

# NEW RIVER VALLEY YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE



*The Friday night stars of tomorrow **LEARN** here.*

## PARENTS • COACHES • OFFICIALS 2017 RULE BOOK

THE NEW RIVER VALLEY YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE IS A JOINT EFFORT BETWEEN PULASKI COUNTY, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, GILES COUNTY, FLOYD COUNTY, RADFORD CITY AND THE TOWNS OF BLACKSBURG, CHRISTIANSBURG AND NARROWS FOOTBALL CLUBS AND PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENTS.



REVISED JULY 19, 2017

## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

<u>SECTION:</u>	<u>PAGE:</u>
ADMINISTRATORS	2
PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE	2
LEAGUES OFFERED	2
<i>MITE LEAGUE: 2<sup>nd</sup> &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup> GRADES</i>	2
<i>JUNIOR LEAGUE: 4<sup>th</sup> &amp; 5<sup>th</sup> GRADES</i>	2
<i>SENIOR LEAGUE: 6<sup>th</sup> &amp; 7<sup>th</sup> GRADES</i>	2
TEAM REQUIREMENTS	3
WEIGHT REQUIREMENTS	3
COACHES INFO	3
LEAGUE RULES	4
<i>GAMES</i>	4
<i>TIME</i>	4
<i>PLAYING REQUIREMENTS</i>	4
<i>INJURIES</i>	4
<i>UNIFORMS &amp; EQUIPMENT</i>	4
PLAYING RULES	5
<i>PRACTICES</i>	5
<i>DEFENSE</i>	5
<i>OFFENSE</i>	5
<i>RUNNING UP THE SCORE</i>	5
<i>KICKING GAME</i>	6
<i>PENALTIES</i>	6
<i>UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT</i>	6
CONCUSSIONS	7
<i>AN OVERVIEW</i>	7
<i>WHAT TO LOOK FOR</i>	7
<i>ROLE OF COACHING STAFF</i>	8
<i>ROLE OF GAME OFFICIALS</i>	8
<i>COACHES COMPLIANCE</i>	8
NRV YOUTH FOOTBALL REQUIRED COURSE OF ACTION	9
TACKLE FOOTBALL SAFETY PROCEDURES	9
A COACH'S CODE	9
GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES	10

NRV Football Handbook: Revised **JULY 2017**  
Please note: all new rules for 2017 are in listed in red.

Auburn	Chris Slusher	540-382-6975	<a href="mailto:slusherce@montgomerycountyva.gov">slusherce@montgomerycountyva.gov</a>
	Ashley Hadidian	540-382-6975	<a href="mailto:hadidianad@montgomerycountyva.gov">hadidianad@montgomerycountyva.gov</a>
Blacksburg	Adam Lloyd	540-961-1135	<a href="mailto:alloyd@blacksburg.gov">alloyd@blacksburg.gov</a>
Christiansburg	Chuck Muncy	540-382-2349	<a href="mailto:cmuncy@christiansburg.org">cmuncy@christiansburg.org</a>
East Mont	Andy Mabe	540-382-6975	<a href="mailto:mabeal@montgomerycountyva.gov">mabeal@montgomerycountyva.gov</a>
	Ashley Hadidian	540-382-6975	<a href="mailto:haididanad@montgomerycountyva.gov">haididanad@montgomerycountyva.gov</a>
Giles County	Mellissa Fisher	540-599-7297	<a href="mailto:mellissafisher@yahoo.com">mellissafisher@yahoo.com</a>
Floyd County	Dustin Hollandsworth	540-745-9363	<a href="mailto:fcparke@swva.net">fcparke@swva.net</a>
Narrows	Ruth Perdue	540-922-2905	<a href="mailto:6perdues@gmail.com">6perdues@gmail.com</a>
Pulaski Co. East	John Myers	540-674-0107	<a href="mailto:jmyers@pulaskicounty.org">jmyers@pulaskicounty.org</a>
Pulaski Co. West	Eddie Sutphin	540-980-7760	<a href="mailto:esutphin@pulaskicounty.org">esutphin@pulaskicounty.org</a>
Radford City	Greg Holbrook	540-731-3633	<a href="mailto:holbrookg@radford.va.us">holbrookg@radford.va.us</a>

### PURPOSE & 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 **August 7, 2017**. 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. Any late sign-ups must participate in 3 practices of just conditioning before being issued pads and engaging in hitting/tackling. **You may not conduct full pads practice until Monday, July 14<sup>th</sup> at the earliest, however, if you start practice later than August 7, 2017 you must have 1 week of conditioning in just helmets before starting full pads practice.**

### LEAGUES OFFERED:

#### MITE LEAGUE: 2<sup>ND</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup> GRADERS

The Mite League consist of second and third graders in the upcoming 2017-2018 school year. Participants older than 9 years of age on August 1, 2017 will be required to play in the Junior League. Mite League weigh limit is **85lbs**, any participant weighing over 86lbs at the time of the official weigh-in will receive an "X" on their helmet and be required to begin all plays on the field from a 3-point or 4-point stance on the offensive or defensive line. **Any 3<sup>rd</sup> grader weighing over 85lbs may move up to Junior league and parents must sign a waiver to play.**

#### JUNIOR LEAGUE: 4<sup>TH</sup> & 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS

The Junior League consists of fourth and fifth graders in the upcoming 2017-2018 school year. Participants older than 11 years of age on August 1, 2017 will be required to play in the Senior League. Junior League weight limit is **110 lbs**, any participant weighing over 111lbs at the time of the official weigh-in will receive an "X" on their helmet and be required to begin all plays on the field from a 3-point or 4-point stance on the offensive or defensive line. **4<sup>th</sup> Graders weighing in at 59 pounds or under have the option of dropping back and playing in the Mite League, but must play on the line and wear an "X" on their helmet. Any 5<sup>th</sup> grader weighing over 110lbs may move up to Senior league and parents must sign a waiver to play.**

#### SENIOR LEAGUE: 6<sup>TH</sup> & 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS

The Senior League of sixth and seventh graders in the upcoming 2017-2018 school year. Participants older than 13 years of age on August 1, 2017 will ineligible to play in the Senior League. Senior League weight limit is **135lbs**, any participant weighing over 136lbs at the time of the official weigh-in will receive an "X" on their helmet and be required to begin all plays on the field from a 3-point or 4-point stance on the offensive or defensive line. **6<sup>th</sup> Graders weighing in at 85 pounds or under have the option of dropping back and playing in the Junior League, but must play on the line and wear an "X" on their helmet.**

To be placed on a NRV Youth Football team; a player must attend school district and/or physical address to corresponding recreation department. No releases will be given.

### **WEIGHT REQUIREMENTS:**

#### **NRV YOUTH FOOTBALL WEIGH-IN**

There will be only one official weigh-in and it is to be done during the first week of practice, exact and times are to be announced through your local recreation department.

- Boys/girls in the Senior Division (6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Grades) weighing 135lbs. or less 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 136lbs. or more will be identified with a black "X" on their helmet. These players must play down linemen and start in a 3-point of 4-point stance on offense or defense.
- Boys/girls in the Junior Division (4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grades) weighing 110lbs. or less 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 111lbs. or more will be identified with a black "X" on their helmet. These players must play down linemen, and start in a 3-point of 4-point stance on offense or defense. **Any 5<sup>th</sup> grader weighing over 110lbs may move up to Senior league and parents must sign a waiver to play.**
- Boys/girls in the Mite Division (2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade) weighing 85lbs. or less 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 86 lbs. or more will be identified with a black "X" on their helmet. These players must play down linemen, and start in a 3-point of 4-point stance on offense or defense. **Any 3<sup>rd</sup> grader weighing over 85lbs may move up to Junior league and parents must sign a waiver to play.**

There will be no mid-season weigh-in.

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.

### **COACHES INFO:**

Each team will be allowed five (5) coaches on the sideline for games, this INCLUDES a trainer if so desired (5 adults max). Each coach must fill out and pass a background check and have a Coaches ID made by their respective recreation department. This ID must be visible at all times by each coach while coaching a game regardless if it's home or away.

One coach from each team MUST attend the organizational meeting and concussion meeting in order to coach for the season, but all coaches and game officials are encouraged to attend.

SUNDAY, **AUGUST 6** CHRISTIANSBURG RECREATION CENTER

2017 NRV Football Coaches Meeting 6:00PM

Heads Up Concussion Seminar 7:00PM

(Presented by Virginia Tech's Associate Director of Athletics for Sports Medicine Mike Goforth)

### GAMES:

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

Evening games will be played at 6:00PM or 5:45PM and 7:15PM on doubleheader nights.

Each Junior and Senior League game will have at least two currently certified VHSL officials. Mite League will have at least one currently certified VHSL 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.

\*In the Mite league one coach from each team can be on the field during play for the entire season. Coaches must remain behind safeties on defense and running backs on offense at all times. Coaches are not allowed to run up to players or move players before the ball is snapped, and certainly not celebrate plays. The coach is there to help give plays to players and should be a quiet bystander.

### TIME:

Mite, Junior & Senior Leagues - Eight-minute quarters

Halftime - Eight minutes (during cold weather games or games running behind, this may be reduced)

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 official resets the ball

### PLAYING REQUIREMENTS:

COACHES HAVE ONE OF TWO OPTIONS ON HOW TO PLAY THEIR PLAYERS. THEY CAN PLAY 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!

**THE LOCAL RECREATION DEPARTMENTS STRONGLY ENCOURAGE ALL COACHES TO PLAY ALL KIDS EQUALLY.** NRV Football Leagues are instructional leagues design to give all kids of all abilities playing time to learn and develop their football skills.

### INJURIES:

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

### UNIFORMS & EQUIPMENT:

Football equipment will be distributed by corresponding recreation department. All equipment should be returned within a week after the last game of the season. Failure to do so will restrict participation in further activities. If equipment is not returned, parents will be billed.

Any mouth piece may be used, but the mouth piece should be bright in color. Any bright color is accepted, this is to make it easier for officials to check and make sure players are wearing them. Mouthpieces must be attached to the helmet.

### PRACTICES:

All teams will be allowed to have four meetings per calendar week (Calendar week is Sunday – Saturday), including games and practices. Only one practice session will be allowed per day. Practices can last 1.5 hours per session.

1. No full speed head-on blocking or tackling drills in which the players line up more than 3 yards apart are permitted. (Having two linemen in stances immediately across the line of scrimmage from each other and having full-speed drills where the players approach each other at an angle, but not straight ahead in to each other are both permitted.) **However, there should be no intentional head-to-head contact!**
2. The amount of contact at each practice will be reduced to a maximum of 1/2 of practice time (45 minutes of practice). In this context, “contact” means any drill or scrimmage in which drills; down line vs. down line full-speed drills; and scrimmages.

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.

### DEFENSE:

Teams may use any legal defense. Players with an “X” on their helmets must start in a 3-point or 4-point stance on the line.

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

### OFFENSE:

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

**Teams using “shotgun” formation; center may not be hit until head is up and he has a chance to defend himself.**

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 the officials must declare a FREEKICK with no run back by the receiving team. Down linesman 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 a continuous clock will be used and the clock will only stop for time outs and injuries. Once the lead falls below 24 points, regular game rules will go back into effect. The team leading by 24+ shall not run reverses, sweeps, passing plays, etc. Plays that start up the middle then are broken to the outside are a normal part of football and will not be penalized. While on defense, teams shall NOT stack 11 players in the box and stunt. These actions lead to injuries and will not be tolerated. **Always consider those on the other side of the ball. Please exhibit good sportsmanship and check the egos at the front gate. This game is for the kids and everyone is here to have an enjoyable experience.**

During the last minute of the game, the team with the ball must inform official they are taking a knee. The official will tell the other team, there will be no pass rush. (This only applies to a when a game is 9 points or more) **Teams up by 24 or more with the ball during the last minute of the game; must take a knee.**

#### KICKING GAME:

##### *Kickoffs:*

There will be no kick-offs in the Mite League. The team receiving the ball will take possession at the 30 yard line.

In the Junior and Senior Leagues, kickoffs will be a free kick with no rush. The kicking team will line up in formation on a knee and kickoff from the 40 yard line. The receiving team will **line up in formation on a knee** and take possession of the ball wherever it is caught or at the spot the ball rolls dead. If the ball bounces back toward the kicking team, the ball will be places at the spot of the bounce. The receiving team will start from that spot. Onside kicks are not allowed. Kickoffs will be a timed play of 1 minute from previous score, a delay of game penalty will result if not done in a minute.

##### *Punts:*

In **ALL** Leagues, punts will be a free kick with no rush. All linemen must be in a down position and must remain down until the ball is kicked. **Receiving team may only send 3 players back to field a punt; other 8 players must be on a knee.** No player may leave his or her feet in an attempt to block the kick. The ball must be snapped straight back, **at least five yards** from where the ball was officially placed, **and kicked from that spot.** The receiving team will take possession of the ball wherever it is caught or at the spot the ball rolls dead. If the ball bounces back toward the kicking team, the ball will be places at the spot of the bounce. *Punter will have 15 seconds to get the punt off before a delay of game penalty is called.* The clock will continue to run during punts, **except** during the last minute of the game. During the last minute punts will be a dead ball play and no time will expire.

##### *Extra Points:*

In the Mite and Junior Leagues, extra points will be a free kick with no rush. Mite teams will snap the ball from 3 yards inside the goal line to attempt an extra point. Junior teams will snap the ball from the goal line to attempt an extra point. In the Senior League, extra points will be snapped from the 3 yard line and **WILL** be a live play. *In all leagues, the ball will be kicked 7 yards back from where the ball is snapped.*

##### *Field Goals:*

In all leagues, field goals are allowed and will be snapped *7 yards back* from the line of scrimmage. In the Mite and Junior Leagues, field goals will be a free kick; in the Senior League, field goals will be live.

##### *Sportsmanship:*

All players on any kick must refrain from yelling, jumping, waving of hands, etc. First infraction will be a warning, second will be an unsportsmanlike penalty.

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

Extra Points: Kick = 2 points      Running = 1 point      Field Goals = 3 points

No quick-kicks will be allowed.

#### PENALTIES:

NRV Youth Football will follow Virginia High School League Rules.

### UN-SPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT:

Any player that commits an un-sportsmanlike foul (slugging, kicking, or knocking an opponent, etc.) will be removed from the game immediately and may not re-enter the game. Said offender may be asked to leave the premises. Anyone ejected (coach or player) is automatically suspended for the next game. Ejected person must leave field and wait in car or parking lot.

### CONCUSSIONS:

#### AN OVERVIEW:

A concussion can be caused by a blow to the head, jolt to the body, or any sudden force that results in a rapid acceleration/deceleration of the brain inside the skull. This impact of the brain against the rigid inside walls of the skull can cause a change in neurological function and a host of other symptoms depending on which part of the brain was injured. Youth athletes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of a concussion. Even what appears to be a “minor ding or bell ringer” has the real risk of catastrophic results when an athlete is returned to action too soon. Second impact syndrome, which in some cases can be fatal, is a direct result of returning to game action before all symptoms have cleared. While most players heal within a few weeks, an athlete who returns to play before a concussion has completely resolved risks re-injuring an already injured brain which can have life threatening consequences. Therefore, continued participation in any sport following a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, as well as increased risk for further injury to the brain, and even death.

The well-being of the athlete/participant is our greatest concern during any practice or game. Officials, coaches and parents are being asked to make all efforts to ensure that concussed athletes do not continue to participate. Thus, coaches, parents, and officials should also be looking for signs of concussion in all athletes and should immediately remove any suspected concussed participant from play.

**When in doubt, sit them out!** It’s far better to miss one or two games as a precautionary matter than to risk possible brain injury. No game is worth that.

#### WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Concussions can appear in many different ways. We know that a person does not have to lose consciousness to suffer a concussion. Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion as the one’s mentioned below shall be immediately removed from the game or practice and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

#### **1. PROBLEMS IN BRAIN FUNCTION:**

- a. Confused state – dazed look, vacant stare or confusion about what happened or is happening.
- b. Memory Problems – can’t remember assignment on play, opponent, score of game, or period of game; can’t remember how or with whom he or she traveled to the game, what he or she is wearing, what was eaten for breakfast, etc.
- c. Symptoms reported by participant – headache, nausea or vomiting; blurred or double vision; oversensitivity to sound, light or touch; ringing in ears; feeling foggy or groggy; dizziness.
- d. Lack of sustained attention – difficulty sustaining focus adequately to complete a task, a coherent thought or a conversation.

**2. SPEED OF BRAIN FUNCTION:** Slow response to questions, slow slurred speech, incoherent speech, slow body movements and slow reaction time.

**3. UNUSUAL BEHAVIORS:** Behaving in a combative, aggressive or very silly manner; atypical behavior for the individual; repeatedly asking the same question over and over; restless and irritable behavior with constant motion and attempts

to return to play; reactions that seems out of proportion and inappropriate; and having trouble resting or “finding a comfortable position.”

4. **PROBLEMS WITH BALANCE AND COORDINATION:** Dizziness, slow clumsy movements, inability to walk a straight line or balance on one foot with eyes closed.

**Seek medical help immediately if...**

Most concussions do not result in emergency care. However, if symptoms worsen, you notice behavioral changes or any of the following, seek care immediately.

Headaches that worsen; seizures, neck pain; very drowsy, can't be awakened; repeated vomiting; increasing confusion or irritability; weakness, numbness in arms and legs; unable to recognize people/places, less responsive than usual.

If you observe any of the above signs, call your doctor or go to the emergency room immediately.

**ROLE OF COACHING STAFF:**

Coaches/Coaching Staff will NOT be expected to “diagnose” a concussion. That is the job of an appropriate health-care professional. Coaches/Coaching Staffs will be asked to use their best judgment in observing the signs, symptoms and behaviors, associated with concussions. If a member of a youth team coaching staff observes questionable signs, symptoms, or behavior, he/she must remove the participant from the game for further evaluation and notify the parent/guardian.

The responsibility of further evaluating and managing the symptomatic participant falls upon the head coach, parent/guardian or appropriate health-care professional. If an appropriate health-care professional on site determines that the athlete HAS NOT suffered a concussion, the athlete may return to play. If there is no appropriate health-care professional available to evaluate the athlete, the athlete SHOULD NOT be allowed by the coach or parent/guardian to return to play.

**ROLE OF GAME OFFICIALS:**

Neither officials, nor coaches, will be expected to “diagnose” a concussion, as that is the job of an appropriate health-care professional. Officials are being asked to use their best judgment in observing the signs, symptoms and behaviors, associated with concussions. Officials will not be asked to make what could be perceived to be a medical opinion. If an official observes questionable signs, symptoms, or behavior, the official must notify the coach and remove the participant from the game for further evaluation.

The game official is not responsible for the sideline evaluation or management of the athlete after he or she is removed from play. The responsibility of further evaluating and managing the symptomatic athlete falls upon the head coach, and/or an appropriate health-care professional. If an appropriate health-care professional on site determines that the athlete HAS NOT suffered a concussion, the athlete may return to play. If there is no appropriate health-care professional available to evaluate the athlete, the athlete **SHOULD NOT** be allowed by the coach or parent to return to play. The official does not need written permission for an athlete to return to play, nor does the official need to verify the credentials of the appropriate health-care professional. Ensuring compliance is the responsibility of the head coach and NOT the game official.

**COACHES COMPLIANCE:**

Any coach that disregards the safety and well-being of a youth sport(s) participant as it relates to concussions will be suspended indefinitely from coaching. Additionally, any coach that misuses this policy to prohibit an otherwise, healthy, fit, uninjured player from participating will be suspended indefinitely from coaching.

For more information on concussions please visit:

[www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports](http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports)

For more detailed information on concussion and traumatic brain injury please visit:

[www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury)

For more information and resources visit:

[www.NCAA.org/health-safety](http://www.NCAA.org/health-safety)

### **NRV YOUTH FOOTBALL REQUIRED COURSE OF ACTION:**

1. Remove athlete from competition.
2. Notify parent or guardian.
3. Any participant suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional within a day of the “injury”. NOTE: An “appropriate health-care professional” should be individuals knowledgeable in the evaluation and management of sports-related concussions and may, include MDs, DOs and certified athletic trainers.
4. No participant should return to play or practice on the same day after a concussion has been diagnosed.
5. Any participant with a concussion should be medically cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or league play. This clearance shall be in the form of a written letter signed by the healthcare professional. One copy must be supplied to the corresponding Parks and Recreation department and one must be supplied to the head coach prior to any return to play. The formulation of a gradual return to play protocol should be a part of the medical clearance. NOTE: Athletes with continued concussion symptoms are at significant risk for recurrent, cumulative and even catastrophic consequences of a second concussive injury. Such risks are minimized if the athlete is allowed time to recover from the concussion and return to play decisions are carefully made. No athlete should return-to-sport or other at-risk participation when symptoms of concussion are present and recovery is ongoing. These guidelines should be applied to all sports related activity.

### **TACKLE FOOTBALL SAFETY PROCEDURES:**

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

### **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 un-sportsmanlike 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.

**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 is in accordance with the departments' 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.

**Do you know what my favorite part of the game is? The opportunity to play.**

***-Mike Singletary, Chicago Bears***