



YMCA YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

Each team will have a maximum of 14 players, and teams will play 7v7, permitting there are enough players present on game days.

Players are recommended to wear cleats or tennis shoes, without metal spikes.

The first possession will be determined by rock, paper, scissors.

Flags must be visible and on the hips. Flags cannot be twisted, tied, or wrapped to shorten them or make them difficult to pull.

TIMING

Games are played for 40 minutes running time.

Teams change sides after 20 minutes.

There will be a 2 minute half time period, and the loser of the coin toss will begin with possession of the ball on their 5-yard line for the second half.

Each team will receive a 60-second and a 30-second timeout per half.

Down Format

The offensive team will begin possession at their 5-yard line and has 4 plays to cross midfield. After crossing midfield, they have 4 more plays to score a touchdown.

If the team fails to cross midfield in 4 downs or score a touchdown, the other team takes possession on its own 5 yard line. There are no punts, all 4 downs will be used without the concern of giving up field position.

Offensive Starting Points

SITUATION	STARTING FIELD POSITION AFTER CHANGE OF POSSESSION
After a touchdown and extra point attempt	Offense's 5 yard line
After a turnover on downs	Offense's 5 yard line

After an interception	At the spot of the interception
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Offense

A minimum of three players must be on the line of scrimmage at every snap, consisting of a center and then at least 2 receivers positioned anywhere along the line of scrimmage.

Only one player can be in motion at the time of the snap.

The ball must be snapped to start play; players may snap the ball between the legs, or use the side snap.

Running

The quarterback cannot run with the ball.

Handoffs and Pitches

- Direct handoffs or pitches behind the line of scrimmage are permitted
- Multiple handoffs are permitted
- The player who takes the handoff or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage

No-Running Zones

- Located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of the midfield are designed to avoid power-running plays.

Encourage players to spin to avoid the defense; a ball carrier may not dive, a dive will result in a penalty.

Receiving

All players are eligible receivers (including the quarterback, if the ball was handed off behind the line of scrimmage).

A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

If a player catches a pass with his knee(s) on the ground, the play is dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the completion.

Passing

All forward passes can be completed behind or beyond the line of scrimmage. Only one forward pass can be completed per play. While in the no-run zone, all forward passes must be completed beyond the line-of-scrimmage. Once the ball leaves the

quarterback's hand, the defender can make a play on the ball. The defender must avoid contact with the receiver.

Shovel passes are allowed.

The quarterback must throw a pass within 7 seconds, or the play is dead, and a loss of down occurs. A handoff or pitch will end the 7-second pass count.

Dead Ball

Play is ruled dead when one of the following occurs:

- The ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls out
- The ball carrier steps out of bounds
- A touchdown or safety is scored
- The ball carrier's knee hits the ground

The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

There are no fumbles.

- The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground
- The offensive team will retain possession
- If a snap is mishandled, only the quarterback may continue play. If a defender gets to the ball before the quarterback, the play is ruled dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the fumble (treated like a sack).

Defense

Teams must line up in a man-to-man formation, with the same number of defensive players on the line-of-scrimmage, as offensive players, at the time of the snap.

Interceptions may not be returned. Change of possession will be awarded at the point of the interception. This rule will force a substitution so players will not sit out more than one possession at a time.

Interceptions made in the end zone will result in a touchback and the ball will be spotted at the 5 yard line.

Rushing the Quarterback

Players are not allowed to rush the quarterback.

Players may defend on (but not cross) the line of scrimmage while the quarterback has possession of the ball.

Once the ball is handed off all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage.

There is no blocking or tackling allowed.

Penalties

Coaches from each team will be on the field, and working together with the official to ensure fair play. Feel free to stop the game to explain the rules and situations to the players as needed.

Defensive Penalty	Result of Penalty
Encroachment	5 Yards from the line of scrimmage and replay the down
Illegal Rushing (Rushing the Quarterback)	10 Yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Interference	10 Yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal Contact (Holding, blocking, pushing, pulling the jersey, etc.)	10 Yards from the spot of the foul and automatic first down
Illegal Flag Pull (Before receiver catches the ball)	10 Yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down

Offensive Penalty	Result of Penalty
Illegal Motion (More than one person moving)	5 Yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down
Illegal Formation (False start, not enough men on the line of scrimmage, etc.)	5 Yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of first down
Illegal Pass (A pass thrown after the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage.)	5 Yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.
Delay of Game	5 Yards from the line of scrimmage and replay down.
Illegal Run (a running play in the no-run zone or a quarterback crossing the line of scrimmage)	5 Yards from the line of scrimmage and replay of down.
Offensive Pass Interference (illegal pick play, pushing a defender)	Ten Yards from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down.
Flag Guarding (intentional or unintentional use of the arm to prevent the flag from being pulled)	Five Yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.
Diving (diving toward the end zone or first down)	Ten Yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.

