



ROGUE VALLEY FAMILY YMCA YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

This league was designed for the benefit of the player, the “intent of the rule” shall carry stronger weight than the “letter of the law” in all decisions rendered by the Officials and the Sports Director.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this league is to be instructional; all decisions will be made from the standpoint of asking if one team gained an advantage because of breaking a rule or fouling. If no advantage is gained and if safety is not an issue, then play will continue without a whistle. In hopes of correcting any issues, Officials and coaches are encouraged to talk with any rule violators about their fouls.

Examples:

1. Not calling offsides if a player is confused and or unaware that they are over the line. There will be no loss of yardage and they will repeat the down.
2. If a skill-challenged quarterback immediately moves forward instead of taking the required 5 yards back or starting 5 yards back in the shotgun position, play could be stopped to explain the rule to the quarterback and then the down would be repeated. Our goal is to help all players understand the rules. However, if the quarterback moved immediately forward because of a superior defense, it should be called.

When an issue arises that is not covered by the rules listed below, it will be governed in accordance with the National Federation of High School Associations rules.

THE GAME

- The game will be held on a field that is approximately 40 yards by 80 yards and end zones being 10 yards.
- The first downs are achieved by crossing the zone line. The field will be made up of four zone lines that are 20 yards apart.
- Teams are composed of 8 to 14 players; during play, 8 players per team are on the field. Other players must be 5 yards away from the sideline to allow players and officials to run out of bounds safely without the risk of running into another person.
- The game is played in four 10-minute quarters. (See Time section).
- EVERY PLAYER ON THE TEAM MUST PLAY AT LEAST HALF OF EACH GAME, unless sitting out for disciplinary reasons. Coaches must notify the Sports Director if sitting a player out.
- **Ball Size:**

1 st and 2 nd grade	Pee Wee
3 rd and 4 th grade	Junior
5 th and 6 th grade	Intermediate / Youth size

TIME

- A game shall consist of 4 quarters of 10 minutes each quarter.
- There will be no overtime periods.
- Each team will have 3 time-outs in each half. Each time-out will consist of one minute.
- There will be a one-minute period between quarters and a five minute period at half time.

- The clock will run continuously except for time-outs, penalties, after each touchdown, unusual delays, and referee time-outs.
- A referee may call a time-out whenever deemed necessary. Such time-outs will not be charged to either team.

Examples:

1. A player who seems sick or injured.
2. A player in need of equipment repair, such as getting flags on correctly, tying shoes, getting mouth guard, etc.
3. A referee feels the need to gain control over the game.

SCORING

- No score will be tracked for these games (i.e. team standings, season wins vs. losses, etc). Although, a scoreboard may be used during games.
Exception: Score will be tracked for tournaments.
- Touchdowns would count as 6 points. One extra point could be scored by running or passing the ball from the three-yard line.
- If a "safety" occurs, the offensive team would lose that down but keep possession. The next down is played from the 20-yard line (Note: the move to the 20-yard line does not count as a first down). If playing a tournament, the defensive team would be awarded 2 points. The offensive team may award the defense with a safety and move to the 20 yard line with a loss of down, but only if they are within 5 yards of the goal line.

CLOTHING

- Mouth guards are required at both practices and games.
- Players must wear pants or shorts without any belt(s), belt loop(s), pockets, or exposed drawstrings. The pants or shorts must be a different color than the flags.
- Gloves may be worn by players as long as they consist of a soft, pliable, and nonabrasive material.
- Headwear containing any hard, unyielding, or stiff material, including billed hats, is not allowed.
- Players are not allowed to wear pads or helmets.
- All jewelry should be taken off.
- Metal or spiked football cleats are not allowed. Players may wear ½ inch molded cleats or an athletic shoe.

SUBSTITUTIONS / PLAYING TIME

- Each team member will play at least two full quarters of each game and equal playing time is required.
- Substitutions must take place during dead ball situations and shall be acknowledged by the referee. There will be no "free" substitutions.
- Although not required, coaches are encouraged to make main substitutions at the half-way point of each quarter.

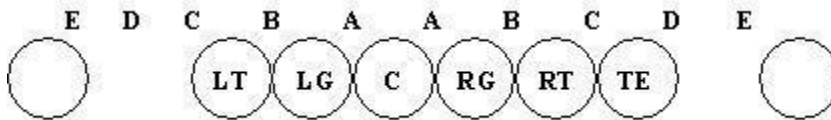
GENERAL RULES

- Every player is required to wear a mouth guard for games and practices.
- Players must have their shirts tucked into their pants and have flags properly displayed with flags positioned on each side and one centered in the back.

- Flags may not be wrapped around a belt loop or belt.
- Every player on the field must wear a flag.
- All blocking used in this league will be brush blocking, for offense and defense. The brush block is from a standing position using the chest area. Primary contact is made by the chest and not by the hands, arms, or shoulders. During the brush block, the elbows must be kept against the body and not extended. The hands must be kept on the jersey and chest. If the brush block is not being done correctly, the player will be given a warning. If improper form continues, the player will be called for unnecessary roughness.
- If a ball carrier's flag falls off without being pulled by the defense, the officials shall announce "one hand touch". The defense will then need to tag the ball carrier with one hand in order to "tackle" the ball carrier.

OFFENSIVE RULES

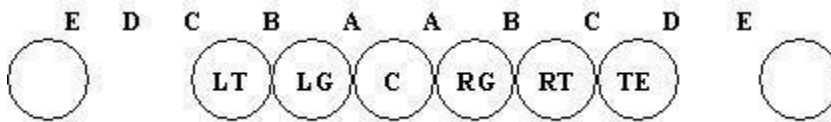
- All offensive players must be set for at least one second prior to the center snap.
- The center must snap the ball to the quarter back. If the ball is snapped to another player, the ball will be dead at that point, and it would be a repeat of down.
- A player is not allowed to "stiff arm" a defending player to avoid having their flag pulled.
- Running between the guards (the A gap, see diagram below) during a play is illegal. The only exceptions are starting out five yards from the center (in shotgun position), when after the QB hikes the ball, they move back five yards before moving forward, and if a play is clearly broken.



- A player may not deliberately drive or run into an opponent, or lower their head and shoulders, causing any contact (unnecessary roughness).
- Players shall not hurdle, take off with both feet, dive headfirst towards a zone line, goal, or a defense player(s) who is in front or around players.
- Blockers may not leave their feet to block. **BLOCKING BELOW THE WAIST IS ILLEGAL!**
- The ball carrier is only allowed one spin. After the first spin, the ball carrier must reestablish control with their feet and take two or more steps before another spin takes place. The ball is dead where the second spin has taken place if they have not first reestablished themselves.
- No more than three players may be in the backfield. This includes the QB.
- All offensive players are eligible to receive a forward pass.
- All punts must be declared before the ball is snapped. No player (offensive or defensive) may move until the ball is kicked no rushing the punter. The punter has five seconds to kick the ball.
- Kickoffs and punts can be picked up after being touched but cannot be recovered by the defensive team.
- Avoidance: once a defensive player has established position on the field, the ball carrier must make valid attempt to avoid direct contact.
- Guarding of the flag belts with any part of the body to avoid having their flag pulled is illegal.

DEFENSIVE RULES

- Before the snap, all defensive players must line up at least 2 yards behind the line of scrimmage. All defensive players are allowed to blitz.
- All defensive players that are lined up near the line of scrimmage may rush the QB, but only the 2 players that are not on the line may blitz. The 2 blitzers need to be 7 yards back from the line of scrimmage and it must be clear who the designated blitzers are.
- The flag puller shall hold the flag high above his/her head until the ball carrier takes it back.
- Defensive players may use their hands to move their way through a line (swim maneuver), but may not hold, strike, or straight-arm any player.
- Removing flags from any player except the ball carrier is illegal.
- Interceptions are allowed as long as the defensive player does not interfere with the offensive player.
- There are no fumbles. The ball will be dead as soon as it touches the ground. This includes center snaps.
- No defensive player may line up over the center within five yards (no nose guard or tilted in a gap). Defense may not rush up through the guards of the offense (shooting the A gap, see diagram below) without first making full contact with the guards. But may shoot the B gap without contact.



- Attempting to steal, punch or strip the ball from a player is illegal (unnecessary roughness).
- Holding, pushing, or tackling any player is illegal (unnecessary roughness).

ADDITIONAL RULES

- The YMCA asks everyone to make this a great experience for all individuals. Please be a good sport at all times. Support your team and respect your opponents and the officials. PLEASE keep comments positive toward officials, players, coaches, and parents. By doing so, you honor everyone, the game, and our community.
- YMCA officials do not have to give warnings before an ejection. YMCA staff reserves the right to deny participation to anyone (player or spectator) that fails to demonstrate proper sportsmanship.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct includes: swearing, fighting, and arguing with the officials.
- Unnecessary roughness includes, tackling, pushing, dangerous, and unsafe play.
- Officials may also assign penalties that include a "cooling off" period for a player.
- Abusive or obscene language or action shall not be tolerated.
 - First offense – warning
 - Second offense – elimination from the game and removal from the field
- If a coach, player, or parent is removed from any 2 games, that person may be eliminated from any further participation in the league. The Sports Director makes all final decisions.
- Only 1st and 2nd grade coaches may be on the field during the game. 3rd to 6th grade coaches may be on the field during the first two games. No more than 2 actively coaching coaches per team.

- Officials will make every effort to explain calls to players, as this is an instructional league.
- A player is only allowed to be on one YMCA flag football team per season.
- Team cheer is expected of both teams during the game, and therefore shaking hands and giving a cheer is a good habit to instill and is expected after the game.
- Disagreements with a referee's judgment, decision, or call should be brought to the referee's attention. All discussions should take place during time-outs. In-depth discussion or arguments will not be allowed on the field or at the game. The referee has the final say at the game. Issues still needing attention should be brought to the Sports Director's attention and will be dealt with during the week between games and not on game days.

TEAM PRACTICE

- Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade may not host weekly practice. Only practice on Saturdays before the game will be allowed. 1st and 2nd grade games will begin at the time noted on the game schedule. 1st and 2nd grade teams may practice for up to one hour. Practice start time will be determined by the team's coach. Coaches can host a parent meeting and one practice (may not last more than 1 hour) before the first game.
- 3rd to 6th grade may not host more than 2 practices per week. Each practice may not last longer than 1 hour. No practice can be held before the season begins. Earliest practice start date will be announced each season.

SPECTATORS

- Spectators must remain at least 5 yards away from field.
- Parents must always supervise their children.
- All cheering is to be positive.

PENALTIES

Violation	Penalty	Enforced From	Down
Hurdling / Diving by Ball Carrier	5 Yards (No Contact)	Point of Foul	Repeat Down
	10 Yards (Contact)	Point of Foul	Repeat Down
Non-avoidance	5 Yards	Point of Foul	Repeat Down
Flag Guarding	10 Yards	Point of Foul	Repeat Down
Stiff Arming	10 Yards	Point of Foul	Loss of Down
QB Running Without Starting in Shotgun	5 Yards (First Offence)	Line of Scrimmage	Repeat Down
	(Next Offence)	Line of Scrimmage	Loss of Down
More Than 3 Players In The Back Field	5 Yards	Line of Scrimmage	Repeat Down
Illegal Forward Pass	10 Yards	Point of Foul	Loss of Down
Shooting the A Gap	5 Yards	Line of Scrimmage	Repeat Down
Pass Interference	10 Yards	Point of Foul	First Down
Illegal Removal of Flag	10 Yards	Point of Foul	Repeat Down
Backfield In Motion	5 Yards	Line of Scrimmage	Repeat Down
Offside / Illegal Procedure or Formation	5 Yards	Line of Scrimmage	Repeat Down
Illegal Shift / Illegal Motion	5 Yards	Line of Scrimmage	Repeat Down
Delaying The Game Intentionally	5 Yards	Line of Scrimmage	Repeat Down
Holding, Or Any Illegal Use Of Hands	10 Yards (Offensive)	Point of Foul	Loss of Down
	(Defensive)	Point of Foul	First Down
Leaving Feet When Blocking	10 Yards (Offensive)	Line of Scrimmage	Loss of Down
	(Defensive)	Line of Scrimmage	Repeat Down
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	10 Yards (Offensive)	Line of Scrimmage	Loss of Down
	(Defensive)	Line of Scrimmage	First Down
Unnecessary Roughness	10 Yards (Offensive)	Point of Foul	Loss of Down
	(Defensive)	Point of Foul	First Down