

2021 Ontario Fall Football League – Playing Rules

(as updated August 15, 2021)

Section 1 – Player Eligibility

- A. Registration Form: A regulation OFFL Registration Form shall be completed for each eligible player at the time of registration. The Monday prior to a teams first game, an alphabetical listing which includes players name, full address, date of birth and Football Ontario (FO) Registration number must be sent to the OFFL Registrar on the OFFL Initial Roster Information form to ensure players are eligible to play. Any additional players prior to the roster freeze at Week 3 must be submitted on the OFFL Supplemental Roster form. Any coaches listed must have taken Football Canada Safe Contact, Making Headway and all components of Community Sport U14 (in class and online) in order to be listed as a Coach, Head or Assistant. Also, please note that your NCCP number and FO Registration are not the same thing. The FO Registration number must be shown to confirm you are registered as a Coach. The Thursday before a team’s first game, a numerical roster must be submitted to the OFFL Registrar so that it can be posted on the League web page
- B. Game Day Roster Sheet: The official roster sheet is to be brought to each game with four (4) copies available. For the players section, this must be listed in numerical order along with all Bench Personnel (Head Coach, Assistant Coaches, Water Boys/Girls, Managerial Staff). Players not participating are to be indicated in the appropriate column with Abs – Absent, Inj – Injured, Susp – Suspended. Only Coaches meeting FO/Football Canada requirements may be listed and on the Team Bench. The Game Day Roster is to be exchanged with the opponent and also given to the person score keeping for the game.
- C. Minimum Roster Dressed: U10 nine (9) dressed, U12 fifteen (15) dressed for 9x9 and eighteen (18) dressed for 12x12, U 14 fifteen (15) dressed for 9x9 and twenty (20) dressed for 12x12
- D. Roster Freeze: The date for rosters to be frozen will be the Thursday of the third (3rd) week of the season. Once established, the roster cannot be changed for the balance of the season.
- E. Jersey numbers: Once each player jersey number is recorded on the final roster, it cannot be changed during regular season or playoffs. The only exception is where a sweater becomes un-useable due to tears or other similar circumstance. If this occurs, the President of the Member Club must advise the OFFL Registrar of the circumstances and obtain his/her approval for the change. The OFFL Registrar will determine what notification process must be followed by the requesting Member Club. Each team is allowed one (1) player to change numbers where he/she has forgotten to bring their regular jersey. The coach must advise the opposing coach of the situation. The player must revert to the original jersey number for the next game. Also, should the Game Referee direct a jersey change due to blood on the jersey or other reason, this is acceptable.

Section 2 – Home Team Obligations

- A. Booking a legal playing field shall be the responsibility of the home team for regular season and playoff games they are eligible to host.
- B. Game officials from the home team's local Tackle Football Officials Association
- C. Supply a new game ball, a second ball in reasonable condition both approved by the Game Referee. Towel(s) should the weather be inclement, yard sticks, downs box and time clock
- D. Two people for stick crew. One for downs box and one for yard sticks. For playoff games one person to work the yard sticks.
- E. Crowd control. Allowing only authorized personnel (game officials, stick crew, team photographer) near the field. It is suggested all others be at least 20 metres away from the sidelines for the safety of all concerned.
- F. Text game score to 289-680-5353 as soon as possible after the game or no later than 9:00 pm the day of the game. Scan and e-mail the score sheet along with both Game Day Rosters no later than 36 hours after the scheduled kick off time of the game.
- G. Public address announcing is encouraged, but remember no announcing is better than bad announcing. The announcer may not say anything, nor may there be music playing once the offensive team has broken their huddle.
- H. Provide and make available, on the sidelines, qualified personnel for dealing with athletic injury for both the home and visiting team. In the event the visiting team wishes to use their own personnel as first response to an injury, they may do so. In the event there is not a qualified medical person who has been hired present, the Game Referee may ask if there is anyone who is qualified and willing to act in this role, then the game may proceed. Should there not be anyone qualified to fulfill this role, then the game will not be played. Should the game not be played, then the teams affected will work with the OFFL Executive to arrange for an alternate date to reschedule.
- I. Non compliance of Item H shall result in review of the game and could be subject to forfeiture with a two-thirds vote of the OFFL Executive.
- J. The playing field must be marked at least every ten (10) yards or metres along with 45 yard or metre lines. Sidelines and end zones must also be marked in accordance with the Canadian Amateur Rule Book for Tackle Football (pages xxvii and xxxviii)
- K. Goal posts must have appropriate padding in place and approved by the Game Referee or the game will not be played. Uprights should have two (2) goal posts. If there is a situation that one goal post is missing, all field goals and converts will be attempted at the uprights where there are two (2) posts in place.
- L. The number of on field officials must be three (3) for U10 games. For U12 and U14 games there must be four (4) on field officials, with 5 officials for U16 and U18+ if offered. An additional officials will operate the game clock for all games. This must be a member of the Local Officials Association and may not be a volunteer. For all playoff games, a member of the Local Tackle Football Officials

Association shall be assigned to man the downs box. For U14 playoff games, there shall be six (6) on field officials assigned.

- M. Make on field officials aware of specific OFFL playing rules.
- N. The following fines will be assessed regarding score sheet submission, game day roster submission and bench control violations:
 - a. 1st offence \$50 2nd offence \$100 3rd offence Game forfeit at discretion of OFFL Executive
- O. A member of the Home Team must be identified as game convenor, whose responsibilities will include the enforcement of bench area control. The bench control area is limited to those persons listed on the Game Day Roster Sheet with a minimum of a 20 metre radius behind the team bench areas extending the length of the field. Bench personnel is limited to ten (10) persons. Eight (8) coaches and two (2) non coaching personnel (Water persons, equipment manager etc.)
- P. Home team must have available an electronic score clock that is visible to both benches.

Section 3 – Visiting Team Obligations

- A. One person for the yard sticks
- B. Person to assist with spotting if the game is being announced.
- C. Visiting team is to appoint a Game Day Convenor at each level whose responsibility will be to interact with the Home Team Game Day Convenor to resolve any game day or crowd control issues.

Section 4 – Disqualification

- A. At the discretion of the Game Referee, a player may be sent to the bench to cool down and may return to the game after a minimum cool down period of three (3) plays.
- B. A player ejected from a game may not return to the playing field for the rest of the game and may not dress or play in the player's next league or playoff game, excluding forfeits or re-scheduled games (including carry-over to the following year). This must be marked on the Score Sheet by the Game Referee. An ejected player must remain on the team bench for supervisory concerns and their conduct is the responsibility of that team's Head Coach. It is recommended that such player not participate in the post-game handshake to avoid further issues.
- C. Conduct unbecoming a coach or team official is grounds for ejection. If ejection occurs, he/she is neither to remain on the playing field nor in the Team Bench area and must leave the game venue.
 - Any coach ejected from a game is automatically suspended from the next league game and may be subject to further disciplinary action by the OFFL Executive.

- D. It is expected that all OFFL Member Clubs enforce their own parents code of conduct. An OFFL Executive member may eject any parent from the field of play for unruly or threatening behaviour. Member clubs may also be subject to a fine of up to \$500 at the discretion of the OFFL Executive for failing to enforce codes of conduct.

At the conclusion of any game, teams are to shake hands and proceed to the Team Bench or Team Locker Room. Once there, team players may go to meet with their parents/guardians for departure from the game venue. Teams ARE NOT permitted to high five with parents after the game on the sideline and should they do so, will be subject to the following discipline:

First offence Letter from OFFL President

Second offence Letter from OFFL President and one (1) game suspension for the Head Coach

Third offence Letter from OFFL President, one (1) game suspension for the Head Coach and forfeit of the game and a \$500 fine payable to the OFFL before their next scheduled game

- E. A player receiving a combination of three (3) Unnecessary Roughness/Objectionable Conduct penalties will be ejected from the game. When a player has reached two (2) such penalties, the Game Referee is to inform the Head Coach of such accumulation. The score keeper should record such penalties (team, player # and penalty) on the scoresheet. Team Management and Coaches should, to the best of their abilities, monitor such penalties and order benching if deemed necessary.
- F. The Game Referee must sign the scoresheet and note any disqualification(s) or unusual events. Relevant information regarding such matters must be noted on the scoresheet as well.
- G. Any team who has a player, Coach or personnel ejected must report such to the OFFL President within twenty-four (24) hours of the scheduled kick off time of said same game.
- H. Any relevant incidents occurring outside of the game (i.e. skirmishes before or after the game) must be reported to the OFFL President no later than twenty-four (24) from the scheduled kick off of the game so that any necessary investigation can be made and discipline meted out by the OFFL Executive.
- I. Any team playing ineligible player(s) will result in automatic forfeiture of any game that the said player(s) participated in. At the discretion of the OFFL Executive; coaches, team executive/managers and players shall be subject to rules of misconduct as empowered by the Constitution of the OFFL.
- Teams' eligibility in post-season play will be subject to OFFL Executive review. In case or cases where it is found that the team in question was aware of the ineligibility of the said player, the Member Club will be subject to a minimum fine of \$500.
- J. If a player is subject to ejection/game disqualification in their last game of the season, regular season or playoffs, the Member Club is subject to a fine of \$100 which is payable to OFFL withing seven (7) days of said same game.

- K. Any Member Club that has three (3) or more player or coach ejections in separate incidents, at one division, in any playing season, will be subject to a \$100 fine. Each subsequent incident will also be subject to a \$100 fine. All fines are to be paid to the OFFL within seven (7) days of such incident(s).
- L. Any Team Official or Player who is found by the OFFL Executive or a Special Committee of the Executive to have knowingly permitted their team to play against an ineligible player(s) and to have not reported such ineligibility to his Team Executive/Management to the OFFL Executive shall be suspended for a period determined by the OFFL Executive or a Special Committee of the Executive.

OFFL Member Clubs being advised of an ineligible player shall immediately notify the OFFL Executive. A Member Club Executive/Management who fails to make such notification shall be suspended for a period to be determined by the OFFL Executive and may be asked for their resignation from the Member Club.

Such reports must be made PRIOR to the affected game.

Section 5 – Exceptions to Canadian Amateur Football Rule Book for Tackle Football

- A. Half time intermission will be 15 minutes but may be shortened due to weather conditions if agreed upon by both Head Coaches
- B. Official game ball(s) noted in Appendix 1. Wilson TDJ for U10 and U12, TDY for U14, F2000 for U16 and U18+ (2021 only). It is suggested to use the composite models of these balls. The home team will provide game balls per Section 2c. No shuttling of balls will be permitted.
- C. Scoring after touchdown as noted in Appendix 1
- D. Game timing as noted in Appendix 1. Should a regular season game end in a tie, it shall be recorded as a tie. For playoff games, Rule 1, Section 3, Article 6 of the Canadian Amateur Rule Book for Tackle Football shall apply.
- E. Time outs, each team is permitted four (4) timeouts which may be utilized any time during the game. For playoff games, timeouts are not permitted in the Overtime Procedure and timeouts from regulation play are not able to carry over to the Overtime Procedure.
- F. Numbering, no teams are required to follow Rule 4, Section 3, Article 1 (Legal Numbering) of the Canadian Amateur Rule Book for Tackle Football
- G. Only one (1) coach is permitted on the field during timeouts.
- H. Determination of ball possession or field position shall be made by coin toss at the beginning of each game. The visiting team shall make the call of the toss. For Champ Day, the higher seeded team shall be the Home Team.
- I. Mercy Rule, If at any time during the game the point spread is greater than 28 points, the Head Coach of the team behind on the score has the option to run the clock. Once the decision has been

made to run the clock it cannot be reversed regardless of the score. The Coach behind on the score must advise the Game Referee and timekeeper of their request to run the clock. In this event, the clock will stop for injuries, scores, timeouts and as deemed necessary by the Game Referee.

- J. U16 and U18+ will play three downs (Fall 2021 only).

Section 6 – Miscellaneous

- A. Filming: Video or camera equipment will be permitted, but courtesy dictates the teams being filmed should be informed. The use of direct communications with electronic devices from the sideline, bleachers or spotter box to any player on the field is prohibited. Any Team found doing this will be fined \$1000 and they will forfeit the game.
- B. On field officials are to strictly enforce the rules as stated in the Canadian Amateur Rule Book for Tackle Football and the OFFL Playing Rules. Any game may be terminated at the Game Referee's discretion. Any further disciplinary action may be taken at the discretion of the OFFL Executive.
- C. If a game is halted due to inclement weather of any type, the teams will wait a maximum of thirty (30) minutes to determine a course of action. If there is unanimous agreement among three parties, comprised of the Game Referee and Game Day Convenor of each team, to wait additional time, this time period can be extended. If a game is not restarted within the above noted time period, then the following will apply:
 - D. A game will be considered complete when three (3) quarters have been completed and then is a three (3) converted touchdown (maximum conversion in each division) differential.
 - E. If the differential is less than the above differential, the game shall be completed at an agreed upon time and date under OFFL guidelines for rescheduling games. If the game is to be completed at a later date, it will resume at the point that the game was interrupted at when it was suspended,
 - F. If three (3) quarters of play have not been completed, then the game will be re-played in its entirety, at an agreed upon date and time under OFFL guidelines for rescheduling games. Any team that is not in the lead at the time the game is suspended, may opt not to replay or complete the game and award the game to the opposing team. In such case, a default shall not be attributed to the conceding team. The final game score will be recorded at the point where the game was suspended/interrupted.
- G. It is URGENTLY recommended that all members of OFFL have qualified, certified and/or accredited medical personnel at all games and practices. Injuries at both practices and games should be written up and filed with Team Management. Injury reports for major injuries (such as breaks, concussions etc.) should also be filed with the OFFL Executive and the FO Office. Best rule of thumb is that any incident that requires an ambulance, hospital or doctor's visit should be reported.

Section 7 – Special Rules for U10 Divisions (where applicable)

A. Official Game Day roster for U10

Each team MUST have three (3) completed Game Day Roster sheets listed Section 1B above. Each team is required to give the opposing team two (2) Game Day Rosters, one (1) for the Game Day Convenor and one (1) for the Head Coach at least ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled kick off time. You are to identify on that Game Day Roster the starting Quarterback and one (1) Running Back for nine (9) person football.

These are your two (2) main players on offence. These are not to be players that take the first snap or series but the true starters of your offence.

You must have the minimum nine (9) players dressed and ready to play for the game to proceed.

Players arriving late (after the Game Day Roster has been submitted) may play of the late player reports to the Game Day Convenor, the Game Day Roster has been amended and the late player is made known to the opposing Head Coach. Until these steps are completed, the player in question is not allowed on the playing field.

B. Coaches on the Field (applies to U10)

During the first three (3) regular season games at U10, one coach from each team may be on the field during gameplay.

Additionally, one (1) coach from each team may be present on the field at any time positioned in such a manner so as to not interfere with the game i.e. realigning a player prior to the snap of the ball.

Offensive Coach – after your huddle breaks you are to be no less than fifteen (15) yards from the line of scrimmage. You are NOT to communicate in any manner to your players on the field or coaches on the sideline. You are NOT to read the defence and change your plays.

Defensive Coach – after the offensive huddle breaks you are to be no less than fifteen (15) yards from the line of scrimmage. You are NOT to communicate in any manner to your players on the field or coaches on the sideline. You NOT to read the offence and your formations, blitzes etc.

There rules apply to Coaches on the field, not those on the sidelines.

C. Punt Rule (applies to U10)

On 4th down, when a team is on their own side of midfield (55 yard line), they have the option to advance the ball twenty five (25) yards and turn the ball over to the other team on downs. The Coach must clearly signal the Game Referee in a timely manner should their team choose this option

If the offensive team is o the opposing side of mid field (55 yard line), they must run a play, which can be an actual kick if the opt to do so. All regular kicking rules apply.

D. Timing

Games will play twelve (12) minutes straight run time per quarter with stopped time in the last six (6) minutes of the second (2nd) and fourth (4th) quarters. Time will NOT stop for penalties, injuries, change of possession or called time outs. The last six (6) minutes of the second (2nd) and fourth (4th) quarters will be regular timing rules. The Game Referee may use their discretion to stop the clock for injuries at any time.

E. Additional information

Legal Scrimmage – Each team will have up to nine (6) players on the field for each play. The offensive team must have at least five (3) players on the line of scrimmage (wingline). The outside players on each end of the wingline and all back fielders are eligible receivers.

Blocking – Shoulder or body blocks may be used. Players may not throw cross body blocks or rolling blocks by leaving their feet. The Unnecessary Roughness penalty as outlined in the Canadian Amateur Rule Book for Tackle Football applies.

F. Playing Field (applies to U10)

U10 field configuration is to run lengthwise on the field extending in length to utilize the entire length of the regulation field, from the spectator's sideline to the far hash mark if there are no numbers on the field. Cones will mark the furthest sideline every five (5) yards.

G. Special Teams Rule (U10 regular season only)

U10 – Kickoffs will take place at the beginning of the game and to start the second (2nd) half, normal rules. After each scoring play where a kickoff would normally take place, the that was scored upon will now have a choice; receive a kickoff or take possession on their thirty (30) yard line and start first (1st) down from that point.

For U10, this rule only applies for the regular season. For playoffs/Champ Day, all regular kickoff rules will apply.