Official Rules

Football · 2026-2027

July 15, 2026 – July 14, 2027

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General Code of Conduct

Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. is committed to cultivating a safe and welcoming environment for its regional and national events and programs that encourages and promotes good sportsmanship by student-athletes, parents, coaches, administrators and other spectators. We ask that event participants and attendees cooperate in being respectful at all practice and competition venues, partner hotels and/or ancillary venues throughout the course of the event. All those involved with the event are expected to refrain from the following behaviors:

1. Acting in a way that is unruly, disruptive or illegal in nature.
2. Intoxication or other signs of impairment that may potentially result in bad behavior.
3. Excessive use of profanities and other vulgar language that interfere with other attendees' ability to enjoy the event.
4. Using bigoted, demeaning or abusive or other disruptive and intimidating language and/or gestures.
5. Verbal or physical harassment of officials, athletes and coaches before, during and following the competition.
6. Disrupting the progress of competition (including physically entering or throwing objects onto the playing field or competition mat).
7. Interfering with or failing to abide by security or emergency procedures or response.
8. Displaying signs that contain offensive language, or any graphic art that may be deemed disrespectful.
9. Defacing, destruction or theft of property associated with the event, including property of the opposing team or other athletes, including officials, as well as official venues.
10. Violence or threats of violence against other individuals at any official venue.
11. Publicly criticizing or making derogatory statements of an official, opposing teams, event personnel or its policies, or other individuals associated with the event. This includes comments with respect to their conduct, character, competence, integrity or appearance. Note: social media is deemed a public forum.
12. Failing to follow instructions of event personnel.
13. Any behavior which otherwise violates conduct codes set by partner venues, hotels or ancillary venues including but not limited to theme parks, as enforced by those properties.

Failure to abide by these expectations are grounds for removal from competition. Pop Warner reserves the right to remove individuals or the entire team. Depending on the infraction, a one-year ban from Pop Warner events and programs will be considered. A repeat offense of the same infraction may result in a permanent ban. All removals will be without refund.

Members Code of Conduct

In addition to the aforementioned General Code of Conduct, all Pop Warner coaches, administrators and other program volunteers shall:

1. Create a positive, safe and healthy environment, free of abuse and harassment, for all athletes and their families.
2. Not criticize athletes in front of spectators, but reserve constructive criticism for later, in private, or in the presence of team members if others might benefit.
3. Accept decisions of the game officials and judges on the field and in competitions as being fair and called to the best ability of said officials.
4. Not criticize an opposing team, its athletes, coaches, or fans by word of mouth or by gesture.
5. Emphasize that good athletes strive to be good students and that both are physically and mentally alert.
6. Strive to make every athletic activity serve as a training ground for life, and a basis for good mental and physical health.
7. Remove from a game, competition or practice any athlete when even slightly in doubt about his/her health, whether or not as a result of injury, until competent medical advice is available.
8. Emphasize that winning is the result of good teamwork.
9. Not engage in excessive sideline coaching and shall not leave the bench area/coaches' designated seating area to shout instructions from the sidelines or competition mat.
10. Together with team officials, be jointly responsible for the conduct and control of team fans and spectators at all times. Any fan who becomes a nuisance and out of control will be asked to leave.
11. Not use abusive or profane language at any time.
12. Not receive any payment, in cash or kind, for services as a volunteer or athlete involved in Pop Warner. This includes any coach, expert, consultant or choreographer, regardless of his/her roster status. Choreography Exception: Teams that register and participate in Pop Warner League Championship/Showcase, advance to Region Championships and Nationals, if applicable, are permitted to hire/pay for routine choreography. Choreography Clinic permitted as needed for skills.
13. <u>All interactions between volunteers and minors—whether in person, online, or through digital communication—must be observable, transparent, and interruptible at all times.</u>

Members Code of Conduct

14. Not recommend or distribute any medication, controlled or over the counter, except as specifically prescribed by the athlete's physician.
15. Not permit an ineligible athlete to participate in a game/ competition.
16. Not deliberately incite unsportsmanlike conduct.
17. Not possess or drink alcoholic beverages and/or use illegal substance(s) on either the game, practice field/practice area or competition venue.
18. Not smoke, vape and/or use smokeless tobacco on the field.
19. Uphold all rules and regulations regarding Pop Warner programs.
20. Refrain from engaging in any action within or outside Pop Warner which in PWLS sole & absolute discretion reflects negatively upon, or causes embarrassment to, the Pop Warner program.

If any of these rules are broken, Pop Warner or its member league shall have the authority to impose a penalty including permanent removal from the program.

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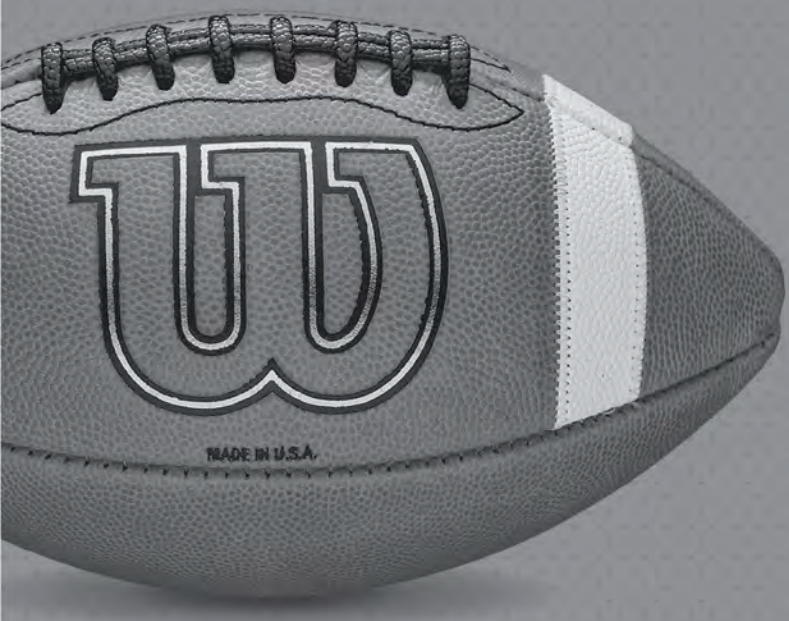

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Part I: The Pop Warner Program

NATIONAL OFFICE & REGIONAL MANAGEMENT TEAMS:

Pop Warner is led by a national staff and supported by an extended volunteer staff across eight (8) regions. The number and composition of regions is determined and may be changed from time to time by the Joint Advisory Committee of Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. (PWLS). The National Office may be reached at: P.O. Box 307 Langhorne, PA 19047 or via www.popwarner.com. When contacting the national office, please state your name, note your team, identify your association and league, and clearly and extensively describe the issue at hand.

NATIONAL REMARKS

PWLS is dedicated to the athletes who participate in Pop Warner and to their safety and enjoyment. The rules for Pop Warner activity of any type as published in this book are to be followed scrupulously. Failure to enforce these rules can result in legal action, dismissal and/or loss of charter. Each family and each adult volunteer in the program must be covered by excess medical and liability insurance of some type. Although participation in Pop Warner is statistically safe, such insurance should include coverage for “participant risk.” All programs must have minimum insurance limits of $100,000 Medical, $1,000,000 General Liability, and $1,000,000 Sexual Abuse/Molestation in order to participate.

All Pop Warner programs and activities are open to youth – males and females – including “mixed/co-ed” teams.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL

The Pop Warner Administrative Manual is designed to keep each League and Association current on all administrative matters, as well as to facilitate the daily operational management of those local organizations. This Rule Book and the Administrative Manual are not the personal property of the volunteer, but belong to PWLS.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Pop Warner Little Scholars is to enable youth athletes to benefit from participation in team sports and activities in a structured environment. Through this active participation, Pop Warner programs teach fundamental values, skills and knowledge that young people will use throughout their lives.

Part I: The Pop Warner Program

GOALS AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE POP WARNER PROGRAM

Pop Warner is an international program operated for the benefit of its youth athletes. Since 1929, the program's philosophy has been that academics and athletics go hand-in-hand. At every level, Pop Warner seeks to develop well-rounded young athletes who learn not only the fundamentals of football, cheer & dance, but also the importance of education, in an atmosphere conducive to developing sound mind, body and character – and having an enjoyable time along the way!

The objectives of Pop Warner are to inspire youth, regardless of race, creed, religion or national origin, to practice the ideals of sportsmanship, scholarship, and physical fitness, as reflected in the life of the late Glenn Scobie "Pop" Warner.

Pop Warner strives to make the game fun for all athletes. The program stresses learning lessons of value that will transcend their participation in Pop Warner, such as: self-discipline, teamwork, determination, friendship, leadership, and good sportsmanship. With such goals in mind, and by providing an opportunity to participate in an organized, supervised environment with emphasis on maximum safety and participation, Pop Warner offers young athletes a unique and memorable opportunity to excel.

Part II: Pop Warner Structure

DEFINITIONS

S1: LEAGUE

The term “League” has two definitions, each separate and distinct as applicable:

A. It is a legal term to define a type of Federation/Conference, **or**

B. It is a grouping of teams of the same ages and weights (playing levels) into a “league” for scheduling purposes.

League shall be utilized and referenced herein place of Federation and Conference. A League consists of a minimum of four (4) teams playing in the same playing level. Leagues are Chartered and managed by PWLS with the assistance of the appropriate Region Management Team. All Leagues must declare a commitment to their charter agreement annually and remain in good standing. Pop Warner national staff shall have the right to attend any League/ Association function with or without notice.

S2: ASSOCIATION

Associations are organizations that sponsor and administer one or more teams. They raise money, buy equipment, recruit coaches, secure fields, secure indoor practice facilities, etc. Each Association shall have Association Board members to be called the Director of Football or Football Commissioner, as well as a Director of Cheer & Dance, Cheer & Dance Commissioner (or whatever other term is locally applicable), who are equal voting members of the Association Board and responsible only to that board.

Associations are characterized by specific geographical coverage. In cities, they often adopt commonly understood neighborhood names. In the suburbs, they usually take the town name. In rural areas, an association name may embrace an entire county (or a substantial part of it). An association’s recruiting area is approved by its League and is normally consistent with its geographical name. When there are no associations, a League is intramural.

S3: ADMINISTRATORS

All League & Association Administrators must be at least 21 years of age.

S4: TEAM

A team is the universal, basic unit of organization. At minimum, a team consists of a group of athletes organized under the direction of a coaching staff in a given playing level. Each football team may have a maximum of three rostered Pop Warner Cheer & Dance teams.

Part II: Pop Warner Structure

S5: LEVEL OF PLAY – AGE AND SKILL DIVISIONS

Levels of play for tackle football include: Age-Based 6u, 7u, 8u, 9u, 10u, 11u, 12u, 13u and 14u. Age/Weight divisions are Tiny-Mite, Mitey-Mite, Junior Peewee, Peewee, Junior Varsity and Varsity. For flag football, divisions are 5u, 6u, 7u, 8u, 9u, 10u, 11u, 12u, 13u, 14u, 15u, 16u, 17u, 18u. Other programs are available for 7v7 non-contact and Challenger. More details are listed in Football, Rule 1, S4.

Division is used to designate DI, DII, DIII or a sub-grouping of a League, such as "National-American divisions" or "East-West divisions."

Cheer & Dance Age Divisions: Junior Tiny Mite (JTM), Tiny-Mite (TM), Mitey-Mite (MM), Junior Peewee (JP), Peewee (P), Junior Varsity (JV), Varsity (V), Bantam (B), Challenger (CH).

Pop Warner offers YCADA Skill Divisions: Show Cheer 1 Ltd. (S,M,L), Show Cheer 1-3 (S,M,L), Show Cheer 4 (S, M, L, NB), Core Cheer Ltd., Core Cheer, Sideline Performance Cheer (S, M, L), Pom Performance (NB), Theme Dance (NB) and Hip Hop (NB). (NB = Natural Break applied if division has four (4) or more.)

INTRODUCTION TO THE RULES

S1: The rules contained herein are required to be enforced by each PWLS association and league. Failure to do so shall be subject to the penalties defined herein, in the PWLS Administrative Manual and in any other PWLS Policies.

S2: For all purposes, the Pop Warner Cheer & Dance season shall be defined as July 15 through July 14. Meanwhile, the Pop Warner Tackle Football season is July 15 through December 31, and the 7v7 season typically runs in the spring, with the season concluding no later than June 30. Flag Football is available in the spring and the fall, with the season dates determined locally.

All Leagues, administrative personnel, coaches, athletes are subject to disciplinary action for violations of Pop Warner rules and regulations occurring at any time during a stated season.

S3: No Rules will be added after July 15 unless required for safety reason(s).

Part III: Pop Warner Regulations All Programs

ARTICLE 1: POWERS/AUTHORITY OF LEAGUE

S1: The League has, among its powers, the obligation and authority to enforce National rules. Leagues will follow all Pop Warner Rules as printed in this book or their Charter shall be in jeopardy.

S2: Leagues are responsible to verify accuracy of all scores/results from League Playoffs and/or Championships. If an error is found in reporting, leagues are responsible to correct and advance the proper team.

ARTICLE 2: BOUNDARIES

S1: A League is responsible for the enforcement of its own boundaries. However, it shall not infringe upon the territorial rights or boundaries of another chartered League.

S2: Transfer between Leagues: Any team or association seeking to withdraw from one League to join another League may do so only with the prior written agreement of the Leagues involved and with the written concurrence of the appropriate Regional Director, after consultation with the Vice Regional Director and Regional Cheer & Dance Coordinator, and under the direction of the national office. In the event the two Leagues cannot agree upon the terms of the move, the Regional Director, under the direction of the national office, shall rule on the matter, with either party retaining the right to appeal the decision to the National Football Commissioner or National Cheer & Dance Commissioner.

S3: Leagues must establish boundaries for their participating associations. Boundaries will be set by a defined, readily recognizable format, (i.e., town limits, school districts, streets, etc.). Failure to establish and operate boundaries in this manner can result in revocation of charter. Athletes found to be participating outside boundaries they reside, without proper release from both Leagues & Associations involved, subject their team to forfeiture of all games played/competitions.

S4: ATHLETE WAIVERS

Leagues must establish written policies for their Associations pertaining to athlete waivers. Waiver requests must be submitted with cause by a parent or legal guardian to both Presidents/Coordinators of the affected Leagues & Associations. Leagues must approve all waivers between their Associations and the Regional Director or his/her designee must approve all cross-league/region waivers. It is strongly recommended that all Waiver requests be resolved by the first practice.

Waivers shall only be granted upon written application executed and verified by both League & Association Presidents involved in

the Waiver request, attesting that the Waiver meets at least one of the following criteria but not limited to, for waiver allowance:

A. Valid family circumstances (divorce, custody determinations, court decisions, etc.) in which the athlete effectively resides in multiple locations.

B. In cases where the team is full.

C. In cases where an age appropriate team does not exist.

D. In demonstrated (proven) hardship cases.

All Football Waivers related to the fall tackle season expire annually on December 31. Cheer & Dance Waivers expire annually on July 14. Only waivers which serve in the best interest of Pop Warner both locally and nationally will be given consideration.

S5: Under the direction of the President & CEO, COO, the National Football Commissioner or National Cheer & Dance Commissioner shall have final non-appealable authority over any/all League boundary and waiver disputes.

ARTICLE 3: RESTRICTION AGAINST DUAL MEMBERSHIP

No League or member association holding a Pop Warner charter may enter any one of its teams into membership in any other youth football, cheer or dance organization and no adult volunteer may serve on the board of a Pop Warner Region, League or member Association while concurrently serving on the board of another youth football, cheer or dance organization. Any individual, League or member Association in violation of this rule shall be immediately dismissed from Pop Warner.

ARTICLE 4: ANNUAL LEAGUE CHARTER APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS & VARIANCE OF RULES

The Charter Committee for Pop Warner consists of select National Staff members, as well as Region Directors. They are responsible for reviewing, granting, suspending or revoking the privileges and conditions of the local league's charter. When a local league wishes to request a waiver of a specific rule or regulation, it must submit in writing to the Region Director, who will forward it with their recommendation to the Charter Committee. The appropriate Region Director will present the variance to the Charter Committee for a decision.

S1: Variances shall only be granted upon a written application executed and verified by the President of the League, attesting that the variance sought is based upon good cause and can be shown to be in the best interest of Pop Warner athletes assuring their safety. Variances are defined by one (1) of three (3) categories: Football only, Cheer & Dance only, Football and Cheer & Dance.

S2: Programs granted a variance forfeit their rights to compete in Region and National Championships for the current season.

S3: No program granted a variance may compete in post season bowl games/competitions that year, unless the opposing team has an identical variance.

S4: All variances expire annually on July 14 every year. Only variances which serve in the best interest of Pop Warner both locally and nationally will be given consideration.

ARTICLE 5: COACHES REQUIREMENTS
Details related to this article are now included in the football and cheer & dance portions of the rule book.

ARTICLE 6: REGISTRATION
A candidate cannot begin practice with a team until he/she has officially registered. Registration consists of completing and submitting items S1-S4 in this Article in addition to any/all local required forms.

The sign-up fee, if any, may be collected at this time. All coach trainees and student demonstrators under the age of 18 must be registered/certified in the same manner as all other minors participating in Pop Warner programs. All candidates must furnish the following in order to be registered and before starting practice:

S1: PARENTAL CONSENT
A candidate cannot begin practice with a team until he/she has officially registered. Registration consists of completing and submitting items S1-S4 in this Article in addition to any/all local required forms.

S2: MEDICAL FORM
A signed medical form provided by PWLS is required to be submitted each year by a parent or legal guardian of each youth participant attests that the youth athlete has been given a medical examination within the past two years, is physically fit, and has no observable conditions which would contra-indicate playing football or participating in cheer & dance.

> **SPECIAL NOTE:** A person with a loss of limb may participate provided that the individual has a signed statement of approval from an examining physician and that the use of the artificial limb is no more dangerous to athletes than the corresponding human limb, and does not place an opponent at a disadvantage.

S3: PROOF OF AGE
A certified copy of the birth certificate on file bearing the seal of the issuing office of the state of birth is the best guarantee of reliability of claimed date of birth and is the form of proof most recommended.

Passports are also reliable. Military ID cards are acceptable. Certified wallet-size certificates issued by a state or commonwealth are acceptable. Any other alleged "proof of birth date," including photocopies of "originals," are to be accepted only upon the willingness of the team administration to have its schedule forfeited should fraudulent application later be determined. Pop Warner does not mandate retaining the originals but verifying them.

S4: SCHOLASTIC FITNESS
Proof of satisfactory progress in school is required. A 2.0/70% or the equivalent shall be the minimum grade point average acceptable to participate. In cases of doubt, conflict of opinion, or if a valid report card is not submitted, the nationally published scholastic eligibility form shall be used and deemed final. NOTE: Like all rules herein this rule as it relates to scholastic grades may not be made more stringent by any team, association, or league. No local team may be allowed to participate in Region/National sponsored championships or bowl games if it has not met the nationally published scholastic requirements and may be subject to other penalties.

Academic verification will take place at the local level. Leagues do not need to keep a record of each individual athlete's GPA, but must affirm eligibility. Each League Scholastics Coordinator is required to file an official Pop Warner "League Confirmation of Compliance with Scholastic Fitness" affidavit annually with the National Office. This affidavit will state that each athlete on the certified roster meets the minimum academic standard and is eligible to participate.

ARTICLE 7: FORMATION OF TEAMS
Tryouts of any kind within Pop Warner are prohibited. Tryouts are defined as any means used to ascertain the level whereby a participant is placed on a team, including assessments, evaluations, or any other method used to place a participant in Pop Warner. For more information regarding formation of teams, please see the specific rules in the football and cheer & dance portions of the rule book.

ARTICLE 8: MANDATORY CUTS
Any participant must be cut who:

S1: Is found to have signed up as a result of parental pressure or tells team management he/she does not really want to play football or compete in cheer & dance.

S2: Refuses or cannot furnish the 4 required items: Parental Consent, Medical Form, Proof of Age, and Scholastic Fitness.

S3: Is a member of any other organized Pop Warner program that retains his/her rights is the one whose boundary includes the athlete's primary residence.

S4: Is to be simultaneously rostered and participating on another Pop Warner team in the same sport, or simultaneously rostered and participating in other youth football leagues, teams and events that are not under Pop Warner governance. (Exception: See Football, Rule 21)

S5: Attempts to intimidate fellow athletes in practice by word and/or physical deed. No refunding of fees shall be required.

S6: Is a recurring discipline problem (and then, only with the concurrence of the League).

ARTICLE 9: VOLUNTARY CUTS

An athlete shall be considered a voluntary cut or "self-cut" athlete when he/she simply no longer shows up at practices, games or competitions of his/her own free will. While voluntary cuts are not charged to any team for the purpose of these regulations, a coaching staff may attempt to disguise its cutting pattern by arranging practices in such a way as to discourage athletes of lesser ability into quitting on their own. While these practices are not common, they have been known to occur and are considered intentional avoidance of the rules and regulations and are, therefore, punishable as a result of a hearing.

If a team loses 20% or more of its assigned athletes prior to certification, it is mandatory that the Association investigate the causes for the athletes voluntarily leaving the team, and take whatever appropriate action may be needed. The results of this investigation shall be reported to the League and the League shall have final authority as to whether appropriate actions were taken.

ARTICLE 10: CERTIFICATION

S1: Certification is that process whereby the team or association will file with the League and Region of which it is a member, a complete roster of athletes for the regular season schedule.

S2: A roster is certified once the Association and League have approved the roster through Pop Warner's online Roster Software. A certified roster is one that the League has accepted at a preseason session with its teams, based upon information submitted, and the teams are restricted to these athletes for the balance of the season (except for allowed "Drops" and "Adds," see Article 12).

S3: Certification will be accomplished within the official Roster Software. All rosters must be completed online prior to the first regular season game to be certified.

S4: To be certified onto a team roster, an athlete shall qualify under the following:

A. Eligibility according to residence shall be decided by the League when the candidate resides in an area other than that authorized for the Association by the League and on file at PWLS.

B. Each Association shall attempt to assign a first-time athlete to the lowest age and skill division for which he/she is qualified.

C. Once certified for a particular age level, an athlete shall not be permitted to recertify to a lower age level during the current season under any circumstances, but based on the information available shall be permitted to approve recertification to a higher age/skill level.

D. Ages shall be verified by birth certificate as specified in Article 6, S3.

E. Associations will require each athlete to upload a current photo to the roster software that is no more than two years old.

ARTICLE 11: RETENTION OF ELIGIBILITY

Once certified, an athlete or Coach Trainee/Student Demonstrator must meet the following requirements to retain eligibility:

S1: Transfer policy in case of change of residence will be decided by the League.

S2: Retain parental consent.

S3: Maintain sound physical condition.

S4: Continue to maintain sound scholastic standards. In cases of doubt, a League shall have the right to require a written statement by the school administration, which shall be deemed final.

S5: An athlete or Coach Trainee/Student Demonstrator serving a school suspension is not eligible to participate in Pop Warner until the day after their school suspension is completed.

Part III: Pop Warner Regulations All Programs

ARTICLE 12: DROPS AND ADDS

S1: A team may add athletes to its certified roster as long as said roster was certified below the maximum number permitted, or to replace those originally certified and no longer on the team for any valid reason as outlined herein.

S2: Each League shall establish its own Drops & Adds cutoff date, but no athlete may be added to any roster after September 15 of the current season.

S3: All Fall Season Team Rosters must have active status in Pop Warner's Roster Software by September 15.

ARTICLE 13: NO ALL-STARS

All-Star teams are prohibited in Pop Warner. Pop Warner Football fall season rosters are valid from July 15-December 31, while Pop Warner Cheer & Dance rosters are valid from July 15-July 14 of the current year. Any coach or athlete found to be competing with All-Star athletes from different rosters of regular season teams will forfeit future eligibility for all Pop Warner programs.

ARTICLE 14: AWARDS

S1: In compliance with the team concept and in view of the ages of Pop Warner athletes, no athlete will be singled out for presentation of any special award. This includes, but is not limited to "best lineman" and "best offensive back" in football, "best flyer" and "best jumper" in cheer & dance, and generally "most valuable athlete" on any team. Such adulation should be given to an athlete after his Pop Warner days, if he/she justly deserves it by performance or achievement. Individual awards may be presented, but must be given to all team members.

S2: SPECIAL NOTE FOR ATHLETES: Awards for individual performances displayed on the uniform, helmet or any piece of equipment are prohibited.

ARTICLE 15: PRACTICE

Details related to this article are now included in the football and cheer & dance portions of the rule book.

ARTICLE 16: CAMPS

Details related to this article are now included in the football and cheer & dance portions of the rule book.

ARTICLE 17: IMPORTANT POINT—MEDICAL & CONCUSSIONS

The home team or hosting organization has the responsibility to provide medical coverage at each game or competition. In the absence of a physician and or ambulance on the site, the minimum safety requirement will be the presence of one individual associated with the home team/host organization who is currently EMT qualified or is currently certified in Red Cross Community First Aid and Safety, the P.R.E.P.A.R.E. Course by the National Center for Sport Safety (www.sportssafety.org), or their equivalent.

Work together with your local EMTs to establish an emergency plan that fits your specific area and needs. Your emergency plan should include, but not be limited to, the following:

A. introduce or identify trainer/health care provider to visiting coach;

B. home team/host organization review emergency plan with visiting team;

C. designated duties for coaching staff and/or athletes;

D. specific directions to your facility for emergency medical service (EMS);

E. emergency numbers,

F. injury report forms;

G. treatment authorization card;

H. list of administrators that the coach is required to contact.

Practice your emergency plan early in the season, and repeat often throughout the season. A similar plan should be in place for teams traveling to away games and competitions.

All teams are recommended to have a staff member carry the entire team's medical release forms and emergency numbers for all athletes in case of an emergency their parent(s) or guardian must be reached. Having the family physician's number opposite the athlete's name is also recommended.

Part III: Pop Warner Regulations All Programs

S1: CONCUSSION RETURN TO PLAY GUIDELINES:
An athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or a head injury in a practice, game or competition shall be removed from practice, play or competition at that time based on evaluation and determination by the Head Coach. However, if an official licensed athletic trainer or other official qualified medical professional is on site and available to render such evaluation, that person shall always have final authority as to removal or return to play/ competition of the athlete. When an official licensed athletic trainer or other official qualified medical professional is not present, and a parent or guardian of the injured athlete is serving as head coach, the final authority on removal of an athlete shall rest with the league president, association president or the top ranking assistant head coach; whomever is present and highest in the Pop Warner chain of command.

Any Pop Warner athlete who has been removed from practice, play or competition due to a head injury or suspected concussion may not return to Pop Warner activities until the athlete has been evaluated by a currently licensed medical professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and receives written clearance to return to play from that licensed practitioner.

In the absence of an official licensed athletic trainer or other official qualified medical professional, at Pop Warner regional events, the Regional Director and/or Regional Cheer & Dance Coordinator shall be the final authority on removal of an athlete for a suspected head injury or concussion. At National events, the National Football Commissioner or National Cheer & Dance Commissioner, or in their absence the President & CEO, shall be the final authority on removal of an athlete for a suspected head injury or concussion.

Pop Warner recommends that all decisions be made in the best interest of the athlete and that when any doubt exists as to the health of the athletes, they sit out. Please check www.popwarner.com or www.cdc.gov/concussion for Center for Disease Control (CDC) signs and symptoms chart for concussions.

ARTICLE 18: CHARGING ADMISSION
Reasonable admission fees may be charged to attendees for entry into pre-season, regular season and postseason Pop Warner league, association and team events, however such admission fees shall not be borne by any active rostered individual who is partaking in the event, including both athletes and coaches, as well as all pertinent Pop Warner administrators; all of whom shall be admitted free of charge.

ARTICLE 19: PROTESTS

S1: Only protests involving the eligibility of an athlete shall be considered.

S2: Protests are decided in accordance with the administrative procedures of the League.

S3: Teams, Associations and Leagues have the responsibility to communicate protests as soon as they are known to exist. Lack of prompt notification may result in denial of the protest.

ARTICLE 20: PATCH REQUIREMENT

All Pop Warner athletes must have the official Pop Warner patch displayed on every uniform for games and competitions in order to participate. More specific information on placement is included in the football and cheer & dance portions of the rule book.

Patches may be purchased through www.popwarnershop.com. All uniforms purchased through Pop Warner Authentic, Inc., are permitted to have the patch sublimated or silk screened directly to the uniform. Momentec Brands has the exclusive right to include a dye-sublimated patch onto its uniforms; no other manufacturer has that same right.

ARTICLE 21: MANDATORY BACKGROUND CHECKS

S1: As a condition of service to a Pop Warner League, all member League and Association board members, coaches, administrators, team parents and other individuals on official, certified team rosters, are required to complete and submit an official "Pop Warner Volunteer Application" to their local Pop Warner Association or League. **Annual** background checks must be completed prior to the applicant assuming his/her duties for the current season, and should be submitted to the League President prior to the start of the current season. Refusal to submit a fully completed "Pop Warner Volunteer Application" annually must result in the immediate dismissal of the individual or denial of participation for the applicant.

S2: Each League shall require and be responsible for enforcing all league and association personnel to annually submit to the League President a fully completed official "Pop Warner Volunteer Application," prior to the applicant assuming his/her duties for the current season. The Volunteer Application must include signed permission from the applicant allowing the League or Association to perform the necessary background check. The official "Pop Warner Volunteer Application" shall only be modified in order to comply with local, state, provincial or national laws. Each League shall also

require and be responsible for enforcing that an Officer of each member Association complete and submit an official Pop Warner "Association Confirmation of Compliance with Background Checks" affidavit.

Each League is required to file an official Pop Warner "League Confirmation of Compliance with Background Checks" affidavit annually with the National Office. All volunteer applications and Association affidavits must be maintained by the League for a minimum of one year, but Pop Warner's recommendation is for two years after the volunteer leaves the organization. Volunteers shall be defined as those persons who have been approved by the League to serve in that capacity.

S3: No League shall permit any of the above referenced persons to participate in any manner whose background check reveals a conviction for, or guilty plea to, or no-contest plea to any crime involving or against a minor. In addition, other charges and convictions may be an indication of an unfit volunteer, and therefore a League may prohibit any individual from participating as a volunteer if the League deems the individual unfit to work with minors, as long as the League applies the same criteria uniformly for all individuals seeking to volunteer.

S4: All Leagues must conduct a nationwide search that contains the applicable government sex offender registry data using a preferred background check provider or a government agency sponsored state search of criminal records. Additionally, if a League utilizes only a state sex offender registry check, that League must also perform a national database or a Federal background check search. If a local organization becomes aware of information, that an individual, including, but not limited to, volunteers, athletes and hired workers, has been convicted of or pled guilty to any crime involving or against a minor, the league must immediately contact the applicable government agency to confirm the accuracy of the information.

Upon confirmation of a conviction for, or guilty plea to, or no-contest plea to a crime against or involving a minor, the league must prohibit the individual from participating in any manner.

S5: In addition to the minimum criteria above, the following additional criteria shall also serve as a basis under which a person is disqualified or prohibited from serving as a volunteer in any Pop Warner program:

A. A pardoned, expunged or sealed conviction for a crime against or involving a minor;authorized for the Association by the League and on file at PWLS.

B. Being adjudged liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of children;

C. Being subject to any court order involving any sexual abuse or physical abuse of a minor, including but not limited to domestic order or protection;

D. Had their parental rights terminated.

S6: Due to the fact that Pop Warner Little Scholars Inc. has no direct operational control over the selection of volunteers, each League shall be required to indemnify and hold harmless Pop Warner Little Scholars Inc. against all legal actions based upon allegations arising from a failure to enforce all or part of this regulation. Failure to comply with all or part of this regulation may result in the suspension or revocation of the league charter, the removal of league and/or association volunteers, ineligibility for participation in region and national play/competition, and as well as significant legal liability.

ARTICLE 22: EVENT PARTICIPATION

An official Pop Warner event request form is required for every sporting event outside the League/Region/National competition system, including but not limited to non-Pop Warner events. Permission to participate in any sporting event (i.e., clinic, camp, competition, tournament, NFL half-time participation, etc.) is granted only if it is in writing, in advance and approved by the League, Region and Pop Warner National Office, and only if the sporting event occurs during the accepted Pop Warner season and follows all Pop Warner safety rules and guidelines.

Each League and Association shall be responsible for obtaining and maintaining appropriate insurance coverage for all sporting events and non-sporting events, including but not limited to parades, picnics, fundraising events, banquets, and end-of-season celebrations. Refer to Part I, National Remarks for guidance on insurance coverage and limits.

Part IV: Enforcement Policy

POLICE POWERS/HEARINGS & APPEALS

All Pop Warner organizations – Leagues, Associations, and Teams will be called upon from time to time to do the following:

A. Resolve disputes between member organizations and individuals.

B. Take action to enforce National and local rules and regulations.

C. Discipline both adult and juvenile members.

NATIONAL POP WARNER DOES NOT HANDLE APPEALS.

Each League is advised to set up its own tribunal to handle matters in a timely fashion at the local level. WARNING: Failure to do so could result in being taken to court. The National Office will intervene only in rare instances at its sole discretion. Please refer to the Pop Warner Administrative Manual for hearings and appeals guidelines.

MINIMUM MANDATED PENALTIES

Minimums are established to assure that the punishment for listed offenses will occur in a uniform fashion. More severe penalties may be levied where circumstances warrant or for repeated offenses.

S1: ADULT OFFENSES

A. **Ejection from Game/Competition:** Automatic one week suspension from practice, including the following game.

B. **Endangerment of Juveniles:** Suspension for 1 year.

C. **Fighting:** Suspension for 1 year.

D. **Cheating:** Suspension for 1 year.

E. **Threats:** Suspension for 1 year.

F. **Gambling on Game/Competition Outcome:** Suspension for 1 year.

G. **Lack of Cooperation/Obstruction:** Suspension until compliance is achieved.

H. **Falsification of Official Documentation:** Suspension for 1 year. This would include, but not be limited to: parental consent, medical form, proof of age, proof of scholastic eligibility, and/or background screening forms.

Additional adult offenses that are specific to football include:

A. **Run-Up-the-Score:** Probation unless found to be intentional, then suspension for 1 week.

B. **Teaching Prohibited Offensive & Defensive Techniques:** Suspension for 1 year.

C. **Violation of Mandatory Play Rule:** Probation unless found to be intentional, then suspension for 1 week.

Upon suspension of any penalty provided herein, an accused shall be placed on probation, among the general conditions of which shall be: (1) that the accused be and remain of good behavior and that he strictly enforce all rules and regulations of Pop Warner; and (2) that

the accused prepare and submit to his League his/her written plan to supervise implementation of the Pop Warner Rules/Guidelines.

The failure of a convicted coach to comply with this provision will be deemed a second violation.

S2: JUVENILE OFFENSES

Fighting, intimidation, disrespect for authority or blatant disregard for rules of competition shall be cause for ejection from a game/competition. Any juvenile ejected from any game/competition for cause shall be ineligible for participation in their next game/competition. If an ejection happens during the last game of the current season, the ejected juvenile will serve their 1 game suspension the first game of the following season. A second ejection during the same season shall be cause for removal from the team for the balance of that season. Any juvenile charged with criminal activity may be removed to ensure the safety of other athletes.

S3: TEAM AND ASSOCIATION OFFENSES

A. **FAILURE TO KEEP FAITH WITH JUVENILES & PARENTS** is defined as any deliberate practice or failure of a team or association which placed the health, welfare and safety of juveniles in jeopardy, or exploits or treats them in such a manner that the juvenile becomes a “tool” of the team.

   To file this charge, the violation must result from team or association policy, and not be an aberration of one individual. This implies that the practice is carried out by order of, or with the knowledge of, the officership, and no steps are taken to end it.

   MINIMUM PENALTY: Probation of the organization coupled with permanent suspension of its president and all others who participated in the practice. Upon a second offense, suspension of the organization until all officers are removed.

B. **FIGHTING/RIOTING/INCITEMENT TO RIOT:** Game related: forfeiture of the game for first offense; forfeiture of the season for second offense within the same season. Scrimmage related: at the discretion of the League. Competition Related: forfeiture of the competition.

S4: REGION AND NATIONAL PLAYOFFS

Investigations and hearings concerning Region and National Championships and Playoffs will be conducted by the National Office and/or appropriate Region Staff in accordance with Pop Warner’s Dispute Resolution Policy as stated in the Administrative Manual and/or communicated by the National Office.

S5: ADDITIONAL OFFENSES

Any and all other offenses which are committed by any party may be subject to the minimum penalty of probation.

Part V: 11-Man Tackle Playing Rules

Except as specifically modified for Pop Warner Football, all games are to be played under the state rules (including state adoptions) for varsity football of the applicable governing body-either the individual state member of the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations or the National Collegiate Athletic Association. It is recommended that each coach have their own copy of the current year's high school rules. Learn more about how you can order a copy from the National Federation at www.nfhs.org or from the NCAA at www.ncaa.org.

RULE 1: AGES AND WEIGHTS

S1: JULY 31 CUTOFF-LEAGUE AGE

The player's age on July 14th of the current year (2026) shall be the player's age for the coming season.

S2: OPERATION OF AGE/WEIGHT SCHEMATICS

Option 1- the traditional age/weight schematic provides a uniform series of three basic years of age qualification for each level of play, with a fourth year of eligibility falling under more stringent weight restrictions (the "older/lighter" player). The "older/lighter" player is indicated by an asterisk. (See Rule 1, S4)

Option 2- the age based schematic provides levels starting with 5/6 yr. olds and no minimum or maximum weights.

Please note programs may not arbitrarily eliminate any ages from the levels, i.e. choose not to allow older/lighters etc.

S3: SPECIAL NOTE FOR MITEY-MITES & 8u, 9u

Mitey Mite, 8U and 9U are training levels, free of any pressure with an emphasis on the individual being supported and empowered to develop, improve and become the best version of themselves. For Mitey Mites and 8U, a Local & Regional Champion may be declared. 9U teams shall be eligible to compete at the Pop Warner Super Bowl, and 9U coaches are not permitted to remain on the field during game play. 8U teams shall be eligible to compete at the Pop Warner Super Bowl, and 8U coaches may remain on the field during game play at the discretion of the League; however, they shall remain a minimum of 10 yards from the line of scrimmage, and are not permitted to remain on the field during playoff or championship games.

A. There shall be:
    1. No blitzing.
        a. Only defensive linemen may move forward immediately at the snap.
        b. Linebackers and Defensive Backs may move toward runner after a read step.
        c. 10-yard penalty after one warning.

2. No rushing of punts, field goals or point after touchdown (while attempting a kick) in Mitey-Mite, 8u, 9u play. Ball must be snapped straight back to the kicker/holder in line with the snapper and must be kicked immediately upon securing the snap. For a hand-to-hand snap, the kicker may retreat straight back to clear linemen before kicking. ***PENALTY:*** *Dead ball, 5-yard delay of game, the clock is reset and will start on the snap.*
3. No more than six (6) defensive players can be on the line of scrimmage or rush the ball, linebackers must be 3 yds. off the line of scrimmage, corners must be 5 yds. off line of scrimmage and safeties must be 7 yds. off line of scrimmage.
4. Offensive and Defensive players on the line of scrimmage must be in a 2-point and shall not be head-up over center. Defensive players are allowed to line up in the A-gap, but may not initiate contact. Penalty for violation of the above: First violation: Warning: Additional violations: 10 yards unsportsmanlike conduct.

S4: TACKLE AGE/WEIGHT SCHEMATIC

Level Name	Ages	Certification Weight	End of Season Max
TINY-MITE	5-6-7	35-80 lbs.	89 lbs.
MITEY-MITE	7-8-9	45-105 lbs.	114 lbs.
JUNIOR PEEWEE	8-9-10	60-120 lbs.	129 lbs.*
(older/lighter)	11*	60-100 lbs.	109 lbs.*
PEEWEE	9-10-11	75-135 lbs.	144 lbs.*
(older/lighter)	12*	75-115 lbs.	124 lbs.*
JUNIOR VARSITY	10-11-12	90-160 lbs.	169 lbs.*
(older/lighter)	13*	90-140 lbs.	149 lbs.*
VARSITY	12-13-14	105-185 lbs.	194 lbs.*
(older/lighter)	15*	105-165 lbs.	174 lbs.*
JUNIOR BANTAM	12-13-14	120-175 lbs.	184 lbs.*
(older/lighter)	15*	120-155 lbs.	164 lbs.*
BANTAM	13-14-15	135-190 lbs.	199 lbs.*
(older/lighter)	16*	135-170 lbs.	179 lbs.*

*The asterisked (*) provisions in each level allow the so-called “older but lighter” player to also qualify. The last year of eligibility falls under more stringent weight restrictions, per above.

A league shall not add the “in-season” growth allowance as a means of upping maximum weights or increasing certification weights.

S5: AGE-BASED SCHEMATIC

Level Name	Ages	Rules to Follow
6u	5-6	Tiny Mite
7u	6-7	Tiny Mite
8u	7-8	Mitey Mite
9u	7-8-9	Mitey Mite
10u	8-9-10	Jr. Peewee
11u	9-10-11	Peewee
12u	10-11-12	Jr. Varsity
13u	11-12-13	Jr. Varsity
14u	12-13-14	Varsity

** No kickoffs permitted in the following levels: TM, MM, 6u, 7u, 8u, 9u.

Rules 2 through 6 a specific to programs that are using the Age/ Weight Schematic.

RULE 2: INITIAL WEIGH-IN; FIRST PRACTICE

Until the first practice session, no convenient means will exist for the team to conduct this weigh-in. Its purpose is to serve as one final check of qualification and to screen out for special attention each player whose weight will bear watching by the team staff, the players, and parents throughout the practice period, because it is slightly below the minimum or slightly above the maximum weight for that particular level. Those failing the initial weigh-in will not continue as eligible candidates for the team (See Rule 6). The initial weigh-in is not the certified weigh-in and may be conducted on less than a medical quality scale.

RULE 3: IN-SEASON DETERMINATION OF WEIGHT

Each team will have its players checked on Game Day PRIOR TO EACH GAME during the season to assure that the weight standards are being maintained. Agreements between teams/ coaches to waive weight requirements are not permitted.

Part V: 11-Man Tackle Playing Rules

S1: IDEAL METHOD

The ideal method of in-season weight checks can only be used when all playing facilities used throughout the program include dressing facilities. If so, pre-game weigh-ins, in shorts, will be conducted before every game and will be scheduled so that they are completed not later than fifteen minutes before kickoff. A medical scale will be used. If not available, a lesser scale may be used if its accuracy can be checked against a weight of known value. The weigh-in will be conducted by a League-assigned Weigh Master.

S2: ACCEPTABLE METHOD

The following alternate method of in-season weight check (with uniform and equipment allowance) shall be used where dressing facilities are not available:

A. A weight allowance shall be established for the wearing of the uniform and protective equipment which will then be subtracted from the player's total scale weight. In cases of marginal overweight or marginal underweight, the team shall be entitled to a strip weight, in shorts, of the player concerned. Strip weight checks will be conducted in dignity, away from unnecessary personnel.

To facilitate the weigh-in process, the scale should be one that can be set up along "pass" or "fail" limits, i.e., be capable of being preset to balance at the maximum and minimum allowable weights for the particular level of play. In this way, a line of players can step onto the scale and have their weights quickly judged as falling at or below the maximum. Next, the scale can be reset to balance at the minimum "pass" weight so players can be judged to weigh at or above the minimum weight. For judging a player's weight, all weights shall be rounded to the nearest full pound-i.e., a player weighing less than 1/2 pound above a full pound will be rounded down, while a player at or above 1/2 pound will be rounded up.

B. The following weight allowances for the wearing of equipment and uniform shall be used. All weights are without a helmet. Cold climate areas: add 1 pound to all weights given when wearing full sleeve cotton jersey with undergarment.

1. Tiny Mite & Mitey-Mite - 7 lbs.
2. Junior Peewee & Peewee - 8 lbs.
3. Junior Varsity & Varsity - 9 lbs.
4. Junior Bantam & Bantam & Unlimited - 10 lbs.

S3: CHALLENGE METHOD
Weight check by challenge or other than above prescribed methods is not acceptable.

S4: INTEGRITY OF WEIGH-IN
Once a weigh-in has been conducted, no equipment shall be exchanged unless the equipment is found to be unsafe, and/or damaged.

RULE 4: IN-SEASON WEIGHT INCREASE

The allowable increase in maximum weight for any level of play shall be calculated as follows, beginning with the first regular season game: These weight allowances may only be granted after the participant has passed the original certification.

1st week	- 0 lbs.
2nd week	- 1
3rd week	- 2
4th week	- 3
5th week	- 4
6th week	- 5
7th week	- 6
8th week	- 7
9th week	- 8
10th week	- 9*

*No more than nine (9) pounds may be added to the maximum weight after the tenth week. Teams cannot add more than 1 pound per week. The above schedule begins with the first week of League scheduled games. Teams advancing to the Super Bowl will be allowed a one (1) pound increase at the national weigh-in.

RULE 5: FAILURE TO PASS IN-SEASON WEIGH-IN

S1: WEIGH-IN BEFORE EACH GAME A player failing a weigh-in will be disqualified from participation in that game only. He may sit with the team on the bench after he has removed his helmet and shoulder pads.

S2: Determination of Weigh Master as to the weight eligibility of a player is final.

RULE 6: CUTTING OF PLAYERS

In addition to those reasons listed in Articles 8 & 9, any player must be cut who:

A. Weighs 6 or more pounds above the maximum weight for the selected level of play, at the time of the initial practice session.

B. Weighs 3 or more pounds less than the minimum weight for the selected level of play, at the time of the initial practice session.

Part V: 11-Man Tackle Playing Rules

RULE 7: CERTIFICATION OF PLAYERS

In addition to the stipulations found in Articles 10-12, to be certified onto a team roster, a player shall qualify under the following:

A. A player shall meet the age requirements as specified on the applicable age/weight schematic. (See Rule 1, S4)

B. At certification, a player who fails to make the weight for the team he has been practicing with, but falls into the weight bracket of another division, must be moved to the other division as part of certification.

C. A League shall not add the "in-season" growth allowance to the certification weights as a means of upping the maximum weights or increasing the certification weights.

RULE 8: ROSTER SIZE

S1: MAXIMUM ROSTER SIZE

Not more than 35 players shall be certified onto a team roster. A team with less than 16 certifiable players will not be permitted to form and play. The League may establish a minimum higher than 16 for a team to be allowed to form and participate.

S2: MINIMUM ROSTER SIZE

A minimum of 16 players must be dressed and eligible to start each game. Also, if you start a game with 16 players, you can finish a game with 15 eligible players. Each League may establish a minimum number higher than 16, but once adopted, it must be kept for the entire season, including post-season bowl games. Each League shall have the option to determine whether or not a team which fails to dress the minimum number of players shall forfeit the game or whether the game shall be rescheduled. Any team which forfeits two successive games by reason of an insufficient number of players shall be investigated by the League for a determination as to whether to forfeit the balance of the season. Please note Pop Warner strongly recommends a minimum of 20 players.

RULE 9: PLACEMENT OF TEAMS IN DI/DII/DIII

Leagues & Regions will make their best effort to assign teams to DI/ DII/ DIII in the various levels of play. Below is a list of criteria that will be used to determine where to slot a team.

- Number of Teams at each level per Association
- Coaching Stability (returning/new)
- Roster Continuity
- League Standings
- History in League, Region & National Playoffs
- Super Bowl Participation

- Any questions/issues regarding where to place a team will be decided by Regional & National Offices.
- Teams must declare I/II/III by September 15 in the PW Roster System. Once a team has been approved for I/II/III they cannot change divisions unless approved and modified by your Regional Director.

RULE 10: MANDATORY PLAY RULE

The following shall be the Minimum Mandatory Play Rule (MPR) for all Pop Warner teams. Each league may set a higher number of Mandatory Plays, but never less than the minimum set by PWLS. All MPRs should be based on eligible players at the time of the game.

JPW-BAN, 10U-14U:	TM-MM, 6U-9U:
16-25 players - 10 plays	16-25 players - 12 plays
26-30 players - 8 plays	26-30 players - 10 plays
31-35 players - 6 plays	31-35 players - 8 plays

6u, 7u- Will follow the same MPR requirements as the Mitey-Mites. The plays must be from the line of scrimmage and declared "active."

A. All players shall be provided their mandatory plays by participation in "active" plays, without the intent to minimize the action or integrity of the plays. Plays such as, but not limited to, having the center snap the ball to the quarterback, and then the quarterback fall to the ground, take a knee, spiking the ball regardless of whether the ball is moved or not while substitutes are playing other positions, shall NOT be considered as active plays.

B. A play shall not count toward fulfillment of the MPR if the play results in a penalty which causes the down to be replayed.

C. All players shall receive their mandatory plays by the end of the third quarter, or they shall enter the game at the start of the fourth quarter, and remain in the game until they have received their required number of plays.

D. Failure to adhere to MPR requirements will result in forfeiture of game in addition to enforcement policies outlined in Part IV, S1.

E. In addition, a player denied his/her required number of plays will start the next game and receive double the number of Mandatory plays in that game. Failure to comply with this provision will be deemed a second violation.

Each League shall establish its own system for enforcing the MPR, and must provide a simple handout or digital file describing its MPR so that this information is made available to each coach throughout the entire League, before the beginning of the season. The Nationally preferred system is that used in the National games.

Part V: 11-Man Tackle Playing Rules

RULE 11: THE FIELD AND MARKINGS

S1: The home team is responsible for the preparation of the playing field and all required accessories for a game. All fields will be equipped and marked in accordance with high school standards. Lime and other caustics shall not be used.

S2: The bench area is reserved for players, coaches, and authorized team personnel only. The sideline areas are reserved for the game physician and chain crew, with the balance of the sidelines kept clear except for the presence of medical and law enforcement personnel, and authorized members of the press. Each League shall be permitted to determine on which side of the field the chain crew shall operate. In the absence of a League stated position, the local high school rules shall apply.

S3: An 80-yard field is permissible for Tiny Mites, 5/6, Mitey-Mites, 7/8, Junior Peewees, 8/9/10 and Peewees.

RULE 12: GAME BALL

S1: The ball shall be of a good grade leather, rubber or composite material with specifications in the area of:

Levels of Play	TM, 6u, 7u MM, 8u, 9u	JP, PW 10u, 11u	JV, V, JRB 12u, 13u, 14u	Bantam
Manufacturer	**Ball Size/Model Number**			
Wilson	K2	TDJ	TDY	TDY
Nike	Peewee	Junior	Youth	
Rawlings	R2CFB PW-B	R2CFB-J-B	R2CFB-Y-B	
Spalding	Rookie	Junior	Youth	Youth

Wilson is the Official Football of Pop Warner and will be used during Regional & National Championships. Notwithstanding any other provisions in league bylaws, the Wilson/Pop Warner design ball is approved for all Pop Warner play as stated above. Equivalent footballs may be used, but the specifications must fall within the range of those specified above for each division of play.

S2: The use of stick-um on the football or the application and use of such on any player's hands is not allowed.

Part V: 11-Man Tackle Playing Rules

RULE 13: PLAYER DESIGNATIONS

S1: Each player shall wear a number between 0 and 99 inclusive. Number "00" is illegal and shall not be worn. No duplicate numbers shall be permitted.

S2: During a game in which a PA system is used, the number of any player committing a foul shall not be publicly announced.

RULE 14: REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

The following items shall be worn by players in all divisions beginning with physical contact in practice sessions:

A. Helmet: Only helmets bearing the NOCSAE Seal of Certification may be worn. All helmets must bear the current NOCSAE approved "Warning Label" in a visible position on the outside of the helmet. This "Warning Label" is the same label that is furnished by all helmet manufacturers and quality reconditioners. Programs must follow manufacturer's guidelines for reconditioning and no helmet older than 10 years may be used per new industry guidelines. (Note: Regulations regarding chin straps and face guards are to be followed per the National Federation or NCAA regulations, whichever is applicable.) Equipment Note: Helmet visors are not allowed according to the NFHS rulebook, unless it is completely clear and glass-like. If a visor is slightly tinted and an Official can see the tint on his/her game data card the visor MUST be removed. There are NO exceptions.

B. Protective Soft-Shell Helmet Covers: If a parent or legal guardian chooses that their child wears a protective soft-shell helmet cover for practices and/or games, then that child shall be permitted to participate.

C. Shoulder Pads-must be for Football not Lacrosse, Hockey etc.

D. Pants: One Piece or Shell & must cover the entire knee cap

E. Hip Pads: One Piece or Shell

F. Tail Pads: One Piece or Shell

G. Thigh Guards: One Piece or Shell

H. Knee Pads - must cover the entire knee cap

I. Jerseys (see Rule 14, S1 for more detail)

J. Mouth guard: All mouth guards must have a keeper strap, and be attached to helmet face mask at all times.

K. Athletic Supporter or Compression Shorts (male players only)

L. Shoes: In all levels of play: sneakers, molded rubber cleats (soccer style), or detachable rubber or plastic (football style) cleats are permitted. No metal cleats are permitted. Cleats may not exceed a 1/2" in length. Special Kicking shoes are not allowed.

M. Eyeglasses: When worn, shall be of athletically-approved construction with non-shattering glass (safety glass) or contact lenses.

N. Any additional protective equipment worn by players shall be allowed with league approval.

O. Jewelry of any type shall be prohibited, except religious or medical medallions, which must be covered by the player's uniform.

P. The wearing of headgear containing knots, including beads and/or decorative hair ornaments is prohibited.

S1: Jerseys: With respect to Pop Warner core value that every child plays, each football jersey should feature numbers that are clearly visible and legible from the stands and press box. Visibility helps ensure proper record of playing time per our Mandatory Play Rule (Rule 10).

1. Home & Away Jerseys
    a. All teams will be required to have Home and Away jerseys.
    b. The body of Home Jersey (inside the shoulders, from the yoke to the bottom of the jersey) shall be Dark in color.
    c. The body of Away jersey (inside the shoulders, from the yoke to the bottom of the jersey) shall be White in color.
2. Jersey Body
    a. The front and back of the jersey shall be solid, without graphics or decoration NOT including the number, from the yoke to the bottom of the jersey, front and back.
        I. A gradient of two solid colors may be used on the Home jersey; both colors shall be dark.
    b. Gradation is defined as a visual technique of gradually transitioning from one color hue to another and the blending of the two solid colors will NOT be declared as another color.
    c. The shoulders of the jersey, as well as a vertical band directly under the armpits (typically about four inches in width), may contain a design or contrasting color.
    d. No design may infringe on the number.
3. Jersey Numbers
    a. Number must be placed on the front and back of the jersey. See Part V, Rule 13 for availability and use of numbers.
    b. The numbers shall be centered horizontally and be a minimum 6 inches high on the front and minimum 8 inches high on the back.
    c. The color and style of the number shall be the same on the front and back.

d. The body of the number shall be clearly visible and legible.

e. If the body of the jersey features a gradient, then the body of the number shall be a single, solid color that clearly contrasts with the body of the jersey.

f. A number border(s) is not required but is permitted. If used, shall be a minimum of ¼" and clearly contrast with both the jersey and number color.

g. Only numbers 0-99 are permitted.

5. Game Play

a. The Away 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.

b. The terms "white" and "dark" have specific meanings. Jerseys of competing teams must contrast each other. The away jersey must be "white" in color. The dark jersey must be a dark color such as black, navy blue, forest green, etc."

c. Consult with your region if you are unsure about this before securing new jerseys.

6. The Official Authorized Pop Warner Patch must be displayed on every uniform for games and competitions. Football Patches must be placed on left front chest. Top of the patch should be in line between v-neck and sleeve.

Failure to have any of the above required equipment during a game, shall subject the participant to be removed until such time as the required equipment has been repaired, replaced or added. The use of any altered equipment shall result in player disqualification if in a game. Eye black with Logos is permitted.

RULE 15: BLOCKING AND TACKLING RESTRICTIONS

Both the National Federation and NCAA rule books contain extremely strong language on blocking and tackling. It is the responsibility of every Pop Warner coach to be fully informed of, and abide by, all such rules of the governing body (National Federation or NCAA) under whose jurisdiction his state falls, and to review the same every year. In addition to other specific prohibitions in the National Federation and NCAA rule books, no butt blocking, chop blocking, clipping, face tackling or spearing techniques are permitted in Pop Warner. If such techniques or any others not in compliance with the National Federation or NCAA are taught and implemented by Pop Warner coaches, said coaches shall be removed immediately.

RULE 16: LENGTH OF PERIODS

Maximum length of periods by level of play are:

Tiny Mite	8 minutes
Mitey-Mite thru 14u	10 minutes
Jr. Bantam, Bantam	10 minutes

Part V: 11-Man Tackle Playing Rules

RULE 17: INTERMISSION LENGTH

Between 1st & 2nd; 3rd & 4th quarters - 1 minute
Intermission between 2nd & 3rd quarters, otherwise known as halftime - 10 minutes
Mandatory Warm-up period following Intermission - 3 minutes

RULE 18: TIME CLOCK

The referee shall decide where the clock will be kept if the field is not equipped with a scoreboard timing device. In any event, the referee has final authority to have the clock kept on the field if, in his judgment, the home management's clock operator is not qualified.

RULE 19: TIME OUTS

A team shall be permitted no more time outs than are permitted by the rules of the current National Federation of State High School Associations or the current NCAA rule book, depending on which body governs a state or section thereof.

RULE 20: KICK OFFS

To start the game, half, after a TD, field goal or safety the ball will be placed on the 35 yard line. This will apply to the Tiny Mite, Mitey Mite, Jr. Peewee, Peewee, 6u, 7u, 8u, 9u levels.

RULE 21: DUAL PARTICIPATION

Participants in Pop Warner are permitted to be rostered on their middle school team, unless otherwise prohibited by state and other local regulations. Per Pop Warner rules, all Pop Warner rosters are certified and official no later than September 15; no players may be added after this point (see Article 12).

A middle school team is defined as an interscholastic athletic team or club sponsored by a public or approved independent school. This rule does not apply to those participating on high school teams, including freshman, junior varsity and varsity.

RULE 22: PLAYERS

S1: A free substitution rule is always in effect.

S2: It is STRICTLY PROHIBITED for a player or group of players to participate in any practice session or game with players from another division of play (i.e., Junior Varsity vs. Varsity, 10u vs. 11u).

S3: Injured player: Once removed by reason of injury, a player shall not re-enter the game without the approval of an official licensed athletic trainer or medical professional who is not a parent/ guardian of the player.

Part V: 11-Man Tackle Playing Rules

RULE 23: REGARDING INELIGIBLE PLAYERS

S1: There are five (5) unequivocal definitions of an ineligible player, from which there are no appeals. Further, these violations shall result in forfeiture of all games in which the ineligible player was a member of the team. If found during the regular season and the team's record will still qualify it for playoffs, the ineligible player shall be removed from the team and the team permitted to proceed. There are no exceptions.

A. Player certified while overweight or underweight

B. Player overage or underage

C. Player residing outside of legal boundaries without mutual agreement (waiver) of appropriate League(s) and/or Associations.

D. Falsification of any player certification/registration documentation. (see Articles 6 & 10)

E. Simultaneously participating with youth tackle football leagues, teams or events that are not under Pop Warner's governance. (Exception: See Rule 21).

S2: If a team is found to have an ineligible player participating during Playoffs or Championships, that team shall be removed from postseason play and forced to forfeit results per S1 above.

RULE 24: COACHES REQUIREMENTS

A coaching staff is in complete charge of the team whenever it is together on the practice or playing field, traveling as a group to and from practice sessions and games, or together for any team function, such as a banquet. The coaching staff is under the direction of the Head Coach; other coaches are called Assistant Coaches. All Football Coaches and Assistant Coaches must complete and pass the USA Football Heads Up Football program to be eligible to coach.

Successful completion of the USA Football Heads Up Program is valid for 1 year. The following applies to all coaches:

S1: The Head Coach, Assistant Coach(s) or Football Commissioner must be 21 years or older in order to supervise at all practices, games and functions.

S2: An Assistant Coach must be at least 18 years of age. A football team may have a maximum of five (5) assistant coaches, plus a maximum of one (1) Coach-Trainee, (1) Equipment Manager, (1) Trainer, (1) Team Parent. All rostered administrative/coaching staff (10) MUST complete and pass the USA Football certification program to be eligible to coach/be rostered.

Part V: 11-Man Tackle
Playing Rules

S3: Teams are permitted to carry a Coach-Trainee, who must be a minimum of 16 years of age and a maximum of 18 years of age.

S4: The Head Coach will determine the assignments of the Assistant Coaches.

S5: In the absence of a specialized, trained person affiliated with the team in the medical area (physician, paramedic, specially trained volunteer, Certified Athletic Trainer), one of the coaches must be the holder of a current Red Cross Certificate in Community CPR and First Aid, or the P.R.E.P.A.R.E. Course by the National Center for Sport Safety (www.sportssafety.org) or its equivalent.

S6: Coaches are to be selected by methods approved by League rules and/or by-laws in accordance with National Rules.

S7: Once approved for coaching, a coach is automatically terminated at the close of each season. To coach the following year, the same League approval is required. Any violation of the rules committed by a coach during the season, even though the hearing is not held until after the close of the season, is still under the jurisdiction of the sponsoring association and/or League.

S8: Coaches do not make Team or League policy. Rather, they carry it out. However, on the playing and practice fields, the coaching staff is in complete charge and shall not be interfered with except in cases of rules violations and any other conduct deemed by higher authority to be contrary to PWLS rules and policies.

S9: The Head Football coach has final responsibility for his/her actions, those of his/her assistant coaches, players, staff and parents.

S10: Each League shall establish its own rules regarding the placing of coaches with sons, daughters or siblings within its own boundaries.

RULE 25: SCORING VALUES

Touchdown ……..... 6 points
Point after TD by run or pass ….....…..... 1 point
Point after TD by kick …….....……..... 2 points
Safety (awarded to opponent) …….....…..... 2 points
Field goal …….....…..... 3 points
Forfeit (offended team wins by) ….....…….. 1-0

RULE 26: SCORES

S1: LOPSIDED/INTENTIONALLY RUN UP SCORES

If at any point in a game there is a 30-point score differential, the following shall occur:

A. Game Clock: The game clock shall run continuously and only stop at the discretion of the referee. It will never revert to a stop clock, regardless of the point differential.

B. Play Clock: Officials shall enforce reasonable snap timing to assist with MPR compliance for both teams.

C. Restrictions: All restrictions noted below end if the score differential falls below 30 andare re-instated if it later reaches 30 points.

D. Winning Team:

1. Shall make every effort to replace starters with reserve players.
2. No passes (forward or backward) or running outside the tackles.
    i. PENALTY: 5-yards from the previous spot and loss of down
3. No onside kicks.
4. May not advance a fumble or interception. The ball is dead at the change of possession spot but possession is maintained by the winning team at that spot.

E. Both Teams:

1. Must fulfill Minimum Play Requirements
2. No blitzing is allowed.
    i. Only defensive linemen may move forward immediately at the snap.
    ii. Linebackers and Defensive Backs may move toward runner after a read step.
    iii. 15-yard penalty after one warning.
3. Shall use 4-3-4 defensive alignment = 4 defensive linemen on the line of scrimmage, 3 linebackers 5 yards from the line of scrimmage, and 4 defensive backs 10 yards from the line of scrimmage.
    i. 15-yard penalty enforced from the previous spot after one warning.
4. Punts, field goals, and extra-point kicks are allowed.

S2: FULL INVESTIGATION

When the statements of the coaches are in disagreement, the League shall require the Head Coach and all Assistant Coaches of each team to submit written answers to the following questions:

A. What in your opinion caused the lopsided score?

B. Is there any ill will or animosity among the coaching staff of Team A toward the coaching staff of Team B?

C. To your knowledge, have there been any threats between and among the children prior to the game?

D. Has your team ever been involved in a lopsided score before?

E. What actions were taken by the coaching staff of Team A to prevent the score differential from reaching 28 points after it reached 18 points?

F. In retrospect, is there anything you feel could have been done to prevent the score differential from reaching 28 points? If so, what?

Based upon the answers to the foregoing questions, the League shall determine whether or not to conduct a hearing. The answers to these questions may not be used in any way at the hearing, unless presented at the hearing by one of the witnesses.

RULE 27: SIDELINE PERSONNEL

In addition to the coaching staff, a team may have additional support personnel positioned within a team box during the game. The total number of team support personnel, including coaches, in a team box shall not exceed 10.

All rostered administrative/coaching staff (10) MUST complete and pass the USA Football certification program to be eligible to coach/ be rostered.

RULE 28: RADIOS AND COMMUNICATION DEVICES

No electronic devices of any kind may be used by coaches, staff, or players anywhere on the field, team box or sideline.

RULE 29: SCOUTING

Scouting football teams is permitted in the form of video tape, film and written reports. Scouting is only permitted during a game situation. Scouting any type of practice is strictly prohibited. Pre-season games/Scrimmages with officials and no coaches on the field may be scouted. Scrimmages with Coaches on the field may not be scouted.

S1: Drones and Unmanned Aircraft are prohibited from being used during practices and games.

RULE 30: CAMPS

S1: No Pop Warner organization or personnel associated within, shall require or mandate that a Pop Warner football team, in part or in whole, with or without coach(s) attend a football camp. There shall be no exceptions. However, a Pop Warner football or spirit team, in part or in whole MAY attend a camp if they so choose to, providing the following conditions are met:

A. Coach or other team affiliated personnel does not make it MANDATORY.

B. Camp provides as part of its services an accident insurance plan for camp participants.

C. All Football camps must be completed by July 15.

S2: Any camp shall NOT be endorsed or sponsored by any League, Association, or Team, which does not provide as part of its services, an accident insurance plan for the camp participants.

RULE 31: NO TAXI SQUADS

No team is permitted to run a "taxi" or "reserve" squad.

RULE 32: PRACTICE

S1: DEFINITION: To prevent possible bending of the rules and as a protection for children, practices are defined as a gathering of players or spirit participants, without minimum number, in the presence of at least one (1) coach, where one or more of the following activities take place:

A. Chalk talk/skull session

B. Viewing of fundamentals film

C. Group conditioning

D. Individual skills sessions (QB, receiving, blocking, tackling, kicking, etc.)

E. Group skills sessions

F. Dummies and other inanimate contact

G. Play run through without pads (shorts & T-shirt)

H. Play run through with equipment, but without contact

I. Intrasquad scrimmages with full pads and equipment

As can be seen, a so-called "party" at a coach's home, where films are shown, or where football or spirit teams are talked about, can be deemed a practice session, as can a "party" at a parent's home where one or more coaches are present. Use of a football field is not required to satisfy the definition of a "practice session." Each League is directed to establish a policy with respect to home videos and/or films of games or competitions and the viewing thereof. Pop Warner strongly recommends League/Associations discourage "parties/ practice sessions" at coaches homes. All the activities/ practice sessions that are referenced in A-15-S1, must include a minimum of 2 coaches in attendance the entire session.

S2: Pre-season practice may begin as early as July 15. The actual date will be determined in accordance with climate and other factors determined by the League in establishing a common starting date for all teams within its jurisdiction.

In all Leagues, the first week of practice shall be devoted entirely and exclusively to conditioning, not wearing pads; however, helmets shall be permitted. Leagues may add more time beyond this required first week for the conditioning period.

S3: All practices must be attended by one person holding a Red Cross Community CPR and First Aid Certificate, or the P.R.E.P.A.R.E. Course by the National Center for Sport Safety (www.sportsafety.org) or their equivalent, if not by an EMT or volunteer physician (such as a parent of one of the participants).

S4: BEFORE LABOR DAY: No team may schedule more than 10 hours of practice per week before Labor Day. A week is defined as Monday-Sunday. Not more than 2-1/2 hours of practice may be scheduled on any one day.

S5: AFTER LABOR DAY: Practices after Labor Day weekend are limited to 6 hours per week. A week is defined as Monday- Sunday. Practices after Labor Day weekend are not to exceed 2 hours per day.

S6: BREAKS: Break time is not counted against the ten (10) or six (6) hours per week or 2-1/2 or 2 hours of allowed practice time. Water breaks should be given as needed and when requested by participants. A mandatory 10 minute break after each hour of practice shall be required. Break time is not counted against the hours per week or per day allowed practice time. Water breaks should be given as needed and/or when requested by participants.

S7: Any player added after a team has formed and/or after the season has started, must be subject to the same 20 hours of conditioning as mentioned in S12 of this Rule.

S8: The following exercises and drills are banned from all practices and pre-game warm-ups; leg lifts, neck bridges (sometimes referred to as neck rolls), Bull in the Ring and the Oklahoma Drill. Leg lifts with knees bent are acceptable.

In addition to the requirements for practice in Article 15, the following also apply:

S9: WARM WEATHER PRECAUTIONS
Teams must guard against serious heat problems, which in extreme high school and college cases have occasionally resulted in death. The training regimen of any team practicing under high heat and/ or humidity conditions must:

A. Limit or eliminate laps entirely. Do not assign laps for disciplinary reasons.

B. Schedule practices for early evening, after the sun is low in sky.

C. Give players all the water they want to drink, when they want it.

Do not substitute soft drinks for water.

D. Each coach must keep an eye on all players and his fellow coaches for the slightest sign of heat exhaustion or fatigue.

E. A fifteen minute break is mandatory in the middle of each practice, not to be counted against practice time.

S10: FULL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

At all practices, pre-season or in-season, where person-to-person or person-to-dummy contact takes place, each player must be dressed in the full complement of protective equipment described in Rule 14, "Required Equipment."

S11: CONTACT

A. No full-speed head-on blocking or tackling drills in which the players line up more than 3 yards apart are permitted. (You may have two linemen in stances immediately across the line of scrimmage from each other. You may have full-speed drills where the players approach each other at an angle, but not straight ahead into each other.) Intentional head-to-head contact is forbidden.

B. Coaches must limit the amount of contact (Live/Full/Thud) at each practice prior to Labor Day to a maximum of 30 minutes per day and 120 minutes total for the week. After Labor Day contact is limited to a maximum of 22 minutes per day and 65 minutes total for the week.

C. In this context, Live/Full/Thud contact" means any drill or scrimmage in which players go Live/Full-speed or Thud with contact –e.g. one-on-one blocking and/or tackling drills; line vs. line full-speed drills; and/or scrimmages.

D. Thud - By definition, involves initiation of contact at full speed with no predetermined winner, but no take-down to the ground. Initial contact, particularly with linemen, is just as physical with "Thud" as with "Live Action."

S12: CONTROLLED INTRASQUAD SCRIMMAGE

After the first week of practice (10 hours) for conditioning, and after the second week of practice (10 hours) in pads in which contact has occurred, teams may engage in joint practice sessions with other team(s) in what are called controlled intrasquad scrimmages. So as to avoid any misinterpretation, 20 hours of practice is required before teams are permitted to engage in joint practice sessions with other teams in what are called controlled intrasquad scrimmages.

In a controlled intrasquad scrimmage, there is prior agreement between coaching staffs that:

A. Coaches will be permitted on the field.

B. Long time-outs are taken between plays so that coaching staffs

can instruct and critique their players.

C. Coaching staffs may inform each other of the plays they are going to run so one team can concentrate on its offensive sets while the other improves its defense and vice-versa.

D. Officials can be present during scrimmages.

E. Game score is not kept; scoring is not the primary goal.

F. No official time is kept other than to assure the practice maximum is not violated. A mandatory ten minute break is taken at the end of one hour, said break not to be counted against the allowed practice time.

G. No player or team is permitted at any time to engage in a controlled scrimmage or any form of contact drills involving a player, players, or team from a different Age/Weight level of play.

RULE 33: SCHEDULES

S1: SCHEDULED GAMES

A. The chart in sub-section B summarizes the number and types of games teams may play during a season by each Age/Weight level.

B. A League may schedule a maximum number of total season games as shown in Column D. The maximum number of each type of game permitted by level of play is shown in columns A, B, and C. A League may schedule fewer regular season games than the maximums shown in column B, but must play a minimum of six (6).

Part V: 11-Man Tackle Playing Rules

Division:	Regular Pre-Season (Max.) (A)	Total Season Schedule (Max.)* (B)	Post Season/ Bowl Games (Max.) (C)	Number of Games (Max.) (D)
TM, 6u, 7u	1	8	1	10
MM, 8u, 9u	1	10	2**	13
JP, 10u	1	11	2	13
PW, 11u	1	11	2	13
JV, 12u, 13u	1	11	2	13
V, 14u	1	11	2	13
JB	1	11	2	13
B	1	11	2	13*

Regular Season Schedule includes any League playoffs.

In any level, a team may play any combination of games in columns A, B, and C (up to the maximum in each column), but shall not exceed the total number of games in Column D. Pre-season exhibitions (Column A), league playoff games (part of Column B), and post-season bowl games (Column C) are not required to be played. Regional/National playoffs and championships are not included in any of the above.

Bowl Games are defined as post season games between teams of different leagues. Teams may play post season games within their league as long as the maximum number of games is not exceeded.

** Mitey Mite, 8u, 9u teams are only permitted to play (2) post-season games either in their own league/conference or in another league/ conference upon written approval of both leagues/ conferences and the Region Director.

S2: SCHEDULING PROHIBITIONS

A. Under no circumstances will a team be allowed to play a game, scrimmage, or practice against a team of another level (i.e., Junior Varsity vs. Peewee, Varsity vs. Jr. Bantam, etc.).

B. No team may schedule a game against a team whose ages and weights are not FULLY in compliance with those printed in this rule book, unless both teams have identical approved variances.

S3: COMMON REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements apply to all scheduling beginning with practice and ending with post-season bowl games:

A. No team, on its own, may arrange a game. All games, regardless of type, must be arranged through or with the sanction of the League of which the team is a member.

B. Prior account will be taken of all local and state laws pertaining to the scheduling of athletic contests.

C. A period of at least four (4) full days (96 consecutive hours) will elapse between the end of any game for a given team and the beginning of the next game for pre-season exhibitions, regularly scheduled league games, post-season and bowl games. A League shall be permitted to waive the four (4) full days (96 consecutive hours) to 2 1/2 days (60 consecutive hours) ONLY to permit the conclusion of the regularly scheduled season.

D. The League schedule officially begins with the first regular season game. All eligible teams must be certified as outlined in A,10 prior to the first League regular season game.

RULE 34: POSTSEASON & BOWL GAMES

S1: Teams from all levels are permitted a maximum of two (2) postseason Bowl Games with the exception of the Tiny Mites, 6u, 7u. Tiny Mite, 6u, 7u teams not participating in League Championships may participate in 1 post-season game within their league.

S2: For a team to be eligible for bowl game participation, the following conditions must be met:

A. All requests for Bowl Game participation must be made through the Region Director or their designee.

B. The team's League must be represented at its Annual Region Meeting.

C. The team's League must have paid any Region Dues by October 15.

D. All rosters from its League must be approved and in the Pop Warner Roster System by September 15.

E. Requests to participate must be made by the designated League official only.

F. All bowl game contracts shall require the written approval of the Leagues involved.

S3: Strip weights are not required, but there shall always be official weigh-ins in accordance with Pop Warner's standard weigh-in procedures as outlined in Rule 3.

S4: All special criteria such as fees, etc., shall be immediately sent to a team expressing interest in playing the game.

S5: The applicable state standard (NCAA or National Federation) and the Pop Warner National Rule book will be the only rules in effect at all bowl games, and Regional or National Championships.

S6: Any League or team that arranges a bowl game(s) without approval from the Region Director or his designee, will be subject to disciplinary action, which could include a fine not to exceed $500.00, as decided by the Region Director.

S7: Regional Championships may be held in the following divisions: MM, JPW, PW, JV, 8u, 9u, 10u, 11u, 12u, 13u, 14u.

S8: National Championships are held in the following divisions: 8u, 9u, 10u, 11u, 12u, 13u, 14u.

S9: Supplemental rules to the jersey rules found in Rule 14, S1:

A. All teams shall submit game jerseys (Home and Away) to their Region for approval, via photographs or images, prior to Regional Championships. Only approved jerseys shall be worn during Regional Championships and Nationals.

B. For any game where a team has any players wearing illegal jerseys (for any reason including color) the Head Coach shall be suspended and the offending team shall be penalized 15-yards to start the game. The Head Coach may return for the next game if the jersey issue is resolved.

C. Home Teams are required to wear Dark and Visiting Teams are required to wear a White jersey.

D. All other jersey rules will continue to follow Federation Jersey Rules.

RULE 35: TIE BALL GAMES

S1: In the Tiny Mite, 6u, 7u levels, all regular season games ending in a tie shall stand as ties with the exception of League Championships or Bowl Games. In the other levels, Pop Warner strongly recommends Leagues break ties in all regular season

games using the established high school tie-breaker for the state in which they reside.

S2: Ties must be broken in League playoff/championship games using the "ten yard overtime procedure" tie-breaker as outlined in National Federation High School Rules.

S3: Ties during regular season games are allowed to stand as ties. However, if as the result of any regular season tie, a situation develops whereby two or more teams are tied for first place and one team has to be selected to represent its League in the League playoff series, there are two options to determine which team(s) advance -a special tie-breaking game (1 extra game) will be played during mid-week between the last regularly scheduled game and the first playoff round or Leagues can utilize the National High School Rules "ten yard overtime procedure" to determine which team(s) advances into the playoffs The provisions of Rule 29, S3: "Common Requirements to All Scheduling," will apply.

S4: In all Regional/National Championship Games, the "ten yard overtime procedure" tie-breaker as outlined in National Federation High School Rules will be used without exception.

S5: Sudden Death tie-breakers are prohibited.

RULE 36: CONTACT WITH OFFICIALS

If a player or adult should strike (hit) a game official, the offender shall be subject to suspension and/or being permanently banned from Pop Warner activities.

RULE 37: REGIONAL/NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP ELIGIBILITY

S1: To be eligible for Regionals, a team must be declared League/Conference Champion on or before the first weekend in November and must have played a minimum of six regular season games. If a team is found to have allowed an ineligible player to participate in any League playoff or championship game, that team shall be ineligible to advance in the postseason. If found during the regular season and the team's record would still qualify it for playoffs, the ineligible player shall be removed from the team and the team permitted to proceed. There are no exceptions.

S2: Must have filed a certified roster with the Region and National by the specified cut-off date.

S3: It is highly recommended that football teams competing be accompanied by the corresponding spirit teams at all games, except when the region cheer championships are being held at the same time.

S4: All teams must be accompanied with a copy of the certified roster, league registration forms with photo identification, birth certificates, medical release forms, and scholastic eligibility forms.

S5: An absentee sheet for any participant absent from a certified roster must accompany said team.

S6: All fees (Regional & National) must be paid prior to participating in the postseason. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.

S7: Championships are held in the following divisions if there are enough teams: 8u, 9u, 10u, 11u, 12u, 13u, 14u.

RULE 38: TINY MITES, 6U, 7U

Tiny Mites, 6U and 7U are training levels, free of any pressure to with an emphasis on the individual being supported and empowered to develop, improve and become the best version of themselves. Scores may be kept & a local championship is permitted. The following are specific rules that must be followed for the Tiny Mite, 6u, 7u levels.

S1: Players: Maximum 35, Minimum 16

S2: Field Length: can be 80 or 100 yards.

S3: Scholastic Fitness: Report card from school or letter from parent.

S4: Coaches: Two coaches from each team are permitted to be on the field with the team. Once the team breaks from the huddle, coaches must stay back 10 yards from the line of scrimmage.

S5: If associations have more than one team, age groups must be equally distributed across team roster. If one team, associations cannot stack by age group.

S6: No Kickoffs or punting. Game will start on 35 yd. line. On 4th down, a team has the option of (a) running or passing the ball from scrimmage (b) move the ball back to the opponent's 35 yard line and start offensive play from there.

S7: Penalties: Major penalty 10 yds. Minor penalty 5 yds.

S8: Game Time and Time Outs: Each quarter is 8 minutes. Game will consist of four (4) quarters. Halftime will be 10 minutes. Each team is allowed two (2) timeouts per half.

S9: Scores may be displayed on scoreboard. Tie breakers are permitted in League Championship and/or Bowl Game.

S10: Ball will be blown dead if fumbled behind the line of scrimmage. However, the ball will be live if fumbled beyond the line of scrimmage.

S11: Playing Time: All players must play a minimum of 8 plays per game. It is recommended that a platoon system (offense/defense) be utilized to help teach the game. Each team must have three (3) captains per game. Every player on the team must be given an opportunity to be a captain.

S12: Offense: All offensive backs must be lined up behind the offensive line in some type of formation. You will be allowed, however, to split one offensive back no more than five (5) yards outside the tight end. Offensive line may utilize any stance.

S13: Defense:

A. Any defensive player lined up directly over the center must be a minimum of three (3) yards off the line of scrimmage.
B. Defensive linemen must be one (1) yard off the line of scrimmage and may utilize any stance.
C. Defense shall utilize a 6-4-1 formation.
D. No blitzing is allowed.
    1. Only the six (6) defensive linemen may move forward immediately at the snap.
    2. Linebackers and Defensive Backs may move toward runner after a read step.
    3. 10-yard penalty after one warning.

S14: Game ball should be the Wilson K2 size.

S15: Pop Warner Official Rule Book, Tiny Mites Same as Mitey Mite (Rules) plus R-1: S-3A.

S16: Teams not participating in League Championships may participate in 1 post-season game within their league. Teams may play a combination of 10 total games; a maximum of 1 pre-season game and 8 regular season games and 1 post season game within their league for a season total of 10 games.

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Part VI: 6, 8, and 9-Man Tackle Playing Rules

All Pop Warner Rules and Regulations apply to 6, 8, and 9-man football except for those differences outlined in the National Federation Rules. Certain modifications to the Federation Rules will be used to suit the philosophies of Pop Warner Football. These options are available to all programs across Pop Warner. The goal is to provide various opportunities and entry points into the game of Football for all.

ARTICLE 1: AGES & WEIGHTS

Without exception, the same ages and weights apply to 6, 8, and 9-man football as are used in all Pop Warner 11-man tackle programs. (See Rule 1, S4)

ARTICLE 2: ROSTER SIZE

	Minimum	Maximum
6-Man	10	15
8-Man	12	18
9-Man	14	20

ARTICLE 3: POST-SEASON PLAY

Post-season play is allowed in 6, 8, 9-man Pop Warner Football. Post-season play must be against chartered Pop Warner League 6, 8, 9-man football teams of similar ages and weights.

Under no circumstances may 6, 8, 9-man Pop Warner teams be merged to play against 11-man teams at any time. Further, 11-man teams may not drop players to permit playing a game with 6, 8, 9-man Pop Warner teams.

ARTICLE 4: MERCY RULE

When one team is 36 or more points ahead at the end of the first half or it takes this lead during the second half, the game is ended at that point.

ARTICLE 5: 6-MAN RULE DIFFERENCES

6-man tackle football can be played on a 100-yard field. However, if available, the 80-yard field should be used. If necessary, a 100-yard field can be converted to 80-yards with special markings, such as pylons. The smaller field is 80 yards between goal lines and 40 yards wide with 15-yard side zones. The location of the goal posts will remain the same.

11-man rules are used for 6-man football with these modifications:

Rule 1: The offense must advance the ball 15 yards instead of 10 in four downs.

Rule 2: At least 3 offensive players must be on the line of scrimmage.

Rule 3: There will be no direct running of the ball across the line of scrimmage.

Rule 4: The ball may be advanced across the line of scrimmage in the following ways:

A. Kick

B. Forward pass

C. Clear pass (lateral) behind the line of scrimmage, e.g., the receiver of the snap (quarterback, tailback, etc.) must execute the clear pass (lateral) to another player before the ball can be advanced beyond the line of scrimmage.

Rule 5: If a fumble occurs before a clear pass (lateral) and if an offensive player recovers it, he may not carry it beyond the scrimmage line.

Rule 6: If a passer catches his own forward pass, it is incomplete.

Rule 7: All players are eligible to catch a forward pass except the passer.

Rule 8: Kickoffs are made from the kicker's 30-yard line.

Rule 9: On an 80-yard field, the ball is snapped after a touchback and is free kicked after a safety from the 15-yard line.

ARTICLE 6: 8-MAN RULE DIFFERENCES

If available, an 80-yard field should be used for 8-man football. If so, the same field restrictions apply to the 8-man field as for 6-man football.

11-man rules are used for 8-man football with these modifications:

Rule 1: At least 5 offensive players will be on the line at the snap.

Rule 2: Only players at the right and left ends of the line are eligible pass receivers.

Rule 3: All backs are eligible pass receivers if they are legally behind the line of scrimmage at the snap. The passer cannot catch his own pass.

Rule 4: Direct running is allowed in 8-man football.

Rule 5: On an 80-yard field, the ball is snapped after a touchback and is free kicked after a safety from the 15-yard line.

ARTICLE 7: 9-MAN RULE DIFFERENCES

A 100-yard field will be used for 9-man football.

11-man rules will apply to 9-man football with these modifications:

Rule 1: At least three receiving team players will be within five-yards of their free kick line.

Rule 2: At least five offensive team members will be on the scrimmage line at the snap of the ball.

In addition to the general regulations found in Parts I-III, the following rules govern all participants playing Pop Warner Flag Football and 7v7 non-contact Football.

All Spring Flag and 7v7 (NC) programs must be completed by July 15th. Rookie Tackle from USA Football is another option for local Pop Warner programs. Rules are available for download on the Pop Warner Website.

Membership is open to any legitimate sponsor, such as recreation departments, YMCAs, Boys Clubs, PAL, and so forth. Requests for flag and 7v7 (NC) leagues to operate in chartered Pop Warner tackle league territories will be considered by the National Football Commissioner.

Flag and 7v7 (NC) leagues become members of Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. If sponsoring flag of 7v7 programs, tackle leagues (already members) do not gain a second membership. Separate registration fees are charged for flag and 7v7 membership.

Part VII: Flag Football

ARTICLE 1: ORGANIZATION

The League is the basic unit of organization which consists of a minimum of four (4) teams in the same age division.

Each association must formally declare which Flag Football program it is operating for the season: Pop Warner Flag Football or Pop Warner NFL FLAG Football. This declaration applies to all Flag Football teams operated by the association and determines gameplay mechanics, age cutoff dates, and uniform branding requirements. Regardless of designation, all programs remain under PWLS governance.

ARTICLE 2: REGISTRATION

Each league must conform to the insurance provisions found in Part I, National Remarks.

ARTICLE 3: DIVISIONS OF PLAY

S1: Age determination standards are now clearly tied to the association's declared participation designation. Pop Warner Flag Football programs use a July 14 age cutoff date, while Pop Warner NFL FLAG Football programs use a July 31 age cutoff date. Age divisions continue to range from 5U through High School, and both co-ed and all-girls formats are permitted.

S2: There are no height or weight restrictions on players.

Ages:	
5U	12U
6U	13U
7U	14U
8U	15U
9U	16U
10U	17U
11U	18U
Challenger 5-18*	

S3: Ages shall be verified by methods outlined in Part III, Article 6, S-3.

S4: Pop Warner leagues can offer an all-girls flag division as a Fall/Spring sport starting with the 2024-2025 season.

S5: If a player starts a season in one division, he must finish in that division.

S6: A player shall furnish a written consent to play from either a parent or legal guardian.

S7: A signed medical form provided by PWLS is required to be submitted each year by a parent or legal guardian that attests the youth athlete is physically fit and there are no observable conditions which would contra-indicate playing football.

ARTICLE 4: FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

RULE 1: PLAYERS

S1: A game is played between two teams who compete 5 v 5, but you may find various leagues out there—6 v 6, 7 v 7 or 9 v 9

S2: Each team roster shall have a maximum of 10 players in a 5 v 5 format, with a minimum of 6 players, and a maximum of 18 players in a 7 v7 format, with a minimum of 10 players. A forfeit will result when the minimum is not met. Only two coaches are permitted to be rostered to each team.

S3: Only players appearing on the official team roster in the PW Roster System are to be counted as players. The Roster is completed and active in the PW Roster System before the first game of the season and verified by the league in a process called "certification."

S4: Mandatory Play Rule: All players will play a minimum of 8 plays. Failure to abide by this rule will result in in a forfeit.

S5: A younger division student athlete MAY play/participate in an OLDER division, but an older division student athlete may NOT play in the YOUNGER divisions.

RULE 2: PLAYING FIELDS

S1: The field shall be rectangular with clearly defined lines and zones and shall follow the standard field dimensions below.

A. **Option 1** - 25 yards wide × 70 yards long with 10-yard end zones

B. **Option 2** - 25 yards wide × 64 yards long with 7-yard end zones

S2: Both field layouts will have a midfield line to gain for a first down. 'No Run Zones' are located 5 yards prior to midfield and 5 yards prior to the opponent's end zone.

S3: Stepping on the boundary line is considered out of bounds.

S4: 'No Run' Zones are in place to prevent teams from conducting run plays. While in the 'No Run' Zones, teams cannot run the ball across the line of scrimmage. All plays must result in a forward pass across the Line of Scrimmage (LOS).

S5: The referee will spot the ball in the middle of the field prior to the 'Ready to Play' whistle. The ball may NOT be closer than 10 yards to any sideline.

S6: There is an option to use a one-way field, which consists of:

A. Starting possession will begin at the 40-yard line.

B. There are NO Safeties. The ball will be spotted at the 40 with a change of possession.

C. The ball will never start further back than the 40-yard line.

D. Interceptions are dead balls and will be spotted at the 40-yard line.

E. Home and Away teams should be on opposite sidelines if possible.

F. A declaration to 'PUNT' is FINAL.

RULE 3: EQUIPMENT

Equipment and uniform rules were expanded to remove ambiguity and strengthen safety enforcement. Flag belts must be worn properly with two visible flags at the hips. Jerseys may not obstruct flags and must be tucked if necessary. Shorts or pants may not have pockets unless permanently sewn shut. Only athletic shoes or molded rubber cleats are permitted; metal or metal-tipped cleats are prohibited. Officials are authorized to withhold players from participation until equipment issues are corrected.

S1: GAME BALL

Game balls should be age specific.

S2: FLAGS

A. Each player must wear PW approved belts and flags with the number of flags designated as "standard" by PWLS which will be 2 flags.

B. The flags will be attached to a belt and hang from each side of the player's body (hip).

C. The belt must be secured to prevent being turned around during a de-flagging.

D. The securing of flags to the body, waist or belt other than provided by S2-B, is illegal.

E. Jerseys cannot be worn over flags.

F. If a player's flag is inadvertently lost that player is ineligible to handle the ball.

S3: GAME UNIFORMS

A. All team members must wear the same color jersey.

B. All uniforms must have the Official Authorized Pop Warner Patch displayed in the designated areas as determined by National.

C. We recommend players wear shorts or pants that do not have pockets or belt loops. Shorts or Pants with pockets or belt loops MUST be taped. Games will NOT be delayed for a player to tape their pockets.

D. Flag belts and flags cannot be the same color as the player's shorts or pants.

E. Players' jerseys must be tucked into shorts or pants, if they hang below the belt line.

F. Players must wear shoes. Sneakers are the preferred shoe; however, rubber-cleats are allowed. Note: Cleats may not be allowed at certain locations.

G. Players may tape their forearms, hands and fingers. Players may wear gloves, elbow pads and knee pads.

S4: EYE GLASSES

Sunglasses and Prescription glasses are permitted but must be of athletically approved construction with non-shattering glass (safety glass).

S5: MOUTH GUARDS

All players MUST always wear mouthguards while on the field.

RULE 4: PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT

S1: Cleats with exposed metal or spikes. Street shoes are also illegal.

S2: Hard surface padding such as shoulder pads and hip pads. Note: Players may wear soft shell helmets and halos, but they must be always secured while on the playing field.

S3: All jewelry must be removed.

S4: Slick or sticky substances such as grease or catching glue.

S5: Any equipment, in the opinion of the referees, that will endanger or confuse players.

RULE 5: REFEREES

S1: There will be at least two (2) referees for a game.

S2: The league may assign more than two referees for a game.

S3: There shall be at least three (3) referees for a sanctioned PWFF playoff, championship game or tournament format.

RULE 6: THE RULES OF THE GAME

Note: Core Flag Football mechanics were clarified for consistent enforcement, including possession and downs, No-Run Zones, rushing alignment, legal flag pulling, prohibited contact, and dead-ball situations. These updates clarify enforcement but do not change the fundamental style of play.

At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for the coin toss to determine who starts with the ball. The visiting team calls the toss. The winner of the coin toss has the choice of offense or defense. The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. There is no option to defer. Teams will automatically switch sides of the field and the team that started the game with possession will begin the 2nd half on defense. The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four (4) downs to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has three (3) downs to score a touchdown.

A. If the offensive team fails to cross midfield after 3rd down and elect to "punt" on 4th down, the possession of the ball changes and the opposing team will start a new possession from its own 5-yard line. If the offensive team goes for it on 4th down and does not cross midfield, the opposing team will start a new possession from the spot where 4th down ended.

   i. Any time there is a 'PUNT or PLAY decision on 4th or 3rd down, the referee WILL ask the offense's Head Coach to declare 'Punt or Play'. The coach MUST make an immediate decision or risk a delay of game penalty.

   ii. Teams may use a timeout to change the declaration of "Play" at any time prior to the expiration of the play clock.

   iii. After crossing midfield, if the offense fails to score on 3rd down, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts at its 5-yard line.

S1: GAME FORMATIONS

A. Offenses must have a minimum of one player on the line of scrimmage (the center) and up to four (4) players on the line of scrimmage (LOS). The quarterback must be off the line of scrimmage.

B. Movement simulating the snap, by a player who is set, is considered a false start.

C. The center must snap the ball with a rapid and continuous motion between his/her legs to a player in the backfield, and the ball must completely leave his/her hands.

****Only one player is allowed in motion when the ball is snapped. The player MUST be in motion, off the line of scrimmage. All motion must be parallel or backwards to the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.**

****Players may shift positions on offense at any time, all players must stillreset for 1 second, prior to the snap.**

S2: COACHING GUIDELINES

Coach requirements were clarified to align with current standards. All coaches must be registered, screened, and approved through Pop Warner. USA Football education certification, or an approved equivalent, is required for Flag Football coaches. A maximum of two coaches are permitted on the sideline or field during games.

A. Coaches are expected to adhere to PWLS philosophies, coaching guidelines and code of conduct.

B. Coaches are permitted to coach on the sideline.

C. 5U, 6U and 7U - One (1) Coach for each team is permitted on the field pre and post snap to help their players, but post snap at a safe distance until plays completion.

D. 8U - One Coach for each team is permitted on the field pre-snap to help their players but MUST be off the field prior to the snap of the ball.

E. All team photographers, managers, position coaches, team moms, fans, etc. are required to remain off the playing field in the designated viewing area.

.F. Coaches are responsible for their fans' conduct and behavior plus any other associated team members in their designated team area.

S3: TIMING

A. Regular Season Games are played on a 48-minute continuous clock with 2 - 24-minute halves, unless one team gains a 35-point advantage, which will end the game. Teams can agree to continue without changing the score. The clock stops for halftime, injuries and at the Officials' discretion.

B. Halftime is 2 minutes.

C. REGULAR SEAON PLAY: Once the ball is spotted, a team will have 40 seconds to snap the ball. TOURNAMENT PLAY: A 25-second PLAY CLOCK will be used.

D. REGULAR SEASON PLAY: Teams will have one (1) - 60-second timeout per half. They do NOT carry over.

E. Officials will stop the clock for team timeouts, player injuries and at their discretion.

S4: OVERTIME

If the score is tied at the end of regulation play, an overtime period will be used to determine the winner. **Overtime format is as follows:**

A. Home team calls the coin toss to determine the team that chooses to be on offense or defense first.

B. If a second round of overtime must be played, the team that lost the coin toss will choose offense or defense for the start of the second round of overtime. This process continues with teams alternating the choice to be on offense or defense to start every round of overtime.

C. The referee will determine which end of the field the entire overtime will be played.

   i. 1st OVERTIME: Each team will get one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Each team has the choice to go for 1 or 2 points in the first OVERTIME PERIOD ONLY. Example: Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win. If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the game is over.

   ii. Starting with the 2nd overtime, both teams must attempt a 2-point conversion from the 10-yard line.

   iii. Starting with the 3rd overtime, each team will get 1 play from the 5-yard line going out from the endzone. The team with the most yards will be the winner. The team with the most yards will be awarded 1 point added to their final score.

D. The Final Score will be recorded to include all points scored in the overtime periods.

E. All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.

F. There are NO timeouts in overtime. Each team will be afforded one (1) coaches challenge' for the entire overtime session. Challenge MUST be a misapplication of a rule, NOT a judgement call by an official.

G. Interceptions are returnable for a score in OT and are worth two (2) points. Interceptions returned for a score in the first or second overtime period, the game is over. Interceptions advanced in the third overtime period, the game is over.

S5: SCORING VALUES

Touchdown ……..... 6 points
Point after TD (from 10-yard line, run or pass)..... 2 points

Part VII: Flag Football

Point after TD (from 5-yard line, pass only)..... 1 point
Safety (awarded to opponent) ..... 2 points
Interception return during regulation ..... 6 points
Interception return on PAT conversation or in OT..... 2 points

Note: A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his/her own end zone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, their knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the end zone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone.

A. A team that scores a touchdown must declare whether it wishes to attempt a 1-point conversion (from the 5-yard line) or a 2-point conversion (from the 10-yard line). Any change, once a decision is made to try for the extra point, requires a charged timeout. A decision cannot be changed after a penalty.

B. REGULAR SEASON PLAY: When 1 team is winning by 35 points or more, the game is over.

C. Forfeits will be scored 35-0 for the winning team.

D. The coaches, officials and scorekeeper must verify the score sheet. If a coach does not verify the score sheet before leaving the field, the scorekeeper will note on that score sheet and the score will be FINAL.

S6: RUNNING GAME

A. The ball is spotted where the ball is when the flag is pulled.

B. The quarterback cannot directly run with the ball across the Line of Scrimmage. The quarterback is the offensive player who receives the snap under center directly or in shotgun formation.

C. Direct handoffs, pitches, and laterals are permitted behind the line of scrimmage only. If this takes place, after the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage, the play is to be blown dead by the official. The ball shall be placed at the spot possession was lost for the next play.

   i. "Center sneak" play is NOT allowed. The QB may NOT handoff, pitch or lateral the ball first to the center.

   ii. Any player who receives a handoff, backward pass, pitch or lateral can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.

   iii. Once the ball has been handed off, in front, behind or to the side of the quarterback, or a backward pass, pitch or lateral has occurred, the 7-second passing clock is eliminated, and all defensive players are eligible to rush.

D. Definition of a "Legal Handoff" - Total loss of possession directly from 1 offensive play to another.

E. Teams are not allowed to run in the 'NO RUN ZONES' - (Reminder: Each offensive team approaches only TWO no-run zones in each drive – one 5 yards from midfield to gain the first down and one 5 yards from the goal line to score a TD).

F. Runners are not permitted to jump, leap or hurdle, in the officials' judgement, while advancing the ball. The play is to be blown dead, and the ball spotted where the jump, leap or hurdle occurred.

G. Ball carriers may leave their feet, and the play will continue for spinning, jump cuts, QB's passing or if there is a clear indication that he/she has done so to avoid a collision with another player. The play will continue without stoppage. However, if while leaving the ground, illegal contact is made, a penalty may be enforced by the official.

H. No blocking or "screening" is allowed at any time.

I. Offensive players in close proximity of the ball carrier must stop their motion once the ball has crossed the line of scrimmage. No running with the ball carrier.

J. Flag obstruction – All jerseys MUST be tucked in before play begins. The flags must be on the player's hips and free from obstruction. Deliberately obstructed flags will be considered flag guarding.

K. Once the ball is advanced beyond the LOS, the current ball carrier is the only player allowed to have possession of the ball until the play is dead.

S7: PASSING

A. Only 1 forward pass, thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, is permitted each offensive play. The ball must be released prior to crossing the line of scrimmage. There can be unlimited backward passes behind the line of scrimmage.

   i. There is no intentional grounding. The quarterback may throw the ball anywhere across the line of scrimmage to avoid a sack.

   ii. All forward passes that do not cross the line of scrimmage are illegal forward passes, unless touched by a defender. All forward passes must go beyond the line of scrimmage.

B. Shovel passes are allowed and must be a forward pass, from behind the line of scrimmage, and received beyond the line of scrimmage.

C. The quarterback has a 7 second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within 7 seconds, the play is dead, the down counts and the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage, the 7 second rule is no longer in effect.

i. If the QB is standing in the end zone at the end of the 7 second clock, the ball is returned to the line of scrimmage (LOS) and it will be the next down.

ii. If the quarterback throws the ball and then catches it, the play is dead and treated like an incomplete pass.

S8: RECEIVING

A. All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off, pitched or lateraled behind the line of scrimmage).

B. A player must have at least one foot or other body part inbounds, contacting the ground first with possession.

C. In the case of simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense. 4. Interceptions are returnable. If returned for a score during regular game play, the score will be worth six points, two points if returned during conversions and/or overtime.

S9: RUSHING THE PASSER

A. All players who rush the passer must be a minimum of 7 yards from the line ofscrimmage when the ball is snapped. Up to two (2) players can rush the quarterback. Rushers MUST identify themselves by raising their hand before the snap. Rushers MUST rush the passer immediately after the snap. Delayed rush is NOT permitted. Players not rushing the quarterback can defend the line of scrimmage.

B. Once the ball is handed off, pitched or lateraled backwards behind the line of scrimmage, all defenders may cross the line of scrimmage to defend and pull the flag.

C. A special marker, or the game official, will designate a rush line 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.

* A legal rush is:

i. Any rush by the 1 or 2 designated rushers, 7 yards from the line of scrimmage.

ii. A rush from anywhere on the field AFTER the ball has been handed off, pitched or thrown backwards by the player receiving the snap.

* A penalty may be called if::

iii. The rusher leaves the rush line before the snap and crosses the line of scrimmage before a handoff, pitch, lateral or pass – Illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).

iv. Any defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped –Encroachment (5-yards from line of scrimmage and first down).

v. Any defensive player not lined up at the rush line crosses the line of scrimmage before the ball is passed, pitched, lateraled or handed off – Illegal rush (5-yards from the line of scrimmage and first down).

vi. If the offense draws the identified rusher(s) across the 7-yard marker prior to the snap of the ball, the rusher(s) CANNOT legally rush. Jumping the rush is not a penalty until the rusher crosses the line of scrimmage prior to a handoff, pitch, lateral or forward pass. Teams are never required to rush the quarterback with the 7 second clock in effect.

D. Players rushing the quarterback may attempt to block a pass; however, contact to the QB, unless ruled incidental by the official, would result in a roughing the passer penalty.

E. The offense cannot impede the rusher's PATH to the quarterback, regardless of where they line up prior to the snap. The PATH is set pre-snap from the rusher or rushers directly to the QB. PATH does not move once the quarterback moves. If the "path or line" is occupied by a moving offensive player, then it is the offense's responsibility to avoid the rusher. Any disruption to the rusher's path and/or contact will result in an 'Impeding the Rusher' penalty. **If the offensive player does not move after the snap, then it is the rusher(s) responsibility to go around the offensive player and avoid contact.**

F. A special marker, or the game official, will designate a rush line 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. Defensive players should verify they are in the correct position with the official on every play.

i. A 2-point Safety is awarded if a flag pull takes place in the offensive team's end zone.

S10: LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL

A. The ball is live at the snap of the ball and remains live until the official whistles the ball dead.

B. The official will indicate the neutral zone and line of scrimmage.

i. It is an automatic dead ball foul if any player on defense or offense enters the neutral zone. The game officials may give teams a "courtesy" neutral zone notification to allow their players to move back behind the line of scrimmage.

C. A player who gains possession of the ball in the air is considered in bounds, as long as the first foot or body part other than the hand contacts the ground in the field, while maintaining possession.

D. Substitutions may be made during any dead ball period.

E. The defense may not simulate the offensive team signals by trying to confuse the offensive players, while the quarterback is calling out signals to start the play. Other unfair acts would be; not returning five (5) eligible players to the field of play after halftime, a team or officials' time out prior to the 'Ready to Play' signal by the referee. This will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on the Head Coach.

F. Any official can whistle the play dead. Play is ruled "dead" when:

i. The ball hits the ground.

a. If the ball hits the ground as a result of a snap, backwards pitch or lateral, the ball will be placed where the ball hit the ground.

ii. The ball-carrier's flag is pulled.

iii. The ball-carrier steps out of bounds.

iv. A touchdown, PAT or safety is scored.

v. The ball-carrier's knee, shin, leg, forearm or arm hits the ground.

vi. The ball-carrier's flag falls out.

vii. The receiver catches the ball while in possession of 1 or 0 flag(s).

iv. The 7 second pass clock expires.

v. Inadvertent whistle

vi. Ball-carrier leaves their feet to dive, jump or hurdle a player.

(Exception: A PLAYER CAN DIVE TO CATCH A PASS OR PULL A FLAG)

NOTE: Fumbles / loss of possession: Ground contact must be made for the play to be dead at that spot. A fumble is loss of possession by a player, resulting in the ball contacting the ground.

G. If an inadvertent whistle occurs, the team in possession has two options:

i. Take the ball where the whistle blew and the down will count.

ii. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

If an IW occurs on the last play of the half or game, the offense will be awarded one untimed down and given those two options.

H. A team is allowed to use a timeout to question an official's rule interpretation. If the official's ruling is correct, the team will be charged a timeout. If the rule is interpreted incorrectly, the timeout will not be charged, and the proper ruling will be enforced.

S11: DE-FLAGGING

A. A legal flag pull takes place when the ball-carrier is in full possession of the ball.

B. Defenders can dive to pull flags but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.

C. It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball from the ball carrier's possession at any time.

D. If a player's flag inadvertently falls off during a play while that player has possession, the player is down immediately and the play ends. The ball is placed where the flag lands.

E. If a player who has one or no flags on their belt takes possession of the ball, the play is dead at that spot on the field.

F. A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flag(s) off a player who is not in possession of the ball.

G. Flag guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, ball, arm or shoulder or intentionally covering the flags with the football jersey.

RULE 7: UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

A. If the field monitor or game officials witness any acts of intentional tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the game officials' discretion. No appeals will be considered. AN INTENTIONAL PHYSICAL PLAY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED!

B. Offensive or confrontational language is NOT allowed. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the official will penalize the player for unsportsmanlike conduct and determine if an ejection is warranted.

C. Players or Coaches may not physically or verbally abuse any opponent, coach or game official.

D. Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.

E. Defenders must give free releases off the line of scrimmage to offensive players and are not allowed to run through the ball carrier when pulling flags. Offensive players may NOT initiate contact at the line of scrimmage with defenders.

F. Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship as well.

G. Fans should cheer on their players only, not harass officials or opposing team(s).

H. Comments must be clean and profanity free. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.

I. Fans are required to keep fields safe and kids friendly and adhere to league requirements for seating:

i. Keep younger kids and equipment such as coolers, chairs and tents a minimum of 10 yards off the field in the end zone area.

ii. Stay in the end zone area, not between fields.

iii. Dispose of ALL trash in designated trash cans.

RULE 8: 8U, 7U, 6U & 5U GUIDELINES

A. **8U**

i. 'No Run' zones are eliminated. Teams may run anywhere on the field.

ii. Defenders may NOT rush the passer unless there is a legal handoff executed in the backfield.

B. **7U, 6U & 5U**

i. 'No Run' zones are eliminated. Teams may run the ball anywhere on the field.

ii. Defenders may NOT rush the passer unless there is a legal handoff executed in the backfield.

iii. If the ball falls to or touches the ground during the initial center to quarterback exchange, the play is ruled a 'Do Over' with no loss of down, once per down. On a second consecutive occurrence, the down is consumed.

iv. Defenders MUST line up at least five yards from the line of scrimmage prior to the snap. If the ball is spotted on or inside the 5-yard line, the distance is reduced to three (3) yards.

RULE 9: PENALTIES

Penalty enforcement language was clarified to support consistent officiating. Offensive, defensive, and unsportsmanlike fouls are clearly distinguished. Officials retain full authority and final judgment. Overtime procedures ensure equal opportunity for both teams.

A. The game officials will administer all penalties.

B. The officials will determine incidental contact that may result from the normal run of play.

C. All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except as noted. (Spot fouls) Only the team captain or head coach may ask the referee questions about rule clarification and interpretations.

D. Games or halves may not end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines it.

E. Penalties are assessed live ball then dead ball. Live ball penalties must be assessed before play is considered complete.

F. Penalties will be assessed half the distance to the goal yardage when the penalty yardage is more than half the distance to the goal.

G. Spot fouls administered in the end zone: Defensive (Ball on one-yard line, first down) / Offensive (Safety).

OFFENSIVE SPOT FOULS

A. **Screening or blocking:** 5-yard penalty and loss of down

B. **Charging:** 5-yard penalty and loss of down.

C. **Flag Guarding:** 5-yard penalty and loss of down

D. **Holding/Illegal Contact:** 5-yard penalty and loss of down

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES

A. **Offensive Unnecessary Roughness:** 10-yard penalty and loss of down.

B. **Offensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** 10-yard penalty and loss of down.

C. **Offside / False Start / Illegal Substitution:** 5-yard penalty from line of scrimmage and loss of down.

D. **Illegal Forward Pass:** 5-yard penalty from line of scrimmage and loss of down.

E. **Pass Interference:** 5-yard penalty from line of scrimmage and loss of down.

F. **Illegal Motion:** 5-yard penalty from line of scrimmage and loss of down.

G. **Delay of Game:** 5-yard penalty from line of scrimmage and loss of down.

H. **Impeding the Rusher:** 5-yard penalty from line of scrimmage and loss of down.

I. **Illegal Procedure:** 5-yard penalty from line of scrimmage and loss of down.

I. **Taunting:** 10-yard penalty from line of scrimmage and loss of down.

DEFENSIVE SPOT FOULS

A. **Defensive Pass Interference:** Automatic first down.

B. **Holding/Illegal Contact:** 5 yards and automatic first down.

C. **Stripping:** 5 yards and automatic first down.

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES

A. **Defensive Unnecessary Roughness:** 10 yards and automatic first down

B. **Defensive Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** 10 yards and automatic first down

C. **Offside/Illegal Substitution:** 5 yards and automatic first down.

D. **Illegal Rush:** 5 yards and automatic first down.

E. **Illegal Flag Pull:** 5 yards and automatic first down.

F. **Roughing the Passer:** 5 yards and automatic first down.

G. **Taunting:** 10 yards and automatic first down.

*Two (2) unsportsmanlike penalties on any player or coach in a game result in a disqualification and may lead to additional discipline.

Part VIII: 7v7 Non Contact (NC)

ARTICLE 1: OVERVIEW

The benefits of playing 7v7 non-contact football include:

A. Perfecting the Passing Game. Because teams cannot tackle or run the ball, QBs have the chance to work on their accuracy and timing when throwing a football.

B. Helps You Stay in Shape. Seven on seven football is a great way for players to build up their stamina on account of all the running involved.

C. Plenty of Repetitions. Instead of just running drills which can be monotonous, 7v7 football allows players to practice different game scenarios. This could be a great way for high school kids, or any level, to get ready for their next game.

D. Less Chance of Injuries. By eliminating tackles, players can focus on their running and passing without having to worry about defending themselves. Some leagues require players to wear soft-shell helmets to protect themselves from head injuries, which already don't occur often because there's no tackling.

E. Great Exposure. Although college coaches and recruiters are prohibited from actually attending 7v7 games, increasing coverage of tournaments has become available, giving football players more opportunities to showcase their skills.

F. Defensively: Alignment and Assignment Perfect. Defensives have the ability to practice their man and zone coverages with the understanding that every down is a passing down. Resulting in advanced preparation and understanding of the game, slowing the speed of the game down which in turn will minimize injuries.

RULE 1: PLAYING RULES

S1: Minimum number of players: 8. Maximum number of players: 16.

S2: The season starts in January. It can end no later than July 15th.

S3: Each play must be run within 30 seconds after the ball has been reset.

S4: Each team is allowed up to two games per week.

S5: Each team must complete six hours of practice before playing their first game.

S6: Each team is allowed up to three two-hour practices a week. A week goes from Monday to Sunday.

S7: The playing field will be 40 yards in length, plus a 10 yard end zone.

Part VIII: 7v7 Non Contact (NC)

S8: The quarterback is NOT allowed to rush with the football. He must throw a pass on every play. He cannot scramble beyond the line of scrimmage.

S9: The field will be marked with two (2) lines -- a 10-yard line and a 25-yard line.

S10: There will be two divisions of play: Warner Division – 10, 11, 12 year olds. Tomlin Division – 13, 14, 15 year olds.

S11: Warner Division uses the Pop Warner Junior size ball. Tomlin Division uses the Pop Warner Youth size ball.

S12: The player's "play age" is how old the player will be on July 31st of that current year (i.e. the same registration age as a Fall Tackle Player).

S13: All teams must have insurance approved by Pop Warner. Rosters must be submitted and approved through the PW Roster system.

S14: All competition is within your conference. Any travel outside of your conference must have an approved event request form.

S15: The goal of this program is to provide a safe learning environment for players to build their skills while having FUN!

S16: 2 halves of play: 20 minutes running clock each half. 10 minute halftime.

S17: 2 timeouts per half. Clock stops for timeouts. Timeouts are 90 seconds each.

S18: Each player must play a minimum of 10 plays per game.

S19: You can have playoffs but they must not exceed two rounds of play.

S20: Each team may have up to three (3) coaches. The head coach must have PW football certification.

S21: All coaches/volunteers must fill out the volunteer application and have a current passing background check.

S22: Each play ends when a "defensive" player touches the receiver 2ith one hand below the neck or the pass falls incomplete.

S23: The quarterback has four seconds to pass the ball across the line of scrimmage or the play is blown dead. A defender can't cross the line of scrimmage until the quarterback passes the ball.

S24: Only two first downs per series is possible, achieved when reaching the 25 yard line within four (4) downs and the same is true when they cross the 10 yard line.

S25: NO running plays are allowed. All players are eligible receivers.

S26: This is a non-contact game and any flagrant contact is cause for immediate ejection. As always, any unsportsmanlike conduct is also cause for ejection. The Referee's decision is final on all plays; there will be no tolerance for arguing and only a coach may ask for a rule clarification. All rules in the Pop Warner Member/Adult Codes of Conduct will apply.

S27: If a player/coach is ejected, they are not eligible to play/coach in the next game. If ejected a 2nd time during the season, the player/coach is finished for the summer season and may be subject to additional sanctions that carry over into the Fall Tackle season.

S28: All passes must be forward. No laterals.

S29: No fumbles; the ball is dead if it touches the ground.

S30: All possessions will start at the 40 yard line.

S31: No punting or field goal attempts.

S32: No protests. The decision of the game officials is final.

RULE 2: SCORING

Offensive Scores:

A. Touchdown scores 6 points.

B. 1 extra point attempt. Attempt will be from the 10 yard line. (1 point)

Defensive Scores:

A. Defenses can also score in 7v7 football. Defenses score three (3) points each time they intercept a pass.

B. If the defense is able to turn the offense over on downs, they score two (2) points.

RULE 3: PENALTIES

Offensive Penalties:

A. Blocking or Holding: 10 yards from line of scrimmage, ejection for flagrant contact violation

B. Illegal Motion/False Start: 5 yards

C. Offensive Pass Interference: 10 yards from line of scrimmage

D. Delay of Game: Clock stops, 10 yards from line of scrimmage

Defensive Penalties:

A. Tackling or Holding: 10 yards from line of scrimmage, ejection for flagrant contact violation

B. Offside: 5 yards from line of scrimmage

C. Pass Interference: 10 yards from line of scrimmage

D. Illegal Rushing of the Quarterback: 10 yards from line of scrimmage

E. Delay of Game: Clock stops, 10 yards from line of scrimmage

Part IX: Challenger Division

The Challenger Division rules are patterned off of Pop Warner's Flag Football rules. Please contact the National Office for more specific division rules.

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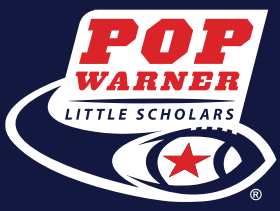

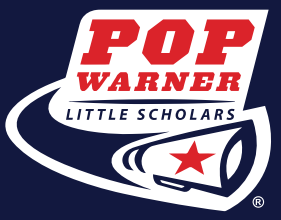

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