

**FAIRFIELD COUNTY FOOTBALL LEAGUE  
2017 RULES AND REGULATIONS  
BANTAM DIVISION – Third Grade**

**I. GRADE AND WEIGHT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:**

- A. All weights are game day weights - that is, player's weight while wearing his uniform and all game equipment, excluding his helmet and shoulder pads.
- B. Enrolled in the 3rd Grade during the fall football season and will be a maximum of 8 years old by February 1<sup>st</sup> of that same year.
- C. No Maximum weight to play in Grade 3 (limited positions).
- D. Players playing at "unlimited" positions (may play any position) must weigh no more than 90 pounds. This includes all equipment except helmet and shoulder pads.
- E. Players weighing over 90 pounds must play interior line "limited" positions and may not carry the ball on a designed play. A player's weight includes all equipment except helmet and shoulder pads. "Limited" positions include only OT/OG/C/DT/DG, and these positions are prohibited from carrying, passing or handing off the ball on a designed play. "Limited" players may NOT play either OE or DE. Each "limited" player must have an orange circle not less than 1 inch in diameter on the front of his helmet, which shall be verified at weigh-in.
- F. The Head Coach must ensure that each player on his team meets the grade, age and weight requirements.
- G. Violations of the above eligibility rules will result in automatic forfeit of all games played in which the violation(s) occurred and the coach will be subject to discipline.

**II. WEIGH-IN PROCEDURE AND GAME DAY ELIGIBILITY:**

Pre-Game weigh-ins are mandatory and should be conducted as follows:

- A. Each team must be weighed in the presence of both teams' coaches representatives no later than 15 minutes prior to start of the game. The final FCFL approved roster listing each player's name, DOB, jersey number, game weight with pads and whether "limited" or "unlimited" must be exchanged between teams and also be available on the FCFL website.
- B. Players must wear all game uniform and equipment, excluding helmet and shoulder pads but including hip pads, thigh, butt and knee pads. Players must then play in the equipment in which they were weighed as well as helmet and shoulder pads. (Example: Should a player elect to be weighed wearing sneakers, or no undershirt, or no additional pads for ribs, neck, or arms, he must play with or without that same equipment.) A mouth guard is mandatory during game play.
- C. Only one official weigh-in per player. Unofficial weigh-ins are allowed prior to the official weigh-ins to be supervised only by that player's coach.
- D. Each hosting organization is responsible to provide a scale, calibrate using a standard-size free weight (minimum 20 lbs.) in the presence of the opposing team.
- E. The purpose of the weigh-in is to confirm each player's status as "limited" or "unlimited.. The exact weight of each player need not be recorded.
- F. Rules governing weigh-ins and wearing of numbered jerseys will be enforced in ALL games, including the pre-season Jamboree.

**III. HEAD COACH RESPONSIBILITIES - GAME DAY:**

- A. The Home Teams having the first game of the day will provide two (2) assistants to
  - 1. League Officials for field preparation, including placing yard line and goal markers.
  - 2. After the last game, the Visiting Team will ensure that the field and sidelines are clean and will assist League Officials in storing equipment.
- B. Head Coaches are responsible for fan control and deportment.
- C. Home Teams will provide a three (3)-man sidelines/first down crew. Where possible, the first down crew shall be stationed on the home team's sideline.
- D. Home Teams must provide the same accommodations to the Visiting Team that they have

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available for themselves. Home Teams who cannot provide the same accommodations to the Visiting team are prohibited from using them.

- E. Each team may have one coach on the field during all plays, who may give oral instructions to his team until the offense is set. An on-field coach must be deeper than the deepest player on his team. Once the ball is snapped, the coach may only move to get out of the way of the play, and if a coach moves toward or directs a player to the play (verbally or physically) a personal foul will be assessed and his team penalized fifteen (15) yards.
- F. No sideline coaches, parents or fans are permitted on the playing field (with the exception as allowed by III. F), or in the end zones for any purpose including filming the game.
- G. All coaches, fans and players are prohibited from using any wired or wireless mechanical communication devices, either directly or indirectly, to communicate with anyone observing the game..
- H. Refer to additional responsibilities in FCFL Policy and Procedures Coaches' Code of Conduct.

**IV. REFEREES:**

Referee responsibilities include

- A. Knowing FCFL Rules
- B. Enforcing Rules
- C. Keeping Time – When available, field clocks should be used.
- D. Down Supervision
- E. Game Play
- F. Crowd Control
- G. An official game may not be played without at least two referees in attendance.

**Referee point of emphasis:**

The FCFL board emphasizes that there should be a penalty called any time the head or neck is contacted by any player, whether offensive or defensive. If a determination can't be made who initiated the illegal head and neck contact, then both players should be penalized. The referees should at the time of the penalty track in writing the number and name of the player(s) penalized and report it on the FCFL website. If a player gets two such penalties they should immediately be removed and again reported on the FCFL website. Referees should not hesitate to penalize or eject a player who violates these rules. It is considered critical in the teaching of proper technique to both the player and the coaches. It is expected that initially there may be a lack of understanding of the strictness of the calls, but by consistently calling the penalty, players and coaches will learn that there is no tolerance to any contact to the head and neck area, nor any contact using any part of the helmet to initiate the contact. The FCFL board would rather the referee err on the side of calling a borderline penalty, than not calling the penalty. Even contact that is deemed unintentional should be penalized.

**V. INJURIES - EMT COVERAGE:**

- A. Host organizations must ensure that EMT or EMS personnel are present at their fields during every game and must have radio access to ambulance service.
- B. Coaches are to cooperate fully with EMTs, recognizing that any injury should be considered potentially serious. The Head Coach (or his duly qualified designee) shall immediately attend to a downed player, solicit the opinion of the referees with regard to the circumstances related to the injury, and signal to the attendant EMT if assistance is required. As soon as the EMT arrives, the EMT will be responsible for the disposition of the injured player.
- C. An injured player must sit out a minimum of one (1) play.
- D. Injured players will be permitted to return to the game based on a decision made by:
  - 1. Medical doctor, if present; or
  - 2. Examining EMT

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**VI. MANDATORY PLAY RULE:**

- A. Team size will be dependent upon the total number of participants in that grade as specified in the FCFL Policy and Procedures document, section VII, A.
- B. Each player is required to play a minimum of Twelve (12) plays. Punts (since they are not live) do not count as plays.
- C. At the end of the first, second, and third quarters, there will be an official time out, for player monitors to agree on any players who have failed to play 12 plays. If the minimum play rule has not been satisfied by the end of the third quarter, each player who has not played 12 plays must immediately start the fourth quarter and remain in the game until he meets the minimum play requirements. Once both coaches have agreed that all players have met the minimum play requirements, neither team may submit a protest. Coaches shall not agree to waive the minimum play rule. It will be mandatory that each team has at least one play counter and that all play counters from both teams are together on the sideline (outside coaches box) of the home team in the first half and the away team in the second half. After **each** quarter the play counters will have one official play count tally.
  - 1) Each team must use the Player Participation Form as provided by FCFL and maintained during the game by each team's designated player monitor. Head coaches are to provide the opposing coaches/player monitors a minimum play sheet that clearly identifies the following separately: two-way starters, offense only starters and defensive only starters and substitutes. The FCFL allows for the use of an electronic device on the sidelines for play counting(EX: IPAD or iPhone)
- D. Exceptions to the minimum play rule for disciplinary matters or injury must be identified prior to the start of the game. The coach and disciplined or injured player will both be required to notify the opposing coach in person prior to the game to discuss the minimum play waiver.
- E. Plays that result in a QB spiking the ball, or dropping to his knee with the sole purpose of “playing it safe” or “taking a knee” will not count as plays for minimum play requirements.

**VII. REMOVING PLAYERS:**

- A. If a team has a seventeen (17) point or more lead, the opposing coach may elect to remove up to three (3) players from the leading team's offense without regard to position until the lead is reduced to less than seventeen (17) points. Additionally, such players shall also be ineligible to participate on any special teams (punting or punt receiving, and field goal or PAT attempts).
- B. If after the 3rd quarter ends, a team has a seventeen (17) or more lead, the opposing coach may elect to remove up to three (3) players from the leading team's defense without regard to position until the lead is reduced to less than seventeen (17) points.

**VIII. PLAYING RULES:**

FCIAC Rules, except as modified below, shall govern all play.

- A. Quarters will be 11 minutes each, timed in accordance with FCIAC rules. Half time will be limited to 5 minutes.
- B. Field of play is 40 X 80 yards where possible, with additional 10-yard end zones.
- C. All fumbles, including exchanges on the snap between center and quarterback, are live and may be recovered by either team. All backfield players can advance the ball or continue the play in 3-5<sup>th</sup> grade. However, if a ball is jarred loose in the air (or is grabbed) from the ball carrier and is caught before touching the ground, it shall be treated as if it were an intercepted pass and may be returned by the defense or advanced by the offense.
- D. Offensive limited players cannot advance the ball. Defensive limited players can only advance the ball if recipient of an unintentional fumble recovery or interception. Play should be stopped in any case where there is a lateral to a limited player.
- E. Offensive Formations and Restrictions:

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1. Offensive Team Formations are limited to formations including the use of only one wide receiver (either flanker or split end). If a slot back (wing back) is to be employed he must line up on the same side of the ball as the split end and may be no further than three yards from the outside shoulder of the tackle.
2. QB is defined as the player who receives the initial snap from center. At no time may there be an offensive player other than the QB closer than three yards to the line of scrimmage (LOS) and between the offensive tackles. All other running backs (regardless of what they are called) other than the flanker, if deployed, must be at least 3 yards back of the LOS and no wider than the offensive tight ends.
3. Splits between offensive linemen may be no more than one yard maximum except where a split end is used. If a wide out is employed, the maximum split from the tackle is 10 yards. No unbalanced line may be employed.
4. All Offensive players, to include linemen, backs and receivers, may be in a 2,3 or 4 pt. stance.
5. No motion may be employed.

F. Defensive Team Formations and Restrictions

1. Limited to a 6-3-2 alignment, with all defensive linemen, including defensive ends, head up on their offensive counterpart, excluding the center, who is not covered by a defensive down lineman.
2. Middle Linebacker may be no closer than three yards to the line of scrimmage. He may set up laterally anywhere between the offensive guards prior to the snap.
3. Outside Linebackers may be no closer than three yards to the line of scrimmage. They may setup laterally anywhere between the offensive guards and head up on the widest player in the offensive formation. Linebackers may not move forward before the ball is snapped. Forward movement before a ball is snapped is illegal procedure.
4. Safeties may be no closer than six yards to the line of scrimmage and may set up laterally anywhere between head up on the widest player on both sides of the offensive formation.
5. Interior defensive linemen must be in a three- or four-point stance.
6. Defensive ends may be in a two-, three-, or four-point stance. DE must be head up on TE if TE is within 1 yard of OT, however if TE splits out as SE, the DE may be anywhere on line of scrimmage from 1 yard wide of OT to head up on TE (SE).
7. All defensive players must be set according to the above rules prior to the snap. Forward movement prior to the snap is illegal procedure. Once the ball is snapped, defense may blitz and stunt.
8. The rules above restricting defenders' movements are designed limit the repositioning of players once they are set up but they are NOT contrary to the established rules of football that permit "flinching" by a defender as long as the movement does not result in an encroachment into the neutral zone of the line of scrimmage or a linebacker coming closer to 3 yards of the LOS.

G. There are no kick-offs at the Bantam level. The receiving team will place the ball on its twenty-yard line, where offensive play will begin.

H. Punting: There is no actual punting at the Bantam level. Should a team wish to punt, it declares its intention to the referees, who will advance the ball twenty yards from the line of scrimmage and give possession to the other team to begin its offense; provided, however, that no possession will begin inside an

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receiving/offensive team's twenty-yard line.

- I. After scoring a touchdown, the offensive team may elect to pass, run, or kick for an extra point(s). When the offense elects to kick the PAT, the ball is snapped from the 3 yard line. Defensive rushing is not permitted and all defensive players on the line of scrimmage must remain in a 3 point stance. The kicker can be a Limited or Unlimited player. If the ball is not kicked within five seconds of the snap the referee will flag for illegal procedure and a penalty will be assessed. Teams that successfully kick the PAT will get two (2) points. Teams that successfully run or pass for the PAT will get one (1) point if they elect to start from the 3 yard line and two (2) points if they elect to start from the 5 yard line. **You must use the same ball of a PAT or Punt as you are using in a game, CANNOT SWITCH**
- J. There is no kicking of Field Goals.
- K. Safeties – If an offense gives up a safety, the defensive team gets the ball at midfield.
- L. Overtime – Will be used only in the playoffs. A coin toss will be called by the visitors. Winner of the toss can choose offense or defense first. Both teams start on the ten (10) yard line and attempt to score. In OT, all PATs will be played run or pass (no kicks) as per usual rules. If the score is tied after one (1) OT, another OT period will be played in the identical fashion, except the team will reverse the order of playing offense.
- M. Keep the Head out of Football:
  - a. Illegal helmet contact: Any intentional or unintentional contact including blocking, and tackling by an offensive or defensive player to any part of an opponent's head or neck is prohibited and should result in a 15 yard penalty.
  - b. Illegal use of helmet: Any intentional or unintentional contact including blocking, tackling or rushing by an offensive or defensive player using any part of his helmet as the initiation point of contacting an opponent is prohibited and should result in a 15 yard penalty.
  - c. Two or more of the above penalties by a single player results in ejection from the game

**IX. EQUIPMENT:**

- A. Only certified and properly reconditioned helmets may be worn.
- B. All players must have a colored mouth guard that must be worn while the ball is in play. (Violations will be flagged and will incur a 5-yard penalty).
- C. Sneakers, rubber cleats or turf shoes must be worn.
- D. A jersey must cover the shoulder pads.
- E. All excess equipment must meet scholastic guidelines.
- F. Under Armour, Nike and Wilson balls are all approved for use in the size indicated as follows:
  - a. Grades 3 & 4: Pee-Wee
  - b. Grades 5 & 6: Junior
  - c. Grades 7 & 8: Youth