



2016 Tackle Football Rules A, B and C league

January 2016

Section 1 – General Guidelines

- A. The VHSL High School Federation rulebook will govern all playing rules, except as modified herein.
- B. "A", "B" and "C" division games will have ten (10) minute quarters. The game clock will stop on a change of possession and be restarted on the next snap of the ball.
- C. In the “A”, “B”, and “C” divisions, no more than six Red Dot Players (6) may participate at any given time during games. **Penalty for violation: Illegal Substitution – 5-yard penalty.** In all divisions players exceeding the maximum weight will be identified with a recognizable marking. The marking will be red dot stickers provided by the league. These stickers shall be located on the helmet in the front, in the rear and above each ear hole.
- D. A & B League Point After Touchdown: During the point after touchdown play, two (2) points are allowed for kicking or a forward pass thrown beyond the line of scrimmage; and one (1) point for a running play or forward pass thrown behind the line of scrimmage.
- E. C League Point After Touchdown: During the point after touchdown play, two (2) points are allowed for a forward pass thrown beyond the line of scrimmage; and one (1) point for a running play, forward pass thrown behind the line of scrimmage, or kicking (i.e., free kick).
- F. Free Scrimmage Kick (C League): The "C" League will permit the offensive team to declare a free scrimmage punt, extra point kick or field goal (i.e., no rush). Upon doing so, the referee will notify the receiving team that the offensive team has declared a free punt. The offensive team is subject to a delay of game penalty if the ball is not kicked within the prescribed time after the ball is marked for play. The defensive team must have six (6) players within five (5) yards of the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted. The receiving team must take possession of the ball. The ball is spotted where the ball comes to a stop (if not fielded) or where it is fielded by the receiving team. If the offensive team does not punt the ball after declaring so, they shall be penalized ten (10) yards and a loss of down.
- G. Onside Kick Rule: No kicking team with a 12-point or greater lead may gain possession of the ball by any means other than a recovered fumble by the receiving team.
- H. Linebackers and Blitzing: Players not on the line of scrimmage are prohibited from advancing toward the offensive team prior to the snap in attempt to gain an advantage (the running blitz is prohibited). All defensive players that are not part of the line of scrimmage must be three (3) yard behind the line of scrimmage. Penalty for violation: Illegal formation, live ball play - penalty 5 yards.

- I. Players exceeding the maximum weight (red dots) can only play end-to-end on offense and end-to-end on defense. Interpretations:
 - a. On Offense
 - i. Players exceeding the maximum weight (red dot) may only play in positions from end-to-end. **Penalty for violation: Illegal formation – Play is blown dead and offending team is assessed 5 yards.**
 - ii. If the player exceeding the maximum (red dot) weight attempts to advance the ball by any means the referee shall blow the play dead. The ball shall be put in play at the spot it was blown dead. Red dot players may not advance the ball on a recovered fumble.
 - iii. Maximum weight players (red dot) may line up uncovered on the line of scrimmage provided he is within the free blocking zone. This player is considered ineligible and as such, must follow all applicable rules. **Penalty for violation: Illegal formation – Play is blown dead and offending team is assessed 5 yards.**
 - b. On Defense
 - i. Players exceeding the maximum weight (red dot) may only play in positions from end-to-end; **Penalty for violation: Illegal formation – Play is blown dead and offending team is assessed 5 yards.**
 - ii. Players exceeding the maximum weight (red dot) and playing defensive end may play pass defense in the “flat” area (i.e., the area on the field between the line of scrimmage and 5 yards into the defensive backfield, and extending from the free blocking zone to the sideline).
 - iii. Players exceeding the maximum weight (red dot) may not play deeper (i.e., “drop back”) more than 5 yards from the offensive line into the defensive backfield; **Penalty for violation: Illegal formation – Play is live and offending team is assessed 5 yards from previous spot.**
 - iv. Players exceeding the maximum weight (red dot) may advance the ball on a fumble recovery or interception.
 - c. On Special Teams
 - i. On kickoff return: Players exceeding the maximum weight (red dot) may only play on the front line. They may advance the ball on an onside kick that goes directly to them.
 - ii. On field goal, extra point, or punt plays: Players exceeding the maximum weight (red dot) may also play holder, kicker, or punter. Red dot players at holder, kicker, or punter are not eligible to advance the ball. In the event of a fake or broken play, red dot players aligned at holder, kicker, or punter may not advance the ball nor participate as a blocker or the play will be blown dead and penalty enforced. **Penalty for violation: Illegal participating – Play is live and offending team is assessed 5 yards from previous spot and loss of down.**

- J. Mercy Rule: When a twenty-one (21) point differential is reached at half-time or at any point in the second half, the head coach of the losing team may request that the mercy rule timing be implemented. The head coach is still responsible for ensuring that all players meet the minimum playing time requirement. Once the head coach notifies the referee to implement the mercy rule, the following changes, and only these changes, shall be made regarding the rules determining when the clock will and will not be stopped. The clock shall run continuously, except for the following situations when it will be stopped:
- a. time-outs (charged to a team),
 - b. intermission (between 3rd and 4th quarters, and after a score),
 - c. penalty enforcement (whistle to ready-for-play), and
 - d. safety reasons (injuries, etc.).
 - e. Normal timing procedures shall resume if the point differential is reduced to less than twenty-one (21) points. This adoption will be utilized only during regular season games and at all levels.

Section 2 – Minimum Player Participation Rule

- A. A and B-League Minimum Player Participation: Every player present and equipped to play must participate in a minimum of sixteen (16) live scrimmage plays (e.g., where a tackle is made). In addition, each participant must play a minimum of eight (8) plays in the first half and a minimum of eight (8) plays in the second half.

The Head Coach will be held accountable for this requirement. Each head coach will submit a mandatory player participation report to the appropriate Division Director upon request.

First infraction of this rule, the coach is reprimanded; the player will start the next game and makeup the missed plays in addition to his minimum plays. Second infraction, the coach is suspended for one game; the player starts the next game, and makes up all missed plays. Third infraction, the coach is removed from the team; the player starts the next game, and makes up all missed plays.

- B. C-League Minimum Player Participation: Every player present and equipped to play must participate in a minimum of sixteen (16) live scrimmage plays (e.g., where a tackle is made; excludes dead ball/free kicking plays). In addition, each participant must play a minimum of eight (8) plays in the first half and a minimum of eight (8) plays in the second half.

The Head Coach will be held accountable for this requirement. Each head coach will submit a mandatory player participation report to the appropriate Division Director upon request.

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