

WJFL Youth Flag Football
Rule Book
Revised 1-12-2025

Table Of Contents

Article I	Players.....	2
Article II	Games.....	2
Article III	Terminology.....	3
Article IV	Equipment.....	4
Article V	Fields.....	4
Article VI	Timing & Overtime.....	5
Article VII	Scoring.....	6
Article VIII	Coaches.....	6
Article IX	Live Ball/Dead Ball.....	7
Article X	Running.....	8
Article XI	Passing.....	10
Article XII	Receiving.....	10
Article XIII	Roughing the Passer.....	11
Article XIV	Flag Pulling.....	12
Article XV	Formations.....	13
Article XVI	Penalties.....	13

Article I Players

Section 1. The school grade they are currently in will determine eligibility for age Divisions.

Section 2. One coach is allowed on the field with all grades. This coach is allowed to play center to allow for a true football formation.

Article II Games

Section 1. At the start of each game, both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who will start with the ball as well as check jerseys and flags. Visitors call the toss.

Section 2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense, defense or defer to second half.

Section 3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at the forty-yard line and has four downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four downs to score a touchdown. If the offensive team goes for it on fourth down and does not get it, the opposing team will start its possession from the forty-yard line.

Article III Terminology

Section 1.

Boundary Lines	The outer perimeter lines around the field, the sidelines and back of the endzone.
Line of Scrimmage	An imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
Line-to-Gain	The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
Rush Line	An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards from the line of scrimmage on the defensive side.
Offense	The team with possession of the ball.
Defense	The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.
Passer	The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
Rusher	The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.
Live Ball	Refers to the period of time that the play is in action.
Dead Ball	Refers to the period of time immediately before or after the play.
Inadvertent Whistle	Official's whistle that is performed in error.
Charging	An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm, or chest.
Flag Guarding	An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball carrier's flag by stiff arm, lowering elbow, head, or by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand, arm, or ball.
Shovel Pass	A legal forward pass across the LOS underhand, backhand, or by pushing the ball forward
Lateral	A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	A rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.

Article IV Equipment

Section 1. Each player must wear uniform shirts and flag belts with flags provided by the WJFL. Footballs will be determined by age groups.

- PeeWee Ball: K-3rd
- Junior Ball: 4th-5th
- Youth Ball: 6th-7th

Section 2. Players may tape their forearms, hands, and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads.

Section 3. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts/pants to prevent flag guarding. We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets.

Section 4. Player's shorts may *not* be the same color as their flags.

Section 5. Mouth Pieces are required to be worn at all times while on the playing field.

Article V Fields

Section 1. Fields will be 50 yards long. Drives will start at the 40 yard line with a first down at the 20 yard line. There will be two no-run zones 5 yards before midfield and the endzone

Section 2. No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. Each offensive team approaches only two no-run zones in each drive. One zone 5 yards going into midfield to gain the first down and one zone 5-yards going into the end zone to score a touchdown.

Article VI Timing & Overtime

Section 1. Regular Season Games are played on 40 minute continuous clock with two 20 minute halves. The clock only stops timeouts and injuries until the final two minutes of the 2nd half, when the clock will stop for the following items: penalties, timeout, out of bounds, turnovers, scores and pass incompletions. Officials may stop the clock at their discretion for injury, to stop a team from delaying other unsportsmanlike conducts. Halftime is 5-minutes.

Section 2. Each time the ball is spotted, the offenses have 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will get one warning before getting a delay of game call.

Section 3. Each team gets three 30-second timeouts per game.

Section 4. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.

Section 5. If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime period will be used to determine a winner. The overtime format is as follows:

- A. The visiting team calls the toss to determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
 - a. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of OT.
- B. Each team will take turns getting one play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two points is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one- or two-point play of their own.
- C. Starting with the 2nd overtime, both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line. This will continue until the end of the game.

- D. Final Score will be recorded to include all points scored for each team.
- E. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- F. There are no timeouts
- G. You may not kick to win in any overtime period.

Article VII Scoring

Section 1. *Touchdown:* 6 points

PAT: 1 point from the 5-yard line (Pass or Run), 2 points from the 10 yard line. (Pass or Run) Teams have the option to kick from the 10 yard line for 2 points.

Section 2. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line).

Article VIII Coaches

Section 1. One coach is allowed on the field to call plays in and direct players according to need. Once the quarterback begins their cadence, coaches can no longer speak. The coach on the field may also be in charge of snapping the ball making the sixth player on the field to line up elsewhere.

Section 2. Coaches can assist in the alignment of their players to facilitate a fast-paced game but coaches on the field may not provide extra instruction or make audibles to play calls once the huddle is broken. Coaches on the sidelines can provide this information to players on the field.

Article IX Live Ball/Dead Ball

Section 1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.

Section 2. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.

- A. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.

Section 3. Any player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or other body part contacts the ground in the field of play.

Section 4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team’s signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

Section 5. Substitution may be made on any dead ball.

Section 6. An official can whistle the play dead.

Section 7. Play is ruled “dead” when:

- A. The ball hits the ground.
- B. The ball-carrier’s flag is pulled.
- C. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
- D. A touchdown, PAT, or safety is scored.
- E. The ball-carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground.
- F. The ball-carrier’s flag falls out in possession of the ball or gains possession with two or fewer flags. (Players without

required flags will be called down at where they gained possession)

- G. The 7 second pass clock expires.
- H. Inadvertent whistles.
- I. Ball-carrier leaves their feet other than jump cuts, spinning, or to avoid a downed player on the field of play.

Section 8. If inadvertent whistle occurs the offense has two options:

- A. Take the ball where the whistle blew and the down is consumed.
- B. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
- C. If it occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offense will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.

Section 9 A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation.

If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial calls in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

Article X Running

Section 1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled

Section 2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.

Section 3. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind, or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.

Section 4. No-run zones are located 5 yards before the end zone and 5 yards before midfield are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is LIVE. Reminder each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive. One 5-yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5-yards from the goaline to score a TD

Section 5. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.

Section 6. Once the ball has been handed off all defensive players are eligible to rush.

Section 7. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.

Section 8. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without flag guarding penalty enforced.

Section 9. There is no blocking or “screening” allowed at anytime.

Section 10. Offensive players in close proximity of the ball-carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the Ball-carrier.

Section 11. Flag obstruction- All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's tailbone, hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

Article XI Passing

Section 1. All passes must be thrown forward and ball out of hand prior to breaching the line of scrimmage.

Section 2. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage in the area of a receiver.

Section 3. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.

Section 4. The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock", this includes plays such as a flea flicker and pitch pass. If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed, and the ball is returned to the line of the scrimmage as if it were an incomplete pass.

Article XII Receiving

Section 1. All players are eligible to receive passes including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.

Section 2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. No motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.

Section 3. A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first.

Section 4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

Section 5. Interceptions may be returned. Defense is awarded 6 points for score during play. A touchdown is called once the player who intercepted the ball crosses the forty-yard line.

Article XIII Rushing the Passer.

Section 1. All players who rush the passer must be minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.

Section 2. Once the ball is handed off, the seven yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.

Section 3. The referee will designate a rush line seven yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.

A. A legal rush is:

- a. Any rush from a point 7-yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
- b. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.

B. A penalty may be called if:

- a. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass-illegal rush
- b. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped-offsidess
- c. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off-illegal rush
- d. If the offense draws the rusher(s) to jump the seven yard marker prior to the snap of the ball that rusher(s) CANNOT rush during that play. However, any other defender that is seven yards back may rush instead. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the

rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to the handoff or passed ball.

Section 4. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.

Section 5. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the quarterback. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. If the path or line is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. **If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.**

Section 6. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is once the flag is pulled.

Article XIII Flag Pulling

Section 1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball

Section 2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.

Section 3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier at any time.

Section 4. If a player who has one or no flags in their belt take possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.

Section 5. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

Section 6. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender's access

to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm, or shoulder, or intentionally cover the flags with the football jersey.

Article XIV Formations

Section 1. Offenses must have a minimum of two player on the line of scrimmage.

Section 2. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.

Section 3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion and the ball must leave their hands (the center sneak is illegal).

Section 4. The coach who is on the field may be incharge of snapping the ball to allow for a true football formation to be utilized.

Article XV Penalties

Section 1. The referee will call all penalties.

Section 2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.

Section 3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted.

Section 4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.

Section 5. Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.

Section 6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.

Section 7. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal

Defensive Spot Fouls	
Defensive Pass Interference	Automatic First Down
Holding	Automatic First Down
Stripping	+10 Yards and Automatic First Down
Offensive Spot Fouls	
Screening, Blocking, or QB/C Run w/o Handoff	-10 Yards and Loss of Down
Charging	-10 Yards and Loss of Down
Flag Guarding	-10 Yards and Loss of Down
Defensive Penalties	
Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	+10 Yards and Automatic First Down
Defensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct	+10 Yards and Automatic First Down
Offsides	+5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Automatic First Down
Illegal Rush	+5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Automatic First Down
Illegal Flag Pull	+5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Automatic First Down
Roughing the Passer	+5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Automatic First Down
Taunting	+5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Automatic First Down
Offensive Penalties	
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	-10 Yards and Loss of Down
Offensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct	-10 Yards and Loss of Down
Offsides/False Start	-5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Loss of Down
Illegal Forward Pass	-5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Loss of Down
Offensive Pass Interference	-5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Loss of Down
Illegal Motion	-5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Loss of Down
Delay of Game	-5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Loss of Down
Impeding the Rusher	-5 Yards from Line of Scrimmage and Loss of Down