



Berwick Youth Football League

RULES AND REGULATIONS

(Pony Division)

&

DRAFT GUIDELINES

2010

2010

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-----Volunteer Member-----

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 Pony (7-8 years of age) Division, its players, coaches, parents, and fans.
- b. Head Coaches and the coaching staff participating in the Pony 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.
- d. The league approved ball size will be any brand of Pee Wee sized composite football. No rubber balls may be used. The ultimate determination of any game ball's compliance will be made by the league's Equipment Manager, or member of the BYFL Executive Board.
- e. All players must meet the league age requirement of being at least 7 years old on or before November 1st of each season. The player may not achieve the age of 9 years old prior to November 1st.

2. Coaches/Advisors Code of Conduct and Guidelines

- a. All teams are allotted five (5) coaching positions per squad. The positions are:
 - i. Head Coach
 - ii. First Assistant Coach
 - iii. (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.

3. Practice Rules and Recommendations

- a. Practice may not begin until the BYFL releases the teams to do so.
- b. In the BYFL recommends that the first week of practice should be devoted to conditioning, not wearing pads; however, helmets could be worn beginning the first day of practice.
- c. 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.
- d. Each practice will last no more than (2) hours.

- e. At all practices, where person to person contact takes place, each player must be dressed in the full compliment of protective equipment.
- f. 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.
- g. 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.
- h. 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.

4. 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.
 - i. The second concussion may be received days or even weeks after the initial trauma.
 - ii. **SIS** is often fatal, and those who suffer a second impact injury are almost always severely disabled.
 - iii. 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.

- iv. Symptoms include headaches, cognitive difficulties, or visual changes, rapid onset of dilating (enlarged) pupils, loss of eye movement, unconsciousness, and respiratory failure.
- v. 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.

5. 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.
- 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.

6. Game Rules

- a. A game will consist of four 7-minute quarters, with all appropriate clock stoppages. In the event of a score, the clock will begin immediately at the time the ball is set for resumption of play.
- b. Half time will be 8 minutes long.
- c. A coin toss will be conducted at the beginning of each game. Winner will get the choice of receiving or deferring.

- d. The HOME team is responsible for providing a 3-person team to work the first down and yard markers. The VISITORS may provide one volunteer to assist (equipment permitting) in the running of the game clock.
- e. Each team will be allowed three 2-minute time outs per half.
- f. The play clock will be 40 seconds from spot of the ball.
 - i. This time may be adjusted upon agreement of both coaches and the referee during the first 3 games of the regular season.
- g. A maximum number of (5) and a minimum of (2) officials shall be required for each game.
- h. One coach may be on the field to direct his team during every play of the game. Coaches on the field are not allowed to give the player instructions after the offensive and defensive huddles are broken.
- i. In the pony division, a change of possession, as a result of an opponent's score, will be to automatically place the ball at midfield.

7. Offense

- a. The ball carrier weight limit shall be 90 lbs., as weighed before the first game of the regular season. A ball carrier is defined as any player who lines up in one of these positions: **quarterback, running back, split end, wide receiver, or flanker/wing back.**
 - i. The ball may be advanced by a larger player on the defense, negating the weight restriction, as a result of a pass interception or fumble recovery.
- b. When the offensive team breaks the huddle, they must move to their pre-snap set. There shall be no pre-snap shifting or motion allowed, prior to the offense being set for a minimum of 1 second.
- c. One coach will be allowed on the field with the team. 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 huddle has been broken.
- d. On 4th down, the offense has the choice of attempting to gain yardage required for 1st down, punting the ball, or throwing the ball for change of possession. The offensive team must declare its intention at the conclusion of third down, once the ball is set.
- e. 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.

8. Scoring

- a. Touchdown = 6 points
- b. PAT (kick) = 2 points
- c. PAT (run) = 1 points
- d. PAT (pass) = 2 points (Pass must be forward pass, at or beyond the LOS. No shuttle or belly passes.)
- e. Safety = 2 points

f. Field Goal = 3 points

9. Defense

- a. A nose guard may be utilized. However, the nose guard must be placed into a three or four point stance when lining up over the center. All defensive interior linemen on the LOS, this includes defensive tackles and nose guards, are required to be in a three or four point stance. Defensive ends and Outside Linebackers may be on the LOS and in a two point stance.
- b. There is a maximum of six defensive players allowed on the LOS.
- c. There is no rushing/blitzing on punts, field goals, or PAT's (kicks).
- d. A loose ball may be advanced by a defensive player as a result of a pass interception or fumble recovery.
- e. Coaches on the field are not allowed to give the player instructions after the offensive huddle is broken, including the defensive coach.

10. 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.
- d. "Horse collar" tackles are strictly prohibited. Immediate penalties will be assessed.
- e. Any offside or false start will be blown dead, with players reset, and the play resuming.
- f. Penalties will be counted during the following instances:
 - a. The penalty affects the outcome of the play.
 - b. The penalty was a personal foul or may have caused injury to opposing player, i.e. horse collar, clipping, face mask, etc. The referee will make the decision for enforcement of a penalty and is not to be contested.

11. 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. A maximum of 3 overtime periods will be allowed in the Pony Division. If after the third overtime period, there is no winner, a tie is to be declared.
- d. 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 or forward pass.
- e. Each team will receive one set of downs (4 downs) at the ten (10) yard line of the opponent.
- f. Each team receives one (1) timeout per overtime period.

New Rules to be put into effect after 2009 season

- a. **EVENING THE ODDS.** If any team goes ahead by at least 28 points at any time during the second half, The Mercy Rule (clock) will go into effect. However, the opposing team will be given the ball on the opponent's 25 yard line. If the team fails to score the ball is turned over at the spot of the ball. The leading team should play with back-up players at all skill positions, wherever possible. The same modifications will apply to the following possessions unless the trailing team scores and closes the scoring gap to within 28 points, at which time the ball will resume being placed at the 40 yard line. The Mercy Rule, "running clock," will continue to run as it has in the previous seasons.