

MAA Flag Football Rules & Procedures

GENERAL GUIDELINE & PROCEDURES

- Pre-Game practice on the field is allowed only if times permits.
- Only the teams getting ready to play are allowed on the field.
- All players that participate in practices must play in every game. Players are expected to attend practices. It is the coach's discretion on how much a player plays if they have missed practices.
- Jewelry/Casts
 - For safety and prevention, all exposed items that are judged to be hazardous or potentially dangerous by the official may not be worn during the game.
 - This includes, but is not limited to; casts, wristwatches, large rings, bracelets or neck chains.

ELIGIBILITY & ROSTERS

- All players must be registered with the MAA and meet all league eligibility requirements.
- The MAA will form teams; **Coaches will not pick their own players.**
- Assigned HC'S may select one (1) AC having two kids to start the season before roster selection. A 3rd may be granted for families (such as cousins), or special circumstances. **(SIBLINGS/Family OF THE SAME AGE GROUP WILL BE PLAY ON THE SAME TEAM)**
- All players must play in every game. The coaches can decide when, but the goal of playing is 50% of the time. Intentional violation of the minimum playing time rule may result in the forfeiture of the game.
- Rosters are made of 7/8 players.
- Roster fill-ins MUST come from 1 League Lower. NO EXCEPTIONS. Violation will result in forfeit.

EQUIPMENT/UNIFORMS

- Uniform Jersey is provided by the MAA and must be worn at all games on the outer layer.
- Football, Baseball and Soccer cleats are allowed. NO METAL SPIKES.
- Protective mouthpiece is at the parents' discretion.
- Only flag belts provided by the MAA will be allowed as official equipment during game play.
- Flags must point out, away from the body on sides and rear, any flags facing inward will be considered flag guarding.
- All shirts must be **tucked in** and flags easily accessible. Any obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.
- Belts must be fitted to player; the flags must not be altered in any way.
- The following football sizes will be used in the MAA league.
 - 5-6 Pee Wee – Pee Wee sized Football
 - 7-8 Junior – Pee Wee sized Football
 - 9-10 Youth – Junior sized Football
 - 11-13 Senior – Youth sized Football

- 14-18 Varsity – Youth sized Football

SCORING

- Touchdown = 6pts
- Extra point = 1 pt (from 5-yd line) 2 pts (from 10-yd line) Pee Wee ONLY has a 5-yd line
- Safety = 2 pts
 - A safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls off, they step out of bounds or they hit the ground with their knee or arm and are surrounded by an opposing player.

START OF THE GAME/BALL POSSESSION

- Teams must have 5 players to begin the game (if only 4 players are available, both teams must agree to play 4 vs. 4)
- Teams shall be prepared to start games at the designated time.
- There is a 5-minute grace period (beginning at designated time) for the start of the game if a team is short of players.
- A coin toss determines first possession.
- The visiting team will be responsible for calling the opening coin toss.
 - Coaches will decide however many players they want present at the coin toss.
 - The winner of the coin toss will decide if they want to receive the ball or defer to the 2nd half.
 - The Defense at the start of the game will decide which direction they will face when the game starts.
- At the beginning of the 2nd half, the team that started the game with the ball will start on defense.
- Teams will also switch the direction they are facing at the beginning of the 2nd half.

CLOCK/TIMING

- The game will consist of 2-25 minute halves, with a 5-minute half time.
- The clock runs continuous, unless otherwise noted in league rules.
- The clock does not stop when a player drops a pass or runs out of bounds.
- The referee will stop the clock and give a 2-minute warning left in each half.
- 2–Minute Warning: 3 plays before the end of the half. 3 plays can come from either team in the event of a turnover (INT or Downs) An interception can be returned for a TD in the final 3 plays of a half.
- ANY SCORE ENDS HALF (3 play rule not in effect) Teams will play an untimed extra-point
- Each time the ball is spotted, the offense will have 30 seconds to snap the ball. Warnings will be given to Coach's who violate before penalties assessed.
- Overtime consists of a sudden death/equal chance scoring possibility.
 - Teams will alternate possessions (1 down) to try to score, with the ball spotted at the 5yd line. (Closest to the end zone) Extra points will be attempted if needed.
- Each team receives one 30 and one 60 second time out per half.

- Official time-outs can be called for rule clarification, injury or spectator interference.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- **GAME RULES**
- Teams consist of 7/8 players, with game play consisting of a 5 on 5 game; teams must field 5 players at a time. (See Start of Game Rules for 4 players)
- The offensive team plays for a 1st down at midfield, and a touchdown in the end zone.
- Running and passing plays are allowed, although there are “no-running” zones 5 yards before mid-field and end zone. (This rule is not enforced in Pee-Wee)
- Hand-offs to Running Backs, followed by a pass are allowed as long as they are still behind the line of scrimmage.
- The Defensive team covers receivers, rushes the passer and grabs flags to stop the offense.
- The Offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has 3 plays to make it across midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it then has 3 plays to score a Touchdown. If the offense fails to cross the midfield or score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its own 5 yard line.
- Interceptions may be returned as long as the interceptor is wearing flags.
- If the interceptor is not wearing flags, the ball is dead where it is caught. A change of possession still occurs at spot of interception.
- Peewee and junior league coaches may coach from the field calling team plays. (2 max per team to ease congestion on the field)
- Youth and Senior league Coaches must stay on the sidelines during the games. (Except timeouts) Coaches are permitted to walk the length of the field during game play.
- There are no kickoffs and there is no blocking by any player on the team possessing the ball.
- No tackling or “inadvertent tripping” while trying to pull flags.
- Games will not be rescheduled to accommodate teams with players not available on scheduled dates.
- Stiff-Arming (Arm Barring) is not allowed and will be called as Flag Guarding.

RUNNING

- The quarterback must pass or handoff the ball. No QB running plays allowed.
- Offense may use multiple handoffs including laterals beyond the line of scrimmage.
- “No-Running Zones” are designated to avoid short yardage, power-running situations.
- The player who takes the hand-off can throw the ball as long as they stay behind the line of scrimmage.
- After a flag has been pulled, the ball is spotted where the ball is located, not where the runner’s feet are. This is at the discretion of the official.

RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the QB if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage)
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot in bounds when making a reception.
- Interceptions are returnable; except on extra points.

- In the case of simultaneous possession by both the offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense. (Discretion of the official)

PASSING

- Shovel passes are allowed.
- Shotgun formation is allowed
- The QB has a 7-second “pass clock”. If a pass is not thrown within the 7 seconds, the official will blow the play dead and will result in a loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-second rule no longer is in effect. (Ref’s will count 7 seconds with hand signals)

DEAD BALLS

- The ball must be snapped between the legs, to start play. With exception of opposite sex players, they must snap the ball from the side.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- Play is “dead” when:
 - Ball carrier’s flag is pulled
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - Touchdown or safety is scored
 - Ball carrier’s flag falls off
 - Ball carrier fumbles the ball (there are no fumbles)

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

- Any player who rushes the QB must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Only 1 player may rush the QB at a time. (This 7 yards will be an arbitrary distance marked off by the official) Any number of players may start 7 yards back.
- **PEE WEE LEAGUE ONLY: ALL players will start from the 7-yard line so that the snapper and the QB have a chance to start a play.**
 - A legal rush is:
 - Any rush from a point 7 yards from the line of scrimmage
 - If the rusher leaves the rush line early, they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the QB.
 - A penalty may be called if:
 - The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap of the ball and does not reset before crossing the line of scrimmage. (Illegal Rush)
 - Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped. (Offside’s)

One exception to the line of scrimmage rule; if the QB fakes a handoff to the RB and the running backs defender crosses the line of scrimmage as a result of the fake. The RB defender at this point cannot interfere with the QB if the hand off does not occur.

- Once the ball is handed off, the 7-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go beyond the line of scrimmage.
- **NO BLOCKING;** Impeding the progress of a defender to make a defensive play on the ball is considered blocking. (I.E. creating a “wall” of players and having the ball carrier run behind

the “wall”, even though contact may not have been made) **THIS MAY INCLUDE RUNNING ALONG SIDE THE BALL CARRIER.**

SPORTSMANSHIP/ROUGHING

- If the referee witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, malicious blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
- Trash talking or negative yelling is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talking is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators). If trash talking or yelling occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the coach, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
- **COACHES MAY NOT YELL ACROSS THE FIELD IN ANY FORM OF NEGATIVE CONNOTATION**
- An ejected coach or player will immediately vacate the playing area and desist from further comment or action. For the purpose of this rule, the “playing area” will be taken to mean “far enough away from the field of play so that the ejected coach or player, in the opinion of the official, has no affect whatsoever on the game, it’s players or spectators”.
- Ejection from a game will constitute automatic temporary suspension through the next regularly scheduled league or playoff game. Two ejections during the season will automatically constitute suspension through the duration of the current season.
- Coaches are responsible for their players and parents conduct at all times.
- By the act of participating, all teams, players and coaches acknowledge that they are acquainted with and will abide by all league rules.
- Any questions regarding rules and regulations of the league can be directed to the officials in a non-threatening manner. **SPEAKING TO THE OFFICIALS IN ANY WAY IN WHICH THEY FEEL THREATENED WILL RESULT IN A ONE GAME SUSPENSION UP TO REMOVAL FROM THE LEAGUE.**
- Communicate to your players that good sportsmanship is an important part of the program.

PENALTIES

- The officials will call all penalties. If a League Spokesperson is asked to clarify a rule, they may step in and discuss the rule/play involved. This DOES NOT mean they will over turn the officials call. Some calls become teaching moments.
- Defensive Penalties:
 - Offside’s – 5 yards
 - Interference – 10 yards and automatic 1st down (and will restart the offenses 3 downs)
 - Illegal contact (impeding an offensive player) – 10 yards and automatic 1st down
 - Illegal flag pulling (before receiver has the ball) – 10 yards and automatic 1st down
 - Illegal rushing (out of “rush zone”) – 10 yards
 - Illegal “Tackling” (incidental or not) – 10 yards and automatic 1st down

- UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT: 1st Offense: 15 yards, automatic 1st down. 2nd Offense: Coach has to leave the field. (See ejected Coach/Player rule)

Offensive Penalties:

- Illegal motion (more than 1 player moving) – 5 yards (Pee wee is exempt)
- Illegal forward pass (beyond line of scrimmage) – 5 yards and loss of down (Pee wee is exempt)
- Interference (pushing off) – 10 yards and loss of down
- Flag guarding (holding or blocking your flag from opponent, or pushing opponents hand away, or jersey/shirts un-tucked) – 10 yards and loss of down
- UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT: 1st Offense: 15 yards and Loss of down. 2nd Offense: Coach has to leave the field. (See ejected Coach/Player rule)

MISC...

- Officials determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. Parents and coaches should expect some incidental contact, especially when two players are going for a pass.
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

FIELD DIMENSIONS

- Pee-wee: 25x50 (includes End Zones)
- Junior: 30x60
- Youth: 30x80
- Senior: 35x90