



## Oconee County Parks and Recreation Department Fall 2023 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://headsup.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 Boys	9 – 10 years	<b><u>Age Control Date</u></b> <b>Fall 2023: September 1, 2023</b>
Pee Wee Girls	9 – 11 years	
Major Boys	11 – 12 years	
Major Girls	12 – 14 years	
Senior Boys	13 – 14 years	

### Local Rules

- 1) GHSA Flag Football rules govern play except where local rules supersede.
- 2) Each player, except when sick or injured, is required to play at least half the game.
- 3) A game may begin with a team at a maximum one player down from the official playing side. A game may continue with fewer players as long as the official, in their judgement, believes both sides are able to remain competitive.
- 4) Shoes and protective mouthpieces are required.
- 5) Players may not wear anything that can be potentially dangerous, i.e., metal cleats, jewelry, etc.
- 6) Players may not wear shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets. If a player has shorts or pants with pockets they must be taped closed.
- 7) Provided jersey must be worn for games.
- 8) Rough play such as tackling, elbowing, blocking, etc. may result in ejection of the offending player.

## **OCPRD Youth Flag Football Rules**

- 9) Official scores will not be kept in Micro and Mite leagues.
- 10) 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.
- 11) Field sizes are dependent on field size appropriate for age group and field space available for usage.
- 12) Each age division is separated by gender and will have specific rules per league.
- 13) League standings will not be posted for any youth sports programs.
- 14) Any child that is a member of a school sponsored team is eligible to participate only if such participation does not violate school policy and only if child is able to fully participate in OCPRD practices and games from the beginning of preseason to conclusion of season.
- 15) Any player or coach who displays unsporting behavior will be flagged and may be ejected from the game.

# OCPRD Youth Flag Football Rules

## 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 7 vs 7
- 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

- 1) Official score is not kept in Micro/Mite
- 2) Following a touchdown, teams will attempt an extra point from the 4-yard line
- 3) There are no safeties in Micro/Mite. If a ball carrier is de-flagged in the endzone, the ball will be spotted at the 3-yard line.

### 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.
  - a. Every 12 yards on the field is a new line to gain. The offense has four (4) plays to cross the line to gain
  - b. If the offense advances past the line to gain, they are awarded a new set of downs.
  - c. If the offensive team fails to cross the line to gain in four (4) plays, then possession changes. The new offensive team takes over possession on its 4-yard line.
- 3) Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 60 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.

### Dead Ball

- 1) The ball must begin on the ground and be snapped between the legs or off to one side to start play. The ball must completely leave the center's hands before touched by the quarterback. Quarterback must set up 2-yards behind the center.
  - Offenses will be allowed one redo per possession for a failed center/quarterback exchange.
- 2) Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- 3) Play is ruled "dead" when:
  - Ball carrier's flag is pulled.

## OCPRD Youth Flag Football Rules

- Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- Touchdown is scored.
- Ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
- Fumbled ball hits the ground.
- When a pass is intercepted

**Note:** There are no fumbles resulting in loss of possession. The ball is spotted at the point of forward progress by the runner.

### 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 six-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 are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
  - "No-running zone" does not apply when a team is at its own goal line
- 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 is located when the flag is pulled.
- 10) The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. Any use of hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A player who screens shall not do any of the following:
  - Take a position closer than a normal step when behind a stationary opponent (pick)
  - Make contact when assuming a position at the side or in front of an opponent
  - Take a position so close to a moving opponent that their opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened will determine where the screener may take stationary position. This position will vary and may be 1 to 2 normal steps or strides from the opponent.
  - After assuming legal screening position, the screener may not move to maintain their screen
- 11) Flag guarding is not allowed.

# OCPRD Youth Flag Football Rules

## 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 6-second, "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the 6-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 6- 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.

## 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 4-yard line

# OCPRD Youth Flag Football Rules

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

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

### Game Time

- 1) Pee Wee, Major, and Senior games will be played in two-25-minute halves with a running clock.
- 2) Two Minute Warning – the clock will stop with two minutes remaining in each half. The official will notify both teams. During the final two minutes, the clock will stop and begin again on the next snap for the following instances:
  - Incomplete legal or illegal forward pass
  - Out of bounds
  - Safety
  - First down
  - Touchdown (clock restarts on the snap of the next possession)
  - Penalty and administration
  - Change of possession (turnover on downs or interception)
  - Team attempting to consume time illegally
  - EXCEPTION: If a team attempts to conserve time illegally (intentional grounding or a backwards pass thrown intentionally out of bounds) – clock will start on the ready
- 3) Halftime break will be 5 minutes.
- 4) 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 roster size.
  - a. Pee Wee Boys 6v6
  - b. Pee Wee Girls 7v7
  - c. Major Boys 6v6
  - d. Major Girls 6v6
  - e. Senior Boys 5v5
- 2) Footballs (Wilson K2 size football for Pee Wee Boys and Girls; Wilson TDJ size football for Major Boys and Girls, Wilson TDY size football for Senior Boys) 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.

## OCPRD Youth Flag Football Rules

- 6) Major and Senior coaches can go into the huddle to relay the play call. Once the huddle breaks they must return to the sideline. Coaches can be a maximum of 2 steps on the field for coaching purposes only.
  - Team benches must remain on their half of the field

### 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) On an extra point try, an interception returned for a score will result in 2 points
- 5) A safety is worth 2 points for the defensive team. The defense will be awarded the ball on their 4-yard line

### 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. Every 15 yards on the field is a new line to gain. The offense has four (4) plays to cross the line to gain
  - b. If the offense advances past the line to gain, they are awarded a new set of downs.
  - c. If the offensive team fails to cross the line to gain in four (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 40 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.

### Dead Ball

- 1) The ball must begin on the ground and be snapped between the legs or off to one side to start play. The ball must completely leave the center's hands before touched by the quarterback. 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:** The ball is spotted at the point where the fumble hits the ground unless the ball is fumbled forward. If the ball is fumbled forward, the ball will be placed at the spot where the ball carrier lost possession. A fumble can result in a change of possession ONLY if the fumble is recovered before the ball hits the ground.

# OCPRD Youth Flag Football Rules

## 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 can run one (1) time per possession
  - The quarterback cannot run on an extra point attempt
- 3). A running play may begin by a handoff or a lateral. 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. Once the ball has been handed off or lateralled the six-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- 4) "No-running zones" located 3 yards from each end zone and 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 or lateral can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- 7) Ballcarriers may leave their feet and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB's passing progression or if there is clear indication they have left their feet to avoid collision with another player.
  - If a player dives to advance the ball, the ball will be spotted at the point where the player left their feet.
- 8) The ball is spotted where the ball is located when the flag is pulled.
- 9) The offensive screen block shall take place without contact. Any use of hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact during an offensive player's screen block is illegal. A player who screens shall not do any of the following:
  - Take a position closer than a normal step when behind a stationary opponent (pick)
  - Make contact when assuming a position at the side or in front of an opponent
  - Take a position so close to a moving opponent that their opponent cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction. The speed of the player to be screened will determine where the screener may take stationary position. This position will vary and may be 1 to 2 normal steps or strides from the opponent.
  - After assuming legal screening position, the screener may not move to maintain their screen
- 10) Flag guarding is not allowed.

## Receiving

- 1) All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback) if the ball has been handed off or lateralled 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.

## Passing

- 1) Passes may be forward or backwards.
- 2) Shovel passes are allowed.



## OCPRD Youth Flag Football Rules

- 3) The quarterback has a 6-second, "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the 6-seconds, the defense can then rush the quarterback, regardless of where they were positioned before the snap.
- 4) Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth 6 points, 2 points if returned during conversions. 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) 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) Both teams will have one time out in the overtime period.  
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

- 1) All penalties will be called by the referees.
- 2) Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- 3) Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines the penalty.
- 4) Defensive interference in the end zone results in the ball being placed at the 4-yard line.
- 5) All fouls behind the neutral zone by the offensive team will be enforced from the previous spot.
- 6) Fouls committed by the defensive team on will be enforced from the previous spot if the play ends behind the neutral zone, and the succeeding spot when the play finishes beyond the neutral zone.

## OCPRD Youth Flag Football Rules

### Defense:

#### Spot Fouls:

- Illegal Contact (holding, blocking etc.): +8 yards from the spot of the foul
  - EXCEPTION: Enforced from the previous spot if foul occurs during a loose ball.
- Illegal Flag Pull (before receiver has ball): +8 yards from the spot of the foul
- Pass Interference: Ball will be marked at the spot of the foul
- Roughing the Passer: +8 yards from the end of the play, automatic first down

#### Previous Spot:

- Offside: +4 yards
- Illegal Rushing (starting rush from inside the 7-yard marker): +8 yards from the previous spot

### Offense:

#### Spot Fouls:

- Charging: -8 yards and loss of down from the spot of the foul and loss of down
- Flag Guarding: -8 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.

#### Previous Spot:

- Illegal Motion (more than one person in motion, false start): -4 yards from the previous spot
- Illegal Substitution: -4 yards from the previous spot
- Illegally Consuming Time: -4 yards and stop the clock
- Delay of Game: Clock stops; -4 yards.
- Illegal Forward pass: -4 yards from the previous spot and loss of down.
- Illegal Quarterback Run: -4 yards from the previous spot and loss down
- Offensive Pass Interference (illegal pick play, pushing defender): -8 yards from the previous spot and loss of down.
- Running in a "No Running Zone": loss of down and ball returned to line of scrimmage in not forth down.

#### Personal Fouls:

- Illegal Batting – 8 yards from spot of the foul
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 8 yards from the end of the play
- Interlocked Interference – 8 yards from the spot of the foul
- Nonplayer Interference – Automatic Touchdown, nonplayer is disqualified
- Tampering with Flag Belt – 8 yards from previous spot. If by offense then loss of down. If by defense then automatic first down; Offending player is disqualified

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

## OCPRD Youth Flag Football Rules

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

<b>Quarterback</b>	Player that receives the initial snap from line of scrimmage.
<b>Boundary Lines</b>	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines, and back of the end zone lines.
<b>Line of Scrimmage</b>	(LOS) An imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field.
<b>Line-To-Gain</b>	The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score.
<b>Rush Line</b>	An imaginary line running across the width of the field 7 yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
<b>Offense</b>	The squad with possession of the ball.
<b>Defense</b>	The squad opposing the offense to prevent them from advancing the ball.
<b>Passer</b>	The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
<b>Rusher</b>	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.
<b>Downs (1-2-3-4)</b>	The offensive squad has four (4) attempts or "downs" to advance the ball. They must cross the line to gain another set of downs.
<b>Live Ball</b>	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.
<b>Dead Ball</b>	Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play
<b>Whistle</b>	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.

## OCPRD Youth Flag Football Rules

<b>Inadvertent Whistle</b>	Official's whistle that is performed in error.
<b>Charging</b>	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.
<b>Blocking</b>	An act of extending arms and/or legs to prevent a defensive player.
<b>Flag Guarding</b>	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.
<b>Shovel Pass</b>	A legal pass attempted behind the line of scrimmage by throwing the ball underhand or pushing it towards a receiver in a shot-put type manner.
<b>Lateral</b>	A backwards or sideways toss of the ball by the ball carrier.
<b>Unsportsmanlike Conduct</b>	A rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.