

CORNELIUS PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
2021 YOUTH NFL FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE
RULES AND REGULATIONS

I. PLAYING RULES

The league will be governed by NFL Flag Rules with the Cornelius Parks and Recreation (CPR) local rule modifications as listed and described below.

OFFICIALS

- CPR staff will have complete control of all games and all actions occurring within the park, before, during, or after scheduled games or practices.
- Contracted officials will have complete control of all in game play.

GAME

- A coin toss determines first possession. The visiting team calls the toss.
- The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense.
- 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 starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- Each game will consist of two (2) – 20 minute halves. The clock will run the entire time and will only stop at the official's discretion or during timeouts. Teams will change ends of the field at halftime and the possession will alternate. There will be a three (3) minute halftime break.
- **Mercy Rule:** Any team up by 20 points will be prohibited from **running** the ball until the score is back within 20 points.
- ***If the score is tied at the end of regulation, overtime will begin immediately. Each team will get 1 possession to see which team can advance the ball the furthest (regular game rules apply with 3 plays to cross midfield for a first down then 3 plays to score a touchdown). A coin flip will determine possession and the team to advance the ball the furthest wins.***
- Silent snap counts are allowed
- 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.
- Each team has one (1) 30-second time out per half.
- Score will be kept by officials in all divisions. Coaches are required to certify scores at the end of the game.

SCORING

- Touchdown: 6 points
- Extra point: 1 point (played from the 5 yard line) or 2 points (played from the 10 yard line)
- Safety: 2 points and the ball changes possession.
- Fumbles will result in a dead ball.

RUNNING

- The quarterback cannot run with the ball.
- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Offense may use multiple handoffs.
- Absolutely NO laterals of any kind.
- "No-running zones," located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
- The player who takes the handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving).
- Players spinning out of control will be called for flag guarding.
- Runner may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
- No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.
- Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage.
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- Interceptions change the possession of the ball at the point of interception. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the five (5) yard line.
- Interceptions are returnable but not on conversions after touchdowns.

PASSING

- All passes must be forward and received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- The quarterback has a seven (7) 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.
- Interceptions can be returned in all age divisions but not on conversions after touchdowns. Interceptions are the only changes of possession that do not start on the 5-yard line. Ball will be spotted where the intercepting player's flag is pulled.

DEAD BALLS

- All players on the field must be present in the huddle, and move from the huddle to the line. If a player enters the field after the huddle breaks, it will result in loss of down.
 - The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play.
 - Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
 - 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.
 - Ball carrier's flag falls out.
- Note: There are no fumbles. Ball is dead at the point that it is fumbled.

RUSHING THE PASSER

- All players who rush the quarterback must be a minimum of seven (7) yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Any number of players can rush the quarterback. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off, the seven (7) yard rule is no longer in effect.
- A special marker will mark the seven (7) yard area.

SPORTSMANSHIP

- Any acts or attempts at tackling, elbowing, blocking, cheap shots, or any attempt at physical contact or unsportsmanlike conduct will result in the ejection of the player identified. **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.**
- "Trash talking" is illegal and will not be tolerated. If "trash talking" occurs, the player or players will be removed from the game at the discretion of the field official.

PENALTIES

- All penalties will be called by the game official(s):

Defense: Offsides	5 yards and automatic first down
Interference	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal contact (<i>holding, blocking, etc.</i>)	10 yards and automatic first down
Illegal flag pull (<i>before receiver has ball</i>)	10 yards and automatic first down

Illegal rushing
(starting rush from inside 7-yard marker) 10 yards and automatic first down

Offense: Illegal motion 5 yards and loss of down
(more than one person moving, false start, etc.)

Illegal forward pass 5 yards and loss of down
(pass received behind line of scrimmage)

Offensive pass interference 10 yards and loss of down
(illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)

Flag guarding 10 yards (from line of scrimmage) and loss of down

Delay of game Clock stops, 10 yards and loss of down

- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines it.

II. TEAMS

1. All teams and participants in the league must abide by all rules and regulations set forth by CPR, which will govern participation in the league.
2. All participants must wear their official jersey and flag belt at each game. Metal cleats will not be allowed, only tennis shoes or plastic / rubber cleats.
3. Teams will use footballs provided by their league.
4. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.
5. Players must remove all jewelry, hats and do-rags. Winter beanies are allowed.
6. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants if they hang below the belt line.
7. We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets. Shorts or pants with belt loops or pockets must be taped. Games will not be delayed for a player to tape up pockets.
8. Flag belts CANNOT be the same color as shorts or pants.
9. All players must wear protective mouthpieces during each practice and each game. NO EXCEPTIONS!
10. Teams will carry a maximum of ten (10) players per roster. Each player must be a registered member of the league and must have submitted an official registration form with correct name, address, phone number, and date of birth.
11. Each team must be ready to play with five (5) players on the field at their scheduled times. However, a team can finish a game with less than five (5) players. **EXCEPTION: In the interest of providing a safe and fun environment for players the league commissioner may ask teams to begin a game with four (4) vs. four (4) if a fifth player is not available for one or both teams.**

PENALTY: Forfeiture of game to opposing team. In the event that both teams are unable to play within the specified time limit, both teams shall be charged with a forfeit and both shall receive a loss in the record.

12. If a team or an individual from a team refuses to start or finish a game for any reason, the team coach or the individual (s) in question will automatically be suspended from this athletic program for one (1) year from the date of infraction.

III. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

1. Individuals may play on only one (1) team within the CPR league structure.
2. Players are not permitted to transfer to another team.

IV. AGE CLASSIFICATIONS

1. Proposed Age Classifications are as follows these are **examples only** and are in no way guaranteed:

DIVISION A (6-7) Must be age 6 by September 1, 2021

DIVISION B (8-10) Must be age 8 by September 1, 2021

DIVISION C (11-14) Must be age 11 by September 1, 2021

All age divisions are coed, unless otherwise noted.

V. PLAYER SUBSTITUTION / ROTATION

1. All YOUTH CLASSIFICATIONS will abide by the “MUST PLAY” rule:
2. Coaches shall play ALL participants a similar amount of time. All participants should participate in both halves.
3. Coaches are encouraged to start, rotate, and substitute players liberally for the duration of the game. Coaches are also encouraged to allow each player to experience different positions.
4. Coaches are expected to ensure that all participants participate throughout the game and are also expected to ensure that all participants sit out at some point during the game. No player should play the entire game.
5. A team must be ready to play on any night, including weekends, if necessary, if games are cancelled due to inclement weather or other factors. The number of games and practices, dates, times, and locations, for all divisions, are subject to change based upon total registration (team numbers) and weather conditions. The Athletic Program Manager, or his designee, reserves the right to modify the total number of games and regular season and post-season schedules as needed so that the season can end in a reasonable amount of time.

VI. CODE OF CONDUCT

1. All coaches / managers are responsible for the conduct of their players and the conduct of any team player (s), spectator (s), and other team affiliated persons. Any and all team affiliated persons, including parents, must conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. This rule of conduct applies to all league play, practices, communication pertaining to the league, or related to the league in any way, shape or form while on Parks and Recreation or other Town property before, during, or after scheduled games or activities, or by telephone. Suspension of coaches, players, or affiliated team persons will occur if any eligibility requirements, rules, or conduct procedures are not adhered to.
2. Only COACHES / MANAGERS will be permitted to consult with or address officials at any time before, during, or after games. This MUST be done in a sportsmanlike manner. PENALTY: Any COACH / MANAGER ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct will be suspended for a minimum of three (3) games for the first offense and one (1) year for a second offense from the date of infraction.
3. Players will not be permitted to consult with officials, question calls or rules, or act in an unsportsmanlike manner.

Unsportsmanlike conduct is defined as follows:

- A. Unduly yelling or screaming at participants or officials
- B. Obscene or vulgar language or gestures
- C. Any attempt at physical violence

- D. Any behavior that compromises the integrity of the league and threatens the atmosphere that is intended for our youth participants

PENALTY: Minimum three (3) game suspension.

4. COACHES / MANAGERS, players, parents, spectators, or other team affiliated persons are not allowed to make physical contact, provoke physical violence, or communicate threats of any kind to other players, COACHES / MANAGERS, officials, parents, spectators, or league administrators at any time before, during, or after scheduled contests. PENALTY: Suspended for a minimum of one (1) year from date of infraction.
5. Absolutely no one will be permitted to participate in scheduled or unscheduled league activities at any time while under the influence of alcoholic beverages, or any other controlled substances. PENALTY: Suspension for a minimum of one (1) year from date of infraction.

VII. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

1. Any COACHES / MANAGERS, players, parents, or spectators who are ejected from league play, suspended from league participation, or later suspended from league play, will be suspended for a minimum of three (3) games for the first offense and one (1) year from the date of infraction for the second offense.
2. All suspensions will be made at the discretion of CPR staff.
3. Any person suspended for any reason will be ineligible for league play, even as a spectator, for the duration of his / her suspension.
4. Any suspension for one (1) year or more will require a written request for reinstatement.