

# ***Wrentham Recreation Flag Football Rules 2026***

This document is designed to keep the league organized and help guide you for a successful season. The purpose of the document is to set the proper expectation of the coaches so that we are all operating under the same guidelines.

## **4 Important Rules:**

**Rule #1 – Have Fun:** Keep in mind this a recreational league developed for the kids to have fun and learn some fundamental skills of football.

**Rule #2 – Everybody Plays: NO EXCEPTIONS.** Flag football was designed to make it easier for every child to have a role in the teams' success. While size and skill certainly will come into play when the action starts, all players will be taught and will try every position.

**Rule #3 – Let the Kids Play:** While teaching football skills, strategies are important, but we need to keep lessons as simple as possible for the level of play. As players grasp the basics feel free to move on to more advanced plays. Overloading young players with too much information too early can cause confusion.

**Rule #4 – Sportsmanship:** Learning to play the game is one aspect, but teaching the players to be a good sport is a very valuable skill. Shaking hands with the other team, thanking the ref, applauding good plays by both teams and treating referees/coaches with respect will be a big focus in this league.

Coaches should arrive 20 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the game.

## **What to do when you show up?**

1. Have players put their flag belts on when they arrive – then conduct warm up drills
2. The referees will arrive 5 minutes before game time to inspect ALL your players for: a mouth guard, game jersey, flag belt, and 2 flags.
3. **Required/Recommended Equipment:**  
All players must wear a protective mouthpiece – there are no exceptions  
Game jerseys must be worn during play  
Flag belt with 2 flags  
Cleats are recommended but not required – no metals spikes may be worn.

## **Start of the Game**

1. The HORN will be blown 2 minutes prior to the scheduled game start time. At that time, send two players to midfield. There they will meet the referee and do a coin toss to determine who starts with possession of the ball. Games start promptly at the scheduled time so please be prepared.
2. Once the coin flip is completed get your players on the field and begin the game. It will be a 27-minute running clock.
3. The next horn you will hear will be halftime. Take a 3-minute break to go over plays/drinks/rest.
4. Teams will switch direction and whoever started the game with the ball will now play defense.

### **Team Make Up**

1. Each team will have 7-12 players depending on grade level
2. Gr K-1 and Gr 2-3 will play 6 v 6 | Gr 4-5 and Gr 6,7,8 will play 5 v 5
3. If any team has less than the required number of players, the opposing team can supply their opponent with players.
4. If both teams can only field 5 then that game will be played 5 vs. 5 or even 4 vs. 4 if necessary

### **Field Size / Location**

The fields have been lined at roughly 30-yards wide and 60-yards long with an additional 5-yards in each end zone.

Teams must field no more than 5 or 6 players at a time on the field, depending on age group

### **Starting the Game**

- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown.
- If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- If the offense fails to cross midfield, they can choose to A: “punt” on 4<sup>th</sup> down. If they “punt” the opposing team takes possession on the 5-yard line. If they choose to “B: Play on 4<sup>th</sup> down, they run a play. If they don’t cross mid-field, the other team takes possession where the play ends. If they cross mid-field, they get three (3) downs to try and score. The team must “announce” whether to “punt” or “play” on 4<sup>th</sup> down and can not change their decision once announced.
- Teams change sides after the first 27-minute half and the team that started the game on defense starts on offense. The clock will stop for 3 minutes for a half time break.

### **Run Time**

- Games will be played to 54 minutes running time.
- Each time the ball is spotted a team has 30-seconds to snap the ball. (Gr K-1 has 45 seconds). Teams will receive one warning before a delay of game penalty is enforced.
- Each team has one 30-second time out per half.
- If a team is up on the ball and ready to hike prior to the last horn ending the game they can run their last play.

### **Running**

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball, except when the ball is handed off or lateraled to the quarterback by an offensive player after the direct snap to the quarterback.
- Direct handoff and pitches behind the line of scrimmage are permitted.
  - Offenses may use multiple handoffs.
- The player who takes the handoff/pitch can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage
- Once the ball is handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush

- Spinning and Juking are allowed but a player cannot leave their feet to avoid a defense player – NO DIVING
- Side snaps are illegal in the Gr 4-5 and Gr 6,7,8 divisions only.
- Center sneaks are illegal.
- “No Run Zones” are located 5 yards from the mid-field line and end zones. Once the ball has been spotted in these areas, no running plays are allowed, except in the Gr K-1 division.
- A defensive player may not attempt to strip the ball from the ball carrier.

### **Receiving**

- All players are eligible to receive a pass (including the QB if the ball has been handed off or pitched behind the line of scrimmage)
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time
- A player must have both feet in-bounds when making a reception
- Players are allowed to dive as part of an attempt to catch a pass.

### **Passing**

- All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Shovel passes are allowed.
- The quarterback has a 10-second “pass clock”. If a pass is not thrown within the 10-seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off or pitched, the 10 second rule no longer applies
- Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the spot where the flag is pulled. If an interception is downed in the end zone, it will be placed on the 5-yard line
- Interceptions can be run back for a touchdown during regular play
- An interception during extra point attempt will be blown dead and no extra point will be awarded
- Interceptions and failed 4<sup>th</sup> down attempts are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line.

### **Scoring**

- Once a team scores a touchdown they line up on the 5-yard line for an extra point attempt.

### **Play is ruled “dead” when**

- The center or quarterback fumbles the ball on the initial exchange. The referees will blow the whistle, and the ball is dead.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball play.
- Ball carriers’ flag is pulled – the ball is spotted where the ball carriers feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- Ball carrier steps out of bound.
- Touchdown or safety occurs.
- When the ball is fumbled.
- Ball carriers knee hits the ground.
- Ball carriers flag falls out.

\*\*\*There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground\*\*\*

### **Rushing the Quarterback**

All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 10 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, the 10-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.

***A special marker will be placed by the referee to designate the rush spot***

### **Sportsmanship / Roughing**

If the coaches or referees witness any acts of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blind blocking, or any unsportsmanlike conduct, the game will be stopped and the player may be ejected from the game.

**FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED**

Trash talking will not be tolerated. Coaches and referees have the right to determine trash talking. If trash talking occurs, that player may be ejected from the game.