

**SVAA FLAG AND 7V7 COACHES' GUIDE**  
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# SVAA FLAG AND 7v7 FOOTBALL COACHES GUIDE

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**A NOTE TO COACHES** ----- You must understand the contents of this manual. By fulfilling this obligation, you will eliminate the problems we experience each year that arise from a misunderstanding of rules and procedures. At the end of the season, communicate your suggestions for improving the program to the Sport Commissioner. Together we can make each year better than the preceding. Thank you for your contribution to the youth of this area.

The game officials, the Sports Commissioner, and the SVAA Board of Directors will enforce all rules in this book. Some rules contain penalties and penalty limits; others do not. For those rules that do not contain a penalty, the Sport Commissioner and/or the Board has full authority to impose whatever penalty they deem appropriate for the violation.

## =====FORWARD=====

As the coach, you are the SVAA representative responsible for the success or failure of our program. To the players and parents, YOU ARE SVAA!!

The essence of SVAA is what happens between you and the children. If done with care and concern, it can be one of the finest educational experiences a child can have.

SVAA is a unique organization; it exists only because of many people caring about their children. Sometimes, in our zeal to see that the best is done, we forget that we are dealing with children, but we must always keep this fact in mind. It is the most important fact in SVAA life.

**HOW WE PLAY THE GAME** - It is the policy of SVAA that every child that signs a contract will be assigned to a team and be given a fair opportunity to play in every game. Every youngster shall be taught the responsibility to their teammates, to their mother and father, to their Country, to their God, and to himself or herself. Every youngster shall be treated with kindness and consideration, and at no time shall any coach humiliate, embarrass, abuse or mistreat any youngster within the framework of this program. All children shall be taught that it is not everything to win...nor are you a failure if you lose. The essence and heart of the SVAA program is the simple philosophy that it is better to have tried and failed than not to have tried at all. All coaches are responsible for teaching each child that the most important aspect of competitive sports is not to win, but to play with all one's ability. Each coach accepts the challenge that they will honestly and sincerely do the best they can to teach each child how to have fun playing whatever sport it may be.

\*\*\* This program is for the participants, "OUR CHILDREN".  
Please work to keep it this way. \*\*\*

## LEAGUE ORGANIZATION

SVAA is operated by an elected board of volunteer directors that serve as the final authority for any decision relating to each sport program. The Board has responsibility for appointing one of its members to organize and run each of its sports programs. This individual is called the Sport Commissioner.

**Sport Commissioner** - The Sport Commissioner has responsibility for the operation of this football program, final approval of team rosters, and shall not hold a coaching or assistant coaching position in the program. Prior to player registration the Sport Commissioner shall submit to the Board of Directors the following:

- Budget for the current sport season
- Calendar of season events
- Proposed changes to established rules for league administration and team play

Prior to the first league game the Sport Commissioner shall submit to the Board for their approval:

- Names of all league officials including Commissioners and League Presidents
- Completed coaches' contracts

During the season the Sport Commissioner shall furnish the Board a monthly written report dealing with the operation of his assigned sport.

**Commissioners** - The Sport Commissioner shall appoint such additional administrators as the Sport Commissioner deems appropriate to assist with such matters as:

- Equipment
- Fields
- Officials
- Leagues
- Fund Raising

**League Presidents** - League Presidents play a vital role in the administration of this football program. They provide the link between the Sport Commissioner and the coaches and officials. A more complete description of the League President's responsibilities is contained in the League President's Guide.

**Disputes/Protests** - Tact, firmness, and diplomacy should be your bywords when you have any problems or disputes. If you have any problems or complaints, raise

the issue with your League President. If the situation cannot be resolved to your satisfaction, communicate in writing to the Sport Commissioner. You will receive a written answer within seven (7) days. If you are still not satisfied, forward your complaint, the Sport Commissioner's reply and a \$50.00 appeal fee to the Rules Infraction Committee as discussed in the Rules Infraction Guideline attached in the back of this booklet. The decision of the Rules Infraction Committee or the Board of Directors as a whole will be final.

Coaches that fail to abide by this process may be suspended without further notice. SVAA expects, and demands, that Coaches remember at all times that very young and impressionable children are observing their behavior. As a result, loud and offensive conduct of any sort will not be permitted.

**N**ote: Disputes should not be arbitrated on the playing field in the presence of our children.....see your League President. The manner in which a dispute is addressed will be considered by the Rules Infraction Committee in addressing any matter brought before it.

### **1.0 TEAM FORMATION**

The League President assigns participants to teams from player registration contracts on the basis of grade, school, geographical location of residence (participants must live in a 50-mile radius of the Dallas Metroplex), team needs, prior team affiliation, etc. Age is not considered except in extreme cases as determined by the Sports Commissioner on a case-by-case basis. Except in rare circumstances, team assignments will not be changed once a player is assigned to a team. Any player reassignment requires the prior approval of the Sport Commissioner.

If a participant is assigned to a team outside his normal school nucleus because that school nucleus team is full or the child moves after assignment, he or she may request in the next season to be placed on his school team (if space available). Any such participant will be given priority over new SVAA children from that school for home school team placement. To receive this priority, the participant's contract must be received by the SVAA office prior to the contract deadline. If there is more than one school team, the participant will not be permitted to pick between the two teams. The League President will make the determination based upon space availability.

**1.1 Player Contracts/Eligibility** - All players must have a truthful contract on file prior to any participation in an SVAA event (including practices, practice games and league games). A game involving an unauthorized player (a player not on a

teams' SVAA supplied roster is unauthorized) shall result in forfeiture of that game and may result in the suspension of the coach.

Player contracts completed prior to the "contract deadline" will receive priority for team placement over contracts received after the contract deadline date. The "contract deadline" will be established by the Board prior to the start of each season. Players may not be added to team rosters after the first regular season game (practice games excluded), without the prior approval of the Sport Commissioner.

A player may elect to participate in a higher league but may not play in a league below his grade level. Grade level players from a particular school that register on time will be assigned before children that desire to play up. If the roster has room, a playing up (child) may be assigned to his school team.

Players with a medical condition must have a treating physician's medical release on file in the SVAA office prior to participation in any SVAA event and/or practice. The Sport Commissioner and SVAA President must approve any exception to the player contract/eligibility rules in advance and in writing. This written documentation must be on file (attached to the player's contract) in the SVAA office prior to any player participation.

Scholarships may be granted to individuals requiring assistance. Proof of need will be required. An application for scholarship must be submitted to the SVAA office and approved by the Sport Commissioner prior to equipment issue or participation. All scholarship players will be expected to make some contribution toward their player fee.

## **1.2 Player Team Assignment**

**1.2.1 Flag Teams.** Returning SVAA teams will first be assigned all players from their immediate past season roster. Any player who indicates a desire not to continue as part of his immediate prior year team will be placed on another team at the League President's discretion. (Recruiting players from one team to another is strictly prohibited and offending individual(s) will be subject to review by the Rules Infraction Committee for disciplinary action, including being banned from further participation in all SVAA programs.) Teams will be formed using school boundaries where possible in all leagues.

Absent the prior consent of the Sports Commissioner, teams will have a maximum of 14 players and a minimum of 10 players. To ensure a reasonable player balance among teams, the League President may assign players to teams as needed, subject to the player limit set forth in rule 6.5.1.

Surplus players will be assigned to the closest team that has a roster of less than the maximum. The League President shall make every effort to maintain a balanced number of players on all teams in the league.

Private school players will be placed on teams according to the school they would normally attend if they attended a RISD school unless there are sufficient players to form a separate team from that private school or create a nucleus from such school.

A coach cannot refuse to accept any player assigned to his team by the League President; nor may a coach engage in any conduct that is designed to run-off or discourage any player from participating in the program. Every player that leaves a team will be contacted to determine the reason for their departure and an evaluation will be made as to whether any action is required.

**1.3 Flag Late Sign-ups** - Contracts received after the “contract deadline” date will be assigned, space permitting, to teams by the League President or Sport Commissioner after all earlier contracts have been assigned. The basis for this assignment will take into consideration the geographical area and team with the least number of players. Players must be assigned before league games begin.

Note: Coaches MAY NOT recruit or promise prospective players a specific team assignment. Team assignment is the responsibility of the League President, or Sport Commissioner.

**1.4 7v7 Teams.** All 7v7 teams are team formed. Coaches need a minimum of 8 players to be considered a team roster. Teams should not exceed 14 players unless the coach has prior approval from the Sport Commissioner.

## **2.0 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COACH**

The coach or his representative is required to attend the coaches meeting prior to the beginning of practice and games. SVAA has entered into an agreement with Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA) to provide training for all of our head coaches. All head coaches are required to become certified either by attending a training session in person or by performing the session online.

**All coaches are required to wear an SVAA ID badge. Failure to show proof of badges will result in a forfeit, Teams may still play, but the game will be recorded as a forfeit for the team who did not have badges. If neither team has badges it will be recorded as a double forfeit. Photographs of ID badges may be used in an emergency, but no more than one per season.**

The objectives of the coaches meeting are:

- Meet your League President and other coaches

- Receive roster with contact information for other coaches
- Receive team's roster of authorized players
- Receive information about player uniforms and team equipment
- Participate in general discussions outlining season calendar, rule changes and interpretation, location and times for practice games, etc.
- Discuss schedule and game rescheduling process

**2.1 Coach/Team/Parent Relations** - Coaches are required to have a parents' meeting prior to beginning practice. It is an important policy of SVAA that the Head Coach meets with the parents of their players prior to the start of the season. During this meeting the following information should be conveyed:

- Support groups (cheerleaders, etc.) are encouraged so long as participation in that group is based on the same principle that governs player participation - that all individuals are given an equal opportunity to participate (no exclusion of individuals).
- Parents are expected to conduct themselves in an adult manner at all times, to set an example of good citizenship and sportsmanship for their children and other participants. No alcoholic beverages, tobacco or illegal drugs will be allowed at any team function or at the field.
- Distribute game and practice information. Explain to them what they may expect of you and what you may expect of them (this will be a good time to solicit parents for any help you may need).
- Encourage your parents to make sure their child has a clean official uniform ready for each game
- Explain your basis for team discipline (e.g. If a player misses practice, games or is late for a game). Discipline must be consistent for every team member and must be given to parents in writing.
- Briefly describe rules of play that are unique to SVAA and your league. Tell them that Rules may be found online at [www.svaa.org](http://www.svaa.org) under the Football Tab at the top of the page.
- Make sure parents know their views are welcome, after a game or practice, but not during an event.
- Emphasize that parents must agree that they will provide, at their own expense, any insurance deemed necessary to cover a player for any SVAA related injury. Any injury requiring a doctor's visit must be reported to the SVAA office immediately.
- Prior to the first league game, each Coach must certify to his/her League President that the parent's meeting has taken place and that the above subjects have been covered.
- Assign an individual parent as team manager to be responsible for assigning various jobs such as:
  - Pictures
  - Refreshments

- Field Equipment
- Crowd Control

## 2.2 Practices

Be present at all team practice sessions and games or be sure that you have a reliable adult assistant coach present at games or practices. Be dependable!

Do not have practice on the day of the game; remember we are working with children, not men and women. However, a 30-minute warm-up period may be utilized.

Practices are where a coach shows what he (she) is made of. Coaching takes time not only on the practice field, but also at the "drawing board".

- Set up a practice schedule and stick to it.
- Have "skull" sessions with your assistant coaches after practice.
- Plan each practice session.
- Practice sessions should be fast paced, and involve all team members as much as possible. Avoid standing around.

As a coach, you should use the Assistant Coaches as much as possible. If they don't know the sport, you, as the Head Coach, teach them as well. They may want to be a Head Coach someday! Ask for feedback from your Assistant Coaches. You might be surprised how much they can help.

**2.3 Non-SVAA Practices, Scrimmages and/or Games** - Any participation with a non-SVAA sanctioned team or outside the assigned SVAA league and grade level, whether it be a scrimmage, practice game or post season game(s) is strictly forbidden. Any violation of this rule will, at the discretion of the Board, result in the disqualification of the offending team(s) entire coaching staff from further participation in any SVAA program. The Board of Directors may give approval in certain circumstances.

**2.4 Liability** – Football, in any form, can be a contact sport. It is the duty and responsibility of each parent to provide insurance. The parents agree to indemnify and to hold SVAA harmless against loss due to the participation of their children in the sports programs, whether any such claim sounds in negligence or any other theory.

**2.5 Concussions** - Any player that exhibits any symptoms of a concussion (including, for example, headaches, nausea or vomiting, balance problems or dizziness, double or blurry vision, unusual sensitivity to light and/or sound, feeling sluggish, confusion or memory loss) shall be immediately removed from any

practice or game situation. The player may not participate in any further practices or games until the SVAA office and the Head Coach have received written confirmation from a qualified health care provider that the player may resume such participation. The Head Coach is responsible for ensuring full compliance with this rule.

**2.6 Conduct On The Field** - As a Head Coach you are responsible for the actions of your assistants, team members and parents. Unless a child is hurt, parents and other supporters should remain in the stands. Only authorized coaches with a valid SVAA coaching badge are allowed on the field, sideline, and the track before, during and after the game. Any violation of this rule can result in a penalty on the field. Only the Head Coach may question an Official.

Do not argue with the Officials or threaten them in any manner. If you feel that the official(s) does not understand the rules, or "calls" a bad game, see your League President, after the game. A coach or fan placing unnecessary pressure on an Official will risk forfeiture of the game and possible suspension.

The use of foul or abusive language, alcohol, tobacco, drugs or fighting will not be tolerated by SVAA. This includes players, coaches and fans who are attending SVAA functions, games or practices. The offending player, coach or fan may be removed from the game at the discretion of the official. Other offenders will be asked to leave the game area and the offending team will be assessed a 15-yard penalty. Coaches, players, or referees may be suspended from SVAA.

Players and coaches who conduct themselves in an unsportsmanlike manner and violate the intent and purpose of SVAA philosophy will not be allowed to participate in any SVAA event until they have met with the Sport Commissioner to assess their continued eligibility. Those who violate this rule may be suspended.

A coach, player or fan ejected from a game will be suspended for a minimum of the next game and must meet with the Sport Commissioner (or designated representative) to reestablish eligibility for further participation in or attendance at any future league games. The ejected individual must leave the field or risk forfeiture of the game. An official must report an expulsion/suspension of a coach, player or fan to the Official Assigner within 24 hours. It is the responsibility of the coach, player or fan who was ejected to establish contact with their Sport Commissioner. Failure to obtain the appropriate Commissioner's approval for future participation or attendance may result in forfeiture of all games in which the offending player or coach participates or the fan attends.

### **3.0 WEATHER/LIGHTNING**

**3.1 Inclement Weather/Lightning Policy** - Texas weather is unpredictable. As a result, weather may become an issue during the play of a game. SVAA’s policy is that safety of all participants and attendees at an event is the number one priority. In the absence of an SVAA league official, the head referee has the authority to determine whether and when game play should be suspended. In all cases, play must be suspended by the time that lightning is within 10 miles of the field location.

Determining the distance of lightning strikes from a field should rely on technology when available. For example, the Weatherbug App has a feature identifying the distance to the closest lightning strike. But, when technology is not available, the National Weather Service advises that the ability to hear thunder associated with a lightning strike indicates that the lightning is within 10 miles. Another useful, non-technological approach is the 30/30 rule. Under that rule, if thunder is heard within 30 seconds of a lightning strike, the lightning is within 6 miles.

The decision of the SVAA league official or the head referee to suspend a game is final and is not up for debate for any reason.

Once a game is suspended, all players, coaches, and fans must leave the field immediately and move to a safe location. To the extent possible, everyone should take shelter in their vehicles. No one may stay in or around the playing field.

Play may not resume until 30 minutes has passed from the last observed lightning strike or, if sooner, the point in time the field becomes unplayable. If the field becomes unplayable, the suspended game may be called. If the 30-minute time period extends beyond the start time for the following game, the game in question will be cancelled and not resumed. A decision as to whether subsequent games will be played that day will be made by the Sports Commissioner or their designee.

## **4.0 GENERAL FOOTBALL RULES**

SVAA Flag Football shall be played in accordance with the current year Texas Amateur Athletic Federation for flag football and SVAA 7x 7 football shall be played in accordance with Texas University Interscholastic League current year rules, both with the exceptions and clarifications covered in this book.

**4.1 Player Participation/Substitution** – Every player must be a “starter” on offense or defense, and barring injury, must play in ALL plays on their “starting” side of the ball. This rule will apply to the first, second, and third quarters of play. Open substitution in the 4th quarter is allowed. You may switch them around, but not in the middle of a quarter. Every player must START and continue playing the whole quarter on either offense or defense. Any changes made during the first three quarters must be made at the start of the next quarter and in any case for the entire

game, absent injury, no player who is eligible to be substituted out of a game may be substituted for another player until possession of the ball changes.

Players will get sick, need to be disciplined, get injured during a game, or arrive late for a game. Therefore, where applicable, the only exceptions to the substitution rule will be for illness, disciplinary action, or injury during a game. The coach shall determine a player's participation in a game if that player arrives late for a game. If the substitution rules are not followed by the coach, the coach will be suspended.

#### 4.2 General Game Rules

- No form of communication devices may be used during game play to communicate with any player on the field of play. A violation of this rule will result in a forfeit being declared.
- Game ball used on offense must be the appropriate size and approved by game officials.
- Coaches and players must stay between the 20-yard markers (**16 yard markers on an 80 yard field**)
- There will be no field goals kicked or kicking of extra points.
- **Visual Recordings** – (a) A team (or any person affiliated with a team in any way) that is not involved in the playing of a game shall not make a visual recording (using any method of recording) of an SVAA athletic contest without the prior written consent of the teams competing in the contest. No visual recording made by any team can be uploaded to any website platform or social media without written consent of parent/guardian of all players included in the video. Any visual recording is to be used solely for player training/coaching. (b) A team choosing to make a visual recording of their athletic contest may not use any mechanism (ladders, drones, etc.) designed to produce a recording at an elevation higher than obtainable by holding a recording device at eye level.
- Injuries must be reported to League President if they cause the player to be removed from the game.

**4.3 Scheduling/Rescheduling Games** - Only the Sport Commissioner or League President may reschedule games and set times and places for make-up games. Games shall be rescheduled for weather related cancellations only, lightning or other dangerous weather. If a game is called because of weather, the game will resume from the point of cancellation. The game official will make that decision. We do not have rainouts in football. **Make sure that you give ALL conflicts to your League President before the schedules are published.**

**4.4 Officials** - Officials are provided for all league games. If, for any reason, there is no official present, the game will not be played and will be rescheduled by the League President.

**4.5 Exceptions** - These rules, hopefully, are designed for the general attitudes that prevail with SVAA. However, exceptions do arise that must be addressed. If, during the course of the season, the need arises for rule modification that is beneficial to the league in general, the League President shall document the proposed changes in writing and submit them to the Sport Commissioner. The Sport Commissioner must gain Board approval prior to enacting any rule change.

## **5.0 PLAYOFFS/CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Each league may consist of one or more divisions. Determination of division numbers and team placement within each division is the responsibility of the League President and Sport Commissioner. Division organization and playoff format, including the number of teams qualifying for the playoffs, will be furnished to each coach prior to the first league game.

At the end of the regular season, the teams that qualify for the playoffs in each division (based on won-loss records) will advance to the playoff games. In the event of identical standings, the selection of qualifying teams will be based upon:

1. Head-to-Head competition.
2. Average points allowed per game not to include forfeits
3. Coin Flip

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**Awards** - It is the policy of SVAA to present awards based primarily on won-loss standings.

**5.2 Division/Playoffs** - Awards will be presented to the regular season division champion(s). For the purpose of awards the division champion will be determined by won-loss record only. In the event of a tie, Co-Champion awards will be presented at this level.

Playoff awards will be presented to: 1. Tournament Winner and 2. Tournament Finalist (runner-up). A regular season "division winner" that becomes a "tournament winner" will receive the "Tournament Winner" award only. A regular season "division winner" that does not become a "tournament winner" will receive the "division winner" award. No team will receive more than one award for competition.

League Presidents and the Sport Commissioner have discretion to create more than one tournament per grade level to accommodate league size and competition issues.

**5.3 Other Awards** - No other awards may be given in the name of SVAA.

## 6.0 FLAG RULES and REGULATIONS (K2/Peewee size football)

Flag teams may be reformed each year to conform to the team formation policy of players s playing with their core school group to the extent possible. Participation for Championships will be by grade levels only!

### 6.1 The Field/Uniforms

- (1) Full size footballs may be used, usually RISD junior high or high school fields. However, fields may be shortened to 80 yards and narrowed for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade leagues.
- (2) **Jerseys are required to have numbers centered on the front and the back on all four sides.** The home team will wear the white jerseys and the visiting team will wear colored jerseys. Jerseys cannot have hoods. The players must all wear the same color of shorts/pants. A team may not wear shorts the same color as their flags or have stripes on their shorts the same color as their flags. Shorts cannot have pockets.
- (3) **Mouthpieces must be worn by all players.** If a team does not have the required number of players to start a game with mouthpieces, then that team will forfeit the game.
- (4) Flags on the belts need to be pointed out, as the belt clips are designed, not in, toward a player’s hip.
- (5) For high school fields the home team will occupy the sideline nearest the stadium entrance and the visitors will occupy the sideline on the opposite/far side of the field. For other fields the home team will occupy the sideline nearest the parking area and the visitors will occupy the opposite sideline. The two teams (coaches and players) must position themselves on opposite sides of the field.

### 6.2 Time Regulations

- (1) **Four ten-minute quarters with a running clock plus 7 plays in the fourth quarter. Five-minute halftime.**
- (2) The clock will be a running clock except for timeouts and injuries. The clock will continue running after a score is made.
- (3) Each team will be allowed 2 time-outs per half. Time-outs will be one-minute in length. Clock restarts at snap. If a team with no time-outs remaining calls a time-out, the referee will inform the coach that he has no more time-outs and the clock will continue to run.
- (4) If regulation time expires with the score tied, we will use the following method to determine a winner:

(a) Before the start of overtime and during an official's timeout, one referee will perform a coin toss pursuant to section 6.5.3(a).

(b) At the start of overtime, the ball will be placed on the 40 yard line (**32 yard line on an 80 yard field**) nearest the target endzone and play will begin. The first offensive team gets only 4 consecutive plays in which to score and gain yardage. Then the second team gets only 4 consecutive plays in the same direction towards the same endzone. At the conclusion of these two possessions, the winner will be determined by score. If the score remains tied the winner will be determined by most positive yards gained during an offensive possession.

- An interception ends any possession.

(c) If the score remains tied after 6.2.4(b), then each team will play single alternating plays from the 40 yard line (**32 yard line on an 80 yard field**) nearest the target endzone. If a touchdown is scored the scoring team may choose either a 1 point or a 2 point conversion. After each team's play a winning determination is made by score then by yardage gained if the score is tied. Repeat as game remains tied.

- (5) The period of time after a touchdown is made is known as the PAT or Point After Touchdown. During regulation game time, the game clock does not stop. During the Seven (7) Play Period or the Tie Breaker Period, the PAT is not counted as a numbered play, but will use the play clock as a guide. With two minutes remaining in regulation period (10 minutes into the last quarter), teams will be given a two minute warning and be instructed that the seven (7) play period will begin. The seven (7) play period has only the twenty-five (25) second play clock to use as a time guideline between plays. The officials will give down and play number on all plays remaining. Teams must continue to make first downs if they want to keep possession, as it is during the remainder of the game before the 7 play period. However, if they do not make a first down, the defense has a chance to gain possession and use the remainder of the seven plays. Kick offs will count as one of the plays.

### 6.3 Scoring

- (1) Touchdowns are worth six points.
- (2) Extra points will be attempted from the three-yard line.
- (3) Two points for an extra point earned by a pass, one point for an extra point earned by a run. To gain 2 points, the pass must go directly from the QB to the receiver. No laterals allowed in this situation.
- (4) Safety is worth two points. **After a safety, the team that is awarded the points will have possession of the ball at their 20 yard line (16 yard line for 80 yard fields).**
- (5) In order to score, any part of the ball must break the plain of the goal line.

### 6.4 Kickoffs and Punts

- (1) Kickoffs will start each half and following touchdowns.
- (2) Kicking team will kick off from their 40 yard line (**32 yard line on an 80 yard field**). The receiving team must be 20 yards (**16 yards on an 80 yard field**) from the ball when it is kicked. If the ball touches a player on the receiving team but is not in his possession, another player on the receiving team may gain possession and return the kickoff.
- (3) If the kicked ball does not go 10 yards (**8 yards on an 80 yard field**) or goes out of bounds before being touched, the receiving team may choose to take possession of the ball where it stops on the field or where it went out of bounds.
- (4) In the event of 6.4.3, the receiving team may also opt to have the kick repeated. There is a 2 yard penalty for the kick being repeated against the kicking team.
- (5) Kicking team cannot recover kickoff.
- (6) Punts: The ball will be automatically advanced 20 yards (**16 on an 80 yard field**) from the line of scrimmage with no further penetration than the 10 yard line (**8 yard line on an 80 yard field**).
- (7) Punting team must declare they are punting.
- (8) No unannounced “punts” will be allowed.
- (9) **On kickoffs - once the ball is picked up or caught by an offensive player and he is running down the field, he can lateral the ball (no handoffs) to another player on his team. No limit on the number of laterals down the field.**

## 6.5 General Rules of Play

### 6.5.1 Participation

- (a) Remember SVAA is a recreational league where we try to find a team for every player that registers. If your team has fewer than 12 players you could receive additional/unexpected solo(s) from your same or a nearby school. If your team already has 12 players you will not receive additional/unexpected solos from the “draft pool.” If players are added to your team, we will not add past 12, however, coaches can request a 13<sup>th</sup> and/or 14<sup>th</sup> player. The Head Coach is responsible for insuring that any added player is welcomed to the team and receives the same treatment as all other players on the team.
- (b) A team is allowed to start a game with 6 players.
- (c) SVAA participation rules for football will apply. See Rule 4.1. Briefly, every player must have a starting position for the first three quarters. There is open substitution for the fourth quarter.
- (d) There will be no down field blocking or running screens. (6-yard penalty). You may only **have one blocker (for QB)** on or behind the line of scrimmage and you must keep your arms behind your back when blocking.

- (e) Defensive player cannot hold or push the ball carrier down to remove the flag, touch or grab the face of the ball carrier, block or push the ball carrier out of bounds. (6-yard penalty)
- (f) The ball carrier may not use their hands, head, or shoulders, to protect his flag from being pulled. He may not stiff arm or block the hands of a defender who is attempting to pull the flag. This is flag guarding and is a 6-yard penalty from the spot in which the infraction first occurs and carries with it a loss-of-down. The ball carrier may not deliberately drive or run into a defensive player. This is also a form of flag guarding/charging and is a 6-yard penalty from the spot in which the infraction first occurs and carries with it a loss-of-down.
- (g) Five-yard penalties will be 2 yards. Fifteen-yard penalties will be 6 yards. Unnecessary roughness, unsportsmanlike conduct will be 10 yards.
- (h) Coaches, players and spectators persisting in unsportsmanlike conduct may face ejection and other sanctions.
- (i) Coaches, players and spectators ejected must meet with the League President and/or Sport Commissioner prior to being reinstated as a coach, player or spectator.
- (j) All judgments by the official are final.
- (k) No player is allowed to leave his feet. Exception - If a player jumps over another player to avoid a collision, the call will be at the discretion of the referee.
- (l) Formation: There must be at least 4 players (the center is included in the number) on the line of scrimmage. Illegal formation penalty will be 2 yards. (your center).
- (m) Once the ball is set in play by the ref, no one (including the center) can pick the ball up from the spot of the ball until the ball is snapped. (2-yard penalty).

**6.5.2 Penalty Enforcement** - A new first down will be given to the offense if the placement of the ball, AFTER the penalty is enforced, results in a first down OR if the penalty includes an automatic first down. For loss of down penalties, the ball will be placed at the new ball placement after penalty enforcement and the down will be advanced to the next down. Otherwise, the previous down will be repeated from the new ball placement after penalty enforcement unless an automatic first down is assessed as part of the penalty.

- (a) Defensive Pass Interference will be a 10 yard penalty (**8 yard penalty on an 80 yard field**) from the line of scrimmage and an automatic first down.
- (b) Intentional grounding: 2 yard penalty from where the ball was thrown and a loss of down. Intentional grounding is defined as the ball not traveling across the line of scrimmage and no receiver in the area.
- (c) Illegal forward pass: 2 yard penalty from the line of scrimmage and a loss of down. An illegal forward pass is defined as a thrown ball when the QB's whole body is across the line of scrimmage.

### 6.5.3 The Game

- (a) One referee will perform pre-game coin toss: (1) winner of coin toss will chose possession (kick or receive), (2) loser of coin toss will chose direction (goal defending), (3) for the second half the direction and possession will be reversed.
- (b) First downs will be gained by advancing the ball past the next 10-yard zone line **(8-yard zone line in an 80-yard field)**.  
Teams will have four downs to move the ball past the next zone line to gain a first down.
- (c) If forced behind an additional zone line through penalty of loss of yardage, the original zone line to be reached for a first down must still be reached.
- (d) One coach for each team is allowed on the field (you may have up to 2 coaches on the field in 1<sup>st</sup> grade). All other coaches, players and fans must stay on the sidelines far enough back so you do not interfere with the play. Once the ball is snapped the coaches on the field are not allowed to talk/coach. Violation of this rule will result in a penalty.
- (e) Players must use flags and flag belts provide by SVAA. Before each snap, players must have flag belts on with the proper number of flags attached. Flags must be placed on the hips directly down from the armpits. The securing of flags to the body, waist or belt other than by the equipment provided or in the wrong location is illegal. (2-yard penalty) All players must have jerseys tucked in. If a flag falls off when a player is running with the ball, he is down where the flag falls off.
- (f) Downing the ball: A player with the ball is down when a knee touches the ground or one of the player's flag is removed or comes off, regardless of whether the flag was pulled off by an opposing player or it just fell off. Also, the ball is dead when it comes into possession of a player without two flags on.
- (g) All players are eligible receivers. However, the ball is dead and ruled an incomplete pass when the passer catches his own pass. If a forward pass is thrown to the snapper it must travel one yard in flight beyond the line of scrimmage. You must have possession of the ball and have one foot in bounds for a legal catch.
- (h) Ball may be handed in any direction to a player behind the line of scrimmage. Unless the ball is forward passed, it may not be advanced across the line of scrimmage until after an exchange has been made between the receiver of the snap and another player. (Penalty: 2 yards and loss of down)
- (i) A ball touching the ground is dead and spotted at the point of contact with the ground except for the following:
  - (1) A ball fumbled forward will be spotted from the point of the fumble.

- (2) A ball fumbled by the offense in its own end zone will be a safety.
  - (3) A ball has not been touched by the receiving team on a kickoff.
  - (4) A ball that hits the ground from a shotgun snap (**this ball can be picked up by the QB, but it cannot be dropped and picked up again during that play**). If the ball rolls or bounces back to the QB from a shotgun snap and he attempts to pick it up, but it hits the ground again BEFORE he can *control* it, it's a muff and he should be able to continue the play. Just like in a direct snap where the ball hits the QBs hands and it goes to the ground, then the QB picks it up and continues the play. The difference is the distance the ball travels initially between the center and the QB. **However, if after he picks it up or gains possession of it or takes a step (football move), then drops it, the ball is dead.**
  - (5) The quarterback gets one muff from snap (meaning the ball can hit the ground and the quarterback can pick it up only once during the same play).
- (j) The offensive team will have 25 seconds from the time the ref places the ball down on the line of scrimmage to put the ball into play.
- (k) There will be a rush count of 3 seconds before the ONE defensive player can rush the quarterback. **Referee should count out loud. One-one thousand, two-one thousand, THREE** ) (You may only have one rusher when the QB has the ball.) If the ball is handed off, anyone can rush.

## 7.0 7 v 7 Football Rules

### 1. Safety equipment:

- Mouth pieces are required for all players.
- Headgear is strongly recommended.

2. All rules are in accordance with the Texas High School football rules including penalties and penalty yards with exceptions stated below.

## 7.1 The Field/Time Regulations

**7.1.1** Field Dimensions A) Field Length -- 45 yards long B) Field Width – normal football field C) End Zone -- 10 yards deep

**7.1.2** Time - Two twenty (20) minute halves with a running clock and a 5 minute halftime.

## 7.2. Starting the Game

A) Visitors will have first possession. The home team will have first possession in the 2nd half. Teams must be on opposite sides of the field. Home team will occupy the sidelines nearest the stands.

**B) Jerseys are required to have numbers centered on the front and the back on all four sides.** The home team will wear white jerseys and the visiting team will wear colored jerseys. Jerseys cannot have hoods. The players must all wear the same color of shorts/pants.

C) Players are permitted to wear standard football cleats with plastic or rubber spikes. **NO METAL SPIKES ARE ALLOWED.**

D) Each team will use its own ball, approved by the Head Official, during offensive possessions. The 4th grade division will use K2 footballs. 5th grade will use TD-J size footballs and 6th-8th will use TD-Y footballs.

E) Referee will announce the score before each offensive possession begins.

## 7.3. Moving the Ball

A) Offense always moves towards the end zone

B) All plays must begin with a forward pass. The QB may not run the ball, and there may not be any handoffs. Once a forward pass is completed, backward laterals are permitted.

a. A pass caught behind the line of scrimmage must still be a forward pass

b. If a defensive player tags the receiver after a completed pass behind the 45yard line, the play is a SAFETY.

C) A new possession always begins at the 45 yard line. No penalty will be assessed in excess of the 45 yard line. Instead, a loss of down will occur.

D) The field is “divided” into three “sections”, each section being 15 yards long. A first down is achieved when the offensive team successfully moves the ball out of their current “section” and into one of the next “sections”. Number of plays to in each section: • 3 plays to get out of the first section • 3 plays to get out of the second section • 4 plays to get out of the third section and into the end zone

E) If the offensive team fails to get a first down or throws an interception (assuming the interception is not returned for a touchdown), the opposing team gains possession and starts at the 45 yard line F) No kicking or punting

## 7.4. Special Rules

A) Defensive players may not cross the line of scrimmage, unless and until a forward pass is completed.

B) No blocking of any kind

C) Receiver/Ball carrier is legally down when touched below the neck with one or both hands. (Excessive force by shoving, pushing, or striking a blow will be penalized by automatic 1st down and 5 yards. Player will be expelled if ruled unsportsmanlike & flagrant).

D) Fumbles are dead balls at the spot with the last team retaining possession. A muffed snap is NOT a fumble/dead ball.

E) Each team will have 25 seconds to snap the ball once the official has declared it ready for play; delay of game penalty will be a 5-yard penalty.

1. If there is a delay of game penalty on an extra point play, the offending team will not get to attempt an extra point

2. The offense turns the ball over if they have two delay of game penalties in one offensive series.

F) The QB is allowed 6 seconds in 4th grade, 5 seconds in 5th grade, and 4 seconds in 6th-8th grades to throw the ball.

- For 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades ONLY: The referee will use a verbal count out loud that will go as follows:

1. 4<sup>th</sup> grade: One-one thousand, two-one thousand, three-one thousand, four-one thousand, five one-thousand, WHISTLE. If at the time of the whistle the QB still has the ball, the play is dead and will count as an incomplete pass. If the ball is released within the time count, no whistle will be blown.

2. 5<sup>th</sup> grade: One-one thousand, two-one thousand, three one thousand, four-one thousand, WHISTLE. If at the time of the whistle the QB still has the ball, the play is dead and will count as an incomplete pass. If the ball is release within the time count, no whistle will be blown.

- For 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grades ONLY: The referee starts a stopwatch on the snap of the ball from the center and stops the watch as soon as the QB releases the ball.

1. If the QB releases the ball after 4 seconds on the stopwatch, play continues but the result will be treated as an incomplete pass.

- Any penalties incurred during that play will still be marked off EXCEPT for pass interference.

2. If release occurs under the specified time, then the play will continue and stand as is.

G) Defensive Pass Interference will be a 15 yard penalty or a spot foul, whichever is greater.

H) Responsibility to avoid contact is with the defense. There will be NO chucking, or deliberate bumping or grabbing. These actions will result in a "tack on" penalty at the end of the play (5-yard penalty).

I) Offensive pass interference is a 15 yard penalty.

1. The penalty will be a loss of down if 15 yards would take a team past the 45 yard line.

- J) Interceptions may be returned. If not returned for a touchdown, the team that intercepted will start their possession on the 45 yard line, regardless of where the interception occurred or was advanced to.
- K) Offensive team is responsible for retrieving and returning the ball to the previous spot or the new scrimmage spot. Clock does not stop and any delay by offense in retrieving and returning the ball to the referee will result in a delay of game and will be a 5-yard penalty from the succeeding spot.
- L) The offensive center is not an eligible receiver nor may he receive a lateral (all teams must have a center-the center may be any player). The center is responsible for establishing the succeeding spot as designated by the Referee.
- M) The center will be responsible for setting or re-positioning the Referee's bean bag or cone at the line of scrimmage.
- N) No taunting or "trash talking." (5-yard penalty & expulsion if flagrant or repeated).
- O) Fighting: the player(s) involved will be ejected from the game. If a team fight occurs, the teams involved will be ejected.
- P) Any dead ball foul on a play that results in the defense getting the ball will result in a loss of down penalty, as the team cannot be penalized beyond the 45 yard line starting position. The new possession would be starting play with 2nd down.
- Q) One coach is allowed on the field for the team's offensive possession (no coaches on the field for defense). The coach must remain behind all offensive players at all times. Once the ball is snapped the coach on the field is not allowed to talk/coach. Violation of this rule will result in a penalty.
- R) Snapping of the ball by the center may be between the legs or from the side.
- S) Formation: There must be a receiver on each side of the center. Illegal formation penalty will be 5 yards.
- T) Tackle Box: The tackle box is enforced and will be judged as 3 yards each side of the center and 3 yards deep.

**7.5. Scoring** 6 points for TD, 1 point for PAT from 5 yard line, 2 point PAT from 10 yard line (an interception returned for a touchdown on a PAT is awarded 2 points). Official score is kept by field referee and game manager.

**7.6. Overtime Rules** After coin flip to determine first possession, each team will get 4 downs from the 10 yard line to score. Normal extra point rules will apply. Only one possession per team.

### **7.7. Time Regulations**

- A) 20-minute halves (continuous clock for each half--see: "starting the game").
- B) No time outs. (EXCEPTION: Injuries. Game clock will halt until injured player(s) can be safely removed from the field). 1. 5-minute halftime

These rules are designed to provide a framework for the proper administration of the SVAA football program. SVAA reserves the right to apply these rules or to alter these rules in a particular situation as the SVAA Board of Directors' determines to be in the best interest of the program as a whole.



## SPRINGVALLEY ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

### 8.0 RULES INFRACTIONS GUIDELINES

Following several months of study, the Board of Directors of the Spring Valley Athletic Association (“SVAA”) has decided to publish its rules and procedures regarding the punishment for violations of its rules. The Board hopes that this document will inform all coaches and participants of SVAA’s intent to ensure compliance with its rules as well as the policies that SVAA will follow to enforce those rules. SVAA is not a heavy rule oriented organization, but rules must exist in order to ensure the basic fairness of the sports programs SVAA offers. The existence of rules, however, is not enough. SVAA must also ensure that those rules are enforced and enforced uniformly from violation to violation and from sport to sport.

This document, while making every effort to be comprehensive, will fail undoubtedly to address every situation that may arise. In any case not dealt with specifically herein, SVAA reserves the right to issue such punishment as it believes to be appropriate under the circumstances. In addition, this document is not intended to be binding or enforceable against SVAA. It is a general statement of policy and intent, but SVAA reserves the right to alter any procedure set forth in this document in the event it believes such change to be in order.

#### *General Philosophy*

As articulated in the rulebook for each sport, SVAA runs its programs for the benefit of the youth participating in those programs. Though many coaches and parents seem to lose track of the basic point, winning and losing are not important. SVAA exists for the purpose of allowing youth to learn about various sports, to learn the team environment, and to learn that “it is better to have tried and failed than not to have tried at all.” All youth should be encouraged to sign up to play and each one should be given equal opportunity to play and learn the sport. Hence, for example, the team formation rules, where everyone should be encouraged to play and coaches are not allowed to form teams, and the substitution rules, where every youth is required to play significant amounts of every game, are both areas that are important to ensuring that the basic philosophy becomes reality. Conduct that interferes with this basic philosophy has always been, and will continue to be dealt with harshly.

#### *Basic Procedures*

The SVAA sports rulebooks provide a uniform procedure regarding the enforcement of SVAA’s rules, policies and philosophy applicable to that sport. In general, the rules divide each sport into three separate areas -- team formation, practice, and games. Each area has its own specific set of rules and guidelines. The violation of some rules and guidelines contain set penalties, while others only establish ranges, and some leave the penalty unspecified. Contrary to the general perception, the range of penalties and the degree of specificity associated with the violation of each rule has been the result of SVAA’s 50 plus years’ experience in administrating youth sports programs.

This document will not address the specifics of the rules of the game since the enforcement of those rules is left to the judgment and discretion of the game officials. Rather, this document focuses on those situations which violate SVAA's specific rules. In general, the enforcement of all SVAA rules is the ultimate responsibility of the Board of Directors. In the first instance, however, rules will be enforced and punishments determined by the League President, the Deputy Sport's Commissioner, and the Sport Commissioner. All decisions made by any of these people can be appealed to the Rules and Infractions Committee of the Board.

The purpose of that appeal process is to ensure some consistency from sport-to-sport, from year-to-year and with the guiding purposes of SVAA. SVAA Commissioners and Officers are all volunteers and they spend a tremendous amount of time and effort to try to ensure compliance with SVAA's rules. **To ensure that time is not wasted, SVAA will, effective with the 1996 Baseball Season, impose a \$50 fee for all appeals beyond the Sport Commissioner level.** If in the Board's sole discretion an appeal is upheld, the full \$50 fee will be refunded. In all other cases the fee will be applied to SVAA's general financial aid program.

### *Basic Rule Infractions*

The general range of penalties available to enforce SVAA's rules can basically be divided into two general categories. One, for addressing game specific issues, involving either forfeiture of a game or a requirement to replay the game under specified conditions. Two, for addressing the conduct of coaches, players and fans, ranging from no action, to probation, to suspension for some period of time, to expulsion from further participation in any SVAA program. The specific punishment applied in a particular situation is dependent upon a consideration of the nature of the violation and the surrounding circumstances. Relevant questions for the surrounding circumstances involve the impact on the youth, the nature of the violation, whether the same or similar conduct had occurred in the past, and whether the offending person has endeavored to rectify the effects of the violation.

Given these variables, a specific penalty for any given violation of an SVAA rule cannot be announced in advance with the exception of expulsion from a game. In the event of an expulsion, an automatic extra game suspension will be imposed. As noted above, those violations that go to the heart of SVAA's philosophy will be dealt with harshly. SVAA does not have a rule that requires a staged enforcement of its penalties. Hence, in the right circumstances and presumably extreme case, the very first violation of an SVAA rule may result in the harshest penalty, expulsion from the league.

SVAA does, however, keep track of its rule enforcement decisions and the fact that a prior violation has occurred may be used as a factor to escalate the punishment for any subsequent violation. Put another way, SVAA will track punishments for particular individuals from sport-to-sport and from year-to-year and additional violations of SVAA rules regardless of sport by the same individual will be dealt with more severely than a first violation by another individual of the same rule.

To help ensure the proper enforcement of its rules across all sports and from year-to-year, SVAA has appointed a standing Rules Infractions Committee of the Board. That Committee will be composed of three members at large, the SVAA Administrator (non-voting), and the Sport Commissioner of each SVAA sport. The Sport Commissioner will not participate in the deliberation of any matter heard by the Committee that arises from the sport in which he/she is the Commissioner.

### *Rule Specific Guides*

The table below is designed to highlight some of the areas of rules violations that SVAA views as serious:

<b>Team Formation</b>	<b>Practice</b>	<b>Games</b>
1. Recruiting youth for a particular team	1. Holding practice longer than permitted by the rule or prior to the time authorized for practice	1. Failing to follow the substitution eligibility rules for that sport
2. Discouraging or preventing youth from signing up or participating in an SVAA program	2. Allowing a youth to participate in practice without a signed contract on file with the office	2. Being ejected from a game or otherwise failing to deal with officials with respect
3. Failure by each coach to have a parents' meeting as required by each sport	3. Failing to ensure adult supervision at all practices and games	3. Allowing youth to participate in two leagues at one time
	4. Damaging a facility obtained by SVAA	4. Allowing fans to engage in inappropriate conduct
	5. Any use of foul or abusive language, Use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco.	5. Any use of foul or abusive language, Use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco.

Violations of these rules in particular can expect to receive more serious penalties.

## *Summary*

Hopefully this document will provide some insight into the SVAA rule enforcement policy. SVAA hopes that it will never be called upon to enforce any of its rules. If you have any questions about a specific rule, contact your league president or Sport Commissioner in advance. Do not assume that merely because the same conduct has happened before that it will not be subject to punishment. Unfortunately, not all rule violations are brought to the Board's attention. If you have any questions about this document, please contact the SVAA office at 972-238-9728. Your question will be forwarded to a member of the rules infraction committee for response.

The Rules Infraction Committee  
Spring Valley Athletic Association