



VAA Youth Football

Policies and Philosophies (2024)

I. Health & Safety

- 1.1 *Concussion Training:* All coaches will complete concussion training on the schedules set forth by VAA.
- 1.2 *Safe Sport Training:* All coaches will complete “Safe Sport” training on the schedules set forth by VAA.
- 1.3 *Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Policy:* Smoking is not permitted at any time on District 196 School property. It is a violation of policy for a player or coach to have in their possession drugs, alcohol, or tobacco while participating in a VAA youth activity.
 - 1.3.1 *First Violation:* Upon notification by the Board, the player/coach shall lose eligibility for the next two consecutive games or two weeks of a sport season in which the player/coach is participating, whichever is greater. No exception is permitted.
 - 1.3.2 *Second Violation:* The player/coach shall lose eligibility in the VAA for that sport season. No exception is permitted.
 - 1.3.3 *Accumulative Penalties:* Penalties shall be accumulative beginning with and continuing throughout the players/coach’s participation in the VAA.

2 Conduct Policy

- 2.1 *Code of Conduct Acknowledgment:* We strive to teach the children of our community respect for themselves, referees, coaches, and opposing players. Coaches, players, *and* parents must review and acknowledge the **VAA Code of Conduct** during the registration process.
- 2.2 *Coaches:* Coaches are responsible for their own behavior, as well as controlling the behavior of their players and fans. Harassment of coaches, referees, players, or fans will not be tolerated. Any coach, player, parent, or fan involved in ANY physical altercation may be subject to a lifetime ban from all VAA sports participation.
- 2.3 *Players:* Players are expected to stay within their bench area when they are not actively playing in the game. Players will treat their teammates *and* opposition with respect when shaking hands before and after the game.

3 Coach Responsibilities

- 3.1 *Coaches are responsible for the following:*
 - 3.1.1 Coaches must be registered through the VAA Football Volunteer Registration and undergo a background check and all required training per VAA.
 - 3.1.2 Coaches must follow the VAA Code of Conduct, demonstrating good sportsmanship and proper behavior (which includes language used on and off the field during games / practices) Sec 1.3.1-3 applies.
 - 3.1.3 Coaches are required to attend coaches’ meetings to review and plan for the upcoming season.
 - 3.1.4 Coaches are responsible for the equipment that is issued to them. Lost or damaged equipment should be reported to the Football Commissioner(s) as soon as possible.
 - 3.1.5 Coaches must hold a parent meeting at the beginning of each season. These meetings shall communicate expectations (of coaches/players/parents), schedules, etc.
 - 3.1.6 Coaches are encouraged to invite parents to participate in assisting as assistant coaches, team managers, and participating in game duties (chain gang, scorekeeper, etc.) **All parents helping as assistant coaches at games and practices must first complete all required training and a background check before they are allowed to assist. Coaches may be split up when multiple teams are required at their age.
 - 3.1.7 Coaches are responsible for abiding by and enforcing VAA/BNC rules.
 - 3.1.8 Coaches are responsible for reporting issues such as field problems and game practice incidents to the Football Board/Commissioner(s) as soon as possible.
 - 3.1.9 Coaches shall enforce the conduct policy expectations of players, parents, and fellow team coaches.
 - 3.1.10 Coaches are responsible for their players during practice and games. At least two (2) coaches shall remain at games/practices until all players are picked up. **No player should ever be left alone at the field after a game/practice.**

4 Player Involvement

4.1 -Minimum Playing Time

VAA Youth football is intended to be developmental. The intent of minimum playing time is for each player to have an opportunity to play and have a meaningful experience throughout the season. Coaches should attempt to play each player as much as possible during games, whenever possible. Each player shall have a particular position that they are assigned to before the game and be given a fair chance to succeed at that position. The player should be introduced to the position and the responsibilities of that position during practice, as it's at the practice where most development occurs. **We also fall under the umbrella of any minimum playing time rules mandated by the BNC.**

-Minimum Touch

In addition to Minimum Playing Time, VAA Youth Football encourages a Minimum Touch Philosophy. This philosophy is that during a game, a **minimum of 6** different players should have the opportunity to carry or catch the football at least twice per game. While this may be difficult to enforce, it remains commensurate with our philosophy on the developmental youth football players within the VAA. The goal is to develop as many players as possible. **We also fall under the umbrella of any minimum touch rules mandated by the BNC.**

4.2 Exceptions

4.2.1 All coaches are expected to run organized practices and prepare for games. In order for them to accomplish this, players and parents need to communicate planned or unexpected absences to the coach as soon as possible (i.e. if a player is sick, academic reasons, family/religious event). The Minimum Playing Rule is subject to a coach's discretion (*within reason*) in the event that a player does not participate in practice(s), does not attend practice, or if the player engages in disruptive behavior at practices or games. At the coach's discretion, a player may be subject to reduced or restricted playing time in the next game.

4.2.2 Coaches shall advise and explain to players and parents rule 4.3.1 at the beginning of the season.

4.2.3 While coaches are encouraged *not* to hold practices on Wednesday (to avoid conflict with many religious practices/organizations) after Labor Day, if practices are unavoidable due to scheduling, no player shall have that absence counted against them regarding 4.2.1 or 4.2.2.

5 Policies

5.1 "Brand" of Tackle Football

Football at each level shall be: **3rd Grade – 8th Grade – 11v11 tackle**

5.2 Daily Participation Limits

No team level shall exceed the Daily/Season Participation Limits described in the MSHSL Bylaw 502.00.

Recommendations per grade level: 3rd/4th – 3 events/week; 5th/6th – 4 events/week; 7th/8th – 4-5 events/week

5.3 Play-Ups

No Player shall be permitted to play up to another grade level without the consent of two-thirds of board members present when considerations are made.

5.4 Team Splits (tackle only)

We fall under the umbrella of any Team split rules mandated by the BNC. Currently, the BNC requires a second team to be formed when the number of players at each grade level reaches 38 (38 or more = two teams, 37 or less can be one team). When multiple teams are present at one grade level, the team splits will be conducted by the Roster Committee. When splits have direct concern relating to a Roster Committee member, a substitute will be appointed. Teams must be split evenly re: perceived player ability (i.e., no "A & B" or "upper and lower" teams). These determinations will be made during pre-season clinics in conjunction with any BNC pre-season "combine" that rates players based on abilities. "Friend requests" will not be considered in the final team decisions.

5.5 Head Coach Selection (tackle only)

When multiple applicants are present for the role of head coach, the Coaches Committee shall conduct interviews with the candidates before the beginning of football activities (a committee of 3-5 is required for interviews and decision-making). All head and assistant coaches must have a completed Background check before being active and present during practices and on the sidelines during games. The Head Coach must

submit Assistant Coaches (including parents and non-parents) for approval from the committee. Assistant coaches may be denied if a grade level split creates an unbalanced roster situation. The number of assistant coaches is not unlimited but shall be limited to an appropriate number considered necessary for a particular roster size and needs to consult between the committee and the Head coach.

Decisions shall be made based on interview results, feedback from previous seasons, and input sought from other VAA Commissioners or VAA Board members. Decisions made by this committee, with advice and consent from the Commissioner(s), will be considered final, with no further discussion occurring.

5.6 *Coach Suspension/Dismissal*

In the event of a coach not adhering to the code(s) of conduct set forth by VAA and/or the Board, the VAA Policy Sportsmanship/Behavior (PP-0006) & Suspension of a Coach (PP-0016) shall prevail.

5.7 *Paid Positions*

5.7.1 *No payments will be submitted to the VAA Admin that has not been signed/verified by either the Commissioner or Treasurer*

5.7.2 *Paid positions within VAA Youth Football shall be:*

Head Referee (\$20/hr, exclusive of when games are refed (i.e. no double-dipping))

Tackle referee (\$40/game)

Flag referee (\$20/game).

-Referees at each level shall be paid \$20/hour for training.

Non-parent (Paid) Head Coaches may be hired at various grade levels. The current budget and by-laws restrict and limit the number to 2 Head Coaches maximum, with the preference being in the 6th, 7th, or 8th-grade levels per decision voted on and approved by the VAA Football Board. (2024 budget for \$6000 total). Any changes to this policy must be approved by April 1st of the upcoming season by the VAA Football Board and with the approval of the by-laws and budget by the VAA Main Board at that time.

6 **COACHES CODE OF ETHICS**

All coaches are expected to sign the Coaches Code of Ethics at the beginning of each season. It is the responsibility of the sports commissioners to have the coaches of their sport read and sign the statement as noted below. I hereby pledge to live up to the VAA coaching guidelines by following the listed Code of Ethics:

- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of any personal desire to win.
- I will remember to treat each player as an individual, considering the wide range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
- I will do my best to provide my players with a safe playing situation.
- I will do my best to organize fun and challenging practices for all my players.
- I promise to review and practice the necessary first-aid principles needed to treat injuries to my players.
- I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.
- I will ensure that I am knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach and that I will teach these rules to my players.
- I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for each skill I teach.
- I will remember that I am a youth coach and that the game is for children and not adults.
- I will demand a drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free sports environment for my team and agree to assist by refraining from their use at all games and practices.

COACH'S SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

TEAM GRADE LEVEL: _____