

**BLACKSBURG, CHRISTIANSBURG, RADFORD, PULASKI,
PULASKI COUNTY AND MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

SANDLOT FOOTBALL

COACHES AND REFEREES HANDBOOK

SPORTS SUPERVISORS PHONE NUMBERS

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**Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Radford, Pulaski,
Pulaski County, and Montgomery County Parks and Recreation**

SANDLOT FOOTBALL

Purpose and Objective: The purpose of the league is to provide a recreational experience in football for the participants. The objectives are to furnish instruction in the rules of the game and techniques of play; to stress sportsmanship throughout the season and to provide a recreational activity for participants.

Practices can start the first day of school for Montgomery County schools. Late sign-ups can only be added up to the Tuesday of the second week of practice. Official weigh-ins will be on the first or second day of practice. Any late sign-ups must be weighed before they can start practice.

ELIGIBILITY:

- A. Any boy/girl may play who will be 9 years old before November 1, 2004, except that no 14 year old may play, regardless of grade in school. No eighth grade boy/girl may play, regardless of age.
- B. Boys/girls who are 13 years old by November 1, 2004 must play in the Senior Division.

Boys/girls who are 9 or 10 years old by November 1, 2004 must play in the Junior Division.
- C. Boys/girls who are 11 years old by November 1, 2004 and weighing 85 pounds and under at the time of the official weigh-in, would be allowed to run the ball. Players weighing between 86 and 105 pounds at the time of the official weigh-in, have an option to play in the Junior Division. If they choose to play in the Junior Division, they cannot run the ball and would have to be a down lineman on offense and defense. An "X" must be placed on their helmet.
- D. Boys/girls who are 7 or 8 years old by November 1, 2004 must play in the Mite Division.

RULES OF THE LEAGUE:

GENERAL:

Boys/girls in the Senior Division weighing 130 lbs. or more at the time of the official weigh-in will be identified with a black "X" on their helmets. These players must play down linemen, tackle to tackle on offense and defense.

No boy/girl in the Senior Division weighing 130 lbs. or more at the time of the official weigh-in will be allowed to play in the backfield or carry the ball at any time.

No boys/girls in the Junior Division (9 and 10 years old) weighing 105 lbs. or more at the time of the official weigh-in will be allowed to play in the backfield or carry the ball at any time.

No boy/girl in the Mite Division weighing 80 lbs. or more at the time of the official weigh-in will be allowed to play in the backfield or carry the ball at any time. Players weighing 80 lbs. or more will be identified with a black "X" on their helmet. These players must play as down linemen, tackle to tackle on offense and defense.

Players with an "X" on their helmet cannot advance the ball in any circumstance! The "X" should be on top of the helmet and be at least 6" to 8" long.

All injuries are to be reported to the supervisors of recreation.

Coaches are responsible for conduct of players and assistant coaches.

One coach from each team must attend the organizational meeting in order to coach for the season.

GAMES:

Games will be played on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings or Saturdays.

Games will be played at 5:45 or 7:00 p.m.

Each game will have at least two currently certified H.S. District officials. Mite league needs at least one current certified high school official.

Each team will have two time-outs per half. Coaches (two per team limit) will be allowed to come onto the field during time-outs.

COACHES HAVE ONE OF TWO OPTIONS ON HOW TO PLAY THEIR PLAYERS. THEY CAN PLAY THE CURRENT RULE WHERE ALL PLAYERS MUST PLAY A COMPLETE QUARTER EACH HALF OR THEY CAN PLAY A ROTATION SYSTEM WHERE THE COACH SUBSTITUTES AN ENTIRE OFFENSE OR DEFENSE EVERY SERIES (CHANGE POSSESSION). YOU MUST FINISH WITH THE SYSTEM YOU START WITH. ANY COACH FOUND TO BE IN VIOLATION OF THIS PLAYING RULE MAY BE SUSPENDED!

Time: *Mite* – Eight minute quarters

Junior – Eight minute quarters

Senior – Eight minute quarters

HALFTIME – Eight minutes

The offense will have 30 seconds to run a play after the referee sets the ball.

The game clock will stop on incomplete passes, out of bounds, scores and time-outs. The clock will restart on the next snap.

The game clock will stop on all penalties and will be restarted when the ball is reset by the official.

Coaches are allowed on the field only during time-outs (to talk with their team only) or when called in for injuries.

In the Mite league one coach from each team can be on the field during play. This will be for the first two games only.

DEFENSE:

Teams may use any legal defense. Players with an “X” on their helmets must play from tackle to tackle.

Linebackers must remain as deep off the line of scrimmage as the defensive lineman’s heels until the ball is snapped.

The interior linemen with an x on their helmet must line up over any offensive player from tackle to tackle. They must play head up and on inside shoulder in a 3 or 4 point stance.

OFFENSE:

Any kind of offensive play may be used i.e. pass, run, reverse, etc.

Teams may use any legal offensive formation.

There shall be no blocking below the waist by any player who is outside the free blocking zone (3 yards on either side of line of scrimmage and five yards on either side of the center) except to tackle the runner or a player pretending to be a runner on any type of play. On a double team block, the second blocker must block above the waist.

If a team decides to punt on any down a FREEKICK must be declared by the officials with no run back by the receiving team. Down lineman must remain down until after the kick has been made. The receiving team will take over possession of the ball where it is caught or where it stops. If it is touched by the receiving team and goes forward it will be marked where first touched. Punts must be started with a snap by the center with the ball being punted behind the line of scrimmage.

RUNNING UP THE SCORE: If a team leads by 24 points or more in the fourth quarter a continuous clock will be used and the clock will only stop for time outs and injuries. If a team is leading by 18 points or more with four minutes or less in the game, the team must run the ball between tackles or take a knee. Any coach accused of running the score up on a team will meet with participating athletic directors and could face suspension from the league. This will be done before the next scheduled game.

If your team is up by 18 points or more at any time during the fourth quarter we strongly encourage you to play your second team offense and defense.

KICKING GAME:

MITE, JUNIOR, AND SENIOR DIVISIONS: There will be no kick-offs to start the game, to start the second half, or after scores. The team receiving the ball will take possession on their 20 yard line.

Extra point tries, punts, and field goal attempts will be a free kick-no rush. All linemen must be in a down position and must remain down until the ball is kicked. No player may leave their feet in an attempt to block the kick. The clock will continue to run during punts.

Players with a black "X" may punt and kick extra points. When an extra point is attempted by kicking, the ball must be kicked.

Extra Points: Kick = 1 point Running = 2 points

No quick-kicks will be allowed.

PRACTICES:

All teams will be allowed to have four meetings per calendar week (Calendar week is Sunday – Saturday), including games and practices. Practices are to be limited to 1 ½ hours per practice. Only one practice session will be allowed per day. A practice schedule containing time, place and date must be submitted with the Recreation Department before practice begins.

During the first week of practice, no contact will be allowed. No pads will be allowed during the first week. Players may wear their helmets. The first week of practice should consist of the fundamentals of blocking, tackling, stance, and conditioning before any inter-squad scrimmaging occurs.

PENALTIES:

Holding – Offense 10 yards Defense 10 yards

Clipping – 10 yards

Personal Foul – Piling on/Late hit, 10 yards

Illegal Forward Pass – 10 yards and loss of down

Offsides/Illegal Motion/False Start – 5 yards

Illegal Block – 10 yards

Pass Interference – Offense: 10 yards, loss of down
Defense: 10 yards, first down

Delay of Game – 5 yards

Unsportsmanlike Conduct – Player or Coach 15 yards

Any player that commits an unsportsmanlike foul (slugging, kicking, or knocking an opponent, etc.) will be removed from the game immediately and may not re-enter the game.

EQUIPMENT:

Uniforms must be washed and returned by the week after the last game. Failure to do so will restrict participation in further activities.

Equipment must be returned within one week of the final game. If equipment is not returned, parents will be billed.

TACKLE FOOTBALL SAFETY PROCEDURES

Practice activities are responsible for a large percentage of football injuries and a majority of these injuries are related to live contact tackling and blocking drills.

1. The use of the head as the primary blocking or tackling surface should not be allowed.
2. The proper football position should be taught (knees flexed, trunk bent, face up and eyes straight ahead).
3. Proper equipment which has been fitted properly should always be worn during drills.
4. In early sessions the emphasis should be on conditioning. Contact should be kept to a minimum.
5. When beginning contact drills, be sure to teach fundamentals of tackling and blocking first.
6. In blocking, the athlete should be taught never to block a person whose back is to them.
7. Players should be taught to regain their feet as soon as possible when knocked down.
8. In blocking, tackling, or running, players should not duck their head downward but should keep their eye up.
9. In blocking or tackling, the players hands should be kept closed as much as possible.
10. Players should not be allowed to leave their feet in blocking, tackling, catching, or running the ball.
11. All participants must wear a mouth piece at all times. It is a good idea to have them use mouth guards even in non-contact practices so as to develop a habit.
12. Always be sure to have a warm-up period which includes stretching exercises.

THE VOLUNTEER COACH

As a volunteer coach in the sports program of the Parks and Recreation Department, you have a great responsibility. Some of you will determine the youngster's future outlook on competitive athletics. All of you will influence the children's sense of self-worth and well-being.

In line with responsibility, we ask you to accept and follow this code:

A COACH'S CODE

1. I agree that participation contributes to a positive recreation experience and I will play all athletes as much as possible so that all may have the best possible experience.
2. I will remember that I am coaching young athletes who need to experience approval if they are to continue in sports and I will make sure that they receive approval from me.
3. I agree that I will treat all players with fairness and impartiality and I will never abuse any player with my language or actions.
4. I agree that I should teach only those tactics that are within the spirit of fair play and that I will not allow the players to exhibit unsportsmanlike conduct of any kind.
5. I agree to accept judgment calls of officials without demonstrations and to confine protests to rule interpretations only, made to the proper authority in the proper manner. I will not approach officials after the game to argue, place blame, or in any way give the impression of coercion.
6. I agree that my conduct on the sideline will be a good example to both players and fans. Moreover, I agree that emotional outbursts condemning the conduct of officials or players have no place in recreational sports.

Working together, the coaches and the Recreation Departments can provide competitive experiences that build character, promotes good sportsmanship, and is a lot of fun.

GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES

FOR COACHES WORKING WITH YOUTH SPORTS

1. All participants should adhere to all rules of the sport as well as to other regulations that insure safe conduct of an activity.
2. Be certain all participants have parental waiver or medical clearance before engaging in any physical activity.
3. See that wearing apparel of participants, including protective equipment, if provided, is fitted correctly and worn at all times during practice and play.
4. Make sure the length and the number of practices are in accordance with the department's requirements. Give attention to fatigue, climate conditions, and the strenuousness of the sport or activity being performed. Adjust length of practice to fit climate or participants.
5. Work out a progressive conditioning schedule that is specific to the sport and will meet the physical demands of the sport.
6. Develop skills before scrimmage.
7. Supervise all play.
8. Allow no horseplay.
9. Adapt all drills to the abilities of young, immature children.
10. Insist upon sportsmanship at all times.
11. Developing skills is one of the most important keys to preventing injuries. A player who has proper knowledge of the activity to be played will reduce the possibility of injury.