



PARK RIDGE FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

I. Basics

- a. Park Ridge Non-Contact Flag Football is for boys and girls ages 4 through 14 (up to 8th grade).
- b. Ages are determined by the player's grade as of September 1st.
- c. The League is divided into five conferences:
 - i. Little Demons Conference is for Pre-K & Kindergarten;
 - ii. SEC Conference is for 1st & 2nd graders;
 - iii. Big 10 Conference is for 3rd & 4th graders;
 - iv. PAC12 Conference is for 5th & 6th graders; and
 - v. CSYFL Conference is for 7th & 8th graders.
- d. CSYFL teams will be travel-focused vs house-focused and will play by NFL Flag rules almost exclusively. Modifications will be made by the League depending on the communities we are able to play during the Fall Season and possibly determined post-Registration.
- e. There are no weight restrictions in any Conference.
- f. The offense will consist of up to 7 players, including a center, QB, RB, and 4 eligible receivers
- g. Any IHSA formation is allowed (simply remove the guards and tackles).
- h. Volunteer coaches must encourage skill development, concepts, and fun – or could be replaced.

II. Gameplay

- a. At the start of each game, both coaches and captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine possession. The visiting team shall call the toss.
- b. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Teams may not choose to defer to the second half.
- c. If on a modified Flag field, the offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross midfield. Once the team crosses mid-field, they have four (4) plays to score a touchdown. If on a modified Tackle field, the offensive team takes possession of the ball at the 45-yard line heading towards the endzone and has four (4) plays to cross the 20-yard line for a first down. Once the team crosses the 20-yard line, they have four (4) plays to score a touchdown.
- d. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line or back on the 45-yard line, respectively.
- e. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line or back on the 45-yard line, respectively.
- f. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line or back on the 45-yard line, respectively.
- g. Teams change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.
- h. There are no kick-offs or punts.

- i. All players must be rotated at halftime into a different position and should receive equal playing time across the course of the season.
- j. Substitutions are not allowed in House Conferences except for injury.
- k. An individual player can only score up to 3 offensive TDs during a game, and additional TDs for that player will be considered a turnover and the ball will be placed at midfield or the 20-yard line, respectively.

III. Terminology

Term	Definition
Boundary Lines	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and the back of the end zone lines.
Line of Scrimmage	(LOS) An imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
Line-to-Gain	The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
Rush Line	An imaginary line running across the width of the field 10 yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
Offense	The squad with possession of the ball.
Defense	The squad opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.
Passer	The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
Rusher	The 1 defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass. There is NO Rusher in Little Demons or SEC divisions.
Downs (1-2-3-4)	The offensive squad has four attempts or “downs” to advance the ball. They must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs to score.
Live Ball	Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties, live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete.
Dead Ball	Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play.
Whistle	The sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, half time, or the end of the game.
Inadvertent Whistle	An official’s whistle that is performed in error
Charging	The movement of the ball carrier directly at the defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head, making contact with the defender with a shoulder, forearm, or chest.
Flag Guarding	An act by the ball carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball carrier’s flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head, grabbing or holding the flag belt or pants, or by blocking access to the runner’s flags with a hand or arm.
Shovel Pass	A legal pass attempted beyond the line of scrimmage by throwing the ball underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in a shot-put type manner.
Lateral	A backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	A rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.

IV. Eligibility

- a. All players' legal guardians must register with Park Ridge Football or thru the CSYFL and agree to the online waivers electronically signed during the registration process.
- b. Players must be appropriate grade as of September 1st of the year they are participating.
- c. Late roster additions after August 15th must be approved by the Director of Flag Football.
- d. 2 unsportsmanlike conduct penalties – or fists thrown by a player – is an automatic ejection.
- e. Park Ridge Tackle Players can also register for and play Flag during the same season.

V. Equipment

- a. The League provides each player with a team jersey which must be worn during play.
- b. The League will provide each coach with flag belts, jerseys, shorts, practice/game balls, and equipment bag.
- c. All teams will use the footballs provided by the league in the game.
- d. 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.
- e. Players must wear shoes. Cleats are encouraged; however, cleats with exposed metal are not allowed and must be removed.
- f. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and kneepads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
- g. Players must remove all watches, earrings and any other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous.
- h. Players' jerseys must be tucked into the pants if they hang below the belt line.
- i. Shorts will be provided by the League. If player shorts have belt loops or pockets, then they must be taped, and should not be the same color as the flag color.
- j. Players may wear soft-padded or soft-shell headgear and helmets (i.e. Rock solid) during a game.

VI. Practice Information

- a. Team practices will start two weeks before the first game and should be held at Southwest Park and Prospect Park.
- b. There are two practices allowed per week before the first game, and should stress basic running, throwing, catching, flag pulling, agility, speed, and fun drills to encourage a positive experience for EVERYONE. Player favoritism and 'daddy ball' appearances should be discouraged.
- c. There is one practice allowed per week after the first game, which often is prior to the week's game itself and not to exceed 2 hours in total game and practice time per day.
- d. The head coach will determine the practice day(s), time, and location, and communicate electronically each week with their team.
- e. Each head coach should recruit at least 1 Asst Coach, preferably 2 Asst Coaches from your parents to help with Offense, Defense, and Sideline coaching.

VII. Field

- a. In House Flag football games will be played primarily at Southwest Park, South Park, and Prospect Park, but we will also use Hinkley Park for Friday night games at times and as

published. Pre-K thru 2nd Grade will play all day games on a modified Flag Field, while 3rd thru 8th Grade will play all day games on a modified Tackle Field. Regardless of Division, teams may be asked to play on either modified Flag or modified Tackle Fields throughout the season. Travel Flag or CSYFL football games will be played both in Park Ridge on either Park District or Maine South High School fields, and in other 'Chicagoland' communities based on 'away' game scheduling. Teams should expect to play at least 1 game under the lights at night – weather permitting.

- b. For Little Demons and SEC, the field dimensions are 30 yards by 70 yards with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. Field size may vary based on field availability for each division.
- c. For Big10, PAC12 and CSYFL divisions, the field dimensions will be half of a full-size tackle football field instead of the modified flag field pictured here.
- d. Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.



VIII. Rosters

- a. Team rosters must consist of at least seven players, with a maximum of fifteen players.
- b. Teams must start a game with a minimum of six players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with five players on the field, but no fewer than five.
- c. Teams are formed by League officials and its committees and may be modified only at League Manager or Director's sole discretion to help ensure parity across their conference.
- d. Head coaches are allowed to recruit up to four (4) players, including their own child and other coach's children, to the team in which they are coaching. Requests will be made during the registration process and are not guaranteed but will be accommodated in most cases.

IX. Time

- a. Games are played on a continuous clock with two twenty-two-minute halves. The clock stops only for timeouts and delay of game penalties.
- b. Halftime is five minutes long.
- c. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
- d. Each team has one 60-second time out each half and an additional 30-second timeout in the 2nd half.
- e. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- f. In the event of an injury the clock will stop and then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
- g. If the score is tied at the end of 44 minutes, the game should be determined a tie.

X. Scoring

- a. **Touchdown:** 6 points
- b. **PAT (Point After Touchdown):** 1-point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line) Note: 1-point PAT or 2-point PAT can be run or pass.
 - i. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged time out. Decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions can be returned for a one (1) point score.
- c. **Safety:** 2 points
 - i. A safety occurs when the ball carrier is declared in his/her own end zone. They can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, their flag falls out, they step out of bounds or they hit the ground with their knee or arm. A Safety also occurs when there is an offensive penalty in the end zone.
- d. **Mercy Rule:** After a team is leading by 18 points (3 TDs) or more, the opposing team will automatically get the ball at midfield (Big10, PAC12 and CSYFL) or the 20-yard line (Little Demons and SEC). In House Flag, Coaches must replace or substitute out their best athletes from both the running back and quarterbacks' positions, not rush the passer, and alter play calling in the spirit of sportsmanship until the game becomes competitive or ends.
- e. **Interceptions:** Intercepting team retains possession of the ball where ruled down or if able to return it for a touchdown receives six (6) points. Unless returned during a PAT attempt which would be one (1) point. Possession changes when a touchdown is scored.

XI. Coaches

- a. Coaches are typically volunteer parents or family members helping the players enjoy the game. Parents are encouraged to support the coach at all times.
- b. Up to 2 coaches from the same team are allowed on the field in House Flag Little Demon and SEC divisions to direct players according to need. Only 1 coach from the same team are allowed on the field during a play in Big Ten, PAC12, and CSYFL divisions and must not direct players after the snap of the ball. In PAC12 and CSYFL beginning with the 5th game, all coaches must coach from the sidelines during the play – hand signals and audible are encouraged for player development.
- c. Coaches are expected to adhere to Park Ridge Football, NFL Flag, and USA Football philosophies, coaching guidelines, and our Codes of Conduct. Failure to do so may result in the end of your coaching for the season under Park Ridge Football based on our Director's subjective judgement.
- d. Coaches of multiple teams will be given flexibility to ensure they can cover up to 2 Flag teams.

XII. Live Ball/Dead ball

- a. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- b. 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. In Big Ten and PAC12 divisions, referees should penalize players consistently after the 2nd game of the season for these infractions.

- c. A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds if one foot comes down within the field of play.
- d. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals, by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike penalty.
- e. Substitutions for injuries only in House may be made on any dead ball.
- f. Any official can whistle the play dead.
- g. Play is ruled “dead” when:
 - i. The ball hits the ground.
 - ii. The ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
 - iii. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - iv. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
 - v. The ball carriers’ knee or arm hits the ground.
 - vi. The ball carrier’s flag falls out.
 - vii. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
 - viii. Inadvertent whistle.
 - ix. **NOTE: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet were at the time of the fumble.**
- h. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options: 1.) Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed; or 2.) Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
- i. A team can use a time out to question an official’s rule interpretation. If the official’s ruling is correct, the team will be charged a time out. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the time out will not be charged, and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call in order to give each team the full benefit of each call.

XIII. Running

- a. The ball is spotted where the runner’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player’s front foot.
- b. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball. The quarterback does have the ability to scramble in the back field but cannot advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. The quarterback is the offensive player that receives the snap.
- c. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. 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.
 - i. “Center Sneak” play – The ball must completely leave the center’s hands on the snap and he/she must step backwards off the line of scrimmage in order to receive a direct handoff from the QB before advancing the ball.
- d. Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind, except in CSYFL.
- e. No-Run Zones have been eliminated as of the Fall 2019 season. Except for Little Demons and SEC, all divisions must pass a minimum of one (1) time every four (4) plays within the same set of downs. For example: When it is 1st down, a team must pass in at least one (1) of the next four (4) plays, UNLESS they get a 1st down or TD or turn the ball over. In which case it resets, and they again need to pass at least one (1) of the next four (4) plays, UNLESS they get a 1st down, TD or turn the ball over.
- f. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- g. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive

players are eligible to rush.

- h. Runners that intentionally or unintentionally hold, grab, or pull their flag belt or pants up while attempting to avoid a flag pull will be considered flag guarding.
- i. Runners may not leave their feet advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding and should be warned and then flagged.
- j. No hurdling or diving will be allowed, however, spinning to avoid a flag being pulled will be permitted as well as lateral moves to the right and left.
- k. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she had done so to avoid a collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced, but the ball will be marked as down wherever the runner lifted both of their feet off of the ground.
- l. No blocking or “screening” is allowed at any time.
- m. No running with the ball carrier that impedes the defender.
- n. Flag Obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player’s hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

XIV. Passing

- a. All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward, and received beyond the line scrimmage.
- b. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- c. The 7-second clock has been eliminated from House rules, but the QB should be encouraged to make reads and release the ball before the defender reaches him/her.

XV. Receiving

- a. All players are eligible to receive passes including the quarterback (if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- b. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the one of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
- c. A player must have a least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- d. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- e. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of the interception or where the interceptor is ruled down if the interception is returned. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line (or 45-yard line on a modified football field).
- f. Interceptions can be returned for a TD. If not returned for a TD, possession changes at the point where the intercepting player is ruled down. However, if that is inside the defensive endzone, it’s considered a Touchback and possession will be taken at mid-field (Big10, PAC12 and CSYFL) or the 20-yard line for Little Demons and SEC.

XVI. Rushing the Passer

- a. No rushing the Passer is allowed in either Little Demons or SEC divisions.
- b. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Only 1 player per play can rush the quarterback before the balls leaves the quarterbacks hands. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.

- c. Once the ball is handed off, the ten (10)-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- d. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a Rush Line ten (10) yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
 - i. A legal rush is:
 1. Any rush from a point ten (10) yards from the defensive line of scrimmage.
 2. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
 3. If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the ten (10) yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback.
 4. 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.
 - ii. A penalty may be called if:
 1. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass – illegal Rush (5 yards).
 2. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Offside (5 yards).
 3. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off – Illegal Rush (5 yards).
 - iii. Special circumstances:
 1. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback.
 2. Teams are not required to identify their 1 rusher before they play, however, if they do send a rusher, the rusher should verify with the official that they are in the correct position.
 3. If a rusher leaves the 10-yard line before the snap, he/she may immediately drop back and act as a defender with no offside penalty enforced.
- e. 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.
- f. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. If the “path or line” is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense’s responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher’s path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher’s responsibility to go around the offensive player and to avoid contact.
- g. A sack occurs if the quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback’s feet are when the flag is pulled.
- h. A 2-point Safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.

XVII. Flag Pulling

- a. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- b. Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- c. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
- d. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.
- e. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- f. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm or shoulder, holding or grabbing the flag belts or pants, or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

XVIII. Formations

- a. Offense must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to six players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
 - i. One player at a time may go in motion.
 - ii. No motion is allowed towards the line of scrimmage.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands. Snapping the ball may be either between the legs or from the side.

XIX. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- a. If the League Director, Field Marshall, or any official witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, or any unsportsmanlike act, 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. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
- b. 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.
- c. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or official.
- d. Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- e. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- f. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well:
 - i. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
 - ii. Keep comments clean and profanity free.

- iii. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.
- g. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly:
 - i. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area.

XX. Penalties

a. General

- i. Any official may throw a flag; however, a referee will call all penalties. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- ii. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (spot fouls)
- iii. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about the rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question judgment calls.
- iv. Games may not end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.
- v. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
- vi. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

b. Spot Fouls

Name	Type	Penalty	Penalty
Holding	Spot Foul	+ 5 yards	Automatic First Down
Defensive Pass Interference	Spot Foul		Automatic First Down
Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	Spot Foul	+ 15 yards	Automatic First Down & sit out a series
Screening, Blocking, or Running w/ Ball Carrier that impedes a defender	Spot Foul	-5 yards	Loss of Down
Charging	Spot Foul	-10 yards	Loss of Down
Flag Guarding	Spot Foul	-15 yards	Loss of Down
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	Spot Foul	-15 yards	Loss of Down & sit out a series

c. Defensive Penalties

Name	Type	Penalty	Penalty
Offside	Dead Ball	+ 5 yards	Down replayed
Illegal Rush (Starting rush from inside 7-10-yard marker)	Dead Ball	+5 yards	Down replayed
Illegal Flag Pull (Before the receiver has the ball)	Dead Ball	+ 5 yards	Down replayed
Roughing the Passer (incidental contact)	Dead Ball	+ 5 yards	Down replayed
Taunting	Dead Ball	+ 10 yards	Automatic First Down
Defensive Pass Interference	Spot Foul		Automatic First Down
Holding	Spot Foul	+ 5 yards	Automatic First Down
Stripping	Spot Foul	+ 10 yards	Down replayed
Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	Spot Foul	+ 15 yards	Automatic First Down & sit out a series

d. Offensive Penalties

Name	Type	Penalty	Penalty
Center-QB Fumbled Snap	Play continues	No penalty	Down replayed
Offside/False Start	Dead Ball	-5 yards	Down replayed
Illegal Forward Pass	Dead Ball	-5 yards	Down replayed
Offensive Pass Interference	Dead Ball	-5 yards	Loss of Down
Illegal Motion	Dead Ball	-5 yards	
Illegal Play calling – no pass by / within 4 downs	Dead Ball	-5 yards	Loss of Down
Delay of Game	Dead Ball	-5 yards	Loss of Down & stop clock
Impeding the Rusher	Dead Ball	-5 yards	Loss of Down
Screening, Blocking, or Running w/ Ball Carrier that impedes a defender	Spot Foul	-5 yards	Loss of Down
Charging	Spot Foul	-10 yards	Loss of Down
Flag Guarding	Spot Foul	-10 yards	Loss of Down
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	Spot Foul	-15 yards	Loss of Down & sit out a series