

**Youth Football Rules and Regulations**

The purpose of youth recreational athletic leagues is to provide an enjoyable organized experience under capable adult supervision for youth in Pittsylvania County. The program is organized to promote sportsmanship, cooperation, and fair play at all times while developing knowledge and skills of the game.

The Pittsylvania County Youth Football League are governed by the “**Virginia High School League**” rules and will apply except as modified herein.

**Age Classification:** Playing age is that age attained by a player prior on or before September 30<sup>th</sup> of the current football season (2019).

| League | Ages    | Ball Size | Weight Requirements  | Length of Game   |
|--------|---------|-----------|--|--|
| C      | 7 – 9   | K2        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ball handlers cannot exceed 95 lbs.</li> <li>95.1 – 120, Red X, down position tackle to tackle, play both offense and defense</li> <li>120.1 &amp; up, Green X, down position tackle to tackle, offense only</li> <li>Anyone with X on helmet cannot advance ball, balls recovered are down at spot and ball is dead</li> </ul>     | <p><b>ALL LEAGUES</b></p> <p><u>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter</u><br/>20 minute running clock w/ 1 timeout</p> <p><u>2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter</u><br/>8 minutes &amp; 2 timeouts</p> <p><u>3<sup>rd</sup> &amp; 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter</u><br/>8 minutes each &amp; 3 timeouts for the half</p> |
| B      | 10 – 11 | TDJ       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ball handlers cannot exceed 120 lbs.</li> <li>120.1 – 155, Red X, down position tackle to tackle, play both offense &amp; defense</li> <li>155.1 &amp; up, Green X, down position tackle to tackle, offense only</li> <li>Anyone with X on helmet cannot advance ball, balls recovered are down at spot and ball is dead</li> </ul> |  |
| A      | 12 – 13 | TDY       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ball handlers cannot exceed 155 lbs.</li> <li>155.1 – 185, Red X, down position tackle to tackle, play both offense and defense</li> <li>185.1 &amp; up, Green X, down position tackle to tackle, offense only</li> <li>Anyone with X on helmet cannot advance ball, balls recovered are down at spot and ball is dead</li> </ul>   |  |

- Allowing 6 year olds to play is a rec club decision. IF 6’s play there are restrictions:
  - If C League player numbers are below 40, club can add 6 year olds until that number is reached. Clubs should wait and add 6’s as late as possibly (mid to late July) so as to have an accurate count of 7-9 year olds.
  - Six year olds can only play in the first quarter and cannot have full contact practice or play with 9 year olds unless the 9 year old is a first quarter player.
  - Six year olds must have a yellow tape identifier on their helmet.
- A and B League – if player numbers are below 25, coordinators must present recommendations to the recreation department on players to ‘play-up’ from lower leagues.

**I. Player Eligibility**

- Players must be a Pittsylvania County resident or attend a Pittsylvania County Public School to be eligible to participate. If a player moves out of the county, they may continue to participate in the program until the season is over.
- All players must have an Athletic Registration Form which includes the medical release and liability release completed, signed by parent or guardian and on file with the league before he or she is allowed to practice or play in a game.
- A child must play for the area represents the high school district in which they live or school they attend.
- An extenuating circumstance may be presented in writing to the Parks and Recreation Department for review.
- It is recommended but not required that all players have a current physical within the last 12 months.

## **II. Team Rosters**

- A. There will be NO CUTS for players that registered and paid on-time. No exceptions.
- B. For new players, a copy of their birth certificate must accompany the team roster. No roster additions will be accepted after the last scrimmage. Exception: the player moves into the county after the roster deadline. Player must provide proof of residency and school starting date. Any player moving into the county must be added prior to the third regular season game of the season.
- C. Team rosters must be completed on a League Roster form in numerical order and submitted with payment of team registration fees, birth certificate copy and copy of physical form (if applicable) to the Secretary or Director one week before the last scrimmage.
- D. Transfer of players during the season is prohibited.
- E. An existing recreation club must sponsor all teams. Each club will be responsible for providing onsite player registration, team and/or draft coordination, safe playing equipment, uniforms, footballs and securing coaches.
- F. The league will provide player insurance.
- G. The Parks and Recreation Department will provide online registrations, officials and staff.
- H. Any coach found to be using an ineligible player may be suspended from coaching for a period of one year. The suspension is applicable to any and all sports from the date formal action was taken.
- I. Coaches must consent to a background screening and be cleared to coach before he or she is allowed to coach a team during a practice or game.

## **III. Player Uniforms**

- A. Only headgear with the NOCSAE stamp is authorized. Coaches must examine headgear prior to issuing to insure that they are free of cracks, blemishes and have not been altered. All pads, straps and snaps must be in good condition and are not to be painted. Helmets must be the original color from the factory.
- B. Player's shoes must be VHSL approved footwear or tennis shoes. Metal baseball-type cleats are not permitted.

## **IV. Secondary Insurance**

Secondary insurance provided by the league is mandatory for all participants. The league pays the premiums from the registration fees charged to each participant. Insurance costs are set annually by the Youth Football Board. No participant will be allowed to play in a game before this fee is paid.

## **V. Weigh-In's**

- A. Players will weigh-in at an assigned time with a director or league representative. If a player misses the weigh-in, they will have to weigh-in before the first game.
- B. Weigh-ins can be done in shorts.
- C. After the weigh in, the league secretary will send out a roster with weights for directors to review prior to going public.
- D. Players will be marked at scrimmages and will retain that mark for the season unless they lose weight and are re-weighed.
- E. If a player wants to be re-weighed to change or lose an X the site supervisor for that site, a board member and weigh them in at that field site. If the player makes weight, the site supervisor must email the new weight to the league secretary.
- F. No coach can challenge a player's weight once they make a weight class. They can only protest a player being marked incorrectly per the sheet provided.
- G. 30 minutes prior to game time, coaches will present their teams to do a roster check to verify jersey numbers, names, and markings per the weigh-in sheet.
- H. The official weights of all players will be maintained by the league secretary.
- I. There is a zero-tolerance for any artificial means of weight reduction. Any means to produce rapid weight loss such as pills, sweat boxes, running, exercise, taping any parts of the body, etc. is not permitted. This applies to practice and game sites. If this practice is allowed by anyone in the league, this person(s) will be suspended immediately pending a league investigation.

## **VI. League Rules**

- A. If two (2) referees determine a child has concussion-like symptoms and sends them to the sideline, they are not to re-enter the game for any reason. This stands true if a coach sees concussion-like symptoms. The site supervisor must complete and submit a Concussion Symptom Checklist form provided by the Parks and Recreation department. The child must have a doctor's note to return to practice or games.
- B. Each team is permitted six (6) personnel on the field including but not limited to: assistant coaches, stat and water personnel, etc.
- C. Every effort will be made to have medical staff onsite for games. However, with volunteer squads this may not always be possible.
- D. The Parks and Recreation Department will handle all cancellations and makeup games will be determined and announced as needed. Games will only be rescheduled for school functions or inclement weather.
- E. In the case of a tie at the end of regulation play, extra overtime sessions will be played with a maximum of two (2) overtimes. There are no limits on OT's in playoffs.
- F. Game cancellations will be made by 8am on weekends.
- G. All extra points (kicks and runs) will be snapped from the 3-yard line.

## **VII. Practice Rules**

- A. Practice start dates will be set each year by the board. Practice routinely starts around August 1.
- B. Practice allowances are as follows:
  - 1. Five (5) days first and second week of season.
  - 2. Maximum of three (3) days per week after that.
  - 3. Max of two (2) hours per day.
- C. Five days of physical conditioning must be complete before contact with pads and equipment is allowed.
- D. No full speed head-on blocking or tackling drills in which the players line up more than 3 yards apart are permitted. Having two linemen in stances immediately across the line of scrimmage from each other and having full-speed drills where the players approach each other at an angle, but not straight ahead in to each other are both permitted. HOWEVER, there should be no intentional head-to-head contact. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action of the coach or coaches by the league.
- E. The amount of contact at each practice will be reduced to a maximum of 1/3 of practice time (either 40 minutes total of each practice or 1/3 of total weekly practice time). In this context, "contact" means any drill or scrimmage. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action of the coach or coaches by the league.
- F. No participant shall engage in any organized contact or practice until the insurance goes into effect.
- G. Preseason camps and clinics may be conducted at the coach's discretion. However, all camps and clinics must be open to all league participants.

## **VIII. Kids Playing Up**

Any recreation club wishing to move a player up into an older age division must have Parks and Recreation Department approval.

## **IX. Game Play for All Leagues**

- A. Length of Quarters:
  - 1. First Quarter (Development Quarter) – 20 minute running clock with one (1) time out. You will play 10 min offense and 10 minutes defense, the clock will stop to change out sides.
  - 2. Second Quarter – 8 minute quarters with two (2) time outs.
  - 3. Third and Fourth Quarter – 8 minutes each with a total of three (3) time outs.
  - 4. Overtime shall be played by VHSL rules. Each team will have four (4) plays to score from the ten (10) yard line.
- B. First Quarter Rules:
  - 1. Players playing in the first quarter should not play in the second quarter unless there are not enough players present or physically able to play in the first quarter.

2. Every attempt should be made not to play players "both ways" in the first quarter.
  3. If a player plays a ball carrying position on the first quarter team, they cannot carry the ball in the second quarter excluding special teams. They are free to play any position in the second half.
- C. Mercy Rule - A mercy rule will take affect when a team reaches a 35 or more point lead during the second half. At that point the clock runs until the lead drops below 35. The clock will only stop on injuries and timeouts.
  - D. C League will have a 35-second play clock with a visual hand county starting with 5-seconds remaining.
  - E. B and A League will have a 25-second play clock with a visual hand count starting with 5-seconds remaining.
  - F. Every player on the team MUST get playing time in EACH game.
  - G. Unsportsmanlike penalties will be a 15-yard penalty.
  - H. Blocking below the waist is restricted to players who are on the line of scrimmage and are in the free-blocking zone at the time of the snap. It is illegal for a back to block below the waist.
  - I. Spearing is a severe penalty and the league will discipline accordingly if a flagrant foul is committed.
  - J. If a helmet comes off during a play the following things will happen per VHSL rules:
    1. If it is the ball-carrier's helmet, the play will be blown dead immediately by the official.
    2. If it is any player other than the ball-carrier, that player cannot continue to participate in that play. If he continues playing after his helmet is off, he will be flagged for illegal participation and a 10-yard penalty.
  - K. In the case of an unbalanced line, only the first and second spots on either side of the center can have X's (see example below). All others cannot have an X regardless of how many are on one side of the ball. The center is defined as the person snapping the ball.
  - L. X's on defense must be in a down position (3 or 4 point stance) from tackle to tackle. X's on offense must play tackle to tackle; however, they can be in 2 point stance or in down positions (3 or 4 point stance).
  - M. If you have an X on defense the furthest out on the line you can play is the outside shoulder of the tackle. You must also play on the line in a down stance.
  - N. In the case of an unbalanced line on offense, left tackle to right tackle CAN be an X but cannot catch a pass, run the ball or advance the ball on a fumble.

**X. 'C' League Specific Rules**

- A. Six year olds can only play in the first quarter and cannot have full contact practice or play with 9 year olds unless the 9 year old is a first quarter player.
- B. First Quarter Play Only – In the event of encroachment/offsides/false start, the official will blow the play dead and identify the flagged play to the on-field coach and play will continue. No penalty yardage will be marked off.
- C. Six year olds must have a yellow tape identifier on their helmet.
- D. Only one coach allowed on the field for offense and defense unless it is the first quarter team or jamboree (allowed 2 coaches).
- E. Defensive alignment shall have four down linemen and no nose guard over the center, defensive guard must be outside of the center's extended arms. Defensive tackle shall play "heads up" with the offensive tackle OR covering his outside shoulder unless offensive tackle has a "X" (heads up only).
- F. Any defensive player lined up between the offensive guards must be at least three (3) yards from the line of scrimmage.
- G. Quarterbacks cannot carry the ball right or left through the center guard gaps unless they are in the shotgun position at least four (4) yards off the ball.
- H. There shall be no kick-off. The Referee shall spot the ball on the 40-yard line.
- I. There shall be no live punts. On fourth down the coach or his designee shall notify the Referee of their intention to punt and the Referee will advance the ball twenty (20) yards.
- J. Teams will have the option of running or passing for the extra point (1) or kicking for two (2) extra points. IF the extra point or field goal is kicked, it will be a dead ball kick with the offense and

defense taking a knee. X's are allowed to kick. On a field goal or point-after try, once the ball is snapped, the official will start a visual 5-second count. If the ball is not kicked within those 5 seconds, the play is dead. Extra point kicks may be placed on a kicking block.

- K. In the event of a Safety, the ball will be placed at the 40-yard-line closest to the end zone in which the safety occurred.

**XI. 'B' League Specific Rules**

- A. There shall be no kick-off. The Referee shall spot the ball on the 40-yard line.
- B. There shall be no live punts. On fourth down the coach or his designee shall notify the Referee of their intention to punt. They can choose to punt and the opposing team will down the punted ball by catching or touching the ball or the Referee will advance the ball twenty (20) yards.
- C. Teams will have the option of running or passing for the extra point (1) or kicking for two (2) extra points. IF the extra point or field goal is kicked, it will be a dead ball kick with the offense and defense taking a knee. X's are allowed to kick. Kicking field goals will be an option on fields that have two sets of goal posts. On a field goal or point-after try, once the ball is snapped, the official will start a visual 5-second count. If the ball is not kicked within those 5 seconds, the play is dead. Extra point kick may be placed on a kicking block.
- D. In the event of a Safety, the ball will be placed at the 40-yard-line closest to the end zone in which the safety occurred.

**XII. 'A' League Specific Rules**

- A. Kick-offs are permitted. There are no X's on kick-offs and this applies to both offense and defense.
- B. Teams will have the option of running or passing for the extra point (1) or kicking for two (2) extra points. Extra point kick may be placed on a kicking block. X's are allowed to kick; however, if at any point, the ball is mishandled and the kick is not attempted, the play shall be called dead. At no point should the X kicker carry the ball.

**XIII. Protest**

The football league will adhere to the VHSL rule regarding protests which states that there shall be no game protests with the exception of ineligible players. Under no circumstance will games be replayed.

**XIV. Player Suspension from School**

Any player or cheerleader suspended from school will not be permitted to practice or play/cheer once the child has been notified of the suspension and cannot return until the day he/she returns to school.

- A. The player is responsible for notifying the head coach. Failing to notify the head coach OR the head coach choosing to play the suspended player despite the suspension will result in a player and/or coach suspension determined by the board.
- B. This is applicable for all practice and game sites.

**XV. Disciplinary Actions of A Player**

Head coaches may discipline a player that repeatedly misses practices. The procedure is as follows:

1. Prior to the game (preferably several days before) in which the player is disciplined, the head coach must inform the parent/guardian of the reasons for the discipline.
2. Prior to the start of the game the head coach must inform the game officials, opposing head coach and the official scorekeeper of the disciplinary actions.

**XVI. Tiebreaker Policy**

Overall win/loss record will determine league champion. In the event of a tie, the following tiebreakers will determine the division champion:

1. Head to head.
2. Point differential.
3. Points allowed for the season.

**XVII. Jamboree Play**

- A. Will be played over the course of two Saturday's in August prior to Labor Day.
- B. Four quarters. 16 minute running clock. Switch offense and defense at 8 minutes.
- C. 10 minute halftime.
- D. One timeout per quarter per team, no score kept, no 25 second clock, no 10 yard chains (down markers only)
- E. "First Quarter" players will play the first and third quarters.
- F. "Second Quarter" players will play the second and fourth quarters.
- G. Three officials will work each game.

**XVIII. Postseason Play**

A single elimination tournament will be played immediately following the end of the regular season. All teams in the league will participate. All tournament games will abide by these bylaws.

**XIX. Sportsmanship**

- A. All coaches and parents will sign a Code of Ethics prior to the start of the season and will be held accountable to them.
- B. The purpose of the Youth Recreation league is to provide an enjoyable experience for each youth participant, while developing character, skills, sportsmanship, and to promote good will among all players, coaches, parents, officials and recreational staff.
- C. Any person involved in or taking part in any event, practice or game sponsored by the Recreation Department that damages or destroys property while using the facilities will be suspended indefinitely, and will be responsible for the cost of required repairs.
- D. Any coach found to be using illegal player, using an assumed name, falsifying a roster, or giving false information to an official or recreation department staff may result in the individual being suspended for up to one year.
- E. Misconduct by players, coaches, spectators, officials, scorekeepers or supervisory personnel will not be tolerated. Misconduct can be defined as improper gesturing, aggressive verbal or physical contact and the use of alcohol and illegal substances.

**XX. Player Discipline**

Participants are expected to maintain a high standard of conduct and sportsmanship. The Parks and Recreation Department must be informed of any incident regarding a participant. Discipline will be on a case-by-case basis and may include quarter, half or game suspensions or expulsion from the league.

**XXI. Lightning Policy (per NFHS)**

- When thunder is heard or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play and take shelter immediately. Avoid all metallic objects like bleachers, fencing, flag poles, etc.
- Observe the thirty-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or flash of lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
- Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count, reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
- In Pittsylvania County, the site supervisor will make the final determination of game status.