

AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL

FLAG AND TOUCH FOOTBALL RULES

AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL also offers flag and touch football programs. Flag Football is an alternative to tackle football with its own rules and regulations. Flag football is played by people of all ages and genders and is often a part of many organizations and leagues that use flag and touch football as a teaching tool for their younger players just starting to play the game. AYF has many programs that operate exclusively as flag and touch football programs. AYF Flag programs can be played in the Spring and Fall.

Programs wishing to charter flag and touch football with AYF will be welcome. Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, Recreation Departments, PALs and other relative type organizations find that flag and touch football is a great addition to their programs. Tackle programs chartered with AYF can add flag and touch teams at an additional, reduced charter fee.

AYF flag and touch football are for both boys and girls. Teams may be coed, all boys' teams or all girls' teams.

AYF flag and touch teams will not interact in any circumstances. Flag teams will not play touch teams.

There are no weight restrictions in AYF flag and touch football.

SECTION I: Age Classes Of Play

Bandits:

Ages will be 6 and under. Players cannot be 7 of age at anytime during the playing season.

Juniors:

Ages will be 9 and under. Players cannot be 10 years of age at anytime during the playing season.

Middies:

Ages will be 12 and under. Players cannot be 13 years of age anytime during the playing season.

Seniors:

Ages will be 15 and under. Players cannot be 16 years of age anytime during the playing season.

Ages will be determined by original birth certificate or a certified copy or a notarized photocopy of an original record of birth. These documents can be a Certificate from the State, County or City Bureau of Vital Statistics, Department of Health, Hospital Certificates, or Record of Notification of Birth Registration by the Bureau of Census of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Passports are also acceptable.

Once again the July 31st date will be used to determine a players age for the current season in all classes of play.

SECTION II: AYF REGULATIONS

RULE 1. THE GAME, FIELD, PLAYERS AND EQUIPMENT

Section 1. General Provisions

- Article 1. The Game** - will be played between two teams of eight players each on a rectangular field with an official football suited to the age of the players involved in the game.
- Article 2. Goal Lines** - for each team shall be established at opposite ends of the field, and each team shall be allowed the opportunity to advance the ball across their opponent's goal line by running or passing.
- Article 3. Winning Team** - the team having the highest score at the end of the game, unless it is forfeited, shall be declared the winner.
- Article 4. Game Officials.** The game shall be played under the supervision of , two or three officials.
- Article 5. Team Captain(s).** The coach will designate to the referee, the team captain(s). If more than one is designated, a speaking captain must be selected.
- Article 6. Subject to the Rules.** All participants are subject to rules of the game and shall be governed by the decisions of the game officials.

Section 2. THE FIELD

- Article 1. Zone Markings.** The field shall be marked in 20-yard zones from goal line to goal line. There shall be one inbound hash mark dividing the field into halves. This hash mark shall run parallel with each sideline.
- Article 2. Inbounds/Out-of Bounds.** The lines bounding the sidelines and end zones are out-of-bounds in their entirety. The inbounds area is also bound by the lines. The end zone is part of the width of the field.
- Article 3. Size of Fields.** AYF Flag and Touch fields shall be either 80 x 40 yards or the regulation 100-yard field. When only a 100-yard field is available, soft, flexible pylons can be placed within the field to make it conform to the 80 x 40 field.
- Article 4. Down Marker.** A down marker shall be used to indicate the number of the down and where the ball is placed on the field.

Section 3. THE BALL

- Article 1. Specifications.** The official ball will be:

Bandits to Juniors: Wilson K2 (Bandits only), Wilson TDJ,

Middies: Wilson TDY,

Seniors: Wilson TDY or TDS,

To order the Official AYF/Wilson Ball, visit www.MyAYF.com

Article 2. Use of Ball. The referee shall be the sole judge of any ball offered for play and may change the ball at his discretion. During the game, each team may use its own ball as long as it meets the legal class standard.

Section 4. EQUIPMENT

Article 1. Legal Equipment. Players of opposing teams must wear contrasting colored jerseys with numbers front and rear. The pants must be a different color than the flags. The visiting team is responsible for changes that are required.

Article 2. (Flag Football) - No jersey or pants may cover any portion of a player's flag.

Article 3. (Flag Football) - Each player on the field must wear a one piece belt with three flags permanently attached. One flag will be on each side and one at the center of the back. The flag shall be 2 inches wide and a minimum of 14 inches long. The flags will be one of contrasting colors to their opponent's flags.

Article 4. Additional Allowable Equipment. Shoes will be soccer style, non-detachable rubber cleats. Sneakers may also be worn.

Article 5. Illegal Equipment. The use of headgear of any nature, body pads, shoulder pads, shoes with removable cleats are prohibited.

RULE 2. PLAYERS

Section 1. ROSTERS

Article 1. AYF Flag and Touch teams shall have a roster minimum of 12 and a maximum of 24 players per team.

Article 2. Official Rosters must be submitted to AYF Headquarters before the playing season begins.

Article 3. Players who play tackle football are ineligible for AYF Flag and Touch teams during the same season.

Article 4. Players may be added to the Official Roster if:

- A. The Official Roster is in danger of falling below the minimum.
- B. There is still room to bring the roster to maximum size.

Article 5. Players may not be added to the Official Roster after September 30.

Section 2. 8 Play Rule

Article 1. AYW players are guaranteed a minimum of 8 plays per game. Only plays from the line of scrimmage are considered legitimate plays. Extra point tries do not count as plays.

Article 2. Each team shall furnish a monitor to record the 8 play rule.

Section 3. PLAYERS - GENERAL

Article 1. AYW Flag and Touch football is 8-man football. Everybody is eligible to catch forward passes.

Article 2. There will be free substitution. All substitutes must report to the huddle.

Section 4. INSURANCE

Article 1. All teams must furnish proof of General Liability and Accident Insurance. The required coverage's can be seen at www.myayf.com/tos.pdf. Additionally American Youth Football must be named as an additional insured. All members, not covered under the AYW endorsed insurance policy are required to deliver to AYW a certificate of insurance prior to conducting any games or practices. For more information on the AYW endorsed insurance plan visit the members-only section on www.MyAYF.com

RULE 3. LENGTH OF GAMES

Section 1. TIME SEGMENTS

Article 1. AYW Flag and Touch games will consist of two halves of 20 minutes each.

Article 2. There will be three time outs per half unless it is an officials time out.

Article 3. The 8-Play Rule goes into effect at the two minute warning. The clock will be stopped until the required substitutions take place.

Article 4. There will be a maximum of 15 minutes allowed for halftime.

Article 5. Teams in possession of the ball will have 35 seconds to put the ball in play. This includes huddle time.

RULE 4. SCORING

Section 1. TYPES OF SCORES

- Article 1.** Touchdown is 6 points
- Article 2.** Point after touchdown is 1 point for a pass from 3 yards out and 2 points by running from 5 yards out.
- Article 3.** Safety is 2 points
- Article 4.** Forfeited game - Winning team is awarded 7-0 score.

SECTION III: PLAYING SPECIFICATIONS

RULE 1. STARTING THE GAME

- Article 1.** Coin Toss - at the beginning of a game, a coin is tossed by the referee and the winner gets possession of the ball. The loser has the option of which goal to defend. These choices will be reversed for the second half.
- Article 2.** Ball is placed on the 30-yard line on the 100-yard field. Ball is placed on the 20-yard line on the 80-yard field.

RULE 2. FIRST DOWNS

- Article 1.** Four downs are allowed to advance the ball into the next zone.
- Article 2.** Zone lines are marked every 20 yards. The zone is reached when the forward part of the ball touches, or is advanced through, the zone line.
- Article 3.** The next zone line will be the line to gain for another first down.

RULE 3. GIVING UP THE BALL

- Article 1.** If the offensive team fails to make a first down, they will announce to the referee that they will give up the ball. The referee picks up the ball and steps off 30 yards (100-yard field), 20 yards (80-yard field) toward the defensive team's goal.
- Article 2.** The defensive team goes on offense from the placement of the ball with first and zone to go.

RULE 4. DE-FLAGGING

- Article 1.** The ball carrier is downed when his flag has been detached from his belt or if either knee touches the ground.
- Article 2.** The defensive player holds the flag over his head and stops at the point of de-flagging.
- Article 3.** Only the ball carrier's flag can be removed. Removing flags of other players is illegal.
- Article 4.** The defensive player cannot grab or hold the ball carrier in order to de-flag him.
- Article 5.** The defensive player must go for a passer's flag and not his arm.

RULE 5. TOUCHING (TOUCH FOOTBALL)

- Article 1.** AYP rules state that touch football will be with two hands.
- Article 2.** The defensive player must touch the ball carrier between the shoulder and the knees.

RULE 6. BLOCKING

- Article 1.** Blocking is done between the shoulder and waist only. There is no blocking below the waist.
- Article 2.** There will be no body, butt or roll blocking.
- Article 3.** Blockers will not use their hands to grab or hold a defensive player.
- Article 4.** Blockers will remain on their feet at all times.
- Article 5.** There will be no down field blocking.

RULE 7. BALL CARRIERS

- Article 1.** The ball carrier must not deliberately run or drive into a defensive player.
- Article 2.** The ball carrier will not protect his flags by using his hands, arm or head.

RULE 8. CENTER SNAP

- Article 1.** A center snap must be between the centers legs.
- Article 2.** If the snap hits the ground before it reaches the backfield man, it is ruled dead at the spot it hits the ground..

RULE 9. FUMBLE RULE

- Article 1.** A fumble at anytime will be declared a dead ball and belongs to the team last in possession and at the spot where it hits the ground.
- Article 2.** A ball that is fumbled and goes beyond the line to gain will be brought back and marked at the point of the fumble.
- Article 3.** A ball that is fumbled in the end zone by a trapped offensive player, will count as an automatic safety.
- Article 4.** A fumbled ball by the offensive team when moving toward the goal, and rolls into the defensive end zone, will count as a touchback.

RULE 10. DEAD BALL

- Article 1.** When a ball touches the ground at anytime, the ball will be declared dead.

Dead Ball Situations:

- A. In **Flag Football:** when a player's flag is pulled. **Touch Football:** when a player has been tagged.
- B. When a player's body touches the ground.
- C. In **Flag Football:** any time a runner or pass receiver's flag is missing.
- D. When a ball touches the ground by reason of a **Fumble** or center snap.
- E. If a ball goes out of bounds for any reason.
- F. An incomplete pass
- G. After a touchdown, safety or touchback.
- H. Change of possession.

RULE 11. PASSING

- Article 1.** Passing is done from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Article 2.** Anyone behind the line of scrimmage is an eligible passer.
- Article 3.** Double passing is permitted as long as the first pass is completed behind the line of scrimmage and the second pass is thrown from behind the line of scrimmage. This includes the lateral pass.

RULE 12. RECEIVING

- Article 1.** All players are eligible pass receivers.
- Article 2.** Receivers may catch the ball even if they go out of bounds, or the end zone, as long as one foot is in bounds when they come down with the ball.

- Article 3.** If the receiver's feet come down simultaneously with one foot in and one foot out of bounds, the pass will be ruled incomplete.
- Article 4.** Two or more offensive players may touch a passed ball in succession resulting in a completion.

RULE 13. 36 POINT RULE

- Article 1.** If a team is ahead by a 36 point differential by halftime, the game will be terminated. If at any time a team reaches this differential in the second half, the game will be terminated.
- Article 2.** The 36 point rule also applies to **Tournament** and **Championship** games.

RULE 14. TOURNAMENTS

- Article 1.** An official AYF tournament will consist of 4 or more teams.
- Article 2.** All tournament teams must have an Official AYF Roster on file with National Headquarters. Only players listed on the rosters will be allowed to play.
- Article 3.** All tournament teams must be official members of AYF.
- Article 4.** AYF tournaments can be double-elimination. This will be decided by the Tournament Director and the host site.
- Article 5.** Size of fields will be decided by the Tournament Director and the host site.
- Article 6.** Trophies will be awarded to the top 4 teams. Certificates will be awarded to others.
- Article 7.** Host site will be responsible for game officials, housing (if needed), awards and footballs.

RULE 15. PENALTIES

- Article 1.** Penalties are determined according to the size of the field. Penalties for the 100-yard field will be the standard 15, 10 and 5 yards. Penalties for the 80-yard field will be 10 and 5 yards.
- Article 2.** Major penalties (15 or 10 yards) are:
Tackling
- A. Fighting (also ejection if official deems it to be serious enough).
 - B. Ball carrier illegally using his hands to protect his flags.
 - C. Offensive holding.
 - D. Leaving feet to block.
 - E. Grabbing or holding a ball carrier.
 - F. Illegal blocking (body, butt, roll below the waist downfield).
 - G. Unnecessary roughness.
 - H. Pulling flags of players other than ball carrier.
 - I. Offensive pass interference.
 - J. Defensive pass interference.
 - K. Defensive player pushing ball carrier out of bounds.
 - L. Illegal use of hands by blocker.
 - M. Disqualified players re-entering the game.
 - N. Unsportsmanlike conduct on players and bench area.
- Article 3.** Minor Penalties (5 yards) are:
- 1. All offside plays.
 - 2. Illegal motion.
 - 3. Delay of game.
 - 4. Wearing flags illegally.
 - 5. Recovering a fumble.
 - 6. Illegal substitution.
 - 7. Illegal use of hands on defense.
 - 8. Defensive holding.
 - 9. More than 8 men on the field.
 - 10. Illegal snap.

RULE 16. PROTESTS

- Article 1.** The local league will decide and rule on all protests.
- Article 2.** A protest can only be made if it is a matter of rules interpretations, or, if the eligibility of a player is involved.
- Article 3.** The judgment of a game official cannot be protested.