

Monroe County Youth Football Association Rules for 2024

REVISED – August 19, 2024

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Monroe County Youth Football Association (MCYFA) is to maintain a properly supervised football program for children ages 6 through 12 within Monroe and surrounding counties. These goals as created by the board of directors are in the following order of priority:

- To create a safe learning environment
- To see that all children have fun while participating through games, practices, or any events
- To teach the fundamentals of football with an emphasis on blocking and tackling.
- To see that every child who participates on our program is coached well and shows improvement
- To exercise a competitive spirit through good sportsmanship

Section 1: Player Requirements

Flag Football League (FFL) is for players who are at least 6 years of age by the first week of September, will not reach the age of 9 prior to November 1 following the season and are in, kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade.

American Football League (AFL) is for players who are at least 8 by the first week of September, will not reach the age of 11 prior to November 1 following the season and are in 3rd and 4th grade.

National Football League (NFL) is for players who are at least 10 years of age by the first week of September, will not reach the age of 13 by November 1 of the year following the season and are in 5th and 6th grade.

In order to provide a maximum opportunity for all youths to participate in organized football, no one may play in the league if their school provides an organized football program.

An extra year may be given for a player under 65 pounds in the AFL, pending a written request from a parent or guardian to the board. That player may not carry the ball. With board approval a player may be granted an extra year in the intro league. These requests must be in writing and must be presented to the board prior to the night of the respective league draft.

Parents/guardians of 2nd grade children can sign them up for AFL tackle football with a signed waiver and MCYFA Board review. Safety is always a top priority, so it's important that the board reviews each case carefully before approving participation. Players in 2nd grade that have played tackle football in another youth football league may petition the board to play in the AFL.

In order to maintain a competitive balance and to improve safety for all participants, no player may play in MCYFA who has had more than six school years pass from the time they entered first grade.

Section 2: NFL Weight Requirements

Any participant that exceeds ball carrying weight, and is known as a single black stripe player, cannot line up in any position that is eligible to receive a forward pass. Any player exceeding the second weight limit (double stripe) will be restricted to playing as interior down lineman (center, guard, tackle or defensive end). The player must be in either three- or four-point stance at the snap of the ball.

Striped players must either wear one or two horizontal black stripes on the front and backside of the helmet, unobstructed by decals. The stripes cannot be removed at any time throughout the playing season. If for any reason a black tape player gains possession of the ball during play the official will blow a whistle to signify the play is dead at the point of interception or fumble recovery. Coaches are responsible to ensure that all players display the proper tape stripes. Playing a player without proper striping may result in forfeiture of all games that the improperly striped player participated.

Weight Limits:

AFL: Ball Carrying Limit – 95 lbs. and under

Single Stripe: Participants over 95 pounds cannot receive a handoff as a running back. Participants are eligible to receive a forward pass as a receiver.

NFL: Ball Carrying Limit – 125 lbs. and under

Single Stripe: Participants over 125 pounds cannot line up in any position eligible to receive a forward pass

Down Lineman: Participants over 160 pounds are restricted to interior line

Players must weigh at least 50 pounds to play in the AFL or NFL. Exemptions may be granted to this rule by a majority of the board of members voting via roll call.

If a player is determined to be a “striper”, they remain a “striper” for the rest of the season until playoff weigh-ins.

Section 3: Weigh-ins for AFL & NFL

All players will be weighed in at registration. This will be for informational and draft purposes only. The official weigh-in for the season will be held prior to the first regular season game. All players must remove their shoulder pads and helmets. Football pants and cleats are optional; however, players must wear at least a pair of shorts and t-shirt. Underwear only is not acceptable.

All players will be “striped” according to their weight. The coach will need to apply a black stripe to his or her player’s helmet on both front and back prior to the first game and record player eligibility for the opposing coach, Board member on duty, and head official for the game.

There will be another weigh-in prior to the first game of the play-off tournament for each team. The same procedure will be used as the first weigh in.

Players in the AFL and NFL are allowed to gain up to five pounds during the regular season. At weigh-ins before the playoffs; the AFL ball carrying limit is 100 pounds and NFL ball carrying limit is 130 pounds. FFL does not have a weight limit.

If during the season the Board of Directors decide there are questions about the weight of any given player, they may request said player/s be weighed. This is up to the total discretion of the Board of Directors. If a player is found to be striped incorrectly at that time, changes will be made to correctly stripe said player/s.

Section 4: Participants Changing Teams

There will be an annual draft in each division. No player will automatically return to the same team or coach to help promote healthy competition and a level playing field for all participants.

Section 5: Registration of Participants

The Board of Directors will announce the registration period prior to the start of the season. The final day of registration will be the end of enrollment and registration will be closed and skills evaluation will begin. However, the MCYFA Board of Directors retains the right to extend and/or reopen the registration period, if just cause prevails.

Registration will be held under the following guidelines:

- Any youth wishing to play football will be required to prove age via birth certificates and school district via previous year report cards
- There will be a weigh-in of each participant at equipment pick-up
- At equipment pick-up, all participant registration fees must be paid, which is determined each year by the Board of Directors
- Each participant in the AFL and NFL division will be issued a helmet, shoulder pads, and jersey to participate
- Each participant in the FFL will be issued a jersey and flags to participate

No player is allowed to participate in any MCYFA practices or games prior to being officially registered (with registration fees paid). All players must be on the official team rosters prior to practicing. Exemptions must be approved in writing by the MCYFA Board. Non-compliance with this rule may result in a coach(s) being suspended from the league.

The league will make every appropriate effort to fit all players with properly fitting and safe equipment. However, MCYFA is not responsible if a participant cannot be fitted correctly for any reason. The team coach will be responsible for ensuring that equipment is returned at the end of the season.

A coach, assistant coach, or representative from each team will be required to participate in registration and equipment pick-up procedures.

Section 6: Placement of Youths/Participants on Teams

Skills Evaluation – All AFL and NFL division youth who register will participate in a skills evaluation. All Coaches will be given a listing of all youth registered in their league. This listing will be used to grade the youth and aid the coaches in the player draft. Each player will go through a series of drills for the purpose of judging his or her abilities. These drills are at the discretion of the Board and participating coaches.

There will be an annual draft in each division beginning in 2024. No player will automatically return to the same team or coach to help promote healthy competition and a level playing field for all participants. No youth will be automatically placed on a team to participate, unless they are considered designated players (head coach child/pick) or sibling options. Any AFL and NFL division participants not in attendance for the skill evaluation will automatically become a hat pick during the team draft. Youth participants must be registered to participate in the skill evaluation.

Designate – The Designee/Option policy is as follows: The head coach gets their child (or the child of which they are the legal guardian) automatically. If the head coach does not have a

child in the league, the head coach may designate a player. In any case, designates replace a team's first round draft pick and remains with the team. The other designated player is the child of the lead assistant coach. If the lead assistant coach does not have a child in the league, the lead assistant coach may designate a player.

Sibling Option – Any youth entering the AFL or NFL league that has a brother or sister already playing for a given team in that league, will automatically go to that team. Also, in the course of player draft, a team picking one of a set of siblings in the open draft will automatically get all other siblings of the selected youth. The additional sibling(s) will count as the next succeeding draft choice(s).

Section 7: AFL & NFL Player Draft Procedure

The player draft will be conducted and overseen by the Board of Directors. A draft cannot be executed without a board member present. The participating board member will resolve all questions and problems that might occur. Any coach not represented at the player draft will have random players drawn for them by a nonpartisan board member whose judgment and choices will not be questioned.

The draft will proceed as follows:

The Board of Directors will provide the names of all players in their respective division. The designated player will be assigned to the appropriate team immediately before the start of the draft and removed from the draft pool.

A list of players eligible for the draft will be provided to each coach at the skills evaluation and the draft. The list will be arranged by names and grades and divided into different pools from each high school district. The AFL pools will consist of: (A) 3rd and 4th grader participants and (B) 2nd grader participants who have been approved by the Board. The NFL pools will consist of: (A) 5th and 6th grade participants. The pools will be consistent with the league wording in section 1.

The Board of Directors will provide a written draft count tallying all participating players eligible for selection. Each team will begin the draft with two designated players.

Draftees NOT attending the skills evaluation: The draft is used primarily to provide a balance of experience and talent on league teams thereby providing parity in competition and enhance enjoyment for our participants. Often players are unable to attend skills evaluation. In order to reduce the possibilities that players not present may be unequally distributed, an attempt will be made to rate absent players. The rating and discussion is done to assist coaches (who may not know a player) gain some understanding of the player's experience and abilities.

All players who are not registered or attend the skills evaluation are not eligible for the draft and will be assigned to a blind draw after the draft as discussed below.

Players will be broken into draft groups based upon their districted school in their home school corporation. Students who attend private school or a different school from the school their home address would be assigned to will be placed in the draft according to where they would be assigned to school. Players with parents or guardians living in multiple school districts will be assigned to the player pool for where they attend school. The MCYFA board will have final say on situations in dispute.

Desired team rosters for FFL at 10-12 (max 15), AFL 10-12 (max 15), NFL 16-18 (max 20) players. Depending on unpredictable registration numbers for each division and location, there may be exceptions to team sizes based on availability and the possibility to increase or reduce teams. The leagues ultimate goal is to have all teams with an equal or relatively similar number of players.

Order of draft:

The head coach and lead assistant coach will select their designated players as defined above prior to the draft.

The order of team selections will be randomly predetermined by the Board president.

The first round will begin with the selection of players in a snake draft format (e.g., Round 1: Team A (1st pick), Team B (2nd pick), Team C (3rd pick), Round 2: Team C (1st pick), Team B (2nd pick), Team A (3rd pick).

AFL Draft – Coaches will begin selecting 3rd, 4th, and 2nd grade participants who have been Board approved to participate in the AFL division until the list is exhausted.

NFL Draft - Coaches will begin selecting 5th and 6th grade participants who have been Board approved to participate in the NFL division until the list is exhausted.

Only the head and/or lead assistant coach may be involved in the draft. Head coaches may not have projected assistant coaches or propose deals or agreements with other coaches during the draft. The only designated assistant coach is the lead assistant coach.

Once the director conducting the draft announces that a team is eligible to select, the coach must announce a draft selection within three minutes. Failure to select within two minutes will cause the Board member to select on behalf of the team a draftee from the appropriate age pool. After all youth who attended the skills evaluation are selected, the draft for non-attending, non-rated players will continue in order using a blind draw. The blind draw will take place after each age group pool.

Players registering late will be assigned by blind draw in the continuing draft order. This draw will take place immediately after late registration. Players may be allowed on to a team after final registration day at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

*** Special Note on SECTION 7 – Board of Directors retains the right to alter any and all aspects of the skills evaluation and/or player draft in order to overcome any unplanned or unforeseen obstacles that may occur.

Section 8: Practices and Games

Practice – FFL, AFL, and NFL team practices start at least two weeks prior to the first scheduled game. Practices shall not exceed two hours in duration. Practices during those two weeks shall be limited to one per day and no more than four per week.

After those two weeks, MCYFA teams are limited to three contacts per week. MCYFA will consider a week to begin on Sunday and end on Saturday. After preseason camp has ended, teams are allowed three contacts per week.

Evening practice sessions shall not begin before 5:00 p.m. and must terminate no later than 15 minutes after sundown as designated by the Herald Times, the Weather Channel, or listed on the MCYFA Web page. These time limitations apply to indoor and outdoor practices. No artificial lighting may be used to conduct outdoor practices (e.g., car lights). This is an extraordinarily dangerous situation. Coaches will receive a one-game suspension if practices occur beyond curfew time. Friday and Sunday practices are not allowed. Extra practices are not allowed. Report any unauthorized practices to the MCYFA Board president.

The Board may approve changes to the practice rules in order to accommodate post- season tournament schedules. Coaches should not assume these changes and unless otherwise informed should expect to follow the rules as stated above.

At the time of the player draft, each team will be asked to report which days of the week they will be practicing and times. This will assist our communication efforts when trying to find a coach at the right place and the right time. **The Board of Directors must approve practice sites.**

Games – If in the event there is a storm delay, the delay of the game may not last any longer than 30 minutes. If no more than two quarters have played, then the game must be deemed incomplete or rescheduled. If two quarters have been played the game is considered final. If a game is canceled due to weather and rescheduled, the game will be considered a new game and played in its entirety.

Section 9: Schedules for the Season

Game schedules will be distributed to the coaches prior to the start of the season. The schedule shall show the playing time and location. Any association team may not accept invitation or participate in in-season or postseason invitational games from other football leagues or organizations without prior approval from the Board of Directors. Each year there will be a league playoff to determine a league champion. Tournament brackets (seeded based on regular season record) will not be finalized until the last game of the regular season play. In case of a tie in the standings for any divisional or league playoff spot, the following tie-breaker format is used:

- Head-to-head competition
- Won/Loss record versus common opponents
- Defensive points allowed during the season
- Offensive points scored during the season
- Average point differential

Section 10: Participating Coaches

All coaches will be chosen or approved on a yearly basis by methods determined by the Board of Directors. Head coaches, assistant lead coaches, and on-field assistants must submit an application each year. A list of coaches for each team must be submitted to and approved by the Board of Directors before the first seasonal game. All coaches must complete a background check prior to the start of practices.

Anyone involved with coaching (head, lead assistant, or on-field assistant) must be certified through USA Football. Age limits for coaches will be determined by the requirements of the certification program. The Board of Directors reserves the right to discipline or remove a coach from the association for the violation or misconduct in accordance with the rules of the league.

Coaches are responsible for ensuring that all participants wear mandatory equipment.

Coaches are responsible for maintaining and cleaning the field before, during, and after games and practices.

Coaches are responsible for the sportsmanship of their fans. If an official has to stop play due to the actions of fans, including being past the fences, a time out shall be charged to the offending team.

A head coach can be suspended from one game for a single infraction. This would include all directives by the Board of Directors and the officers of the Board of Directors must approve any

suspensions in majority. The Board of Directors reserves the right to discipline any coach in whatever measures they deem appropriate for the situation.

Any coach who is ejected from a game is automatically suspended for a minimum of one additional game. If the suspension is from a team's final game, the suspension would be served in the first game of the next season that coach returns to the MCYFA league, if permitted.

Teams will be allowed no more than four assistant coaches in the coach's box during games. One on field and others in the coaches' box. These coaches must be on the coaches' list submitted at the beginning of the season and approved by the Board.

MCYFA does not allow any form of electronic communication during games. Any coach who is found to be using cell phones, iPads, radios, or any type of communication device during a game will be ejected. If the coach is not the head coach, the head coach will also be ejected (e.g., playbooks need to be printed, not displayed on an iPad or mobile device).

The Board of Directors holds the right to amend or change any qualifications or requirements of coaches as needed to ensure the quality and integrity of the league.

Section 11: Game Officials

It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to arrange for a minimum of two licensed officials for each game AFL and NFL division game, and provide each official a copy of the MCYFA Rules and Regulations. All rules, unless stated differently, will be standard National Federation Football Rules. Officials are responsible for verifying the usage of mandatory equipment with the head coach. All officials will be under the direct supervision of an appointed Board member who may not overrule a call but will bring all pertinent matters before the rules infraction process governed by an appointed Board member.

Section 12: Sideline Personnel (Field Marking Crew) & Scoreboard

The MCYFA will provide personnel to run the game clock and operate the scoreboard. The visiting team shall provide three adults (at least high school age) to run the down marker and the line to gain equipment. These adults must be selected and ready prior to the captain's meeting and the coin toss. Failure to results in a 15-yard penalty (NFL) or 12yard penalty (AFL) at the start of the game and forfeiture of one time-out per half, including any overtime.

Section 13: Equipment

All MCYFA teams must be fully equipped with a complete line of high quality, league sponsored, and league approved equipment for each participating youth. This includes all practice sessions, scrimmages, games, etc. The following equipment items are mandatory in MCYFA AFL and NFL divisions; failure to have all mandatory equipment means forfeiture of participation, as well as penalties as prescribed by the National Federation rulebook.

League provided: Helmet with 4-point chin strap, shoulder pads

- Do NOT remove the integrated chin strap of Zenith helmets

Parent provided: Padded football pants (hip pads, thigh pads, knee pads, tail bone pad, covering the knee), mouth guard, etc.

The MCYFA also strongly recommends soft-cup athletic supporters and rubber-cleated shoes for quality participation. No metal or metal-tipped cleats are allowed.

Personal equipment must meet NFHS standards and be approved by the league.

Section 14: AFL and NFL Modified Youth Football Playing Rules

Kickoffs & Ball Placement

- **In the interest of safety MCYFA will not have kickoffs in either division. After a touchdown and try, the ball will be placed on the 30-yard line for the ensuing scrimmage play. If a team scores a safety, they will get the ball on the 50-yard line (NFL).**

Extra Points

- The AFL will award 1 point for any successful extra point attempt after a touchdown from the 2 ½ yard line and 2 points for any successful extra point attempt after a touchdown from the 5-yard line. Extra point kicking is not allowed in AFL.
- The NFL will award 1 point for any successful extra point attempt after a touchdown from the 2 ½ yard line and 2 points for any successful extra point attempt after a touchdown from the 5-yard line. A successful extra point kick will be awarded 2 points.

| Extra Points | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| AFL | Run or pass from 2 ½ - yard line | 1-point |
| AFL | Run or pass from 5-yard line | 2-points |
| AFL | Extra point kick | NOT ALLOWED |
| NFL | Run or pass from 2 ½ - yard line | 1-point |
| NFL | Run or pass from 5-yard line | 2-points |
| NFL | Extra point kick | 2-points |

Offense

- Each play must include three offensive linemen – a center and two guards, one on either side of the center. These players are ineligible for first touch as the receiver of a pass.
- There can be a maximum of four players on the line of scrimmage. The fourth player can be a tight end or split end.

Defense

- Both divisions will have a defensive heads-up rule. Each defensive player must line up "heads up" on an interior offensive lineman and cannot play in a gap. Head up shall be defined as having at least ½ of the helmets overlapping. This shall be a judgment call of the officials and may not be contested by the coaches. This will encompass all defensive linemen. The defensive tackles, in the AFL, are required to line up over the offensive guards and the defensive ends have the option of lining head-up over the offensive tackles or ends. A down lineman may not cover an offensive player who is not lined up in the free blocking zone. All offenses must be balanced in the formation in that three people must be on the line of scrimmage on each side of the offensive center. Offensive guards and tackles cannot have any more than a two-foot split. Defenses will be allowed to match the number of offensive down lineman with a defensive down lineman and must have at least four down linemen in the AFL. The AFL does not allow a nose tackle. The offensive center must be uncovered. The NFL will allow more options but will require at least 3 down linemen.
- The penalty for any defensive violation will be enforced from the end of the run or the line of scrimmage; whichever benefits the offense the most.
- Defensive backs and linebackers must be lined up a minimum of four (4) yards from the line of scrimmage and may not get any closer than four (4) yards from the line of scrimmage until the ball is snapped. However, they will not be required to be more than one yard into their own end zone at any time. Only down defensive lineman may be within three yards of the line of scrimmage. They also cannot move closer until the snap of the ball. Failure to stay at least four yards off the ball will result in an encroachment penalty. The defensive backs may move only sideways or backwards. The penalty will be enforced from the end of the run or the line of scrimmage; whichever benefits the offense the most.
- Defensive line must make contact and engage with the outside shoulder or lineman; not shooting "A" gap.

Coaches during Game Day

The AFL will allow one coach on the playing field at all times. The coach is not considered part of the play and must make every attempt to avoid the action. If a coach interferes with the action the officials may enforce any penalty, they deem fair to remedy the situation. This judgment is at the discretion of the game officials. Any field participating coach must be 10 yards deeper than the deepest man on his team. **As of 2019 in the NFL division is that coaches**

will be required to be on the sidelines and follow federation rules concerning the coaching areas on the sidelines.

Field coaches are not allowed to communicate with their players after the quarterback has begun his snap count. They may resume communication when the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage and can only use encouraging commentary. The penalty for an infraction of this rule is 15 yards, NFL, or 12 yards, AFL. These fouls would not automatically count towards a coach's disqualification.

Playing Field

Playing fields for NFL will be 100 yards goal line to goal line. Playing fields for the AFL will be 40-yard line to goal line in between the hash marks.

Punts / Place-Kicking

There will be no punts in the AFL division. The NFL division team may choose to “punt” which will cause the ball to be moved 30 yards downfield. Extra points and field goals will be attempted in the NFL without rush. However, the center must long-snap to the holder who must start out on one knee. The holder must catch the center snap without the ball touching the ground and place immediately on the place-kicking tee for the kick. If the ball touches the ground in any manner prior to the kick the ball becomes dead and the down is over. The ball must be kicked within five seconds of the snap.

Clock/Length of periods/Overtimes

Both leagues will play eight-minute quarters. MCYFA will use a modification of NCAA timing rules. Until the last two minutes of a half, the game clock will start on the ready for play signal if stopped for an incomplete pass or an out of bounds play. Overtimes will be conducted by Indiana High School Athletic Association Rules. Only one overtime period will be played during regular season games. Regular season games tied after one overtime period will be recorded as a tie. Playoff games will continue until a winner has been determined. Both leagues will use a 40 second play clock. The AFL will start on the officials ready for play signal, and the NFL will use the standard NFHS 40 second clock.

Running clock

Running clock options – if for any reason a team is behind by 2 touchdowns and playing the 4th quarter of play, the losing coach can ask the officials for a continuous running clock. In order to remain on schedule, the officials will mandate a running clock once a team falls 18 points behind in the second half. The running clock will start when the ball is marked ready for play for the ensuing kickoff/scrimmage play not including the PAT.

A team that is the beneficiary of a running clock forfeits their time outs for the half as well as the ability to throw a forward pass. If they attain of lead of 24 or more points, the team shall not use misdirection plays that go outside of the free blocking zone. This is a judgment call of the officials. The penalty would be returning the ball to the previous spot and the down would be lost. A team that is the beneficiary of a running clock may choose on 4th down in lieu of a punt to move the ball downfield 20 yards.

As of 2019, if a team is the beneficiary of a running clock, any player who has scored two or more touchdowns is ineligible to carry the ball until the score differential is less than 12 points. If such a player intercepts or recovers the ball on defense only, they could advance.

Penalties

AFL division will have reduced game penalties of 80% of the normal distance.

For each:

15-yard penalty – 12 yards will be assessed

10-yard penalty – 8 yards will be assessed

5-yard penalty – 4 yards will be assessed

Thunder and Lightning

The MCYFA will not allow any play (practices or games) during lightning or thunder. National Federation guidelines will determine the beginning or resumption of play after a stoppage due to thunder or lightning.

Weather: Lightning & Thunder – We abide by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Guidelines on Handling Practices and Contest During Lighting of Thunder Disturbances

(https://www.ihsaa.org/sites/default/files/documents/guidelines_on_handling_practices_contests_during_lightning_thunder_disturbances_march_2018.pdf)

- a. When thunder is heard or lightning is seen*, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.
- b. 30-minute rule. Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed* prior to resuming play.
- c. Any subsequent thunder or lightning* after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.
- d. When lightning-detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be used to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the

reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning* should always take precedence over information from a mobile app or lightning-detection device.

Coaches may receive discipline from the Board if it is reported that practice or team activity continued when lightning was seen in the location.

Section 15: Player Participation Rule

It is a league policy that all healthy players should play a minimum of 25% of the plays from scrimmage in a regulation length game. In order to practically monitor compliance with this policy, the following rules will apply:

- Each team member will be assigned to either an offensive unit or defensive unit before the start of each game. A player may be assigned to both an offensive and defensive unit. However, each player must play either all offensive or all defensive plays during both the 1st and 3rd quarters of a game (kickoffs and kickoff returns are excluded).
- In the event a player is injured during the first two quarters, the player will be released from having to play either all offensive or defensive plays until the league-appointed trainer has approved the player's return to the game. In the event the coach has determined that a player is unable to comply with this rule, the coach must obtain approval from the league president for each game or the board member on duty. In the event the individual is related to the coach, the city vice-president must approve suspension of this rule on a game-by-game basis. After obtaining league approval, the coach is responsible for informing the player's parents (guardians) that the league has waived the player's compliance with the Participation Rule.
- Enforcement of this rule will be monitored during each game. Accordingly, when the ball changes possession during the first half, all players on the bench must enter the game for playing all downs during the next series of downs.
- Before the start of the game, coaches will exchange a list of player numbers showing assignment to either offense or defense in the 1st and 3rd quarters for all players. Players should be assigned to only one team that will qualify them under the participation rule. However, a player may play on both offense and defense, but must play either all defense or offense plays for the unit to which they are assigned at the start of the game. Coaches may change 3rd quarter assignments during half time by notifying the opposing coach.
- Players may not be substituted during the 1st and 3rd quarters except for injury.
- An opposing coach, believing an infraction has occurred may request the director on duty or his designate to ask the referee to review the assignment sheet during a dead ball situation. Upon finding a violation, the referee will assess an unsportsmanlike penalty from the spot of the ball.
- Continued failure to comply with this rule will result in the executive board taking appropriate further action such as is warranted, but will at least involve the suspension

of the coach for one game and forfeiture of the game in which the infractions occur. The executive board will consider appropriate further disciplinary action for the offending coach if warranted.

- If in the event any participating player has blood on his skin or jersey he will be removed from participation of the game. If the injury is to the participating player, the injury must be cleaned and completely covered. No blood can be visible. If blood is on a participating player's jersey it must be washed and ultimately approved for participation by the referee of the game.
- A player with an injury requiring a hard cast may play with written permission from a physician if the cast is padded to National Federation Rules specifications.
- If a player fails to attend multiple practices, coaches may petition the MCYFA Board for permission to limit a player's game participation. Please note this must be in advance of a game and must be in writing.

Section 16: Verification

This document covers the rules for the 2024 Monroe County Youth Football season. The Board of Directors holds the right to amend or change any of the existing rules. If any rules are changed during the season, it must be done through a board meeting and any changes or amendments must be submitted in writing to all directors and coaches of the association.

MCYFA USA Football 7-on-7 Flag Football (FFL) Rules 2024

This set of rules and procedures for 7-on-7 flag football are modified rules set by USA Football's American Development Model ([USA Football 7-on-7 Flag Rule Book](#)). Modifications were made to meet the needs of youth participants aged kindergarten through 2nd grade.

Philosophy

- FFL football is a game of skill and agility. It is not intended to be rough and physical. It is up to each individual coach to continually express this idea to each player. The objective is to teach the fundamentals of the game and to have fun!
- The FFL league is designed for 1st and 2nd graders only. Kindergartners may be allowed at the Board's discretion
- FFL is an instructional non-competitive league that prepares players for the next level
- FFL does not post or keep score
- We encourage coaches and players to set goals for players, celebrate their development, and encourage them to have fun

Sportsmanship

Players, coaches, and spectators are expected to display good sportsmanship at all times. Unsportsmanlike conduct of any kind shall warrant dismissal from the game. This includes players, coaches, and spectators. Any coach removed for unsportsmanlike conduct will receive a minimum of a one game suspension up to indefinite suspension.

Player Equipment

- Jersey, mouth guard, black shorts without pockets, flags
 - Players will not be permitted to participate in practice or games if they wear shorts with pockets
- Any type of rubber soled shoe may be worn by players
- Rubber cleats are allowed (No Steel Cleats)
- No hard padding of any kind may be worn
- All players must wear a protective mouthpiece
- No player is allowed to play without properly fitted equipment

Field Size

- Goal Line to 30-yard line. Hash Marks to sideline
- 4 quadrants will be used each game

Timing

- Games are played on a 50-minute continuous clock with two 25-minute halves. The clock runs continuously without stopping.
- Halftime is 5 minutes
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 45 seconds to snap the ball. Team will receive two warnings before a delay-of-game penalty is enforced (5-yard penalty)
 - **NOTE:** USA Football recommend that official and coaches should use discretion with younger ages who may need more time to line up and get a play off
 - **MCYFA Guidance:** Teach and train your team to adhere to this rule early in the season as it will be enforced more as we enter Week 3 of the season.
- Each team has one 60-second timeout per half, note that the game clock continues to run
- In the event of an injury, play will be stopped and restart when the injured player is removed from the field of play and both teams are lined up ready to restart the play, note that the game clock will continue to run.
- No timeouts will be granted during the last two minutes of the either half

Enforcement of the Rules

- Each Coach will provide an officiate from the coaching staff to help officiate the game or a game official will be assigned
- Each Coach will be accountable for reading the entire rules package

Responsibilities

- Each Coach will bring a watch, whistle and coin
- The Coach will enforce the 30-second rule between downs and watch the offense while ruling out holding, illegal player down field, lining up off sides and spotting the ball. He/she will also keep time for time outs and announce the 2 minute warning. Additional tasks include verifying flags are outside of shirts and fully visible
- The Coach will enforce the 5-minute half time period. In addition, he/she will watch the defensive lineman and defensive backs to rule out off sides, pass interference, complete/ incomplete pass, out of bounds location and spotting of the ball
- The Head Coach and two assistants for each team are allowed on the field for flag football

Field Size

- Up to two coaches are allowed on the field to call plays and direct players according to need. Once the quarterback begins her or her cadence, however, coaches can no longer speak and must be behind the deepest offensive and defensive players and out of action.
- Coaches can assist the alignment of their players to facilitate a fast-paced game, but coaches on the field may not provide extra instruction or make audibles to play calls once the huddle is broken. Coaches on the sideline can provide this information to players on the field.

Size of Teams

- Maximum of seven (7) players per team on the field at one time
- Minimum of five players. (Four or fewer players will be a forfeit = game is over) If a team has only five players and the opposing team has seven, they are allowed to play their seven players as an advantage unless waived by the advantage teams head coach (Remember sportsmanship)

Playing Time

- Every player must play. Coaches should attempt to give all players equal playing time. Free substitution is permitted
- Players must rotate carrying the ball. No player shall carry the ball for a 2nd time until all team members have carried the ball
- Strive to have each player play every position

Choice of Possession

- The home Coach will flip a coin
- The winner will choose to play offense or defense
- The team who starts off on offense will begin the second-half on defense

Ball Placement

- To begin a game, the ball is placed on the 30-yard line. There are no kickoffs
- Change of possession after a turnover or touchdown will result in the ball placed on the 30-yard line for the opposing team

Flags

- All flags must be worn outside of clothing and clearly visible. Shirts must be tucked in at all times
- If a flag is accidentally lost, that player becomes ineligible to handle the ball
- If a player without a flag handles the ball, the play is immediately dead

Downing the Ball

- In order to down a ballcarrier, a flag must be clearly withdrawn from the waist by the defense
- The defensive person who pulled the flag must stop at that spot in the field and hold the flag up in the air so that the referee can see it
- The runner cannot touch his own flags or defend himself in any way
- The referee shall make all decisions regarding flags

Dead Ball

- To start any play, the ball must be snapped between the center's legs, not off to one side. Substitutions may be made on any dead ball.
- The ball is deemed dead if the ballcarrier fumbles the ball. The ball will be spotted where the ball first hits the ground
- The ballcarrier steps out of bounds
- The ballcarrier's flag is pulled
- A touchdown is scored

First Downs

- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at the 30-yard line and has four (4) plays to cross the 15-yard line. Once a team cross the 15-yard line, it has four (4) plays to score a touchdown
- If the offense fails to make a first down or score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on the 30-yard line
- All possession changes start on the offense's 30-yard line

Fumbles

- When the ball hits the ground (fumble), the play is over. There are no lost fumbles. The ball is spotted where the player possessing the ball is when the ball first hits the ground and the offensive team retains possession, unless there is a turnover on downs
- If the ball hits the ground during the hike from center to the quarterback, the play is repeated without loss of down

Flag Pulling

TACKLING IS NOT PERMITTED

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball
- The defender must not tackle, hold, push, or run through the ball-carrier, but must play the flag rather than the runner
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball-carrier's possession at any time
- Any action against the runner other than pulling the flag will result in unnecessary roughness and will result in a 10-yard penalty or half the distance to the goal if the ball is inside the 10-yard line
- If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during the play, the player is down immediately upon possession of the ball and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball
 - If a defender makes a good-faith flag pull while a receiver bobbles or juggles what will be a completed catch, the ball is down where possession is made

Carrying the Ball

- The ball is spotted where the runner's front foot is when the flag is pulled, not the position of the ball
- The quarterback cannot directly run the ball. Only direct handoffs (no pitch sweeps) behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. But the offense may use multiple handoffs.
- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are permitted. Handoffs may be in front, behind or to the side of the offensive player but must take place behind the line of scrimmage. The offense may use multiple handoffs.
 - The "center sneak" play is not allowed as centers are ineligible to receive handoffs or catch passes.
- The quarterback may receive a pass back from another player and then run: he/she would then become a receiver
- No laterals of any kind are allowed, including pitches and throwback.
- No-Run Zone is located five yards before the end zone. This is designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in this zone.
- Any player who received a handoff can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Runners may not leave their feet to advance the ball. Diving, leaping or jumping to avoid a flag pull is considered flag guarding.
- Runners may leave their feet if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid collision with another player without a flag guarding penalty enforced.
- No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.

- Offensive players without the ball must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. There is no running with the ball-carrier.
- Flag obstruction – All jerseys must be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player’s hips and free of obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.
- Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender’s access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm, or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.
 - Repeated offenses should result in stronger measures being implemented by the offensive player’s coach, including being pulled for the remainder of that half or game
- A shotgun snap is not permitted, only a direct snap to the quarterback from the center. If a snap is fumbled by the quarterback, or the quarterback drops the ball before he passes it or hands it off, he can still pick it up and complete the play
- There are no negative yardage offensive plays at the 30-yard line if a play results in a “loss”, and the ball has not crossed the original line of scrimmage, the ball is returned to the 30-yard line for the upcoming play

Passing

- All passes must be from behind the line of scrimmage, thrown forward and beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - All passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage, whether received or not, are illegal forward passes.
 - The quarterback may throw the ball away to avoid a sack. The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage and be in the vicinity of a receiver per NFHS rules.
 - Quarterback cannot spike the ball dead unless the ball travels beyond the line of scrimmage and is in the vicinity of a teammate.
- Shovel passes are allowed but must be received beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Any player who has received a legal handoff can throw the ball forward.
- All offensive players except the center and quarterback are eligible to receive a pass
- The passer is down if an opponent pulls his/her flags, or if they fall off before the throwing motion begins
- No screen passes for example are allowed
- Only the quarterback can receive the snap directly from the center and the center can’t hike to another player. A team can throw a pass off of a reverse or after a handoff, but only 1 pass per play is permitted

Receiving

- All players – excluding the center – are eligible to receive passes.
- A player must have at least one foot inbounds to make a legal reception.
- In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense.

- Interceptions change possession at the point of the catch. Interceptions are not returnable. Possession will change with the ball placed at the 30-yard line.
- The play is blown dead immediately if an interception is made. There are no returns on that play.

Rushing the Passer

- All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of ten yards behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Only 2 players can rush the quarterback and identify themselves as pass rushers by raising their hand at the game official or coaches. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend on the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off, the ten-yard rule no longer is in effect, and all defenders may go behind the line of scrimmage.
- A marker, referee, or coach will designate a rush line of ten yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the game official (referee or coach) on every play.
- Teams are not required to rush the quarterback.
- Teams are not required to identify two potential rushers before the play.
- Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass. However, no contact can be made with the quarterback in any way. Blocking the pass or attempting to block the pass and then making contact with the passer still results in roughing the passer penalty.
- The offense cannot impede the rusher in any way. The rusher has the right to a clear path to the quarterback, regardless of where he or she lines up prior to the snap. If the "path or line" is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an impeding the rusher penalty. If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher's responsibility to go around the offensive player and avoid the contact.
- A sack occurs if the quarterback's flag is pulled behind the line of scrimmage. The ball is placed where the quarterback's front foot was when the flag was pulled.

Penalties

- Game officials or coaches will call all penalties
- Game officials or coaches will determine incidental contact that may result from normal fun of play.
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- Only the head coach may ask the game official questions about the rule clarification and interpretations. Player, lead assistant, assistant coach, and spectators may not question calls.
- Games and halves may not end on a penalty unless the opposing team declines it.
- Penalties are assessed live ball and dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.
- Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal line when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

| Defensive Penalties | |
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| Defensive pass interference | +5 yards, repeat down; if penalty occurs in the end zone it will be first and goal from the 1-yard line |
| Holding | +5 yards, repeat down |
| Stripping | +0-15 yards, automatic first down; +10 yards, automatic first down & player warning and sit out a series |
| Defensive unnecessary roughness | +1-10 yards, automatic first down; +10 yards, automatic first down & (1) player warning, (2) sit out current and next series, (3) sit out remainder of half |
| Defensive unsportsmanlike conduct | +1-10 yards, automatic first down; +10 yards, automatic first down & (1) player warning, (2) sit out current and next series, (3) sit out remainder of half |
| Offside | +5 yards, repeat down |
| Illegal rush (starting rush from inside 7-yard marker) | +5 yards, repeat down |
| Illegal flag pull (before the receiver has the ball) | +5 yards, repeat down |
| Roughing the passer | +5 yards, repeat down |
| Taunting | +5 yards, repeat down |

| Offensive Penalties | |
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| Screening, blocking, or running with the ball | -5 yards, loss of down |
| Charging | -5 yards, loss of down |
| Flag guarding | -5 yards, loss of down |
| Offensive unnecessary roughness | -10 yards, loss of down & (1) player warning, (2) sit out current and next series, (3) sit out remainder of half |
| Offensive unsportsmanlike conduct | -10 yards, loss of down & (1) player warning, (2) sit out current and next series, (3) sit out remainder of half |
| Offside / false start | -5 yards, loss of down |

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| Illegal forward pass (Any pass received or lands behind the line of scrimmage, throwing to an ineligible receiver, or throwing a pass after crossing the line of scrimmage) | -5 yards, loss of down |
| Offensive pass interference | -5 yards, loss of down |
| Illegal motion (more than one person moving) | -5 yards, loss of down |
| Delay of game | -5 yards, loss of down |
| Impeding the rusher | -5 yards, loss of down |

Rushing the QB and Defensive Alignment

- Without linemen in the mix, there are two main defensive positions: defensive backs, safeties, and up to 2 rushers. Up to two rushers try to get to the quarterback as quickly as possible and are a minimum of 10-yards off the line of scrimmage (must identify themselves by raising their hand to the game official or coach before each play), while defensive backs line up to face wide receivers, or even farther back as safeties.
 - What is a safety in flag football? The safety is an essential defensive position who acts as a catch-all, covering deep throws and any players who get loose. They're responsible for keeping offensive players in front of them and covering players who slip through the cracks.
 - Coaches typically teach both man-to-man and zone defensive strategies. But the most important skill players learn on defense is the proper way to pull off an opponent's flags. This technique actually lays the foundation for tackle football. For example, when breaking down, players are taught how to square up their opponent, where to align their head and knees, and what angles to take when pulling off flags. Essentially, it's the exact position an athlete would need to take to physically tackle their opponent. This is a transferable skill set that benefits players who eventually want to play tackle football.

- The defensive coach will mark where the flags are pulled and will spot the ball for the next play (unless a referee or league official is present)
- Defensive backs and linebackers must be lined up a minimum of four (4) yards from the line of scrimmage and may not get any closer than four (4) yards from the line of scrimmage until the ball is snapped. However, they will not be required to be more than one yard into their own end zone at any time. Only down defensive lineman may be within three yards of the line of scrimmage. They also cannot move closer until the snap of the ball. Failure to stay at least four yards off the ball will result in an encroachment penalty. The defensive backs may move only sideways or backwards. The penalty will be enforced from the end of the run or the line of scrimmage; whichever benefits the offense the most.
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Blocking (limited definition)

- The only form of acceptable blocking is for the center and receivers/backs lined up right next to the center at the snap of the play cross their arms on their chest and remain in position (similar to setting a “pick” in basketball)
- The center and receivers/backs may not use their hands to block
- A player cannot move or leave her/her feet been blocking
- Any rough tactic such as attempting to impede a rusher or run over an opponent will be penalized as unnecessary roughness

Punting

- No Punting. On the change of possession, the offense gets the ball at the 30-yard line

Pass Interception

- Pass interception by the defense results in a dead ball and change of possession. The defensive player cannot advance the ball. The ball starts for the new offense on the 30 yard line

Scoring

- Neither team keeps score in FFL
 - The focus of the game is safety, having fun, and developing skills
- Game objectives
 - Touchdown – when a team reaches the end-zone on offense
 - PAT – not point after attempts or two-point conversions in FFL
 - Safety – no safeties in FFL
 - Interception – no return, play blown dead, and change of possession
 - Fumble – no return, play blown dead
 - Create team and individual goals to encourage development (e.g., score three touchdowns, record two sacks in the game, catch two passes, etc.)

- Do NOT make goals based on the other teams to in reference to competitive play (e.g., record more touchdowns than the other team, remain undefeated for the season, etc.)

Other Penalty Information

Although this is flag football, we recognize that there will be minimal contact flag league with its primary purpose to teach the fundamentals of football in a safe and fun environment. Some physical contact is to be expected during normal play and is also permissible under the rules. It is illegal to tackle, knock or throw another player off his feet or otherwise play in an overly aggressive manner.

Unsportsmanlike contact is illegal. If the field monitor, a board member, or a referee witnesses any acts of hitting, elbowing, cheap shots, any other unsportsmanlike or dangerous acts, or hears any trash talking or profanity, the game should be stopped and the situation addressed immediately, but not by the opposing coach or parents.

The first violation of the above conduct rules (although the person in authority may choose to go directly to the 2 level for a more serious infraction or conduct) will result in the player receiving a warning and having to sit out the current and following series. The second violation during the same game will result in the player being removed for the remainder of the half and penalty will be assessed. Any additional violation during the game will result in the player being removed for the remainder of the game and penalty will be assessed. Repeated willful violations in more than one game may result in a stricter sanctions being imposed against the offending player including possible game suspension(s) and even expulsion from the league with no refunds.

*****Illegal play or foul language will not be tolerated under any circumstances.**

In addition to the specialized rules for this league, basic football rules still apply, but this is a teaching league and there are bound to be frequent violations of certain rules (such as offsides, illegal movement, encroachment, etc.) just due to the players ages. If such violations occur and does not affect the outcome of the play then the offending player’s coach is to give instruction to correct the situation which should be done in a non- embarrassing manner such that hopefully all players on both teams will see how not to be penalized in the future.

Flag Football Terminology

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|-----------------------|---|
| BOUNDARY LINES | The outer perimeter lines around the field. They include the sidelines and back of the endzone lines. |
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| CENTER | This player’s main responsibility is to snap the ball to begin the play, a critical skill at all levels of football. |
| CHARGING | An illegal movement of the ball-carrier directly at a defensive player who has established position on the field. This includes lowering the head or initiating contact with a shoulder, forearm, or the chest. |
| DEAD BALL | Refers to the period of time immediately before or after a play. |
| DEFENSE | The team opposing the offense to prevent it from advancing the ball. |
| DEFENSIVE BACK | The defensive backs play the short pass first and the run to the outside. Opposite to how safeties play (i.e., pass first, then run), the defensive back guard against the run first, then pass. |
| DOWNS | The offensive team has four attempts or “down” to advance the ball. It must cross the line to gain to get another set of downs or score. |
| FLAG GUARDING | An illegal act by the ball-carrier to prevent a defender from pulling the ball-carrier’s flags by stiff arm, lowering elbow or head, diving, leaving the ground by blocking access to the runner’s flags with a hand or arm. |
| INADVERTENT WHISTLE | Coach or officials whistle that is performed in error. |
| LATERAL | A backward or sideways toss of the ball by the ball-carrier. There are no legal lateral or pitches allowed in USA Football 7-on-7 Flag. |
| LINE OF SCRIMMAGE (LOS) | An imaginary line running through the point of the football and across the width of the field. |
| LINE-TO-GAIN | The line the offense must pass to get a first down or score. In USA Football 7-on-7 flag, this is the midfield point. |
| LIVE BALL | Refers to the period of time that the play is in action. Generally used in regard to penalties. Live ball penalties are considered part of the play and must be enforced before the down is considered complete. |

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| NO RUN ZONE | No-Run Zone is located five yards before the end zone. This is designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations. Teams are not allowed to run in this zone. |
| OFFENSE | The team with possession of the ball. |
| PASSER | The offensive player who throws the ball and may or may not be the quarterback. |
| QUARTERBACK | This player receives the snap from the center and initiates the play either through a handoff or pass. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the line of scrimmage without first handing the ball off to a teammate and then receiving a second handoff back or receiving a pass. |
| RUSH LINE | |
| RUSHER | Up to two designated players from each play who rushes the quarterback. They must identify themselves to game officials and coaches before each snap and be lined up a minimum of ten yards from the line of scrimmage before each play. |
| SAFETY | The Safety is the defensive QB, especially in flag football. Their role is to lead the defensive team and to cover anyone who gets loose. If a wide receiver is getting open deep or a play breaks loose, he or she covers and helps out. |
| SHOVEL PASS | A legal forward pitch attempted from behind the line of scrimmage travelling beyond the line of scrimmage. |
| UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT | A rude, confrontational, or offensive behavior or language. |
| WHISTLE | Sound made by a coach or official using a whistle that signifies the end of the play or stop in the action for a timeout, halftime, or the end of a game. |
| WIDE RECEIVER/BACK | Any player who does not initiate the snap nor receive the snap is considered eligible receiver/back and can either receive a handoff or catch a pass. |