



## MIDDLE SCHOOL FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

### ALL DIVISIONS

- The Home Team will call the coin toss; the winner of the coin toss will then choose to receive or defer. Home Team is listed as bottom team on Playpass.
- Home Team will lead pre-game prayer.
- All players will receive equal playing time throughout the game.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has **four** plays to cross midfield.
- Once a team crosses midfield, it has **four** more downs to score a touchdown.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- **DECEPTIVE PLAYS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED.** Trick plays are allowed that fall within the game's rules. If there are questions regarding the definition of each, please contact the Director of Football or an official for clarification.

### COACHES

- All coaches must be Serving Safely approved and have their approved coaching shirt to be on the sideline. NO photographers/videographers allowed on the sideline.
- Only Head Coaches may address and discuss rules/calls with officials during the game.

### TIE GAME/OVERTIME

- Recreational League Regular season games will remain a tie, no overtime.

### PLAYING EQUIPMENT

- All players must wear a mouthpiece during practices and games.
- Westover Sports will provide 1 mouthpiece per player at first practice. Players are responsible for replacement mouthpieces.
- Players are not allowed to participate in practice and games with a cast or splint on any body parts.
- Flag belts are to be worn with flags on hips. Jerseys must be tucked in.
- No hats or jewelry is to be worn.

### GAME TIMING

- (2) 20-minute halves
- 4-minute half time
- Change of Possession: 30 seconds to run play.
- Play Clock: 30 seconds to run play. After 30 seconds, it will result in a loss of down.
- Clock stops on injuries
- Each team gets (2), 30-second time outs per half.
- Games may have intentional water breaks at the discretion of the referee.

## **SCORING**

- Touchdowns – 6 points
- Extra points from 3 yd line – 1 point (pass only)
- Extra point from 8 yd line – 2 points
- Safety – 2 points
- Turnovers on extra points may not be advanced by the defense and the play is over.

## **OFFENSIVE/DEFENSIVE PLAYS**

- Players may defend up to the line of scrimmage, until the ball is handed off or passed from the Quarterback. If the quarterback makes a pass behind the line of scrimmage, the defender may step across the line of scrimmage to pull the flag of the receiver.
- Once the ball leaves the Quarterback's hand with a forward pass, lateral, or handoff, all defenders may go beyond the line of scrimmage.
- If a defensive player makes contact with the QB (regardless of if ball is deflected or not) it is illegal contact.
- There is no limit on the players allowed to line up on the line of scrimmage prior to the ball's snap.
- The offensive team may not snap the ball until rush cone is set.
- An offensive player is down where their hip is located when a defender pulls their flag. There is no "extending of the ball" over a line to gain a first down or score.
- 30 seconds will be allowed for each play.
- Quarterback has 7 seconds to pass the ball.
- No rushing allowed.

## **INTERCEPTIONS**

- Interceptions are live and may be returned for touchdowns. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.

## **START OF OFFENSIVE SERIES**

- The play will start when the quarterback holds the ball in his hand, standing at the line of scrimmage, and gives a clear cadence call to start the play. (No center snap) No silent count. Offensive players will start with the ball extended.
- There is no limit on the number of players who can line up on the scrimmage line.
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time, running laterally.

## **RUNNING**

- The quarterback cannot run beyond the line of scrimmage with the ball, unless the ball has already been handed off or passed to another player. A run play may not be used in "No Run Zones."
  - "No Run Zones" – Located 5 yards from the intended scoring end zone.
  - Lateral or Pitches are allowed to be used in a No Run Zones if they are followed by forward pass.

- Handoffs, laterals, pitches.
  - The player who takes the handoff, lateral, or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
  - Once the ball has been handed off, lateraled, or pitched all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning & jump cuts are allowed, there is no diving or jumping to advance ball up field. Play will be blown dead if player dives or jumps to advance ball up the field and loss of down.
- Flag Guarding is not allowed and is defined as the offensive player intentional guarding his/her flag pushing away the hand of the defensive player who is attempting to pull the offensive player's flag. Lowering the shoulder to run over a defensive player is not permitted.
- Laterals or pitches behind the quarterback's forward progress are allowed and are considered a running play.
  - If the player receiving the ball, then throws a forward pass, it would be considered a passing play.
- When a running player's flag is pulled, they are down where their hip is located (no extending the ball over the line).

#### **6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> GRADE DIVISION**

- This division is pass only.
- The ball may only cross the line of scrimmage from a forward pass.
  - Teams may pitch, use handoffs, or lateral passes behind the line of scrimmage but cannot advance the ball past it until forward pass is made across it.
  - The 5 second play clock is in effect as soon as the ball is snapped and does not reset on any lateral or pitch.
  - Defensive players may not cross the line of scrimmage on a lateral, handoff, or pitch.

#### **RECEIVING**

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off or passed backwards from the quarterback).
- Passing is defined as one player throwing the ball to another player while the ball travels in a forward flight. If the ball is caught the receiver may advance the ball. If the ball is dropped the pass is incomplete, and the play is over.
- A quarterback is the player who throws a forward pass. He continues to be the passer until the pass ends, or until he moves to participate in the play.
- Shovel passes are allowed and considered a forward pass. Must cross the line of scrimmage for 7th/8th grade.
- After a forward pass is completed, laterals are allowed if they are pitched behind the player in possession of the football. There is an unlimited number of laterals allowed once the forward pass is completed.

## DEAD BALL (Substitutions may be made on any dead ball)

- **Play is ruled "dead" when:**
  - Ball carrier's flag is pulled
  - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
  - Touchdown or safety is scored
  - Ball carrier's knee hits the ground
  - Player dives with the ball
  - When a runner loses his/her flag belt either accidentally, inadvertently (not removed by grabbing or pulling), or on purpose, play continues. The deflagging reverts to a one-hang tag of the runner between the shoulders and knees and the play is ruled dead.

**Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground or at the point where the ball carrier fumbled if the ball is fumbled forward. Defense may not "strip" the ball and take possession.**

## BLOCKING

- There is no blocking!
- A player blocking (shadow or other contact) will cause the play to be over at the point of the penalty. There will be a 10-yard penalty from the spot of the foul, and loss of down. Coaches are encouraged to teach their players if the ball does not come to them to continue running away from the play.

## DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

- *Offside* = 5 yards and replay the down
- *Pass Interference* = 10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
- *Illegal Contact* = 10 yards from the spot of the foul and automatic first down
  - Holding, blocking, straight arming, etc. (*If a player dives for a flag and causes a player to fall it will be deemed illegal contact (intentional or non-intentional). If a player dives for a flag and pulls a flag without knocking down the player, it will be deemed a legal flag pull without penalty. Coaches are encouraged to teach their players to stay on their feet, and not to dive at an opposing player's flag*
- *Illegal Flag pull* = 10 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down • Pulling flags before receiver has ball. The defensive player may not wrap his/her arms around the body (bear hug/holding) while searching to pull the flag.
- If a defender pulls an offensive player's flag before the offensive player catches the football, then a penalty will be assessed from the spot of the catch

## OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

- *Illegal motion* = 5-yard penalty, replay down (more than one person moving before the offense is set)
- *Illegal forward pass* = 5-yard penalty and loss of down
- *Illegal contact* = 10 yards from the line of scrimmage, loss of down (Pushing, blocking, etc.)
- *Offensive pass interference* = 10 yards from the line of scrimmage, loss of down

- Flag guarding = 10 yards spot foul
- Delay of game = 5 yards and loss of down
- Shirts not tucked in causing interference with the pulling of flags = 10-yard penalty and the ball is down at the spot of the foul.
- Games will not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.

#### **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

- Any taunting, illegal play, verbal abuse of referee or opposing team will result in an automatic 15-yard penalty.
  - If the unsportsmanlike play happens after a player scores, the score will be removed. The ball will be spotted back at the original line of scrimmage and the 15-yard penalty will be added on.

#### **6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> GRADE DIVISION**

- 7v7
- 35 yds x 70 yds field
- Junior football will be used
- Passing only, no running is allowed in this league.
- One defensive player will be allowed to rush the quarterback
- 5 seconds to throw forward pass.
- No coaches are allowed on the field during games.
- Home team starts with ball

Westover Sports Flag Football League will follow the National Federation of State High School (NFHS) Association Football Rules with modifications listed below to fit the needs of our league. Please refer to NFHS Football Rulebook for items not listed here. Rules are subject to change at the discretion of Westover Sports.