

Plainsmen Junior Football League Rules

1.0 PURPOSE

The purposes of the Plainsmen Junior Football League are to:

- Stress the best values derived from athletic competition (sportsmanship, teamwork, integrity, respect, leadership, commitment, perseverance, fairness)
- Promote the physical, mental, moral, social and emotional well-being of each player
- Encourage continued athletic participation
- Teach Football
- Have Fun

2.0 RULES

2.1 Participation

- 2.1.1 Players must attend at least two full weeks of practices before they can actively participate in a Sunday game, unless otherwise determined by the Executive Board. In the event players do not participate in scheduled practices following the commencement of games, player eligibility will be determined by the Vice President of Field Operations (or his designate) in consultation with the Head Coach. Decisions are made on a case basis. Factors affecting eligibility decisions include past practice attendance, player physical readiness and reason for absence. Decisions to limit playing time for any reason must be approved by the Vice President of Field Operations.
- 2.1.2 The “Tackle” Football program is divided into two divisions: Junior (Fourth-Fifth Grade) and Senior (Sixth-Seventh Grade) Divisions. In some cases it may be appropriate for a player to participate either with an older or younger grade level as approved by the Vice President of Field Operations. Decisions are made on a case basis. Safety to the player (or other players) and the player’s physical readiness are key factors in any decision. Parents will be consulted prior to any change in division. Advancing a younger player to the Senior Division is generally discouraged.
- 2.1.3 Junior Division - Prior to player selection, typically the 48 heaviest players (32 if there are only 4 teams) will be designated as interior lineman, but no more than 92 pounds (weight to be set after weigh-ins are complete) will be allowed for offensive and defensive backfield and end positions. Players less than the above weight cut-offs are allowed to play interior line positions, but if practical should play a backfield or end position.
- 2.1.4 Senior Division - Prior to player selection, typically the 48 heaviest players will be designated as interior lineman, but a minimum of 105

pounds (weight to be set after weigh-ins are complete) will be allowed for offensive and defensive backfield and end positions. Players less than the above weight cut-offs are allowed to play interior line positions, but if practical should play a backfield or end position.

2.2 Player Selections, Alignment, and Replacement

- 2.2.1 Coaches will evaluate each player during the evaluation week prior to player selection. Players are rated on a scale from 1 to 7 (highest ranking). Absent players are given an estimated ranking based on familiarity of the coaches with the player.
- 2.2.2 The draft order is established by drawing numbers (1-6) from a hat. The team that drafts 1st will also draft 12th, 2nd will also draft 11th, 3rd will also draft 10th, 4th will also draft 9th, 5th will also go 8th and 6th will go 7th. The draft will be continue with the Team originally drafting first, drafting second and seventh, the Team originally drafting second, drafting third and sixth, the Team originally drafting third-drafting fourth and fifth and the Team originally drafting fourth-drafting first and eighth. The draft will continue with the order rotating as described earlier.
- 2.2.3 A maximum of 4 Coaches children will be protected in the draft. (1 Head Coach, 3 Assistant Coaches)

(Example: A coaches child is rated as a "5". The player must be the first player selected by the Team, when no players of a higher rating (6 or 7) are available_or if the coach decides they do not want to draft the higher rated players. The Team may not pick any player (lower or the same ratings) until the higher ranked player or Coaches children are no longer available. In the above example, the Team could select the higher rated player(s) or his child before he could draft a player with the same or lower rating.

- 2.2.4 Each team will be divided into 2 equally talented platoons. Each squad will play one-half the game on both offense and defense. Teams with greater than 22 players (or more than 10 interior offensive linemen or 12 backs/ends) should platoon players such that each player participates in a minimum of 10 plays, excluding specialty teams. Coaches are encouraged to keep platoons roughly equal in capabilities. Loading up one squad may discourage members of the other squad. The 10-play participation rule should not be viewed as a target. The goal remains for each player to participate in At least one half of the game and no more than three quarters of the game.
- 2.2.5 Visiting Teams will change platoons from offense to defense (and defense to offense) each quarter. Home Teams will change on the half. Offensive

and defensive personnel will change from the field at any turnover, which would determine that team alternating from offense to defense or vice-versa. The rule allows each offensive and defensive platoon on the opposing teams to play each other over the course of the game.

- 2.2.6 Stronger interior linemen will line up on the offensive right (defensive left). The player whose offensive position is Center may be considered either a strong or weak-side lineman on defense, depending upon his skill level. All discussions of strong or weak side designations of a player should be discussed during coaches' meetings prior to the game. There is a wide range of experience level, size and physical readiness among the linemen. Player designations are not based solely on size. Proper designation of the players minimizes physical mismatches. This rule applies to interior linemen only.
- 2.2.7 If an injury occurs during the game, a replacement player should be selected from the other platoon (or a preferably a player that platoons on that squad). Offensive backfield and end positions should be replaced position for position (QB for QB, TB for TB, etc.). Defensive backfield-end positions do not carry a strong or weak-side designation. A DE can substitute for either DE, a LB for either LB or any defensive back (safety or cornerbacks) can substitute for another. Strong-side linemen should substitute for strong-side linemen, weak-side for weak-side. A single player should not substitute for a player both offensively and defensively. Teams with player overages should adjust their line up to insert the platooned player. Special situations should be reviewed with the Vice President of Field Operations.
- 2.2.8 Players that are absent for 1 game (illness, injury, other commitment, etc.) may be replaced as discussed in 2.2.7. An offensive backfield absence extending more than 1 game requires that a new player be trained for that position. Typically an End or platooned back will be trained for a backfield position. For example: The QB sprains his ankle and will be out 2 weeks. The injury occurred the week prior to the first game. The first game the other platoon's QB can play for both squads. For the second game, an End is converted to PB; the original PB is trained for QB. The QB's defensive position is filled as discussed in 2.2.7. The intent of this rule is to ensure each team has two separate sets of backfields for each game (Quarterback, Powerback, Fullback, Tailback).
- 2.2.9 The Head Coaches, or designated alternate, will meet, every Saturday, prior to game day, at 9:30 am. This meeting will include a discussion of issues that came up during the previous week and the roster exchange (required form provided by the league) which will include player numbers, squads, offensive and defensive positions. Players are not allowed to switch positions during the game, unless a physical mismatch is apparent. Coaches should review the player match-ups. Squads may be adjusted at this time to minimize mismatches. This may entail some minor adjusting of the line, not moving strong-side players to the weak-side or vice-versa. The Vice-President of Field Operations (or his designate) should concur

with switching players during the course of the game. Players should not change positions to run a “special play” or boost the defense.

2.3 Rule Enhancements

- 2.3.1 Football cleats should be molded rubber soles. No screw-on cleats. Sneakers are not prohibited, but are discouraged.
- 2.3.2 Each quarter will last 10 minutes. Each quarter will be regular football time, complete with stopped clock for incomplete pass, out-of-bounds, penalties, etc. Each team is allotted 3 timeouts per half.
- 2.3.3 Extra-points may be kicked (2 points), carried or received (1 point) across the goal line.
- 2.3.4 Ball size: A junior size ball will be used for the Junior Division. An intermediate size ball will be used for the Senior Division. The ball will be inflated in accordance with the manufacturer’s guidance. The League provides Footballs, no personal footballs will be used in the game.
- 2.3.5 Following a safety, the defensive team will get the ball on the 50-yard line.
- 2.3.6 One assistant coach may go downfield beyond the 35-yard line. All players not on the field and all other coaches must stay within the 35-yard lines.
- 2.3.7 One coach is permitted on the field during a time-out. In the event of an injury time-out, coaches are allowed on the field to check on the injured player, but are not permitted in the huddle or to give non-injury related instructions.
- 2.3.8 Teams are allowed 3 timeouts per half.
- 2.3.9 Teams are allowed 30 seconds from the time the ball is spotted: to run a play.
- 2.3.10 Any player may advance a fumble. Plays shall not be designed for an interior lineman to carry or receive the football-No fumble-rookies.
- 2.3.11 In the Junior Division, In the event that a team is ahead by 3 touchdowns, there shall be a brief time-out by the head coaches to discuss a strategy for keeping the game in hand. Coaches that run up the score will be subject to review as determined by the Executive Board.
- 2.3.12 Excessive victory/touchdown/sack celebrations etc. are strongly discouraged. Examples of excessive celebrations include, but are not limited to, victory laps, sack/touchdown dances, etc.
- 2.3.13 Prior to the start of the game there will be 3 coin flips
 - The first flip determines which team has choice of offense/defense or deferring the choice to the second half.
 - The second and third flips determine which platoons each team starts. *(For example: The Warriors are the home team and have won the first toss, opting to begin the game on offense. Prior to the second coin toss, the Warrior’s captain chooses that “Heads” to represent the “A” platoon (“Tails” represents the “B” platoon). The toss comes up “Tails”; the “B” platoon will play offense the first half. The “A”*

platoon will play defense the first half. The process will be repeated with the opposing team with the third toss.)

2.4 Offensive Rules

- 2.4.1 The offense is limited to the “I” formation. The Fullback (FB) and Tailback (TB) must lineup directly behind the Quarterback (QB).
- 2.4.2 The Powerback (PB) may be lined up directly behind either Guard (Power I formation), up to one yard to the outside of either End and behind the line (Wing formation), or up to one yard to the outside of either Tackle and behind the line (Slot formation). In the Senior Division, the power back may be split out (behind the line) in a Flanker formation. Only 1 receiver, End or Flanker, may be in the split formation.
- 2.4.3 There shall be no more than 1-yard between each lineman from End-to-End. In the Senior Division, one end may be split. Only 1 receiver (End or Flanker) may be in the split formation. Splitting an end on one side and having a wing or slot formation on the other side is an allowed formation. Lining the Powerback in the Slot position (See 2.4.2) with a split end on the same side is also allowable.
- 2.4.4 There are no man-in-motion plays. Players cannot shift into position.
- 2.4.5 No blocking below the waist outside the free blocking zone. The free blocking zone is defined as an area within 3 yards (either side) of the line of scrimmage and within 6 yards of either side of ball placement. Blocking below the waist is discouraged, but may result from a block initiated above the waist. Cut-blocks (or any block initiated below the waist) should not be taught.
- 2.4.6 Coaches are encouraged to include plays for each running back and end to carry or receive the ball. Coaches should call plays that position their team to win the game, but a goal of the league is to teach the game and encourage further participation. Coaches are encouraged to spread the ball carrying/receiving opportunities over the course of the season.
- 2.4.7 Using a “Hard Count”, head bob or other technique to intentionally draw the defense offsides is prohibited. The purpose of this rule is not to discourage the offensive team from going on a long count. This is strictly a judgment call by the officials. In the Sr. Tackle Division play can not start until after the first sound. For example: Quarterback must say Ready and can go on any subsequent count including a silent count. In the Jr. Tackle Division play can not start until after the second sound. For example: Quarterback must say Ready, Set. Then play can start. (You may use any terminology you wish but it must be distinct and not intended to deceive.)
- 2.4.8 When the offense is in a wing or slot formation (powerback lined up outside the offensive tackle), the fullback is allowed to offset behind either guard, but must remain at his normal depth.

2.5 Defensive Rules

- 2.5.1 All teams will play a 6-2-2-1 defense.
- 2.5.2 The defensive linemen (DE to DE) must be within 1 yard of the line of scrimmage until the ball is snapped.
- 2.5.3 Defensive Guards must line-up head-to-head with the Offensive Guard. Defensive Tackles may line-up head-to-head or on the Offensive Tackles outside shoulder (*i.e., DT's head lined up with OT outside shoulder*). The Defensive Ends may line up as wide as desired.
- 2.5.4 The linebackers must line up 1-3 yards directly behind the Defensive Tackles.
- 2.5.5 Both Cornerbacks must line up at least 3 yards behind the Linebacker on their side. The Safety must be at least 1 yard behind the deepest Cornerback. The Cornerbacks may play as wide as desired. The Safety should be inside the Tackles.
- 2.5.6 Line stunts and blitzing are allowed on the snap of the ball. (*For example: Defensive linemen can drop-off into the secondary on the snap of the ball.*)
- 2.5.7 The defense linemen and linebackers are required to remain set for 1 second prior to the snap of the ball. Defensive linemen may reset prior to the snap, provided they don't enter the neutral zone. Linebackers are not allowed to cheat-up to the line. The defense is not allowed to draw the offense off-sides.
- 2.5.8 Goal Line Defense. When the offense has possession of the ball inside but not including, the opponents 10 yard line, the defense may make the following adjustments; The cornerbacks and the safety may move up to a depth of 1 yard behind the linebackers.

2.6 **Kicking/Punting Rules**

- 2.6.1 There are no kick-offs, play starts at the 35-yard line.
- 2.6.2 Extra points and field goals may be kicked. Both are "free" plays – the defensive squad is not allowed to rush and cannot return missed attempts. The ball must be placed at least 5-yards behind the line of scrimmage, directly behind the center. Upon notification that the offensive team will attempt a field goal, the referee shall center the ball in the middle of the field prior to the snap. Defensive players are allowed to jump at the line of scrimmage to block kicks. Kicking plays (extra points and punts) are dead-ball plays and the clock is stopped for the duration of the play.
- 2.6.3 The kicking/punting squad should be aligned in a standard kicking/punting formation. Both ends should be split when punting. The football should be long snapped to the punter or holder.
- 2.6.4 In the Junior Division, the kicker may use either a holder with or without a flat kicking tee or a "kick-off" tee without a holder. Senior Division kickers should use a holder with or without a flat kicking tee. The holder's toe shall not be used as a tee.
- 2.6.5 The punting squad is not allowed downfield following a punt. The receiving team takes over where the punted ball is controlled. Punts that

are touched by the receiving team, but continue downfield, are not under control. Punts deflected towards the line of scrimmage are placed where first touched.

- 2.6.6 The receiving team must stay in normal defensive positions until the snap of the ball. All defensive backs and linebackers may drop back to receive the punt on the snap of the ball.
- 2.6.7 Since all kicks are free plays. The kicker/punter may be any player, regardless of weight.