



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

FRIDAY Y LIGHTS

YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL

2025

PROGRAM MANUAL

YARROW FAMILY YMCA

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WELCOME

Y MISSION

The Southeast Ventura County YMCA builds relationships, impacts lives and strengthens community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

THE SIX PILLARS OF CHARACTER

The Yarrow Family YMCA is a supporter of the Character Counts! Coalition and supports the Six Pillars of Character as a measure of positive youth development.

- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Citizenship

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Goals for YMCA Youth Sports programs are based on the following beliefs and principles:

- **PARTICIPATION:** Everyone Plays
- **FUN:** We Play Sports to Have Fun
- **FITNESS:** Regular Cardiovascular Exercise is Important for a Lifetime
- **SKILLS:** Emphasize the Fundamentals
- **TEAMWORK:** Focus on Cooperation, Not Competition
- **FAIR PLAY:** Fair Play Involves Respect
- **MEMBER INVOLVEMENT:** Members are the Key
- **SAFETY:** Protect Players from Harm

PROGRAM QUALITY STANDARDS

To assure a quality experience for all involved, the following standards are upheld by participants in the YMCA's Youth Flag Football program:

PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

Players in our YMCA flag football program wear quality uniforms. Football jerseys and shorts will be provided. Officials are always in their standard uniforms.

COACHING CERTIFICATION

Teams are expected to provide a volunteer coach for the season. Each coach will complete a volunteer application, background check, along with attending a mandatory coaches training. They are educated and held accountable to uphold the values the YMCA exemplifies. Above all, they will teach TEAMWORK and SPORTSMANSHIP.

SUPERVISED FACILITIES

A YMCA employs or volunteer will be monitoring the quality of the experience and making sure the games meet reasonable YMCA standards of play.

VALUES TRAINING

All participants at every level are educated and expected to exemplify the SIX PILLARS OF CHARACTER.

EVERYONE PLAYS

Each player on every team will always play an equitable amount of time each in every game. No player is allowed to play the entire game without sitting out at least one substitution pattern unless special circumstances allow for it.

RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

All YMCA's strive to maintain a safe environment in all areas. Many precautions are taken to ensure that our program runs as risk free as possible. All facilities are monitored for safe conditions, equipment and conduct. ALL PARENTS MUST BE SEATED OR STANDING IN THE DESIGNATED END ZONE VIEWING AREAS FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL PARTICIPANTS. SIDELINES ARE RESERVED FOR PLAYERS AND EMERGENCIES PERSONAL.

PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE

We are committed to providing a safe and positive environment for all participants. In accordance with the Safe Sport Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-139), we have implemented policies and procedures to prevent abuse and misconduct. In order to assure everyone that all players are protected from potential abuse, the YMCA has established a Prevention of Abuse in the YMCA Program Policy.

- At least two adults attend all player and team activities.

- Non-playing activities are the responsibility of each player's parents/guardians.
- All volunteers complete a volunteer application and the appropriate YMCA employee reviews and approves the applications this includes personal reference checking.
- Volunteer leadership is fingerprinted by the YMCA for clearance prior to involvement.

GENERAL POLICIES

TEAM PARENT

All teams are expected to have at least one adult in attendance at all team activities, in addition to the coach. **One (1) home team parent is responsible for keeping score on a team provided whiteboard for games.**

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is the responsibility of each player's parents/guardian. The coach and/or team parent is not to be responsible for transporting players. YMCA insurance does not cover any transportation by volunteers or parents/guardians.

CONDUCT

All coaches and players represent the YMCA in a positive and mannerly fashion. All head coaches and assistants must sign the Coaches Code of Conduct Pledge.

CODE OF CONDUCT

All team members, coaches and supporters must maintain the highest standards of conduct at all times. Profanity, loud or rowdy behavior, ridiculing players, fans, referees, or coaches, fighting, shoving and arguing are not allowed. It is expected that the team coach will ensure the observance of the Code of Conduct by each team member. Violation of the Code of Conduct after a warning may result in suspension or expulsion of individual players, coaches, fans or teams.

SPORTSMANSHIP LINE

All games will conclude with a sportsmanship line-up handshake.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

Any unsportsmanlike conduct by players, coaches and fans will not be a part of the YMCA Flag Football League. Officials and the Sports Director have the responsibility to stop the game if situations gets out of control.

SUBSTITUTION RULES

All players must be substituted. NO player plays the entire game unless necessary due to lack of participants.

BEHAVIOR

Players, Coaches or Team Representatives involved in fights, vulgar confrontation or negative behavior will receive an instant expulsion from the YMCA league. Players, Coaches or Team Representations receiving (2) unsportsmanlike penalties during regular league play will be ineligible for post-season play. Branch teams forfeiting (2) regular league games will be terminated from further league play.

REFUND POLICY

- Refunds requested before December 1st: 100% minus the \$55 jersey fee.
- Refunds requested after December 1st: No Refund will be given.

FLAG FOOTBALL TEAMS

THE DIVISIONS

Divisions are divided up as follows:

- Lower Divisions, 6 vs 6: Kinder/1st, 1st/2nd, 3rd/4th Divisions
- Upper Divisions, 5 vs 5: 5th/6th and 7th/8th Divisions

Divisions are determined by the players current grade level. Player may play up one division. Games may be played with 5 players and will result in a forfeit for the undermanned team.

- Football size by division:
 - Kinder/1st = Mini Ball
 - 1st/2nd = Mini Ball
 - 3rd/4th = Pee Wee
 - 5th/6th = Junior
 - 7th/8th = Youth
- A championship game will be played between the top two teams in each division based on record. This game will be played as the second game on the final Friday to determine the Championship for that division.

GAMES SCHEDULE

- All games will start at their scheduled times. Please arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled game time. NO schedule changes will be made. If a team cannot be fielded at scheduled time, then that team will have to forfeit and goes in the books as a loss. The opposing team be credited with a win and the score will be reflected as 6-0.
- If both teams do not field a team, they will both be given ties for that game. Score will be reflected as 6-6. Games are subject to cancellation based on weather and field conditions.

PRACTICES

Practices are optional, the YMCA offers a practice field for all teams, available on a first come first serve basis. Members can use their daxko login to reserve the turf, if you are not a member, please call the YMCA to get assistance in reserving the field for your team practice.

FIELDING A TEAM WITH MINIMUM PLAYERS AT GAME TIME

LOWER DIVISIONS:

At game time a team **MUST** start with 6 players. Teams with less than 6 players will be an automatic forfeit. This game will be counted as a loss in the book with the opposing team credited with a win and the score will be reflected as 6-0.

- Injury Exception: If a player is injured DURING the game, then a team can continue with less than the minimum required number of players.
- The opposing team will continue the game with the required 5 players.
- Team may not loan extra players to the opposing team if they do not meet the required number of players (6) to play.

UPPER DIVISIONS:

At game time, a team MUST start with 5 players. Teams with less than 5 players will be an automatic forfeit. This game will count as a loss in the book with opposing team credited with a win and the score will be reflected as 6-0.

- Injury Exception: If a player is injured DURING the game, then a team can continue with less than the minimum required number of players.
- The opposing team will continue the game with the required 5 players.
- Team may not loan extra players to the opposing team if they do not meet the required number of players (5) to play.

GAME FORMAT

GAME START

- The field dimensions are 30 yards wide by 50 yards long which includes already two 5-yard end zones.
- No contact allowed; players will be warned and penalized for excessive contact for first infraction. Players will be ejected for successive infractions.
- A coin toss determines first possession.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at their 5-yard line and has four plays to cross mid-field. If the offensive team fails to cross mid-field, the ball changes possession.
- Once a team crosses mid-field they have three plays to score. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession.
- All possessions start from the 5-yard line except interceptions.
- "No Run Zone" is located 5-yards before mid-field and 5-yard before the end zone.
- Teams may use their own ball (only one allowed) during games, but must pass official inspection before approval.

GAME CLOCK

KINDER/1st Grade

- Each week will consist of a 15-minute practice, followed by a 30-minute game, consisting of two 15-minute halves and a 2-minute halftime.
- The clock will continuously run except when a timeout has been called by a coach or an official; players do not call timeouts.
- Each time the ball is spotted, the offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball once the officials return to their positions on the field. Officials will warn the offense when there are 10 seconds left to snap the ball (leniency will be given the first 2 weeks).
- Teams may not snap the ball until the officials are set.
- Games do not end on a defensive penalty. Offense will get on additional play.

1st-8th GRADE DIVISION

- Each game is 44 minutes long. Two 22-minute halves and a 2-minute halftime.
- The clock will continuously run except for the last 2 minutes of the 2nd half. In the last 2 minutes of the 2nd half, the clock will stop on a first down, touchdown, change of possession, incomplete pass, penalty, stepping out of bounds or 5 seconds QB count.
- The clock will stop if a time out has been called by a coach or an official; players do not call timeouts.
- Each time the ball is spotted, the offensive team has 30 seconds to snap the ball once the officials return to their positions on the field. Officials will warn the offense when there are 10 seconds left to snap the ball (leniency will be given the first 2 weeks)
- Teams may not snap the ball until the officials are set. One official will be on the sideline at the line of scrimmage. The 2nd official will walk off the 7-yard rush line with a bright color bean bag, then go to the opposite sideline at the rush line (no Quick Snaps). Officials are off the field during game play.
- Games do not end on a defensive penalty. Offense will get on additional play.

TIME OUTS

- Each team has two timeouts per half. Timeouts do not carry over between halves.
- Head Coaches and Officials call timeouts only; players (on or off the field do not call timeouts).

- Timeouts will only stop the game clock for 30 seconds. The offense must snap at the completion of the time out.
- If timeout is called after a touchdown, the clock will not run during the extra point. The clock will begin on the first snap after the change of possession.

ATTIRE

- Cleats are recommended and allowed as long as they do not have metal spikes. All players must wear a protective mouthpiece and YMCA approved GAMEBREAKER BRANDED soft helmets; there are no exceptions. Inspections will be made at the beginning of each game by one of the officials.
- Shirts must be tucked in. If a shirt is not tucked in and gets pulled on by a defender going for a flag, then the player with the ball is considered down.
- Flags must be worn on each side of the players' hips with the flags pointing out. It is recommended that players check their flag alignment at the line of scrimmage before the beginning of each play to avoid unfair advantages created by improper flag alignment.
- YMCA Flag Football jerseys must be worn during play. Each registered player will receive a team jersey and shorts.

HELMETS

We require all players to have a GameBreaker branded helmets. If your player already has one, they may use it. However, if they do not, they can purchase one as part of their registration. Our helmets are supplied by GameBreaker at a discounted rate and include a mouthguard and a sports bag. Players are welcome to purchase a GameBreaker helmet through another vendor.

SPECTATORS

DO

- **Cheer Positively:** Offer words of encouragement, not instructions.
- **Trust the Coaches:** Let the coaches do their job and enjoy watching your child play.
- **Respect All Players:** Applaud good plays, regardless of the team.
- **Be a Good Sport:** Show courtesy to other parents and officials.

- **Keep it in Perspective:** Remember, it's just a game.

DON'T

- **Coach from the Sidelines:** You are not the coach.
- **Criticize Other Players:** It is not fair to anyone.
- **Harass Officials:** They are doing their best.
- **Engage in Arguments:** It's not worth it.
- **Prioritize Professional Sports Dreams:** Focus on fun, learning and friendship.

SCORING

- Touchdown = 6 points
- Extra point:
 - 5 yards out = 1 point (No Run Zone)
 - 10 yards out = 2 points
 - Safety = 2 points
 - Forfeits are scored 6-0 for the winning team

MERCY RULE

After one team is winning by 28 points or more at half time, the following will take place:

- The losing team gets the first offensive possession of the second half to continue regular play. If they do not score, game is over.
 - If losing team does score on the first offensive possession, then the game will continue.
 - However, if the winning team scores again on their possession.
 - Then the losing team will have one more possession to try to score. If they do not score, game is over, if they do score game will continue with the mercy rule.

SEASON STANDING TIE-BREAKERS

- Two teams tied for one place will be resolved in the following order:
 - Head-to-Head
 - Total points against
 - Coin toss
- Three or more teams tied for one place will resolved in the following order:

- Head-to-Head
- Total Points against
- Coin toss if two teams are still tied. Drawing if three teams are still tied.

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

The top two teams in each division (k-7th/8th) will advance to the Championship Game after seven games of regular season play. The eighth games of the season will determine the division champion.

AWARDS

Only the top two finishing teams in each division will receive medals or trophies.

FLAG FOOTBALL GAME RULES

START OF PLAY

- The offense can ask the referee before the play to spot the ball on the left or right hash mark. The hash marks will not be marked on the field so that will be determined by the official. If not requested, the ball will be placed in the middle of the field.
- Players may not be moving forward when the ball is snapped.
- The ball must be snapped between the legs to start the play. Note: Kinder/1st Division only – if the snap is dropped, the official will allow two retry attempts and after that it will be ruled a loss of down. Note 1st/2nd, 3rd/4th, 5th/6th and 7th/8th division a dropped snap or quarterback drops the ball, it is spotted at location where ball is dropped and the down is consumed.
 - Exception: Kinder/1st and 1st/2nd Division: all may be hiked to the side of player, not through legs.
- Coaches are to be off the field in all divisions besides Kinder/1st and 1st/2nd during a play. In the Kinder/1st and 1st/2nd divisions, the coach must stand 10 yards behind the 7-yard rush line before the play begins.
- In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew and an offensive down is consumed.
 - Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

RUSHING THE QUARTERBACK

ONLY FOR 3rd/4th, 5th/6th and 7th/8th DIVISIONS

- Players who desire to rush the quarterback directly must be behind the “Rush Line” at 7 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. An official will designate the “Rush Line” at 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- Two players maximum can rush the quarterback on a play.
- When the ball is snapped, players who are not 7 yards from the line of scrimmage may not enter into the backfield until the ball has left the Quarterback’s (player who takes the snap) possession.
- The rusher should not be in a direct line with the quarterback. The rusher should start 5 yards to either side of where the ball is spotted to prevent the offense from obstructing a straight path. The offense must avoid interfering with the rusher or penalties may be given for blocking.

RUNNING

- The quarterback (player who takes the initial snap) may not run with the ball unless the ball has been pitched, handed off or thrown back to them.
- Teams may pitch, handoff or throw back the football in the backfield only.
- The player who receives a backwards pitch, handoff or throw back may throw the ball forward or backward as long as they are not beyond the line of scrimmage.
- “No Run Zones” are located 5 yards before midfield and 5 yards before the end zone. **Exception for the Kinder/1st Division: They may run the ball when going for 1 extra point after scoring a touchdown. “No Run Zones” still enforced on all other plays in Kinder/1st Division.*
- The ball is spotted where the runner’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball carrier has the ball. Forward progress will be measured by the player’s front foot.
- The front foot must break the plane of the midfield or goal line to be considered a first down or touchdown. The ball does not have to cross. (diving and hurdling will result in a penalty)
- The center who snapped the ball cannot receive a direct handoff from the quarter back in any way. The ball must be tossed, pitched or the center can run behind the quarter back to be eligible for a run.
- **Players may not block at any time. Once an offensive player has possession of the ball across the line of scrimmage (due to a pass or run), all other offensive players must stop and hold their position. If a defender is impeded by an**

offensive player who is not stationary, there will be a penalty given (Note: Kinder/1st and 1st/2nd divisions will be more lenient).

- Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.

PASSING

- The quarterback (player who takes the initial snap) has 5 seconds to pass the ball if no players rush from the 7-yard rush line and cross the line of scrimmage. If the ball is not thrown, the play is dead, resulting in a loss of down. The ball returns to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball has been handed off or pitched, there is no 5-second count.
- The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack, but the pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage or it is a penalty.
- If the defensive team rushes the quarterback from behind the "Rush Line", there is no 5-second count once they cross the line of scrimmage.
- Interceptions may be returned even if caught in the end zone, the ball will be spotted where the intercepting player's flag is finally pulled. Touchbacks occur if the interceptor does not leave the end zone. The ball will be spotted on the offensive 5yd line.
- When an interception occurs on an extra point the play is ruled over, no returning extra points.
- The rusher may not hit the quarterback's arm, or knock the ball out of the quarterback's hand. The rusher must keep their hands below their shoulders and play the flags. 7th/8th division is the exception. Players may attempt to knock the ball out of the air. Contact with the quarterback or his/her throwing arm will result in a penalty.

RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive a pass, including the quarterback, if the ball has been pitched back or handed off behind the line of scrimmage.
- Players must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.
- Players that run out of bounds during a play are not eligible to come back in and make a catch.

PLAY IS RULED DEAD WHEN THE FOLLOWING OCCURS

The offensive player with possession has his flag pulled. Note: if defensive player pulls the offensive player's flag before they receive the ball, the defense must pull the second flag to end the play.

- Ball carrier steps out of bounds
- Touchdown is scored
- Ball carrier's knee or elbow touches the ground
- 5-second count on quarterback (no defenders rushing)
- Incomplete pass
- Ball hits the ground (no fumbles)
- Ball carrier's flag falls off
- Any player who starts a play without a flag is down where they touch the ball
- There are no fumbles and the ball is spotted where it hit the ground
- If an offensive player has one flag pulled by a defender before he/she receives the ball, the defenders must now pull the other flag to end the play. If an offensive player has both flags pulled by a defender before he/she receives the ball, it is a defensive penalty 5 yards from the line of scrimmage or half the distance to the goal and an automatic first down.
- The player throwing the ball cannot receive his/her own pass unless a defender has tipped the ball first.

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES:

MOST PENALTIES RESULT IN A 5-YARD PENALTY AND AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWN

- Offsides / Illegal Rush
 - Only one player at a time may go in motion. Player in motion may only go parallel or back. No forward motion. Forward motion before the snap will result in a penalty of false start.
 - **Please note that all offside penalties will result in a 5-yard loss but not loss of down and not automatic first down.**
- Pass interference (ball will be placed at the spot of the foul and automatic first down)
 - If this occurs in the end zone, the offensive coach can choose to spot the ball inside or outside the "No Run Zone"
- Illegal contact (holding, bump and run, blocking) Note: the officials will determine incidental contact which may result from normal play.
- Delay of game (all delay of game penalties stops the clock)
- Holding
- Tripping
- Rushing the quarterback
 - The rusher may not knock the ball out of the quarterback's hand

- They must attempt to go for the flag.
- They may not collide or make contact the quarterback
- A defender who dives for flags and makes contact with the ball carrier will be penalized.
- **Tackling will NOT be tolerated!**
 - **Malicious tackles or several tackling penalties on one player may result in being ejected from that game and possibly more pending further deliberation.**
- **Excessive contact**
 - **Even if the defender is making a play on the ball. If the official feels it was intentional or with intent to harm the player will be sat out of the game and may be removed from the league.**
- **Last Man Rule** – If there is no one in between the player and the end zone, and it is clear to the official that the offensive player would have scored if they were not held, a touchdown will be awarded.
- All defensive penalties are 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and automatic first down except illegal rush/offsidess, delay of game and pass interference. Illegal rush and delay of game are just 5 yard penalties and repeat the current down.

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES:

MOST PENALTIES RESULT IN A 5-YARD PENALTY AND A LOSS OF DOWN (NO LOSS OF DOWN IF THE PLAY RESULTED IN A FIRST DOWN BEFORE THE PENALTY OCCURRED)

- Illegal motion / False start
- Please note that all offside penalties will result in a 5-yard loss but not loss of down and not automatic 1st down.
- Pass interference (illegal pick, pushing off defender).
- Impeding the rush (the offensive players must avoid the rusher).
- **Flag guarding, will result in a 10-yard penalty from the action and a loss of down.**
The ball carrier may not:
 - Stiff arm defender
 - Slap at defender
 - Push away defender
 - Use the ball to deflect a defender's attempt to grab their flags
 - Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid flag pull

- Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding. Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
- Delay of game (all delay of game penalties stops the clock).
- **Excessive contact**
 - **Even if the defender is making a play on the ball. If the official feels it was intentional or with intent to harm the player will be sat out of the game and may be removed from the league.**
- All offensive penalties are 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down, except flag guarding and blocking, which is from the point of infraction.

SPORTSMANSHIP

- **Trash talking and use of foul language will not be tolerated.** The official has the right to determine language that is offensive. Trash talking is language that may be considered offensive to the official, opposing players, coaches or spectators. **The official may eject players, coaches, and parents from the game for trash talking.**
- Personalized trash talking is an auto ejection. Example, "you suck" versus "this sucks". Personal attacking another participant (including parents, officials, coaches and spectators) is not allowed in any manner.
- If the official witnesses any act of tackling, elbowing, cheap shots or any other unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player(s) will be ejected from the game.
- The league director reserves the right to eject any involved party from a game.
- **Player eligibility:** to ensure a fair and safe playing environment for all participants, it is important that only registered flag football players participate in games. Any unregistered player(s) found playing on a team will result in a forfeit of that game and any subsequent games in which that player participates.
- **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**

OVERTIME

- A coin flip will determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.
 - If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will get to choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating who gets to choose to be on offense or defense to start out during every round of overtime.

- The referee will determine which end of the field the overtime will take place on.
- Each team has one possession in overtime that starts at midfield and get 3 downs to score followed by points after touchdown. They may elect to go for one or two points.
- Both teams must “go for two” from the 10-yard line starting with the third round of overtime.
- The final points earned in overtime will be added to the final score.
- All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- There are no timeouts.

INJURIES AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

HEAT EXHAUSTION/HEAT STROKE

Please be aware of the risks of heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion, heatstroke and heat cramps. It is crucial to recognize the signs and symptoms of these conditions, to learn more visit www.sevymca.org/flag-football



HEAD INJURIES

Head injuries and concussions can occur during sports and other activities. It is important to be aware of the signs and symptoms and to take appropriate action if your child sustains a head injury. The CDC’s Head Up program has provided an information on concussions for parents and coaches can be found at www.sevymca.org/flag-football.



IDENTIFICATION/MEDICAL RELEASE

All coaches must carry their rosters and medical release forms at all times. It will be the responsibility of the individual coaches to make sure the participants are playing in the appropriate age divisions.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND FIRST AID

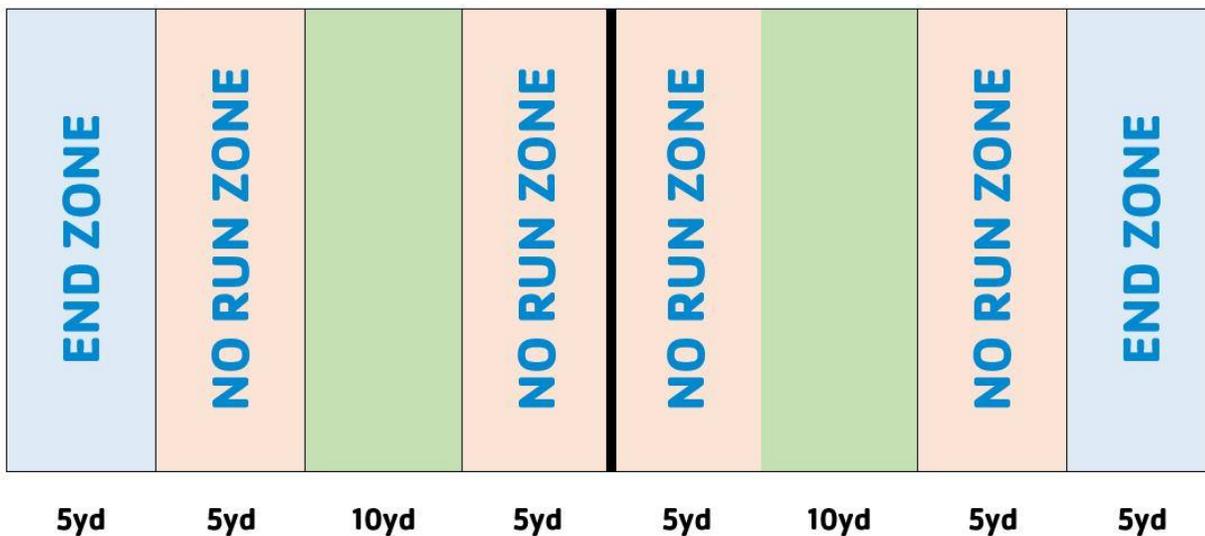
No two emergencies are the same. While the various steps and suggested actions outlined below represent sound procedures, your own good judgment should be the final authority until you are able to contact a superior. Generally, your responsibilities include:

- Prevention of incidents before they happen
- Handling the situation at the time of occurrence
- Notifying the necessary people after the incident
- During or following most emergencies it is necessary to inform others.

In general, YMCA staff are the key personnel to be notified in case of injury or incident, and a YMCA incident/accident report should be completed immediately following the emergency.

FIELD DIMENSIONS

Entire Field = 50 yards x 30 yards
End Zone to End Zone = 40 yards



CONTACT INFORMATION

YARROW FAMILY YMCA

Program Coordinator

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