



**Plainfield Park District**  
**Instructional Youth Flag Football League**  
**Revised 9/2021**

The following are modifications made within the Plainfield Park District Flag Football League. All players must be registered with a signed release form by his/her parent or guardian before being eligible to participate. **The Plainfield Park District reserves the right to modify any rule as deemed necessary.** This is an Instructional League & play may be delayed at any time for instruction and coaching. However, coaches should use discretion concerning frequent stoppages of play.

The most important rule in flag football is that there's **no contact allowed, including tackling, diving, blocking, screening or fumbles.** Instead of physically tackling an opponent to the ground, players wear flags that hang along their sides by a belt. Defenders "tackle" the ball-carrier by removing one of their flags

**A. Game & Length**

1. Schedule: Games/Practices are to be played as scheduled.
2. Cancellations: Should questionable weather develop, call the Field Hotline, **779-252-2715**
  - i. In the case of rain or inclement weather, games will be called at the discretion of Park District Staff. Cancelled practices will not be made up.
3. A "regulation game" is comprised of two 20-minute halves and the clock only stops for timeouts (each team has three per game), injuries and halftime along with the last minute of each half on plays out of bounds, passes dropped or scoring plays. Game can end in a tie & there is no overtime.
4. Every game begins with a coin toss to determine which team will start with the ball.
5. Game balls will be supplied by Park District Staff
6. Teams compete 5 v 5 (or 6 v 6 if discussed and agreed on by coaches)

**B. Uniform, Equipment and Jewelry**

1. Uniform: All players are to wear the jersey provided by the Park Plainfield Park District. Shorts/pants can be worn, and cleats (non-metal) are allowed as well.
2. Jewelry: For the safety of all involved, participants are strongly encouraged not to wear any sort of jewelry, including earrings, rings, necklaces, watches, bracelets, hard hair barrettes or accessories.
3. The site supervisor responsible for all decisions related to illegal equipment
4. Medical bracelets are allowed to be worn during practices and games.
5. Athletes should be wearing a protective mouth guard during practice and games
6. Flags will be provided by Park District staff that will be returned after each practice/game

**C. Playing Field**

1. To accommodate a smaller team size, the field dimensions will be 30 yards wide and 70 yards long with two 10-yard end zones and a midfield line-to-gain. There are 5 yard "no run zones" going into each end zone and on either side of the midfield line-to-gain.



#### D. Rules - Overview

1. The quarterback isn't allowed to run with the ball, unless it was handed off first. They can run behind the line of scrimmage, but they can't gain yardage.
2. All passes must go forward and be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. Laterals and pitches aren't allowed—only direct handoffs are permitted.
4. Center sneak plays aren't allowed.
5. There are no fumbles. Instead, the ball stays in possession of the offense and is spotted where the ball-carrier's feet were when the fumble occurred.
6. The ball is dead when: the ball-carrier's flag is pulled, the ball-carrier steps out of bound, a touchdown or safety is scored, the ball-carrier's knee hits the ground, or the ball-carrier's flag falls off.
7. Players can't obstruct or guard their flags.

#### E. Rules – Scoring

1. Every game starts with a coin toss. The starting team begins on its own 5-yard line and has four downs—essentially four plays—to cross midfield for a first down.
2. If the offense fails to advance after three attempts, they can “punt,” meaning they turn over the ball to the opposing team, which then starts from its own 5-yard line. Or they can go for a first down, but if they fail, the opposing team takes over possession from the spot of the ball.
3. Once midfield is crossed, the offense has four downs to score a touchdown. A touchdown is 6 points and a safety are 2 points (1-point conversion from the 5-yard line; 2-point conversion from the 10-yard line).

#### F. Rules – Running & Receiving & Passing

1. When players run with the ball, their feet can't leave the ground to avoid a defensive player. In other words, players can spin to avoid their opponent, but they can't leap or dive.
2. Only direct handoffs are permitted—there are no laterals or pitches. Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
3. Flag football rules aim to prevent power plays and avoid short-yardage situations, so you'll find no run zones located 5 yards from each end zone and on either side of the midfield. In this designated area, the offensive team must complete a pass play.
4. Lastly, if an offensive player's flag is pulled when they're running with the ball, their feet determine where the ball is spotted, not the flag.
5. All passes must go forward and be received beyond the line of scrimmage. Shovel passes, which are short passes to forward receivers, are allowed, but also must be received beyond the line of scrimmage. Quarterbacks have a seven-second pass clock to get rid of the ball. And if they don't, the play is dead.
6. Additionally, center sneak play—where the quarterback hands off to the center as the first handoff of the play—is not allowed.
7. Interceptions are allowed but look a little different in flag football. They change the possession of the ball at the point of the interception. If an interception occurs, the referee blows the whistle and the play is dead. Interceptions are the only change of possession that don't start on the team's 5-yard line.

## G. Rules – Rushing the Passer

1. Players who rush the passer must stand at least seven yards off the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped, while players who aren't rushing the passer may start on the line of scrimmage. The seven-yard rule no longer applies once the ball is handed off—all defenders are allowed to go behind the line of scrimmage at that point. A sack occurs when a defensive player pulls off the quarterback's flag(s) behind the line of scrimmage. The quarterback, or anyone in possession of the ball, is down when their flag(s) are removed.

## H. Flag Football Positions

### OFFENSE

Typically, teams set up in a formation with these 6 positions:

- **Quarterback**
- **Center**
- **Wide receivers, running backs, or a mix of both**

At the start of a play, the center snaps the football back to the quarterback, who can either hand it off or throw it.

### DEFENSE

Without linemen in the mix, there are really two kinds of flag football defensive positions: rushers and defensive backs. Rushers try to get to the quarterback as quickly as possible, while defensive backs line up to face wide receivers, or even farther back as safeties.

What is a safety in flag football? The safety is an essential defensive position who acts as a catch-all, covering deep throws and any players who get loose. They're responsible for keeping offensive players in front of them and covering players who slip through the cracks.



- I. Sportsmanship:** Good sportsmanship is required. It is expected that all team personnel (coaches, assistant coaches, team attendants, and players) and spectators will conform to sportsmanlike behavior at all times. Violations such as the following will not be tolerated and will result in immediate ejection from the game and premises by Park District staff or officials:
1. Verbal or physical abuse towards umpire, Park District staff, coaches, participants, or spectators.
  2. Foul, profane or obscene language or gestures.
  3. Violation of Coaches' Code of Ethics.
    - i. Players: Should a player be removed from the game, he/she will be suspended a minimum of 1 game (the next scheduled or played game). The player and parents must also meet with the League Manager before he or she is allowed to return to the League.
    - ii. Coaches: Any coach who is removed from a game will receive a minimum (1) game suspension and must meet with the League Manager before being allowed to resume their coaching duties. Any coach who is asked to leave the fields a 2<sup>nd</sup> time will be suspended for the rest of the season.
    - iii. Ejections: Any player, head coach, assistant coach, or spectator that has been ejected from a game must immediately leave the premises or the game will be forfeited. Ejections will result in a minimum 1 game suspension (cannot come to the fields) upon review of the League Manager.
  4. Balanced Playing Time is required for all teams. This is an "Instructional" League and the goal is to provide all players the opportunity to learn the game of baseball. The only way this will be accomplished is by rotating players into different positions and giving each child a chance.
- J. Bench/Sideline**
1. Each team is permitted to have a max of 1 head coach, 3 assistant coaches, and their players on the team bench (no siblings, team parents, etc.). Both the 1 head coach and 3 assistant coaches on the bench must have a completed background check/Volunteer Coach Application.