

# Arapahoe Youth League



## 2025 Football Rules

*ARAPAHOE YOUTH LEAGUE*  
*2025 FOOTBALL RULES*

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# ARAPAHOE YOUTH LEAGUE

## 2025 FOOTBALL RULES

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### **1 AYL Football Board of Directors Guidelines**

The AYL Football Board of Directors "Football Board" will be responsible for establishing and enforcing specific rules and coordinating all football related activities. The Board is comprised of one Delegate from each participating Member Club, a sport Vice President, and a sport Secretary.

#### **1.1 Football Board Vice President**

The Football Board Vice President will be responsible for the oversight of the sport specific board in accordance with all AYL By-Laws, General Principles of Operation, fiduciary responsibility, and sport specific rules. The Football Board Vice President will report into the AYL President for all issues that are presented to the Football Board. The Football Board Vice President is elected to a 2 (Two) year term by the Delegates from each participating Member Club.

##### **Football Board Vice President (Term 2025-2026)**

Heath Dorris

#### **1.2 Football Board Secretary**

The Football Board Secretary is responsible for roll call, meeting minutes, and the administration of all league paperwork. The Secretary is elected by Delegates of each participating Member Club. The Football Board Secretary is elected to a 1 (One) year term by the Delegates from each participating Member Club.

##### **Football Board Secretary (Term 2025-2026)**

Daniel Wynn

#### **1.3 Football Scheduler**

The Football Scheduler is responsible for scheduling all regular season, makeup and playoff and Super Bowl games. This also includes the rescheduling of any games that have been cancelled. The Scheduler is selected by Delegates of each participating Member Club.

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### 2 2025 Football Dates

April - May	Registration Opens (dates vary by Club)
May 1 <sup>st</sup> – July 26 <sup>th</sup>	Off Season Conditioning Open
July 27 <sup>th</sup>	Official Team Practices Begin
August 6 <sup>th</sup>	Birth Certificate Signoff, NOP & Assessments Due
August 9 <sup>th</sup>	Mandatory Weigh-In Event
August 23 <sup>rd</sup>	First Regular Season Games
October 18 <sup>th</sup>	Last Regular Season Games
October 19 <sup>th</sup> - 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Mini Playoffs
October 25 <sup>th</sup>	Playoffs
November 1 <sup>st</sup>	Super Bowl

#### 2.1 Season Schedule Requirements

The Football Board shall have the right to change the following dates.

- The 1st game may start as early as the one (1) Saturday before Labor Day.
- The season may be played on the last Saturday of October.
- First practice starts five (5) Mondays before the first game.
- Games may be played on weekdays and Sunday's.
- Mini playoffs will be played on Sunday after the last game. If there are 12 Saturdays between Labor Day and Thanksgiving, then the Mini playoffs will be played the Saturday following the last game. THERE IS A GOOD CHANCE THAT PLAYOFFS WILL INCLUDE SUNDAY GAMES.

### 3 Member Club Information

Communication Plan: Please remember to always contact "Your Coach" with all questions/concerns first. If you have a question, it makes sense that every player/parent on the team may have that same question. The AYL expects that our Football Coaches strive to be extremely knowledgeable about their sports, our rules, and processes. By asking your Coach, if they don't know the answer, they will consult with their Club Football Delegate and receive the information important to everyone. The Football Board meets every week throughout the season and is the only Colorado League Management organization that does so! This provides the opportunity to resolve issues and fix errors in a timely manner.

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If your Coach fails to answer your questions or concerns, please contact your Club Delegate. If appropriate, your Club Delegate will bring the issues to the Football Board.

 <p><b>Cherry Creek Bruins Youth Sports</b>  <a href="http://www.creeksports.com">www.creeksports.com</a></p>	 <p><b>Raptors Athletics</b>  <a href="http://www.raptorsathletics.org">www.raptorsathletics.org</a></p>	 <p><b>Parker Hawks Youth Sports</b>  <a href="http://parkerhawksfootball.leag1.com">http://parkerhawksfootball.leag1.com</a></p>
 <p><b>South Jeffco Sports Assoc.</b>  <a href="http://www.southjeff.org">http://www.southjeff.org</a></p>	 <p><b>Spartans Youth Club</b>  <a href="http://www.spartanyouthclub.com">www.spartanyouthclub.com</a></p>	 <p><b>Littleton Youth Sports</b>  <a href="http://www.littletonyouthsports.org">www.littletonyouthsports.org</a></p>
 <p><b>Elbert County</b>  <a href="https://www.elbertcountywranglers.com/football">https://www.elbertcountywranglers.com/football</a></p>	 <p><b>Warriors Youth Sports</b>  <a href="http://www.warriorsyouthsportsfootball.assn.la/">www.warriorsyouthsportsfootball.assn.la/</a></p>	

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### **4 Code of Conduct**

Each Member Club is responsible for developing and administering their own Player, Coach, and Parent Code of Conducts in accordance with the individual Club's needs.

All Players, Coaches, Parents, and Spectators are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the NFHS and CHSAA Code of Ethics at all times.

#### **4.1 Conduct Ejections Penalty**

The following penalties will be assessed to any individual teams with multiple ejections. These rules shall apply to off field conduct for players, coaches, parents and spectators.

- 1st ejection offense will result in a \$100.00 fine to the member club.
- 2nd ejection offense from the same team will result in a \$500.00 fine to the member club.
- 3rd ejection offense from the same team will result in that team being disqualified from postseason play for that season.
- 4th ejection offense from the same team will result in board action against the member club sport director and or coach. Penalties will be assessed by the AYL board with the member club's corrective actions being taken into account.

#### **4.2 Sportsmanship & Ethics**

The Football Board requires that all Coaches uphold the principle and spirit of Good Sportsmanship at all times. Since the coaches are the most influential persons in teaching good sportsmanship, one of their fundamental responsibilities is to inspire players and spectators to conduct themselves in a manner which best represent those values. Coaches must stress respect for opposing players and tolerate no conduct from players or spectators, which demeans or embarrasses the opponent, the officials, or the sport itself. Taunting and baiting an opponent is contrary to the basic concept of fair play and honorable competition. Profane language, taunting, and unsportsmanlike behavior cannot be tolerated as part of a program and is exactly opposite of the type of conduct and behavior which participation is intended to teach. The Football Board will act quickly in the investigation of any complaints of unsportsmanlike behavior by any Coach associated with our Football Program. Should a Coach be found to have acted in an unsportsmanlike manner, that Coach might face suspension or other penalties, up to and including expulsion from the AYL.

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The primary goal of coaches should be the development of our players to become better citizens. The players must be taught sportsmanship, fair play and ethics, and these teachings should always govern their behavior while at practice and games. Coaches shall be responsible for the conduct of all players, members of the coaching staff, and spectators. This includes the time periods before, during, and after league games.

AYL Coaches will:

- Honor the game, by treating each player, official, coach, and parent with respect and dignity
- Emphasize that good athletes are good students, and both are physically and mentally alert
- Strive to make every football activity serve as a training ground for life
- Emphasize that winning a game is the result of teamwork
- Will learn the strengths and weakness of their players to place them into situations where each has an opportunity to achieve success
- Will protect the safety and health of their players
- Set an example in personal conduct at all times

All AYL Member Club Head and Assistant Coaches are required to complete certification through the USA Football Heads Up football program, or the current Board recommended program, prior to the beginning of the current season. A \$100 fine will be assessed to the member club, per each head coach failing to complete certification by July 28, 2025. No coach will be allowed in the coach's box during games without completing certification. Uncertified coaches attempting to coach will be subject to ejection, suspension, and fines by the Board.

### 4.3 Evaluation of Officials

The Football Board in conjunction with the League Head Official continuously strives to improve the quality of our game officials. This effort requires that all Head Coaches must complete the "Coach Referee Evaluation" Form (Pink Sheet) on the AYL Website upon conclusion of every game. The Referee Evaluation Form allows the Head Coach and coaching staff to evaluate each game official individually as well as provide an evaluation of the officiating crew as a single entity. Each official is assigned a "Number" and the evaluation need only show the associated number for each official being evaluated. The Football Board will receive regular reports on the performance of all our officials. Further, these official ratings will be used by the Football Board and the Head Official to assign game officials for our play-offs and Super Bowl. Failure to complete the required Evaluation by a significant number of a particular Club's teams may remove that Club from participating in the assignment process for officials to work our play-off and Super Bowl games.

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### 4.4 Rule Changes

Member clubs may submit rule changes, new rules, modifications, and additions for the next season during the current season only. The current season is defined from April 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup>. Clarification: Rules submitted after March 31<sup>st</sup> will take effect starting April 1<sup>st</sup> of the next year. All rules (new rules, modifications, and additions) require at least one week for review by Clubs. Rules must be submitted and seconded during an approved Football Board meeting, allowing at least one week for review before a final vote can be approved.

The Football Board will take no action on submitted rule changes for the current season unless a National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) rule creates undue hardship and/or expense for the member Clubs and participants. Thirty (30) days or more must remain prior to the first game of the respective season in which the proposed NFHS rule would affect the clubs.

The Football Board has an unstated goal of being consistent and extremely accurate in all endeavors throughout the entire football season. Should obvious errors occur in the creation, application, or omission of our football specific rules and the result is inconsistent with the stated purpose of serving the youth or our territories, the Football Board reserves the right to make any corrections, additions, or deletions of our sport specific rules as the Football Board sees fit. The approval of any change to the current rules within the 30 period prior to the start of the season or during the season will require a Super Majority (>65% in favor) vote of all Member Clubs in good standing.

## 5 Participation Standards

The AYL Football Program uses both Grade/Age and weight as the Participation Standards: Note all 8th graders in the AYL must play only at the 8th grade level unless they can meet the play down weight limit.

### 5.1 Age Requirements

The AYL Football Program is for ages 9 to 14. No player in High School may play in AYL football. i.e.: All 14-year-olds must be in the 8th grade to play in the AYL. Further, all players in the 8th grade must play in the 8th grade Divisions regardless of actual age, i.e., no 12-year-old players in 8th grade may play at the 12/7th grade level. The only exception to this Rule is if an 8th grade player can meet the "playdown" requirements stated in Rule 5.7.

NOTE: For players at ages 6 – 8 (grades 1<sup>st</sup> thru 3<sup>rd</sup>) are addressed in the separate "AYL Rookie Football League" Rules.

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### 5.2 Grade/Age Determination

Grade	Max Age Prior to June 1st	Max Age During Season*
4th	9	10
5th	10	11
6th	11	12
7th	12	13
8th	14	15

\* Regardless of grade, the player cannot be two years older than the division of play any time before December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Players will be placed on rosters for their grade for the active season. Divisions will be grade and age based. No 2 year and/or 2 Grade playdowns will be allowed without Board approval.

Any player who was previously rostered on an AYL team one grade below that player's school grade may petition the Board to move to that player's school assigned grade level. This must be petitioned yearly. Any parent, player, relative or coach who alters or modifies official documents such as birth certification, report cards, etc., in an attempt to play out of the player's true grade will be suspended for one (1) calendar year. Re-entry into the AYL for those violations will require a majority vote of the Board.

### 5.3 Proof of Age / Grade

Before a member can play in any game, a league acceptable proof of age document must be presented and checked by a member of the Football Board. The following documents will be accepted as proof of birth, provided there is a birth date and official signature.

- Birth Certificate
- Military Papers or ID
- Adoption Papers
- Passport
- Birth Registration
- Notification of Birth
- Hospital Certificate

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- Supporting letter from parent for different last name
- Previous year's official roster. Football exception, the only rosters accepted will be signed and approved AYL Football rosters.
- A temporary waiver of "proof of age" may be obtained only when accompanied by a \$100.00 refundable deposit by the Club requesting the waiver. This waiver shall be valid for only one month from the date filed with the League. If proof of age is not obtained, the \$100.00 deposit shall be forfeited, and the League may decide to impose further penalties.
- A proof of Grade may be required by Clubs at registration or the Board if needed or requested if the player does not qualify by age.

### 5.4 Grade / Age Division Play Up

Players may play up one Grade/age group at the discretion of the Member Club. Players wanting to play up two Grade/age groups must be approved by the Football Board.

### 5.5 Weight Guidelines

Weight limits in all age divisions will be determined by Football Board. The Football Board will utilize the available numerous growth charts and growth statistics as it sees fit. Weight limits, by

age, will be reviewed yearly and be changed if the Football Board reaches a majority agreement on any particular age group. Increases or decreases in weight limits will be in five-pound increments and changed only when an age has changed by the five-pound limit.

### 5.6 Weight Limit Determination

Grade / Age	Play Down Weight	Backfield Weight	Patch
4 <sup>th</sup> / 9	65	100	101 +
5 <sup>th</sup> / 10	75	110	111 +
6 <sup>th</sup> / 11	85	125	126 +
7 <sup>th</sup> / 12	95	140	141 +
8 <sup>th</sup> / 13	105	NA	NA
8 <sup>th</sup> / 14	NA	NA	NA

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Patch restrictions are listed in Rule 9.7.21. Playdown weight is determined by the players current age/grade level. They must meet the weight listed to play at a lower level.

### **5.7 Weighing of Members**

All members must be weighed by the League officials before the first game and in time to include this information on the roster to be filed with the League Secretary.

Failure to make play down weight will result in the player being moved to his proper Grade/Age division. Once a player has been moved to the proper Grade/Age division, he shall not be eligible to move down for the duration of the season. If a child is a patched player due to the pre-season weigh-in, he must remain as a patched player the entire season.

Rostered players not making the official pre-season weigh-in must pay \$40 to weigh-in at any subsequent weigh-in. The \$40 must accompany the player to the weigh-in along with the AYL Football Add-On Form. New add players that were not on the team's roster at sign off, are not required to pay, but must bring their proof of age/grade and the AYL Add-On form.

Failure to appear either at the official pre-season weigh in or an official make-up weigh in will result in automatic suspension for one game and until player is officially weighed in. Any player missing the official make-up weigh-in and the official pre-season weigh-in will not play in the first game.

### **5.8 Sweating Down**

Sweating down to reduce a player's weight is PROHIBITED. If the League Delegates have reason to believe a player has been sweated down, they can disqualify him from further participation in the League.

To prevent players from sweating down, a coach will be given one weight challenge per year. A player or team can only have one challenge brought against them per year. (You can challenge one player and your team can have one player challenged) This weight challenge must occur on or before the Football Board meeting during week 5 games. The Club's Delegate must file a weight challenge with the VP of Football and the Football Secretary, no later than 11:59 pm on the Sunday night prior to the next regularly scheduled Football Board meeting. The player must be weighed in the presence of 2 Football Board Delegates or AYL Board representatives at the next regularly scheduled Football Board meeting. If the

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player weighs more than 110% of the weight that was posted on the official weighed-in roster and that player is over the backfield or patch limit, that player will then become a patch player for the remainder of the season, including the post season. If the player does not comply with the weight challenge, the player will automatically be moved up to a patch category for the remainder of the season. All challenges are subject to the discretion of the Football Board.

## 6 Pre-Season Rankings

It is the goal of the Football Board to have like talent levels competing against each other each season. The Football Board will make best effort towards ranking each team correctly with the goal of playing like “talent” and “experience” levels against each other. The following process will be used as a guideline for accomplishing this goal. The final ranking of all teams in each age division will be at the discretion of the Football Board.

### 6.1 Ranking Guidelines

Pre-season ranking will be based on the team’s success the previous season. A team is defined per the AYL football rules. New teams will be seeded based on the experience of the team and the AYL Football Board recommendations.

Any team appearing in the Super Bowl will move up 2(two) spots in the pre-season rankings from the previous season’s rankings.

Teams wishing to enter the AYL as an independent, will enter the pre-season rankings based solely on the recommendation of the AYL Football board.

## 7 Rosters

In accordance with the AYL General Principles of Operation, the Football Board has established roster guidelines that include players from within a Member Club territory boundary and players from outside the Member Club territory boundary. This “roster mix” of inside territory and outside territory players is outlined below:

See Rule 3 Zoning, Paragraph A, Line 1A of the AYL General Principles of Operation for the definition of in territory player designation.

### 7.1 Official AYL Rosters

Member Clubs are responsible for preparing official AYL Rosters using the AYL form provided by the Football Secretary. At date of birth (DOB) validation, each

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Member Club will provide the Football Secretary with a printed and electronic copy of each roster.

Member Clubs are responsible for submitting their official AYL Rosters on the date and time designated by the Football VP. Member Clubs will be fined \$500 for each roster not submitted on time, as designated by the Football VP.

Member Clubs are responsible for submitting completed and accurate official AYL Rosters. Member Clubs will be fined \$10 for each incomplete or blank field on the official AYL Roster.

Out of Territory players will be identified on the AYL Roster utilizing **Bold** type on the official roster form. Play Down players will be identified on the Roster with a "**PD**" next to the player's name. Grandfathered players will be identified on the Roster with a "**GF**" next to the player's name. Patched players will be identified on the Roster with a "\*" next to the player's weight.

A team may be formed from two or more Member Clubs who cannot absorb additional players under the following conditions:

1. Each member club roster must be full (minimum of 22 players), in that age group.
2. As a guideline each club wishing to combine players will have to have 6 players without a team to play on (4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade).
3. The formed team will be ranked appropriately by the Football Board.
4. The roster must be approved by the Football Board.

### 7.2 Rosters Standards

Age / Conference	Maximum Out of Territory Players
4 <sup>th</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup>	4
8 <sup>th</sup>	6

Any team that does not meet this requirement must have their roster approved by the Football Board prior to the first regular season game. An illegal roster can be protested.

### 7.3 Roster Changes

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Generally, no roster moves will be allowed after DOB validation (sign-off) when the official rosters are submitted to the Football Secretary. However, after DOB sign-off and until Formal Roster Sign-off by the Football VP, changes may be proposed and voted on by the Football Board. After the Formal Roster Sign-off no rosters moves will be allowed except in the following situations:

- A player wishing to play down doesn't make weight.
- A player is found to be rostered illegally. Note: This may force other players to change rosters also.

### 7.4 Roster Add Ons

After rosters have been submitted to the Football Secretary for the date of Birth (DOB) validation, new players may be added up to the fourth (4th) game of the season.

The Member Club must file a Roster Add On form with the Football Secretary with a copy of the birth certificate (or birth certificate waiver) for any new player added to a roster after DOB validation.

### 7.5 Grandfathered Rosters and Players

Players from a previously approved AYL roster will be considered "grandfathered" to stay with the Member Club for which they previously played, as long as they were considered in territory players on the previous roster, even if the family moves to another Club's territory. This also includes younger siblings of the "grandfathered" players that may not yet have participated in AYL Football. Member Clubs wishing to "grandfather" a player or sibling will be required to provide an approved roster from the same sport, in which the player or player's sibling was approved as an in-territory player. These "grandfathered" players will be considered as Home Area players for the purpose of determining a legal roster on a specific Team roster. In order to remain as a "grandfathered" player, the player must continue to play with the same Member Club for that sport without a break. Should the "grandfathered" player cease to play for their original Member Club in that sport or chose to play for the Member Club in their new territory, they will no longer be considered "grandfathered" and will be subject to the roster rules above.

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### 7.6 Roster Team Color

#### 7.6.1

When a Member Club plans to change or modify a team that participated the previous season there are additional guidelines that must be followed. The team Color and the make-up of that team's roster from the previous season determines the placement of that same team Color in the Division seedings for the new season. Additionally, the members of that changed team must be identified as to their prior tackle football experience, both within and outside of the AYL. This information should be brought to the appropriate Football Board meeting so the Board can determine the correct preseason ranking for this proposed changed team. Should a club not be able to provide or refuses to provide this information the Football Board can place the team in question in a ranking that the majority believes is correct for this changed team. The decision of the Football Board is final without any appeal process.

This entire rule is based on the on the fact that the team Color and team makeup (roster) from the previous season accounted for the results for that team's performance. Thus, if that Color team earned a spot into the Super Bowl the previous season that same team Color will be subject to Rule 6.1 Rankings Guidelines without question. The entire integrity of the AYL Football team placement (seeding) process is subject to scrutiny with regard to proper team/color placement and must not be compromised.

The number of players from the previous year's roster that return and register to play for the same Club in the next season, regardless of the Club's desire or needs as to a specific player team placement and/or correct competition level determines the status of that specific team Color placement in the next season's Division of Play. The replacement of a team's Head Coach has no bearing on the Division of Play placement of a specific team Color.

While the team Color determines the placement of said team Color in the Division of Play, the Member Club can populate the new roster with players as they see fit. Often some less skilled players will move down into lower levels of play, other players through tryouts or requests may move up into higher levels of play. The specific new roster make-up is within the purview of the Club as long as all AYL rostering rules are followed.

#### 7.6.2

An existing team or team color is defined in table below. To determine if the

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Team Color must still exist for the next season the AYL applies a “40% Rule”. If at least 40% of the previous year’s roster returns to play for the same Club, the team Color must exist in the new season and be subject to Division of play placement per Rule 6.1. Should less than 40% of the previous year’s roster return to play for the same Club in the new season the team Color may be subject to Rule 7.6.3 below.

Thus, an existing team Color is defined in TABLE A below.

**TABLE A**

Previous Year’s Roster Number	# Club’s Returning Players
17 or fewer	6 or more from last year’s color
18-19	7 or more from last year’s color
20-22	8 or more from last year’s color
23-24	9 or more from last year’s color
25 or more	10 or more from last year’s color

### 7.6.3

Any existing team that does not return a sufficient number of players per TABLE A above to maintain the team’s Color may wish to form a new team and changing Colors, or move all players involved to one or more other teams within the Club. The Club involved must complete an official team dismantle form for that specific team Color so the AYL Football Board may review the specific team assignment of those players returning to the Club to play their next season.

### 7.6.4

A player MAY be allowed to “Play Down” one grade/age division provided he is below the minimum weight established by the Football Board for his proper age division. Regardless of grade, the player cannot be two years older than the division of play any time before December 1st. Once a player has been allowed to play down one age division, he shall not be eligible to move up for the duration of the season. The player must meet minimum weight each season in order to remain playing down an age division. A maximum of 20% play-down players allowed per team. Example: 20 players on team then only 4 players are allowed to play-down on this team.

### 7.6.5

Any team receiving more than the number of players permitted in TABLE A above may be reviewed by the AYL Football Board prior to conference assignment and seeding. The AYL Football Board can designate/assign a sub-committee to review

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team rosters in accordance with this rule. If a sub-committee cannot be designated/assigned the AYL Football Board itself can/will serve as the committee.

Players on Team	Max Play Down Players Allowed
15 - 19	3
20 - 24	4
25 - 29	5

### 7.7 Roster Violations

The Football Board will decide if a violation of the AYL rostering policy has occurred. If a roster violation is found, the following will occur:

1. For the first offense, the Head Coach is suspended for one (1) game, and the Member Club is fined \$100.
2. For the second offense, the Head Coach is suspended for one (1) year, the Member Club is fined \$500, and the team is ineligible for any post-season playoffs.
3. For the third offense, the Member Club Delegate is suspended for one (1) year and the Member Club loses voting rights.

## 8 Practice Policy and Guidelines

Teams at 4<sup>th</sup> grade and above may at the coaches' option, schedule a non-contact (helmets only) "Walk-Thru" practice in lieu of the "Chalk Talk or Team Meeting". 6<sup>th</sup> grade and above teams may continue (4) playing periods per week during season, one of those periods being their game, with an optional (5th) non-contact playing period being a "Walk-Thru, Chalk Talk, or Team Meeting," when teams have a game.

AYL General Principles of Operation, Rule 10, PLAYING PERIODS States:

A playing period is defined as a practice or game in which three or more players rostered on the same team and a coach are engaged in organized instruction of play or practice for the purpose hereof, the week begins at 12:01 am, Monday and ends at 12:00 midnight on Sunday.

GRADE	PRESEASON PP's	SEASON PP's
4 <sup>th</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup>	4 Playing Periods (PP)	2 Practices + (CT or TM *) + Game
6 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup>	4 Playing Periods (PP)	3 Practices + (WT or CT or TM) + Game

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**Practice Guidelines:** All teams will adhere to CHSAA Equipment Use Dates (Rule 3310.1)

### GUIDELINE 1:

**Implementing a preseason youth football heat acclimatization period** Reported cases of exertional heat stroke (EHS) currently rank among the top-three causes of sport participation fatalities. Setting mandatory guidelines for heat acclimatization provides a vital standard to protect athletes against exertional heat illnesses and possibly save lives. The majority of EHS cases occur during summer workouts when athletes are unprepared to cope with environmental conditions and physiological demands placed upon them. Heat acclimatization guidelines recommend that athletes be introduced slowly to environmental stresses during practice sessions, resulting in a lowered risk for EHS. These guidelines call for a two-week period (10-14 days) when coaches gradually increase the length and intensity of practice and the amount of equipment that can be worn. At all times, athletes should have access to fluids and have periods of rest throughout a practice.

1. At no time throughout the preseason or regular season should teams practice more than once per day, without prior permission from the Club (No two-a-day practices without Club approval). Teams will be allowed to practice a maximum of 4 times per week during the preseason, according to age. (See Rule 5.2)
2. During practice days 1 and 2 of the heat-acclimatization period, no more than 90 minutes of practice are allowed, a helmet should be the only protective equipment permitted. No form of player-to-player contact should occur during the first two practices.
3. During practice days 3 and 4, two hours of total practice time is allowed. Only helmets and shoulder pads should be worn. No full-contact drills should be allowed. Full-contact are defined as drills being run at "Thud" and "Live" tempo. Coaches are encouraged to limit player-to-player contact up to "Control" using USA Football's Levels of Contact.
4. On practice days 5 and 6, two hours of practice time is allowed which would occur within the second week of a youth organization's preseason schedule according to these guidelines. Teams have the option to wear full pads and full contact drills can begin and should be utilized within the recommended time allocation discussed below.
5. If a practice is interrupted by inclement weather or heat restrictions on any of the practice days, the practice should resume once conditions are deemed safe.

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6. On days when environmental conditions (heat index or WBGT) are extreme, modifications should be made to the work-to-rest ratio (to allow for cool-down periods and rehydration) or rescheduled to cooler parts of the day (i.e., before 10am or after 6pm)

### GUIDELINE 2:

#### **The definition of “full contact”**

Full-contact drills should be limited during the preseason and regular season as the number of exposures may increase the chance for injury to youth players. For purposes of these guidelines,

full-contact consists of both “Thud” and “Live Action” using USA Football’s definitions of Levels of Contact.

**Rationale:** By definition, “Thud” involves initiation of contact at full speed with no pre-determined winner, but no take-down to the ground. Initial contact, particularly with linemen, is just as physical with “Thud” as with “Live Action.” AYL Football recognizes that “Live Action” likely carries a higher injury risk to the body than does “Thud.” The first three levels of USA Football Levels of Contact “Air,” “Bags,” and “Control” are considered no- or controlled-contact, and thus no limitations are placed on their use in practice.

### GUIDELINE 3:

#### **Number of team practices and amount of “full contact” drills per week**

##### **Preseason**

Following the preseason acclimatization period, it is recommended youth teams conduct no more than four practices per week. Coaches are to limit the amount of full-contact to no more than 30 minutes per day and no more than 90 minutes per week. No two-a-day practices will be allowed at any point throughout the preseason.

**Rationale:** AYL Football recognizes preseason practices may require more full-contact time than practices occurring in the regular season to allow for teaching fundamentals with sufficient repetition to prepare for the season. Coaches are encouraged to introduce contact through a progressive manner to ensure they are using proper technique before full-contact (Thud & Live Action) drills are allowed.

##### **Regular Season**

Once the regular season begins and games commence, AYL Football requires the number of practices per week is decreased to account for the weekly game. Coaches are to limit the amount of full-contact to no more than 30 minutes per day and no more than 60 minutes per week.

**Rationale:** At this point in the season, games have begun, and full-contact exposure rates have increased on a weekly basis for players. To account for this, the

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recommendation to decrease the amount of time dedicated to full-contact drills decreases the number of exposures per week.

### GUIDELINE 4

**Coaches need to use a practice plan and assign a “level of contact” for every drill according to USA Football’s Level of Contact chart**

USA Football defines contact using its Levels of Contact chart (see below) to help coaches assign a level of resistance for each drill period within their practice plan. Properly employing the levels of contact during a football practice is an important skill for youth coaches to learn. This is completed by adjusting the distance between players, the speed at which they conduct a drill and modifying the “winner” of a drill. In doing this, coaches can better accomplish specific teaching objectives during practices and decrease the chance for injury.

Planning when to teach, when to compete and when to adjust contact promotes a better experience for players and coaches. Proper usage of the Levels of Contact system will help players perform their contact skills at a high level while instilling confidence.

Employing the Levels of Contact system also helps reduce player fatigue, which can advance player safety.

## **8.1 Explaining USA FOOTBALL Levels of Contact**

Levels of Contact focuses on varying intensity levels throughout practices to build player confidence, ensure their safety and prevent both physical and mental exhaustion.

Five intensity levels are used to introduce players to practice drills which position them to master the fundamentals and increase skill development.

<b><u>CONTACT</u></b>	<b><u>INTENSITY</u></b>	<b><u>DESCRIPTION</u></b>
Air	0	Players run a drill unopposed without contact.
Bags	1	Drill is run against a bag or another soft-contact surface.

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Control	2	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 waist and players stay on their feet.
Thud	3	Drill is run at assigned speed to competitive speed through the moment of contact; no pre-determined "winner." Contact remains above the waist; players stay on their feet and a quick whistle ends the drill.
Live Action	4	Drill is run in game-like conditions and is the only time that players are taken to the ground.

AYL Football recommends athletes be able to drink fluids at any time during a practice beyond designated breaks.

### 8.2 Offseason Conditioning

All AYL teams may conduct voluntary workouts starting May 1st and continuing until the official practice start date. Teams may have four (4) workouts per month (1 per week). Teams will not be allowed to wear pads, and workout must be non-contact during this period.

### 8.3 Voluntary Club Evaluations

Each club will be allowed voluntary club evaluations during the months of February, March, and April each year. The evaluations must be posted in advance on the Club's website. Evaluations can include full contact and can involve other members, players and coaches, of the team if desired. Club based evaluations can have six different dates during the months of February, March, and April to ensure the successful completion. Evaluations can be held at outdoor fields or other locations at the Club's direction and at the Club's discretion as to costs to accomplish these evals. Clubs are strongly encouraged to provide formal feedback to players being evaluated so that the players not selected can have closure.

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### **8.4 Tournament Standards**

A team may play in tournaments as long as the playing period rule is followed, and it does not start before the season begins for practice.

- Participating in a tournament will constitute one (1) practice period.
- A player and/or team may go to camps for skill training prior to the season starting.

### **8.5 Practice Policy Violation**

The Football Board will decide if a violation of the AYL practice policy has occurred. If a team is found to have practiced illegally the following will occur:

1. For the first offense, the Head Coach is suspended for one (1) game, and the Member Club is fined \$100.
2. For the second offense, the Head Coach is suspended for one (1) year, the Member Club is fined \$500, and the team is ineligible for any post-season playoffs.

## **9 Rules of Play**

The AYL Football Rules of Play shall follow the National Federation of State High School Athletic Association unless specifically stated in this document.

### **9.1 Equipment Requirements**

All players are required to wear helmets with colored mouth guard at each practice/game.

#### **9.1.1 Mouth Guards**

Mouth guards are mandatory, and if not used, a 3-yard penalty (5 yards for 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade divisions) will be assessed. No warning need be given. The mouth guard must be of any readily visible color.

#### **9.1.2 Cleats**

See High School Rules

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### 9.1.3 Helmets

All players must use a face mask that met NOCSAE test standard at the time of manufacture.

Multiple bar type is recommended. The face mask shall be properly secured to a helmet which met the NOCSAE test standard at the time of manufacture and has a visible exterior warning label regarding the risk of injury. The helmet shall be secured by a properly fastened, four-snap chin strap.

### 9.1.4 Official Football

A. The following footballs shall be used:

- a. 4<sup>th</sup> - PEEWEE/K2 OR equivalent size/weight
- b. 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> - TDJ OR equivalent size/weight
- c. 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> - TDY OR equivalent size/weight.

B. The offensive team shall have the choice of ball to conduct their offensive plays. The ball may be changed at change of possession or at a first down, but the team requesting the change of ball shall furnish the ball of their choice to the officials. Each team shall provide towels for the purpose of cleaning and/or drying the football. During wet weather or if wet field conditions exist, the referee may request, and each team will provide, a designated person to provide and shuttle dry game balls.

## 9.2 Minimum Play

It is mandatory that all Divisions play in accordance with the following minimum play system. All **plays count for minimum play rule except dead ball fouls.**

## 9.3 Minimum Play Requirements

- A. For the purpose of fulfilling the minimum play rule, every play in which a player is in the game will count toward this requirement even though that particular play may not count as a game play; extra points. When a foul occurs during a dead ball between downs or prior to a free-kick or snap, it shall not be counted as a play in satisfying the minimum play rule.
- B. It is an expectation of the AYL that the minimum play rule will be followed by all of the Coaches. However, there are exceptions where a particular player is not required to meet minimum plays in a game. Exceptions include:
  - 1. Ineligibility due to Team Disciplinary measures, Parents restrictions, or for reasons of injury or illness.

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2. An injury occurring during a game that prevents the player from fulfilling the minimum play requirements.
  3. A player is ejected from a game and cannot continue.
- C. Any player not eligible to play in a game must be identified to the opposing Head coach before the start of the game and noted on both Team's "Blue Sheet." Any player that cannot continue in a game due to injury or ejection must be documented on the Team's "Blue Sheet".

### 9.4 Minimum Play Audit

The AYL "formal" minimum play auditing is required for both teams in all Playoff and an "Officials" Full Team Audit in the Super Bowl games. Otherwise, a Head Coach can always request an opposing Head Coach complete a formal audit of their team's minimum play performance. To complete these processes, follow the following:

The Coach(s) must identify three (3) up to eleven (11) players on the opponent's team that he requires to be "formally" audited. These players are listed on the "Play Audit

Log" on the back portion of that Team's "Blue Sheet". This play audit is recorded in real time, as plays occur, during the game. The team that has been requested to audit its players is responsible to supply one (or more) "TEAM AUDITOR(s)" to complete this audit. The opponent requesting the "formal" audit also is responsible to supply one (or more) "TEAM AUDITOR(s)" to assist in this audit. These "TEAM AUDITOR(s)", from both teams involved in the contest, will be stationed on the sideline of the team under audit and will be instructed by the Game Official in their roles. All "TEAM AUDITOR(s)" will be responsible to track individually the number of plays each of the players designated for audit participate in until each player has met the required minimum number of plays. It is required that all "TEAM AUDITOR(s)" must agree on the actual play count associated with each player involved in the audit. Should a disagreement occur the game will be stopped, and the Game Official must resolve the issue before the game continues. Should the Game Official be unable to resolve the discrepancy, the "TEAM AUDITOR(s)" from the Team requesting the "formal" will be in the overriding position. With one (1) game play left in the first quarter of the game the "TEAM AUDITOR(s)" will be called to the center of the field to confer with the Officials and both Head Coaches for the purpose of evaluating the progress made on completing minimum play requirements. Each Head Coach and all "TEAM AUDITOR(s)" must initial the designated area on the "Play Audit Log" each time this review is performed. This continues each quarter of the game until all designated players have completed the minimum play requirements. If at the completion of the

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game, the "Play Audit Log" reflects that minimum play has not been met for all designated players, the Head Official shall declare the game a forfeited game by the offending team.

The minimum play rule shall not be abridged unless the player is injured or ejected, in which case the referee and opposing Coach must be notified at the time of removal, and the time of removal noted on the "Play Audit Log". Further, if a game is ended early with 4 plays or less remaining and the team with the ball, leading by a score, chooses to kneel (Rule 19G), the number of plays left in the game will be credited to those players not yet completed with the minimum play requirements to finalize those player's minimum play status. All violations of this application of the minimum play rule will reviewed by the Football Board. Penalties for violations include, but not limited to, fines and/or suspension of the Coach.

### 9.5 Minimum Play per Conference / Age

	Minimum # of Plays per Player per Game	
GRADE	4 <sup>th</sup> - 5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup>
4 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup>	16	8

### 9.6 Field Requirements

The AYL Football Field Requirements shall follow the National Federation of State High School Athletic Association unless specifically stated in this document.

#### 9.6.1 Field Size

- 4<sup>th</sup> grade, the football field shall be 60 yards long and 40 yards wide with end zones extending 10 yards beyond each goal line making the total area within the lines 80 yards by 40 yards.
- 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade Divisions, the field shall be 100 yards long and 53 1/3 yards wide with end zones extending ten yards behind the goal lines, making the total area within the lines 120 yds by 53 1/3 yds.

#### 9.6.2 Goal Post

Goal posts will be used in ALL 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade (ages 13/14) divisions for field goals and PAT attempts. Field goals will be awarded 3 points and follow the standard NFHS Rule Book unless otherwise stated in this rule book.

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### 9.6.3 Marking the Field

- A. The field must be properly marked with lines and yard markers for all games. Sidelines and five-yard lines must be lined with visible material. It is required that colored flags or pylons be used (if available) as corner markers for the goal lines. Marking of coaches and player's boxes should be parallel to the side lines from 12-yard line to 12-yard line for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade Divisions) and 5 yards back from the sideline.
- B. Fields not in compliance with the proper marking may be deemed unplayable at the discretion of the referee prior to the start of the game.

### 9.6.4 Coaches and Players Box

Only Certified Coaches, Certified Assistant Coaches, players, play counters and minimum play monitors will be allowed INSIDE this area.

## 9.7 Game Play Guidelines

The AYL Football Game Play Requirements shall follow the National Federation of State High School Athletic Association unless specifically stated in this document.

### 9.7.1 Length of Games

- A. Game length will be based upon the number of plays for each quarter by age group.
  - a. 4<sup>th</sup> grade will play 22 plays per quarter (Do not count extra points)
  - b. 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> will play 10-minute quarters following full NFHS High School Rules.
- B. The rest period between halves shall not exceed ten (10) minutes. Teams shall be notified with three (3) minutes remaining so they may warm up. All plays in the game count as plays except Points After Touchdown (PATs) and Dead Ball penalties. For play count purposes, a DEAD BALL PENALTY is defined as a foul that occurs before the ball is snapped.  
EXCEPTION: The 4<sup>th</sup> quarter is extended by 1 play for every offensive penalty if the following is applicable:
  - 5-8 Plays remaining in the game
  - The score is within 8 points or less
  - The team winning has the ball.
- C. If a live ball foul occurs on the last play of a quarter, the offended team will have the following options:

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- Accept the penalty and replay the down. The quarter is extended one play.
- Decline the penalty, accept the result of the play, and the quarter is over.

EXCEPTION: The quarter is not extended if the penalty involved is:

1. Unsportsmanlike fouls
2. Non-player fouls
3. A foul that specifies loss of down
4. A foul where the penalty is enforced on the following kick-off.

For each of the listed fouls, the quarter ends and the penalty is enforced on the first play of the next period. If it is the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> period, the Unsportsmanlike, the Non-player, and the foul enforced on the following kick-off carry over. The loss of down foul does not carry over.

D. If Team A gets a penalty during the last play of any quarter, then Team B has the following options:

- Accept penalty and play an additional down. i.e., Quarter cannot end on a penalty.
- Decline penalty and let play stand. i.e., Quarter is over.

E. If the game is tied at the end of regulation of a regular season game, 1 overtime period will be played to determine the winner. The overtime period is defined as such; Team A starts on the 10-yard line and has four downs to either score or fail to put points on the board, then Team B takes over on offense from the 10-yard line. They now have four downs to score. If there is a turnover, it counts as stopping the offensive team, and the teams switch sides. Once each team has played both offense and defense, the period is over. If one team has scored more points at the end of the possession, that team wins. If no winner is decided after 1 overtime period, the game is a tie. High School overtime rules will apply. The home team has the choice to start the overtime period on offense or defense. In the Postseason, the overtime periods will continue until there is a winner.

F. If Team "A" is on offense, leading by score, and the game has 4 plays (or less) remaining, and the down number is such that Team "A" can kneel for the remaining plays, the Referee shall ask the coach of Team "A" if they are going to kneel for the remaining plays of the game. If the answer is "Yes", then the official shall end the game without playing the remainder of the plays.

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### 9.7.2 Kick-Off

- A. For Kick-offs, the ball shall be placed:
- 20-yard line for 4<sup>th</sup> grade (60-yard field)
  - 40-yard line for 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grades (100-yard field)
- B. If Kick-off goes out of bounds, the Receiving team has the option of:
- Accepting the ball where it went out of bounds
  - Accepting the ball at:
    - 16 yards beyond kick-line for 4<sup>th</sup> grade (60-yard field)
    - 25 yards beyond kick-line for 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grades (100-yard field)
- C. If ball crosses the plane of the goal line, it is dead immediately and put in play at:
- 12-yard line for 4<sup>th</sup> grade (60-yard field)
  - 20-yard line for 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grades (100-yard field)
- D. Free kick after a safety shall be from kicker's:
- 12-yard line for 4<sup>th</sup> grade (60-yard field)
  - 20-yard line for 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grades (100-yard field)
- E. If the Free Kick after safety goes out of bounds, the Receiving team has the option of:
- Accepting the ball where it went out of bounds
  - Accepting the ball at:
    - 16 yards beyond kick-line for 4<sup>th</sup> grade (60-yard field)
    - 25 yards beyond kick-line for 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grades (100-yard field)
- F. Team A gets an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty at the end of the half, Team A is kicking team, and this penalty is assessed at the kick-off of the second half. If the ball is kicked out-of-bounds (under these circumstances) an additional 9 yards will be assessed from the out-of-bounds point, the 24-yard line (35-yard line for the 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade division), or if kicked in the end zone, from the (20-yard line for 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade divisions). Also, see Rule 19 "Length of Games" for clarifications.
- G. At least four members of the kicking team must be on each side of the kicker, and second, other than the kicker, no members of the kicking team may be more than five yards behind the kicking team's free-kick line.

### 9.7.3 Point After Touchdown

A one point or two-point conversion will be awarded due to placement of the ball for

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the extra point attempt.

1. In the 4<sup>th</sup> grade division, a two-point conversion will be placed on the 4-yard line. A one-point conversion will be placed on the 2-yard line.
2. In the 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade divisions, a two-point conversion will be placed on the 5-yard line. A one-point conversion will be placed on the 3-yard line.
  - a. Each COACH is responsible for informing the referee of their extra point intentions prior to the play. After the referee is informed of the coach's decision for one or two points, and after the ball is spotted for play, prior to the play a time out must be called by the team to change their extra point intentions. After a play is run or a penalty (dead ball or other penalty) there can be no change in the extra point intentions.
3. In the 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade divisions, the coaches shall have the opportunity to kick a try for a one-point conversion or try for a two-point conversion (Point-After-Touchdown- PAT). The scoring team shall designate a spot anywhere between the hash marks on the 3-yard line, unless moved by penalty. All additional try rules and scenarios shall follow the NFHS Rule Book.

### 9.7.4 Length of Penalties

The penalties for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade division will be 3 yards for minor infractions, 6 yards for intermediate infractions, and 9 yards for major infractions.

The penalties for the 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade division will be 5, 10, or 15 yards, according to the High School Rule Book.

### 9.7.5 Delays

Teams must appear on the field promptly and any unnecessary or willful delay will result in the forfeiture of the game. Within 10 minutes of the scheduled game time, each team must have all eligible players on the field to start the game; otherwise, the offending Club will forfeit the game unless the game has been officially postponed.

### 9.7.6 Coaching

- A. For the 4<sup>th</sup> grade division, Coaches and team members must remain in the Team/Coaches Box, between the 12-yard lines (25 for the 5<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade divisions) during the game.

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- B. In the AYL the number of coaches allowed in the Team/coaches Box is not limited as in the High School Rules.

### 9.7.7 Electronic Devices

#### Purpose:

The Arapahoe Youth League Football prioritizes fair play, integrity, and sportsmanship. In order to maintain a level playing field and uphold the spirit of healthy competition, the use of electronic communication devices between coaches and players, as well as coach-to-coach communication, is strictly prohibited.

#### Scope:

This rule applies to all teams, coaches, and players participating in the Arapahoe Youth League Football.

#### Prohibition:

- A. No coach or player shall use any form of electronic communication devices during games or any league-related activities for the purpose of transmitting signals, play calls, or any information relevant to the game. This includes, but is not limited to, mobile phones, radios, smartwatches, earpieces/headsets, and any other electronic devices capable of facilitating communication.

#### Enforcement:

- A. Violation of this rule may result in penalties, including but not limited to warnings, fines, suspension, or expulsion from the league, as determined by the league officials. The Arapahoe Youth League Football reserves the right to investigate and take appropriate action in response to any suspected violations. This does not include devices that are used to improve hearing or medical devices.
- a. First Offense – 15-yard penalty (unsportsmanlike penalty against coach)
  - b. Second Offense – Coach ejection

### 9.7.8 Play Clock

All Divisions shall have 30 seconds from the time the ball is ready.

### 9.7.9 Captains

Four captains per team will be allowed.

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### 9.7.10 Mercy Rule

- A. If at any time after the first half of play the point differential reaches or exceeds 40 points, the officials will freeze the score as the official score with no additional scoring for either team recorded. Play will continue following the normal game rules except that all plays in the game count as plays towards game and minimum play count, including Points After Touchdown (PATs) and Dead Ball penalties. Also, the Play Counters (Yellow Sheet) will be instructed to mark off two plays for every one play actually run during the balance of the game.

Further, for the 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade Divisions the CHSAA rules regarding the Mercy Rule will be followed.

- B. In all age divisions, coaches and teams are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship and not purposefully run-up winning point margins. All coaches **SHALL** attempt to mitigate point differentials in excess of 40 points.

### 9.7.11 Game Time

The time for all League games will be determined by the Football Board and published on the schedules.

### 9.7.12 Game Officials

Three paid officials (Four for the 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade) will be supplied for all games; however, games may be played with only two officials (Three for 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>). Game officials must be in full referee's uniform. Game Officials must make themselves known to both team's Head Coaches at the Game Field no later than 20 minutes before official game time. Failure to do so must be noted on the "Blue Sheets" and the Head of Officials may be fined at the AYL Football Board's discretion. The Referee shall make a complete report of any injuries incurred during the game as well as record the score of the game. The Referee will ensure that this information is documented on the "Blue Sheets" by the Coaches and will then turn these "Blue Sheets" into the League office, as follows. All Blue Sheets must be scanned in by 9pm on game days to the VP and/or Secretary and Head of the Officials. The Head of Official must have the original Blue Sheets present at the following Board meeting. All the game "Blue Sheets" must be signed by both Head Coaches and the white hat official working in the games before the officials will be paid for officiating the game. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in officials not being paid. If an official fail to show up at a scheduled game, a person mutually chosen by the coaches involved may officiate.

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### 9.7.13 Linesman Equipment

The field coordinator must supply a linesman's outfit consisting of down box and 10-yard chain. All yardage chain and down indicator rods must have flat lower ends covered by a protective cap. A competent crew (preferably adults) shall be provided by the home team to operate this equipment. This crew is part of the official crew and as such must conduct themselves in a manner befitting their status, i.e., refrain from coaching, discussion with the players and/or officials, etc.

### 9.7.14 Roster of Players

All official team rosters as they appear on file with the League Secretary, will be posted prior to opening Saturday, and be available to Coaches and Officials, on the AYL website.

If requested by the opposing coach, before play is commenced, each team shall line up in numerical order on the sidelines allowing opposing coach to validate rosters.

### 9.7.15 Uniforms

A player cannot play in a game unless he is uniformed in conformity with the other members of the team, including:

Proper numbers on both front and back of his jersey. These numbers shall be at least 5" in size, and no duplication of numbers will be permitted. The AYL does not require specific jersey numbers to play particular positions.

Helmet color, jersey color and pant color.

Players of opposing teams shall wear jerseys of contrasting colors. Players of the Home team shall wear DARK jerseys and players of the visiting team shall wear LIGHT color Jerseys. The visiting team is responsible for avoidance of similarity of colors, but if there is doubt, the referee may require players of the home team to change jerseys.

### 9.7.16 Play Recorders

Teams will each furnish one play recorder in all Divisions who will remain together and keep a record of the number of plays. Play Recorders will change from one side of the field to the other at halftime. Play Recorders are part of the official crew and as such must conduct themselves in a manner befitting their statuses i.e., refrain

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from coaching, discussions with players, coaches, or officials. Play Recorders shall notify the officials when 5 plays remain in the quarter.

### 9.7.17 Postponed Games

Games may be postponed by the field coordinator not less than three (3) hours prior to the game, unless the fields are closed due to weather, in which event the game can be postponed any time before or during the game. Games may not be postponed for reasons other than weather without the approval of the Football Board.

### 9.7.18 Rescheduling of Games

Saturday games will be rescheduled for **Sunday** (8 days later) at a field and time to be decided by the Football Board.

All regular season and play-off games must be decided with one of the teams involved being declared the winner. No games will be defined as "Did Not Play". No coach or Delegate shall willfully manipulate the final standings of a particular team by refusing to either agree to a re-schedule of a game or declare the game a forfeit. The only exception will be due to problems that force the Football Board to eliminate games so as to complete the season as required by date.

### 9.7.19 Chain Crew

The home team in each game shall provide personnel to operate the chains and down marker. These personnel shall remain on the home team side of the field. Super Bowl games will have League designated personnel provide this function.

### 9.7.20 Sideline Safety

Spectators, Parents, children, cameras, chairs, tables, benches, coolers, or other hazardous items are not allowed within five (5) yards of the sidelines for the entire length of the playing field, including the end zones. The Head Coach is responsible to ensure that their sideline is compliant with this 5-yard "Spectators Boundary". Coaches failing to maintain this Spectators Boundary shall be given one warning by the Game Official, after which an unsportsmanlike penalty may be assessed for further offense of this rule. Refer to AYL General Principles of Operation, Rule 22, KEEPING ORDER.

While the AYL encourages active, positive, sideline participation the use of many

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types of noise makers such as air horns, cow bells, and coin cans as well as the playing of loud music, or the use of electronic amplification of voice can be construed as an attempt to distract or confuse the opponent and thus represents unsportsmanlike behavior. The AYL will not allow the use of air horns or amplified voice at any time during a regular season or playoff game. The use of other noisemakers and the playing of music of any type are limited only to timeout periods, the time between the quarters, or at halftime. If in the opinion of the Officials, the offending team's sideline noisemakers are being used in violation of this rule, the Game Official will provide one bench warning to the offending team's Head Coach. Subsequent violations of this rule will be charged as an unsportsmanlike penalty on the offending team's Head Coach.

- No one will be permitted behind the end zone within fifteen (15) yards of the end line.
- Drones will be allowed for use at any AYL football game.

The following rules apply to all Drone usage:

### **Pilots**

- A. All Colorado and FAA Drone Regulations are observed and adhered to at all times.
- B. Possess a current 107b license (commercial license) OR a TRUST (Recreational UAS Safety Test Completion Certificate)
- C. C. Drone pilots must be in possession of a "Small UAS Certificate of Registration"
- D. Drone Pilots must adhere to FAA restricted no fly zones or obtain a permit to operate in those zones.
- E. Drone Pilots must check in the white hat prior to game.

### **Drones must have the following:**

- A. Current registration clearly marked on the outside of the aircraft.
- B. All Drones used must broadcast FAA Remote ID information.
- C. All Drones must use commercial software that prevents flight in restricted areas.
- D. All Drones must have Return to Home fail safe software to prevent fly offs or low battery mishaps.

### **Usage**

- A. One (1) Drone Per Team competing will be allowed for the purposes of filming the contest. Drones must film on opposite sides of the playing field. Must be a participant in the current game being played. Drones are not allowed for scouting purposes.

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- B. Drone Pilots must pilot from an area 15 yards behind the endzone and maintain visual line of sight with the aircraft. A Drone Pilot may also use a spotter as outlined in the FAA UAS guidelines. A five yard by five yards, coned off square must be established for landing and takeoffs.
- C. Filming should occur behind the players on the field as much as possible. Operations over people should be limited to the Drone moving into position and swapping batteries. At all times FAAA UAS Safety rules must be observed.
- D. Fly-by's over sidelines are strictly prohibited.
- E. If a sports complex, school, county, etc. prohibit drone usage at their facility, Drone filming shall not be permitted.
- F. Be advised that the AYL does utilize some fields (Aurora Sports Park for example) whereby the airspace is restricted. It is each Drone Pilot's responsibility to know in advance if this is the case and to apply for an Airspace Authorization or Waiver from the FAA. Requests can be made via the FAADroneZone website (<https://faadronezone-access.faa.gov>). Please note that an Airspace authorization is also required for flying a drone after sunset.

The AYL reserves the right to prohibit, ban, suspend, or issue fines to any Team, Coach or Club at its discretion for any violation of the outlined rules above. The AYL also reserves the right to revoke all drone filming at any time for any reason.

- 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade games. Only players, coaches, chain gang, 1 photographer, and 1 videographer will be allowed on the field. All spectators are required to watch games from the stands. If the field does not have stands, spectators must remain outside the track unless the track is gravel/dirt. No spectators will be allowed on synthetic tracks, including shade structures or chairs.

### 9.7.20 Home Team

The Home Team shall have the choice of which sideline they will occupy for that particular game.

### 9.7.21 Patched Player Restrictions

Any player may be allowed to move up one age group and this new age group's weight will apply to this player.

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### A. SINGLE PATCHED PLAYERS-RESTRICTIONS:

- a. All single patch players who are ineligible for backfield position due to weight limits must be designated by wearing 1(one) florescent green sticker affixed to the center back of the helmet, with a minimum 2" diameter. Current players that have patches attached will be allowed to play with current uniforms until such time that the uniform changes or the player changes clubs. The rules will be enforced based on the helmet stickers.
- b. No single patched player shall be allowed to run with the ball on a kick-off caught behind his own 20-yard line.
- c. No single-patched player shall be allowed to run with the ball on a pre-determined play except as a receiver of a forward pass beyond the line of scrimmage or a lateral/backward pass received beyond the line of scrimmage, an interception, or a fumble recovery. If a single-patched player violates any of these provisions, the ball will be declared dead at the spot of the violation and the defensive team will have the option of:
  - i. Declining the penalty and it becomes the next down.
  - ii. Accepting a minor penalty from the spot of the foul and replaying the down.
- d. A single-patched player, who is the intended kicker during a scrimmage kick, can do nothing with the ball other than attempt to kick it or cover it in the event of a muffed snap or blocked kick and under no circumstances can the offensive team advance.

the ball beyond the line of scrimmage. If the offensive team does attempt to advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage, it becomes dead immediately once it crosses the line of scrimmage, either by pass, by running, or by fumble. This will include a loss of down penalty. On kick-offs or free kicks following a safety, he may be permitted to kick the ball.
- e. No single patched player shall be allowed to be behind the line of scrimmage on either offense or defense at the time the ball is put into play except for the purpose of punting the ball.

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### 10 Season Rankings and Play-offs

#### 10.1 Tie Breaker Rules

- A. Tie Breaker rules apply to the seeding of teams in the play-offs; they will not be used to eliminate a team from the play-offs. Teams that are tied for the last play-off position will play a mini play-off. Tie Breaker rules will apply for seeding the teams for the mini play-off.
- B. 10.1.1 Football Tie Breaker rules:
- a. Head-to-Head.
  - b. Best W-L-T with common opponents.
  - c. Strength of Schedule (this year)
  - d. Best opponents total W-L-T of each team played. Example: 37-24-2
  - e. Coin Toss.
- C. Reference the AYL General Principles of Operation – Rule 8 Championships, Paragraph B. “In the event that inclement weather and/or non-availability of play-off sites would prevent play-off games from being scheduled and taking place 24 hours before the Championships to determine the Conference Champions, then the following tie-breaker method will be used to determine the participants in the AYL Championship.”

The Football Board may implement this AYL General Principal Rule when weather conditions and/or hard termination dates for field availability prevent the safe completion of the regular season schedule in the timely manner required to complete mini-playoffs, playoffs, and the Super Bowl before the end of the current season. Upon this determination by the Football Board, this Rule 10.1.C will supersede Rule 10.1.A above in its entirety.

The Football Board has the authority to use the Football Tie Breakers, defined in Rule 5.4.24.B above, as follows:

Teams may be eliminated from the playoffs by application of the Football Tie Breaker Rules so as to eliminate mini-playoffs.

Teams finishing below the top two positions in a Division may be eliminated from the playoffs so as to eliminate all playoffs and determine the two Super Bowl Teams.

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Teams finishing below the top position in a Division may be eliminated from the playoffs so as to eliminate all playoffs and the Super Bowl and determine the Super Bowl Champion.

### 10.2 Mini Play-Off Games

When multiple teams end the regular season tied for the last play-off position the league will schedule MINI PLAY-OFFS to decide the final team to qualify for the Play-offs, with the exception in 5.4.23 C1. The tie breaker process defined in Rule 5.4.23 B above will be utilized to seed the teams into the MINI PLAY-OFFS. The determined seeding will be used to declare the Home team(s) as well as where each team is placed in the MINI PLAY-OFF Bracket. When two teams are tied, these teams will play a full game to determine the team advancing into the Play-offs. When three teams are tied, the highest seed, #1, will be awarded a bye for the first round of the MINI PLAY-OFFS. The remaining two teams, #2 & #3, will play in a first-round half game, with the #2 seed as the home team. The winner of the first-round half game will then play the #1 seed in a second-round half game, played on the same day as the first round, to determine the team advancing into the Play-offs. Note: the "Minimum Play Rule" is still in effect for MINI PLAY-OFFS with the minimum play requirements for half games being prorated at one half the full game requirements. Should more than three teams end the regular season tied, the Football Board will determine the MINI PLAY-OFF structure to be utilized.

### 10.3 Playoffs

The top twelve (12) teams in each grade for 4th through 8th grade divisions will qualify for the play-offs. At the discretion of the Football Board, the number of teams that may qualify for the play-offs can be modified.

## 11 Protest Process

Should the Head coach feel that a violation of the rules has occurred during a game, the protesting Head Coach or Member Club Delegate may file a Formal Protest. The Protesting Head coach and their Member Club Delegate must follow the Protest Process completely. Lack of adherence to this process will render the Protest invalid.

The entire process is detailed in the AYL General Principles of Operation, Rule 6. This Football Rule only provides an overview of the AYL Protest process. Refer to AYL General Principles of Operation, Rule 6.

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### 11.1 Protest Guidelines

ONLY RULE VIOLATIONS ARE PROTESTABLE! Judgment decisions by officials are not protest able.

When the occurrence of an alleged rule violation has occurred, the protesting Head Coach must immediately notify the Head Official and the opposing Head Coach that they are protesting the game. The Protesting Head Coach must completely fill out the Protest Form on the "Blue Sheet" and have it initialed by the opposing Head Coach and the Head Official.

The Protesting Head Coach must contact their Member Club Delegate immediately following the conclusion of the game in question to determine if the protest is valid and will continue.

The protesting Member Club Delegate will determine if the protest is valid and contact the Football VP within 24 hours of the alleged violation if the protest is to continue or not. If the protest continues, the Club Delegate will send the PROTESTING TEAM's FORM to the protesting coach for completion. The Football VP will contact the alleged offending Member Club Delegate within 24 hours to notify them that the formal protest has been submitted according to the AYL General Principles of Operation and send the OPPONENT TEAM's FORM to be filled out by the Opposing Head Coach. If needed an OFFICIAL's FORM may be sent.

Protests must be filed (on the Blue Sheet) at the point in time of the alleged rule violation – any attempt to protest a game after its conclusion or later in time will not be heard by the Football Board.

### 12 Ejection Policy

Ejection of any Player, Coach, Assistant Coach, Parent, or Spectator from a game for any reason must be explained in detail on both game's Football Game Sheets aka "Blue Sheet". The proper process to document the ejection from a game is critical to the management of behaviors exhibited by Players, Coaches, and Spectators. When an ejection occurs in a game the White Hat Official must immediately take an official's time out to stop the game, call both team's Head Coaches to the center of the field with their respective Blue Sheets. The White Hat will detail the ejection on both team's Blue Sheet and the Head Coaches must sign the notation regarding the details of the

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ejection. At a minimum the details of the ejection must include the identification of the individual ejected, e.g., the Player's name and number, the Coach's name, the Spectator's name, etc., as well as sufficient detail as to what caused the ejection from the game.

Should the White Hat wish to provide additional details surrounding the ejection they may provide additional documentation to the Head of Officials later.

Should there be further ejections from the same game the entire documentation process must be repeated, and the Blue Sheets noted with the second ejection and the Blue Sheets again signed by the Head Coach from both teams.

If the ejection from the game is the team specific Head Coach, the Assistant Coach designated to act in the position of the departed Head Coach will perform the necessary signature on the ejection details.

The Club Delegate, from the ejected person, and the AYL Secretary, must be notified by the Head of Officials via a phone call or email of any game ejection(s) no later than 9:00 pm on the day of the game involved. All ejections will be reviewed by the Football Board at the next scheduled meeting to evaluate the suspension. The Head of Officials must present, at this meeting, the original Blue Sheets with the ejection details noted. There will be no protesting the validity of an ejection at any time. Officials must have all Blue Sheets turned in, consistent with rule 5.4.12

Per the AYL General Principles, Rule 19 Ejections, any individual ejected from a game will be placed on probation and will be ineligible to participate in the next scheduled game. Further, the AYL Football Board has determined that any non-player ejected from a game is not allowed to attend the next scheduled game in any capacity.

A coach ejected from a game is required to complete the following courses offered on-line by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS): Teaching and Modeling Behavior. The course will be at the cost (\$20) of the ejected coach and these courses shall be completed before he/she will be removed from probation and must be finished in a reasonable amount of time during the season to be determined by that Club's Football Director.

If the same individual is ejected a second time during the season, that individual will be ineligible to participate in league events for the remainder of the season. If the second ejection comes in the last game the individual is not eligible to participate in the following season.

The Member Club will be fined \$500 if any player, coach, or parent is ejected from the last game of the season and the player does not return to play in the AYL Football the next season. (i.e., Ejected from the last game at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level).

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