

# Ankeny Junior Football General Policy & Playing Rules 2014

## 1.0 GENERAL

- 1.1 **Governing Rules.** ISHAA rules apply to Ankeny Junior Football unless specifically revised in these playing rules. The Board has final decision involving playing rule disagreements. All Board decisions are final and no protests will be heard.
- 1.2 **Officials.** At least one IHSAA licensed official will be assigned as Head Official to each game in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Flag Division and up unless a special game circumstance occurs. The Board will assign a qualified Head Official in the case of special game circumstances. The Head Official will be assisted by high school players trained as officials specifically for AJF.
- 1.3 **Code of Conduct.** All players, coaches, chain crew, parents, and other spectators are subject to AJF's Zero Tolerance Policy for behavior. The Board reserves the right to remove any person in violation of the Zero Tolerance Policy.
- 1.4 **Point of Emphasis (POE).** Several AJF rules are indicated to be a Point of Emphasis. Officials and Board will be most concerned by the rules marked as **POE**.

## 2.0 REGISTRATION / ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 All participants and coaches are subject to AJF Requirements.
- 2.2 Participation in practices and/or games are not allowed until a signed Registration Form and Payment is received.
- 2.3 AJF participants are allowed one season of play per grade.
- 2.4 All participants must be entering Grades 1-7 in the Ankeny School District or live within the Ankeny city limits in those grades.
- 2.5 Participation is open to both boys and girls.

## 3.0 REGISTRATION REFUNDS

A player who becomes injured (unable to continue play) while participating in a AJF practice or game will be refunded 75% of their Registration Fee up through week 4.

Participants, who leave the program prior to the First Game, will be refunded 50% of their Registration Fee. There will be no refunds after the First Game is played.

## 4.0 PLAYING DIVISIONS

There are now nine divisions of Ankeny Junior Football as described below:

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade Flag** – Flag football open to kids in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. The game is for all kids to participate, have fun, and get introduced to football. The game is a 7(offensive) player vs. 6 (defensive) player game. The 1<sup>st</sup> division has pass requirements so the kids learn how to pass and catch. Score is not formally kept in this division. Each kid wears his team T-shirt and a mouth guard for their uniform.

**Equipment provided:** Flags – coaches turn in at the end of the season. Mouth guard and game jersey are yours to keep.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Flag** – Flag football open to kids in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. The game is for all kids to participate, have fun, and get introduced to football. The game is a 7 (offensive) player vs. 6 (defensive) player game. The 2<sup>nd</sup> division has pass requirements so the kids learn how to pass and catch. Score is not formally kept in this division. Each kid wears his team T-shirt and a mouth guard for their uniform.

**Equipment provided:** Flags – Coaches turn in at the end of the season. Mouth guard and game jersey are yours to keep.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Flag** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Flag division is open to “all” 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. This division is flag but the kids wear shoulder pads and helmets. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Flag division is usually played as 8-man football.

**Equipment provided:** Helmet, shoulder pads, and game jersey need to be returned at the end on season. Mouth guard and AJF t-shirt are yours to keep.

**Other equipment needed: Pants and cleats.**

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade Tackle Division** – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Tackle Division is full pads 11-man tackle football. 4th grade is the first age where players need to weigh-in. The heavier kids are restricted to lineman positions for safety reasons.

**Equipment provided:** Helmet, shoulder pads, and game jersey need to be returned at the end on season. Mouth guard and AJF t-shirt are yours to keep.

**Other equipment needed** – Pants, pant pads, and cleats.

**4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Flag Divisions** – Open to all kids in 4<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> grade. The game is for all kids to participate, have fun, and get introduced to football if no prior experience. The game is a 5 player vs. 5 player game. Each kid wears his team T-shirt and a mouth guard for their uniform. Note: For 2014 there were enough registrants for a separate 4<sup>th</sup> grade division, but we had to combine 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> to form one division. In the future, numbers will dictate separate divisions at each grade level.

**Equipment provided:** Flags – Coaches turn in at the end of the season. Mouth guard and game jersey are yours to keep.

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Tackle Division** – All 5<sup>th</sup> Graders play full pads 11-man tackle football. The heavier kids are restricted to lineman positions for safety reasons.

**Equipment provided:** Helmet, shoulder pads, and game jersey need to be returned at the end on season. Mouth guard and AJF t-shirt are yours to keep.

**Other equipment needed** – Pants, pant pads, and cleats.

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade Tackle Division** – All 6<sup>th</sup> Graders play full pads 11 man tackle football.

Players who weigh in less than 80 pounds are encouraged to play down a grade due to weight, but are eligible to play within their grade by signing a waiver.

**Equipment provided:** Helmet, shoulder pads, and game jersey need to be returned at the end on season. Mouth guard and AJF t-shirt are yours to keep.

**Other equipment needed** – Pants, pant pads, and cleats.

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade Tackle Division** – All 7<sup>th</sup> Graders play full pads 11 man tackle football.

Players who weigh in less than 90 pounds are encouraged to play down a grade due to weight, but are eligible to play within their grade by signing a waiver.

**Equipment provided:** Helmet, shoulder pads, and game jersey need to be returned at the end on season. Mouth guard and AJF t-shirt are yours to keep.

**Other equipment needed** – Pants, pant pads, and cleats.

## 5.0 WEIGH-IN

**5.1 Weight Limits (ball carrier restrictions)** – Ball carrier weights are used for each tackle league as a safety measure to protect the smaller players from having to tackle the bigger kids. The ball carrier weight varies slightly from year to year based on the weights of the participants. The weight limit is set by sorting the kids by weight and then drafting 5 lineman per team starting from the heaviest kids.

After each team has 5 linemen the next break in weight is set as the ball carrier limit. Other restrictions due to the weight limit are:

- Those players under the weight limit can play quarterback, running back, receiver and tight end on offense. Those players above the weight limit can only play interior line on offense.
- There are no weight restrictions for defensive players.
- All players can advance an interception on defense (weight limit does not apply).
- Only ball carriers can return punts or kickoffs.
- Only ball carriers can line up in the back field on kick-off returns.
- Only ball carriers are eligible as outside position (head hunters) on punts.

Players in 6<sup>th</sup> grade who weigh less than 80 lbs and players in 7<sup>th</sup> grade who weigh less than 90 lbs are encouraged to “play down” a grade based upon their weight. If you choose to play within your grade, that will be allowed. A waiver is available for 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> graders. This waiver can be signed at weigh-in. This form does not apply to any other grades or Divisions

## **6.0 PLAYING FIELDS**

Football Fields will be 70%, 80%, or 100% of regulation football fields.

Both teams will occupy the same side of the field. When not on the field, all players and coaches shall remain in their respective coaches/players box. Each coaches/players box runs from the 25-yard line to the 40-yard line and is set back 2 yards from the playing field.

All spectators shall be on the opposite side of the field from the players.

Each team will provide volunteers to operate the chains and down markers. The chain and down marker volunteers must be at least 15 years old and not provide verbal directions to players.

## **7.0 PLAYERS EQUIPMENT**

**7.1 Shoes.** All players must wear tennis shoes, sneakers, similar soft rubber cleated or rubber soled footwear, soccer type shoes, or multi-purpose athletic shoes with “grip features” or cleat-type characteristics, as long as these shoes do not have football-type cleats of rigid metal. The officials will make routine checks of footwear prior to each game. Players determined to have unacceptable footwear will not be allowed to play until obtaining suitable footwear. In the case of any player found to be wearing unacceptable footwear during the course of a game, that player will be removed from the game until they have obtained suitable footwear.

**7.2 Additional Pads.** The only pads that may be worn in addition to those issued by the league are neck and forearm pads made of soft material. The only exception to this rule involves situations where a player may be medically required to protect an injury (i.e. knee brace or support, deep bruises, etc.). Said exceptions must be brought to the attention of the on field IHSAA official who will determine acceptability. No player shall play with any “extra pads” without first requesting and then receiving specific permission to do so from the Board President or the Head Official of that game. Helmet visors are allowed, but must be clear. Mouth guards must consist of a solid color, clear is not acceptable.

**7.3 Helmets.** All helmets used in AJF are to be free of colored tape, decals and/or stickers. Decorating helmets is not allowed.

**7.4 Jerseys.** Jerseys shall be worn so that both front and back numbers are visible to the officials at all times, and must be tucked in at all times. Jersey numbering must comply with the following except for legal ball carriers may play interior line without lineman numbers.

Jersey numbering –

- Backs (legal ball carriers) : 1 thru 49
- Linemen : 50 thru 79
- Receivers (legal ball carriers): 80 thru 99

Game jerseys are forbidden to be worn other than on game days and to school on AJF High School Night (TBA).

## **8.0 PLAY REQUIREMENTS**

**8.1 Practice Times.** Each player in grades 4th – 7th tackle are required to have their first (2) practices in helmets only before they can practice in full pads. Scheduled practice times are not to start prior to 5pm during the week. Coaches are asked to communicate with parents to establish a start time that is manageable for both coaches and parents. Practices on Fridays are prohibited.

**8.2 Contact Hours.** A team may have no more than 3 practices/meetings per week (in addition to games). Total contact time for the practices/meetings per week cannot exceed 5 hours.

**8.3 Minimum Play.** Each player must play approximately one half of each game. The intent is that each player plays the entire game either on offense or defense. If minimum play can't be met due to injury or illness of a player, the head coach shall notify the opposing coach and head official immediately.

**8.4 Pass Rule.** In divisions where passing is required, one pass must be attempted every four downs. In the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Divisions, the passes must be forward. For all other divisions, the pass can be behind the LOS if it is thrown outside the offensive tackle. Note – Backward pass may be ruled as a fumble. Penalty for not passing within a set of downs is a personal foul. A new set of downs does not start if the penalized team retains possession. The pass rule does not apply when: offensive team punts on 4<sup>th</sup> down, or offensive team is within their own 20 yard line.

**8.5 Pass Attempt Determination.** The head official will determine a valid pass attempt. If the defense sacks the quarterback and a pass play was developing it will count as a valid pass attempt. Any coach on the field may ask the head official if a sack constitutes a valid pass play. If a fumble occurs on a pass play and the intent to pass is not clear, the play is not a valid pass attempt.

## **9.0 COACHES**

All head and assistant coaches are selected by the AJF Board. Each coach must complete a Volunteer Application to participate.

For 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Flag Division, two coaches may be allowed to be on the field at once. For 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Division, no coaches are allowed on the field. For all other divisions, one coach will be allowed on the field with the offense and defense during play. Coaches on the field must wear shirt, coat or jacket of a distinctly different color than the jerseys worn by either team. Up to two other coaches (total of three) will be allowed per team and will remain in the coaches/players box.

Coaches on the field must be at least 5 yards behind the deepest player at all times after the break of the huddle. **Point of Emphasis (POE)** - Absolutely no verbal directions or communication should be directed to any player by a coach on the field from the time the quarterback starts his cadence until the conclusion of the play. Penalty for violation will be personal foul.

No coach is allowed to send or receive text messages during the course of a game.

## **10.0 PLAYER ALIGNMENT/LIMITATIONS**

Offensive and defensive player alignment and restrictions are included below. Officials and coaches are urged to correct alignment violations during the game as they occur. Repeated alignment or position violations will be penalized for illegal procedure.

**10.1 Offensive Line (11 player games):** Five (5) interior linemen (tackle-to-tackle), each of which must be in a “down” position (three-point stance rather than upright or erect) for one full second prior to the snap of the ball. **POE** - A total of seven (7) players are required on the line of scrimmage (LOS).

**10.2 Defensive Line (11 player games):** The defensive line must contain 5 players, with no more than 4 linebackers at all times. A team may run any “stunt” you want with the linemen. NOTE: 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade may have a defensive line of either 4 or 5 players.

**POE** – If the defense is in a 5 man front, the widest alignment allowed for the defensive end is their inside foot placed inside the widest offensive man (lineman or tightend) on the LOS.

Within their own 10-yard line (shadow of their own end zone), the defensive team may employ any formation desired.

At all times, all defensive interior linemen (tackle-to-tackle) must be in a “down” position (three-point stance rather than upright or erect)

### **10.3 Linebacker (11 player games)**

**POE** – Linebackers cannot line up closer than 2 yards from the line of scrimmage.

**POE** – Linebackers may not blitz. They may not cross the LOS until the offensive play goes outside the tackle.

The defensive team may employ any formation they desire when inside their own 10-yard line. No stand up player may blitz the offensive team.

### **10.4 Defensive Backs (11 player games)**

**POE** – Defensive backs cannot line up any closer than 4 yards from the line of scrimmage.

**POE** – They may not blitz. They may not cross the LOS until the offensive play goes outside the tackle.

### **10.5 Offensive Line (8 player games)**

Three (3) interior linemen (guard-to-guard), each of which must be in a “down” position (three-point stance rather than upright or erect) for one full second prior to the snap of the ball. **POE** – A total of five (5) players are required on the line of scrimmage (LOS). Note: In the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grade Flag Division, there must be a balanced line. The use of an unbalanced line formation is forbidden.

#### **10.6 Defensive Line (8 player games)**

The defensive line must contain 3 players. **POE** – The nose guard must line up no closer than one yard off the LOS.

Within their own 10-yard line (shadow of their own end zone), the defensive team may employ any formation desired. There shall be no player in an upright position blitzing the offense.

All defensive linemen must be in a “down” position (three-point stance rather than upright or erect). The defensive ends can’t lineup wider than their inside foot inside the outside foot of the widest offensive player on the line (tackle or tight end). The defensive lineman must engage the offensive lineman before any lateral movement outside the widest offensive lineman. They may stunt inside the offensive widest man without engaging first.

#### **10.7 Linebacker (8 player games)**

**POE** – Linebackers cannot line up closer than 2 yards from the line of scrimmage.

**POE** – Linebackers may not blitz. They may not cross the LOS until the offensive play goes outside the tackle.

The defensive team may employ any formation they desire when inside their own 10-yard line.

**POE** – No stand up player may blitz the offensive team.

#### **10.8 Defensive Back (8 player games)**

**POE** – Defensive backs cannot line up any closer than 4 yards from the line of scrimmage.

**POE** – They may not blitz. They may not cross the LOS until the offensive play goes outside the tackle.

#### **10.9 Special Teams**

**Change of Possession (including start of game or 2nd Half)** – In 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Flag Divisions, the ball goes to the 20-yard line after every possession. In 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Division, there are no kickoffs. The ball is placed on the 30-yard line.

**Punts** – In 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Division only, the punt play is live (clock starts) after the punt is completed. Players cannot leave the LOS until ball is punted. Non-ball carrying players are ONLY allowed to line up on the offensive line. Only ball carriers may advance a punt. If a lineman receives a punt it is down where it is received.

All other divisions: Must be announced with no fakes. The punt is a “dead ball” and the clock will stop. The offense will be allowed to long snap the ball to the punter and punt the ball without rush.

On punt team, offense is allowed only one headhunter on each end of the formation. Headhunters must be ball carriers. After punt is away, offensive team can leave the LOS (punt formation is provided on website under Rules).

Defensive lineman may block a punt by standing or jumping on their side of the LOS. In the event a defensive lineman does touch or block a punt, the ball is live until recovered. Neither team may advance the ball.

The receiving team must catch, control, down, or cover the ball to gain possession. Kicking team cannot recover a fumbled punt. Touching is not considered control.

**Field Goals and PAT's** – In 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> grade, each team may kick the point after touchdown or kick Field Goals. Kicking the extra point will be worth 2 points. Field Goals will be worth 3 points. Rules for kicking the ball: 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade the defensive team may not rush the kick but may stand on the LOS and attempt to jump and block the kick. The offensive team will snap the ball to the holder for the kick. If the ball gets away from the holder, the holder is allowed to get the ball and return to a knee to place the ball on the kicking pad without penalty. In the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Division all field goals and PAT plays are live. Fake attempts are legal. Side note: If a team attempts a long FG and it is unsuccessful but the ball does not go into the end zone, the defensive team can pick the ball up and return it just like a punt (ball carriers only). Also, the offensive team could down the ball if they down it before the defensive team picks it up.

## 11.0 MISCELLANEOUS RULES

### 11.1 Safety – POE – Violation of these rules is a personal foul.

Ball carriers may not jump over defensive players attempting to make the tackle.

The ball carrier cannot “straight-arm” or “stiff-arm” any player except in grades 4<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup>.

There is no cut blocking allowed anywhere including on the offensive line within the “box”.

### 11.2 Scoring

Touchdowns – 6 points. PATs – 1 point for a successful run, 2 pts for a successful pass, and 2 pts for a successful kick. Field goal – 3 pts.

### 11.3 Fumbles:

Cannot be advanced. In grade 4, fumbles are live but the defense cannot advance. In grades 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>, Fumbles & Interceptions may be recovered/advanced by any Defensive player. Fumbles recovered by the Offense can only be advanced by ball carriers.

### 11.4 Delay of game

**POE** – A delay of game will be called after one warning if the offensive team does not run a play within: 25 seconds of the ball being set in 4<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> Grade and within 45 seconds for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Flag division.

### 11.5 Overtime

Any game that ends regulation in a tie will play 2 overtime sessions as done in Iowa High School Football. If a tie remains after 2 overtime sessions, the game will end in a tie. Basics of overtime: Each team gets a possession starting at the 10-yard line. The offensive team gets 4 downs to try and score. If a pass is intercepted or a fumble recovered, the offensive team is done. The defensive team cannot advance the ball.

## **12.0 PLAYING RULES**

- 12.1 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Flag Division - See attached Quick Reference Rules**
- 12.2 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Flag Division - See attached Quick Reference Rules**
- 12.3 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Flag Division - See attached Quick Reference Rules**
- 12.4 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Tackle Division - See attached Quick Reference Rules**
- 12.5 5<sup>TH</sup> Grade Tackle Division - See attached Quick Reference Rules**
- 12.6 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Tackle Division - See attached Quick Reference Rules**
- 12.7 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Tackle Division - See attached Quick Reference Rules**
- 12.8 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Flag Division – See attached Quick Reference Rules**