

Arapahoe Youth League



2026 Rookie Football League Rules

ARAPAHOE YOUTH LEAGUE 2026 ROOKIE FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES

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1 AYL Football Board of Directors Guidelines

The AYL Football Board of Directors "Football Board" will be responsible for establishing and enforcing specific rules, and coordinating all football related activities, for both the Rookie Football League (RFL) and the Competitive League. The Board is comprised of one Delegate from each participating Member Club, a sport Vice President, and a sport Secretary.

1.1 Football Board Vice President

The Football Board Vice President will be responsible for the oversight of the sport specific board in accordance with all AYL By-Laws, General Principles of Operation, fiduciary responsibility, and sport specific rules. The Football Board Vice President will report into the AYL President for all issues that are presented to the Football Board. The Football Board Vice President is elected to a 2 (Two) year term by the Delegates from each participating Member Club.

Football Board Vice President (Term 2026-2027)

Heath Dorris

1.2 Football Board Secretary

The Football Board Secretary is responsible for roll call, meeting minutes, and the administration of all league paperwork. The Secretary is elected by Delegates of each participating Member Club. The Football Board Secretary is elected to a 1 (One) year term by the Delegates from each participating Member Club.

Football Board Secretary (2026-2027)

Daniel Wynn

1.3 Football Scheduler

The Football Scheduler is responsible for scheduling all regular season, makeup and playoff and Super Bowl games. This also includes the rescheduling of any games that have been cancelled. The Scheduler is selected by Delegates of each participating Member Club.

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1.4 Current Rookie Football League (RFL) Season Dates

April - May	Registration Opens (dates vary by Club)
May 1st – July 25th	Off Season Conditioning Open
July 26th	Official Team Practices Begin
August 3rd	Birth Certificate Signoff, NOP & Assessments Due
August 8th	Mandatory Weigh-In Event
August 22nd	First Regular Season Games
October 17th	Last Regular Season Games
October 18th – 23rd	Mini Playoffs
October 24th	Playoffs
October 31st	Super Bowl

1.5 Season Schedule Requirements

- A. The Football Board shall have the right to change dates.
- B. The 1st game may start as early as the one (1) Saturday before Labor Day.
- C. The season may be played on the last Saturday of November.
- D. First Practice may start up to five (5) Mondays before the first game.
- E. **Games may be played on weekdays and Sunday's.**
- F. The mini playoffs will be played on Sunday after the last game. If there are 12 Saturdays between Labor Day and Thanksgiving, then the Mini playoffs will be played the Saturday following the last game. **THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT PLAYOFFS WILL INCLUDE SUNDAY GAMES.**

1.6 Member Club Information

Communication Plan: Please remember to always contact "Your Coach" with all questions/concerns first. If you have a question, it makes sense that every player/parent on the team may have that same question. The AYL expects our Football Coaches strive to be extremely knowledgeable about their sports, our rules, and processes. By asking your Coach, if they don't know the answer, they will consult their Club Football Delegate and receive the information important to everyone. The Football Board meets every week throughout the season and is the only Colorado League Management organization that does so! This provides the opportunity to resolve issues and fix errors in a timely manner.

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If your Coach fails to answer your questions or concerns, please contact your Club Delegate. If appropriate, your Club Delegate will bring the issues to the Football Board.

See the following page for links to each Member Club's website.

 <p>Cherry Creek Bruins Youth Sports www.creeksports.com</p>	 <p>Raptors Athletics www.raptorsathletics.org</p>	 <p>Parker Hawks Youth Sports http://parkerhawksfootball.leag1.com</p>
 <p>Littleton Youth Sports www.littletonyouthsports.org</p>	 <p>South Jeffco Sports Assoc. http://www.southjeff.org</p>	 <p>Spartans Youth Club www.spartanyouthclub.com</p>
 <p>WRANGLERS ELBERT COUNTY Elbert County https://www.elbertcountyranglers.com/football</p>	 <p>Warriors Youth Sports www.warriorsyouthsportsfootball.assn.la/</p>	

1.7 Code of Conduct

Each Member Club is responsible for developing and administering their own Player, Coach, and Parent Code of Conducts in accordance with the individual Club's needs.

All Players, Coaches, Parents, and Spectators are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the NFHS and CHSAA Code of Ethics at all times. **Any parent or coach (NON-PLAYER) that is ejected from a game will result in a \$100 fine to be assessed to the Club.**

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1.8 Sportsmanship & Ethics

The Football Board requires that all Coaches uphold the principle and spirit of Good Sportsmanship at all times. Since the coaches are the most influential people in teaching good sportsmanship, one of their fundamental responsibilities is to inspire players and spectators to conduct themselves in a manner which best represent those values. Coaches must stress respect for opposing players and tolerate no conduct from players or spectators, which demeans or embarrasses the opponent, the officials, or the sport itself. Taunting and baiting an opponent are contrary to the basic concept of fair play and honorable competition. Profane language, taunting, and unsportsmanlike behavior cannot be tolerated as part of a program and is exactly opposite of the type of conduct and behavior which participation is intended to teach. The Football Board will act quickly in the investigation of any complaints of unsportsmanlike behavior by any Coach associated with our Football Program. Should a Coach be found to have acted in an unsportsmanlike manner, that Coach might face suspension or other penalties, up to and including expulsion from the AYL.

The primary goal of coaches should be the development of our players to become better citizens. The players must be taught sportsmanship, fair play and ethics, and these teachings should always govern their behavior while at practice and games. Coaches shall be responsible for the conduct of all players, members of the coaching staff, and spectators. This includes the time periods before, during, and after league games.

AYL Coaches will:

- Honor the game, by treating each player, official, coach, and parent with respect and dignity.
- Emphasize that good athletes are good students, and are both physically and mentally alert.
- Strive to make every football activity serve as a training ground for life.
- Emphasize that winning a game is the result of teamwork.
- Learn the strengths and weakness of their players in order to place them into situations where each has an opportunity to achieve success.
- Protect the safety and health of their players.
- Set an example in personal conduct at all times.

All AYL Member Club Head and Assistant Coaches are required to complete certification through the USA Football Heads Up football program, or the current Board recommended program, prior to the beginning of the current season. A \$100 fine will be assessed to the Member Club, per each head coach failing to complete certification by the official 1st weigh in date. No coach will be allowed in the coach's box during games

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without completing certification. Uncertified coaches attempting to coach will be subject to ejection, suspension, and fines by the Board.

1.9 Evaluation of Officials

The Football Board in conjunction with the League Head Official continuously strives to improve the quality of our game officials. This effort requires that all Head Coaches **MUST** complete the "Coach Referee Evaluation" Form (Pink Sheet) on the AYL Website upon conclusion of every game. This should be done before a Head Coach begins emailing regarding complaints about officials! The Referee Evaluation Form allows the Head Coach and coaching staff to evaluate each game official individually as well as provide an evaluation of the officiating crew as a single entity. Each official must be assigned a "Number" and the evaluation need only show the associated number for each official being evaluated. The White hat of each crew will be REQUIRED to present his/her number on the Blue Sheet prior to the game being played. The Football Board will receive regular reports on the performance of all of our officials. All electronic Blue Sheets must be turned in by 7pm on the Sunday following the prior scheduled game. Further, these official ratings will be used by the Football Board and the Head Official to assign game officials for our play-offs and Super Bowl. Failure to complete the required Evaluation by a significant number of a particular Club's teams may remove that Club from participating in the assignment process for officials to work our play-off and Super Bowl games.

1.10 Rule Changes

- A.** Member clubs may submit rule changes, new rules, modifications, and additions for the next season during the current season only. The current season is defined from April 1st through March 31st. Clarification: Rules submitted after March 31st will take effect starting April 1st of the next year. All rules (new rules, modifications, and additions) require at least one week for review by Clubs. Rules must be submitted and seconded during an approved Football Board meeting, allowing at least one week for review before a final vote can be approved.
- B.** The Football Board will take no action on submitted rule changes for the current season unless a National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) rule creates undue hardship and/or expense for the member Clubs and participants. Thirty (30) days or more must remain prior to the first game of the respective season in which the proposed NFHS rule would affect the clubs.

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- C. The Football Board has an unstated goal of being consistent and extremely accurate in all endeavors throughout the entire football season. Should obvious errors occur in the creation, application, or omission of our football specific rules and the result is inconsistent with the stated purpose of serving the youth or our territories, the Football Board reserves the right to make any corrections, additions, or deletions of our sport specific rules as the Football Board sees fit. The approval of any change to the current rules within the 30 period prior to the start of the season or during the season will require a Super Majority (>65% in favor) vote of all Member Clubs in good standing.

2 Participation Standards

The AYL Rookie Football League (RFL) Program uses both Grade/Age as the Participation Standards:

2.1 Age Requirements

The AYL RFL Program is only for ages 6 to 8, grades 1st through 3rd.

2.1.1 Age Determination

Grade	or	Max Age Prior to June 1st
1 st		6
2 nd		7
3 rd		8

Players will be placed on rosters for their grade for the active season. Divisions will be grade and age based. No play downs are allowed within the AYL RFL program unless there is a specific petition presented by the Member Club and approved by the AYL Football Board.

Any player who was previously rostered on an AYL team one grade below that player's school grade, may petition the Board to move to that player's school assigned grade level. This must be petitioned yearly.

Any parent, player, relative or coach who alters or modifies official documents such as birth certification, report cards, etc., in an attempt to play out of the player's true grade will be suspended for one (1) calendar year. Re-entry into the AYL for those violations will require a majority vote of the Board.

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2.1.2 Proof of Age / Grade

- A.** Before a member can play in any game, a league acceptable proof of age document must be presented and checked by a member of the Football Board. The following documents will be accepted as proof of birth, provided there is a birth date and official signature.
1. Birth Certificate
 2. Military Papers or ID
 3. Adoption Papers
 4. Passport
 5. Birth Registration
 6. Notification of Birth
 7. Hospital Certificate
 8. Supporting letter from parent for different last name
 9. Previous year's official roster. Football exception, the only rosters accepted will be signed and approved AYL Football rosters.
- B.** A temporary waiver of "proof of age" may be obtained only when accompanied by a \$100.00 refundable deposit by the Club requesting the waiver. This waiver shall be valid for only one month from the date filed with the League. If proof of age is not obtained, the \$100.00 deposit shall be forfeited and the League may decide to impose further penalties.
- C.** A proof of Grade may be required by Clubs at registration or the Board if needed or requested if the player does not qualify by age.

2.1.3 Grade / Age Play Up or Play Down

Players may play up to one Grade/Age group at the discretion of the Member Club. Players wanting to play up two Grade/Age groups must be approved by the Football Board. **No Grade and Age play downs will be allowed in the AYL RFL unless approved by the AYL Football Board.**

2.2 Weight Guidelines

The AYL Rookie Football League Program uses weight restrictions only for its 3rd grade players, 1st and 2nd grade Rookie Football have no weight limitations. AYL RFL Coaches, at all grade levels, are encouraged to play all players at every position that the player wishes to try, assuming a basic skill level or physical size as well as the 3rd grade backfield weight limit.

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The following shows the weight limit for 3rd grade Rookie only!

Grade/Age	Play Down	Backfield Weight	Patch
3 rd Grade	NA	90	91+

3 Conferences

All teams in the AYL RFL will be placed in a single conference, based on specific age/grade. This conference will be defined as the RFC conference. Depending on the number of teams the 6/1st and 7/2nd division may be combined to increase the game opportunities for the teams at those age/grade groups.

3.1 Conferences Guidelines

A. The 3rd Grade division will use strength of schedule (ranking from previous year) for scheduling. If any age/grade division has less than nine (9) teams then they will need to play some teams twice.

B. Any teams wanting to enter the AYL RFL that have played tackle football together in another League generally may not enter the RFL conference. If desired the Member Club may request that the AYL Football Board complete a thorough vetting of any new team wishing to enter the RFL. The AYL RFL is designed for players new to tackle football without previous tackle football experience. A team consists of a head coach and four (4) players that have played together the previous year. If found to have (4) or more players, then said team will be seeded at the top of the division.

C. The AYL RFL program is designed to be a developmental program to BRIDGE the football experience from Flag Football to Competitive Tackle Football, the step to prepare all of the players for their upcoming High School experience with Football.

4 Rosters

The AYL RFL is designed to be comprised of rosters that will be adjusted to the Rules of Play defined in Section 6 that follows. The most significant Rule of Play for AYL RFL is that the games are played as an 8 vs 8 competition with near equal play requirements. These Rules of Play will impact the size of the Roster for each team. It is suggested that team will be comprised of 12 to 16 members only to assure play time as well as position flexibilities. In accordance with the AYL General Principles of Operation, the Football Board has established roster guidelines that include players

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from within a Member Club territory boundary and players from outside the Member Club territory boundary. This “roster mix” of inside territory and outside territory players is outlined below:

See Rule 3, Zoning, Paragraph A, Line 1A of the AYL General Principles of Operation for the definition of in territory player designation.

4.1 Official AYL RFL Rosters

- A. Member Clubs are responsible for preparing official AYL Rosters using the AYL form provided by the Football Secretary. At date of birth (DOB) validation, each Member Club will provide the Football Secretary with a printed and electronic copy of each roster.
- B. Member Clubs are responsible for submitting their official AYL Rosters on the date and time designated by the Football VP. Member Clubs will be fined \$500 for each roster not submitted on time, as designated by the Football VP.
- C. Member Clubs are responsible for submitting completed and accurate official AYL Rosters. Member Clubs will be fined \$10 for each incomplete or blank field on the official AYL Roster.
- D. Out of Territory players will be identified on the AYL Roster utilizing **Bold** type on the official roster form. No Play Down players will be allowed without specific approval of the Football Board. If so, approved any Play Down player will be identified on the Roster with a “**PD**” next to the player’s name. Grandfathered players will be identified on the Roster with a “**GF**” next to the player’s name.
- E. A team may be formed from two or more Member Clubs who cannot absorb additional players under the following conditions:
 - 1. Each member club roster must be full (minimum of 12 players), in that age/grade group.
 - 2. As a guideline each club wishing to combine players will have to have 6 players without a team to play on 1st thru 3rd grade.
 - 3. The roster must be approved by the Football board.

4.2 Rosters Standards – AYL RFL

Conference	Maximum Out of Territory Players
RFC	4

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- A. Any team that does not meet this requirement must have their roster approved by the Football Board prior to the first regular season game. An illegal roster can be protested.

4.3 Roster Changes

Generally, no roster moves will be allowed after DOB validation (sign-off) when the official rosters are submitted to the Football Secretary. However, after DOB sign-off and until Formal Roster Sign-off by the Football VP, changes may be proposed and voted on by the Football Board. After the Formal Roster Sign-off no rosters moves will be allowed except in the case that a player is found to be rostered illegally. Note: this may force other players to change roster also.

4.4 Roster Add Ons

A. After rosters have been submitted to the Football Secretary for the Date of Birth (DOB) validation, "New" players may be added up to that team's fourth (4th) game of the season. "New" players are defined as players that have not played AYL football for any Club/team in the current season.

B. The Member Club must file a Roster Add On form with the Football Secretary with a copy of the birth certificate (or birth certificate waiver) for any new player added to a roster after DOB validation.

4.5 Grandfathered Rosters and Players

Players from a previously approved AYL roster will be considered "grandfathered" to stay with the Member Club for which they previously played, as long as they were considered in territory players on the previous roster, even if the family moves to another Club's territory. This also includes younger siblings of the "grandfathered" players that may not yet have participated in AYL Football. Member Clubs wishing to "grandfather" a player or sibling will be required to provide an approved roster from the same sport, in which the player or player's sibling was approved as an in territory player. These "grandfathered" players will be considered as Home Area players for the purpose of determining a legal roster on a specific Team roster. In order to remain as a "grandfathered" player, the player must continue to play with the same Member Club for that sport without a break. Should the "grandfathered" player cease to play for their original Member Club in that sport or chose to play for the Member Club in their new territory, they will no longer be considered "grandfathered" and will be subject to the roster rules above.

4.6 Roster Team Color/Coach

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- A. When a Member Club plans to add new team, or a new color/coach to an existing team, into any Division in the Rookie Football League, the make-up of the members of that team must be identified as to their prior Tackle football experience, both within and out of the AYL. This information should be brought to the appropriate Football Board meeting so the Board can determine where the team should be correctly placed in the RFC division of play for this new team. Should a Club not be able to provide or refuses to provide this information the Football Board can place this team in a Division of play that the majority believes is correct for this new team and that may mean a movement to the Competitive Tackle Football program. The decision of the Football Board is final without any appeal process.
- B. An existing team or team color is defined in table below.
- C. Any existing team wishing to form a new team or change colors must complete an official team dismantle form.

Previous Year's Roster Number	# of Returning Players
11-13	5 or more, same color/coach
14-16	6 or more, same color/coach

4.7 Roster Violations

The Football Board will decide if a violation of the AYL rostering policy has occurred. If a roster violation is found, the following will occur:

1. For the first offense, the Head Coach is suspended for one (1) game, and the Member Club is fined \$100.
2. For the second offense, the Head Coach is suspended for one (1) year, the Member Club is fined \$500, and the team is ineligible for any post-season playoffs.
3. For the third offense, the Member Club Delegate is suspended for one (1) year and the Member Club loses voting rights until reinstated by the AYL Football Board.

5 Practice Policy and Guidelines

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Each team is limited to a maximum of four (4) playing periods a week up to and including the team's first game. After a team's first game all teams will be further limited to a maximum of four (4) playing periods (PP) per week, one of those periods being their game and an additional requirement is that one of the four allowed playing periods must be a "Chalk Talk" or "Walk Thru" period. This "Chalk Talk" is a meeting of the team and is required to be a NO CONTACT, NO EQUIPMENT, and NO EXERCISE period only. The "Walk Thru" is required to be a NO CONTACT, NO EQUIPMENT - OTHER THAN HELMETS, and a TIME LIMITED period only. If a Coach does not wish to have a "Chalk Talk" or "Walk Thru" period in a given week or at any time, then that team is limited to three (3) playing periods per week.

AYL General Principles of Operation, Rule 10, PLAYING PERIODS States:

A playing period is defined as a practice or game in which three or more players rostered on the same team and a coach are engaged in organized instruction of play or practice for the purpose hereof, the week begins at 12:01 am, Monday and ends at 12:00 midnight on Sunday.

GRADE	PRESEASON PP's	SEASON PP's
1 st – 3 rd	4 Playing Periods (PP)	2 Practices + (CT or WT *) + Game

*Walk Thru must be limited in time and players may only be in helmets and mouth pieces

Practice Guidelines: All teams will adhere to CHSAA Equipment Use Dates (Rule 3310.1)

GUIDELINE 1:

Implementing a preseason youth football heat acclimatization period

Reported cases of exertional heat stroke (EHS) currently rank among the top-three causes of sport participation fatalities (nationally). Setting mandatory guidelines for heat acclimatization provides a vital standard to protect athletes against exertional heat illnesses and possibly save lives. The majority of EHS cases occur during summer workouts when athletes are unprepared to cope with environmental conditions and physiological demands placed upon them. Heat acclimatization guidelines recommend that athletes be introduced slowly to environmental stresses during practice sessions, resulting in a lowered risk for EHS. These guidelines call for a two-week period (10-14 days) when coaches gradually increase the length and intensity of practice and the amount of equipment that can be worn. At all times, athletes should have access to fluids and have periods of rest throughout a practice.

1. At no time throughout the preseason or regular season should teams practice more than once per day, without prior permission from the Club (No two-a-day practices without Club approval). Teams will be allowed to practice a maximum of 4 times per week during the preseason, according to age. (See Rule 3.3.)

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2. During practice days 1 and 2 of the heat-acclimatization period, no more than 90 minutes of practice are allowed, a helmet should be the only protective equipment permitted. No form of player-to-player contact should occur during the first two practices.
3. During practice days 3 and 4, two hours of total practice time is allowed. Only helmets and shoulder pads should be worn. No full-contact drills should be allowed. Full contact drills are defined as drills being run at “Thud” and “Live” tempo. Coaches are encouraged to limit player-to-player contact up to “Control” using USA Football’s Levels of Contact.
4. On practice days 5 and 6, two hours of practice time is allowed which would occur within the second week of a youth organization’s preseason schedule according to these guidelines. Teams have the option to wear full pads and full contact drills can begin and should be utilized within the recommended time allocation discussed below.
5. If a practice is interrupted by inclement weather or heat restrictions on any of the practice days, the practice should resume once conditions are deemed safe
6. On days when environmental conditions (heat index or WBGT) are extreme, modifications should be made to the work-to-rest ratio (to allow for cool-down periods and rehydration) or rescheduled to cooler parts of the day (i.e. before 10am or after 6pm)

GUIDELINE 2:

The definition of “full contact”

Full contact drills should be limited during the preseason and regular season as the number of exposures may increase the chance for injury to youth players. For purposes of these guidelines, full contact consists of both “Thud” and “Live Action” using USA Football’s definitions of Levels of Contact.

Rationale: By definition, “Thud” involves initiation of contact at full speed with no pre-determined winner, but no take-down to the ground. Initial contact, particularly with linemen, is just as physical with “Thud” as with “Live Action.” AYL Football recognizes that “Live Action” likely carries a higher injury risk to the body than does “Thud.” The first three levels of USA Football Levels of Contact “Air,” “Bags,” and “Control” are considered non- or controlled-contact, and thus no limitations are placed on their use in practice.

GUIDELINE 3:

Number of team practices and amount of “full contact” drills per week

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Preseason

Following the preseason acclimatization period, it is recommended youth teams conduct no more than four practices per week. Coaches are to limit the amount of full contact to no more than 30 minutes per day and no more than 90 minutes per week. No two-a-day practices will be allowed at any point throughout the preseason.

Rationale: AYL Football recognizes preseason practices may require more full contact time than practices occurring in the regular season to allow for teaching fundamentals with sufficient repetition to prepare for the season. Coaches are encouraged to introduce contact through a progressive manner to ensure they are using proper technique before full contact (Thud & Live Action) drills are allowed.

Regular Season

Once the regular season begins and games commence, AYL Football requires the number of practices per week is decreased to account for the weekly game. Coaches are to limit the amount of full contact to no more than 30 minutes per day and no more than 60 minutes per week.

Rationale: At this point in the season, games have begun, and full contact exposure rates have increased on a weekly basis for players. To account for this, the recommendation to decrease the amount of time dedicated to full contact drills decreases the number of exposures per week.

GUIDELINE 4

Coaches need to use a practice plan and assign a “level of contact” for every drill according to USA Football’s Level of Contact chart

USA Football defines contact using its Levels of Contact chart (see below) to help coaches assign a level of resistance for each drill period within their practice plan. Properly employing the levels of contact during a football practice is an important skill for youth coaches to learn. This is completed by adjusting the distance between players, the speed at which they conduct a drill and modifying the “winner” of a drill. In doing this, coaches can better accomplish specific teaching objectives during practices and decrease the chance for injury. Planning when to teach, when to compete and when to adjust contact promotes a better experience for players and coaches. Proper usage of the Levels of Contact system will help players perform their contact skills at a high level while instilling confidence. Employing the Levels of Contact system also helps reduce player fatigue, which can advance player safety.

Explaining USA FOOTBALL Levels of Contact.

Levels of Contact focuses on varying intensity levels throughout practices to build player confidence, ensure their safety and prevent both physical and mental exhaustion. Five intensity levels are used to introduce players to practice drills which position them to master the fundamentals and increase skill development.

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<u>CONTACT</u>	<u>INTENSITY</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
Air	0	Players run a drill unopposed without contact.
Bags	1	Drill is run against a bag or another soft-contact surface.
Control	2	Drill is run at assigned speed until the moment of contact; one player is pre-determined the 'winner' by the coach. Contact remains above the waist and players stay on their feet.
Thud	3	Drill is run at assigned speed to competitive speed through the moment of contact; no pre-determined "winner." Contact remains above the waist; players stay on their feet and a quick whistle ends the drill.
Live Action	4	Drill is run in game-like conditions and is the only time that players are taken to the ground.

AYL Football recommends athletes be able to drink fluids at any time during a practice beyond designated breaks.

5.1 Offseason Conditioning

All AYL RFL teams may conduct voluntary workouts starting May 1st and continuing until the official practice start date. Teams may have four (4) workouts per month (1 per week). Teams will not be allowed to wear pads, only helmets and mouth pieces, and workout must be non-contact during this period.

5.2 Tournament Standards

A. A team may play in tournaments as long as the playing period rule is followed, and it does not start before the season begins for practice.

B. Participating in a tournament will constitute one (1) practice period.

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- C. A player and/or team may go to camps for skill training prior to the season starting.

5.3 Practice Policy Violation

The Football Board will decide if a violation of the AYL practice policy has occurred. If a team is found to have practiced illegally the following will occur:

1. For the first offense, the Head Coach is suspended for one (1) game, and the Member Club is fined \$100.
2. For the second offense, the Head Coach is suspended for one (1) year, the Member Club is fined \$500, and the team is ineligible for any post-season playoffs.

6 Rules of Play

The AYL Rookie Football League Rules of Play shall follow the National Federation of State High School Athletic Association unless specifically stated in this document.

6.1 Equipment Requirements

All players are required to wear helmets with colored mouth guard at each practice/game.

6.1.1 Mouth Guards

- A. Mouth guards are mandatory, and if not used, a 3-yard penalty will be assessed. No warning need be given.
- B. The mouth guard must be of any readily visible color, other than white or clear.

6.1.2 Cleats

See High School Rules (Rev 09/84)

6.1.3 Helmets/Visors

All players must use a face mask that met NOCSAE test standard at the time of manufacture. Multiple bar type is recommended. The face mask shall be properly secured to a helmet which met the NOCSAE test standard at the time of manufacture and has a visible exterior warning label regarding the risk of injury. The helmet shall be secured by a properly fastened, four-snap chin strap. Visors must be CLEAR and ZERO

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tint of any kind will be allowed. If a Visor has tint of any kind, then the player must remove prior to the game. If a player does not remove the tinted visor prior to play and is caught with it on, then a loss of down and personal foul will be assessed.

6.1.4 Official Football

- A. The following footballs shall be used for the AYL RFL:
1st – 3rd - WILSON PEEWEE OR K2 OR equivalent size/weight
- B. The offensive team shall have the choice of ball to conduct their offensive plays. The ball may be changed at change of possession or at a first down, but the team requesting the change of ball shall furnish the ball of their choice to the officials. Each team shall provide towels for the purpose of cleaning and/or drying the football. During wet weather or if wet field conditions exist, the referee may request, and each team will provide, a designated person to provide and shuttle dry game balls.

6.2 Minimum Play

It is mandatory that all Divisions play in accordance with the following minimum play system. **All plays count for minimum play rule except dead ball fouls.**

6.2.1 Minimum Play Requirements

- A. For the purpose of fulfilling the minimum play rule, every play in which a player is in the game will count toward this requirement even though that particular play may not count as a game play, e.g. extra points. When a foul occurs during a dead ball between downs or prior to a free-kick or snap, it shall not be counted as a play in satisfying the minimum play rule.
- B. It is an expectation of the AYL that the minimum play rule will be followed by all of the Coaches. However, there are exceptions where a particular player is not required to meet minimum plays in a game. Exceptions include:
 - 1. Ineligibility due to Team Disciplinary measures, Parents restrictions, or for reasons of injury or illness.
 - 2. An injury occurring during a game that prevents the player from fulfilling the minimum play requirements.
 - 3. A player is ejected from a game and cannot continue.
- C. Any player not eligible to play in a game must be identified to the opposing Head coach before the start of the game and noted on both Team's "Blue Sheet." Any player that cannot continue in a game due to injury or ejection must be

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documented on the Team's "Blue Sheet".

6.2.2 Minimum Play Audit

The AYL "formal" minimum play auditing is required for both teams in all Playoff and an "Officials" Full Team Audit in the Super Bowl games. Otherwise, a Head Coach can always request an opposing Head Coach complete a formal audit of their team's minimum play performance. To complete these processes, follow the below steps:

The Coach(s) must identify three (3) up to seven (7) players on the opponent's team that he requires to be "formally" audited. These players are listed on the "Play Audit Log" on the back portion of that Team's "Blue Sheet". This play audit is recorded in real time, as plays occur, during the game. The team that has been requested to audit its players is responsible to supply one (or more) "TEAM AUDITOR(s)" to complete this audit. The opponent requesting the "formal" audit also is responsible to supply one (or more) "TEAM AUDITOR(s)" to assist in this audit. These "TEAM AUDITOR(s)", from both teams involved in the contest, will be stationed on the sideline of the team under audit and will be instructed by the Game Official in their roles. All "TEAM AUDITOR(s)" will be responsible to track individually the number of plays each of the players designated for audit participate in until each player has met the required minimum number of plays. It is required that all "TEAM AUDTOR(s) must agree on the actual play count associated with each player involved in the audit. Should a disagreement occur, the game will be stopped, and the Game Official must resolve the issue before the game continues. Should the Game Official be unable to resolve the discrepancy, the "TEAM AUDITOR(s) from the Team requesting the "formal audit" will be in the overriding position. With one (1) game play left in the first quarter of the game the "TEAM AUDITOR(s)" will be called to the center of the field to confer with the Officials and both Head Coaches for the purpose of evaluating the progress made on completing minimum play requirements. Each Head Coach and all "TEAM AUDITOR(s)" must initial the designated area on the "Play Audit Log" each time this review is performed. This continues each quarter of the game until all designated players have completed the minimum play requirements. If at the completion of the game, the "Play Audit Log" reflects that minimum play has not been met for all designated players, the Head Official shall declare the game a forfeited game by the offending team.

The minimum play rule shall not be abridged unless the player is injured or ejected, in which case the referee and opposing Coach must be notified at the time of removal, and the time of removal noted on the "Play Audit Log". Further, if a game is ended early with 4 plays or less remaining and the team with the ball, leading by a score, chooses to kneel (See Rule 6.4.1 G), the number of plays left in the game will be credited to those players not yet completed with the minimum play requirements to finalize those player's minimum play status. All violations of this application of the minimum play rule will

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reviewed by the Football Board. Penalties for violations include, but not limited to, fines and/or suspension of the Coach.

6.2.3 Minimum Play per Player

AGE/GRADE LEVEL	MIN NUMBER OF PLAYS PER PLAYER PER GAME
RFC, 1st & 2nd Grade	24
RFC, 3rd Grade	28

Minimum play for the AYL RFL is near **“Equal Play”** for every player eligible to play on the specific game day.

6.3 Field Requirements

The AYL Football Field Requirements shall follow the National Federation of State High School Athletic Association unless specifically stated in this document.

6.3.1 Field Size

For 1st – 3rd grade Rookie Football League games the football field shall be 60 yards long and 40 yards wide with end zones extending 10 yards beyond each goal line making the total area within the lines 80 yards by 40 yards.

6.3.2 Goal Post

No Goal posts will be used in any AYL RFL games though they may be present on the game field.

6.3.3 Marking the Field

- A.** The field must be properly marked with lines and yard markers for all games. Sidelines and five-yard lines must be lined with visible material. It is required that colored flags or pylons be used (if available) as corner markers for the goal lines. Marking of coaches and player’s boxes should be parallel to the side lines from 12-yard line to 12-yard line for the RFL games.

- B.** Fields not in compliance with the proper marking may be deemed unplayable at the discretion of the referee prior to the start of the game.

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6.3.4 Coaches and Players Box

Only Certified Coaches, Certified Assistant Coaches, players, play counters and minimum play monitors will be allowed INSIDE this area.

6.4 Game Play Guidelines

The AYL Football Game Play Requirements shall follow the National Federation of State High School Athletic Association unless specifically stated in this document. AYL Rookie Football League has the following specific rule adjustments on both Offensive and Defensive Play:

NOTE: The violation of these specific game rules for the RFL will result in a major penalty being charged, an Unsportsmanlike Penalty – Game Play Violation. On offense this violation will be a 9 yard walk off and if there is not sufficient yardage available, the down will be decremented as well. On defense this violation will be at a minimum a 9 yard walk off and an automatic first down. Repeated violations of these specific rules will result in the ejection of the offending team’s coordinator, offense or defense, after the third violation. If the team continues to violate these rules the teams’ Head Coach will be ejected after the fourth violation. With a fifth violation the game will be forfeited to the opponent. The AYL Football Board will discuss the coaching performance of any coach ejected for continuing to violate these rules and if they should remain as a coach in the AYL.

Offensive adjustments:

1. Each play must include three offensive linemen – a center (C) and two guards (OG), one on either side of the center. These players are ineligible for first touch as the receiver of a pass regardless of the numbers on their jerseys.
2. The distance between a guard and center may not exceed three feet (1 yard) but may be closer.
3. Because of the “all players, all positions, all skills” philosophy, players should change

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positions during the game. Therefore:

- a. The three offensive linemen must identify themselves on each play by raising their hands as they break the huddle and approach the line of scrimmage.
 - b. Once identified as an offensive lineman, players may not shift to another position.
 - c. All three offensive linemen are ineligible for first touch on a pass.
4. The quarterback-center exchange, snapped thru the Center's legs, may be direct, pistol or shotgun. Regardless of who actually receives the snap that player will be treated as a QB for the purpose of enforcement of these rules, e.g. direct snap to a RB.
5. Quarterback sneaks are prohibited in all situations because the defense is not allowed to have players aligned over the center or in the center-guard A gap. A violation of this rule will result in an Unsportsmanlike Penalty – Game Play Violation being charged.
6. The offense must have five players on the line of scrimmage. No more, no less. The fourth and fifth player can be a tight end or wide receiver/split end.
7. The five offensive players who are not playing guard or center may be deployed in positions at the coach's discretion as long as two are on the line of scrimmage. Note: Should the offense shift the positions of any players such that one or more become a tight end (TE), the defense must be given time to adjust their TE covering responsibility. The White Hat must stop the Play Clock (see Rule 6.4.7) to give the defense time to adjust without incurring a penalty for failing to cover a TE.
8. No unbalanced lines are allowed, the TE/WR's must be on opposite sides of the ball.
9. No trips formations are allowed. For purpose of Rookie Tackle, Trips is defined as any three players, on the same side of the ball and outside THE BOX. THE BOX is defined as the space from TE position to TE position or TE position to OG position or OG position to OG position. A violation of this rule will result in an Unsportsmanlike Penalty – Game Play Violation being charged
10. Motion is allowed by a backfield player as long as it does not create a trips formation. Further, when the offense comes to the line of scrimmage, and before the QB starts their cadence, there will be no shifts of offensive player positions allowed.
11. All blocks below the waist, in any situation, are illegal.
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Defensive Adjustments:

1. Defenses **MUST** always have two defensive linemen on the two offensive guards. When the offensive formation includes a tight end(s) (TE) the defensive lineman **MUST** line up over the tight end(s). When the offensive formation includes a wide receiver(s) (WR) a defensive lineman may line up over the wide receiver(s). Should the offense make a last-minute shift of a player into a TE positions in an effort to catch the defense in violation of this rule the White Hat must stop the Play Clock (see Rule 6.4.7) to allow the defense time to cover the new TE.

2. Defensive linemen over guards **MUST** be aligned in a head up or outside shade position and cannot be more than 1 yard off of the line of scrimmage. Defensive lineman over guards may not penetrate the A-gap on the snap of the ball. Contact with the hands **MUST** be made with the offensive line players before defeating the block into the A-gap in effort to get to the QB/RB. Should the offense have a TE, the defensive player that is heads up on that TE cannot run any line stunts in conjunction with the defensive player who is on the offense guard. This includes stunting with the defensive guard to enter the A-gap without engaging the offensive guard.

3. If Defensive personnel are lined up over TE's or WR's they **MUST** be in a heads-up position, no outside or inside shade allowed, and cannot be more than 1 yard off of the line of scrimmage. If Defensive personnel are not lined up over TE's or WR's they **MUST** be a minimum of 4 yards off of the line of scrimmage.

4. Players in an outside shade **MUST** always have one foot aligned inside the stance of the opposing guards. That is, the defensive lineman **MUST** always have their inside foot lined up between the feet of the opposing offensive lineman.

5. The defense **MUST** have one player at least 10 yards from the ball (deep safety) except when the ball is within the defenses 6-yard line.

6. The remaining four players can be deployed at the coach's discretion but must be four yards off the line of scrimmage unless directly covering a tight end or wide receiver on the line of scrimmage.

a. Example: If the offense aligns with its fourth and fifth line-of-scrimmage player as a tight end, then the defense **MUST** align a player directly over the tight end on the line of scrimmage to balance the running surface.

b. Defenses that choose to not match the eligible wide receivers on the line of scrimmage may position those players on the second level as long as they are at least 4 yards from the ball.

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7. No blitzes are allowed. Players on the defensive line of scrimmage within the offensive lineman box – “THE BOX” - at the snap can penetrate upon the snap i.e. rush the offense. Linebackers, safeties and cornerbacks (both on the line and at depth), but outside THE BOX, can flow to the ball naturally after a handoff is made, or the QB becomes a runner, but predetermined penetration to a specific gap is illegal. This could result in a tackle behind the line of scrimmage which will be allowed. Failure to avoid this will be charged as an Unsportsmanlike Penalty – Game Play Violation.

a. THE BOX includes offensive players who line up within two yards either side of the ball and on the line of scrimmage along with the defensive players lined up directly over them or in an outside shade of the OG and head up on the TE.

b. On pass plays, anyone outside THE BOX on the snap cannot rush the quarterback and must remain behind the line of scrimmage in pass coverage.

c. Coaches are encouraged to be creative with their formations but not use “THE BOX” to delay defensive penetration.

d. NOTE: The restriction on blitzing is intended to encourage skill development within the passing game and allow young players to execute a successful handoff with limited penetration.

8. If the ball is inside the defense’s 6-yard line, the four defensive non-linemen, non-deep players may now align at a position 2 yards off of the line of scrimmage.

6.4.1 Length of Games

A. Game length will be based upon the number of plays for each quarter by age/grade group.

1. 1st & 2nd grade will 16 plays per quarter (Do not count extra points and Dead Ball penalties)

2. 3rd grade will play 18 plays per quarter (Do not count extra points and Dead Ball Penalties)

B. The rest period between halves shall not exceed ten (10) minutes. Teams shall be notified with three (3) minutes remaining so they may warm up.

C. All plays in the game count as plays except Points After Touchdown (PATs) and Dead Ball penalties. For play count purposes, a DEAD BALL PENALTY is defined as a foul that occurs before the ball is snapped.

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EXCEPTION: The 4th quarter is extended by 1 play for every offensive penalty if the following is applicable:

1. 5-8 Plays remaining in the game
2. The score is within 8 points or less
3. The team winning has the ball.

D. If a live ball foul occurs on the last play of a quarter, the offended team will have the following options:

1. Accept the penalty and replay the down. The quarter is extended one play.
2. Decline the penalty, accept the result of the play, and the quarter is over.

EXCEPTION: The quarter is not extended if the penalty involved is:

1. Unsportsmanlike fouls
2. Non-player fouls
3. A foul that specifies loss of down
4. A foul where the penalty is enforced on the following quarter start of play line.

For each of the listed fouls, the quarter ends and the penalty is enforced on the first play of the next period. If it is the end of the 2nd period, the Unsportsmanlike, the Non-player, and the foul that will be enforced on the start line (20 yd line) for the 3rd quarter, carry over. The loss of down foul does not carry over.

E. If Team A gets a penalty during the last play of any quarter, then Team B has the following options:

1. Accept penalty and play an additional down. i.e., Quarter cannot end on a penalty.
2. Decline penalty and let play stand. i.e., Quarter is over.

F. If the game is tied at the end of regulation of a regular season game, 1 overtime period will be played to determine the winner. The overtime period is defined as such; Team A starts on the 10-yard line and has four downs to either score or fail to put points on the board, then Team B takes over on offense from the 10-yard line. They now have four downs to score. If there is a turnover, it counts as stopping the offensive team, and the teams switch sides. Once each team has played both offense and defense, the period is over. If one team has scored more points at the end of the possession, that team wins. If no winner is decided after 1 overtime period, the game is a tie. High School overtime rules will apply. The home team has the choice to start the overtime period on offense or defense. In the Postseason, the overtime periods will continue until there is a winner.

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- G.** If Team “A” is on offense, leading by score, and the game has 4 plays (or less) remaining, and the down number is such that Team “A” can kneel for the remaining plays, the Referee shall ask the coach of Team “A” if they are going to kneel for the remaining plays of the game. If the answer is “Yes”, then the official shall end the game without playing the remainder of the plays.

6.4.2 Kick-Off/Special Teams

In the AYL Rookie Football League there will be no Kick-Offs or Special Teams of any kind, punts, safety kicks, kick returns, etc. This is in an effort to increase the safety for these development players. To start the game, the team that wins the coin flip has the choice to take the ball on offense or defer their decision until the second half. The first team to have possession of the ball on offense starts on their own team’s 20-yard line, forty (40) yards from the goal line to score. After a turnover on downs or after a scoring play the ball will be placed back on the new offensive team’s starting 20-yard line (the 20 yard line furthest from the offensive team’s goal line) and the other team’s offense will take over the ball.

See Rule **6.4.22 Defensive Turnovers** below for specific rules associated with a turnover associated with a fumble or interception. After quarter changes and the halftime intermission the teams will change ends and use the other 20-yard line as the starting line for offense. This will help to even the wear on the natural turf fields.

6.4.3 Point After Touchdown

A one point or two-point conversion will be awarded due to placement of the ball for the extra point attempt.

1. In all of the RFL age/grade groups, a two-point conversion will be placed on the 4-yard line. A one-point conversion will be placed on the 2-yard line.
2. Each COACH is responsible for informing the referee of their extra point intentions prior to the play. After the referee is informed of the coach’s decision for one or two points, and after the ball is spotted for play, prior to the play a time out must be called by the team to change their extra point intentions. After a play is run or a penalty (dead ball or other penalty) there can be no change in the extra point intentions.

6.4.4 Length of Penalties

For all of the RFL age/grade divisions, penalties will be 3 yards for minor infractions, 6

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yards for intermediate infractions, and 9 yards for major infractions (See Table Below). All personal foul penalties include an immediate substitution from the field for a minimum of four plays to allow coaches to address misconduct and promote good sportsmanship. This is referred to as a cooling off period.

The following Table highlights some of the most significant penalties that can be charged during a game. While not totally complete this table covers the most common.

PENALTY	YARDAGE
Delay of Game, Encroachment, False Start, illegally handing ball forward, illegal forward pass, Ineligible Receiver downfield, Incidental grasping face mask, Sideline interference, failure to be properly equipped (mouthpiece),	3 yards, See Note 3
Illegal Blocking, Holding, Illegal use of hands, Illegal block in the back	6 yards, See Note 3
Unsportsmanlike Conduct, Illegal helmet contact, Pass Interference, Illegal block below the waist, Clipping, Chop Block, Tripping, grasping of face mask or any helmet opening, Horse Collar, targeting an opponent, Illegal blind side block, Roughing the passer, Roughing the snapper, Failure to follow RFL Rules of Play (unsportsmanlike)	9 yards, See Notes 1, 2, & 3
Fighting by any player, intentionally contacting an official, Striking, Kicking, Kneeing an opponent, Any Flagrant act, Second Unsportsmanlike penalty	Automatic disqualification

NOTES:

Note 1: Any player receiving a major penalty for a personal foul or unsportsmanlike conduct (non-disqualifying) will be required to immediately leave the game for a minimum of four (4) plays as a cooling off period.

Note 2: Any Coach or Team that does not follow the RFL Rules of Play such as with formations, Blitzing, QB Sneaks, player alignment, etc. will be charged with a major unsportsmanlike penalty and assessed 9 yards. On defense it will also include an automatic first down. On offense there will be a 9 yard walk off if there is yardage

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available outside the team's 20-yard line. If the penalty cannot be fully marked off, the down marker will be decremented one down. Additionally, after the third such Unsportsmanlike penalty the teams' associated coordinator, offense or defense, will be ejected from the game. For the fourth violation, the teams' Head Coach will be ejected and for the fifth penalty the game will be forfeited.

Note 3: No offensive penalty will move the ball behind the offense's start line (20-yard line). If the penalty cannot be fully marked off, the down marker will be decremented one down.

6.4.5 Delays

Teams must appear on the field promptly and any unnecessary or willful delay will result in the forfeiture of the game. Within 10 minutes of the scheduled game time, each team must have all eligible players on the field to start the game; otherwise, the offending Club will forfeit the game unless the game has been officially postponed.

6.4.6 Coaching

- A. For all of the RFL age/grade divisions, Coaches and team members must remain in the Team/Coaches Box, between the 12-yard lines during the game. In all divisions one coach may be allowed on the field for the team on offense and one for defense. The offensive coach may call plays in the huddle. After the huddle breaks, the coach must move to a spot at least 10 yards behind the deepest player (20 yards off the ball), and always completely out of the play. *Both Offensive and Defensive Coaches (all divisions) on the field must terminate coaching once the offensive team has come to the line and the QB starts the cadence.* Once the ball is in play, the coaches on the sidelines may commence coaching, but the coaches on the field, both offense and defense, must continue to refrain from coaching until the whistle stops play. Coaches abusing this rule shall be given one warning by the referee. For continued offense of this rule, the referee may request that the field coach be replaced by another coach until the next change of possession, or an Illegal Procedure penalty may be assessed.

- B. In the AYL the number of coaches allowed in the Team/coaches Box is not limited as in the High School Rules.

6.4.7 Play Clock

The 1st – 3rd grade divisions shall have no more than 35 seconds from the time the ball is whistled ready for play by the official until the ball is snapped. Note: Should the offense make last-minute adjustments to their TE alignment the White Hat will momentarily stop the play clock to allow the defense time to counter these adjustments

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to prevent an unnecessary penalty for failure to cover the new TE.

6.4.8 Captains

Four captains per team will be allowed. RFC divisions will encourage the opportunity for all members of the team to serve as a game captain during the season.

6.4.9 Free Punt/Special Teams Play

In the AYL RFL there will be no Special Teams, including punts or punt returns. When the offense turns the ball over on downs the ball will be returned to the start line, the far 20-yard line, and the other team's offense takes over.

6.4.10 Mercy Rule

- A. A. If at any time after the first half of play the point differential reaches or exceeds 40 points, the officials will freeze the score as the official score with no additional scoring for either team recorded. Play will continue following the normal game rules except that now all plays in the game count double as plays towards game and minimum play count, including Points After Touchdown (PATs) and Dead Ball penalties. Also, the Play Counters (Yellow Sheet) must be instructed to mark off two plays for every one play actually run during the balance of the game.

- B. In all age divisions, coaches and teams are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship and not purposefully run-up winning point margins. All coaches **SHALL** attempt to mitigate point differentials in excess of 40 points.

6.4.11 Game Time

The time for all Rookie Football League games will be determined by the Football Board and published on the schedules.

6.4.12 Game Officials

Three paid officials will be supplied for all games; however, games may be played with only two officials. Game officials must be in full referee's uniform. Game Officials must make themselves known to both team's Head Coaches at the Game Field no later than 20 minutes before official game time. Failure to do so must be noted on the "Blue Sheets" and the Head of Officials may be fined at the AYL Football Board's discretion. The Referee shall make a complete report of any injuries incurred during the game as well as record the score of the game. The Referee will ensure that this information is documented on the "Blue Sheets" by the Coaches and will then turn these "Blue

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Sheets” into the League office, as follows. All electronic Blue Sheets must be turned in by 7pm on the Sunday following the prior scheduled game. Officials’ reports must be turned in by 7pm on the Monday prior to the next scheduled AYL Football Board meeting. All of the game “Blue Sheets” must be signed by both Head Coaches and the white hat official working in the games before the officials will be paid for officiating the game. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in officials not being paid. If a sufficient number of officials fail to show up at a scheduled game, a person(s) mutually chosen by the coaches involved may officiate.

6.4.13 Linesman Equipment

The field coordinator must supply a linesman's outfit consisting of down box and 10-yard chain. All yardage chain and down indicator rods must have flat lower ends covered by a protective cap. A competent crew (preferably adults) shall be provided by the home team to operate this equipment. This crew is part of the official crew and as such must conduct themselves in a manner befitting their status, i.e., refrain from coaching or discussion with the players and/or officials, etc.

6.4.14 Roster of Players

- A.** All official team rosters as they appear on file with the League Secretary, will be posted prior to opening Saturday, and be available to Coaches and Officials, on the AYL website.
- B.** If requested by the opposing coach, before play is commenced, each team shall line up in numerical order on the sidelines allowing opposing coach to validate rosters.

6.4.15 Uniforms

- A.** A player cannot play in a game unless they are uniformed in conformity with the other members of the team, including:
 - 1.** Proper numbers on both front and back of his jersey. These numbers shall be at least 5” in size, and no duplication of numbers will be permitted. The AYL does not require specific jersey numbers to play particular positions.
 - 2.** Helmet color, jersey color and pant color.
- B.** Players of opposing teams shall wear jerseys of contrasting colors. Players of the Home team shall wear DARK jerseys and players of the visiting team shall wear LIGHT color Jerseys. The visiting team is responsible for avoidance of similarity of colors, but if there is doubt, the referee may require players of the home team to change jerseys.

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6.4.16 Play Recorders

Teams will each furnish one play recorder in all age/grade divisions who will remain together and keep a record of the number of plays. Play Recorders will change from one side of the field to the other at halftime. Play Recorders are part of the official crew and as such must conduct themselves in a manner befitting their statuses i.e. refrain from coaching, discussions with players, coaches, or officials. Play Recorders shall notify the officials when 5 plays remain in the quarter.

6.4.17 Postponed Games

- A. Games may be postponed by the field coordinator not less than three (3) hours prior to the game, unless the fields are closed due to weather, in which event the game can be postponed any time before or during the game.
- B. Games may not be postponed for reasons other than weather without approval of the Football Board.

6.4.18 Rescheduling of Games

- A. Saturday games will be rescheduled for **Sunday** (8 days later) at a field and time to be decided by the Football Board.
- B. All regular season and play-off games must be decided with one of the teams involved being declared the winner. No games will be defined as "Did Not Play". No coach or Delegate shall willfully manipulate the final standings of a particular team by refusing to either agree to a re-schedule of a game or declare the game a forfeit. The only exception will be due to problems that force the Football Board to eliminate games so as to complete the season as required by date.

6.4.19 Chain Crew

The home team in each game shall provide personnel to operate the chains and down marker. These personnel shall remain on the home team side of the field. Note: Super Bowl games will have League designated personnel provide this function.

6.4.20 Sideline Safety

- A. Spectators, Parents, children, cameras, chairs, tables, benches, coolers, or other hazardous items are not allowed within five (5) yards of the sidelines for the entire length of the playing field, including the end zones. The Head Coach is responsible to ensure that their sideline is compliant with this 5-yard "Spectators

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Boundary”. Coaches failing to maintain this Spectators Boundary shall be given one warning by the Game Official, after which an unsportsmanlike penalty may be assessed for further offense of this rule. Refer to AYL General Principles of Operation, Rule 22, KEEPING ORDER.

- B.** While the AYL encourages active, positive, sideline participation the use of many types of noise makers such as air horns, cow bells, and coin cans as well as the playing of loud music, or the use of electronic amplification of voice can be construed as an attempt to distract or confuse the opponent and thus represents unsportsmanlike behavior. The AYL will not allow the use of air horns or amplified voice at any time during a regular season or playoff game. The use of other noisemakers and the playing of music of any type are limited only to timeout periods, the time between the quarters, after scoring plays, after turnovers or change of possession, or at halftime. If in the opinion of the Officials, the offending team’s sideline noisemakers are being used in violation of this rule, the Game Official will provide one bench warning to the offending team’s Head Coach. Subsequent violations of this rule will be charged as an unsportsmanlike penalty on the offending team’s Head Coach.
- C.** No one will be permitted behind the end zone within fifteen (15) yards of the end line at any time during a game!
- D.** Drones will be allowed for use at any AYL football game.

The following rules apply to all Drone usage:

Pilots

- A. All Colorado and FAA Drone Regulations are observed and adhered to at all times.
- B. Possess a current 107b license (commercial license) OR a TRUST (Recreational UAS Safety Test Completion Certificate)
- C. C. Drone pilots must be in possession of a “Small UAS Certificate of Registration”
- D. Drone Pilots must adhere to FAA restricted no fly zones or obtain a permit to operate in those zones.
- E. Drone Pilots must check in the white hat prior to game.

Drones must have the following:

- A. Current registration clearly marked on the outside of the aircraft.
- B. All Drones used must broadcast FAA Remote ID information.
- C. All Drones must use commercial software that prevents flight in restricted areas.

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- D. All Drones must have Return to Home fail safe software to prevent fly offs or low battery mishaps.

Usage

- A. One (1) Drone Per Team competing will be allowed for the purposes of filming the contest. Drones must film on opposite sides of the playing field. Must be a participant in the current game being played. Drones are not allowed for scouting purposes.
- B. Drone Pilots must pilot from an area 15 yards behind the endzone and maintain visual line of sight with the aircraft. A Drone Pilot may also use a spotter as outlined in the FAA UAS guidelines. A five yard by five yards, coned off square must be established for landing and takeoffs.
- C. Filming should occur behind the players on the field as much as possible. Operations over people should be limited to the Drone moving into position and swapping batteries. At all times FAA UAS Safety rules must be observed.
- D. Fly-by's over sidelines are strictly prohibited.
- E. If a sports complex, school, county, etc. prohibit drone usage at their facility, Drone filming shall not be permitted.
- F. Be advised that the AYL does utilize some fields (Aurora Sports Park for example) whereby the airspace is restricted. It is each Drone Pilot's responsibility to know in advance if this is the case and to apply for an Airspace Authorization or Waiver from the FAA. Requests can be made via the FAADroneZone website (<https://faadronezone-access.faa.gov>). Please note that an Airspace authorization is also required for flying a drone after sunset.

The AYL reserves the right to prohibit, ban, suspend, or issue fines to any Team, Coach or Club at its discretion for any violation of the outlined rules above. The AYL also reserves the right to revoke all drone filming at any time for any reason.

6.4.21 Home Team

The Home Team shall have the choice of which sideline they will occupy for that particular game.

6.4.22 Defensive Turnovers/Safeties

The AYL RFL will allow defensive turnovers but not safeties. Should a defensive turnover occur, an interception or fumble recovery, the ball will be immediately blown dead, and the ball will be turned over to the new offensive team where the turnover

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occurred. If the turnover occurred within the new offensive team's 20-yard line the ball will be placed on that team's 20-yard line. Further, there will be no ability for the defense to score a Safety on the offensive team. Should an offensive player retreat back beyond the original series start line of scrimmage (20-yard line) and be tackled by the defense the official will return the ball to the series start line for the next down in current series. If the play was fourth down the ball will be turned over on downs to the new offensive team at their start line.

6.4.23 Tie Breaker Rules

- A.** Tie Breaker rules apply to the seeding of teams in the play-offs; they will not be used to eliminate a team from the play-offs. Teams that are tied for the last play-off position will play a mini play-off. Tie Breaker rules will apply for seeding the teams for the mini play-off.
- B.** Football Tie Breaker rules:
1. Head to Head.
 2. Best W-L-T with common opponents.
 3. Strength of Schedule (this year)
 4. Best opponents total W-L-T of each team played. Example: 37-24-2
 5. Coin Toss.
- C.** Reference the AYL General Principles of Operation – Rule 8 Championships, Paragraph B. "In the event that inclement weather and/or non-availability of play-off sites would prevent play-off games from being scheduled and taking place 24 hours before the Championships to determine the Conference Champions, then the following tie-breaker method will be used to determine the participants in the AYL Championship."

The Football Board may implement this AYL General Principles Rule when weather conditions and/or hard termination dates for field availability prevent the safe completion of the regular season schedule in the timely manner required to complete mini-playoffs, playoffs and the Super Bowl before the end of the current season. Upon this determination by the Football Board, this Rule 5.4.24.C will supersede Rule 5.4.24.A above in its entirety.

The Football Board has the authority to use the Football Tie Breakers, defined in Rule 5.4.24.B above, as follows:

1. Teams may be eliminated from the playoffs by application of the Football Tie Breaker Rules so as to eliminate mini-playoffs

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2. Teams finishing below the top two positions in a Division may be eliminated from the playoffs so as to eliminate all playoffs and determine the two Super Bowl Teams.
3. Teams finishing below the top position in a Division may be eliminated from the playoffs so as to eliminate all playoffs and the Super Bowl and determine the Super Bowl Champion.

6.4.24 Mini Play-Off Games

When multiple teams end the regular season tied for the last play-off position the league will schedule MINI PLAY-OFFS to decide the final team to qualify for the Play-offs, with the exception in 5.4.23 C1. The tie breaker process defined in Rule 5.4.23 B above will be utilized to seed the teams into the MINI PLAY-OFFS. The determined seeding will be used to declare the Home team(s) as well as where each team is placed in the MINI PLAY-OFF Bracket. When two teams are tied, these teams will play a full game to determine the team advancing into the Play-offs. When three teams are tied, the highest seed, #1, will be awarded a bye for the first round of the MINI PLAY-OFFS. The remaining two teams, #2 & #3, will play in a first round half game, with the #2 seed as the home team. The winner of the first round half game will then play the #1 seed in a second round half game, played on the same day as the first round, to determine the team advancing into the Play-offs. Note: the "Minimum Play Rule" is still in effect for MINI PLAY-OFFS with the minimum play requirements for half games being prorated at one half the full game requirements. Should more than three teams end the regular season tied, the Football Board will determine the MINI PLAY-OFF structure to be utilized.

6.4.25 Playoffs

The top four (4) teams in each conference for 1st through 3rd grade divisions will qualify for the play-offs. In grades where East/West divisions exist, the top 3 team from each division will qualify for the playoffs, with cross division play in round 1 and round 2 when possible. When cross play is not possible a coin flip will determine which #1 team is played. At the discretion of the Football Board, additional teams may qualify for the play-offs. Any time there are more than 4 teams advancing into the playoffs there will always be a possibility that after round one the playoff brackets will require reseeding. The purpose of reseeding is to always ensure that the top seed (#1) will always play the lowest seed advancing from the previous round of playoffs.

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6.4.26 Patched Player Restrictions

- A. All single patch players who are ineligible for backfield position due to weight limits must be designated by wearing 1(one) florescent green sticker affixed to the center back of the helmet, with a minimum 2" diameter. Current players that have patches attached will be allowed to play with current uniforms until such time that the uniform changes or the player changes clubs. The rules will be enforced based on the helmet stickers.
- B. No single-patched player shall be allowed to run with the ball on a pre-determined play except as a receiver of a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage or a lateral/backward pass received beyond the line of scrimmage, an interception, or a fumble recovery. If a single-patched player violates any of these provisions, the ball will be declared dead at the spot of the violation and the defensive team will have the option of:
 - a. Declining the penalty and it becomes the next down.
 - b. Accepting a minor penalty from the spot of the foul and replaying the down.
- C. No single patched player shall be allowed to be behind the line of scrimmage on either offense or defense at the time the ball is put into play.

6.5 Protest Process

Should the Head Coach feel that a violation of the rules has occurred during a game, the protesting Head Coach or Member Club Delegate may file a Formal Protest. The Protesting Head Coach and their Member Club Delegate must follow the Protest Process completely. Lack of adherence to this process will render the Protest invalid. The entire process is detailed in the AYL General Principles of Operation, Rule 6. This Football Rule only provides an overview of the AYL Protest process. Refer to AYL General Principles of Operation, Rule 6.

6.5.1 Protest Guidelines

- A. ONLY RULE VIOLATIONS ARE PROTESTABLE! Judgment decisions by officials are not protest able.
- B. When the occurrence of an alleged rule violation has occurred, the protesting Head Coach must immediately notify the Head Official and the

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opposing Head Coach that they are protesting the game. The Protesting Head Coach must completely fill out the Protest Form on the "Blue Sheet" and have it initialed by the opposing Head Coach and the Head Official. The protesting Head Coach must also pay \$100 at the time of the protest, if the protest is upheld then the monies will be given back to the protesting coach. If the protest is denied, then the monies are forfeited by the protesting coach.

- C. The Protesting Head Coach must contact their Member Club Delegate immediately following the conclusion of the game in question to determine if the protest is valid and will continue.
- D. The protesting Member Club Delegate will determine if the protest is valid and contact the Football VP within 24 hours of the alleged violation if the protest is to continue or not. If the protest continues, the Club Delegate will send the PROTESTING TEAM's FORM to the protesting coach for completion. The Football VP will contact the alleged offending Member Club Delegate within 24 hours to notify them that the formal protest has been submitted according to the AYL General Principles of Operation and send the OPPONENT TEAM's FORM to be filled out by the Opposing Head Coach. If needed an OFFICIAL's FORM may be sent.
- E. Protests must be filed (on the Blue Sheet) at the point in time of the alleged rule violation – any attempt to protest a game after its conclusion or later in time will not be heard by the Football Board.

6.6 Ejection Policy

Ejection of any Player, Coach, Assistant Coach, Parent, or Spectator from a game for any reason must be explained in detail on both of the game's Football Game Sheets aka "Blue Sheet". The proper process to document the ejection from a game is critical to the management of behaviors exhibited by Players, Coaches, and Spectators. When an ejection occurs in a game the White Hat Official must immediately take an official's time out to stop the game, call both team's Head Coaches to the center of the field with their respective Blue Sheets. The White Hat will detail the ejection on both team's Blue Sheet and the Head Coaches must sign the notation regarding the details of the ejection. At a minimum the details of the ejection must include the identification of the individual ejected, e.g., the Player's name and number, the Coach's name, the Spectator's name, etc., as well as sufficient detail as to what caused the ejection from the game. Should the White Hat wish to provide additional details surrounding the ejection they may provide additional documentation to the Head of Officials later.

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Should there be further ejections from the same game the entire documentation process must be repeated, and the Blue Sheets noted with the second ejection and the Blue Sheets again signed by the Head Coach from both teams.

If the ejection from the game is the team specific Head Coach, the Assistant Coach designated to act in the position of the departed Head Coach will perform the necessary signature on the ejection details.

The Club Delegate, from the ejected person, and the AYL Secretary, must be notified by the Head of Officials via a phone call or email of any game ejection(s) no later than 9:00 pm on the day of the game involved. All ejections will be reviewed by the Football Board at the next scheduled meeting to evaluate the suspension. The Head of Officials must present, at this meeting, the original Blue Sheets with the ejection details noted. There will be no protesting the validity of an ejection at any time. Officials must have all Blue Sheets turned in, consistent with rule 5.4.12.

Per the AYL General Principles, Rule 19 Ejections, any individual ejected from a game will be placed on probation and will be ineligible to participate in the next scheduled game. Further, the AYL Football Board has determined that any non-player ejected from a game is not allowed to attend the next scheduled game in any capacity. A \$100 fee will be assessed to the Club per each non-player ejection.

A coach ejected from a game is required to complete the following courses offered on-line by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS): Teaching and Modeling Behavior. The course will be at the cost (\$20) of the ejected coach and these courses shall be completed before he/she will be removed from probation and must be finished in a reasonable amount of time during the season to be determined by that Club's Football Director.

If the same individual is ejected a second time during the season, that individual will be ineligible to participate in league events for the remainder of the season. If the second ejection comes in the last game the individual is not eligible to participate in the following season.

The Member Club will be fined \$500 if any player, coach or parent is ejected from the last game of the season and the player does not return to play in the AYL Football the next season. (i.e. Ejected from the last game at the 8th grade level).