

Jr. Bronco Flag Football Rules

YMCA GOAL

- The YMCA goal is to give every child between the grades of 1st–4th a chance to play flag football. To teach flag football skills, sportsmanship, working together as a team: promote new friendships, positive family interactions and to have FUN.

SPORTSMANSHIP

- Coaches are directly responsible for team members before, during, & after the game.
- If the referee or supervisor witnesses any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or unsportsmanlike conduct, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
- Any trash talking or taunting which is intended to embarrass, ridicule, or demean others under any circumstance will not be tolerated. First offence is a warning; the second offense is ejection from the game.

COACH CONDUCT:

- Coaches are expected to adhere to YMCA philosophies, coaching guidelines, codes of conduct, and hold themselves with utmost integrity.
- One coach is allowed to be on the field for offense and defense.

PRACTICES

- Practice will be scheduled by the coach in conjunction with team members. Teams practice once a week for approx. 1 hour. During the first week, teams are allowed to practice 2 times before their first game.
- Reminder: Outside facilities are open to members; you may have to share with other YMCA teams.
- In case of bad weather, coaches will make the decision whether to cancel practices. Game cancellations/delays will be determined by Y staff.

EQUIPMENT:

- All participants will receive a Jr. Bronco jersey—jerseys must be tucked in and flags must be visible and at the hips.
- Each team will be provided 2–3 footballs, flags, and cones to practice with throughout the season.
- Mouth guards are highly recommended.
- Cleats are optional, metal spikes are not allowed.
- Coaches must return all equipment after the last game of the season

TEAM SIZE:

- 1st–2nd Grade will be 5v5 — 8–12 players per team
- 3rd–4th Grade will be 6v6 — 8–12 players per team

The YMCA emphasizes equal participation, please allow players to play different positions and play at least half of each game.

BALL SIZE:

- 1st–2nd Grade will play with Pee Wee size ball
- 3rd–4th Grade will play with Junior size ball

FIELD OF PLAY:

- 1st–2nd Grade-- Approximately 50 yards long by 20 yards wide. (5-yard end zone)
- 3rd–4th Grade-- Approximately 65 yards long by 30 yards wide. (5-yard end zone)

TIMING

- Games are two 20-minute halves (running clock) with a 5 minute halftime. Teams switch directions at halftime.
- No overtime for either grade division.
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced. Refs will be a little more lenient the first week of the season.
- Each team has one 60 second timeout per half, no carryover. Clock will stop for timeouts.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.

START OF GAME

- The game is started with the players/coaches meeting with the referee at midfield and going over the Sports Pledge.
- First possession will be determined by **Rocks, Paper, Scissors.**
- The offensive team begins the game and second half by taking possession of the ball on its 5-yard line.

GAME:

- **1st–2nd Grade:** The offensive team takes possession of the ball on its 5-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown. If the team fails to cross midfield in four downs or score a touchdown, the other team takes possession on its own 5-yard line. There will be no punts for this division. All four downs will be used without the concern of giving up field position.

- **3rd-4th Grade**-The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
- **3rd-4th Grade Punting**- Teams will have the option to punt.
 - *A team may punt on any down but must first tell referee and defending team.
 - *No one may rush the punter or jump while the ball is in play. If so, re-kick.
 - *Any punt that is not caught and rolls, the ball will be spotted where the ball is touched or stops rolling.
 - *The kicking team cannot cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked.
 - *A punt that is downed by the receiving team in the end zone will be spotted at the 5-yard line.
- A team may choose to go for the first down or a touchdown on 4th down but if it does not convert, the other team will take over possession of the ball where the play ends.
- The only turnover allowed is an interception, which may be advanced by the defense for a gain. Interception during extra-point conversion will result in turnover and defense will take over on the 5 yard line.
- All fumbles will be a dead ball at the spot where the fumble occurs, except on muffed snap.

OFFENSE

- The quarterback is the first player to touch the ball from the snap.
- **The Quarterback CANNOT run the ball across the line of scrimmage, he/she must hand off or pass.** The quarterback does have the ability to scramble in the back field, but cannot advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. This is in place to include others in each offensive play. Without this rule, a quarterback could dominate each play by advancing the football.
Penalty: 5 yards and loss of down
- A player who takes a handoff or pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play.
- A muffed snap to the quarterback will not be considered a fumble and may be picked up and play continues. If the defense recovers, the result is loss of down.
- No Center or QB Sneaks allowed!
- An offensive team must have a minimum of 2 players on the offensive line.
- Direct handoffs/pitches behind the line of scrimmage are permitted.
- The offense may use multiple handoffs and pitches.
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- If the ball carrier accidentally loses the flag belt or falls down, the ball is dead at that spot. (receiver is still eligible, but if catches pass, is down at that spot)
- Offensive players must avoid contact with the defensive player. **Penalty: 5 yards and loss of down.**
- Players are allowed to spin only to avoid contact with the defender. No continual spinning is allowed. **Penalty: 5 yards and loss of down.**
- Players can't leave their feet by jumping over another player to avoid their flag from being pulled and no diving is allowed. **Penalty: 5 yards and loss of down.**
- A player with the ball is not allowed to guard flags with his hands, swatting defenders hands away. **Penalty: 5 yards from spot and loss of down.**
- Stiff Arming is not allowed. **Penalty: 5 yards and loss of down.**

BLOCKING

- Blocking is allowed on the line of scrimmage on the defenders upper body. **No extending of hands is allowed!**
- Downfield blocking is not allowed 5 yards beyond the line of scrimmage. Players may get in defenders way but not initiate contact. **No hands allowed: Penalty: 5 yards and loss of down.**
- Once the ball has been handed off or pitched, all defensive players may rush.

RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive a forward pass.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

PASSING

- Quarterback has **10 seconds** to throw the ball. If a pass is not thrown within 10 seconds, it is treated as an incomplete pass (loss of down). If the QB is standing in the end-zone at the end of 10-second clock, the ball will be returned to the line of scrimmage.
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage. **Penalty: 5 yards and loss of down.**
- Interceptions are a change of possession. Interceptions may be returned by the defense for a positive gain. Interception during extra-point conversion will result in turnover and defense will take over on the 5 yard line
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.

DEAD BALLS

Play is ruled dead when:

- Ball carrier's flag is pulled
- When the ball is fumble, except when the ball is snapped

- Ball carrier steps out of bounds
- Touchdown or extra-point is scored
- Ball carrier's knee hits the ground
- Ball carrier's flag falls out or the receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
- The **10 second** pass clock expires.

FUMBLES

- The ball hits the ground as a fumble. The ball will be spotted at the point of the fumble. One exception to this rule is with the center/quarterback exchange. If a snap is mishandled, the quarterback, and only the QB, may pick up the ball and continue play. If a defender gets to the ball before the quarterback, the play is ruled dead and the ball is spotted at the point of the fumble (treated like a sack)

DEFENSE

- A Defensive player is not allowed to strip the football from the offensive player running the ball. **Penalty: 5 yards and automatic first down.**
- A Defensive player is allowed to strip the football from a receiver trying to catch a pass.

RUSHING THE QB

- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of **7-yards** from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Referee will designate a Rush Line **7-yards** from the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off to another player or play-action is shown, the seven yard rule is no longer in effect.
- **An illegal rush penalty is 5 yards and automatic 1st down**
- Any number of players may rush the passer.

PENALTIES

All penalties will be called by the referee.

- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** (swearing, disrespecting official taunting, spiking, etc.)-- 10 yard penalty and automatic 1st down or loss of down and depending on infraction; it may result in ejection.
- **Personal Foul**-(intentional flagrant actions beyond illegal contact)—Player is ejected. 10 yard penalty and loss of down or automatic 1st down if by defense.
- All penalties within 5 yards of the end zone will be half the distance to the goal line.
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- Only the team coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.

Defense:

- **Off-sides**—5 yards and automatic 1st down
- **Pass Interference**—5 yards and automatic 1st down
- **Illegal Contact** (holding, blocking, tackling, pushing, stripping of ball)—5 yards and automatic 1st down
- **Illegal Flag Pull** (before receiver has ball—5 yards and automatic 1st down
- **Illegal Rushing** (start rush inside 7-yard marker)—5 yards and automatic 1st down
- All defensive penalties incur automatic 1st down and loss of 5 yards

Offense:

- **Illegal Motion** (false start, offsides, QB running ball)—loss of 5 yards and repeat down
- **Illegal Forward Pass** (throwing a pass beyond line of scrimmage)—loss of 5 yards and loss of down.
- **Illegal Contact**-(stiff arm, holding, charging, pushing, blocking) -- loss of 5 yards and loss of down.
- **Offensive Pass Interference**(illegal pick, pushing off defender)—loss of 5 yards and loss of down
- **Flag Guarding**—loss of 5 yards (from the spot) and loss of down
- **Delay of Game** (more than 30 seconds to begin next play)—loss of 5 yards and loss of down