

**City of Gladstone**  
Recreation Division  
Youth Flag Football Program  
Regulations

## **Administration**

The Youth Flag Football program is supervised by the Gladstone Parks & Recreation Department. Decisions rendered by the Parks & Recreation Department are final.

The league provides balls, officials, shirts, playing fields, equipment, and schedules.

## **Coaches**

1. Shall be certified National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) coaches.
2. Shall place emphasis of coaching on learning rules, fundamentals and sportsmanship.

## **Officials**

Two officials will referee each game. The officials have absolute authority to enforce rules, decide disputes, eject or stop a game as necessary for whatever reason.

## **Practices & Games**

Each team will be allowed four scheduled practices prior to the start of league games. Practices before games begin will be on Saturdays from 10:00am to 11:00am or 11:00am to 12:00pm on March 16 & 23. Practices on Mondays will begin on March 18, and all teams will practice from 6:00pm to 7:00pm.

Games will be on Saturday mornings in the fields on the east side of Happy Rock Park. Games are scheduled to begin on Saturday, April 6. Game times will either be 10:00am or 11:00am.

## **Registration**

Players must submit a registration form and a fee to participate in the league. Proof of age may be required.

## **Uniforms**

Each player will receive a uniform T-shirt with a number on the back. Participants must wear the league issued uniform.

Tennis shoes or shoes with molded rubber cleats are to be worn. No street shoes or metal, or replaceable cleats allowed.

**All participants must wear mouthpieces.** Athletic supporters are recommended for all male players.

## Playing Field

The playing field shall measure fifty yards in length and 25 yards in width. End zones are 10 yards in length.

Field lines and cones shall be marked for the end zones and at the one first down marker at midfield.

## Players and Equipment

- A game is played between two teams consisting of: five (5) players per team on the field.
- Each team roster shall have a maximum of 10 players. A minimum of four (4) players must be dressed and ready to play each game. A forfeit will result when the minimum number of players is not met.
- The offensive team must have a minimum of three (3) players on the line of scrimmage. The remaining two (2) players may take formation in any position whether it is on the line or in the backfield. The defensive team may choose any formation.
- **Defensive Blitzing and Quarterback Rules (All Grades):** Blitzing will be allowed in all grade divisions. Only one player on defense may blitz the quarterback. They must be 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage to be able to blitz. An official on one side of field will determine where the blitzer must start from. The quarterback will *not* be allowed to run with the ball in all divisions (**quarterback will be defined as player receiving the snap from center**). The quarterback has 7 seconds to release the ball (**forward pass or hand off**). If quarterback has not handed off or made a forward pass when 7 seconds has passed, play is dead. Ball is spotted at that point.
- The game ball shall be an official pee wee size football for the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade division, and 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade will use a junior size ball. After the toss to determine the beginning of the game the kicking team will be responsible for providing the game ball.
- Shorts, sweatpants, sliding shorts, or football pants are permitted as long as they do not have pockets or belt loops. Absolutely no baseball caps can be worn during games or practices. Coaches will be responsible for enforcing this rule during practices.
- Dangerous or confusing equipment will not be permitted. Examples include: projecting metal or other hard surfaces, jewelry, knee, and elbow or wrist pads of a hard substance. Traditional knee braces are acceptable as long as they are properly

padded and have no exposed metal. No pads or helmets normally associated with tackle football will be accepted.

- All players must wear the flags provided by the league. Flag belts tampered with to prohibit de-flagging will result in a 10-yard penalty and ejection from the game. Sticky substances, such as grease or glue, on a players clothing is prohibited.
- Eye glasses, when worn, shall be constructed of non-shattering glass.

## **Game Time**

Game time will start promptly as scheduled. A team must have four (4) uniformed players to start a game. A five (5) minute grace period is allowed from the starting time. The referee's watch is the official timing device. If the five (5) minute grace period is used that time will be deducted from the first quarter.

All teams must play on assigned dates. Failure to do so is an automatic forfeit

## **Playing Time**

- Games consist of four quarters, lasting 10 minutes each. The clock will run continuously. There will be no two (2) minute warning.
- The game official is responsible for keeping time. Time will stop only in the event of injury or illness, time outs or for handling incidents of unsportsmanlike conduct
- Any player or coach may call a time out. Each team will receive 1 time out per quarter. Time outs last 60 seconds.
- The Huddle: Thirty seconds are allotted to put the ball in play from the officials "ready to play whistle." Delay of game penalty is 5 yards.
- Pre-game: The initial coin toss between the two team captains and officials shall be made prior to game time. The captain winning the toss shall have choice of taking the ball or deferring to second half. Direction goes to the loser of the toss.

## **Game Records**

Standings will be kept in all grade divisions. We will determine a league winner in each division. Only the league winners will get medals in 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade. All players in 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> will receive a medal.

## **Official Game**

Every effort will be made to complete a game. In the event a game must be suspended because of conditions making it impossible to continue play, the officials shall declare an official game if one (1) complete half or more of the game has been played.

## Player Requirements/Player Substitutions

- All players in uniform will play a minimum of one full quarter in each half of the game and a maximum of three full quarters only if it is necessary in order for his/her team to field a full team. A minimum playing requirement does not apply in the case of injury or illness---should a player be removed from the game due to injury or illness, or disciplinary action that partial quarter counts as a quarter towards fulfilling the player participation requirement.
- **Offensive & Defensive Substitution** Player substitution will only take place at the beginning of each quarter. The players that are assigned to each quarter will play offense and defense. Separate offensive and defensive teams will not be allowed. The only exception will be in the case of injury or illness, or disciplinary action.
- Any player removed from the game due to injury, illness or disciplinary action must sit out of the game for the duration of that quarter. If, in the judgement of the official, the injury is of serious nature, the player will be required to sit out of the game for the duration of that quarter and the next full quarter before returning to play.
- Although you may not substitute during a quarter, you may change player positions. For example the person playing quarterback for one series of downs may switch to receiver during another series of downs. The same for the defense, a person playing on the line of scrimmage for one set of downs may move to the secondary for another set of downs.
- Each team will be allowed one coach on the playing field. The purpose is to help instruct the players and call plays. Coaches must stay out of the area of play so as not to interfere with progress.

## Sportsmanship

- Team members, coaches and spectators shall exhibit appropriate behavior towards other players, officials and spectators.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct from team members and/or associates including spectators will result in one or more of the following:
  1. Player or coach ejection from the game
  2. Player or coach ejection from the league
  3. Player or coach suspension
  4. Forfeit of the game
- During the game, the officials have the authority to eject players or coaches. The Recreation Department has the final authority on determining the duration of the suspension or other penalty. Any player or coach ejected from a game must leave the playing area. Failure to do so may result in a forfeiture of the game.

- The Officials decision in all matters is final. There shall be no protests except in the case of minimum playing requirements. Intent to protest must be noted to the official at the request of the coach within five (5) minutes of the conclusion of the game. The protest must then be reported to the Recreation Department by the protesting coach the next working day. Reports may be made in person or by phone.

## **The Game**

- Each half will start with the ball placed on the 10-yard line, with no kick off.
- To gain another first down, the team in possession must advance the ball to the mid-field line from where the ball was located at the start of the first down.
- The ball is considered in the next zone if any part of it is on, over, or above the line at the most advanced point when the ball is dead.
- Encroachment: After the ball is marked for play, any player that crosses his or her scrimmage line before the snap causes the ball to become dead.
- Shifts: Only one offensive player may be in motion at the snap and that motion may not be towards the opponent goal line. A player starting in motion from the scrimmage line must be behind the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- If a snap hits the ground, the ball is dead and is placed at the spot where it first contacted the ground.
- The player receiving the snap may be positioned under center or in the shotgun formation. There must be an exchange of the ball between the center and quarterback. Fake snaps will not be allowed.

## **Passing**

- All players are eligible to catch a forward pass.
- A pass intercepted in the end zone may be run into the field of play, or may be downed for a touchback. It is an automatic touchback when the player intercepts the ball in the end zone and is de-flagged. Interceptions occurring during an extra point attempt cannot be advanced.
- Examples of illegal forward passes are: a pass thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage, a pass intentionally thrown to the ground.
- Lateral passes are legal both behind and in front of the line of scrimmage. A lateral will be legal after the completion of the forward pass.

## Blocking

- The only player allowed to block will be the center, against the blitzing defender. **All other players are not allowed to block.** They must get out of the way or continue to run without making contact or getting in the way of defenders trying to de-flag the ball carrier.
- If officials see that a player other than center trying to block blitzer was intentionally blocking a defender, an illegal block will be called. It will result in a 5 yard penalty and loss of down.
- A blocker cannot use their hands or elbows. Arms are to be kept to the sides of the body or behind their back. Screen blocking is the only accepted form of blocking.

## Center

- The center must snap the ball between their legs. No fake snaps from the center.
- The center must line up with no part of his body beyond the forward point of the ball.
- The center is the only position that has a choice to block blitzing defender or just run a route if passing.

## Ball Carrier/Running the Ball

- The ball is declared dead when a defensive player detaches the ball carriers flag.
- Players feet may leave the ground in order to pull the flag from the ball carrier, but it is not recommended.
- Pushing a runner unnecessarily hard in an attempt to pull the flag is considered unnecessary roughness. An intentional tackle by a player may result in an automatic ejection.
- If a player's flag inadvertently falls off, the play is dead where the flag fell off.
- Flag guarding will not be allowed. If in the official's determination, the ball carrier was using his hand without the ball to block defenders from pulling their flag, than flag guarding will be called. It will result in a 5 yard penalty and a loss of down.

## Dead Ball

- All balls touching the ground are immediately dead. Examples of dead ball situations:
  1. When the ball carrier touches the ground with his body, other than hands or feet.
  2. When the ball carriers flag has been pulled.
  3. Following a touchdown, safety, or touchback.

4. When the ball goes out of bounds for any reason.
5. If the center's snap hits the ground. Ball is placed at the spot the ball hit the ground.
6. If a lateral pass touches the ground. (Ball is dead at that point)
7. If a forward pass strikes the ground.

## **Punting**

Teams have the choice on fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) down to punt or try for first (1<sup>st</sup>) down. If a team decides to go for a first down and does not succeed the defensive team takes possession of the ball at that point.

If a team decides to punt on fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) down the following procedure will be used:

1. Coach must inform the officials they are wanting to punt.
2. Ball will automatically go to opponent's 10 yard line. Where they will start their drive.

## **Defense**

- Defense may play any formation. Defense has choice between playing zone or man-to-man. Players on defense must not be across the neutral zone before the ball is snapped. It will be a 5 yard offside penalty if this occurs.
- Only one player will be allowed to blitz the quarterback. They must be 5 yards back of the line of scrimmage. If the blitzer leaves before the snap or is in front of official standing at the blitzing point, they will be considered offside and receive a 5 yard penalty.
- Once the offense either hands the ball off or completes a pass (forward or lateral), than all defensive players may cross the line of scrimmage to attempt to de-flag player with the ball.

## **Extra Points**

- Offensive team will have the option of going for a 1-point or 2-point play after a touchdown is scored.
- 1-point play will be a play that is from the 5 yard line.
- 2-point play will be a play that is from the 10 yard line.
- Offense has the choice of handing off, throwing a forward pass, or lateraling during the play. All other rules during play will remain (blitzing, blocking, etc.)