

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION
2018 ATHLETIC RULES AND POLICIES

Youth Tackle Football

Appendix



Rockingham County Parks and Recreation Youth Football League

The purpose of Youth Recreation Athletic Leagues is to provide an enjoyable experience for each youth participant, while developing character, skills, sportsmanship, and to promote good will among all teams and individuals.

Although sports are competitive by nature; Rockingham County Parks and Recreation Department's intentions are to place LESS emphasis on winning, while promoting lifetime physical activity and health for each participant.

2018 By-Laws

The Youth Football Leagues are governed by the Football Committee. This committee shall be composed of the Director of Recreation, the Department's Athletic Staff, and the Committee of the Recreation Commission in charge of football. Questions of conduct and affairs of the league shall be submitted to this committee. NO PROTESTS WILL BE ALLOWED. National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) rules apply to the By-laws except as modified herein.

ARTICLE I: **PURPOSE**

- A. The purpose of this league is to familiarize children with the fundamentals of football rules, passing, running, kicking, blocking, and tackling. To teach, through the sport of football, sportsmanship, teamwork, love of the game. To promote safe play in their age and weight limit, and prevent rough play. To encourage the attainment of higher scholastic grades.

ARTICLE II: **REGISTRATION**

- A. Each player will be charged a recreation fee determined by the department which includes jersey, mouthpiece and equipment upkeep fee.
- B. All youths must register, including youths who participated in the previous season.
- C. The department will set a date for registration each year.
- D. **Registration: Registration is July 16 through August 10, 2018. NO LATE REGISTRATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.** Must agree during registration that child will be available to be fitted for equipment and be weighed from July 16 – August 10. If child is not present during these dates then they will be unable to participate. NO REFUNDS.
- E. **Equipment Fitting and Weigh-in:** Fitting of equipment and weigh-in will take place from July 16 – August 10. Child must have already registered during registration dates set. NO LATE EQUIPMENT FITTINGS OR WEIGH-INS WILL BE ACCEPTED.
- F. Registration Weigh-In – Participants who are no more than 5 pounds over the requirement or no more than 5 pounds below the weight requirement for their league during the scheduled registration dates may reweigh within five (5) business days by 5 p.m. after the last registration date.

ARTICLE III: **PLAYER ELIGIBILITY**

- A. Only youth between the ages of 8-13 years may participate in the League. All youth shall play in the age/weight class that they have registered and are eligible for. There shall be no waivers.
- B. No youth shall play or practice in the league without being registered through our department at times and dates set for registration of that year.
- C. Each parent or guardian will be required to sign an agreement stating that they understand the Youth Tackle Football Bylaws and Youth Sports Code of Conduct. Each parent or guardian will also be required to sign an agreement that states their child's date of birth is correct, child is physically fit to play tackle football, and material on concussions was made available at time of registrations.
- D. **Junior Tackle:** This group is for 11, 12 and 13 year olds with the exception that no 8th graders are allowed to participate. Youth may not be registered for Junior Tackle unless they have attained the age of 10 before September 30 of the current year. Any youth that weighs more than 135 pounds will be restricted to play in a down or set position on the offensive or defensive line (head up or inside of tackle to tackle). Limit of four (4) players above 135 pounds may participate on the offensive or defensive line with no more than two of these on either side of the ball.
- E. **Rookie Tackle :** This group is for 8, 9 and 10 year olds. Youths may not be registered for Rookie Tackle unless they have attained the age of 8 before September 30 of the current year.

ARTICLE IV: TEAMS

JUNIOR TACKLE: Each team will consist of a maximum of approximately 30 players per team with 11 players as a fielded team.

ROOKIE TACKLE: Depending on enrollment numbers will play a 6 versus 6, 7 versus 7, 8 versus 8. Each team consists of a maximum of 16 players.

ARTICLE V: COACHES REQUIREMENTS

- A. Pending an agreement with Rockingham County and USA Football, coaches must obtain USA Football's Youth Tackle certification prior to the start of the season, attend the mandatory coaches meeting, submit to a background check, and shall be approved each year by the governing body of the league. Coaches are expected to hold weekly parents meetings.
- B. Coaches- There will be a limit of five coaches per team: one head coach and four assistant coaches. ALL coaches will have to go through the RCPR vetting process, NO ACCEPTIONS. Those who are not coaches will not be allowed on the bench or playing field during games OR practices.
- C. Head Coaches are responsible for conduct of all players, assistant coaches, and parents. Any coach who knowingly plays an illegal player, uses profanity, threatens any player or official can or will be suspended from coaching any Rockingham County Recreation sponsored activity.
- D. **Junior Tackle:** It is the head coach's responsibility to play each player a minimum of 8 plays each game. If the head coach fails to do this, they will be given a written warning that players are to play 8 plays, if it happens a second time then a one game suspension will be given, a third time, then the coach will be suspended for the season.
Rookie Tackle: No player is allowed to play the same position in back to back quarters. It is the Head Coaches responsibility to rotate his players in a meaningful way in order to maximize player involvement.

ARTICLE VI: SCHEDULE

- A. Number of Games – Games shall be played in accordance with the schedule set by the Rockingham County Parks and Recreation Staff. Teams will play 6 games.

ARTICLE VII: PRACTICE AND GAMES

- A. Maximum hours of practice per week: Practices before the start of the season are limited to three (3) days per week and no more than 6 hours per week. No more than two (2) hours of practice may be scheduled on any one day. Practices after the start of the season are limited to 2 days per week; total of 4 hours practice per week.
- B. Rockingham County Athletic Staff shall determine the number of games played by each team during the season. Games will start the third Saturday of September.
- C. No league standings will be kept and no trophies will be awarded.

ARTICLE VIII: TEAM SELECTION

- A. Each season teams will be drafted. Head coaches will be responsible for setting up time to draft players for their age group. Each head coach may select 2 assistants and all other kids will go in to the draft. Coaches will draft older age kids first then the younger age for that group. Red strippers and ages should be evenly distributed. If head coaches cannot come to an agreement over drafting of players then the Parks and Recreation Department will oversee draft for that group. Final draft of players must be submitted to Parks and Recreation Department by date and time stated for that season for final approval. Parks and Recreation will have final say on all rosters prior to teams being divided.

ARTICLE IX: EQUIPMENT

- A. The league will issue game jerseys, helmets with face guards, mouth pieces, and shoulder pads. Shoes worn by youth leagues must be sneakers or rubber cleated type of shoes. Pants with hip, thigh, tail, and knee pads will be the responsibility of the participants. The youths are required to furnish practice jerseys, socks, supporters, special teeth guards. Special protective devices can only be used with approval of league officials or game referee.

ARTICLE X: GAME AND FIELD RULES

- A. Games will be scheduled by Parks and Recreation Department based on time and facilities available. Games will be played on Saturdays and some weekdays. Make-up games will be scheduled at the Recreation Department’s discretion. Games will be played in four 12-minute quarters, running clock, with two minutes between quarters and five minutes between halves. Free substitution rules will be used. Time will be kept by game officials. Coaches will be notified of 2-minute warning. At the two minute warning the clock will be stopped. A 30 second play clock will be in effect for all age groups. Each team is allotted 2 time outs per half. Time outs will stop the clock.
- B. NO ONE except coaches, assistants and trainers may walk the sidelines between the 25-yard lines, limit five persons, one of which must keep record of player’s participation.
- C. If any coach is flagged for unsportsmanlike conduct they are subject to being ejected from the game and will be at the discretion of the officiating crew and Parks and Recreation employee on site. If a coach is ejected they must immediately leave the facility. That coach will then be subject to a mid-week review by the Director of Recreation and Athletic Staff.
- D. Rookie Tackle one offensive coach will be allowed on field (Admin. Zone) for the games and the rest of the coaches will be on the sideline. Junior Tackle Coaches will remain on the sideline.
- E. The League will abide by the Player Participation Rule. (See Page 10)
- F. Teams may have policies concerning number of practices a player must participate in to be eligible to play on Saturday. This policy must be approved by the Recreation Department and a copy made available to the Recreation Department.
- G. The league will secure officials for all scheduled games.
- H. Home team is responsible for properly inflated game ball and towel for games during wet conditions.

- I. Home team must furnish a chain crew which consists of two linesmen and one downs man for each game. No one under the age of 16 will be allowed.
- J. All football equipment will be picked up by the Parks and Recreation Department at the last regular season game.
- K. Any Junior Tackle player above 135 pounds will be designated by the Recreation Department to be easily identified by the referees by using a helmet with a red stripe on it. Should this player gain possession of the ball, the play will be whistled dead at that spot.
- L. Any player who is bleeding may not participate until bleeding has stopped or is covered.
- M. Any time a coach or trainer is called on the field for a head, neck or back injury to a player, the injured player will not be allowed to return to play for that day. Any injury to the head, the player will not be allowed to return until cleared by a medical doctor.
- N. Mouth pieces must be attached (if so designed) to the helmet.
- O. NO stickers or tape are allowed on helmets except for the red stripe which are issued by Recreation Department officials. Players name must appear on helmet.
- P. Virginia High School League rules shall apply to all Junior tackle games, with the following exceptions:

Special Teams:

1. There are no kickoffs in Junior Tackle. The game begins and restarts after a score with the ball on the 30-yard line.
2. The punt is introduced, but no rush is allowed.
3. The offensive team must declare that it is punting in order to alert the defensive team to not rush and to allow the defensive team to assign returners.
4. The formation for return teams is nine players at the line of scrimmage and two deep safeties.
5. There are no fake punts. A team that has declared to punt may alert an official and the defense that it has changed its mind. A team that declares its intention to punt then runs a play will be penalized for illegal formation.
6. A team that fails to declare and punts the ball is also penalized for illegal formation.
7. The punted ball may not be returned for yardage by the receiving team. The play is blown dead and the ball spotted where the receiving team either fields the punt, the ball rolls to a stop or the ball goes out of bounds.
8. The kicking team shall not cover the punt nor send players downfield as the punt team is voluntarily giving up the ball.
9. With no punt coverage, there are no muffed or fumbled punts.

Receiving team players are encouraged to develop the skill of catching a punt as fielding the kick may keep it from rolling further downfield.

10. Following a touchdown, teams can go for a 1-point kick from the 3-yard line or a 2-point try from the 5-yard line.

11. Point after touchdown (PATs) are snapped from the 3-yard line with the holder and kicker placed at the kicking team's discretion.

12. There is no defensive rush allowed on a kicked PAT. Defensive players must remain behind the line of scrimmage but may jump and waive their arms to distract the kicker or block the ball.

13. There is no return of a miss PAT or field goal regardless of whether it crosses the line of scrimmage or not. A missed field goal that reaches the end zone is spotted at the 20-yard line for the new possession. A ball that does not reach the end zone is spotted at the 30-yard line or the previous line of scrimmage, whichever benefits the new team in possession.

14. As with the PAT, field goals also have the no rush and no return rule in place. A defensive player who crosses the neutral zone once an offensive team has declared its intention is flagged for encroachment.

15. All special teams plays must have a long snapper. It is at the coach's discretion for how long that snap is to the punter or holder. The punter and holder can set up as far back as the kicking team chooses. However, the punter must initiate the kick from the spot where he or she secures it. (For example, a snap sails over the punter's head, and the punter secures the ball 10 yards behind where he or she first set up. The punter must make a standard two- or three-step punt from that spot.) In turn, a holder must recover an errant snap and return it to the block where it was originally set.

16. Once the ready for play whistle has been blown, a kicking team has the regular 30-second play clock to either punt or place kick. The play clock continues to run in the instance of a punter, kicker or holder chasing down an errant long snap.

Offensive Adjustments:

1. Played by standard NFHS rules with the following exception: a. No blocking below the waist by any player anywhere on the field

Defensive Adjustments:

1. Played by standard NFHS rules with the following exceptions: a. Teams can only rush players that line up in a 3 or 4-point stance. Defensive Lineman cannot line up wider than the outside foot of the OT or TE. No additional Defensive Players are allowed to cross the LOS prior to a Hand-off or Pitch.

Rookie Tackle uses the NFHS rule book as its base but will employ adjustments in order to accommodate and promote play. These adjustments will depend on whether we will play 6vs6, 7vs7, or 8vs8. We will provide the Rules and Adjustments as soon as we determine the individual leagues.

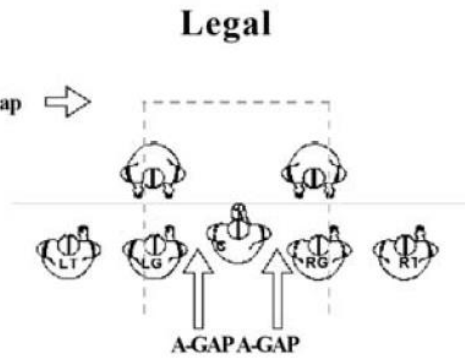
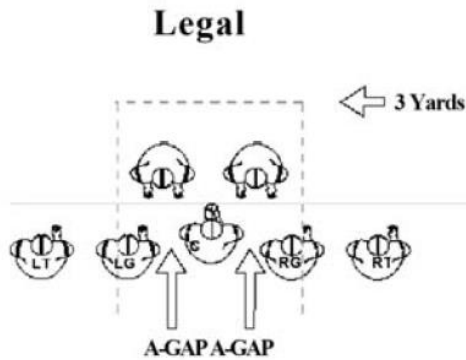
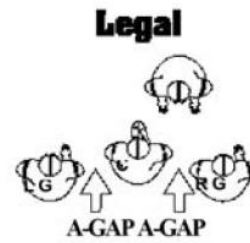
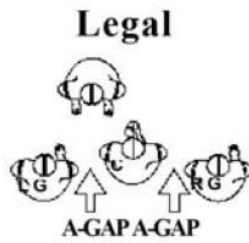
- Q. Parent or team videos will not be recognized as a form of review on any play or decisions made by game officials or parks and recreation staff. Any videos of practices or games are for personal use only.

ARTICLE XI: **PLAYER POSITIONING**

These special defensive alignment rules provided are to increase Player safety and allow conditions for majority of offensive plays to be initiated beyond the quarterback/center exchange. All coaches are expected to abide with both the spirit and intent of these alignment rules.

- a. The "Safe Zone" is defined as Head Up on Right Guard to Head Up on Left Guard from the Line of Scrimmage to 3 yards forward at the snap;
- b. The defense is limited to two down lineman in this "Safe Zone" but no player may line up on the Center's head on any snap.
- c. All standing players must be outside of this zone.
 - a. (See illustrations Page 9.)
- d. Defensive lineman will not be allowed to line up head up with the offensive center. The player and coach will first receive a warning if in a stance head up over the center. If this continues the team may be flagged for illegal formation.
- e. **Red Stripers** on defense must be lined up within heads up of the offensive tackle. They will not be allowed to shade the outside shoulder of the offensive tackle. The player and coach will first receive a warning if in a stance shaded outside of heads up. If this continues the team will be flagged for illegal formation.

Lining up on Center Examples:



Player Participation Rule

1. The maximum number of players per team will be set up by the Parks and Recreation Department.
2. At the **CHANGE of ANY** possession, all 11 players that were on the field **MUST** come off and be exchanged with eleven new players that were on the bench, **and stay on the sideline, until another legal change of possession takes place, i.e., interception, fumble, or loss of downs.**
3. **SUBSTITUTING** for players is allowed, but only for those players that are playing both ways! Substitutions must not create a situation where a 1-way player is no longer playing a full game on one side of the ball or another. One-way players **MAY NOT** be substituted out when they are not doing their job, or because they missed some practices, or for any other reason **EXCEPT** injury. If a coach is found to be using this exception as a loophole in the rule they **WILL** be expelled from the League.
4. Each player on the roster needs to participate in at **LEAST** two quarters of the game.
5. Make sure that if you take a child off the field for an injury that you have someone monitoring them for when they are ready to return. We take this part very seriously. Take a time out and coach the kid up if they are not doing their job. Do not take him/her out of the game – it is a violation.
6. All special team plays are exempt from this rule
7. The following “special team” plays **ARE** subject to this rule and do not allow substitutions of one-way players: **Punt, Punt Block, Field Goal, and Field Goal Block.** These are considered regular scrimmage plays and the Player Participation Rule applies. In other words, these are regular 4th down plays and a coach may **NOT** bring in his best players for these situations at the expense of one-way players.
8. No coach can deviate from these requirements and “invent” substitution patterns or specialty packages for whatever reason(s)! Making substitutions for one way players on the “goal line”, or “goal line stands”, “jumbo” offenses, etc. are prohibited. Basically, when the going gets tough, you cannot “beef up” by substituting for one-way players. The spirit and intent of the rule is the guiding principle...kids need to play!
9. If a player is listed on the official roster, arrives at the game with a uniform, they must play! No club administrator or coach may discipline a player for whatever reason by holding them out of a game, or any portion of a game, for any reason! Excuses like “missing practices”, late for practices; conduct, etc. are not acceptable. Major issues are to be dealt with by the Commissioner and the Executive Committee prior to it becoming an issue at the game.
10. Any deviation from the “spirit and intent” of this rule, as interpreted by the Rockingham County Parks and Recreation Athletic Staff, will result in **SEVERE** penalties.
11. The Rockingham County Parks and Recreation Athletic Staff expect all coaches and commissioners to monitor this rule for compliance. Should a situation develop where a violation of the rule is detected, you are obligated to immediately notify all concerned. Recreation Staff are required to report violations on their Field Reports.
12. The Player Participation Rule is **NOT** the responsibility of the Game Officials.

Ignorance of the rules is not an excuse. The teams that know the rule, understand the importance of the rule, practice the rule, and have integrated all components of the rule into their coaching. These teams have no problem with compliance.

If you find yourself looking at this to find loopholes, you are not living up to the spirit and intent of the rule and you are violating the Code of Conduct.

Violators will have consequences. Do not put yourself, your players and their families, or your Club in the position of being sanctioned. You are responsible. **PLAY** the KIDS!

