

Massanutten Youth Football League



2021 Senior Tackle Football League Rules

Ages 11-13



The Massanutten Youth Football League is governed by Harrisonburg and Rockingham County Parks and Recreation Department's Athletic Divisions. Questions of conduct and affairs of the league shall be submitted to the appropriate department.

City of Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Staff Contact:

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Massanutten Youth Football League will be known as MYFL for the remainder of the document.
 Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation will be known as HPR for the remainder of the document.
 Rockingham County Parks and Recreation will be known as RCPR for the remainder of the document.

ARTICLE I: **PURPOSE**

- A. The purpose of the Massanutten Youth Football League is to provide an enjoyable experience, to develop character, skills, and sportsmanship, and to promote good will among all teams and individuals. Although sports are competitive by nature; HPR and RCPR Departments' intentions are to place LESS emphasis on winning, while promoting lifetime sport involvement, good health, and fun for each participant.

ARTICLE II: **REGISTRATION**

- A. Each player will be charged a registration fee determined by the department which includes, but not limited to jersey, mouthpiece, and equipment upkeep fee.
- B. All youth must register, including youth who participated in the previous season. A copy of the child's birth certificate is required at registration.
- C. Each department will set a date for registration each year. Information on that can be found at www.harrisonburgva.gov/football.
- D. Registration for City participants will open on June 14 and will remain open through July 30.
1. County youth **CANNOT** register on a City team. Residents must show proof of City residence.
 2. More registration info can be found at www.harrisonburgva.gov/football.
- E. Late registrations will be placed on a waiting list and will be added as space permits.
- F. Equipment Fitting:
1. Fitting of equipment will take place **August 2-4 from 5:30pm-7:00pm each night**. The participant must be registered prior to the equipment fitting. If child is not present during these dates, then an alternative date will be chosen before that child can participate.

ARTICLE III: **PLAYER ELIGIBILITY**

- A. Only children between the ages of 11-13 years may participate in the Senior Tackle Football. Children may not be registered for Senior Tackle unless they have attained the age of 11 before August 1, 2021.
- B. No youth shall play or practice in the league without being registered through their department at times and dates set for registration of that year.
- C. Each parent or guardian will be required to sign an agreement stating that they understand the Youth Tackle Football Bylaws and Youth Sports Code of Conduct.

ARTICLE IV: **TEAMS**

- A. City MYFL teams will be generated based on the feeder schools to each of the two middle school's district. Participants cannot request to be on either team.
- B. The 2 teams will be generated from the 3 elementary schools that feed into each middle school respectfully.
 - 1. **Team 1** → Smithland, Stone Spring, Spotswood → Skyline
 - 2. **Team 2** → Waterman, Keister, Bluestone → Thomas Harrison
- C. The HPR staff reserves the right to adjust the roster size in order to best serve the interest of the Department and the league.

ARTICLE V: **COACH REQUIREMENTS**

- A. All coaches must obtain the USA Football Youth Tackle certification prior to the start of the season, attend the mandatory coaches meeting, submit, and pass a background check conducted by a third party, and shall be approved each year by the governing body of the league.
- B. There will be a limit of six (6) coaches per team: one head coach and five assistant coaches. All coaches will have to go through the MYFL screening process, **NO EXCEPTIONS**. Individuals who are not vetted by HPR or RCPR will not be allowed on the bench or playing field during games or practices. Final coaching staffs will be set at the discretion of MYFL administration and the respective head coach.
- C. Head coaches are responsible for conduct of all players, assistant coaches, and parents. Any coach who knowingly plays an illegal player, uses profanity, threatens any player or official can be suspended from coaching any HPR or RCPR Department's activity/program/event.
- D. Depending on level of misconduct suspension or trespass notices may be issued.

ARTICLE VI: **GAME SCHEDULE**

- A. HPR and RCPR Athletic Staff shall determine the number of games played by each team during the season.
- B. All games will be played in accordance with the schedule set by the HPR and RCPR Athletic Staff. Games will be played at Rockingham Park at the Crossroads and at the Smithland Athletic Complex.
- C. No league standings will be kept, and no trophies will be awarded.

ARTICLE VII: **PRACTICES**

- A. Pre-Season: Before school starts
 - 1. Practices will start **the week of August 9th**.
 - 2. Practices before the start of the season are limited to 4 days per week. No more than 2 hours of practice may be scheduled on any one day.

3. **Week 1 practices are helmets only.**
 4. All teams are allowed a maximum of 10 minutes of Thud/Full contact per practice.
 5. A maximum of 10 hours of practice is permitted for a full week.
- B. In-Season: Once School starts (Aug. 17th)
1. Practices after the start of the season are limited to 3 days per week. No more than 2 hours of practice may be scheduled on any one day.
 2. Week 2 and beyond are helmets & shoulder pads **twice a week** (Tuesday & Wednesday).
 3. 1 practice per week **must** be helmet only (Thursday).
 4. Teams are allowed a max of 30 minutes of Thud/Full contact per practice.
 5. A maximum of 8 hours of practice is permitted for a full week.

ARTICLE VIII: TEAM SELECTION

- A. If an area has enough players to form a second team, the two teams will be drafted out of the pool of available players. All pool players will have one combined practice under the instruction of the area coaches. At the conclusion of the combined practice, the Head Coaches will draft players for their team under the supervision of either the HPR or RCPR Athletics Staff. All Coach's children will be assigned to their parent's team. All other players will go into the draft. The first pick will be determined based on a coin flip, the loser will then have pick 2 & 3. After that, picks will rotate every other pick. Should the head coach have no kids themselves playing, he will be awarded the first pick of the draft.

ARTICLE IX: EQUIPMENT

- A. HPR will supply game jerseys, practice jersey's/pennies, pants, helmets with face guards and decals, mouth pieces, shoulder pads, knee pads, butt pads, thigh pads, and socks. Shoes worn must be rubber cleated type of shoes. Special protective devices can only be used with approval of league officials or game referee. Cleats must be purchased as these are not provided.

ARTICLE X: GAME AND FIELD RULES

- A. Virginia High School League (VHSL) rules apply to the by-laws except as modified herein.
- B. Games will be scheduled by HPR and RCPR Athletic Divisions based on time and facilities available. Games will be played on Saturdays and Tuesdays. Make-up games will be scheduled at the Recreation Department's discretion. Games will be played in four 12-minute quarters with a running clock, with two minutes between quarters and five minutes between halves. Time will be kept by game officials. Coaches will be notified of 2-minute warning during the 2nd and 4th quarter. At the two-minute warning the clock will be stopped. A 30 second play clock will be in effect for all age groups. Each team is allotted 2-time outs per half. Time outs will stop the clock.
- C. NO ONE except HPR and RCPR vetted personnel with lanyards and trainers may walk the sidelines between the 25-yard lines.
- D. If any coach is flagged for unsportsmanlike conduct, the coach will be ejected from the game. If a coach is ejected, they must immediately leave the facility. That coach will then be subject to a mid-week review by the one or both departments if necessary.
- E. All Senior Tackle Coaches will remain on the sidelines.
- F. All teams will abide by the player participation rules.
- G. The league will secure officials for all scheduled games.
- H. Both teams are responsible for towels for games during wet conditions.
- I. **The Home team must furnish a chain crew which consists of two linesmen, and one downs man for each game. No one under the age of 16 will be allowed.**

- J. Equipment must be returned to the HPR Department at the last regular season game. Staff will collect and check off players that have returned their equipment. If equipment is not returned, an equipment replacement fee will be applied, and future participation in Department programs will be suspended.
- K. Any player who is bleeding may not participate until bleeding has stopped or is covered.
- L. Anytime a coach or trainer is called on the field for a head, neck or back injury to a player, the injured player will not be allowed to return to play for that day. Any injury to the head, the player will not be allowed to return until cleared by a medical doctor.
- M. Mouth pieces must be attached (if so designed) to the helmet.
- N. NO stickers or tape are allowed on helmets except the players name on the back of the helmet.
- O. Parent or team videos will not be recognized as a form of review on any play or decisions made by game officials or parks and recreation staff. Any videos of practices or games are for personal use only.
- P. **No protests will be allowed.**

Special Teams:

- A. There are no kickoffs in the Senior Tackle League. The game begins and restarts after a score with the ball on the 30-yard line. When mercy rule is in effect, the team that is ahead by 28+ points shall start at the 20-yard line.
- B. The punt is introduced, but no rush is allowed.
- C. The offensive team must declare that it is punting to alert the defensive team to not rush and to allow the defensive team to assign returners.
- D. The formation for return teams is nine players at the line of scrimmage and two deep safeties.
- E. There are no fake punts. A team that has declared to punt may alert an official and the defense that it has changed its mind. A team that declares its intention to punt then runs a play will be penalized for illegal formation.
- F. A team that fails to declare and punts the ball is also penalized for illegal formation.
- G. The punted ball **may not be returned** for yardage by the receiving team. The play is blown dead and the ball spotted where the receiving team either fields the punt, the ball rolls to a stop or the ball goes out of bounds.
- H. The kicking team shall not cover the punt nor send players downfield as the punt team is voluntarily giving up the ball.
- I. With no punt coverage, there are no muffed or fumbled punts. Receiving team players are encouraged to develop the skill of catching a punt as fielding the kick may keep it from rolling further downfield.
- J. **Following a touchdown, teams can go for a Point After Touchdown (PAT), 1-point try from the 3-yard line or a 2-point kick from the 3-yard line.**
- K. The offensive team must declare that it is kicking the PAT to alert the defensive team to not rush.
- L. PAT's are snapped from the 3-yard line with the holder and kicker placed at the kicking team's discretion.
- M. There is no defensive rush allowed on a kicked PAT. Defensive players must remain behind the line of scrimmage but may jump and waive their arms to distract the kicker or block the ball.
- N. There is no return of a miss PAT or field goal regardless of whether it crosses the line of scrimmage or not. A missed field goal that reaches the end zone is spotted at the 20-yard

- line for the new possession. A ball that does not reach the end zone is spotted at the 30-yard line or the previous line of scrimmage, whichever benefits the new team in possession.
- O. As with the PAT, field goals also have the no rush and no return rule in place. A defensive player who crosses the neutral zone once an offensive team has declared its intention is flagged for encroachment.
 - P. All special team plays must have a long snapper. It is at the coach's discretion for how long that snap is to the punter or holder. The punter and holder can set up as far back as the kicking team chooses. However, the punter must initiate the kick from the spot where he or she secures it. (For example, if a snap goes over the punter's head, and the punter secures the ball 10 yards behind where he or she first set up. The punter must make a standard two- or three-step punt from that spot). In turn, a holder must recover an errant snap and return it to the block where it was originally set.
 - Q. Once the ready for play whistle has been blown, a kicking team has the regular 30-second play clock to either punt or place kick. The play clock continues to run in the instance of a punter, kicker or holder chasing down an errant long snap. If the play clock runs out, the ball will be spotted at the place where the punter has the ball and awarded to the other team.

Offensive Adjustments:

- A. Played by standard VSHL rules with the following exception:
 1. No blocking below the waist by any player anywhere on the field.
 2. Only 1 offensive player may go in motion. There are NO pre-snap shifts allowed on offense.
 3. No Huddle - An offensive team may use a no huddle offense, but the defense must be given time to line up before the ball can be snapped (exception is the last two minutes of the game)

Defensive Adjustments:

- A. Played by standard VSHL rules with the following exceptions:
 1. At least 1 safety at a minimum of 10 yards depth. (Exception is when the ball is inside the 10-yard line, the safety may have feet on the goal line)
 2. All linebackers have to line up at least 3 yards from the line of scrimmage (exception is when the ball is inside the 3-yard line). Then linebackers may have their feet on the goal line.
 3. All defensive linemen must be in a 3-point or 4-point stance and cannot line up wider than the outside foot of the offensive tackle or tight end.
 4. **NO PREDETERMINED BLITZING ON DEFENSE IS PERMITTED!**
 - a. **Exception:**
If the quarterback leaves the pocket (tackle to tackle box), defensive players may cross the line of scrimmage and tackle the quarterback behind the line of scrimmage.

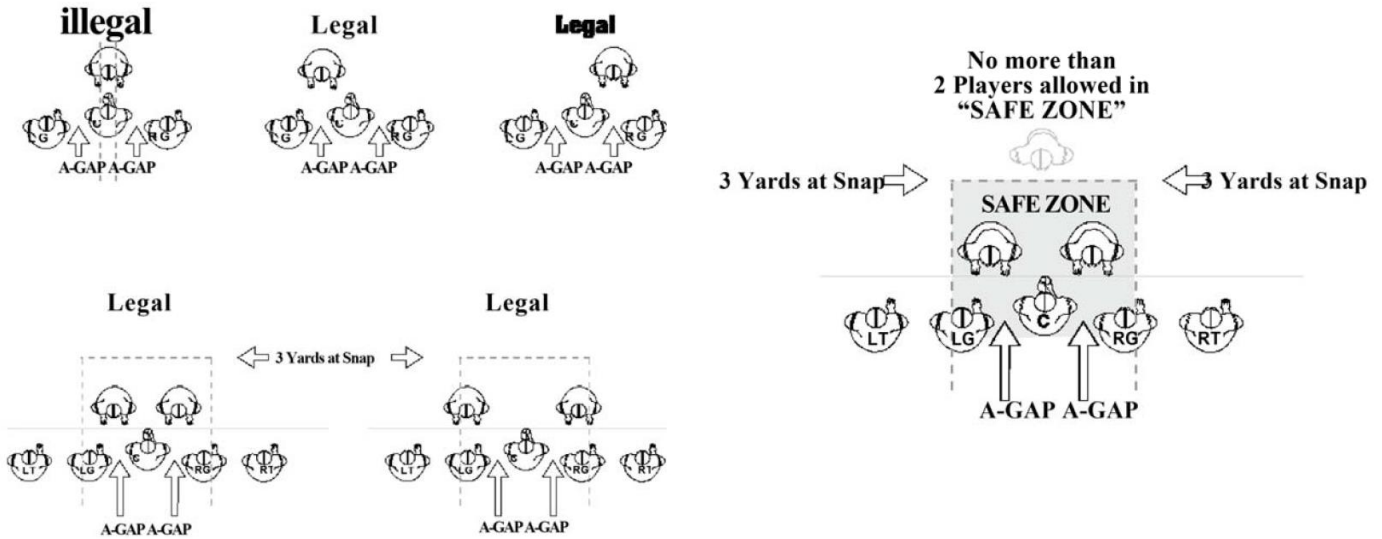
Mercy Rule:

- A. Once a team goes up by 28 points, we will implement the following:
 - 1. The team winning by 28+ points will not have any additional scores added to their total, until the losing team gets within 28 points (ex. Team A is up 28-0, team A scores again, the score remains at 28-0. Team B scores the score will be 28-7. Team A scores again the score will be 35-7).
 - 2. HPR will expect teams to distribute the offensive touches to other players on the team. HPR staff will remind coaches of this rule during the game.

ARTICLE XI: PLAYER POSITIONING

- A. These special defensive alignment rules provided are to create player safety and allow conditions for majority of offensive plays to be initiated beyond the quarterback/center exchange. All coaches are expected to abide with both the spirit and intent of these alignment rules.
 - 1. The “Safe Zone” is defined as “head-up” on right guard to “head-up” on left guard from the line of scrimmage to 3 yards forward at the snap.
 - 2. The defense is limited to two down linemen in this “Safe Zone” but no player may line up on the offensive center’s head on any snap.
 - 3. All standing players must be outside of this zone (Exception: Goal-line – see below illustrations).
 - 4. Defensive lineman will not be allowed to line up “head-up” with the offensive center. The player and coach will first receive a warning if in a stance “head-up” over the offensive center. If this continues the team may be flagged for illegal formation.

Lining up on Center Examples



ARTICLE XII: PLAYER PARTICIPATION RULE (SENIOR)

- A. If a team has a game day roster of 25 or more players, no skill position player is allowed to start both ways on consecutive drives. At the **CHANGE of ANY** possession, all skill players that were on the field **MUST** come off the field and be exchanged with new players that were on the bench. Offensive linemen/defensive linemen may stay on the field but must remain in either offensive linemen or defensive linemen position. A substitution of a skill player may only take place if the player on the field is physically unable to play (ex. injury) or has been on the field for at least 3 consecutive plays.
- B. Each player on the roster needs to participate in **12 plays** (offense/defense/or a combination) during the game if the player has attended practices regularly during the week prior to the game.
- C. Make sure that if a player is taken off the field for an injury that someone is monitoring them for when they are ready to return.
- D. No coach can deviate from these rules and “invent” substitution patterns or specialty packages for whatever reason(s).
- E. **It is the responsibility of the parents and players to attend practice. Players are required to attend at least 2 (two) practices to be able to participate in a game.** If a player is absent from practice, they are not guaranteed any playing time during a game. It is the head coach’s responsibility to document missed practices and communicate with HPR and RCPR Athletics Staff by Friday before the game if a player will be held out of a game.
- F. HPR and RCPR Athletics Staff expect all coaches and commissioners to monitor these rules for compliance. Should a situation develop where a violation of these rules is detected, you are obligated to immediately notify all concerned. HPR and RCPR Athletics Staff are required to report violations on their field reports.
- G. The Player Participation Rule is **NOT** the responsibility of the game officials.

The main objective of our Football league is to introduce the sport of football to the youths of the City of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County in an environment that will foster continuous involvement in athletics. Emphasis should be placed on creating a fun environment that allows for improvement in the safest way possible.

If you find yourself looking at this to find loopholes, you are not living up to the spirit and intent of the rules and you are violating the Code of Conduct.