

## ***SIYAA Rookie (Mighty Mite) League Football Rules***

### **Purpose:**

To provide a clearly defined set of rules that players may play by, coaches may coach by, and officials may officiate by through the elimination of multiple interpretations of playing situations, emphasize player safety and fundamental execution.

### **Methods:**

Amplification, clarification, and definition of existing playing rules.

**NOTE: These rules are meant to make the games exciting for both the fans, parents, and players, to give each School the opportunity to win, to prepare the players for the next tier of competition while teaching the fundamentals of football and good sportsmanship to players, coaches and parents, and most of all, have fun.**

## *SIYAA Rookie (Mighty Mite) League Football Rules*

### **1. Scheduling**

- The South Iredell Young Athletes Association (SIYAA) Rookie League shall consist of one (1) conference composed of teams fielded by the association's schools.
- No team should have more than 25 players on their roster.
- The SIYAA Football Coordinator(s) will determine the regular season and playoff schedules with guidance of the SIYAA Board.
- The regular season will begin on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in September following Labor Day.
- The first (1<sup>st</sup>) game will begin promptly at the set time on the scheduled Saturday. The SIYAA Football Coordinator(s) will determine game times on the scheduled Saturdays. Each succeeding game will start right after the completion of the preceding game.
- The SIYAA Football Coordinator(s) will reschedule any rained out games on Sunday at a rescheduled time.
- Regular season standings will determine playoff seedings; in case of a tie the game played against each other will be used first to determine seeding within the tied group(s). If three or more teams are tied, and no one team has beaten all the other tied group, then a coin toss by the SIYAA Football Coordinator(s) will be used (If there is a tie between 2 teams that have not played, a playoff game will be played during the week prior to the beginning of the playoffs to determine the team that will advance, if possible). Coaches or the Coordinator(s) of each team involved must be present for the seeding determination.
- All schedule conflicts must be addressed by the September SIYAA Board meeting. Schedule will be finalized after this meeting.

### **2. Eligibility**

- A player shall play for the SIYAA School that he/she attends unless otherwise decided by the SIYAA Board. The SIYAA Board before the first (1<sup>st</sup>) game must approve any player(s) not attending the school.
- Players should be in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade for their respective schools during the current fall football season. Kindergartener participants are not recommended and should only be considered and allowed if needed for team forming needs and/or if the parent signs a waiver.
- A copy of the participant's birth certificate and legal address of participant's parents or guardian must be verified by a school's SIYAA board member and SIYAA Football Coordinator(s) before the first (1<sup>st</sup>) game. If a player(s) is deemed unqualified or illegal after the first (1<sup>st</sup>) game, then all games that the questioned player has participated in will be forfeited. The SIYAA Board will determine any disciplinary actions needed.
- A signed copy of the ICPRD Concussion Acknowledgement & Release as well as the SIYAA Code of Conduct signed by the player and parent(s) and/or guardian(s) will be turned in by the coach with the team roster during the weigh-in.
- A player may not be dropped from a team except for bona fide disciplinary reasons approve by the SIYAA Board. Bona fide includes but is not limited to: (1) use of profane language (2) unexcused missed practices (3) un-sportsmanship like conduct at games or practices (4) disrupting inter-squad relationships (5) rude behavior and lack of respect to coaches and teammates.

*(Eligibility Con't)*

- Players may not be added to the roster after the first (1<sup>st</sup>) regular season game.
- No eligible ball carrier or pass receiver may weigh in excess of eighty (80) pounds; stripped at initial weigh in. Players over eighty (80) pounds may not line up in the backfield or at the split end position. Any player weighing over eighty (80) pounds must play on the offensive line and must line up in a 3 point stance. Interior line positions are center, guard, or tackle. Any player, regardless of weight may play anywhere on the defensive side of the ball. These players will be marked with a piece of tape applied to the front of the helmet. Each player will be weighed in prior to the first (1<sup>st</sup>) game to meet the above requirements.
- The SIYAA Football Coordinator(s) will announce the weigh-in times prior to the first game. At the weigh-in, Coaches will furnish an official master roster listing players in numeric order by jersey number, signed forms supplied by the SIYAA and ICRPD and copies of each player's birth certificate. Players must also bring their game day helmets to the weigh-in.

### **3. Equipment**

- K2 footballs (or league approved equivalent) must be used for the Rookie League.
- No tinted visors on helmets
- Mouthpieces must be attached to helmets and **cannot** be white or clear
- No head coverings on players heads under helmets
- Play cards are allowed on arms only
- No sports bracelets
- Players may wear compression sleeves or a standard sweat band on forearm
- 4-way chin straps must be used
- Player must wear same jersey number all season, no switching jerseys.

### **4. Practice**

- Preseason practice may begin on August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The SIYAA requires six (6) full practices for conditioning prior to FULL CONTACT for all players. During the acclimation period, the first three (3) practices will be without pads, but a helmet may be worn. During the final three (3) day of acclimation, student-athletes are to practice in full pads but again are not to have full contact.
- Full Contact is defined as any intentional football activity by a player where the goal is to take one (1) or more competing players to the ground as the result of the activity.
- After the acclimation period and prior to the first game, practices will be limited to three (3) per week with a two (2) hour limitation per session.
- Each team is also allowed three (3) scrimmages with other teams of the same age group. Schools having more than one (1) team can scrimmage each other one (1) time and count as part of the three (3) scrimmages. Kicking and special teams cannot be at full speed. These scrimmages will count as one (1) practice session and should not last longer than two (2) hours.
- After the first game, practices will be limited to two (2) per week, each with a two (2) hour limitation per session.

## 5. Game Play

- Game day skill sessions and warm-ups must be on the grounds of the scheduled field and may begin at the START of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of the game preceding your start time.
- Only six (5) coaches, one (1) manager may be on the sidelines during a game. The only people allowed on the sidelines are coaches, football players, chain crew (if home team), cheerleaders and water boy(s). **NO PARENTS ARE TO BE ALLOWED TO SPECTATE FROM THE SIDELINE.**
- Home team must provide three volunteers to be the chain crew. Chain crew volunteers must be at least 13 years old, and there is to be no cheering or coaching from the chain crew.
- To be eligible to participate in the first (1<sup>st</sup>) scheduled game, a player(s) must attend at least nine (9) scheduled practices (three (3) must be in pads with full contact).
- **MINIMAL PLAY TIME** All players who are in attendance at the game **must play 6 downs before the third quarter of the game** on offense, defense or special teams. The only players exempt from the all play rule are:
  - i. Players who have missed more than half of a team's schedule practices for the week
  - ii. Players who have been suspended by the SIYAA For conduct reasons.
  - iii. Players who for health reasons cannot play the minimum amount.
- Coaches must notify the SIYAA Football Coordinator(s) by email as well as the head official and opposing head coach prior to the game of any player who is exempt from the all play rule and the reason.
- Upon investigation & review by the SIYAA Coordinator(s) of Sport & Executive Board the following consequences will apply for any team that does not comply with rules of required minimal play time for each player on their team will forfeit of game.

## 6. Playing Rules

### **NCHSAA rules will apply unless specified in these rules.**

- The field will be eighty (80) yards.
- Games will consist of four (4) six (6) minute quarters with ten (10) minute half time period. Any team not ready for the kickoff after the ten (10) minute half will be penalized ten (10) yards.
- The game clock will only be stopped by the officials and may be stopped for reasons including but not limited to: timeouts, at the end of a quarter, out of bounds play, on a penalty, player injury, change of possession and official measurements.
- Upon the referee's signal, the offense will be given a 45 second play clock from the end of the previous play to start a new play. Failure to start the new play within the 45 second play clock will result in a 5 yard delay of game penalty.
- Each team will be allowed 3 timeouts during each half of a regulation game.
- **MERCY RULE.** Any team with an 18 point lead will stay on defense until the other team scores. No downs will be kept. The clock will operate as it normally would. The team that is behind will take possession of the ball on the opposing team's 35 yard line. Once a team is no longer 18 points behind regular rules will apply.
- In the event of a tie, the NCHSAA sudden death method of determining the winner will apply.
- If the ball touches any players marked with tape during special team play, the ball will be marked down at the first point of contact. If a player marked with tape receives the ball on offense, the play will be considered an incomplete pass. If a player marked with tape intercepts the ball on defense, the ball will be marked down at that point.

*(Playing Rules Con't)*

- Two coaches from each team will be allowed on the field during play, one for the line and one for the backfield. The coaches may verbally and physically line up their players. Once players are in place, the coach must move back (10 yards from the deepest player on both offence and defense) and cannot coach players, point out the ball or have any physical contact with players while play is in process. **Note:** The play calling and alignment must be done quickly as possible.
- **Do not try to officiate the game or try to influence the officials.** After one (1) warning, the coach or coaches will be asked to leave the field and remain on the sidelines. Another coach will be allowed to take their place on the field.

### **7. Kickoffs/Punts**

- There will be no kicking game. Playing field will be 80 yards in length. The ball will be placed on the 35 yard line of the receiving team. On 4th down, the offense will have the option of going for the first down or they may elect to punt, if so the ball will be advanced 30 yards forward from the line of scrimmage. If moving the ball 30 yards puts the ball inside the twenty yard line the ball will be placed on the twenty yard line.

### **8. Offensive Alignment**

- Any NCHSAA offense of formation is allowed.
- All possible ball carriers such as Tight ends and fullbacks must meet weight requirements regardless of whether they carry the ball or not.
- Motion is not allowed.
- Offensive line splits can be no more than two feet. Plays in the A gap will be allowed by the half back only without the full back as lead block. **THERE WILL BE NO QB SNEAK, (MUST RUN OUTSIDE THE TACKLES) FB SNEAK, CENTER SNEAK OR QB DRAW ALLOWED.**

### **9. Defensive Alignment**

- Any NCHSAA alignment is allowed as long as there are no more than six (6) defensive players on the line up head-to-head with and offensive lineman, except the center. No player may line up over the center. **NO DEFENSIVE LINEMAN CAN LINE UP AGAINST THE CENTER OR IN THE 'A GAP'. THE 'A GAP' IS DEFINED AS THE CENTER/GUARD GAP. THIS RULE IS TO ALLOW FOR THE CENTER TO CONCENTRATE ON A GOOD SNAP.** Defensive guards must be head up on the offensive guards and cannot pinch in when the ball is snapped. **PENALTY WILL BE LOSS OF 5 YARDS AND AUTOMATIC 1ST DOWN FOR OFFENSE.**
- Defensive line shall be one yard off the line of scrimmage. And must be in a 3 or 4 point stance at the snap of the ball.
- Linebackers and defensive backs must be at least 3 yards off the line of scrimmage.
- **NO BLITZING WILL BE ALLOWED.** Blitzing is NOT Blitzing shall be defined as any linebacker or defensive back moving toward the line of scrimmage prior to the snap. If this occurs, a ten (10) yard penalty will be assessed.
- Inside the five (5) yard line, a maximum of eight (8) defensive players may be within three (3) yards of the line of scrimmage.
- Any player that intercepts or recovers a fumble can advance the ball no matter the weight except on kickoffs where the ball becomes dead after recovery.

## **10. Coach, Player And Spectator Conduct**

- This is an instructional league for beginning players and only penalties which directly affect the play or for safety concerns will be called. Repetitive offenses will be noted and addressed appropriately.
- It is the responsibility of the head coach to explain rules to his assistants and parents/fans, and to his players. Offenses that do not affect the play should be addressed by the coaches to their players as they occur. Again this is an instructional league. We are to teach these players the correct way to play football.
- Players or Coaches thrown out of a game will not be allowed to participate in the teams next game.
- UNRULY FANS/PARENTS WILL BE GIVEN A WARNING FROM A TEAMS HEAD COACH OR LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVE. A SECOND WARNING WILL RESULT IN THE FAN OR PARENT BEING ASKED TO LEAVE THE GAME. THE OFFENDER WILL BE AFFORDED 5 MINUTES TO LEAVE, AFTERWARD THE TEAM WILL BE FORCED TO FORFEIT THE GAME.
- **AGGRESSIVE FORCEFUL ACTION** The Executive Board of the SIYAA will investigate any reports of aggressive, forceful action towards a child/player during SIYAA events. Several witnesses must verify the report. After investigation & review, if determined forceful action towards a child/player had occurred, the person/coach will receive an automatic two game suspension. (They may attend the game as a spectator only, not to sit or practice with team during two week suspension).
- THESE RULES ARENT MEANT FOR EVERYONE TO LIKE BUT ARE TO ENSURE FAIR PLAY AS THIS IS AN INTRODUCTORY LEAGUE TO TEACH THE PROPER RULES OF THE GAME TO ENSURE SAFETY AND MOST OF ALL, FUN!!!