

3rd/4th Grade Flag Football Rules

Updated Sep. 2023

Teams	Seven (7) Players on the field. Play may begin with four (4) players, but four will be considered a forfeit if at halftime more players have not arrived, however, the game will continue for fun and practice.
Formation	All offensive players are eligible pass receivers. The ball must be clearly snapped to and in the sole possession of an offensive player other than the center. A legal snap can be between the legs or to the side- must stay onside.
Equipment	Official game ball will be a junior sized leather ball (K2). Metal cleats or spikes are not permitted. Small rubber cleats are recommended. Belts and flags must be visible and worn at waist level on each side. No player may tamper or alter his/her flags in any way. Shirts must be tucked in. No pockets allowed. Encourage your players to wear shorts without pockets. If your child has pockets, you must TAPE them closed.
Game Length	The game will consist of two 20-minute halves with a running clock. The clock will stop during the last two minutes of the game for penalties, incomplete passes or fumble , changes in ball possession , or out of bounds (exception- clock will continue to run if there is an 18-point difference.) Half-time will be 3 minutes in length. Each team will be allowed two (2) one-minute time-outs per half. Time-outs do not carry over. Players must stay on the playing field during time-outs.
Putting the Ball in Play	The offensive team has 30 seconds to put the ball in play.
Substitutions	Substitutions shall be unlimited but may occur on dead balls only.
Scoring	A Touchdown is 6 points. After a touchdown is scored an official shall pull the flag of the ball carrier to check for tied flags. The point after touchdown (PAT) will be attempted from the three-yard line for one point or from the ten-yard line for two points. The offensive team will be required to notify the head official of their choice. Point after is dead ball if pass is intercepted. Safety: two points will be awarded if the defensive team forces the ball to be downed behind the offensive team's goal line by fumbling or being downed.
Kick-Off	No Kickoff- the offensive team will start the game with the ball on the 20-yard line. Offense/Defense to start the game determined by pregame coin flip.
First Down	To keep possession of the ball, the offensive team must advance the ball past the next zone line in four downs. As soon as the ball is advanced over the zone line, the following down is a first down. A ball on the line is considered in the more forward zone.
Neutral Zone	The distance between the offensive and defensive lines at the beginning of a play shall be 3 yards if the ball is outside the defensive team's 20-yard line and 1 yard if the ball is inside the defensive team's 20-yard line.
Diving, Spinning, Jumping	No diving of any kind is allowed. Offensive players may not dive to advance the ball or score. Defensive players may not dive for offensive players flags- both officials' judgement. Spinning, diving, or jumping results in an immediate dead ball.
Stripping the Ball	Defense cannot intentionally strip the ball from an offensive player.

4th Down/Punting	on the 4 th down the offensive team has 2 choices: 1. Go for the 1 st down 2. "Punt" the ball- Meaning to move the ball to the 20-yd line of the opposing team, change possession, and begin play there. The 4 th down decision must be announced to the official prior to beginning the play. The official shall then notify the other team of the decision, so they may get into the appropriate formation.
Forward Pass	Two-forward passes can be made if the quarterback makes the first pass prior to crossing the line of scrimmage. If the quarterback crosses the line of scrimmage prior to passing only one forward pass may be attempted. All players on the field are eligible to receive or intercept passes. If a player has lost his/her flags and catches a pass, the ball will be downed where the ball is caught. If the second pass is incomplete, the ball will be placed at the spot the second pass was thrown. Handoffs and lateral passes do not count as forward passes.
Blocking	The offensive team must start each play with four (4) players on the line of scrimmage. All offensive players are eligible to receive a forward pass and only three (3) players can be in the backfield blocking. A player may block for his/her runner or passer by using a screen block. No contact should take place. If a blocker uses his/her arm, elbows, legs, lowers his/her shoulder, or leaves his/her feet, it is an illegal block. Stiff arming, spinning, and jumping are not allowed. A runner may not guard/block the flag in any manner. Unintentional contact may occur- there is a difference between unintentional contact and illegal contact.
Dead Balls	1. A player is down once one of his/her knees or body contacts the ground- a hand on the ground to maintain balance is not down. 2. In removing the flag or stopping the ball, a defensive player should pull the flag and immediately set it on the ground. 3. If at any time the belt of the ball carrier falls off, the ball carrier is down, and the ball is dead. 4. All fumbles are dead the moment the ball contacts the ground. Possession of the ball remains with the team who had possession last. Exceptions: fumble on 4 th down prior to making a 1 st down; fumble in end zone is a safety. 5. If the ball is fumbled on any snap or any play, the ball is dead, and the down is lost. 6. Inadvertent whistle-ball is dead; play is over as soon as the whistle blows. 7. Dual possession on a pass -ball is dead, and offense keeps the ball (no fighting for possession).
Conduct	No player, coach, or spectator shall act in an unsportsmanlike manner during the game, at halftime, or after the game. Examples are, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A- Using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures. B- Intentionally kicking at, swinging at, or pushing any player, spectator, coach or official. C- Harassing, insulting, or badgering any official, coach, spectator, or player. Failure to comply with this rule may result in dismissal from the game and possibility of future game suspension. League specialists have absolute autonomy to enforce or negate any dismissals or suspensions.
Coaches	One adult coach is allowed on the field for the duration of the season. All other coaches must stay on their respective sidelines during all games.
Playing Time	Each player must play at least half of the game. This is a recreational league, and we <u>strongly</u> suggest that each player plays as much as possible each game. Please substitute all players equally.