



## De Pere Youth Football League League and Game Playing Rules Revised 08/23/2025



Motto of De Pere Youth Football:

The De Pere Youth Football (DPYF) League is a cooperative program between [De Pere](#) and [West De Pere](#) football programs. Our goal is to teach football fundamentals and skills to 5th and 6th grade athletes who have interest in future involvement with the middle school football programs.

### 1. WIAA Rules:

All games to be played under the rules for varsity football as set forth by the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) with the following additions and/or exceptions.

### 2. Ages/Weights/Grade

- a. The player's grade at the start of the school year shall determine which league/division they will play in. Weight is not a determining factor for which division a child plays in.
- b. Weight will be a factor for carrying the ball in each division.
  - i. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade - Players weighing over 115 lbs. are not permitted to play in restricted positions as defined in rule 2(f)(i) below.
  - ii. 6<sup>th</sup> Grade – Players weighing over 125 lbs. are not permitted to play in restricted positions as defined in rule 2(f)(i) below.
  - iii. If 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders are combined as directed by the Executive Committee, players weighing over 120 lbs. regardless of grade are not permitted to play in restricted positions as defined in rule 2(f)(i) below.
  - iv. Restricted players may advance fumbles or interceptions.
- c. The official weight for each child will be taken at the equipment check out. Any child without an official weight, taken by league representative, will not be allowed to carry the ball until an official weight has been recorded by a league official.
- d. Exceptions to this rule must be presented to the De Pere Youth Football Executive Committee by July of the year they plan to participate.
- e. There will be no weigh-ins on game day. The official weight will be the one recorded at equipment check out. Once an official weight has been recorded, the player's designation as a "Restricted" player or "non-restricted" player will be set for the season regardless of any fluctuation in their weight during the season.
- f. Restricted Players – Are defined as a player that exceeds the weight limit for the grade, they will play in. Restricted players have the following limitations:

- i. May not play in a restricted position on Offense. Restricted positions are defined as Quarterback, Running Back, Full back, Wide Receiver, and or Tight End.
- ii. Restricted players will have a colored dot placed on their helmets for identification by league officials and the officiating crews.

### 3. Ineligible Players

- a. An ineligible player is defined as the following:
  - i. A player not registered with De Pere Youth Football
  - ii. A player registered by using false information.
  - iii. Restricted Player playing in a restricted position.
  - iv. Player that is participating in an additional tackle football program outside of De Pere Youth Football League.
  - v. A player that does not have a current medical form on file with the league.
- b. The use of ineligible players will be reviewed by the Executive Council and will implement appropriate disciplinary measures to include but not limited to;
  - i. Forfeiture of games played.
  - ii. Review and possible disciplinary of a coach to include suspension and or removal from the league.
  - iii. Player removal from the league.

### 4. Roster Size

- a. Teams shall have a minimum of 17 kids per roster, with a goal of 20+ kids. Teams falling below 17 players per roster shall be reviewed by the league and make necessary adjustments if needed to include the possible adding of a player or moving players from another team. Roster size may also be adjusted based upon the overall enrollment at each level by the league.
- b. Team rosters will be set up by the Head of Coaching based upon players' weight, experience, feedback from other coaches in other sports if possible and other information that may be used to try to balance the teams as best as possible.
- c. Players that join the league after teams are formed: The player(s) will be placed on the team with the least number of players or as the Board decides.

### 5. Mandatory Play Rule

- a. All players are required to participate and play offense for one half of each game and defense for one half of each game.
  - i. Players must play an entire half consecutively on offense or defense to fulfill this requirement. Consecutive halves are defined as qtrs. 1&2 or qtrs. 3&4.
  - ii. Players playing time on offense or defense may be affected by absence, injury, or other factors. See rule 5.c below for more information.
  - iii. There may be exceptions to allow lessor skilled players to play more. See Mercy Rules below for more info.
  - iv. Kickers and punters are exempt from this rule. However, kickers and punters are to have other positions on offense or defense in addition to kicking and punting to fulfill this rule.

v. Players that are playing more than one half on offense may only play one of the restricted positions for one consecutive half of the game. After they have played their half at a restricted position, they must play on the offensive line for the remaining playing time of the game.

1. For example, a player starts the game at quarterback. He then moves to the Tight End in the second quarter (since he must play an entire half consecutively on offense or defense). In the third and fourth quarters any playing time the player has on offense must be done with him on the offensive line.
  2. Players that start at a restricted position and then move to the offensive line may NOT move back to the restricted position at any point of the game.
  3. Players that start on the offensive line may move to a restricted position AFTER they have completed an entire half on the offensive line.
- b. The actual number of plays a player will participate in will be dependent on various factors such as but not limited to lack of practice time, behavior, game factors, etc.
  - c. This is a developmental league and therefore, it is the intent of this league to give the maximum number of kids the opportunity to play on offense and defense, regardless of skill and talent. Coaches viewed as manipulating league rules to gain a competitive advantage by providing certain players with more playing time while sacrificing playing time of others shall be reviewed by the Chair of the Coaches Committee and possible disciplinary action implemented.
  - d. Plays that are run with an ineligible player on the field will result in one of the following:
    - i. For an offensive player, the play were this is realized will be called back with loss of down and distance. No yard penalty, ball is placed at the same line of scrimmage.
    - ii. For a defensive player, the offense can take the play that was run or get a five yard gain and an automatic first down.

**6. Player Designations:**

- a. Each player shall wear a number from 1 to 99. Numbers "0" and "00" are prohibited and shall not be worn. Player numbers shall not correlate to positions played.

**7. Required Equipment:**

- a. Helmet: All participants will receive a league issued helmet that must be worn and not altered.
- b. Shoulder pads: All participants will receive a league issued pair of shoulder pads and cannot be altered.
- c. Pants: The league shall provide each participant with one pair of pants. Some pants will not come with hip, thigh, or tail pads and require a girdle.
- d. Jersey/Practice Jersey: All participants shall receive a game/practice jersey that is to be returned at the end of the season.
- e. Mouth Guard: Is provided by the league. It needs to be attached to the face mask and cannot be clear in color. You may also purchase your own mouth guard but it must attach to the helmet and not clear in color. Only one mouth guard may be attached to the helmet.
- f. Cleats: Follow WIAA guidelines for footwear. Molded rubber cleats, or detachable rubber/plastic cleats are permitted. No metal cleats are permitted.
- g. Eyeglasses: Shall follow WIAA rules for eyewear. Shall be of athletically approved construction with non-shattering (safety glass) or contact lenses. Tinted face shields are NOT allowed. Any face shields must be clear and made of non-shattering glass or plastic.
- h. Jewelry: Jewelry of any type is prohibited.
- i. Anti-glare markings on a player's face are limited to a single horizontal line under each eye.

**8. Game Ball**

The ball shall be of a good grade of leather or composite material with minimum specifications and shall be a "Youth" size ball.

**9. Length of Games**

- a. Each game shall consist of four (4) ten (10) minute quarters, with a running clock except for injuries or as follows:
  - i. Quarters 1 & 3 shall use a running clock except for penalties, change of possessions, and PAT plays.
    1. When a touchdown is scored, the clock will not wind until the snap of the ball for the next offensive series.
    2. For penalties, the clock shall stop until the ball is reset, then the clock shall wind.
    3. For change of possession, the clock will wind when the ball is snapped.
  - ii. Quarters 2 & 4 shall use a running clock except for penalties, change of possessions, PAT plays, and inside 2 minutes remaining in the half or game.
    1. For penalties, the clock shall stop until the ball is reset, then the clock shall wind.
    2. When a touchdown is scored, the clock will not wind until the snap of the ball for the next offensive series.
    3. For change of possession, the clock will wind when the ball is snapped.
    4. Within 2 minutes remaining the clock shall stop for the following and wind again on the snap:
      - 1) Penalties.
      - 2) Change of possession.
      - 3) Players are out of bounds while moving forward.
      - 4) Incomplete passes.
      - 5) Other stoppages as signaled by the officials.
- b. Halftimes will be 4-6 minutes in length, depending on the schedule and flow of the game.
- c. Time between quarters shall be 2 minutes.
- d. Time between games shall be up to 8 minutes in length.
- e. In the event of an uneven number of teams, the league may adapt game scheduling to allow time for each team to play on Saturdays or schedule byes.

**10. League Records (Win/Loss)**

- a. The league emphasizes skill and technique development. Scores will be kept during games.
- b. Win/Loss records will be kept and may be used to determine the final week matchups depending on the number of teams in the league.
- c. Trophies and/or awards will not be presented.

**11. Time Outs:**

- a. Standard WIAA rules apply for time-outs. Three (3) time-outs per half per team.

**12. Substitution of Players**

- a. Free substitution is always in effect.

**13. Players:**

- a. It is illegal for any position on the playing field, both offense and defense, to make initial contact below the waist. Penalty is 15-yards. Examples that warrant penalty, but are not limited to, are cut blocking and submarining by defensive lineman. Exception: Contact with any player carrying the football may be tackled in any legal manner.
- b. A player must play for the team they are assigned to. Players are not allowed to substitute for other teams due to low numbers without league approval.
- c. Players must reside within the legal school boundaries of West De Pere and De Pere Unified School Districts or are registered as students in either the De Pere Unified School District or the West De Pere School District.

- d. The league does not have any academic requirements.
- 14. Radio and Communication Devices:**
  - a. All radio or other communications are prohibited during games.
- 15. Scouting**
  - a. Scouting is permitted during game situations; however, teams may NOT use video tape or other technological methods to record/capture opposing teams. Teams may film their own game for self-improvement and analysis of their own team.
- 16. Chain Gangs and Announcer**
  - a. Simple rules shall be followed by the Chain Gains.
    - i. No coaching.
    - ii. No excessive cheering.
  - b. The Announcer shall be objective while announcing. No bias should be shown during announcing games.
- 17. Practice**
  - a. A player must practice a minimum of 10 hours of non-contact before going to being permitted to practice with full pads and engage in tackling. Scrimmages count towards this requirement.
    - i. 10 hours' non-contact – the player must be in helmet only. No shoulder pads or pant/pads may be worn.
  - b. A player must have had a minimum of 10 hours of full contact practice prior to being permitted to play in a game situation.
  - c. Pre-season:
    - i. Teams may practice maximum of 2.5 hours per day, and a maximum of 4 days per week during the preseason.
    - ii. Once the season begins, practicing is regulated to a maximum of 2.5 hours per day, and a maximum of 2 days per week.
    - iii. The league may implement special practice days designed to take advantage of High School involvement. These special practice days will be relayed to families as soon as possible.
  - d. Practice cannot begin prior to July 20th, with the actual start date determined by the league on an annual basis.
  - e. Practice times, location and schedule shall be determined by the league. Coaches that wish to have special practices must obtain permission from the league.
- 18. Games**
  - a. Playing rules:
    - i. Teams may 'punt' the ball on any down.
      - 1. If a team decides to 'punt' the ball, the following will happen:
        - 1) If the ball is at the fifty-yard line or the opponent's side of the field, the ball is spotted at the 20-yard line on the opponent's side of the field.
        - 2) If the ball is on the punting team's half of the field, the ball is moved 35 yards down field and spotted.
        - 3) Once the ball is spotted, the opposing team takes possession of the ball with a first and ten.
        - 4) Teams must declare their intention to punt within 10 seconds of the ball being spotted after the 3<sup>rd</sup> down play.

- ii. Teams may attempt field goals and extra points.
  - 1. The offense must declare their intent to attempt a kick. Fake field goals or fake extra points are not allowed.
  - 2. There shall be no contact by players or rush during the play.
  - 3. Players may not jump to attempt to block the field goal attempt.
  - 4. Missed field goals shall have the ball spotted at the line of scrimmage on the change of possession.
  - 5. Points after touchdowns are scored as follows:
    - 1) Kicked: 2 points
    - 2) Running or passing: 1 point
  - 6. Extra points, whether kicked or a normal play is run, are untimed, except for the normal play clock.
- iii. Because there are no kick-offs the ball shall be placed at the 35-yard line to start the game, to start the second half and after a scoring event causes a change of possession.
- iv. Mercy Rule: Any team leading by 27 or more points should not run up the score through:
  - 1. Replacing more skilled/experienced players at key positions with less skilled/experienced players on both offense and defense.
  - 2. Punting on 4<sup>th</sup> down.
  - 3. On 4<sup>th</sup> down the trailing team may run a play to get the first down. However, if unsuccessful, the leading team will start their drive from their own 35-yard line unless the play occurred deeper in the leading team's half of the field.
  - 4. Coaches should use common sense to not run the score up on lessor teams (i.e.: run more passing plays if they haven't been working).
- b. Offensive and Defensive Alignments
  - i. Offensive alignments must meet the standards set forth in rule 20 below.
  - ii. Defensive alignments must meet the standards set forth in rule 19 below.
- c. Play Clock - Teams will be required to run a play within 40 seconds, otherwise a penalty will be enforced for delay of game.
- d. Coaches on Field – Coaches on the field of play will be permitted as follows:
  - i. Offense: One offensive coach may be on the field for the entire season with the following rules:
    - 1. For weeks 1 & 2: An offensive coach may be in the huddle and provide direction to their team.
    - 2. For weeks 3 through 6: An offensive coach may be on the field, but they can only be in the huddle. Once the team leaves the huddle, they need to retreat to ten yards behind the quarterback and give no further instructions until the team reforms in the huddle.
  - ii. Defense: One defensive coach on the field of play is permitted as follows:
    - 1. For weeks 1 & 2: A defensive coach may be on the field of play and provide instruction to the defense pre-snap and post snap.
    - 2. For weeks 3 through 6: A defensive coach may provide instruction to the team only during pre-snap. Once the ball is snapped, they may not provide any further instruction until the play is over.
    - 3. For weeks 3 through 6: Defensive coaches must be 15 yards off the line of scrimmage prior to the snap.
  - iii. Coaches that are on the field are to be respectful of the officials.
  - iv. If a coach fails to follow the rules of this section, they will be removed from the field, and required to coach from the sidelines or replaced by another coach on the field as the officials see fit.

- v. Failure to abide by instructions from officials may result in a delay of game penalty.
- e. A game schedule will be provided once teams are established.
- f. No team and/or coach may arrange a game or reschedule a game.
- g. Postponement:
  - i. The referee will consult with league officials and decide to prohibit the start or continuation of a game due to weather or other field safety concerns.

## 19. Defensive Rules

- a. Teams must use a 4-5-man front.
  - i. The two interior tackles must line up inside shade of the Offensive Guard (21 Technique) or the outside shade of the Offensive Guard (3 Technique).
  - ii. The next two defensive lineman must line up outside shade of the Offensive Tackle (5 Technique) or inside shade of the TE (7 Technique).
  - iii. The outside linebacker
    - 1. If there is a TE – the OLB should line up on the Line of Scrimmage an outside shade of the TE.
    - 2. If no TE – the OLB must drop back and follow Linebacker rules.
  - iv. The use of nose tackles is prohibited.
- b. Linebackers must line up a minimum of 4 yards from the Line of Scrimmage.
  - i. Exception – When the opposing team has the ball inside the defensive team's 5-yard line, at which time linebackers may line up one (1) yard from the goal line.
- c. Cornerbacks and safeties
  - i. Must always line up so they are further back than the linebackers.
  - ii. Safeties must line up at least 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage except when the opposing team has the ball inside the 10-yard line then they can move up to 8 yards.
  - iii. Must be outside the area known as the box. (The box is defined as the outside shoulder of one offensive Tackle to the outside shoulder of the other offensive tackle, and 4 yards deep into the defensive side of the ball.)
- d. Defensive Players in the "box" may not move forward prior to the snap of the ball and after the quarterback calls the offensive team into a set position.
- e. Blitzing is not allowed. Blitzing will be defined as a linebacker, safety or cornerback moving forward within the 4-yard buffer zone during the snap count, with intent to attack the offensive backfield.

## 20. Offensive Rules

- a. Offensive formations must meet the following requirements:
  - i. Minimum of 7 on the line of scrimmage
    - 1. Five offensive lineman
    - 2. Two skilled positions (WR, TE, RB on the line, etc.)
  - ii. Must have two players in the back field between the tackles (QB and a skilled position) and they must be in this position at the snap of the ball.
  - iii. A third player may be in the tackle box and go in motion to leave the tackle box.
- b. Using a man in motion is allowed. Only one player may be motion on a play and the other players must be set.
- c. The use of "crack-back" type of blocks is prohibited. The penalty for a "crack-back" type of block will be consistent with an illegal block in the back.
- d. Teams are asked to incorporate a minimum of 3 passes per half.
- e. A Quarterback sneak is not permitted IF the quarterback starts the play under center. If the quarterback receives the ball in a shotgun formation, the quarterback may run the ball.
- f. Trick plays are not allowed. A trick play is defined as a play that is designed in such a way that more than three different offensive players will touch the ball.

- i. Example of a legal play: The center (touch 1) snaps the ball to the quarterback (touch 2). The quarterback then hands the ball off to a running back (touch 3).
  - ii. Example of an illegal play: The center (touch 1) snaps the ball to the quarterback (touch 2). The quarterback then hands the ball off to a running back (touch 3). The running back then runs towards a sideline and hands the ball off to a receiver (touch 4).
  - iii. Offenses that run a trick play will be called for an illegal formation penalty.
- g. Offenses may not run a play that is designed to run out the clock (i.e. kneeling after the snap) UNLESS the following conditions are met. Offenses that run a play of this nature will be flagged for an illegal formation penalty.
  - i. The offensive team has a 15 or more-point lead.
  - ii. It is the fourth quarter of the game.

## 21. Officiating

- a. Games are required to have a minimum of three (3) officials.
  - i. A minimum of one (1) official must be WIAA certified.

## 22. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- a. Any player or coach receiving an “unsportsmanlike” conduct penalty will receive an automatic warning from the league.
- b. A second “unsportsmanlike” conduct penalty with-in a game will result in the player and/or coach being removed from the game. The issue will then be reviewed by the Executive Committee for further disciplinary action.
- c. A third “unsportsmanlike” penalty within a season will result in automatic league review and consideration of disciplinary action to include suspension or removal from the league.

## 23. Coaches

- a. All head and assistant coaches for De Pere Youth Football are mandated to attend a Coaches orientation meeting held by league officials.
- b. Coaches are required to be USA Football Heads-up Certified. The cost of the certification will be paid for by the league.
- c. Coaches are required to follow the USA Football Heads-up program for teaching tackling and blocking.
- d. Coaches are asked to follow common verbiage for formations, plays, hole numbering, etc. If teams run a play like the “Power” play, they should call it “Power”.
- e. Any coach found violating any of the league rules may be removed by the Executive Committee or by a majority vote by the President, the Head of Coaches, and the Head of the Rules Committee.
- f. Coaches are required to pass a background check as set forth by the league.

## The Mission of De Pere Youth Football:

This program is for the preservation, improvement, and operation of a youth football program by bringing together appropriate partnerships of people, organizations and funds needed to facilitate or implement the program. This program includes direct instruction from varsity level coaches at occasional times during the season. The focus of this program is on skill development and fundamental techniques of football to better prepare players for participation in middle school and high school level competition.