



MIKEY'S LEAGUE, INC. FALL 2019 RULES FOR NON-COMPETITIVE FLAG FOOTBALL

The most important rule:

This program is about strengthening family connections and having fun, not about winning and losing. To accomplish this goal, we recognize that every group of children that enter our program will be different and have their own strengths and challenges. Our rules must therefore be able to adapt, just like the sports themselves. What follows are guidelines for play, not hard rules. Our coaches will modify as needed to put every child in a position to be successful and have a good time.

It is expected and intended that the rules will not always be “even” and will not always be “fair.” It is expected and intended that the rules will be biased towards player safety and having a good time. We intentionally have few rules as the expectation is that coaches, players, and parents will be able to maintain a focus on the “spirit of the game.”

Teams

- 1) Teams will consist of a combination of approximately 10 Athletes, Players, and Helpers.
 - a) An Athlete is defined as a person with a physical or developmental disability
 - b) A Partner is defined as the sibling or friend of an athlete on the field, who is there to play alongside their athlete in a teammate role but may provide minor assistance as needed.
 - c) A Helper is defined as a non-participant in the game whose role is to assist an Athlete with tasks that are difficult to perform based on their challenges. Examples of a Helper's role could be to follow an Athlete and direct them where they should be going during the game, pushing a wheelchair, catching a ball and handing it to an Athlete, etc.

In short, Partners play the game while providing assistance, and Helpers do not play while providing assistance.

Adaptations

What follows are examples of the types of adaptations that may be made to the game to allow for the success of Athlete's with any challenges. They are included to give you an idea of the types of adaptations that might be made but are simply examples. As everyone is different, the adaptations may be unique for each Athlete. You will know your child best, and if you have recommendations for your child, we would love to hear them.

- 1) Having a Helper on the field to direct the Athlete in accomplishing the tasks needed to successfully execute a play, such as telling them where to run, or encouraging them to continue during gameplay.
- 2) Athletes with assisted mobility devices such as wheelchairs or walkers may be given pool noodles to tag players with instead of pulling their flags.
- 3) Athletes with low mobility won't typically need to be covered by a defender if they are going out to catch a ball. It simply isn't necessary.
- 4) A thrown pass that hits a mobility device but is not caught by the Athlete will count as a catch and the ball will be downed at the spot.

Gameplay

We will ***loosely*** follow the Special Olympics Flag Football Rules.

- 1) Mikey's League Flag Football is non-contact.
- 2) Games will be played 5 against 5
 - a) Players will not outnumber Athletes
 - b) Helpers do not count towards the 5
- 2) Possessions: Each team will possess the ball two times per half. A possession starts on the 5-yard line and each team has 4 (or more depending on skill levels) plays to pass midfield, and then 4 (or more) additional plays to score a touchdown. Failure to score a touchdown in the allowed number of plays, or a turnover will result in the other team taking possession of the ball and starting their own drive at their own 5-yard line.
- 3) Play is designed to showcase the Athletes. Play is not to be dominated by the Players. To make this simpler, if a Player is playing quarterback, he may only pass the ball to Athletes (or their Helpers if necessary). If Players are not participating in the spirit of the game, they will be reminded by the coaches and may ultimately be removed from play if behaviors continue.

4) A touchdown will result in 6 points. Instead of kicking extra points, a team may choose to do a touchdown dance to earn an additional 1 point.

Last Revised 8/22/2019