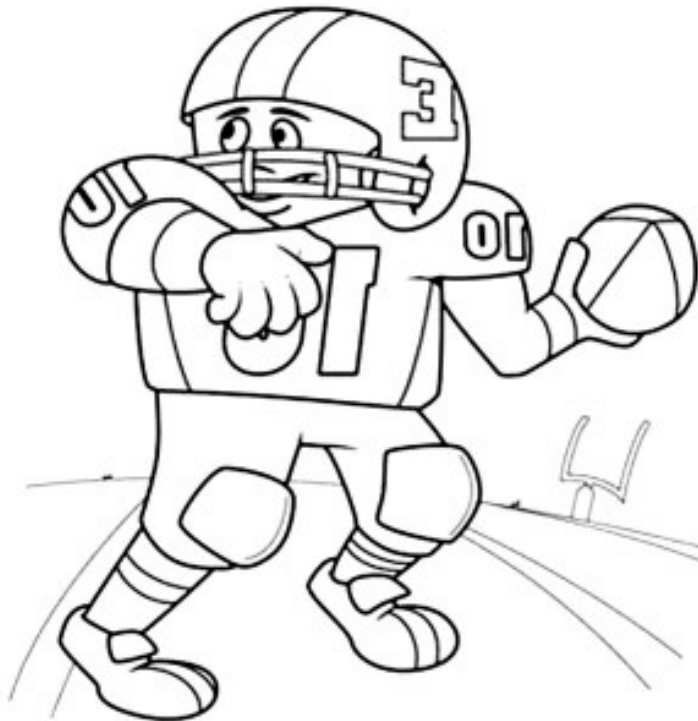




Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association

Handbook



Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

*** Please note that the VICFA is a 12 man league with a 9 man option and is ruled by the British Columbia Community Football Association and the Canadian Amateur Tackle Football Rulebook (CATFR) provided by Football Canada with the exception of our Handbook. Teams joining VICFA for league play will follow the VICFA Handbook regardless of rules specific to their Organizations as follows:*

League Fees:

All leagues will pay VICFA \$5.00/player no later than April 15 of the current season for offset costs of Championship Game costs i.e., trophies/medallions.

Referees fees will be paid to VICFA based on the scheduled home games billing to each club will be released one week after the schedule is finalized. Payment is due within 7 days to the VICFA Treasurer. In the event a game is forfeited the home organization will still be responsible to pay for the referees.

Season Information

Regular Season will start first weekend in April or and run until 2nd weekend of June

Playoffs will start the weekend following the last game of the regular season (highest seeded team as home field advantage for playoffs)

Championship weekend will be the weekend following play offs for both the Dogwood Bowl (Saturday) & VICFA Cup (Sunday) location determined at the beginning of the season

Playoff Format will be as follows:

- Top 8 Teams will make playoffs the winners of both playoff games will move forward to Championship weekend
- Top 4 will play off for VICFA Cup 1 vs 4, 2 vs 3
- Bottom 4 will playoff for Dogwood Bowl 5 vs 8, 6 vs 7

PLAY COUNT MONITORS

Monitors for Player Participation: each team will supply minimum of 2 individuals, called 'Play Counters'. One will monitor their own team and the other will monitor the opposing team, thus having 2 Play Counters working together per team, and recording the results on play counting sheets.

- The Play Counters will work with each team's coaching staff to ensure all players play the minimum number of plays per game according to the numbers outlined above.
- Play counting sheets will be forwarded to the game commissioner upon completion and sign off by Play Counters.
- The PPR rule will be officially monitored from the beginning of week 1 of the regular

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

season and through the playoffs.

DELAY OF GAME PENALTY

10 Yards for the Home team if the team does not have all volunteers; Play Counters, Stick Crew, Game Commissioner and Referees in place at Kick off time.

INJURED/HURT PLAYERS

- If a player is injured and is not expected to return to the game, the minimum play rule does not apply to the injured player.
- If a player is hurt (i.e. shaken up) and chooses to continue, then they return to the game and the team must comply with the PPR accordingly
- The Trainer must tell the play counters and the game commissioner that the player won't return to the game

GENERAL GAME RULES: AGE GROUPS

ATOM

- 15-minute quarters – running time; except for the last 2 minutes of the 2nd and 4th quarters, rulebook time per the Canadian Amateur Tackle Football Rulebook pg. 4 & 5
- No kick-offs, punts or field goals
- No Blitzing

Coaches on the field

One Coach allowed on the field on the playing field during play for the season. The coach shall not run with the play or shout instructions once the quarterback instructs the team to set. A bench warning will be assessed if this is not adhered to.

Scoring

- Touch down: 6 points.
- Extra Point: 1 point for the run, 2 points for a forward pass, 2 point for kicked convert; a failed extra point by an interception or fumble recovery cannot be run back by the defense.

3rd Down

Offence can either go for it on 3rd down, or “punt”, by having the game officials move the ball up field 25 yards from the last line of scrimmage

Play Clock

25 second will be allowed to get the ball in play. Referees will give the offensive team a 10 second warning when the play clock is winding down.

Half-time - 10 minutes

Time Outs

Each team will be allowed two time outs per half. Only a player on the field or the head coach may request a time out. If a coach calls a third time out, at the referee’s discretion he may penalize the team of 5 yards with the down repeated.

Field

Standard sized field – 110 yards in length – as close as possible, 65 yards in width
9 man field size – 110 yards in length – as close as possible, 50 yards in width

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

Football

Wilson Size 5 K2

PEE WEE

- 15 minute quarters – running time; except for the last 2 minutes of the 2nd and 4th quarters, rulebook time per the Canadian Amateur Tackle Football Rulebook pg. 4 & 5
- For all Peewee games during the period that coaches are allowed on the field, the following shall apply:
 - Blitzing will not be permitted, subject to the following:
 - On defense, line players are defined as anyone who is lined up within 1 yard of the Line of Scrimmage at the instant the ball is snapped.
 - Only line players will be allowed to move forward at the snap and cross the Line of Scrimmage. No other defensive players may cross the line until:
 - The ball crosses the Line of Scrimmage or:
 - The ball leaves the possession of the QB or:
 - The QB, with the ball in his possession, is outside the tackles.
- If a Peewee game goes into the mercy rule, blitzing will no longer be allowed.

PENALTY: 10 yards, down repeated.

NOTE: The intent of this wording is to restrict blitzing, but at the same time I tried not to restrict players from reacting to the play and playing proper defense. Obviously, if the ball has been handed off or fumbled, or if the QB is running a sweep, there is no reason that a defensive player can't read the play and cross the line accordingly. Accordingly, we all know what a blitz is when we see it. I will be instructing the officials to follow the spirit of the rule, and if someone is trying to look for loopholes to circumvent the rule, they will be penalized. Conversely, if a player is not blitzing, but somehow inadvertently violates one of the clauses above as a result of him just playing football, the officials will not be looking to nitpick and find penalties that don't exist.

- Starting line of scrimmage determined by kick-off return
- One coach on the field for the first 3 regular scheduled games. However, the coach must remain 15 yards behind the line of scrimmage after players leave the huddle.

Coaches on the field

One Coach allowed on the field on the playing field during play for the first 3 weeks the coach shall not run with the play or shot instructions once the quarterback instructs the team to set. A bench waning well be assessed if this is not adhered to.

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

Play Clock

25 second will be allowed to get the ball in play. Referees will give the offensive team a 10 second warning when the play clock is winding down.

Half-time - 10 minutes

Time Outs

Each team will be allowed two time outs per half. Only a player on the field or the head coach may request a time out. If a coach calls a third time out, at the referee's discretion he may penalize the team of 5 yards with the down repeated.

Scoring

- Touch down: 6 points
- Rogue: 1 point
- Safety Touch: 2 points
- Field Goals – 3 points for a field goal, snap required. On field goals the center/snapper is off limits – defense cannot initiate a hit on the center/snapper, regardless of the outcome of the play (i.e. fumbled snap, fake kick, etc.), unless the center initiates contact. Hitting the center/snapper will result in a 15-yard penalty and a first down for the offence.
- Extra Point – 1 point for a run, 1 points for a forward pass, 2 points for a kicked convert
 - No snap required on a kicked convert; ball to be placed on the 20-yard line and line of scrimmage on the 5-yard line.
- A failed extra point resulting in an interception or fumble recovery by the defense cannot be run back for a score

Punting

- On 4th down the offense can either
 - Run a regular play; or,
 - Punt with a snap from center; or,
 - Punt with the punter 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage with the ball in his hands and the play initiated by a whistle from the referee. In the case of option 3, no player on the punting team is allowed to line up onside (in this situation only the punter can recover the ball on the punting team), and no fake punts are allowed
- Teams will also have the option of a 30 yard march off by game officials
- On punts with a snap from center, the center/snapper is off limits. The defense cannot line up over the center/snapper or initiate a hit on the center/snapper, unless the center initiates contact. If the defense does line up over the center or initiates contact, a 15-yard roughing penalty will be assessed
- If, during a punt, the ball does not travel more than 10 yards from the kicking point, the

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

referee will whistle the play dead. The possession of the ball will change and the ball will be placed at the point at which it contacted the ground

Field

- 12 man field size: 110 yards in length – 65 yards in width or as close as possible
- 9 man field size: 110 yards in length – 50 yards in width or as close as possible

Football - Size 6 TDJ

JUNIOR BANTAM

- 15 minute quarters – running time; except for the last 2 minutes of the 2nd and 4th quarters, rulebook time per the Canadian Amateur Tackle Football Rulebook pg. 4 & 5
- All special teams in effect, starting line of scrimmage determined by kick-off return

Play Clock

25 second will be allowed to get the ball in play. Referees will give the offensive team a 10 second warning when the play clock is winding down.

Half-time - 10 minutes

Time Outs

Each team will be allowed two time outs per half. Only a player on the field or the head coach may request a time out. If a coach calls a third time out, at the referee's discretion he may penalize the team of 5 yards with the down repeated.

Scoring

- Touch down: 6 points.
- Rogue: 1 point
- Safety Touch: 2 points
- Field Goals – 3 points for a field goal, snap required. On field goals the center/snapper is off limits – defense cannot initiate a hit on the center/snapper, regardless of the outcome of the play (i.e. fumbled snap, fake kick, etc.), unless the center initiates contact. Hitting the center/snapper will result in a 15-yard penalty and a first down for the offence
- Extra Point – 1 point for a run, 1 point for a forward pass, 2 points for a kicked convert
 - Snap required on a kicked convert; line of scrimmage to be 5 yards from the uprights.
 - A failed extra point resulting in an interception or fumble recovery by the defense cannot be run back for a score

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

Punting

- On punts, converts, and field goal formations the center/snapper is off limits; defense cannot line up over the center or initiate contact on the center/snapper. If the defense does line up over the center or initiates contact, a 15-yard roughing penalty will be assessed.

Field

- 12 man field size: 110 yards in length – 65 yards in width or as close as possible
- 9 man field size: 110 yards in length – 50 yards in width or as close as possible

Football - Size 7 TDY

OTHER RULES

Forfeiture of Games

In the event that, because of a shortage of players, one team must forfeit a game, that team must inform the VICFA President, Referee Coordinator and the opponents teams contact no later than 9:00 pm the Thursday before the game to allow ample time to inform the team. A team will be forced to forfeit if player injuries during a game cause them to not have enough players to field a full team. In the event of a forfeit prior to kick off; then the non-forfeiting team shall be awarded 30 points.

9-man Option

If you have 15 or less players on the team; that team will be provided the option to declare as a 9-player team for the season. 16 or more players on the team will require that team to play 12 man.

Minimum roster size for a 9-man game is 13 players dress for a game and 16 dress for a game for 12-man game.

Roster size for teams is 32; special consideration will be provided for teams who may be over by a few players.

If for a scheduled game, one team can only play 9-player football (because they have 15 or less players available), then that team must inform its opponent by **Noon Wednesday prior to the next game**. This notice must be provided in writing (email), and must be copied to the VICFA President, Referee Coordinator and Organizations Contact. See appendix A

***Once the 9 man declaration is made, the game must be played 9 man, regardless of how many players show up.*

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

VICFA Board may force a forfeit of the game if proper notice is not provided

PLAYER PARTICIPATION RULE* (PPR)

For either a 9-man or 12-man game each player dressed for the game will be required to have a minimum of 10 game plays per game (including special teams).

**Note: Player participation rule is not followed may result in a review; if there are special circumstances they must be documented on the play count sheet and to the game commissioner.*

Sideline Privileges & Restrictions

- During the game, the only persons who may legally occupy any position on the sidelines are: field officials, downs man, time keeper and scorer
- During the game, the team bench area may be occupied only by substitute players, and other authorized non-playing personnel of the team consisting of coaches, team trainer, team manager, play counters, or organization's players at the discretion of the team's head coach.

Coaches on Field

No coaching staff besides; the pre-authorized coach that has been granted permission from the referee; shall be allowed on the playing field during play. Infraction of this rule will result in 10-yard penalty against the offending team

Equipment

All privately owned helmets, and shoulder pads must be approved and checked by their Organization's Equipment manager prior to the season.

Mouth guards

Regulation mouth guards are mandatory and they must be attached to the facemask at all times. Only exception of this is if a player wears a special mouth guard, the Head Official must be notified before the start of the game.

Visors

All visors must be clear, No tinting allowed
No medical exceptions are allowed.

All visors must be cleared by their Organization's Equipment manager or a Head Coach for correct installation.

Cleats

Molded or screw in plastic cleats are permitted. Absolutely no metal or metal-tipped cleats are permitted. If in question, the referees may check both teams for the existence of metal or metal-tipped cleats prior to the start of a game.

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

Stikum

“Stikum” and stikum-like substances are not permitted.

Electronic Communications

Radio and Telecommunications devices are not permitted to be used by/between coaches and other team staff at any time.

Game Scores

All game scores and commissioner/play count/verified game day roster shall be emailed in to vicfainformation@gmail.com by the home team within 48 hours game day. Failure to comply will result in a fine by the offending Organization of \$100.00 payable to Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association within 7 business days.

Player Registration

Competing teams can ONLY field players for a game that have been registered to an organization playing in the VICFA spring season for their division. If a team plays a regular season or playoff game with a player that is not registered on that team then that game is automatically forfeited. (See *BCCFA handbook regarding playing up*).

Coach Registration

- All adult coaches, team trainers, team managers and park managers/coordinators **MUST** have their criminal record check and coaching application completed (online or paper) and handed in to the Organization’s Coaching Coordinator or President.
- All organizations will have 7 days to produce any Criminal Record Check and Coaching application to VICFA President upon request.
- As well, all adult coaches **MUST** have an online concussion protocol course completed and handed in to the Organization’s Coaching Coordinator or President.
- If a team takes part in a regular season or play-off game with any of its coaches not having the criminal record check and coaching application completed and handed into their Organization then that game will be automatically forfeited.

Blocking and Low Contact

- A player shall be penalized for unnecessary physical contact, including but not limited to, running into, diving into, cut blocking or throwing their body on a player who is: out of the play, or should not have reasonably anticipated such contact by an opponent, before or after the ball is dead.
- Crack Back Blocking: **No** crack back blocking below the waist.
- Cut Blocking: Canadian Amateur Rules apply, inside box only, tackle to tackle,

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

initiated above the knees within one (1) yard from either side of line of scrimmage.

- Low Contact: There shall be no contact at or below the knees on any player, except when tackling the ball carrier.
- High Contact: is a forcible hit above the shoulders; this will be penalized as a personal foul.

Major Penalty

Any players receiving any Major Penalty (Personal Foul, Unsportsmanlike Conduct etc.) that will be recorded on the Game Commissioners Sheet will require that player being held out for two plays.

Coaches:

- Any coach receiving 2 penalties for any combination of either objectionable conduct or personal foul in one game will also receive an automatic game ejection.
- Any ejected coach must leave the player's side of the field. Failure to do so can result in forfeiture of the game
- Any coach ejected from a game for any reason will also receive a one game suspension to be served on the next schedule game (excluding Bye games) following the game he/she has been ejected from. Failure to do so can result in forfeiture of the game.
- Any coach serving a game suspension is NOT allowed contact with the team on the date of the game the suspension is being served.

Players:

- Any player receiving 2 penalties for any combination of either objectionable conduct or personal foul in one game will also receive an automatic game ejection.
- Any ejected player must leave the player's side of the field. Failure to do so can result in forfeiture of the game.
- Any player receiving 2 game ejections for any reason will also receive a one game suspension to be served on the next schedule game (excluding Bye games) following the game he/she has been ejected from.
- Any player serving a game suspension is NOT allowed contact with the team on the date of the game the suspension is being served. Failure to do so can result in forfeiture of the game.

Mercy Rules

If there is an 18-point spread or more at half time, the losing team has the choice of kicking or receiving the ball at the start of the 2nd half.

The referee also has the right to stop the game if the imbalance between skills and abilities of the two teams playing are, in the judgment of the referee, creating an unsafe situation for players

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

involved.

After being scored upon, a team losing by 30 or more points has the option of taking the ball at their 40-yard line instead of receiving a kick-off.

Any time after the first half, if the difference in score between the two teams becomes 30 points or more, the clock will be running time for the remainder of the game, except for injuries or any reason the Referee deems necessary to stop the clock. The team holding the deficit will have to score before the winning team will be awarded any extra points they may score in the remainder of the game. The scores by the winning team will still have their points documented so that the necessary points can be awarded based on the 30-point max point spread.

Field Closures

In the event that a park or a team's field is closed or its practice otherwise cancelled for reasons outside of its control, that it be allowed a make-up practice within the following two weeks. All other teams can continue with their regular scheduled practices.

Practices can commence as soon as teams want - As per Football Canada mandate the first week (3 days) of practices will be no gear with Safe Contact instruction. Teams may practice up to 3 days per week.

Game Commissioner

The home team must provide a Game Commissioner for the game. The Game Commissioner will be positioned between player benches during the entirety of the game. They will fill out the required forms and paperwork, and liaise between the teams, and game officials as required. They will in turn provide all completed paperwork back to the team manager at the end of the game. *(See attached for additional duties)*

SPORTSMANSHIP INFORMATION

Coaches

- No foul language on the bench or on the field,
- No yelling/foul language directed at opposing players, opposing coaches, and game officials, or inappropriate behavior such as grabbing player's facemasks etc.
- Must have read/signed and returned their Organizations Coaches Code of Conduct
- All Organization's Coaching Staff members must have submitted a signed VICFA Code of Conduct within 1 week of the start of the regular season. (see schedule A)

Players

- No foul language/yelling at opposing players, coaches, officials,

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

- No punching, kicking or pushing players,
- No spitting on hands or refusing to shake hands at end of game
- Must have read/signed and returned their Organizations Players Code of Conduct

Referee's Discretion

Issues of sportsmanship will be at the discretion of game officials. Generally coaches and players will be given one warning before being assessed sportsmanship penalties; however judgments in these scenarios will be dependent upon the discretion of the game officials.

We value your contribution and skill to run the games and enforce the rules but we caution all officials to constantly err on the side of player safety.

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

APPENDIX A

Contacts:

- VICFA PRESIDENT – vicfainformation@gmail.com
- REFEREE COORDINATORS –
 - Ladysmith/ Cowichan/GVMFA/Spartans murrayclarke@shaw.ca
 - Nanaimo/South Side/Oceanside/Comox/Campbell River kevandcin@shaw.ca
- GVMFA – president@vifootball.ca
- COWICHAN – erinyoung3@shaw.ca
- LADYSMITH – ladysmithsteelers@gmail.com
- NANAIMO – footballnanaimopres@shaw.ca
- OCEANSIDE – OYFA.info@gmail.com
- COMOX – daniels_jay@hotmail.com
- CAMPBELL RIVER – erikaloomis@hotmail.com
- VICTORIA SPARTANS – president@spartansfootball.ca
- SOUTH SIDE – boomsha@yahoo.com
 - **Jr. Bantam Dawgs:** Coach Larry Cooper ltcdawg@shaw.ca [250-754-2079](tel:250-754-2079)

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

APPENDIX B

Game Commissioner

The game commissioner shall be 19 years of age or older and locate themselves between the players' benches (between the two teams).

The Commissioner will be responsible for ensuring the following:

- a) Each team is prepared to play at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the game. All absent players are to be noted on the play counter sheets.
- b) If a team is late by 15 minutes to play a scheduled game, it will be considered forfeiture.
- c) The head officials are ready for the game to begin and that the game timing has been decided and the game balls have been chosen.
- d) The conduct of the players and team support staff on the benches is proper and issue instruction if required.
- e) Advise spectators to stay away from or near the player's benches or on the same side of the field as the players (i.e.: Westhills Stadium has bleachers and Windsor park has benches behind players benches. would like to refrain from spectators sitting there as it is distracting to players.)
- f) That, in the event of an injury, they shall check with the trainer to see if a stretcher or ambulance is required.
- g) That only qualified medical persons attempt to move a player with any neck back injury, and that an ambulance is called under these circumstances.
- h) That the Game Commissioner's report is properly filled out at the end of the game, including the signature of both the head coaches, as well as the Head Official. Commissioner reports shall be sent regardless if the game was a forfeit. The number of game officials that officiate, as well as their name, excluding sideline officials is recorded on the Game Commissioner's report.
- i) The completed reports are given to the team manager on the same day the game is concluded or as soon as possible thereafter.
- j) The game scores are properly recorded.
- k) The Game Commissioner's report shall include details of all serious infraction which must be completed at the time of the infractions as per the Head Referee's instructions, and ensure that the Head Referee initials all serious infractions on the form

A copy of the form, football rules and pen will be provided at the game.

It may sound like a lot but it is pretty straightforward. You do most of these things just by filling up the report.

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

Doing Sticks

(Please keep in mind that the referees will tell you where to stand and where to move)

In American football, the chain crew (commonly known as the "chain gang") are assistants to the referees who handle the first down measuring chain and the down indicator box. The members of the chain crew who operate the measuring chain are called rod men and the person who works the down indicator box is called the box man.

The down indicator box is a pole with a sign indicating what the current down is. A down is a period in which a play transpires. Before every play from scrimmage, it is placed on the sideline to mark the current line of scrimmage.



A play from scrimmage is the activity of the games during which one team tries to advance the ball, get a first down, or to score, and the other team tries to stop them or take the ball away. Once a play is over, and before the next play starts, the football is considered dead.

A line of scrimmage is an imaginary transverse line (across the width of the football field) beyond which a team cannot cross until the next play has begun. Its location is based on the spot where the ball is placed after the end of the most recent play and following the assessment of any penalty yards.

The first down measuring chain is used to measure the yards that the offensive team needs to gain a first down. It is a 10-yard metal chain with poles attached to each end. The poles, usually called "the sticks", are almost

always covered in bright orange padding.

When a team gains a first down, one of the rod men places one end of the chain on the sideline parallel to the spot of the ball. The other rod man then stretches the chain out to mark the first down line. To ensure an accurate measurement, a clip is usually attached to the chain on the closest 5-yard mark on the field.

The chains will be brought directly onto the field whenever the referee needs an accurate measurement to determine if a first down has been made. A team may also request an accurate measurement to determine how far they have to reach for the first down.

For games at all levels below the NFL, the chain crew operates on the side of the field opposite the team's bench box.

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

Play Counting

Each team has to supply 2 volunteers, called 'Play Counters'.

Play Counters monitor the number of plays that each player participates in during the game. One play counter monitors our team's plays and the other monitors the play of the opposing team, thus having 2

Play Counters working together per team, and recording each time a player is part of a play.

The Play Counters will work with each team's coaching staff to ensure all players play the minimum number of plays per game according to the numbers outlined below.

Play counters will completed and signed the play counting sheets and will forward the document to the game commissioner to add to the game report.

If the Player Participation Rules are not adhered to by one team, the opposing team has the option of forcing a forfeited game.

Player participation rules is 10 game plays (including special teams) per player

*Note: Player participation rule is for players dress for the game.

Injured/Hurt Players

- If a player is injured and is not expected to return to the game, the minimum play rule does not apply to the injured player.
- If a player is hurt (i.e. shaken up) and chooses to continue, then they return to the game and the team must comply with the Player Participation Rule accordingly.

Play Counters are to mark an X in one of the numbered spaces next to a player's name each time a player is on the field for a play. Once the player has completed the correct number of plays draw a straight line after the last play.

APPENDIX C

Standards & Interpretations

“No-Blitzing” Rule Standard

For all Atom games. For all Peewee games during the period that coaches are allowed on the field, the following shall apply:

- Blitzing will not be permitted, subject to the following:

On defense, line players are defined as anyone who is lined up within 1 yard of the Line of Scrimmage at the instant the ball is snapped.

Only line players will be allowed to move forward at the snap and cross the Line of Scrimmage. No other defensive players may cross the line until:

- The ball crosses the Line of Scrimmage or:
- The ball leaves the possession of the QB or:
- The QB, with the ball in his possession, is outside the tackles.

PENALTY: 10 yards, down repeated.

If a Peewee game goes into the mercy rule, blitzing will no longer be allowed.

The intent of this wording is to restrict blitzing, but at the same time not to restrict players from reacting to the play and playing proper defense. Obviously, if the ball has been handed off or fumbled, or if the QB is running a sweep, there is no reason that a defensive player can't read the play and cross the line accordingly.

Accordingly, we all know what a blitz is when we see it. Officials are instructed to follow the spirit of the rule, and if someone is trying to look for loopholes to circumvent the rule, they will be penalized. Conversely, if a player is not blitzing, but somehow inadvertently violates one of the clauses above as a result of him just playing football, officials will not be looking to nitpick and find penalties that don't exist.

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

Unnecessary Roughness Standards

Tourist Hits

- Players who are out of the play and are not participating in the play may not be contacted in an unnecessarily rough manner.
- If a player is well away from the play, and should not reasonably expect to get hit, he is off-limits. But if he is within 5-10 yards of the ball and the play is continuing, he must expect to be hit, and will receive no protection.
- Football continues to be a contact sport, and opponents cannot be expected to be mind-readers. This rule is to protect players who have ceased participating and are watching from a distance. Coaches are expected to teach their players not to let up when they are in the vicinity of the play.

Late Hits & Hits Out of Bounds

- It is incumbent upon players to know when the play is dead and whether their actions will be deemed reasonable under this rule.
- We often use the term “players are coached to play to the whistle”. In most cases, this standard is acceptable. The whistle is used to signal when the official deems the play to be over. However, there are cases where the play is dead and the whistle comes later. Some examples occur near the sidelines where a player with the ball has stepped out of bounds (which is when the play is actually over), and the covering official is moving hard to get the spot and signal timeout. In a situation like this, the whistle may come seconds after the player has stepped out, but that does not mean the play isn’t dead until the whistle blows. The play is over when the player steps out of bounds.
- The same standard applies when a ball carrier goes to the ground with the ball in his possession. The ball is dead the instant the player goes to the ground, whether the whistle has sounded or not. There are no instances where the play can continue. Officials are trained not to blow the whistle until they can see that the player on the ground still has the ball in his possession, as we never want to blow the whistle when the ball is loose. This slight delay in some situations does not mean that the play was not dead when the ball carrier went to the ground. Whether a player has fallen on a fumble, recovered a short kickoff, slipped and fallen, dove for a pass, etc. he cannot be contacted. Players should be coached to never contact a player that is on the ground.

Roughing the Passer Standard

The restrictions under the Roughing the Passer rule apply whether a pass is actually thrown or not.

- Once the ball is released, defensive players must avoid all unnecessary contact with the passer. There is no “one step” rule. All Referees yell “Gone” once the passer has released the ball to assist in protection by making the defensive player aware that the passer no longer has the ball.
- Any blow delivered to the passer’s head or neck, or at or below the knees, whether the defender’s path to the passer was unrestricted or if they are coming off a blocker, is a foul. We use the general term that he can be hit legally in the “strike zone” used for hitters in baseball.
- A potential passer who is on the run in any direction, inside or outside the pocket, does not have low hit protection. He can be hit legally at or below the knees while on the run with the football.
- If a defender contacts the passer with his helmet as the initial or primary point of contact, he will be penalized, regardless of where on the passer’s body the contact is made.
- If the defender keeps his head up, and contacts the passer in the strike zone with his face mask as the initial or primary point of contact, it is not a foul.
- If a passer ducks into or jumps up into what would be an otherwise legal hit, it is not a foul.
- If the referee has doubt as to initial or primary point of contact, timing of contact, or severity of contact he should always rule in favour of protecting the passer and call a Roughing the Passer penalty.
- For a foul to be called when the passer is contacted in the neck or head, the defender must “deliver a blow”. Slight and incidental contact by a defensive player’s hand or arm to the passer’s head or neck area when attempting to block a pass shall not be a foul.

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

Horse Collar

- A Horse Collar Tackle is a UR penalty and is defined as “Tackling an opponent by grabbing the inside collar of the side or back of the shoulder pads, or jersey”
- A Horse Collar tackle penalty shall be called if either of the following conditions is met: The player’s fingers get inside the collar and grab the side or back of the jersey or shoulder pads **OR** the player grabs the side or back of the jersey on or above the nameplate, **AND** pulls the opponent down and back.
- A Horse Collar Tackle has nothing to do with a high tackle or a tackle around the head.

High Tackles

A “high tackle” is not necessarily a penalty. For the action to be penalized as Unnecessary Roughness, it must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The hit must be above the shoulders in an unnecessarily rough manner.
- The hit must be forcible. Incidental contact is **not** unnecessary roughness.
- As above, the Quarterback cannot be contacted outside the “strike zone” while in the act of passing.

If a player is already being tackled low by one player, and another tackler wraps him up high, this may be a high tackle, but it does not meet the criteria for an unnecessary roughness penalty. Similarly, if a larger player makes the tackle by simply “smothering” the ball carrier, or if the ball carrier lowers his head and is tackled high as a result of his own actions, there will be no penalty.

Having said all this, players must be coached to tackle properly, and to avoid all high contact. Officials will always err on the side of player safety when high contact occurs.

Protection for the Center on Special Teams Plays

The following applies to all special teams plays where the center snaps the ball, **whether the ball is kicked or not.**

- No defensive player may line up over the center. If an official sees a player lined up over the center prior to the play, he will stop the play and ensure that the offending player lines up properly.
- It must be clear that the offense is lining up in a kicking formation. If the offense is in a normal shotgun formation, or a formation that creates confusion, the center will not receive protection under this rule. If it is the team’s intent to kick from an unusual formation, they must notify the referee on their intentions, and he will notify the defense to leave the center uncovered.
- Once the ball is snapped, defensive players cannot make contact with the center in any way. If the center begins to block or initiates contact with a defender, he will no longer receive protection under this rule.

Illegal Block Standard

- It is illegal to block an opponent below the waist or anywhere on the back plane on scrimmage or kick plays. (Exception – Players who are lined up in the “box” from tackle-to-tackle can block below the waist while still in the “box”)
- For a block to be legal it must therefore be above the waist and must be CLEARLY on the side or front of the opponent.
- Players receiving a block are defined as having four planes (front, two sides, and back) on all blocks above the waist.
- Blocks judged to be on the back corner of the body (the intersection of the side and back planes) will be ruled as an Illegal Block. If the official is in doubt as to whether the block is on the side or the back corner of the player, the player shall be penalized for an Illegal Block.
- The initial point of contact is the determining factor as to whether it is an Illegal Block or not. The position of the head is not the determining factor as to whether a block is illegal or not.
- If a player charges into the back plane of an opponent, or across the back of his legs, the player shall be penalized for Clipping (which is Unnecessary Roughness – 15 yards).

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

Objectionable Conduct Standard

Coaches

- For officials to do their jobs properly, they must be able to move about the field unimpeded by occupants of the team benches.
- Coaches must remain off the field of play **at all times**, except during a time-out or to attend to an injured player.
- If a coach comes **on to** the field to argue a call, or ask for an interpretation, no matter how polite he is, he will be penalized 10 yards for Objectionable Conduct. If a coach wants to talk to an official, he can request that the official come to the sideline and talk there. If the coach wants an explanation from the head referee, he must ask the nearest official, who will pass on the request to the referee **when the opportunity presents itself**. Under no circumstances will the coach be allowed to come on to the field and delay the game by his presence.
- If an official feels that a coach is pushing the boundaries of what they feel is unacceptable behavior, they will warn him, or have the referee come over and warn him. If the coach reoffends in any way, at any time in the game, he will be penalized. If a coach crosses the line of acceptable behavior at any time, he will be penalized without a warning.
- Obviously, players and coaches who wander a few yards out on to the field to see the action at the far end of the field will not be penalized. Likewise, coaches can step out a few yards onto the field between plays to signal in plays, but they must quickly return to the bench area before the team breaks the huddle.
- Coaches who are on the field attending to an injured player are not allowed to coach while they are on the field. If the coach begins to involve himself with the uninjured players while he is on the field, the referee will politely ask him to stop, and to return to his bench. Any abuse of this rule by the coach will result in the coach being charged with a team time-out. If the team is out of time-outs, the coach will be penalized 10 yards for Delay of Game. Hopefully, this will only occur in extreme circumstances.

Players

- Players should be coached to act in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. Verbal abuse or objectionable gestures directed at opponents, officials or spectators will not be tolerated.
- Standing over an opponent on the ground for an extended time, intimidating or baiting an opponent will result in a 10 yard penalty for Taunting.
- There will be zero tolerance for swearing or racial comments of any kind.

- Football is a fun game. Players will not be penalized for celebrating a score or big play, as long as the actions are not directed at their opponents. Any actions meant to embarrass or intimidate their opponents will be penalized.
- Spiking the ball, or throwing it in the direction of an opponent is not permitted.

Vancouver Island Canadian Football Association (VICFA) Handbook

Disqualification for Repeat Offenses

The rules state:

"Any coach or player receiving 2 penalties for any combination of either objectionable conduct or personal foul in one game will also receive an automatic game ejection.

Any player or coach ejected from a game for any reason will also receive a one game suspension to be served on the game immediately following the game he/she has been ejected from."

- As a result, it is important that every time a 15 yard penalty or Objectionable Conduct (10 yard penalty) is assessed, the referee must make a point to notify the Game Commissioner as to who was penalized, so that they can make a note of it on the Game Report.
- Also, as per League rules, when a player is called for Objectionable Conduct or Unnecessary Roughness, they must leave the game for 2 plays.