

**QUAD COUNTY**

**RECREATIONAL**

**FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

**HANDBOOK**

# OVERVIEW

The Quad County Recreational Football League (QCRFL) is a youth football program whose member organizations are comprised solely of public Parks and Recreation supported programs in Randolph, Chatham, Orange, and Wake counties. The Quad County Recreational Football League (QCRFL) is not a formal organization or entity, and member agencies are not bound together. The existence of the QCRFL is at the will of member agencies to align their agency in good faith under a single set of rules that enable inter-agency play and reflect the goals and values of parks and recreation department programs. The QCRFL is dedicated to providing recreational youth football opportunities in an environment that promotes sportsmanship, fair play, and safety.

The Quad County Recreational Football League (QCRFL) will offer football opportunities for participants ages 5-12, based on the participant's age as of August 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year. Participants who are either age 5 or age 6 must play in the flag division. Each participating agency, at its individual discretion, may choose to offer any or all of the specific divisions (*Flag, 7&8 Tackle, 10 & Under Tackle, 12 & Under Tackle*). The QCRFL Board of Directors reserves the right to increase or decrease the offerings based on need.

QCRFL member agencies will control their own registration dates, fees, team selection criteria, coach selection, team requirements, etc. The number of teams entered into the league in each age group by individual agencies is at the discretion of the agency. In order to maintain consistency and avoid forfeits due to attrition or injuries, any "team" entered into the league must consist of a minimum of 12 players in the flag division and 15 players in any tackle division.

The Quad County Recreational Football League (QCRFL) maintains an informal Board of Directors to establish and guide the formation and development of the league rules. The board is comprised of representatives from each of the participating agencies. The rules and regulations of the Quad County Recreational Football League (QCRFL) have been developed, discussed and adopted through the cooperation of the QCRFL Board of Directors. The QCRFL rules will be governed by the rules established by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and the rules established by the QCRFL Board of Directors. In the event of a conflict, QCRFL rules will take precedence. The QCRFL Board of Directors shall have the authority to establish additional rules and/or alter current rules if it is beneficial to the program.

These rules are to be utilized and followed during all QCRFL-related events including practices, games, etc. Additionally, any agency who hosts a tournament, jamboree or event involving any other QCRFL member agency shall not deviate from these rules. Under no circumstances shall any agencies or coaches make an agreement to waive or alter any rules without prior knowledge and majority consensus of the QCRFL Board of Directors. Any activity hosted by, or attended by, member organizations or their participants that are not directly scheduled by or in accordance with QCRFL programming are considered agency specific and non QCRFL-related.

# PLAYERS

## A. Eligibility

1. All players must meet the age eligibility requirements, as listed below, to participate.

Division	Ages	Notes
Flag	5 & 6	All participants must meet the minimum age, and may not exceed the maximum age on August 1 <sup>st</sup> of the current year
7 & 8 Tackle	7 & 8	
10 & Under Tackle	7*, 8*, 9, & 10	
12 & Under Tackle	9*, 10*, 11, & 12	

\* 7, 8, 9 & 10 year olds "playing up" must have the approval of the QCRFL board member for their agency.

2. All players must submit an official copy of their birth certificate to their registering agency for certification by a member of the QCRFL Board of Directors.
3. No player may be rostered as a member of or participate with more than one QCRFL team.
4. All players must be formally registered with the agency for which they are participating.

## B. Weight Limits

1. All players must meet the weight eligibility requirements to participate as listed below. Individual agencies will certify the initial weights of the participants in their program, and players will be subject to weigh-ins at game sites at the discretion of their opponent.

Division	Maximum Weight
Flag	None
7 & 8 Tackle	115 lbs.
10 & Under Tackle	135 lbs.
12 & Under Tackle	170 lbs. <b>(Players weighing between 161lbs. and 170lbs. must have helmets clearly marked, and may only play center, guard or tackle positions on the offensive line. "Tackle-eligible" is not allowed.)</b>

2. The use of artificial devices or unsafe methods for the purpose of reducing the weight of any player is expressly prohibited. This includes the use of over-exertion, steam of any form or manner, and any other devices such as rubber suits, plastic jackets, etc. Any coach, team or agency representative found to be in violation of this rule is subject to sanctions up to, and including, suspension from the QCRFL.

## C. Mandatory Play Rule (MPR)

1. Each player dressed and in attendance at game time must play a minimum of 6 plays per game.
2. The plays must be from the line of scrimmage.
3. Kick-offs, extra points and free-kicks shall not be used in fulfilling the MPR requirement.
4. A play shall not count toward fulfillment of the MPR if the play results in a penalty that causes the down to be replayed.
5. All plays must be "active plays" that do not have the intent to minimize the action or integrity of the play. Plays such as, but not limited to, quarterback kneel-downs (Victory Formation) shall not be considered as active plays.
6. Players who are physically unable to perform due to injury, illness, or weight limit issues and those being held out for disciplinary reasons, may be on the sideline in their jerseys, but may not wear their shoulder pads and helmet. Players ejected from a game may remain on the bench, provided they

remove their helmet and shoulder pads. (Exceptions to the MPR exist and may be found in the Games section under Roster Verification and Weigh-In.)

## D. Equipment

All players participating in tackle programs must have the following equipment in order to participate in any game or practice involving contact.

1. Helmet with face guard and chin strap (*must be NOCSAE approved/certified*)
2. Shoulder Pads
3. Pants (*one piece or shell*)
4. Jersey (numbered 1-99; "0" & "00" are illegal)
  - a. *Number ranges for specific positions are NOT in effect in the QCRFL.*
5. Hip Pads
6. Thigh Pads
7. Knee Pads
8. Mouth Guard (*must be attached with keeper strap*)
9. Non-detachable Rubber Cleats or Sneakers
  - a. Detachable, screw-in and metal cleats are not permitted
10. Eyeglasses, when worn, shall be athletically approved construction with safety glass.
11. Any other special protective equipment (*neck rolls, wrist pads, medically necessary items, etc.*) may be worn, but are subject to inspection and may be prohibited by referees if deemed unsafe. Hard casts are prohibited.

# COACHES & SPECTATORS

## A. Eligibility

1. Head Coaches must be at least 21 years old; Assistant Coaches must be at least 18 years old.
2. All coaches must register with and meet the requirements of the agency which they represent.
3. Teams may designate up to five (5) coaches / representatives on the sideline; this includes all head coaches, assistant coaches, trainers, team parents, etc.
4. No one other than players, cheerleaders, and designated coaches are allowed on the field area without the specific consent of site officials and/or referees.

## B. Expectations

1. Coaches shall strive to provide a safe environment for their players.
2. The head coach is responsible for his actions and his teams' assistant coaches, players and spectators.
3. Coaches and spectators shall set a good example, and display proper sportsmanship. Use of profanity, demeaning or demoralizing others, and the use of alcohol and tobacco on the field is prohibited.
4. Coaches and Spectators shall observe all local facility rules.
5. Persons ejected or asked to leave must leave the stadium area. Failure to do so in a timely fashion may result in forfeit and/or further suspension.

*Note: The stadium area includes parking facilities on the stadium/school/park grounds.*
6. Coaches shall accept the decisions of officials without undue argument or display.
7. Coaches shall remain on the sidelines at all times with the following exceptions.
  - a. Timeouts: One coach permitted in the huddle
  - b. Flag and 7&8 Tackle Division: One coach from each team is permitted in the backfield of his/her respective team. Coaches must remain 5 yards behind their last player, and must make every effort to not interfere with plays in progress.

# PRACTICES

## A. Commencement

1. No practices may begin prior to July 27<sup>th</sup>.

## B. Conditioning and Safety

1. All players must complete a minimum of 10 hours of “conditioning” prior to participating in any physical contact drills.
  - a. July 27<sup>th</sup>- August 4<sup>th</sup>: Helmets Only
  - b. August 5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>: Helmet and Shoulder Pads only
  - c. August 12<sup>th</sup> – End of Season: Full Pads / Full Contact
2. Camps, clinics, etc. DO NOT count toward required conditioning hours.
3. In the event of severe weather, teams should be removed from the field to a secure location.
4. Drills generally considered unsafe (*full speed, head-on blocking and tackling drills, “bull in the ring”, head to head contact drills, etc.*) are prohibited. Angled drills are permitted.
5. The amount of full contact drills (full speed drills and scrimmaging) at practices is limited to no more than 1/3 of practice time

## C. Frequency and Duration

1. Split practices (*offense only / defense only, etc.*) are prohibited.
2. For the restrictions below, a week = Monday – Sunday

Division	Frequency (Max.)	Duration (Max.)	Notes
Flag	2 Days / Wk.	1 ½ Hrs / Day	All practices must end by 9:00pm*
Tackle (All)	3 Days / Wk.	2 Hrs* / Day	

\* ***Individual departments have the right to impose/require an earlier end time at their discretion.***

# GAMES

## A. General Information

1. All games will be considered regulation games if in accordance with these playing rules.
2. Games may be cancelled by officials at any time if conditions are considered unsuitable. Make-up games may or may not be scheduled; any re-schedules are at the discretion of the QCRFL Board of Directors.
3. Teams unable to field the minimum number of required players at any time will be forfeited. A 10-minute “grace period” will be allowed beginning at the scheduled game time.
4. No protests will be accepted.
  - a. Any concerns about officiating, timing, etc should be directed to the team’s agency representative.
  - b. Rule and ruling clarifications may be addressed to the referees calmly and respectfully.
  - c. Judgment calls and referee decisions should be accepted and viewed as impartial, fair, and called by the referees to best of their ability.
5. Individual QCRFL agencies shall determine if admission will be charged at their game site.
  - a. The following are not subject to admission fees. \*
    - i. Rostered Players and Coaches (5 max.) in attendance for a scheduled game
    - ii. Uniformed Cheerleaders & Cheerleading Coaches (2 max.)
    - iii. QCRFL Board Members & QCRFL Member Agency designated staff and associates.

**\* All coaches should have a league-issued pass for admission to be waived.**

b. In the event that admission is charged, the fees may not exceed those listed below.

Age Category	Regular Season	Playoff Games
Ages 5 & Under	FREE	FREE
Ages 6-12	\$2.00	\$3.00
Ages 13 & Older	\$3.00	\$4.00

## **B. The Playing Field**

1. Tackle games shall be played on a regulation-sized field with standard markings.
2. Flag games shall be 50 yards long (*25 yard line to 25 yard line*) and 80 feet wide (*sideline to center of regulation field*).
3. All game fields must have a regulation goal post and working scoreboard with a working clock that is visible to officials, teams and spectators.
  - a. QCRFL Board of Directors reserves the right to make exception on a case by case basis.

## **C. Equipment & Staff**

1. Host agencies shall supply all necessary field equipment such as field markers, pylons/cones, down indicator, chain set, verifiable working scale, game ball(s), and chain crew.
2. Host agencies shall supply a minimum of three (3) officials for regular season games and four (4) officials for playoff games for tackle division games and a minimum of two (2) officials for regular season games and three (3) officials for playoff games for flag division games.
3. Host agencies shall supply a chain crew. Chain crews must be impartial and refrain from openly cheering and/or addressing players.
4. **Host agency shall supply a water cooler for visiting teams.**
5. The Official Game Ball(s) for QCRFL play are as follows: Wilson K2 (Flag & 7/8 Tackle) and Wilson TDJ (10 & Under and 12 & Under)
6. All players must be equipped as outlined in the *Players* section above.
7. Sideline walkie-talkies, telephones, or other electronic communication equipment shall not be used in League games.

## **D. Roster Verification & Weigh-In**

1. Each team should, at each game, at the time of weigh-in, have a completed and up to date copy of their roster.
2. Weigh-in should be scheduled for 30 minutes prior to game time.
3. Any deviation (jersey number changes, players not in attendance, etc.) from the *Official Roster* as issued by the QCRFL must be disclosed at weigh-in.
4. **All players eligible to participate in the game are to be present at weigh-in, and will be subject to a weight check.**
  - a. Any player who arrives late and cannot be subject to be roster verified and/or weighed prior to kickoff may not play until after halftime, and their mandatory play is reduced to 4 plays. Players arriving after the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half are ineligible.
  - b. For the purposes of weigh-in, players may reduce equipment/ clothing worn to a minimum of shorts, shirt and socks. Removal of more clothing to meet weight requirements is prohibited.

## E. Timing

1. Flag Division
  - a. Two 20-minute running halves; halftime will last 5 minutes.
  - b. Clock will stop during the last two minutes of each half on incomplete passes, penalties, time-outs, out of bounds, and after a touchdown.
  - c. Each team will be allotted 2 two-minute timeouts per half.
  - d. Ball will be placed in the center of the field at the conclusion of each down.
  - e. Teams will have 30 seconds to put the ball in play after the ready signal.
2. Tackle Divisions
  - a. QCRFL clock will be based on Junior Varsity clock regulations; halftime will last 8 minutes.
  - b. Each team will be allotted 3 time outs per half (one player may go to sidelines or 1 coach may go to huddle).
3. Overtime
  - a. Any games tied at the end of regulation will utilize the NCHSAA 10 yard line overtime procedure.

## F. Kickoffs & Punts

1. Kickoffs
  - a. Flag Division: There will be no kickoffs or punts in the flag division.
  - b. 7 & 8 Tackle Division: No Kickoffs. Teams will start possessions at their own 35 yard line.
  - c. All Other Divisions: Normal kickoff rules apply.
2. Punts
  - a. Offensive team must declare their intent to punt to the officials; offensive players may not cross the line of scrimmage until after the ball is kicked.
  - b. Defensive players may not cross the line of scrimmage until after the ball is kicked.
  - c. Fake punts are not allowed once the declaration has been made.
  - d. **The ball must be snapped in the traditional manner** (*between the center's legs*).

## G. Scoring

1. The following scoring values will be assigned.

Division	Touchdown	PAT (Run)	PAT (Pass)	PAT (Kick)	Safety	Field Goal	Forfeit Score
Flag	6	1	2*	N/A	N/A	N/A	1-0
7 & 8 Tackle	6	1	2*	2	2	3	1-0
10U Tackle	6	1	1	2	2	3	1-0
12U Tackle	6	1	1	2	2	3	1-0

\* *Pass must be caught in the endzone to receive 2 points; passes caught in the field of play and subsequently run in to the endzone shall be considered a run.*

2. Mercy Rule
  - a. 1<sup>st</sup> Half: If a team is trailing by 24 points or more, there will be no more kick-offs, the trailing team will be awarded the ball at the 15 yard line. All regulation rules will apply. The process will be repeated for each of the trailing team's offensive possession until the deficit is reduced below 24 points. The clock will run until the deficit is reduced below 24 points.

- b. 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter: If the mercy rule is in effect in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, the same process will be followed with the following exception: the clock will run for the rest of the game.
- c. 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter: If the mercy rule is still in effect at the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, or goes into effect any time during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, the game will end at that point.
- d. During this period, the leading team must use reserve players in lieu of first string players whenever possible.
- e. While the Mercy Rule is in effect, the clock will stop only for injuries, time-outs, at the end of a quarter, and immediately after a score that reduces the deficit to less than 24 points (*1<sup>st</sup> half only*).

## **H. Penalties**

1. Penalties shall be called in accordance with NFHS guidelines unless otherwise specified herein.

## **I. Playoffs**

1. Playoff sites will be pre-determined by the QCRFL Board of Directors, not based on records or game results.
2. Playoff seeding will be established as follows: (1) Overall Record (2) Head to Head Results (3) Record vs. Common Opponents (4) Coin Flip by board member with no competing interest in the result.