Bethel Recreation Association

Middle School Girls Flag Football

LEAGUE RULES (Updated 10/22/26)

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Middle School Girls Flag Football program is a 7 vs 7 recreational league and follows NFHS and WIAA high school girls flag football rules with Bethel Rec. exceptions outlined below. The goal is to teach players flag football, teamwork, and good sportsmanship in a fun, positive environment. As a new program, rules may be adjusted as needed throughout the season.

THE FIELD

1. The game will be played on a turf field that is approximately 150 feet (50 yards) by 90 feet (30 yards), plus two endzones of 30 feet (10 yards).
2. *Spectators and parents are not allowed on the fields. Only players and coaches are allowed on the fields.*

PLAYERS AND EQUIPMENT

1. Ball Size: **Women's Official / Girls Flag Football size ball**
2. Teams must field a maximum of seven (7) players and a minimum of five (5) players. A ten-minute grace period from the scheduled start time will be granted prior to forfeiting. If grace period is used, game time will be 15-minute halves.
3. Every member of a team must wear flag belts provided. Belts and flags must be exposed and worn around player's waist with individual flags around the sides and back.
4. All players must wear a mouth guard.
5. Players may not have on the same color shorts as their flags.
6. Tennis shoes or rubber cleats permitted. Turf cleats recommended. ***No metal cleats are allowed.***
7. No article of clothing, nor the athlete's hair, may cover the flag or belt.
8. **Shirts must be tucked in**. A shirt hanging over a flag belt will be called for a flag-guarding penalty (**official's discretion**).
9. ***Jewelry is prohibited and includes nose rings, earrings, etc. (taping jewelry is NOT acceptable).*** Religious and medical-alert medals are allowed. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible. ***Temporary plastic earring retainers can be worn in the ear in place of studs.***
10. A player shall not wear anything that may be dangerous to other players or themselves. This includes casts/splints, plastic face shields that are not molded to the face, etc. No player wearing a cast or splint shall be permitted to play.

SUPERVISION/OFFICIALS

1. There will be a Field Supervisor at each game site to answer questions and provide assistance.
2. Each game is controlled by 3-4 officials and/or a supervisor who has full authority to enforce the rules of the game.
3. *All decisions of officials on all matters are not subject to protest.*

DURATION OF THE GAME

1. There shall be two (2) twenty five-minute running clock halves. The clock will stop after a score and during the last two minutes of each half. The clock will also stop for time-outs and injuries.
2. Halftime will last 5 minutes.
3. **Overtime:** If at the end of the second half, teams have identical scores, the following overtime rules will apply:
   - Each team will have a three-try opportunity to score PAT's.
   - Coin toss will determine which team will attempt these tries first (home team calls the flip).
   - The officials pick endzone, both teams play with the same endzone.
   - Points scored are as follows: **5 yds** (pass only) – 1 point **10 yds**-2pt **17 yds**-3pt
   - Penalties on offense will forfeit the attempt, penalties on defense will move offense one section closer, with the opportunity to score the same points on a replayed down. Offsetting penalties will replay the down.
   - If the score is still tied after one overtime period, teams will swap order and have another 3-try opportunity. That will repeat until one team scores more points than the other.

SUBSTITUIONS & TIME-OUTS

1. Each team will be allowed two (2) time-outs per half. The time-out period will be one (1) minute.
2. Unlimited Substitutions can be made on any dead ball ***including between plays.***

GAME GUIDELINES

1. Score and standings will be kept and it is the coach's responsibility to update their scores on the website.
2. It is the responsibility of the coach to make sure players are played an equal amount of time to the best of their ability.
3. At the start of each game, captains from both teams shall meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who shall start with the ball. The visiting team, as listed on the game schedule, calls the coin toss. The team that wins the coin toss has the choice to take the ball first, or defer to the second half.
4. The loser of the coin toss chooses the end zone to start play.
5. The game is played with seven players on each team, but a team may play with no fewer than five.
6. Each half of the game shall be started by a play from the team's **5-yard line.**
7. Each play will start and stop with the official blowing the whistle.
8. The team in possession has a series of four downs numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4 to advance the ball to **two** zones to gain, which are located **17 yards from the endzone on either side of midfield.**

OFFENSE

1. *Formations:*
    - A scrimmage formation requires 3 offensive players on the line of scrimmage including a snapper with another offensive player in position behind the snapper to receive the snap (quarterback).
    - The player in position to receive the snap must be a minimum of 2 yards behind the snapper.
    - Snaps must be made from the center of the field.
    - All players are eligible receivers including the snapper.
    - Once the ball is snapped the quarterback has 10 seconds to pass or hand off the ball.
    - After a huddle or shift, all players shall come to an absolute stop and shall remain stationary simultaneously without movement of hands, feet, head or body for at least one second before the snap.
    - Only one player may be in motion at the snap and then only if it is not toward the opponent's goal line.
2. *Blocking:*
    - Only **screen blocking** is allowed and must be stationary and non-contact. Screen blocking is taking position to obstruct the path of an opponent without contacting the opponent with any part of the blocker's body.
    - **Arm placement:** Arms may be folded across the chest, at the sides, or behind the back. A player cannot extend elbows, forearms, or shoulders.
    - **Stationary requirement:** To screen block you must be completely stationary and set before the defender approaches. You cannot move into a defender or slide laterally to cut them off.
    - You must give the defender a reasonable opportunity to change direction (generally 1 to 2 steps). Blindside screens or last-second stepping into a defender are illegal.
    - Screen blocking by the offense is legal only behind the line of scrimmage.
    - Screening a defender beyond the line of scrimmage by any offensive player who is not the ball carrier shall be penalized as illegal screening-10 yards and loss of down.
3. *Quarterback Run Rule:*
    - The quarterback, by definition, is the offensive player who receives the snap.
    - The quarterback may not cross the line of scrimmage with the ball as a runner unless they have transferred the ball to another player and then have had it transferred back.
    - If the quarterback advances illegally, the play is dead at the spot and a 5-yard penalty is assessed.
4. *No-Run Zones:*
    - Pass-Only Zones are within 5 yards of the end-zone, facing the end-zone.
    - When the ball is spotted in the pass-only zone, a forward pass must be executed that breaks the line of scrimmage in order for the play to stand.
    - The penalty for not executing a legal pass in this zone is a replay of the down.
5. Kicking the Ball:
    - Kicking of the ball is NOT permissible.
    - On fourth down, teams will have the option of "punting" by relinquishing possession to the opponents 5-yard line or "going for it" and forfeiting the ball on the line of scrimmage to the other team if the line to gain is not crossed on fourth down.
6. Onside Play:
    - An **untimed** onside play option will be available to teams only in the final two minutes of the second half after scoring/completing a PAT attempt and is only available to a trailing team or if the score is tied.
    - Option not available after trailing team scores a safety or to a team leading in points.

- To complete a successful onside play, the attempting team must reach midfield in one play.
- They must reach or pass midfield after all live ball penalties have been assessed.
- The coach of the team attempting an onside play will inform officials they intend to attempt the play.
- The ball will be spotted on the attempting team's 5-yard line.
- The down is a one play down and is treated like a fourth down, which includes the assessment of penalties.
- Dead ball penalties will NOT be used in the determination of the line to gain being reached.
- If there is a defensive penalty that causes an automatic first down, the offense will receive the penalty yards, but will still have to try the onside play. The offense will not automatically convert the down in this scenario.
- If the offense successfully converts the down, the new line to gain will be established and the clock operations will return to normal.
- If the offense does not convert, the defense will take over the ball at midfield unless an interception occurs. If an interception occurs, the ball will be spotted wherever the ball is downed. An interception during an onside play may be returned for 6 points with an ensuing PAT attempt.

SCORING

1. Six (6) points shall be awarded for a touchdown.
2. **PATs** (Points After Touchdown, or extra-point tries) in girls high school flag football are untimed scoring plays attempted immediately after a touchdown
3. After a touchdown is scored, teams will have the option:
4. To take an automatic 1pt
5. or try for a 2pt conversion from the 10-yard line
6. or try for a 3pt conversion from the 17-yard line

RUNNING AND RECEIVING

1. The receiver/ball carrier cannot slap at the defender's hands, fan or guard the flags, stiff-arm or hurdle a defender. They will be called down where the infraction occurs.
2. Once the ball carrier has the ball in her possession she is not permitted to contact or run through a defensive player. She must attempt to avoid the defender.
3. Spinning is allowed but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no jumping over players or diving ahead). **This is enforced for player safety!**
4. The player must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.
5. If a player catches the ball or is in possession of the ball and loses their flags inadvertently, play will continue with **one hand touch.**
6. If the ball carrier's knee or other body part (other than the hand or foot) hits the ground, play is blown dead with the ball spotted where the body part hit the ground.

DEFENSE:

1. The defense must be lined up at least 1 yard back from the offense's line of scrimmage. There are no traditional linemen and defensive players may be positioned anywhere in the field in a man or zone coverage.
2. **Blitzing and Rushing the Quarterback:**
    - One identified (legal signal) Rusher who is at least 7 yards away from the line of scrimmage at the snap may enter the backfield once the ball is snapped and will automatically have Right-of-Way (ROW).
    - This rusher must identify themselves by raising their hand before the snap. This player has the ROW and offense cannot block this defender.
    - Any other defender at least 7 yards away from the line of scrimmage at the snap may enter the backfield on the snap but will not have ROW.
    - Defenders lined up less than 7 yards from the line of scrimmage are not eligible to enter the backfield unless the ball makes contact (touches) with any player other than the player who took the snap.
    - Once the ball is transferred to another offensive player other than the quarterback, the yard rule is no longer in effect and all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage.
    - Penalty: Illegal rush, 5-yard penalty, replay the down
3. Slapping, striking, stripping the ball and pushing a player to the ground or out of bounds are NOT allowed.
4. The goal for the defense is to pull the flag of a runner.

5. **Coverage Sack:**
    - A ten-second count will begin at the snap of the ball. If the quarterback has not released a pass before the count expires, the ball becomes dead and the play is ruled a coverage sack. The ball shall be returned to the previous line of scrimmage, and the down shall count.
    - The ten-second count ends when the ball is handed off, pitched backward, or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage, or when the defense rushes. Once the count ends, it does not restart during that down.

ADDITIONAL RULES:

1. **Helping the runner:** An offensive player shall not push, pull or lift a runner to assist the runner's forward progress.
2. **Illegal personal contact:** No player shall make any contact with an opponent, which is deemed unnecessary or excessive and which incites roughness (officials' discretion).
3. **Roughing the passer:** Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer or player attempting to pass the ball. Defensive players must make an effort to pull the passer's flag. They may not contact the passing arm or head of the player attempting a pass and not attempt to bat the ball from the passer's arm.
4. **Dead Ball on the Ground:**
    - When a fumble or a bad snap hit the ground, the ball immediately becomes a **dead ball** at the spot where it touches the ground.
    - The team retains possession of the ball at the spot of the fumble, **unless** the fumble occurs on a 4th down (which results in a turnover on downs) or at the end of a half/game.
5. Pass interference penalties will be enforced for both offensive and defensive infractions.
6. **Offensive Pass Interference-** An offensive player may not initiate significant contact that impedes a defender's ability to make a play on the ball.
7. **Defensive Pass Interference-** A defensive player may not initiate significant contact that impedes a receiver's ability to make a play on the ball. This includes, but is not limited to:
    - Making contact with the receiver instead of attempting to play the ball
    - Hooking or grabbing the receiver
    - Repetitive jersey pulls
    - Using an arm bar to restrict movement
8. **Rules on Diving:**
    - **Ball Carriers:** An offensive player cannot dive, leap, or jump forward to advance the ball, gain a first down, or score a touchdown.
    - **Defenders:** A defensive player cannot dive to grab a flag or tackle/down a ball carrier.
    - **Exceptions:** Players on offense or defense **are** allowed to dive or jump to catch a pass.
9. **Players or coaches receiving two (2) unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will be ejected from the game and will have a one (1) game suspension for the next scheduled game.*

BETHEL RECREATION CODE OF CONDUCT

Coaches, players, and spectators MUST:

- Follow all Bethel SD rules. Alcohol, intoxicants, tobacco, marijuana, weapons, and drones are prohibited.
- Treat officials, coaches, players, parents, and spectators respectfully. No yelling, taunting, baiting, profanity, obscene gestures, or attempts to influence or confront officials.
- Never threaten or use physical force against officials, staff, coaches, or players.
- Keep all animals, including dogs, off BSD property. Supervise children and siblings at all times

Coach Responsibility: The head coach is responsible for the conduct of their players, bench personnel, and spectators.

Violations & Penalties: Failure to follow the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action. Depending on the severity, individuals may be removed from the facility or game.

Questions or Concerns Contact: During Games: Game supervisor Before or After Games: Bethel Rec. Director