

2019
WEST MICHIGAN YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE,
INC.
RULES / BY-LAWS

WMYFL MISSION STATEMENT

Supporting a safe, fun environment to teach good sportsmanship and the basic fundamentals of football to all participants!!

Definitions:

WMYFL – Is a coalition of (7) area programs. Each program designates 1 individual (FD, Board Member, etc) to vote on its behalf for all matters that pertain to the league.

Commissioner – The commissioner will be voted in by member programs. The Commissioner will be paid a stipend to administer the league including; scheduling, rosters, conflict resolution, etc. The Commissioner’s term is one year and can be renewed by mutual agreement and League Board approval.

League Board – (1) representative from each area program will participate in the League Board. The Commissioner works in support of the League Board.

Cost – Each member area will pay 1/7 of the total league cost per year. Part of cost will be paying for the Commissioner and scheduling will total \$315 per year for each team. Commissioner stipend is by the first game of the year.

THE WEST MICHIGAN YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE FOLLOWS MHSAA RULES EXCEPT FOR DIFFERENCES OUTLINED IN THESE RULES. IN THOSE INSTANCES THE WEST MICHIGAN YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES TAKE PRECEDENCE.

Membership in USA Football and “Heads Up Football is required to maintain standing in the league.

NONE of the West Michigan Youth Football League rules can be waived by any person for any reason. Anyone willfully violating any rule will be suspended for one (1) year. Reinstatement/appeal procedures are outlined in the WMYFL Guidelines.

A. PLAYING TIME / ROSTER LIMITS

1. A method to maintain equal playing time should be developed within each league program
2. Team size; recommended maximum of 25(grades 3 – 6) players and a minimum of 15. All efforts should be made to try to minimize team rosters at 3rd – 6th grade divisions to no more than 22 players.
3. The Commissioner may request an area to amend roster size and/or composition if necessary to create adequate numbers of teams for scheduling purposes.

B. Divisions - (LEAGUE AGE)

1. 3rd/4th Grade – No player under the age of 8 (as of September 1st) shall be allowed to play within this group. No player over the age of 10 (as of September 1st) shall be allowed to play within this group.
2. 5th/6th Grade – No player under the age of 9 (as of September 1st) shall be allowed to play within this group. No player over the age of 12 (as of September 1st) shall be allowed to play within this group.
3. 7th Grade – No player over the age of 14 (as of September 1st) shall be allowed to play in this group. 8th graders that weigh 80 pounds or less may apply to the league Commissioner to play down to the 7th grade level. The league Commissioner will review the request and respond within a 24 hour period.
4. NO player may either practice or play who has not turned in a Home Area Permission/Hold Harmless Agreement signed by the player’s parents.
5. Each program must, MAINTAIN COPIES OF ALL *FULLY COMPLETED* PERMISSION SLIPS and be able to furnish permission slips to the league upon demand.
6. All area programs must verify age/grade.

C. WEIGHTS

GENERAL

1. The weight limits in the various age groups are as follows:
 - Any child over the weights below must play Tackle to Tackle on offense and/or defense
 - 3rd/4th Grade weight limit @ 125 pounds
 - 5th/6th Grade weight limit @ 145 pounds

****SEE SEASON FOR PROCEDURES****

****SEE SPECIAL RULES****

D. CAST POLICY

1. No player wearing a cast of any type may participate in a game or practice of a WMYFL member area. *This policy is to be strictly enforced and CANNOT be waived by a doctor's slip or by parental consent.*

E. FIRST AID - EMERGENCIES

1. All Field Directors, head coaches and assistants should be at least be acquainted in basic first aid procedures.

2. AN EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN TO EVACUATE AN INJURED PLAYER (AMBULANCE, ETC.) SHOULD BE PART OF EVERY MEMBER AREA'S PRE-SEASON PLANNING.

3. Each team is to be equipped with a first aid kit, including ice packs, which is present at all team practices and games. This is in addition to the field site first aid kit.

4. CONCUSSION POLICY- ANY PLAYER VISIBLY SUFFERING FROM OR COMPLAINING OF A HEADACHE, BLURRED VISION, NAUSEA OR OTHER SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH A CLOSED HEAD INJURY/CONCUSSION SHALL BE REMOVED FROM THE GAME AND UNABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY FURTHER ACTIVITY UNTIL RELEASED FROM MEDICAL SUPERVISION.

a. A medical release signed by a doctor must be on record with the Field Director of the injured player's home area and provided to the WMYFL along with a matching injury report. ALL WMYFL ADMINISTRATORS, COACHES AND OFFICIALS WILL BE BRIEFED ON THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AT PRESEASON COACHING/OFFICIATING MEETINGS.

5. All areas will follow MHSAA guidelines for severe weather, including extreme heat

F. EQUIPMENT

1. Pads, Mouth Guards, Visors, Misc.

a. Every player must wear football shoulder pads, helmet with face mask and football pants with pads. ALL playing equipment must be NOCSAE approved. Every effort should be made by all Field Directors and coaches to see that no obsolete or over-aged equipment is used. If neck rolls are worn by a player, the WMYFL strongly suggests a "proper fit." "Proper fit" being defined as a "neck roll that adequately protects the neck, but still allows movement of the head in all directions."

b. All players must wear mouth protectors either clear or colored, and unless the player has written permission from his/her dentist ALL Mouthpieces must be attached to the helmet facemask and worn in the mouth while on the playing field. Following a WARNING, the referees will assess a 15-yard penalty for violation of this rule.

c. Visors, either clear or tinted may be worn, however the tint MUST not be so dark as to keep the players' eyes from being visible.

2. Cleats

a. Cleats must be of the plastic, rubber molded variety. There should be NO metal caps and any metal rivets MUST be submerged in the cleat and any shoe having metal protruding WILL NOT be worn. SHOES HAVING SCREW-IN CLEATS OF THE PLASTIC VARIETY ARE ALLOWED.

3. Footballs

a. 3rd & 4th grade teams and 5th and 6th grade teams will use the junior size football. 5th & 6th teams may choose to use the youth size.

G. COACHES

1. Certification/Training/ ID

a. All teams are to be coached by a minimum of two (2) and a maximum of (7) coaches, and ALL coaches holding any appropriate WMYFL Certification (see below). All coaches, including assistants must be at least 21 years of age

b. ALL programs are to develop and implement a coach training program that include concussion training consistent with USA Football HUF training protocol.

c. ALL coaches will submit and pass at minimum a Michigan State Police background check as conducted by the league. (or its school, parks/rec equivalent)

d. No coach will have sideline privileges without being authorized by their area program and commissioner.

2. Field Behavior, Sportsmanship, Etc

a. ALL coaches must remain on the sidelines as in regular high school rules (*see 3rd/4th Rules for exceptions), and may enter the playing field to converse with their players only during called time outs. Coaches and players on the sidelines must remain within the 25-yard line markers. There shall be an AUTOMATIC 15 yard penalty for any member of the coaching staff, players or parents on the playing field and interrupting the normal progress of the game.

b. ***ZERO TOLERANCE COACHING BEHAVIOR*** ANY COACH OR ASST. COACH entering the field of play to argue an official's call in an unsportsmanlike or hostile manner, or inciting his players or fans to harass the officials about a call and/or subsequently EJECTED FROM THE GAME SHALL BE IMMEDIATELY DISMISSED FROM THE PROGRAM IN QUESTION AND PERMENANTLY BARRED FROM ANY/ALL WMYFL ACTIVITIES. Any coach found in violation of the rules as presented will be reported to the commissioner for enforcement. If the commissioner finds the coach is in violation of the WMYFL rules, the commissioner at his discretion may provide a verbal warning for the first infraction. Any further infractions will result in game suspensions to be determined by the commissioner.**

c. Field Directors are responsible for identifying violations of rules/regulations or conduct by coaches (their own as well as visiting coaches) that require "off the field" discipline. The use of the WMYFL Game Report should be used to corroborate these violations. The Commissioner will be immediately notified of such violations so as to

rapidly facilitate the appropriate disciplinary action, if any, as set forth WMYFL Rules and/or Guidelines. Strict compliance of procedures governing reinstatement and/or appeals procedures outlined in the WMYFL Guidelines will be practiced by all parties.

d. Any player using profanity, degrading language, unsportsmanlike gestures or taunting of another player, coach or official shall be penalized 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct. This penalty shall be considered a team penalty and any subsequent such infraction from ANY player of the same team WILL RESULT IN AN IMMEDIATE EJECTION FROM THE GAME OF THAT PLAYER.

e. Concerning the sportsmanship of spectators and fans, it will be explained at any/all coach's seminars/meetings and by every area Field Director to their coaches; it is the coach's responsibility to control their team's fans (parents). If the coach CANNOT control their team's fans, then the Field Director or Asst. Field Director must step in and restore order. It should be explained that at the first such offense an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be enforced and 15-yards marked off against the offending team. A second offense will require the Field Director to stop the game and if the individual (s) causing the disturbance can be identified, they will be instructed to leave the facility or the game will be stopped and a forfeit awarded the opposing team.

1. ALL SPECTATORS MUST REMAIN AT LEAST 10-YARDS FROM ALL BOUNDARIES OF THE PLAYING FIELD.

2. ANY SPECTATOR ENTERING THE PLAYING FIELD FOR REASONS OTHER THAN A PLAYER INJURY SHALL BE IMMEDIATELY ESCORTED FROM THE PLAYING FIELD BY EITHER THE FIELD DIRECTOR OR HIS/HER ASSISTANT.

3. IF THE OFFENDING PARTY REFUSES TO LEAVE THE SITE, LAW ENFORCEMENT SHOULD BE CALLED.

f. Referees may penalize a team 15-yards for unsportsmanlike conduct by coaching staff *or* SUPPORTING FANS. This rule also applies to a coach who by action or word entices the fans to act in an unsportsmanlike manner *OR who fails to use his influence to calm the fans.*

****SUSPENSIONS****

Depending on the infraction, (other than ejection from a game) suspensions may range from one week/one game to a permanent ban from all WMYFL activities, including coaching. Final determination as to the degree of severity of the discipline or suspension rests with the WMYFL Commissioner.

****SPORTSMANSHIP****

Rules governing the conduct of coaches, players and spectators are continuously reviewed by the league in an attempt to stem unsportsmanlike behavior.

H. COACHING MEMBERSHIPS

1. All league areas are responsible to establish and maintain requirements and guidelines for coaching membership outside of the requirements for USA Football.

2. In any WMYFL area where there is a cheerleading component, that component shall be under nominal supervision of the area Field Director or his/her delegate.

The administrative requirements for the cheer program reside with the program.

I. OFFICIALS

1. Officials will be in a team with a minimum of three adult officials two of whom should be certified by the MHSAA. A fourth uncertified official may be added to the crew who is uncertified. The fourth official must be at least a high school junior. The referees work directly for the Field Director of the area in which they were hired. The said area is responsible for the conduct of game officials before, during and immediately following a game. Problems with game officials are to be brought to the attention of the WMYFL Commissioner. He/she is also responsible for any communication between an area's Field Director and his/her area officials and the WMYFL.

2. The following rule is emphasized to reduce problems with fans; Referees may penalize a team 15-yards for unsportsmanlike conduct by coaching staff *or* SUPPORTING FANS. This rule also applies to a coach who by action or word entices the fans to act in an unsportsmanlike manner *OR who fails to use his influence to calm the fans.*

J. CAMPS

1. AREA CAMP/SEMINARS: THE INDIVIDUAL AREAS MAY OPERATE CAMPS/SESSIONS FOR THEIR PLAYERS AS LONG AS THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET;

A. NO SINGLE TEAM CAMPS-THEY MUST BE OPEN TO ALL PLAYERS AND AGE GROUPS

B. CAMPS MUST BE CONDUCTED EITHER BY THE AREA OR THE HIGH SCHOOL COACHING STAFF

C. **NO EQUIPMENT AND NO CONTACT.**

D. **CAMPS MUST BE COMPLETED NO LATER THAN FOUR (4) WEEKS BEFORE THE START OF THE PRACTICE SEASON.**

M. WEATHER

1. Due to the seven (7) game schedule adopted in 1996, there will be no set make-up games for Saturdays that may be cancelled due to inclement weather , to be identified as: tornado watch or warning, lightning, extreme heat, or any weather related incident that would cause the respective area high school to withhold the use of the field. Each area will use MHSAA guidelines in regards to severe weather.

PRESEASON

N. SIGN-UPS

1. ALL areas must have every player/parent fill out and sign the standard form described and supplied by the WMYFL noted above. The original forms are to be kept by the member area and prior to the first scheduled game, a copy of each form must be submitted preferably in an electronic format to the WMYFL Commissioner.

2. Cut-off dates and the late window sign up will be provided each season by the league. Any player not registered by the final date is ineligible to participate in the WMYFL for that season, no exceptions.

O. DRAFT PROCEDURES

THIS SHALL BE THE ESTABLISHED PROCEDURE FOR THE SELECTION OF TEAM PERSONNEL IN ALL WMYFL MEMBER AREAS:

1. In age groups with more than one (1) team, each team can reserve/draft up to 5 players from the previous year. Reserved players are defined as son of the coach, sons of assistant coaches, past players, and players at large. If there are brothers in the same age group, they will be placed on the same team, a coach choosing one, selects both. Brothers selected in this matter count as two (2) selections of the five reserved picks. The remaining players shall be divided into straight Grade Divisions first, then further separated by age, weight (lightest to heaviest), and tackle football experience to be placed in the remaining roster spots on a random basis.

3. After the designated draft times, each program should submit copies of their rosters to the Commissioner to file.

P. PRACTICE

1. The *Commissioner* shall determine the date pre-season practice shall commence. There will be no more than 3 practice sessions held per week for grades 3rd through 6th grade, with the exception of the first week of the pre-season when 4 conditioning practices will be allowed.
2. NO CONTACT IS ALLOWED THE FIRST WEEK OF PRACTICE. CONTACT IS DEFINED AS; A PLAYER COMING INTO PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ANOTHER PLAYER, COACH, PARENT OR SLED. A PLAYER MAY COME INTO CONTACT WITH A DUMMY OR SHIELD AT A CONTROLLED PACE TO TEACH PROPER BLOCKING AND/OR TACKLING TECHNIQUES.
3. Per USA Football recommendations, the first two practices during conditioning practices will be helmets only. The third and fourth conditioning practices may be conducted in helmets and shoulder pads. There will be **no** contact during those practices.
4. ALL players must have the MANDATORY four (4) conditioning practices before engaging in contact.
5. After completing the mandatory 4 conditioning practices, each team will comply with the following rules established by the MHSAA for Collision Contact:
 - a. Collision contact is limited to no more than 2 hours in a week.
Scrimmages will calculate collision contact based on ½ of the total time (2 hours scrimmage = 1 hour of collision contact).

- b. In – Season (Game Week) A maximum of 45 minutes of collision contact is allowed during an in – season week.
6. Two-a-day practices are NOT allowed. Cancelled practices may not be “banked” (that is moved to another week to be made up, thereby defeating the purpose of the practice rules).

SEASON

Regulation MHSAA rules, substitution and scoring rules will be in effect EXCEPT where they conflict with WMYFL Rules. SHOULD THAT OCCUR, WMYFL RULES AS OUTLINED HERE TAKE PRECEDENCE. WMYFL MEMBER AREAS ARE PROHIBITED FROM ADOPTING “LOCAL” CHANGES TO THE WMYFL RULES. ANY REPORTS OF SUCH PRACTICES WILL BE INVESTIGATED BY THE COMMISSIONER AND OFFENDERS SUBJECT TO SANCTIONS UP TO AND INCLUDING DISMISSAL FROM THE LEAGUE

Q. SCHEDULING OF GAMES

The WMYFL will schedule all seven games at the start of the season. The league reserves the right to make adjustments for week seven to provide an equitable match up for teams with zero or one wins for the season.

ALL SCHEDULING RIGHTS RESIDE WITH THE WMYFL COMMISSIONER

R. GAME LENGTH, TIME-OUTS, WARM-UPS, INJURIES

1. ALL age groups will have 4 ten-minute quarters, with no more than a 2 minute rest between quarters and a ten minute halftime. IF in the interests of time & game management, the Field Director may reduce halftime to five minutes so long as the warm-up period is enforced. The Field Director must inform both teams if half time is to be reduced prior to the start of the game.

2. Each team is entitled to three, two-minute time outs per half. The clock will stop for all penalties, after a score, following kick-off, an injury, equipment repair, after a punt, or a time-out. ***The clock is not stopped for any other reason.***

3. Each team must have a ten-minute warm-up of stretching and/or calisthenics before starting each game and at least a 2 minute warm up prior to the start of the second half. These warm-ups are mandatory and will be enforced by the referees. Should either warm-up (pre-game or at halftime) result in a delayed start to either half, the team causing the delay will be penalized (unsportsmanlike conduct) 15-yards at the time of the kick-off.

4. In the event of injury to a player, an official time-out will be called. However, the hurt player must report to his sideline after the time-out and remain there at least 3 consecutive playing minutes. The referees will be instructed at the Officials Clinic to enforce this procedure. The Field Director of the home field has the authority to remove

a player from the game IF, in their opinion the players is unable to, or it is not in their best interests to safely continue.

S. JERSEYS

If two (2) teams, are playing each other and have the same color jerseys, the home team (if they are available) will change to another color or use field/practice jerseys.

T. WEIGH IN

1. The weight limits in the various age groups are as follows:
2. Any child over the weights below must play Tackle to Tackle on the offensive and/or defensive line for their age division. An overweight player may pull between the tackles, but may NOT pull outside the tackle on a sweep play.

- 3rd/4th grade weight limit @ 125 lbs.
- 5th/6th grade weight limit @ 145 lbs.

a. Players must be weighed in before each game and meet the weight restrictions. ALL PLAYERS MAY WEIGH IN WITHOUT THEIR HELMETS. Each player must be stamped on the hand or wrist when qualified and no player may participate without such a mark. A Field Director, coach or official may ask to see a players mark at any time. **HAND GUARDS/ARM PADS MUST BE HELD NOT WORN DURING THE WEIGH IN PROCESS.**

b. A player may remove socks or t-shirts to make weight but may not put them back on once the playing weight is achieved. AT NO TIME MAY ANY PLAYER CHANGE THEIR EXISTING EQUIPMENT, OTHER THAN SHOES, TO MAKE WEIGHT. **You must weigh-in, football spikes or tennis shoes only.**

d. Any Field Director and/or coach that knowingly allows an overweight player to participate will be in violation of WMYFL rules. The offending area is immediately placed on probation pending a full investigation by the WMYFL.

e. Over weight players – A neon ORANGE sticker shall be affixed to the front of the player’s helmet on all players weighing above the allowed weight for that division at the time of the weigh-in. Over weight players can only play from tackle to tackle on the offensive and/or defensive line. Over weight players are not allowed on special teams except as the kicker or punter. If the punter or kicker is overweight, he MUST report to official prior to kick and he must remove himself from the field IMMEDIATELY after the kick. In no circumstance may he be involved in the play after the kick.

U. FIELD RULES

1. The football field is 100 yards long for all age groups.
2. The Down markers/chains are to be located on the HOME SIDE of the field ONLY.

3. Chain crews may be volunteers; however they are considered part of the officiating crew. Members of the chain crew may not coach, cheer, or interfere with players, coaches, or officials during any game.

4. Kick offs are from the 40 yard line.

V. POINT AFTER ATTEMPT (PAT)

1. 3rd & 4th Grade PAT conversion will be run/passed. Run = 1 point, Pass = 2 points. No Place Kicks.
2. 5th and 6th Grade PAT conversion maybe run, pass or place kick. Run = 1 point, Pass = 2 points, successful place = 2 points

W. FUMBLES

1. By MHSAA Rules a stripped football is considered a fumble. At all age groups both the defense and offense can advance a fumble, (all levels, all divisions). However it is suggested that coaches refrain from encouraging their players to purposely strip the football. An overweight player may not advance a fumble.

X. PUNTS

1. In 5th and 6th grade, the defense may rush the kicker, however there will be NO contact allowed with the offensive center during long snapping process.
2. Referees shall be instructed to enforce any violations in the following manner:
 - a. DEFENSIVE CONTACT WITH THE OFFENSIVE CENTER IN A PUNTING SITUATION (LONG SNAP ONLY) WILL BE ASSESSED AS A PERSONAL FOUL, WITH A 15-YARD WALK-OFF AND AN AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWN. This penalty is only in an obvious 4th down punting situation and not on a shotgun snap on 1, 2 or 3 down.

Y. SCORING

WMYFL is a developmental league. All efforts shall be made to keep the games competitive. If a team is outscoring a team by 24 points, field directors will have a conversation with coaches to ask what efforts will be made to keep the score within 24 points.

Z. KICK OFFS

1. There will be no kick offs at the third and fourth grade level. The ball will be placed at the 40 yard line.
2. 5th and 6th grade teams will not allow on-side kicks. The ball must travel 20 yards to be returned. If the ball is touch by either team before traveling 20 yards the

play is immediately blown dead. If the ball does not travel 20 yards, the play is blown dead. The ball may hit the ground and travel 20 yards. Any kick blown dead will have the ball placed 20 yards from spot of kick off and the receiving team will start their possession.

AA. GAME REPORTS

1. At the completion of every game, one coach from each team must sign a game sheet.

BB. GAME REPORT SUBMISSION - SCORE REPORTS

1. Each Field Director or representative for that area MUST submit the scores to the Commissioner, generally before NOON the Sunday immediately following game days. After reporting of all scores, all game reports must be submitted as well.

3rd/4th Grade SPECIAL RULES DIVISION

DEFENSIVE LINE

1. The DEFENSIVE LINE can have no more than 6 players on the Line of Scrimmage (LOS). Of these 6 ONLY the Defensive Ends (2) can be standing- as long as they are on the outside shoulder of the last offensive lineman (end or OT) to the DE's side of the formation. (In the event the offensive end is split out, the DE may be positioned either off the OT or the end). Teams may move a standing defensive end to stand over a wing to counter an unbalanced offensive line. The other 4 Defensive Linemen MUST be in either a 3 or 4 point stance.

2. With exception to the defensive line (no more than 6 players), every other defensive player must be lined up no closer than 5 yards to the line of scrimmage. The intent is to prevent any defensive player from running unimpeded into the offensive backfield to disrupt a play before it can develop. To defend the goal line, linebackers may move

PUNTS

1. The ball will be handed to the punter by the referee, after the rest of the players on both offense and defense kneel down. TWO player(s) on the defense may be back to field the punt. NO team player other than the punter and the punt receiver may move until the ball is either caught or rolls dead.

2. The punter must be at least 3-yards behind the line of scrimmage to punt.

3. The punt must travel at least 20-yards and if it does not, the referee will spot the ball 20-yards from the line of scrimmage for play. THERE IS NO PUNT RETURN.

PENALTIES

1. Maximum penalty for 8/9 year-olds will be 10-yards. Other than Unsportsmanlike.

COACHES

THE 3rd/4th grade SEASON WILL BE DIVIDED INTO THE FIRST 3 GAMES WHERE A COACH IS ALLOWED ON THE FIELD AND THE LAST 4 GAMES WHERE NO COACH IS ALLOWED ON THE FIELD.

During the first three games of the season, ONE coach per team may be present on the playing field, but shall not INTERFERE either physically or verbally while play is in progress. The coach must remain at least 10-yards behind the line of scrimmage and out of the playing area when a play is in progress.
