



IMPLEMENTING LIMITED CONTACT – PADDED FLAG IOWA METRO YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE

INTRODUCTION

Youth football programs across the country are finding a way to bridge the gap between Non-Contact and Contact. This Iowa league shared with USA Football the success they had with bringing the Game Type of Limited Contact into their community.

Key Takeaways:

- Easier transition to playing Contact
- Raised participation numbers
- Helped concerned parents get on board with their child playing the game

Q: What were your impressions of limited contact prior to your first year implementing it?

A: We had only done flag in the spring and tackle in the fall. We had some board members learn about Limited Contact (flag football with full pads) and then we figured we would give it a shot, as it allowed us to bring 3rd graders into our league.

Q: Did you see a lot of athletes go from Non-Contact to Limited Contact and how was their experience?

A: Yes, we see a natural progression.

They have one year of Limited Contact in 3rd grade. In 4th grade, they play 8-man tackle, then in 5th grade they move to 11-man tackle.

Q: How successful was Limited Contact for your organization from a participation standpoint?

A: This option has been very successful. We have the three ages go through and the kids are enjoying it. By the end of the 3rd grade season, you see that most of the Limited Contact players are ready to tackle.

Q: How did parents react to having a Limited Contact game type?

A: This was certainly a football option that helped the parents that were concerned. They got to see their 3rd grader play the Limited Contact game in full pads and many then transitioned to full tackle the next year.

Q: Were there any other unexpected results by offering Limited Contact?

A: We had some parents that wanted to continue to have their player play Limited Contact instead of full tackle.

Q: Would you say Limited Contact is a good bridge between Non-Contact and Contact?

A: Absolutely. For our Limited Contact coaches, we encourage them to teach regular blocking and to spend some time in practice tackling bags.

Q: What was the impact on participation?

A: For participation, it allowed 3rd graders participate in our league in the fall. The numbers have been very good. It also helped our chances getting 4th graders to come out for tackle the next year. Limited Contact allows the 3rd graders to get used to the equipment and hitting or being hit. Yes, they are pulling flags, but they are also taught the proper ways to block and tackle.

Q: What have you learned by offering both Limited Contact and Non-Contact?

A: For the Limited Contact, you still have to teach the players how to properly tackle. We stress that with our coaches to help instill the good habits while blocking and tackling during the Limited Contact year.

Q: What was the message you wanted parents to know the first season you offered Non-Contact?

A: That the game of football could be played while protecting their player and then above all else, the kids could have fun doing it.

Q: What was your biggest hesitation and/or hurdle to implement Limited Contact? How did you overcome this?

A: The main hurdle was equipment. We use flag belts and traditional equipment. We did not have an option for 3rd graders. Needless to say, we had to purchase smaller helmets to fit the little guys. We just planned ahead and got those small helmets on order.

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