



**NORTH TEXAS  
FOOTBALL  
LEAGUE 7-on-7  
RULES**

**Updated: March 2022**



## 7v7-Rule 1. PLAYER QUALIFICATIONS

### Section 1.01 Age Requirements

- (a) **Players shall not be less than 5 years of age or over 14 years of age on or before September 1 of the current year.**
- (b) **Shall present to the local official at the time of registration a certified birth certificate (or a copy thereof) or current passport. Proof of birth date accepted by local school district may also be accepted.**
- (c) **No child may participate if conditions of 7v7 RULE 1 item 1) b) are not accomplished.**
- (d) **Any exceptions must be approved by the NTFL Board.**

### Section 1.02 Local Association Boundaries

- (a) **Players shall participate only with the local association whose boundaries are defined by the player's school district, residence, or attendance at a private school located within the associations' city limits. Executive Board must approve any exceptions.**
- (b) **Any child participating or who is eligible to participate in at a High School affiliated football program shall be prohibited from participation in NTFL as a player.**

### Section 1.03 Special Needs Players

- (a) **Any children with special/physical needs MUST be brought before the NTFL Board for approval to participate in the program.**

## 7v7-Rule 2. COACHING QUALIFICATIONS

### Section 2.01 Coaching Requirements

- (a) **The NTFL board will require ALL Coaches to sign the NTFL Code of Ethics, with your local association. All head coaches must live in the member association boundaries or have NTFL Board approval.**
- (b) **All coaches will agree to have a criminal background check performed by their association.**
- (c) **The head coach and/or at least one alternate must attend the sports medicine/bylaw and officials meeting sponsored by the NTFL.**

### Section 2.02 Coaching Regulations

- (a) **Each team must have one individual designated as a head coach.**

- (b) Penalty for not having an official roster at game site is \$25.00 to the local association for the first offense. The coach may be required to appear before the NTFL Executive Board for the second offense. The Executive Board will determine any penalty.
- (c) It is the responsibility of the head coach for conduct unbecoming to the objectives and goals of NTFL for himself/herself, his/her assistant coaches, players and the players' parents.

#### Section 2.03 Coaching Violations

- (a) The penalty for violation of RULE 2 shall consist of: first offense, a \$100.00 fine, notification to the NTFL board, and possible one-game suspension; second offense, automatic one-game suspension and \$250.00 fine to the local association; third offense, possible suspension/banning from the league.
- (b) The board of directors dictates suspension.
- (c) "Banned" is out for life.
- (d) If any association takes action against a coach, parent, or participant, then that association must notify the NTFL board in writing of its decision.

### 7v7-Rule 3. DIVISIONS

#### Section 3.01 Compilation of Divisions

- (a) The breakdown of league divisions shall be the following:

TABLE 1: Breakdown of League Divisions

<b>Division</b>	<b>Player Age Limitation</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	Players may not be older than 7 years old by September 1.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	Players may not be older than 8 years old by September 1
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	Players may not be older than 9 years old by September 1
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Players may not be older than 10 years old by September 1
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Players may not be older than 11 years old by September 1
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Players may not be older than 12 years old by September 1
7/8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Players may not be older than 14 years old by September 1

- (b) Any deviations from RULE 3 section 3.01 as listed above, **MUST** go through the local Association and presented to the NTFL Board at least one (1) month prior to the start of the season. Final approval is with the NTFL board. Any request(s) may be required to appear before the NTFL board.
- (c) Any parent that wishes to move their child up to the next division, must present in writing to the Local Association prior to the draft. Once a player has completed two seasons in the higher division he may not return to his age appropriate division.

## 7v7-Rule 4. PLAYER ALLOCATION AND TEAM FORMATION

### Section 4.01 Team Size

- (a) No team in any division shall consist of more than 14 players without the approval of the NTFL Board, provided an additional team can be made. Any exceptions to this article must be brought before the NTFL Executive Board.
- (b) If any team falls to 8 players or below, by the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) game of the season, that team may go to the waitlist to obtain additional players to make up to 10 players on the team.

### Section 4.02 Player Registration

- (a) All players shall register with their local association on or before the registration deadline. The Executive 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 local association sees that its numbers are down or not enough to split by the registration deadline then that local association may register more players in that division.

### Section 4.03 Local Association 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 1<sup>st</sup> weekend.
- (b) If no waitlist players exist in the needed division after the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) 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.

### Section 4.04 Player Allocation and Team Formation - General Information

- (a) Each association will adhere to the NTFL Team Formation guidelines as follows.
- (b) Teams can be formed by coaches

## 7v7-Rule 5. SEASON AND GAMES CANCELLATION

### Section 5.01 League Season

- (a) **Starting date, number of games and scheduling will be determined by the NTFL Board.**
- (b) **If the NTFL Board determines the need for a playoff, the NTFL Board at its spring scheduling meeting shall establish the procedure for determining playoff participation.**

### Section 5.02 Game Cancellations or Forfeiture

- (a) **In the event of forfeiture by the visiting team, said team shall be liable to the home team 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 Hosting City and 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. If there is inclement weather on game day, go to [www.NTFL.org](http://www.NTFL.org) for updates.**

## 7v7-Rule 6. PLAYER PARTICIPATION

### Section 6.01 Player Participation Guidelines

- (a) **Every player shall participate as a player in every game in which he/she is in attendance.**
- (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.**

## 7v7-Rule 7. TEAM INFORMATION

### Section 7.01 Team Size

- (a) **Maximum of 15 players per team.**
- (b) **Recommend minimum of 10 players per team.**

### Section 7.02 Team formation

- (a) **Each team member must be from the same local youth football association.**

### Section 7.03 Grade Based Eligibility:

- (a) **All divisions will be grade based only.**
- (b) **A player is eligible to participate in the Grade Division for his grade for 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.**

### Section 7.04 Maximum Age

- (a) **Even if grade eligible, no player may play in a division where the player is more than one year older for the corresponding age for the grade division. For this purpose only, the corresponding ages per Table 1 above.**
- (b) **The age determination dates for purposes of the Maximum Age rule is September 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>.**
- (c) **Proof of player eligibility is the responsibility of the local Association and team coach.**
- (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) **Failure to have such information available at the tournament may result in player ineligibility and/or game forfeiture.**
- (f) **Acceptable proofs of age are clean photocopies of birth certificate, adoption papers, immigration papers or school documentation.**
- (g) **Acceptable proofs of grade include a clean copy of any report card of the current or immediately preceding school year.**
- (h) **Player Protests and Incident Reporting Forms**
  - (i) **Any player eligibility protest should be reported immediately so that it may be heard in a timely manner.**
  - (ii) **Any protest of player eligibility must be made prior to the start of the 2nd half of a game.**
  - (iii) **Also, you must show your own eligibility documents if you challenge another team's players. Failure to protest eligibility prior to the start of the 2nd half of a game will waive a team's opportunity to protest any player's eligibility for that game.**
  - (iv) **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.**

- (v) 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.
- (vi) 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.
- (vii) If a player in question is not able to produce a report card and birth certificate at the game venue, that player will not be eligible until verifiable proof of a report card and/or birth certificate have been provide to the NTFL Board, no questions asked.

## 7v7-Rule 8. OFFICIALS

### Section 8.01 Field Officials per Game

#### **(a) One (1)-Game Time Keeper**

- (i) Manages the 25 sec. play clock
- (ii) Manages the 5.0 sec. clock

#### **(b) One (1) Field Judge**

- (i) Manages the game rules

## 7v7-Rule 9. COACHES

### Section 9.01 General

- (a) All team coaches will wear an identification tag for clarification purposes.**
- (b) A team may not have more than four coaches on the sidelines.**
- (c) 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(s).**

## 7v7-Rule 10. APPLICATION OF RULES

### Section 10.01 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.**

## 7v7-Rule 11. GENERAL RULES OF PLAY FOR ALL DIVISIONS

### Section 11.01 STARTING THE GAME

#### (a) Time Keeper

- (i) Each site will have a designated central Time-keeper. All games will begin and end on this person's instructions. He will also announce the time remaining at the 10, 5, and 2 minute marks.

### Section 11.02 Team Possession

- (a) **Visitors will have first possession and wear white (top team in bracket or first team listed will be the visitor).**
- (b) **The home team will have first possession in the 2nd half and wear a dark color (bottom team in bracket or second team listed will be the home team).**

### Section 11.03 Team Sidelines

- (a) **Teams must be on opposite sides of the field) NO TEAM WILL BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE WITHOUT MATCHING JERSEYS!**
- (b) **Team sidelines must be on opposite sides of the field. Visitors (wearing white) will line up on the right side of the field when facing the end zone. Home (wearing dark) will line up on the left side of the field when facing the end zone.**

### Section 11.04 Team Uniforms and Equipment

- (a) **T-shirts, Compression T-shirts, football jerseys or basketball-type sleeveless shirts are permitted. Teams must have 2 different color jerseys or reversible jerseys.**
- (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**
- (d) **All players must wear a mouth piece**

### Section 11.05 MOVING THE BALL

- (a) **QB is not allowed to run with the ball beyond the Line of Scrimmage (LOS).**
- (b) **No kicking/punting.**
- (c) **Offenses always move in the same direction.**
- (d) **NO PASSER MAY RUN WITH THE BALL. ALL PASSES MUST BE FORWARD. 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.**

## Section 11.06 GENERAL GAME RULES

- (a) All rules are in accordance with the Texas High School football rules including penalties and penalty yards with all exceptions stated below.
- (b) No blocking.
- (c) Receiver/Ball carrier is legally down when touched below the neck with one or both hands.
  - (i) Excessive force by shoving, pushing, or striking a blow will be penalized by automatic 1st down and 5 yards.
  - (ii) Player will be expelled if ruled unsportsmanlike and flagrant.
- (d) Fumbles are dead balls at the spot with the last team retaining possession.
- (e) Defensive Pass Interference will be a spot foul (1st down at the spot).
  - (i) The penalty will be 15 yards if the foul occurs 15 or more yards past the original line of scrimmage (1st down).
- (f) Responsibility to avoid contact is with the defense. There will be **NO** chucking, or deliberate bumping or grabbing. These actions will result in a "tack on" penalty at the end of the play (5-yard penalty).
- (g) Offensive team is responsible for retrieving and returning the ball to the previous spot or the new scrimmage spot. Clock does not stop and any delay by offense in retrieving and returning the ball to the referee will result in a delay of game and will be a 5-yard penalty from the succeeding spot.
- (h) The offensive center is an eligible receiver (all teams must have a center – the center may be any player). The center is responsible for establishing the succeeding spot as designated by the referee. The center must be a player on the team roster, not a coach. In grades 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>, the center must be more than 5 yards beyond the LOS before becoming eligible. Once the LOS is within 5 yards of the goal line the center is no longer eligible.
- (i) The center will be responsible for setting or re-positioning the Referee's LOS-Marker at the line of scrimmage.
- (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.
- (l) One coach is allowed on the field for the team's offensive possession. The coach must remain behind all offensive players at all times.
- (m) One coach is allowed on the field for the team's defensive possession for K/1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> only. The coach must remain behind the defensive players at all times.

- (n) **Snapping of the ball by the center can be between the legs, but it is not required. It is recommended that the center simply hold the ball allowing for the QB to simply take the ball when ready to start the play. The ball must be seated fully on the QB-Tee timer before snapping.**

#### Section 11.07 SCORING

**(a) Touchdowns**

- (i) 6 points
- (ii) 1 point for PAT from 3-yard line
- (iii) 2-point PAT from 10-yard line
- (iv) FOR 5<sup>TH</sup> THRU 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE ONLY-Interceptions returned to the 45 yd line, on the PAT attempt, will be worth 2 points.
- (v) Official score is kept by field referee and game manager.

#### Section 11.08 OVERTIME RULES

- (a) **After coin flip to determine first possession, teams will alternate four down series from the 15-yard line.**
- (b) **A winner is determined when one team outscores the other team during an overtime session. Each team must go for two points on the conversion attempts beginning in the 2nd overtime.**

#### Section 11.09 TIME

**(a) Time per half**

- (i) 20-minute
- (ii) Continuous clock for each half--see: "starting the game"

**(b) Time Outs**

- (i) No time outs.
- (ii) EXCEPTION: Injuries. All games will halt until injured player(s) can be safely removed from the field.

**(c) Half Time**

- (i) 5-minutes

**(d) Game Clocks**

- (i) Play must commence 25 Sec. after the ball has been spotted

- (e) **15 minutes between games (the between game time may be shortened if the tournament is running behind schedule).**

- (f) All games start/end at the same time.
- (g) If a team(s) is(are) late and cannot start when the tournament officially starts, they will be penalized 7 points and begin play with whatever time is left on the tournament clock. (Not to exceed 10 minutes of 1st half.)
- (h) Forfeit will occur after 10 minutes of the 1st half.
- (i) **IT IS IMPERATIVE TO KEEP TO THE LEAGUE and/or TOURNAMENT TIME SCHEDULE.**
- (j) Teams must be on site and ready to play when scheduled. Injury time outs may reduce the amount of time between halves and/or between games to maintain the game schedules.

## 7v7-Rule 12. RULES EXCEPTIONS FOR 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade

### Section 12.01 FIELD DIMENSIONS

- (a) **Field Length -- 45 yards (135 feet)**
- (b) **Field Width – 53yards (160 feet)**
  - (i) 60 feet to hash mark from sidelines
  - (ii) 40 feet between hashes
- (c) **Field is marked with three (3) 15 yard zones with cones on each sideline**
- (d) **End Zone -- 10 yards deep**

### Section 12.02 Starting Ball Placement

- (a) **Ball will always be placed on right hash mark or middle of the field if no hashes exist, when at the 45-yard line.**

### Section 12.03 Ball Size and Use

- (a) **Each team will use its own ball during offensive possessions.**
- (b) **5<sup>th</sup> Grade and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade divisions must use Wilson TDJ or TDY authentic leather.**
- (c) **7<sup>th</sup> grade division and below may use a Wilson TDJ or TDY authentic leather.**

### Section 12.04 MOVING THE BALL

- (a) **Field is marked with three (3) 15 yard intervals by cones.**
  - (i) Three (3) 1st downs without a penalty would result in a TD.
- (b) **Possession always begins at the 45-yard line at the right hash or middle of the field if no hashes exist.**

- (i) NO PENALTY WILL BE ASSESSED IN EXCESS OF THE 45 YARD LINE (35 yard-1<sup>st</sup> grade thru 4<sup>th</sup> grade Divisions). LOSS OF DOWN WILL BE ASSESSED INSTEAD.
  - (ii) 1st Down-incomplete pass and offensive penalty results in the next down being 2nd down.
  - (iii) 2nd Down-incomplete pass and offensive penalty results in the next down being 3rd down.
- (c) If a forward pass does not cross the LOS and before the 5.0 second count has expired, a defensive player tags the ball carrier behind the 45-yard line, the play is a SAFETY.**

#### Section 12.05 GENERAL GAME RULES

- (a) A muffed snap is NOT a fumble/dead ball. The 5.0 second count remains in effect on snaps.**
- (b) Each team will have 25 seconds to snap the ball once it has been marked ready for play; delay of game penalty will be a 5-yard penalty.**
  - (i) The point after attempt will be voided if you have a delay of game penalty. Defense will get the ball at the 45 yard line.
  - (ii) The offense turns the ball over if they have two delay of game penalties in one offensive series.
- (c) The QB is allowed 5.0 seconds to throw the ball. 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.**
  - (i) If release occurs at or under 5.0 seconds, the play stands as is.
  - (ii) If release or hand off occurs after 5.0 seconds, the play will not be blown dead, but will be treated as an incomplete pass at the conclusion of the play.
  - (iii) All penalties will be marked off on a 5.0 second count EXCEPT for pass interference.
- (d) Offensive pass interference is a 15 yard penalty.**
  - (i) The penalty will be a loss of down if 15 yards would take a team past the 45 yard line.
- (e) Interceptions may be returned. However, defensive players may not block anyone subsequent to an interception. If an interception is returned beyond the 45-yard line (the offensive origination point) it is a touchdown and point after attempt should ensue.**
- (f) Line to Gain**
  - (i) Each field has three (3) 15 yard zones designated as the line to gain

- (ii) The offense must gain at least 15 yards within three (3) downs while the offense in each of the first two zones or the defense takes over.
- (g) Once the team has entered the final third of the field (the third 15-yard segment of the field), the offense must score within the four (4) downs.**
- (h) Any dead ball foul on a play that results in the defense getting the ball will result in a loss of down penalty, as the team cannot be penalized beyond the 45 yard line starting position. The defense - not the offense - would be starting play with 2nd down.**

## 7v7-Rule 13. RULES EXCEPTIONS FOR 1<sup>ST</sup> THRU 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

### Section 13.01 FIELD DIMENSIONS

- (a) Field Length -- 30 yards (105 feet)**
- (b) Field Width – 53yards (160 feet)**
  - (i) 60 feet to hash mark from sidelines
  - (ii) 40 feet between hashes
- (c) End Zone -- 10 yards deep**

### Section 13.02 Starting Ball Placement

- (a) Ball always placed on right hash mark when at the 30-yard line.**

### Section 13.03 Ball Size and Use

- (a) Each team will use its own ball during offensive possessions.**
- (b) 1<sup>st</sup> Grade thru 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Divisions may use Wilson K2 or TDJ ball authentic leather.**

### Section 13.04 MOVING THE BALL

- (a) The QB may hand the ball off to a Running Back/Ball Carrier behind the line of scrimmage on 3rd and 4th Downs. QB's must pass the ball on 1st and 2nd downs.**
- (b) Field is marked with three (3) 10 yard intervals by cones.**
  - (i) Three (3) 1st downs without a penalty would result in a TD.
- (c) Possession always begins at the 30 yard line at the right hash or middle of the field if no hashes exist.**
  - (i) NO PENALTY WILL BE ASSESSED IN EXCESS OF THE 30 YARD LINE. LOSS OF DOWN WILL BE ASSESSED INSTEAD.
  - (ii) 1st Down-incomplete pass and offensive penalty results in the next down being 2nd down.

(iii) 2nd Down-incomplete pass and offensive penalty results in the next down being 3rd down.

- (d) **If the QB hands the ball off at the 30-yard line to a Running Back/Ball Carrier, and a defensive player tags the ball carrier behind the 30-yard line, the play is a SAFETY. Also, if a forward pass does not cross the LOS and before the 7.0 second count has expired, a defensive player tags the ball carrier behind the 30 yard line, the play is a SAFETY.**

### Section 13.05 GENERAL GAME RULES

- (a) **K/1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade will be coach QB with 6 participants on the field. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade has the option of player QB with 7 participants on the field.**
- (b) **Defensive players may not cross the line of scrimmage, unless a hand off to a Running Back/Ball Carrier occurs or a forward pass is completed.**
- (c) **A muffed snap is NOT a fumble/dead ball. The 7.0 second count remains in effect on snaps.**
- (d) **Each team will have 25 seconds to snap the ball once it has been marked ready for play; delay of game penalty will be a 5-yard penalty.**
- (i) The point after attempt will be voided if you have a delay of game penalty. Defense will get the ball at the 30 yard line.
- (ii) The offense turns the ball over if they have two delay of game penalties in one offensive series.
- (e) **The QB is allowed 7.0 seconds to throw the ball or hand off to a running back. 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 or hands the ball off to a running back.**
- (i) If release occurs at or under 7.0 seconds, the play stands as is.
- (ii) If release or hand off occurs after 7.0 seconds, the play will not be blown dead, but will be treated as an incomplete pass at the conclusion of the play.
- (iii) All penalties will be marked off on a 7.0 second count EXCEPT for pass interference.
- (f) **Offensive pass interference is a 15 yard penalty.**
- (i) The penalty will be a loss of down if 15 yards would take a team past the 30 yard line.
- (g) **Interceptions may not be returned. The ball is dead and the intercepting team will be on offense starting at the 30 yard line.**
- (h) **Any dead ball foul on a play that results in the defense getting the ball will result in a loss of down penalty, as the team cannot be penalized beyond the 30 yard line starting position. The defense - not the offense - would be starting play with 2nd down.**