

# EAST YONKERS SPORTS CLUB



## NFL FLAG FOOTBALL

### **2021 LEAGUE RULES**

(Updated 9/27/21)

## General Rules:

- Teams must field a minimum of five players at all times. If a team has only 4 players, then it is up to the opposing coach to decide on the following:
  - a) Play 4 on 4
  - b) Play 5 on 4
  - c) Accept the win via forfeit
- In the event that a player gets injured and is unable to play, a team can play with as few as four players, anything less will result in the game being stopped and the team that has fewer than four players will be given a loss.
- A maximum of five players are allowed on the field (offense/defense) at the time the ball is snapped, regardless of how many players were in the huddle.
- Teams consist of 8 players – five on the field, with the balance of the players acting as substitutes.
- Each player must play at least 12 plays per game (combination of offense/defense). If this rule is not enforced by the coaching staff, the league office will speak with the head coach. If the issue is not addressed, the head coach will be at risk of a one game suspension. The only exception to this rule is if a player consistently misses practice or consistently fools around during the game at which point the head coach must address the situation to both the parent and league office.
- Players must play in at least 50% of the team's regular season games in order for them to be eligible to participate in any playoff games as well as in the League's Annual Pro Bowl Games. The only exception to this rule is if the player was unable to play in regular season games due to an injury or medical illness ( a medical note must be provided).
- The league will be providing the game ball for each game.
- NEW RULE: The offensive team takes possession of the ball on it's 5-yard line at the start of each half, following a touchdown or an interception in the endzone. The offensive team has four plays to cross midfield. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield before 4<sup>th</sup> down, the offensive team will have the option to either go for it on 4<sup>th</sup> down or punt; if the offensive team chooses to go for it and they do not get the 1<sup>st</sup> down, the ball will be turned over on downs at the point that play was declared dead by the official or the offensive team can elect to punt the ball on 4<sup>th</sup> down which basically means that the opposing team will get possession of the ball from its own 5-yard line.

- In the event that the offensive team crosses midfield, it has **three** additional plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on their own 5-yard line.
- Interceptions are allowed and can be returned. In the event that the interception does not result in a touchdown, the ball will be spotted where the defenders flag was pulled and there will be a change of possession.

### **Ball Sizes**

- Teams in the 8-9 age group will use the blue junior size football provided.
- Teams in the older age groups will use the youth size football provided.

### **Timing of Game:**

- Games are played for 40 minutes of running time with the exception of the final 2 minutes of the game, when the clock stops as it would in the NFL (i.e. incomplete pass, out of bounds, change of possession, extra point conversion, and timeout). Please note that there is no stoppage of play in the 1<sup>st</sup> half.
- Please note that if the offensive team scores a touchdown and time expires at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> half, you must go for the extra point.
- The end of 1<sup>st</sup> half or 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the game cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offensive team declines the penalty.
- Each game will consist of (2) twenty-two minutes halves with a 2-minute half time.
- The winner of the coin toss will determine one of the following: a) whether they would like to have the ball to start the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the game or b) which goal they would like to defend in the first half. The second half will begin with the ball going to the team that started the game on defense, as well as each team defending the opposite end zone.
- Possession changes at the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. The team that was on defense to start the game will start the 2<sup>nd</sup> half on offense going in the opposite direction.

- Forfeit time is generally 15 minutes after the scheduled start time of the game, with the league office making the final decision. If a team has a coach and at least 4 players at the field visible, the game must begin at the scheduled start time.
- During a regular season game, if the score is tied at the end of regulation time, teams will play one overtime period for an additional 5 minutes. The first team to score wins. If no one scores, the game ends in a tie. Playoff games will consist of 5 minute overtime periods until a team scores. During each overtime period the first four minutes will be running time, with the clock stopping in the final minute as it does in the NFL. Each team will be granted one timeout in each overtime period.
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. There will be no delay of game warning granted.
- A 10 second warning may be announced by the official keeping time, but it is not mandatory.
- The official time is held by the referee. The field clock is for reference only. If necessary, the referee will update the field clock as frequently as possible.
- Each team will have three 30-second timeouts per half – unused timeouts cannot be carried over to the next half. Each team will be granted one timeout in the overtime period. Consecutive timeouts by the same team will not be granted and will result in a 5-yard penalty (no loss of down).
- If a coach disputes an interpretation of the rules made by the official and as a result it involves stopping the clock, the team challenging the call will be charged with a timeout if the call made on the field stands (if a team has no timeouts left they will be given a five yard penalty).
- The official keeping time will announce a two-minute warning at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> half and both a four and two-minute warning at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.
- The clock will be stopped for on the field injuries, and for any rule interpretation between an official and coach.
- Officials can stop the game clock at any time they deem necessary.
- An official timeout can only be called by a coach; it will be in effect once it is recognized by an official. After the timeout has been completed, the 30-second play clock will begin once

the official blows his whistle. The official game clock will begin once the ball has been snapped.

- When a team is ahead by 25 or more points with less than five minutes left to the game or ahead by 18 or more points with less than two minutes left to the game, the following rules will be in effect:

- The team that is ahead can only run the ball on offense, except if that team is in a no-run zone.
- The official clock will continue to run with no stoppage of time regardless of who is in possession of the ball.
- Both teams are prohibited from calling time outs.
- If the team that is ahead intercepts the ball on defense, the whistle will be blown and play is dead – interceptions will not be able to be returned.

### Scoring:

- A touchdown is worth 6 points.

- Extra point from the 5-yard line is worth 1 point (must be a pass). Interceptions can be returned by the defensive team on an extra point conversion. If the interception results in a touchdown, the defense will be rewarded one point. Any penalty invoked by the offensive team (post interception) will also result in one point awarded to the defensive team.

- Extra point from the 12-yard line is worth 2 points (offensive team can run or pass). Interceptions can be returned by the defensive team on an extra point conversion. If the interception results in a touchdown, the defense will be rewarded two points. Any penalty invoked by the offensive team (post interception) will also result in two points awarded to the defensive team.

- Once a coach declares whether they are going for a 1-point or 2-point conversion, that decision will be considered final and can only be changed if either team calls a timeout.

- A safety is worth 2 points.

- Once a team is leading by **greater** than 20 points, that team will not be allowed to rush the quarterback until their lead falls to 20 points or less.

- We will start off the season with the **no slaughter rule**, but there will be certain exceptions to the league rules when a team is ahead by certain amount of points in the final minutes of a game (see ruling under the 'timing of the game' section of the attached rules).

### Running:

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball.
- Direct handoffs, tosses, and pitches behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Overhand lateral passes behind the line of scrimmage are not permitted. All pitches and tosses behind the line of scrimmage must be made behind the quarterback and must come directly from the quarterback.
- Each team is limited to one toss/pitch per down and it must come directly from the quarterback.
- Offense may use multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage.

The 'Center Sneak' play is no longer allowed!!!!

- Fake handoffs and tosses are allowed. On any handoff, toss, or pitch, a defensive player is eligible to cross the line of scrimmage once the ball is no longer in the possession of the quarterback. If a quarterback places the ball in a running backs chest and then pulls the ball away all in one motion with no delay, defensive players are not eligible to cross the line of scrimmage.
- There are absolutely no laterals beyond the line of scrimmage. Once the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, the ball cannot be exchanged to another player.
- If the ball is handed off or tossed behind the line of scrimmage, the seven-second clock will reset. Upon possession, the new ball carrier then has seven seconds to either release a pass or cross the line of scrimmage with the ball; the only exception to the '7 second' ruling would be if the ball carrier is making an attempt to pass the original line of scrimmage and is trying to avoid a defender from grabbing his flags (at the official's discretion). After seven seconds has expired, the play will be blown dead and the ball will be spotted where the ball carrier was at the time of the whistle. The whistle will also be blown dead if the ball carrier drops back further than 15 yards from the original line of scrimmage.
- All snaps must be directly to the quarterback. Snaps can either be under center or in shotgun formation. The quarterback is defined as the individual directly behind the center.

A quarterback must gain complete possession of a snap before the ball can be exchanged with any other player on the field.

- “No-running zones” located five yards from the approaching end zone and five yards from the approaching 1<sup>st</sup> down (midfield). These lines will be marked off by a yellow cone. The referee is not required to announce a “no run” zone. The responsibility is on the offensive team to know where the ball is spotted.
- A player who takes a handoff or toss can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage or run with the ball, even if he fakes to throw the ball.
- Once the ball has been handed off or in the process of being tossed, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot excessively dive or jump to avoid a defensive player. The term “excessively” will be a judgment call made by the official.
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- Any penalty or quarterback sack that occurs while an offensive team is in a no run zone will continue play with the “no run zone” ruling, regardless of where the ball is spotted.
- Offensive teams are not permitted to hand off the ball when going for a one point conversion after a touchdown or when in a no run zone. All one-point conversions and possession in a no-run zone must be the result of a forward pass by the quarterback.
- Defensive players have the right of way – an offensive player must move out of the way of a defender. In the event that the defender has position, and a collision occurs between the ball carrier and the defender, a penalty will be called on the ball carrier.
- A defender is allowed to cross the line of scrimmage once the ball is in the process of being tossed or pitched – a defender does not have to wait for the ball carrier to have complete possession of the toss/pitch.

### Receiving:

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback, if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).

- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception. You cannot have one foot out of bounds prior to making the reception.
- All passes must be caught passed the line of scrimmage.
- A receiver may leave his feet to catch a ball.
- An offensive player will only be called for a “pick play” against the pass rusher if the official feels that the pass rusher did not have a direct path to the quarterback as a result of an offensive player. Once a pass rusher’s path has been broken, there will be no impeding the rusher penalty assessed.

### Passing:

- Shovel passes are allowed as long as the pass is forward and passed the line of scrimmage; it cannot be an underhand forward toss.
- The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down. The ball will be spotted at the original line of scrimmage. The play will be whistled dead once the seven seconds expires. The line official is not obligated to count out loud.
- If the ball is handed off or tossed behind the line of scrimmage, the seven-second clock will reset. Upon possession, the new ball carrier then has seven seconds to either release a pass or cross the line of scrimmage with the ball; the only exception to the ‘7 second’ ruling would be if the ball carrier is making an attempt to pass the original line of scrimmage and is trying to avoid a defender from grabbing his flags (at the official’s discretion). After seven seconds has expired, the play will be blown dead and the ball will be spotted where the ball carrier was at the time of the whistle. The whistle will also be blown dead if the ball carrier drops back further than 15 yards from the original line of scrimmage.
- The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play. Snaps may be in shotgun formation or under center.
- Any ball that is caught by a defender behind the line of scrimmage will be deemed an interception as long as the quarterback’s hand was in a forward motion; any toss or pitch



behind the line of scrimmage cannot be possessed by a defender since there are no fumbles.

### Rushing the Quarterback:

- At the time the ball is snapped, all players who anticipate on rushing the quarterback must be a minimum of **ten yards** from the line of scrimmage with the exception of the 7-9 age group, where the rush will be from **seven yards** out.
- Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off, the ten yard/seven yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- A sideline official holding a yard marker will designate seven/ten yards from the line of scrimmage. An offensive team must give the officials ample time to set-up the 7/10 yard rush marker; failure to do so can cause the defensive team from rushing the QB at a distance less than the required amount of yardage.
- No blocking or tackling is allowed. Blocking is defined as an act where an offensive player or group of offensive players prevent a defender or defenders from attempting to grab the ball carriers' flag. The penalty is subject to the discretion of the officials on the field. It is best to tell you players that once the ball carrier passes the line of scrimmage that they should make every attempt not to move.
- The rusher may put his hands up and jump in order to deflect or distract the quarterback but there must be no "unnecessary" contact with the quarterback. Any contact made with the quarterback outside of the act of the defender attempting to grab the quarterback's flag will be deemed roughing the passer. A penalty will not be called if at the officials discretion contact is as a result of the quarterback releasing the ball. Taunting when rushing a quarterback is not permitted, first offense will result in a team warning with any other team offense resulting in a taunting penalty.
- Defenders are not allowed to taunt or make noises in a way to distract or cause the offense from committing a false start or bad snap.

### Dead Ball Play:

- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Play is ruled “dead” when:
  1. Ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
  2. Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
  3. Touchdown or safety is scored.
  4. Ball carrier’s knee hits the ground.
  5. Ball carrier’s flag falls out and a defender makes any contact with the ball carrier.
  6. When the ball hits the ground (i.e. Bad snap or incomplete pass).
  7. Any timeout or penalty
  8. Any change of possession
- There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted as follow:
  - If the ball carrier drops the ball behind the line of scrimmage and the ball lands behind him/her, the ball will be spotted where it first hits the ground. If the ball is dropped in the offensive team’s end-zone, the play will result in a ‘Safety’.
  - If the ball carrier loses the ball behind the line of scrimmage and the ball lands in front of them, the ball will be spotted where the ball carriers feet were at the time the ball was dropped – you can not gain any yardage as a result of losing/fumbling the ball.
  - If the ball carrier loses the ball passed the line of scrimmage, the ball will be spotted where the ball carrier’s feet were at the time the ball was dropped, regardless if the ball landed behind or in front of them – you can not gain any yardage as a result of losing/fumbling the ball.

### **Sportsmanship:**

- If any referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking with contact or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be temporarily stopped and the player will be either be given a warning, a penalty, or ejected from the game depending on the severity of the foul. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.** The player(s) ejected from the game may receive a 1 game suspension (including the postseason) at the discretion of the league office.
- Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players and coaches, teams or spectators). Based on the nature of the trash talking, the referee will either give a warning

or a penalty. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game. Depending on the language and severity of the trash talk, the player or players involved may be given a penalty or ejected without a warning.

- The above unsportsmanlike acts apply to all coaches as well.
- Any violation of the Leagues Code of Conduct Rules can result in an ejection from the game, as well as a 1 game suspension (League Office decision).
- The league office has the right to eject a player or coach from the league for any excessive unsportsmanlike act.
- Parents must also abide by the leagues code of conduct rules. Any parent using offensive or threatening language will be asked to leave the field. Failure to do so can lead to a suspension of the game (at the league official's discretion).

#### **Required Attire:**

- Cleats are recommended, but not required (no metal spikes).
- All players must wear a protective mouthpiece. The only exception in players not being required to wear a mouth piece is in the event that the mask mandates become mandatory once again at which point, it would be left up to each individual player's parent/guardian whether they want their child to wear a mount piece underneath their face covering; if a player chooses not to wear a mouthpiece under their face covering, the East Yonkers Sports Club will not be responsible for any potential injury.
- Official NFL FLAG jerseys must be worn during play and must be tucked in at all time. If a player does not have their jersey, they must wear a color similar to their team uniform.
- Players can only use the NFL issued green and yellow flags; the blue and red flags cannot be used.
- No excessive part of the flag belt can be shown, and flags must be positioned on the left and right side of the player's waist.
- Shorts with pockets are not allowed!!!
- Jeans are not allowed.
- No necklaces, earrings, or caps of any sort can be worn.

## **Penalties:**

All penalties will be called by the referee.

### **Defensive Penalties:**

- Offsides - 5 yards and automatic first down.
- Pass Interference – Spot of Foul and automatic first down.
- Illegal contact (holding, blocking, etc.) - 5 yards from the spot of the foul and automatic first down. Holding will be called when a defender holds on to a player's shorts, shirt or flag belt – a quick release should not result in a holding penalty, but will be at the official's discretion.
- Illegal flag pull (before receiver has control of the ball) – If a flag is pulled before the receiver has possession, the referee will be instructed to let the play continue, and the ball carrier will be ruled down only after being contacted by a defender.
- Illegal rushing (rushing from inside the 7/10 yard marker) - 5 yards and automatic first down.
- Roughing the Passer – 10 yards and automatic first down.
- Any unsportsmanlike act – 10 yards and automatic first down.

### **Offensive Penalties:**

- Illegal motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.) - 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down. Only on a false start will play be whistled dead immediately.
- Offsides (player lined up passed the line of scrimmage) – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down. The official shall not inform the player(s) prior to the start of play that they are lined up pass the line of scrimmage.
- Illegal forward pass (pass thrown from beyond line of scrimmage) - 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.

- Illegal handoff or pitch - 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.
- Illegal snap - 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.
- Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender) - 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.
- Flag guarding - 10 yards (from spot of the foul) and loss of down. Flag guarding includes when a ball carrier stiff arms a defender, prevents a defender from attempting to grab their flag(s), and any sort of contact that the ball carrier makes with his flags and/or flag belt during the course of play. It will be at the official's discretion if they feel that a ball carrier prevented a defender from grabbing their flag. If a ball carrier is in an open field and, in the opinion of the official, will not be caught by any defender, contacting his/her flag belt may not result in a penalty.
- Delay of game - Clock stops, 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down (no warning will be given to any of the age groups).
- Any unsportsmanlike act – 10 yards and loss of down.

### **Attire Penalties:**

- Prior to the snap of the ball game officials will attempt to notify players and a coach when a player's jersey is not properly tucked, or a flag is missing prior to the snap of the ball.
- Offensive players will not be charged with a penalty, but at the officials discretion he can whistle the play dead if he feels that it has prevented a defensive player from having an adequate chance at pulling the ball carriers flag – this is assuming that the player did not fix their uniform or flag belt prior to the ball being snapped.
- Defensive players will not be charged with a penalty, but if that defender intercepts the ball, play will be whistled dead at the point that the official feels it interferes with their flag from being pulled.
- No penalty will be called if the jersey comes out as a result of an offensive/defensive play. If the jersey comes out as a result of the normal course of play and the official feels in his judgment that it is avoiding a defensive player from grabbing the flag, the play may be whistled dead at that point. Play will also be whistled dead if the defender is holding on to the excessive flag slack of the ball carrier. The excess slack of the flag belt must be tucked

into each player's shorts/pants at all times. We recommend that you customize a flag belt for each player on your team by cutting off the extra slack and placing their names on the flag belt.

- Any illegal flag or foul play with a player's flag, flag belt or jersey will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty. This infraction is assuming there was intent which is only to be decided by the official and this penalty will be acknowledged as soon as the official witnesses the foul play.
- Prior to the start of any game, the officials will be checking players for mouthpieces. If at any point during a game a player does not have their mouthpiece in their mouth, it will result in a 5-yard penalty (no loss of down) and the player will need to sit out at least one down and not return into the game until they have a mouthpiece.
- During the Covid-19 precaution period, any player or coach seen without a face covering will be given an unsportsmanlike penalty of 10 yards. The first two team penalties will result in a 10 yard penalty; any team penalty in excess of two infractions will also result in either an automatic first down or loss of down.

### **Other Penalties:**

- Any play which includes an offensive and defensive penalty will result in offsetting penalties and a redo of the down.
- When there is more than one penalty against the same team, the more severe penalty will be given. The only time that multiple penalties will be given is when there is an unsportsmanlike penalty given.
- When an official blows their whistle **inadvertently** the team in possession may elect to accept the result of the play up to the whistle or replay the down.
- Any team that calls a 4<sup>th</sup> timeout will be given a 5-yard penalty and loss of down or automatic first down will also be granted depending on the team that called the illegal timeout.
- Any injury that takes place in the final two minutes of the game that results in a stoppage of play will result in a charged timeout to that particular team. If the team has no timeouts left, depending on the game situation the clock will be stopped and ten seconds can either be added or removed from the game clock.

- Any penalty that occurs by the offensive team when going for a one or two point conversion will result in the ball being turned over on possession.
- Coaches on the field either (defense or offense) when a timeout is not called will result in a 5 yard penalty – warnings will first be issued.
- Players and coaches are not allowed within ten yards of either end zone, one warning will be given by the official before a five yard penalty is given (no loss of down or automatic first down will be granted).
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- Only the team captain/coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players/coaches should avoid questioning judgment calls.
- Either half cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines the penalty.
- Handing off the ball (regardless of the ball is then passed) in a no-run zone or during a 1 point conversion will result in a 5 yard penalty and loss of down and the team will continue to remain in a no-run zone situation.
- Failure to hand in a complete and accurate stat card may result in that team losing all or some of their timeouts in their next scheduled played game.
- Failure of any coaching staff to play their players a minimum of 12 plays in any game may result in any of the following: loss of time outs in their next played game, suspension of the coach and/or that player being awarded a minimum of 24 plays in the team's next played game.
- Any player or coach who intentionally throws a football away from the game official or kicks or throws any of the field equipment will be given an unsportsmanlike penalty with a possible ejection. If this action causes a delay in the game clock, time may be stopped and resumed once the ball is snapped.
- Any excessive celebration of a touchdown or extra point conversion will result in an opposing team starting with the ball on their own 15-yard line for their next offensive possession. Excessive celebration will be determined by the game official.
- Any team that calls consecutive timeouts will be charged with a 5-yard penalty (no loss of down or automatic first down) and the clock will continue to run.

- Any player who delays the delivery of the ball back to the official in a way to allow additional time to expire will be given a five yard penalty and the game clock will be stopped.