



6-MAN TACKLE FOOTBALL RULES

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I. NOTICE

- a. The Vice-president of Football and/or Assistant VP of Football, with the approval of the Board of Directors, reserves the right to waive, interpret or amend any rule when such waiver or amendment is deemed to be in the best interest of the program. Waiver in individual instances may be made with the intent to allow each child, who expresses a desire to play, the opportunity to do so.
- b. Any head coach or assistant coach found in violation of the rules within in Arlington Community Athletics Optimist Club rule book or the Coach's Application shall be required to appear before the Football Committee, Vice-President of Football and/or the Board of Directors for review prior to the coach participating in any football activities.
- c. The Vice-President of Football and/or assistant VP of Football will determine what, if any, disciplinary action needs to be taken. This action may be anything up to and including dismissal from his/her position within the program.
- d. All causes and actions must be presented to Vice-President of Football and/or assistant VP of Football for review and approval.
- e. Referees will have the option to stop any game if coach/parent/player violations are continuously committed. The opposing team will automatically receive the win regardless of the score at the time the game is stopped.

II. COACHES' RESPONSIBILITY

- a. The head coach of a team is responsible to affirm that he and all his assistant coaches are members in good standing of the ACAO, current in their payment of their dues, has submitted a completed coach's application prior to the start of practice. All applicants will abide by the rules, policies, regulations, guidelines, and the intentions thereof, as set forth by the Arlington Community Athletics Optimist Club.
- b. Applications and agreements are for the current year's season only. They must be submitted each year and must be approved each year, prior to the start of practice, by the Board of Directors.
- c. The head coach is responsible for the conduct of all assistant coaches and the team. Any head coach will immediately remove any assistant coach objectionable to the Football Committee, or the Board of Directors.
- d. Each coach must actively support and encourage player participation during any fundraising campaign that may be conducted for this program.
- e. It shall be mandatory that each head coach meet with the parents of the team players before practices are to begin. The purpose of this meeting will be to explain the football program, promote sportsmanship, and to define what is expected of each player.
- f. The head coach of each team must restrain all fans from any display of conduct that is deemed not appropriate or does not display proper sportsmanship. This includes but is not limited to" jeering at any player, field official or an Optimist member who has been assigned to work the field. It is not considered appropriate for fans to be closer than 5 yards from the playing field. Fans must not walk or stand in the area in front of the bleachers (this is reserved for the cheerleaders). If fans insist to display unsportsmanlike conduct, the game may be stopped, and it will be the coaches' responsibility to talk to the fans.

- g. Each head coach must ensure that the required adults to operate the down and distance markers, monitor games and keep score are provided. All must be in place prior to the start of the game in order to prevent a delay of game penalty.
- h. Each head coach must ensure that all issued equipment is returned to the Arlington Community Athletics Optimist Club. All decals and stickers must be removed by the teams that place them on the equipment.
- i. Each coach must ensure that every player on the team be given equal opportunity to participate in each game as required in Section III, Subheading b, Number ii.
- j. **Flag Football is a game of skill, both offensively and defensively. Rough tactics are not acceptable and are not intended to be part of the game of Flag Football. Players who initiate rough physical contact or coaches who promote such activities from their players will be penalized accordingly.**
- k. Any coach ejected from a game must appear before the Vice-president of Football prior to ANY further coaching activities.
- l. No coach, athlete or Optimist Official will use tobacco of any kind, nor will they use or be under the influence of any intoxicant, while in the presence of youths who are participating in our programs. This includes practice areas, game fields, and meeting sessions.
- m. Coaches and athletes must conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the high standards set forth by the Arlington Community Athletics Optimist Club. Misconduct, including but not limited to, profane or abusive language, gestures, etc., shall result in the immediate ejection and removal from the playing fields. Such ejection and removal may only be conducted by a member of the Football Committee.
- n. Any coach or athlete that does not follow these rules will be subject to dismissal from this program. A dismissed coach must appear before the Board of Directors and be reinstated by the Board of Directors. A dismissed coach may not participate in any football activity until reinstated.

III. General Rules, Divisions, Players and Equipment

a. General Rules

- i. **The Game** – The game shall be played between two teams of seven players each. Six players are required to start the game and avoid a forfeit – Once the game begins teams will be allowed to finish the game even if an injury causes them to not be able to field the minimum number of players.
 - 1. **Exception: 5U and under will be played as 5 on 5. Four (4) players are required to play the game.**
- ii. **Eligibility** - All players must be on the official roster registered with ACAO.
- iii. **Referee's Authority** - The Referee has authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. **The Referee's decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.**

- may affect a player's participation in a game. A copy of such rules must be submitted to the Football Committee prior to the 1st game.
- f. The head coach of each team must restrain all fans from any display of conduct that is deemed not appropriate or does not display proper sportsmanship. This includes but is not limited to" jeering at any player, field official or an Optimist member who has been assigned to work the field. It is not considered appropriate for fans to be closer than 5 yards from the playing field. Fans must not walk or stand in the area in front of the bleachers (this is reserved for the cheerleaders). If fans insist to display unsportsmanlike conduct, the game may be stopped, and it will be the coaches' responsibility to talk to the fans.
 - g. Each head coach must insure that the required adults to operate the down and distance markers, monitor games and keep score are provided. All must be in place prior to the start of the game in order to prevent a delay of game penalty.
 - h. Each head coach must insure that all issued equipment is returned to the Arlington Community Athletics Optimist Club. All decals and stickers must be removed by the teams that place them on the equipment.
 - i. Each coach must insure that every player on the team be given equal opportunity to participate in each game as required in Section III, Subheading b, Number 2.
 - j. Any coach ejected from a game must appear before the Football Committee prior to ANY further coaching activities.
 - k. No coach or Optimist Official will use tobacco of any kind, nor will they use or be under the influence of any intoxicant, while in the presence of youths who are participating in our programs. This includes practice areas, game fields, and meeting sessions.
 - l. Coaches must conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the high standards set forth by the Arlington Community Athletics Optimist Club. Misconduct, including but not limited to, profane or abusive language, gestures, etc., shall result in the immediate ejection and removal from the playing fields. Such ejection and removal may only be conducted by a member of the Football Committee.
 - m. Any coach that does not follow these rules will be subject to dismissal from this program. A dismissed coach must appear before the Board of Directors and be reinstated by the Board of Directors. A dismissed coach may not participate in any football activity until reinstated.

III. General Rules, Divisions, Players and Equipment

a. General Rules

1. **The Game** – The game shall be played between two teams of 6 players each. 5 players are required to start the game and avoid a forfeit. Once the game begins, teams will be allowed to finish the game even if an injury causes them to not be able to field the minimum number of players.

2. **Eligibility** - All players must be on the official roster registered with ACAO.
3. **Referee's Authority** - The Referee has authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. The Referee's decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.
4. **Field** – The game will be played on a field with a minimum of 40 yards in width, 80 yards in length and will be marked by 10-yard increments.
 - A. **Each team will designate parents** to help manage the game.
 - a. **Home Team** – help manage the scoreboard and clock. – 1 person
 - b. **Visiting Team** - Manage the line of scrimmage marker and the first down chains. – 3 people
- b. **Divisions/Football Sizes/Roster Sizes** – Below are the main divisions for ACAO, however, Divisions may be combined based on enrollment at each age/skill level.
 1. **Age Determination:** determined by the players age as of September 1st of that calendar year – EXEPTION can be made if born after Jan 1st of that year, and in the same grade as age group. Must prove with school transcript or report card. **Exceptions shall be approved by the Football Committee.**

Age Level	Divisions	Ball Size	Max Roster Size	Game Time	Post Season
9U	Rec/Comp	Pee Wee	15	40 min	Yes
111U	Rec/Comp	Junior	15	40 min	Yes

2. Playing Time

- A. 9U – Each player will be required to participate in at least 4 plays on either offense or defense per HALF.
 - B. 11U – No minimum playing time required.
3. **Rainouts** - In the case of rainouts, the commissioner will reschedule the game with a minimum of 2 days' notice. There is no rainout hotline number. All teams are expected to show up at their game, rain or shine. E-mails/Text notifications will be sent out if the fields are closed in advance.

c. Equipment –

- A. Each player is required to wear the following equipment provided by the Arlington Community Athletics Optimist Club:
 - a. Helmet
 - b. Shoulder Pads
 - c. Official Team Jersey (Official games only)
- B. No alteration to the Optimist issued equipment is allowed, except for the application of decals to helmets. All decals must be of a type of material as to be readily removed, all decals must be removed prior to the final equipment turn-in.
- C. Jerseys may have the addition of the player's last name on the back of the jersey in the name plate section. This will be at the parent's expense.
- D. In addition to the equipment listed above, each player must wear the following equipment supplied by the players' parents.
 - a. Pants with knee, thigh, and hip pads
 - b. Shoes without hard or metal cleats (detachable cleats are not allowed nor street shoes)
 - c. Mouth guard
- E. **Exclusions** - No Jewelry of any kind will be permitted. Shoes with metal, ceramic, screw-in, or detachable cleats are NOT Permitted. Any team found wearing illegal equipment will be penalized 15 yards, and the second warning results in a forfeit. For shoes that have removable cleats, the "threaded stud" must come out with the cleat when it needs to be changed.

d. Score Keeping/Records/Playoffs

- 1. **9U and 11U** – Scores will be recorded as they are determined during the game. League Standings will be kept, and there will be a post season tournament for each league/division. There will be NO over time in the regular season. Games can end in a tie. Only postseason play will use Overtime.

e. Eligibility

- 1. Players must meet all eligibility guidelines for each season of participation in this program. Requests for exceptions to any requirement must be submitted in writing and are subject to verification, review and final approval by the Board of Directors.
- 2. Submit a registration form or complete the online registration.

3. Each player must submit a photocopy of their official notarized birth certificate.
4. Submit a Physical Examination form.
5. Satisfy the registration fee requirement.
6. No player shall participate in a division lower than their current age level.
7. ANY TEAM found in violation of ANY of the eligibility or age and weight rules shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including forfeiting all games in which the ineligible player participated and/or appeared on the official roster as applicable. The score of the forfeited games shall be 1 to 0.

f. AGE AND WIEGHT

1. The official weight of each player will be determined on a specific date and at a specific time. Weight administrator (s) appointed by the Football Committee will conduct the weigh-in. Weigh-ins will be conducted prior to the first game of each season.
2. At each weigh-in, each player shall be weighed wearing their game jersey, shorts, shoes optional, and have their helmet available.
3. A player is officially weighed by stepping on the scales (1 time) in the presence of a weight administrator. There shall be no appeal of the weigh-in procedure.
4. Each player must meet the age and weight requirements for the divisions as follows:

A. 9U

- a. Age – will not attain the age of (10) by September 1st of the year participating – exception can be made if birthday falls after January 1st – but is in same GRADE as age group – must prove with school report card.
- b. Weight – eligible ball carriers out of backfield on offense cannot exceed (100) pounds.

B. 11U

- a. Age – will not attain the age of (12) by September 1st of the year participating – exception can be made if birthday falls after January 1st – but is in same GRADE as age group – must prove with school report card.
- b. Weight – eligible ball carriers out of backfield on offense cannot exceed (130) pounds.

IV. PRACTICES

- a. *A PRACTICE SESSION IS DEFINED AS: Two or more players from the same team engaging in football activities under adult supervision. Official games are not considered practice sessions.*

- b. *Prior to the first game of the season a maximum of five (5) practice sessions may be held during the week (Monday- Sunday).*
- c. *Beginning the week of the first scheduled game or the start of school (whichever comes first), a maximum of three (3) practice sessions may be held during a week (Monday – Sunday). A scrimmage/practice game is considered a practice.*
- d. *No more than one (1) practice session may be held on a single day.*
- e. *Practices may be held on Sunday. Any practice held on Sunday must start after 1 PM.*
- f. *No player may be disciplined (loss of playing time, sprints, etc.) for missing Sunday practice.*
- g. *Practice sessions must be terminated prior to sundown to allow players to return home prior to the onset of darkness. Practice may go beyond darkness if the team adheres to the following conditions.*
 - 1. *Practice areas must have lights.*
 - 2. *All practice session must be terminated by 8 PM.*
 - 3. *No practice session may run longer than 3 hours.*
 - 4. *All players must remain in the custody of a coach until the player is picked up by a parent or legal guardian or by an adult approved by the parent or legal guardian.*

V. **PLAYING RULES** - *The NCAA Official Rule Book as modified by the NCAA Interpretation Book with respect to Texas High Schools, shall prevail except as modified by the following rules:*

a. **Penalty Modifications:**

- 1. *The following personal fouls will be assessed a fifteen (15) yard penalty and an automatic first down:*
 - A. *Intentional face mask*
 - B. *Spearing*
 - C. *Roughing the passer, the kicker, or holder*
 - D. *Clipping*
 - E. *Piling On*
 - 2. *The following personal fouls will be assessed a fifteen (15) yard penalty:*
 - A. *Butting or ramming the helmet*
 - B. *Offensive face mask*
 - C. *Use of abusive or insulting language*
 - 3. *All other major violations shall be assessed a ten (10) yard penalty instead of the customary fifteen (15) yard penalty.*
 - 4. *A kick-off receiving or punt receiving “Halo Rule” violation shall be assessed a five (5) yard penalty instead of the customary ten (10) yard penalty.*
- b. **KICK-OFFS** – *There will be **NO Kickoffs** – Each offensive possession, after a opponent score, will be started on the 20yd Line of the team possessing the ball.*

- c. **Quarters** - will consist of a ten (10) minute *RUNNING* regulation clock with each team receiving a maximum of three (3) time-outs per half.
 - 1. The interval between halves shall be ten (10) minutes.
- d. **Substitutes** - may replace a player or fill a player's vacancy between consecutive downs; such entries do not affect the game clock or interrupt the twenty-five (25) second clock; the number of individual entries is not limited.
- e. **Extra Points**
 - 1. One (1) point will be awarded for successfully running or passing the ball across the goal line.
 - 2. Two (2) points will be awarded for successfully kicking the ball through the uprights— **NO FAKE FIELD GOALS ALLOWED** – if your team lines up in a field goal formation, you **MUST** attempt the field goal.
- f. **Field Goal**
 - 1. Three (3) points will be awarded for successfully kicking the ball through the uprights— **NO FAKE FIELD GOALS ALLOWED** – if your team lines up in a field goal formation, you **MUST** attempt the field goal.
- g. **Mercy Rule**
 - 1. When one team is 45 or more points ahead at the end of the first half or if a team achieves a 45-point lead during the second half, the game is ended immediately
- h. **First Downs**
 - 1. Offense must advance 15 yards instead of 10 yards in four downs.
- i. **Snap of the Ball**
 - 1. Unless the ball is kicked or forward passed, it may not be advanced beyond the neutral zone until **AFTER AN EXCHANGE** has been made between the receiver of the snap and another player. **EXCEPTION:** Any player of Team A may advance a loose football after it has been touched by a Team B player. **PENALTY:** 5 yards plus loss of down (illegal procedure) from previous spot (S19 & S9). An exchange is completed when possession of the football is gained by a receiver of the snap, given up voluntarily or involuntarily by the receiver of the snap, and possession is regained by another player of Team A.
 - 2. If the snap is muffed and a Team A player catches or recovers the ball beyond the neutral zone, he may not advance it. **PENALTY:** Loss of down (illegal procedure) from previous spot (S19 & S9), 5 yards from the previous spot is also assessed if the Team A player advances the ball. If a Team A player catches or recovers the muffed snap behind the neutral zone, he may legally advance it only after a legal exchange
 - 3. The ball may be handed in any direction to any player during a scrimmage down behind the neutral zone. A linesman may receive a forward hand-off at any time and is not required to be 2 yards behind his line of scrimmage and does not have to face his goal prior to receiving the handoff. **EXCEPTION:** The ball may **not** be handed forward to the snapper through his legs. **PENALTY:** 5 yards from previous spot and loss of down (S19 & S9).

j. Punting

1. Teams have the option of a FREE KICK, or to advance the ball 20 yards on 4th down in lieu of an actual punt (Note: if ball is inside the 30 yard line, then ball is advanced one-half distance to goal).
 - A. During a FREE KICK, the offensive team must declare to the referee their intention to punt. They may not alter their decision to punt. The referee will notify the defensive team. The defensive team must align themselves with a minimum of four(4) players within five (5) yards of the line of scrimmage. Both the offensive and defensive teams must remain in their proper alignment until the ball is actually kicked.
 - a. Violation of this rule is a five (5) yard illegal formation penalty.
 - b. When at the line of scrimmage, the "Center" may move the ball to any position necessary to insure a clean snap of the ball. As long as he does not lift it off the ground. If he does, it will be considered a snap, and will become a live ball.
 - B. Once the ball is punted and makes contact with the ground it is now considered a LIVE ball and may be recovered by either team.

k. Line of Scrimmage

1. NO defensive formation shall use a "nose tackle" in any formation – no player will be lined up directly over the center at any point.
2. Each Defensive player must align at least 1 yard off the line of scrimmage.
3. A minimum of three offensive players must be on the line of scrimmage at the time of the snapped ball.

l. Eligible Receivers

1. All players are eligible to catch a forward pass, except that a pass is ruled incomplete when caught by the passer. If a forward pass is thrown to the snapper, it must travel at least one yard in flight

m. Player Conduct

1. If a player is ejected from a game, he/she may not re-enter that game and may not participate in the next scheduled game.

n. Playoffs

1. In the event a play-off game ends in a tie, the following rules shall apply:
 - A. The home team will call the coin toss.
 - B. The winner of the coin toss will select offense or defense
 - C. The loser will select the end zone into which play will continue.
 - D. The ball will be placed at the 15-yard line. Each team will have an equal number of possessions. The first team to outscore the other will be the winner.

VI. GAME DAY RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Only approved personnel are allowed on the bench side of the playing field. These include a maximum of five (5) coaches per team, a maximum of two (2) non-coaching monitors per team.
- b. Photography, filming, or use of electronic equipment, audio or visual, or scouting may be done on the bench side as long as the persons have been approved to be on the sideline prior to the start of the game.
- c. The head coach and the assistant coaches will confine their activities to the bench side of the field, between the mid-field line and their twenty (20) yard line during a game and must be wearing their current ACAO furnished badge.
- d. The "Home Team" will be the first team listed on the game schedule.
- e. The HOME TEAM will provide a representative that will arrive one hour prior to game start time and help Field Rep the previous game.
- f. Each team the "Home Team" and "Visiting Team" will provide two (2) adults (minimum of eighteen (18) years old) to operate the down and distance markers. These individuals shall be considered "official" and shall not coach or advise players on the field.
 - 1. **Home Team** – help manage the scoreboard and clock.
 - 2. **Visiting Team** - Manage the line of scrimmage marker and the first down chains.
- g. Last game of the day, the winning team will help clear all equipment off the fields.

VII. SCHEDULE AND PLAYOFF GAMES

- a. The schedule may contain non-conference and conference games. Only conference games will be used to determine conference standings and teams to compete in playoff games.
- b. The dates, locations, and format of all playoff games will be determined and announced by the Commissioner and the Football Committee.
- c. In the event that teams are tied for playoff position(s) at the completion of regular play, the playoff position(s) will be determined using the following:
 - 1. Head to head matchup
 - 2. Total Points Allowed
 - 3. Total Points Scored