

# **AHSAA Recommendations For Full Contact Football Practices**

**Summary:** Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) Bylaws currently do not limit the amount of full-contact practice during the football season. The recommendations below should serve as guidelines regarding the amount of time during which full contact practice (11-on-11) is allowed.

**Rationale:** The proposal by the AHSAA Medical Advisory Board seeks to increase the level of health and safety of student-athletes – high school and junior high/middle school – who participate in the sport of football at AHSAA member schools.

**Recommendations:** During the regular season, including championship play, and the allowed 10-day spring evaluation period, the AHSAA recommends that member schools restrict the amount of full contact football practice (11-on-11).

The recommendations regarding full contact football practice (11-on-11) are as follows:

Week 1 – In accordance with the AHSAA Fall Football Practice Rule (Rule III, Section 18, Page 44 of the 2013-14 Handbook), the first two days of fall football practice should be in shorts and helmets. Shoulder pads and helmets are allowed on the third practice day for a period not to exceed 90 minutes of total practice time.

The AHSAA recommends that shoulder pads and helmets be used on the fourth practice day for a period of time not to exceed 120 minutes (2 hours) of total practice time. On the fifth practice day, one full contact practice, not to exceed 90 minutes of full contact (11-on-11) is recommended.

Week 2 – Alternating days of full contact practice, not to exceed a combined total of 120 minutes of full contact practice (11-on-11) per week. In addition, one intra-squad scrimmage would be allowed in week 2.

Week 3 – Alternating days of full contact practice, not to exceed a combined total of 120 minutes of full contact practice (11-on-11) per week. One interscholastic scrimmage contest would be allowed in week 3.

Week 4 through End of Season – 90 minutes of full contact practice (11-on-11) per week.

Spring Evaluation – Alternating days of full contact practice, not to exceed a combined total of 120 minutes of full contact practice (11-on-11) per week. One interscholastic scrimmage contest would be allowed during the spring evaluation.

Teams may continue to dress in full pads for practices, but should only participate in live action in accordance with the above-stated time guidelines for full contact practice. It is assumed that when players are in shells (shorts, shoulder pads, helmets) no live action will occur. These guidelines are intended to limit live action and not the number of practices a team may participate in using full pads. A team may participate in “air,” “bags,” “wrap,” and “thud” drills and simulations at any point. The contact levels are defined below.

The AHSAA makes no recommendation regarding limitations of full contact during football drills involving groups of less than 11-on-11.

For the purposes of these recommended guidelines, the following definitions are provided:

Full Contact -- Live game simulations where live action occurs (11-on-11).

Live Action – Contact at game speed where players execute full tackles at a competitive pace, taking players to the ground.

Air – Players should run unopposed without bags or any opposition.

Bags – Activity is executed against a bag, shield or pad to allow for a soft-contact surface, with or without the resistance of a teammate or coach standing behind the bag.

Wrap – Drills run at full speed until contact, which is above the waist with the players remaining on their feet.

Thud – Same as a wrap but the tempo is competitive with no pre-determined winner and the players are not tackling to the ground.