

AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL, INC.

OFFICIAL
RULES AND REGULATIONS

REVISED

2009.1.21

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The international headquarters of AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL, INC. (AYF) is located in Miami, FL.

Your comments and suggestions are solicited and encouraged to make your membership with AYF a more enjoyable experience.

The AYF website at www.AmericanYouthFootball.com is a good way to keep current with AYF activities and offers. For all AYF membership management, services, and publications, visit the control Panel at www.MyAYF.com. Each local Association should have its own password and access to all of the information and benefits of AYF. Your password will be given to you upon registration. If you do not have a password please contact your Conference or the AYF office directly by email to Forms@AmericanYouthFootball.com

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AYF is the fastest growing youth organization in America and in just nine years is in all 50 states with more than 400,000 documented participants.

American Youth Football is on a mission to give back to the community. The **NFL** recognizes American Youth Football's firm commitment to its **GIVING BACK** campaign and has made AYF a national youth partner of the National Football League. American Youth Football's "Giving Back" Programs range from: financial grants to leagues who need help; shoes for kids programs sponsored by **Nike Go**; field development in conjunction with **Field Turf**; recognizing administrators who are making a difference in the AYF Hall of Fame; and in partnership with **Sadler Sports Risk Management**, making league safety and communication a priority.

MISSION STATEMENT

“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power.” - Abraham Lincoln

AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL, Inc., (AYF) established in 1996, is an international youth football organization established to promote the wholesome development of youth through their association with adult leaders in the sport of American football. Rules and regulations are established to ensure that players play in an atmosphere of safety with a competitive balance between teams. Scholastic requirements for participation ensures that each participant understands that schoolwork comes first. Being all-inclusive AYF encourages Independent Local Leagues to join in order to receive the same benefits and services as our National Tournament members.

For the greater good, a Kids First Philosophy is mandated of all AYF member organizations.

OBJECTIVES

“Winning is only half of it. Having fun is the other half.” - Bum Phillips

AYF welcomes all Youth involved in football and cheerleading, regardless of, race, religion, national origin, and sex. Special divisions exist to serve various ages and weight groups and Special Needs Kids.

AYF welcomes all Leagues, regardless of financial capabilities, location, participation, and pledges to support youth football and to do its best to help those leagues who need help in order to build stronger communities.

AYF allows its Independent “Local Members” to govern themselves by remaining non-intrusive so long as they subscribe to the following principles 1) Safety, 2) Sportsmanship, 3) Full Participation (everyone gets to play).

AYF requires that its “Tournament Members” adhere to the Official Rules and Regulations contained in this rulebook.

AYF brings consistency to its rule interpretations and compliance by its effort to have open and constant communication with all of its members, thereby removing the perception of cheating. AYF will strictly enforce its rules maintaining the integrity of its programs and the safety and well being of its participants thereby insuring exemplary adult role models for its participants.

AYF does not restrict the communication with the National Staff by any of its members, and will not tolerate disciplinary actions being taken against members who choose to contact the National Office. Contact information can be found online at www.AmericanYouthFootball.com

AYF members believe that each of us can make a difference where we live and how we live.

AYF believes that ALL kids deserve equal opportunities, special attention and respect.

GOALS

To provide a wholesome competitiveness within the scope of our rules and regulations that will protect the youth athletes.

To teach the fundamentals of football and coordinate cheerleader activities.

To provide a responsible football and cheerleader program where none is provided by the public schools.

To influence good sportsmanship, teamwork, highest moral and physical standards and the importance of scholarship by recognizing and rewarding academic achievement.

To lend leagues support while remaining NON-INTRUSIVE to local operations.

To make Youth Football ALL-INCLUSIVE by not excluding participants based on superficial factors (such as weight).

To provide programs for special needs, at-risk and anti-gang groups, and the international football community.

To recognize and reward Organizations, Coaches, Volunteers, and those involved in the sport of football and cheerleading who exemplify the highest degree of Integrity, Honor and Servant Leadership (ability to put the team ahead of self in every decision, accepts and fulfills a role).

To provide opportunities, regardless of organizational size, by offering a Division I and Division II competition at championship events in the National Division. The DII level of play is for organizations that may be located in smaller communities or for whatever reason may not be able to compete at a level that would afford them the opportunity to compete in an inter-conference Regional / National tournament.

To annually communicate, update and revise the rulebook in order to provide clear, concise and consistent rules, thereby eliminating real or perceived violations of those stated rules. This allows for strict enforcement of rules, whether a direct violation or a violation of the spirit of the rule. Thereby insuring the integrity of AYF and fair play by all. Understanding always that this is a youth organization and we are all role models for our youth.

“It’s 4 the kids” - Ralf D’Andrea, Jr.

ORGANIZATION

“Organization is a habit” - George Allen

Board of Directors

AYF is guided by a Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for overseeing the National staff on matters that relate to their individual talents and expertise. The National staff conducts the day-to-day operations of AYF. This staff will be under the guidance of the President of AYF. Positions will be added to the staff as necessary.

Football Advisory Board

The AYF Football Advisory Board is composed of individuals whose knowledge and experience provide valuable advice and insight to issues that affect AYF. The primary purpose of the AYF Football Advisory Board is to advise and guide AYF on matters related to rules and regulations that affect all forms of play.

STRUCTURE

Section 1 – Membership Structure

Organizations can participate in one of two participation levels: AYF Local Structure or AYF Tournament Structure.

A) Local Membership Structure

AYF Local Membership Structure stays true to the AYF objective of remaining non-intrusive and supporting all football and cheer teams regardless of their competitive intentions. Organizations that DO NOT plan to participate in AYF inter-league tournament competitions have the freedom to participate as a member of AYF; as long as organizations abide by the three principals of: safety, sportsmanship and full participation (everyone gets to play). Local Membership Structure leagues can retain independence in creating a structure that fits their group specifically. This structure and rules are requested to be submitted to AYF National Headquarters by August 1st of the current season. AYF encourages its Local Members to follow this Official Rule Book whenever possible.

B) Tournament Membership Structure

AYF Tournament Membership Structure pertains to those leagues that plan to participate in AYF inter-league play: regional tournament competitions, national championships and other pre or post-season games/tournaments. These leagues must strictly abide by AYF Rules and Regulations as outlined in this Official AYF Rule Book. This Rule Book must be followed at all times, this includes but is not limited to Pre-Season, In-Season, and Post-Season play (Year Round). All Tournament members must make their intention to participate in the national tournament known to the current national football commissioner at Football@AmericanYouthFootball.com by August 1st.

Section 2 – Structure Definitions

STRUCTURE DEFINITIONS

A) Region:

A Region is defined as a geographic territory. The geographic territory is determined by the AYF National Office. The 8 regional territories that make up AYF can be found online at www.americanyouthfootball.com.

A Region is comprised of Member Conferences within a territory who have applied for and have been granted membership, by the National Office.

B) Conference:

A Conference is defined by the geographic boundary of its membership. A Conference membership is comprised of the Associations that have applied for, and have been granted membership, by the Conference's governing body. In keeping with the American Youth Football's Goals and Philosophies no application for membership should be unreasonably withheld.

C) Association:

An Association is an organization, whether legally formed or not, assembled for the purpose of organizing and operating a youth football and/or cheer program. Associations may be organized by locales, cities, towns or community groups. The Association must be restricted by its Conference from drawing participants from certain geographic territory/boundaries. The acceptable method and determination of what participants can register within any given Association will be governed by the Conference/Region to which it is a member. The movement of a participant from one member Association to another must be strictly governed and enforced by the Conference/Region to which it is a member **and or by this rulebook. When controversy exists over player movement or territorial boundaries or draw areas the national office will have the final say.**

An Associations' members are the Participants that have applied for, and have been granted membership, by the Associations governing body. In keeping with the American Youth Football's Goals and Philosophies **applications must be taken on a first come first serve basis and teams must be formed regardless of player ability (see Formation Of Teams contained in this rulebook)** no application for membership should be unreasonably withheld and under no circumstances will a participant be discriminated against.

D) Participant:

A Participant is defined as a minor child that has applied for and has been granted membership within a given Association.

E) Division:

A division is defined as a grouping of Teams in specific Age and Weight Class or Grade Based Class. AYF now offers the following divisions: National, United and All American. These Divisions are further defined under the heading of "Divisions" in this rulebook.

F) Team/Classification:

A Team is defined as a grouping within an age and weight class such as: Junior PeeWee, PeeWee, Junior Midget, etc.

Section 3 – Rule Enforcement Authority

RULE ENFORCEMENT / AUTHORITY

A) National:

All Conferences, Associations, Administrative Personnel, Coaches, Volunteers, and Participants are subject to disciplinary actions including, but not limited to, Permanent Suspension or Non-Renewal of Membership for violation of the Rules and Regulations and Terms of Service. American Youth Football National Office will not interfere with local matters, and or local rule violations, unless asked to do so by the governing body, but does reserve the right, at its sole discretion, to enforce any and all of its rules and the spirit of its rules, at any time including, but not limited to, Post-Season activities. American Youth Football, Inc. may impose consequences upon any of its members without conducting hearings or appeals.

B) Regional Level of Authority:

Regional Committees are required to inspect and enforce all of the AYF Participant Paperwork and Requirements for compliance with AYF Participant Certification. No participant or team shall be allowed to compete in a regional tournament game who has not met all of these requirements.

Regional Committees may be called upon, by the National Office, from time to time to: (1) mediate disputes between member organizations and individuals, (2) take action to enforce AYF National rules and regulations, (3) discipline both adult and juvenile members. In these events the Regional Committees, may, at the request of the AYF national office conduct investigations / hearings, but may only make disciplinary or dispute resolution recommendations to the National Office. The National Office will then at its sole discretion decide on the course of action to be taken.

C) Conference / Association Level of Authority:

Conferences are hereby required to enforce the AYF Rules and Regulations contained herein. Conference / Associations have the obligation and authority to enforce the AYF Rules, Regulations

and the Spirit of the Rules and Regulations and it's own rules, by-laws and other organizational materials. Additionally, Conference / Associations have the right to make any rule more stringent, but do not have the right to make these rules less strict. **Any organization found not enforcing this rulebook, the rules regulations and the spirit of the rules and regulations may be suspended until compliance is achieved.** Conferences are asked to submit their Rules and Regulations to the National Office by August 1st of the current season.

All Conferences, Associations, and Teams in accordance with their organizational and operational materials, may be called upon from time to time to: (1) resolve disputes between member organizations and individuals, (2) discipline both adult and juvenile members and (3) may from time to time be required to take action to enforce AYF National and Rules and Regulations.

American Youth Football, Inc. does not hold hearings or appeals. Conferences, Associations and Teams are advised to set up their own procedures to handle these matters in a timely fashion.

Section 4 – Governing Rule Book

GOVERNING RULE BOOK

AYF Tournament members follow their state and/or high school governing rule book for their regular season games, except where superseded by this Rule Book. AYF Tournament members will be governed by the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) for all inter-conference / tournament games including, but not limited to, Regional and National competitions. All AYF Rules and Regulations supersede any and all other rulebooks. The AYF National Office will determine and be the final adjudicator on any and all rule conflicts. **AYF requires that all coaches receive and read this rulebook and** strongly recommends that the local organizations supply the appropriate state and/or high school rulebook to all of its coaches. **Any organization found to have allowed a variance to this rulebook, the rules regulations and the spirit of the rules and regulations without filing and receiving written approval may be suspended.**

Section 5 – Divisions

DIVISIONS

1) Definition of “Max Stripped Weight”

The definition of the term “Max Stripped Weight” is as follows:

The participants weight wearing Gym Shorts and a T-Shirt as the minimum clothing.

2) Definition of “Max Dressed Weight”

The definition of the term “Max Dressed Weight” is as follows:

The participants weight wearing (uniform allowance) Football Cleats, Game Sox, Football Pants With Pads, and Game Jersey as the minimum clothing. No Clothing, Padding, Cleats etc. can be exchanged once the weigh-in has been conducted.

If your participant is so close to the weight that you are concerned about the thickness of the participant's socks ... then your participant is on the wrong team level. Understand that the participant will not be allowed to play if they do not make weight. If this becomes a big issue in your Association, consider the All-American Division where it is a Grade Based Age Protected system.

A) Instructional Division

*INSTRUCTIONAL DIVISIONS		
Team	Age (as of July 31st)	Max Stripped Weight + Uniform Allowance = Max Dressed Weight
Tiny Mite	7 and Under	85 + 5 = 90 lbs
Mitey Mite	9 and Under	100 + 5 = 105 lbs
1st Grade	Protected Age 7 as of 12/31	Unrestricted
2nd Grade	Protected Age 8 as of 12/31	Unrestricted
3rd Grade	Protected Age 9 as of 12/31	Unrestricted
<p>*Instructional Division can be established/adjusted as your Conference sees fit, adjust to the needs of your area with this chart as a Guideline. Age and/or Grades can be combined to fit the needs of your area Sample playing rules for Instructional Division play can be found online.</p>		
Pre-Game Weigh-In Must Be Conducted Prior To Each Game		

B) National Division

NATIONAL DIVISION		
Team	Age (as of July 31st)	Max Stripped Weight + Uniform Allowance = Max Dressed Weight
Cadet	8, 9 and 10 O/L	100 + 5 = 105 lbs, 80 + 5 = 85 lbs
Jr. PeeWee	10 and Under, 11 O/L	114 + 5 = 119 lbs, 94 + 5 = 99 lbs
PeeWee	11 and Under, 12 O/L	129 + 5 = 134 lbs, 109 + 5 = 114 lbs
Jr. Midget	12 and Under, 13 O/L	144 + 6 = 150 lbs, 124 + 6 = 130 lbs
Midget	14 and Under, 15 O/L	169 + 6 = 175 lbs, 149 + 6 = 155 lbs
Pre-Game Weigh-In Must Be Conducted Prior To Each Game		

C) United Division

UNITED DIVISION		
Team	Age (as of July 31st)	Max Stripped Weight + Uniform Allowance = Max Dressed Weight
Jr. PeeWee	10 and Under	114 + 5 = 119 lbs
PeeWee	11 and Under	129 + 5 = 134 lbs
Jr. Midget	12 and Under	144 + 6 = 150 lbs
Midget	14 and Under	169 + 6 = 175 lbs
Pre-Game Weigh-In Must Be Conducted Prior To Each Game		

D) All-American Division

ALL-AMERICAN DIVISION			
Grade Based / Age Protected			
Grade Max.	Age Range	Protected Age	Protected Age Explanation
4th	8/ 9 /10	10	10 in 4 th grade can not turn 11 on or before 12/31
5th	9/ 10 /11	11	11 in 5 th grade can not turn 12 on or before 12/31 * 9 in 5 th grade as of 7/31 can go down one level
6th	10/ 11 /12	12	12 in 6 th grade can not turn 13 on or before 12/31 * 10 in 6 th grade as of 7/31 can go down one level
7th	11/ 12 /13	13	13 in 7 th grade can not turn 14 on or before 12/31 * 11 in 7 th grade as of 7/31 can go down one level
8th	12/ 13 /14	14	14 in 8 th grade can not turn 15 on or before 12/31 * 12 in 8 th grade as of 7/31 can go down one level
9th	13/ 14 /15	15	15 in 9 th grade can not turn 16 on or before 12/31 * 9 th grade players can NOT move down
* Players Who Have Advanced A Grade Or Who Are Young For Their Grade May Move Down 1 Level If They Meet This Age Criteria. Grades can be Combined.			
9th Grade Classification for areas without 9th Grade High School Program.			

American Youth Football Strongly Supports School Football Programs And Will Encourage All Participants To Join Their Local School Team Over Any Youth League.

For determining the Participants age (Protected Age), the term “On Or Before” and the term “As Off” is intended to have the same definition (Age Cut Off Date):

An age cut off date of (on or before/as of 7/31) July 31st of the current season is as follows: 14 yrs old on July 31st, turns 15 yrs old on August 1st the participate plays as a 14 yr old.

An age cut off date of (on or before/as of 12/31) Dec. 31st of the current season is as follows: 14 yrs old on Dec. 31st, turns 15 yrs old on January 1st the participate plays as a 14 yr old.

Associations and Conferences may alter the weights in any of the Weighted Divisions/Teams to a weight Less Than BUT NOT More Than the listed Maximum weight to accommodate any special condition that may exist in your local organization such as the desire to allow for in season growth.

No other alterations to the above listed divisions are allowed without the prior written consent of the National Office. An official AYF Waiver Request Form can be found online.

E) Spring Football / Summer Passing Leagues

American Youth Football (AYF) acknowledges Spring Football and Summer Passing Leagues. AYF recommends that any Conference, Association, Team participating in Spring Football and Summer Passing Leagues do so by following the format established by their local High School or State High School Athletic Governing Board.

Great care should be taken to not interfere with other Spring and Summer sports such as Baseball, Lacrosse, and family vacations. American Youth Football requires that NO pressure be placed on individuals to participate. Coaches that “Require” or in anyway manipulate Fall participants to join or participate in anyway or who do not plan and allow for participation in other sports and family

vacations should be immediately suspended from coaching any team during the regular (Fall) season. Conferences are required to monitor any Spring or Summer events. Outlines and Ideas for Spring Football and Summer Passing Leagues can be found under "Forms" on the MyAYF control panel.

F) Division I and Division II

* The AYF National Division is the only division that offers a Division I ("DI") and Division II ("DII") level of play. The default level of play for all National Division teams is DI. For Conferences that want to offer DII level of play for inter-conference, Region / National tournaments must submit a request to the National Office by August 15th. Any Conference may offer a DII level structured in any way they see fit, however they will be entered into inter-conference, Regional / National tournament play as a DI level if they have not submitted a request and been granted, in writing, a DII Level Status for inter-conference, Regional / National tournament play. An official AYF DII Request Form can be found online. This request must be submitted by August 15th of the current season. The only criteria, at this time, needed for receiving DII Status, is your methodology for determining who in your organization is a legitimate DII Team. Your methodology must fit within the AYF Goals and Philosophy for its DII Level of play. DII status is reserved for organizations that may be located in smaller communities or for whatever reason may not be able to compete at a level that would afford them the opportunity to compete in an inter-conference Regional / National tournament (AYF strongly recommends a Win/Loss component be added to your methodology). Therefore returning to a DII status the season after winning a National Tournament may not be allowed.

Section 6 – Weigh-In Rules

WEIGH-IN RULES

"To make a man you must first build a boy". - Tiger Ellison

American Youth Football will strictly enforce the age and weight restrictions contained in this Rulebook as well as all other Rules and Regulations. Anyone who is determined to be over the maximum weight limit listed herein will not be allowed to participate in any Local, Regional or National game or event.

If a participant within your program is determined to be over the maximum weight limit at the National Tournament they will not be allowed to participate. You are hereby obligated to inform all that there will be no exceptions, no travel refunds, and no appeals of the weigh masters decision.

Associations, Conferences, Regions must adopt and agree on weigh-in rules and procedures but must meet the following minimum requirements.

1. Weigh-ins must be conducted prior to each game.
2. When Pre-Season practice begins, all players must be weighed to insure proper team placement. Parents must be informed of the possibility of the participant not being allowed to play if they do not make weight prior to each game.
3. When Pre-Season practice begins, any participant found to be ten or more pounds above the Max Stripped Weight for their specified team level, at the Pre-Season, or In-Season weigh-in, must move up a level prior to the roster certification cut off date, or be dropped if no All-American Division exists. No child may practice or remain on a team if they are 10 or more pounds over the Max Stripped Weight.

4. Any “Sweat Down” or Extreme” weight loss used by a player to make weight will be grounds for immediate suspension for the players own safety.
5. Any Coach, Administrator or Team Personnel found to have advised, encouraged, or tolerated any “Sweat Down” or “Extreme” weight loss techniques will be grounds for immediate suspension. Suspension will be anywhere from 1 year to permanent depending on the severity. Head Coaches will be held responsible for the actions of all team personnel.
6. The only two acceptable methods of verifying a participants weight are as follows:
 - a. **Maximum Stripped Weight** – Player steps on scale wearing at a minimum Gym Shorts and a T-Shirt.
 - b. **Maximum Dressed Weight** – Player steps on scale wearing Football Cleats, Game Socks, Football Pants With Pads, Game Jersey as the minimum clothing. No Clothing, Padding, Cleats... can be exchanged once the weigh-in has been conducted.
7. Any Participant that exceeds the maximum weight for his registered team must not be allowed to play in that weeks game.
8. Conferences / Regions can adopt their own Weigh-in procedures as far as who conducts the weigh-in but must allow at least one member from each coaching staff to attend/witness. AYF recommends that each head coach be present as they will be held responsible should any weigh-in rules be violated.
9. The Team Books including participant picture, documents, and MPR form must be available to the weigh-in officials for player verification.
10. No Player Jersey Numbers Can be Changed Once The Official Weigh-in Has Been Completed.
11. No 2 Players May Have The Same Jersey Number Under Any Circumstances.

Section 7 – Insurance Requirement

INSURANCE REQUIREMENT

All teams must furnish proof of General Liability and Accident Insurance. The required coverage’s can be seen at www.myayf.com/tos.pdf . Additionally American Youth Football, Inc. must be named as an additional insured. All members, not covered under the AYF endorsed insurance policy are required to deliver to AYF a certificate of insurance prior to conducting any games or practices. For more information on the AYF endorsed insurance plan visit the member’s only section on www.MyAYF.com

Section 8 – Formation Of Teams

FORMATION OF TEAMS

“We all start out as children. It’s a good way to start. But only the wisest and luckiest few hold on to a Childs heart”- Unknown

The formation of teams is done on a first come, first served participation policy. AYF does allow registration/sign-up for “veteran (returning) players” prior to “open” registration/sign-up. Each child must be afforded the opportunity to be taught the game of football regardless of their ability, AYF

does not form “Select” teams, in other words you can not select or recruit only the best athletes for your team. Tryouts of any kind can only be done to determine what team level the participant will be placed on and to ensure that all teams are created equally and have similarly competitive skill levels. Cutting of players is not allowed in AYF, however, there are certain guidelines that should be met if it becomes necessary to not assign a player to a team. AYF strongly recommends that the coaching staff work closely with these players before the extreme measure of dropping a player takes place. AYF believes that the game of football may just be a saving grace for this type of participant.

A) Dropping A Player Will Be Acceptable:

1. When a participant is found to have signed as a result of parent or guardian pressure, or, he/she tells team management he/she does not really want to play football/cheer.
2. When a participant cannot furnish the required documents to be certified to a team roster, (e.g., Medical, Proof of Birth date, etc.).
3. When a Participant shows no interest in football/cheer, is disruptive to other participants and the instructions of the coaching staff, and becomes a discipline problem.
4. When a Participant does not show up for practices. Participants must have a valid excuse from the parent(s), guardian(s) or a physician.
5. When a Participant attempts to intimidate fellow participants by word and/or physical act.
6. When a Participant is actively a member of another football team or cheerleader squad while actively participating with an AYF team (dual participation, some may exceptions apply).

B) Dropping A Player Will NOT Be Acceptable:

Excessive team or individual conditioning drills, disciplinary actions or assigning individual players laps or intentionally placing player in intimidating hitting drills for the purpose of encouraging weaker players to quit is not acceptable. Coaches determined to be using this or any other tactic to drop weaker players will be immediately dismissed for the remainder of the season and may be permanently suspended.

C) Dual Participation:

Playing flag or touch football as part of the physical education requirement in the school curriculum is not counted as school team participation. While dual participation is prohibited as stated above, AYF recognizes that extenuating circumstances do exist in certain parts of the country with respect to school football/cheer programs. Any organization may request a waiver by submitting the AYF Waiver Request form which can be found online.

D) Participant Recruitment:

Conferences are required to establish “Draw Area’s” or “Boundaries” for its member Associations. Should an organization/team wish to accept the application of a participant (special participant) who is (1) outside of the Associations defined draw area, or (2) previously rostered with another Association, it must provide full disclosure of these conditions to the Conference members they participate with and receive permission from the Conference in a manner to be determined by the Conference. Permission should only be granted on a limited basis when it is in the best interest of the participant and when it is determined that the participant has NOT been recruited. Conferences are required to create and enforce rules and regulations to prevent one Association from recruiting the players of another Association. Under no circumstances can a Conference allow any individual

team to accept the application of more than 3 “Special Participants” without written permission from the National Office.

E) A and B Teams/Squads:

Associations that have a large number of participants at a specific Team Level (Jr. PeeWee, PeeWee, etc.), may form multiple squads, hereinafter referred to as A and B squads. Associations may roster participants on either the A or B team as their Conference/Association Rules and Regulations allow. However, the association may not “stack” one team over the other by intentionally placing all of the most talented players on the A team in order to qualify for Tournament play. Remember you can not cut players or put them on a waiting list with the sole intention being to form a superior squad.

F) All Star Teams:

At no time is a team allowed to form by moving participants from existing certified rosters. In this event this newly formed team will be considered an All-Star team and be considered “Cheating” for purposes of determining disciplinary actions.

At no time is a team allowed to form what a reasonably prudent person would consider an All-Star team based on the spirit of all the rules contained in the previous “Formation Of Teams” paragraphs and be considered “Cheating” for purposes of determining disciplinary actions.

The formation of an “ALL-STAR” Team is only permitted for Intra-Conference play. Conferences may establish an All-Star game (e.g., east vs. west) at the same Team level at the end of its regular season only. No Participant certified on a team that is still actively participating in Post Season play is allowed to also participate on the All-Star Team.

Conferences may choose to name an All-Star team or All-Conference team as an honor without playing a game. AYF fully recognizes this honor.

All Star selections with or without game participation should require the highest of Academic Standards and should be reserved for the oldest players only.

AYF All-Conference and AYF Under Armour All-Star teams are excluded from this rule.

Section 9 – Playing Season / Practice

PLAYING SEASON / PRACTICE

“Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see” - James Whitehead

A) Start Dates:

The AYF playing season may start as early as the fourth Monday in July and extend until December 31 of the current year. Start and end dates of the playing season may be modified for teams playing in regions with severe weather conditions. Written permission by the AYF National Office is required before any such modifications may be made. A later start date may occur for any league

No Conference shall commence team practice until the fourth Monday in July, with the first week being dedicated to Ten (10) Hours of conditioning ONLY, before full contact is allowed.

B) Practice Length:

Pre-season practice can be on a daily basis until Labor Day, but must not exceed 10 hours a week, and two (2) hours in duration. A mandatory 10-minute break (“Mandatory Break”) after each hour of

practice is required. Mandatory Breaks are not counted against the hours per week nor the maximum hours per day.

After Labor Day, all practices may not exceed a maximum of eight (8) hours, per week, with a maximum of two (2) hours duration per day. Mandatory Breaks are still required.

All players, regardless of when they join the team, must have at least one week of conditioning before they are allowed to have live contact. Even if a player joins the team after the start of the regular season schedule, this requirement must be met.

C) Practice Staff Requirements:

At least one coach must be present during every practice.

Each and every coach must have a background check preformed and reviewed/approved by the process established by the Association/Conference.

There shall be at least one person holding a Red Cross Card, or of similar equivalency, present at all practices. This can be a coach or any volunteer approved by the Association.

Conferences are required to enforce these "Staff Requirements" with its member Associations.

D) Practice Restrictions:

There shall be no "inter-team" practice or games between Teams/Divisions e.g., Pee Wee vs. Jr. Pee Wee, National Division teams vs. All-American Division teams, etc.; this does not prohibit individual fundamental coaching sessions as long as there is no full contact between players of differing teams/divisions.

The following Drills and Warm-up Exercises are hereby banned from all AYF activities. Leg Lifts, Neck Bridges, Neck Rolls, Bull in the Ring, Barrel Rolls, and any and all drills and exercises not generally accepted as safe, and that may not be reflective of actions that would normally occur during the course of a football game.

The National Federation (NFHS) and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rulebooks contain strong language on Blocking and Tackling. AYF coaches are responsible to be fully informed, and abide by, all such rules of their states governing body (NFHS or NCAA). AYF coaches are also responsible to review these rules every year. In addition to other specific prohibitions in the NFHS and NCAA rulebooks, butt blocking, chop blocking, face tackling or spearing techniques are strictly prohibited. If such techniques or any others forbidden by the NFHS or NCAA rulebooks are taught, the coaches responsible shall be subject to disciplinary actions including but not limited to probation upon the first offense and suspension for the remainder of the season upon the second offence. Associations are encouraged to establish their own rules regulations and monitoring of their coaches. Coaches assume all liability for their actions or inactions.

Section 10 – Playing Season / Games

PLAYING SEASON / GAMES

"Life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it". -Lou Holtz

A) Game Clock Details / Playing Requirements:

Only 10 minute quarters, will be utilized in all Divisions/Class of play within AYF

Maximum half time allowed will be 15 minutes.

Three (3) timeouts per half in all AYF games, Timeouts are not charged against a team for injuries or game officials' timeout.

A maximum of 14 regular season games including Conference championships are allowed.

A minimum of 12 players eligible and able to participate is required to start and maintain a regulation game during the regular season only. A minimum of 14 players eligible and able to participate is required to enter post season play and must be maintained throughout post season play or the game will be forfeited and the winner will advance. A minimum of 14 players eligible and able to participate is required to qualify and begin participation in the national tournament. Once participation in the national tournament has begun all games will count until the number of eligible players falls below 12.

Football games are to be scheduled no more than one (1) game per week with a minimum of 48 hours (2 days) between games. The AYF National Office reserves the right to waive this rule when extenuating circumstances exist or to accommodate a championship tournament.

B) Coaching Communications:

There will be no electronic devices from the press box, coaching box, sidelines, or any other position on the field that may be used to relay messages to the coaches or players at any time. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, the use of a Cell Phone, Blackberry, PDA, Computer or other messaging device. All Bluetooth earpiece devices are not allowed within the field of play. A coach using a cell phone for emergency purposes must step outside the coach's box, off the playing field, and if it continues, may be asked to leave the field for the remainder of the game. Further disciplinary action may be taken by the Conference.

C) Medical Requirements:

AYF Requires the home team or hosting organization provide medical coverage at each game. In the absence of a physician and or ambulance on site, the minimum requirement will be the presence of an individual who is EMT qualified or is currently certified in Red Cross Community First Aid and Safety or its equivalent. Therefore no game shall start without this requirement being met.

Coaches are required to maintain in their possession at all times the teams Emergency Medical Release Forms and Parent/Guardian Emergency Numbers.

Home team or hosting organization is required to introduce the emergency medical personnel to the visiting team and to review the emergency medical plan with the visiting team. The emergency medical plan shall include but not be limited to (1) ambulatory access to the field, (2) directions to the facility, (3) location of the emergency communication device, in the absence of a cell phone, and the emergency medical services numbers as well as the local fire and police numbers.

Once an injured participant is removed from the game, they may not re-enter the game unless first approved by the emergency medical personnel covering the game. If a participant is transported off the field to a medical facility or for any reason seeks medical attention whether from an injury sustained during a game or practice they may not resume participation without the written consent from the examining medical personnel. An AYF Doctors Resume Participation Consent form can be found online.

D) Sanctioned Football:

AYF Sanctioned football manufacture is Wilson®. AYF strongly recommends and requests the use of the Wilson football during the regular season. AYF will require the use of the Wilson footballs

during all AYF Sanctioned Tournament play. The following is the recommended size breakdown per team level, any NFHS, OR NCAA sanctioned football may be used as an alternative. To order official AYF Wilson Footballs –visit www.MyAYF.com

Pre – Jr. PeeWee	Wilson K2
Jr. PeeWee – PeeWee	Wilson TDJ
Jr. Midgets – Midgets	Wilson TDY
Pre – 4th Grade	Wilson K2
4th – 6th Grade	Wilson TDJ
7th – 8th Grade	Wilson TDY
9th – Grade	Wilson TDS

You can be a hard, but good loser. Any coach or team that cannot lose or treat opponents with respect has no right to win. " Knute Rockne

E) Scoring, Tie Breakers, Lopsided Rule:

Scoring is as follows:

Touchdown	6 points
Point after touchdown (running or passing).....	1 point
Points after touchdown (kicking).....	2 points
Safety (awarded to opponent).....	2 points
Field goal.....	3 points
Forfeit.....	(6-0)

Tie games at the end of regulation play.

AYF will allow each Conference to set their own tie-breaker system if needed for regular season play. However, "Sudden Death" tie-breakers are prohibited. AYF Inter-Conference, Regional and National Tournament/Championship Games will utilize the ten (10) yard Tie-Breaker System. As stated in the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) rule book. The NFHS Tie-Breaker rules amended to start from the 10 yard line.

An ***intentionally*** run-up score is when a team continues to pour it on even after the game is in their favor and far out of reach for their opponents. Coaches who practice this are to be disciplined by the local Conference / Association. AYF considers this type of coaching contrary to its purposes.

The AYF lopsided score rule is 35 Points or 5 touchdowns, whichever comes first. Once the score differential reaches 35 points, or 5 touchdowns, the game clock will become a running clock. Once the clock becomes a running clock it can only be stopped for injuries and official or team time outs. It will be the losing teams preference as to whether they will receive a normal kickoff or they may choose to take the ball on their own 40 yard line. The winning team is prohibited from running any mis-direction, counter, reverses or "trick plays" of any kind. Skill position starters must be replaced whenever possible. Conferences and Associations cannot limit the winning team to only running between the tackles. Mandatory plays must be completed regardless of the score or game clock. If

the winning team does not complete their required mandatory plays, the full force of the mandatory play rules will be in effect.

Conferences are required to investigate/review all reported losses of more than 35 points or 5 touchdowns. Conferences are required to establish their own disciplinary actions for coaches that are determined to have ***intentionally*** run-up the score, in all cases an appeal process must be afforded to the coach, unless the coach has signed acceptance of an agreement prior to the start of the season indicated that the conference will not allow appeals of its disciplinary decisions.

F) Regional / National Tournament:

1) Special Warning Regarding Rumors:

No one should be allowed to participate in a Local, Regional or National event until all of their paperwork, grade and/or weight has been verified. Any allegations of Cheating or Violations of this rule book or any local rule or regulation should be immediately reported, in writing, to both the Association and/or Conference president or their appointed representative for dealing with such issues. Associations and Conferences are Required to fully investigate all claims and keep on file a written record of all investigations.

Once the allegations of cheating or rules violation has been reported, in writing, to the respective official, be it Association or Conference, there shall be NO further discussion until it is reviewed, investigated and acted on appropriately by the Association and/or Conference. The act of spreading rumors which is general talk not based on fact will not be tolerated in American Youth Football, it not only hurts your credibility, it affects your team and other teams that may become involved in the rumor.

Any allegation of Cheating or Violations of this rule book during Post Season Play should be reported in writing to the National Office for investigation. Given these facts any Organization, individual or group of individuals (which includes any member of the organization) spreading rumors of cheating, special treatment or any other false information whether causing an incident or not during a Regional or National event may be banned from participation in any future Regional or National events for a period of time deemed reasonable by the National Office.

Section 11 – Protests

PROTESTS

“Win without arrogance, lose without excuses” -Chris Corkum

Conferences shall have complete jurisdiction over protests concerning all games within their programs. Conferences may choose at their sole discretion whether protests of any kind are allowed. Conferences must maintain consistency with this discretion.

Protests on matters of judgment rendered by any game official WILL NOT be heard under any circumstances.

All protests must be in writing and submitted to the local Conference designated person no later than 24 hours after termination of the game in question. Conferences have the responsibility of calling a hearing within 48 hours after receipt of the protest, or in the event of a holiday the following non-holiday day.

“You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give” . -Winston Churchill

Section 12 – Participant Registration / Eligibility

PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION / ELIGIBILITY

“Look for players with character and ability. But remember, character comes first.” - Joe Gibbs

Note: Falsifying birth or any other documents to make a participant eligible is grounds for forfeiture of all games in which they have participated and permanent suspension of the adult(s) and or organization responsible for the act and all evidence will be turned over to the local authorities for any criminal prosecution that may be relevant.

Consent to Play: Parents or legal guardians are required to furnish to local Associations a written statement declaring their child has permission to participate in local and any and all AYF activities and that they understand the risks involved. The written and signed statements must include a: *Waiver/Release and Image Release*. Sample copies of these documents can be found online under the MyAYF control panel under “Forms”. Teams, leagues and associations should consult with local legal counsel to determine if these sample forms meet their individual needs.

Emergency Information & Consent to Treat: This document must contain emergency medical information, emergency contacts and consent to treat in the event of a medical emergency. This form must be in the possession of the team at all times in the event an injury occurs.

Medical Clearance: All AYF participants must deliver to their local Association proof of a Medical Clearance before participating in AYF programs. This includes but is not limited to Preseason Practice. The Medical Clearance must attest to, or contain the statement:

“I, hereby my signature below, do certify that I am licensed by the state and am qualified in determining that: (Childs Name:) _____ is physically fit and I have found no medical or observable conditions which would contra-indicate him/her from participating in youth flag football, tackle football, cheer or dance athletic activities. I am therefore clearing this individual for athletic participation without limitation.”

This document will be good for 1 year from the date it was signed. A sample copy of an acceptable document can be found online under the MyAYF control panel under “Forms”.

Age Certification: AYF requires that all participants present to their local Association an original record of their birth, AYF strongly recommends the use of State issued DMV (department of motor vehicles) ID cards, certified copy or a notarized photocopy of that original record of birth or a copy of the birth certificate with a State-issued identification card that requires an original birth certificate (or equivalent) for issuance. These documents shall set forth the date and year of birth and can be a Certificate from the State, County or City Bureau of Vital Statistics, Department of Health, and the Dept. of Motor Vehicles, School Certificates or Record of Notification of Birth Registration by the Bureau of Census of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Passports, Military ID cards are also acceptable. These documents must be presented to the Conference officials for verification, and is part of the mandatory player certification process.

NO HOSPITAL CERTIFICATES WILL BE ACCEPTED. The age certification date is specified under “Divisions”.

Grade Verification: The All-American Division will require a copy of the current or previous season report card to verify the Participants grade. This documentation should be maintained along with all other required documentation.

Scholastic Eligibility: All participants must have received a passing grade average for the school year ending just prior to the beginning of the season (e.g., school year ending June, 2007 for the Fall 2007 season) to be eligible for AYF participation. If verification of grades are necessary, or if passing grades are not achieved, only a school administrator can make the final ruling regarding scholastic eligibility. Each team will be required to submit an AYF Affidavit of Scholastic Eligibility to participate in Regional and National Tournament play.

Section 13 – Rosters

ROSTERS

“Whatever you think you can, or, think you can t -you are right ” -Henry Ford

Associations must have all AYF Required Participant Paperwork collected, complete, and inspected for compliance by August 31st. Conferences must certify that their Associations have met this requirement and have a system in place for paperwork and roster certification. A Certified Roster means that all of the participants listed on the roster have submitted the AYF Required Paperwork and that all paperwork is authentic and compliant with AYF Rules and Regulations, and the participant fits the criteria established for the specific team level and division to which The Participant is certified including but not limited to the Participants Age/Weight and/or Grade. **Conferences must maintain in their possession a copy of the final certified copy of all rosters.** Players added to rosters after August 31st must be certified prior to participating in any game but no later than September 15th.

The Maximum number of participants allowed on a certified roster is 36. The Minimum number of participants required to certify a roster is 16. (see **minimum number of players required to play a regulation game** [Section 10 Playing Season / Games](#))

Once a roster is full, no player may be dropped to make room for another player.

After Rosters have been certified, Participants can be moved up to a higher level of play for any reason up and until September 15th. After Rosters have been certified, A Participant can only be moved down to a lower level prior to the second regularly scheduled game, as long as that game is prior to the roster add/drop deadline of September 15th. Any movement of a certified participant to a level lower than the level that the participant was originally certified at should only be done if the participant is determined to have been placed on a level above his/her ability to participate safely. There must also be room on the roster as no one can be cut/dropped just to make room. There can be no roster movement for any reason after September 15th.

Conferences must receive all of their Associations rosters and certify all of their player documentation by September 15th. **Conferences must maintain in their possession a copy of the final certified copy of all rosters.** Conferences must then submit all rosters to AYF National Office by October 1st. Conferences must submit a copy of the same rosters to the designated Regional Committee member, and National Football Commissioner by October 1st. It is requested that All Conferences submit rosters to the AYF National Office by entering them into the www.myAYF.com system run by AYF Headquarters by the deadline of October 1st, of the current playing season. Failure to submit rosters may result in the loss of certain services provided by AYF, including post-season and championship game eligibility.

IF FOR ANY REASON YOU WILL NOT MEET THE OCTOBER FIRST (1ST) DATE YOU MAY REQUEST AN EXTENSION FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE. ALL REQUESTS MUST BE MADE BY OCTOBER 1ST.

Section 14 – Mandatory Play Rules

MANDATORY PLAY RULES

"To win without struggle is to triumph without glory." - George Allen

All AYF participants MUST play an active role in each game. Unless noted prior to the start of the game, by absence, by injury, or the participant fails to make weight.

All AYF participants MUST play an active role in a minimum number of plays as follows:

31 - 36 Players = 4 Plays

26 - 30 Players = 6 Plays

16 - 25 Players = 8 Plays

The number of plays required is determined by the numbers of players able to participate at the start of each game.

All Minimum plays must be "Active" plays (punt and punt return are Active plays from the LOS and do count). All special teams plays do not count as plays. All plays must be from the line of scrimmage (LOS). Any Penalties resulting in the replay of the down do not count as plays. Plays that result in a quarterback dropping to his knee with the sole purpose of "playing it safe" will not count as plays.

All participants must receive their minimum mandatory number of plays by the end of the 3rd quarter. Any participant that has not received their minimum plays by the end of the 3rd quarter must enter the game and remain in the game until they have received their required number of plays.

Each team will supply 2 adults, 18 years of age or older, to monitor the Mandatory Play Rule. **Failure to supply 2 adults as described will be considered a violation of the Mandatory Play Rule and may result in the forfeiture of the game.**

Any person assigned as a Mandatory Play Monitor must be instructed to be respectful while on the opponents sideline or working with the opponents volunteer. There is to be no excessive cheering, cell phone use, and no coaching of any kind. At any time the opponent for any reason may ask that the volunteer be replaced and this request must be complied with immediately without question. Failure to comply will be considered a violation of the Mandatory Play Rule and may result in the forfeiture of the game.

Conferences shall enforce the Mandatory Play Rule. Any team not meeting the Mandatory Play Rule shall forfeit their game. Additional minimum penalties: First offense for the head coach: probation. Second offense for the head coach: suspension for one game and one week of practice. Third offense: suspension for remainder of season. If it is the last game: suspension for the first half of the following season's games. In the event a suspension should carry over into the next season, the Association that may appoint the offending coach will be obligated to enforce the suspension.

If you do not have a Mandatory Play Form (MPR) please use the official AYF MPR Form found online.

Section 15 – Post Season Bowl Games

BOWL GAMES

Associations/Conferences wishing to participate in post season bowl games **During The National Championship Tournament** must file the AYF Post Season Bowl Game Request form. AYF Post Season Bowl Game Request forms can be found online.

All post-season bowl games must be played in accordance to all in-season and post-season rules.

Section 16 – Coaching Requirments / Background Checks / Scouting

COACHES

“With the instant credibility one gains by the Privilege to coach football, comes the obligation to coach safe fundamentals.” - Bill Walsh

All coaches by their appointment to coach, are bound by the “Coaches Pledge”, “Coaches Code”, and “Standard of Conduct”.

Associations are required to perform Background Checks on all of their Coaches and any and all volunteers deemed to have repeated contact with the participants, each year. Conferences are required to obtain an Affidavit that all background checks have been completed from their member associations. Conferences must submit all collected Affidavits to the AYF National Office. American Youth Football, Inc. has no control over the selection of volunteers, each Association shall be required to indemnify and hold harmless American Youth Football, Inc. against all legal actions based upon allegations arising from a failure to enforce all or part of this regulation and or the decision making process used in volunteer selection.

All coaches must be approved by and serve at the pleasure of the Local Association. Coaching assignments are for one playing season only and is therefore automatically terminated at the close of each season. Coaches must re-apply for coaching positions annually. The close of the season will be determined by the local Association but must not extend past the “End Of The Year Banquet”.

All Coaching appointments and their appropriate contact info must be submitted to the National Office each year by August 31st.

Head coaches must be at least 21 years of age. The coaching staff will be under his/her direction and supervision.

Assistant coaches must be at least 18 years of age and have graduated from high school or hold a GED certificate. They must have a general knowledge of the game of football.

Coach Trainees must be a minimum of 16 years old and may only carry out the instructions of the Head or Assistant coaches.

“What makes a good coach? Complete dedication.” - George Halas

Each Team must have a Coach or Volunteer that is the holder of a current Red Cross Certificate in Community CPR and First Aid or its equivalent.

Head coaches are in complete charge of their players. They are responsible for their own actions or inactions, their assistants’ actions or inactions and the actions of their players.

Head coaches may be required to be certified through any available training program available to their Association/Conference. The Association/Conference may also make this a requirement of assistant coaches.

For online Coaching Certifications, Coaching Resources and special AYF member Background Check Services visit www.MyAYF.com.

Minimum scouting rules are as follows: any videotaping allowed by your local Conference is prohibited from the field level end zone. Scouting of any kind during a team's practice session is strictly prohibited. Any coach, team member or associate found or determined to be scouting another team's practice will be cause for the immediate suspension of the person involved and the head coach. AYF will allow scouting of teams during post-season play in the form of video and written reports as long as the minimum rules listed above are followed.

Section 17 – Coaches and Administrators Pledge

COACHES AND ADMINISTRATORS PLEDGE

“Coach a boy as if he is your own son.” - Eddie Robinson

All administrators and volunteers are bound by the “Pledge”, “Code”, and “Standard of Conduct”.

Each game and practice I participate in or administer over will provide me with an opportunity to be a Champion of Character. I pledge, as an AYF member to accept the five core character values of American Youth Football and will do my best to represent AYF, my Conference, my Association, my Team, and myself by: respecting my opponent, the officials, my team, my administrators, coaches, myself and the game; taking responsibility for my actions in all areas of my life; having the integrity to stand by my word; providing leadership where I serve others while striving to be a personal and team leader; and being an example of sportsmanship by holding myself to the highest standards of fair play.

“One athlete of character will improve a team. One team of character will improve a school. One school of character can impact an entire community.” - Bruce E. Brown

Coaches can make a conscious choice to uphold the best of values. Individual players can make choices that will define them as athletes. American Youth Football believes in the following five core values.

Leadership

Integrity

Respect

Responsibility

Sportsmanship

The five core values can be exemplified as described below:

How an athlete shows **LEADERSHIP**

Selflessness – Teamwork, has the ability to put the team ahead of self in every decision, accepts and fulfills a role.

Enthusiasm - Plays for the love of the game, shares it with teammates, brings it everyday.

How an athlete shows **INTEGRITY**

Integrity - Tells the truth, keeps commitments, does not lie, cheat, or steal, purity of intent. Honorable and genuine, being worthy of respect.

How an athlete shows **RESPECT**

Teachable Spirit - Takes correction as a compliment. Consistently seeks new information. Is eager to learn.

Work Habits - Commits to hard, productive work. Commits to continuous improvement.

Attentiveness - Listens to coaches and teammates. Concentrates on the task at hand.

Confidence - Quiet, inner feeling based on preparation, not arrogance. Values the work and accomplishments of the team – is not arrogant. Shared joy of the inner circle. Does not require or expect special treatment. Proud, feels a sense of dignity.

How an athlete shows **RESPONSIBILITY**

Academic Progress - Turns in assignments on time. Assumes responsibility for academic effort. Maintains academic eligibility. Covers all responsibilities for any classes missed due to travel.

Accountability - Accepts responsibility for outcomes. Solves problems – does not make excuses. Looks to self first when improvement is needed. Can be counted on by self and teammates.

Mental Toughness - Nothing breaks spirit – stays enthusiastic, confident and positive.

Determination - Is a self-starter, Recovers from mistakes quickly. Accepts and embraces discipline for the benefit of the team Exhibits self control on and off the field. Focuses attention and effort.

Competitive - Is determined to work within the rules of the game to be successful. Makes a quick recovery from mistakes or misfortune.

How an athlete shows **SPORTSMANSHIP**

Sportsmanship: Respects the rules and the game. Respects and accepts the judgment of others. Respects opponents as guests and reacts correctly, even when others do not.

Section 18 – Coaches and Administrators Code

COACHES AND ADMINISTRATORS CODE

“Watch your thoughts for they become words. Choose your words, for they become actions. Understand your actions for they become habits. Study your habits, for they will become your character. Develop your character for it comes your destiny.”- Unknown

I believe in the power of athletics as a program for the training of youth for a strong and efficient democracy.

I believe in athletics for the building of good character and personality.

I believe in athletics as a significant part of a sound educational program.

I believe in athletics as a constructive force in the lives of millions of sports followers throughout our nation. Therefore, I will hold sportsmanship and fair play high above all other values to be gained through sports participation.

I consider the privilege of guiding youth through participation in sports as a sacred trust.

I will always keep the best interests of each participant as my aim. I shall never be guilty of enhancing my progress by the use of a participant's skill for my benefit.

I will forever keep before the participants under my direction the high ideals, honesty, sincerity, and integrity which have made our nation great. I will not encourage, or tolerate, any form of trickery or evasion of rules in order to gain an advantage over an opponent.

I will do all in my power to instill in those under my direction a tolerance for all races and creeds, and I will stand out against intolerance wherever it may occur.

I will strive to instill in every youth great purposes and aims in living and will use the desire to play not as an end, but as a training ground for the participant's highest development.

I will strive to teach each participant's to be humble in victory and gracious in defeat, to be above bragging or using alibis, and shall help develop inner strength and poise.

I will use only fair and honest means in my desire for personal achievement and shall count the goodwill of my peers far above any achievement unfairly gained.

I will not sacrifice the values to be gained through a wholesome enjoyment of challenging sports activity for institutional pride or commercial ends.

I will use only fair and honest means of securing talent for athletic teams and never stoop to trickery or insincere promises in influencing participant's in the selection of their experience.

I will use every means at my command to protect the moral, mental and physical health of the participant's under my guidance and will never be party to the use of athletics for the financial or political gain of any office or group.

I will encourage each participant to avail himself/herself of the best experience to be gained in a well-rounded education and to progress normally toward graduation. I will never encourage participation in athletics as an end in itself.

I will help each participant under my guidance toward the development of honest habits of work and pride in work well done and I shall not practice or allow evasion in any obligation surrounding the athletics program.

I will shoulder my total responsibility as a leader through athletics and will not allow that responsibility to be transferred to any person or group outside the organization. I will not violate this sacred trust for financial support or political prestige.

Section 19 – Administrators, Coaches, Volunteers Standard of Conduct

ADMINISTRATORS, COACHES, VOLUNTEERS STANDARD OF CONDUCT

"Don't pray for an easy victory,

but pray for the strength to do your best at the moment of decision!" - Joe Galat

All Administrators, Coaches, and Volunteers will abide by a Standard of Conduct, which includes the following provisions. If any of these provisions are violated, the Association / Conference shall have the authority to impose any penalty they see fit. If any of these provisions are violated during a

Regional or National event, the National Office at its sole discretion shall have the authority to impose any penalty it sees fit with no right to appeal. Administrators, Coaches, and Volunteers, having already accepted and agreed to abide by the Coach and Administrators Pledge and the Coach and Administrators Code, by their accepting and active participation in membership, shall follow the intent of the Pledge and Code and shall inclusively and/or additionally agree to:

1. Not smoke and/or use smokeless tobacco on the field or in front of participants at any time.
2. Abstain from the possession and drinking of alcoholic beverages and the possession or use of any illegal substance on the field or in front of participants at any time.
3. Accept decisions of the game officials and judges on the field and in competitions as being fair and called to the best of their ability.
4. Not criticize an opposing team, its players, spirit participants, coaches, or fans by word of mouth or by gesture.
5. Together with team officials, be jointly responsible for the conduct and control of team fans and spectators. Any parent, guardian, or fan that becomes a nuisance and out of control must be asked to leave.
6. Not use abusive or profane language at any time.
7. Not encourage their team to intentionally run up the score on an opponent. In the event of a commanding lead every effort shall be made to let all players play.
8. Not permit or encourage, "extreme dieting", or "sweating down" tactics of any kind for any reason. Must report any instance witnessed or suspected to the parent/guardian and local administrator.
9. Not recommend or distribute any medication, controlled or over the counter
10. Not deliberately incite unsportsmanlike conduct.
11. Not criticize/berate participants ever, to provide constructive criticism, in private, or in the presence of team/squad members if others might benefit.
12. Remove from a game or practice any participant when his/her health is in question, whether or not as a result of injury, until competent medical advice is available.
13. A coach will follow the parameters of the Anti-Substance Abuse Rule and see that it's carried out faithfully and that all players understand its importance.
14. A coach will not use ineligible players and will take the responsibility of having proper and legal documents on each and every player proving his eligibility at all times.
15. Insure that all participants meet the minimum required number of plays under the Mandatory Play Rules and Regulations.
16. Uphold all rules and regulations of Association, Conference, Region, and National AYF.
17. A coach must discourage the wearing of Gang colors or any gang symbol and the use of any gang related forms of communication during any and all team related activities including but not limited to team practices.

Section 20 – Anti-Substance Abuse Rule

ANTI-SUBSTANCE ABUSE RULE

Each team will present a Substance Abuse lecture to players and cheerleaders at all levels of play. The lecture will be presented during the first week of practice and will be repeated as many times as necessary to ensure all American Youth participants are aware of the harmful effects of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

The lecture must be given by a member of the coaching staff or an adult volunteer designated for that purpose. Some examples would be “just say no” or “DARE” programs. Also included with this talk should be topics like “Academics – Tolerance – Giving Back to the Community”.

Section 21 – Minimum Penalties

MINIMUM PENALTIES

A) Coach / Administrators

The following are the minimum penalties to be enforced for violation of, but not limited to the following rules:

Any organization found to have allowed a variance to this rulebook, the rules regulations and the spirit of the rules and regulations without filing and receiving written approval may be suspended.

Any organization found not enforcing this rulebook, the rules regulations and the spirit of the rules and regulations may be suspended.

Cheating: Permanent suspension. (Roster / Participant Manipulation will be considered Cheating)

Failure to keep faith with juveniles & parents: Defined as any deliberate practice of a coach, team, or Association, which placed the health, welfare and safety of juveniles in jeopardy, or exploits or treats them in such a manner that the juvenile becomes a “tool” of the team. First offense: suspension for one game and one week of practice. Second offense: permanent suspension.

Badgering of game officials with threats and inciting fans to display poor sportsmanship: First offense: suspension for two games and two weeks of practice. Second offense: permanent suspension.

Fighting of any kind: suspension for the remainder of the season and subject to arrest.

Teaching players dirty tactics: First offense: suspension for one game and one week of practice. Second offense: permanent suspension.

Falsifying birth or any other documents to make a participant eligible is grounds for forfeiture of all games in which they have participated and permanent suspension of the adult(s) responsible for the act and all evidence will be turned over to the local authorities for any criminal prosecution that may be relevant.

Playing ineligible players: Suspension for rest of season. League will review status for next season. Suspension may be appealed, if an appeal process exists, to the Conference depending on the nature of the ineligibility.

When ineligible players are found, all games of which the ineligible players have participated in are forfeited and will count in the league standings as such.

When ineligible players are found the Team is ineligible for post-season play of any kind regardless of the number of losses it has suffered for playing ineligible players.

In the absence of local rules and regulations regarding participant extreme behavior, the following minimum penalties should be enforced whether in game or practice when the act is not covered by the governing state or high school rules, within the coach/administrators discretion:

Fighting: First offense: Suspension for one game and one week of practice. Second offense: Suspension and parental/guardian conference.

Disrespect for coaches, participants, game and team officials: First offense: removal from the game/practice and parental/guardian conference. Second offense: suspended for one game and one week of practice. Third offense: Suspension and parental conference.

Badgering opponents and or teammates by word or act with the purpose of intimidation: First offense: removal from the game/practice and parental/guardian conference. Second offense: suspended for one game and one week of practice. Third offense: Suspension and parental/guardian conference.

C) Organization Offenses

In the absence of local rules and regulations regarding the following, It is AYF's recommendation that the guidelines below be implemented.

Any Player, Coach, Administrator, Parent/Guardian, or Fan should strike (hit) a game official, or member of the coaching staff, shall be subject to arrest by local law enforcement agencies, and permanent suspension including but not limited to being banned from all AYF Events and Activities.

Failure to control parents or fans: Suspension of the Association from the Conference until the administration of the Association can submit evidence satisfactory to the Conference that the problems have been rectified.

Failure to control coaches from actions contrary to the health, safety and welfare of players. First offense: probation for the entire Association for the season. Second offense: suspension of the Association from the Conference until the administration of the Association can submit evidence satisfactory to the Conference that the problems have been rectified.

See section on "Rule Enforcement Authority" for additional information.

Section 22 – Hearings and Appeals

HEARINGS AND APPEALS

Conferences shall have complete jurisdiction over hearings and appeals within their programs.

All hearings and appeals must be conducted in the manner the Conference has constructed in its bylaws/organizational documents. Should no process exist it will be at the complete discretion of the Conference to allow or disallow a hearing or appeal. The National AYF office will not hold hearings or appeals of any kind concerning local issues.

The National AYF office at its sole discretion may or may not allow a hearing or appeal of any of its decisions and rulings.

See section on "Rule Enforcement Authority" for additional information.

Section 23 – Regional/National Championship Eligibility

REGIONAL/NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Regional Committees are required to establish a system for inspecting the AYF Required Paperwork for all Regional Tournament teams prior to the first Regional tournament game. All paperwork and rosters must be verified to prevent a team from qualifying and traveling to the National tournament when they do not legitimately qualify. In the event that a team is to be disqualified by this review the Conference runner-up would be allowed to enter the Regional tournament.

Conferences must commit to their Regional Chairperson What Divisions and Team Levels they will be sending to the Regional/National Tournament by September 15th.

Regional Committees must meet to set the Tournament brackets by October 1st .

Regional Committees must submit the tournament brackets to the AYF National Office by October 15th . Failure to comply may result in loss of opportunity to participate in National tournament play.

Associations that commit to their Conferences to participate in the Regional and National Tournament and then do not compete, will be subject to suspension from the following years post-season play including but not limited to, Regional and National tournaments. Any team participating in the Regional Tournament, Winning the right to advance and then not traveling will be subject to suspension from the following year's post-season play. Any team participating in the National Tournament and not participating in all scheduled games will cause their Association to be subject to suspension from the following year's post-season play.

Any Team entered into post-season play of any kind must have filed a Certified Roster with the Region and National Office by the specified cut-off date.

All teams must travel with a copy of the Certified Roster, all Participant and Tournament required paperwork. An Absentee form for any participant listed on a certified roster but not accompanying the team. All paperwork must be available for official weigh-in and player verification prior to each game. AYF Absentee Form can be found online.

All Teams traveling to the National Championship tournament must have with them, in addition to the above, Proof of Insurance, Background Check Affidavits and Filled in AYF Mandatory Play Forms.

All teams traveling to the National Tournament must book their stay through the AYF authorized booking agent and stay in approved accommodations. This insures that all of our members will receive the discounted accommodations we have secured and allow us to host the tournament in the locations you have chosen.

Section 24 – Wild Card Eligibility

WILD CARD ELIGIBILITY

Wild Card births may be awarded to teams wherever an opening exists in the Regional or National Tournament Brackets.

To be considered for a Wild Card slot in the Regional or National Tournament bracket you must make your interest and commitment known to both the Regional Chairperson within your region and the National Office by November 1st.

To be accepted as a Wild Card team you must demonstrate the ability to compete at the Regional and National level, have verified each participants paperwork, filed a Certified Roster with the Region and National Office by the specified cut-off date. And meet any and all other requirements contained in this rulebook.

For more specific information speak with your Regional Committee Chairperson, the Regional host and the AYF National Office.

Section 25 – Important Dates

SUMMARY OF DUE DATES

August 1st –

- All AYF Tournament Conferences Must Make Their Tournament Participation Known To The National Football Commissioner.

August 15th –

- Request For DII Status Is Due (Submit The AYF DII Request Form)
- Waivers Of Any Kind Are Due (Submit The AYF Waiver Request Form)

August 31st –

- All AYF Required Participant Paperwork Collected, Complete, And Inspected For Compliance And Roster Certification.

September 15th –

- Last Date Participants Can Be Added/Moved And Certified To A Roster.
- Conferences Must Complete Certification Of All It's Association Rosters.
- Conferences Must Commit Teams To The Regional/National Tournament To The Regional Chairperson

October 1st –

- Rosters Due At the Regional and National Office.
- Roster Submission Extension Request Due.
- Regions Set Their Regional Tournament Brackets

November 1st –

- Bowl Game Requests Due (Submit The AYF Bowl Game Request Form)
- Wild Card Tournament Entry Request Due.
- Regions Finalize Commitment of Teams For The National Tournament To The National Office committee