

# Western Reserve Youth Football League

## Rules & Regulations – *Version 08/18/2009*

*Updated by David Kelleher, Woodridge*

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# 2009 Western Reserve Youth Football League Rules

**A. WRYFL Purpose.** To furnish the youth of designated age and weight limitation who are not members of other organized squads, i.e., junior high, CYO, etc. the opportunity to play football under proper supervision and safety precautions.

**B.** To provide an opportunity for the youth of member cities to participate in an organized football program for moral, emotional and academic growth.

**C.** These Rules and Regulations have been established by the Governing Board which consists of one (1) member representative from each community as set forth in Section IX herein. Any rules changes, or league charter changes must be approved by an 80% majority of the Governing Board, which includes one vote per community.

**D.** The interpretation of these Rules and all decisions involving questions or disputes about these Rules vests solely in the Rules Committee as set forth in Section IX (5) herein. All decisions made by the Rules Committee shall be final and all member communities shall be bound by those decisions.

## II. Eligibility - Age and Weight Limitations

**A. Jr. Varsity team members** must be at least 7 by August 1<sup>st</sup>. and cannot be 10 by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Varsity team members will consist of 10, 11, and 12 year olds. They cannot be 13 by August 1<sup>st</sup>.

**B.** Division qualification will be determined by current age restrictions listed in paragraph II.A.

**C.** Varsity team players must not weigh more than 125 pounds equipped in game Pants and game shoes. Additional safety equipment will be allowed. (Arm pads, sweatshirts etc). Any player who weighs more than 125.0 pounds but less than or equal to 140 pounds to play in the following positions: (Offensive guard, tackle, center, and Defensive guard and tackle), these players are not eligible to receive passes or run the ball from the line of scrimmage. These players will be designated with a Green sticker (to be provided by the league). A team may only play players in this category 3 at one time. If a player drops below the 125.1-pound mark (by the next game), this player can remove designation sticker and be eligible to play any position. If a community has multiple teams, the Green sticker players must be equally divided amongst the teams. Four Weeks after the first weekend of the season, the maximum playing weight at the varsity level will be increased by one pound, to 141lbs. Four weeks from that point another pound will be added to allow for 142 lbs maximum weight.

**D.** Jr. Varsity team players must not weigh more than 110 pounds equipped in \ Game pants and game shoes. Additional safety equipment will be allowed. (Arm pads, sweatshirts etc). Any player who weighs more than 110.0 pounds but less than or equal to 120 pounds to play in the following positions:

(Offensive guard, tackle, center, and Defensive guard and tackle), these players are not eligible to receive passes or run the ball from the line of scrimmage. These players will be designated with a Green sticker (to be provided by the league). A team may only play players in this category 3 at one time. If a player drops below the 110.1-pound mark (by the next game), this player can remove designation sticker and be eligible to play any position. If a community has multiple teams, the Green sticker players must be equally divided amongst the teams.

**E.** The maximum weight will stand throughout the season and weight variances per game will not be permitted. Violation of this rule will result in both teams forfeiting that game and both head coaches will be suspended for the next scheduled game.

**F.** Exceptions – In the event a player is age eligible for a specific division, and is unable to compete in that division due to being physically unable to play based on weight, he may be able to play in the smaller division, by petition to the league . Each team is limited to one of these exceptions. Each exception is to be approved by league commissioners vote, and requires an 80% majority in order to be approved. Upon approval, it is understood that this player can not be an “orange-sticker” player and is not permitted to handle the ball.

**G.** A digital scale will be furnished by the “home”team. All scales to be used for weigh - ins must be certified by your County Auditor before the season starts. Proof of Certification must be presented to the Rules Committee at the roster meeting prior to first game.

**H.** All players must be weighed prior to each game. Players will be weighed in game pants (pads in pants and game shoes). Optional equipment will be included in the weigh-in. A player will be allowed to remove optional equipment to make weight. Optional equipment will include arm pads, sweatshirts etc. **NO METAL CLEATS ARE ALLOWED.**

**I.** Player weigh-ins will be conducted 10 minutes prior to the website scheduled game time for all games. At the conclusion of the weigh-in each team will immediately proceed to their respective benches to await the start of the game. There will be no allowance for early weigh-in requests. All participants must weigh-in at the officially **scheduled** weigh-in time.

**J.** Any player missing **the scheduled weigh-in time** will be ineligible to play the first half. They can weigh-in at halftime, and will be subject to the 8-play minimum participation rule.

**K.** Weigh-ins will be conducted by a coach from each team and a league representative.

**L.** If a player on a team is deemed ineligible due to Age Limitation that team will forfeit any games in which the ineligible player participated. If a team is found to be in violation of this rule the Head Coach of the team will be removed for 4 games automatically. This suspension will carry over to following season if applicable.

**M.** Players are only eligible to play for the community in which they reside unless the community in which they reside does not have a football program available to them. If a player is used in violation of this rule, each game the player was in violation will be forfeited.

**N.** Any 7<sup>th</sup> grader must be identified to the league and discussed among member communities Any child going into the 7<sup>th</sup> grade that does not have a football program available to them may participate in a W.R.Y.F.L. program providing they meet the age and weight requirements of the Varsity team division and provided it is understood that this player can not be an “orange-sticker” player and is not permitted to handle the ball on offense.

. (A copy of the child’s signed official report card will be used as proof of grade.) In each case the rules committee must approve this matter.

### III. Rosters

**A.** Prior to each game the coaches will be required to submit their team roster to the opposing coach. Rosters must be completely filled out with the game jersey listed in numerical order followed by the players' age and weight. The Rules Committee will provide a master form to all communities to use.

**B.** Players may be added to the rosters after four non-contact practice sessions with the team up and until the first game. Exceptions to this rule must be reviewed and approved by the rules committee.

**C.** Master team rosters will be required in writing to the Rules Committee at the announced league meeting held prior to the first game; jersey color and number, as well as head coaches name and phone numbers must be on the master roster. Number changes are not permitted unless approved by the Rules Committee. Failure to submit a legal roster at this meeting will result in forfeiture of games and no games will be played until the rules committee approves a legal roster.

**D.** Team rosters are unlimited rosters with numbers set by each community. All players listed on the roster are required to participate unless the player is injured, has quit the team or is benched for disciplinary actions.

1) Each city may admit as many teams per age division as needed with approval of the Rules Committee.

2) Any community that declares more than one team per division must (by random selection) have an equal number of age grouped players (within two plus or minus in age group) on all teams in that division. Each community must make every effort to divide teams equally in terms of talent, experience and ability.

Example:

Team One:

10 Yr Olds – 4 players

11 Yr Olds – 10 Players

12 Yr Olds – 11 Players

Team 2:

10 yr olds – Must have between 2 and 6 players

11 Yr Olds – Must have between 8 and 12 players

12 Yr Olds – Must have between 9 and 13 players

3) Each community will be required to get proof of age (birth certificate) at sign-ups. Copies of the documents must be made available to the Rules Committee. This documentation will also include the copy of a player's report card if applicable.

**F.** Team jerseys: No double numbers permitted (two or more players with the same number).

### IV. Practices

**A. Pre-Season:** Practice may commence 4 weeks ahead of the first game weekend, giving 4 weeks of practice before the 1<sup>st</sup> game. For the 2009 season the first day of permitted practice is Monday July 27. The first 4 practices shall be non-contact. All practices shall be limited to one session per day, no more than 2 hours in length and shall be limited to a maximum of five practices per week.

**B.** The week after the first regular season game, practices shall be limited to a maximum of three sessions per week including scrimmages and chalk talks and shall be limited to a maximum length of two hours per session. It is recommended that no practice extend past 8:00pm.

**C. Pre-Practice stretching and post practice conditioning** shall be included in every practice; 15 minutes before practice and 15 minutes post practice.

## **V. General Procedures**

**A.** No player will be permitted to practice or play who has not been properly registered with the Western Reserve Youth Football League (WRYFL).

**B.** Each community is to report the results of their home game(s) to the League Commissioner by 10:00PM Sunday evening.

**C.** In the event that the score is tied at the end of regulation, an overtime will immediately commence. Time outs remaining from regulation play will not be carried over to the overtime periods. Each team is awarded 1 time out per overtime period. Up to three overtime periods can be played, where each period consists of a full set of downs (1<sup>st</sup> and goal situation) for each team. The winner of a coin flip can decide if they want to start on offense or defense for the 1<sup>st</sup> Overtime period. (The loser of the coin flip will get to pick for the second OT period, and the winner will pick for the 3<sup>rd</sup> OT period (if applicable)). Each team will have a set of plays, each starting at the 10-yard line. The team ahead at the end of the period is declared the winner. If it is still tied, the format is repeated for up to 3 periods (3 sets of downs). If after 3 periods the score remains tied, the game will be considered a tie. In a playoff situation the same rule applies except that if the score remains tied after 3 periods, the ball will be moved to the 5-yard line to begin the sequence again. The game will continue until a winner is declared.

**D.** Jr. Varsity teams: One coach per team is allowed on the field of play and must be at least 10 yards behind the deepest player. Coaches are not allowed to have physical contact or give verbal communication once the play begins. Instruction given to players during the play will result in a five-yard penalty. Play begins when the offensive team breaks the huddle. There will be no communications from the on-field coaches once the offensive huddle breaks. This applies to both the offensive and defensive on-field coaches. The penalty shall be 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct.

**E.** All fields designated as home fields by each community will be inspected by at least one member of the Rules Committee.

**F.** To insure the safety of non-football personnel, the home communities must establish, and enforce a "safety zone" along the sidelines. Communities have the option to determine which method will suit their community best. Only coaches & league commissioners, designated by WRYFL badges will be permitted in the bench area inside the safety zone and along the sidelines. All other personnel must remain behind this "safety zone" during the game. Referees will reserve the right to remove anyone from the sidelines that does not have a WRYFL Badge.

**G.** The use of communications devices will not be permitted on the field, or sidelines.

**H.** Video-taping/recording of any kind for scouting purposes (games other than your own) is strictly prohibited.

## **VI. Coaches**

**A.** Only coaches listed on the official roster submitted to the WRYFL and properly identified by league provided badges are allowed on the sidelines. The number of total coaches per team shall be limited to a maximum of 6 coaches [on the sidelines during games](#).

**B.** All communities must submit a signed acknowledgement and their agreement to abide by the rules prior to the start of the season.

## **VII. Player's Equipment**

- A.** All players must wear full legal equipment. It is strongly recommend that each player wear an athletic supporter and cup.
- B.** Each community is responsible for supplying their teams with a first aid kit for all practices and games. All kits need an HIV (Zorbizide) clean-up kit and a change of uniform.
- C.** All helmets must display "warning" sticker prior to each game as per OHSAA rules.

## **VIII. Game Procedures**

- A.** All players dressed for the game that **have** met the weigh-in criteria must play at least 8 plays. Punting downs or receiving downs will not count as a play. Any child who chooses not to play or who is sick must remove helmet and shoulder pads and leave the sideline area.
- B.** The 8-play rule will be enforced through the review of each team's 8-play stat sheet and each team will be spotted occasionally.
- C.** Violation of this rule will result in an automatic one-year warning to the city, and head coach. The Rules Committee will handle additional infractions of this rule.
- D.** Quarters will be 9 minutes in length with a 30-second huddle clock for both divisions.
- E.** On 4<sup>th</sup> down the game clock will continue to run, unless the offensive team declares a punt. At which time the game clock will stopped for a non-timed punt.
- F.** The clock will stop as in an official game, i.e., out of bounds, incomplete passes, after a touchdown etc. Three timeouts per team will be permitted in each half.
- G.** There will be a 7 minute "halftime" period. The teams will warm-up the players with 2 minutes left in the halftime period.
- H.** To insure fair competition and to avoid "running" up the score: teams leading by 12 (18 in play-off games) or more points must remove their starting backfield. The procedure is as follows:
  - 1) The four starting backfield players (orange stickers) must be circled on the team's roster sheet. The starting backfield will be required to wear an Orange sticker" on the back right side of the helmet.
  - 2) These stickers will be provided by the league and can be changed from player to player each game, however once the weigh in is complete, changing the stickers to another player is disallowed. 3 Players designated as the starting backfield must start the game and will play the game with LIMITED SUBSTITUTION. At all times 3 out of the 4 starting backfield must be in the game, unless there is an injury; additional substitutions will be allowed for injuries or safety concerns. It is the goal of the league to advise the teams to not run up the score or in the case of a lopsided game change the plays that are executed. For example if your team is a good running team that hardly passes, start to throw the ball and vice versa. A non-designated starting back can not run or throw the ball for two consecutive plays (this does not apply if the spread is 12 or more points and the starting backfield has been removed or nor does it apply for an injury substitute).
  - 3) During post season play-off games, the point spread for removing orange sticker players from the starting back field is 18 points.

- 4) Once the score reaches a 12 (18 in Play-offs) or more point spread, the entire starting backfield must be removed from those positions. (The trailing team also has the option to remove their backfield, as free substitution will apply to them for their backfield). The starting backfield will be allowed to remain in the game to attempt the extra point (after the score that made the spread 12 point or more), but must be removed on the next offensive possession. At this point, they are allowed, however, to assume the position of offensive lineman (tight-end included). They cannot catch, throw or handle the ball on offense, unless they become the center. They can play on defense (interceptions and fumble recoveries allowed), catch punts and punt the ball. Once the point spread is cut back to fewer than 12 points the starting backfield (for both teams) is allowed to resume their starting positions. If there is a violation of this rule the offensive team will be assessed a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- 5) Once the score reaches a 24 or more point spread, the team leading must remove from the game all Orange sticker players. If a team does not have enough players to continue, the head coach of the trailing team can select which Orange sticker players may remain in the game. Once the point spread is cut back to fewer than 24 points the Orange sticker players may return to the game as per paragraph VIII.H.4 above. If there is a violation of this rule the offending team will be assessed a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.
- 6) After the completion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter if a team is up by 24 or more points and both coaches agree, the clock will run continuously. All orange stickered players must be completely off the field at this time. The clock will stop only for punts and timeouts.
- 7) If a member of the Rules Committee detects a violation, corrective action will immediately take place and the penalty will be assessed.
- 8) The Rules Committee will review suspected violations of these rules. If a violation is confirmed the head coach will be suspended for one game for a first offense, the head coach will be suspended for one year for 2 or more offenses.
- 9) Ejection rule: After 1 ejection from a game in a single season, The rules committee will make a ruling on what disciplinary action will be taken based on severity of that individual's actions that brought on the ejection. After 2<sup>nd</sup> ejection in the same season, the individual is suspended for the remainder of the season. At the end of the season, all communities will review and vote on whether you are able to return the next season. Following an ejection from a game, the commissioner or head coach must get the referee to fill out an incident report on what brought on the ejection.

**I.** If a coach questions the official's interpretation of a call and not the judgement of the call, the coach will receive the attention of the official. If the interpretation is not correct the correct action will be made.

**J.** The game will start from scrimmage on the offensive team's own 35 yard line. After a safety the scoring team will start play from the 50 yard line. There are no kick-offs.

**K.** Extra Points: Extra points may be attempted by run or pass. A successful conversion by a run is one point; a successful conversion by a forward pass (even if the forward pass is caught behind the line of scrimmage) is two points.

**L.** Coaches and substitutes must confine themselves to area between the 25-yard lines. And two yards off the sidelines during live action plays. (Jr. Varsity will allow one coach on the field of play; additional coaches must follow the above rule and confine themselves between the 25 yard lines and 2 yards off the sidelines during live plays).

**M. Punting:**

After 3<sup>rd</sup> down, the clock continues to run. The team with possession has 29 seconds from the time the ball is set to make a decision to run a play or declare a punt. If the team declares a punt, the clock stops and they must punt the ball at this point. If they decide to run a play, they have to get the play off in 29 seconds or call a time out. If they do not get the play off in 29 seconds, they will be charged with delay of game. At this point, they can still punt, but they will have to give up the timeout or take the delay of game.

If a punt is declared by the offensive team the game clock will remain stopped until the next offensive play is ran.

There will be no rushing of the punter.

No offensive players are allowed down field during the punt.

There will be NO CONTACT by either team during the punt. Offensive and Defensive linemen must set one knee on the ground during the punt attempt.

Once the offensive team declares a punt, a punt must occur.

A run or pass play will result in the defensive team receiving the ball where the offensive team's line of scrimmage was.

A punt may be "long" or "short" snapped.

A maximum of 3 players is allowed off the line of scrimmage during the punt attempt.

There will be no "run-backs", however catching the ball on the fly will result in a 5yard advance of the ball from the spot of the catch. Untouched, muffed and fumbled punts will be spotted where ball is downed unless it goes forward (after being touched), in which case it is down where it is first touched.

The punt must occur behind the line of scrimmage and within the limits of the offensive line.

**N.** All defensive formations must have a minimum of three (3) down linemen positioned inside the offensive ends. Any player in a defensive position located inside the offensive ends, on the defensive line, must be in a down position. The teams are allowed to have one standing player outside of the offensive tackles on each side of the line (defensive ends). Linebackers and any other position player in a standing position must be a minimum of two (2) yards off the line of scrimmage. Inside the offensive ends is defined as any position between the outside gaps of the offensive tackle positions. If a standing player enters this "neutral zone" at any time prior to the snap a 5 yard offside penalty will be assessed on the defense.

**O.** An attempted blitz before the snap of the ball will result in a 15 yard penalty assessed against the defense.

**P.** MIKASA (Youth), Nike (Youth), or a WILSON TDY (Youth) ball will be used for the Varsity team.

The Jr. Varsity team will use a MIKASA (Junior), Nike (Junior), or a WILSON TDJ (Junior).

These are the chosen brands and their numbering version may vary from year To year.

The offensive team will make the ball type choice.

The home team must provide two playable balls for each game.

**Q.** A minimum of two card-carrying officials will be required to officiate the game. The "home" team will be responsible for paying the officials. It is preferred to have 3 officials at all games, with a minimum of two officials at all games, if the game is played contrary to this rule and was agreed upon by both teams,

then the game is official.

**R.** All fumbles and muffs will be considered a “LIVE” ball which can be advanced by either team.

**S.** No field goals or extra-point kicks are allowed.

**T.** All coaches and commissioners will be required to wear a badge identifying them as league personal. These badges will be provided by the league at the fall scheduling Meeting

**U.** 4 officials will be present at every playoff and Championship game.

**V.** Starting with the 2009 season, all communities must have a certified athletic digital scale and no other scale can be used.

**W.** Tie breakers are determined as follows;

- Overall Record
- Head to Head
- Strength of schedule
- Point Differential (12 Point Cap)
- Coin Toss

**X.** Clear mouth guards are not permitted and all mouth guards must be attached to the facemask of helmets.

**Y. Chain Gangs are required to be position on the home team sideline and positioned 2 yards off the sideline. Any type of “Coaching” by chain gang members is not permitted.**

Any rule pertaining to the game of football not covered within these rules will be covered by the OHSAA rules.

## IX. The Governing Board

The governing board will consist of one commissioner from each city, with each city receiving a vote on each matter. Should the commissioner be unable to attend a meeting, he can appoint someone to represent his city at the meeting. There will be 4 nonvoting positions on the board. Since these are non-voting positions, they can be held by a commissioner, and that commissioner still maintains his voting rights as commissioner. The following are the 4 nonvoting position.

- 1) Scheduling Committee – 2009 Doug Crystal of Kenston, Doug Sensibaugh of Solon, and Chris Righthour of Hudson. They will communicate with the web page coordinators to make sure everything is posted correctly on the web page. They will be in charge of the regular season schedule and communicating this schedule to the person who schedules the referees. After all cities involved in the playoffs have met and have agreed upon a time and place, this will be communicated to the scheduling committee and they will make sure there are referees scheduled for these games also. Each city is responsible for notifying this person of any time change of their game to insure that there are refs present.
- 2) League Secretary – 2009 David Kelleher of Woodridge. Will be in charge of all league meeting minutes and will insure that everything voted on is documented and makes it into the rules and regulations. Will be responsible for making sure that all cities are informed and updated on current events. □
- 3) League Treasurer – 2009 Doug Crystal of Kenston with assistance from “treasurer-in-waiting, Todd Benenati, of Chardon. Responsible for all league transactions and maintenance of League money.
- 4) □ Web Page Co-Administrators – 2009 Doug Crystal of Kenston and Doug Sensibaugh of Solon. This person will communicate with the secretary to make sure that any rules and regulations are updated and posted on the site. This person will maintain the standings on the website after each City notifies them of that weeks scores. He will communicate with the scheduling coordinator to make sure the schedule is posted on the site.
- 5) Rules Committee- 2009 Scott Shell of Kenston, David Kelleher of Woodridge, Howard Eisenhardt of Hudson.

## **X. Playoffs & Championship Games**

With the exception of the 1<sup>st</sup> week when all cities meet: The cities remaining in the playoffs after the first round will meet or communicate by email or phone to decide where the next round of playoffs will be played and times.

This needs to be communicated to the scheduling coordinator, web page coordinator and secretary so all cities are informed and the everything is updated.

- Other than the championship game, single games will be allowed, if a city only has one team in the playoffs and they are high seed.
- Championship game will be played on High School Field only.
- If high seed does not want to play on their own field, they have the option to agree to play on the opposing teams field or go to a neutral field.
- In the semi-finals, and championship game, an unbiased, nonparticipating league designated community representative will spot plays to ensure all players are playing the required number of plays (8) for all semi-final and final games.

Championship games.

- Trophies will go to all players on Varsity & Junior Varsity Championship Teams.
- Medals will be given to all players on Varsity & Junior Varsity Runner up Teams.
- Plaques will be given up to 3 coaches on Varsity & Junior Varsity Championship Teams.
- A trophy will be given to the Commissioner of Varsity & Junior Varsity Championship Teams.

## **XI. League Expansion**

Any new community wishing to join our league must attend a meeting and present to us the following:

- What their program is about.
- Why they are leaving their current league, if they have an existing program.
- What they expect from our league.
- They must make a 3 year commitment to our league consisting of a \$500 commitment fee that will be given back to them after the Completion of their 3<sup>rd</sup> season.
- They will have 80% voting rights until after the completion of their first season when they will receive 100% voting rights.
- After the completion of their presentation, the governing board will vote on whether to admit or deny them participation in our league

## **XII. Freshman Division**

### **COMPETITION RULES FOR “FRESHMAN” DIVISION (7 Year Olds)**

- 1.1 Orange dots will not be used for the 7 year old leagues.
- 1.2 Weight limitations will be the same as the “JV” division.
- 1.3 All players will participate in a minimum of ten (10) plays per game
- 1.4 All coaches on the field will be identifiable by their WRYFL badges.
- 1.5 Two (2) coaches are allowed on the field and are permitted to “set” the players prior to the start of play.
- 1.6 **Defense** will be a standard **5-3** with the following adjustments:
  - A. Defensive tackles must be lined up in a down position over the offensive tackles.
  - B. Defensive ends will be in a standing position outside the offensive tackles or the offensive ends.
  - C. Nose guards will be lined up at least one (1) yard off –center.
  - D. Three (3) linebackers will be permitted but must be lined up three (3) yards off the ball.
  - E. A fourth linebacker (safety) can be used in short yardage situations only. Short yardage is identified as any situation of three (3) yards or less for a first down, touchdown or extra point attempts.
  - F. The defense must employ two (2) cornerbacks.
- 1.7 There is absolutely no blitzing allowed by the cornerbacks, linebackers, or safeties. This infraction will incur a fifteen (15) yard, unsportsmanlike conduct penalty if spotted by the referee.
- 1.8 A Wilson K2 (Leather or Synthetic) or any brand, make or model of football equivalent in size and dimension to the Wilson K2 (Leather or Synthetic) football shall be used by “Freshman” teams for all games. Each team shall be responsible for supplying their own game balls.
- 1.9 Punting – The team punting has the option to punt the ball or turn the ball over with a 20 yard gain.
- 1.10 All other WRYFL rules apply.