



Roslyn Flag Football League - Rules & Policies - Fall 2024 Season

Roslyn Flag Football League (RFFL) is a non-contact, no tackling or blocking league, dedicated to providing a safe and enjoyable flag football experience for kids residing in the Roslyn and East Williston School Districts. Our League emphasizes fairness, sportsmanship, and community spirit by carefully forming balanced teams based on grade and skill level in collaboration with volunteer parent coaches. RFFL offers a distinct experience compared to other flag football leagues you may have encountered. Our approach to rules, referees, and team setup is designed to foster a positive and inclusive environment. Our primary motivation is to make RFFL the best community youth league available. We believe you will appreciate the effort, planning, communication, and attention to detail that contribute to the success of our RFFL. Our goal is to ensure that every participant has a great experience, develops their skills, forms lasting friendships and most important, has fun!

Policies

Team Formation Policy

In our Roslyn Flag Football League, the formation of teams is a collaborative effort between the League administrators and parent coaches to ensure fairness and competitive balance. Unlike other leagues, we do not register full rosters in advance, nor do we create "all-star" teams or groups based solely on friendships. Instead, our approach focuses on evenly distributing talent and experience across all teams.

Commitment to Fairness: Each team is carefully assembled by considering a variety of factors, including vetting coaches & assistants, players' skill levels, grades, and schools. This method aims to create an environment where competitiveness is balanced with sportsmanship and teamwork.

Community and Relationships: A fundamental goal of our team formation process is to enrich our community spirit. By mixing players from different grades and schools, we not only enhance the competitive nature of our league but also foster new friendships and connections among families. This has proven to be a successful formula over many years, leading to positive experiences for both players and their parents.

Lasting Impact: Our approach has repeatedly demonstrated its effectiveness, not just in maintaining competitive equity but also in helping our community members meet and form lasting relationships. We believe that sports are a powerful way to bring people together, and Roslyn Flag Football League is committed to making every season a great experience for everyone involved.

By participating in our League, families can expect an organized, well run, enjoyable, and community-oriented sports experience that goes beyond the game.

Acknowledgment of Team Performance Variability

Despite our best efforts to create balanced and fair teams, it is inevitable that some teams may experience more success than others during the season. This variability is a natural aspect of competitive sports. However, our League has consistently observed that teams which may start the season with challenges often show significant improvement as players develop their skills and teamwork. History within our League shows that teams that may begin the season with difficulties frequently advance and even succeed in winning the championship. This transformation underscores the value of perseverance, coaching, and players' adaptability. This journey of improvement—not just the final outcome—embodies the spirit of our league and the lifelong lessons we hope to impart through youth sports.

Parents & Spectators

- **Positive Support:** Parents and spectators are encouraged to support their teams and children in a positive and respectful manner.
- **Courteous Conduct:** Sideline conduct must remain courteous towards all players, coaches, referees, and other spectators.
- **Respect for Decisions:** Arguing with referees' calls will not be tolerated. Parents on the sidelines should not distract or engage referees or argue calls. Spectators will be asked to leave the field if they violate the above rules after adequate warning from referees

- **Sideline Behavior:** Sideline areas should be kept clear of distractions and confrontations. Maintain a positive environment for all participants.
- **Compliance:** Coaches or spectators violating these guidelines will receive a warning from referees. Repeated offenses may result in ejection from the field area.
- **Timely Arrival:** Please have your kids at the field and ready to play at least 15 minutes before game time or as instructed by your coaches. **DO NOT SHOW UP AT GAME TIME!**
- **Sideline Restrictions:** Non-coaching parents are not permitted on the players' sideline during the game. Give your kids their water bottle and everything else they need before the game.
- **Field Access:** Do not walk across the field of play or through the end zones. Walk around the end zones as far away from the field as possible.
- **Spectator Placement:** Parents are required to stand/sit on the opposite sideline from the players (not behind either end zone or on the sideline with players) and at least 10 feet off the sideline. This is for both the players and referees' safety and to limit distractions to both the participants. **THIS WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED!**
- **League Equipment:** Please do not go into the referee bag, borrow any league game balls or equipment.
- **First Aid:** Coaches and referees do have first aid kits at the field.
- **Equipment Care:** Flag belts and uniforms are not stocked in great numbers by the league, so please keep track of all equipment and bring it to the field.
- **Practice Oversight:** Practice time and location is determined entirely by the coaches and team parents. The League is not involved with practice scheduling. We only have permits for field use during our schedule of game play.

Standings

- **Score Reporting:** The referees will be responsible for reporting the winners and losers of each game to the League. Coaches need to confirm the final score with the referees after each game to avoid any discrepancies.
- **Focus on Defense:** For standings and tiebreakers, a team's total points scored in each game and/or cumulatively for the season **DOES NOT MATTER**. Defense matters, not offense. There is no advantage to running up the score and it is highly discouraged.

Playoff/Tie Breaker

- **Tie Resolution:** At the end of the season, if two or more teams are tied with equal points, a tie breaker system will be employed as follows:
 - **Head-to-Head Play:** Record against common opponents.
 - **Points Allowed Per Game:** Focusing on defensive strength.
 - **Coin Flip:** If all else fails, a coin will be flipped by the league.

Playoff Format

- **Number of teams in Division will determine:** With Divisions of 8 teams or less, all teams will make the playoffs. Larger Divisions may not be able to be accommodated due to field availability/weather/darkness but will play an additional regular season game in those circumstances. We also may shorten the regular season to have a larger playoff format in those larger divisions if approved by the majority of the coaches

League Rules

Players on the Field

- **Team Composition:** Teams will typically have 9-11 kids rostered and play 6 v 6 on the field unless one team has only 5 players at the start of the game, then they will play 5 v 5. Once a sixth rostered player arrives, teams will play 6 v 6 on the next change of possession.
- **Flexibility for Younger Divisions:** Pre-K and K & 1st grade divisions may play more kids on the field at the League's discretion if both teams have enough players and agree.
- **Communication and Attendance:** Parents need to communicate with their coaches and RSVP for games through the TeamLinkt League app. Coaches should also alert the League in advance to known situations where attendance is an issue so we can take steps to avoid forfeitures.
- **Player Eligibility:** Only RFFL registered players are permitted to play in any RFFL game.

Game Schedule

- **Scheduling:** Games will be scheduled by the League and communicated with all coaches and registered participants via the TeamLinkt application.
- **Changes and Updates:** Any changes including game time, location, postponements, or cancellations will come directly from the League, not the coaches. Everyone will receive the updates simultaneously. We do play in rain and cold as long as the field conditions are deemed safe by the League so assume games are being played unless you hear otherwise directly from the League.
- **Communication:** Ensure all family members who wish to be in communication with the League are registered on each player's TeamLinkt account.
- **RSVP:** Parents are requested to utilize the TeamLinkt application to RSVP for all games so both the coaches and the League are aware of any potential attendance issues.
- **Uniforms:** The home team will be wearing the dark color side of the uniform. The visitor team will wear light side.

Game Time

- **Duration:** Each game will consist of two 22-minute halves with a 3-minute halftime. Shorter halves or limited halftime will be at referees' discretion before the game.
- **Clock Management:** The clock will only be stopped during the last two minutes of each half for out of bounds, incomplete passes, extra point attempts (although the clock will run during the extra point play), and change of possession.
- **Timeouts:** Each team gets three one-minute time-outs per game.
- **Punctuality:** Expect games to start exactly at their scheduled times. Please arrive early and have your kids ready to play. Do not show up at game time unless prior arrangements are made.
- **Minimum Players:** A team must have a minimum of five players from their official roster by five minutes after the scheduled game time or they forfeit the game unless prior arrangements are made. Exhibition games will be played in these instances so the kids still get to play.

Start of Game

1. **Coin Toss:** Captains meet at midfield for the coin toss; the visiting team calls.
2. **Choice of Play:** Winner chooses offense or defense; loser chooses direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense and change sides.
3. **Game Initiation:** Teams start from their respective 5-yard lines depending on the possession choice, attempting to cross midfield and score.

Equipment

- **Uniforms and Gear:** All players must wear the league-provided flag belts. Cups & Mouthguards are strongly encouraged for all players. Players must wear appropriate footwear—sneakers or cleats without exposed metal. Personal equipment like tape, gloves, elbow pads, and knee pads is permitted but must not have hard or sharp elements. Please tuck all hoodies into the uniform as they are a safety hazard to be pulled and cannot be worn. In cold weather, players may wear beanie style hats. No baseball style hats may be worn.
- **Game Balls and Accessories:** Game balls, uniforms & flag belts appropriate for each age division are provided by the League. Small size red clip flag belts are only for 2nd/3rd and younger divisions. Use League provided yellow/blue clip flag belt for the older divisions. Personal equipment like water bottles, cups, mouthguards must be supplied by the players' families.

Scoring

- **Touchdowns:** Worth 6 points.
- **PAT (Point After Touchdown):** 1 point from the 5-yard line or 2 points from the 10-yard line; choice of run or pass for 2 points, pass only for 1 point. Must be declared and cannot be changed without consuming a timeout or after a penalty.
- **Safety:** Occurs when the ball carrier is declared down in their own end zone, worth 2 points.

Live Ball/Dead Ball

1. **Live Ball:** Starts at snap, remains live until whistle.
2. **In-bounds Catch:** One foot or body part must contact the ground inbounds.
3. **Defensive Mimicry:** No mimicking offensive signals; may result in unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
4. **Dead Ball:** Occurs when ball hits the ground, flag is pulled, ball carrier steps out of bounds, scores, arm/knee touches ground, flag falls off and player is touched, 7-second clock expires, or ball carrier leaves feet.

Running/Rushing

1. **Spotting the Ball:** Where runner is when flag is pulled. The spot is the front foot of the runner not the ball or the body.
2. **Quarterback Runs:** QB is the player who receives the snap and cannot directly run with the ball past the line of scrimmage.
3. **Hand-offs:** Direct hand-offs behind the line of scrimmage only. Offense may use multiple hand-offs or reverses.

4. **No Pitches/Laterals:** Not allowed.
5. **Must Pass Zones:** 5 yards before each end zone and midfield 1st down.
6. **Flag Guarding:** Stiff arm, lowering elbow or head or by blocking access to the runner's flags with a hand, arm or ball.

Passing

1. **One-Hand Passes:** Must be thrown from behind the line of scrimmage by the QB or any player who receives a handoff
2. **Shovel Passes:** A legal forward pass across the LOS underhand, backhand or by pushing the ball forward.
3. **Seven-Second Rule:** Pass must be thrown within 7 seconds. Referees will call out the count.
4. **Self-Catch:** Not allowed.

Receiving

1. **Eligibility:** All players, including the quarterback after hand-off, are eligible.
2. **Inbounds Catch:** Possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds as long as the first foot or a body part other than the hand contacts the ground in the field of play with possession.
3. **Simultaneous Possession:** Awarded to the offense.

Formation/Rushing the Passer

1. **Rush Line:** Minimum 12 yards from the line of scrimmage behind the rushing line puck set by the referees.
2. **Multiple Rushers:** Allowed from behind the rush line.
3. **Blocking Path:** Offense cannot impede the rusher's clear path from the puck.
4. **Defensive Formation:** K & 1st defenders must line up a minimum of 5 yards from LOS prior to the snap

Flag Pulling

1. **Legal Pull:** When ball carrier is in full possession of the ball.
2. **No Stripping:** Illegal to strip or pull the ball.
3. **Inadvertent Flag Fall:** Player is down by touch.

Post Season Overtime Procedure

- If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime PAT "sudden death" contest will be used to determine a winner
- Each team gets one timeout in overtime.
- Higher seed calls the toss; the winning team chooses offense or defense.
- Referee will choose the side of the field to conduct the overtime.
- Each team has one play from the 5-yard line for 1 point or the 10-yard line for 2 points. Whether to go for 1 or 2 points is up to the offensive team. In each overtime round if the first team scores 1 point the opposing team can decide to go for 1 point to tie or 2 points to win. If first team fails to score and the second team does, the game is over.

- If additional overtime rounds are necessary, teams will alternate who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start the next round.
- From the second round of overtime, both teams must go for two from the 10-yard line (excluding Pre-K to 1st grade divisions).

Slaughter Rule

- **Promoting Fun and Sportsmanship:** Coaches are asked to use their discretion and sense of fair play to keep games from becoming lopsided.
- **Player Restrictions:** Any time that a team is winning by more than 18 points, they may not play their strongest player on offense (as selected by the opposing head coach). Any time that a team is winning by more than 24 points, they may not play their two strongest players on offense (again, as selected by the opposing head coach). If that team is playing with fewer than seven players, then those players may not play quarterback and are not eligible to run the ball or throw/catch a pass or be included in "fake" hand-offs.
- **League Objective:** The League asks each coach to remember that the main objective of RFFL is to promote fun and learning of football and athletics. Although it is a competitive league with playoffs and an ultimate champion, we implore you to use your better judgment of fair play, sportsmanship, and competition. Do not call out penalties during the play or work the referees for calls as it confuses the kids who may believe the play is over. Let the referees do their job.

Coaches

- **Number of Coaches:** Each team is allowed to have a maximum of two coaches on the sideline during the game (Pre-K & K & 1st grade may have 3) unless prior League approval is given.
- **Assistant Coaches:** Each team will have assistants assigned but the head coach is required to provide the League Commissioner with the names of any additional fill-in assistant coaches or any parent that assists for insurance purposes (send e-mail to roslynflagfootball@gmail.com). The main responsibility of sideline assistants is for the proper substitution of players and making sure players are ready to come in and out of the game and receive playing time according to League policy. Assistants not properly providing this function will be asked to sit on the parent sideline.
- **On-Field Coach:** One coach will be allowed on the field as follows:
 - The coach on the defensive side of the field must move to the sideline prior to the snap of the ball. The offensive coach must also be on the sideline or way behind the play. In Boys 6th & 7th grade and older, the coach must be completely off the field on the sideline before the ball is snapped.
 - Only one coach per team on the field at a time (Pre-K and K & 1st Division, additional coaches will be allowed. League will provide guidance).
- **Enforcement:** Violations of the above rule will be enforced at the discretion of the referee. After adequate warning, the referee can assess a 15-yard penalty plus loss of down or automatic first down for the other team.

- **Responsibilities:** Coaches are responsible for confirming final game scores with referees to ensure accuracy in standings. They are also encouraged to develop players' skills by rotating them through different positions and managing playing time according to League policies
- **After Each Game:** Each team is responsible for cleaning up the sidelines and throwing water bottles or other trash in garbage cans after each game. Please advise your team's parents to do the same. We can lose our permits if we do not keep the fields clean. If you choose to hold team meetings with players or parents after games, please do so away from the field just played on. This will help the League get the next game started and avoid delays.

Playing Time:

- **Fair Opportunity:** RFFL is a recreational league and not travel football. We expect each player to play at least HALF THE GAME. As a guideline, each child should be given a chance to run the ball or attempt to catch a pass each game if at all possible in 4th & 5th and 6th & 7th grades. In 2nd & 3rd and younger divisions this is mandatory.
- **Development Focus:** Opposing coaches should communicate/work together to each use a set of downs to allow the less talented kids a chance to run the football. Historically in this league, less talented kids in younger grades can become stars in the older divisions if they get a chance to play and enjoy their initial experience.
- **Coach Communication Policy:** To ensure a respectful and constructive environment, we ask that any non-emergency concerns or issues parents may have with coaches not be addressed on the field during or immediately after the game. Parents and players are encouraged to adhere to a 24-hour cooling-off period before contacting coaches or the League. This period allows for thoughtful reflection and often results in more productive discussions and resolutions to issues. Additionally, we kindly remind everyone that our coaches are volunteers who dedicate their time and effort to supporting our players and League. Coaching is not an easy task, and challenges such as players not paying attention, listening or being unprepared when called into the game can significantly complicate their efforts. We ask for your patience and understanding, especially with new players who may need a few games to learn and feel comfortable in their roles. Please encourage your children to listen carefully and follow their coaches' instructions to help create a positive and effective learning environment for all involved.
- **Skill Rotation:** Coaches should try to rotate kids to as many positions as possible and encourage participation in each football skill.
- **Record Keeping:** Coaches are encouraged to keep records of practice attendance and game day arrival time in order to justify any discretionary playing time decisions made.

Key Rules and Interpretations

- **Fair Play:** All players should receive substantial playing time, with the intent to participate in various aspects of the game. Coaches are expected to foster an environment of growth and enjoyment, emphasizing sportsmanship over competition.
- **Rules Compliance:** Coaches and players must adhere to all league rules regarding gameplay mechanics, player conduct, and fair competition. Disputes are to be handled respectfully and through the proper channels as outlined in the league policies.
- **Blocking:** Absolutely no blocking is allowed. Offensive players not involved in the play must stop and get out of the defenders' way. Players on offense should not follow the ball carrier down the field to avoid blocking the defenders.
 - **Play Clock:**
 - **4th & 5th Grade and Older:** 35 seconds to snap the ball once set by referees.
 - **2nd & 3rd Grade and Younger:** 45 seconds to snap the ball. Defense will play at offensive team's pace but will have reasonable time to set up at referees' discretion. Delay of game penalties may be called if teams do not snap the ball in time. Referees have full discretion of enforcement (especially for younger grades and early season games but will call consistently for both teams).
 - **Snapping the Ball:** Centers must snap from between the legs. Policy for Pre-K and K & 1st grade divisions to be determined by the League.
 - **Hand-offs:** Only direct hand-offs permitted. No laterals or pitches.
 - **Quarterback Run:** Quarterback cannot run with the ball past the line of scrimmage unless handed off first.
 - **Must Pass Zones:** No handoffs or fake handoffs are permitted in must pass zones, including one-point PAT's. Violations will result in a loss of down or failed PAT attempt.
 - **Standard Formation:** Mandatory for 2nd & 3rd grade and younger divisions: one center, one quarterback, one or two running backs, one or two wide receivers on either side of the center. Other divisions may use any legal formation with a center to snap the ball.
 - **Wide Receiver Placement:** Inside wide receivers must be at least 5 yards from the football prior to the snap in 2nd & 3rd grade and younger divisions.
 - **Motion:** Offensive players may not be in motion; everyone must be set until the ball is snapped. This rule may be amended in certain divisions by the League.
 - **No Tackling:** Tackling or pushing a player out of bounds is strictly prohibited. Defenders must attempt to pull flags. Intentional tackling can lead to player ejection and/or a 15-yard penalty from the end of the play and an automatic first down. Ejections are reviewed by the Commissioner for further suspension. Safety is the top priority.
 - **Charging:** Ball carriers must attempt to avoid contact with defenders. A charging penalty may be called if a ball carrier attempts to run through a defender.
 - **Offensive Player in the Clear:** Defenders cannot impede an offensive player in the clear. The referee may award points for a touchdown or extra point attempt if a defender stops a player from scoring without making a legitimate flag pull attempt.
 - **Substitutions:** Offensive players entering the game from the sideline must be clearly identifiable to the defense. Players cannot substitute by standing next to the sideline; they must clearly enter the field and take their position before the snap.
 - **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** 15-yard penalty and loss of down for the offense or an automatic first down for the defense. Referees can remove offending player(s) from the game for a series or more at their discretion in addition to or in lieu of a penalty being called.

- **Must Pass Situations:** Offensive penalties that move the line of scrimmage outside of the must pass zone will remain must pass situations with no fake handoffs allowed. The offense can also decline any penalty that the defense commits that would result in creating a must pass situation if the offense does not want to accept it. Further penalties committed by the defense after a penalty decline for the purpose of creating must pass situations for the offense will be deemed unsportsmanlike conduct against the defensive team.
- **New Ball Carrier Rule:** Each offensive player is allowed one run per series. A first down or a TD starts a new series. A run is considered a play when the player touches the ball (dropped or not) or is a halfback option thrower/carrier. Players who have had their run in the series are not eligible for running plays or fake handoffs but can still be eligible receivers. A defensive penalty that is accepted by the offense that nullifies the previous running play does not count as a run by those players involved. The penalty for violations is a loss of down and must be policed by the coaches on the honor system as referees cannot keep track of each player on both teams.
- **Interceptions:** In 4th & 5th grade and younger divisions and all current girl's divisions, interceptions are dead upon interception. Boys 6th & 7th grade and older can return interceptions PAT's are not returnable.
- **Seven-Second Rule:** The quarterback must pass or hand off the ball within seven seconds of the snap. No safety awarded for seven-second violations in the end zone.
- **Rushing the Passer:** Defenders may rush the quarterback immediately after the snap, starting from behind the 12-yard puck. Multiple rushers are allowed from behind the puck except in Boys K & 1st grade and younger.
- **Handoff Rule:** Once the ball is handed off by the quarterback, any defender may rush.
- **Passes:** No screen passes or laterals. All passes must be completed beyond the line of scrimmage. Pre-K and K & 1st grade divisions are exempt but must still use forward passes.
- **Fumble Recoveries:** Not allowed. Play is dead at the spot of the fumble, and the offense retains possession.
- **Two-Point Conversions:** From the 10-yard line; can be run or pass plays. One-point conversions from the 5-yard line are pass only with no fake handoffs.
- **Penalties:** Penalties moving the line of scrimmage out of the zone remain "must pass" situations.
- **Center Eligibility:** The center is an eligible receiver.
- **Coaches Conduct:** Coaches must stay clear of all plays and should refrain from instructing or coaching while the play is in progress for 6th & 7th grade divisions and up.
- **Challenges:** RFFL utilizes 2-man (or more) referee crews for games and they do a great job but referee mistakes happen and are a part of sports. Judgement calls by referees are not reviewable. However, coaches can officially (and respectfully) challenge referees' rule interpretations. If a challenged call is upheld, the challenging team loses a timeout. If the defense loses the challenge with no timeouts left, a 10-yard penalty and an automatic first down is awarded to the offense. For the offense, there will be a 10-yard penalty and a loss of down. Only one lost challenge is allowed per game. Referees can consult with each-other on any play and/or with the on-site League Commissioner if available for rule interpretations at their discretion or at request of coaches who challenge. The referees will determine any changes to incorrect calls after consultation or challenges. There are no post game protests and parent sideline videos will not be considered in any play review.

Penalties

Defensive Penalties

1. **Offside:** +5 yards from the line of scrimmage.
2. **Illegal Rush:** Starting from inside the 12-yard marker results in +5 yards from the line of scrimmage.
3. **Illegal Flag Pull:** Before the receiver has the ball results in +5 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.
4. **Roughing the Passer:** +10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.
5. **Taunting:** +10 yards from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.
6. **Defensive Pass Interference:** Spot foul and an automatic first down.
7. **Holding:** Spot foul +5 yards and an automatic first down.
8. **Stripping:** Spot foul +10 yards and an automatic first down.
9. **Defensive Unnecessary Roughness:** Spot foul +10 yards and an automatic first down.

Offensive Penalties

1. **False Start:** -5 yards from the line of scrimmage.
2. **Illegal Forward Pass:** -5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down (Pass completed behind the line of scrimmage).
3. **Offensive Pass Interference:** -5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.
4. **Illegal Motion:** (If motion allowed) More than one person moving results in -5 yards from the line of scrimmage.
5. **Delay of Game:** -5 yards from the line of scrimmage.
6. **Impeding the Rusher:** -5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.
7. **Screening, Blocking, or Running with the Ball Carrier:** Spot foul, -5 yards, and loss of down.
8. **Charging:** Spot foul, -10 yards, and loss of down.
9. **Flag Guarding:** Spot foul, -10 yards, and loss of down.
10. **Offensive Unnecessary Roughness:** Spot foul, -10 yards, and loss of down.
11. **New Ball Carrier Violation:** Loss of down.