

MANHATTAN PARKS AND RECREATION

By-Laws

As of 7/18/2017

Age/Grade:

1. To be eligible players must be enrolled in grades 1 through 6
2. Divisions will be organized as follows:
 - a. 1st/2nd grade
 - b. 3rd/4th grade
 - c. 5th/6th grade
3. Participants must play in their respective grade division with the exception that participant may play up in age group if approved by the participants guardians and the Recreation Supervisor if currently eligible.
 - a. Participants may NOT play down an age group for any reason.

Team Organization

1. Before any child is permitted to participate in the flag football program, they must be registered with the Parks and Recreation Department. A registration period will be established before each season begins. A participant who does not sign up during this period will be placed on a waiting list and assigned to a team as spots become available. Exception: A participant who moves into the Manhattan area will be assigned to a team by the MPRD staff.
2. Once a team is established, each child will remain on this team. No player may switch teams' under any circumstances except when approved by the MPRD Recreation Supervisor.
3. Family members who are eligible for the same league may be placed on the same team for family convenience.
4. Head Coach/Assistant Coach Assignment Policy: Parents who volunteer as a head coach or assistant coach will have his/her child/children place on their team.
 - a. There can be a maximum of one head coach and two assistant coaches per team
5. A player is not eligible for participation until all of the following occur:
 - a. A player registration form is completed, signed by a parent/guardian and submitted to the Parks and Recreation offices during regular business hours.
 - b. The registration fee is paid.
 - c. The player is approved for participation and assigned to a team by the Recreation Supervisor in charge of the program.
 - d. Penalty: If a team uses a player who has not met each of these requirements, any game in which that player participated will be forfeited.

Protests:

1. There will be no protests allowed in MPRD Youth Flag Football. Any rule infractions must be resolved before play continues in accordance to flag football laws. The decisions made by game officials and field supervisors are final.

Unsportsmanlike Behavior:

1. May result in penalties being imposed upon the offending individual, including coaches, participants and/or spectators. Penalties may include banishment from further participation in Recreation Department activities. Penalties will be decided by a committee made up of the Director of Parks and Recreation, the Recreation Superintendent and the Recreation Supervisor in charge of the activity. The set procedure is further clarified in the Parks and Recreation Department's policy manual, available at MPRD offices.

2. Each coach/team is subject to a sportsmanship evaluation performed by a site supervisor following each game.

Introduction and General Rules

1. Any phase of the program or game not covered herein will be governed by the football rules of the National Federation of State High School Associations. These rules are referred to below as the "High School Rules."
2. **Substitutions and Participation**
 - a. If a player does not attend a minimum of one complete practice during the week before a game, his/her coach may ask the Recreation Supervisor to designate the player as ineligible for that game. The Recreation Supervisor must give approval for a player to be ineligible.
 - b. All eligible team members who are present for a game must have a starting position on offense or defense. Starting position means that they will play a maximum amount of time at that position. A position only on punting is not considered a starting position. Also, a "messenger" who alternates plays only on offense or defense is not considered to have a starting position. A player must alternate on both offense and defense to be considered to have a starting position.
3. **Penalties**
 - a. All 15 yard penalties in the High School Rules will be 9 yards in this program. All 10 yard penalties will be 6 yards; all 5 yard penalties will be 3 yards.
 - b. Either the coaches or the team captain will decide whether to accept or decline a penalty.
 - c. If a team calls time-out to discuss a penalty with the officials and it is discovered that an official misapplied or misinterpreted a rule or incorrectly measured a penalty distance, the time-out will not be charged against the team. (See Rule I-6 and High School Rule 3-5-11)
4. **Tie Games**
 - a. Tie Games will not be broken.
 - b. A game that is tied at the end of the second half will be recorded as a tie game.
5. **Appealing an Official's Ruling**
 - a. A coach or player directed by his coach may request a conference for the purpose of the coach and the referee reviewing a decision that may have resulted from misapplication or misinterpretation of the rules. THE ACCURACY OF AN OFFICIAL'S JUDGMENT IS NOT SUBJECT TO REVIEW. The request must be made prior to the time the ball becomes live following the play to be reviewed or before both teams have left the playing field at the end of the half. The referee will confer with the coach at the sideline in front of his team box. The referee's decision may not be appealed further.
 - b. Unless the conference takes place at the end of a half, a time-out must be taken for the conference. If the conference results in the official's ruling being altered, the time-out is charged to the official. If the official's ruling prevails, the team requesting the conference will be charged with a time-out. If, in this situation, a team has no timeouts remaining, the team will be assessed a delay-of-game penalty (3 yards).

Definitions

1. **Fumble** - any loss of player possession other than by kicking, passing, or handing the ball.
2. **Running Through a Deflagger** - running into and running over a defensive player.
3. **Hurdling** – is an attempt by a player to jump with one or both feet or knees foremost over an opponent who is contacting the ground with no part of his body except one or both feet.

4. **Blocking** - All players are limited to the blocking techniques listed below and in Rule IX.
 - a. *Brush Block* - a block thrown from a standing position using the chest area with no shoulder contact.
 - b. *Open Hand Block* – an open hand block is a block using the hands to ward off or push an opponent. The hands must be open and in advance of the elbows and the fingers extended. See High School Rule 2-3-2b
5. **Scoring**
 - a. Touchdown - 6 points
 - b. Safety - 2 points. (See rule VII-6)
 - c. Extra points - One point is scored for running or passing the ball from the 3 yard line. Two points are scored for running or passing the ball from the 6 yard line.
6. **Deflagging** - the act by which a defensive player removes the flag belt, or a flag from the belt of an offensive player. Deflagging is the only method that may be used to intentionally stop a runner's progress.
7. **Tackling** - the use of hands, arms, or body by a defensive player in an attempt to hold a runner or throw a runner to the ground. **Tackling is not allowed in flag football.**
8. **Roughing the Passer** - any contact with the passer other than in an attempt to deflag him. Blocking the pass does not allow the defender to contact the passer.
9. **Line to Gain** - in this program, the line to gain for a first down is the marked yard line in advance of the point of the ball when it is placed for first down unless there is a penalty. The ball is on a yard line if the ball breaks the plane of the yard line when it is declared dead at the end of a play.

The Field

1. The field will be 70 yards (60 yards plus two 5-yard end zones) by 35 yards.
2. Yard lines and goal lines will be marked.
3. The marked yard lines starting with each goal line will be designated as follows: 10, 20, and 30 yard lines.

Equipment

1. In the 1st/2nd and 3rd/4th grade, a "Pee Wee" sized ball will be used, and in 5th/6th grade leagues, an official "Junior" sized ball will be used. The Parks and Recreation Department will provide game balls at the playing field.
2. **Player Equipment**
 - a. No hard head protector or facemasks will be worn.
 - b. Knee and elbow pads may be worn.
 - c. A player wearing a cast may play by meeting the following requirement: Any hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, etc.) on the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, or upper arm unless padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½" thick.
 - d. Shoes will be tennis shoes, sneakers, soccer shoes, or any shoe with short, dull rubber cleats. All metal, plastic, or long rubber spikes or cleats are prohibited. The legality of shoes will be determined by discretion of any official.
 - e. It is REQUIRED that no player wear any shorts that have pockets.
 - f. No object or clothing may be worn which could confuse opposing players or cause injury to either the wearer or another player. This includes jewelry, large metal buckles, steel caps or plates on shoes, watch bands, equipment used in tackle football, and clothing that because of color or design hinders or confuses deflaggers. This also includes pants or shorts which are the same colors as the flags or which have a stripe or stripes which are the same color as the flags.
 - g. Mouthpieces:

- 1) It is strongly recommended by the Manhattan Parks and Recreation Department that players wear a protective mouthpiece. Coaches should encourage players to purchase them at any sporting goods store.
- 2) The mouthpiece must not be attached to the player in any way such as by a string around the player's neck.

3. Flags

- a. Flags must be worn on the hips. When a player's flags are unreasonably out of position, it is the responsibility of the officials and the player's coach to correct the position as soon as a dead ball period occurs. The ball should not be put in play until the flags are positioned properly.
- b. The free end of the belt must hang freely in front portion of the players body.
- c. Official Manhattan Parks and Recreation Department belts and flags will be provided for each game. Practice belts will not be allowed in a game.
- d. Any modification of the flags or their attachment to the belt is illegal and considered to be an unfair act. See High School Rule 9-9 for penalty.

4. Jerseys

- a. Team shirts must be tucked into trousers.
- b. If opposing teams' jerseys are similar enough to cause confusion in play or officiating, one team will wear scrimmage vests of a contrasting color. The referee will decide if the vests are to be worn, and a coin toss will determine which team will wear them. The field supervisor will provide the vests.
- c. Team jerseys need not be numbered in accordance with the High School Rules.

Officials' Duties

1. There will be three officials on each field: one referee, one umpire, and one linesman. The referee will be in charge of the field on which he is working. The remaining two officials will be subordinate to him.
 - a. The referee will deliver all warnings, make all ejections of players and coaches, and confer with the field supervisor on problems and decisions. If another official believes it is necessary to warn or eject a coach or player, he will confer with the referee who will make the decision.
 - b. The linesman will be responsible for control of the spot of the ball during the game.
2. A supervisor will be present at the field to check out game equipment and to record scores. If any questions arise during the games, see the supervisor.

Time Factors

1. The game shall consist of four (4) quarters. Each quarter will consist of 12 plays for 1st/2nd grade and 15 plays for 3rd-6th. Each down where the ball is legally snapped, will count as one of the numbered plays, regardless of penalty after the snap. Those plays with a penalty before the snap will not count as one of the numbered plays. Extra point attempts will not be counted as one of the plays in a quarter.
2. Halftime is five minutes in length.
3. A quarter must be extended by one extra unnumbered down, except for unsportsmanlike or non-player fouls, if during the last down of the quarter one of the following occurred:
 - a. There was a foul by either team and the penalty is accepted (unless the foul includes a loss-of-down provision)
 - b. There was a double foul.
 - c. There was an inadvertent whistle and the down is to be replayed.
 - d. If a, b, or c occurs during the extra unnumbered down, the procedure is repeated.
4. If a touchdown is scored on the last play of a quarter, the "point after touchdown" will be run as part of that quarter. This PAT will be an unnumbered down.

Exception: The PAT will not be allowed after the final play of the game, unless the point(s) will have a determining factor in the outcome of the game.

5. Play Clock- After the referee gives the ready for play signal the offense will have forty (40) seconds to snap the ball. Failure to snap the ball before the play clock expires will result in a delay of game penalty.

PENALTY: Article 5- Delay of game (3 yards- Dead ball)

6. Each team is allowed **two timeouts per half**. Any team member, including a coach, may call a timeout. Timeouts do not carry over.

Ball Dead, Ball In Play

1. Any official of the game may declare the ball dead by signal or whistle.
2. The ball will be placed midway between the sidelines for each snap. After a dead ball, the ball will next be put in play at a spot in line with the spot where the ball was declared dead unless moved to another spot midway between the sidelines by an incomplete pass, penalty, etc.
3. A cone will be placed one yard from the football at the new line of scrimmage for each play to indicate the neutral zone. Neither offensive nor defensive players are permitted to enter this zone until the ball has been snapped.
4. A live ball becomes dead as a result of the following acts:
 - a. When the ball goes out of bounds in flight and strikes the ground, a player who is out of bounds, or an obstruction which is out of bounds.
 - b. When any part of the ball carrier, other than his/her hands or feet, touches the ground.
 - c. When a ball carrier is deflagged (see rule II-6).
 - d. When a forward pass touches the ground or is caught simultaneously by opponents (dual possession).
 - e. When a player without a flag belt, or without one or more flags, obtains possession of the ball. The ball is declared dead at the spot where possession was obtained.
 - f. Any time the ball touches the ground after the snapper first moves the ball during the snap. The ball is declared dead at the spot where it touched the ground. EXCEPTIONS:
 - This rule does **NOT** apply to a ball that has been legally kicked during a punt. (See Rule VII-4)
 - This rule does **NOT** apply on a declared punt.
 - If a ball carrier fumbles the ball forward so that it first touches the ground in his opponent's end zone, the ball will be declared dead at the point where the runner lost possession. If the ball was fumbled forward intentionally, there may be a foul for an illegal forward pass.
4. A live loose ball may be recovered or caught by any player. Whether the ball belongs to that player and the ball remains alive or becomes dead depends on the play that caused the loose ball.
5. Touchback/Safety. The team whose goal line is involved shall put the ball in play on its own 10-yard line by a snap after a touchback or safety.

Position and Action During The Snap

1. A down must start with a legal snap. An illegal snap causes the ball to remain dead.
2. The ball can be snapped between the snapper's legs, or the snapper can take a position on either side of the ball and snap it to an individual in the backfield.
3. The ball must be snapped backwards and in a continuous motion.

PENALTY: Articles 1,2,3 – Snap Infraction (3 yards – dead ball foul)
4. All players are eligible to receive the snap if they are two yards off the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.

EXCEPTION: The quarterback can receive a direct hand-to-hand snap from the snapper.

PENALTY: Article 4 – Illegal Procedure (3 yards – live ball foul)

5. The offensive team can position their players anywhere they so desire as long as they are on or behind their line of scrimmage. There are no requirements for a minimum or maximum number of offensive players on the line of scrimmage.

PENALTY : Articles 5 - Illegal Procedure (3 yards – live ball foul).

6. Only one (1) player may be in motion at the time of the snapping of the ball and the individual must be moving laterally or away from the opponent's goal line.

PENALTY : Article 6 - Illegal Motion (3 yards – live ball foul).

7. After a huddle or shift, all offensive players must come to an absolute stop and must remain stationary simultaneously without movement of hands, feet, head, or body for at least one second before the snap, or before a player goes in motion.

PENALTY : Article 7 - Illegal Shift (3 yards – live ball foul).

Blocking

1. Only brush blocks and open hand blocks may be used by all players.
2. All brush and open hand blocks must meet the following requirements:
 - a. The blocker must never strike a blow with any part of the body and must never throw an elbow or forearm.
 - b. At no time may the blocker make contact with the ground except with the feet. The blocker must remain on his/her feet at all times while blocking.
 - c. The blocker must not initiate contact with an opponent above the opponent's shoulders.
 - d. A blocker must not grasp, pull, or hold an opponent in any way.

PENALTY: Articles a, b, and c - Personal foul - 9 yards. If the infraction was flagrant, the offending player will be warned. If the same player commits another flagrant foul under Articles a, b, or c, that player will be ejected from the game. Article d - Holding - 6 yards.

3. **Brush Blocking**

- a. The brush block is thrown from a standing position using the chest. Contact is made by the chest area, not the shoulder.
- b. During a brush block, elbows must be kept against the body and NOT extended. The hands must be kept on the jersey.
- c. A brush block may be used anywhere on the field by any player.

4. **Open Hand Blocking**

- a. An open hand block is a block using the hands to ward off or push an opposing player. The hands must be open and in advance of the elbows and the fingers extended.
- b. An open hand block may be used anywhere on the field by any player.

PENALTY: Sections 3 and 4 - Illegal use of hands or arms - 6 yards.

Deflagging

1. The deflagger must take the flag belt from the ball carrier by playing the flag and not the ball carrier.
 - a. A defender cannot tackle or hold a ball carrier until the flag belt can be removed, or place the arms around a ball carrier.
 - b. A defender cannot run through the ball carrier or use unnecessary roughness to remove or attempt to remove flagbelts.
 - c. A defender must not block or push a ball carrier out of bounds to stop the runner's progress.
 - d. Deflagging by diving for the flags is allowed if the deflagger does not make excessive contact with the ball carrier.

PENALTY: Any infraction of Section 1 - Personal foul - 9 yards.

NOTE: If there is only one defender between the ball carrier and the goal line and that defender commits a foul as outlined in Section 1, the ball will be placed on the defense's one yard line, and it will be a first down.

2. Deflagging the passer. Defenders may not contact the passer except in an attempt to deflag him/her. Contact other than in an attempt to deflag is roughing the passer. A defender may attempt to block a pass but may not contact the passer in any way either before, during, or after the block or attempted block.

PENALTY: Section 2- Roughing the passer - 9 yards and first down.

3. The deflagger shall hold the flag high over his/her head until the ball carrier takes it back.

PENALTY: Section 3 - Delay of game - 3 yards.

4. A player may not deflag an opponent unless that opponent is in possession of the ball or faking as though in possession or has just released or lost possession of the ball.

PENALTY: Section 4 – Unsportsmanlike conduct - 9 yards. Also a first down if the penalty is on the defense.

5. Stripping of the ball from the ball carrier is not permitted.

The Ball Carrier

1. Guarding the flags or otherwise hindering the deflagger:

- a. The ball carrier may not use the hands or arms in any way either to ward off the defender or to hinder the defender from reaching for the flagbelt.

PENALTY: Article a. – Flag guarding

- Intentionally guarding the flags or hindering the defender - 9 yards.
- Unintentionally guarding the flags - the ball will be placed at the spot of the foul. The down will count as if the flag was pulled at the spot of the foul.

- b. A ball carrier must not have a belt end hanging loose so that it can be gripped as a flag.

- c. A player must not have the jersey hanging out so that it is gripped by a defender reaching for the flag.

- d. A player must not wear the flags unreasonably out of position. The flags must be worn on or reasonably near the hips.

PENALTY: Articles b, c, and d - Flag Violation - The foul occurs when the belt end or shirt is actually gripped by the defender or a defender fails in an attempt to remove a flag which is out of position. The ball will be placed at the spot of the foul. The down will count as if the flagbelt was pulled at the spot of the foul.

2. The runner may spin off a defender attempting to deflag him.

3. The ball carrier may NOT hurdle to avoid being deflagged. (see rule II-3)

PENALTY: Section 2 – Hurdling (Personal foul) - 9 yards.

3. An open field ball carrier must attempt to avoid a defender. The ball carrier must not run over or through a defender.

PENALTY: Section 4 - Personal foul - 9 yards.

Kicking the Ball

1. For all grades there will be no kickoffs. Instead, the ball will be placed on the 20 yard line of the team taking possession. This rule is in place of any kickoffs.

2. **Punts**

- a) The only scrimmage kick allowed in this program is a punt.

- b) All punts must be announced to the officials. The officials must inform the defensive team. Fake punts are not allowed.

- c) At the snap, the kicker must stand no less than five yards behind the snapper. The kicker must receive the snap and kick in a continuous motion. The kicker is allowed a reasonable number of steps before kicking (usually no more than 4) but may not delay the kick in any other way.
 PENALTY: Articles b and c:
- Not announcing punt or using fake punt – Unsportsmanlike conduct - 9 yards from previous spot (spot of snap).
 - Intentionally delaying the kick after the snap – Unsportsmanlike conduct - 9 yards from the previous spot. If the kicker delays kicking the ball, the referee will immediately blow the ball dead when the delay takes place.
 - Kicker not five yards behind the snapper at the snap - Illegal procedure - 3 yards.
- d) On punts, only one kicking team member may enter the neutral zone immediately after the ball is snapped. This one player can be anywhere on or behind the kicking team's scrimmage line. No other player, either on the kicking or punt receiving team, may enter the neutral zone until the ball is kicked.
 PENALTY: Illegal procedure – 3 yards
- e. The punt receiving team must have 4 or more players within four yards of the defensive line of scrimmage at the snap.
 PENALTY: Illegal procedure - 3 yards.

Conduct of Players, Coaches, and Others

1. Players

- a. Any rough tactics such as attempting to run over or batter down an opponent will be penalized as unnecessary roughness.
 NOTE: Flag football is a game of skill both offensively and defensively. It is not a game where rough tactics are to be used. Plays and tactics should be designed to employ speed and deception rather than violent conduct.
- b. No defensive or offensive player may initiate direct contact to the head of an opponent.
 PENALTY: Articles a and b - Personal foul - 9 yards and possible ejection at the discretion of the official. No appeals of this judgment will be allowed.
- c. Team members, including assistant coaches, must stay between the 10 and 20 yard lines on their end of the field except for substitutions or playing in the game.
- d. After the ball is marked ready-for-play and before the snap, each offensive player must momentarily be within 12 yards of the spot where the ball is to be snapped.
 PENALTY: Articles c and d - Illegal procedure - 3 yards.
- e. One player may accompany a coach who is following the team up and down the sidelines.

2. Coaches

- a. A team is limited to three coaches or adult supervisors during a game.
- b. During all games in the 1st/2nd and 3rd/4th grade division, one coach may be on the field with the team. In the 5th/6th grade division **NO** coaches will be allowed on the field with the team during play.
- c. Authorized Conferences:
- 1) There are two types of authorized conferences permitted during charged time-outs, during the intermission between halves, and following an extra point try or safety.
 - a) One or more coaches and one or more players on the field directly in front of the team bench area.
 - b) One coach may enter the field at his team's huddle, which will be on his team's side of the neutral zone within 12 yards of where the ball is spotted and midway between the sidelines.

- 2) During a dead ball which is not a charged time-out and which is not between halves or after an extra point try or safety, ONE offensive player may come to the sideline to confer with the coach or coaches. This player must be within 12 yards of the ball when the ball is next snapped.
PENALTY: Conferring player not within 12 yards of the ball at the snap - Illegal formation - 3 yards.
- e. Visual Aids:
 - 1) Coaches may provide drawn/hand written, printed or electronic visual aids to show their players while in the huddle.
 - 2) Coaches may provide drawn/hand written or printed visual aids for their players. These visual aids may be carried on or off the field by substitutes or kept by one or more players on the field during play. The players may show the visual aids to each other. The size of the visual aids is limited to 3 by 5 inches.
 - 3) When a coach is legally on the field during 1st/2nd grade and 3rd/4th grade games, and during authorized conferences, Coaches may provide drawn/hand written, printed or electronic visual aids to show their players while in the huddle.
 - 4) If, in the opinion of the referee, use of visual aids causes an unusually long delay, the offending team will be penalized for delay of game.
PENALTY: First offense – warning. Second and subsequent offenses – 3 yards

Special Rules

1. OFFENSE

- a. All players on offense are eligible receivers/ball carriers.
- b. Prior to the snap, all players must be set for at least one second before the ball is snapped, or before a player goes in motion. This is the same as High School Rule 7-5-7.
PENALTY: Article b – Illegal Procedure – 3 yards. Article c – Illegal Shift / Illegal Motion – 3 yards
- c. Hurry-up offenses are NOT permitted in any division. The referee reserves the right to slow the game if necessary.

2. DEFENSE

- a. Defensive players can line up anywhere on or behind the defensive line of scrimmage.
- b. There are not a specified number of players that must be on the defensive line of scrimmage.
NOTE: This means that linebackers and defensive backs are ALLOWED to blitz.

3. NUMBER OF PLAYERS NECESSARY TO START AND/OR CONTINUE A GAME

- a) There must be 5 or more eligible team members present to start a game.
- b) If a team has fewer than 5 players present at game time, it will be a forfeit. When the game begins with 5 players, a late- arriving player may enter the game during any dead ball period. The referee must be notified when a late-arriving player is added to the line-up.
PENALTY: Less than 5 players at the start of the game - forfeit of game.
- c) Number of players necessary to continue a game:
 - A team must forfeit if for any reason there are less than 5 players available and eligible to continue a game. EXCEPTION: If a player is temporarily removed from the game because of injury, a team may play with 4 players for one play. If the injured player is able to return to the game after one play, the game will continue. If the injured player cannot continue, the game will result in a forfeit.

4. Unsportsmanlike behavior may result in penalties being imposed upon the offending individual, including coaches, participants, or spectators. Penalties may include banishment from further participation in Recreation Department activities. Penalties will be decided by a committee made up of the Recreation Director, the Recreation Supervisor, and the Recreation Coordinator in charge of the activity.

5. Neither scores nor standings will be kept for the 1st/2nd grade division.
6. Scores will be kept for 3rd/4th and 5th/6th grade divisions. Standings will not be kept.
7. Mercy Rule- (3rd-6th grade only) After one team is winning by thirty-five (35) points or more at any time after the start of the second half, the losing teams will get two offensive possessions to continue regulation play. If they do not score after the first or second offensive possession the game will end.
 - a. Each offensive series will begin at the team's 20 yard line. If the team fails to score in their first possession, they will go back to their 20 yard line for their second possession.
 - b. Any change of possessions will be a dead ball. (ex. interceptions)
 - c. If the losing teams scores in either offensive possessions the game will resume under normal rules provided that corresponding quarter play limit hasn't been reached.