



# Berwick Youth Football League

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

(A & B Divisions)

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## DRAFT GUIDELINES

2010

2010

# BYFL BOARD

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Fred Shotwell

Weights/Referees: Brad Harter

Concessions Coordinator: Ann Eyer

-----Volunteer Appointees-----

Team Mom Coordinator: Jenn Bogart

## **1. General Rules and Conduct Guidelines**

- a. The BYFL will utilize PIAA rules for governing its Pony Division. The rules contained within this rule book are meant to supplement and clarify areas where the BYFL has determined extraordinary measures and definitions should be taken for the benefit of the league.
- b. Head Coaches and the coaching staff participating in the program shall be responsible for their knowledge of all pertinent League and PIAA rules.
- c. The Head Coach is responsible for the behavior and discipline of his/her staff, team members, parents and fans. If the Head Coach is unwilling/unable to properly control the actions of his/her team, staff, parents, or fans, the BYFL Executive Board can and will intervene for the benefit of all league stakeholders.

## **2. Player Code of Conduct and Guidelines**

- a. All participants in the operation of this league and the individual teams shall conduct themselves in a proper manner.
- b. The disrespect for authority by any player/cheerleader toward any coach, cheerleader, league official, or team can result in disciplinary actions by the league.
- c. Any act of fighting or otherwise abusive behavior by any player or team will not be tolerated by the BYFL. Immediate ejection of the instigating parties is mandatory, up to and including:
  1. Mandatory one (1) game suspension.
  2. Removal from team for the season.
  3. Possible one (1) year suspension from the league.
- d. If a player is suspended from school for any reason whatsoever, they will be suspended from that week's game. The BYFL expects players to act appropriately on and off the field. This action also extends to Berwick football games.
- e. Coaches, players, statisticians, game officials, EMT's, BYFL Board Members, and equipment managers are the only persons permitted beyond the restraining lines of the football field. At no time is anyone permitted beyond the restraining lines of the field for spectator purposes only.
- f. Cheerleaders must stay back three (3) yards or a reasonable distance from the sidelines of the football field.
- g. Cheerleader Advisors are responsible for the safety and welfare of their cheerleaders during both practices and games.
- h. Parents are not permitted to harass the sponsors for any money or equipment.
- i. No one is permitted to approach the bench area during any game without permission from two of the following sources:
  1. Coaching Staff (of present game)

2. Game officials
3. BYFL Executive Board Members

(NOTE: The requirement for permission, for family members, is nullified during times of injury to players and/or staff.)

### **3. Coaches/Advisors Code of Conduct and Guidelines**

- a. All teams are allotted five (5) coaching positions per squad. The positions are:
  1. Head Coach
  2. First Assistant Coach
  3. (3) Assistant Coaches

No more than 5 coaches are allowed on the sideline during any game. Coaches may employ volunteers at practices, which will not count toward their total coaching total of five coaches. All coaches must be approved by the BYFL Board of Directors and submit to a background check, to be completed by the league, through a service provider of league choice.

- b. Any coach, advisor, or board member that has any physical altercation with another coach, advisor, parent, referee, or board member will be immediately ejected from the BYFL program.
- c. Head Coaches/Advisors and their assistants shall be held responsible for their knowledge of all PIAA rules.
- d. All coaches/advisors must show consideration for all personnel connected with the league at all times. Any physical, verbal, or personal abuse of a referee, league official, coach, or player will be turned over to the league for review.
- e. A coach will display proper conduct at all times.
- f. League Officials- President, BYFL Board Members, or Game officials (referees) have the authority to eject any person (i.e. players, cheerleaders, parents, or fans) from any BYFL event at any time. Any person ejected from a BYFL event MUST leave the field immediately. All game play may be stopped until that person has left. If the ejected person refuses to leave, the BYFL will notify the Berwick Police Department and that person may be charged with trespassing.
- g. All coaches must agree to a background check in order to ensure the safety of the children involved with the program. This applies to ALL volunteers as well.
- h. Coaches must reapply for a team each year and must be approved by the BYFL Board. Returning coaches have first right of refusal for a team, pending league review of disciplinary actions and/or grievances received by the league from the prior year. If the head coach of that team does not want to continue coaching, the application process will begin once the BYFL President receives a letter of resignation from the Head Coach.
- i. Each assistant coach is answerable to his/her head coach and the head coach is empowered to discipline any assistant coach for his/her unsportsmanlike or other improper conduct.
- j. If there is any children that have not been picked up at practice, it is the coaches' responsibility to wait until everyone is gone. It is suggested to have two adults with children at all times. **DO NOT LEAVE CHILDEN ALONE TO WAIT FOR A RIDE!!!**

- k. Any coach knowingly placing a child's welfare at risk can and will be subjected to review by the BYFL Board of Directors for discipline, including possible removal from their coaching position.
- l. Coaches are to review every player's medical forms for possible allergies and/or physical ailments.

#### 4. Player Weight (Football Only)

- a. Violation of weight and/or age requirements will result in a one (1) week suspension of the Head Coach, or Coaches in charge, from all league functions and duties.
- b. Participation of players with respect to weight shall be determined as follows:
  1. **“A” Division**
    - i. The “A” Division weight is unlimited except for 13 year old players. Every 13 year old is to weigh no more than 155lbs. It is up to the coach to use discretion in the placement and position of players. The ball carrier weight is 140lbs.
  2. **“B” Division**
    - i. The “B” Division weight is unlimited. It is up to the coach to use discretion in the placement and position of players. The ball carrier weight is 110lbs.
- c. Weigh-Ins will be conducted when equipment is handed out. Head Coaches need to be present for all weigh-ins.
- d. Ball Carriers defined by position:
  1. Quarterback
  2. Running backs
  3. Wide Receivers, including slot backs/flankers
  4. Tight Ends are to be considered linemen, unless it is the intention of the coaching staff to hand/pass the ball to the tight end *behind the line of scrimmage*. Therefore, no Tight End may receive a hand-off or pass behind the LOS without meeting the league weight requirements.
- e. Each team’s coaching staff will be required to present their prospective ball carriers for weigh-in prior to the first game, on a day to be determined by the BYFL. Any player who fails to make their division’s weight limit will be allowed to weigh in once more prior to first game.
- f. If a prospective ball carrier or 13 year old weighs in, prior to the beginning of the season, within 5 pounds of their respective weight limitation, they will be required to weigh in a second time at midseason (prior to Game #4). Failing to meet the weight limit at this weigh in will disqualify the player from further participation in games as a ball carrier. A two pound buffer will be allowed at this midseason weigh in. This will allow a player, who must previously have been a ball carrier, to exceed the division weight requirement by 2 pounds.

#### 5. Equipment

- a. All players must be registered and paid in full, and all forms turned in before equipment will be issued.

- b. Coaches will be required to assist the Equipment Coordinator during equipment distribution and return. This is MANDATORY!!!
- c. Mouth pieces are mandatory. Mouthpieces must be in good condition and cannot be clear. Mouth pieces also must be attached to the helmet.
- d. Athletic supporters are encouraged.
- e. All players must wear proper football equipment at all times:
  - 1. Helmet
  - 2. Thigh pads
  - 3. Knee pads
  - 4. Hip pads
  - 5. Shoulder pads
  - 6. Athletic supporter (recommended)
  - 7. Mouthpiece
- f. All other padding is optional. (Ex. Arm pads, rib pads, etc.)
- g. There are no hard casts allowed on the football field, during play. Any player who has had a cast must present a doctor's note to the coach/league giving permission for the child to return to play. Any splint worn by a player must be well padded and will be checked by a league official.
- h. Prohibited are sneakers and metal screw in spikes.
- i. Parent or guardian must be present at all practices and games to adjust female player's equipment if needed.
- j. The Head Coach and coaching staff are responsible for the players' equipment being in serviceable condition for games and practices. League officials will have the right to suspend players without proper equipment. There will be no substitution for proper equipment.
- k. If a child has to be attended to for equipment, medical, or personal reasons, two adults must be present, preferably a man and a woman.
- l. No jewelry or other related items or clothing shall be worn during practices or games. This includes any style of earring/piercings, necklaces, watches, or bracelets.
- m. Long hair must be pulled back into a pony tail and kept away from the face. If the hair falls 2" below the helmet, it must be pulled back.
- n. All teams will be given an equipment turn in date, set by the league. All equipment must be returned by the return date established by the league, following the completion of the season. Head coaches/Advisors are required to be present during this return time.

## **6. Practice Rules and Recommendations**

- a. Practice may not begin until the BYFL releases the teams to do so.
- b. The start of practice sessions will be determined yearly. No team may start practice prior to the official date set by the league. There is an optional week of practice being allowed for all teams. No child is to be punished for missing this week.

- c. No player/cheerleader may participate in any organized practice until he or she has passed a physical examination.
- d. All practice periods shall be under the supervision of a coach. It is desirable to have a qualified first aid person at all practices.
- e. In the BYFL recommends that the first week of practice should be devoted to conditioning, not wearing pads; however, helmets and shoulder pads could be worn beginning the first day of practice.
- f. A team may have no more than (5) practices per week, until the first game of the season. Afterwards, each team is allotted 4 practices per week.
- g. Each practice will last no more than (2) hours.
- h. There is no one allowed on the bench or sidelines except authorized personnel.
- i. Keeping attendance during the first two weeks of practice is mandatory and must be turned into the league President at the end of the two weeks. Any child who has missed a total of 6 practices within that two week timeframe will not be considered a member of that team, unless the Head Coach has been notified. No refunds will be given at this point. Coaches should also be aware of where their players are at all times at practices and at games.
- j. A player must complete one week of practice, prior to participating in their first game.
- k. No child is to be dropped off at practice unless a coach is present. Any parent violating this rule can and should be referred to the league for disciplinary actions.
- l. At all practices, where person to person contact takes place, each player must be dressed in the full compliment of protective equipment.
- m. Each team may have (2) preseason scrimmages. Said scrimmages will not be allowed until a team has had at least five (5) practices. All scrimmages must be pre-approved by the BYFL Coaches Coordinator or member of the Executive Board.
- n. Parents are not allowed on the practice field, and are not to interfere with practice. Parents must observe practice from a distance set forth by the coaching staff of the team. If there is a problem, they are to talk with the coach after practice away from the children on the team. If no resolution can be reached at this point, the parent may request to be contacted by the Coaches Coordinator within 48 hours, or seek resolution via a member of the BYFL Executive Board.
- o. No player or team is permitted at any time to engage in a controlled scrimmage or any form of contact drills involving a player, players, or team from a different age/weight division of play.
- p. Team Attendance. The following are reasons for suspension during the season:
  - 1. Any player who misses two (2) out of three practices in one week cannot play in that week's game. All players must have active participation during practice. Exceptions to this are Church or school activities, or medically excused reasons.
  - 2. Any player who misses four (4) practices without notifying the Head Coach can be cut from the roster at the coach's discretion.
- q. Practice times are as follows:
  - 1. Before first game of the season, a maximum of five practices, two hours each may be held per week. This is a set time.
  - 2. All sponsored teams should try to practice at the same time, including cheerleading squads. Please try to adjust schedules so parents do not have to wait.
- r. If the BYFL cancels practice due to weather or any other League function, practice may be held on that Saturday for a maximum of 2.5 hours. Cancellation of practice by the

Coaches does not warrant a Saturday practice. NO MORE THAN 5 PRACTICES ARE ALLOWED IN ONE WEEK.

## 7. Injury Precautions

All injuries should be taken seriously, regardless of the circumstances surrounding them. While the BYFL strives to provide medical personnel coverage at all of our league games, there are instances when medically trained personnel may not be readily available. During these times, all precautions must be taken to insure that any injury to a player/cheerleader is treated properly and not aggravated by untrained actions.

If a player is complaining of head or neck pain, their helmet should never removed without first seeking proper medical personnel's input and/or assistance. Fatigue and exhaustion should be handled with diligence. Respect the athletes' needs or requests for rest or hydration. Youth athletes are not to be pushed to the point of over exhaustion or muscle failure. Discipline or intensity is never an acceptable reason for pushing our youth athletes beyond their healthy limitations. Every player has a different ability to withstand dehydration or exhaustion, which should be recognized and respected.

Documentation of a growing trend in **Second Impact Injuries** has made the BYFL aware of the need to further inform our coaches and volunteers of this injury's dangers:

- a. **Second-impact syndrome (SIS)** is a condition where the brain swells rapidly and catastrophically after a person suffers a second concussion before symptoms from an earlier concussion have been resolved.
  1. The second concussion may be received days or even weeks after the initial trauma.
  2. **SIS** is often fatal, and those who suffer a second impact injury are almost always severely disabled.
  3. Young athletes are most at risk. In order to prevent SIS, guidelines should be established to prohibit athletes from returning to a game/practice prematurely. Each coach must be aware of the dangers and instruct their players accordingly.
  4. Symptoms include headaches, cognitive difficulties, or visual changes, rapid onset of dilating (enlarged) pupils, loss of eye movement, unconsciousness, and respiratory failure.
  5. Athletes are advised to use protective gear such as helmets, though helmets do not entirely prevent the syndrome. Athletes are also discouraged from returning to play until after they have been evaluated and approved for resuming the sport by a healthcare provider skilled in evaluating a concussion.
- A. If a player is injured during a game, he/she must come out of the game for a minimum of one (1) play.
- B. A severely injured player may not return to the roster until a written consent is given by their doctor and filed with the league President.

- C. If a player is bleeding in any way, the injured player must leave the game for at least one play, or until the wound has been properly dressed. Proper disposal of contaminated goods is important. All blood must be covered completely and permanently before the player will be permitted to reenter the game.
- D. It is the responsibility of the Head Coach to report any injury at the time of the incident. An accident form has been provided to all coaches. It is their responsibility to fill it out completely and give it to the BYFL President. One a participant leaves the field without prior notice of injury, the league is NOT responsible.
- E. DO NOT PHYSICALLY REMOVE A CHILD FROM THE FIELD IF INJURED. There will be medical personnel available at most games and they will be utilized to attend to the child. If there are no medical personnel available, the ambulance will be called.

## **8. Hot Weather and Storm Precautions**

Teams must guard against serious heat related issues. The training regimen of any team practicing under high heat (88 degrees or more) and/or high humidity conditions should:

- a. Limit or eliminate laps entirely. Do not assign laps for disciplinary reasons or assign them to be run some point in the future, when heat may not contribute to unnecessary health risks.
- b. Schedule practices for early evening, after the sun is low.
- c. Give the players all the water they want to drink any time they want it. Do not substitute soft drinks for water. Drinks with electrolytes are permissible.
- d. Each coach must keep an eye on all players and his fellow coaches for the slightest sign of heat exhaustion or fatigue.
- e. A fifteen minute break is mandatory in the middle of each practice, and is not to be counted against the 2 hours allotted for practice.
- f. Bullrings, beachheads, and other drills of an intense nature should not be conducted during these practices.
- g. Due to the adverse effects that high heat may have on various players, no player should be unduly disciplined for failure to participate in a practice during a high heat/humidity situation.
- h. Practice needs are to be left to the discretion of the Head Coach. However, each team's practice methodology may also be reviewed by the BYFL Board of Directors. Any coach found to be placing a player's health at risk will be subject to disciplinary actions determined necessary by the BYFL Board of Directors.
- i. In the event of lightning, all players are to remove their helmets immediately. Practice must be suspended immediately. The time used during this suspension will count against a teams' total allotted practice time for the night, i.e. 2 hours. A team must wait a minimum of 30 minutes from the last visible instance of lightning, prior to resuming practice.

## **9. BYFL Player Participation**

- a. Participants are allowed to play in only one organized football league at a time. They may not play for the Berwick Youth Football League and the Middle School/Junior Varsity team.
- b. In order to register for football and/or cheerleading, a child must meet the residency requirements defined within the BYFL bylaws, including, but not limited to, attending school within the Berwick School District. If a player moves during the season, the affected coaches must inform the BYFL Executive Board. If a child moves out of the area during the football season, they are allowed to continue to play for the BYFL for the remainder of that season.
- c. The player/cheerleader must meet the eligible age requirements of 7 by November 1<sup>st</sup>. Players may not turn 14 by November 1<sup>st</sup> of that year. A birth certificate is required as proof of age. No child can play or practice who is under or over age.
- d. Each player/cheerleader must have a Parental Waiver form signed by his or her parents or guardian. The parent/guardian must waive all claims for injuries exclusive of the terms of the insurance of the league.
- e. Each player/cheerleader shall be required to have a physical examination at the beginning of the season, which starts at the time of equipment handout. A copy of the Physical Examination certificate is required. Physicals that have been performed within 8 months of the start of the football season are acceptable.
- f. Parental Waiver forms, proof of age, and Physical Examination certificates shall be filed with the Secretary of the BYFL. The President will verify all paperwork as stated in the BYFL bylaws.

## **10. Rosters**

- a. Rosters will include the following information:
  1. Jersey Number in numerical order (Football only)
  2. Name
  3. Age
  4. Date of Birth
  5. Actual Weight (Football Only)
  6. Position
  7. Coaching staff
- b. Copies of complete rosters will be given to the Head Coaches and Advisors the week before the first week of practice. Each coach/advisor will have a roster packet which will include rosters for all the teams within the league.

## 11. Games

**There is a Zero tolerance for cheating. Any Coach and/or parent involved in the violation of this rule are subject to a lifetime suspension from the league.**

- a. Prior to the start of each game, opposing coaches will confer regarding disciplinary actions, injuries, or other reasons why any person on his roster will not be playing.
- b. Each team is allowed three (3) timeouts per half. A Coach may ask for a timeout if a playing rule has been violated. Officials will determine if a complaint is valid. If the complaint is valid:
  1. 15 yard penalty from line of scrimmage will be assessed.
  2. Time timeout will NOT be charged against the complaining team.
  3. If not valid: the timeout will be charged against the complaining team.
- c. Two water personnel will be allowed on the sidelines.
- d. League approved balls will be provided at the start of every game. (Composite)
- e. There is no mandatory play rule in effect but play counts will be reviewed. All teams are to submit an official stat sheet to the league at the end of each game.
- f. In the event a game must be postponed, the BYFL President will contact the Head Coaches only. It is the Head Coaches' responsibility to notify the assistants and the members of the team. The game is to be rescheduled at the discretion of the BYFL Executive Board.
- g. Each individual "A" or "B" team is responsible for cleaning their sidelines at the conclusion of the game. This rule will be strictly enforced. Failure to do so will result in a warning to the Head Coach. Do not leave the sideline until all garbage has been picked up.
- h. All games will be played under PIAA rules with the following exceptions:
  1. Point after Touchdown (PAT): A run/pass is worth 1 point and a kick is worth 2 points. This applies to both the "A" and "B" divisions.
  2. A loose ball cannot be advanced by the offense. A loose ball is defined as any ball that has left the possession of a player and traveled forward on the field of play.
  3. "B" division games will be composed of 4 eight (8) minute quarters. Half time will be 5 minutes long, unless there is a change in weather or the games have lasted longer than expected.
  4. "A" division games will be composed of 4 ten (10) minute quarters. Half time will be 5 minutes long, unless there is a change in weather or the games have lasted longer than expected.
  5. In the event a team has a 30 point deficit at the end of the first half, the Mercy Rule will be put into effect at the start of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. The clock will continue to run on all plays. An injury, timeout, or player substitution is the only situations that will stop the clock under the Mercy Rule.
  6. A player can wear any Jersey number at any position.
  7. Games may be played during periods of rain. No lighting may be present. (20 minutes between flashes.) League officials and referees have the right to cancel the game if needed.

8. "B" division: One coach may be on the field while the game is in play. Beginning during the 2009 season, after the 4<sup>th</sup> game of the season, no coaches will be permitted on the field during play, except during timeouts. This rule does not apply to "A" division, as no coach is permitted on the field, other than timeouts.
  9. There will be no head tackling or spiking of players.
  10. "Horse collar" tackles are strictly prohibited. Immediate penalties will be assessed.
  11. Timeouts may not be called back-to-back.
  12. There is absolutely no coaching (speaking to) a "B" division player, once the huddle has been broken. Violation of this rule is a 15 yard unsportsmanlike penalty.
- i. In the "B" division, one coach will be allowed on the field with the team, during the first 4 games. The coach must stay at least 5 yards behind the deepest player and not interfere with the progression of the game. The on-field coach may not talk to his team or give instructions after the offensive center takes position with his/her hands on the ball.
  - j. Only the Head Coach or coach on the field may confer with game officials. There is no need to have all of the coaches approach any referee/game official. A penalty can and will be assessed if this is not adhered to.
  - k. On 4<sup>th</sup> down, the offense has the choice of attempting to gain yardage required for 1<sup>st</sup> down, punting the ball, or throwing the ball for change of possession.
  - l. A fumble may be recovered by either the offense or the defense. In the event of any fumble, the ball can be recovered and advanced by the defense. However, only a fumble travelling backwards on the field of play, may be recovered and advanced by the offense. Any fumble forward can be recovered by the offense, but will be returned to the spot where possession was lost. No yardage may be gained by the offense as a result of a fumble.

## 12. Scoring

- a. Touchdown = 6 points
- b. PAT (kick) = 2 points
- c. PAT (run) = 1 points
- d. Safety = 2 points
- e. Field Goal = 3 points

## 13. Time outs and Penalties

- a. A team shall be permitted no more than (3) time-outs per half (not including officials' time-outs). If a team calls a time-out and that team does not have any time-outs left a (10) yard penalty will be assessed.
- b. Timeouts may not be called back-to-back. Calling a timeout immediately after resuming play from a timeout results in automatic loss of down.
- c. There is to be no hands to the helmet of another player, i.e. stiff arms, clotheslines, face-guarding, etc. Penalties will be called and enforced in every instance that this is

witnessed, regardless of the impact the infraction will have on the play. The infraction being "AWAY" from the play will not excuse it, nor dismiss it.

## **14. Officials and Schedules**

- a. Three (3) league approved officials are required for all divisions.
- b. A league schedule will be drawn up in advance and be given to all personnel once it is completely finished.
- c. Regularly scheduled games shall be played on Saturday and Sundays. If there is a Pony game scheduled, the first game will be at 10:00am. The next game will be played at 12:00pm. The last game will be played at 2:00pm.

## **15. Overtime**

- a. In the event of a tie at the end of regulation, an overtime period(s) will be utilized.
- b. Overtime periods have no game clock, i.e. untimed. The 40 second play clock remains in effect.
- c. During the third overtime period, and in the event of a touchdown, each team will be required to attempt a two point conversion, via kicking.
- d. Each team receives two (2) timeout per overtime period.
- e. Overtime rules for the "A" & "B" divisions will be as follows:
  1. Each team will receive possession of the ball at the fifteen (15) yard line.
  2. Each team gets four (4) downs to either score or attain a first down.
  3. After the second overtime, each team is required to kick the PAT, in the event of a touchdown.
  4. A maximum of three (3) overtime periods will be permitted. If no winner can be determined after 5 overtimes, a tie will be declared.
  5. Each team receives two (2) timeouts, one per offensive possession and one per defensive possession.

## **16. Playoffs**

- a. Playoffs are determined by the following seedings:
  1. In a four (4) team field:
    - i. 1 vs. 4
    - ii. 2 vs. 3
  2. In a six team field:
    - i. Seeds 1 and 2 receive a first round bye.
    - ii. 3 vs. 6
    - iii. 4 vs. 5
- b. The final regular season standings will determine the seedings for the playoffs, as well as the order of picks awarded in the following year's draft. (Ex. Seed #1 will receive the last pick in each round of the draft.)
- c. Tie breaking system:
  1. If teams are tied for a playoff seed:
    - i. Overall record (if using divisional set up)
    - ii. Head to Head competition with the two teams that are tied. (Example: If two teams played each other once, the winning team of that game,

receives the higher seed; if the teams played each other twice and each team won one of the games, refer to iii: below.)

- iii. Head to Head competition totals: Points For and Points against. Total the PF for both games for each team. Total the PA for both games for each team. Subtract the PA from the PF. Higher total margin receives the higher seed. If still tied, refer to iv: below.
- iv. Play a tie breaker or flip a coin, whichever is agreed upon by both Head Coaches and consented to by the BYFL Executive Board.