



HarrisburgNC

PARKS & RECREATION

**Flag Football Rules
Fall 2022
TOWN OF HARRISBURG
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

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PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of the Harrisburg Parks and Recreation Athletic Program is to provide the citizens of Harrisburg the opportunity to play organized sports. The leagues will promote, regulate, develop, and conduct competitive play, will encourage sportsmanship, and good conduct among participants, and it will develop such rules and regulations that will be for the general good of the leagues. At all times the health and welfare of each individual will be taken into consideration. It should be clear that participation in Harrisburg Parks and Recreation Athletic Programs is a privilege and NOT an inherent right of an individual. Those who persist in exhibiting a negative attitude toward the program shall be asked to refrain from participating or attending any league activities particularly after they have been counseled and given extended opportunities to change their conduct. This type of action distracts from the positive aspects of the program and the department has an obligation to protect the interests of those who participate within the League's Rules & Regulations.

HARRISBURG YOUTH FOOTBALL OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Harrisburg Youth Football Program shall be to implement firmly in the minds of the children of the community the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage and reverence. These objectives will be achieved by providing supervised competitive athletic games. The supervisors shall bear in mind that the attainment of exceptional athletic skill or the winning of games is secondary. The development of future citizens is of prime importance.

A league will be formed in the following age categories:

Boys & Girls (Ages 5-6)

ORGANIZATION – STRUCTURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.01 Recreation Department and Staff:

Shall be responsible for determining and administering all program related fees. Shall be totally responsible for scheduling all league games. Shall be the chief supervising body of all teams under the Harrisburg Parks and Recreation Youth Football Program and reserves the right to suspend any team member, manager or coach whose conduct is considered as detrimental to the best interest of Harrisburg Youth Football. The department shall also be responsible for ruling on all matters not herein stated in the rules and regulations.

The Recreation Department Staff shall have the following additional responsibilities:

- 1) To review all matters concerning complaints, suggestions, violations and subject concerns of stated program Rules and Regulations.
- 2) To resolve all matters concerning the interpretation of the accepted playing rules.
- 3) To render decisions and rulings on all league matters.

TEAMS

2.01 Flag (5-6) teams will be composed of players age five to six.

ELIGIBLE PLAYERS

- 3.01 A Flag (5-6) player must be five years of age on or before July 31 of the current year, and shall not have turned seven years of age on or before July 31 of the current year.
- 3.02 Players are eligible who reside inside and outside of Cabarrus County. Player's legal residence is determined by the residence of their legal guardian or parent that has primary legal custody of said player at time of registration.
- 3.03 All players new and old will be drafted every season.
- 3.04 All participants will be required to pay a participation fee as adopted by the Harrisburg Town Council.
- 3.05 The Parks and Recreation staff shall have the authority to suspend any team member, whose conduct is considered as detrimental to the best interest of Harrisburg Youth Flag Football.

OFFICIAL EQUIPMENT

- 4.01 Each player must wear a belt with two flags of a color. A flag must extend down each side of the player. Flags must be 14-20 inches long and 2 inches wide. Belt must be tight to prevent the flags from being turned around.
- 4.02 Teams will be dressed with numbered T-shirts. Shirts must be tucked in at all times and cannot be worn over the flags.

- 4.03 Any type of pants may be worn. However, the color must be in contrast with the color of his/her flag.
- 4.04 Tennis shoes or shoes with molded rubber cleats are permitted.
- 4.05 All players are required to wear a mouthpiece.
- 4.06 The official football will be a peewee size football.
- 4.07 Jewelry that includes, but not limited to earrings, necklaces, bracelets, watches, and other body adornments that could be deemed dangerous will not be allowed. Those players with a medical condition that need to wear medical alert tags in the form of bracelets or necklaces will be allowed to do so. If worn, the medical alert tags should be taped to the body so that the medical alert information remains visible.

PLAYING RULES

5.01 Playing Field and Time

- A. The playing field shall be 60 yards in length and 25 yards in width. End zones will be 10 yards in length.
- B. Games will consist of four, ten-minute quarters. The clock will run continuously except for time-outs and injuries.
- C. Each team will have **one time-out per half**. Time outs shall consist of **one** minute each.
- D. Time allotted between each quarter shall be one minute and five minutes between halves.

5.02 The Game

- A. The game is played between two teams consisting of seven players each.
 - 1. Any offensive set will be permissible, provided there are at least three players on the line of scrimmage prior to the snap. All players are eligible to catch a forward pass.
 - 2. The defensive team may choose any formation and there are no limits to the number of rushers on defense. The defense must line up a minimum of 2 yards off the line of scrimmage before the snap. If the ball is inside the 5 yard line the defense must line up a minimum of 1 yard off the line of scrimmage. **The defensive team may not cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is handed off, passed or until the quarterback is outside of the guard box.**

The guard box is determined by the original position of the offensive guards prior to the ball being snapped.

PENALTY – Dead ball and the play will start over.

- B. Each offensive series will begin 10 yards from the offensive team's goal line

- C. A team will have **30 seconds** to put the ball in play after the ready signal.
- D. The ball must be snapped from between the centers legs.
- E. At the conclusion of each down, the referee will place the ball in the center of the field.
- F. There are no fumble recoveries. **The ball becomes dead immediately and is put in play from the spot of the fumble. If the defense recovers the fumble, the ball goes back to the offense.**
- G. Interceptions by the defense are live balls until the play is over. Possession will belong to the intercepting team with the ball being placed on the team's 20 yard line unless the intercepted results in a touchdown.

5.03 Scoring

- A. Touch down – 6 points
- B. Points after touchdown
 - 1. One point from the three yard line
 - 2. Two points from the eight yard line
- C. Safety – Two points.
- D. Tie games – Each team will have four downs from the opponent's 15 until one-team scores more than the other.

5.04 De-Flagging – Downed Ball

- A. A player is considered down when an opposing player removes one of his/her flags. The ball will be played from the point where the ball was when the flag was removed.
- B. The defensive player shall immediately hold the flag above his or her head and stand still.
- C. Physical tackling, holding, stiff-arming and deliberate roughness will not be permitted at anytime. **PENALTY:** 10-yard penalty from the point of infraction if the defensive team does not choose to accept the result of the play.
- D. If a ball carrier slips causing any part of their body to touch the ground or puts their knee down, they will be considered to be down at that point.
- E. The ball carrier may not protect his flag in any way. Any form of straight arming or flag guarding with the forearm or ball, running with their head down, dipping their shoulder, or purposely running into a defender is not allowed. **PENALTY:** A 10-yard penalty enforced from the point of infraction.
- F. A ball carrier cannot cover his/her flags with his shirt nor have both flags on the same side. **PENALTY:** The defense can accept the result of the play or a 5-yard penalty enforced from the line of scrimmage. If a touchdown is scored, it will be nullified.
- G. The runner shall be prohibited from contacting an opponent with extended hand or arm. This includes “stiff arming”
- H. If a defensive player pulls a receiver's flag before they catch the pass, the pass will be complete to where they might have caught the ball.
- I. If an offensive player knocks their flag off before catching the pass, the ball is dead at that point.

- J. Runners may not leave their feet to dive or jump over a player. The play is dead at that point.
- K. Defensive players may not intentionally leave their feet at any time. Defensive players may not run over, push or pull a blocker away from them. They may push him sideways if they get past the blocker but cannot push the blocker down.
PENALTY: The offensive team can accept the result of the play or a 5-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage.

5.05 Blocking

- A. A blocker must be on their feet at all times. **No four point stances are allowed except for the center.** Players may line up with their hands on their knees or a 3 point stance. **(Warning and correction.)**
- B. A blocker cannot use his hands. Blocking will be by **SCREENING ONLY.** That is, a blocker must hinder a defender's movement through positioning rather than body contact. Blockers must keep their hands closed against their chest with elbows extended out to the side. Arm extension is not permitted. While incidental contact may occur, blocking/pushing penalties will be called against the player who initiates the contact. **PENALTY:** 5-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage if the defensive team does not choose to accept the result of the play.
- A. Cross body and roll blocking are not permitted. **PENALTY:** 5-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage if the defensive team does not choose to accept the result of the play.
- B. There will be no "pick" blocking during a pass play.
- C. The defensive player may not use any "bump and run" tactics on a receiver. If the defensive player causes any contact, it will be automatic pass interference regardless if the ball is in the air or not.
- D. Down field – blocker must pull up and stop. No screen blocking all the way down the field.

5.06 Additional Rules

- A. All offensive and defensive penalties are 5 yards and are administered according to the high school rulebook. Unsportsmanlike conduct penalties are 10 yards.
- B. Each team will be allowed to have **one** coach on the field. The coach on the field **MAY NOT AT ANYTIME DURING THE PLAY DO ANY COACHING!** Each coach on the field must back up behind their line of scrimmage 15 yards, before the quarterback starts his signal calling. **The coaches are there *only* for organization purposes.** **PENALTY:** One warning and a 5-yard penalty. The next infraction the coach will be restricted to the sideline for the rest of the game and no other coach may replace them on the field.

FORFEITURE

- 6.01 A team failing to field at least five eligible players at the start of the game shall forfeit that game.
- 6.02 If a team has six eligible players present at game time, they must start play. If both teams have seven players and both coaches agree, they may play seven versus seven.
- 6.03 There will be no grace period, players should be present and ready to play at the scheduled game time.
- 6.04 Playing ineligible players shall result in forfeiture of the game.
- 6.05 If the preceding game ends early, the next scheduled game can only begin early with the approval of **both** team coaches. **If approval is not issued, game time will immediately revert to the original scheduled game time.**

PROTEST

- 7.01 There will be no protests.

COACHES

- 8.01 Only coaches who have been certified and approved by the Harrisburg Parks and Recreation Department to coach youth football during the current year will be allowed to be on the field during practices and games. All others will be asked to leave. A signed coach's code of conduct is required and a criminal background check will be performed on each coaching applicant. Coaches are required to wear their ID badge at all practices and games.
- 8.02 A person must be at least 18 years of age to be considered for a coaching position for the Harrisburg Parks and Recreation Department.
- 8.03 The coaching staff shall consist of no more than **ONE Head Coach** and **TWO Assistants** in the team area at game time. If present, the 3 coaches must be the ones that are listed in the official league program. Under special circumstances other coaches will be allowed to fill in as substitutes if they have filled out the proper paper work and have been approved by the Parks and Recreation Manager prior to the practice or game in question.
- 8.04 All coaches shall be approved annually by the Parks and Recreation Manager and shall be responsible for the selection of their teams and for their actions on the field.

- 8.05 The Parks and Recreation Staff or volunteer coordinator shall have the authority to suspend any coach whose conduct is considered as detrimental to the best interest of the Harrisburg Youth Football League.
- 8.06 Any coach expelled from a game must be reinstated through the Parks and Recreation Staff prior to entering the next scheduled team game. Failure to comply will result in automatic expulsion from the Youth Football Program for the remainder of the season.
- 8.07 All expelled coaches will forfeit their right to coach in two consecutive games implemented immediately. The offending coach after being ejected must leave the park and will not be able to return until after the entire two game suspensions has been served.
- 8.08 If a coach is ejected, the ejection will stand regardless of the circumstances. This includes protests.
- 8.09 Second offensives will merit automatic expulsion from the Youth Football Program.

PLAYER CONDUCT

- 9.01 The Youth Football Program strives to encourage good, clean, competitive sportsmanship. Therefore, all teams are asked to cooperate with the referees, Parks and Recreation Staff, volunteer coordinators and coaches in bringing about good relationships among teams and spectators.
- 9.02 Parks and Recreation Staff and volunteer coordinators shall have the authority to suspend any team member, whose conduct is considered as detrimental to the best interest of Harrisburg Youth Football.
- 9.03 Any player who is ejected from a game must be reinstated by the Parks and Recreation Staff prior to their next scheduled game. If this is not done, then the player in question will be automatically expelled from the Harrisburg Parks and Recreation Youth Football Program for the remainder of the season.
- 9.04 All expelled players will forfeit their right to play in two consecutive games involving their team, with penalty to be implemented immediately. The two consecutive games include the remainder of the game when the ejection occurred and the teams next scheduled game. If the ejection takes place after the conclusion of the game, the two consecutive game penalty would include the team's next two (2) scheduled games. The offending player after being ejected must leave the bench area for the remainder of the current game. The offending player will not be allowed to attend the second game of their suspension.
- 9.05 If a player is ejected, the ejection will stand regardless of the circumstances. This includes protests.

- 9.06 No profanity or unsportsmanlike conduct will be allowed. Players will be ejected from the game (no warnings).
- 9.07 Throwing equipment (**footballs, flags, water bottles, etc.**) in a flagrant manner will result in the player being ejected from the game.
- 9.08 Objectionable demonstration or dissent at any official's decision by the use of profanity and/or mannerisms may result in expulsion from game and/or premises.
- 9.09 Any violation of 9.06 or 9.08, from spectators and they will be asked to leave the premises.

PLAYER SELECTION

- 10.01 There will be no skills assessment for the flag league, teams will be formed by the volunteer league coordinator placing children on teams to evenly distribute the talent to ensure parity in the league.

SCHEDULES

- 11.01 The Parks and Recreation Department shall be totally responsible for scheduling all league games.
- 11.02 In cases of game postponements due to inclement weather occurring **BEFORE 5:00 pm** on game day, the Cultural and Recreation Services Department will contact all head coaches involved in games for that day.
- 11.03 In cases of unfavorable playing conditions occurring **AFTER 5:00 pm**, teams should report to the game field prepared to play. All decisions to postpone or cancel will be made by game time. Information after 5:00 pm will be available on the Parks and Recreation Department weather hotline. Dial 704-455-2903 or visit www.harrisburgnc.org.
- 11.04 Practice sessions shall be limited to **two** practices per week prior to the opening of scheduled games.
- 11.05 Upon the beginning of scheduled games, practices shall be limited to **one** practice a week.
- 11.06 NO practice session may exceed sixty minutes in duration on a week night and sixty minutes in duration on Saturday's

TOURNAMENT PLAY

12.01 There is no tournament competition in the flag football program.

FIRST AID

13.01 In this day and time with liability being the way it is and lawsuits being very commonplace, treating the injured has become very complicated. Therefore, it is this department's policy not to treat an injured player. If minor bandages are needed, let players administer themselves, unless the coaches are properly trained in first aid. If an injury is more severe, call 911 for assistance.

PLAYER PARTICIPATION POLICY

14.01 The following shall be the minimum play rule for all Harrisburg Parks and Recreation Department flag football teams.

- A. Coaches shall play all participants a similar amount of time. All participants should participate in both halves of the game.
- B. Coaches are encouraged to start, rotate and substitute players liberally for the duration of the game. Each player should experience each position.
- C. Coaches are expected to ensure that all participants participate throughout the game and are also expected to ensure that all participants sit out at some point during the game. No player should play the entire game.

14.02 In the cases of a player missing practices, games, or other disciplinary problems, the coach may not have to meet a player's participation requirement. In such a case, prior to the start of the game, the coach must present to the Cultural and Recreation Services staff his/her reasons for anyone that is not going to meet their playing requirement in the game in question. The Parks and Recreation Staff will make a final decision on playing time for the game in question.

14.04 In the case of a player arriving after the game has already started, the coach does not have to meet that player's participation requirement for that game.

14.05 In the case of a player who becomes a disciplinary problem after the game has started, the head coach can make an immediate appeal to a program coordinator. If that coordinator agrees with the decision the said player may not have to meet their playing requirement for that game.