

SPAR FOOTBALL RULES

SECTION I ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

ENTRY INFORMATION:

1. Entry fee: **\$10.00** per child.
2. Upon verification of birth date, an ID card must be obtained from the SPAR Athletics Department. It is **MANDATORY** that each child show his ID card to a SPAR staff member or field official before participating in each and every game.
Note: There is a \$5.00 replacement charge for a player ID that has been lost prior to its expiration date, or any coach ID that needs to be replaced (except when additional sports have been added).
3. A parental permission slip, birth certificate (if not on file at the SPAR Athletics Office) and entry fee for each child must accompany the team's roster. The roster will not be certified and the child will not be allowed to participate until these requirements are met. The coach must have player ID cards and his SPAR (NYSCA) ID card available at all games.
NOTE: If a child's age is questioned, his parent(s) / guardian(s) must provide either a second form of proof of birth (e. g., school locator card) or a certified original copy of the child's birth certificate before the child will be allowed to participate. If a child's birth certificate on file with the SPAR Athletics Office appears to have been altered, a certified original copy of the child's birth certificate must be submitted before the child will be allowed to participate.
4. Rosters, permission slips, team entry form, entry fees and birth certificates (if not already on file) must be turned into the SPAR Athletics Office no later than 4:30 p.m. on the denoted registration deadline. *Player ID cards must be also brought in for verification prior to the team's first scheduled game.*
NOTE: Any player who has not submitted a permission slip and birth certificate will have his name removed from the roster and will not be allowed to play until such time as this information is provided. This individual will be considered an illegal player in accordance with the rules stated, below.
5. Please print or type rosters and put names in alphabetical order. **Maximum roster is 25 players.**
6. Play will begin the second Saturday in September (unless changed by the Athletic Office).
7. Players cannot be added to the roster after designated deadline. Rosters will be frozen at this time. Organizations that pay for all of their players with one check will be charged for all players whose names appears on the roster following the roster freeze date.
8. The head coach or team representative will be required to list (on the Team Entry Form) any date that their team will not be able to play. After the schedules have been made, no game(s) will be rescheduled, except for extreme weather conditions or emergencies.
9. SPAR staff will entertain comments and complaints from head coaches by appointments only. You must call to make a 15 minute appointment.

AGE REQUIREMENTS:

Must be 5 by August 31, Current Year

- 5/6yr. Old anytime this year/cannot be 7 before August 31, Current Year
- 7yr. Old anytime this year/cannot be 8 before August 31, Current Year
- 8yr. Old anytime this year/cannot be 9 before August 31, Current Year
- 9yr. Old anytime this year/cannot be 10 before August 31, Current Year
- 10yr. Old anytime this year/cannot be 11 before August 31, Current Year
- 11yr. Old anytime this year/cannot be 12 before August 31, Current Year
- 12yr. Old anytime this year/cannot be 13 before August 31, Current Year

10. It is the coach's responsibility not to put players on the roster who are not of proper age.
11. Leagues will be formed in the following age divisions (given a sufficient number of teams).
 - a. 5-6 Flag
 - b. 7 Flag
 - c. 8 Tackle
 - d. 9 Tackle
 - e. 10 Tackle
 - f. 11 Tackle
 - g. 12 Tackle
12. Players may play up one (1) year, but cannot participate in a lower age division or on more than one team.
NOTE: Weight is unlimited in all age groups.

DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS:

1. There are no district lines. Players are not required to play within the district in which they live or attend school.
2. A player can be on only one SPAR roster and cannot be on a varsity, JV or Middle School roster during the current school year.

ROSTER INFORMATION:

1. A player cannot be added to a roster at game time. Additions must be written and made at the SPAR Athletics Office by 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday. **NO ADDITIONS WILL BE TAKEN BY TELEPHONE.** Only the coach may add a player. Deletions must also be made at the SPAR Athletics Office.
2. A request for change may be **made by the player's parent(s) / guardian(s)**. The player, his parent(s)/guardian(s) and the new coach must come to the SPAR Athletics Office to make the change. **Once the change is made, the player will remain on the new team's roster for the remainder of the season.** If a player is dismissed by a coach, the coach must sign a release form. This form will be attached to the appropriate roster. Players **may not change teams after roster deadline.**
3. If a player is guilty of playing for another SPAR team other than the team he is registered with or on a school team, the player will be suspended from league play for the remainder of the season. A team guilty of playing a non-roster player will have every game that he illegally participated in forfeited (see Illegal Player section, below for additional information).

COACHES' RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. **The head coach or team representative must have a SPAR certified roster and player ID's in his possession prior to the start of all games.** If the coach or team representative can not provide players ID's prior to the start of the game, the game will be forfeited. **A player without an ID at the game will not be allowed to participate.**
2. ***All coaches on the sideline (in the designated team area) or on the field (where allowed) are REQUIRED to wear and have visible, their SPAR ID badge at all times during the game. Failure to do so may result in the coach being sent to the bleachers / spectator area.***
3. The home team will provide two (2) and visitor team (1) volunteers to handle the chains. These individuals will follow directions given by the referee or his/her designated representative. If their actions or behavior become detrimental to the game, the coach will be asked to provide another volunteer. If the home team cannot provide the required number of individuals, the responsibility will be given to the visiting team.

4. It will be the responsibility of the field supervisor, security and head coach to assist in keeping all parents and spectators in their proper place in the bleachers and behind the fence (if installed). They will **NOT** be allowed to walk up and down the sidelines. Spectators who wish to sit in chairs may not place them closer to the field than the bleacher / fence line. Managers, ball boys, water boys, etc., will not be permitted in uniform.
5. If a coaching change is made during the season, the SPAR Athletics Office must be notified as soon as possible.
6. Coaches will be required to sign the Referee Game Report prior to the start of each game certifying that their players *are on the roster, the correct age* and properly equipped.
7. The HEAD COACH is responsible to ensure that only NYSCA/ASEP certified coaches who are wearing their SPAR Coaches' ID Badge are allowed on the field or in the designated coach's area (25 yd. line to 25 yd. line).

COACH/PLAYER/SPECTATOR BEHAVIOR:

1. Any coach, player or spectator who is reported by a game official, security personnel or SPAR Staff member as a constant source of unsportsmanlike conduct will not be allowed to participate nor attend the team's next game until he/she meets with the SPAR Discipline Committee. This committee will review the facts as presented and recommend the punishment to be rendered.
2. Any coach or player ejected from a game will be immediately placed on probation. He will not be allowed to participate in any additional games until after he has met with the SPAR Youth Sports Administrator. A decision regarding disciplinary action will be made following this hearing. If he is ejected a second time, he will be automatically suspended for the remainder of the season.
3. Any coach, player or spectator who curses, pushes, hits, spits on, **uses profane language toward** or otherwise abuses **ANY SPAR OFFICIAL** (including game officials), other coach or player or another spectator will be suspended indefinitely from coaching / playing in any SPAR Athletics program or attending SPAR Athletics events pending a hearing before the Discipline Committee.
4. If suspended, the player, coach or spectator has the right to appeal the decision to the Appeals Committee.

ILLEGAL PLAYERS:

1. Any coach guilty of playing an illegal player (over age, not on roster, etc.) will be required to meet with a Discipline Committee comprised of his/her peers that will review the facts as presented and recommend his status as a coach in the SPAR program. He will be placed on immediate probation and banned from further coaching, pending the outcome of the findings and recommendation of the committee. Notice will be provided verbally and in writing to the last known address.
2. If found guilty on the first offense, the coach may be suspended from coaching in ANY SPAR program for a period of up to twelve (12) months from the date of the decision.
3. If found guilty on a subsequent offense, the coach could be suspended for life from coaching in ANY SPAR program.
4. If suspended, the coach has the right to appeal the decision to the Appeals Committee.

APPEAL PROCEDURES:

1. Players, coaches and spectators may appeal any suspension or disciplinary action taken as a result of improper behavior. Additionally, head coaches may appeal any decision based on an authorized protest.

2. There are four levels in the appeal process which must be followed in sequence:
 - a. First Level: Meet with SPAR Athletics Division Manager, Superintendent of Athletics and Youth Sports Administrator.
 - b. Second Level: Meet with SPAR Assistant Director.
 - c. Third Level: Meet with SPAR Director.
 - d. Final Appeal: Meet with SPAR Council.

GAME SCHEDULES:

1. Each team will be scheduled to play eight (6-8) games, if possible. The top eight (8) teams by record will play in a playoff bracket to reach the Junior Independence Bowl.
2. Teams that refuse to play a game where the result could affect playoff and subsequent Junior Independence Bowl participation will be dropped from the playoffs and replaced with the next higher seeded team.

FORFEITURES:

1. If a team does not show up at scheduled game time, the game will be forfeited. There is a 10 minute grace period in the SPAR program for the first game of the day/evening.

PROTEST PROCEDURES:

1. If a game is being protested, the coach must notify the referee and submit the protest *in writing* to the SPAR Athletics Office within 24 hours after the game has been played (not later than Monday at 5:00 p.m. for games played on weekends). ***The written protest must contain all pertinent facts.*** A **\$25.00** fee (preferably in the form of a check payable to “City of Shreveport”) must accompany the protest. If the protest is upheld, the \$25.00 will be refunded.
2. The only grounds for lodging a protest are player eligibility and violation of a SPAR rule. Protests involving an official’s judgment will not be entertained. The protest should be lodged with the referee **prior to** the end of the game. The head referee/supervisor will notify the SPAR Youth Sports Administrator of any problems or pending protests when submitting the game scores. Protests involving player eligibility after completion of the game are permissible but must be filed within the time constraints listed above.

Note: Coaches must have their players ID’s available prior to the start of all games.

LEAGUE STANDINGS:

1. Standings for 7 Flag and above age divisions will be posted weekly in the SPAR Athletics Office and on our web page (**www.myspar.org**). Tie games will count as 1/2 game won and 1/2 game lost.
2. Seeding will be determined by the following methods:
 - a. Best Record (wins, loses, ties)
 - b. Head to Head Match-Up
 - c. Points Allowed
 - d. Coin Toss

NOTE: Coin Toss Procedures will be determined by the number of teams tied. Head to Head will not be considered when more than two (2) teams have the same record.

3. Certificates will be presented to each participant at the end of regular season play. Junior Independence Bowl team trophies will be awarded to the champions and runner-up.
4. If a team forfeits two (2) games, it could result in being dropped from the schedule. Results from all games played against this team as well as those remaining will not count in the final standings.

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GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. Teams will not be allowed to scrimmage against team's more than one age level above or below their age division. **Example:** A 9 year old tackle team may only scrimmage against an 8, 9 or 10 year old tackle team.
2. Make an attempt to keep your team practices to two (2) hours maximum.
3. **Pre-Season Practice:** In accordance with the LHSAA Handbook, the first official day of football practice is **August 5**. During this time, helmets & shoulder pads may be worn but contact is not authorized. Emphasis should be placed on heat acclimation with frequent water breaks. Practice in full gear and player contact may begin on **August 8**.

Heat Timeout as of August 2012

Effective Immediately-During the months of August and September, there shall be a one (1) minute **MANDATORY** heat time-out at or near the six (6) and twelve (12) minute mark every half for 5/6yr.-7yr. Flag and five (5) minute mark every quarter for 8yr.-12yr. Tackle. These time-outs will not oversee any drives and shall be official time-outs to allow players to rest briefly and hydrate their bodies.

HIV/Hepatitis B - Bleeding Player

Any player who is bleeding from the nose, mouth, or open wound will be governed by the injured player rule.

Any player with an excessive amount of blood on his/her uniform will be removed from the game until the uniform has been changed. The player cannot re-enter the game until permission is granted by the referee.

NOTE: SPAR requires all coaches to be National Youth Sports Coaches Association (N.Y.S.C.A.) or American Sport Education Program (ASEP) certified before they are allowed to coach in the SPAR program. Please contact the SPAR Athletics Office for a schedule of class dates.

VOLUNTEER COACHES AND TEAM PARENTS **MUST WEAR THEIR SPAR I.D. BADGES AT ALL GAMES OR THEY WILL NOT BE ALLOWED ON THE SIDELINE / FIELD.**

**SECTION II
PLAYING RULES
(5-6, 7 YEAR OLD FLAG FOOTBALL)**

PLAYER EQUIPMENT:

1. It is **MANDATORY** that each player wears the following equipment:
 - a. A regulation football helmet secured by a properly fastened *four-strap* chin strap.
 - b. A face protector- multiple T-Bar type is best.

NOTE: If an eye shield is worn, it must be clear, molded and rigid, and attached firmly to the helmet.

 - c. A regulation mouthpiece (*any color except completely white or completely clear*).
 - d. Same colored jersey as teammates with Arabic numbers 1-99 on the front and back of the jersey. The body of the number shall be either a single solid color contrasting with the jersey color or the same single solid color as the jersey with a minimum 1/4-inch wide border of a single contrasting color. Players on the same team shall not wear identical numbers.
 - e. It is optional that each player wear regulation football pants and pads. The injury shoulder pad may also be worn to further protect the participant.

NOTE 1: a, b, and c are not required for the 5-6 year old flag division however a mouthpiece is recommended.

NOTE 2: For 7-year-old equipment flag, "soft" injury shoulder pads are the only authorized type that may be worn.

2. Players may wear either a football shoe or soccer shoe with molded sole cleats. Canvas or soft leather type basketball shoes are also allowed.
3. The triple threat one-piece flag belt will be worn and furnished by each team and is required to be worn by all players except interior linemen on offense. These flags **CANNOT** be altered in any way (for example, cut) nor covered by the uniform shirt. Flags must be a different, **contrasting** color from the uniform pants or stripe **with one positioned on each side (hip) and one on the back of the belt**.

Note 1: Site Supervisors/Officials will check for these requirements prior to the start of each game. Players whose uniforms do not meet these requirements will not be allowed to play in that game.

Note 2: If an official determines that a flag has been "repositioned" to gain an advantage for the runner, the play is dead as soon as the ball carrier is touched.
4. Coaches will be required to sign the Referee Game Report prior to the start of each game certifying that their players are on the official team roster, are the correct age and are properly equipped. **In addition Coaches will be responsible for initialing beside their final score at the end of each game.**

GAME REGULATIONS:

1. National Federation rules will govern play, including penalty yardage. On fields of less than regulation size, penalties will be 5 or 10 yards with the addition of a fifteen (15) yard penalty and ejection for anyone who pushes, hits, spits on, **uses profane language toward** or otherwise abuses **ANY SPAR OFFICIAL** (including game officials), or other coach or player.
2. Fields will be 40 yards wide and 80 yards long. Non-regulation size football fields will be a minimum of 40 yards wide and 70 yards long.
3. The official game ball for the flag leagues will be the **Pee-Wee** size football. **Teams will use their own game ball when on offense.**

4. No game will be played or continued under weather or playing conditions that would create a safety hazard to the participants. SPAR staff or game officials in conjunction with team head coach may shorten periods or, in severe cases, call the game. If a game is called, play will resume at a later date from that point of suspension, if feasible.
5. Under normal playing conditions, officials may not shorten a game unless agreed upon by both head coaches.
6. It is **MANDATORY** that each child participates in a game. Failure to comply may result in the game being forfeited. If a child is being disciplined and on the sidelines, the supervisor, head official and opposing coach must be informed before the game starts.
7. NYSCA/ASEP certified coaches will be allowed in the coaches' box (**25 yd. line to 25 yd. line**) unless their actions become detrimental to the game. **NO SMOKING WHILE ON THE FIELD. THIS INCLUDES THE USE OF SMOKELESS TOBACCO PRODUCTS.**
NOTE: Each team will be allowed two (2) team parents with SPAR ID Badges on the sideline and two (2) coaches with SPAR ID Badges on the field during play.
8. Flag games will be played in 16 minute half's using a running clock that will stop at the following times:
 1. Change of possession.
 2. Touchdowns.
 3. Time Outs.

Note: The 45 second ready to play clock will be used this year. Each team will be allowed **2 time outs per half** to be called by the **HEAD COACH/Designee** or a field player
Once a team obtains 21 point lead on their opponent in the second half, the Referee will inform both coaches that we are now using a running clock for the duration of the game.
9. Teams will change direction at the end of the half.
10. Eleven (11) players shall constitute a team. A minimum of nine (9) players is needed to start and finish a game.
11. After the referee spots the ball, the team will have 45 seconds to run an offensive play.
 - a. The offensive coach will receive a warning the first time the team exceeds the allocated time in the huddle.
 - b. The second and subsequent violations will result in loss of down.
12. On offense, there must be at least seven (7) players on the line of scrimmage.
13. **SAFETY FEATURE: 5 & 6 year old** offense players on the line of scrimmage must start with hands or elbows on their knees until the ball is snapped. **For 5-6 year old flag, offensive linemen ARE NOT allowed to line up in a three point stance.**
14. The quarterback may take the snap directly from the center.
15. Only ends and backs (based on position, not uniform number) are eligible to touch or catch a forward pass. Therefore, they are the only offensive players required to wear the flag belt, recommend all defensive players wear a flag belt.
16. Shirt tails must be tucked in whenever possible, with the FLAG BELT worn on the outside.
17. All fumbled balls are dead. The down will count.
18. If, in the opinion of the officials a defensive player has the flag in his grasp and the belt does not fall off the ball carrier the play is dead.
19. If, in the opinion of the officials a player is in the open with no opportunity to be caught and the flag belt falls off without being pulled by a defensive player, the play **WILL NOT** be declared dead.

20. There will be no kick-offs or punting.
- Following a touchdown, the ball will be placed on the offensive team's 20 yard line.
 - Following a safety, the ball will be placed at midfield.
 - When a team declares a punt, the ball will be moved 15 yards down field.
EXCEPTION: A punt declared from inside the defensive team's 20 yard line will be moved half the distance toward the goal line.
21. No stiff arming or guarding flags with the hand is allowed.
22. No player shall deliberately drive or run into a defensive player. The ball carrier must avoid the defensive player, not lowering his head/shoulder and running into the defensive player to avoid having his flag pulled. The intent of this rule is to make the ball carrier avoid the defensive player. (See paragraph 24 regarding the penalty for violating this rule).
23. Defensive players must attempt to pull the flag, not tackle the ball carrier. (See paragraph 24 regarding the penalty for violating this rule).
24. If, in the opinion of the officials, an offensive player deliberately drives or runs into a defensive player OR a defender deliberately tackles the ball carrier the following actions will be taken.
- On the 1st infraction, the coach and player will be warned and a five (5) yard penalty will be assessed from the spot of the foul.
 - On the 2nd infraction, the coach and player will receive a 2nd warning and a fifteen (15) yard penalty will be assessed from the spot of the foul.
 - On the 3rd infraction, the player and head coach will be removed from the game, a fifteen (15) yard penalty will be assessed from the spot of the foul and an automatic first down awarded.
 - The 4th infraction will cause the violating team to forfeit the game and the coach to be suspended pending a hearing in the presence of the Discipline Committee.
25. A five (5) foot "safety zone" (2 1/2 feet either side of the center of the field) will be designated by lines painted from goal line to goal line. All plays will begin with the ball placed in the center of the "safety zone". **NOTE: Ball carrier may not run the ball through the safety zone until past the line of scrimmage.**
26. Players are allowed to "straight up" block. No blocking below the waist and no leaving your feet to make a block.
NOTE: 5-6 year old flag, offensive linemen ARE NOT allowed to line up in a three point stance.
- 5-6 flag players must block with their hands in contact with the jersey or clasped.
 - 7 year old flag players may employ standard blocking procedures (hands open, contact inside the shoulders). Closed hands or contact outside the shoulders are illegal.
27. **Defenders who line up within the "safety zone" must be at least three (3) yards from the line of scrimmage.** As a result, there shall be no scrimmage play designed to run inside the "safety zone". After the ball carrier passes outside the "safety zone" with BOTH FEET, he may NOT reenter the "safety zone" until he passes beyond the line of scrimmage. The defense will not be allowed to penetrate the line of scrimmage inside the "safety zone". On the first violation the coach will receive a warning. All subsequent violations on the offense will result in a five (5) yard penalty and loss of down. The defense will be penalized (5) yards. **The offensive team has the option to accept the penalty or take the result of the play.**
28. **First downs will be played by lines, and there will be approximately 20 yards between each line.**
29. Only one (1) point can be scored on an extra point attempt.
30. **SPAR reserves the right to make any changes for the betterment of the league or for the protection of the players. Changes will be made as an addendum to these rules.**

**SECTION III
PLAYING RULES
TACKLE FOOTBALL
(8 YEARS OLD & ABOVE)**

PLAYER EQUIPMENT:

1. A player will be required to have a full uniform to play-It is **MANDATORY** that he wears the following equipment:
 - a. A regulation football helmet secured by a properly fastened *four-strap* chin strap.
 - b. A face protector--a multiple T-Bar type is best.

NOTE: If an eye shield is worn, it must be clear, molded and rigid, and attached firmly to the helmet.

 - c. Shoulder pads, hip pads with tailbone protector, thigh guards, regulation mouthpiece (*any color except completely white or completely clear*) and knee pads.
 - d. Same colored jersey as teammates with Arabic numbers 1-99 on the front and back of the jersey. The body of the number shall be either a single solid color contrasting with the jersey color or the same single solid color as the jersey with a minimum 1/4-inch wide border of a single contrasting color. Players on the same team shall not wear identical numbers.
2. Players may wear either a football shoe or soccer shoe with molded sole cleats. Canvas or soft leather type basketball shoes are also allowed.

GAME REGULATIONS:

1. National Federation rules will govern play, including penalty yardage. On fields of less than regulation size, penalties will be 5 or 10 yards with the addition of a fifteen (15) yard penalty and ejection for anyone who pushes, hits, spits on, **uses profane language toward** or otherwise abuses **ANY SPAR OFFICIAL** (including game officials), or other coach or player.
2. Non-regulation size football fields will be a minimum of 70 yards in length and 40 yards in width.
3. Official game ball (**Teams will use their own game ball when on offense**):
 - a. Eight (8) year old tackle: **Pee-Wee** size.
 - b. Nine (9) and 10 (ten) year old tackle: **Intermediate** size.
 - c. Eleven (11) twelve (12) and thirteen/fourteen (13-14) year old tackle: **Youth** size.
4. No game will be played or **continued under weather** or playing conditions that would create a safety hazard to the participants. SPAR or game officials in conjunction with teams head coaches may shorten periods or, in severe cases, call the game. If a game is called, play will resume at a later date from that point, if feasible.
5. **Under normal playing conditions, officials may not shorten a game unless agreed upon by both head coaches.**
6. It is **MANDATORY** that each child participates in a game. **Failure to comply may result in the game being forfeited.** If a child is being disciplined and on the sidelines, the head official and opposing coach must be informed before the game starts.
7. NYSCA/ASEP **certified** coaches will be allowed in the coaches box (**25 yd. line to 25 yd. line**) until their actions become detrimental to the game. **NO SMOKING WHILE ON THE FIELD. THIS INCLUDES THE USE OF SMOKELESS TOBACCO PRODUCTS.**

NOTE: For 8 year old teams, two (2) NYSCA/ASEP **certified** coaches with SPAR ID Badges will be allowed on the field of play. For 9 year old teams, one (1) NYSCA/ASEP **certified** coach with a

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SPAR ID Badge will be allowed on the field of play.

8. **Games will be played in four (4) ten (10) minute quarters with the clock continually running except timeouts, injuries, and the last two (2) minutes of the fourth quarter then it will be run according to National Federation rules.**

Note: The 35 second ready to play clock will be used this year. Each team will be allowed **2 time outs per half** to be called by the **HEAD COACH/Designee** or a field player. **Once a team obtains 21 point lead on their opponent in the second half, the Referee will inform both coaches in the second half of the game that we are now using a running clock for the duration of the game.**

9. Eleven (11) players shall constitute a team. A minimum of 11 players is needed to start and finish a game.
10. On offense, there must be at least seven (7) players on the line of scrimmage.
11. Only ends and backs (based on position, not uniform number) are eligible to touch or catch a forward pass.
12. Kick-offs will be taken from the 40-yard line following a touchdown (25-yard line on non-regulation size field) and the 20-yard line following a safety.
13. There will be no rushing the punter in 8, 9 and 10 year old leagues. Neither team may break the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked. The offensive team must notify the referee that they are going to punt before this rule goes into effect.
14. **NOTE: Blocking below the waist on the line of scrimmage is not allowed and nose guard will not be allowed to line up over the center and must allow the center to come up before there is any contact with the center in the SPAR Recreational League.**
15. Only one (1) point can be scored on an extra point if run in; 2 points if passed and caught in the end zone.
16. **SPAR reserves the right to make any changes for the betterment of the league or for the protection of the players. Changes will be made as an addendum to these rules.**