



League Guidelines & Game Play Rules

General Guidelines

1. IWFF Youth League is first and foremost a RECREATIONAL league. The goal is to have fun!
2. Equal playing time is the goal. All players should play around 50% of the game.
3. In the rare event that a team does not have 5 players for a game – the coaches have 2 options: 1) Play with less than 5 players (i.e., 4v4), or 2) request opposing teams who have more players to lend a player (this will forfeit the game giving the winner 1 point and 1 win).
4. In the event of sudden inclement weather, the current score will stand if at least half of the game (20 minutes) has been played. Otherwise the game will be repeated on a pre-scheduled make-up day. Parents will be alerted over TeamSnap and social media if the games are canceled due to bad weather (a little rain will not stop our games).
5. All coaches are volunteers from the IWFF Adult Women's League. Clearances are on file for all volunteers. Coaches may be on the field to huddle with the players but will otherwise be on the sidelines.
6. The league carries liability insurance. Parents/Legal Guardians are required to sign a waiver for their child prior to participation. (This was done digitally when you registered)

Equipment

1. Ball Size – Pee Wee (Youth and Junior Divisions) and Mini (Pee Wee Division).
2. Flags and balls will be provided by the league prior to each game and will be returned to the game bag after each game.
3. Tennis shoes or plastic cleats must be worn. We highly recommend cleats over tennis shoes because the fields can get muddy and slippery. Metal cleats are prohibited.
4. Provided team shirts must be worn to each game and should be tucked in to avoid covering flags. Mouth pieces are recommended but not required.
5. No watches or jewelry may be worn during the game.

The Game

1. Format – 5 vs 5 Screen Style (Non-Contact)
2. Field Dimensions – (Youth) 60 yards x 25 yards, (Junior) 70 yards x 25 yards
3. At the start of the game, coaches will meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine direction and possession. The winner may pick to start on offense or defense and the end they would like to defend.
4. The team on offense takes possession of the ball in their end zone and has 4 plays to cross the midfield (or 1st down marker). Once the offense crosses the midfield, it has 4 plays to score a touchdown.

5. *(Junior Division) The 5 yard line from each end zone will be marked with red cones. These zones are called "No QB Run Zones" (see below for details).*
6. If the offense is not able to advance off the line of scrimmage after 4 plays, the ball will be moved to the midfield line to start the opposing team's possession.
7. If the team on the offense fails to cross the midfield or crosses midfield but fails to score, the ball changes possession and the other team takes over from that point.
8. Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception and are returnable.

Timing

1. The game consists of two 20 minute halves with a 5 min half-time.
2. The clock will continuously run.
3. In the event of an injury the referee will stop the clock and then restart it when the injured player is removed from the field.
4. There are no time outs, but game play will allow for some extra time in the huddles for the coaches to discuss plays with the players.
5. In the event of a tie, the teams will move into overtime. Each team will be given one opportunity to score from the midfield line (4 plays). If the game is still tied after both teams complete their possessions we will move into Sudden Death. The team who lost the original coin toss will be given first possession. The first team to score wins. Interceptions may be returned for a touchdown.

Scoring

1. Touchdowns will be worth 1 point.
2. There will be no conversion points.
3. There will be no safety awarded.
4. There will be no punting/kicking.
5. Fumbled balls are considered dead balls.

Live Ball / Dead Ball

1. A play is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the referee whistles it dead.
2. The play will be dead when:
 - a. The ball hits the ground.
 - b. The ball carriers' flag is pulled.
 - c. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - d. A touchdown is scored.

Offense

1. Any formation is allowed. However, the quarterback must be lined up near the center.
2. The offense must be set and behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped (marked with a cone).
3. (Youth Division) The ball is "snapped" when the Quarterback lifts it off the ground with a clear "hike" being called in the process.
(Junior Division) The ball is snapped by a teammate lined up on the line of scrimmage. The snap may be tossed from between the legs or to the side. No direct snaps (meaning the ball must be in the air and cannot be handed to the QB).

4. (Youth Division) After the “snap” a count of “5 Mississippi’s” will be counted out loud by the game official. (*1 Mississippi, 2 Mississippi, 3 Mississippi, 4 Mississippi, 5*)
(Junior Division) No “Mississippi’s” will be counted.
5. (Youth Division) The Quarterback may not cross the line of scrimmage WITH the ball prior to the “5” count. After the “5” count has been called the Quarterback may cross with the ball.
(Junior Division) The QB may run across the line of scrimmage with the ball anytime after the snap. The ball may not be thrown forward after it passes the line of scrimmage.
6. Offensive players may use “Screen Blocking”, defined as: legally obstructing an opponent without using any part of the body to initiate contact.
 - a. Screen blocking shall take place without contact. The blocker shall have their hands and arms at their sides or behind their back. A screen blocker can not use their hands, arms, elbows, legs or body to initiate contact.
 - b. If they do use “impactful contact” it will be considered Illegal Contact (10 yd penalty)
 - c. Blockers may move when they are blocking behind the line of scrimmage, but must take a stationary position when blocking up field.
 - d. Screen blockers may not:
 - i. Take a position closer than a normal step when behind a stationary opponent.
 - ii. Make contact when assuming a position at the side or in front of a stationary opponent.
 - iii. Take a position so close to an opponent that they cannot avoid contact by stopping or changing direction.
 - iv. Lead block for a runner or continue to move while blocking up field.
 - v. STIFF ARMING: Stiff arming is not allowed; illegal contact may be called.
7. Handoffs and pitches of all kinds are allowed behind the line of scrimmage.
8. Lateral and backward passes are allowed anywhere in the field of play.
9. A ball carrier may spin, but may not jump or dive to advance the ball.
10. A ball carrier may not stiff arm or otherwise physically impede a defensive player from pulling her flag. *This is considered flag guarding (see penalties).*
11. A ball carrier must avoid contact with a defensive player who has established position on the field of play. Jumping over a player to avoid contact is the only jumping permitted. *Failure to avoid contact with defensive players is considered “Illegal Contact” (see penalties).*

Defense

1. Any formation is allowed behind the defensive line (second cone).
2. (Youth Division) No defensive player may cross the line of scrimmage prior to the “5” count UNLESS the ball has been handed off from the Quarterback to another offensive player.
(Junior Division) Once the ball is snapped a defensive player may cross the line of scrimmage to pull the QB flags.
3. (Youth Division) After the “5” count has been reached or a handoff made, any defensive player (usually the “rusher”) may cross the line of scrimmage to pull a flag.
(Junior Division) Once the ball is snapped a defensive player may cross the line of scrimmage to pull the QB flags.
4. Flag Pulling:
 - a. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
 - b. A defensive player may not tackle, hold, or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags. Holding includes grabbing the ball carrier’s shorts or shirt to impede her progress. *This is considered “Illegal Contact” (see penalties).*
 - c. A defensive player may not attempt to strip the ball from the ball carrier’s possession at any time.

- d. If an offensive player's flags INADVERTENTLY fall off during the play, the play moves to "one-hand touch" and the player must be tagged between the shoulder and knees to end the play.
- e. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off an offensive player who is not in possession of the ball.

No Quarterback Run Zone (Junior Division)

1. In the space located 5 yards (or less) from the offensive team's scoring end zone known as the QB No-Run Zone, the Quarterback must not cross the LOS unless:
 - a. A defensive rusher crosses the LOS to "sack" the QB
 - b. The ball has left QB hands and returned (ex: double hand-off behind the LOS)

Penalties

Coaches will do their best to enforce the rules consistently for both teams and throughout the game. However, they will have latitude in determining how strictly to enforce them and penalties if any should be assessed. Contact penalties are more strictly enforced than non-contact penalties.

OFFENSE

Offensive Infraction	Penalty	Description
Flag Guarding	5 Yards from POI	<p>What is Flag Guarding?</p> <p>Flag guarding is an illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling their flags. This can be done by using a stiff arm, placing a hand or arm over the flags, covering them with the ball or jersey, or lowering the head, shoulder, or elbow in a way that blocks the flag.</p>
Illegal Contact	10 Yards from POI	<p>What is Illegal OFFENSIVE Contact?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ball carrier will not deliberately run or drive into a defensive player. • The responsibility of avoiding contact rests with the ball carrier. She must show the officials she made an effort to avoid contact. • A ball carrier may spin , but must realize that while spinning if she is in a "State of Non-Control" and should contact occur as a result of her uncontrolled momentum, she will be penalized. • The ball carrier may jump over a player on the ground to avoid contact.
Illegal Forward Pass	5 Yards from POI	<p>What is an Illegal Forward Pass?</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There can be only one forward pass per play. A forward pass is defined as a live ball thrown toward the opponent's goal line. • If the passer/runner is beyond the L.O.S. and the football is released forward, an illegal Forward/Pass has occurred; this will result in a 5-yard penalty from POS. • Once the ball has crossed the L.O.S., in the air or in possession of a player, it cannot be passed forward, even if the ball is brought back behind the L.O.S. (Illegal Forward Pass).
Encroachment	5 Yards	<p>What is Encroachment?</p> <p>Encroachment shall be called if either the offense or the defense passes over the plane of the L.O.S prior to the snap.</p>

**POI "Point of Infraction"

DEFENSE

Defensive Infraction	Penalty	Description
Illegal Contact	10 Yards, Replay Down	<p>What is Illegal DEFENSIVE Contact?</p> <p>Any contact by a defensive player that makes an impact on the opposing player. This includes tackling, diving, slide tackling, tripping, or clotheslining.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A defensive player's feet may leave the ground to pull the offensive player's flag, but she may not make contact while doing so. • Tackling is defined as grasping or encircling the body of the ball carrier with a hand or arm. • If the defensive player reaches across the body of a ball carrier to pull her flag and contact is made, the responsibility of the contact lies with the defensive player. • Slide tackles involve a player deliberately leaving their feet and sliding on the ground, which is extremely dangerous and can cause serious injuries to other players in a non-contact sport.
Roughing the Passer	10 yards from POI, Replay Down	<p>What is Roughing the Passer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is when the passer is hit before, during, or after a pass. Penalty will be tacked on to the end of the play. • The Quarterback is 100% protected on every play. There may be no contact whatsoever whether the ball has been tipped or not.

		Contact caused by the QB's follow through is a penalty if the defenders hands are raised. It is the responsibility of the defender to keep the hands down and go for the flag if they are close to the QB.
Encroachment	5 Yards, Replay Down	What is Encroachment? Encroachment shall be called if either the offense or the defense passes over the plane of the L.O.S prior to the snap.

**POI "Point of Infraction"

All Players (Offense and Defense):

Unsportsmanlike Conduct	10 yards	What is Unsportsmanlike Conduct? Unsportsmanlike conduct includes disrespectful or abusive actions like repeated illegal contact, trash-talking, or excessive celebration.
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A note for spectators: we hope you will enjoy watching the game and let your kids have FUN. That will be our main goal in all of our games, and if we have any issues with negative comments they will be addressed quickly by league officials. Please refrain from arguing with coaches or referees regarding calls or penalties made during the game. We are a volunteer-run program and do our best to keep game play safe and fun for everyone involved. If you are unable to maintain your composure and respect for other players, families, or league volunteers - you will be asked to leave the field.