

# 2021

## MIICHIGAN MADE x UNDER ARMOUR

### UNDER THE LIGHTS FLAG FOOTBALL

#### Rules of Outdoor Gameplay / Logistics

*\* Identifies rules that vary between Age Divisions*

#### I. Game Format

- The K-8th Grade Divisions will be played 6v6.
- At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at mid-field for rock / paper / scissors to determine possession and which side of field to play.
- The winner of rock paper scissors has the choice of offense or defense. The loser has the choice of direction. Teams may not choose to defer to the second half.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its goal line and has three (3) plays to achieve first downs (mid-field). With an additional three more downs to score a touchdown after a first down is achieved.
- If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own goal line.
- -All possession changes start at that offense's own goal line.
- Fumbles result in a dead ball and ball is spotted at place the ball makes contact with the ground. Unless the ball changes possession in the air from a fumble (air fumble). Rule of thumb when determining if it's a air fumble or a fumble, "In air it's fair, ground is down"
- After halftime, possession changes to the team that started the game on defense.
- Field dimensions are 40-50 yards in length by 25-30 yards in width. End zones will have 10 yards of depth.
- Pylons identify the goal lines. Fields will be lined.

#### II. Rosters

- Teams must consist of no more than 10 players and start a game with the designated number of players. *\* In the event of an injury or shortage, teams with insufficient substitute players K-2nd* may play as low as a 5v5 game, but no fewer than that. This would be at coach's discretion.

#### III. Equipment

- The league provides each player with a flag belt prior to the season. These are for the athlete to keep. Parents will be responsible for keeping, cleaning and bringing them each game/practice throughout the season. They will also receive NFL team Under Armour performance t-shirt and shorts which must be worn.
- Teams will use the football provided by the league.
- Players must wear athletic shoes - cleats are recommended.
- Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear mouthpieces, gloves, elbow pads,

and kneepads, but please note that these items are not provided. Braces with exposed metals are not allowed.

- Players must remove all watches, earrings and any other jewelry that the officials deem hazardous.
- Players' jerseys must be tucked under the flag belts. No shirt or apparel can impede flag-grabs during competition.
- Players, coaches and officials may be required to wear face-coverings at all times.
- Players may remove gaiter when on the sideline adequately spaced, or when active in gameplay.

#### **IV. Timing**

- Games are played in two 20-minute halves on a continuous clock, with a 5 minutes .
- The clock stops only for timeouts. Timeouts are one minute long. Each team has two timeouts per game.
- Each time the ball is spotted, the offense has 30s to snap the ball.
- Teams will receive one warning before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced as a loss of down.
- Officials can stop the clock anytime at their discretion.

#### **V. Scoring**

- Touchdown = 6 points PAT (Point after Touchdown) = +1 point (5-yard line) or +2 points (10-Yard line).
- Interceptions can be returned for a Touchdown unless the player's flag that intercepts the ball is pulled. The ball will be spotted at the point of the pulled flag.
- A safety by the defense results in a loss of possession for the offense and the ball being awarded to that defensive team at their goal line, 1<sup>st</sup> down. UPDATE: There are NO safeties.
- A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-pt. conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-pt. conversion (from the 10-yard line). Decision cannot be changed. (1-pt. conversions are not eligible to be run plays)
- Interceptions on PAT's cannot be returned in 5v5 and do not earn points in 7v7.

#### **VI. Coaches/Substitutions**

- Coaches are typically volunteer parents or family members helping the players learn and enjoy the game.
- Parents are encouraged to support the coach at all time.
- One offensive coach is allowed on the field behind the formation in the backfield to coach and direct players according to need and age division.
- Defensive coaches must move to the sidelines each play before the snap of the ball.
- There is a limit to two on-field coached per team. Defensive coaches have to be sidelined before the offense snaps the ball.

#### **VII. Live/Dead Ball**

- The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.
- The official will indicate the neutral zone (2 yards off the ball defensively) and line of scrimmage.

- Coaches may make substitutions on any dead ball.
- Any official can whistle the play dead.
- Play is ruled “dead” when: the ball hits the ground, the ball carrier’s flag is pulled, the ball carrier steps out of bounds, there is a touchdown, PAT or safety scored, the ball carrier’s knee or arm hits the ground, the ball carrier’s flag falls out or the receiver catches the ball while in possession of one or no flags.

## VIII. Running Game

- Direct handoffs and tosses, player-to-player behind the line of scrimmage, are legal. Anyone behind the line of scrimmage can receive a handoff or toss. *There are no laterals allowed once the ball has advanced beyond the line of scrimmage.*
- A player must completely let go of the ball to be considered a legal handoff.
- There is no limit to the number of runs that can be performed by the offense in a game.
- There is also no limit to the number of handoffs in a single play, so long as the ball never crosses the line of scrimmage.
- The QB will not be permitted to run the ball at any time unless these criteria are met:
  - o The QB can run the ball only if he/she has first handed the ball off behind the line of scrimmage and then takes a direct handoff back from another player before the ball has ever crossed the line of scrimmage.
  - o The only other time that the QB also has the ability to advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage is when the defense uses one of its two allotted blitzes per game.
- The quarterback is defined as the first offensive player that receives the snap from the center.
- If the QB runs illegally, the team will have a loss of downs and ball be returned to the line of scrimmage.
- No Blocking is allowed at any time. Blocking will result in a loss of down and ball be returned to the line of scrimmage.
- A player who takes a handoff can throw the ball, if he or she does not pass the line of scrimmage first.
- It is the responsibility of the ball carrier to avoid colliding with defenders that lie in his/her path.
- Unintentional contact will not be penalized, provided the ball carrier tries to avoid it.
- Failure to attempt to avoid contact with a defender (charging) may be penalized. Intentional contact will not be tolerated, and may also result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and/or player ejection.
- The ball is spotted where the runner’s flag belt is when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball.
- It is always the offensive team’s responsibility to retrieve and return the ball to the official each play. Delay in getting the ball to the official could result in a delay of game penalty and loss of down. The 30s play clock will start after play is whistled dead.
- Jumping or diving to advance the ball is illegal. However, jumping or diving to catch a pass is permitted.

## IX. Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes including the center.
- The quarterback can receive as pass as well, if the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
- A player who gains possession in the air is considered in bounds as long as one foot comes down in the field of play. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.
- Jumping or diving to advance the ball is illegal. However, jumping or diving to catch a pass is permitted.

## X. Passing

- All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and received beyond the line scrimmage.
- Shovel passes are allowed, but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage. Direct pitches or tosses are allowed ONLY behind the line of scrimmage.
- The Quarterback has 5 seconds to pass the ball before the play is blown dead by the official with a loss of down.
- Interceptions change the possession of the ball and are returnable.

## XI. Rushing the Passer

- All players who rush/blitz the passer must be a minimum of 5 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
- Any number of players can rush the quarterback. A referee will identify the rush line by dropping a colored bean bag.
- Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official's beanbag before rushing.
- Defensive players may NOT defend on the line of scrimmage – they must align no closer than 2 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- Only 2 blitzes are allowed per team, per game.
- Once the ball is handed off, the five-yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage to pull the flags of the ball carrier.
- **A legal rush is:**
  - o Any rush from a point 5 yards from the line of scrimmage. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off by the quarterback.
  - o If a rusher leaves the rush line early, they may return to the rush line, reset and then legally rush the quarterback if it is before the snap.
  - o If a rusher leaves the rush line early and the ball is handed off before they cross the line of scrimmage, they may legally continue the play.
- **A penalty may be called if:**
  - o If the rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff or pass it is deemed an illegal rush = 5-yard penalty from the LOS.

- Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line that crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed or handed off is deemed an illegal rush = 5-yards penalty from the LOS.
- Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped is Offsides = 5-yards penalty from the LOS.

## **XII. Flag Pulling**

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
- Defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold on to, or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off of a player who is not in possession of the ball.

## **XIII. Flag Guarding**

- Offensive players may not obstruct defenders from grabbing their flags by flag guarding.
- 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, arm or shoulder, or intentionally covering the flags.

## **XIV. Formations**

- Offense must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (center). The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.
- The ball must be snapped between the center's legs. Shotgun snaps are allowed.
- Only one receiver or back is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted toward the line of scrimmage. The lone player in motion can remain in motion and does not need to be set at the snap of the ball.
- Offensive players must come to a complete stop for one second on multiple-player shifts before the ball is snapped.
- Movement by a player who is set or a player who runs toward the line of scrimmage while in motion is considered a false start = 5-yard penalty and a loss of down.
- The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

## **XV. Overtime Period**

- If the score is tied at the end of regulation, the game should go to a tie-breaker. This will be played in a college-style format with one overtime period consisting of a possession for each team.
- The first Offensive/Defensive possession is determined by the winner of rock/paper/scissors and the ball will begin at the offenses goal line. In each subsequent overtime, the team starting with the ball will alternate.
- Overtime periods will continue until the tie is broken.
- Starting on the third overtime period, each team must go for a two-point conversion following a score.

- All other regulation game-play rules and scoring rules apply.

## **XVI. Weather (Delays and Cancellations)**

- If there is thunder or lightning present, a 30-minute delay will be placed on games being played.
- If the inclement weather is persistent, games will be cancelled without reschedule. If two games are missed due to weather challenges, going forward any further weather cancellations will be rescheduled.
- League commissioner and staff will make final judgement calls on weather and weather predictions with the safety of all coaches, players, officials and volunteers as the top priority.

## **XVII. Unsportsmanlike Conduct**

- If the fields monitor or referee witnesses any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking, fighting or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game.
- The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!
- Offensive or confrontational language is illegal by players, staff and spectating parents.
- Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the warned person(s) will be ejected. We have zero tolerance for profanity or flamboyant confrontations from coaches or spectators - these may result in removal from the event at first offense.
- Ball carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- No intentional contact of any kind will be tolerated!
- Keep younger kids and personal items off the field in the end zone area and leave the playing area in a timely manner following competition.
- Repeat offenses by players, or spectators may result in removal from the league. Refunds will not be issued.

## **XVIII. Player, Coach and Spectator Code of Ethics**

- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of the players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development.
- I will take reasonable measures to honor all commitments to the athletes.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for the players.
- I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all players, coaches, officials, parents and staff.
- Coaches will do their best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all players.
- I will provide a sports environment that is free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.



- Coaches will be knowledgeable in the rules and teach these rules to the players.
- I will remember that this is youth sports, and that the game is for children and not for adults.
- Unsportsman-like play, behavior or language from coaches, parents, officials or players will NOT be tolerated and can result in disqualification from the contest and/or removal from the remainder of Flag Football League games without pay or refund.
- This includes and extends beyond negative behavior or language that is directed at coaches, officials, score keepers, parents or Michigan Made staff.

## XVIII. Penalties

- All penalties will be called by the referee. Penalties may be declined by the non-penalized team.
- Penalties near the goal line will be enforced as “half the distance from the goal line” when it applies.

### DEFENSE:

<u>Infraction</u>	<u>Penalty</u>
• Offsides	5 yards
• Pass Interference	Ball at Spot of Foul
• Illegal Contact (Holding, Blocking, Etc.)	10 yards
• Illegal Flag Pull (before the receiver has the ball)	10 yards
• Illegal Rushing (starting before the 7 yard marker)	10 yards

### OFFENSE:

<u>Infraction</u>	<u>Penalty</u>
• Stiff Arming	10 yards
• Illegal Block	10 yards
• Hurdling/Charging/Diving	10 yards
• Illegal Motion (more than 1 player in motion, false start)	5 yards
• Illegal Forward Pass (QB passing after crossing line of scrimmage)	5 yards, LOD
• Offensive Pass Interference	10 yards
• Flag Guarding	10 yards
• Delay of Game	Loss of Down
• Unsportsmanlike Conduct	15 yards (ejection?)

***(Trash talking, Roughing, Tackling, Elbowing, Cheap Shots, Other Flagrant Contact)***

- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage unless stated otherwise.
- Only the team captain or coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgement calls.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.

## XX. Game Field Layout

40-50 Yards Long x 25-30 Yards Wide

Pass Mid-Field of 1<sup>st</sup> Down

“NO RUN ZONES” – 5 Yards Before Offense’s Mid-Field / 5 Yards Before Offense’s End-zone

Ball Starts on goal line in changes of possession.

