



Oconee County Parks and Recreation Department Fall 2022 Youth Flag Football Rules

Philosophy

Oconee County Parks and Recreation Department offers recreational youth sport programs that allow children to participate, develop skills, and learn the game in a fun and safe environment.

Code of Conduct

- All participants are governed by the Oconee County Parks and Recreation Department Code of Conduct.
- Players, spectators, and coaches should display a good sporting attitude. Spectators, parents, coaches, or participants who display unsportsmanlike behavior will be asked to leave the premises. If such behavior continues, the parent, participant or both may be removed from the program.
- Any coach, assistant coach, or player ejected from a contest must leave the vicinity (out of sight and sound) immediately and are prohibited from any further contact with the team (directly or indirectly) for the remainder of the game and will not be permitted on the premises for the team's next scheduled game.

Parents

- At least one parent or guardian of each child participating must have completed the NAYS Parent Orientation & Membership Program (formerly known as PAYS).
- This program is offered online at <https://www.nays.org/parents/>.
- Select "Oconee County Pks and Rec Dept". (No payment required).

Coaches

- All coaches must complete the Online Criminal History Check and fill out a coach application each season.
- All coaches must complete the CDC Head's Up Concussion Training (<https://heads-up.cdc.gov/>).
- All coaches must also be certified through the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA).
- Attend coach clinic provided by OCPRD

Age Divisions

	Age	
Micro	5 – 6 years	<i>Must be 5 years old on or before age control date</i>
Mite	7 – 8 years	
Pee Wee	9 – 10 years	
Major Boys	11 – 12 years	
Major Girls	11 – 13 years	
Senior Boys	13 – 14 years	

Age Control Date
Fall 2022: September 1, 2022

Playing Guidelines

- Shoes and protective mouthpieces are required.
- Players may not wear anything that can be potentially dangerous, i.e., metal cleats, jewelry, etc.
- Provided jersey must be worn for games.
- Rough play such as tackling, elbowing, blocking, etc. may result in ejection of the offending player.
- Official scores will not be kept in Micro and Mite leagues.
- Only regular season games will be played in Micro and Mite leagues. Post-season tournaments/jamborees may be offered for Pee Wee, Major, and Senior when the schedule permits.
- Field sizes are dependent on field size appropriate for age group and field space available for usage.

★ **Each player except when sick or injured is required to play at least half the game or 20 minutes.**

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Micro – Ages 5-6 Mites – Ages 7-8

Game Time

- 1) Micro & Mite games will be played in two–20-minute halves with a running clock.
- 2) Halftime break will be 5 minutes.
- 3) Coaches are the Referees in Micro and Mite.
- 4) Overtime will not be played in Micro and Mite leagues.

Game Play

- 1) Games are played 6 vs 6 or 7 vs 7; depending on registration numbers.
- 2) Footballs (Mini football, 5-6 yrs; K2 size football, 7-8 yrs) will be provided by OCPRD.
- 3) A coin toss determines the first possession.
- 4) Each team has two 60-second time outs per half.
- 5) Micro and Mite will be allowed to have up to 2 (two) coaches per team on the field. Once the cadence starts, coaches must remain 8 yards behind the deepest player and only verbal adjustments to players.

Scoring (Official score is not kept in Micro and Mite leagues)

Team Possessions

- 1) Teams change sides at halftime. The team not in possession of the ball to begin the game will have possession of the ball to start the second half.
- 2) All possessions and possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 4-yard line.
- 3) The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 4-yard line
 - a. The offensive team has 4 plays to cross midfield.
 - b. If the offensive team crosses midfield, the team has 4 plays to score a touchdown.
 - c. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield in 4 plays or fails to score in 4 plays, then possession changes. The new offensive team takes over possession on its 4-yard line.
- 4) Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
- 5) There are no safeties in flag football. If the ball carrier is inside his own end zone when his flag is pulled, the down counts and the ball is spotted on its 3-yard line.

Dead Ball

- 1) The ball must be snapped between the legs or off to one side, to start play. The Quarterback must set up 2-yards behind the center.
- 2) Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- 3) Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls off.
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - Touchdown is scored.
 - Ball carrier's knee hits the ground.

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- Fumbled ball hits the ground.

Note: There are no fumbles resulting in loss of possession. The ball is spotted at the point of forward progress by the runner. If the ball is snapped from in front of the midfield line (but fumbled behind it and in the no running zone) the ball is spotted where it falls and the down counts.

Running

- 1) The ball must be snapped from the ground to the quarterback to start a play. The Quarterback must set up 2-yards behind the center.
- 2) The quarterback cannot run with the ball beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 3) Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
 - a. "Center sneak" play is no longer allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.
 - b. Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, the seven-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- 4) Absolutely NO pitches or laterals of any kind.
- 5) "No-running zones" located 3 yards from each end zone and 4 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
 - "No-running zone" does not apply when a team is at its own goal line and/or has already crossed midfield.
- 6) The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- 7) Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- 8) Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
 - a. The ball will be spotted where the ball carrier's feet left the ground.
- 9) The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is located.
- 10) Contact blocking is not allowed. Offensive players may not extend their hands or feet in an attempt to prevent a defender. Offensive players may only shuffle laterally in an attempt to prevent a defender.
- 11) Flag guarding is not allowed.

Receiving

- 1) All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback), if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
- 2) Only one player is allowed in motion at a time before the snap.
- 3) A player must have at least one foot in bounds before one-foot hits out of bounds to make a catch.
- 4) Flag guarding is not allowed.

Passing

- 1) All passes must be forward.

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- 2) Shovel passes are allowed.
- 3) The quarterback has a 7-second, "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the 7-seconds the play is dead and results in a loss of down with the ball spotted at the spot the quarterback was at the expiration of the pass clock. Once the ball is handed off, the 7- second rule is no longer in effect.
- 4) Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of the interception. Interceptions are the only change of possession that does not start on the 4-yard line.
- 5) Flag guarding is not allowed.

Rushing the Quarterback

- 1) Players are not allowed to rush the quarterback.
- 2) Defensive players must remain behind the line of scrimmage unless there is a handoff.
- 3) Once the ball is handed off, all defenders are eligible to rush.
- 4) Reminder - No contact blocking or tackling is allowed.

Penalties

- 1) All penalties will be called by the referees (coaches in Micro and Mite).
- 2) Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- 3) All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- 4) Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines the penalty.
- 5) Defensive interference in the end zone results in the ball being placed at the 3-yard line

Pee Wee, Major, and Senior Flag Football Rules – Ages 9-14

Pee Wee – Ages 9-10 Major Boys – Age 11-12 Major Girls – Ages 11-13 Senior Boys – Ages 13-14

Game Time

- 1) Pee Wee, Major, and Senior games will be played in two-25-minute halves with a running clock.
- 2) Halftime break will be 5 minutes.
- 3) Referees may stop the clock at their discretion.

Game Play

- 1) Games are played 7 vs 7, 6 vs 6, or 5 vs 5 depending on registration numbers.
- 2) Footballs (Wilson K2 size football 9-10 yrs; Wilson TDJ size football, 11-14 yrs) will be provided by OCPRD.
- 3) A coin toss determines the first possession.
- 4) Each team has two 60-second time outs per half.
- 5) Pee Wee will be allowed to have 1 (one) coach per team on the field. Once the huddle breaks, the coaches on the field must remain 8 yards behind the deepest player. No touching or adjusting of players at that point; verbal adjustments are allowed. Once the cadence starts, on-field coaches may not provide feedback or verbal adjustments to players.
- 6) Major and Senior coaches must remain on the sideline.

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Scoring

- 1) Touchdown (6 points)
- 2) Extra point: played from the 4-yard line
- 3) 2-point conversion: played from the 12-yard line
- 4) There are no safeties in flag football.

Team Possessions

- 1) Teams change sides at halftime. The team not in possession of the ball to begin the game will have possession of the ball to start the second half.
- 2) All possessions and possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 4-yard line.
- 3) The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 4-yard line
 - a. The offensive team has 4 plays to cross midfield.
 - b. If the offensive team crosses midfield, the team has 4 plays to score a touchdown.
 - c. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield in 4 plays or fails to score in 4 plays, then possession changes. The new offensive team takes over possession on its 4-yard line.
- 4) Each time the ball is spotted a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
- 5) There are no safeties in flag football. If the ball carrier is inside his own end zone when his flag is pulled, then the offense loses a down and the ball is spotted on its 3-yard line.

Dead Ball

- 1) The ball must be snapped between the legs or off to one side, to start play. The Quarterback must set up 2-yards behind the center.
- 2) Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- 3) Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled or falls off.
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - Touchdown is scored.
 - Ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
 - Fumbled ball hits the ground.

Note: There are no fumbles resulting in loss of possession. The ball is spotted at the point of forward progress by the runner. If the ball is snapped from in front of the midfield line (but fumbled behind it and in the no running zone) the ball is spotted where it falls and there is a loss of down.

Running

- 1) The ball must be snapped from the ground to the quarterback to start a play. The Quarterback must set up 2-yards behind the center.

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- 2) The quarterback cannot run with the ball beyond the line of scrimmage.
- 3). Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must be behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
 - a. "Center sneak" play is no longer allowed. The QB is not allowed to handoff to the center on the first handoff of the play.
 - b. Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, the seven-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Absolutely NO pitches or laterals of any kind.
- 4) "No-running zones" located 3 yards from each end zone and 4 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
- 5) "No-running zone" does not apply when a team is at its own goal line and/or has already crossed midfield.
- 6) The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- 7) Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- 8) Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
 - The ball will be spotted where the ball carrier's feet left the ground.
- 9) The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is located.
- 10) Contact blocking is not allowed. Offensive players may not extend their hands or feet in an attempt to prevent a defender. Offensive players may only shuffle *laterally* in an attempt to prevent a defender.
- 11) Flag guarding is not allowed.

Receiving

- 1) All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback) if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
- 2) Only one player is allowed in motion at a time before the snap.
- 3) A player must have at least one foot in bounds before one-foot hits out of bounds to make a catch.
- 4) Flag guarding is not allowed.

Passing

- 1) All passes must be forward.
- 2) Shovel passes are allowed.
- 3) The quarterback has a 7-second, "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the 7-seconds the play is dead and results in a loss of down with the ball spotted at the spot the quarterback was at the expiration of the pass clock. Once the ball is handed off, the 7- second rule is no longer in effect.
- 4) Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth 6 points, 3 points if returned during conversions and/or overtime. Interceptions are the only change of possession that does not start on the 4-yard line.
- 5) Flag guarding is not allowed.

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Rushing the Quarterback

- 1) All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7-yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- 2) Only 2 players are allowed to rush the quarterback.
- 3) Players not rushing the quarterback must remain behind the line of scrimmage unless there is a handoff.
- 4) Once the ball is handed off, the 7-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- 5) A special marker, or the referee, will designate 7-yards from the line of scrimmage.
- 6) Reminder - No contact blocking or tackling is allowed.

Overtime Format

- 1) One overtime period will be played during the regular season.
- 2) Each team will have one (1) play from the defense's 4-yard line for one point or the defense's 12-yard line for two points.
- 3) There will be no timeouts carried over into overtime.
If there is no winner at the end of the overtime period, the game will end in a tie *During tournament play, overtime periods will be repeated until a winner is declared

Penalties – Spot Fouls

Penalties

- 1) All penalties will be called by the referees.
- 2) Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- 3) All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- 4) Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines the penalty.
- 5) Defensive interference in the end zone results in the ball being placed at the 4-yard line.

Defense:

- Offside: +4 yards and automatic first down.
- Pass Interference: +8 yards and automatic first down.
- Illegal Contact (holding, blocking etc.): +8 yards and automatic first down.
- Illegal Flag Pull (before receiver has ball): +8 yards and automatic first down.
- Illegal Rushing (starting rush from inside the 7-yard marker): +8 yards and an automatic first down.

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Offense:

- Illegal Motion (more than one person in motion, false start): -4 yards.
- Illegal Lateral (backwards pass): -4 yards and loss of down.
- Offensive Pass Interference (illegal pick play, pushing defender): -8 yards and loss of down.
- Charging: -8 yards and loss of down
- Flag Guarding: -8 yards (from line of scrimmage) and loss of down.
- Delay of Game: Clock stops; -8 yards.
- Running in a "No Running Zone": loss of down and ball returned to line of scrimmage in not forth down.

Standings are kept in Major and Senior leagues and are calculated based on a point system applied to regular season games. Tournament brackets will be seeded based on each team's total end of season points.

Win = 3 Points

Lose = 0 Points

Tie = 1 Points

Forfeit = 6-0 Win

Team Tie Breaker Criteria (In Order):

1) Head to Head Record

If tied teams played more than once during the regular season, point differential will be used to determine the head to head competition winner

2) Wins

3) Point Differential

Up to 15 points can be gained or lost towards point differential in each game. Each additional point in a game will not count towards point differential

4) Coin Toss

Tournament Details

Tournament brackets will be seeded based off regular season standings. All regular season rules apply.

Flag Football Terminology

Quarterback	Player that receives the initial snap from line of scrimmage.
Boundary Lines	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and back of the end zone lines.
Line of Scrimmage	(LOS) 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 7 yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
Offense	The squad with possession of the ball.
Defense	The squad opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.

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Passer	The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
Rusher	The defensive player assigned to rush the quarterback to prevent him/her from passing the ball by pulling his/her flags or by blocking the pass.
Downs (1-2-3-4)	The offensive squad has four (4) attempts or “downs” to advance the ball. They must cross the mid-field line to gain another set of downs. After crossing the mid-field line, the offensive team will have four downs in order to score.
Live Ball	Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. In regards 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 a 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, half time, or the end of the game.
Inadvertent Whistle	Official’s whistle that is performed in error.
Charging	The movement of the ball carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head, making contact with the defender with a shoulder, forearm, or the chest.
Blocking	An act of extending arms and/or legs to prevent a defensive player.
Flag Guarding	An act by the ball carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball carrier’s flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head, or by blocking access to the runner’s flags with a hand or arm.
Shovel Pass	A legal pass attempted beyond the line of scrimmage by throwing the ball underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in a shot-put type manner.
Lateral	A backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier.
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	A rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.