**Southwest Youth Football Conference**

**Rules**

**2023**

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The S.Y.F.C. WILL ABIDE BY THE HIGH SCHOOL PLAYING RULES

ESTABLISHED BY THE MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHELETIC ASSOCIATION (M.H.S.A.A.) WITH THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONS AND/OR EXCEPTIONS:

**RULE 1. Sign Ups:**

1. Sign-ups will be the responsibility of each regional director.
2. All participants must bring a photocopy of their birth certificate, baptismal record or certification from school records for age.
3. Late sign-ups will be allowed if a player has newly moved into a community or any team’s roster that drops below 15 players.
4. The minimum number of players on a team is 13 and there is no maximum number.
5. Each regional team will only have one team at each level of play.
6. The regional directors must able to provide a list of eligible players with age, weight and player’s number for all age groups. This list must be available at all games.

**RULE 2. Grades and weight Restrictions:**

**A.** Age division will be primarily by grades: Age will be determined by the age as of: Sept 1st except 2nd graders

1. 2nd, 3rd and 4th (Junior)

2.5th & 6th (Senior)

**B.** 2nd graders must be 8 by Nov 1st (No Exceptions)

**C.** Player cannot be 13 years old on or before Sept. 1st.

1. If a child is over the age of 13, but meets weight requirements, a league vote will be allowed for player eligibility.

**D.** Each player will be weighed in their pants, shirt and cleats or tennis shoes with their shoulder pads on, no helmet, but helmets will be inspected at two locations chosen by the league each year.

**E.** Juniors

1. If a player is over 120 lbs. at weigh-in they must play tight end to tight end on the line only, they may not be thrown the ball if they are over 115 lbs. (may **not be** in the backfield)

2. If a player is over 120 lbs. they can play special teams, but must be on the line. The punter may be overweight.

3. If a player is over 120 lbs. they can be moved up to Seniors.

4. If a player is over **120 lbs**. they **can’t** run or catch the ball**.**

**5.** Players who are over weight may only be on the line(tackle to tackle on both offense and defense.

Seniors

1. If a player is over 145 lbs. at weigh-in they must play tackle to tackle on the offensive line only. (may **not be** in the backfield)
2. If a player is over 145 lbs. they can play special teams, but must be on the line. The punter may be overweight.
3. If a player is over 145 lbs. they **can’t** run or catch the ball.
4. Players who are over weight may only be on the line (end to end on the defense).

**F.** There will only be one weigh-in for the season with exceptions to players who may have moved into the community later or players who may not be able to make it on that date. If a player can’t make it on the scheduled date the regional director must make arrangement with another regional director to weigh the player before the scheduled date.

**H**. All players will be weighed in their shoes, football pants (with pads), shoulder pads and a shirt. **(No Exceptions) No helmet, but helmets will be inspected at the time of weigh-in for safety issues.**

**RULE 3. Equipment:**

1. All players’ equipment must be regulation equipment as defined by the M.H.S.A.A. rulebook.
2. Football sizes for each will be as follow:

1. Junior… junior sizes (volt 6 or equivalent)

2. Senior… junior or intermediate size – youth (volt 6 or 7 or equivalent)

**RULE 4. Practices and Scrimmages**

1. 1st practice will be determined by the directors.
2. First practice for 2022 will be on or after August 8.
3. No contact practices will occur in the first three days of practice.

B. No limit on practices until the scrimmage.

C. After the scrimmage can only practice 6 hours a week.

D. Scrimmages will be held at two locations, 9:00am and 12:00pm.

a. Decatur hosting- Cass, Lawton, Marcellus and Kalamazoo

b. Hartford hosting- South Haven, Watervliet and Coloma

E. Scrimmages will be on the August 26.

**RULE 5. Game Schedules**

1. The board of directors will set scheduling of games no later than one week prior to the first game.

**B**. All games will be played on Saturday. Make up games if any will be determined by regional directors and have at least a minimum of three days between games.

**C.** In order to adhere to the game schedules, regional directors have the right to use a continuous clock.

**D.** Tentative starting times for games:

1. Flag – 9:00 am.

2. Junior - 10:30 pm.

3. Senior- 12:30pm

**RULE 6. COACHES:**

**A.** Regional directors will be responsible for the screening and selection of coaches for their respective regions.

**B.** Coaches along with their players must remain in their designated areas along the sidelines except for the 2 junior and 1 senior coach. (rule 8-f)

**C.** Coaches and their staff will abide by all S.Y.F.C. rules and will keep the best interest of their players in mind at all times.

**D.** The use of profane language or abusive behavior will not be tolerated.

E. Coaches will assist regional directors in controlling their spectators.

**RULE 7. Officials**

**A.** There will be 2 M.H.S.A.A. registered officials for each game.

**B.** The S.Y.F.C. will use a pool of officials that will be sent to each region every week.

**C.** Each region director will be in charge to pay the officials after the game, the price will be $50 a game for each official.

**D.** Directors and coaches will treat the officials with respect.

**RULE 8. Game Rules:**

**A.** Regulation high school playing clock will be used.

**B.** Four 10-minute quarters with a 10-minute half time will be used.

**C.** Each team is entitled to 3-1 minutes time-out per half.

**D.** A 100-yard regulation high school field will be used.

**E.** There will be no overtime games.

**F. On field coaching**

**1.** Up to 2 Junior coaches may remain on the field and enter their team’s huddle to help guide them as long as they remain 15 yards back from the line of scrimmage once the huddle is broken.

**2.** 1 Senior coach may remain on the field and enter their team’s huddle to help guide them as long as they remain 15 yards back from the line of scrimmage once the huddle is broken.

**G.** Every attempt should be made to ensure equal playing time among all players. Each player will be required to play a minimum of 4 plays per half. It will be every coach’s responsibility to abide by this rule. Regional directors will monitor its adherence. Violations my result in coaches being suspended based on the board of director’s vote .

**H.** A thirty-five second play clock will be in use for both junior and senior games.

**I.** On 4th down **(Juniors and Seniors)** the offensive team can announce that they would like to punt and they will be given a free kick. Once the ball is snapped there will be no movement by either team until the ball is kicked, with the exception of two flyers who will be lined up outside the tackle box. The flyers may release at the time of the snap. Two defensive players may block each flyer. There must be 8 players with-in 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.

**1.** On the punt, a 2 yard catch zone will be allowed. If the defensive player enters the catch zone prior to the catch, a warning will be issued unless contact is made. Every penalty afterwards will be a 5 yards addition after the end of the play.

**2.** If the team decides to forgo the punt, a twenty yard walk off will be used instead of punting the ball.

**J. Kick offs**

1. Juniors will not kick off at any point during the game. The ball will be placed at the 35 yard line.

2. Seniors will kick off according to MHSAA rules.

**K.** Defensive linemen must be in a down stance, end can stand. **(Juniors and Seniors)**

**L.** Linebackers must be three yards off the ball. **(Juniors and Seniors)**

**M.** No defensive lineman may line up on the center or the gaps next to the center. **(Juniors and Seniors) This includes within the red zone.**

**N.** Plays may be run in those gaps including quarterback sneaks and dives.

**O.** Defensemay enter the gaps by the use of the guards or linebacker moving after the snap.

**P.** No presnap blitzing for Juniors or Seniors. Players must wait until the ball is snapped.

**Q.** Any extra point attempt that is kicked will not be rushed. This applies to both Junior and Seniors. Defense may stand and jump up and down in an attempt to block a low kick. A block kick will be a dead ball turn over, no returns may be attempted.

**R.** All overweight players must be placed on the offensive and defensive line.

**RULE 9. Courtesy Rule:**

**A.** All coaches must understand that it is not necessary to run up scores on opposing teams. Once a 25-point margin is achieved in a game that all attempts should be made to prevent the margin of victory from increasing. The pride and self-esteem of opposing players and coaches must be honored at all times. The following recommended actions would be viewed by the board of directors as attempts to keep the margin of victory at a minimum.

1. Substitute freely.

2. Allow players to run the ball who normally don’t get to.

3. Use timeouts only to reposition new players.

**B.** This list is not all-inclusive. Remember, even though the S.Y.F.C. understands that winning is one of the objectives of the game we believe that by adhering to the above recommended action you can accomplish additional playing time for other players while at the same time honoring the pride of the opposing team.

**C.** If a player is dominating a game and there is a 25-point margin, the opposing coach may request that the player be moved to another position. A coach failing to honor this request will be suspended from the following game. If the 25-point margins are reduced, the player may return to the position he was moved from.

**RULE 10. Administration of Rules**

**A.** No rules will be waived unless approved by the board of directors.

**B.** Rules may be amended at any board of directors meeting by a majority vote provided there is a quorum (4) in attendance.

**C.** Any coaching staff member or directors who violate any of the S.Y.F.C. rules may be subjected to disciplinary action up to and including suspension for a year, reinstatement will be made only after review and approval by the board of directors.

**D**.Any director not following the rules will also lose their right to vote.

Suspensions and Violations of the Rules

If a coach or player violates the rules above, the league will take action to discuss if a suspension is warranted.

We will follow the MHSAA guidelines on suspensions.