



OFFICIAL PLAYING RULES

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ARTICLE I: General

All coaches, parent representatives, athletic directors, cheerleader sponsors and coordinators will be familiar with and abide by all rules, regulations and Bylaws of the league. All F.H.S.A.A. rules and contract Bylaws apply where applicable.

ARTICLE II: Age & Weight Divisions

DIVISION	AGES	MAXIMUM WEIGHT
Tiny-Mite (older/lighter)	5-6-7 N/A	75 lbs N/A
Mitey-Mite (older/lighter)	7-8-9 N/A	90 lbs N/A
Pee Wee (older/lighter)	9-10-11 12*	120 lbs 100 lbs
Junior Varsity (older/lighter)	10-11-12-13 N/A	135 lbs N/A

ARTICLE III: Area Eligibility

(A). **PLAYING IN DESIGNATED ZONE:** Football players and Cheerleaders will use their zones designated by the Gulf Coast Youth Football Association. The address maintained by the Bay County School System will be considered the official address of any participant; check current report card and/or utility bill.

1. Participants living in areas that do not field a team in the participant's respective age group will be allowed to play for any area fielding a team.
2. If a participant's residence changes during the active football season and is under a current contract that participant has the option to either continue play with the original team holding their contract or may opt to join the team in their new area. This can only be done within the first three weeks. **ONCE THIS CHOICE IS MADE, IT CAN NOT BE CHANGED.** Once registered with an area, any participant, to include Football players, Cheerleaders, Coaches and Sponsors can not change to another area without extenuating circumstances and require approval by the rules committee.
3. Players and cheerleaders that participated during the previous season for a particular area have the option to return to that area. If more than one area was played for, the option only applies to the last area played for in the previous season. Once this choice is made, it can not be changed.

(B). OUT OF AREA RECRUITING: NO OUT OF AREA RECRUITING. Violations will go to the Protest Committee.

1. **Penalties:** The penalty is a \$250.00 fine paid by the area and the person or persons found guilty will be suspended from the league for a minimum of one year (12 months).

(C). WAIVERS: Players and Cheerleaders who wish to participate with an area out of zone must request a waiver to be eligible.

1. All areas must require a waiver prior to registering the child with their area. Some areas may or may not grant waivers for their areas Football teams or Cheerleading squads.

2. This waiver must be signed and released by both areas involved to be eligible and must be completed prior to the GCYFA registration. No area shall have more than four waived participants per squad or team.

ARTICLE IV: Registration & Rosters

(A). AREA SQUADS: Area teams must be registered with the GCYFA as scheduled by the league Secretary.

1. **ROSTER LIMITS:** The maximum number of players allowed on each squad's official roster are as follows;

- a. Jr. Varsity- A limit of thirty-five (35) players can be on the official roster.
- b. Pee Wee - A limit of thirty-five (35) players can be on the official roster.
- c. Mighty Mite - A limit of thirty-five (35) players can be on the official roster.
- d. Tiny Mite - A limit of thirty-five (35) players can be on the official roster.

(B). ATHLETES: A football player or Cheerleader may be registered up to the end of the third week of the league schedule for the current year. After that time, no football player or cheerleader may be registered.

1. **Dual Participation:** If a football player appears on the roster for a similar school program, they are not eligible for the GCYFA program.

a. Any squad in violation will forfeit any and all games played while the participant was registered. If an area/team is found in violation during, or after the season, the head coach will be suspended from the GCYFA for a period of 12 months.

2. **Eligibility:** Player eligibility qualifications will consist of parent's notarized signature(s) on one original GCYFA league contract with one photo provided by the GCYFA of the player in current numerical game jersey. Certified birth certificates (or certified copies), Military I.D. cards, and/or passports will be accepted as proof of age. No participant shall be allowed to start or play in a regular season scheduled game until this criterion has been met.

a. The GCYFA reserves the right to refuse or question any proof of age presented for registration purposes.

b. A current report card reflecting address or utility bill will be accepted as proof of residency.

c. All areas will be responsible for the accurate eligibility of their participants. Any fraudulent identification will result in the forfeiture of all games that an ineligible player weighed in to play. Any area found to be in conscious violation, as ruled by the protest committee of the above stated rules, will be fined \$100 per forfeited game. Fine(s) must be paid before the squad(s) will be eligible for playoffs.

- (C). **COACHES, AREA BOARD MEMBERS, AND VOLUNTEERS:** All coaches, cheerleader sponsors, area Board of Directors and authorized assistants are required to have signed GCYFA Contracts with current photo on file with the league.
1. All coaches, board members, and volunteers must pass a criminal background check. Any person that has a record of sexual misconduct, drugs, or domestic violence within the last five (5) years is automatically prohibited from serving as a volunteer of the GCYFA, or its member areas. Other charges will be up to the member areas' discretion.
 2. All coaches, board members, and volunteers must be at least 18 years of age. The exception will be one (1) Coach In Training, per squad. The Coach In Training may be between the ages of 15 to 17 years of age, but may not turn 18 anytime before December 1st of the current year.

ARTICLE V: Equipment & Uniforms

- (A). **MANDATORY EQUIPMENT:** Each player will be furnished the following as a minimum; N.O.C.S.A.E. approved helmet and shoulder pads, pants with thigh, hip, tail, and knee pads and a game jersey. All N.F.H.S. Rules apply with exceptions to GCYFA rules where applicable.
1. Players will obtain and use approved mouthpieces and rubber cleats. Screw-in cleats are prohibited. Cleats will be checked by the Field Representative during the weigh-in process. Violation of this rule will result in a 15 yard penalty and disqualification of player until proper cleats are worn by the disqualified player.
- (B). **TEAM UNIFORMS:** White is the only trim color allowed, unless approved by the Board of Directors. Area mascot names and colors are listed in Appendix A of this document.
1. Areas are not allowed to change jersey colors and/or area names to any extent without submitting a letter of request and approval from the Board of Directors.
 2. Commercial logos and/or signs will be allowed on jerseys.
- (C). **OFFICIAL FOOTBALLS:** All balls must be made of leather, no composite or composite leather balls will be allowed. The use of an illegal ball may result in game forfeiture by ruling of the rules / protest committee.
1. Tiny Mite, Mighty Might, and Pee Wee teams will use the Wilson K-2 football or the Nike 2000K. Jr. Varsity teams will use the Wilson TDJ or the Nike 2000J.
 - a. No other footballs are authorized for play in the GCYFA.
 - b. All violations will result in immediate forfeiture of the current game.
 - c. The game ball(s) must be presented to the Officiating Crew prior to the start of the game by each team.
 2. The Rules Committee will approve any changes to the type of balls used.

ARTICLE VI: Practices

- (A). **PRE-SEASON PRACTICE:** Practice and/or conditioning shall not begin prior to August 1st.
1. Each player must have a minimum of five (5) practice days for physical conditioning before starting drills involving full contact. Helmets may be worn during these conditioning days.
 2. Upon late registration there will be a one (1) game waiting period.

- (B). FREQUENCY & LENGTH:** Sessions will not last more than two (2) hours or be held more than once a day. The week shall run from Saturday through Friday for seven (7) days a week.
1. Beginning August 1st, a maximum of five (5) practice sessions per week will be allowed.
 2. Four (4) practice sessions will be allowed per week after the start of public schools and during bye week if applicable.
 3. Fun-day activities do not count as practices.
 4. Three (3) practices a week and one game are allowed after the start of the regular season.
 5. Teams involved during play-off week will be allowed three (3) practices and two (2) league scheduled games.

ARTICLE VII: Pre-Season

- (A). ANNUAL JAMBOREE:** The GCYFA Annual Jamboree will be scheduled by the Rules Committee Chairperson and will be attended by all areas without exception.
1. Each area must have one (1) volunteer available at all times during the GCYFA Annual Jamboree. Failure to have a volunteer available will result in a \$250 fine to the area, payable to the GCYFA.
- (B). AREA FUN DAYS:** Any area may elect to host a Fun Day for revenue purposes. Fun Days are invitation only and are not mandatory for areas to attend.

ARTICLE VIII: Games

- (A). SCHEDULING & LENGTH OF GAMES:** The Rules Commissioner will be responsible for the scheduling of all regular season, and playoff games with the approval of the Rules Committee. The following guidelines are to be used:
1. The regular season schedule will be a minimum of eight (8) games, and a maximum of ten (10) games for all age divisions.
 - a. Home and visitor slots, as well as game locations, will be divided up as equally as possible.
 - b. All cancelled or postponed games due to inclement weather will automatically be rescheduled for the following Saturday. Rescheduled games will be played prior to the regular scheduled game.
 2. All games will consist of four equal quarters, ten minutes each. The youngest age group will play the first game on each evening.
 3. On game nights, the second game will begin 15 minutes after the completion of the first game or at the scheduled game time, whichever is later. A 15-yard penalty may be assessed at the referee's discretion for any violation. A second violation will result in a forfeit to the offending team.
- (B). WEIGH-IN POLICIES:** The official league field representative will be present, conduct and verify all weigh-ins before every game, including playoff games.
1. All players must meet maximum and minimum age and weight requirements to be eligible for play.

2. A growth weight will be added to each team beginning at the second week for all players at a rate of one (1) pound a week to a maximum of nine pounds of growth weight. A player must meet the official weigh-in requirement by the third (3rd) week of the regular season, or move up to the next division.
3. Each team must have one coach present at weigh-ins, and each coach must sign off on the designated approval form. In substitution of a coach, a parent representative appointed by the Head Coach, and approved by the GCYFA may witness the weigh-in process.
4. All players will be weighed in prior to each game and must physically stand on the scale individually.
 - a. There will be no pre-weighing prior to the official weigh in.
 - b. A league official must initial the weigh-in roster.
 - c. Weigh-in will be at 5:30 PM for the first game of the night. The gate will open at 5:00 PM to admit coaches and players for warm-ups, etc. Any area that can, but refuses to not field a team 30 minutes after weigh-in will be fined \$200.00.
 - d. No player will be weighed-in after kick-off with the exception of the early weeknight games. Players who miss the pre-game weigh-in may be weighed in at half-time by the Field Representative. A representative from both teams must witness the weigh-in.
 - e. Procedures for team books, rosters, player cards, and certification will be outlined in Appendix E attached to this document.
5. Each player weighed-in must have his numerical jersey in his possession. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
 - a. Any one caught swapping jerseys will cause the team to forfeit that game, the head coach will be suspended for one year (12 months).
6. If a player fails to meet the weight requirements, he/she must move to the end of the line and will be allowed only one more attempt. If said player fails the second attempt, the player is no longer eligible to participate in that game.
 - a. The player must remove both helmet and shoulder pads to sit with the team on the sidelines.
7. No sweating down will be tolerated. Any player attempting to lose weight by sweating down at the field will be brought before the rules committee for disciplinary action, not to exclude any penalties, forfeiture of game and/or suspension of player and/or coach found guilty of encouraging the infraction.

(C). GAME OFFICIALS: During all games, the field referee will have the authority over all actions at the playing fields. Their decisions will be binding to all concerned and they will have final authority. The field referee may take required action, including ejection of person(s) from the game or stadium. The GCYFA Field Representative and/or security shall carry out decisions of removal and decisions of the field referees. The notification of such actions shall be made to the GCYFA within 24 hours by the referees and the GCYFA field representative and/or security. The following describes the chain of authority on the playing field, and in the playing venue.

1. **Field Representative(s)** - This officer is primarily responsible for all activities in and around their respective field(s) and will be responsible for the enforcement of all Gulf Coast Youth Football Association, Inc. rules and guidelines as stated in the Official Playing Rules.
 - a. Field Representatives shall be of the age of at least 21 years.
 - b. Field Representatives will be approved and appointed by the Executive Board.
 - c. The Field Representative will attend a rules clinic with the Rules Committee Chairman.

2. **Officiating Crew:** The officials used will be those secured by the league. Florida high school rules are to be used unless specifically amended by the Board of Directors.
 - a. Prior to approval of the Officials contract, the Rules Committee will review the proposed contract for compliance with the current GCYFA rules and bylaws.
3. **Coaches:** The coaches and athletic directors will be in charge of their team(s) activities.

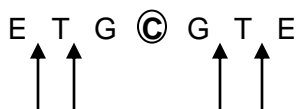
(D). AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL: Only the following personnel will be allowed on the sidelines during games:

1. **Coaches & Staff:** No more than one (1) head coach, four (4) assistants, (1) coach in training, (1) parent representative (with permission from head coach), maximum of two (2) water persons, one (1) medic, (1) cheerleader sponsor and (2) co-sponsors and one(1) team mom will be allowed on the sidelines.
 - a. A 15-yard penalty may be assessed for any violation of the above.
 - b. Any ineligible player may be on the bench only if no pads are on and the opposing team obtains permission. This means no helmet or shoulder pads.
2. **Press:** Any person(s) with press credentials may enter the sideline area. A
 - a. All press must be in an area that will not interfere with the coaches, officials, or players.
 - b. Only members of the press will be allowed to have video cameras on the sideline. No other video cameras will be allowed.
3. **Chain Crew:** The visiting team must furnish three (3) people for the chains and down marker.
 - a. The referee will assess a penalty for delay of game on the visiting team for failure to have three (3) people ready for kick-off.
 - b. Any un-sportsmanlike action on the part of the chain crew will result in an automatic penalty of fifteen (15) yards for the visiting team.

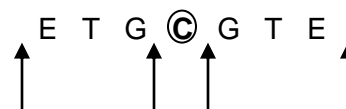
(E). PLAYING RULES SPECIFIC TO THE GCYFA:

1. **Punting:** The punting rule will be “elected” by the Tiny Mite and Mighty Mite divisions. The Pee Wee division will have the option of taking the “elected” punt, or doing a “live” punt. The option must be communicated to the head official prior to opening kickoff. The option can not be changed once the game has begun. Jr. Varsity divisions must do a “Live” punt.
 - a. **Elected Punt:** The following rules apply to an elected punt.
 - (i). The elected punt is for twenty-five (25) yards.
 - (ii). If inside the 30-yard line of the opponent, the elected punt will be one-half of the distance of the goal.
 - b. **Live Punt:**
 - (i). 4-man rush between the offensive ends and guards (2-man rush for each side of the ball). No rush will be allowed between the offensive center and and the offensive guards, or outside the offensive ends. A rush by the defense in either of the non-rush zones will result in a 15 yard penalty against the defense.

LEGAL RUSH



ILLEGAL RUSH



- (ii). No fake punts are allowed
- (iii). A blocked punt is played as a live ball

- (iv). Punting team may send only two (2) receivers downfield to cover the punt at the snap of the football. All other players on the punting team can go into punt coverage once the ball touches the punters foot.
- (v). If the ball should touch the ground prior to the punt, the ball will be ruled dead, and the opposing team will take possession from that spot.

2. Kickoffs: All teams will kick-off as follows:

- a. Tiny Mites and Mighty Mites will start from their 30-yard line. There will be no kickoffs for the Tiny Mite and Mighty Mite divisions.
- b. The Pee Wee and Jr. Varsity will kick-off from the 50-yard line.

3. Extra Points: Extra points will be awarded as followed: 2 points for kicks and 1 point for pass or run.

- a. The extra point attempt is subject to the 25 second play clock.
- b. For 2 point attempts the following criteria will apply for all divisions;
 - (i). The extra point attempt must be conducted within ten (10) seconds of the ball being snapped. The game official will blow the play dead when ten (10) seconds have elapsed.
 - (ii). In the event of an errand snap, in which the holder must change positions to retrieve the ball, the play is to be blown dead by the game official and no further attempts will be allowed.
 - (iii). No fake kicks.
- c. For Tiny Mite and Mighty Mite divisions, no rush will be allowed.
- d. For Pee Wee and Jr. Varsity divisions, 4-man rush between the offensive ends and guards (2-man rush for each side of the ball). No rush will be allowed between the offensive center and the offensive guards, or outside the offensive ends. A rush by the defense in either of the non-rush zones will result in the ball being spotted half the distance to the goal, and the kicking team allowed another attempt at the extra point.

4. Mercy Rule: Any game with a score differential equal to or greater than 24 points shall continue from that point of the game with a continuous running clock.

- a. Upon the 24 point lead being diminished, the clock will revert back to a normal game clock.
- b. All time outs, official injury timeouts, or team time outs will stop the continuous running clock.

5. Tie Breakers: All tie games will be decided by Florida High School rules.

6. Coaches On The Field: Tiny Mites, Mighty Mites, and Pee Wees are allowed one coach on the field during regular play. Jr. Varsity coaches are not allowed on the field during regulation time, except during called time-outs, or during official timeouts.

- a. The coaches on the field are restricted from interfering or coaching in any manner following the break of the offensive huddle.
- b. The offensive huddle is broken upon the quarterback leaving the huddle and the coaches are restricted at that point.
- c. If officials determine that a coach interferes with the normal play of the game, that team will receive an un-sportsmanlike penalty of 10 yards. Upon a second infraction, the coach will be disqualified from that game and must leave the complex and receive a penalty of 15 yards. The coach will not be replaced during regular season games or post-season games.
- d. The use of radio headsets or other communication devices are not allowed on the playing field. Radio headsets and other communication devices are allowed on the sidelines, and around the press box area.

7. **Fields:** Games will be played on a regulation football field.
 8. **Team Introductions:** Each area may introduce their football team and cheerleaders prior to kick-off; however; game time will not be delayed for this privilege.
 9. **National Anthem:** The National Anthem may be played prior to the start of the first game.
- (F). **RECORDS & REPORTING:** The Field Representative will report scoring and all written activity by the head official to the GCYFA Rules Commissioner for league records, standings, and disciplinary action . A record of conference standings shall be posted on the GCYFA website and other public media available to the league.
1. **Officials:** The head official will for each game must submit a written report of any, and all unsportsmanlike activity, ejections, quarterly scoring, and final score to the Field Representative.

ARTICLE IX: Post Season

- (A). **PLAYOFFS / CHAMPIONSHIPS:** The play-off schedule will be approved with the regular season schedule. The following criteria will apply regarding playoffs:
1. The four (4) teams in each age division with the best overall regular season record will be deemed eligible for post season play.
 - a. Tie Breakers will be determined in the following order:
 - (i). Head to head during regular season. If tied teams have played more than once during the regular season, both game scores will be totaled.
 - (ii). Coin toss.
 2. The following playoff/championship schedule will apply. Teams are ranked by their regular season win/loss record.
 - a. Round One: #1 ranked vs. #4 ranked, and #2 ranked vs. #3 ranked.
 - b. Round Two: Winner of #1 vs. #4, will play the winner of #2 vs. #3. The winner of this game will be GCYFA Champions for that particular age division.

ARTICLE X: Conduct & Sportsmanship

- (A). **USE OF TOBACCO & ALCOHOL:** There will be no smoking, chewing tobacco or any use of alcohol by anyone on the sidelines at any time.
1. Officials will assess a 15-yard un-sportsmanlike conduct penalty for any violation and individual(s) will be ejected from the playing field.
 2. Anyone found under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be suspended until the Board of Directors takes whatever action it deems appropriate.
- (B). **EJECTION / DISQUALIFICATION:** If any player is ejected or disqualified by a game official, the ejection and/or disqualification is for the remainder of that game and at least the next game. The ejection of coaches shall last the remainder of that game. If deemed necessary, the Rules Committee may impose further action upon players and/or coaches. The area concerned may make a protest within 72 hours after the game.

1. The ejection / disqualification must be reported to the Field Representative IN WRITING by the Head Official. Procedures for reporting such actions are outlined in "Appendix D" of this document.
 2. The Field Representative is responsible for reporting ejections / disqualifications to the GCYFA Rules Commissioner within 24 hours of the game ending. Field Representative reporting procedures are outlined in "Appendix C" of this document.
 3. Any player suspended, or expelled from school, shall be immediately declared ineligible from any GCYFA activities. This includes, but is not limited to games, competitions, jamborees, fun days, and post-season bowls.
- (B). PHYSICAL ALTERCATIONS:** Any person involved in a physical altercation with any person on, or in the area of the playing field, shall be immediately ejected from the field confines by the Field Representative.
1. The Field Representative shall contact the President, Vice-President and/or Protest Chairperson to make the decision whether further investigation is necessary by the Protest Committee.
 - a. If further investigation is warranted, the Field Representative will notify the League President, the area President, the Rules Committee Chairperson and the accused of a meeting, date and time the incident is to be resolved. The area of the accused must be notified by the Field Representative or the Rules Committee Chairperson.

ARTICLE XI: USE OF ENHANCEMENTS

The use of energy enhancing drinks, or pills by athletes is strictly prohibited by the GCYFA. This includes, but is not limited to substances containing high amounts of caffeine and/or herbal additives to increase performance. Coaches who are found encouraging, or allowing the use of such substances are subject to immediate, and permanent expulsion from GCYFA activities.

ARTICLE XII: Document Revision

- (A). SCHEDULED REVIEWS:** This document shall be reviewed, amended, and approved by the Rules Committee every three (3) years.
- (B). Amendments:** Any proposed amendments outside of those described in paragraph 1, shall be submitted in writing to the Rules Commissioner no later than October 1st of each year in order to be considered for the following season. Such amendments will be reviewed by the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee must pass the proposed amendment by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote, and then submit to the Board of Directors for passage by $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote. Once a proposed amendment has been voted upon, it cannot be reconsidered again until it has been re-submitted using the procedure outlined previously in the this paragraph.
- (C). APPENDIXES:** All appendixes to this document may be reviewed, amended, and approved by the Rules Committee or Executive Board each year. Appendixes must be updated no later than August 1st of the current year.

SECTION XIII: Savors Clause

It is not the intent of the Gulf Coast Youth Football Association, Inc. to violate any laws of the city, county, state or Federal Government that may or may not conflict with the set rules, laws and procedures that govern the

GCYFA or any of its extra curricular activities where rules may deviate for the purpose of fund raising, post season Bowl games and/or tournaments that may or may not include travel by participants.

Appendix A: Area Mascots and Colors

Callaway	-Rebels	Carolina Blue / Black
Hiland Park	-Razorbacks	Maroon / Black / Old Gold
Lynn Haven	-Raiders	Orange / White
Millville	-Warriors	Red / White
Panama City Beach	-Barracudas	Royal Blue / Vegas Gold / Black
Parker	-Pirates	Green /Black / White
Springfield	-Panthers	Red / Black
Forest Park	-Raptors	Red / White / Navy Blue

Updated 06/09

Appendix B: Registration Procedures & Policies

- New player birth certificate and residence verification must be authorized by a GCYFA Executive Board member.
- Registrations turned into the GCYFA after Labor Day will be charged a \$5 late fee by the GCYFA. No Exceptions.
- No partial registrations will be accepted. All required documentation (birth cert., proof of residence, area waiver, etc.) must be attached to the registration in order for it to be accepted.
- The GCYFA will hold a scheduled registration date for all teams and areas on the third Saturday in August. All area football squads must report to the registration for final registration, and individual pictures.

Updated 06/09

Appendix C: Field Representative Reporting

The Field Representative will report scoring and all written activity by the head official to the GCYFA Rules Commissioner for league records, standings, and disciplinary action.

A record of division standings shall be posted on the GCYFA website and other public media available to the league.

Appendix D: Head Official Reporting

The head official for each game must submit a written report of any and all un-sportsman like activity, ejections, quarterly scoring, and final score to the Field Representative.

Official's Reporting forms are available from the Field Representative, immediately following the game. Form must be given to the Field Representative.

The GCYFA will refuse payment to officials for any game unless form has been completed.

OFFICIALS REPORT

Date: _____ Division: _____ Field: _____

SCORING:

TEAM	1 ST Qtr.	2 nd Qtr.	3 rd Qtr.	4 th Qtr.	OT	FINAL

EJECTIONS:

PLAYER/COACH	Jersey #	REASON

OFFICIATING CREW:

Signature of Head Official: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E: Coaches Book, Player Cards, Rosters, and Certification

1. **Coaches Book:** Each squad must have a Coaches Book containing the following;

- Complete roster of all players and coaches
- Completed player card for each player
- Copy of each players' birth certificate
- Copy of each players' proof of residence
- Copy of players' area waiver if applicable

The Coaches Book must accompany the team at all times and made available for inspection by the Field Rep, Rules Commissioner, or any member of the GCYFA Executive Board or it's designee(s).

2. **Player Cards:** Each players' Player Card must be certified by signature or official stamp of the GCYFA Rules Commissioner, Cheer Coordinator, Secretary, or Director of Operations. Stamps and signatures must be in red ink. Player cards are invalid without red stamp or signature