

# NHYFSC 2008 FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

## RULE 1: GENERAL

**F1-1:** The intention of this level is to focus on FUN and provide a structured environment for the children to learn the sport.

## RULE 2: PLAYERS

**F2-1:** A game is played between two teams consisting of eight (8) players each.

**F2-2:** Each team roster shall have a maximum of 16 players, and a minimum of 10 players. A forfeit will result when the minimum is not met.

**F2-3:** Home team is the first team listed on the schedule

**F2-4:** Only players appearing on the official certified team roster are to be counted as players.

**F2-5:** All children should have the opportunity to play as many positions as possible.

**F2-6:** Offensive alignment: Must have five (5) players on the line of scrimmage and three (3) in the backfield. Splits between the offensive center and the offensive guards must be no wider than 24 inches.

**F2-7:** Man in motion is not permitted

**F2-8:** Defensive alignment - linemen will be at least one yard off the line of scrimmage. Linebackers must be four yards off the line of scrimmage. Blitzing or stunting through the gaps between the offensive center and guards (commonly known as "shooting the gap"), is not permitted under any circumstances.

**F2-9:** Minimum Play Rule: Each player will play a minimum of two quarters unless a child is sick or under disciplinary action. All actions must be reported verbally to the association presidents, referees and opposing team's coach prior to the start of the game. Failure to abide by this rule will result in forfeiture of that game.

**F2-10:** A team will have 30 seconds to put the ball in play after the ready signal.

## RULE 3: PLAYING FIELDS

**F3-1:** The playing field shall be 30 yards wide by approximately 160 feet long (the width of a regulation football field) with the regulation football field sidelines becoming the flag football field end-zones.

- A. The flag football field will then be split into three zones by placing markers or cones 15 yards in from each end zone leaving approximately 20 yards in the center.
- B. Goal Posts are unnecessary as points after TD are made only by passing or running and there are no field goal kicks.

**F3-2:** The following field equipment will be used:

- A. A Down Marker will be used to indicate the number of the down.
- B. A Zone Marker will be used to indicate the distance to go for a first down (placed at the forward zone line).

## RULE 4: EQUIPMENT

### F4-1 - GAME BALL

A "K-2" size game ball will be used.

### F4-2 - FLAGS

- A. Each player must wear a belt with the number of flags designated as "standard" by the conference, which will be 2 flags.
- B. The flags will be attached to a belt and extend or hang from each side of the player's body.
- C. Flags will be 14-20 inches long and a minimum of 2 inches wide.

- D. The belt must be tight to prevent being turned around during a de-flagging.
- E. The flags may not be rolled, tied, pinned or sewn on the belt.
- F. Jerseys cannot be worn over flags.
- G. If a player's flag is inadvertently lost, he is ineligible to handle the ball.
- H. Flags are to be of contrasting colors between opponents and different from game uniform. Definitions of uniform shall be game pants and/or jersey.

NOTE: The flags will be attached to a belt made for that purpose. Such a belt has equal resistance at the point of attachment of flags, thereby ensuring an equal effort necessary to de-flag a player.

#### **F4-3 - GAME UNIFORMS**

- A. All team members must wear the same color jersey.
- B. All jerseys will be numbered on the back, numbers on the front are optional.
- C. Any type of pants or shorts may be worn provided said pants or shorts have no front or side pockets.
- D. Jerseys will be tucked in at all times.
- E. Sneakers are the preferred shoe; however, non-detachable, rubber-cleated shoes are allowed. No other footwear is acceptable.

#### **F4-4 - EYE GLASSES**

Eye glasses, when worn, shall be of athletically-approved construction with non-shattering glass (safety glass).

#### **F4-5 - MOUTHGUARDS**

Mouthguards are required, no keeper strap is necessary.

### **RULE 5: PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT**

**F5-1:** Spiked or street shoes.

**F5-2:** Padding of any kind, including hard surface padding such as shoulder pads, hip pads, and helmets.

**F5-3:** Hard metal or any other hard substance on a player's clothing or person.

**F5-4:** Anything that conceals the flags.

**F5-5:** Slick or sticky substances such as grease or glue.

**F5-6:** Any equipment, in the opinion of the referee that will endanger or confuse players.

### **RULE 6: REFEREES**

**F6-1:** There will be at least two (2) referees, one from each team. Coaches will also be allowed to referee.

**F6-2:** Each referee will be on the opposite sideline from their team.

**F6-3:** Each game official will carry a handkerchief and drop it whenever an infraction occurs.

### **RULE 7: THE RULES OF THE GAME**

#### **F7-1 - PLAYERS**

- A. Each team will have four consecutive downs to advance the ball into the next forward zone or to score a touchdown.
- B. Once a team enters into the next forward zone, it is a first down and a new series of downs begins.
- C. A team failing to move the ball into the next zone will lose possession. The opposing team takes over at the point where the ball is declared dead and begins its series of first down and zone to go.
- D. The forward part of the ball touching any line will be the determining factor in measuring for a first down or a touchdown.
- E. A down will be repeated if provided for by the rules.

- F. When the offensive team is within the last zone and has a first down, it will be first down and goal to go.
- G. At the conclusion of each down, the referee will place the ball in the center of the field (equal distance from sidelines – not on a hash mark)
- H. The free substitution rule is always in effect and a player may enter the game any time the ball is dead.

#### **F7-2 - TEAM COACHES:**

One coach for each team will be permitted on the field.

#### **F7-3 - TIME**

There will be

- A. Four (4) ten-minute quarters
- B. The clock will start upon placement of the ball
- C. Time between plays – The offensive team has 30 seconds to put the ball into play after the referee whistles the ball ready for play.
- D. The clock will be a running clock and will only stop for the following:
  - 1 – Time outs (each team is allotted two timeouts per half)
  - 2 – Injuries
  - 3 – During the point-after-touchdown attempts
  - 4 – A two-minute warning will be given, however the clock will not be stopped at this time
  - 5 – Forfeiture: Game time is forfeiture time, unless otherwise determined by the NHYFSC league officer
  - 6 – Duration of halftime. Halftime consists of 10 minutes.

#### **F7-4 - KICKOFFS**

There are no kick-offs in the flag division.

- A. The ball will be placed at the 15 yard line of the receiving team.
- B. Following a Safety, the ball will be spotted at mid-field.

#### **F7-5 - PUNTS**

There are no punts in the flag division. (Each team has four downs to make it into the next forward zone and gain four more downs or to score a touchdown.)

#### **F7-6 - DE-FLAGGING**

- A. There shall be no tackling of the ball carrier, passer, or kicker.
- B. The player carrying or having possession of the ball is down when a flag is removed from his waist (de-flagging). The defensive player shall hold the flag above his head and stand still.
- C. The defensive player cannot hold or push the ball carrier to remove his flag. An accidental touch of the body or shoulder while reaching for the flag shall not be considered a violation; however, touching of the head or face shall be considered a violation.
- D. A defensive player may not run over, push, or pull a blocker away from him. He may push him sideways if he gets past him, but he cannot push the blocker down.
- E. A defensive player must go for the passer's flag. He cannot touch the passer's arm.

#### **F7-7 - BLOCKING**

- A. A blocker must be on his feet at all times while blocking. All linemen, except the center, must not assume the three point stance or otherwise spring from a coiled or crouching start. Instead, they must simply stand at the line of scrimmage and await the snap. The center, though crouching, if he is to block, must first stand straight up.
- B. Cross body and roll blocking are not permitted.

- C. A blocker cannot use his hands.
- D. Blocking shall be done with the arms and body in the form of shoulder and brush blocking only.
- E. A defensive player cannot block or push a ball carrier out-of-bounds.
- F. Butting, elbowing or knee blocking is not permitted.
- G. There will be no two-on-one blocking for the ball carrier beyond the line of scrimmage.
- H. Blocking a player from behind is not permitted (clipping).
- I. There will be no interlocking blocking.
- J. A defensive player will be restricted in the use of his hands to the blocker's body and shoulders.

#### **F7-8 - BALL CARRIER**

- A. The ball carrier cannot use his hands or arms to protect his flags. The defensive player must have the opportunity to remove the ball carrier's flags.
- B. The ball carrier cannot lower his head to drive or run into a defensive player.
- C. Stiff-arming by the ball carrier is illegal.
- D. The ball carrier cannot spin or hurdle to prevent a defensive player from removing his flags.
- E. He may run in any direction until the ball is declared dead.

#### **F7-9 - CENTER**

- A. The center must snap the ball between his legs.
- B. He must have both feet on the scrimmage line with no part of his body beyond the forward point of the ball.
- C. He may adjust the long part of the ball at right angles to the scrimmage line for one time only.

#### **F7-10 - PASSING**

- A. All backfield men are eligible passers.
- B. Passing will be attempted from behind the line of scrimmage only.
- C. A lateral pass is a pass thrown parallel to the line of scrimmage or back toward the passer's own goal line. A lateral pass is not considered a forward pass.
- D. A forward pass is a pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage toward the defensive team's goal line.

#### **F7-11 - RECEIVING**

- A. All players are eligible to receive forward passes.
- B. A receiver may catch a ball even if he steps out-of-bounds or out of the end zone as long as he comes down with one foot in bounds.
- C. Two or more receivers may touch a ball in succession resulting in a completed pass.
- D. If an offensive and defensive player catches a pass simultaneously, the ball is declared dead at the spot of the catch and the passing team is awarded possession.
- E. An offensive player cannot be out-of-bounds and return in-bounds to catch a pass. This will be ruled an incomplete pass.

#### **F7-12 - DEAD BALL**

All balls touching the ground are immediately dead (except kickoffs and punts). For example, the ball is declared dead at the following times:

- A. When the ball carrier touches the ground with his body, other than hands or feet.
- B. When the ball carrier's flag has been pulled.
- C. If a pass receiver or ball carrier has a missing flag (ball is dead at that spot).
- D. Following a touchdown, safety or touchback.
- E. When the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason.
- F. If the center snap hits the ground before reaching a backfield man.
- G. When the ball hits the ground as a result of a fumble or muffed ball. There are no fumble recoveries allowed!
- H. If a lateral pass touches the ground (ball is declared dead at that point). If a lateral pass goes out-of-bounds, the ball is ruled dead at the point it crosses the boundary line.
- I. If a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught at the same time by an opposing player(s).
- J. A free catch (cannot be advanced).

### **RULE 8: SCORING VALUES**

#### **F8-1: Game Scoring Values**

A. Touchdown	6 points
B. Safety	2 points
C. Extra point attempt interception and run back	2 points
D. Extra point passing	2 points
E. Extra point running	1 point
F. Forfeit (offended team wins by)	1-0

### **RULE 9: TIE GAME**

**F9-1:** Tie games will go into the record as such and will not be played off in regular season play.

#### **F9-2: All Tournament Games:**

- A. Ball will be placed in the center of the field. The referee will toss a coin in the presence of the two team captains. The winning captain will have the option of putting the ball in play at mid-field.
- B. Each team will have four (4) consecutive downs and the winner will be the team gaining the most yardage in its series of downs.
- C. Penalties will count as plus or minus yardage.
- D. Intercepted passes will count as incomplete passes.
- E. If the yardage is still the same at the end of each team's four down series, the series will be repeated.

### **RULE 10: INJURED PLAYERS**

**F10-1:** Once removed from a game because of injury, a player must sit out at least one down, and may not re-enter the game without the approval of attending medical personnel.

### **RULE 11: PRACTICES**

**F11-1:** When school is not in session, practices are limited to (three) 3-days per week, not to exceed 2 hours each practice.

**F11-2:** When school is in session, practices are limited to (two) 2-days per week, not to exceed 1-1/2 hours each practice.

## **RULE 12: PENALTIES**

All penalties listed are assessed a 5 yard penalty unless otherwise indicated.

### **F12-1 - LINE OF SCRIMMAGE-Centering**

- A. Offside, defensive or offensive
- B. Illegal snap
- C. Failure to observe 30 second rule
- D. Illegal motion-more than one backfield man in motion
- E. Illegal formation, offense

### **F12-2 - PASSING**

- A. If an illegal forward pass is thrown and intercepted, the play will continue until the ball is declared dead. The intercepting team has the option of possession from that spot or accepting the penalty.
- B. Passer crosses the line of scrimmage and loss of down.
- C. Intentional grounding and loss of down.
- D. Offensive pass interference from line of scrimmage and loss of down.
- E. Defensive pass interference-first down from spot of infraction for the offensive team.

### **F12-3 - DELAY OF GAME**

- A. Continuing to play after the ball is dead from spot where the ball is dead.
- B. Recovering a fumble or falling on the ball.
- C. Advancing a fair catch.
- D. Unnecessary delay of game for any reason.

### **F12-4 - FLAG WEARING AND DE-FLAGGING**

- A. Tackling.
- B. Wearing the flags illegally
- C. Ball carrier using his hands to prevent a defensive player from de-flagging
- D. Holding, pushing, or hitting the ball carrier while de-flagging
- E. Leaving one's feet while de-flagging from spot of foul.
- F. Wearing one flag

### **F12-5 - ILLEGAL HAND-OFF**

- A. If the ball is handed forward beyond the scrimmage line and loss of down.
- B. Handing or snapping a ball to a lineman

### **F12-6 - ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTIONS**

- A. More than eight (8) men of the field.
- B. Substitution(s) while the ball is in play or before it is declared dead
- C. Disqualified player entering game

### **F12-7 - BLOCKING**

- A. Leaving feet to block

- B. Cross body blocking or roll blocking
- C. Illegal use of hands by blocker
- D. Holding a defensive player
- E. Defensive player blocking or pushing the ball carrier out of bounds
- F. Butting, elbowing or knee blocking
- G. Defensive player using hands illegally
- H. More than two blockers for the ball carrier (on one defensive player) beyond the line of scrimmage
- I. Clipping
- J. Interlock Blocking from spot of foul.

**F12-8 - BALL CARRIER**

- A. Stiff arming from spot of foul.
- B. Lowering head to drive or run into defensive player
- C. Use of head
- D. Use of hands or arms to protect flags
- E. Spinning or hurdling

**F12-9 - UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS**

- A. Offensive and Defensive
- B. Disqualification of guilty player or players if repeated.

**F12-10 - UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

- A. Fighting offenders ejected from game.
- B. Defensive player pulling offensive player's flag to make him ineligible for play
- C. Insulting and abusive language
- D. Interference with progress of the game by coaches or any other team personnel
- E. Illegal play
- F. Team leaving field before game is completed. Failure to return- Forfeit. Win for team remaining on the field.
- G. Failure to control players or fans
- H. Forfeit if not controlled.

**RULE 13: CHEERLEADING**

**F13-1:** Team shall follow Mascot Guidelines.

**F13-2:** The flag cheer team may not perform or participate in any mount or stunt.

**F13-3:** The flag cheer team may not perform with any competitive squads on the field or at competitions.

**F13-4:** The flag cheer team may accompany the association to state and regional competition.

**F13-5:** The flag cheer team may be involved in crowd participation sideline/chants ONLY.