



2025 NJAYF 7U & 8U INSTRUCTIONAL RULES

NOTE: The rules listed below supersede all other Mitey Mite rules.

7U AND 8U DIVISION RULES

With the exception of what is written here, these divisions utilize National Federation of High School & NJAYF rules.

PRE-GAME BOOK CHECK

All participants are required to go to the designated area, line up in book order / JERSEY NUMBER ORDER with helmets off so opposing coaches can compare players with pictures in the player book.

LOPSIDED RULE - INTENTIONALLY "RUN-UP" SCORES

- A.** The "Lopsided Rule" goes into effect when the winning team assumes a 4 Touchdown differential over the losing team. During that time, the game shall be played under the provisions of this rule. All of the other provisions of the normal "Lopsided Rule" that are not inconsistent with this section, shall apply.
- B.** Once the "Lopsided Rule" goes into effect and for as many times as may be required during the course of a game, Franchise personnel and officers shall adhere to the following procedures:
 - a.** The winning team shall request and be allowed a "Game Official's Time-Out."
 - b.** The winning team **MUST** remove all of its starters, as well as any key dominant players on both offense and defense. Since the 7U and 8U Divisions of Play are "instructional," specializing players in one single position is inconsistent with its purposes and goals. Therefore under "Lopsided" play, ideally, the winning team should experience little difficulty or problem in keeping within the Rule. If there are not a sufficient number of players to replace all starters, the few that remain must be shifted around to various positions, in a concerted effort to weaken the winning team and to allow the losing team the opportunity to score with dignity.
 - c.** Once the scoring differential is reduced to under 4 Touchdowns, normal play resumes with the exception of the game clock which continues as a running clock for the remainder of the game.
 - d.** After all scores, the ball shall be placed on the 40 yard line to start play.

KICKOFFS

There will be no kickoffs at 7U and 8U play.

REGULATION FOOTBALL

7U and 8U must use Wilson K2 footballs. **NO RUBBER BALLS ARE ALLOWED!**

GAME OFFICIALS' SPECIAL AUTHORITY

Game officials have the authority to eject from any game, or subsequent games, any coach for Unsportsmanlike conduct, or who in their opinion, they deem to be belittling or berating their Players, or for violating the "Coaches Code of Conduct".

POSTPONEMENTS OF SCHEDULED GAMES

Should a 7U and 8U instructional game be canceled due to weather, said game may not be rescheduled. It is at the discretion of the NJAYF Football Commissioner as to whether or not the game will be rescheduled.

GAME CLOCK

Game Clock shall be kept on the field and is official unless otherwise arranged with Game Officials.

TIMEOUTS

Time-Outs - 3 per half, "Official's Timeouts" do not count.

LENGTH OF QUARTERS

Each quarter shall be 10 minutes and Halftime shall be 10 minutes. **7U and 8U GAMES SHOULD NOT EXCEED 1 ½ HOURS.** Games exceeding their allotted time may be ended by the Game Officials at their discretion regardless of time remaining on the clock. Time between games shall be 10 minutes, or at the discretion of the Game Officials.

MANDATORY PLAY RULE (MPR)

16-25 Players – 12 Plays

26-30 Players – 10 Plays

31-36 Players – 8 Plays

- A. NOTE: All plays count INCLUDING: plays where a penalty is called and accepted **AS LONG AS THE PLAY IS RUN TO ITS CONCLUSION.** Dead ball fouls **DO NOT COUNT AS PLAYS.** The Head Coach is not relieved of meeting the requirements for mandatory plays set forth in the national rule book and its description of what constitutes an acceptable play.
- B. ***ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST HAVE THEIR MANDATORY PLAYS COMPLETE BY THE END OF THE 3RD QUARTER, OR THEY ARE REQUIRED TO START THE 4th QUARTER, AND REMAIN IN THE GAME (on Offense, Defense and Special Teams. In short, they don't come off the field) UNTIL ALL OF THEIR PLAYS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED.***

CONFERENCE OFFICERS AND SUMMARY AUTHORITY

In any matter concerning a Conference Rule, or policy, that may be in dispute on the playing field, and during the conduct of a game; that cannot be settled between the two Head Coaches, and a Conference Officer is present, that officer may make a decision, which **MUST** be abided by at that time. As a member Franchise in this Conference, you do have the right to appeal that decision through normal channels, however, on the field the decision stands. In the absence of a Conference official, the decision reached by the Head Game Official shall stand.

Summary Authority may be applied in all instances where quick and decisive action is needed to stop, alter, change or otherwise modify a condition that cannot be allowed to continue until a Hearing is held. This may involve a threat to the safety and well-being of a child, an obvious violation of Conference rules, or any action or incident which adversely affects the image and good name of this Conference within the community. The powers of Summary Authority include ordering a game or practice stopped, as well as to suspend on the spot any adult or juvenile judged to be the cause of the problem.

DEFENSE

A. Absolutely no blitzing allowed. For the purposes of enforcement, you are considered to be “blitzing” anytime a tackle is made behind the line of scrimmage, from end to end, by anyone other than the five (5) “down” defensive linemen (**NO lineman or linebacker is permitted to align anywhere over the center**). The Six Down Defensive Lineman must align head up to the Guards, Tackles or Ends!

Example of Defensive Head UP Alignments No Shading or Gap Alignment Allowed

D END C TACKLE B GUARD A CENTER A GUARD B TACKLE C END D

Green = Legal Red = Prohibited

- B. Exactly 6 down linemen are required in any defensive set. **Down linemen MUST be in a 3 or 4 Point Stance ONLY** and must be head up on any opposing Guard, Tackle or End. Linebackers must be 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- C. Ball carrier has to be outside the “tight end” position, or over the line of scrimmage for linebackers to rush.
- D. PENALTIES FOR BLITZING: First Offense - 5 YARDS/WARNING; Second Offense - 5 YARDS/FIRST DOWN, Third Offense - 15 YARDS. ****The Administrative Secretary must be notified of a third or subsequent offense.****

OFFENSE

- A. Offense shall be run in accordance with National AYF and High School Federation rules.
- B. The only exception is that the line MUST have 7 men on it, a Center, 2 Guards, 2 Tackles, & 2 Ends.
- C. (This is NOT NEGOTIABLE). **This means no unbalanced line; Splits between the linemen shall be no more than 2yds.**
- D. **ALL running plays to include direct snaps and quarterback keepers must be run outside the B Gaps. (The gap to the outside shoulder of the guards)**

Example of legal running lanes No plays may be run inside shoulder of guards to include counters

D END C TACKLE B GUARD A CENTER A GUARD B TACKLE C END D

Green = Legal Red = Prohibited

PUNTING

THERE IS NO PUNTING ALLOWED IN THE 7U and 8U DIVISIONS.

- A. On Fourth Down, if a team chooses to “punt” the ball, the Head Coach will notify the referee he wishes to punt.
- B. The official will notify the defense that there is going to be a punt. The clock is stopped.
- C. The official will place the ball 20 YDS FROM THE THIRD DOWN SPOT and the opposing team will take possession of the ball.
- D. If the Offense elects to run a play on “4th” down they must notify the referee of that decision. If the offense fails to make a first down the Defense will take possession from the spot of the ball.
- E. **FAKE PUNTS ARE PROHIBITED ON ANY DOWN**

PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS

Franchises found in violation of these Rules, either as they appear here or as prescribed elsewhere in these NJAYF Titles and the AYF Nationals rules; the fine shall be double the minimum and maximum as provided in the appropriate section for the violation.

COACHES

- A. Prior to the start of all 7U and 8U games, the Head Coach & any coach who will be on the field with the players will meet with the referees to ensure the referees have an updated copy of the rules. All Head Coaches must make sure they have a copy of the Instructional Division Rules in their team book!
- B. Coaches who utilize in excess of 40 seconds in the huddle will be penalized for "Delay of Game Penalty".
- C. Coaches who fail to comply with, or are found to abuse the privilege, shall forfeit their rights to be on the field. A coach who is removed from the field SHALL NOT be replaced.

COACHES ON THE FIELD

- A. Two coaches per team (7U and 8U) are allowed on the field during play. The purpose of which is to assure that this division of play remains instructional. (7U and 8U) These two coaches may participate in the huddle, assist in calling the plays and arrange players. One Coach is to set up the Backfield (Backfield Coach) and One Coach is to set up the Linemen (Line Coach). However, once the players are in the "SET" position, neither coach may talk or interfere with the play in any manner. The Backfield Coach MUST assume a position of **NOT LESS** than 5 yards behind the deepest player on the field. The Line Coach must line up at the line of scrimmage, outside the Hash Mark, in front of his own team's sideline. **THE COACH MUST** assume a position of **NOT LESS than 5 yards** behind the deepest player on the field.
- B. A Pre-game coin toss by the official shall determine which team will take possession.
- C. After every scoring drive the ball will be placed on the possessing team's own forty yard line where live play will begin immediately.

EXTRA POINT KICK & FIELD GOALS

- A. In order to maintain the productive flow of the game, there shall be **NO EXTRA POINT KICKS or FIELD GOAL ATTEMPTS AT THE 7U AND 8U DIVISIONS.**
- B. **NO POINTS AFTER TOUCHDOWN-** When a touchdown is scored, the following will take place:
 - a. Six (6) points will be awarded to the scoring team.
 - b. No Extra Points will be attempted. **NO EXTRA POINTS WILL BE RUN, PASSED OR KICKED!!**
 - c. The team that was scored upon will take over on offense on their own 40 yard line and begin play immediately.

SCOREBOARD

To accentuate the Instructional Nature of this Division, there shall be **NO SCOREBOARD** kept at All. Time **ONLY** may be kept on the scoreboard in order to help manage the MPR sheets, but **NO** score shall be shown on the scoreboard.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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