COLUMBIA COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

**13-16 FLAG FOOTBALL**

1. **Equipment Regulations**
2. The league provides each player with a belt and flags. There should be a flag positioned on each side of the hip. If three flags are provided then the third flag will be positioned on the belt at center of the back.
3. Football cleats are encouraged, however, athletic shoes are allowed. No metal spiked cleats.
4. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not permitted.
5. Cast and hard braces must have at least 2 inches of padding for legal play.
6. Players are not allowed to wear jewelry during recreational activities.
7. Jerseys must be tucked into the shorts if below belt line.
8. Pants or shorts with belt loops or pockets must be taped.
9. A mouthpiece must be worn and cannot be chewed off around the ends.
10. Nothing may be worn that, in the opinion of the officials, restricts the ability to see a player’s eyes.
11. 9/10 Flag league uses a Junior size football. 11-16 Flag leagues use a Youth size football.

# Head Injuries/Concussions Protocol

1. If your child has suffered a head injury during athletic participation. She/he will need to rest and avoid any strenuous activity. Please do not give your child any medications unless directed to do so by a physician. We need to know all the symptoms your child is experiencing to manage them properly.
2. **Signs to watch for:**

Problems could arise over the first 24-48 hours.

You should not be left alone and must go to a hospital at once if you:

* Have a headache that gets worse
* Are very drowsy or can’t be awakened (woken up)
* Can’t recognize people or places
* Have repeated vomiting
* Behave unusually or seem confused; are very irritable
* Have seizures (arms and legs jerk uncontrollably)
* Have weak or numb arms or legs
* Are unsteady on your feet; have slurred speech

**Remember, it is better to be safe.**

1. **Return to play:**

When returning athletes to play, they should follow a stepwise symptom-limited program, with stages of progression.

For example:

* Rest until asymptomatic (physical and mental rest)
* Light aerobic exercise (e.g. stationary cycle)
* Sport-specific exercise
* Non-contact training drills (start light resistance training)
* Full contact training after medical clearance
* Return to competition (game play)

There should be approximately 24 hours (or longer) for each stage and the athlete should return to step 1 if symptoms recur. Resistance training should only be added in the later stages.

# Flag Rules

1. A coin toss determines first possession
2. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has three (3) plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
3. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
4. All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense’s 5-yard line. **Interceptions may be returned**. Fumbles are considered down where the ball initially hits the ground.
5. Teams change sides after the first half**.** Whichever team did not have the ball first in the first half will receive the ball first in the second half.
6. Coaches must remain on the sidelines within the coaching box at all times. No more than 3 total coaches on the sideline.
7. Home team is responsible for assigning a volunteer to hold the down marker. Home team side will be the sideline closest to the concession stand/bathroom.
8. Teams will play 7 vs 7. Teams must have a minimum of 5 players to begin a game. If an injury occurs directly resulting in a team having only 4 eligible players they may continue to play but with no less than four. If one team has fewer players (but not less than 5), the team which has more will go down to that team’s # (ex: 6 vs 6 or 5 vs 5). If another player arrives then both teams will adjust to that number.
9. Teams consist of 10-12 players (7 on the field with 3-5 substitutes).
10. **Timing**
11. Games are played a total of 40 minutes running time. Two 20 minute halves. Four 10 minute quarters in total. Halftime is 5 minutes long.
12. The clock runs during the first 18 minutes of each half unless a timeout is called.
13. During the last 2 minutes of each half, the clock stops when there is an incomplete pass, a penalty, a change of possession, or when the ball-carrier steps out of bounds provided the score is within 8 points. For example the clock would stop if the score is 28-20 but not if it is 29-20.
14. Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball. Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced.
15. Each team has **2 timeouts per half**. **One 60-second and one 30-second time out**. Teams receive one additional 30 second time-out in overtime
16. **Participation Rule**
17. Each player is required to play a 10 minute quarter of each half (20 minutes/two quarters total)
18. Players should play the full length of their assigned quarter with exceptions to injuries and player’s request to leave the playing field. The player should reenter as soon as they are able. Players who come out due to injury or by personal request count towards their required playing time.
19. **Scoring**

* **Touchdown:** 6 points
* **Extra point:** 1 point (play from 5yd line)
* **Safety:** 2 points

# Running

1. The quarterback cannot advance past the line of scrimmage but may move anywhere behind the line.
2. Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.

* Center may receive handoff once the Center has snapped the ball, taken a step backwards away from the line of scrimmage before moving forward.

1. Absolutely NO laterals or pitches of any kind.
2. No more than 2 RBs in the backfield in the direct vicinity of the QB. This is to prevent power running plays. Remember, no blocking or screening is allowed.
3. The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
4. Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
5. Spinning/Juke moves are allowed, no diving or hurdling. Jumping or leaping forward to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding. Lateral moves to the left or right (juke/spin) are permitted.
6. The ball is spotted where the ball carrier’s **feet** are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
7. **NO RUN ZONE – No run zones are located 5 yards before midfield and 5 yards before the goal line in each offensive direction. If the ball is spotted on or inside the no run zone, the offense MUST use a pass play to achieve a first down or touchdown. Each offense will only face two No Run Zones on any drive – 5 yards before the midfield line and 5 yards before the opponent’s end zone.**
8. No blocking or screening is allowed. Blocking or screening is a judgement call by an official that deems an offensive player has inhibited a defender from making a play on the ball carrier. No running with the ball carrier.

# Receiving

1. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
2. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
3. The offensive team must have any **3 players (including the center)** on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap with one on each side of the center. The three in line players are not required to be within any certain distance of the center.
4. A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
5. **Passing**
6. All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
7. Shovel passes are allowed, but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
8. The quarterback has a seven-second “pass clock.” If a pass is not thrown within the seven seconds, play is dead, loss of down. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-second rule no longer is in effect.
9. **Dead Ball**
10. The ball can be snapped between the legs or off to one side to start play.
11. Play is ruled “dead” when:  
    Ball carrier’s flag is pulled.  
    Ball carrier steps out of bounds.  
    Touchdown or safety is scored.  
    Ball carrier’s knee hits the ground.

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

1. **Rushing the Quarterback**
2. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of seven yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback may defend on the line of scrimmage.
3. Once the ball is handed off, the seven-yard rule no longer is in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage. A special marker, or the referee, will designate seven yards from the line of scrimmage.

1. **Tackling/Flag Placement**
2. Players must have their flag belt on prior to the snap. The flag belt may only be clipped in the front, no tying the belt. The belt should be positioned so that there is one flag on each hip and behind the player.
3. If a player inadvertently loses a flag during a play, they are considered down when touched anywhere on the body by the opposing team (one hand touch).
4. If a player enters the game without a flag belt and participates in a play, this is considered a uniform violation. This will result in a 5 yard penalty, replay the down.
5. **Player/Coach & Spectator Conduct**
6. **Unsportsmanlike Penalty (10 yards and loss of down)**: Officials have the right to determine offensive language or act. (Trash talking is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators.) Any player or coach receiving two unsportsmanlike penalties will be ejected from the game and suspended for the next game. Any unsportsmanlike language or act deemed by the officials as violent or harmful to others will be susceptible to immediate ejection and suspended for the next game. Anyone who is ejected must leave the park immediately.
7. There will be **no hollering or harassing of officials, staff or players** by parents, players, or coaches. **If a coach cannot control this situation, the game will be awarded to the opposing team.** The person or persons violating this rule shall be suspended for the following game (judgment of the officials or the Recreation Staff present).
8. It is the parent’s responsibility to make sure their child attends all practices and games. Any child who misses three consecutive practices or games can be benched by the coach for one game with the approval of the league coordinator. Any child who continuously misses practices or games will be dismissed from the team. It is the coach’s responsibility to notify the CCPRE Department of any players missing two consecutive games or practices.
9. No alcoholic, tobacco or vaping products will be allowed at any Columbia County facilities.
10. **Penalties**

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| Defense: **Following penalties are from the line of scrimmage. A coach may decline if result of the play is greater.** | |
| Offside | 5 yards & automatic first down |
| Illegal Contact | 10 yards & Automatic First Down |
| Illegal Rushing | 10 yards & Automatic First Down |
| Illegal Flag Pull | 10 yards & Automatic First Down |
| Defense: **Following penalties are spot fouls.** | |
| Illegal tackle  *(holding runner, etc.)* | 10 yards & Automatic First Down from spot of foul |
| Defensive Unnecessary Roughness | 15 yards and loss of down from spot of foul |
| Defensive Pass Interference | 5 yards and automatic first down from spot of foul |

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| Offense: **All penalties are from the line of scrimmage** | |
| Illegal Motion/Formation | 5 yards & loss of down |
| Illegal Forward Pass | 5 yards & loss of down |
| Offensive Pass Interference | 10 yards & loss of down |
| Impeding the Rusher | 5 yards & loss of down |
| Delay of Game | 5 yards & loss of down |
| Offense: **Following penalties are spot fouls.** | |
| Screening, Blocking or Running with Ball Carrier | 5 yards and loss of down from spot of foul. |
| Offensive Unnecessary Roughness | 15 yards and loss of down from spot of foul |
| Charging | 5 yards and loss of down from spot of foul. |
| Flag Guarding | 1. yards and loss of down from spot of foul. |

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| Remaining Penalties: **All penalties are from the line of scrimmage** | |
| Uniform Violation | 5 yards and replay the down |
| Unsportsmanlike Penalty | 10 yards and loss of down |

* Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
* Only the head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players and assistant coaches cannot question calls.
* Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

# Overtime (Playoffs only)

1. Winner of coin toss chooses offense or defense first.
2. Each team takes turns getting one play from the defense’s 5 yard line for one point or defense’s 10 yard line to 2 points. This choice is for the offensive team.
3. Whether or not the team that begins on offense converts, the team that started on defense gets a chance on offense to win or tie by converting a one point or two point play of its own.
4. If both teams score and complete the same amount of points on conversions, then the process is repeated with the team that lost the first coin toss getting to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues until there is a winner. Start of the 3rd round all attempts must be 2 point plays.

**\*\* Any adult who feels he or she cannot enjoy coaching under these rules and regulations should in all fairness to himself and the players withdraw from the program.**

***The CCPRE Department*** ***wishes to thank all of our volunteer coaches***

***for their time and effort this season.***

**For schedules, rules and any other updates please visit**

[**www.quickscores.com/columbiacountyga**](http://www.quickscores.com/columbiacountyga)