



**OPTIMIST**  
**INTERNATIONAL**

*Friend of Youth*

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## **Lapel Optimist Youth Football (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>)**

### **Rules Handbook 2021**

(Version 2.0)

#### **Senior Division**

*(5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grades)*

*Updated 8/2020*

# 2021 Lapel Optimist Youth Football Rules

These rules are intended to guide the coaches in how the game is to be played. Coaches are advised to remember that our players are young children and our job is to teach how the game is to be played and create a positive experience for the children and their families.

## 1. ELIGIBILITY

- a. Senior Division - 5th & 6th Graders ----- 80 Yard Field  
*(Based on 2020-2021 Fall School Year Grade)*

## 2. WEIGHT LIMITS

- a. **Classification Senior Div.**  
Offensive Backs 115.00 lbs or less
- b. TE can receive hand off's as long as they don't have an "X" on their helmet.
- c. A player exceeding the weight limit for their division is required to have a black "X" on the top of their helmet to indicate that they cannot carry the ball.
- d. Each coach must have in his possession a copy of the official roster for his team.

## 3. EQUIPMENT

- a. Players may wear molded rubber or plastic stud cleats. Metal cleats and metal studs are not allowed.
- b. Each player must wear a mouth guard.
- c. **Helmets must be LOYF issue. (Unless approved by Program Director)**
- d. **Shoulder Pads must be LOYF issue (Unless Approved by Program Director)**
- e. Junior size football will be used for 5/6th grade games.

## 4. PLAYING TIME AND POSITIONS - REGULAR SEASON

These rules are intended to promote youth football by increasing the amount and quality of playing time for players.

- a. There are at least three captains per team per game.
- b. All players will receive significant playing time which could include offense, defense or special teams. Every player will get to play some in each game on either offense or defense.

## 5. LENGTH OF GAME

- a. Each quarter is 8 minutes running clock.
  - i. Clock will stop for time outs.
  - ii. Clock will stop after a touchdown.
  - iii. Clock will run except for a penalty or incomplete pass but will restart upon the referee placing the ball and blowing the whistle to start the clock.
  - iv. Clock will stop for the “**Two Minute Warning**” at the end of the 2nd quarter and the 4th quarter. The clock will stop for incomplete passes as well as out of bounds plays and will re-start at the snap of the ball.
- b. Each team is allowed three - one minute time outs per half.
- c. Half time is 5 minutes.
- d. Teams will only change goals at half.

## 6. COACHES AND COACHES' CONDUCT

- a. Head coaches must be at least 21 years old.
- b. All coaches must have a back ground check.
- c. And must be an active member of the Lapel Optimist Club.
- d. All head coaches must complete the NFHS concussion training.
- e. All head coaches must complete the NFHS Heat Illness Prevention.
- f. Each team is allowed one head coach. Only registered coaches and assistants may be in the bench area during a game. No more than 4 coaches per team, including the sideline during the game.
- g. Only one coach is allowed on the field during the game.
  - i. Once the offensive huddle breaks the coach on the field (offensive and defensive) cannot speak to, or communicate with their players in ANY way (i.e. hand gestures, etc.). A violation of this rule is a 5 yard penalty.... The Head Ref will say the huddle has broken...
  - ii. The coaches on the sidelines can still communicate once the huddle breaks.
- h. Additional coaches are permitted on the playing field only in the case of any injury, if requested by the officials, or at timeouts.
- i. Coaches must be careful to NOT inflame the parents of either team by arguing with officials or other coaches. **Only the head coach is allowed to address the lead officials.**
- j. Unsportsmanlike conduct will result in a 10 yard penalty.
- k. Coaches are not to “argue calls”. Coaches are instructed to advise players to respect calls even if the coach disagrees. If a coach argues a call with an official or coach they will be penalized 10 yards for Unsportsmanlike conduct and ejected from a game. No exceptions. **THIS WILL BE ENFORCED!!**
- l. Coaches will not make a negative remark or gesture to an opposing player, opposing coach, referee, parents or program official. If a coach does make a negative remark or gesture a flag will be thrown. If the coaches receive two flags the head coach will be ejected from a game and must leave the field immediately or the game will be forfeited to the opposing team. The coach will need to report to the program director within 48 hours of the ejection. Depending on the situation a hearing may be called with the director & board which could result in a suspension

for one game or the entire season. The ruling is at the discretion of the director & board.

- m. The Program Director will terminate a coach if the coach has previously been ejected from a game and he has a second violation of these rules.

## **7. PLAYERS' CONDUCT**

- a. During games players must remain within their team's sideline box.
- b. Unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of any player will result in a 10 yard penalty. The Lead official may eject an offender from the game at their discretion.
- c. Fighting, intentional kicking, kneeling, foul language or use of fists is cause for immediate ejection from the game. Any player with a second violation/unsportsmanlike penalty will be reviewed by the program director & board for possible suspension during the season.

## **8. PENALTIES**

- a. The clock will stop for the penalty call to be assessed. The clock will resume once the ball is placed. Exception exists during "Two Minute Warning" unless the referee determines the violation to be committed in order to stop the clock.

<b><u>Penalty</u></b>	<b><u>Distance (Yds)</u></b>	<b><u>Spot for Mark</u></b>	<b><u>Consequence</u></b>
Illegal Procedure	5	Scrimmage	Dead Ball-Replay Down
Encroachment	5	Scrimmage	Dead Ball-Replay Down
Off-side	5	Scrimmage	Dead Ball-Replay Down
Clipping	10	Scrimmage	Replay Down if Accepted
Holding	10	Scrimmage	Replay Down if Accepted
Face Mask (Defense)	10	Spot of Foul	Automatic First Down
Face Mask (Offense)	10	Spot of Foul	Replay Down if Accepted
Pass interference	10	Scrimmage	Automatic First Down
Roughing the Passer	10	Scrimmage	Automatic First Down
Delay of game	5	Scrimmage	Dead Ball-Replay Down
Coach On The Field	10 + Timeout	Scrimmage	Dead Ball-Replay Down
Mouth Guard Not In	5	Scrimmage	Replay Down If Accepted
Comm-After Huddle	5	Scrimmage	Replay Down If Accepted
Unsportsmanlike	10	Scrimmage	Loss Of Down

## **9. GENERAL RULES**

- a. The team that wins the coin toss may elect to kick or receive the ball but not defer. (You cannot defer) If a team kicks off the ball in the first half, it will receive the ball in the second half and vice-versa.
- b. After a touchdown a team can elect to go for 1 or 2 points.
  - i. Senior Division
    - 1. For a one point attempt the ball will be placed on the 2 yard line and cannot be kicked.
    - 2. For a two point attempt the ball will be placed on the 3 yard line and may be kicked or run a play from scrimmage.
      - a. No fake kick plays are allowed due to lack of defensive rush.
      - i. In the event of a failed kick attempt the play will result in no extra points.
- c. A game will be forfeited to the opposing team by any team which:
  - i. Fails to field 9 players by the start of the game.

- ii. Opposing team will still play with 11 players.
  - iii. Fails to provide to the opposing coach a roster of the team's eligible players, if requested.
  - iv. Is unable for any reason to field 9 players at any time prior to the completion of the game.
- d. A penalty measurement may not move the ball more than one-half the distance to the offending team's goal line.
- e. Only team members and coaches are permitted on the bench side of the field. Exception is medical or appointees of the Program Director or Lead Official.
- f. The failure to wear a mouth guard will result in a 5 yard penalty.
- g. **During the last two minutes of EACH HALF of the game, the clock will stop for the following:**
- i. **2 Minute Warning Rule – The clock will stop at the end of a play within two minutes of half and the end of the game. The clock will restart at the next snap. (This is not a time out situation).**
  - ii. Moving of the down markers when a first down is made.
  - iii. Time out called by either the offensive or defensive team or the officials
  - iv. Incomplete pass.
  - v. Player with possession of the football runs or is forced out of bounds.
  - vi. Offensive or defensive penalty.
  - vii. Change of possession. Includes forced turnover or turnover on downs.
  - viii. After a touchdown the clock will stop for the extra point attempt.
  - ix. *If the clock has been stopped during the last two minutes of either half for any of the reasons listed above it will start again with the snap of the ball on the next offensive play or kick-off.*
- h. In a fourth down situation when the offensive team is in a punting formation, no defensive player is permitted to be lined up closer to the center than heads up on the offensive guards. The punting team cannot move until the ball has left the kicker's foot.(Senior Division)
- i. Kickoffs will be as follows:
- i. The kicking team will kick from their 30 yard line.
  - ii. The receiving team will line up behind the 40 yard line.
  - iii. A player with an X on their helmet can not advance the ball on a kickoff.***
  - iv. Onside kicks are allowed. If a team is leading you are NOT allowed to intentionally onside kick.
- j. **Offensive lineman may use a 2 point or 3 point stance. “Example”: If RG is in a 2 point stance, then RT and RTE also have to be in a 2 point stance.**
- k. **All defensive linemen (does NOT include defensive ends) must have ground contact with their hand or hands prior to the snap of the ball. Linebackers, Defensive backs, and Safety's may start in an upright position and do not need to have ground contact.**
- l. Time between plays will be 35 seconds from when the ball is placed until it is snapped. i.  
First offense – Delay of Game 5 yard penalty

- ii. Second offense – Delay of Game 5 yard penalty (clock will start once ball is snapped)
- iii. A game CANNOT end on a delay of game penalty, the ball must be snapped

## **10. SPECIAL RULES**

a. Failure to comply with the rules in this section results in an illegal procedure penalty.

b. The Senior Division offense can run any Football Formation as long as you have no more than 4 players in the backfield within the Tackle Box.(Example QB,RB,RB, RB) and 7 players on the line of scrimmage.

c. Formation examples: Balance T, I Formation, Wishbone, Full House, Wideout, and Singleback  
Any football formation, as long as there are no more than 4 players in the backfield within the tackle box.

d. On 4th down, punts must be declared. The player in deep punt formation must receive the snap. No rushing is allowed. The player must punt from at least five yards behind the line of scrimmage and may not roll out. No member of the punting team is allowed down field before the punt.

e.

i. Offensive line consists of 5 players, 2 on each side of the center.

ii. Linemen may not be more than one yard apart.

iii. All linemen are aligned at equal distance from each other.

f. Offense Special Rules and Clarifications

i. 7 and only 7 players on the line of scrimmage.

ii. Crack back blocks are not allowed. Offensive players lined up outside the defensive end may not block him using crack back technique (this includes above the waist crack back).

g. The Senior Division Defense may run any defensive alignment as long as there are no more than 5 players on the line of scrimmage. All linebackers and cornerbacks must be 3 yards from the line of scrimmage, and safeties must be 8 yards from the line of scrimmage. {Exception} Goal line defense may be used when the ball is on the 10 yard line or inside the 10 yard line.

**SEE RULE 10-M**

h. The defensive punt alignment differs only in the placement of the defensive outside linebackers and safeties. These four players may line up anywhere behind their inside linebackers. (Senior Division)

i. Once a team is leading by 21 or more points, the leading team is not allowed to blitz any players not on the line of scrimmage.

i. The defensive players on the line of scrimmage can still attempt to advance on the quarterback.

j. Deployment of the defensive line:

i. Defensive lineman line up from 1 foot to 1 yard off the line of scrimmage for 5/6 grade.

ii. Nose guard may align head-to-head on the offensive center. However, they must not initiate contact with the center and must make a move left or right of the center. (NO blowing up the center).

iii. Defensive ends must line up no wider than one yard on the outside shoulder of the offensive end.

k. Deployment of linebackers:

i. Linebackers must be no closer than 3 yards from the line of scrimmage until the ball is snapped.

ii. Linebackers must hold their positions until the snap of the ball, at which time they may proceed in any direction. (EXCEPTION: When a back goes in motion, the linebacker may move laterally, but must still be at least 3 yards off the line of scrimmage).

l. Deployment of defensive secondary:

i. Cornerbacks or outside linebackers may line up anywhere between the sideline and 3 yards outside the shoulder of the offensive end, but must be at least 3 yards off the line of scrimmage. Cornerbacks may move laterally prior to the snap of the ball when a back goes in motion.

ii. Safeties must be at least 8 yards from the line of scrimmage.

iii. In a punt situation, the defensive secondary may be dispersed in any manner.

m. Goal Line Defense:

i. Goal line defense can be used if the football is on or inside the 10 yard line of the goal being defended. Linebackers are allowed on the line of scrimmage.

## **11. PRACTICE SESSIONS**

a. No player may participate in a game until they have been properly conditioned (5 contact practices).

b. Football sessions are defined as any skill session, group conditioning or other forms of training (including games). No practice may exceed 2 hours.

c. No more than 3 football training sessions are allowed per week. **(Week runs Sunday to Saturday).**

i. Three contact practices are allowed each week prior to the first game.

ii. After the first game three practices are allowed however only two may be contacted and the third must be no contact.

d. Official LOFL games do not count toward the 3 football training sessions.

## **12. OFFICIATING**

a. There are at least 2 field officials for each game. One is positioned in the offensive backfield and on the line of scrimmage. **THE OFFICIALS ARE HIGH SCHOOL COACHES, STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS. Please treat them with respect.**

b. The Program Director may also assign individuals for quality control and statistical purposes.

## **13. POINTS and TIE BREAKERS**

### **Points - Regular Season**

Win - 2 points are awarded to the winning team

Tie - 1 point is awarded to each team for a tie

### **Tie Breakers**

1. Head to Head

2. Like Opponents

3. Flip of coin

## **14. OVERTIME REGULATIONS**

a. **Regular Season** - If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime session will be played to try and determine the winner.

- i. There is a 5 minute rest period between the end of regulation play and the beginning of the overtime period. The overtime begins with a flip of the coin, called by the visiting team. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of being on either offense or defense. The loser chooses which goal they will defend.
  - ii. The overtime session consists of one set of plays. A set is defined as each team having played both offense and defense. The winner of the game is the team scoring the most points in that set. ***If the score remains tied after this set of plays, the game will end in a tie.***
  - iii. The offensive team has four (4) plays to score starting from the 10 yard line. If the offensive team scores a touchdown within those four (4) plays, they also have the opportunity to convert the extra point(s). If the offensive team fails to score, the ball is turned over on downs and the other team goes on offense and has four (4) plays to score starting from the 10 yard line.
  - iv. The overtime session is played according to the governing rules, except when the defense gains possession of the ball in which case the ball is dead and the offensive series is complete. (Play clock ONLY during this time).
- b. Playoffs** - Same rules apply as described under Regular Season except that the overtime sessions will continue until a winner is determined.

## **15. THE PREDOMINANT RULE BOOK**

- a. ***The predominant rule book is the current year rule book of the Indiana High School Athletic Association and exceptions are listed above. If a situation cannot be ruled on; the spirit of sportsmanship should prevail. All judgments made by the lead official are final.***