



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

BUILDING SKILLS DEVELOPING CHARACTER

YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL RULEBOOK
NFL FLAG
K-6TH GRADE

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YMCA STAFF

YMCA personnel shall be present and visible at all games. If you encounter any problems or have suggestions, please contact the Sports Director or Site Supervisor. They can be found wearing a Blue Sports Supervisor shirt. If you have a question or suggestion concerning the game or league, please present it before or after the game, not during the game. Sports Director or Site Supervisors have the final decision at all sites.

Welcome to YMCA Youth Sports

YMCA MISSION

“To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.”

THE YMCA PHILOSOPHY OF YOUTH SPORTS

YMCA Youth Sports is not just another sports program. We have a mission, and that mission is stated in our Seven Pillars of YMCA Sports.

Pillar One-Everyone Plays. We do not use tryouts to select the best players, nor do we cut kids from YMCA Youth Sports. Everyone who registers is assigned to a team. During the season everyone receives equal practice time and equal playing time.

Pillar Two-Safety First. Although kids may get hurt playing sports, we do all we can to prevent injuries. We have modified each sport to make it safer and more enjoyable to play. Coaches make sure the equipment and facilities are safe, and constantly supervise their players and stop any unsafe activities.

Pillar Three-Fair Play. Fair play is about playing by the rules-and more. It is about coaches and players showing respect for all involved in YMCA Youth Sports. It is about coaches being role models of good sporting behavior and guiding their players to do the same.

Pillar Four-Positive Competition. We believe competition is a positive process when the pursuit of victory is kept in the right perspective. The right perspective is when adults make decisions that put the best interests of the players before winning the contest. Learning to compete is important for youngsters and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential lesson of life.

Pillar Five-Family Involvement. YMCA Youth Sports encourages parents to be involved appropriately in their child's participation in our sports programs. In addition to parents being helpful as volunteer coaches, officials, and timekeepers, we encourage them to be at practices and games to support their child's participation.

Pillar Six-Sport for All. YMCA Youth Sports is an “inclusive” sports program. We offer programs to all youngsters regardless of their race, gender, religious creed, or ability. We ask our adult leaders to encourage and appreciate the diversity of children in our society and to encourage the kids and their parents to do the same.

Pillar Seven-Sport for Fun. Sports are naturally fun for most kids. Sometimes when adults become involved in children's activities they over organize and dominate the activities to the point that it destroys kids' enjoyment of them. If we take the fun out of sports for young athletes, we are in danger of the young athletes taking themselves out of sports.

YMCA CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The YMCA believes that character development, focusing on the values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility is an essential element of all its programs.

CARING

Demonstrate a sincere concern for all others, for their needs and wellbeing.

HONESTY

Have integrity, make sure that one's actions match one's values through participation in sports.

RESPECT

Treat others as I would want them to treat me, value the worth of every person, including oneself, one's teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials.

RESPONSIBILITY

Do what is right, be accountable for my choices of behavior and obligations.

OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

All Coaches are required to:

1. Apply through our YMCA coaching link that will:
2. Complete a full background check.
3. Complete the Coaches' Agreement and Code of Conduct Form
4. Complete Child Abuse and Prevention training.
5. Attend the Coaches Meeting held in the YMCA Meeting Room each season.
6. Report suspected abuse of any form (new federal law that makes our sports volunteers mandated reporters) anonymous reporting can be sent to 800.743.6354)

In addition, the Salina Family YMCA:

1. Screens all coaches and volunteers and our database for registered sex offenders.
2. Observes practices and games.
3. Responds quickly to any potential concerns regarding coaches and team volunteer.
4. Has Child Abuse and Prevention Policies and Procedures in Place for all Coaches.
5. Coaches are not permitted to:
 - a. Be one on one with a child (unless it is their own). Please stay and observe practices and games.
 - b. Provide rides to children that are not their own**

Have any social media contact with children. This includes texting or calling. All communication should be done with the parent.

FIRST CONTACT WITH TEAM PARENTS

This is a very important interaction because it will set the tone for the entire season. **Make sure your contact is reciprocated!** Make sure they have your name, team name and grade, and your contact information! What follows are most of the points that you will want to make in the first call to the parents:

1. Introduce yourself as the child's volunteer coach from the YMCA. Welcome the player and family to be on your team. Give them your contact information.
 - a. Coach's First and Last Name
 - b. Phone Number
 - c. Division
2. Verify the parents' names, the player's name, and contact information.
3. Tell them when and where the first Parent & Coach meeting will take place (usually after the first practice).
4. Inform them about scheduling and how you prefer to communicate.
5. If you must leave a message, be sure to give them your name and contact information and ask them to call you back to verify that they received your message!
6. If you do not receive a call back within 48 hours, please call our Sports department so that we can check the contact information right away!

PARENT & COACH MEETING

It is important that you set up a Parent & Coach Meeting before you begin your practices. You can set your meeting for the same day, time, and location where you will be having your practices. Make sure you cover all the following information and any additional information that you want to cover to begin your season:

- 1) Welcome and Introductions!
- 2) Invite parents to come to every practice and help with supervision, organizing the players, setting up and helping with drills, etc.
- 3) Timeline for Season (practice schedules, first game, etc.)
- 4) YMCA Mission, The YMCA Philosophy of Youth Sports, & YMCA Character Development
- 5) Communication from the Sports Department:
 - a. Email is where Weather Information/Cancellations will be communicated.
 - b. We will also utilize Playerspace communications.
- 6) Tobacco Free Campus (this includes E-Cigarettes)
- 7) Only Labeled Service Dogs are allowed on our Campus.
- 8) Our Commitment to Safety
- 9) Parent Information (Code of Conduct, Rules, Snack and Drink Sign Up, etc.)
- 10) Uniforms (Players receive NFL Flag branded jersey for gamedays)
- 11) Team Photographs – Not Provided by the YMCA

Policies and Procedures

The YMCA is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all. To promote safety and comfort, the YMCA asks all persons to behave responsibly and to respect the rights and dignity of others at all times when in our facilities, on our property or participating in our programs.

The actions listed below, which are not intended to be an all-inclusive list of behaviors, are considered inappropriate and are prohibited in our facilities or on the property:

- Using or possessing alcohol or illegal drugs, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol on YMCA property, in YMCA vehicles or facilities, or at YMCA sponsored programs.
- Smoking tobacco on YMCA property – All of our YMCA buildings and grounds are smoke-free and tobacco-free environments; this includes e-cigarettes.
- Harassment or intimidation by words, gestures, body language, or any type of menacing behavior
- Physical contact with another person in an angry, aggressive, or threatening way.
- Verbally abusive behavior, including profanity, angry language, swearing, name-calling, or shouting
- Sexually explicit conversation or behavior; any sexual contact with another person.
- Inappropriate, immodest, or sexually revealing attire.
- Theft or behavior that results in the destruction or loss of property.
- Loitering within facilities or on the grounds of the YMCA after being requested to depart the YMCA's property
- Use of cameras or other picture taking or recording devices is not permitted in the locker rooms.

Anyone who feels that this Code of Conduct is being violated should immediately report the behavior to a staff person on duty.

Suspension or termination of YMCA membership may result from a violation of this Code of Conduct or other YMCA policies. While an incident is being investigated, the membership of the person(s) accused of violating this Code of Conduct may be temporarily suspended pending a final decision. All decisions are reviewed by the President/CEO and are final.

Parent Code of Conduct

1. I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care and encouragement for my child participating in YMCA Youth Sports.
2. I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, instructors, coaches and officials at every game, practice, or other youth sports event.
3. I will support the Sports Staff, coaches, instructors, and officials working with my child, to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
4. I understand the Salina Family YMCA campus is a drug, tobacco, and alcohol-free environment for my child and I will refrain from there use at all YMCA Youth Sports events.
5. I will ask my child to treat players, coaches, officials, and fans with respect.
6. I will help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectable fan or assisting the coach.
7. I will strive to fulfill the mission of the YMCA and demonstrate and adhere to the YMCA Youth Sports philosophy.

Important Information:

RULES, SCHEDULES, AND NOTIFICATIONS

All rules and schedules will be sent by the sports department to each team's head coach. Parents may have access to this information as well upon request.

All-important updates, changes, and notifications from the YMCA Sports Staff will be sent out through playerspace and email.

WEATHER UPDATES, GAME & PRACTICE CANCELLATIONS

In case of severe weather conditions cancellations will be made through Email communication and playerspace.

1) It is the responsibility of the coach to notify the Sports Department and all their team families if they are cancelling a practice. Please do so by email or playerspace!

2) Cancelled practices may be made up at another time if the practice schedule allows. If making up a cancelled practice Coaches must contact the Youth Sports Department first to see what is available.

3) Games will only be cancelled by the YMCA staff for inclement weather or extenuating circumstances. To best serve most of our participants please adhere to our Saturday game schedule.

2026 FALL SEASON TIMELINE

COACHES MEETING:

All Coaches are required to attend the Coaches Meeting held in the YMCA Meeting Room. Those who cannot attend this meeting are required to meet with the Sports Staff 1:1 prior to receiving any season information such as Rosters, Practice Times etc.

Season Kickoff: AUGUST 25th (6:00 Coaches Meetings, 6:30 Family Meetings, 6:45-7:30 Team Meetings and Play.)

FIRST PARENT CONTACT MUST BE COMPLETE BY: AUGUST 27th

FIRST WEEK OF PRACTICES: AUGUST 31 (No Practice on Labor Day 9/7, they will practice 9/11 instead)

FIRST SATURDAY GAME DAY: SEPTEMBER 12TH

LAST SATURDAY GAME DAY: OCTOBER 10th

GENERAL RULES

Sportsmanship/Officials:

- ❖ The Salina Family YMCA Youth Sports Program is not only dedicated to teaching sports fundamentals but also good sportsmanship. **The most important way we teach is by being a good role model.**
- ❖ Coaches are encouraged to enforce discipline. Teach your players to honor the officials call.
- ❖ **Coaches are responsible for team members and spectators supporting their team, before, during, and after the game.**
- ❖ Any abusive language or inappropriate behavior by a player, coach, or spectator will result in the disqualification of a player, coach, or team.
- ❖ The Salina Family YMCA Sports Staff will be notified of any disqualifications and a conference with the Sports Staff will be held before further participation.

Team/Fans Location:

1. Home team will be wearing WHITE (lighter color). Away will be wearing BLACK (darker color). Players and coaches will be located on the white line side of the field
2. ALL Fans will be sitting BEHIND the orange line on the OPPOSITE side of the field from the players. No fans will be allowed to sit behind the ENDZONE, unless they are located behind the orange lines.

Equipment:

1. **All players are required to wear the NFL FLAG reversible jersey.**
 - a. **Jersey must be TUCKED in at all times.**
2. Players should wear shorts, socks, and running shoes or cleats.
 - a. **No metal or screw in cleats allowed.**
3. **Mouth guards are REQUIRED.**
4. NO Jewelry is allowed. Players should remove all jewelry (earrings, necklaces, bracelets, etc.) before warming up or playing. This is for the child's safety and the safety of other players.
5. Practice/game balls and cones for practices and game held at the YMCA fields.
6. Any coach on the field is required to wear their YMCA designated coach's shirt unless arrangements with Sports staff have been made.

Game Play Rules Per Division:

Division	Number of Players on the Field	Number of Coaches Allowed on the Field	Size of Football	Length of Quarters	Time Outs
Kindergarten	6 v 6	2 Coaches	Pee Wee Size Ball	4- 8 min. quarters	1 per half
1 st Grade	7 v 7	2 Coaches	Pee Wee Size Ball	4- 8 min. quarters	1 per half
2 nd /3 rd Grade	7 v 7	1 Coach	Pee Wee Size Ball	4- 8 min. quarters	1 per half
4-6 th Grade	7 v 7	1 Coach	Junior Size Ball	4- 10 min. quarters	1 per half

****All division player amounts may be adjusted by the Sports staff based on enrollment numbers.**

General Play Rules:

1. Playing time should be as equal as possible. A min. of 4 players is required to start a game. All players should have the opportunity to play both offense and defense positions.
2. Coaches should focus on the fundamentals of football when teaching the game.
3. All games will be a running clock. Clock will only stop for time-outs & injuries. No overtime play.
4. Substitutions may take place during halftime, timeouts, or dead ball situations.
5. Each game will start with teams lining up at half field to go over rules, equipment, and the YMCA pledge.
 - a. "Win or lose, I pledge before God, to do my best to be a team player; to respect my teammates, opponents, coaches, parents, and officials; and to improve myself in Spirit, Mind and Body."
6. The away team (Black) will start with the possession of the ball first. The home team will determine which direction they would like to go toward in the 1st half. After halftime possession will start with the home team going the opposite way of the 1st half.
7. Each team will have 4 downs to make the next 1st down zone or End Zone.
 - a. First downs are made when the offensive team advances the ball to the next zone. Once the ball has entered a zone for a first down, the team cannot re-enter that same zone for another first down.
8. Any turnover on downs will be placed on the teams own 5 yard line.
9. **K-1st Grade:** If the ball falls to, or touches the ground during the initial center to quarterback exchange, the play is ruled a 'Do Over' with no loss of down, once per down. On a second consecutive occurrence, the down is consumed.
 - a. **2-6th Grade:** If the ball falls to, or touches the ground during the initial QB/Center exchange, the play is ruled over and the down is consumed.
10. **K-1st Grade:** Defenders MUST line up at least five yards from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap. If the ball is spotted on or inside the 5-yard line, the distance is reduced to three (3) yards.

Prior to the Snap:

1. 45 second play clock. (Clock will stop with injuries or at the officials discretion).
2. No 3-point stance will be allowed on defense or offense. Players should start with their hands on their knees or thighs. The only exception to this is the Center, hiking the ball.
 - a. **2nd – 6th GRADE:** Required to hike ball between their legs
 - b. **K-1st GRADE:** Can snap the ball from a kneeling position.
3. All players must be set prior to the snap.
4. Teams can use anything as their cadence.
5. All offensive players are eligible to receive a forward pass.
6. Only ONE player may go in motion.
 - a. A player in motion can only move parallel or away from the line of scrimmage.
7. A SHIFT is allowed
 - a. A shift is described as a change in formation where players become set prior to the ball being set.

Line of Scrimmage:

1. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four players on the line of scrimmage. The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.

OFFENSE

Run Game

1. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the Line of Scrimmage. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap under center directly or in shotgun formation.
2. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.
3. Direct handoffs, pitches, and laterals are permitted behind the line of scrimmage only. If this takes place, after the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, the play is to be blown dead by the official. The ball shall be placed at the spot possession was lost for the next play
 - a. "Center Sneak" is not allowed
 - b. Any player who receives a handoff, backward pass, pitch or lateral can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
 - c. Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, or a backward pass, pitch or lateral has occurred, the 7-second passing clock is eliminated and all defensive players are eligible to rush.
4. **K-3rd Grade: No Run Zone Eliminated**
5. Teams are not allowed to run in the 'NO RUN ZONES' - (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).
6. Runners are not permitted to jump, leap or hurdle, in the officials' judgement, while advancing the ball. The play is to be blown dead and the ball spotted where the jump, leap or hurdle occurred.
7. **Blocking is allowed ONLY when athletes cross their arms across their chest. Essentially screening other players at the line of scrimmage or down the field. Players may NOT extend their arms and engage with the defenders.**
8. Flag obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

Pass Game

1. Only 1 forward pass, thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, is permitted each offensive play. The ball must be released prior to crossing the line of scrimmage. There can be unlimited backward passes behind the line of scrimmage.
 - a. Passer must have a portion of their body behind the LOS to be eligible to throw.
 - b. Passes may be thrown backwards behind the line of scrimmage.
 - c. There is no intentional grounding. The quarterback may throw the ball anywhere across the line of scrimmage to avoid a sack.
 - d. All forward passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender. All forward passes must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
2. The quarterback has a 7 second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, the play is dead, the down counts and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage, the 7 second rule is no longer in effect.
 - a. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7 second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS).
 - b. If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.
3. An Illegal pass is when the passers entire body is beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball is released.

Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage).
2. A player must have at least one foot or other body part in bounds, contacting the ground first with possession.
3. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

DEFENSE

Rushing the Passer

K-3rd GRADE: Defenders may NOT rush the passer unless there is a legal handoff executed in the backfield

1. **4th – 6th GRADE:** All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Up to two (2) players can rush the quarterback. Rushers MUST identify themselves by raising their hand before the snap. Rushers MUST rush the passer immediately after the snap. Delayed rush is NOT permitted. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend the line of scrimmage. The defensive players who raise their hand MUST rush the passer.
2. Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled backwards behind the line of scrimmage, all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to defend and pull the flag.
3. A special marker, or the referee, will designate a rush line 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.
4. The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap.
5. A sack occurs if the quarterback's flags are pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball will be spotted where possession of the ball is when the flag is pulled.

Flag Pulling

1. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
3. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
4. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
5. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

Defensive Rules:

1. On run plays, defensive players must wait until there is a clear handoff before rushing.
2. Absolutely NO tackling is allowed.
3. When pulled, the flag must be placed above your head to signal the referee when the ball carrier is down.
4. No tripping any kind is allowed.
5. Interceptions are not allowed to be returned and ball will be placed at the spot of the turnover.
 1. 7-yard cone rule is in effect.

SCORING

2nd – 6th Grade ONLY

Score will ONLY be kept starting at the 2nd grade division and above.

- Touchdowns will count for 6 points, and a change of possession will ensue.
- There will be no extra-point conversions

Officials will report the score to the YMCA department who will keep a general win-loss record.

Youth sports are powerful teaching moments. Parents and coaches now have the opportunity to model how to handle victory with humility, defeat with grace, and leadership with responsibility.