



2015 PLAYER SAFETY POLICY & GUIDELINES

Introduction

Gator Football believes in teaching and developing young men and women the game of football, while stressing the character and leadership skills required to be successful in sports and in life beyond the playing field. Furthermore, Gator Football is committed to player safety. This document serves as a guideline for Gator Football coaches to follow when planning team events and practices. It is not meant to replace rules established by Anne Arundel County Parks and Recreation or laws in place within the State of Maryland or Anne Arundel County. These policies are meant to enhance those rules and laws so that Gator Football continues to be a leader in Player Safety within our region and our athletes have the ability to compete in the game of Football.

Table of Contents

1. Practice Defined.....	2
2. Important Point-Medical & Concussions.....	2
3. Concussion Return to Play Guidelines.....	3
4. Practice Detail – In addition to Section 1 requirements, the following also apply:	3
5. USA Football Heads Up Tackling	4
6. Injury Report Form.....	4



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1. Practice Defined

- a. Definition: To prevent possible bending of the rules and as a protection for the children, practices are defined as a gathering of players, without minimum number, in the presence of at least one (1) coach, where one or more of the following activities take place:
 - i. Chalk Talk/Skull Session
 - ii. Viewing of Fundamentals Film
 - iii. Group Conditioning
 - iv. Individual Skills Session (QB, receiving, blocking, tackling, kicking, etc.)
 - v. Group Skills Session
 - vi. Dummies and other inanimate contact
 - vii. Play run through without pads (shorts & T-Shirt)
 - viii. Play Run through with equipment, but without contact
 - ix. Intra-squad scrimmages with full pads and equipment
- b. Pre-season practice shall not begin before the AAYFA established date for the first practice.
- c. Prior to the first day of school, as determined by the AACPS Calendar, no team may schedule more than 8 hours of practice per week, with an additional 2 hours allowed for scrimmaging non-DAA teams. No practice shall exceed 2 hours on any one day.
- d. After school begins and before the second Monday in September, no team may schedule more than 6 hours of practice per week. No practice shall exceed 2 hours on any one day.
- e. Commencing on the second Monday in September, no team may schedule more than 4.5 hours of practice per week. No practice shall exceed 2.5 hours on any one day.
- f. Controlled Inter-Squad Scrimmage: After the first week of practice (6 hours minimum) for conditioning and after the second week of practice (6 Hours minimum) in pads in which contact has occurred, teams may engage in joint practice sessions with other team(s) in what are called controlled inter-squad scrimmages. So as to avoid any misinterpretation, 12 hours of practice is required before inter-squad scrimmages may occur.
- g. Any player added after a team has formed and/or after the season has started, must be subject to the same 12 hours of practice as mentioned in Paragraph F of this article.
- h. The following exercises and drills are banned from all practices and pre-game warm-ups; neck bridges and bull in the ring.

2. Important Point-Medical & Concussions

- a. When DAA is hosting home football games, medical coverage at each game will be provided at the responsibility of DAA Football. The minimum safety requirement will be the presence of one individual associated with the host organization who is currently EMT qualified or is currently certified in Red Cross Community First Aid and Safety, the P.R.E.P.A.R.E. Course by the National Center for Sport Safety (www.sportssafety.org), or their equivalent. DAA will work with Anne Arundel County EMT's to establish an emergency plan that includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - i. Identify trainer/health care provider to visiting coach;

- ii. Designated duties for coaching staff;
- iii. Emergency numbers available in first aid kit;
- iv. Injury report forms;
- v. Treatment authorization card;
- vi. List of administrators that the coach is required to contact;
- vii. Football Commissioner
- viii. Football Director of Player Safety
- ix. All teams are recommended to have a staff member carry the entire team's medical release forms and emergency numbers for all players in case in an emergency their parent(s) or guardian must be reached.

3. Concussion Return to Play Guidelines

- a. A participant who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or a head injury in a practice, scrimmage or game shall be removed from practice, play or competition at that time based on evaluation and determination by the Head Coach. However, if an official licensed athletic trainer or other official qualified medical professional is on site and available to render such evaluation, that person shall always have final authority as to removal or return to play of the participant.
- b. When an official licensed athletic trainer or other official qualified medical professional is not present, and a parent or guardian of the injured player is serving as head coach, the final authority on removal of a participant shall rest with the Football commissioner, association president or the top ranking assistant coach; whomever is present and highest in the chain of command.
- c. Any participant who has been removed from play due to a head injury or suspected concussion may not return to activities until the participant has been evaluated by a currently licensed medical professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and receive written clearance to return to play from that licensed practitioner.
- d. DAA recommends that all decisions be made in the best interest of the children and that when any doubt exists as to the health of the participants, they sit out.
- e. Please check with www.cdc.gov/concussion for Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) signs and symptoms chart for concussions. Each team should have this printed and stored with the team first aid kit.

4. Practice Detail – In addition to Section 1 requirements, the following also apply:

- a. Pre Season
 - i. The first six (6) hours of practice shall be devoted entirely and exclusively to conditioning, not wearing pads; however, helmets shall be permitted.
- b. Warm Weather Precautions
 - i. Teams must guard against serious heat problems. The training regimen of any team practicing under high heat and/or humidity conditions must:
 - 1. Limit or eliminate laps entirely. Do not assign laps for disciplinary reasons.



2015 PLAYER SAFETY POLICY & GUIDELINES

2. Schedule practices for early evening, after sun is low in sky.
3. Give players all the water they want to drink, when they want it. Do not substitute soft drinks for water.
4. Each coach must keep an eye on all players and his fellow coaches for the slightest sign of heat exhaustion or fatigue.
5. Gator Football will determine when Warm Weather procedures are in effect based on the NOAA National Weather Service Heat Index Chart.
6. Warm Weather procedure will go into effect when the NOAA Weather Service Heat Index Chart indicates Caution.
7. When levels reach Extreme Caution, a fifteen minute break is mandatory in the middle of each practice, not to be counted against practice time.
8. Practice may be cancelled or limited to non contact practices when levels reach Danger.
9. Practices will NOT be held when the Heat Index indicates Extreme Danger.

c. Full Protective Equipment Required

- i. At all practice where person-to-person contact takes place, each player must be dressed in the full complement of protective equipment.

d. Contact

- i. No full-speed head-on blocking or tackling drills in which the players line up more than 3 yards apart are permitted. (You may have two linemen in stance immediately across the line of scrimmage from each other. You may have full-speed drills where the players approach each other at an angle, but not straight ahead into each other.) Intentional head to head contact is forbidden.
- ii. Coaches must limit the amount of contact at each practice to a maximum of 1/3 of practice time (either 40 minutes of each practice or 1/3 of your total weekly practice time). In this context "contact" means any drill or scrimmage in which players go full-speed with contact – e.g. one on one blocking and/or tackling drills; down line vs. down line full-speed drills in which taking players to the ground occurs. Wrap and tap scrimmage's will not count against this time restriction.

5. USA Football Heads Up Tackling

- a. Gator Football endorses the "Heads Up Tackling" progression that has been established by USA Football.
- b. Gator Football recommends that all teams and coaches utilize the progression when teaching form tackling and in tackling drills.
- c. Information is available at;
 - i. <http://usafootball.com/health-safety/how-to-tackle>

6. Injury Report Form

- a. Is located on the DAA Football Website and each coach should have multiple copies with their coaches bag.