

KALAMAZOO

VALLEY

ROCKET

FOOTBALL

LEAGUE

RULE BOOK

UPDATED August 2023

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THE KVRFL WILL ABIDE BY THE MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (M.H.S.A.A.) PLAYING RULES FOR FOOTBALL WITH THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONS AND OR EXCEPTIONS:

**Rule 1. Sign Ups**

- A. The regional director will make every effort to publicize sign ups in their respective towns i.e. mailings, flyers, school announcements, newspaper ads, etc. Signups can remain open until August 15. The individual directors may elect to extend this date for their particular program. (Please see D.)
- B. Collection of signup fee and initial weigh-in will be the responsibility of each regional director.
- C. The league director for each organization will be responsible for verifying the age of each participant prior to the league scheduling meeting each season.
- D. Late sign ups can be allowed up until the first game or September 18, whichever comes first. All late sign ups must have the minimum practices completed (conditioning and contact) before being eligible for their first game. EXAMPLE: If a player were to sign up the week before the first scheduled game he/she must have 4 conditioning practices and 3 contact practices thus, making him/her ineligible for at least the first game. This rule should be explained to any player and parent before they decide to sign up late. PLEASE SEE RULE 5.
- E. The KVRFL recommends a recent doctor's physical examination for all players before participation.
- F. Players MUST be a resident of the school district or attend the public school in the city they will play for, unless waived by the KVRFL board of directors.

Eligibility for Kalamazoo Hackett and Kalamazoo Christian will be defined as follows:

- 1) students attending those schools (regardless of residence)
- 2) students attending private schools or home schooled in a city where a KVRFL team is located. Including the Kalamazoo and Portage area.

- G. The maximum number of players on a team can be 36. You must split your team when you sign up your 37<sup>th</sup> player. It is up to each regional director's discretion on a team with 30-36 players being split. The KVRFL board of directors must approve any deviation from this rule.
- H. When an age group splits into one or more teams, every effort should be made to ensure that each team contains an equal number of players. The regional director must have final approval of all team splits with consideration given to balancing the competitive factors, skill, experience, weight, and age group as equally as possible.
- I. The regional director must be able to provide a list of eligible players with age, weight and player's number for all age groups. These lists must be available at all games.

## **Rule 2. Grade Groups and Weight Restrictions**

- A. A player's grade for the current school year shall determine their grouping for the season in the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grade and the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade groups. However, a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader who turns 8 prior to September 1<sup>st</sup> will be eligible to play in the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grade group. If a player is 10 years old as of September 1<sup>st</sup> and in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade they may play in the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade group or choose to remain in the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grade group. If a player is 12 years old as of September 1<sup>st</sup> and in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, they may play on the 7<sup>th</sup> grade team, or choose to remain on the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade team. If a player is in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and will turn 14 before January 1<sup>st</sup> of the next year, they will be required to move up to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade team. If a player is in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade they must play on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade team but they cannot turn 15 before the end of the season. No exceptions!
- B. Players will be divided into four age divisions:
  - 1. 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Graders (2<sup>nd</sup> grader who is 8 by Sept 1)
  - 2. 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Graders (10 year olds in 4<sup>th</sup> grade) optional
  - 3. 7<sup>th</sup> Grade (12 year olds in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade) optional
  - 4. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade
- C. Weight restrictions for each age group are listed below. If a player exceeds the weight limit in their grade group they will still be allowed to participate. The "restricted" player must follow the guidelines (Rule 3), which are spelled out for each of the specific age groups. No player will be excluded from playing if they exceed the weight limits. The regional director, field director or an assistant from the home team before each game will weigh each player in their full uniform **without** their helmet. Failure to weigh could be cause for a forfeit and or suspension.

1. 8 & 9 year olds.....100 pounds
2. 10 & 11 year olds.....145 pounds
3. 7<sup>th</sup> Grade.....No weight restrictions
4. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade.....No weight restrictions

### **Rule 3. Guidelines for Restricted Players**

- A. Restricted players must be identified at the pre-game weigh in. A two-inch piece of red tape (or larger) must be applied to the front of the restricted players helmet for identification purposes.
- B. 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Grade – 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade
  - Restricted players must play tackle to tackle in down line positions only. Clarification: Tackle to tackle is defined as two positions to the left and two positions to the right of the center. The third player outside the center will be defined as an end and must be unrestricted.
- C. Restricted players are not allowed to play on Kickoff and Kickoff receive Teams. If this rule prevents a team from fielding the proper number of players (11), then the opposing team must reduce their number of players to that of the team who has less than 11 players. They may play on punt and punt receive teams, but only in their down lineman positions tackle to tackle. They will not be allowed to punt. A restricted player on defense MAY advance a fumble or an interception. No restricted player on offense may carry or advance the ball at any time. Therefore, no fumblerooski, tackle eligible, etc.
- D. Restricted players will not be allowed to “pull” from an offensive down lineman position in order to lead block outside of the offensive tackle positions on a run from scrimmage. Restricted players will be allowed to “Trap Block” as long as it is done between the two offensive tackle positions.
- E. The illegal use of restricted players will result in a 15-yard unsportsmanlike penalty. A second offense involving the same player will result in that player being ejected from the game and suspended from the next game. The coach will also be ejected from the game and suspended from the next game. If such an occurrence should happen the last game of the year, the coach will be put on probation for the following year and that town’s program shall be put on probation for the following year.

## Rule 4. Equipment

- A. All player equipment must be regulation equipment as defined by the M.H.S.A.A. rule book. Helmets must be NOCSAE approved.
- B. Football sizes for each of the four age groups will be as follows:
  - 1. 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Pee Wee
  - 2. 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Junior
  - 3. 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Intermediate
- C. A turf shoe is recommended but shoes with rubber-molded cleats are acceptable as long as the cleats do not exceed ½ inch in length. Screw-in football cleats are ALLOWED.
- D. Mouth Guards must be attached to the Face Mask of the helmet.

## Rule 5. Practices and Scrimmages

- A. No player will be allowed to participate in practices or games without turning in a registration form, which must be signed by their parent or guardian.
- B. No practice sessions shall be held prior to FOUR WEEKS before the first scheduled game. There will not be more than 14 practices before the first game. The first week of practice **must be without contact**. Players must attend 4 conditioning practices before they are allowed to practice in pads and participate in contact drills. Helmets may be worn during conditioning week, but **no pads**. There will be no more than 10 practices or less than 6 practices allowed during the three-week contact period before the first game. **Note: During the first week of conditioning if you allow players to wear helmets, be sure that ALL of your players are wearing helmets as to reduce the risk of injury.**
- C. No Saturday or Sunday practices. Exception: The first Saturday after contact practice begins is available for scrimmages and or practice. Any team activity on this day will count against the 14 allowed practices.
- D. Maximum practice time is 2 Hours. Including warm-ups, stretching and scrimmages
- E. After the first game, no more than 3 practices or less than two per week. This includes scrimmage time. **Per MHSAA rule, no team may have more than 30 minutes of contact practice per week after the first game.** Contact is defined as game speed player on player contact.
- F. All players who sign up late must have a minimum of 4 conditioning and 3 contact practices before being allowed to participate in any game or scrimmage.
- G. No Scrimmage shall be held prior to the first Saturday after contact practice begins.

- H. All games and scrimmages must be against KVRFL teams in the same grade division. No exceptions.

## **Rule 6. Game Schedules**

- A. Scheduling of games will be set by the board of directors no later than one week prior to the first game.
- B. No one will have to play games against teams from their own town.
- C. All games will be played on Saturday. Make up games will be added to the end of the season and must have a minimum of three days between games.
- D. Tentative starting times for games will begin at 9:00 A.M. and continue every 1 ½ hours. Games will begin with the 8<sup>th</sup> graders, then the 7<sup>th</sup> graders, then the 10 & 11 year olds, and finish with the 8 & 9 year olds. If night games are played, start with the 8 & 9 year olds and finish with the 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Exceptions can be made with the consent of the area directors of the teams involved.
- E. Weigh-in will occur ½ hour before each game or at half time of the proceeding game. EVERY player must be weighed in regardless of size. Any player who is not properly weighed in will be ineligible for that game. Each team is entitled to have a coach representative at the weigh-in of an opposing team. If a team has already been weighed-in without proper notice to the opponent, a forfeit can be issued to the team not properly notified.
- F. In order to adhere to the game schedules, the hosting regional director has the right to use a continuous clock to catch up to the established game schedule. If the field director is going to use a running clock it must be done at the start of a game, and with notification made to both coaches.

## **Rule 7. Coaches**

- A. Regional directors will be responsible for screening and selection of coaches for their respective teams. All coaches and volunteers must complete a background check conducted by their league.
- B. Coaches along with their players must remain in their designated areas along the sidelines.
- C. There will be an automatic 15-yard penalty for any member of a coaching staff that enters onto the playing field and interrupts the game's progress.
- D. Before each game, each team will designate a "Head Coach" that will be responsible for any discussion with the officials. This is the ONLY person

from each team allowed to communicate with the officials.

- E. Coaches and their staff will abide by all KVRFL rules and will keep the best interest of their players in mind at all times.
- F. The use of profane language or abusive behavior will not be tolerated.
- G. Coaches will assist Regional Directors in controlling their spectators. Spectators must remain in the stands or at least 30 feet from the sidelines.
- H. No More than five coaches will be allowed on the sidelines.
- I. Each league director will be responsible for verifying the age of each participant in their respective leagues, and that each player has been assigned to the proper age division per rule 2.B. The respective league directors will attest that their rosters comply with Rule 2.B.

## **Rule 8. Officials**

- A. It is the responsibility of each Regional Director to schedule and compensate officials for their home games. It is also the regional director's responsibility to educate the game officials as to KVRFL rules, i.e restricted players, courtesy rule, etc.
- B. The KVRFL recommends that two officials be used: a minimum of one M.H.S.A.A. registered official is required. No High School students are allowed to officiate unless they are involved with the M.H.S.A.A. Legacy Program.
- C. Only the head coach of each team will be allowed to talk to officials.

## **Rule 9. Game Rules**

- A. A regulation high school playing clock will be used.
- B. Four 14 minute quarters with a 10-minute rest at half time will be used for all grade groups. The clock will run continuously with the exception of time outs including during kick offs, PAT's, incomplete plays and out of bounds. The referee will have the discretion to stop the clock for injuries or equipment issues or any other reasons he/she deem necessary. However, they do not have to stop the clock for these issues.
- C. Each team is entitled to 3 one-minute time-outs in the first half, and 4 one-minute time outs in the second half.



- D. KICK OFF. For 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade teams, there will be no kick off. The team that wins the coin toss can elect to take the ball or defer to the second half. The ball will be placed on the team who is taking possession's 40 yard line and play will begin. After a score, the ball will be placed on the 40 yard line of the team who just gave up the score and play will begin. After a safety the team that scored the safety will take possession of the ball on their own 40 yard line, and play will begin. For 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teams a regulation kick off will begin each half and will take place subsequent to each score.
- E. Each team must have a 3-minute warm-up period at the beginning of the game and at the start of the second half. This will be part of the 10 minute half time.
- F. Home teams are to supply emergency medical care.
- G. A 100-yard regulation high school field will be used for all grade groups.
- H. There will be no overtime games.
- I. No communication devices allowed on the sideline for competitive advantage. Cell phones allowed for emergency purposes only!
- J. Every attempt should be made to ensure equal playing time among players. Each player will be required to play a minimum of 10 plays per game. It will be every coach's responsibility to abide by this rule. Regional Directors will monitor its adherence. Violations may result in coaches being suspended based on KVRFL board of directors recommendation. **NOTE: It is the right of every Regional Director to set up guidelines for their own programs as far as an eligibility of a certain player based on missed practices, etc. The head coach should let the opposing coach know before the start of a game if he has a player present, that for whatever reason, will not be playing the required plays.**
- K. In the event that a team chooses to "Take a knee". The Coach must declare to the referee that the quarterback will be kneeling down. If the opposing team makes contact upon the snap of the ball, or the offense then runs a play other than kneeling down, an unsportsmanlike conduct personal foul penalty will be called. This penalty will result in the ejection of the offending teams coach from the game. This penalty will also result in the coach's ejection from the next week's game.
- L. If a team is trailing by **more** than two scores ( 16 points ), they have the choice to take possession of the ball on their 40 yd line **or** receive a kick off following a score by the opposing team. The trailing coach should make this declaration to the referee prior to the teams lining up for a kick off. (7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade only)

- M. Point After Touchdown (PAT). After a touchdown has been scored the scoring team will be allowed to attempt a PAT. The scoring team can attempt a play from scrimmage (run or pass) from the designated yard marker. If the PAT attempt is successful, they will receive 2 additional points. The scoring team may elect to attempt a kick in lieu of a play from scrimmage. If the scoring team elects to kick, they will declare that they are kicking, and a dead play will ensue with the ball spotted on the designated yard marker. The ball will be snapped and no players from either team will move with the exception of the snapper, holder and kicker. If the kick is successful 1 point will be awarded. A team MAY NOT fake a kick once they have elected to kick.

3rd & 4<sup>th</sup> grade teams – No PAT kicks are allowed.

5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade teams – Must be able to execute snap, hold and kick

8<sup>th</sup> grade teams – live play

For 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade a team must be able to successfully complete the snap, hold and kick on their PAT. Ball must come cleanly to the holder, the holder must cleanly place the ball on the tee/block, and the kick must be through the uprights. The play will be blown dead if any of these portions fails. The defense may NOT rush, but can jump to attempt to block the kick. They may NOT continuously jump up and down and holler and scream in an attempt to distract the kicking team.

- N. The penalty for intentionally tackling a player via the “horse collar” will be 15 yards and an automatic first down. It will be the official’s discretion as to the intent of the play.
- O. Punt is live for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- P. The chain gang will set up on the home side of the field. The chain gang is to remain impartial and refrain from coaching during the course of the game. The field director can use their discretion to place the chain on the visiting side line.
- Q. All coaches and regional directors MUST understand that it is not necessary to run up scores on opposing teams. The KVRFL strongly believes that once a three-touchdown margin is achieved in a game, that all attempts are made to prevent the margin of victory from increasing. The pride and self-esteem of the opposing coaches and players must be honored at all times.
- R. The following recommended actions will be viewed by the KVRFL board of directors as attempts to keep the margin of victory at a minimum:
- Substitute freely
  - Allow players to run the ball who normally would not get to.  
Still abiding by RULE 3.

- Do not run sweeps, reverses, or any play outside if practical
- DO NOT PASS THE BALL
- Use time-outs only to reposition new players.

S.

## **Rule 10. Specific Rules of Play for the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grade Group**

- A. The defense cannot blitz the opposing team. Linebackers/DB's must remain 3 yards back from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap. The linebacker cannot cross the line of scrimmage between the two defensive tackles to make a tackle in the opposing team's backfield. This rule does not apply if the linebacker meets the ball carrier at the line of scrimmage and his momentum pushes the ball carrier back into the backfield
- B. All defenses must have 6 players on the line of scrimmage, no more, no less. All players must be in the down position except the defensive ends who can remain standing. The defensive front four must line up directly with their offensive counterparts. **EXAMPLE:** defensive tackle lines up head to head with the offensive tackle. Defensive guard lines up head to head with the offensive guard. No defensive player shall line up over the center or in the gap between the center and the offensive guard. **NOTE: This rule is to ensure a proper exchange from Center to QB, allowing the offense to execute a play.**

**Offensive Alignment.** – The offensive must have 7 men on the line of scrimmage. The players lined up as T G C G T cannot line up with a gap larger than their arms extended fingertips touching. TE and receivers may be spread out wide.

- C. On fourth down the offensive team can announce that they would like to punt. If a punt is declared, the ball will be moved forward 25 yards and the defensive team will take possession.

**NOTE:** This is not all-inclusive. **REMEMBER,** even though the KVRFL understands that winning is one of the objectives of the game, it is also believed that by adhering to the above recommended actions you can accomplish additional playing time for other players, while at the same time honoring the pride of the opposing team.

- D. Teams violating any of these rules will first be given a warning. Any further violations will result in 15 yard unsportsmanlike penalties.

The KVRFL feels very strongly about these specific rules governing 8 & 9 play. The 8 & 9 year-old program is about fundamentals, learning basic football skills, and having fun. Any coach who deliberately teaches otherwise will be up for immediate review by the KVRFL board of directors.

- E. Any coach ejected from a game will be subjected to a disciplinary review by the KVRFL Board of Directors, whom have the authority to accept the punishment suggested by the Regional Director or may impose additional sanctions.

### **Rule 11. 10-11 Punt rule.**

On fourth down the offensive team can announce that they would like to punt. If a punt is declared, the ball will be moved forward 25 yards and the defensive team will take possession.

### **Rule 12. Awards**

- A. Any awards given will be of equal value to all players.

### **Rule 13. Administration of Rules**

- A. No rules will be waived unless approved by a majority of the KVRFL board of directors.
- B. Rules may be amended at any board of directors meeting by a majority vote provided there is a quorum in attendance.
- C. Any coaching staff member who violates any of the KVRFL rules may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension for one year. Re-instatement will be made only after review and approval by the board of directors.
- D. A representative from each KVRFL program must be present at each meeting called by the KVRFL Chairman. If a KVRFL program has an unexcused absence at any meeting the chair will recognize this and the program will be on probation. In the event that a KVRFL program has a 2<sup>nd</sup> unexcused absence that program and its Directors will receive a punishment from the KVRFL Chairman, upon a vote from all presiding Directors. The punishment may include the community's expulsion from the league.

### **Rule 14. Procedures for Resolving Rules Violations**

Whenever a KVRFL rule is violated, the procedure below must be followed:

1. Notify opposing coach, game official, or regional director of the rule that has been violated.
2. If the violation involves the game official's judgment, then the call stands as is.
3. If the violation involves the opposing coach, (specifically the courtesy rule) then

you are to request an official's time out to speak with the opposing coach or field director. Every effort must be made to resolve the issue at that time.

4. If the same violation reoccurs then request that the regional director or field director from the home team resolve the issue.
5. If the same violation continues to occur then request your regional director to bring the issue to the next board of directors meeting.

**The KVRFL Board of Directors expects that all coaches will take the responsibility of abiding by the rules and to cooperate with opposing coaches and game officials in attempting to resolve any violations. The Board of Directors will not hear from any coaches or parents regarding violations unless the above procedure has been followed.**