



Youth Flag Football Guidelines 2023





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Article 1: Mission/Vision Statement

Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Mission Statement

The mission of the Harrisonburg Department of Parks and Recreation is to enhance the quality of life and meet the needs of the community by providing comprehensive leisure service opportunities and to develop and maintain a safe system of open spaces and public facilities for the use and enjoyment by the public.

Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Values

Integrity

We are committed to taking initiative, being accountable, and adhering to our mission vision and values.

Teamwork

We engage in effective communication to build professional and respectful relationships while being open minded to and welcoming of diverse perspectives.

Innovation

We utilize technology, processes, and protocols of operation to enhance efficiency and pride in our organization's ability to be a leader in Parks and Recreation.

Safety

We are proactive in creating a safe working and recreational spaces for our employees and community.

Public Service

We provide consistent quality service by building relationships through diverse opportunities that appeal to our community.

Article 2: League Contact

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www.harrisonburgva.gov/football
www.facebook.com/hprathletics

Article 3:

Flag Football League Guidelines (Grades 1-2): Below are the standards and rules in which this league will operate. These rules shall serve as guidelines for those playing, coaching, officiating, and administering. Some rules may be modified during the season if the league administrators see it is in the best interest of the participants.



Equipment and Field Specifications

Size of Ball	Pee-Wee (K2)
Field Size	50 yards (40 yards and endzone)
Game Format	6v6
Roster Size	10-12 on average

Game Structure

Game Length	Two 20-minute halves
Substitutions	On any dead ball
Time Between Halves	5 minutes
Extra Period	None
Scoring	N/A
Timeouts	Two 60-second timeouts per half
Start of Game Possession	Coin toss
Coaches	1-2 coaches will be allowed on the field during play
Penalties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5-yard penalties<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offsides / False Start• Illegal flag pull (if player is not in possession of the ball)• Illegal rushing• Illegal motion• Illegal forward pass (additional loss of down)• Delay of game• Roughing the passer• Taunting• Offensive pass interference• Impeding the rusher• 10-yard penalties<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illegal contact: holding, tackling, hitting, charging, blocking, stripping, etc., (automatic first down)• Flag guarding• Defensive pass interference (automatic first down)• Defensive unnecessary roughness (automatic first down)• 15-yard penalties (unsportsmanlike conduct)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Players who receive 1 in a game will be ejected.• Coaches who receive 1 in a game will be ejected and must vacate the facility.

Game Tactics

Motion (before play)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 1 offensive player can be in motion at a time
Snapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The center must snap the ball between their legs to a player in the backfield.
Players on the Line of Scrimmage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each team must have a minimum of 3 players on the line of scrimmage to snap the ball.
Blocking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Players may “shield” the way of a defender by standing and moving laterally. A blocker must have his/her hands at their sides or behind their back (preferred) when blocking.
Rushing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All players must be a minimum of 5 yards from the line of scrimmage. (2023 season change) A minimum of 2 players may rush prior to the ball being handed off. (2023 season change) If a team reaches points within 5-yards of the goal line, the ball will be moved back to the 5 yard line due to the defenders positioning. (2023 season change) Once the ball is handed off, pitched, or lateraled all defenders may go beyond the line of scrimmage.
Running	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ball carriers are not allowed to intentionally leave the ground to avoid a defender, get out of bounds, or gain yardage. (No hurdling, diving, leaping, etc.) The ball will be spotted where the ball carrier left his/her feet. <u>The Quarterback cannot directly run the ball. The ball must be handed off or passed.</u> There is no “center sneak” permitted.
Turnovers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interceptions are dead (reset on 40) If a ball carrier fumbles the ball, the play is blown dead at the spot of the fumble (offense retains possession).

Highlighted Game Play Rules

Running Clock/ Clock Stoppage	<p>There will be a running clock. The clock will stop on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeouts Injury Inside of 2 minutes in the second half.
Flag Guarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A player will not be allowed to run with the ball in one hand and “guard” their flags with the other. If this happens, the play will be blown dead, and a 10-yard penalty will ensue at the spot of the foul. If a player’s flag falls off, the defense simply must touch the runner to end the play.
Checked Flags	<p>Flags are checked after every score to ensure there is not anything that would prohibit a defender from being able to pull them off.</p>
First Downs	<p>Each team will start their possession from the 40-yard line. They will have 4 plays to reach midfield (20-yard-line), and then a touchdown.</p>

Possession changes	All possession changes including interceptions will return and begin at the 40-yard line.
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Article 4: Coaching Guidelines and Expectations

1. Coaches serve as role models for our participants. They are responsible not only for teaching the fundamentals of football, but also teaching character building values such as teamwork, respect, effort, and good sportsmanship.
2. Coaches must agree to sign a coach's code of conduct and strictly adhere to those guidelines for coach conduct and attitude.
 - If a coach displays any type of negativity toward their players, coaches, or staff, they risk being removed from the facility immediately and unable to coach the remainder of the game, and the following game.
 - If the conduct issue happens a second time, the coach will be removed for the season and jeopardize future seasons of participation.
3. All coaches are required to pass a background check through a third-party provider. These are provided at no cost to the individual. These background checks are good for two calendar years.
4. Coaches should follow all Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Flag Football League Guidelines. The official rulebook will be sent to coaches prior to the beginning of the season and may also be found at www.harrisonburgva.gov/football.
5. **Please be prompt to all practices and games.** We want to provide as much instructional time as possible. All practices should start and finish at their designated times. Also, be constructive with the short amount of practice time you are given. Please make sure all players have left with their parent/guardian before leaving.
6. Only coaches who have been approved by the league administrator may be on the practice field, game field, or sidelines during program activities. This is for the safety of our participants.
7. Coaches are responsible for all correspondence with team members. The league administrator cannot contact every single player. Please make sure parents are aware of practice and game schedules.
8. In case of a weather delay/cancellation, schedule change, etc. the coach is the primary person responsible for contacting participants and their parents. Parents may also be directed to the Athletics Division Facebook page at www.facebook.com/hprathletics for league cancellations.
9. All coaches are expected to provide a method of communication to parents. This can include phone number, email address, or other communication phone apps. This way parents can contact you in case of emergency, or in the event that their child may miss a practice or game.
10. Coaches are responsible for supervising all games and practices. While each player should have a parent or guardian in attendance, the coach needs to be the primary supervisor.
11. Coaches will be given footballs, jerseys, and flags prior to the start of the season. It is their responsibility to keep track of this equipment and return it at the conclusion of the season to the Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation in good condition and in a timely manner.
12. As one of our primary missions is instruction, it is important that all players receive playing time. Players having fun and learning the game, is more important to us than winning.
13. If there is an issue with a player on the field, the coach is expected to manage it in the appropriate manner. If a coach is uncomfortable with a particular situation, they should contact the league administrator.

14. All coaches should conduct themselves in a professional manner in all activities associated with this league. This includes refraining from using profanity, arguing with officials, or violating any other rule outlined by the Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation.
15. **Remember, coaches serve as role models for our participants in all instances.**

Article 5: Rationale

1. Substitution Rules: This helps ensure all participants are having an opportunity to experience the game with equal and fair playing time.
2. Unsportsmanlike Penalties: Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation has a "0" tolerance policy when it comes to any actions that are not within the normal actions of said sport.
3. Checked Flags: This is to prevent players from gaining an advantage over a defender by tying, tucking, etc. their flags so that they are harder/impossible to pull off easily.
4. Flag Guarding: This is to ensure the defense has a fair opportunity to pull flags.
5. Rushing: This is to control a defender from immediately disrupting a play. It will prepare both defenders and offensive players for the next level (tackle).
6. Blocking/Shielding: This is to allow for the offense to defend against rushing, and to introduce the concept before the next level (tackle)

Article 6: Sportsmanship Policy

1. Spectators that show poor sportsmanship including booing, harassing officials, arguing calls, disruptive behavior, negative comments, threats, or obscene gestures shall be given one warning. If the undesirable behavior continues after the warning, the individual(s) shall be ejected from the facility. Play will not resume until the spectator has vacated the facility. If they refuse to leave, the game will end, and the individual will be issued a trespass notice which will apply to all Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation facilities and parks.
2. Cheering in a positive manner for both teams is highly encouraged. Remember, it takes a lot of courage for our players to get in front of a crowd and play. Please remember this during the game and help us build the positive experiences through the game of football.
3. We ask that spectators refrain from coaching our players from the bleachers during games. We have coaches who volunteer their time to do this, let them coach! This is also very distracting to our players. Again, do not be the reason for increased anxiety to our players.

Article 7: Registration

1. All league information can be found at www.harrisonburgva.gov/football.
2. Please make sure all requested information has been completed.
3. Ages are based on the age of the player as of September 1st.
 - Ex. A child born on Sept. 2nd who is 8 years old will be allowed to participate.
 - Ex. A child born on Sept. 2nd who is 5 years old will not be allowed to participate.
 - Moving up & down in age divisions is not permitted. Players must play in their designated age division. No exceptions.

Article 8: Practices

1. Please arrive with enough time to have your player prepared to participate, this includes flag on, shirt/jersey tucked into shorts, etc. This will allow practices to start on time as scheduled.
2. Prior to games beginning, each team will have two weeks of practice only activities.
3. Once games begin, teams will either have a practice or game on either Monday or Wednesday. Please refer to the league schedule. League schedule can be found at www.harrisonburgva.gov/football.
4. All activities will take place on the football field at the Smithland Athletic Complex.
5. Parents/guardians are responsible for the supervision of their children that accompany them to league activities.

Article 9: Game Day

1. Please arrive with enough time to have your player prepared to participate, this includes flag on, shirt/jersey tucked into shorts, etc. This will allow games to start on time as scheduled.
2. Uniforms will be provided for each team at the start of the season. Parents/Players will be responsible for keeping up with their uniforms throughout the season.
 - There will be a fee for replacement jerseys.
3. Shorts may not be the same color as flags.
4. It will be the responsibility of each participant or parent to have their uniform washed following each day's activity.
5. Games will take place on either a Monday or Wednesday evenings. A game schedule will be distributed prior to the season and can also be found at www.harrisonburgva.gov/football
6. All games will take place on the football field at the Smithland Athletic Complex.
7. Parents/guardians are responsible for the supervision of their children that accompany them to league activities.

Article 10: Game Cancellations or Postponements

1. An email will be sent out to all participants. Please make sure the league administrator is provided with an active working email.
2. For inclement weather notifications via social media, please use the following resources:
 - Facebook: www.facebook.com/HPRathletics
 - Twitter: www.twitter.com/HburgParks

Article 11: Team Selection

1. It is our effort to place participants on their team based on which school they attend or will attend. Adjustments may need to occur based on the number of teams, registration numbers from each school, and an effort to balance out ages.
2. Participants cannot request to be on any team.
3. Volunteer coaches, who have children in the program, will be automatically assigned their own children.
4. Siblings will be placed together on the same team.