

THREE RIVERS YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE  
PLAYING RULES AND REGULATIONS  
7-27-11 REV.  
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Universal Rules Grades 4-6

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## **1. Organization and Philosophy**

- a. TRYFL exists for the purpose of teaching each child the fundamentals of the sport and to provide the framework for the wholesome participation at each child's playing ability.
- b. Having fun while learning and being treated with dignity is each child's right and each adult's responsibility.
- c. Coaches and parents shall stress sportsmanship, team spirit, and developing skills more than winning. In addition to learning the fundamentals, the child, parents and coaches should learn and remember how to lose graciously.
- d. Coaches and parents shall employ appropriate language when dealing with impressionable youth. Coaches or parents will not tolerate profanity.

## **2. Registration and Medical Release**

- a. Each participating community must have signed registrations including medical releases and any additional paperwork required as per each communities program. Any player with a cast or any medical concerns MUST have a copy of the release from a medical doctor or a chiropractor that must be given to the official prior to playing in any game. A copy of that release must be provided for every game.

## **3. Team size and selection**

- a. Each participating community will strive to create competitively balanced teams of 22 players or fewer.
- b. Team names must be approved by the Community representative.
- c. Team size will be no larger than 29 players. Anything over will be split into 2 teams. The deadline for number of teams per town will be the Monday that High School teams start practice. The deadline for team rosters will be the TRYFL coaches meeting.

## **4. Coaches**

- a. Coaches must complete all the requirements below to be approved as a head or assistant coach by the TRYFL Board of Trustees.
  - i. All coaches:
    1. Shall have the approval of the respective Community representative.
    2. Shall pass a background check

3. Shall have attended the annual TRYFL Coaches clinic and receive verification from said clinic. At this clinic the coach must sign a coaches statement certifying that the coach has read and understands the rules and philosophy of the TRYFL and has signed the TRYFL's coaches code of conduct.
- b. Coaches are selected on the basis of their ability to work with young people and not solely on the basis of their technical football knowledge. Coaches are required to abide by the spirit of these rules and the overall philosophy of the TRYFL. The coaches must always remember that the program is for players and not for the coaches.
  - c. Two adults must supervise each game, practice and meeting. One of said adults must be a TRYFL approved coach.
  - d. One (1) coach will be allowed on the field during play
    - i. Any Varsity coach on the field, offensive or defensive, must remain silent once the huddle is broken and until the end of the play.
    - ii. Junior Varsity coaches on the field must remain silent once the quarterback is under center and until the end of the play.
    - iii. If the coaches do not remain silent, they will receive one warning. For the second offense, a 5 yard penalty will be assessed. Coaches on the sidelines can continue to give commands at any time during the course of play.
    - iv. There must never be more than one (1) coach on the field at any given time except for equipment repairs, injuries or change of possession.
    - v. EXCEPTION: An on field coach may call a time out at any time.

## **5. Equipment**

- a. All players must use TRYFL approved equipment. Players not equipped as outlined below will be sent off the playing field until the necessary changes have been made.
- b. All players must wear
  - i. Approved helmets with hard chin straps, football pants, shoulder pads, mouthguards and shoes. Shoes may not have removable cleats. Mouthguards must be attached to helmet.
  - ii. Failure to wear a mouthguard during a game will result in a 10 yard penalty. Athletic supporters are highly recommended but not required.
- c. Coaches are expected to see that each player is fitted properly in approved equipment in proper repair. Any player wearing faulty equipment will not be allowed to play.

- d. The only reason a jersey may come off during a game is for medical reasons or blood on the jersey. If the jersey needs to be replaced it must be reported to the referee and the opposing team.
- e. The official game ball for grades 4-6 is Junior size 9-12
- f. As of the 2010 season, it is mandatory that each community provide reversible jerseys for all players. Any team without reversible jerseys will be allowed to play the game, but the game will be a forfeit.
- g. Jersey numbers: For 2011 teams may have duplicate jersey numbers, but must notify the opposing team and notate it on the roster. No teams may have duplicate jersey numbers for 2012 season and beyond.

## 6. Fields

- a. Community Representatives shall be responsible to ensure that the game fields are in playable condition, properly marked and equipped for a TRYFL game.
- b. The team box shall extend from the 30 yard line to the 30 yard line, 5 yards deep, marked with cones or chalk. All coaches and players are to remain inside that box during the game. No person other than a coach or player shall be permitted in the team box during the game. The penalty for violation is 5 yards.
- c. Fields will be 80 yards long by 42 yards wide with 10 yard end zones. All fields must be completely chalked and markers every 10 yards, with hash marks every 5 yards, a hash at the 3 yard lines and an X at the 35 yard lines. See attachment F.

## 7. Games

- a. Games begin with a coin toss involving team captains and the game officials. The team winning the coin toss has the choice of kicking off, receiving, or deferring their choice until the start of the second half.
- b. It will be the duty of the game officials with the help of the head and assistant coaches, to keep spectators 5 yards or more from the field of play. The game will stop until the area is clear. Violations may result in a ten (10) yard penalty.
- c. There will be a two (2) minute time out between quarters and a maximum of five (5) minutes at halftime.

### d. Game Times

- i. Junior Varsity

1. Tuesdays @ 6:00 PM
  2. Thursdays @ 6:00 PM If necessary
  3. Saturdays @ 10:00 AM
- ii. Varsity
1. Tuesdays @ 7:30 PM
  2. Thursdays @ 7:30 PM if necessary
  3. Saturdays @ 11:30 AM
- iii. Night game times subject to lighted field availability and may change towards the end of the season.
- iv. [Metrodome game dates and times to be determined at the beginning of each season](#)

## 8. Practices

- a. Team practices may start during the week of August 15<sup>th</sup> and teams may have no more than three (3) practices per week until the first game. Thereafter, teams may have maximum of two (2) practices and two (2) games per week. Practices should last no longer than 2 hours. Practices should not be conducted in bad weather or in darkness.
- b. No practice is allowed before the official practice starting date for High School football as designated by the Minnesota High School League.
- c. **The penalty for too many practices or starting early is that the team will play the current game and forfeit the next game .The community rep is responsible for monitoring and bringing to league attention.**

## 9. Weight restrictions

- a. At weigh in the player may wear anything they want but at a minimum they must wear a pair of shorts and a T shirt.
- b. Official weights are as follows
  - i. Varsity- To be eligible to carry or receive the ball, a player cannot weigh more than 115 pounds while wearing shorts and a T shirt This is a 5 pound increase over 2008.
  - ii. Junior Varsity- To be eligible to carry or receive the ball, a player cannot weigh more than 100 pounds while wearing shorts and a T shirt.
- iii. 2009 and hereafter, TRYFL will conduct random weigh ins, your entire team WILL be weighed at some point during the season. No player shall be officially weighed more than

2 times per season. If a player is found to be over the weight limits a red stripe must be placed on the players helmet immediately for that and all following games. The coach of the offending team will be suspended for 2 games, that game and the next game, regular season or playoffs do not matter.

1. It is the responsibility of the offending teams Community Rep to ensure that the coach abides by the 2 game suspension
  2. There will be NO protests of games as in years past.
- iv. A player weighing in excess of the above weights shall be deemed an ineligible player for the purpose of these rules. Ineligible players will be designated by a single red stripe on the helmet. No ineligible offensive player may advance the ball on any offensive play or as part of any kickoff, punt or fumble. An ineligible defensive player may advance an interception or a recovered fumble
  - v. Players who are not eligible to carry or receive the ball will have their helmet marked with a red stripe for identification. Players with a red stripe cannot line up in any offensive position that is eligible to receive or carry the ball (including quarterback)
  - vi. If the ball is turned over during a kickoff or punt, it can be advanced only by a player of legal ball carrying weight. If the ball is recovered by a player with a red stripe, the play will be blown dead at the spot of recovery.  
**Clarification:** Red striper must possess the ball then it is dead if a red striper touches and does not possess, it is a live ball on kick offs.
  - vii. Turnovers from the offense to the defense can be advanced by any player.

## 10. Offense

- a. Teams may run any legal offense (i.e. 7 players on the line of scrimmage). A player is considered on the line of scrimmage as long as his helmet is even with or forward of the centers hips. Only players of ball carrying weight may line up in any position eligible to receive the ball. (see rule on ball carrying weights)
- b. The offensive line may not line up with splits larger than three (3) feet between linemen. (i.e. Center, guard, tackle) See Attachment E
- c. “Crack Back” blocks are illegal. Players split more than 5 yards from the offensive tackle may not block defensive players on the line of scrimmage. (Defensive Ends can go wider). Teams

must use a balanced line. The ball must be snapped from the middle of the formation. The outside two (2) players are eligible receivers, and may line up anywhere between the tackle and the sideline as long as they remain on the line of scrimmage.

- d. All teams must huddle between each play. An official huddle is five (5) yards back from the line of scrimmage and between the hash marks. If hash marks are not on the field the huddle must be in the middle of the field per the official's judgment. It could range in time anywhere from one (1) second to no more than forty five (45) seconds. An official can hold up a play to allow for a defensive player to get on the field and get set up, (i.e. injuries, beanies, moving chains), only on a change of possession. The clock stops on a change of possession.

## 11. Defense

- a. **Varsity** Teams may use a 4 or 5 man front, with the noseguard directly head up on the center (no shading) and the inside defensive tackles must be head up (no shading) on the offensive tackles. The noseguard and tackles must be in the down position. To avoid any confusion of the referees or possible delays in the game, beanies must be on the appropriate players prior to breaking your defensive huddle. If a defensive huddle is not used it must be very clear well before the offensive huddle is broken which front you are using. The outside players on the line of scrimmage (Defensive Ends) may stand, or be in a down position. They may line up anywhere outside the tackle on their side, but on the line of scrimmage and not closer than three (3) feet to the defensive tackle. The other six (6) players must be in a standing position and must be lined up at least four (4) yards from the line of scrimmage when the play begins.
- b. **Junior Varsity** Teams must use a six (6) man front with at least four (4) down lineman. Junior Varsity cannot use a noseguard/tackle. The four (4) down linemen must be head up (no shading) on the offensive lines guards and tackles. The outside players on the line of scrimmage (Defensive Ends) may stand, or be in a down position. They may line up anywhere outside the tackle on their side, but on the line of scrimmage and not closer than three (3) feet to the defensive tackle. The other five (5) players must be in a standing position and must be lined up at least four (4) yards from the line of scrimmage when the play begins.
- c. **Goal line defense Junior Varsity and Varsity** When the offense has the ball on, or inside the defensive team's five (5) yard, the linebackers may move up into the gaps to within one (1) yard of the line of scrimmage.
- d. **Blitzing, stunting** There shall be no blitzing or stunting.

- i. Defensive linebackers and safeties may not cross the line of scrimmage until the ball carrier commits to cross the line or goes outside the offensive tackle position established at the time of the snap.
- ii. Linebackers and safeties must be coached to read all of the plays and the movements of the offensive players.
- iii. All players must line up heads up, no shading and square to the line. If a referee considers a player lined up crooked for a stunt he may make him square up. You can cross block but you must line up squared up.
- iv. Blitzing/stunting penalty clarification. If the referee calls a team for blitzing or stunting, the penalty for the first offense is a 5 yard penalty. The penalty for the second and any subsequent calls is a 5 yard penalty and automatic first down for the offense.

## **12. Kicking game**

- a. The kicking team will line up on the 35 yard line. The kicking team cannot cross the 35 yard line until the ball has been kicked. The receiving team must have 5 players lined up on the opposite 35 yard line. If the ball is kicked out of bounds the receiving team takes possession on their own 30 yard line. A free kick will occur after a safety. For a safety the ball will be placed at the kicking teams 20 yard line and can be punted or kicked off. The set up for a free kick is the same for a regular kickoff. All communities please ensure that the 35 yard lines are marked well for ball placement.
- b. Onside kicks have always been and are still legal per High School rules.
- c. When a touchback occurs the ball will be placed on the 20 yard line.
- d. The offensive team must notify the defensive team when they intend to punt no matter what down it is. (Declared punt) The punting team must have 7 players on the line of scrimmage in a legal offensive formation. The punter must line up at least 3-5 yards behind the line of scrimmage. The offensive and defensive teams cannot leave the line of scrimmage until the ball has been punted. The defensive team must have 5 players on the line of scrimmage. If the ball touches either offense or defense on the line of scrimmage it is a dead ball and belongs to the receiving team and ball goes back to the original line of scrimmage.

## **13. Playing time**

- a. Although the TRYFL does not consider itself the “playing time police” TRYFL does expect that each community and/or team will devise an equitable system to ensure as close as possible to equal playing time. The League will investigate complaints that coaches are not abiding by the spirit and intent of this rule. The League absolutely reserves the right to forfeit games and ban coaches, teams and communities who are not abiding by the spirit and intent of this rule.

#### **14. Scoring and Timing**

- a. A touchdown is worth (6) points. Extra points are worth (2) points if scored on a passing play, or (1) point if scored on a running play. Safeties are worth (2) points.
- b. Junior Varsity games will consist of four (10) minute quarters
- c. Varsity games will consist of four (12) minute quarters
- d. A 45 second play clock will be in effect once the ball is placed by the referee. Because there is no visual clock, the referee will inform the offense once 30 seconds have elapsed. Exceeding the 45 second limit will result in a 5 yard penalty.
- e. Game will have running time, with the exception of the following:
  - i. Penalties
  - ii. Injuries
  - iii. Touchdowns (through the PAT until the following kickoff)
  - iv. Change of possession (until next offensive play begins)
- f. Time is stopped during the last 2 minutes of each half for the following:
  - i. Incomplete pass
  - ii. Out of Bounds
  - iii. Moving of yard and down markers
  - iv. There will be 2 timeouts per half. Timeouts will last 1 minute from the time the huddle starts. Timeouts will not be carried over from the first half to the second half. In the case of an overtime game each team will have 1 timeout. Timeouts will not be carried over from the second half.

g. Tie Games

- i. Overtime will begin with a coin toss. The winner of the coin toss will have the choice of beginning on offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss will choose from which end of the field the overtime will be played. The offensive team will have 4 plays from the 10 yard line to score a touchdown. Extra points do apply in overtime. Once the offensive team has either scored a touchdown or run out of downs, the opposing team will receive the ball and have 4 plays to score a touchdown. Both teams to run all plays from the same end zone.

If the game is still tied after the first overtime, each team will receive an additional 4 plays to score again with the ball starting on the 5 yard line. Games can have a maximum of 2 overtimes. If the game is still tied after the second overtime the game is considered a tie. The HOME team is responsible then for reporting the score to the website. Games CAN end in a tie. Except for playoff games, in this case all games must have a winner. If the defense scores during overtime, their team wins. (Game over) This rule applies in both Varsity and Junior Varsity levels.

h. 24 Point Rule

- i. When a team is down by 24 points or more, the clock runs nonstop. If the score reverts to less than 24 point difference, the clock goes back to normal stoppages. There will be no passing or onside kicking, allowed when the 24 point rule is in effect by the team that is ahead. The team that is ahead by 24 or more MUST punt on 4<sup>th</sup> down unless they are within their own 15 yard line. If the winning team does pass or onside kick, ( onside kick attempt will be based solely on referees discretion) the first offense will be an incomplete pass, loss of down and a 15 yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. The second offense will be the same plus ejection of the coach from this game and the coach will not be allowed at the next game. There will be no timeouts allowed to be taken by a team that is 24 points or more ahead.

## 15. Rules and Penalties

- a. The Minnesota State High School rules are used to govern all play. Our rules are either clarifications or changes made specifically for our league.

- b. Any unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches, players, parents or spectators will result in an automatic 15 yard penalty. It is the responsibility of the head coach to control his player, parents and spectators. Any time a player, parent, spectator or a coach has been ejected from the game, the game will not continue until that person has left the premises. If they do not leave within 5 minutes of being ejected the team that they represent will be forfeited.
- c. No more than 2 coaches will be allowed on the field during timeouts to discuss strategy.
- d. Only the Head coach or the coach on the field at the time, can talk to the referees during the game.
- e. Blitzing/stunting penalty clarification. If the referee calls a team for blitzing or stunting, the penalty for the first offense is a 5 yard penalty. The penalty for the second and any subsequent calls is a 5 yard penalty and automatic first down for the offense.
- f. Horse Collar tackle. A horse collar tackle will be subject to a 10 yard penalty

## **16. Inclement weather**

- a. All coaches and players must be present at the field by game time. If a team has less than (11) players at game time, it could result in a forfeit if the game could have been played. A team will be allowed 10 minutes to get all of their players to the field. Then it is a forfeit.
- b. The Community representative in the host area where a game is scheduled to be played shall determine whether a game should be cancelled or postponed because of weather or field conditions before the start of the game. Once the game has begun the game officials will have the authority to cancel or delay the game in progress.
  - i. Just to clarify the wording. If there is any change in game schedule because of the weather, the Community Rep from the affected community is to call the Community Rep from whatever community is coming to their town by 2 PM on game day. This needs to be a call and talk to the rep. not just an email that they may or may not receive in time. The Community Rep needs to get this information to the webmaster ASAP also. This makes your job easier. If a decision is not made by 2PM it will be a game time decision that all communities must accept. This will be a courtesy call and there will be NO opportunity for a forfeit if a coach or a team thinks they weren't notified in time. Coaches, please utilize your calling tree.

1. Example. It is storming in Becker and the weather says it will only get worse. Becker is hosting 2 games against Big Lake and Milaca. The Becker Rep needs to call the Milaca Rep and the Big Lake Rep by 2 PM if they want to cancel the games. The Becker Rep will then let his coaches and the webmaster know, the Big Lake Rep will let his coaches know and the Milaca Rep will let his coaches know. The Becker Rep is now responsible for rescheduling the games.
- c. The League will not cancel an entire game night. If for whatever reason a game needs to be cancelled, it must be made up on the next regularly scheduled practice night. It cannot cause a 5<sup>th</sup> contact in any given week.

The game is an official game if 2 full quarters have been played. If at the end of the second quarter a game is called by a referee due to weather the score at that time is final. Including a tie. If a game has not completed 2 full quarters it will be rescheduled per prior wording, on the next regularly scheduled practice night per the league.

## 17. Important Notes

- a. **Coaches Responsibilities:** It is the responsibility of each coach to understand and strictly follow the association's rules and guidelines. Rules are specific and are not subject to interpretation. Coaches should discuss rules or other concerns with each other before or after games in a professional manner away from the players. Remember the players are unnecessarily distracted by such discussions. The referees are instructed to officiate the games and are not expected to enforce association rules and guidelines. Coaches should confirm game timing and scoring with the referees prior to each game.
- b. **Rules disputes during the game:** Rules disputes with referees or opposing coaches during the game will not be tolerated. The referees will be directed by the association to strictly enforce penalties relating to the following: Profanity, abusive language, questioning or arguing calls by coaches, players, spectators or parents.  
First Offense: 15 Yard unsportsmanlike penalty and loss of down  
Second Offense: 15 yard unsportsmanlike penalty, loss of down and ejection. (game will be stopped until the offender has left the property).  
If the offender does not leave within a reasonable amount of time (10 minutes) the team that the offender represents will forfeit the game.

- c. **Rules Violations:** Rule violations should be reported in writing within 48 hours to the League Director. Coaches determined to have violated any TRYFL rules and philosophies will be dismissed by TRYFL and to be enforced by the individual community.
- d. These rules have been developed to ensure
  - i. Fairness to all participants
  - ii. The best learning environment for most children
  - iii. An experience for children and parents, which promotes football as a positive reflection of your community.
- e. Any player in a grade higher than the 6th when the season begins is not eligible to play
- f. A team trophy will be given to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place teams in the league and in the top tier of the playoffs. The top teams in the regular season will advance to the first tier and the other teams will play in a second “friendship” tier. There will only be participation awards for teams in the second tier. The amount of teams in the top tier will be determined each year based on how many teams the League ends up with.
- g. Teams will be called “Varsity” and “Junior Varsity”. Each team must have a minimum of eleven (11) players or the game will be forfeited. Players from another team cannot fill roster spots. Varsity teams will consist of 6<sup>th</sup> grade players and Junior Varsity will consist of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade players. All effort must be made to ensure that Junior Varsity teams will consist of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade players. **Grade level will be added to all rosters and need to be filled in.**
- h. Scores are to be entered onto the website within **12** hours by the winning coach. Winning coaches who fail to report your score by this deadline will not be awarded the win and both teams will be recorded as a loss for that game.