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## Youth Sports mission statement

The City of Santa Clarita's Youth Sports Program is designed to be a source of fun and enjoyment for the community's youth, while building their character and self-esteem. We as recreation professionals and parents are here to develop children's abilities by teaching skills and strategies in an atmosphere that values sportsmanship and encourages positive interaction.

## Youth Sports philosophy

The primary objective of our youth sports program is to let the children have fun! Secondly, it is to teach skills and strategies related to sports in a manner designed to develop self-confidence and improve physical abilities and conditioning. We are here to teach the children how to win as a team and as individuals by building character and self-esteem. This kind of winning is not always reflected in the score or the standings, but is seen in the development of the child as a player and in the team as a unit.

In developing individual talents and the team as a whole, it is essential that all children be allowed to participate in league games. This is so important that it is reflected in our rules, insuring the player's right to play sports in each and every game regardless of their individual talents and/or abilities.

The backbone of our program is you, the volunteer coach. Your leadership will determine, to a large extent, whether or not the children have a good experience playing sports. This is why we emphasize excellent sportsmanship in our program, beginning with the coaches as primary role models.

Our goal in youth sports is to create the opportunity for a positive and productive experience for players and coaches alike. In that sense, we as organizers are here to provide support and structure to the program and to you as individual coaches.

# Youth Sports **volunteer requirements**

## **VOLUNTEER APPROVAL PROCESS**

The highest priority of the City of Santa Clarita Youth Sports program is to protect our youth. All Youth Sports program volunteers (coaches, assistant coaches or volunteer parents) are required to:

- 1. Have a completed Volunteer Coach Application, Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Sanction Forms on file for the upcoming season.**
- 2. Pass a fingerprint screening and background check before assuming a volunteer role with a team.**
- 3. Wear a City issued Coaches shirt and personalized badge to games.**
- 4. Wear a City issue, personalized badge to practices.**

Head Coaches are required to submit a list of team volunteers to the Youth Sports office. Any person or volunteer without a City issued, personalized badge is strictly prohibited from assisting with a team at practices or games. Only volunteers with proper identification will be allowed in designated player/coach boxes or on the team bench during games.

## **VOLUNTEER FINGERPRINTING INFORMATION**

All Youth Sports program volunteers must complete a Volunteer Coach application and have fingerprints on file with the City of Santa Clarita for consideration as an approved volunteer in the Youth Sports program. All approved volunteers will receive a City issued, personalized badge and will be eligible to assist with Youth Sports teams. Any person or volunteer without a City issued, personalized badge is strictly prohibited from assisting with a team at practices or games and must go through the volunteer approval process.

Volunteers can make a fingerprint appointment (no walk-ins) by contacting the Youth Sports Office at (661) 250-3756 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

# Youth Sports **role of the coach**

## **I. PURPOSE**

As a coach of a youth athletic team, you have a tremendous influence on the life of each youth on that team. Next to the parent, you are probably one of the most important adults in the youths' lives. Each youth on the team looks to you for guidance and leadership. You will find yourself, at one time or another, in the position of being a father, a mother, a teacher, a friend, and a disciplinarian; and many times all of these on the same day -- your guidance effects the youths in all situations.

It is the intent of the City to ensure that games shall be conducted with good sportsmanship and fair play. It is our hope that the managers and coaches be the type of individuals who our society can point to as worthy examples for youths to follow.

## **II. CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **A. RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FOLLOWING:**

1. A coach, assistant coach, parent, spectator or player shall not at any time lay a hand upon, push, shove, strike, or threaten to strike a referee, or they are subject to ejection from the game, as well as, any or all games left in the season.
2. A coach, assistant coach, parent, spectator or player shall not verbally abuse a referee or use profane, obscene, or vulgar language in any manner or at any time.
3. A coach shall not appear at any time in an intoxicated condition, smell of alcohol or have in his/her possession any alcoholic beverage.
4. For the conduct of his/her own spectators or rooters on either side of the playing area.
5. For the conduct of his/her players while they are on the field or sidelines.
6. For seeing that his/her assistant coaches and team helpers exhibit good sportsmanship before, during and after the game.
7. Win, lose, or draw, all coaches, assistant coaches and players will be required to show good sportsmanship by giving a cheer to the other team and shaking hands after the game.

## Coaches **code of conduct**

- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will praise my players just for participating.
- I will look for positives, and make a big deal out of them.
- I will stay calm when my players make mistakes, helping them learn from their mistakes.
- I will treat my players with respect, avoiding put-down, sarcasm, or ridicule.
- I will remind my players not to get down on themselves.
- I will remind myself, and my players, to laugh and keep a sense of humor.
- I will emphasize teamwork, and help my players to think “we” instead of “me.”
- I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.
- I will remember not to take myself too seriously during the game.
- I will maintain a “fun is #1” attitude.
- I will remember that I am a youth coach, and that the game is for children and not adults.
- I will be a role model for good sportsmanship:

Winning without gloating

Losing without complaining

Treating my opponent and officials with fairness and courtesy

## Coaches disciplinary sanctions

| ACTION   | SANCTION   |
|--|--|
| 1. Aggressive confrontation with official, staff, coach, player or spectator <b>before or during</b> a game.   | Removal from Game and Facility<br>One (1) Game Suspension from following Game and Facility Restriction |
| 1. Aggressive confrontation <b>after</b> a game with official, staff, coach, player or spectator.  | One (1) Game Suspension from following Game and Facility Restriction                                   |
| 1. Any aggressive confrontation, including technical fouls, following a one (1) game suspension<br><br>2. Threat or engagement in physical violence towards official, staff, coach, player or spectator.<br><br>3. Physical/Verbal threat or abuse of a child. | Termination as Coach   |

The Youth Sports Administration has the responsibility and authority to both interpret and enforce these sanctions on a non-negotiable, case by case basis. Violations may be applied to ALL TEAMS coached in the program. Persons forfeiting a game due to a disciplinary sanction will face immediate termination as a coach. Persons whose actions have warranted a disciplinary sanction hold the right to a written appeal to be submitted within 48 hours of notification of disciplinary sanction. Appeals will be heard by the Sanctions Committee comprised of two Recreation Division Managers, one Veteran Official, and one Veteran Coach. Until appeal verdict is rendered, disciplinary sanction shall be upheld.

The purpose of the City of Santa Clarita Youth Sports Program is to provide a fun, safe and positive environment for our participants.

I agree to the above disciplinary sanctions and I understand that failure to abide by the Code of Conduct, or any serious violation of the rules and guidelines, may result in my removal, suspension, or termination as a volunteer coach.

## Guidelines for honoring the game

The key to preventing adult misbehavior in youth sports is a youth sports culture in which all involved "Honor the Game." Honoring the Game gets to the ROOTS of the matter and involves respect for the Rules, Opponents, Officials, Teammates and one's Self. You don't bend the rules to win. You understand that a worthy opponent is a gift that forces you to play to your highest potential. You show respect for officials even when you disagree. You refuse to do anything that embarrasses your team. You live up to your own standards even if others don't. Here are ways that **parents** can create a positive youth sports culture so that children will have fun and learn positive character traits to last a lifetime.

### **Before the Game:**

1. Make a commitment to Honor the Game in action and language no matter what others may do.
2. Tell your child before each game that you are proud of him or her regardless of how well he or she plays.

### **During the Game:**

1. Fill your children's "Emotional Tank" through praise and positive recognition so they can play their very best.
2. Don't give instructions to your child during the game. Let the coach correct player mistakes.
3. Cheer good plays by both teams (this is advanced behavior!)
4. Mention good calls by the official to other parents.
5. If an official makes a "bad" call against your team? Honor the Game—BE SILENT!
6. If another parent on your team yells at an official? Gently remind him or her to Honor the Game.
7. Don't do anything in the heat of the moment that you will regret after the game. Ask yourself, "Will this embarrass my child or the team?"
8. Remember to have fun! Enjoy the game.

### **After the Game:**

1. Thank the officials for doing a difficult job for little or no pay.
2. Thank the coaches for their commitment and effort.
3. Don't give advice. Instead ask your child what he or she thought about the game and then LISTEN. Listening fills Emotional Tanks.
4. Tell your child again that you are proud of him or her, whether the team won or lost.

## Guide for a **successful parents meeting**

1. Introductions – Introduce yourself to the parents and make sure you get their name and contact information. This could also be a good time for teammates to bond.
2. Discuss Objectives and Expectations – Share with your parents the philosophy of the program and explain your coaching philosophy and how it relates. Share your expectations and ask parents to share **their** expectations. Talk about playing time requirements, and how you will decide who plays what position.
3. Briefly explain the rules of the game as they relate to playing time and conduct of the spectators. You may want to provide a copy of the rules at this time. Be clear that this program focuses on positive sportsmanship and that unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated.
4. Practice Plan - Explain when/where you plan to conduct practices. Talk about what you expect from players during practices and how they can get involved in practice sessions.
5. Tell them where games will be played and when players should meet before games.
6. Recruit parents to help out with team tasks such as snack lists, communications and arranging team parties.
7. Hand out appropriate literature: Philosophy and Mission Statement, Parent Code of Conduct, Guidelines for Honoring the Game, etc.
8. Other items of discussion may include:

- Car-pooling
- Injuries
- Illness

**Mighty Mite and Junior** **Division Rules**



## **I. BASIC CONCEPT OF THE GAME**

The basic concept for the game of Flag Football is for the ball carrier to avoid bodily contact with the defensive player. The defense should attempt to remove the ball carrier's flag.

Flag Football is not tackle football; it is not power football. It is a different concept than power football in that the defense and offense strive by speed, quickness, and agility to defeat the opponent.

## **II. PRACTICES**

Practices will be limited to a maximum of three practices per week and no longer than one and half hour per practice prior to the first game. Once the season has begun, practices will be limited to a maximum of two per week and no longer than one and a half hour per practice.

## **III. REGULATION AND RULES OF PLAY**

**The Sports Office staff reserves the right to enforce the following rules with the best interest of the league in mind.**

### **Conduct of Players, Coaches, Parents and Spectators**

Any infraction of the rules shall be ordered by the referee to be corrected by the offending coach. Coaches shall at all times assist the officials with any conduct problems that may arise. If the situation is not corrected, the coach is then ejected from the park and the game shall be forfeited.

The referee is a representative of the City of Santa Clarita. No player, coach, assistant coach, parent, or spectator shall lay a hand upon, push, shove, strike, or threaten a referee. The referee has the power to order any individual(s) out of the park; if not complied with, the game shall be forfeited, and/or the Sheriff's Department will be called. Should a player, coach, assistant coach, parent, and/or spectator be ejected from the game because of the Unsportsmanlike conduct, he/she will not be allowed to attend the next game, or possibly any remaining games, his/her child is scheduled to participate in. Failure to abide by the Codes of Conduct or any serious violation of the rules and guidelines may result in the Disciplinary Sanctions of removal, suspension, or termination as a volunteer coach.

### **A. RULES OF PLAY**

#### **1. Equipment.**

- a. Tennis shoes, basketball shoes, or rubber molded cleat shoes must be worn. Metal spikes and shoes with removable spikes are prohibited.
- b. NO hard surface padding such as shoulder pads, elbow pads, hip pads, rip pads on arms, or helmets may be worn. If worn, kneepads must be worn underneath outer clothing. Players with hard casts will not be eligible to participate. Players wearing soft casts must have a doctor's note to participate. Jewelry, including earrings and/or any hard clip ***must*** be removed before the start of the game. Baseball type hats will not be allowed.

**Mighty Mite and Junior rules (cont.)**

- c. Uniform Jerseys will be provided for each team and must be worn tucked into pants or shorts.
  - d. **Home Team will be required to wear the dark color of their jersey. Visiting Team will be required to wear the light color of their jersey. Home and Away sidelines will be marked on the game field for spectators.**
  - e. Player's pants may not have the same color vertical stripe as the flags being worn.
  - f. Friction-type belts and flags shall be provided and may not be altered in any way.
  - g. The Mighty Mite division will be using Nerf footballs. Junior will be using a Pee Wee sized NFL ball.
2. **Players.**
- a. Both offense and defense will consist of 8 players.
  - b. Any offensive formation must consist of four or more players on the line of scrimmage. All players are eligible as pass receivers. Each of the players must wear the belts and flags in the proper position at the waist. Flag belts must be worn before the snap.
  - c. Each team must have **at least 6** roster players to start the game and may not continue with less than 6 players.
3. **Coaches.**
- a. Only the City approved volunteer Head Coach and 2 Assistant Coaches are permitted on the sideline during the game.
4. **Grace Period.**
- a. All games shall start at the scheduled starting time. In the event either team has less than 5 or 6 players ready to play, a 5-minute grace period from the official starting time will be permitted for such team to field 5 or 6 players. If said team cannot field the required players within the grace period, the game shall be forfeited to the other team; at which point players may be borrowed and the game played for practice. **Officials Must Officiate Practice Games.** If neither team can field the required players within the grace period, a double forfeit shall be declared. Games will not be rescheduled. Games will **only** be rescheduled for City of Santa Clarita logistical reasons (no exceptions).

**5. Playing Field.**

a. The Junior field shall be 60 yards x 40 yards plus 10 yard end zones. The four playing zones are 15 yards long. The Mighty Mite field shall be 40 yards x 25 yards plus 7-yard end zones. The four playing zones are 10 yards long. Two coaches are allowed on the field at all times for the Mighty Mite division and one coach is permitted for the Junior division. The coach must stay 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage. Furthermore, the coach on the field may not comment on or question any calls made during the game. This may result in the coach not being allowed on the field for the rest of the game.

b. All coaches on the sidelines must remain between the 20-yard lines.

**PENALTY: After warning, Unsportsmanlike Conduct –**

**12 yards** Non-competitive

*Spectator Restriction Line:* All parents must remain behind the spectator restriction line while on the sidelines. This line will be marked-off behind the coaches.

**PENALTY: After warning, Unsportsmanlike Conduct –**

**12 yards** Non-competitive

**6. Rain-out Policy.**

a. On game day if conditions are questionable, Coaches only may call the Field Condition Line at 290-2241, to find out game status. Field conditions and game status will be left on the recording by 6:45 a.m. For evening games and/or practices, status will be posted after 3:00 p.m.

b. Games cancelled due to increment weather and/or field conditions will be rescheduled if time permits.

**7. Insurance.**

a. No participant or coach will be covered by the City of Santa Clarita insurance.

**8. Inadvertent Whistle.**

a. In the case of an inadvertent whistle the Offense will have the option to either take the result of the play at the point of the blown whistle, or replay the down. *Note: If an inadvertent whistle occurs after an interception the intercepting team will receive the result of the play at the time of the whistle.*

b. If an inadvertent whistle occurs while the ball is in the air, the down will be replayed regardless of the outcome.

**B. TIMING, TIE GAMES, POINT DIFFERENTIAL, SUBSTITUTIONS.**

**1. Timing.**

- a. The referee is responsible for time keeping (starting/stopping the clock) in all games in all situations.
- b. Mighty Mite - Four 10-minute running quarters.
- c. Junior - Four 10-minute running quarters.
  
- e. The game clock will run continuously; it shall stop for time outs and emergencies only. The official shall notify the coaches and captains when approximately two (2) minutes remain in the half. If a player is hurt, the player must come out for one play and the injury will be an official time out.
- f. There shall be a two (2) minute, if possible, rest periods between the first and second quarters, and between the third and fourth quarters; and three (3) minutes between the first and second halves. Teams may go to the sidelines between quarters and during the time outs.
- g. At the request of any player or coach, 2 one-minute time out periods are allowed to each team in each half. Time outs cannot be accumulated.
- h. A forfeit time of five (5) minutes after scheduled game time will be strictly enforced by the referee. However, a scrimmage will still be played with the official present.

**2. Tie Games.**

- a. If at the end of regulation play, the score is tied, the game will be considered complete and each team will be awarded a 1/2 win and 1/2 loss.

**3. Point Differential.**

- a. Forfeit score will be recorded as 1-0 if one team cannot field the required amount of players.

**4. Substitutions**

- a. Coaches must clear the bench on change of possession (offense and defense). **NO FREE SUBSTITUTIONS.** Coaches may make player substitutions during time outs, in-between quarters, for extra point conversions, and special teams (extra point conversions and special teams are not considered a change of possession).

**PENALTY: After warning, Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 12 yards Non-competitive**

**C. KICK-OFFS, FIRST TOUCHING, KICKING LINES, RESTRAINING LINES AND INBOUND SPOT.**

**1. Kick-offs.**

- a. The Junior division will kick-off from the 20-yard line.
- b. The ball must be on tee; it cannot be teed on a player's toe or by a player holding the ball.
- c. The Mighty Mite Division will not have kick-offs - all possessions will begin at the offense's 10 yd. line (first cone).
- d. Players cannot begin forward motion until ball is kicked.

**2. Punting.**

- a. All punts must be declared before a team breaks their huddle. If the clock is stopped, the clock will not start until the ball is kicked.
- b. The ball must be kicked. No offensive player shall leave the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked. The center must snap the ball to the punter, who must then retreat behind the five (5) yard distance to punt the ball. The referee will stand five yards from the line. **NOTE:** There are no punts in Mighty Mite – all possession changes will begin at the offenses 10 yd. line (first cone). **PENALTY:** Illegal Procedure against the offense - 4 yards for the Junior Division. During punts only - The defensive team must have at least five players on the line of scrimmage and shall not leave their positions until the ball is kicked. No defensive player shall attempt to hinder or block a punted ball or make movements intended to distract the punter. **PENALTY:** Illegal Procedure against the defense - 4 yards for the Junior Division
- d. During any down, the offense may punt the ball. However, intent to punt the ball must be declared prior to breaking the huddle. When a member of the offense fails to field the ball cleanly and the ball falls to the ground, or a defensive player touches the ball first, it is referred to as "first touching," and the ball is dead.

**3. First Touching of a Kick-Off or Punt.**

- a. If any member of the kicking team touches a kick-off or punt, it is referred to as "first touching" of the kick. The ball is considered dead where it was touched.
- b. No receiving team will be allowed to run the ball out of the end zone. The ball will be dead and brought out to the 20 yard line.
- b. No on-side kicks are allowed.

**4. Inbound Spot.**

- a. If the ball goes out of bounds behind the receiver's 30-yard line untouched, the ball will be put in play at the receiver's 30 yard line. If the ball goes out of bounds behind the receiver's 30-yard line touched, the ball will be put in play at the spot from where it was touched.

## Mighty Mite and Junior rules (cont.)

- b. If the ball goes out of bounds before going 20 yards, the ball will be put in play at the inbound spot from where the ball went out of bounds.

### 5. **Kicking After a Touchback or Safety.**

- a. The ball shall be put in play at the 20-yard line by means of a snap after the touchback.
- b. The ball shall be put in play at the 20-yard line by means of a kick-off or a punt after a safety.

## D. **BALL IN PLAY, DOWNS, AND DEAD BALL**

### 1. **Putting the Ball in Play.**

- a. The winner of a pre-game coin toss (visiting team shall make the call) shall have the choice of kicking-off or receiving. If a team chooses to receive in the first half, they will kick in the second half and vice-versa. **No exceptions.**
- b. Mighty Mite and Junior shall have 35 seconds; the official may exercise discretion concerning this rule for the Mighty Mite and Junior divisions only.

**PENALTY:** Delay of game against the offense - 4 yards for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions

The Mighty Mite center may stand sideways and toss the ball to the quarterback. The ball is not in play until it leaves the center's possession. The Mighty Mite coach cannot call out the snap of the ball.

### 2. **Downs.**

- a. A team has four downs to advance the ball from wherever the team takes possession of the ball to the next zone. If the next zone is not reached within the four downs, the opposing team shall take possession of the ball at the point where it is dead.

### 3. **Dead and Live Ball and Clock Stopping.**

- a. In all cases, after the ball has been touched and hits the ground, the ball is ruled DEAD. The ball shall be put in play where the ball hits the ground; except when the ball is tossed forward by the ball carrier, then the ball shall be put in play where the ball carrier lost possession.
- b. There is no stopped clock in the Mighty Mite or Junior divisions.

## Mighty Mite and Junior rules (cont.)

- c. The referee is responsible for time keeping, (starting/stopping the clock) for all games in all situations.

### E. SCORING.

#### 1. Touchdowns and Extra Points

- a. A touchdown shall be 6 points. The Mighty Mite and Junior divisions will not attempt an extra point after a touchdown.

#### 2. Safety

- a. A safety is scored when an offensive player causes the ball to go behind his/her own goal line, and it becomes dead in his team's possession or when the ball carrier has his/her flag pulled in their own end zone. (2 points)

#### 3. Touchback

- a. A touchback occurs when the ball goes out of the end zone or a player downs the ball behind his/her own goal line. The ball is placed on the 20-yard line.

### F. THE BALL CARRIER, BLOCKING, AND DEFENSE.

#### 1. Offensive charging/hurdling

- a. The ball carrier shall strive to avoid having his/her flag pulled by the use of agility rather than power. Any attempt by the ball carrier to run over, charge, hurdle, or straight-arm a defensive player is illegal. The "running over" by the ball carrier will be judged based on a defender's established position. A hurdle is also called when the ball carrier jumps or dives forward to avoid their flag from being pulled.  
**PENALTY:** The Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions - 8 yards

#### 2. Running plays and passing plays.

- a. A direct run by the quarterback is not allowed. During a running play, two offensive players (other than the center) must obtain possession of the ball behind the line of scrimmage. The runner must have full possession of the ball at least 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage.  
**PENALTY:** 4 yards for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions.
- b. One forward pass per down may be thrown by the offense from behind the line of scrimmage. Lateral passes may be thrown at any point on the field.

- c. Intentional grounding occurs when a quarterback throws an incomplete pass toward an area of the field where there is no clear eligible receiver within 10 yards. **PENALTY:** 4 yards for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions. Should a flag be pulled when the arm is in the forward throwing motion, it is not considered a sack and play will continue.
  - d. Pass interference is called by either team when any player movement beyond the line of scrimmage significantly hinders the progress of an eligible player's opportunity to catch the ball. **PENALTY:** 4 yards for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions. Pass interference by the offense will result in a 4-yard penalty in for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions. A defensive player cannot intentionally draw an offensive player off-sides by jabbing his foot, or any other similar method. **PENALTY:** 4 yards for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions. A ball carrier may not run up the middle. Two cones will be designated by the official, on either side of the center. Once the play begins any ball carrier will be restricted from running between the cones. **Mighty Mite and Junior Division only. PENALTY:** 4 yards at L.O.S.
3. **Stopping the Ball Carrier and Loose Equipment.**
- a. In order to down the ball carrier, the opponent must pull either flag from the belt.
  - b. Each player is responsible for not having loose clothing or equipment. All clothing must be tucked inside the pants so that the belts and flags will be visibly tight and worn at the waist level on each side. **PENALTY:** After warning, 4 yards for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions.
  - c. If, for any reason a flag falls off accidentally from the ball carrier after the ball is snapped, a tag with one or both hands on any part of the body will down the ball carrier.
  - d. The defensive player may not strip the ball from the ball carriers hands.



4. **Flag Guarding**
- a. The ball carrier cannot touch or guard his/her flags by protecting, hacking, or holding the flags. This includes using the ball or the swinging of the arms at or below the belt line to ward off the defender. Flag guarding may be called for intentionally *or* unintentionally guarding flags.  
**PENALTY:** 8 yards for the Mighty Mite and Junior.
5. **Blocking.**
- a. **Offensive blocking** - an offensive player is allowed to block in the following manner: he/she may use their hands as long as elbows are not locked, hands are open, fists are not clenched, not holding the opponent, nor using a forearm shiver.
- i. All blocking must be between the belt line, the shoulders, and in front chest area (Note: Does not apply if defensive player turns his/her back to opponent.)
  - ii. No head shots, rip-ups, or elbowing.
- b. **Defensive** - Defensive player may use hands to ward off the offensive blockers. He/she may use their hands as long as elbows are not locked, hands are open fists and not clenched, not holding the opponent, nor using a forearm shiver. (No head shots, rip-ups, or elbowing.)  
**PENALTY:** 8 yards for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions.
- c. It is illegal for the defensive player to block the offensive center on or immediately after the initial snap or until the center assumes a blocking stance.  
**PENALTY:** 8 yards for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions.
6. **Defensive Roughness.**
- a. The defense cannot tackle, hold, block, trip, push, charge, or bump the ball carrier out of bounds.  
**PENALTY:** 8 yards for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions.
- b. If the last defensive player between the ball carrier and the goal is guilty of any of the above infractions, (6a) **the ball carrier may be awarded the score he/she would have attained if the foul did not occur** (at the discretion of the official).
- c. A defensive player cannot tackle, hold, block, trip, push, charge, intentionally bump, push the quarterback out of bounds, or hit his arm while the quarterback is attempting to pass the ball.  
**PENALTY:** 4 yards for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions.

7. **Off-Sides**
  - a. Prior to the snap the Defense may not jump off-sides. No Defender may break the plane and jump off-sides and jump back. Once the plane is broken, the whistle will be blown and play will be stopped. **PENALTY:** 4 yards for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions.
8. **Defensive Rushing**
  - a. No defensive player may line up over the center or make contact with the center until he is up from his snapping stance. (Two cones will be placed on either side of the center for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions. The defense will not be allowed to rush between the two cones). Penalty: 4 yards at L.O.S for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions.
9. **Hide-Outs**
  - a. It is illegal for an offensive player to intentionally split wide to the sidelines without first coming from the huddle (hideout). **PENALTY:** 4 yards for the Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions.

#### IV. MIGHTY MITE AND JUNIOR DEFENSIVE BOX RULES

**Defensive Box Dimensions** – The Defensive Box width will be determined by the outermost offensive lineman (center, guard, or tackle) on each side of a standard offensive line set. This will be monitored by the officials.. Defensive lineman may line up as far as the outside shoulder of the offensive’s outermost lineman (center, guard, or tackle). . The length of the box is always five (5) yards from the Line of Scrimmage (L.o.S).

1. No more than four (4) down linemen will be permitted to line up in the Defensive Box. Linebackers and Defensive Backs must line up at least five (5) yards off the line of scrimmage and may line up outside of the box - sideline to sideline. A Linebacker or Defensive Back is eligible to cover a receiver at the line of scrimmage. Defensive lineman can never outnumber the amount of offensive lineman, and no defender may line up over the center.
2. **All receivers must be covered - single coverage only.**
3. A 1 yard neutral zone will be applied in the space between the Offensive and Defensive at the line of scrimmage. This will be monitored at the Referee’s discretion.

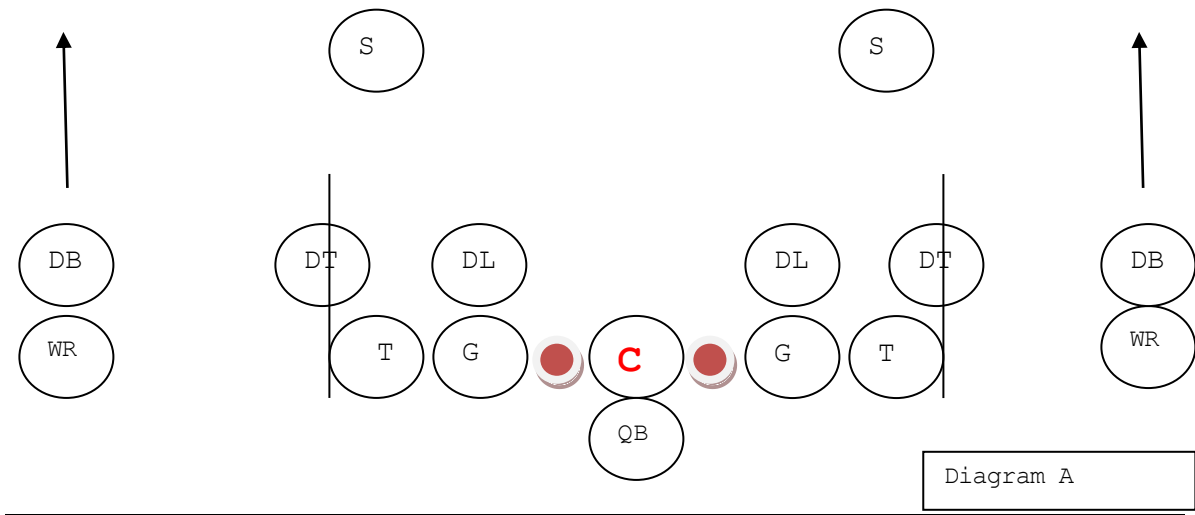
# rules (cont.)

## \*\*Examples of Defensive Set with Correct Alignment of Down Lineman, Linebackers, and Safeties\*\*

The **lines** are a representation of the defensive box (Section VI 1), notice the defensive linemen are permitted to line up on the outside shoulder of the outermost offensive lineman. No player may line up directly over the center (Section 8a). The **red dots** represent the restricted run zone that is designated by the officials on both sides of the center (Section 2d).

The **arrows** show that the defensive back can either cover the wide receiver on the line of scrimmage or five yards off the line.

Safeties on defense are **five yards** off the line of scrimmage, since they are not covering anyone. \*Note the positioning of the safeties is tentative, as long as they are five yards off the line they can practically be placed anywhere. (Single coverage only)



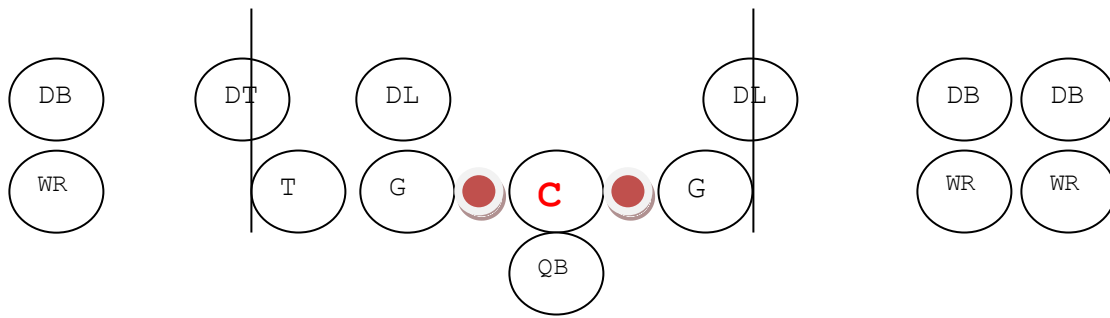


Diagram B

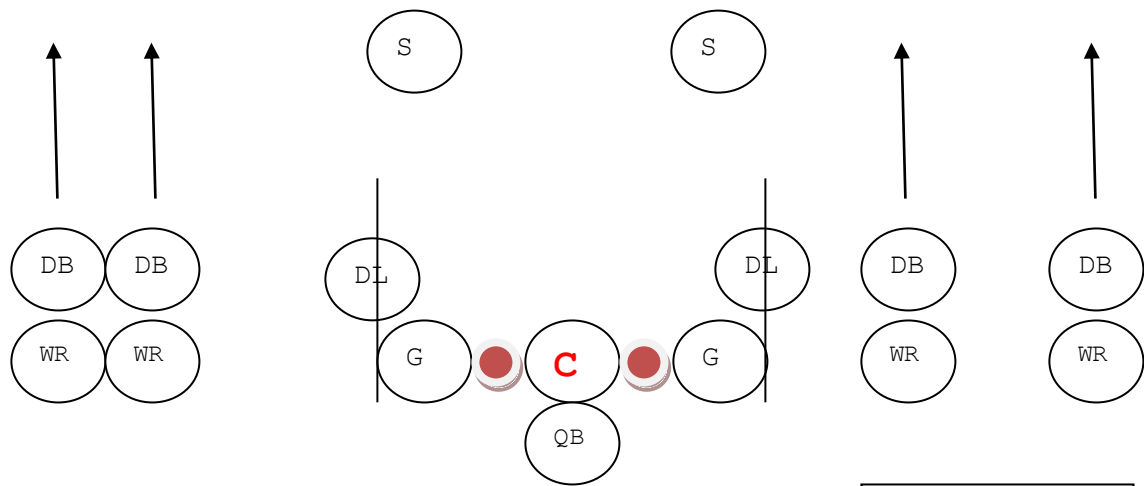


Diagram C



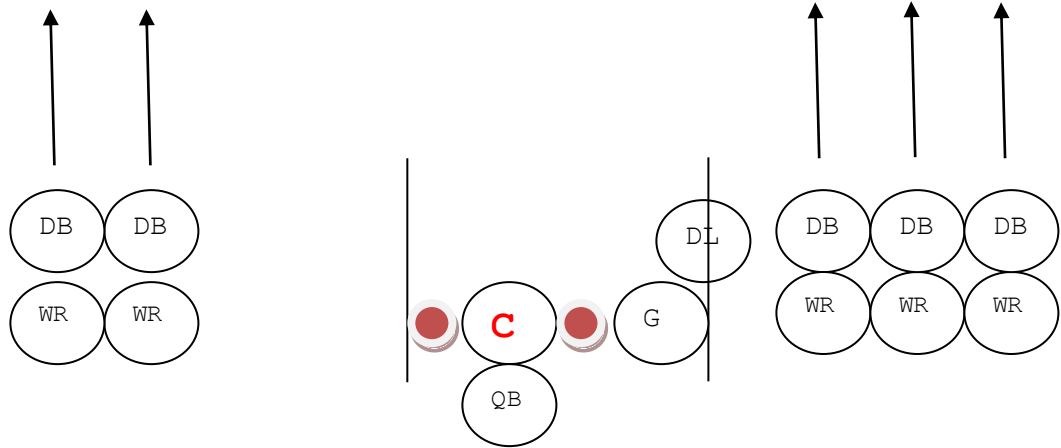


Diagram D

In this example, the center would be considered the outermost lineman on the offense. The rules state that no one can line up directly over the center, which is why the defensive lineman is on the **outside** shoulder of the center.

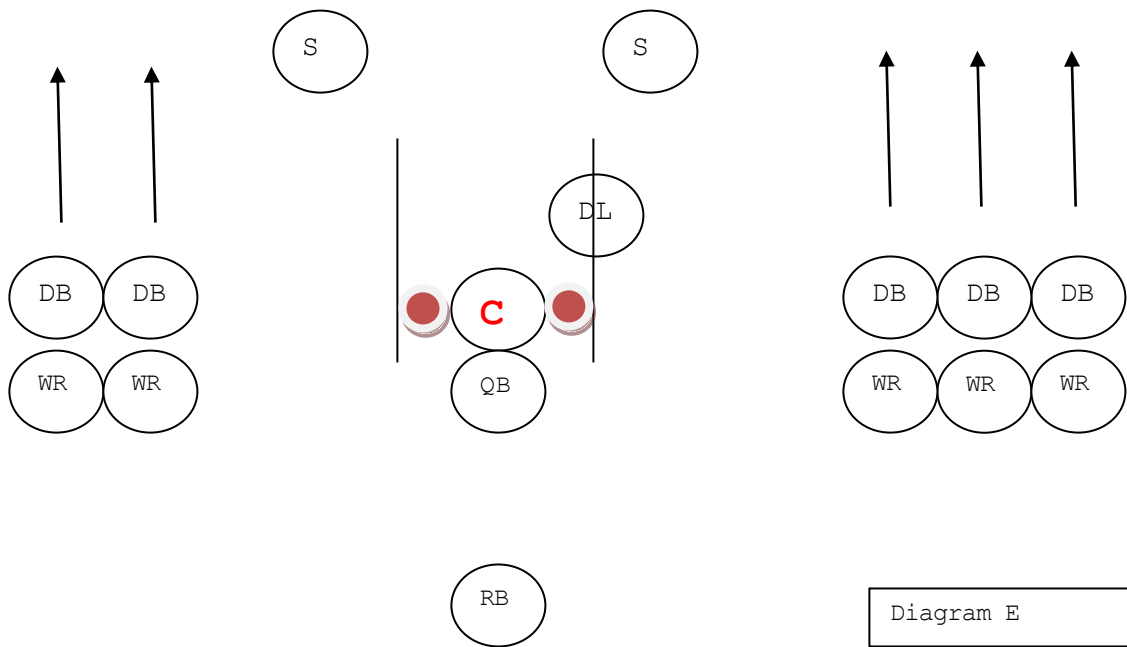
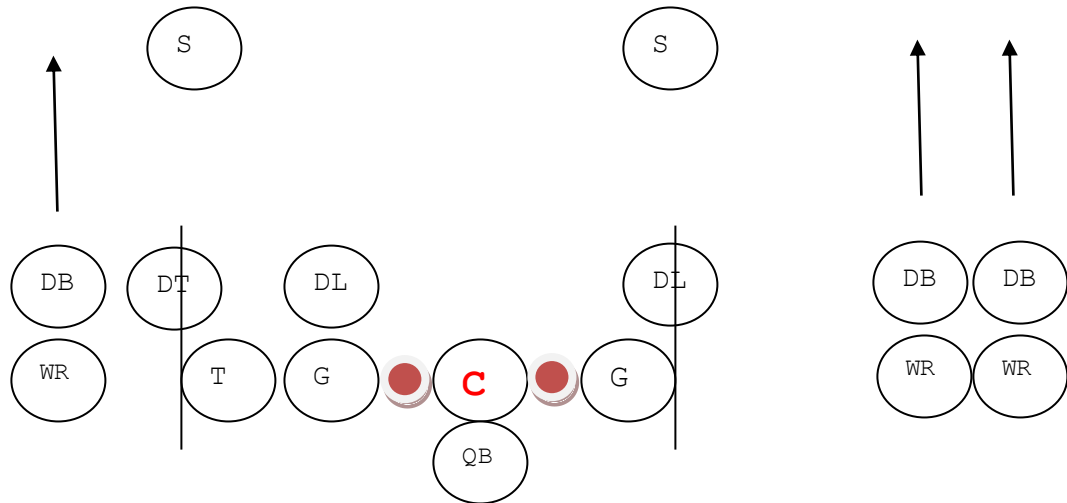


Diagram E



In this instance the defensive box extends to the tackle on the left side, and only to the guard on the right side. This happens because the tackle is the outermost lineman on the left side, and the guard is the outermost lineman on the right side.

Diagram F

**V. STANDINGS.**

Mighty Mite and Junior Divisions will not keep score or standings

**VI. The Youth Sports Supervisor, Coordinator(s), and Program Specialist reserve the right to enforce and/or amend any of the above listed rules in order to maintain the integrity of the league.**

**Youth Sports games cannot be protested. All games are FINAL.**

**Minor, Major and Senior Division Rules**

**I. BASIC CONCEPT OF THE GAME**

The basic concept for the game of Flag Football is for the ball carrier to avoid bodily contact with the defensive player. The defense should attempt to remove the ball carrier's flag.

Flag Football is not tackle football; it is not power football. It is a different concept than power football in that the defense and offense strive by speed, quickness, and agility to defeat the opponent.

## **II. PRACTICES**

Practices will be limited to a maximum of three practices per week and no longer than one and half hour per practice prior to the first game. Once the season has begun, practices will be limited to a maximum of two per week and no longer than one and a half hour per practice.

## **III. REGULATION AND RULES OF PLAY**

**The Sports Office staff reserves the right to enforce the following rules with the best interest of the league in mind.**

### **Conduct of Players, Coaches, Parents and Spectators**

Any infraction of the rules shall be ordered by the referee to be corrected by the offending coach. Coaches shall at all times assist the officials with any conduct problems that may arise. If the situation is not corrected, the coach is then ejected from the park and the game shall be forfeited.

The referee is a representative of the City of Santa Clarita. No player, coach, assistant coach, parent, or spectator shall lay a hand upon, push, shove, strike, or threaten a referee. The referee has the power to order any individual(s) out of the park; if not complied with, the game shall be forfeited, and/or the Sheriff's Department will be called. Should a player, coach, assistant coach, parent, and/or spectator be ejected from the game because of the Unsportsmanlike conduct, he/she will not be allowed to attend the next game, or possibly any remaining games, his/her child is scheduled to participate in. Failure to abide by the Codes of Conduct or any serious violation of the rules and guidelines may result in the Disciplinary Sanctions of removal, suspension, or termination as a volunteer coach.

### **A. RULES OF PLAY**

#### **1. Equipment.**

- a. Tennis shoes, basketball shoes, or rubber molded cleat shoes must be worn. Metal spikes and shoes with removable spikes are prohibited.
- b. NO hard surface padding such as shoulder pads, elbow pads, hip pads, rip pads on arms, or helmets may be worn. If worn, kneepads must be worn underneath outer clothing. Players with hard casts will not be eligible to participate. Players wearing soft casts must have a doctor's note to participate. Jewelry, including earrings and/or any hard clip ***must*** be removed before the start of the game. Baseball type hats will not be allowed.

Minor, Major and Senior **rules (cont.)**

- c. Uniform Jerseys will be provided for each team and must be worn tucked into pants or shorts.
  - d. **Home Team will be required to wear the dark color of their jersey. Visiting Team will be required to wear the light color of their jersey. Home and Away sidelines will be marked on the game field for spectators.**
  - e. Player's pants may not have the same color vertical stripe as the flags being worn.
  - f. Friction-type belts and flags shall be provided and may not be altered in any way.
  - g. The Minor, Major, and Senior divisions will be using a Junior sized NFL football.
2. **Players.**
- a. Both offense and defense will consist of 8 players.
  - b. Any offensive formation must consist of four or more players on the line of scrimmage. All players are eligible as pass receivers. Defensive formation has no limitations on the number of players on the line for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions (**Exceptions: on punting situations, you must have at least 5 players on the line.** Each of the players must wear the belts and flags in the proper position at the waist before the snap.
  - c. Each team must have **at least 6** roster players to start the game and may not continue with less than 6 players.
3. **Coaches.**
- a. Only the City approved volunteer Head Coach and 2 Assistant Coaches are permitted on the sideline during the game.
4. **Grace Period.**
- a. All games shall start at the scheduled starting time. In the event either team has less than 5 or 6 players ready to play, a 5-minute grace period from the official starting time will be permitted for such team to field 5 or 6 players. If said team cannot field the required players within the grace period, the game shall be forfeited to the other team; at which point players may be borrowed and the game played for practice. **Officials Must Officiate Practice Games.** If neither team can field the required players within the grace period, a double forfeit shall be declared. Games will not be rescheduled. Games will **only** be rescheduled for City of Santa Clarita logistical reasons (no exceptions).

## Minor, Major and Senior rules (cont.)

5. **Playing Field.**
- a. The regulation dimensions for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions shall be 80 yards x 40 yards plus 10-yard end zone. The four playing zones should be 20 yards long.



- b. All coaches on the sidelines must remain between the 20-yard lines.  
**PENALTY: After warning, Unsportsmanlike Conduct –**

**15 yards-** Competitive

*Spectator Restriction Line:* All parents must remain behind the spectator restriction line while on the sidelines. This line will be marked-off behind the coaches.

**PENALTY: After warning, Unsportsmanlike Conduct –**

**15 yards-** Competitive

**6. Rain-out Policy.**

- a. On game day if conditions are questionable, Coaches only may call the Field Condition Line at 290-2241, to find out game status. Field conditions and game status will be left on the recording by 6:45 a.m. For evening games and/or practices, status will be posted after 3:00 p.m.
- b. Games cancelled due to increment weather and/or field conditions will be rescheduled if time permits.

**7. Insurance.**

- a. No participant or coach will be covered by the City of Santa Clarita insurance.

**8. Inadvertent Whistle.**

- c. In the case of an inadvertent whistle the Offense will have the option to either take the result of the play at the point of the blown whistle, or replay the down. *Note: If an inadvertent whistle occurs after an interception the intercepting team will receive the result of the play at the time of the whistle.*
- d. If an inadvertent whistle occurs while the ball is in the air, the down will be replayed regardless of the outcome.

## Minor, Major and Senior **rules (cont.)**

### **B. TIMING, TIE GAMES, POINT DIFFERENTIAL, SUBSTITUTIONS.**

1. **Timing.**
  - a. The referee is responsible for time keeping (starting/stopping the clock) in all games in all situations.
  - b. Minor, Major, and Senior Divisions - Four 12 minute running quarters.
  - c. Regulation timing (clock stopped on dead balls) will be used during the last two (2) minutes of the game. At all other times, the game clock shall run continuously; it shall stop for time outs and emergencies only. The official shall notify the coaches and captains when approximately two (2) minutes remain in the half. If a player is hurt, the player must come out for one play and the injury will be an official time out.
  - d. There shall be a two (2) minute, if possible, rest periods between the first and second quarters, and between the third and fourth quarters; and three (3) minutes between the first and second halves. Teams may go to the sidelines between quarters and during the time outs.
  - e. At the request of any player or coach, 2 one-minute time out periods are allowed to each team in each half. Time outs cannot be accumulated.
  - f. A forfeit time of five (5) minutes after scheduled game time will be strictly enforced by the referee. However, a scrimmage will still be played with the official present.

2. **Tie Games.**
  - a. If at the end of regulation play, the score is tied, the game will be considered complete and each team will be awarded a 1/2 win and 1/2 loss.

3. **Point Differential.**
  - a. During the last two minutes of the game, the clock will not stop running if one team is ahead by the following amount of points, depending on the division:

Minor, Major & Senior Divisions      18 points

- b. Forfeit score will be recorded as 1-0 if one team cannot field the required amount of players.
- c. If at the beginning of the second half, or any time after, there is a 35-point difference in the score, the teams will play out the time left on the clock for the duration of the game. Penalties and substitutions will continue to be kept. However, the win will be awarded to the team

## Minor, Major and Senior rules (cont.)

4. **Substitutions**
  - a. Coaches must clear the bench on change of possession (offense and defense). **NO FREE SUBSTITUTIONS.** Coaches may make player substitutions during time outs, in-between quarters, for extra point conversions, and special teams (extra point conversions and special teams are not considered a change of possession).  
**PENALTY: After warning, Unsportsmanlike Conduct – 15 yards**

**C. KICK-OFFS, FIRST TOUCHING, KICKING LINES, RESTRAINING LINES AND INBOUND SPOT.**

**1. Kick-offs.**

- a. Kick-offs for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions shall be from the team's 30-yard line. The ball must be on tee; it cannot be teed on a player's toe or by a player holding the ball.
- b. Players may not begin a forward motion until the ball has been kicked.

**2. Punting.**

- a. All punts must be declared before a team breaks their huddle. If the clock is stopped, the clock will not start until the ball is kicked.
- b. The ball must be kicked. No offensive player shall leave the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked. The center must snap the ball to the punter, who must then retreat behind the five (5) yard distance to punt the ball. The referee will stand five yards from the line. **PENALTY:** Illegal Procedure against the offense- 5 yards for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions.
- c. During punts only - The defensive team must have at least five players on the line of scrimmage and shall not leave their positions until the ball is kicked. No defensive player shall attempt to hinder or block a punted ball or make movements intended to distract the punter. **PENALTY:** Illegal Procedure against the defense - 5 yards for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions.
- d. During any down, the offense may punt the ball. However, intent to punt the ball must be declared prior to breaking the huddle. When a member of the offense fails to field the ball cleanly and the ball falls to the ground, or a defensive player touches the ball first, it is referred to as "first touching," and the ball is dead.

**3. First Touching of a Kick-Off or Punt.**

- a. If any member of the kicking team touches a kick-off or punt, it is referred to as "first touching" of the kick. The ball is considered dead where it was touched.
- b. No receiving team will be allowed to run the ball out of the end zone. The ball will be dead and brought out to the 20 yard line.
- c. No on-side kicks are allowed.

**4. Inbound Spot.**

- a. If the ball goes out of bounds behind the receiver's 30-yard line untouched, the ball will be put in play at the receiver's 30 yard line. If the ball goes out of bounds behind the receiver's 30-yard line touched, the ball will be put in play at the spot from where it was touched.

- b. If the ball goes out of bounds before going 20 yards, the ball will be put in play at the inbound spot from where the ball went out of bounds.

**5. Kicking After a Touchback or Safety.**

- c. The ball shall be put in play at the 20-yard line by means of a snap after the touchback.
- d. The ball shall be put in play at the 20-yard line by means of a kick-off or a punt after a safety.

**E. BALL IN PLAY, DOWNS, AND DEAD BALL**

**1. Putting the Ball in Play.**

- a. The winner of a pre-game coin toss (visiting team shall make the call) shall have the choice of kicking-off or receiving. If a team chooses to receive in the first half, they will kick in the second half and vice-versa. **No exceptions.**
- b. The Minor, Major, or Senior offensive team has thirty (30) seconds to put the ball in play from the time the official signals to play. **PENALTY:** Delay of game against the offense - 5 yards for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions. The ball is not in play until it leaves the center's possession.

**2. Downs.**

- a. A team has four downs to advance the ball from wherever the team takes possession of the ball to the next zone. If the next zone is not reached within the four downs, the opposing team shall take possession of the ball at the point where it is dead.

**3. Dead and Live Ball and Clock Stopping.**

- a. In all cases, after the ball has been touched and hits the ground, the ball is ruled DEAD. The ball shall be put in play where the ball hits the ground; except when the ball is tossed forward by the ball carrier, then the ball shall be put in play where the ball carrier lost possession.
- b. During regulation time the clock will continue to run until the last two (2) minutes of the second half for the Minor and Major divisions. The clock shall be stopped for out of bounds, incomplete passes, time outs, injuries, and penalties.

- c. The referee is responsible for time keeping, (starting/stopping the clock) for all games in all situations.

**E. SCORING.**

**1. Touchdowns and Extra Points**

- a. A touchdown shall be 6 points. A safety shall be 2 points. A conversion from the 5 yard line is 2 points. A conversion from the 2 yard line is 1 point. The placement of the conversion must be stated to the referee before the team breaks their huddle.

**2. Safety**

- a. A safety is scored when an offensive player causes the ball to go behind his/her own goal line, and it becomes dead in his team's possession or when the ball carrier has his/her flag pulled in their own end zone. (2 points)

**3. Touchback**

- a. A touchback occurs when the ball goes out of the end zone or a player downs the ball behind his/her own goal line. The ball is placed on the 20-yard line.

**F. THE BALL CARRIER, BLOCKING, AND DEFENSE.**

**1. Offensive charging/hurdling**

- a. The ball carrier shall strive to avoid having his/her flag pulled by the use of agility rather than power. Any attempt by the ball carrier to run over, charge, hurdle, or straight-arm a defensive player is illegal. The "running over" by the ball carrier will be judged based on a defender's established position. A hurdle is also called when the ball carrier jumps or dives forward to avoid their flag from being pulled.

**PENALTY:** The Minor, Major & Senior Divisions - 10 yards from the point of the foul and possible disqualification from the game.

**2. Running plays and passing plays.**

- a. A direct run by the quarterback is not allowed. During a running play, two offensive players (other than the center) must obtain possession of the ball behind the line of scrimmage. The runner must have full possession of the ball at least 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage. **PENALTY:** 5 yards for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions and loss of down.
- b. One forward pass per down may be thrown by the offense from behind the line of scrimmage. Lateral passes may be thrown at any point on the field.

- c. Intentional grounding occurs when a quarterback throws an incomplete pass toward an area of the field where there is no clear eligible receiver within 10 yards. **PENALTY:** 5-yard penalty for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions and loss of down. **Exception:** The quarterback may, during the last two minutes of the game, stand up, without stepping back, and immediately ground the ball to stop the clock.
- d. Should a flag be pulled when the arm is in the forward throwing motion, it is not considered a sack and play will continue.
- e. Pass interference is called by either team when any player movement beyond the line of scrimmage significantly hinders the progress of an eligible player's opportunity to catch the ball. **PENALTY:** 5-yard penalty for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions from the line of scrimmage and first down for the offense.
- f. Pass interference by the offense will result in a 5-yard penalty for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.
- g. A defensive player cannot intentionally draw an offensive player off-side by jabbing his foot, or any other similar method. **PENALTY:** 5-yard penalty for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions and replay the down.

**3. Stopping the Ball Carrier and Loose Equipment.**

- a. In order to down the ball carrier, the opponent must pull either flag from the belt.
- b. Each player is responsible for not having loose clothing or equipment. All clothing must be tucked inside the pants so that the belts and flags will be visibly tight and worn at the waist level on each side. **PENALTY:** 5 yards for the Minor and Major Divisions against the team in violation.
- c. If, for any reason a flag falls off accidentally from the ball carrier, a tag with one or both hands on any part of the body will down the ball carrier.
- d. The defensive player may not strip the ball from the ball carriers hands.

4. **Flag Guarding**
- a. The ball carrier cannot touch or guard his/her flags by protecting, hacking, or holding the flags. This includes using the ball or the swinging of the arms at or below the belt line to ward off the defender. Flag guarding may be called for intentionally **or** unintentionally guarding flags.  
**PENALTY:** 10 yards for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions from the point of the foul. No longer a loss of down penalty.
5. **Blocking.**
- a. **Offensive blocking** - an offensive player is allowed to block in the following manner: he/she may use their hands as long as elbows are not locked, hands are open, fists are not clenched, not holding the opponent, nor using a forearm shiver.
- i. All blocking must be between the belt line, the shoulders, and in front chest area (Note: Does not apply if defensive player turns his/her back to opponent.)
- ii. No head shots, rip-ups, or elbowing.
- b. **Defensive** - Defensive player may use hands to ward off the offensive blockers. He/she may use their hands as long as elbows are not locked, hands are open fists and not clenched, not holding the opponent, nor using a forearm shiver. (No head shots, rip-ups, or elbowing.)  
**PENALTY:** 10 yards for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions.
- c. It is illegal for the defensive player to block the offensive center on or immediately after the initial snap or until the center assumes a blocking stance.  
**PENALTY:** 10 yards for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions and possible disqualification.
6. **Defensive Roughness.**
- a. The defense cannot tackle, hold, block, trip, push, charge, or bump the ball carrier out of bounds.  
**PENALTY:** 10 yards for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions and possible disqualification.
- b. If the last defensive player between the ball carrier and the goal is guilty of any of the above infractions, (6a) **the ball carrier may be awarded the score he/she would have attained if the foul did not occur** (at the discretion of the official).
- c. A defensive player cannot tackle, hold, block, trip, push, charge, intentionally bump, push the quarterback out of bounds, or hit his arm while the quarterback is attempting to pass the ball.  
**PENALTY:** 5 yards for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions, automatic first down.

7. **Off-sides**
  - a. Prior to the snap the Defense may not jump off-sides. No Defender may break the plane and jump off-sides and jump back. Once the plane is broken, the whistle will be blown and play will be stopped. **PENALTY:** 5 yards for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions.
8. **Defensive Rushing**
  - a. No defensive player may line up over the center or make contact with the center until he is up from his snapping stance.
9. **Hide-Outs**
  - a. It is illegal for an offensive player to intentionally split wide to the sidelines without first coming from the huddle (hideout). **PENALTY:** 5 yards for the Minor, Major & Senior Divisions and loss of down.

**V. STANDINGS.**

**A. MINOR, MAJOR, & SENIOR DIVISIONS**

Minor I, Minor II, Major I, Major II and Senior Divisions will have the opportunity to participate in playoffs. Standings will be kept for all regular season games. At the end of the regular season play, **ALL teams** will be seeded into the playoffs based on their final standings. Playoffs will occur in a single elimination format. The two teams who advance in the tournament will then have the opportunity to participate in the Championship Game on Super Bowl Saturday.

- VI. The Youth Sports Supervisor, Coordinator(s), and Program Specialist reserve the right to enforce and/or amend any of the above listed rules in order to maintain the integrity of the league.**

**Youth Sports games cannot be protested. All games are FINAL.**

Heads Up: **safety in youth sports**



## **Dehydration and Heat Illness**

### **Why Kids Are at Risk:**

1. Children absorb more heat from a hot environment than adults. The smaller the child the faster they heat up.
2. Children release less heat through sweating.
3. Children usually don't drink enough fluids to replenish sweat losses during prolonged exercise.
4. Young athletes may be more easily distracted when occasions allow for them to rest and rehydrate.

### **Signs of Dehydration and Heat Illness**

If dehydration progresses unchecked, the risk of heat illness increases. Heat illness is best understood in three separate degrees: HEAT CRAMPS, HEAT EXHAUSTION and the most serious and deadly form, HEAT STROKE.

### **Dehydration**

Dehydration during exercise is a common problem. Some young athletes can begin to suffer the consequences of dehydration if they become dehydrated by just 2 percent of their body weight. That's why it's important to recognize the warning signs:

- Noticeable Thirst
- Muscle Cramps
- Weakness
- Decreased Performance
- Nausea
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Lightheaded Feeling or Dizziness
- Difficulty Paying Attention

Treating the symptoms of dehydration is crucial in preventing more serious conditions such as heat exhaustion.

1. Rest in a cool place.
2. Consume a sports drink that contains the adequate amount of electrolytes.
3. Prevent dehydration in the future by consuming fluids before, during and after exercise.
4. Allow for ample time to rehydrate.

**Heads Up: safety in youth sports (cont.)**

## Heat Exhaustion

If dehydration goes untreated, the likelihood of heat exhaustion may increase. Common symptoms of heat exhaustion are:

- Dizziness and fatigue
- Chills
- Rapid pulse

Treatment of heat exhaustion is similar to that of dehydration and should take place immediately. This treatment includes:

1. Rest in a cool, shaded area and place ice cold towels on the body.
2. Drink a sports drink that contains the adequate amount of electrolytes.
3. Lie down with legs elevated to promote circulation.
4. Athlete should begin to feel better relatively soon; if not, assume heat stroke.

## Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is a medical emergency! When it is not recognized promptly and treated properly, it can result in death. If rapid cooling does not occur, damage could be extreme, resulting in fatal consequences. Symptoms and results of heat stroke include:

- Very high core body temperature
- Altered central nervous system function (i.e., confusion or unconsciousness)
- Otherwise healthy athlete collapses during intense exercise in the heat

Remember that athletes get better relatively quickly with heat exhaustion, and they get worse with heat stroke. The important thing to remember is that heat stroke must be treated immediately by doing the following:

- Immediate cool-down by whatever means possible
  - An ice bath in a “cool pool” is preferable because of the superior cooling rates (holding head out of bath)
  - Ice packs over as much of the body as possible
  - A cool shower
  - Cool, wet towels
  - Water spray
- **SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY** (always transport a suspected heat stroke victim to the hospital).
- Do not drink fluids since nausea and vomiting are extremely common.

Reference: Kendrick Fincher Hydration Foundation For more information visit:  
[http://www.kendrickfincher.org/hydration\\_facts.htm#](http://www.kendrickfincher.org/hydration_facts.htm#)

Heads Up: **safety in youth sports (cont.)**

## Safety Rules

- Players must remove any jewelry (necklaces, rings, earrings, etc.) to prevent a hazard to opponents and themselves.
- If a child has a special need, check with the parents on how to address that need.
- Here is a list of suggested first-aid supplies you might want to have on hand
  - Band-Aids
  - Gauze pads
  - Ice packs
  - Athletic tape
- Procedure for Serious Accidents
  1. Do not move the individual if indications are that they may have a back or neck injury.
  2. Get in touch with parents and proceed from there, offering assistance in every way.
    - a. If parents cannot be contacted or the situation requires immediate medical attention, call 911. Stay with the child until help arrives.

## Concussion in Youth Sports

### The Facts

- A concussion is a **brain injury**.
- All concussions are **serious**.
- Concussions can occur **without** loss of consciousness.
- Concussions can occur **in any sport**.
- Recognition and proper management of concussions when they first occur can help prevent further injury or even death.

### What is a Concussion?

A concussion is an injury that changes how the cells in the brain normally work. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goalpost.

Heads Up: **safety in youth sports (cont.)**

### Recognizing a Possible Concussion

To help recognize a concussion, you should watch for the following two things among your athletes:

1. A forceful blow to the head or body that results in a rapid movement of the head.

**-And-**

2. Any change in the athlete's behavior, thinking, or physical functioning. (See the signs and symptoms of concussion.)

## Signs and Symptoms

### Signs Observed by Coaching Staff

- 
- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets sports plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

### Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

### Action Plan: What to do When a Concussion is Suspected:

1. **Remove the athlete from play.** Look for the signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head.
2. **Ensure that the athlete is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional.** Do not try to judge the severity of concussions.

## Warm-Up exercises

### Jogging

Have players jog (not run) a lap or two around the flag football field prior to practices and games. This will get their heart rate up and prepare muscles for exercise.

### **Jumping Jacks**

Having players do these will increase their heart rate and stretch leg, back, and arm muscles.

## Stretching exercises

### **Hamstring Stretch**

Stand upright and cross your left foot in front of your right, so the outside of your left foot is close to the outside of your right foot. Slowly bend forward at the waist, moving your hands toward your toes. Stop when you feel a gentle stretch through the right hamstring. Hold for thirty seconds. Breathe deeply and try to deepen the stretch with each exhale. Repeat the exercise for your left leg by crossing your right foot in front of your left.

### **Calf Stretch**

In a push up position extend the right leg back as straight as possible. Place the left leg over the right. Push the right heel down as far as possible. Hold for ten seconds. Release. Switch legs.

### **Groin Stretches**

Sit on the floor. Forming a circular shape with your legs, join the soles of your feet together and hold them with your hands. Lean your elbows on the inside of your legs. Lean your upper body forward from the hips.

### **Shoulder Stretch**

Place your right arm across your chest just below chin level. Take the opposite hand and grab the right elbow, gently pull the arm until you feel a stretch in the shoulder. Hold for ten seconds. Release. Switch arms. Repeat.

### **Arm Stretches**

Loosen up your arms/shoulders by sticking them straight out (sideways), swirl them in small tight circles, make the circles wider and wider until you're basically swinging your arms in a circle that goes from the floor around to the ceiling. That should take about thirty seconds. Do this again but swirling your arms in the reverse direction.

## Basic skills

### **Proper Grip**

An appropriate grip varies from one person to another. Size of hands and length of fingers always influence placement of the hand. There is no one specific way to grip the football. To provide enough control and pressure on the surface of the ball, hold the top half with one to three fingers spread across the laces and the index finger crossing the seam close to the ball's tip. Players need to practice different grips to find which one works best for them.

### **Proper Throwing Technique**

The focus here is on an over-the-top delivery, flicking the wrists and following through for maximum velocity. Step toward target with front foot as you release the ball.

### **Receiving**

Arms out-stretched, with the tips of the index fingers and thumbs touching, forming a diamond. This avoids the common pitfall of catching the ball with your chest.

### **Backpedaling**

Backpedaling is especially important for players who will be covering speedy and shifty wide receivers; you must be able to move backward and side to side without losing much speed or taking time to shift body position. Defenders should focus on keeping an athletic stance, bent slightly at the waist and never crossing feet.

### **Handoff Drill**

In this drill, the running back comes behind the quarterback and places his arms in the receiving position. If the running back is running left to right, his left hand is on top, aligning with his rib cage and his right hand is on the bottom aligning with his waist. If the back is running right to left, his right hand is on top and his left hand is on bottom. Have the quarterback hand the ball off to the running back twice while running in each direction, giving the back attempts to receive the ball correctly on a handoff.

### **Knee Drill**

This knee drill is designed to improve your wrist snap and release while throwing the ball. Grab a partner and stand five yards apart. Get down on one knee and pick up a football in your throwing hand. Bring the ball up behind your ear and snap off a short pass to your partner, making sure to follow through so your arm comes down across your body. Repeat 10 times before moving an additional five yards away from your partner. Continue moving five feet back until you are out of your range.

### **Route Running**

Players will line up, single file. One at a time, players will run a predetermined route. Coaches should watch each route and teach as players run the routes. After players feel comfortable with the route, add a pass from the coach.

### **Chase Drill**

Just as players must learn to grab flags, they also must be able to avoid having their flags pulled on offense. Have players take turns being the defensive and offensive player and set up two cones 20 yards up-field, 10 yards apart. The ball carrier gets the ball along with a 3- to 5-yard head start. When the whistle blows, the ball carrier races for the condensed end zone while trying to move quickly and laterally to avoid having their flag grabbed.

### **Flag Pulling Drill**

In this drill, you designate a defender and line up offensive players who form a single-file line. The offensive players run across the line of scrimmage with the ball, cutting right and left alternating, and increasing speed as the drills progresses. The defender must close in on the ball-carrier quickly, bend at the waist and ready to lunge for the flag with both hands.

### **Angle Pulling Drill**

Set up two cones on the line of scrimmage, one about 10 yards to the right and the other about 10 yards to the left. Have each player wear a flag belt and pair up with another similar-sized player, with one being the running back and the other the linebacker. Position the players between the cones, facing each other about 10 yards apart. When you blow the whistle, have the running back sprint toward whichever cone she chooses. The linebacker must then take an angle of pursuit that will allow him to reach the running back before she gets past the cone. The linebacker will need to reach out across the body of the running back to grab her flag but should not make contact.

### **Flag Pulling Duel**

Set up four to six cones to mark off a small square or circle. Have two players at a time enter the ring, each wearing a flag belt. Players will compete to see who can pull off the other's belt first. The winner will then take on a new challenger, until everyone on the team has had a chance to play.



### **Sprint Drill**

In this drill, each player starts at the goal line. On the coach's whistle, each player sprints to the 10-yard line and back, the 20-yard line and back and then the 40-yard line and back.

### **Gassers**

These sprints go the length of the football field. For youth players, it's best to adjust the distance to 50 or 60 yards and adjust the number of sprints to 7 or 8. This drill will develop leg muscles and explosive speed.

### **Interval Sprints**

Interval training improves endurance and speed. Have players start by sprinting for 15 yards, then go into a jog for 15 yards, then sprint 15 yards, then finish with a 15-yard jog. Another option is to start with a 15-yard jog and then sprint for 15 yards, as long as you do an equal number of jogs and sprints. Perform four or five repetitions, resting for about one minute between sets.

### **Indian Run**

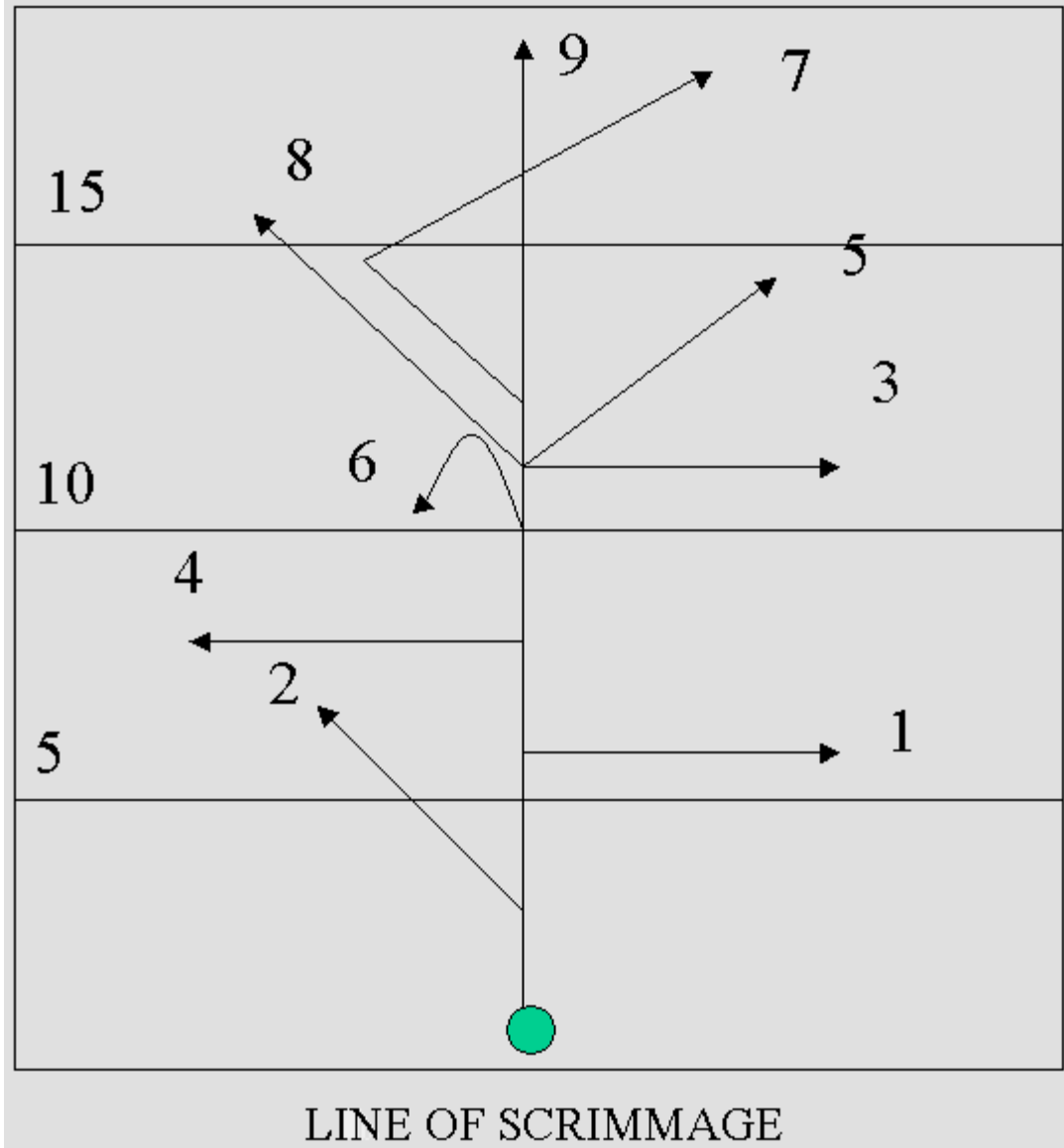
To perform this drill, the players get into a line and begin to jog around the outside of the field. A coach will blow a whistle or signal for the player at the back of the line to sprint to the front. When he gets to the front, he resumes jogging. The player now at the end of the line will sprint to the front on the coach's cue. Continue the drill for five to six minutes.

### **Jingle-Jangle**

This drill improves a player's balance, footwork and quick change of direction. Place four cones on the corners of a large square. The players sprint to the first cone, back pedal to the second, side step to the third and sprint to the fourth cone.

## Passing Tree diagram

The Passing Tree is a numbered System used for the passing routes.



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### Passing Tree – Routes / Number

|                 |           |             |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|
| Quick Out- 1    | Slant – 2 | Deep Out- 3 |
| Drag / In – 4   | Flag- 5   | Curl-6      |
| Post Corner – 7 | Post- 8   | Fly - 9     |

Passing Tree definitions

**\* For younger participants the passing routes can be reduced by half**

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|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Quick Out (1):   | This is a 5-8 yard route forward then the receiver cuts out towards the sideline looking for the ball.   |
| Slant (2):       | This is a 3-5 yard route forward then the receiver breaks towards the middle of the field on a 45 degree angle and looks for the ball.   |
| Deep Out (3):    | This is a 10-15 yard route. It should be run exactly like the quick out only deeper.   |
| Drag/In (4):     | This is a 5-8 yard route forward then the receiver breaks into the middle of the field on a 90 degree angle and looks for the ball.  |
| Flag (5):        | This is a 10-15 yard route forward then the receiver breaks at a 45 degree angle towards the sideline and looks for the ball.  |
| Curl (6):        | This is a 5-8 yard route forward then the receiver stops and turns to the ball.  |
| Post Corner (7): | This is a 12-20 yard route forward then the receiver cuts on a 45 degree angle to the middle of the field for three steps then the receiver cuts on a 45 degree angle towards the sideline looking for the ball. |
| Post (8):        | This is a 12-20 yard route forward then the receiver breaks on a 45 degree angle towards the middle of the field and looks for the ball.   |
| Fly (9):         | This route is ran straight up the field with the receiver looking for the ball after he gets past about 10 yards.  |

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Coaching **resources**

The LA 84 is a nonprofit foundation that is committed to serving youth sports. They provide information for coaches and also provide various coaching clinics  
[www.la84foundation.org](http://www.la84foundation.org)

**NFL Flag**

NFL Flag is the official website for the NFL's flag football program. They offer many coaching resources including tips and plays.  
[www.nflflag.com](http://www.nflflag.com)

**National Alliance for Youth Sports**

The National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) is a non-profit organization and America's leading advocate for positive and safe sports and activities for children. NAYS offers programs and services for everyone involved in youth sports experiences, including professional administrators, volunteer administrators, volunteer coaches, officials, parents and young athletes. The goal of NAYS is to make sports and activities safe and positive by providing programs and services that add value to youth sports. [www.NAYS.org](http://www.NAYS.org)

**Southern California Municipal Athletic Federation – SCMAF**

The Southern California Municipal Athletic Federation is a non-profit organization comprised primarily of municipal recreation services that provides resources to both Recreational programs and their coaches.  
[www.scmaf.org](http://www.scmaf.org)

**Youth Sports Information**

**Website:** [www.santa-clarita.com/youthsports](http://www.santa-clarita.com/youthsports)

**Youth Sports Office**

(661) 250-3756  
[youthsports@santa-clarita.com](mailto:youthsports@santa-clarita.com)

**Mark Jordan –Recreation Coordinator**

(661) 250-3754  
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**RULINGS ON VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES**

**NOTE: L.O.S. - Line of Scrimmage/ P.O.F. - Point of Foul**

| VIOLATION                     |  | PENALTY                                   |                                       | DOWN         | ENFORCE FROM   |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|--------------|--|
| <b>(Dead Ball Violations)</b> |  |   |                                       |              |  |
| 1.                            | Delay of game 30 seconds (Minor & Major Div.)  | 5 yards                                   |                                       | same         | L.O.S. (Line of Scrimmage)                           |
| 2.                            | Delay of game 35 seconds (Mighty Mite & Junior Div.)   | 4 yards                                   |                                       | same         | L.O.S.   |
| <b>(Offensive Violations)</b> |  | <b>Mighty Mite / Junior</b>               | <b>Minor / Major</b>                  |              |  |
| 3.                            | Illegal procedure  | 4 yards                                   | 5 yards                               | same         | L.O.S.   |
| 4.                            | Intentionally grounded pass  | 4 yards                                   | 5 yards                               | loss of down | L.O.S.   |
| 5.                            | Flag guarding or illegal arrangement of flag   | 8 yards                                   | 10 yards                              | same         | P.O.F. (Point of Foul)                               |
| 6.                            | Illegal hideouts   | 4 yards                                   | 5 yards                               | loss of down | L.O.S.   |
| 7.                            | Illegal forward pass   | 4 yards                                   | 5 yards                               | loss of down | L.O.S.   |
| 8.                            | Direct run by quarterback  | 4 yards                                   | 5 yards                               | loss of down | L.O.S.   |
| 9.                            | Delay on punt  | 4 yards                                   | 5 yards                               | same         | L.O.S.   |
| 10.                           | Illegal use of hands (offensive)   | 8 yards                                   | 10 yards                              | same         | L.O.S.   |
| 11.                           | Stiff arming or hacking (by ball carrier)  | 8 yards                                   | 10 yards                              | same         | P.O.F.   |
| 12.                           | Clipping   | 8 yards                                   | 10 yards                              | same         | P.O.F.   |
| 13.                           | Offensive pass interference  | 4 yards                                   | 5 yards                               | loss of down | L.O.S.   |
| 14.                           | Hurdling to advance the ball   | 8 yards                                   | 10 yards                              | same         | P.O.F.   |
| 15.                           | Rushing the middle (offense)   | 4 yards                                   | Does not apply                        | same         | L.O.S.   |
| 16.                           | Illegal punt   | 4 yards                                   | 5 yards                               | same         | L.O.S.   |
| <b>(Defensive Violations)</b> |  |   |                                       |              |  |
| 17.                           | Rushing the middle (defense)   | 4 yards                                   | Does not apply                        | same         | L.O.S.   |
| 18.                           | Defensive holding or illegal use of hands  | 8 yards                                   | 10 yards                              | same         | L.O.S.   |
| 19.                           | Roughing passer  | 4 yards                                   | 5 yards                               | 1st down     | L.O.S.   |
| 20.                           | Defensive pass interference  | 4 yards                                   | 5 yards                               | 1st down     | L.O.S.   |
| <b>(General Violations)</b>   |  |   |                                       |              |  |
| 21.                           | Unnecessary roughness, kneeling, punching or any flagrant roughness  | 12 yards (possible removal from the game) | 15 yards (possible removal from game) | same         | Offense L.O.S.<br>Defense P.O.F.                     |
| 22.                           | Unsportsmanlike conduct  | 12 yards (possible removal from game)     | 15 yards (possible removal from game) | same         | Offense L.O.S.<br>Defense P.O.F.<br>Coach/Fan L.O.S. |
| 23.                           | Intentional Tripping   | 8 yards                                   | 10 yards                              | same         | P.O.F.   |
| 24.                           | Charging: running over the defense by the ball carrier and playing the person instead of the flag                                      | 8 yards                                   | 10 yards                              | same         | P.O.F.   |
| 25.                           | Defensive roughness - the defense cannot tackle, hold, block, trip, push, charge, bump the ball carrier, nor push the ball carrier out | 8 yards                                   | 10 yards                              | same         | P.O.F.   |

## Definition **terms**

**Run:** A play that does not include a forward pass prior to crossing the line of scrimmage.

**Pass:** Any thrown ball that spends time untouched in the air and does not touch the ground.

**Forward Pass:** A pass thrown by a player from behind the line of scrimmage toward the opponents' goal line.

**Lateral Pass:** A pass that is not thrown forward (Laterally or backwards)