

## Southeastern Michigan Youth Football Association (SMYFA)

### 2021 Flag Football Rules (*cheat sheet / cliff notes version*)

If referees have any questions, please stop the game and ask for directors from both teams to verify

#### Rules

- 1 All games will consist of six periods, eight minutes each  
The clock will stop only on change of possession, penalty or for injury  
Clock stops when a TD is scored and starts again when the ball is kicked off (extra point is un-timed down)
- 2 Each team will be allowed 2 one-minute timeouts per half
- 3 Only one (1) or two (2) coaches for each team are allowed on the field at a time  
Once the ball is snapped, the on-field coaches may not coach
- 4 Blocking is permitted within five (5) yards of the line of scrimmage
- 5 Offensive Line – A minimum of 4 players must be on the line of scrimmage  
Defensive Line – A minimum of 3 players must be on the line of scrimmage
- 6 First Downs – A team makes a first down when the ball advances to or beyond the field designated 20-yard markers in 4 downs or less. If a defensive penalty occurs in the offensive's team red zone (20-yard line to the goal line), the infraction will result in penalty yardage and replay of the down (up to 5-yard line)

#### Penalties

#### Penalty

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|---|-----------------------|
| 7 There is a 1-minute time limit between plays<br>The time limit is from the end of the last play to the beginning of the next play (snap of ball)  | <b>5-yards</b>        |
| 8 Blocking beyond 5 yards:<br>Offensive player may protect the ball carrier by "screening" as done in basketball<br>Screening shall be defined as an offensive player maintaining a position between the defensive player and the player with the ball<br>Movement of the screener's body that causes contact with the defender is considered an illegal screen | <b>10-yards</b>       |
| 9 No forceful charging or aggressive blocking or defensive BULL rushing by players is permitted   | <b>10-yards</b>       |
| 10 The defense shall observe a 5-yard neutral zone from the spot of the ball<br>A player entering the neutral zone prior to the snap of the ball  | <b>5-yards</b>        |
| 11 The ball carrier must run to avoid tacklers. Deliberate charging of an opponent<br>Brushing contact and unavoidable contact is not willful charging  | <b>10-yards</b>       |
| 12 Offensive player in front of the ball carrier must stop or alter his run to avoid intentional contact with a defender  | <b>10-yards</b>       |
| 13 A ball carrier may NOT stiff arm defender or protect his flags by deflecting the defender with the use of his hands<br>Ball carrier may not protect his flags with his hands; Flag Guarding  | <b>10-yards</b>       |
| 14 Unnecessary roughness by tackler or elbowing by runner   | <b>10-yards</b>       |
| 15 If a defensive player tackles a ball carrier<br>If the runner was in the clear, and in the opinion of the referee would have scored except for being tackled, a touchdown shall be allowed   | <b>10-yards or TD</b> |