

SEPYTFL Rules & Regulations

Fully Consolidated 2026 Edition

Southeast Polk Youth Tackle Football League

Revision Date: August 26, 2026

I. OFFICIALS

A minimum of two (2) IHSAA-certified officials will be utilized for each regular-season game. Only officials eligible and certified to referee Iowa high school games may officiate league games.

No coach, team official, or other organizational member may officiate a league game unless mutually agreeable to both participating teams. If no contracted officials are present, the game will be played and officiated by SEPYTFL Board Members. The League will provide contracted officials for all regular-season and championship games.

II. COACHES

The League is comprised of adult coaches who volunteer in capacities designated and approved by League Administrators. All league coaches must submit a Coaching Application, participate in an interview process, and provide information necessary for a background investigation. Coaching applicants may coach only after approval by the Board. A coach may be removed at any time by majority vote of the SEPYTFL Executive Board. For the full list of requirements and criteria, refer to the Coaching Criteria section of the SEPYTFL Policies and Procedures document.

Each Head Coach and Assistant Coach must complete, sign, and submit a Coach's Application and Coach's Code of Conduct for review and approval before any involvement with a League team. All coaches must be twenty-one (21) years of age or older unless approved by the League and must have a general understanding of football. Coaches are expected to know Federation Football rules and teach fair play and sportsmanship through their example and conduct at practices and games.

The Head Coach shall be present at all practices and games unless appropriate arrangements have been made with league-approved Assistant Coaches assigned to the team.

Coaches do not make league policy, but they are required to follow all rules and regulations. On practice and playing fields, the coaching staff is in charge and shall not be interfered with except in cases of bylaws or rules infractions, or conduct deemed inappropriate by League Administrators.

Coaches may be required to run age-appropriate teaching drills and follow practice plans provided by the Board to establish a consistent base level of instruction across the League. Coaches must follow Board mandates. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal from coaching responsibilities.

Coaches are responsible for assisting officials with the sportsmanship of playing and non-playing team members, parents, and spectators.

Head Coaches are responsible for practice schedules and team compliance with established practice policies and league-mandated restrictions. The Head Coach must publish and maintain an online team practice calendar through the League-designated platform and provide League representatives with the schedule.

Coaches serve from season to season, subject to annual review and renewal by the League Coaching Committee and Board of Directors. The League screens coaches for criminal history. Falsification of any league coaching document is grounds for immediate expulsion.

All coaches must understand and administer the League disciplinary policy and sign and adhere to the Coaches Code of Conduct. Code of Conduct violations will be reviewed by the Executive Board under the applicable policy.

Head Coaches are responsible for the care, maintenance, and return of all League equipment issued to their teams.

League-designated Head and Assistant Coaches shall complete annual safety training as designated by the Board. Training may include general first aid, concussion safety, athlete-safety protocols, and emergency procedures.

League coaching staffs generally consist of one (1) Head Coach and three (3) Assistant Coaches. No more than four (4) coaches may be assigned to a team. Due to insurance requirements, only league-approved coaches and Board Members may instruct, direct, supervise, assist, or otherwise participate in participant instruction during practices, scrimmages, games, or other league-sanctioned functions.

Internal coaching-staff issues or concerns must be reported promptly to League Administrators so the facts can be reviewed and corrective measures facilitated when necessary. All League rules, regulations, policies, and procedures apply equally to Head and Assistant Coaches unless otherwise stated.

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The League provides annual training opportunities related to fundamentals, safety, and other relevant considerations. All league coaches are required to attend. Failure to follow these expectations is subject to discipline, up to and including removal of coaching status.

III. SPORTSMANSHIP

The League operates on the premise that youth football should support the positive development of every participant. Coaches have a direct role in helping players build confidence, prepare for competition, and respond appropriately to both victory and defeat.

Poor sportsmanship is unacceptable. Coaches, participants, parents, volunteers, and spectators must demonstrate positive sportsmanship and respect toward players, opposing teams, parents, coaches, officials, and League representatives. Anyone unable to do so may be suspended or permanently expelled from the League.

The provisions below apply uniformly to players, coaches, parents, volunteers, and spectators. Disciplinary action shall be handled under the applicable SEPYTFL Code of Conduct.

Single-Game Ejection

A player or coach ejected from a game may not play or coach in the next scheduled game. This includes postseason play. If the ejection occurs in the final postseason game, the suspension carries to the first game of the following season if the participant remains active in the League.

League Expulsion

A second or subsequent ejection may result in immediate league suspension or expulsion, subject to Executive Board review, regardless of whether the ejections occurred in the same season or across multiple seasons.

IV. PRACTICE SCHEDULES

The season begins on the date designated annually by the League. No practice, conditioning session, or camp may occur before that date. Equipment distribution and other administrative meetings may occur before the designated start date.

A practice is any organized team activity related to practices or games, including chalk talks, film review, team parties, and similar activities.

Practice is limited to two (2) hours per day. At least one ten-minute break per hour must be provided and does not count against the two-hour limit. During extreme heat, fifteen-minute breaks or breaks on demand are encouraged. No practice may continue past 7:30 p.m. Central Time. After October 1, practices must end by 7:00 p.m. Central Time.

Teams may conduct no more than three (3) practices per week. A week is Sunday through Saturday. The practice immediately following a game must be non-contact and limited to helmets only. All other contact practices must comply with League safety guidelines.

The Board may designate no-practice nights for Southeast Polk school functions, including Homecoming and Black and Gold Night. Practices are not permitted on Southeast Polk varsity football game nights or on Sundays.

Practice dates and times shall be established by Head Coaches in accordance with these rules. All contact practices must use full protective equipment. Pre-game warm-ups count toward weekly practice time when they exceed forty-five (45) minutes.

Scrimmaging between teams is permitted subject to the limitations in the Scrimmaging section of the SEPYTFL Policies and Procedures document.

Each team must maintain a practice attendance log. Parents must notify a designated coach about a player absence before the scheduled practice begins.

V. EQUIPMENT

All team equipment shall be inventoried at the beginning and end of each season. The Head Coach is responsible for issued team equipment.

Equipment may not be altered or defaced. This includes swapping facemasks, altering jerseys, attaching patches, or writing on helmets. The NOCSAE Seal of Certification and Warning Label may not be removed. Player names are not permitted on league jerseys.

Only League-issued or League-approved equipment is permitted in League-sanctioned activities. The League will provide approved equipment for each player. A player may purchase personal or supplemental equipment at the family's expense, but the League will not reimburse the purchase.

Permitted additions include chin straps, commercially manufactured football forearm and elbow pads, gloves, a protective cup, rib protector pads, and approved neck rolls. Additional equipment required to protect an injury, such as a knee brace or extra padding, must be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval.

The Executive Board may establish an annual equipment deposit program. Deposit amounts, collection procedures, and refund terms shall be determined by the Board and administered through the League-designated registration platform.

Shoes must use molded cleats. Internally threaded shoes are prohibited. Cleats may not exceed one and one-half (1 1/2) inches from tip to shoe base. All-metal, primarily metal, or metal-tipped cleats are prohibited.

Jewelry is prohibited. Glasses should be athletically approved and use non-shattering safety lenses, or participants may wear contact lenses.

Players may not wear bandannas, scarves, or other head coverings under the helmet or on the uniform.

Players must wear a mouth protector during any practice involving contact and during all League play. The mouthpiece must be attached to the helmet and may not be clear.

Official Footballs

SEPYTFL will supply approved game footballs. Only the official footballs maintained at the designated game location may be used in games. Non-SEPYTFL footballs are not permitted for game play.

Division	Football Size
5th/6th Grade	Junior
3rd/4th Grade	Pee-Wee

VI. LEAGUE WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS

There is no maximum weight limit for League participation. Weight limits apply only to ball-carrier positions.

For League administration, a ball carrier is any offensive player who touches the ball behind the line of scrimmage after the snap, receives a handoff, forward pass, or legal lateral, or lines up in a backfield or receiving position. Blocking backs over the ball-carrier weight limit are prohibited. Restricted positions include quarterback, running back, wide receiver, flanker, and tight end.

2026 Ball-Carrier Weight Limits

Division	Maximum Ball-Carrier Weight
3rd/4th Grade	90 lbs.
5th/6th Grade	120 lbs.

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The Board may adjust these limits annually based on League participation and player weight distribution.

Past Weight Limits

Year	3rd/4th Grade	5th/6th Grade
2006	80	100
2007	90	110
2008	81	105
2009	80	109
2010	80	109
2011	79	101
2012	79	101
2013	80	105
2014	82	106
2015	87	105
2016	85	107
2018	82	110
2019	88	105
2020	90	114
2025	90	120
2026	90	120

Players exceeding the ball-carrier limit may advance the ball only after an interception or fumble that the restricted player personally recovered. An approved-weight player may not recover or intercept the ball and then transfer it to a restricted player for advancement.

Each player's official weight shall be recorded at a date, time, and location established by League Administrators. One official weigh-in will be held each season, and every player will be weighed regardless of intended position.

An official League weight log shall document each player's recognized weight and be attested by a League official conducting the weigh-in. Except for designated League officials, parents, guardians, coaches, spectators, and other individuals may not view or participate in the weigh-in process. The League will appoint a representative to coordinate the process and respond to weight or weigh-in questions. Access to the weight log shall be controlled consistent with League policy.

VII. LEAGUE PLAYING RULES

Except as otherwise provided here, the League follows the current National Federation of State High School Associations rules. When a League rule directly conflicts with an NFHS rule, the League rule controls.

Participants must be in the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, or 7th grade. Players may not play up or down between divisions without Board consideration and approval. A player may not remain in the same division for more than two (2) years without Board consideration and approval.

Draft procedures and team placement are reviewed annually by League Administrators. The League is not intended to promote dominance by one team, and draft procedures will be used to support equitable player distribution. Refer to the Draft Procedures section of the SEPYTFL Policies and Procedures document.

The team not shown in bold on the League schedule is the visiting team and must provide three (3) capable people, preferably adults or older youth, to serve as the chain crew. The chain crew must be ready at least fifteen (15) minutes before game time.

3rd/4th and 5th/6th Grade Game Rules

Games consist of four (4) twelve-minute quarters using continuous running time. The clock continues on first downs, out-of-bounds plays, and incomplete passes. The clock stops after a field goal or extra point, for an injury, and for official or team time-outs. Standard regulation timing applies during the last two (2) minutes of each half. The scoreboard clock is official.

A sixty-second hydration break shall be taken at the end of the first and third quarters. Halftime is five (5) minutes.

A thirty-five-second play clock is in effect. The first violation results in a warning; each later violation results in loss of down.

Each team receives two (2) one-minute time-outs per half. During a charged time-out, two coaches may enter the field and approach the huddle.

Teams change field direction after the second quarter and before the third quarter.

Scoring Play	Points
Touchdown	6
Point after touchdown - run	2
Point after touchdown - pass	2
Point after touchdown - kick	1
Safety	2
Field goal	3

In the 3rd/4th Grade Division, one (1) coach may be on the field during play. The coach must remain at least ten (10) yards behind the deepest player in the offensive or defensive formation. The coach may direct huddle activity but must cease all verbal and nonverbal communication once the quarterback begins cadence.

A coach who interferes with a play will be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct. If the interference prevents a probable score, the official may award the score and assess the penalty on the next possession.

The 5th/6th Grade Division may not have coaches on the field. Plays must be carried in by a player or signaled from the sideline. One coach and one player may move along the sideline from goal line to goal line; all other coaches and players must remain in the designated sideline box. These sideline restrictions shall be strictly enforced.

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No team may have more than four (4) league-approved coaches on the sideline during a League game or scrimmage.

Team Rosters

Head Coaches must submit a team roster before League scrimmages. The roster must list, from left to right, jersey number, player name, grade, and likely offensive and defensive positions, ordered by jersey number. Example: 15 Joe Smith, 4th, QB/DB.

Head Coaches must promptly notify League Administrators of roster changes and players who are no longer active.

Auto Punt

For participant safety, the League has no punt returns, kickoffs, or kickoff returns. Auto Punt applies to all divisions. A coach must notify the referee of the decision to punt.

The ball is moved thirty (30) yards downfield, or half the distance to the goal when on opponents side of 50 yard line. When the offense is on the opponent's side of the 50-yard line, the thirty-yard placement remains subject to ½ the distance to the opponent's goal line. Example: if Team A is at Team B's 40-yard line, Team B begins possession at its own 20-yard line.

At the start of each half and after an opponent scores, the receiving team begins possession at its own forty (40) yard line instead of using a kickoff and return.

Field Goals

Field-goal attempts are dead-ball downs. Neither team may cross the line of scrimmage, and no opposing-player contact is permitted. After a missed field goal, the ball is marked at the original line of scrimmage. The kick must be attempted directly behind the center and parallel to the original line of scrimmage; the snap may not be moved left or right to improve the angle.

Safeties

A safety is worth two (2) points. Following a safety, the team that scored begins its offensive series at the 50-yard line.

Defensive Alignment

Defensive linemen must begin each play in a down position. Standing defensive linemen are not permitted.

A defensive end's inside foot may be no wider than the outside foot of the widest offensive player on the line of scrimmage, whether tackle or tight end. Cornerbacks and linebackers must line up at least five (5) yards off the line of scrimmage. Corner blitzes are prohibited. The center may not be covered by a defensive lineman except in goal-line defense.

All permitted defensive alignments must come from the official SEPYTFL Playbook provided before each season.

Goal-Line Defense

When the ball is on or inside the defense's own five-yard line, a goal-line defense may be used. Linebackers must be at least two (2) yards deep and defensive backs at least three (3) yards deep.

No Blitzing

Linebackers and secondary players may not blitz unless the quarterback moves outside the area occupied by the offensive tackles at the snap. Once players read that movement, they may react. Linebackers must begin at least five (5) yards from the line of scrimmage and play read-and-react football. They may not rush immediately at the snap without regard to the play's flow.

Penalty: five (5) yards and repeat the down. The clock does not stop for this penalty.

No Motion

Motion during an offensive formation or play is prohibited. Backfield formation changes before the snap are permitted when all players are set for at least one (1) second before the snap.

Offensive Alignment

All permitted offensive alignments and schemes must come from the official SEPYTFL Playbook. All age groups may use shotgun formation. League-approved playbooks are the final authority for permitted offensive and defensive formations.

The offensive and defensive restrictions are intended to provide a semi-controlled environment for instruction and development of football fundamentals. They may not be exploited through bizarre or unconventional schemes.

Minimum Play

Unless restricted because of disciplinary probation under the League Codes of Conduct, injury, illness, limited preparation, or another approved reason, every player must participate in at least fifteen (15) plays and start at one position in every game. Free substitution is permitted.

Head Coaches are accountable for this rule. If a player's time will be limited, the Head Coach must notify the player's parents and the League representative on duty before play begins. Reasons may include repeated missed practices, illness or injury, late team assignment and limited preparation, League or team discipline, school discipline, or academic concerns raised by the player's parents.

Fumbles

Fumbles are live in all divisions.

Competitive Adjustment

The competitive-adjustment rule takes effect when a team leads by twenty-one (21) or more points. The starting quarterback, running back, and fullback become non-ball carriers until the score difference is fewer than twenty-one points. Before the game, coaches must identify the three potentially affected players to an SEPYTFL representative. Those players may not line up in or play a ball-carrying position while the rule is in effect.

8-Man Division Rules

In 8-man divisions, non-ball carriers may line up offensively only at left guard, center, or right guard, but may play any defensive position.

The offense must use five (5) players on the line of scrimmage and three (3) players in the backfield, as shown in the official SEPYTFL 8-Man Playbook.

Except in goal-line defense, the defense uses two defensive linemen aligned head-up on the offensive guards or shading the outside shoulder, as shown in the official 8-Man Playbook. Other defensive positions and spacing must follow the official playbook.

Field goals are not permitted in 8-man divisions. Auto Punt is mandatory.

11-Man Division Rules

Offensive and defensive formations for 11-man divisions must follow the official SEPYTFL 11-Man Playbook and the division-specific restrictions in this rulebook. All rules concerning defensive alignment, no blitzing, no motion, eligible ball carriers, and shotgun formation remain in effect.

Playing-Rule Enforcement

A playing-rule violation during a game or scrimmage may result in a warning from the Board official on the field.

Later violations may result in an unsportsmanlike penalty of five (5) or fifteen (15) yards, based on the severity of the offense and the coaches' efforts to correct it. Repeated or blatant violations by the same player or coach may result in ejection.

VIII. DIVISION STANDINGS, OVERTIME, AND AWARDS

Standings Without Conferences

When conference designations are not used, standings are based on overall division won-loss record. The top two teams advance to the League Championship. Ties are resolved in this order:

1. Head-to-head competition.
2. Fewest points allowed during the season.
3. Coin toss.

Standings With Conferences

When conference designations are used, the championship is played between the conference champions. Conference champions are determined by conference won-loss record. Ties are resolved in this order:

4. Head-to-head competition.
5. Overall League record.
6. Fewest points allowed during the season.
7. Coin toss.

Regular-Season Overtime

8. After the coin toss, play begins at the defensive team's 10-yard line.
9. Each team receives one series of downs, first-and-goal from the 10-yard line.
10. A team cannot earn a first down or automatic first down.
11. If an accepted defensive penalty occurs, the down is replayed.
12. If an accepted offensive penalty occurs, the down is replayed unless the penalty includes loss of down.
13. The team with the higher score after both possessions wins. If tied, positive penetration distance after four downs determines the winner, provided the offense maintained possession for all four downs. A team cannot win on zero or negative yards.
14. If both teams have lost yardage, lost possession, or have the same score and penetration after four downs, another overtime may be played subject to the limit below.
15. Defensive pass interference or a personal foul carries a ten-yard penalty or half the distance to the goal, and the down is replayed when accepted.
16. If the defense gains possession, the ball is dead and the original offense is credited with zero yards for that series.
17. Yardage gained on extra-point attempts does not count toward penetration yardage.

No more than two (2) overtime periods will be played in regular-season games. If the teams remain tied after the second overtime, the game is recorded as a tie.

League Championship Overtime

League Championship games use standard high school overtime rules for up to two (2) overtime series. If tied after the second overtime, the penetration-yardage procedure above will be used for a third and final overtime.

Awards

The League determines appropriate participation awards annually. Awards may be presented to all team members and coaches. No award may recognize individual accomplishment or status. The League will provide appropriate awards to the players and coaches of the Championship and Runner-Up teams in each division. Other awards are prohibited unless authorized by the League.

IX. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The League Grievance Procedure addresses operational matters and may be initiated by any person with an active role in or association with the League, including coaches, parents, participant representatives, contracted employees, facility or grounds coordinators, field supervisors, and school district officials. The procedure reviews possible misuse or misapplication of a League policy, provision, or rule.

The grievance process may not be used to challenge the substance of a League policy or rule, or to appeal an official's judgment call.

A grievance must be submitted in writing by email or U.S. Mail within seventy-two (72) hours of the incident, event, or occurrence. A matter that is not tied to a specific incident must be submitted within a reasonable and timely period as determined by the League.

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League Administrators determine whether sufficient grounds exist to hear the grievance. If so, a Grievance Committee will be convened at the earliest practical date to review the matter and make a recommendation to the Board of Directors. The Committee consists of three (3) appointed Head Coaches who are or were active in the League at the time of the incident or issue.

The Board of Directors will provide the complainant with a finding that the grievance was founded or unfounded and will identify any corrective or punitive action imposed.

X. INJURIES

A League coach or representative may not treat a participant's injury unless it is extremely minor and requires only basic first aid, or the person is a licensed medical practitioner.

A participant injured during a game must leave play for at least one (1) play.

An injury during a practice or game that causes a player to miss a later game must be reported to League Administrators by a coach within twenty-four (24) hours. The report must include the participant's name; date and time of injury; names of involved players; nature of the injury; and the circumstances. Any injury serious enough to require medical attention must be reported as soon as possible.

A medical release is required before the player may return to any practice or game. The release must state that the player is cleared to play football.

XI. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Any situation not covered by League Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, or their binding interpretation shall be referred to League Administrators for final determination.

The League may modify, change, or create a rule or policy deemed appropriate and in the best interest of participants, coaches, parents, spectators, volunteers, or the program. Additions, modifications, revisions, and deletions are subject to Board of Directors approval and may be implemented with or without prior notice.

XII. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PLAYERS, PARENTS, AND VOLUNTEERS

SEPYTFL asks every family to review and follow the League policy against harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Together, families and League representatives can help all athletes and participants understand these expectations and make every SEPYTFL program safe, positive, and enjoyable.

Youth sports encourage the physical, social, and character development of athletes. Parents, coaches, volunteers, and officials must encourage players to embrace sportsmanship, discipline, commitment, and respect. Alleged violations will be reviewed by the Executive Board for appropriate action.

Player Code of Conduct

- Be a good sport in victory or defeat; be honest, fair, and respectful toward coaches, players, officials, and spectators.
- Learn and demonstrate commitment to the team.
- Place team goals ahead of personal goals.
- Show courtesy and respect to teammates, parents, opponents, coaches, officials, and League representatives.
- Treat practices and games as educational experiences and opportunities to improve.
- Do not engage in unsportsmanlike conduct or rude behavior on or off the field.
- Do not engage in harassment, intimidation, bullying, threatening conduct, or discriminatory behavior.
- Follow team, League, equipment, safety, and playing rules.
- Represent SEPYTFL positively and have fun.

Parent and Volunteer Code of Conduct

- Model good sportsmanship and lead by example on and off the field.
- Provide constructive criticism only in a private and appropriate setting, never publicly in front of players, officials, spectators, or other families.
- Support players, coaches, officials, volunteers, and League decisions in a positive manner.
- Do not use abusive, threatening, harassing, intimidating, discriminatory, or inappropriate language or conduct.
- Do not interfere with coaching, officiating, game administration, practices, or player safety.
- Address concerns through the League's established communication and grievance procedures.
- Respect League facilities, equipment, schedules, policies, and directions from League representatives.
- Help maintain a safe, positive, and enjoyable environment for every participant.

Enforcement

The Executive Board will review Code of Conduct violations and determine action based on the nature, severity, frequency, and circumstances of the conduct. Action may include:

- Verbal warning.
- Written warning.
- Probation or conditions on participation.
- Suspension from practices, games, or other League activities.
- Removal from a League event or facility.
- Removal from a coaching or volunteer role.
- Permanent expulsion from SEPYTFL.

Nothing in this section limits the League's authority to take immediate action when necessary to protect participants, maintain order, or address a serious safety concern.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Edition	Revision Date	Status
2026 Consolidated Edition	August 26, 2026	Board review draft

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This consolidated edition retains the existing rule framework and incorporates the proposed 2026 revisions contained in the working draft. References to separate SEPYTFL Policies and Procedures and official playbooks remain controlling where stated.