



**City Norwalk**  
**Recreation and Park Services Department**  
**Youth Flag Football Rules and Regulations**

The following Rules and Regulations shall govern the City of Norwalk's Youth Flag Football Program. The League Coordinator shall have the jurisdiction and final say over all rules and regulations not covered herein.

**I. Eligibility**

- 1) Participants who have reached their 12th or 13th birthday and have not reached their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday as of October 1, 2024 will be eligible to play in the "A" Division.
- 2) Participants who have reached their 10th or 11th birthday and have not reached their 12<sup>th</sup> birthday as of October 1, 2024 will will be eligible to play in the "B" Division.
- 3) Participants who have reached their 8th or 9th birthday and have not reached their 10<sup>th</sup> birthday as of October 1, 2024 will 2023 will be eligible to play in the "C" Division.
- 4) All players must be listed on the team roster form compiled by the Recreation and Park Services Department before taking part in a league game.
- 5) A liability release (waiver) form must be signed by a parent or Legal guardian and be on file with the league coordinator before a player is eligible to participate in practices or games.
- 6) The Parent/Coaches "Code of Conduct" form must be signed and on File with league coordinator before the player/coach is eligible to participate in the program.
- 7) Roster additions or deletions may only be made by the league coordinator. Any coach or team adding players to their roster without the consent of the league coordinator will subject the team to forfeiture all league games played with the ineligible player and the ineligible player and coach being removed from the program.
- 8) Any player who is not on the official roster, will not be eligible to play.

**II. Games**

- 1) All games will be played at Holifield Park, 12500 Excelsior Drive on Saturday morning/afternoons.
- 2) Refer to league schedules for game times.

### III. Equipment

- 1) A football and flags will be issued to each team. Each team is required to bring their football and City issued flags to each game.
- 2) Equipment is to be returned immediately after the last game.
- 3) Each player will receive a team shirt that is to be worn at all games. If a team wishes to purchase additional items such as shorts, sweats, etc. they may do so at their own expense.
- 4) Rubber soled or rubber cleated shoes may be worn. No street shoes, bare feet or steel cleated shoes will be allowed.
- 5) Football sizes used are as follows:
- 6) Lower and Upper - Junior Size Football

### IV. Participation

- 1) Rosters will be compiled by the league coordinator and be limited to no more than 16 players.
- 2) Roster additions may only be made by the league coordinator. **Coaches may not add players on their own!**
- 3) Teams will consist of boys & girls.

### V. League Procedures

- 1) The Flag Football league is a learning program for youth where sportsmanship, fair play and teamwork are taught. Competition and winning at all cost are not part of our program. With this in mind, **protests will be accepted only on player eligibility.** To protest an ineligible player, the coach must notify the officials prior to the completion of the game. If a player is found to be ineligible, the team will forfeit the protested game. The league coordinator will make a determination as to the future playing status of the ineligible player.

### VI. The Players

- 1) Each team on the field will consist of eight (8) players. In the event that a team cannot field eight (8) players, both teams will field the maximum number of players they have available and the game will be played. Each team must have a minimum of 6 players or the game will be forfeited. Good sportsmanship would suggest that each team field an even amount of players. However, this is not mandatory.

- 2) The offensive team must always have a minimum of three (3) players on the line of scrimmage.
- 3) The defensive team has no restriction as to where they may line up, as long as they line up behind the neutral zone.
- 4) All players are eligible to receive a pass.
- 5) Direct runs by the quarterback across the line of scrimmage are not allowed. He/she must hand off or pass the ball. **The quarterback is defined as the first person to handle the ball from center.** Handle is defined as full control of the ball.
- 6) Every player must play a minimum of one full quarter continuously, which includes offense, defense, and kicking plays. Exceptions to this rule will be made in the case of injuries or disqualifications, or if a player plays the entire game on defense or offense. Penalty may be forfeiture of the game.

## **VII. Coaches and Spectators**

- 1) Coaches and players must stay between the two 20 yard lines when on the sidelines.
- 2) "C" Division may have one coach on the field at all times.
- 3) Spectators must stay at least five (5) yards from the sideline, end zones and players.
- 4) Unsportsmanlike conduct, including fighting, arguing and use of foul language or heckling of teams will not be tolerated. **NOTE:** Coaches are responsible for the actions of their players, assistant coaches, parents and spectators. The officials and/or league coordinator will take appropriate corrective actions.

## **VIII. GAME TIME:**

- 1) The game will consist of four 10-minute quarters, using a running clock. The clock will only be stopped during timeouts or after a score.
- 2) Regulation clock will be used only in the last two (2) minutes of the fourth quarter. During the last two minutes, the clock will be stopped for incomplete forward passes, penalties, scores, timeouts, out of bounds and change of possessions. After a penalty, the clock will restart dependent on the previous play (clock stopped or running when penalty occurred).
- 3) The clock will stop for notification of the two (2) minute warning prior to the end of each half.
- 4) Each team will receive four (4) timeouts per game.
- 5) **Sportsmanship Rule:** If a team is leading by 18 points or more, the running time clock will be used. The clock will only stop for charged timeouts. In addition, after any score, the

trailing team will be awarded the ball at mid-field instead of a kickoff. Should the lead become less than a 13-point margin, the game will revert back to regulation rules.

## IX. THE GAME:

- 1) **Encroachment** is going into the neutral zone prior to the snap of the ball. Neutral zone is the space between the two scrimmage lines during a scrimmage down. This is established when the ball is placed ready for play. If either team encroaches, the ball is dead and a five (5) yard penalty will be assessed.
- 2) **Blocking:** An **offensive** blocker may use only the standing block, with the forearms and hands folded to the body. No part of the blockers body, except their feet shall be in contact with the ground throughout the block. Four-point blocking will be allowed only on the initial charge by a lineman.
  - a. **Defensive** players are limited in use of hands to pushing the shoulders and body of offensive blockers. Slapping or striking is not allowed and will be penalized.

### 3) **Charging and Tackling:**

- 1) The ball carrier may not run through a defensive player, but must attempt to evade the defensive players. The defensive player may not hold nor run through a ball carrier, **but must play the flag not the player or the ball.** The quarterback is considered the ball carrier until he/she releases the ball. Defensive player may attempt to block a pass as long as contact is not made with the passer. In an attempt to remove the flag from the ball carrier, defensive players may contact the body of an opponent with their hands, but not with their neck or head. A defensive player may not hold, push or knock the ball carrier down in an attempt to remove the flag.
- 2) Defensive roughness against the ball carrier
  - a) Violators involved in the following fouls may be banished from the game at the discretion of the officials:
    1. Tackling the ball carrier.
    2. Holding the ball carrier.
    3. Blocking the ball carrier
    4. Tripping the ball carrier.
    5. Pushing the ball carrier.
    6. Charging the ball carrier.
    7. Bumping into the ball carrier.
    8. Pushing out of bounds.

PENALTY: 12 yards and possible disqualification if flagrant.

### 4) **The Kick-Off:**

1. The kick-off shall be made from the 30-yard line from either end of the field. The receiving team must place a minimum of three (3) players within five yards of midfield. The kick-off must originate from the ground or from a kicking tee. The ball shall not be placed on the foot of anyone and kicked.

2. Out-Of-Bounds: In the event the ball goes out-of-bounds on the kick-off, between the kicking team's restraining line and the receiving teams 15 yard line, the receiving team shall have the following choices:
  - a) Accept a 5 yard penalty from the previous spot and have a re-kick:
  - b) Put the ball in play 10 yards in from the sideline at the inbounds spot.NOTE: If the re-kick goes out of bounds, the receiving team must put the ball in play at the inbounds spot, or at the 15-yard line if the ball goes out-of-bounds inside the receiving team's 15-yard line.
3. On-side Kicks are not allowed. The kicking team cannot recover an on-side kick. The ball becomes dead and is put in play by the receiving team.

## **5) First Downs**

To keep possession of the ball, the offensive team must advance the ball past the zone lines in four downs. As soon as the ball is advanced over the zone line, the following down shall be first.

## **6) Putting the Ball into Play**

The ball is put in play by the center by a backwards pass or hand-off, including free kick situations.

## **7) Fumbled Balls**

1. The ball is dead at the point of contact with the ground behind the line of scrimmage. Fumbles beyond the line of scrimmage, when ball hits the ground, ball is dead and spotted at the point of lost possession.
2. On a punt, kick or interception, once possession is gained, if the ball carrier loses possession of the ball and the ball hits the ground, the ball is dead and spotted at the point of lost possession.
3. An intentional fumble is considered unsportsmanlike conduct and will be penalized from the point of the foul.

## **8) Punts and Kicks**

1. A kick, which touches a player of either team and then touches the ground is dead at the spot of touching the ground and belongs to the receiving team at that spot, or at the spot of first touching by the kicking team.
2. Kicks or punts crossing the goal line shall be declared dead and automatic touchbacks, whether touched or not and shall be put in play from the 15 yard line.
3. On a defensive blocked punt, the kicking team may advance the ball if recovered in the air behind the line of scrimmage and remains in possession if the down was 3<sup>rd</sup> or less, or if the ball is advanced beyond the first down zone.

4. Blocked punts caught in the air, may be run out of the offensive team's end zone.
5. All kicks must be declared on any down. The defensive team must have a minimum of three (3) players on the line of scrimmage until the ball has been kicked.
6. On all free kicks, the punter has 10 seconds from the time of the snap to punt the ball. Punter must begin the kicking motion from directly behind the center (hiker). If the ball makes contact with the ground on the snap, the punter may pick up the ball and kick from that spot.

## **X. SUBSTITUTIONS**

Players must play an entire quarter, start to finish. Once everyone has played a full quarter, free substitutions may be made. However, continuous substitutions that are obviously made to delay the game will not be tolerated. Exception: If a player plays the entire game on defense or offense. Exceptions must be noted prior to the start of each game.

## **XI. ILLEGAL HIDEOUTS**

All players must break from the huddle before each play. If a team does not huddle, all players must be five yards from the sidelines once the ball is put in play, or they will be penalized.

## **XII. PASSES AND HAND OFFS**

1. All players are eligible pass receivers.
2. An incomplete lateral/backward pass is dead at the point of contact with the ground.
3. An intercepted pass in the defensive team's end zone may be run out of the end zone or downed in the end zone. Touchbacks will be put in play at the 20-yard line.
4. During the scrimmage down, the ball may be handed forward behind the line.
  - a) To any lineman who has clearly faced his goal line by moving both feet in a half-turn and is at least one yard behind the line of scrimmage when he/she receives the ball.
  - b) To a teammate, who at the snap was behind his line of scrimmage.
5. There may be any number of legal forward passes during a down, but each pass must be thrown from in or behind the neutral zone.

## **XIII. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

Swearing, obscene language or actions, etc. either on or off the playing field by the players, coaches, or spectators will not be tolerated. No player may show baiting or taunting acts or words that provoke ill will or any delayed, excessive or prolonged act by which a player attempts to focus attention upon him. Spiking the ball or "touchdown dances" are considered unsportsmanlike conduct and will be penalized accordingly.

#### **XIV. SAFETY**

1. A fumble in ones own end zone
2. Ball carrier's flag is pulled in his own end zone
3. A blocked punt is downed by the offensive team in their own end zone.
4. A dropped sideward or backward pass in the end zone
5. A blocked punt that goes out of the end zone
6. A penalty on the offensive team in their own end zone

NOTE: After a safety, the offensive team kicks or punts the ball from their own 15-yard line to the opposing team.

#### **XV. DEAD BALL**

1. The Referee shall declare the ball "dead" and the down ended:
  - a) A flag not removed by grabbing and pulling does not cause play to stop. In all situations where play is in progress and a ball carrier loses one or both flags either accidentally, inadvertently, or on purpose, de-flagging reverts to a one-handed touch of the ball carrier between the shoulders and the knees.
  - b) When the ball goes out-of-bounds or the ball carrier goes out-of-bounds.
  - c) When a forward pass becomes incomplete.
  - d) When a touchdown, safety or touchback is made.
  - e) When the ball carrier touches his/her knee to the ground.
  - f) When any lateralled ball, centered ball, backward or sideward pass strikes the ground.
  - g) At any other time the official declares the ball "dead."

#### **XVI. CHANGING GOALS**

Teams shall change goals at the end of the first and third quarter.

#### **XVII. SCORING**

1. Touchdown = 6 points
2. Safety = 2 points
3. Conversion = 1 point from the 2 yard line
4. Conversion = 2 points from the 5 yard line
5. Forfeit = 1 point

#### **XVIII. PENALTY ENFORCEMENT**

1. No single penalty may be assessed that will move the ball more than half the distance to the goal line, whether the penalty be against the offensive or defensive team.
2. For any fouls between downs, enforce from the spot of the snap.
3. For fouls during a down, the following enforcement principles apply:
  - a) If foul DURING A LOOSE BALL PLAY: Free kick, pass, kick or fumble behind the scrimmage line or a run which precedes a pass, kick or fumble behind the scrimmage line...Enforce from the line of scrimmage\*.

\*NOTE: If the offensive team fouls behind the line of scrimmage, the enforcement spot is from the spot of the foul.

b) If foul DURING A RUNNING PLAY: Enforce such penalty from the end of the run\*. A running play is any run that is not followed by a pass, kick, or fumble behind the line of scrimmage.

\*NOTE: If the offensive team fouls behind the end of the run, enforce from the spot of the foul.

4. If the last defensive player between the ball carrier and the goal line commits a foul on the ball carrier, a touchdown shall be awarded.
5. Any penalty that involves a loss of down and occurs in a play following a change of possession shall be enforced from the spot of the foul. The team obtaining possession will have a first down after the penalty is enforced.
6. A period must be extended by an un-timed down except for unsportsmanlike conduct or non player fouls, if during the last timed down, one of the following occurred:
  - a) There was a foul by either team and the penalty was accepted,
  - b) There was a double foul,
  - c) There was an inadvertent whistle and the down is to be repeated.

## **XIX. INADVERTANT WHISTLE**

The ball is dead and the down is ended when an official sounds his whistle inadvertently. When a penalty is declined for a foul, which occurred during the down, and there is an inadvertent whistle while:

- a) A legal snap or pass is in flight, or during a kick, the down will be replayed.
- b) A player is in possession, the team may choose to accept the play at that point or replay the down