Garden City Parks and Recreation

Girl's Flag Football League

Rules Packet / Coaches Manual

STRUCTURE

Garden City Parks and Recreation Youth Flag Football Leagues are open to all boys and girls. League placement will go by **the current grade they are enrolled in.** The program is divided into leagues according to grade to provide appropriate competition and skill development at all ages. Leagues are established as follows:

First & Second Grade
Third & Fourth Grade
Fifth & Sixth Grade
Seventh & Eighth Grade

ADMINISTRATION

The GCPR Athletic Staff, with the approval of the Superintendent of Recreation and the Garden City Recreation Advisory Board, will establish the policies governing the Youth Flag Football program. Evaluations, surveys, and input from advisory committees will be used to help formulate those policies.

ELIGIBILITY & REGISTRATION

Anyone meeting the grade requirements will be eligible to participate in this program. All boys and girls wanting to participate must be registered and fees paid before they will be allowed to play. For those unable to pay the fee, scholarships are available through Garden City Recreation. Registrations will be accepted online at https://www.gcrec.com/227/Youth-Flag-Football or at the Garden City Recreation Office, 310 N.6th, or by mail.

COACHES & ASSISTANTS

Volunteers will be used as coaches and assistants for all teams. Experience is second to willingness to coach the youth. Any person who coaches or assists with any activities is required to pass a background check prior to coaching. All Head Coaches must be 18 years or older, those under 18 are encouraged to serve as assistants. Any parent that volunteers will be allowed to coach his/her own child. **Coach's children must still attend the workout and be rated.** A coaches training session and organizational meeting will be conducted each year prior to the start of the season. It is strongly recommended that all volunteers attend.

GENERAL RULES

1. No coach may hold practices until after the coaches meeting has been completed for his/her age division.

2. Cancellation of games will be posted on the GCPR Facebook page. Managers are responsible for notifying players of the cancellation. Managers affected by a cancelled game will get an email from team sideline to let them know of the new date and time for that game.

3. **No jewelry such as watches, rings, neck chains or earrings may be worn while playing.**

4. **Any player, manager, or assistant shall be suspended for the remainder of the game and ejected from the area if guilty of any of the following:**

- **A. Using profane language in any manner.**
- **B. Making unnecessary gestures in protesting an official's decision.**
- **C. Resorting to unnecessary roughness on the playing field.**
- **D. Riding, heckling, or making uncomplimentary remarks to an opposing player, manager, or official.**
- **E. Bickering with judgment decisions of the officials.**
- **F. USE OF TOBACCO while on Playing Fields or any GCPR Facilities.**
- **G. Under the influence of alcohol while on Playing Fields or any GCPR Facilities.**

ZERO TOLLERANCE RULE

There will be zero tolerance for players, coaches and spectators who engage in harassing and/or unsportsmanlike behavior with umpires / officials, other spectators, game supervisors, other players, or GCPR Athletic Staff. Officials, game supervisors and GCPR Athletic Staff have the authority to penalize the player, coach, spectator, or team if an official is sworn at, harassed, argued with, or insulted. Penalties will range from: warning, to ejection from the game, to suspension from future games and possible forfeiture of the game.

5. Shoes with molded rubber or plastic cleats are permissible. **(No Metal)**

6. **Any communication to the official must be done through the head coach and in calm and respectful manner.**

7. Teams will wear the jerseys provided by Garden City Parks and Recreation.

8. Any team using an ineligible player shall forfeit all games that the ineligible player participates in.

9. Protests are allowed only for determining an ineligible player. All other questions regarding a ruling by an official shall be settled on the spot by the official, supervisor, coordinators, if available. Judgment calls are not open to discussion. If there is any question or comments on rules / interpretation, please contact GCPR Athletic Staff.

10. Managers and assistants shall be responsible for the conduct of their players, parents, and their sideline.

GAME

A. At the start of each game, captains from both teams will meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss.
B. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offence or defense. The loser of the toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that stared the game on defense.
C. The offensive team will take possession of the ball at its own 5-yard line and has 4 plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has 4 plays to score a touchdown.
    a. 1/2 & 3/4 Grade Leagues will have 2 additional first down lines. These lines will be halfway (12 ½ yards) between the end zone lines and the midfield line.
D. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
E. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
F. Teams will change sides after the first half. Possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.

TERMINOLOGY

Boundary Lines	The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the endzones 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 seven yards (into the defensive side) from the line of scrimmage.
Offense	The team with possession of the ball.
Defense	The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball.
Passer	The offensive player that throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback.
Rusher	The defensive player(s) allowed 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 team has four attempts or "downs" to advance the ball. It must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or to score.
Live Ball	Refers to the period of time that play is in action. Generally used regarding 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, halftime, or the end of the game.
Inadvertent Whistle	Official's whistle that is performed in error.
Charging	An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has establish position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm, or the chest.
Flag Guarding	AN illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent the 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 forward pitch attempted behind the LOS to a receiver beyond the LOS.
Lateral	A backward or sideway toss of the ball by the ball-carrier (Illegal in all leagues)
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	Rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language.

EQUIPMENT

A. The league provides each player with an official flag belt and NFL FLAG team jersey. Teams will use footballs provided by their league.
    a. 5&6 Grade will use the Junior size football
    b. 1&2 and 3&4 Grade will use the PeeWee sive ball
    c. Kindergarten will use the Mini size ball
B. Player must wear shoes. Cleats are allowed if they are molded. (No metal cleats)
C. Players may tape their forearms, hands, and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads. Braces with exposed metal are not allowed.
D. Players must remove all jewelry, hats, and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed.
E. Player's jerseys must be tucked into their shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line. Flag belts should be altered (cut or taped) to ensure only two flags are hanging off belt.
F. We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Short or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Games will not be delayed for a player to tape up pockets.
    a. **Shorts or pants cannot be the same color as the flag belts**

THE FIELD

A. Field dimensions are 30 yards by 70 yards with two 10-yard end zones, and a midfield line-to-gain. No-run zones precede each line-to-gain by 5 yards.
B. No-Run Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting power run plays. While in the no-run-zones (a 5-yard imaginary zone before midfield and before the end zone), teams cannot run the ball in any fashion and all plays must be pass plays, even with a handoff.
C. Stepping on the boundary, or out-of-bounds, line is considered out-of-bounds.
D. Each offensive team approaches only Two no-run-zones in each drive (one zone 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down, and one zone 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
E. Kindergarten and 1/2 Grade Leagues will have 2 additional first down lines. These lines will be halfway (12 ½ yards) between the end zone lines and the midfield line.

ROSTERS

A. Home teams wear dark color jerseys. Visiting teams wear light color jerseys.
B. Teams must consist of at least 5 players with a maximum of 12 players.
C. Teams must start games with a minimum of 5 players. In the event of an injury, a team with insufficient substitute players may play with 4 players on the field but no fewer than 4.

TIMING

A. Games are played on a 40-minute continuous clock with two 20-minute halves unless one team gains a 28-point advantage, which will then end the game. Clock stops only for timeouts and injuries.
B. Halftime will be up to 5 minutes.
C. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Game officials will give a 10 second warning when there is 10 seconds left on the play clock. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
D. Each team has one 30-second timeout per half.
E. Officials can stop the clock at their discretion.
F. In the event of an injury, the clock will stop then restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play.
G. If score is tied at end of 40 minutes, and overtime period will be used to determine a winner.

OVERTIME

A. A coin flip will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
    a. If a second overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the 2nd round of overtime. If the score is still tied at the end of the second overtime the game will end in a tie.
    b. The referee will determine which end the overtime period will take place on.
B. Each team will take turns getting one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Whether to go for one or two is up to the offensive team. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts, the team that started on defense will get a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one or two-point play of their own.
    a. Example: Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for 2 points from the 10-yard line for the win.
    b. If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the team that went first wins.
C. Both teams must go for two from the 10-yard line in the second round of overtime.
D. The final points earned by the winning team in the final overtime will be added onto the winning team's total score. The losing team will not receive any additional points.
    a. Example: End of regulation time, score is 14-14. Team A scores 1 point and Team B scores 2 points. Team B wins with a final score of 16-14. Points are only added to the total score from the final round of overtime.
E. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
F. There are no timeouts in overtime.

SCORING

A. Touchdowns = 6 points
B. PAT (point after touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line)
    a. 1 point PAT is pass only: 2point PAT can be run or pass.
    b. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty. Interceptions on conversions cannot be returned.
C. Safety = 2 points
    a. Safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls off, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone, or if the ball is snapped out of the back of the end zone.
D. After one team is winning by 28 points or more, the game is over. Once a 28 or more point advantage is gained, no PAT will be attempted. The game will continue in scrimmage mode for remainder of the game.
E. Forfeits are scored 28-0 for the winning team.

COACHES

A. 1 Coach is allowed on the field to direct players. Coaches must move to the sidelines before the snap of the ball. (1 Additional coach will be allowed on the field for kindergarten)
B. Coaches are expected to adhere to NFL FLAG philosophies, coaching guidelines, and code of conduct.

LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL

A. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
B. The official will indicate the neutral zone and the line of scrimmage.
    a. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. In regard to the neutral zone, the official may give both teams a "courtesy" neutral zone infraction to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.
C. A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play.
D. The defense may not mimic the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
E. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
F. Any official can whistle the play dead.
G. Play is ruled "dead" when:
    a. The ball hits the ground
        i. If the ball hits the round as a result of a bad snap, the ball is then placed where the ball hit the ground.
    b. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.
    c. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.
    d. A touchdown, PAT, or safety is scored.
    e. The ball-carrier's knee or arm hits the ground.
    f. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.

g. The ball carrier dives forward
h. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flag(s).
i. The 7 second pass clock expires.
j. Inadvertent whistle.

H. **There are no fumbles.** The ball is spotted where the ball-carrier's feet where at the time of the fumble.
I. In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
   a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
   b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.
J. A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged, and the proper ruling will be enforced. Officials should all agree upon any controversial call, in order to give each team, the full benefit of each call.

RUNNINNG

A. The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball-carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player's front foot.
B. The quarterback may not directly run with the ball. The quarterback is defined as the offensive player who receives the snap.
C. 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 utilize 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.
D. Absolutely no lateral of any kind.
E. No-Run Zones, located 5 yards before each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in these zones if the subsequent line is live. (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive- one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD)
F. Any player who receives a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage
G. Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind, or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
H. Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping, or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
I. Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a flag pull.
   a. Players spinning out of control will be considered flag guarding
J. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she is attempting to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
K. No blocking or screening is allowed at any time
L. Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage No running with the ball carrier
M. Flag obstruction- All jerseys must be tucked in before the play begins. Flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

PASSING

A. ALL passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage
    a. All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes.
    b. Quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack as long as the ball crosses the line of scrimmage in the air.
B. Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage
C. The quarterback has a seven second pass clock. If a pass is not thrown with 7 seconds, the play is dead, the down is consumed, and the ball is returned to the original line of scrimmage. Once ball is handed off, the 7 second clock is no longer in effect.
    a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7-second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).

RECIEVING

A. All players are eligible receivers including the quarterback once he/she hands it off behind the line of scrimmage provided they are beyond the line of scrimmage when they receive the pass.
B. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel with the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage.
C. A player must have at least one foot in bounds, and nothing touching the boundary line, to receive a pass successfully.
D. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
E. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only change of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.
F. Interceptions are returnable but not on conversions after touchdowns.

RUSHING THE PASSER

A. All players who rush the passes must be a minimum of seven (7) yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage
B. Once the ball is handed off, the 7-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
C. A special marker, or referee, will designate a rush line 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
D. A legal rush is defined as:
E. Any rush from a point 7 yards from the defensive line of scrimmage
    a. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback
    b. If a rusher leaves the rush line early (breaks the 7-yard area), they may return to the rush line, reset, and then legally rush the quarterback.
    c. If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before he/she crosses the line of scrimmage, he/she may legally rush the quarterback.

F. A penalty may be called if:
    a. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass is made. Penalty – ILLEGAL RUSH: 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and first down
    b. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped. Penalty – OFFSIDES: 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and first down
    c. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off. Penalty – ILLEGAL RUSH: 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down

G. Special circumstances
    a. Teams are not required to rush the quarterback with the seven second clock in effect.
    b. Teams are not required to identify their rushers before the play.

H. 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 making contact with the passer will result in a roughing the passer penalty.

I. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. It is the OFFENSIVE PLAYERS RESPONSIBILTIY to avoid contact. Any disruption to the rushers path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and avoid contact.

J. A sack occurs if the QB's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the QB's feet are when the flag is pulled. A safety is awarded if the sack takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

FLAG PULLING

A. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball

B. Defenders cannot dive to pull flags

C. It is illegal to tackle or run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.

D. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time.

E. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag fell off.

F. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball

G. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm, or shoulder intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

FORMATIONS

A. Offenses must have a minimum of one (1) player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four (4) players on the line of scrimmage. Quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
    a. One player at a time may go in motion 1-yard behind and parallel to the line of scrimmage.
    b. No motion allowed toward 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 (from the ground)in a rapid, continuous motion to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

A. If the field monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLLERATED.
B. Offensive or confrontational language is not allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
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 adhere to good sportsmanship as well:
    a. Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials or other teams.
    b. Keep comments clean and profanity free.
    c. Compliment all players, not just one child or team.
G. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kid friendly:
    a. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs, and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area.
    b. Stay in the endzone area, not between fields.
    c. Dispose of all trash in designated trash cans.
H. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties:
    a. Defense +10 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down
    b. Offense -10 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down

PENALTIES

A. The referee will call all penalties.
B. Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of the play.
C. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls)
D. Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players may not question calls.
E. Games may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.
F. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must always be assessed before play is considered complete.

G. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

DEFENSIVE SPOT FOULS

DEFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE	AUTOMATIC 1ST DOWN
HOLDING	AUTOMATIC 1ST DOWN
STRIPPING	+10 YARDS & AUTOMATIC 1ST DOWN

OFFENSIVE SPOT FOULS

SCREENING OR BLOCKING	-10 YARDS & LOSS OF DOWN
CHARGING	-10 YARDS & LOSS OF DOWN
FLAG GUARDING	-10 YARDS & LOSS OF DOWN

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS	+10 YARDS & AUTOMATIC 1ST DOWN
UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT	+10 YARDS & AUTOMATIC 1ST DOWN
OFFSIDE	+5 YARDS & AUTOMATIC 1ST DOWN
ILLEGAL RUSH	+5 YARDS & AUTOMATIC 1ST DOWN
ILLEGAL FLAG PULL	+5 YARDS & AUTOMATIC 1ST DOWN
ROUGHING THE PASSER	+5 YARDS & AUTOMATIC 1ST DOWN
TAUNTING	+5 YARDS & AUTOMATIC 1ST DOWN

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS	-10 YARDS AND LOSS OF DOWN
UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT	-10 YARDS AND LOSS OF DOWN
OFFSIDE/FALSE START	-5 YARDS AND LOSS OF DOWN
ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS	-5 YARDS AND LOSS OF DOWN
OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE	-5 YARDS AND LOSS OF DOWN
ILLEGAL MOTION	-5 YARDS AND LOSS OF DOWN
DELAY OF GAME	-5 YARDS AND LOSS OF DOWN
IMPEDING THE RUSHER	-5 YARDS AND LOSS OF DOWN