



# **Skills League Flag Football**

## **4 year olds**

### **Rules and Regulations**

The following rules are to be used as guidelines in an effort to keep consistency and continuity in The YMCA Youth Sports Football League.

High School rules and regulations will prevail except where changes are indicated by the following rules:

The YMCA will enforce a non-tobacco and alcohol use policy for coaches and assistant coaches at all practices and games. Parents are also strongly encouraged to refrain from using tobacco and prohibited from using alcohol at practices or games.

1. The Skills League (4 yo) field shall be 40 yds long and 25 yds wide when permissible.
2. **Players:** Players will be placed in divisions based on their age as of August 1<sup>st</sup>, of the current year. The Skill Leagues Flag Football is for 4 year olds only.
3. Each team will consist of 9 players (min) - 12 players (max). In the Skills League there will be a total of 6 players per team in the field at one time. The offensive team must have a minimum of (3) players on the line of scrimmage. The defensive team is not limited to the number of players on the line.
4. **Player Equipment:** Soft soled shoes are recommended. Players may have molded cleats but no metal or plastic cleats. Shoulder pads and/or helmet may not be worn. A mouthpiece is required. Players must wear a 3 flag belt at all times. All shirts must be tucked in. All equipment must be worn at practice and games and will be checked by each coach. The YMCA will provide a game ball, but a team may elect to use its own ball if it is of the correct size and type.
5. **Scoring:** Score will not be kept in the Skills League. Each game will end in a tie.
6. **Practices:** Teams will have no more than (2) practices of (1) hour each per week during the preseason and no more than (2) practices of (1) hour each during the regular season. Regular season begins with the first regular game of the flag program. Scrimmages will count as a practice. Specific practice times and locations will be determined by the coach. Every child who attends practice regularly, reports to games on time, and whose conduct is satisfactory shall play a minimum of half of each game either on offense or defense and shall be deemed a starter on either offense or defense. Playing a child only on specialty teams is not acceptable. The first offence will result in a warning. The second offence will result in a one game suspension of the head coach. A third offence will result in the forfeiture of the game as well as the suspension of the team's coach for the following game.

Punishment for any such occurrence following a third offence will be decided by the YMCA CEO, Sports Director and Football Committee and could result in a yearlong suspension of the team's coach. Deviation by coaches of assigned practice times or practice guidelines will result in forfeiture of the most recent game. Team practices that take place before the start of the YMCA season are frowned upon by the YMCA and are in no way covered by the YMCA league insurance policy. Absolutely no practices on Sundays.

1. **The Game:** A game will consist of four (4) six (6) minute quarters with running time with the exception of team or official timeouts. During the last two (2) minutes or the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters a regulation clock will be used, i.e. the clock will stop for out of bounds, incomplete pass etc.
2. **Starting Each Half:**
  1. Each half of the game will start with an offensive possession at the five (5) yard line. There will be no kick offs. Before the game begins the referee, in the presence of the team captains and coach shall toss a coin in which the visiting team will call. The winner of the toss must choose one of the following: offense, defense and goal or deferment of these options until the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.
  2. Between the first and second and third and fourth quarters the teams will not change goals.
  3. **Time Outs and Between Quarter Breaks:** There will be a 5 minute break between halves, and a 1 minute break between quarters. Each team will be allowed two (1 minute in length) time outs per half. Any player may call time out for his team. Teams will have one time out per overtime period. Unused timeouts expire at the end of each half or overtime period.
  4. There will be no punting in the Skills league. After the 5<sup>th</sup> offensive down the ball is turned over to the opposing team for a new offensive series that will begin at the 5 yard line.
  5. **Ending a half:** If there is a live ball or dead ball foul by either team during the last play of the half, the penalty will be administered at the end of the first half. Any such foul committed after the half has ended will be administered at the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half.
  6. **Ball Ready for Play and Delay:** The ball is ready for play when the referee gives the ready-for-play signal and whistle. The offensive team has 35 seconds to snap the ball. The penalty for delay of game is 5 yards.
  7. **Substitution:** Free substitution will be used as long as every child is getting to play minimum half the game (each player must be labeled a starter on either offense or defense). Any substitute must participate in at least one play before leaving the game, and must stay out one play before reentering. The penalty for a team not playing every player at least half the game may include forfeiture of the game.
  8. **Forfeiture of Game:** With no score being kept in Skills League there will be no forfeits. Games will take place as long as each team shows up with at least 5 players within 10 minutes of the scheduled start time. If a team is short on players at game time, the coaches will have the option to play a scrimmage game up until the start of the following game.
  9. **Penalties:** 5 yards for minor infractions and 10 yards for major infractions, including unsportsmanlike conduct. Although penalties aren't assessed during the game it is a good idea

to use this time as a teaching tool to let the player know what he did wrong and why a penalty would have been called in that situation.

10. Tripping shall not be allowed. Tripping is the use of the lower leg or foot to obstruct any opponent below his/her knee. This is normally a 10 yard penalty.
11. Clipping is an illegal block in which a player hits an opponent from behind, typically at leg level. Clipping is a 10-yard penalty.
12. Blocking: Blocking will be legal only with the shoulder or forearm, with the blocker's hand "tucked in", in contact with his/her body. No cross body blocks are allowed, and blocking is only legal near the line of scrimmage. Down field (away from line of scrimmage) screen blocking is allowed.
13. Offense: No stiff-arming is allowed. The flag cannot be protected in any manner by any part of the body. Flags cannot be protected in any manner by any part of the body. Flags cannot be wrapped around or tucked under the player's belt. In above cases, the offense is assessed a ten yard penalty from the point of infraction and repeats the down. All shirts must be tucked in.
14. Ball Carriers: Only ends and backs may advance or receive the ball. The players on the offensive line are not considered ball carriers.
15. First downs: No first downs can be made (except through penalties). The team on offense has 5 downs to score. In the event the offensive team does not score, the ball shall go to the opposing team.
16. Defense: Tackling is not permitted. The first violation shall result in a 10 yard penalty and a warning. A second violation shall result in a 10 yard penalty and the ejection of the offending player.
17. A player is downed by a defensive player securing his/her flag or by his/her knee touching the ground. In case of the flag falling off the ball carrier, he/she will be down where the flag falls off. Any receiver who loses his flag(s) before making a catch will be considered down at the point of the catch.

**Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Any of the following offenses will result in a 10-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct:

1. Any offensive player not going to the huddle between downs.
2. Any player leaving the field between downs to gain an advantage (unless replaced).
3. Any profanity by player, parent or coach will result in immediate ejection from the game.
4. Unsportsmanlike conduct that is directed to the opposing team and/or official by a player, parent or coach will result in an immediate ejection.
5. Note: All unsportsmanlike conduct calls are final and cannot be appealed.
6. Tie Breaker: Score is not kept in Skills League therefore each game will end in a tie and there will be no tie breakers.
7. Mercy Rule: Score is not kept in Skills League so there will be no mercy rule.

- 8. Turnovers: Fumbles are dead at the point the ball falls. Interceptions can be returned, and remain live until the runner is downed.**

**YMCA participants may not belong to or participate with any other youth football program.**

**All accidents are to be reported to the Sports Director within 24 hours of the injury. All accidents must be reported on an accident form provided by the YMCA. Coaches will not be able to protest games in the Skills League.**

**The Skills League is considered a teaching league that will prepare the players for their first year of flag football. Team coaches will assist as officials during game play if needed. During the game if a play takes place where a flag would normally be thrown we suggest using this as a teaching tool to inform the player of what not to do and to teach him the proper way to make the play. Also, with this being a teaching league, we will not keep score and there will be no playoff or championship at the end of the season.**