



Youth Tackle Football Coaches Handbook

Dedication

This handbook is dedicated to the hardworking volunteer coaches who make our football program possible. We appreciate the time, effort, and dedication you give to the children of Town of Ayden. The staff of Ayden Arts and Recreation Department offers many thanks for helping us provide this opportunity to the youth of our Town. We hope that you find this handbook helpful in your coaching endeavors.

Many Thanks!

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Mission Statement

The mission of Ayden Arts and Recreation Department is to provide high quality, diverse and accessible programs, services and facilities that enhance the quality of life for all ages, cultures, and abilities.

Philosophy

The game of football is just a game. The number one reason (well documented in a number of studies) children participate in youth sports is to have fun. If you take the fun out of sports, you take the child out of sports. It is detrimental to the player if there is too much pressure placed on them too early to achieve a result rather than simply experiencing the sheer joy of a youth game. As a coach you want to create a stress free relaxed environment for your team. Let your kids know that it is okay to make mistakes. Get to know your kids individually and determine what they need to be successful. For some kids it might be a specific skill. For others it might be encouragement or even something as simple as acknowledgment.

Ayden Arts and Recreation youth football is not about how many wins or losses are accumulated! Proper football development is achieved by children participating in age appropriate activities so that they are able to experience, comprehend, and execute the game as it relates to where they are in their cognitive development. It is achieved by all of the team members receiving equal playing time. It is achieved by teaching the skills, rules and vocabulary of the game. Finally, it is achieved by teaching sportsmanship. Learning about winning and losing, playing by the rules, and respecting an opponent are just as important as learning football skills.

The Ayden Arts and Recreation wants you to respect the game of football, respect the players, the opponents, the referee, and the parents. Go about your teachings in a thorough, positive, yet humble manner. Players should come out of their experience with the coach as better people and better citizens, not just better football players.

Role of the Coach

As a coach in youth sports, one must assume the responsibility of ensuring that each participant has an enjoyable and safe experience learning football. To fulfill these responsibilities, a coach must wear many different hats. Listed below are some prominent roles a coach may take on.

Facilitator

- Set up the conditions and environment for learning.
- Give only positive feedback (sarcasm and negativity should never occur).
- Encourage players to give each other positive feedback.
- Coaches should be enthusiastic, organized, patient, sincere, and fair.
- Practices should be conducted in the spirit of enjoyment and learning.
- De-emphasize winning and losing and emphasize sportsmanship and fun.
- Invite parents to help and participate.

Positive Role Model

- Work with all players equally.
- Treat each team member with equal regard and respect.
- Demonstrate respect for opponents, referees, parents, spectators, opposing coaches, and opposing players.
- Show respect and responsibility for the game of football.

Understand who you are coaching

- Children are not defined by chronological age only.
- Each child matures and develops at a different pace.
- Treat each child as a unique individual.
- All activities should be age appropriate.
- Recognize that kids participate for different reasons. Some may be there because their older siblings play and it is expected in their family that they play. Some may play because they have a parent that is a frustrated athlete and wants to live through their child. Some may play because all their friends do, and they want to be with them. Others may play because they love football.

“THERE IS NO GREATER GIFT THAN THAT OF A GOOD COACH”

Bruce Brown (Former college coach)

Coaches' Responsibilities and Guidelines

Coaches are role models for teaching the fundamentals of the sport, sport skills, tactics and sportsmanship. Coaches are responsible for their personal conduct and behavior, as well as, the conduct and behavior of players. Coaches are required to follow the Ayden Arts and Recreation Department guidelines at all times. A coach who does not follow the guidelines provided by the Ayden Arts and Recreation Department will need to meet with the Arts and Recreation Department Recreation Director in order to continue to coach. All volunteer coaches shall be "at will coaches," and may be discharged by the Ayden Arts and Recreation Department with or without cause. Only coaches who have been approved by the Ayden Arts and Recreation Department will be allowed to go on the field of play or court during practices and games.

Responsibilities and Guidelines

Coaches participating in Ayden Arts and Recreation Department youth sports shall:

- Be reliable, and on time. (The first to arrive and the last to leave...)
- Be responsible for distributing a game/practice schedule to parents/guardians prior to the beginning of the season.
- Have with you, at all practices and games, the Emergency Contact Information forms for each child on the team.
- Be responsible for making sure first aid kits are on-site at every practice and game. Ayden Arts and Recreation Department will supply these kits.
- Be responsible for ensuring players' parents/guardians are informed of changes to the game or practice schedule. This includes cancellations the day of the game or practice.
- Ensure that each player receives playing time in games according to Ayden Arts and Recreation Department policy on playing time. Equal participation in the program as a whole is the desired goal.
- Be responsible for communicating Ayden Arts and Recreation Department playing time policy as well as their own philosophy regarding playing time to parents/guardians & athletes prior to the start of the season.
- Have all players and team coaches shake hands after the completion of the game.
- Never play an injured or bleeding player. Think of the player first and not the team's final outcome.

- Conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times, and shall refrain from directing abusive or sarcastic language or gestures toward officials, other coaches or players.
- Serve as a role model for players and spectators.
- Ensure that Ayden Arts and Recreation Department equipment is accounted for, and maintained in usable condition and returned promptly at the end of the season.
- Leave facilities in the same or better condition than they were when the team arrived.

Coaches' Code of Conduct & Code of Ethics

I will honor the fact that youth sports exist for youth, not adults.

Expected Behavior:

- Maintaining a positive, helpful and supportive attitude.
- Exercising your authority/influence to control behavior of fans and spectators.
- Exhibiting gracious acceptance of defeat or victory.
- Accepting and adhering to all league rules and policies related to participation of adults and youth. Playing all players according to the equal participation rules established by the league and the follow the spirit of those rules.
- Fulfilling the expected role of a youth coach to adopt a "children first" philosophy.
- Allowing and encouraging the players to listen, learn and play hard within the rules.
- Placing emphasis on fun, participation and team.

I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child and other children involved.

Expected Behavior:

- Recognizing the differences of each child and treating each player as an individual while demonstrating concern for their individual needs and well-being.
- Encouraging all players, regardless of skill level, to be included as a member of the team.
- Recognizing that some physical tasks, drills and demands are not appropriate for all youth.
- Recognizing that youth may vary greatly in physical, social and emotional maturation and considering these factors when setting up competitions and when interacting with youth.

I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.

Expected Behavior:

- Establishing practice plans that are interesting, varied, productive and aimed at improving all players skills and individual abilities.
- Devoting appropriate time to the individual improvement of each player.
- Conducting practices of reasonable length and intensity appropriate for the age and conditioning of the players.

I will exercise good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players & officials at every game, practice or other sports event.

Expected Behavior:

- Adopting the position, teaching and demonstrating that it is our basic moral code to treat others as we would like to be treated.
- Abiding by and supporting the rules of the game as well as the spirit of the rules.
- Providing an environment conducive to fair and equitable competition.
- Using the influential position of youth coach as an opportunity to promote, teach and expect fair sportsmanship and fair play.

I will make sure all children play in a safe, healthy environment.

Expected Behavior:

- Maintaining a high level of awareness of potentially unsafe conditions.
- Protecting players from sexual molestations, assault, physical abuse and emotional abuse.
- Correcting or avoiding unsafe practice or playing conditions.
- Using appropriate safety equipment necessary to protect all players.
- Seeing that the players are provided with adequate adult supervision while under the coach's care.

I will insist that my team exercise good sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, fans, and other players.

Expected Behavior:

- Becoming knowledgeable, understanding and supportive of all applicable game rules, league rules, regulations and policies.
- Teaching and requiring compliance of these rules among players, so that with this understanding good sportsmanship can be maintained.
- Teaching techniques that reduce risk of injury to both the coach's own players and their opponents.
- Discouraging illegal contact or intentional dangerous play and administering swift and equitable discipline to players involved in such activity.

I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol. I will refrain from their use at all Ayden Arts and Recreation Department youth sports events.

Expected Behavior:

- Being alcohol and drug free at all team activities or in the presence of players.
- Refraining from the use of any type of tobacco products at all team activities or in the presence of your players
- Refraining from providing any type of alcohol, drug or tobacco products to any of your players
- Encouraging parents to refrain from the public use of tobacco products or alcohol at team activities.

I will place the safety and physical development of my players ahead of my personal desire to win.

Expected Behavior:

- Using appropriate language in appropriate tones when interacting with league officials, players, game officials, parents and spectators. *At no time is profanity acceptable.*
- Including all players in team activities without regard to race, religion, sex, body type, national origin, ancestry, disability, ability or any other legally protected classification.

- Treating all players, league officials, game officials, parents, and spectators with dignity and respect.
- Playing all players according to the equal participation rules established by the league and the playing by the spirit of those rules.
- Encouraging youth to participate in other sports and activities to promote all aspects of their development.
- Allowing reasonable absences from practices.

I will support other coaches and league officials.

Expected Behavior:

- I will back and support league officials and coaches when working with my players and parents. I will enforce league rules.
- If I have concerns or questions, I will direct them to recreation staff or coach at an appropriate time, not during a practice or game. I will not criticize another coach, an official, or a recreation staff in front of my players or parents.
- I will cooperate and offer assistance whenever I can.

I will remember that children play, referees call, fans cheer and coaches TEACH. Anytime someone steps out of their area of responsibility, a strain is created on every other areas involved.

Offense & Penalty

Coaches must conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times, and are, otherwise, subject to removal from coaching staff. No matter the situation, coaches must act with the upmost respect and integrity.

Coaches ejected from a game by an official will be immediately removed from the premises. Said Coach will serve a minimum one (1) game suspension. Each situation will be reviewed, and penalties will be issued on a case by case basis.

Minimum means the coach will receive at least the prescribed penalty depending on the severity of the offense. Maximum means this the highest penalty a coach may receive for that offense. Multiple offenses will result in the doubling of penalties and may result in suspension from coaching for the remainder of the season as well as in any other Ayden Arts and Recreation Department function.

Offense: Failure to follow established guidelines, rules, policies and procedures as applicable to related sport

Penalty: Not necessarily proceeded by a warning...immediate ejection, removal from the premises and a minimum two (2) game suspension.

- This includes regular season and tournament games.
- This includes coaching or assistance of any other youth sport teams.
- For coaches involved with multiple teams, the two (2) game suspension will not be lifted until the team in which the infraction occurred has been played.

Offense: Malicious obscene/profane/vulgar verbal abuse directed towards another individual.

Penalty: Not necessarily proceeded by a warning...immediate ejection, removal from the premises and a minimum of two (2) game suspension

- This includes regular season and tournament games.
- This includes coaching or assistance of any other youth sport teams.

- For coaches involved with multiple teams, the two (2) game suspension will not be lifted until the team in which the infraction occurred has been played.

Offense: Racist or other language that could incite a riot.

Penalty: Not necessarily preceded by a warning. Immediate removal from the premises and a minimum suspension of the remainder of the season with a maximum of two (2) years suspension will ensue.

- This includes regular season games, tournament games, practices, award ceremonies, and any other Ayden Arts and Recreation Department function.
- This includes coaching or assistance of any other youth sport teams.
- For coaches with players(children) in other sports. Will not be allowed attend any regular season games, tournament games, practices, award ceremonies until the sport in which the infraction occurred has had the season end.
- Coaches will be allowed to attend regular season games, tournament games, practices, award ceremonies as a parent. After the season has ended for the sport which the infraction occurred.
- Suspension coach will act as role model for other parents. Action such as negative cheering, coaching from the sideline, etc.... will result in immediate removal from the premises and suspension of the remainder of the season.

Offense: Physical aggression towards another; pushing, shoving, striking or touching another individual.

Penalty: Not necessarily preceded by a warning. Immediate removal from the premises and a minimum suspension of the remainder of the season with a maximum of five (5) years suspension will ensue.

- This includes regular season games, tournament games, practices, award ceremonies, and any other Ayden Arts and Recreation Department function.
- This includes coaching or assistance of any other youth sport teams.
- For coaches with players(children) in other sports. Will not be allowed attend any regular season games, tournament games, practices, award ceremonies until the sport in which the infraction occurred has had the season end.
- Coaches will be allowed to attend regular season games, tournament games, practices, award ceremonies as a parent. After the season has end for the sport which the infraction occurred.
- Suspension coach will act as role model for other parents. Action such as negative cheering, coaching from the sideline, etc.... will result in immediate removal from the premises and suspension of the remainder of the season.

Offense: Any violation of North Carolina law; possession of firearms, knives, explosive devices weapons or under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, controlled substances, chemical or drug paraphernalia; assault with or without a weapon.

Penalty Not necessarily preceded by a warning. Immediate removal from the premises and a minimum suspension of the remainder of the season with a maximum of eight (8) years suspension will ensue.

- This includes regular season games, tournament games, practices, award ceremonies, and any other Ayden Arts and Recreation Department function.
- This includes coaching or assistance of any other youth sport teams.
- For coaches with players(children) in other sports. Will not be allowed attend any regular season games, tournament games, practices, award ceremonies until the sport in which the infraction occurred has had the season end.

- Coaches will be allowed to attend regular season games, tournament games, practices, award ceremonies as a parent. After the season has end for the sport which the infraction occurred.
- Suspension coach will act as role model for other parents. Action such as negative cheering, coaching from the sideline, etc.... will result in immediate removal from the premises and suspension of the remainder of the season.

Youth Sports Players

A growing body of research literature finds that in addition to improved physical health, sport plays a primarily positive role in youth development, including improved academic achievement, higher self-esteem, fewer behavioral problems, and better psychosocial. Many studies focus on the effects of sport on the five “C’s” competence, confidence, connections, character, and caring, which are considered critical components of positive youth development. It has long been thought that the many facets of playing sport—the discipline of training, learning teamwork, following the leadership of coaches and captains, learning to lose, provide lifelong skills for athletes.

Four Truths about Children and Sports

- Fun is pivotal. If it isn’t fun, children will drop out of sports.
- Skill development is a crucial aspect of fun.
- Intrinsic rewards (self-knowledge that grows out of self-competition) are more important in creating lifetime athletes than are extrinsic rewards (victory or attention from others).
- The most rewarding challenges of sports are those that lead to increased self-knowledge, self-improvement, self-confidence, and self-esteem

Age Group Characteristics

Before you are able to effectively coach the children that have been entrusted to your care, you need to understand the characteristics of whom you are developing. It is imperative that you understand that when you are dealing with children that you take the time to comprehend where they are currently in their own development.

Ages 7 - 9

This is the stage where players begin to understand the concept of passing to a teammate.

From a physical standpoint they still lack a sense of pace and tend to exert themselves hard and then drop. They are now starting to develop some physical confidence in themselves and they are still into running, climbing, rolling and jumping.

From a mental perspective they feel if they tried hard then they performed well (regardless of the activity’s outcome). They are beginning to show a limited ability to tend to more than one task at a time.

From a social perspective they have a great need for approval from adults and like to show off individual skills. Negative comments carry great weight. Their playmates start to emerge and they will start to move towards small groups. They want everyone to like them at this age. You should be positive with everything that you do.

Ages 10 – 12

Children at this age are on the edge of childhood and adolescence. It can present a multitude of problems, but also an abundance of potential.

From a physical standpoint strength and power become a major factor in their performance. Their muscles mature and they realize how much more they can do on the court. Their coordination significantly improves and it shows up in the execution of a child's technical ability.

From a mental perspective they can sequence thoughts and perform complex tasks. A coach can expect his players to understand the game and use teammates to solve problems. They are usually eager to learn.

From a social perspective whether a child enters puberty early or late is significant. Girls tend to form cliques while boys take a more broad approach to team relationships. The manner in which they feel about themselves can determine how they relate to their teammates. Sometimes popularity influences self-esteem.

Ages 13 - 16

From a physical standpoint they are experiencing many physical changes. They are entering puberty where boys' voices are changing; they are experiencing a growing spurt.

From a mental perspective they are expanding to include more abstract thinking. They are beginning to understand cause and effect and are ready for more in-depth and more long-term experiences. They also like to set goals based on their needs and interests. They are also moving from fantasy to reality where their life goals or career are concerned.

From a social perspective a child at this age are transitioning into involvement with opposite sex groups. They are more interested in what their peers say than their parents' advice. They do search for adult role models outside of their parents

Youth Sports Players Playing Time and Practice Requirements

Playing Time

To foster enjoyment and personal development for all players participating in team sports, the Ayden Arts and Recreation Department expects coaches adhere to the following time requirements. League rules should be followed if the minimum playing time is greater than the Department requirement.

- Football: Every player must play at least 12 downs during the game.

After playing requirements are met, coaches will be encouraged to give players additional playing time. Equal playing time is encouraged.

Note: For more information about playing time, see the coach's handbook for that particular sport.

Practice Requirements

Ayden Arts & Recreation Department wants to insure that your athlete is safe while on the court or playing field. Youth sports of Ayden require athletes to attend practices that will allow them an opportunity for them to gain the skills needed to participate in their chosen sport safely. While the Department understands how difficult it can be to bring your child to practice, it is important to know that when athletes miss practices they are not only hurting their team and their coach, but, most importantly, themselves by not acquiring the necessary skills and understanding of the game.

Ayden Arts & Recreation has developed the following penalties for players missing practice:

Football:

- One (1) missed practice – will play minimum requirements
- Two (2) missed practices – two (2) plays during a game
- Three (3) missed practices – four (4) plays during a game
- Four (4) or more missed practices – eight (8) plays during a game

Players' Responsibilities and Expectations

Participation in youth sports programs can have a lasting and meaningful effect on children's lives. Therefore, it is the goal of the Ayden Arts and Recreation Department to provide the highest quality of athletic programs to ensure that a child's experience with sports is a positive one. It takes the cooperation of everyone involved, including the participant, to make this happen. The Ayden Arts and Recreation Department has established the following responsibilities for participants to adhere to:

- Players will listen to their coaches and be respectful of their elders.
- Players will take care of the facilities, equipment, and uniforms which they are given or participate in.
- Players will make sure to eat the right foods and drink plenty of water before and after practices and games.
- Players will avoid all types of taunting and belittling remarks to their teammates or opponents.
- Players will show good sportsmanship at all times, win or lose.
- Players will not make sports a priority over schoolwork or family.
- Players will participate for the love of the game and social interaction with peers.

Players Code of Ethics

Players are expected to conduct themselves in a positive manner regarding their youth sports experience and accept responsibility for their participation by following the Players Code of Ethics Pledge:

- I will encourage good sportsmanship from fellow players, coaches, officials, and parents at every game and practice by demonstrating good sportsmanship.
- I will attend every practice and game that I can, and will notify my coach if I cannot.
- I will expect to receive a fair and just amount of playing time.
- I will do my very best to listen and learn from my coaches.
- I will treat my coaches, other players, officials and fans with respect regardless of race, gender, creed or abilities, and I will expect to be treated accordingly.
- I deserve to have fun during my sports experience and will alert parents or coaches if it stops being fun!
- I deserve to play in an environment that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and expect adults to refrain from their use at all youth sporting events.
- I will encourage my parents to be involved with my team in some capacity because it's important to me.
- I will do my very best in school.
- I will remember that sports are an opportunity to learn and have fun.

Offense & Penalty

Players may not conduct themselves in an unsportsmanlike manner at any time and may be removed from the league if they do. Regardless of the situation, we expect our players to act with the upmost respect and integrity in any scenario.

Offense: Failure to follow established guidelines, rules, policies and procedures as applicable to related sport.

Penalty: Not necessarily proceeded by a warning...immediate ejection, removal from the premises and a minimum One (1) game suspension.

Offensive: Malicious obscene/profane/vulgar verbal abuse directed towards another individual.

Penalty: Not necessarily proceeded by a warning...immediate ejection, removal from the premises and a minimum one (1) game suspension. This includes regular and tournament games, practices, award ceremonies or any other Ayden Arts and Recreation Department function(s).

Offense: Physical aggression towards another; pushing, shoving or touching another individual.

Penalty: Not necessarily proceeded by a warning...immediate ejection, removal from the premises and a minimum one (1) game suspension. This includes regular and tournament games, practices, award ceremonies or any other Ayden Arts and Recreation Department function(s).

Offense: Physical aggression towards another; striking or throwing a punch towards another individual.

Penalty: Not necessarily proceeded by a warning...immediate ejection, removal from the premises and could result in a maximum of one (1) year suspension. This includes all youths' sports regular and tournament games, practices, award ceremonies or any other Ayden Arts and Recreation Department function(s).

Offense: Any violation of North Carolina law; possession of firearms, knives, explosive devices weapons or under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, controlled substances, chemical or drug paraphernalia; assault with or without a weapon.

Penalty: Not necessarily proceeded by a warning...immediate ejection, removal from the premises and could result in a maximum of three (3) years suspension. This includes all youths' sports regular and tournament games, practices, award ceremonies or any other Ayden Arts and Recreation Department function(s).

Player Safety

As a volunteer coach you will have the care, custody, and control of someone else's children. In this capacity you have the potential to create and to prevent accidents and injuries.

- You must provide adequate supervision to your players. The health and safety of your team members are entrusted to your care. You must provide adequate supervision to avoid foreseeable accidents and injuries. NEVER leave players unattended! NEVER leave after a game or practice until all parents or guardians have arrived!
- Evaluate your players and determine any limitations that they may have. Be sure players are physically and mentally capable of performing the required skills. Evaluate injuries as they occur and determine if it is safe for the player to play.
- If any minor or major injuries occur, always fill out an accident report and give it to a recreation staff member.

Care and Prevention of Injuries

The first line of defense in the treatment of injuries is to prevent them. Factors that can prevent injuries are:

- The proper use of equipment
- No jewelry allowed
- Make sure there is ample water and rest periods
- Make sure players don't return too early from an injury

The care of an injured athlete should begin the moment an injury occurs. Immediate care will reduce the severity of the injury and possibility of long-term disability. Upon seeing an injured player on the court/field a coach should:

- Stay composed
- Determine if a player is conscious and coherent (if not, dial 911)
- Question the player in regards to the injury
- Avoid moving the player if it appears major in any way
- Inspire confidence and reassure the player
- Determine how the injury occurred

After determining that an injury is not life threatening, the nature of an injury can be further determined. Note the position of the injured part. Is it swollen or deformed? Compare the injury with the uninjured opposite body part. Do not move the injured part.

Injury Policy

Any participant injured, in either league sanctioned play or that outside of sanctioned play (non-league sanctioned), that requires medical attention will not be eligible to participate until the department (Ayden Arts & Recreation) receives signed medical release from doctor noting that the child is eligible to play or when they will be eligible to play with specific date.

This policy will be strictly enforced and is in the best interests of parents, participants, coaches Ayden Arts & Recreation, and all other involved parties.

PLANNING FOR THE SEASON

Holding a pre-season parent meeting is beneficial for the parents, players and coach. Take this opportunity to inform parents of the goals and expectations as outlined in the Youth Tackle Football Coaches' Manual.

Parent Orientation Meeting

All Coaches are encouraged to establish effective lines of communication with the team parents early in the season by holding a parent orientation meeting. This may take the form of a casual discussion at your first practice. The time you invest will pay dividends for all concerned throughout the season. If a meeting is impossible, then the following information could be put in a letter to parents/players. But, a face-to-face meeting is preferred.

Purpose of a Parent Orientation Meeting

- Enables parents to understand the objectives of the team.
- Allows parents to become acquainted with you, the coach.
- Inform parents about the nature (and inherent risks) of the sport.
- Articulate your expectations of them and of their children.
- Enables you to address any parents' concerns.
- Establishes clear lines of communication between you, parents, and players.
- Allows you to obtain parental support (assistant coaches, team parents, etc.).
- Designate a "Team Mom" to arrange a schedule for snacks and refreshments for each game.

Important Points to Cover

- Introduce yourself and assistant coaches (or ask for volunteers at this time).
- Give background information about yourself (why you are coaching, experience)
- Coaching philosophy
- Discuss the value of the sport and the health benefits to the children.
- Discuss the philosophy of age appropriate activities.
- State the importance you assign to having fun and developing technique.
- State how you evaluate player development through skills and not winning.
- Discuss any team rules and guidelines.
- Let them know that all players will receive equal playing time.
- Discuss how players must respect opponents, coaches, officials, and the game itself.
- Briefly discuss rules of the game.

Ayden/Winterville Football Rules

Age Eligibility:

A player's age as of September 1st the current year will determine the age group they participate in:

10U League: ages 8-10

13U League: ages 11 -13

Purpose:

The purpose of the Ayden /Winterville Youth Football Program is to provide a wholesome recreational activity for boys/girls ages 8-13 that will help them to build self-esteem and teach them the basic fundamentals of football.

The program is designed for the following purpose:

- To help players learn the basic skills of football.
- To help players develop self-discipline and build positive attributes such as teamwork, respect for authority and good sportsmanship.

Fields Rules and Sportsmanship:

- No alcoholic beverages are allowed on recreation property. This is a state law. If necessary, proper legal action will be taken to enforce this rule.
- A coach, player, or spectator with alcohol on their breath will be asked to leave the recreation area.
- No tobacco products—smoking, chewing, dipping, etc. are allowed on the field or spectator area.
- No profanity
- No negative cheering
- Children not participating must be under supervision by a parent/adult at all times. No children may be unattended at any time in any facility.

General Players Rule:

- No jewelry, watches or any accessory of hard materials may be worn during games.
- Shoes - Tennis shoes or molded sole shoes with multiple cleats are acceptable.
 - Cleats: Molded multiple cleats, studs or bars less than ½ inch in diameter or width that does not extend more than ½ of an inch from the sole and are not of an extreme conical design is permissible. Detachable fiberglass or steel-tipped cleats are not legal
- Mouthpieces are not required.
 - All players must have there mouthpiece attached and hanging from their facemask at all times. ALL MOUTHPIECES MUST BE OF COLOR (NOT CLEAR). Clear mouthpieces designed for braces will be allowed.
- Players must wear their team uniform for all games.

General League Rules:

Ayden/Winterville Recreation Department will utilize the National Federation of High School rules except as modified within:

- OFFICIAL BALL: League shall utilize the Wilson TDJ for all tackle football games.
- FIELD DIMENSIONS: The field will be 80 yards in length by 40 yards in width for 8-10 Division and 80 yards in length by 30 yards in width for 11-13 Division. First Downs will be 10 yards and penalties will be 5 and 10 yards. Hash marks will be painted 1 yard outside of the goal posts.
- EXTRA POINTS: Run—1 point, and Kick—2 points. Field Goal-3 points
- TIEBREAKERS: High school rules will be followed in the event of a tie. Each team will have four downs to score from the 10-yard line.
- TIMEOUTS: are awarded according to high school rules. 3 timeouts per half
- GAME CLOCK: All games will be played in four ten (10) minute running quarters, except during the last two (2) minutes of each half when regular timing rules will apply. The clock will also stop on official timeouts for injuries, charged timeouts, and after touchdowns. Halftime will be five (5) minutes. If a team is winning by 21 points or more the clock will continuously run except for timeouts and injuries.
- PLAY CLOCK: The league will utilize a 25-second play clock. First (1st) play clock violation will result in a warning. All subsequent play clock violations will result in a five (5) yard penalty.
- During last 2 minutes of each half (2nd & 4th quarters), play clock will begin on snap following delay of game penalty.
- PRESEASON MEETINGS: A coaches/staff/officials meeting will be held prior to the season to discuss rule changes and to avoid controversy.
- HOME TEAM: The Home team will be responsible for providing a chain crew. The Home side is the side closest to the concession stand.
- GRACE PERIOD: There shall be a ten (10) minute grace period for teams to obtain the minimum number of players required to start a game. Game will begin at any time, between scheduled start and end of grace period, if a team has the minimum number of players required. If grace period expires and a team lacks the minimum players required, said team shall forfeit game.

- ROSTERS: After two (2) weeks of the regular season, all rosters will be frozen. No more players will be allowed to be added, unless special circumstances arise.
- COACH: Four coaches per team will be allowed on the sideline.
- WEIGHT LIMIT: A **minimum** weight of 60 lbs. will be required for age's 8-13. Please refer to table below for position weight requirements. Players required to play offensive and defensive line will wear a black "X" on the back of the helmet. Players required to play offensive line only will wear an orange "X" on the back of the helmet. Any player with an "X" must play interior line (tackle to tackle).

	8-10 yr. olds	11-13 yr. olds	Notes
Skill Position	Max 115 lbs	Max 140 lbs	
O & D Line	116-135 lbs	141-155 lbs	Players shall display black "X" on helmet at all times
O Line Only	136+	156+	Players shall display orange/red "X" on helmet at all times
Minimum weight for 8-13 yr. olds is 50lbs			

Note:

Weigh-Ins: All players shall be weighed in at the time they receive equipment. Players will be weighed again the Thursday of practice prior to week of first games. At this time, if a player is within 5 pounds of a position class, shall be permitted one additional weigh-in. This final weigh-in will be Friday of the second week of games. All weigh-ins include shirt and shorts.

- PARTICIPATION TIME: Every player must play at least 6 downs per half for a total of 12 plays per game. 2 special teams' plays (only) will count towards the total number of plays. If a player does not play enough downs in a game because of some oversight, and the Recreation staff gets a complaint, someone (staff) will be assigned to count the number of downs that the player is involved with in the next game. If a coach does not let the player in on 12 downs in the next game, then that team will have a forfeit of the game.
- EJECTIONS: Any player or coach removed from a game for any penalty will have to sit out the rest of the game and complete next game. The player must be present and on the team bench at the next game before he can play in another game. The coach will not be allowed on (Ayden or Winterville) Recreation property until suspension is lifted.
- CONTACT PRACTICE: Once the game season begins, a team may not conduct practice involving player to player contact (i.e. hitting), one calendar after respective team's game day(s). This does not preclude teams from practicing, only prevents hitting.
- PLAYOFF: A playoff will be held directly after the regular season. Playoff brackets will depend on the number of teams participating. All regular season rules will apply during the playoffs. Playoff will be single elimination unless otherwise stated. Seating for the playoff will be determined by the regular season standings. If two teams have the same season recorded head to head play will determine the seeds. If head to head play is equal, then a flip coin will determine the seeds.

Division Rules

10U TACKLE FOOTBALL

8 - 10 years old: This league is to teach the fundamentals, skills, and team building.

Game Rules:

- Kick-Offs: No kickoff for 8-10 Division. Team on offense will start play with ball at 20-yard Line
- Defensive Line: A 6-man or less defensive line may be employed (does not include defensive ends outside of the offensive line). The defensive line includes down lineman within the tight ends. An 8-man line can only be used inside the 10-yard line. Interior lineman must be in a three or four point stance before and at the snap of the football.
- Offensive Line: Offensive linemen (including but not limited to guards) may not pull from the line of scrimmage to block in an area outside of their position.
- Linebackers: Linebackers who line up between offensive tackles must be a minimum of 2 yards off the defensive linemen. Outside of the tackles, linebackers may come up to the line of scrimmage in a standing position. Linebackers cannot be moving forward within 2 yards of the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. (PENALTY: 1st offense: warning; 2nd offense: 5 yards; 3rd offense: 10 yards)
- Nose Guard: The position of nose guard will not be utilized and is illegal.
- Punts and field goal/extra point: No rushing will be allowed. Punting: A miss handled snap will result in a dead ball and the opposing team will take over on the down and where the ball is ruled dead. Field Goal: A miss handled snap by the holder will result in a dead ball and a team will take over possession. The holder must be on one knee in a proper holding stance. No fake kicks, field goal or punt. Kicking intention must be declared to official on 4th down and extra point attempt in order to provide each team chance to remove players with "X" from field as necessary.

Note: If you are kicking a field goal or extra point you may use your black and orange/red "X" players. If you are receiving or kicking a punt then you may NOT use your black or orange/red "X" players due to contact with the other team. No black or orange/red "X" players may be utilized for kick-offs.

- Minimum players: A team must have at least nine (9) rostered players, in uniform, for game play to begin.

13U TACKLE FOOTBALL

11-13 years old: This league develops gross motor skill fundamentals and competitive play.

Game Rules:

- Minimum Players: The game is played with 8 offensive and 8 defensive players
 - The game must start with Seven (7) eligible players on each team.
 - No game may be played if a team cannot field seven (7) eligible players at game time.
 - It is not a requirement that the opponent play with seven players to compliment their opposition
- Offensive Formation: Must have a minimum of 5 players on the line of scrimmage (LOS) at the time of the snap.
 - LOS. The basic offensive line will consist of:
 - The three down linemen that are not eligible to receive a pass
 - The two Ends (uncovered Linesmen) who are eligible to receive a pass. They may be lined up in a tight formation or in a spread formation.
 - In a basic 5-man LOS formation, there will be 3 players in the backfield. All players who are backs must be clearly established behind the line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.
 - All backs are eligible pass receivers if they are legally behind the line of scrimmage at the snap.
- Defensive Line: A maximum of 5 players and a minimum of 3 players can be on the defensive line of scrimmage (LOS). The defensive line includes down lineman within the tight ends. Interior lineman must be in a three or four point stance before and at the snap of the football.
- Linebackers: Linebackers who line up between offensive tackles must be a minimum of 2 yards off the defensive linemen. Linebackers cannot be moving forward within 2 yards of the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. (PENALTY: 1st offense: warning; 2nd offense: 5 yards; 3rd offense: 10 yards)
- Punts and field goal/extra point: Kicking intention must be declared to official on 4th down and extra point attempt in order to provide each team chance to remove players with "X" from field. Fake kicks, field goal and punt, are allowed.

Note: No black or orange/red "X" players may be utilized for special teams.

Revise July 9, 2020