

RULE XIII – YOUTH FOOTBALL**ARTICLE I – ELIGIBILITY****SECTION A – AGE DIVISIONS**

1. There are nine age divisions for youth football. Participant must be 6 by the age control date: on September 1, current year.

| <u>DIVISION</u> | <u>BALL CARRIER MAX WEIGHT</u> |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| 6-7 Year Old | Unlimited |
| 8 Year Old | Unlimited |
| 8 & Under | 100 lbs. |
| 9 Year Old | Unlimited |
| 10 Year Old | Unlimited |
| 10 & Under | 125 lbs. |
| 11 Year Old | Unlimited |
| 12 Year Old | Unlimited |
| 12 & Under | 150 lbs. |

2. For all team sports allow within district lines for individuals to compete in the nearest or adjoining departments with the following restrictions.
 - a. Home County or Agency has no program.
 - b. Cannot cross district lines.
 - c. Cannot pass over a program to participate in another agency.
 - d. Must participate in the sport program in the host agency.
 - e. Host agency must endorse participant.
 - f. Participant must be approved by District Athletic Chair. Once approved, they are legal throughout District and State.
 - g. Host agency must notify the District Athletic Chair with list and Home County of each crossover participant. The district must forward info to the State Host and Athletic Chair.
3. Youth coaches must be certified by one of the following programs: NYSCA, ACEP, GHSA, USA FOOTBALL.
4. Any player or coach ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct will be suspended for one game, in addition to the game from which ejected; or, in the case of an individual event within a meet or match, for the duration of that event.

SECTION B – ENTRIES

1. Any agency may enter as many teams as their district allows, provided the State Athletic Committee does not set a limit on the number.
2. Host agency will have the option of entering a host team in the state "regional" football tournament. The host team must win the regional in order to advance to the State Championship game.
3. Districts may designate a roster deadline, if and only if, it conducts a season schedule. This deadline must be prior to the final scheduled district game.

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- b. In the 8U division, a defensive player is not allowed to line up over the center. As a result of this rule, there will be no quarterback sneaks. The QB must be led by a running back if running up the middle. The QB may run outside the guards and there are no direct snaps to anyone other than the quarterback. The penalty for this infraction is the same as illegal formation.
- c. Defensive linemen must be in a 3 or 4 point stance – any player tackle to tackle is considered a lineman on the line-of-scrimmage. Linebackers (tackle to tackle) must be off the line-of-scrimmage – depth must be the back of the farthest lineman position. The penalty for this infraction is the same as being off sides.
- d. Coaches will be responsible for maintaining the stripes and making sure players are in the correct playing position. If lined up incorrectly, there will be a 5 yard penalty. Players with striped helmets are eligible to punt and kick on kick-offs/field goal attempts.
- e. A player's weight is defined as that weight which is determined by approved or certified scales when the player weighed at their official weigh in. **No player will be allowed to totally strip for a weigh in and must have at least gym shorts on at all times.** Players should be in alphabetical order for weigh-ins and a coach should be present with their roster and birth certificates in alphabetical order, as well.
- f. Weights shall be determined on digital scales or balance type scales, furnished by the Host team. Spring scales are not acceptable. Players shall weigh in at each level of play.
 - i. **The Official Weigh-in shall be conducted two hours prior to game time. Players not making the weight limit at the Official Weigh-in shall be permitted a second or alternate weigh in conducted one hour prior to game time.**
 - ii. **Teams not desiring to weigh-in two hours prior to game time shall be permitted to weigh-in one hour prior to game time but no alternate Weigh-in will be allowed.**
 - iii. **Failure to meet the weight requirements at alternate Weigh-in shall constitute game ineligibility to carry/handle the ball.**
 - iv. Players absent from their first game must weigh in prior to any following or subsequent games. **All players must weigh in at all levels of GRPA play.** Once weight requirement has been met for that level of play, players will not be required to reweigh during same level of play.
 - 1. Players attempting to make weight after district may reweigh at regionals.
 - 2. **However, players that do not make weight at district or regionals may not make weight for state finals.**
 - 3. Teams going straight to State must meet all weight requirements. ***If a player is found to have not weighed in, penalty for player and/or coach will be as follows: Penalty- EJECTION FROM FACILITY AND PLAYER EJECTION FOR THE REMAINDER OF TOURNAMENT.**
 - v. All players will be weighed regardless of position and the actual weight will be recorded on the official roster prior to the first game played AND weighed at each level of play. There are NO weight protests once an official weight is recorded at each level of GRPA play. If a player is deemed ineligible, as a result of removing or tampering with the stripe placed on the helmet during weigh-in or failure to report jersey change in an attempt to be deceptive, the player and coach ejections and/or disqualification of team from tournament. Illegal participation, by a maximum weight player, during the game will result in the player being removed for minimum one game (4 quarters) suspension, and a

8. All coaches are required to stay within the boundaries of the coaching box with noted exceptions in the 8U division – one coach is allowed in the huddle of the offensive and defensive team. Once the huddles are broken, the coaches are to back up at least 10-yards. Coaches on the field are not allowed to communicate/talk to their players after the huddle is broken (penalty is 5 yards). No coaches will be allowed on the field in the 9U, 10U and 12U Traditional and Unlimited divisions. The coaches' box extends from the 25-yard line to the 25-yard line. There is a limit of 5 coaches on the sideline and all 5 should have the same color shirt on.
9. The time allowed to snap the ball after it has been declared ready for play is 30 seconds. **In the 8U division, the football may be placed parallel to the line of scrimmage to assist in snapping the ball.**
10. **OVERTIME in the 8U division ONLY:** If a game ends in a tie, the 10-yard line overtime procedure will be used with the ball being placed on the 10-yard line with each team getting a series. 1st and 2nd Overtime will use 10 yard procedure and 3rd overtime the ball will be placed on the 3 yard line, each team will be given ONE play to score (no extra point attempts in 3rd OT or any successive OT periods).
11. **OVERTIME in the 10U and 12U divisions:** If a game ends in a tie, the 10-yard line overtime procedure will be used with the ball being placed on the 10-yard line with each team getting a series. 1st and 2nd Overtime will use 10 yard procedure and 3rd overtime or any successive OT periods, each team must attempt a two point conversion (kick).
12. **Extra Points and Field Goals: Players with striped helmets are eligible to punt and kick on kick-offs/field goal attempts.**

a. 8U Football

- i. 1 point for passing/running in the end zone from the 3 yd. line
- ii. 2 points for passing/running in the end zone from the 5 yd. line

b. 10U Football

- i. 1 point for running or passing
- ii. 2 points for kicking through the uprights
- iii. (Dead Ball with no rush, defense can raise hands and try to block only – no jumping. The ball must be snapped to holder whom places on standard orange kicking tee and holder does not have to hold ball while ball is being kicked; in fact, kicker can actually adjust ball after being placed on kicking tee by holder). Ball would be placed and snapped on the regulation 3 yard line on a 100 yard field. On an 80 yard field, a snap would be from 13 yards off the face of the goal/uprights. Field Goal attempts have the same rule except team awarded 3 points.

c. 12U Football

- i. 1 point for running or passing
- ii. 2 points for kicking through the uprights
- iii. (Dead Ball with no rush, defense can raise hands and try to block only – no jumping. The ball must be snapped to holder who holds football on a kicking block or ground for the extra point. once the official sees that the snapped ball is in place by the holder, the official blows the whistle and the kicker must immediately kick the extra point). Ball is placed on 3 yard line. Penalty is delay of game. Field Goal attempts – the same rule except team awarded 3 points.

c. **11U & 12U Football** – extra points are live

(Dead Ball with no rush, defense can raise hands and try to block only – no jumping. The ball must be snapped to holder who holds football on a kicking block or ground for the extra point, once the official sees that the snapped ball is in place by the holder; the official blows the whistle and the kicker must immediately kick the extra point.) Ball is placed on 3 yard line. Penalty is delay of game. Field Goal attempts - the same rule except team awarded 3-points.

ARTICLE III – EQUIPMENT**SECTION A – APPROVED EQUIPMENT**

1. Shoes are mandatory for play in youth football games.
 - a. Shoes which have plastic, nylon, hard rubber or other synthetic materials, and which have cleats which are detachable are not allowed.
 - b. Shoes with rubber-molded cleats are permissible, as are smooth, soft-sole shoes such as tennis or basketball shoes.
2. The approved footballs are as follows (teams may use their own ball as long as it meets the below specifications):
 - a. 12U: Wilson TDY; Spaulding J2Y; McGregor MSJ; Rawlings KRB; Voit CF7S; Wilson F1544; or other youth size football.
 - b. 10U: Wilson TDJ or any other Junior size football.
 - c. 8U: Wilson K2 or equal
3. Game Balls – All game balls for each team that will be used for the game must be inspected by officials prior to the game and marked by officials. Use of any other ball that is not marked appropriately will be considered illegal equipment. If the illegal equipment (game ball) is:
 - a. **DISCOVERED PRIOR TO THE NEXT DOWN/PLAY**, the down/play should be REPLAYED and the team flagged for unsportsmanlike conduct with a 15 yard penalty assessed (if the coach/team defers to the result of the play, the penalty will be assessed on the next down) and the illegal equipment removed from the game.
 - b. Is discovered after the play but **NOT BEFORE** the next down/snap/play the team will be assessed an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty of 15 yards and the illegal ball/equipment removed from the game. The result of the play stands and will not be replayed if discovered after the next play/down has occurred.
 - c. Second offense by the offending team will be assessed a 15 yard unsportsmanlike penalty and the coach ejected from the game. NOTE: THE SIT OUT RULE WILL BE IN EFFECT.
 - d. Third offense of using an illegal football will result in forfeiting the game and being disqualified.

SECTION B – UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

1. A uniform for youth football shall include helmet with face guard, 2 or 4 point chin strap snaps, shoulder pads, football pants with pads protecting the hips, thighs and knees, and jersey with numerals on front and back (must be alike in style and base color, trim and script does not matter). It is mandatory that all players wear such uniforms. No other youth sports organization patches will be allowed on uniforms in GRPA tournaments. Penalty – Illegal Equipment
 - a. Approved uniform: (1) plain shirts with numbers, (2) agency name or agency abbreviation, or (3) agency logo with department/school mascot name. (*EFFECTIVE January 2025*)
2. Mouth pieces must be worn by all players in the game and meet current GSHA requirements. They

minimum two games (8 quarters) suspension for the head coach.

All protests regarding rule interpretation must be made prior to the conclusion of the game. **If the player is found to be overweight at official weigh-in, they will be ineligible to carry or advance the ball in that game.** They may weigh in again for the next game. **THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTION TO READING OF OFFICIAL SCALES! Any team(s) found utilizing ineligible players will be penalized either by player ejection and/ or team forfeiting the game.**

Weight Clarification/Interpretation:

Players with striped helmets are eligible to play on kickoff and return team. They may also kick or punt and kick on kick-offs/field goal attempts. Please remember if this is not the scenario then the penalties outlined in the manual will still apply.

Striped players may recover a fumble or intercept the ball; however, they cannot advance the ball. Play is dead once recovery by a striped player occurs. If player attempts to run the ball, it will be spotted at point of intercept or recovery.

- g. All players whose names appear on the Official Roster must have met the weight requirement prior to the State Championship finals to be eligible to handle ball. **APPROVED RULING:** If one of the teams to play in a State Championship does not have a game within one week of the State Championship game, players shall be allowed to weigh for official purposes at the Official weigh in of the game in which the team's opponent for the Championship games is determined, or on that same day by a State Athletic Committee Member not associated with the team agency.

5. **Mercy rule** – Beginning in the third quarter, if requested by the losing team's coach, or any time in the fourth quarter a team gains a 21-point lead the clock will run continuously for the balance of the game except after touchdowns and during timeouts, injuries, penalties and scores. If not elected in the third quarter it **automatically occurs in the fourth quarter** when a 21-point lead occurs. If the losing team gets within seven points, the clock will return to regulation.

6. The playing field shall be 100 yards in length for 12U, and 80 yards for 8U and 10U. Kick-offs will be from the 30 yard line for 10U and 40-yard line in 12U divisions. There will be no kick-offs in the 8U division. The ball will be placed on the 20 yard-line to begin play.

7. All kick-offs out-of-bounds will be placed on the 35 yard-line or at the point of the out-of-bounds whichever is greater. If the receiving team fumbles the kick-off out-of-bounds, the ball will be placed at that point.

The offensive team must verbally state their intention of punting before leaving their huddle. After a verbal declaration of punting, the clock will stop until the change of possession. There will be **no punts in the 8U division**, the ball will be marked 30 yards from the line of scrimmage or half the distance from inside the 20-yard line by the referee. The ball cannot be spotted deeper than the 10-yard line. **10U division punts** will be a dead ball kick; all defensive players will take a knee during the kick except for one defensive punt receiver. The ball will be spotted where the receiver catches or controls the ball. All punts must be from long snapped formation. Delay of game can still be called even though punts are dead ball. In **12U division**, starts out as a dead ball and once the punter is in control of the snapped football the official blows the whistle and the play becomes live, the defense must have seven men on the line of scrimmage and two players whom cannot be no more than 5 yards off the line of scrimmage, this allows for two punt receivers for the punt return team.

The intent of the rule is to keep teams from developing a wedge prior to the ball becoming live, and to help aid in the realism of the punt return portion of the game. By rule, 12U division punts become live once the official whistles in that the punter has control of the snapped football, which at that moment makes the punt returnable or gives the opportunity for a blocked punt. **No fake punts will be allowed.**

SECTION B – GAME OFFICIALS

A minimum of four REGISTERED Game Officials (qualified game official with a certified officials' association acceptable by the Georgia High School Association and designated by GHSA Standards) shall be employed for State level GRPA competition. District levels must use at least three (3) Officials as stated in Rule II, Article IV, Section B1d.

ARTICLE VI – PROTESTS AND APPEALS

For more information regarding protests and appeals, see: Rule I, Article IV, Section C-11. For more information on protest committee organization and responsibility, see Rule II, Article I, Section A.

Exception: Weigh-ins would follow procedures listed herein.