

YOUTH FOOTBALL GUIDELINES

Note: All community youth sports coordinators, coaches, parents, players, fans and interested parties: The rules listed below will be used to implement youth football governed by LCRAC. It is your responsibility to read these rules and follow them. You should make no assumptions regarding these rules. Failure on your part to follow this procedure will not invalidate these rules.

Note: All professionals, volunteer administrators, coaches and parents must successfully complete an orientation/training program through local boards that includes an understanding of the LCRAC's philosophy, policies and procedures, and specific knowledge required for each position. All boards must annually provide through written communication to LCRAC documentation of its understanding and willingness to adhere to these guidelines and procedures. Please refer to 4.0 of this manual for reference.



1.0 Youth Football Mission

The Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commission will direct the Youth Organizations/Leagues in the operation of the county football program. End of the year playoffs will not be allowed on any of the Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commissions property.

The purpose/mission for the youth football is:

- A. To allow all youth of Lexington County an opportunity to participate in an atmosphere of friendly competition against other youth with similar age
- B. To Provide youth an opportunity to learn youth football skills and technique and teach some life skills
- C. To place emphasis on cooperation with others, good sportsmanship and fair play rather than win at all cost
- D. To emphasize FUN and PARTICIPATION

2.0 LCRAC's Promise To Kids

The Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commission's staff and commission board members realize that we must at all times keep the focus of its' programs on the youth of our county. We therefore have adopted as part of a statewide campaign to our kids the following: recognizes the value of youth sports on publicly owned facilities and as a community working together we will do our best to deliver on these promises to our kids. We promise to provide you the opportunity:

- A. For a Fun, Safe, Positive environment in which to participate
- B. To participate under the supervision of positive role models that will help focus on developing skills,

- teamwork, sportsmanship and how to win and lose graciously
- C. For all participants to play regardless of skill or ability
- D. To build self-confidence and self-esteem while respecting oneself and others
- E. To make new friends
- F. To continue to improve and enhance the quality of your youth sports experience

3.0 Responsibilities of Participants

- A. To follow rules
- B. To tell parents (or other trusted adult) of any abuse
- C. To learn the values of teamwork, helping and supporting one another
- D. To learn ways to deal with pressure and frustrations without turning to violence
- E. To care about what happens to others
- F. To settle conflicts without saying or doing things that hurt others
- G. To treat coaches and officials with respect
- H. To treat other players as you would want to be treated
- I. To be a good sport (how you talk to others and how you behave)

4.0 Youth Associations/Organizations Members Responsibilities

- A. Abide by the standard by-laws LCRAC has provided to each youth association. Any exception to these by-laws must be approved by LCRAC and be open for review by the LCRAC attorney before adoption.**
- B. Follow rules of Conduct section within this manual. This includes players, fans, parents, coaches and all league administrators/board members.**
- C. Follow the eligibility requirements for players and coaches.
- D. Provide financial statements to the LCRAC administration and/or board of commissioners prior to the start of practice and two (2) weeks after the conclusion of the season. The end of season statement must include the local board's plan for any left over monies.**
- E. Provide proof of insurance coverage for participants and volunteers boards to LCRAC after the youth organization has registered players and before preseason practice begins.
- F. Respect all decision by the LCRAC administration and/or board of commissioners and follow its' guidelines including the LCRAC "No Tolerance" Policy.
- G. Gain inspection approval from DHEC for concession stand.
- H. Keep restrooms clean throughout the season.
- I. Must provide youth association board representation/attendance at home games.
- J. All Associations/Organizations must submit completed background check forms on all coaches and board members before practices begin.
- K. All Associations/Organizations must adhere to the LCRAC Concussion Policy. This includes ensure all helmets meet the current recommendations from helmet manufactures regarding recertification and reconditioning.

Warning: Failure to comply with these responsibilities by the youth association/organization could result in the following steps:

- L. Written warning to the youth association/organization requiring that corrective action occur within 14 calendar days of formal notification.
- M. Elimination of home games.

- N. Elimination of field privileges including but not limited to lights and ultimately usage.
- O. Suspension of League President and/or board members. Association/Organization will then name interim President or board members.
- P. Elimination from LCRAC youth league football program.

5.0 LCRAC Responsibilities to Youth Leagues/Organizations

- A. Organize, recruit and train officials
- B. Assign and pay officials
- C. Schedule all games
- D. Cancellation and rescheduling of games due to inclement weather. Officials make the decision once the game has started
- E. Maintenance of fields and areas:
 - 1.0 Initial preparation and cleaning of restrooms PRIOR to the start of the season
 - 2.0 Cutting of grass
 - 3.0 Lining of fields for games
 - 4.0 Replacement of field lights
 - 5.0 Spreading fire ant killer or providing ant killer for leagues use
 - 6.0 General inspection and safety of the fields
- F. Provide game balls for the season.
- G. Responsible for approval of any structural changes in the property.
- H. Monitor local boards adherence to these Youth Football Guidelines.
- I. Complete all submitted background checks for leagues and provide electronic verification of approved coaches.

6.0 Registration

- A. All youth associations must use a standard LCRAC registration form.**
- B. Parents/Gaurdians/ must agree and sign the No Tolerance Policy form provided by LCRAC.**
- C. Parents/Gaurdians must acknowledge and sign that they have received a copy of the LCRAC Youth Football Guidelines.**
- D. Youth Association registration lists must be faxed, e-mailed, or physically delivered to LCRAC weekly on Mondays by Noon until the registration period is over. These lists must include the participants name, address, phone number, registration form (copy) and all parental/guardian forms listed in A,B,C. Waiting lists will also be handled in this manner until the frozen roster deadline has occurred.**
- E. If any of A,B,C are not followed, the child will not be eligible to participate in LCRAC Youth Football. Youth associations that do not follow through with gathering and providing copies of these forms to LCRAC will not participate in Sportsarama and/or have games forfeited once the season begins, and could ultimately lose the League's sanction with the LCRAC.**
- F. All official youth association registration will begin no earlier than June 15, 2020. Registration of all associations will end July 13, 2020. Leagues are not allowed to close registration before the July 13th deadline. Leagues are required to have waiting lists after July 13, and spots will be filled if they exist off of the waiting lists. Each Association can determine the number of teams in each age group by the amount of registrants. Players are placed in the pool based on the priority order in which they register.**

7.0 Players/Rosters/Boundaries and Releases

A. There will be a thirty (30) player maximum limit allowed on the roster and a 20 player minimum to form

a team. Each team must submit to the league a roster containing the following information:

- 1.0 Team Name
- 2.0 Head Coach's name, address, home and work telephone numbers
- 3.0 All other coaches names and address
- 4.0 Child's name
- 5.0 Parental permission sheet
- 6.0 Birth date (birth certificate required for players). Verification of certificates is the responsibility of each coach and league.

NOTE: Leagues are not allowed to carry more than 30 players at practices or games after **July 13, 2020**. Discovery of noncompliance after the regular season begins will result in forfeiture of games up to that point and loss of paid officials fees by the LCRAC for the remainder of the season. League board members must take responsibility for compliance. If at some point to or on **July 13, 2020** it appears leagues will go over 30 per team, players must be pulled from the waiting list to form a second team with a minimum of 20 players on each team. **The deadline to turn in rosters and birth certificates to LCRAC Athletic Department is one full week prior to the Sportsrama, which is August 14, 2020. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

B. To add a player to the roster, that player must bring their birth certificate to LCRAC. Upon verification of the birth certificate the player will be given a verification of eligibility letter from LCRAC. Once the coach receives the eligibility letter from LCRAC, the player's name can be added to the roster.

NOTE: The eligibility letter must be presented to the opposing team's coach before the player is eligible to play in the game. The league should also have a copy for their records.

Any additions or deletions to the roster must be submitted to the LCRAC by **September 1, 2020**. Rosters will be frozen after that date. Any changes in rosters after that date must be approved by LCRAC.

C. Players that are cut, dismissed or released from the "B" or "C" (Public, Private, Home Schooled) school teams after having dressed out for a game are NOT eligible. Players that have made and/or currently playing school ball are ineligible.

D. Boundaries for each league will be those areas indicated on the map approved at the preseason meeting. LCRAC recognizes local school district (affiliated high school attendance boundaries) as the official county youth football boundaries.

7.1 If a player wishes to play in a league other than the one he/she is bound to by his/her attendance location, he/she must obtain a written release from the league president and present it to the president the league he/she wishes to play in. If a player cannot obtain a release, they may appeal to the Athletic Director of LCRAC. As a general rule, the LCRAC allows leagues to determine release decisions; however, the LCRAC has the final authority to grant releases should disputes occur. A player that begins their eligibility in one league may continue to play in that league each year until their eligibility expires without obtaining a release even if the player moves outside the leagues boundaries.

7.2 If a child is turned away from a league because it is full, then they are free to register with another league and a release is not required. However, the league president of the accepting league must receive a letter signed and dated from the president of the league to which the child is bound stating that their league is full.

7.3 A Head Coach and First Head Assistant that have children playing that desire to coach and play out of their respective attendance zone may do so without obtaining a release. **This is only the Head Coach and First Head Assistant. All leagues should have this documented.**

8.0 Coaches

- A. Head Coaches must be at least 21 years of age. Assistant coaches may be 18 years of age.
- B. All head coaches and assistant coaches must submit a completed background check form to LCRAC before the first practice.**
- C. All head coaches and assistant coaches must become certified in Heads UP Training from the CDC/Heads Up website. All certificates must be submitted to LCRAC before July 31st, 2020
All coaches not certified or who do not submit their certificates will not be permitted to coach until all the proper paperwork has been submitted.
 - (a) LCRAC recommends that all coaches obtain a Coaching Certification from USA Football/NFL Heads Up Coaching Certification classes.
- D. Head coaches are in charge of their players at all times. They are responsible for their own actions and the assistant coaches and the actions of their players. They are also responsible for the conduct of any person connected to his/her team at all times. This includes conduct to the officials. He/she is also responsible so far as can be reasonably expected to control the spectators associated with his team.

9.0 Liability

- A. All Participants must be covered by a current liability insurance policy. Each league will be responsible for the purchase and proof of the insurance policy. The LCRAC will not be responsible for any injuries received by participants while playing in our county youth football league or injuries received while being transported to and from any activities sponsored by LCRAC.
- B. It is the responsibility of each league to carry adequate insurance to cover accidents and injuries to players and other official team members while traveling, practicing, or playing. A copy of each leagues insurance policy must be submitted to the LCRAC after registration and before the beginning of practices.
- C. It is recommended that each league have insurance for all its board members as well.

10.0 Ages

Note: There are no weight limits/restrictions in LCRAC Youth Football.

Note: Players are not allowed to move up to an older age group. Players are not allowed to play “down” in a younger age under any circumstance.

10.1 Bantam - (7 and 8 year old division-Flag Football)

- A. All players must have reached their eighth (7th) birthday before September 1, 2020
- B. Players can not turn 9 before September 1, 2020

10.2 Termites – (9 and 10 year old division)

- A. All players must have reached their 9th birthday before September 1, 2020
- B. All players can not turn 11 before September 1, 2020

10.3 Mites - (11 and 12 year old division)

- A. All players must have reached their 11th birthday before September 1 , 2020
- B. All Players can not turn 13 before September 1 , 2020

11.0 Practice

Note: Mouth pieces are required at all times.

- A. Conditioning practice may begin **July 20** and at any time once you have submitted a copy of your leagues insurance policy to LCRAC. The first official practice “in pads” is **July 27th, 2020 for all age groups**. Practice sessions cannot last more than **two (2) hours** in length.
- B. Bull in the ring or other similar drills are not allowed to take place during practice. Any coach conducting these drills will be suspended following the no tolerance policy under the general unsportsmanlike conduct.
- C. Suspended coaches are not allowed at practices or games until their suspension is over.
- D. Contact during practices will be limited to two times per week. Players will only be allowed to participate in two practices a week with full equipment. All other practices must be in shorts and helmets. During practices with shorts and helmets, contact is prohibited.
 - a. Pre-season practices will be limited to three contact (Full Pads) practices a week.
 - b. Coaches who violate this policy will be subjected to discipline through the LCRAC No Tolerance Policy for unsportsmanlike conduct.

12.0 Game Rules

Note: It is highly recommended that both teams playing have play counters that are not part of your coaching staff. If you do not have a play counter working for you, then the head coach forfeits the right of defense on complaints against him.

- A. All games in both divisions will be played under the South Carolina High School League rules with the following Lexington County exceptions:
 - 1. Quarters for all age divisions will be eight (8) minutes. Halftime will be five (5) minutes.
 - 2. Each player must play at least six (6) plays per game (including kick offs, punts, extra points or receiving) unless they are injured, ill or if disciplinary action is being taken by the coach. Head

Coaches not adhering to this rule will be suspended for one (1) game

3. Any team which is ahead by 24 points or more at anytime during the game will remain on the defense and will not be allowed any timeouts. **The ONLY timeout allowed are official timeouts. Games that teams are ahead by 36 points or more after the 3rd quarter will be called as an official game.**

4. If official score clocks are not available, time will be kept on the field by the officials.

5. Games will not start until the scheduled time or until ten minutes after the conclusion of the prior game.

6. Two (2) points will be awarded for a successful kick on an extra point and one (1) point will be awarded for a successful run or pass.

7. Coaches will not be allowed to use any type of communication device from the press box to the sideline during any games.

8. Crack Back blocks and blocks targeting the head/helmet of other players will result in an ejection for the rest of the game for their first offense. A second offense will result in a 2 game suspension for the player. A third offense will result in the suspension for the rest of the season for the player. The player will be on probation for the following year. One violation while on probation will result in a suspension for the rest of the season and removal from all youth football for 5 years.

9. **Rushing the punter/kicker in the Termites division will not be allowed on punts or extra point tries.**

13.0 Bantam Division 7v7 Football Rules:

A. See 7v7 Bantam Football Rule Book

14.0 Game Management

A. Not more than six (6) coaches will be allowed per team, per sideline, with one (1) play counter who is NOT considered a coach.

B. Chain crews are to be provided by the home team.

C. Game balls and officials will be provided by LCRAC.

D. Officials have the authority to forfeit a game if players, coaches, or spectators display excessive poor sportsmanship after warnings are issued.

E. There are NO protests for the misapplication of rules in football. All disputes will be handled on the field and the referee's (or County representative) decision will be final.

F. All games must be played at the times and locations scheduled by LCRAC. Games will not be re-scheduled because of field trips, boy scouts, band concerts etc. All games must be rescheduled by LCRAC Athletic staff. Games not scheduled by LCRAC will not be recognized by LCRAC.

15.0 Rules of Conduct

A. All coaches are required to sign a "code of conduct" at the mandatory coaches meeting. Adherence to this pledge is a requirement for membership. Failure to comply with the code will result in disciplinary action including possibility of revocation of members/certification.

B. Penalties for using illegal players: Teams using illegal (ineligible) player(s) will forfeit all games in which illegal players have participated. Illegal players are defined as:

1.) **Players too old or too young**

2.) **Playing a player who is wearing another player's jersey**

- 3.) **Playing a player who is playing under another player's name (whether on roster or not)**
- 4.) **Playing a player who is using another child's birth certificate**
- 5.) **Playing a player whose birth certificate has been altered.**

Warning: In addition to forfeiting all ball games, the head coach of the team found using an illegal player(s) will be suspended from coaching in LCRAC Youth Football for 1 year. Also, the person supervising the local board that knowingly allowed the illegal player(s) will be suspended for 1 year from participating and/or coaching all LCRAC sponsored activities. The youth sports board charged will be fined \$250.00.

C. Coach/Player Behavior: Unsportsmanlike behavior and conduct will not be tolerated. Profanity and/or verbal abuse directed at players, coaches, game officials and/or spectators is considered unsportsmanlike. Failure to heed game officials warnings over such things as delaying the game, arguments over judgment calls, heckling, harassment from bench and bench area or throwing equipment may also be interpreted as unsportsmanlike and result in ejections from the game. Any coach ejected from the game will be asked to leave the playing area. Coaches and players who are ejected from the game will be subject to suspension from league play for minimum of one (1) calendar week to begin the day following the ejection. Coaches and players remain on probation for the remainder of the season. This punitive action may not be appealed. A subsequent ejection will result in suspension for the remainder of the season. This is at the discretion of the LCRAC.

D. Ejected players must remove their jersey. A player will also be removed from the sidelines and/or playing area.

E. League officials are required to report any violations of league rules and/or the Coaches code of conduct to the LCRAC. The league must follow the No Tolerance Policy of the LCRAC.

F. Volunteer league officials will be responsible for controlling the conduct of the fans, with assistance, when appropriate, from the coaches. Unruly or abusive fans or parents will be asked to leave the complex/facility and this can result in being barred from future events on LCRAC facilities.

16.0 LCRAC “No Tolerance” Policy

Within the last few years recreation across the country has seen a dramatic change in issues dealing with parents, coaches, fans, umpires, and league officials conduct at sporting events. Although not as severe as some instances nationwide, Lexington County has had its share of conduct problems.

With this in mind, our Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commission Board of Commissioners have taken a “No Tolerance” stance in order to help prevent severe situations from occurring on and within leagues operating on (LCRAC) facilities. This includes unsportsmanlike behavior, verbal abuse, threatening physical abuse, and actual physical abuse. **The “No Tolerance” Policy regarding adult behavior is as follows:**

A. No fan/spectator/adult/parent/coach/board member shall verbally confront or argue with an official, coach, player or other fans before, during, or after a game.

Penalties for such unsportsmanlike conduct:

- 1.) **General unsportsmanlike conduct = 1 calendar week suspension**

2.) Profanity = 1 calendar week suspension

Any adult suspended due to #1 or #2 will be suspended from all facilities and activities which include practices and games. Any adult that commits a second similar offense of 1 or 2 will be banned from LCRAC Youth Football for the remainder of that season and their child(ren) removed from the league(s) for the remainder of the season. Association will refund registration monies pro-rated based on the percentage of the season remaining.

3.) Drinking = suspension for season

4.) Fighting = suspension for season

5.) Possession of weapon = suspension permanently

6.) Parents/Fans/Spectators are not allowed on the field during play. Any interruption will be considered unsportsmanlike and subject to one (1) calendar year suspension. Tending to injuries of players are an exception.

7.) Those guilty of # 3,4, 5 above include suspension from all LCRAC sponsored facilities and activities.

- B. Any adult who physically assaults an official, coach, or volunteer will be banned from LCRAC Facilities and their child(ren) removed from LCRAC sponsored facilities, activities, events and programs for one year from the date of the offense. The child(ren) may not participate in another LCRAC Youth football association during that sanction period. After 1 year, the parent may apply for reinstatement of his/her child. Second offenses may result in the adult and child(ren) permanently banned from LCRAC facilities, activities, events and programs.**

Note: The term physical assault includes, but is not limited to: hitting, slapping, pushing, spitting, kicking, or striking in any way any part of the body or any physical implement.

Note: Remember! Any person who physically attacks an official, coach, other fan or player may be subject to criminal prosecution as well as civil suit for money damages. If anyone touches an official, the official will press charges against this offender. This will result in a \$1,000 fine and up to 60 days in jail.

- C. It is the goal of LCRAC and advisors that participation in recreational sports programs be individually and cooperatively a wholesome, fun and personally rewarding experience. Each participant, along with the coaches, should try to achieve a more positive attitude for the sport and its objectives than he/she had at the start of the season. All players, coaches, fans, and parents shall be guided by the LCRAC Code of Conduct, which is mandated (for coaches) by the LCRAC board.**

- D. This procedure has been prepared and approved by the LCRAC Board of Commissioners. Failure by individuals or groups to abide by these guidelines could result in banishment of youth contact football in Lexington County.**

17.0 Guidelines for Enforcement

- A. Any official, league representative, parent, or coach must report a violation to the local league**

governing body that is operating on LCRAC facilities or property.

- B. The local league shall institute **according to LCRAC guidelines**, a hearing and deliver sanctions deemed necessary against the offender as stated in **Section 15.0, steps A & B**. The local governing board’s decision must meet final approval by the Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commission **Athletic Staff**.
- C. Should the local league, for any reason, not be able to handle the situation, then a review committee of LCRAC Athletic Department employees and 3 local league members will address the situation. The offender may also appeal to this review committee. The committee will inform the person by certified mail of the reported incident and that the committee will meet at a particular time and date of this hearing. The offender shall be in attendance to state his/her case. After the hearing, the committee shall make a decision on the sanctions, which will be a final decision. This includes fans, coaches, players, and parents.

In closing we hope you will find the enclosed information for all sports leagues necessary for insuring a positive environment for our youth. It also insures that the LCRAC and its constituents comply in the true spirit of cooperation. In addition, the policy enacted enhances the coordination of programs and facilities between LCRAC and each sports league governing bodies. The “No Tolerance” policy will go into effect immediately.

The Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commission will always promote safety first, encouraging only programs with strict controls over age and protect all children from the psychological, emotional, physical or social abuse that can be perpetrated against them. **Adopted 1-9-02**

Lexington County Recreation and Aging Commission
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Athletic Director – Alvin Kelley
Asst. Athletic Director – B.J. Belville

Sportsarama Schedules

The 2020 Lexington County Sportsarama for **Termites and Mites** is **August 22, 2020**.

Admission for the games will be:

Adults \$3.00
Children - \$2.00
Under 6 – free

Sportsarama Rotation

2020-Batesburg-Leesville	2024-White Knoll
2021- Lexington	2025-Swansea
2022-Pelion	2026-Midland
2023-Gilbert	2027-Batesburg-Leesville

If your Sportsarama game is suspended or cancelled due to circumstances (weather, etc.), your entry fee will not be refunded. NO REFUNDS.