



# 2024 League Rules

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### **GPYF 100 – GREAT PLAINS YOUTH FOOTBALL MISSION:**

To provide and foster a youth football league that provides the safest possible experience for all participants, while providing a competitive atmosphere allowing all players the opportunity to grow and excel on the field, while enjoying the game of football and growing fundamentally, competitively and as people.

### **GPYF 200 – GREAT PLAINS YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE PREFACE:**

The Great Plains Youth Football League Board of Directors is the presiding authority of the league. Changes in the league rules and day-to-day operations of the program members and teams are subject to the oversight and final approval of the GPYF Board of Directors.

Rules of the GPYF Football League are rules and regulations of the GPYF Board of Directors, reputable handbooks, the National Federation of State High School Football (NFHS) Rule Book, and the Nebraska Schools Activities Association (NSAA) Guidelines. The GPYF Board of Directors has the right to interpret, add, amend, revoke, suspend, or delete any rule contained herein, in the spirit of fair competition, at any time.

The following general rules, regulations, policies and procedures governing Great Plains Youth Football League competition, apply to all pre-season, regular season and post-season football activities.

### **GPYF 300 – GREAT PLAINS YOUTH FOOTBALL DEFINITIONS:**

The GPYF League will be divided into 3 grade-combination divisions.

- The Combination Grade divisions will be comprised of the following grade teams as of the 2024-25 school year:
  - 3rd and 4th Grade Combination (Pee Wee)
  - 5th and 6th Grade Combination (Jr. Midget)
  - 7th Grade and 8th Grade Combination (Midget)

In the spirit of fair play, all combination-based teams must contain a minimum of 20 percent of its players from the younger of the two grades that comprise that division.

If a program has 2 or more teams playing at a specific combination division, they must split talent as equally, as possible, between teams, so that all teams are equally competitive. This must be accomplished while still maintaining a minimum of 20 percent of its players from the younger grade that comprises the respective division.

### **GPYF 400 – DATES AND TIME FRAMES:**

**GPYF400.1 - Off-Season:** Will be the time from January 1st to the GPYF established first day of practice, Monday, July 29th, 2024. No GPYF team will engage in any organized physical conditioning or other football type activity involving players, or prospective players, no sooner than the GPYF established first day of practice.

*NOTE: A waiver may be obtained for this rule from the GPYF President. Such waivers are for the purpose of camps that will benefit and/or are open for ALL members of the league.*

**GPYF400.2 - Pre-Season:** Shall be the time from the date of the GPYF declared first day of practice to the first regular season game.

**GPYF400.3 - Regular Season:** Shall be from the first regular season game to the completion of the final regular season game. This time frame would most likely be a 5 or 6-week period, under normal circumstances.

**GPYF400.4 - Post Season:** The Post-Season shall be the time period from which the final GPYF regular season game has been completed and will continue to December 31st.

**GPYF400.5 - Game Scheduling:** The GPYF Football League will be responsible for producing a working game schedule. During scheduling, attempts will be made to keep entire program member teams together, at home and away, whenever possible.

**GPYF500 - ELIGIBILITY OF ATHLETES:**

**GPYF500.1** Member programs and teams are required to properly outfit all players before they are eligible to participate in a GPYF league game, practice or scrimmage. Additionally, players may not be added to a roster until he/she has been registered and approved by the GPYF League.

**GPYF500.2** - To be eligible to participate for a Program Member or team in the GPYF League, a player:

1. Must be regularly enrolled, and, in regular attendance at a public, private, parochial, home, or military school.
2. Must not have, or currently be, participating in any high school athletic program, to include school organized summer weightlifting programs/classes. 9th graders are not allowed to participate in the Great Plains Youth Football League.
3. Must submit signed Parental Consent Form, Pre-Existing Injury Release and Parental Pledge Form to the league.
4. Must be at least entering the 2nd grade or 7 years old by July 1st, 2024 to participate in any practice or game.
5. Must meet the following age guidelines/requirements: Player must meet either grade or birthdate requirements.
  - Pee Wee Combo (3rd/4th Grade): Must not reach the age of 10 prior to July 1, 2024, without league approval.
    - 5th Graders must play at the Jr. Midget level, unless they qualify as an older-lighter player.
  - Jr. Midget Combo (5th/6th Grade): Must not reach the age of 12 prior to July 1, 2024, without league approval.
    - 7th Graders must play at the Midget level unless, they qualify as an older-lighter player.
  - Midget Combo (7th/8th Grade): Must not reach the age of 14 prior to July 1, 2024, without league approval.
    - 9th Graders are not allowed to play at the Midget level – NO EXCEPTIONS.
6. Must participate for only one team at one level of play.
7. A player may play up at a higher grade level/division at the discretion of the parents and local Program Leader.
8. Must display good sportsmanship and follow the rules of competition of the Great Plains Youth Football League.

***NOTE: Participation of an ineligible player, whether accidental or intentional, in any contest, shall constitute a mandatory and automatic forfeit of each contest the ineligible player participated in.***

**GPYF600 - ELIGIBILITY OF COACHES:**

**GPYF600.1 - Background Checks:** Member coaches are required to submit to a background check administered by an authorized background check service provider or provide proof of a background check through their local school administration, in accordance with teaching certification, before they participate or interact in any practice or contest. Background checks must remain current every 12 months. Program Members are required to withhold ineligible coaches from all contact with players and participation as coaches.

**GPYF600.2 - To be eligible to coach or assist coach for a team in the GPYF League, the coaching candidate must:**

1. Submit to an aforementioned mandatory background check, and if candidate is denied coaching eligibility, they may appeal to their Program Leader and the GPYF Board of Directors. Both authorities must give approval before the coach is allowed to continue coaching in the league. Program Leaders are responsible for ensuring that all head and assistant coaches and parent helpers within their local program have been background checked, completed online concussion training certification and completed an online Safe Sports Course, prior to coaching at any team gathering, practice or game, and have been approved to coach in the league.
2. Head Coaches must be a minimum 21 years of age and assistants or trainers must be a minimum 18 years of age. Permission for individuals to coach that are younger than the established criteria must be approved by the GPYF Board of Directors prior to July 15th.
3. Must not have presented any false or incomplete information to his/her Program or GPYF Official to gain eligibility.
4. Must display good sportsmanship, follow the rules of competition and follow the GPYF Coaches Code of Conduct before, during and after every contest.
5. Must complete certification requirements as set forth through the USA Football Coaching Certification Program.

**GPYF 700 – PROGRAM MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES & HOSTING CONTESTS:**

**GPYF700.1 - Schedule Responsibilities:** GPYF League Program Members are required to fulfill their GPYF league and schedule responsibilities. Failure to meet these responsibilities can result in forfeitures of games and/or expulsion from the League.

**GPYF700.2 - Admission Fees:** Admittance to all regular season games is free of charge for spectators. In the event of a special circumstance, admission to contests may be charged with prior approval of the GPYF Board of Directors, including league championship events.

**GPYF700.3 - Chain Gang Crew:** The host program will ensure that there is a "Chain Gang" of 3 people (2 marker and 1 down marker) present on the field a minimum of 5 minutes prior to each game. Each chain gang member will be at least 16 years old. The "Chain Gang" must be on the home team sidelines throughout the contest and not on the visitor sideline. The chain gang will abide by the NFHS rules to include: remaining neutral and is not allowed to relay, communicate or gesture in any way, any information to anyone other than the officials. Any chain gang member violating this rule will be immediately ejected from the game, must leave the premises, be disqualified from attending the teams next scheduled game and will not be allowed to serve as a chain gang member again during his/her life in Great Plains Youth Football.

**GPYF700.4 - Event Support Staff:** All host member programs are required to provide a designated Site Supervisor during all GPYF contests hosted at their facility. The Site Supervisor must identify themselves to the game officials as they arrive for the contests.

**GPYF700.5 - Facility Requirements:** Any member program that intends to host any Great Plains Youth Football pre-season, regular season or post-season contest, must meet a minimum of the following requirements:

1. Must have concessions available to the general public.
2. Must have 2 restrooms or portable waste units in clean, working condition.
3. Must have a working electronic scoreboard w/clock visible to both teams.
4. Must have a lined field, with all lines clearly visible, and the field must be in safe playing condition.
5. Must have functional, working yard markers, clearly visible to spectators and officials.
6. Playing field must have a barrier between players and fans. Barrier may be a temporary fence or track.
7. Game field must be 53 yds. wide x 100 yds. long.
8. Must have bench areas marked at each 25 yd. line.
9. Have a host Site Supervisor "In Charge" and "On Duty" at all times.

*Failure to abide by or correct facility requirement issues in a timely manner will result in forfeiture of games played with the facility issue.*

**GPYF700.6 - Game Balls/Official Balls:** The host team will provide game balls for all contests it hosts. Game ball must be approved by both home and visiting teams. Visiting teams have the option of using their own game ball and must have their ball ready for game officials for change of possessions.

**GPYF Authorized Footballs:**

- 3rd and 4th Grade Levels: Pee Wee Size or K2
- 5th and 6th Grade Levels: Junior Size
- 7th and 8th Grade Levels: Youth Size

**GPYF700.7 - Officials:** All GPYF games shall use only GPYF contracted officials. A minimum of 2 officials will be provided per game.

**GPYF700.7b** - Host sites will provide, free of charge, a drink and food/snack at half-time and between each game to each game official, as requested.

**GPYF700.8 - Security:** The host site and coaches are responsible for the control of spectators during all contests it hosts. GPYF recommends that the host Site Supervisors notify the GPYF league office of any possible negative tensions or issues among spectators. Any and all disruptive situations will be reported to the GPYF league office by 8pm the day of the event/issue.

**GPYF700.9 - Warm-up Areas:** Host sites must provide a warm-up area for all teams to warm-up prior to a game.

**GPYF800 - PRE-SEASON, REGULAR SEASON AND POST SEASON CONTESTS AND SITE SELECTION:**

**GPYF800.1 - Pre-Season Contests:** No player shall participate on any team unless they are on the teams' official roster and provided all signed consent forms and medical release documents to the league, prior to any contests or practices.

**GPYF800.2 - Pre-Season Scrimmages** - No team shall play in a scrimmage contest until after it has completed at least 4 days of full contact practices after Heat Acclimatization Guidelines have been met.

**GPYF800.3 - Regular Season Contests:** All teams will play a 5-game regular season based on the number of teams within their division/level. No games will be played Labor Day Weekend, unless necessary. When possible, the schedule will be done in a manner that considers factors such as travel distance and rivalries, if applicable. Games are typically on Saturday or Sunday of each weekend. The following first games of the regular season will be held no sooner than August 19th and the final games will be played on or before October 17th. The game schedule for Week #6 games will be posted on Tuesday, September 25th and the game schedule for Week #7 games will be posted on Tuesday, October 3rd.

**GPYF800.4 - Postseason Contests:** All teams from each division will qualify for post-season play and will compete in a Friendship game or playoff format. Playoff pairings, sites and times will be posted 2 days after the completion of the regular season for each division. All teams will receive 2 post-season games.

**GPYF800.4a** - The format for any and all playoff contests will be seeded as follows:

1. Team seeding for playoff games will be determined by best record of regular season games. Seeding will only determine the matchup of opponents. If neither team has home field availability, then the league reserves the right to change seedings to ensure that all games can be played.
2. Tie-Breakers: Used in breaking all ties in the final standings between teams. In the event of a tie in the final standings, the following tie-breakers will be used. Once the top team is determined through the tie-breaker process, the next tie-breaker with the remaining teams will move back to tie-breaker #1 and move through the established criteria to place the next team. This process will repeat until all teams have been placed. Each time a team is placed using the tie-breaker, the

remaining teams will be decided beginning with tie-breaker #1 first and then through the progression of tie-breakers until the tie is broken.

- 1.) Best Record (Divisional Games Only)
- 2.) Head-to-Head Results (Only Games between teams tied in standings)
- 3.) Point Differential (Maximum 24 Points per Game only for games between teams that are tied in standings)
- 4.) Strength of Schedule (Opponents Winning Percentage – All Games)
- 5.) Coin Toss

3. Home teams for playoff games will be determined by field availability and to give teams with fewer home games in the regular season, additional home games. The league reserves the right to schedule the dates, times and locations of games based on the availability of game officials, as necessary.

**GPYF800.5 - Championship Game Sites:** The GPYF Board of Directors will select a site for the Championship games, with the goal of holding the championship game at the home field of one of the two teams, based on record, strength of schedule and home field availability. Sites will be selected by the GPYF Board of Directors for the best interest of the event and the league members.

#### **GPYF900 - TEAM COMPOSITION AND LIMITATIONS:**

**GPYF900.1 - Maximum Roster Size:** The maximum # of players that a team can field is 32 players, maximum, per game.

**GPYF900.2 - Minimum Roster Size:** Minimum roster/team size is 11 players. A team must have 11 players minimum to start a game.

**GPYF900.2a** - No team shall have less than 11 players on the field at any time. If a team has less than 11 players available to play, it will forfeit the game to its opponent. No further play will be allowed for that contest.

**GPYF900.4 - Coaching Staffs:** A team will have one (1) designated Head Coach, up to five (5) designated Assistant Coaches. If a team has more than 6 non-players on their sideline during a game, excluding chain gang members, the offending team will be penalized 15 yds. and the game stopped until all non-designated coaches and players are removed. Teams are not permitted to have a team trainer or ball person on the sidelines.

**GPYF900.5 - Responsibility of Formation of Teams:** Member Programs will be responsible for the formation of their teams. The GPYF league does not coordinate or facilitate local registrations, assembly of coaches or the formation of teams.

**GPYF900.6 - Team Rosters:** Head Coaches are responsible to ensure that all team rosters are current with the league at all times throughout the season. Additionally, head coaches are responsible for ensuring that all player names and jersey #'s on the league web-site are accurate and current at all times throughout the season.

#### **GPYF1000 - PRACTICES:**

**Practice** - Is defined to include a gathering of players and/or prospective players to discuss, study, view film, walk -through or perform plays and techniques relating to football.

**GPYF1000.1 - Great Plains Youth Football team practices will follow this format:**

Days 1 through 5 of formal practices are considered Heat Acclimatization days. The following heat acclimatization guidelines must be followed:

1. During days 1 and 2 of the Heat Acclimatization period a helmet is the only piece of protective equipment that should be worn.

2. During days 3 through 5 only helmets and shoulder pads should be worn. Contact with blocking sleds and blocking dummies is permitted.
3. Beginning on day 6 all protective equipment may be worn and all full contact drills may begin.
4. No player shall play in a game without having attended practice and observed the Heat Acclimatization guidelines.

**GPYF1000.1a – Levels of Contact and Contact Guidelines during Heat Acclimatization Days:**

1. **Air:** Players run a drill unopposed without contact and with a coach pre-determined outcome. Air drills can be run at any practice throughout the season.
2. **Bags:** Drill is run against a bag or another soft-contact surface with a coach pre-determined outcome. Bag drills can be run at any practice throughout the season.
3. **Control:** Drill is run at assigned speed until the moment of contact; one player is pre-determined, the “winner” by the coach. Contact remains above the waste and players stay on their feet. Control drills can be run beginning on Day #3 and continue at any practice throughout the season.
4. **Thud:** The drill is run at assigned speed through the moment of contact; no pre-determined “winner”. Contact must remain above the waist; players stay on their feet and a quick whistle ends the drill. Thud drills can begin on Day #6 of practices and can be run at any practice throughout the season. Thud drills can only be run for a maximum of 30 minutes per practice.
5. **Live Action:** Games, scrimmages and drills run in game-like situations with no pre-determined “winner”. These are the only times that players are taken to the ground. Live Action Drills can begin on Day #6 of practices and can be run at any practice throughout the season. Live Action Drills can only be run for a maximum of 30 minutes per practice. If scrimmaging, for a maximum of 90 minutes per practice.

**GPYF1000.2** – Players that miss practices, join late, etc. can make those practices up to complete the Heat Acclimatization requirements. Coaches are allowed to hold a separate practice for only those players that have not completed the 6 Heat Acclimatization practices. These practices must be on days the full team does not practice and must be a minimum of 1-hour in length and no more than 2 hours in length. The progression of these practices must follow GPYF1000.1 and GPYF1000.1a.

**GPYF1000.3 – Team Practices:** Teams will limit their practices to no more than 2 hours of active, exertive practicing. Any gathering of 30 minutes or longer is considered a practice.

**GPYF1000.3a** – All teams will be allowed to practice a maximum of 4 times per week from July 31st through August 19th. After August 20th, teams can practice a maximum of 2 times per week.

**GPYF1000.4** – In addition to the maximum 2 practices per week, a 1-hour walk-through practice or skills practice will be permitted. A walk-through practice or skills practice must not involve contact drills or conditioning drills and players are permitted to wear helmets only. No shoulder pads or padded football pants are allowed.

**GPYF1000.5** – No practice will extend past 9:00pm on a school night.

**GPYF1000.6** – Scrimmages or games outside of the league will be considered an official practice and count toward a teams’ maximum practice allowance each week.

**GPYF1000.7** – The following heat index guidelines must be followed:



## **GENERAL HEAT GUIDELINES**

### **Heat index 99.0 degrees and under:**

- Provide ample amounts of water. This means water should always be available and athletes should take in as much water as they desire.
- Optional water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes duration.
- Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.

### **Heat index of 99.1-104.9 degrees:**

- Provide ample amounts of water. This means water should always be available and athletes should take in as much water as they desire.
- Mandatory water breaks every 30 minutes.
- Ice-down towels for cooling.
- Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.
- Reduce time of outside activity.
- Reduce the amount of practice time.
- Consider postponing practice to later in the day.
- Players to wear lightweight material shirt over pads.
- Helmets and other possible equipment removed if not involved in contact.
- Re-check temperature and humidity every 30 minutes to monitor for increased Heat Index.

### **Heat index of 105.0 to 110 degrees.**

- Provide ample amounts of water. This means water should always be available and athletes should take in as much water as they desire.
- Mandatory water breaks every 30 minutes for 10 minutes duration.
- Ice-down towels for cooling.
- Watch/monitor athletes carefully for necessary action.
- Reduce time of outside activity.
- Reduce practice time as well as indoor activity if air conditioning unavailable.
- Postpone practice to later in day, if possible.
- Players to wear lightweight material shirt.
- Helmets and other possible equipment removed if not involved in contact or necessary for safety. If necessary for safety, suspend activity.
- Alter uniform by removing items, if possible. Consider practice without pads and helmets.
- Re-check temperature and humidity every 30 minutes to monitor for increased Heat

### **Heat index above 110.1 degrees.**

- In this range, stop all outside activity and all activity held in an area without air-conditioning, until the heat index returns to 110.0 or below.

Note: During the course of the day, the heat index will rise and fall depending upon the time of day, amount of wind, cloud cover, etc. These heat guidelines will be in effect for fall Football season. The above are merely guidelines and it is the responsibility of parents to make the ultimate decision as to the participation of their child in GPYFL events when heat may be a factor, taking into consideration the age and physical condition of their child. Parents also have the ultimate responsibility to inform their child about the dangers of heat and need for protection, including sunscreen and proper hydration.

**If a parent believes it is too hot or cold for their child to practice or play, they have every right to exclude their child from participating. A parent's discretion supersedes any coaches, program or league decision to practice or play games. A player will not be penalized in any way for their absence.**

**GPYF1100 - RULES OF COMPETITION:**

**GPYF1100.1 - Game Rules:** All games of the Great Plains Youth Football League will be played under current Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) Guidelines and National Federation of State High School Football (NFHS) Rules, with the exception of the GPYF League Rules, contained herein.

**GPYF1100.2 - League Rules:** The Great Plains Youth Football League Rules will supersede all others. This is to ensure stricter rules and that fair play is in place at all times.

**GPYF1100.3 - Player Grade Level:** The grade level a player will be entering in the 2024-2025 school year will determine what level the player will compete in.

**GPYF1100.4 -** No GPYF team will practice with or scrimmage against, or compete in a game against, any team at an older division.

**GPYF1100.5 - Minimum Play Rule:** The GPYFL does not mandate a minimum play rule for each participant. However, individual Program Members may choose to implement their own internal minimum play rule for the participants within their own program. The GPYFL will not govern any minimum play rules for, or on behalf of, Program Members.

**GPYF1100.6 - Player Proof of Identity:** The GPYF League officials reserve the right to request further proof of any child's age, grade, school attending, or identity, at any time during the season, if it deems necessary. Said proof must be provided within 2 days or player may be declared ineligible. No League official, Program Member representative, coach or parent will approach or make question directly to a player. All inquiries to the league shall come in written communication from the local Program Leader.

**GPYF1100.7 - Cheerleading Guidelines:** Cheerleaders should avoid football teams, if possible, by occupying the area from the 25-yard line to the 5-yard line.

**GPYF1100.8 - Electronic Equipment:** The use of sideline electronic communication equipment during GPYF Youth Football contests will be prohibited. Sideline coaches and personnel will be allowed to carry their cell phone however, if they take a call, they must leave the sideline IMMEDIATELY. Phone communication or other surveillance devices placed in or near the ear are prohibited and can be interpreted as cheating. It is recommended that if sideline personnel are repeatedly using a phone during a game, he/she should remove themselves from the sideline area for the remainder of the contest or shut the phone off. This includes text messaging as well.

**GPYF1100.9 - Failure to Appear:** A team must give the GPYF League officials 72 hours' notice prior to game day that it cannot make its scheduled game. The team must give its reason for not being able to man a team for its game. Failure to notify the league at least 72 hours in advance of the game may result in possible forfeiture of the contest.

**GPYF1101.0 - Inclement Weather:** At the first sign of inclement weather, league representatives and/or game officials will decide whether to delay or suspend the game(s). The safety and welfare of participants and fans is paramount. Any sign of lightning in the area will delay the game for 30 minutes from the last sign of lightning.

**GPYF1101.1 - Making-up Games:** In the event of a game postponement or suspension, the GPYF League President will determine the makeup date, time and location or decide to call the game as complete and declare a winner.

**GPYF1101.2 - Mercy Rule:** Once a 24-point spread between teams has been reached; the game will enter the Mercy Rule. If a game reaches the Mercy Rule, the Head Game Official will start the clock and let it run continuously until the end of each quarter and again until all 4 quarters have been played. The only times the clock will stop are:

1. Timeouts
2. Change of Possessions
3. End of Quarters
4. Injuries
5. Score becomes less than 24 points

**GPYF1101.2a** - No teams leading in Mercy Rule situations are permitted to onside kick. If the game official believes that an onside kick was attempted, either intentionally or accidentally, they have right to award possession of the ball to the receiving team at the spot of the recovery.

**GPYF1101.2b** - Once the game has reached the Mercy Rule, the winning team is not allowed to blitz or place more than 7 players in the Blocking Free Zone on defense, prior to the snap of the ball, unless it is a Goal Line situation. The offense for the winning team is strongly encouraged against running reverses, passing plays, sweeps and plays outside of the Free Blocking Zone. Teams winning by 24 points or more are encouraged to remove starters from the game or place them in other positions. Skill players should be moved to non-skill positions, if possible. If the score differential drops below 24 points, then teams should resume normal play.

**GPYF1101.3 - Striper Weight Limits:** Eligible players, whose body weight exceeds the established weight limits for their grade division, will be denoted as a Striper. Additionally, any player that does not attend an official league weigh-in will be declared a Striper. The league will conduct one official weigh-in per player, per season, prior to the start of games. Once a player is declared a striper, they will be designated as a striper for the season. The GPYFL does not conduct secondary weigh-ins for players who lost weight during the season.

**Striper Weights for the 2024 Season:**

Combination Teams:

- Pee Wee Level (3rd/ 4th Grades): 90.1 lbs. or higher.
- Jr. Midget Level (5th / 6th Grades): 125.1 lbs. or higher.
- Midget Level (7th / 8th Grades): 160.1 lbs. or higher.

**Striper Rules Include:**

1. Stripers must have a horizontal stripe on their helmet in a halo style application. The tape must be visible on all sides of the helmet and must be 3/4" wide, minimum. Light colored helmets must have dark colored tape and dark colored helmets must have light colored tape.
2. Striper players must play the interior line positions, either the center, guard, or tackle position and must line up in the free blocking zone, which defined by NFHS - Rule 2, Section 17 Article 1: The free blocking zone extends from 4 yds. to the right and left of the ball and 3 yds. to the front and back of the ball. A striper must be aligned no more than two positions from the ball and can play only center, guard or tackle.
3. Defensive stripers must be in a 3-point or 4-point stance at the snap of the ball. Defensive players cannot line up head up any further outside than the outside shoulder of the offensive tackle.
4. Offensive players may maintain a 2-point pass blocking stance at the snap of the ball, in addition to the 3-point or 4-point stance. On kick-off or kick return teams' striper player does not have to be in a 3-point or 4-point stance.
5. Stripers are eligible to play on special teams (i.e kickoff, kick return, punt, punt return, etc.), but must observe established rules if they come into possession of the ball
6. A play will be blown dead if, and when, a striper comes into possession of the ball. The exception is if the punter is a striper. In this case the punter must punt and cannot fake a punt or advance the ball. No ball advancement or laterals are permitted by striper players.
7. Once a player is declared a striper, he/she cannot be re-certified as a skill position player if he/she loses weight.
8. Any team found illegally using a striper player or illegally lining up striper player at a skill position will be assessed a 15-yard penalty for un-sportsmanlike conduct. If a striper was illegally used in a skill position, any points scored during those possessions will be negated and taken off of the scoreboard. If it is determined to have impacted the results of the game, forfeiture of the game will occur.

**GPYF1101.4 - Older/ Lighter Rule:** Players meeting the following criteria will be allowed to follow the Older/Lighter Rule:

1. 5th graders weighing 75 lbs. or less have the option of playing down a level to Pee Wee Combo.

2. 7th graders weighing 100 lbs. or less have the option of playing down a level to Jr. Midget Combo.

**GPYF1101.4a - Older/ Lighter players:** must have two horizontal stripes on their helmet in a “halo” fashion. The tape must be visible on all sides of the helmet and must be 3/4” wide, minimum. Light colored helmets must have black tape and dark colored helmets must have white tape. Older/lighter players are not allowed to play the running back or quarterback positions, and are not allowed to advance the ball unless they intercept a pass, return a punt or kick-off, recover a fumble, or catch a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage. Older/Lighter players are not required to play tackle-to-tackle on offense and can play Tight End. Older lighter players cannot play QB or RB and cannot lineup in the backfield at any time. Older/lighter players can play any position on defense or special teams. An older/lighter player on offense cannot go in motion into the backfield inside of the tackle-to-tackle area prior to the snap. The double striper cannot be in motion at the snap of the football.

**GPYF1101.5 - Game Time Limits:** All GPYF Youth Football games will be four 10-minute Quarters with a 10-minute halftime. There will be a stop and go clock. Each team is allowed 3 timeouts per half.

**GPYF1101.5a** - No game will begin before its scheduled time without the consent of approval of both head coaches and officials.

**GPYF1101.6 - Overtime Rules:** A coin flip will determine which team plays offense and which team plays defense to start the overtime period. The team that wins the coin toss will decide whether they want to play offense or defense to start the overtime period. The team that loses the coin toss will decide which end of the field the overtime periods will be played on. Each team will be given 4 plays to score from the 10-yard line. If the score remains tied after the first overtime, we will move to a second overtime. The team that lost the coin toss to start the first overtime period will choose whether to play offense or defense to start the 2nd overtime period. This format will continue for all additional overtime periods. Games will be played until there is a winner. Timeouts do not carryover from regulation play or previous overtime periods. In each overtime period, both teams will receive one timeout.

**GPYF1101.7 - Team Scoring:** Teams will be awarded points for the following:

Touchdowns = 6 points

Point after TD by Play = 1-point

Points after TD by Kick = 2 points

Safety = 2 points

Field Goal = 3 points

**GPYF1101.8 - Reporting of Game Scores:** Both Head Coaches for the winning team and losing team are required to email their score to the designated league administrator, no later than 8pm of the day the game was played.

**GPYF1101.9 - Game Protests:** When a game has ended it is **OFFICIAL**. There will be NO protest because of an officials’ call or non-call. Please remember this game is for the kids to have fun, and learn to play football. No one call or non-call makes a difference.

### **GPYF1200 - RULES VARIATIONS:**

**GPYF1200.1** - Pee Wee (3rd and 4th Grade Combo) Teams are allowed to have 1 coach on the field to assist with play calling, lining up, and huddling for games through the weekend of September 16th/17th. No coaches are allowed on the field during kick-off or kick return plays during any point of the season.

**GPYF1200.1a** - The offensive team coach must be 10 yards behind the deepest offensive player at the snap of the ball. The defensive team coach must 5 yards behind the deepest defensive player and 10 yards away from any player.

**GPYF1200.1b** - Neither on field coach may coach, nor give directions or gestures, once the huddle is broke. The on-field coach may assist with players lining up, as long as he/she does not make blocking assignments or delay the game. On-field coaches will make all attempts to avoid interfering with the play. On field coaches will not attempt to deceive the opposing players between or during plays. (i.e., being involved in a trick play.)

**GPYF1200.1c** – If an on-field coach is found to interfere in a play, the game will be stopped and a warning issued the offending teams head coach. The second offense will result in an automatic unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and the on-field coach will be removed from the field for the remainder of the contest and the offending team will not be allowed to have any coach on the field for the remainder of the game.

**GPYF1200.2 – 3rd and 4th Grade (Pee Wee) Punts:** 3rd and 4th grade teams can only punt on 4th down. Head Coaches have 10 seconds to declare, from the end of the previous play, whether they will punt or go for the 4th down play. To declare, Head Coaches must clearly state to the head official their decision. If the Head Coach fails to provide a decision to the head official within 10 seconds, the game clock will be stopped and will not restart until the ball is put back into play.

**GPYF1200.2a – 3rd and 4th Grade (Pee Wee) Automatic Punts:** Teams have the option to punt the ball or ask the head official for an automatic punt. After declaring an automatic punt, the ball will be moved 25 yards automatically. The ball can be placed no further than the opponents' 20-yard line on an automatic punt, as a team cannot pin their opponent inside of the 20 yd. line.

**GPYF1200.2b- 3rd and 4th Grade (Pee Wee) Punts:** If a 3rd or 4th grade team chooses to have a player punt, no rush is allowed and no contact can be made, by either team, until after the punt has occurred. No fake punts are allowed. The center must snap the ball to the punter, between the legs and the punter must be lined up a minimum of 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped into play. The punting team cannot release downfield until the punt has taken place. During actual punt plays, the receiving team must have a minimum of 5 players lined up on the line of scrimmage in the free blocking zone. The 5 defensive players that are within the free blocking zone at the snap cannot move outside of the free blocking zone until the football is punted.

**\* Fake punts ARE NOT ALLOWED at the 3rd and 4th grade (Pee Wee) levels.**

Once the offensive team snaps the ball, they have 10 seconds to punt the football. After the ball has been snapped, and before the punter kicks it, the football may not be touched by any player on the offensive team, except the punter. If the ball is not punted in the allotted 10 seconds, the play is dead and the ball is spotted, as a change of possession, at the place of the ball when the play was blown dead. The head official will be responsible for timing the punt.

**GPYF1200.3 – 3rd and 4th Grade (Pee Wee) Field Goals & Extra Points:** The kicking team must alert the officials that they are going to attempt an extra point or field goal. The officials will alert the defensive team that an extra point or field goal is going to be attempted. The offensive team must snap the ball from the center, between the legs, to the holder, to start the play. Neither team will be allowed to make contact with any player on the opposing team. The defensive team will be allowed to jump and waive their arms, but touching an offensive player or crossing the line of scrimmage will result in an offside penalty being assessed.

Once the offensive team snaps the ball, they have 10 seconds to kick the football. After the ball has been snapped, and before the kicker kicks it, the football may not be touched by any player on the offensive team, except the holder. If the ball is not kicked in the allotted 10 seconds, the play is dead and no points are awarded. The head official will be responsible for timing the kick.

**\* Fake extra points or field goals ARE NOT ALLOWED at the 3rd and 4th grade (Pee Wee) levels.**

**GPYF1200.4 – 5th and 6th Grade (Jr. Midget) Punts: Automatic Punts NOT allowed at this level.** A team can elect to punt on any down. No rush is allowed and no contact can be made, by either team, until after the punt has occurred. No fake punts are allowed. The center must snap the ball to the punter, between the legs and the punter must be lined up a minimum of 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped into play. The punting team cannot release downfield until the punt has taken place. During actual punt plays, the receiving team must have a minimum of 5 players lined up on the line of scrimmage in the free blocking zone. The 5 defensive players that are within the free blocking zone at the snap cannot move outside of the free blocking zone until the football is punted.

Once the offensive team snaps the ball, they have 5 seconds to punt the football. After the ball has been snapped, and before the punter kicks it, the football may not be touched by any player on the offensive team, except the punter. If the ball is not punted in the allotted 5 seconds, the play is dead and the ball is spotted at the place of the ball when the play was blown dead. If the snap goes beyond the punter the ball is dead where it is picked up or becomes dead. The head official will be responsible for timing the punt.

\* Fake punts **ARE NOT ALLOWED** at the 5th and 6th grade (Jr. Midget) levels.

**GPYF1200.5 – 5th and 6th Grade (Jr. Midget) Field Goals & Extra Points:** The kicking team must alert the officials that they are going to attempt an extra point or field goal. The officials will alert the defensive team that an extra point or field goal is going to be attempted. The offensive team must snap the ball from the center, between the legs, to the holder, to start the play. Neither team will be allowed to make contact with any player on the opposing team. The defensive team will be allowed to jump and waive their arms, but touching an offensive player or crossing the line of scrimmage will result in an offside penalty being assessed.

Once the offensive team snaps the ball, they have 3 seconds to kick the football. After the ball has been snapped, and before the kicker kicks it, the football may not be touched by any player on the offensive team, except the holder. If the ball is not kicked in the allotted 3 seconds, the play is dead and no points are awarded. If the ball is snapped beyond the kicker, it is declared dead. The head official will be responsible for timing the kick.

\* Fake extra points or field goals **ARE NOT ALLOWED** at the 5th and 6th grade (Jr. Midget) levels.

**GPYF1200.6 – 7th and 8th Grade (Midget) Punts & Extra Points:** All punts and extra points are live and follow NFHS rules.

\* Fake punts and Field Goals **ARE ALLOWED** at the 7th and 8th grade (Midget) levels.

**GPYF1200.7 – Deceptive Plays:** It is a fundamental core belief of Great Plains Youth Football that coaches demand sportsmanship from their players and, equally important, must lead by example. Coaches must always remember that the players look to them for positive life skills and values. With that in mind, GPYF takes the position that coaches should refrain from teaching their players and teams techniques and plays that have no place in youth football. Examples of deceptive plays include but are not limited to “hideout” plays, “wrong ball” plays and/or “fumblerooski” plays. Football has been and always will be a game of deception and trickery involving multiple shifts, unusual formations and creative plays. However, actions or verbiage designed to confuse the defense into believing there is problem and a snap isn’t imminent, or planned loose ball plays, are beyond the scope of sportsmanship and are illegal. Respect your opponent! Respect the game! An act of deception is a 15 yd. unsportsmanlike conduct penalty from the previous spot of the ball and loss of down.

### **GPYF1300 – PLAYER EQUIPMENT GUIDELINES:**

**GPYF1300.1 – Player Equipment:** All players must have Helmet, Shoulder Pads, Jersey, Hip Pads, Thigh Pads, Tail Pad, Knee Pads and Athletic Supporter/Compression Shorts. The NSAA guidelines shall govern the player’s equipment with the exceptions herein:

**GPYF1300.1a – Mouth-pieces:** Can be any color, including clear, and must be attached to the helmet or face mask at all times.

**GPYF1300.1b – Cleats:** Shoes must not have metal spikes or cleats, or hard or sharp materials.

**GPYF1300.2 – Uniform Sponsors/Advertising:** Teams may add sponsors names or logos to the shoulder and sleeve areas of the jersey. The front and back of the jersey should only have the team logo or mascot name, players’ name and/or jersey number. No reference to tobacco or liquor establishments is permitted on uniforms.

**GPYF1300.3 – Uniforms:** Each player will only be assigned one (1) jersey number per season. If that jersey becomes lost or unusable, the player may use a backup jersey. In the event that a player must use a backup jersey with a different jersey number, the league must be notified immediately.

**GPYF1300.3a –** The jersey number must be secure and readable on the front and back, at weigh-ins and during games. If a number is not readable, the jersey number must be repaired or replaced immediately.

**GPYF1300.4 - Helmet Visors:** Must be clear to allow referees/first aid personnel to see the player's eyes.

**GPYF1300.5 - Glasses:** If glasses are worn, they must be safety glasses with a strap that fits securely around the head. Transitional Safety Glasses are permitted.

**GPYF1300.6 - Casts:** Any player who is wearing a cast and wishes to play must present a medical release form to the head of officials prior to the start of the game. Additionally, the cast must be a soft cast and have a minimum of 1" of foam wrapped around it securely.

**GPYF1300.7 - Game Readiness** - Prior to the start of each game, Head Coaches are responsible for ensuring that all players are properly equipped. Any player who is not properly equipped will not be allowed to participate. Additionally, game officials will ask each Head Coach, prior to the start of a game, if all players are properly equipped to play. By an admission of yes, all burden and responsibility of ensuring players are properly equipped is the responsibility of the Head Coach.

### **GPYF1400 - WEIGH-INS AND TEAM ROSTERS:**

**GPYF1400.1 - Official Weigh-In Procedures:** The GPYF Board of Directors will conduct and supervise all formal weigh-ins. Program Members will be offered the opportunity to schedule a local team weigh-in at a nominal cost, to avoid travel to designated sites.

#### **GPYF1400.1a - Weigh-Ins Procedures Include:**

1. All head Coaches are required to submit, via an online link, a completed roster to the league, no later than 48 hours prior to the teams scheduled player weigh-in.
2. The scales at all weigh-ins will be provided by the League and only those scales can be used.
3. Be at weigh-ins at least 15 minutes before your scheduled time!
4. All paperwork will be collected at weigh-ins. If you do not have a player's paperwork with you at that time, then that player will not be eligible to play until that paperwork is turned in to the league.
5. Have all of this done before your weigh-in time. **DO NOT ORGANIZE AT WEIGH-INS!**
  - a. Each player must have a completed Consent / Pre-Existing Condition / Parental Pledge Form.
  - b. Make sure each player has their game jersey on at weigh-ins. Failure to wear game jersey will result in them not being weighed-in and they will have to attend an alternate weigh-in site.
  - c. Players must be lined up by jersey # (lowest to highest) and ready for weigh-ins. Coaches must submit all completed paperwork, including player forms and coaching forms, before the team will be allowed to weigh-in.
6. Each player will be allowed a maximum of 2 attempts to make weight at their programs designated weigh-in date and time. Players cannot attend more than 1 weigh-in location or date.

#### **GPYF1400.1b - Weigh-In Strip-Down Policy:**

**Male:** A male student-athlete may voluntarily strip down to his shorts only. Under NO circumstances is he to disrobe beyond that, whether voluntary or not.

**Female:** A female student-athlete may voluntarily strip down to her shorts and sports bra. Under NO circumstance is she to disrobe beyond that, whether voluntary or not.

**If you have a player that cannot attend weigh-ins on your teams scheduled date, that player must weigh-in at another weigh-in location. The players attending an alternate weigh-in site that is pre-determined and communicated by the league.**

**GPYF1400.2 - Player Weight Loss:** No player shall voluntarily or involuntarily engage in any method of weight loss. This is to include over-the-counter weight loss remedies, excessive exercise, body suits, or saunas.

**GPYF1400.3 - Older/ Lighter - Refer to Rule GPYF1101.3** - All older / lighter players must be identified to the league prior to weigh-ins, or immediately after, your teams scheduled weigh-in.

**GPYF1400.4 - Team & Coaching Rosters:** Rosters provided to the GPYF League representatives prior to official team weigh-ins will be deemed final and posted on the league web-site. Information on the web-site for each team will include player's name, jersey # and denote if the player is a striper or double striper (Older/Lighter). Teams with home and away jerseys with different jersey #'s must provide both jersey #'s for posting on the web-site.

Any deviation found between web-site rosters and actual player rosters should be reported, via email, to the GPYF President, via email, as soon as possible. If not reported, an investigation will be launched to determine the reason for the deviation and its' effects on game results. Forfeiture of games may result if the infraction was found to be negligent.

**GPYF1400.4a - Adding players to the final roster** - This request requires coaches to contact the GPYF League Administration. Player information, including completed consent and medical release forms must be provided at that time. A "special" weigh-in time will be established to determine player weight.

**GPYF1400.4b - Final Date to add new players** - No new player will be permitted to join a team roster or play in a GPYF game, if they are not included on their teams' roster after week #3 of regular season games.

#### **GPYF1500 - SCOUTING:**

**GPYF1500.1 - Game Scouting:** Scouting is allowed; however, all Head Coaches must ensure compliance with all regulations regarding scouting.

**GPYF1500.1a** - An opposing team may scout only regular season & post season game(s). This is to include the charting of plays and hand written notes, or the use of video equipment. Under no circumstances will an opposing team's practices or practice scrimmages be scouted. Coaches may exchange game film between teams.

#### **GPYF1600 - CODES OF CONDUCT:**

**GPYF1600.1 - Player Code of Conduct:** The GPYF Board of Directors reserves the right to disqualify any player based on the severity of their action. The following guidelines will be followed:

- 1. DISRESPECT FOR AUTHORITY:** Players will have respect towards other players, cheerleaders, Coaches, League Officials or other teams.
- 2. FIGHTING:** Players will not engage in any act of fighting or otherwise abusive behavior at all.
- 3. INTIMIDATION:** Players will not engage in any verbal or physical intimidation of opponents outside of the normal across the line talk. This is to include threatening gestures.
- 4. PROFANITY:** Players will not use profane language or gestures at any GPYF activities.
- 5. GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP:** Players must display good sportsmanship, follow the rules of competition and abide by the GPYF Players Code of Conduct before, during and after every contest.
- 6. DRUGS:** Players must avoid the possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, tobacco products, drugs and performance-enhancing drugs at all times.

**GPYF1600.2 - Coaches Guidelines and Code of Conduct:** The GPYF Board of Directors reserves the right to disqualify any coach based on the severity of their action. The following guidelines will be followed:



1. Head Coaches and the coaching staff participating in the program shall be held responsible for their knowledge of NSAA, NFHS and Great Plains Youth Football rules.
2. The Head Coach is responsible for the actions of his staff, team members, parents and fans. Your actions will dictate the responses of others.
3. GPYF Youth Football has the right to suspend coaches from games, for any unsportsmanlike or eligibility infraction.
4. There shall be no more than six (6) team staff members, per team, on a team's sideline. Head coach will ensure his/her sideline is clear of non-authorized persons. Only designated personnel are allowed on the sidelines!
5. During games, all coaches must remain within the designated Coach's Box.
6. Coaches will show consideration for all personnel connected with the game. This includes GPYF officers, officials, the opposing team fans, and side-line personnel, at all times. Remember, this is youth sports!
7. All coaches will have a background check performed annually. (a minimum of every 12 months.)
8. No Alcohol, tobacco or drug use is tolerated at any GPYF event, including practices.
9. No profanity will be tolerated by the Great Plains Youth Football League. Violators will be automatically suspended for 1 game for the first offense and up to 1 year for the second offense.
10. It is the Head Coach's responsibility, in the event of an injury, to meet with the parents or guardian of the participant (player or cheerleader) injured, and to help assist the parent in any way to ensure the child is taken to receive proper medical care during/after a GPYF event.
11. It is the Head Coaches responsibility to ensure that his/her team's roster is accurate and correct, and that it is received by the GPYF League office, before its due time.
12. All coaches will refrain from handling any player by the facemask, snatching, grabbing, hitting or contacting inappropriately any part of a child, equipment or body.
13. Any coach found to be in violation of Nebraska Statute LB260 or Iowa Senate File 367- Section Code 280.13c for failure to abide by law in the event a suspected concussion has occurred with a player will be suspended indefinitely. Any coach knowingly violating this law by allowing a player suspected to either have, or potentially have, suffered a concussion will not be allowed to coach before a hearing in front of the GPYF Board of Directors to decide their coaching future.
14. Any coach that pulls their team from the field and forfeits during a contest will be subject to discipline including suspension and/or permanent removal from coaching in the league.

**GPYF1600.3 - Disqualification of a coach:** A coach who is disqualified (ejected) from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct or unacceptable behavior shall be ineligible to coach for the remainder of that contest and the next contest. During this time, the GPYF Board of Directors will review the disqualification and approve the coach's return or extend the disqualification.

**GPYF1600.3a** - A coach that has been disqualified (ejected) will be given seven (7) minutes to leave the event site/property. All game play will stop until the person has left the event. If the ejected person refuses to leave a GPYF event, the official will declare a forfeit of the game. A coach who has been disqualified from a contest and continues to be disruptive shall be disqualified for the remainder of the season.

**GPYF1600.3b** - Any coach who has been repeatedly disqualified from multiple contests during his/her lifetime in the GPYF League may be permanently disqualified from GPYF events and contests.

**GPYF1600.3c** - In the event there have been 2 or more disqualifications of a coach(s), player(s), attendant, guardian or parents, from the same team in a season, that Program Members designated leader, and the teams entire coaching staff will meet to review and take measures to correct the negative situations.

**GPYF1600.3d** - Any coach that grabs, hits, intimidates or reprimands a player physically will be subject to a league Board of Directors review and can result in suspension or termination of coaching duties.

**GPYF1600.4 - Spectator Guidelines and Code of Conduct** - Any and all spectators must observe proper and good sportsmanship at all times. Parents must observe the Parental Pledge, which they are mandated to sign and abide by. Great Plains Youth Football will not tolerate profanity, abusive language, comments and gestures made toward any officials, coaches, players or league representatives. Failure to abide by these rules will mandate a 15 yd. unsportsmanlike penalty against the team of the offending spectator. At that time, the head coach will be asked to

address the spectator(s) and ensure that repeated violations do not occur. If another infraction occurs, another 15 yd. penalty will be assessed and the spectator will be ejected from the game.

**GPYF1600.4a** - Fans must remain behind the barrier at all times. Failure to remain away from the playing field will result in the game being halted until all fans, players and coaches are in compliance. No one may sit or congregate in the back of the end zone to watch the games. Head Coaches are responsible to not allow parents to enter the game field area during competition.

**GPYF1600.5: Spectator Concerns, Issues and Complaints:** as a parent, spectator or relative with a child participating in the league, if you have an issue, the following protocol must be followed: Step #1, contact your teams Head Coach. If your teams Head Coach cannot resolve your issue then please move to Step #2, which is to contact the teams local Program Leader about your concerns or issues. If the Program Leader cannot resolve your concerns or issues, then, Step #3 would be to approach the GPYF Board of Directors via email or phone call from your local Program Leader. The league will only accept concerns and/or complaints that are sent, in writing, from the Program Leader, who is the designated point of contact between your program and Great Plains Youth Football. We have several thousand parents involved in the league, so the league is not able to hear, read or respond to grievances, complaints, issues or concerns that have not followed the proper steps. Furthermore, the league will not hear or respond to complaints regarding officials, official's calls or non-calls. Any spectator that fails to abide by this protocol may be subject to disqualification of attending future events.

**GPYF1600.5a** - If at any time a spectator approaches a game official or opposing coach, regardless of the content of their words or actions, the spectator will be ejected immediately. If this happens after a game, the spectator will be suspended for a minimum of one game and potentially a life-time ban, based off of the severity of the situation. Our game officials and coaches are off-limits to all spectators at all times. NO EXCEPTIONS!

**GPYF1600.6 - League Rights to Eject:** The GPYF League officials, GPYF Program Member officials, and game officials, have the authority to eject any person, (i.e., Coaches, Players, Cheerleaders, Parents and Spectators) from any GPYF event, at any time, without warning, if necessary. Any person ejected from a GPYF event will be given seven (7) minutes to leave the event. All game play will stop until the person has left the event. If the ejected person refuses to leave the GPYF event, the game official will stop the game and the offending team will forfeit the game. Any person, player, coach or spectator that is ejected from a contest will be disqualified from attending or participating in a league sponsored game for a period of 12 days.

**GPYF1600.6a - Detrimental Actions or Activities** - Any adult, whose actions or activities are detrimental to GPYF, are subject to disciplinary action, including permanent dismissal and/or suspension of attending any and all future league events. Great Plains Youth Football reserves the right to accept, deny or revoke continued membership/certification to any adult, coach, team, spectator or Program Member, in the league, at any time.

**GPYF1600.6 - Internet Postings & Media Broadcasts** - Any Player, Parent, Coach or Program Leader within Great Plains Youth Football who posts or communicates inappropriate or negative league related media on the internet, radio or television, including emails, without the written approval of the league office may face disciplinary action up to, and including, permanent suspension from the league for themselves, their team, and/or program.