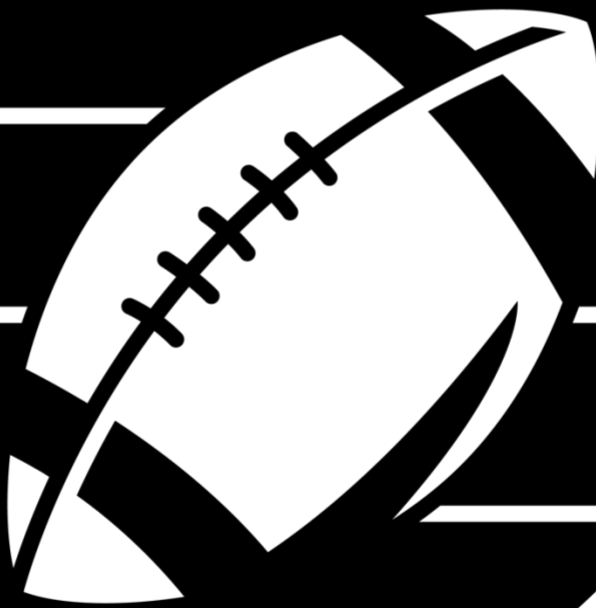


**- THE GROVE -  
FLAG FOOTBALL**



### **The Grove Football History:**

The Grove Community Church started youth sports in 2013 under the leadership of Pastor Kendall Brown. The league's purpose is to give local families the opportunity to enjoy a faith-based sports league in the community.

### **Total athletes over the past years:**

2020 = 175 KIDS

2021 = 200 KIDS

2022 = 240 KIDS

2023 = 350 KIDS

2024 = 424 KIDS

### **The Vision for The Grove Sports**

May this Sports Ministry be an access point for people to hear the Gospel and enjoy sound fundamental sports knowing their children are well cared for.

### **The Vision for The Grove Coaches**

To have a spiritual impact on the lives of their players and families while providing them with a premier sports league that is committed to excellence in all we do.

### **The Vision for the Referees**

Referees, as Stewards, are responsible for keeping the game safe, fair, and fun. Referees should support and work with Coaches to manage the behavior of players and spectators while honoring Christ in all they say and do.

### **Guidelines for all Spectators**

Spectators will respect all Coaches, Players, and Officials. If not upheld, you may be asked to leave the premises.

### **Stewardship**

Stewardship from the Bible – 1 Peter 4:10 (ESV), “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

### **Application on the Field**

Referees and Coaches are to be good stewards and work together to ensure equal and safe play. During games, coaches will defer to the Referee's call.

### **Duties and Responsibilities of The Grove Football Participant, Coach, Referee, and Spectator:**

- Conduct himself / herself in a manner becoming a member of The Grove Football and consistent with The Grove Sport Philosophies and the highest standards of conduct.
- Work together as a team to support the children playing the match and align with the Stewards of the Game to promote a safe, fair, fun environment.
- Comply with and promote compliance with the Bylaws, Rules & Regulations, and Policies, including those related to registration, certification, and training.
- Encourage clean competition and good sportsmanship.
- Prohibit and abstain from making negative comments and complaints about officiating.
- Present a healthy, athletic environment for team members, including but not limited to, not consuming alcoholic beverages, not using tobacco products or smoking, or simulating smoking or the use of tobacco products during practices or matches or in the immediate vicinity of the soccer fields.

## Serious Injuries / Emergencies

When a player is clearly injured on the field, the Referee shall stop play, and investigate the seriousness of the injury by attending to the injured player. Referee will motion to the Grove Flag Football Leadership Team with 3 short whistle blast. The referee shall call the player's coach onto the field and ask the other players to provide space (10 yards minimum) and to take a knee.

More serious injuries may require first aid or medical assistance. Be aware that emergencies may also occur involving spectators or others not involved in the game.

- A First Aid Kit is located at the Information Booth and The Grove Concession Stand.
- Ice is available at the concessions stand if needed for an emergency.
- An AED (defibrillator) device is located at The Grove Concession Stand.
  - Situations necessitating a 911 call would include an unconscious individual, obvious broken bones, sudden cardiac arrest, or other serious injuries requiring immediate medical attention.
  - If needed, the referee will swiftly retrieve the AED from the Grove Concessions Stand and bring it back to the emergency place.
- The Grove Incident report will need to be completed following the injury/emergency

## The Grove Rules - Youth Flag Football 2024

<u>Division</u>	<u>Football Size</u>	<u>Players on Field</u>	<u>Quarterback</u>
1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	#6 = Pee Wee	7 vs. 7	Coach
3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	# 7 = Junior	7 vs. 7	Player
5 <sup>th</sup> /6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	# 7 = Intermediate	7 vs. 7	Player
7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	# 8 = Intermediate	6 vs. 6	Player

1. HOME TEAM (listed 1st on schedule) gets first possession of the game.
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> half starts with the VISITOR TEAM starting with the ball.
3. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has 4 plays to cross midfield.
4. Once a team crosses midfield, it has 4 more downs to score a touchdown.
5. Possession changes due to turnover on downs before midfield will start at midfield unless the point differential is 21 points or more, then all possession changes start at the 5-yard line for the leading team.
6. Possession changes due to turnover on downs after midfield will start at the 5-yard line.
7. Run backs are allowed on interceptions unless the score is 21+. In that case, the possession change will count but the ball will be placed at your own 5-yard line.
8. **DECEPTIVE PLAYS ARE NOT ALLOWED.** Trick plays are allowed that fall within the rules of the game. If there are questions regarding the definition of each, please contact the Commissioner of Football or an Official for clarification.

## Coaches

1. All Head Coaches will be given a Grove Coach's Hat. Please wear this hat during practices and games.
2. Only those coaches who have gone through The Grove's **LIVE SCAN** volunteer process are on the official coaching roster and will be allowed to coach on the team sidelines during games.
3. **Coaches are required to complete the State Mandated Training before the first practice.**
4. Coaches will not be allowed to bring any writing utensil onto the field and therefore will not be allowed to write on anything depicting a play for his/her team. Plays should be drawn up prior to entering onto the field.
5. Coaches for 3<sup>rd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grades will not be allowed on the field (in the huddle) to call plays starting the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of games. You can use a time-out to enter a huddle.
6. **Wearing Wrist Band Plays is allowed** (optional purchase by individual teams, not provided by League).

## Referees

1. Arrive 30 minutes prior to your shift
  - a. Referee pregame meetings with Jeff Couto, Josh Solorio, and Scott Brasher
    - i. Pray, review the weekly huddle topic, and review rules
  - b. Make sure you have your referee jersey, whistle, stopwatch, and flag
  - c. Hand out game cards
2. On Field assessment
  - a. Walk the field to make sure everything needed is at your field:
    - i. Endzone markers, first down marker, whiteboard marker, and scorer's table
3. Coaches Gathering
  - a. Bring the two coaches together, introduce one another, say a quick prayer
4. Checking in player (blow the whistle and call them to the 5-yard line):
  - a. Introduce yourself, check mouth guard, jersey tucked in, and flag location
5. Gather the team to the middle of the field
  - a. Review the Weekly Huddle and ask someone from the home team to pray.

## Tie Game / Overtime

1. During Regular Season:
  - a. Home Team has the first possession.
  - b. Each team will get 4 downs starting at the 5-yard line.
  - c. No running plays.
  - d. If both teams score, the team that scored in the fewer plays will be the winner.
  - e. If any of these circumstances causes a tie, then that is the end of the game, and it will be a "Draw."
2. During Playoffs:
  - a. The same rules as above apply except if tied after 4 downs.
  - b. If tied, then that process will be repeated except the Visitor Team will get first possession in the 2<sup>nd</sup> OT and will continue until there is a winner.

## Game Timing / Time-outs / Scoring

1. Game Time
  - a. Two 25-minute halves with a running clock.
  - b. A 5-minute halftime.

- c. A 30-second play clock. Referees will monitor this with stopwatches.
  - d. Clock stops for injuries.
  - e. **In the last 2 minutes of the game** (not first half), if it is within the “21-point rule,” the Referee will stop the clock when a pass is incomplete, or a ball runner goes out of bounds.
2. Time-outs
    - a. Two time-outs per team per game (60 seconds each).
  3. Scoring
    - b. A Touchdown = 7 points – no extra points
    - c. A Safety on a tackle or Dead Ball in the End Zone = 2 points

### Playing Field / Equipment

1. No Run Zones
  - “No Run Zones” are located 5 yards before each end zone.
2. Playing Equipment
  - a. Players must wear a mouthpiece at all games and practices.
  - b. Players are **not** allowed to practice or compete with a hard cast or splint.
  - c. Players are **not** allowed to practice or compete while wearing any jewelry.
  - d. Metal cleats are **not** allowed.
  - e. Flag belts are to be worn with flags on both sides of the hips.
  - f. Jerseys must be tucked inside shorts.
  - g. If a flag falls out on a breakaway and the Referee can safely determine that the runner was not going to be caught the play will continue and be scored as a TD. If a defender catches up to a runner with a flag missing the play will be called down.
  - h. If a flag falls out without being pulled with players between the runner and goal line, the play is dead where the flag dropped out.

### Defense

1. 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grades – Coach / Quarterback can’t run the ball.
2. 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grades – Coach / Quarterback must throw the ball within 7 seconds.
3. 3<sup>rd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grades – 1 defensive player can rush the QB after starting 15 yards beyond the line of scrimmage. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Referee will determine that 15-yard line and the rushing defensive player must raise their hand to signify that they are rushing. There is no count needed. Once the ball is snapped, they can rush.
4. If they rush early (before the ball is snapped) from that line, the Referee will throw a flag and let the play continue. The offense can then determine if they want to accept the penalty (5 yards, replay the down) or keep the result of the play.
5. Any / All Defenders are allowed to rush once a ball has been handed off or lateraled.

### Interceptions

Interceptions are a change of possession and can be ran back.

1. If the score difference is 21 points or more, then all interceptions made by the leading team will be a dead ball and start at the 5-yard line.
2. If an interception occurs in the end zone the ball goes to the 5-yard line.

## Offense

1. Start of Offensive Series
  - a. The play will start when the Coach (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>) or Player (3<sup>rd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>) snaps the ball between the legs to the QB. (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grades do not use a player to hike the ball).
  - b. All players can be on the line of scrimmage & are eligible to receive a pass or handoff.
  - c. 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grades – Coach / Quarterback must throw the ball within 7 seconds.
  - d. Once a passing play is in effect, the QB is not allowed to run past the line of scrimmage. (1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> grade Coaches are not allowed to ever run the ball).
  - e. Only one player is allowed in motion at a time when the ball is being hiked.
  - f. The offense can run a play once the Referee sets the ball down, they do not need to wait for the defense to get organized or substitutes have been made.
  - g. If the offense makes substitutes during a series of plays, the defense will be allowed to make substitutes as well.
2. Running
  - a. The offense can run 1 time per series of 1<sup>st</sup> downs. If the ball is lateraled or handed off to another player and then thrown forward, it counts as a run play.
  - b. A hand-off or lateral may not be used inside of the 5-yard line.
  - c. Once the ball has been handed off, lateraled, or pitched, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
  - d. Any throwing motion (overhand, underhand, side arm, etc.) to the side or behind where the QB is standing is considered a running play.
  - e. Spinning is allowed.
  - f. Diving for a flag is allowed, but you are not to dive into a player. Diving, and grabbing a flag, is the only thing you are allowed to grab. If you dive and knock down or cause them to become off balance it will be a penalty.
  - g. A repeated offense of “rule f” above can result in being ejected from a game.
  - h. Diving with the ball to gain extra yardage is not allowed. Loss of 5 yards from the infraction.
  - i. Jumping is not allowed unless you are jumping to possibly avoid injury to another player (ex. a player falls down in front of you).
  - j. Flag Guarding is not allowed and is defined as the offensive player intentionally guarding his / her flag or pushing away the hand of the defensive player who is attempting to pull the offensive player’s flag. *It is not considered flag guarding if the offensive player is using his / her normal running motion.*
3. Receiving
  - All players are eligible to receive passes (including the Quarterback) if the ball has been handed off or passed backwards from the Quarterback.
4. Passing
  - a. Passing is defined as one player throwing the ball to another player while the ball travels in a forward flight. If the ball is caught, the receiver may advance the ball.
    - Any throwing motion (overhand, underhand, side arm, etc.) forward from where the QB is standing is considered a pass.
  - b. After a forward pass is completed, laterals are allowed as long as they are pitched behind the player in possession of the football. An unlimited number of laterals are allowed once the forward pass is completed.
5. Dead Ball (Substitutions may be made on any dead ball)  
Play is ruled “dead” when:
  - a. The ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
  - b. The ball carrier steps out of bounds.
  - c. A Touchdown or Safety is scored.

- d. A ball carrier's knee hits the ground.
- e. A ball carrier's flag falls out (except in a breakaway).
- f. A player dives with the ball (spot of ball is where "diver" left their feet).
- g. The ball hits the ground.
- h. If an offensive player's flag is not attached to him when he catches the football, the ball will be down where the catch was made unless the receiver was clearly behind all defenders and scores.

**Note: There are no fumbles. The ball is spotted where the ball hits the ground.**

6. Mercy Rule
  - No Head Coach will deliberately run up the score. Head Coaches will make all attempts to play his players in different positions to deter a large point difference. We do not expect a team to STOP playing, but you can let "lesser" players get involved more.
7. Blocking
  - a. **There is no blocking.**
  - b. A player blocking (shadow or other contact) will cause the play to be over at the point of the penalty. There will be a 5-yard penalty from the spot of the foul, and loss of down. Coaches are encouraged to teach their players to not get involved in a play since there are no fumbles lost and no blocking allowed.

**Defensive Penalties:** all penalties are 5 yards (Offense may decline any penalty)

1. Offside = 5 yards and replay down.
2. Pass Interference = spot of foul, replay down.
3. Illegal Contact = spot of the foul and replay down. For example, holding, blocking, straight arming, etc. If a player dives for a flag and causes a player to fall or become off balance, it will be deemed illegal contact (intentional or not).
4. If a player dives for a flag and pulls a flag without knocking down the player, it will be deemed a legal flag pull without penalty. Coaches are encouraged to teach their players to stay on their feet and not to dive at an opposing player's flag.
5. Illegal Flag Pull = 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay down.
6. Illegal Flag Pulls are pulling flags before receiver has the ball and / or the defensive player wrapping his / her arms around the body (bear-hugging) while searching to pull the flag.
7. Illegal Rushing = 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and replay down or result of play.
8. Games will not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense is winning.
9. Unsportsmanlike Conduct = loss of down, 5 yards from field position that it occurred. If after a TD it will be added from the 5-yard line for the opposing team.
10. Unsportsmanlike Conduct would be considered ANY action towards the opposing sidelines / players that was deemed dishonoring.
11. A 2<sup>nd</sup> offense of this action will be removal for the remainder of the game.

**Offensive Penalties:** all penalties are 5 yards (Defense may decline any penalty)

1. Illegal Motion = 5-yard penalty, replay down.
  - a. more than **one person** moving at a time of ball being hiked.
2. Illegal Forward Pass = 5-yard penalty from line of scrimmage & loss of down.
3. Illegal Contact = 5 yards from the line of scrimmage, loss of down.
  - a. Pushing, blocking, chipping, etc.
4. Offensive Pass Interference = 5 yards from the line of scrimmage, loss of down.
5. Flag Guarding = dead ball and 5 yards from spot of foul, loss of down.
6. Delay of Game = 5 yards, replay down.

7. Shirts Not Tucked = ball is dead where the player touches ball (if shirt is hindering flags).
8. Referees will step off approximately 5 steps (yards) for penalties.
9. Unsportsmanlike Conduct = Loss of down, 5 yards from field position that it occurred. If after a TD it will be added from the 5-yard line for the opposing team.
10. Unsportsmanlike Conduct would be considered ANY action towards the opposing sidelines / players that was deemed dishonoring.
11. A 2<sup>nd</sup> offense of this action will be removal for the remainder of the game.

### **Celebration Standard for The Grove League:**

We are in full support to celebrate accomplishments that happen on the field by teammates, coaches, and families. We do not support celebrations that are targeted towards the opposing team / player to embarrass or demean another player. We support Ephesians 4:29 which reminds us to not let corrupt communication come out of our mouth.

### **Direct Defiance to the Standards of The Grove Flag Football League and Protocol**

If a player verbally or with physical gestures, is demeaning another player, coach, or person, or is openly being directly defiant to a Referee, a league rule, or the standards that are place in The Grove Flag Football League or Church, then:

- a. **Level 1 Offense:** The player's coach will be warned of said incident and both the player and coach will be verbally warned to not repeat said action and or action in line with that previous decision.
  - i. Referees are not looking for confirmation from the coach, but just communication to the coach so everyone is aware of the stance of the refereeing team.
- b. **Level 2 Offense:** Referees let the coach know to sit the player for the rest of the current half.
- c. **Level 3 Offense:** Referees let the coach know that the player is out the rest of the game and will be referred to the Sports Pastor.
  - i. After the game, the Sports Pastor will process the data and determine if any of the following will occur or if an additional outcome will come:
    1. Not being able to play the next game(s).
    2. Not being able to play in the playoffs.
    3. Being removed from the league for the current season.
- d. **Level 4 Offense:** Referee calls the game, and the team of the person is deemed with a loss no matter the actual score.

### **Standard for dealing with a Coach:**

1. If a coach is openly being directly defiant to a Referee, a league rule, or the standards that are place in The Grove Flag Football League or Church:
  - a. **Level 1 Offense** (This is after a dialogue has arisen from the coach with a disagreement of some sort pertaining to the game): The Referee has heard the coach out and the stance is that we agree to disagree. The Referee will stop the game and let the coach know that this topic/issue/focus needs to stop, and we need to move on. Any additional conversations can be had after the game with the Sports Pastor or Commissions.
    - i. Referees are not looking for confirmation from the coach, but just the communication to the coach so everyone is aware of the stance of the refereeing team.
  - b. **Level 2 Offense:** Referees will stop game and Referees will let the coach know that the next comment deemed unnecessary by the Referees, said out loud, or noted by the Referees, the coach will be asked to stand down for the rest of the game and



have his assistant coach lead the team. The commission of that field will be notified in real time of the incident to speak with the head coach. If there is no assistant coach, the game will be forfeited at that time and that coach's team will be awarded the loss, no matter the actual score.

- c. **Level 3 Offense:** the coach will be removed from the field and removed from coaching said team moving forward and will be referred to the Sports Pastor.
  - i. After the game, the Sports Pastor will process the data and determine if any of the following will occur or if an additional outcome will come:
    1. Not being able to play the next game(s).
    2. Not being able to play in the playoffs.
    3. Being removed from the league for the current season.