



North Texas Football League

7-on-7 Rules

Board Approved:

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7-ON-7 RULES OF THE GAME

RULE 1: PLAYER QUALIFICATIONS

1) Age Requirements

- a) The age determination dates for purposes of the Maximum Age rule is September 1st (previous calendar year) through August 31st (current calendar year). Also known as typical school year.
- b) Players shall not be less than 5 years of age or cannot have reached the age of 13 on or before September 1st.
- c) Local Organization shall validate age as part of registration. Acceptable forms include a certified birth certificate or current passport.
- d) Proof of player eligibility is the responsibility of the Local Organization and team coach.
- e) Any exceptions must be approved by the NTFL Board.

2) Local Organization Boundaries

- a) Players shall participate only if they are part of an NTFL approved member organization ("Local Organization") whose boundaries are defined by the Local Organization and approved by the NTFL Board. Player must be eligible based on those boundaries to participate with the Local Organization. Executive Board must approve any exceptions.

3) Special Needs Players

- a) Any children with special/physical needs MUST be brought before the NTFL Board for approval to participate in the program.
- b) The need for prescription eyewear does not fall into a special need.

RULE 2: COACHING QUALIFICATIONS

1) Coaching Requirements

- a) The NTFL Board will require ALL Coaches to sign the NTFL Code of Ethics, with your Local Organization. All head coaches must live in the member association boundaries or have NTFL Board approval.
- b) All coaches will agree to have a criminal background check performed by their association and must be approved in accordance with the Local Organization Bylaws.

2) Coaching Regulations

- a) Each team must have one individual designated as a head coach.
- b) It is the responsibility of the head coach for conduct unbecoming to the objectives and goals of NTFL for himself/herself, his/her assistant coaches, players and the players' parents.

3) Coaching Violations

- a) The penalty for violation of RULE 2 shall consist of: first offense, a \$100.00 fine, notification to the NTFL Board, and possible one-game suspension; second offense, automatic one-game suspension and \$250.00 fine to the Local Organization; third offense, possible suspension/banning from the league.
- b) The NTFL Board dictates suspension.
- c) "Banned" is out for life.
- d) If any association takes action against a coach, parent, or participant, then that association must notify the NTFL Board in writing of its decision.

RULE 3: DIVISIONS

1) Compilation of Divisions

- a) All divisions will be grade based only. Players participate in each grade division is based on their current grade level enrollment.
- b) Age limits are set as Maximum Age per grade division.
- c) The breakdown of league grade divisions shall be the following:

TABLE 1: Breakdown of League Divisions

Division	Player Age Limitation
Kindergarten and 1 st Grade	Players may not be older than 7 years old by September 1
2 nd Grade	Players may not be older than 8 years old by September 1
3 rd Grade	Players may not be older than 9 years old by September 1
4 th Grade	Players may not be older than 10 years old by September 1
5 th Grade	Players may not be older than 11 years old by September 1
6 th Grade	Players may not be older than 12 years old by September 1

2) Requests to Play in Other Divisions

- a) Any deviations from **RULE 3 section 1** as listed above, **MUST** go through the Local Organization and presented to the NTFL Board at least one (1) month prior to the

start of the season. Final approval is with the NTFL board. Any request(s) may be required to appear before the NTFL board.

- b) Any parent that wishes to move their child up to the next division, must present in writing to the Local Organization prior to the draft. Once a player has completed two seasons in the higher division that player may not return to that player's grade appropriate division with the exception of 6th Grade.

RULE 4: PLAYER ALLOCATION AND TEAMS

1) Team Size

- a) No team in any division shall consist of more than 14 players without the approval of the NTFL Board. Teams must split if there are a minimum of 10 players for each team. Any exceptions to this article must be brought before the NTFL Executive Board.
- b) If any team falls to 8 players or below, by the fourth (4th) game of the season, that team may go to the waitlist to obtain additional players to make up to 10 players on the team.

2) Player Registration

- a) All players shall register with their Local Organization on or before the registration deadline. The NTFL Board will approve this deadline.
- b) Each association shall have a registration period of no less than two (2) weeks before registration deadline.
- c) If a Local Organization sees that its numbers are down or not enough to split by the registration deadline, then that Local Organization may register more players in that division.

3) Local Organization Waitlist Procedure

- a) Waitlist closes after the first weekend of play; no additional players may be added to the waitlist after the final game of the 1st weekend.
- b) If no waitlist players exist in the needed division after the fourth (4th) game of the season and a team falls below 8 players, they may go out and find players to add to their team with approval from the NTFL Board.

4) Player Allocation - General Information

- a) Team rosters will be formed by their Local Organization.

RULE 5: SEASON AND GAMES CANCELLATION1) League Season

- a) Starting date, number of games and scheduling will be determined by the NTFL Executive Board.
- b) If the NTFL Board determines playoff format, if a post season or tournament is determined.

2) Game Cancellations or Forfeiture

- a) In the event of forfeiture, the team shall be liable to the NTFL for any officiating or field expenses incurred by the latter as a direct result of the forfeiture.
- b) If a game is stopped or cancelled due to weather or extenuating circumstances at half time or during the second half of a game and a team is leading by 18 or more points the game will be considered a complete game and the team with the lead will be awarded the win.
- c) If there is inclement weather on game day, the NTFL Board will evaluate the conditions to determine if games will be held as scheduled.
- d) NTFL Board reserves the right to reschedule or cancel games if the inclement weather makes it unsafe or unplayable for players and spectators.
- e) In general, games may be played if there is light to moderate rain, with no thunder or lightning. If there is inclement weather on game day, go to www.NTFL.org for updates.

RULE 6: PLAYER PARTICIPATION1) Player Participation Guidelines

- a) Every player shall participate as a player in every game in which that player is in attendance and capable of playing.
- b) An injured or ill player in attendance at a game shall be allowed on the sideline area and shall not be required to play.

RULE 7: TEAM INFORMATION1) Team Size

- a) Maximum of 14 players per team.
- b) Minimum of 9 players per team.
- c) Minimum of 6 players present and able to participate in a game or that team must forfeit.

2) Team Formation

- a) Each team member must be an eligible member of a Local Organization.

3) Grade Based Eligibility

- a) All divisions will be grade based only.
- b) A player is eligible to participate in the Grade Division for his grade for the current School Season. There are NO AGE EXCEPTIONS.
- c) A team must participate in the division which corresponds with the highest grade of any player on the team.

4) Maximum Age

- a) NTFL will not check eligibility prior to events. However, a coach must be able to document grade and age eligibility in the event of a challenge by another team.
- b) Acceptable proofs of age are clean photocopies of birth certificate, adoption papers, immigration papers or school documentation.
- c) Acceptable proofs of grade include a clean copy of any report card of the current school year.
- d) Player Protests and Incident Reporting Forms
 - i. Any player eligibility protest should be reported immediately so that it may be heard in a timely manner.
 - ii. All protests must be in writing (forms will be provided on-site) and accompanied by the official protest fee of \$100 cash for each player challenged. This fee is non-refundable.
 - iii. The ruling on a protest will be made by the NTFL Board and is final and binding on all coaches, players, and attendees of the event.
 - iv. The NTFL Board shall apply the Player Eligibility Rules in such manner as the NTFL Board deems appropriate to uphold not only the letter but the spirit of such rules and all coaches, players, and attendees shall be bound by any such application.
 - v. If a player in question is not able to produce a report card and birth certificate, that player will not be eligible until verifiable proof of a report card and/or birth certificate have been provide to the NTFL Board.

RULE 8: COACHES

1) General

- a) A team may not have more than four coaches on the sidelines.
- b) Each team must have a team head coach accompany it to any/all events to serve as an Administrator on duty for their particular team(s).

RULE 9: APPLICATION OF RULES1) General

- a) The NTFL may modify the League and/or Tournament Rules when the NTFL Board deems it in the best interests of the League and/or Tournament to do so and all teams, coaches, players, and attendees will be bound by any such change.

RULE 10: GENERAL RULES OF PLAY FOR ALL DIVISIONS1) Starting the Game

- a) Time Keeper
 - i) Each site will have a designated central Time-keeper. All games will begin and end on this person's instructions. He will also announce the time remaining at the 10, 5, and 2 minute marks.

2) Team Possession

- a) Visitors will have first possession (top team in bracket or first team listed will be the visitor).
- b) The home team will have first possession in the 2nd half (bottom team in bracket or second team listed will be the home team).

3) Team Sidelines

- a) Teams must be on opposite sides of the field.
- b) Team sidelines must be on opposite sides of the field. Visitors will line up on the right side of the field when facing the end zone. Home will line up on the left side of the field when facing the end zone.

4) Team Uniforms and Equipment

- a) T-shirts, Compression T-shirts, football jerseys or basketball-type sleeveless shirts are permitted. Teams must have assigned color jerseys. **NO TEAM WILL BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE WITHOUT MATCHING JERSEYS!**
- b) It is recommended that teams have jerseys with numbers on the back that match the team roster.
- c) Players are permitted to wear standard football cleats with plastic or rubber spikes. **NO METAL SPIKES ARE ALLOWED.**
- d) All players must wear a mouthpiece.

5) Moving the Ball

- a) QB is not allowed to run with the ball beyond the Line of Scrimmage ("LOS").
- b) No kicking/punting.
- c) Offenses always move in the same direction.

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- d) **NO PASSER MAY RUN WITH THE BALL. ALL PASSES MUST BE FORWARD.**
A pass caught behind the line must be forward. The only laterals that will be allowed will be laterals that occur after the completion of a forward pass.

6) Formations

- a) **Offense formation requires minimum 3 players set on the line of scrimmage each play. At least one player must be set on the line of scrimmage on each side of the center.**

7) General Game Rules

- a) No blocking.
- b) Receiver/Ball carrier is legally down when touched below the neck with one or both hands.
i) Excessive force by shoving, pushing, or striking a blow will be penalized by automatic 1st down and 5 yards.
ii) Player will be expelled if ruled unsportsmanlike and flagrant.
- c) Fumbles are dead balls at the spot with the last team retaining possession.
- d) Defensive Pass Interference will be a spot foul (1st down at the spot).
i) The penalty will be 15 yards if the foul occurs 15 or more yards past the original line of scrimmage (1st down).
- e) Responsibility to avoid contact is with the defense. There will be NO chucking, or deliberate bumping or grabbing. These actions will result in a "tack on" penalty at the end of the play (5-yard penalty).
- f) Offensive team is responsible for retrieving and returning the ball to the previous spot or the new scrimmage spot. Clock does not stop and any delay by offense in retrieving and returning the ball to the referee will result in a delay of game and will be a 5-yard penalty from the succeeding spot.
- g) The offensive center is an eligible receiver at all times (all teams must have a center – the center may be any player). The center is responsible for establishing the succeeding spot as designated by the referee. The center must snap the ball with the ball touching the ground. The center may snap between legs or to the side.
- h) The center will be responsible for setting or re-positioning the Referee's LOS-Marker at the line of scrimmage.
- i) No taunting or "trash talking." (5-yard penalty & expulsion if flagrant or repeated).
- j) Fighting: the player(s) involved will be ejected from the game and tournament. If a team fight occurs, the teams involved will be ejected from the tournament and denied participation in any/all qualifying tournaments.

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- k) One coach is allowed on the field for the team's offensive possession. The coach must remain behind all offensive players at all times. The coach on the field is not allowed to talk or give direction once the ball is snapped. In-play coaching will result in a 5 yard penalty and loss of down.
 - l) One coach is allowed on the field for the team's defensive possession for K/1st and 2nd only. The coach must remain behind the defensive players at all times. The coach on the field is not allowed to talk or give direction once the ball is snapped. In-play coaching will result in a 5 yard penalty and loss of down
- 8) Scoring
- a) Touchdowns
 - i) 6 points
 - ii) 1 point for PAT from 3-yard line
 - iii) 2-point PAT from 10-yard line
 - iv) 4th, 5th and 6th Grade must pass the ball on all PAT attempts.
 - Interceptions returned to the 45-yd line, on the PAT attempt, will be worth 2 points.
 - v) K/1st, 2nd, and 3rd Grade must pass the ball on all PAT attempts.
 - Interceptions result in failed PAT try. No interceptions are returned.
 - vi) Official score is kept by field referee and game manager.
- 9) Overtime Rules Tournament ONLY
- a) After coin flip to determine first possession, teams will alternate four down series from the 15-yard line.
 - b) Each team must go for two points on the conversion attempts beginning in the 2nd overtime.
 - c) Regular season games will end in a tie.
- 10) Time
- a) Time per half
 - i) 20-minute
 - ii) Continuous clock for each half--see: "starting the game"
 - b) Time Outs
 - i) No time outs.
 - ii) EXCEPTION: Injuries. All games will halt until injured player(s) can be safely removed from the field.
 - c) Half Time
 - i) 5-minutes
 - d) Game Clocks
 - i) Play must commence 25 Sec. after the ball has been spotted
 - e) 15 minutes between games (the between game time may be shortened if the
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tournament is running behind schedule).

- f) All games start/end at the same time.
- g) If a team(s) is(are) late and cannot start when the tournament officially starts, they will be penalized 7 points and begin play with whatever time is left on the tournament clock. (Not to exceed 10 minutes of 1st half.)
- h) Forfeit will occur after 10 minutes of the 1st half.
- i) IT IS IMPERATIVE TO KEEP TO THE LEAGUE and/or TOURNAMENT TIME SCHEDULE.
- j) Teams must be on site and ready to play when scheduled. Injury time outs may reduce the amount of time between halves and/or between games to maintain the game schedules.

RULE 11: RULES FOR 4th, 5th AND 6th GRADE

1) Field Dimensions

- a) Field Length -- 45 yards (135 feet)
- b) Field Width – 53yards (160 feet)
 - i) 60 feet to hash mark from sidelines
 - ii) 40 feet between hashes
- c) Field is marked with three (3) 15 yard zones with cones on each sideline
- d) End Zone -- 10 yards' deep

2) Starting Ball Placement

- a) Ball will be placed on right or left hash mark or middle of the field if no hashes exist, when at the 45-yard line.

3) Ball Size and Use

- a) Each team will use its own ball during offensive possessions.
- b) 4th Grade must use Wilson K2, Nike Vapor, Nike Tournament, or Nike All-Field Pee Wee sized ball. 4th Grade can use same ball as 5th and 6th Grade if they choose. 5th Grade and 6th Grade divisions must use Wilson TDJ or TDY, Nike Vapor, Nike Tournament or Nike All-Field Junior size. Footballs may be authentic leather or composite.

4) Moving the Ball

- a) Field is marked with three (3) 15 yard intervals by cones.
 - i) Three (3) 1st downs without a penalty would result in a TD.
- b) Possession always begins at the 45-yard line at the right hash or middle of the field if no hashes exist.
 - i) NO PENALTY WILL BE ASSESSED IN EXCESS OF THE 45 YARD LINE.

LOSS OF DOWN WILL BE ASSESSED.

- Pre-snap penalty will result in loss of down.
- c) If a forward pass is completed and the Receiver/Ball Carrier does not cross the LOS and a defensive player tags the ball carrier behind the 45-yard line, the play is dead and ball is reset at 45-yard line.

5) General Game Rules

- a) A muffed snap is NOT a fumble/dead ball. The 5.0 second count remains in effect on snaps.
- b) Each team will have 25 seconds to snap the ball once it has been marked ready for play; delay of game penalty will be a 5-yard penalty.
- i) The point after attempt will be voided if you have a delay of game penalty. Defense will get the ball at the 45-yard line.
- c) The QB is allowed 5.0 seconds to throw the ball. There are no hand offs in 4th, 5th or 6th Grade. The Referee starts a stopwatch on the snap of the ball from center and stops the watch as soon as the QB releases the ball.
- i) If release occurs at or under 5.0 seconds, the play stands as is.
 - ii) If release occurs after 5.0 seconds, the play will be treated as an incomplete pass at the conclusion of the play.
 - iii) **The Referee has the authority to blow the play dead if it is obvious the play has exceeded the 5.0 second rule.**
- d) Offensive pass interference is a 15-yard penalty.
- i) The penalty will be a loss of down if 15 yards would take a team past the 45-yard line.
- e) Interceptions may be returned. However, defensive players may not block anyone subsequent to an interception. If an interception is returned beyond the 45-yard line (the offensive origination point) it is a touchdown and point after attempt should ensue.
- f) Line to Gain
- i) Each field has three (3) 15 yard zones designated as the line to gain
 - ii) The offense must gain past the line of each zone to gain a first down. The offense has three (3) downs in the first zone. Four (4) downs in the second and third zone. Failure to achieve a first down or touch down results in a change of possession.

RULE 12: RULES FOR K/1st THRU 3rd GRADE**1) Field Dimensions**

- a) Field Length -- 30 yards (105 feet)
- b) Field Width – 53yards (160 feet)
 - i) 60 feet to hash mark from sidelines
 - ii) 40 feet between hashes
- c) End Zone -- 10 yards' deep

2) Starting Ball Placement

- a) Ball always placed on right or left hash mark or middle of the field if no hashes exist, when at the 30-yard line.

3) Ball Size and Use

- a) Each team will use its own ball during offensive possessions.
- b) K/1st Grade thru 3rd Grade Divisions must use Wilson K2, Nike Vapor, Nike Tournament, or Nike All-Field Pee Wee size ball. Footballs can be authentic leather or composite.

4) Moving the Ball

- a) In K/1 and 2nd Grade the QB may hand the ball off to a Running Back/Ball Carrier behind the line of scrimmage on 3rd and 4th Downs. QB's must pass the ball on 1st and 2nd downs.
- b) There are no hand-offs in 3rd Grade. QB must pass the ball on all downs.
- c) Field is marked with three (3) 10 yard intervals by cones.
 - i) Three (3) 1st downs without a penalty would result in a TD.
- d) Possession always begins at the 30-yard line.
 - i) NO PENALTY WILL BE ASSESSED IN EXCESS OF THE 30 YARD LINE. LOSS OF DOWN WILL BE ASSESSED.
 - Pre-snap penalty will result in loss of down
- e) Line to Gain
 - i) Each field has three (3) 10 yard zones designated as the line to gain
 - ii) The offense must gain past the line of each zone to gain a first down. The offense has three (3) downs in the first zone. Four (4) downs in the second and third zone. Failure to achieve a first down or touchdown results in a change of possession.
- f) If the QB hands the ball off at the 30-yard line to a Running Back/Ball Carrier or completes a pass, and a defensive player tags the ball carrier behind the 30-yard line, the play is a dead and reset at the 30-yard line. There are no Safeties.
- g) The purpose of the Coach QB is there to facilitate the play. The Coach QB should not be an integral part of the play design. Obvious disregard for this rule will result in a 5-yard penalty and loss of down. The Coach QB cannot –
 - i) Hide the ball. Hold or disguise the ball so that it is out of plain view;
 - ii) Turn back to the play to disguise a hand-off or fake hand-off. Effectively taking the ball out of plain view;
 - iii) Pump fake a pass;
 - iv) Move outside of a 5-yard box. No rollout passes or wide rollout hand-offs or fake hand-offs;
 - v) Direct or tell players where to move during play. No on-field coach can talk or direct once the ball is snapped.

h) Fake hand-offs and play action plays are legal plays for Coach QB.

5) General Game Rules

a) K/1st can be coach QB with 6 participants on the field. 2nd Grade and 3rd Grade are kid QB with 7 participants on the field.

b) Defensive players may not cross the line of scrimmage, unless a hand off to a Running Back/Ball Carrier occurs or a forward pass is completed.

c) A muffed snap is NOT a fumble/dead ball. The 7.0 second count remains in effect on snaps.

d) Each team will have 25 seconds to snap the ball once it has been marked ready for play; delay of game penalty will be a 5-yard penalty.

i) The point after attempt will be voided if you have a delay of game penalty. Defense will get the ball at the 30-yard line.

e) The QB is allowed 7.0 seconds to throw the ball or hand off to a running back. The Referee starts a stopwatch on the snap of the ball from center and stops the watch as soon as the QB releases the ball or hands the ball off to a running back.

i) If release occurs at or under 7.0 seconds, the play stands as is.

ii) If release or hand off occurs after 7.0 seconds, the play will be treated as an incomplete pass at the conclusion of the play.

iii) **The Referee has the authority to blow the play dead if it is obvious the play has exceeded the 7.0 second rule.**

f) Offensive pass interference is a 15-yard penalty.

i) The penalty will be a loss of down if 15 yards would take a team past the 30-yard line.

g) Interceptions may not be returned. The ball is dead and the intercepting team will be on offense starting at the 30-yard line.