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Saint Croix Valley Athletic Association

3rd – 6th Grade Youth Football Playing Rules



These rules govern the conduct and play of all participants in the SCVAA Youth Football program, grades 3rd through 6th. While some rules are very specific in nature, others are intended to guide the spirit of play and address the rules of play purely for safety and fair play reasons. The interpretation of these rules is at the discretion of the SCVAA Youth Football Commission. The goal of the Football Commission in establishing these rules is to ensure and encourage good sportsmanship, teach the fundamentals of youth football and allow players the opportunity to play in each game they are eligible to do so. All are expected to honor the philosophies and intent of our program as participation is a privilege rather than a right.

• Participant Conduct

Coaches must conduct themselves as agreed upon in the 'SCVAA Football Policies and Standards' document which must be signed by all coaches before they are allowed to participate in any league games. This document also addresses player and spectator conduct and is intended to ensure good sportsmanship and fair play by all present during a contest. Head coaches will be responsible for addressing sportsmanship issues at the discretion of the game officials present. The game officials are responsible for conducting the game according to these rules. Game officials are contracted by the Football Commission to manage each game and are responsible for doing so. If an impartial member of the SCVAA Football Commission is present at a game, the officials can consult with these persons if rules interpretations, game conditions or participant conduct so inclines them to do so. Impartial Football Commission members can conduct discussions with officials during official game stoppages (pre-game, halftime, post-game, etc). An impartial Commission member is an active member of the Football Commission whom is not involved in the current game or does not have a child participating in the current game.

• Program Divisions

The SCVAA will be conducting football programs in 4 separate divisions. These divisions are organized as follows: (Players whose age exceeds the average age of their classmates such that they are closer to the average age of the next division may be required to play up one grade at the discretion of the Football Commission).

- I. 3rd Grade Pee-Wee Football
 - a. 9-man Football – One Coach permitted on field during game play
 - b. No Special Teams
 - c. Striper Weight – players over 95 lbs. are restricted players
- II. 4th Grade Junior Football
 - a. 11-Man Football – One Coach permitted on the field during game play
 - b. No Special Teams
 - c. Striper Weight – players over 105 lbs. are restricted players
- III. 5th Grade Junior Football
 - a. 11-Man Football – One Coach permitted on the field during game play
 - b. Special Teams – controlled punting game
 - c. Striper Weight – players over 125 lbs. are restricted players
- IV. 6th Grade Youth Football
 - a. 11-Man Football – One Coach permitted until 4th game of season
 - b. Special Teams – controlled punting game
 - c. Striper Weight – players over 135 lbs. are restricted players

Player weights will be determined by official league weigh in during equipment distribution nights at the Lucy Winton Bell Field house. A Football Commission member must weigh and record each player's weight, anyone not officially weighed by a Football Commission member must participate as a restricted



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player regardless of their weight. Weigh in is conducted without equipment but with street clothes and athletic shoes on. Players without athletic shoes will be assessed a 1 pound penalty. Players unable to attend the scheduled equipment distribution dates are responsible for coordinating with their coaches to properly register their weights with the league. **Restricted players must wear a colored stripe down the center top of their helmet no less than ½" wide.** They are not permitted to line up in the offensive or defensive backfield at any time during the game, except on a controlled punt team they may punt the ball. Restricted players may never carry or advance the ball. If they recover a fumble or intercept a thrown ball they retain possession, but the ball is dead at the spot they recover it.

- On offense they must play on the line of scrimmage. They may play tight end (cannot split or play wide) but are ineligible to catch a pass except on an extra point. Restricted players are allowed to catch a pass on an extra point, but the ball is dead where they catch it so they must be in the end zone to receive the points. Offensive line splits are limited at all levels to a maximum of "hand-to-hand" contact from lineman when arms are extended. (Approximately 3 feet).
- On defense restricted players cannot play linebacker or defensive back. They must line up on the defensive line. Restricted players ARE allowed to play defensive end.

• **Facilities and Equipment**

Fields will be determined and agreed upon by the Football Commission. Each field will be striped if possible according to MSHSL guidelines. Field sizes vary by division and whenever possible will be as follows:

- | | | |
|------|--|----------------|
| I. | 3 rd Grade Pee-Wee Division = | 60 yard field |
| II. | 4 th Grade Junior Division = | 80 yard field |
| III. | 5 th & 6 th Junior/Youth Divisions = | 100 yard field |

Game officials will verify that the fields are safe for play. Parents should direct any questions or concerns to their coaches and coaches only should do so to the Game Officials.

Both teams will take position on the same side of the playing field (NO EXCEPTIONS). All Parents and spectators must remain on the opposite side of the playing field from the team at all times. A parent may walk around the field of play to check on an injured player if called by their coach. Coaches will know if parent involvement is required and all parents should address this directly with their Head Coach. **Each team is limited to a total of 5 adults (coaches or other) on the players sideline during each game (the only exception to this is Pony players assigned to your team, they do not count towards your 5).** This would include any statistics parent or photography. This is a strict limit and violations will result in disciplinary action directed at the Head Coach. **Home team** as designated on the schedule, or if unknown as selected by the Game Officials, **will be responsible for designating spectator volunteers to serve as chain and down marker attendants for the game.** Chain gang will utilize the provided down marker line 1 yard off the spectator side of the sideline. Chains will not be used directly on the sideline unless no additional line is available.

All players must wear league provided or approved equipment. Any player not outfitted as required will not be allowed to participate until necessary changes have been made. Coaches are expected to see that all players are properly outfitted. Players will not be allowed to play with faulty or ill-fitted equipment. Mouth guards must contain a color in the mouthpiece and strap and must be affixed to the facemask of the helmet. Face Shields intended to provide additional protection of the eyes must be **clear plastic** with no sharp edges. No shaded, colored or smoke eye shields are permitted. All arm padding must be tight fitted with no openings that another player fingers could become lodged or stuck within. If necessary, edges or openings must be taped to seal and prevent injury. **Absolutely no jewelry will be permitted.** This includes necklaces or bracelets of any kind including watches and rings. Earrings should not be worn due to risks when



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removing or putting on helmets. **Cleats must be molded rubber only in all grade levels.** No replaceable cleat shoes are allowed. Cleats must be no more than ½” in length. Most molded cleats available from local retailers will work fine. Any shoe with damage or alteration that presents sharp edges or protrusions will not be permitted for safety reasons. A player playing with any type of cast, must completely cover the cast with no less than ½” foam padding that must be approved by the game officials before the player will be permitted to play. Games will be played using official ‘**SCVAA League Provided Footballs**’ – 3rd Grade=PeeWee size, 4th/5th Grade = Junior size and 6th Grade = Youth size football.

- **Practices**

All teams will communicate their teams practice schedules and locations to their grade level coordinator no later than 4 days after the conclusion of the pre-season football clinic. Coordinators will be responsible for collecting this information and communicating it to the Football Commission for required evaluation and permits. Until the beginning of the school year teams can conduct up to four football activities per week.

Weeks are defined as Sunday through Saturday. Once the school year begins each team is limited to conducting only **3 (three) football activities per week.** This includes Games, Practices or any type of team gathering involving players and coaches. Teams are limited to 3 activities per week for any post season activity as well. Violations of this policy will be brought to the attention of the Football Commission. All players must wear approved protective equipment and mouth guards when participating in any contact activities. This is the responsibility of the Head Coach or his designate.

- **Game Play**

There will be 2 Game Officials for each game 3rd-6th grade. Teams must be present at the designated field at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the game. The game officials will instruct the coaches regarding the necessary pre-game tasks. The Head Coaches and Head Referee shall meet together on the field prior to the start of the game for proper introductions and any questions or instructions. **This is a Mandatory Meeting for Head Coach’s, plan your pre-game activities accordingly.**

Game play rules will be conducting according to Minnesota State High School rules with the exception of the following. (Additional exceptions can be made at the discretion of the VAA Football Commission and will be communicated appropriately). **ALL Coaches must have signed a copy of the current SCVAA Youth Football Policies and Standards form** to confirm their understanding and willingness to comply before they are allowed to coach on any team. This must be submitted to the Football Commission and distributed to all parents.

ALL GRADES

- A.1 – **Coach Limits:** One coach is allowed on the field for all grades. Except 6th grade the coach is only allowed on the field until the completion of the 4th game of the regular season. Once the regular season schedule is established a date will be set by the Football Commission for the coaches to remain on the sidelines. **The on-field coach must be positioned at least 15yds from the line of scrimmage once the offense breaks its huddle and must remain absolutely silent once the offense starts its cadence until the whistle blow to end the play.** Only 5 adults are allowed on each teams sideline during the game. This will be strictly enforced and includes non-coaches (Violations First infraction warning, all subsequent **15 yd unsportsmanlike penalty**).
- A.2 – **One Coach:** Only one coach is allowed in the huddle at any time during the game. **(5 yd penalty).**
- A.3 – **Game Time:** All games shall consist of 4 (four) 9 minute stop-time quarters. 3 minute break for halftime. Water break only at quarter change. Teams can switch ends at the conclusion of each quarter, however if both head coaches consent to only switching once at halftime this will be



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allowed. Stop time means that when a ball carrier goes out of bounds or there is an incomplete pass the game clock will be stopped. If the carrier is tackled in bounds than the clock continues to run. Follow MSHSL rules for clock stoppages. If a team is ahead by more than 21 points in the 4th (fourth) quarter than running time shall be used until the score returns to 21 points or less. The officials should provide 2 minute warnings notifications for both halves of the game.

- A.4 - **Overtime:** After a tie game, a coin toss determines who goes first. Spot the ball at the 10-yard line and it's first and goal. If you get a touchdown you also get an extra-point attempt. If the defense gains possession, the ball becomes dead immediately and the offensive team's series is ended. Both teams get only one offensive attempt unless time remains before the next game is scheduled to begin. The team that was on offense first in the first overtime, goes second in the second overtime. This rotation continues throughout overtime periods. If after both teams have had allowed number of offensive attempts and the game is still tied, the result is a tie. (**Except post-season**). Once game time limit is reached, only one additional OT set of downs per team will be allowed. Limit of three overtimes for each game. (Normal Tie Breaker Rules apply for seeding purposes.)
- A.5 - **Face Mask:** any and all grabbing of a helmet opening or facemask, no matter how significant, shall always be a **15-yd Penalty**. Not an automatic first down. (A stiff arm by a ball carrier is allowed as long as the ball carrier does not grab the face mask or helmet opening. A defensive player can put their hand on a ball carriers helmet as long as they don't grab an opening.)
- A.6 - **Running up the score rule:** While hopefully no coach would intentionally do this, if a team is ahead by more than 21 points in the second half, same as running time rule, There is to be no passing (including extra points), on-side kicks or trick plays. (15 Yard Unsportsmanlike Conduct Penalty).
- A.7 - **Failure to wear a mouthguard:** At the time of the snap or until the whistle blows to end the play any player on the field who fails to have his mouthguard completely in his mouth will be called for a penalty. (**5yd penalty**). Mouthguards must be properly colored and attached to the helmet.
- A.8 - **Delay of Game:** The offense has 30 seconds to snap the ball once the Referee has whistled the ball into play. During the initial games of the season, Referees should be generous with their warnings and if an offense is in the process of calling their cadence should allow the play to continue. Provide warnings to the coaches and assess penalties only for those coaches that do not speed up their offense. (**First infraction Warning, Subsequent 5yd Delay of Game**)
- A.9 - **Time Outs:** Each team is allowed 3 (three) timeouts per half. These timeouts are 30-60 second timeouts only.
- A.10 - **Scoring:** Touchdowns are always 6 (six) points. Extra points will be scored as follows: The ball will be spotted on the 3 yard line centered at the request of the offense. The offense will receive 1 (one) point for a successful point after if it is a running play or a lateral pitch or pass. **The offense will receive 2 (points) for a successful point after that results from a forward pass only.**
- A.11 - **Illegal Participation:** To have 12 or more players on the field at the snap or kick.(5yd penalty)
- A.12 - **Illegal Substitution:** To have 12 or more players break from the huddle, line up before the snap or wait to leave the playing field until before the snap. (Warning only unless occurs multiple times, then 5 yd penalty)
- A.13 - **Personal Injury.** Rule 3-5-10: An injured player, for whom the clock is stopped, must be replaced for at least one down, unless the halftime or overtime intermission occurs.
- A.14 - **Offensive Line Splits:** Must be no further than the ability to extend both arms simultaneously to their sides and still make contact with the hands of the lineman on either side. Tight Ends can split



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out in all grades (9yd from sideline). This is consistent with the defensive line rule, which requires Head-up alignment. (Warning on first offense, then assessed a 5 yd penalty for illegal formation).

- A.15 – **Defensive Line Alignment:** All down defensive lineman must be lined up directly across (helmet-to-helmet) from their offensive counterpart. Defensive End is to line anywhere from head-up on the Offensive Tackle to the outside shoulder of the Tight End (or where a tight end would be in the case of a split end). (Warning on first offense, then assessed a 5 yd penalty for illegal defense).
- A.16 - **Defensive Stunting Rule:** No defensive stunting is allowed at any time. To allow for proper adherence to this rule, at the snap of the ball a defensive player must only cross the line of scrimmage in a straight path (no slanting). A defensive player with left or right gap responsibilities must first cross the line of scrimmage, making contact with the offensive lineman if necessary, before moving laterally to cover either gap. This rule is intended to prevent defensive line stunting and we ask that coaches respect the spirit of this rule. The only exception to this is the Defensive End. The DE can line up in the gap between the Tackle and Tight End. (First offense 5 yd penalty, subsequent infractions 15 yd unsportsmanlike penalties).
- A.17 - **Blitzing Rule:** Absolutely no blitzing is allowed. Blitzing is defined as a linebacker/cornerback/safety vacating their normal responsibilities to attack the offensive backfield in a pre-determined manner. Linebackers/safeties/cornerbacks must be coached to read and react to what they see on the field. A LB/CB or S can make his first move forward after the snap as he reads the play. No LB/CB/S can be moving forward prior to the snap of the ball. A false start by a LB/CB/S on a long count is evidence of the intention to blitz and will be assessed a penalty. LB's must be 3 yards from the LOS at the snap of the ball. CB's must be 5 yards and safeties must be 7 yards from the LOS at the snap. During an extra point or inside of the 3-yard line, LB's and CB's may move up to one yard from the LOS, but still may not blitz. This rule is a fair play and safety rule. We are trying to teach our players the basic fundamentals of youth football and expect every coach to respect the spirit of this rule. (First offense 5 yd penalty, subsequent infractions 15 yd unsportsmanlike penalty)
- A.18 - **Quarterback Sneak Rule:** Due to the no-blitzing rule, the quarterback cannot advance the ball in between the tackles if there is less than 3 yards to go for a first down, whenever the team is inside the 5 yard line (including extra points). **NO QUARTER BACK SNEAKS ON SHORT YARDAGE** – No exceptions – even a broken play must be run as described. **(5yd penalty)**
- A.19 - **Down Lineman Stances:** All offensive and Defensive lineman must be down in a 3 (three) or 4 (four) point stance with the exception of the Defensive End who may remain in a 2 (two) point up position. **(Warning, then 5 yd illegal formation penalty).**
- A.20 - **Defensive False Start:** The defensive players cannot simulate the start of the play or move in a manner intended to draw the offensive players offside. **(5yd penalty – Defensive Illegal Motion)**
- A.21 – **Pass Interference:** It is only pass interference if the ball passes the neutral zone. Pass interference begins for the offense at the snap of the ball and for the defense at the release of the pass. It is forward-pass interference if any player, offense or defense who is beyond the neutral zone interferes with an eligible opponent's opportunity to move toward, catch or bat the pass. **(15 yd penalty from the previous spot if against defense and 15yd penalty from previous spot and loss of down if by offense).** There are no spot of the foul pass interference penalties.



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- A.22 – **Coin toss:** One coach is allowed on the field with the officials and up to 3 players from each team. Visitors call. The winner of the toss has 3 choices: 1. Defer choice to 2nd half; 2. Choose whether to kick or receive; 3. Choose the goal to defend. (i.e. if team A wins toss – defers - and team B elects to kickoff – team A has choice in 2nd half and may choose to receive – meaning team B has to kickoff both halves.)
- A.23 - **Assist the Runner:** An offensive player shall not push, pull or lift the runner to assist his forward progress. **(5-yd penalty)**
- A.24 – **Forward Pass Rule:** More than one **forward pass** may be thrown during the down provided the passer has both feet in or behind the neutral zone when the ball is released on each pass. (You can pass or lateral the ball backwards as many times as you want also.)
- A.25 – **Fumble Recovery Rule:** The Defensive Team CAN advance a fumble. Offensive Backs and Ends can advance a fumble only if it is recovered **BEHIND** their line of scrimmage. Restricted Players (stripers) CANNOT ADVANCE the ball at any time. Ball becomes dead where recovered.
- A.26 - **Referee Discretion Rule:** The referee has authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. The referees' decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game. The referee can consult with an impartial VAA Football Commission Member if present for rule interpretation guidance.

3rd Grade Specific Playing Rules

- 3.1 - **Nine Man Football:** There will be only nine players per side during a Pee-Wee game. There will be no offensive guards on offense.
- 3.2 - **No Special Teams:** Instead of kick-offs on a 60 yard field, the ball will be placed on the offense's 25 yard line. On an 80 yard field it would be the 30 yard line. Punts: Offensive team has 30 seconds to indicate their intent to punt or go for a first down. If they choose to punt the ball will be moved forward 15 yards and the defense will take over 1st and 10. (Official will only move the ball Half the distance to the goal if inside the defense's 30 yard line).
- 3.3 - **First Down Yardage:** First downs are still at 10 yard intervals.
- 3.3 - **Penalty Yardage:** Penalties will be enforced at full value. 5 yard and 10 yard penalties will be stepped off at their total value even if playing on a 60 or 80 yard field.
- 3.4 - **Offensive Line:** There will be a balanced 5 man offensive line at all times. Offensive and defensive ends must be on the line of scrimmage, but they can be split and they need not be in a down position. (The tight end DOES NOT have to be in a three-point stance if split wider than 2 yards)
(5-yd penalty)
- 3.5 - **Defensive Formation:** Defense must be in a **4-4 formation only** (4 man line, four linebackers and one safety). Only a **4-man balanced line is allowed (No down player lined up across from center)**. Defensive End is to line anywhere from head-up on the Offensive Tackle to the outside shoulder of the Tight End (or where a tight end would be in the case of a split end). Linebackers must be at least 3 yards off the line of scrimmage and the safety must be at least 7 yards off the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. You can move your safety up to three (3) yards off the line



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of scrimmage within your own 10-yard line. During an extra-point or inside your own 3-yard line, the linebackers can be lined up 1 yard off the line of scrimmage.

(5-yd penalty illegal defense)

- 3.6 - **No Motion:** No Motion and resetting is allowed by the offensive team **Formation Note:** At the snap of the ball there must be 3 offensive backs in the backfield between the Tackles. This would include the quarterback and 2 running backs. This is to prevent loading up one side or another and accommodates the limitations placed on defensive alignments. **(Illegal Motion 5yd)(Illegal Formation 5yds)**
- 3.7 - **Safeties:** After a **safety (2 points)**, the ball shall be put on the 25-yard line (60 yd field) 35-yard line (80 yd field) of the team that scored and they shall become the offense.
- 3.8 - **Quarter Back Sneak:** Due to the defensive formation, quarterback sneaks will not be allowed during the game. The quarter back can only advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage outside of the tackles. **(5yd Penalty)**

4th Grade Specific Playing Rules

- 4.1 - **No Special Teams:** Instead of kick-offs on an 80 yard field, the ball will be placed on the offenses 30 yard line. On an 100 yard field it would be the 35 yard line. Punts: Offensive team has 30 seconds to indicate their intent to punt or go for a first down. If they choose to punt the ball will be moved forward 15 yards and the defense will take over 1st and 10. (Official will only move the ball Half the distance to the goal if inside the defense's 30 yard line).
- 4.2 - **First Down Yardage:** First downs are still at 10 yard intervals.
- 4.3 - **Penalty Yardage:** Penalties will be enforced at full value. 5 yard and 10 yard penalties will be stepped off at their total value even if playing on a 60 or 80 yard field.
- 4.4 - **Offensive Line:** There will be a balanced 7 man offensive line at all times. Offensive and defensive ends must be on the line of scrimmage, but they can be split and they need not be in a down position. (The tight end DOES NOT have to be in a three-point stance if split wider than 2 yards). All players split wide must not be within 9 yards of the sideline. **(5-yd penalty)**
- 4.5 - **Defensive Formation:** Defense must be in a **4-4 formation only** (4 man line, 4 Linebackers and 2 Cornerbacks and one Safety). Only a **4-man balanced line is allowed (No down player lined up across from center)**. Defensive End is to line anywhere from head-up on the Offensive Tackle to the outside shoulder of the Tight End (or where a tight end would be in the case of a split end). Inside linebackers should be balanced horizontally and should start out stacked (behind Defensive lineman) but can shade left or right one gap depending on responsibilities. Linebackers must be at least 3 yards off the line of scrimmage, Corners 5 yards off the line of scrimmage and the Safety must be at least 7 yards off the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. You can move your Corners and Safety up to three (3) yards off the line of scrimmage within your own 10-yard line.



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During an extra-point or inside your own 3-yard line, the linebackers can be lined up 1 yard off the line of scrimmage.

- 4.6 - **No Motion:** No Motion and resetting is allowed by the offensive team **Formation Note:** At the snap of the ball there must be 3 offensive backs in the backfield between the Tackles. This would include the quarterback and 2 running backs. This is to prevent loading up one side or another and accommodates the limitations placed on defensive alignments. **(Illegal Motion 5yd)(Illegal Formation 5yds)**
- 4.7 - **Safeties:** After a **safety (2 points)**, the ball shall be put on the 30-yard line (80 yd field) 35-yard line (100 yd field) of the team that scored and they shall become the offense.

5th Grade Specific Playing Rules

- 5.1 - **Offensive Formation:** There will be a balanced 7 man Offensive Line at all times. Tight Ends may split wide and do not need to be in a down stance when split greater than 2 yards. **(Illegal Formation 5 yards penalty).**
- 5.2 - **Defensive Formation:** Defense must be in a **4-4 formation only** (4 man line, 4 Linebackers and 2 Cornerbacks and one Safety). Only a **4-man balanced line is allowed (No down player lined up across from center)**. Defensive End is to line anywhere from head-up on the Offensive Tackle to the outside shoulder of the Tight End (or where a tight end would be in the case of a split end). Inside linebackers should be balanced horizontally and should start out stacked (behind Defensive lineman) but can shade left or right one gap depending on responsibilities. Linebackers must be at least 3 yards off the line of scrimmage, Corners 5 yards off the line of scrimmage and the Safety must be at least 7 yards off the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. You can move your Corners and Safety up to three (3) yards off the line of scrimmage within your own 10-yard line. During an extra-point or inside your own 3-yard line, the linebackers can be lined up 1 yard off the line of scrimmage..
- 5.3 - **Offensive Man in Motion:** Motion is ALLOWED, however; at the snap of the ball there must be at least 3 offensive backs in the backfield between the Offensive Tackles. **(Illegal Motion 5 yard Penalty).**
- 5.4 - **Special Teams:** Kick-offs, Kick Returns and Punting special teams play will be used. Kick-offs per High School Rules and On-side kicks are allowed except as defined above in rule A.6.
- 5.5 - **Punting:** The offense must signal the referee of their intention to punt or not and must follow their intention. **(5-yd penalty)** i.e. No fake punts and no punting when they said they would go for it. The ball is snapped to the punter but the play is not live or started until the punter has either caught or picked up the ball and has successfully punted it away. This means all players on Offense must remain set until the ball is kicked and the defense must remain set and may not rush the punter. The defensive interior lineman must be in a 3- or 4-point stance until the ball is punted. The objective is to allow our players to learn the basic fundamentals of long snapping, catching, and punting the ball away without the pressures of an onslaught of opposing players rushing in to block the punt to tackle



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the punter. All players are eligible to punt or kick the ball; there is no weight restriction to be a punter or kicker.

- 5.6 - **Coaches on the Field:** Coaches will only be allowed on the field of play as defined in rule A.1, except for 5th Grade for the last regular season game, no coach will be allowed on the field during regular play. One coach is allowed on the field during time-outs or injuries as requested by the officials. This is intended to teach the student athletes responsibility, teamwork and self-discipline. Please establish an organized game management plan with your team so that they may execute without confusion or excessive frustration.

6th Grade Specific Playing Rules

- 6.1 - **Offensive Formation:** There will be a balanced 7 man Offensive Line at all times. Tight Ends may split wide and do not need to be in a down stance when split greater than 2 yards. **(Illegal Formation 5 yards penalty).**
- 6.2 - **Defensive Formation:** Defense must be in a **4-4 formation only** (4 man line, 4 Linebackers and 2 Cornerbacks and one Safety). Only a **4-man balanced line is allowed (No down player lined up across from center)**. Defensive End is to line anywhere from head-up on the Offensive Tackle to the outside shoulder of the Tight End (or where a tight end would be in the case of a split end). Inside linebackers should be balanced horizontally and should start out stacked (behind Defensive lineman) but can shade left or right one gap depending on responsibilities. Linebackers must be at least 3 yards off the line of scrimmage, Corners 5 yards off the line of scrimmage and the Safety must be at least 7 yards off the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. You can move your Corners and Safety up to three (3) yards off the line of scrimmage within your own 10-yard line. During an extra-point or inside your own 3-yard line, the linebackers can be lined up 1 yard off the line of scrimmage.
- 6.3 - **Offensive Man in Motion:** Motion is ALLOWED, however; at the snap of the ball there must be at least 3 offensive backs in the backfield between the Offensive Tackles. **(Illegal Motion 5 yard Penalty).**
- 6.4 - **Special Teams:** Kick-offs, Kick Returns and Punting special teams play will be used. Kick-offs per High School Rules and On-side kicks are allowed except as defined above in rule A.6.
- 6.5 - **Punting:** The offense must signal the referee of their intention to punt or not and must follow their intention. **(5-yd penalty)** i.e. No fake punts and no punting when they said they would go for it. The ball is snapped to the punter but the play is not live or started until the punter has either caught or picked up the ball and has successfully punted it away. This means all players on Offense must remain set until the ball is kicked and the defense must remain set and may not rush the punter. The defensive interior lineman must be in a 3- or 4-point stance until the ball is punted. The objective is to allow our players to learn the basic fundamentals of long snapping, catching, and punting the ball away without the pressures of an onslaught of opposing players rushing in to block the punt to tackle the punter. All players are eligible to punt or kick the ball; there is no weight restriction to be a punter or kicker.



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6.6 - **Coaches on the Field:** Coaches will only be allowed on the field of play as defined in rule A.1, except for 6th Grade during the final three regular season games. One coach is allowed on the field during time-outs or injuries as requested by the officials. This is intended to teach the student athletes responsibility, teamwork and self-discipline. Please establish an organized game management plan with your team so that they may execute without confusion or excessive frustration. The commission will establish exact dates and games for "no on-field coaches after scheduling is complete"

Some Helpful High School Football Rules and Definitions (as enforced during our VAA Games)

- HS.1 - **Referees:** The referee has authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. The referees' decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.
- HS.2 - **Time-Out Allotment:** Each team is allowed 3 first half and 3 second half time-outs of 60-seconds each. Time-outs do not carry over. Teams are allowed one time-out per overtime period
- HS.3 - **Time out.** Rule 3-5-11: (paraphrased) A team may take a time-out to review a decision or problem with the rules. If the conference results in the referee altering his ruling, the opposing coach will be notified, the revision made, and the time out shall be an official's time-out. If the referee's ruling prevails, the time-out remains charged to the team requesting the time-out.
- HS.4 - **Neutral Zone:** The Neutral Zone is as wide as the length of the ball, and is expanded following the snap up to 2 yards on the defensive side of the line of scrimmage.
- HS.5 - **Illegal Blocking-Blocking in the Back.** Rule 2-5-2 Blocking in the back is a block against an opponent when the initial contact is in the opponent's back, inside the shoulders and below the helmet and above the waist. Except in the free blocking zone. (See below) **(10-yd penalty)**
- HS.6 - **Illegal Blocking-Clipping.** Rule 9-3-5: A player shall not clip except in the free blocking zone (rectangular area 4 yards either side of the ball and 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage) In this zone, only players who are in the zone at the snap may clip others that are also in the zone at the snap. Rule 2-17-3: May also clip when tackling a runner or pretend runner; or recovering a loose ball. Such cases shall not be ruled clipping unless the official sees the initial contact. When in doubt, or the opponent turns his back, or the block is from the side, it is not clipping if the opponent was able to see the blocker. **(15-yd Penalty)**
- HS.6a - **Clipping** is a block against an opponent when the initial contact is from behind, at or below the waist, and not against a player who is a runner or pretending to be a runner. **(15-yd penalty)**
- HS.7 - **Illegal Blocking-Below the Waist.** Rule 9-3-2: A player shall not block an opponent below the waist, except: a. in the free blocking zone (See 6) when contact meets requirements (Rule 2-17) b. to tackle a player with, or pretending to have, the ball. **(15-yd penalty)**



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- HS.8 - **Illegal Blocking-Chop Block.** Rule 9-3-6: Blocking by offense or defense is illegal when it is a chop block. Rule 2-3-9 Chop Block is a block at the knees or below against opponent who is in contact with a teammate of the blocker in the free blocking zone. This block is NEVER legal. **(15-yd penalty)**
- HS.9 - **Illegal Personal Contact.** Rule 9-4-2: No player shall:
- Charge into or throw an opponent to the ground after he is obviously out of play, or after the ball is clearly dead either in or out of bounds. In other words, players **shall not HEADHUNT** away from the play and coaches should teach their kids that such an activity is illegal and dangerous.
 - Pile on any player who is lying on the ground.
 - Butt block or **spear**. (Butt Block is a blow driven directly into an opponent with the face mask, frontal area, or top of the helmet as the primary point of contact.)
 - Intentionally use his helmet to butt or ram an opponent.
 - Hide the ball under a jersey.
 - Rule 9-4-7: A defensive (and offensive) player shall not use his hands to strike (an opponents) head. **(all 15-yd penalties)**
- HS.10- **Noncontact Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Non players.** Rule 9-8-1: No coach, substitute, trainer or other team attendant shall act in an unsportsmanlike manner. Example are, but not limited to:
- Using Profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures.
 - Attempting to influence a decision by an official.
 - Disrespectfully addressing an official.
- (15-yd penalty and if flagrant-disqualification and ejection. The second unsportsmanlike foul with a 15-yard penalty results in disqualification. Failure to comply, the referee may forfeit the game.)**
- Between the 25-yard lines.** No Coach, substitute, trainer or other team attendant shall be outside the team box. **(1st offense warning-2nd 5 yards, 3rd and so on 15 yards)**
- HS.11- **Parents and spectators.** Rule 9-9-1: A player or nonplayer or person not subjected to the rules shall not hinder play by an unfair act which has no specific rule. **(Penalty-the referee enforces any penalty he considers equitable including the award of a score. Zero Tolerance enforced, spectator ejected from facility.)**
- HS.12- **Inadvertent Whistle:** Rule 4-2-3: During a down, or during a down in which the penalty for foul is declined, if an inadvertent whistle occurs while:
- A legal forward pass or snap is in flight, or during a legal kick, the down shall be replayed.
 - The ball is loose following a backward pass, fumble, illegal forward pass or illegal kick, the team last in possession may choose to put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down.
 - The ball is in player possession, that team may choose to accept the play at that spot or replay the down.
- HS.13- **No Walk-Ons.** Rule 7-2-1: After the ball is ready for play, each player of the offense must have been, momentarily, within 15 yards of the ball before the snap. **(5-yd penalty)**



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Also, Rule 9-6-4c: To use a replaced player or substitute in a substitution or pretend substitution to deceive opponents at or immediately before the snap or free-kick. **(15-yd penalty)**

HS.14- **Illegal Personal Contact.** Rule 9-4-1: No player or non-player shall fight (striking, kicking, kneeling, intentionally contacting an official.) **(15-yd penalty & disqualification)**

HS.15- **Pass Interference** restrictions only apply beyond the neutral zone and only if the forward pass crosses the neutral zone.

It is not pass interference if unavoidable contact occurs when two or more eligible are making a simultaneous, bona fide attempt to move toward, catch or bat the pass.

It is not pass interference if contact by the offense is immediately made on the defense and the contact does not continue beyond the neutral zone.

HS.16- **Roughing the Passer.** Rule 9-3-3: Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer, after it is clear the ball has been thrown. **(15-yards and automatic first down from previous spot or from completion.)**

HS.17- **Noncontact Unsportsmanlike Conduct.** Rule 9-5: Baiting, taunting, insignias worn that engenders ill will; embarrass, ridicule or demean on the basis of race, gender, religion, or national origin; profanity, insulting, language or gestures; spiking or kicking the ball, throw it in the air; any delayed excessive or prolonged act by which a player attempts to focus attention upon himself. **(15-yards & disqualification if flagrant, The 2nd unsportsmanlike foul results in disqualification.)**

HS.18- **Roughing the snapper.** A defensive player shall not charge directly into the snapper when the offensive team is in a scrimmage-kick (punt) formation. **(15-yard penalty and 1st down)**

HS.19- **Snap:**

a. The snapper may be over the ball...and no part of his person, other than a hand(s) on the ball, may be beyond the foremost point of the ball.

b. The snapper may lift the ball for lateral rotation but may not rotate end-for-end or change the location of the ball.

c. The snapper may not remove both hands from the ball, make a false snap or fail to pause before the snap.

d. An act clearly intended to cause the defense to encroach. **(5 yards penalty)**

HS.20- **QB** Rule 7-1-7: Jerky movements by a quarterback which, simulate the beginning of the down or acts clearly intended to cause the Defense to encroach, are false starts. No head-bobbing, but hard counts are okay. **(5-yard penalty)**

HS.21- No interior offensive lineman can run with the ball. (center, guards & tackles) No fumble-ruskies (planned loose balls) (5-yd penalty)