



COACH'S MANUAL

PRF Coach's Manual



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SCOPE OF RULES

Rule changes or waivers must be reviewed and approved by the PRF Board.

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PORTAGE ROCKET FOOTBALL

GOALS

The goal of Portage Rocket Football (PRF) is to provide the opportunity for the youth of the Portage area to have a positive, enjoyable and fulfilling experience that encourages and increases youth participation in football. The program will teach the ideals of good sportsmanship, respect and teamwork and provide each child with the opportunity to develop the full potential of their playing skills. These objectives will be achieved through continuous upgrades and improvements in the program. Fundamentals of the game are the most important concept for these children, and winning will not be put ahead of this concept.

It is the intent of PRF to choose football coaches in a manner which is fair, equitable, and which identifies the candidates best able to contribute to the league's continuation and growth.

WHY KIDS PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS

1. Having fun
2. Improving skills
3. Develop fitness/exercise
4. Being with my friends
5. Experiencing thrills and excitement
6. Being on a team
7. Opportunities for personal accomplishment
8. Staying in shape
9. Doing something I'm good at
10. Winning

TOP REASONS WHY KIDS QUIT SPORTS

1. Not having fun
2. Too much pressure from parents and peers
3. Too much emphasis on winning
4. Concerns about coaching
5. Not getting enough playing time
6. Injury concerns

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COACH SELECTION

Anyone who is interested in becoming a PRF coach must express interest before sign ups are completed. This may be done through their child's sign up form or by notifying any PRF board member. The Director of Football Operations will manage the identification and selection of a pool of qualified coaches for each age group. They will then pass on their recommendations to the board for a final decision. Coaches are evaluated based on a number of considerations, which may include the following (in no particular order):

1. Knowledge of the game.
2. Amount of coaching experience.
3. Do they have a child in the league?
4. Level of involvement beyond coaching (sponsor, board member, committee, etc.).
5. Prior year status as a coach/assistant.
6. Length of time in the league.
7. Past performance.
8. Character.
9. On-field conduct (coach/non-coach).
10. Ability to teach.
11. Demonstrated interest in kids and in the game.
12. Time to invest in the program.
13. Heads Up certification.

ASSISTANT COACHES

Assistant coaches are selected by the team head coach and should meet similar criteria as listed above.

COACHES CONDUCT

Any misconduct on the part of a coach/assistant coach before, during or after a game or practice will be promptly reported to a league official or the Field Director on duty. Such misconduct includes, but is not limited to: abuse of an official, disregard for playing rules, unnecessarily delaying the progress of the game, improper treatment of any player, etc. This includes profanity toward a player/non-player, verbal abuse, and contacting any player outside the scope of instruction. The coach accused will then be contacted by the Board of Directors for an explanation of events. After the coach has had the opportunity to explain his/her conduct, the Board of Directors may place such person on probation and/or withdraw his/her coaching privileges indefinitely.

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PORTAGE ROCKET FOOTBALL RULES

1. STATE PURPOSE

PRF believes that safety, developing a child's interest in football, participation in games, and good sportsmanship are the most important activities that the Rockets have. Therefore, the league shall be divided into four age groups: 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, & 11-12, with every participant, spectator, and volunteer to be subject to these rules.

Furthermore, every child shall play a minimum of eight (8) plays per half and a total of sixteen (16) per game. Non-contact plays such as punts or field goals in the 7-10 divisions do not count towards this minimum. Any missed plays from the first half shall be made up in the third quarter in addition to the required 8 for the second half. Reports on offending teams will be given to the Executive Board of Directors for disciplinary action. Field Directors shall have the authority to require a coach to enter a player into the game that has not met the minimum number of plays per half. If a minimum plays complaint is lodged against a head coach, the head coach must show documentation of the players' plays. Failure to show documentation will result in the mandatory the implementation of a policy of starting all players on either offense or defense. If this program is implemented, substitutions are not permitted until every player has fulfilled the minimum allotment of plays. This rule applies to both halves of each game. An injury would be the only circumstance that would allow for a substitution.

2. FIELD DIRECTORS

Field Directors, as assigned by the Executive Board of Directors, are the final authority on the assigned field including the immediate sidelines. The assigned coach or designated representative must report for all Field Director responsibilities or you will risk forfeiture of your next game coaching duties. Field Directors will keep the official time for all games and remain visible and within an acceptable distance to the coaches and referees. Field Directors have full authority to end a game at any time if, in their opinion, the stated purpose of Rocket Football is not being served by the continuance of the game. In the event that one team does not have enough players to play, the Field Director shall be in charge of calling a rule change to a reduced field of players or a forfeit. Field Directors are responsible to report the score and summarize games in the folder held at the official table.

See page 14 for Field Director's Duties

3. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

No player may either practice or play that has not properly registered, paid, or received a scholarship with the PRF program. Any team, which uses an ineligible player, will forfeit the game(s) in which the player is used. A player's age as of August 1st shall determine his/her league age unless otherwise approved by a majority of the PRF Board. All players must show their birth certificate upon request by the PRF Board. It is

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possible that some players within a given age group may not fall within the PRF age guidelines. This determination is the sole discretion of the PRF Board of Directors.

Portage Rocket Football discourages the participation of players in both rocket football and middle school football during the same season. While this does not violate PRF rules, the players' middle school eligibility may be jeopardized. PRF will release registration information to middle school athletic directors upon a written request.

4. WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS

The entire team will be weighed in prior to the first game as the first official weigh-in (preseason weigh-in is not official). Each player must be weighed in the equipment and clothing they will play in. No Equipment or padding may be added by any player after they have been weighed. Once a player officially meets the weight restrictions listed below for carrying the ball, then the player is eligible for the remainder of the season (no more weigh-ins required). Players over the weight restrictions, listed below, will require weight checks prior to each game. A Board Member (or designated representative) will monitor the weigh-in and maintain a weekly record of weight restricted players including documentation of those having weight restrictions lifted. The scales at the field shall be considered official. Players will only have one official opportunity to be weighed per game day. Any player that misses the team weigh-in must be weighed before being allowed to play. All weigh-ins shall occur at the order and convenience of the Board Member; however teams should be prepared to weigh-in fifteen (15) minutes before each game. Violation of this rule as determined by the Field Director will be a 5-yard delay of game penalty.

Eligible weights will be restricted in the various age groups as follows:

5-6	No weight limits
7-8	Up to and including 160 lbs.
9-10	Up to and including 180 lbs.
11-12	No maximum limit.

Weight Restricted Players:

Interior offensive line (not allowed to intentionally handle the ball) and defensive line (all defensive front line positions including DE).

5-6	No weight limits
7-8	110.1 lbs. and above
9-10	135.1 lbs. and above
11-12	160.1 lbs. and above

Weight restricted player will receive a colored sticker on the back of the helmet. This will happen each time the player weighs in and is of restricted weight.

Weight restricted player can advance a ball upon a turnover.

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A weight restricted player cannot be included on kickoff or kick receiving teams. The Field Director will instruct game officials on this rule and will have final authority to issue penalties to the offending teams on the field. Reports on offending teams will be given to the Executive Board of Directors for disciplinary action. Penalty-dead ball foul, 15-yard penalty for each occurrence.

Weight restricted player is not allowed to be pulling lineman on offensive plays. Weight restricted player blocking must remain within the interior line and downfield only and not related to pitches and sweeps, in which the player's role is that of a leading back. Trap blocks off-tackle and/or on the defensive end or linebacker is acceptable.

Weight restricted player may have the option of playing up in an older age group based on Board approval prior to the second league game. This option is final. Players that choose this option may not move back down to the lower age group. Parents of players requesting to move up must notify player's coach who will, in turn, notify the Registration Coordinator for new team assignment.

5. OFFICIAL TIME

The field director (or designated referee) is designated the official timekeeper. The 7-8, 9-10, and 11-12 age groups will have four (4) ten (10) minute quarters with two (2) minutes of exercise and calisthenics before starting each game, and before the start of the second half of each game. The mandatory warm ups do not have to be performed on the field. Should either warm up result in the delay in starting either the game itself or the second half, the team causing the delay is penalized 15 yards (for 7-8 year olds – 10 yards) at the time of the kick off. The timekeeper shall stop the clock on the referees signal, typically at the following times:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| A. After the Score | F. During an extra point attempt |
| B. At the change of possession | G. 2-minute warnings |
| C. During a Penalty | H. Downs markers are set on 1 st downs |
| D. After kickoffs | I. Incomplete Pass |
| E. During an injury | J. Ball goes out of bounds |
| | K. Change of possession until snap |

The two minute warnings stop the clock until the ball is snapped for the next play and allow teams a 30 second time-out. (Not a full time-out or water break)

Running clock will be in effect with a 24 point lead. In the event, the lead falls below 24 points, regular play clock rules will resume. Running clock and regular play clock can repeat throughout the remainder of the game.

At the end of regulation play, if the score is tied, we will play up to two overtime sessions. Overtime consists of 4 downs from the 10 yard line with each team having an offensive possession. In the playoffs, overtime play will continue until a winner is decided.

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Play Clock

7-8 Division	45 seconds
9-10 Division	40 seconds
11-12 Division	35 seconds

5-6 Flag Division Rules- see Appendix B

6. INJURIES

In the event of an injury, if an official time out is called, the player must report to the team's sideline after the time out for at least three (3) consecutive plays. The Field Director may remove any injured player from the game, and allow them to re-enter if, in his/her opinion, the player is able to safely continue playing the game. When brought to the attention of a coach or any PRF Board member, any player that has been ordered to "no contact practices" by a licensed physician due to any type of head or neck trauma occurring on or off PRF playing/ practice fields, said player can NOT participate in a practice or game until a doctor's release is presented to the coach or any Board member according to Heads Up concussion protocol.

The league policy for handling and reporting injuries must be followed.

7. EQUIPMENT

Every player must wear a helmet, facemask, shoulder pads, football pants, kneepads, thigh pads, hip and tailbone pads, team league jersey, and shoes. The shoes for all age groups shall be a multipurpose shoe with rubber cleats (no metal) or tennis shoes. Every player must wear shoes that will meet Rocket Football rules. No other shoes will be permitted, and the referees will check all players on the field for violations of this rule. Any violation of this rule will result in both removal of the player in violation from the game until such time as that player meets this rule requirement in the opinion of the Field Director, and a dead ball 15-yard penalty. Furthermore, all players SHALL wear a mouth guard and it shall be attached to the facemask and worn in the mouth while on the playing field. A sports "protective cup" is recommended. 5-6 year olds will use a Pee Wee ball, the 7-8, 9-10, 11-12 year old divisions will use a junior size or Voit #6 equivalent ball.

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8. PRACTICE RESTRICTIONS

For the purpose of this rule, practice shall be defined as any gathering of players where the players perform actions that are associated with the playing of football in the presence of a coach. A scrimmage by two teams is considered a practice. Each practice shall be limited to no more than 2 ½ hours. Prior to the first game, each team shall have a minimum of six (6) practices, with no more than five (5) per week. After either school or the season starts, the limit on the number of practice sessions will be a maximum of three (3) per week. Optional practices are allowed on weekends, but these do count towards the practice limit.

9. OFFICIALS

Referees are to be certified by the MHSAA.

Lineman shall be a minimum of 11th grade students.

Referees will keep track of team timeouts per half.

Referees may act as the official Field Director in the absence of one.

10. TEAM PLAYERS

The number of players on a team shall be a minimum of 15. Any deviation shall be at the discretion of the Executive Board of Directors. Late sign-ups will be assigned to the next team in the draft order or at the discretion of the Executive Board of Directors and Player Representative. Any request to play up or play down, based on special circumstances, will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Board of Directors.

11. INCLEMENT WEATHER

The postponement of any game due to inclement weather will be made up on the next Monday at 6:00 p.m. or time designated by the Board of Directors. If a game has reached half time and has been cancelled due to inclement weather, it will be considered a full game regardless of the score.

12. PUNTING/FIELD GOAL-EXTRA POINT

- 7 – 10's – Punt formation/Free kick/ No return or rush. Punt team is not allowed downfield. Ball is spotted where it rolls dead or is **controlled** by receiving team. Maximum of 3 players deep to receive punt. Missed FG attempt will result in the ball being spotted at the original line of scrimmage or the 20 yard line, whichever is greater.
- 11– 12's – Regular high school rules – Center must be uncovered

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13. DEFENSIVE RESTRICTIONS

In the 7-12 age groups, defenses are restricted as follows:

- A maximum of 5 players are allowed on the line of scrimmage, which must contain the weight restricted players
- All other defensive players must line up at least 3 yards off the line until the ball is snapped
- Players on the line of scrimmage when the center's hand touches will be counted as one of the five players allowed.
- Rotation of a player from the front line to the secondary must be performed prior to a player rotating from the secondary to the front. Otherwise a violation of the 5 man rule has occurred. The penalty for violating this rule is the same as for defensive offsides or encroachment.
- **Exception:** On or inside the 5 yard line, the defensive restriction is lifted, allowing any legal defensive formation.

14. CHAMPIONSHIP SEED CRITERIA

#1. = Overall Record

#2. = Head to Head (Who beat who)

If there are teams with records that are tied after criteria #2, criteria #3 will be used for placement in the playoff games.

#3. = Points allowed above the first 14 points allowed per game

If there is still a tie at this point, the Board of Directors will determine other criteria to break the tie.

15. 9 Man Football

In the instance for teams that fall to 11 players or less due to injuries or other reasons before or during the game, a 9 man football game will be played to start or complete a game. Teams must have equal players on each side of the ball and if one falls below the adjusted level, then that team must forfeit the game,

Teams are allowed to continue in a scrimmage format of equal players on each side of the ball.

- Offensive Line must have a minimum of 5 players on LOS.
- Defensive Line must not have more than 4 players on LOS
- Each team will include one extra timeout per half, treated similar to 2 minute warning for water and break. No coaching.
- Once game moves to a reduced fielded team rules, it remains under reduced rules and cannot switch back throughout the remainder of the game.
- Incorporate a mid-quarter break.
- Ends on the LOS are eligible for passes.

If a season is expected to play 9 man football for all games, there would be an allowance to 8 man football. If less than the 8 or 9 man football, then teams are allowed to continue under a scrimmage format of equal players on each side of the ball.

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PORTAGE ROCKET FOOTBALL – DRAFT PROCEDURE

Starting with the 2006 season, PRF will have no core teams. Draft typically occurs on the Saturday after the combine and prior to the first allowed practices.

- Draft order will be randomly selected. No trading of draft position prior to or during draft.
- The draft will follow a “snake” draft structure in which the coach with the last pick in the first round (and all odd rounds) will have the first pick in the second round (and all even rounds).

PRF Combined Practices: Players attending at least one combined practice are draft eligible. Players that fail to attend at least one combined practice, but were selected in the previous year's draft are eligible to be drafted. Information regarding the player, such as previous year draft position and coach will be provided to the coaches prior to the draft. Players that do not attend at least one combined practice nor drafted in the previous year are not draft eligible and will be distributed to teams by random draw (hat pick) after the draft has been completed. The only other exception is sons/daughters of head coaches coaching in that division.

Coach Requests: Attempts will be made to honor requests in the 5 & 6 flag division. In all other divisions, requests will be made known to the coaches in that age group, but are not guaranteed.

Secrecy: Players shall never be told the position in which they were drafted. Coaches and board members shall not discuss player discussion and draft positions of players outside of the draft.

Siblings in the draft: When there are two or more siblings in the draft when one sibling is drafted, that coach automatically takes the sibling in the next round that the coach has open. The exception would be if the parents have requested that the siblings not be on the same team.

Sons/Daughters of coaches: The selection process of Sons/Daughters will be determined by the Board of Directors and provided to coaches at the mandatory coaches' meeting. Typical expectations are as followed:

- All head coaches are required to evaluate and rate the child of other head coaches in their age group as well as their own child.
- Ratings will be provided to the Director of Football Operation at the completion of the combined practices.
- Depending on the rating process, Board Members will complete the process in determining your child's draft position
- Your child will automatically be slotted into the determined draft position prior to the draft.
- Failure to turn in your ratings may result in your child slotted in the highest round possible or as determined by the Board.

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Sons/Daughter of Assistant Coaches: Assistant coaches are not protected and their children must be drafted.

Gentleman's Agreements: Gentlemen's agreements are not recommended or supported by the league or its board. Should a gentlemen's agreement be breached, in the executive board's eyes, it shall be as if it never happened.

Trades: Coaches will have a period of 10 minutes after the draft has been completed to make trades. Trades must be fair as viewed by the Board and other coaches before approval.

COACHES CODE OF ETHICS

The coach shall be aware that he/she has a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, therefore, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.

The coach shall uphold the honor and dignity of the position. In all personal contact with players, officials, parents, opposing coaches, and Board Members, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.

The coach shall avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco when in contact with the players, including end of season team parties.

The coach shall master the rules of the contest and shall teach them to his/her team members, and shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.

The coach shall exert his/her influence to enhance sportsmanship by spectators, both directly and by working closely with league officials.

The coach shall respect and support contest officials. The coach shall not indulge in conduct, which could incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of the officials or players is unethical and unacceptable.

The coach shall, before and after the contest, meet and exchange cordial greetings to set the tone for the event.

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PRF CODE OF CONDUCT

Poor conduct is detraction from the fun and innocence of the game of youth football and is a poor example to set for our young boys and girls and will not be tolerated!

The board would like to address our Code of Conduct in regards to all PRF coaches, officials, parents, players, and volunteers, to make sure they understand the PRF board's position on misconduct toward others. If any volunteer, coach, parent, official, player, or league official, is harassed in any way, before, during, or after a ballgame, or if any PRF coach, official, parent, player, or volunteer conducts himself or herself in any manner detrimental to the league or to the players, officials, coaches, volunteers, or parents ... the offending party will be subject to disciplinary action and/or removal from the park.

If a PRF coach or player is ejected from a game for poor conduct, the league will sanction that coach, or player with a **minimum one-game suspension** and place the coach and/or player on **probation for the remainder of the season**.

- Any subsequent poor conduct will result in the immediate **suspension and/or dismissal of their coaching, or playing duties**.
- A coach will be automatically ejected from the game after two (2) unsportsmanlike conduct penalties.
- All such poor conduct, whether resulting in ejection or suspensions ... or witnessed by a board member ... will be seriously considered when the board selects coaches, and players for future seasons.
- Examples of poor behavior includes but is not limited to: verbal/physical abuse of anyone, use of offensive language, abuse of playing equipment and/or facilities, inciting or encouraging abusive and/or dangerous actions by the players or coaches on the field.
- Games will be stopped to deal with any violation of the Code of Conduct policy.

Coaches need to communicate to their parents, coaches, players, and other volunteers, PRF's strong stance on exhibiting appropriate conduct toward others when at **any** location where a PRF team plays or practices. Please be good ambassadors for Portage Rocket Football!!!

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FIELD DIRECTOR DUTIES

- Introduce self to referees and coaches and oversee coin toss.
- Confirm that the home team is running the chains and down marker.
- Confirm that visiting team is running the scoreboard. Keep track of score during entire game and communicate with referees when running clock situation is in place.
- Keep time clock with provided stopwatch and concur with referees at the end of each quarter.
- **Interpret local rules-** The field director will aid the referees on the interpretation of any local rules. This does not include judgment calls.
- **Crowd Control-** It is the coach's responsibility to control the fans of his team. If in the determination of the field director that a fan is out of control, the coach will be warned and expected to address the situation. If the situation persists, the coach shall be warned a second time and an unsportsmanlike penalty shall be assessed to his team. If the situation persists, the fan or fans in violation shall be removed from the park.
- **Injury/accident action-** When an injury occurs, the field director shall see that the proper procedures are followed on the field. If necessary, the field director shall contact a trainer, if available, through the supplied radio. This shall be according to PRF procedures.
- **Injury/accident reports-** The field director will be responsible for facilitating that an injury report is filed when an injury occurs and file it with the head table by the end of the game.
- Report final score, accidents, injuries, and any incidents to the head table at the end of the game.

Appendix A – Medical & Emergency



PORTAGE ROCKET FOOTBALL

INJURY & INCIDENT REPORT FORM

INSTRUCTIONS: This form is to be completed by the Head Coach for any injury that requires referral to a physician or hospital or immediate medical treatment. This report must be completed and signed by the players Head Coach. This form must be completed and turned in to the PRF Board within forty eight (48) hours from the time of injury.

Players name (print): _____ Team: _____

Date of Injury: _____ Time: _____ Division: _____

EVENT: (circle appropriate event)

Practice Game Scrimmage Other (describe) _____

EQUIPMENT IN PLACE AT THE TIME OF INJURY: (circle appropriate equipment)

Full Pads Helmet Only Helmet & Shoulder Pads None

LOCATION OF INJURY: (Record appropriate number(s) on line of side of injury)

Left: _____	Right: _____			
1. Head	7. Nose	13. Ankle	19. Toes	25. Eye
2. Neck	8. Spleen	14. Knee	20. Shoulder	26. Upper Arm
3. Back	9. Pelvis	15. Hand	21. Lower Leg	27. Lower Arm
4. Ribs	10. Genitals	16. Wrist	22. Upper Leg	28. Other
5. Teeth	11. Elbow	17. Finger	23. Hip	
6. Mouth	12. Foot	18. Forearm	24. Collar Bone	

TYPE OF INJURY: (circle the number of the known or suspected nature of injury. In case of multiple injuries, number the circles to correspond the injury on the previous section)

1. Fracture	4. Bruise/Contusion	7. Dislocation
2. Sprain/Strain	5. Laceration	8. Other _____
3. Tear	6. Puncture	

TREATMENT: (circle appropriate number)

1. Ice	4. Return to Activity	7. Referral to Physician _____
2. Observation	5. Taped/Splint	8. Transported by other _____
3. Compression	6. Call 911	9. Other Treatment _____

DESCRIPTION: (describe the actions of the athlete, chief complaint and your suspicion of the nature of the injury)

Head Coach Signature: _____ Date: _____

League Representative Signature: _____ Date: _____

(Form Distribution: Original – PRF Board Copy – Athlete / Parent Copy – Head Coach)

Appendix A – Medical & Emergency



EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN FOR POTAGE ROCKET FOOTBALL

Logistics

- Each game session will have a designated PRF Board member or designated person as the Football Director.
- On game days, Football director (designated person) and each field director will have direct communication with each other and scorer's table.(walkie-talkie)
- Scorer's table will be manned at all times by the Football Director (designated person).
- Scorer's table will be designated as First Aid station and include a basic First Aid kit for any minor injuries suffered by players or spectators. Any spectators treated at this station will need an injury report filed with PRF league and filed until the end of the season.
- The Field Director or designated person in charge will determine when play should be stopped and/or continue due to weather related conditions. Players and spectators will be asked to leave the field and find adequate shelter.
- Each coach will have one (1) First Aid kit supplied by the league with basic supplies for minor injuries. Coach will be responsible for kit maintenance.

Injury Procedure

- Trained personnel will immediately be summoned to the scene for **any** injury that requires a player to leave the field or remain on the field.
- Football Director (designated person) will be notified of **all** injuries to a player or spectator.
- Field Director will oversee and/or appoint person(s) to keep spectators and players organized and out of the way of EMS personnel.
- On EMS response type injuries, the Football Director (designated person) will remain on the scene as long as necessary and determine when (or if) play should resume.
- Injury report will be filled out by coach/Field Director at the end of the game (or time of injury if not related to game) and reviewed by Football Director (designated person) at this time.
- It will be the responsibility of the Football Director (designated person) to personally contact the injured player/party at a later time and file a brief follow-up report.
- All reports are to be kept on file with the league secretary.

- Communication Procedure

- The certified trainer will direct Field Director to call 9-1-1 for any injury related emergencies.
- Field Director will notify Football Director or designated person in charge of any 9-1-1 call.
- Football Director or designated person in charge will determine the need to call 9-1-1 for a **non-injury** type incident.
- Football Director or designated person in charge will maintain communication with EMS/Police personnel while on the scene.
- PRF Board is the designated spokesperson for the league with regards to statements to the media.

- **External Support**

EMS/Police/Fire-	9-1-1	Poison Control Center	1-800-222-1222
Consumer Powers	1-800-477-5050	Towing	(269) 329-4869, (269) 342-0973

Appendix B – Flag Football Rules



Portage Rocket Flag Football Rules

Beginning play and all change of possessions start on the 40 yard line. The offensive team has four (4) plays to go 10 yards for a 1st down or score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score or convert a first down, then the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 40 yard line.

Penalties or loss of yardage plays cannot push the line of scrimmage beyond the 40 yard line.

Teams/Players

Teams must field a minimum of eight players at all times (allowances to 7 players are allowable if one team is short, but both teams have to play with 7 players).

Teams consist of up to 14 players (8 on the field with 6 subs.)

Minimum of 8 plays per half per player. Substitutions can be made during any dead ball.

3 Coaches are permitted on the field.

Timing / Overtime

Games are four (4), 12 minute quarters with a running clock.

Half-time: 10 minutes plus 2 minute warm-up.

Timeouts: Each team has two 60 second time outs per half.

If the score is tied at the end of the 4 quarters, the game ends in a tie.

Officials can and are encouraged to stop the clock at their discretion (including for injuries and rules clarifications).

Scoring

Touchdown: 6 points

Extra Point: 2 points (played from the 3 yard line) and will occur upon each TD, even if game clock expires.

When a player has scored 2 touchdowns, that player is no longer eligible to carry the ball, and must be played in a position other than QB or RB (including extra point attempts). Extra point scores do not count against a player's touchdown total.

Appendix B – Flag Football Rules



Line of Scrimmage

Offense

The offensive line must consist of three down linemen only and in a 3 point stance.

Each side of the offensive line must have one wide receiver at least 5 yards outside the linemen and 1 yard off of the line of scrimmage.

Defense

The defensive line must consist of three down linemen only, lined “head up” on the offensive linemen and 1 yard back from the line of scrimmage in a 3 or 4 point stance.

All defensive players that are not part of the 3-man line must be lined up 3 yards from the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball.

No player on defense may leave their feet (dive) in an attempt to pull the flag. 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul.

Running

Spinning is allowed, but players cannot leave their feet to avoid a defensive player (no diving/hurdling). If a player attempts to dive, and the referee calls it, the ball is spotted where the player left his feet. The ball is spotted where the carrier’s feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.

Intentionally running out of bounds or taking a knee to avoid TD total to a player is not permitted and will be at the official’s discretion to award TD based on likelihood of getting flag pulled prior to crossing the goal line.

Receiving

All players are eligible to receive passes except the three down linemen.

No motion is allowed.

A player must have at least one foot inbounds when making a reception.

Passing

Any position (no linemen) can pass the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.

Interceptions cannot be advanced and result in a change of possession that starts on the 40 yard line.

Appendix B – Flag Football Rules



Dead Balls

The ball must be snapped between the legs, not off to one side, to start play. Play is ruled “dead” when:

- Ball hits the ground (no fumbles)
- Ball carrier’s flag is pulled.
- Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
- Touchdown is scored.
- Ball carrier’s knee hits the ground.
- An interception occurs.
- Ball carrier’s flag falls out.

Rushing the Quarterback

Only the defensive linemen can rush the quarterback until there is an attempt to hand the ball off, fake a hand-off or the quarterback appears to be keeping the ball to run. A straight drop back pass can only be rushed by the three front defensive players. The QB rolling out is open to any defensive player to attack. The secondary line must remain behind the line of scrimmage until the ball has been handed off, faked, passed, or a QB keeper is evident. This is meant to allow the offense to receive a hike and start the play and gives secondary defensive players to learn to read and react.

Blocking

Blocking is allowed but is limited to contact within the framework of the torso and is not to include shoving, stiff-arming or unnecessary roughness as interpreted by the game officials, this includes downfield blocking. Downfield blockers must be in control and cannot shove the defenders to the ground, interference or shield blocking is permitted.

Sportsmanship / Roughing

If the referee witnesses any acts of elbowing, cheap shots, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped and the player will be ejected from the game. Foul play will not be tolerated.

Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams, or spectators.) If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

Penalties Specific to Flag

All penalties will be called by the referee.

Defensive:

Unnecessary roughness: 10 yards and automatic first down for opposing team.

Off-sides: 5 yard penalty. Any encroachment or forward movement into the 1 or 3 yard defensive setback is considered off-sides.

Interference: 10 yards and an automatic first down.

Appendix B – Flag Football Rules



Illegal Flag Pull: No player on defense may leave their feet (dive) in an attempt to pull the flag. 10 yard penalty from the spot of the foul.

Tackling: Flagrant tackles will result in a 15 yard penalty and automatic first down. Player must sit the next 3 plays. Referee and Field Director must note.

2nd offense in same half – player must sit the next 3 plays and can not play defense for the remainder of that half.

3rd offense in the game – player must sit the next 3 plays and can not play defense for the remainder of the game.

Offensive:

Unnecessary roughness: 10 yards and loss of down.

Offensive pass interference: 10 yards and loss of down.

Flag guarding: 10 yards and loss of down.

Stiff Arming: 10 yards and loss of down.

Holding 10 yards- no loss of down

Delay of game: There is no delay of game penalty. Referees may ask coaches to speed things up.

Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.

Only the coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations. Players cannot question judgment calls.

Game cannot end on a penalty, unless the offense declines it.

Attire

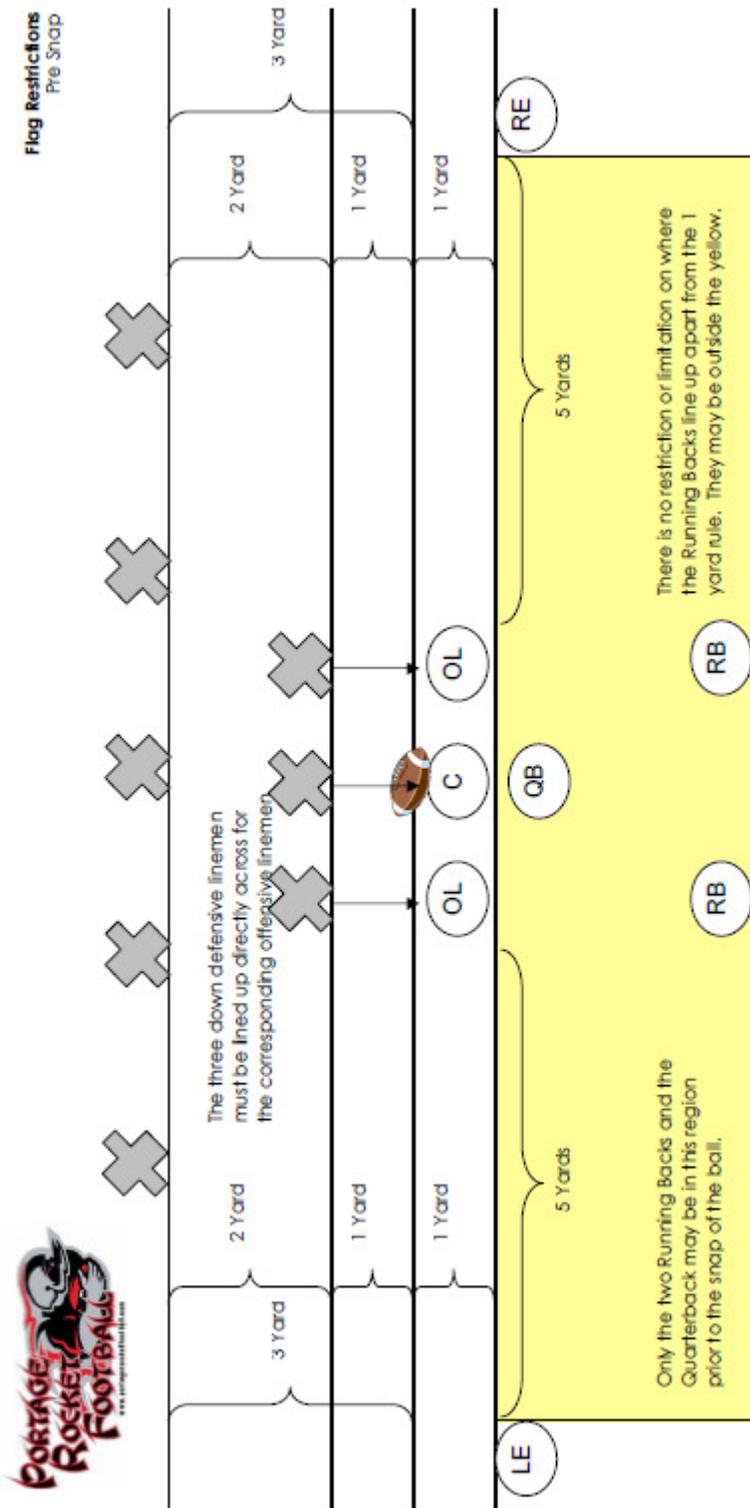
Flag belt must be worn on the outside, be fully exposed and have 3 flags attached (one on each side and one in the back).

Cleats are allowed, except for metal spikes. Inspections must be made. Players are encouraged to wear protective mouthpieces and athletic supporters.

Football pants w/pads are strongly encouraged.

No shoulder pads and no helmets.

Appendix B – Flag Football Rules



Copy of FLAG ALIGNMENT.xls FLAG CLARIFICATION

Appendix C - Officiating



Officials Signals, Timekeeping Instructions and Penalty Summary



OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE



<p>1</p> <p>Ball ready for play *Untimed down</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Start clock</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Time-out Discretionary or injury time-out (follow by tapping hands on chest)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>TV/Radio time-out</p>	
<p>5</p> <p>Touchdown Field goal Point(s) after touchdown</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Safety</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Dead ball foul Touchback (move side to side)</p>	<p>8</p> <p>First down</p>	
<p>9</p> <p>Loss of down</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Incomplete forward pass Penalty declined No play, no score Toss option deferred</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Legal touching of forward pass or scrimmage kick</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Inadvertent whistle (Face Press Box)</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Disregard flag</p>
<p>14</p> <p>End of period</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Sideline warning (NFHS)</p>	<p>16</p> <p>First touching (NFHS) Illegal touching</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Uncatchable forward pass (NCAA)</p>	
<p>18</p> <p>Encroachment (NFHS) Offside defense or free-kick defense (NCAA)</p>	<p>19</p> <p>False start Illegal formation</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Illegal shift - 2 hands Illegal motion - 1 hand</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Delay of game</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Substitution infraction</p>

Appendix C - Officiating



OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE



<p>23</p> <p>Failure to wear required equipment</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Illegal helmet contact</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Illegal Horse-Collar Tackle</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Unsportsmanlike conduct Noncontact foul</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Illegal participation</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Sideline interference (Face Press Box)</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Running into or Roughing kicker or holder</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Illegal batting/kicking (Followed by pointing toward toe for kicking)</p>	<p>32</p> <p>Invalid fair catch signal (NFHS) Illegal fair catch signal</p>	<p>33</p> <p>Forward pass interference Kick catching interference</p>
<p>34</p> <p>Roughing passer</p>	<p>35</p> <p>Illegal pass/forward handing (Face Press Box)</p>	<p>36</p> <p>Intentional grounding</p>	<p>37</p> <p>Ineligible downfield on pass</p>	<p>38</p> <p>Personal foul</p>
<p>39</p> <p>Clipping</p>	<p>40</p> <p>Blocking below waist Illegal block</p>	<p>41</p> <p>Chop block</p>	<p>42</p> <p>Holding/obstructing Illegal use of hands/arms</p>	<p>43</p> <p>Illegal block in the back</p>
<p>44</p> <p>Helping runner Interlocked blocking</p>	<p>45</p> <p>Grasping face mask or helmet opening</p>	<p>46</p> <p>Tripping</p>	<p>47</p> <p>Disqualification</p>	

Appendix D – Coaching Information



NUMBERING

Hole Assignments and **player numbering** are critical for this offensive play system. The numbering is used to assign who will be the main ball carrier and where the play will go. The following rules apply to this play system:

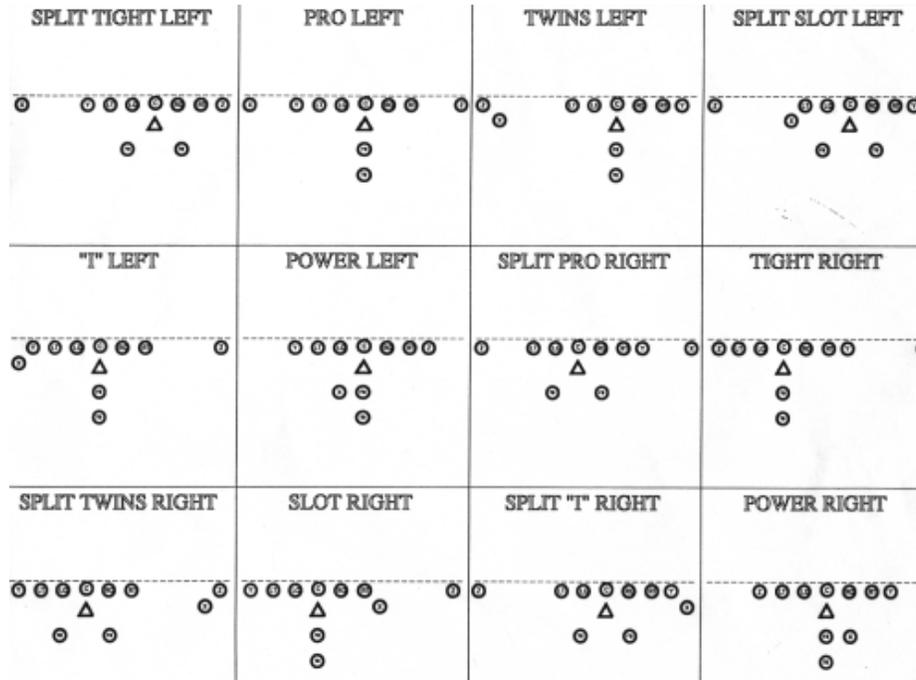
- **Even** numbered holes are to the **RIGHT** of the center.
- **Odd** numbered holes are to the **LEFT** of the center.
- The **1-Back** is the QB.
-
- The **2-Back** is Flanker or wing back
- The **3-Back** is the Tailback
- The **4-Back** is the Fullback and lines up on the strong side. Again, there are exceptions to the rule, such as an I-formation, where the 4-Back lines up behind the Tailback.
- The **X-receiver** is always on the **LEFT** side of the field. The **Z-receiver** is always on the **RIGHT** side of the field. There are exceptions to this rule, such as, trips formation, where both the X and Z are on the same side.
- The **Y-receiver** lines up depending on the play call. The Y receiver can be either a slot back or a tight end, depending on the coaching style.

Appendix D – Coaching Information



OFFENSIVE FORMATIONS

Below is a very wide variety of legal formations used by youth, high school, college and Pro teams. Find the ones that best accentuate your teams strengths and focus on plays you can run off of those.



Appendix D – Coaching Information

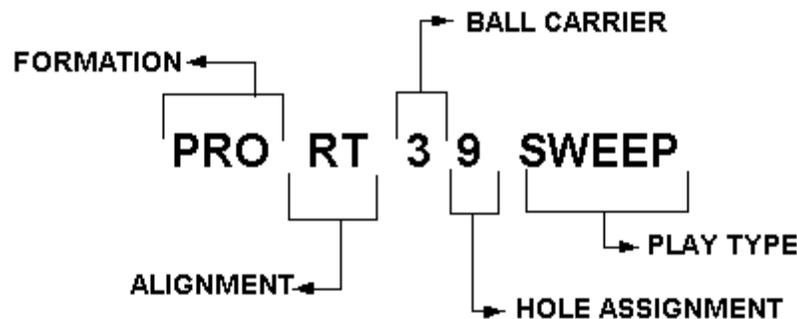


NAMING A PLAY

You can be as simple or as complicated as you like with naming your plays, sometimes the younger players respond well to a more simple naming system like “power right” and “sweep left”. If you choose to use it, the following system works well.

The play-name uses a number system for the Hole Assignments and/or Passing Tree to call the play name. It is very important for players to understand the format, because this play name format allows coaches to combine any formation, play direction, motion type, blocking scheme or whatever the coaches desire in their offense. Below are examples of a typical run play-name and pass play-name:

EXAMPLE (RUN PLAY)

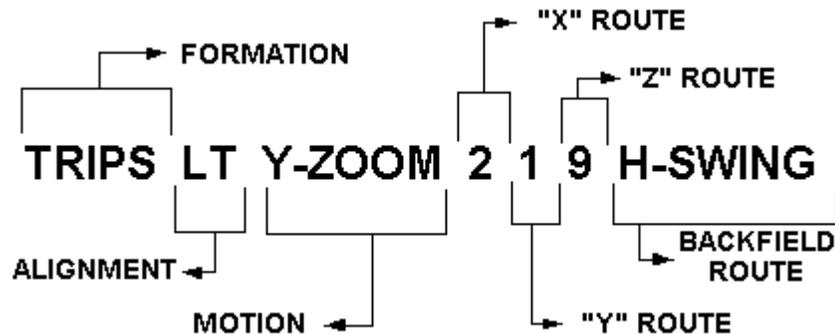


- **FORMATION** – how the backfield lines up, such as a PRO. Formation, “I” formation, or “Ace” formation for example.
- **ALIGNMENT** – the side on which the “Y” receiver lines up. (The HB lines up OPPOSITE of the ALIGNMENT)
- The **FIRST number** is the MAIN BALL CARRIER.
- The **SECOND number** is the HOLE ASSIGNMENT.
- The **PLAY TYPE** is the type of play that will be used.
- Variations of run play names can include **special blocking schemes, Motion**, or other instructions

Appendix D – Coaching Information



EXAMPLE (PASS PLAY)



- **FORMATION** – the alignment of the backfield.
- **ALIGNMENT** – the side on which the “Y” receiver lines up. (The HB lines up OPPOSITE of the ALIGNMENT)
- **MOTION** – motion called, when necessary.
- The **FIRST number** is the “X” receiver route.
- The **SECOND number** is the “Y” receiver route.
- The **THIRD number** is the “Z” receiver route.
- The “**BACKFIELD ROUTE**” is for the backfield routes, when necessary.
- The play may also include the type of **pass protection** for the linemen when necessary (such as on a rollout or flood play for example).
- Other calls or play variations can be added to the end of the play name, such as a **rollout, flood, or sprintout for example**.

Appendix D – Coaching Information



RUNNING PLAYS

DESCRIPTION

The **Blast** and **Power** are almost the same with respect that these plays utilize a lead back. The main difference is that a Blast is more towards the inside of the line, while the Power is more to the outside. As their names suggests, these are "muscle plays" that require a dominating offensive line and tough runners. These plays are common in goal-line and short yardage situations, and can be run in any offensive set.

BLOCKING SCHEMES

The blocking scheme for Blasts and Powers are typically head-up plays, with a double team block at the hole for blast plays. Depending on the defense, the offensive line may change the blocking scheme to a fold or cross block instead of "heads-up" blocking. The success of the blast and power is dependent on how dominating the offensive line is.

THE BACKFIELD

Blasts and Powers use a lead blocker (usually the fullback) to clear the path, and the ball carrier to follow the lead block. The lead back typically picks up a linebacker or safety, but the general rule is to block the first defender in his path (which is straight ahead).

The key for the ball carrier is to follow the lead block up until the initial block. The ball carrier must pick the correct path, depending on which direction the blocking back goes. Blasts and powers are tough running plays, and the ball carrier must work to gain yardage. If the ball carrier can break through the line and get into the secondary, they can either continue running straight ahead or bounce to the sidelines to streak downfield.

SUMMARY

The play name "Power" and "Blast" accurately describe these plays - straight ahead running with a lead block and a powering line. This play requires the offensive line to push to dominate their blockers in order for these plays to gain big yardage. Although these plays are made for the middle of the field and are short yardage plays, there are certainly opportunities for the ball carrier to break free and make a big play.

Appendix D – Coaching Information



SWEEPS AND PITCHES

DESCRIPTION

Sweeps and pitch plays are run plays to the outside. The major difference between the two is that the quarterback hands off the ball on a sweep whereas the quarterback must toss the ball on a pitch. A major advantage of a sweep is that it allows a ball carrier to search for an open hole and can turn the ball up-field very easily. A pitch allows the ball carrier to get outside much faster and the play develops much quicker.

BLOCKING SCHEME

The basic blocking scheme for the offensive line is straight ahead blocking. The fullback can serve as the lead blocker or can be used to fake the counter play. A "sweep trap" can easily be incorporated - the blocking becomes similar to an outside trap, except the pulling lineman also sweeps to the outside to become the lead blocker (with exception to weight restricted lineman).

Preventing an outside linebacker from maintaining outside containment can be useful to help get the back into the open field. This can be accomplished with the use of a "crack back". The receiver can be in motion or can crash from their initial position. In other situations, the Y receiver can block down to create a double team at the outside corner.

BALL CARRIER

The goal for the ball carrier is simple - get to the outside as fast as possible and turn it up-field. In some cases, the back will see a hole and turn it up-field before getting to the outside. This is more common with sweep plays. In other situations, the ball carrier will string the defense out as far as the sidelines before turning up-field. The rule of thumb, which applies to ALL run plays, is to get down the field instead of from sideline to sideline. It becomes a waste of effort when a back runs 25 yards along the line of scrimmage to gain only 3 yards towards the end zone.

The ball carrier must have great running vision to find the opening. In many instances, the back will actually cut back inside once they get outside into the open running area. This happens when a defense overpursues the play. If the ball carrier recognizes this and cuts back, he will find that there will be a lot of open field available.

SUMMARY

Sweeps and pitches are successful when the ball carrier is able to turn the ball up-field to gain positive yardage. Although running to the sideline can gain extra yardage, it sometimes becomes more work than for what it is worth. The ball carrier must keep their vision open and look for areas to cut back. In terms of blocking, the offensive line must sustain their blocks and keep the defenders inside. In addition, the offense must stop the outside linebacker (or defensive end) from containing the outside. This can be done by double teaming the end with the Y-receiver.

Appendix D – Coaching Information



SAMPLE PRACTICE PLANS

Portage Rocket Football strongly recommends the use of practice plans by our coaches. A **written** plan for every practice ensures that practices are organized, timely, and efficient. These written plans do not need to be elaborate or detailed, simply listing the goals and/or drills that need to be accomplished works fine. Coaches may use any format that they are comfortable with, but a sample plan is below.

Practice- August XX, 20XX

1. Stretch	5:45-6:00
2. 3 Point Stance	6:00-6:05
3. Form Blocking	6:05-6:15
4. Blocking Drill	6:15-6:25
5. Water Break	6:25-6:30
6. Form Tackling	6:30-6:40
7. Tackling Drill	6:40-7:00
8. Water Break	7:00-7:05
10. Block, Run, Tackle	7:05-7:20
11. Sprints-Relay	7:20-7:30

Appendix E – Risk Management



Portage Rocket Football Coaches Risk Management Handbook

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Appendix E – Risk Management



SECTION A

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Portage Rocket Football Coaches Risk Management Handbook! Whether you are a new coach or a veteran, this handbook will provide valuable information and ideas on how you can manage your coaching program and team to minimize risk of injury to athletes and risk of liability to yourself. Coaching a Portage Rocket Football team or squad offers great opportunities to be a positive influence in a child's life, teach meaningful lessons through sports, and have fun! At the same time, coaching comes with significant responsibility. When parents drop their children off for practice or come to a game, there is an expectation that their children will return home in the same condition, or better. The great thing is that, although we all know that there are inherent risks in sports and kids may get hurt, we all share the same goal of protecting the well being of the athletes who participate in Portage Rocket Football.

This handbook provides materials and information that you can easily and directly incorporate into your coaching program to increase success and safety. We have provided checklists, instructions, and sources where you can find more information on relevant topics. The handbook is organized to highlight your responsibilities as a coach in managing the risks that are associated with sports and working with young people. These responsibilities are as follows.

- Responsibility 1 - Properly Plan Activities
- Responsibility 2 - Provide Appropriate Supervision
- Responsibility 3 - Provide Proper Instruction
- Responsibility 4 - Provide Adequate and Safe Equipment
- Responsibility 5 - Evaluate for Injury and Incapacity
- Responsibility 6 - Provide a Safe Physical Environment
- Responsibility 7 - Match Athletes Accordingly
- Responsibility 8 - Warn of Inherent Dangers
- Responsibility 9 - Initiate Medical Response

Please review, understand, and carry out these responsibilities; it is in everyone's best interests, including your own. Have a great season!

SECTION B

PROPERLY PLAN ACTIVITIES

In order to comply with Portage Rocket Football rules and to provide a safe environment for the athletes, it is essential to plan activities for practice in advance and to document the time spent and the techniques taught. Appropriate documentation ensures that the proper procedures are followed and also aids in your defense in the event of alleged negligence. Advanced planning will result in a more organized and effective practice that will also decrease accidents. It is important to incorporate the following items into practices and competitions to ensure that athletes avoid injury and reach their athletic potential for the demands of the activity:

Appendix E – Risk Management



WARM-UP & COOL DOWN

Beginning a practice or competition without warming up greatly increases the chance of injury. A proper warm-up helps athletes train and compete without being injured by:

- Increasing body temperature.
- Increasing respiration (oxygen availability).
- Increasing heart rate.
- Reducing the risk of muscle and tendon sprains by stretching tight muscles.
- Reducing the risk of ligament sprains.

Guidelines for Warm-Up:

1. Inform athletes of the importance of properly warming up.
2. Teach athletes the warm-up activities to perform before training and competing.
 - First, appropriate calisthenics (for strength) to raise body temperature.
 - Second, appropriate stretching exercises (for flexibility).
 - Third, partial- and full-motion activities for each athlete's particular position or event, at varying speeds, distances, or intensities.
3. Direct warm-up activities of athletes to ensure a slow increase in the intensity of motion, particularly the motion actually used in the sport.
4. Ensure that warm-up activities are tailored to each athlete's conditioning and position or event.
5. Ensure that athletes warm-up for at least 10 minutes.
6. Monitor warm-up activities to make sure they do not cause fatigue.

Blood and muscle lactic acid levels drop faster during active cool-down than during rest. Abruptly stopping intense physical activity can result in muscle cramps, soreness, and stiffness and may increase the potential for fainting or dizziness caused by blood pooling. Guidelines for Cool-Down –

1. Inform athletes of the importance of properly cooling down the body after exercise.
2. Teach athletes the cool-down activities to perform after training and competing:
 - First, partial- and full-motion activities for each athlete's particular position/event, at reduced speeds, distances, or intensities.
 - Second, light calisthenics
 - Third, stretching exercises
3. Direct cool-down activities to ensure a gradual reduction of the intensity of the activity.
4. Ensure that athletes perform the cool-down activity for a least 10 minutes.

TRAINING

Training methods and type, frequency, duration, and intensity of practices should vary among athletes, depending on the athlete's age, physical conditioning, mental state, and training goals. The purpose of training is to prepare for competition. Training is not to be used as a disciplinary activity, unsupervised play, or competition itself. Guidelines for Training –

1. Recommend that training begin before the season starts so athletes are in good condition for the first day of practice. Injuries are more likely when poorly conditioned athletes over-train early in the season.
2. Pay attention to ensure that training balances fitness and skill development in all training sessions.

Appendix E – Risk Management



3. Ensure that training intensity increases gradually. Trying to increase too rapidly often leads to injury.
 4. Teach athletes to be aware of their training levels.
 5. Note athletes' changes in skill levels and techniques.
 6. In warmer, more humid climates, modify training to prevent heat-related emergencies.
- Coaches should always start practices by inquiring whether anyone is hurt or is not feeling well before starting warm-up and respond accordingly. When appropriate, the following is an example of an effective way to conduct a practice. Practices should include:

- ! Practicing previously taught skills
- ! Teaching and practicing new skills
- ! Practicing under competitive conditions
- ! Discussing things that need improvement, which were successful or which need to be eliminated.

SECTION C

PROVIDE APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION

Coaches are responsible for providing appropriate supervision to prevent unnecessary risk of injury. There are two types of supervision.

General - General supervision is the oversight of all areas and events taking place during the session, whether training or competition.

Specific - Specific supervision is the oversight of specific elements or skills being performed. For the coach, balancing supervisory responsibilities is important for protecting the well-being of athletes, since as the level of specific supervision increases, the level of general supervision often decreases. The coach must continue to be aware of the activities of all athletes present.

Guidelines for Appropriate Supervision

A coach's supervisory responsibilities start when the first athlete arrives at the facility and do not end until the last athlete leaves. It is imperative that the coach implement a contingency supervision plan in the event that he/she needs to step away from the activity site, and is no longer in the position to observe, instruct, correct or supervise.

There should always be at least 2 coaches present. The head coach should direct to ensure all athletes have adult supervision while at practice and/or competition. Coaches should avoid any situation where a single adult is alone with one or more minors.

1. Consider athletes' maturity, age, size, weight, conditioning, and skill when determining the degree of supervision required. Generally, the lower the age the greater the required ratio of supervisors to athletes.
2. Supervise athletes in all activities related to the sport including:
 - Dressing, assembling equipment, and otherwise preparing for training and competition
 - Warming up
 - Training and competing
 - Cooling down
 - Putting equipment away, showering, and otherwise concluding training and competition
 - Receiving treatment for injuries

Appendix E – Risk Management



- Traveling to and from training and competition, when appropriate
 - Staying overnight
 - Eating meals
3. Act quickly and decisively to correct conditions and actions that could lead to injury or damage.
 4. Plan and direct activities.
 5. Increase the level of specific supervision as the risk of injury increases.
 6. Insist that athletes use appropriate training techniques.
 7. Ensure that athletes use equipment in accordance with its intended use.
 8. Make sure that athletes use facilities, fields, and courses as they are intended to be used.
 9. Be alert to conditions that require additional supervision.
 10. Be alert to changing conditions that could increase the risk of injury.
 11. Increase the level of supervision when athletes are learning new techniques or equipment.
 12. Develop and follow medical emergency response procedures.
 13. Document and investigate accidents or injuries.
 14. Check all facilities and equipment for noticeably dangerous conditions and/or defects.

SECTION D

PROVIDE PROPER INSTRUCTION

Sports coaches are responsible for instructing athletes on sport-specific techniques and skills, game rules, safety rules, and sportsmanship.

It is important that coaches comply with the following responsibilities when providing instructions to the athlete:

- ! Follow the accepted practices for teaching sport specific.
- ! Follow the drills and other methods that are considered standard for the sport.
- ! Maintain familiarity with trends in the sport.
- ! Provide instructions that focus on the more hazardous areas of a particular sport and/or techniques that are counter-intuitive such as certain blocking/tackling techniques and stunts. ! Be familiar with the venue surroundings and instruct athletes to do the same.
- ! Maintain records of instruction and training.

While it is important to understand the rules, skills, and strategies of the sport, it is equally important to know how to teach the rules, skills, and strategies. The following is a helpful guideline for successful coaching.

1. Introduce the skill to your athletes.
2. Demonstrate the skill.
3. Explain the skill.
4. Pay specific attention to athletes practicing the skill.

Introduce the Skill

Athletes, especially young and inexperienced ones, need to understand what skill they are learning and why it is important. Coaches should take the following steps into consideration when teaching a new skill:

- Ensure that you have the athlete's attention.
- Name the new skill.

Appendix E – Risk Management



- Explain the importance of the skill.

Demonstrate the Skill

The demonstration step is the most important part of teaching the skill to young athletes since they often have never done anything similar to it. They need to see how the skill is properly performed. If you are unable to perform the skill correctly, have an assistant coach or someone skilled perform the demonstration. Your demonstrations will be more effective if you:

- Use correct form.
- Demonstrate the skill several times.
- Slow down the skill, if possible, during one or two performances so athletes can see every movement involved.
- Demonstrate the skill from both the left and right sides, as well as from different angles.

Explain the Skill

Athletes are able to comprehend more complex skills when they are broken down and explained in more manageable parts. Coaches should break down new skills into the following parts:

- Show athletes the entire skill correctly and explain the function in the sport.
- Break down the skill and point out its component parts to the team.
- Require the athletes to perform each of the component skills.
- Re-explain the entire skill, after the athletes have demonstrated their ability to perform the separate parts of the skill in sequence.
- Have athletes practice the skill.

Pay Attention to Athletes Practicing the Skill

Some athletes may need to be physically guided through the movements during their first few attempts. Once your athletes have demonstrated that they understand how to perform the skill, a significant part of coaching will involve closely observing the performances of your athletes.

As you observe athletes' efforts in practices and competitions, it is important to:

- Point out what the athlete did correctly.
- Let the athlete know what was done incorrectly and provide instruction on how to correct it.
- Offer positive, corrective feedback.
- Document progression.

SECTION E

PROVIDE ADEQUATE & SAFE EQUIPMENT

It is important to inspect equipment prior to each practice and game. Proper equipment can protect athletes from injury or reduce the severity of injury if an incident occurs. Conversely, improper equipment can create vulnerabilities and increase the risk of injury. In football, for example, protective pads tend to wear down and pants can lose their stretch allowing thigh pads to slip. This could leave a player vulnerable to a severe thigh bruise.

Appendix E – Risk Management



To maximize injury prevention, equipment must be:

- ! Available and used by athletes
- ! Appropriate
- ! High-quality
- ! In good condition
- ! Sized properly
- ! Fitted correctly
- ! Maintained
- ! Repaired or replaced when damaged.

The coach is responsible for:

- ! Determining what equipment will be used in training and competing, regardless of the supplier.
- ! Overseeing the use of equipment, and ensuring that equipment is properly maintained and replaced when needed.
- ! Establishing procedures to inspect athletes' equipment before they engage in the activity to ensure that they are using proper and non-defective equipment.

Coaches should never modify equipment without consulting with and obtaining written consent from the manufacturer. Any modifications to equipment may void equipment warranties and create liability.

Guidelines for Equipment Selection and Use

1. The purchaser of equipment should:
 - Be knowledgeable about the different types of equipment available, including new developments in equipment material and design.
 - Deal only with reputable suppliers and authorized dealers. Coaches should check references.
 - Provide quality equipment that is appropriate for the sport and size, strength, and skill level of the user.
 - Ensure that equipment is reconditioned annually by a reputable re-conditioner.
 - Re-certify helmets every two years.
2. Require the use of helmets, eye protection, mouthguards, and other critical safety equipment where appropriate. Always follow Portage Rocket Football rules on appropriate equipment.
3. Inspect all equipment at the beginning of each season for quality and defects before use and periodically through the season for wear and tear. Be cautious of hand-me-down equipment.
4. Always follow manufacturers' recommendations for sizing equipment.
5. Instruct athletes on the proper use, fit, cleaning and maintenance of equipment.
6. Warn athletes about any dangers associated with equipment use.
7. Instruct athletes and parents to report equipment damage.
8. Direct athletes and parents to repair or replace their personal equipment when necessary.

Coaches have a duty and a right to prohibit players from participating if they do not have the proper equipment. Sport specific requirements are identified in the Portage Rocket Football Official Rules for football and cheer.

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SECTION F

EVALUATE FOR INJURY AND INCAPACITY

Sports injury care consists of two basic elements - prevention and recognition/treatment.

Coaches must include both elements in their coaching programs.

1. Prevention – Coaches should incorporate methods for preventing injuries in their coaching programs including pre-participation screening, strength training, conditioning, and awareness of the nature, cause, and mechanisms of sport specific injuries.
2. Recognition and Treatment – Once the coach realizes that an injury has occurred, the magnitude must be assessed and appropriate care initiated.

Portage Rocket Football recommends that coaches ask athletes whether they are hurt or not feeling well prior to any practice or competition.

Return-To-Play Guidelines:

If an athlete has been injured or ill but seems to have recovered, you may need to decide whether the athlete should return to play. The severity of an injury or illness is not easily determined. An injury or illness that is incorrectly identified and for which the athlete does not receive medical attention may become worse. Recovery time may be longer if proper care is delayed, and the athlete could experience increased or permanent damage.

1. Portage Rocket Football rules require athletes that have been removed from a game because of injury sit out at least one down, and may not re-enter the game without approval of attending medical personnel.
2. The absence of pain does not signify that the injury is not serious. Do not return an athlete to play simple because he or she says the pain is minimal.
3. With an injury causing pain, swelling, or redness, do not ask the athlete to try to “walk it off.” Movement may aggravate the injury.
4. Do not let the athlete move at all with any suspected injury to the head, neck or back. Do not let others touch the athlete or roll him or her over. Call EMS immediately.
5. An athlete exhibiting any of the following signs needs immediate medical care:
 - ! Deformity of limb.
 - ! Any extreme localized pain.
 - ! Joint pain.
 - ! Altered level of consciousness, including drowsiness, disorientation, seizure, unconsciousness.
 - ! Repeated vomiting or diarrhea.
 - ! Unequal pupil size.
 - ! Severe bleeding.

 - ! Breathing difficulty or breathing irregularly.
 - ! Fluid leaking from nose or ears.
 - ! Any eye injury affecting vision.

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- ! Chest pain.
- 6. If an athlete reports any pain, or there are other symptoms, or signs of a potential head or neck injury, do not let the athlete return to play. When in doubt, play it safe.
- 7. Following a serious injury or illness, return to play should be guided by a physician's recommendation. These include injuries that have resulted in unconsciousness, concussion, surgery and/or missing several consecutive days of training.
- 8. An athlete should be able to demonstrate a pain-free full range of motion in the injured areas before returning to play.

SECTION G

PROVIDE SAFE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Although facility managers, building owners and other operators have certain responsibilities for providing a safe environment in and around their facilities, coaches are responsible for inspecting all areas

to be utilized in practice and competition to identify hazards. This includes locker rooms, workout rooms, gymnasiums, equipment and fields. Coaches also should ensure that proper emergency care and safety equipment is available and accessible. Coaches should document their facility inspections because they can be beneficial in defending against certain lawsuits. In addition, please note it is not sufficient simply to identify a hazard. You should take action by having the item corrected, posting warning signs, and/or keeping athletes/spectators away from the hazard.

Guidelines to Provide a Safe Environment

1. Regularly and thoroughly inspect all building areas, equipment, fields, courses and other playing surfaces used by the athletes.
2. Inspect potentially dangerous equipment, heavy-use equipment and protective equipment frequently.
3. Ensure that unused equipment is not stored in or dangerously close to a playing area.
4. Ensure that wall-mounted devices that could cause injury are padded and light bulbs have protective coverings.
5. During extreme weather, inspect equipment and fields, courses, and other outside playing surfaces, including support structures, that could become unsafe.
6. Ask athletes to report any unsafe conditions related to the facility, equipment, fields, courses, and other playing surfaces.
7. Report (in writing) damage to the facility, fields, and courses, and request to have it repaired. Inspect repairs when completed.
8. Prevent athletes from using unsafe building areas, equipment, fields, courses, and other playing surfaces. In particular, remove unsafe equipment immediately to prevent inadvertent or prohibited use.
9. Ensure the facility provides access to water for adequate fluid replacement for athletes during all practices and competitions, or provide a separate source.
10. Ensure easy access to emergency equipment and first aid supplies.
11. Ensure telephone or radio access to enable contact with emergency medical services.

*See Facility checklist included at the end of this manual.

Inclement Weather

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Monitoring weather conditions is the responsibility of the game officials, coaches, and league and association administrators. All should be aware of the potential dangers posed by different weather conditions and work together to keep the players and other participants as safe as possible. Coaches should monitor weather conditions including warnings and watches issued by the National Weather

Service. Prior to a game, coaches and game officials should discuss the procedures they will follow if inclement weather becomes an issue..

In the case of inclement weather a game may be called for two reasons:

- Condition of the playing field
- Weather at game time

Coaches and referees must exercise their best judgement to determine whether or not a field is in playable

condition or if lightning is a potential hazard. If the area has had a large amount of rain and the fields are not in playing shape, games should be called as early as possible. If there is any lightning in the area at game time, the game official is to cancel the game immediately. In addition, if it is raining heavily at game time, the game official can call the game.

If a decision is made to continue play (this should never be the case if lightning is an issue), and a parent does not agree with the decision, the coach should support the parent's decision to remove the child from the game.

Severe Storm

Severe storms can produce damaging high winds, hail, heavy rain, lightning and/or tornadoes. If a severe storm approaches the playing area, the safety of the players may require that the game be suspended and immediate shelter sought. Coaches should err on the side of caution when considering whether the call a game or cancel a practice for weather concerns.

Lightning

Lightning is the second leading cause of storm related deaths (flooding is first). Lightning can strike up to 10 miles outside of a thunderstorm, literally a bolt from the blue. The danger from lightning can persist for 20-30 minutes or more after a thunderstorm has passed. The National Weather Service does not issue watches or warnings for lightning by itself.

If a person can hear thunder, or see lightning, the danger is already present. A clear, sunny sky overhead with storm clouds nearby can still be dangerous.

The following guidelines are recommended to determine if hazardous conditions exist:

- If lightning is within 5 miles, the game(s) should be suspended and shelter sought. A lightning detector can identify the distance accurately but may not be available. A rough guideline is to measure the time between the lightning flash and hearing the corresponding thunder. If it is 30 seconds or less, seek shelter. It may not be possible to determine which lightning strike generated which roll of thunder.

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- Shelter should be in larger, enclosed structures. Do not stay in open, unprotected areas. Smaller, open structures such as tents, trees, and isolated areas should be avoided. Cars, with windows rolled up, or buses can provide good shelter. Avoid contact with metal or other conducting materials to the outside surfaces.
- Games should not be restarted for at least 20 minutes after the last roll of thunder is heard.
- The team(s) should be advised of notification and evacuation plans and places to seek shelter near playing sites.

Coaches should discuss methods for notifying athletes of cancelled events (competition or practice) at the beginning of the season. For example, the coach may want the athletes to call him or her directly for the status or may want to implement a phone tree notification system.

SECTION H

MATCH ATHLETES ACCORDINGLY

Portage Rocket Football places great emphasis on the importance of matching players to reduce the risk of injury and avoid unfair competitive advantage. Coaches have a duty to exercise reasonable care to prevent foreseeable risks of harm to others. One of the duties that has emerged is the duty to match athletes of similar competitive levels. Numerous court cases have arisen out of the failure of a sports organization to appropriately match the size, age and skill of sports athletes. Courts have indicated that coaches have an obligation to match their athletes using reasonable guidelines.

The following factors should be considered when matching athletes:

- Skill
- Experience
- Height and weight
- Injuries or incapacitating conditions
- Age
- Maturity
- Mental state
- Gender It is important to:
 1. Have knowledge of the skill and experience levels of the athlete prior to performing a skill
 2. Understand the physical and emotional conditions of an athlete that may restrict participation.
 3. Document factors that you utilized when matching your athletes

For specific ages and weights, please refer to the Portage Rocket Football Rules:

SECTION I

INITIATE MEDICAL RESPONSE

As a head coach it is your responsibility to make sure the rules are followed. If a first aid certified coach

is not available, the practice or competition cannot take place. Portage Rocket Football rules require that at least one

coach certified in basic first aid and CPR be present at all practices and competitions. The coach should follow the scope of his/her training in administering first aid and not exceed the scope of that

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training. The purpose of first aid is to stabilize the situation by preventing it from worsening. Once the situation has been stabilized, all other treatment should be provided by a doctor. Coaches should renew their training in accordance with certification guidelines to ensure they remain current on the changes in procedures and nature of treatment. In addition, all coaches are expected to have a thoroughly planned and well-organized emergency medical plan.

The basic duties of first aid are:

- Check the scene for safety.
- Check the injured athlete and protect the athlete from further harm, following universal precautions when appropriate. **DO NOT MOVE THE ATHLETE.**
- Activate the emergency medical plan.
- Care for the injured or ill athlete until EMS personnel arrive.

Emergency Medical Plan

An emergency plan is a necessary tool in preparing your athletes for the upcoming season. All head coaches are required to submit a general emergency plan in writing to their staff. The head coach should then discuss and review these procedures with assistant coaches, participants, volunteers, and parents. Coaches, and those who have designated roles in the plan, need to be specifically trained on how to activate the Emergency Medical Plan.

The plan should be in writing and readily available and should cover the following elements:

! Who telephones 9-1-1 or other predetermined emergency response telephone number and maintain procedures for calling 9-1-1 in his/her possession?

! Who attends to the injured athlete(s), controls immediate scene and has each athlete's Emergency Treatment Authorization Cards?

! Where is the nearest treatment facility?

! Who meets paramedics at gate and guides them to the injured athlete(s) and maintains all necessary keys in his/her possession?

! Who initiates crowd control and contacts security?

! Who notifies parents/guardians or alternate name on emergency card?

! Who accompanies the injured athlete for treatment?

! Who supervises the team?

! Who provides proof of insurance?

! Who documents all information relating to the incident and the emergency response?

An alternative plan should be formulated when traveling to other facilities.

Heat-Related Emergencies

Heat-related emergencies are progressive conditions caused by overexposure to heat. Heat emergencies fall into three categories of increasing severity: heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke. Heat illnesses are easily preventable by taking necessary precautions in hot weather. If recognized in the early stages, heat-related emergencies can usually be reversed. Without intervention and resolution of the problem, heat cramps (caused by loss of salt from heavy sweating) can lead to heat exhaustion (caused by dehydration), which can progress to heatstroke, a life-threatening condition. Heat related emergencies can be avoided by canceling practice or

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competition in extreme weather (high temperature and/or high humidity) and taking frequent breaks for water.

Signals of heat-related illnesses:

- # Early stages of heat illness
- # Profuse sweating
- # Fatigue
- # Thirst
- # Muscle Cramps
- # Later symptoms of heat exhaustion:
 - # Headache
 - # Dizziness
 - # Weaknesses and light-headedness
 - # Cool, moist skin
 - # Nausea and vomiting
 - # Dark Urine
- # Symptoms of heatstroke:
 - # Fever (body temperature above 104 degrees F)
 - # Irrational behavior
 - # Extreme confusion
 - # Dry, hot, and red skin
 - # Rapid, weak pulse
 - # Seizures
 - # Unconsciousness

Response:

1. Follow the basic duties of first aid.
 2. Move the athlete to a cool place.
 3. Loosen tight clothing.
 4. Remove perspiration-soaked clothing.
 5. Fan the athlete.
 6. If conscious, give cool water to drink.
- If the athlete refuses water, vomits, or starts to lose consciousness –
1. Send someone to call EMS personnel.
 2. Place the athlete on his or her side.
 3. Immediately decrease body temperature by hosing the athlete down with cold water or placing them in an ice bath.
 4. Continue to cool the athlete by using ice or cold packs on the wrists, ankles, groin, and neck and in the armpits.
 5. Continue to check breathing and pulse.

Appendix F – Clock Operation

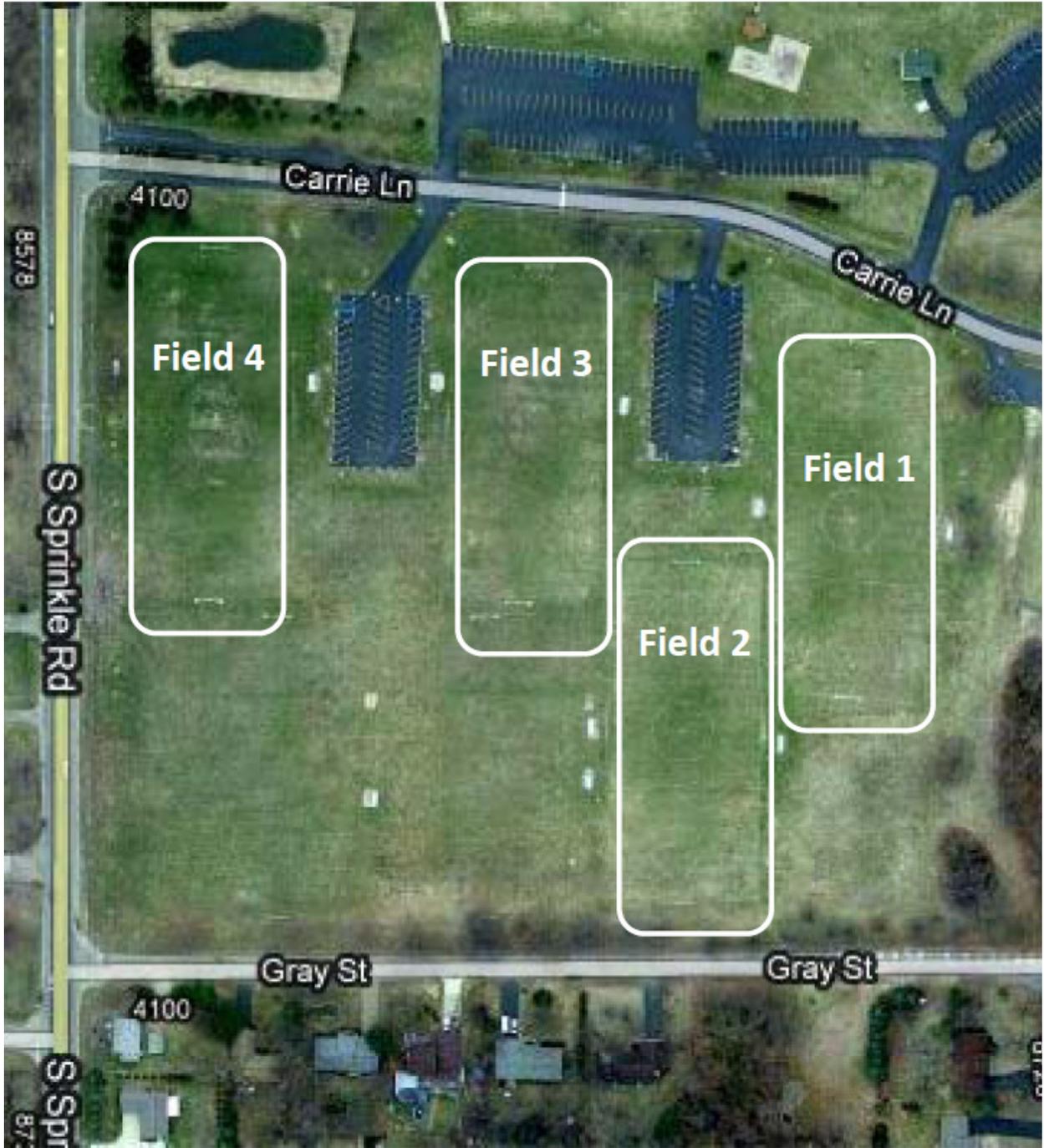


GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOOTBALL CLOCK OPERATORS



- A. The clock operator should report to the officials' dressing room at the stadium at least one hour before game time for the following purposes.
 1. To synchronize timer's watch with official game time as established by the official responsible for timing.
 2. To advise officials whether the clock operator will be in the press box or on the sideline. Determine procedure for communication with timer and check this procedure prior to the game.
 3. To discuss coordination of starting, stopping and adjusting the clock in accordance with the playing rules.
- B. The field clock is normally started 30 minutes before game time. The halftime intermission will start on the referee's signal when the players and officials leave the field. All pregame and halftime activities will be synchronized with the official game clock. The mandatory three-minute warm-up period will be put on the clock after the intermission time has elapsed and shall be started immediately.
- C. The clock operator shall have an extra stopwatch available. In case of failure of the game clock, the clock operator shall immediately contact the officials, giving them the correct data regarding the official time. The official responsible for timing will then pick up the correct game time on the stopwatch. If the field clock becomes inoperative and is subsequently repaired, it will not be used again until the next period or when the referee determines it is operational. The public-address announcer will indicate the field clock will not be official until the malfunction is corrected and a subsequent announcement is made on the public-address system.
- D. Game Procedures:
 1. The clock operator is an integral member of the officiating crew and game administration. Unfair advantages occur when the game clock is not started correctly by rule. Great care must be exercised to see that no time lag occurs in starting or stopping the clock.
 2. On all free kicks, the nearest official(s) will signal the legal touching of the ball by indicating that the clock should start.
 3. Any official may signal a time-out; therefore, the operator should be alert to stop the clock.
 4. The incompleteness signal will stop the clock. **Note:** On plays near the out-of-bounds line and in advance of the line to gain, an official may give a winding signal to indicate the ball is inbounds and follow it by a stop-the-clock signal for an apparent first down. Be alert for both signals.
 5. The clock operator will automatically stop the clock following a touchdown, field goal, touchback or safety after the appropriate scoring signal has been made.
 6. After the clock has been stopped, the referee will start it again on the referee's start-the-clock signal and if no such signal is given, the operator will start the clock on the snap without the signal from the referee.
 7. The referee may start the clock again in certain instances before the ready-for-play signal.
 8. The try is not a timed down.
 9. There are instances when a period shall be extended by an untimed down. During these extensions, leave the clock at :00. Do not reset the clock for the next period until the referee declares the period over by facing the press box and holding the ball overhead.
 10. Each state association may decide whether or not to utilize a running clock in certain situations, and the procedures for those situations.

Appendix G – Field Alignment



Appendix G – Field Alignment

