

2018 FOOTBALL GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

This guide is an annual publication of the Vermont Principals' Association (V.P.A.) standing committee on football. The committee members are doing their best to include all necessary information to assist football schools in the proper procedures in the sport. However, you may recognize errors or omissions. We welcome your suggestions to improve this manual.

RULES CHANGES - The VPA follows the Football rules of the National Federation of State High School Associations. Rules changes are listed on the inside of the 2018 Football Rule book. It is the responsibility of every coach to read these rules changes.

The VPA, the VPA football committee, and the VIFL seek to increase health and safety of student athletes participating in Vermont high school football. The required preseason training practice protocols (listed in the back of this guide) reflect the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) Recommendations and Guidelines for Minimizing Head – Impact Exposure and Concussion Risk in Football.

As of the Fall 2018 season, all VPA Football Schools must have their coaches certified through the USA Football Heads Up Program. Note – schools who do not meet this requirement are placed on a probationary status and are fined \$250.

Please read and study the guide. If you have questions concerning any rule or regulation, call or write the Executive Director for an explanation.

I. POINTS OF EMPHASIS

The following topics are Points of Emphasis for the 2018-2019 year. Please refer to the 2018 NFHS Football Rules Book for a detailed explanation.

- 1. Proper wearing and use of required equipment**
- 2. Blindside Blocks and Defenseless player**
- 3. Pace of play and timing issues**
- 4. Enforcement of penalties for personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct foul**

II. REGULAR SEASON

- The fall season may start on Monday August 13th and will conclude on Saturday November, November 10th. No player shall participate in a scrimmage (interscholastic) until the player has had seven (7) practice sessions* Players must complete 10 practices before their first game. Prior to the first contact practice all players shall receive information on risk awareness and safe tackling techniques.**

A special provision for Spring Football practice is as follows:

That voluntary out of season football practice (grades 9-11) in the State of Vermont shall consist of a maximum of six (6) practice days to be completed in such a manner so that they will not conflict with Winter or Spring Sport Seasons. Furthermore, that the emphasis in this program

shall be on organization, indoctrination, instruction, and experimentation. The only equipment allowed will be limited to helmets and football shoes.

There will be absolutely no contact allowed and these six days will be concluded during the school year. This program is not to be made mandatory for a school's athletes and if any athlete should be involved in post-season competition which presents a conflict (i.e. New England Track Meet), that player will not participate in out-of-season football. It is strongly recommended that all schools choosing to run this program adhere to the seven-day rest period.

Schools with early closing should be given the option to get in spring practice up to the normal school closing in June. It was noted this proposal had been carefully worked out with athletic directors, principals, football committee and Executive Council.

2. Vermont schools may schedule a maximum of nine (9) games excluding the state championship events. No games or scrimmages may be arranged with any squads or teams that are not high school teams. **Note: Division I and III will play an 8 game regular season. Week 9 becomes a Quarter Final play-off game with the remaining 6 teams playing each other.**
3. Each player is eligible to play a maximum number of 36 quarters (which is the number of games allowed for the season times 4 quarters; $9 \times 4 = 36$ quarters, exclusive of overtime). It is recommended a student not compete in more than one game (4 quarters) of interscholastic football in five (5) calendar days.

It is further clarified that special teams' participation should have no bearing on eligibility for the next game (kick-off, kick-off return, punt, punt return, extra point, and field goal).

Varsity starters are ineligible for sub-varsity games.

4. Only captains will be allowed on the field during the pre-game and half-time meetings with officials.
5. **Officials fees for 2018 will be Varsity - \$75 & JV- \$50.**
6. Suspended/Cancelled Games: If a game is suspended (pre-game activities started), officials will receive full fee plus mileage.

If a game is cancelled with adequate prior notification (2 hours) no fee!

If a game is cancelled without adequate prior notification and officials are present -- they will receive one half-game fee, plus mileage.
7. Suspension of a game-final decisions concerning the suspension/resumption of a delayed game lies with the host administrator. The host administrator will take all factors into consideration including an attempt to contact and get input from the visiting administrator.
8. A point differential rule has been implemented. See Section VIII for full details.
9. **All schools are to play their schedule as assigned by the VIFL. Any changes must be approved by the VPA/VIFL. If a school cancels their season, it cannot be re-implemented during that season.**
10. A decision by a school to forfeit any regular season game, shall be accompanied by prior notice to the VPA and VIFL. A decision to forfeit a second game by the same school, absent prior

approval from the VPA, shall result in a termination of the remainder of that schools varsity schedule.

11. The use of sideline technology (like hudl sideline) is permissible.

III. RULES

1. The playing rules as adopted and published by the National Federation of State High School Associations for the current year shall be standard for all games. **COACHES: Read carefully, the special notes on Rules and Points of Emphasis.**
2. No more than two innings (4 downs for a team from the ten yard line equals one half inning) each to be used as a tie breaker procedure in sub-varsity level games.
3. **The game referee will call the assignor with reports of game ejections. The assignor will notify the VPA, the VIFL Executive Secretary and the offending players' school's AD. The VPA will also notify the school principal. This must be done in a timely fashion and should be completed by the Monday morning following the game ejection.**

Note: in the 2018 Football season, any team (coach and Principal or AD) that acquires more than two ejections will be required to meet with the Activities Standards Committee before entering or continuing in the tournament. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss steps being taken to address this situation.

4. Advise all opponents before season begins of your jersey colors, home and away, and submit a roster of all possible players to scheduled schools. **Schools also need to notify opponent and officials if an equipment waiver has been granted.**
5. The official site administrator, clock operator and scorer will be identified to the referee. WHEN FIELD SCOREBOARD CLOCKS ARE USED THEY SHALL BE OFFICIAL, OTHERWISE THOSE CLOCKS SHALL BE TURNED OFF. The clock operator will meet with game officials 30 minutes prior to the start of the game. **Every clock operator should possess a fundamental knowledge of football rules, signals and game administration as well as proficiency in operation of the timing system in use. Chain crews and equipment are important to game administration and each school must provide a full, competent crew and serviceable equipment.**
6. Sub-varsity Games are 12 minute quarters unless there is mutual agreement by both schools.
7. Recommended Pre-game ceremonies - Following a team's introduction, players shall leave the field and return to the bench area. Only team captains may return to the field for the coin toss. Note: (suggested protocol) Each school needs to provide a protocol sheet upon arrival prior to a team going on the field.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| - One half-hour before kickoff | Officials meet with home team |
| - Twenty-five minutes before kickoff | Officials meet with visiting team |
| - 15 minutes before kickoff | Team/Player Introductions |
| - 10 minutes before kickoff | Coin Toss |
| - 5 minutes before kickoff | National Anthem |

8. Point Differential Rule

- A. During the 1st three quarters, by mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee, a “running clock” may be used if the point differential between the two teams reaches 35 or more.
- B. If at the start of the 4th quarter or at any time during the 4th quarter, the point differential is 35 or more points, a running clock shall be used for the remainder of the contest.
- C. Once the “running clock” is in effect during the 4th quarter, it shall remain in effect for the balance of the contest, even if the team that is behind subsequently scores to make the deficit less than 35 points.
- D. The “running clock” will be administered as follows:
 - a. The game clock will start with the snap or legal touch of a free kick on the first play following the establishment of the pertinent point differential, and continue to run uninterrupted when:
 - A 1st down is awarded to either team, including following a change of possession;
 - The ball or runner is out-of-bounds;
 - A legal or illegal forward pass is incomplete;
 - A play results in a touchback;
 - An inadvertent whistle occurs;
 - During all penalty enforcements;
 - b. The game clock shall be stopped for:
 - The end of a period;
 - A score (including touchdown; try; field goal; safety);
 - The free kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch;
 - A charged team time-out;
 - A coach-referee conference;
 - An official’s time-out (injury; equipment; 1st down measurement; other, as required).
 - c. Following a stoppage for any reason in (b.) above, the game clock will start when the ball is next:
 - Marked ready-for-play; or
 - Legally touched on the free kick following a score, a fair catch or awarded fair catch or awarded fair catch.

IV. COACHES’ ADVISORY CHECKLIST

SAFETY PRACTICES: Note: As of 2016 Vermont is a USA Football “Heads Up.” state. All football schools are required to have all coaches certified through the USA Heads Up program for the Fall 2018 season. Failure to do so will result in the school being placed on a probationary status and a \$250 fine.

1. **Keep the Head Out of Football**
 - a. **Keep the head up.**
 - b. **Keep the head out of contact**
 - c. **Don’t glorify “head hunters”**
 - d. **Support officials who penalize illegal helmet contact.**
 - e. **Don’t praise or condone illegal helmet contact.**
 - f. **Provide conditioning to strengthen neck muscles.**
 - g. **Check helmet condition regularly.**
 - h. **Helmet must fit properly.**
 - i. **Improper technique causes spinal-cord injury.**
 - j. **Receive clearance by physician for athlete to play following head trauma.**

- k. Concussion recognition.
2. General Safety:
- a. Involve parents in early season meeting.
 - b. Clearly explain and demonstrate safe techniques.
 - c. Provide best medical care possible.
 - d. Have a set plan for coaching safety.
 - e. Repeat drills which stress proper and safe techniques.
 - f. Stress safety every day.
 - g. Entire staff must be “tuned in” to safety program.
 - h. Be prepared for a catastrophic injury.
 - i. Player safety is your responsibility.
 - j. Monitor blocking and tackling techniques every day.
 - k. Make all participants aware of heat/hydration protocols.
3. Use Good Communication:
- a. Explain how serious injuries occur.
 - b. Involve parents in early season meeting.
 - c. Admonish and/or discipline users of unsafe techniques.
 - d. The game doesn’t need abusive contact.
 - e. It’s a game – not a job – for the players.

V. COACHES CODE OF PRACTICES

1. SPORTSMANSHIP

The coach bears the greatest burden of responsibility for good sportsmanship. The example set carries through to not only players, but to the spectators as well as the entire community. They must abide by the rules of the game and respect the integrity and judgment of the officials. The coaches own ethics and integrity must be above reproach.

An ethical coach would not:

- * allow players to fake an injury or equipment repair in order to stop the clock
- * allow players to abuse or punish an opponent, make late hits, etc.
- * encourage or condone baiting or taunting, displays following almost every play which are demeaning to the image of the game
- * send in more than 11 players on defense in critical situations
- * allow intimidation of opponents before the game
- * condone vulgar language, profanity and use of obscene gestures

2. SCOUTING

- a. Scouting is allowed for all scheduled games. It is not considered ethical to scout scrimmages or practice sessions. An exception may be made for a scrimmage provided all involved coaches agree in advance.
- b. Film Exchange policy as mandated by Vermont Interscholastic Football League (VIFL) is on page 9.**
- c. Scouts will not be charged for admission to football games. This is a courtesy

allowed by the home team and should not be abused. Members of a coaching staff not assisting with the actual scouting will be expected to pay.

3. It is not ethical for a school or a coach to loan films or release scouting information of previous opponents to another school or third party.
4. It is considered unethical for a coach to use varsity players on the JV level unless he had contacted the opposing coach and a real emergency exists.
5. The host school is expected to provide an acceptable place for films to be taken or contact their opponents in advance so they can make other arrangements.
6. It is not the host school's responsibility to provide a place for the visiting team's spotters.
7. Coaches should refrain from making derogatory statements to the press, local boosters' clubs, etc. about officiating or the conduct of an official. All serious charges should be made to the officials' association through the school administration or to the Executive Director of the V.I.F.L.
8. Coaches should refrain from making derogatory statements to the press, local boosters' clubs, etc. about another school or its personnel. All serious charges should be made to the administrators of the schools involved.
9. Football coaches should endorse the American Football Coaches Association code of ethics as it applies to high school level football.
10. It shall be the responsibility of the host school to furnish the field properly equipped, at least one game football, yardage chain, a downs marker crew, a clock operator, and staff to handle the crowd.
11. The host school should have at least one identifiable administrator present.
12. The host school must provide for emergency medical services.
13. Crowd control is the responsibility of the host school. Incidental to this is the firm enforcement of the ban of alcohol and drugs at interscholastic events. It is recommended that there is a 7-10 yard barrier between the field and spectators.

VI. TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

1. **TO QUALIFY FOR THE TOURNAMENT A SCHOOL MUST SUBMIT AN APPLICATION. A DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM THE TOURNAMENT MAY BE MADE NO LATER THAN NOON THE DAY PRIOR TO THE PAIRINGS.**
2. **Pairings will be posted on October 21nd for Division I, II and Division III.**
3. **Championship quarterfinal games for Division I, II & III will be played on October 26th & 27th.
Championship semifinal games for Division I, II, and III will be played on November 2nd & 3rd hosted by the top seeded teams sponsored by the V.P.A. (#1 vs. #4 and #2 vs. #3); and finals for all Divisions will be on November 10th at Rutland High School.**

4. All Game Officials fees will be paid by the VPA.

VII. CHAMPIONSHIP PROCEDURE

1. The championship, dates and times for Division I, II, and III will be determined by the V.P.A. Football Committee.
2. The higher seeded team will wear the dark or colored jersey and will be the home team.
3. Practice at the neutral site of the championship game prior to warm-up is prohibited. Locker rooms should be opened two hours before game time, with selling tickets starting at least one and one half-hours before game time.
4. Should either game end in a tie, the tie breaking system prescribed in the National Federation Football Rules Book will be used.
5. The squad size will be those who are on the varsity of the school involved, and they must all be in the same uniform. Forty-five medals will be awarded to the members of the schools.
6. The chain gang and the downs marker will be operated by the host schools and these people will be provided with vests or some other apparel that will make them easily discernible to the officials on the field.
7. **THE V.P.A. WILL PROVIDE OFFICIAL BALLS FOR SEMI & FINALS GAMES. THE OFFICIAL BALL WILL BE A SPALDING J5V ADVANCE BALL, a SPALDING TF SBI BALL (Balls for Championships shall be broken in) Schools will have the choice as to which football ball they will use. It is strongly recommended that schools have appropriate balls before the tournament begins since the time frames are too short in the tournament to properly 'break' a ball in.**
8. The scoreboard clock will be official.
9. Principals should discuss with their student body about staying off the playing fields, behind the ropes, or staying in the areas where the general public should be. Violation of this could result in holding up of the game. At awards ceremonies, only teams should be on the field.
10. Each team will provide two ball persons to assist the officials. There should be 2 ball persons on each side of the field.
11. It is absolutely essential that each school provide a spotter to work with the public address announcer. The spotters are not being assigned to radio personnel, but to the public address system announcer. **SEND CORRECTED ROSTERS, UNIFORM NUMBERS AND COLORS TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE SEMI-FINAL AND CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES.**
12. Communications may be provided by the competing teams according to the rulebook.
13. Student busses will be directed where to park. Teams should bring towels, gum, oranges, water buckets and any other items which they need.

14. There will be medical coverage and stand-by ambulance service.
15. The pre-game ceremonies will be as follows:
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| - One half-hour before kickoff | Officials meet with home team |
| - Twenty-five minutes before kickoff | Officials meet with visiting team |
| - Fifteen minutes before kickoff | Team/Player Introductions |
| - Ten minutes before kickoff | Coin Toss |
| - Five minutes before kickoff | National Anthem |
- **The coach must see to the information getting to the P.A. announcer by the spotters.**
16. There will be plaques presented at the conclusion of the championship game. Please notify your coach to hold his squad for appropriate ceremonies. The team plaque will be given to the team captain, and the game ball will be presented to the coach. In connection with this, would you please instruct your coach to have his team ready for the presentation as soon as possible. There have been some instances when the coach, especially of the losing team, exhibited some reluctance to bring his team out. This is not in keeping with good sportsmanship. Each host director will try to provide an elevated position for the awards recipients.
17. Band members wishing to be admitted complimentary, must be in uniform. In the event a band does not have uniforms for its members, there should be chaperones who will identify them. Cheerleaders should also be in uniform. As far as cheerleaders are concerned, they may not send more than 16 in uniform. Cheerleaders should cheer in front of their respective fan seating.

Other performing groups must be approved by the V.P.A..

Seating provisions will be provided in each game for the bands on the appropriate side of the field. The half-time show must be worked out by the two band directors involved; the pre-game ceremonies, which involved the playing of the National Anthem five minutes before game time will be performed by: (1) the home team band, or in the event the home team does not have a band or musical group with them, then the visiting team band, and if there is no band, then a recording will be used.

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING FOOTBALL SEEDS FOR V.P.A. PLAYOFFS

Overall Quality Point Rating System

1. A school shall receive 10 points for defeating any D-I team, 7 points for defeating any D-II team, 5 points for defeating any D-III team. This will constitute a team's own value.
2. A school shall receive 2 points for each victory earned by any opponent. This constitutes a team's opponent's value.
3. The total (own value + opponents' value) will be divided by the number of V.I.F.L. games that the team played to determine the quality point rating (Q.P.R.).
4. The higher the Q.P.R., the higher the seeding.
5. In the event that two teams have the same overall Q.P.R., head to head competition becomes the tie breaker.

6. **If a tie still exists...refer to VPA Tournament Rules (Fall Tournament Section).**
7. **Games to be played, #1 vs. #4 at higher seed's home field, #2 vs. #3 at higher seeds home field.**

Effective Fall 2015 the following Coaches Film Exchange Policy is in Effect.

Coaches will exchange their last two game / scrimmage films with their upcoming opponent (as outline in diagram below) to be sent out no later than the Tuesday 10 - 11 days prior to the game. If the teams are Hudl software users they would be required to give your opponent access to the game / scrimmage films by that Thursday, no later than 12:00 noon. Failure to exchange films by Thursday will result in the sending school assuming the responsibility to personally deliver the films to the receiving school no later than that Friday.

Understand that the above requirement is a minimum expectation for all VIFL schools to follow. If coaches mutually agree to meet and exchange films; this is acceptable, but not required. It would also be ideal that all footage to be exchanged be shot with a sideline view, but again not required. It is also recommended that teams investigate the possibility of using a service like Hudl to streamline this process. Also in pursuant of the VPA Football Guide there is to be no "Third Party" exchange of films at any time.

Opponent	Films to be sent	Sent	Received by
Week 1 opponent	Last 2 game of previous year	August 21	August 23
Week 2 opponent	Last game of previous year & Scrimmage	August 28	August 30
Week 3 opponent	Scrimmage & Week 1 game	September 4	September 6
Week 4 opponent	Week 1 game & Week 2 game	September 11	September 13
Week 5 opponent	Week 2 game & Week 3 game	September 18	September 20
Week 6 opponent	Week 3 game & Week 4 game	September 25	September 27
Week 7 opponent	Week 4 game & Week 5 game	October 2	October 4
Week 8 opponent	Week 5 game & Week 6 game	October 9	October 11
Week 9 opponent	Week 6, Week 7 & Week 8 games	October 16	October 18
Week 10 opponent	Week 7, Week 8 & Week 9 games	October 21	October 23
Week 11 opponent	Week 8, Week 9 & Week 10 games	October 28	October 30

Note: Week 10 + 11 films need to be sent by Sunday - Noon

VPA Football Committee Pre-Season Practice Protocol

Rationale

The Vermont Principals' Association (VPA) and the VPA Football Committee seek to increase the health and safety of student athletes participating in Vermont high school football. The following training rule changes reflect the National Federation of State High School Associations' (NFHS) *Recommendations and Guidelines for Minimizing Head Impact Exposure and Concussion Risk in Football*.

Outline of Rules

The VPA Football Committee will amend these rules as new evidence emerges and in keeping with future NFHS recommendations. The following rules shall apply to the 2017 Vermont high school football season and subsequent seasons as may be revised and amended.

1. The first two days of pre-season training will be single practice session days. Helmets are the only protective equipment permitted during days 1 and 2. Practice drills may include conditioning, physical testing, and drills against "Air". Teams may choose to hold a Team Meeting each day in addition to the single practice session.
2. A practice session is not to exceed three total hours.
3. Double practice session days will begin on day 3.
4. Teams may not hold consecutive days of double practice sessions.
5. Day 9 is the first day that interscholastic scrimmages are allowed. If you have a scrimmage on that day it will be in place of the "Single Practice"
6. On double practice session days only one of the sessions may include drills that consist of any Full Contact, Live Action, and/or Thud. The other session of the day may only be drills that are Tag Touch, Bags, or against Air.
7. On double practice session days a three-hour minimum rest period is required between sessions. The total combined practice time is not to exceed **five** hours.
8. On single practice session days teams may choose to hold a second one hour walkthrough practice (*excluding the first two days of pre-season training as herein mentioned above*). Helmets are the only protective equipment permitted for walkthrough practices.
9. Full Contact, Live Action, and or Thud drills may be done in up to three practices per week and are not to exceed 30 minutes per day/90 minutes per week.

Definition of Terms

Air: Activities are executed without the use of bags or player opposition.

Bags: Activities are executed against a bag, shield or pad to allow for a soft-contact surface, with or without the resistance of a teammate or coach.

Tag Touch: Drills run at full speed up to the point of contact, which will be above the waist with the players remaining on their feet. Contact is controlled with players tagging an opponent.

Thud: Same as tag touch but the tempo is competitive with no pre-determined winner and the players are not tackling to the ground.

Live Action: Contact at game speed where players execute full tackles at competitive pace, taking players to the ground.

Full Contact: Live game simulations where live action occurs (11 on 11).

Walkthrough: An on-field meeting for the purpose of learning new plays. Must be separated from practice by at least three hours and is not to exceed 60 minutes. Activities are done at a walking pace. No conditioning is allowed. Helmets are the only protective equipment permitted.

Team Meeting: An off-field meeting in which coaches may give verbal instruction or show film for the purpose of educating players. No physical activity is permitted during team meetings.

August 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	Day 1 Single Practice Helmets Only Team Meeting	Day 2 Single Practice Helmets Only Team Meeting	Day 3 Double Practice Helmets and Shoulder Pads Only	Day 4 Single Practice Full Protective Equipment Team Meeting or Walkthrough Helmets Only	Day 5 Double Practice Full Protective Equipment	Day 6 Single Practice Full Protective Equipment No Scrimmages Allowed Team Meeting or Walkthrough Helmets Only
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Day 7 Rest	Day 8 Double Practice Full Protective Equipment	Day 9 Single Practice Full Protective Equipment Team Meeting or Walkthrough Helmets Only 1st Allowed Controlled Scrimmage	Day 10 Double Practice Full Protective Equipment	Day 11 Single Practice Full Protective Equipment Team Meeting or Walkthrough Helmets Only	Day 12 Double Practice Full Protective Equipment	Day 13 Single Practice Full Protective Equipment or 2nd Controlled Team Meeting or Walkthrough Helmets Only