



Rule Book

Welcome to the City of Gardena Youth Flag Football Program. We hope that you and your child will have a wonderful experience while participating in our program. Please take a minute to read over this Rule Book and utilize it as a guide to familiarize yourself with how our games are played and how the league operates. When involved in our youth sports program please remember that you are participating in a recreational league and there may be some variations to other leagues and organizations.

- Our coaches are a combination of recreation staff along with community volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, contact our Youth Sports Coordinator at (310) 217-9537.
- Coaches will be responsible for setting practice days and times (keep in mind these are volunteer coaches, with responsibilities outside of coaching as well) and schedules may change.
- Games will be played on Saturdays and possibly Wednesdays, depending on the division. Game score and standings will not be kept in the 1st - 2nd grade division. The complete game schedule will be provided prior to the start of the season.
- We have zero tolerance for negative and threatening comments or negative behavior towards staff, coaches, officials, or players. If you have a disagreement regarding an official's call, please speak to the Recreation staff after the game. Spectators will be asked to leave the facility and the game will be stopped until the spectator in question leaves the facility.
- All games will be played at Freeman Park and Johnson Park.

Always remember that collectively we must all do our part to ensure the success of the program. This game is for the children and played by your children. Positive cheering for all teams is encouraged.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
The Players.....	1
5 on 5 Football	2-3
Defense.....	3
Blocking.	3
Coaches and Spectators	3
Defensive Penalties 10 yards	4
Offensive Penalties 10 yards.....	4
Other Penalties 5 yards.	4
Equipment.....	5
Game Time	5-6
Kickoff and Punting.....	6
Scoring.....	7
Sportsmanship Rule	7
Tie Game Overtime System	7-8
Addendum.....	8

THE PLAYERS

- A. Rosters shall not exceed 10 players per team.
- B. The game shall be played between two (2) teams with five (5) players each. A minimum of four (4) players is required to avoid a forfeit.
- C. Any offensive formation will be allowed.
- D. The defensive line-up is not restricted. Any defensive formation will be allowed.
- E. All players are eligible on offense, but no direct run by the quarterback.
- F. Minimum Play Rule:
 - 1. Each player must play a minimum of four (4) minutes in the 1st-2nd grade division and five (5) minutes in all other grade divisions. This will include all offensive and defensive plays in each half.
 - 2. Late arriving players, if time permits, must play the minimum minutes within the mandatory substitution half of their arrival.
 - 3. Injuries that preclude the player out of play from returning to the game are exceptions. Injuries that preclude the player from playing for more than one (1) play will be ruled upon at the discretion of the Youth Sports Coordinator with respect to satisfactorily meeting the requirement of the minimum play rule.
 - 4. Penalty for non-compliance will be forfeiture of the game.
 - 5. The Youth Sports Coordinator shall determine compliance.

5 on 5 Football

The following are the game rules that will govern our league. These rules were based on the NFL Flag Rule Book, along with some modifications.

OFFENSE

- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) downs to score a touchdown. a. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield or score a touchdown on three (3) downs, and elect to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross midfield or score a touchdown, the defensive team will start its possession from the spot where the offensive play ended.
- A 30 second play clock will be used in all divisions of play.
- The offensive team may not change from play or punt once they declare. Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of "play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.
- Teams change sides after each quarter. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.
- Teams may not run a running play in the designated No-Run zones (See Figure A). No-run zones are located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield. No-run zones are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Running plays are not permitted in these zones. Running plays ran inside the no-run zones will be declared dead and that down will be lost. The ball will then be spotted where the play originated. (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 goal line to score a TD).

Figure A – Field (No-run zones)



- Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Direct runs from the quarterback are not permitted.
- If the offensive player loses their flag, without it being pulled off, during an offensive play the defensive player must then touch the offensive player with one hand or two hands, for the offensive player to be considered down.
- Offensive players cannot break the offensive huddle or begin an offensive play without wearing a flag. Offensive players without a flag will have to put one on prior to the 30 second play clock expiring.
- **Ball carriers may not leave their feet to advance the ball.** However, the ball carrier may leave their feet and the play will continue ONLY if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player, **officials' discretion.**
 - Jumping, diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.

DEFENSE

Only one (1) defensive player may rush the quarterback. That player must be declared prior to the start of each down and must be lined up seven (7) yards off the line of scrimmage. Once the ball has been “snapped” into play, that player is eligible to rush.

BLOCKING

Blocking is not permitted.

COACHES AND SPECTATORS

- All coaches and players, when on the sidelines, must remain in a team box. One (1) coach may enter the field at their team’s huddle during time-outs.
- Spectators must remain in the stands or in designated spectator areas whenever seating facilities or designated spectator areas are available. If stands are not provided, spectators will keep at least five (5) yards from the sidelines and end lines, and five (5) yards from players’ sidelines.
- After a warning, failure to comply with A or B will result in a 10-yard penalty and said coach/team for unsportsmanlike conduct. If behavior persists, the game may be forfeited at discretion of official.
- Coaches will be permitted on the field as follows:

Division	Coaches Permitted on the Field
1 st -2 nd grade	Offense and Defense
3 rd -4 th grade	During timeouts only
5 th -6 th grade	During timeouts only
7 th -8 th grade	During timeouts only

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES – 10 YARDS

Penalty Types
Tackling the ball carrier
Holding the ball carrier
Blocking the ball carrier
Pushing the ball carrier
Charging the ball carrier
Bumping the ball carrier
Stripping the ball carrier
Defensive roughness + automatic first down
Flying block
Hideouts
Running over the ball carrier
Unsportsmanlike Conduct
Defensive penalty inside the 10 yard line = half the distance to the goal

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES – 10 YARDS

Penalty Types
Flag Guarding (including stiff arm) + loss of down
Hurdling + loss of down
Hideouts

OTHER PENALTIES – 5 YARDS

Penalty Types
Illegal Substitution- Offense/Defense
Offsides/False Start
Delay of Game- Offense
Tied Belt- Offense
Centered Ball- Offense
Forward pass thrown beyond the line of scrimmage, + loss of down
Line Buck

***In the 1st-2nd grade division all penalties will be enforced in an instructional manner. Called penalties will be explained to the player and coach, as needed. Repeated penalties shall then be called, and yardage will be marked.**

EQUIPMENT

- A. All game equipment, such as GAME BALLS, FLAGS, etc. will be furnished by the City of Gardena Recreation Division.
- B. Jerseys: Players must wear matching colored jerseys with numbers that are issued by the City of Gardena Recreation Division. At the start of each play all jerseys must be tucked into pants/shorts one (1) inch above the flag football belt line. Players not wearing their jersey will be declared ineligible to play in that game. Permission may be granted for players to play without their jersey in the event that their jersey is damaged or lost. This permission may be granted by the Youth Sports Coordinator and is only temporary until the jersey situation is resolved.
- C. Shorts: Each player must wear uniform shorts that are issued by the City of Gardena Recreation Division. The shorts must be a different color from the flags.
- D. FLAG BELT: All divisions shall use a regulation three (3) flag belt system. Flags must be a contrasting color to their opponents' flags.
- E. SHOES: Shoes must be worn; bare feet will not be permitted. Screw in or metal cleats are illegal. Use of molded rubber or multi-purpose shoes is recommended.
- F. GAME BALLS: The game ball sizes shall be as follow:

Division	Game Ball Size
1 st -2 nd grade	Pee Wee
3 rd -4 th grade	Pee Wee
5 th -6 th grade	Junior
7 th -8 th grade	Junior

- G. Personal Protective Equipment, such as knee guards, arm guards, etc. shall be inspected by officials prior to each game. No regulation on football equipment such as helmets, pads, etc. will be allowed. Shoes with metal, ceramic screw-in or detachable cleats are illegal.
- H. MOUTH GUARDS: Recommended for all participants.

GAME TIME

- A. The length of the game is listed on the table below, **see Figure B**. During running time, the clock shall be stopped by an official for a time-out or after any score. After a time-out the clock shall start on the next snap. After a score, the clock shall start on the kickoff.
- B. During the final two (2) minutes of each half the clock will stop for the situations listed below, **see Figure C**.
- C. Each team will receive two (2) timeouts per half. Unused first half timeouts do not carry over to the second half. Each team is entitled to one (1) time-out during each overtime period. Unused time-outs may not carry over into overtime periods. Timeouts shall be one (1) minute in length.

D. Game time is forfeit time.

Figure B- Time of Game

Division	Time of Game
1 st -2 nd grade	Four 8-minute quarters
3 rd -4 th grade	Four 10-minute quarters
5 th -6 th grade	Four 10-minute quarters
7 th -8 th grade	Four 10-minute quarters

Figure C- Two-Minute Warning Clock Stoppage

Stoppage	Restarting the Game Clock
Two-minute warning	Dependent on the previous play
Incomplete Pass	Restarts on the snap
Out of bounds	Restarts on the snap
Scoring play (touchdown or safety)	Restarts when the offensive team begins its series of downs
Team time out	Restarts on the snap
First down	Dependent on the previous play
Penalty administration	Dependent on the previous play (exception: delay of game- restarts on the snap)
Change of possession	Dependent on the previous play

KICKOFF and PUNTING

Kickoffs and punts are not permitted in any grade division.

SCORING

- A. When a team scores, they can choose to attempt a one (1) point conversion from five (5) yards out from the goal line or a two (2) point conversion from seven (7) yards out from the goal line. Afterwards, the team on defense will then begin its series of downs from their own 5-yard line.

SCORING PLAYS

Type of Play	Point value
Touchdown	6
Safety	2
Conversion (from 5-yard line)	1
Conversion (from 7-yard line)	2

***Game score and standings are not kept in the 1st-2nd grade division.**

SPORTSMANSHIP RULE

If a team is leading by a score of 24 points or more, the “running time” clock will be used. The clock will only stop for charged time outs and official time outs. Should the lead become less than a 24 point margin, the game will convert back to regulation timing.

TIE GAME OVERTIME SYSTEM- Playoff and Championship Games Only

The SCMAF tiebreaker system will be used when a game is tied after four (4) periods. Regular SCMAF flag football-playing rules apply with the following exceptions:

- A. A coin toss will be held immediately following regulation play. The winner of the toss shall choose one (1) of the following options: 1. Offense or defense, with the offense at the opponent’s 20 yard line to start the first series. 2. Which end of the field shall be used for both series of that overtime period. 3. The loser of the toss shall exercise the remaining option for the first extra period and shall have the first choice of the two (2) options for subsequent even-numbered extra periods. Note: The winner of the toss may not defer their choice.
- B. Extra periods: An extra period shall consist of two series (one (1) by each team) with each team putting the ball in play at the 20 yard line (unless moved by penalty). Both series are played toward the same goal line.
- C. Team Series: Teams which begin their overtime period outside of the 20 yard line due to penalty will NOT receive any first downs for crossing the zone-line-to-gains in the process. Teams may receive another set of downs by penalty only (automatic first down).

- D. The team that scores the most points in the overtime period is declared the winner.
- E. If both teams fail to score in any overtime period, the winner will be determined by the team that has gained the most net yardage from the 20 yard line. *(EX: If Team A finishes its possession at the 22 yard line and Team B finishes its possession at the 25 yard line Team A shall be declared the winner. The officials will mark the dead ball spot after completion of Team A's fourth down to determine the line to gain for Team B.)*
- F. If the teams are tied in score or in yardage at the end of overtime period, the overtime procedure will be repeated until there is a winner.
- G. 1st – 2nd grade division will not have a tiebreaker period as score is not kept.
- H. Tie Game Overtime System will only be used during playoff and championship games. Regular season games that are tied after four (4) quarters of play will be recorded as a half win/ half loss in the standings.

Addendum

- The offensive team will have seven (7) seconds to pass or hand off the ball once the ball is snapped. Failure to do so will result in a loss of down.
- All offensive plays in the no-run zone must be forward passes.
- Interceptions returned for scores during regular game play are worth six (6) points, and worth two (2) points in overtime.
- Point After Touchdown (PAT): Passed balls intercepted inside the end zone will be considered dead and placed on the 5-yard line of the defensive team. Passed balls intercepted outside of the end zone are considered live and may be run back for two (2) points.