

**BURKE COUNTY RECREATION DEPARTMENT**  
**FLAG FOOTBALL RULES**  
Updated September 7, 2022

**GOVERNING AUTHORITY**

The Burke County Recreation Department's Football Leagues will be governed by the current rules and regulations of the Georgia High School Football Association, with the exceptions found in this manual.

**PURPOSE**

Flag football is designed for the general purpose of establishing the foundation of the basic fundamentals of football. The Burke County Recreation Department wants to establish the game of football as fun for the children. The children do not need unnecessary pressure to win or excel. They need supportive parents and coaches to set the foundation of good sportsmanship. Winning or losing is not that important; learning how to play the game and getting along with others in a team setting is.

**AGE CONTROL DATE**

The age control date is September 1st of the current year. The Flag division is designed for 5- 6 year olds.

**TEAM SELECTION**

Coaches will choose their teams. See the Team Selection Policy in this manual for the procedure used.

**FIELD SPECIFICATIONS**

The Flag division will play on a 60 yard field that is 40 feet wide.

**WEIGHT LIMIT**

All boys weighing over sixty (60) pounds must play a **down interior line** position (tackle to tackle) on offense and defense. Each child will be weighed prior to the first game. **Once a child has made the weight limit, they will be eligible to play running positions and wide-outs for the entire season.** If a child does not make the weight limit, they may be reweighed **before** the first game. If they make the limit, they are considered eligible. A notice will be given to all coaches with the names of the children who made the weight limit.

**PLAYER EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORMS**

- A. Shoes are mandatory. Rubber-molded, cleated shoes are approved for use. Smooth and soft-soled athletic shoes, including tennis or basketball shoes are acceptable. Steel spikes and detachable cleats are prohibited.
- B. Team uniforms will be issued by the Recreation Department. Players must be in uniform to play.
- C. Pants with pads and a mouthpiece will be issued by the Recreation Department and must be worn in practices and games.
- D. The only approved footballs are a youth size nerf style football or equal.

**GAMES AND AWARDS**

First and second place team trophies are not issued for the flag league because neither a score nor a winner is kept for the games played. All teams playing are considered the winner of the game. The flag league is to

be considered as instructional and formal competition is strongly discouraged. The Recreation Department will provide a participation award for each child in the league.

### COACH'S APPLICATION, BACKGROUND CHECK, AND CERTIFICATION

- A. All coaches must complete a coach's application form and submit it to the Recreation Department for approval.
- B. In order to insure the safety of our participants, all coaches and volunteers are subjected to a background check. Each coach must complete a consent to background check. The Burke County Sheriff's Department will conduct a background check on each coach. If the background check is approved (see Background Check Policy of the BCRD for further details), a coach will then be considered in the coach's application process.
- C. Only **approved coaches** are allowed on the fields with the children. If a parent wishes to assist a coach with practices, certification is required and a background check must first be approved.
- D. The Recreation Department will provide at least one certification opportunity for all coaches and assistant coaches. The certification fee will be paid by the Recreation Department for all coaches and assistant coaches in attendance. Coaches not attending will be responsible for attending a certification program elsewhere, prior to the beginning of the season. The Recreation Department will pay 1/2 of the fee. This policy, also, applies to renewals. It is mandatory that all coaches be certified.
- E. All coaches must sign a code of ethics as a part of the application process.

### PARENTS' MEETING

It is mandatory that a parent or legal guardian attends a parent's meeting prior to the first sport that the child participates in. The child will not be issued any equipment or uniform until a parent or legal guardian has attended.

### GAME RULES AND REGULATIONS

- A. Four (4) eight (8) minute quarters will be played. Half time will be ten (10) minutes. The clock stops for the following reasons:
  1. Incomplete Pass
  2. Out of Bounds
  3. On Touchdown & Extra Point Attempt
  4. Time Outs
- B. Each team should start the game with seven (7) players; a minimum of five (5) is needed to avoid a forfeit. Each team on the field will consist of two (2) receivers, two (2) linemen (guards), a Center, Quarterback and a Back.
- C. A team may take three (3) time-outs per half. During a time-out, the clock will be stopped. Forty-five (45) seconds are allowed for each time-out.
- D. Defense cannot advance a fumble recovery.
- E. All shirttails must be tucked in and flags must hang down either side. (Wide receivers and running backs will be issued flags.)
- F. The play is whistled dead when a flag is either pulled off or falls off.
- G. When players are noticeably off-side, play will be reset by officials.

- H. No tackling is allowed. Tackling will result in a ten (10) yard penalty from the line of scrimmage, or if past the line of scrimmage, the place of penalty. **(Player must sit for a minimum of three (3) plays)**
- I. Flag guarding (intentionally knocking defenders hands from flags) is not allowed. Play is whistled dead at the spot, or if past the line of scrimmage, moved back to the original spot and loss of down.
- J. The field is set up in ten (10) yard increments. Each time a team advances the ball past a yard line, a first down is awarded.
- K. The offensive team must have a minimum of four (4) players set the line of scrimmage at the snap. The quarterback sneak is not allowed; however, the quarterback drop (meaning the quarterback can drop back and then rush up the middle) is allowed.
- L. On Defense, no one is allowed to line up over the center. They must be at least two (2) feet from the center of the ball. (Distance to be determined by the official.) Defensive Linebackers cannot crash the middle (shoot the gap); however, they may crash outside the guards.
- M. PUNTS
1. A team may ask for a free punt if they do not wish to go for the first down.
  2. A free punt on the fourth down will be walked off twenty (20) yards from the line of scrimmage.
  3. No punt will be placed inside the twenty (20) yard line. For example, if a team "punts" the ball on the thirty-five (35) yard line, it (the ball) will be placed on the twenty (20) yard line.
- N. There will be no kick-offs at the beginning of halves or after touchdowns. The ball will be placed on the twenty (20) yard line.
- O. There are no field goals. The "extra point" must be run or passed in the end zone. The extra point counts as one (1) point.
- P. **Coaches are requested to help keep everyone except players and coaches off the sidelines.**
- Q. A maximum of five (5) coaches are allowed on the sidelines at one time. All coaches are required to stay within the boundaries of the coaching box, with the following exception: one coach is allowed in the huddle of the offensive and defensive team. Once the huddles are broken, the coaches are to back up at least ten (10) yards. The coaches' box extends from the twenty-five (25) yard line to the fifty (50) yard line. **All coaches are required to wear their department issued coaches shirts.**
- R. Game time is forfeit time.
- S. Every child is required to play at least two (2) minutes of each half. If a coach fails to obey this rule, the game will be forfeited.
- T. PENALTIES
- The penalties awarded will be five (5) and ten (10) yard penalties. All ten (10) yard penalties are an automatic first down. A mouthpiece violation is an automatic penalty when the team is set before the snap.
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| <u>5 yard penalties</u><br>Mouthpiece Violation | <u>10 yard penalties</u><br>Holding<br>Personal Foul<br>Pass Interference<br>Clipping<br>Charging over the Middle<br>Tackling |
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- U. PERSONAL FOULS
- Any act listed below or any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul.

Players shall not:

- Punch, strike, strip, steal, or attempt to steal the ball from a player in possession.
  - Trip an opponent.
  - Contact an opponent who is on the ground.
  - Throw the runner to the ground.
  - Hurdle another player.
  - Contact an opponent either before or after the ball is declared dead.
  - Make any contact with an opponent that is deemed unnecessary.
  - Deliberately drive or run into a defensive player.
  - Clip an opponent.
  - Position themselves on the shoulders of a teammate or opponent to gain an advantage.
- V. Prior to each game, the official will verify each child for weight eligibility.

### PRACTICES AND FIELD SCHEDULES

- A. Coaches may not hold their first practice until after the specific date assigned by the Recreation Department. Any team found in violation of this policy will be subject to game forfeiture(s) determined by the number of practices held before the said date.
- B. It is preferred that practices be limited to one (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes, but a maximum of two (2) hours is allowed. No practices may begin after 7:30 pm and **all practices must be completed by 9:00 pm**. Remember, the children attend school and have many school related responsibilities (such as homework).
- C. It is the policy of the Burke County Recreation Department to avoid hosting youth activities on Wednesday nights, due to church activities. Coaches may conduct practices on Wednesday nights; however, the practice cannot be considered mandatory and a child cannot be penalized for not attending. This same policy applies to week-end practices.
- D. Fill out the practice schedule form (located in your coach's manual) and submit to a Recreation Department official prior to beginning practices. Practices will be approved and a field schedule will be given to each coach. The schedule should be strictly adhered to. It is very important that your practices do not run into another team's practice time. The Recreation Department requires notification of all scheduled practices.
- E. If you are the last one to use the field, please make sure that you cut off the lights to the field and that the playing area is clean.
- F. Before leaving the Recreation Department Complex, please make sure that all of the children on your team are with a **member of the coaching staff** or that a Recreation Department Staff Member has been notified. Please do not leave a child unattended.

### INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS

- A. The fields and facilities at Jonathan Broxton Park are monitored by the ThorGuard Lightning Prediction and Warning System. This system is designed to predict a lightning strike within a defined geographical region.
- B. When the conditions for a lightning strike exist, the Thor Guard system will give a 15-second blast on the horn cluster that can be heard approximately 700 yards away. At the same time, a yellow strobe visible from most areas of the park will activate and stay on until the danger has passed or at

least 10 minutes after the last detection of lightning. Once the potential for a lightning strike has passed, the system will activate the horns giving the all-clear signal – three, five second blasts -- and the strobe light will go off.

- C. Anytime that the strobe light is on, participants should take cover inside a building or their vehicle and are not allowed on the playing fields, playground, basketball court or outdoor areas.
- D. Anyone not following these guidelines when the Thor Guard warning is activated and remains outdoors or in an inappropriate area or shelter will do so at their own risk.
- E. If the alarm is activated during a game, officials will clear the area and ask all participants and spectators to go to their vehicles. If the system has not given an all clear within 30 minutes, the games will be called for the evening. (Refer to policies regarding completed games to determine if the game in session will be complete, rescheduled, etc.) Prior to leaving, check our Facebook Page (Burke County Recreation Department) or look for an email from our department confirming that all activities are suspended for the evening.
- F. Check the Burke County Recreation Department's Inclement Weather Policy for more detailed information.

### COACH'S RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. After team selection, it is your responsibility to inform the players of your team that you are their coach and when you will be scheduling practices.
- B. All approved coaches will be issued a coach's shirt. The shirt must be worn while coaching league games. Any coach not dressed in the proper attire will not be recognized as a league coach and will not be allowed in the coaching area.
- C. Anytime that our office notifies you of a change in schedule, it is your responsibility to contact all of the children on your team.
- D. In the event of rain, the Recreation Department will inform **you** if the games or practices have been canceled. **You must then get in touch with your team.** Please make sure that we have all telephone/pager numbers so that we can locate you. Check internet site ([www.wbcrd.com](http://www.wbcrd.com)) for up to the minute notices regarding inclement weather and cancelled games.
- E. Anytime that our office cancels practice or games, coaches are not allowed to practice their teams on our complex. We usually do this because of the conditions of the fields or weather and **ONLY** as a last resort. If you choose to disregard our notice, you will be suspended from coaching the next scheduled game. The only exception is if games are canceled due to a conflicting activity.
- F. Any written correspondence from a coach (or team representative) to their respective teams, must be approved by Recreation Department staff prior to distribution. A copy shall be placed on file in our office.
- G. Any coach that is unable to consistently reach a child (for practices, etc.) should notify the Recreation Department immediately so that we can see if we can reach them.
- H. If you have a problem with your team equipment, need additional equipment, etc., please **contact our office before 3:30 p.m.** so Robert can have your equipment ready for you by time of practice. Do not wait until practice time to let us know. If you do, it may be the next day before your request can be filled.
- I. Coaches must notify the Recreation Department in case of injury to any player, whether the accident occurred at a game or practice. Injured players must be cleared by the Recreation Department before they can play or practice. Accident forms are included in this manual.

- J. Located in our main office is a box for all of our coaches. It will have the name of the head coach. Please have someone check your box every few days. All correspondence from this office will be placed in your box.
- K. Sign an inventory sheet of the equipment issued to you at the beginning of the season. Make sure that all equipment is in the bag when returned at the end of the season. Equipment is to be returned immediately following your last scheduled game.
- L. Conduct a parent's meeting. Get the parents involved. Let them set up refreshment schedules. Make sure they know that good sportsmanship is **MANDATORY**.
- M. No tobacco is allowed on the playing field (smoking or chewing).
- N. There will be no stopping the game to get a Recreation Department Official. If there is a problem, the game may be played under protest.
- O. A coach is the only person that may file a protest. A protest may not be filed on a judgment call. It may be filed only if there is a rule violation. In the event of a protest, the coach must present the protest in writing within twenty-four (24) hours and the protest must be accompanied by a \$25.00 filing fee. If the protest is upheld, the \$25.00 will be refunded.
- P. See Practices section for information about field schedule for practices.

### OFFICIAL'S AUTHORITY

An official assumes authority 15 minutes prior to the scheduled game time, and until they have left the field. The officials have the authority to rule on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. His/her decision is final. The official has the right to eject players or have them sit out of part or all of the game. Fans, coaches, and spectators are a part of a team and any fouls they commit will go against their team.

### OUT OF TOWN TRAVEL

- A. When you take children out of town as a team, it is mandatory that you inform the Recreation Department of your intentions. Do not set up practice games or participate in area tournaments without our knowledge.
- B. When traveling out of town, it is mandatory that all children wear seat belts when in our departmental vehicles. Also, we expect you to drive the speed limit. There is no smoking allowed in our vehicles. If you will be driving a team to a game, please make sure that we have a copy of your driver's license to send to our insurance company.
- C. When bringing children back from out of town games and activities, do not leave the parking lot until all children have been picked up by their parents. If any incident or accident has occurred while a child was in your care and under your supervision, please inform the parent as well as one of our staff members. An incident report form is in your coach's notebook and should be filled out and turned in to the Recreation Department within twenty-four (24) hours.

### GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

- A. Good sportsmanship is expected and demanded of all participants, coaches and team followers.
- B. Remember, you set the mood for the team. **Your attitude is the most important one on the field.** If you are pleasant and have a positive attitude and show good sportsmanship, so will your parents and players.
- C. Players, coaches, and spectators are to refrain from making derogatory comments or using inflammatory actions to opposing players, coaches or teams.

## PLAYERS AND SPECTATORS CONDUCT

- A. Any player, coach, or spectator acting in an unsportsmanlike manner or in anyway that could prove detrimental to the league, will be subject to disciplinary action by the Recreation Department. If the coach cannot control the situation, the game will be awarded to the opposing team. The person or persons violating this rule shall be suspended for the following game. (Judgment shall be made by either the referees or the Recreation staff.)
- B. Any player, coach, or spectator disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct, including abusive language, is ineligible for further participation in the game in progress, plus the next game played and may be dismissed from the league.
- C. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure their child attends all practices and games. Any child who misses two (2) consecutive practices or games can be benched by the coach for one (1) game, with the approval of the Recreation Department. Any child who continuously misses practices or games will be dismissed from the team. It is the coach's responsibility to notify the Recreation Department of any child's missed games or practices.
- D. No alcoholic products should be consumed before or during activities involving your team.

## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I would like to remind you that our staff works MANY, MANY long hours and spends much time away from their families in order that you and your family can enjoy your leisure time. We have a very small staff and many of them are having to perform more than one job. I realize that many times you, as a coach, (and parents as well) get caught up in the moment of the game and react before you think about what you're saying or how you are acting, but please remember that our staff is here to perform their job to the best of their abilities and that they deserve the same respect that you want given to you. We want you to enjoy your time at our facility and we try to work with you to accommodate your needs. I am asking that you treat our staff with respect and if you have a problem or request, that you present it in a respectful, orderly manner.