

North Florida Youth Football Conference



OFFICIAL RULES

The North Florida Youth Football Conference and Cheer Rulebook and all its Rules and Regulations have been created and are enforced/administered with the following philosophy: Provide an all-inclusive, fair, and safe environment where any child can learn and participate in the sport of football and cheerleading without overbearing unrealistic un-enforceable restrictions.

The North Florida Youth Football Conference Rulebook has been written with the minimum requirements allowing each association and team to strengthen and govern as they see fit customizing to the community they serve. All Rules and Regulations should be reviewed with common sense and understanding of the intent of each rule. The intent will be to create a fair and consistent team formation and opportunity for all participants/teams across the country. Any and all recommendations/changes/clarifications are welcome and may be submitted through your association directors.

GENERAL RULES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL

IMPORTANT NOTE: North Florida Youth Football Conference reserves the right to enforce any and all of its rules and regulations and the spirit of its rules and regulations as it sees fit and may refuse participation or limit participation to any team or individual at any of its sanctioned events at its sole discretion. North Florida Youth Football Conference offers no right to appeal and will not be obligated to refund any participation fees and/or travel and related expenses.

North Florida Youth Football Conference (NFYFC) follows state and/or high school governing rulebook for regular season games, except where superseded by this Rulebook.

Section 1 – Membership Requirements and Membership Types

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS AND MEMBERSHIP TYPES

A) Membership Requirements

All applications for membership must include, at a minimum, the following information:

- 1) Association/Team Name (organization)
- 2) Organization Address
- 3) Organization Web Site Address
- 4) President Name, Daytime Phone, Email
- 5) Football Director Name, Daytime Phone, Email
- 6) Cheer Director Name, Daytime Phone, Email

All email addresses must be unique and directed to the named individual. Members must employ a minimum standard of conduct and must always maintain the players best interests.

1) Insurance Requirement

All teams must furnish proof of General Liability and Accident Insurance prior to participation in any North Florida Youth Football Conference sanctioned event. Additionally, North Florida Youth Football Conference must be named as an additional insured.

A) Participant

A Participant is defined as a minor child that has applied for and has been granted membership within a given Association/Team.

All NFYFC Rules and Regulations supersede any and all other rulebooks. The NFYFC Executive Board will determine and be the final adjudicator on any and all rule conflicts. NFYFC requires that all coaches receive and read this rulebook in its entirety. For purposes of rule enforcement NFYFC will assume that the requirement that all coaches receive, read and understand this rulebook in its entirety has been met and will not be held responsible for any other form of announcement of this rule as all reasonable members are aware that a rulebook exists. NFYFC will not entertain any claim of ignorance of its rules as a form of defense. NFYFC strongly recommends that the local organizations supply the appropriate state and/or high school rulebook, NFHS to all its coaches. Any organization found to have allowed a variance to this rulebook, the rules regulations and the spirit of the rules and regulations without filing and receiving written approval from the NFYFC BOD may be suspended. Members always retain the right to make any rule stricter as they see fit.

Section 2 – Rule Enforcement Authority

RULE ENFORCEMENT / AUTHORITY

A) Conference / Association Level of Authority

Associations are hereby required to enforce the NFYFC Rules and Regulations contained herein. Associations have the obligation and authority to enforce the NFYFC Rules, Regulations and the Spirit of the Rules and Regulations and its own rules, by-laws and other organizational governing instrument. Additionally, Associations have the right to make any rule more stringent, but do not have the right to make these rules less strict. Any organization found not enforcing this rulebook, the rules regulations and the spirit of the rules and regulations may be suspended until compliance is achieved.

North Florida Youth Football Conference is not required to hold hearings or appeals. Conferences, Associations and Teams are advised to set up their own procedures to handle these matters in a timely fashion.

Section 3 – Hearings and Appeals

HEARINGS AND APPEALS

Associations shall have complete jurisdiction over hearings and appeals within their programs and may or may not be required to hold hearings or appeals depending on their governing instrument.

All hearings and appeals must be conducted in the manner the Conference has constructed in its bylaws/organizational documents. Should no process exist it will be at the complete discretion of the Conference to allow or disallow a hearing or appeal.

NFYFC office will **only**, get involved, arbitrate/hold hearings and/or appeals on local issues if (1) is asked to do so by the member association, and, (2) it is agreed to by all involved, and, (3) all involved must agree that the NFYFC has the final say on all of its decisions. NFYFC always reserves the right to refuse to get involved in any and all local issues.

NFYFC at its sole discretion may or may not allow a hearing or appeal of any of its decisions and rulings.

See section on “Rule Enforcement Authority” for additional information.

Section 4 – Minimum Penalties

MINIMUM PENALTIES

A) Coach / Administrators

The following are the minimum penalties to be enforced for violation of, but not limited to the following rules:

- 1) Rulebook Variance:** Any organization found to have allowed a **variance** to this rulebook, the rules regulations and the spirit of the rules and regulations without filing and receiving written approval may be suspended.
- 2) Rulebook Enforcement:** Any organization found not **enforcing** this rulebook, the rules regulations and the spirit of the rules and regulations may be suspended.
- 3) Cheating:** Permanent Suspension. (Roster / Participant Manipulation will be considered Cheating)
- 4) Badgering of Game Officials with Threats and/or Inciting Fans to Display Poor Sportsmanship:** Suspension for two games and two weeks of practice and could be a suspension for the remainder of the season or permanent suspension depending on the severity of the incident. Any coach or rostered volunteer ejected from a game for any reason will be suspended for a minimum of one week. Any and all ejections may be reviewed by conference and if deemed excessive in nature, are subject to further disciplinary actions up to and including permanent league suspension.
- 5) Fighting of Any Kind:** Suspension for the remainder of the season and subject to arrest.
- 6) Teaching Players Dirty Tactics:** First offense: suspension for one game and one week of practice. Second offense: suspension for the remainder of the season or permanent suspension.
- 7) Falsifying or Altering Documents:** Falsifying birth or any other documents to make a participant eligible is grounds for forfeiture of all games in which they have participated and permanent suspension of the adult(s) responsible for the act and all evidence will be turned over to the local authorities for any criminal prosecution that may be relevant. NFYFC recommends that a full investigation is conducted by an impartial committee when document falsification or alteration is suspected. NFYFC may provide a 3rd party certification program to avoid these issues.
- 8) Failure to Keep Faith with Juveniles and Parents:** Defined as any deliberate practice of a coach, team, or Association, which placed the health, welfare and safety of juveniles in jeopardy, or exploits or treats them in such a manner that the juvenile becomes a “tool” of the team. First offense: suspension for one game and one week of practice. Second offense: suspension for the remainder of the season or permanent suspension.

Special Note: *Any Coach, Administrator or Team Personnel found to have advised, encouraged, or tolerated any "Sweat Down" or "Extreme" weight loss techniques will be grounds for immediate suspension. Suspension will be anywhere from 1 year to permanent depending on the severity. Head Coaches will be held responsible for the actions and/or inactions of all team personnel.*

9) Player Manipulation: Excessive team or individual conditioning drills, disciplinary actions or assigning individual players laps or intentionally placing player in intimidating hitting drills for the purpose of encouraging weaker players to quit is not acceptable. Coaches determined to be using this or any other tactic to drop weaker players will be immediately dismissed for the remainder of the season and may be permanently suspended.

10) Mandatory Play Rule: See Mandatory Play Rule Section

11) Playing Ineligible Players: Suspension for rest of season. League will review status for next season. Suspension may be appealed, if an appeal process exists, to the Conference depending on the nature of the ineligibility. NFYFC requires a full investigation by an appointed impartial committee be conducted prior to any suspension for use of ineligible players.

- a) When ineligible players are found, all games of which the ineligible players have participated in are forfeited and will count in the league standings as such.
- b) When ineligible players are found the Team is ineligible for post-season play of any kind regardless of the number of losses it has suffered for playing ineligible players.

B) Participant Offenses

In the absence of local rules and regulations regarding participant extreme behavior, the following minimum penalties should be enforced whether in game or practice when the act is not covered by the governing state or high school rules, within the coach/administrator's discretion:

1) Fighting: First offense: Suspension for one game and one week of practice. Second offense: Suspension and parental/guardian conference.

2) Disrespectful Behavior: Disrespect for coaches, participants, game and team officials: First offense: removal from the game/practice and parental/guardian conference. Second offense: suspended for one game and one week of practice. Third offense: Suspension and parental conference.

3) Badgering/Bullying: Badgering/Bullying opponents and or teammates by word or act with the purpose of intimidation: First offense: removal from the game/practice and parental/guardian conference. Second offense: suspended for one game and one week of practice. Third offense: Suspension and parental/guardian conference.

4) Extreme Weight Loss: Any "Sweat Down" or Extreme" weight loss used by a player to make weight will be grounds for immediate suspension for the players own safety.

C) Organization Offenses

In the absence of local rules and regulations regarding the following, it is NFYFC's recommendation that the guidelines below be implemented.

1) Assault: Any Player, Coach, Administrator, Parent/Guardian, or Fan should strike (hit) a game official, or member of the coaching staff, shall be subject to arrest by local law enforcement agencies, and permanent suspension including but not limited to being banned from all Events and Activities.

2) Failure to Control Parents or Fans: Suspension of the Association from the Conference until the administration of the Association can submit evidence satisfactory to the Conference that the problems/conditions which allowed the issues to exist have been rectified.

3) Mandatory Play Rule: See Section 12

4) Failure to Control Coaches from Actions Contrary to the Health, Safety and Welfare of Players:

Suspension of the Association from the Conference until the administration of the Association can submit evidence satisfactory to the Conference that the problems/conditions which allowed the issues to exist have been rectified.

See section on “Rule Enforcement Authority” for additional information.

Section 5 – Coaching Appointments & Requirements / Background Checks**COACHES**

All coaches, by their appointment to coach, are bound by the “Standard of Conduct”.

A) Coaching Appointments

All coaches must be approved by and serve at the pleasure of the Local Association. Coaching assignments are for one playing season only and is therefore automatically terminated at the close of each season. Coaches must re-apply for coaching positions annually. The close of the season will be determined by the local Association but must not extend past the “End of the Year Banquet” or December 31st whichever occurs first.

All Coaching appointments and their appropriate contact info must be included on any and all rosters.

B) Coaching Requirements**1) Head Coaches:**

- a) Head coaches must have a general knowledge of the sport of football, cheerleading, dance, step and all safety rules respectively.
- b) Head coaches must be at least 21 years of age. The coaching staff will be under his/her direction and supervision.
- c) Coaches are required to maintain in their possession, at any and all times the team is assembled, the team’s **EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT, CONSENT AND INFORMATION** form and **Parent/Guardian Emergency Numbers**.
- d) Each Team must have a Coach or Volunteer that is the holder of a current Red Cross Certificate in Community CPR and First Aid or its equivalent. This person must be present at all practices, games/competitions, gatherings of the team.
- e) Head coaches are in complete charge of their players. They are responsible for their own actions or inactions, their assistants’ actions or inactions and the actions of their players.
- f) Head coaches may be required to be trained through any training program available to their Association. The Association may also make this a requirement of assistant coaches.

2) Assistant Coaches: must be at least 18 years of age and have graduated from high school or hold a GED certificate. They must have a general knowledge of the sport of football, cheerleading, dance, step and all safety rules respectively.

3) Junior Coaches: must be a minimum of 16 years old and may only carry out the instructions of the Head or Assistant coaches. Junior Coaches are not permitted to conduct a practice.

Background Check

Associations are required to perform Background Checks on all their Coaches and any and all volunteers deemed to have repeated contact with the participants, each year. NFYFC is required to obtain an Affidavit that all background checks have been completed from their member associations. North Florida Youth Football Conference reserves the right for final approval of any volunteer from any association and may deny participation. Each Association shall be required to indemnify and hold harmless North Florida Youth Football Conference against all legal actions based upon allegations arising from a failure to enforce all or part of this regulation and or the decision-making process used in volunteer selection. Background checks MUST comply

with any and all state of Florida statutory requirement.

- a) Treat each participant equally, excessive team or individual conditioning drills, disciplinary actions or assigning individual players laps or intentionally placing player in intimidating hitting drills for the purpose of encouraging weaker players to quit is not acceptable. Coaches determined to be using this or any other tactic to drop weaker players will be immediately dismissed for the remainder of the season and may be permanently suspended.
- b) Coaches are not to allow, nor encourage, any form of weight loss for the purpose of making the maximum weight in an Age & Weight Program / Division – See Minimum Penalties. This does not preclude your ability, if professionally trained/educated to do so, to provide nutritional and proper diet advice to obese participants.
- c) Not smoke and/or use smokeless tobacco on the field or in front of participants at any time.
- d) Abstain from the possession and drinking of alcoholic beverages and the possession or use of any illegal substance on the field or in front of participants at any time.
- e) Accept decisions of the game officials and judges on the field and in competitions as being fair and called to the best of their ability.
- f) Not criticize an opposing team, its players, spirit participants, coaches, or fans by word of mouth or by gesture.
- g) Together with team officials, be jointly responsible for the conduct and control of team fans and spectators. Any parent, guardian, or fan that becomes a nuisance and out of control must be asked to leave.
- h) Not use abusive or profane language at any time.
- i) Not encourage their team to intentionally run up the score on an opponent. In the event of a commanding lead every effort shall be made to let all players play.
- j) Not permit or encourage, “extreme dieting”, or “sweating down” tactics of any kind for any reason. Must report any instance witnessed or suspected to the parent/guardian and local administrator.
- k) Not recommend or distribute any medication, controlled or over the counter
- l) Not deliberately incite unsportsmanlike conduct.
- m) Not criticize/berate participants ever, to provide constructive criticism, in private, or in the presence of team/squad members if others might benefit.
- n) Remove from a game or practice any participant when his/her health is in question, whether as a result of injury, until competent medical advice is available.
- o) A coach will not use ineligible players and will always take the responsibility of having proper and legal documents on each player proving his eligibility.
- p) Insure that all participants meet the minimum required number of plays under the Mandatory Play Rules and Regulations.
- q) Uphold all rules and regulations.
- r) A coach must discourage the wearing of Gang colors or any gang symbol and the use of any gang related forms of communication during any and all team related activities including but not limited to team practices.
- s) Refrain from posting anything derogatory or antagonizing on any social network/internet or public communication of any type.
- t) Remember to win without arrogance and lose without excuses.

In addition to the basic expected behavior Administrators, Coaches and Volunteers additionally agree to the following:

“One athlete of character will improve a team. One team of character will improve a school. One school of character can impact an entire community.” – Bruce E. Brown

Make a conscious choice to uphold the best of values:

- a) Each game and practice I participate in or administer over will provide me with an opportunity to teach and be a role model for positive character development. As a member of North Florida Youth Football Conference and Cheer (NFYFC) I accept the challenge and will do my best to represent NFYFC, my Conference, my Association, my Team, and myself by: respecting my opponent, the officials, my team, my administrators, coaches, myself and the game; taking responsibility for my actions in all areas of my life; having the integrity to stand by my word; providing leadership where I serve others while striving to be a personal and team leader; and being an example of sportsmanship by holding myself to the highest standards of fair play.
- b) Athletics provides another opportunity for the training of youth for a strong and efficient democracy.
- c) Athletics provides another opportunity for the building of good character and personality.
- d) Athletics is a significant part of a sound educational program.
- e) NFYFC considers the privilege of guiding youth through participation in sports as a sacred trust.
- f) Coaches must always keep the best interests of each participant as their aim. Coaches should never be guilty of enhancing his/her progress using a participant's skill for his/her benefit.
- g) Coaches must forever keep before the participants under his/her direction the high ideals, honesty, sincerity, and integrity which have made our nation great. Coaches must not encourage, or tolerate, any form of trickery or evasion of rules in order to gain an advantage over an opponent.
- h) NFYFC members will do all in their power to instill in those under their direction a tolerance for all races and creeds and stand out against intolerance wherever it may occur.
- i) NFYFC members should strive to instill in every youth great purpose and aims in living and use the desire to play not as an end, but as a training ground for the participant's highest development.
- j) Coaches should strive to teach each participant's to be humble in victory and gracious in defeat, to be above bragging or using alibis, and shall help develop inner strength and poise.
- k) NFYFC members will use only fair and honest means of securing talent for athletic teams and never stoop to trickery or insincere promises in influencing participants in the selection of their experience.
- l) Coaches should use every means at their command to protect the moral, mental and physical health of the participants under their guidance.

A) Special Warning Regarding Rumors

No one should be allowed to participate in a Local, Regional or National event until all their paperwork, grade and/or weight have been verified. Any allegations of Cheating or Violations of this rulebook or any local rule or regulation should be immediately reported, in writing, to both the Association and Conference presidents and/or their appointed representatives for dealing with such issues. Associations and Conferences are required to fully investigate all claims and keep on file a written record of all investigations.

Once the allegations of cheating or rules violation has been reported, in writing, to the respective official, be it Association or Conference, there shall be NO further discussion until it is reviewed, investigated and acted on appropriately by the Association and/or Conference. The act of spreading rumors which is general talk not based on fact will not be tolerated in North Florida Youth Football Conference and Cheer, it not only hurts your credibility, it affects your team and other teams that may become involved in the rumor.

Any allegation of Cheating or Violations of this rulebook during Post Season Play should be reported in writing to the National Office for investigation. Given these facts any Organization, individual or group of individuals (which includes any member of the organization) spreading rumors of cheating, special treatment or any other false information whether causing an incident or not during Post Season Play/event may be banned from participation in any future Post Season Play/event(s) for a period of time deemed reasonable by the National Office.

B) Social Media Policy

Due to the nature of the Internet, each Team and Association, depending on your structure, must develop, communicate and enforce a “Social Media Policy” on all members who represent all of us as their actions/words are a reflection of us all collectively.

- > Social media is largely about connecting, helping others, and having fun.
- > Social media is also a valuable resource to learn and to contribute.
- > Social media is more than just Facebook and Twitter. It includes blogs, online networks, and any other Internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information.

Please remember these points:

- a) Be respectful to others.
- b) Each individual is responsible for what they post online.
- c) Understand that you are legally liable for anything you write or present online.
- d) Anyone can be sued for commentary, content, videos, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or create a hostile environment.
- e) Post knowledgeably, accurately, and use appropriate professionalism.
- f) Be quick to correct your own mistakes and admit when you are wrong.
- g) No one is authorized to speak on behalf of North Florida Youth Football Conference and Cheer, or to represent that they are.
- h) Do not cite anyone without their approval.
- i) Never reveal any confidential and/or proprietary information.
- j) Never identify players, parents, or league members/officers by name without their permission.
- k) Understand that any threats, potential threats of violence of any kind, online bullying or any other criminal act that is posted by any member, association, league officer etc., will be forwarded to law enforcement for prosecution and will be cause for revocation of NFYFC membership.

Please make all your members aware that North Florida Youth Football Conference (NFYFC) reserves the right to revoke anyone’s membership who seeks to defame or use the social media in any form to disrupt the mission, goals and purpose of NFYFC and/or violates any of the suggested Social Media Policy.

Section 6 – Participant Registration / Eligibility

PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION / ELIGIBILITY

A) Paperwork Notice

North Florida Youth Football Conference provides no legal advice, makes no representations nor warrants that any Paperwork/Form/Document/ Contract provided by North Florida Youth Football Conference will provide you the proper protection, coverage and/or will comply with any statute.

North Florida Youth Football Conference recommends that all Paperwork/Form/Document/ Contracts be kept in a safe and secure place where the information that may be contained in the documents is released (1) with Parent/Guardian permission, (2) on a limited “need to know” basis, (3) in compliance with any and all statute(s). North Florida Youth Football Conference also recommends that all Paperwork/Form/Document/Contracts be kept on file for a minimum of 5 years, longer in the event of an injury. Please confer with your local attorney for advice as to the appropriate security procedures, maintenance and storage term for this and all such paperwork.

By using any Paperwork/Form/Document/Contract supplied, offered, or provided by North Florida Youth Football Conference you agree and understand you do so at your own risk.

NOTE: *Falsifying birth or any other documents to make a participant eligible is grounds for forfeiture of all games in which they have participated and permanent suspension of the adult(s) responsible for the act and all evidence will be turned over to the local authorities for any criminal prosecution that may be relevant. NFYFC recommends that a full investigation is conducted by an impartial committee when document falsification or alteration is suspected.*

Required Minor Participant Paperwork / Documentation and Certification

No participant will be allowed to participate in any way until all required paperwork is collected and verified. No participant will be certified or assigned to any roster until all required paperwork is collected and verified. Any organization that does not follow any and all regulations set forth herein will be held responsible for their actions and/or inactions and be subject to suspension and/or revocation of their membership.

1) Medical Clearance:

The North Florida Youth Football Conference (NFYFC) or mutually agreed upon **Medical Clearance Form** is required for registration and must be received and held by the local association prior to any participation, this includes but is not limited to preseason practice, regardless of parental consent including consent from Coaches for their participant children. You may accept, in addition to the Medical Clearance Form, any other documentation of physical fitness you would like however, you cannot replace this NFYFC requirement.

The approved Medical Clearance Form will be provided by North Florida Youth Football Conference

Please Note: The Medical Clearance will be voided by any injury, accident, or illness, attended to by a trainer or any medical professional that results in the participant being withheld or limited in his/her participation and/or if the participant is removed from any participation as a result of a suspected concussion or heat related illness. It will be the responsibility of the Parent/Legal Guardian to notify the participants Coach and League Officials should any condition/concern exist. It will also be the responsibility of the Parent/Legal Guardian to obtain WRITTEN permission from his/her physician to resume participation. A "**Medical Clearance Resume Form**" is available from North Florida Youth Football Conference

Emergency Medical and Consent:

The North Florida Youth Football Conference (NFYFC) **Participant Registration Form** is required for registration and must be received and held by the local association prior to any participation, this includes but is not limited to preseason practice, regardless of parental consent including consent from Coaches for their participant children. An association may accept, in addition to the Participant Registration Form, any other documentation you see fit however; however an association cannot replace this NFYFC requirement.

The approved Participant Registration Form will be provided by North Florida Youth Football Conference

Please Note: The Participant Registration Form contains emergency medical information and parent/guardian as well as emergency contacts. The ORIGINAL form must always be in the possession of the team in the event an injury/medical emergency occurs.

2) Parent/Guardian Contract, Permission & Waiver:

The North Florida Youth Football Conference (NFYFC) **Parent/Guardian Contract, Permission & Waiver Form** is required for registration and must be received and held by the local association prior to any participation, this includes but is not limited to preseason practice, regardless of parental consent including consent from Coaches for their participant children. This document includes a written statement, to be acknowledged and signed by the parent/guardian declaring their child has permission to participate in local and any and all NFYFC activities and that they understand the risks involved. This document also provides authorization for medical treatment in case of an emergency, and a photo/image release.

The approved Parent/Guardian Contract, Permission & Waiver Form will be provided by North Florida Youth Football Conference.

This document will be collected by the NFYFC national office prior to any sanctioned post-season play.

Age Verification Requirement:

North Florida Youth Football Conference (NFYFC) requires that all participants age/date of birth be verified prior to any team/division assignment.

The following are the only acceptable documents for age/date of birth verification:

- a) Original birth certificate
- b) State/city/town raised seal certified copy of birth certificate /State issued sport birth certificate
- c) Letter from School, on School Letterhead, certifying/authenticating copy of birth certificate
- d) DMV ID cards
- e) Military ID cards
- f) Passports, and/or any government agency issued photo id with birth date and must not be expired.

NO HOSPITAL CERTIFICATES WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT CONFERENCE APPROVAL

The following may be adopted by your local conference for regular season play but will not be acceptable for any post season play and if a participant is found to have been certified to a team/division he/she does not age/date of birth qualify for it will be considered a Rule Variance/Rule Enforcement violation for disciplinary purposes and may be a case of Falsification of Documents.

- > The conference may at their sole discretion accept a copy of an original proof of age/date of birth document (see approved list above) along with the original, and with their own protected secure seal mark the copy as verified. This will allow the participant to retain the original document. If this system is used the original will still have to be presented to verify the copy for all NFYFC sanctioned post season play and/or 3rd part verification.

3) Photo Identification Verification Requirement:

North Florida Youth Football Conference (NFYFC) requires that all participants have their identification documented by a photograph. This photograph must be a close-up, from the shoulders up, to clearly show the participants head and facial features. This Photo ID must be verified prior to any final roster certification.

Scholastic Eligibility

Each association has the ability to set requirements for minimum scholastic eligibility and also to create a scholastics-based award program if they chose to do so. If an association decides to implement any scholastics eligibility and/or awards programs, they must notify NFYFC in writing and provide a copy of the program guidelines/eligibility criteria for NFYFC approval.

Section 7 – Formation of Teams

FORMATION OF TEAMS

When programs form their teams, they must form them in a manner to ensure that each participant who is registered has a place to participate. This participation policy is established to ensure that each child is afforded the opportunity to be taught the game of football, Cheerleading, Dance and Step, regardless of their ability. Tryouts of any kind are not permitted. Cutting of players is not allowed in NFYFC; however, there are certain guidelines that should be met if it becomes necessary to not assign a player to a team. NFYFC strongly recommends that the coaching staff work closely with these players before the extreme measure of dropping a player takes place. NFYFC believes that the game of football, Cheer, Dance and Step may just be a saving grace for this type of participant.

A) Roster Size

Football roster size, Minimum is 16, Maximum is not more than 35 participants, and some exceptions apply. Lieutenant division roster size is a minimum of 12 and maximum of 18. Cheer roster size is as follows, Small = Max 16, Large = Max 36 (Mascots are not included). Dance and step roster size is not more than 36 participants. (See "Roster" section of this rule book for more information).

B) Dropping a Player Will Be Acceptable

When a participant is found to have signed as a result of parent or guardian pressure, or, he/she tells team management he/she does not really want to play

When a participant cannot furnish the required documents to be certified to a team roster, (e.g., Medical, Proof of Birth Date, etc...).

When a Participant shows no interest in football/cheer, is disruptive to other participants and the instructions of the coaching staff and becomes a discipline problem.

When a Participant stops attending practices. Participants must have a valid excuse from the parent(s), guardian(s) or a physician.

When a Participant attempts to intimidate fellow participants by word and/or physical act.

When a Participant is actively a member of another football team or cheerleader squad while actively participating with an NFYFC team (dual participation, some exceptions may apply).

When a Participant is found to be using any "Sweat Down" or Extreme" weight loss techniques to come under make the maximum weight will be grounds for immediate suspension for the players own safety. *Please note any coach, administrator or volunteer who is found to be tolerant or encouraging this behavior will be subject to disciplinary actions – see minimum penalties.*

C) Dropping a Player Will NOT Be Acceptable

Excessive team or individual conditioning drills, disciplinary actions or assigning individual players laps or intentionally placing player in intimidating hitting drills for the purpose of encouraging weaker players to quit is not acceptable. Coaches determined to be using this or any other tactic to drop weaker players will be immediately dismissed for the remainder of the season and may be permanently suspended.

Once a roster is full, no player may be dropped to make room for another player.

D) Participant Recruitment

Associations will have defined marketing boundaries. Players may play at any association with the following guidelines:

Players not may play at more than 2 member associations during their playing career unless proof of physical relocation is supplied.

Coaches or any rostered volunteer may move between different member associations. If a coach transfers to another member association, ONLY their immediate family members may transfer to the new association of the coach. Any player listed on the previous roster of which the coach was listed will be denied participation in that new association until one entire playing season has elapsed.

Section 8 – Rosters

ROSTERS

A) Roster Certification and Timeline

Associations must have all NFYFC Required Participant Paperwork collected, complete, and inspected for compliance by player certification date (or prior to first game, whichever comes first). A Certified Roster means that all of the participants listed on the roster have submitted the NFYFC Required Paperwork and that all paperwork is authentic and compliant with NFYFC Rules and Regulations, and the participant fits the criteria established for the specific program/ division to which The Participant is assigned and certified including but not limited to the Participants division. Conferences must maintain in their possession a copy of the final certified copy of all rosters. **The last day to certify any players for any team shall be by the close of business of week 2 games.**

B) Roster Size

For football roster size in the Commander Division (8U) and above the minimum is 16 participants, and the maximum is 35 participants. For the Lieutenant Division (6U) of football, the minimum roster size is 12 participants and the maximum is 18 participants. Cheer roster size is as follows, Small = Max 16, Large = Max 36 (Mascots are not included). Dance and Step roster size is not more than 36 participants.

Special Note Football:

The minimum number of participants required to certify a roster is 16. The minimum of 16 participants (players ready and able to play) is required to enter post season play.

For football, the maximum number of volunteers on each roster is as follows: 1 Head Coach, 7 Assistant Coaches, 1 Team Parent, and 1 Junior Coach.

For cheer, the maximum number of volunteers on each roster is as follows: 1 Head Coach, 7 Assistant Coaches, 1 Team Parent, and 1 Student Demonstrator.

C) Movement of Rostered Participants

Once a roster is full, no player may be dropped to make room for another player.

After a roster has been certified, a player may NOT be allowed to move up or down in any division.

Two players cannot have the same jersey number under any circumstances.

Section 9 – Important Dates**SUMMARY OF DUE DATES**

FOOTBALL SPECIFIC - RULES AND REQUIREMENTS

Section 10 – Football Age Determination Definition

AGE DETERMINATION DEFINITION

For determining the Participants Age and/or Protected Age, the term “On or Before” and the term “As Of” is intended to have the same definition (Age Cut Off Date): An age cutoff date of (on or before/as of 7/31) July 31st of the current season is as follows: 14 year old on July 31st, turns 15 years old on August 1st, the participant is registered as a 14 year old. If the participant has a birthday on July 31st in which they turn 15 they would be considered 15 for registration and/or division placement purposes.

Section 15 – Divisions of Play

Lieutenant Division (6U)

Players that are 5 or 6 years old, regardless of weight. Players with league age of 7 may participate as older/lighter provided their certification weight is 45 pounds or less.

Commander Division (8U)

Players that are 7 or 8 years old, regardless of weight. Players with league age of 9 may participate as older/lighter provided their certification weight is 60 pounds or less.

Captain Division (10U)

Players that are 9 or 10 years old, regardless of weight. Players with league age of 11 may participate as older/lighter provided their certification weight is 70 pounds or less.

Admiral Division (12U)

Players that are 11 or 12 years old, regardless of weight. Players with league age of 13 may participate as older/lighter provided their certification weight is 100 pounds or less.

Special Note – Any player participating as an older/lighter is not eligible to participate in any games outside of North Florida Youth Football Conference. This special category applies only to NFYFC and is not recognized outside of the conference. No exceptions will be granted for these players. A special Older-Lighter Participant Acknowledgement Form must be completed and signed by a parent/guardian and kept in the team book for each older-lighter participant.

Section 11 – Age & Weight Program Weigh-In Rules

WEIGH-IN RULES

A) Definition of “Max Stripped Weight”

For older/lighter participants, the definition of the term “Max Stripped Weight” is as follows:

The participants weight wearing gym shorts and a T-Shirt as the minimum clothing.

B) Weigh-In Procedure/Rules

Older but lighter participants will be weighed in at time of player certification only. Once certified, older lighter players will not be required to weigh in before each game.

- a) When Pre-Season practice begins, any participant found to be five or more pounds above the Max Stripped Weight for their specified team level, at the Pre-Season, or In-Season weigh-in, must move up a level prior to the roster certification cutoff date, or be dropped if no age-based division exists. No child may practice or remain on a team if they are 5 or more pounds over the Max Stripped Weight.

- b) Any “Sweat Down” or Extreme” weight loss used by a player to make weight will be grounds for immediate suspension for the players own safety.
- c) Any Coach, Administrator or Team Personnel found to have advised, encouraged, or tolerated any “Sweat Down” or “Extreme” weight loss techniques will be grounds for immediate suspension. Suspension will be anywhere from 1 year to permanent depending on the severity. Head Coaches will be held responsible for the actions and/or inactions of all team personnel.
- d) The conference reserves the right to weigh at any time during the season any older but lighter player. No association or member of any association has the right or authority to challenge the weight of any player. They may send formal request to the conference requesting the player to be evaluated.
- e) Older but lighter players will be allowed 1 extra pound for every week of the season that they play, with a maximum allowed weight of no more than 8 pounds the maximum weight for the division. The extra 1 pound will begin after week 1 of the regular season.
- f) Any Participant that exceeds the maximum weight for his registered team must not be allowed to play in that week’s game.
- g) The Team Books including participant picture, documents, (or 3rd party player ID badge) and MPR form must be available to the weigh-in officials for player verification.
- h) No player jersey numbers can be changed once the official weigh-in has been completed.

Section 12 – Mandatory Play Rules – For All Programs/Divisions

MANDATORY PLAY RULES

All NFYFC participants MUST play an active role in each game. Unless noted prior to the start of the game, by absence, by injury, or the participant fails to make weight.

All NFYFC participants in the Commander (8U), Captain (10U) and Admiral (12U) Divisions MUST play an active role in a minimum number of plays as follows:

26 – 35 Players = 6 Plays

21 - 25 Players = 8 Plays

14 - 20 Players = 10 Plays

Lieutenant Division (6U) requires a minimum of 15 plays per player regardless of roster size.

The number of plays required is determined by the numbers of players eligible and physically able to participate at the start of each game.

All Minimum plays must be “Active” plays. Punt and Punt Return are considered Active plays from the LOS and will count only at the Admiral division. Extra point attempts plays will count as active plays. All plays must be from the line of scrimmage (LOS). Any Penalties resulting in the replay of the down do not count as plays. Plays that result in a quarterback dropping to his knee with the sole purpose of “playing it safe” will not count as “Active” plays.

All participants must receive their minimum mandatory number of plays by the end of the 3rd quarter. Any participant that has not received their minimum plays by the end of the 3rd quarter must enter the game and remain in the game until they have received their required number of plays.

No player may be designated as “Injured” as an acceptable means of meeting the Mandatory Play Requirement without the onsite Trainers evaluation and designation.

Each team will supply 2 adults, 18 years of age or older, to monitor the Mandatory Play Rule. Failure to supply 2 adults as described will be considered a violation of the Mandatory Play Rule and may result in the forfeiture of the game. Any issue with this provision must be resolved prior to the start of the game.

Any person assigned as a Mandatory Play Monitor must be instructed to be respectful while on the opponent's sideline or working with the opponent's volunteer. There is to be no excessive cheering, no cell phone use, and no coaching of any kind. Failure to comply will be considered a violation of the Mandatory Play Rule and may result in the forfeiture of the game. Head Coaches may request an Official Time Out to rectify MPR monitor behavioral issues; this time out is to be charged to the team.

Associations shall enforce the Mandatory Play Rule. Any team not meeting the Mandatory Play Rule shall forfeit their game. Additional minimum penalties: First offense for the head coach: probation. Second offense for the head coach: suspension for one game and one week of practice. Third offense: suspension for remainder of season. If it is the last game: suspension for the first half of the following season's games. In the event a suspension should carry over into the next season, the Association that may appoint the offending coach will be obligated to enforce the suspension.

Section 13 – Fall Playing Season / Practice

FALL PLAYING SEASON / PRACTICE / SCOUTING

A) Start Dates

No Association shall commence team practice until the 4th Saturday in July. The NFYFC playing season starts on the first 4th Saturday in July and extends to December 31 of the current year.

The first week of practice must be dedicated to Ten (10) Hours of conditioning ONLY, before full contact is allowed. No pads may be worn during the initial 10 hour conditioning period; however, helmets may be worn. No teams may participate in any type of scrimmage until after completing 10 hours of conditioning and an additional ten hours of full contact.

B) Practice Length

Pre-season practice can be daily until Labor Day, but must not exceed 10 hours a week, and two (2) hours in duration. A mandatory 10-minute break ("Mandatory Break") after each hour of practice is required. Mandatory Breaks are not counted against the hours per week or the maximum hours per day.

After Labor Day, all practices may not exceed a maximum of six (6) hours, per week, with a maximum of two (2) hours duration per day. Mandatory Breaks are still required.

All players, regardless of when they join the team, must have at least one week of conditioning before they are allowed to have live contact. Even if a player joins the team after the start of the regular season schedule, this requirement must be met. All players must have minimum of 20 hours of practice before game eligibility.

C) Practice Staff Requirements

At least two coaches must be present during every practice.

Every coach and every volunteer listed on the team's official roster must have a background check preformed and reviewed/approved by the process established by the Association/Conference.

There shall be at least one person holding a Red Cross Card, or of similar equivalency, present at all practices. This can be a coach, or any volunteer approved by the Association.

Coaches are required to maintain in their possession at any and all practices the team's **PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION FORMS** and **PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTRACT, PERMISSION & WAIVER FORMS**

D) Practice Restrictions

There shall be no "inter-division" practice or games between divisions i.e., Commander vs Captain, ... this does not prohibit individual fundamental coaching sessions as long as there is no full contact between players of differing teams/divisions.

The following Drills and Warm-up Exercises are hereby banned from all NFYFC activities. Leg Lifts, Neck Bridges, Neck Rolls, Bull in the Ring, Barrel Rolls, and any and all drills and exercises not generally accepted as safe, and that may not be reflective of actions that would normally occur during the course of a football game.

The National Federation (NFHS) and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rulebooks contain strong language on Blocking and Tackling. NFYFC coaches are responsible to be fully informed, and abide by, all such rules of their states governing body (NFHS or NCAA). NFYFC coaches are also responsible to review these rules every year. In addition to other specific prohibitions in the NFHS and NCAA rulebooks, butt blocking, chop blocking, face tackling or spearing techniques are strictly prohibited. If such techniques or any others forbidden by the NFHS or NCAA rulebooks are taught, the coaches responsible shall be subject to disciplinary actions including but not limited to probation upon the first offense and suspension for the remainder of the season upon the second offence. Associations are encouraged to establish their own rules regulations and monitoring of their coaches. Coaches assume all liability for their actions or inactions.

Section 14 – Fall Playing Season / Games / Scoring / Football Size / Scouting

FALL PLAYING SEASON / GAMES

A) Game Clock Details

Only 10-minute quarters will be utilized in all Divisions/Class of play within NFYFC except for the Lieutenant division which plays 22-minute running clock halves.

Maximum half time allowed will be 10 minutes.

In Lieutenant division, clock stops only for time outs and change of possession. There will be a 35 second play clock enforced once ball is declared ready for play by official. Clock will not stop for extra point attempts in Lieutenant division.

All other divisions will utilize modified high school regulation clock rules.

Three (3) timeouts per half in all NFYFC games, Timeouts are not charged against a team for injuries or game officials' timeout. Head Coaches may request an Official Time Out to rectify MPR monitor behavioral issues; this time out is NOT to be charged to the team. Lieutenant division is allowed 2 time outs per half.

B) Game Details / Minimum Number of Players

The minimum number of players eligible and able to participate and required to start and maintain a regulation game during the regular season will be 14 with exception of the Lieutenant division which will require 10 eligible players. A minimum of 14 players eligible and able to participate is required to enter post season play and must be maintained throughout post season or the game will be forfeited, and the winner will advance.

Football games are to be scheduled no more than one (1) game per week with a minimum of 48 hours (2 days) between games. The NFYFC reserves the right to waive this rule when extenuating circumstances exist or to accommodate a championship tournament.

C) Coaching Communications

There will be no electronic devices from the press box, coaching box, sidelines, or any other position on the field that may be used to relay messages to the coaches or players at any time. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, the use of a Cell Phone, Blackberry, PDA, Computer or other messaging device. All Bluetooth earpiece devices are not allowed within the field of play. A coach using a cell phone for emergency purposes must step outside the coach's box, off the playing field, (with an exception for on field emergency) and if it continues, may be asked to leave the field for the remainder of the game. Further disciplinary action may be taken by the Conference.

D) Game Day Medical Requirements

NFYFC requires the home team or hosting organization to provide medical coverage at each game. In the absence of a physician and or ambulance on site, the minimum requirement will be the presence of an individual who is EMT qualified or is currently certified in Red Cross Community First Aid and Safety or its equivalent. Therefore, no game shall start without this requirement being met.

Coaches are always required to maintain in their possession the teams **PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION FORMS** and **PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTRACT, PERMISSION & WAIVER FORMS**.

Home team or hosting organization is required to introduce the emergency medical personnel to the visiting
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team and to review the emergency medical plan with the visiting team. The emergency medical plan shall include but not be limited to (1) ambulatory access to the field, (2) directions to the facility, (3) location of the emergency communication device, in the absence of a cell phone, and the emergency medical services numbers as well as the local fire and police numbers when 911 services do not exist.

Once an injured participant is removed from the game, they may not re-enter the game unless first approved by the emergency medical personnel covering the game. If a participant is transported off the field to a medical facility or for any reason seeks medical attention whether from an injury sustained during a game or practice, they may not resume participation without the written consent from the examining medical personnel.

E) Football Size Requirement

The following is the recommended size breakdown per team level. The Wilson football is listed here for illustration purposes you may use any brand's size equivalent.

Lieutenant (6U) - Pee Wee

Commander (8U) - Pee Wee

Captain (10U) - Junior

Admiral (12U) - Junior

F) Scoring, Tie Breakers, Lopsided Score Rule

1) Scoring:

In all divisions, a touchdown is scored as 6 points. All divisions will have option of attempting one point by having ball spotted on 3-yard line and will run either a run or pass play. Teams may elect to go for 2 extra points by having the ball placed on the 5 yards with either a run or pass play. Home teams must paint marks or have indicators of the 3 and 5 yard lines on the field.

2) Tie-Breakers:

“Sudden Death” tie-breakers are prohibited. NFYFC games will utilize the ten (10) yard Tie-Breaker System. As stated in the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) rule book. The NFHS Tie-Breaker rules amended to start from the 10-yard line. Conference standing tie-breaker used for establishing playoff brackets cannot use total points for or against as a tie-breaker.

3) Lopsided Score Rule:

An intentionally run-up score is when a team continues to use its best players and its currently most successful plays to score as many times as possible even after the game is in their favor and far out of reach for their opponents. Coaches who practice this are to be disciplined by the local Conference / Association. NFYFC considers this type of coaching contrary to its purposes.

The NFYFC lopsided score rule is 28 Points or 4 touchdowns, whichever comes first. Once the score differential reaches 28 points, or 4 touchdowns, the game clock will become a running clock. Once the clock becomes a running clock it can only be stopped for injuries and official or team time outs. The winning team is prohibited from running any pass plays, misdirection, counter, reverses or “trick plays” of any kind, or any play that has been consistently run with success during the game. Skill position starters must be replaced whenever possible. All plays must be ran between the tackles. There is no blitzing allowed by EITHER team. The losing's teams defense may have no more than 4 players on the LOS, Linebackers must be a minimum of 5 yards away from LOS and defensive backs must be 10 yards from the LOS. Mandatory plays must be completed regardless of the score or game clock. If the winning team does not complete their required mandatory plays, the full force of the mandatory play rules will be in effect.

NFYFC will investigate/review all reported losses of more than 35 points or 5 touchdowns. Not all lopsided scores are intentional. Great care should be used when investigating these situations, the opponents (head coach) observations should be heavily considered, and no penalty or disciplinary action should be assessed if a team is determined to have shown restraint and respect for its opponent but is simply superior for whatever reason.

G) Scouting

Scouting football teams is permitted in the form of video tape, film and written reports. Scouting is only permitted during a game situation. Scouting any type of practice is strictly prohibited. Preseason games/scrimmages with officials and no coaches on the field may be scouted. Scrimmages with coaches on the field may not be scouted.

Drones and unmanned aircraft are prohibited from being used during practices and games.

H) Mandatory Required Player Equipment

NFYFC will follow FHSSA rules for required player equipment with the following exceptions: 1) Mouthpieces must be tethered to the helmet, and 2) Mouthpieces may be any color except for clear.

I) Fourth Down After Scoring Play

For all divisions except for Lieutenant (6U), will be allowed the opportunity to run a special 4th and 10 play immediately following any score. Each team will only be allowed 1 special 4th and 10 play per game, and the play can only be used in the second half of the game and only if the score differential is 14 points or less.

If declared, the ball will be spotted on the scoring teams 35 yard line. The team will have one down of which to gain 10 or more yards. If the team fails to gain the minimum 10 yards, the ball will be turned over at the spot of the play. If the team gains the 10 yards or more, they will keep possession and continue their drive.

Section 15 – Playoff Seeding

Teams will be seeded for playoffs utilizing the following format:

- Number of overall losses
- Common opponents
- Points allowed
- Points differential (max 21 points per game)
- Coin toss

Section 16 – Specific Division Rules**Lieutenant Division (6U)**

Lieutenant division is played 8 on 8 football on a standard length high school field, but only 40 yards wide.

Kickoff – There are no kickoffs. Ball will be placed on the 35-yard line.

Punts – Declared punts will spot the ball on the other team’s 35-yard line.

Huddle - There is no hurry up offense allowed. Each team must be allowed to set up between plays.

Offensive Restrictions – Offense must have 5 players on the LOS. A receiver may be placed on the LOS provided they are not farther away than 5 yards from the last player on LOS. All offensive backfield players must be inside the last player of the LOS on each side. QB cannot run if the ball is snapped from shotgun or if they receive the ball off the back of the center. There is no pre snap movement allowed. No silent snap counts are allowed.

Defense Restrictions – No player may line up over the center. All defense players must line up directly over top of

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the offense line and defensive line must be in a 3- or 4-point stance. Defensive line must line up 1 yard away from the LOS. Defensive ends may split the last player on the LOS. Defensive players must be in a 4:3:1 formation.

There shall be no blitzing allowed, defined as any forward movement once the snap of the ball is imminent.

Defensive secondary must be 3 yards back from the LOS and may be in a 2, 3, or 4-point stance.

There may be 2 coaches from each team on the field during the game. Once the snap is imminent, coaches must be back a minimum of 15 yards from LOS or behind the official and must remain silent. The first penalty will be a warning, and subsequent infractions will result in a 15-yard unsportsmanlike penalty.

Safety – If there is a safety, the ball will be placed in same spot as a kick off.

Commander Division (8U)

Commander division is played 11 on 11 football on a standard high school size field.

Kickoff – There are no kickoffs. Ball will be placed on the 35-yard line.

Punts – Declared punts will move the ball 20 yards from the LOS.

PAT – Teams may elect to attempt a 1-point play if the ball is spotted on the 3-yard line. Teams may elect to attempt a 2-point play if the ball is spotted on the 5-yard line. Regardless of ball placement, teams may elect to either run or pass the ball.

Offensive Restrictions – None

Defensive Restrictions – May not line up directly over top of center. Defense is allowed a maximum of 5 down linemen and they must be in a 3 or 4 point stance. There is no blitzing allowed, defined as forward movement before the ball is snapped. Defense secondary must be a minimum of 3 yards away from the line of scrimmage.

Safety – If there is a safety, the ball will be placed in same spot as a kick off.

There may be 1 coach from each team on the field during the game. Once the snap is imminent, coaches must be back 15 yards from LOS or behind the official and must remain silent. The first penalty will be a warning, and subsequent infractions will result in a 15-yard unsportsmanlike penalty.

Captain Division (10U)

Captain division is played 11 on 11 football on a standard high school size field.

Kickoff – There are no kickoffs. Ball will be placed on the 35-yard line.

Punts – Declared punts will move the ball 25 yards from the LOS.

PAT – Teams may elect to attempt a 1-point play if the ball is spotted on the 3-yard line. Teams may elect to attempt a 2-point play if the ball is spotted on the 5-yard line. Regardless of ball placement, teams may elect to either run or pass the ball.

Offensive Restrictions – None

Defensive Restrictions – None

Safety – If there is a safety, the ball will be placed in same spot as a kick off.

Coaches – no coaches are allowed on the field during gameplay.

Admiral Division (12U)

Admiral division is played 11 on 11 football on a standard high school size field.

Kickoff – There are no kickoffs. Ball will be placed on the 35-yard line.

Punts – Admiral division must punt the ball following standard NFHS rules.

PAT – Teams may elect to attempt a 1-point play if the ball is spotted on the 3-yard line. Teams may elect to attempt a 2-point play if the ball is spotted on the 5-yard line. Regardless of ball placement, teams may elect to either run or pass the ball.

Offensive Restrictions – None

Defensive Restrictions – None

Safety – If there is a safety, the ball will be placed in same spot as a kick off.

Coaches – No coaches are allowed on the field during gameplay