

Field

*The playing field is 100 yards long and 40 yards wide. (End Zones constitute 20 yards of the playing field.) There are lines painted every 20 yards. There are also hash marks painted at five and ten yards from each goal line.

Participation

*Each team will field eight players. If a team does not have enough players, teams may share players or decide on an “equal strength” number to play at.

*ALL players must be assigned to “1st” Team Offense or “1st” Team Defense. Players should not be on the sideline for two consecutive offensive/defensive possessions. The League recommends that all participants get the opportunity to play offense and defense at least once during the year. The league also recommends that coaches make every effort to have one offensive “play” for each child on the team and that play be called at least once during the year.

Equipment

*Tennis shoes or plastic/rubber cleats may be worn. Metal cleats are prohibited.

*No jewelry may be worn. This includes earrings, watches, bracelets, necklaces, etc... (We reserve the right to ban anything that might hurt other players.) A player cannot play with a cast of any kind.

*JCUMC reversible shirts must be worn for all games. If a player does not have a game shirt, then they cannot participate in the game, unless they have been pre-approved to do so by the JCUMC league office. All shirts must be tucked in at all times.

*It is the responsibility of each player to obtain their own mouth piece. All players are required to wear a mouth piece.

Game

*The game will consist of two 25-minute halves.

*The clock will be a running clock. The clock will be stopped at all dead ball situations during the last two minutes of each half. (It is the referees discretion to stop the clock for an injury. In the case that an injury occurs in the last two minutes of the half, the injured player must be replaced for one play.)

*There is a five-minute half time break.

*Each team is allotted two timeouts per half. A timeout cannot be carried over to the second half. Timeouts will be 1 minute in length. The clock will be stopped during called timeouts in the “running clock” format.

*The referees will meet with team captains prior to the start of the game. The referee will designate one team to be heads and the other tails. The referee will then flip the coin and award the “call” to the team whose side is up. The referee will then ask the team captain what side he is calling and then flip the coin. The team that wins the coin toss should decide if they want to make a decision as to whether they will play offense or defense

first. If a team chooses to play offense first, then they will automatically start out on defense for the beginning of the 2nd half. The non-designated team for each half will be able to choose which direction they want to face if they wish to.

*The offensive team will begin on their own 10-yard line. There will be no kickoffs in the league.

*One coach per team is allowed on the field to help keep the game moving. On offense, the coach may be in the huddle. Once the huddle is broken, the coach may only stand behind the play and may not interfere with the play. Once a play has started, coaches must stand back and cannot touch a player or interfere in any way with a play. (Coaches may help in positioning their players before the snap, as long as it does it is within the 45 second time constraint. If they take too long, they may be called for a delay of game penalty.)

Offense

Play Clock-A team is allowed up to 45 seconds to execute a play. The play clock will start when the referee places the ball and puts the ball in play. Depending on circumstances, referees may restart the play clock for a particular play.

First Downs-A team may gain a first down by crossing the next yard line. Once a team gains a first down by passing a yard line, they cannot gain another first down by crossing the same first down line in the same drive. (Example: First down, then penalty pushes back behind first down line that was previously gained)

Formations-Any formations is allowed; however there must always be at least three offensive players on the line of scrimmage. Any player at any position is an eligible receiver. In addition, there is no limit as to how many players can be in lateral motion at the same time.

No-Huddle Offenses-They are allowed, but the offensive team cannot substitute players from the sidelines when running in this mode.

Substitutions-Offensive players need to be substituted either before or during the “huddle”. If a team breaks the huddle with more than eight players, then a penalty will be called for illegal participation. If a team breaks the huddle with less than eight players, a penalty will not be called, but they must call a timeout to get the player in the game or they may continue the play with seven players to save the time-out. This rule keeps teams/players from sneaking a player step in bounds from the sideline in order to deceive the defense.

Snapping the Ball-Snaps must be made by a center to quarterback. Shotgun snaps are allowed. The ball must travel between the snapper’s legs in some form or fashion to be legal. It is the responsibility of the referee to ensure that offensive teams do not take advantage of defensive teams by quick-snapping.

Forward Passes-A team may only throw one forward pass per play. Back passes, or laterals, can be thrown at any time. (Once a player has crossed the line of scrimmage, he cannot attempt to go back behind the line of scrimmage at any point during the play to execute a forward pass. In other words, once an offensive player goes across the line of scrimmage, then the play is bound to be a running play. It cannot be a passing play at that point.

Flag Guarding-Any player with possession of the ball may not guard his flags from would be defenders. This includes guarding, spinning, or slapping at or stiff-arming would be defenders.

Fumbles-There is no such thing as a fumble in flag football. Once the ball hits the ground, it is dead. Passes or laterals can be picked off, but there can be no fumbles.

Offensive Blocking-All blocks must be screen blocks. The blocker may never initiate contact. The blocker may use his hands, but will not be allowed to move the defender out of the way, grab the defender in any way, or put his hands above the defender's neckline. Players may not link hands at any time during the play. Ball carriers must go around the defender, not over or through the defender.

Defense

Making a Tackle—The play will be considered over when the runner's flag belt has been removed by a defender. Defenders should remove the runner's flag belt and drop it on the ground. In the case that a runner's flag belt falls off on their own, then defenders only have to touch the runner with one hand to constitute a tackle. Runners can be considered down if they touch the ground with their knee or bottom; however, the play should not be blown down if a player touches the ground with his hand to regain his balance.

Formations-Any formation is allowed.

Line of Scrimmage-There is a two yard restraining line in effect. Markers will be placed approximately two yards from the ball. The defensive team must respect the restraining zone before the snap and possibly during the play if you play in a league where rushers are limited. (2nd/3rd & 4th/5th) A defensive player may never line up directly in front of the center.

Defensive Contact- Defensive players must attempt to go around the offensive player and his attempted block. Defensive players may not use their hands to grab offensive players and push them out of the way nor will they be allowed to hold the offensive player in any way. Players must attempt to grab for the runner's flag belt and not clothing. Referees will pay close attention to deem whether the players are attempting to grab flags or clothing. We will penalize for intentional grabbing of clothing. Players cannot push other players out of bounds.

Blitzing- Defined as any time a defensive player crosses into and through the 2-yard restraining zone on the snap of the ball. (This does not pertain to a defender who charges into the backfield once a handoff is made. Defenders who are not blitzers can not go into the restraining zone or backfield until a handoff is made. Note the rules for blitzing for each league below:

2nd/3rd Grade-Only two players may blitz.

4th/5th Grade-Only two players may blitz.

6th/7th Grade-No limit as to how many players may blitz.

Only the defenders that are blitzing may cross the two yard restraining zone until the ball crosses the line of scrimmage. For example, if a quarterback goes back and is scrambling behind the line of scrimmage, only blitzing players are allowed to pursue the runner behind the line of scrimmage. The other defenders must remain on the defensive side of the line of scrimmage; however, all defensive players may attack once the ball is handed off. This does not apply to the 6th/7th grade league as they are able to blitz as many players as they want to.

Kicking/Punting

Kicking Off- We will not use kick-offs in the league. Teams receiving the ball will start on their own 10-yard line. This means that a team only has to go ten yards for their “first” first down.

Punts-There will be no actual punting of the ball. If a team chooses to punt, the ball will automatically be carried past one 20 yard line and then placed on the second 20 yard line from the previous spot of the ball. If a team is inside the opponents 40-yard line and chooses to punt, then the ball will go to the ten yard line. If a team is inside the opponents 20-yard line and chooses to punt, then the ball will go to the five yard line.

Scoring

*Teams will receive six points for scoring a touchdown.

*There are two levels of extra point conversions. A team will receive one point for converting from 5 yards out, while a team will receive two points for converting from 10 yards out. Extra point tries can not be returned by the defense.

*A safety can be gained by the defense by making a tackle in the opponent’s end zone or if an offensive player runs out of his own end zone. In addition, the defensive team would also receive the ball on the 40-yard line following a safety. A safety can also be gained if the offensive team commits a penalty in their own end zone. A safety results in 2 points plus the ball for the defensive team.

*There will be a 24 point blowout rule in effect for all games. If a team gets up by 24 points or more, the team that is trailing would continue to be the offensive team until the difference is less than 24 points. For this reason, the officials will keep the score on the field.

Special Rules

If an offensive player breaks away and is running for a touchdown, the penalty is an automatic touchdown plus a player ejection for the player that attempted the illegal tackle during the break-away.

Two personal fouls against one player during a game will result in an ejection for the current game plus an ejection for the next scheduled game.

Penalties

5-yard infractions

- *Illegal Substitution, Illegal Formation, Delay of Game, Illegal Procedure, Illegal Participation, Off-sides, Illegal Blitz

10-yard infractions

- *Pass Interference
- *Illegal Contact (Spot Foul)
- *Illegal Tackle (Spot Foul)
- *Coach Interference
- *Illegal Forward Pass (from spot)

15-yard infractions

- *Personal Foul
- *Unsportsmanlike Conduct
- *Flag Belt tied (from line of scrimmage)
- *Flag-Guarding plus loss of down (spot foul)

Automatic First Down Infractions(Against Defense For Offense)

- *Pass Interference
- *Personal Foul (Taunting, Language, etc...)
- *Illegal Tackle

Loss of Down Infractions (Against Offense For Defense)

- *Illegal forward pass
- *flag belt tied
- *flag guarding