

Melrose Flag Football Rules/Game Play

Games will consist of 20-minute half's – The clock will be running for the entire first half and 2nd half. There will be a 2-minute warning and the clock will stop at the 2nd half only. The clock will begin running again once the first play is run under the 2 minute warning.

Each team gets 1 timeout per half. Timeouts do not carry over from the 1st half to the 2nd half.

Officials will be enforcing penalties (no warnings with the following points of Emphasis):

- Masks are optional for Melrose Flag Football
- Players and CORI'd Coaches only on the field. Spectators should be social distanced around the field.
- Flag guarding (down instantly)
- Shirts must be tucked before the play or player is down when defensive player goes for the flag
- Tackling/ blocking/ hitting–15 yard penalty automatic first down (subject to ejection)
- Diving from behind/tackling to prevent touchdown – Touchdown counts (no diving for Flags)
- Un-Sportsman like comments by player/coach/assistant coach – 15 yard penalty and ejection at the discretion of the commissioner
- 7 seconds for QB to pass ball
- Rushers must be 7 yards back to rush the QB (only 1 rusher per down)
- Offside – called with no warnings
- No Forward hand-offs (shuffle pass is allowed)
- A pass is considered any throw that goes forward (regardless if player is past line of scrimmage (includes shuffle pass)
- Forward progress is stopped where the player's front foot is (not the ball – e.g if a foot is on the ground in the endzone it's a touchdown)
- Mouth guards are optional
- NO CONTACT. Players need to understand that contact is not allowed. Flag Football is and can be played with no contact.
- Grades K – 4 will use size "peewee" football. Grades 5 – 6 will use size "junior" football

Coaches must be Away from the Play as Follows:

- **3 - 4 Heading off the field and far enough away**
- **5 - 6 off the field completely at Snap.**

General Rules:

- 5 on 5 no contact flag football for Grades 3-4
- 6 on 6 no contact flag football for Grades 5-6
- Coin toss determines:
 - First possession
 - Goal to defend
 - Or defer to 2nd half

- The offensive team takes possession at their 5-yard line. The offensive team then has (3) downs to either advance the football to mid-field or score a touchdown. If the offense reaches mid-field it receives 3 more downs to score. If the offense fails to reach mid-field or score, the football changes possession to the opposite team and it starts its own drive from their own 5-yard line.
- All possession changes start at the offense's 5-yard line.
- **For Grades 3-4 Only:** The Quarterback will start the play with the ball in his hands (no center or snapping the football). The Quarterback must stand at the Line of Scrimmage (where the ball is marker/where the play before ended). Once his team is lined up, he may make a noise, motion, say hut, hike, etc. the play will begin. The Quarterback must go backwards, drop back, or reach for a hand off when they start the play.
- **For Grades 5-6 Only:** One player must be designated as the center, or the snapper. The play will begin when the snapper who will be holding the ball on the line of scrimmage tosses the ball backwards (behind the line of scrimmage) directly to the QB.

Game Clock

- Each game is 40 minutes in length with two 20-minute half's.
- There will be a 2-minute half time.
- After halftime, the team who started on defense will start on offense.
- There will be a change of possession and direction at halftime.
- The game clock will not stop at any time during play except for a team timeout or at the referee's discretion or the two minute warning in the 2nd half.
- Each team will receive one (1) 30 second timeout per half. Timeouts do not carry over from the 1st half.
- Once the referee has spotted the football for play, the offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the football. The referee will announce when 10 seconds remain before calling a delay of game penalty.
- The offensive team may not snap the football until the referee has set the football for play.
- **OVERTIME:** The team that started with the ball at the beginning of the game will start with the ball in overtime. They will have 3 plays from midfield to score a touchdown. If they score, they can opt to go for 1 or 2. The opposing team will then receive the ball with either a chance to win or tie depending on how the first team faired. If tied after that, double OT will give each team gets 1 play from the 10-yard line to score. No extra points in double OT. Game will result in a tie if after double OT if no clear winner.

Scoring:

- Touchdown = 6 points
- Following a touchdown, teams will have the opportunity to go for a 1 point conversion or a 2 point conversion. They will only have one play unless there is a penalty.
- Extra Points:
 - 1 point = 5-yard line
 - 2 points = 10-yard line
 - 2 points = defense returns interception on extra point try for touchdown
- Safety = 2 points

Running:

- The Quarterback (QB) cannot run except:
 - When the football is handed off, lateraled, etc. to the QB by an offensive player other than on the direct snap
- All handoffs must be behind the line of scrimmage and behind the offensive player handing off or to the side (**NO FRONT HANDOFFS**).
- Offensive teams may pitch, lateral, throw back; however, once the ball hits the ground the play is dead (no fumbles, ball is spotted where it lands).
- “No Run Zones” are located 5-yards from the mid-field line and end zones. Once the ball has been spotted in these areas, no running plays are allowed.
- The football is spotted where the ball carrier’s front foot is when their flag is pulled off the belt.
- No jumping or diving. A player may juke, side step, or make a lateral movement, but should not leave the ground. Spin moves are allowed, however coaches should be cautious about players losing control while attempting a spin move to prevent collisions and injury.
- Offensive players may not guard their flags in any way by shielding, holding, moving, etc.
- Offensive players may not block in any way. The only acceptable scenario is a, “non-moving screen.” A “non-moving screen” must meet the following criteria to be legal:
 - The player(s) feet must be stationary
 - The player(s) hands must be at their side or touching their own body.
 - The player(s) may not move until the ball-carrier has past them by 2 yards.
- A “non-moving screen” may only be implemented to screen for an offensive ball carrier.

Receiving:

- All offensive players are eligible to receive passes.
- Players must have at least one-foot inbounds when making a catch.
- Players who run out of bounds are not eligible to make a reception.
- All offensive players must be set prior to snapping the ball, no moving in motion.
- QB’s must pass the football within 7 seconds after the snap. If the football is not thrown within 7 seconds, the play is ruled dead. There is no penalty.
- If the football is handed off, lateraled, etc. the 7-second rule is no longer in effect.
- Intentional grounding is not a penalty.
- Interceptions may be returned by the defense. Interceptions downed in the end zone will result in the football being placed at the 5-yard line. Interceptions result in a change in possession and the team will start on offense on their own 5 yard line unless it is returned for a touchdown.
- The intercepting team may not implement a “non-moving screen” during an interception return.

Rushing the Quarterback:

- Any defensive player that rushes the QB must start 7 yards off the line of scrimmage when the football is snapped. Only 1 player may rush the QB per down or none at all. All other defensive players must stay 5 yards off the line of scrimmage until the football is snapped. Once the football has been handed off to an offensive player, by the QB, the 7-yard rush rule is no longer in effect.
- Defensive players defending the line of scrimmage may not follow offensive players behind the line of scrimmage. Defensive players who are not 7 yards off the line of scrimmage may only cross the line once the ball has been handed off or lateraled by the QB.
- The referee will designate the 7-yard mark before the ball is set each play.
- **There is no tackling, blocking, pushing or contact of any kind allowed (15 yard penalty and subject to ejection).**
- Defenders are not allowed to “bump” receivers at any time (no contact).
- Defensive players may not charge thru an offensive player in a “non-moving screen,” they must go around.
- Defensive players may not attempt to strip the ball from the ball carrier.
- Defensive players may not dive to pull the flag (15 yard penalty)

Dead Balls:

- Substitutions may only be made during dead ball situations (players must play a minimum 3 plays in a row before being subbed out).
- Dead ball situations include:
 - Ball carrier’s flag is pulled
 - Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - Touchdown is scored
 - Ball carrier falls on the ground or the ball touches the ground.
 - Incomplete pass
 - 7-second QB pass rule violation
 - Any player who starts the play without a flag belt and touches the football
 - Any time the ball is fumbled the play is dead where the football hits the ground

Penalties

All penalties will be called by the referee.

Defense

- Offside - 5 yard penalty, replay down
- Interference - 10 yard penalty, automatic first down
- Illegal contact - (holding, blocking) 10 yard penalty, automatic first down
- Illegal flag pull - (before receiver has the ball) 10 yard penalty, automatic first down
- Illegal rushing - (defender started to rush inside of the 7 yard marker or more than 1 rusher) 10 yard penalty, automatic first down
- Tackling/Unnecessary Roughness – 15 yard Penalty, automatic first down

Offense

- False Start - 5 yard penalty, replay down
- Illegal forward pass - (pass thrown beyond the line of scrimmage) 5 yard penalty, loss of down
- Offensive pass interference - (illegal pick play, pushing off/away the defender) 10 yard penalty, loss of down
- Flag guarding, Spin Move, Jumping, Diving, etc. - 10 yards from the line of scrimmage, loss of down
- Blocking - 10 yards from the spot of the foul, loss of down (No Blocking Allowed)
- Delay of game - clock stops, 10 yard penalty, replay down

Attire:

- All players must wear their Melrose Flag Football Jersey, and a flag belt (given by the Rec Dept)
- Players may wear wristbands and gloves.
- Cleats are allowed (must be rubber, no metal spikes).
- No Jewelry, necklaces, or earrings. Earrings should have tape over them.
- All player's shirts **must** be tucked in at all times and their flag belt worn properly with no obstructions to the flags.

Sportsmanship:

Foul play of any kind will not be tolerated!!!

- If the referee or any league official witnesses any acts of elbowing, tackling, blocking, pushing or any other form of unsportsmanlike conduct, the game will be stopped, the player ejected, and unnecessary roughness penalty will be enforced.
- Trash talking also is not permitted. Any form of taunting, of language, which is deemed offensive to any person on or near the field will not be tolerated. This action will result in a 15-yard penalty and the player will be ejected from the game.
- Any player ejected from the game is automatically suspended from the league until further review by league officials.

* Referees will use their discretion to determine if the tackling was intentional or accidental. If a player was about to score and he/she was deliberately tackled, the score counts.