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## **YOUTH FOOTBALL 2008 RULES OF PLAY**

### **I. POLICY**

It shall be the policy that the rules of play of this league shall be the National Federation of State High Schools, unless amended or modified herein, and are governed by the Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation and Parks' Organized Sports Manual and the Youth Football Association Guidelines.

### **II. LEAGUE CLASSIFICATIONS**

The Association will be comprised of the following league classifications. No changes to the age or weight qualifications can be made for the current football season. Revisions, if any, must be made six months prior to the year it is to go into effect.

#### **A. 70 lb. League Instructional**

Ages 6-7: - Players must be 6 years old by **September 1, 2008** to be eligible to play. Any player turning 8 years old on/before **December 31, 2008** is not eligible to play in this weight class. **No player will be granted more than 2 seasons to compete in this league, regardless of age or weight.**

Weight: 70 lbs. to start the season

Every player will play (1/2) one-half of every game.

#### **B. 80 lb. League**

Ages 8 and under - Players must be 6 years old by **September 1, 2008** to be eligible to play. Any player turning 9 years old on/before **September 1, 2008** is not eligible to play in this weight class. (**Born September 1, 1999 – September 1, 2002**).

Weight: 80 lbs. to start the season.

Every player will play a minimum of 10 plays per game.

#### **C. 90 lb. League**

Ages 9 and under: Players must turn 7 years old by **September 1, 2008** to be eligible to play. Any player turning 10 years old on/before **September 1, 2008** is not eligible to play in this weight class. **(Born September 1, 1998 – August 31, 2001).**

Maximum Weight: 90 lbs. to start the season

Every player will play a minimum of 10 plays per game.

D. **100 lb. League**

Ages 10 and under: Players must turn 8 years old by **September 1, 2008** to be eligible to play. Any player turning 11 years old on/before **September 1, 2008**, is not eligible to play in this weight class. **(Born September 1, 1997 – September 1, 2000)**

Maximum Weight: 100 lbs. to start the season.

Every player will play a minimum of 10 plays per game.

E. **110 lb. League**

Ages 11 and under: Players must turn 9 years old by **September 1, 2008** to be eligible to play. Any player turning 12 years old on/before **September 1, 2008** is not eligible to play in this weight class. **(Born September 1, 1996– September 1, 1999).**

Maximum Weight: 110 lbs. to start the season.

Every player will play a minimum of 10 plays per game.

F. **125 lb. League**

Ages 12 and under: Players must turn 10 years old by **September 1, 2008** to be eligible to play. Any player turning 13 years old on/before **September 1, 2008** is not eligible to play in this weight class. **(Born September 1, 1995 – September 1, 1998)**

Maximum Weight: 125 lbs. to start the season.

Every player will play a minimum of 10 plays per game.

G. **12U League**

Ages 12 and under: Players must turn 10 years old by **September 1, 2008** to be eligible to play. Any player turning 13 years old on/before **September 1, 2008** is not eligible to play in this weight class. **(Born September 1, 1995 – September 1, 1998)**

Maximum Weight: **No Maximum Weight.**

There is no minimum play rule for the 12 Unlimited League

H. **135 lb. League**

Ages 11-13: Players must turn 11 years old by **September 1, 2008** to be eligible to play. Any player turning 14 years old on/before **September 1, 2008** is not eligible to play in

this weight class, unless they are in Middle School. If an 8<sup>th</sup> grade child turns 15 before December 31, 2008 they are not eligible to play. No HS student may participate in this league (**Born September 1, 1994 – September 1, 1997**).

Maximum Weight: 135 lbs. to start the season.

Every player will play a minimum of 10 plays per game.

**I. 13 U League**

A player may be no older than 14 years old by **September 1, 2008 and still be in Middle School. No HS students will be eligible for this league.** This league is for players in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade for the 2008-2009 school year. If an 8<sup>th</sup> grade child turns 15 before December 31, 2008 they are not eligible to play in the 13 Unlimited League.

Maximum Weight: No maximum weight to play in the 13 unlimited league.

There is no minimum play rule for the 13 Unlimited League.

**J. Freshman Sophomore League**

Ages 14-15: Players must turn 14 years old by **September 1, 2008** to be eligible to play. **No player turning 16 on or before September 1, 2008 is eligible to play in this league.**

The play back rule doesn't apply. (**Born September 1, 1993 – September 1, 1994**)

Maximum Weight: No maximum weight for the Freshman Sophomore League

No minimum play rule for the Freshman Sophomore League.

**K. Home School Exceptions** – Children that are Home Schooled and wish to play must meet the age/weight requirements listed above for each weight class. No 14 year old Home Schooled children can play in the 13 Unlimited league.

L. A player who is within one year of the minimum age for a weight class, may play in that weight class if he attends the weigh-in and is overweight for the roster on which he is listed. This was approved by the Board on 8/23/05.

**III. PLAYING RULES**

A. Special Rules for 70 - 90lb. leagues.

- 1. Major penalties will be ten (10) yards, except unsportsmanlike conduct on any coach, is 15 yards.**

2. 70 Lb. – Declared punts. Official will mark off 20 yards from the line of scrimmage, unless this places the ball inside the 20-yard line.
3. **80 & 90 lb – Declared Punts – Fourth down & outside of defense’s 30-yard line. Defense cannot rush the passer or make contact with offensive line. Offense cannot cross line of scrimmage until ball is punted. Both teams must have a minimum of 7 players on the line. Punting team must inform the referee of intention prior to the play, who in turn informs the opposing team. If the ball is snapped over the punter’s head, the ball must be punted from the recovery spot. (The spirit of this is to execute the snap-punt-catch.)**
4. 70 Lb. - Two coaches are allowed on the field during the game for the entire season.
5. **80 Lb. - One coach is allowed on the field for the first four games of the season only.**

Note: The coach on the field for 70 & 80 lb leagues can only talk during the time when the ball is dead with no cheerleading or coaching while the ball is in play and will be at least ten (10) yards behind the deepest player while the play is in progress.

- B. One coach will be allowed on field with captain during coin toss.
- C. **No organized practices or drills may begin prior to July 21, 2008. Practices with pads cannot begin prior to July 28, 2008**
- D. **Once the public school year begins (August 25, 2008), no team may practice more than three nights per week, Monday-Friday and the three practices may not total more than six hours.**
- E. The High School Federation's mandatory numbering system rule is waived.
- F. Two (2) points will be awarded for a successful kick on an extra point and one (1) point will be awarded for a successful run or pass.
- G. Quarters will be 10 minutes of controlled time. The game clock will be governed by Federation rules with the following exception: the clock will stop on change of possession. The referee will start the clock when the down marker is set and the ready for play whistle is blown. This follows the pre-1996 Federation timing rules.
- H. If a team is winning by 35 or more points at the end of the third quarter or any time thereafter, the fourth quarter will be played with a running clock (this includes time-outs), even if the score difference becomes less than 35 points. This applies to regular season only. This rule has become necessary in order to add a degree of scoring control in games that are between teams that are not matched in talent, experience, size, etc. It

is highly encouraged, and shall be required, that winning coaches take all necessary steps available to control the high level of scoring in unmatched games.

- I. All ties will be played as per High School Federation overtime procedure, but limited to two overtime tries during regular season.
- J. Freshman Sophomore League – For safety and security reasons, all Saturday games must begin by 2:30pm and all Sunday games must begin by 3:30pm.

#### IV. **FIELDS**

- A. Playing fields must be at least 100 yards from goal line to goal line and 53 yards from sideline to sideline. Sidelines, goal lines, end zone lines, inbounds lines, and yard lines every ten (10) yards must be marked clearly. (Check NHSF)
- B. Securing a home field for games is a responsibility of the organization sponsoring the team. If possible, the Department will assist a team in locating a field, but at the present time, the Department cannot guarantee a field for any team. It is also the responsibility of the home team to see that fields are properly marked and that conditions are playable.
- C. In order to allow the coaches and officials to properly perform their duties, it is the responsibility of the home team to provide a barrier, preferably rope, along each sideline to keep spectators away from the playing area. The barrier should be at least 15 to 20 feet from each sideline and should run from goal line to goal line. The penalty for the first offense will be a \$100 fine. A Second offense will result in loss of home games.
- D. The Recreation & Parks Department may cancel games due to weather or field conditions prior to the scheduled starting time. The home team may also cancel games prior to the scheduled starting time, due to weather or field conditions. Once the game begins, only the officials may cancel games due to inclement weather. Game officials and the officials of each team must be continually aware of the safety of the participants and the condition of the field. Lightning, high water conditions, high winds, etc. must be considered before a game is started or continued. Any game not played because of unsafe playing conditions shall be rescheduled.
- E. If a regularly scheduled game is cancelled it will be rescheduled on the next available day, and if the home team is unable to host the game it shall be moved to a neutral field.

#### V. **REGISTRATION AND ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS**

- A. The Anne Arundel County Recreation Advisory Board has determined that anyone can participate in any adult or youth athletic program as long as the sponsoring organization is located in Anne Arundel County. A minimum of 75% of the participants must reside in Anne Arundel County. The Director of Recreation & Parks may grant special exemptions.
- B. All players must be registered on an official contract to participate. League players must also submit a photocopy of their Birth Certificate. The Department will maintain a file on all contracts and releases according to leagues and teams.
- C. A contract shall be invalid unless the player, the coach, and a parent or guardian has signed it. Failure to comply with this may result in forfeiture of games. Any Coach with a player on his/her roster that does not have a valid release for that child will be subject to disciplinary actions, including but not limited to suspension, probation and forfeiture of games.
- D. Players will be eligible to participate in football only after their contract and a photocopy of their Birth Certificate have been received.
- E. No players may be added to the roster after the third week of the season. No player may be added to the roster after the "Make-up" weigh in.
- F. High school varsity, junior varsity and freshmen players who participate with their school football team during the current scholastic year are not eligible to sign a Department contract while playing. This includes players from public, private and parochial schools. This restriction is lifted if subject player is cut or quits and is no longer associated with that team and his contract is registered with the Department of Recreation & Parks prior to the cut-off date. A letter of release from the player's school coach or the Anne Arundel County Player Release Form must be presented prior to the player being registered. The County cannot force any player or team outside of the County league to sign a player release form, but the effort must be made to obtain the release.
- H. Team coaches are responsible for the registration of players, releasing of players and all eligibility requirements of their team.
- I. Birth certificates or verification from the Board of Education are acceptable evidence for proof of age.
- J. An ineligible player and the coach who signed him are liable for suspension and disciplinary action.

- K. When a case of ineligibility is brought to the attention of the referee, any player or coach who refuses to sign their signatures or cooperate with the official when requested to do so is liable for suspension. The official may forfeit the game immediately if the request is not fulfilled.
- L. No child may play football in the County league if they are not attending school, public or private, or home schooled.

## **VI. ROSTER LIMIT**

- A. Teams will be allowed to carry 30 players under contract; therefore, not more than 30 players may be in uniform for a league game.
- B. It is the responsibility of the coach to see that a valid contract, and release when needed, has been completed and submitted for each player on the roster.

## **VII. RELEASES**

- A. Release will be granted upon presentation of the Anne Arundel County Player Release Form. This form must be properly filled out and signed by the coach.
- B. A coach who refuses to release a player must show cause for such action within 48 hours after the player or his parents have presented a request for release in writing.
- C. A released player will be eligible to sign a new contract after his release form has been date stamped, provided it is submitted before the cut-off date, but will not be eligible to play until a new card is issued.
- D. The Recreation & Parks Department shall decide all disputes concerning releases.

## **VIII. OFFICIAL GAMES**

- A. All games shall be played as originally scheduled. Only the Department of Recreation & Parks will make any changes to the schedule. No games will be scheduled before 12:00 p.m. on Sundays.
- B. There must be at least two officials present for 70 and 80 lb. games, three officials present for 90, 100, 110, 125, 12U 135 lb, 13U, and Fresh/Soph games. No games may be played with less than the amount of officials noted above. If any team refuses to play any game when the minimum number of officials is present, they will forfeit the game.

## **IX. LEAGUE STRUCTURE**

**A. Division Breakdown:** Starting in 2008 AAYFA will switch to a multi division makeup. The ten organizations with the most wins from the 2007 season will make up Division I. The remaining organizations will make up Division II.

Organizations in Division I that field more than one team per weight class will have their second teams fill any open slots in Division II (highest ranking Division I organization will fill open slots first. Second highest-ranking organization will fill open slots in second and so on...). If there are no open slots, the teams will create a Division III.

Organizations in Division II with more than one team per weight class, will if available, fill any open slots in Division I with their first team and have their second team play Division II. If no slots are open in Division I, the first team will play Division II and the second team will join Division III. Division III will be for Organizations that have multiple teams at one weight class that don't have a spot in DI or DII.

### **2008 Division I**

**GORC  
CHARGERS  
SEVERN  
CROFTON  
SEVERNA PARK  
REBELS  
EDGEWATER  
CHESAPEAKE  
UQA  
CAPE ST CLAIRE**

### **2008 DIVISION II**

**SOUTH RIVER  
BUCS  
PANTHERS  
BROOKLYN PARK  
ANDOVER  
PAL  
SOUTHERN  
CRUSADERS  
OLD MILL  
MD CITY  
FT MEADE**

B. Future Seasons: Division I will be made up of the 8 Division I organizations with the most wins from the prior season and the 2 Division II organizations with the most wins from the prior season. The bottom two organizations from Division I will move to Division II. Wins will be counted from the following weight classes: 80, 90, 100, 110

## X. STANDINGS & PLAY-OFFS

- A. Standings will be determined by awarding two points for each win and one point for a tie.
- B. The playoff for Division I will be made up of the top six teams in Division I and the top two teams in Division II. The Division II playoffs will be made up of the next four top ranked teams from both Division I and II. Division III playoffs will be made up of the remaining teams in Division II and the top Division III teams. (enough to make an 8-team playoff) .
- C. If Division II has 11 or more teams in a weight class, but not enough teams to fill a full Division III schedule, there will be two divisions.
- D. If a Division has 10 or less teams in a weight class, there will be no divisions.
  - a. In the event of a tie for any placement, head-to-head competition will be the tiebreaker.
  - b. If the teams are still tied for first, second or third place (playoff seeding/positions), a coin toss will be done for seeding purposes.
  - c. **In the event that a tie still exists to qualify for the play-offs, elimination play-off game(s) will be played to determine the final seed(s). Examples of ties are two teams tied for the fourth seed and they tied during the regular season or three teams tied for the third & fourth seeding and these teams were 1- 1 against each other during the regular season.**
- E. Home team for County championship will be the highest seeded playoff team.

## XI. COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Coaches are responsible for the registration and releasing of players, and all other eligibility requirements of their teams.
- B. A coach who signs an ineligible player is liable for suspension and other disciplinary action.
- C. If a home coach calls off a game at least two (2) hours prior to game time because of weather conditions, he must notify the opposing coach and the Commissioner of his league.
- D. The coach is responsible for the conduct of any person connected with his team at all times. This includes conduct towards the officials. The coach is responsible for the behavior of his players and all team attendants. He is also responsible insofar as can be reasonably expected to control his spectators. Abuse to an official or an opposing player by a fan with no attempt by the management of the team to eliminate it will be dealt with by the Department of Recreation and Parks.
- E. If a coach feels that a problem spectator(s) is not a supporter he should request the official to remove the spectator from the vicinity. If the problem persists, the referee will require the home team management to call the police.
- F. All head coaches must report the final score of their football game to his organizational representative. Organizational representatives must contact their division representative. Each conference representative shall contact the President of the A.A. Co. Youth Football organization and the Sports Supervisor for the County to report all scores.
- G. The home team is responsible for contrasting jerseys. The home team coach shall call the visiting coach to ensure that both teams do not show up in the same color jersey. It will be the responsibility of the home team to change.
- H. Head coach must make sure that all assistant coaches are certified, and have a ID present with the proper color displayed at all times during a game. Failure to have proper ID will result in coach moving behind the ropes.
- I. Each Head coach is responsible for signing and adhering to the Anne Arundel Recreation and Parks Department's Head Coaches Pledge.

## **XII. PLAYING EQUIPMENT**

- A. All protective equipment must be of high caliber for safety reasons. At any time an official of the Association or the Department may disapprove equipment and declare it

unsafe for contact. As a result, the team can be barred from competition until the situation is corrected.

B. Mandatory Equipment:

1. Helmet (NOCSAE approved) with face guard
2. Mouth piece
3. Shoulder pads
4. Football jersey
5. Protective hip and spinal pads
6. Thigh pads
7. Knee pads
8. Regulation football pants
9. Socks
10. Cleats or other approved football shoe

All other descriptions not covered above must meet High School Federation requirements.

- C. Balls -- one ball is to be used during the game. This ball is to be new or in new condition and supplied by the home team. If the home team ball for some reason is in bad condition and the visiting team has a ball in better condition, the official may use this ball. (Leather Balls only, no Composite balls).

<b>70 lb.</b>	<b>Wilson K2, Nike 2000K, Baden 500JR</b>
<b>80 lb.</b>	<b>Wilson K2, Nike 2000K, Baden 500JR</b>
<b>90 lb.</b>	<b>Wilson K2, Nike 2000K, Baden 500JR</b>
<b>100 lb.</b>	<b>Wilson K2, Nike 2000K, Baden 500JR</b>
<b>110 lb.</b>	<b>TDJ, 2000J, 500J</b>
<b>125 and 12U.</b>	<b>TDJ, 2000J, 500J</b>
<b>13U and 135 lb.</b>	<b>TDY, 2000Y, 500Y</b>
<b> Fresh/Soph</b>	<b>1001/1005/1205, 3005, Lexum</b>

### **XIII. ALCOHOL POLICY**

#### **A. Organization Policy (“ZERO” TOLERANCE)**

It is the responsibility of each organization to police their coaches, fans, parents and players to assure that there is no consumption of alcohol during County sponsored games. Consumption of alcohol at games cannot and will not be tolerated. While such behavior sets a poor example for our youth, it is also against the law to consume alcoholic beverages on properties operated by the County Department of Recreation and Parks or the Board of Education.

1. Anyone consuming alcohol at a County sponsored game will be suspended from participation for a minimum of one (1) year.
2. An Organization Representative must be on duty at all times working the crowd confirming that no alcohol consumption is occurring at the facility.
3. Each year Organizations must send a letter to parents notifying them of these

policies.

#### **B. County Youth Football Policy**

If a County Youth Football organization fails to comply with the above procedures the following step or steps will be taken:

1. Written warning to Organization
2. Elimination of night games
3. Elimination of home games
4. Elimination from County leagues

### **XIV. DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

- A. An ejected coach will receive a minimum of an automatic one game suspension and probation for remainder of season. This punitive action may not be appealed.
- B. An ejected coach must leave the immediate playing area and may not participate in the game in any manner. Any Coach ejected from a game will be given an automatic two game suspension. This punitive action may not be appealed.

### **XV. REFEREES**

- A. The Athletic Supervisor who is responsible for liaison with the Official's Associations shall insure that agreements are negotiated which will enable all games to be properly officiated.
- B. At the discretion of the above Athletic Supervisor, additional officials may be requested to cover playoff or championship games.
- C. Referees are to insure that all games start as scheduled. Any team not at the playing site within 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time shall forfeit the contest.
- D. An ejected player must turn his jersey inside out or take it off. Officials shall inform the opposing team of the name and number of the ejected player.
- F. A "volunteer" official will never be allowed to officiate a game in which the assigned officials do not show up.
- G. The Department will not pay for officials for exhibition or non-league games.

#### **XVI. WEIGH-IN AND GAME-DAY CHECK-IN PROCEDURES**

- A. Each Organization will be assigned a time and place for weigh-ins.
- B. Organizations will be weighed starting at the lightest weights, in order, moving toward the heaviest weights.
- C. Each Coach will be required to have a **completed roster** and an I.D. information sheet for every player in alphabetical order.
- D. In addition to the players, only the Head Coach, Commissioner, and/or representatives from each team will be allowed in the weigh-in area.
- E. Teams must be in the weigh-in area 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the weigh-in. **Representatives of the Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation & Parks & AAYFA** officials will conduct the weigh-ins.
- F. Teams will lineup in a straight line, in order, and the coach will present his team to an AAYFA official.
- G. Each player will step on the scale wearing shorts, T-shirt and footwear.

- H. If the scale exceeds the maximum allowance for the class during the weigh-in, the player will be ineligible to participate in that weight class and will be assigned to the proper age/weight class by the AAYFA officials on the site.
- I. Once the player has been weighed in and approved, he will proceed to the photography area to have his/her I.D. picture taken.
- J. A digital scale must be used. The AAYFA officials will check the scale for accuracy, prior to weigh-in.
- K. If a player is observed at the weigh-in site running any laps, attempting to sweat down by other means, or attempting to weigh-in without proper equipment, will be declared ineligible to participate in the weigh-in. If multiple players are found guilty of this offense then action will be brought against the Head Coach and/or the Commissioner/Organization. A complaint on this may be noted to the AAYFA officials and should be filed as soon as possible.
- L. There will be **three** weigh-ins per player, if necessary. Each child will be given an opportunity to weigh-in at all three weigh-ins.
- M. **If a player is overweight at a weigh-in, the organization has 48 hours to discuss with the parent and:**
  - a. **Make a determination as to whether the player is going to remain with that organization, or**
  - b. **To immediately move to the next weight class with that organization, or**
  - c. **To continue to weigh in at the original weight class with that organization.**  
**IF the player does not make weight, the organization may NOT cut that player and MUST move to the higher weight class.**
- N. **Any child who weighs-in at or does not make weight until the third weigh-in must sit out the first two games of the season.**
- O. Play-off Weigh-In Procedures (Required of all teams in Play-offs).
  - 1. All rules above are followed
  - 2. Players will be given an additional **5 lbs.**
- P. Game Check-In Procedures
  - 1. Both teams will report to their sidelines 15 minutes before scheduled game time.

2. Before the start of the game, both teams will lineup on opposite 40-yard line in roster order. Players will be dressed in full playing equipment with the exception of helmets. No helmets will be worn during ID checks.
3. Coaches will exchange team ID cards and rosters.
4. Opposing coaches will check the roster and ID cards of players. The opposing head coach and referee will monitor the process.
5. If a player is not present he is ineligible to play in the game and a line is placed through his name on the roster. **There can be no bargaining or negotiating between coaches concerning a late arriving player being permitted to play. Exception: In the 70 lb league ONLY, if a player arrives before halftime, he may play in the second half, provided that the player checks in with both the referee and the opposing coach at halftime.**
6. A questionable player will be brought to the referee's attention.
  - a. The player will be required to sign the roster and be allowed to play in the game.
  - b. At this time, a formal protest of the game has been filed; the protesting team then must contact the Recreation & Parks Department to set-up a hearing.
  - c. A fee of \$100, and the protested game roster, with signature, will be required to be brought to the hearing. The protested player must attend the hearing, along with a parent/guardian and the head coach of the team. The player's I.D. card must be brought to the hearing.
  - d. If the protest procedure is not followed, disciplinary action will be brought against the head coach of the team and commissioner of the organization. If the protest is upheld then the fee will be refunded, the protesting team will be awarded the victory of the protested game, the player will be suspended for the rest of the year, and disciplinary action will be brought against the team and/or coach.
  - e. A team can protest a player's weight, if he's thought to be at least 10 lbs overweight. The player will be required to weigh-in at the Recreation & Parks Department at 7:00pm on the Monday following the game. A maximum of two protests per season per team is allowed.
6. Teams will be required to have both rosters and ID cards or the game will be forfeited.
7. Both coaches will sign the rosters.

## **XVII. YEARLY MEETING**

The President of the Youth Football program will have a meeting once a year, in connection with the Association's Coaches Clinic, with all head coaches. Disciplinary action, consisting of a two (2) game suspension starting with the first game of the current season will be taken against those coaches not attending.

### **A. AGENDA**

1. Our rules vs. High School Federation, NCAA, NFL.
2. Player registration and eligibility (age, weight, contracts).
3. Rosters (order, numbers).
4. Weigh-ins (when, where, how, proper equipment).
5. Coach's code of conduct (before, during and after game).
6. The "Game" (side line barriers, chain gang, cancelled games, officials, mandatory play rule).
7. Sportsmanship.

### **B. OBJECTIVE**

1. A chance to meet other coaches in a friendly atmosphere.
2. An opportunity to arrange scrimmage/and or practice games.
3. An opportunity to meet the Association Board and discuss problems.