
Metro Youth Football League – Rules – 2026

I. **NAME:**

The name of the league shall be the Metro Youth Tackle Football League. Some age divisions will consist of teams from the following local community clubs and recreation departments: Mebane, Gibsonville, Siler City, Hawfields Civitan Club, Northern Alamance Athletic Club, and Alamance Civitan Club.

II. **ELIGIBILITY:**

- A. Each player's age will be approved by the sponsoring Recreation and Parks Department. This will be done only through the use of birth certificates and the birth certificate file in the office of the Athletic Director.
 - i. 8 & under (must be age 6 before August 1st but cannot be 9 years old before August 1st.)
 - ii. 10 & under (cannot be 11 years old before August 1st.)
 - iii. 12 & under (cannot be 13 years old before August 1st.)
- B. A new player must be on the team roster and present his/her birth certificate to the sponsoring Recreation and Parks Department before he/she is eligible to play in a league game. Only new players who have not participated in the league may be added to a team's roster no later than September 8th.
 - i. Any participant found to be ineligible due to clerical error on behalf of the sponsoring Recreation and Parks Department will be ineligible to participate for the remainder of that season, unless corrective measures are implemented. No disciplinary action will be taken against the team involved.
- C. Each player must play on the team with which he/she signed up for the entire season unless released by the Head Coach and their sponsoring Recreation and Parks Department on the contract form. A player may **NOT** be released to another team after September 7th of the playing year. Failure to obtain a release will result in suspension of the player for the remainder of the regular season.
- D. A player may move up and play in an older League if he/she desires, but after he/she has participated in one (1) league game with that team, he/she must play in that age group for the remainder of the season.
- E. If a player is on a middle school football roster on and after August 24th, he/she is ineligible to participate in the 12 & Under Football League.
- F. Players participating in the Metro Youth Football League cannot be listed on any other tackle football roster during the current football season.
- G. Teams must have a minimum of 20 players on their official team roster by August 17th to participate in the upcoming season and may not exceed a maximum of a 40-player official team roster at any point in the season.
- H. Parents shall be responsible for seeing that their child is examined by his family doctor before he/she is allowed to play.
- I. It is mandatory that the official team roster be completed in full and typed: showing the player's name exactly how it appears on his/her birth certificate with no use of nicknames or other. The player's birth date and complete mailing address must be filled in. For age verification, birth certificates must be presented to the sponsoring Recreation and Parks Staff member.

III. PRINCIPLES OF YOUTH ATHLETICS:

- A. It is the aim of the Metro Youth Football League to provide organized games and activities, recreation facilities, supervision and leadership to its citizens in their ideals and interests in the area of leisure time activities and/or its organization.
- B. To promote the ideals of good sportsmanship, teach basic skills, develop individual talents, and provide an opportunity to enjoy the best possible recreation advantages and atmospheres.
- C. To recognize the youth participant as an individual with particular abilities and limitations. A great deal of consideration must be given to his physical, mental, emotional, and social development with every precaution taken to ensure that each is developed to its highest potential.

IV. DISCIPLINARY ACTION: (Including: parents, spectators, coaches, and players)

- A. Ejection from Game..... Minimum 1/2 Game Suspension
 - 1. Ejection from a game can result from using profanity or from displaying unsportsmanlike behavior.
- B. Threatening an Official/Anyone.....Minimum 1 Calendar Year Suspension
- C. Hitting an Official/Anyone.....Minimum 1 Calendar Year Suspension
 - 1. Any coach, parent or spectator ejected must leave the playing facility immediately upon ejection and go to the parking lot; however, a player may remain at the playing facility.
 - 2. All suspensions will be reviewed by the Recreation Staff to determine if further disciplinary action needs to be taken. All decisions concerning disciplinary actions by the Recreation and Parks Department are FINAL.
 - 3. Individuals can be suspended after the game for unsportsmanlike conduct by a game official or recreation staff member.

V. EQUIPMENT:

- A. All teams must furnish their own numbered uniforms and equipment, which will consist of helmet, shoulder pads, hip pads, socks, regulation shoes (molded rubber cleats) or tennis shoes. No street shoes or boots allowed. ALL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT MUST BE NOC-SAE APPROVED.
- B. Face guards and mouth pieces are mandatory. Knee pads must be worn and cover the knees.
- C. The Recreation and Parks Departments will furnish the footballs for all scheduled games.
- D. The official football will be Wilson K2 for 8U and 10U games; Wilson TDJ for 12U games.
- E. If possible, the playing field will be a regulation size high school field for all age groups.
- F. All teams must furnish their own individual first aid kits. At a minimum these kits should contain: 1 1/2-inch adhesive tape, elastic ace bandages, disposable latex gloves, regular and large band aids, Tylenol, hydrogen peroxide, betadine, Neosporin, gauze rolls and pads, cotton, and cold packs.

VI. PROTESTS:

- A. Protests can only be made concerning the eligibility of players' age. Any player being found ineligible due to age will result in forfeiture of all games in which this individual has participated.
- B. Protests concerning the eligibility of the players' age may simply be called to the attention of the sponsoring Recreation and Parks Department. NO FORMAL PROTEST REQUIRED.

VII. AWARDS:

- A. A team trophy or plaque and individual medallions will be awarded to the League Champion.
- B. In the event of a tie for the Conference Championship (determined by win-loss records), both teams will be declared co-champions, but head-to-head play will determine how the teams are seeded for the tournament.
- C. A team trophy or plaque will be awarded to the League Champions.
- D. A finalist plaque will be awarded to the League Runner-up

VIII. OFFICIALS:

- A. All officials will be furnished and assigned by the Football Booking Agent.
- B. Officials will have complete control of all games.
- C. After the game has begun, the assigned officials or recreation staff will be responsible for discontinuing the game for any reason.
- D. The officials' decision on all calls will be final.

IX. PRACTICES:

- A. No-contact practices must not begin prior to the week of July 27th. (Helmets Only)
- B. Practices in full equipment must not begin prior to the week of August 3rd.
- C. Limitations on the number of practices:
 - 1. Pre-Season - Each team will be allowed a maximum of three 2-hour practices per week in the pre-season.
 - 2. During Season - Each team will be allowed a maximum of two 2-hour practices per week if they have a game scheduled. If a team has a "bye", they will be allowed three 2-hour practices that week.

X. "MERCY RULE" (ALL AGE GROUPS)

- A. With a lead of 24 or more points in the 2nd half, the clock will become a running clock for everyone. The clock will only stop for injuries and time-outs. If the lead gets back below 24 points, the clock will resume to normal rules.
- B. With a lead of 24 or more points in the 2nd half, the team that is trailing in points will receive the ball on the 50-yard line and start their offensive possession. If there is a change of possession, the team trailing in points will restart their offensive possession on the 50-yard line. If the defense gains possession of the ball by a fumble or interception, the play will be called dead on possession and the team trailing in points will restart their offensive possession on the 50-yard line.
- C. This "Mercy Rule" will continue until the score deficit is below 24 points, or we reach the end of the game.

XI. PRE-GAME ROUTINE

- A. Team Warmups – Teams are permitted on the field no earlier than 60 minutes prior to the scheduled start time. Coaches are responsible that all warmups are conducted safely and properly supervised.
- B. Team Runout – Teams must lineup by their designated sideline and enter the field of play in an orderly fashion. The use of music, announcements, or smoke machines may accompany the runout.
- C. 5th Quarter – All age groups will play a 5th Quarter to start the game. Each team will have 4 minutes to be on offense and 4 minutes to be on defense. The clock will be running, and no score is kept during this period. It is preferred that teams utilize the end zone closest to the scoreboard.
- D. Captains and Coaches Meeting – The team captains, one coach (preferably head coach), and at least one team representation are required to meet at the 50-yard line with game officials. The coin toss procedures will be conducted, in addition to any rule clarifications and sportsmanship expectations.
- E. Kickoff / Game Start – The game should begin promptly at the scheduled time unless delayed by weather, officiating, or if the first game goes longer than anticipated.

8 & Under - Rules

Game Time & 5th Quarter

- A. North Carolina High School Federation Rules and Regulations will be adopted with the following exception of quarters which will be eight (8) minutes. Four, eight-minute quarters will constitute a game.
- B. The clock will only stop for touchdowns, time outs and penalties except for the last two (2) minutes of each half, in which the clock will be a “JV Regulation Clock”. Half time is four (4) minutes long. The clock starts on the ready for play signal from the Referee after a kickoff or change of possession.
- C. There will be a 5th Quarter that will begin right before the 1st Quarter. The Visiting Team will start on offense and will start from the defensive team’s 10-yard line and have 4 downs to score. Any turnover (interception or fumble) will be blown dead when the defense gains possession of the ball. Any score in this 5th quarter period will not be counted for that game. The offensive team will reset at the 10-yard line after a touchdown or failed 4th down attempt. This will continue until the teams switch up on offense and defense after 4 minutes. (It is encouraged to allow the players who don’t play as much in the regular game minutes to get their mandatory playing time). Each team may have one (1) Coach on the field for offense and defense.
- D. Mandatory Playing Rule – For teams with 24 or fewer dressed players, each player must play a minimum of 9 plays per game. For teams with 25-33 dressed players, each player must play a minimum of 7 plays per game. For teams with 34 or more dressed players, each player must play a minimum of 5 plays per game. (Fifth Quarter plays do count as plays per game). **Two (2) time-outs per half.**

Scoring

- A. On an extra point attempt, the offensive team can advance the ball on the ground into the endzone for (1) point or pass the ball into the endzone for (2) two points. If the ball is turned over during the extra point attempt to the defensive team, the play will stop immediately.
- B. Overtime: There will be a coin flip (called by the home team) to decide who attempts to score first in overtime. Overtime will consist of one play per team from the 3-yard line. Scoring will follow the extra point attempt rules (see above). Both teams will get an opportunity to score. At the end of the first overtime, if the score is still tied, the team who went last in the order will go first in the next overtime and the team who went first will go last. This will continue until there is no longer a tie at the end of the overtime period.

General Rules

- A. There are no kick-offs in 8U. The “receiving team” will gain possession of the ball on their own 35-yard line.
- B. Ten (10) yards will be assessed for a major penalty when playing on an 80-yard field.
- C. The Offensive Center will be allowed to snap the ball with no one directly lined up over him. The defensive player must line up one (1) yard away from the center. The only time the defense player is allowed to line up over center will be if the offense is inside their 10-yard line, otherwise the center is protected.

Coaches

- A. There will only be seven (7) total Coaches per team allowed on the sidelines.
- B. All Coaches must have passed a Background Check to be eligible to coach.
- C. Only the Head Coach is allowed to speak to the Football Officials.
- D. One coach is allowed to be on the field with the players to assist in lining them up for offense and defense.

Punting

- A. On 4th down, the offensive team’s coach will tell the referee what his/her team will do.
 - a. If punting, the referee takes the ball and marks it 20 yards from the previous spot. Offensive and defensive teams switch.
 - i. Note: If a team decides to punt inside their opponent’s 25-yard line, the ball will be placed half the distance to the goal line.

10 & Under - Rules

Game Time & 5th Quarter

- A. North Carolina High School Federation Rules and Regulations will be adopted with the following exception of quarters which will be eight (8) minutes. Four (4) eight (8) minute quarters will constitute a game.
- B. The clock will only stop for touchdowns, time outs and penalties except for the last two (2) minutes of each half, in which the clock will be a "JV Regulation Clock". Half time is four (4) minutes long. **Two (2) time-outs per half.** The clock starts on the ready for play signal from the Referee after a kickoff or change of possession.
- C. There will be a 5th Quarter that will begin right before the 1st Quarter. The Visiting Team will start on offense and will start from the defensive team's 10-yard line and have 4 downs to score. Any turnover (interception or fumble) will be blown dead when the defense gains possession of the ball. Any score in this 5th quarter period will not be counted for that game. The offensive team will reset at the 10-yard line after a touchdown or failed 4th down attempt. This will continue until the teams switch up on offense and defense after 4 minutes. (It is encouraged to allow the players who don't play as much in the regular game minutes to get their mandatory playing time). Each team may have one (1) Coach on the field for offense and defense.
- D. Mandatory Playing Rule – For teams with 24 or fewer dressed players, each player must play a minimum of 9 plays per game. For teams with 25-33 dressed players, each player must play a minimum of 7 plays per game. For teams with 34 or more dressed players, each player must play a minimum of 5 plays per game. (Fifth Quarter plays do count as plays per game)

Scoring

- A. On an extra point attempt, the offensive team can advance the ball on the ground into the endzone (1) point or pass the ball into the endzone for (2) two points. If the ball is turned over during the extra point attempt to the defensive team, the play will stop immediately.
- B. Overtime: There will be a coin flip (called by the home team) to decide who attempts to score first in overtime. Overtime will consist of one play per team from the 3-yard line. Scoring will follow the extra point attempt rules (see above). Both teams will get an opportunity to score. At the end of the first overtime, if the score is still tied, the team who went last in the order will go first in the next overtime and the team who went first will go last. This will continue until there is no longer a tie at the end of the overtime period.

General Rules

- A. Ten (10) yards will be assessed for a major penalty when playing on an 80-yard field.

Coaches

- A. There will only be seven (7) total Coaches per team allowed on the sidelines. All Coaches must have passed a Background Check to be eligible to coach.
- B. Only the Head Coach is allowed to speak to the Football Officials.

Punting

- A. On 4th down, the offense's Head Coach will tell the official what his/her team will do. The officials must then notify the defensive head coach of what the offense will do. If punting, the team that is punting has two (2) options:
 - (A) The referee takes the ball and marks it 20 yards from the previous spot. Offensive and defensive teams switch. Note: If a team decides to punt inside their opponent's 25-yard line, the ball will be placed half the distance to the goal line.
 - (B) The team that is punting may snap it to their punter with no rush from the opposing team. The team that is punting cannot release off the line until the ball crosses the line of scrimmage. The receiving team is allowed to return the punt. The punting team is not allowed to fake the punt.

12 & Under - Rules

Game Time & 5th Quarter

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- B. The clock will only stop for touchdowns, time outs and penalties except for the last two (2) minutes of each half, in which the clock will be a “JV Regulation Clock”. Half time is four (4) minutes long. The clock starts on the ready for play signal from the Referee after a kickoff or change of possession.
- C. There will be a 5th Quarter that will begin right before the 1st Quarter. The Visiting Team will start on offense and will start from the defensive team’s 10-yard line and have 4 downs to score. Any turnover (interception or fumble) will be blown dead when the defense gains possession of the ball. Any score in this 5th quarter period will not be counted for that game. The offensive team will reset at the 10-yard line after a touchdown or failed 4th down attempt. This will continue until the teams switch up on offense and defense after 4 minutes. (It is encouraged to allow the players who don’t play as much in the regular game minutes to get their mandatory playing time). Each team may have one (1) Coach on the field for offense and defense.
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General Rules

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Coaches

- A. There will only be seven (7) total Coaches per team allowed on the sidelines. All Coaches must have passed a Background Check to be eligible to coach.
- B. Only the Head Coach is allowed to speak to the Football Officials.

Punting

- A. On 4th down, the offensive team is allowed to attempt the 4th down conversion, punt, or attempt a fake punt.