



Youth Pop Warner Football League

Local League Rules

Revised:
7.24.26



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA Youth Football Pop Warner Rules

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National Pop Warner Football rules will be followed with the following clarifications and additions.

Practice

1. The first two (2) weeks of practice must be conditioning, and each practice may not exceed a 2-hour time limit. Pads may **not** be worn, but helmets are permissible. First week of conditioning is optional.
2. Four (4) practices are allowed during weeks that games are not scheduled (3 in pads)
3. Three (3) practices are allowed during game weeks (2 in pads).
4. Teams are allowed to hold intrasquad or intersquad scrimmages. These scrimmages count as padded practices.
5. Teams are allowed to hold intrasquad or intersquad scrimmages during the half times of high school, college, or professional games. This **does not** count as a practice.

Game Management

1. Weigh-In – On each game day, the home/ host town is responsible for weighing blue sticker athletes for all teams playing at the site. This is to make sure that every athlete meets the blue sticker weight requirements set by the league.
2. Home and Visiting (Away) Designation – The home and visiting team will be designated on the schedule. The home team will be designated in **BOLD**.
3. Coin Toss – Before the game, **officials shall hold a pre-game meeting with the teams' coaches and captains**. There will be a coin toss in which the visiting team will call "heads" or "tails" in the air. The winner of the coin toss will select whether they want to be on offense or defense to start the game in the first half. **You are not able to defer and must choose either offense or defense.** The loser of the coin toss will get what the winner of the coin toss selects, in the second half. EX: if the visiting team wins the toss and chooses offense to start the game, the home team will be on offense to start the second half. The loser of the coin toss gets to determine which end zone they would like to defend to start the game.
4. Offensive Coach – In all games, a single (1) offensive coach is allowed on the field of play on his side of the line of scrimmage. In the huddle, the coach may not use writing instruments. However, cards with pre-diagrammed plays are acceptable.
5. Defensive Coach – In all games, a single (1) defensive coach is allowed on the field of play on his side of the line of scrimmage. The coach may not impede the offense, and at the snap he must be 15 yards off behind safeties. Coaches who impede/shout direction of plays to his players, will be given a warning first and if it continues, will be assessed a 5-yard penalty.
6. Game Length – A game will consist of four (4) quarters, each eight- (8) minutes in length. There will be a one- (1) minute break at the end of the first and third quarters and ten (10) minutes at half time.

7. **Between Plays** – There is a thirty (30) second time limit between plays. Time starts when the officials set the ball.
8. **Timeouts** – Each team is allowed three one-minute (1) timeouts per half.
9. **Tiebreakers** – Tiebreakers will NOT be played.
10. **20 Point Rule** – When one team leads another by more than 20 points, those points beyond a 20-point difference are not registered on the scoreboard. However, those points beyond 20 are banked. The losing team will automatically get the ball at the 50-yard line. If at any time the losing team scores, this rule is negated until a 20-point difference is again obtained by the leading team.
11. **Officials** – Officials are the "Game Site Managers" and have full authority to make decisions that protect the safety of the players, coaches, fans, and the integrity of the goals of YMCA Pop Warner Football. Their authority begins with their entry onto the field and ends upon their departure following the last game of the day. These officials are "the law of the land" and have full support of the Executive Council in their decision making. This includes the following:
 - a. **Ejection of a Coach/Player:** As stated in the high school rules, there is no recourse, and the coach/player will not be able to actively participate in the next game.
 - b. **Warning and Ejection of a Fan:** This rule is original to YMCA Pop Warner Football and is very specific. A game can be halted by an official if a fan becomes unruly (foul language, vocal threats, or generally abusive to the integrity of the goals of YMCA Pop Warner Football). In other words, if the environment is not good for the players it must be dealt with in the following manner:
 - a. Warning to the fan and both coaches.
 - b. Stop play and inform the individual that if he/she doesn't depart the facility within 5 minutes the authorities will be called.
 - c. Play will begin when the situation has met the satisfaction of the game officials.

Beginning of a Half

1. **Beginning of Half** – Each half will start from the teams 35 yard line going towards the opposing end zone. However, the 20-point rule may supersede this.

Punts / Returns

1. **Declaration** – Must be declared and no faking is allowed.
2. **Free Kick Line** – Neither team may cross the line of scrimmage. However, the defending team may attempt to block the kick from their side of the line of scrimmage. If blocked, the ball cannot be placed any closer to the punting team's goal than the original line of scrimmage.
3. **Receiving Team** – Receiving team must have at least 5 men on the line of scrimmage.
4. **Punter** – The punter must be a minimum of 7 yards from the snapper.
5. **Long Snap** – There must be a long snap, followed by a punt.
6. **Bad Snaps or Fumble** – If there is a bad snap or fumble; the ball must be punted from the point the punter gets control of the ball or his original spot, whichever is deeper.
7. **Possession** – When the ball is controlled by the receiving team, the play is over.

8. **Errant Punt** – If the ball is not caught, it is placed at the farthest point from the original line of scrimmage where it is touched by the receiving team or goes out of bounds.

Extra-Point Kicks

1. Declaration – Must be declared and no faking is allowed.
2. Free Kick Line – Neither team may cross the line of scrimmage. However, the defense may attempt to block the kick from their side of the line of scrimmage.
3. Long Snap – Ball must be snapped, held, and kicked. Holder may not move from his immediate area to retrieve an errant snap. The ball may touch/bounce on the ground during the snap. For example, if the ball is snapped over the holder's head, and not caught, he may not get up and go get it. He may rise to catch a high snap and return to holding position.

Field Goals

1. Declaration – Must be declared and no faking is allowed.
2. Free Kick Line – Neither team may cross the line of scrimmage. However, the defense may attempt to block the kick from their side of the line of scrimmage. If blocked, the ball cannot be placed any closer to the kicking team's goal than the original line of scrimmage.
3. Long Snap – Ball must be snapped, held, and kicked. Same restrictions as extra point regarding the holder.
4. Misses – On a missed field goal, the defensive team will take possession at their 20-yard line, or the original line of scrimmage, whichever is most beneficial.

Guardian Caps:

Guardian caps are allowed to be worn at practice and in games. Guardian Caps will be treated as a part of the helmet where specific rules apply. Players and teams choosing to wear Guardian Caps during play must follow the following rules and guidelines outlined by the MHSAA below:

1. Player involved: Ball carrier – guardian cap falls off during play.
 - a. Ball Status & Penalty – Ball is dead immediately; ball carrier must sit out next down.
2. Player involved: Ball carrier – guardian cap is pulled off by the defense.
 - a. Ball Statue & Penalty – Ball is dead immediately; ball carrier must sit out next down.
3. Player involved: Ball carrier – guardian cap is hanging off but hasn't fallen completely off.
 - a. Ball Status & Penalty – Ball is dead immediately, must sit out next down.
4. Player involved: Ball carrier – guardian cap falls off because of a foul by the opponent (facemask or hands to the face).
 - a. Ball Status & Penalty – Ball is dead immediately, not required to sit out next down.
5. Player involved: Non-ball carrier – guardian cap falls off because of a foul by the opponent (facemask or hands to the face).
 - a. Ball Status & Penalty – Ball remains live; not required to sit out next down.
6. Player involved: Non-ball carrier – Guardian cap falls off.
 - a. Ball Statue & Penalty – Ball remains live, must sit out next down.

*If an official deems that a player has pulled an opponent's guardian cap off for the sole purpose of requiring that opponent to sit down, the game officials can assess that player a delay of game penalty and the player whose guardian cap was pulled off can remain in the game.

Blue Sticker Players:

No athlete will be turned away from participating because of their weight. Below are the weights for each week with allowances for "Blue" Players. "Blue" players are defined by blue tape affixed to their helmet, in plain view. "Blue" players on **offense must *only* play center, guard, tackle.**

On defense they must ***only* play defensive tackle, or defensive end.**

Any player **over** the set weight each game cannot be a quarterback, running back, tight end, wide receiver, linebacker, or defensive back

Weight Limits for Blue Sticker Players:

*8-man Division follows Jr. Pee wee Weights.

<u>Junior Pee wees (3/4 graders)</u>	<u>Without equipment</u>	<u>With equipment minus helmet</u>
Game 1	115	125
Game 2	116	126
Game 3	116	126
Game 4	117	127
Game 5	117	127
Game 6	118	128
Game 7	118	128
 <u>JV (5/6 graders)</u>		
Game 1	155	165
Game 2	156	166
Game 3	156	166
Game 4	157	167
Game 5	157	167
Game 6	158	168
Game 7	158	168

11-Man Divisions

11-Man Junior Pee Wee

1. Players will consist of 3rd and 4th grade students.
 - a. All players shall be age 8 by August 1st.
 - b. 2nd grade players are eligible if they are 8 by August 1st.
2. No Weight Restrictions for Offensive & Defensive Lineman.
 - a. Center, Guards & Tackles on Offense & Defensive Tackles on Defense.
 - b. Ball carriers will continue to fall under the existing weight chart guideline. (QB, RB, TE, WR) 125# by first game
3. All offensive and defensive lineman shall be in an "athletic" 2-point stance.
 - a. Guards, Tackles, and Tight Ends on Offense & Def. Tackles and Def. Ends on Defense.
4. All other existing rules associated with YMCA Pop Warner Football shall remain in place.

11-Man JV

1. Players will consist of 5th and 6th grade students.
2. No Weight Restrictions for Offensive & Defensive Lineman.
 - a. Center, Guards & Tackles on Offense & Defensive Tackles on Defense.
 - b. Ball carriers will continue to fall under the existing weight chart guideline. (QB, RB, TE, WR)
3. All other existing rules associated with YMCA Pop Warner Football shall remain in place.
 - a. 3-point stance is allowed.

Defense

1. 4-3 Defense – A 4-3 defense is mandatory.
2. Defensive Tackles – Must align directly over the Offensive Guards in a down position.
3. Defensive Ends – Can be in up or down position. Must align directly over or anywhere outside the tight end (or invisible tight end.) *May go all the way to the sideline if they wish*
4. Three Linebackers – One directly over the Center, and one over each Offensive Tackle. At the snap, each Linebackers must be approx. 4 yards behind the line of scrimmage.
5. Secondary – All four secondary players must align deeper than the Linebackers.

Offense

1. Alignment – Must have a guard, tackle, and end on each side of the center on the line of scrimmage.
2. Splits – Line splits may not be wider than 3 feet. (Tight end to tight end if you have them. No flex tight ends).
3. Split Ends – Split ends are acceptable but must be aligned at least five (5) yards from the tackle.

8-Man Division

8-Man Rules (Jr. Peewee rules apply)

1. **Offense:** Basic rules you need 5 players on the line of scrimmage as compared to 7 in 11 man. The end man on each side is eligible whether that is a TE, WR, RB, etc. 8-man consists of 3 lineman, 4 skill (rb, wr, te), and a qb. Can use a spread offense or a tight formation, under center or shotgun.
2. **Defense:** 3-2-3 alignment. 3 DL, 2 LB, 3 DB's. DL- align nose guard on the center, and a DE on each side in a head up or outside shade of the OL or TE whichever one is on the end. LB- 4 yards off the ball lined up over the offensive guards. DB- 1 safety and 2 corners and play base cover 3. Teach them the fundamentals of the positions. Special teams the same as 11-man pop warner.
3. All players on the line must be in an athletic 2-point stance. "Blue" Sticker players must play on the line.
4. Players will consist of 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders.
5. No Weight Restrictions for Offensive & Defensive Lineman.
 - a. Ball carriers will continue to fall under the existing weight chart guideline. (QB, RB, TE, WR)
6. All offensive and defensive lineman shall be in an "athletic" 2-point stance.
 - a. Guards, Tackles, and Tight Ends on Offense & Def. Tackles and Def. Ends on Defense.
7. All other existing rules associated with YMCA Pop Warner Football shall remain in place.

6th Graders

1. Teams may carry up to 4, sixth graders. **(Please remember that these 6th graders must be very inexperienced, very light, and unable to move up to their middle school team)**
2. These 6th graders will need a sticker on front of helmet, something in contrast to the color of the helmet, for identification. Coaches + refs need to be made aware of who the 6th graders are.
3. 6th graders are subject to the same rules at "blue sticker" players as for carrying the ball. 6th Graders will not be able to play a skill position or any position that carries or potentially carries the ball.
 - 6th graders will only be able to play the offense or defensive lines.
 - If a team runs out of players during the game and only has 6th graders left to play the offensive tight end or defensive end positions. The 6th grader then, may play the end position but will not be able to receive a pass or carry the ball while playing this position.
4. There will never be more than 2 - 6th graders in the game at a time.