Iowa Developmental Youth Football League

5th Grade Tackle Football Rules

**GENERAL LEAGUE RULES/GUIDELINES**

There will be no league standings kept throughout the year. This is a re-emphasis of the fact that this level is about learning skills/fundamentals/the game itself. Scores will be kept at the games but as mentioned – no transfer to league standings.

**The season: 6 weekends of play (1 scrimmage/5 games)**

**August 18: practices may begin.**

**Scrimmage Day: September 7 / Official Weigh In’s**

**September 14 – October 19: game weekends**

**Practice Rules/Guidelines:**

* Weeks 1&2: teams can practice no more than 4 times for 90 minutes.
* It is recommended that teams practice no more than 2 days in a row before taking a day off.
* The practices 1-2 are non-padded, practices 3-4 can be helmets only.
* The first full pad practice is week 2
* Week 3 - end: teams can practice 3x a week for 90 minutes.
* No practice can be held prior to the start date as determined by the governing board of the league. See below for contact rules
* It is recommended that time each night be spent on USA football blocking and tackling instruction with aligned drills.
* Contact Limitations for practice: no more than 30 minutes a week may be considered LIVE CONTACT drills or practice.
* Once games begin, it drops to 20 minutes a week in practice. Live Contact is defined as a drill or scrimmage situation in which a player is going full speed, there is game-like contact with another player, and there is no designated winner of the drill or play.
* The first practice following a game MUST BE a helmet only practice unless the first practice after a game is Tuesday or later. Then equipment can be worn.

Coaches in each community will determine the location of practice as determined by local league guidelines.

***Players will be spread throughout each community’s number of teams. Competitive balance will be the goal of this league. Any team or community that establishes an “all-star” team will have that team ineligible for participation until the changes have been made.***

All players at this level will be of the same grade. There will be no playing “up” or “down” by anyone. You play the grade you are in during that season.

With this level being the first to involve tackling, there will be weight limits in place for the skill players.

**All teams will complete a league approved and supervised weigh-in scrimmage weekend. If a player is not present to weigh-in at this time, they must have a doctor approved(signed) weight taken before they are allowed to participate. There are NO exceptions to this rule.**

QB-RB-WR-TE-WB must be 105 or under – anyone over will play on the line.

1. The Game
   1. Each game begins with captains from both teams meeting at mid-field for a coin toss. Visitors call the toss.
   2. The winner gets to choose offense or defense.
   3. The ball will be spotted on the 40-yard line at the start of any and all possessions by a team. Regardless of reason (change of possession, touchdown, start of the game, interception) the possession always starts at the 40-yard line.
      1. Teams will be able to gain a first down according to “normal” 10 yard to gain rules. Chains will be used to mark these first down lines to gain.
      2. Once the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to run their next play. There will be one delay warning given, the next time it will be a penalty.
      3. There is no need to punt on 4th down, as the ball would return to the 40-yard line on a change of possession. Therefore, all teams will be encouraged to run at least 4 plays each possession.
   4. The playing field will be 40 yards long and width will be the hash marks away from the marked sideline. (40x40 field)
      1. The field should run from the sideline closest to the bleachers to the far hash marks.
   5. Game will consist of four (4) 10 minute quarters with a continuous clock. The clock will run at all times except during the last 2 minutes of the game and after scoring a touchdown. There is an untimed 2-point conversion and the clock will start with the opponents next possession.
      1. Huddles will last no longer than 30 seconds. Penalty will be 5 yards if longer than this time.
   6. After a score, the scoring team is allowed a 2-point conversion play. During this play, the weight limitations on ball carriers is removed and any player can carry/throw/catch the ball.
   7. Each team is allowed two (2) 30-second timeouts/half.
   8. There are no kickoffs or kick returns.
   9. There will be a one (1) minute break between quarters.
   10. A maximum of 1 coach per team is allowed on the field during the game. They must not interfere with play. All other coaches are on the sideline during the game.
   11. Games will have 2 officials. These officials should be licensed football officials.
   12. Game Ball will be determined by league officials.
       1. 3rd/ 4th – Pee Wee size football
       2. 5th and 6th – Junior size football
2. Scoring
   1. Scoring will be as follows:
      1. Each team will keep the game score. They must mutually agree to score throughout the game. There will however, be no league standings kept or scores reported.
   2. Scoring will be as follows:
      1. Touchdown – 6 points
      2. 2-point conversion from the 3-yard line – 2 points

NOTE: After a score, the scoring team is allowed a 2-point conversion play. During this play, the weight limitations on the ball carrier is removed and any player can carry/throw/catch the ball.

* 1. In the event of a tie, the game ends in a tie. There will be NO overtime period played.

1. Equipment
   1. Each player will wear a protective mouthpiece.
   2. Each player will wear an approved helmet, shoulder pads, and integrated football pants as approved by the league.
   3. Football cleats, if worn, must be molded cleats. No screw in cleats.
2. Field
   1. 40 yards long and a width to the top of the numbers. Two (2) games on each regulation field will be held.
      1. Field should run from one sideline closest to the bleachers to the opposite hash.
      2. The far hash should be marked clearly with cones.
3. Players
   1. The game will be played with eight (8) players on offense and eight (8) players on defense.
   2. Players will play both offense and defense during a game.
   3. In 5th grade weight limits are in play. 105 lbs. or under can be ball carriers, anyone over plays on the line.
4. Substitutions
   1. The emphasis of this game is development and a great experience therefore each player will participate for a minimum of 15 plays. (the same process teams have used in the past in previous leagues)
      1. At the end of the third quarter, one coach from each team will meet at midfield and exchange play count sheets.
   2. Exceptions to playing time would be if a player has missed the majority of practice time leading up to the game or is coming off an injury.
5. Dead Balls
   1. The ball is considered “down” when any of the following happen:
      1. Ball carrier has been tackled.
      2. Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
      3. If a shotgun snap is dropped by the QB, he can pick it up and the play can continue but ONLY the QB can pick it up.
      4. The ball carriers knee hits the ground
      5. In the event of a fumble, and a recovery by the defense, the ball is blown dead and given to the recovering team at the 40. Fumbles, like interceptions, cannot be advanced.
6. Dead Clock
   1. The clock will not run
      1. After a touchdown and during a 2-point conversion.
         1. The clock will next start on the snap of the following possession.
      2. last two (2) minutes of the game
7. Tackling
   1. All the rules on tackling that are used in the 11-man game will be in place for the 8-man game as well.
   2. Penalties while tackling would include: (examples)
      1. Spearing
      2. Late hits out of bounds or after the whistle
      3. Blind side block – the “crack back” hit is no longer legal
      4. Any time a player lunges at another player who does not see him coming and initiates contact above the numbers. (targeting)
8. Formations
   1. Offensive formations must have five (5) of the eight (8) players on the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. (3 lineman and 2 receivers)
      1. NOTE: teams may only use league approved formations and defensive alignments in grades 3-4-5.
   2. Only one offensive player can be in motion but cannot run towards the line of scrimmage.
      1. When in motion-the defensive player will “chase” the offensive player when he goes in motion. The defense cannot “slide” to cover the motion.
      2. The ball must be snapped with the player in motion, he cannot motion and then reset or this results in an illegal formation.
   3. Defense must have two (2) players on the defensive tackles at the snap of the ball. They must line head up on the offensive guards on the line of scrimmage. They cannot “shade” outside or inside at any time. They can rush on the snap of the football.
      1. If the offense shows a TE/WB, the defender must align head up on that person and is treated like a defensive tackle. He would be allowed to cross the line of scrimmage.
9. Offense
   1. The offensive team must follow the formation guidelines provided by the league.
   2. All motions must be in accordance with the rules of football.
   3. Blocking is allowed and teams are recommended to use the USA football techniques of blocking as taught in practice. There will be no chop blocking.
      1. You are allowed to pull your lineman starting in 5th grade on traps or power plays.
      2. No lineman eligible for receiving a pass.
   4. The center must snap the ball between his legs.
   5. Weight restriction for ball carriers will be 105 lbs.

NOTE: After a score, the scoring team is allowed a 2-point conversion play. During this play, the weight limitations on ball carriers is removed and any player can carry/throw/catch the ball.

1. Defense
   1. The defense must follow the formation guidelines provided by the league.
   2. Defensive backs must be 5 yards off the ball, linebackers must be 5 yards off the ball and stacked behind the defensive lineman, and safeties must be 10 yards off the ball at the snap. Inside the 5 yard line this alignment moves to 2 yards.
   3. The defensive tackles will line up on the line of scrimmage and head up on offensive guards. There is no more 3-count for the defensive lineman in 5th grade and the defensive lineman are the only players on defense allowed to cross the line of scrimmage.
   4. No blitzing is allowed.
   5. Linebackers cannot cross the line of scrimmage at any time. They must track the ball and meet the ball carrier at the line of scrimmage.
2. Penalties
3. Will be implemented along the lines of regular penalties of the game of football.

**RULE REGARDING UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT OF COACHES:**

**The League regards poor and/or bad sportsmanship as unacceptable and completely intolerable. Coaches and players are expected and required to lead by example in constantly demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all players.**

The League has adopted a **'Zero-Tolerance Policy'** concerning coaches and players that display **Unsportsmanlike Conduct**. Coaches that are flagged by an official for the same will be subject to an **immediate, automatic, non-appealable expulsion from the game in which the infraction occurred**. This removal includes physically vacating the premises/venue where the game is being held and will be completed voluntarily by the offending coach. **(If the offending** **coach refuses to leave the venue, this will result in permanent league expulsion).**

In addition, the offending **coach will be subjected to an automatic one (1) game suspension**, which will be served at the next scheduled league game.

Players who are ejected from the game will miss the next 4 quarters that they are eligible to play. An ejection in the second quarter will result in missing the rest of that quarter, all of the second half, and the first half of the next game. They would be eligible to play in the second half of the game the following week. A second ejection would result in them being ineligible for the remainder of the season.

**RULE REGARDING SPORTSMANSHIP OF SPECTATORS:**

Spectators are required to demonstrate positive sportsmanship in respect to their players, opposing team players, parents, coaches and game officials. Spectators who are unable to demonstrate proper sportsmanship will be removed and/or be subject to **permanent league expulsion**.

Any game official, in an IDYFL league game, has the authority to remove a spectator from the premises of an IDYFL game if the official feels that this individual(s) is exhibiting inappropriate and unsportsmanlike behavior that takes away from the contest.

Approved/Updated June 2025