

**RYA Flag Rules**  
Spring 2019

**Attire**

- Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections must be made. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece; there are no exceptions.
- Players must have the flag belt unobstructed by attire.
  - ✚ *Coaches will receive the warning for this prior to the start of the game.*
- A Player who is on the field without mouthpiece will receive a 10 yard penalty.
- Official league jerseys must be worn during play. Players who forgets their jersey must have their alternate uniform approved by the head coach of the opposing team or they will not be allowed to participate.

**Pre-Game**

- Each sideline ref will introduce themselves to the respective coach and the team and conduct an equipment check of proper flag placement and attire (to include mouthpiece).
- The head ref will flip a coin for the visiting team to call heads or tails and decide if they would like to start on offense or defense.

**The Basics**

- All games will be played 7 on 7.
  - ✚ *If one team does not have enough kids, the opposing coach is not required to play less than 7 players.*
- Games are two 20 minute halves. 1<sup>st</sup> half is a 20 minute running clock. 2<sup>nd</sup> half, the clock stops in the last 2 minutes of the game. The referee will stop the clock and announce the 2 minute warning.
- First possession is determined by a coin toss.
- **There are no kickoffs.**
- **No blocking or tackling is allowed.** (Players are allowed to be used as a pick as long as they are standing still.)
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has 3 plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has 3 plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions and Slaughter Rule situations, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- Interceptions may be returned.
- Teams change sides after the first 20 minutes
- Only 1 coach can be on the field during play for the 5-8 and 9-11 division. NO coaches are allowed on the field for the other age groups.
- No flag guarding. A runner shall not flag guard by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opportunity for an opponent to pull or remove the flag belt. A player may use a spin move, however; must keep their arms away from their flag to avoid flag guarding.

**Player Participation**

The player participation policy is that each player shall start and play the entire game, either on offense or defense, except in case of an injury or sickness. The purpose of this rule is to allow every participant to play the entire game.

- *At the change of any possession, all players on the sideline must enter the game.*

*Full compliance with the participation rule is mandatory. Coaches found guilty by the Rules Committee for not complying with this policy will be disciplined. Specific sanctions will start with a warning, and may include, forfeiture of games, suspension of coaches, exclusion from League post season competition, and expulsion from the League by the Board. Complaints should be filed in writing through the commissioner of flag.*

**Timing/Overtime**

- If the score is tied at the end of the regulated time, teams move directly into overtime. If the team that wins the toss scores first, the opposing teams get an opportunity to match the score. If the opposing team fails to do so, they lose. If the opposing team scores, the cycle is repeated.
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball (5-8 has 40sec). Teams will receive 1 warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
- Each team has one 60-second and one 30-second time-out per half.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- Final 2 minutes - during the final 2 minutes of regulation time, the clock will stop on incomplete passes, after all scoring plays, turnovers, turnover on downs, a ball carrier getting out of bounds, or a penalty flag.
- Overtime – There is no longer a game clock, just a play clock. There will be a coin flip to determine who will have the ball first. Teams will each have 1 possession and the ball spotted on the 12 yard line. They will have 3 downs to score. After a score they may elect to go for 1 or 2 points for the Point after attempt.
- Each team will be given 1 full timeout in the overtime period.
- **This season there will be no ties. We will play until a winner is decided.**

- **After 3rd Overtime, the scoring team MUST go for 2 points.**
- **Starting after the 2<sup>nd</sup> Overtime the ball will be moved up from the 12 yard line to the 5 yard line and each team will be given one play to score. The 5-8 Division will have 2 plays?**

### Scoring

- Touchdowns: 6 points
- Extra Points: 1 point (played from the 5-yard line) or 2 points (played from the 12-yard line run or pass)
- If the ball is intercepted on a 1 Point extra point play, the ball is dead.
- **If the ball is intercepted on a 2 Point Extra point play, the ball can be intercepted and returned to the opposing end zone for 2 points!**
- Safety: 2 points and change of possession

### Running

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball.
- Once a lateral leaves the quarterback's hands anyone on the opposing team may cross the line of scrimmage.
- Offense may use multiple handoffs/laterals behind the line of scrimmage only.
- "No running zones" located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, all other offensive players must stop moving. If they impede the defense or run with the ball carrier, it is considered blocking and a penalty will be enforced.
- Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's waist/hips are the moment the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind are allowed beyond the line of scrimmage.
- If the ball carrier's flag falls out without being pulled by a defender, than the defense only needs to touch the ball carrier with one hand to end the play.

### Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- As in the NFL, only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- After a receiver catches a pass beyond the line of scrimmage, all other offensive players must stop moving. If they impede the defense or run with the ball carrier, it is considered blocking and a penalty will be enforced.

### Passing

- Shovels passes are allowed.
- The quarterback has a 7 second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the 7 seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off or passed, the 7 second rule is no longer in effect. Ball goes back to the line of scrimmage.
- Interceptions may be returned.
- No lateral passes/pitches beyond the line of scrimmage.

### Dead Balls

- The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side (except for 5-8 division) to start play.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball. **(Only for a player that is playing both ways. Not for a player that was recently on the sideline.)**
- Play is "dead" when:
  - The ball carrier's flag is pulled
  - The ball carrier steps out of bounds
  - A touchdown or safety is scored
  - The ball carrier's knee hits the ground
- There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground. The only exception is for the 5-8 division games during the snap of the ball. Snaps that hit the ground are live and play will continue. Only the quarterback is allowed to pick up the ball.

### Rushing the Quarterback

- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. 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 7-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.

## Sportsmanship/Roughing

- If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game and a 15 yard penalty enforced. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
- Trash talking and “Show- Boating” and taunting is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators.) If trash talking, “Show- Boating” or taunting occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game and a 15 yard penalty will be enforced. Coaches, parents, spectators who engage in unsportsmanlike behavior risk forfeit of the game and their actions may be reviewed by Reston Flag officials.

## Slaughter Rule

If at any point of the game, one team holds a 25 point (cap 32 points) advantage over another team, the opposing team will have possession of the ball spotted on the 49 yard line until they score. **The “No Run Zone” will be eliminated until they score.** No team shall win a game by more than 24 points. The team that trails by 24 points or greater will continue to have possession until they have closed the point gap to 24 points or less. Interceptions by the defense results in a dead ball play.

## Penalties

All penalties will be called by the referee.

## Defense

- **Offsides** - 5 yards and repeat of down
- **Interference** - 10 yards and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down
- **Illegal contact** (holding, blocking, etc.) - when ball is in the air, the defender cannot go through the receiver to get the ball. - 10 yards and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down
- **Illegal Flag Pull** (before receiver has ball) - 10 yards and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down
- **Illegal Rushing** – (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker) - 10 yards and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down
- **Too Many Players on Field** – 5 Yards and repeat down
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – 15 yards and automatic 1<sup>st</sup> down

## Offense

- **Illegal motion** (more than 1 person moving, false start, etc.) - 5 yards and repeat the down. Play is blown dead when penalty is called.
- **Illegal forward pass** (pass thrown beyond line of scrimmage)- 5 yards and loss of down
- **Offensive pass interference** (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender) - 10 yards and loss of down
- **Flag guarding** - 10 yards (from the spot of the foul) and loss of down
- **Charging** – 10 yards and loss of down
- **Jumping** – 10 yards (from the spot of the foul) and loss of down
- **Delay of game** - Clock stops, loss of 5 yards. Defense may not decline this penalty.
- **Too Many Players on Field** – 5 Yards and repeat down
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – 15 yards and loss of down
- **No Run Zone Penalty** – 5 yards and loss of down - If a team is within 5 yards of mid-field or the goal line, they must run a pass play. The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage. (No screens) The ref will let you know when you are in the “No Run”, but if it looks close, it is also the coach’s responsibility to ask the ref for a measurement.

## No Run Zone

- If the offense is in the “No Run” zone and receives a penalty that takes them out of the “No Run” zone, they are still in a pass only situation.
- The “No Run” zone has been eliminated from the 5-8 division. They are allowed to run or pass from any spot on the field.
- The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.

## Offense and Defense

- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.