

South Jersey Independent Youth Football Association Playing Rules

SJIYFA plays under the official rules and regulations governing the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) **except** where the League rules specifically differ from the NJSIAA rules.

The NJSIAA currently follows the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Rules.

All coaches should familiarize themselves with the NFHS Rules, NJSIAA Rules and our league specific rules.

The 2021 NFHS Rule Books can be purchased at www.nfhs.org. Print copies are \$10, Electronic Copies are available on iTunes and Amazon for \$6.99.

Note: if there is a discrepancy between the rules outlined in this document and the rules outlined in the 2020 SJIYFA League By-Laws, the By-Laws shall prevail.

Forfeit Time - Rule 9

Teams have 30 minutes after the official starting time before forfeiting the game. FORFEITING TEAM MUST PAY FOR THE REFEREES.

If JV team forfeits game(s) both JV and varsity team will be declared ineligible for playoffs for that weight class.

Officials - Rule 12

The following shows the number of officials to be used for each weight class:

Varsity		JV - To be confirmed	
• 75 lb	2 Officials	• 95 lb JV	2 Officials
• 95lb & 110lb	3 Officials	• 110lb JV & 125lb JV	3 Officials
• 125lb & JH	4 Officials	• JH JV	4 Officials

If the number of designated officials are not present at the start of the game, the teams can elect to start/play the game. Once a game starts, teams must finish or forfeit the game.

Pre-Game Player Line Up (From Rule 2 Eligibility)

- Ten minutes before game time players shall stand at attention at midfield with their I.D. card in front of them so that they can be identified by the opposing coaching staff.
- At the beginning of each game, a team must produce ID cards for each player specifying whether they are a varsity, JV, tackle-to-tackle player. If a team fails to produce the league issued I.D. card, the player will not be able to participate in the game. If a player, or the player's card, is presented to the opposing team prior to the end of the 2nd quarter, that player will be eligible to participate in that game from that point forward. If the player or player's card is not presented prior to the end of the 2nd Quarter the player will be ineligible to participate.

From Article XIV – Miscellaneous Playing Rules – Rule 3 T2T Playing Rules

RULES FOR IDENTIFYING TACKLE-TO-TACKLE (T2T) PLAYERS

- Tackle-to-Tackle (T2T) Players Card will be a different Color. Card will be presented at weigh ins and **MUST** be presented at GAMES.
- During pregame lineup, ALL Tackle-to-Tackle (T2T) players must be together on the same side lined up next to each other. **DO NOT** have players interspersed during the lineup. This will make it easy for the other team to make notations of the Tackle-to-Tackle (T2T) Players playing in that game.
- A helmet sticker will be placed running on the center of the helmet running from front to back for identification. **If the Tackle-to-Tackle (T2T) player DOES NOT have a sticker on his helmet, HE CANNOT PLAY! NO EXCEPTIONS OR EXCUSES TO THIS RULE.** Stickers will be a significant color and change to the current helmet. Sticker will be visible on the front and back of the helmet so the officials can identify those players.

Equipment - Rule 3

Each player must be fully equipped as required by National Federation rules including helmet, faceguard, mouthpiece, shoulder pads, football pants including thigh and knee pads, one piece (non-detachable) cleated footwear or sneakers and jersey with number on front and back to be worn by same player all season.

Player Safety - Rule 4

Officials will not let any player continue in any game if he is injured, exhausted or out of condition. Above players must remain out of game at least one play.

Playing Rules - Rule 6

- A. All divisions/weight classes will use a regulation field as prescribed in NJSIAA rules, or as close as possible.
- B. Coaches, Managers and players must remain within the 25 yard lines on side of field.
- C. The home team is responsible for having field properly marked, field to be marked at five yard intervals and inbound markings.
- D. Player's bench will be for official players, coaches and managers only.
- E. Home team shall rope or fence off spectators from playing field.
- F. Home teams shall provide adequate police protection for each game and will have ambulance, emergency vehicle or phone available.
- G. Coaches will be required to wear a field Pass, with Team Name & Weight Class. Only two Coaches will be able to talk to the referees.
- H. Down markers and down box will be on the home team side.

Official Ball- Rule 7

The following shall be the official ball used during games:

- 75lb & 95lb - Wilson K2
- 110lb & 125lb - Wilson TDJ
- Junior High - Wilson TDY

A BALL EQUIVALENT TO THE CORRESPONDING BALLS ABOVE MAY BE SUBSTITUTED WITH PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. Composite balls are permitted but must be the same size balls as listed above. Teams are permitted to use their own ball, however once a ball enters the game, that ball must stay in play. For example, if a team kicks off with a ball and they recover the ball to go on offense, they must leave that ball in play. After inspection, the official has the right to request a ball change due to poor gripping or excessive wear.

League Rules - Rule 5

NJSIAA rules in all games with the following exceptions:

- A. Three time outs per half for all weight divisions.
- B. Extra point shall count two points if kicked and one point if run or passed at the 125lb and Jr. High level.
- C. Kick-off from the 40-yard line (75lb and 95lb-JV kick-off only if both coaches agree, otherwise ball will be placed on 40-yard line)
- D. Four ten minute stop clock quarters for all teams except 75lb, they will play under a 12 minute running clock.
- E. Two coaches shall be permitted on field at all times for both offensive team and defensive team for 75lb games. At the 95lb-JV level one coach shall be permitted on the field. Once the players are set, the coach on the field is prohibited from coaching the players or yelling out instruction.
- F. There is a 35 second play clock between plays. The 75lb and 95lb-JV will be permitted 45 seconds between plays.
- G. TEN (10) minutes between halves.
- H. Jersey numbering system is not mandatory but strongly suggested.
- I. On the 75lb, 95lb, & 110lb level an offensive team shall have the option to advance the ball 20 yards in lieu of a punt when they are inside their own 30-yard line. The same rule applies for a Safety.
- J. On the 75lb level there will be no nose tackle over the center. No Player shall line up in the "A" gap (between the center and guard). They must be directly over the guard.
- K. At the 95lb & 110lb level if the QB is not under the center or during a Punt or Extra point no player shall line up over the center; they must be in the "A" gaps NO EXCEPTIONS. At the 120LB and Junior High levels they can be on the Center but they cannot rush until the center raises his head and can defend themselves.
- L. Sportsmanship / Mercy Rule (From Rule 19 Unsportsmanlike Conduct) - A team ahead in the score by 28 points or more in the second half will not blitz and make every effort not to score (i.e. running between the tackles). Additionally, the opposing team will not blitz up the middle when they see the other team running between tackles.
 - 1. The coach will be given 1 warning by the official; the 2nd infraction will result in a flag and a 15 yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct. A 3rd infraction will include a \$200.00 fine and a game suspension for the head coach.
 - 2. All violations of the mercy rule if it was flagged or not can be subject to video review by the board of directors.
 - 3. Additionally, once the score differential reaches 28 points (in the 2nd half) at the 95lb and 110lb level there will no longer be kick-offs. The receiving team will begin possession at their own 40 yard line. For the other weight classes there will be NO ONSIDE KICKS.
 - 4. This rule will no longer be enforced if the other team scores to bring the score under 28 points.
 - 5. The 28 point rule employs a running clock in the 2nd half.

Tackle-to-Tackle (T2T) Rules By Phases of the Game

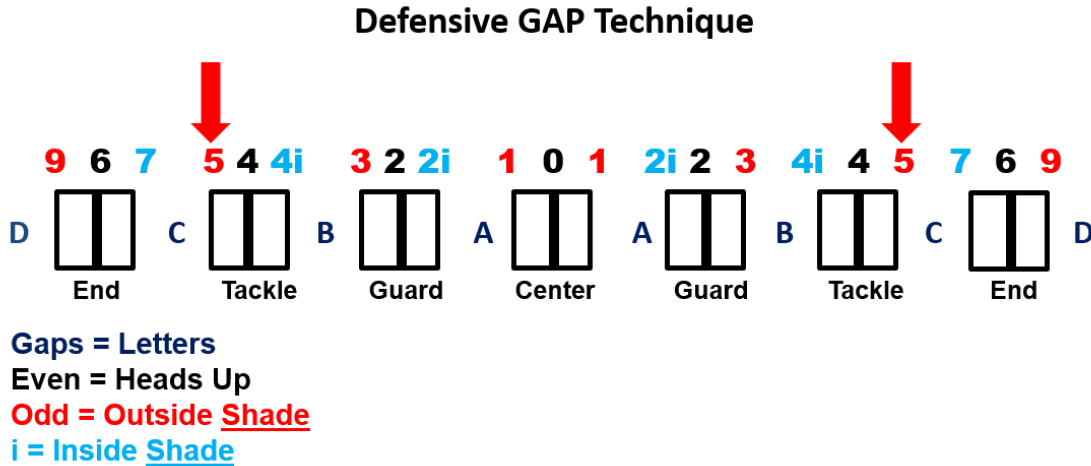
Offense:

- No more than 5 players on the field at one time that are considered tackle-to-tackle.
- These 5 players must be evenly distributed – 2 on either side of the center. You cannot have a staggered line, where 3 or 4 players are on one side of the ball. If a team decides to go with a staggered line the 3rd player from the center and beyond cannot be a tackle-to-tackler player.
- They are permitted to be the last player on the line of scrimmage, however they are not permitted to be an eligible receiver. For example, a team can play with two ends on the same side of the field (only one will be eligible), however the tackle on the opposite side of the center is NOT permitted to be an eligible receiver.
- Players must start with one hand on the ground.
- These players are permitted to pull.

Defense:

- No more than 5 players on the field at one time that are considered tackle-to-tackle (T2T).
- These 5 players must be lined up on the line of scrimmage no wider than the 5-technique which is defined as shading the outside shoulder of the offensive tackle. (see Figure A below)
- Tackle-to-tackle (T2T) Players must start with at least one hand on the ground in a 3 or 4 point stance.
- The player must initially engage an offensive lineman or shoot the line of scrimmage/gaps, they are not permitted to drop back into coverage or into a line-backer position.

Figure A:



Special Teams:

- Tackle-to-tackle (T2T) players are permitted on kickoff and kickoff returns.
 - Max of 3 in center of the field
 - May not advance the football
 - Must be on the front line
- Tackle-to-tackle (T2T) players are not permitted to kick or hold on the offensive side and are not permitted to be out of the tackle box on the line of scrimmage (as described above under defense).
- If lined-up over the center, they must adhere to the league rule which allows the center the opportunity to defend themselves from a head-to-head collision.

If a tackle-to-tackle (T2T) player lines up illegally on Offense, Defense or Special Teams, the officials will assess an illegal formation penalty.

RULES FOR IDENTIFYING TACKLE-TO-TACKLE (T2T) PLAYERS

- D. Tackle-to-Tackle (T2T) Players Card will be a different Color. Card will be presented at weigh ins and **MUST** be presented at GAMES.
- E. During pregame lineup, ALL Tackle-to-Tackle (T2T) players must be together on the same side lined up next to each other. **DO NOT** have players interspersed during the lineup. This will make it easy for the other team to make notations of the Tackle-to-Tackle (T2T) Players playing in that game.
- F. A helmet sticker will be placed running on the center of the helmet running from front to back identification. **If the Tackle-to-Tackle (T2T) player DOES NOT have a sticker on his helmet, HE CANNOT PLAY! NO EXCEPTIONS OR EXCUSES TO THIS RULE.** Stickers will be a significant color and change to the current helmet. Sticker will be visible on the front and back of the helmet so the officials can identify those players.

Coaches Conduct - Rule 17

- A. Coaches will conduct themselves in the presence of their players, parents, officials, and spectators in such a manner as to be a credit to themselves, their Organizations, the League and the Coached Code of Ethics.
- B. Coaches will meet at mid-field after game to extend, or receive congratulations to or from the opposing coach.
- C. Any incident or conduct involving a Coach/Coaches of any team which might cause trouble before, after or during a game (including expulsion from playing field by officials) will be penalized as in Article XII, rule 19. And any Coach who is ejected from a game or any Coach who exhibits unsportsmanlike like conduct as deemed by the league will be or may be penalized after a Board member meetings findings.
- D. Officials assigned to League games are mandated by the League to expel from the playing field the coach or coaches

who are penalized three times in any one game for unsportsmanlike conduct. Expulsion from the playing field is defined as being physically removed to a location where any verbal communication (including telephone, intercom and radio) is impossible. Refusal to obey such expulsion order of violation of the order by establishing lines of communication will result in forfeiting of the game to be called the Official-in-Charge.

- E. Any Coach who shows UNSPORTSMAN like conduct to a referee or opposing Coach or a Fan after the CONCLUSION of a game could be subject to an ADDITIONAL fine of \$100.00 plus a Franchise fine of \$100.00. This would be Subject to a Board review.
- F. All Coaches are required to participate in the Coaches Conduct meeting and get a Certification card (\$10.00 – 2-year card) to be able to Coach and be on the Sideline in the SJIYFA Youth Football Season and are required to have that card at all times during the game on the sidelines. If a coach has been found not to have one disciplinary actions will be taken. **75lb COACHES HAVE A DIFFERENT CARD. (\$5.00 1-year card).**
- G. Each program must assign a special representative for every game as a crowd and sideline control official. These representatives must introduce themselves to the officials prior to the start of every game.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct - Rule 18

- A. Ejection's for Unsportsmanlike Conduct will be handled as follows:
 - 1. Reports will go to the Grievance Committee
 - 2. Any coach who is ejected from game will be penalized as follows:
 - a. 1st offense - \$100.00 automatic fine and next game suspension
 - b. 2nd offense - \$200.00 automatic fine and next 2 games suspension
 - c. Any additional offenses will be reviewed by the Board of Directors
 - 3. A player ejected for fighting receives an automatic 1 game suspension. All other ejections must be reviewed before the next game.
- B. Mercy Rule - A team ahead in the score by 28 points or more in the second half will not blitz and make every effort not to score (i.e. running between the tackles). Additionally, the opposing team will not blitz up the middle when they see the other team running between tackles.
 - 1. The coach will be given 1 warning by the official; the 2nd infraction will result in a flag and a 15 yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct. A 3rd infraction will include a \$200.00 fine and a game suspension for the head coach.
 - 2. All violations of the mercy rule if it was flagged or not can be subject to video review by the board of directors.
 - 3. Additionally, once the score differential reaches 28 points (in the 2nd half) at the 95lb and 110lb level there will no longer be kick-offs. The receiving team will begin possession at their own 40 yard line. For the other weight classes there will be NO ONSIDE KICKS.
 - 4. This rule will no longer be enforced if the other team scores to bring the score under 28 points.
 - 5. The 28 point rule employs a running clock in the 2nd half.

Rule 19 – Playing up divisions

- 1. Player either varsity or jr is permitted to play up a weight class but can not play down. Example a player carded 95 varsity is allowed to play up on the 125 varsity or jr.

Rule 22 – Extra Point at 75, 95, and 110lb

Following a touchdown, the Head Coach must declare the team's intent to the Head Referee. The ball will be spotted as follows:

- 1. 1-Point Scrimmage Try
 - Placement: The ball is spotted at the 3-yard line.
 - Requirement: Successful run or pass play in one scrimmage down.
 - Ball Position: The offensive team may select ball placement (center or on a hash mark).
- 2. 2-Point Scrimmage Try
 - Notification: The Head Coach **MUST** notify the official of a 2-point scrimmage intent ahead of time.
 - Placement: The ball is spotted at the 10-yard line.
 - Requirement: Successful run or pass play in one scrimmage down.
 - Ball Position: The offensive team may select ball placement (center or on a hash mark).
- 3. 2-Point Kick Option
 - Placement: The ball is spotted at the 3-yard line.
 - Requirement: A successful field goal/kick from the 3-yard line.
 - Restriction: A two-point conversion (kick or scrimmage) cannot be attempted once the Mercy Rule is in effect.
- 4. Change Declaration & Turnover Rules
 - A time out must be called prior to the 2pt attempt in order to change the declaration.
 - Once the ball is snapped for a 2pt try, if a penalty occurs the declaration cannot be changed even if a timeout is called.
 - Turnover: If the offensive team turns the ball over it's a dead ball.

MISCELLANEOUS PLAYING RULES - Overtime, JV and 75lb Division

Overtime Rules

- A. If a Varsity game at the 95, 110, 125 and Junior High levels is tied at the end of regulation play, teams will play overtime. There is no overtime for JV or the 75lb division (except in playoff or tournament games).

- B. There will be a maximum of 3 overtime periods per game, where each team will have an opportunity to possess the ball and attempt to score in each overtime period.
- C. If either team is leading at the end of an overtime period the game is over.
- D. The chosen end of play will be used for all overtime periods.
- E. Each team will be allotted 1 time out per overtime period.
- F. Play starts at the 25 yard line.
- G. The Offense can get first downs. If the offense does not score, the defending team will take possession and begin their offensive series on the 25 yard line.
- H. If the Defense scores, the game is over. If a Field Goal is blocked and the Defense returns it for a touchdown, the game is over.
- I. If no one scores or the game is tied at the end of the first overtime period, the second overtime period will begin with offensive possession alternating.
- J. Rules for the 3rd Overtime period
 - a. 95lb and 110lb the same rules at period 1 and 2 will apply
 - b. 125 and Junior High, if the first team to possess the ball scores and runs the ball in for an extra point, the 2nd team to possess the ball must try to kick the extra point (2points) for the win.
- K. If the game is still tied at the end of the 3rd overtime period, the game will be ruled a tie.
 - a. During the playoffs and championship, overtime periods will continue as needed to determine a winner.

JV Rules

- 1. CERTIFICATION: All players designated to play JV by the League and or Coaches of any weight class of a franchise shall be required to be certified at the regular league weigh-ins as all other players of the SJIYFA.
- 2. PICTURES: All JV Coaches must ensure that all JV players show a SJIYFA picture prior to ALL JV games that proves the players' certification to play. Any player not having a picture from the League weigh-ins will be ineligible to play in that game just as in the varsity games. Any team not producing pictures to show to the opposing team prior to the beginning of each game shall be fined \$50.00. A second occurrence may result in a \$100.00 fine and a third occurrence may result in additional fines and/or ineligibility to possible JV tournaments that may be scheduled.
- 3. PLAYING AND PLAYER RULES: All player and playing rules for the league sanctioned varsity games will also apply at all JV games. Exception: Each 95lb-JV team is allowed to have one (1) Coach on the field during the game to assist these players. Coaches must be at least 10 yards off the ball and the 45 second clock will be enforced by the officials, but they will also exercise the rule with some flexibility for this level is only a half-step above the 75lb instructional play.
- 4. JV ELIGIBILITY: In order to be eligible for and enter a team to play in the JV schedule, you must have a minimum of 25 players in that weight class. You are required to card 50% of your total weight class, or 15 players as Varsity players (whichever number is less).
- 5. CARDS: The Varsity players cards will be the regular cards we produce as a league each year. The JV and tackle-to-tackle (T2T) player's cards will have a JV or T2T identification on them to designate the difference from the Varsity cards.
- 6. OVERTIME: There is no overtime period for the JV division during the regular season. There will be overtime during the playoffs.
- 7. PLAYING TIME: JV Players are eligible to play up to 6 quarters in a weekend. Playing 1 play in a quarter counts as a quarter except special teams which is exempt from counting as a play towards the 6 quarter rule. A player can play the last play in the 3rd quarter and the first play in the 4th and that would count at 2 quarters. If a player is found to play more than 6 quarters in a weekend that player is considered an illegal player. Disciplinary action will be followed as set forth in ARTICLE XIII, SECTION A of the By-Laws.

75lb Playing Rules

- 1. No kick-offs unless both teams agree to do so, team will take possession at their own 40-yard line.
- 2. Four 12 minute running clock quarters.
- 3. Two coaches shall be permitted on field at all times for both offensive team and defensive team for 75lb games. Once players are set, coaches are to move out of the way.
- 4. The offensive team shall have the option to advance the ball 20 yards in lieu of a punt when they are inside their own 30-yard line. The same rule applies for a Safety.
- 5. There will be no Trick plays on the 75lb level.
- 6. There are no QB sneaks at the 75lb level.
- 7. The defensive guard must be lined up head-to-head over the offensive guard.
- 8. The defensive tackle must be lined up either head-to-head over the offensive tackle or shaded slightly to the offensive tackle's outside shoulder – some part of the defensive tackle's shoulder/helmet must be lined up on the offensive tackle's shoulder/helmet.
- 9. If the offense shifts, so can the defense.
- 10. Linebackers & cornerbacks must start 5 yards deep – if the offense shifts, so can these players, but they must remain 5 yards deep until the snap of the ball. Cornerbacks are permitted to line-up on the line of scrimmage, but must be at least 10 yards wide of the tight end. If the end on that side of the field is split out, they must be at least 10 yards from the next offensive lineman.
- 11. If you would like to put your safety up on the same line as the linebackers/corners, that is also allowed.
- 12. Once the players are set-up the coaches on the field are to step away from the players and are not permitted to talk/coach the players during the play. Coaches on the sideline can speak to the players.
- 13. Scores will be kept but only standings will be displayed at the 75lb level.
- 14. There will be no Overtime in 75lb regular season games.
- 15. Suggested 75lb defensive formation:

