

# 2012

## **FAIRFIELD COUNTY FOOTBALL LEAGUE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **I. ORGANIZATION**

The League will include teams from the towns of Darien, Fairfield, New Canaan, Norwalk, Ridgefield, Weston, Westport, and Wilton. The Member Organizations are Darien, represented as Darien Junior Football League; Fairfield, represented as Fairfield Wildcats Youth Football; New Canaan, represented as New Canaan Youth Football, Inc.; Norwalk, represented as Norwalk PAL Football; Ridgefield, represented as Ridgefield Youth Football; Weston as Weston Trojans Football; Westport, represented as Westport PAL; and Wilton, represented as Wilton Youth Football League. Fairfield County Football League (FCFL) encourages all children to play the game of football and does not permit its participating organizations to cut any player.

### **II. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the FCFL are:

- A. to provide an opportunity to play football during the fall months to youth from Darien, Fairfield, New Canaan, Norwalk, Ridgefield, Weston, Westport and Wilton without regard to race, creed, color, national origin or gender;
- B. to promote passion for the game of football and encourage mutual respect between players, coaches and parents of all towns and to implant the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, and citizenship;
- C. to assure appropriate supervision by individuals who are dedicated to youth and their best interests;
- D. to provide a safe, organized learning experience while teaching the fundamentals of football; and
- E. to discourage use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and other abusive substances.

### **III. RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **A. Member Organization**

1. To appoint three of its Board Members to reside on the FCFL Board of Directors and to attend and participate in all FCFL Board Meetings. Members must attend a minimum of 75 % of the FCFL board meetings during the course of the year. Any member that does not attend 75% of the meetings will lose voting privileges and the position will be considered vacant; An FCFL member may designate a member organization's board member in good standing to attend an FCFL meeting or committee as his proxy, with temporary voting privileges. The Secretary shall track board member attendance and in January will notify the board of any board member who have failed to attend 75% of the meetings. The Board shall have the power at any time to change the membership of any committee,

to fill vacancies, to designate alternate members to replace any absent or disqualified member or to dissolve any committee.

2. Approved joining organizations become member organizations with voting privileges 12 months after they are approved to join the league. Prior to that time, they should have at least one and no more than 3 representatives present to observe FCFL board meetings.
3. To ensure that all participating players, parents, and coaches understand fully and sign a FCFL Code of Conduct Form. These forms must be held for a minimum of one year;
4. To enforce FCFL Rules, Policy and Procedures, Objectives, and Codes of Conduct;
5. To ensure that all coaches are provided a basic first aid class. In addition all head coaches must be certified by each member organization in basic first aid and CPR;
6. To pay all FCFL fees when due;
7. Member organizations must have a policy and conduct background checks for all coaches and volunteers; and
8. Shall establish a policy and procedure when splitting teams evenly and in balance with regard to talent and experience.

#### B. Home Team

1. The Home Teams, having the first game of the day, will provide two (2) assistants to league officials for field preparation, including placing yard lines and goal markers.
2. The Home Team will provide a visible working time clock on each field for games. This clock will be coordinated with the officials on the field.
3. After each game, the Visiting Team will ensure that their sidelines are clean. The Home Team will ensure that their sidelines are clean as well as assist in storing equipment.
4. Home Teams will provide a three-person sidelines/first down crew. Where possible, the first down crew shall be stationed on the home team's sideline.
5. Home Teams must provide a field commissioner to oversee every game. The Field Commissioner prior to any game should introduce him to both coaches and is responsible for the oversight of the weigh-ins and will mediate any on field rules or policy questions.
6. Home Teams must provide the same accommodations to the Visiting Team that they have available for themselves. Home Teams that cannot provide the same accommodations to the Visiting Team are prohibited from using them.

#### C. Head Coaches

1. Head Coaches are responsible for helping to enforce FCFL Codes of Conduct for Coaches, Parents, and Participants (Exhibits A, B, and C, respectively), and are responsible for fan control and deportment;
2. Must know and follow FCFL Policy and Procedures, Rules and Regulations, and FCFL Coaches Code of Conduct (Exhibit A);

3. Must have on-hand FCFL Policy and Procedures, along with appropriate grade level rules.
4. Head Coaches shall attend all coaching clinics and conferences required by the FCFL.
5. All Coaching Concussion training needs to be completed by the first practice of the upcoming season.

D. Referees

1. Knowing FCFL Rules;
2. Enforcing rules;
3. Keeping time;
4. Down supervision;
5. Game play; and
6. Crowd control.

#### IV. 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/plastic cleated shoes or turf shoes must be worn;
- D. A jersey must cover the shoulder pads;
- E. All excess equipment must meet scholastic guidelines; and
- F. Ball Size:

Bantam 3 & 4 Wilson K-2 or GST Pee Wee, Nike K series and Baden PW  
 Junior 5 Wilson K-2 or GST Pee Wee, Nike K series and Baden PW  
 Junior 6 Wilson TDJ or GST Junior, Nike J series and Baden JR  
 Senior 7 Wilson TDJ or GST Junior, Nike J series and Baden JR  
 Senior 8 Wilson TDY or GST Youth, Nike Y Series and Baden Y

#### V. PLAYER WEIGHT, AGE POLICY and ELIGIBILITY

- A. 2012 FCFL Weight Limits by Grade Level

Grade	Unlimited	Maximum Age by Feb. 1
Bantam 3	95	8
Bantam 4	105	9
Junior 5	115	10
Junior 6	130	11
Senior 7	145	12
Senior 8	155	14 Max Age by 8/1

Playing at “unlimited” positions (may play any position) must weigh in at no more than the designated weight of their grade level. Weight includes all equipment except helmet and shoulder pads. A player must play in the equipment he wears at the weigh-in with the only additions being helmet and shoulder pads.

- B. 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). Only in grades 7 and 8 may the TE or SE unbalance the line. “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, but may kick the ball on kickoffs, punts, PAT’s and field goals. Each “limited” player must have a distinctive mark on the front of his helmet in the form of an orange circle not less than 1-inch in diameter, which shall be verified at weigh-in.
- C. 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.
- D. Weight includes all equipment except helmet and shoulder pads.
- E. A player must be at or below the maximum age limit to play in the specified division. For example, a child who turns 12 in November will not be eligible to play in the Bantam 4 division even if he is in grade 4.
- F. No player will be allowed to play up one or more grades and play as a Unlimited Player—that is, once a player plays up, that player will automatically be constituted a Limited Player and not play a skill position.
- G. Players on a member organization roster must reside in that town. Only the following exceptions are permitted:
  - 1. Players may play in a town other than their town of residence, if their town of residence does not have a team in that grade in the FCFL. This requires FCFL board majority approval.
  - 2. Players who have received explicit FCFL approval in June of 2012.
- H. Violations of the above eligibility rules will result in automatic forfeit of all games played in which the violation occurred which may also include other penalties that may be imposed.

## **VI. PRACTICES**

- A. Prior to the start of the season, the FCFL Board shall establish the date on which preseason practices may begin;
- B. Prior to Labor Day, team practice may not exceed ten (10) hours per calendar week or more than two and one half (2 1/2) hours per day. A week is defined as seven (7) consecutive days; and
- C. After Labor Day, team practice may not exceed six (6) hours per calendar week or more than two (2) hours per day.
- D. Practice is defined as any event for the football players of a particular grade that provides football instruction, training, athletic participation, conditioning, team meal, captain’s practices, ‘walk thrus’ or film review. Pre-game warm-ups will NOT constitute a practice so long as the pre-game warm-up occurs within 1.5 hours prior to the scheduled game kick-off. Travel time to and from practices or games will also not count towards practice time

- E. Before the first football practice and after the end of the season as defined by the Championship game, teams regardless of how they are defined, will be allowed to practice or organize up to two hours per week as long as these events are non-contact and do not involve full equipment. Youth coaches will be allowed to provide instruction for these practices or clinics.
- F. For purposes of E above, any professional coach or high school coach that exclusively runs a clinic, camp or practice, will not count towards the 2 hour per week maximum,
- G. Any event constituting a Practice must be posted on either Town or FCFL Website

## **VII. TEAM**

### **A. Team Splitting**

1. For the Bantam (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade) and Junior (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade) divisions, teams must be split when registration reaches 32. Therefore, the maximum team size is 31.
2. For the Senior (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade) division, teams must be split when registration reaches 34. Therefore, the maximum team size is 33. However, under special situations and circumstances, each respective town has the option to appeal to the FCFL to increase the mandatory split prior to the first game of the season. All other rules and policies will apply including the minimum play rule.
3. For The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade through 6<sup>th</sup> Grade divisions, when registration reaches 57, three teams must be formed. When registration reaches 80, four teams must be formed.
4. For The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8 Grade divisions, when registration reaches 60, three teams must be formed. When registration reaches 80, four teams must be formed.
5. There are no taxi squads, injured reserve or other categories that would allow a team to make additions to or deletions from their roster from week to week during the season.
6. Towns with multiple teams in a division will split teams so no one team will have any advantage in talent or experience. Each team must have the same number of new players within one. In addition, towns are required to reshuffle their rosters on an annual basis such on any one team a minimum of 25.0% (please note this is a required minimum, 24.9% is not sufficient) must be assigned to a different team then they were on the previous year. Each member of the team must have at least 25% different teammates not including new players then the previous year.) By the Tuesday prior to the start of the regular season, the FCFL representatives sitting on the Policy committee will gather all their respective town's rosters to ensure that each team at each grade levels meets the new player distribution and minimum 25% shuffling requirement. The policy committee will then certified each team as complied. Any coaches who fail to comply will be first requested to comply by the Policy committee and given 48 hours to meet this requirement. If the requirements are not

satisfied within 48 hours, the coach will be suspended for 5 games. A second request to satisfy the requirement will be given and if not complied within an additional 48 hours, a season long suspension of the coach or coaches involved will be instituted.

7. The FCFL board has the authority to request that a town rebalances teams and then may or may not approve this intra-season rebalancing. In the event, the rebalancing is not approved; the FCFL board has authority to rebalance the teams.

B. Each Member Organization must submit to the FCFL Web Coordinator, a final player roster including roster numbers for each team per division by the Wednesday before the first scheduled regular season game. Absolutely no additions, deletions, or changes of any kind will be permitted if this would require changing the number of teams for a town at a specific grade after this date unless the FCFL Board of Directors makes an exception.

C. Deadline for Player Registration

1. Prior to the Friday, two weeks and one day before the first game, “no child should be left out”, meaning all players meeting deadline registration will participate. However, should a head coach strongly feel that a player has a safety issue, it should be discussed with the member organization’s President and the player’s parents as to whether the player should continue playing. Aside from an identified and bona fide safety issue, no football registrant should be discouraged from playing tackle football.
2. After the Friday, two weeks and one day before the first game, a child registering for tackle football will require approval from the FCFL if this requires changing the number of teams for a town at a specific grade. This will be handled by the FCFL in a case-by-case manner.

## **VIII. JAMBOREE**

FCFL Jamboree will be held one week prior to the start of the regular season. Each town is required to have all their teams play. The format of the jamboree will be 15 running minutes on offense for each team. All FCFL Rules including weigh-in will apply except for the following:

1. No punting or kicking; and
2. No turnovers.

## **IX. GAME DAY**

A. Weigh-in Procedures

The Head Coach must ensure that each player on his team meets the grade and weight requirements. The Head Coach must verify that for each player on his team, there is on file with the Member Organization (1) a parent/guardian release form and (2) a physical examination certificate certifying a medical doctor’s approval to play football. The physical examination should be within the last year. Pre-Game weigh-ins are mandatory and should be conducted as follows:

1. Each team player must be officially weighed in the presence of both teams’ coaching representative no later than 15 minutes prior to kick-off.

The final FCFL approved roster listing each player's name, jersey number, game weight and whether "limited" or "unlimited" must be exchanged between teams. Such roster must also be available with permanent roster numbers on the League's website.

2. Players must wear game uniform and equipment, excluding helmet and shoulder pads but including hip pads, thigh and knee pads. Players must then play in the equipment in which they were weighed. (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 colored mouth guard is mandatory during game play.
3. All limited players will show an orange circle sticker that is clearly visible place on the front of their helmet at the time they are weighed in.
4. Only one official weigh-in per player. That is, should a player fail to make weight on the first attempt, he is at once disqualified to play in that day's game. Unofficial weigh-ins are allowed prior to the official weigh-ins to be supervised only by that player's coach.
5. 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.
6. The purpose of the weigh-in is to confirm each player's eligibility to play and status as "limited" or "unlimited". The exact weight of each player need not be recorded.

**B. Player Roster and Play Count Form**

Each Head Coach will supply one player roster and one play count sheet to the opposing team's Head Coach. Play count sheets will be arranged in numerical order with substitutes highlighted. Game rosters will be arranged as outlined in IX. A 1).

**C. Head Coach/Referee Meeting**

Prior to the start of each game, both Head Coaches and Referees must review any unique rules affecting the grade level for that game. In addition all coaches must shake hands before the game and discuss any particular concerns and foster open communication between coaches in advance of any issues or conflicts that may arise during the game.

- D. All coaches, chain workers, play counters, and team photographer must have a field pass in order to be on the sidelines, track or any area inside the fence of the playing area. All others must be in the stands. The Home team will be responsible for issuing the field passes to both Home and Away teams.**

**E. Filming Games**

No one, including coaches, parents or anyone else, shall be permitted on the playing field, including inside the end zones, during the conduct of any game for the purpose of filming the game. For Bantam and Junior Division games played on the 40x80 yard field, persons filming such games must only remain outside the boundaries of the smaller field of play, including end zones.

**F. Communication Devices**

During the conduct of any FCFL game, all coaches are prohibited from using any wired or wireless communications devices, either directly or indirectly, to

communicate with anyone who is observing the game. The relay of any information by the prohibited means to someone other than a coach, who then passes such information on to a coach involved in the game, is specifically included within the scope of this policy.

#### G. Score Differential

Head Coaches whose team wins by more than 24 points must submit a letter to the FCFL justifying the score. On the first offense in a season, the offending head coach's may be subject to disciplinary action. The second offense in any season subjects the head coach to a mandatory suspension from coaching duties for the remainder of the year, and not less than 5 games (i.e., the suspension can carry over to the next year). Any coach that takes over the head coaching duties after a head coach is suspended for the year, will be suspended for the remainder of the year if his team wins a game by more than 24 points.

#### H. Rainouts

In cases of inclement weather, the Field Commissioner shall, in consultation with coaches and referees, decide not less than two (2) hours prior to the first scheduled game of the day whether the game should be postponed or rescheduled. If the first game of the day is canceled, all games that day will be canceled. Games that are rained out or canceled need to be rescheduled by no later than Wednesday of that same week. Should a rainout not be rescheduled by Wednesday, both teams will be awarded a loss. In the event that a team does not show for the rescheduled game, that team will receive a forfeit.

#### I. Play Counters

A team may have up to 2 play counters who must count plays from their team's sideline between the 30-yard line and the goal line. Play Counters assigned by each team should stand together. They may stand either behind end zones or between the 20-yard line and back line of the end zone. Under no conditions should they be in the player's/coach's box or on the playing field.

#### J. Game ejections

Any game ejection of a player, parent or coach will result in his/her immediate removal from the game, sideline and if an adult removal from school property. The offending person must also serve a minimum of one game additional suspension. A second ejection within one season will result in a season long suspension for any coach or adult. A second ejection for a player will result in a minimum 3 game suspension. A third ejection of a player will result in suspension for the remainder of the season. Any suspensions that result in a suspension for the season must result in at least missing 5 games. In the event the season ends before the 5<sup>th</sup> game of the suspension, the offending person remains on suspension until 5 complete games have been missed. Any coach or parent who is suspended for the season will automatically come under review by the FCFL board.

## **X. INJURIES - EMT COVERAGE**

- A. Host organizations must ensure that EMT or Emergency Medical Service personnel are present at their fields during every game. The EMT 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 a medical doctor, if present, or examining EMT.

## **XI. GRIEVANCES AND PROTESTS**

- A. Intra-Member Organizational grievances will be governed by its member organizational elected Board of Directors. The elected Board will put in place procedures on how to investigate and resolve these grievances including but not limited to forwarding to FCFL for final resolution. Resolutions must be made in a timely manner.
- B. Inter-Member Organization grievances will be governed by the FCFL Board of Directors and reported immediately to its President. The FCFL President will then direct the Rules Committee or Policy Committee to investigate the incident (ie. interviewing parties involved and reviewing all statements) and submit their findings and recommendation in a timely manner to the FCFL Board of Directors for a final decision. Notice shall be given to all involved parties at which time they may request a hearing before the FCFL Board or designated Committee thereof. All FCFL Board of Director decisions shall be final.
- C. Game Protests – Only protests concerning misinterpretation and violation of the rules of football or policy of the FCFL will be considered. A protest must be made and announced to the opposing coach, and either the referees or field commissioner prior to the end of the game for it to be considered. Protests involving the judgment of an official will not be considered. Legitimate protests must be submitted in writing or e-mail to the chairman of the Rules Committee and his FCFL representatives by midnight of the day of the game being protested. The Rules Chairman will immediately forward the written protest via e-mail to the opposing head coach, and his FCFL representatives who may file a response within 12 hours to the Chairman. Both the protest and the response will be forwarded via e-mail to the involved head coaches and the rules committee. No later than 36 hours after midnight of the day of the game, the Protest Committee must meet. Protest Committee Hearing format: The protesting head coach will first submit a additional written brief followed by a maximum 10-minute verbal explanation of his protest. The Opposing head coach will then submit a written brief and then will be allowed

a maximum of a 10-minute response. The committee will then be allowed to ask questions to both head coaches. After which the opposing coach will be allowed to make a 5-minute summary, to be followed by a 5-minute summary by the protesting coach. The coaches will then be excused and will leave the premises. The committee will deliberate immediately after the coaches are excused and render judgment as ruled by the majority. The involved towns committee members do not have to recuse themselves. If a committee member coaches or has a son/daughter who is on one of the involved teams, he must get a replacement from the FCFL board from his town who is not involved with an involved team. The Committee's majority ruling will be final and binding and will be e-mailed to the involved head coaches, their town presidents and the entire FCFL board by midnight of the hearing. The Ruling Committee has the power to order a full or partial replay of a game, forfeit of a game or rule against the protest.

## **XII. PENALTIES**

May include forfeiture of game; suspension of member organization, team or individuals (player, coach or parent), and expulsion from the team and/or the League. Note: This Policy and Procedure document is prepared and provided as a convenience to all members of the FCFL association. While we have tried to make it as complete and accurate as possible, please understand that all information contained within this document is subject to errors, omissions, and/or revisions. FCFL reserves the right, at any time, to make the appropriate revisions deemed necessary by its governing body in order to continue with a successful program. Further, the FCFL reserves the right to "remove" a parent from the field of play, stadium and spectator viewing area -- practice or game -- in the event that it is determined by the coaches and/or officials that the parent has materially violated the above guidelines.

## **XIII. POLICY AND RULES CHANGES**

All Rules and policy documents are to be reviewed annually by the FCFL committees. And Rule or Policy change voted on by the FCFL board if approved will be immediately implemented. If denied, that rule or policy cannot be brought up for another similar modification for 22 months.

## **XIV. SCHEDULING AND POLICY GUIDELINES**

- A. No intra-town games for any teams when there are less than 4 teams from a respective town in a specific grade.
- B. When intraweek games occur, no team will be required to play without a minimum of two calendar days rest.