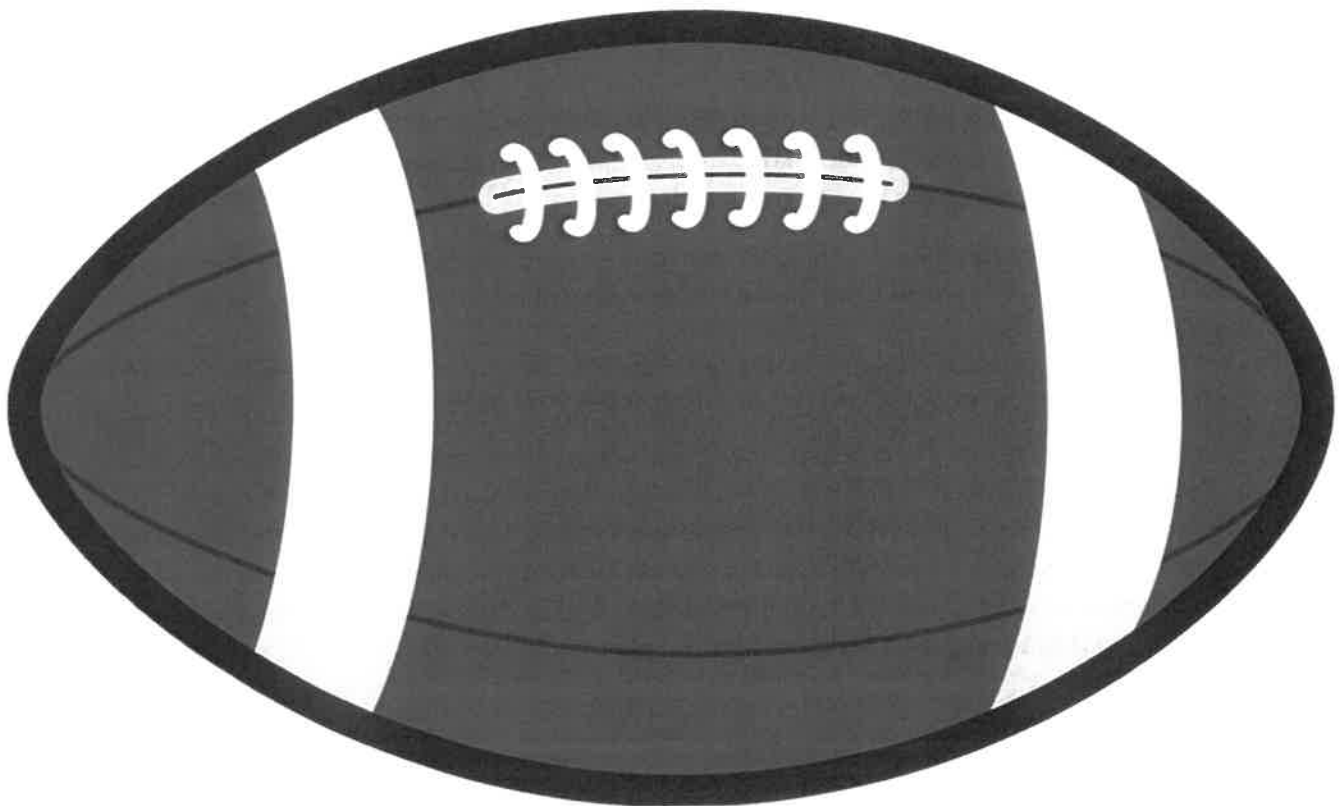




Youth Football Rules

4th & 5th Grade



Revised June 2026

We are pleased that you and your child have made the choice to participate in our program. Our goal is to provide a quality experience for your child; one that focuses on fun while learning how to play the game. Our program will provide your child with opportunities to learn essential values in life such as sportsmanship, winning and losing, teamwork, and much more. The staff believes that leisure or recreation opportunities are necessary throughout one's life by helping maintain a healthy balance.

Staff/Special Needs

The staff are available to answer your questions and to assist you as needed. We encourage you to discuss ideas, suggestions, problems, and concerns with us at any time. The Town of Wytheville, Wythe County Parks and Recreation, and the Bland County Youth Sports Department make recreation programs and facilities available for use by everyone. Please discuss with us any accommodation needed to enjoy this program.

Department Requirements:

1. Please be advised that physical examinations are not required for your child to participate in the football season. However, they are strongly recommended to ensure your child is in good health and physically prepared for athletic activity.

All parents or guardians will be required to sign a waiver form before participating. This waiver acknowledges that by allowing your child to take part in football activities, you understand and accept the inherent risks of injury associated with the sport.

2. A signed Parental Consent Form – Standard Department sports participation form/waiver and concussion forms are required to be turned into the department/booster club **prior to starting practice.**
3. Players may not turn twelve (12) years of age as of September 30 of the calendar year.
4. Weight Limits & Weigh In: There will be one official weigh-in per department and it is to be done during equipment handout or placement practices. Exact times will be announced by each recreation department. An official roster with weights will be submitted between departments prior to the annual Jamboree. Any player that will miss weigh in, must communicate this to the respective department before the weigh in date and schedule a makeup date at that time. Players may not practice until they have completed the weigh in.
5. Teams cannot have more than 27 players on their roster. Once there are 28 on the roster, then there will be a split into two (2) teams of 14.

6. Players must play on the team where they attend school or district in which the player lives in. No release will be given unless the particular sport is not offered in your area during the same season.
7. There shall be no parents on the sidelines unless tending to an injured player.

The National Federation for the State of Virginia High School Football League Rules will be adhered to with the following modifications and/or points of emphasis:

Rules of the Game:

1. Practices and games, combined, are limited to four (4) days per calendar week, **one session per day. One (1) hour and thirty (30) minutes per session. Full contact will be limited to 30 minutes per practice. Practice may begin the week of August 1st.**
2. Pads may not be used until a player has participated in four (4) full practice sessions for the current season. Helmets only may be used for the first 4 full practices.
3. No block can be thrown below the waist away from the line of scrimmage.
4. A recovered fumble or intercepted pass can only be advanced by those eligible, according to established weight limits, to advance the ball. If the ball is recovered by an ineligible player, the play will be ruled dead at the spot of the recovery or interception and change of possession will occur.
5. Each team will be allowed five (5) timeouts per game. Timeouts will not carry over in case of overtime. Only the coach on the field may call a timeout.
6. This league will allow one coach on offense and one coach on defense on the field during the game. The coach may instruct players up to the time the ball is ready to be snapped then must move behind the game officials and remain out of the play. Coaches may not change plays (call an audible) after leaving the huddle or as teams are lining up for the play.
7. Only **five (5) coaches** are allowed on the sidelines each game. All coaches must pass the Background Check and complete all applicable forms. Only the coaches that have completed all required paperwork will be allowed to coach during any game. Coaches can only be listed on one roster. **One coach** will be assigned to keep a play sheet count and turn it in to a recreation department staff at the end of the game.
8. A team may begin or continue a game with as few as nine (9) players. If a team drops below nine players, the game will be forfeited, and the opposing team will be awarded the win.
9. If a player is to be added to any roster after rosters have been turned in, it must be approved by the Parks and Recreation Departments and Youth leagues.
10. No hard cast will be permitted on the field of play. Soft cast will be permitted. **Braces or soft cast must be wrapped so that no sharp edges or metal is shown or exposed.**
11. No head or neck bandannas will be allowed to be worn.

12. Officials and Parks and Recreation Departments Personnel may remove any player, coach or fan from the game, playing area or facility for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Unsportsmanlike conduct: (Taunting, spiking ball, flagrant spearing, cursing, etc)

***The head official will follow the NFHS/VHSL rules and guidelines.**

13. Wythe County & Bland County School Policy states: Any child suspended from school will not be allowed on school property until suspension is over.
14. Participants are asked to attend **ALL** practices, for proper conditioning. In order to play the minimum time required, the majority of practices must be attended each week. Missing practices may be an infraction of individual team rules and could result in loss of game play time.
15. Ball carriers may not weigh over 105 pounds to advance the ball. All players marked with red tape on their helmet are over the weight limit and may not line up in the offensive backfield to carry the ball.
16. A Pee-wee sized football will be used in all games.
17. Quarters will be 8 minutes long with a halftime of 10 minutes.
18. The defense may not touch the center until after the ball has been snapped and the center has raised up.
19. If a team elects to punt on fourth down, it will be a dead ball.
20. If at any point during a game one team is ahead of the other by **twenty-four (24)** or more points, the clock will run continuously except for timeouts/injuries. If the lead falls below **24** points, regular game rules will go back into effect. In continuous clock situations, the clock will be stopped during change of possession, time-outs, and injuries. Once the ball is set, time will resume.
21. Each player must play eight (8) live ball downs per half(special team plays and knee plays do not count). A coach from each team will record their players live ball downs on a roster that must be signed by the head coach and turned into the field supervisor after each game. A coach who does not play each player the required number of downs per half will be suspended the next game. A second occurrence will result in the forfeiture of the game and the coach being suspended for the remainder of the season and all playoff games. Before the start of the game, the head coach is responsible for reporting to the opposing coach, head official, and the field supervisor any player who will not meet the required playing time and the reason for the reduced time. (I.E., illness, injury, missed practices, violation of team/youth league rules, child chooses not to play).
22. Any tackle made by the helmet will be considered a face mask penalty.
23. All players will wear a mouthpiece that connects to the face mask by a strap. Mouthpieces must be of a distinguishable color and may not be white or clear. Mouthpieces must be of full size and

may not be tampered with. **Examples: Cut, chewed. Mouthpieces specifically made for use by those with braces may be allowed if approved by the head official.**

24. All players must wear all equipment in its proper location to include seven-piece pad set.
25. No full speed head on blocking or tackling drills in which the players are more than 3 yards apart will be allowed. Examples: Oklahoma, Bull in the Ring, Boards.
26. Clear visors will be permitted. Visors with dark or mirrored tint will not be allowed unless a doctors note is provided to the recreation department prior to the game. Blue prism visors may be allowed with approval from head official. Official must be able to see the eyes of the player at all times.
27. All county/town issued equipment is required to be returned at the end of your team's final game or within a week.
28. No department issued equipment will be used in any events not sanctioned by the county/town.
29. At all games, parents/spectators are to remain in the stands or designated area. NO ONE other than players, cheerleaders, coaches, officials, rescue squad members and Parks and Recreation staff are permitted on the field.
30. **Concussions** - 24 hour rest rule will take place. *** See Attachments***
 - All coaches must have concussion training, which can be completed online. After completion please e-mail or bring in a copy of the completed course to their recreation department.
<http://nfhslearn.com>.

Kickoffs

The kicking team will line up in formation or a knee and kickoff from the 40-yard line. Kick off team will not advance after kick. The receiving team will line up in formation and take possession of the ball wherever it is caught or at the spot the ball rolls dead. If the ball bounces back toward the kicking team, the ball will be placed at the spot of the bounce. The receiving team will start from that spot. Kickoffs must be made within 1 minute of previous score, a delay of game penalty will result if not done in a minute. Kicking team has the option to have ball placed on the opponents 30 yard line.

Punts

Punts will be a scrimmage kick with no rush. All linemen must be in a down position and remain down until the ball is kicked. Receiving team may only send 3 players back to field a punt; other 8 players must be on a knee. No player may leave his feet and attempt to block the kick. The ball must be snapped straight back, at least five (5) yards from where the ball was officially placed and kicked from that spot. The receiving team will take possession of the ball wherever it is caught or at the spot the ball rolls dead. If the ball bounces back toward the kicking team, the ball will be placed at the spot of the bounce. Punter will have five (5) seconds to complete the punt. If not punted within the allotted time, it will result in a turnover of downs and the ball will be placed at the current spot of possession. The clock will continue to run during the punts.

Options on fourth down on or outside the defense's 30 yard line:

1. Play the down.
2. Punt.
3. Turn ball over. Ball will be placed 20 yards from the line of scrimmage.

Options on fourth down inside the defense's 30 yard line:

1. Play the down.
2. Punt.
3. Turn ball over. Ball placed $\frac{1}{2}$ the distance between the spot of the ball and goal line.

Extra Points

After scoring a touchdown a team may elect from the following:

- One extra point will be scored by either carrying or completing a pass into the end zone from the two-yard line.
- Two extra points will be scored by either carrying or completing a pass into the end zone from the three-yard line.

Defensive Alignments

INSIDE OF THE 15 YARD LINE:

- Defense must be played in a minimum 3 man front to a maximum 6-man front.
- All defensive linemen inside the ends must be in a down position (3 or 4 point stance).
- All linebackers must be a minimum of 2 yards off the line of scrimmage. (3 yards if outside the 15-yard line).
- First violation of this rule will be a warning. Subsequent violations will result in 5-yard penalties for each occurrence.

Overtime

If a game ends in a tie, then a coin toss will determine who gets the option of offense, defense or which goal to defend. Each team will be given one set of 4 downs to attempt to score from the ten yard line. The series ends by scoring, losing the ball by fumble, interception or by completing four (4) downs without a score. A team scoring a touchdown will also be given a try for an extra point.

If there is still a tie, teams will then play just for 2-point conversions. During regular season, each team will get two (2) point conversion attempts, if the game is still tied after overtime downs and 2-point conversion attempts, it will end in a tie.

During playoffs, there is no limit on 2-point conversion attempts, we will play the game until there is a winner.

Each team will be given one (1) timeout during each overtime session.

Playoffs

Seeds for tournament that result in a regular season tie, will be head-to-head winner or loser from the game played against each other in the season. Any split in wins or a three or more-way tie will refer to the number draw at the head coach's meeting prior to the beginning of the season.

Points of Interest

- Each youth league will be given the opportunity to host an equal amount of Saturday game days if the high school in the respective area makes enough dates available. **Set-up, clean-up, chain gang, announcer and concessions are the responsibility of the youth league.** Youth leagues retain all proceeds received from concessions on their assigned date. Youth leagues should be at the game site prior to the first scheduled game to begin game day preparations.
- Games will be played in accordance with the published schedule.
- Make up games will be played based on availability of fields.

Pre-Season Camps

Pre-Season camps are limited to one sponsored camp per youth league and not to exceed more than four days. Days do not have to be consecutive. Camps should be open to all who are interested.

Camps do not count as regular season practices.

Team Selections

If a youth league has more participants and needs to split into two or more teams, a draft must be completed with an equal number of players from each grade group. (or as close as possible).

A team must have at least 13 players to be able to begin a season in the league.

Drafts are to be conducted by Parks and Recreation staff along with head coaches.

CANCELLATIONS

If games are canceled due to inclement weather, WCPR will notify each Youth League President/Athletic director and then it will be up to them to notify the coaches. WCPR does have a cancellation line (276-223-4520). Updates to schedule changes will be recorded if able. WCPR will attempt to post on social media as well. The Town of Wytheville Parks & Rec Dept and Bland County Youth Sports department will notify coaches and parents via the band app for cancellations and will also post on the Town of Wytheville Facebook page.

NO WEAPONS, PETS, TOBACCO PRODUCTS OR ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES WILL BE ALLOWED ON PUBLIC SCHOOL GROUNDS.

Concussion Awareness

Athletes who experience any of the signs and symptoms below after a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion.

Signs Observed by Coaching Staff

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
 - Forgets an instruction or play
 - Is unsure of score or opponent
 - Moves clumsily
 - Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)

- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
 - Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
 - Can't recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms Reported By Athlete

- Headache or pressure in head
 - Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
 - Double or blurry vision
 - Sensitivity to light
 - Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
 - Confusion
- Does not "feel right" or is "feeling down"

Action Plan

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion you should take the following steps.

1. Remove the athlete from play. **WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!**
2. Inform the athlete's parent/guardian about the possible concussion and give them the facts and symptoms observed
3. Do not judge the severity of the injury yourself – utilize EMS if they are on site or call 911 as needed.
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury and until they show no symptoms and an appropriate health care professional says they are OK to return to play.

The Wythe County, Wytheville Parks and Recreation Department and Bland County Youth Sports staff and certified EMTs at local youth league games have the right to sit any player out of action they believe has a possible concussion. Then the 24 hours of rest goes into effect, and the player must be cleared by a health care professional with a written clearance provided to the appropriate recreation department before the player can return to practices or games.