

# Fairfield County Football League

## 2024 RULES AND REGULATIONS

### MODIFIED TRAVEL FLAG – Third and Fourth Grade

Updated October 2024

#### I. GRADE AND AGE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- A. Enrolled in the 3rd or 4th Grade during the fall football season and will be not have a birthdate prior to September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.
- B. The Head Coach must ensure that each player on his team meets the grade and age requirements.
- C. Violations of the above eligibility rules will result in automatic forfeit of all games played in which the violation(s) occurred, and the coach will be subject to discipline.

#### II. HEAD COACH RESPONSIBILITIES - GAME DAY:

- A. The Home Teams having the first game of the day will provide two (2) assistants:
  - 1. League Officials for field preparation, including placing yard line and goal markers.
  - 2. After the last game, the Visiting Team will ensure that the field and sidelines are clean and will assist League Officials in storing equipment.
- B. Head Coaches are responsible for fan control and deportment.
- C. Home Teams will provide a three (3)-man sidelines/first down crew. Where possible, the first down crew shall be stationed on the home team's sideline.
- D. Home Teams must provide the same accommodations to the Visiting Team that they have available for themselves. Home Teams who cannot provide the same accommodations to the Visiting team are prohibited from using them.
- E. Each team may have two coaches on the field during all plays, the coaches may give oral instructions to his team until the offense is set. All on-field coaches must be deeper than the deepest player on his team. Once the ball is snapped, the coach may only move to get out of the way of the play, and if a coach moves toward or directs a player to the play after the snap (verbally or physically) a personal foul will be assessed, and his team penalized fifteen (15) yards.
- F. No sideline coaches, parents or fans are permitted on the playing field (with the exception as allowed by III. F for fan control, or in the end zones for any purpose including filming the game.
- G. All coaches, fans and players are prohibited from using any wired or wireless mechanical communication devices, either directly or indirectly, to communicate with anyone observing the game.
- H. Refer to additional responsibilities in FCFL Policy and Procedures Coaches' Code of Conduct.

#### III. REFEREES:

Referee responsibilities include

- A. Knowing FCFL Rules
- B. Enforcing Rules
- C. Keeping Time – When available, field clocks should be used.
- D. Down Supervision
- E. Game Play
- F. Crowd Control
- G. An official game may not be played without at least two referees in attendance.

Referee point of emphasis:

The FCFL board emphasizes that there should be a penalty called any time the head or neck is contacted by any player, whether offensive or defensive. If a determination can't be made who initiated the illegal head and neck contact, then both players should be penalized. The referees should at the time of the penalty track in writing the number and name of the player(s) penalized and report it on the FCFL website. If a player gets two such penalties, they should immediately be removed and again reported on the FCFL website. Referees should not hesitate to penalize or eject a player who violates these rules. It is considered critical in the teaching of proper technique to both the player and the coaches. It is expected that initially there may be a lack of understanding of the strictness of the calls, but by consistently calling the penalty, players and coaches will learn that there is no tolerance to any contact to the head and neck area, nor any contact using any part of the helmet to initiate the contact. The FCFL board

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would rather the referee err on the side of calling a borderline penalty, than not calling the penalty. Even contact that is deemed unintentional should be penalized.

#### IV. INJURIES - EMT COVERAGE:

- A. Host organizations must ensure that EMT, professional trainers or EMS personnel are present at their fields during every game and must have radio access to ambulance service.
- B. Coaches are to cooperate fully with EMTs, recognizing that any injury should be considered potentially serious. The Head Coach (or his duly qualified designee) shall immediately attend to a downed player, solicit the opinion of the referees with regard to the circumstances related to the injury, and signal to the attendant EMT if assistance is required. As soon as the EMT arrives, the EMT will be responsible for the disposition of the injured player.
- C. An injured player must sit out a minimum of one (1) play.
- D. Injured players will be permitted to return to the game based on a decision made by:
  1. Medical doctor, if present; or
  2. Examining EMT

#### V. MANDATORY PLAY RULE:

- A. Team size will be dependent upon the total number of participants in that grade as specified in the FCFL Policy and Procedures document, section VII, A.
- B. Each player is required to play a minimum of **Fourteen (14) plays**. Punts (since they are not live) do not count as plays.
- C. At the end of the first, second, and third quarters, there will be an official time out, for player monitors to agree on any players who have failed to play **14** plays. If the minimum play rule has not been satisfied by the end of the third quarter, each player who has not played **14** plays must immediately start the fourth quarter and remain in the game until he meets the minimum play requirements. Once both coaches have agreed that all players have met the minimum play requirements, neither team may submit a protest. Coaches shall not agree to waive the minimum play rule. It will be mandatory that each team has at least one play counter and that all play counters from both teams are together on the sideline (outside coaches box) of the home team in the first half and the away team in the second half. After each quarter the play counters will have one official play count tally.
  - 1) Each team must use the Player Participation Form as provided by FCFL and maintained during the game by each team's designated player monitor. Head coaches are to provide the opposing coaches/player monitors a minimum play sheet that clearly identifies the following separately: two-way starters, offense only starters and defensive only starters and substitutes. The FCFL allows for the use of an electronic device on the sidelines for play counting (EX: IPAD or iPhone)
- D. Exceptions to the minimum play rule for disciplinary matters or injury must be identified prior to the start of the game. The coach and disciplined or injured player will both be required to notify the opposing coach in person prior to the game to discuss the minimum play waiver. If a player is injured during the game, the **14** play minimum is not applicable to the injured player.
- E. Plays that result in a QB spiking the ball, or dropping to his knee with the sole purpose of “playing it safe” or “taking a knee” will not count as plays for minimum play requirements.

#### VI. REMOVING PLAYERS:

- A. If a team has a Twenty-One (21) point or more lead, the opposing coach may elect to **substitute** up to three (3) players from the leading team's offense without regard to position until the lead is reduced to less than Twenty-One (21) points. Additionally, such players shall also be ineligible to participate on any special teams (punting or punt receiving, and field goal or PAT attempts).
- B. If after the 3rd quarter ends, a team has a **Twenty-One** (21) or more lead, the opposing coach may elect to **substitute** up to three (3) players from the leading team's defense without regard to position until the lead is reduced to less than **Twenty-One** (21) points.

#### VII. PLAYING RULES:

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FCIAC Rules, except as modified below, shall govern all play.

A. Quarters will be 11 minutes each, timed in accordance with FCIAC rules. Half time will be limited to 5 minutes. 4 minute stop time at the end of each half.

B. Field of play is 40 X 80 yards where possible, with additional 10-yard end zones.

C. Modified Travel Flag will play 9 players per side of the ball instead of 11. There are no tackles in 3 /4 modified flag football. There must be 1 Qb and either 2 or 3 running backs in the backfield at all times. (Running Backs must be at least 3 yards behind line of scrimmage and not outside of where the tackle would be or not outside 3 feet off the Guard.

Rationale: This must be added for clarity. Some teams label the second player next to the guard a tackle and then add a TightEnd and slot. This overloaded formation is not permitted and this will give clarity. The games should be played with 3 linemen (1 Center, 2 Guards and 6 skill players) not 5 “lineman” and 4 skill players. There will be 1 center, 2 guards, a minimum of 2 receivers on the line, a minimum of 2 running backs in the backfield at least 3 yards back and 1 Quarterback. If using a slot, the slot cannot be more than 5 yards outside of the tackle box and not more than one yard off of the line of scrimmage.

D. All fumbles, including exchanges on the snap between center and quarterback, are live and may be recovered by either team. All players can advance the ball or continue the play in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Modified. If a ball is juggled in the air and is caught before touching the ground, it shall be treated as if it were an intercepted pass and may be returned by the defense or advanced by the offense.

E. All players on offense or defense can advance the ball in a fumble or interception scenario. No player on defense can intentionally force a fumble without going for the flag. No player on offense can fumble the ball forward. If recovered by the offense, the ball will be whistled dead and placed at the spot of the fumble for the next down.

F. Offensive Formations and Restrictions:

1. Offensive Team Formations are limited to formations including the use of 2 split ends OR tight ends lined up on the Line of Scrimmage on opposite sides of the formation. The use of 5 players on the line of scrimmage is required. Only One (1) slot back may be employed. The single slot back may be deployed with a tight end or split end must be at least one (1) yard off the line of scrimmage.

2. "Slot" as referenced herein includes what has also been known as a flanker or wing back (any back outside the guard ). You may only have one "Slot" back in your formation (not one on each side or one of each - slot, flanker, wing).

3. QB is defined as the player who receives the initial snap from center. At no time may there be more than two backs (one of whom must be a quarterback under center) closer than three yards to the line of scrimmage. No player in the backfield (other than the "Slot" as defined above) may be wider than the would be tackle box (5 yards outside the guard) Rationale: This will allow running backs to be as wide as an attached tight end or where the tackle box would be. This will allow there to be two running backs to one side of the field giving coaches still some creativity in their playbooks.

4. If employing shotgun, only one back is allowed within 3 yards of the LOS, whether it's a slot or otherwise. Once a running back is put into space, which is defined as outside the would be tackle box (3 yards outside the guard) , he is then considered a "slot" back. Rational: no tackles in

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modified flag. Reiterating all of the above making it clear there needs to be 2 or 3 running backs and a Qb in the backfield.

5. Splits between offensive linemen may be no more than one yard maximum except where a split end is used. If a wide out is employed, the maximum split from the tackle box is 10 yards. No unbalanced line may be employed.

6. All Offensive players, to include linemen, backs and receivers, may be in a 2,3 or 4 point stance.

7. No motion may be employed.

#### G. Defensive Team Formations and Restrictions

1. Defensive Team Formations are limited such that 2 linemen are head up on offensive guards and there is a maximum of 1 additional linemen lined up on each side of the formation, from immediately outside of the tackle box to a maximum of 5 yards outside of the tackle box (a total of 2 Defensive Ends). The center (defined as the player who snaps the ball at the beginning of the play, regardless of his place on the line of scrimmage) is not to be covered by any defensive lineman.

2. All other defensive players (3-5 players) must be at least 3 yards off the line of scrimmage. The defensive alignment can therefore have 2, 3 or 4 linemen (2 of whom are head up on guards, at least 1 safety (6 yards off the line of scrimmage) and the remaining 2 – 4 players at least 3 yards off the line of scrimmage.

3. The linebackers and safeties may be no closer than three yards to the line of scrimmage. They may set up laterally anywhere between the sidelines. No linebacker or safety will be permitted to move inside of 3 yards of the Line of Scrimmage (LOS) prior to the snap. There can be no defensive movement or shifting prior to the snap after the offense is set.

4. Interior Linemen may be in two-, three- or four-point stance.

5. Defensive ends may be in a two-, three-, or four-point stance.

6. In goal line situations (defined as within the defensive team's 3 yard line) linebackers are permitted to move to no closer than 1 yard from the ball, instead of normal 3 yard minimum. (For example, with the ball on the one yard line...LBers can move to goal line instead of 2 yards deep in their own end zone to prevent easy QB sneak).

7. All defensive players must be set according to the above rules prior to the snap. Forward movement prior to the snap is illegal procedure. Once the ball is snapped, defense may blitz and stunt. Defensive players can move and realign based on the offensive formation.

8. The rules above restricting defenders' movements are designed to limit the repositioning of players once they are set up but they are NOT contrary to the established rules of football that permit "flinching" by a defender as long as the movement does not result in an encroachment into the neutral zone of the line of scrimmage or a linebacker coming closer to 3 yards of the LOS.

H. There are no kick-offs in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Modified. The receiving team will place the ball on its twenty-yard line, where offensive play will begin.

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##### I. Punting:

1. Should a team wish to punt, it declares its intention to the referees and sets up in a punt formation-five down linemen shoulder to shoulder, two flankers as wide as desired, and two backs including the punter.
2. Defense must line up as cited in section VIII, E above. There is no rushing. All down linemen must take a knee and stay at the line of scrimmage. Punters must punt the ball upon receipt of snap, it is permitted for the punter to drop the ball and continue with the punt.
3. Ball is spotted where it comes to rest, where it is caught or where, in the case of a bouncing ball, the recovering team downs it. There is no loss of possession on a punted ball, regardless of the team that downs or recovers it. There are no returns, tackling or contact with the ball carrier. Punts do not count as a play, and the clock should be stopped during this transition, until the ball is set.
4. If the ball travels less than 20 yards, the referees will move the ball 20 yards from the previous line of scrimmage and turn over possession to the receiving team.
5. No possession will begin inside an offensive team's twenty-yard line following a punt. Punts caught or downed inside the 20-yard line will be moved out to the 20-yard line to begin play.

J. After scoring a touchdown, the offensive team may elect to pass, run, or kick for an extra point(s). When the offense elects to kick the PAT, the ball is snapped from the 3 yard line. Defensive rushing is not permitted and all defensive players on the line of scrimmage must remain take a knee. If the ball is not kicked within five seconds of the snap the referee will flag for illegal procedure and a penalty will be assessed. Teams that successfully kick the PAT will get two (2) points. Teams that successfully run or pass for the PAT will get one (1) point if they elect to start from the 3 yard line and two (2) points if they elect to start from the 5 yard line. You must use the same ball of a PAT or Punt as you are using in a game, CANNOT SWITCH. It is permissible for the holder to drop the ball and reposition for the kick.

K. There is no kicking of Field Goals.

L. Safeties – If an offense gives up a safety, the defensive team gets the ball at midfield.

M. Overtime – Will be used only in the playoffs. A coin toss will be called by the visitors. Winner of the toss can choose offense or defense first. Both teams start on the ten (10) yard line and attempt to score. In OT, all PATs will be played run or pass (no kicks) as per usual rules. If the score is tied after one (1) OT, another OT period will be played in the identical fashion, except the team will reverse the order of playing offense.

##### N. Keep the Head out of Football and additional Modified Travel Flag rules:

- a. Illegal helmet contact: Any intentional or unintentional contact including blocking, and tackling by an offensive or defensive player to any part of an opponent's head or neck is prohibited and should result in a 15 yard penalty.
- b. Illegal use of helmet: Any intentional or unintentional contact including blocking, tackling or rushing by an offensive or defensive player using any part of his helmet as the initiation point of contacting an opponent is prohibited and should result in a 15 yard penalty.
- c. Any contact where a player is taken to the ground or shoved out of bounds, will result in a 15 yard penalty
- d. Two or more of the above penalties by a single player results in ejection from the game.
- e. There can be no 'striping' of the ball. Defenders must make attempt of flags. Runners cannot flag guard. Flag guarding will result in a dead ball at the spot of the violation.

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##### IX. EQUIPMENT:

- A. Only certified and properly reconditioned helmets may be worn.
- B. All players must have a colored mouth guard that must be worn while the ball is in play. (Violations will be flagged and will incur a 5-yard penalty).
- C. Sneakers, rubber cleats or turf shoes must be worn.
- D. A jersey must cover the shoulder pads.
- E. All excess equipment must meet scholastic guidelines.
- F. Under Armour, Nike and Wilson balls are all approved for use in the size indicated as follows:
  - a. Grades 3 & 4: Pee-Wee
  - b. Grades 5 & 6: Junior
  - c. Grades 7 & 8: Youth
- G. All Modified Travel Flag Players must wear the following flags when playing in the game:  
NFL – Flag -Nylon  
These are available in Yellow, Green, Blue and Red and the color the player wears must contrast the uniform color.

##### X. Modified Specific Rules

- 1. No intentionally stripping of the football. (Result in personal foul 15 yard).
- 2. No intentionally pushing players out of bounds when running down the sideline. (Result in personal foul unnecessary roughness 15 yard )
- 3. No stiff arms (result in flag guarding – Ball placed at spot of flag guard.)
- 4. If a runner falls while the defender is trying to grab a flag at the waist level, a tackle penalty shall not be called.
- 5. If a defender intentionally trips (going below the knee or hits a runner high (at chest level or above) and knocks down the player that will be considered a tackle and result in a 15 yard penalty.