

WEST LICKING – NFL FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN BUCKEYE VALLEY YMCA, LICKING HEIGHTS YOUTH SPORTS & SOUTHWEST
LICKING YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUES

Version R3 – 3-2-25

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES AND GUIDELINES

A. GENERAL LEAGUE RULES AND INFORMATION

- 1) This Flag Football league will be made up of (3) age/grade-based divisions.
 - Mini Division: Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd Grade Boys and Girls
 - Junior Division: 3rd and 4th Grade Boys and Girls
 - Senior Division: 5th and 6th Grade Boys and Girls
 - Athletes must attend school in the grade level that coincides with the particular division they are playing.
Athletes who want to play up or down must get permission from the commissioners of the league on a case by case basis. Unauthorized athletes playing up or down divisions can be subject to suspension and team wins may be vacated.
 - Each division will have more than one team or combined based on registration numbers.
 - There will be a draft after evaluations to determine teams based on skills and grade.
 - Formation of teams at the discretion of each league's Football Director.
- 2) Basic schedule will be set up as follows.
 - Each team will practice for one hour then have an actual game against another team in their division.
 - All main practices and games will be on Sunday afternoons from 12pm to 6pm, weather permitting.
 - Each team does have the option to practice for just one occurrence during the week for 1-2 hours.
- 3) Each team will have a Head Coach and try to have at least (1) Assistant Coach.
- 4) This will be a 6-8-week league, If you sign your child up for this league, he/she is expected to be at all practices and games. Poor attendance will result in reduced playing time. That is up to each coach.
- 5) Teams will compete against other teams from the YMCA, SWLFC, and the LHYSL in three different locations such as the YMCA, SWL Lions Park, and a Licking Heights field. Teams may play other teams from their own leagues
- 6) Each season will end with a Championship / Awards day that will finish at the YMCA fields.
- 7) Every team in this league will play the 7-on-7 version of this sport.
- 8) Each team will have the following:
 - Offense: consisting of at least a quarterback, a center, and five eligible receivers.
 - Defense: consisting of seven defenders who can rush the passer (Junior/Senior) and drop back into coverage.
 - There is NO kicking or punting in this league so NO special teams.

B. EQUIPMENT

- 1) Teammates must wear shirts/jerseys of the same color supplied by their league. Each participant will get to keep their flag football shirt/jersey.
- 2) Shorts are preferred to be a dark color (black), no pockets or belt loops. Gloves, leg/arm pads & tape are permitted.
- 3) **Players' jerseys MUST be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line, flag belts must be on top of the shirt/jersey. All excess straps must be tucked and tied to not hang like an official flag.**
- 4) Flag belts and flags will be provided by each league and must be visible at all times and of 1 color per Team. 2 Flags per belt. Belts are to be NFL issued belt sets.
- 5) Football or soccer cleats are recommended - **NO BASEBALL OR METAL CLEATS!**
- 6) Mouth guards are required during practice and games.
- 7) Players are to remove all jewelry, hats, and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed.
- 8) Footballs:
 - "PeeWee/Mini" sized ball or comparable permitted for grades Kindergarten, 1st, & 2nd Grades
 - "PeeWee/Mini" sized ball or comparable permitted for grades 3rd & 4th a junior size football is also permitted for this age group at the discretion of the coach of the team using the ball. The ball brought on to the field for that series needs to be kept on the field for the entire series unless the ball is damaged.
 - "Junior" sized ball or comparable permitted for Seniors, grades 5th & 6th.

• **B. EQUIPMENT (Cont.)**

- Each team uses their own game ball when they are on offense, the ball brought on to the field for that series needs to be kept on the field for the entire series unless the ball is damaged.
- All game balls can be inspected by referee prior to the start of the game.

C. FIELDS

- 1) Maximum Dimensions approx. 70yds x 25yds as space permits.
 - Mini (K, 1st – 2nd) Division field size approx. 40yds x 20yds.
 - Junior & Senior (3rd-4th / 5th-6th) Division field size approx. 50yds x 25yds.
- 2) Field will be lined and/or designated with visible boundaries, sidelines, goal lines, 5 yd lines, and midfield.
- 3) Only players and volunteer coaches are allowed onto the field at any time.
- 4) Parents and spectators may sit in designated areas on the field/sidelines or stands if available. It is at the discretion of each location's director where those areas may be taking in consideration available room, weather and field conditions.

D. BASIC GAME RULES

- 1) No deliberate contact allowed. No player may initiate contact with another player.
- 2) No blocking – **Shielding is allowed** = getting in the way of another player, no grabbing, locking up or tripping.
- 3) No stiff arming, intentionally running into players, or flag shielding
- 4) All games will be 7 on 7. Each team may have 8 to 15 players on their team * *dependent on enrollment* *
- 5) Teams must use a minimum of SEVEN players at all times. * *dependent on enrollment* *
**If a team does not have the seven player minimum, the head coaches can agree to play the contest shorthanded.*
- 6) Substitutions may quickly be made on any dead ball.
- 7) Minimum Play Rule – **NO Minimum Plays** -- Every attempt to play all athletes will be goal. All coaches will try to keep everyone involved. Attendance, attitude, and effort will help the most for play time.
- 8) (1) Offensive and (1) Defensive Coach are permitted on the field during the play for calling plays and directing players into formations. These on-field coaches **are not** to provide extra instruction or to make audibles to play calls. Coaches must be 15yds behind the play at time of the snap.
- 9) A coin toss determines first possession. Coaches from both teams will meet at midfield. Visiting team will call the toss. The winner of the toss decides possession, loser decides direction.
- 10) Offensive team takes possession at its own 5-yard line and has 4 downs/plays to cross midfield for a 1st down.
- 11) Once a team crosses midfield, it has a new series of downs to score a touchdown. Midfield is the only opportunity to gain a first down other than a penalty.
- 12) There is NO punting in this league. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard.

E. TIMING - GAME

- 1) Games are played:
 - Pee Wee: 40 minutes running time* (2 twenty-minute halves)
 - 3-4 Grades: 40 minutes running time* (2 twenty-minute halves)
 - 5-6 Grades: 40 minutes running time* (2 twenty-minute halves)
- 2) Half time:
 - K - 6 Grades: 5-minute break at end of the 1st half.
 - Teams change direction, and possession goes to the team who started the game on defense.
 - Additional 5-minute water breaks may be made throughout the game (only if needed).
- 3) If the score is tied at the end of regulation time, teams move directly into overtime.
- 4) Each time the ball is spotted, the team in possession has 30-40 seconds to snap the ball.
**Teams will receive one warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced.*
- 5) Each team has TWO 30-second time outs PER GAME.
- 6) All game time is running clock except for the **last (1) minute of each half**. The clock does NOT stop for first downs, dead ball play stoppages, and penalties. The clock DOES stop for scores and conversions. Timing for **last (1) minute of each half** the time clock will stop according to normal football stoppages. **See section F.**
- 7) Officials can stop the clock at their discretion such as athlete injury.

F. TIMING – END OF HALF (Last (1) minute of each half)

Clock **WILL** stop for the following:

- 1) Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- 2) Interception / Change of possession: Spot of interception. Interceptions are not advanced.
- 3) Any score. Conversions are untimed.

Clock **WILL NOT** stop for the following:

- 1) Unpossessed ball touching the ground – Fumble or dropped pass attempt. (*clock remains running*)
- 2) First down, Clock may stop momentarily if there is a delay in placement of ball for the next play.
- 3) Ball carrier's knee touching the ground (*clock remains running*)
- 4) Ball carrier's flag removed or falls off (*clock remains running*)
- 5) Fumbled snap / hits the ground before it reaches QB / dropped handoff exchange or pitch (*clock remains running*)

G. TIMING - OVERTIME - Shootout Rules

- 1) The "no run zone" does not apply in Overtime.
- 2) The ball is placed at midfield, in possession of the same team that held possession at the end of regulation.
- 3) Each team has a possession of 4 plays to score for each series.
- 4) A new set of downs (first down) can be awarded as a result of a penalty.
- 5) If a team scores a touchdown, they may attempt a PAT. Normal PAT attempt rules will apply, **See section H.** After the PAT attempt, their possession is concluded, and the other team begins its possession for that series.
- 6) Each team will get a chance to score for each (1) series. If after (1) series each there is still a tie score, the game will end in a tie. "*Each team has one set of downs only (one chance) to score in the OT session.*"
- 7) If the defense intercepts, their offensive possession will begin at midfield, if needed.
- 8) Interception returns are not permitted in Overtime.
- 9) No timeouts in Overtime

H. SCORING

- 1) Touchdown: 6 points
- 2) Extra point: 1 point (PAT played from 5-yd line **must be a pass play**), 2 points (PAT played from 10-yd line can be run or pass play)
- 3) Safety: 2 points
- 4) Mercy Rule: 30 points
 - Will be in play when a team is winning by 30+ points at any time during the game (1st or 2nd half).
 - Constant running clock with no clock stoppage until the end of the game or the deficit is below 30points.

I. POSSESSION

- 1) Point of possession (line of scrimmage) is determined by:
 - A) control of the ball and
 - B) the position of the ball and both flags prior to a dead ball.
 - C) Ball fumbled in a turnover; the opposite team takes possession on their own 5-yard line.
- 2) Officials shall mark the point of possession before each play.
- 3) Offense may not run hurry up mode. Defense must be set before the ball is snapped.
- 4) Fumbled snap / snap hits the ground before it reaches the QB dropped handoff exchange or pitch. Dead ball, loss of down at the previous spot.

J. FORMATIONS - OFFENSE

- 1) Offense must have at least one player (the center) positioned on the line of scrimmage at the snap. This position will snap the ball, can stay into block, or go out for pass-
- 2) Center: Ball can be snapped between the center's legs or taking a knee and tossing/handing the football back from a set position on the ground.
- 3) The offense will have a quarterback (person who receives the snap), 1 running back, and 4 receivers that line up on the line of scrimmage (no receiver off the line). No more than 3 players off the line of scrimmage at one time.
- 4) The quarterback may pitch or toss the ball and also make forward passes if he is behind the line of scrimmage.
- 5) Only one offensive player may be in motion, away from the line of scrimmage, at the time of the snap.
- 6) All offensive players are eligible receivers no matter the formation.

K. RUNNING WITH THE BALL

- 1) A "No Run Zone" exists 5 yards before midfield, and 5 yards before the goal line, in each direction, where the offense may not run the ball across the line of scrimmage, they must pass. **No Run Zone for all divisions.**
- 2) The quarterback may not cross the line of scrimmage with the ball, unless he receives a handoff, pitch or pass from another player.
- 3) A QB may run the ball from the time a defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage during a pass rush.
- 4) A QB run, or any run within the "No Run Zone" shall result in a loss of down at the previous spot.
- 5) Unlimited handoffs, pitches and passes are permitted behind the line of scrimmage.
- 6) Handoffs, pitches, or passes are not permitted once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage.
- 7) Handoffs to the center, between the center's legs, are not permitted.
- 8) Offensive players who take a handoff, pitch or pass may run across the line of scrimmage with the ball.
- 9) Ball carrier may not lower his shoulder, nor deliberately run into a defender, nor stiff arm, nor shield or otherwise protect (guard) the flag. – This is Illegal Contact
- 10) Jumping over players is only permitted in order to avoid stepping on a player who is on the ground.

L. PASSING THE BALL

- 1) Offensive players may hand off, pitch, or pass the ball only if positioned behind the line of scrimmage.
- 2) All offensive players are eligible to receive passes.
- 3) A player must have control of the ball without any part of his/her body being out of bounds for a legal reception.
- 4) PeeWee/Mini division drop back time limit: Quarterback has 10 second time limit when dropping back to attempt to complete a pass. This time limit ONLY applies to the PeeWee/Mini division.

**Warning for first violation. Subsequent violations will result in a delay of game penalty against the offense.*

M. KICKING

- 1) No kickoffs in this league.
- 2) There is NO punting in this league. **See section D. line 12.**

N. DEFENSE

- 1) All defensive players who are rushing the QB (Junior/Senior divisions), must be positioned at least 7 yards away from the line of scrimmage at time of snap, except when the ball is snapped from within a No Run Zone (5 yards of the midfield line or the goal line), at which time the defense may use any formation.
- 2) No blitz/rushing for defensive players in the PeeWee/Mini division only.
**There is a 10 sec quarterback drop back time limit for the PeeWee/Mini division.*
- 3) Immediate rush for all defensive players from any position if the ball is handed off, pitched, or passed.
- 4) Defender must make an obvious attempt to de-flag the ball carrier.
- 5) Defender may not grasp or otherwise obstruct the ball carrier while in the process of removing the flag.
- 6) Defender may not attempt to strip the ball from the ball carrier.
- 7) Defender must attempt to de-flag the passer or deflect the ball without contact to the passer's throwing arm.

O. ENFORCEMENTS / PENALTIES

- 1) The referee will call all penalties. There will be at least one referee at each flag football game.
- 2) The two on-field coaches will assist the referee with control of the game.
- 3) Penalties will be assessed half the distance to goal when the penalty is more than half the distance to goal.
- 4) Only the Head Coach may approach the referees with questions and clarifications on call or rules. If an Assistant Coach and/or player engages a referee regarding a call made on the field, a delay-of-game penalty can be enforced at the discretion of the referee. If the situation escalates, the person engaging in the situation can be ejected from the game. The situation can be reviewed by the league commissioners for further action if needed.
- 5) Any inappropriate acts of misconduct by a player, coach, or participant that is a violation of each league's Code of Conduct will receive a warning for the first act. If there is more misconduct from the same participant they will be ejected from the field and premises immediately (**See section R**). Any participant who is ejected from a function because of misconduct will be reviewed by the commissioners for possible additional punishment (**See section T**).

P. OFFENSIVE ENFORCEMENTS

- 1) Illegal Procedure (substitution, formation, motion, offsides, pre-snap).
 - Dead ball foul, 5-yard penalty, repeat the down.
- 2) Illegal Run (QB run, run within the No run zone).
 - 5-yard penalty from previous spot, Loss of Down.
- 3) Endzone Penalty (foul in own endzone).
 - Defense awarded safety.
- 4) Penalty on 4th Down
 - Replay the down if accepted.
- 5) Illegal Contact (holding, blocking, etc.)
 - Spot Foul, 5-yard penalty from spot of the foul, Repeat the down.
- 6) Offensive Pass Interference
 - 5-yard penalty from previous spot, Repeat the down.
- 7) Flag Guarding or Shielding flags.
 - Spot Foul, 5-yard penalty from spot of the foul, Loss of down
- 8) Delay of game (Failing to snap the ball within 30 seconds of the ball being placed / drop back limit violation)
 - 5-yard penalty from previous spot, Repeat the down
- 9) Personal Foul / Game Misconduct
 - 10-yard penalty and loss of down

Q. DEFENSIVE ENFORCEMENTS

- 1) Offsides
 - Dead ball foul, 5-yard penalty, repeat the down.
- 2) Defensive Pass Interference.
 - 5-yard penalty from prev. spot, Automatic 1st Down.
- 3) Illegal Contact (holding, blocking, etc)
 - Dead ball foul, Automatic 1st down from the spot of foul.
- 4) Tackling / Obstruction of Ball Carrier / Unnecessary Roughness
 - Spot Foul, 10-yard penalty, Automatic 1st Down.
- 5) Personal Foul / Game Misconduct
 - 10-yard penalty and loss of down

*Any inappropriate manipulation of existing rules during a game can result in a warning to the particular team. If subsequent actions continue a Personal Foul penalty will be assessed with an option of a game forfeit.

R. SPORTSMANSHIP

- 1) Foul Play will not be tolerated!!** If the field monitor or referee witnesses any flagrant acts of blocking, tackling, illegal contact, unnecessary roughness, or any type of unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player may be warned or be ejected from the game. This will follow the 1-2 Rule Enforcement Policy
- 2) Trash talking is illegal.** Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators) If trash talking occurs, the referee can give one warning. A second offense will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct with a penalty called. If it continues, the player(s), coaches, or spectators may be ejected from the game and the entire program if needed.
- 3) The 1-2 Chance Rule Enforcement Policy:** There will be (1) warning for any acts of misconduct that violates any of the league's Code of Conduct rules. Any additional misconduct from the same participant will result in an ejection from the game/event and asked to leave the premises (See section T).
- 4) All investigations and disciplinary actions needed will be reviewed and approved by the FB league commissioners.**

S. STANDINGS

- 1) Regular Season Standings and Records**
 - All teams during the regular season will be ranked by record and points scored by division (Mini, Junior, Senior)
 - These standings will be for reference only and will have NO impact on Championship weekend.
 - All coaches turn in his/her team's game score to their respective director.
 - All directors will turn in their teams & home game scores to the YMCA.
 - Updated standings will be sent out each week by Wednesday evening (this is a goal).
- 2) Championship Weekend Standings and Seedings**
 - There will be standings for each division, Mini, Junior, and Senior divisions.
 - Rankings/Seedings will be based on the following
 - Regular Season record (winning percentage).
 - Tiebreak 1: Head-to-head victory.
 - Tiebreak 2: Point total, A winning team will get 1 point for every win the opponent they defeated ends up with at the end of the regular season, if the opponent goes winless, the winning team gets 1 point.
 1. Team A defeats Team B, Team B ends up with a 5-1 record, Team A gets 5 points.
 2. Team A defeats Team B, Team B ends up with a 0-6 record, Team A gets 1 point.

T. LEAGUE COMMISSIONERS POWER AND DUTIES

- 1) The commissioners who organize, operate, and enforce the West Licking NFL Flag Football League are made up of each of the appointed directors, one from each organization who make up the partnership that is the West Licking NFL Flag Football League (Buckeye Valley YMCA, Licking Heights Youth Sports, & SW Licking Youth Football).**
- 2) The commissioners of the West Licking NFL Flag Football League will primarily focus on enforcing Flag Football league associated with "play on the field" consisting of practices, games, and its referees.**
- 3) All sportsmanship inappropriate acts and/or misconduct by any participant (athlete, coach, parent, or spectator) will be determined based on violations of the (3) leagues' Code of Conduct rules (SWL, LHYSL, YMCA).**
- 4) Any detrimental behavioral or sportsmanship actions that need to be addressed from an athlete, coach or parent standpoint will and should be initially handled by each leagues Code of conduct that will determine investigation and punishment. The commissioners of the West Licking NFL Flay Football League will oversee and confirm the flag football league sportsmanship rules are followed.**
- 5) The 1-2 Chance Rule Enforcement Policy:** There will be (1) warning for any acts of misconduct that violates any of the league's Code of Conduct rules. Any additional misconduct from the same participant will result in an ejection from the game/event and asked to leave the premises (See section T). This rule enforcement will cover all events sanctioned by the West Licking NFL Flag Football League. These events include, but not limited to, Flag Football Practices, Flag Football Games, times prior and after events, and Championship day.
- 6) The commissioners of the West Licking NFL Flag Football League reserves the right to investigate any rules infractions, determine punishments, or immediately suspend any athlete or coach for the inappropriate action. This can be determined based on the severity of the action or rules infraction with the possibility of removal from the team or ban from any West Licking NFL Flag Football events and premises.**