

**FAIRFIELD COUNTY FOOTBALL LEAGUE
2017 RULES AND REGULATIONS
SENIOR DIVISION - Eighth 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 8th Grade during the fall football season and will be a maximum of 14 years old by August 1 of that same year.
- C. Players playing at "unlimited" positions (may play any position) must weigh no more than 155 pounds. This includes all equipment except helmet and shoulder pads.
- D. Players weighing over 155 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.
- E. The Head Coach must ensure that each player on his team meets the grade, age and weight requirements.
- F. Violations of the above eligibility rules will result in automatic forfeit of all games played in which the violation occurred.

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 League Officials for field preparation, including placing yard line and goal markers.

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- B. After the last game, the Visiting Team will ensure that the field and sidelines are clean and will assist League Officials in storing equipment.
- C. Head Coaches are responsible for fan control and deportment.
- D. Home Teams will provide a three (3)-man sidelines/first down crew. Where possible, the
- E. first down crew shall be stationed on the home team's sideline.
- F. Home Teams must provide the same accommodations to the Visiting Team that they have available for themselves. Home Teams who cannot provide the same accommodations to the Visiting team are prohibited from using them.
- G. No sideline coaches, parents or fans are permitted on the playing field, or in the end zones for any purpose including filming the game.
- H. 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.
- I. 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
- 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 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

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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

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 do 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.
- D. 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.
- E. 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.
- F. 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

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- B. Field of play is 53-1/3 X 100 yards, with additional 10-yard end zones.
 - C. All fumbles are live and may be recovered and advanced by either team.
 - 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 are unlimited in full accordance with FCIAC rules with the following exceptions:
 - 1. A player who weighs over the “unlimited” weight for their grade level, must play an interior line “limited” position. “Limited” positions include only OT/OG/C/DT/DG. All offensive formations must include Left OT/Left OG/C/Right OG/Right OT in a balanced line and these players, even if unlimited players are never eligible receivers, even if they are the last man on the line (uncovered). “Limited” players may NOT play DE or be more than 2 players away from the C. Limited players are never be eligible to be receivers or ball carriers regardless of where they line up,
 - 2. Eligible Receivers are as per FCIAC rules, except that an eligible receiver on the LOS must always be at least 3 players away from the Center.
 - 3. Splits between offensive linemen may be no more than one yard maximum.
 - F. Defensive Team Formations and Restrictions for 6th – 8th grade
 - 1. Interior Line is restricted to the following two formations:
 - a. Noseguard (NG) employed:
 - i. NG defined as defensive lineman who MUST be aligned to be head up on Center (defined as player who snaps the ball) and two Def. Tackles (DT) head up on Offensive Tackles (OT). The Offensive Guards must be uncovered. This totals 3 Def Linemen between the two Off Tackles.
 - OR**
 - b. NG not employed:
 - i. Center (defined as player who snaps the ball) must be uncovered, thus TWO Def. Guards (DG) would align head up on the Off. Guards (OG) and TWO Def Tackles would align head up on the Off Tackles, totaling 4 Def Linemen between the two Off Tackles.
 - o In both formations, no other defensive players are allowed within 3 yards from the LOS between the two offensive tackles.
 - o The above interior linemen must all be in 3 or 4 point stances.
2. Defensive Ends (DE) – any additional player(s) setup on the defensive line setup outside of each offensive tackle defined as Defensive Ends
 - a. 0, 1 or 2 players (DEs) allowed within 3 yards of the LOS so long as NOT within the 2 offensive tackles AND max of 1 DE on each side of the ball
 - b. DEs are restricted to being aligned head up or outside the TE or ghost TE (if no TE is employed by the offense) without restriction on width
 - c. DEs may be in 2, 3 or 4 point stances
3. Safety – defensive players at least 6 yards deep from the LOS
 - a. At least 1 player must be at least 6 yards deep from the LOS and can be anywhere from sideline to sideline

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4. Linebackers (LB) - defensive players at least 3 yards deep from the LOS without lateral restrictions
 - a. A key distinction between LB and DE is the DE can setup WITHIN 3 yards of LOS while LB must be at least 3 yards from the LOS.
 - b. There may be no more than 7 LBs. For every DE employed, there would be 1 less LB.
For example:
 - i. 1 NG + 2 DTs + 1 Safety = 7 remaining LBs without any DEs
 - ii. 0 NG + 2 DTs + 2 DGs + 1 Safety = 6 remaining LBs without any DEs
 - c. In goal line situations (defined as within the defensive team's 3 yard line) linebackers are permitted to move to no closer than 1 yard from the ball, instead of normal 3 yard minimum. (For example, with the ball on the one yard line...LBers can move to goal line instead of 2 yards deep in their own end zone to prevent easy QB sneak).

5. Response to motion or shifts
 - a. Offensive motion defined as only 1 player in motion at a time. The defensive response to this may be lateral motion, not towards or away from the LOS, of any player with the exception of NG, DG and DT. The defense must be set when the offense is set.
 - b. If 2 or more offensive players are moving simultaneously it will be defined as an offensive shift. For the avoidance of doubt, this will allow the entire defense to RE-position itself and does not have to be set until the offense is Set (defined as at least 10 offensive players set in position).
 - c. The rules above restricting defenders movements are designed to 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 to start the game, half or after a score. Possession will start on the offense's 30 yard line.
- H. Punting
 1. Punt formations are limited to 5 interior lineman, 2 TEs/SEs, 3 players in the backfield from OT to OT and 1 punter. Linemen on either side of the ball must remain in a 3- or 4-point stance, must maintain "normal splits" (i.e. may not spread out to cover the width of the field), and no member of the punting team may go downfield until the ball is punted. If the ball is not punted within five seconds of the snap, the referee will flag for illegal procedure and a penalty will be assessed. NOTE: If a team elects not to punt the ball after declaring their intent to do so, the usual playtime restrictions are in effect and a delay of game penalty will be enforced. The Receiving Team may deploy one (1) blocker (DE) per wide out to defend the play.
 2. Minimum of 8 players within 5 yards of LOS. (continue to keep 4 interior defensive lineman head up.) In addition, no movement by offense or defense once ball set by official (no shifting of punt receivers toward where ball is being punted towards). Punters must punt the ball upon receipt of snap from between their Offensive Tackles and will not be permitted to shift and punt from outside of this area.
 3. Receiving formations must all follow the regular defensive alignment as described above. Defense must line up head to head except the center is uncovered. There is no rushing. All down linemen must remain in a 3- or 4- point stance until the ball is punted. Everyone in the punting formation may release downfield once the ball is punted.
 4. Play is live per FCIAC rules once the ball is punted.

- I. After scoring a touchdown, the offensive team may elect to pass, run, or kick for an extra point(s). When the

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offense elects to kick the PAT, the ball is snapped from the 3 yard line. The offense can elect to kick a “Dead-Ball” PAT or a “LIVE” PAT. A successfully kicked “DEAD- Ball” PAT will count as one (1) point. A successfully kicked “LIVE” PAT counts as two (2) points. In an elected DEAD-BALL PAT, defensive rushing is not permitted and all defensive players on the line of scrimmage must remain in a 3 point stance. 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. FAKED PATs are prohibited when the offensive team has elected the Dead-Ball PAT option. An elected Dead-Ball PAT that is muffed cannot be advanced. Faked kicked PATs are permitted only with the “LIVE” PAT option but will only count as one (1) point. All defensive formations and restrictions apply for the appropriate grades. Only “Live” PAT attempts count towards the Mandatory Play Rule. 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.

- J. An offensive team may kick a field goal at any time. They shall announce their intention to the referees, and a kick formation will be used. All defensive players are governed by the applicable defensive formations and restrictions for each grade. Faked Field Goals are permitted. Muffed Field Goals can be advanced. The kicker can be a Limited or Unlimited player on both a PAT and FG attempt, but he cannot advance the ball on a fake, botch or muff. Missed field goals will result in the opposing team taking possession at the line of scrimmage from which the field goal play was attempted.
- 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.
 - a. In grades 6th,7th and 8th, rules allow the use of LIVE extra point kicking attempts and field goals. No dead ball kicks are allowed in OT.
- 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