



## **2024 Tackle Football Rules**

### **A, B and C Leagues**

**LYFA Board Approved – May 29, 2024**

## Section 1 – General Guidelines

- A. The VHSL High School Federation rule book will govern all playing rules, except as modified herein.
- B. **No communication devices of any kind shall be permitted or used during the game.** Only exceptions will be for emergency personnel (i.e., police, fire, rescue, and facilities related communications). Penalty Unsportsmanlike on the head coach 15 yards
- C. "A", "B" and "C" division games will have (10) minute quarters. The game clock will stop on a change of possession and be restarted on the next snap of the ball.
- D. In the "B," and "C" divisions, no more than six Red & green dot Players (6) may participate at any given time during games. **Penalty for violation: Illegal Substitution – 5-yard penalty.** In the B and C divisions, athletes exceeding the maximum weight will be identified with a recognizable marking. The marking will be 1" minimum red & green dot stickers provided by the league. These red & green dot stickers shall be located on the helmet with two in the front, two in the rear and two in the middle with one above each ear hole. Red & green dots must be visible by the side judges as they look down the line of scrimmage.
- E. A & B League Point After Touchdown: During the point after touchdown play, two (2) points are allowed for kicking or a forward pass thrown beyond the line of scrimmage; and one (1) point for a running play or forward pass thrown behind the line of scrimmage.
- F. C League Point After Touchdown: During the point after touchdown play, two (2) points are allowed for a forward pass thrown beyond the line of scrimmage; and one (1) point for a running play or forward pass thrown behind the line of scrimmage or kicking.
- G. Free Scrimmage Kick (C League): The "C" League will permit the offensive team to declare a free scrimmage punt, extra point kick or field goal (no rush). Upon doing so, the referee will notify the receiving team that the offensive team has declared a free punt. The offensive team is subject to a delay of game penalty if the ball is not kicked within the prescribed time (25 seconds) after the ball is marked for play. The defensive team must have six (6) players within five (5) yards of the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted. The receiving team must take possession of the ball. The ball is spotted where the ball comes to a stop (if not fielded) or where it is fielded by the receiving team. If the offensive team does not punt the ball after declaring so, they shall be penalized ten (10) yards and a loss of down.
- H. Onside Kick Rule: No kicking team with a **14-point or greater lead** may gain

possession of the ball by any means other than recovering a fumble by the receiving team after they have gained possession.

- I. Linebackers and Blitzing: Players not on the line are prohibited from advancing toward the offensive team prior to the snap to gain an advantage (the running blitz is prohibited). All defensive players that are not part of the line of scrimmage must be three (3) yards behind the line of scrimmage.

**Penalty for violation: Illegal formation, live ball play - penalty 5 yards.**

- The exception to the rule would be in the A division where blitzing from behind the line of scrimmage is permitted. Defensive players are not subject to the 3-yard free zone from the line of scrimmage.

- J. Players exceeding the maximum weight (red & green dots) can only play end-to-end on offense line and end-to-end on defense line. Green dots are defined as weighing + 10 lbs above the maximum weight and are eligible to receive a pass forward the line of scrimmage. The A division has no weight limits and is not subject to this LYFA rule. The B and C divisions must abide by the Red/Green Dot weight rules. Interpretations:

**a. On Offense**

- i. Players exceeding the maximum weight (red & green dot) may only play in positions from end-to-end **Penalty for violation: Illegal formation – Play is blown dead, and the offending team is assessed 5 yards.**
- ii. Red & Green dot players may advance the ball on a recovered fumble.
- iii. All red & green dots must be lined up in the free blocking zone. Red & green dots may line up uncovered on the LOS provided the player is within the free blocking zone. This player is considered ineligible and as such, must follow all applicable rules. **Penalty for violation: Illegal formation – Play is blown dead, and the offending team is assessed 5 yards.**
- iv. Green dots must be on the end of the line, on the line to be eligible to catch a pass forward the line of scrimmage.
- v. **The A division has no weight limits and is not subject to the following LYFA rules on limitations for offensive line positions. All other divisions must abide by the Red/Green Dot weight rules for offensive line positions.**
- vi. At the snap, at least five players on their line of scrimmage can be any jersey number.

**b. On Defense**

- i. Players exceeding the maximum weight (red & green dot) may only play in positions from end-to-end; **Penalty for violation: Illegal formation – Play is blown dead, and the offending team is assessed 5 yards.**
- ii. Players exceeding the maximum weight (red & green dot) may advance the ball on a fumble recovery or interception.
- iii. Defensive End Red & Green Dot pass coverage - Dots are allowed to drop into pass coverage up to 5 yards deep outside the tackle box -- tackle to tackle. Intent is to allow the DE to cover the RB swing pass out of the backfield. **Penalty for violation: Illegal formation – LIVE ball penalty and offending team is assessed 5 yards.**
- iv. The A division has no weight limits and is not subject to the following LYFA rules on limitations for defensive line positions. All other divisions must abide by the Red/Green Dot weight rules for defensive line positions.
- v. At the snap, at least five players on their line of scrimmage can be any jersey number.

**c. On Special Teams**

- i. On kickoff return: Players exceeding the maximum weight (red & green dot) may only play on the front line. They may advance the ball that goes directly to them within 2 yards.
- ii. On field goal, extra point, or punt plays: Players exceeding the maximum weight (red & green dot) may also play holder, kicker, or punter. Red & green dot players at holder, kicker, or punter are not eligible to advance the ball past the LOS. In the event of a fake or broken play, red & green dot players aligned at holder, kicker, or punter may not advance the ball past the LOS nor participate as a blocker. **Penalty for violation: Illegal formation – 5-yard penalty and loss of down.**

K. Mercy Rule: When a twenty-one (21) point differential is reached at half-time or at any point in the second half, the referee will ask the head coach of the losing team if they would like the mercy rule timing to be implemented. Once the score exceeds 35-point differential, the referee will institute the mercy rule timing. The head coach is still responsible for ensuring that all players meet the minimum playing time requirement. Once the losing team's head coach notifies the referee to implement the mercy rule, the following changes, and only these changes, shall be made regarding the rules determining when the clock will and will not be stopped. The clock shall run continuously, except for the following situations when it will be stopped:

- a. Time-outs (charged to a team),
- b. Intermission (between 3rd and 4th quarters, and after a score),
- c. Penalty Enforcement (whistle to ready-for-play), and
- d. Safety reasons (injuries, etc.).

**Section 2 – Minimum Player Participation Rule**

- A. **A7 and B-League Minimum Player Participation:** Every player present and equipped to play must participate in a minimum of 16 scrimmage plays. In addition, each participant must play a minimum of 8 plays in the first half and a minimum of 8 plays in the second half.
- \*In A8 only – Minimum play count is 12 total for each game – 6 plays per half mandatory. \*

The Head Coach will be held accountable for this requirement. Each head coach will submit a mandatory player participation report to the appropriate Division Director upon request.

- First infraction of this rule, the coach is reprimanded; the player will start the next game and make up for the missed plays in addition to his minimum plays.
- Second infraction, the coach is suspended for one game; the player starts the next game and makes up all missed plays.
- Third infraction, the coach is removed from the team; the player starts the next game and makes up all missed plays.

- B. **C-League Minimum Player Participation:** Every player present and equipped to play must participate in a minimum of 16 scrimmage plays (excluding dead ball kicking plays). In addition, each participant must play a minimum of 8 plays in the first half and a minimum of 8 plays in the second half.

The Head Coach will be held accountable for this requirement. Each head coach will submit a mandatory player participation report to the appropriate Division Director upon request.

- First infraction of this rule, the coach is reprimanded; the player will start the next game and make up for the missed plays in addition to his minimum plays.
- Second infraction, the coach is suspended for one game; the player starts the next game and makes up all missed plays.

- Third infraction, the coach is removed from the team; the player starts the next game and makes up all missed plays.
- C. Large team number adjustment to Player Participation Rule – excludes A8 league: For teams over 22 rostered players, player participation count lowers by 2 plays per player (1 play per half) per game. League notification is required. Minimum play count is 14 total for each game – 7 plays per half mandatory.