YMCA OF CORSICANA

Youth Flag Football Rulebook

7-on-7 Recreational League | 8U, 10U & 12U

Effective Fall 2026

YMCA APPROACH

These rules use modern flag-football concepts while preserving the YMCA emphasis on participation, player development, safety, sportsmanship and balanced recreational competition.

PLAY	SAFE	FAIR	GROW
Every child plays offense & defense	Non-contact football	Balanced recreational teams	Skills, character & fun

Rule Authority

YMCA of Corsicana rules govern league play. This rulebook is informed by USA Football's USA Flag 7's rules and NFL FLAG concepts, with local modifications for YMCA recreational play.

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1. Purpose, Philosophy & Rules Authority

YMCA of Corsicana Youth Flag Football is a recreational program designed to develop skills, confidence, teamwork, character and a love of the game. Winning is part of sports, but it does not take priority over safety, sportsmanship, player development or fair participation.

Rules Authority

YMCA of Corsicana generally follows modern 7-on-7 flag-football game concepts, with the recreational modifications contained in this rulebook. When a YMCA rule differs from another flag-football ruleset, this YMCA rulebook controls.

YMCA Sportsmanship

- Both teams will participate in the YMCA Youth Sports Pledge before each game.
- Teams will meet after the game for a sportsmanship handshake or other YMCA-approved closing.
- Players, coaches, officials and spectators are expected to demonstrate respect at all times.

2. Divisions, Rosters & Playing Time

Age Divisions

Divisions are 8U, 10U and 12U based on the current YMCA age chart. The YMCA may combine or adjust divisions when registration numbers require it.

Players on the Field

Games are played 7-on-7. A team may begin or continue with fewer than seven players when necessary, but may not play with fewer than five unless YMCA staff approve an exception to avoid a recreational-league forfeit.

Minimum Playing Time - YMCA Rule

NON-NEGOTIABLE PARTICIPATION STANDARD

Every player must play a minimum of two full quarters per game. At least one full quarter must be played on offense and at least one full quarter must be played on defense.

- Coaches are encouraged to provide playing time beyond the minimum and to rotate players through meaningful opportunities throughout the game.
- Exceptions may be made for injury, illness, disciplinary reasons, late arrival, or at the request of the player/parent.
- The minimum does not guarantee a particular position, number of carries, targets or quarterback snaps.
- Coaches are responsible for tracking and meeting this requirement. YMCA Sports staff may address repeated noncompliance.

3. Field & Game Setup

Field Dimensions

The standard YMCA field is 70 yards long by 30 yards wide: a 50-yard field of play with two 10-yard end zones.

Marker	Purpose
G	Goal line
5	Possession-start line / 5 yards from goal
20	Five yards before midfield - no-run-zone boundary
25	Midfield / line-to-gain
20	Five yards before midfield from opposite direction
5	Possession-start line / 5 yards from opposite goal
G	Goal line

Sideline yardage markers should read: G / 5 / 20 / 25 / 20 / 5 / G. A 7-yard rush marker should also be used behind the line of scrimmage.

Possession & Downs

- There are no kickoffs or punts.
- At the start of each half, after a touchdown/try sequence, and after most changes of possession on downs, the offense begins at its own 5-yard line.
- The offense has four downs to cross midfield. Once it earns the midfield line-to-gain, it receives a new series of four downs to score.
- If the offense fails to cross midfield within four downs, or fails to score after earning midfield within the next four downs, the opposing team begins at its own 5-yard line.
- Interceptions are returnable and the next possession begins where the return ends, subject to the touchback rule in Section 10.

Opening Possession

A pregame coin toss determines first-half possession or direction. The team that begins the game on defense receives the ball to begin the second half. Teams change directions at halftime.

4. Game Timing

Item	YMCA Standard
Game	Four 10-minute quarters
Clock	Running clock
Quarter breaks	1 minute between 1st/2nd and 3rd/4th quarters
Halftime	5 minutes
Timeouts	2 per half, 60 seconds each; no carryover
Play clock	30 seconds
Pass clock	7 seconds

The game clock stops for team timeouts, injuries, official timeouts and other situations the referee determines require a stoppage. A play legally snapped before time expires is allowed to finish.

Play Clock

The offense must snap the ball within 30 seconds after the ball is ready for play. Officials may use reasonable discretion when no visible play clock is available, especially early in the 8U season, but repeated delay should be penalized.

Regular-Season Ties

Regular-season games may end in a tie. Playoff or tournament games that require a winner use the overtime procedure in Section 19.

5. Equipment & Uniforms

- Mouth guards are recommended for all players while on the field.
- No exposed jewelry, watches, bracelets, necklaces or rings.
- No metal cleats or exposed metal on footwear or braces.
- Shorts/pants may not have exposed pockets, belt loops, zippers or hard attachments that interfere with flag pulling.
- YMCA-approved flags must be worn at the hips and must clearly contrast with the player's shorts/pants.
- Jerseys must be tucked in when they hang over or obstruct the flags.
- Flags may not be tied, taped, tucked, altered or manipulated to make them harder to remove.
- The YMCA provides or approves the game ball. Pee-Wee size is used for 8U; Junior size is used for 10U and 12U unless the Director of Sports & Facilities approves another appropriate size.
- Improper equipment should be corrected before participation. Intentional or repeated equipment violations may result in penalty or removal.

6. Offense, Snaps & Passing

- Every play begins with a legal snap from a center to the quarterback. The center is an eligible receiver after the snap.
- The quarterback is the player who first receives possession after the snap.
- The quarterback may move behind the line of scrimmage but may not run across the line of scrimmage with the ball. A defensive rush does not make the quarterback eligible to run.
- Handoffs, pitches and backward passes may occur behind the line of scrimmage except where prohibited by a no-run zone.
- The center may not receive the first handoff, pitch or backward pass immediately after snapping the ball (no center sneak). The center remains eligible to receive a forward pass.

- Only one forward pass may be thrown per down, and it must be released from behind the line of scrimmage.
- A shovel pass traveling forward is a forward pass.
- All players are eligible to receive a legal forward pass.

Seven-Second Pass Clock

The 7-second pass clock begins at the snap. If the quarterback still possesses the ball when seven seconds expires, the play is dead at the previous line of scrimmage and the down is consumed. A legal handoff, pitch or backward pass ends the quarterback pass clock for that play.

7. Running, No-Run Zones & Flag Guarding

Running Plays

A player other than the quarterback may advance the ball after receiving a legal handoff, pitch or backward pass, unless the play begins in a no-run zone.

No-Run Zones - All Divisions

NO-RUN ZONES

No-run zones are the five yards immediately before midfield and the five yards immediately before each goal line. They apply to 8U, 10U and 12U.

- When the ball is spotted in a no-run zone and the offense is advancing toward the applicable line-to-gain or goal line, the play must result in a legal forward pass that crosses the line of scrimmage.
- A handoff, pitch or backward pass does not remove the no-run-zone restriction.
- The defense may still rush the quarterback under the normal rushing rules.
- The quarterback remains subject to the 7-second pass clock and may not cross the line of scrimmage with the ball.

Flag Guarding

- A ball carrier may not intentionally block access to a flag with the hand, arm, elbow, head, shoulder, ball or clothing. Stiff-arming is prohibited.
- Spinning is allowed when controlled and when it does not intentionally obstruct a flag pull.
- A runner may not dive, hurdle, leap or jump forward to gain yardage or avoid a flag pull.
- A player may leave the ground to catch a pass or to avoid a collision.

Non-Contact Play

YMCA Flag Football is non-contact. Blocking, moving screens, tackling, charging, pushing, holding, tripping, stiff-arming and intentional obstruction are prohibited. Offensive players without the ball may not intentionally impede a defender or run alongside the ball carrier to create a moving screen. Incidental contact is judged by the officials and is not automatically a foul.

8. Rushing the Quarterback

- The defense may designate one or two rushers on each play in 8U, 10U and 12U.
- Declared rushers must begin at least seven yards behind the line of scrimmage and clearly identify themselves by raising a hand before the snap.
- Declared rushers must have a clear path to the quarterback. Offensive players may not intentionally move into or remain in a declared rusher's direct path to impede the rush.
- Rushers may begin their rush immediately after the snap. Defenders who are not declared rushers may not cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is handed off, pitched or passed backward.
- Once a legal handoff, pitch or backward pass occurs, all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage and pursue the ball carrier.
- A defensive rush never gives the quarterback permission to run across the line of scrimmage.

9. Receiving & Ball Placement

- A receiver must establish possession with at least one foot or another body part inbounds.
- Simultaneous possession by an offensive and defensive player is awarded to the offense.
- Forward progress is determined by the location of the football when the ball carrier's flag is pulled or the runner is otherwise declared down.
- A runner may extend the football forward, but may not dive or jump forward to gain yardage and may not use the ball to guard a flag.

Missing or Detached Flag

If a ball carrier begins the play without a legally attached flag, or a flag falls off before possession, the runner is down when touched by a defender with one hand between the shoulders and knees. Officials should stop the play promptly and use safety-first judgment.

10. Dead-Ball Situations & Turnovers

The ball becomes dead when:

- A flag is legally pulled from the ball carrier.
- The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- The ball carrier's knee, elbow or body other than a hand or foot touches the ground.
- A fumble, muffed snap or backward pass touches the ground. There are no live-ball fumble recoveries.
- A forward pass is incomplete.
- The 7-second pass clock expires.
- A touchdown, safety or successful try is scored.
- An official sounds the whistle.

Bad Snap

A bad or mishandled snap that touches the ground is dead at the spot where the ball first touches the ground. The down counts.

Interceptions

Interceptions are live and returnable. The next offensive series begins at the end of the return. If an interception becomes dead in the intercepting team's own end zone without being returned into the field of play, it is a touchback and the new offense begins at its own 5-yard line.

Inadvertent Whistle

If an official accidentally whistles a live play dead, the referee may place the ball at the point of the whistle or replay the down, whichever is fairest under the circumstances.

11. Scoring

Scoring Play	Points / Rule
Touchdown	6 points
1-point try	From the 5-yard line - pass only
2-point try	From the 10-yard line - run or pass
Safety	2 points; scoring team receives next possession at its own 5
Defensive return on a try	2 points

On a try, an interception or other defensive possession may be returned to the opposite goal line for 2 points. If the return becomes dead before scoring, the try ends.

12. Coaches & Team Responsibilities

- Up to three adult coaches may be designated for a team; only approved coaches may occupy the team area.
- 8U: one approved coach may be on the field to help align and direct players. Once the quarterback begins cadence, the on-field coach must stop giving instructions, remain out of the action and avoid influencing the play.
- 10U and 12U: coaches remain on the sideline during live play.
- Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their assistant coaches, players and team sideline.
- Coaches must follow the YMCA minimum-playing-time requirement and recreational philosophy.
- Coaches may respectfully ask for a rules clarification. Judgment calls are final and are not subject to prolonged argument.
- Coaches may not verbally abuse, intimidate, threaten or continually argue with officials, opposing teams, YMCA staff or spectators.

13. Parent & Spectator Conduct

- Cheer positively for players and teams.
- Do not coach from the spectator area in a way that conflicts with the team coach.
- Do not verbally abuse, threaten or harass players, coaches, officials, YMCA staff or other spectators.
- Do not enter the playing field unless directed by an official or YMCA staff member, except for an emergency.
- Keep children, chairs, coolers and equipment safely away from boundary lines and team/official areas.
- YMCA staff may require a spectator to leave for disruptive, threatening or inappropriate conduct.

14. Officials & YMCA Sports Staff

Game Officials

- Officials control the game from the pregame conference until the final score is declared.
- The referee has final authority on rules interpretations, penalties, score and judgment calls during the game.
- Only the head coach or designated team captain may respectfully request a rules clarification.
- Officials are expected to wear approved officiating attire and maintain a professional appearance and demeanor.

YMCA Sports Operations Staff

- Sports Operations staff manage facility operations, safety, equipment, game-day support and spectator/administrative concerns.
- Sports Operations staff do not overturn an official's judgment call.
- Serious coach, player, spectator or officiating concerns may be documented for follow-up by the Director of Sports & Facilities.

15. Practices, Safety & Weather

- Teams may practice no more than two times per week unless the Director of Sports & Facilities approves an exception.
- Practices may not exceed one hour.
- All activities are subject to YMCA heat, lightning, severe-weather and facility safety procedures.
- YMCA staff may delay, suspend or cancel activity when field conditions, weather or safety concerns make play inappropriate.
- Coaches must immediately report significant injuries or safety incidents to YMCA staff.

16. Sportsmanship, Discipline & Mercy Rule

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Profanity, taunting, threats, intentional cheap shots, fighting, repeated arguing and other unsportsmanlike behavior are prohibited. Depending on severity, officials or YMCA staff may issue a warning, penalty, removal or ejection. Serious incidents are subject to additional YMCA review and suspension.

Mercy Rule

- When a team leads by 30 or more points, the leading team may not use a designated rusher while the 30-point margin remains.
- The leading coach must emphasize player and position rotation and use reasonable measures to avoid running up the score while continuing meaningful participation for all players.
- If a team leads by 40 or more points at any time during the second half, the game ends.

17. Penalties

Officials determine whether contact is incidental or illegal. Unless noted as a spot foul, penalties are enforced from the line of scrimmage. The non-offending team may accept or decline a penalty unless enforcement is required for safety or conduct. Repeated, intentional or dangerous fouls may be upgraded to unsportsmanlike conduct or ejection.

Minor / Procedural Fouls

Foul	Enforcement
False start / offensive offside	5 yards from LOS; replay down
Defensive offside	5 yards from LOS; replay down
Delay of game	5 yards from LOS; replay down
Too many players	5 yards from LOS; replay down
Illegal motion / formation	5 yards from LOS; replay down
Repeated improper equipment	5 yards; correct before next play

Offensive Fouls

Foul	Enforcement
Flag guarding	5 yards from spot; loss of down
Illegal forward pass / intentional grounding	5 yards from LOS; loss of down
Blocking, screening, holding or intentionally impeding a rusher	10 yards from spot; loss of down
Charging / intentional contact	10 yards from spot; loss of down
Offensive pass interference	10 yards from LOS; loss of down
Unnecessary roughness	10 yards; loss of down; possible ejection
Unsportsmanlike conduct	10 yards; loss of down; possible ejection

Defensive Fouls

Foul	Enforcement
Illegal rush / blitz	5 yards from LOS; automatic first down
Illegal flag pull before receiver possesses ball	5 yards from spot; automatic first down
Holding / intentional obstruction	10 yards from spot; automatic first down
Defensive pass interference	10 yards from LOS; automatic first down
Roughing the passer	10 yards from LOS; automatic first down
Unnecessary roughness	10 yards; automatic first down; possible ejection
Unsportsmanlike conduct	10 yards; automatic first down; possible ejection

Line-to-Gain After Penalty Enforcement

A first down is awarded only if the ball remains beyond midfield after all accepted live-ball penalties are enforced. If enforcement moves the ball back behind midfield, the offense has not earned a new series.

If the offense crosses midfield and, after enforcement, the ball still remains beyond midfield, the new series is earned. When the accepted foul also carries loss of down, the next play is second down of the new series.

General Penalty Administration

- Dead-ball fouls are administered separately from live-ball fouls.
- When full yardage cannot be enforced because of proximity to a goal line, the referee may enforce half the distance to the goal.
- A game may not end on an accepted defensive penalty; one untimed down will be played when required.
- Officials and YMCA leadership retain authority to address unusual situations not specifically covered when necessary for safety, fairness or sportsmanship.

18. Team Formation & Competitive Balance

- YMCA Youth Sports is recreational. Team formation should promote balanced competition and meaningful participation.
- The head coach's child and one pre-designated assistant coach's child may be placed together before evaluations/draft.
- Additional players may not be pre-rostered solely at a coach's request.
- Evaluations and drafts should be used to create teams that are as balanced as reasonably possible.
- The YMCA may adjust rosters before the season when a clear competitive or numerical imbalance exists.

19. Playoffs & Overtime

Regular-season games may end in a tie. For playoff or tournament games that require a winner:

- A coin toss determines which team begins on offense.
- First overtime: each team receives one possession beginning at midfield and has four downs to score. Normal touchdown and try rules apply.
- Both teams receive an equal possession in the overtime round unless a defensive score ends the game under the referee's ruling.
- If still tied after each team has had a possession, teams alternate 1-point tries from the 5-yard line. Each team receives an equal attempt in each round until one team outscores the other.
- No team timeouts are permitted during overtime.
- The team that goes second in one overtime round goes first in the next round.

20. Officials Quick Reference

Item	Quick Rule
Field	70 x 30 yards; G / 5 / 20 / 25 / 20 / 5 / G
Format	7-on-7; minimum 5 unless YMCA exception
Game	4 x 10-minute running quarters; 5-minute halftime
Timeouts	2 per half, 60 seconds
Play clock	30 seconds
QB clock	7 seconds
Possession	Own 5; 4 downs to midfield; 4 downs to score
QB running	Not permitted across LOS
Rush	1 or 2 declared rushers from 7 yards; clear path
No-run zones	5 yards before midfield and goal line; all divisions; pass required
Playing time	Minimum 2 full quarters: 1 offense + 1 defense
Scoring	TD 6; 1 from 5 pass-only; 2 from 10 run/pass; safety 2
Try turnover	Defensive return to goal = 2 points
Contact	No blocking, screening or intentional contact
30-point lead	Leading team may not rush; rotate players/positions
40-point lead	Second half = game over
Regular-season tie	Game ends tied

21. Administration & Final Authority

The YMCA of Corsicana Director of Sports & Facilities, or designated YMCA leadership, may interpret these rules, address situations not specifically covered, and make administrative decisions necessary for safety, fairness, league operation and the YMCA mission. Rule changes affecting a season should be communicated to coaches and officials as soon as practical.

Reference Framework

This YMCA rulebook is an independent recreational league rule set informed by modern flag-football concepts, including USA Football's USA Flag 7's rules and NFL FLAG rules. YMCA-specific provisions control league play.

USA Football reference: https://resources.usafootball.com/assets/usawebsite/usa-flag-7-s-rulebook-2026.2-v2.pdf

NFL FLAG reference: https://nflflag.com/coaches/flag-football-rules