

NORTHEAST YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE
FLAG FOOTBALL MANUAL
Revised August 2017

OVERVIEW:

The NYFL will operate and support a flag football division for youngsters entering grades K-2 in the interest of building a successful football programs for their member communities interested in participating at this level of play. The flag division is purely instructional and will not be considered a competitive venture. The division is non-contact, and shall not encourage or instruct tactics that require excessive force on opponents.

MISSION:

The mission of the NYFL Flag Football Division is to develop interest in the game of football at the lowest practical age in an effort to secure a strong football presence for its participating member associations, while offering youngsters an opportunity to learn about football in a non-competitive, non-contact, fun environment.

MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING:

The participating member associations of the NYFL must mutually support the principles of a non-competitive, non-contact (passive blocking), non-confrontational and purely instructional flag football division to secure the long term success of this program. Since scores and records are not kept, the act of allowing players to participate to the greatest extent possible should be carried out. There should not be any attempts to limit player time due to the coach's need to put "the best team" on the field.

ELIGIBILITY:

All boys and girls enrolled in grades K-2 are eligible. ~~All participants must be 5 years old before they are eligible to take the field, due to insurance requirements.~~ Second graders that have failed or are delayed may play if they do not turn eight (8) years old before September 1. If a second grader will become eight (8) years old before September 1 he or she must be enrolled in the tackle program. Second graders younger than eight (8) years old may play tackle provided parents and OSAA Football Commissioner(s) both agree the player is physically and mentally capable to do so. Jurisdictional (district boundary) requirements as set forth by the NYFL will continue to be in place. If a player resides in an area where there is not an NYFL flag program, the player may commute to the NYFL flag program of his/her choice and register for play at that location.

GAME OPERATIONS:

FIELD SIZE

The field size will consist of an 80-yard field at a standard width. The field will be marked with continuous lines at every 10 yards.

SCHEDULING

The Flag Football Division will participate in a six game schedule, starting the Saturday before the first Sunday of the NYFL tackle season. Flag games are expected to be scheduled on Saturday mornings between the hours of 10am and 12pm, or at the discretion of the NYFL board members. The scheduled time or location of any game may be changed at the discretion of the coaching staff or NYFL league representative as long as both teams are in agreement with the change in time and/or locations.

TEAMS

Each offensive and defensive squad must have eight (8) players. There are no special teams. There are no extra points after scoring. Team size is recommended to be between 12 and 20 players, however, member organizations may need to make adjustments as necessary. Teams are recommended to have at least twelve (12) players on their roster, however there will be no forfeit situations unless both teams agree that a forfeit should take place based on a lack of payer from any one team. Coaches should always find a way to play the game and improvise as necessary. Reasonable accommodations should be made to allow teams to play and allow late players to show up.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT:

Each player **must** wear a protective mouthpiece. Players will not be allowed to wear any hard surfaces during play (i.e. helmets, hard pads, etc.) that may come into contact with other players. Players will wear a jersey with number on front or back, representing their team color. Sneakers or cleats are acceptable, however, rubber/plastic cleats are recommended. Metal spikes are not permitted. Athletic supporters may also be used.

FLAGS

Flags to be worn by players will consist of three ribbons (one rear ribbon and two side ribbons), all of equal length, attached permanently to a breakaway belt. When the flags are pulled off of a player, the belt must release not the flag(s). The flags will be of the type typically referred to as the "Triple Threat" flag belt. Game jerseys should be tucked into pants so as not to cover the flags.

GAME RULES:

ON FIELD PERSONNEL

A maximum of two (2) coaches for each team may be on the field to assist their respective team at any time. The flag division shall not use paid referees. Each team's head coach shall choose a qualified and knowledgeable volunteer (i.e. assistant coach) to assist in the duties as a referee. The on field coach may ask the opposing coach to watch his players for similar infractions.

NOTE: The spirit of the flag division is to conduct an instructional, non-competitive, non-confrontational football atmosphere.

TIME OF PLAY

Each regular season flag game will be played for the duration of one (1) hour, as measured by a continuous play clock. There will be no stopping the time clock for any reason. There will be two, twenty five (25) minute halves per game and one ten (10) minute halftime. At the conclusion of the half time and end of game, the team that possesses the ball shall be allowed to continue their possession (four downs).

TIME BETWEEN PLAYS

It is recommended that teams practice their play calling techniques to optimize the time of play. It is recommended that not more than 30 seconds elapse between plays, however, delay of game penalties shall not be called.

FIRST POSSESSION

The visiting team will get first choice in deciding to take the ball. Home team will get its choice of goal to defend.

OFFENSE

- There must be 5 men on the line of scrimmage, 3 of which are interior linemen.
- The interior three linemen are not eligible pass receivers.
- First downs are established by accruing 10 yards in any four down possession.
- Scores are not to be kept, published, or considered for player substitution.
- If coaches wish to educate their players on scoring, each TD should be considered 6 points.
- Each team will get four (4) attempts at reaching a first down (Downs 1-4)
- Each team will take offensive possession at their own 20 yard line at the start of the game and during change of possessions.
- Fumbled balls are considered dead at the point of the fumble. Fumbles behind the line of scrimmage, including a snap in shotgun formation, will be returned to the line of scrimmage; however, the down will be lost.
- Fumble on the snap, QB/Center exchange will be called dead and brought back to the line of scrimmage with no loss of down...
- Exception- Shotgun Snap fumbled exchange will be brought back to the line of scrimmage but there will be a loss of down.
- Tackles behind the line of scrimmage are also moved back out to the line of scrimmage with a loss of down.
- Although no necessary, a team may choose to use a chain set to mark the first down. A simpler approach would be to have the referee stand at the point of the next first down to avoid any on field confusion.

OFFENSIVE LINE PLAY

- Offensive linemen will be in a two-point stance.
- There will be no blocking below the jersey numbers or above the shoulders.
- Offensive linemen must not charge the defensive players to cause injury.
- **Coaches should monitor the match ups on the O-D line to ensure fairness to smaller players.** Defensive coach should make necessary arrangements to realign players if necessary.
- A buffer zone between the offensive and defensive lines of 1 to 2 yards shall be used.

RUNNING BACKS

- Running backs must not cover flags or block to prevent de-flagging. Evasive moves should consist of proper cuts, running away from defenders, and use of speed.
- Running backs may be used in option situations to pass to other offensive players. If the flags should fall off of the running back, the play would be whistled dead. If the runner should fall, the play would be whistled dead.

DEFENSE

- Interception of passes will result in a change of possession at the point of interception. When the interception is caught between the defense's 20 yard line and the defense's goal line, the ball will be brought out to the intercepting team's 20 yard line for the change of possession, otherwise, the defense will take the ball at the spot of the interception.
- Defensive linemen should limit their momentum in charging an offensive lineman. It is preferred that defensive linemen use a "gap" position to line up to prevent impact.
- There will be no defensive linemen lined directly on the center.
- Defenses will consist of a 4-4 version or a 4-2 with safeties behind or equal to the linebackers.
- Defensive players may not grab or hold on to a runner to grab a flag.
- If a defense is dominant and prevents the offense from executing a play (broken up in the backfield or on the center/QB exchange) the offensive team coach can require the defense to move back greater than 2 yards, to a distance suitable for play execution.
- **Use of a 6-2 defense is prohibited since it diminishes the outside running game and mismatches the offensive line.**

SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES:

It is recommended that the two teams work together to settle any dispute regarding rule violations, penalties and game operation issues. In the absence of impartial game officials, these issues must be settled on the field in an effort to optimize playtime. The home team head coach and/or home team member president shall have final say on all unresolved issues during the game. If coaches do not feel reasonable solutions have been reached, or if at any time, the safety (physical or mental harm) of the players has been compromised due to violations of this manual (see Mission and Understanding) the NYFL member organization representative must contact the NYFL Flag Chairman to provide a description of the occurrence. A description of the violation may then need to be put in writing by the member association representative and/or require an appearance in front of the NYFL board. The flag committee will review and discuss any problems in an effort to mitigate further problems. [Schuylerville: Violations will be handled in accordance with the OSAA Code of Conduct and Schuylerville Football Guidelines]

FLAG COORDINATOR:

The flag coordinator will be provided by a member organization according to the following schedule:

2017- Greenwich	2019- Granville	2021-Salem	2023- Hoosick Falls
2018- Schuylerville	2020- Brunswick	2022- Manchester	2024- Hoosic Valley

SCHUYLERVILLE

Practices will begin in early August and run through early October. Practices will be at least once per week lasting roughly 1 hour in length. This schedule may be altered or a practice added at the coach's discretion, with approval from the flag director. Any practice will be scheduled on the same days as tackle (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday) to accommodate parents with players at both levels. Each head coach will follow a weekly practice plan, provided to them at the beginning of the season, to assist in running an efficient practice and ensure all players are exposed to proper fundamentals. Coaches may alter their practice plan to suit the needs of their team.

Home Games will be played at Ft Hardy on Saturdays at 10am or 11am.