

Junior Development Football

Coaches Handbook



2020 Season

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INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook is designed to provide JDL coaches with the knowledge and information they need to deliver a positive experience for all JDL participants. It explains how JDL works and the coaches' role in executing the program. This handbook covers many of the questions coaches have and addresses most situations that occur during a JDL season. Please read it and use it to help yourself and your players.

JDL Football Overview

Junior Development League Football is part of the Ponte Vedra Palm Valley Athletic Association.

The PVAA is a multi-sport (football, baseball, lacrosse, soccer and softball) recreational league for children in Northeast St. Johns County that is run by a Board of Directors. The directors consist of key representatives from each sport along with other administrators.

Please visit www.pvaa.org for more details on PVAA.

JDL Football in Ponte Vedra is run under JDL Inc. a not for profit organization. You can learn about JDL Football Inc. at www.jdlfootball.com.

Please visit www.pvaafootball.com for more details on the Ponte Vedra JDL organization. Select JDL Football from the left hand menu.

JDL Philosophy

Junior Development League Football is a youth football program created to introduce and promote the game of tackle football to young players of various age, weight and ability levels in a manner that assures a safe and enjoyable experience for each participant. All players enjoy abundant and meaningful playing time while learning to play multiple football positions. JDL Football is intended to promote physical fitness through healthy competition.

Players compete against each other in equitable and competitively balanced situations. As a result, all participants in JDL football derive significant benefit from the experience by developing new skills, gaining increased confidence, self-respect and self-worth, all while learning valuable life lessons including sportsmanship, teamwork, commitment, acceptance of discipline and the respect of others.

As coaches, we must be careful how we approach the task of teaching football to young players. As teachers, we must walk a fine line. The quest for perfect technique and perfect execution should not come at the expense of the players' enjoyment and fun.

Coaches should certainly have a basic understanding of the fundamentals and the techniques of the sport they are teaching. To this end we provide coaches specific help in the form of tutorials, manuals, videos, clinics etc. But understanding what and how to teach players and the expectations that instruction will produce must be tempered by several important factors.

First, there is a wide range in the emotional, intellectual and physical maturity of players in the same age group, which means that all the players in a division will not respond equally to what the coach is trying to teach.

Second, learning new skills requires time and patience. We practice twice per week for 90 minutes, hardly enough time to develop competence in any single technique let alone the multiple skills players need to become proficient at even one position. Therefore progress should be measured in small increments over extended periods of time.

Nonetheless, in junior development football we strive throughout the season to have players experience the entire game not just a single position. In that way, as kids continue to play – now and in future seasons, they may focus on that element of the game that best fits their evolving body type, ability level and personality. They are also in a better position to evaluate their progress, their football goals and objectives as well as the level of commitment they wish to make.

Coaches cannot know and shouldn't anticipate how or whether a young player will develop. Kids need to experiment and try their hand in different rolls. This helps keep them motivated and will enhance their sports experience. We should not "force fit" a player into a particular mold. Instead we should identify for them the skills and techniques a position requires and give instruction and encouragement as they work on that skill. Skill development takes time and patience on the part of both the coach and the player.

An old saying has it that "better is the enemy of good." Ask yourself—"should we be trying to create perfect running backs, perfect offensive linemen and perfect quarterbacks out of every participant?" Or —"should we be trying to provide the guidance and instruction that will enable players, regardless of ability, to play the game and have a positive, rewarding and enjoyable experience?" The answer of course is the second. So let's not let our expectations cloud our true objective; which is to ensure that each player, regardless of current skill has a positive, rewarding and enjoyable sports experience. Nor should we lose sight of the fact that opportunities to teach life lessons through sports are abundant if we remain alert to them.

If we do things right and keep kids excited about the game, they will continue to play for several years and the effect of our instruction and our mentoring will begin to tell. Perhaps a few players may achieve success in football at the next level. However, with our guidance, all of the youngsters who pass through our program should become better young men and better citizens.

Player's Bill of Rights

The Player's Bill of Rights is the cornerstone of JDL Football. You must at all times uphold a JDL player's rights.

Bill of Rights for Young Athletes

- The right to participate in sports
- The right to have qualified adult leadership
- The right to play as a child and not as an adult
- The right to share in the leadership and decision making of their sport participation
- The right to proper preparation in sports
- The right to participate at an appropriate level
- The right to participate in a safe, healthy environment
- The right to an equal opportunity to strive for success
- The right to be treated with dignity
- The right to have fun in sports

Getting Help

When looking for answers to questions the first place you should look is this handbook. When the handbook doesn't have the information you need please contact the appropriate individuals below:

For questions concerning:

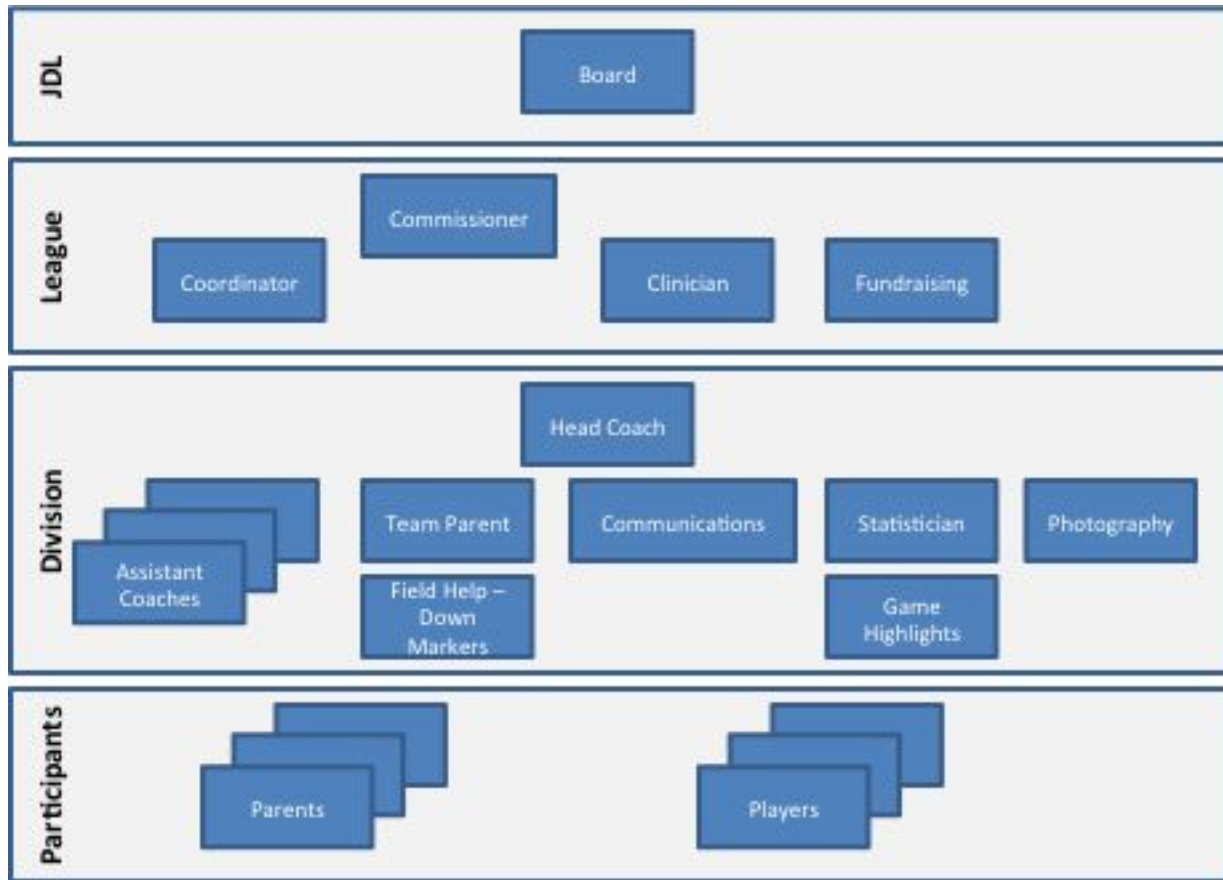
- Registration
- Equipment Handout
- Jerseys
- Scheduling
- General Questions
- Team Parents

Your contact is Mary J. Henkel - League Administrator – email at mjhenkel@bellsouth.net

For questions concerning:

- Coaching
- Players
- Practices
- Division Assignments
- Games

Below is a graphical representation of the JDL structure and its various components.



IMPORTANT GENERAL INFORMATION

League Structure / Divisions

The entire JDL player roster is divided into separate divisions. Each division consists of players of comparable age.

Your division will consist of approximately 32 players – enough for two teams. Each week you will divide your roster into two teams Black and White. Each player will have two jerseys and be able to play for either team.

Schedule

The JDL schedule consists of two practices per week on Monday and Wednesday with two time slots 5:00 to 6:30 or 6:30 to 8:00. Your time slot will be given to you once the rosters are complete. Saturdays are your game days. Time slots start at 8:30 and run until all divisions have played. Just like with the practices your game time slot will be assigned once the rosters are complete. During the pre-season (before games start) Saturday's will be for practice. Once your time slot is assigned it remains the same for the entire season.

You will have a practice on Monday and Wednesday at the same time and your game will be on Saturday at the same time. We typically start practicing in August with games beginning in September for a total of 10 games ending before Thanksgiving. Expect detailed information on your schedule via email and on the JDL Ponte Vedra Web Site (JDLWS).

Field

Equipment

JDL provides all players with the following equipment:

- Helmet
- Shoulder pads
- Reversible Jersey

At the end of the season players will return all equipment except their game jersey.

Players need to provide the following equipment:

- Cleats
- Mouthpiece
- Integrated Practice pants
- Practice jersey
- Water bottle

JDL Coaches Equipment Bag:

- Each division is provided with an equipment bag that contains the following:
 - Footballs

- Cones
- Helmet caps to help separate players into to teams
- agility ladders
- official penny
- whistles
- penalty flag

The league administrator will publish an equipment handout scheduled on the JDL web site and send out emails with dates for equipment handout.

Coaches your help is needed during equipment handout. This is your opportunity to learn how to properly fit helmets and pads from manufacturer representatives. This is invaluable information you will need during the season. It also allows you to meet the kids and parents. Please inform the JDL clinician which equipment handout day you will be attending. This is also a great opportunity to recruit additional coaches.

Weather

Coaches should remember that parents always have the option to keep players away from practice due to threatening weather.

Play Recognition / “The Huddle”

“The Huddle:” The Huddle is a special event for JDL players regardless of age or division. It is a brief time after each practice and each game where coaches take a few minutes to recognize players in the division for accomplishments or contributions made that day. The accomplishment may be a strong performance in a practice drill or scrimmage, a great block, a touchdown saving tackle, a fumble recovery, a pass or run. The coach has the player stand up to be recognized for his accomplishment. During practices and games coaches should make mental or paper notes of the players who should be recognized in the “Huddle.” This should be done in conjunction with the coaches’ spreadsheet that is tracking player recognition.

Officiating

Officiating your games is the responsibility of the division coaches. The lead coach will identify a coach to be the referee for the game. A few of the older divisions will have paid referees assigned to officiate their games. Coaches should keep the age and experience of the players in mind when officiating. Too much referee involvement doesn’t help anyone. For some of the more common penalties such as off sides, holding, pass interference, etc, referees should explain to players what they are doing wrong (like a warning) and how to correct it before calling a penalty. It is a good idea to discuss penalties in all practices. It is not a major focus of practice but should be taught throughout the season. Only focus on the most common penalties like off sides, holding and blocking in the back. Keep the age of the players in mind when discussing penalties. For more details on officiating, see JDL Rule book which is included in this document and available on the Coaches Corner web site.

Parents Code of Conduct

Just as coaches are required to adhere to a “Coach’s Code of Conduct,” every parent must read and agree to a “Code of Conduct.” No child will be permitted to play JDL Football unless this form is signed and turned in with all other registration materials.

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by being a good positive role model
- I will try my best to make athletics a positive experience for everyone involved, i.e., participants, coaches, officials, and spectators
- I will insist that my players will treat other players, coaches, officials and fans with respect

- I will show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team
- I will be a “team fan” not a “my child” fan
- If I have a concern, I will talk to the coach at the appropriate time and place, i.e. never before, during or immediately after a contest.
- At any JDL Football event, practice, or competition, any adult who participates in any of the below behavior will be asked to leave the event:
 - Verbally abuses
 - Attempts to intimidate
 - Is flagrantly rude
 - Cannot control their language or actions with an official, coach, player or other volunteer
- Any adult that commits a second similar offense will be banned from JDL Football events for the remainder of the season
- Any adult who physically assaults an official, coach or volunteer will be banned from JDL Football events for one year from the date of the offense
- After one year, the parent may apply for re-instatement
- If the adult commits a second offense, he or she will be permanently banned from such events

Parent’s Signature

Date

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Player safety is primary consideration in every aspect of JDL football. It is embedded in the JDL philosophy and reflected in our training of all JDL coaches in teaching safe blocking and tackling techniques. Still injuries can occur and JDL coaches must be prepared to deal with such situations. Dehydration, concussions and returning from injury are very important elements in a safe football program. The following information is provided to help you recognize and deal with potential situations. The JDLWS and the USA Football web site have additional information

Hydration

Tragic events in which football players have become extremely ill or have died following strenuous workouts in the high heat should serve as reminders to all of the potential dangers of dehydration. It is imperative that you, as coaches, take the following precautions, provided by the National Athletic Trainers Association, to ensure that your players are not placed in danger.

- Schedule practices for the cooler times of the day whenever possible - a primary reason for our evening and morning practice schedules
- Encourage your players to drink plenty of water or sports drink (17-20 oz.) prior to coming to practice and games
- Schedule regular water breaks every 15 minutes during practice
- Encourage players to drink beyond thirst
- Never deny a player water or the opportunity to get a drink if needed
- Players should drink 7-10 oz. of water or sports drink every 10 to 20 minutes
- For a two hour practice, players should bring at least half a gallon of water or sports drink to the field with them
- Remind players to replace lost fluids after practice
- Athletes should drink at least 20 oz. of fluid for every pound of weight lost
- Remind parents to have their player drink the necessary fluids prior to and after practice and to bring an adequate drink supply to practice
- Recognize the warning signs of dehydration and heat illness
 - Thirst
 - Headache
 - Irritability
 - Cramps
 - Nausea
 - Flushed skin
 - Weakness
 - Dizziness
- Players displaying symptoms should stop participating immediately and move into the shade or indoors. They should be given cool water to drink. Wet towels may be used to sponge the body.
- **Dry, red skin; a fast, weak pulse; shallow, rapid breathing or blue lips are indications of severe dehydration and require immediate medical attention**

Coaches should remind their players to notify any coach immediately of any dehydration symptoms they may be experiencing.

Additional Information on Hydration is available at www.usafootball.com/health-safety/hydration

Concussions

Increased concussion awareness in youth sports—especially youth football—is fundamental to the safety of every participant. Coaches, parents and players must recognize the dangers a concussion presents and do everything possible to act appropriately and responsibly in the event of such an injury. To this end, JDL Football is participating in an education initiative sponsored by the US Department of Health and Human Services Center to

help youth coaches recognize and respond to concussions in youth sports. You have been provided a Concussion Fact Sheet sticker for your clipboard as a part of your coach's packet. This fact sheet provides information on the signs and symptoms of a concussion as well as the actions a coach must take when a concussion is suspected. Some of that information is repeated below.

The signs of a concussion displayed by a player that a coaching staff might observe include:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of the score or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior or after a hit or fall

The athlete might report the following symptoms:

- Headache or "pressure" in the head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

In the event a concussion is suspected, remove the athlete from play. Do not allow the athlete displaying signs of a concussion to return to play. Notify the athlete's parents about the possibility of a concussion and provide them with a parent's fact sheet on concussions. Notify the league commissioner of the athlete's injury. Allow the athlete to return to play **only** with permission from a health care professional with experience in evaluating concussions.

Returning to Action Following Injury

Players who have suffered significant injuries during practices or games, including but not limited to concussions, will be allowed to return to play only with permission from a health care professional. In the event a player is injured during practice or games, notify the parents as well as the league commissioner of the event and the circumstances surrounding the injury. Instruct the parents to seek professional medical care as soon as possible. Remind the parents that the player will not be allowed to return to action without permission from a health care professional.

MRSA (Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus)

MRSA (Methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus) is a bacterial infection that is highly resistant to some antibiotics. There have been increasing number of MRSA outbreaks in athletes through skin contacts in locker rooms and gyms. Players contracting the infection may not participate in practice or games until medically cleared.

COACHING REQUIREMENTS

JDL thanks you for your participation in our program and your dedication in upholding the JDL values. There are a few things we need you to complete before you can coach. These requirements help ensure consistency of the JDL program and the safety of the players. They are:

- Coaches Code of Conduct
- JDL Football Certification
- St. Johns County Field Badge
- USA Football Membership

Coaches Code of Conduct

As a Junior Development League Football coach, I pledge to adhere to the following National Youth Sports Coaching Alliance (NYSCA) Coaches Code Of Ethics:

- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
- I promise to review and practice the basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
- I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players. I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.
- I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all sports events.
- I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach, and will teach these rules to my players.
- I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that I teach.
- I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for the children and not the adults
- I will be responsible for controlling the behavior and/or maintaining parent/crowd control to ensure an orderly and peaceful game. This includes refraining from the use of profanity, vulgarity, and other offensive language and gestures at all times to all persons, on the field.

I further acknowledge and fully understand that coaching in the Junior Development Football program is a privilege granted based on my adherence to the principles and tenets of the program. I also understand that a violation of any of the above codes is grounds for my immediate removal as a coach in the Junior Development Football program.

Coach's Signature

Date

This document is available on the JDLWS for you to print and submit to the coach's clinician.

JDL Certification

NO ONE IS ALLOWED ON THE PLAYING FIELD OR IN THE COACHES/PLAYER AREAS OF THE FIELD UNLESS THEY ARE CERTIFIED AND RECEIVE A BADGE FROM ST. JOHN'S COUNTY. IF YOU ARE FOUND IN THESE AREAS WITHOUT A BADGE YOU WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE. ST. JOHN'S COUNTY HAS THE RIGHT TO SHUTDOWN OUR ENTIRE PROGRAM IF WE ARE NOT FOLLOWING THIS RULE.

Certification is required to coach football in the Junior Development League. Without this certification you cannot run drills or instruct players, you must stay on the parent sidelines for games and practices. It is important to understand that just having a St. Johns County badge or any other sport badge or certification does NOT certify

you to coach in JDL Football. If you have been certified to coach in Pop-Warner, Baseball, or Soccer you still have to be certified to coach in JDL Football. The certification also is a requirement by St. Johns County to be issued a Badge. Ponte Vedra Football Association works with the county in enforcing this rule. **The county will issue you your badge.** The certification and badge is only valid for one season.

To get certified go to <http://pvaacoachtraining.com>. To sign into the site the username is **pvaa** and the password is **coach (Please keep the login information to this site confidential)**. You have 2 choices you can Sign Up or Login. If you used the site in previous years and remember your username and password you can re-enter it and re-certify if you don't remember your username and password or this is your first time, click on the Sign Up and follow the on screen instructions.

Each year you will have to re-certify and complete the Introduction to Youth Sports and the Junior Development Football tutorials and associated quizzes. Make sure to click on each element of the course, if you miss any item your certificate will not print or be available to print.

The certificates that you print must show the current year. Past year certifications are not valid.

Field Badge for St. Johns County

Once you have completed your coaching certification you will be able to download the necessary documents required by the County for a badge.

The County of St. Johns requires that all adults that interact with children in sports activities on County property pass a background check and certifications required by the sport they are involved with. After passing these requirements the County will issue a badge. This badge allows the adult to participate in sports activities for which they have been certified. So for example if you get certified for Baseball and are issued a badge, you still must pass the certification for football if you want to coach football. The County issues one badge per year, there are no sport specific badges issued by the County. The badge is only valid for one year. All badges expire on July 31st.

Upon completion of the JDL Certification you will be presented with documents that must be downloaded. These documents are the forms necessary to get a badge from St. Johns County. Please follow the instructions provided and acquire your badge.

USA Football

USA Football is a great resource for coaching football and complements the JDL program. You will need to be a member of USA Football in order to be a JDL coach. USA Football membership provides insurance as well as other valuable resources. You will find many similarities and what appear to be duplications when you read through the JDL material and look at the site. Here is how we recommend you leverage USA Football:

- JDL Practice plans are the basis for your practice – use the USA Football drills to fine tune and get ideas on how to improve existing drill execution
- JDL Playbook is the basis for your play calling – however, coaches might want to use the USA Football animated playbook function to create an animated version of the JDL Playbook. Please do not import new plays or formations that are not in the JDL Playbook and manual.
- USA Football offers a coach's packet containing helmet stickers and captain's patches. Use these patches and stickers in recognizing our player's accomplishments.

Visit www.usafootball.com

Lead Coach Responsibilities

As a lead coach you have the overall responsibility for ensuring all your players, assistant coaches, and parents have a wonderful football experience. Please remember you cannot be successful without the help of assistant coaches, the team parent, parents and players. They will all look to you for leadership and your actions will be an example for others.

Here is a list of some specific responsibilities:

- Insure all kids have an opportunity to play all major positions
- Prepare the game day roster before Monday's practice
- Establish a Progression of Skill Development for each player
- Communicate with parents and players as needed for practice and games
- Mentor and Train Assistant Coaches
- Keep track of practice and game attendance
- Insure all players are acknowledged frequently during huddles
- Insure that the game day highlights are turned in weekly
- Attend Coach's training sessions and clinics
- Attend Coach's meetings
- Attend Practices and Games (if absence is unavoidable, designate a replacement)
- Review and understand practice plans in advance of practice
- Officiate Games
- Create a fun and safe environment for the kids
- Complete JDL Coaches Certification
- Obtain a St. Johns County Field Badge
- Become a member of USA Football
- Commit to checking e-mail regularly during the season
- Uphold the Player's Bill of Rights
- Adhere to each tenet of the Coaches Code of Conduct
- Know the JDL football Rules
- Fully support and adhere to all of the guiding principles of the JDL program

Assistant Coach Responsibilities

As an assistance coach your focuses is on helping your division deliver a great football experience for everyone involved. Each week the lead coach will work with you and assign specific responsibilities to you for practices and games.

Here is a list of some specific responsibilities:

- Attend Coach's training and clinics
- Attend Coach's meetings
- Attend Practices and Games
- Review and understand practice plans in advance of practice
- Officiate Games
- Create a fun and safe environment for the kids
- Complete JDL Coaches Certification
- Obtain a St. Johns County Background Field Badge
- Become a member of USA Football
- Commit to checking e-mail regularly during the season
- Uphold the Player's Bill of Rights
- Adhere to each tenet of the Coaches Code of Conduct
- Know the JDL football Rules
- Fully support and adhere to all of the guiding principles of the JDL program

COACHING OVERVIEW

Progressive Skill Development

The JDL philosophy on teaching football revolves around a very simple concept – start with the foundation and build from there. When teaching football we need to build a solid foundation and slowly add skill progressions to the foundation.

JDL has developed skill progressions for each major football position. Skill progressions are the breakdown of the steps necessary to learn a position. When coaching a position you should be thinking about the skill progression for that position, identifying where a player is in the progression and how to get them to the next progression.

For example, the first progression for an offensive lineman is to be able to get into a three-point stance. If you have a player who gets on the line but isn't in a proper three point stance that player is defeated before the play even begins. This is because the player cannot fire out of the position he is in and the defensive player goes right through him.

Be sure to teach the proper progression and only progress players when they are ready. Make accommodations to help the player progress – additional repetitions, coaching tips – check the USA Football site – etc.

You must also keep in mind age and physical ability when teaching progressions. A six year old is not going to learn progression level 12 for any position. On the other hand you will probably see some older players that have tremendous physical ability but they were never taught the specifics about a position. They missed progressions. Please bring them back to the progressions they missed and teach them. They will learn it quickly and thank you for it albeit at a later time.

JDL has a Skill Progression for each football position we teach. As a coach you need to be familiar with the skill progressions for each position. Consult the Skill Progression and Drill manual for specifics.

Here is a sample skill progression:

Skill: Running Back

Level 1 – 3 point stance

Level 2 – Ball Security

Level 3 – First step towards taking the ball from the QB

Level 4 – Taking the handoff and protecting the football

Level 5 – The Fake Handoff

Level 6 – Transition the ball to proper position

Level 7– Reading the line

Level 8 – Running through the hole and behind a blocker

Level 9 – Accelerating once across the line

Level 10 – Running in the middle of the defense

etc

When you are working with a player you need to be sure that player's foundation is solid. The foundation is in the initial levels of the skill progression. To achieve proficiency in a skill, a player must master each level in the progression typically in order. There will be times when a player struggles with certain levels but gets most others. In these cases you will need to fine-tune your teaching technique to help that player learn the missing progressions.

This is just one example of the PSDI for a position. The PSDI manual contains skills progression for all the positions we teach.

JDL Football Rules

With several notable exceptions identified herein, JDL Football is played in accordance with established youth football rules contained in the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) rulebook.

Any discussion of playing rules should consider the JDL Football philosophy and its unique coaching approach. It should be remembered that JDL Football coaches are coaching both competing teams and in most JDL divisions, they also serve as referees. As a result, the role of the referee is less adversarial and also less consequential. The referee serves as another coach on the field with the dual task of mentoring while maintaining a ‘level’ playing field for the competing teams.

Since not all volunteer youth football coaches are well versed in the NFHS rule book or may not have access to the NFHS rule book, this condensed JDL Football rule book provides a simple, basic set of playing rules for use in JDL Football games. It has been designed to complement the goals and objectives of Junior Development League Football. Local JDL Football league commissioners may expand or modify this simplified rulebook as appropriate to suit the needs of the local organization’s football program and personnel.

A basic understanding of the of the game and its general rules of play is assumed and includes the following fundamental elements of the game:

- 11 players on the field per team
- 7 offensive players on the line of scrimmage
- The offense has 4 downs to make 10 yards and a first down

Areas where the JDL Football playing rules depart from NFHS rules include the assessment of penalties, scoring for extra points, game timing, special teams play on kickoffs, punts, field goals and extra points. These JDL unique situations are discussed in detail in the following pages.

The Ball

The league commissioner determines the size and type of ball used in each division. It is recommended that the younger divisions use a smaller ball and older divisions use a larger ball.

The Field

The dimensions of the playing field are determined by the league commissioner. Full size, 100-yard by 55-yard fields are recommended but younger divisions may play on smaller fields as determined by the league commissioner and local field availability. Goal posts and 10-yard end zones are considered the minimum standard for all levels of play.

Equipment

All players must be outfitted with a full set of properly fitted equipment including a helmet, shoulder pads, pants, hip, butt, thigh and knee pads, athletic shoes with molded cleats and a mouth piece. Players are issued contrasting jerseys and wear the appropriate color based on their team assignment for a given game.

Formations

Local JDL Football commissioners are encouraged to keep offensive and defensive formations simple and basic until players have mastered the basic formations, associated skills and fundamental techniques. It is recommended that JDL Football coaches teach the 6-3-2 defense and only move to variations such as 5-4-2 or 4-4, 4-3 etc when players gain experience in the basic formations, and with commissioner approval. The 6-3 defense is preferred, especially at the younger levels of play because it simplifies offensive blocking assignments. Blitzing by linebackers and defensive backs is not permitted. Linebackers must line up 3 yards off the line of scrimmage and defensive backs 6 yards of the line of scrimmage. Players in these positions should be taught to read and react. Blitzing techniques may be introduced in middle school divisions as deemed appropriate and authorized by the league commissioner. Offensive formations taught include the basic straight T-formation and variations including the Shotgun, I-formation and spread formations as determined by the local league. Five receivers are eligible in these offensive formations. In considering offensive and defensive formations, the focus should always be on teaching and mastering basic fundamental football techniques before introducing more advanced techniques.

Special Teams

Kickoffs, kickoff returns and punt returns are permitted only in the older divisions if deemed appropriate and authorized by the league commissioner. Free kicks and/or limited rushes are used on kicked extra points, field goal attempts and punts—again as determined by the league commissioner. The team scoring the safety will put the ball in play from its own 40-yard line.

Game Timing/Duration

JDL Football games are 50 minutes in duration using a running clock. The game consists of two 25 minute halves with a 10 minute intermission. Games must start within 5 minutes of the schedule start time.

Starting a Game

A coin toss is used to determine which team will start on offense. The coin toss will be made at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the game. Kickoffs are not typically used in the younger divisions. Instead the offensive team puts the ball in play at its 40-yard line. The league commissioner determines whether kickoffs and kickoff returns are to be used and in which division. If kickoffs are employed the ball is kicked from the kicking team's 40-yard line. The running clock starts when the referee blows his whistle. Time is kept on the field by the referee and is only stopped in the event of a significant injury or scheduled water break.

Starting the Second Half

The team that started the first half on defense will get the ball to start the second half. The same rules for kickoffs as described above apply.

Starting and Stopping the Clock

In JDL football the play clock stops only for water breaks, player injuries, half-time intermission and the end of the game.

Dead Time

Dead Time is an innovative JDL Football concept designed to insure that the players on the field determine the outcome of the game, not some aspect of clock management.

If one team is ahead by more than a touchdown including the extra point, the game is over after 50 minutes has expired. If however, at the 48 minute point of the game (ie 2 minutes left to play), the game score is within one touchdown including the point after attempt, then the game is considered to be in Dead Time. The team that has possession of the ball at the beginning of dead time continues play until they score, turn over the ball on a fumble or on downs. If they have the leading score going into dead time and they score, the game is over. If they are trailing in the score and do not score they game is over. If they are trailing in score and score, the opponent gets the ball and continues to play until they score, turn over the ball on a fumble or on downs.

Dead Time Example—Scenario 1

Team A is winning by a touchdown, team B is losing. Team A has possession of the ball when entering Dead Time. If Team A scores the game is over and Team A wins. If Team B stops Team A from scoring they get the ball and get a chance to score. If Team B does not score the game is over and Team A wins. If Team B scores and Team B's score is higher than Team A, Team B wins.

Dead Time Example—Scenario 2

Team A is losing by a touchdown, team B is winning. Team A has possession of the ball when entering Dead Time. If Team A does not score the game is over. Team B wins. If Team A scores, Team B gets the ball and gets a chance to score. If Team B does not score and the score is not tied. Team A wins. If Team B scores, the game is over. Team B wins. If the score is a tie, tiebreaker rule is followed.

Dead Time Example—Scenario 3

Score is tied. Team A has possession of the ball when entering Dead Time. If Team A does or does not score, Team B get a chance to score. The highest score wins.

Tie Breaking Procedure

In the event of a tie at the end of regulation play the following tiebreaker procedure will be followed. The ball is placed on the 10 yd line, each team gets a chance to score in four downs or until loss of possession which ever comes first. A coin toss is used to determine who starts on offense. Multiple tie-breaking periods may be played. The league commissioner has the authority to limit the number of tie-breaking periods are played.

Penalties

To simplify the task for JDL Football coach/referees, most penalties—offensive and defensive—such as off-sides, illegal procedure, holding, block in the back, face mask infractions, etc., shall be 5- yards in length, assessed at the completion of the play or the line of scrimmage if no yardage is gained on the play.

Pass Interference: If, as a result of pass interference by the defense, the pass is incomplete, the play shall be ruled as a completed pass at the spot of the infraction and an automatic first down awarded. If pass interference is ruled against the offense, the penalty is 5-yards from the previous line of scrimmage and the down is replayed

Dead-Ball Penalties Occurring after the play has ended: These will be assessed from the new line of scrimmage.

Fighting or major Unsportsmanlike Conduct: 10-yard penalty plus ejection if warranted by the referee.

Spiking the Ball: Players are not allowed to spike the ball following a touchdown. A 5-yard penalty is awarded on the ensuing offensive play, ie spot the ball on the offense's 45-yard line – first and ten.

Kick Offs, Punts, Extra Points and Field Goals:

The league commissioner will set the rules for free kicks (no rush, limited rush or full rush) on punts and extra-points in each division as well as whether kick-offs and kick returns will be allowed. Commissioners are encouraged to make use of the free kick option so that players can experience the kicking aspect of football. In divisions that do not have kick-offs, the offensive team starts from its 40-yard line. Extra points if kicked score 2 points, if run/pass score 1 point.

Scoring

Touchdown (score six points) — A touchdown is scored when a player with the ball crosses his opponent's goal line.

Extra points (score one or two points) — The scoring team has the option of going for a one or two point conversion. The line of scrimmage for the extra-point attempt is the opponent's 3-yard line. The attempt may be either by run, pass (score 1 point) or kick (score 2 points). In younger age groups, a kicked extra point attempt is a free kick without rushing by the defense with the ball placed at the 3-yard line. In older divisions, a free kick, a limited rush or full rush may be allowed as directed by the league commissioner. In these situations the ball placement will typically be 5-7 yards from the line of scrimmage at the discretion of the coach.

Field goals (score three points) — As with kicked extra points, free kick, limited rush or full rush attempts are permitted in the different divisions as determined by the league commissioner

Safety (two points) — A safety occurs when an offensive player with the ball is tackled in his own end zone. The team scoring the safety then puts the ball in play on offense from its own forty yard- line.

Key Differences

As you can see there are some difference between the NFL and JDL. Here is a simplified list that will help those familiar with the NFL or other football programs:

- There is a running clock with no timeouts

- Time management can not affect the outcome of a game
- You will need to get permission to utilize special teams – Permission is granted based on player and coaching experience
- There is no blitzing
- Formations are limited to those discussed above (specific details are provide in the playbook)

Team Parent (Team Mom or Dad)

As a coach you will need lots of help from other coaches and a team parent to complete all that needs to happen this season. The league administrator is the “Head” team parent and will help ensure each team has a team parent. However, your help is needed here to communicate with your parents and ask for their help.

The team parent is responsible for the following:

- Game snack and drink rotation schedule
 - For each game one parent will bring a snack and a drink for every player
- Chain Gang rotation schedule
 - Our parents help us with the 10 yard chain and down indicator
- Fund raising support as needed

Avoiding/Handling Difficult Situations

Coaches will avoid most difficult situations with players and parents by following the guidance offered in this handbook. Good communications along with a calm and controlled demeanor are key to avoiding most problem situations. Encourage parents to voice concerns as they arise and address those concerns individually with the parent away from the player. Avoid confrontations. If necessary seek assistance from the Clinician or league commissioner. Use the “Three-Strike Approach” explained in the coach’s tutorial to handle routine discipline problems with players. If a discipline problem with a player continues, bring it to the attention of the clinician so the parents can be made aware of the problem.

If you are having discipline problems with a child and need to talk to the Parent, we strongly suggest that you have another coach present (witness). By having the second coach, especially if that coach witnessed the event, you have support.

End of Practice/Game Huddle – “The Huddle”

As discussed earlier The Huddle is an important part of this program. Every practice and every game ends with a Huddle. Do not forget its role is vital to each player feeling they are part of the team. It is an especially good opportunity to make developing players feel good about their progress and contributions.

Skilled players frequently make big plays in practices and games so coaches will have more than enough opportunities to call out a skilled player and they should do so as appropriate. However the coach must be especially alert for an accomplishment by a rising star or developing player. Consult with the assistant coaches and make mental or paper notes of the players who should be recognized in the “Huddle” so as not to forget or overlook a deserving player.

Coaches should stress the importance of players as well as parents staying the few minutes it takes to complete the Huddle.

Do not use the huddle as the chance to criticize poor execution or point out mistakes. Only positive feedback should be a part of the Huddle.

The Huddle is also the time for important announcements by league administrators. Be alert for any special announcements.

Ball Handling Positions / Player Rotation

Two of the most fundamental tenets of JDL Football are:

- *Abundant playing time for every player*
- *The opportunity for every player to experience each of the major football positions.*

The lead coach must ensure that these objectives are met for every participant during the course of the season. To assist the coach in this task, JDL football provides a special software tool that the coach uses to create competitively balanced team rosters for each game.

The first step in achieving abundant playing time for every player is the requirement that each player must start either on offense or defense in each half. Considering that there are four starting segments or opportunities in a game—1st half offense, 1st half defense, 2nd half offense and 2nd half defense—and 16 players per team, 12 of the players will play three of the four starting segments and the 4 remaining players will play in 2 of the 4 segments in that game. As the season progresses, the roster software tool ensures that each player will have an equal opportunity to play 3 of the 4 starting segments.

While every player wants a chance to handle the football, we all know that in most other football programs only a few players get that chance. That is not the case in JDL football. Your job, as coach, is to give all players the opportunity to play each of the major football positions especially the ball handling positions. The roster software provides the necessary metric for you to keep track of players and the positions they have played during the season.

The Ball Handling Positions are:

- Quarterback
- Center
- Running Back (two Half backs and full back) 3 total - The JDL “T” formation offense contains three running backs in addition to the quarterback. The running backs may also become receivers during a passing play.

Position Assignment

Each week the lead coach needs to create two teams from their entire roster. These teams will only exist for this game and next week's teams will only exist for one game so for each game you will have unique teams. The coach first selects the Ball Handling players for each team. Once the coach selects the five ball handlers for each team and provides that as an input to the roster software tool, the software completes the assignment of all other players to the remaining six positions on the team. It also identifies the five “substitute players.”

Typically a coach will select a center, a quarterback and three running backs for each team and that offensive unit will play in those positions for the entire game, barring injury. It is unlikely, especially early in the season, before players have had a chance to develop the necessary skills to handle one of the ball handling positions, that more than two quarterbacks (or two centers) will be prepared to play. However, there may be circumstances in which the coach may utilize multiple quarterbacks, centers or even running backs on a team during a game if other players are prepared to play those positions that week. If so, the coach should certainly consider that option.

It is important that the coach understands the need to have every player “experience” each of the major positions at some time during the season. The obvious challenge for the coach in this regard is best illustrated by considering the quarterback position. If a single quarterback is used each week by each team, then over the course of a ten game season, there are only 20 quarterback opportunities (10 games times two teams) for 32 players. This means that some players may play less than an entire game at the position and their “quarterback experience” will have to include practice experiences. One way to fix this is to have the QB and Center rotate positions in the second half, so that the center for the first half becomes the QB for the second half and visa-versa. This gives a total of 40 QB/C opportunities for the season. The coach will need to be creative to be successful in having every player “experience” each position during the season. This of course needs to be tempered by the fact that unless the center/quarterback pair is at least minimally proficient in the exchange, the game experience for all

players deteriorates. Do not put a QB/C pair together that cannot successfully complete the exchange. Use the players that can and quickly build up that skill in other players.

Again, keep in mind that while “experiencing a position” should include playing time at that position in a game, it can also include practicing the skills associated with a particular position. Examples of this are Oklahoma Drills or tackling drills where a ball carrier is used, quarterback station drills, passing drills, etc.

Another point regarding player rotation of which coaches should be mindful deals with the assignment of a player to a running back position. A player that is assigned to a running back position but never actually handles to football has been denied the opportunity he deserves and that we are obligated to provide. Coaches must not only give all players chances to be running backs, they must also give each running back chances to carry the football.

Coaching Rotation

Just like players, coaches might consider rotating responsibilities as well. There are generally four coaching roles:

1. Offensive coach for both teams*
2. Defensive coach for both teams*
3. Substitution/Sideline coach
4. Referee for game

Coaches should try to rotate roles and help each other learn roles some may be uncomfortable with. Coaches are reminded that the offensive and defensive coaches do not compete against each other. They must work together to ensure equitable matchups and to maintain competitive balance between teams and individual player matchups.

There should not be one coach assigned to coach offense for one team and other coach assigned for the other team. There should always be one offensive coach and one defensive coach and those coaches coach both teams. This is important to the JDL philosophy.

* In the two lowest divisions only – additional on field coaches are allowed.

Player Evaluations

As previously mentioned your job is to get all players to experience every major position on the field (C, QB, RB, R, OL, DL, LB, DB). In addition to getting players exposed to all positions you must do it in a way that one player isn't unfairly matched up with another player. The roster software and player evaluations help accomplish this. During the season coaches will evaluate a player's ability, progression level and field confidence and give the player a confidential ranking. The ranking is simply a letter A, B or C corresponding to the following:

Rank A Traits:

- Noticeably a well rounded athlete
- Confident being on the field – will play anywhere
- More than likely has played football or other organized sports before
- Can pretty much play any positions with basic guidance
- At the middle to upper level of skill progression for most positions

Rank B Traits:

- Average athletic skills
- Might have not played football before but probably played other organized sports
- Somewhat confident on the field – believes in himself but not overly confident
- At the low to middle level skill progression for many positions possibly at the upper levels for some
- Most players will probably fall into this ranking

Rank C Traits:

- Below average to average athletic skills
- Probably never played football before
- Not confident on the field – prefers not to be by the ball
- Will avoid making tackles
- At the low level of skill progressions for most positions
- This player would be significantly overmatched if they went up against a Rank A player on the line of scrimmage

The rankings are very important because the software will line up players of similar rankings against each other. The roster software in conjunction with the player rankings helps to avoid miss-matches. You may need to use your best judgment each week to manually make adjustments that are more appropriate. You may also need to make adjustments during practices and games.

As the season progresses your players will move up in rankings. You need to monitor this and make the appropriate changes in the software so the proper match ups can continue to be made.

Player rankings **are confidential and only known to the coaches.**

When you create your first game in the software it will ask you who will be in the Ball Handling Positions and then it will fill in all the other positions based on ranking and playing history.

You should have the more experienced players (Rank A) play the Ball Handling Positions for the early season games. This gives other players some time to get used to the program, learn appropriate skills and build confidence.

Offensive Play List for Game Day

A goal of JDL is that the players determine the outcome of the game not play calling or time management strategies. So, during game day the offensive coach who coaches offense for both teams should prepare a play list. The play list consists of the offensive plays that were practiced by the offensive units during the weekly practices. The list will be a subset collection of plays from the JDL Playbook that will feature each of the players in the Ball Handling positions. The coach should run plays strategically to give different players the opportunity to be successful.

Since the play list only contains plays that were practiced during the week the variety of plays in the first few games will be small but as the season grows and players progress the variety will increase.

The play list will typically be the same for both teams.

“From the Sidelines...”

As previously mentioned gathering statistics and a game summary is a coach’s responsibility. Please be sure and have a coach assigned to this task. The information needs to be submitted to the JDL Commissioner by Wednesday’s practice.

Field Equipment Shed

At Davis Park there are field equipment storage facilities. The field equipment is for your usage during your practices. You are responsible for getting the equipment you need and bringing it to your field. You are also responsible for returning the equipment after your practice. For the early practice (5:00 pm) please check with the late practice (6:30 pm) coach and see if any of the equipment you have out is needed. If not please return the equipment.

It is a good idea to have your players get and return the equipment. Show them by example but after a couple of practices they can handle it.

Practice Day

Your practices will be on Monday and Wednesday either at 5:00 pm or 6:30 pm. They are one and a half hours long. During the pre-season there will also be a practice on Saturday. It is important that you come to practice prepared. If you haven't reviewed the practice plan and don't know the drills the kids will feel it and you will struggle with the practice.

One of the key JDL concepts is that each player gets to play every football position. That concept is awesome and during practice is where you are going to make it happen. This will be discussed in more detail later but during the regular season you need to look at your practices like this – "I have two practices to prepare every player to play their position for Saturday's game."

This philosophy is important to instill in your coaches, players, and parents. If a player is playing one of the Ball Handling Positions and they miss one of the two practices how are they going to be successful during the game? You need to communicate with your parents and players that attending practice is very important and cannot be taken lightly. It may delay their player's opportunity to play a desired position.

If you are the lead coach you also need to figure out how which assistant coach is going to handle which drill.

Get to practice early – start and end on time.

Game Day

Saturday is JDL Game Day!! You should have your players arrive at least 45 minutes before you start time. On game day your focus is on the following:

- Last minute roster changes based on players not showing or other situations that occur
- Warming up the players – light stretching and loosening up
- Reviewing plays that you have practiced during the week
- Going over player position assignments
- Making sure all coaches know their role for game day
- Identifying parents that are handling the chains and down marker
- Making sure you have someone taking stats and writing up the end of game summary
- Remind all your players to bring both their black and white jerseys in case of last minute changes

It is important to NOT do the following on game day:

- Adding new plays – only runs plays that were practiced. Many of the players are nervous and scared and adding new plays at the last minute is a recipe for disaster
- Making too many position changes – Remember your players have been practicing their position all week and putting them into a position they are not comfortable with will result in an uncomfortable player and possible any injury.

The ten things you need to do to be a successful JDL Coach

As you begin your journey as a JDL coach there is a lot of information to digest and many things to consider. However, in all your decision making if you keep the items below in the front of your mind you will be very successful.

- A coach should be enthusiastic without being intimidating. Yell encouragement, whisper criticism. Be sensitive to the player's feelings and generally enjoy spending time with them. Be dedicated to serving children and understand that football provides physical, emotional and spiritual growth for its participants. Remember that JDL football is for the children.
- A coach needs to realize that he or she is a teacher, not a drill sergeant. Help children learn and work to improve their skills. Personal gains should never be a consideration. The job does not have the element of winning or losing. The best interests of the children transform into the best interests of the game.

- A coach must realize that the spectrum of skills for players of comparable chronological age will vary greatly. Each player must be considered as an individual. A coach must adjust his expectations as necessary.
- A coach needs tremendous patience and must temper his expectations. Players develop skills at different rates. Progressive skill development is achieved through repeated repetitions. It is not accomplished in a single practice or in a single season. Don't push children beyond limits in regard to practice. Make all drills and elements of progressive skill development obtainable. Children have many daily pressures and the football experience should not be one of them. Playing football must be fun.
- A coach should care more about the players as people ~~more~~ than as athletes.
- The safety and the welfare of the children can never be compromised. A coach will consider these factors above all others.
- A coach should encourage his players to dream and should help them set achievable goals. It is important to remain positive and refrain from discouraging remarks. Negative comments are remembered far more often than positive affirmations.
- A coach should be the first person to demonstrate good sportsmanship. Take a low profile during the competitions and allow the kids to be the center of attention. Your objective should be to instruct, encourage and correct
- Parents and players place their trust and confidence in the coach. The coach has a very important role in molding the athletic experience of the child.
- A coach can measure success by the respect he gets from his players, regardless of victories or defeats. Children who mature socially and physically while participating in sports are the best indication of good coaching.

Remember – Always smile, don't take yourself too seriously and it's all about the kids!

COACHING RESOURCES

Practice Plans

Your practice plans are already built! You just need to fine-tune them to your players' skill progression levels. All the practice plans are on the JDL Football Ponte Vedra website.

JDL Football Ponte Vedra Website (JDLWS)

The JDLWS is a single source of information for JDL Football in Ponte Vedra. This online tool will provide you 24x7 access to Junior Development information. Here is what you will find on JDLWS:

- Calendar of Events
- Practice Plans
- Drill Manual
- Rule Book
- Progressive Skill Development Manual
- Playbook
- JDL Football Manager Software and Documentation
- Announcements
- Useful links
- All documents referenced in this handbook

Every coach needs to login to this website as the weekly practice plans are provided on the site as well as the Playbook and Drill Manual.

The sites address is <https://sites.google.com/site/jdlcoachesintranet/> and the login name is jdlpvuser with a password of GoSharks.

Drill Manual

The JDL Drill manual is a reference book for you to use when running practices. All the practice plans reference a drill contained in the manual. You will need a drill manual to run your practices.

Remember all drills are to be adjusted based on player progressions. For example, if you are running a tackling drill but the majority of players have never tackled before you would want to start at level 1 of the tackling skill progression. If on the other hand most players are experienced tacklers you would want to start at a higher level on the tackling skills progression.

Playbook

The JDL Playbook contains the offensive and defensive plays you will run during your practices and games. It is important that you use the plays given. Only in the older divisions should new plays be developed.

JDL Football Software

In order to assist with player position assignments JDL has developed software that handles the task for you. You only need to put in your player information and it will do the rest including printing out players and their position assignments for game day. The software also tracks the history of what positions each player has played.

The software can be download from the JDL coaches website along with an instruction video on how to use the software. Please download, install the software and watch the video during the preseason. Don't wait until the first game you will need to create a game day roster your last week of preseason using the software.

There is also an instructional video on the web site to help you with using the software.

Coaching Spreadsheet

JDL uses an Excel spreadsheet to track information about each JDL division. The spreadsheet is available on JDLWS. You will use it every week to keep track of the following items:

- Roster and player contact information
- Player attendance
- Player Huddle Acknowledgement

If you don't have Excel you can print templates and updated them manually.

LET'S PLAY FOOTBALL

Now that you have all the background information let's get to the field.

Your football season can be broken down into three distinct phases:

1. Pre-Season
 - a. This is the time before games start and is usually three to four weeks long. All players are just coming off of summer vacations. They have been out of school for a month or so and it is hot out.
 - b. We will start the early practices without equipment and slowly bring equipment into the practices. You will receive emails and announcements on the Coaches Corner site about this schedule.
2. Regular-Season
 - a. This is the time when your 10 games begin. Players have been back to school for a few weeks and the heat is at its peak.
3. Final Game
 - a. This is the number 10 game and it is a special day for everyone. JDL coordinates with a local high school or other facility and sets up a complete football day for all of JDL. Your players get to hear their name announced over the loud speakers, they get to see a scoreboard and enjoy their family and friends cheering for them from the stadium seating.
 - b. This is also the time where final words are given, trophies handed out and equipment turned in.

The following sections breakdown how you handle each segment of the football season.

What to do now?

I'm sure you are anxious to get to practice and start learning about the JDL Progressive Skill Development but before you do you need to complete some very important items. Without them you won't be able to coach.

1. Complete the JDL Coaches Certification at <http://pvaacoachtraining.com>
2. Sign the coaches code of conduct and submit to the JDL Clinician via email or in person
3. Get certified by the county at and be sure to follow up and get your badge
4. Login to the JDLWS and review it
 - a. JDL Playbook
 - b. JDL Skills Progress Manual
 - i. Review skill progression videos as needed
 - c. Game Roster Software (install this on your Windows computer)
 - i. Watch video!
 - d. JDL Coaches Spreadsheet
5. Sign up to help at an equipment handout by letting the coaches clinician know you are coming
6. Become a member of USA Football at <http://usafootball.com>
 - a. Get their insurance
7. Meet with the other coaches who will be working in your division
 - a. Understand and establish their schedule and availability
 - b. Exchange contact info

Now you are ready to move on to the specifics of coaching in JDL.

Pre-Season

The Pre-Season is where you get all the jitters out. This is your chance to get to know your fellow coaches, your players and parents.

Specifically during the pre-season you need to accomplish the following:

1. Physical conditioning

- a. You need to get your players physically comfortable playing in the heat wearing football equipment
 - b. Familiarize parents with the practice schedule and the importance of being on time
2. Equipment Fitting
 - a. You need to ensure all players have equipment that fits properly
 - b. You need to see all players in all the proper protective gear – you’ll be amazed what some kids wear
3. Player Evaluations
 - a. You need to rank your players – Keep rankings confidential
 - b. You need to identify where players are on the skill progression levels
 - c. Your practice plans will be setup to work through the football basics and you will be given plenty of opportunity to evaluate players
4. Player Division Correctness
 - a. Proper division assignment is critical to a player enjoying JDL football. It is important to make necessary division assignment adjustments as early in the season as possible. However coaches need to recognize that there is a broad skill spectrum for players of the same chronological age. Coaches should not recommend moving players to a lower division to avoid coaching less skilled players. Nor should coaches be too quick to recommend moving more-skilled players to a higher division. The JDL philosophy is that players should play as close to their age group as possible and that each player deserves the opportunity to excel as well as to be challenged.
 - b. You need to communicate with the Coaches Clinician when you think a player might be in the wrong division.
 - c. If you have a player that is just way beyond all your other players (either far more skilled or far less skilled) he may need to move to another division.
 - d. Coaches recommend the movement of qualifying players to the Clinician; however, the reassignment of any player will be made by the league commissioner only
 - e. DON’T WAIT moving players’ needs to be done as early as possible.
5. JDL Software Setup
 - a. You need to input all your players and their rankings into the software
 - b. You need to create a test game and become familiar with the software
 - c. You need to start thinking about who is going to be playing your Ball Handling Position Players for the first game
6. Player Safety – Hydration, Concussion and Returning to Action Following Injury
 - a. Hydration
 - i. Know the symptoms of dehydration and what to do in the event a player shows the symptoms. Be alert during practice for players exhibiting the symptoms of dehydration.
 - ii. Have frequent water breaks
 - iii. Stress proper hydration with both players and parents until they get it – players need to come to practice with a large water container not a 12oz bottle picked up on the way to practice.
 - b. Concussion
 - i. Know how to identify
 - ii. Discuss symptoms with parents
 - c. Returning to Action following an injury
 - i. Need approval from doctor
7. Team Parent
 - a. Figure out who your team parent is and start working with them
8. Establish communications with your players and parents
 - a. Email is typically best because once games start you will be emailing out positions on Sunday so parent and kids know where they are playing in the upcoming practices and game.
9. Find out if players will be missing practices or games
 - a. If a player is missing a game the JDL Software allows you to exclude him from the rotation for that game. It is very important that you do this because it will get other players into positions that can practice them that week.

- b. Players that miss a practice the week before a game should not play a Ball Handling Position that Saturday. They go back into the rotation. This must be stressed to parents.
- c. Missing one practice means that 50% of a player's opportunity to learn a position is lost and that player is probably not ready to play that position during a game. They risk injury and they are at risk for having a terrible day because they are not prepared.

NOTE: Your last week of Pre-Season practice must follow the game day practice process. As the pre-season progresses a 25-minute scrimmage session is added to practice. The scrimmage is intended to prepare both offensive and defensive units for game situations. Typically a subset of offensive plays will be run. Coaches are reminded that scrimmage is but a portion of the day's practice. Coaches must continue to include PSDI drills as a major element of practice.

Weekly To Do's Pre-Season

It's a week or so before your first practice - What do you do? Smile and go to the JDLWS. You should already have your Progression and Drill manuals printed out and ready to go. You probably just need to get the practice plan for tomorrow's practice.

Here is a day-by-day breakdown of what a coach needs to do during the Pre-Season and when to do it. Please adjust to fit into your schedule while ensuring all necessary items are completed:

<p>Communicate with assistance coaches on who will be at the practices</p> <p>Assign drills to assistant coaches</p> <p>Print practice plans for Mon, Wed, Sat</p> <p>Review all drills, know how to execute them and become familiar with the coaching points/skill progressions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Run Practice ● Take Attendance ● Review practice with coaches and fine tune execution ● Review player rankings with coaches ● Update attendance & player acknowledgement on coaches spreadsheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review Wednesdays practice plan ● Review all drills and know how to execute them ● Assign drills to assistant coaches
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Day	Thursday/Friday	Saturday
<p>Review practice with coaches and fine tune execution</p> <p>Review player rankings with coaches</p> <p>Update attendance & player acknowledgement on coaches spreadsheet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review Saturdays practice plan ● Review all drills and know how to execute them ● Assign drills to assistant coaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Run Practice ● Take Attendance ● Review practice with coaches and fine tune execution ● Review player rankings with coaches ● Update attendance & player acknowledgement on coaches spreadsheet ● Update JDL Software with player rankings

Lead coach responsible for all activities. Assistant coaches are responsible for items that are not bold.

First Practice

Below is the actual first practice plan from the JDLWS. On the right are explanations that will help you following the plan.

Minutes = amount of time allocated to that drill

Period = an identifier for the period of the practice. 1=warm up, 2=speed/agility, 3=skill development, 4=game prep/scrimmage, 5= huddle

Drill Name = the name of the drill to run

Source = where the drill is located

You will notice that in section 3 and sometimes section 2 it will specify rotation – this means multiple stations are setup and players rotate between stations.

After the pre-season you will see a rotation for period three and a ball handling break out section. The ball handling players will break out and work with the game day offensive coach while the remaining players work through the skill building stations.

Period 5 is conducted after your 90 minute practice. So don't include the 10 minutes for the huddle in the 90 minutes you have for practice.

Minutes	Period	Drill Name and Number	Source
10	1	Warm-up and Stretch—Jog plus Warm-ups drills (coach's selection)	Drill Manual, USA Football Drill Library
5		Water Break and Attendance (identify missing players and "strays")	
10	2	Speed/Agility/Offensive/Defensive Reaction Drills	Drill Manual and Skill Manual
		• 2 & 3-point Stance	
		• Form Running	
5		Water Break	
15	3	Skill Development Drills—Five Stations (5 minutes each then rotate)	
		• Quarterback Station Drill #17 (omit passing mechanics)	Drill Manual pg 15
		• Ball Handling Drill #22	Drill Manual pg 18
		• Center Station Drill #2	Drill Manual pg 8
		• Squirm Drill #24	Drill Manual pg 19
5		Water Break	
15	3	Skill Development Drills—Continue with Period 3 above	Drill Manual
5		Water Break	
20	4	Game Preparation	
		• Offensive Formations and Designations and Hole Designations	Drill Manual pg 6
10	5	Huddle	

Regular Season

The regular season consists of 10 games all played at Davis Park with the exception of the last game being played at a local facility. Your schedule is now practice on Monday and Wednesday with games on Saturday. The focus you have during the pre-season will continue but with an increased emphasis on preparing players to play there assigned positions during the game.

Your practices are basically the same and your weekly To Do's are very similar. So there are really no surprises.

During the regular season you need to bring everything you have been building together. Here are some key objectives:

1. Build confidence in your players by establishing an environment where it is ok to make mistakes
2. Never criticize a player – criticize the technique
3. Provide only positive feedback and demonstrate how they can improve
4. You have two days to teach a player to be successful in a position – emphasize this with your parents and use your time properly to accomplish this goal

NOTE: The last week of practice must follow the regular season practice plans and regular season weekly to-do's.

Weekly To Do's Regular Season

It's Sunday and your first game is this Saturday. What do you do? No worries. You should be all set. You have been preparing for this for about a month now.

- Your practices run just like they did in the pre-season with two exceptions and that is a focus on specific skill progression for each player based on where they are playing in the game and heavier focus on offensive plays
- You have been ranking your players
- You have identified your Ball Handling Positions Players for your first game
- You have everything inputted into your JDL Software
- Your team parent has your chain game and snack schedule worked out

Here is a day-by-day breakdown of what a coach needs to do during the Regular Season and when to do it. Please adjust to fit into your schedule while ensuring all necessary items are completed:

Sunday		Monday	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using the JDL Software create the roster for your game ● Fine tune the roster as needed ● Make sure player match ups are appropriate ● Print your roster and email to your team ● Remind parents that you need to know when a player will miss practice or game ● Remind parents that players in Ball Handling Positions must be at both practices ● Identify the following coaching assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offensive coach for both teams - The offensive coach will need to prepare a play list ○ Defensive coach for both teams ○ Referee for game ○ Sideline coach for game ● Coaches should practice their game roles during practice. So, the offensive coach will work with the backfield, the defensive coach runs the defensive drills, etc. ● Print out the practice plans for Monday & Wednesday ● Review all drills for the practice and know them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attend and run Practice ● Take attendance ● Confirm which players will not be at the game on Saturday ● Adjust playing positions based on players missing the game and Ball Handling Positions players not at practice ● Review practice with coaches and fine tune execution ● Review player rankings with coaches ● Update the following items on the Coaches Spreadsheet Player Attendance & Player Acknowledgements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review plan ● Review and ● Assign ● Make play JDL ● Print nece 	
Wednesday		Thursday/Friday	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attend and run Practice ● Confirm which players will not be at the game on Saturday ● Adjust playing positions based on players missing the game and Ball Handling Positions players not at practice ● Review practice with coaches and fine tune execution ● Review player rankings with coaches ● Update the following items on the Coaches Spreadsheet Player Attendance & Player Acknowledgements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make final adjustments in JDL Software to rosters ● Includes player position changes and other changes needed ● Email the team the updated roster if needed and inform them what time to arrive for the game. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arrive on time ● Take attendance have proper co ● Warm up play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Light stretch ○ Just getting muscles hea ● Have QB's and snapping ● Review Offens ● Line up player second half. T where to play have all your p ● Gather statisti submit to com 	

Lead coach responsible for all activities. Assistant coaches are responsible for items that are not bold.

Practices – Regular Season

Your practices will be setup and run the same as your pre-season practices with the exception of a strong focus on building skills specific to the position the players will be playing on Saturday. Also there is a strong focus on teaching the Ball Handling Position players the offensive plays. This was also done during practices the week before the first game.

Ball Handling Position Break Out

During each practice of the regular season and the week before the first game your practice plan will include a Ball Handling Positions Break Out section. During this part of the practice the following occurs:

- The Offensive coach for the upcoming game leads this break out
- Ball Handling Positions players for the upcoming game for both teams participate in this break out
- The rest of the team will work with the other coach on the assigned drills
- All the players will merge together again after completion of the break out
- The teaching objective is to continue building skill progressions while teaching the offensive plays
- Players need to be walked through the players and slowing worked into full speed

Scrimmages

As the season progresses your practice plans will include an intra-division scrimmage. Scrimmages are an opportunity for your players to experience the position they are playing on Saturday's game. It's also for coaches to participate in their role for game day.

Scrimmages are intended to be a portion of practice not the entire practice. A good rule of thumb to give all players the opportunity to practice their position is to breakout Monday and Wednesday's scrimmage as follows:

Breakout players into their assigned black and white teams. Have one team wear the red hats or other identifiable clothing so the players and coaches know who is on which team. Take the time available for the scrimmage and cut it in two parts. On Monday use your Saturday game day first half offense and first half defense for both teams. Take the first part of the scrimmage and have white offense (first half) play against black defense (first half). For the second part of the scrimmage have black offense (first half) play against white defense (first half). On Wednesday use your second half positions.

Monday Scrimmage:

First part - game day first half white offense vs. game day first half black defense

Second part – game day first half black offense vs. game day first half white defense

Wednesday Scrimmage:

First part - game day second half white offense vs. game day second half black defense

Second part – game day second half black offense vs. game day second half white defense

Ending a practice

Practices should end on time and with a huddle. Remember to call out players as described in previous huddle section. Remember to talk to your parents have give them any information they need and gather information you need such as players not being at practices or games. As appropriate allow all coaches to call out players.

Games

Your games are on Saturday at a regularly scheduled time. It is suggested that you have your players arrive 45 minutes prior to game time wearing their proper color jersey and having their other jersey available in case of last minute changes. Find a location away from the games currently in progress and gather your team. Here is a suggestion for the things to accomplish 45 minutes prior to game time:

- Take attendance
- If needed make last minute player substitutions. When making substitutions please remember to have competitive match ups and don't put a rank C player into a position he has never played. Use your rank A players when needed to fill positions that require more confidence.
- Warm up the team – do a light stretch and some cardio
- Have the team drinking water
- Line up players into their positions – ask them to remember their positions and who is standing next to them
- Have the QB and centers practice the snap
- Have the offense run through plays on the play list
- If you have been practicing the 5-4 defense have the defense practice switching between 6-3 and 5-4
- Assign captains to participate in the coin toss. Hold the coin toss 5 minutes prior to the scheduled start time for the game.

Offensive Sample play list

Keep scope of plays to a minimum. Fewer plays run properly are better than many play poorly executed.

The order of plays run is critical. For example, Dive plays help set up “2nd man” plays, “2nd man” plays set up the counters and quick hitters can keep defenses honest. You need to build confidence in your team so start with the simple plays and work up to the more complex plays. The play list will be different for different divisions. A play list for a 9-year old division early in mid-season might look like this:

- 1) A Dive play (either “32 ...Fake 26” or “31... Fake 45” or both if the backs have both mastered it)
- 2) “2nd man play” (either “Fake 32...26” or Fake 31..45” or both if mastered)
- 3) Quick hitter either “46 quick hitter” or “25 quick hitter
- 4) “QB Sneak”
- 5) “QB Rollout
- 6) Counter play (either “Fake 32...45 Counter” or “Fake 31...26

Running a game – Keys to Success

Coaches have a role for game day assigned to them and it is important they fulfill the requirements of their role. However, many things happen during a game and flexibility is important. So, as the game progresses keep the JDL philosophy in mind and make decisions in accordance with the philosophy.

Extended time spent in the huddle calling a play can be counterproductive. The more plays you can run in a game the more fun it will be. Keep huddles simple, short and quick. Effective practice is the key to being able to get your team into and out of the huddle quickly. Keep the game's play list short and work with the players to master the few plays on that week's play list. It is far better to run only three or four different plays well, than trying to run ten different plays poorly. Call the play in the huddle quickly and let the kids run it. Provide positive feedback afterwards and show ways to improve. Whatever happens on the play happens. Don't get upset at the kids. They are learning. Before long they will be able to get in to and out of the huddle quickly. Smile and enjoy it.

Ending a game

At the completion of a game you will have a “Huddle” and recognize players for their accomplishments. The score is not important after the game. What is important is that players feel part of the team and good about themselves. Talk to your parents and get ready for next week.

Last Couple of Games

It's about game 6, 7 or 8 and you have been doing a great job encouraging your players and following the JDL concept. That means all your players at this point have played running back and most have played QB and center. Now you have the opportunity to give the players something new. Because you have been successful with your player rotation you can give the players an opportunity to pick positions they want to play. Here is a suggestion for doing this if you like. If you are more comfortable continuing with how the other games have been setup please

do so. This is only an option and is not an expectation of players or parents. Also keep in mind age appropriateness for doing this.

Create a list with all the player's names on it with three columns for the first, second, and third choice of positions they would like to play. Gather all the player's choices. Go into your JDL Software and setup say game 9. Using your player's choices setup a roster. Try to give each player at least one of his position choices. Remember you still need to have appropriate match ups with your rankings. If you haven't completed the QB/C rotation just continue doing it. You can do this for game 10 as well. That should enable you to get most of your players two of their position choices.

Final Season Game

The final game of the season is a big day for your players and their family. Details about this event will be given to you as the day approaches.

Upon completion of the season you will need to submit your Coaches spreadsheet that should be updated with all player rankings and attendance. Email the spreadsheet to the coaches' clinician.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

What are the differences between JDL Football and other youth football programs?

JDL Football is an attractive alternative to other football programs because it offers

- full participation for every player--ie no minimum play players
- balanced competition between teams and between opposing players on opposing teams
- a program that focuses on fundamentals and skill development for every player
- a program that allows every player to experience all aspects of the game
- a program in which coaches are mentors and have no stake in the outcome of games
- a program free of travel commitments
- a program without demanding practice schedules

On what basis are players assigned to a particular JDL division?

The league commissioner assigns players to divisions based on several considerations—the primary consideration is the player’s age/grade. A player’s weight may be a factor but is not nearly as compelling as age/grade.

Heavier players are not forced to play in older divisions just because they may weigh more than players their own age. Experience, maturity, aggressiveness and skill level are considered in placing players whose weight is lighter or heavier than what is typical for the age. Mismatches in age and maturity levels are far more significant than weight mismatches within an age group and should be avoided. Ideally, to ensure a positive experience, players in a division should be within a year of the same age if at all possible. Age spreads of three years or more are discouraged. The main objective is that players be placed in a division such that all players have a safe and positive sports experience.

JDL Football refers to a unique coaching assignment as a fundamental element of the program. Can you describe the role of the coach in JDL Football that makes it unique?

The coaches assigned to a JDL Football division work with all players in that division during practices and games.

Coaches also play key roles in creating the two competing teams for each week of the season. Competing teams in JDL Football are formed by splitting the 32 players in the division into two 16-player teams in a manner that ensures competitive balance between the two teams. A computer application program is used to facilitate player assignments. During the game, there is an offensive coach on the field during play. That coach works with the offensive units of each competing team. Similarly there is a defensive coach on the field who works with the defensive units of each competing team. The two on-field coaches do not compete against each other. Instead they work together to provide instruction and ensure proper alignments. If necessary they make adjustments in position assignments to avoid gross mismatches between opposing players. As a result the coaches have no stake in the outcome of the game—an essential factor in the JDL Football concept.

Why do JDL Football divisions have 32-player limit?

JDL Football divisions are limited in size in order to maximize playing time for every player. On game day, the 32 players in a division are split into two 16-player teams. With 16 players on each team there are only 5 players waiting to play. JDL Football rules require that each player must start either on offense or defense in each half of the game. This implementation guarantees that every player will have the opportunity to play in at least two and often three of the four game segments (first half offense, first half defense, second half offense and second half defense.) Limiting the size of the division also ensures that players will have the opportunity to play at least two games at most of the football positions.

How do you ensure that players get a chance to play multiple positions during the season?

Learning to play a variety of positions is a fundamental tenet of JDL Football and it is not something that is left to chance. A special computer application program (“Game Day Roster” software) is used to assign players to position for each week’s game. In addition to assigning players to teams and positions, the computer program keeps track of the positions played by each player during the season and provides that metric to the coaches.

What is the purpose of the “Game Day Roster” software that JDL Football provides?

The special JDL Football “Game Day Roster” software serves several purposes. It is used to assign players to the two competing teams each week in a manner that produces two competitively balanced teams. Second it ensures that every player is having an opportunity to play multiple positions. Coaches evaluate players during the season and feed those evaluations into the Game Day Roster software program. The coaches select

competitively balanced offensive backfields and centers for the week's game and feed that into the software program. The program then assigns the remaining players to positions on the two teams, again striving for competitively balanced teams and competitively balanced match-ups by positions.

What is Progressive Skill Development and Instruction (PSDI)?

Progressive Skill Development and Instruction is a JDL initiative that ensures that each player regardless of age, weight or current skill level can become a better football player. Each player is instructed and challenged to perfect age appropriate football skills associated with each of the major football positions.

My son played in Division 4 last season. Will he be placed in division 5 this season?

Not necessarily. Each season new divisions are created depending upon the number of players who register and their ages. As a result, there is no correlation between age and division number from year to year. We may have more than one or two divisions in each age group, again depending upon the ages of players who register. The only assurance is that the very youngest players will be in the lowest numbered division and older players will be placed in higher numbered divisions.

Can Dads volunteer to help as coaches?

We welcome all interested parents who wish to serve as lead or assistant coaches. However, **all** adults who will be on the field with players in any capacity even for a limited period of time must be certified and must wear their certification badge at all times. The certification process is described in the coaches' handbook.

Are there limitations in the formations that may be used on offense and defense?

Yes, the offensive and defensive formations permitted are described in the coach's manual. Our youngest JDL divisions typically play a 6-3-2 defense and a base T-formation on offense. As players gain experience, adaptations to the formations are allowed upon approval by the league commissioner.

Are kickoffs and punt returns permitted?

Kickoffs and live punt returns are not permitted in most divisions for safety considerations. The ball is put in play at the 40-yard line to start the game or following a score. Free punts (no rushers) and free field goal attempts (no rushers) are allowed in all but the very youngest divisions. Any variation to these conditions must be approved by the league commissioner.

What is the procedure for scoring on the Point After Touchdown (PAT)?

The scoring team has the option of going for a one or two point conversion. The line of scrimmage for the extra-point attempt is the opponent's 3-yard line. The attempt may be either by run, pass (score 1 point) or kick (score 2 points). In younger age groups, a kicked extra point attempt is a free kick without rushing by the defense with the ball placed at the 3-yard line. In older divisions, a free kick, a limited rush or full rush may be allowed as directed by the league commissioner. In these situations the ball placement will typically be 5-7 yards from the line of scrimmage at the discretion of the coach.

Do coaches choose when and where to practice?

No. The commissioner establishes the practice and game schedules and divisions must practice and play at the assigned place and time.

Can coaches hold practice scrimmages against other divisions?

Players are assigned to divisions to ensure the best football experience possible. Since each division represents a collection of players of comparable age, weight and skill level, scrimmages between divisions are discouraged. Only in certain limited situations where the two divisions are close in age, weight and skill level are interdivision scrimmages permitted. Approval from the league commissioner is required for any interdivisional scrimmage.

Do JDL Football leagues compete against each other?

No. JDL Football leagues do not play against each other. All games are intra-divisional match-ups within the local organization. However, if a local organization has multiple divisions in the same age/weight group, scrimmages and games between those divisions may under certain conditions be permitted.

Are there any post-season playoffs in JDL Football?

No. There are no sanctioned JDL Football post-season playoffs—a concept that pits one team from one organization against a team from another organization. Since a single JDL team only exists for any given week of the season, it is not possible to identify individual JDL teams for post-season playoff consideration. Furthermore, roster control—the number of players in the division and player composition— is unique for a local division. In addition, in the context of JDL Football, playing time is predicated on a limited size roster—no more than 16 players per team. With 16 players on a team, all players experience abundant playing time. Competing one division against another would reduce playing time for all players significantly. In short, playoffs are not compatible with the JDL Football structure or JDL Football objectives.

Can girls play JDL Football?

Yes. JDL Football welcomes girls who want to play football and several have played over the past few years, typically in the 8 or 9-year old age group. In some cases, girls have an advantage over boys in motor skills at the younger ages.

My son is 13-years old and weighs 248 pounds. Can he play JDL Football?

Yes he can. The league's oldest division is comparable to the middle school age division and has unlimited weight provisions.

What is the minimum age for players in JDL Football?

There are no firm minimum age requirements in JDL Football. However, experience has shown that very young players, i.e. five years old or younger may have difficulty dealing with the complexities and challenges organized football presents. It really depends on the individual player's physical, mental and emotional maturity and if the league has a 5 or 6-year old division.

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT RESOURCES

1. JDLWS – JDL Football PV Website - <https://sites.google.com/site/jdlcoachesintranet/>
 - a. Progressive Skill Development Manual
 - b. Practice Plans
 - c. Drill Manual
 - d. Playbook
2. Ponte Vedra JDL web site www.pvafootball.com
3. USA Football web site www.usafootball.com
4. JDL Commissioner – Jerry Norton – jnorton@coachjerry.com – 904-285-2319
5. Lead administrator – Mary J. Henkel mjhenkel@bellsouth.net
6. Coaches Clinician – Eric Henkel – eric.henkel@pepsico.com - 904-673-8549