

FINAL

2014
NORTHERN ROCKET FOOTBALL LEAGUE, INC.
RULES / BY-LAWS

NRFL MISSION STATEMENT

“ROCKET FOOTBALL” and “FLAG FOOTBALL” are recreational programs for the benefit of children, conducted by interested adults. Although any sport is competitive, this competitiveness is not emphasized, at least in the perspective of winning or losing. The primary purpose of “ROCKETS” is that every child is placed on a team and every player participates as equally as possible. RULES ARE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE MAJORITY OF THE PLAYERS. Believing that each game is incentive enough to provide a competitive atmosphere, there are no official standings kept and no championships awarded. Teams are constructed through the league sponsored draft process, and in scheduling an effort is made to match teams of similar strengths.

FLAG FOOTBALL teams are constructed by an area's Field Director and are not subject to NRFL Draft Regulations or Requirements. FLAG FOOTBALL games are scheduled by the individual areas and they are solely responsible for such contests.

**THE NORTHERN ROCKET FOOTBALL LEAGUE FOLLOWS
MHSAA RULES EXCEPT FOR DIFFERENCES
OUTLINED IN THESE RULES.**

**IN THOSE INSTANCES THE
NORTHERN ROCKET FOOTBALL LEAGUE RULES
TAKE PRECEDENCE.**

NONE of the NORTHERN ROCKET FOOTBALL LEAGUE, INC. rules can be waived by any person for any reason. Anyone willfully violating any rule will be suspended for one (1) year. Reinstatement/appeal procedures are outlined in the NRFL, Inc. Guidelines.

A. PLAYING TIME / ROSTER LIMITS

1. All players shall start either on offense, defense and thereafter play as equally as possible.

2. Team size; a maximum of 30 players and a minimum of 15. **Less than 15 players is acceptable to accommodate smaller areas and/or lack of sign-ups, however no team shall be allowed more than the maximum of 30 players AND all players must receive as equal playing time as possible during games.**

3. The league reserves the right to request an area to amend roster size and/or composition if necessary to create adequate numbers of teams for scheduling purposes.

B. AGE GROUPS - (LEAGUE AGE)

1. A player's age on **September 1** shall determine his/her age for the season. Proper verification of birthdates must be furnished at time of sign-up, either a birth certificate, baptismal record or school record. **THE HOME AREA SHOULD KEEP A COPY OF THIS BIRTHDATE VERIFICATION ON HAND FOR EACH PLAYER.**

2. There shall be no 13/14 year old ninth graders nor 15 year old eighth graders participating.

3. NO player may either practice or play who has not turned in a NRFL/Home Area Permission/Hold Harmless Agreement signed by the player's parents. **ANY TEAM USING AN UNREGISTERED PLAYER OR WHOSE COACH AND/OR FIELD DIRECTOR ALLOWS A ROSTER SUBSTITUTION WILL FORFEIT ALL GAMES IN WHICH THE PLAYER WAS USED AND THE ENTIRE COACHING STAFF OF THE TEAM PERMANENTLY SUSPENDED.**

4. Each member area must, **MAINTAIN COPIES OF ALL FULLY COMPLETED PERMISSION SLIPS** and provide copies of all slips electronically to the league prior to the first scheduled game. **IF unable to furnish electronic copies the area will maintain such slips and furnish to the league upon demand. (N. 1, page 9)**

C. WEIGHTS

SOUTHERN & NORTHERN DIVISION - GENERAL

1. The weight limits in the various age groups are as follows:
2. **Any child over the weights below must play Tackle to Tackle for their age division.**
 - 8-9 year old weight limit @ 125 lbs.
 - 10-11 year old weight limit @ 145 lbs.
 - 12-14 year old weight limit @ 170 lbs.

****SEE SEASON FOR PROCEDURES****

****SEE SPECIAL RULES****

D. CAST POLICY

1. No player wearing a cast of any type may participate in a game or practice of an NRFL member area. ***This policy is to be strictly enforced and CANNOT be waived by a doctors slip or by parental consent.***

E. FIRST AID - EMERGENCIES

1. All Field Directors, head coaches and assistants should be at least be acquainted in basic first aid procedures.

2. AN EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN TO EVACUATE AN INJURED PLAYER (AMBULANCE, ETC.) SHOULD BE PART OF EVERY MEMBER AREA'S PRE-SEASON PLANNING.

3. Each team is to be equipped with a first aid kit, including ice packs, which is present at all team practices and games. This is in addition to the field site first aid kit.

4. CONCUSSION POLICY- ANY PLAYER VISIBLY SUFFERING FROM OR COMPLAINING OF A HEADACHE, BLURRED VISION, NAUSEA OR OTHER SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH A CLOSED HEAD INJURY/CONCUSSION SHALL BE REMOVED FROM THE GAME AND UNABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY FURTHER ACTIVITY UNTIL RELEASED FROM MEDICAL SUPERVISION.

a. A medical release signed by a doctor must be on record with the Field Director of the injured players home area and provided to the NRFL along with a matching injury report. ALL NRFL ADMINISTRATORS, COACHES AND OFFICIALS WILL BE BRIEFED ON THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AT PRESEASON COACHING/OFFICIATING MEETINGS.

F. EQUIPMENT

1. Pads, Mouth Guards, Visors, Misc.

a. Every player must wear **football** shoulder pads, helmet with face mask and football pants with pads. ALL playing equipment must be NOCSAE approved. Every effort should be made by all Field Directors and coaches to see that no obsolete or over-aged equipment is used. If neck rolls are worn by a player, the NRFL strongly suggests a "proper fit." "Proper fit" being defined as a "neck roll that adequately protects the neck, but still allows movement of the head in all directions."

b. All players must wear mouth protectors either clear or colored, and unless the player has written permission from his/her dentist ALL Mouthpieces must be attached to the helmet facemask and worn in the mouth while on the playing field. Following a WARNING, the referees will assess a 15-yard penalty for violation of this rule.

c. Visors, either clear or tinted may be worn, however the tint MUST not be so dark as to keep the players eyes from being visible.

d. Do-rags, or skull caps (head covers), are acceptable as long as they DO NOT extend beyond the bottom rear lip/edge of the helmet. The same applies to ponytails, locks, etc.

2. Cleats

a. Cleats must be of the plastic, rubber molded variety. There should be NO metal caps and any metal rivets MUST be submerged in the cleat and any shoe having metal protruding WILL NOT be worn. **SHOES HAVING SCREW-IN CLEATS OF THE PLASTIC VARIETY ARE ALLOWED.**

3. Footballs

a. There will be two (2) football sizes for use in ALL NRFL areas. The 8/9 yr. old age group will use the #6 Intermediate size football and the other age groups 10/11 and 12/14 would use the #7 Junior size. NO EXCEPTIONS.

b. ALL FOOTBALLS MUST BE ON THE APPROVED LIST *PRIOR* TO THE START OF THE SEASON AND ONLY THOSE FOOTBALLS WILL BE ALLOWED. AREAS NOT HAVING FOOTBALL USAGE APPROVED *FORCE* THEIR TEAMS TO USE THE FOOTBALL(S) OF ANY HOME SITE WHERE THEY MAY BE PLAYING.

c. ****PROCEDURE: ALL FOOTBALLS APPROVED FOR USE BY THE 8/9 yr. old age group MUST BE SO MARKED WITH A PERMENANT MARKER WITH THE CLEARLY VISIBLE “8/9” ON THE SIDES.**

1. All footballs must be checked for proper size/age group by the Field Director or the Head Official *prior* to the start of a game. That football will be the only one used by that team in the game.

2. Each member area must have at least one (1) approved game football on site for all home games in the event that a visiting team does not have, or presents an unapproved football. Questions regarding this matter should be directed to the NRFL COO.

3. It is not necessary to have area footballs approved each year as long as the football they use is on the NRFL master list as an "approved football". USE THE LIST AS A GUIDELINE WHEN PURCHASING NEW FOOTBALLS. THE APPROVED LIST WILL BE POSTED AND MAINTAINED ON THE NRFL WEBSITE.

G. COACHES

1. Certification/Training/ ID

a. All teams are to be coached by a minimum of two (2) and a maximum of (7) coaches, and ALL coaches holding any appropriate NRFL Certification (see below). All

coaches, including assistants must be at least 21 years of age .* (See NRFL Coaching Intern Rules G.1-e, page 5).

b. ALL coaches are required to take and pass the USA Football Certification Course as prescribed by the NRFL. ALL coaches must also attend an NRFL Rules meeting AND obtain an NRFL issued ID as determined by the league.

c. ALL coaches will submit and pass a Michigan State Police background check as conducted by the league. (or its school, parks/rec equivalent)

d. ID's are issued each season to all coaches. To obtain an ID each coach must complete the requirements noted above, present a valid driver's license or state ID and pay the required fee as set forth by the NRFL. These ID's are to be presented/shown to the Field Director at each game site prior to each game. If an ID is lost, a coach may present their valid driver's license/state ID and have their name checked against the NRFL master list.

d. No coach will have sideline privileges without proper NRFL identification and confirmation per the master list.

e. With prior approval of the area Field Director and the NRFL Director of Personnel, a team may have **no more** than one(1) assistant coach per team classified as a *Coaching Intern* between the ages of (18-20). This *intern* will meet all NRFL requirements for passing the USA Football Coaching Certification Course, attendance at a coaching meeting and passing a background check. He/she will also be issued an ID. Any area using an *intern* must coordinate an evaluation procedure with the Director of Personnel and furnish complete contact information prior to the start of the season. Under no circumstances will this *coaching intern* serve in any capacity other than as an assistant and NO *interns* will be added to coaching rosters AFTER the start of the season.

2. Field Behavior, Sportsmanship, Etc

a. ALL coaches must remain on the sidelines as in regular high school rules (*see 8/9 Rules for exceptions), and may enter the playing field to converse with their players only during called time outs. Coaches and players on the sidelines must remain within the 25-yard line markers. There shall be an AUTOMATIC 15 yard penalty for any member of the coaching staff, players or parents on the playing field and interrupting the normal progress of the game.

b. **ZERO TOLERANCE COACHING BEHAVIOR** ANY COACH OR ASST. COACH entering the field of play to argue an official's call in an unsportsmanlike or hostile manner, or inciting his players or fans to harass the officials about a call and/or subsequently EJECTED FROM THE GAME SHALL BE IMMEDIATELY DISMISSED FROM THE PROGRAM IN QUESTION AND PERMENANTLY BARRED FROM ANY/ALL NRFL ACTIVITIES.**

c. Field Directors are responsible for identifying violations of rules/regulations or conduct by coaches (their own as well as visiting coaches) that require “off the field” discipline. The use of the NRFL Game Report should be used to corroborate these violations. The President/CEO and Regional Director/COO will be immediately notified of such violations so as to rapidly facilitate the appropriate disciplinary action, if any, as set forth NRFL Rules and/or Guidelines. Strict compliance of procedures governing reinstatement and/or appeals procedures outlined in the NRFL Guidelines will be practiced by all parties.

d. Any player using profanity, degrading language, unsportsmanlike gestures or taunting of another player, coach or official shall be penalized 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct. This penalty shall be considered a team penalty and any subsequent such infraction from ANY player of the same team WILL RESULT IN AN IMMEDIATE EJECTION FROM THE GAME OF THAT PLAYER.

e. Concerning the sportsmanship of spectators and fans, it will be explained at any/all coach’s seminars/meetings and by every area Field Director to their coaches; it is the coach’s responsibility to control their team’s fans (parents). If the coach CANNOT control their team’s fans, then the Field Director or Asst. Field Director must step in and restore order. It should be explained that at the first such offense an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be enforced and 15-yards marked off against the offending team. A second offense will require the Field Director to stop the game and if the individual (s) causing the disturbance can be identified, they will be instructed to leave the facility or the game will be stopped and a forfeit awarded the opposing team.

1. ALL SPECTATORS MUST REMAIN AT LEAST 5-YARDS FROM ALL BOUNDARIES OF THE PLAYING FIELD.

2. ANY SPECTATOR ENTERING THE PLAYING FIELD FOR REASONS OTHER THAN A PLAYER INJURY SHALL BE IMMEDIATELY ESCORTED FROM THE PLAYING FIELD BY EITHER THE FIELD DIRECTOR OR HIS/HER ASSISTANT.

3. IF THE OFFENDING PARTY REFUSES TO LEAVE THE SITE, LAW ENFORCEMENT SHOULD BE CALLED.

f. Referees may penalize a team 15-yards for unsportsmanlike conduct by coaching staff *or* SUPPORTING FANS. This rule also applies to a coach who by action or word entices the fans to act in an unsportsmanlike manner *OR who fails to use his influence to calm the fans.*

****SUSPENSIONS****

Depending on the infraction, (other than ejection from a game) suspensions may range from one week/one game to a permanent ban from all NRFL activities, including coaching. Final determination as to the degree of severity of the discipline or suspension rests with the NRFL Executive Council.

****SPORTSMANSHIP****

Rules governing the conduct of coaches, players and spectators are continuously reviewed by the league in an attempt to stem unsportsmanlike behavior.

H. COACHING MEMBERSHIPS, CHEERLEADING

1. Since ALL coaches are required to take and pass the USA Football Coach's Certification Course (which includes membership) it follows that ALL NRFL Coaches will be USA Football members. The league also endorses membership in the National Federation of Interscholastic Coaches Association (NFICA). However this is not a requirement to coach.

2. In any NRFL area where there is a cheerleading component, that component shall be under nominal supervision of the area Field Director or his/her delegate.

The administrative requirements for the cheer program reside with the member area but ALL cheer activities must be coordinated with the NRFL Director of Cheerleading.

3. Cheerleading components should be age specific in the manner of NRFL Rocket Football age groups.

4. Cheer coaches are required to attend NRFL sessions as indicated each season.

I. OFFICIALS

1. Referees shall be a minimum of 11th grade students. Referees work directly for the Field Director of the area in which they were hired. The said area is responsible for the conduct of game officials before, during and immediately following a game. Problems with game officials are to be brought to the attention of the NRFL Director of Officials. He/she is also responsible for any communication between an area's Field Director and his/her area officials and the NRFL.

2. ALL OFFICIALS MUST ATTEND THE NRFL OFFICIALS CLINIC for continued eligibility to officiate in the league.

**** FLAG FOOTBALL REFEREES (IF USED) MUST BE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OR ADULTS, BUT THE 11TH GRADE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT IS WAIVED. FLAG FOOTBALL OFFICIALS TRAINING IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE AREA FIELD DIRECTOR.**

3. ALL NRFL area officiating crews MUST include at least ONE adult (21 or older) to serve as the head official at all contests. Rules regarding attendance at NRFL Officials Clinic, will still apply. **IF AT ALL POSSIBLE IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE ADULT OFFICIAL BE MHSAA CERTIFIED.**

4. Since referees are volunteers, the following rule is emphasized to reduce problems with fans; Referees may penalize a team 15-yards for unsportsmanlike conduct by coaching staff *or* SUPPORTING FANS. This rule also applies to a coach who by action or word entices the fans to act in an unsportsmanlike manner *OR who fails to use his influence to calm the fans.*

J. CAMPS

1. AREA CAMP/SEMINARS: THE INDIVIDUAL AREAS MAY OPERATE CAMPS/SESSIONS FOR THEIR PLAYERS AS LONG AS THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET;

A. NO SINGLE TEAM CAMPS-THEY MUST BE OPEN TO ALL PLAYERS AND AGE GROUPS

B. CAMPS MUST BE CONDUCTED EITHER BY THE AREA OR THE HIGH SCHOOL COACHING STAFF

C. **NO EQUIPMENT AND NO CONTACT,**

D. **CAMPS MUST BE COMPLETED NO LATER THAN FOUR (4) WEEKS BEFORE THE START OF THE PRACTICE SEASON.**

K. SPECIAL EVENTS

1. SPECIAL EVENTS, GAMES, TOURNAMENTS, ETC. ANY SPECIAL EVENT INVOLVING TEAMS FROM NRFL MEMBER AREAS MUST BE APPROVED BY THE LEAGUE PRIOR TO THE EVENT(*IF IT OCCURS DURING THE SEASON*).

2. THE NORTHERN ROCKET FOOTBALL LEAGUE, INC. HAS CHOSEN NOT TO ENDORSE OR SANCTION ANY TYPE OF TOURNAMENT FOOTBALL ACTIVITY. ANY MEMBER AREA/TEAM CHOOSING TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH AN ACTIVITY DOES SO WITHOUT THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE NRFL AND WILL IN EFFECT BE OPERATING OF THEIR OWN ACCORD.

3. ANY MEMBER AREA OR TEAM PARTICIPATING IN SUCH AN ACTIVITY RISKS VOIDING THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN THE LEAGUE IN THE EVENT OF ANY LIABILITY ISSUES.

L. AWARDS & RECOGNITION

1. ANY AWARDS (TROPHIES/ MEDALS, ETC.) PRESENTED BY AN NRFL MEMBER AREA TO ITS PLAYERS SHALL BE GIVEN TO ALL PLAYERS ON THE TEAM AND NONE SHALL BE GIVEN FOR INDIVIDUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS (IE MOST VALUABLE PLAYER, ETC.)

2. The value of such awards shall be set by the individual member areas.

M. WEATHER

1. Due to the seven (7) game schedule adopted in 1996, there will be no set make-up games for Saturdays that may be cancelled due to inclement weather, to be identified as: TORNADO WATCH OR WARNING, LIGHTNING OR ANY WEATHER RELATED INCIDENT THAT WOULD CAUSE THE RESPECTIVE AREA HIGH SCHOOL TO WITHHOLD THE USE OF THE FIELD. SHOULD

SUCH AN INCIDENT OCCUR, THE NRFL BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL MAKE A DETERMINATION AS TO THE NEED FOR A MAKE UP.

PRESEASON

N. SIGN-UPS

1. ALL areas must have every player/parent fill out and sign the standard form described and supplied by the NRFL noted above. The original forms are to be kept by the member area and prior to the first scheduled game, a copy of each form must be submitted preferably in an electronic format to the NRFL Director of Personnel.

2. Cut-off dates and the late window sign up will be provided each season by the league. Any player not registered by the final date is ineligible to participate in the NRFL for that season, no exceptions.

O. DRAFT PROCEDURES

THIS SHALL BE THE ESTABLISHED PROCEDURE FOR THE SELECTION OF TEAM PERSONNEL IN ALL NRFL MEMBER AREAS:

1. In age groups with more than one (1) team, each team can reserve up to five (5) returning players from the previous year (THIS INCLUDES THE ADDITION OF A TEAM TO AN AGE GROUP OR A COACH MOVING UP OR DOWN). Any coach's son will be included in the protected players so long as other league requirements are met i.e. Weight, age, etc. If there are brothers in the same age group, they will be placed on the same team, a coach choosing one, selects both. Brothers selected in this matter count as two (2) selections of the five (5) reserved picks.

2. Prior to the NRFL draft day, a roster shall be started for EACH team in your area, with ALL coaches identified (attendance at NRFL Coach's Meeting will be verified), each team's five (5) picks shall be identified on the roster and their permission slips kept separate from those in the same age group to be drafted.

a. ROSTERS FROM ALL AREAS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED NO LATER THAN THE ANNOUNCED DRAFT DATE EACH SEASON. THE ROSTERS MUST BE FULLY COMPLETED, I.E., NO MISSING WEIGHTS, D.O.B.'s, ETC. FAILURE TO SUBMIT THE MASTER ROSTERS ON TIME OR SUBMITTING THEM WITH INCOMPLETE INFORMATION WILL DELAY THE AREA'S DRAFT AND POSSIBLY PREVENT THEIR INCLUSION IN WEEK 1 SCHEDULING.

3. The remaining players shall be divided into straight age groups first, then further separated by weight (lightest to heaviest), AND TACKLE FOOTBALL EXPERIENCE.

4. These remaining players beginning with the oldest of the team age group, shall be divided amongst the teams in an anonymous fashion, by the Personnel Director NRFL. The procedure is then repeated with the lower age group players until all are placed on teams.

5. There will be no straight age groups, all teams must be mixed as equally as possible.

6. At the time of the draft, two (2) rosters for each team will be prepared; these will be the official team rosters, one (1) copy will stay with the league, the other with the Field Director of the area. At such time as team jerseys are passed out, the official rosters will be amended to indicate the player's jersey number.

P. PRACTICE

1. The **EXECUTIVE COUNCIL** shall determine the date pre-season practice shall commence. There will be no more than 3 practice sessions held per week, with the exception of the first week of the pre-season when 4 conditioning practices will be allowed.

2. NO CONTACT IS ALLOWED THE FIRST WEEK OF PRACTICE. CONTACT IS DEFINED AS; A PLAYER COMING INTO PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ANOTHER PLAYER, COACH, PARENT OR SLED. A PLAYER MAY COME INTO CONTACT WITH A DUMMY OR SHIELD AT A CONTROLLED PACE TO TEACH PROPER BLOCKING AND/OR TACKLING TECHNIQUES.

3. NO EQUIPMENT OTHER THAN HELMETS IS TO BE WORN DURING NON-CONTACT PRACTICES.

4. After the first **game**, throughout the rest of the season, contact is allowed only at two (2) of the three practice sessions per week.

5. ALL players including those who are assigned to a team via the open window must have the MANDATORY four (4) conditioning practices before engaging in contact.

6. Two-a-day practices are NOT allowed. Cancelled practices may not be "banked" (that is moved to another week to be made up, thereby defeating the purpose of the practice rules).

7. Any inter-squad scrimmages shall be played only against NRFL teams in the same age group. There will be no scrimmages against teams from non-NRFL members.

8. NO team shall play more than the league scheduled seven (7) games in a season.

SEASON

Regulation MHSAA rules, substitution and scoring rules will be in effect EXCEPT where they conflict with NRFL Rules. SHOULD THAT OCCUR, NRFL RULES AS OUTLINED HERE TAKE PRECEDENCE. NRFL MEMBER AREAS ARE PROHIBITED FROM ADOPTING "LOCAL" CHANGES TO THE NRFL RULES. ANY REPORTS OF SUCH PRACTICES WILL BE INVESTIGATED BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND OFFENDERS SUBJECT TO SANCTIONS UP TO AND INCLUDING DISMISSAL FROM THE LEAGUE

Q. SCHEDULING OF GAMES

As a pilot for 2014 : The first 4 games will be a set schedule with the last 3 games done on strength of schedule Basis

****ALL SCHEDULING OF GAMES WILL BE DONE ON A STRENGTH BASIS WEEKLY. This will be in effect for the last 3 games as a pilot for 2014**

The traditional NRFL Scheduling Priorities are as follows:

1. Field availability; which takes into consideration any available (unplayed) opponent within the teams own immediate area.
2. Overall team record.
3. Previous week's record (win-loss-by)
4. Distance (includes both division and non-division opponents)

THESE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THE BASIS OF THE NRFL STRENGTH SCHEDULING PROCEDURE AND REMAIN IN EFFECT THROUGH THE COMPUTER SCHEDULING PROGRAM REDUCED TO ITS SIMPLEST TERMS; THE SCHEDULING ATTEMPTS TO GIVE EACH PLAYER THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS AS WELL AS TO FACE ADVERSITY.

NO SCHEDULING PROCEDURE COMPUTERIZED OR NOT CAN GUARANTEE EITHER SUCCESS OR ADVERSITY, ONLY THE OPPORTUNITY.

ALL SCHEDULING **RIGHTS RESIDE WITH THE NORTHERN ROCKET FOOTBALL LEAGUE, INC.**

R. GAME LENGTH, TIME-OUTS, WARM-UPS, INJURIES

1. ALL age groups will have 4 ten-minute quarters, with no more than a 2 minute rest between quarters and a ten minute halftime. **IF** in the event of a necessity (ex. Ferris State/NRFL Game day) in the interests of time & game management the Field Director may reduce halftime to five minutes so long as the warm-up period is enforced. **The Field Director must inform both teams if half time is to be reduced prior to the start of the game.**

2. Each team is entitled to three, two-minute time outs per half. The clock will stop for all penalties, after a score, following kick-off, an injury, equipment repair, after a punt, or a time-out. **The clock is not stopped for any other reason.**

3. Each team must have a ten-minute warm-up of stretching and/or calisthenics before starting each game and **at least a 2 minute warm up prior to the start of the second half.** These warm-ups are mandatory and will be enforced by the referees. Should either warm-up (pre-game or at halftime) result in a *delayed* start to either half, the team causing the delay will be penalized (unsportsmanlike conduct) 15-yards at the time of the kick-off.

4. In the event of injury to a player, an official time-out will be called. However, the hurt player must report to his sideline after the time-out and remain there at least 3 consecutive playing minutes. The referees will be instructed at the Officials Clinic to enforce this procedure. The Field Director of the home field has the authority to remove a player from the game IF, in their opinion the players is unable to, or it is not in their best interests to safely continue.

S. JERSEYS

1. If two (2) teams, are playing each other and have the same color jerseys, the home team (if they are available) will change to another color or use field/practice jerseys. Due to the safety issue, **NO OVER-JERSEY TYPE FIELD JERSEY'S MAY BE PURCHASED FOR USE IN NRFL AREAS.**

T. WEIGH IN

1. The weight limits in the various age groups are as follows:
2. Any child over the weights below must play Tackle to Tackle for their age division.

- 8-9 year old weight limit @ 125 lbs.
- 10-11 year old weight limit @ 145 lbs.
- 12-14 year old weight limit @ 170 lbs.

a. Players must be weighed in before each game and meet the weight restrictions. **ALL PLAYERS MAY WEIGH IN WITHOUT THEIR HELMETS.** Each player must be stamped on the hand or wrist when qualified and no player may participate without such a mark. A Field Director, coach or official may ask to see a players mark at any time. **HAND GUARDS/ARM PADS MUST BE HELD NOT WORN DURING THE WEIGH IN PROCESS.**

b. Each team must have a coach witness the weigh-in of the opposing team. Any player who does not make weight at the initial weigh-in has until the official start of the game to make weight. After that he/she must wait until

halftime to weigh-in, *IF* they still cannot make weight at that time they must sit out the game. **Shoulder pads must be removed from a player unable to participate and head referee must be informed by the Field Director.**

c. A player may remove socks or t-shirts to make weight but may not put them back on once the playing weight is achieved. **AT NO TIME MAY ANY PLAYER CHANGE THEIR EXISTING EQUIPMENT, OTHER THAN SHOES, TO MAKE WEIGHT. You must weigh-in, football spikes or tennis shoes only.**

d. Any Field Director **and/or coach** that knowingly allows an overweight player to participate forfeits ALL games the offending areas teams participated in that day (home and away). Forfeits the areas right to play home games the next time the area is scheduled for home contests. The offending area is immediately placed on probation pending a full investigation by the NRFL Executive Council.

U. FIELD RULES

1. The football field is 100 yards long for all age groups.
2. The Down markers/chains are to be located on the HOME SIDE of the field ONLY.
3. Chain crews may be volunteers; however they are considered part of the officiating crew. Members of the chain crew may not coach, cheer, or interfere with players, coaches, or officials during any game.
4. Kick off's are from the 40 yard line. ****SEE SPECIAL 8/9 RULES****

V. GADGET PLAYS

1. In keeping with the primary mission of the NRFL, which is teaching football fundamentals and sportsmanship, the following "GAGDGET" plays are not permitted:

2. CENTER SNEAKS, FUMBLEROOSKIS, BOUNCE PASSES, OR ANY PLAY WHERE THE RECEIVER/BALL CARRIER LEAVES THE PLAYING FIELD AND RETURNS TO HANDLE THE BALL. PLAYERS INVOLVED IN THE PLAY SHALL HAVE BEEN IN THE HUDDLE OF THE TEAM ON THE FIELD IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE START OF THE PLAY.

a. PENALTY- the team attempting to use one of the above plays shall be penalized with both loss of down and a 15-yard assessment.

W. POINT AFTER ATTEMPT (PAT)

1. 8/9/& 10/11 age groups, PAT conversion will be run/passed. THERE WILL BE NO PLACE KICKS.

2. 12/14 age groups (all Divisions) PLACE KICK ATTEMPT FOR A 2-POINT CONVERSION IS ALLOWED BUT IS STRICTLY AN OPTION. A blocked PAT place kick attempt CANNOT be returned.

3. **THERE WILL BE NO FIELD GOAL ATTEMPTS AT ANY LEVEL.**

X. FUMBLES

1. By MHSAA Rules a stripped football is considered a fumble. **At all age groups both the defense and offense can advance a fumble, (all levels, all divisions).** However it is suggested that coaches refrain from encouraging their players to purposely strip the football.

Y. PUNTS

1. In the 10/11 and 12/14 (ALL DIVISIONS), **the defense may rush the kicker, however** there will be NO contact allowed with the offensive center during long snapping process involved with punting the ball, or in a PAT placekick situation in the 12/14 age groups. This has been adopted to promote player safety.

2. Referees shall be instructed to enforce any violations in the following manner:

a. DEFENSIVE CONTACT WITH THE OFFENSIVE CENTER IN A PUNTING SITUATION (LONG SNAP ONLY) WILL BE ASSESSED AS A PERSONAL FOUL, WITH A 15-YARD WALK-OFF AND AN AUTOMATIC FIRST DOWN. This penalty is only in an obvious 4th down punting situation and not on a shotgun snap on 1, 2 or 3 down.

Z. SCORING

1. ANY TEAM OUT-SCORING AN OPPONENT BY MORE THAN 24 POINTS COULD BE SUBJECT TO A BYE THE FOLLOWING SATURDAY.

*****IF THE SCORE IN THE GAME REACHES A 24-POINT DIFFERENTIAL, A TIME-OUT MAY BE CALLED AND A MANDATORY CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD ON THE FIELD BETWEEN BOTH COACHES, THE HEAD OFFICIAL AND THE FELD DIRECTOR. THEY WILL REVIEW THE GAME TO THAT POINT AND DECIDE UPON APPROPRIATE CONDUCT FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE CONTEST. THERE WILL BE NO SUSPENSION OR FORFEITURE OF THE GAME. POST-GAME CONSEQUENCES WILL BE DETERMINED AS OUTLINED IN THESE BY-LAWS.***

AA. GAME REPORTS

1. At the completion of every game, one coach from each team must sign a game sheet. Refusal by any coach to sign a game report may result in disciplinary action.

BB. GAME REPORT SUBMISSION - SCORE REPORTS

1. As noted each season by the NRFL, each Field Director or representative for that area MUST submit the scores to the league following the process outlined at the beginning of each season, generally before NOON the Sunday immediately following game days. After reporting of all scores, all game reports must be submitted as well. ****FAILURE TO SUBMIT GAME SCORES AS REQUIRED WILL DELAY THE SCHEDULE FOR THE ENTIRE LEAGUE AND MAY MEAN THE OFFENDING AREA HAS NO GAMES SCHEDULED FOR THE FOLLOWING WEEK.**

ALL TEAMS- A NEON ORANGE COLORED STICKER SHALL BE AFFIXED TO FRONT OF PLAYERS HELMET ON ALL PLAYERS WEIGHING ABOVE THE ALLOWED WEIGHT FOR THAT DIVISION (TACKLE TO TACKLE). AT THE TIME OF WEIGH-IN.

Player selection will be according to NRFL Draft Guidelines as they relate to this unique format. Close cooperation will be required of all areas, Field Directors, etc. **Questions should be referred to the Special Divisions Representative of the NRFL who in conjunction with the Director of Personnel will resolve any issues.**

1. All players must have proof of age (copies) on file with their area Field Director and the Director of Personnel, NRFL, PRIOR to beginning practice.
2. All players must have a signed waiver (Permission Slip/ Hold Harmless Agreement) on file with their Field Director and the NRFL prior to start of practice.
3. Pre-game weigh-in MUST be conducted and witnessed by the Field Director or Assistant Field Director.
4. Except for the noted differences all other aspects of Special Division games shall follow standard MHSAA rules *except* if they conflict with NRFL Rules in which case NRFL Rules shall apply.

12/ 14 DIVISION - SPECIAL RULES

12/14 YR. AGE GROUP

To attempt to create parity among teams in the 12/14 year old age group two “divisions” within the age grouping will be formed when all team rosters are received but *prior* to the first weeks scheduling.

A “Blue” Division for those teams that have no 14 yr. olds; and the number of 13 yr. olds does not exceed 25 % of the total number of players in the 12/14 yr. age group for that area.

A “Red” Division for those areas that have 14 yr. olds and/or 25% or more of their total number of players at the 13 yr. old age level.

At the time of the NRFL Draft all 12/14 yr. old teams will be placed in the appropriate division based upon the ages of their players.

The 25% total of 13 yr. olds applies to the area regardless of the number of teams. Naturally in the case of multiple teams, the 13 & 14 yr. olds would be equitably distributed through the draft process.

There would be no crossover competition between the “Red” and “Blue” Divisions until after Week 4 of the season when the strength of scheduling program would have determined the stronger teams in both divisions. There **COULD BE** crossover scheduling beginning in Week 5 (all other scheduling parameters being used and met) although that is not to assume that there would be crossover scheduling.

8/9 YR OLD SPECIAL RULES DIVISION

DEFENSIVE LINE

1. The DEFENSIVE LINE can have no more than 6 players on the Line of Scrimmage (LOS). Of these 6 ONLY the Defensive Ends (2) can be standing- as long as they are on the outside shoulder of the last offensive lineman (end or OT) to the DE's side of the formation. (In the event the offensive end is split out, the DE may be positioned either off the OT or the end). The other 4 Defensive Linemen MUST be in either a 3 or 4 point stance. NO Defensive players other than the Defensive Line may cross the LOS.

2. NO BLITZING - defensive players behind the defensive line (any player not a part of or defined as the defensive line noted above), CANNOT cross the line of scrimmage UNTIL the ball carrier advances OUTSIDE the offensive line tackles.

PUNTS

1. The ball will be handed to the punter by the referee, after the rest of the players on both offense and defense kneel down. TWO player(s) on the defense may be back to field the punt. NO team player other than the punter and the punt receiver may move until the ball is either caught or rolls dead.

2. The punter must be at least 3-yards behind the line of scrimmage to punt.

3. The punt must travel at least 10-yards and if it does not, the referee will spot the ball 10-yards from the line of scrimmage for play. **THERE IS NO PUNT RETURN.**

KICK OFFS

1. For kickoff's, the kicking team will kick from the 50 yard line, receiving team will be at the 40 yard line. 8/9 Yr. olds ONLY.

PENALTIES

1. Maximum penalty for 8/9 year-olds will be 10-yards.

COACHES

THE 8/9 YEAR OLD SEASON WILL BE DIVIDED INTO THE FIRST 3 GAMES WHERE A COACH IS ALLOWED ON THE FIELD AND THE LAST 4 GAMES WHERE NO COACH IS ALLOWED ON THE FIELD.

During the first three games of the season, ONE coach per team may be present on the playing field, but shall not INTERFERE either physically or verbally while play is in progress. The coach must remain at least 10-yards behind the line of scrimmage and out of the playing area when a play is in progress.

NRFL FLAG RULES are listed separately