

Hesperia Recreation and Park District

Flag Football Rules

PHILOSOPHY & GOVERNING RULES

The philosophy of Hesperia Recreation and Park District and our Youth Flag Football is an emphasis on participation, fun, and learning of fundamentals to develop and improve football skills. All coaches, parents, and officials must demonstrate, by example, fair play, sportsmanship, and always keep the physical and mental well being of the players ahead of any personal desire to win.

GAME

1. The games will be played at Hesperia Community Park.
2. Home Team will be on the North side of the field and the Visiting Team will be on the South side.
3. No kicking or punting.
4. Coaches and players must stay between the midfield and endzone line on the sidelines.
5. During the Half-Back games, two coaches may be on the field to help players. During the Full-Back and Tail-Back games, one coach may be on the field to help players for the first four games. Coaches may not interfere when the plays are in progress.
6. It is the Coaches' responsibility to make sure all players flags are on correctly. If a players' flags are incorrect and the player is the ball carrier the team will receive a warning the 1st time. After the 1st time it will be a loss of down and the ball placed back at the line of scrimmage.
7. No arm pads, wraps, or hats are allowed. Elbow, knee pads, and beanies will be permissible.
8. All shirts must be tucked in so they do not interfere with the flags.
9. Gym, tennis, soccer, multi-purpose shoes, and plastic cleats are acceptable. Bare feet, sandals, and cleats with metal spikes will not be allowed.
10. All Head Coaches must be at least sixteen years of age. In accordance with California State law, all Coaches must be fingerprinted and cleared before being allowed to Coach his/her team.
11. Coaches and parents need to recognize that in addition to sports, the home, church, school, and other activities are all part of a child's growth and development. Coaches will make provisions for excused absences through parental requests for church, school, and other family activities.
12. No team may practice more than once a week.
13. Jewelry may not be worn. In the event that the child has recently had a piercing and cannot remove the jewelry, the item must be taped flat and covered completely.
14. Blood Rule - A player, coach, or official, who is bleeding, has an open wound, has blood on his body or clothing, shall be prohibited from further participation in the game, until appropriate treatment has been administered.

MUST PLAY RULE

All youths must play a minimum of one half of each game. It is the Coach's responsibility to keep track of playing time so each child meets the Time Played Requirement. The must play rule cannot be protested. If a child has a medical condition that prohibits them from playing half of each game, the opposing coach, referee, and score table must be notified. If a coach does not play a player the correct playing time it could result in forfeit of that game.

- Exceptions to the minimum play rule are allowed for players who are unable to participate due to injury or disqualification (being ejected or illness).

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

1. Swearing, obscene language or actions, either on or off the playing field, by players, coaches, or spectators, will not be tolerated.
2. Coaches will be responsible to help enforce this rule with their parents/fans. Failure to help enforce this rule can result in forfeit of game.
3. The following defensive roughness against the ball carrier may result in a 15 yard penalty and/or player ejection:
 - A. Tackling the ball carrier.
 - B. Holding the ball carrier.
 - C. Blocking the ball carrier.
 - D. Tripping the ball carrier.
 - E. Pushing the ball carrier.
 - F. Charging the ball carrier.
 - G. Bumping the ball carrier.
 - H. Pushing out-of-bounds is illegal.

PROTESTS

Formal protests for this league will not be honored. If a coach believes a referee is interpreting a rule incorrectly, and if the dispute cannot be resolved, the referee's ruling will be final (right or wrong) and play will resume. Any concerns with the referees and/or their calls need to be directed to the League Director on the following working day by 5:00 p.m. If any Coaches, players, or parents have a concern about a player's eligibility (i.e. age), only the Head Coach may submit something in writing prior to the fourth game of the season to the League Director.

Play of the Game

1. Players/Formations: Each team will be composed of six players on the field. Any offensive formation will be allowed. There is no restriction on the defensive formation.
2. There will be a coin flip before each game. The team that wins the coin flip will choose either to receive or to defer.
3. Timing - There will be twenty-five minute running halves. Half time will be five minutes.
 - A. Each team will be allowed two time outs per half, one minute in length.
 - B. The clock will stop for time outs in the last two minutes of the game only.
4. There are no kick-offs. The receiving team will get the ball on the 20 yard line.
5. Runs - No direct runs by the quarterback. Penalty will be loss of down.
6. Half-back division will get 45 seconds when ball is set to start a play. Full-back and Tail-back divisions will get 30 seconds when ball is set to start a play.

7. Blocking is allowed with arms tucked in between the shoulders and waist. No blocking below the waist or dive rolling. No crab blocks are allowed.
8. Any players starting at least 8 yards behind the line of scrimmage may rush the quarterback. Once the ball has been handed off or lateralled, all defensive players may rush. Players may rush thru the middle, maneuvering themselves between the gaps of the offensive/defensive players. You can not run through a player.
9. The offensive team takes possession of the ball on their own 20 yard line. Each 20 yard line (marked by cones) is a first down. The team has four downs to reach each marker. When possession of the ball changes, the opposing team starts their drive from their own 20 yard line. This happens when the offensive team scores or fails to make a first down.
10. Tackling
 - A. A player is tackled by removing his/her flag after he/she has possession of the ball. Premature pulling of flags is not allowed. Penalty will be assessed after the first warning. Penalty will be 10 yards from the spot of the foul.
 - B. In an attempt to remove a flag, the tackler may not hold or run through the ball carrier. Penalty will be 10 yards from the spot of the foul.
 - C. If the quarterback's flag is pulled in the back field before he/she has released the ball it is a sack.
 - D. If a player loses his/her flag for any reason after gaining possession of the ball he/she is considered down at that point.
 - E. If a player's knee touches the ground while he/she has the ball, it is down at that point.
11. Ball Carrier
 - A. All players are eligible to receive handoffs and passes. Direct runs by the quarterback across the line of scrimmage are not allowed. He/she must hand off or pass. Once passed, the quarterback becomes an active player. A penalty shall be called when the quarterback crosses the line of scrimmage, play will be called dead.
 - B. Ball carrier must always attempt to avoid the defender. He/she may not run through or over any player. Penalty will be 10 yards from the spot of the foul.
 - C. Attempting to hurdle a player who is still on his/her feet is forbidden in all cases. Penalty will be 10 yards from the spot of the foul.
 - D. The following are all violations; stiff arming, protecting the flags, and spinning. Penalty will be 10 yards from the spot of the foul.
12. Penalty Enforcement
 - A. No multiple penalties may be assessed that will move the ball more than half the distance to the goal line, whether the penalty be against the offensive or defensive team.
 - B. Any foul between downs will be enforced from the line of scrimmage. If the offensive team fouls behind the end of the run, enforcement is from the spot of foul.
 - C. If the last defensive player between the ball carrier and the goal line commits a foul on the ball carrier, a touchdown shall be awarded.

13. Dead Ball

- A. The referee shall declare the ball “dead” and the down ended:
 - 1. When the ball goes out-of-bounds or the ball carrier goes out-of-bounds.
 - 2. When a forward pass becomes incomplete.
 - 3. When a touchdown, safety, or touchback is made.
 - 4. When the ball carrier touches his knee to the ground.
 - 5. When a lateral ball, centered ball, backward or sideways pass strikes the ground.
 - 6. At any other time the official declares the ball dead.

14. Inadvertent Whistle

- A. The ball is dead and the down has ended when an official sounds his whistle inadvertently.
- B. When a penalty is declined for a foul which occurred during the down and there is an inadvertent whistle while:
 - 1. A legal snap or pass is in flight, the down will be replayed.
 - 2. A player is in possession, the team may choose to play at the point or replay the down.

15. Blocking

- A. Offense: An offense blocker may only use the standing block with the forearms and hands folded to the body. No part of the blocker’s body, except the feet shall be in contact with the ground throughout the block.
- B. Defense: Defensive players are restrained in use of the hands to pushing the shoulders and body of offensive blockers. Slapping or striking is not allowed and will be penalized.
- C. The defensive player must not hold nor run through a ball carrier BUT MUST PLAY THE FLAG NOT THE PLAYER OR THE BALL. The quarterback is considered the ball carrier until he/she releases the ball. A defensive player may attempt to block a pass as long as contact is not made with the passer.

Penalty Enforcement- The following penalties apply:

Defense:

Offsides - 5 yards
Pass Interference - 10 yards
Holding - 10 yards
Illegal Flag pull - 10 yards
Illegal Rush - 10 yards
Illegal Contact - 10 yards

Offense:

Illegal Procedure - 5 yards
Offensive Pass Interference - 10 yards
Flag Guarding - 10 yards
Delay of Game - 5 yards
Intentional Grounding - 10 yards
Illegal Blocking - 10 yards
Unsportsmanlike Conduct - 15 yards
Direct Run by Quarterback - loss of down