



# Flag Football

## Purpose

The purpose of the league run by Wellington Recreation is to provide kids with the opportunity for learning and fun in a safe environment. Friendly competition and sportsmanship will be emphasized. Our main goal is for all participants (players, coaches, parents, etc.) to have fun while building athletics, team, and social skills.

### 1. Field, Players, and Equipment

#### a. The Field:

- i. Size: 60 yards (goal to goal) x 40 yards wide, 10-yard end zones. The playing field will be divided into four equal zones.

#### b. The Players:

- i. No team may play without a certified coach present on the playing field.
- ii. All ages play 5v5. If the opposing team has fewer than five players, they may borrow players from the other team to make the sides equal.
- iii. Each player will have equal playing time if they attend practices.
- iv. Each player will play both offense and defense.
- v. Players will play every position on offense every game.
- vi. Any number of substitutions may enter the game for either team when the ball is dead.
- vii. Players must be on the Town of Wellington's official roster and may not participate if they have not registered for the sport through the Parks and Recreation department/website.

#### c. The Equipment:

- i. The ball is a pee-wee size ball for 8u and junior size for 12u, provided by Wellington Recreation.
- ii. All participants wear official flag belts provided by Wellington Recreation. Flags are worn on the sides and in a manner that keeps it clear of any obstructions. **Shirts must be tucked in and not hanging over the flags.** Officials may whistle a ball carrier down immediately for deliberately placing flags in a non-legal position.
- iii. Player's attire
  1. Athletic shoes (no metal spikes).
  2. Protective mouthpiece is optional but highly recommended.
  3. No Jewelry.
  4. Official Recreation Jersey worn outside of any other clothing.
  5. Headwear must be soft and without any hard brims (no helmets/ball caps, etc.)
- iv. **Hoods on coats or other apparel must be tucked in and not hanging out.**
- v. Pads and safety equipment or attire deemed by the official to be unsafe are illegal.



## 2.) The Game:

### d. Timing

- i. The game consists of two halves, each 25 minutes in length. Half time shall be 5 minutes in length.
- ii. Each team is allowed two time-outs per half. Each time-out will be one minute in length.
- iii. Time runs continuously for each half except for legal time outs or on field injuries. If no official is present, the home team shall designate a non-coach to be the official timekeeper. Approximately two minutes before the end of each half, the official timekeeper calls out a two-minute warning.
- iv. Game clock starts when one of the following occurs:
  1. Ball is hiked to start the game.
  2. Ball is hiked following a time-out.
  3. Ball is hiked following an on-field injury.
  4. At the direction of the official after any stoppage of time.
  5. If time for any period expires during a down, play shall continue until the end of the down.

### e. Scoring

- i. A touchdown counts as six points. A touchdown shall be scored when, in an upright position, the ball carriers feet break the plane of the goal line.
- ii. A point after the touchdown attempt (PAT) is awarded after a touchdown is scored. The defensive team cannot score on a PAT attempt. The PAT attempt shall consist of one offensive play from the following options.
  1. Five-yard line for a 1-point conversion (run or pass).
  2. Ten-yard line for a 2-point conversion (run or pass).
- iii. Safety counts as two points.
  1. A safety is scored when the ball is legally in possession of a player becomes dead behind their own goal line, provided the impetus which sent the ball into the end zone was given by a member of their own team. Points are awarded to the opposing team, and the team awarded points receives the ball on their 10-yard line.
  2. If a team commits a foul in the end zone where the spot of enforcement is designated as the spot of the foul, it will be declared a safety.  
*Exception – When a player intercepts a forward pass between their five-yard line and their goal line and their momentum carries them into the end zone where the ball becomes dead, the ball will belong to the receiving team at the spot of the catch or reception.*
- iv. If at any point a team is up by 28 points or more, the score will no longer be kept but play will continue until the regular time is over.
  1. If the team up by 28 points scores again, no extra point attempts will be awarded. The opposing team is awarded the ball after the touchdown.



- f. Start of the game
  - i. A coin toss will determine which team will have their choice of starting with the ball or deferring to start the second half with the ball. The team who did not win the coin toss chooses the direction. White team captain shall call the coin toss.
  - ii. Teams start with the ball on their own ten (10) yard line.
- g. Touchback
  - i. An interception downed in the end zone comes out to the 10-yard line.
- h. Regular Play
  - i. Teams on offense have four (4) downs to advance the ball to the next half or endzone. A new set of four (4) downs shall be awarded upon advancement into the other half. If after four (4) consecutive downs the spot of the ball is not sufficient to award a new set of downs or a touchdown, possession is awarded to the defense.
  - ii. The offensive team can concede on 4<sup>th</sup> down, therefore possession of the ball flips to the opposing team and they will get ball at their own 10-yard line.
    - 1. If the offensive team decides to attempt the 4<sup>th</sup> down try, and fails, the opposing team will take over at the spot of the ball.
  - iii. Bean Bag markers will be utilized to mark the line of scrimmage and a seven (7) yard encroachment zone. (Marked by an official).
  - iv. Teams shall trade end zones defended after halftime break.
  - v. Quarterback is defined as a player, different from the snapper, receiving the ball from the player snapping the ball.
  - vi. Only five players per team are allowed on the field during a play.
- i. Blocking
  - i. Screen blocking shall take place without contact. The blockers shall have their hands and arms behind their backs.
  - ii. A screen blocker cannot use their hands, arms, elbows, legs, or body to initiate contact.
  - iii. The defense must go around the offensive blocker.
  - iv. The offensive blocker cannot lean or use hips to block a defensive player.
  - v. **Downfield blocking is illegal.** Any offensive player who continues running AND impedes the progress of a defensive player who is attempting to pull the ball carrier's flag will be called for illegal blocking.
- j. The Line of Scrimmage & Offense
  - i. Advancing the Ball: To advance the ball after snap, the team may run with it or pass it.
  - ii. The offense must hike the ball into play within forty-five (45) seconds from the time of the official places the ball on the line of scrimmage.
  - iii. All players on the offensive team must remain stationary for at least one second before the ball is snapped.
  - iv. One person may start in motion, but this person cannot be on the line of scrimmage and their motion must be moving away from, or parallel to, the line of scrimmage. Illegal Motion penalty is 5-yards.

- v. On a shift play, all players of the offensive team must come to a complete stop and remain motionless in a legal position for at least one full second before the ball is snapped. An illegal shift carries a 10-yard penalty.
  - vi. The person hiking the ball must:
    1. Hike between the legs, with the snapper facing the defense, to a teammate behind the line of scrimmage or on one knee facing either sideline.
    2. Transfer the ball fully to the teammate receiving the ball.
    3. The “center sneak” is an illegal play.
  - vii. The offense and defense cannot enter or break the plane of the neutral zone until the ball is hiked. An infraction of this rule is offsides. Any player breaking or lining-up in the neutral zone will be flagged (play is called dead for ANY offsides infraction by the offense). This penalty cannot be declined. Penalty results in 10-yards.
  - viii. At least one offensive player must be on the line of scrimmage.
  - ix. Any number of players may line up on the line of scrimmage defensively (no requirements).
  - x. Should a player lose their flag belt legally or illegally during a down and then should that player gain possession of a live ball, that player will be down when a legal tag (one hand touched by the defense) is made.
- k. Fumbles
- i. If a ball carrier drops the ball and it hits the ground, it is dead at the spot. The team who fumbles the ball keeps possession and advances to the next down. If fumble occurs on fourth down and the spot is not sufficient to award a first down, then possession is awarded to the defense.
  - ii. Fumbles on Quarterback/Center exchange:
    1. Play is blown dead and down is replayed if Quarterback is directly under the center.
    2. If the Quarterback is in shotgun, play continues if the ball lands in front of the Quarterback. If the ball is past the Quarterback, then the ball is blown dead and play resumes as if a fumble occurred.
- l. Running Plays
- i. The Quarterback cannot run with the ball. He must pass the ball forward or hand it off behind the line of scrimmage. Play is dead when the Quarterback advances past the line of scrimmage.
  - ii. The ball carrier may run in any direction, hand off, or lateral anywhere on the field. All handoffs or laterals must be to the rear of the ball carrier beyond the line of scrimmage. If dropped, the ball is dead at the spot (fumble).
  - iii. Stiff-arms or covering the flags in any manner is illegal (Flag Guarding). Play is blown dead.
  - iv. No player may jump, leap, or hurdle while in possession of the ball, especially at goal line and first down situations. If this occurs, the ball will be considered dead automatically and there will be a loss of down. Officials will not call jumping over a



players lying on the ground, Quarterbacks jumping to get the ball over defenders, or related situations.

- v. Spinning is allowed but the ball carrier cannot lose contact with the ground.
- vi. In running, the ball carrier must attempt to avoid tacklers. Deliberate charging into a defensive player, with or without head down is illegal. "Brushing" or other unavoidable contact is not willful charging.
- vii. The "center sneak" is an illegal play.

m. Passing Plays

- i. Every player is eligible to catch a forward pass. The quarterback is eligible to catch a forward pass after he has handed it off.
- ii. A catch is considered legal when a player gains possession of the ball with at least one foot inbounds.
- iii. For a defensive player to be eligible to cross the line of scrimmage before a handoff or forward pass, the player shall line up beyond the seven-yard zone. The seven-yard zone shall be marked by the official with a bean bag.
- iv. If a legal catch is not made, the ball is dead and returns to the previous line of scrimmage.
- v. If a simultaneous catch takes place, the ball is dead and belongs to the offensive team.
- vi. Lateral (backward) passes, overhand or underhand, may be made anywhere on the field and there is no limit to the number that may be attempted in a play or down.
- vii. No player may hand the ball off forward of their position on the field to another teammate unless both players are behind the line of scrimmage and before the ball goes forward to the line of scrimmage.
- viii. A ball which falls from the passer's hand shall be judged accordingly to the following:
  - 1. If there is any forward motion by the arm, the ball is ruled an incomplete forward pass and returned to the line of scrimmage.
  - 2. If there is no forward motion, the ball is ruled a fumble and dead at the spot where the ball touches the ground.
- ix. Intentional grounding occurs when there is no receiver in the vicinity of a thrown ball.
- x. A "double pass" is illegal. (A double pass means two forward passes.)
- xi. Incomplete forward passes behind the goal line will not be considered touchbacks.
- xii. A pass is illegal if the passer has crossed the line of scrimmage or if it is the second forward pass in the same play.

n. Pass Interference

- i. No contact with the receiver is allowed unless it is a simultaneous effort by both players to get the ball. If the ball is in the air, any contact, offensive or defensive, shall be called Pass Interference.
- ii. Defensive Pass Interference Penalty: Automatic first down. 10-yard penalty



- iii. Defensive Pass Interference in the end zone shall result in the ball being placed at the 1-yard line, automatic first down.
- iv. Intentionally de-flagging an opponent before they have possession of the ball shall result in one of the following:
  - 1. If a legal catch is made by player de-flagged, play continues, and player is marked down by 1-hand touch from an opponent.
  - 2. If a pass is incomplete, pass interference shall be called against the offending team.
- o. Conduct & Roughness
  - i. Tackling- If the field supervisor or referee witnesses tackling. The first time will be a 10-yard penalty. 2 or more will result in the player sitting out for five (5) minutes.
  - ii. If the field supervisor or referee witnesses any acts of elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will have to sit out for five (5) minutes.
- p. Penalties
  - i. Defense:
    - 1. Offside – Five (5) yards and an automatic first down.
    - 2. Interference – Automatic first down. 10-yard penalty
    - 3. Illegal contact (holding, contact on the ball carrier, etc.) – Ten (10) yards and an automatic first down.
    - 4. Illegal flag pull (before receiver has the ball) – Ten (10) yards from the spot of the foul and an automatic first down.
    - 5. Illegal rushing (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker) – Five (5) yards and an automatic first down.
  - ii. Offense:
    - 1. Illegal Motion (more than one person moving, false start, etc.) – Five (5) yards and a loss of down.
    - 2. Illegal forward pass (forward pass attempted beyond the line of scrimmage) – Five (5) yards and a loss of down.
    - 3. Offensive pass interference (illegal pick lay, pushing off/away a defender) – Ten (10) yards and a loss of down.
    - 4. Delay of game – Five (5) yards and a loss of down (if occurs during the second half of play, the clock is stopped until the next snap).
    - 5. Flag guarding – Ten (10) yards from the spot of the foul and a loss of down.
    - 6. Illegal screen block – Ten (10) yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.
    - 7. Illegal pitch (more than 1 pitch, lateral, or backward pass per play) – Five (5) yards and loss of down.
    - 8. Jumping – Ball is automatically called dead and a loss of down.
    - 9. Tackling- Refer to K-i



### Miscellaneous:

- Parents and spectators are encouraged to retrieve balls that go out of play to restart the game quickly.
- All players have a right to play every game and an equal amount of time if they have attended regular practices.
- Playing Conditions: Field Supervisor will determine if games will or will not be played. Game will be called when there is a safety concern.
- Opposing coaches and players should shake hands after each game.
- The Recreation Staff will make every effort to reschedule missed games. Make up games may not be played at the same time or days as regularly scheduled games.
- Participation awards, when given, shall be given to ALL players.
- Parents, coaches, non-playing players, and spectators should be there to enjoy and encourage the activity of the youngsters.
- All coaches and officials are volunteers and as such are not employees of the Town of Wellington.
- No alcoholic beverages or tobacco products will be allowed or used in the parks during games or practices.
- Foul language will not be tolerated by fans, participants, or coaches. All adults need to remember they are role models and need to be positive in their words and actions.
- A parent or fan that is loud, obnoxious, or disrupts the event will be asked to leave the premises and will be expected to comply immediately.
- Elastic Clause: The League Director shall have complete charge of the Youth Sports League. All situations not specifically covered by these rules shall be acted upon by the League Director and all actions by the League Director are final.
- The League Director reserves the right to change or amend any of the rules or regulations contained in this manual. Any questions concerning Youth Sports should be directed to:

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