

Lancaster Parks and Recreation Department Everyone Plays Youth Football Flag Rules

League Wide Rules and Disclaimers

- Officiating will be conducted by officials appointed by Lancaster Parks and Recreation Department
- Officials and the league supervisors have absolute control over the game and reserve the right to conference and confirm calls or mandate any matters that may fall outside these rules.
- Their decision is final on any above-mentioned matter and must be respected by all involved.
- These rules govern play. All rule changes are at the discretion of Lancaster Parks and Recreation Department.

Divisions

D1: Pre-K/K – Pee wee size ball – 2 coaches on the field during game

D2: 1st & 2nd - Pee wee size ball – 1 coach on the field during game

D3: 3rd & 4th - Junior size ball – no coaches on the field during game

D4: 5th & 6th - Junior size ball - no coaches on the field during game

1. Team Requirements

- A. Target for all divisions is 7 vs 7.
- B. A team may play with less than 7 players if agreed upon by coaches from both teams and if it does not exclude any kids that aren't under disciplinary action.
 - a. Teams may play with 6 vs 6 or 5 vs 5 but no less than 5 players.
 - b. Teams cannot add players from another team to substitute.
- C. Substitutions are allowed between plays and during time outs.

2. Equipment

- A. All players must wear shoes.
- B. Rubber cleats or tennis shoes are allowed.
- C. Prohibited footwear are as follows, metal cleats, hard sole shoes, open-toed or open-heeled shoes.
- D. Pants or shorts with pockets or belt loops are prohibited.
 - a. Duct tape will be available to close pockets to prevent injuries.
 - b. Coaches should help identify players that will need to tape pockets
- E. Towels must not hang from the waist or interfere with flag removal.
- F. Teams must use flags provided by Lancaster Parks and Recreation Department.
 - a. These flags are Velcro style and **NOT** the suction cup style.
 - b. Lancaster Parks will provide each team with belts at the start of each game.
 - c. Belts can be picked up at the start of each game from the assigned game field.
- G. Other strictly prohibited equipment; billed hats, bandanas, all jewelry, and any other type of equipment that will either provide a place to catch an appendage or is made of hard, unyielding material.
- H. Field dimensions:
 - D1 & D2: 30y x 40y with additional 10-yard endzones
 - D3 & D4: 30y x 50y with additional 10-yard endzones

3. Coin Toss

- A. Coin toss will be roughly 3 minutes before the start of the game.
 - a. LPRD officials and designated captains will participate.
- B. LPRD Official will designate which captain will call the flip.
- C. The winning captain will have the choice of receiving the ball or defer until the 2nd half.
- D. The losing captain will have the remaining choice.
- E. The final choice will go to the winning captain, and he will choose which goal to defend in the 1st half.

4. Game Timing

- A. Games will consist of four 10 min quarters that are a running clock. Unless there is a time out, injury or any other circumstance deemed appropriate by the LPRD official.
 - a. Potentially adjusted times for the quarters if there is a threat of inclement weather. Meaning 8 min quarters to help get in a whole game if needed based on weather at the time of game.
- B. There will be 5 min halftime.
 - a. Can be shortened upon approval of both coaches and the official.
- C. All play must be started within 45 seconds of the official placing the ball with younger (D1 & D2) divisions and 30 seconds with older (D3 & D4) divisions.
- D. Any team in any division will be given one warning. All subsequent violations will result in the loss of down.
- E. All teams will be given 2 timeouts per half that are to be no longer than 1 minute.

5. Field of Play and Advancement

- A. The field of play will be:
 - 30y x 40y additional 10y end zone. D1 & D2
 - 30y x 50y additional 10y end zone. D3 & D4
- B. The ball will be placed on the 10 yd line at the beginning of each game, once the opposing team takes possession after a touchdown, after a touchback or safety.
- C. The offense will be given 4 downs to reach the midpoint of the field.
- D. After the midpoint is crossed the offense will have another 4 downs to reach the endzone.

6. Offensive Rules

- A. There must be at least 4 players on the line of scrimmage at time of the “snap” and must come to a stop for at least one second prior to the beginning of the play.
- B. Only one player may be in motion prior to the “snap”. If more than one player goes into motion this is considered a shift and must come to rest again for at least one second before the “snap”.
- C. There must be a center, and they must “snap” the ball to a different player.
- D. There will NO LONGER be a snap made by the center from the side. ***D3 & D4**
- E. The “snap” must be through the legs. ***D3 & D4**
- F. Once the ball is placed the center must “snap” in a single continuous motion.
- G. The person receiving the “snap” must be behind the center.
- H. The ball may be moved with the official’s permission due to poor field conditions.
- I. If the “snap” is dropped this is considered a fumble and will be a live ball. Either team could advance the ball or fall on it to keep or acquire possession. ***D3 & D4**
- J. If any part of the ball carriers’ body other than their feet or hands hits the ground the play is dead.
- K. A ball carrier may not hurdle or dive into a defender. This is a possible 10yd penalty depending upon severity.
- L. All violations of the above rules are subject to a 5yd penalty.

7. Offensive Passing Rules

- A. Every member of the offensive team is eligible to receive a pass. Unless the player voluntarily leaves the field of play.
- B. All offensive players must be within 15yds of the ball, and it must also be clear who the 7 players are. This is to eliminate any sleeper or hideout plays. Any violation of this rule will be subject to a 10yd penalty.
- C. For a legal catch the player must come down with one foot in bounds. This also covers an interception.

8. Offensive Scoring

- A. A touchdown is worth 6 points.
- B. There are no field goals.
- C. One extra point will be awarded for a touchdown that is run in or a pass that is caught short of the end zone and then ran in.
- D. Two extra points will be awarded for a pass caught in the end zone.

9. Punting (D3 & D4)

- A. No fake punts.
- B. There are no elective punts. All punts will be live.
- C. There is no rushing the punter.
 - D4 Returning team is allowed to attempt to block the punt. If they collide with the punter, a roughing the punter penalty will be enforced. (loss of 10yds)
- D. All players must remain in place while the punt is being kicked.
- E. Defensive players may put their hands up to block the punt.

***D3 & D4** - At the start of the game, start of the second half, and after each touchdown scored, the team on defense would kick off from a tee to the offensive team. The receiving team would have the option for a fair catch or be able to advance the ball. If the receiving team touches the ball and/or fumbles the ball, either team would be allowed to dive on the ball to gain possession or would be allowed to pick up the ball and advance the ball. ** this addition is for the older (D3 & D4) divisions.

***D3 & D4** - All fourth down punts will be live and returnable.

- D4 – Returning team is allowed to attempt to block the punt. If they collide with the punter, a roughing the punter penalty will be enforced.
- D3 & D4 - If the receiving team touches &/or fumbles the ball, either team would be allowed to dive on the ball to gain possession or would be allowed to pick up the ball and advance the ball.

***D1 & D2 do not punt**

10. Screening

- A. Blocking as in tackling football is prohibited.
- B. A screen block must happen without contact. Like a basketball pick.
- C. A screener must have his hands behind their back. Any use of hands, elbows, legs or body to initiate contact is illegal.
- D. A screener may only use an appendage to maintain balance and must remain on their feet during the entirety of the play.
- E. Any violation of the above rules will result in a personal foul and will be a personal foul of 10yds.

11. Defensive Rushing Rules

- A. The QB may move laterally or backwards while being free from a rush. However once there is a simulated, attempted handoff or the QB takes a step towards the line of scrimmage the defense may rush.
- B. There will be a 10-second rush clock, younger (D1 & D2) divisions and a 5 second rush clock for older (D3 & D4) divisions. Once the rush clock expires the defense may rush.
- C. This rule is to prevent the QB from intentionally abusing the clock.

12. Flag Belts and Flag Removal

- A. All belts will be free of knots or any obstruction to prevent the removal of its flags. Players found to be in violation of this rule will face being ejected from the game for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- B. A player may not cover their flags to prevent their removal. A team will get two warnings then a 10 yd penalty will be assessed.
- C. The ball carrier may not stiff arm or prevent a flag removal in any such manner.
- D. Once a flag is removed by a defender the play is dead where the flag was removed, and the ball is down.
- E. If a flag inadvertently falls off, then a one-handed tag between the shoulder and knee on that side constitutes a removed flag.
- F. A player may leave their feet to remove a flag.
- G. A player may **NOT** push, shove or tackle to remove a flag.

- H. If a player is found to have intentionally pushed, shoved, tackled or harmed another player there will be a personal foul and a 10yd penalty. If deemed necessary, the player could be ejected if found malicious.
- I. Ejection may be subject to further suspension pending review.
- J. Adversely if contact was deemed unintentional and naturally occurring the play may stand as it played.
- K. A defensive player may not remove another player's flag outside of play or when they do not have the ball. Illegal removal of a flag is subject to a 10yd penalty.
- L. A player may not remove a flag during a reception until the player has touched the ball. A player in violation of this rule will be found guilty of passing interference. A 10 yd penalty will be awarded.
- M. A defensive player must avoid running into the QB behind the line of scrimmage. If a defender contacts the passer in any way during the pass, it will be considered roughing the passer. A 10yd penalty will be awarded to the offense.

13. Fumbles

- A. Fumbles are Dead balls for D1 & D2.
 - D3 & D4 Fumbles are LIVE and can be advanced by either team or they may lay on top of the ball to acquire or maintain possession of the ball.
- B. A player may not intentionally fumble the ball forward.
- C. A ball fumbled into the offensive end zone results in a safety.
- D. A ball fumbled into the opposing end zone results in a touchback.

14. Interceptions

- A. All interceptions may be advanced.
- B. An interception caught on an extra point attempt may be advanced for 2 pts.

15. Game Time Expectations and Overtime

- A. All teams are expected to be present and ready for game play. Any team that is not ready is subject to forfeit and the opposing team will be awarded a 21-point victory.
- B. All regular season games will not have overtime. A tie will be recorded as such.

16. General Rules

- A. If an inadvertent whistle is blown the play is considered dead at that point. The team in which the whistle was blown will be given the choice of accepting the play or replaying the down.
- B. All players must wear flags. Failure to do so will result in a 5yd penalty. As every player has the potential to take possession of the ball.
- C. Excessive celebrations are prohibited. This will be judged by the LPRD official. Any unsportsmanlike penalty will be assessed of 10yds.
 - a. Foul language and excessive trash talk will not be tolerated. An unsportsmanlike penalty will be assessed.
 - i. One warning will be issued before penalty is assessed
- D. Any dead ball penalty after a touchdown will be assessed on the extra point attempt.
- E. Any dead ball penalty after a conversion will be assessed on the change of possession.
- F. All final scores will be recorded with no more than a 21-point gap.
- G. During the game coaches permitted on the field are as follows:
 - *Must be out of the play once offense lines up. Play clock is running and this is not to be used as a time out. Simply to help keep the game moving and coaching in the moment.
 - D1 – 2 Coaches on the field during the play*
 - D2 – 1 Coach on the field during the play*
 - D3 & D4 – No coaches permitted on the field during game play

Summary of Fouls and Penalties

Loss of 5yds:

1. Required equipment worn illegally
2. Delay of game
3. Illegal snap
4. False start
5. Encroachment
6. Illegal procedure
7. Illegal forward pass
8. Intentional or illegal grounding
9. Helping the runner

Loss of 10yds:

1. Delaying the start of either half
2. 2 or more encroachments during the same interval between downs
3. Illegal participation
4. Offensive pass interference, includes a loss of down
5. Defensive pass interference, automatic first down
6. Illegally secured belt
7. Unsportsmanlike conduct
8. Hurdling
9. Unnecessary contact of any kind
10. Roughing the passer. Automatic first down
11. Roughing the punter.
12. Illegal use of the hands
13. Guarding the flag belt
14. Illegal flag removal
15. Flagrant foul or Flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct (Possible Ejection)
16. Intentionally tampering with the flag (Automatic Ejection)
17. Illegal equipment

**** LANCASTER PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL PROMOTES SPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT AND RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ADMINISTER PROPER ENFORCEMENT OF ALL ABOVE STATED RULES AND THOSE IN THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME AS SEEN FIT****

******Rules updated 7/13/26 by: LPRD (ap)******