



TRI-COUNTY YOUTH
FOOTBALL &
CHEERLEADING
CONFERENCE, INC.

FOOTBALL RULES

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FOOTBALL RULES

1. TEAM COMPOSITION

- A. Each TCYFCC team shall have no more than thirty-five (35) players with the exception of Mighty Mites who shall have no more than twenty-eight (28). There shall not be fewer than eleven (11) players at all levels.
- B. Anyone not a registered player and over the age of 18 (excluding media personnel and chain gang), must have a TCYFCC ID badge and comply with the Hillsborough County requirements for coaching certification and/or background check. (See **TCYFCC Bylaws ARTICLE IX – LIABILITY, INSURANCE, AND CERTIFICATION**)
- C. The Staff of each TCYFCC team shall consist of the following:
 1. One (1) Head Coach
 2. No more than five (5) assistant coached
 3. No more than two (2) team managers/team parents
 4. No more than two (2) water boys/trainers
 5. Each park is responsible for their sideline management and parents at all times.
 6. The Head Coach is responsible for sideline management during their game.

2. AGES AND DIVISIONS

- A. The following age limits shall be strictly enforced: (Ages are determined as of July 31st of the current season).
 1. 4 year old's will be at parks discretion with a maximum number of 5.
 2. Division age limits shall be strictly adhered to. No player shall move divisions without just cause and prior approval from the Executive Board.

Team/Division	Ages
Mighty Mites	4*, 5, 6
Pee Wee	7, 8
Midgets	9, 10
Junior Varsity	11, 12
Varsity	13, 14

3. PRACTICE

- A. Practice shall not begin until July 1st.
 1. There shall be NO Conditioning/Skills camps allowed for any member league during the off season.
- B. Practice shall be defined as any team or team members gathering to study of or execute football plays in a manner consistent with game day preparation.
- C. No one will be allowed to practice until all TCYFCC documents have been completed and submitted.
- D. Each player will have a total of 8 hours of conditioning before hitting can begin. These hours must be counted starting on the first day of official practice for the TCYFCC fall season. All 8 hours shall be completed at league where the participant will play during the season. During the 8 hours of conditioning use of equipment will be as follows:
 1. Hours 1 thru 4 – Helmet and Shorts only
 2. Hours 5 thru 8 – Helmet, Shorts, and Shoulder pads only
 3. After 8 hours; Full Gear, Blocking Pads, Sleds, and Full Contact is permitted. Each player must complete 8 hours of conditioning before full contact can begin. Full contact is defined as physical contact between

two players in a forceful or aggressive manner with the intent to thwart or stop the opposing player's movement.

- E. Blocking Pads, Tackling Dummies and Sleds may be utilized during the conditioning days with the following restrictions:
1. Coaches can only handle the blocking pads or tackling dummies during this time. No players shall hold a bag or shield for drills.
 2. Emphasis shall be placed on teaching "Technique" as oppose to aggressive movements.
 3. Blocking pads and tackling dummies shall be utilized for teaching at low speeds and limited movement during this time i.e. (fit drills, blocking drills and hand placement).
- F. Practices will be limited to a maximum of two hours per day. All practices, scrimmages, and games must be conducted under strict supervision by a trustee. Any activities containing contact between participants shall be limited to 1 division up or down. Teams shall hold practices as follows:
1. Practice week 1 thru 4 -- 5 days for a total of 10 hours
 2. Practice week 5 thru 6 – 4 days for a total of 8 hours
 3. Practice week 7 thru end of season – 3 days for a total of 6 hours (Unless **RULE 3 G** Applies)
- G. Teams with a bye week shall be permitted to practice an additional 2 hours during the bye week. The term "bye week" will equal a true bye week, a non-scheduled game, or a forfeit.
- H. Curfew for ALL practices shall be 9pm
- I. One Trustee from each organization shall be present at all practices, scrimmages and games. Coaches shall not act as Trustees at the same time.
- J. With exception of controlled scrimmages, all practices MUST be held at each Organizations official practice facility or a location approved by the Governing Board.

4. TCYFCC SCHEDULE

- A. All TCYFCC games shall be scheduled on Saturdays according to the following timeframes.
1. Teams may not begin warm-up after their official check in.
 2. Check-In times may be adjusted in the event of early or late running games.

Division	Check In Time	Game Time
Mighty Mites	8:00am	9:00am
Peewees	9:30am	10:30am
Midgets	11:00am	12:00pm
Junior Varsity	1:00pm	2:00pm
Varsity	3:00pm	4:00pm

5. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

- A. Each player shall have a complete uniform, including: Helmet with face guard, with plastic clips, shoulder pads, thigh pads, hip and knee pads, tailbone pad, and shoes with non-removable rubber cleats or screw-on cleats with no metal tips, colored (no white/clear) mouth protector that is not required to be attached to the helmet, and numbered team jerseys. (Pacifier style mouth protectors are permitted in any color including white)
- B. All equipment must be in good condition and certified for the age and/or weight classification for which it is to be used. Helmets must bear the "NOCSAE" seal and evidence of safety inspection within the previous two (2) years. Proof of inspection will be turned in to the TCYFCC Vice President no later than the June TCYFCC Board meeting, to be submitted to the TCYFCC Secretary and added to the official records.
- C. Once assigned, a player's jersey number shall not normally be changed from that shown on the official roster. Jersey numbers shall be defined as 0-99. There are no number range requirements assigned by position.
- D. Should a player's jersey be lost, stolen, or damaged irreparably, and a change in jersey number is required, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. The player's organization shall notify the opposing trustee. The TCYFCC Vice President and/or Football Director must be notified prior to the next scheduled game by the changing organization.
 2. The opposing trustee shall change the number and sign the change on all copies of the official roster and the attendance sheet
- E. Should a player's jersey be irreparably damaged during the course of a game, and a number substitution is required, the opposing head coach, both Trustees, and the press box shall be notified of the change.
1. Should the number substitution affect subsequent games, the procedure outlined in **RULE 5—UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT.C** above shall be followed.

6. STOPPING, SHORTENING, OR POSTPONING GAMES

- A. All games must be played to completion, except under such conditions or circumstances where the safety and welfare of the players may be adversely affected. Both organizations Trustees must agree to any shortening of a game.
- B. A game may be postponed for good cause, providing the visiting team is given at least four (4) hours' notice and there is agreement by both teams.
1. In the event the team desiring to postpone a game is unable to contact the head coach, Trustee, or president of the opposing team's organization, or the opposing team will not agree to a postponement, then the question shall be submitted to the TCYFCC Executive Board whose decision shall be final.
 2. In the event a visiting team fails to show or shows with less than the required eleven (11) players, such team's organization shall be required to pay the officiating fees for that game and the game result shall be recorded as a forfeit.
- C. In the event of inclement weather or adverse conditions, play shall be delayed for 1 hour before the game is called. If the game is called, a make-up time shall be scheduled within 1 week (1st practice night or as soon as officials can be secured). When the game is rescheduled for a different date a check in shall be required before the start of the game.
- D. In the event of stopping or shorten a game(s) due to unforeseen circumstances, the minimum play requirement shall be waived. If the game is rescheduled the minimum play rule shall be reinstated.
- E. In the event a game is suspended the home team shall immediately notify the TCYFCC Football Director and Vice President.

7. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- A. Any football player who is or was considered a member of a High School team who dresses out for a game during the period of August 1st through December 31st, shall be ineligible to play during that year.
- B. Every participant must be enrolled in and attending an accredited school or registered with the County they reside for home schooling (appropriate documentation required), unless the participant is too young to attend school. Any player who is not enrolled in and attending an accredited school shall be ineligible to participate, unless he has graduated from an accredited school. Any player who quits school after the season begins shall become ineligible to continue to play.
1. The responsibility of notification of withdrawal from school shall be the responsibility of the individual player. Failure to notify the organization of his/her withdrawal shall result in his immediate removal from the team.
 2. Any other players knowledgeable of an individual's withdrawal from school shall be required to report such withdrawal to his/her organization's officials. Failure to do so may result in the individual also being subject to dismissal from the team.
 3. Any organization official knowledgeable of an individual's withdrawal from school shall be responsible to investigate the situation in an appropriate manner and report it to the TCYFCC President in a timely fashion.
 4. If failing to report the non-attendance of a player by any individual—player, coach, or organization official—is deemed to be of a vindictive nature, disciplinary action may be warranted.
- C. A violation of **RULE 7—PLAYER ELIGIBILITY** shall result in the forfeiture of all games at the point in time in which the player became ineligible and continued to participate.

- D. If at any time during the season the eligibility of a player becomes a question, after a majority vote of the TCYFCC Executive Board, the questioned player(s) may be required to provide documents to prove his/her eligibility (i.e. original birth certificate, school records, etc.)
- E. A player(s) may move from one member organization to another member organization in successive years with the written consent of both organizations. Not giving written consent is only for the purpose of collecting equipment or unpaid funds or any documented disciplinary actions from the organization. This rule may be waived with the written consent of both organizations or the approval of the TCYFCC Executive Board.
 - 1. Any participant found owing any money to an organization will be suspended until the obligation is taken care of. The organization shall not be held liable.
- F. A player cannot move from one (1) organization to another after their first day of practice.
 - 1. This rule can only be waived by the TCYFCC Executive Board.
- G. Football player’s attendance check is to be conducted 1 hour prior to game time. A trustee’s initial will be required on the Attendance sheet each game week. Attendance check-in sheet must be placed in front of the Official Binder. Any player not checked in by kickoff will be ineligible for that game.
- H. Game Attendance is required at a minimum of 70% of eligible rostered regular season games to be eligible to participate in Post season play. Exceptions will only be granted for documented medical issues, with TCYFCC Executive Board notification and approval.

8. GAME OFFICIALS

- A. All TCYFCC games shall be played with a minimum of five (5) officials shall be required. One official must remain in the press box to run the clock. For the Playoffs and Super bowl six (6) officials for the J.V. and Varsity game
- B. When determined appropriate, a specific complaint of an official’s conduct or interpretations of Rules shall be forwarded, in writing, to the TCYFCC Vice President and Football Director.
- C. The head game official shall be required sign the Official Ejection Form if presented. Otherwise the head official shall provide an official ejection report. (See **ARTICLE XII—CONDUCT.E.** of the TCYFCC Bylaws)

9. PLAYING RULES

- A. All games shall be played according to the Florida High School Activities Association (FHSA) rules with the following exceptions:
 - 1. Quarters shall be ten (10) minutes in duration for Varsity and Junior Varsity games, eight (8) minutes for Midgets, Peewees, and Mighty Mite games. Halftime will be ten (10) minutes.
 - 2. The following ball sizes shall be used, brand must be genuine leather Wilson or leather Riddell:

<u>Division</u>	<u>Wilson</u>	<u>Riddell</u>
Varsity	TDY	RDY
Junior Varsity	TDJ	RDJ
Midgets	K-2	RDP
Peewees	K-2	RDP
Mighty Mites	K-2	RDP

- 3. All night games preceding a school day shall begin no later than 7:30 p.m. except in extreme circumstances as determined by the TCYFCC President to be in the best interest of the TCYFCC.
- 4. All games should start as close to the scheduled time as possible. A reasonable amount of time shall be allowed for proper player warm-ups, official’s instructions and introduction of team captains.
- 5. During exhibition games only one coach shall be allowed on the playing field during play. The coach is permitted to be in the huddle during play call and must stand 10 yards behind the ball when in play. While the ball is in play there shall be no coaching or interfering with the play or an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be applied.

- a. For Mighty Mite Division only shall be allowed only one coach on the field for the entire season regardless of exhibition, regular season, or playoff games.
- 6. In the Midget, Pee Wee and Mighty Mite divisions, one point shall be scored for running “a point after touchdown” and two (2) points for forward passing or kicking “a point after” touchdown. In all other divisions, two (2) points shall be scored for kicking the “point after touchdown” and one (1) point for running or passing a “point after touchdown”.
- B. All teams shall refrain from running up scores. Coaches and Trustees are under obligation of sportsmanship and fair play to take reasonable steps to avoid running up the scores, and thereby, demoralizing and embarrassing the opposing team.
 - 1. When there is a point spread of thirty-five (35) points or more, the following rules will go into effect:
 - a. There will be a mandatory continuous clock, except for time-outs, official time-outs, and injury time-outs. The team leading by thirty-five (35) points or more is prohibited from calling a time-out during the last two minutes of any game.
 - i. When the point spread falls below thirty-five (35) points, normal time keeping shall resume.
 - b. There shall be no kick offs of any kind. Losing team shall get the ball at their 40 yard line; winning teams shall get the ball at their 20 yard line.
 - c. On punts, the kicker must kick the ball without being rushed. Following the punt, the ball will automatically be dead at the spot where it rolls dead. There shall be NO returns on punts.
 - d. There shall be no passing, reverses, trick plays or blitzing of any kind allowed for the winning team. Any violation shall result in an unsportsmanlike penalty of 15 yards.
 - e. Possible fines/suspensions for violations of rules listed above.
- C. It is the intent of the TCYFCC to see that all players listed on the official roster are given a reasonable opportunity to play in every game, barring sickness, injury or disciplinary action. Therefore, all eligible (non-benched) players that are on the sideline during a game shall be guaranteed a minimum of five (5) plays per game. Any ineligible players will be announced at check in. The five (5) play rule also applies to all Play Offs and Super Bowl games.
 - 1. Breaching this GUIDELINE shall subject the head coach to disciplinary action as follows:
 - a. 1st Offense (Lifetime) – One game week suspension to include all team activities.
 - b. 2nd Offense (Lifetime) – Three game week suspension to include all team activities.
 - c. Additional Offense – Subject to **ARTICLE XVI – DISCIPLINARY PROCESS** of the TCYFCC Bylaws
 - d. Post Season Offense – Post Season Game Forfeit in addition to being subject to **ARTICLE XVI – DISCIPLINARY PROCESS.** of the TCYFCC Bylaws
- D. Each organizations trustee is tasked with the responsibility to ensure all their coaches are familiar with and understand these and all other applicable rules. Copies of appropriate rule must be available at all games.
- E. In the event of a tie game, the Kansas City Tie Breaker (four (4) downs from the ten (10) yard line as defined in the FHSAA rules shall decide the game.

10. OFFICAL ATTENDANCE CHECK

- A. The official attendance check will be held during the preseason games. Trustee/Alternate Trustees shall be responsible for the check-in.
- B. Each team shall present to the designated Trustee three (3) type-written or hand printed official rosters. See **ARTICLE X—TEAM ROSTER AND OFFICIAL BINDER** of the TCYFCC Bylaws.
- C. Prior to the check in of each player, the Trustee representative shall certify that the information on the official rosters and the information in the binder is accurate and matches the player in all respects.
- D. Players shall be checked-in by older age players first, followed by younger age players and each player shall be required to wear or carry his/her properly numbered game jersey. Refer to **ARTICLE X—TEAM ROSTER AND OFFICIAL BINDER** of the TCYFCC Bylaws for specific directions.
- E. Only one (1) TCYFCC Trustees/Alternate Trustee per team shall be present for the official attendance check. No parent or on-lookers shall be allowed in the immediate area.

- F. Any individual who is absent from the official attendance check shall be checked in at the next regular scheduled game. All requirements under **RULE 12—ADDING AND DROPPING PLAYERS** must be met for the individual to be added to the roster.

11. PRE-GAME ATTENDANCE CHECK

- A. Every player shall be checked in prior to game time of every TCYFCC game. This rule will not be waived under any circumstances. (See **RULE 10—OFFICIAL ATTENDANCE CHECK**)
- B. Conduct of Attendance Check;
1. Each team's Attendance Check representative shall be a TCYFCC Trustee, Alternate Trustee, or TCYFCC Executive Board Member. (See **RULE 10—OFFICIAL ATTENDANCE CHECK**.)
 2. Attendance Check shall be attended by the players and Trustees from each team only. Parents, other coaches, and on-lookers shall not be permitted in the weigh-in area.
 3. During Post Season play, a trustee from a team not involved may conduct Attendance Check. In the absence of an involved team's trustee with the approval of the absent team.
 4. Attendance Check shall be conducted in game gear – no hats, jewelry, or headphones, etc.
 5. Any Player who is game ineligible due to injury, illness, or disciplinary action shall be declared during check-in. Opposing Trustees shall be notified of any changes to a players game eligibility status after check in.

12. ADDING DROPPING PLAYERS

- A. No players shall be added after the final sealing or all games will be forfeited by such team and the team adding such players shall be ineligible for post season games. Games may continue to be played by such teams, but for record-keeping purposes, a win shall be credited to any opponent team(s) in which they continue to play after Game Week Four.
- B. If a rostered team drops below fifteen (15) rostered players for any division they may add back to the maximum of twenty (20) rostered players without penalty. The organization must notify the TCYFCC Vice President and TCYFCC Football Director and receive written approval from the TCYFCC Executive Board to do this.
- C. Any player deleted from a team's official roster may not be reinstated without the approval of the TCYFCC Executive Board.
- D. No organization shall alter or change its own roster. Any changes must be made by another organization's Trustee or Alternate Trustee. All Changes must be signed and dated by both organizations' Trustee.

13. CHAMPIONSHIPS/PLAYOFF POSITIONS TIE BREAKER RULE

- A. Championships and Play Off positions shall be determined in the following manner:
1. Win – Loss Record (overall record)
 2. Head to Head
 3. Coin Toss
 - a. If Playoff Elimination is in question then a mini game shall replace the coin toss
 - b. Mini Game shall be defined as one half (½) of a game. Each team shall have 2 time outs. In the event of a tie then Kansas City tie breaker rules shall apply. During Mini Game the 5 play rule shall not be enforced.

14. PLAYOFF AND SUPERBOWL

A. Play Offs:

1. Play Off games to determine the participants in the Super Bowl will be scheduled as follows:
 - a. According to the final regular season standing; and, the table below. Second Round of Play-Offs seeding remains from the first round.

Rank	vs	Rank
1 st Place	vs	8 th Place
2 nd Place	vs	7 th Place
3 rd Place	vs	6 th Place
4 th Place	vs	5 th Place

2. Highest seeded team shall choose the game site, unless the opponent is hosting the playoff round. Highest seed team shall choose sideline.

B. Super Bowl:

1. The second round of Play-Off winners shall meet in a single game—Super Bowl.
2. Super Bowl shall be held at an approved high school game field or other approved venue with proper amenities capable of handling the volume of participants and spectators that accompany said event. Approval shall be determined by Executive Board Vote.

C. Game Day of Champions

1. Official schedule may include the Game Day of Champions. Super Bowl winners for the squads, designated by the Hillsborough Sports Authority, have the option to attend if the Super Bowl winning team does not choose to participate; the Super Bowl runner up has the option to attend.

15. RULE CHANGES

- A. TCYFCC Football Rules may be reviewed for possible changes by the Board of Trustees in even-numbered years.
- B. Should any rule changes become necessary at any time, the procedure specified in **ARTICLE VIII—AMENDMENTS** of the TCYFCC Bylaws shall be adhered to.

16. PROTESTS

- A. An official's judgment call will not be considered as grounds for a protest.
- B. All other protests shall be filed in accordance with By-Law **ARTICLE XVI—DISCIPLINARY PROCESS** of the TCYFCC Bylaws
 1. Protests must be submitted; in writing, with evidence and \$100.00 filing fee, to the TCYFCC President or the President's designee no later than forty-eight (48) hours after termination of the protest game.
 2. Post Season Protests must be submitted; in writing, with evidence and \$100.00 filing fee, to the TCYFCC President or the President's designee no later than twenty-four (24) hours after termination of the protest game.
- C. It must be the responsibility of the protesting team to furnish tangible evidence of a contestable violation.

17. SPECIAL RULES FOR THE MIGHTY MITE DIVISION

- A. Regulation field shall be used. Eleven players per side.
- B. NFHS rules will be used with exceptions listed on this sheet.
- C. Each game shall be played using four (4) eight minute quarters, regulation clock.
- D. Delay of game shall be called following 30 seconds from the ready for play signal.
- E. There shall be no kick-offs. The ball will be placed on the 40-yard line.
- F. Kicks:
 - 1. On 4th down, the head coach of the team on offense must declare to the referee if he is going for it, punting or wants the ball placed ten yards down field.
 - a. The offense may choose to punt the ball or have the ball spotted ten yards from their line of scrimmage and the ball will turn over on downs at that spot.
 - b. On punts, the kicker must kick the ball without being rushed. The defense must move outside the hash marks. Following the punt, the ball will automatically be dead at the spot where it rolls dead. There shall be NO returns on punts.
- G. One (1) coach may be on the field, with each team and may not have contact, including verbal, once the ball is snapped. The coach shall be positioned ten yards behind the offense or defense.
 - 1. First offense: warning,
 - 2. Second offense: 15 yards for unsportsmanlike,
 - 3. Third offense: ejection.
- H. Extra points must be by run, pass, or kick. Run = 1 point. Pass = two (2) points will be scored for passing (pass must be a forward pass which is caught across the line of scrimmage) or kicking for the “point after touchdown” and one point (1) for running the “point after touchdown.” Kick=2 points. There shall be no field goal attempts.
- I. If a game ends in a tie, Kansas tie-breaker shall be used.
- J. All penalty enforcement shall be in accordance with NFHS rules as used in all other tackle games used in youth football.
- K. Only one defensive player may line up between the offensive guards. This permitted defensive player may only line up in the gap and may not be head up on the center. This defensive player must be in a 3 or 4 point stance and may not engage the center until the center/QB exchange is complete. Violation of this rule is a live ball foul for “Illegal Defense” and shall result in a 5 yard penalty assessed against the defensive team. All other players have to lineup outside of the guards or on an outside shade. They can be standing or in a 3 or 4 point stance. None of these players are allowed to stunt into the A gap. There shall be no blitzing of the A gap until the ball is snapped. Violation of this rule is a live ball foul for “Illegal Defense” and shall result in a 5 yard penalty against the defensive team.
- L. No defensive player may blitz between the offensive guards and center (A Gap). Blitzing shall be defining as an intentional movement into the A gap prior to the flow of the play being established, or reaction to a hand off, by the offense. Violation of this rule is a live ball foul for “Illegal Defense” and shall result in a 5 yard penalty against the defensive team.