



GRAND VALLEY YOUTH FOOTBALL

6U Flag Rules

In Flag football, the offensive team plays for a first down at midfield and a touchdown in the end zone. The offensive team cannot use a running play when the line of scrimmage is in an effective “no run zone” (see below). The defensive team grabs flags to make “tackles.”

Article 1. Eligibility – Players will be assigned to teams according to their age on the cut-off date established by School District 51 (July 31, 2026). All players must provide a copy of their birth certificate. If the player does not make a team selection, they will be placed on a team based on their school of attendance.

Article 2. Team Rosters – Team rosters shall be a minimum of 7 players.

- A. If a team fails to meet the minimum required players to safely participate, those players will be assigned to another team that is below the maximum. We will strive to keep players as close to their home boundary as we can.
- B. Once a team reaches the maximum number of players, no new players can be assigned to that team.

Article 3. Equipment – Players will be provided with a flag belt, mouthpiece, and game shirt by GVYF. Players must wear the GVYF provided game shirt for all contests.

- A. No modifications to the game shirt are permissible except for the ability of the player and/or team to embroider or heat press the player’s last name or appropriate nickname on the back of the jersey.
- B. The shirt must be tucked into the shorts at all times during the contest. The shorts must not conceal the flags in any way during play.
- C. GVYF provided flag belts must be worn by all participants, unless players elect to provide their own flag belts of the same type and manufacturer.
- D. All contests will be played with a Wilson K2 football or GVYF approved equivalent.

Article 4. The Basics

- A. Game start – The team that wins the coinflip at midfield can elect to take possession of the ball first or can choose which side of the field they want to defend. The team that does not start the game with possession of the ball will start the second half with possession of the ball. Teams will switch direction at halftime.
- B. The offense and defense shall each always have 5 players on the field.
- C. The offense takes possession of the ball at its own 5-yard line and has four plays to cross midfield. If a team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposing team starts their possession from their own 5-yard line.
- D. If the offense crosses midfield, it has four plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession with the opposing team taking possession of the ball at their own 5-yard line.
- E. All possession changes, except interceptions, result in the new possession beginning at the offensive team’s 5-yard line. Interceptions may be run back allowing the intercepting defender a chance to score a touchdown. The ball is spotted at the end of the run-back.
- F. There is NO kicking or punting.
- G. All players will receive equal playing time.

Article 5. Game Clock – The game shall consist of two twenty-minute halves with a running clock. Unless described herein, the clock does not stop for incomplete passes or plays that end out of bounds. Once play begins the clock will run continuously except for the circumstances noted below. Halftime shall be 5 to 10 minutes in length.

- A. The clock stops only at the direction of the coach(es), in the following situations:
 - i. A charged time-out is taken by either team.

- B. Once the ball is spotted, the offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
- C. Each team is awarded two 60-second time-outs per half. Unused time-outs do not carry over.
- D. If a player is injured in the field of play, the game clock may be stopped at the coach's discretion or after two minutes have passed.
- E. There is no overtime.

Article 6. The Playing Field – The playing field shall be 50 yards long and 26-1/2 yards wide with 10-yard end zones.

Article 7. Coaching – Per the GUYF bylaws, coaches must be registered with the league, pass a background check, and obtain current USA Football Youth Coach Certification.

- A. Team sidelines are reserved for designated coaches only. A maximum of 4 coaches per team will be allowed on the sidelines.
- B. Two coaches from each team are permitted on the field of play.
 - i. The offensive coach must be aligned behind the deepest offensive player by a minimum of 5 yards once the huddle has broken.
 - ii. The defensive coach must be aligned behind the deepest safety and remain out of the play.

Article 7. Scoring – Score is not kept for 6U games.

Article 8. Starting Play – A play starts when the center snaps the ball to the quarterback.

- A. The quarterback (QB) is defined as the offensive player who first possesses the ball after the snap. The QB may not necessarily be the player lined up behind the center.
- B. The ball must be snapped from the ground, either between the legs or to the side. There are no live fumbles.
 - i. On a botched snap, the ball is still live and the QB pass clock continues to run. Only an eligible defensive rusher may cross the LOS.
 - ii. For any non-snap fumble, the ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground. In the event of a forward fumble, the ball will be spotted at the player's front foot.
- C. Only one offensive player may be in motion when the ball is snapped.

Article 9. Ending Play – Play ends when a coach's whistle is blown, marking the play dead.

- A. A play is ruled dead when:
 - i. The ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - ii. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - iii. A touchdown or safety is scored.
 - iv. The ball carrier's knee touches the ground.
 - v. The ball carrier's flag falls off.
 - vi. A non-snap fumble occurs.
 - vii. A dead ball penalty is called by the coach(es).
- B. Play is not ruled dead when a player that is not the ball carrier has their flags pulled. Play continues as normal and the appropriate penalty is enforced at the end of the play.
- C. Player substitutions may be made on any dead ball except an inadvertent whistle.

Article 10. Running

- A. The quarterback cannot run the ball past the line of scrimmage after receiving the snap unless the defense crosses the line of scrimmage.
 - i. Any defensive player who crosses the line of scrimmage while the QB still maintains original possession of the ball triggers the ability for the QB to advance the ball for positive yards.
 - ii. If the QB advances the ball past the line of scrimmage without a defensive player having crossed the line of scrimmage, a 5-yard penalty will be enforced with loss of down.

- B. Any player who receives a handoff or lateral from the QB can still throw a legal forward pass if that player does not cross the line of scrimmage.
- C. Once the ball leaves the QB's possession, all defensive players are eligible to cross the line of scrimmage.
- D. Hurdling or diving are not permitted while running the ball.
- E. Laterals are allowed.
- F. If the ball carrier's flag falls off at any time, the play is dead at that spot as if the flag was pulled by a defensive player.
- G. The ball is spotted at the spot where the flag was pulled.
- H. Center Sneak Rule – When the ball is snapped, to hand the ball back to the Center, the QB must reach the ball around the Center's body, or the Center can reach back to get the ball. Handoffs between the Center's legs after the snap are not permitted.

Article 11. Passing – To be considered a pass, the ball must cross the offensive LOS in the air. Otherwise, it is considered a running play.

- A. All players are eligible to receive a pass (including the QB if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- B. To successfully complete a catch, the receiver must have one foot in bounds before stepping out of bounds.
- C. If the receiver's flag falls off while the player is running a route and then catches a pass, the ball is down at the spot of the catch.
- D. Shovel passes, defined as a legal pass thrown underhand or by pushing the ball to a receiver, are legal so long as the ball crosses the line of scrimmage.
- E. The offense has a 7-second pass clock for the QB to throw a pass. If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds of the snap, the play is immediately blown down with a loss of down. No yardage is lost.
 - i. The pass clock stops once the ball leaves the QB's hands so there is no pass clock for another player to attempt to complete a pass.
- F. An interception results in a change of possession and the intercepting player can attempt to advance the ball for a touchdown.

Article 12. Blocking/Screening/Contact

- A. Down field blocking is not allowed – coaches will be instructed to watch for players deliberately seeking contact.
- B. Blocking as if to mimic an offensive line protecting the QB is not permitted.
- C. All receivers are expected to run routes as if expecting to be targeted by the QB. "Rub routes" or "picking" as in basketball is not permitted.

Article 13. Rushing the Quarterback

- A. Any defensive player that starts play a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage may rush the QB.
 - i. Any number of defensive players may rush the QB if they meet the above criteria.
 - ii. Players not rushing the QB may defend at the line of scrimmage but may not cross the line of scrimmage until the ball leaves the hands of the QB.

Article 14. Penalties – Enforced penalties that result in an automatic 1st down provide the offense a full set of downs to reach the midfield line if they have not already done so; or a full set of downs to score a touchdown if they have already crossed the midfield line or if the enforcement of the penalty results in the offense crossing the midfield line.

- A. Offensive Penalties – Dead ball penalties are enforced automatically. For live ball penalties, the defense will be given the choice to take the result of the play or to enforce the penalty.
 - i. Delay of Game – 5 yards from line of scrimmage; dead ball; replay down.
 - ii. False Start – 5 yards from line of scrimmage; dead ball; replay down.
 - iii. Flag Guarding – using hands, arms, or the ball to prevent a flag pull / stiff arming) – 5 yards from the spot of the foul; loss of down.

- iv. Illegal Blocking – any offensive player intentionally seeking contact to prevent a flag pull – 5 yards from line of scrimmage; replay down.
- v. Illegal Forward Pass – offensive player attempting a forward pass while beyond the line of scrimmage – 5 yards from line of scrimmage; loss of down.
- vi. Illegal Motion – more than one player in motion or motion towards the line of scrimmage at snap – 5 yards from line of scrimmage; dead ball; replay down.
- vii. Illegal QB Run – 5 yards from line of scrimmage; loss of down.
- viii. Illegal Substitution – more than 5 players in formation or a player enters the field of play after the snap – 5 yards from line of scrimmage; dead ball; replay down.
- ix. Offensive Pass Interference – illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender – 5 yards from line of scrimmage; loss of down.
- x. Personal Foul – Unnecessary or excessive physical contact initiated by an offensive player – 10 yards from spot of the foul; penalty applied to end of play.
- xi. Unsportsmanlike Conduct – At the Coach(es) discretion including but not limited to taunting, trash talking, cursing, or harassing the coach(es) or player(s) – 10 yards from line of scrimmage; penalty applied to end of play.

B. Defensive Penalties – Dead ball penalties are enforced automatically. For live ball penalties, the defense will be given the choice to take the result of the play or to enforce the penalty.

- i. Defensive Holding – Restricting the receiver's ability to run their route before the ball is in the air or physically restraining the ball carrier to allow for a flag pull – 5 yards added to the end of the play; penalty applied at end of play.
- ii. Defensive Pass Interference – intentional contact with the receiver while the ball is in the air – 10 yards from line of scrimmage; replay down.
 - a. If Defensive Pass Interference occurs in the endzone, the offense is granted an automatic first down and the ball is placed at the defense's 1 yard line.
- iii. Illegal Batting – it is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball away from the ball carrier's possession at any time – 5 yards from the spot of the foul; replay down.
- iv. Illegal Flag Pull
 - a. Before the receiver has the ball and the pass intended for the flag pulled receiver is dropped – 5 yards from line of scrimmage; replay down.
 - b. Before the receiver has the ball and the pass intended for the flag pulled receiver is caught – 5 yards from spot of catch; penalty applied at end of play.
- v. Illegal Rushing – A defensive player who began play less than 7 yards from the line of scrimmage crosses the line of scrimmage while the QB still has the ball – 5 yards from line of scrimmage; replay the down.
- vi. Illegal Substitution – more than 5 players in formation or a player enters the field of play after the snap – 5 yards from line of scrimmage; dead ball unless the play is already in progress; replay down.
- vii. Incidental Contact – 5 yards from spot of foul; penalty applied at end of play.
- viii. Offsides – 5 yards from line of scrimmage; dead ball; replay down.
- ix. Personal Foul – Unnecessary or excessive physical contact initiated by a defensive player – 10 yards from spot of the foul; penalty applied to end of play and an automatic 1st down.
- x. Unsportsmanlike Conduct – At the Coach(es) discretion including but not limited to taunting, trash talking, cursing, or harassing the coach(es) or player(s) – 10 yards from end of play; penalty applied to end of play; penalty applied to end of play and an automatic 1st down.