

2021

## AAO GRIDIRON FOOTBALL LEAGUE (GFL) GAME DAY PROCEDURES AND RULES

### **Player Eligibility**

The Gridiron Football League (GFL) is designed to prepare players for their future junior high school programs. Teams are based and formed by individual communities and school districts.

#### **School District Based:**

Students must play for the team in the school district where they live.

#### **Private School Players:**

Players who attend a private school that participates in the GFL, must play for their private school team. If their private school does not participate in the GFL, the player must play for the school district team where they live.

#### **Neighboring School Districts:**

Players who live in a neighboring school district that doesn't offer tackle football, may request to participate on a GFL team. Approval must be obtained by League Director, the community organization, and specific team coach. Whenever their community school district provides a tackle football option, the player must return to their home team.

### **Game Day Procedures**

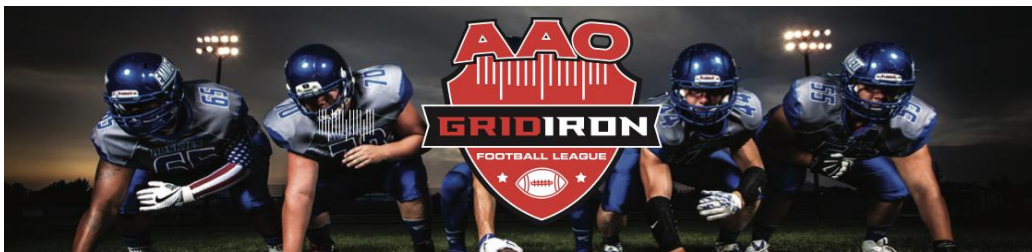
#### **Length of Games**

- 3rd-4th Grade: Two 25 minute running clock halves.
- 5th-6th Grade: Two 25 minute running clock halves.
- Each team is allowed two timeouts each half of the game -(Time Outs Can Not be carried over)
- There will be 10 minutes scheduled between games to allow transition of new teams / fans onto the fields.

#### **Equipment Size of Footballs (composite, leather):**

Teams must start with and use the same size ball throughout the entire game for their appropriate grade level.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grades - Peewee size ball
- 5<sup>th</sup> grade - Junior size ball
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade - Junior size or Youth size ball



## Game Play

- It is important for games to start on time. A team must forfeit if they are unable to play within 5 minutes after the scheduled start time.
- No Coin Toss:
  - **Home Team:** will provide the chain crew (3 person crew) and have the option of which end of the field to start play
  - **Visiting Team:** will provide one scorekeeper and have the option of receiving or defending the ball to start play
  - The second half will begin with team first receiving playing defense and the field will automatically reverse for offenses
- A team must have at least 10 players available to start a game.
- Games may be called by the League Commissioner for inclement weather or dangerous or poor field conditions.
- Officials will enforce 30 sec. play clock - for all divisions - (kept manually by head official)
- No headsets may be used by either team.
- Scores table will be stationed on the South side of the field (Team Sideline) near the 50 yard line
  - operated by the visiting team - scorekeeper will be responsible for having each head coach initial the official score sheet confirming the final score of the game.
- A 3 person Chain Crew will be the responsibility of the Home Team and operated on the North side of the field - (Fan Sideline)

-Reporting Scores: Head coaches are expected to sign / initial the score sheet located at the score table following each game - confirming the final score. Any updated or revised scores must be communicated to the league commissioner no later than 3:00 PM on Sundays.

## Half Time Procedure

- Half time is 5 minutes.

## Suspended Games

- If a game is halfway through the second half, the game will be considered complete if the referee suspends the game and feels it cannot be continued within what he feels is a reasonable time.
- If a game is suspended within the first half and cannot be completed at that time, the entire game will be rescheduled for a later date. If the game is suspended at halftime or before the start of the 2nd half, the game will be rescheduled and the play will start over at the beginning of the 2nd half. Same score & possession as if the 2<sup>nd</sup> half had never started. Every effort will be made to complete a suspended game at a later date. However, if an unfinished game cannot be rescheduled, the game can be deemed completed by the agreement of the league commissioner and the score considered final.



## GAME RULES

### **Team Sideline:**

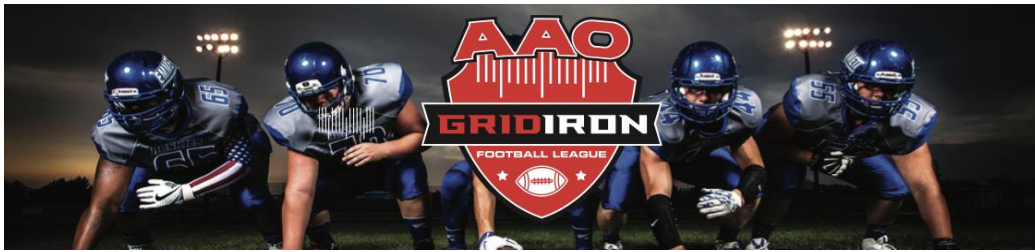
- Coaches and players are expected to remain inside their designated team box - area - marked from the 40 - 10 yard lines on their respective ends of the fields.
  - Home Team Sideline will be towards the center of the field complex closest to the gate. Designated signs are posted for assistance.
  
- **EXCEPTION:**
  - **One** coach with no more than 3 player substitutions may progress with their team down the sideline to better communicate and enter the game for their team - **IT IS AN EXPECTATION OF THE GFL - THAT THE COACH ONLY TAKE WITH HIM THE PLAYERS HE INTENDS TO PUT IN GAME DURING THE CURRENT SERIES.** It is an expectation as well that coaches and players progressing into their opponents sideline refrain from any unsportsmanlike behavior - physically or verbally - this action is to be reciprocated by the opposing team.

**-Sideline Coaches: Only a total of 5 USA Certified Coaches are allowed on the sideline during games.** A team may have more coaches helping with practice during the week but only 5 allowed on the sideline.

- 5 total coaches are allowed on the sidelines at any time during the football game.

-All designated coaches must wear their coaching pass and lanyards to be recognized.

- The number of non-player personnel on each football team's sideline shall not exceed a total of eight (8).
- **Sideline Special Guests are limited to ONLY - Middle / High School coaches that participating players will play for in the future - (Feeder School Coach Exception) and AAO staff.**
- These (8) include all coaches, + managers, play counters, team video personnel, or water personnel .
- **All team personnel must be 16 years of age or older:**
- Only - Head coach will be allowed to address the officials per offensive / defensive series. - Assistant Coaches need to communicate through their head coaches...



### **Coach's Field & Sideline Rules**

**Only during a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade game is one coach from each team allowed on the field.** (One on offense and one on defense). The coaches are encouraged to keep the flow of play going and not delay the game with lengthy additional coaching points. An official may remove a field coach at any time if the official feels the coach is a disruption to the game. If a coach is removed from the field in a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade game - *there will be no replacement* and the violating team will forfeit their on field coaching privileges. The purpose of this rule is to speed up play and allow for more plays per game and improve the instructional purpose of the league.

**3<sup>rd</sup> grade on-field coaches must remain 5 yards behind the official when the ball is snapped.** There is no coaching on the field *once the ball is snapped*. The coach must remain quiet. Failure to follow these rules will first result in a verbal warning. Followed by a 5 yard (delay of game) - penalty - any further issues will result in a 15 yard (unsportsmanlike) - penalty and the coach being removed from the field.

**Center Protection:** no defensive player shall line up directly over the center, they must shade right or left gaps of the center, **unless** in a goal line or short yardage situations and must be down in a 3 or 4 point stance.

- Any player standing shall be a minimum of **2 yards** off the ball, > unless they are being counted as one of the five defensive players on the line of scrimmage - then they must be outside the tackle box.
- First violation of this rule will result in a verbal warning. Followed by a 5 yard - (delay of game) - penalty. Any further violations will result in a 15 yard - (unsportsmanlike) - penalty.

### **Max Players on Defensive LOS:**

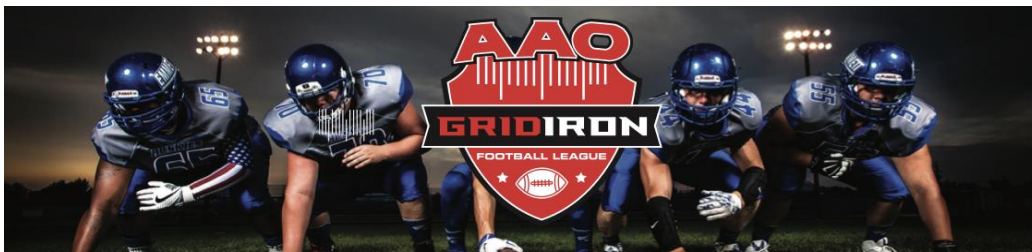
- Defensive teams may only have **5** players on the line of scrimmage, **Exception** > Goal Line or Short Yardage. All players **inside** the tackle box must be down in a 3 or 4 point stance.

### **Short Yardage:**

- Short yardage will be defined as **3 yards or less** when a team is defending its goal line or three yards or less on any fourth down attempt anywhere on the field.

### **Team Sideline Boxes:**

- Coaches and players are expected to remain inside their team box - area - marked from the 40 - 10 yard lines on their respective ends of the fields. **Only one coach should be allowed out of the team box at any time during the game.** Violation of this rule will result in a sideline warning - any further violations will result in a 5 yard delay of game penalty and the third offense will result in a 15 yard unsportsmanlike penalty.



### No Kick-Offs:

- At the start of each half and after each score, the receiving team will start from their own 30 yard line.

### Punts:

- A punt must be declared by the offensive team and the punts will be moved 30 yards from the line of scrimmage and you can't punt if you are at, or inside, your opponent's 30-yard line. The ball will be spotted 30 yards downfield from the line of scrimmage.
- Punts are a strategic part of the game. **The 10 yard line is the deepest "you can pin down" a team.**

### PAT:

- Following a touchdown:
- If a team elects to spot the ball at the 3 yard line, a successful attempt will be worth one (1) point.
- If a team elects to spot the ball at the ten (10) yard line, a successful attempt will be worth (2) points.

### Safety:

- If a safety occurs the defensive team will receive 2 pts. + receive possession of the ball at the 50 yard line. (NFHS - enforces the kicking line at the 20 yd. line following a safety)

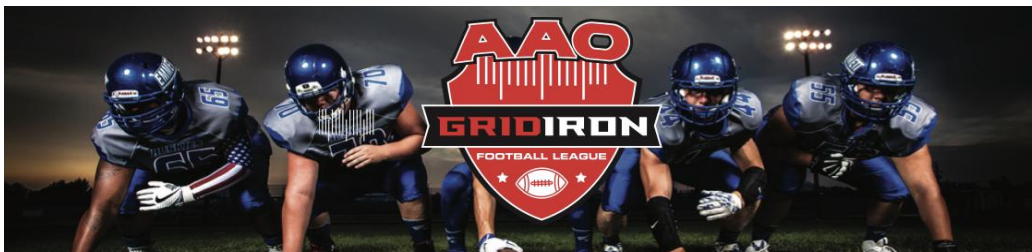
### Overtime:

- Overtime will be "**sudden death**".
- One Play-One Score.
- The team who wins the overtime coin toss may elect to receive the ball or defer, each team upon starting its offense can choose to go for a (1) point score from the 5 yard line or a (2) point score from the 10 yard line. The team will be given one play to score. After their play is completed their opponent will be given the same option to run a play from the 5 or 10 yard line.
- Teams will continue to trade plays until one team scores more points than the other or 5 minutes expires.
- If the game is still tied at the end of **5 minutes** the game will be considered as a completed game and the score will remain tied.

### Mercy Rule:

- The mercy rule will go into effect with a 30 point lead anytime within the second half.
- The clock will continue to run as normal.





- Coaches are expected to practice good sportsmanship toward your fellow opponents. Coaches are encouraged to substitute their starting skill players (QB, RB, WR) during the mercy rule.
- If the mercy rule is already in effect by the end of the first half and both coaches agree with approval by the head referee > the game time may be shortened in the second half to 10 minutes (3rd-4th Grade) and 12 minutes (5th-6th Grade).

### Rule Violations

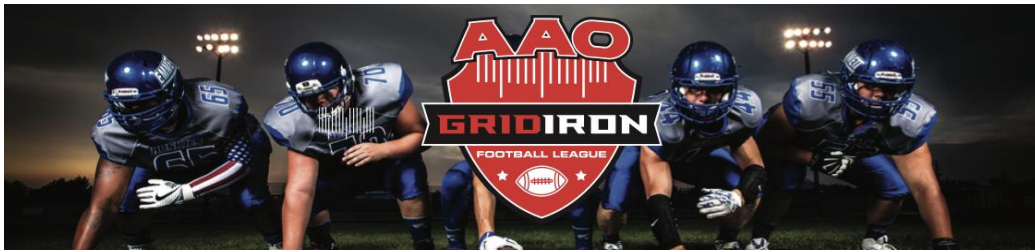
- Violations of Gridiron League rules will be acted on and penalties assessed by the League Commissioner as outlined and approved by the Executive Rules Committee.
- The penalty or penalties assessed against an organization, coach, parent, or player can be one or more of the following:
  - Ejection from games
  - Forfeiture of game or games
  - Suspension of coaches or individuals within an organization
  - Probation
  - Any action deemed appropriate by majority vote of the Officers including the permanent removal from the league.
- Assaults, verbal abuse, profanity, display of poor sportsmanship or rule violation by a coach, parent, participant, club official or guest at a league function will not be tolerated.
- Alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs or the consumption of alcoholic beverages or drugs will not be allowed by anyone at a league function. Penalties will be dealt accordingly.
- **Any coach, player or spectator ejected from a league game or scrimmage will be automatically suspended for the next 4 quarters of regulation play - as subject to the Arkansas Activities Association ejection ruling.**
  - Suspended coaches and players will be allowed to attend team practice.
  - Suspended coaches will not be allowed into the facility during their suspension failure to comply will result in team forfeiture of the game.

### Disputes

- Will first be heard by the League Commissioner with an attempt to completely resolve. The Commissioner will resolve the majority of issues. If the issue can not be resolved then it will be heard by the appointed members of the Executive Rules Committee.

### Ejections

- Player ejections may be reviewed by the head official in consultation with the League Commissioner and enforced or reverse the disqualification prior to the next game. Officials also



have the authority to send a player to the sideline for a period of time without formally ejecting the player from the game. The player may only return to the game with the permission of the head official. If the player is ejected, disqualified or decision reversed, **it is the responsibility of the head coach to notify their member director and league commissioner immediately following the game.**

- A coach ejected from a second game will be suspended for the remainder of the season and will not participate in team practices. To return to coaching next season the coach must apply for approval from the League Commissioner.
- **Protesting A Game:** To protest an action or game by a coach to the League Commissioner, the coach or persons involved in the incident must do the following within 24 hours of the incident: Submit a written statement on the incident in protest to their Member Director.
- The parties involved may be asked to speak to the League Commissioner and provide evidence to support the complaint. The Commissioner will then review the evidence and declare a ruling within "seven" (7) days of the filing of the written incident statement.

The League Commissioner may modify the League Rules when the League Commissioner deems it in the best interest of the league/tournament to do so and all teams will be bound by any such change.

Questions, contact: [admin@aaoteam.org](mailto:admin@aaoteam.org)