

Leyden Youth Sports League

Flag Football Rules

1. General Rules

- **EQUAL PLAYING TIME**
- Arrive on time for both practices and games.
- Bring all required equipment to both practices and games.
- Promote good sportsmanship
 - Respect all staff, players, coaches, officials and spectators.
 - Encourage one another.
 - No fighting, bullying or vulgar language will be tolerated from anyone.
- No use of tobacco, drugs or alcohol by anyone during practices and games.

2. Equipment

- Each player must wear a league-issued jersey. Jersey must be tucked in.
- Each player must wear black shorts/pants (no pockets).
- Each player must wear a mouth-guard.
- Each player must wear league-issued flag belt.
- Cleats with exposed metal are NOT allowed.

3. Timing/Overtime

- Games will consist of two (20) minute halves, with a (5) minute halftime.
- Continuous Clock – Clock will only stop for timeouts, injuries or PATs for the first (19) minutes of each half. Clock will then stop after every play during the final minute of each half.
- Teams have (30) seconds to snap the ball once the ball is spotted. If the ball is not snapped within the (30) second window, a delay-of-game penalty will be called, resulting in a (5) yard loss and loss of down.
- Each team has (1) 30-second timeout per half.
- Overtime – If the score is tied at the end of regulation during the regular season, the game ends in a tie. If the score is tied at the end of regulation during the playoffs, overtime will be played. Please see below for the overtime format:
 - Coin flip to determine which team will be offense or defense first

- Each team will get (1) play from (10) yard line to score. If (1) team scores, and the other team does not, the game is over. If both teams score, another round of overtime is played. If neither team scores, another round of overtime is played.
- If a second round of overtime is required, the team that lost the coin flip will get to choose who plays offense / defense first. (Teams will alternate who gets to choose each new round of overtime)
- Referee determines which end of the field overtime will take place on.
- No timeouts in overtime.

4. Playing Field

- 1st - 4th Grade: 50 Yards Long x 25 yards Wide + (2) 10-yard endzones
- 5th – 8th Grade: 50 Yards Long x 30 Yards Wide + (2) 10-yard endzones

5. Game Play

- 1st/2nd Grade: 5 v 5
- 3rd/8th Grade: 7 v 7
- Offense
 - (1) Quarterback, (1) Center and 3-5 receivers/backs.
 - (2) receivers MUST be on the line of scrimmage at the snap – each positioned on opposite sides of the center. ALL players are eligible receivers.
 - Quarterback – This player receives the snap from the center and initiates the play by handoff or pass. The QB cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage without first handing the ball off to a teammate before receiving it back either by handoff or pass. Any passes made by the QB must be in a forward motion towards the line of scrimmage.
 - Center – This player snaps the ball to begin the play. Once snapped, the center is an eligible receiver and may go out for a pass.
 - Receiver/Back – Players eligible for either a handoff or pass from the quarterback.
- Defense
 - Defense consist (4) or (6) defenders, and (1) eligible pass rusher (With the exception of 1st/2nd grade – NO RUSHER).
 - Pass Rusher – Each Team, 3rd grade and older, may assign (1) pass rusher. This player lines up behind the pass rush cone during the snap, which is placed (10) yards beyond the line of scrimmage for

3rd/4th grade, and (15) yards beyond the line of scrimmage for 5th/8th grade. This is the only player who may rush the passer after the snap before a legal handoff or pass is made. (Referees may increase the pass rushing cone distance if one team is struggling to get a playoff effectively, but must inform both coaches before doing so). **NO RUSHING** if your team is up by (3) touchdowns.

- Defenders – May line up anywhere on the defensive side of the ball, beyond the line of scrimmage. These players may only cross the line of scrimmage following a legal handoff by the QB.
- Defenders may dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through a ball carrier
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier at any time.
- A defender may not intentionally pull an offensive player's flag who does not have possession of the ball.
- Scoring
 - Touchdowns are worth (6) points
 - PAT (Point After Touchdown) are (1) point from (5) yards out, and (2) points from (10) yards out. Teams have (1) chance to convert a PAT after scoring a touchdown.
 - A Safety is worth (2) points
 - A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his or her own endzone. Runners are considered down when their flag is pulled off, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, a knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
 - NO safeties will be called for 1st/2nd grade. Instead, the play will be considered dead, with the offensive team losing a down and resuming play from their own (5) yard line.
- Coaches
 - (1) coach is allowed on the field to call offensive/defensive plays. Once the play begins, coaches must refrain from speaking, and be behind the deepest offensive or defensive player (GET OUT OF THE WAY!)
- Live Ball / Dead Ball
 - The ball is considered “live” at the snap, and remains “live” until an official's whistle blows the ball dead.

- Substitutions can be made during any dead ball
- Play is ruled dead when:
 - The ball hits the ground
 - The ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap
 - The ball-carrier's flag is pulled
 - The ball-carrier steps out of bounds
 - A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored
 - Any part of the ball-carrier's body other than feet/hands touches the ground
 - The ball-carrier's flag falls off
- Timeouts can only occur when the ball is dead.
- Running
 - Handoffs can only occur behind the line of scrimmage.
 - Pitches/Laterals are only allowed behind the line of scrimmage.
 - Any player who receives a handoff/pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
 - Once the ball has been pitched/handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
 - NO diving, leaping or jumping to avoid flag being pulled.
 - No blocking or screening for a ball-carrier is allowed
 - Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage.
 - No stiff arming or flag guarding allowed.
- Passing
 - All passes must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - A QB may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage and be within (10) yards of a receiver.
 - For 1st/2nd Grade, a (7) second pass clock begins after the snap. If the QB still has the ball in their hands after the pass clock expires, the play is considered dead, and the offensive team loses a down.
 - Any player who receives a legal handoff can throw the ball forward as long as both feet are still behind the line of scrimmage.
- Receiving
 - All offensive players are eligible to receive a pass.
 - A player must have at least (1) foot inbound for a legal reception.

- In the event of an offensive player/defensive player both catching the ball at the same time, possession is awarded to the offensive player.
- Interceptions change possession at the point of the catch, and are returnable except during PATs, which will result in the play being called dead.

6. Penalties

- Offensive Penalties
 - Blocking – 10 yard loss & loss of down
 - Flag Guarding – 10 yard loss & loss of down
 - Delay of Game – 10 yard loss & loss of down
 - Illegal Pass – 10 yard loss & loss of down
 - Offsides/False Start – 10 yard loss & loss of down
- Defensive Penalties
 - Unnecessary Roughness – 5 yards & automatic first down
 - Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 5 yards & automatic first down
 - Illegal Rush – 5 yards & automatic first down
 - Pass Interference – 5 yards & automatic first down
 - Stripping – 5 yards & automatic first down

7. Punting

- On 4th down, a team may elect to “punt,” or go for it. If a team elects to punt, the opposing team will take over possession of the ball at their own (5) yard line. If a team elects to go for it, they must either gain a first down or score a touchdown. If they fail to do either of these, the defense will gain possession of the ball wherever the play died.