



WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE

www.wpyfl.org

WPYFL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The purpose of these guidelines are to provide every WPYFL football organization with guidelines and regulations that will establish consistent methods designed to limit the chance for injury during structured practice sessions. This document provides WPYFL football coaches with clear definitions of contact and regulations on the number of practices per week and time limits on player-to-player full contact.

PRE-SEASON PRACTICE REGULATIONS

Following the mandatory WPYFL “heat acclimation week” WPYFL organization will conduct no more than five (5) practices per week. Practices are limited to one (1) 2-hour practice per day. Coaches will limit the amount of full-contact to no more than 30 minutes per day and no more than a total of 150 minutes per week.

Rationale: The WPYFL recognizes preseason practices may require more full-contact time than practices occurring after the start of the regular season to allow for teaching fundamentals with sufficient repetition to prepare for the season. WPYFL coaches are encouraged to introduce contact through a progressive manner to ensure they are using proper technique before full-contact (Thud & Live Action) drills are allowed.

REGULAR SEASON PRACTICE REGULATIONS

At the beginning of the regular season WPYFL organizations will be limited to four (4) 2-hour practices per week. Coaches will limit the amount of full-contact to no more than 30 minutes per day and no more than a total of 90 minutes per week.

One of the four (4) practices will be considered a **NO** full-contact practice. Players will only be permitted to wear helmets and shoulder pads.

Rationale: At this point in the season, games have begun and full-contact exposure rates have increased on a weekly basis for players. To account for the increased full-contact exposure during games, the

WPYFL eliminated two full practices per week which decreases the amount of time dedicated to full-contact drills therefore decreasing the number of full-contact exposures per week.

POST SEASON PRACTICE GUIDELINES

During post season play WPYFL organizations will be permitted to have five (5) 2-hour practices per week. Coaches will limit the amount of full contact to no more than 30 minutes per day and no more than a total of 90 minutes per week.

One of the five (5) practices will be considered a **NO** full-contact practice. Players will only be permitted to wear helmets and shoulder pads.

ENSURE ALL WPYFL COACHES UNDERSTAND THE DEFINITION OF “FULL-CONTACT”

Full-contact drills should be limited during the preseason and regular season as the number of exposures may increase the chance for injury as youth players. For the purpose of these guidelines, full-contact consists of both “thud” and “live action” using USA Football’s definitions of Level of Contact.

Rationale: By definition, “Thud” involves initiation of contact at full speed with no pre-determined winner, but no take-down to the ground. Initial contact, particularly with linemen, is just as physical with “Thud” as with “Live Action.” USA Football recognizes that “Live Action” likely carries a higher injury risk to the body than does “Thud.” The first three levels of USA Football Levels of Contact “Air,” “Bags,” and “Control” are considered controlled-contact, and thus no limitations are places on their use in practice.

EXPLAINING LEVELS OF CONTACT

Levels of Contact focuses on varying intensity levels throughout practices to build player confidence ensure their safety and prevent both physical and mental exhaustion.

The five “Levels of Contact” listed below are used to introduce players to practice drills which position them to master the fundamentals and increase skill development.

CONTACT	INTENSITY	DESCRIPTION
Air	0	Players run a drill unopposed without contact.
Bags	1	Drill is run against a bag or another soft-contact surface.
Control	2	Drill is run at assigned speed until the moment of contact; one player is pre-determined the ‘winner’ by the coach. Contact remains above the waist and players stay on their feet.
Thud	3	Drill is run at assigned speed to competitive speed through the moment of contact; no pre-determined “winner.” Contact remains above the waist, players stay on their feet and a quick whistle ends the drill.
Live Action	4	Drill is run in game-like conditions and is the only time that players are taken to the ground.

