

# Nittany

# Youth

# Flag Football

# Rulebook

# Adult Code of Conduct

## ADULT CODE OF CONDUCT

- F1:** In order to uphold the goals of Nittany Youth and ensure that all participants have the benefit of a safe and fun learning environment, all parents, guardians and other adult attendees of Nittany Youth events, including but not limited to practices, competitions, and banquets, must behave in a respectful, courteous and sportsmanlike manner at all times.
- F2:** Any adult found using alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs, appears impaired or who is flagrantly rude, attempts to intimidate, verbally abuse, heckles, taunts, ridicules, boos, throws objects and/or uses vulgarity or profane language/gestures with an official, coach, volunteer, staff member, participant or other event attendee, will receive a verbal warning and/or be asked to leave a Nittany Youth event. The member organization may also provide a written warning to the individual regarding the misbehavior. In Addition, the adult's children may also be removed from the event at the discretion of the member association. Any adult who commits one of the above stated offenses a second time, shall be banned from any and all Nittany Youth events for a period of one year from the date of the second offense. At the discretion of the NYFCL Board, their children may also be removed from the program(s) for that time period.
- F3:** Any adult who physically assaults an official, coach, volunteer, staff member or participant or threatens grave bodily harm shall be banned from any and all Nittany Youth events for one year from the date of the offense. At the discretion of the NYFCL Board their children may also be removed from any and all Nittany Youth programs for that same period of time. After the ban has expired, if the individual commits another offense of the adult code of conduct, the individual will be permanently banned from any and all Nittany Youth events and the individual's children may also be permanently removed from any and all Nittany Youth programs.

## COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

All coaches will abide by a Code of Conduct, which includes the following provisions. If any of these rules are broken, the League shall have the authority to impose a penalty as in the enforcement section contained herein. Coaches shall:

- F1:** Not smoke and/or use smokeless tobacco on the field.
- F2:** Not criticize players/participants in front of spectators, but reserve constructive criticism for later, in private, or in the presence of team/squad members if others might benefit.
- F3:** Accept decisions of the game officials and judges on the field as being fair and called to the best ability of said officials.
- F4:** Not criticize an opposing team, its players, coaches, or fans by word of mouth or by gesture.
- F5:** Emphasize that good athletes strive to be good students and that both are physically and mentally alert.
- F6:** Strive to make every football activity serve as a training ground for life, and a basis for good mental and physical health.
- F7:** Emphasize that winning is the result of good "teamwork."
- F8:** Not engage in excessive sideline coaching and shall not leave the bench area to shout instructions from the sidelines.
- F9:** Together with team officials, be jointly responsible for the conduct and control of team fans and spectators. Any fan who becomes a nuisance and out of control will be asked to leave.
- F10:** Not use abusive or profane language at any time.

- F11:** Not "pile it on" or encourage their team to get a commanding lead and raise the score as high as it can. In these instances, every effort shall be made to let all players play.
- F12:** Not receive any payment, in cash or kind, for services as a coach in Nittany Youth Football/Spirit. This includes any coach, expert, consultant or choreographer, regardless of his/her roster status.
- F13:** Not permit or encourage "sweating down" tactics in order for a player to make the team weight.
- F14:** Not recommend or distribute any medication, controlled or over the counter, except as specifically prescribed by participant's physician.
- F15:** Not permit an ineligible player to participate in a game.
- F16:** Not deliberately incite unsportsmanlike conduct.
- F17:** Abstain from the possession and drinking of alcoholic beverages and the possession or use of any illegal substance on both the game and practice fields.
- F18:** Remove from a game or practice any participant when even slightly in doubt about his/her health, whether or not as a result of injury, until competent medical advice is available.
- F19:** Control their fans. Remember, as a team coach you're responsible for your team, and fan reaction will usually be in step with your reaction.
- F20:** Uphold all rules and regulations of Nittany Youth Football and Cheer League.

# PART I - THE NITTANY YOUTH STRUCTURE

## DEFINITIONS

**F1-LEAGUE:**  
The term "League" shall mean Nittany Youth Football & Cheer.

A League consists of a minimum number of teams as decided by the League, playing in the same Age/Weight division.

**F2-ASSOCIATION:**  
Associations are organizations that sponsor and administer one or more teams. They raise money, buy equipment, recruit coaches, secure fields, etc.

Associations are characterized by specific geographical coverage. In cities, they often adopt commonly understood neighborhood names. In the suburbs, they usually take the town name. In rural areas, an association name may embrace an entire county (or a substantial part of it). An association's recruiting area is approved by its League and is normally consistent with its geographical name.

**F3-TEAM:**  
A team is the universal, basic unit of organization. At minimum, a team consists of a group of participants organized under the direction of a coaching staff in a given Age/Weight division.

**F4-DIVISION:**

Division has several meanings, the most common of which refers to the following Age/Weight classifications: Flag (FG). The basic ages and weights for the division of play is listed below.

**F5-ELIGIBILITY:**

A player is eligible if they meet the criteria under the Age/Weight Divisions, has been physically cleared to play and has parental/guardian permission to play. Flag players are ineligible if they compete in another flag football program (unless as part of school curriculum).

**INTRODUCTION TO THE RULES**

- F1:** The rules contained herein ARE REQUIRED to be enforced by each Association participating in Nittany Youth Football and Cheer League.
- F2:** FOR ALL PURPOSES, THE NITTANY YOUTH PLAYING SEASON SHALL BE DEFINED AS AUGUST 1 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, OR THE LAST GAME/COMPETITION, WHICH EVER COMES FIRST. All Associations, administrative personnel, coaches, players and spirit participants are subject to disciplinary action for violations of Nittany Youth rules and regulations at any time during a stated playing season.
- F3:** NO RULES WILL BE ADDED AFTER MAY 1<sup>st</sup> OF EACH SEASON UNLESS IT IS A SAFETY ISSUE.

**PART II - NITTANY YOUTH REGULATIONS**

**ARTICLE 1: POWERS/AUTHORITY OF THE ASSOCIATIONS**

- F1:** Each Associations has, among its powers, the obligation and authority to enforce these rules. In addition, it has the right to make its rules more stringent than those appearing in this book. Examples would be: increasing Mandatory Play, from the minimum of 10 or 12 plays (depending on division) to any higher number.
- F2:** An Association may not make rules less strict - that is, it cannot increase maximum weight, abolish Mandatory Play, etc.

**ARTICLE 2: BOUNDARIES**

- F1:** An Association is responsible for the establishment of its own boundaries, with agreement of said boundaries by the NYFCL. However, it shall not infringe upon the territorial rights or boundaries of another chartered Association.
- F2:** Associations must establish boundaries. Boundaries will be set by a defined, readily recognizable format, i.e. town limits, school districts, streets, etc.

**ARTICLE 3: DUAL MEMBERSHIP**

An Association holding a Nittany Youth charter may enter any one of its teams into membership in any other youth football program (i.e. American Youth Football).

## **ARTICLE 4: WAIVERS OF RULES/CHARTER COMMITTEE**

Nittany Youth & Cheer shall have a Board consisting of two voting members from each Association. The Board shall be responsible for reviewing, granting, suspending or revoking the privileges of any association's charter in addition to implementing acceptance conditions of new associations.

- F1:** Waivers regarding players wishing to play outside their Association's boundaries, shall only be granted upon a written application executed and verified by the President of the Association, attesting that the waiver sought is based upon good cause and can be shown to be in the best interest of Nittany Youth players.
- F2:** All waivers expire annually on December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- F3:** Only waivers which, serve in the best interest of Nittany Youth Football will be given consideration.

## **ARTICLE 5: COACHES REQUIREMENTS**

The coaching staff of each team is to be in complete charge of the team whenever it is together whether on the practice or playing field, traveling as a group to or from practice sessions and games, or together for any team function, such as a banquet. The coaching staff is under the direction of the Head Coach all other coaches shall be known as Assistant Coaches. The following applies to all coaches:

- F1:** A Head Coach must be at least 21 years of age. An adult representative (21 years or older) must be present for practices, games and other team functions.
- F2:** Every Assistant Coach must be at least 18 years of age or older.. A football team may have a maximum of six (6) assistant coaches, (1) Team Parent and (1) Administrator.
- F3:** Teams are permitted to carry a Coach-Trainee as an assistant, who must be a minimum of 16 years of age.
- F4:** The Head Coach will determine the assignments of the Assistant Coaches.
- F5:** In the absence of a specialized, trained person affiliated with the team in the medical area (physician, paramedic, specially trained volunteer), one of the coaches must be the holder of a current Red Cross Certificate in Community CPR and First Aid, or the P.R.E.P.A.R.E. Course by the National Center for Sport Safety ([www.sportssafety.org](http://www.sportssafety.org)) or their equivalent.
- F6:** Coaches are to be selected by methods approved by each respective Association.
- F7:** Once approved for coaching, a coach is automatically terminated at the close of each season. To coach the following year, the same Association approval is required. Any violation of the rules committed by a coach during the season, even if a hearing is not held until after the close of the season, is still under the jurisdiction of the sponsoring association.
- F8:** Coaches do not make team or Association policy, rather, they carry it out. However, on the playing and practice fields, the coaching staff is in complete charge and shall not be interfered with except in cases of rules violations and/or any other conduct deemed by higher authority to be contrary to the welfare of youth.
- F9:** The Head Football Coach has final responsibility for his or her actions, those of his or her assistant coaches, players, staff and parents.
- F10:** Each Association shall establish its own rules regarding the placing of coaches with sons, daughters or siblings within its own boundaries.

## **ARTICLE 6: REGISTRATION**

A participant cannot begin practice with a team until he/she has "signed up." To register, the candidate must sign a standard form approved by the League. The sign-up fee, if any, may be collected at this time. All coach trainees and teen demonstrators under the age of 18 must be registered/certified in the same manner as all other minors participating in Nittany Youth Football and Cheer League. All candidates must furnish the following:

### **F1-PARENTAL CONSENT:**

A written statement from either a parent or legal guardian, stating that the child has their permission to participate. The Association may supply a standard form for this.

### **F2-MEDICAL EXAMINATION:**

Each Association is responsible for ensuring that every participant has evidence of a current physical examination from any Licensed State Examiner; (i.e. Medical Doctor, Registered Physician Assistant, Registered Nurse Practitioner, etc.) who has determined the participant is physically fit and without any observable conditions, which would contra-indicate their participation in football. Note: If a regular school medical examination was performed and the results of which are releasable to parents, a copy of such a report may be used in lieu of a new examination. It shall be at the discretion of each Association to determine what constitutes "current".

SPECIAL NOTE: A person with a loss of limb may participate provided that the individual has a signed statement of approval from an examining physician and that the use of the limb is no more dangerous to players than the corresponding human limb, and does not place an opponent at a disadvantage.

### **F3-PROOF OF AGE:**

A copy of the participants birth certificate on file with the state of birth shall be the most recommended form of proof of age. Any other alleged "proof of birth date are to be accepted only upon the willingness of the team administration to have its schedule forfeited should fraudulent application later be determined.

## **ARTICLE 7: FORMATION OF TEAMS AND SQUADS**

Tryouts of any kind within Nittany Youth are prohibited. Tryouts are defined as any means used to ascertain the ability of a participant where this information is used to place a participant on a team, including assessments, evaluations, or any other method used whereas at the end of such evaluation a child would be excluded from participation. Participants may participate in the above scenario at the discretion of each Association provided every child is placed on a team and no one is excluded. Placement of players shall be at the discretion of each Association, in accordance with their policies, provided those policies are not in conflict with the Nittany Youth policies.

Not more than 30 players shall be assigned to a football team at the start of pre-conditioning on August 1 or the later starting date of the association, whichever comes first.

## **ARTICLE 8: MANDATORY CUTS**

Any participant must be cut who:

- F1:** Is found to have signed up as a result of parental pressure or tells team management he/she does not really want to participate.
- F2:** Refuses or cannot furnish the 3 required items-Parental Consent, Medical Examination, and Proof of Age.
- F3:** Attempts to intimidate fellow participants in practice by word and/or physical deed. No refunding of fees shall be required.
- F4:** Is an extreme discipline problem (and then, only with the concurrence of the Association).

## **ARTICLE 9: VOLUNTARY CUTS**

A participant shall be considered to have voluntary or "self-cut" when he/she simply no longer shows up at practices or games of his/ her own free will despite repeated attempts to contact them.

While voluntary cuts are not charged to any team for the purpose of these regulations, a coaching staff may attempt to disguise its cutting pattern by arranging practices in such a way as to discourage participants of lesser ability into quitting on their own. While these practices are not common, they have been known to occur and are considered intentional avoidance of the rules and regulations and are, therefore, punishable as a result of a hearing.

Any team loses 20% or more of its assigned participants prior to certification, shall be subject to a mandatory investigation by the teams respective Association to ascertain the cause for the participants voluntarily leaving the team, and take whatever appropriate action may be warranted. The results of this investigation shall be reported to the League and the League shall have final authority as to whether appropriate actions were taken.

## **ARTICLE 10: CERTIFICATION**

- F1:** Certification is that process whereby the team or association will file with the League of which it is a member, a complete roster of players for the regular season schedule.
- F2:** A certified copy of each roster will be placed in the front of each team book and remain there throughout the season. Team books must be at every practice and game. This is a certified roster in that the Association has accepted the information at a pre-season session with its teams based upon information submitted, and the teams are restricted to these participants for the balance of the season.
- F3:** Certification must be completed prior to the opening game of the regular League schedule. The procedures for accomplishing certification are discussed hereafter. To be certified onto a team a participant shall qualify under the following:
  - A. Eligibility according to residence shall be decided by the League when the candidate resides in an area other than that area authorized for the Association by the League.
  - B. Each Association shall attempt to assign a first-time participant to the lowest age and weight division for which he/she is qualified.
  - C. Once certified for a particular age/weight division, a participant shall not be permitted to recertify to a lower division of play without the written approval of the NYFCL Board.
  - D. Ages shall be verified by birth certificate as specified in Article 6, F3.
  - E. Associations shall require a new picture of a football player at least every two (2) years.

## **ARTICLE 11: RETENTION OF ELIGIBILITY**

Once certified, a participant must meet the following requirements to retain eligibility:

- F1:** Transfer policy in case of change of residence will be decided by the League.
- F2:** Retain parental consent.
- F3:** Maintain sound physical condition. At the start of the season, any player having been declared unfit for play by a physician, or deemed to be of questionable condition for play by their Association, shall be required to provide to their respective association a statement, signed by a physician, clearing them to play. This rule shall exclude a minor game injury that is treated on the field (i.e. non-medical emergencies).

## **ARTICLE 12: DROPS AND ADDS**

**F1:** A team may add participants to its certified roster as long as said roster was certified below the maximum number permitted, or to replace those originally certified and no longer on the team or squad for any valid reason.

## **ARTICLE 13: NO ALL-STARS**

All Star teams or squads are prohibited in Nittany Youth inter-league play. Nittany Youth rosters are valid from August 1 to December 31 of the current year. Any coach or participant found to have competed in any NYFCL inter-league game(s) with All Star participants from different rosters of regular season teams will forfeit future eligibility for all Nittany Youth programs. Participation in events outside of Nittany Youth Football inter-league play shall be exempt from this rule.

## **ARTICLE 14: AWARDS**

**F1:** In compliance with the "team" concept and in view of the ages of Nittany Youth participants, no participant will be singled out as "best lineman," "best offensive back," "most valuable player" etc., for the presentation of a special award. Such adulation should be given to an athlete after his Nittany Youth days, if he/she justly deserves it by their performance at the High School level. Individual awards may be presented, but must be given to all team or squad members.

**F2-SPECIAL NOTE FOR PLAYERS:** Awards for individual performances displayed on the helmets (i.e. stars, hatchets, footballs, ect.) shall be at the discretion of each Association.

## **ARTICLE 15: PRACTICE**

**F1-DEFINITION:** After August 1<sup>st</sup> of each year and as a protection for the participants and to prevent possible bending of the rules, practices are defined as a gathering of players, without minimum number, in the presence of at least one (1) coach, where one or more of the following activities take place:

- A. Chalk talk/skull session
- B. Viewing of fundamentals film
- C. Group conditioning
- D. Individual skills sessions (QB, receiving, blocking, tackling, kicking, etc.)
- E. Group skills sessions
- F. Dummies and other inanimate contact
- G. Play run through without pads (shorts & T-shirt)
- H. Play run through with equipment, but without contact
- I. Intra-squad scrimmages with full pads and equipment

As can be seen, a so-called "party" at a coach's home, where films are shown, or where football teams are talked about, can be deemed a practice session, as can a "party" at a parent's home where one or more coaches are present. Use of a football field is not required to satisfy the definition of a "practice session." Each Association is directed to establish a policy with respect to home videos and/or films of games and the viewing thereof. Nittany Youth strongly recommends Associations discourage "parties/practice sessions" at coaches homes. All practice sessions must include a minimum of 2 coaches in attendance during the entire session.

- F2:** Pre-season practice shall not begin until August 1 (or later). The actual date will be determined in accordance with climate and other factors determined by the Association in establishing a common starting date for all teams within its jurisdiction.
- F3:** All practices must be attended by one person holding a Red Cross Community CPR and First Aid Certificate, or its equivalent, if not by an EMT or volunteer physician (such as a parent of one of the participants).
- F4-BEFORE LABOR DAY:** No team may schedule more than 8 hours of practice per week before Labor Day. A week is defined as seven (7) consecutive calendar days. Not more than 2 hours of practice may be scheduled on any one day.
- F5-AFTER LABOR DAY:** Practices after Labor Day weekend are limited to 4.5 hours per week. A week is defined as seven (7) consecutive calendar days. Practices after Labor Day weekend are not to exceed 1 1/2 hours per day.
- F6-BREAKS:** Break time is not counted against the ten (10) or six (6) hours per week or 2-1/2 or 2 hours of allowed practice time.
- F7-CONTROLLED INTER-SQUAD SCRIMMAGE:** After the first ten (10) hours for conditioning, teams may engage in joint practice sessions with other team(s) in what are called controlled inter-squad scrimmages.
- F8:** Any player added after a team has formed and/or after the season has started, must be subject to the same 10 hours of conditioning as mentioned in F7 of this article.
- F9:** The following exercises and drills are banned from all practices and pre-game warm-ups; leg lifts and bull in the ring. Leg lifts with knees bent are acceptable.

## **ARTICLE 16: CAMPS**

- F1:** No Nittany Youth organization or personnel associated within, shall require or mandate that a Nittany Youth football team, in whole or in part, with or without coach(s) attend a football camp. There shall be no exceptions. However, a Nittany Youth affiliated football team, in whole or in part MAY attend a camp if they so choose, provided the following conditions are met:
- A Coach or other team affiliated personnel does not make it MANDATORY.
  - B. The must require adequate accident insurance for camp participants.

## **ARTICLE 17: IMPORTANT POINT-MEDICAL**

The home team or hosting organization is responsible for providing medical coverage at each game. In the absence of a physician and or ambulance on the site, the minimum safety requirement will be the presence of one individual associated with the home team/host organization who is currently EMT qualified or is currently certified in Red Cross Community First Aid and Safety, the P.R. E. P.A.R.E. Course by the National Center for Sport Safety ([www.sportssafety.org](http://www.sportssafety.org)), or their equivalent.

Work together with your local EMTs to establish an emergency plan that fits your specific area and needs. Your emergency plan should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. Introduce or identify trainer/health care provider to visiting coach;
- B. Home team/host organization review emergency plan with visiting team;
- C. Designated duties for coaching staff and or athletes;
- D. "How to call EMS" next to phone;
- E. Specific directions to your facility for emergency medical service (EMS);
- F. Emergency numbers;
- G. Injury report forms;
- H. Treatment authorization card;

- I. List of administrators that the coach is required to contact.

Practice your emergency plan early in the season, and repeat often throughout the season. A similar plan should be in place for teams traveling to away games.

All teams are required to have a staff member carry the entire team's medical release forms and emergency numbers for all players so in the event of an emergency their parent(s) or guardian must be reached. Having the family physician's number opposite the participant's name is also recommended.

## **ARTICLE 18: CHARGING ADMISSION**

Admission may not be charged to participating players, spirit squads, or coaching staff members of a team playing in any Nittany Youth game, whether it be a regular season game, post-season game, post-season bowl game, League playoff game. Donations may be solicited at the gate.

## **ARTICLE 19: PROTESTS**

**F1:** Only protests involving the eligibility of a player shall be considered by the League.

**F2:** Protests are decided in accordance with the administrative procedures of the League.

**F3:** Teams and Associations have the responsibility to communicate protests as soon as they are known to exist. Lack of prompt notification may result in denial of the protest.

## **ARTICLE 20: MANDATORY BACKGROUND CHECKS**

**F1:** Each Association is responsible for obtaining Act 151 clearances for each prospective coach and any individual who will have contact with participants, i.e. Team Parent, etc. After initial submission to the Association by a prospective coach or affiliated adult records will be kept and updated at the discretion of each Association.

Due to the fact that Nittany Youth has no direct operational control over the selection of volunteers, each Association shall be required to indemnify and hold harmless Nittany Youth against all legal actions based upon allegations arising from a failure to enforce all or part of this regulation. Failure to comply with all or part of this regulation may result in the suspension or revocation of the association charter, the removal of the association and/or its volunteers, ineligibility for participation in play, and as well as significant legal liability.

# **PART III-ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

## **POLICE POWERS/HEARINGS & APPEALS**

All Associations chartered under Nittany Youth may be called upon from time to time to do the following:

- A. Resolve disputes between member organizations and individuals.
- B. Take action to enforce Nittany Youth rules and regulations.
- C. Discipline both adult and juvenile members.

## **INVESTIGATION OF OFFENSES**

Upon notification to any Association of an alleged rules violation involving any of the listed offenses, the Association must investigate the alleged violation and take action when warranted in accordance with the "Minimum Mandated Penalties" section. The investigation may include but is not limited to, requiring a written statement describing the incident, reviewing video footage of the alleged incident, speaking to witnesses, etc.

Upon conclusion of the investigation, should the Association deem there to be just cause to warrant the issuance of a penalty as listed in the "Minimum Mandated Penalties" section, said penalty must be issued in writing detailing the alleged violation, and include statement verifying the Association has investigated the incident and deems it to be a violation of a specific offense, and the penalty to be imposed in accordance with the minimum mandated penalties.

Upon receipt of a notification of rules violation, should the alleged offender wish to appeal the decision of the Association, they must notify their respective Association President in writing of their wish to appeal and present, in person, their case for appeal at the next available NYFCL Board meeting. Presentation should include any item deemed by the alleged offender to be valuable in their defense of the violation (i. e. video footage, presentation of witnesses, etc.). However, presentment of an appeal or obtainment of reversal of the Association decision shall not negate the enforcement of the penalty imposed, it shall serve only to "reset" the penalty of any future violation (i.e. the next violation would only be a first violation, etc.)

At the conclusion of the presentation of the appeal, the NYFCL Board shall discuss, if needed, the alleged violation and determine if the subject Association acted in accordance with the rules as listed herein. Ruling of the NYFCL Board shall be final.

## **MINIMUM MANDATED PENALTIES**

Minimum mandated penalties for specific offenses are required to assure that punishment for the most serious infractions will occur on a uniform basis. Offenses shall be divided into two categories, Major Offenses and Minor Offenses as defined below:

### **F1-MAJOR OFFENSES:**

- B. **ENDANGERMENT OF JUVENILES:** Endangerment of juveniles shall be defined as any reckless act which would endanger a child physically or emotionally. Suspension for one (1) year, to permanent suspension upon repeated offense.
- D. **FIGHTING:** Fighting shall be defined as any violent, tumultuous behavior. Suspension for one (1) year, to permanent suspension upon repeated offense.
- E. **CHEATING:** Cheating shall be defined as any deliberate, intentional infraction of any rule or directive for the specific purpose of a gain. Suspension for one (1) year; permanent suspension upon second offense.
- F. **THREATS:** Threats shall be defined as anything communicated directly or indirectly, whether written or verbal, to a person with intent to cause them fear, harm, terror or inconvenience. Suspension for one (1) year; permanent suspension upon second offense.
- H. **LACK OF COOPERATION/ OBSTRUCTION:** Lack of cooperation shall be defined as any failure to abide by the general rules, regulations, policies or directives of the NYFCL or any game official. Suspension until compliance is achieved.

### **F2 MINOR OFFENSES:**

- A. **RUN-UP SCORE** (as defined in Rule 21 F1 & F2): A finding of "guilty" shall result in Probation at a minimum; Suspension if the conduct is found to have been intentional; and Dismissal in the case of a repetitive pattern (malice).
- B. **TEACHING PROHIBITED OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE TECHNIQUES:** Suspension for one (1) game for the first offense, to permanent suspension upon repeated offense.
- C. **GAMBLING ON GAME OUTCOME:** Suspension for one (1) year.
- D. **VIOLATION OF MANDATORY PLAY RULE:** First violation: Suspension for one game (may be reduced to probation); Second violation: Dismissal if original suspension still in effect, probation revoked and original suspension reinstated.
- E. **FALSIFICATION OF OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATION:** Suspension for one year, to permanent suspension for repeat offense. This would include, but not be limited to, parental consent, medical examination and proof of age.

Upon suspension of any penalty provided herein, an accused shall be placed on probation, among the general conditions of which shall be: (1) that the accused be and remain of good behavior and that he strictly enforce all rules and regulations of Nittany Youth; and (2) if in violation of the Mandatory Play Rule, that the accused prepare and submit to his Association his written plan to supervise implementation of the Mandatory Play Rule (MPR), until such time as an investigation by the Association has been completed and a decision rendered.

In addition, a player denied his required number of plays, will start the next game and receive double the number of mandatory plays in that game. The failure of a convicted coach to comply with this provision will be deemed a second violation.

### **F3-JUVENILE OFFENSES:**

Fighting, intimidation, or disrespect for authority shall be cause for ejection from a game/competition. Any player or participant ejected from any game/competition for cause shall be ineligible for participation in their next game/competition. A second ejection during the same season shall be cause for removal from the team for the balance of that season.

### **F4-TEAM AND ASSOCIATION OFFENSES**

- A. **FAILURE TO KEEP FAITH WITH JUVENILES & PARENTS** is defined as any deliberate practice of a team or association, which placed the health, welfare and safety of juveniles in jeopardy, or exploits or treats them in such a manner that the juvenile becomes a "tool" of the team.

To file this charge, the violation must result from team or association policy, and not be an aberration of one individual. This implies that the practice is carried out by order of, or with the knowledge of, the officership, and no steps are taken to end it.

**MINIMUM PENALTY:** Probation of the Association coupled with permanent suspension of its president and all others who participated in the practice. Upon a second offense, suspension of the Association until all officers are removed.

- B. **FIGHTING/RIOTING/INCITEMENT TO RIOT:** Game related: forfeiture of the game for first offense; forfeiture of the season for second offense within the same season. Scrimmage-related: at the discretion of the Association.

## **PART IV- FLAG FOOTBALL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **ARTICLE 1 : DIVISION OF PLAY**

There are no weight restrictions on players in the flag division. Ages are 5, 6 and 7.

### **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.

**F4:** Mandatory Play Rule: All players will play a minimum of 10 plays. Should any player not obtain their mandatory plays in a game, the coach will be required to play that player their mandatory plays plus any missed plays from the prior game at the next scheduled game. Failure to abide by this will result in a formal complaint to the NYFCL Board.

**F5:** A team will have 30 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 association will determine which ball will be used during its games. Balls will be switched by team during the Game, if necessary.

### **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. 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. Jerseys cannot be worn over flags.
- F. If a player's flag is inadvertently lost, he is ineligible to handle the ball.
- G. 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 long pants may be worn provided said pants have no front or side pockets. Shorts are not allowed.
- 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:** Metal spiked 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. One referee shall be supplied from each team.

**F2:** The league may assign more than two referees for a game.

**F3:** Each game official will carry a handkerchief and drop it whenever an infraction occurs.

**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 CAPTAINS**

Each team will have at least one captain on the field at all times during the game.

**F3-TEAM COACHES:**

Two coaches from each team will be permitted on the field.

**F4-TIME**

There will be:

- A. Two 25-minute halves.
- B. Ten (10) minutes between halves.
- C. The clock shall run continuously for both halves of the game.

**F5-BALL PLACEMENT**

Each half will start with a ball placement.

- A. The 100-yard field placement will be at the 40-yard line.
- B. The 80-yard field placement will be at the 30-yard line. (Although this yard line is not diagrammed, the kickoff line will be marked with an appropriate symbol, usually an "X".)

**F6-PUNTING**

On 4<sup>th</sup> down the offensive team may elect to "punt" the ball. This shall consist of moving the ball 40 yards or halfway to the goal line whichever is less. A change of possession will occur once the ball has been moved.

**F7-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. When the offensive team is within the last zone and has a first down, it will be first down and goal to go.
- F. 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).

#### **F8-DE-FLAGGING**

- A. There shall be no tackling of the ball carrier or passer.
- 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.
- F. Defensive players shall not be penalized for diving while trying to de-flag a player. However, this should not be taught as a de-flagging method.

#### **F9-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.
- K. Defensive players must adhere to the following:
  - a. Defensive must give the center sufficient time to snap the ball and return to a standing position before approaching.
  - b. Defensive players may not line up across from or hit the center.
  - c. Defensive players must line up a minimum of 1 yard off of the line of scrimmage.
- L. Defensive players may not shove the ball carrier out of bounds as a means of ending the play. Defensive players must always go for the flags of the ball carrier.

#### **F10-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. He may run in any direction until the ball is declared dead.

#### **F11-CENTER**

- A. The ball must be snapped and passed to another player by the center.
- B. The Center must snap the ball between his legs.
- C. He must have both feet on the scrimmage line with no part of his body beyond the forward point of the ball.

- D. He may adjust the long part of the ball at right angles to the scrimmage line for one time only.

#### **F12-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.

#### **F13-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.

#### **F14-DEAD BALL**

All balls touching the ground are immediately dead. 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 a 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 before reaching a backfield man.
- G. When the ball hits the ground as a result of a fumble or muffed ball. **THERE ARE NO FUMBLE RECOVERIES IN NYFCL!**
- 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).
- J. There shall be no "mulligans" or "do-overs", etc. If a fumble occurs the ball will be placed at the spot of the fumble not at the original line of scrimmage.

#### **RULE 7: SCORING VALUES**

No score shall 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.

## **RULE 10: SCHEDULES**

**F1:** Maximum number of flag games per season shall be as follows:

Pre-Season	Regular Season	Tournament
0	8	Yes*

\*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 40-second snap 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. 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).
- A. 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 of 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.

**F10-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).

**F11-UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS**

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

**F12-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 either team to control their players and/or fans during a game shall result in a penalty (15-10).

**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.

**RULE 13: RULES MEETING**

One coach from each team shall be required to attend a rules meeting where the interpretation of the rule book will be given. Failure to have a representative attend will result in disciplinary action.