



## North Texas Football League

# NTFL

# 7v7 RULES

Updated March 25, 2026 (updates are in Green font)



# NTFL 7v7 Rules

## RULE 1: PLAYER ELIGIBILITY & DIVISIONS

- 1) Age Requirements
  - a. Age restrictions are based on September 1 of the preceding fall. Players shall not be less than the age of 5 or have reached the age of 13 on or before September 1.
    - i. For example, Spring 7v7 for 2026 uses the September 1 of the fall of 2025.
    - ii. Players that turned 13 on or before September 1, 2025 (as per the example) would be eligible to participate.
    - iii. No 7<sup>th</sup> graders are eligible to participate
  - b. Must be able to present to Member Organization and NFTL a certified birth certificate (or a copy thereof) or current passport. Proof of birth date accepted by local school district may also be accepted.
- 2) Competition Divisions
  - a. Divisions for competition are based on grade with a maximum age limitation. The following are the seven Divisions for competition.
    - i. Kindergarten
      1. Players enrolled in kindergarten and cannot have reached the age on 7 on September 1 (preceding calendar year).
    - ii. 1st Grade
      1. Players enrolled in 1st Grade and cannot have reached the age of 8 on September 1 (preceding calendar year).
    - iii. 2nd Grade
      1. Players enrolled in 2nd Grade and cannot have reached the age of 9 on September 1 (preceding calendar year).
    - iv. 3rd Grade
      1. Players enrolled in 3rd grade and cannot have reached the age of 10 on September 1 (preceding calendar year).
    - v. 4th Grade
      1. Players enrolled in 4th grade and cannot have reached the age of 11 on September 1 (preceding calendar year).
    - vi. 5th Grade
      1. Players enrolled in 5th grade and cannot have reached the age of 12 on September 1 (preceding calendar year).
    - vii. 6th Grade
      1. Players enrolled in 6th grade and cannot have reached the age of 13 on September 1 (preceding calendar year).
- 3) Competition Division Requests
  - a. Any deviations from RULE 1 item 2) as listed above, MUST go through the Member Organization and be presented to the NTFL Board prior to March 1st. Final approval is with the NTFL Board. Any request(s) may be required to appear before the NTFL Board.
  - b. Any parent that wishes to move their player up to the next division, must present in writing to the Member Organization prior to team formation.
- 4) Member Organization Boundaries

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- a. Member Organization boundaries must be clearly defined and approved by the NTFL Board. Any changes or deviations must be approved by the NTFL Board. No exceptions are provided for boundaries.
  - b. Players must meet the Member Organization boundaries. These are defined by the player's school district, residence, or attendance at a public school located within the Member Organizations' approved boundaries.
- 5) Special Needs Players
- a. Any player with special/physical needs MUST be brought before the NTFL Board for approval to participate in the NTFL.
  - b. The need for prescription eyewear does not fall into a special need.

## **RULE 2: PLAYER CERTIFICATION**

- 1) Certification Responsibility
  - a. The Member Organization President shall have the responsibility for certification of grade placement/school, player age, and residence.
  - b. No player shall participate who has not been certified.
- 2) Certification Penalty
  - a. The penalty for playing a player whose grade, age and/or residence was not certified, or has been falsified shall be suspension of the player from the NTFL. The head coach and Member Organization may be brought before the NTFL Board for consideration of rule violations. The Member Organization may elect to do, as they deem necessary to any coach for violating any rule; however, its final judgment does not prevent NTFL Executive Board from imposing further penalties.
  - b. Member Organizations may be subject to a \$1,000 fine if a player is found to not meet the certification requirements.

## **RULE 3: COACHING**

- 1) Coaching Requirements
  - a. All coaches must sign the NTFL Code of Ethics. All head coaches must live in the Member Organization boundaries or have NTFL Board approval.
  - b. All coaches will agree to have a criminal background check performed by their Member Organization and must be approved in accordance with the Member Organization bylaws.
  - c. Member Organizations are required to have a formal coach selection process. This process is governed by the Member Organizations.
- 2) Coaching Regulations
  - a. Each team must have one individual designated as a head coach.
  - b. Each team is allowed (3) three additional designated assistant coaches.
  - c. It is the responsibility of the head coach for conduct unbecoming to the objectives and goals of NTFL. This includes assistant coaches, team volunteers, players and the players' parents.
- 3) Coaching Violations
  - a. The penalty for violation of an NTFL rule shall consist of: first offense, a \$250.00 fine to the Member Organization, notification to the NTFL Board, and possible one-game

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suspension; a second offense, automatic one-game suspension of the coach and \$1,000.00 fine to the Member Organization; third offense, possible suspension/banning from the league and fine to be determined by the NTFL. The NTFL board reserves the right to remove a coach at any time, with or without cause as determined by the NTFL board.

- b. The NTFL Board has full authority to levy suspensions or fines. These suspensions and fines are not limited to the definitions in these rules and include misconduct. Misconduct can be defined by the NFL Board based on conduct and is not limited to the matters defined herein.
- c. "Banned" is out for life.
- d. If any Member Organization takes action against a coach, parent, or participant, then that Member Organization must notify the NTFL Board in writing of its decision within 24 hours.

## **RULE 4: PLAYER ALLOCATION AND TEAMS**

### 1) Team Size

- a. No team in any division shall consist of more than 14 players without the approval of the NTFL Board. Teams must split if there are a minimum of 10 players for each team. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved by the NTFL Board.

### 2) Player Registration

- a. All players shall register with their Member Organization on or before the registration deadline. The NTFL Board will approve this deadline.
- b. Each association shall have a registration period of no less than two (2) weeks before registration deadline.
- c. If a Member Organization sees that its numbers are down or not enough to split by the registration deadline, then that Member Organization may register more players in that division.

### 3) Member Organization Waitlist Procedure

- a. Waitlist closes after the first weekend of play; no additional players may be added to the waitlist after the final game of the 1st weekend.
- b. If no waitlist players exist in the needed division after the fourth (4th) game of the season and a team falls below 8 players, they may go out and find players to add to their team with approval from the NTFL Board.

### 4) Player Allocation - General Information

- a. Team rosters will be formed by their Member Organization.

## **RULE 5: SEASON AND GAMES CANCELLATION**

### 5) League Season

- a. Starting date, number of games and scheduling will be determined by the NTFL Executive Board.
- b. NTFL Executive Board will determine playoff or tournament format for each season.

### 6) Game Cancellations or Forfeiture

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- a. In the event of forfeiture, the team shall be liable to the NTFL for any officiating or field expenses incurred by the latter as a direct result of the forfeiture.
- b. If a game is stopped or cancelled due to weather or extenuating circumstances at half time or during the second half of a game and a team is leading by 18 or more points the game will be considered a complete game and the team with the lead will be awarded the win.
- c. If there is inclement weather on game day, the NTFL Board will evaluate the conditions to determine if games will be held as scheduled.
- d. NTFL Board reserves the right to reschedule or cancel games if the inclement weather makes it unsafe or unplayable for players and spectators.
- e. In general, games may be played if there is light to moderate rain, with no thunder or lightning.

## **RULE 6: PLAYER PARTICIPATION**

- 1) Player Participation Guidelines
  - a. Every player shall participate as a player in every game in which that player is in attendance and capable of playing.
  - b. An injured or ill player in attendance at a game shall be allowed on the sideline area and shall not be required to play.

## **RULE 7: TEAM INFORMATION**

- 1) Team Size
  - a. Maximum of 14 players per team.
  - b. Minimum to split 10 players per team.
  - c. Minimum of 6 players present and able to participate in a game or that team must forfeit.
- 2) Grade and Age Eligibility
  - a. All divisions will be grade based only with age restriction.
  - b. A player is eligible to participate in the grade division the current school season. There are NO AGE EXCEPTIONS.
  - c. A team must participate in the division which corresponds with the highest grade of any player on the team.
  - d. NTFL will not check eligibility prior to events. However, a coach must be able to document grade and age eligibility in the event of a challenge by another team.
  - e. Acceptable proofs of age are clean photocopies of birth certificate, adoption papers, immigration papers or school documentation.
  - f. Acceptable proofs of grade include a clean copy of any report card of the current school year.
- 3) Player Protests and Incident Reporting Forms
  - a. Any player eligibility protest should be reported immediately so that it may be heard in a timely manner.
  - b. All protests must be in writing (forms will be provided on-site) and accompanied by the official protest fee of \$100 cash for each player challenged. This fee is non-refundable.

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- c. The ruling on a protest will be made by the NTFL Board and is final and binding on all coaches, players, and attendees of the event.
  - d. The NTFL Board shall apply the player eligibility rules in such manner as the NTFL Board deems appropriate to uphold not only the letter but the spirit of such rules and all coaches, players, and attendees shall be bound by any such application.
- 4) Coaches
- a. A team may not have more than four coaches on the sidelines.
  - b. Each team must have a team head coach accompany it to any/all events to serve as an administrator on duty for their particular team.

## **RULE 8: APPLICATION OF RULES**

- 1) General
- a. The NTFL may modify the League and/or Tournament Rules when the NTFL Board deems it in the best interests of the League and/or Tournament to do so and all teams, coaches, players, and attendees will be bound by any such change.

## **RULE 9: GENERAL RULES OF PLAY**

- 1) Game Duration and Time
- a. Each game will consist of two 15 minutes halves
    - i. Clock will run continuous for each half.
  - b. Time Outs
    - i. No time outs.
    - ii. EXCEPTION: Injuries.
  - c. Half Time
    - i. 2-minutes
- 2) Game Clocks
- a. Once the ball is spotted, there is a 30 second play clock
  - b. All games start/end on the clock of the official game Time Keeper
    - i. Each game will have one referee designated as the Time Keeper
    - ii. Time Keeper will announce the time remaining at the 2 minute mark of each half.
  - c. If a team is late and cannot start at the designated time, they will be penalized 7 points and begin play with whatever time is left on the clock. (Not to exceed 10 minutes of 1st half.)
  - d. Forfeit will occur after 10 minutes of the 1st half.
  - e. IT IS IMPERATIVE TO KEEP TO THE LEAGUE and/or TOURNAMENT TIME SCHEDULE.
  - f. Teams must be on site and ready to play when scheduled. Overtime and injury time outs may reduce the amount of time between halves and/or between games to maintain the game schedules.
- 3) Field Dimensions
- a. Kinder, 1st, and 2nd Grade Divisions
    - i. Field Length – 35 yards plus endzone
    - ii. Field Width – Between top of numbers
    - iii. End Zone – 10 yards

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- iv. Field is marked with three (3) 10 yard interval zones by cones.
    - v. Possession starting point is 30 yard line
  - b. 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Grade Divisions
    - i. Field Length – 50 yards plus endzone
    - ii. Field Width – Normal full field sideline
    - iii. End Zone – 10 yards
    - iv. Field is marked with three (3) 15 yard interval zones by cones
    - v. Possession starting point is 45 yard line
- 4) Starting Ball Placement
  - a. Kinder, 1st, and 2nd Grade Divisions
    - i. Ball always placed on either hash mark or middle of the field if no hashes exist, at the 30-yard line.
    - ii. No penalty will be assessed in excess of the 30 yard line
      - 1. Loss of down will be assessed
  - b. 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Grade Divisions
    - i. Ball always placed on either hash mark or middle of the field if no hashes exist, at the 45 yard line.
    - ii. No penalty will be assessed in excess of the 45 yard line
      - 1. Loss of down will be assessed
- 5) Ball Size and Use
  - a. Each team will use their own ball during offensive possessions.
  - b. Kinder, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Grade Divisions
    - i. Ball size: K2 or Pee Wee. Approved balls include: Wilson K2, Nike Vapor, Nike Tournament, or Nike All-Field Pee Wee size ball. Footballs can be authentic leather or composite.
  - c. 5th and 6th Grade Divisions
    - i. Ball size: Junior. Approved balls include: Wilson TDJ or TDY, Nike Vapor, Nike Tournament or Nike All-Field Junior size. Footballs may be authentic leather or composite.
- 6) Team Possession
  - a. Visitor team will have first possession
  - b. The Home team will have first possession in the 2nd half
- 7) Team Sidelines
  - a. Teams must be on opposite sides of the field. Visitors will line up on the right side of the field when facing the end zone. Home will line up on the left side of the field when facing the end zone.
- 8) Team Uniforms and Equipment
  - a. T-shirts, Compression T-shirts, football jerseys or basketball-type sleeveless shirts are permitted. Teams must have assigned color jerseys. Teams must have matching jerseys unless granted an exception by the NTFL Executive Board.
  - b. It is recommended that teams have jerseys with numbers on the back that match the team roster.
  - c. Players are permitted to wear standard football cleats with plastic or rubber spikes. **NO METAL SPIKES ARE ALLOWED.**

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- d. All players must wear a mouthpiece.
- e. No sideline-to-player communication devices may be used.
- 9) Moving the Ball
  - a. The offense must gain past the line of each zone to gain a first down. The offense has four (4) downs in each zone (4-4-4 format). Failure to achieve a first down or touchdown results in a change of possession.
  - b. Offensive Plays Must All Be Passes
    - i. No handoff or “running” plays
  - c. ALL PASSES MUST BE FORWARD.
    - i. A pass caught behind the line must be forward. The only laterals that will be allowed will be laterals that occur after the completion of a forward pass.
  - d. No kicking/punting.
  - e. Offenses always move in the same direction
  - f. No “Double Passes” are allowed
  - g. Kinder and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Divisions can be Coach QB
  - h. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Divisions must be Kid QB
  - i. Kinder (Kid QB), 1<sup>st</sup> (Kid QB), and 2nd Grade Divisions
    - i. The QB is allowed 7.0 seconds to throw the ball.
    - ii. The Referee starts a stopwatch on the snap of the ball from center and stops the watch as soon as the QB releases the ball.
    - iii. If release occurs at or under 7.0 seconds, the play stands as is.
    - iv. If release occurs after 7.0 seconds, the play will be treated as an incomplete pass at the conclusion of the play.
    - v. The Referee has the authority to blow the play dead if it is obvious the play has exceeded the 7.0 second rule.
  - j. Kinder (Coach QB) and 1st (Coach QB)
    - i. The QB is allowed 5.0 seconds to throw the ball.
    - ii. The purpose of the Coach QB is to facilitate the play. The Coach QB should
    - iii. not be an integral part of the play design. Obvious disregard for this rule will result in a 5-yard penalty and loss of down.
    - iv. The Coach QB cannot –
      1. Hide the ball. Hold or disguise the ball so that it is out of plain view;
      2. Turn back to the play to disguise a hand-off or fake hand-off. Effectively taking the ball out of plain view;
      3. Pump fake a pass;
      4. Move outside of a 5-yard box. No rollout passes or wide rollout fake hand-offs;
      5. Direct or tell players where to move during play. No on-field coach can talk or direct once the ball is snapped. This includes pointing.
      6. Fake hand-offs and play action plays are legal plays for Coach QB.
    - v. The seven players on the field include the Coach QB with 6 participants.
  - k. 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Grade Divisions
    - i. The QB is allowed 5.0 seconds to throw the ball.

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- ii. The Referee starts a stopwatch on the snap of the ball from center and stops the watch as soon as the QB releases the ball.
  - iii. If release occurs at or under 5.0 seconds, the play stands as is.
  - iv. If release occurs after 5.0 seconds, the play will be treated as an incomplete pass at the conclusion of the play.
  - v. The Referee has the authority to blow the play dead if it is obvious the play has exceeded the 5.0 second rule.
- I. A muffed snap is NOT a fumble/dead ball. The 5.0 or 7.0 second count remains in effect on the snap.

## 10) Formations

- a. Offense formation requires minimum 3 players set on the line of scrimmage each play
  - i. At least one player must be set on the line of scrimmage on each side of the center.
  - ii. Offensive players on the line of scrimmage must be at least four yards away from the center on either side.
- b. Standard motion rules apply. Only one player may be in motion at the snap.
- c. Center is not an eligible receiver and cannot go out for a pass
  - i. Center is responsible for moving the possession marker (bean bag)
  - ii. Center is responsible for gathering the football and setting the line of scrimmage between each play.
    - 1. Offensive team is responsible for retrieving and returning the ball to the previous spot or the new scrimmage spot. Delay of game penalty will result in 5 yard penalty. If deemed intentional the penalty can result in a loss of down.
  - iii. Center must snap the ball with the ball touching the ground. The center may snap between legs or to the side. The QB cannot grab the football from the ground.
- d. Defensive player must be 1 yard away/off the line of scrimmage

## 11) On Field Coaches

- a. One coach is allowed on the field for the team's offensive possession in all divisions. The coach must remain behind all offensive players at all times. The coach on the field is not allowed to talk or give directions once the ball is snapped. In-play coaching will result in a 5 yard penalty and replay down.
- b. One defensive coach is allowed on the field for Kinder, 1st, and 2nd Grade. The on the field coach is not allowed to talk or give direction once the ball is snapped. In-play coaching will result in a 5 yard penalty and replay the down if accepted by the offence.

## 12) Scoring

- a. Touchdown 7 points
  - i. There are no extra points
- b. Interception 3 points (Pic-3)
  - i. Interceptions are not returned. The play is blown dead once an interception has occurred.
  - ii. Interceptions cannot occur after the QB 5.0 or 7.0 second rule. Violation of the 5.0 or 7.0 second rule is considered an incomplete pass.

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- iii. Intercepting team will gain possession
    - 1. Kinder, 1st, and 2nd Grade Divisions and start from 30 yard line
    - 2. 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Grade Divisions and start from 45 yard line
  - c. Official score is kept by field referee
  - d. There are no safeties. A player tagged behind the 30 yard line for Kinder, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Divisions or 45 yard line for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Divisions start the next down at the 30 yard line or 45 yard line for their respective divisions.
- 13) General Game Rules
- a. No blocking
  - b. Receiver/Ball carrier is legally down when touched below the neck with one or both hands
  - c. Excessive force by shoving, pushing, or striking a blow will be penalized by automatic 1st down and 5 yards
  - d. Players can be ejected if ruled unsportsmanlike and flagrant
  - e. Fumbles are dead balls at the spot with the last team retaining possession
  - f. Two delays of game penalties in a row will result in a turnover.
  - g. Defensive Pass Interference will be a spot foul (1st down at the spot)
  - h. The penalty will be 15 yards if the foul occurs 15 or more yards past the original line of scrimmage (1st down)
  - i. Responsibility to avoid contact is with the defense. There will be NO, pressing, chucking, or deliberate bumping or grabbing. These actions will result in a "tack on" penalty at the end of the play (5-yard penalty)
  - j. No taunting or "trash talking." (5-yard penalty & expulsion if flagrant or repeated)
  - k. Fighting: the player(s) involved will be ejected from the game and tournament. If a team fight occurs, the teams involved will be ejected from the tournament and denied participation in any/all qualifying tournaments.
- 14) Overtime Rules
- a. During regular season, each team gets one attempt at a 2pt conversion from the 5 (Kinder, 1st, and 2nd Grade) or 7 yard line (3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Grade).
  - b. Visiting team has first possession
  - c. If score is still tied after each team has one possession then the game will end in a tie.
- 15) During tournament games where a winner must be determined
- a. Teams will alternate attempting 2 point conversions until a winner is determined

## **RULE 10: SPECTATOR SEATING**

- 1) Spectators MUST sit behind their team when they are playing. However, after the contest, they must relinquish their position to the fans of the team scheduled to play.
- 2) Spectators may not sit behind someone else's team during a contest.

## **RULE 11: GAME EJECTIONS**

- 1) Game Ejections
  - a. Game reports will include any ejections. They must include the half in which the ejection occurred. The official must include ejection comments/notes on the official NTFL game sheet. NTFL will keep records of all ejections and suspensions for the season.

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- i. The NTFL appeal process is as follows:
  1. Only an organization president can request appeal and it must be within 24 hours of game completion.
  2. An NTFL ejection appeal form must be submitted with the required documentation.
  3. NTFL Board decision is final.
- b. If a child, spectator, or coach is ejected for any reason during the course of the game. The player, spectator, or the coach must immediately leave the premises included field, parking lot and property.
  - i. The ejected player or spectator will serve the ejection for the remainder of the day and cannot participate or spectate at any other games for that day.
  - ii. The ejected coach will serve that ejection as a suspension for 1 week and it will extend to any team they serve as a coach on (this will include any/all games that may also fall on the same day). Meaning, the coach will also miss the games for the following week.
  - iii. For a second ejection offense during the season the player, spectator, or coach ejected will be suspended from the remainder of that day and for the next weeks games.
  - iv. For the third ejection offense during the season, the player or coach, is immediately ejected from the current game and expelled for the remainder of the season and any subsequent playoff games.
  - v. If an ejection occurs for the coach, and the coach is not returning for a subsequent season and therefore cannot serve the penalties provided herein, the NTFL Board may take action against that coach and the coach's team up to and including forfeiture of the game where the ejection occurred.
  - vi. In the event a player or coach is flagged for two unsportsmanlike penalties during a game, this will result in immediate ejection.
  - vii. If a child throws a punch, kicks, or actions considered fighting this action is grounds for immediate ejection by the official and counts toward the ejection actions in the above paragraphs.
  - viii. The NTFL Board has the right to suspend any spectator, coach, or players for actions or behavior considered misconduct. Misconduct is not limited to the definitions herein and is at the discretion of the NTFL Board.