

Berks Area Youth Football League (BAYFL) Rules Handbook

Article I: Player Eligibility

Section 1 – Levels

Level	Age
Flag Football	Players may not turn 7 prior to July 1 st of the league year
Mighty Mite Football	Players may not turn 9 prior to July 1 st of the league year
Mite Football	Players may not turn 11 prior to July 1 st of the league year
Midget Football	Players may not turn 13 prior to July 1 st of the league year
Juniors Football	8 th grade students are ineligible from playing for any BAYFL team or level.

Rules of Gameplay

Section 1- PIAA Rules

PIAA rules will apply at all times during BAYFL games. This will include but is not limited to rules of the game, fan management, dealings with the referees and coaches' conduct. Special BAYFL rules, as specified below, will supersede PIAA rules. PIAA has adopted NFHS rules.

Section 2- Officials

All JV and Varsity Games will be officiated by assigned PIAA Officials.

Section 3 - Scoring

- Touchdowns will result in six (6) points
- Running or Passing PAT will result in one (1) point
- Running or Passing PAT from the 5 yard line will result in two (2) points
- Kicking PAT will result in two (2) points
- Field Goals will result in three (3) points

Section 4 – Footballs

Level	Football
Flag Football	Offensive team chooses own type of ball while on offense
Mighty Mite Football	Wilson K-2 or Wilson GST K-2
Mite Football	Wilson K-2 or Wilson GST K-2
Midget Football	Wilson GST TDJ (Leather) or Wilson GST TDJ (Composite)

*The use of leather footballs at the Midget level is to help acclimate players for the middle school team. Composite was added to the midget level after games played on 9/9/2015.

Section 5 - Field Conditions, Postponements and Cancellation

Field conditions are up to the discretion of the home team. Home team must advise visiting teams at least two hours before the game in regards to postponements. Any game cancellation will be at the discretion of the home team.

- The home team must advise visiting team and the Assignor of Officials at least 2 hours before the game, in regards to any postponements/cancellations.
- If the visiting team is not so advised, they shall assume the game is to be played.
- If a visiting team is not notified and they arrive to away game because the visiting team was not contacted, it COULD result in a forfeit for the home team. .
- Weather delayed games can be rescheduled by the participating teams with final decision resting with the home team field availability and unless mutually agreed upon the day of the postponement.
- The home team shall give a minimum 48 hours' notice.
- The home team is also responsible for notifying the Commissioner of Officials of rescheduled games.
- Failure to comply shall result in a forfeit loss.
- In the event the home team does not reschedule the makeup game by the last day of the season, the home team shall forfeit the game. Section 6 - Electronic Communication Equipment Electronic communication devices of any kind may NOT be used for coaching purposes at BAYFL games.

Section 6 - Electronic Communication Equipment

- Electronic communication devices of any kind may NOT be used for coaching purposes at BAYFL games.

Section 7- Game Day Volunteers

The HOME TEAM will supply the following volunteers to assist with gameplay:

- 3-person chain crew, which will work on the Home team sidelines.
- Chain Crews are not permitted to use cell phones or provide instruction to the players on the field.
- Game Clock Operator

Section 8 - Game Clock

- All BAYFL games will have a Four (4), 8-minute Quarters. 8-minute half time.
- Clock will be run per PIAA rules
- Time Outs (3 per team; per half)

Section 9 - Play Clock

There will be a 45-second play clock for all levels. Referees shall give a 5 second warning to alert the offense. First violation of the rule is a warning. All other delay of game infractions, following the warning, will be a loss of down.

Section 10 - Allowable Defensive Schemes/Formations No more than 6 Defensive players on the line of scrimmage (PIAA)

- Linebackers must be at least 3-yards behind the line of scrimmage (PIAA)
- Nose Tackle position is allowed
- Inside the 10 yard line, a Goal Line Defense can be used, no more than nine (9) players on the line of scrimmage (9-2).

Any violation of this rule called by an Official will result in a 5-yard penalty (Illegal Procedure) and replay of down with the offensive team having the option to accept the play or penalty. This penalty will be enforced from the line of scrimmage.

Section 11 – Varsity & Junior Varsity

Organizations should divide their rosters at each level into a Varsity and a Junior Varsity (JV) program. It is at the discretion of each organization to determine which of their players will play at either level. (Some organizations may choose to divide it by age/grade group within a level, while others may base it upon player skill level). Regardless of how each organization decides to designate players on Varsity or Junior Varsity, (if enrollment numbers allow it), each organization should make every effort to field both a Varsity and a Junior Varsity team.

The Junior Varsity level is geared more towards player development to allow coaches/players more of a teaching game environment. JV players are allowed to play in a Varsity game.

- Junior Varsity players receiving more than 50% playing time during Varsity games will not be eligible to play in a JV game the following week.
- With the exception of injury, all JV players shall receive a minimum of six (6) plays during the JV game. The 6 plays may not include special teams.

Regardless of how teams are divided, one guideline should always be followed. Varsity level players should NOT play in JV games. There should be clearly defined Varsity players (typically, the most skilled players) which will not be eligible to play in JV games. (Ex: A player skilled enough to be the Varsity QB or RB is not a player that should play in a Junior Varsity game).

For example, if an organization has 26+ players registered at a specific level, then that program can support both Varsity and JV teams at that level. In these instances, there should be no overlapping of players UNLESS a change is made during the season where a JV player is moved up to Varsity based on merit, or a Varsity player is moved down to join the JV. In either of these instances, it would represent a change meant to be on a regular basis (not a 1-week fill-in).

In instances where a program has difficulty fielding clearly defined Varsity & JV teams due to lower enrollment numbers (approx. 17-24 players), programs may have some players from JV also play some games at the Varsity level. The best way to do this is to identify your definitive Varsity players, and then be “JV-heavy” for the remainder of your players. Coaches then have the flexibility to “call-up” JV players to play in Varsity games on a player rotation. (Ex: If a team has 8-9 players defined as Varsity players, the coaches may bring 6 JV players to rotate in/out of the Varsity game).

Organizations also need to bear in mind that PIAA has a ‘Participation Limitation’ which always needs to be adhered to. The PIAA rule states the following:

“Participation Limitation: No Team, no individual member or members of such Team, and no individual representing any PIAA member school, may Practice or participate in an Inter-School Practice, Scrimmage, Contest, and/or Open Gym on more than six days in any Calendar Week during the Regular Season.”

Which means a player cannot play in more than 1-FULL game in a 6-day period. Therefore, if a player is playing in a JV game on Saturday and then in a Varsity game on Sunday, that player should only be playing in approx. half of the playing time in each game.

Junior Varsity players should be the ones that help fill the Varsity rosters; NOT the Varsity players that help play at the JV level. Varsity players should not play in a JV game, unless due to shortage of JV players. In those unavoidable instances the Varsity player should not play in a skill position and Coaches should discuss prior to kick-off any circumstances where a Varsity is playing in a JV game.

Section 12 - Mercy Rule

The mercy rule will be in effect when a team is leading by 22 points or more after halftime; the Head Official will notify both Head Coaches that, from that point forward, the clock will run continuously for the remainder of the game.

EXCEPTION: The losing team has the option of declining the mercy rule until the point difference is 35 points or more. The PIAA mercy rule in effect at 35 points.

Section 13: Coach Pre-game Meeting

Prior to any BAYFL game the Head Coaches (or an Asst Coach) are required to communicate and discuss any details they feel necessary prior to game.

Section 14: Reporting Scores

All Varsity Mighty Mite, Mite & Midget scores must be submitted by the home team to the league designee within 12 hours of the completion of the games. Official Standings will be kept by the BAYFL Secretary and be updated on the league website each week.

NOTE: JV scores do not have to be reported to BAYFL Secretary

ARTICLE III: RULES FOR MIGHTY MITES

Section 1 - Coaches on Field

Two (2) coaches per team will be permitted on the field during Might Mite JV/Varsity games.

- The "on field" coaches must be at least five (5) yards behind the deepest player.

Section 2 – Defensive Schemes (Mighty Mites)

No more than 6 defensive players may be on the line of scrimmage. Linebackers must be at least three yards behind the line of scrimmage.

- Inside the 10 yard line, a Goal Line Defense can be used, no more than nine (9) players on the line of scrimmage (9-2).

Section 3 – Blitzing

Blitzing is not permitted at the Mighty Mite level. Blitzing is defined as moving forward toward the line of scrimmage prior to the snap of the ball.

Any violation of this rule called by an Official will result in a penalty of 15 yds and unsportsmanlike conduct warning awarded to the head coach.

Section 4 –Kick-Offs/Punting

Varsity Mighty Mite games will have a kick off to start the game and second half, but all possessions after a score will begin on the 40-yard line.

JV Mighty Mites will begin the game and the second half with the receiving team starting from the 40-yard line. Punting options:

- Perform a standard punt – Defensive rushing not permitted
- Attempt to gain the 1st down
- Walk off 20 yards and turn the ball over. Not permitted inside the defensive team's 40 yard line.

ARTICLE IV: RULES FOR MITES

Section 1 - Coaches on Field

One (1) coach per team is permitted on the field during a JV Mite games.

- The "on field" coach must be at least five (5) yards behind the deepest player.

No Coaches permitted on the field for Varsity Mites games.

Section 2 – Defensive Schemes For JV Mites:

No more than 6 defensive players may be on the line of scrimmage. Linebackers must be at least three yards behind the line of scrimmage.

- Inside the 10 yard line, a Goal Line Defense can be used, no more than nine (9) players on the line of scrimmage (9-2).

Section 3: Blitzing

Blitzing is not permitted at the JV Mite Level, but is allowed at the Varsity Mite level. Blitzing is defined as moving forward toward the line of scrimmage prior to the snap of the ball.

Any violation of this rule called by an Official will result in a penalty of 15 yds and unsportsmanlike conduct warning awarded to the head coach.

Section 4 –Kick-Offs/Punting

JV and Varsity Mite games will have a kick-off to start the game, start of the second half, and after each score.

JV Mite Punting options:

- Perform a standard punt – Defensive rushing not permitted
- Attempt to gain the 1st down
- Walk off 20 yards and turn the ball over. Not permitted inside the defensive team's 40 yard line.

ARTICLE 4: RULES FOR MIDGETS

Section 1 - Coaches on Field

No Coaches on the field for Midget JV/Varsity

Section 2 - Blitzing

Blitzing is allowed at Midget JV/Varsity level. Blitzing is defined as moving forward toward the line of scrimmage prior to the snap

ARTICLE 5: PLAYOFF

Section 1 - Playoffs will consist of all eligible (see Article 5; Section 3) teams making the playoffs by seeding with pre-determined locations for the games. Each playoff game will need a winner and loser by play which will include overtime if needed. Over time format will follow the PIAA format. The playoff structure will be defined by the BAYFL rule book.

Section 2 – Championship game Championship games will be played between the top two Mighty-Mite, Mite and Midget Varsity teams. The Championship game will be played the weekend immediately following the playoffs. The game will be hosted on a rotating basis determined by alphabetical order. The higher ranked team will be considered the home team and may choose which side of the field they will use.

Section 3 – New Members on probations are ineligible for playoffs for their first year in BAYFL. Eligibility can be obtained by approval of ALL voting members of BAYFL. (revised 8/2021)

SECTION 4 - PLAYOFF SEEDING

League Standings shall be based on overall wins and losses between BAYFL Teams. Non-League games will not be calculated into standings. Teams will receive 2 points for a win, 1 point for a tie and 0 points for a loss. Tie breaking criteria for the Playoff games is as follows:

Overall Record (Win, Loss, Tie Points Calculation)

Head to Head Competition

Record vs Common Opponents

Most Wins

Common opponent loss point differential. The team that has the lower differential will be the higher seed. Example if both teams have 3 losses but only has 1 common opponent lose. Team 1 score was 14-7 and Team 2 loss was 21-7 Team 1 would be the higher seed.

Coin Toss by League President in the presence of representatives from each team

- In the event of more than 2 teams are tied, the odd man out losses the first round of the coin toss.

6 SECTION 3 - PLAYOFF GAME TIMES

- 1st round - Saturday @ 10:30am
- 2nd Round – Saturday @ 4:30pm with stadium lights
- Finals – with stadium lights

BAYFL Flag Football Rules

- A. Use PIAA rules except as modified below
- B. As an important safety factor it is mandatory for flag players to wear a soft shell (karate type) head gear for their own protection.
- C. Eight (8) players on the field for each team. 5 players on the LOS, (1) C, (2) Guards and (2) TE. The C & (2) Guards will be ineligible.
- D. The game is played on a field that is 80 yards long by 30 yards wide. The end zones are 10 yards deep and there is a five yard no run zone bordering both ends zones (5 yard line to the goal line). This is done to promote passing in an area where a power run might have a better chance of scoring. However, this passing requirement can be discussed between Head Coaches prior to game and deemed optional, only if both coaches agree.
- E. Game is started with a coin toss to determine the first possession. Team that wins the coin toss may elect to start with possession or defer to the second half.

- F. The 'receiving' team starts from their own 10-yard line and has four plays to cross midfield and achieve a first down to get four more plays to attempt to score.
- G. TOUCHDOWNS are worth 6-Points.
- H. EXTRA POINTS: There are two different extra point tries, 1-point from the five yard line, or 2-points from the twelve yard line.
- I. If a team fails to score or cross the midfield point, the ball is turned over to the opposing team where they will start their possession from their 10-yard line.
- J. There are NO FUMBLES. If a fumble occurs, the offensive team retains possession at the point of the fumble and it is loss of down. In the event a fumble occurs on 4th down the ball goes to the other team to start on their 10-yard line.
- K. INTERCEPTIONS: An interception is a live ball, and may be advanced and returned by the defensive team for a touchdown.
- L. KICK-OFF: There will be no kick-offs at the flag level. The offensive team that will begin their possession at the 10 yard line to start each half and after each score.
- M. Penalty - No distance, no loss of down, except; Blatant off sides is 5 yards. Unnecessary roughness; tackling, leaving feet on the block, forearming, stiff arming, blocks below the waist, etc. are 10 yards.
- N. PENALTIES: There are no distance penalties or loss of down (unless specified elsewhere within these rules). However penalties such as the following will be enforced for infractions: blatant/repeated offside is a 5-yd penalty. Tackling, tripping, unnecessary roughness, leaving feet on a block, blocks below the waist, roughing the passer or any of the unsportsmanlike conduct penalties will result in a 10 yd penalty. (Some penalties, a team may be given a warning first, but anything after the warning will be strictly enforced).
 - a. Rough play or unsportsmanlike conduct should be given warning for first occurrence, but could result in removing player from game if behavior continues.
- O. No slapping the hands from defenders by the ball carrier, no pushing out of bounds, must be attempting to grab the flags, one warning per half, per team. A second violation will result in penalty as follows: Upon Defense - 1st down at the point of infraction. Upon Offense - loss of down and loss of yardage on that play
- P. PASSES/RECEPTIONS: A player must have one foot in-bounds for a legitimate catch.
- Q. Motion is allowed using the same rules as tackle football.
- R. BLOCKING: There will be only screen blocking (like in basketball). Meaning that the offensive blocker is merely to be an "obstruction" to the defender. The blocker is to have 8 folded arms, no outstretched arms or forceful shoves of any kind. No-one is allowed to block an opposing player in the traditional football manner. a. Accordingly, defenders will be instructed/coached to avoid blockers and not runthrough them. b. The above is to be strictly coached in practice and games, as well as, officiated as such. i. First violation (on Offense or Defense) will be a Warning to the coach. Second violation on Offense will be a loss of down. Second violation on Defense will award a 1st down to the offensive team.
- S. PUNT: Automatic punt at the option of the coach - 30 yards from the line of scrimmage. If the line of scrimmage is at or inside the 40 yard line, then the automatic punt is half the distance to the goal.
- T. CLOCK: Two 25-minute halves per game with continuous running clock. Each team has two 40-second timeouts per half. The clock will be stopped for a downed injured player and after every score. The clock will restart when the ball is set for play. There will be a 10 minute break at half-time.
- U. One of the officials on the field will keep the clock and may stop it only for equipment, injury, or if a team uses a time out. The offense has 30 seconds to start a play once the official spots the ball. If a team is continually taking longer than 35-45 seconds to run play, a down may be lost, to insure each team has the opportunity to run offensive plays as well. Please discuss with coaches before penalizing.
- V. SAFETY: A safety is two (2) points. After a score, the opposing team will take possession on their own 10-yard line.

W. DEFENSES:

- a. Defenses must remain 5 yards off the line of scrimmage
 - b. Linebackers must be at least three yards behind the defensive line.
 - c. Blitzing is not permitted. Blitzing is moving forward toward the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.
 - d. Rushing the QB is allowed, but only after the ball has been snapped.
 - e. Players will not be allowed to leave their feet to avoid getting their flag pulled, or to attempt to pull an opponent's flag. A player is considered to be down from the spot that his or her flag is pulled.
 - f. If a ball carriers flag falls off at any time, the play is dead. The ball is spotted at the point where the flag fell off.
 - g. Defending the pass is no different than in tackle football in that no contact will be allowed in an effort to deter the receiver from catching the ball. This will be called as pass interference, and possession will be taken at the spot of the foul.
- X. Inside the 10 yard line you can use a goal line defense.
- Y. No player that plays on a tackle team of any kind may play on the flag team.
- Z. EQUIPMENT: All Flags shall be at least 14 inches long and be of a bright color that is contrasting to the pants that the player is wearing. The flag will be unobstructed from view and touch.
- a. Teams should use "popper" flags for game day
 - b. Leg pads may be worn by all flag players.
 - c. All jerseys in excess of waist length must be tucked into the pants.
- AA. COACHES/REFS: Not more than 3 coaches from each team shall be on the field at any time during the game. At least 1 coach must remain with the bench at all times. Both head coaches shall appoint an additional coach/volunteer to act as a referee during the game if a ref is not available. The ref/coaches shall agree on all infractions. The coaches and ref/coaches shall remain at least 10 yards away from the players in all directions and shall move away from the ball as the play progresses.
- BB. No player may score more than 2 Touchdowns per HALF. If a player has scored 2 TDs in a half, that player may not carry or catch the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. If such a player does carry the ball beyond the line of scrimmage, the team will be penalized the yardage gained and will suffer loss of down.
- CC. The rules and guidelines set down by the BAYFL for the conduct of parents, players and coaches apply at this level as well.
- DD. Coaches and officials should try to emphasize good sportsmanship at all times, keeping in mind that especially at this level it is important to start teaching players the guidelines that are most important. Again, having all teams' coaches share a common understanding of the rules and spirit of the games will be key to a great year.
- EE. The rules and guidelines set down by the BAYFL for the conduct of parents, players and coaches apply at this level as well.
- FF. There will be a mandatory flag head coach meeting in August prior to Week One of the season. If an organization's head flag coach is not present for this meeting, then the organization will have no league scheduled flag games for that season.
- GG. Communication regarding any changes or cancellations to games will be the responsibility of the Head Coaches of the teams involved and is to follow same rules as in the BAYFL Tackle Football level Rules document. League Presidents and other officers may be needed if new venues are needed to complete the season
- HH. LASTLY: Let's all remember, this is Flags. Have fun with the players.
- o Coaches are (of course) encouraged to teach their team how to win, but remember that valuable lessons are also learned in a loss as well.

- ALL Players should have an opportunity to play ALL positions. Players should not be typecast into specific positions at the Flag level.
- If a team is stopped on 1st, 2nd and 3rd downs, don't bring in a "ringer" into the RB or QB spot just to try and improve your chances for a 1st down.
- There are no Lombardi Trophies awarded at Flags, and there are no college/pro scouts at these games.
- PLAY SAFE & HAVE FUN!!!

