

**2011**

**HANDBOOK**

**FOR**

**THE TWIN CITY NORTH YOUTH  
FOOTBALL LEAGUE  
2-6 GRADES**

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# PART 1

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## **PART 2**

# **TWIN CITIES NORTH YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES**

# ***TWIN CITIES NORTH YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES***

***1. Introduction*** - The Twin Cities North Youth Football League (“TCYNFL”) is an informal association of communities located in the northern suburbs of Minneapolis and St. Paul organized with the intent to provide a football league for youths in grades 2-6. The league is the direct descendant of the Blaine-Spring Lake Park youth football league, and has grown tremendously over the past six years due to the collective common sense and cooperation of park and recreation and community education professionals and community volunteers from many different communities. In 2011 the league will include teams from St. Francis, Andover, Blaine-Spring Lake Park, Lino-Lakes-Centennial, Irondale, Mounds View, Fridley, St. Anthony, Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, Columbia Heights, Big Lake, and Robbinsdale Cooper.

***2. Philosophy and League Functions*** – The league is organized with the intent to promote, organize and coordinate the activities of its member communities with the goal of enhancing the quality of football in the Twin Cities area. The league is an informal organization, and operates with a minimum of rules, regulations, policies and procedures. League members believe that the focus of the organization should be on providing youths with the opportunity to play football and increasing overall participation in the sport, and should not be on the personal agendas of various adults who are not interested in the long-term growth of the sport.

The basic operating functions of the league are summarized as follows:

2.1 Provide a simple and functional framework that allows teams from the various participating communities to play each other, thereby allowing participating teams to play teams from several different communities.

2.2 Establish a uniform set of playing rules and provide training for referees to maintain consistency in the enforcement of playing rules.

2.3 Develop and maintain game schedules for each grade division among the participating communities, including a playoff system for those communities that desire to participate in a post-season playoff.

2.4 Provide a mechanism and authority for receiving, investigating, and resolving complaints.

2.5 Establish registration deadlines.

***3. Organization Bylaws*** – The TCNYFL functions on as informal basis as possible. Operation of the TCNYFL is governed by the following simple rules:

3.1 Commissioner – Participating communities will elect a Commissioner in July of each even numbered year. The Commissioner will serve a two (2) year term. The Commissioner is responsible for coordinating and running meetings, maintaining league records, including meeting minutes and community contact information, initiating the scheduling process, revising and distributing league rules, monitoring the registration process, and acting as the final arbiter of any disputes that might arise.

3.2 Scheduling and Website Coordinator - The TCNYFL will employ a Scheduling and Website Coordinator, who will be selected and supervised by the Commissioner. The Scheduling and Website Coordinator will be paid directly by the member communities on a “per team” basis, at a rate agreed upon by the Commissioner and Scheduling and Website Coordinator.

3.3 Community Representative – Each participating community will select one (1) person as their TCNYFL representative. This person will be responsible for attending TCNYFL meetings and coordinating all TCNYFL activities with their community.

3.4 Meetings – The TCNYFL will conduct two (2) preseason meetings in the summer of each year and one (1) postseason meeting in November of each year. Meeting dates, times and places will be determined by the Commissioner. The Commissioner may call special meetings as needed. Notice of all meetings will be sent via e-mail or in other written form.

3.5 Votes - Any formal proposal to amend league policies, procedures, bylaws or playing rules, or to sanction a player, coach, team, or participating community must be approved by a majority vote of the participating community representatives present at the meeting at which the vote is taken. Each community will receive the following number of votes, based upon participating teams:

Blaine-Spring Lake Park – 5 votes	
St. Francis – 3 votes	Brooklyn Park/Brk. Center – 3 votes
Andover – 5 votes	Lino - Lakes - Centennial – 3 votes
Mounds View – 2 votes	Irondale – 2 votes
Fridley, Columbia Hghts, St. Anthony, Big Lake, Robbinsdale Cooper – 1 vote each	

The Commissioner may adjust the votes each participating community receives as the number of teams the community enters in the league changes. In the event of a tie vote, the Commissioner will vote to break the tie.

3.6 Confirmation of Participation – Each participating community must confirm their participation in the upcoming season no later than June 1. Confirmation must be sent to the Commissioner by e-mail or other written form.

## **TCYNYFL PLAYING RULES**

**1. Composition of Divisions and Teams** – The league will have four (4) grade divisions, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (one division), 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Participants must play in their appropriate grade division, unless the participant elects to play in an older grade. Any participant that elects to play in an older grade is required to have his or her parents sign an informed consent form. Participating communities are prohibited from turning down participants based upon ability, and “hand picked teams”, “select teams”, “all-star teams” and teams with participants outside a community’s jurisdiction are prohibited. Communities that field more than one team in a division must construct their teams based upon geography or an equi-draft system. Community representatives are responsible for the composition of their teams and assuring that all players are properly registered and equipped.



**2. Weight Restrictions** - The restrictions on the weight of ball carriers are as follows:

2 <sup>nd</sup> – 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade:	90 pounds
4 <sup>th</sup> grade:	100 pounds
5 <sup>th</sup> grade:	125 pounds
6 <sup>th</sup> grade:	135 pounds

These weights must be verified no earlier than the player's community's last regularly scheduled registration date. Players over these weight limits must have a red stripe affixed to their helmet. These players may not line up in the offensive backfield or at wide receiver. They may line up at tight end, but under no circumstances may run the ball or receive a pass from the tight end position. Overweight players must play on the first line on a kickoff receiving team. Overweight players may only run the ball in the following circumstances:

- a. Fumble Recovery
- b. Pass Interception
- c. Kickoff Return from the first line, provided there is no lateral or handoff.

Each community must weigh its players no earlier than the community's last regularly scheduled registration date, and provide its community representative with complete rosters, including the names and weights of all players who are overweight. Community representatives are not required to submit this information to the Commissioner or another community representative unless requested to do so. If a team believes that an opponent has allowed an overweight player to carry the ball, the team must have its community representative contact the community representative of the opposing team after completion of the game. The individual community representatives of the communities involved will then arrange for a weigh-in. If the player in question weighs-in more than four (4) pounds over the ball carrier limits described above, the game will be forfeited and the player in question will be prohibited from carrying the ball in subsequent games. All violations of the weight restriction rules must be reported to the Commissioner.

**3. Game Administration** - The following procedures apply to the administration of league games:

3.1 The "host team" (the team at whose field the game is being played at) is responsible for having the field in playable condition, having the field marked properly, and having the chains out. The host team is also responsible for providing and paying for a minimum of two qualified officials. This responsibility is for **all games scheduled at the host site on a particular date, regardless of whether or not the host has teams participating in all of the scheduled games.**

3.2 The league requires that both teams occupy the same sideline, and that all fans and the chain gang occupy the opposite sideline. Each team may occupy the area from the 20 yard line to the 45 yard line on their half of the sideline. The team listed second on the schedule is responsible for providing the chain gang. We do not want the chain gang to change at halftime.

3.3 Games may be postponed before the teams have arrived at the field only by the community representative of the host team, and only for inclement weather or unplayable field conditions. In the event a community representative elects to postpone a game before the participating teams have arrived at the field, the community representative must notify the community representatives and coaches of all other teams affected by the postponement. Once a game has started, the decision to postpone a game may only be made by the game officials. Coaches and community representatives of teams who have had games postponed must contact the Scheduling and Website Coordinator to reschedule the game.

3.4 Coaches and community representatives are responsible for the behavior of their respective players, coaches and fans. Coaches are prohibited from smoking during games or practices, and alcohol consumption by coaches, officials and spectators is prohibited at games or practices. Unsportsmanlike or abusive behavior will not be tolerated. The TCYNFL reserves the right to suspend or ban players, coaches, and spectators who exhibit unsportsmanlike or abusive behavior. Game officials have the authority to order an ejected player or coach, or any spectator exhibiting unsportsmanlike or abusive behavior, from the game premises. Failure to abide by such an order will result in immediate forfeit of the game by the offending team.

3.5 The winning coach of each game is responsible for reporting the game score to the league website.

3.6 Playoff formats will vary from year to year based upon weather, time constraints, and the number of teams in each grade division. The Commissioner will determine the playoff format in early October. The TCYNFL believes in simple, short playoff formats. The TCYNFL does not provide trophies or awards for either regular season or playoff champions. Participating communities are free to provide whatever awards their community feels are appropriate for their teams and players.

3.7 Protests or complaints regarding officials or unsportsmanlike or abusive behavior must be submitted by the community representative to the Commissioner and the community representative of the other team involved within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident.

**4. Modifications to Playing Rules** - In general, National Federation rules apply to all TCNYFL games with the following modifications:

**4.1 *Playing Field*** – The playing field for the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade division is only 80 yards long. Kickoffs on the 80 yard field are from the 35 yard line. All major penalties on the 80 yard field are ten (10) yards instead of fifteen (15) yards, except for unsportsmanlike conduct, which shall remain at fifteen (15) yards on the 80 yard field.

**4.2 *Declared Punts*** – In the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 4<sup>th</sup> grade divisions, all 4<sup>th</sup> down punts must be declared, and the officials will acknowledge the declared punt to both teams and their respective coaches. When a 4<sup>th</sup> down punt is declared, no player on either team may move until the punter has actually kicked the ball. In the event the punter fumbles the snap, he or she is allowed to pick the ball up and kick the ball. Other players may not move until the ball is kicked. Each team is required to have seven (7) players on the line of scrimmage for declared punts. The penalty for early movement in a declared punt situation is a warning for the first infraction by a team, and a penalty of five (5) yards for each subsequent infraction by the same team. Normal rules apply to punting situations in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 6<sup>th</sup> grade divisions. At the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade levels, the league emphasizes that the center can not be touched until the snap has been completed and the center has an opportunity to lift his hands and head and protect himself.

**4.3 *Coach on Field*** - Each team may have one (1) coach on the field or in the huddle in the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade division. Coaches are not allowed on the field or in the huddle in all other divisions.

**4.4 Other Modifications to Penalties** – Officials will assess penalties for improper equipment, such as no mouthguard and dangling chinstrap, after one (1) team warning. Subsequent infractions to a team will result in five (5) yard penalties. Referees are instructed to use discretion when assessing penalties for too many players on the field. If the official determines that a player was making an honest effort to get off the field and the play was not affected by the extra player, the official can elect not to penalize the offending team. Assessed penalties for too many players shall be ten (10) yards.

**4.5 Extra Points** – All extra points will be played from the two (2) yard line. Teams receive two (2) points for a forward pass and one (1) point for a run. No kicks are allowed.

**4.6 Modifications to Timing Rules** – Games will consist of four (4) fifteen (15) minute quarters. The quarters will be **running time**, with the following exceptions:

- a. Injuries. The clock will stop until the injured player has been cleared from the field and both teams are ready to play.
- b. Scores. The clock will stop after a team scores a touchdown, and will remain stopped until completion of the extra point. The clock will start again immediately after completion of the extra point. In the event of a safety, the clock shall stop when the safety occurs and will remain stopped until the ball is touched after the free kick.
- c. Official time outs to discuss rules interpretations with coaches. The clock will be stopped until the conference is completed and both teams are ready to play. In no event shall any such conference take more than one (1) minute.
- d. Team time outs. Each team has three (3) time outs per half. The clock will be stopped until the next snap after the time out.
- e. **The last one (1) minute of each half** will be “book rule” stop time.
- f. In the event one team is seventeen (17) or more points ahead at any time in the game, the clock shall continue to run **in all circumstances except team time outs and injuries**. This modification shall continue until the team behind cuts the deficit to less than seventeen (17) points.
- g. Halftime shall be no more than five (5) minutes and quarter breaks shall be no more than one (1) minute. Officials have the discretion to reduce the length of halftime if the officials determine the game is running behind schedule.
- h. In instances of extremely warm weather, regardless of the actual heat index, the officials have the discretion to lengthen play stoppages for time outs and quarter breaks for the purpose of allowing players extra time for hydration. Officials may, at their discretion, also stop play mid-quarter for an extra hydration break. Coaches are encouraged to discuss this issue with officials before the game starts on extremely warm days.

**4.7 Size of Footballs** – The 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 4<sup>th</sup> grade divisions will use a “junior” size football. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 6<sup>th</sup> grade divisions will use a “youth” size football.

**4.8 Playing Time** – Teams participating in the TCNYFL are required to play, to the extent possible, all players in at least one-half (1/2) of each game. Teams with 22 or less players should therefore start each player on either offense or defense. Teams with more than 22 players are required to devise an equitable system to assure that all players participate in as close to one-half (1/2) of the game as reasonably possible. The TCNYFL acknowledges that no playing time system will result in a perfect equalization of playing time, and the TCNYFL does not consider itself the “playing time police.” Individual areas are free to set their own policies regarding attendance and discipline, and are free to limit playing time for those reasons. Coaches are required to notify the opposing coach before the game if the coach intends to limit one or more of his or her player’s participation for such reasons. Although the TCNYFL is not the “playing time police”, the league will investigate complaints that coaches are not abiding by the spirit and intent of this rule. ***The league absolutely reserves the right to forfeit games and ban coaches, teams, and communities who are not abiding by the spirit and intent of this rule.***

**4.9 Overtime** – In the event of a tie game at the end of regulation time, only one (1) overtime period shall be played. If the game remains a tie after one (1) overtime period, it shall be recorded as a tie game, unless the game is a playoff game. Tie playoff games shall be played out until one team wins. National federation rules govern overtime play except that the teams shall not switch ends of the field at the end of each series.

**4.10 Restrictions on Defenses** – The following restrictions apply to defenses. Defenses who do not comply with these restrictions will receive one (1) warning. Subsequent infractions will result in a delayed dead ball five (5) yard penalty, with the offense having the option of taking the play or the penalty.

- a. ***Blitzing is not allowed at any grade level. For all divisions inside linebackers must, at the snap, be at least three (3) yards off the line of scrimmage, and corners must, at the snap, be at least one (1) yard off the line of scrimmage, and be at least three (3) yards outside the “box”, which is defined as at least three yards outside the normal alignment of the defensive end. In all circumstances other than goal line situations there must be at least (2) players lined up in a “safety type” position no closer than four (4) yards from the line of scrimmage. These restrictions do not apply to goal line situations. Inside linebackers, corners, and safeties may not begin to cross the neutral zone until after the quarterback hands off the ball or after the quarterback leaves the box, which is defined as the area between the normal alignment of the defensive ends.***
- b. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 5<sup>th</sup> grade divisions, the defense must line up in a 5-2 “Okie” alignment in accordance with the attached diagram. In the 6<sup>th</sup> grade division, a team may line up in either a 5-2 or 4-3 alignment, per the attached diagram.
- c. The defense is permitted to line up in any alignment inside their own five (5) yard line (goal line defense). Any players off the line of scrimmage in the goal line defense are still prohibited from blitzing.

**4.10 Restrictions on Offenses** – All offensive formations are required to have seven (7) players on the line of scrimmage, and three (3) players on the line of scrimmage on each side of the center, with at least two players lining up adjacent to each side of the center. In other words, no “unbalanced” lines.

Alignments: