



A department of MPS

Milwaukee Recreation
YOUTH SPORTS
5225 W. Vliet St. Rm. 163
Milwaukee, WI 53208
P: 414.475.8410
mkerec.net

Middle School Flag Football

Milwaukee Recreation Youth Sports reserves the right to change rules at any time.
Last Updated: 09/19/21

Section 1 - General League Rules

SPORTSMANSHIP – Unsportsmanlike conduct may result in ejection from the contest. Officials, coaches, parents, players, and fans should always display leadership and sportsmanship qualities. Any players or coaches ejected from the game by officials/staff for unsportsmanlike conduct will be suspended until their case is reviewed by Milwaukee Recreation. The final disposition of the case will then be made. Sports Coordinators are required to check with the Youth Sports Office before allowing the player or coach in question to continue participation in Youth Sports Activities.

SPECTATORS – Spectators are to be seated opposite the player’s bench. All spectators are asked to show good sportsmanship and character and offer only positive reinforcement.

COACHES - Only coaches and players listed on the TEAM ROSTER FORM are allowed in the team bench area. A maximum of three (3) coaches are allowed on the team bench. A coach must be present before a game may start.

FACILITY REMINDERS - Dogs, alcohol, smoking (including E-cigarettes), weapons, and grilling are prohibited during Milwaukee Recreation Youth Sports activities.

JEWELRY – Head decorations, headwear, and jewelry. This means that rings, wristwatches, hair curlers, combs, beads, earrings, or barrettes cannot be worn while participating in Youth Sports Leagues.

GAME RE-SCHEDULING/CANCELLATIONS – All school sport coordinators, coaches, or applicable staff will be notified of any reschedule games or game cancellations via email. Revised schedules will be posted on the Milwaukee Recreation Website: www.mkerec.net/YouthSports.

WEATHER HOTLINE – For inclement weather updates, contact the Weather Hotline at 414-475-8068. The hotline is updated on league play days by 8AM on Saturdays and 1PM on weekdays when inclement weather is expected. The hotline is available in English and Spanish. Coaches are responsible for informing players and their families of the weather hotline number.



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ROSTERS – A copy of the team’s roster must be submitted to the Youth Sports Office one (1) week prior to the team’s first scheduled game. Roster additions are not allowed after a team’s 2nd scheduled game. All rosters **MUST BE TYPED**. There is no roster limit.

COED LEAGUE RULES - The term “COED” refers to the fact that both boys and girls are eligible to play on the same team. It is possible that teams will have varying numbers of boys or girls, but no special “coed rules” will apply. Teams made of one gender are allowed in the COED league.

FORFEITS – The Youth Sports Office must be notified in advance of all forfeit contests. Notification must be delivered to youthsports@mkerec.net at least 36-hours prior to scheduled game start time. Teams that forfeit will be charged a \$25.00 fee per occurrence. See the Youth Sports Opportunity Handbook for a list of forfeit situations.

PROTEST – Judgement calls made by the game officials are not eligible for protest and/or appeal. Protest on rule enforcement must be filed in writing with the Youth Sports Office with 48-hours following the incident. Protest on athlete eligibility may be filed any time during the regular season. Submit rules enforcement and athlete eligibility protest via email to youthsports@mkerec.net.

TIE-BREAKER PROCEDURES (TROPHY SPORTS ONLY) – The Youth Sports Office will have full discretion determining the position and placement of all teams. Tie-break procedures are available online at www.mkerec.net/YouthSports.

LEAGUE CHAMPIONS (TROPHY SPORTS ONLY) - League Champions can be determined one of three ways.

- A. **Tournament** - A season ending tournament in which a championship game is played. The winner of the tournament will receive the league trophies regardless of their regular season record.
- B. **Position Day** - the number 1 and number 2 teams in the league standings will compete in a single game at the end of the season to determine the league champion. League record will not prevail as the determining factor, the single match up will.
- C. **Season Record** - Best overall season record in league play will determine the league champion.

Section 2 – Before the Game

Article 1 – Rules are adapted from the USFTL and may be changed by the League Administrators at any time to improve the safety and understanding of the game.



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Article 2 – Eligibility:

A. Age/Grade Limits – Students may not exceed the age/grade limits as listed below. Age is determined as of September 1 of the current school year. Middle School Girls Basketball is only offered to students enrolled in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade at the beginning of the fall season.

- 12 years old and under/6th grade maximum
- 13 years old and under/7th grade maximum
- 15 years old and under/8th grade maximum

B. School Suspensions – Any student suspended from school must be reinstated prior to the close of school on the Friday before their next scheduled game to be eligible.

C. Grade Point Average (GPA) – Schools using the standards based report card please use published requirements for eligibility.

1. A student must have a minimum 2.0 GPA in their previous mark period report card in order to participate unless the school standard is higher, in which case the school GPA requirement would prevail.
2. Middle School athletic eligibility is determined by report card mark period GPA only; there are no provisions for recertification in the program.
3. Once a student is ineligible they must wait until the next report card is published to regain eligibility.

Article 3 – Players: In order to avoid a forfeit, a team may start with six (6) players. Additional players who arrive late may enter the game when the player is fully suited, checked in, and must let the officials know that they are ready to join the game. Teams must play with eight (8) players if available.

1. Playing Time – It is mandatory that all players who suit up for the game play a minimum of ten (10) minutes of the game or the game will be forfeited.
2. Substitutions – Players may substitute at any time (on the fly), but must wait until the replaced player comes off of the field.
3. Uniforms – Teams are required to wear matching colored jerseys with numbers, athletic shorts/pants, and gym shoes or rubber cleated soccer shoes (**NO METAL CLEATS**). Shorts do not need to match jerseys.
4. Mouthpiece – All players are required to wear a protective mouthpiece.
5. Flags – Flags must be worn hanging down the hip and along the leg. They must be hanging loose and fully extended. Flags may NOT be knotted, tucked in the pants or pockets, or inside out. In addition, the flag belt may NOT be inside the belt loops on the pants.
6. Post-Game – Opposing coaches and players should shake hands after each match.



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Article 4 – Officials:

- A. All match officials are contracted through Call Something Ref, LLC (Ike Moore).
- B. The officials decisions on point of fact connected with the game shall be final.
- C. All rule infractions shall be briefly explained to the offending player.
- D. The match official can stop, suspend, or abandon the match because of outside interference of any kind.

Article 5 – Coaches:

- A. A coach or other responsible adult must be present before a game may start.

Section 3 – The Game

Article 1 – Game Ball Size: The Youth Sports Office will provide the official game ball at each site (**Wilson TDY 1714 – Composite Youth Football**). Although, Teams are required to provide their own football for practice.

Article 2 – Field Size: 100 yards in Length; 40 yards in Width (Turf Fields 100yds x 54 yds.)

- A. **Out of Bounds** – Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.
- B. **Team Area** – Team areas are located between the 20 yard lines.

Article 3 – Coin Toss (Odds Game):

- A. A coin toss or odds game shall begin each game. The captain winning the toss shall choose one of the following options:
 - 1. Offense
 - 2. Defense
 - 3. Designate which goal their team will defend
 - 4. Defer choice to second half
- B. Loser of the coin toss shall make a choice of the remaining options.
- C. Before the start of the second half, the choice of options shall be reversed.

Article 4 – Possessions:

- A. **Kickoffs** – The game will begin with a kickoff on the 20 yard line. The receiving team must stand at the 40 yard line. The kicking team cannot touch the ball until it has traveled 10 yards or more



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down the field towards the opposite end zone. If the kicking team touches the ball before the ball has traveled 10 yards, a 5 yard penalty will be issued from the previous spot and the team can kick again or receive the ball where the kicking team touched it.

- B. **First Downs** – Are achieved by crossing a Zone-Line-to-Gain located at the 20 and 40 yard lines. A team shall have 4 downs to advance the ball to the next Zone-Line-to-Gain.
- C. **Flag Belt** – All players must start with their flag belts on. If a player starts with-out his flag belt properly secured with all flags attached, his team will be assessed a 5 yard penalty.
- D. **Interceptions** – On Interceptions, the team will take possession of the ball where the defender’s flag was pulled. Penalties on interceptions will be assessed where the interception occurred. Exception: If the referee judged that a player intentionally or flagrantly commits a penalty then the penalty will be at the point of the foul, no less that the point of interception.

Article 5 – Snaps: The ball must be snapped between the legs or from the side to start play. Direct snaps are NOT legal. The snap must be received at least 1 yard behind the Center.

Article 6 – Huddle Clock: 25 second clock - Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 25 seconds to snap the ball. The referee will give announce a 10 second warning and 5 second warning.

Article 7 – BLOCKING: CONTACT BLOCKING IS ALLOWED. Contact between shoulders and waist only. Contact blocking is legally hindering the progress of an opponent in a fair and safe manner. Blockers must be on their feet before, during and after contact is made with their opponent. You may not dive to block. An open hand, straight arm block, within the framework of the blocker’s body, is the ideal block to avoid unnecessary rough play. You may not grab the jersey of the opponent while attempting to block. The blocker may not swing, throw or flip the elbow or forearm.

Article 8 – Interception: Interceptions may be returned.

Article 9 – Eligible Players: All players are eligible.

Section 4 – Timing and Overtime

Article 1 – Game Length:

- A. **Regulation Time** – 40 minute game time - (2) 20 minute halves with a running clock. The clock stops only for timeouts and for the 2 minute warnings of each half.



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- B. **Two minute warning** – When there are two minutes left in each half, the game clock shall stop for incomplete passes, out-of-bounds, time-outs, and scores (clock starts on the snap), and change of possessions, penalties, and first downs (clock starts on the ready for play whistle).

Article 2 – Halftime: Halftime is 5 minutes long.

Article 3 – Huddle Clock: 25 seconds long. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 25 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive a 5 second warning.

Article 4 – Time Outs:

- A. Each team has three 30 second time outs per half. If a team still has all their time outs for the half at the 2 minute mark they will forfeit one of their timeouts.
- B. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
- C. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field.

Article 5 – Mercy Rule: Games will terminate at the two (2) minutes warning in the second half if a team is ahead by 17 or more points, or whenever a 17 point differential is reached after the two (2) minute warning.

Article 6 – Forfeit: A five (5) minute grace period will be allowed for those teams unable to field a minimum of six (6) players at the scheduled starting time. If, after five (5) minutes, a team still is unable to field the minimum number of players an additional five (5) minutes will be granted by the league director. The second grace period will be deducted from the playing time of the first half.

Section 5 – Scoring

Article 1 – Scoring Values:

- A. Touchdown = 6 points
- B. Extra Points = 2 points
- C. PATs cannot be returned if intercepted.
- D. Safety = 2 points

Section 6 – Live Ball and Dead Ball



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Article 1 – Live Ball:

- A. The ball is live at the snap and remains live until the Official whistles the ball dead.
- B. **One foot in-bounds for Legal Catch** – A player who gains possession in the air is considered in-bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
- C. **Imitating Offensive Signals** – The defense may not imitate the offensive team's signals by trying to confuse the offensive players. This will result in an Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty.

Article 2 – Dead ball:

- A. The ball is ruled dead when:
 - a. A snap to the Quarterback hits the ground.
 - b. A fumble hits the ground (no fumble recoveries allowed).
 - c. A ball carrier's knee touches the ground.
 - d. A ball carrier steps out-of-bounds
 - e. A ball carrier's flags are legally removed. NOTE: If a ball carrier's flags fall off inadvertently, play shall revert to a one hand touch between the shoulders and knees.
 - f. A touchdown, point after a touchdown, or safety is scored.
 - g. Any official can whistle play dead.
 - h. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball
- B. The official will indicate the Neutral Zone and Line of Scrimmage. It is an automatic dead ball if any player on offense or defense enters the Neutral Zone. In regards to the Neutral Zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" Neutral Zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the Line of Scrimmage.

NOTE:

1. There are NO fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hit the ground.
2. The ball will be spotted wherever the ball was at the time of the flag pull.

Article 3 – Inadvertent Whistle: In the case of an inadvertent whistle the offense has three options.

- A. **The ball in player possession** – The team in possession may elect to put the ball where declared dead or replay the down.
- B. **The ball is loose from a fumble, backward pass, or illegal forward pass** – The team in possession may elect to put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down.
- C. During a legal forward pass, the ball is returned to the previous spot and the down is replayed.



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NOTE: If a foul occurs during an inadvertent whistle, an accepted penalty shall be administered as in any other play situation. When the foul is accepted, disregard the inadvertent whistle.

Section 7 – Running

Article 1 – Running Plays:

- A. The ball will be spotted wherever the ball was at the time of a flag pull.
- B. The Quarterback may run with the ball at any time.
- C. The offense may use multiple handoffs
 - a. “Center Sneak” play - The ball must completely leave the center’s hands on the snap and he must step backwards off the Line of Scrimmage in order to receive a direct handoff from the Quarterback before advancing the ball.
- D. Laterals and pitches are allowed anywhere on the field.
- E. Defensive players must wait 3 seconds before rushing the quarterback.
- F. Runners may not leave their feet (diving) to advance the ball.
- G. Spinning is NOT allowed. Lateral moves to the left or right are permitted.
- H. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he has done so to avoid a collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
- I. Contact blocking is allowed. Contact between shoulders and waist only.
- J. Downfield blocking – blocking for the ball carrier is allowed down-field by not while the ball is in the air.
- K. Flag Obstruction - All jerseys must be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on a player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

Section 8 – Passing

Article 1 – Passing Plays:

- A. Backward passes and laterals are allowed.
- B. Only one forward pass per down.
- C. If a passer crosses the Line of Scrimmage and comes back behind the line of scrimmage and throws a pass, it is an illegal forward pass.



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- D. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions may be returned.
- E. If a penalty occurs on an interception return by the return team, the penalty will be assessed from the spot of the foul.
- F. If a penalty occurs on an interception return by the defensive team, the penalty will be assessed from the end of the run.
- G. **Intentional Grounding** – A passer may not intentionally throw the ball to the ground to avoid loss of yardage.

EXCEPTION: In the last two minutes of each half, a passer may throw the ball into the ground to stop the clock and conserve time for his team. This play is legal provided the passer is not trying to avoid a loss of yardage.

Section 9 – Receiving

Article 1 – Receiving Plays:

- A. All players are eligible to receive passes.
- B. No contact allowed on the Center or Receivers on offense.
- C. Only one player is allowed to be in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage.
- D. A player must have 1 foot in-bounds to make a legal reception.
- E. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- F. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception.
- G. Interceptions are not returnable on extra point plays.

Section 10 – Kicking

Article 1 – Kick off:

- A. **Kickoffs** – The game will begin with a kickoff on the 20 yard line. The receiving team must stand at the 40 yard line. The kicking team cannot touch the ball until it has traveled 10 yards or more down the field towards the opposite end zone. If the kick doesn't go 10 yards, the receiving team



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can decide to take the ball where it landed or have the kicking team kick again after a 5 yard penalty.

- B. There are no on-side kicks
- C. **Safety** – Place ball on 20 yard line.

Article 2 – Punt (Scrimmage Kick):

- A. **Punt** – The referee asks the team if they want to punt.
- B. Teams may ask to punt on any down.
- C. In order to change the decision to punt, a team must call a timeout.
- D. If a punt has been announced and the kicking team purposely runs an offensive play, other than the punt, the penalty shall be a dead ball foul Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty, 10 yards and a loss of down.
- E. At least four players must be on the Line of Scrimmage at the time of the punt (Offense & Defense)
- F. Defense may raise their arms or jump to try and block the punt but cannot cross the Line of Scrimmage.
- G. If the punter drops the snap, the ball is dead at the spot.
- H. The punter must be at least 5 yards behind the center when receiving the snap.
- I. Punter must punt the ball immediately and in a continuous motion. The penalty for not punting the ball immediately shall be a 5 yard illegal procedure penalty.
- J. If the punting team or the punt return team touches a punt and it hits the ground, the ball is dead at the spot.
- K. Muffs and fumbled punts are dead at the spot.
- L. **Punt in the end zone** – Place the ball on the 20 yard line if not returned.
- M. **Punt out of bounds** – Play ball on spot
- N. Punt that hit the ground may be advanced by the punt return team or downed by the punting team.
- O. There is no fair catch.
- P. **Touchback** – If a punt returner catches a punt in the end zone and kneels down, it is a touchback and the ball is brought out to the 20 yard line, first down, zone line to gain. If a punt goes through the end zone, the ball is brought out to the 20 yard line - first down, zone-line-to-gain.

Article 3 – Extra Points (Try-For-Point):

- A. 2 points = 3 yard line - Run or pass



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- B. **Next Play** – After an extra point, the next play shall be a kickoff.
- C. Penalty during an extra point attempt- if a penalty occurs during an extra point attempt, assess the penalty and the extra point value remains the same.
- D. Minimum number of players on Line of Scrimmage - 4 players
- E. Roughing the passer - any roughing of the passer is a 10 yard penalty and an Automatic first down, whether the extra point was good or not.
- F. You may run or pass from the 3 yard line.

Section 11 – Rushing the Passer

Article 1 – Rushing Plays:

- A. Defensive players who rush the passer may line up on the Line of Scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- B. If the defense wishes to rush the quarterback on passing plays, the referee must first count 1-mississippi, 2-mississippi, 3-mississippi out loud before the rusher can cross the line of scrimmage. This counting must be loud enough for officials and pass blockers to hear. After the 3-count, defenders may begin to rush the quarterback. If the quarterback moves laterally more than two (2) steps after the snap, the defense may begin the rush immediately without finishing the count. PENALTY: Five (5) yards – illegal procedure
- C. A ball spotter (poly spot) shall be used to mark the Line of Scrimmage
- D. Players rushing the Quarterback may attempt to block a pass, however NO contact can be made with the Quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer will result in a Roughing the Passer penalty. Players must go for the Quarterback’s flag.
- E. A sack occurs if the Quarterback’s flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the ball is at when the flag is pulled. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team’s end zone.

Section 12 – Flag Pulling

Article 1 – De-Flagging: De-flagging is the legal removal of a flag from an opponent in possession of the ball. Pushing, striking, holding, slapping, or tripping of an opponent when attempting to pull a flag is not



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permitted. Defensive players may leave their feet to pull a flag. Offensive players are not permitted to protect or guard their flags.

- A. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- B. Defenders can dive to flags but cannot tackle, hold on, or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- C. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
- D. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the de-flagging reverts to a one hand touch of the runner between the shoulders and knees.
- E. If a flag is removed illegally, play should continue with the option of a penalty or the play.
- F. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags of a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- G. Tampering with the flag in any way to gain an advantage including, tying the flag, cutting the flag, using foreign materials or other such acts are illegal.
- H. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flag by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm, shoulder, or intentionally covering the flags with the ball or jersey.

Section 13 – Formations

Article 1 – Minimum Players on Line: Offense must have a minimum of four players on the Line of Scrimmage and up to six players on the line of scrimmage. The Quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.

Article 2 – Motion:

- A. Offensive players must come to a complete stop for 1 second before the ball is snapped unless he is the only player in motion.
 - a. One player at a time may go in motion at the snap behind and parallel to the Line of Scrimmage
 - b. No motion is allowed towards the Line of Scrimmage
- B. Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the Line of Scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start.
- C. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his legs or from the side to a player in the backfield (not on the Line of Scrimmage) and the ball must completely leave his hands.



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Section 14 – Overtime

- A. There will be no overtime periods. Games that end in ties will be considered complete games.
- B. If a play-off is needed to decide league championship and game is ties at the end of regulation play, game will be decided by special overtime procedure. Each team will have four downs to score form the 20-yard line.

Section 15 – Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- A. If the referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, etc., it is at the referee’s discretion to issue an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and eject the player from the game.
- B. Offensive or confrontational language is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language.
- C. Players may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach, or official.
- D. Ball carriers **MUST** make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- E. Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- F. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship:
 - a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass Officials or other teams.
 - b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
- G. Team/Players leaving the bench area during a fight: If either team leaves the bench during a fight, the game will be immediately forfeited
 - a. Any player that comes off the sideline during a fight will be ejected.