



RIVER TRAILS PARK DISTRICT **ADULT FLAG FOOTBALL RULES MANUAL**

**updated 5/2026*

The River Trails Park District will use official IHSA Football rules unless stated in these rules or at the captains meeting. **PLEASE READ THESE RULES CAREFULLY.** Teams are responsible for the knowledge of both IHSA rules and River Trails Park District rules. Rules may be added or deleted by the league supervisor at any time, but not without proper notification to team captains and referees.

PARK RULES

- The River Trails Park District does not carry insurance covering injuries incurred while playing.
- The Park District has the right to stop any game because of any violations of park ordinances (illegal parking, alcohol and drugs) or for the general safety of its participants. This would include dangerous weather such as lightning and tornadoes.
- The Mount Prospect Police Department will be called for all people violating park ordinances. These ordinances are STATE LAWS and people will be prosecuted as necessary.

EQUIPMENT

Park District Supplies

1. Enough Flags for each player
2. Coordinator for each league
3. Fields lined and marked.

Participants Supply

1. **NO METAL SPIKES!** No metal spikes will be allowed during regular season or tournament play.
2. Uniform shirts are required with numbers.
3. RTPD recommends that each player have a mouthpiece.
4. Each team will use their own ball for offense. Ball must be marked “official ball”

PLAYERS/ROSTERS/WAIVERS

- Rosters / Waivers are limited to 14 players
- Players must be 18 years or older and are required to carry a drivers license with them at all times in case a players eligibility is questioned during the game. See protest for further details.
- All players must be on and sign the waiver / roster sheet before they play in a game. A final roster is due before your team’s 2nd game of the season.
- Roster changes can be approved at the discretion of the League Supervisor for teams needing to add a player to their roster due to unforeseen circumstances (i.e. a player moving, season ending injury etc...)

OFFICIALS

- All referees are representatives of the River Trails Park District and have the power to order a player, coach to do, or omit any act(s), which in their judgement is necessary to maintain an orderly game. Once the game begins the referee has control over the entire playing area including the area where the spectators may be located. Most importantly, all referees must be treated with respect. Players, coaches or captains that attempt to hassle any referee – before, during or after the game will be suspended from the league. The league director will determine the severity of the suspension.

GAME CONDUCT OF PLAYERS

- Unnecessary and unsportsmanlike conduct, including but not limited to swearing and fighting, are not permitted. Players not conducting themselves properly, before, during or after a game, will be suspended or dismissed from the

league. The park district reserves the right to dismiss any individual or team at any time due to persistent poor behavior.

- The following guidelines will be used:

Yellow Cards – Yellow cards are given out to players who, with intention, perform unnecessary and or unsportsmanlike conduct/contact. Players given a yellow card must sit out that possession PLUS 3 more possessions. If a team only does not have a substitute, that team must play shorthanded.

Thrown out of a game or 3 yellow cards in a season: 1 or more games. Each additional yellow card after 3 (ie 4, 5 or 6) would be a 1 game suspension)

Thrown out of a game (2nd time in a same season) – 3 or more games

Participating in a fight – Out for the rest of the season and banned from all River Trails Park District leagues for one year or more. This includes throwing a punch (doesn't matter whether punch landed or not).

DO NOT PUT YOURSELF OR OTHER TEAMATES IN THE POSITION TO BE THROWN OUT OF A GAME.

No player, coach, manager or captain is allowed on the field until the official summons them.

PROTESTS

- If a team has a question about eligibility of a player, they must notify the referee and or park personnel. Teams must question to check rosters before the end of the 1st half the player plays in. No questions regarding roster checks will be made after the game finishes.
- If a player's eligibility is questioned, and he/she cannot prove their identity due to lack of an ID, that player needs to provide full name (including middle name), home address, phone & birthdate to the field coordinator. Player would then have 2 days to provide a photo ID to verify information in person with the Supervisor of Athletics.
- No other protests will be allowed.

FORFEITED GAMES

- If your team is unable to field a team for any scheduled game, please contact the Supervisor of Athletics immediately. Captains MUST give a one week (7 day) notice to Supervisor of Athletics to avoid a forfeit. Any notice given under 7 days could result in a forfeit loss.
- If a team forfeits a game, the team will be charged a **\$25 forfeit fee per game. Forfeit fee must be paid in full before next game.**
- A team may only forfeit two games. After the second forfeit the team could be dropped from the league and will not participate in the tournament.
- Forfeited games are recorded as a 1-0 score.

DETERMINING LEAGUE CHAMPIONS / TIEBREAKING PROCEDURES

1. Overall league record
2. Head to head
3. Head to head point differential
4. Overall point differential
5. The number of points allowed in all games
6. If a team has a forfeit
7. Coin Flip

AWARDS

\$150 is awarded between top 2 teams (1st place & 2nd place) in regular season, playoff champion (1st place) and playoff runner up (2nd place). ****Teams may choose a trophy instead of a \$25 cash prize****

RAINOUTS

- An official game is one in which 10 minutes has elapsed in the 2nd half.
- In the event of multiple rainouts, multiple games or games on other nights will be played. These rainout games on other nights could include weekends. Captains will be given one-week notice on makeup games and it is their responsibility to contact their team.

DAY OF GAME INFORMATION

- In case of bad weather, game information will be available after 4:30 p.m. on game day by calling the hotline number 847-255-2229. This recorded message will give all sports information for that day.

GAME RULES

TEAM

1. 6 players make up an official team.
2. There must be 5 players by 10 minutes past the game time otherwise the game is ruled a forfeit. If both teams have less than 5 players, they both receive a loss.
3. Offense: 1 QB, 1 Center, 4 Receivers, must have three on the line of scrimmage at the snap. The center is eligible to be a receiver.
4. Defense: 6 defenders, which all must be 5 yards off line of scrimmage

FIELD SIZE

1. 80 yards X 40 yards (which include 10-yard end zones).
2. The 60 yard field will be divided into thirds with two 1st down lines.
3. 5 yard marker outside of end zones on both sides of the field (indicating 1 point extra point).
4. 10-yard marker outside of end zones on both sides of the field (indicating 2 point extra point).

LENGTH OF GAME

1. Game will have two 20-minute running halves and 3 minutes between halves. (See below for clock stoppages)
2. The play clock will be 30 seconds to put the ball in play after referee places the ball on the line of scrimmage and signals.
3. A running clock will be used EXCEPT for the last one minute of the 1st half and last two minutes of the 2nd half. The clock will not stop in the 2nd half of the game if the game is being decided by more than 14 points.
4. The clock will be started and stopped for these reasons:
 - A. Injury - team will be charged a time out if it is in the last 2 minutes of the game
 - B. Incomplete pass
 - C. Running out of bounds
 - D. Touchdown, safety
 - E. Penalties:
 - Offensive: Clock starts right away
 - Defensive: Clock starts on snap
5. Each team is given 3 timeouts per game.
6. OVERTIME (OT) will be played via high school rules. Teams will receive the ball on the 1st down line (20 yards from end zone) and will have four plays to score. The opposing team will then have the same opportunity and teams will continue to alternate possessions until there is a winner. Beginning in the 2nd overtime teams must go for a 2 point conversion.

SCORING

1. Touchdown = 6 points.
2. Safety = 2 points plus ball on 10 yard line.
3. No field goals or kicking for extra points.
4. Extra points:
 - 5 yard line = 1 point.
 - 10 yard line = 2 points.
5. If a defensive team intercepts an extra point conversion, the defensive team will be rewarded 2 points if they can return it to the other end zone for a score
6. The ball and flag belt must cross the end zone line to be awarded points

OFFENSE

Kicking (kickoffs):

1. The winner of a coin flip before the game will decide if they want the ball in the first half or second half. The other team will decide on which direction they defend
2. There will be NO kickoffs. Ball will be placed on the 10 yard line to begin a possession to start the half or after a score

Kicking (Punts):

1. No rush on punts, kickers have 5 seconds to punt.
2. Punts must be declared.
3. All but 2 defensive players must be on the line of scrimmage during the punt. The offense may not release until the ball has been kicked.
4. A punt that is dropped by a returner is a live ball and can be picked up by either team. No player is allowed to dive for the fumble, players must stay on their feet.

Running / Passing:

1. Running is defined as a direct handoff or pitch. A QB scramble is defined as a QB crossing the line of scrimmage with the ball.
2. Offense has unlimited runs per possession EXCEPT they can only have 1 QB scramble per possession.
3. Each team is allowed only 1 half-back (running back) pass per possession

Snapping:

1. Center can snap the ball to the side or between the legs
2. If a snap hits the ground on an offensive play (punt included) the ball is dead and the ball will be spotted at the point of contact.

DEFENSE

1. All defenders must be 5 yards off the line of scrimmage (neutral zone) at the time of the snap. However, once the offensive team is within 5 yards of scoring, the defense may position their defenders closer than 5 yards away EXCEPT for the pass rusher(s) who need to remain at least 5 yards from the ball.
2. Pushing a ball carrier out of bounds is legal as long as excessive force is not used and the defender is attempting to get the flags while this occurs. (Flag must be the 1st priority) Defensive players that go high (ie the shoulder area) can be flagged and could warrant ejection. This also applies to excessive force that will be a subjective call that the referee will make.
3. Bull rushing (directly running head into an offensive lineman) will not be allowed by the defense. A 10 yard penalty will be called.

BLOCKING

1. An offensive lineman may start with his arms straight out or in a bench press position. At no time can a lineman who is at a bench press position extend his arms straight out. (ie a shoving motion) Below the head, a shoving motion would be considered illegal
2. Upright blocking only (means straight back and arms extended straight ahead)
3. No cut blocks or blocking below the waist or in the back.
4. Downfield blocks are not allowed. No contact can be initiated by the offense. Basketball style picks and running interference are allowed
5. Defense can NOT touch the QB's arm during a pass play IF the defender is coming from the side or back

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Anything not noted in these rules will be addressed to the I.H.S.A. rules.
2. No flag guarding is allowed to avoid flag pulling. If the infraction occurs, the play will be blown dead and the ball placed where the infraction took place
3. When flag is pulled, drop flag as soon as it is off the opponent's belt.
4. Ball carrier is allowed to jump in the air to avoid having his flag pulled as long as the ball carrier is not initiating contact or jumping over a defender
5. If a flag falls off a player prior or during a play and the player possesses the ball, the player will be deemed down from the spot the player receives the ball OR loses his flag.

Offensive Penalties:

PENALTY	NUMBER YARDS	ASSESSED FROM POINT/LINE of SCRIMMAGE		LOSS DOWN	AUTO FIRST	With Intention, Yellow Card & sit out 3 possessions
Illegal Pick	5		X	X		
Illegal Forward Pass	5		X	X		
“Off” Interference	15		X	X		
“Off” Holding	10		X			
Running Through Defender	15	X		X		X
Straight Arm	15	X		X		
More than 1 QB scramble in a possession	5		X	X		

Defensive Penalties:

PENALTY	NUMBER YARDS	ASSESSED FROM POINT/LINE of SCRIMMAGE		LOSS DOWN	AUTO FIRST	With Intention, Yellow Card & sit out 3 possessions
“Def” Offsides/Neutral zone infraction	5		X			
“Def” Holding	5		X			
Roughing the Passer	15		X		X	X
Pushing Out of Bounds (excessive force)	15					X
Early Rush Count	5		X			
Bull Rushing	10	X				X
“Def” Interference	-	X			X	
Hitting QB’s arm	15		X		X	X

Both Sides Penalties:

PENALTY	NUMBER YARDS	ASSESSED FROM POINT/LINE of SCRIMMAGE		LOSS DOWN	AUTO FIRST	With Intention, Yellow Card & sit out 3 possessions
Illegal Motion	5		X			
Illegal Procedure	5		X			
Illegal Formations	5		X			
Blocking Behind Back	15		X			X
Deliberately Pulls Flags	15		X		X	
Tackling (+ possible ejection)	15	X			X	X
Clipping, Cut Blocks Below the Waist	15	X				X
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	15					X