

Upper Arlington Youth Football

Black League Rules of Play

Version 2020.1 – Revision Date July 2020

Section 1 – RULES

- A. The League will follow the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Rules for Football

Section 2 - PENALTIES

- B. Penalties will be enforced as listed in NFHS Rules
- a. However, due to short fields the yardages will be adjusted to **60%** as follows
 - i. 15 Yard = 9 Yards
 - ii. 10 Yard = 6 Yards
 - iii. 5 Yards = 3 Yards

Section 3 PLAYERS – This league is open to youth in Grades 3 and 4

- A. **Weight Limits** - All players will be weighed at the time of registration. No 4th grade player may weigh over 155 pounds.
1. Any player weighing between 121 and 155 lbs. at the time of registration is restricted to playing either defensive tackle, Center, offensive Tackle or offensive guard. This player can play both ways.
 2. Quarterbacks, Q, X & Z Receivers, Running Backs, Cornerbacks and Safeties must weigh 100 lbs. or less
 3. MIKE, SAM & WILL Linebackers must weigh 100 lbs or less
 4. LEO Linebackers & Defensive Ends must weigh 120 lbs or less
 5. Tight Ends must weigh under 120 lbs. or less
 - i. EXCEPTION to this rule: There will be one exception to this rule on the extra point. Once per game on the extra point any player in excess of 120 pounds may play tight end and the team may throw to him for the “required touch” for that player. (This only applies if the player has not had a “touch” yet. Once they have satisfied the “touch” rule you must play them as the normal rules allow)
 6. Punters have no weight limit restriction
 7. For purposes of this rule, it is the weight recorded at registration that is controlling. (i.e. 100.01 is over the limit)
 8. Weight Limit Challenges - All coaches shall retain the original rosters provided to them at the start of the season and shall have their rosters with them on game day.
 9. If a coach has reason to believe that an opposing team's player is playing a position in violation of the league's weight limit, the coach may ask to review the opposing team's original roster
 - i. Rosters can be reviewed before the beginning of the game, at the end of a quarter, at half-time, or at the end of the game.

10. **A determination that a team has violated these weight restrictions shall result in a forfeit.**
- B. Playing Time** - each player must **START**, at a minimum, on one side of the ball for the entire game.
1. Equivalent of playing ½ of all plays.
 2. Games are typically 20 plays per quarter, so each player should be playing a minimum of 40 plays a game.
 3. **This rule is NOT Negotiable.**
 - i. We understand that some games may have more offense or defense and the 40-40 balance may not be perfectly achieved, that is why each player should be a "starter" on offense or defense and be on the field for 99% of those offensive or defensive series.
 4. Situational substitutions are allowed for one play or two.
 5. Two way players must fulfill the above requirement. Removing a two way player from the game entirely is not permitted (Example: A player playing the entire first half and not the second is unacceptable.)
 6. Game time Exceptions - you must notify the opposing coach and supervising referee prior to start of any playing time restrictions.
 - i. Injury
 - ii. Illness
 - iii. Missed Practices
 - iv. Discipline Issues, etc.
 7. *****ANY coaches found violating the participation rule will be reprimanded, and could lose their coaching privileges. You will also forfeit the game in which the participation rule is not followed properly. Your number one goal is making sure all players play safe, get full playing time and have fun!!**
- C. Captains** Each Player during the season will be game/week captain:
1. Minimum of 2 Captains per game
 2. Captains for the game to be announced on the first practice of the week
 3. Captains will lead stretching/breakdowns/ drills etc. for practices and be present for the coin toss during the game
 - i. This is a teaching moment for leadership. Try to pair weaker players with stronger players and ensure weaker players take a primary role
- D. Injury** - Any time there is a stoppage in play for an injury, the injured player must leave the field for two plays. **BE AWARE OF CONCUSSION PROTOCOL!**
- E. Quitting Players** - Coaches must report promptly to the Commissioner when a player quits. Coaches are responsible for returning the quitting player's helmet.
- F. Player Eye-Black**
1. Players are encouraged to use eye-black, or eye-black stickers on game days
 2. Players may have any design, number or phrase on the Eye-Black as long as it is not deemed offensive, vulgar or unsportsmanlike by the coaches from the opposing team
 3. Players are allowed to draw designs or patterns on their face and down their cheeks as long as these designs do not inhibit their ability to see, and the

opposing coaches do not find them offensive, vulgar or unsportsmanlike in any way

Section 4 COACHES

A. PLAYING TIME - Coaches not starting a player on one side of the ball and not allowing a player to play at least ½ of game will be suspended and the game forfeit

B. Practices - Practices shall be no longer than 90 minutes.

1. Running sprints is included during the practice time, your practice should not run long due to sprints.
2. Allot stretching/flexibilities for 5 minutes before and after practice.
3. Practices must be held at Northam Park, South of the Tennis Court
4. A team may have a maximum of 15 practices prior to the first game with the first 3 helmets only and the first full pads practice must be light contact.
5. Thereafter, a team may have no more than 3 practices per week - 2 with pads and 1 with helmet only.
6. Practices on Saturday before a Sunday game must be "helmets only" (not helmets and shoulder pads).
7. **NO "BULL IN THE RING" or DEAD MAN DRILLS.** Use common sense.
8. Practices on Monday following a Sunday game are prohibited, unless specifically cleared with the board.
9. Running cannot be used as a team punishment for a loss – No physical punishment, Grass Drills (up downs) or extended workouts or tackling on baseball diamonds.

C. Profanity and Negative Yelling are Prohibited –

1. Use positive reinforcement whenever possible. Your players admire and respect you. Earn that respect by teaching sound fundamentals and complimenting their efforts.
2. At this level, especially where the league attempts to equalize the talent level of each team, success should not be measured by the win/loss record, but instead, by the progress each individual player and the team makes over the course of the season.
3. Both offensive and defensive coaches on the field should refrain from obnoxious or overly boisterous cheerleading or from berating players while on the field.
4. **The defensive coach on the field is prohibited from "tipping" players off once the offense has come to the line of scrimmage but, instead, shall provide general guidance between plays.**
5. **ANY COACH OR PLAYER WHO USES PROFANITY IN PRACTICE OR DURING A GAME WILL IMMEDIATELY BE DISMISSED FOR THE UPCOMING GAME OR THE GAME BEING PLAYED AND THE NEXT GAME.**

6. **A SECOND INFRACTION WILL BE A SUSPENSION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SEASON. IF IT IS IN WEEK BEFORE THE LAST GAME OF THE SEASON OR DURING THE LAST GAME, THE SUSPENSION WILL CARRY INTO NEXT SEASON.**
7. **A THIRD INFRACTION WILL BE A PERMANENT SUSPENSION FROM THE LEAGUE**

D. Coaches on the Field - One coach from each team is allowed on the field during each play.

1. Exceptions can be made by coach agreement to have more than one coach on the field for any player(s) requiring special attention. Please work this out among coaches before the game begins. (Must have Board Approval in Advance)
2. On offense, the coach shall position himself 10 yards behind the offensive play.
3. The coach may enter the huddle to call a play and instruct players, but in the interest of keeping the game moving, instructions should be kept to a minimum.
4. As the season progresses, the coach should only have to call the play with little or no instruction.
5. On defense, the coach shall position himself at least 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage.
6. The defensive coach's role is to make sure his players are lined up properly and not shooting the gaps, and to provide general instruction between plays
7. Defensive coaches should not "call out" specific offensive players to "watch him!" (Coaches will be warned and then ejected from game and subject to further disciplinary action)
8. NO Two way communication devices (headsets, cell phones, etc.) are allowed for any member of the coaching staff

E. Coaching staff - ALL COACHES MUST BE APPROVED BY THE UA Youth Football Board of Directors, complete and pass a background check and pass the USA Football Coaches test to instruct players.

Section 5 GAME AND FIELD

A. Playing Field - 60 x 40 yards. Both teams' benches will be on the same side of the field. The "bench area" shall be between mid-field and the ten yard lines. The home team shall have its choice concerning the end of the field on which its bench area will be located. Registered Coaches and players are the only persons allowed in the bench area. Parents and other spectators must remain in the designated areas on the opposite side of the field.

B. Start of Game - The ball shall be placed on the 20 yard line at the beginning of the game, at half, and after each score. There are no kickoffs.

C. Length of Game - Each quarter will consist of 20 plays, plays per quarter. Ties are acceptable. No sudden death.

A punt **DOES** count as a play. An extra point **DOES NOT** count as a play.

Halftime will be 5 minutes. If the first punt is bad (less than 10 yds), RE-PUNT!!

- D. Time-Outs** - Each team is entitled to two time-outs per half. Time outs shall be one minute in length.
- E. Play Clocks** - The offense has 40 seconds for the first two games and 30 seconds for the remaining games to call the play and get the players to the line of scrimmage once the ball is set by the referee.
- F. Yard Markers**
- a. The home team must provide a "chain gang" for the first half of the game. The away team must provide the "chain gang" for the second half.
 - b. **The "Chain Gang" CANNOT talk to the referees, players, or coaches except when moving the chains or settling on a down and/or distance situation.**
 - c. **Any Parent violating this rule can be removed from the chain gang and the team penalized**
- G. Picking up Trash** - Please make sure that all trash is removed from the field at the end of the game.
- H. Referees** – Referees are hired through the league
1. They will miss calls. Do not dwell on a bad call. Teach your players to overcome a bad call by moving on to the next play.
 2. ANY yelling and/or anger with the referees, either by a player, coach, parent, or other spectator will initially result in a warning, followed by a 10 yard penalty if the conduct does not stop.
 3. **Any coach found to be abusing a referee will be subject to discipline and/or dismissal by the Commissioner.**
 4. Persistent abuse of the referees may, at the discretion of the referee, result in the ejection of an offending player or coach.
 5. This is a complicated game for the 8-11 year olds that are participating, and the referees are directed to be lenient unless there is a flagrant foul or an infraction that substantially affects the outcome of a play.
 6. Coaches are asked to remember this when a minor infraction not affecting a play is not called by the referees.

Section 6 BLACK LEAGUE OFFENSIVE RULES

- A. Formation** - A seven man offensive line with one tight end must be played at all times (Total of a 7 man line).
- 1 Tight ends cannot weigh more than 120 pounds.
 - i. **EXCEPTION** to this rule: There will be one exception to this rule on the extra point. Once per game on the extra point any player in excess of 120 pounds may play tight end and the team may throw to him for the “required touch” for that player. (This only applies if the player has not had a “touch” yet. Once they have satisfied the “touch” rule you must play them as the normal rules allow
 - 2 Putting two backfield players outside of the tight end on the same side of the formation is prohibited.
 - 3 Motion is NOT allowed.

- 4 Offensive backfield must line up in a conventional formation. (e.g. - no crowding two running backs right behind the quarterback.)
 - 5 Formations and plays as shown in the official UA Youth Football Black League Playbook should be used and observed at all times
- B. Snap Count** - All teams must utilize the Upper Arlington High School snap count
- 1 Silent counts are prohibited.
 - 2 Long counts and quick counts are permitted.
 - 3 Offensive lineman must stay down throughout the count.
 - 4 Count is - (Color #, Color #, Set. HIT)
- C. Line Splits** - Standard line splits (1-3 ft.) are to be used. Splits shall not exceed three feet.
- D. QB Wristband** QB may have a wristband on their arms or on their Belt.
- E. Pulling Linemen** - Pulling linemen are prohibited
- F. "Mercy Rule"** - If a team is ahead by 18 or more points, one of its players, as chosen by the opposing team, shall be prohibited from touching or carrying the ball until such time as the lead is reduced to less than 18 points.
- G. Fumbles**
- 1 Fumbles are a live ball
 - 2 Ball may be recovered by offense or defense
 - 3 Ball may **not** be advanced by defense. Once ball is recovered, play is dead and a new play is run, or possession changes to the defensive team and the new series starts at the point of recovery
 - 4 EXCEPTION to this rule:
 - i. If ball hits ground on a "shotgun" snap, the QB may recover the ball and continuing running the play.
- H. Required Offensive Play** - Each player must have a required offensive play defined as one of the following:
- 1 Quarterback
 - 2 Running the ball,
 - 3 Pass play as intended receiver,
 - 4 Punter.
 - 5 Punt Receiver
 - i. Player must catch or receive the ball. It does not count if they go back to receive and the ball comes nowhere near them
 - 6 NO EXCEPTIONS to the "touch" rule. All players must touch the ball once per game.
 - i. On each player's "required play," the runner must make an attempt to gain yardage.
 - ii. Taking a handoff and taking a knee will not count as a "required play."
 - iii. Running the ball on an extra point counts for purposes of fulfilling the "ball-carrying" requirement.
 - iv. Note, however, that extra point plays are not counted for purposes of determining the number of plays in a game
 - v. Coaches will keep track of each player's "required play," and failure to fulfill the "required play" requirement will result in a forfeit.

- I. **Blocking** - No double-teams, no pulling, no trapping, no crack-backs
- J. **Passing** – All Receivers must be under 120 Lbs. On all pass plays, the QB must attempt to pass the ball. If under pressure the QB can run.
- K. **Running** - The quarterback must receive the snap from the center on every play except punts.
 - 1 Center sneaks are prohibited, as are hikes to the guards, or “fumblerooski” type plays
- L. **Extra Points** - Running counts as 1 point. Passing counts as 2 points.
- M. **Punts** - The punt is a "dead" play but **DOES** count in the total number of plays in the game.
 - 1 After a punt, the ball will be placed where it is caught by the receiving team
 - 2 OR where it stops rolling backwards.
 - 3 Only 1 player are allowed to receive the ball

Section 7 BLACK LEAGUE DEFENSIVE RULES

- A. **Formation** - All teams shall play either a 4-3 OR 5-2 Defense with a "cover 2" secondary.
 - 1. Alignments (4-3 or "Base" Defense / 5-2 or “Tight” Defense):
 - i. NT/DT Head up over offensive guards. See Playbook for details
 - ii. E is Head Up over the Tight End OR strongside tackle.
 - iii. Linebackers (MIKE & WILL) - Stacked over Guards, 3yds. from the line of scrimmage; LEO is over the weakside tackle and can be in 2 pt stance. SAM is over the tight end (either 3 yds off or on the ball)
 - iv. Corners – Man up on the outside receiver, 4-5 yards off of the Line of Scrimmage
 - v. Safeties - 7-10 yds. deep, between the end and the guard (cover 2)
- B. **Stunts** - Stunting is prohibited. There is no gapping, gaming, or blitzing at any time.
 - 1. **Defensive linemen must hit the player over them "head up," with a forward step and both hands not just with the shoulder or single hand.**
 - 2. MIKE, SAM and WILL Linebacker, corners and safeties may not cross the line of scrimmage "inside the box."
 - 3. Safeties, corners, and MIKE, SAM and WILL linebackers may cross the line of scrimmage "outside the box" when they read flow to their side (e.g. - sweeps, Stretch, etc.)
 - 4. Box is defined as between Tackle to Tackle.
 - 5. **Backside corners can NOT pursue across the LOS if play goes away from them.**
- C. **Tackling** – Proper Tackling technique should be taught and required at all times
 - 1. Players head must be up during tackle
- CI. **Fumbles / Turnovers**
 - 1. Defensive fumbles cannot be advanced
 - 2. Fumble is a live ball
 - 3. Possession changes if defense recovers a fumble.
 - 4. Next series begins at the point of recovery
 - 5. Interceptions can be returned.