

RULES AND REGULATIONS

INTRODUCTION

In addition to the general regulations found in Parts I - III, the following Nittany Youth Flag rules govern all participants playing Nittany Youth Flag Football (NYFF).

ARTICLE 1: ORGANIZATION

The LEAGUE is the basic unit of organization which consists of a minimum of three (3) teams in the same age division.

ARTICLE 2: REGISTRATION

Each league must conform to the insurance provisions.

ARTICLE 3: DIVISIONS OF PLAY

- F1:** League age cut-off date is July 31 of the current year and shall be the participants league age for the coming season.
- F2:** There are no height or weight restrictions on players. Ages are 5, 6, and 7.
- F3:** Cheerleaders shall follow the overall age and division of play referenced in F2 above. In addition, all flag spirit squads must follow Nittany Youth Spirit Guidelines as outlined in the spirit section of this rulebook.
- F4:** Ages shall be verified.
- F5:** If a player starts a season in one division, he must finish in that division.
- F6:** A player is ineligible if he is a member of a school tackle program or if he is playing Nittany Youth tackle football. He is also ineligible if he is competing in another flag football program (unless as part of school curriculum).
- F7:** A player shall furnish a written consent to play from either parent or legal guardian.
- F8:** A signed statement from an examining physician that the candidate is physically fit and there are no observable conditions which would contra-indicate him playing football or her cheering. Note: If regular school medical examination results are releasable to parents, a copy of such report, if not older than January 1st of the current year, may be used in lieu of a new examination.

ARTICLE 4: FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

RULE 1: PLAYERS

- F1:** A game is played between two teams consisting of eight (8) players each.
- F2:** Only players appearing on the official team roster form are to be counted as players. The Roster is completed before the first game of the season and verified by the league in a process called "certification."
- F3:** The offensive team must have five (5) players on the line and three (3) in the backfield. The defensive team may choose any formation except in kicking situations.

F4: Mandatory Play Rule: All players will play a minimum of 10 plays. Failure to abide by this rule will result in forfeiture of that game.

F5: A team will have 45 seconds to put the ball in play after the ready signal.

RULE 2: PLAYING FIELDS

F1: The field shall be rectangular with lines and zones and shall conform to either of the two designs mentioned below.

- A. 100-yard field: This field measures one hundred and twenty yards in length, divided into 5 zones of twenty yards each between two end zones of ten yards each. It is 53 1/3 yards wide.
- B. 80-yard field: This field measures one hundred yards in length, divided into 4 zones of twenty yards each between two end zones of ten yards each. It is 40 yards wide.
- C. Goal Posts are unnecessary as points after TD (conversion) are made only by passing or running and there are no field goals kicked.
- D. A conversion line will be marked 3 yards from the goal line and at an equal distance from each sideline.
- E. A kickoff area will be marked (usually by an "X") as follows:
 1. 100-yard field: from the 40 yard line.
 2. 80-yard field: from the 30 yard line (middle of second zone and equal distance from the sidelines).

F2: The following field equipment will be used:

- A. A Down Marker will be used to indicate the number of the down.
- B. A Zone Marker will be used to indicate the distance to go for a first down (placed at the forward zone line).
- C. Corner Flags with flexible staffs will be placed at the four sections of the end zones and the sidelines. Soft pylons may be used if flags are unavailable.

RULE 3: EQUIPMENT

F1-GAMEBALL

Each NYF league will determine which ball will be used during its games.

F2-FLAGS

- A. Each player must wear a belt with the number of flags designated as "standard" by the league, which will be 3 flags.
- B. The flags will be attached to a belt and extend or hang from each side of the player's body. When using three flags, the third will hang from the rear of the player's body.
- C. Flags will be 14-20 inches long and a minimum of 2 inches wide.
- D. The belt must be tight to prevent being turned around during a de-flagging.
- E. The securing of flags to the body, waist or belt, is illegal.
- F. Jerseys cannot be worn over flags.
- G. If a player's flag is inadvertently lost, he is ineligible to handle the ball.
- H. Flags are to be of contrasting colors, different from game uniform. Definitions of uniform shall be game pants and/or jersey.

NOTE: The flags will be attached to a belt made for that purpose. Such a belt has equal resistance at the point of attachment of flags, thereby ensuring an equal effort necessary to de-flag a player.

F3-GAME UNIFORMS

- A. All team members must wear the same color jersey.
- B. All jerseys will be numbered, front and back.
- C. Any type of pants may be worn provided said pants have no front or side pockets.

- D. Jerseys will be tucked in at all times.
- E. Sneakers are the preferred shoe; however, non-detachable, rubber-cleated shoes are allowed. No other footwear is acceptable.

F4-EYE GLASSES

Eye glasses, when worn, shall be of athletically-approved construction with non-shattering glass (safety glass).

F5-MOUTHGUARDS

Mouthguards are required, no keeper strap is necessary.

RULE 4: PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT

- F1:** Spiked or street shoes.
- F2:** Padding of any kind, including hard surface padding such as shoulder pads, hip pads, and helmets.
- F3:** Hard metal or any other hard substance on a player's clothing or person.
- F4:** Anything that conceals the flags.
- F5:** Slick or sticky substances such as grease or glue.
- F6:** Any equipment, in the opinion of the referee, that will endanger or confuse players.

RULE 5: REFEREES

- F1:** There will be at least two (2) referees; each Association to provide one of these referees—not necessarily PIAA official.
- F2:** The league may assign more than two referees for a game.

RULE 6: THE RULES OF THE GAME

F1-PLAYERS

The free substitution rule is always in effect and a player may enter the game any time the ball is dead.

F2-TEAM COACHES:

One coach for each team will be permitted on the field.

F3-TIME

There will be:

- A. Two 20-minute halves.
- B. Three (3) time-outs per half per team.
- C. Five (5) minutes between halves.
- D. Clock is a continuous clock. Clock is stopped on change of possession after a try for extra point. It is re-started when the ball is placed in play on the 40 (allowing approximately 1-2 minutes for the teams to get to the sideline and get organized). It is also stopped for timeouts (3 per half).
- E. The game is over after completion of the 2nd half, or it is over after one hour time has elapsed since the start of the game.

F4-DOWNS (First down and zone to go)

- A. Each team will have four consecutive downs to advance the ball into the next zone or to score a touchdown.
- B. Once a team enters into the next zone, it is a first down and a new series of downs begins.
- C. A team failing to move the ball into the next zone will lose possession. The opposing team takes over at the point where the ball is declared dead and begins its series of first down and zone to go.
- D. The forward part of the ball touching any line will be the determining factor in measuring for a first down.
- E. A down will be repeated if provided for by the rules.
- F. When the offensive team is within the last zone and has a first down, it will be first down and goal to go.
- G. At the conclusion of each down, the referee will place the ball in the center of the field (equal distance from sidelines-not on a hash mark).

F5-DE-FLAGGING

- A. There shall be no tackling of the ball carrier, passer, or kicker.
- B. The player carrying or having possession of the ball is down when the flag is removed from his waist (de-flagging). The defensive player shall hold the flag above his head and stand still.
- C. The defensive player cannot hold or push the ball carrier to remove his flag. An accidental touch of the body or shoulder while reaching for the flag shall not be considered a violation, however, touching of the head or face shall be considered a violation.
- D. A defensive player may not run over, push, or pull a blocker away from him. He may push him sideways if he gets past him, but he cannot push the blocker down.
- E. A defensive player must go for the passer's flag. He cannot touch the passer's arm.

F6-BLOCKING

- A. A blocker must be on his feet at all times while blocking. All linemen, except the center, must not assume the three-point stance or otherwise spring from a coiled or crouching start. Instead, they must simply stand at the line of scrimmage and await the snap. The center, though crouching, if he is to block, must first stand straight up.
- B. Cross body and roll blocking are not permitted.
- C. A blocker cannot use his hands.
- D. Blocking shall be done with the arms and body in the form of shoulder and brush blocking only.
- E. A defensive player cannot block or push a ball carrier out-of-bounds.
- F. Butting, elbowing or knee blocking is not permitted.
- G. There will be no two-on-one blocking for the ball carrier beyond the line of scrimmage.
- H. Blocking a player from behind is not permitted (clipping).
- I. There will be no interlocking blocking.
- J. A defensive player will be restricted in the use of his hands to the blocker's body and shoulders.

F7-BALLCARRIER

- A. The ball carrier cannot use his hands or arms to protect his flags. The defensive player must have the opportunity to remove the ball carrier's flags.
- B. The ball carrier cannot lower his head to drive or run into a defensive player.
- C. Stiff-arming by the ball carrier is illegal.
- D. The ball carrier cannot spin or hurdle to prevent a defensive player from removing his flags.
- E. He may run in any direction until the ball is declared dead.

F8-CENTER

- A. The center must snap the ball between his legs.

- B. He must have both feet on the scrimmage line with no part of his body beyond the forward point of the ball.
- C. He may adjust the long part of the ball at right angles to the scrimmage line for one time only.

F9-PASSING

- A. All backfield men are eligible passers.
- B. Passing will be attempted from behind the line of scrimmage only.
- C. A lateral pass is a pass thrown parallel to the line of scrimmage or back toward the passer's own goal line. A lateral pass is not considered a forward pass.
- D. A forward pass is a pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage toward the defensive team's goal line.

F10-RECEIVING

- A. All players are eligible to receive forward passes.
- B. A receiver may catch a ball even if he steps out-of-bounds or out of the end zone as long as he comes down with one foot in bounds.
- C. Two or more receivers may touch a ball in succession resulting in a completed pass.
- D. If an offensive and defensive player catch a pass simultaneously, the ball is declared dead at the spot of the catch and the passing team is awarded possession.
- E. An offensive player cannot be out-of-bounds and return in-bounds to catch a pass. This will be ruled an incomplete pass.

F11-DEAD BALL

All balls touching the ground are immediately dead (except kickoffs and punts). For example, the ball is declared dead at the following times:

- A. When the ball carrier touches the ground with his body, other than hands or feet.
- B. When the ball carrier's flag has been pulled.
- C. If a pass receiver or ball carrier has a missing flag (ball is dead at that spot).
- D. Following a touchdown, safety or touchback.
- E. When the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason.
- F. If the center snap hits the ground over the Quarterback's head or dropped by Quarterback.
- G. When the ball hits the ground as a result of a fumble or muffed ball. **THERE ARE NO FUMBLE RECOVERIES IN NYF!**
- H. If a lateral pass touches the ground (ball is declared dead at that point). If a lateral pass goes out-of-bounds, the ball is ruled dead at the point it crosses the boundary line.
- I. If a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught at the same time by an opposing player(s).

RULE 7: SCORING VALUES

No score is to be kept for Flag games.

RULE 8: INJURED PLAYERS

Once removed from a game because of injury, a player must sit out at least one down, and may not re-enter the game without the approval of attending medical personnel.

RULE 9: PRACTICES

F1: Practice cannot begin until August 1.

F2: Practices are limited to three days per week, not to exceed 1-1/2 hours each practice, while school is in session, and when school is not in session, practices are limited to four days per week, not to exceed 2 hours duration.

*Whatever number needed in the tournament program is allowed.

RULE 11: PENALTIES

Since two football field sizes can be used, penalties are adjusted accordingly. The 100-yard field will be assessed the standard fifteen (15) and five (5) yard penalties. The 80-yard field will be assessed ten (10) and five (5) yard penalties. With this in mind, references to penalties will be given as (15-10) and (5-5) in the following listings.

F1-LINE OF SCRIMMAGE-Centering

- A. Offside, defensive or offensive (5-5)
- B. Illegal snap (5-5)
- C. Failure to observe 30-second rule (5-5)
- D. Illegal motion-more than one backfield man in motion (5-5)
- E. Illegal formation, offense (5-5)

F2-PASSING

- A. If an illegal forward pass is thrown and intercepted, the play will continue until the ball is declared dead. The intercepting team has the option of possession from that spot or accepting the penalty (5-5).
- B. Passer crosses the line of scrimmage- (5-5) and loss of down.
- C. Intentional grounding- (5-5) and loss of down.
- D. Offensive pass interference- (15-10) from line of scrimmage and loss of down.
- E. Defensive pass interference-first down from spot of infraction for the offensive team.

F3-DELAY OF GAME

- A. Continuing to play after the ball is dead- (5-5) from spot where the ball is dead.
- B. Recovering a fumble or falling on the ball (5-5).
- C. Advancing a fair catch (5-5).
- D. Unnecessary delay of game for any reason (5-5).

F4-FLAGWEARING AND DE-FLAGGING

- A. Tackling (15-10).
- B. Wearing the flags illegally (5-5).
- C. Ball carrier using his hands to prevent a defensive player from de-flagging- (15--10).
- D. Holding, pushing, or hitting the ball carrier while de-flagging- (15-10).
- E. Leaving one's feet while de-flagging- (15-10) from spot of foul.
- F. Wearing one flag (5-5).

F5-ILLEGAL HAND-OFF

- A. If the ball is handed forward beyond the scrimmage line- (5-5) and loss of down.
- B. Handing or snapping a ball to a lineman (5-5).

F6-ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTIONS

- A. More than eight (8) men on the field (5-5).
- B. Substitution(s) while the ball is in play or before it is declared dead (5-5).
- C. Disqualified player entering game (15-10).

F7-BLOCKING

- A. Leaving feet to block (15-10).
- B. Cross body blocking or roll blocking (15-10).
- C. Illegal use of hands by blocker (15-10).
- D. Holding a defensive player (15- 10).
- E. Defensive player blocking or pushing the ball carrier out of bounds (15-10).

- F. Butting, elbowing or knee blocking (15-10).
- G. Defensive player using hands illegally (5-5).
- H. More than two blockers for the ball carrier (on one defensive player) beyond the line of scrimmage (5-5).
- I. Clipping (15-10).
- J. Interlock Blocking- (15-10) from spot of foul.

F8-BALL CARRIER

- A. Stiff arming- (15-10) from spot of foul.
- B. Lowering head to drive or run into defensive player (15-10).
- C. Use of head (15-10).
- D. Use of hands or arms to protect flags (15-10).
- E. Spinning or hurdling (5-5).

F9-UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS

- A. Offensive and Defensive (15-10).
- B. Disqualification of guilty player or players if repeated.

F10-UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- A. Fighting (15-10)- offenders ejected from game.
- B. Defensive player pulling offensive player's flag to make him ineligible foreplay (15-10).
- C. Insulting and abusive language (15-10).
- D. Interference with progress of the game by coaches or any other team personnel (15-10).
- E. Illegal play (15-10).
- F. Team leaving field before game is completed (15-10). Failure to return - Forfeit. Win for team remaining on the field.
- G. Failure of home team to control players or fans (15-10).
- H. Forfeit if not controlled.

RULE 12: PROTESTS

- F1:** Only protests involving rules' interpretations or the eligibility of a player shall be considered - never the judgment of an official in calling a play.
- F2:** Protests are decided at the local level in accordance with the administrative procedures of the league.