

# Palm Bay Rockets

## 8-Man Spring Tackle Football/ Cheerleading

### Organization

Palm Bay Rockets are a 501© 3 Non profit organization that provides organized Sporting events for the youth of our community. Organizational structure and information can be found on our website

[www.PalmBayRockets.com](http://www.PalmBayRockets.com)

### Mission Statement

The mission is of Palm Bay Pop Rockets 8-man Spring Tackle Program is to strengthen the individual athlete, the coach, the family, and community through participation in youth sports. Our focus is to partner with neighboring organizations to provide a safe environment for children to improve their fundamental skill of football and to develop positive character values while pursuing victory with honor. PBR encourages positive parental involvement as they support the league and the coaches in which the league has appointed.



# 8-Man Spring Tackle Football

## Rules of the Game

(Unless otherwise amended below, the current years NFHS (National Federation of State High School associations) Laws of the Game shall apply. NFHS laws of the Game and other resources are available at [www.nfhs.com](http://www.nfhs.com)

### *Athletes Age and Weight Matrix:*

#### **Jr. Pee Wee**

(50-105 lbs.) 8, 9 & 10 year olds  
(60-85 lb.) Older/Lighter- 11 year olds

#### **Pee Wee**

(75-120 lbs.) 10 & 11 year olds  
(75-100 lb. Older/Lighter) 12 year old

#### **Jr. Varsity**

(85-135 lbs.)  
11 - 12 year olds  
(85-115 lb. Older/lighter) 13 years old

#### **Varsity**

(105-160 lbs.)  
12, 13 & 14 year olds. No older lighters

### **Pre-Season /Practice:**

**Player's age eligibility will be determined by their age as of August 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous year.**

1. The Head Coach from each team is allowed to secure four players of their choice for their team. These players must be age and weight eligible for their division. Coaches are to turn in their choice of athletes in writing to the program director. These four picks include their own children. All other teammates shall be acquired through a draft, assisted by an open combine.
2. There will be one (1) official weighing in of players to be held on the "Official Weigh in Date". Time and place are to be determined by League officials. Once athletes have made the official weight for their division they are then certified for the season. In the event that a team does not have its full roster of athletes only, a coach has until the beginning of the second game to add to his roster. The athlete must have all Registration, Physical, and other league documentation prior to participation. No Exceptions. If a registered player that's already on the official roster fails to make the weight requirement on the official weigh in date, they may participate in practice and request another weigh in at any point in the season to become eligible. This must be witnessed by the head coach, one opposing coach and conducted by two league officials. The Player then can participate in the game once weight is met.  
**There will be NO Refunds for players unable to make weight.**
3. Each team will be allowed to practice three weeks prior to the start of the season to prepare their team for competition with a maximum of 8 hours per week. After 16 hours (8 hours conditioning, 8 hrs pad) teams are allowed to scrimmage. Coaches must receive permission and give time and

place to the league director before scrimmages are scheduled. After the 1<sup>ST</sup> game of the season practices are a maximum of 4 hours per week.

4. Twenty minutes prior to the start of the game all visiting and home team players, as well as, each team's head coach and a team representative must be present for the start of the check-in process. The head coach is responsible for reporting to the league director all members of his or her team to be checked in on the roster. Players should be lined up in alphabetical order by their last name. The opposing team representatives are entitled to check the opposing team players Hard Cards to insure the photo matches the player. If a player does not have a current player Hard card then he or she is ineligible for that day's game. If there is a discrepancy on the photo and the player, the team representative will address this situation with the PBR staff member at the event check-in station. Any player arriving after the check in process has ended is not eligible to participate in the days game.

#### **Uniform/Equipment:**

All athletes will wear an approved 8 man tackle uniform to include a NOCSAE approved helmet, face mask, shoulder pads and pant pads. Uniform must be complete with numbers front and back. No part of the Equipment and/or uniform may be altered to any degree for safety reasons. Mouth pieces are required and must be worn. Athletes may not wear any tinted face shields or goggles. All eye wear and face shields must be clear and be athletically constructed with non shattering glass. No Jewelry, arm bands, leg bands, open toed shoes or metal cleats may be worn.

#### **Coin Toss:**

In the presence of each team's captains, PBR staff will conduct the coin toss five(5) minutes prior to game time. Coin tosses will be conducted on the field with the referees. Home and Away teams will be determined by the schedule. The "home" team is responsible for obtaining volunteers to run the sideline chains and down marker, while the "away" team is responsible for calling the coin toss. The winning team of the toss will chose whether to start on offense or defense (No deferment). The losing team of the toss will chose the end zone in which they would like to defend or advance towards. After halftime the teams will switch roles.

#### **Field of Play:**

The only representatives allowed on the playing side line, caution line, or field designated area are individuals with proper PBPW 8 man tackle roster identification. All teams will be given Five PBPW coach per roster prior to the start of the season. Only these five coaches are allowed on the playing side of the parent line. This includes team Mom and any other team support.

The game will be played eight on eight. Each team is limited to a minimum of 10 (ten) and a maximum of 16 (sixteen) players on their roster.

The head coach has the authority to limit game playing time of any player on their team who continually misses practices without a valid excuse, or who may have caused disciplinary problems during a prior practice or a particular game. There are NO minimum play rules. However coaches are expected to divide playing time evenly, keeping the focus on the athlete's growth.

The playing field will be forty yards wide and eighty yards long, with ten yard end zones.

The game will consist of two continuous 20 minute halves with a five minute halftime. The clock will be continuously running, only stopping for team and/or referee time outs. Each team is allowed two, thirty

second timeouts per half. The timeouts will not carry over to the second half. In the last two minutes of the game, the team with a lead of more than 16 points cannot call a time out. The clock stops in the last 2 minutes of the game for timeouts, penalties, incomplete pass and out of bounds plays. There will also be one referee timeout per half for water to be taken at the discretion of the referee. For the regular season, playoffs and Super Bowl, the overtime will be governed by a Kansas City Tie Breaker Rules starting from the 10 yard line.

Down marker will be used to indicate the number of the down.  
Zone markers will be used to indicate the distance to the first down.  
There is a 1 yard Neutral Zone, from the spot of the ball

Game balls will be comparative to the standard size used in Pop Warner leagues with size varying by age groups. No multi-color, plastic, or rubber footballs are allowed.

### **Methods of Scoring:**

Touch Down - 6 points

Field goal – 3 point

Safety – 2 points and possession at midfield.

Extra-point kick from the 3 yard line – 2 points

Extra-point pass from the 10 yard line - 2 points

Extra-point run from the 5 yard line – 1 point

- Note: All attempts for extra points and field goals must be declared. No fakes. All attempts are live
- Any turn over occurring during a point after touchdown attempt is immediately down and the attempt has failed, this includes interceptions.

### **Game Participants:**

#### *Coaches:*

Each team may have one coach on the field during play. Before the snap, both offensive and defensive coaches must be a minimum of 15 yards from the line of scrimmage. Coaches must be behind the end zone in red zone plays. The coach may not interfere with the play of the game or they will receive a fifteen-yard penalty.

#### The following activities shall be construed as interfering:

- a. Moving players during a play or after the offense has broken the huddle
  - b. Speaking or shouting to players during the play or after the offense has broken the huddle
  - c. A coach that is "caught" in the middle of the play or obstructing a play in any way. (It is the responsibility of the coach to be out of the play no matter where the ball ends up)
  - d. Having more than one (1) coach on the field in any area.
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## Offense:

**Rule 1:** A minimum of 5 offensive players (includes OL,WR's/TE's) on the line of scrimmage at the snap, to ensure a legal offensive formation and remaining 3 as offensive skill positions (ie. QB, RB, WR)

**Rule 2:** Only the players on the far right and left ends of the line of scrimmage are eligible pass receivers.

**Rule 3:** All backs are eligible pass receivers if they are legally behind the line of scrimmage at the snap. The passer cannot catch his own pass, unless it is tipped or hit by another player.

**Rule 4:** Shifts before the linemen are set and one man in motion parallel to the line of scrimmage after the line is set are legal.

**Rule 5:** Direct snap and direct handoff running is allowed.

**Rule 6:** There will be No Kick Offs of any kind. The team with possession will start on the 10 yard line and pursue their initial first down at the 20 yard line. First downs are 10 yards from then on.

**Rule 7:** Punting is allowed, but must be declared. No fakes once a punt is declared, doing so will result in a turnover. A team can punt on any down. Punts are uncontested free kicks that must take place within offensive box, and kick must be timely as not to waste time off the clock. To prevent mass walls/wedging, the punt return team must have at least 4 lineman on the LOS at the time of the punt and may pursue the live return once the ball has been kicked.

**Rule 8:** A team will have 30 seconds to punt the ball in play after the declaration is given. An out of bounds punt will be spotted at the point the ball exited the field of play.

### **Rule 9:**

**A:** The free substitution rule is always in effect and a player may enter the game any time the ball is dead.

**B: TEAM COACHES:** One coach for each team will be permitted on the field. Coaches are encouraged to develop a sense of urgency amongst their players. A play must be underway before 30 seconds after the ball is spotted. Failure to do so will result in a Delay of game penalty.

**C:** Coaches must be 15 yards back from the closest player at the snap of the ball.

## Defense:

**Rule 1:** The defense must have a minimum of two and a maximum of four lineman on the line of scrimmage for every play. ***All offensive and defensive linemen must be in a three or four point stance prior to the snap of the ball.*** Linemen are described as any player four yards left or right of the football. The NFHS rule regarding Linebackers states "*that defensive players within one yard of the football are considered lineman, therefore defensive secondary players must be a minimum of two yards North/South to be in an standing position*" The NFHS Rule on this issue is in place to define who can be legally blocked below the waist, legally blocked in the back and legally clipped. The clarification will be as follows...If the defensive lineman is more than four yards East/West of the football or more than one yard North/South prior to the snap they can be in a stand up position. Any defensive player within the eight yard by one yard rectangle (centered on the football) prior to the snap would be required to be in a three or four point stance. Therefore, a player will be penalized if their initial position is fine but right before the snap the defensive line or secondary player tries to time his rush/blitz but he moves or arrives in the zone prior to the snap. While coaches can gain every advantage they can to disrupt the offensive play call, the focus of the referees will be FIRST to make sure players don't get hurt from getting cut below the waist by an illegal block ending their playing career, as well as making sure the rules are enforced fairly. The officials will consistently enforce the rule as interpreted.

**Rule 2:** The offense is given thirty seconds from the spotting of the ball to the time they must snap the ball to begin the next play. A defensive player on the defensive LOS shall not line up directly over the snapper (center) or be in the guard-center gap **and** run directly into the snapper (center) on any scrimmage play. This will constitute roughing the snapper and result in a 15 yard penalty. The premise is that the intent of the defensive player should be to control their lane (by engaging the Center's block if

necessary) without, however an obvious intent simply to run directly into the Center in an unsafe manner. This is a thin line of judgment, however the referees have been given latitude here to determine intent of "roughing the snapper" in the same way as a "roughing the kicker" is concerned. This is in place to protecting the player.

**Rule 3:** The ball carrier is down according to high school football rules.

In the event a ball carrier falls to the ground as a result of contact or not, the player is down and the play is over.

**Rule 4:** Blocking below the waist is prohibited at all times. This is to protect all players.

**Rule 5:** There are no kick offs. The ball will be placed on the 10 yard line to start the game and after a score, with exception of a safety.

**Rule 6:** After a safety, the ball is placed at midfield.

**Rule 7:** Mercy Rule. If a team gets a lead larger than twenty-four (28) points, the losing team will start with the ball at midfield.

**Rule 8:** If a major injury occurs during the game, the EMT and PBPW staff will make a discretionary call as to whether the game is to be cancelled. If the game is cancelled prior to halftime, the game will be made up on a future date and will be picked up where it was left off. If a game is cancelled after halftime, the game is considered final.

**Rule 9:** Blitzing is allowed by 1 Linebacker who can only Blitz from the "Depth of Alignment" (four yards from the line of scrimmage on the snap) in the interior gaps only.

No Cornerback blitzing, however corners are allowed to press cover and then rush if the QB breaks the box. No blitzing from the safety position, safeties must be 6-8 yards off the ball at the start of the play/snap.

**\*Blitzing is defined by – a player other than a defensive lineman rushes the QB after the QB has received the snap and remains between the area located behind outside of 2nd offensive lineman on both sides of the center. If only one offensive lineman is next to center on one or both sides, the "box" will be outside of where a 2nd "imaginary" offensive lineman would be. Once transfer of ball by pass or run by QB occurs, or when QB leaves protected box area, all defensive players are eligible to rush.**

**Rule 10:** Turnovers - Fumbles are live balls that CAN be recovered and returned for a score by the opposing team, with the exception of extra point attempts. An interception is considered a live ball and can be returned by the defensive team for a score, also with the exception of extra point attempts. If there is no score possession will start at the point the play ended. Backward laterals and tosses are considered fumbles if incomplete.

**Rule 11:** Stripping a player of the football in order to obtain possession or create a fumble is legal.

### **Post Season Play**

All teams regardless of win/loss record make the playoffs. Seeding is first determined by a team's winning percentage. If there is tie, head to head match-up would factor in, afterwards point against. In the event that a tie still exist, a Kansas City Tie breaker would take place after the last regular season game at a location and time to be determined. Once the Play-off Bracket is final the top seed would play the lowest seed, Second place would play the next to last place seed and so on.(i.e. 1 vs 4, 2 vs 3). In the event

that there are an odd number of teams, the number 1 seed would get the first round Bye and would play the winner of the last place seeded teams game in the second round.

## **SUMMARY OF PENALTIES**

### **Loss of five yards:**

1. Delay of game
2. Encroachment
3. False Start
4. Illegal formation
5. Illegal forward pass
6. Illegal forward lateral
7. Ineligible receiver down field
8. Incidental face mask
9. Intentional grounding
10. Illegal substitution
11. Illegal shift or motion

### **Loss of ten yards:**

1. Holding
2. Illegal use of hands (hands to the face, block in the back)

### **Loss of fifteen yards:**

1. Un-sportsmanlike conduct (by a player, coach, or spectator)
2. Intentional or accidental coach interference while on field
3. Block below the waist
4. Clipping, tripping, chop block
5. Grasping an opponent's face mask
6. Roughing the passer
7. Slapping a blocker's head
8. Illegal participation
9. Sideline interference
10. Illegal hit or block after a fair catch signal

### **Disqualification:**

1. Second unsportsmanlike facemask penalty
2. Fighting whether it is a player or spectator
3. Striking, kicking, or kneeling any player or spectator
4. Intentional contact with a game official
5. Two un-sportsmanlike fouls by a player or spectator (Referee may eject a player, coach, and spectator for one unsportsmanlike conduct depending on severity of action).
6. Any other act that is unruly, rough, and/or flagrant

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND PENALTIES**

1. The players, head coach, and assistant coaches can be in the coach's box on the sidelines. The coach's box is between the twenty yard lines. These individuals must have proper identification to be on the playing side of the field. Failure to comply with this rule will result in a fifteen-yard unsportsmanlike conduct.

All other parents, friends, and/or relatives must stay in the designated area, even if you are filming.

2. Profanity and arguing with any game official, PBPW staff, or opposing parent/coach is not allowed, ZERO TOLERANCE. This will be strictly enforced. Failure to comply will be handled as follows: Coach will be ejected from the game and suspended by the league for up to three games. Coaches can only be reinstated at the league coordinator's discretion. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be ejected from the game and suspended for the following week's game. If the problem persists then the child of the parent/guardian may be suspended for one game. Players will be ejected from the game and suspended for the following week's game. If the problem persists then the child may be suspended for the season and banned from future participation in the league.

3. There will be no use of electronic devices between coaches and players during the game. Violation will result in immediate ejection from the game and suspension for the following week's game. NO REFUNDS WILL BE GIVEN FOR THOSE IN VIOLATION.

4. PBPW considers the code of conduct sheets that are handed out to each coach

These codes of conduct must be shared and signed by everyone on the team. They must be turned in at the first mandatory coach's meeting in order to receive the team's jerseys and schedules.

5. Parents that are in violation and not in the designated area determined by PBPW at the game site will be asked to leave the field area.

6. Parents found engaging in verbal or physical violence with other parents, coaches, referees, or PBPW staff will be suspended indefinitely from the league.

**Palm Bay Pop Warner and its Officials reserve the right to make any changes to these rules , policies, and procedures.**