



Mt Pleasant Parks and Recreation

Flag Football Rules

(Revised 7/26/2022)

Uniform

1. Players provided MPPR youth flag football jersey. Shirts **MUST** be tucked in during game play.
2. Flags are to be placed over shirt.
3. Players may wear rubber cleats or tennis shoes. Shoes must be closed toed. **Cleats must be rubber and cannot be metal, plastic or polyurethane.**
4. Mouth guards are recommended, but not required.
5. No type of padding (football pants)

Equipment

- Youth Football
- Flag belt

Field Dimensions

- 70 X 30
 - 50 yard field with two (2), 10 yard end zones

Game Play

1. Scoring and standings will not be kept.
2. Number of Players:
 - Kindergarten/1st- 5 v 5 (Coach QB does not include 5 players)
 - 2nd/3rd & 4th/6th- 6 v 6
3. All players should play an equal number of minutes or as close to it as possible during games. Coaches should make a conscious effort to **ensure players are receiving equal play on offense and defense.**
4. Coach will act as quarterback ONLY for the Kindergarten-1st Grade division.
 - **All other divisions – player acts as QB**
5. Games play for each division:
 - K-1st: Four (4) – 10 minute quarters (running clock)
 - 2nd-3rd and 4th-6th Grade: Two (2) – 24 minute halves (running clock)
6. Teams will be allowed one (1), 30 second time out per quarter.
7. To achieve first down or touchdown, **ball and feet** must be across the line.
8. NO punting or kicking.
9. NO fumbles. Play will stopped and possession beginning at point of fumble. Exception to this rule is when a quarterback fumbles a snap. Play may resume.
10. Interceptions may be returned. Ball will be placed at point of interception or at the point of which interception has been returned to.
11. Safety will result in a loss of possession, with defensive team taking over at their own 5 yard line.
12. Extra points and two point conversions **will not** be attempted.

13. There is no diving, jumping or sliding to tackle or avoid tackles. All effort should be made to stay on their feet and avoid injury. Naturally these may occur during game play, however proper coaching should be instructed not to do so.
14. Inadvertent Whistle – If whistle blows prior to ball carrier crossing line of scrimmage, down is replayed. If ball carrier is past the line of scrimmage, offensive team get the option to accept play as is or replay down.

Offensive Possession

1. Team listed first will start game.
2. All offensive possessions will begin at teams own 5 yard line. Exception to this rule is interceptions.
3. Teams will have 4 downs to reach midfield to gain 1st down. Once team has crossed gained 1st down, team has 4 downs to score a touchdown.
 - a. If team does not gain first down or score touchdown within the 4 downs, opposing team shall receive ball on their own 5 yard line.
4. The offense has **45 seconds to snap** the ball after it has been set by referee.
5. Ball must be snapped between center's legs.
6. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
7. Dead ball occurs when:
 - a. Ball carrier's flag is pulled
 - b. Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - c. Ball carrier makes contact with ground other than with feet or hands
 - d. Ball carrier's flag falls off
 - e. Touchdown is scored
 - f. Fumble (unless quarterback fumbles snap)
8. The offense has seven seconds to either pass the football or run it **across the line of scrimmage**. Once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage the seven seconds is no longer in effect. The quarterback can NOT run the football for positive yards.

NO RUN ZONE

- Only applies to the 2nd - 3rd & 4th - 6th Grade Division
- "No Run Zones" are designed to avoid short-yardage situations.
- "No Run Zones" come into effect only when the offensive team is five yards from a first down or the end zone. Exception: If the offensive team has already achieved first down, but has been pushed back into a "No Run Zone", then the "No Run Zone" is no longer in effect.
- Whenever within the "No Run Zone" the offense must pass.
- If a run play occurs while inside the "No Run Zone", the play is immediately dead with the consumption of a down.

Formations

1. Offensive team must have a minimum of 1 person (center) on line of scrimmage to begin play.
2. Quarterback must be directly behind center or in shot gun formation directly behind center.
3. **All snaps MUST be from between center's legs.**
4. Snap can only go to quarterback, no wild cat.
5. **Once the ball is handed off, defense can cross the line of scrimmage and player MUST run. Any pass will result in a dead ball, loss of down.**

Running

1. The quarterback cannot run with the ball past the line of scrimmage.
2. Direct handoffs or laterals behind the line of scrimmage are permitted.

3. NO laterals or pitches **BEYOND** the line of scrimmage.

4. ~~The player that takes the direct handoff can throw the ball from behind line of scrimmage.~~

5. Spinning is allowed, however player cannot leave feet and must not flag guard.

Flag Guarding

1. Flag guarding is prohibited. Acts of flag guarding include, blocking opponents attempt at grabbing the flag, shirt pulled over waist, or using any part of hands, arms or ball to block flag.

Passing

1. Only one forward pass per down.
2. The quarterback can rollout, but must pass, handoff, or lateral while in backfield.
3. The quarterback cannot advance for positive yards.

Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive a pass.
2. Only one player allowed to be in motion parallel to line of scrimmage before ball is snapped.
3. A receiver must have one foot in bounds and maintain control throughout the catch.
4. In case of simultaneous possession by both offense and defense, possession goes to offense.
5. If a receiver's flag inadvertently falls off after the reception without contact from a defender, player will be ruled down at the spot flag fell off.
6. If a receiver's flag inadvertently falls off prior to the reception, the receiver will be rule down at point of reception.
7. A receiver cannot willingly run out of bounds and then come back in bounds to catch ball.

Blocking

1. NO INTENTIONAL CONTACT of any kind is permitted.
2. Downfield blocking or screening is illegal. Any offensive player who continues running AND impedes the progress of a defensive player who is attempting to pull the ball carriers flag will be called for illegal blocking.

Defense

Game Play

1. Zone or man to man coverage is permitted.
2. Defensive players may not bump or jam offensive players at the line.
3. No swatting at ball to cause fumble.

For the K – 1st Grade division

- All players must be (3) three yards from line of scrimmage as indicated by marker.
- **No rushing the QB in this division.** Players may rush beyond line of scrimmage once ball is handed off.

Rushing the Passer: 2nd – 3rd and 4th - 6th Grade Division ONLY

1. Only those lined up at 7 yard marker may rush the QB.
 - a. If a player is rushing he or she must signal before the snap by their hand so the referee can see
2. Players NOT rushing may line up at the line of scrimmage.
3. Any number of players may rush the QB as long as they are at the 7 yard marker.
4. The rusher must take an angled path to the QB. If this path is crossed AND contact is made involving the rusher and any offensive player then an offensive impeding penalty will be assessed.

- a. Once angle is set, player cannot change their path to QB. If path changes, they will lose right of way and if any contact is made it will be called by initiating player.
5. If offense draws player beyond the 7 yard marker prior to the snap, player may NOT rush.
 - a. Jumping the rush is not a penalty unless they cross line of scrimmage prior to hand off or passed ball.

Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when defender pulls flag from offensive player in possession of the ball.
2. Defensive players cannot tackle, pull or hold player or players clothing in process of removing flag.
3. Defensive players cannot intentionally pull flags from those that are not in possession of the ball.

Penalties

Offensive Penalties: 5 yards from line of scrimmage, replay of down

- False Start
- Offensive Pass Interference
- Offsides
- Illegal Motion
- Delay of Game
- Too many players on the field

Offensive Penalties – 5 Yards from the Spot of Infraction and Loss of that Down

- Flag Guarding
- Illegal Ball advancement (jumping or diving to advance ball, laterals beyond line of scrimmage)
- Intentional Contact – (Blocking, charging, tackling, tripping, pushing, holding, obstructing, stiff arming)

Defensive Penalties – 5 Yards from the Line of Scrimmage, Automatic First Down

- Roughing the passer
- Intentionally removing a receiver's flag belt before he/she contacts the ball
- Illegally rushing the QB
- Too many players on the field

Defensive Penalties – 5 Yards from the Spot of Infraction, Automatic First Down

- Defensive Pass Interference
- Intentional Contact – (Blocking, charging, tackling, tripping, pushing, holding, obstructing, stiff arming)

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT – Will not be tolerated, including, but not limited to intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, offensive/confrontational language, or any unsportsmanlike act. With discretion of referee, these acts may cause, player, coach, parent, or spectator to be ejected or removed from facility.

- Officials have the right to determine offensive or confrontational language.
- Players/coaches may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
- Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- **FANS AND SPECTATORS MUST ADHERE TO GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP AS WELL.**

Terminology Player Should Know

Understanding the Positions

- **Quarterback(QB)** – Player receiving the ball or the snap from the center to begin the play. QB's may throw the ball to a receiver or handoff the ball to the running back.
- **Center(C)** – Player that hikes or snaps the ball back to the QB.
- **Running Back(RB)** – Player that receives handoff from the QB behind the line of scrimmage. RB's typically line up in the backfield behind the QB.
- **Wide Receiver(WR)** – Player that starts play on line of scrimmage on either side of ball, outside of the center. WR's typically run a pattern and receive a pass from the QB.
- **Defensive Back(DB)** – Player that covers offensive players.

Understanding the Field

- **Sideline** – The line that designates the outer boundary of the field.
- **Out of Bounds** – Area outside the side lines that surround field of play.
- **End Zone** – The scoring portion of the field. There is an end zone located at each end of the field.
- **Field of Play** – The portion of the field inside the side lines and excluding the end zone.
- **Goal Line** – The line that separates the field of play and endzone. A team scores anytime the player advances the ball from field of play into endzone.
- **Line of Scrimmage(LOS)** – The imaginary line that extends from sideline to sideline from where the ball is marked to start the play.
- **Backfield** – Any part of the field directly behind the line of scrimmage.

Understanding the Game

- **Snap** – The act of putting the ball into play typically by having the center move it from the LOS into the QB's hand. The player moving the ball is said to be "snapping" while the betting the ball is "receiving the snap."
- **Pass** – When the QB attempts to advance the ball by throwing it from behind the LOS, forward to a receiver.
- **Down** – Each team gets a series of 4 downs to advance the ball to the scoring area or first down. A down is the period from the snap of the ball until the end of the play.
- **Formation** – The pattern in which the offensive team lines up at the LOS prior to snapping the ball.
- **Huddle** – When the offensive team gathers together before a play to set up their formation and plays to be used for that down.
- **Incompletion** – When the offense attempts a forward pass but the ball is not caught or is caught out of bounds.

- **Interception** – When a defensive player catches a pass thrown by the offense. The defensive player can attempt to advance the ball towards the opponent’s endzone.
- **Tackle** – The act of stopping the ball carrier by pulling the flag from the flag belt.
- **Touchdown** – Score earned by advancing ball into the endzone.

