Revised 1/4/2017

Valley Junior High Athletic Conference
Flag Football Rules
General Rules

Official Team: An official team shall consist of seven (7) players; A minimum of five (5) players must be on the field the whole game.
Game Time: Game must be started by 4:30 to have enough light to finish the game.
Officials: The hosting team will assign officials for each scheduled game.
Jerseys: For all flag football games, it is required that teams wear numbered and uniformly colored jerseys in order to help distinguish one team from another.
Illegal equipment: Pants or shorts must be free of pockets, drawstrings, and exposed belt loops. All jewelry must be removed before playing. Helmets, casts, shoulder pads, and boots are all examples of illegal equipment. Any equipment that in the official's judgment would be injurious to participants is illegal to wear.
Flags: All flags must be **Triple Threat Flag Football Belts** (Three heavy duty vinyl flags sewn permanently onto a cotton belt). No Rip Flag Belts or Economy Flag Belts are permitted. The home team will furnish belts, or the visiting team may use their own flag football belts. All flag belts worn by a team should be the same color. Competing teams should wear different colored flags.
Ball: League will use a **youth regulation football**.

Game Regulations

Game Time: A game shall consist of two 20-minute halves, with a 5-minute half-time intermission.
Timing: Regular playing time will be kept on an automatic timing devise held by the official. The clock will be kept running throughout the first half and the first 18 minutes of the second half and will not stop for dead balls.
Two Minute Warning: There will be a "two-minute warning" in the second half of play. The clock will stop on all dead ball situations the final two minutes.
Start of Game: The game shall start with a coin toss. The referee shall toss a coin in the presence of the opposing team captains, after first designating which captain shall call the fall of the coin. The captain winning the toss shall choose one of the following: (1) Start with the ball first half or second half. (2) Which Goal to defend. The losing captain chooses which ever option is left
Starting Play: To start each half, following a touchdown, or touchback, the ball will be placed on the 20 yard line of the team in possession. There will be no kickoffs.
Time Outs: Each team will be allowed one time-out per half. The referee may declare a time-out for any injury. (1 Min. in length)

Tie Game: If the score is tied at the end of regulation play during the regular league season, the game will be declared a tie. Overtime procedures will be used in the single elimination playoffs. **This procedure will be explained to the teams in the event of a tie. (Same as college overtime-Each team gets a shot from the 20 yard line)**

Scoring:
Touchdown - 6 points
Safety - 2 points
PAT (run or pass) - 2 points from 10 yd. line -1 point from the 5 yd. line

Basic Rules

Zone Lines: The field is divided into four 20-yard zones. A team will have a series of downs to advance the ball to the next zone.
Series of Downs: A team shall have four (4) consecutive downs to advance the ball into the next zone. This may be affected by penalty.
Scrimmage Line: The scrimmage line for the offensive team is the yard line and its vertical plane which passes through the forward point of the ball which is placed at the orange ball spotter or bean bag.
Ball Responsibility: The offensive team is responsible for retrieving the ball after the down.

Minimum Line Players: The offensive team must have at least 4 players on their scrimmage line at the snap. All remaining players must be on or behind the scrimmage line.
Motion: One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line at the snap.
Snapping the Ball: Each time the ball is snapped it must be a quick and continuous motion of the hand(s). The ball must leave the hand(s) in this motion. A snap that hit's the ground is dead and the ball is spotted at that point for the next down. A loss of down occurs also. A safety will be in effect if the ball lands in the end zone and turnover on downs if the snap was missed on 4th down. (Except punting- A punter may pick up the ball and proceed to kick it.
Direct Snap: The player who receives the snap must be at least two (2) yards behind the offensive scrimmage line. **A Direct Snap may only be allowed on a punting situation.**
Ball in Play: On each play after the referee sounds the ready for play whistle, the team on offense has 30 seconds to put the ball in play.

Handing and Passing the Ball

Handing the Ball Backwards: Any player may hand the ball backwards at any time at any location on the field.
Handing the Ball Forward: During a scrimmage down, an offensive player may hand the ball forward behind the line only.
Backward Pass: A runner may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble anytime except if intentionally thrown out-of-bounds to conserve time.
Backward Pass out-of-bounds: A backward pass or fumble which goes out-of-bounds between the goal lines belongs to the team last in possession at the out-of-bounds spot. If out-of-bounds behind the goal line, it is a touchback or a safety.
Ball Dead: A backward pass or fumble which touches the ground between the goal lines is dead at the spot where it **touches the ground and belongs to the team last in possession unless lost on downs.**
Eligible Receivers: All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass.
Legal Forward Pass: Passer's feet are behind the offensive scrimmage line when the ball leaves the passer's hand.
Legal Catch or Interception: One foot must touch inbound to be considered a catch.
Incomplete Pass: When a forward pass touches the ground or anything out-of-bounds, it becomes dead.

Blocking Rules

Offensive Screen Blocking or Brush Blocking may be used by all players.

Brush Block

1. A block thrown from a standing position using the chest area with minimal shoulder contact.
2. The elbows must be kept against the body and NOT extended. The hands must be kept on the jersey or the side of the jersey.
3. A brush block may be used anywhere on the field by any player.

All brush blocks & screen blocks must meet the following requirements.

1. The blocker must never strike a blow with any part of his/her body and must never throw an elbow or forearm.
2. A blocker must remain on his/her feet at all times during the block.
3. A blocker may not grasp, pull or hold an opponent in any way.
4. Offensive contact is allowed, but not in a very aggressive manner with intent to hurt or injury another player.
5. The screen/brush blocker shall have his/her hands and arms at his/her side or behind his/her back.
6. Any use of the hands, arms, elbows, or legs to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block or brush block is illegal.
7. A blocker may use his/her hand or arm to break a fall or to retain his/her balance.

Screen Blocking/Brush Blocking Fundamentals: A player who screens/brush block shall not:

1. When he/she is behind a stationary opponent, take position closer than a normal step from him or her.
2. The blocker must not initiate contact with an opponent above the opponent's shoulders.
3. A blocker may not block an opponent in the back. All blocks must be made on an opponent's chest area.

Blocking and Interlocked Interference: Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere for him/her by screen blocking, but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any manner.
Use of Hands or Arms by the Defense: Defensive players must go around the offensive player's screen block with minimal contact. The arms and hands may not be used as a wedge to contact the opponent. The application of this rule depends entirely on the judgment of the official. A defensive player may use his/her arms or hands to break a fall or retain his/her balance.
A defensive player may raise his/her hands & arms in attempt to block or bat down a pass, but he/she must not interfere with the passer's throwing motion due to contact on the passer's hands or arms during or after the play.
Flag Belt Removal Basics: When the flag belt is clearly taken from the runner the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removes the flag belt from the runner should immediately hold the flag belt above his/her head to assist the official.
Inadvertent Removal: If a flag belt inadvertently falls to the ground a receiver may still catch the ball without a flag but they will be down as soon as they catch it. Any other time it falls off while running the runner is automatically down were the flag falls off.
Diving: A player, who is attempting to remove the flag belt, may leave his/her feet. Any contact will be considered the fault of the person diving.
Defensive Contact: In an attempt to remove the flag belt from a runner, defensive players may contact the body and shoulders of an opponent with their hands, but not their face or any part of their neck or head. A defensive player may not hold, push, or knock the runner down in an attempt to remove the flag belt.

Runner/Ball Carrier

Guarding the Flag Belt: Runners/Ball carriers shall not guard the flag by using their hands, arms, or the ball to deny the opponent an opportunity to remove the flag belt. Examples include but are not limited to:
1. Placing or swinging the hand or arm over the flag belt.
2. Placing the ball in possession over the flag belt.
3. Lowering the shoulders in such a manner that places the arm over the flag belt.

Stiff-Arm: The runner /ball carrier shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with extended arm or hand.
Obstructing the Runner/Ball Carrier: The defensive player shall not hold, grasp, or obstruct the forward progress of a runner/ball carrier when in the act of removing the flag belt.
Charging: A runner/ball carrier shall not charge into an opponent in his/her path. The runner/ball carrier must avoid contact by changing direction.
Knee Touching Ground: The ball becomes dead if any part of the runner/ball carrier, other than the hands or feet, touches the ground.

Punting

Protected Scrimmage Kick: The only kick permitted shall be a punt. For each scrimmage kick, offensive team must maintain four players on the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked. No one shall rush the kicker and no player from either team shall cross the scrimmage line until the ball is kicked.

Quick Kick: Quick kicks are illegal
Punting After the Snap: After receiving the snap, the kicker must punt the ball immediately and in a continuous motion. A dropped snap on a punt may be picked up and kicked with no penalty.
Hitting the Ground: The ball may strike the ground on a protected scrimmage kick and then be picked up by the receiving team or downed by the kicking team.
Behind the Goal Line: The receiving team may receive the protected scrimmage kick behind the goal line and either down the ball for a touchback or run the ball out of the end zone. If the ball goes out of the end zone, it is ruled as a touchback.

Penalty Enforcement

Captain's Choice: When a foul occurs, the Referee shall notify both captains. The Referee shall inform the captain of the offended team regarding their options on the penalty. Once a penalty has been accepted or declined, that choice may not be changed.
Establishing the Zone Line-to-gain: The zone line-to-gain shall be established after all penalties are administered and prior to the ready for play signal.

Half the Distance: A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway between the enforcement spot and the goal line.

Loss of down Fouls (Offense): Fouls by the offense that result in a loss of down include; (4th down would be treated as a turnover)

1. Illegally handing the ball forward
2. Illegal forward pass
3. Offensive pass interference
5. Intentionally grounding
6. Illegal contact or use of hands or elbows by the offense
7. Unsportsmanlike conduct

* If a penalty happens down the field the ball is spotted back at the last 20 yd zone marker passed before the foul and a loss of down is charged. EXAMPLE: The offense will start at the beginning of that zone at 2nd down.

Automatic First down Fouls (Defense): Fouls by the defense that result in an automatic first down and moving to the next zone (Note: If the next zone is the goal line then it we be half the distance to the goal) include:

1. Defensive pass interference
2. Roughing the passer
3. Illegal contact or use of hands or arms by the defense
4. Unsportsmanlike conduct

Summary of Penalties:

Offensive illegal motion (5-yard penalty)
Offside on offense or illegal procedure (5-yard penalty)
Offensive Delay of game (30 sec play clock) (5-yard penalty)
Offside on defense (5-yard penalty)

Infraction on the line of scrimmage (Not enough players on the line) (5-yard penalty)
Illegal participation (More than 7 players on the field at the snap of the ball) (5-yard penalty)
Flag

10	**20 yard zone**	**20 yard zone**	**20 yard zone**	**20 yard zone**	**10**

belt

Guarding (10-yard penalty)
Offensive/Defensive Holding (10-yard penalty)

Illegally secured flag (10-yard penalty)

Unsportsmanlike conduct (10-yard penalty)

Field Dimensions

(Width of field 40 to 45 yards)
(Length 80 yards)
(Fields should have two hash marks on the 10 yd line and 5 yard line for PAT

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