

PYFFL RULEBOOK



FLAG

***RULES ADOPTED FROM NFLFLAG RULES
UPDATED FOR 2026 SEASON***





Welcome to another season of the Pembroke Youth Flag Football League!

This rulebook is your guide to how our league operates, from game rules to player eligibility and everything in between. Whether you are a coach, player, referee, or parent, the goal is for everyone to understand the standards we follow so the game is fair, safe, and fun for all.

The PYFFL has grown into one of the largest and most respected youth flag football leagues in the region, with hundreds of players from Pembroke and surrounding towns. That growth comes with a responsibility to maintain the integrity of the league while providing the best possible experience for every participant. Our rules are designed to ensure safety, competitive balance, and sportsmanship at every level of play.

We also want to remind everyone that youth sports are about more than wins and losses. They are about teaching teamwork, resilience, and respect, lessons that last long after the season ends. We expect all players, coaches, and spectators to represent the PYFFL in a positive way, on and off the field.

This league exists only because of the hundreds of people who give their time, energy, and support. From the PYFFL Board to the dozens of volunteer coaches who pitch in every week, it takes a community to make the league go. On behalf of all of them, I wish every player, coach, and family a fun, safe, and memorable season.

Best,
Marc Bertrand
President, PYFFL

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Pembroke Youth Flag Football League

PembrokeFlagFootball.com

Rulebook Updated For 2026 Season

The rules in this book are based on the official NFL FLAG rulebook. Any rule not specifically addressed herein will be governed by the most current edition of the NFL FLAG rulebook. PYFFL may issue clarifications, revisions, or updates to this rulebook during the season. Any such changes will take effect upon official communication from the league.

8/9/2026

Glossary

Boundary Lines: The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and the back of the end zone lines.

Line of Scrimmage: 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 seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage. (Grades 4-9 Only)

Offense: The team with possession of the ball.

Defense: The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.

Passer: The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.

Rusher: The defensive players assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling flags or blocking the pass. (Not applicable in divisions K-3rd)

Downs: One offensive play or attempt to advance the ball. The offense receives four downs to cross midfield and, after crossing midfield, three 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 the play.

Whistle: Sound made by an official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or a stop in the action for a timeout, halftime, or the end of the game.

Inadvertent Whistle: Official's whistle that is performed in error.

Charging: An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm, or chest.

Flag Guarding: An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carrier's flag by stiff-arm, lowering elbow or head, or by blocking access to the ball-carrier's flag with a hand or arm.

Shovel Pass: A legal pitch attempted from behind the line of scrimmage. Shovel passes are forward passes delivered underhand or sidearm, sometimes with a quick flick from the player throwing the ball.

Lateral: A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.



Equipment & Uniforms

Official Uniform Requirement

All players are required to wear league-issued jerseys and shorts during games. No other jerseys, shirts, or tops may be worn in place of or over the official team uniform. Jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants at all times. Players must wear their PYFFL-issued shorts. If pants are worn (for warmth or other reasons), they must be worn under the league-issued shorts.

All players must wear PYFFL-issued NFL FLAG belts and flags. All players **MUST** wear mouth guards at all times while on the field.

Players must wear sneakers or cleats. Cleats with exposed metal are never allowed.

Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads.

Prohibited Items

Players must remove all jewelry and ball caps before participating in games. Ball caps refer to any structured or unstructured baseball-style hats with a brim. All jewelry, including earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and watches, are prohibited for safety reasons. Hooded sweatshirts are also prohibited for safety reasons.

Players may wear sunglasses but they must be firmly secured at all times with a strap. Prescription glasses are permitted without a strap.

Cold Weather Gear

Winter beanies are allowed during cold weather conditions. All other cold-weather gear must be worn under the PYFFL-issued uniform.

Enforcement

All players must be checked for proper equipment prior to the start of every game by the game officials. Players not in proper uniform or wearing unauthorized items will be deemed ineligible to participate by game officials or league coordinators.



Field Dimensions and Layout

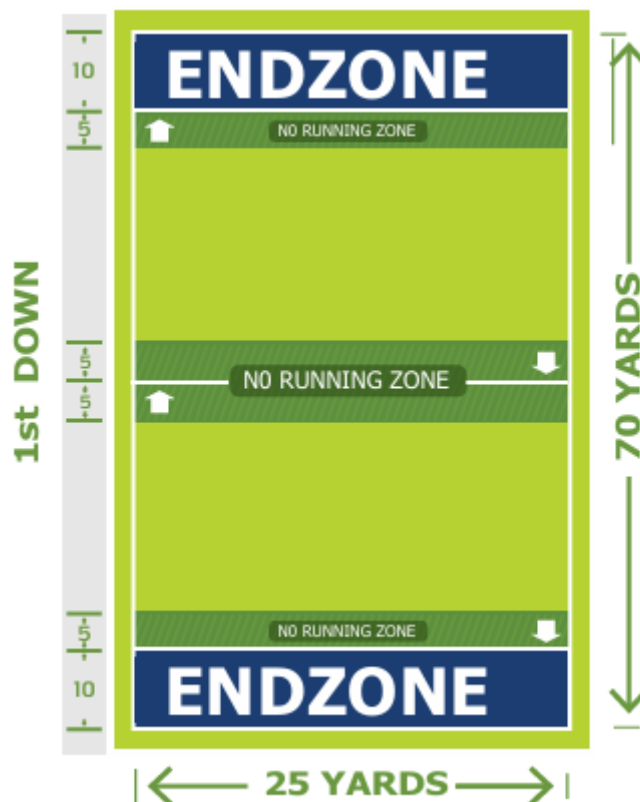
The playing field is 25 yards wide × 70 yards long. Endzones are 10-yards in depth.

The field has a midfield line to gain for a first down. 'No Run Zones' are located 5 yards prior to the midfield and 5 yards prior to the opponent's endzone.

Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

'No Run Zones' are in place to prevent teams from conducting run plays. While in the 'No Run Zones,' teams cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage. All plays must result in a forward pass across the line of scrimmage.

The referee will spot the ball in the middle of the field prior to the 'Ready to Play' whistle. The ball may NOT be closer than 10 yards to any sideline.



Start of Game Procedures

The home team wears dark jerseys, the away team wears light jerseys.

At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.

The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. ***There is no option to defer.*** Teams will automatically switch sides of the field and the team that started the game with possession will begin the 2nd half on defense.

Downs, Possession & Punt-or-Play Decisions

The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) downs to score a touchdown.

If the offensive team fails to cross midfield after 3rd down and elects to "punt" on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposing team will start a new possession from its own 5-yard line.

If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross midfield, the opposing team will start a new possession from the spot where 4th down ended.

After crossing midfield, if the offense fails to score on 3rd down, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts at its own 5-yard line.

Note: Any time there is a 'PUNT or PLAY decision, the referee will ask the offensive coach to declare 'Punt or Play'. The coach MUST make an immediate decision or will be called for a delay of game penalty.

Teams may use a timeout to change the declaration of "Play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.

Timing

Game Length: Each game consists of two 24-minute halves (48 minutes total). If a team gains a **35-point advantage in the second half, official scoring will end at that point.** The scorekeeper will record the final score when the 35-point lead is reached.

Teams are encouraged to continue playing after official scoring has ended, but the score will no longer change. The coach of either team may elect to end the game at any point thereafter. Any unsportsmanlike conduct occurring after official scoring has ended will result in the game ending immediately.

Clock Stoppages: The game is played with a continuous clock. The clock will only stop for halftime, timeouts, injuries and at the officials' discretion.

Timeouts: Each team receives one 60-second timeout per half.

Play Clock: Teams have **40 seconds** to snap the ball after it is spotted. Delay of game penalties will be assessed for violations.

Halftime: Halftime lasts 2 minutes and is officially timed by the game's scorekeeper in a public manner.

Overtime: If a regular-season game is tied after 48 minutes, the game will be recorded as a tie. Overtime is only used in the PYFFL playoffs. (Playoff Overtime rules are on page 19)



Scoring

Touchdown: 6 points

PAT (point after touchdown): 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line)

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 a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.

A 1-point extra point from the 5-yard line can only be a passing play due to the no-run zone. A 2-point extra point from the 10-yard line can be a run or pass.

An interception returned for a touchdown during a scrimmage down is worth 6 points. After the score, the scoring team's offense will attempt the PAT, while the opposing team's defense returns to the field.

An interception returned for a score during a PAT attempt is worth 2 points.

Safety: 2 points A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.

Forfeits: Forfeits will be scored 35-0 for the winning team.

The coaches, officials and scorekeeper must verify the score sheet before leaving the field.



Live Ball/Dead Ball Regulations

The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.

A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds, as long as the first foot or a body part other than the hand, contacts the ground in the field, while maintaining possession.

The defense may not simulate the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play.

Play is ruled "dead" when:

- The ball hits the ground. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a snap, backwards pitch or lateral, the ball will be placed where the ball hit the ground.
- The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
- The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
- A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.
- The ball-carrier's knee, shin, leg, forearm or arm hits the ground.
- The ball-carrier's flag falls out.
- The receiver catches the ball while in possession of 1 or 0 flag(s).
- The 7 second pass clock expires.
- Inadvertent whistle
- Ball-carrier leaves their feet to dive, jump or hurdle a player. (Exception: A PLAYER CAN DIVE TO CATCH A PASS OR PULL A FLAG)

NOTE: Fumbles / loss of possession: Ground contact must be made for the play to be dead at that spot.

A fumble is loss of possession by a player, resulting in the ball contacting the ground. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble. On offense, the down counts and the offense retains possession unless the play would otherwise result in a turnover on downs.

If an inadvertent whistle occurs, the team in possession has two options:

- Take the ball where the whistle blew and the down will count
- Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage If an IW occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offense will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.

Running Game

The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.

The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the Line of Scrimmage. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap under center directly or in shotgun formation.

Direct handoffs, pitches and laterals are permitted only behind the line of scrimmage. If a handoff, pitch or lateral occurs after the ball carrier has crossed the line of scrimmage, the play is blown dead and the ball is spotted at the location of the illegal exchange.

Behind the line of scrimmage, The QB may NOT handoff, pitch or lateral the ball first to the center. In flag football this is referred to as a "Center sneak". The center may receive a pass over the line of scrimmage the same as any other receiver.

Any player who receives a handoff, backward pass, pitch or lateral 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, or a backward pass, pitch or lateral has occurred, the 7-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.

Definition of a "Legal Handoff" - Total loss of possession directly from 1 offensive player to another.

Teams are not allowed to run in the 'NO RUN ZONES' - (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches TWO no-run zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

Runners are not permitted to jump, leap or hurdle, in the officials' judgement, while advancing the ball. The play is to be blown dead and the ball spotted where the jump, leap or hurdle occurred.

Ball carriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB's passing or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player. The play will continue without stoppage. However, if while leaving the ground, illegal contact is made, a penalty may be enforced by the official.

No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.

Offensive players in close proximity to the ball carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.

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.

Once the ball is advanced beyond the LOS, the current ball carrier is the only player allowed to have possession of the ball until the play is dead.



Passing

Only 1 forward pass, thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, is permitted each offensive play. The ball must be released prior to crossing the line of scrimmage.

There can be unlimited backward passes behind the line of scrimmage.

There is no intentional grounding. The quarterback may throw the ball anywhere across the line of scrimmage to avoid a sack.

All forward passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender.

All forward passes must go beyond the line of scrimmage.

Shovel passes are allowed and must be a forward pass, from behind the line of scrimmage, and received beyond the line of scrimmage.

The quarterback has a 7 second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, the play is dead, the down counts and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage, the 7 second rule is no longer in effect.

If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7 second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS) and it will be the next down. If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.

Receiving

All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage).

A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.

In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth six points, two points if returned during 1- or 2-point PAT conversions.

Rushing The Passer (Grades 4-9 Only)

In divisions K, 1, 2, & 3 defenders may not rush the passer.

All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.

Up to two (2) players can rush the quarterback. Rushers MUST identify themselves by raising their hand before the snap. While designated rushers don't have to rush, if they choose to, they must do so immediately after the snap. Delayed rush is NOT permitted. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend the line of scrimmage.

Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled backwards behind the line of scrimmage, all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to defend and pull the flag.

The game official will designate a rush line 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.

Defensive players may verify they are in the correct position with the official.

To recap, a legal rush is any rush by the 1 or 2 designated rushers, 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.

Any defensive player may rush into the backfield **after** the player receiving the snap has handed the ball off, pitched it, or thrown it backward.

See rushing the passer penalties on the next page.



Penalties related to Rushing the Passer

A penalty may be called for any of the following:

The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff, pitch, lateral or pass – Illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).

Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped – Encroachment (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down).

Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed, pitched, lateraled or handed off – Illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).

If the offense draws the identified rusher(s) across the 7 yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, the rusher(s) CANNOT legally rush. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to a handoff, pitch, lateral or forward pass. Teams are never required to rush the quarterback with the 7 second clock in effect.

Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.

The offense cannot impede the rusher's PATH to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. 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 avoid contact.

A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is when the flag is pulled.

A 2-point Safety is awarded if a flag pull takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

Flag Pulling

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.

It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.

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, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the jersey. Keep those hands up!

If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.

If a player who has one or no flags on their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.

A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flag(s) off a player who is not in possession of the ball.

Defensive players may not pull their own flags in an attempt to imitate the sound of a legal flag pull and deceive the ball carrier. Doing so will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.



Formations

Each offensive play must have a minimum of one player (the center) and a maximum of four players on the line of scrimmage.

The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.

Movement simulating the snap, by a player who is set, is considered a false start.

The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion **between his/her legs** to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

Only one player is allowed in motion when the ball is snapped. The player **MUST** be in motion, off the line of scrimmage. All motion must be parallel or backwards to the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.

Players may shift positions on offense at any time, all players must still reset for 1 second, prior to the snap.



Penalties

The on-field officials will administer all in-game penalties.

The officials will determine incidental contact that may result from the normal run of play.

All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)

Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations.

Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.

Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball.

Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.

Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

Spot fouls administered in the end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down) /
Offensive (Safety)

Defensive Spot Fouls	
Defensive Pass Interference	Automatic First Down
Holding	+5 yards and automatic first down
Stripping	+5 yards and automatic first down

Offensive Spot Fouls	
Screening, blocking, running with the ball	-5 yards and loss of down
Charging	-5 yards and loss of down
Flag Guarding	-5 yards and loss of down

Defensive Penalties	
Defensive Unnecessary Roughness	+10 yards automatic first down
Defensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct	+10 yards and automatic first down
Offside	+5 yards from line of scrimmage automatic first down
Illegal Rush (inside 7 yards)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage automatic first down
Illegal Flag Pull (before receiver has the ball)	+5 yards from line of scrimmage automatic first down
Roughing the Passer	+5 yards from line of scrimmage automatic first down
Taunting	+10 yards from line of scrimmage automatic first down

Offensive Penalties	
Offensive Unnecessary Roughness	-10 yards and loss of down
Offensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct	-10 yards and loss of down
Offside/false start	-5 yards from line of scrimmage loss of down
Illegal Forward Pass (pass received or land behind LOS or throwing a pass after crossing the LOS)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage loss of down
Offensive Pass Interference	-5 yards from line of scrimmage loss of down
Illegal Motion (more than one person moving)	-5 yards from line of scrimmage loss of down
Delay of Game	-5 yards from line of scrimmage loss of down
Impeding the Rusher	-5 yards from line of scrimmage loss of down
Illegal Advancement	-5 yards from line of scrimmage loss of down

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

If the game officials witness any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, dangerous or excessive contact, or other unsportsmanlike acts, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the game officials' discretion.

Offensive or confrontational language is NOT allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the officials will penalize for unsportsmanlike conduct and determine if an ejection is warranted.

Players, Coaches or spectators may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or game official.

Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.

Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags. Offensive players may NOT initiate contact at the line of scrimmage with defenders.

Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:

Defensive penalty +10 yards from the dead ball spot and an automatic first down

Offensive penalty -10 yards from the dead ball spot and a loss of down

Two (2) unsportsmanlike penalties on any player or coach in a game result in a disqualification and may lead to additional discipline.

Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties can be called on teams for their fans' behavior.

On Field Coaching Participation

K Division

In the K Division, multiple coaches from each team are allowed on the field during play. Coaches may assist players in any way they see fit, including helping with positioning, play-calling, and providing in-the-moment instruction during live action. This flexibility is intended to promote learning, safety, and a positive first experience with the game.

Divisions 1 through 3

In Divisions 1 through 3, coaches are permitted on the field during games to assist players with positioning and play-calling.

Offensive Coaches: One offensive coach is allowed in the huddle between plays. At the time of the snap, the coach must be positioned at least 7 yards behind the player farthest from the line of scrimmage.

Defensive Coaches: One defensive coach may enter the field between plays to assist with alignment and play-calling. However, the defensive coach must return to the sideline before the snap.

4th Grade Division

In the 4th Grade Division, coaches are permitted on the field between plays in the same fashion as Divisions 1–3, but only during the first two weekends of the season.

After the first two weeks, all coaching must take place from the sideline unless there is a timeout on the field. No coaches are allowed on the field of play during live action or between plays beyond Week 2.

Division 5/6 & 7/8/9

In the 5/6 & 7/8/9 divisions, all coaching must take place from the sideline unless there is a timeout on the field. No coaches are allowed on the field of play during live action.

Enforcement

Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in a warning and potential unsportsmanlike penalties at the discretion of the officials.

Overtime Rules

Used only for playoff games - Regular season games end in a tie

Overtime Playing Time: The same offensive and defensive groups used in the second half will remain in place for overtime. Any applicable Ironman designations will also remain unchanged. The "Rules of Three" scoring limit resets to zero for all players at the start of overtime.

The home team calls the coin toss to determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime.

This process continues with teams alternating the choice to be on offense or defense to start every round of overtime.

The referee will determine which end of the field the entire overtime will be played.

1st Overtime: Each team will get one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Each team has the choice to go for 1 or 2 points in the first overtime period only.

Example: Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.

If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the game is over.

2nd Overtime: Both teams must attempt a 2 point conversion from the 10-yard

3rd overtime: Each team will get 1 play from their own 5 yard line going out from the Endzone. The team with the most yards on their play will be awarded 1 point to be added to their final score to win the game. (A 4th overtime is only possible if both teams score a touchdown on their 3rd overtime play.)

-The Final Score will be recorded to include all points scored in the overtime periods.

-All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.

-There are no timeouts in overtime.

-Interceptions are returnable for a score in OT and are worth 2 points.

-Interceptions returned for a score in the first or second overtime period, the game is over.

-Interceptions advanced in the third overtime period, the game is over.



PYFFL-Specific Scoring Limit: “Rules of Three”

One of the cornerstone philosophies of the PYFFL is that all participants receive equal playing time and have the same opportunities as other players. When possible, teams are composed of 10 players with five players playing at one time and another group of five players waiting to substitute.

In an effort to distribute the ball evenly on offense, “Rules of Three” scoring will be in effect for all games regardless of how many players are in attendance for a team.

Individual players may score a maximum of three times on offense per game (touchdowns and 1- or 2-point conversions). Defensive scores do not count toward this limit.

Coaches are required to know how many scores their players have. They are encouraged to confirm with the official, scorekeeper and opposing coach if need be.

Once a player has reached their maximum it should be communicated with the official that the player can no longer advance the ball on offense.

Once a player reaches their offensive scoring limit:

On offense: The player may play quarterback and throw passes or act as a decoy (without touching the ball). If they run or catch the ball after reaching their limit, the play will not count. A 5-yard penalty and loss of down will be enforced. If this occurs on 3rd down, the opposing team gains possession at their own 5-yard line.

On defense: The player may continue to play without restriction. They can intercept passes and return them for scores. They may also be involved in safeties, and those scores are allowed.

Playing Time & Ironman Rules

With eight or more players available for a game, all players **MUST** play a minimum of one half on offense and one half on defense. This rule is designed to ensure that every player receives meaningful and equitable playing time on both sides of the ball. The following playing-time policy applies to every team, in every division, without exception:

10 Players

Two groups of five players are created. One group plays offense during the first half and defense during the second half. The other group plays defense during the first half and offense during the second half.

Once the two groups are established, players may not switch groups during the game.

9 or 8 Players — Ironman Rule in Effect

When a team has eight or nine available players, designated Ironman players may play on both offense and defense during one half of the game.

Ironman designations are made on a game-by-game basis. A coach may select any player to serve as an Ironman, regardless of whether that player has previously served as an Ironman in another game.

However, **no player may serve as an Ironman in both halves of the same game.** A player who plays both offense and defense during the first half may not play both offense and defense during the second half.

9 Players (1 Player Absent) — Please see example on next page

Designate one (1) Ironman for the first half who plays both offense and defense.

A different player must be designated as the Ironman for the second half.

A total of two (2) different Ironman players are required during the game.

8 Players (2 Players Absent) — Please see example on next page

Designate two (2) Ironmen for the first half who play both offense and defense.

Two different players must be designated as Ironmen for the second half.

A total of four (4) different Ironman players are required during the game.

Note: Ironmen will identify themselves on the field by wearing a yellow wristband.

7 or 6 Players

The coach determines who plays and may substitute players before each series. Each player is required to play at least three (3) series on each side of the ball. The “Rules of Three” policy still applies.

Because the Ironman Rule no longer applies when a team has seven or fewer available players, players may play both offense and defense throughout the game as necessary.



5 Players

Players must play every play. All phases of the Rules of Three policy still apply. Teams with five players are granted one additional timeout in each half.

Late-Arriving Players

If a late-arriving player brings the team to 10 total players, all Ironman designations are removed for the remainder of that half and the team follows the 10-player rule.

If a late-arriving player brings the team to nine total players, up from eight, one Ironman designation must be removed for the remainder of that half. The team must follow the 9-player rule for the remainder of the game.

If a late-arriving player brings the team to eight total players, up from seven, the coach must designate two Ironman players for the remainder of that half. The team must then follow the 8-player rule for the remainder of the game.

Regardless of when a player arrives, no player may serve as an Ironman in both halves of the same game.

Timing Note: Any player arriving with less than 15:00 remaining on the clock in the first half will sit out the remainder of that half.

Late Arrivals & Early Departures for Attendance Policy

A player who arrives late or leaves a game early will be considered absent for purposes of the attendance policy.

Ironman Violations

Ironman designations will be noted on the scoresheet for each game to ensure compliance with the playing-time policy.

There is no season limit on the number of times a player may be designated as an Ironman. A player may serve as an Ironman in multiple games during the season, but may only serve as an Ironman during one half of any individual game.

An Ironman policy violation will automatically result in a forfeit in both the regular season and playoffs. No exceptions.

IRONMAN SAMPLE LINEUP WITH 9 PLAYERS AVAILABLE

First Half Offense

Drew B.
Andrew S.
Cole V. *IRONMAN*
Grayson I.
Gavin B.

First Half Defense

Will B.
Ben B.
Luca B.
Cole V.
Sebastien H.

Second Half Offense

Will B.
Ben B.
Luca B.
Cole V.
Sebastien H.

Second Half Defense

Drew B.
Andrew S.
Grayson I.
Gavin B.
Ben B. *IRONMAN*

In this example, Cole V. plays offense in addition to defense in the first half as the “first half ironman.” He plays offense the entire game. Ben B. plays defense in addition to offense in the second half as the “second half ironman.” He plays defense the entire game.

IRONMAN SAMPLE LINEUP WITH 8 PLAYERS AVAILABLE

First Half Offense

Drew B.
Sebastien H. *IRONMAN*
Cole V. *IRONMAN*
Grayson I.
Gavin B.

First Half Defense

Will B.
Ben B.
Luca B.
Cole V.
Sebastien H.

Second Half Offense

Will B.
Ben B.
Luca B.
Cole V.
Sebastien H.

Second Half Defense

Drew B.
Will B. *IRONMAN*
Grayson I.
Gavin B.
Ben B. *IRONMAN*

In this example, Cole V. plays offense in addition to defense in the first half as a “first half ironman.” Sebastien H. does the same. They play offense the entire game. Ben B. & Will B. play defense in addition to offense in the second half as the “second half ironmen.” They play defense the entire game.

Game Attendance & Playoff Eligibility

To ensure fair participation throughout the season, players must meet the following attendance requirement in order to be eligible for postseason play.

Minimum Participation

A player must be credited with participation in at least 5 of the 8 regular-season games to be eligible for the playoffs. This means a player may miss up to 3 regular-season games and still remain eligible for postseason play.

For a game to count toward the attendance requirement, a player must be present, in uniform, and participate in the entire game from start to finish.

Players who are absent, arrive after the game has begun, or leave before the game is completed will not receive participation credit for that game.

Injury Exemption

An exemption may only be considered in cases of a documented orthopedic injury that prevents the player from participating in sports activities.

Any exemption request must include:

- A doctor's note documenting the injury
- Written medical clearance allowing the player to return to play

All injury exemptions are subject to review and approval by the PYFFL Board.

Non-Qualifying Absences

Absences due to vacations, personal or family scheduling conflicts, common illnesses, or participation in other sports, teams, tournaments, practices, games, or athletic events will not qualify for an exemption from the attendance requirement.

Conflicts with another sport or athletic commitment do not alter PYFFL playoff eligibility requirements.

Postponed Games

In the event that a game is postponed due to weather or field conditions, any make-up game played on a regularly scheduled PYFFL game day will still be subject to the same attendance and participation requirements outlined above.

Coaching Code Of Conduct

Coaches serve as role models and leaders for their teams and for the entire Pembroke Youth Flag Football League community. Their actions directly influence the behavior of players, fellow coaches, parents, and spectators. All coaches are expected to maintain professionalism at all times, demonstrating respect, self-control, leadership, and sportsmanship. PYFFL is a youth development league, and the experience of the players will always take precedence over competition, personal recognition, or winning.

Coaches are responsible for managing their players and their team's spectators to ensure a positive and respectful environment at all practices and games. Coaches must treat players, officials, scorekeepers, opposing coaches, and spectators with respect at all times. They are expected to work collaboratively with officials to defuse potential conflicts and must refrain from engaging in heated arguments or confrontational behavior. Swearing, inappropriate language, or gestures are strictly prohibited. Coaches are expected to model composure and maturity in competitive situations. Violations of these standards may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to an immediate one-game suspension, a mandatory appearance before the PYFFL Board of Directors, or additional sanctions as determined by the Board. The League President or Vice-President may impose interim discipline pending Board review when necessary.

Under no circumstances may a coach physically or verbally threaten any player, spectator, official, scorekeeper, or opposing coach. Any form of bullying, intimidation, harassment, or discriminatory conduct based on ability, gender, background, or any other characteristic will not be tolerated. Such behavior will result in immediate removal and may result in permanent dismissal from the league.

Coaches must prioritize player safety and well-being over competition at all times. Coaches are expected to teach proper flag football techniques consistent with league and NFL Flag guidelines and must not teach or encourage excessive contact. Injuries must be addressed immediately and reported in accordance with league procedures. All required safety, background check, and abuse-prevention training requirements must be completed and maintained. PYFFL prioritizes participation and development, and coaches are expected to provide equitable opportunities for players to learn, develop, and contribute within the framework of league rules.

Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their team's sideline. Coaches must not engage in arguments with parents or spectators. Concerns or disputes should be directed through appropriate league channels. A coach's ability to manage sideline behavior is considered part of their leadership responsibility.

If a coach is ejected from a game, the coach must leave the field immediately and will serve a mandatory one-game suspension. The coach must appear before the PYFFL Board of Directors prior to returning to coaching duties. Failure to comply may result in further disciplinary action.

(Policy continued on next page)

The consumption of alcohol at PYFFL fields is strictly prohibited. Coaches may not bring alcohol onto the fields and must refrain from consuming alcohol prior to coaching. Any coach found to be under the influence while coaching will be immediately removed from the practice or game and permanently dismissed from the league. Smoking or the use of tobacco or vaping products is not permitted on or near the fields during practices or games. Violations of these policies will result in disciplinary action.

Coaches represent PYFFL both on and off the field. Coaches may not publicly criticize players, officials, league policies, or board members. Coaches may not capture, post, share, distribute, or transmit images or videos of players in any form without parental consent. Coaches may not engage in conduct, including online activity, that reflects negatively on the league. Coaches are expected to uphold the values of the league in all public and digital spaces.

PYFFL is a volunteer-run organization committed to providing a positive youth sports experience. Coaches are expected to maintain perspective and model the values of sportsmanship, maturity, and community leadership at all times. Those who are unable to uphold the league's standards may be removed at the discretion of the League President or Vice-President and/or the PYFFL Board of Directors. Board decisions regarding disciplinary matters are final.



Parent/Spectator Code of Conduct

Parents and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the values of PYFFL and creates a positive, safe, and respectful environment for all players, coaches, officials, volunteers, and families.

Parents and spectators must treat coaches, officials, opposing players, opposing coaches, and other spectators with respect at all times. Unsportsmanlike conduct, including yelling at or confronting others; taunting; threatening or intimidating behavior; abusive or profane language; harassment; or other disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.

Parents and spectators may not argue with, heckle, taunt, "chirp," or repeatedly comment on an official's calls, judgment, or performance. This includes comments directed at officials from the sideline, even when not profane or threatening. Persistent criticism of officiating creates an unsportsmanlike environment and will be treated as a violation of the PYFFL Parent/Spectator Code of Conduct.

Parents and spectators are expected to model good sportsmanship and prioritize player development, participation, and enjoyment over winning. Positive encouragement is welcomed. Criticism or arguments directed at coaches, officials, players, or opposing spectators are not.

Parents and spectators may not coach from the sidelines unless they are an approved member of the PYFFL coaching staff. Parents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with PYFFL rules and reinforce good sportsmanship and respect for those rules with their children.

All parents, spectators, team photographers, and other non-team personnel must remain outside the playing field and within designated spectator areas. At the Mattakeesett Complex, spectators must remain behind the fences in designated league viewing areas unless specifically authorized by PYFFL.

Enforcement

PYFFL has zero tolerance for abusive, threatening, intimidating, or otherwise inappropriate spectator behavior. Depending on the nature and severity of the conduct, disciplinary action may be taken immediately without any prior warning.

If spectator behavior becomes disruptive during a game, an official may issue a warning to the spectator and associated team. Continued misconduct may result in a 10-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty against that team.

Any conduct deemed sufficiently serious by an official or PYFFL representative, may result in immediate removal of the spectator from the field or complex. Failure to comply with an order to leave may result in forfeiture of the game.

Removal from a game or complex does not prevent PYFFL from imposing additional discipline. The PYFFL President and/or Board of Directors may suspend or prohibit a parent or spectator from attending future PYFFL activities or, when warranted, remove the associated player or family from the league.

PYFFL reserves the right to take any disciplinary action it determines necessary to protect players, coaches, officials, volunteers, and families and to preserve the integrity, safety, and sportsmanship of the league.

