

## VII. General Rules

1. Coaches may schedule practice on Sunday; however, no player may be penalized for not attending a Sunday practice. A maximum of four (4) practices and/or games may be scheduled per calendar week. A team that has three (3) games per week will be allowed one additional team meeting. Sunday practices will be counted in the number of meetings per week. A calendar week is Sunday through Saturday. Any coach that deviates from this rule will be subject to suspension. Picture taking is not considered a function.
2. It is recommended that practices last no longer than 1 ½ hours.
3. Physical examinations for youths participating in the league are highly suggested prior to the beginning of practice and the regular season, but are not required by the department.
4. The Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation will not change the schedule due to player's involvement in:
  - a. school activities (including band trips, etc.),
  - b. scout activities,
  - c. church activities,
  - d. or any other activity.
5. The use of any tobacco products is prohibited by coaches or players while in the vicinity of the field.
6. The county high schools operate their programs according to the Virginia High School League Rules. The rules state that during the sports season for the relevant sport, a student may, while a member of a school squad or team engaged in interscholastic sports become a member of or participate with an organized team in the same sport which is independent of the school's control so long as such participation does not conflict with the scheduled activities of the school squad or team. No school or student shall be declared ineligible for participation in interscholastic sports because of participation by a student as a member of an organized team in the same sport which is independent of the school's control during the sports season for the relevant sport.
7. No uniform will be replaced unless the damaged item is returned.
8. No uniform will be issued to an individual until all items are returned from previous sports.

## VIII. Player Equipment

1. Casts, splints, or body braces made of a hard substance in its final form such as leather, rubber, plastic, plaster, or fiberglass must be covered on all exterior surfaces with no less than 1/2-inch-thick, high-density, closed-cell polyurethane, or an alternate material of the same minimum thickness and similar physical properties to protect an injury. **The referee will have final say on participation.**
2. Players who wear eyeglasses shall wear a safety strap to keep them in place.
3. Players who wear external hearing aids should have them fastened securely, with tape if necessary, so that they cannot be jarred loose.
4. The use of face/body paint is not allowed.
5. No jewelry or earrings shall be worn (including starter earrings). **NO EXCEPTIONS.** Medic Alert or religious jewelry must be taped to the body. Properly equipped players: Coaches are responsible for assuring that his/her players have proper equipment. Players and coaches should not wait for the official to declare items illegal. However, if there is doubt as to the legality of apparel and equipment, the question should be brought to the head referee's attention for a ruling. In addition to this rule, the head referee's pre-game procedure will include a request for coaches to verify the legality of apparel and equipment.
6. Players cannot play unless they are wearing their game jersey in its original form (shirts/sleeves shall not be cut or frayed in any manner) issued by the Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation Department. Teams may print their team name, player name or initials on their jerseys. **No nicknames are permitted.**
7. A player's shirt must be worn inside his or her pants prior to and during the entire game.

8. Each player must have a copy of the warning decal on the back of their helmet. If players do not have the warning decal, they will not be allowed to participate.
9. The use of eye shields with less than 100% allowable light transmission is prohibited.
10. If teams choose to place stickers on helmets, the head coach will be responsible for making sure all stickers are removed before equipment is returned to the Parks and Recreation Department.
11. **A Mouthpiece is mandatory for all participants in all leagues.** (Replacement charge will be \$2.09 per guard)
12. Participants must wear the equipment and jersey issued by the Parks and Recreation Department.
13. **Participants are responsible for providing their own pants and leg pads. (Hip, Knee, Tail and Thigh)**
14. **Football Equipment (helmet, and shoulder pads) issued by Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation Department may be collected by department staff immediately after the last scheduled game has concluded.**

#### IX. Player Participation Guidelines:

1. **Player participation:**
  - Each player in attendance at the game must play a minimum of sixteen plays per game, with the suggestion of at least 8 plays in the first half.
  - A player who misses two (2) or more consecutive games and/or practices is required to play only one half the minimum time stated.
    - This rule does not apply if a player misses a practice held on a Sunday.
  - Coaches must notify the field supervisor, opposing coach, head official, and the Parks and Recreation Department if a player has missed consecutive games and/or practices before the game begins in order for the participant not to play the allotted playing time (no exceptions).
  - A player who is injured and cannot play or meet the minimum requirement must be called to the official's attention at that precise time. A forfeit may be declared if the minimum playing requirements are not adhered to.
2. If a player is traded to another team, then both coaches must be in agreement on the player(s) being traded. All trades must be made prior to the first game of the season. All trades must be reported to and approved by the Parks and Recreation Department.

## X. Starting and Ending a Game, Game Time:

1. Games shall consist of 4 eight (8) minute quarters with the clock stopping as it normally does for out of bounds, incomplete forward pass, and after a touchdown.
2. The referee shall start or stop the clock contrary to normal timing procedure only if a team illegally conserves or consumes time.
3. Games will begin as scheduled, a five-minute grace period will be allowed for all games beginning at their specified times.
4. After the completion of a game, both teams shall form two lines to congratulate each other and show good sportsmanship.
5. In the event a game must be suspended because of conditions which make it impossible to continue play, the head referee shall declare it an official game if one (1) complete half or more has been played. If less than one (1) half of the game has been played, the game may be rescheduled.
6. Ties: All regular-season games that end in a tie will remain a tie. League standings will be computed with two (2) points for each win, zero (0) points for each loss, and one (1) point for each tie. Standings at the end of the regular season will be determined by: a) League record, b) Head-to-Head competition between tied teams, c) Pre-season drawing.

### Scoring and Scoring Differential

7. A team will be awarded 6 points for a touchdown, and 2 points for a conversion.
8. The following is a breakdown of the slaughter rule that has been put into effect.
  - a. A team losing by at least 30 points after the 3rd quarter will obtain possession of the ball at their own 30-yard line.
  - b. The team will retain possession of the ball until the difference in the score is less than 30 points. Normal league rules apply when the difference in the score is less than 30 points.
  - c. In case of a fumble or interception the play is ruled dead at the time of the turnover. The ball will be returned to the losing team at the line of scrimmage prior to the turnover.

## XI Football Terms

1. Field: All leagues will use the youth-size fields that will not exceed maximum width and will be 80 yards long.
2. Kicking the Ball: The 30-yard line will be used for kick-offs.
3. Snapping, Handling, and Passing the Ball.
  - a. Roughing the snapper: A defensive player shall not charge directly into the snapper when the offensive team is in a scrimmage kick formation. It shall be an automatic first down.
  - b. If a legal forward pass is touched by the defense in or behind the neutral zone and subsequently goes beyond the line of scrimmage, offensive lineman will not be considered illegally downfield.
  - c. Pass interference restrictions apply only beyond the neutral zone and only if the legal forward pass, is untouched by the defense in or behind the neutral zone, and crosses the neutral zone.
  - d. Roughing the passer restrictions end if the pass is thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage.

4. Blocking and Blocking Zone

- a. Players legally blocking below the waist must be on the line of scrimmage and in the free blocking zone at the snap. The block must be an immediate, initial action following the snap
- b. 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.
- c. 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, and not against a player who is a runner or pretending to be a runner.
- d. Such cases shall not be ruled clipping and/or blocking in the back unless the official sees the initial contact. When in doubt, the contact is legal and not from the back. When the contact is ruled to be from the back, and the official has question as to the initial point of contact, it shall be ruled clipping
- e. Blocking in the back is permitted in the free-blocking zone when the following conditions are met.
  - i. By offensive linemen who are in the zone at the snap.
  - ii. Against defensive players who are in the zone at the snap.
  - iii. The contact is in the zone and immediately after the snap
  - iv. The free-blocking zone disintegrates and the exception for a player is to block below the waist and/or the exception for an offensive lineman to block in the back is not to continue after the ball has left the zone.

5. Enforcement of Penalties.

- a. There are two (2) automatic first downs: (1) roughing the kicker /holder /snapper and (2) roughing the passer.
- b. The penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct by a player is 10 yards, if flagrant, the player is disqualified.
- c. One of two penalties is now applicable for a player who grasps an opponent's face mask or helmet opening. 10 yards for grasping, twisting, turning, or pulling the face mask or helmet opening; 5 yards for incidental grasping.
- d. It is illegal to grasp the inside back or side opening of the collar of the jersey or shoulder pads of the runner and subsequently pull the runner to the ground (Horse Collar Tackle). The penalty will be 10yard from the succeeding spot.