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YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE 2009 RULES

(Adopted as of 8/12/09 summer meeting)

Let's always remember that we are responsible for all players having a positive experience, not just our own. We must never stop the clock or pass in an attempt to score another touch down, if the opponent is beaten. There is nothing to be gained from those tactics. The game is for the kids, not the coaches or parents -- if we keep this in mind we will always have a successful program.

Section 1 Coaches and League Directors

- 1.1 Each individual team participating in the YFL Youth Football League will be entitled to have one person to represent their league on the board of directors of YFL. Each league will have one vote through their director on all matters decided upon by the board. By being a member of the YFL each team agrees to obey all rules, regulations and schedules set forth by the board. It will be the responsibility of each director to see that all information regarding decisions set forth by the board of directors is passed on to their respective teams.
- 1.2 **Coaching staff** shall consist of one head coach and as many assistant coaches as deemed necessary.
- 1.3 **Head coach** must be knowledgeable of the game of football and all the league rules. The head coach must be a mature adult whose responsibilities include total control of the side lines, assistant coaches, and the actions of all persons connected with the team.
- 1.4 **Assistant coaches** must be under the direction of the head coach. They are also expected to be mature individuals, knowledgeable of the game and all the league rules.
- 1.5 **No** alcohol, smoking, chewing tobacco, or profanity will be allowed on playing field during practice or games.
- 1.6 **YFL Field Supervisors**
- a) There shall be a Field Supervisor at all games. The Supervisor must be either a league officer or league representative.
 - b) The Field Supervisor shall be responsible for greeting teams, greeting officials, supervising auditors and explaining any rule interpretations. They will assist the referees with any rule interpretations and mediate all on-site conflicts.
 - c) The home team shall be responsible for ensuring that an YFL Field Supervisor is in attendance at all games.

Section 2 Practice Sessions

- 2.1 **Practices** shall not begin prior to **August 24, 2009** and then shall be conducted under the following requirements:
- 2.2 **No player** will participate in contact drills or scrimmage until he/she has experienced 3 full conditioning practices. All players must have 5 full contact practice sessions prior to the LEAGUE SCRIMMAGE on **SATURDAY 9/12/09**.
- 2.3 **All players** shall wear proper league approved protective equipment at all sessions (game and practice) involving physical contact. **NO PRIVATELY PURCHASED equipment and or uniform may be used in any YFL practices or games without first being inspected and approved by the team's respective YFL director. (i.e. parents/guardians purchasing equipment for their own child, not using issued equipment by program).**
- a. Helmet
 - b. Shoulder pads
 - c. Hip, thigh, tail bone and knee pads
 - d. Supporter with cup
 - e. Mouth guard **must be attached to helmet**
 - f. Molded rubber sole cleat or non-cleated athletic shoe
- 2.4 **No practice session** shall exceed two (2) hours. Coaches will allow sufficient amount of water breaks.
- 2.5 **No more than four** (4) two-hour practice sessions per week. (*Including games*)
- 2.6 **JR. team** level will use JR. size ball. **SR. team** level will use intermediate size ball.

Section 3 Game Scheduling *Games start 9/20/09.*

- 3.1 Season schedule will be set by league directors. It will be the responsibility of the head coach to see that his players are ready so games start on time.
- 3.2 Game postponements will be allowed due to severe weather conditions:
- a) In the event of severe weather, league officials at each game site will make the decision to play or not. Visiting team coaches must be notified of a decision to postpone at least 2 hours prior to game time. Local radio stations must also be notified of cancellations.
 - b) Cancellations may be made at the field just prior to game time with the consent of both participating coaches and a league director.
 - c) Failure to field your team at the scheduled time will result in a forfeit. Games that are forfeited will be considered a loss and will not be rescheduled.
- 3.3 **Rescheduling** of postponed games will be done with both coaches and league directors to determine a day and time convenient for all.

Section 4 Personnel on the Field

4.1 JR LEVEL: One coach from each team is allowed on the field during play. This coach is allowed to instruct only between plays. Coaches must stay clear of play and not interfere. Coach's instruction stops when the offensive team is on the line of scrimmage and they are ready to put the ball in play and will not start again until play is blown dead. Coaches are encouraged to coach from the sideline.

SR LEVEL: No coaches are allowed on the field during game play. ALL coaching must be done from the sidelines.

4.2 Chain Crew

a) It will be the home team's responsibility to ensure that three (3) responsible **individuals** are assigned to man the 10-yard chain and down marker for each game.

b) The chain crews are to be instructed by and under the direction of the head linesman.

4.3 Officials: it will be the home team's responsibility to have three (3) officials on the field to ensure proper conduct of the game and enforcement of the rules. *(1) of the officials on the field must be an ADULT! (College students are considered adults).*

a) **OFFICIALS UNIFORM** – at minimum, ALL officials must wear an official's black and white striped jersey short sleeve or long sleeve as per the unanimous agreement of the YFL Board 2/20/08.

b) Officials will remind/instruct chain **crews** regarding operation and placement of box and chain set in the event of a play going out of bounds in the area of the chain crew.

c) Head official is mandated to attend the official's clinic that takes place at the league scrimmage. Failure to have crew representation may result in no scheduled home games.

4.4 Medical Personnel: It will be the home team's responsibility to provide qualified medical personnel at each game. Game should NOT start without medical (EMT) personnel being at the field.

Section 5 Field Size & Game Clock

5.1 Field Size shall be regulation size, with the following provisions:

a) The field shall be no narrower than 40 yards wide

b) The length of the playing field shall be as follows:

1) Junior Division - 80 yards

2) Senior Division - 100 yards

- 5.2 **All fields** shall have ropes or restraining markers to keep spectators back from bench and sideline. All players must remain within the designated player area on each sideline. Spectators are not allowed within this area.
- 5.3 **The time** will be controlled exclusively by an official on the field of play and coordinated with the scoreboard time clock operator.
- a) Playing time will be four (4) 12-minute quarters with a 1-minute official time-out between quarters 1 & 2 and between quarters 3 & 4 with a 10-minute half-time.
 - b) A 2-minute warning will be given to each team in quarters 2 & 4 and will be an official time-out of 1 minute.
 - c) The clock will stop for: Incomplete pass, play going out of bounds, injury, penalties, change of possession. Clock will start on the snap. Clock does NOT run during extra point attempts.
- 5.4 **Each team** is allowed three (3) time-outs per half (1 minute each). A charged time-out occurs when requested by an authorized player on the field, and is granted by an official. Non-chargeable time-outs will be for injury of a player, repair of equipment, or official's time out.
- 5.5 **Injured players** must come out of the game for the next two (2) plays. To re-enter the game, player must be released by attending medical personnel.
- 5.6 **If there is** a tie score at the end of regulation play, the game is over.

Section 6 **Official Weigh In**

- 6.1 Official rosters must be completed and brought to the League Scrimmage. Rosters will be checked and certified at the scrimmage upon completion of the team weigh in. **PLAYERS NOT AT OR CERTIFIED AT THE SCRIMMAGE ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO PLAY!**
- 6.2 The official weigh in will take place under league supervision at the League **Scrimmage on Saturday September 12th at ITHACA.** Weights will be recorded on rosters. **Players will get ONE chance to weigh in that will occur during the team weigh in.**

Section 7 **Eligibility**

- 7.1 **Junior Division**
- a) A Junior Division player is in grades 3 - 5 with a maximum playing weight of 140 lbs. Players over 140 lbs. and in the fifth grade must play on the Senior Division.
 - b) Weights - 90 lb. limit for ball-carriers, linebackers, defensive backs, *offensive* ends.

7.2 Senior Division

- a) A Senior Division player is in sixth grade or in seventh grade. Players that turn 14 years of age prior to December 31st are NOT ELIGIBLE to play in this league. **(It is a goal of this league to support Modified Football by pushing “ready 7th graders” up to scholastic Modified Football)**
- b) Weights:
1. 7th grade - 190 lb. maximum weight limit.
 2. Ball carrier, D-back, backers, offensive ends - 120 lbs. maximum

7.3 **No player** will be allowed to participate in both the Senior and Junior division at the same time.

7.4 **NO player** playing interscholastic football will be allowed to participate in this league.

7.5 **All ineligible** ball carriers must have clearly marked helmets, and will be marked at the official weigh in that will take place at the league scrimmage **9/12/09 at ITHACA.**

7.6 “Older – Lighter” Players that are 6th graders and weigh less than 70 lbs. may play down on the JR TEAM, but may not have more than 2 years experience. The “Older Lighter” rule is NOT an option for players starting JR Team as 3rd graders. These player’s helmets will be marked with a GREEN SPOT. No more than one of these players from the same team on the field at the same time.

Section 8 **Playing Rules**

8.1 **Kickoffs:** There are **no kickoffs**. Play will start on the 25 yard line on a 80 yard field,... and start on the 35 yd line on a 100 yd field.

8.2 **Safety:** scoring team puts ball in play as follows:

- a) Junior Division - 40 yard line
- b) Senior Division - 50 yard line

8.3 **Punting:** Will be done by a controlled freeze punt. The offense must declare if they are going to punt. (Stop Clock)

- a) No rushing or no returning of the punt. Players are allowed to stand with hands raised.
- b) The ball must be controlled by the receiving team. The referee will place the ball in play at that point. The ball cannot be hit or fumbled forward.
- c) ***The punter may not take more than three (3) steps from where they gain control of the football before punting the ball. 7/21/05 new***

8.4 **Fumbles & Interceptions:** may be advanced by either the offense or defense and only by an eligible ball carrier. When knee is down play is dead. Non-eligible ball carriers will be spotted at the point of interception or recovery.

- 8.6 **Encroachment:** is the term to indicate a player is illegally in the neutral zone. After the snapper has made his final adjustment of the ball, it is encroachment for any player to break the plane of his line of scrimmage.
- 8.7 **Blocking:** a player may contact opponents with the arms or hands provided the technique is legal. The legal techniques are as follows:
- a) Closed or cupped hand technique
 1. The elbows may be inside or outside the shoulders
 2. The hands must be closed
 3. The forearms are extended no more than 45 degrees from the body
 - b) Open hand technique. The hands shall be:
 1. In advance of the elbow;
 2. Inside the frame of the blocker's body. The frame of the blocker's body is the front of the body at or below the shoulders.
 3. Inside the frame of the opponent's body, except when the opponent turns his back to the blocker during the block or after the blocker is committed to his charge. The frame of the opponent's body is at the shoulders or below other than the back;
 4. At or below the shoulders of the blocker and the opponent, except when the opponent squats, ducks or submarines during the block or after the blocker is committed to his charge; and
 5. Open when the palms are facing the frame of the opponent or when the forearms are extended beyond the 45 degree angle from the body.
 - c) The blocker may not initiate contact with his arm or hands against an opponent above the opponent's shoulder.
 - d) An offensive player may also use his hands or arms when he is a runner to ward off or push any player.
 - e) A defensive player may also use unlocked hands or arm to ward off an opponent who is blocking him, or push or pull the blocker out of the way in an actual attempt by him to get at the runner or a loose ball.
- 8.8 **Free-blocking Zone:** is a rectangular area extending from tackle to tackle and 3 yards on either side of the line of scrimmage.
- a) An offensive player who is stationary at the snap and any defensive player may contact an opponent below the waist on his initial charge provided all players in the contact were in the free-blocking zone at the time of the snap, and contact is in the free-blocking zone.
 - b) Blocking from the rear is not clipping when:
 1. Contact is in the free-blocking zone;
 2. Offensive blocker is on his line of scrimmage and is in the free-blocking zone at the snap; and
 3. Opponent is in the free-blocking zone at the snap.

c) Free-blocking zone disintegrates and the right to block below the waist and/or clip during close line play is not to continue after the initial charge, or the position of the ball is established, or the ball has left the zone.

8.9 **Down-Field Blocking** is interpreted as any blocking of an opponent taking place down field from the free-blocking zone. All down field blocking must be done above the waist.

Section 9 Offense

9.1 **Offensive line:** of interior linemen (including tight ends) must be down in a 3 point stance on the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. Wide receivers may be in a 2 point stance. 7 players must be on line at all times. No unbalanced lines allowed. Must have 3 players on each side of the center.

9.2 **Offensive player:** is on the line of scrimmage when he faces his opponent's goal line with the line of his shoulders approximately parallel thereto and his head or foot breaking the plane of an imaginary line drawn through the waistline of the snapper and parallel to the line of scrimmage.

9.3 **Maximum split** of 1 yard between linemen, end to end, unless a split end is used, in which case the maximum split for the end is **10 yards** from the tackle. No double split ends.

9.4 **Center** shall have his feet behind his line and **no** part of his body other than a hand or hands on the ball may be beyond the foremost point of the ball.

a) The center may make preliminary adjustment of the ball before assuming his set position. During these adjustments the center may lift the ball slightly without moving the location.

9.5 **Offensive backfield** must be eligible ball carriers - weight limit appropriate.

On the snap of the ball, there may be ONLY 2 players outside of the tackle on either or both sides of the field.

9.6

a) **Flanker** is defined as positioned one yard behind the line of scrimmage and split more than one yard outside of the end.

b) **Wing** is defined as positioned one yard behind the line of scrimmage and one yard outside of the end.

c) **Slot** is defined as positioned one yard behind the line of scrimmage and between the tackle and end, who is positioned outside of the tackle.

m) At no time may there be more than two players outside of the tackle.

9.7 **Motion: Limited to 10 yards.** No more than one player may be in motion at the snap of the ball between offensive ends (unless split) and then only if such motion is not toward the line of scrimmage prior to the snap of the ball. Tight ends may not go in motion. **On the snap of the ball, there may be only 2 players outside of the tackle on either or both sides of the field.** Motion shall be prohibited to the side of formation that has 2 players outside of the tackle.

9.8 **Ready for play** is a term that signifies the referee has signaled the ball may be put in play by the offense. After the referee's signal, the offense will have 45 seconds to get their play off.

9.9 **Double reverse** and end around plays are legal.

Section 10 Defense

10.1 **Defensive Alignment:** Only 2 defenses will be allowed - 6-2-3 or 6-3-2. 6-2-3 is to be used in all situations except the following three situations that the 6-3-2 can be used.

1. Inside the 10-yard line of your opponent.
2. Extra point attempts.
3. Short yardage situations any place on the field. Short yardage is defined as 2 yards or less.

The alignment of players in the 6-2-3 or 6-3-2 can be of any variety as long as they are stationary at the snap and meet the following roles:

10.2 **Defensive Line** made up of 6 linemen must be in an imaginary straight line extending from offensive end to offensive end, with no one lined up over the center.

10.3 **Defensive ends:**

1. May line up on the outside shoulder/or head up on any offensive player outside the tackle, which includes but is not limited to TE, SE, FL, SL, and or W.
2. In the absence of a TE, the DE may line-up in the gap between the DT and widest offensive player. (This is the **ONLY** situation in which a defensive lineman can line up in a gap).

10.4 **Guards and tackles** must play head to head on the offensive guards and tackles in either a 3 or 4 point stance. No linemen may play directly over the offensive center or in the gap.

10.5 **Linebackers** must be at least 1 yard *directly* behind the deepest lineman until the ball is snapped and may not line up over the center or in the gap in 6-2-3. In short yardage situation (6-3-2) linebackers can line up over the center, however, they must be 1 yd. behind the deepest lineman.

10.6 **Defensive backs** must be at least 3 yards behind the deepest linebacker *sideline to sideline* until the ball is snapped.

10.7 **Blitzing: No defensive player may be moving.** It is possible that some D-backs in 2 pt. stances may actually physically move unintentionally. No player should move and never move to shadow offensive motion or to move forward prior to the snap.

10.8 **Head tackles**, spearing, or direct blows to the head **are not allowed**, and will result in a major penalty.

- a) Intentional use of hands on the helmet, weather blocking or tackling to bring a player down is not allowed.

Section 11 Scoring

11.1 The game is won by the team that accumulates the most points. Points are scored either by the run or pass as follows for:

- Touchdown = **6 points**
- extra point run or pass from the 3 yard line = **1 point**
- extra point run or pass from the 6 yard line = **2 points**
- extra point **kick** from the 3 yard line = **2 points (Senior Division Only)**

Kicking – 1. When attempting to kick for points the holder may NOT leave their kneeling position to retrieve a poor or mishandled snap. If the holder must leave their kneeling position to get the ball or another player touches the ball before the holder has control of the ball, the play is considered dead and the attempt will be ruled no good. If the holder can gain control of the ball without leaving their kneeling position, they can place it on the tee and the play can continue.

2. The kicking team has 5 seconds from the time the ball is snapped in which to kick the ball. If the kick is not completed within the 5 second time limit, the attempt will be considered no good.

- a) Immediately following a touchdown, the offensive team must declare if point after attempt will be for 1 or 2 points. The referee will then set the line of scrimmage from either the 3 or 6 yd. line.
- b) Foul during point after:
 - 1.** Offense attempt is for 2 points from 6 yard line and their attempt is unsuccessful, however the defense commits a foul. The offense accepts the penalty and the spot is moved half the distance to the goal. The attempt will still be for 2 points.
 - 2.** Offense attempt is for 1 point from 3 yard line and is successful, however they commit a foul. The defense accepts the penalty, the spot is now beyond the 6 yard line. The attempt will still be for 1 point.

11.2 **Safety 2 points**

11.3 **If point spread becomes 19 points or more**, the trailing team will have 5 downs to make a first down (first down will be repeated). If the point spread becomes less than 19 points, both teams will have 4 downs.

- a) If, at half time, a team is trailing by 19 points or more they may choose to receive the ball to start the second half.

Section 12 Player Participation

12.1 **Mandatory Playing Time** - Each player **must play** ten (10) “action” plays per game, which do not include kicking play.

Section 13 Summary of Penalties

13.1 **Loss of 5 yards**

1. Failure to wear required equipment (**mouth guards must be attached**)
2. Delay of game
3. Encroachment
4. False start or any illegal act by snapper
5. Less than 7 players on the line of scrimmage
6. More than 7 players on the line of scrimmage
7. Illegal formation or procedure at snap
8. Illegal motion or shift
9. Illegal forward pass (also loss of down)
10. Intentional grounding (also loss of down)
11. Ineligible receiver illegally down field
12. Non-player outside of the team box
13. 12 players on field of play at snap

13.2 **Loss of 10 yards**

1. Illegal blocking
2. Illegal use of hands
3. Striking blockers head with hands
4. Offensive pass interference (also loss of down)
5. Defensive pass interference (also first down)
6. Illegal block below waist
7. Clipping
8. Chop block
9. Tripping
10. Piling, hurdling, unnecessary roughness, etc. and other personal fouls
11. Roughing passer (also first down)
12. Grasping opponents face protector or any helmet opening
13. Unsportsmanlike conduct by player or non-player
14. Holding

13.3 **Disqualification** associated with certain major penalties

1. Striking, kicking, kneeling – with or without contact.
2. Any act if unduly rough or flagrant
3. Disrespectfully addressing an official by player or non-player
4. Using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures