



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®**  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# BUILDING SKILLS DEVELOPING CHARACTER

YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL RULEBOOK

NFL FLAG

K-6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

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# 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.

# 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 <sup>st</sup> Grade	7 v 7	2 Coaches	Pee Wee Size Ball	4- 8 min. quarters	1 per half
2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	7 v 7	1 Coach	Pee Wee Size Ball	4- 8 min. quarters	1 per half
4-6 <sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> half. After halftime possession will start with the home team going the opposite way of the 1<sup>st</sup> half.
7. Each team will have 4 downs to make the next 1<sup>st</sup> 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-1<sup>st</sup> 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. **2-6<sup>th</sup> 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-1<sup>st</sup> 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. 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE: Required to hike ball between their legs
  - b. K-1<sup>st</sup> 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-3<sup>rd</sup> 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-3<sup>rd</sup> GRADE: Defenders may NOT rush the passer unless there is a legal handoff executed in the backfield**

1. **4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> 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

2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade ONLY

Score will ONLY be kept starting at the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.