

MOOSE JAW YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE

RULES 2026

Spectator & Player Guidelines

- Sunflower seeds are NOT permitted on the field
- Dogs are not permitted on the football field
- Pick up all garbage
- Parking:
 - Do not park at or block Co-op store/Cardlock
 - Do not park at the north corner (by the score clock)
 - Parking is available in the space west of the Cardlock

Player Attire

- Cleats are strongly 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
- Watches and jewelry are not permitted during play
- Sunglasses can be worn
- Soft headgear, including religious headdresses that are securely fastened and do not include metal or hard plastic that could be harmful to participants (standard brim hats can be worn backwards only)
- All coaches are responsible to make sure players have flags positioned correctly, jerseys tucked in and no loose belt parts 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 it or if they disregard it

MOUTHGUARDS ARE HIGHLY RECOMMENDED BUT IT IS UP TO THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF THE PLAYER.

Field Dimensions and Markings

- Length: 70 yards
- Width: 25 yards
- End Zones: 10 yards deep
- No-running zones: Must be marked 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of mid-field
- Parents are designated to remain on the side of the field across from the teams

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, 16/17/18 Age Divisions

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 8 – 12 players (5 on the field at a time)
- Teams may play with a minimum of 4 players
- If less than 4 players are available, the teams should still try and play a game during the time slot by adjusting the rosters to even out the teams. The team without enough players will forfeit points in the standings (if applicable)
- Teams that have 4 players can play will pick-up players from the division below. If the team has 5 players, 1 pick-up player can be used to provide rest for the original 5 players. If the team has 6+ players pick-ups cannot be used

Possession

- Before the start of the game, captains will gather and perform a rock, paper, scissors challenge. The winner of the challenge shall choose if they would like to start with the ball or choose a side (if it's windy). In the second half it flips. This allows each team to get the ball and the wind (if it's windy) each game.

Length of Games

- Game length is 45 minutes running time (1st half 20 minutes, 2nd half 25 minutes and a 5 minute half time). Game running time remains 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
- At the 4 minute mark of each half, the officials will tell the teams that 2 minutes remain until the final 3 plays

- When the last play finishes and the clock is under 2 minutes, the clock will be stopped and 3 plays will remain
- If the defense commits a penalty in the final 3 plays, the offense will not lose a play because of the penalty

Overtime (Playoffs only)

- Overtime will start with rock, paper scissors. The winner will choose to start on offense, defense or choose the end for the entire overtime period(s). The loser will choose from one of the remaining options
- The first period shall consist of 2 series with each team putting the ball in play by a snap at the midfield line for one series of downs (no first down at middle). Should the defense score during the first series, other than on the try, then the extra period is over
- Each team retains the ball during its series until it scores (including try downs for 1 or 2 points) or exhausts its series of downs. The ball remains alive after a change of team possession until it is declared dead
- If after the first period (with 2 series including tries) the score is still tied, the second and following periods will consist of series with each team playing a 1-point try from the 5-yard line. The overtime ends when the score after a period is no longer a tie or the defense scores during the first series of a period
- For the second period, the team's bench who is furthest away from the end chosen may elect to move their bench to the opposite side of the field and closer down to that end.
- The team scoring the greater number of points during overtime shall be declared the winner
- No charged team timeouts are allowed during overtime
- Starting from the first period, the order in which each team takes possession for following series will 'snake'
- (Team A -> Team B, Team B -> Team A, Team A -> Team B, etc.)" In the event of a tied game unless otherwise noted on league or tournament regulations, overtime will be played. The period between the end of the game and the start of the overtime halves will be 2 minutes

Play Clock / Timeouts

- After the ball is spotted by the official, the offense has 25 seconds to snap the ball
- Each team has 2 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, penalty clarification/discussion)
- The teams will be given a 2-minute warning until the final 3 plays. This will come with 4 minutes remaining before the end of each half
- There will be a halftime of 5 minutes
- The game cannot end on a defensive penalty

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

Moose Jaw Youth Flag Football follows the 2024 Canadian Amateur Flag Football Rule Book with some modifications from Regina Youth Flag Football and ones we feel improve the game:

Possession

- There are no fumble recoveries in flag football, except for the quarterback at the snap of the ball. If the quarterback fumbles the ball at the snap, ONLY the quarterback can recover the ball and continue the play
- The offense cannot down the final 3 plays of the game if it's a one game score. One of the plays must be a pass if a first down is not gained

Sportsmanship

- 16/17/18 division will be allowed to celebrate as long as it is not directed at a player or coach. If problems arise, celebrations will be removed

Pro Clock

- The Pro Clock will not be used in the final 2 minutes before half and at the end of the game

IN PLAY RULES

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

- There are no kickoffs
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5 yard line and has 4 downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has 3 downs to score a touchdown. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield after 3rd down and elect to 'punt' on 4th down, possession of the ball changes and the opposing team will start a new possession from its own 5 yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross midfield, the opposing team will start a new possession from the spot where 4th down ended
- Any time there is a 'punt' or 'play' decision on 4th down, the referee will ask the offense's head coach to declare 'punt or play'. The coach must make an immediate decision or risk a delay of game penalty
- Teams may use a timeout to change the declaration of 'play' at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock
- After crossing midfield, if the offense fails to score on 3rd down, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts at its 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
- If an official inadvertently blows their whistle, the official will give the affected team the option to let the play stand or repeat it. If the whistle blows inadvertently after an interception and the intercepting team is most affected (regardless of the time training on the clock), they can scrimmage the ball from the spot of the early whistle
- Teams change sides at half time
- One pass must be made for every 3 plays of possession. Meaning if play #1 - run, play #2 - run, play #3 must be a pass (exception is 14+ age groups)
- Any given player can only score 3 offensive touchdowns per game (exception is 14+ age groups). If a player who has scored 3 offensive touchdowns in the current game scores a 4th touchdown, the ball is brought back to the line of scrimmage and the down is replayed. The first time no penalty is applied if it occurs afterwards a 5-yard loss and LOD penalty will be applied (except in 14+ age groups)
- 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. The 6-7 & 8-9 age group should use down, set, hut. 10+ can use any cadence consisting of at least 2 words

Running

- To start the play, the ball must be snapped between the legs of the center
- The center can line up directly over the rush bag
- The center is the player who gives the ball to the quarterback via a snap. The center cannot take a direct handoff back from the quarterback
- 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 (forward, backward, or lateral handoffs)
- Forward handoffs are allowed behind the line of scrimmage. Any forward handoff or handoffs behind the QB, can be thrown by the player taking the ball
- Tosses or sweeps behind the line of scrimmage are allowed and can be then passed downfield. Downfield tosses or laterals are not permitted beyond the LOS. 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 midfield and 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 any handoff or pitch behind the QB can throw the ball forward from behind the line of scrimmage
- 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 and the ball will be placed at the spot the player left the ground. It can also result in a turnover on downs if this occurs on a 3rd down
- 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

Passing

- The quarterback has 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 7 second rule is no longer in effect
- Shovel passes are allowed
- Once a player catches a legal forward pass, they are no longer allowed to make another handoff, lateral, or second pass (except on the final play before half time and the last play of the game)

Dead Plays

- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball/play
- 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 of the ball is not allowed and could result in a defensive penalty

Defensive Rushing

- All defenders must be a minimum of 1 yard away from the line of scrimmage prior to the start of the play
- No rushing in the 6/7 division
- Only players lining up 7 yards behind the LOS can rush the passer
- A bean bag designates the rushing zone 7 yards from the line of scrimmage and centered directly opposite the ball
- The rusher can not line up directly over the rush bag, they must be 1 yard to either side of the rush bag
- If the rusher wants to be 'protected', the rusher must raise their hand prior to the play to identify themselves as the rusher
- If the rusher does not raise their hand, they will not be 'protected' during the rush
- If the rusher switches sides after declaring they are rushing, they are no longer 'protected'
- If the identified rusher is interfered with, it will result in an offensive rush interference penalty
- 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 leaves the end zone, the ball will belong to the intercepting team at the spot the ball becomes dead. If the intercepting team has their flag before they reach the 5 yard line, the ball will be spotted at the 5 yard line. 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. If the pass is an onside pass, the ball 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

Deliberate Grounding Pass

- When the passer deliberately throws the ball out of bounds, or an area where there is no receiver in an obvious attempt to avoid a loss of ground, the passer will be penalized for grounding (Spot of foul and loss of down)
- 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. It also includes the intentional obstruction of a rusher by the quarterback during a hand-off or toss to another offensive player

- Should 2 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 could result in a 15 yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty

PENALTIES

- Penalties are 5 yards with the exception of defensive pass interference and intentional grounding (spot foul), illegal flag pull (spot foul plus 5 yards), unnecessary roughness and unsportsmanlike conduct (15 yards)
- 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, defensive pass interference, intentional grounding and illegal flag pull
- Only the team captain and coach 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 2 penalties that are of the same distance, the down will be repeated
- If the offense and defense are both penalized, but 1 side is penalized for 5 yards and the other is penalized for 15 yards, 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 – a forward pass made beyond the line of scrimmage (throw the flag)
- Offensive Pass Interference – illegally preventing a defender from catching the ball (throw the flag)
- 7 sec pass – the quarterback has 7 seconds to throw the ball if play action does not occur (whistle dead/throw flag)
- Illegal contact – holding, blocking and pick plays (whistle dead/throw flag)
- 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 (whistle play dead/throw flag after the runner has crossed the LOS)

-5 yards, down repeated

- No cadence by the quarterback (silent snap or less than 3 words) (throw the flag)
- False Start / Offside – if a player lines up offside or moves across the LOS before the ball is snapped (if the player is multiple yards beyond the LOS before the ball is snapped whistle the play dead / everything else just throw the flag)
- Substitution fouls – i.e. six players on the field; player enters field during the snap of the ball (whistle dead/throw flag)
- Delay of game – inability to snap the ball before the 20 second play clock expires (whistle dead/throw flag)
- Illegal Snap – A snap not made between the legs of the center to the quarterback or a “balked” snap (whistle dead/throw flag)
- Player out of bounds – if a player goes out of bounds without interference, the player may not return to the field to re-join the play in progress (throw flag)
- 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)

-5 yards from the spot of foul and loss of down

- Flag Guarding – using hands, arms or elbows to intentionally block the defender from pulling the flag (whistle dead/throw 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
- Diving or Jumping – if a player dives or jumps to avoid a flag pull or get the ball across the goal line (whistle dead/throw flag)

-15 Yards and a loss of down

- Unsportsmanlike Conduct – intentional physical misconduct, verbal abuse, taunting (whistle dead/throw flag)
- Unnecessary Roughness – charging (whistle dead/throw flag)

Spot foul and a 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 (throw flag)

Defensive Penalties

+5 Yards and Automatic first down for the offence

- Offside – occurs when a player is past the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball (throw flag)
- Illegal Contact – holding, blocking, obstructing the receiver (throw flag)
- 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 (throw flag)
- Note: The rusher must have passed the line of scrimmage to be considered an illegal rush. If the rusher goes back to the 7 yard distance and then continues his rush no penalty will be called
- 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 flag)

+5 Yards and down repeated

- Disconcerting signals – Sounds or signals intended to simulate or disrupt offensive signals prior to the snap (throw the flag)
- Interference with the ball at the snap (whistle dead/throw flag)
- Substitution fouls – i.e. 6 players on the field; player enters the field during the snap of the ball (whistle dead/throw flag)

+15 Yards and automatic first down

- Unsportsmanlike Conduct – intentional physical misconduct, verbal abuse, taunting (whistle dead/throw flag)
- Unnecessary Roughness – roughing the passer, tackling, rough play (whistle dead/throw flag)

Spot Foul and automatic first down

- Defensive Pass Interference – illegally preventing a receiver from catching the ball. Spot of foul penalty and automatic 1st down (throw flag)

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 flag)

Field Manager

- If a field manager determines that a game is getting out of control due to yelling, swearing, or abuse towards officials from players, coaches or spectator(s)/team, they have the authority to:
 - 1) Issue one warning to the offending player, coach, spectator(s)/team
 - 2) Consult with the game officials to evaluate the situation
 - 3) Call the game and declare a forfeit against the abusive team if necessary