



Midwest 7 on 7 Football

2024 Official Rules

Field Dimensions:

Field Length will be 50 yards. 40 yard playing field with a 10 yard end zone. The width of the field can vary. For youth 10U, 12U, and 14U the minimum width is 40 yards. It is preferred to play on a regulation field space permitting.

Starting Each Game: (More gameplay information available in [Appendix Section 1](#))

1. Coin Toss or Rock Paper Scissors. The toss of the coin will take place within two minutes of the scheduled start time of the game. The toss will be called by the team captain (Ref's Discretion) before the coin is flipped. The winning team will begin possession of the ball on the +40 yard line with their choice of hash.

1.1 During Bracket Play the higher seed gets to choose offense or defense to start the game.

2. A whistle will begin each game.

3. Each game lasts 25 minutes with a running clock (Overtime in Pool Play).

3.1 The clock only stops for an official timeout or a coach called timeout.

4. A whistle will end each game.

5. The referees and field manager will keep the official score and time on the field for each game.

6. Mouth guards are required and must be worn at all times by all players except the QB. If a player does not have one they cannot participate until they do.

7. Soft helmets are optional for each team or player during the event.

7.1 Event organizers can decide if soft helmets will be mandatory at their individual event.

Moving the Ball: (More gameplay information available in [Appendix Section 1](#))

1. Offense always starts on +40 yard line with their choice of the hash after any change of possession.

2. All snaps at the +40 yard can not be penalized or sacked going backward. They will remain at the +40

3. Offense has three (3) downs to gain a first down. The first down markers will be at the 25 and 10 yard lines.
4. Once inside the 10 yard line, the offense has 3 downs to score a touchdown.
5. The first person to control the football off of the snap is the QB. The QB is never eligible to run.
6. The offense may run the ball as many times as they want on any down during the game. The QB is allowed to make one exchange (Ex. Pass, handoff or toss). No toss passes, reverses or hook and ladders.
7. Defensive players cannot cross the line on a run play until the quarterback hands the ball off to the RB/WR. If he does, that is considered a blitz.
8. Quarterbacks can NEVER run the ball. In the case of a blitz, the quarterback is allowed to evade the players blitzing and the 4 second clock is no longer valid.
9. A Fumbled or Dropped offensive snap is a dead ball and loss of down. The ball is returned to the original line of scrimmage if the offense has downs remaining.

Coaching your Team: (More coaching information available in [Appendix Section 2](#))

1. There will be Two offensive coaches allowed on the field at any time.
2. The coaches must be positioned behind the offensive huddle.
3. Coaches are not allowed to challenge any official ruling. There is no replay so the on field call is final.
4. The remaining team coaches can work from the sidelines.
5. NO defensive coaches allowed on the field.
6. Coaches will be given 1 sideline warning during play. A second warning would result in a 10 yard penalty or half the distance to the goal. A third warning will result in coaches ejection.
7. No more than 5 coaches are allowed on the sidelines.

Special Rules: (More defense information available in [Appendix Section 3](#))

1. NO blocking is allowed in the game. This means shielding, picking or obstructing. Once a pass is completed all offensive players are required to stop moving in their existing location.

1. Any attempt to block or impede a defensive player will result in a loss of down and return to the previous spot.
2. Face guarding is allowed however, pass interference rules will apply for contact that obstructs the receiver. The pass interference rules are not NFL or College, they are the High School rules.
3. The ball carrier is legally down when touched below the neck with one hand. A defender may leave his feet to make a tag.
4. Offensive teams will have 25 seconds to put the ball into play. Delay of game is a loss of down.
5. The offensive team is responsible for retrieving and returning the ball to the official. The clock does not stop, and any delay of the offense in retrieving and returning the ball to the official will result in delay of game.
6. Defensive pass interference or defensive holding will result in a first down at the next first down marker regardless of the distance of the foul from the next first down marker. If the foul occurs when the offense is within the 10 yard line or in the endzone, the offense is granted first down at the 1 yard line.
7. Offensive pass interference will result in a return to the previous spot plus a loss of down.
8. The QB is allowed 4.0 seconds to throw the ball. Referees will stop play if 4.0 seconds have surpassed. When the defense blitzes the 4.0 second clock is not in play meaning the QB can avoid the rush for as many seconds as needed, but he is still not allowed to run past the line of scrimmage.
9. The defense is allowed one (1) blitz in the entire game (including overtime), meaning if you don't blitz during the 25 minute game it carries over to overtime, but if you used your blitz in the 25 minute game you do not have a blitz for overtime.
10. An interception will result in an immediate stoppage of play and a change of possession, with the interception team gaining possession at the 40 yard line.
11. Excessive celebration is not allowed and will not be tolerated. If a team clears the sideline to celebrate a touchdown and delay the game, they will be penalized a first down on defense on the next opponent's offensive drive/possession. If on an extra point, the team will be penalized a first down on defense and the extra point will not count.

12. A game cannot end on a defensive penalty. If this occurs, the offense will have an untimed down if time has expired. The down will be played from the location of the assessed penalty meaning the first down location that the ball will be placed will be the location of the one untimed down.

13. Fighting will not be tolerated. If a player throws a punch, they are ejected immediately and can NOT return to the game. If players are involved in pushing or shoving the initial incident will be penalized as a loss of down on the offensive team or first down on the defensive team. However, if the issue persists, participating players will be ejected immediately from the game and cannot return for the rest of the game. If a team's bench clears, resulting in a fight, both teams are ejected, resulting in a forfeit of the game by both teams. The referee has the right to eject any player, players, or team from the game for fighting. The event staff has the right in extreme cases to expel players and teams from the remainder of the tournament. The expelled group will have to leave the complex immediately and not return to the event.

Tie Breaker: (More Tie Breaker information available in [Appendix Section 5](#))

1. Any game that ends in a tie will go to a tiebreaker. There will be a coin toss at the beginning of the tiebreaker with the home team calling the toss. The winner will choose to be on either offense or defense.
2. Each team will have 1 snap from the 40 yard line, choice of hash.
3. The team with the deepest completion will be declared the winner of the tiebreaker and will add 1 point to the final score.
4. If there is no completion, or the deepest completion is equal, the tiebreaker will be repeated with the team that lost the initial coin toss making the choice to either take offense or defense.
5. This format will be repeated until a clear winner is declared.
6. This tiebreaker format will be used in all games

SHOOT-OUT BRACKET FORMAT:

1. All teams will be seeded in the bracket based on Day 1 win/loss and Day 1 schedule. 2. All teams will play a minimum of 3 - 4 games during the event.

BRACKET SEEDING WILL BE DETERMINED BY:

1. Record
2. Fewest points allowed
3. Total points scored
4. Point differential total score minus total give up
5. Rock Paper Scissors

SCORING AND POINT VALUES:

1. Offensive touchdown is worth 6 points.
 - 1.1 Teams may choose to take 1 point
 - 1.2 Teams may choose to run a play from the 10 yard line for a chance to score 2 extra points. If the team succeeds the total is 8 points. If the extra point fails the team does not get any more than the base 6 points added to their score.
2. Tiebreaker victory = 1 point.
3. The ball must be touching or across the goal line for a touchdown to be scored. If it is deemed by the officials that the ball was caught by a player whose body is in the end zone, but the ball did not touch the goal line before the player with possession is touched down by a defender. It is not a score. The ball is placed short of the goal line.
4. The defense is awarded 2 points for intercepting the ball and awarded the ball at the 40 yard line. There are NO interception returns. The whistle is blown when the interception is completed.

PENALTIES:

Offensive Penalties Assessed Result

False Start/Illegal Motion Line of Scrimmage - Loss of Down

Delay in Game Line of Scrimmage - Loss of Down

Blocking Line of Scrimmage - Loss of Down

Pass Interference Line of Scrimmage - Loss of Down

Unnecessary Roughness - Loss of Down

Illegal Play - Loss of Down

Unsportsmanlike Conduct - 15 Yards / Loss of Down

Defense Penalties Assessed Result

Encroachment/Neutral zone - 5 yards / Repeat Down

Holding Offense - First down at the next first down marker or at the 1 if inside the 10 yard line.

Pass Interference - First down at the next first down marker or at the 1 if inside the 10 yard line.

Unnecessary Roughness - First down at the next first down marker or at the 1 if inside the 10 yard line.

Illegal Blitz - 5 yards / Repeat Down

Unsportsmanlike conduct - First down at the next first down marker or at the 1 if inside the 10 yard line.

Eligibility (More age division information available in [Appendix Section 7](#))

Multiple Teams in the same event:

Organizations with multiple teams in the same age group: During check-in, each player will be given a different color wristband to represent their team. Once a team is eliminated from tournament play that disqualifies those players on the losing team from further play during that day. Wristbands are not interchangeable among players. All players from multi-team organizations must have a wristband to be eligible to compete. This will be monitored by Field Managers and tournament staff. Any players/teams that are caught switching wristbands or competing without a wristband will be automatically eliminated from the tournament. **PLAYERS CANNOT PLAY ON MORE THAN ONE TEAM FOR THE ENTIRETY OF THE EVENT.**

Age Rules For Midwest 7v7 Football

Reasoning:

1. It's not easy to verify a grade but we can verify an age
2. If the age cut-off is set for the end of the season there is still a chance that a kid could age out during the season
3. If we set the age cut-off for before the event is played we would be spending hours checking birth certificates and licenses.

Age cut off

We have followed other 7v7 organizations and set the cut-off for the beginning of the year as the season runs spring through summer so valid ages will be applied to the entire season. A player is the age they were on January 1 of the current year.

Application of the cut-off rule

Players are eligible to play up or in higher age divisions (14yo can play in 15u or 18u)

Players are NOT eligible to play down or in a lower age divisions (14yo can not play in 12u)

High School - 18U Division

No player that is older than 18 on 12/31 of the previous year is eligible to play. Your age must be 18 or younger as of January 1 of the current season.

Freshman - 15U Division

Players must be 15 or younger on January 1, of the current year

Middle School Division - 14U Division

Players must be 14 or younger on January 1 of the current year.

Youth Division - 12U Division

Players must be 12 or younger on January 1 of the current year.

Child Division - 10U Division

Players must be 10 or younger on January 1 of the current year.

Age Verification during events

Coaches are recommended to keep a binder or some sort of media with them containing identifying copies of information for all team participants.

Acceptable forms of identification documents printed or digital

- **Zorts Player Card**
- **National Prospect ID**
- **Drivers License**
- **School ID with Birthdate**
- **State ID**
- **Birth Certificate**

Player eligibility disputes

There are NO player eligibility disputes allowed. All players are age verified before the event to ensure a fair and proper tournament. Any questions regarding this process can be directed to the tournament director after the event. Games will not be delayed for coach concerns.

Football Sizes

10U - TDJ

12U - TDJ

14U - TDY

15U/18U - Regulation NFHS ball

Appendix: Tournament Rules and Processes Explained

1. Gameplay Rules:

1.1 Time announcements at 15, 10, 5 minutes, with consistent updates in the last 2 minutes.

1.2 One exchange per play; no additional ball exchanges during a live play. (Flips, hook and ladders, double pass, etc)

1.3 Overly aggressive DB pressing that crosses the line of scrimmage results in the team's 1 blitz for the game.

1.4 Defensive player crossing the line before QB exchange is used as the defensive team's blitz.

1.5 Fumbles post-QB exchange result in a dead play; ball spotted where the fumble occurred.

1.6 Any attempt to block or impede a defensive player results in a loss of down and return to the previous spot.

2. Coach Responsibilities:

2.1 Each coach receives free entry into the event.

2.2 Coaches are responsible for knowing and educating players on all rules.

2.3 Sideline maintenance and timely paperwork/payment submission are the coach's responsibility.

2.4 Team rosters must be entered and updated before each event.

2.5 Players must be on the team's roster for each event to be eligible to play.

3. Defensive Play Rules:

- 3.1 Defensive players do not have to look for the ball in the air.
- 3.2 No physical impeding allowed until the receiver touches the ball.
- 3.3 Pass interference in the endzone grants the offense 1st down at the 1-yard line.
- 3.4 Blitz allows sending as many defensive players across the line as desired.

4. Weather Policy:

- 4.1 Play through all weather, excluding extreme or unsafe conditions.
- 4.2 Lightning results in a 30-minute delay; subsequent lightning extends the delay.
- 4.3 Weather decisions are made by the acting event director.
- 4.4 Events subject to cancellation, relocation, rescheduling, or early ending due to weather.
- 4.5 Refunds or discounts due to weather are at the discretion of each event host.

5. Tie Breaker Rules:

- 5.1 Running the ball is not allowed; teams must complete a pass.
- 5.2 Furthest completion rule in overtime; interceptions have no value.
- 5.3 Pass interference during overtime results in a replay of the down.
- 5.4 One point is awarded for an overtime win. If tied at 14 in overtime, the final score is declared 15-14 when a winner is decided.

6. Officials:

- 6.1 Each game has a minimum of 2 referees and 1 Field Manager.
- 6.2 Referee positions: 1 behind the offense, 1 on the line, and a third (if present) behind the defense.

6.3 Head Referee/Field Judge oversees the 4-second clock behind the offense.

6.4 Referees and Field Managers assist with scorekeeping and time management.

6.5 Line Judges manage game time and the 25-second play clock on the line of scrimmage.

6.6 If a 3rd official is present, they serve as the back judge, tracking the 25-second play clock.

6.7 Field Managers assist with crowd control and rules discretions.

6.8 Field Managers do not have the authority to overturn Head Referee decisions.

6.9 Field Managers update live scoring in unison with the Head Referee.

6.10 Referees and Field Managers ensure games are on time and flow smoothly.

7. Player Eligibility and Challenges:

7.1 Players are eligible to play up or in higher age divisions.

7.2 Players can be on two teams if they are in different age divisions.

7.3 Players are not eligible to play down or in lower age divisions.

7.4 Age challenges are not allowed, every player has been age verified before the tournament. For any questions, please address the event host AFTER the event.