

**NORTHWEST FOOTBALL LEAGUE
RULES AND ORGANIZATION**

JUNIOR DIVISION RULES

GENERAL LEAGUE RULES

League Structure – The Northwest Football League (NWFL) is sponsored by the Hilliard Optimist Club Youth Sports, Inc. and governed by the NWFL Mini-Board. The Mini-Board consists of a Director (appointed and approved by the Hilliard Optimist Club Youth Sports, Inc. Board of Directors); Assistant Director(s), Community Director(s), Division Commissioners, Assistant Division Commissioners, and Secretary. Voting Members include: Director, Community Director(s) and Division Commissioners. Assistant Commissioners can vote in place of Commissioner when 24-hour notice of absence from meeting is received by the League Director. **NOTE:** Director only votes in cases of a tie, or if their vote would cause a tie.

Coaches – *The NWFL considers it a privilege to coach in our league and not a right – coaches should always remember this.* All coaching positions must be approved by the NWFL.

Volunteering to Coach – Anyone can volunteer to become a coach regardless of game and/or coaching experience by contacting any league official or volunteering through the league website (www.HilliardOptimist.org). Head coaches must be at least 21 years of age to volunteer. Assistant coaches must be at least 13 years of age to volunteer with the NWFL.

Volunteer Screenings – To be a Coach and/or Commissioner in the NWFL volunteers must pass a Volunteer Screening/Background Check. Background checks cost a nominal fee (approx. \$20) and are to be paid by the league. **ABSOLUTELY NO** coaches will be approved without a completed background check on file. This background check must be updated every two years. In addition to coaches, anyone that will be in charge of a group of youth participants (at practices, events, games, etc.) must also complete a background check. **NOTE:** Any group of participants should be supervised by at least one approved Coach/Volunteer.

Photo ID Badges – Coaches and League Administrators will receive photo ID badges which must be worn at every game. Badges will only be distributed to coaches that have cleared the NWFL's screening process and have been approved to coach in the NWFL. These badges must be worn at all times when on the sideline and given to any league referee or official upon request. Refusal to provide your badge when requested will result in immediate removal from the sidelines and may result in a suspension for the season. **NOTE:** If a coach is not able to attend the scheduled picture day and have their photograph taken for their ID badges, they must provide a photo to the league by emailing a JPG file to the Director of the NWFL via the league website. Photos must be sent no later than one week prior to the first game.

Fundraising – There will be no team fundraisers or solicitation of funds from player's parents, of any type, in this league. Fundraising is done as a league function by each respective community only, no other fundraisers are allowed (for team gear, equipment, etc.). All teams and players are EQUAL.

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Team Purchases – Any purchase for a team must be approved by a League Official. For example, if a coach or parent asks for, or suggests, that parents purchase practice jerseys, **all** team members must be provided the same practice jersey regardless of the parents' agreement to purchase the jersey.

Uniforms – NWFL participants must wear the league furnished uniform (jersey, pants, and flag belt) for all games.

Coach Suspensions – Coaches will be suspended for any behavior or actions in direct violation of the NWFL's Coaches Code of Conduct, any League rules or requirements, or any other behavior or actions found to be in detriment to the NWFL and/or the children served by the league. Suspensions can be administered by any League Assistant Commissioner, Commissioner, Assistant Director or Director of the League. Minimum suspensions will be for a period of **two weeks** where **NO** contact with the team is permitted – either at practices or games. During the time of suspension, any actions or attempts to coach at practice or games (verbal or non-verbal communication) will result in a suspension for the remainder of the season.

Appeals to any suspension can be made in writing to the Division Commissioner who will present the appeal to the NWFL Mini-Board. Appeals will be decided by the Mini-Board and will be presented at the next meeting following the suspension. If and when a decision is rendered by the Mini-Board the coach will be notified in writing (via email) of the findings. In the event that a coach is suspended for an entire year, they may petition the league to be reinstated two years after the season the suspension took place. NWFL Mini-Board meetings are scheduled at least once a month. If a special meeting is required to review any appeals or other urgent league business at least three (3) days written notice is required.

Petition for Reinstatement of Suspended Coaches – Any program which is a member of the NWFL wishing to recommend reinstatement of a suspended coach may write a letter of recommendation addressed to the NWFL Mini-Board. The letter must contain the following:

- A detailed description of the incident which resulted in the suspension
- Reason why the program feels the offending coach should be reinstated

The NWFL Mini-Board will review the application for reinstatement and vote based on the merits of the petition. Once the vote is completed and a decision is announced the coach in question must wait a period of one (1) year before reapplying for reinstatement if denied. Mini-Board meetings are held once a month, if needed a second meeting can be scheduled within two weeks of request.

Player Suspensions – A player ejected from a game, for any reason, will not be permitted to practice the following week and will be suspended from the next league game. Any player found to be a repeat offender, or whose actions jeopardize the safety of others can be suspended for the remainder of the season. In addition, players may be suspended if their behavior continually disrupts practices, games or league events.

Petition for Reinstatement of Suspended Players – Parents/guardians may petition the NWFL Mini-Board (in writing) to review their child's status for the following season. The letter must contain the following:

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- A detailed description of the incident(s) which resulted in the suspension
- Reason why the parent feels the participant should be reinstated

The NWFL Mini-Board will review the application for reinstatement and vote based on the merits of the petition. During the review process parents/guardians may be asked to attend a NWFL Mini-Board meeting in order to discuss the behavior of the player. Once the vote is completed and a decision is announced the player in question must wait a period of one (1) year before reapplying for reinstatement if denied.

Practices – Coaches are not permitted to have any contact (other than email and phone notification) with their team prior to the official start of the NWFL practices (as determined annually by the League). Any contact with the team prior to this date must be approved by the League Director.

Number of Practices/Length of Practices – Practices are a maximum of two (2) hours in length. Prior to the start of school teams may have a maximum of five (5) practices per week. Once school starts practices are limited to a maximum of three (3) per week. Of these three (3) maximum practices, two (2) can be full contact practices (with pads) and one (1) should be a no pads/no contact practice. Only **exception** to this rule is the ability to conduct a third practice in pads by teams that have a bye on the NWFL game schedule for the week. The length of the practice session shall be at the discretion of the Head Coach as long as it does not exceed two (2) hours in length per day. Once school starts, practices must be completed by 8:30 p.m.

Missed Practices by a Player – Any player that misses two consecutive practices in a week **may** not be permitted to play in that week's game. The benching of a player for missed practices is at the sole discretion of the Head Coach of the applicable team. The Head Coach is responsible for providing written rules for the team prior to any disciplinary action being taken.

If a Coach decides to bench a player for a game the Head Coach must contact their Division Commissioner, other Community Commissioner (when game in question is played against another a team from another community), the opposing Head Coach, and the player's parent(s)/guardian(s) no later than midnight on Thursday of the current week. Any complaints and/or objections must be submitted in writing to the Division Commissioners of all Communities involved eight (8) hours prior to the game or within three (3) days of the incident. **NOTE:** Under no circumstances shall a child be penalized for missing practice due to a school related or religious activity or medical reason (accompanied by a note from a doctor) where prior notification was given.

Scrimmages – Interleague scrimmages are acceptable and encouraged, however **absolutely no scrimmages and/or games are permitted with teams that are not part of the NWFL** unless the game or practice is a special league activity sponsored by and approved by the NWFL Mini-Board. Full-contact scrimmages are limited to two (2) during the preseason and three (3) during the regular season. No more than one (1) full-contact scrimmage is permitted per week. All full-contact scrimmages must be scheduled with the Player Safety Coach. There are no full-pad non-contact scrimmages. Unused preseason scrimmages do not carry over to the regular season.

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Length of Season – Season consists of at least nine (9) games. Each team must complete the schedule of League games.

Concussion Awareness and Procedures – If a player is removed from a game or practice due to concussion or concussion like systems as identified in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention publication “Concussion in Youth Sports”, that player may not return to the game or practice. The player may also not return to practice or a game until evaluated by a health care professional. A physician’s note must be provided with the date of allowable return to football activities.

Ban of Tobacco Products on School Property – In 2010 the Hilliard City School District implemented a new policy that bans the use of all tobacco products on School District property. Absolutely no smoking or use of other tobacco products on school property is permitted.

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SECTION A – COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

- I. All Coaches shall be required to attend one pre-season league meeting and any and all other meetings deemed necessary by the League. Failure to attend the meetings without proper request for a representative to attend on behalf of the Head Coach may result in that coach losing his/her privilege to coach for the season.
- II. No Coach is allowed to pull his team off the field and stop play for any reason whatsoever. Coaches removing their teams from the field shall have the game forfeited, shall be suspended for the remainder of the season, and any other penalty as sanctioned by the NWFL.
- III. All Coaches and players will, in the interest of GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP, shake hands with the opposing team and coaching staff at the end of the game.
- IV. Coaches conduct shall be governed by the following:
 - a. Coaches shall not engage in any extensive physical contact with players.
 - b. Coaches shall not use foul or abusive language.
 - c. Coaches shall not use tobacco products during practice, games and at league functions.
 - d. Coaches shall not give players instructions that are contrary to league rules.
 - e. Coaches will address officials in a properly courteous manner. (Likewise, officials will address coaches in a properly courteous manner also.)
 - f. Due to the nature and purpose of the League, we will practice **ZERO TOLERANCE**; that is, a Head Coach or Assistant Coach ejected from a game will be suspended from coaching for the remainder of the season and the entire next season. Application for reinstatement will not be accepted until two years has passed from the incident resulting in their suspension. After this period, the coach has the right to petition for reinstatement following the policies and procedures spelled out within the “General League Rules”.
 - g. Coaches shall not give any player instructions to fake an injury to allow a substitution or delay a game. This will be considered a flagrant violation of the Coaches Code of Conduct.
- V. All teams are to attend all League functions, including but not limited to the Optimist Nights at their communities’ respective high school(s) and any functions at the conclusion of the season.

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One Coach from each team must attend each event unless Commissioner or Director approves request at least 24 hours in advance of event.

- VI. No member of a coaching staff, family of a coaching staff, or non-family member shall be permitted to electronically videotape an opposing team's games for the purposes of scouting. This is youth football and it is the intent of the NWFL not to allow any electronic or digital recording of a game with the intent or purpose of scouting. This would include any device that is not paper, pencil, pen, and/or memory. On field use of any electronic or digital device is prohibited during any game or scrimmage. A two-game suspension will be given to the Head Coach for such a violation on the first offense, season suspension for a subsequent violation.
- VII. Teams from the Hilliard program will be scheduled to assist with the cleaning of the HS football stadiums. Any failure of a team to attend when scheduled could result in the Head Coach losing his/her coaching rights for the remainder of the season and/or the full next season.
- VIII. Representatives from teams in the League will be assigned to handle volunteer duties for NWFL functions such as the Kick-Off Bowl, Baum Bowl, and Annual November Tournament. Any team that does not have a representative show for their team-assigned duties could result in the Head Coach losing his/her coaching rights for the remainder of the season and/or the full next season.
- IX. As Coaches are recognized as League Representatives, whether they are on the field or off, the League expects that they represent themselves and the League wherever they are and at all times. If actions or behavior that is unbecoming of a youth coach are brought to the attention of the NWFL Mini-Board, the League reserves the right to ask for the resignation and/or removal of the individual as a coach.

The League regards coaching youth as a privilege and any NWFL Mini-Board member may ask that a Coach not be asked to return the following season, or be asked to step down from their position at any time throughout the year (pre-season, season, post-season, etc.).

Any NWFL Mini-Board member can ask for a discussion and/or a vote by the voting members of the Mini-Board. A majority vote will then determine the status of the Coach in question.

The Commissioner of the applicable Division will be responsible for informing the Coach that the NWFL has decided not to ask them to return for the upcoming season.

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If it is determined that a Coach should not be permitted to return, the League Director is responsible for informing the Hilliard Optimist Youth Club, Inc. Board by the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

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SECTION B – PLAYER PARTICIPATION

- I. All players must have on file with the Program Director a signed permission to play and registration payment receipt prior to any practice or game. Hardship cases may be considered and approved wherein the League will waive payment for any player or players. The decision shall rest with the individual Program Director(s) and will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

- II. Any child will be eligible to participate if he/she has attained their ninth (9th) birthday by August 1st of the current year, and not attained his/her eleventh (11th) birthday by August of the current year. Verification of age is required for all participants. Birth Certificates are not kept on file, however they are viewed and the database record of the individual is marked noting the League's verification of age. **NOTE:** Season ages are determined by the participant's age as of August 1st of the current year.

- III. The League Director and Commissioners reserve the right to determine the Division in which a child shall be placed. Generally, five (5) and six (6) year-olds shall play in the Flag Division, seven (7) and eight (8) year-olds shall play in the Freshman Division, nine (9) and ten (10) year-olds shall play in the Junior Division, and eleven (11) and twelve (12) year-olds shall play in the Senior Division. Senior Division players cannot be thirteen (13) years old on August 1st of the current year. Other factors that could determine placement include: maturity levels, special needs, experience, etc. A Commissioner may place the participant within one (1) year and no more than two (2) years of the written age requirements for the NWFL Divisions at their discretion Exception Rule - Age is taken into consideration over weight.

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SECTION C – EQUIPMENT

- I. All players **MUST** wear protective gear at all times while engaged in contact play – including practice sessions. This shall include: helmet, shoulder pads, football pants (with proper knee, thigh, hip and tail pads) and a mouth guard. Athletic supporters are strongly recommended. Other protection, such as rib pads and arm pads are also permissible if approved in advance by the NWFL.

- II. League participants may wear molded football cleats or multi-purpose style shoes. Tennis style shoes are permitted but not recommended. No steel, removable, or molded cleats containing metal are permitted. Participants found to be in violation of the rule will not be permitted to play until league-approved footwear is worn. If participant and/or coaching staff is found to be negligent or is known to have repeated issue with this subject, a suspension can be issued to the participant and/or the Head Coach for such a violation on the first offense and up to, and including, a season suspension (subject to the review of the NWFL Mini-Board).

- III. Team uniforms shall not vary from the League provided game jerseys and helmet decals. Players are required to wear the League furnished game jersey and the player furnished solid, one-color game pants (colors of pants are determined by the appropriate Commissioner). **NOTE:** All players on a team must wear the same color game pants. Any alteration of the uniform (jersey and pants) will result in the removal of the participant. The participant will be permitted to return to the game when and if they are able to meet the League requirement of the uniform. If participant and/or coaching staff is found to be negligent or is known to have repeated issue regarding uniforms, a suspension can be issued to the participant and/or Head Coach for such a violation on the first offense and up to, and including, a season suspension (subject to review by the NWFL Mini-Board).

- IV. The League shall furnish one approved mouthpiece for each participant prior to the first game of the season. They are designed to be attached to the helmet via the facemask. All participants are required to wear and attach their mouthpiece to their facemask as they were designed. Failure to do so will result in a five (5) yard dead ball penalty and the participant will be declared ineligible until they are fitted with the proper equipment. Participants with a special mouthpiece must report any special needs to the Referee prior to the start of every game. **NOTE:** Ohio High School Rules do not allow clear or white mouthpieces. All participants will be required to wear their mouthpiece during practices and games.

- V. From time to time, games will be scheduled between teams with like colored jerseys. In these cases, cover-ups furnished by the League will be worn by the home team. The use of cover-ups will be decided by the Referees prior to kick-off or the start of the game. This is not for debate by either team or NWFL Commissioner and/or the Official, rather it is at the sole discretion of the Referees. If a Coach argues with an Official about the judgment, they will be penalized for

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unsportsmanlike conduct and a penalty will be assessed to the Head Coach and marked off at the beginning of the game. **NOTE:** Cover-ups must be returned to the appropriate commissioner on duty at the field immediately following the game.

- VI. The NWFL furnishes shoulder pads and helmets to all players. If a player chooses to supply their own helmet or shoulder pads, the equipment must first be pre-approved by the League no later than Equipment Pass-Out Day, which occurs before the first scheduled practice of the season. If the player purchased equipment is approved by the League, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of such player must complete a "NWFL Release of Liability for Parent Purchased Equipment" form available on the league website **before** the player engages in any practice or League activity. This form must be provided to the Director of the NWFL and kept with League records for that season. The Head Coach is responsible for notifying their division Commissioner of any players who do not receive League equipment and/or show up for practice in other than League supplied equipment. The Head Coach is also responsible for ensuring that players who do not use League furnished equipment have a completed "NWFL Release of Liability for Parent Purchased Equipment" form before any engagement in League practices and/or games. Failure of the Head Coach to do so will result in an immediate two-week suspension. Repeated failure to do so will result in a season suspension.

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SECTION D – DRAFT OF PLAYERS

- I. Any new Junior Division player that does not attend the scheduled Evaluations will be placed into the “blind” draft.
 - a. Players assigned to the “blind” draft will be grouped according to age (Exception Rule players will be noted) and assigned a letter by the Draft Master from which teams will pick. Under no circumstances will Coaches know the corresponding letter and player until the entire applicable age group has been drafted.

- II. Players will return to the same team that they played on the previous year as long as they are signed up and participation fees are paid prior to the scheduled Draft Day. Exceptions to this include players moving up to a new Division or those that request to be placed on a new team for the upcoming season. Special requests for new team placement must be made in writing to the Director for his/her approval.
 - a. Any player not returning to their same Junior Division team from the previous season will automatically be placed into the “blind” draft and will not be eligible to be drafted by his/her previous team.

- III. Junior Division draft will be conducted at a special drafting session from a roster of draftees. The draft will be conducted for all communities at a time and place designated by the Director of the NWFL. Players are **not** permitted to be present during the draft.

- IV. Sons of Head Coaches may be withheld from the draft and assigned to their Father’s team if so desired (limit – two (2) withholds per team). No Assistant Coaches’ children will be assigned to teams.
 - a. Expansion team Head Coaches may pick one (1) Assistant Coach and their child to be placed on their team prior to the draft. If the Coach chooses to do so they will lose their first-round draft pick.

- V. In the Junior Division, the draft will be structured such that each team contains a balance of age groups, same as the Senior Division. To accomplish this, 9-year-olds (which include 8-year-olds moving up to Junior Division due to weight or evaluated and permitted to move up by the NWFL) will be drafted first, followed by 10-year-olds.

- VI. For draft purposes teams will be ranked by the previous season’s record in ascending order. Ties are broken by head-to-head match-up from the previous season. If not matched-up, tie will be broken by a coin toss.

- VII. In the first round of the draft teams may pick from any age group.

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- VIII. For the second and subsequent rounds, each team will pick in the same rank order, regardless of number of returning players, until the maximum number of players has been drafted for that team. No team may have three Exception Rule players until all teams have at least one.

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SECTION E – WEIGH-INS/WEIGHTS

**95 lbs. maximum weight for skill positions on offense and defensive end positions. Players weighing 96 lbs. to 129 lbs. will have a Green X and can only play non-skilled positions on offense and defense positions except defensive end positions. Players over 129 lbs. can only play offensive tackle, guard, or center positions and cannot pull outside of the tackle position. Defensive line positions covered by a non red X player (no DE)
(Maximum Skill Position Weight = 95 lbs.)**

- a. Unofficial player weights are initially recorded by the player's parent/guardian at the time of on-line registration. These weights must be as close as possible to the player's true weight as their assignment to a team will be partially based on that. The official weigh-in will occur during Equipment Pass-Out Weekend. **NOTE:** If a player has been determined to have a significant difference in their true weight from the on-line registration weight, that player may be reassigned to another team to ensure competitive balance.
- b. Each player must meet weight at weigh-in prior to the game
- c. Game weigh-in will establish those players eligible to be ball carriers (skill players) and those players eligible to participate in their respective Division based on maximum weight limitations, and those Exception Rule players who are limited in position.
- d. Any player exceeding the established maximum ball carrier (skill position) weight for their respective Division will have a large green "X" placed on the back of their helmet
 1. Those players receiving a green "X" on their helmet will be prohibited from being a ball carrier or from advancing the ball on defense in the case of a turnover
 2. Those players that fall under the Exception Rules will have a red "X" on their helmet and will be restricted to playing offense and defense tackle to tackle positions only. There are no exceptions to these rules.
 3. If an "X" player is able to weigh in under the maximum weight limit for a ball carrier (skill position) before any game, a Commissioner (**and only a Commissioner**) will be permitted to remove the "X" player designation.
- I. Official weigh-ins will be conducted prior to every game. This includes doubleheader weekends when games are played on a Saturday and Sunday, however, back to back games on the same day will not require a second weigh-in. Weigh-ins will be completed one team at a time and will be conducted approximately one-half (1/2) hour before kick-off, and no earlier than one (1) hour prior to kick-off. The weigh-in will be conducted by the Field Commissioner with both the respective team's Head Coaches, or designated representative, observing and verifying the other team's weigh-in. Those individuals not making weight as described herein will be disqualified from game play for that week and any week in the future until such time as the participant can make weight on an approved scale in the presence of one of the Field Commissioners or their authorized representative.

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- II. Participants will only be weighed in one time on game day, early weigh-ins are not permitted.
- III. At weigh-in time, the weight will be adjusted back to the previous full pound (i.e. 99.8 pounds will be entered as 99 pounds).
- IV. There will be no weight allowance for pads, true weight will be recorded
- V. There will be no “agreements” between coaches regarding a player’s weight, the Field Commissioner will make all decisions on weight

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SECTION F – GAME RULES

- I. Games shall be played on the standard football field as defined under National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) rules.
- II. There will be a minimum of two (2) carded OHSAA Officials present for a game to be played.
- III. Game Format
 - A. Football**
 1. The official League football shall be furnished by the NWFL for each game
 2. Official football size is TDJ (junior)
 - B. Game Clock**
 1. In the Junior Division, the playing time of regular season games shall be four (4) eight (8) minute quarters
 - a. Half time is eight (8) minutes long
 - b. A two (2) minute break will follow each completed quarter
 - c. Time is to be kept according to NFHS rules
 2. Once the referee signals the ball ready to play, the Offensive team has twenty-five (25) seconds to put the ball into play by snap of the ball
 - a. The penalty for delay of putting the ball into play is five (5) yards
 - b. During the first three (3) games, it will at times take longer for young players to get organized and get the ball into play – the twenty-five second rule is intended to speed up play – there is normally no intent to delay play by these young players. If, in the opinion of game Officials, delay is intended, the Officials may stop the clock until the ball is snapped
 - C. Overtime**
 1. In the event of a tie, a single untimed overtime period will be played under NFHS rules
 - a. Each team will be given the ball at the ten (10) yard line
 - b. Teams will be given four (4) downs to score
 - c. Coin Flip will determine possession
 - i. Winner will be given the option to choose Offense or Defense
 - d. Only one (1) overtime period will be played
 - i. If game remains tied after overtime period, the game will be declared a tie

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D. Time Outs

1. Each team in the Junior Division will be allowed three (3) time outs per half – time outs not used in first half cannot be carried forward to the second half
 - a. Time outs will be one (1) minute in length
 - b. During a game, the clock will stop in accordance with the National Federation of State High School Associations Rule Book
 - c. During a time out on the field, and between quarters, the teams must remain on the field and not go to the sidelines: Coaches and water may be brought to the teams; the exception, of course, is at halftime
 - i. The Coach on the field and one (1) Coach from the sideline are permitted on the field during time outs

E. Injury Time Outs

1. An injured player must be removed from the playing field for at least one (1) down
2. The Officials will make the determination of a player is injured – **no exceptions** will be allowed to this rule

F. Penalties

1. All penalties will be assessed using NFHS Rules

G. Playing Time

1. All active players on a team shall start on Offense or Defense and will play 100% of each game
 - a. Although players may play both Defense and Offense in the same half, they cannot be considered “done” for the game after one half of dual play – the rule is for the players to play in both halves
2. Any participant who, for any reason, will not be participating in any game shall be reported to the Officials and Commissioners prior to the “kick-off”
3. A player that starts on Offense must play the **entire half** on Offense
4. A player that starts on Defense must play the **entire half** on Defense
5. Substitutions are only allowed in the case of player injury and must be announced to the opposing team’s coaching staff
 - a. Any intentional misuse of this rule can result in the Head Coach being permanently removed from coaching duties in any Division

H. Coaches on the Field of Play

1. A total of four (4) coaches (1 Head Coach and 3 Assistants) are permitted on the sidelines for each team
 - a. Teams are permitted one water boy/girl for each team
 - b. Statisticians are not permitted on the sideline

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2. Junior Division Coaches shall be permitted to direct their teams from the playing field
 - a. One Coach permitted for Offense and one Coach permitted for Defense
3. Once the Offensive team breaks the huddle, the on field Offensive Coach **cannot** communicate in any way (verbally or visually) with their players
 - a. Similarly, once the Defensive team breaks its huddle, the on field Defensive Coaches **cannot** communicate in any way (verbally or visually) with their players
 - b. Officials shall attempt to give each coach a warning, however, violations are at the sole discretion of the Officials and subsequent violations will be penalized with a five (5) yard dead ball penalty
 - c. The Official can ask for the Coach to remove themselves from the field of play and allow plays to be run in by a player from the sidelines (with helmet removed) for either Offense, Defense or both
4. The On-Field Coaches shall make every attempt to stay out of the way of the play – in the event that a Coach is obstructing the play, they shall be treated, at the Official’s discretion, as part of the field

I. Offensive Formations

1. **All offensive formations must be a commonly used formation in either high school or college - no exceptions**
 - a. Offensive formations will be limited to the standard seven (7) man line – proper offensive lineman spacing must be taught (no feet to feet)
 - b. Unbalanced lines are allowed, however “X” players must always be covered regardless of the formation.
 - c. Latitude will be given to the Center’s head being over the ball during the snap of the ball
 - d. The Center is protected on a “long snap” or in a shotgun formation during the initial line charge
 - i. A shotgun formation is defined as any formation in which the Quarterback is not directly under the Center at the snap of the ball
 - e. Within the last two (2) minutes of each half, a “Hurry Up” offense will be permitted as long as the following three conditions are met
 - i. The Officials will allow the Defense every chance to set up before allowing the Offense to snap the ball
 - ii. Once the Offensive team has broken the huddle, the Defense must break and come to the ball
 - iii. If the Offense does not huddle, the Defense is allowed to huddle, but must break when instructed by the Officials

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J. Defensive Formations

1. There shall be no more than six (6) Defensive linemen and no less than (5) Defensive linemen on the line
 - a. All linemen are required to be in the down position, with the exception of the two (2) Defensive Ends
 - b. All other Defensive players must be aligned at least three (3) yards from the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball
 - i. This rule does not apply between the ten (10) yard line and the goal line that the Defense is defending
 - ii. Violation of this rule will result in a five-yard dead ball penalty
2. Defensive End Position cannot be an "X" player
 - a. Repeated violation of this rule can result in an unsportsmanlike penalty and removal of a Coach
3. Defensive players must be set for one (1) second before the snap of the ball
 - a. The spirit of this rule is to allow the Officials time to check for possible blitz (see below) and obvious attempts to draw the Offense offside – not to penalize the Defense for arbitrary movement within the line and will be enforced as such
4. Blitzing is not permitted by any player
 - a. Blitzing is defined as a player who was more than one (1) yard off the line of scrimmage at the snap, charging in anticipation of penetrating the line of scrimmage with the snap of the ball
 - b. A Defensive player who has established a position within one (1) yard of the line of scrimmage, irrespective of whether he/she is in a down position, or in an upright or standing position, will not be classified as a blitz
 - c. Violation of this rule shall be a five (5) yard dead ball penalty

K. Kick Offs

1. There shall be no Kick Offs in any Division of the NWFL
2. The ball will be put into play on the thirty (30) yard line
 - a. Only exception to this rule is following a safety, in which the NFHS Rule will be enforced – 25 yard mark off from their own 30-yard line and a ten (10) second clock run.
3. Clock will start on the snap, rather than on the ready for play signal

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L. Punts

1. In the Junior Division there shall be no kicking of punts
2. When a team declares a punt, the Officials will advance the ball thirty (30) yards and ten (10) second clock run.
3. In no case will the ball be advanced beyond the ten (10) yard line
4. The punting team will lose possession, turning the ball over to the receiving team
5. The clock will continue to run while the yardage is marked off, then stop until the ready to play signal is given

M. Extra Point Attempts

1. Following a touchdown, ball will be spotted on the three (3) yard line
2. Teams can choose to run or pass for an extra point
 - a. Successful forward pass will be awarded two (2) points
 - b. Successful run will be awarded one (1) point
3. Time will not expire from the clock during extra point attempts

N. Turnovers

1. An intercepted fumble, pass or lateral may not be advanced by an "X" player – the ball will be downed at the spot that possession changed
2. An intercepted fumble, pass or lateral may be advanced by an eligible (non "X") player

O. Blocking Below the Waist

1. There is no free blocking zone in the NWFL; no blocking below the waist is permitted

P. Blow Out Rule

1. If a team gains an 18-point lead at any time the Blow Out Rule described herein goes into effect
2. Offensive teams will be required to change their entire backfield to less experienced players
 - a. Backfield includes offensive ends, backs and tight ends
 - b. Substituted backfield shall become an offensive lineman or a defensive player
 - c. If the 18-point lead is the result of a touchdown the backfield shall be changed after the "extra point" attempt to avoid any delay in the game
 - d. Every attempt should be made by the coach of the team which is leading to play their least experienced players – passing plays and plays utilizing their most experienced players should be minimized

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3. If the lead falls below 18 points, the original starting backfield can return during the next offensive set
4. If a team gains a 30-point lead during the game the Head Official will inform both Head Coaches that the remainder of the quarter will be played under a “running clock”
 - a. The clock will stop only for time outs and injuries
 - b. Following quarters shall be played under a running clock as required
5. If the lead exceeds 40 points the scoreboard will be reset to read 0-1 and the game will continue under a running clock
 - a. Substitution rule will be relaxed so as not to demoralize the losing team

Q. Additional Rules

1. The Official Football Rules, published by the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations and such changes authorized by them shall govern all games
 - a. If a rule is not specifically modified by the League, in writing, by the official league rules or addendum therein, the above listed rulebook shall be followed

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SECTION G – FIELD EQUIPMENT AND CLEAN UP

- I. The home team for the first game of the day shall see that the yard markers and chains are on the field.
- II. The visiting team for all games shall be responsible for supplying personnel for the down markers.
- III. The home team shall be responsible for supplying personnel for running the clock immediately following their game. **NOTE:** If the home team is playing the last scheduled game for the field that night they will be responsible for running the clock for the first game of that same day at that same field.
- IV. The home team for the last game shall see that the yard markers and the chains are properly put away immediately following their game.
- V. Both teams playing in the last game on the respective fields shall be responsible for the cleanup of the field and surrounding area (including bleachers).
- VI. Due to the adverse effect on income from the Concession Stands, tailgating is banned as a practice in this League.

Firearms, whether legal or otherwise, shall not be permitted at any function of the NWFL – be it practice, games or other official functions. The only exception to this rule shall be duly sworn local law enforcement officials in the performance of their duties.

Any person, be they Officials, Coaches, participants or spectators found to be carrying, displaying, or otherwise having in their possession a firearm, whether legal or otherwise, shall be banned from participating in the NWFL.

In addition, appropriate legal action shall be brought against said person by the NWFL.