

## Ohio Athletic Committee Youth Flag Football Rules

Revised 10/02/11

### Section 1: Age & Eligibility

- A. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade boys or girls who attend an Ohio School. (7<sup>th</sup> Graders and above are not eligible)
- B. There is No age limit requirement. It is strictly by grade

### Section 2: Divisions

- A. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade combine to form Division I
- B. 4<sup>th</sup> grade = Division II
- C. 5<sup>th</sup> grade = Division III
- D. 6<sup>th</sup> grade = Division IV

### Section 3: Waiver / Release/ Roster

- A. Head Coach/Team Admin must submit a team roster/waiver form for the State Championships by specified deadline. Note: Head Coach/ Team must have copies to bring to event.
- B. Rosters should also include full names of Head Coach, Assistant Coaches along with email address and phone number of Assistant Coaches
- C. All Head Coaches must have in his possession at all times, a signed copy of the waiver and release form for every athlete that will be competing, practicing and traveling with the team. A copy of the waiver can be found in team packet.
- D. A copy of the roster must be given to opposing team

### Section 4: Coaches Responsibility and Conduct

- A. Each team may have 1 Head Coach and up to 4 non-player personnel admitted free of charge.
- B. Coaches must review each player's physical card and be aware of any medical problems a player may have.
- C. All head coaches are responsible for the conduct of their assistant coaches, fans and athletes at all times. Any repeated violations may be cause for individual and/or team expulsion from the championships.
- D. Only Coaches and player personnel may be on the sideline or bench area; coaching must be done from the sideline.
- E. A forfeiture of the game may be demanded if at team cannot field the required number of players (5) within 15 minutes of the scheduled game time.
- F. All head coaches are responsible for the safety and well-being of their players during practice and games.
- G. All players, sideline personnel, coaches, stat keepers and water boys must remain in the bench area when not actively engaged on the field of play.
- H. BOTH offensive and defensive coaches must move to the sidelines, during the snap and offensive execution of the play.

**Section 5: Attire**

- A. All players must have 2 jerseys/shirts of different colors.
- B. Players are required to wear protective mouthpieces at all times during a game.
- C. The belts that hold the flags (not the flags themselves) must be secured to ensure they do not hang appearing to be a flag. If the belt is hanging, flag guarding will be called.
- D. Jerseys must be tucked in at all times. If a jersey is hanging out, flag guarding may be called.
- E. Molded and screw-in cleats are permitted. No metal cleats are allowed.
- F. No jewelry is permitted during the games.
- G. Shorts and pants must not have open pockets.

**Section 6: Roster**

- A. The game is played with five (5) players. However, a minimum of four (4) players must be on the field at all times.
- B. A player may only appear on one roster.
- C. If a player is found playing on a team illegally, the team will forfeit that game.

**Section 7: Equipment****Ball Type**

- A. 2nd/3rd Grade: WILSON – WTF 1523 (BLUE BALL) or equivalent
- B. 4th Grade and Up: WILSON – WTF 1305 (BROWN BALL) or equivalent
- C. If a teams opponent uses a different make of ball they have the right to request the use of their opponents ball

**Section 8: Spectators and Unauthorized Coaches**

- A. A spectator will be defined as any person not being a coach, official or chain worker.
- B. Spectators are strictly forbidden to coach during practice or game.
- C. Team coaches will be officially recognized as those individuals whose names are inscribed on the official team roster.

**Section 9: Games**

- A. Games are played with two **12-minute** halves and a two-minute half-time.

- B. The clock will only stop at the one-minute warning of the second half for an incompletion, extra points, or out-of-bounds play, only if the game score is within an eight point differential. The clock will stop to set the pucks if a first down is obtained.
- C. The offensive team is responsible for collecting both the line of scrimmage puck and the seven yard puck based on the referee's positioning.

#### **Section 10: Possessions**

- A. The referee will flip a coin before the start of the game to determine possession of the ball. The options are to choose offense, defense, or you may defer your choice to the second half.

#### **Section 11: No Run Zones**

- A. "No Run Zones" are designed to avoid short-yardage situations.
- B. "No Run Zones" come into effect only when offensive team is approaching a first down or the end zone. Exception: If the offensive team has already achieved a first down, but has been pushed back into a "No Run Zone", then the "No Run Zone" is no longer in effect.

#### **Section 12: Passing**

- A. Only one forward pass per down. All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- B. QB has a seven (7) second "pass clock." If the pass is not thrown within seven seconds, the play will be ruled dead, with a loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule is no longer in effect.
- C. Shovel passes are legal, but must be beyond the line of scrimmage.
- D. Interceptions cannot be returned.

#### **Section 13: Receiving**

- A. Once the offensive player catches the ball beyond the line of scrimmage, all other offensive players must come to a stop. Downfield screening or blocking is illegal.
- B. All players must start with their flag belts on. If a player starts without his flag belt properly secure with all flags attached, his team will be assessed a 5-yard and loss of down penalty.
- C. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the QB, if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- D. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- E. A receiver is down where his or her flag belt is pulled. Exception: In order to achieve a first down, or a touchdown, the ball carrier's **flag belt and ball**, must cross the plane of the first down line and/or goal line.
- F. If a receiver's flag belt inadvertently falls off without contact from another player, **that player must be ONE HAND touched to be ruled down.**
- G. Receiver must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.

- H. A player may tip the football to a teammate, as long as the initial receiver does not show possession of the ball.

#### **Section 14: Running**

- A. Once the offensive player runs the ball beyond the line of scrimmage, all other offensive players must come to a stop. Downfield screening or blocking is illegal.
- B. The QB cannot run the ball. The QB can only run the ball if he or she has taken a direct hand-off.
- C. Only direct hand-offs behind the line of scrimmage are legal. Anyone behind the line of scrimmage can receive a hand-off. Exception: The ball cannot be handed off between the center's legs.
- D. No laterals or pitches of any kind, anywhere on the field, are allowed.
- E. The player who takes the hand-off can throw the ball, as long as he or she does not pass the line of scrimmage first.
- F. Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- G. Once the ball has been handed off, the seven-second pass rule is no longer in effect.
- H. Defensive players cannot pass the line of scrimmage, during a direct hand-off play, until the ball is handed off.
- I. Spinning is allowed. However, jumping or diving to advance the ball is not allowed.

#### **Section 15: Rushing the Quarterback**

- A. Any number of players may rush the quarterback as long as they are a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage. The rush marker will be designated by the referee, prior to the snap of the ball
- B. If the offense draws any rusher to commit or jump that seven-yard marker, that rusher **CANNOT** rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead.
- C. The rusher must declare their rush angle or path to the QB. If this path is crossed AND contact is made involving the rusher then an offensive penalty will be assessed.
- D. The rusher **CANNOT** run straight into the center. The center has the right away if the rusher does not take an angle to the QB. If contact is made with the center by the rusher who is has not taken an angle to the quarterback a defensive obstruction penalty will be called.
- E. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend the line of scrimmage, as long as he or she is at least one yard from the line of scrimmage.
- F. A rusher must go for the quarterback's flags. The rusher may attempt to block the pass but it is a penalty to make contact with the quarterback's body or arm.

#### **Section 16: Dead Balls**

- A. The ball must be snapped between the center's legs to start a play.

- B. A play is ruled dead when: the ball carrier's flag is pulled; the ball carrier steps out of bounds; any part of the ball carrier's body other than hands touch the ground ; the ball carrier lets the ball hit the ground; or after a touchdown or extra point is scored. There are no fumbles. When the offensive player loses control of the ball it is ruled dead. The offense maintains possession at the spot the ball first touches the ground.
- C. If there is an inadvertent whistle during a play, the offense has the choice of either the result of the play at the point the whistle was blown, or replaying the down.
- D. If there is an inadvertent whistle during a passing play and the ball is in flight, the down is replayed.
- E. Any ball that is fumbled during a down will be dead by rule once it has touched the ground.
- F. A backward pass or fumble may be caught or intercepted by any player inbounds and advanced.
- G. A player may not intentionally throw a backward pass out of bounds to conserve time or to avoid being downed. Penalty- Illegal pass, 5 yards, loss of down and the clock will start on the ready for play.
- H. Once a ball has touched the ground the ball is considered dead.

#### **Section 17: Scoring and Time Situations**

- A. Scoring: Touchdown = 6 points, Extra point (5 yards) = 1 point, Extra point (12 yards) = 2 points, Safety = 2 points.
- B. There is a 30-second huddle clock, which starts once the line of scrimmage is marked.
- C. Each team is allowed one 60-second timeout per half. Timeouts do NOT carry over into the next half.
- D. Referee may stop the clock at own discretion.
- E. The clock will only stop at the one-minute warning of the second half for an incompletion, extra point, if the offense goes out of bounds, or if the score of the game is within an 8-point differential. However, the clock will stop to set the pucks, or if a first down is obtained.
- F. A mercy rule will be declared once a 35 point differential has been obtained. The game will then be officially declared over.

#### **Section 18: Overtime**

- A. If the score is tied at the end of regulation, teams move directly into overtime.
- B. Coin toss determines possession. The team that did not call the opening coin toss will call the overtime coin toss.
- C. The team that wins the coin toss has the choice to take the ball first, or defend first. Each team will start from the 12-yard line. They will have two plays to attempt to score. If a team scores, they may attempt either an extra point or a two-point conversion. Both teams will drive into the same end zone.

- D. The game is over when each team has had possession of the ball an equal amount of times, and one team was able to score more points than their opponents.
- E. If the score is still tied after the first overtime, the team that didn't have the choice in the first overtime will make the call for the beginning of the second overtime. If the score is still tied after the second overtime, the first overtime step will be repeated with teams going for 2-point conversions, instead of extra points, until there is a winner.

### **Section 19: Penalties**

- A. Most penalties are five yards and assessed from the line of scrimmage. Most offensive penalties will result in a loss of down. All defensive penalties will result in an automatic first down.
- B. Defensive penalties are 5 yards and an automatic first down.
- C. Offensive penalties are 5 yards and loss of down from the line of scrimmage. **EXCEPT** for flag guarding, diving and jumping which will be a 5 yard penalty from the spot of infraction.
- D. Penalties on interceptions will be assessed where the interception occurred. Exception: If the game referee judges that a player intentionally or flagrantly commits a penalty then the penalty will be at the point of the foul, no less than the point of interception.
- E. All Personal Fouls and Unsportsmanlike Conduct will result in a 15 yard penalty and loss of down or automatic first down.
- F. Any type of blocking or screening is illegal and will result in a penalty.
- G. Extra attempts: If the offense throws an interception and commits an infraction after the interception, when the opposing team takes offensive possession they will get an additional 5 yards from the line of scrimmage. If a flagrant foul or intentional foul occurs on the extra point play, the penalty will still be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- H. Only head coaches may approach the referee. Judgment calls cannot be questioned.
- I. A protest on a rule interpretation must take place before the next play is started. Tournament Directors arbitrate and have the final say. If a team protests a rule interpretation and is proven wrong, the team will be charged a timeout. If the team doesn't have a timeout then that team will be penalized as a delay of game.
- J. Games will not end on any accepted live ball defensive penalty.
- K. Any offensive penalty in your own end zone will result in a safety (2 points).
- L. A second penalty on an extra point, will equate to the number of points the offensive team was attempting and be awarded.

### **Section 20: Field Set Up**

- A. Teams must choose opposite sides of the field to watch the games.

- B. All possession changes will start at the offensive team's 5-yard line. \*Exception: Interceptions will be spotted at point of interception.
- C. A 5-yard (15 feet) buffer zone is in place during all games. This buffer zone completely surrounds the playing field. This zone assists in maintaining the safety of our players and spectators during game play. Only coaches, players, and league personnel are allowed within this zone during the game. Coaches are asked to enforce this rule.
- D. Each team is responsible for cleaning up the field and sidelines, after the game.
- E. Refer to diagram "OAC Field Set Up" for layout of venue

### **Section 21: Other Rules**

- A. No contact or blocking is allowed.
- B. The offense has three (3) downs to pass midfield and then three (3) downs to score. A turnover on downs will occur if the offense is short of the first down or end zone resulting in an immediate possession change spotting the ball at the opponent's five yard line.
- C. All players are eligible to receive a pass.
- D. No kicking or punting.
- E. All possessions, except interceptions, will start at the five yard line.
- F. Interceptions may NOT be returned.
- G. The quarterback cannot run the ball unless there has been a direct handoff behind the line of scrimmage. The player who rushes the QB must start at least seven yards from the line of scrimmage.

### **Section 22: Ohio Athletic Committee Sportsmanship Policy**

In the effort to increase the quality of this Ohio Athletic Committee event, we would ask that you as a coach/parent/athlete please read and follow our expectations on Sportsmanship.

- I will show respect for self and others at all times.
- I will respect the officials. Have the willingness to accept and abide by the decisions of the officials.
- I have a basic understanding, and appreciate the rules of the contest.
- I will maintain self-control at all times.
- I recognize and appreciate skill in performance of all participants and tournament staff.

Any un-sportsmanlike conduct by a person present at an OAC event may result in a penalty up to and including a one-year ban from any Ohio Athletic Committee event. If the un-sportsman act is by a coach, parent, family member or anyone connected to a particular athlete the ban could also include the athlete. We will have a zero tolerance for un-sportsmanlike behavior. We ask that you hold yourself in the highest standard of sportsmanship. Please set an example for the young men/women whom you coach. Please do not put your participant at risk for disqualification due

to your behavior.

**Ohio Athletic Committee operates under a ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY.**