

PLAY

LAWTON

TACKLE FOOTBALL

RULE BOOK

Rev. 07/2023

2023 EDITION

PURPOSE

This program is designed to give children an opportunity to play sports under good adult supervision. The primary goal of the program is the molding of good character; winning and the attainment of exceptional athletic skills are secondary.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

Every team in the program should designate a Manager who serves as an organizer and contact person for that team. Their primary responsibility is to obtain competent coaches.

All persons accepting responsibility in this program must strive to teach good sportsmanship, good health habits, and good citizenship. They should exercise the type of behavior that will set a good example for players and follow the rules and regulations. Embarrassment of any player or team must be avoided. Abuse of players will not be tolerated. All coaches should strive to practice and play all players on their team. The participants should be exposed to all game conditions, regardless of wins or losses.

Play Lawton does not issue cash refunds. We do not consider refunds unless a program or event is canceled and is not rescheduled.

COACHES

We want to take the opportunity to thank all of you fine coaches for the many hours you work with our youth. Without you, the sports programs could not possibly function so successfully.

We appreciate that you are helping to build good character traits in the children you coach. Thank you for being patient and considerate with the players, while at the same time maintaining control of your team.

We hope at the end of the season, you may evaluate your work by answering, "Yes" to the following question: "Did I build good character in the players on my team?"

This manual should be a tool to help you in the quest to build good character. We hope you will find the information helpful.

Thank you,
Play Lawton

COACHING GUIDELINES

I agree as coach or assistant coach to comply at all times with the provisions listed below:

1. **To read the “2023 Tackle Football Rulebook” that pertains to the sport that I am coaching and will comply with these rules.**
2. To never make abusive or insulting remarks to or about officials of the game, officials of the programs, or opposing coaches and players.
3. To hold regularly scheduled practices and that my assistants or I will be there on time
4. Not to use profanity around players or consume alcoholic beverages before or during any meeting with the players.
5. At all times I will set a good example of sportsmanship for my players, keeping in mind that the primary goal of this program is to build character. I will make the maximum effort to keep my spectators, parents and fans from harassing the game officials. I will congratulate the opponents and have my players do the same.
6. I will play all players who practice regularly and with maximum effort, as the situation permits.
7. I will never take my team off the court until the game is finished.
8. Reasons for Ejection:
 - Using profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures;
 - Attempting to influence a decision by an official;
 - Disrespectfully addressing an official;
 - Indicating objections to an Official's decision;
 - Using a mechanical device to attract attention;
 - Holding an unauthorized conference;
 - Failure of a team to be ready to play;
 - Failure of the head coach, following verification, to have his/her player(s) wear legal and/or required equipment;
 - Be on the playing field except as a substitute or replaced player;
 - Be outside the designated area (i.e., team/coaches box, bench or dugout);

I understand that the penalty for violation of any of the above is automatic suspension from coaching until reinstated.

GAME DISMISSAL/EJECTION

When a coach or assistant coach is dismissed or ejected from a game, said coach must contact Play Lawton to schedule a reinstatement meeting with the League Director before being permitted to participate further in the youth sports programs. It is the coach's responsibility to contact the sports office and set the meeting. A coach dismissed from a game may be penalized, by sitting out the next game, suspended for the remainder of the season or may not be reinstated to coach in Play Lawton youth sports programs.

If a player or coach is playing (coaching) in two different age divisions and is suspended in one age division; the player or coach cannot play (coach) games in the second age division due to being on suspension. While on suspension, a player cannot participate in scheduled Play Lawton activities until the suspension has been served and the player or coach is reinstated.

COACHES ON THE SIDELINE

A maximum of four (4) coaches are allowed on the sideline.

ROSTERS

All players must be registered, paid, have a waiver signed, and be on the DaySmart Roster prior to game start. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the League Director. Players who do not meet the requirements will not play.

Playoff Rosters - players must play in a minimum of two (2) regular season games AND meet all previous roster requirements to be eligible to play in playoffs. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the League Director.

USING AN ILLEGAL PLAYER

Any coach found using illegal players on their team will be automatically suspended from coaching the remainder of the season. If the infraction accrues and/or is discovered at the end of the regular season or playoffs; the suspension will carry to the next coached sport. In addition to being suspended, the coach may also be placed on probation by the Play Lawton Management until the end of the athletic season at which time a decision will be made as to whether the coach may continue to coach in Play Lawton youth sports programs. Any game an illegal player participates in will be forfeited. It is the coach's responsibility to ensure all players are registered.

MISCONDUCT

Play lawton reserves the right to suspend any player, coach, and/or fan for misconduct of any kind. Examples of misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- Fighting
- Profanity
- Obscene gesture
- Disrespectfully addressing an official
- Objecting to an official's decision
- Improper contact with an official
- Illegal player

NOTE: If a player legally playing in two different age divisions is suspended in one age division; the player cannot participate in any games until the suspension has been served and the player is reinstated. When a player is suspended, the player is not allowed to participate in any scheduled Parks & Recreation sporting activities. That player will miss games in both age divisions until the suspension is served and the player is reinstated.

Misconduct reports will be filed with the League Director. Game Officials, Field Marshals, the League Director and/or his representative may eject a player, coach or fan from the game or game site, as he or she deems necessary. All other player ejection penalties will be imposed at the discretion of the League Director. The League Director is responsible for deciding the level of penalty imposed in cases of misconduct.

REINSTATEMENT

Coaches must be reinstated by the League Director before being permitted to participate further in the youth sports program. It is the coach's responsibility to contact the sports office and set the meeting.

ASSAULT ON AN OFFICIAL

Oklahoma Statutes

Title 21. Crimes and Punishments

§21-650.1. Athletic contests - Assault and battery upon referee, umpire, etc.

Universal Citation: 21 OK Stat § 21-650.1 (2016)

Every person who, without justifiable or excusable cause and with intent to do bodily harm, commits any assault, battery, assault and battery upon the person of a referee, umpire, timekeeper, coach, official, or any person having authority in connection with any amateur or professional athletic contest is guilty of a misdemeanor and is punishable by imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding one (1) year or by a fine not exceeding One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00), or by both such fine and imprisonment.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

8U DIVISION

Players who turn 9 prior to August 1 of the current year are not eligible unless they are in 2nd or 3rd Grade (Grade Level Exception). Also, any player turning 10 prior to December 1 will not be eligible. Players who are 8U are eligible for this division regardless of grade.

- **WEIGHT LIMIT:** There is a 105 lb weight limit for this division, additionally, players must be 80 lbs or less to carry the ball and/or catch the ball. Players who weigh in more than 80 lbs, but are under the 105 lb limit must wear two stickers at the back of their helmet.

10U DIVISION

Players who turn 11 prior to August 1 of the current year are not eligible unless they are in 4th or 5th Grade (Grade Level Exception). Also, any player turning 12 prior to December 1 will not be eligible. Players who are 10U are eligible for this division regardless of grade.

12U DIVISION

Players who turn 13 prior to August 1 of the current year are not eligible unless they are in 6th or 7th Grade (Grade Level Exception). Also, any player turning 14 prior to December 1 will not be eligible. Players who are 12U are eligible for this division regardless of grade.

Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the League Director. Proof must be provided in order for a player to qualify for the Grade Level Exception (GLE). **Maximum of two (2) GLE allowed per team.**

RECREATION LEAGUE PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

A player must meet the age requirement for their age division. A player cannot be over the division age before the age cutoff date. Parents should consider a player's skill level of play when registering.

Recreational Leagues are for players who are learning the game and developing their skills. Recreational leagues will play seven (7) regular season games and a postseason championship tournament for top teams.

COMPETITIVE LEAGUE PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

A player must meet the age requirement for their age division. A player cannot be over the division age before the age cutoff date. Parents should consider a player's skill level of play when registering.

Competitive Leagues are for players who are more skilled or have more experience. Competitive leagues will play seven (7) regular season games and a postseason championship tournament for top teams.

PLAYER MOVE UP

Players at the top of their division (10yr old in 10U or 12yr old in 12U) may play up a division. The parents or legal guardian must contact the League Director for approval prior to participating in any league games. The League Director may move players up a division to maintain competitive balance.

FREE AGENT REQUEST

Free agents will be placed on to rosters when team registration is finished. If a free agent has a specific team request they can submit it to the League Director via email or by registration note in DaySmart.

MAXIMUM TEAM SIZE

8U/10U/12U Division: 30 Players Per Team

If you have one to two players over the max team size, email programs@playlawton.com to request additional players. Your request will be reviewed and, if approved, the player(s) will be added to your roster. We recommend keeping team sizes smaller to allow for more playing time for each player.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION

Birth Certificates or Report Cards may be required to verify player eligibility if questions or concerns arise. Birth certificates made from affidavits are not acceptable unless approved by the League Director. Report cards must be from the current school year. Documents may be required on protest of eligibility. Parents should be prepared to present verification documents if requested. The player is not eligible to play until they can be verified by supporting documentation.

Protesting an Illegal Player

Only the **Head Coach** or **Team Manager** may protest the eligibility of any player on an opposing team at any time. The protest must be filed, in writing (email), with the League Director within **seven (7) days** after the supposed illegal player participated in a game. If the protest is deemed valid, it will be reviewed by the League Director. Players suspected of being ineligible will be unable to participate until their eligibility has been verified.

TIE BREAKER ANALYSIS

If there is a tie in the standings at the end of regular season play, the following tie breaker configurations will be used to break the tie or ties:

- Winning Percentage
- Head-To-Head
- Head-To-Head Differential
- Total Point Differential
- Lowest Number of Forfeits
- Coin Toss

COACHES

- Coaches are expected to adhere to the coaching guidelines and code of conduct outlined above.
- Coaches and Team Managers are responsible for the conduct of their players and parents.

PARENTS/SPECTATORS

Parents/spectators will be held to the same code of conduct as coaches.

Parent/Spectator/Fan Misconduct

The following punishments will be handed down if a parent/spectator/fan is thrown out of the game for misconduct (defined under 'Misconduct'):

- **FIRST STRIKE:** If a parent/spectator/fan is removed from a game for misconduct, the TEAM will receive a warning which lasts the entire season, including playoffs.
- **SECOND STRIKE:** If a parent/spectator/fan is removed from a game for misconduct, after the team has already received their first strike, the TEAM will immediately forfeit the game they are playing, resulting in a score of 24-0 for the team not forfeiting.
- **THIRD STRIKE:** If a parent/spectator/fan is removed from a game for misconduct, after the team has already received their first and second strikes, the TEAM will forfeit their remaining games for the season, and will not be eligible for playoffs, regardless of record.

ALL Misconduct will be reviewed by the League Director

BOTTOM LINE:

As a parent/spectator/fan who is passionate about the sport, your child, and/or your team. It is your right to feel emotion, for example, happiness of your team scoring a touchdown, or frustration with a call that didn't go your way. However, it is also your RESPONSIBILITY, to conduct yourself in a way that is appropriate and aligns with the purpose as stated above. Misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated.

INCLIMATE WEATHER

Visit www.facebook.com/playlawton to get game updates. Information on weather cancellations will be posted by 4:00 PM if Play Lawton staff has determined that games should be canceled. The League Director, Field Marshals, or game officials may terminate any game due to inclement weather. Games canceled due to weather, electrical issues or any other reason are not guaranteed to be made up. Every effort will be made to reschedule a canceled game.

TACKLE FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES

GENERAL

Play shall be governed by the current NFHS Football Rulebook, except where modified in this rulebook.

8U LEAGUE ONLY

WEIGH IN

Play Lawton will host a weigh-in prior to the start of the season, all players must weigh prior to season start.

- Players weighing over 105 lbs will be ineligible to play in the 8U division.
- Players weighing over 80 lbs but below 105 lbs will wear two stickers on the back of their helmet, signifying they cannot be in a ball carrying position (Quarterback, Running Back, Wide Receiver, or Tight End). This designation will be defined as Over the Weight Limit (OWL).
- If a player who is an OWL comes into possession of the ball, the ball is DEAD AT THE SPOT.
- OWLs may not receive kickoffs or punts. However, if the ball touches an OWL on a kickoff or punt, it is considered a live ball.

TIMING/TIMEOUTS

1ST Quarter: 10 minute running clock

2ND Quarter: 8 minute running clock, last 2 minutes stop clock

HALFTIME: 4 minutes

3RD Quarter: 10 minute running clock

4TH Quarter: 8 minute running clock, last 2 minutes stop clock

Running clock will only stop for Injury or Coach's/Official's Timeout. Two minute clock will be kept by the officials

Each team is allowed two (2), sixty (60) second timeouts, per half. Unused timeouts do not accumulate over the course of a match. Additionally, game officials may call time at their own discretion.

START OF THE GAME

At the start of each game, the officials will meet with the head coaches and team captains. During this meeting the official will do a coin toss to determine who gains possession of the ball first. The AWAY team captain will call the toss, if they call it correctly, they will have the option to receive the opening kick, or defer to the second half. If they call it incorrectly, the home team will have the same options.

PLAY CLOCK

There will be a 40 second play clock, which starts at the placement of the ball. 5 yard penalty for delay of game.

OVERTIME

There will be no overtime during the regular season, if the score is tied at the end of regulation, the game will be recorded as a tie.

- **Playoffs:** a coin toss will take place with the same rules as the pregame coin toss to determine possession.
 - Each team will have at least one offensive opportunity per overtime period.
 - Teams will start with the ball on the 15 yard line and have 4 downs to score.

SCORING

All extra point attempts will be from the 2 yard line.

Running Play: 1 Point

Passing Play: 2 Points

FIELD SIZE

8U: 100' x 240'

10U/12U: 160' x 360' (Regulation Size)

MERCY RULE

If a team is ahead by 28 or more points after the 3RD Quarter, the game will be over.

KICKOFF/FREE KICK

8U Division

There will be no kickoffs in 8U, the offense will start with the ball on the 20 yard line.

10U/12U DIVISION

Kickoffs: 40 yard line

Safety: 20 yard line

- Spot of the catch after a fair catch, unless the fair catch occurs inside the 25 yard line, in which case the ball will be placed at the 25 yard line.

PUNTS

All punts will be considered free kicks, this means the defense (receiving team) may not rush the punter. The defense (receiving team) must have four players lined up on the line of scrimmage for a punt.

EQUIPMENT

SHOES

Tennis shoes, shoes with plastic or rubber cleats may be worn. **ABSOLUTELY NO METAL CLEATS.**

BALL

Size 7 (Junior) Footballs will be used, the officials will check balls at the beginning of the game.

MOUTHPIECES

Mouthpieces of all colors, including clear, are allowed. Mouthpieces that are detached from the facemask are allowed, however, it is recommended that players have mouthpieces that are attached to the facemask.

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

All players must wear a helmet (with a facemask), mouthpiece, shoulder pads, thigh pads and knee pads. Hip pads and rib protection may be worn but are not required.

All equipment is subject to inspection and approval by the game officials or Play Lawton Staff

VOLUNTEERS

Each team will provide three (3) volunteers to work the chains and the down marker. The home team will work the first half, the away team will work the second half.

ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

The administrative area is up to two yards off of the sideline and extends all the way to the end line (back of the end zone) on both sides of the field. Parent volunteers who are working the chains and down markers are allowed inside of the administrative area, however, they **MUST NOT** impede the progress of the game in any way. If a game official determines that a volunteer is impeding the proceedings of the game, that volunteer may be asked to return to the spectator area and will be replaced.

OFFICIALS

The referee has authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. The referee's decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.

The game officials shall assume authority for the contest, including penalizing unsportsmanlike acts, at the start of the scheduled game time - an earlier time if required - or as soon thereafter as they are able to be present.

The game officials' authority extends through the referee's declaration of the end of the game including overtime. The game officials retain clerical authority over the game through the completion of any reports, including those imposing disqualifications, that are responsive to actions occurring while the game officials had jurisdiction. Play Lawton may intercede in the event of unusual incidents that occur before, during or after the game officials' jurisdiction has ended or in the event that a game is terminated prior to the conclusion of regulation play.

The game officials shall have the authority to make decisions for infractions of the rules. The use of any replay or television monitoring equipment by the game officials in making any decision relating to the game is prohibited.

Visit [DaySmart Recreation](http://DaySmartRecreation.com) to check your team's schedule and scores.

For questions or concerns email programs@playlawton.com