

LUKESPORTS - Flag Football  
**Rules and Safety Tips**

**Overview and Expectations**

- Flag Football is designed to promote knowledge of football, basic fundamentals and skills, and sportsmanship.
- Players will be at the sixth, seventh and eighth grade level.
- Players must not be older than age 14 to participate. Once a player turns 15 they are ineligible.
- A mouthpiece is required for games, however no pads or helmets will be used.
- **Teams must consist of a minimum of 11 players and a maximum of 30 players. Flag Football is classified as a co-ed sport; however, this is not mandated as in soccer.**
- See LUKESPORTS Calendar for game times and location.
- Games will start on time and will be played on scheduled dates. Teams may warm-up on half of the field up until five minutes before game time. The “home side / end” of the field is the portion of the field next to the stands. Some game locations require that we warm up on the practice field.

**Playing Rules**

**A. Players**

- 1) **A game is played between two teams consisting of 11 players each. A forfeit will result when a team cannot field 11 players.**
- 2) Only players appearing on the official team roster form are to be counted as players. This form is to be completed before every game with no more than 30 players on the team / sidelines.
- 3) The offensive team must have at least 7 players on the line of scrimmage. The center, guards and two tackles are not eligible to receive forward passes. The defensive team must have at least 4 players on the line of scrimmage.
- 4) Mandatory Play Rule: Players receive game time based on the coaches’ discretion.
- 5) A team will have 30 seconds to put the ball in play after the referee gives the ready signal.

**B. Playing Fields**

- 1) A minimum 80-yard field will be used which measures 80 yards in length total and including two end zones of 9 yards each with a width of 46 yards. The field size will vary based on game location.
- 2) Points after TD are made by passing or running from the 10 yard line for 2 points or a point after attempt is made from a 1” or 2” PAT tee with the ball being snapped from the 2 yard line. Note: If a team decides to kick a PAT and or field goal a coach must come onto the field and kneel in front of the center who has his head down. This will prevent neck injury. The center must snap and remain still with the coach kneeling in front of him / her. There is no rushing on PAT; however, you may rush on a field goal attempt. The

coach will be on the field in both cases. Fakes are not allowed for a PAT but are allowed for a field goal.

- 3) The following field equipment will be used:
  - a) A down marker will be used to indicate the number of downs.
  - b) A 10-yard chain will be used to indicate the distance to go for a first down.
  - c) The home team is responsible for recruiting 3 adult volunteers to run the down marker and the 10-yard chain.
  - d) Corner pylons with flexible staffs or collapsible cones will be placed at the four sections of the end zones and sidelines.
- 4) **The LUKESPORTS League Director and/or referee will determine in advance or during a game if in-climate weather would prevent, post-poner, delay, or cancel a scheduled game. Head coaches should prepare and transport teams to the game regardless of weather conditions unless they receive a call from the LUKESPORTS League Director or are prevented by local officials, the school principal, natural disaster, etc...**
- 5) In the event a game is rained out, the game will be rescheduled as required.

### C. Equipment

- 1) **Game Ball will be provided by LUKESPORTS:** Shall be of good grade of rubber or leather, or material accepted by the league. Referee will determine whether rubber or leather is used depending upon the weather.  
**Size: YOUTH**
- 2) **Flags:**
  - a) Each player must wear a belt with the number of flags designated as standard by the league, which will be 3 flags. Players are not allowed to “roll” flags under the belt to shorten the length or hinder pulling.
  - b) The flags will be attached to a belt and extend or hang from each side of the player's body. When using three flags, the third will hang from the rear of the player's body.
  - c) The securing of flags to the body or waist is illegal.
  - d) Jerseys cannot be worn over flags and must be tucked into shorts.
  - e) If a player does not have a belt or if flags are in any way inaccessible, he is ineligible to handle the ball.
- 3) **Game Uniforms:**
  - a) All team members must wear the same color jersey.
  - b) All jerseys will be numbered on the back, for proper identification by officials and statisticians.
  - c) **Rubber cleats must be worn.**
  - d) Girls must wear a supportive undergarment / sports bra.
  - e) Note: If a player is not dressed properly the official will send the player to the sidelines. Multiple infractions may result in an unsportsmanlike penalty on the coach.
- 4) **Eye Glasses:**
  - a) Eye glasses, when worn, shall be of athletically approved construction with non-shattering glass (safety glasses) with securing strap.

- b) Contact lenses may be worn.
- 5) **Prohibited Equipment:**
  - a) Spiked or street shoes.
  - b) Padding including hard surface padding such as shoulder pads, hip pads, and helmets.
  - c) Hard metal or any other hard substance on a player's clothing or person (watches and jewelry).
  - d) Any equipment, in the opinion of the referee that will endanger or confuse players.

#### **D. Referees**

- 1) There will be at least three referees appointed prior to the game by the league.
- 2) The league may assign more than three referees per game.
- 3) Each game official will carry a yellow handkerchief and drop it when an infraction occurs.
- 4) Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- 5) In the event referee(s) are not able to start and or referee a scheduled game or are delayed the League Director or league representative may delay the game start by 15 minutes and or appoint a substitute referee.

#### **E. Rules of the Game**

Players: The free substitution rule is always in effect and a player may enter the game any time the ball is dead.

Captains:

- a) Each team will have at least one captain on the field at all times during the game.
  - b) The captain will address the referees only on matters of interpretation and to obtain information.
  - c) Captains may request a chain measurement; however, the referee will make the final decision.
- 1) **Team Coaches: Coaches will not be allowed on the field during the game.**
  - 2) **Time: There will be four 8-minute quarters. The clock will start once the head official rotates his / her arm and has placed the ball in play. The final two minutes of the second and fourth quarter will run as a regulation clock according to GHSA rules. Final 2-minutes - The clock will stop during: Incomplete pass, change of possession, movement of chains, ball carrier steps out of bounds with flags remaining attached, injury, charged timeout.**

**The clock shall not run during "point after attempts" following touchdowns. These attempts are classified as untimed downs.**

**During kickoffs, the clock shall not start until ball is legally touched by receiving team.**

**Two 1-minute timeouts per half**

- d) Five minutes between halves. This may be adjusted as required.

**3) Kickoffs:**

Each half will start with a kickoff at the 30 - 40 - yard line. Game location will determine the placement.

- a) The referee will call the team captains together for a toss of a coin to decide a choice of kicking or receiving. The winning captain has the choice. It would be expected that the team who kicked off in the first half will receive in the second half, etc... Teams will go in one direction for the first half and the opposite direction the second half.
- b) After a touchdown and extra point attempt, the ball will be placed on the 40 - yard line for a kickoff.

**4) Punting:**

- a) The offensive team may punt only on 4<sup>th</sup> down.
- b) For the safety of the players, the defense must have 7 players on the line of scrimmage. The Referee will hand the ball to the punter who will have 30 seconds to punt the ball. Once the punter's foot touches the ball, the ball is live. \*\* Note: Players must assume a standard punt formation with the punter 8-10 yards behind the line of scrimmage.
- c) No fakes allowed.

**5) Downs:**

- a) Each team will have four consecutive downs to advance the ball to the next line to gain or to score a touchdown.
- b) Once a team reaches the line to gain, it is a first down and a new series of downs begins.
- c) A team failing to move the ball into the next line to gain will lose possession. The opposing team takes over at the point where the ball is declared dead and begins its series of first down and 10 yards to go.
- d) The forward part of the ball will be the determining factor in measuring for a first down.
- e) A down will be repeated if provided for in the rules. (See: Penalties)
- f) When the offensive team is within the 10 yd line and has a first down, it will be first down and goal to go.
- g) At the conclusion of each down, the referee will place the ball in the center of the field (equal distance from sidelines - not on a hash mark).

**6) De-flagging:**

- a) There shall be no tackling of the ball carrier or passer.

- b) The player carrying or having possession of the ball is down when the flag is removed from his waist (de-flagging). The defensive player shall hold the flag above his head and stand still. The referee will mark the ball at the spot of the ball, not the flag, once the flag is clearly detached.
- c) The defensive player cannot hold or push the ball carrier to remove his flag. An accidental touch of the body or shoulder while reaching for the flag shall not be considered a violation. A defensive player in the act of pulling a flag may “accidentally” grab the player’s shirt. The referee will determine if this was the case or a violation.  
Practice flag drills!
- d) A defensive player may not run over, thrust or pull / push a blocker away from him. He may move him sideways with open hands to get past him / her, but he cannot push the blocker to the ground.
- e) A defensive player must go for the passer's flag. He cannot touch the passer's arm or other body parts. Coaches please instruct female and male players to respect gender / body parts and act accordingly.

**7) Blocking:**

- a) A blocker must be on his feet at all times while blocking. All offensive and defensive linemen, except the center must stand at the line of scrimmage or place hands on knees and await the snap.
- b) Cross body and roll blocking are not permitted.
- c) A blocker cannot use his hands to hold or grasp.
- d) **Blocking shall be done with the player grasping the front of their jersey at chest level with both hands so that the elbows are extended.**
- e) A defensive player cannot block or push a ball carrier out-of-bounds.
- f) Butting, elbowing, or knee blocking are not permitted.
- g) Blocking a player from behind is not permitted (clipping).
- h) There will be no interlocking blocking.
- i) **A defensive player will be restricted to open hand gestures, no thrusting, grabbing, or pushing the blocker's body.**
- j) **“Crack Back” blocks are allowed as long as they do not violate above mentioned rules and or with force that would produce an unnecessary roughness call by the official.**

**8) Ball Carrier:**

- a) The ball carrier cannot use his hands or arms to protect his flags. The defensive player must have the opportunity to remove the ball carrier's flags.
- b) The ball carrier cannot lower his head to drive or run into a defensive player.
- c) Stiff-arming by the ball carrier is illegal.
- d) The ball carrier may run in any direction until the ball is declared dead.
- e) The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag belt is pulled.

- f) A ball carrier cannot leave his/her feet unless he/she is avoiding running over another player. Momentary moves of athleticism will not be considered hurdling.
- g) Red Zone Run Rule - Once a team reaches the five-yard line or the ball is marked closer to the goal line the Red Zone Run Rule will apply. All running plays from the five-yard line or closer must be initiated and designed to occur outside of the tackles. Quarterback sneaks, dive plays between the guards, etc. will result in a penalty.

**9) Center:**

- a) The center must snap the ball between his / her legs.
- b) He / She must have both feet on the scrimmage line with no part of his / her body beyond the forward point of the ball.
- c) He / She may adjust the long part of the ball at right angles to the scrimmage line for one time only.

**10) Passing:**

- a) All backfield members are eligible passers.
- b) Passing will be attempted from behind the line of scrimmage only.
- c) A lateral pass is a pass thrown parallel to the line of scrimmage or back toward the passer's own goal line. A lateral pass is not considered a forward pass.
- d) A forward pass is a pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage toward the defensive team's goal line.
- e) A pass is live if the passer's flag is pulled after the ball has been released.

**11) Receiving:**

- a) Players in the backfield and wide outs are eligible to receive forward passes. The center, guards and two tackles are not eligible to receive forward passes. If a team goes strong side right and or left the player to the left and right of the center are still considered guards. Only the outside end on the strong side would be considered eligible to receive forward passes.
- b) A receiver may catch a ball even if he / she "inadvertently" steps out-of-bounds or out of the end zone during a play as long as he / she returns onto the field of play before he / she catches the ball and must place down one foot in bounds with possession of the ball. The player must return to the field of play for 1 full second to be eligible.
- c) Two or more receivers may touch a ball in succession resulting in a completed pass.
- d) If offensive and defensive players catch a pass simultaneously, the ball is declared dead at the spot of the catch and the passing team is awarded possession.
- e) A receiver may leave the ground to catch the ball and is then considered a ball carrier.
- f) If a forward pass strikes the ground or is caught by a player in a trap situation – this is an incomplete pass.

## 12) Dead Ball:

- a) All balls touching the ground are immediately dead. For example, the ball is declared dead at the following times:
  - b) When the ball carrier touches the ground with his body, other than hands or feet.
  - c) When the ball carrier's flag belt has been pulled.
  - d) If a pass receiver or ball carrier has a missing flag belt (ball is dead at that spot).
  - e) Following a touchdown, safety or touchback.
  - f) When the ball goes out-of-bounds for any reason.
  - g) **When the ball hits the ground as a result of a fumble or muffed snap from center. THERE ARE NO FUMBLE RECOVERIES. The ball is down at the spot of the fumble. IF A PLAYER DIVES FOR THE FUMBLE THEN the offensive or defensive team is penalized 10 yards from the spot of the fumble and new line of scrimmage will be established.**
- Note: If a ball carrier loses control of the ball and it ends up in the arms / hands of an opposing team member without hitting the ground this will not be considered a fumble and play will not be stopped.**
- h) If a lateral pass touches the ground it is considered a fumble. If a lateral pass goes out-of-bounds, the ball is ruled dead at the point it crosses the boundary line.
  - i) If a forward pass strikes the ground.

\* Exception: Snap from center, if the snap from center rolls back to the QB he / she and only he / she may field the ball, and it must be fielded cleanly. This would be true for punt and kick-off returns as well.

**Game Termination / (RULE 18) Slaughter Rule:** When one team is 18 or more points ahead that team must change out the impact players who play in the backfield, slot and wide receiver position(s) and those players are not allowed to run or catch the ball during the time they are on offense. If the spread becomes less than 18 points then the impact players may return to their positions and are allowed to handle the ball. An impact player is any offensive player that handles the ball, has scored, participated in long runs, long pass plays and or would be instrumental in running up the score on an opponent. On the first violation a 15yd. unsportsmanlike penalty will be assessed. On following violations, a 15yd. penalty will be assessed and the ball will change possession. Good sportsmanship is essential. Note: The officials will review Rule 18 with the coaches before the start of the game.

## F. Scoring Values

- 1) Touchdown: 6 points
- 2) Extra Point: 1 point (played from 2yard line – point after kick) or 2 points (played from 5-yard line – run or pass)  
**1 point for point after attempt when kicking**

### **3 points when kicking a field goal**

There is no rushing on PAT; however, you may rush on a field goal attempt.

- 3) Safety: 2 Points
- 4) Tie: If the score is tied at the end of 4 quarters, teams move directly into overtime. Overtime begins with a coin toss. The winner of the toss decides if they would like to be on offense or defense first. The ball is placed on the fifteen-yard line. A team has four downs to score. Please note that they can obtain a 1<sup>st</sup> down since series will begin on fifteen-yard line. Interceptions would result in a dead ball and change possession or end game as required. Then the opposing team would have four downs to score. If a winner cannot be determined the process is repeated. If a winner still has not been determined after the second overtime period the process is repeated for a third and final time. The team that scores and or has the deepest penetration after their possession will be win the game. If both teams score a touchdown and go for two and or kick an extra point and the score is still tied at the end of the third overtime period the game will end in a tie.
- 5) Blocked field goal is considered a fumble and is a dead ball.
- 6) Blocked extra point is considered a fumble and is a dead ball.
- 7) Blocked punt is considered a fumble and is a dead ball.
- 8) Interception of a two-point conversion – The ball is dead.

### **G. Injured Players**

- 1) Once removed from a game because of injury a player must sit out at least one play or the coach must call a time out.
- 2) A player must have all cuts, scratches, or any blood completely covered before re-entering a game.
- 3) If the director of the league and or referee(s) state that a child is injured and should not play, the game can be stopped and the player taken out.
- 4) When a player is injured, all players currently on the field must take a knee.

### **H. Penalties**

- 1) The 80-100 yard field will be assessed 15, 10 and 5-yard penalties. The offended team will always have the choice of accepting or declining a penalty. If the penalty is declined, the down will remain the same as if no infraction occurred. Also, when the penalty is greater than the distance to the goal line, the penalty shall be half the distance to the goal line.
- 2) **Line of Scrimmage:**
  - j) Offside, defensive or offensive (5 yards)
  - k) Illegal snap (5 yards)
  - l) Failure to observe 30 second rule (5 yards)
  - m) Illegal motion - more than one backfield player in motion (5 yards)
  - n) Illegal formation, offense (5 yards)
- 3) **Passing:**
  - a) Illegal forward passes 5 yards.
  - b) Passer crosses the line of scrimmage – 5 yards and loss of down.
  - c) Intentional grounding -5 yards and loss of down

- d) Offensive pass interference –GHSA Rules
  - e) Defensive pass interference – GHSA Rules
- 4) Delay of Game:**
- a) Continuing to play after the ball is dead -5 yards from spot where the ball is dead.
  - b) Recovering a fumble or falling on the ball - 1 warning to coach on 1<sup>st</sup> violation with each occurrence thereafter resulting in a 15 - yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on the coach.
  - c) Unnecessary delay of game for any reason -5 yards.
  - d) Excessive celebration will result in a 15 - yard penalty on the kick-off.  
Example(s): Prolonged choreographed dances, chants and dunking football over goal.
- 5) Flag wearing and De-flagging:**
- a) Tackling- 10 yards
  - b) Wearing the flags illegally -5 yards
  - c) Ball carrier using his hands to prevent a defensive player from de-flagging -5 yards.
  - d) Holding, pushing, or hitting the ball carrier while de-flagging -10 yards.
  - e) Leaving one's feet while de-flagging -10 yards from spot of foul. If a player dives (Superman Style) a penalty will result. Slides or body control falls / leans are not considered diving.
- 6) Illegal Handoff:**
- a) If the ball is handed forward beyond the scrimmage line -5 yards and loss of down.
  - b) Snapping a ball to a lineman -5 yards. No Center Sneak.
- 7) Illegal Substitutions:**
- a) More than 11 players on the field -5 yards.
  - b) Substitution while the ball is in play or before it is declared dead -5 yards.
  - c) Disqualified player enters game -15 yards.
- 8) Blocking:**
- a) Leaving feet to block -10 yards
  - b) Cross body blocking or roll blocking -10 yards
  - c) Illegal use of hands by blocker -10 yards
  - d) Holding a defensive player -10 yards
  - e) Defensive player blocking, impeding or pushing the ball carrier out of bounds - 10 yards.
  - f) Butting, elbowing or knee blocking -10 yards
  - g) Defensive player using hands illegally -10 yards
  - h) Two or more blockers for the ball carrier (on one defensive player) beyond the line of scrimmage - 10 yards**
  - i) Clipping -10 yards
  - j) Interlock Blocking -10 yards from spot of foul.
- 9) Ball Carrier:**
- a) Stiff arming -10 yards from spot of foul.

- b) Lowering head or shoulder to drive or run into defensive player -10 yards.
- c) Use of head -10 yards
- d) Use of hands or arms to protect flag -5 yards
- e) Hurdling -10 yards

**10) Unnecessary Roughness:**

- a) Offensive and Defensive -15 yards
- b) Disqualification of guilty player or players if repeated.

**11) Unsportsmanlike Conduct:**

- a) Fighting or posturing to fight with mouth or body - 15 yards -offenders ejected from game.
- b) Defensive player pulling offensive player's flag to make him ineligible for play -15 yards
- c) Insulting, aggressive or abusive language from coaches, players, team or fans - 15 yards
- d) Interference with progress of the game by coaches, spectators, or any other team personnel- 15 yards – Note: Coaches and or fans are subject to ejection from game as required.
- e) Illegal play -15 yards
- f) Team leaving field before game is completed -15 yards. Failure to return -Forfeit. Team remaining on the field wins.
- g) Team coming onto the field before quarter, half or game is complete – 15 yards.
- h) Taunting – Any behavior perceived by the officiating crew as taunting will be penalized as unsportsmanlike conduct. The ball will be dead at the spot of the infraction and a 15yd. penalty will be assessed. The officials will notify the player or players and they will be ejected from the game on the second offense.

\*Example: If a player scores on a long run and taunts the other team by holding out the ball or high stepping or uses language, etc... the ball will be whistled dead at the spot of the infraction and a 15yd. penalty will be assessed. If taunting occurs in the end zone after a scoring drive the 15yd. penalty will be assessed on the kick-off.

**Safety Tips & Additional Information – Games & Practices**

**LUKESPORTS strongly recommends every player obtain a complete health physical before participating in athletic programs. The Athletic Director for each school is responsible for checking with the school's principal and or the local school board to ensure their school's athletes are in compliance with the State of Georgia Board of Education / City / County, etc...**

**The Athletic Director is responsible for having all medical releases for 911 / emergency medical calls / visits.**

**The Athletic Director is responsible for providing a medical first responder at every game.**

**The Athletic Director is responsible for providing a sports safety representative who has at minimum a current Red Cross certification in First Aid / CPR. Games & Practices...**

**The Athletic Director is responsible for coordination of 3 adults and or qualified individuals for running the chains during home games as required.**

- 1) **Medical Equipment: Make sure children always have their asthma pumps or other necessary medical equipment at practices and games.**
- 2) Hydration: Keep water available and make sure children are drinking throughout practice and games. Dehydration can occur in both warm and cold weather.
- 3) First Aid and Safety Kit: Always have a first aid and safety kit available and have an emergency action plan prepared.
- 4) Health Checks: Make sure players have a physical and are in suitable shape to participate in athletic programs.
- 5) As a show of support and good sportsmanship at the conclusion of game football players and cheerleaders are encouraged to line up and “shake hands / high fives.”

## LUKESPORTS

### Protocol for Grievance Resolution:

#### Step 1 - Informal Appeal for Clarification

A coach desires to question a call made by an official, has another concern they believe requires immediate attention or desires clarification on an issue may respectfully address an official requesting clarification. The official reserves the right to answer or not depending on the situation. This has always been the case or "un-written rule" of interaction between coaches and officials. If a coach presses the point beyond this initial request the official has the right to penalize the coach as required.

#### Step 2 - Formal Appeal for Clarification

A coach may feel the need to question a call on a formal basis. The Head coach must call a time-out. The Head coach, and only the head coach, will address the Head Official quietly and respectfully a reasonable distance from the fans and players. The Head coach may step away and speak with his / her assistant coaches and the Head Official may desire to step away and or engage the other officials. Once the coach and the Head Official have resolved the issue lasting no longer than 2 minutes the game will resume.

#### Step 3 - Post Game Clarification

A coach would like to question a call made by an official after a game as been completed, has another concern they believe requires immediate attention or desires clarification on

an issue may respectfully address the Head Official at mid-field at the conclusion of a game. There will be a 2-minute time limit on discussion and coaches from both teams are allowed to be present. If a coach does not believe the Head Official is providing a satisfactory answer a coach may request to speak with a league representative if time permits.

#### Step 4 - Post Game Written Clarification

LUKESPORTS advises coaches to address any grievance(s) that need to be addressed at the conclusion of each game. If a coach does not feel the league has provided a satisfactory answer he / she will need to send an e-mail to the League Director before 12:00 noon on the Monday following the game. A league representative will respond to the formal e-mail request within 48 hours. If a coach, school leader, or athletic director does not feel the written response from the league is adequate they must mail a letter on school stationary to LUKESPORTS, P.O. Box 115028, Atlanta, GA 30310 and the Leadership Council will initiate a process to resolve the grievance and a final written response will be mailed from the league office within 30 days of the post mark on the letter of grievance.

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