

CITY OF CARSON

5 vs 5

**YOUTH
FLAG
FOOTBALL
2023
RULE BOOK**

PARKS & RECREATION

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The following rules and regulations have been formulated and adopted by the Youth Sports Section for the 2023 Youth Flag Football Season.

The Youth Sports Section will have jurisdiction over all rules and regulations governing any City of Carson Youth Flag Football event.

The Flag Football Season (including playoffs) will be conducted from September 23 to November 18, 2023.

1. CLASSIFICATIONS

Sandlot Division	Year Born – 2017 – 2018
Rookie Division	Year Born – 2015 – 2016
1A Division	Year Born – 2013 – 2014
2A Division	Year Born – 2011 – 2012
3A Division	Year Born – 2009 – 2010

2. REGISTRATION

All players must register online through ActiveNet and be listed on the **Official Team Roster Form** before taking part in a league game. Registrants must present proof of birth date at the time of registration. An original Birth Certificate is the only proof of birth accepted as verification of age.

3. ELIGIBILITY

- A. An ActiveNet registration must be completed online by the participant's parent or guardian.
- B. A player shall play for one team and one league only. A player is considered on a team when their name is placed on the Official Team Roster which is on file in the park office.
- C. Once a player is dropped from a team they cannot be added to another team during that current sport season at any park in the City of Carson unless they provide written proof of a change in residence. A player can never play for another team at the same park or at a different park during the same sport season.
- D. Youth participating in a sports league sanctioned by the California Interscholastic Federation (C.I.F.) are ineligible to concurrently play for a City of Carson team participating in the same sport (i.e., high school baseball – boy's baseball, high school football – flag football). If said youth has stopped playing on a C.I.F. team prior to tryouts for the department's league, they are eligible to go through the tryout and drafting procedure. If said youth has not stopped playing on a C.I.F. team as of the tryout date, they will not be eligible to go through the tryout and drafting procedure, but is eligible to be added to a team once they have stopped playing for the C.I.F. team provided the department's team qualifies for adding a player as described on page 7 of the Youth Sports Coaches Manual under the heading "Waiting List".
- E. The use of an ineligible player(s) will result in the forfeiture of all games in which said player(s) participated.
- F. Falsification of any information on the player's Sports Registration/Waiver Card is grounds for forfeiture of any or all games in which said player participated.
- G. Per the Youth Coaches Manual teams may have a maximum of 10 and a minimum of 7 rostered players.
- H. Teams must start games with a minimum of five players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with four players on the field but no fewer than four.
- I. There must be a minimum of four names on the waiting list before assignments from the waiting list can be made, except in an emergency situation (when a team roster falls below the minimum number of roster players needed for a team).
- J. The dropping and adding of players will not be done at the coaches' whim. In order for a coach to drop a player, the coach must fill out a **Park Player Release Form** and submit it to the Center Supervisor, who will then call the player's parent/guardian to verify the situation. If it is done properly and with good cause, only then will the coach be able to acquire a youngster from the waiting list to replace the dropped player. The Center Supervisor will then assign a player or players to a team once the drop has been confirmed.

- K. No new players can be added to a team following regular season play (prior to the City Play-offs). To be eligible for the City Play-offs, a player must have participated in at least one regular season game.
- L. Any player(s) that have been suspended shall have no contact with their team for the entire duration of the game(s) in which they are suspended.

4. EQUIPMENT

A. **Game Equipment:**

- 1. The official game ball will be of a rubber, pebbled-grain composition in the following sizes:
 - A. 1A and 2A Divisions will use a #6 junior-size football.
 - B. 3A Division will use a #7 intermediate-size football.
 - C. 4A Division will use a #9 official-size football.
 - D. Clinic Divisions will use a #5 pee-wee size football.**
- 2. An official down indicator will be used on the same side of the field as the teams.
- 3. A timing device (official game clock) will be operated by a designated referee on the field.
- 4. Flag Belts. All divisions shall use a regulation three flag belt system. **Flag belts cannot be the same color as shorts or pants.**

H. **Player Equipment:**

- 1. **A player shall wear:**
 - A. Either basketball, tennis, cross-country or rubber-cleated multipurpose shoes must be worn. Hard soled street shoes and metal cleats will not be allowed.
 - B. A numbered jersey or shirt of the same color is required of each member of a participating team in league play and must be tucked into shorts or pants. Dyed or non-dyed T-shirts with numbers are acceptable as jerseys.
 - C. Shorts or Pants of any length.
 - D. An oral mouthpiece is highly recommended but not required.
- 2. Players must remove all jewelry while participating in a game. Religious and medical alert medals are not considered jewelry. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical alert medal must be taped and may be visible.

5. THE FIELD

- A. The field dimensions are 20 yards by 50 yards with two 5-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-run zones are located five yards prior to the line to gain and five yards prior to the endzone in the offense's direction. However, some parks may use slightly different field dimensions because of field space availability.
- B. No-run zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run zones (a 5-yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion. All plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff. **Clinic Divisions – No-run zones are eliminated. Teams may run anywhere on the field.** Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
- C. Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
- D. A restraining line shall be placed completely around the outside of the field at least three yards from the sidelines and end lines as an extension of the line limiting the team box area.

6. COACHES AND SPECTATORS

- A. The head coach is responsible for the conduct and behavior of all players, assistant coaches and disqualified team members. **The conduct and behavior of team parents and spectators is also the responsibility of the head coach.**
- B. Coaches and players must stay in their own team areas. Both teams will be located on the same side of the field. **Only two adult coaches (maximum), are permitted on the sidelines to coach.**
- C. Spectators are required to remain completely behind the restraining line on the opposite side of the field from the players. If no restraining line is visible, spectators must remain at least three yards

back from the sidelines and end lines at all times.

- D. **Clinic Divisions – Only one coach per team will be allowed on the field during play to help their players. It is the coaches’ responsibility to ensure that their presence on the field does not hinder any live ball play or the Official’s view of the play in progress.**

H. **THE GAME**

1. At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
2. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
3. 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 three (3) downs to score a touchdown.
 - A. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, on three 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 field, the opposing team will start its possession from the spot.
 - B. Offensive Teams **MUST** declare 4th down intent; “Play or Punt”, when asked by the referee and prior to the ‘Ready for Play’.
 - C. Teams may use a timeout only to change the declaration of “Play” at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.
 - D. If the declaration is “Punt” the ball changes possession and will be placed at the opposing Team’s 5-yard line, 1st down, with **NO** option to change the declaration.
 - E. If the offense fails to score after crossing midfield the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
4. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

RULE 1 – TERMINOLOGY

1. **Boundary Lines** – The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the end zone lines.
2. **Line Of Scrimmage (LOS)** – An imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
3. **Line-to-Gain** – The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
4. **Rush Line** – An imaginary line running across the width of the field seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
5. **Offense** – The team with possession of the ball.
6. **Defense** – The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.
7. **Passer** – The offensive player that throws the ball and may not be the quarterback.
8. **Rusher** – The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback and to prevent the quarterback from passing the ball by pulling the quarterback’s flags or by blocking the pass.
9. **Live Ball** – Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
10. **Dead Ball** – Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
11. **Whistle** – Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime or the end of the game.
12. **Inadvertent Whistle** – Official’s whistle that is performed in error.
13. **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 the chest.
14. **Flag Guarding** – An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carrier’s flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner’s flags with a hand, arm

or ball.

15. **Shovel Pass** – A legal forward pass across the LOS underhand, backhand or by pushing the ball forward.
16. **Lateral** – A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier.
17. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – A rude, confrontational or offensive behavior or language.

RULE 2 – SUBSTITUTIONS

1. Coaches will be responsible for the enforcement of all articles within this rule, regardless of the circumstances.
2. When present, each team member in good standing must play in each game a minimum of one complete quarter (ten minutes).
3. A combination of minutes adding up to ten within two or more quarters does not constitute the playing of one complete quarter. A player must play the entire quarter, to satisfy the minimum participation requirements.
PENALTY: Forfeiture of game.
4. Substitutions will not be allowed during the first quarter, with the exception of replacing an injured player. After completion of the first quarter, any player may be substituted for, provided the substitute will play a minimum of one complete quarter (from beginning to end). At the start of each quarter, all entering substitutes must report to the referee. **Clinic Divisions – Free substitution throughout the game will be allowed. However, it is the coaches' responsibility to notify the referee when a substitution is taking place and that all players present during the game play a minimum of one half of the game (twenty minutes).**
5. Players arriving late (within the first three quarters) must still play one complete quarter to meet the minimum participation requirement and can only enter the game at the beginning of the next quarter. Players arriving after the fourth quarter has begun will not be allowed to play.
6. If a player is injured prior to having played the minimum required playing time, the referee must be notified prior to a substitute replacement. A player that has not yet played must replace the injured player. If all players have played, the manager can designate any player to replace the injured player.
7. An injured player who has been withdrawn and who has been unable to complete the required playing time, constitutes a legal player and may re-enter as a substitute at the discretion of the referee.
8. If a player is to become a legal substitute, they must, at the beginning of a quarter, report to the referee before entering the game.
9. No substitute shall enter during a down.
10. Between downs, any number of eligible substitutes may replace players. Replaced players shall leave the field immediately before the ball becomes live.
11. A player, replaced player, or a substitute is required to leave the field at the side on which their team box is located and go directly to the team box.
12. During the same dead ball interval, no substitute shall become a player and then withdraw and no player shall withdraw and re-enter as a substitute unless a penalty is accepted, a dead-ball foul occurs, there is a charged time-out or the period ends.
13. During a down a replaced player or substitute who attempts unsuccessfully to leave the field and who does not participate in or affect the play, constitutes an illegal substitution.
PENALTY: Illegal substitution – 5 yards
NOTE: Participation by a replaced player or substitute is illegal participation.
14. It is the responsibility of a manager or coach to see to it that all players' present play their minimum required playing time, and that all substitutes report to the referee prior to entering the game.
PENALTY: Failure to adhere to this article may result in the head coach being suspended from their next scheduled game.
15. Any disciplinary action taken by the head coach against a member of their team that would affect any of the participation or substitution rules must be reported to the referee and also noted on the scorecard prior to the start of the game.

RULE 3 – TIMING & TIE GAMES

1. The length of the game shall be four ten (10) minute quarters, running time. The clock stops for halftime, injuries and the Officials' discretion. **Clinic Divisions – The length of the game shall be two twenty**

(20) minute halves, running time. Late running games can be ended early at the discretion of either the head referee, Center Supervisor, Youth Sports Coordinator or highest ranking staff member present.

2. There shall be a one-minute rest period between the first and second quarters and between the third and fourth quarters. There will be a five-minute rest period (half-time) between the second and third quarters.
3. Each team gets one 60-second timeout per half. They do not carry over.
4. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
5. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
6. If time for any period expires during a down, play shall continue until the down ends.
7. If a game is suspended because of conditions that make it impossible to continue playing, the game may be rescheduled or it could be declared an official game if three or more complete quarters of the game have been played.
8. Regular season games, which end in a tie, will remain a tie. No extra periods will be played.
9. **Play-off games which end in a tie will be completed in the following manner:**
 - A. A flip of a coin shall determine the defending and receiving teams. The winner of the coin toss shall be given their choice of receiving the ball or defending a goal.
 - B. Each team will take turns getting one (1) 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. **(Example: Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.)**
 - C. If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
 - D. **Second Overtime Round (if needed):** Starting with the second round of overtime, both teams must "go for two" from the 10-yard line.
 - E. **Third Overtime Round (if needed):** Starting with the third round of overtime, each team will get 1 play from the 5-yard line going out from the end-zone. The team with the most yards will be the winner. The team with the most yards will be awarded 1 point added to their final score.
 - F. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
 - G. There are no timeouts.
 - H. Interceptions are returnable in OT, and worth 2 points.
 - I. **Both teams must have an offensive possession in OT. (Example: If first possession results in an interception that is returned, they must still take an offensive possession.)**

RULE 4 – SCORING

1. **Touchdown: 6 points**
2. **PAT (point after touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line).**
NOTE: 1 point PAT is pass only; 2 point PAT can be run or pass.
3. Interceptions returned for scores during regular game play are worth six points, conversions or overtime are worth two points.
4. **Safety: 2 points**
 - A. A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in their own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.
5. 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). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty. **Clinic Divisions – After a touchdown there shall be no attempt for the extra point (conversation).**
6. At the conclusion of the third quarter, if one team has gained a twenty-eight point differential or if it

secures such differential at any time during the fourth quarter, the game shall be ended upon completion of the down in progress.

7. **Clinic Divisions – No score is kept, everyone is a winner.**

RULE 5 – LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL

1. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
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. An official may give both teams a “courtesy” neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
3. A player who gains possession 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 with possession.
4. The defense may not mimic the offensive team 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.
5. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
6. Any official can whistle the play dead.
7. **Play is ruled “dead” when:**
 - A. The ball hits the ground.
 1. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit 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.
 - G. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
 - H. The 7 second pass clock expires.
 - I. Inadvertent whistle.
 - J. Ball carrier leaves their feet diving or to hurdle a player.

NOTE: There are no fumbles, ground contact does not have to be made. If the ball is fumbled forwards then it will be spotted where the ball carrier lost possession. Loss of possession is a **DEAD BALL**.
8. If an 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.If an inadvertent whistle occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offense will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.
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 call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

RULE 6 – RUNNING

1. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
2. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap.
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.
 - A. “Center sneak” play is not allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.
 - B. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
 - C. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, the seven-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.
4. Absolutely NO pitches or laterals of any kind.

5. No-run Zones are located 5-yards before each end zone and 5-yards on either side of 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 goal line to score a TD). **Clinic Divisions – No-run zones are eliminated. Teams may run anywhere on the field.**
6. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball.
7. Ballcarriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB's passing progression or if there is a clear indication that they have done so to avoid collision with another player and the play will continue without stoppage. However, if while leaving the ground, contact is made unnecessary roughness penalty may be enforced by the official.
8. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
9. 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.
10. Flag obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

RULE 7 – PASSING

1. All passes must be thrown with one hand from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and ball out of hand prior to breaching the line of scrimmage.
 - A. There is no intentional grounding.
 - B. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender.
 - C. The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. Pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. The quarterback has a seven-second "pass clock." 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 scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.
 - A. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).
 - B. If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.

RULE 8 – RECEIVING

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
3. A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
4. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
5. Interceptions are returnable on conversions after touchdowns (2 points).
6. Interceptions can be returned for a touchdown. If the flag is pulled of the defender intercepting the ball inside the opponent's end-zone or 5-yard line the intercepting team will start with possession from their opponents 5-yard line.

RULE 9 – RUSHING THE PASSER

1. All players who rush the passer must be a 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. **Clinic Divisions – Defenders may not rush the passer unless a legal handoff is executed in the backfield.**
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.
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. **Clinic Divisions – Defenders MUST line up at least five yards from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.**

A. A legal rush is:

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

H. A penalty may be called if:

1. The rusher passes the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
2. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offsides (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down).
3. 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 (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).
4. 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.

H. Special circumstances:

1. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect.
2. Teams are not required to identify their rusher before the play.
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.
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. 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.
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.
 - A. A Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.

RULE 10 – FLAG PULLING

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier’s possession at any time.
4. If a player’s flag inadvertently falls off during the play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. If a player who has one or no flags in their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.
6. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
7. 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 covering the flags with the football jersey.

RULE 11 – FORMATIONS

1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - A. One player at a time may go in motion at least 1 yard behind the line of scrimmage.
 - B. Teams may shift formations prior to the snap as long as they are set for at least 1 second before the ball is snapped.
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.
3. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between their legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave their hands.

RULE 12 – UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

1. If the referee witnesses any acts of **INTENTIONAL** tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**
2. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
3. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
4. Ball-carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
5. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
6. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:
Defense: +10 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down.
Offense: -10 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down.

RULE 13 – PENALTIES

General

1. The referee will call all penalties.
2. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
3. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
4. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
5. Games may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
6. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
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.
8. Spot fouls in end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down) / Offensive (Safety).

Defensive Spot Fouls

Defensive Pass Interference	Automatic first down
Holding	+5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping	+10 yards and automatic first down

Offensive Spot Fouls

Screening, Blocking or Running with the Ball	-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
Offside / Illegal substitution	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal Rush (Starting rush from inside 7-yard marker)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage and automatic first down
Illegal Flag Pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	+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
Offside / False Start / Illegal substitution	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down
Illegal Forward Pass (Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage)	-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 (More than one person moving)	-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
Illegal Procedure	-5 yards from line of scrimmage and loss of down

RULE 14 – PROTESTS

H. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY:

- A. Questions regarding the eligibility of a player(s) do not need to be made in protest form and may be raised at any time by a coach.
- B. Any coach questioning the eligibility of a player(s) shall notify the Youth Sports Section.
- C. The Youth Sports Section will render a decision regarding player(s) eligibility after all pertinent information has been obtained and reviewed.

H. RULE INTERPRETATION:

- A. In order that a Protest be proper and subject to a ruling by the Protest Committee, the following list of requirements must be met:
 1. Whenever a matter of protest arises during a game, time out is called by the team making the protest immediately following the play in question and a notice of intent to protest must be verbally given by the coach of the protesting team to the referee. The referee will then notify the coach of the opposing team that the game will be continued under protest. The error must be recognized before the next legal play begins. If the protest cannot be resolved at this time the referee shall make a note on the scorecard reflecting the rule being protested, the score at the time of the protest, the time remaining in the game, what quarter/down was being played, which team has possession of the ball, yardage to go for a first down (if any) and the location of the ball on the field. The head coach from each team shall initial the scorecard to verify that the information recorded by the referee is correct.
 2. A protest shall be considered only if it is placed in writing on the Coach's Protest Report Form and submitted to the Center Supervisor or one of his/her staff members along with a \$25.00 (check or money order) protest fee within twenty-four hours of the game. The written protest must contain the date, time and location of the game, the names of both teams, the division, Rule, Section or Article #, of the official rule(s) under which the protest is being made, the decision made by the referee, and all other essential facts involved with the matter protested.
 3. A protest must involve the interpretation or application of a playing rule and not involve the accuracy of the judgment of a referee.
 4. The head referee has the authority to rule on any point not specifically covered in the rulebook.
 5. Highly technical protests or those, which could have little or no effect on subsequent play or the final result of the game, shall not be considered.
 6. When a protest for the misinterpretation of a playing rule is allowed, the game will be replayed from the point at which the improper decision was made, with the decision corrected. When a protest for an illegal player(s) is allowed, all games the ineligible player(s) participated in shall be forfeited to the opponent of the offending team.

7. All protests will be handled by the Youth Sports Section. All rulings will be made in writing, after receiving all the pertinent information needed to make a decision.
8. The following will be taken into consideration when determining a final ruling: the official score card; statements of game officials, supervising park staff, and coaches; all applicable rules and any other pertinent information needed to make a decision.
9. The use of video or other electronic devices will not be allowed as evidence in a protest, nor shall it be used by a sports official in an attempt to render a decision.
10. Protests that do not contain all information necessary to determine a ruling, or have been found inconclusive by the protest committee, will be subject to a final ruling by the Recreation Program Manager.
11. The protest fee will be refunded if a protest is decided in favor of the coach who submitted it.

22. CITY PLAY-OFFS AND CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES

- A. The City Championship Tournament will be conducted the week following the end of the regular season league play.
- B. The same rules and regulations which governed league play shall govern the City Play-offs and Championship games.
- C. To be eligible for playoffs a player must have participated in at least one regular season game.
- D. If at the end of the fourth period, the score is tied during a City Play-off and/or final Championship game, playing time will be extended as outlined under the section – TIMING & TIE GAMES, on page 5.
- E. A paid scorekeeper will be the official scorekeeper in final Championship games only.
- F. Protests during City Play-offs or Championship games will be rendered on the site by the Center Supervisor or Youth Sports Coordinator. In the absence of both, the highest ranking staff member present will handle all protests. The protest must be made verbally to the Head Referee, stating the Rule #, Section, and/or Article that governs the rule interpretation in question.
- G. In the event a player is discovered during the City Play-offs to be ineligible, the opposing team playing, or the last team to have played the offending team, will advance to the next round of the Play-offs, or be awarded the City Championship (if ineligible player is discovered during or following the final City Championship game) by forfeit.
- H. The use of video or other electronic devices will not be allowed as evidence in a protest, nor shall it be used by a sports official in an attempt to render a decision.

5v5 FIELD DIMENSIONS

