



MOOSE JAW YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL OPERATING RULES 2018

The League shall be known as the Moose Jaw Youth Flag Football League and for the purpose of the Operating Rules shall be known as the League.

Player Attire

- Cleats are recommended and must be rubber (no metal tips)
- Before the beginning of each play, players' flags must be at the player's sides, properly attached and unobstructed by other clothing
- Jerseys must be tucked in at all times
- Shorts or pants must not be the same colour as the player's flags, nor can shorts or pants have vertical stripes the same colour as the player's flags
- For safety reasons, it is strongly recommended that pants/shorts do not have pockets
- Baseball caps, hats, sunglasses, watches and jewellery of any kind is not permitted on the field of play
- All coaches are responsible to make sure that players have the flags positioned correctly, jerseys tucked in and no loose parts of the belt are exposed that might be mistaken for a flag. This is a safety and fair play issue. Players in question will be ordered off the field if they can't fix the issue or if they disregard it
- **ALL PLAYERS MUST WEAR A MOUTH GUARD. THEY CANNOT PLAY WITHOUT ONE**

Field Dimensions and Markings

- Length: 60 yards (goal line to goal line); 40 yards (dead line to dead line)
- Width: 24 yards
- End Zones: 10 yards deep
- No-running zones: Must be marked 5 yards from each end zone
- Parents are designated to remain on the side of the field across from the team benches

Scoring

- Touchdown: 6 points
- Convert: 1 point (played from the 5 yard line)
- Convert: 2 points (played from the 10 yard line)
- Safety: 2 points
- A win constitutes 2 points, a tie 1 point and a loss 0 points
- Standings will be kept in the 10/11, 12/13, 14/15 and 16/17/18 Age Divisions only

NOTE: An interception returned to the opponent's end zone on a convert play by the defense will result in the defense scoring 2 points and gaining possession for the next series at their own 5 yard line. 2 points are awarded regardless if the offense went for a 1 or 2 point convert.

Number of Players

- Teams consist of 6 – 12 players (5 on the field at a time)
- Teams may play with a minimum of four (4) players
- If less than 4 players are available, the team should attempt to use a player from the next lower division. If this is not possible, teams are encouraged to play the game during the time slot by adjusting the rosters to even out the teams (share players). The team without enough players will forfeit points in the standings (if applicable)
- If a team has only 5 players, 1 pick-up player from the next lowest division can be used to provide rest and coaching opportunity for the original 5 players. If the team has 6+ players, pick-ups cannot be used
- Overage players will not be permitted to play in lower divisions

Timing/Overtime

- **Game length is 45 minutes** running time (2 halves – **first half is 20 minutes**, second half is **25 minutes**). The game time will remain the same even if a game starts late
- If the score remains tied at the end of regulation play, a tie will be awarded with each team receiving one point in the standings
- **PLAYOFFS/FINALS ONLY:** If the score is tied at the end of regulation time, teams move directly into overtime. A coin toss determines first possession of overtime. The team that wins the coin toss has the option to begin play on offense or defence and if they would like to go for 1 point from the opponent's 5 yard line or 2 points from the opponent's 10 yard line. If the first team attempts a 2 point convert and fails the second team has the option of going for a 1 point convert from the 5 yard line or a 2 point convert from the 10 yard line. If the team with first possession scores, the second team must match that score to continue the overtime period. If the first team does not score, the second team can win by scoring their convert. If neither team scores, overtime will continue until one team scores and the other is unable to convert their attempt. There will be no timeouts granted during the overtime period.
- After the ball is spotted by the official, the offense has 20 seconds to snap the ball
- **Each team has 1 x 60 second time out per half.** The clock stops during a time out. Time outs cannot be carried over to the second half
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion (injury)
- The teams will be given a 2 minute warning until the final 3 plays; 4 minutes before half time and 4 minutes before the end of the game
- There will be a halftime of 5 minutes between the first and second half
- The game cannot end on a defensive penalty
- If a defensive penalty is issued within the final three plays of either half of the game, the offense will not lose the current down and the down will be replayed. IE: If on the first play of the final 3 plays defensive pass interference is called, the result would be a spot foul and an automatic first down. It would also still be the first of 3 final plays
- Converts do not count towards the final 3 plays. IE: If a team scores a TD on the 1st play of the final 3 plays, the other team would then have 2 plays to score a TD and then have a convert attempt
- The Offense cannot down the ball during the final 3 plays of the game. One of the plays must be a pass if a 1st down is not obtained

Incidents and Accidents

All incidents/accidents whether they involve injury or not shall be reported to a member of the League Executive and the incident be logged and investigated. In the event that an injury is sustained, the well being of any individual must be of paramount importance to all those individuals carrying out their duties on behalf of the League.

The coach of the team at the time of an incident/accident, which results in an injury, must ensure that the player is given adequate first aid. The coach must notify the player's parents (if not present) of the nature of the incident/accident or injury at the earliest opportunity. The details of the incident/accident must be reported to the Chairperson within 24 hours of the incident/accident. The Chairperson, or a member of the League Executive will follow up with the Player's Parents within 24 hours of an accident resulting in an injury to ascertain the well being of the player.

Concussion Protocol

Any suspected head injury must result in the player being removed from the game or practice immediately. Coaches will be provided with a general overview of signs and symptoms of possible concussions and will be given resources to have for reference. If the player presents with signs and/or symptoms, it is recommended that the parent(s) or legal guardian take the child for a medical evaluation prior to the player returning to games or practices. The coach will be required to notify a League Executive about the incident and the League Executive will follow up with the parent(s) and/or legal guardian to determine future play. A signed medical document will be required for a player diagnosed with a concussion, to return to play.

IN PLAY RULES

FLAG FOOTBALL IS A NON-CONTACT SPORT. BLOCKING OR TACKLING IS NOT PERMITTED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES

Possession

- Before the start of the game, captains will gather and perform a rock/paper/scissors challenge to win the option of first possession or the choice of which end zone to defend. If the winning team elects to choose an end, the losing team will assume first possession. The losing team will have possession at the beginning of the second half
- There are no kickoffs
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 5 yard line and has 3 downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, a new set of 3 downs begins. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on their 5 yard line
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts it's drive from their 5 yard line
- An automatic first down by penalty will overrule the other requirements regarding 3 plays to make either a first down or score
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5 yard line
- The rusher will pick a side to the right or left of the bean bag (not on top of it)
- The center will line up on the opposite side of the rusher
- The offensive team must form a huddle before the first play following a change of possession. Failure to do so will result in an illegal procedure penalty
- The Offense must have a cadence. It must be at least 3 words. 6-7 ages should use down, set, hut. 8+ can use any cadence consisting of at least 3 words
- Teams change sides at half time
- ***One pass MUST be made for every new set of downs (i.e. Play #1 – run, play #2 – run, play # 3 must be a pass.)***

Running

- To start the play, the ball must be snapped between the legs of the center
- The center is the player who gives the ball to the quarterback via a snap. The center cannot receive a forward handoff back from the quarterback. The center can loop behind the quarterback and take a hand-off or pitch
- The quarterback is the player who receives the ball directly from the snap
- The quarterback cannot run with the ball past the line of scrimmage
- An offence may use multiple handoffs behind the line of scrimmage. Only backward or lateral handoffs are allowed
- Tosses or sweeps behind the line of scrimmage are allowed. Tosses or laterals beyond the line of scrimmage are not permitted. Once a player has possession of the ball beyond the line of scrimmage, any loss of possession will be blown dead by the official
- “No-running zones” are located 5 yards from each end zone. When the ball is on or inside the 5 yard line going towards the opponent’s end zone, the offense cannot use a running play to cross the line of scrimmage. If a run play occurs within the 5 yard no-run zone, the play will be blown dead and a loss of down will occur
- Any player who takes a handoff or pitch can throw the ball forward from behind the line of scrimmage, provided that the previous handoff or pitch was not made in a forward direction
- All defensive players are eligible to rush once the ball has been handed off, tossed or there is a play-action fake or fake handoff
- Spinning is allowed, but offensive players cannot jump or dive to avoid a defensive player. If the ball carrier jumps or dives, the play will be blown dead, - 5 yards from the LOS and LOD.
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s feet are when the flag is pulled
- A touchdown, convert or safety will be awarded when the ball carrier’s hips (not the football, itself) pass through the invisible vertical plane of the goal line.
- There are no fumble recoveries in flag football, with the exception of the quarterback at the snap. If the quarterback fumbles the ball at the snap, **ONLY** the quarterback can recover the ball and continue the play.
- All other fumbles will result in a dead ball at the spot of the fumble
- Any fumble by the offensive team in their own end zone other than a dropped ball during the initial exchange between the center and quarterback will result in a safety
- If the ball is snapped, pitched or rolls out of the end zone behind the goal line, a safety will be awarded

Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage)
- Prior to the snap, all players may be in motion in any direction, with the exception of the center
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception. (A receiver cannot return on to the playing field from an out of bounds position and be the first to touch the football)
- Once a player catches the ball and proceeds beyond the line of scrimmage he/she is no longer allowed to lateral or pass the ball
- Players may catch the ball while on their knees, back or side, however the play is blown dead and the ball is spotted where the catch was made
- Players are eligible to catch a pass if their flag has fallen off, however the play is blown dead and the ball is spotted where the catch was made
- If a player dives to catch a ball, the play is dead where the catch is made (where the players’ feet/body land at the time of the catch)
- If both an offensive and defensive player catch the ball simultaneously, the tie will always go to the offense

- A catch is completed when a player has caught the ball with at least one foot in bounds and has made a football move. If a player catches a ball, makes a football move and then falls to the ground or loses the ball it's still a completion.

Passing

- The quarterback has seven (7) seconds to throw the ball; he/she cannot cross the line of scrimmage with the ball
- Once the ball is handed off, tossed or there is a play-action fake or fake handoff, the seven (7) second rule is no longer in effect
- Any hand-off, pitch or throw that is made by the quarterback behind him/her and behind the line of scrimmage can also be handed-off, pitched, shovel passed (unlimited) as long as it occurs behind the player with the ball and behind the line of scrimmage. At any point during this action the ball can be pitched, shovel passed or thrown in a forward motion (once) as long as it occurs behind the line of scrimmage.
- Any ball being thrown, pitched or shovel passed in a forward motion is considered a forward pass and cannot be handed off, pitched or shovel passed again.

Dead Plays

- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball plays
- Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - Official blows the whistle
 - Ball carrier's flag is pulled or becomes illegal (**Note:** illegal means the flag is not in a position for the defense to pull it, or it falls off)
 - If the ball carrier's flag falls off or becomes illegal, the play will be whistled dead and the ball will be spotted at the spot where the flag fell off
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - A Touchdown or safety is scored
 - When any part of the ball carrier's body, other than a hand or foot touches the ground
 - Players are eligible to catch a pass if their flag has fallen off, but will be ruled down upon making the catch
 - When the ball is fumbled
 - When the ball is stripped – Note: Intentional stripping could result in an unsportsmanlike penalty

Defensive Rushing

- All defenders must be a minimum of one (1) yard away from the line of scrimmage prior to the start of the play
- A bean bag designates the rushing zone, 7 yards from the line of scrimmage and centered directly opposite the ball
- The Rusher will pick which side of the beanbag he wants to rush from. Only players starting 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage can rush the quarterback prior to a handoff, toss, play-action fake or fake handoff
- Any number of players can rush the quarterback
- A maximum of one defensive player is permitted to line up within the protected rush zone, which is a rectangular zone established 2 yards either side of the 7 yard marker and one yard behind the 7 yard marker. This player is entitled to an unobstructed path to rush the quarterback. Interference with a rusher who begins from the protected zone will result in an offensive penalty for rusher Interference
- If the Rusher advances to rush from the protected rushing zone, they must continue the rush once inside the 7 yard marker until the quarterback exchanges the ball with another player

- A rusher lined up outside the protected rush zone (more than 2 yards either side of the 7 yard marker, or more than 1 yard behind the marker) is not entitled to an unobstructed rush to the quarterback and may be interfered
- All defenders may rush once the ball is handed off or tossed, or if there is a play-action fake or fake handoff
- A rusher may block a pass but is prohibited from hitting the quarterback's throwing arm or hand at or above the quarterback's shoulder while attempting to make a pass. This includes the quarterback's natural follow-through motion or hitting the ball prior to its release from the quarterback's throwing hand (above the shoulder)

Interceptions

- Interceptions change the possession of the ball
- The defense can return interceptions
- On interceptions that occur and remain in the end zone, the ball will become dead and will result in the ball belonging to the intercepting team on their 5 yard line. Should an interception occur in the end zone and the ball carrier leave the end zone, the ball will belong to the intercepting team at the spot the ball becomes dead. However, should the ball carrier return to the end zone and be de-flagged or the ball be ruled dead, the result would be a safety for the other team

Tipped Passes

- Tipped passes are legal and can be advanced when caught

Bobbled Passes

- When a ball carrier deliberately throws the ball into the air, then catches it to avoid being flagged, the ball is dead immediately
- When the ball carrier accidentally loses control of the ball, then catches it without the ball being touched by another player, the play continues. If the ball carrier was flagged by an opponent after losing control of the ball, the play is considered dead when the ball carrier was flagged

Intentional Grounding Pass

- When the passer deliberately throws the ball out of bounds, or to an area where there is no receiver in an obvious attempt to avoid a loss of ground, the passer will be penalized for grounding
- If the passer throws it out of bounds but a receiver is in the area, no penalty will be called

Right of Way / Obstruction Rules

- **All players have a shared responsibility to minimize incidental contact and ensure safe play**
- Officials should respect good defensive positioning. This includes positioning established prior to the snap of the ball and effective zone play
- Once the play has started, defensive players must allow receivers the opportunity to run their routes and are prohibited from deliberately moving to obstruct the path of a moving receiver
- It is up to the ball carrier to control his/her momentum and direction to avoid contact with defensive players
- Offensive players are prohibited from deliberately charging or "running through" defenders who have pre-positioned themselves prior to the start of the play, or who have, through pursuit or zone positioning, established themselves ahead of the offensive player's intended path
- Defensive players who establish a position ahead of the ball carrier's path are expected to make every attempt to pull the ball carrier's flag. Purely obstructive defensive positioning made with the intent of inducing contact and/or drawing an offensive penalty is prohibited and will result in a defensive penalty for unnecessary roughness
- Defenders must be allowed a clear path to the player carrying the ball. Offensive players without possession of the ball are prohibited from lining up or moving into stalemated positions to act as

blockers or move collectively as a “wall” in order to obstruct defensive players from reaching the ball carrier

- Pick plays are prohibited. A pick play is an illegal play in which an offensive player(s) attempts to impede the progress of a defender in order to allow a teammate to get open for a pass or receive a hand-off or pitch. It also includes the intentional obstruction of a rusher by the quarterback during a hand-off or toss to another offensive player
- Should two or more opposing players collide while attempting to catch a pass, a penalty will not necessarily be called provided that no interference took place and the players involved were making a legitimate attempt to play the ball. While discouraged, such contact should be considered incidental

Sportsmanship

- **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED**
- Acts of flagrant contact (tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any physically unsportsmanlike act) will result in a 15 yard Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty. Depending on the severity of the infraction, offending players may also be ejected from the game at the referee’s discretion
- Trash talking and taunting is illegal. Trash talk and taunting includes directed profanity or talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, coaches or spectators. Team(s) guilty of Taunting will be penalized 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct and the individuals responsible may be subject to ejection at the referee’s discretion
- Deliberate questioning of referee’s calls may be penalized at the referee’s discretion
- Any physical or verbal abuse of a referee by a player, coach or spectator will result in a 15 yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and an immediate ejection of the offending party from the game. Coaches and players guilty of this offense will be subject to disciplinary review by the League Executive, the result of which may include suspension or expulsion from the League
- In the event that parents are asked to leave the field for inappropriate behaviour, the coach will be expected to assist the referees if the parents are unwilling to leave. If the parents persist and do not leave the field, the team that the parents are sided with will forfeit the game
- Once a flag is pulled, the defensive player should drop the flag at the spot at which it was pulled or hold the flag above his/her head. Intentionally throwing the flag at players, slamming them into the ground or away from the spot is considered poor flag etiquette and will result in a 15 yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty

Suspensions and Appeals

If any member feels that they have a grievance, or that the League Policies, Rules or Codes of Conduct have been broken, they should follow the procedures below:

- Report the matter to a member of the Executive Committee in writing. The report should include:
 - Details of what, when and where the occurrence took place
 - Any witness statement and names
 - Details of any former complaints made about the incident
 - A preference for a solution to the incident
- The Executive Committee will sit for any hearings that are required, to facilitate arbitration and conflict resolution
- The Executive Committee will have the power to:
 - Warn as to future conduct
 - Suspend from membership
 - Remove from membership any person found to have broken the League's Policies or Code of Conduct

Disciplinary Procedure

Moose Jaw Youth Flag Football will adhere to the Football Canada Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct for Managers, Coaches, Players, Team Officials, Parents and Spectators. The Football Canada Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct can be found at <http://footballcanada.com/about/policies/code-of-ethics-and-code-of-conduct/>

The disciplinary procedure is in place to ensure that members of the League who persistently fail to meet the agreed expectations are dealt with in a fair and open manner.

PENALTIES

- Penalties will be 5 yards, 15 yards and spot fouls.
- Penalties will not exceed half the distance to the opposing team's goal line from the line of scrimmage
- Referees determine if incidental contact is a normal part of the play or if roughing should be called
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage except for flag guarding, jumping, diving, defensive pass interference, intentional grounding and illegal flag pull
- Only the team captain may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines the penalty
- If the offense and defense are both penalized with two penalties that are of the same distance, the down will be repeated
- If the offense and defense are both penalized, but one side is penalized with a 15 yard penalty, the difference between the penalties will be assessed and the down will be repeated

Offensive Penalties

- 5 yards and Loss of Down

- Illegal Forward Pass – when an offensive is attempting to throw a pass after they have passed the LOS or a player receives a forward hand off and attempts to throw a pass. **Throw the flag and whistle the play dead**
- Offensive Pass Interference – illegally preventing a defender from catching the ball. **Throw the flag but allow the play to continue**
- 7 sec pass – the quarterback has 7 seconds to throw the ball if play action does not occur. **Throw the flag and whistle the play dead**
- Illegal Contact – holding, blocking, pick play, pushing off/away defender. **Throw the flag but allow the play to continue**
- Illegal Run Play – if the offense runs the ball inside the 5 yard no rush zone or 3 times in a row without a 1st down. **Once the ball crosses the LOS, throw the flag and whistle the play dead**

- 5 yards and Down Repeated

- No Cadence by the Quarterback - silent snap or less than 3 words. **Throw the flag and whistle the play dead**
- Offside – if a player goes across the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped. **If the player is more than 2 yards offside, throw the flag and whistle the play dead. If the player is less than 2 yards offside, throw the flag but allow the play to continue**
- Substitution Fouls – i.e. six players on the field; player enters field during the snap of the ball. **Throw the flag and whistle the play dead**
- Delay of Game – inability to snap the ball before the 20 second play clock expires. **Throw the flag and whistle the play dead**

- Illegal Snap – a snap not made between the legs of the center to the quarterback or a “balked” snap (the ball must be placed on the ground). **Throw the flag and whistle the play dead**
- Rusher Interference – it is illegal for a receiver, running back or center to run a pattern that interferes with a rusher who is at a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage and who begins rushing within 2 yards either side of the 7 yard rushing bean bag marker. **Throw the flag but allow the play to continue**
- Player Out of Bounds – if a player leaves the field of play, comes back into the field of play and is the 1st one to touch the ball. **Throw the flag and whistle the play dead**

- 5 yards from the Spot of Foul and Loss of Down

- Flag Guarding – using hands, arms, elbows or the ball to intentionally block the defender from pulling the flag
Note: Stiff arming a defender is a form of flag guarding and may also result in an unnecessary roughness penalty at the referee’s discretion. **Throw the flag and whistle the play dead**
- Diving or Jumping – if a player dives or jumps to avoid a flag pull or get the ball across the goal line. **Throw the flag and whistle the play dead**

- 15 Yards and a Loss of Down

- Unsportsmanlike Conduct – intentional physical misconduct, verbal abuse, taunting. **Throw the flag and whistle the play dead**
- Unnecessary Roughness – charging. **Throw the flag and whistle the play dead**

Spot Foul and Loss of Down

- Intentional Grounding - When the passer deliberately throws the ball out of bounds, or to an area where there is no receiver in an obvious attempt to avoid a loss of ground, the passer will be penalized for grounding. If the passer throws it out of bounds but a receiver is in the area, no penalty will be called. **Throw the flag and whistle the play dead**

Defensive Penalties

+ 5 Yards and Automatic first down for the offence

- Offside – occurs when a player is less than 1 yard from the LOS at the snap of the ball. **Throw the flag but allow the play to continue**
- Illegal Contact – holding, blocking, obstructing the receiver. **Throw the flag but allow the play to continue**
- Illegal Rush – occurs when a rusher is inside the minimum 7 yard rushing distance before the ball is snapped when attempting to rush the quarterback. It is also illegal rush if the rusher starts the rush but then stops and drops into coverage. **Note:** If the rusher goes back to the 7 yard rush bag and then continues his rush no penalty will be called. **Throw the flag but allow the play to continue**

+ 5 Yards and down repeated

- Disconcerting Signals – sounds or signals intended to simulate or disrupt offensive signals prior to the snap. **Throw the flag but allow the play to continue**
- Substitution Fouls – i.e. 6 players on the field before the snap of the ball. **Throw the flag but allow the play to continue**

+ 15 Yards and automatic first down

- Unsportsmanlike Conduct – intentional physical misconduct, verbal abuse, taunting unnecessary roughness. **Throw the flag and whistle the play dead**
- Roughing the Passer – hitting the quarterback’s throwing arm or hand at or above the quarterback’s shoulder while attempting to make a pass. This includes the quarterback’s natural follow-through

motion or hitting the ball prior to its release from the quarterback's throwing hand (above the shoulder). **Throw the flag but allow the play to continue**

Spot Foul and automatic first down

- Defensive Pass Interference – illegally preventing a receiver from catching the ball. **Throw the flag but allow the play to continue**

Spot Foul, + 5 yards and automatic first down

- Illegal Flag Pull – occurs when a defensive player pulls an offensive player's flag with intention to cause a dead ball or making the receiver ineligible for a catch. **Throw the flag and whistle the play dead**