

2026
3rd & 4th GRADE
**PADDED FLAG FOOTBALL
RULES**



SUBURBAN YOUTH
FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

1. Game Rules

- a. A coin toss determines first possession
 - i. Visiting Team calls the coin toss.
- b. The field is 60 yards long by 40 yards wide.
- c. There are no kick-offs.
 - i. Teams will start drives at the beginning of each half and after touchdowns on their own 10-yard line. The ball will always be placed in the middle of the field (weather permitting).
- d. The offensive team has 4 plays to gain a first down marked at each 20-yard line.
- e. There are no punts.
 - i. On 4th down, the offense must declare within 10 seconds if they wish to punt or go for it. If a punt is declared, the clock will stop and the referee will mark off 20 yards from the line of scrimmage. If the LOS is inside your opponent's 20-yard line, the referee will mark off half the distance. The clock will resume running when the ball is reset.
- f. 30-second clock between plays.
 - i. Referee enforcement will tighten up during season.

2. Players/Coaches

- a. Padded Flag Football is a CONTACT game. Coaches are to instruct players the proper techniques in blocking and avoiding blocks.
- b. Only 1 coach from each team is permitted on the field at a time.
 - i. Offensive Coach must back up behind huddle before snap.
 - ii. Coaches must not interfere with game play. (Defensive coach should get to a sideline)

3. Timing

- a. The length of each quarter is 9 minutes with a 5-minute break at halftime.
- b. The clock will run continuously except in the following situations:
 - i. During extra-point attempts.
 - ii. After third down and until the punt yardage is marked off or a team decided to "go for it".
 - iii. After a change of possession and until the referee signals the ball is in play.
 - iv. During the last 2 minutes of each half, in which a regulation high school stop clock will be used.
 - v. During the discussion with team captains concerning penalties. The clock will resume on the referee's signal.
- c. Each team is permitted 3 time-outs per half. These do not carry over to the next half.
- d. No overtime for regular season play.

4. Scoring

- a. Touchdowns: 6 points
- b. Extra points:
 - i. 2.5-yard line
 - 1. 1 point run
 - 2. 2 points pass
- c. Safety: 2 points. Ball placed at midfield.

5. Offense

- a. Each team will play with 9 players (minimum 8 to avoid forfeit, still must have 5 linemen).
- b. You must have 3 players OFF the line of scrimmage.
 - i. QB-RB-RB or QB-RB-WR or QB-WR-WR
- c. You must have 6 players ON the line of scrimmage
 - i. 5 in the Tackle-to-Tackle box (2 tackles, 2 guards and a center). Each of these players must be lined up no farther than an arm's length apart and in a 3-point stance
 - ii. The 6th player on the line of scrimmage can be lined up as a tight end or split out as a wide receiver. This player is eligible and can be in a 2-point stance
- d. Motion is allowed by one player not lined up on the line of scrimmage.

6. Running

- a. The quarterback can only run with the ball outside of the tackle box. NO QB SNEAKS up the middle!
- b. Spinning/Diving is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defender.
 - i. Violation of this rule will result in the play being whistled "dead" and the ball being marked at the spot where the runner left the ground.
- c. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- d. No flag guarding or stiff-arming. No 'Trucking' or putting head down into defender.
- e. There is no ball carrier weight limit.
- f. Center sneak plays are not permitted. The ball must exchange hands between the center and quarterback.
 - i. The "sleeper", or "lonesome end" play, is not permitted.

7. Passing

- a. The quarterback or a running back may pass the ball as long as they are behind the line of scrimmage.

- i. all laterals or pitches must occur behind the line of scrimmage.
- ii. Offensive Lineman can not go downfield on a pass.

8. Receiving

- a. Only the 3 players lined up off the line of scrimmage and/or 1 “tight end” or “wide receiver” will be eligible to receive passes.
- b. Screen passes are allowed.
- c. A player must have one foot in bounds when making a reception.
- d. A player cannot run out of bounds and back in bounds and make a reception.

9. Dead Balls

- a. The ball must be snapped from between the center’s legs.
- b. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- c. Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - i. Ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
 - ii. Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - iii. Touchdown or safety is scored.
 - iv. Ball carrier’s knee hits the ground.
 - v. If the flag inadvertently falls off the ball carrier, the ball will be marked at that spot. If this occurs by a runner in his own end zone, the down will be replayed but the ball will be marked at the 1-yard line.
 - vi. If a whistle is blown inadvertently, the play will stand, the down will count, and the ball will be marked at the spot that the whistle was blown.
 - vii. There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball is dropped. The defensive team cannot recover a fumble, even if it is caught in the air. The ball is dead at the spot.
 - 1. There is no stripping of the ball from the carrier. If the ball is stripped, it is dead at the spot of the stripping.
 - 2. If the ball is fumbled in the endzone, or snap is dropped in the endzone, it is a safety.

10. Defense

- a. Blitzing is not allowed. (only defensive lineman can rush)
 - i. Non-Linemen may rush after ball is handed off or QB leaves the pocket
- b. Defensive must have minimum of 2 and maximum of 4 defensive lineman.
 - i. All Defensive Linemen will line up in a 3-point stance.
 - ii. No Gap Play, Defensive Lineman must line up HEAD-to-HEAD.
 - 1. Defensive Lineman must be within 1 yard of LOS
 - 2. Contact must be made with the offensive guard before A gap rush.
 - iii. No Nose Guard, defense must not line up over the center.

- iv. No stunting or shifting
- c. All defensive players except for defensive lineman (guards and tackles) **must line up 3 yards off the line of scrimmage at the snap**, anywhere on the field.
 - i. Referees will be instructed to warn defensive players lining up too close, then call unsportsmanlike conduct penalty at next offense.
- d. Interceptions are live and can be returned.
- e. Defensive players must make an attempt to pull flags. No Tackling.

11. Blocking

- a. Players must be coached on proper blocking technique. Players must not be coached to grab, hold or tackle their opponent.

12. Penalties

OFFENSIVE	Offside Holding Delay of Game Illegal Block/Clipping Personal Foul Pass Interference Guarding the Flag Illegal Man Downfield Unintentional Facemask Personal Foul Facemask Unsportsmanlike Running over a defender by dropping a shoulder	3 yds. whistled dead 7 yds. from the spot 3 yds. 10 yds. from the spot 10 yds. from the spot 10 yds. from the LOS Ball whistled dead at the spot 3 yds, replay the down 3 yds. 10 yds. 10 yds.
DEFENSIVE	Holding, grabbing, pushing, or tackling ball carrier. Encroachment Unintentional Facemask Personal Foul Facemask Personal Foul Pass Interference Unsportsmanlike making a tackle without attempting to pull a flag	10 yds. from the spot 3 yds. (whistled dead immediately) 3 yds. 10 yds./automatic first down 10 yds. from the spot/automatic first down 10 yds. from the LOS 10 yds. from the spot/automatic first down

- a. Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offensive team declines.
- b. Un-sportsmanlike conduct penalties on offense or defense will result in a 10-yard penalty and ejection of the player from the game for at least 3 plays (not including punts).
- c. A second unsportsmanlike penalty on the same player results in an ejection of the remainder of that game and sitting the following game.

13. Attire

- a. Only soft molded cleats are allowed.
- b. Players must wear protective mouth guards.
- c. Official Team jerseys must be worn during play.
- d. Jersey must be tucked in and flags visible on hips.
- e. Shoulder pads, helmet and shorts or pants must be worn (no padded football pants).
- f. Each player must have 2 flags and each flag should be positioned on the right and left hip prior to the play starting.

14. Ball

- a. All teams will play with the “Wilson K2” ball or the Nike Vapor Strike Pee Wee size ball.

15. Playing Time

- a. Every player must play 1/2 of the game. Therefore, no player may be out of the game for his teams’ offensive and defensive series. For example, if a player does not play offense, the player must play defense or vice versa. A player can play “both ways” but must not sit “both ways.”
 - i. Substitutions may be made for injured players but if the injured player is a “one way” player, he must re-enter the game as soon as possible.

16. Practice Time

- 1. Teams will be permitted to practice 3 times per week before school starts and only 2 times per week once school starts. Practices are defined as any time the coach meets with at least half of the team.
- 2. Practices are not to exceed 120 minutes in length and should not go past 8pm or darkness (whichever comes first) on school nights.
- 3. Players may not participate in a scheduled game without at least 3 practices. Violation of this rule will result in the dismissal of the head coach.

17. Mercy Rule

- a. A “mercy rule” is in effect if a team takes a lead of 18 points. Play will continue and the leading team must remove the starting backfield.
 - i. The leading team may retain the starting quarterback providing he does not advance the ball by run or pass.
- b. A 5-yard penalty will be called for violation of this rule. If the other team scores and reduces the lead to less than 18 points, the starting line-up may return.

18. Score and Standings and Playoffs

- a. All final game scores will be reported or sent by phone or email by the home team to the league commissioner within 24 hours of each game.
- b. There is no OT in regular season games.
- c. Overtime for Playoffs - Each team will have the ball placed 10 yards from the goal line and have 4 plays to score and attempt an extra point. After the 1st OT, if the score is still tied, teams will have to go for 2-point conversions from then on. OT periods will continue, alternating possessions until a winner is determined.
- d. Playoffs or a knock-down format will be held at the end of the season. The 4 division winners will host a playoff game. The next 4 best teams, (2 per conference), regardless of division, will be the wild card teams.
- e. For the purpose of playoffs and knockdowns, teams will be ranked based on season records. Tie - breakers:
 - i. Head-to-head record
 - ii. Record against common opponents
 - ii. Fewest points allowed
 - iii. Points scored
 - iv. Coin toss

*Tie-Breakers reset after each seed is determined

19. Field

- a. The field should be 60 yards long and 35 yards wide. Or sideline to far hash mark on HS football field.

