



2026 Tackle League Rules

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2026 Badger East Youth Football League Rules

2026 WIAA/National Federation Football Rules will govern with the following exceptions:

A. AGE REQUIREMENTS

1. No player can participate in the Badger East YFL if they have reached the age of 15 by the start of the season. Players who turn 15 during the season will remain eligible
2. Players in the 9th Grade or above are prohibited from participating
3. 6th Grade team players must be in the 6th Grade or below, age 12 and under. 5th Graders are allowed if communities are having trouble filling rosters/teams and parents approve of it.
4. Players can play up a grade-level, but not down unless specifically approved by the Badger East YFL Board.

B. PRACTICES & SCRIMMAGES

1. Football practices may commence no sooner than 3 weeks before the first regularly scheduled game. **This year's season and first eligible practice begins Monday, August 3, 2026**
2. Practice is defined as an organized gathering of players and coaches, with the exception of registration and/or equipment issue meetings.
 - i. Prior to the school year starting, 10 hours per week of practice is allowed
 - ii. After school is in session, a maximum of six (6) hours per week is allowed
3. Prior to participating in full-contact (hitting other players with full equipment on), each player must complete ten (10) hours of coach-supervised non-contact practice
4. Scrimmages are defined as any practice in which two or more organizations participate in, whereby player to player contact takes place
5. Teams are allowed scrimmages/games with teams outside the Badger East YFL prior to the Sunday of the 1st week that the Badger East YFL game schedule begins, or after the final week that the league schedule ends.
 - i. An additional game is allowed with a Badger East YFL team, if your team isn't scheduled to play the team that season and if the game is played the week before the season starts, Labor Day weekend, or the immediate week after the regular season schedule has ended.
 - ii. **EXCEPTION:** If a team has a bye week or forfeit/no game on the schedule, a team can arrange a game or scrimmage with another organization not affiliated with this league. Please always make the Board aware if scheduling this.

C. EQUIPMENT

1. Footballs – The league uses a standard youth-sized (age 12-14) composite football. The home team will be responsible for providing game balls. There will no longer be a need to switch balls with changes of possession, however the visiting team can use their own ball if desired as long as it is a standard youth-sized composite football.
2. Shoes – No metal or steel cleats. Molded type – 14 cleats (rubber or plastic) on molded shoes.
3. Electrical devices (walkie-talkies) are not allowed on the game field or sidelines.
4. **No helmets 10 years of age or older may be used.** There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule.
5. Teams must follow manufacturer's equipment re-certification policy.
6. Jersey numbering for player positions does not need to follow WIAA rules.
7. All teams should try to have two sets of game uniforms - a home uniform and an away uniform.
8. Teams must determine and communicate with their opponent prior to game day, which uniform would be appropriate to wear, especially if a team only has one uniform.

D. ROSTERS

1. **Player & Coach** Rosters are due to a league designee by a league-determined date prior to the beginning of the 1st week of games.
2. Rosters not turned in by the designated league due date, will result in forfeiture of all games until said rosters are received by the league.
3. **Player** Roster information will include: community team name, grade-level, names of all coaches (listed below the team's name), uniform number, player name, player weight **and listed in numerical jersey order – smallest to largest.**
4. **Coach Roster information will include: community team name, grade-level, names and photos of individual coaches, and will identify each grade-level head coach. See example**
5. Players on rosters are required to reside in the member-designated high school district boundary unless their district does not offer a youth tackle football program. For "Private School" systems participating in the league, all players must attend that school or be a part of their feeder system.
 - i. All players are subject to random residence verification by a league representative.
6. Players who move into an organization school district after the start of the season can be added to that team only after all required roster information has been given to the league prior to that player's participation in a league game. (The 10-hours of practice rule still applies)
7. Player(s) intending to play down one level (ie: 8th to 7th) to fill out a roster need to be added to the weigh-in roster(s) and weigh in at the lower grade level. Players are only allowed to play down one level and must seek league approval.

E. PLAYER WEIGHT

1. Restricted players aka "Blue or White Stars" are defined as weighing (without equipment):
 - i. 6th Grade – 120.0 lbs and over
 - ii. 7th Grade – 140.0 lbs and over
 - iii. 8th Grade – 160.0 lbs and over
2. Restricted players will have a [league-approved marker](#), **either blue stars or white stars** on their helmets. 2 stars must be visible on the front and 2 must be visible on back.
3. Each community can weigh-in their players at their own location but must announce the date and time of weigh-in to the league president and other participating league members so they may attend. At least one other league member must attend each community weigh-in.
4. Complete weigh-in rosters are to include:
 - i. The names of all coaches
 - ii. Player uniform number (in numerical order smallest to largest)
 - iii. Player name (first and last)
 - iv. Player weight
 - v. 2 total pictures – (1) Restricted (Blue/White Star) players, (1) Full team. Players must be wearing their jerseys, and all jersey numbers must be visible in each photo.
5. Complete rosters must be submitted to the league president at the conclusion of weigh-ins or at least 1 week prior to the start of league scheduled games
6. A mid-season weigh-in may be conducted by the league. If so, players must again make the required weight, or they will be moved to a Blue/White Star status for the rest of the season.
7. No more than 5 Restricted (Blue/White Star) players are allowed on the field of play at one time, and they must play on the Offensive and/or Defensive Line of scrimmage.
 - i. Offensive Line positions are defined as: Center, Guard, Tackle
 - ii. Defensive Line positions are defined as: Nose or Nose Guard, Tackle, End or Defensive End. **Restricted (Blue/White Star)** Defensive Line players must be in a 3- or 4-point stance.
8. Restricted (Blue/White Star) players may not advance the ball (ie: pick up a fumble and run with it; intercept a pass and run with it). The ball is considered "dead" at the spot of recovery.

- i. **EXCEPTION:** Players over the maximum weight may punt, kick field goals and/or extra points
- 9. Violation of this section will constitute a game forfeit.

F. GAME TIMES

- 1. Games will be played on Saturdays either in the morning or at night.
 - i. 6th Grade games: 9:00am or 4:30pm
 - ii. 7th Grade games: 10:30am or 6:00pm
 - iii. 8th Grade games: 12:00pm or 7:30pm
- 2. 7th and 8th Grade games are to start 10 minutes after the completion of the previous game, **unless that game is more than 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time.**
- 3. If behind schedule, teams should be ready to start immediately following the conclusion of the previous game.
- 4. **Game length – (4) 10:00 minute quarters with 3 time-outs per half; no overtime allowed.**
 - i. **Halftime is to be 5:00 minutes in duration.**
- 5. By mutual agreement or when field conflicts occur, coaches can re-schedule game times.
- 6. The home team is responsible for notifying assigned referees of change, preferably one week or more before rescheduled date.
- 7. Postponements due to weather or any other unforeseen circumstances must be rescheduled by no later than Monday following the postponement. Failure to do so by either team will result in a forfeit for both teams involved.
- 8. Games will be considered complete after the completion of the 1st half of play. Games called prior to the end of the first half will be considered incomplete games and will be resumed following WIAA rules.
- 9. Games will be called by joint agreement between officials and head coaches.
- 10. A minimum of 1 board member from the host organization must be onsite at each home game to observe and supervise. Away teams can be represented by a Head Coach or other board-related supervisor.
- 11. Games can be called complete with time remaining on the clock if:
 - i. The combination of timeouts and taking knees does not result in a possession change
 - ii. Both coaches agree not to use timeouts and/or taking knees
 - iii. Coaches agree to taking no more than 1-kneed down.
 - 1. This does not have to be taken under center. Taking a knee in shotgun formation is acceptable

G. GAME FIELD RULES

- 1. A spectator restraining line, a minimum of 5 yards back from the playing field is suggested. This line can be chalked off or preferably roped off if a fence is not provided.
- 2. Responsible people are to work the sideline chains and down-markers for all levels of play. These people should be quiet, professional and unbiased during the game.
- 3. There should be access or reasonable availability to medical assistance. **A licensed Athletic Trainer is required to be available on the field during all home games.** The home team is required to provide this service. Doctors, Paramedics or EMT's should only be used as a last resort backup.
- 4. You must have a game or field clock along with a qualified person(s) to run it.
- 5. You must provide a safe and playable field of play with goal posts. Coaches/players must remain inside the 25-50-25 painted yard box.
- 6. You should have an announcer at your home field games.
- 7. You should have rest rooms or provide port-a-potties within a reasonable walking distance of the playing field.

8. Home teams will have available, and on hand, an abundance of ice and water for visiting teams and trainers, etc on the visitor sideline.
9. A concession stand is required for all home games.
10. A hard copy of these rules is required to be on the sideline for all games and is the responsibility of the host organization.

H. PLAYING TIME

1. **No player may play in more than four quarters per week.** An exception may be made if coaches are notified that a player(s) may need to move up (or down-if approved) to help field a team at that level.
 - i. Players cannot play down a level unless expressly approved by the Badger East YFL Board. Players playing down must meet the weight requirements at that level if they desire to play at a non-restricted position. If they don't meet the weight requirements, they are restricted players to play on the line of scrimmage, wearing respective blue or white stars on their helmets.
 - ii. Rosters showing players playing down a level should be approved in advance and copies of those rosters should be sent out to all Badger East YFL Board members and officials at least one week in advance of the 1st regular season game.
2. A quarter of play is defined as participation in one or more plays per quarter.

I. SPECIAL 6th GRADE GAME RULES

1. 6th Grade teams are not allowed to blitz.
 - i. Defensive Line players (up to a maximum of 5) should line up:
 1. Head-up on the Center
 2. Head-up to outside shade of the Guards and Tackles and
 3. On the outside shade of the Tight Ends, Wing or last player on the line of scrimmage if no Tight End is present
2. All other defensive players should be a minimum 5 yards off the line of scrimmage.
 - i. Inside their own 5-yard-line non-linemen are allowed to move up to 2 yards off the line.
3. An Offensive coach and a Defensive coach are allowed on the field of play.

J. KICKOFFS, PUNTS & SCORING

1. **Kickoffs** - There will be no "live" kickoffs. At the beginning of the game and immediately after Halftime **only**, there will be a kickoff from the kicking team's 40 yd line.
 - i. Teams can line up normal kick and kick-return coverages
 - ii. The kicking team will not move downfield; the receiving team will not attempt a return.
 - iii. **See section 2. Punts; sub-section iv. #1-#6 for possession rules**
 - iv. In the event of a touchback the ball will be placed at the receiving team's 35-yard line.
 - v. After scores, the receiving team will be awarded the football at their own 35-yard line.
2. **Punts** - Due to concerns for safety at these age groups, there will be no "live" punts. On 4th down, or any other down where a team may elect to punt, the referee must be notified before the play may occur. Normal WIAA game clock rules still apply.
 - i. The punting team has 25 seconds to punt the ball after notification.
 - ii. No players on the punting team will be allowed to go down field.
 - iii. The receiving team must have a minimum of six players on the line of scrimmage, and may not rush the punting team, or punter.
 - iv. The ball will be placed and designated down where the ball is controlled.
 1. If the ball bounces backwards, it will be placed where its forward progress stopped.
 2. If the receiver fumbles the ball forward, the ball will be returned to where the catch was attempted.

3. If the receiver fumbles the ball and it goes behind him, the ball will be placed and considered down at the point where it is controlled.
4. If the ball goes into the end zone after it was touched by the receiving team, the ball will be downed at the point of deflection.
5. **If the receiving team catches the ball on the fly, five yards will be rewarded to the receiving team from the point of the catch.**
6. There shall be no contact made during the punt for any reason. If contact is made and the referee feels it is aggressive and premeditated, a 15-yard penalty will be assessed.
7. Teams are allowed to long snap the ball to the punter. If the snap is muffed or dropped, the ball may be picked up and punted from the punter's original position.
- v. Time is stopped after the punt and is restarted once the receiving team snaps the ball.
3. **Extra Point Attempts (EPA) & Field Goals**
 - i. **(EPA) Kick aka "PAT" & Field Goal**
 1. Due to concerns for safety at these age groups, there will be no "live" extra point kick or field goal. Normal WIAA game clock rules still apply.
 2. Teams are required to long snap the ball to the kicker. If the snap is muffed or dropped, the ball may be picked up and kicked only if the holder and/or kicker did not have to move from their original position to recover the ball. If the kicker and/or holder must move from their original position to recover the ball, the attempt is forfeited.
 3. Extra-point kicks are worth 2 points; a field goal is worth 3 points
 - ii. **(EPA) Pass/Run Play**
 1. A pass or run play may be attempted for 1 point

K. PLAYOFFS & CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

1. None to be held.

L. REFEREES

1. (4) Officials are required for games, at least 2 of which must be WIAA certified. A minimum of 3 officials are needed to be present for a game to start, of which 2 must be WIAA certified. If the minimum number of officials/referees is not available, the game must be rescheduled or mutual consent from both teams must be given before play is to start.
2. Home teams will be responsible for the hiring and paying of officials. Officials will be compensated at a minimum of \$50.00 per official, per game, and should be paid at the start of the games.
3. **If an official is a board member of either team playing, the official must make that announcement to the opposing team prior to the start of each game.**

M. COACHES / PLAYERS CONDUCT

1. All coaches regardless of title must be USA Football certified.
2. 1 coach from each grade-level must be CPR & First Aid certified.
3. Proof of certification should be provided with team rosters.
4. All league coaches should try to attend coaching clinics during the off-season.
5. The head coach is responsible for the conduct of his assistants, players, and sideline conduct of parents.
6. Only the head coach, or offensive and defensive coordinators should have discussions with the officials, no one else.
7. Trash talking, taunting, or inappropriate language by coaches or players is not, and will not be tolerated. If witnessed, a 15-yard penalty will be assessed, and the player or coach will be

warned. If it occurs again, that player or coach will be suspended from that game and the following game. Coaches are strongly encouraged to try to keep parents & spectators in line if possible.

8. **Any coach ejected from a game** will also be suspended for the next scheduled game and:
 - i. If the league feels the offense is serious enough to warrant additional game suspensions, they will meet and have the power to suspend a coach for additional games.
 - ii. Any coach receiving two (2) suspensions during the season will be suspended from coaching the remainder of the season and the following season.
 - iii. Suspension means the coach may not be within sight or sound of the playing field. Coach suspensions are to be reported promptly to the League.
9. **Any player ejected from a game** by an official will be suspended from participating in the next scheduled game.
 - i. If the league feels the offense is serious enough to warrant additional game suspensions, they will meet and have the power to suspend a player for additional games.
 - ii. By league rules: A player found to have committed 2 personal fouls in a game will also be suspended for the remainder of that game and the next regularly scheduled game.
 - iii. Players suspended may not be in uniform but may attend the game as a spectator in the stands – not on the field.
 - iv. A player who violates a specific club or school rule will be at the mercy of that respective club or school as far as eligibility is concerned. The league will not intervene.
10. **Evictions of Players or Coaches are required to be reported to the league promptly and include player/coach name, grade-level and the infraction that led to eviction.**
11. No smoking or use of tobacco products is allowed on the sidelines or on school grounds.
12. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the sidelines or on school grounds.
13. No profanity or abusive language shall be directed at officials, coaches, fans, or players.
14. Players should be held accountable for their academics even though this is not a school-sanctioned league. Attendance of classes and maintaining passing grades should be a basic requirement.
15. Etiquette and sportsmanship should be followed at all times.
16. All players on a team should participate. Remember – this is developmental league.

N. LEAGUE RULE INFRACTIONS

1. TBD

O. LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP

1. All new teams petitioning for and granted membership will enter the league on probation. The probationary period will last for a total of 2 seasons. Teams on probation will not have voting rights in league decisions but will have input in discussions with the exception of voting on their probationary status.
2. League dues will be collected at the league's discretion. League dues amounts will be discussed and decided by league officers.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR SEASON!!!