

# OPTIMIST YOUTH FOOTBALL AND CHEER RULES & REGULATIONS

(Revised 2011)

Changes are indicated in **BOLD**

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## **ARTICLE I GENERAL**

### **SECTION 1 – OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of the program are:

- A. To provide a wholesome, enjoyable experience of playing football for youths from ages 7 to 12 years of age, while teaching the basic fundamentals of the game, teamwork, good sportsmanship, discipline and response to leadership.
  - 1. To encourage the players to maintain satisfactory grades in school and to emphasize the importance of keeping a proper relationship and balance between scholastic and athletic endeavors.
  - 2. To provide a satisfying, rewarding experience for coaches, sponsors, and those persons administering the program through their relationships in teaching and working with youth.
  - 3. To provide a well organized and implemented program that is appreciated and favorably received by the parents and the community.
- B. The program is administered by a football committee, comprised of members of the Boise Noon Optimist Club and representatives from participating communities outside Boise. The Football Committee plans and implements the program under the guidance of the Board of Directors of the Boise Noon Optimist Club.

### **SECTION 2 - OPTIMIST AUTHORITY**

The Optimist Youth Football Program is maintained and operated by the Boise Noon Optimist Club. The Board of Directors confirms all responsibility and authority for the operation of the program.

- A. **COMMISSIONER:** Appointed annually by the Board to administer the OYF Program. Presides over all committee meetings, appoints directors and coordinators, provides overall guidance and direction for the program, interprets the rules, and presides over any appeal and all other duties and responsibilities normally associated with the position of Commissioner of an athletic program.
- B. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:** Appointed by the Board for an indeterminate term and is the primary liaison to the Board. Assists the Commissioner in administering the OYF Program. Responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Program. Serves as an advisor and confidant to the members of the OYF Committee and is a non-voting member of the OYF Football Committee.
- C. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:** Primary responsibility is to interpret and enforce the rules and policies of the Boise Noon Optimist Club and the OYF program. All matters regarding discipline, unless deemed an "Emergency Disciplinary Action - (see page 47) "will be referred to the

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Executive Committee for action. The Executive Committee is comprised of the Commissioner, Executive Director, 1st Assistant Commissioner, 2nd Assistant Commissioner, 3rd Assistant Commissioner, the immediate Past Commissioner, and any other Past Commissioners as deemed appropriate.

- D. COMMITTEE: Administers the OYF Program under the direction of the Commissioner, approves by majority vote, the budget, rule changes, schedules and any other program section as directed by the Board, acts as individuals to carry out appointments and other responsibilities as directed, participates in the general program implementation. The Committee is comprised of members of the Boise Noon Optimist Club and other such individuals or groups, who in the opinion of the Commissioner and the Executive Director have such talents, expertise and interest which might benefit the program.
- E. LEAGUE DIRECTORS: Appointed by the Commissioner and Executive Director; administers and supervises the activities of the coaches; the League Directors shall act as liaisons between the coaching staff and the Committee.
- F. STAFF: Football head coaches, assistant coaches, and other individuals who function to implement the program. Such staff operates at the pleasure of the OYF program and shall serve to execute philosophies, policies, and purpose of that program.
- G. POLICY: Shall be stated in these rules, written statements from the Commissioner, Executive Director, and the Optimist Code of Ethical Conduct. The Committee shall make policy and rules and insure compliance with both. The League Directors shall communicate policy and supervise staff. The Commissioner and Executive Director shall be the primary authorities and may delegate any such responsibilities as deemed appropriate.
- H. FOOTBALL COMMITTEE VOTING POLICY: In accordance with existing policies and procedures, OYF Committee voting privileges are as follows:

Role	Number of Votes
• Commissioner	Only votes in case of a tie vote
• Executive Director	No vote
• Past Commissioner	One vote
• 1st Asst. Commissioner	One vote
• 2nd Asst. Commissioner	One vote
• 3rd Asst. Commissioner	One vote
• Treasurer	One vote
• Bookkeeper	No vote
• 1st Administrative Assistant	One vote
• Sports Information Director	One vote
• Sponsor Coordinator	One vote
• Coaches Coordinator	One vote
• Coaches Mentoring Coordinator	One vote
• Sign-up Coordinator	One vote
• Insurance Director	No vote

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Role	Number of Votes
• Senior League Director	One vote
• Junior League Director	One vote
• Sophomore League Director	One vote
• Freshman League Director	One vote
• Flag League Director	One vote
• Asst. League Directors	No vote (unless League Director is not present, then would vote in lieu of the League Director)
• Cheerleader Directors	One vote
• Cheer Coordinators	One vote (based upon same as MAL – see below)
• School Information Coordinator	One vote
• Policy and Past Commissioners Committee Chairperson	One vote
• Rules and Competition Committee Chairperson	One vote
• Equipment Coordinator	One vote
• Fund Raiser Coordinator	One vote
• Officials Coordinator	One vote
• Time Keeper Coordinator	One vote
• Jr. Referee Training Coordinator	One vote
• Photography Coordinator	No vote
• Jamboree Coordinator	No vote
• Bowl Coordinator	No vote
• Outside Programs	One vote each (see note below) <sup>1</sup>
• Life Directors	One vote each (see note below) <sup>2</sup>
• Members-at-Large	One vote each (see note below) <sup>3</sup>

Each member program of Optimist Youth Football shall have voting “members-at-large” based upon the number of players registered in that program from the previous year. The number of members-at-large (MAL) votes each program has will be based upon this formula:

- 0 to 100 players      No MAL vote
- 101 to 300 players    1 MAL vote
- 301 to 500 players    2 MAL votes

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1 Outside Programs that have participated in the OYF program for two full years, met all the OYF rules and regulations, and have not had any major incidents will have voting rights as designated above.

2 Life Directors - All Past Commissioners and Hall of Fame members are "Life Directors" and have the right to vote as long as they attend both the February and March meetings each year.

3 Members at Large - After serving on the Committee for at least one full year, members-at-large can be appointed as voting members by the Commissioner and/or Executive Director. In addition, individuals who have served on the Committee for more than one year and hold non-voting positions can be designed as voting members-as-large by the Commissioner and/or Executive Director.

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- 501 to 700 players      3 MAL votes
- 701 to 900 players      4 MAL votes

Note: Table to progress in set increments as illustrated above.

At the November OYF meeting, the Executive Committee will review the registrations for each member program and establish the appropriate number of MAL votes for each program. At the following mandatory January meeting, each member program will designate who their voting MAL are. All individuals designated as voting MAL as well as all voting members must attend both the February and March Committee meetings to retain the right to vote. Absences that are approved by a member of the Executive Committee are the only exceptions. There will be no proxy votes allowed for any voting position or MAL. If a voting position (or assistant, if applicable) or MAL cannot attend a meeting, that vote can be assigned to another member, provided that individual meets all the voting criteria and it is pre-approved by the Executive Committee.

### SECTION 3 - OUTSIDE PROGRAM CRITERIA AND SPECIAL RULES FOR OYF PARTICIPATION

- A. BASIC REQUIREMENTS: Any area that wishes to participate in the OYF program shall be required to meet all of these requirements. Failure to do so will result in expulsion from the OYF. These areas will be designated as "districts". All districts will operate under the overall administration of the Boise District, with each "outside district" having its own committee to administer local issues.
1. Follow our playing rules; weights, team size, team composition
  2. Adhere to our code of ethics, coach's conduct, and use all Boise District forms.
  3. Have regulation fields, with appropriate facilities for teams to play on.
  4. Have trained, certified referees and medical personnel.
  5. Pay referees comparable to the rates that the OYF pays its officials.
  6. Have a similar process to the OYF for selecting new head coaches. Must fill out same questionnaire, have an inter-view process with at least three interviewers, and require all head coaches, new and old, to attend OYF coach's clinic.
  7. Have a similar process to the OYF for coach's disciplinary issues. One member of Executive Committee will sit on disciplinary committee. Major disciplinary issues will be referred to the OYF Executive Committee with the outside area director being part of the review process.
  8. Follow OYF policy for inspection of all equipment on a yearly basis.
  9. Participate in the Jamboree including taking of team photos for Bowl program, and going through final weigh-in.

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10. Uniforms and equipment will follow OYF rules, including no decals on helmets and rules regarding names on jerseys.
  11. Maintain a phone, either cellular or fixed, that is accessible during scheduled games at their location.
  12. Reimburse the OYF program for the cost of the medical insurance premium for each participant in their program; paid based upon the OYF's "annual rate per insured".
- B. SPECIAL RULES FOR OUTSIDE DISTRICTS: Outside district commissioners are required to provide copies of the registration forms to the OYF League Director. Outside teams may not have enough eligible players at a given age to make a team. In those cases and with the approval of the OYF Executive Committee, they may combine age groups to form "compressed teams". The League Director and the Outside Program Coordinator will make the compressed team recommendation to the OYF Executive Committee for approval. Compressed teams must adhere to the following guidelines.
1. No seven (7) year old may play on a tackle team except in those cases where the players weight allows moving him/her up into the tackle level.
  2. "Compressed" teams must have a minimum of 15 players and a maximum of 27.
  3. "Compressed" teams structure - "Compressed 9 Year Old Team" can be composed of both 9 and 10 year olds provided that all the players not exceed the maximum weight for the 9 year old league (105 lbs.), and that no more than 40% of the team be 10 years old. - "Compressed 10 Year Old Team" can be composed of 9 year olds, 10 year olds, and 11 year olds provided that all the players not exceed the maximum weight for the 10 year old league (120 lbs.), and that no more than 40% of the team be 11 years old. - "Compressed 11 Year Old Teams" can be composed of 10 year olds, 11 year olds, and 12 year olds provided that all the players not exceed the maximum weight for the 11 year old league (130 lbs.), and that no more than 40% of the team be 12 years old. - Rosters of all compressed teams must be approved by the Executive Committee; which can make exceptions to the above guidelines in "extraordinary" situations.

### SECTION 4 - TEAM COMPOSITION

- A. BASIC UNIT OF ORGANIZATION: The team is the basic unit of organization where a group of players is organized under the direction of a coaching staff in order to participate in football.
- B. ROSTER CERTIFIED WITH COMMITTEE: Flag, Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior League teams will be organized with returning players who registered during spring sign-ups to their respective teams. New registrants and returning players that sign-up after May will be added as required to balance team rosters with an objective not to exceed 25 the following players per team:

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- Flag minimum of 12, maximum of 16 players per team
  - Freshman minimum of 18, maximum of 21 players per team
  - Sophomore minimum of 18, maximum of 23 players per team
  - Junior minimum of 18, maximum of 25 players per team
  - Senior minimum of 18, maximum of 25 players per team
- C. DROPS & ADDS: Players may be dropped from a certified roster only by the Committee for a valid reason such as injured and non-recoverable before the close of the season, moving out of area, failing to maintain school marks, etc. Additional players may be added to certified rosters only to replace those dropped for valid cause. A player may not be added to temporarily cover the loss of another player who is injured but will return to play before the season ends.
- D. PLAYER TRADES: Players may not be traded between teams.
- E. LATE REGISTRANTS: A late registrant will be assigned to a team in his school area if an opening exists. With the consent of the parent or guardian, the child can be assigned to a team having an opening outside his school area.

### SECTION 5 - TEAM ADULT QUALIFICATIONS

All team adult personnel shall be of unquestionable moral character and shall serve on a no compensation basis.

- A. ID BADGES: All head coaches, assistant coaches, cheer coaches, and OYF committee members must wear an OYF ID Badge at **ALL** games. ID badges will only be issued after they have passed the Background Checks (see page 10). The ID Badge Program will be administered by the ID Badge Program Director.
- B. Director: The Director will coordinate with the Photography Director for the taking of all photos of new coaches and personnel, for assuring that all returning personnel with ID badges complete new background checks, that old ID badges have the appropriate sticker to indicate they have been updated, for working with the Secretary to create a master list of all the ID badges, and for seeing that each district has a current copy of the master list. Each district will have duplicate ID badges for each of their members as well as "guest passes" for members from outside their district. If a coach, either football or cheer, forgets their badge prior to a game, the duplicate or guest pass will be available for them at the appropriate OYF district office. They must provide verification of their ID, either with a driver's license or through verification by an appropriate OYF official (league director, assistant league, assistant commissioners, district directors, commissioner, or executive director). Once ID has been verified, the coach must leave some form of "collateral" (driver's license, credit card, car keys, etc) in exchange for the duplicate ID badge or guest pass. These must be

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returned that day or a \$5.00 fee will be charged for the replacement. Within a football or cheer coach's home district, if their duplicate badge has been previously issued to them and has not been returned for whatever reason, and he/she has forgotten their original ID badge, they will NOT be allowed to coach and will be asked to move to the parents' sideline. In the case of a cheer coach, they will be required to have their squad cease performing. In the event that an ID badge is lost or forgotten and the individual is at a location outside their home district, they will contact the Director of the district they are at. That director will verify his/her ID and position with the OYF and issue him/her a guest ID badge under the same guidelines as above, for use that day. This guest ID badge must be returned when the individual is done. In the Boise/Meridian District the ID Badge Program Director, and in the outside districts, the District Director, will have the authority to refuse access to the coach's sideline to any individual who does not have an ID badge, who cannot verify their identity, and who has not been verified by an appropriate OYF official- see above.

- C. COACHES-GENERAL: Optimist philosophy rejects the premise that rough football must serve as a vehicle to prepare youngsters for the competitive way of our national life. Coaches do not make policy; they carry it out. However, on the field, in all practices and games the coaching staff, under the direction of the Head Coach, is completely in charge and will determine the organization of practice, drill assignments and for games; all plays to be run, players to start and substitutions to be made. When and if coaching excesses are experienced, they will be dealt with immediately, including the possibility of summary removal from volunteer position. No coach or staff shall be removed because the team is experiencing a poor season in terms of wins and losses.
- D. COACHES - SPECIFIC: Any person can hold only one coaching position on only one team in this program. In the Boise District, a junior high coach (of any sport) can coach in the OYF program as long as they only coach kids who are outside of their school's feeder system. A team coaching staff shall consist of one Head Coach and NO MORE than six assistant coaches, who shall be chosen in accordance with the following:
  - 1. Age requirements - Head Coaches must be 21 years of age or older.
  - 2. Background check – **As a condition of service to the OYF program, all football and cheer head coaches and assistant coaches must complete the online information and background check forms prior to assuming their duties for the season.** Annual background screenings must be completed prior to the applicant assuming his/her duties for the season. Refusal to annually submit a fully completed volunteer application will result in the immediate dismissal of the individual from the OYF program. The Boise District will be responsible to do all background checks for every district in the program. It is the head coach's responsibility to make sure that each member of his/her staff has submitted a fully completed

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application to their league director. If an assistant coach is added during the season, a fully completed application must be submitted and approved before the assistant can begin to coach. The OYF considers any "non-player" who could meet the OYF standards to be an assistant coach and is on the team sideline, to be an assistant coach. Any head coach who has an assistant on his/her staff that has not been approved will be immediately suspended from the OYF program for that season and must re-apply to return the next season. Background checks will be done prior to any individual assuming his/her duties for the current season. The information reported in the background checks will be kept in strict confidence by the OYF program. The Executive Director and a qualified "At-Large" individual, chosen by the Executive Committee, will be responsible to review and approve all applications. Access to this information will be limited to these two individuals and in cases where there is an appeal of a decision, the Board of Directors of the Boise Noon Optimist Club. Applications and reports will be kept on file by the OYF program for the duration of a volunteer's service to the program. Cost for all volunteer background checks will be paid by the OYF program. Background checks will consist of a non-fingerprint Criminal History report and a search of the Sexual Offender Registry, both which are public records. The OYF program will not permit anyone to participate in any manner whose background check reveals a conviction for any of the following offenses:

- Child Abuse
  - Violence to Children
  - Sex Offenses
  - Felony drug use and/or trafficking involving "controlled substances"
3. The OYF will use a "relevant test and by-case consideration" as to whether or not to permit individuals convicted of the following offenses to participate:
- Misdemeanor convictions for drugs (recency & circumstance)
  - Weapons (recency & circumstance)
  - Violence to adults (recency & circumstance)
  - Theft (recency & circumstance)
  - DUI and alcohol related offenses (recency & circumstance)
  - Homicide (recency & circumstance)

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4. Any individual who has charges pending for which they could be disqualified from OYF service if convicted, may not be allowed to participate in the OYF program until there is a final disposition of the charges.
5. Character and Sincerity - The positions of coaching shall be open to any responsible, qualified person with sufficient knowledge of and interest in the game to study, and develop teaching ability. Each coach must show a satisfactory character and sincerity of purpose to act as a proper influence upon young minds. Each coach must perform in accordance with the Code of Conduct (see page 47) and Ethics as consistent with Optimist philosophy.
6. Acceptance as a Coach in the OYF Program shall be based on personal interview, background check, prior experience, interest, sincerity, age qualification, and a desire to serve youth as determined by the Coaches Review Committee (CRC). The CRC will recommend approved applicants for head coaching positions to the League Directors. League Directors shall assign all head coaches to teams and practice locations. All coaches shall uphold the values and principles of the OYF Program. Coaches shall be qualified by experience and head coaches must attend both the Coaches Certification courses and the Optimist sponsored Coaches Clinic. Assistant coaches shall be selected by the head coach. However, the league director, the Commissioner, or the Executive Director may require that a specific individual be interviewed by CRC, and recommended by them, before they can be an assistant coach.
7. Coaching Evaluation - coaches shall be evaluated and may be reappointed to serve again with no maximum time limit upon their years of service. An evaluation of a coach will not be made based on win/loss records; but his ability to teach, hold the interest of his players and impart skills, knowledge and fundamentals to them, as well as his overall fairness in assignments and playing time. The latter is an Optimist and not a parental judgment.
8. Requirements - The Committee may establish reasonable requirements which must be met by all Optimist coaches, such as; attendance at an Optimist sponsored coaching clinic, attendance at an Optimist sponsored Coaches Training/Certification course, a requirement of proper football playing experience, tests of knowledge of football skills and football rules, which shall include the official rules of OYF and the official high school football playing rules of the State of Idaho, and proper attire.
9. All head coaches are required to attend the Optimist Coaches Training /Certification course and must pass the certification test to be qualified to coach in the program. Coaches must be

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re-certified every year, but do not necessarily have to attend the course each year.

10. All head coaches are required to attend the coach's clinic; assistant coaches are strongly encouraged to attend. If for some reason a head coach cannot attend the clinic, he must notify his league director and one of his assistant coaches must attend in his place. Violation of this rule will result as follows: first miss; coach will be placed on one year probation, second miss; coach will be suspended from the program for one year.
11. If a coach is ejected from any game (Jamboree, regular season, or Optimist bowl) he must leave the field completely and will be suspended from coaching in the next scheduled game. He will be allowed to coach during the week to prepare the team, but he will not be allowed to be at the next game, even as a spectator. In addition, the coach will be reviewed by the Coaches Review Committee and will be on probation for the remainder of the season. If a coach is ejected from two games in a season, he will be immediately suspended for the rest of the season and for all of the next season. At the end of the suspension, he must then re-apply for admission back into the program.
12. A coach may be asked to resign his position or may be removed whenever, in the opinion of the League Directors, the Commissioner, the Executive Director or the Committee, the coach is not capable of handling young players, or cannot properly assume the duties and responsibilities required for this position. Coaches may appeal such decisions as directed herein.
13. All new Boise District tackle head coaches are required to participate in the mentoring program for the first year that they are in the Boise District OYF program. Failure to "actively" follow and participate in the mentoring program, as outlined in either the mentoring guidelines manual or verbally by the mentor himself, could result in disciplinary actions up to and including removal from the OYF program".

### SECTION 6 - COACHING RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONDUCT

#### A. ALL ADULT TEAM PERSONNEL SHALL:

1. No OYF coach, head coach or assistant coach will engage in "excessive or physically dangerous" coaching activities with players. "Excessive or physically dangerous coaching activities" are defined as those coaching methods that would not be considered "reasonable and generally accepted coaching methods". For example, holding a dummy for a player to hit it would be an accepted coaching method. However, taking a dummy and forcibly causing it to hit the player would not be an accepted coaching method. Simply stated, behavior by a coach that is beyond what "a reasonable person would expect" is not acceptable.

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2. Refrain from smoking or using any form of tobacco (chew) on the field (practice and games)
  3. Reserve constructive criticism for a private moment, or in the presence of the team if others might benefit, but never in front of spectators.
  4. Refrain from excessive "sideline coaching", and remain in the designated coaching area on the sideline.
  5. Refrain from using profanity.
  6. Not allow any player to use a steam room, rubber sweats, and weight reducing drugs, etc., in an effort to make weight.
  7. Refrain from "running-up" the score against an opponent. This includes keeping the first defense in at all times.
  8. Always strive to make every football activity serve as a training ground for life.
  9. Together with game officials, be jointly responsible for the conduct and control of team fans and spectators. Any fan who becomes a nuisance and out of control must be asked to leave.
  10. Uphold the Optimist rules and regulations, the philosophy of the program and applicable requirements of the Committee.
  11. Abide by a player's doctor's decision in all matters of player health and injuries, and physical ability to play.
  12. Accept decisions of officials on the field as being fair and called to the best ability of the officials. The coach MUST stay off the field and remain under control in order to set a good example for players and fans. A decision based on judgment should never be questioned. In case of apparent misinterpretation or violation of rules, the officials shall be addressed as gentlemen.
  13. Not criticize an opposing team, its players, coaches or team, by words or gestures.
  14. Not use any video, audio, radio, telecommunications equipment, or cellular phone as a coaching aide during an OYF game.
- B. HEAD COACH TOTAL RESPONSIBILITY:**
1. The head coach is responsible for all actions involving himself, his staff, and all of his players from the time the team arrives at the field and until the team depart.
  2. The head coach shall have a good understanding of and strive to achieve the objectives listed in Section 1A – Objectives (see page 4) of the rulebook. Any coaching conduct not specifically covered by rule, but creates the perception of poor sportsmanship with regards to score will be subject to review by the Rules and Competition Committee. Procedure for review: Any party may submit complaints regarding conduct through the normal complaint procedure. Such complaints must be in writing and signed by the submitting party. The complaint will be forwarded to the Rules and Competition committee for review. Findings from the committee will be given to the appropriate league director and will be copied to the Executive Committee.

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League director will be responsible for any corrective action that is deemed appropriate.

3. The head coach is responsible for issuing and maintaining all OYF equipment provided to his team. When the season is over, the head coach is obligated to return all equipment to the Equipment Coordinator and is financially accountable for all missing items that are not available for return
4. OYF head coaches are required to report within 24 hours any "coach involved incidents" as defined in the previous paragraph and also any "medical issues" involving the players. "Medical issues" are defined as any medically related incidents that cause a player to be transported for medical care, that cause a player to miss more than two practices, or anything that causes the coaching staff to have "serious concerns" as to whether or not a player should be allowed to continue to participate in either practices or games. These must be reported to the coach's league director, who will in turn report it to the appropriate assistant commissioner. A verbal report will be sufficient during the week with the understanding that the coach MUST make a written report on the next Saturday, PRIOR to his/her scheduled game. Failure to make a verbal report within 24 hours will result in disciplinary action against the head coach ranging from being placed on probation up to and including being immediately suspended from coaching in the OYF program. The league director and the assistant commissioner for that league will make the initial decision based upon the nature and severity of the incident. Should a head coach choose to appeal that decision, he/she will remain in whatever status the original decision placed them pending a review and hearing by the OYF Executive Committee.

### SECTION 7 – SCOUTING

- A. INDIVIDUAL SCOUTING: Scouting individual players in any form shall be prohibited. All players are assigned by the League Directors and all such assignments are final. Any coach who scouts individual players in any way for the purpose of attempting to gain team placement shall be discharged from the program.
- B. TEAM SCOUTING: Coaches may observe the playing of opposing teams only at scheduled games so long as observations do not interfere with the playing of the game. NO filming, or taping of opposing teams will be permitted.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **PLAYING PERSONNEL**

#### SECTION 1 - REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS

- A. PARENTS SIGNATURE: A parent or guardian must accompany each child at the time of registration and must sign the registration form. Since the registration form documents the consent and permission of a parent or guardian, proxy signatures are not acceptable.
  - 1. OPTIMIST REGISTRATION: At LEAST two members of the DISTRICT OYF COMMITTEE or their designated representatives shall be present at every registration. League Director will assign players to teams by elementary school attending with primary residence as the deciding factor in case of conflict. The Executive Committee, Commissioner, or Executive Director can grant a "hardship designation" and sign-up a player who is absent, on a case-by-case basis.
- B. WEIGH-IN: Every registrant will be weighed once at the time of registration.
- C. PROOF OF BIRTH: All new players must present legal proof of birth date at time of registration. Players who have participated in the program do not.
- D. REGISTRATION FEE: The registration fee covers the cost of participation, field maintenance, officials, etc. Late registrations will cost an additional \$10.00.
- E. OFFICIAL REGISTRATION DATES: Official registration dates will be scheduled and published each year by the OYF Committee.
- F. LATE REGISTRATION: Late registration dates will be determined by the Committee. Acceptance of late registration is not a guarantee of being assigned to a team unless an opening exists. A late fee will be assessed, see paragraph E above.
- G. REFUNDS: No refunds of the registration fees will be made after the month of May unless authorized by the Executive Director, Commissioner, or the Executive Committee.
- H. REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE: All players must register and weigh-in each year before starting practice. Registration forms shall be filled out in quadruplicate and one copy given to each of the following: parent, coach, League Director and Commissioner. After a player has been assigned to a team, he will not be allowed to transfer to another team unless approved by the Executive Committee, League Directors and coaches involved.
- I. PRACTICE: No player may start practice without being registered, insured and assigned to a proper league and team. Failure to comply with proper registration will constitute a forfeiture of games in which the player participated and removal from the OYF Program.

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### SECTION 2 - AGE CUT-OFF

The age cut-off for OYF players is midnight on September 1 of the current year.

### SECTION 3 - DETERMINATION OF AGE

Ages will be determined by birth certificate or proof of birth as received in official extract forms from the state in which the child was born. This document must be presented at the time the child is registered in the OYF Program.

### SECTION 4 - AGE EXCEPTIONS

- A. No exceptions to the age requirements are permitted without approval by the Executive Committee and the parents involved.
- B. When a player's weight exceeds the maximum limit for his/her age, he/she will have the option to advance to a higher age league and they must meet the weight requirement for that league. A player cannot be advanced more than two age brackets - no exceptions.
- C. A player will not be advanced to a higher age league without the written consent of his parent or guardian. If this consent is not given, the player is ineligible to participate in OYF.

### SECTION 5 - ASSIGNMENT TO TEAMS

- A. Player's age and weight at registration will determine the league the player will be assigned to. No player will be accepted into this program if they weigh over 150 lbs. at registration.
- B. If a new player's weight exceeds the maximum for his/her age group, that player has two options. He/she can advance to a higher league (see C below) or they can return to any/all of the scheduled registration times (excluding late signup) and be weighed. The last weight that the player receives will be the weight that the OYF program will use to assign the player to a team. Once the player has received his/her final weight, only then will the OYF program accept payment for the registration fees and assign the player to a team. If a returning player's weight exceeds the maximum for his/her age group, that player has two options. He/she can advance to a higher age league (see C below) or be placed on an "assignment pending" list. A player placed on the "assignment pending" list has the option to return to any/all the scheduled registration times (excluding late signup) and be weighed. The last weight that the player receives will be the weight that the OYF program will use to assign the player to his/her league. Returning players on the "assignment pending" list will be temporarily "assigned" to their previous team pending receipt of a final assignment weight. Once the player has received his/her final weight, only then will the OYF program accept payment for the registration and assign the player to a team. After the last scheduled registration date, all players will be assigned to leagues/teams according to the established weight limits-no exceptions.

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- C. Upon mutual agreement of parent and player, a player who exceeds the maximum limit for his/her age group may elect to advance to a higher age league, rather than be dropped from the program. This choice must be made prior to the player's first day of practice and approved by both League Directors involved. This agreement must be in writing as in Age Exceptions on page 17).
- D. Players who attend the private schools have the option of playing on the team nearest their place of residency or on the "private school team". Players who attend the private schools will be assigned to the private school team until the team has reached the maximum number of players for its age group (see Team Composition – paragraph B on page 17). If there are more players qualified and requesting to play on the "private school team" then there is room, assignment to the team will be based upon registration date. Once the team is full, remaining players requesting the private school team will be assigned to the team closest to their primary place of residency. The next OYF season, these players can apply to be re-assigned to the private school team as long as there is room on the team and they are still attending a private school. If there are less players qualified and requesting to play on the "private school team" then there is room, the team will be filled with "non-private school players" until it has reached the maximum number of players for its age group. These players will be assigned at the league director's discretion. The next season, these players can apply to be re-assigned to the team as indicated in the Registration of Players, paragraph B on page 16. Players whose fathers are going to coach a team, either as an assistant or a head coach, outside their child's primary place of residency, can be assigned to that team. The number of players who can be assigned to teams outside their area for this reason will be limited to a maximum of three and this can only be done at the nine-year old age group (Freshman League). Players who played in the OYF program the previous year will be re-assigned to the same team on which they played. The only exceptions to this rule are:
1. Player does not meet the weight classification for his/her previous team.
  2. Player's primary place of residency changes. The player has the option of requesting a change to a team closer to the new elementary school attending or staying on their previous team. Once the player has made that decision, it will govern all future team assignments. Change must be approved by the Executive Committee.
  3. Players moving up from the flag program into the tackle program will be assigned to new teams.
  4. Requests to transfer from one team to another for reasons other than those listed above must be submitted in writing and will be decided upon by Executive Committee. After all the April and May Registrations are completed, players will be placed on

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teams. Players will be placed on teams using the following criteria:

- i. Players who played the previous year will be assigned first. They will be placed on the same team as they played the previous year.
  - ii. New players will then be assigned. They will be assigned to the teams as indicated in the Registration of Players, paragraph B on page 16 . In cases where there are more players than there are spots on a team, the players who registered the earliest will have priority.
  - iii. Once a team has reached its maximum number of players (flag = 16, tackle = 25), then players will be assigned to the next closest team. The criteria described in ii above will be the guidelines followed.
  - iv. League Directors will have, at their discretion, the option to assign any/all new players to teams as required to balance out the number of players on each team.
5. **The date for late registrations will be published each spring by the OYF Committee. This registration usually takes place in late June.** At this registration, League Directors will assign players to teams as they sign-up, using the following criteria:
- i. Players will be assigned on a "first-come-first-served" basis, regardless of whether or not the player played in the OYF program the previous year.
  - ii. Once a team has reached its maximum number of players, then players will be assigned to the next closest team. Players may decide to be placed on a "waiting list" instead of playing outside their area of residence. Placement on a waiting list does not assure a spot in the OYF program.
- E. The weight of every player in full pads and uniform will be verified for the entire season at one final weigh-in at the Jamboree. If a player does not make weight at Jamboree, they will be ineligible to play and will be refunded their registration. Weigh-ins at the jamboree will follow these procedures:
1. Players will be weighed wearing all the required equipment including their helmet.
  2. If any player does not make weight on a specific scale, a member of the Executive Committee will immediately accompany the player to the other scale and weigh him/her. Player may be weighed only once on each scale and if he/she makes weight on either of the scales, they are eligible.
  3. Players not making weight for their age group, or previously assigned team, will be given the opportunity to move up to the appropriate league and be placed on the team in that league that the league director selects.

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4. NO COACHES will be allowed within 15 feet of the scale while his/her team is being weighed. All weights and decisions made at the scales by the OYF program are final and coaches who act inappropriately will be subject to immediate suspension and/or removal from the OYF program.
5. The Jamboree is the final time that players will be weighed. Any player who cannot attend the Jamboree MUST be weighed, in full pads and in accordance with the rules above, prior to the jamboree. This "prior" weight check must be done as close to Jamboree as possible and with at least two district officials present. Verification of the player's weight will be provided with the team roster that is turned in at Jamboree by each team. The only exception to this will be in "extraordinary or emergency" situations and they must be approved by the Boise OYF Executive Committee.

### SECTION 6 - LEAGUE REQUIREMENTS

Weights in this section are with street clothes and shoes on. Players play with their own age group except where weight rules allow/require a change

#### A. FLAG LEAGUE:

1. At least 7, but not over 8 years old.\*
2. Allowable weight, up to and including 95 lbs
3. There will be no weight limits on participants in the flag program. All 7 & 8 year olds will be weighed as part of the registration process. Any 7 or 8 year old who weighs over 95 lbs will have the option to "move-up" to the tackle program or to stay in the flag program. Those who choose to move into the tackle program will be assigned to the appropriate league based upon the tackle weight classifications. The decision whether to stay in flag or move-up to tackle must be made at the time the participant registers and the decision is final for that year. Flag participants will not be weighed at jamboree.

#### B. FRESHMAN LEAGUE:

1. Maximum age of 9 years old.\*
2. Maximum weight of 105 lbs.
3. A player who weighs 55 lbs. or less has the option to play down one league.

#### C. SOPHOMORE LEAGUE:

1. Maximum age of 10 years old.\*
2. Maximum weight of 120 lbs.
3. A player who weighs 70 lbs. or less has the option to play down one league.

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\* Maximum age with exception of players who meet the "play-down" weight

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### D. JUNIOR LEAGUE:

1. Maximum age of 11 years old.\*
2. Maximum weight of 135 lbs.
3. A player who weighs 80 lbs. or less has the option to play down one league.

### E. SENIOR LEAGUE:

1. Maximum age of 12 years old, NO EXCEPTIONS.
2. Maximum weight of 150 lbs.
3. A player who weighs 95 lbs. or less has the option to play down one league.

F. All teams in each league will be divided equally between the American and National.

G. Conferences in their respective leagues.

## SECTION 7 - CHALLENGES TO ELIGIBILITY

A. RINGER: A player is suspected of not being the same player who was certified on the roster, but is playing under the name of one so certified. The challenging team will notify the head official that the eligibility of a player is being challenged. If the Head Coach of the team on whose roster a player is challenged does not voluntarily declare his disputed player to be ineligible for that game, the team challenging will notify the official that they are playing the game under protest. The game will then be played under protest and will be handled in accordance with the protest procedures of the OYF Committee. Should either team refuse to play the game, they will forfeit the game to their opponents. Note: Coaches in the OYF program are prohibited from forfeiting a game. Concerns should be handled via the chain of command. (i.e. Officials Coordinator, League Director etc.) Only the referee has authority to declare a forfeit. Should a Coach forfeit a game, he/she will be immediately suspended from the program pending review by the Executive Committee.

B. ILLEGAL EQUIPMENT: Any protest regarding the wearing of illegal or altered equipment must be filed with the game official and Commissioner or Executive Director immediately. It is their responsibility alone to determine the legality of any item of equipment worn by a player. Use of illegal or altered equipment game will result in immediate ejection of the player and a forfeit of the game by his team. If a player uses a helmet not provided by the OYF program, that player will be suspended for the remainder of the season, without refund of registration fees.

1. Non-removable stickers will be placed on all helmets including all the outside districts. This is to insure that only OYF supplied helmets are being used by football participants.
2. Prior to the start of any OYF tackle football game the timekeeper, or designated OYF official Blue Shirt, will do a visual inspection of all the helmets on both teams. Players from each team will line-up single file, with their helmet on. The OYF

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person doing the inspection will walk behind each player checking to see if each helmet has the appropriate sticker and that the sticker has not been tampered with. If a player is found to have a helmet without a sticker or with a sticker that has been tampered with, that player will not be allowed to participate in that game. There will be no sharing of helmets between players and there will be no attempt to secure another OYF helmet until it is determined what happened to the helmet that this player has in his/her possession. If a player shows up late, after the game has already started, the timekeeper must check the helmet before that player can participate.

### C. UNIFORM RESTRICTIONS:

1. All helmets will be white in color. No decals, numbers, or markings of any kind can be put on helmets.
2. Jerseys will only have the player's names on them in the Senior League; Junior League for Horseshoe Bend, Emmett, McCall, Marsing and other outside programs.
3. Pants will be solid white, with no strips, markers, etc. Violation of these rules will render the equipment as illegal and according to the rules; use of illegal equipment will result in forfeiture. This forfeiture will be enforced before the game is played.

## SECTION 8 – AWARDS

- A. The Optimist Club of Boise will present a trophy to the champion of each conference of the Junior and Senior Leagues.
- B. No team, association, league, federation or any other individual or group directly or indirectly affiliated with Optimists shall grant, give, bestow or otherwise present or convey to any Optimist player an expensive trophy or award. The amount of the \$8.00 retail is suggested as a guide between acceptable and excessive monetary value. General OYF policy is that no individual awards be given, unless all team members are to receive the same type award.
- C. The only exception to this rule is the OYF Fundraiser team prize "credit" that teams may earn as part of the OYF fundraiser. This team credit must be utilized equally on all members of the team.

## **ARTICLE III SCHEDULES**

### SECTION I – GENERAL

Schedules are organized to protect children from excessive practice or play and to minimize as much as possible the aspect of pressure involved in competition play. They are also designed to control the priority of school work and to protect the reputation of the Optimist Youth Football (OYF) Program.

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### SECTION 2 – PROHIBITIONS

Under no circumstances may an Optimist team schedule, conduct, or play a controlled scrimmage, pre-season exhibition, regular season, play-off, championship, or postseason bowl game without written consent of the Committee.

### SECTION 3 - PRACTICE SCHEDULE

- A. DEFINITION: Practice sessions are a gathering of players without minimum, or maximum number, including the mandatory presence of one coach, where one or more of the following activities take place:
1. Chalk talk
  2. Viewing of fundamentals
  3. Group conditioning
  4. Individual skill sessions
  5. Group skill sessions
  6. Dummies and other inanimate contact
  7. Play run through without pads (T-shirt and shorts).
  8. Play run through with pads, but without contact.
  9. Intra-squad scrimmage with full pads and equipment.
- B. REQUIREMENTS: Practice sessions in all leagues shall not begin prior to the scheduled beginning date published each year by the OYF Committee, and shall then be conducted in accordance with the following guidelines:
1. Each player must have a valid football insurance policy in force prior to the first practice session and for the duration of the season.
  2. Unauthorized practices shall be prohibited and will be penalized at the discretion of the Committee.
  3. **Teams may practice 5 days a week, two hours per night as a maximum for the first three weeks during years in which a bye week occurs prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> scheduled game. (Example: Labor Day weekend).**
  4. Practices shall be limited to 2 hours for the first two weeks and 1½ hours after the first 2 weeks for tackle teams, and 1½ hours for the first 2 weeks and 1 hour after the first 2 weeks for flag teams.
  5. Practice shall be limited to one session per day.
  6. Practice sessions shall be completed no later than ½ hour before sunset, except in the case of an OYF sanctioned practice “under the lights”.
  7. All players shall be suited without pads and shall not be involved in contact of any kind for the first three days of practice (minimum).
  8. All players will wear the full complement of protective equipment except for the Flag League.

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9. A five minute break each hour must take place with players allowed to rest. Each player must provide their own water or other drinks. Players will be allowed to consume such liquid replenishment throughout the practices or game.
10. Before each practice and each game a minimum of eight warm-up exercises or stretch drills will be conducted as outlined in OYF training guide.
11. Practice sessions shall not exceed the weekly and evening termination limits as specified below:

LEAGUE	1 <sup>ST</sup> TWO WEEKS	AFTER 1 <sup>ST</sup> TWO WEEKS	All leagues practice shall end a ½ hour before sunset.
Flag	4	3	
Freshman	5	4	
Sophomore	5	4	
Junior	5	4	
Senior	5	4	

- A. Definition: A scrimmage is the closest possible training approach to actual game conditions, There are two types:
  1. INTRA-SQUAD: Actually a part of the practice period after two weeks of conditioning has taken place, or may be held during practice sessions during the regular season. One team breaks itself down into two opposing teams. Intra-squad scrimmages are covered under regulations for PRACTICE SCHEDULE, above.
  2. CONTROLLED INTER-SQUAD: A controlled inter-squad is part of a scheduled practice session, and resembled an intra-squad practice scrimmage very closely. Two different teams meet. However, as opposed to game conditions, there is prior agreement between coaching staffs that:
    - i. Coaches will be permitted on the fields.
    - ii. Long timeouts are taken between plays so that coaching staffs can instruct and critique their players.
    - iii. Coaching staffs can inform each other of plays they are going to run so one team can concentrate on its offensive sets while the other improves its defense and vice-versa,
    - iv. There are no officials present.
    - v. Game score is not kept; in fact, scoring is not the primary goal.
    - vi. No official time is kept other than to assure the 1½ hour practice maximum is not violated.
- B. SCRIMMAGES PERMITTED: Controlled scrimmages are not the same as "Jamboree" or other publicity kickoffs before the community-at-large where all teams gathered on the same field and a demonstration of contact takes place in addition to team introductions, purposes of the program, etc. Teams may only scrimmage teams within their league and

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in the other conferences with the approval of the League Director. Scrimmages will have a controlled scrimmage format, with a maximum of one per week.

### SECTION 5 - PRE-SEASON EXHIBITION GAME

Definition: An exhibition game is a pre-season or unscheduled game before the regular season opens. No pre-season or unscheduled games shall be permitted unless otherwise authorized, in writing, by the Committee.

### SECTION 6 - REGULAR SEASON SCHEDULE OF GAMES

Each conference in each league shall play its own regular season schedule of games which results in an overall W-L-T record for each team.

#### A. GAME SCHEDULE:

1. Flag and Freshman: Drawing team names at random for each conference.
2. Sophomore: Based upon Rookie league records, teams with the best win/loss records will be placed in the same conference and play each other. Those teams with lesser records, expansion teams, and new teams from outside programs will be placed in the same conference and play each other.
3. Junior and Senior: Seed teams into each conference based upon past records and estimate of teams' strength.

In leagues with more than fourteen (14) teams, the teams will be divided into two conferences with an Eastern Division and Western Division in each conference. Teams will be scheduled to play everyone in their division during the first six league games. The seventh and final league game will match the winner of each division to determine the conference champion and the representative for the Bowl game. In leagues with more than twenty-four (24) teams, the teams will be divided into two conferences. Each conference will have an Eastern Division, Western Division, Northern Division and Southern Division. Teams will be scheduled to play everyone in their division during the first five (5) league games. During the sixth week, the Western Division winner will play the Eastern Division winner and the Northern Division Winner will play the Southern Division winner. The seventh and final league game, will match the winner of the games from week six to determine the conference champions and the representatives for the Optimist Bowl game.

- A. NON-LEAGUE SCRIMMAGES PROHIBITED: No Optimist League shall be allowed to play a non-league opponent. Games or scrimmages against teams outside the Boise Optimist Program are prohibited unless authorized by the Committee in writing. Under no circumstances will scrimmages be allowed between teams of different leagues such as sophomore versus junior, etc.
- B. RESCHEDULING: Rescheduling of any games will not be permitted.
- C. STARTING TIMES OF GAMES: Teams must be ready to play 10 minutes before the scheduled starting time, however, games will not start earlier than the scheduled start time without consent of both coaches.

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- D. TIE GAMES: If a game played during the season is tied at the end of regulation playing time, the game will be recorded as a TIE, except for all Senior and Junior League Divisional games, where a tie at the end of regulation will be decided by a Kansas City playoff.
- E. WARM-UP EXERCISES BEFORE GAMES: Before each practice and each game a minimum of eight warm-up exercises or stretch drills are required.

### SECTION 7 - ELIGIBILITY FOR LEAGUE GAMES

- A. GAME ELIGIBILITY: Eligible players shall be boys or girls properly registered with proper equipment, be physically fit, have satisfactory attendance at practice (must attend at least eight practices prior to Jamboree) and meet league weight requirements.
- B. WEIGHT REQUIREMENTS: At the Jamboree, each player will be weighed only once and must weigh-in at or below the maximum weight limit for their league. The following weights by league are with full uniform, equipment and shoes (see Paragraph C below):

Flag	95 pounds
Freshman	115 pounds
Sophomore	130 pounds
Junior	145 pounds
Senior	160 pounds

- C. Any player absent from the Jamboree must be weighed prior to Jamboree, as per Assignment to Teams (sub paragraph E5) on page 20. Any player not in attendance at the jamboree, not weighed prior to jamboree, and without an "excused absence" will be immediately removed from the OYF program.

### SECTION 8 - OPTIMIST BOWL GAMES

- A. LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP FOR JUNIOR AND SENIOR LEAGUES: Following the completion of the league play, the two conference champions of each league will meet in the Optimist Bowl games which will be held for the Junior and Senior Leagues. Additional Senior League Games: following the completion of league play, all teams in the Senior League will meet in an "Optimist Bowl" game. Teams will meet in relationship to their standings at the end of league play.
- B. BOWL STANDINGS: To determine the standings for participation in the Optimist Bowl, only division records will be considered. Non-conference or cross conference game records will not be counted in selecting BOWL representatives.
- C. IDENTICAL RECORDS: In the event that two or more teams in the same conference/division have identical records at the end of league play, the Optimist Bowl representatives will be determined as follows:

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1. The winner of the game between co-champions played during the regular season, within their conference will represent that conference in the Optimist Bowl.
  2. In the event three or more teams are tied for the conference championship, the bowl representatives will be determined by a Kansas City Playoff, to be played on either the Saturday afternoon of the last regular season game, after league play has completed or on the first Monday prior to the Optimist Bowl-at the Executive Committee's discretion.
- D. KANSAS CITY PLAYOFF: Kansas City Playoff system for determining teams entering the play-offs at the junior and senior divisions requires that a team win at least one of the Kansas City play-off games to advance. (Coin toss will only determine first two teams to play.**
1. In a Kansas City Playoff, the ball will be placed on the 10 yard line and each team will have 4 downs to score. If the team scores there will be a try for an extra point. If, after each team has had a possession, the score is still tied, then this process is repeated.

### SECTION 9 - COMMON REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL SCHEDULING

The following requirements apply to all scheduling, beginning with practice and ending with post-season bowl games:

- A. Prior account will be taken of all local and state laws pertaining to the scheduling of athletic contests.
- B. NO games or practices will be scheduled on Sunday.
- C. The first scheduled regular season game will not take place earlier than the first weekend after Labor Day, regardless of climate.
- D. A period of at least four full days (96 consecutive hours) must elapse between all games for pre-season exhibitions, regularly scheduled league games, post-season and bowl games.

## **ARTICLE IV EQUIPMENT FOR TACKLE**

### SECTION I - GENERAL

- A. The physical contact in football demands that each player wear a full complement of protective equipment which makes participation relatively expensive in comparison with other youth athletic activities. Therefore, to achieve maximum player protection while realizing a genuine economy by spreading the higher initial cost of quality equipment over several seasons of reliable wear, no item should be purchased which is not at least in the middle-priced line of a recognized manufacturer of quality athletic equipment.
- B. As a money-saving alternative, be sure to check local and used sales and specials.

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### SECTION 2 - REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

The following items shall be worn by players in all divisions beginning with physical contact in practice sessions and shall meet the required standards as noted (recommended standards indicated in parenthesis):

#### HELMET:

May be of one or two-piece construction, of ultra-high impact plastic-type (polyethylene) shell, head cushion or (six-point) suspension type, and shall provide adequate neck protection, horizontal double bar (cage mask) face guard attached and chin strap required. *ONLY HELMETS BEARING THE NOCSAE SEAL OF CERTIFICATION SHALL BE WORN AS OF 1978.*

Alteration of helmets, including changing face masks is absolutely prohibited. All helmets must be provided by the OYF. The only exception to this rule will be those teams that have "grand-fathered" rights to provide their own helmets, as agreed to by previous agreement. Violations to this helmet policy are referenced under Illegal Equipment on page 21. All participants must use OYF supplied helmets, NO exceptions. Non-removable stickers will be placed on all helmets including all the outside districts. This is to insure that only OYF supplied helmets are being used by football participants.

#### SHOULDER PADS:

Shoulder pads may be comprised of corrugated, molded fiber or plastic-type (high density polyethylene) material, with a coated (poly-vinyl) washable padding, heavy web hinges and adjustable (cantilever) underarm straps.

#### PANTS:

Pants may be of one-piece or "shell" construction. One piece pants must feature removable (snap out) hip and kidney pads; knit (cotton/nylon) material is recommended with tunnel belt loops or attached web belt. "Shell" pants should feature sanforized knee guard and waist-suspended thigh guard pockets. Make allowance for hip pads when ordering. *ONLY* standard white pants will be allowed for games.

#### HIP AND KIDNEY PADS:

May be of corrugated, molded fiber or plastic-type polyethylene material, covered on the inside with a shock-absorbing poly-foam material, and shall include spine piece.

#### THIGH GUARDS:

Thigh pads may be of corrugated, molded fiber or plastic with poly foam padding.

#### KNEEPADS:

Shall be of durable, shock absorbing material, not less than 1/2" in thickness.

#### JERSEYS:

For game purposes may be of solid or mesh type material. All game jerseys shall be required to have 10" numbers on the back and must meet National High School Federation Standards. Jersey colors **MUST** be approved by the Committee to avoid duplication. Game jerseys will be provided by the OYF. In a game when the two teams have the same

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colored Optimist jerseys, if one of the teams has its own practice jerseys, they may be allowed to use these practice jerseys in the game provided that the jerseys are all the same, that they each have a regulation size number, and that the use of them is pre-approved by the league director PRIOR to the game. Any team wanting to use a mascot instead of their sponsor's logo MUST have it pre-approved by BOTH the sponsor and by the Rules-and-Competition Committee. A two color logo on the front and a one color (must be one of the logo colors) number on the shoulder of the jerseys will be allowed starting with the 2006 freshman league *ONLY*. No coach or sponsor will be allowed to add an additional color or the numbers on the shoulders on jerseys for existing teams. Coaches may *NOT* have parents, sponsors or a team fundraiser in order to get the funds to place the numbers on your jerseys as a team. Violation of this rule will be immediate forfeit of the game and suspension of the coach. All existing jerseys will remain as originally printed EXCEPT for the senior league and then only to have the player's names printed on the back.

### TEETH PROTECTION:

Protector shall be the intra-oral; custom or self fitted impression type, colored, and with a "keeper strap" (attaches to face guard) required. A mouth guard is to be worn at ALL games and practices during ANY type of contact. Executive Committee can grant a "Medical Hardship" for special cases where a "keeper" strap cannot be utilized.

### ATHLETIC SUPPORTER:

Shall be of high-quality elastic, with a woven mesh pocket (plastic cup is optional).

### SHOES:

In all leagues, tennis shoes or cleated shoes are required. Shoes with removable" cleats are allowed as long as the cleats are not longer than 1/2" in length and are not metal or metal tipped.

### EYEGGLASSES:

Eyeglasses shall be of athletic-approved construction with non-shattering glass, plastic, or soft contact lenses. Face shields may only be used if required by written instruction from a doctor, and then only clear, commercially manufactured face shields are allowed

### SKULL CAPS:

Skulls caps are considered "optional equipment" and if worn underneath the helmet, they must be commercially manufactured. No bandannas or "homemade" skull caps are allowed.

### CASTS:

No player shall participate in either practice or games while wearing illegal equipment. This includes any hard substance in its final form such as leather, rubber, plastic, plaster, or fiberglass when worn on the hand, wrist, forearm, or elbow unless covered on all exterior surfaces with no less than 1/2" thick, high density, closed-cell polyurethane or an alternate material of the same minimum thickness and with similar physical properties to protect an injury. Additionally, the player must have a note from a licensed medical physician stating that the player is cleared to participate with the cast. This note must be renewed on a weekly basis.

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Prior to each game, the umpire will inspect the cast to see that it is properly prepared for play. The doctor's note will be surrendered to the umpire and a new note will be required prior to participation the following week. No player in the flag program may participate with a cast. (ALL OTHER EQUIPMENT NOT SPECIFICALLY DESCRIBED IS CONSIDERED OPTIONAL AND MAY NOT BE USED UNTIL APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE. IN ADDITION, ONLY THE REQUIRED EQUIPMENT LISTED ABOVE HAS TO BE WORN DURING THE REQUIRED WEIGH-IN AT JAMBOREE.)

### **ARTICLE V PLAYING RULES FOR TACKLE FOOTBALL**

#### SECTION I - BASIC PLAYING RULES

Except as modified by specific Optimist variations, games are played under the state rules of the individual members of the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations.

#### SECTION 2 - OPTIMIST MODIFICATIONS

- A. OYF PERSONNEL: Optimist Youth Football requires a minimum of one OYF representative not involved in the game in any way to be present at each OYF game to encourage good sportsmanship, and to be available for people to contact in the event of a problem. If no representative is present at game time, the referee shall contact the OYF Operations Coordinator.
- B. MEDICAL: At all scheduled games the OYF shall be responsible for having at least one certified trainer or paramedic or EMT present or available within five minutes response time at the playing fields. The Commissioner shall appoint one person in charge of maintaining change for, and the location of the nearest public telephone.
- C. **It is required to have a licensed health care professional's written authorization for participants to return to play in games or practices following a verified concussion, If the player participates in practice or games without authorization, the head coach is subject to suspension.**
- D. OFFICIALS:
  - 1. The OYF will arrange for the presence of at least the minimum recommended number of officials (Freshman & Sophomore = 2 minimum, 3 maximum / Junior & Senior = 3 minimum, 4 maximum).
  - 2. A qualified official is defined as an official who is registered collegiate or high school official. A trainee is defined as an official who is an apprentice position and working toward certification as a registered high school or collegiate official.
  - 3. There will be a minimum of three qualified officials at each Optimist post-season game.
  - 4. Payment of officials is the responsibility of the OYF.

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5. All officials will be provided with a current copy of Optimist Rules and Regulations.
- E. GAME BALL: All game balls shall be provided by the OYF. The acceptance of a given game ball shall be the responsibility of the Head Official.
- F. TIMEKEEPERS:
  1. Shall be designated by the OYF.
  2. Shall represent the Optimist organization and the Optimist Football Committee.
  3. In the event that any player, coach, or spectator engages in disorderly or disruptive conduct, the timekeeper shall contact the appropriate OYF committee member and initiate the "Incident Response Policy" (see page 35).
- G. SECURITY: Outside districts must have security available within 10 minutes of the field.

### SECTION 3 - PLAYING FIELD

- A. FIELD PREPARATION: The OYF Committee is responsible for the preparation of the playing field and all required accessories for a game.
- B. FIELD SIZE: The minimum field size is 80 x 37 yards. The OYF will attempt to have all Flag, Freshman and Sophomore League games played on 80 yard x 37 yard fields, and will attempt to play all Junior and Senior League games on a 100 yard x 47 yard field. (Flag, Freshman, and Sophomore games may be played on the larger fields.)
- C. MAXIMUM PENALTY: The maximum distance for any penalty in an OYF game shall be 10 yards with the exception of the penalty for violation of the minimum plays per player rule - see Player Participation and Playing Time on page 32.
- D. FIELD MARKINGS: All fields will be equipped and marked in accordance with high school standards, except as noted in these rules. Lime and other caustics shall not be used.
- E. BENCH AREA: The bench area is reserved for players, coaches and team physicians only. The coaching staff shall be limited to a total of seven on the sideline. Spectators shall remain on the opposite sideline during pre-game, half-time, and playing of the game.

### SECTION 4 - QUARTERS

Time per quarters shall be eight minutes each. Lesser times are permissible and shall be specified by the Committee.

### SECTION 5 - INTERMISSIONS

- A. Between 1st and 2nd; 3rd and 4th quarters - 2 minutes
- B. Between 2nd and 3rd quarters - 5minutes

### SECTION 6 - TIMEOUTS

A team shall be permitted no more than three timeouts per half. This does not include one minute timeouts for the timekeeper in the 2nd and 4th quarters.

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### SECTION 7 - SCORING VALUES

- Touchdown - 6 points
- Point after TD (run) - 2 points
- Point after TD (kick) - 1 point
- Safety (awarded to opponent) - 2 points
- Field Goal - 3 points
- Forfeit (offended team wins by) - 6 points

### SECTION 8 - TIE GAMES

Tie games stand as ties in all pre-season, regular season and post-season games, except as stated in the rules.

### SECTION 9 - PLAYER PARTICIPATION AND PLAYING TIME

- A. FREE SUBSTITUTION RULE: The free substitution rule is always in effect.
- B. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY: The eligibility of a player may be challenged as noted herein:
  1. Players are prohibited "temporarily" coloring their hair due to the staining of the helmet padding. Players with "temporary hair coloring" are not eligible to play until the coloring is removed.
  2. Players who have been designated by their coach as "not playing" and have been noted as such on the official game card are required to remove their helmets and shoulder pads while they are on the bench.
- C. INJURED PLAYER: Once removed by reason of injury, a player should not be allowed to re-enter the game without the approval of a physician or the EMT's at the field. This rule does not apply to minor injuries, cuts, or abrasions. If a player cannot re-enter the game, he must remove his helmet and jersey while on the bench.
- D. MINIMUM PLAYS PER PLAYER: **The minimum play rule is 7 total plays (per half) include special teams for tackle only.**
  1. At the four minute warning in the 2nd and 4th quarters, an official's time-out will be called for the express purpose of insuring that all players are receiving the required playing time. The Optimist Timekeeper shall poll all the players on the field, the remaining players on the sidelines, and both coaching staffs to determine if all players have participated in no fewer than five plays from scrimmage that half. In the case of a possible violation, the timekeeper will contact the appropriate league director BEFORE play starts again.
  2. It shall be the responsibility of each head coach to see that any players who have not played the minimum required plays prior to the four minute warning do so during the remaining four minutes of the half. The Timekeeper will note any players who have not played the required plays in an effort to insure that they do so prior to the end of the half.

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3. Any potential playing time violations will immediately be called to the attention of an OYF committee member. The OYF committee member will meet with the head coach at the end of the half in question to determine if, in fact, a violation has occurred. If a violation has occurred, the following action will take place: **The game will be forfeited, the coach will be ejected from the game, a fifteen yard penalty will be assessed, and the coach will be suspended from participation in any form for the next game.**
4. The only exception to this rule will be in verifiable cases of a player violating team rules, or in the case of injury. This information must be given to the OYF Timekeeper prior to the game.
5. A repeated infraction (two or more per season) will be considered flagrant, and violators will be referred to the Committee for disposition.
6. Flagrant violations or deliberate attempts to circumvent this rule will be sufficient cause for dismissal of a coach from the OYF program.

### SECTION 10 - SPECIAL RULES FOR FRESHMAN LEAGUE

- A. COACH ASSISTED GAMES: Coach assisted games shall be permitted for all league games. One coach per team shall be permitted on the field at any time to assist his team. Coaches shall not interfere with the officiating or play of the game. The coaches on the field, both the offensive and defensive coaches, must stop all on the field coaching when the quarterback starts his cadence. On the field coaching includes, but is not limited to, giving instructions, positioning players, and calling plays (both offensive and defensive). Violation of this rule constitutes "DELAY of GAME". The penalty will be: first offense = warning; second offense = 5 yard penalty; third offense = 10 yard penalty; fourth offense = 10 yard penalty and coach ejection.
- B. DECLARED PUNT: Regardless of field position, all punts must be "declared" to the official prior to lining up on the ball. The official shall then give the defensive team time to get into formation prior to putting the ball in play. On a declared punt, the defensive players shall not be permitted to cross the line of scrimmage and defensive players on the line of scrimmage cannot move until the ball is kicked. The offensive team MUST punt the ball, and no offensive players shall be permitted to move toward the line of scrimmage until after the ball is punted. The penalty for an infraction of this rule by the defensive team shall be a five yard penalty. The penalty for an infraction by the offensive team shall be a five yard penalty with no loss of down.
- C. DEFENSE: Line up with center uncovered, guard on guard, tackle on tackle, 6 defensive players on the line of scrimmage – all other players 3 yards off the line of scrimmage and they can't move forward until the snap of the ball. High school rules (with the exception of the center

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uncovered) will apply within the opposing team's 10 yard line. The penalty for violation of the above special rules after two warnings could be game forfeit. After the second warning, the game will be completed under protest and will be reviewed by game officials, League Directors and the Executive Committee for final determination. Blitzing is defined as moving towards the line of scrimmage prior to the snap of the ball.

- D. OFFENSE: The offensive line must consist of a tackle-guard-center-guard-tackle, in that order. The maximum split between the tackles and guards and the guards and the center is one yard. The penalty for violation of this rule is the same as defined above, in paragraph C. The quarterback must give the defense "a reasonable amount of time" to get set before starting his cadence.

### SECTION 11 - SPECIAL RULES FOR SOPHOMORE LEAGUE

- A. COACH ASSISTED GAMES: Coach assisted games will be permitted, at the coach's option for the first three games of the season. All rules regarding "on the field coaching" as defined in SPECIAL RULES FOR FRESHMAN LEAGUE (see page 33) will apply.

### SECTION 12 - SPEARING AND BUTT BLOCKING IS PROHIBITED

- A. Spearing and butt blocking will not be tolerated in any OYF competition or practice.
- B. NATIONAL FEDERATION RULES:
  - 1. Butt blocking is defined as a blow with the face-masking, frontal areas, or top of the helmet as the primary point of contact, driven directly into the opponents.
  - 2. Spearing (face tackling) is similar to butt blocking in that it is defined as driving the face-mask, frontal area, or top of the helmet directly into the runner. It is a personal foul with a 10 yard penalty.
  - 3. If taught by an Optimist coach he shall be subject to summary dismissal upon a finding of guilty after a hearing.

### SECTION 13 - PROTESTS

- A. Only protests involving rules, interpretations or the eligibility of a player may be considered; NEVER the judgment of an official in calling a play.
- B. Protests are decided at the local level in accordance with the administrative procedure of the highest local authority.

### SECTION 14 - STANDING RULES COMMITTEE

Questions of/or relating to the interpretation of these rules and regulations should be addressed to the Optimist Rule Committee. Questions must be clearly stated in writing.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **SPECIAL GENERAL RULES**

#### **SECTION 1 - INCIDENT RESPONSE POLICY**

If, in the judgment of the timekeeper, referee, or any OYF committee member, there exists an "on the field incident", they will contact the appropriate person as designated below:

- Incident: 1st Response, 2nd Response, 3rd Response
- Coach Issues: League Director, Asst. League Director, Chain of Command
- Official Issues: Officials Coordinator, Chain of Command
- Timekeeper Issues: Timekeeper Coordinator, Chain of Command
- Crowd Issues: Chain of Command

Chain of Command is defined as: Commissioner; Executive Director; 1<sup>st</sup> Commissioner; 2<sup>nd</sup> Commissioner; 3<sup>rd</sup> Commissioner, Past Commissioner; League Directors; Asst. League Directors; OYF Committee members.

#### **SECTION 2 - SIDELINE RULE**

The fields shall be marked with a line two yards outside of the playing field. Such areas are a "safe zone" for players. All spectators shall remain outside of that area. Spectators may be asked to allow for team "warm-up" areas.

#### **SECTION 3 - ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**

Alcoholic beverages and intoxicated behavior are prohibited at any Optimist activity. Anyone displaying either will be removed into the custody of the local police.

#### **SECTION 4 - TOBACCO**

Smoking, chewing tobacco, or use of any tobacco product is prohibited at any Optimist youth activity.

#### **SECTION 5 - DESIGNATED FIELD SIDES**

Players, coaches and officials only shall be allowed on the side of the field designated as player's side. Spectators and non-participants shall remain on the spectator's side.

#### **SECTION 6 - VEHICLES**

Except for emergency vehicles, and Optimist maintenance vehicles, NO vehicles shall be driven or parked in the proximity of the playing fields.

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### SECTION 7 - COACH REQUIREMENTS

Coaches are required to attend the Coaches Clinic, Coaches Certification courses, adhere to contracts entered into by the Football Committee (i.e., team photographs, etc.), and submit requests for all equipment to the Commissioner. Failure to follow OYF rules will result in disciplinary action by the Football Committee.

### SECTION 8 - AIR QUALITY / WEATHER POLICIES

Optimist Youth Football will follow the Idaho DEQ "recommendations for schools". Green and Yellow Air Quality Index (AQI) will not be cause for any change in OYF practices or games. With an Orange AQI, at practices OYF coaches will increase rest periods and substitutions and reduce the number of strenuous activities. An Orange AQI will have no impact on scheduled OYF games. A Red AQI, at practices OYF coaches will decrease the number of strenuous activities (drills), have more frequent and longer rest periods, and consider shortening the length of practice. A Red AQI will have no impact on scheduled OYF games. A Purple AQI will result in cancellation of practices and OYF games. Players with asthma or other respiratory /cardiovascular illness should be monitored at all times regardless of the AQI. If a parent chooses to remove their child from participating in an OYF practice or game because of a concern for their health, there will be no repercussions from either the coach or the league, regardless of any specific team rules. Extended absences for "health concerns" will require that the player's parents furnish the coach with a signed doctor's release BEFORE the player will be allowed to return to practice. The coach must keep a copy of the release with him and forward a copy on to his/her league director. Weather events or acts of God adversely affecting the playing of games will be handled on a case by case basis following policy as set forth in February 2009.

### SECTION 9 - FIELD SET-UP POLICY

Parent Set-Up and Take-Down Rule: OYF personnel will have all the equipment necessary for field set up, at the 50 yard line on the coaches side of the field prior to game start time. It is the responsibility of the Home team to distribute the cones to the appropriate areas of the field-both sides, at mid-field and at the front and back corners of the end-zone, while the Visiting team will be responsible for yard markers and chains on the parent's side line. Each team is responsible for unrolling their side line mat and positioning their bench. OYF personnel will be responsible for the time clock frame set up and positioning of the clock. After the last game of the day on that field, the Home team is be responsible to pick up of all the cones on the field and the Visiting team will gather the yard markers and chains. All of this equipment will be brought to the 50-yard line on the coach's side of the field. Cones should be stacked, chains rolled up and yard markers arranged in numerical order. Each team's mat will be folded up and left at the 50-yard line as well.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **PLAYING RULES FOR FLAG - IN ADDITION TO OYF RULE**

#### SECTION 1 - EQUIPMENT

##### A. TEAM FURNISHED (Sponsor and/or Optimist) :

1. Jerseys - one per player:
  - i. Numbers on back at least 8 in high.
  - ii. All team jerseys will be purchased by the Optimist club on behalf of the sponsor.
  - iii. No names printed on front or back.
2. Flags - standard three flag set:
  - i. Flags must be worn in the hip area and at rear.
  - ii. Each team will have one red set and one yellow set per player.
  - iii. The home team wears red at the games, the other team yellow.
  - iv. All flag sets used in a game shall be the same type by both teams. Flag sets shall not be Velcro flags or Velcro buckles.
3. Footballs:
  - i. Each team will be furnished two footballs minimum.
  - ii. Game footballs will be furnished by OYF.<sup>4</sup>
4. Medical Kit:
  - i. This kit should have as a minimum a supply of bandages, anesthetic, an ice pack and some tape.

##### B. PLAYER FURNISHED:

1. Shoes:
  - i. Football cleats, turf shoes, or tennis shoes. (See Required Equipment for specifications on page 28).
2. Mouthpiece:
  - i. **Colored** football mouthpiece with strap cut off.
  - ii. Mouthpiece will cover all top teeth.
3. White Gym Shorts:
  - i. White shorts are acceptable, no stripes. Football pants are okay. No pads.
  - ii. Shorts cannot have pockets or belt loops. Players with pockets or belt loops will not be allowed to participate in the game.
  - iii. If long pants are desired because of cold weather, the shorts must be worn over the long pants to provide contrast to the flags.

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<sup>4</sup>Starting the 2007 season, the official size football for OYF flag teams will be one size smaller than the one currently being used in the tackle program.

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## SECTION 2 - THE TEAM

- A. TEAM SIZE:
  - 1. Each team will have no more than 16 players.
  - 2. The OYF Committee will strive for a minimum of 12 players.
- B. COACHES:
  - 1. The Head Coach will be selected by the OYF Committee.
  - 2. Assistant Coaches will be selected by the Head Coach or recommended by the OYF Committee.
- C. PARENTS:
  - 1. Parents are asked to give their time to make this sport a special experience for the youth.
  - 2. Parents are asked to refrain from losing control at games. If they do lose control they will be asked to leave by the officials or the Optimists. The Head Coach is responsible for the behavior and control of the parents of his players.

## SECTION 3 - OFFICIALS

- A. FLAG OFFICIALS:
  - 1. Flag officials will be provided by OYF.
  - 2. Flag officials must be at least 16 years of age and trained by OYF.
- B. GAME AUTHORITY:
  - 1. Each game will be officiated by two OYF trained Officials. The timing of the game shall be the responsibility trained OYF timekeeper.
- C. CHAIN CREW:
  - 1. Home team shall furnish qualified personnel to man chains and box.

## SECTION 4 - THE PLAYING FIELD

- A. See Playing Field at ARTICLE V, SECTION 3 on page 31 (same as tackle program).

## SECTION 5 - QUARTERS OF THE GAME

- A. QUARTERS:
  - 1. Time per quarter shall be eight minutes each.
  - 2. Offense has 30 seconds to put the ball in play from the Officials ready to play whistle. (Delay of game penalty is five yards)
  - 3. The flag program will use a running clock. Time will be stopped for timeouts, changes of possession, and penalty administration. During the last two minutes of each half, the clock will also stop in out-of-bounds situations and on incomplete passes.

## SECTION 6 - TIMEOUTS

- A. TWO TIMEOUTS WILL BE ALLOWED PER TEAM PER HALF.

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### SECTION 7 - SCORING VALUES

#### A. SCORES:

1. No scores will be kept in the Flag program.

### SECTION 8 - PLAYER PARTICIPATION

#### A. SEE ARTICLE V, SECTION 9 A, B, C and D on page 32:

1. Each player must play 10 plays per half or at least 50% of the plays, if the total number of plays in a given half is less than 20.

### SECTION 9 - SPECIAL RULES FOR FLAG FOOTBALL

#### A. COACH ASSISTED GAMES:

1. See Article V, Section 10, paragraph A on page 33 (same as Freshman League).

#### B. DECLARED PUNT:

1. Punts must be declared by the offense. Only the center and punter may move on the offense to snap and kick the ball. A fumbled exchange between the center and the punter shall be ignored and the punt continued. The receiving team may attempt to catch the ball; however, under no circumstances can the punt be returned. Following a punt, the ball will be spotted at the point where it is caught. If not caught, the ball will be spotted where it comes to rest, whether touched or untouched, at the furthestmost point from the line of scrimmage following the "muff".

#### C. EIGHT-MAN FOOTBALL:

1. Offense:
  - i. The offensive line shall consist of five players; a center, and two linemen on each side of the center.
  - ii. The offensive line shall line up not more than one yard apart (e.g. guards not more than one yard from the center and the tackles not more than one yard from the guards).
  - iii. Only three players are allowed in the backfield (one quarterback and two running backs). The two running backs shall be at least one yard off the line of scrimmage.
  - iv. Eligible players to receive passes and run the ball are the three backs.
  - v. Shifting and/or motion by the offensive players are not allowed.
  - vi. Offensive line may block within its own back field or up to five yards down field from the line of scrimmage. Beyond this area, no contact is allowed and only body screens by any offensive player are allowed. If a block is made out of this zone, it is illegal use of hands and 10 yard penalty.
  - vii. A legal block is executed with the blocker's hands in front, with open palms and within the frame of his body. The arms may be in an extended position so as to impede the progress of his opponent. The block shall be such that the

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contact is with the opponent's chest. The blocker shall not forcefully initiate contact with an opponent at any time. If a player blatantly touches an opponent above the shoulders or below the waist it is a personal foul, 10 yard penalty.

- viii. Offensive ball carriers or receivers cannot hinder the defense from pulling their flag by holding the flags on or pushing the opponent's hand(s) away. The penalty for any foul, including straight arming, by the offensive ball carrier is five yards from the spot of the foul, and the down counts. If a defender's hand gets knocked away by a normal motion of running, this is not a penalty.
- ix. All fumbles are blown dead at the point of fumble and remain in the possession of the offense and the down is lost. On fourth down with no declared punt, a fumble will result in a turnover on downs. A penalty for "stripping the ball" shall be called when the defender attempts to take the ball from the ball carrier. The penalty is 10 yards from the spot of the foul and replay the down.

### 2. Defense:

- i. Four defensive players must be on the line of scrimmage. These linemen must be lined head-up with the offensive linemen. No defensive player will be allowed to line up over the offensive center. The four defensive linemen must engage with the offensive linemen before shooting a gap or the outside of the line.
- ii. The other four defensive players must line up at least one yard behind the other players or two yards off the line of scrimmage, if uncovered. There shall be no blitzing or stunting. Blitzing or stunting is defined as moving towards the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped.
- iii. Defensive pass coverage is similar to tackle. Pass Interference or pulling the flag before the receiver has touched the ball will be a ten yard penalty and an automatic first down.
- iv. Illegal use of hands is when a defensive player holds an offensive player or touches them anywhere other than in the chest area or makes contact using contact other than open hands (no elbows or forearms, etc.). Illegal use of hands is a five yard penalty.
- v. The only player that may be touched below the waist is the ball carrier when the defense is going for the flag. Defensive holding against the ball carrier occurs when a defensive player uses his arms or hands or body to impede the runner. This includes the grasping of clothing without removing the flag. The penalty is five yards from the spot of the foul and the down is replayed.

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- vi. Unintentional tripping or tackling may be defined as impeding the runner, which carries a five yard penalty and the replay of the down. Intentional tripping or tackling is a ten yard penalty and carries an automatic first down.
- vii. An interception by the defense may be advanced.  
Interception is defined as a catch in the air by the defense of a forward pass or lateral by the offense.

### D. GENERAL FLAG RULES:

1. Stance: All players must start from an upright or hand on knees stance. The only exception is the offensive center and quarterback.
2. Centering the ball: Centering the ball shall be done in the conventional manner between the legs. The play starts once the ball leaves the ground. Any movement, by the offense or defense, into the neutral zone prior to the snap of the ball will be called off-sides and a five yard penalty will be assessed.
3. Starting the game - putting the ball in play: The home team starts with the ball on offense. The ball is placed on their 20 yard line and the game starts. The clock starts on the first snap of the ball. This procedure replaces all kickoffs. After a team scores and attempts an extra point, the other team gets the ball and starts from the 20 yard line, first and ten.
4. Flags: Flag sets that have been tied or fastened in any manner other than the manufacturer's intended procedure shall result in an unsportsmanlike penalty (10 yards). If the ball carrier's flag set falls off for any reason, the ball is downed at the point the flags came off the ball carrier. Jerseys shall be tucked in at all times. Flags will be worn on the hips. Apparel worn in any other manner shall constitute a player ineligible to participate.

## **ARTICLE VIII CHEERLEADING**

### SECTION I – OBJECTIVES

- A. The main objectives of the cheerleading program are:
  1. To provide a wholesome, enjoyable experience of cheerleading at Optimist Youth Football games for youths ages 4 years through 12 years old. The basic fundamentals of cheer techniques, teamwork, good sportsmanship, discipline, and response to leadership will be taught.
  2. To encourage the cheerleaders to maintain satisfactory grades in school and to emphasize the importance of keeping a proper relationship and balance between scholastic and cheer endeavors.

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3. To provide a satisfying, rewarding experience for cheer advisors, sponsors, and the OYF teams through their relationships in teaching and working with youth.
  4. To provide a well organized and implemented program that is appreciated and favorably received by the parents and the community.
  5. The program is administered under the Optimist Youth Football committee and is part of the Boise Noon Optimist Club. Cheerleaders are in a position of great influence; therefore high standards of conduct are essential. Positive personal behavior and squad cohesiveness demonstrate these standards. Cheerleaders are expected to be well-mannered, courteous, respectful and considerate at all times.
- B. Location of Cheerleaders:
1. Beginning with the 2008 season, the cheerleaders will be located on the parent's sidelines either from the 10 to 20 yard line, or the 20 to 30 yard line dependent upon the stagger of the fields. The 10 yard cheer box will be 6 feet in depth set back three feet from the sideline.
- C. Purpose of Cheerleading is:
1. Promote and uphold team spirit.
  2. Encourage good sportsmanship among participants and spectators.
  3. Promote unity within the crowd during games.
  4. Strive to build relationships between other cheerleading squads.
  5. Uphold the highest personal and cheerleading standards.
- D. General Cheerleader Guidelines:
1. Attend practices and show cooperation with other cheerleaders and Cheer Coach.
  2. Be on time to all games and practices.
  3. Show respect and be courteous to cheerleaders, administration, Cheer Advisors, officials, players, parents, and visitors.
  4. Attend Cheer Camp.
  5. Learn cheers, chants, and routines for games.
  6. Must adhere to the rules as listed in the Cheerleading Constitution.
  7. Throughout the season cheerleaders will be learning new cheers and should strive to keep a positive attitude about learning new cheers.
  8. Responsible for providing positive leadership both when cheering and when not cheering.
  9. Must abide by all rules and regulations of the Boise Optimist Football Program.
  10. Strive to be modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
  11. Always remember that the primary responsibility is to support the football program.

## Optimist Youth Football and Cheer - Rules & Regulations

### E. When to Cheer:

1. "Hello" to the other team and squad.
2. Whenever play is stopped and nothing else is happening.
3. Before the game, starting line-up, between quarters, time-outs and halftime.
4. Individual players entering/leaving the game, not necessary every time offense/defense switch.
5. Injured player (either team). Wait until the player is helped from the field or indicates he will remain in the game.
6. If your team is winning or losing by a wide margin, general cheers are much more appropriate than "fight" type cheers. A "fight" cheer is one that encourages your team to do better, even if it doesn't have the word "fight" in it. General cheers focus on team pride.

### F. When not to Cheer:

1. While an injured player is lying on the field.
2. While someone else is performing, including other cheerleaders. Try to take turns.
3. If the ball is in play, the crowd will be watching the team, not the cheerleaders.
4. If an announcer or official is speaking.

### G. Cheerleader Conduct and Responsibilities:

1. Cooperate with the Cheer Coach, game officials, and other cheerleaders.
2. Be enthusiastic and prepared.
3. Do not eat, drink, or chew gum while on the field.
4. Do not sit in the stands or on the playing field.
5. Promote good sportsmanship and team spirit. Profanity will not be tolerated, use of which will be cause for immediate removal from the field and possible removal from the cheer program, pending a review by the Cheer Director.

### H. Cheer Coach Responsibilities:

1. Attend and supervise all practices and performances.
2. Cheer coaches will have a background check, paid for by the OYF
3. Develop agendas and run practices.
4. Keep injury records.
5. Have an emergency plan, including names and phone numbers for emergencies
6. Maintain adherence to the Cheerleader Constitution.
7. Work with administration.
8. Communicate with *football coach, team, and parents*, have clear objectives and expectations.
9. Have first aid kit at all practices and games.
10. Attend camp.
11. Provide motivation, consistency, and organization for squad.
12. Handle all items related to your squad.

## Optimist Youth Football and Cheer - Rules & Regulations

### I. Games:

1. Never leave the area without permission/notifying the Cheer Coach. Take a parent with you whenever you must leave the field area (for restroom, etc.).
2. Wear Optimist Cheerleading uniform. Always bring pompoms. If poms are lost/stolen or misplaced it will be the participant's responsibility to pay for replacements. It will be the Head Coach's responsibility to monitor all equipment and return on time with any replacement costs enclosed at the time of return.
3. Listen to the Cheer Advisor for which cheer to perform.
4. Greet the opposing team's cheerleaders. Remember your squad name and that you are an important part of Optimist Youth Football. Please be warm and welcoming.
5. Ask Cheer Coach any questions you may have concerning your cheerleader or the other members of the squad.
6. Help organize a spirit line and motivate the crowd.
7. Follow up after every routine/cheer by rallying.
8. Never talk negatively about anyone. You are one of the most visible representatives for Optimist Youth Football program. There will be differing personalities – just remember this is supposed to be fun!
9. Half-time – Be sure to be back on the field on time. That is at least two minutes before kick-off for the second half.
10. Clean up your trash at all times.

### SECTION 2 – OPTIMIST AUTHORITY

- A. See Article I – Section 2 on page 4.
- B. Incident Response Policy: Contact the League Cheer Director first, then follow the "Chain of Command" as outlined in the Incident Response Policy on page 35.

### SECTION 3 – TEAM COMPOSITION

- A. Squad Membership:
  1. Cheerleaders should cheer at games for the respective teams and at other events, as determined throughout the season.
  2. The sizes of squads and squad placement of individuals shall be determined by the Optimist Cheer Directors and the Coordinators.

### SECTION 4 – EQUIPMENT

- A. Uniforms and Appearance:
  1. Each cheerleader is responsible for care and maintenance of her uniform. Do not alter the uniform. Skirts are the property of the Optimist Football league.
  2. Cheerleaders must wear the sanctioned uniform during games. NO EXCEPTIONS.
  3. NO LOANING OR RENTING UNIFORMS OR EQUIPMENT. Loss is possible, LIABILITY is a big issue. Uniforms may only be worn in

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conjunction with approved Optimist events. Uniforms should be cared for very carefully in the manner specified by the maker. Please read the labels on the shirt, sweatshirt and skirt before washing and/or bleaching. **Uniforms shall be returned at the end of the season.** Shoes should always be clean, ribbons not frayed, etc.

4. Chewing gum and wearing jewelry are prohibited at all practices and games. Earrings need to be removed before practices and games – it is a local, state and national rule for cheerleading.
5. Make-up, if any, should be minimal, subject to the Cheer Coach. We must abide by WIC and NFHSA rules that glitter is NEVER allowed as a cosmetic.
6. Nails should be manicured and kept at a length no longer than tips of fingers (again, a nation-wide safety rule). Nail polish must look natural or be a modest color.

### SECTION 5 – PLAYING FIELD

- A. All Cheerleading activities during OYF games will be conducted in specific, designated areas.
  1. There will be a six-foot set back from the sideline to the spectator area where the cheerleaders will be allowed to perform.
- B. Location of Cheerleaders:
  1. Beginning with the 2008 season, the cheerleaders will be located on the parent's sidelines either from the 10 to 20 yard line, or the 20 to 30 yard line dependent upon the stagger of the fields. The 10 yard cheer box will be 6 feet in depth set back three feet from the sideline.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES AND DISCIPLINE OF ADULT PERSONNEL**

The Optimist Football committee may be called upon from time to time to resolve disputes between member adults as well as provide for enforcement of local and national rules and regulations. The following procedures contain the fundamentals for a fair hearing and are based upon a thorough study of the laws and regulations of voluntary, not-for-profit organizations and generally accepted concepts of due process. Their purpose is to afford justice to individuals and organizations that come into contact with such proceedings and should cover any local disputes. In any program using the name Optimist, which has a constitution and bylaws that are silent on the subject, or has provisions for justice that are not adequate, the provisions of this Appendix will be incorporated into and become a binding part of the constitution and by-laws. The local Commissioner, Executive Director or his designs shall determine the adequacy of local judicial procedures.

- A. **RIGHT TO DISCIPLINE:** It is proper for the Optimists to discipline and expel its own personnel, member associations, team and adults connected therewith (including coaches) as the need may arise. Likewise, an association may discipline its member teams and adult personnel connected therewith (including coaches). The following behavior will be cause for a player to be reviewed by the OYF Executive Committee and possibly expelled from the program:
1. Two ejections from an OYF game in a season.
  2. Multiple violations of the code of conduct or disciplinary issues.
  3. Flagrant acts of violence or threats of personal harm at games or practices.
  4. Criminal activities: The following behavior will be cause for a parent(s) to be reviewed by the OYF Executive Committee and possibly be expelled, along with their child, from the program:
    - i. Repeated violation of Parents Code of Conduct.
    - ii. Flagrant acts of violence or threats against any OYF official, coach, parent, spectator, or any other individual.
    - iii. Criminal activities.
- B. **COMMISSIONER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S POWERS:** The Commissioner, Executive Director, or other authorized association or Optimist official, is empowered to impose any penalty deemed appropriate as provided herein in a private, informal hearing for cause. However, a person or organization thus penalized may demand an open hearing before the appropriate tribunal of the Optimists as set forth below. The decision of the Commissioner, Executive Director, or other authorized official shall stand until action is taken by the highest local authority (see part E below).
- C. **HEARING TRIBUNAL:** The tribunal conducting a hearing shall be selected in accordance with the constitution and by-laws of the organization conducting the hearing. In those cases where such a tribunal is not

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provided, it shall be the full football committee of the organization conducting the hearing.

- D. **EMERGENCY DISCIPLINARY ACTION.** If after appropriate investigation, the Commissioner, Executive Director, or other duly authorized person, determines that rule violations may have been committed which involve serious age or weight infractions or other matters that concern the safety and well being of the program or the players, the Commissioner or Executive Director has the authority to order immediate, temporary suspension of any adults, teams or associations involved (summary discipline). Any temporary suspension shall remain judgment under the provisions of this Appendix and the duly adopted rules and regulations of the highest local authority. In all cases, the Commissioner or Executive Director's final decision shall be made within a reasonable period of time after investigation.
- E. **RIGHT TO APPEAL:** Every adult participant who feels aggrieved by a local decision is entitled to appeal to the Board of Directors of the Boise Noon Optimist Club. Any appeal beyond the Board of Directors must be through the courts.

### **COACHES CONDUCT CODE**

#### **FOREWARD**

Since the inception of the Optimist Youth Football Program in 1949, it has steadily grown to become an enormous activity for boys and girls. With rapid expansion of more leagues and teams, approximately two hundred fifty coaches are involved in the program. Obviously with this many coaches, it is virtually impossible to gather them together at one time to review and discuss:

- The **DESIGN** of the program
- The **OBJECTIVES** of the program
- The **DUTIES** and **CONDUCT** required of the coaches.

Therefore, it is with this in mind that this guide is issued so that our common objectives can be achieved by all. This guide is required reading for all coaches in the program. Failure to abide by any of these policies could result in dismissal from the program.

- A. **DESIGN:** The Optimist Youth Football Program is designed to be an activity for grade school boys & girls. The program has expanded from an initial four teams to 152. This program is the largest one of its kind in the state, currently reaching nearly 3,500 boys and girls. This project, because of its size, requires good management, solid support, and complete cooperation of all who participate. The teams are composed of the following:
1. **Players:** Each team has between 22 and 25 players insofar as practical.
  2. **Coaches:** Each team must have one head coach, and should have at least two assistants.

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3. Sponsors: Each team must have a sponsor, which may be a business or a group of very interested individuals. The sponsors furnish the helmets, game jerseys, the game socks, and the other numerous items used in football. Good sponsors are the very backbone of the program.
- B. OBJECTIVES: The primary goal of the Optimist Youth Football Program is "development of boys & girls to be better citizens." This is primarily accomplished by the coaches as they work with the boys & girls. The players must be taught sportsmanship and fair play, and these teachings should always govern their behavior while at practice and at games. Most boys & girls desire to be fair and just in their actions, but it is up to the coaches to make the word "SPORTSMANSHIP" have a very clear meaning. Unsportsmanlike conduct of any nature has a tendency to reflect adversely upon the coaching staff. Teaching the proper fundamentals of the game is also very important, as improper playing can result in:
1. Injuries to the player.
  2. Lack of interest in the game. This does not mean that the coaches must know all the plays, positions and how to play them. They do however; owe it to the players to have a staff that can give them the guidance and instruction needed to play the game properly. Most boys & girls want to learn to play the game by the rules. The **correct way is the only way** they should be taught. Remember, always, that this program is for the boys & girls their safety and welfare must always be paramount with this objective in mind.
- C. DUTIES AND CONDUCT: The Optimist Youth Football Program is an excellent indoctrination program into football. To set a fine example, all coaches and staff members MUST conduct themselves in a SPORTSMANLIKE manner at all times when they are in the presence of the boys & girls in the program. To insure the success of the program, guidelines have been adopted concerning the behavior of coaches and their staffs. The following are grounds for immediate dismissal from the program:
1. Swearing or using abusive language in the presence of the players either at the practices or in the games.
  2. Unsportsmanlike conduct.
  3. Deliberate violation of any of the rules prescribed by the Optimist Youth Football Committee.
  4. Conviction of any crime involving drugs, domestic violence, violence or injury to a child.

### DUTIES TO REMEMBER

1. Know the rules that apply to the game. (High school rules apply, except for a few exceptions.)
2. Have your team ready to play on time at the designated field.

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3. At the end of each game, fill in and sign the voucher that indicates all boys & girls have played and turn it in to your League Director. **THIS IS A MUST.**
4. If you wish to register a complaint, submit it in writing to the League Director in charge. (No complaints will be considered concerning officiating).
5. Try to provide at least one man, other than a player, to help with the chain or down marker crew.
6. Help the Optimist Club keep spectators away from the player's side of the field.
7. Maintain the sponsor's equipment in good repair and condition.
8. Refrain from using tobacco at practices and at games.
9. Follow the advice of your League Director.
10. Any Optimist Club member with proper identification has the authority to enforce any of the rules prescribed by the Optimist Football Committee.
11. Share your sportsmanship with others, it is contagious.  
**REMEMBER...A SPORTSMAN IS A GENTLEMAN.**

### **PARENTS CODE OF CONDUCT**

#### BACKGROUND

The Boise Noon Optimist Club established the Optimist Youth Football Program in 1949. The primary goal of the OYF Program is the "development of boys and girls to be better citizens". That continues to be one of the primary goals of the program today. Coaches, referees, and parents form a trio of role models from which these young boys and girls learn behaviors that they will carry into adulthood. The OYF Program, in association with the District Three Referees Association, has a Code of Conduct for both the coaches and referees, and we feel it is equally important that the parents also have a Code of Conduct. Cooperation, respect, and maturity among all the adults in the OYF Program will encourage those qualities in the players themselves.

#### A. PARENTS CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Children play OYF Football and Cheer for their own fun! They are not here to entertain you; they are not miniature professional athletes, and this is not a "farm club" for an athletic career.
2. Encourage fair play. Always play by the rules.
3. Be supportive, i.e. be sure the player attends practices; is picked up on time; and attends games.
4. Show respect for everyone involved in the program, especially the referees and the opposing team. Wait until after the game before approaching the coach with questions or concerns.
5. Recognize the value and importance of your child's coach or coaches. They are volunteers who donated a tremendous amount of time and effort to make this a positive experience for your child and you. Please maintain respect for these volunteers at all times.

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6. At games, make sure your comments are positive, or make no comment at all. Parents and spectators are required to be on the opposite side of the field from the teams at all times during games. Applaud good plays and efforts by the opposing team, as well as your own team. NEVER ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during a game.
7. Condemn unsportsmanlike conduct in any way, shape or form.
8. Respect the decisions of the referees - even if you do not agree with them. We do promote a Jr. Referee program, please respect these volunteers - this is their training ground as well.
9. Please remember, as a parent, you are a role model. Do not use profane language or harass the players or referees.
10. Any parents or spectators who do not abide by this Code of Conduct will be asked to leave the fields.