



## Whatcom County Youth Flag Football League Rules 2016

### General League Rules

- Game:**
- Consists of two halves.
  - Each half consists of a 25 minute running clock. Similar to baseball, if a new offensive possession begins prior to the end of 25 minutes, that team will finish that series. Head referee will have official time.
  - Each team is guaranteed at least 2 offensive possessions per half, with no maximum number of possessions.
  - 5 minute halftime.
  - Teams may take 1 timeout per half (timeouts do not carry over).
  - Game begins with a coin toss and play will begin at the 20 yard line.
- Series:**
- A series is any offensive possession of the ball (including interception returned for touchdown)
  - A series is terminated when a team: 1) Fails to move the ball to the next zone in four downs 2) Scores a touchdown 3) Loses the ball to an intercepted pass.
  - There are no extra points or field goals. There are no points awarded on a safety. If an offensive player is downed in their own endzone the defensive team will take possession at midfield.
- Penalties:**
- Penalty on the offense prior to a play does not count as a down.
  - Penalty on the defense prior to a play does not count as a down.
  - Accepted penalty on the defense during a play is a spot foul and counts as a down.
  - Penalty on the offense during a play counts as a down.
  - Penalties are all 5, 10, or 15 yards. 5 yard penalties include delay of game, false start, offsides, and illegal formation. 10 yard penalties include holding, illegal blocks, flag guarding, and illegal use of hands. 15 yard penalties include pass interference, unsportsmanlike conduct, unnecessary roughness, and tripping. There is no penalty for intentional grounding.
- Players:**
- 7 players on the field at one time.
  - 5 offensive players on the line with 2 in the backfield (including the quarterback).
  - A defensive team may have any number players on the line of scrimmage.
  - No game may be played with fewer than 6 players. There is a 10 minute grace period from the scheduled start time.
  - Any player is eligible to receive a pass.
- Blocking:**
- Blocking is a bump or screen with contact below the shoulders and above the waist. It is not a shove. Blockers may block with arms folded criss-crossed across their chest or in the traditional butterfly technique (hands together at the center of the chest and elbows out wide). There is no extending of the hands on a block (this would constitute shoving). There is no use of hands by either the offensive or defensive line. There is no downfield blocking, players may only screen for one another downfield. Flag football should not be employing tackle football techniques for blocking or shedding blocks.
- Huddles:**
- Offensive team must huddle prior to each play. Super and Senior flag leagues will have 45 seconds once the ball is set by the official. Junior flag football teams will have 60 seconds once the ball is placed. Teams may forfeit if the referees and supervisor believe a team is delaying the game in order to finish the game and not begin an additional series.
- Punts:**
- There are no kickoffs or punts. A team that does not elect to go for it on 4<sup>th</sup> down may elect to punt. The official will mark off 20 yards and the defensive team will take possession of the ball at that spot. The 20 yard walk off cannot take an opponent inside of their own 10 yard line.
- Play Time:**
- Each player shall play a minimum of two full series. **Teams are encouraged to play every kid as even as possible.**
- Field:**
- Rectangular field is 80 yards long with four 20 yard zones and two end zones.
- Equipment:**
- No metal cleats allowed.
  - Pee Wee or Junior Size Football for Junior Division and Junior Size for Senior and Super Division.
  - Each player will wear a flag belt with a flag on each side. Teams may not cut flags to be shorter.

## General League Rules Continued

- Sportsmanship:** -Offer praise and encouraging words for all athletes, including your child's opponents. Never openly berate, tease, or demean any child athlete, coach, or referee while attending a B&GC sporting event.  
-The B&GC will not hesitate to act if the standards of the B&GC are compromised.
- Field Conduct:** -Good citizenship at the fields is crucial to the success of the program. Please pick-up all your garbage and no tobacco (including the use of e-cigarettes or vaping) or alcohol is allowed at any program site.
- Schedule:** -The schedule will be posted on the website at [www.whatcomclubs.org](http://www.whatcomclubs.org).
- Chain Crew:** -Home team is required to provide someone to work the down marker.
- Officials:** -There will be 2 officials for each game. Please understand that flag football is difficult to officiate and not everything will be seen and/or called. Thank you for always supporting them.
- Games:** -Teams will play 8 regular season games (uneven number of teams may result in byes and doubleheaders).
- Coaches:** -Coaches caught playing ineligible players will be subject to suspension.  
-Each team is allowed one offensive and defensive coach on the field of play. Once the ball is snapped the coaches are no longer allowed to assist their team verbally or physically in any way.  
-Coaches that are on the field should be at least 10 yards from their last player and continue to back up in order to avoid interfering with play.  
-Coaches may get one warning before a 15 yard penalty will be assessed for interfering or assisting their team.
- Fumbles:** -Any ball fumbled by a player is dead as soon as it touches the ground and belongs to the team whose member had previous control of the ball, unless 4th down, then a dead ball turnover. Either team cannot play a fumbled ball. (A dropped pass is not a fumble.)
- Downed Ball:** -Each player will be equipped with two canvas flags, one of which shall be hanging from each side of the hips. Flags may not be cut and are typically 14-18 inches long. Shirts must be tucked in so as not to cover the flag below the waist. In order to "down" the ball carrier, either of the two flags must be pulled free from the belt of the ball carrier. In the event that a flag falls off of the offensive player while running, that player will be considered downed when a defender comes within arm's reach of him. This will be a judgement call by the official.
- (\*PENALTY\*- If the ball carrier's flag is deemed by the official to be hidden by clothing or if it is not accessible on the side of the hips (i.e. hanging in front of body), the official will call the ball dead at that point of the first valid attempt at the flag.)
- It is illegal for the ball carrier to: deliberately touch or guard the flag or push the defender with arm or hands, run over a defender without trying to avoid him. No offensive player can initiate contact with a defender to avoid having his flag pulled. **There are no stiff arms to defenders.**
- It is illegal for the ball carrier to dive or hurdle a defender.
- (\*PENALTY\* - The ball is down at the point of the foul and a 10 yard penalty is assessed from that point.)
- It is illegal for the defender, in attempting to pull the flag, to:
- a) bump a runner with head or shoulder
  - b) grab the ball carrier
  - c) push the ball carrier out of bounds
  - d) trip the ball carrier
  - e) tackle the ball carrier
  - f) dive for the flag (grabbing or reaching for the flag and falling forward is not diving)
- (\*PENALTY\* - If the foul is committed by the last defender on a break-away for a touchdown and it prevents the touchdown, the ball will be placed on the 1 yard line and an automatic 1st down will be awarded. If the touchdown is scored, a 10-yard penalty will be assessed on the change of possession after touchdown. Otherwise, the penalty will be 10 yards and an automatic 1st down, with the ball on the 20-yard line with no kick-off.)
- NOTE: Flagrant violations that threaten player safety may result in player ejection and shall be at the discretion of the head official. Fighting will result in automatic ejection of the participating players.**

## General League Rules Continued

- Line of Scrimmage:** -Is that imaginary horizontal line separating the opposing team's lineman at the beginning of a play. No part of the body shall be lined up over this imaginary line (except the offensive center), nor shall any player cross the imaginary line until the ball is hiked.
- Center Sneak:** -The center is allowed to carry the ball if, and only if, he has released full control of the ball to the quarterback. The center must turn to the left or right and receive the handoff from the quarterback in a traditional manner. The quarterback must place the football back into the center's hands and he may run from there. The center is not allowed to just touch the ball to the quarterback's hands on a snap and then take the ball back between his legs and begin to run. There must be a clear handoff and it must take place after an actual snap to the quarterback.
- Score:** -Standings will only be kept in the Senior and Super Divisions. Winning coach must report the final score to the field supervisor at the conclusion of the game or email Randy at [rashe@whatcomclubs.org](mailto:rashe@whatcomclubs.org) by Monday at noon.  
-Games may end in a tie. No Overtime.  
-Junior Division will not keep standings.
- Divisions:** Junior: k-2<sup>nd</sup> grade  
Senior: 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade  
Super: 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade