North Metro Football League (NMFL)

2019 Season Rules

LEAGUE MISSION STATEMENT/DEFINITION

The NMFL offers several highly competitive levels of tackle football. The NMFL is for programs primarily made up of youth football teams which are a mix of experienced as well as new players. While this level is highly competitive, the primary focus is to develop ALL youth players both in practice and with competitive game experience. The programs which participate in NMFL abide by the following general principals;

 All players receive playing time during games

 Team size requirements

 Balance Drafts for programs with multiple teams

 Open Registration Policy with no tryouts

**Rule 1.0 – Team Composition**

1.1 Maximum number of players allowed on a NMFL team.

No Limit – NMFL recommends no more than 25 players per team. Team with rosters over 25 players must be approved by NMFL Executive Board.

1.1.1 Team playing in the 7th-8th Grade may elect to have no more than 30 play rosters.

1.2 The staff of each NMFL team shall be limited to 8 Adults on the field:

1 head coach

4 assistant coaches

1 trainer

1 statistician

1 team Player Safety Coach (TPSC)\*

\*Note: NMFL requires each Member club to have a trained USA Football Player Safety Coach (PSC) with the responsibilities of mentoring, teaching and communicating safety rules to that clubs coaches, players and parents. The PSC position is separate of the team player safety coach. Beginning 2015 the NMFL Board voted to allow teams to add a Team Player Safety Coach. This position is optional and is added to assist the coaching staff with monitoring player safety during both practice and games. They will ensure the coaches adhere to NMFL/GHSA safety rules and GA State Concussion Law. They cannot coach players during games.

1.2.1 Each Team may utilize up to 2 team managers. This position must be person under 18 year of age. Teams in violation of the rule will be penalized after 1 warning by the officials.

1.3 Team Registration

1.3.1 Team registrations must be open and all who register will make the team in order of their individual registration.

1.3.2 Program registration must be internet based with proof of opening and closing dates. The registration process shall include a method of determining the order of player registration.

1.3.3 Programs must advertise their registration at least one week in advance of accepting player registrations with proof of advertisement. Program Web Site Advertisement accepted

1.4 Team Selection

1.4.1 The NMFL recommends a 16 player minimum for teams. Teams may petition the NMFL for a lower player threshold.

1.4.2 If a program can only accommodate one team, or a limited number of teams, players shall be taken in the order of their registration until the team(s) availability is filled. Programs/Teams shall publish the maximum number of players that they will accept per team on the programs web page. If a program can accommodate multiple teams, they must advertise that player registrants will be wait-listed for a possible second team once a team has reached its advertised player maximum.

1.4.3 If a program will have more than one D2 team at the same age group, coaches will be required to draft their teams.

1.4.4 Each team will be allowed (3) player locks. A Head Coach’s son (if applicable) must be one of these locks. This rule also applies to appointed assistant coaches if known at the time of the draft.

1.4.5 The draft will be conducted after all players go through a uniform player assessment. All players (including player locks) should be ranked collectively by the Head Coaches as 1st Round, 2nd Round and etc… Once the draft begins, if your lock is ranked as a 1st round pick, your team will not have a 1st round pick. This should apply for the entirety of the draft.

1.4.6 The draft will be attended only by the Head Coach and one assistant.

Once the drafting order is decided (ex: draw from hat) the coaches will make their draft selections in a “snake pattern”. A team that selects in the

1st round will select last in the 2nd round etc…

1.4.7 Each Member Organization shall have the responsibility of submitting a copy of their Board adopted Team Draft Rules to the NMFL Executive Vice President prior to the first evaluation and/or draft. A NMFL Executive Board Member that is not associated with an impacted team must ~~shall be allowed to~~ witness any evaluation or draft process.

1.4.8 No recruiting (other than to encourage to register for the team), or tryouts will be permitted. Players home team will be the High School area in which the player lives. In area where no team in that area is represented, teams may seek players adjacent to their area. All exceptions must be cleared thru an Executive Board Member.

1.4.9 Handpicked teams, or player locks beyond (3) players shall not be permitted.

**Rule 2.0 - Official Team Roster**

2.1 Each team shall submit a typed roster (attached) and supporting documentation prior to the official NMFL certification. A NMFL representative will certify weights during the official NMFL certification. The roster shall list all player names in jersey number order.

2.2 The roster shall be completed by a team official and contain the following information:

**Team information including**:

a) Division b) School Grade c) Restricted Weight Limit (For School Grade)

d) Name of Association e) Team Name

f) Team Home Jersey Color (dark jersey; reference rule 5.10)

g) Head Coach’s Name and Telephone Number

h) Staff Names and Phone Numbers

**Player Information Including**:

a) Game Jersey Number (Jersey Order Number 1-XX)

b) Full Name (Last, First, MI) c) School Grade

d) Age (as of September 1 of the current year) e) Date of Birth

2.3 Restricted players will be identified during the NMFL certification. The NMFL certifying Representative will place an “R” in the designated column on the roster form signifying a restriction.

2.4 Jersey numbers shall not change. It is recognized that consideration must be given to the fact that unusual situations may occur, such as loss of or damage to a jersey during the course of a season. If this occurs, the original jersey shall be replaced with a similar jersey in color, material, and if possible, number. If the number cannot be duplicated, then the roster shall be revised with the replacement jersey number and initialed by a NMFL League Executive Board Member. If this alternate jersey number for that game only upon verification by the opposing head coach and park director that the player is listed on the roster.

2.5 The Head coach and a current year Official Association Board Member must sign the team official roster certifying on behalf of their association that :

\* The players listed on the roster are only eligible to play on the team to which they have been assigned.

\*A form of draft has evenly selected instructional (D2) teams, if there is more than one team at the same age group within the same program.

2.6 Additional Players may be added to a roster until after the 3rd regular season week including Labor Day week. A member of the NMFL League Executive Board must certify each addition.

2.7 After the 3rd game of the regular season players can be added to the roster only if the active number of eligible players drops below 15 and is approved by the NMFL Board.

2.8 No player who is either a member or who is trying out for another league or Middle school football squad (including 6th, 7th and 8th grade) may participate in NMFL games. However, if the Player opts not to play for either, they may rejoin an NMFL team prior to the first NMFL game providing that the Player has properly registered and officially weighed in with the league. The association adding the player to a team must comply with the competitive balance rule (1.4) when adding the player to a roster. A member of the NMFL Executive Committee shall certify the player and addition to the official roster.

**Rule 3.0 - Player Grade, Ages and Weights**

3.1 The age of a player shall be determined as of September 1 of the current year.

3.2 The following table provides the grade, age and weight schematic that will govern team make up: NMFL Weight Restrictions

2nd Grade 7-8 Year old Restricted Weight: 105lbs.

8 in 2nd grade cannot turn 9 on or before September 1

3rd Grade 8-9 Year old Restricted Weight: 115lbs.

9 in 3rd grade cannot turn 10 on or before September 1

\*EXCEPTION: Age 9 in 4th grade as of 8/31 can go down one level

4th Grade 9-10 Year old Restricted Weight: 125lbs.

10 in 4th grade cannot turn 11 on or before September 1

\*EXCEPTION: Age 10 in 5th grade as of 8/31 can go down one level

5th Grade 10-11 Year old Restricted Weight: 135lbs.

11 in 5th grade cannot turn 12 on or before September 1

\*EXCEPTION: Age 11 in 6th grade as of 8/31 can go down one level

6th Grade 11-12 Year old No Weight Restrictions

12 in 6th grade cannot turn 13 on or before September 1

\*EXCEPTION: Age 12 in 7th Grade as of 8/31 can go down one level

7th Grade 12-13 Year old No Weight Restrictions

13 in 7th grade cannot turn 14 on or before September 1

\* EXCEPTIONS are to be used for players who have advanced a grade Participants who meet this criteria may move down 1 level.

This is meant to be used as an exception and are to be used in extenuating circumstances. Any team or organization found to be using this exception rule to strengthen any D2 team shall be subject to game forfeitures and/or suspension from the league play. Players wishing to use this Exception Rule must fill out an NMFL Grade Exception From and submit for consideration to the Executive Committee prior to certification date .

Weight Restrictions:

3.2.1 All players regardless of weight will be subject to the NMFL certification process including certification weigh-in. Players who meet restricted criteria shall be identified on the official NMFL Roster by the certifying NMFL Representative.

3.2.2 During games each restricted players helmet must have a sticker, approved by the League, attached at the rear center of their helmet.

3.2.3 Players exceeding the restricted weight or ages are restricted to playing on the Offensive and Defensive Line of scrimmage within seven (7) yards of the center (Tackle to Tackle). Restricted Offensive linemen must play from a set position. Restricted Defensive Linemen must be in a 3 or 4 point stance.

3.2.4 Restricted players cannot run the ball, play as a receiver or advance the ball on special teams.

3.2.5 Restricted defensive players can advance a fumble or interception.

3.2.6 Restricted offensive players can advance the ball after a fumble.

3.2.7 Restricted players can punt and kick extra points, but cannot advance the ball as a runner or when serving as the kicker, act as a lead blocker on special teams. The ball will be considered dead if in possession of a restricted player.

3.2.8 Violation of positioning of a restricted player will be an illegal position foul.

Penalty 5 yards

3.3 There shall be No "older/lighter.

3.5 After certification, progressive weight gain is allowed so a participant’s natural

growth may take place without preventing continued participation.

\*No additional weigh-ins will be required.

\*A change in a player’s weight anytime during the current season will

have no impact on their certified weight.

**Rule 4.0 - Certification Documents and Process for Certification of roster, age and weight:**

4.1 All players must be certified, by NMFL, before he or she is eligible to play in a regular season game.

4.2 The NMFL Executive Board shall have overall responsibility for certifying each player and team for play during the current season. The NMFL Executive Board retains the right to revisit any players eligibility at any time during the regular season.

4.3 The NMFL will require submittal of a completed doctor’s release or current physical exam form for certification for each player.

4.4 Each team shall provide, at certification, one (1) complete certification package

containing a complete typed roster, player affidavits with current photograph of the player, from waist up, wearing his/her official roster jersey, and a copy of the following documents; birth certificate and school/grade verification.

\* Digital photos allowed on photo paper.

\* Photo must clearly show players face and jersey number.

\* Package shall be assembled by player and in roster order.

\* Do not place papers in plastic sleeves or book prior to certification.

\* One Package (original only) will be presented at the Official Certification.

\* At completion of the official certification the “original” certified package will be given back to the head coach. A copy shall be made of the “original” certified package and kept on file by an Association Board Member.

\* Original Certification Documents will be placed in a book after NMFL official certification and shall be available for review at all NMFL games.

4.5 The player affidavit shall have attached a copy of an official hospital, state or county birth certificate showing registration of birth from a state or county bureau of vital statistics (preferred proof).

\*If birth certificate is not available, NMFL will accept a passport or an official school registration issued, signed and notarized by a private or public school.

\*Documentation shall be made available to other NMFL member associations upon request by an association only.

\*A parent or guardian attesting to the accuracy of the date of birth and proof of age shall sign the affidavit.

4.6 The player affidavit shall have attached a copy of one of the following documents:

\* Previous years report card

\* School enrollment form

\*School attendance record

\*If none of these documents are available, a signature block has been added to the player affidavit form to allow the parent to obtain the signature from a school official (example: teacher, registrar, principal) certifying that the player is enrolled in the grade for that school. The form should be completed prior to obtaining the signature.

\*Documentation shall be made available to other NMFL member associations upon request by an association only.

\*A parent or guardian attesting to the accuracy of the school and grade shall

sign the affidavit

4.7 Player weight and certification papers (certification package) will be verified by an NMFL Executive Board member at an official certification and weigh-in no later than the Friday prior to the first regular season game. The NMFL league representatives shall determine the exact date, time and location (s).

4.8 The Official NMFL Certification will consist of one (1) NMFL Executive Board

Member and one (1) NMFL Association Board Member.

4.9 All players on a roster MUST be in attendance at the official NMFL weigh-in unless injury or illness prevents the player’s attendance. Such absence must be supported by a doctor’s certification of illness or injury.

4.10 The head coach and one (1) assistant coach will be allowed to observe the certification and weigh-in. Parents and other individuals are not to be permitted in the immediate area of the check-in.

4.11 Each player’s birth certificate and School Grade document will be examined confirming age and grade. The player identification forms will be checked to insure information is correct and that each player can be identified with the photograph provided.

4.12 A player listed on the official roster that is in a plaster cast as a result of an injury shall be allowed a late weigh-in if the player cannot meet the official weight. The player must meet the official weigh-in restricted weight upon removal of the cast.

4.13 If a player does not meet the weight limit restriction, the player will have thirty minutes from the time his team has completed weigh-in to be weighed again. If the player still does not meet the restricted weight limit, the player will be identified as a restricted player. Exception: the player can request the removal of his/her name from the roster and be allowed to certify anytime up to the 3rd game of the season. However, this player will not be able to participate in games until he or she is officially certified by an Executive Board Member of NMFL.

4.14 The NMFL Officials conducting the certification will attest with their signatures to the accuracy of the information contained in the certification package during the certification process. NMFL Officials will signify that each player was in attendance and meet certification requirements by initialing the team roster.

4.14.1 Players not in attendance at the Official Certification will not be allowed to play in any regular season game until they are officially certified by the NMFL.

4.15 After the NMFL Certification a copy of the signed certification package shall be made and given to a Board Member of their Association. This copy will be made available to an NMFL Representative when requested in case the original was lost or for comparison to the original document.

4.16 The original certified package containing a set of each team’s identification records will be placed in a book and retained by the head coach for inspection at all pre- game check ins.

**Rule 5.0 – Pre-Game Check-In**

5.1 There shall be No Pre-game weigh-in.

5.2 All players must be on the certified roster.

5.3 All pre-game check-ins shall be conducted not earlier than one (1) hour and not less than 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time.

5.4 The head coach of each team or a designated representative will be responsible for the pre-game check-in.

5.5 The visiting team head coach or a designated representative shall report to the home team head coach at the game site not less than one (1) hour prior to the scheduled game time.

5.6 Failure of either teams' head coach or designated representative to appear at least one (1) hour prior to game time will exclude the opposing team from the pre- game check-in requirements.

5.7 Pre-game check-in must be conducted using the original Roster Book. The book will be made available to the opposing head coach. Each player shall be checked against the certified affidavit and photo contained in the official roster book. Each player designated as a restricted player on the certified roster shall have their helmet inspected to verify application of an R decal that is visible to the officials. Any and all disputes will be presented to a NMFL Official (Referee) or the home team assigned Park Director for resolution.

5.7.1 Players who have not been certified will not be allowed to participate

in any game. The Official Roster must contain the initials of an NMFL Executive Board Member signifying that they are certified. (Reference rule 4.12).

5.7.2 Players arriving late after check-in must be reported to visiting team and agreed they are certified players on the roster. Failure to report late arriving player may result if forfeit of the game.

5.8 The pre-game check-in shall not be open to the public. Parents and other individuals are not to be permitted in the immediate area of the check-in. Only NMFL officials, park director, head coach (or their representative) shall be allowed to be in the check-in area.

5.9 Dark colored jerseys will be considered the home jersey and must be worn at all designated NMFL home games. The NMFL Schedule will serve, as the official document to designate which team is home and which team is visiting. The NMFL designated Home Team will be allowed to request and change the home team jersey color at pre-game check-in with full agreement of the visiting team head coach.

**Rule 6.0 – Practice**

6.1 The purpose of this rule is to provide standard, fair and equal practice time for all NMFL teams and to keep practice activity at a reasonable level during school days so as not to create a hardship for players with regard to school studies and participation in school activities.

6.2 Practice is defined as any gathering of players, prospective players, NMFL team or individual players on a NMFL team, to discuss the subject of football, to view film of football or to study football.

6.3 NMFL Associations are prohibited from engaging in any organized practice- type activities involving players, or prospective players, prior to the date set by NMFL officials, except for physical conditioning.

6.4 Pre-season practice will begin on Monday no earlier than four weeks prior to the jamboree date set by the NMFL Board. The two weeks will be used for conditioning only. No uniforms or pads, limited to players dressed in shorts, mouthpieces and shoes only.

6.5 Practice will be limited to 10 hours per week (Monday to Sunday) until the date Fulton County begins school. All associations outside of Fulton County will be required to follow the same date.

6.6 With the start of school, all teams at 4th grade and above may not hold more than practices or a maximum of 6 hrs during any calendar week (Monday to Friday).

Teams will be allowed 2 additional hours for use on weekend days only (Saturday

or Sunday) when no games are scheduled.

6.7 With the start of school, all teams at 2nd & 3rd grade may not hold more than 3 practices during any calendar week with a maximum of 6 hours of practice per week.

6.8 Upon conclusion of the regularly scheduled playing season, any team scheduled to play in a NMFL play-off game may hold 4 practices during the week with a maximum of 8 hours of practice per week.

6.9 No practice will continue past 9:00 PM.

6.10 Time spent traveling to the location of scheduled NMFL games will not count as practice time or activity. All organized activities of a team conducted from the time of the pre-game until the start of the game is considered to be pre-game warm-up activities and is not counted as a practice activity.

6.11 In addition to all other authorized practices and warm-up activities, teams may, on the day of a scheduled game, hold one pre-game preparation session, not to exceed 1 hour.

6.12 The provisions of this rule are not intended to prohibit a NMFL team or its individual members from viewing or listening to games on TV or radio, provided such is not intended to be used as a practice or training activity. NMFL teams and their individual members who participate in non-practice social, civic, and church activities, picnics, banquets, Pep rallies, league carnivals, and work details, etc., are not in violation of NMFL rules pertaining to practices. This is provided such activity is not also used for NMFL football instruction and practice.

6.13 During the regular scheduled playing season no team shall play more than 1 game in any calendar week with the exception of NMFL scheduled mid-week games.

6.14 Controlled scrimmages will be permitted but each such scrimmage shall be considered a practice.

6.15 Scouting of opponent practices is prohibited. No coaches or team parents shall video or observe other team practices before or during the regular season or at any time during the post-season. The practice of scouting or video-taping another team practices in order to gain an offensive or defensive advantage shall be considered detrimental and contrary to the best interest of the NMFL program. Any Player or member of the coaching staff involved with any of the aforementioned offenses will be suspended from league play for the remainder of the season.

6.16 The NMFL including all members shall recognize and abide by GA House Bill

284 “Return to Play Act 2013”

6.17 CONCUSSIONS: The well-being of all participants in the NMFL is of paramount concern. Officials, coaches, parents and administrators shall ensure that all participants (players and cheerleaders) who show symptoms or signs of a concussion do not continue to participate in games or practices. The following NFHS rule shall apply all NMFL sponsored events, including practices and games.

NFHS Rule 3-5-10b: Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health- care professional

The NMFL Concussion Return To Play Form must be signed by an appropriate health care professional & the parent/guardian of the injured player/cheerleader before they are able to return to the field of play. Copies of the executed form shall be provided and retained by the head coach and the NMFL Board.

6.18 All full contact, one on one, head on tackling and blocking drills in which the players involved start the drill more than five yards away from one another are banned. The ban shall not include any drill in which the participants are lined up less than five yards apart or non-head on drills.

\*First Violation: Any team found to be in violation of this rule will be subject to a one game suspension for the head coach.

\*Second Violation: will be subject to penalties up to and including suspension for the year.

\*The rule is not meant to eliminate contact drills, but to create a safer environment and force coaches to stress technique and fundamentals

6.19 All Members in the North Metro Football League are required to have a written emergency plan for both field and practice locations.

6.20 Every coach and parent participating in NMFL shall be knowledgeable and abide by these policies.

**Rule 7.0 - Home Team Responsibilities**

7.1 The home or host team shall have the following responsibilities:

\*All Members in the North Metro Football League are required to have a written emergency plan for both field and practice locations.

\*Every coach and parent participating in NMFL shall be knowledgeable

and abide by these policies.

\* Preparing and marking of the playing field.

\* Providing all field markers and other necessary officiating equipment.

\* Adequate safety equipment

\* Emergency procedures posted including the telephone numbers.

7.2 The home team is responsible for providing the chain crew. The chain crew will work from the side of the field (opposite from press box).

Note: the chain crew operates under the direction of the officiating crew and in no way will be allowed to coach or provide their coaching staff any information during play on the field. Violation of this rule will result in removal of the individual from the field of play.

7.3 To offset the costs to lease field space NMFL Member Associations shall be allowed the option to charge a gate fee for all sanctioned games. The maximum allowable admission rate to be charged at all NMFL regular season football games shall be $3.00 ($5.00 for playoff games). Programs planning to charge gate fees must submit their policy to the NMFL League Board and post policy on their web page prior to the season. All participants, including players, coaches, cheerleaders and NMFL Board members are exempt for gate fees. Children under 12 are except from fees for all games.

7.4 All associations must provide adequate seating for home and visiting spectators.

7.5 All associations must provide a Field Marshall or Duty Officer during all games. This individual will have the overall responsibility of assisting the officiating crew with rule interpretations, field & game coordination, weather and/or emergency needs.

7.6 All Playing fields should be covered at all times by paid Law Enforcement Personnel with jurisdiction for that field.

7.7 All Playing fields should have certified medical personnel on-hand at all games.

**Rule 8.0 – Officials**

8.1 All NMFL regular games shall be played using the following number of officials.

\*One (1) game clock operator provided by the host association.

\*Four (4) officials on the field provided by designated NMFL Officiating Organizations

8.2 Each association shall log and report late arriving and/or absent game officials within 48 hours after completion of the game to their Treasurer and NMFL.

8.3 Unless the White Hat and both opposing head coaches agree to play sooner, a minimum of 15 minutes shall elapse between the end of any one game and the beginning (kick-off) of the next following game. When the regular scheduled starting time allows 15 minutes or more between games, the game shall proceed as scheduled; however a 15-minute period between games must be allowed regardless of the scheduled starting times of any games. An exception to this rule can be granted by the Head Official (White Hat) after confirming all players from both teams having had sufficient time to do warm ups and agreement from both Head Coaches.

**Rule 9.0 - Uniforms and Equipment**

9.1 Each player must have a complete uniform and be legally equipped. Detachable cleats are permitted only when the shoe contains the receiver ("female") and the cleat contains the insert ("male") and no metal is exposed. All molded type cleats are considered legal.

**Rule 10 - Team Captains / Coin Toss**

10.1 A team may have a maximum of 4 team captains, as identified by the head coach to game officials, who may attend the opening game ceremonies and instructions at mid-field.

10.2 All players except the captains should be off the field prior to and during the Coin Toss with the officials. Head Coach is responsible to conclude pre-game banners and other activities prior to game time. Failure to complete could be penalized by officials as Unsportsmanlike act subject to 15 yard penalty.

**Rule 11 – Headsets**

11.1 Headsets are permissible during any game.

11.2 No team will be prohibited from using headsets because the other participant does not have access to the same.

11.3 Any and all coaches, including coaches allowed on the field in games shall be allowed to use headsets.

11.4 Cell Phones may not be used as a substitute for headsets.

**Rule 12 - Sideline Restrictions**

12.1 During any conference game, no one is to be allowed on the sidelines, outside the coaching box, except the following:

\*Cheerleaders, when adequate space cannot be provided outside the restraining lines;

\*The official chain crew;

\*Newspaper, magazine and/or television or photographic staff, which have been authorized to take pictures or film the game;

\*A ball boy when specifically requested by the officiating crew;

\*NMFL league officials may be on the sidelines at any NMFL conference game, inside or outside the coaching box, when they feel such action is appropriate and in the best interest of the game or conference. Exception to this rule is when the individual is also designated as a coach within that Division and age group. When on the sideline these individuals are prohibited from conducting any form of coaching.

\*Host Park Board Members may be on the sidelines at their designated NMFL home game, inside or outside the coaching box, when they feel such action is appropriate, except when the individual is designated as a coach within that Division and age group. When on the sideline these individuals are prohibited from conducting any form of coaching.

12.2 Coaches from other NMFL teams, mascots, guests, spectators and other similar type personnel shall not be permitted on the sidelines inside or outside of the coaching box during NMFL games.

12.3 Unless otherwise provided in these rules, during any conference game, no one is to be allowed on the sidelines, inside the coaching box, except the following:

\*The members of the participating team and the team's coaching staff who are listed as players and coaches on the official team rosters;

\*The team trainer and statistician as listed on the team's official team roster

\*Two (2) managers under the age of 18. These managers do not have to be listed on the team's official team roster.

\*NMFL league officials may be on the sidelines at any NMFL conference game, inside or outside the coaching box, when they feel such action is appropriate and in the best interest of the game or conference. Exception to this rule is when the individual is also designated as a coach within that Division and age group. When on the sideline these individuals are prohibited from conducting any form of coaching.

**Rule 13 - Complaints / Misconduct / Protests / Violations of the Rules**

13.1 NMFL will enforce all violations of rules, complaints and protests.

13.2 All complaints, protests or allegations of a rules violation shall be made to the governing board of the association making the complaints.

13.3 Each association shall be responsible for ensuring all coaches, parent, and officials conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. Each association shall fully investigate any allegation lodged against it by another association and advise the association lodging the complaint of its findings and any disciplinary actions it has imposed.

13.4 Unless self-imposed by an association there shall be no over-turning, re-playing or otherwise setting aside the results of any game as the result of a protest or violation of any rule.

13.5 The Head Coach will be held responsible for the conduct of his team, parents of team players and assistant coaches. The head coach will be subject to dismissal or ejection, including game suspension, for any parent or assistant coach misconduct or rule violation.

13.6 Any Player exhibiting any form of unsportsmanlike conduct may, at the discretion of game officials, be sent off the field for a “cool down” period of a minimum of 5 plays after which the Player shall be allowed to return to the field. Player warnings shall not be considered as being ejected from the game. Players shall not receive more than one “cool down” period per contest.

13.7 Flagrant un-sportsman like conduct, at the discretion of the game officials, or a second Player Warning from the officials shall be cause for Player disqualification and ejection from the game. Any Player so disqualified by the officials, shall remain on the bench for the remainder of that game or, if deemed necessary by the Referee, ejected from the game field.

\* Any Player allowed by game officials to return to a game shall not be considered as being ejected from a game.

\* A Player removed from the game on the final play of the game shall be considered ejected from the game.

\* Game officials shall notify the league of any ejections within 24 hours of the completion of the contest. Player name and number shall be recorded and submitted to the League along with the game score.

\* Any Player ejected during a League game shall be ineligible for a minimum of one following game.

13.8 Flagrant un-sportsman like conduct by the Head Coach or any member(s) of the coaching or sideline staff shall result in disqualification of those involved. Any person so disqualified by the officials, shall be ejected from the game field and if warranted, facility and prohibited from any further contact, direct or indirect, with the team during the remainder of the game. Such conduct may include, but is not limited to, abusive, disrespectful, or profane language, intimidation, fighting, physical confrontations, or other un-sportsman like acts before, during or after the game.

a) Failure to comply may result in removal from the league.

b) Any coach or sideline staff ejected from a league game shall be ineligible for a minimum of one following game and will be prohibited from contacting, the team, direct or indirect, during the suspension game.

c) An ejected coach may not return to their coaching position without the permission of the Association and the NMFL.

**Rule 14 – PLAYING RULES (Governing Rules and Exceptions)**

14.1 The National High School Football Rules with the following exceptions will govern all NMFL conference games.

14.2 For all conference games time duration for each quarter shall be as follows:

\*2nd & 3rd grade shall be 8 minutes in duration

\*4th grade and up 10 minutes in duration.

14.3 The ball shall be of good grade leather, synthetic leather, or rubber with the following specifications:

\*2nd & 3rd grade - Pee-Wee size ball or K2 (according to Wilson)

\*4th grade and up - junior size ball (according to Wilson). 6th grade and up has the option to use a youth sized ball (according to Wilson) during their offensive series.

\*Ball cannot be in like color of uniform. (Example Black Uniform/Black Ball)

14.4 Extra points shall score 2 points for kicking and 1 point for passing and running the ball. The ball will be put in play from the 3-yard line.

14.5 Goal posts shall be no less than 19 feet, 2 inches in width.

14.6 Two-color jersey numbers are permissible. Length of game jerseys must cover all protective gear.

14.7 The National High School Federation Rule with regard to numbering interior lineman, eligible receivers, backs, etc. will not apply.

14.8 When a team must kick from its own end zone; the team's captain may request the

game officials to move the football in order to avoid the possibility of kicking into the goal posts.

14.9 All ties shall be broken using National Federation tie breaking rules, except as follows:

GHSA OVERTIME PROCEDURE

1. There will be a 3-minute intermission between the end of regulation play and the coin toss to start the overtime procedure.

2. The captains will meet for the coin toss, and winner may choose one of the following:

(a) Be on offense first

(b) Be on defense first

(c) Choose the end of the field on which to play

3. The ball is placed on the 15-yard line and the offense keeps the ball until:

(a) Ball is turned over on downs NOTE: The team on offense can gain a first down.

(b) The defense gains possession of the ball (ball is dead immediately) (c) The offense scores a touchdown or field goal

(d) The offense misses a field goal

4. After the first offensive team completes its possession, the opposing team gets its opportunity from the 15-yard line.

5. If the game remains tied after each team has had an offensive possession, there will be a 2-minute intermission and the team that lost the first coin toss has the first option for the second possession.

6. For each additional overtime period (i.e., an offensive possession by each team) the original coin toss options are alternated.

7. Beginning with the third overtime period, a team must attempt a 2-point try after a touchdown.

8. Each team is allowed one timeout per overtime period. No timeouts may be carried over from regulation play.

9. Penalty enforcement is handled the same way in overtime as in regulation play.

Mercy Rule

14.10 When one team achieves at 24 point advantage, the league will enact a “Mercy Rule” adjustment to the clock management. This Mercy Rule speeds up game play while allowing coaches to preserve timeouts needed for personnel adjustments. The amendments below may be altered by trailing coach only to full running clock by notification of head coach to the officials. This does not alter 14.10.1.2 as player safety overrides the issue.

14.10.1 Once the score difference in the game reaches 24 or more points, the clock will be adjusted to a running clock and “TIPS” clock management for GHSA rules. This rule allows the clock to be stopped for Timeouts, Injuries, Penalty Administration, and Scoring.

14.10.1.1 Timeouts will stop the clock for the normal 60 seconds, then clock will continue. The leading team will not be awarded timeouts to conserve clock and extend its lead near end of game.

14.10.1.2 Injuries to players at any point will stop the clock until the injured player and all safety personnel are off the field of play.

14.10.1.3 Clock will stop at the end of the play for officials to administer penalties. Clock resumes on signal from the Referee (White Hat)

14.10.1.4 The clock will stop when a touchdown or field goal is scored by any team. Clock will resume once the ball is spotted for kick-off and ready to play by the officials.

14.10.2 There are no further kick-offs. Ball placement during the Mercy Rule is the 20 yard line if the trailing team scores, and the 50 yard line if the leading team scores.

14.10.3 The timing of the game will continue as 8 or 10 minute quarters and will be considered a complete game should weather interrupt the game repeatedly and called by the League. Officials must have clearance from an NMFL Board Member before calling a game complete.

14.10.4 The Mercy Rule package may be suspended for NMFL Championship Games by the trailing team by notification of the trailing team Head Coach to the Referee and the Leading team. At that point the entire balance of the game will be played under normal clock operation and no restrictions are placed on the Leading team to control scoring.

**Rule 15 - Player Participation (Revised 7/15/2013)**

15.1 All players shall play at least the minimum number of plays per game established under the NMFL Minimum Play Rule. Each player shall be given 8- Plays minimum in regular season games.(kick offs and receiving can be counted toward 8-play minimum).

15.2 RESPONSIBILITY: NMFL Member Associations shall have the responsibility managing compliance with their minimum play rule.

**Rule 16 - Coach's Participation – 2nd & 3rd Grade**

16.1 2nd Grade may have 2 Coaches from each team on the game field during the game.

16.2 3rd Grade may have one coach from each team on the game field during the game

16.3 Coaches allowed to participate on the field of play may not have any form of communication with any player of either team after the offensive team’s center touches the ball. Each coach must remain silent and may not give any verbal or visual signals until after the play has ended.

16.4 Each of the participating coaches must be at least 15 yards from the line of scrimmage when the play starts and not interfere with the play or vision of the officials in any way.

16.5 Penalty for Violation of the rules 16.1 through 16.4 will be administered as follows:

16.5.1 After the first occurrence the coach shall receive a "team" warning.

16.5.2 After the second occurrence the team will be assessed a 15-yard un- sportsmanlike conduct penalty

16.5.3 After the third occurrence the team will be assessed a 15-yard un- sportsmanlike conduct penalty and the coach causing the violation shall be restricted to that team’s sideline.

16.5.4 A replacement coach shall be permitted, but will do so knowing that they are subject to rule 16.5. A violation of Rule 16 by the replacement coach shall be treated as a third occurrence for purposes of this rule.

**Rule 17 - Free Punts and Automatic Spot – 2nd & 3rd Grade**

17.1 A team may request a "free punt". When a free punt is requested, the defensive team may not rush the punter. This rule does not mean that a defensive lineman or any other defensive player cannot block after ball is kicked to set up a return.

17.2 The team requesting the free punt must punt the ball.

17.3 A free punt may be requested at any location on the field.

17.3.1 Coaches must communicate their intent to the games officials prior to expiration of the 25 second play clock to avoid delat of Games penalty.

17.4 If the game officials determine that an infraction of this rule has occurred, an encroachment violation will be assessed.

17.5 The offensive team may request an "automatic spot" in punting situations that occur inside the requesting team's fifty (50) yard-line.

17.6 When a team requests an automatic spot the game officials will provide a 20-yard spot from the line of scrimmage. The game clock will run during this process and stop once ball is spotted for play.

**Rule 18 - Free PAT and field goals – 2nd & 3rd Grade**

18.1 A team may request a "free kick" PAT or field goal. If a team requests a "free kick" the defense cannot interfere in any way with any offensive player during the play. This includes rushing the kicker and any attempts to otherwise distract the offense. The defense must take a knee throughout the free kick. Cheering and waving of arms by the defense is allowed.

18.2 The center must snap the ball between his legs and may not run back or hand the ball to the holder.

18.3 There shall be no time limitation on the attempt to kick the ball other than the game official's discretion that the team is making an effort to kick the ball.

18.4 If the game officials determine that the defense has committed an infraction of the free kick rule, an encroachment violation shall be assessed.

18.5 If the offensive team attempts to advance the ball, a dead ball shall be called and the play ended.

**19.0 USA Football Heads Up Certification**

ALL Coaches (Head & Assistants) are required by the NMFL to take the USA Football Heads Up Certification for the season and each year they coach in the NMFL. Each individual NMFL program will be provided with a USA Football Password that will allow each coach to take the test on-line. NMFL

Coaches who fail to take the Heads Up Certification will NOT be permitted on the field to coach during NMFL games.

**20.0 Player Safety Coaches ( PS C’s)**

All NMFL programs are required to have a USA Football Heads Up Certified Player

Safety Coach (PSC). Player Safety Coaches will be trained by a USA Football Master Trainer in preparation for implementing and overseeing the primary components of Heads Up Football in their organizations: Coach education, proper equipment fitting, concussion recognition & response, heat & hydration preparedness, Heads Up Blocking, and Heads Up Tackling.

**21.0 Use Guardian Protective Helmet Covers**

NMFL will allow Guardian protective helmets shields for use in both practices and games without restriction. At all times shields must be properly anchored to helmets in practice and game conditions. Players with damaged or improper fitted shields must leave field of play and practice until shield are properly fitted.