

NORTHERN ILLINOIS YOUTH
FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Northern Illinois Youth Flag Football League (NIYFFL)

Official Rules & Guidelines
2026 Season

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I. Basics

Flag Football is for boys and girls ages 5 through 14 (Kindergarten through 8th Grade)

The program is divided into 8 divisions for boys:

- Kindergarten
- 1st Grade
- 2nd Grade
- 3rd Grade
- 4th Grade
- 5th Grade
- 6th Grade
- 7/8th Grade

The program is divided into 7 divisions for girls:

- 2nd Grade
- 3rd Grade
- 4th Grade
- 5th Grade
- 6th Grade
- 7th Grade
- 8th Grade

There are no weight restrictions in any division

II. Eligibility

- All players' legal guardians must register with their host program and agree to the online waivers during the registration process
- Late roster additions after the first game must be approved by the program director
- You cannot play a child that is NOT rostered on the team
- Two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties in a game – or any single time fists are thrown by a player – are automatic disqualifications during a game, with a one additional game suspension mandated by the League
- League directors have the authority to implement additional penalties for players in their program
- Tackle football players can register for and play Flag during the same season

III. Equipment

- League Programs will provide each player with a standardized NIYFFL uniform which must be worn during play
- League Programs will provide their teams with standardized NIYFFL flags, practice/game balls, and an equipment bag

All teams will use standard-sized footballs during league games: (***Only footballs supplied by your league program can be used during games)***

- K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade (BOYS) and 2nd/3rd/4th/5th/6th (GIRLS) - Pee Wee Football
- 5th/6th (BOYS) and 7th/8th (GIRLS) – TDJ (or JUNIOR) Sized Football

    - 7th/8th (BOYS): TDY (or YOUTH) Sized Football
- All players are required to wear a mouth guard. The mouth guard shall be completely in the player's mouth at the start of play
- Players must wear shoes. Cleats are encouraged, but cleats may not have exposed metal
- Players cannot wear a hooded shirt or sweatshirt under their game jersey. This is a safety issue and is not allowed.
- Players may tape their arms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed
- Players must remove all jewelry and watches
- Player's shorts may not have belt loops or pockets. If players have loops/pockets, they must be taped (with the tape being a different color to their flag)
- Players may wear soft-padded or soft-shell helmets (e.g. Rocksolid) during games
- Players' jerseys must remain un-tucked during the game
- The jersey must have 3 Velcro patches in which to attach 3 flags. Flags must be attached to the Velcro on the exposed side of the jersey.
    - For K-6th Boys, and 2-6th Girls: three (3) flags must be worn: left hip, back and right hip
    - For 7th and 8th Boys and Girls: two (2) flags must be worn: left hip and right hip

Practice Information

- Team practices will start two weeks before the first game
- Two practices are allowed per week before the season starts (not to exceed a total of 4 hours), and should stress basic running, throwing, catching, flag pulling, and agility
- There is a maximum of 2 hours of practice time allowed per week after the first game X
- The head coach will determine the practice day(s), time, and location of practice and communicate with their teams as appropriate
- Each team should have a minimum of two coaches, preferably 3 to help with offense, defense and sideline coaching
- We encourage all coaches to encourage a fun and positive experience for all participants

IV. Field

BOYS Grades K-1st

- Field dimensions will be played on 40 yards length and 35 yards width football field (40 yards, plus one 10-yard end zone)
- The starting position for each possession is the 40-yard line, with a first down reached at the 20-yard line
- There are no "no-run zones" for this age group.

BOYS Grades 2nd-6th and GIRLS 2-6th

- League flag games will be played on one half of a regulation football field
- Field dimensions are 53.3 yards in width and 50 yards in length (40 yards, plus one 10-yard end zone)
- The starting position for each possession is the 40-yard line, with a first down reached at the 20-yard line
- There are no "no-run zones" for this age group.

GIRLS Grades 7th - 8th

- League flag games will be played on one half of a regulation football field
- Field dimensions are 53.3 yards in width and 50 yards in length (40 yards, plus one 10-yard end zone)
- The starting position for each possession is the 40-yard line, with a first down reached at the 20-yard line
- There are “no-run zones” for this age group. NO-RUN ZONES are zones within 5-yards of a first down line or the endzone, in which the quarterback may not advance the ball past the line of scrimmage. **All other offensive players may run the ball, including past the line of scrimmage, on a handoff, pitch, or lateral. Forward passes, screen passes, laterals, and pitches are all permitted in a no-run zone. Whether a play is a no-run-zone play is determined by the spot of the ball before the snap.**
    - The quarterback is the first offensive player to touch the ball after the snap. In a no-run zone the quarterback cannot take a direct snap, handoff or lateral and proceed to run past the line of scrimmage. Any other offensive player may take a handoff, pitch or lateral and run past the line of scrimmage.
    - One Point PAT’s are considered “no-run zones” for the quarterback only.
    - **If the quarterback violates the no-run-zone it will result in a penalty which is: Illegal Run “No Run Zone” - Dead Ball Foul/Loss of Down**

BOYS Grades 7th - 8th

- League games will be played on the grass fields or turf fields to allow for a larger playing surface
- Field dimensions are 53.3 yards in width, and 60 yards in length (60 yards, plus one 10-yard end zone)
- The starting position for each possession is the team’s own 40-yard line. There are two first down’s possible when the offensive team reaches the 40-yard-line and 20- yard-line.
- There are “no-run zones” for this age group. NO-RUN ZONES are zones within 5-yards of a first down line or the endzone, in which the quarterback may not advance the ball past the line of scrimmage. **All other offensive players may run the ball, including past the line of scrimmage, on a handoff, pitch, or lateral. Forward passes, screen passes, laterals, and pitches are all permitted in a no-run zone. Whether a play is a no-run-zone play is determined by the spot of the ball before the snap.**
    - The quarterback is the first offensive player to touch the ball after the snap. In a no-run zone the quarterback cannot take a direct snap, handoff or lateral and proceed to run past the line of scrimmage. Any other offensive player may take a handoff, pitch or lateral and run past the line of scrimmage.
    - One Point PAT’s are considered “no-run zones” for the quarterback only.
    - **If the quarterback violates the no-run-zone it will result in a penalty which is: Illegal Run “No Run Zone” - Dead Ball Foul/Loss of Down**

V. Rosters

- Teams play in a division of the fall school grade.
- The highest grade of a team member determines the division the team plays in (i.e. if a team is composed of 3rd and 4th graders the team plays in the 4th grade division)
- Team rosters must consist of at least seven players, with a maximum of fourteen players unless approved by the league directors.
- Teams are formed by the program directors for each town and may be modified at their discretion to help ensure parity across their program
- Head coaches are allowed to recruit up to four (4) players, not including their own child and other coaches’ children (up to a maximum of 3 total coaches, including the head coach), to the team in which they are coaching. Requests will be made during the registration process and are not guaranteed.

VI. Coaches

- Coaches are volunteer parents or family members helping the players enjoy the game and develop their skills. Parents are encouraged to support the coach at all times
- One Offensive and Defensive coach will be allowed on the field in league flag games to direct players according to the need before the snap. Once the ball is snapped the on-field coach can no longer direct the quarterback during live play, with the exception of the K-1st divisions.
- Coaches are expected to adhere to participating programs' philosophies, coaching guidelines, and codes of conduct. Failure to do so may result in removal for the season by League or program directors based on their subjective judgement.
- Volunteer coaches must encourage skill development, concepts, and fun
- All League coaches will sign and turn in the Coaches Pledge

VII. Gameplay

- Teams must start a game with a minimum of five players. In the event a team starts a game with fewer than seven players, the opposing team is not obligated to play an equal number of players, however, is allowed to play 1 additional player (i.e. Team A only has 5 players then Team B can play 6 players; or Team A only has 6 players then Team B can play 7 players). This is applicable for Regular Season and Playoffs.
    - In the event of injury, a team with insufficient players (fewer than five) may play with four players on the field, but no fewer than four players
- Teams will consist of up to 7 players on the field (Offense: C (eligible receiver), QB, and five additional eligible receivers/RBs)
- At the start of each game, both coaches and captains from both teams meet at midfield for the rock, paper and scissors contest to determine possession
- The winner of the contest has the choice of offense or defense. Teams may not choose to defer to the second half; but can select to be on defense first which would put them on offense to start the second half.
- Play cannot start beyond the 40-yard line in K-6th Boys or All Girls games and Beyond 40-yard line on the offenses 40 yd line (60 yards from end zone for 7/8th grade Boys league)
- Weather Delays: If a game is delayed by rain or lightning and has reached at least halftime, the game will be considered official and the score at that point will stand.
    - If the delay occurs before halftime and play can resume before the top of the hour, the game will continue until the top of the hour, at which time it will be considered complete.
    - If a game is fully rained out, the league will make every effort to reschedule, but a makeup game is not guaranteed.

BOYS Grades K-6th AND GIRLS 3-8th (40-yard field)

- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at the 40-yard line and has four (4) plays to reach the 20-yard line. Once the team crosses the 20-yard line, they have four (4) plays to score a touchdown. If the offensive team fails to score a touchdown, the ball changes possession and the opposing team starts its own drive on the 40-yard line.
- All possession changes (including interceptions) start on the offense's 40-yard line.
- There are no kickoffs or punts
- All players should be rotated at halftime into a different position and should receive equal playing time throughout the course of the season. This does not apply for the playoffs.
- **Maximum Offensive Touchdowns by an Individual Player -** A player who has already scored three offensive touchdowns in a game may not score another offensive touchdown during any possession in which their team begins with a lead of nine or more points.For purposes of this rule, an offensive touchdown is a touchdown credited to a player while their team is on offense, scored

by run or reception. Touchdown passes thrown by the player, point-after conversions, and defensive touchdowns do not count toward the three touchdown total.The rule applies automatically based on the scoreboard at the start of each possession. Before the first play of any possession in which the rule is in effect, officials shall notify both head coaches and identify the ineligible player or players. Failure to notify does not suspend the rule.If an ineligible player scores an offensive touchdown, the score is disallowed and the ball is awarded to the defending team at its own 20 yard line, first down. This rule does not apply during playoff games.

BOYS Grades 7th-8th (60-yard field)

- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their own 40-yard line and has four (4) plays to reach the opposition's 40-yard line. Once the team crosses their 40-yard line, they have four (4) plays to reach their 20-yard line for first and goal (the offensive team has the opportunity to make 2 first downs)
- If the offense fails to reach the oppositions 40-yard line, the ball changes possession and the opposing team starts its drive from their own 40-yard line
- All possession changes (including interceptions) start on the offense's own 40-yard line
- There are no kickoffs or punts
- All players should be rotated at halftime into a different position and should receive equal playing time across the course of the season. This does not apply for the playoffs.
- **Maximum Offensive Touchdowns by an Individual Player -** A player who has already scored three offensive touchdowns in a game may not score another offensive touchdown during any possession in which their team begins with a lead of nine or more points.For purposes of this rule, an offensive touchdown is a touchdown credited to a player while their team is on offense, scored by run or reception. Touchdown passes thrown by the player, point-after conversions, and defensive touchdowns do not count toward the three touchdown total.The rule applies automatically based on the scoreboard at the start of each possession. Before the first play of any possession in which the rule is in effect, officials shall notify both head coaches and identify the ineligible player or players. Failure to notify does not suspend the rule.If an ineligible player scores an offensive touchdown, the score is disallowed and the ball is awarded to the defending team at its own 20 yard line, first down. This rule does not apply during playoff games.

VII. Overtime Gameplay (applicable only during playoffs/championship tournament)

- At the start of overtime, both coaches and captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the rock, paper, and scissors contest to determine possession.
- The winner of the contest has the choice to start on offense or defense.
- The offensive team chooses between a 1-point conversion from the 5-yard line or a 2-point conversion from the 12-yard line. (For 7th-8th Grade Boys and Girls, the 1-point conversion is a no-run zone for the quarterback only.)
- After one play the ball changes possession and the opposing team chooses between a 1-point conversion and 2-point conversion
- If the game is tied after each team runs a play there will be another overtime period
- For each subsequent overtime period, the team that finished on defense in the prior period must start the next period on offense
- If a game reaches a third overtime period, note that all point-after conversions must take place from the 12-yard line

IX. Time

- Games are played on a continuous clock with two (2) twenty-minute halves

- The game clock will start on the first snap of each half.
- Halftime is five minutes.
- The first 18 minutes of each half will be continuous time and will only stop for timeouts.
- During the final two (2) minutes of each half, play will stop for incomplete passes, running out of bounds, touchdowns and resulting conversions, and changes in possession
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
    - At fifteen (15) seconds, the line judge (official) will raise his/her hand.
    - At ten (10) seconds, the line judge will count down the play clock to zero
- Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced
- Each team has TWO (2) timeouts per half. One is a 60-second timeout and the other is a timeout just to stop the clock (once the timeout is called, the clock stops but the 30 second play clock still runs). Timeouts cannot be saved and moved from the first half to the second half.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion (e.g. player is struggling to re-attach their flag, or other equipment issue)
- In the event of an injury, the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play
- FINAL PLAY OF EACH HALF: if there is at least 1 second remaining in a half and the ball is spotted by the officials before the game clock expires, the offensive team will have a full 30 seconds to run a final play

X. Scoring

- Touchdown: 6 points
- PAT (Point After Touchdown): 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (12-yard line) (Decisions cannot be changed after a penalty.)
- The PAT can be a run or pass from either starting line for K-6th grade boys and 2nd-6th grade girls. For Boys & Girls 7th-8th grade, the one-point PAT (5-yard line) is a no-run zone for the quarterback only: the quarterback may not run the ball in, but any other offensive player may. The two-point PAT (12-yard line) carries no run restriction.
- Mercy rule: After a team is leading by 24 or more points, the opposing team will automatically get possession of the ball at the 20-yard line (for 7/8th Boys the ball will be placed at the 30 yd line). Coaches of the leading team are strongly encouraged to replace or substitute out their best athletes from the quarterback and running back positions, not rush the passer in the spirit of sportsmanship until the game becomes more competitive or ends. This rule does not apply in the playoffs.
- If the ball crosses over the goal line, it is considered a touchdown at the referee's discretion. The players' feet do not have to cross the goal-line.
- Referees are required to report all game results to the Field Marshals. These results will be final. All coaches should check throughout the game and at the end of the game to make sure the score will be reported correctly. If there is any dispute with the final score the Field Marshals along with the referees will determine the score which will be final.

XI. Interceptions

BOYS & GIRLS Grades K-2nd

- Interceptions ARE NOT returnable (anywhere on the field) and just result in a change of possession
- No points are awarded for an interception

BOYS & GIRLS 3rd-8th

- Interceptions ARE returnable (anywhere on the field) but only result in points if it's run back to the 40 yard-line for Boys 3rd-6th and Girls 3rd-8th Grades. Interceptions for Boys 7th-8th Grade must be returned to the offensive teams 40 yard-line. (Interceptions not run back all the way just result in a change of possession. (no points will be awarded for the interception)
- The interception team then runs a PAT play for 1 or 2 pts.
- Intercepting team then goes on defense
- Interceptions on PAT conversion attempts ARE returnable. If returned all the way as stated above, the interception team is awarded 1 or 2 points depending on what the offensive team was attempting and then proceeds to go on offense. If the intercepting team does not return it all the way, no points are awarded for the interception.

XII. Live Ball/Dead Ball

- The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. Regarding the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
- A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in-bounds if one foot comes down in the field of play
- Substitutions for injuries may be made on any dead ball
- Any official can whistle the play dead
    - Play is ruled "dead" when:
    - The ball hits the ground.
    - The ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls off
    - The ball carrier steps out of bounds
    - The ball carrier's knee or arm hits the ground
    - The receiver catches the ball while in possession of two or fewer flags on their uniform
    - The 7 second pass clock expires
- In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
    - Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
    - Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage (the clock will stop, and it will be an untimed down).
- If a snap does not reach the quarterback's hands the play is ruled dead, the down is expired, and the ball is spotted at the point where the ball hits the ground. If the ball is at the 40 and hits the ground at the 43 then the ball will be spotted at the 40. (Play cannot start beyond the 40-yard line in K-6th Boys or All Girls games and Beyond 40-yard line on the offenses 40 yd line (60 yards from end zone for 7/8th grade Boys)
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.

NOTE: THERE ARE NO FUMBLES. THE BALL IS SPOTTED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE REF AT THE TIME OF THE FUMBLE. If a ball is laterally or pitched and hits the ground, the ball will be spotted where it hit the ground. If the ball is stripped or fumbled into the opposing team's hands the ball is down at that spot.

XIII. Running

- There are "no-run zones" for Boys and Girls 7th & 8th Grades. The league rule is as follows for this age group. NO-RUN ZONES are zones within 5-yards of a first down line or the endzone, in which the quarterback may not advance the ball past the line of scrimmage. **All other offensive players may run the ball, including past the line of scrimmage, on a handoff, pitch, or lateral. Forward passes, screen passes, laterals, and pitches are all permitted in a no-run zone. Whether a play is a no-run-zone play**

is determined by the spot of the ball before the snap.

- The quarterback is the first offensive player to touch the ball after the snap. In a no-run zone the quarterback cannot take a direct snap, handoff or lateral and proceed to run past the line of scrimmage. Any other offensive player may take a handoff, pitch or lateral and run past the line of scrimmage.
- One Point PAT's are considered "no-run zones" for the quarterback only.
- **If the quarterback violates the no-run-zone it will result in a penalty which is: Illegal Run "No Run Zone" - Dead Ball Foul/Loss of Down**

- The ball is spotted at the yardline where the ball is when the flag is pulled in the center of the field.
- For K-6th grade Boys and Girls, the quarterback cannot directly run the ball. The quarterback does have the ability to scramble in the backfield but cannot advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. For all divisions, the quarterback is the first offensive player to touch the ball after the snap. For 7-8th grade Boys and Girls, the quarterback is allowed to run the ball. (except when the ball is spotted inside a no-run zone)
- Grades K-6th handoffs, laterals and pitches by the quarterback are permitted but must be behind the line of scrimmage because the quarterback is not eligible to run.. Handoffs may be in front, behind, or to the side of the offensive player, but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs. For grades 7/8th boys and girls, laterals and pitches are allowed anywhere on the field including in no-run zones.
- NO Center Handoff's. NO "Center sneak" plays are allowed. The Center can receive a forward pass, but handoff's to the Center are NOT allowed.
- Laterals and pitches are allowed as long as it's not a forward pass after the line of scrimmage.
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage
- Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind, or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush and the 7 second clock no longer applies to throws.
- Runners that intentionally or unintentionally hold or grab their flag while attempting to avoid a flag pull will be considered flag guarding.
- If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during play who has possession of the ball, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.
- Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff-arming, dropping the dead, hand arm or shoulder, holding or grabbing the flag belts or pants, or intentionally covering the flag with a part of the uniform (i.e. tucking flag into ones' shorts)
- Runners are not allowed to jump, leap, or hurdle while advancing the ball. If an official determines that a player has done so, the play will be whistled dead, and the ball will be placed at the spot where the runner left the ground.
- Ball carriers may leave their feet when performing certain moves such as spins, jump cuts, or a quarterback's passing motion. If the player clearly leaves the ground to avoid contact with another player, the play will continue.
- Flag obstruction – all jerseys must be outside a player's pants/shorts (not tucked in) and free from obstruction. Flags must be placed on the jersey side in which it is showing.(not on the reversed side.
- Offensive players may not form a wall of two or more blockers at the line of scrimmage in which a ball runner is behind the two blockers. (Doing so is Unnecessary Roughness)

XIV. Blocking/Screening

- NO MOVING PICKS OR SCREENS ARE ALLOWED. Blocking can only take place without moving.
- Stationary screens can take place anywhere on the field. Hands and arms must be behind your back or across the chest and within the body's framework. A player's arms cannot be extended out.

XV. Passing

- Passes may be received behind the line of scrimmage, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect. (example:

Bubble Screen)

- The quarterback has a 7 second “pass clock”. If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds allowed, the play is called dead, the down is consumed, and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage.
- If the quarterback crosses the line of scrimmage and throws a pass, the play is called dead, the down is consumed, and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage.
- Once a ball is handed off, lateraled, or thrown, the 7-second rule is no longer in effect

XVI. Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes including the quarterback (if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage)
- A player must have at least one foot in bounds when making a reception
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense
- **When a receiver crosses the line of scrimmage their intent must be to receive a pass and not block the rusher. The receiver may not impede the rusher, doing so would create a dangerous situation. (Doing so is Unnecessary Roughness)**

XVII. Defensive Rushing

- There is no rusher allowed for BOYS and GIRLS K-2 games
- 3rd-6th Boys and Girls who rush the passer must be a minimum fifteen (15) yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. 7th-8th grade Boys and Girls rushers can line up ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage. Only 1 player per play can rush the quarterback before the ball leaves the quarterback’s hands. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage
- Once the ball is handed off, lateralled, pitched or thrown to behind the line of scrimmage, the fifteen-yard rule Is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage
- A special marker, or the referee, will designate the rush line 15 yards (or 10 yards for 7-8th Grade Boys & Girls) from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify that they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
- If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 15 or 10-yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset, and then legally rush the quarterback
- If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally rush the quarterback
- A penalty may be called if:
    - The defensive rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – illegal rush (5 yards from line of scrimmage and replay the down)
    - Any defensive player who crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – offside (5 yards from line of scrimmage and replay the down)
    - Any defensive player who crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – illegal rush (5 yards from line of scrimmage and replay the down)
- Teams are not required to rush the quarterback, seven second pass clock will remain in effect
- Defensive Rushers must be identified (to the official) before the snap of the ball and start each play at an agreed upon identified spot on the field.
- If a rusher leaves the 15-yard line, or 10-yard line for 7th and 8th grade, before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back and act as a defender with no offside penalty enforced
- Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass, however NO contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then contacting the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty

- The rusher cannot bull rush or run through the offensive player. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and avoid contact.
- A sack occurs if the quarterback's flag is pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold, or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags. Rushers can not dive to get to the quarterback.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball. Early flag pulls. If a defender pulls a flag from an offensive player before that player has the ball, it is an unsportsmanlike penalty.

XVIII. Tackling

- Tackling is considered unnecessary roughness. If a defender tackles an offensive player, the defender is flagged for unnecessary roughness. A second tackling penalty on the same player will result in a penalty and a warning. A third tackling violation will lead to a penalty; the player is then ejected from the game.
- Tackling occurs if:
    - A player wraps his/her arms around a player and brings them to the ground
    - A player pushes the ball carrier out of bounds with no effort toward pulling the player's flag
    - A player slides or dives in front of a ball carrier and knocks them down to stop their progress

XIX. Formations

- Any IHSA formation is allowed
- Offense must have a minimum of three players on the line of scrimmage and up to five players on the line of scrimmage. There must always be at least two players off the line of scrimmage
- No deceptive plays are allowed. (example: Everyone huddles around the QB and someone runs out with the ball.)
- The quarterback and one other player must be off the line of scrimmage
- No motion is allowed moving toward the line of scrimmage
- There must be three players on the line of scrimmage.
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage, and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage
- Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second before the ball is snapped unless he/she is the only player in motion
- Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start
- Boys 3rd - 8th and Girls 7-8th: The center must snap the ball from the ground with a rapid and continuous motion to a player in the backfield and must completely leave his/her hands. Snapping the ball may be either from between the legs or from the side. A silent snap is ok if the offense chooses to use that.
- Boys K-2nd and Girls 3rd–6th: Center can be standing holding the ball (ie: ball is not on the ground) and then throw it back to a player in the backfield to start the play. A silent snap is ok if the offense chooses to use that.

XX. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- If the league director, field marshal, or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap

shots, or any unsportsmanlike conduct, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered.

- If at any time a referee feels threatened, intimidated, or subjected to inappropriate verbal or nonverbal conduct, the game will be immediately stopped. This decision is final and not subject to appeal. Any additional disciplinary action will be reviewed and determined by the league directors.
- Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
- The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty
- Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official
- Ball carriers MUST try to avoid defenders with and established position
- Defenders are not allowed to run through a ball carrier when pulling flags
- Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship
    - Cheer on your players, but do not harass officials or other teams. Parents who verbally abuse the referees, coaches, field marshals, directors or other parents will be removed from the field. If removed this will carry a 3-game suspension. Suspensions will be carried over into another season.
- Coaches should keep all discussions with the referees appropriate. (Any yelling or foul language will result in being removed from the game and an automatic game suspension. The league directors will also be engaged to determine if an additional suspension or removal from the league is needed.
- All Coaches, Players and Spectators should keep all comments clean and profanity free. Violators can be removed from the field. PARENTS THAT GET EJECTED FROM THE FIELD BY THE REF MUST TAKE THEIR PLAYER WITH THEM.
- Complement ALL players, not just one child or team
- Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly
- Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 5 yards off the field and in the end zone area
- Fans are to be seated in stands, when stands are available.
- Field Marshall controls the game field and spectator stands. They can remove any Player, Coach or Spectator at their discretion.
- Any parent or coach that walks onto the field to show a video in an attempt to overturn a call will automatically be penalized 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct. Second offense they will be removed from the game and suspended for the next game. There are NO video instant replays to overturn calls.

XXI. Penalties

General

- The referee will call all penalties
- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (spot fouls)
- SPOT FOUL: a spot foul is a penalty assessed from the spot where the foul occurred rather than from the line of scrimmage. The referee marks the ball at the spot of the foul and then walks off the penalty yardage from that spot.
- If the ball carrier reaches the line to gain before a spot foul occurs, the first down is earned and is not taken away. The new series is awarded first, the penalty yardage is then assessed from the spot of the foul, and any loss-of-down provision is applied to the new series. The offense keeps the first down even if the penalty places the ball behind the line to gain.
- Example: the ball is spotted at the 40-yard line with a first down line at the 20-yard line. The ball carrier crosses the 20 and is then flagged for flag guarding at the 15. The first down is earned. The 10-yard penalty is marked off from the 15, placing the ball at the 25, and the loss of down makes it second down. The offense keeps the new series and is not awarded a 1st down by crossing the 20-yard line again.
- Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about the rule clarification and

interpretations. Players may not question judgement calls

- Games may not end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it
- Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.
- A team can use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged with a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the time out will not be charged, and the correct ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call to give each team the full benefit of each call. If needed the field marshal should be engaged and ultimately can make the decision on the rules.

Quarterback Run Rule Chart

Division	QB Run Allowed?	Notes
Boys K–6	No	QB may scramble but not cross LOS
Girls 2–6	No	QB may scramble but not cross LOS
Girls 7–8	Yes	Subject to no-run zones (QB only)
Boys 7–8	Yes	Subject to no-run zones (QB only)

Penalties Appendix

Offensive Penalties

Infraction	**Penalty**	**Result**
Illegal Screening, Blocking, Running with the ball Carrier	-10 yds	Spot Foul/Loss of Down
Illegal Motion/Shift or Illegal Formation	-5 yds	Dead Ball Foul/Replay Down
Illegal Forward Pass Illegal Run "No Run Zone" (quarterback advances past the LOS in a no-run zone)	-5 yds 0 yards	Dead Ball Foul/Replay Down Dead Ball Foul/Loss of Down
Delay of Game	-5 yds	Dead Ball Foul/Replay Down

Offensive Pass Interference	-10 yds	Dead Ball Foul/Loss of Down
Flag Guarding (Offense)	-10 yds	Spot Foul/Loss of Down
Charging (Offense)	-10 yds	Spot Foul/Loss of Down
Holding (Offense)	-10 yds	Spot Foul/Loss of Down
Offside / False Start	-5 yds	Dead Ball Foul/Replay Down
Taunting / Unsportsmanlike (Offense)	-10 yds	Dead Ball Foul/Loss of Down
Offside/False Start (offense)	-5 yds	Dead Ball Foul/Replay Down
Delay of Game (offense)	-5 yds	Dead Ball Foul/Replay Down
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	-10 yds	Spot Foul/Loss of Down

Defensive Penalties

Infraction	**Penalty**	**Result**
Offside (Defense)	+5 yds	Replay the Down/This Penalty can be declined by the offense
Charging (Defense)	+10 yds	This Penalty can be declined by the offense/Automatic 1st Down
Illegal Rush (Defense)	+5 yds	Replay the Down/This Penalty can be declined by the offense
Illegal Flag Pull	+5 yds	Dead Ball Foul/Replay the Down
Roughing the Passer	+10 yds	Dead Ball Foul/Automatic 1st Down
Illegal Contact (Defense)	+10 yds	Spot Foul/Automatic 1st Down
Defensive Pass Interference	At the spot of foul	Spot Foul/Automatic 1st Down
Stripping Ball	At the spot of	Spot Foul/Automatic 1st

(Defense)	foul	Down
Holding (Defense)	+10 yds	Spot Foul/Automatic 1st Down
Unnecessary Roughness (Defense)	+10 yds	Spot Foul/Automatic 1st Down

Unsportsmanlike / Roughness

Infraction	**Penalty**	**Result**
Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	+10 yds	Spot Foul/Automatic 1st Down
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	-10 yds	Spot Foul/Loss of Down
Taunting / Unsportsmanlike (Defense)	+10 yds	Dead Ball Foul/Automatic 1st Down
Taunting / Unsportsmanlike (Offense)	-10 yds	Dead Ball Foul/Loss of Down
Fighting	Ejection	Dead Ball Foul/League Suspension Next Game