

High School Athletics

Safety Guidelines and Agreement to Participate in Football for Valley Christian

Valley Christian strives to protect each student from possible injury while engaging in school activities. The guidelines and/or practices identified below have been established for this activity in order to protect the student and others from injury and/or illness. Participants and their parents should recognize that conditioning, nutrition, proper techniques, safety procedures, and well-fitting equipment are important aspects of this training program. Each participant is expected to follow the directions/standards of the coach. Every sport has certain inherent risks, and regardless of the precautions taken, it is impossible to guarantee the safety of the participant. Football requires a high level of fitness and stamina. It involves quick bursts of speed and physical contact with other participants. It is a reasonably safe sport as long as certain guidelines are followed.

To help reduce the chance of injury to yourself and other participants, the following safety rules need to be followed during practice and games.

Guidelines are as follows:

1. Obey the rules of the sport.
2. Make certain that you wear all equipment that is issued by the coach.
3. Advise the coach of any poorly-fitted or defective equipment.
4. Advise the coach if you are ill or have any prolonged symptoms of illness.
5. Advise the coach if you have been injured.
6. Engage in warm-up activities prior to strenuous participation.
7. Be alert for any physical hazards in the locker room or in and around the participation area. Advise coach of any hazards.

I certify that (1) I am physically fit to participate in football, (2) I understand that I am free to discontinue activity at any time I feel undue discomfort or stress, and (3) on the following lines is a complete list of any health-related conditions that might affect my ability to participate in football.

TACKLING, BLOCKING, AND RUNNING THE BALL

Tackling and blocking techniques are basically the same. Contact is to be made above the belt, **but not initially with the helmet**. The player should always be in a position of balance, knees bent, back straight, body **slightly** bent forward, head up and the target area as near to the body as possible with the main contact being made with the shoulder. When properly blocking or tackling an opponent, contact with your helmet will naturally result. Therefore, technique is most important in order to prevent or reduce the likelihood of injury. Blocking and tackling by not keeping the helmet as close to the body as possible may result in a shoulder injury and a separation or a pinched nerve in the neck area. Injuries as a result of improper techniques can range from minor to disabling or even death. Improper body alignment can put the spinal column in a vulnerable position for injury. The development of strength in the neck muscles through isometric-type exercises will enable the participant to hold his/her head up even after getting tired during a workout or contest.

BASIC HITTING (CONTACT) POSITION AND FUNDAMENTAL TECHNIQUE

Strained muscle injuries can range from ankle injuries to serious knee injuries requiring surgery. The rules have made blocking below the waist (outside a two-yard by four-yard area next to the football) illegal. Cleats are restricted to no more than one-half inch to further help prevent knee injuries. A runner with the ball, however, may be tackled around the legs.

In tackling, the rules prohibit initial contact with the helmet or grabbing the face mask on the edge of the helmet. Initial helmet contact may result in a bruise; dislocation; broken bone; head injury; or internal injury such as kidneys, spleen, bladder, etc. Grabbing the face mask or helmet edge may result in a neck injury which could result in injuries ranging from muscle strain to a dislocation, nerve injury, or spinal column damage which could cause paralysis or death.

EQUIPMENT

An athlete is required to wear all issued equipment. If equipment is damaged or does not fit correctly, the athlete must inform his coach immediately before use. Shoulder pads, helmets, hip pads, and pants (including thigh pads and knee pads) must have proper fitting and use.

A shoulder pad which is too small will leave the shoulder point vulnerable to bruises or separations. A shoulder pad that is too tight in the neck area may result in a possible pinched nerve. A shoulder pad which is too large will leave the neck area poorly protected and will slide on the shoulders making them vulnerable to bruises or separations. Helmets must fit snugly at the contact points: front, back, and top of head. The helmet must be safety branded, the chin straps must be fastened, and the cheek pads must be of the proper thickness. A fit which is too loose could result in headaches, a concussion, a face injury such as a broken nose or cheekbone, or a neck injury that is possibly quite serious such as paralysis or even death.

I am aware that tackle football is a high-risk sport and that practicing or competing in tackle football will be a dangerous activity involving **MANY RISKS OF INJURY**. I understand that the dangers and risks of practicing and competing in tackle football include, but are not limited to, death, serious neck and spinal injuries which may result in complete or partial paralysis, brain damage, serious injury to virtually all internal organs, serious injury to my body, general health and well being. I understand that the dangers and risks of practicing or competing in tackle football may result not only in serious injury, but in a serious impairment of my future abilities to earn a living, to engage in other business, social and recreational activities and generally to enjoy life.

I, _____, am the parent/legal guardian of _____ (student). I have read the above warning and release and understand its terms. I understand that tackle football is a **HIGH-RISK SPORT** involving many **RISKS OF INJURY**, including but not limited to those risks outlined above.

In permitting my child/ward to try out for the Valley Christian tackle football team and to engage in all activities related to the team, including, but limited to, trying out, practicing, or competing in tackle football, I hereby assume all the risks normally associated with tackle football and agree to hold Valley Christian Schools, its employees, agents, representatives, coaches, and volunteers harmless from any and all liability, actions, causes of action, debts, claims or demands of every kind and nature whatsoever which may arise from such risks. The terms hereof shall serve as a release for my heirs, estate, executor, administrator, assignees, and for all members of my family.

I have read the preceding warning of risks, my coach has explained the hazards to me, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions concerning the safety risks involved in football. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my complete satisfaction. I fully know, understand, and appreciate the risks inherent in football, and I am voluntarily participating in this activity.

Participant Signature

Participant Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

