



Rules for NYO Football Games

NYO Football is generally governed by Georgia High School Football rules. There, however, are certain rules, which we have revised to address the fact that that NYO is a youth program. The most important of these rules that vary from Georgia High School rules are summarized in the following alphabetically sequenced sections.

Blowout Scoring Situations

A “blowout” scoring situation is considered to be one in which a team is ahead by 20 or more points. NYO Football has only one specific rule concerning these situations. IF requested by the coach of the team that is behind, the clock will run continuously if one team is ahead by 20 points or more. All wins that exceed that point margin are not the result of bad intentions by the winning coaches, but that does not really matter. Winning by a large margin or scoring at the end of the game when it is not necessary creates tremendous ill will among parents and opposing coaches. It is deflating to the losing players and is a bad example for the players on the winning team. The coach that is ahead in a blowout situation must take appropriate measures to assure the score does not become more lopsided. Coaches, if you are fortunate enough to be up by 20 points, do whatever you reasonably can to keep the scoring margin no greater than 20.

Specifically, the following steps should be implemented:

- Rotate your least gifted players to QB and RB.

- Don't pass.
- Run the ball up the middle.
- Take a knee.
- Some coaches who have been ahead have voluntarily given the ball back to the losing team after stopping them on downs.
- Do not call time-outs EXCEPT in situations where the losing team is out of timeouts and it would be beneficial to them to have an opportunity to score or make a first down.

- After the game, explain to your team why you took these actions and use it as a sportsmanship lesson.

Crack Back Blocks

NYO does not permit crack back blocks in which defenders who are looking in a different direction receive hard hits from a blocker. The objective of this rule is to enhance player safety by avoiding these types of blocks which result in hard hits. In these situations, blockers should screen or shadow block the defender.

Jerseys

Once assigned at the beginning of the season, players are not allowed to exchange jerseys. If a player must wear a different jersey number during a game, his coach must clearly communicate the change to the opposing coach prior to kickoff.

Kicking and Punting

Second and Third Grade Leagues (Pee Wees)

There will be no punting in Pee Wees (second and third grade leagues). If a team elects to "punt" on fourth down, the coach will advise the official and the ball will be moved 20 yards down field and possession will change. "Punts" from or inside the opposing team's 30-yard line will be placed half the distance to the goal line. Players over the running back weight limit must be on the front line while on the kick-off receiving team. If the ball comes to a player over the running back weight limit on the kick-off, he can run the ball. No field goals are allowed. Officials will control the clock during punts running off approximately eight seconds during the play. **If the kicking team is ahead then its kick must travel 20 yards (rather than 10 yards) in order for the kicking team to recover and gain possession of the ball. This is true even if a member of the receiving team touches the ball before it has gone 20 yards unless the receiver gained possession of the ball and fumbled while running the ball.**

Fourth and Fifth Grade Leagues (Littles)

In the fourth and fifth grade leagues, if a team elects to punt on any down, the official will be advised and the teams will line up in punt formation. The ball will be snapped to the punter and both teams will maintain their positions until the ball is punted; i.e., there is a "free punt." There will be no punt blocking or fake punts. The punter must remain between a traditional alignment of the tackles while punting which means the punter may not move east and west on the field more than a couple yards before kicking. Also, the defensive team receiving the punt must have at least five players on the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted. On punts, a player over the running back weight limit cannot be lined up any deeper than a linebacker position on the punt receiving team. If the ball comes to a player over the running back weight limit on a punt, he can run the ball. Littles teams are not allowed to kick extra points or field goals when playing on Blackwell Field. Players over the running back weight limit must be on the front line while on the kick-off receiving team. If the ball comes to a player over the running back weight limit on the kick-off, he can run the ball. **If the kicking team is ahead then its kick must travel 20 yards (rather than 10 yards) in order for the kicking team to recover and gain possession of the ball. This is true even if a member of the receiving team touches the ball before it has gone 20 yards unless the receiver gained possession of the ball and fumbled while running the ball.**

Sixth and Seventh Grade League (Bigs)

Punting is live in the Bigs. There is no requirement to declare a punt. Punt blocking and fake punts are allowed. On punts, a player over the running back weight limit and up to 135 lbs. cannot be lined up any deeper than a linebacker position on the punt receiving team. A player over 135 pounds must play an interior down lineman position. If the ball comes to a player over the running back weight limit on a punt, he can run the ball. Players over the running back limit must be on the front line on the kick-off receiving team. If the ball comes to a player over the running back weight limit on the kick-off, he can run the ball. Field goals and extra points will be allowed. Normal high school rules apply. **If the kicking team is ahead then its kick must travel 20 yards (rather than 10 yards) in order for the kicking team to recover and gain possession of the ball. This is true even if a member of the receiving team touches the ball before it has gone 20 yards unless the receiver gained possession of the ball and fumbled it while running with the ball.**

Length of Games

Second and Third Grade Leagues (Pee Wees)

There will be seven minute quarters in the Pee Wees. The clock will stop under normal GHSA rules.

Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Grade Leagues (Littles and Bigs)

There will be eight minute quarters in the Littles and Bigs. The clock will stop under normal GHSA rules.

Minimum Play Rule

At a minimum, all players must play either all offensive or all defensive plays throughout each game and the corresponding special team plays, i.e. kick offs and punt returns are considered defensive plays and kick returns and punts will be considered offensive plays. This means that at each change of possession, all players on the bench should enter the game. The one acceptable variation to this rule will be if a team utilizes two players to run in plays on literally every offensive and defensive play. The only exception to the Minimum Play Rule is for players who have missed practice on a chronic basis. Those players may be played less than half the game as a disciplinary measure IF the coach first advises the parents, the opposing coach and league director before the game that this action will be taken. The League Director will have final authority on the player's participation. If a player is injured during the game and will be played less than the minimum, the coach should alert the player's parents if possible. If a complaint is brought to the League's attention involving minimum play, a video of the game will be sought. If the video tape reveals the Minimum Play rule was violated, that team will forfeit the game.

Officiating in the Second and Third Grade Leagues (PeeWees)

With the exception of unsportsmanlike and personal fouls, no penalties will result in more than five yards.

On-field Coaches in the Second and Third Grade Leagues (PeeWees)

For these leagues, one coach from each team is allowed on the field during the game. The goal of this practice is to promote faster play and instruction between plays; on-field coaches are not to read the opponent's formations in order to direct the play or alignment of his team after the huddle is broken. Specifically, the on-field coach must be quiet once the center's hands are on the ball. Violations will result in a five-yard penalty.

Playing in a Younger or Older League

Players may not participate in a younger age group. Players who wish to participate in an older age group should submit a request to Football@nyosports.com.

Scoring

Touchdowns count as six points. After a touchdown, the scoring team has an option for extra points:

- a) The ball may be placed at the 8-yard line and a score results in two points when run or passed.
- b) The ball may be placed at the 3-yard line and a score results in one point when run or passed.
- c) For Bigs teams, the ball may be placed at the 3-yard line and kicked which will result in one point. Field goals, as permitted only in the BIGS, will result in 3 points.

Shotgun Snaps – Protection of Center

Georgia high school rules provide protection for centers which are vulnerable while making shotgun snaps. The high school rule states that the center cannot be hit until he has a reasonable opportunity to recover to a football position, provided the QB is seven (7) or more yards behind the center. NYO has reduced the seven-yard distance the QB must be from the center as follows by league:

- 2nd & 3rd Grade Leagues - one (1) yard
- 4th & 5th Grade Leagues - three (3) yards
- Bigs (6th & 7th grades) League - five (5) yards

Provided the QB is at least these distances from the center, the center cannot be hit until he has a reasonable time to recover. This rule does not restrict a nose guard from aligning over the center or from rushing to either side of the center.

Tie Games

Regular season games will be allowed to end with a tie score. Playoff games will utilize the Georgia High School rule for breaking ties in which each team receives four plays to score from the fifteen (15) yard line and that sequence is repeated until the tie is broken. If the score remains tied after the second OT, the officials will require teams to go for a two-point conversion.

Weight Rules

Weight limits have been established to promote safety and fair competition. Player weights will be initially determined during tryouts. A player who is not at the tryout must have an official weigh-in at NYO before his/her respective draft. If a player's weight is above the limit for that player's age appropriate league, the player will be required to play in the older league, except where special circumstances exist. The League Directors will resolve all such issues in their sole discretion. Please review these comments about weights:

1. Parents and players are asked to comply with the spirit of these rules. Players should not lose excessive weight to prior to weigh-ins.
2. Players may remove their shoes and shirts during weigh-ins.
3. If a player's weight during tryouts does not qualify that player for a given classification, such as playing in the offensive backfield, the player is ineligible for that classification for the balance of the season. The player cannot lose weight and subsequently qualify.
4. There may be up to two additional weigh-ins, the dates of which will be purposely announced on short notice, during the season and/or playoffs.
5. For subsequent weigh-ins, players will be allowed to weigh an additional two (2) pounds if weighed in October plus an additional three (3) lbs. if weighed in November. This will allow players to have healthy growth during the season. For example, an offensive back in the Bigs that could weigh 115 lbs. on the first day of Tryouts can weigh 117 in October and 120 lbs. in November. If a player exceeds a weight on a subsequent weigh-in, he will lose his running back/receiver status for the balance of the season.

Please keep in mind that attempting to judge weights from the sideline is highly deceptive. If you are concerned about the apparent size of a player, you are welcome to call or email the League. Decades of secondary weigh-ins have clearly demonstrated rarely gain meaningful weight during the season.

Weight Limits - NYO Football has five contact leagues. Each of these leagues have four weight limits relevant to the following player classifications:

- 1) **Offensive backs** – Regardless of whether a player carries the ball, or if the player aligns off of the line of scrimmage, he is considered an offense back. Players over the offensive back weight may not pick up an offensive fumble and run with the ball if it is deemed in the eyes of the officials to be a deliberate play designed to get the ball into the hands of a player otherwise too heavy to carry the ball. If such a play is run and missed by the officials it can be reviewed later by the Football Committee and appropriate action will be taken which may include a coach's suspension or forfeiture. The intent of the rule must be followed. Within the Bigs, there is a lower weight limit for 12-year-old offensive backs vs. 11- year-old backs.

- 2) **Receiver** – To qualify as an eligible receiver, receptions by players over the offensive back weight limit must be on or across the line of scrimmage, and passes to them must be thrown overhead, i.e. no shovel or screen passes.

- 3) **Interior Lineman** – Players at or above this weight will be required to play as interior down linemen which means they must:
 - a) Play from either a 3 or 4-point stance.
 - b) On offense, play as a center, guard or tackle. Tackle eligible passes to these players are not permitted.
 - c) On defense, line up and play as a defensive guard or tackle no wider than the outside shoulder of the offensive tackle and inside the offensive end. This alignment should not be any more than one yard from the line of scrimmage, and no further from the line of scrimmage than the rest of defensive lineman.
 - d) Players in this weight classification must play on the line when receiving kick offs and punts.
 - e) **Maximum Weight limit** – Four of the five leagues have an overall maximum weight limit. Players over this weight will be moved to the older age group. Please note that final decisions concerning which league such players will participate within will be made by the League Director in his sole discretion.

League	Offensive Back (lbs)	Receiver (lbs)	Interior Lineman (lbs)	League Maximum (lbs)
2nd Grade League	65	85	85	100
3rd Grade League	75	95	95	110
4th Grade League	85	105	105	120
5th Grade League	95	115	115	130
Bigs – age 11 (*)	115	135	135	None
Bigs – age 12 (*)	112			