

## MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION RULES

### Eligibility

A player must live in or attend the school district/town/city served by the registered organization for which he participates as defined in the Sphere of Influence section of these bylaws.

Players shall be less than a freshman (grade 9) in school and not have reached his/her 15th birthday before the first practice (conditioning or equipment) allowed by SMYFL.

Valid proof of birth date must be submitted by each player before that player is allowed to play. A copy of a notarized Birth Certificate or other legally accepted proof of the player's date of birth is acceptable.

A player may not participate on a SMYFL team if that player is also participating in any other contact football program.

A player who is otherwise eligible for Pee Wee football, but is unable to make the top weight limit for Pee Wee, and their organization's Middle School program rules do not allow the player to move up to play on the Middle School team (e.g. school affiliated Middle School program that only allows 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade players), that player will be allowed to participate on the Middle School team of another nearby SMYFL team of their choosing, if that other SMYFL team agrees.

### Weight Limits

There is no weight limit defined or enforced at this program level. Players may play any position.

### Weigh-ins

There is no weigh-in required at this program level.

### Preseason Practices

Preseason football practice may begin no earlier than the Sunday before the first day of August, unless otherwise changed by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

Preseason football practice is allowed for purposes of conditioning. No pads other than helmets may be worn during preseason sessions. Preseason practices will have no contact. Footballs may be used at these practices.

### Practices

Football practice means the organized instruction of youths eligible to play football in the SMYFL during the upcoming season by the coaches of, or any person affiliated with, an organization which is a member of the SMYFL. This does not preclude football clinics being

offered publicly for football instruction.

Football practice using footballs and football equipment may begin one week after the first allowed day of preseason practice.

### Schedule

Game schedules for Middle School football will be established by the SMYFL Board of Directors

Game time for all regular season games played on Sunday shall be 1p.m. 'A' games to be played first and 'B' games played after the completion of 'A' game for Sunday dates. All Saturday evening games shall start at 6:00 PM. Evening games will have the 'B' game played first, unless agreed upon by both team's head coaches at least ninety-six(96) hours prior to the game start time, with the 'A' game played immediately following the completion of the 'B' game.

If a team only has enough players to field one team, the 'A' game must be played first.

### Rosters

An organization's player roster shall consist of the following information about every player:

- Full name
- Age
- Date of birth
- Jersey number
- School system the player attends

If the school system attended is the same for all players on the roster, then an indication of that fact may be made on the roster rather than specifying the same school for each player.

Organizations must submit a complete roster to the SMYFL before the first regular season game. The SMYFL must be informed of all addition(s) or correction(s) to the submitted roster (which occur any time after submission of the complete roster) within one (1) week of the addition(s) or correction(s). Failure to comply with the submission deadline shall result in a one hundred dollar (\$100) fine levied against the non-compliant organization.

Submission of rosters shall be made either in paper form submitted to the President of the SMYFL, or in a league approved electronic format, such as email, made available to all teams. In either form, it is the responsibility of the representative of each organization to verify that their organization's submitted roster was successfully received by the SMYFL.

Any player meeting the eligibility requirements for playing Pee Wee football that participates with a Middle School team and is listed on that Middle School team's first official game roster will not be allowed to return/participate at the Pee Wee level during that year. Any

player otherwise eligible to play Pee Wee football may return to their organization's Pee Wee team prior to the first game.

Players may be added to a team's roster according to local rules and the rules of eligibility as specified in these bylaws. The head coach of a team is responsible for submitting roster updates to the SMYFL president at the earliest possible time.

### Game Equipment

A minimum of two (2) footballs of game quality will be available at each game, provided by the home team. Any team desiring to use a ball other than that supplied by the home team must supply their own as described previously. The official agreed upon ball size for Middle School shall be the size of a Wilson "TDY" football or Nike Vapor Strike Youth. Footballs do not need to be branded with the "NFHS" label for any level.

### Game Rules

Games will be played under Federation Rules. The home team will provide a current rule book at each game.

'A' games shall consist of four(4) ten(10) minute regulation quarters for all games. 'B' games shall consist of four(4) eight(8) minute regulation quarters.

During 'B' games, one(1) coach from each team will be allowed on the field. If a team elects to have a coach on the field as described above, that coach is considered part of the field, and should remain in the same position he/she was in at the snap of the ball for the remainder of the play. Note: Coaches should try to select a spot that is not likely to interfere with normal play. If one team elects to not have a coach on the field, the other team may still choose to have their coach on the field if they desire.

### Gentlemen's Rule

Common courtesy dictates that when one team attains a commanding lead of twenty-four(24) or more points, the leading team will take measures to even the level of play of the two teams, with substitution of different players freely exhibited. Disciplinary action may be taken by the Board of Directors against any team not following this ideal.

These measures do not mean a team must allow the other team to score, rather players who normally get less playing time, or even 'B' players playing in 'A' games, should be used. The goal of this rule is to avoid humiliating or demoralizing participants into disliking football.

The 24-point rule does not apply during playoffs.

### Overtime

'A' games that at the end of regulation play have a tie score shall be resolved in accordance with Federation Rules. 'B' games shall end in a tie at the end of regulation play, with no overtime, as their record is not used in determining playoff seating.

An overtime period is untimed play after a regulation game has ended with the score tied. During an overtime period each team has an opportunity for an offensive series of downs. However, an overtime period may include only one offensive series of downs if the defensive team scores a safety or touchdown.

After a 3-minute intermission following the end of regular timed play, a coin toss will be held at the middle of the field. The visiting team shall pick "heads" or "tails". The winner of the toss shall have shall be given their choice of defense or offense first, or of designating which end of the field to play at. The loser will have their choice of the remaining options.

Each Team will be permitted one time out during each overtime period. Timeouts remaining from regulation play do not carry over into overtime play.

The team scoring the greater number of points in the overtime shall be declared the winner. The final score shall be determined by totaling all points scored by each team during both regulation time and all overtime periods.

To start each overtime, the offensive team shall put the ball in play, first and goal, on the defensive team's 10-yard line or succeeding spot if a carry-over penalty has been administered. The ball may be placed anywhere between the inbounds lines. The first offensive shall have a series of four downs. That series shall be terminated by any score by the offensive team, or if the defensive team has possession of the ball.

If the team on offense scores a touchdown, that team is entitled to the opportunity for a try unless the points would not affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying.

A field-goal attempt is permitted during any down.

If the defensive team gains possession, the ball becomes dead immediately and the offensive team's series of downs is ended.

After the first team on offense has completed the series of downs, the first team on defense will become the offensive team with the ball in its possession at the same 10-yard line anywhere between the inbounds lines. The same end of the field will be used for possessions by both teams during the two sets of downs to ensure equal game conditions and conserve time.

If the score remains tied after each team has been given one series of downs in an overtime period, then the procedure shall be repeated with other overtime periods until a game winner

is determined. In this case, there shall be an intermission of two minutes. At the subsequent meeting of team captains, the loser of the overtime coin toss will be given first choice of the options. If additional overtime periods are required, then the first choice of options will be alternated with no coin toss.

If a safety is scored by the offensive team, the succeeding spot will be the 10-yard line in possession of the team that was on defense, provided the defensive team has not had its series of downs (the temporary overtime score is: Team A-2, Team B-0).

When the defensive team gains possession of the ball, the down and series immediately end for the offensive team.

The offensive team shall be awarded a new series of downs when any one of the following occurs:

1. Penalty for defensive pass interference is accepted.
2. Offensive team recovers a scrimmage kick (field-goal attempt) between the goal lines after it has been touched first by the defensive team beyond the neutral zone.
3. Defensive Team is guilty of roughing the kicker, place-kicker holder, snapper, or passer.

The line to gain is always the goal line.

If the defensive team scores a safety or touchdown, the game is ended.

No point-after-touchdown try will be attempted if the winner of the game has been determined.

If a penalty is called against the defense which would result in an automatic first down for the offense, the ball is spotted where the penalty would advance the ball, and the offense is awarded a new set of downs.

### Playoffs

Teams will be seated at the end of the regular season based on the HEAL point system. Each team yearly will be assigned a base ranking of A, B, C, or D for use with the HEAL point system based on a determination of the voting membership of the SMYFL. These base rankings shall be based upon, but not limited to, the number of potential players available within each teams' sphere of influence. A general guideline to be used shall be the High School "class" rankings for the school(s) from which the member organization draws.

In the event of a tie in the seating process, the following tie breakers apply in order

1. Head-to-Head - Win/Loss record among the tied teams

2. Total number of wins by opponents
3. Flip a coin