

# LVC YOUTH TACKLE FOOTBALL LEAGUE

## Rules and Exceptions

Update 8/8/2021

The LCV Youth Football League will follow the standard rules and policies established by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) as applied to junior high level except as specified and intended in this document.

League rules are established to ensure a safe and fair game in which all participants (including players, coaches, officials, and spectators) can develop their skills and appreciation of the game. It is expected that all participants will follow the intents of the rules as well as the stated words.

### 1. PLAYERS:

A. Competition and/or participation in a school, city, church or any other football leagues will deem the player ineligible.

B. All players must be listed on the official roster by the due date; the roster is to include each player's name, number, age and weight.

C. Age limits of players are:

3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grades Level:

a) Minimum – Eight (8) years old and in third (3<sup>rd</sup>) grade

b) Maximum – Ten (10) years old (as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year) and in the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) grade

5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Grades Level:

c) Minimum – Ten (10) years old and in fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) grade

d) Maximum – Twelve (12) years old (as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year) and in the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) grade

D. A player's weight is established by the official roster at the beginning of the season. Coaches are responsible to weigh any player who is close to the weight limit and may be a ball carrier, and report that information to the board, weekly. A one (1) pound per week increase is allowed throughout the season; no ball carrier may be over:

3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grades Level – 100 pounds

5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Grades Level – 130 pounds

E. Weigh-in will take place at time of gear issue with results distributed to coaches

F. All players not within designated weight limitations must have their helmet properly tagged and/or identified

G. No player with a tagged helmet may advance the ball in any way; fumbles or interceptions are to be called dead if such a player secures possession of the ball.

H. Players must use the same uniform number for the entire year; exceptions must be approved by league officials and will be announced to all teams.

I. In order to be eligible to play in a game, the player must have attended and participate in the required number of practices

K. To play in their first game, a player must participate in at least five (5) practices in full gear

L. Each player is to play a minimum of one (1) quarter per game; exceptions are granted at coach's discretion for concerns of tardiness, safety, lack of effort, etc. Skill is not an acceptable reason for a player to not play at least the minimum.

M. All players must demonstrate sportsmanlike conduct and an appreciation for the game before, during and after their games and practices.

### 2. COACHES:

A. All coaches are to monitor actions and behaviors of their assistant coaches, players and spectators.

- B. One coach is allowed on the field and may be in the huddle.
- C. Coaches on the field are to monitor their own players' actions and compliance to the rules; especially those that are difficult for game officials to monitor, including blitzing, line and linebacker positions, etc.
- D. All coaches must demonstrate sportsmanlike conduct and an appreciation for the game before, during and after their games and practices.
- E. Coaches are not to speak to opposing players or coaches except to offer encouragement and compliments.
- F. All on-field coaching is to stop (for both offensive and defensive coaches) once the quarterback begins to call cadence or making audible instructions.
  - First Offense - team warning and possible penalty
  - Second Offense - five yard penalty enforced
- G. Only four (4) official coaches may be in the playing area during games. All other "helpers" are considered spectators and must adhere to those expectations, including entrance fee and staying outside the playing area.
- H. Unless otherwise arranged, the home team is responsible for working the chains and down markers.

### 3. SPECTATORS:

- A. No spectators, family or friends are allowed on the field or playing area including sidelines and team areas.
- B. All attendees must demonstrate sportsmanlike conduct and an appreciation for the game, before, during and after their games and practices. Unsportsmanlike conduct may result in a penalty for their respective team and ejection from game or practice.

### 4. GAME OFFICIALS:

- A. Officials are to wear proper uniforms, provide necessary gear, and offer services as directed by the league and the commissioner.
- B. Officials are to provide an environment that is safe and fair for all participants in an objective manner as established by the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) and the Clearwater Football League.
- C. Discretion by which infractions are to be enforced will use the following priority scale:
  1. Safety
  2. Unsportsmanlike or Flagrant
  3. Extremely obvious or a point-of-emphasis
  4. Advantage
- D. The officials' discretion shall tighten as the season progresses.

### 5. SPORTSMANSHIP:

- A. All participants (players, coaches, game officials and spectators) must demonstrate sportsmanship at all times.

### 6. PRACTICES:

- A. Practices may not be more than two (2) hours long.
- B. Teams are allowed only one (1) practice per day.
- C. Before the season begins, teams may practice up to four (4) times per week.
- D. During the school year, teams may practice up to three (3) times per week

### 7. EQUIPMENT:

- A. The official game ball will be provided at the game; any exceptions to using the provided ball must be agreed upon by both coaches.
- B. The official balls to be used are:
  - 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grades Level – Nike Vapor 24/7 inflatable to 8 lbs
  - 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Grades Level – Nike Vapor 24/7 inflatable to 11 lbs
- C. All players must be legally and safely equipped, including all safety pads, mouthguards, helmets, etc.
- D. It is to be assumed that all players are legal and eligible for play at the beginning of the game. Head coaches are

responsible for verifying equipment eligibility prior to game time.

E. Smoked or colored face guards are prohibited.

#### 8. TIMING:

A. Each game will consist of two (2) halves.

B. Each half will be 30 minutes with a running clock, except for injuries and times out.

C. Injuries will not typically stop the clock. Game officials will decide if the clock should be stopped.

D. Each team is to bring one (1) coach, and a maximum of three (3) players, to the center of the field for the pre-game conference.

E. During the last two (2) minutes of the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) quarter ONLY, the clock will be stopped for first downs, incomplete passes, penalties, etc. as determined by NFHS rules; see 10. Point Differential Rule below.

F. Each team is entitled a maximum of two (2) timeouts per half.

#### 9. SCORING:

A. Touchdowns are worth six (6) points.

B. Kicked Point-After-Attempts are worth two (2) points.

C. Ran or passed Point-After-Attempts are worth one (1) point.

D. Field Goals are worth three (3) points.

E. A Safety will result in two (2) points for the defensive team and the ball on the fifty (50) yard line.

F. There will be no extra periods. Tied scores will be scored as a tie.

#### 10. POINT DIFFERENTIAL RULE:

A. A maximum point differential rule will be in effect if either team is ahead by thirty five (35) points or more.

B. While the point differential rule is in effect:

1. The team ahead will no longer have their scores recorded on the scoreboard..

2. The team behind will begin First and Ten on the opposing team's forty (40) yard line.

3. If the team behind fails to score the other team will take possession on their own 20 yard line or at the spot of the ball if deeper than the 20.

4. If the defense secures a turnover by either fumble or interception the ball will be placed back at their own 20 or at the spot of the ball if deeper than the 20.

a. The play will be allowed to continue until a normal dead ball situation (*meaning the player will be allowed to run the ball back for a touchdown*).

5. No extra points will be attempted after a play that results in a score difference of thirty five points (35) or more.

6. The clock will remain running even during the last two minutes of the second half.

#### 11. OFFENSE:

A. The ball must be snapped within thirty-five (35) seconds of the ball being declared ready-for-play. Penalties for not doing so include:

- First offense – Team warning

- Second Offense – Five (5) yard delay of game penalty and clock stopped

B. The offense is NOT required to wait for the defense to set up before snapping the ball

C. No interior lineman weighing over the designated limit is allowed to 'pull' to block. Weight restrictions are:

- 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grades Level – 100 pounds

- 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Grades Level – 130 pounds

D. Offensive lines cannot be widened for advantage.

12. DEFENSE:

- A. The offensive pocket is considered to be between the offensive tackles.
- B. Any ball carrier may be tackled if outside the pocket or after a hand-off.
- C. No blitzing allowed; including linebackers and cornerbacks.
- D. Linebackers must be three (3) yards off the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped and cannot rush until the ball is handed off or the runner is outside of the tackles.
- E. No more than one (1) defensive player may be between the offensive guards when the ball is snapped; pinching the center is prohibited.
- F. No more than two (2) defensive players may be between the offensive tackles when the ball is snapped.
- G. There must be four (4) or five (5) defensive linemen within three (3) yards of the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. No other options are allowed.
- H. Penalties for illegal defenses are:
  - First Offense – team warning; and possible re-play of the down, from the previous spot. This option is at the discretion of the officials.

13. KICK OFFS:

- A. There are no kick offs.
- B. The offense will take possession on its thirty-five (35) yard line to begin the first and second halves and after scores except when a Safety is scored.

14. PUNTS:

- A. All punts must be declared; no fakes.
- B. A long snap from the center to the punter starts the play.
- C. No rushing is allowed on any kicking play.
- D. Only two (2) players may be down field to receive a punt.
- E. Only the two (2) intended punt receivers may attempt to catch the ball. Any other player intentionally touching the ball results in a dead ball without possibility of the ten yard advancement.
- F. If an eligible receiver:
  - Catches the ball in the air, the ball is to be advanced ten (10) yards.
  - Muffs the ball forward, the ball is spotted at the point of first touching.
  - Muffs the ball backward, the ball is spotted at the point of possession.
- G. If any player of the receiving team, other than the eligible receivers, inadvertently touches the ball, it is declared dead and is spotted at point of first touching or of possession whichever gives the receiving team the least advantage.
- H. Punts must be kicked within five (5) seconds of the snap or a dead ball will be declared and the receiving team will take over at the previous spot.

15. POINT-AFTER-ATTEMPTS:

- A. Point-After-Attempts may be ran, passed, or kicked.
- B. A run or pass play will be as any scrimmage play.
- C. A kicking play must be declared and will be subject to the following rules.
- D. No fakes are allowed.
- E. The ball is to be spotted at the center of the field unless requested otherwise by the on-field coach.
- F. A long snap from the center to the holder starts the play.
- G. No rushing is allowed on any kicking play.
- H. Kicks must be completed within five (5) seconds of the snap or a dead ball will be declared and change of possession will occur. NOTE: The intent is to encourage a quick kick. Leniency will be given early in the season but will tighten up as the season progresses.
- I. A kicking pad/block must be used for Point-After-Attempts; with the exception that 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grades Level may

choose a standard kicking tee.

16. FIELD GOALS:

- A. All field goal attempts must be declared; no fakes are allowed.
- B. The ball is to be spotted at the center of the field unless requested otherwise by the on-field coach. C. A long snap from the center to the holder starts the play.
- D. No rushing is allowed on any kicking play.
- E. Kicks must be completed within five (5) seconds of the snap or a dead ball will be declared and change of possession will occur. NOTE: The intent is to encourage a quick kick. Leniency will be given early in the season but will tighten up as the season progresses.
- F. An attempted field goal causes a change of possession whether it is successful or not. The ball will be spotted at the thirty-five of the new offensive team or at the previous spot; whichever is better for the new offensive team.
- G. A kicking pad/block must be used for field goal attempts; with the exception that 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grades Level may choose a standard kicking tee.