



## North Georgia Youth Football Association Rules

*Revised March 2026*

### GENERAL RULES – SECTION 1

#### Rule 1.1 – League Fees and Regulations

1. Membership is \$12 per athlete.
2. All fees and rosters must be submitted before the opening day of the season.
3. All football and cheerleading coaches must have a league ID card to be on or around the field. Absolutely no spectators are to be present on the sidelines or the track. All spectators must remain in the stands.
  - a. **Revised 2026** All Football and Cheerleading coaches' badge requests must be submitted 2 weeks before the roster check-in date each season. Late submissions will be processed with a late fee per each submission due by the end of the season.
    - i. Regular fees - FREE
    - ii. Late fee - \$10 per late submission

#### Rule 1.2 – Age Requirements

1. **6U (5 & 6 yr olds)** A player who has reached his 7<sup>th</sup> birthday before August 1<sup>st</sup> is not eligible. To participate, a player must be 5 years old before August 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year.
2. **7U (7 yr olds)** A player who has reached his 8<sup>th</sup> birthday before August 1<sup>st</sup> is not eligible.
3. **8U (8 yr olds)** A player who has reached his 9<sup>th</sup> birthday before August 1<sup>st</sup> is not eligible.
4. **9U (9 yr olds)** A player who has reached his 10<sup>th</sup> birthday before August 1<sup>st</sup> is not eligible.
5. **10U (10 yr olds)** A player who has reached his 11<sup>th</sup> birthday before August 1<sup>st</sup> is not eligible.
6. **11U (11 yr olds)** A player who has reached his 12<sup>th</sup> birthday before August 1<sup>st</sup> is not eligible.
  - a. Exception: 6th grade players that are 12 years old as of August 1st and are **not** 13 in the current year are eligible to play on the 11U team if their organization does not have a 7th grade team.
7. **7<sup>th</sup> Grade (12 & 13 yr olds)** A player who has reached his 14<sup>th</sup> birthday before August 1<sup>st</sup> is not eligible. All players must be in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade or below.
  - a. Exception: 8<sup>th</sup> grade players that are 12 years old as of August 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year.

#### Rule 1.3 – Draft Regulations

1. All player pools from a member park where 2+ teams exist must be evaluated and drafted to produce relative parity within the park. To be eligible for NGYFA sanctioned play, all teams must adhere to the following evaluation and draft procedure:
  - a. All players will be divided into:
    - i. Group 1 – All talent deficient
    - ii. Group 2 – All below-average talent
    - iii. Group 3 – All average talent
    - iv. Group 4 – All above-average talent
    - v. Group 5 – All elite talent

- b. Using an alternate draft system, each team will receive a relatively equal number of players from each group listed above, in the following order: Group 5, Group 4, Group 3, Group 2, and then Group 1.
- c. Teams are allowed to designate 1 child in lieu of the Head Coach and 1 child in lieu of the first Assistant Coach.
- d. The team with the lower average talent rating among the pre-designated will pick first.
- e. All picks will alternate in a T1, T2, T1, T2 type fashion.

**Exception:** In a situation where a team may be splitting for the first time, Head Coaches who are coaching in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or longer year with their respective teams may protect up to 8 players from the previous year's roster. This includes the Head Coach's child or any assistant coaches they wish to protect in the draft. Also, in this situation when a team is splitting for the first time, the **NEW** team being formed will receive the first 8 draft picks. All remaining players from both teams, including new players, will follow the regular draft procedures (Rule 1.3 #1 A-E). **This rule does not pertain to newly splitting age groups only. In addition:** Age groups with multiple returning teams may protect up to 8 returning players per team. All remaining players from all teams, including new players, will follow the regular draft procedures (Rule 1.3 #1 A-E).

- f. All member parks must draw one NGYFA Executive Committee Member (ECM) out of a hat so that the ECM can serve as on-site verification that the above rule was followed.
  - i. The ECM must be present for the **evaluation and draft** process during the **first** year a team is required to split. If that team continues to split in seasons after, the ECM is only required to attend the **draft** and not the evaluation.
  - ii. The onsite draft ECM will be provided with the roster(s) from the previous season. This will help ensure that returning players are not being distributed unevenly.
  - iii. ECM's must verify at least two and no more than three evaluation/draft processes in a season year.
  - iv. When the evaluation/draft has been verified by the ECM, said ECM must leave the draft with a printed copy of all drafted rosters, sign said rosters, and fax/email them to both the Commissioner and the Vice-Commissioner of Eligibility for dual filing.

## **Rule 1.4 – Practice/Game Regulations**

1. **Pre-season** - begins after GHSA deadweek until Week 1
  - a. Two (105 min max) non-padded practices per week allowed (helmets optional)
2. **Season (Official Practices Begin)**
  - a. **Week 1:** Three (3) helmet only practices and 1 full padded practice (105 mins max).
  - b. **Week 2-4:** Four (4) padded practices (105 mins max). Preferably three (3) weeknights and one (1) on Saturday.
  - c. **Week 5:** Two (2) padded practices (105 mins max) and one (1) helmet only practice (60 mins max).
3. **Once Games Begin:** Two (2) practices per week (105 mins max) and one (1) helmet only practice (60 mins max).
  - a. **Exception:** If a team has a bye week, they are allowed to have three (3) padded practices (105 mins max).

***If a team violates the practice rules, the Head Coach will be suspended for two games.***

4. **Heat Index Guidelines**
  - a. If the **heat index is 80-89**, players should be watched closely for any heat distress and frequent water breaks should be taken.
  - b. If the **heat index is 90-94**, 10-minute rest breaks should be taken every hour and water breaks every 10 minutes. Players should be under careful supervision. The athletic activity must be kept to 100 minutes or less.
  - c. If the **heat index is 95-99**, the athletic activity should be modified. For example, football practices in shorts, shoulder pads and helmets only. Frequent water breaks every 10 minutes and rest

breaks must be held. Players should be able to get water at any time and should be under extreme supervision from coaches, instructors, and trainers. The athletic activity must be kept to 90 minutes or less.

- d. If the **heat index is 100-104**, the athletic activity should be modified. For example, football practice in shorts, t-shirts and helmets only. Frequent water breaks every 10 minutes and rest breaks must be held. Players should be able to get water at any time and should be under extreme supervision from coaches, instructors, and trainers. The athletic activity must be kept to 90 minutes or less.
- e. If the **heat index is 105 or greater**, the athletic activity **will be suspended** and postponed until later in the evening or held indoors at the administrator's/coach's discretion, with suggestions made by the athletic trainer. Athletic activities could also be rescheduled to when the heat index has reached an acceptable level.
  - i. When an event is "BLACK FLAGGED" (which means the heat index is at 105 or higher that day), no outdoor practice may begin until the Athletic Director communicates to the Head Coach that the conditions are acceptable, and the heat index is below 105. The practice may be postponed to a later time on the same day if the heat index lowers. All appropriate guidelines should be followed based on the reading at the time.

***It is the responsibility of all administrators and coaches to provide an ample supply of water and appropriate care to all players. It is recommended that all guidelines be followed in such a way that the safety and best interests of all players be made our number one priority. It is also recommended that coaches constantly teach/instruct all players.***

5. **Games under Excessive Heat** – in excessive heat situations during games, mandatory hydration time outs will be issued by the game officials (scoring player, change of possession, timeouts).
6. **Games under lighting delay** – if lighting occurs during a game, there is a mandatory 30-minute delay. Each subsequent lighting strike will restart the mandatory 30-minute delay.
  - a. Any suspended game delayed for more than one hour **MUST** be rescheduled.
  - b. Any suspended/rescheduled game will resume from the point of delay.
  - c. Incomplete games may not be rescheduled if both coaches, in the presence of the game site manager, sign a document to not finish the game. In this circumstance, the game will be considered complete as it stands.

### **Rule 1.5 - Home Games - Revised 2026**

**NEW** - An agency must have the following to qualify for host dates in a single season. If they do not meet these minimums, they are subject to not receiving any home games:

1. If an agency does not select 3 or more available host dates in a single season, they are subject to not receiving any home games.
  - a. To be considered for home games with fewer than 3 available host dates, the agency must provide documentation of extenuating circumstances to the executive board for consideration.
2. An agency must have a minimum of 3 teams at the team declaration meeting. If an agency has less than 3 teams to declare, they are not guaranteed to host any home games.

## **Rule 1.6 – Playoffs**

1. In the event of a regular season tie, the tiebreaker will be as follows in order:
  - a. Head-to-head
    - i. In a 3+ way tie if any team has beaten all other teams involved, they will assume the higher seed
    - ii. In a 3+ way tie if any team has lost to all other teams involved, they will assume the lower seed
  - b. Total points allowed
  - c. Record versus common opponents (only the teams each team has played count as common)
  - d. Average points allowed amongst common opponents
  - e. Coin flip

If at each level of a tiebreaker, a seeding order cannot be determined, the next tiebreaker will break the tie. There is no going back to the former tiebreaker if it cannot be broken initially. If the teams are tied after all tiebreakers, a coin flip will determine seeding.

2. Playoff/Championship Games – if a game ends in a tie, the Kansas Rule will be used. In the event of a third overtime or more, teams *MUST* attempt a 2-point conversion.
3. First and second place awards will be awarded to both the football players and cheerleaders.
4. Playoff hosts will be determined during the July meeting. If more than one agency asks to host a playoff round, a vote will be taken from the relevant conference(s) to determine the host.
5. Rounds of the playoff agencies/parks that host will have their teams play at their home stadiums unless a higher seeded team is also hosting during the same round. In those instances, the higher seeded team will host. In 6U and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, if an agency/park hosts a playoff round, their teams will play at their host site, unless a higher seed is also hosting.
6. Games that have no host team will play at the playoff host that is available nearest to the higher seeded team, which is measured from the higher seeds home stadium.
7. The Super Bowl may not be held at the same location in consecutive years unless no other agency/park submits a bid in the second year. Furthermore, no one agency/park may host two rounds in the same postseason, unless another agency/park does **not** submit a bid.

***The NGYFA Commissioner has final authority on game assignments for playoffs. The membership of each conference will vote on the Super Bowl host.***

## **Rule 1.7 – Player Eligibility**

1. All registered players on a team from a member park must play for the park or organization representing the school they attend
  - a. Exception A - A player who attends an elementary or middle school that feeds into more than one high school OR if a player is homeschooled, the must play for the park or organization representing the school they are districted to attend based on their home address
    - i. This also applies to players in Hall County who attend Da Vinci Academy and World Language Middle School under charter provisions. These players must play for the park or organization representing the school for which they are districted to attend based on their home address

- b. Exception B - If an agency does not offer 6U, a 6U aged athlete may go to the geographically closest park or organization that offers the 6U age group based on their home address and organization/agency's home field address

**No player may play on any other team than their originally declared team from the date of roster check-in forward unless otherwise approved by the NGYFA Executive Board.**

2. All player eligibility must be verified at the annual roster check-in meeting. Any missing paperwork *MUST* be submitted by Friday, two days following the annual roster check-in date. A \$10 per player late fee will be applied to any player verified after this date. This includes new players and/or current players.
  3. No player may be added to a team roster once games begin. The beginning of games shall be defined as midnight of opening day.
  4. Proper paperwork includes:
    - a. Complete team roster will full name, date of birth and jersey number
    - b. Copy of official school documentation verifying current school enrollment in the school year congruent with the football season. This documentation must show the players full name, enrollment, school name, date of birth and current school year. This subsection applies to all players enrolled in home school or private school.
      - i. If qualifying under one of the exceptions listed under Rule 1.6 - 1 above, the custodial parent/guardian must provide one of the following as proof for the address at which the player resides:
        1. Athletes must also provide proof from county's school zone map verifying the school the are districted for based on their home address.
- AND**
2. Official documentation from the school which lists the player's home address, and districted school.
  3. A current utility bill for the address at which the player resides. The custodial parent/guardian's name must be listed on the utility bill.
    - a. Additional documentation may be requested to prove the player lives at that address.
- c. If school documentation is questioned, a birth certificate may be required
  - d. Cheerleaders and cheer squads not participating in the NGYFA Cheer Bowl are not required to submit eligibility paperwork.
5. The number of playoff teams in each division will be decided by the total number of teams in that division. If an age group has 10 or fewer teams, only 6 teams will make the playoffs.

## Rule 1.8 – 2024 Reclassification

NGYFA is broken up into regional conferences. The conferences will be as follows:

North	South
Banks	Apalachee Youth Athletics Association
Commerce	Bethlehem Christian Academy
Cherokee Bluff	Cedar Shoals
East Jackson	Clarke Central
East Hall	Elbert County
Flowery Branch	George Walton Academy
Franklin County	Loganville
Habersham County	Madison County
Hart County	Monroe
Jackson County	North Oconee
Jefferson	Oconee County
North Hall	Oglethorpe
Stephens County	Social Circle
West Hall	Walnut Grove
	Winder-Barrow Youth Athletics Inc.

## AGE SPECIFIC RULES – SECTION 2

### Rule 2.1 – Game Rules

1. All age groups play 8-minute quarters. \*\*\*\*Unlimited weight limit for all positions\*\*\*\*
2. The 6U league will be allowed to have 2 coaches per team on the field. One coach is allowed to call plays and one coach is allowed to line the players up.
3. The 7U and 8U will be allowed to have 1 coach per team on the field during the entire season. Once the huddle breaks, the coaches on the field must remain 10 yards behind the deepest player. No touching or adjusting of players at that point, verbal adjustments are allowed. Once the cadence starts, on-field coaches may not provide feedback or verbal adjustments to players.

In 6U, 7U, and 8U any on-field coach must not provide any feedback or input, verbal or otherwise, from the time the ball is snapped up until the play is over. **Penalty:** Unsportsmanlike conduct on the Head Coach. In all cases, sideline to press box communication involving radios, headsets and cell phones is permitted.

4. Blitzing is allowed in all age divisions except in the 6U and 7U leagues. *Blitzing* is a tactic used by the defense to disrupt the offense. A blitz is when a higher than usual number of players rushes the opposing backfield.
  - a. A defensive player cannot line up on the center in the 6U and 7U leagues. Additionally, the quarterback cannot run a sneak play straight behind the center while lined up under the center or from the shotgun formation.
  - b. In both the 6U and 7U leagues, defensive teams can have a maximum of 6 players on the line of scrimmage.
  - c. **NEW 2026 - 6U and 7U line of scrimmage is TE to TE or Tackle to Tackle. Corners can play press coverage. Linebackers must start 3 yards off the line of scrimmage.**

5. Extra points:
  - a. 6U – 10U
    - 1 point-running/passing from the 3-yard line
    - 2 points-running/passing from the 5-yard line
    - 2 points-kicking an extra point
  - b. 11U & 7<sup>th</sup> Grade
    - 1 point-running/kicking from the 3-yard line
    - 2 points-kicking an extra point
6. Punting:
  - a. 6U – 8U will declare a punt and the ball will be advanced 25 yards downfield
    - i. In 6U-8U *ONLY*, if the offensive team wishes to punt inside the 25-yard line, the ball will be moved half the distance of the goal line. The clock will stop after the punt has been declared and while it is being marked off by the officials.
  - b. 9U – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade will punt customarily under normal football rules
7. All leagues, except 6U, 7U and 8U, will kick-off to start the game and after every score. Kick-offs will be from the 40-yard line. In the 6U and 7U league the ball will be placed on the 30-yard line to start the game and after each touchdown. In 8U teams will kick off to start the game and at the start of the second half. If a team (9U – 7<sup>th</sup> Grade) records a safety, the ball will be kicked off from the 20-yard line. In 6U – 8U leagues a safety will result in the ball being placed at the 50-yard line.
8. The Kansas Plan will be used for all regular season games ending in a tie. The ball goes on the 10-yard line and each team gets one time per period. No time-outs can be carried over from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. During the regular season, if a game remains tied after two overtime series for each team under the Kansas Plan, the game will be considered a tie.
9. All players in uniform must play a minimum of 6 live ball plays during regular season games and playoffs. League member agencies may enforce regulations on practice attendance to reduce the 6-play minimum per game. League member agencies must have documentation of players missing practices and email the Vice President of Eligibility the notification of the action for the upcoming game by noon on Friday before a Saturday game. The documentation must include the player's name, jersey number, and how many practices were missed. The email must come from and be approved by the NGYFA Board member representing the league member/agency they represent.
  - a. The 6-play rule at the Super Bowl – the Director of Officials will provide an official(s) to supervise and enforce this rule.

**NOTE:** If a coach has a player(s) not wanting to play or an injury, that player(s) must remove their helmet and shoulder pads for the remainder of the game. The Head Coach must notify the field officials of the situation and the officials will then notify the opposing team's Head Coach. The coach of the team removing the player from the game must also inform the field supervisor at their earliest opportunity.

10. No child is eligible to play both for the NGYFA and any other school, travel or recreational football team during the current NGYFA season. You must play one or the other. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** The penalty will be forfeiture of all games that player(s) participated in, and the players(s) will be suspended from playing for the remainder of the current regular season and playoffs.
11. Game time is the scheduled start time. No game will begin more than 5 minutes early. There can be a 10-minute grace period if unforeseen circumstances occur at the NGYFA hosts' discretion. Circumstances must be communicated between the coach and the host director.
  - a. There is a one-hour maximum for lighting delays.



22. Every agency must have lighting detection capabilities (weather app, lighting detector, etc) at the field site. The NGYFA will follow the GHSA lighting rule.
23. League affiliated personnel (ie. Coaches, parents, players, and staff) may film any NGYFA sanctioned game for scouting purposes.
24. Any game forfeited during the season will be recorded as a score of 0-50 for the losing team.
25. Chain crews must be provided by the host site.

## **Rule 2.2 – Registration Guidelines**

1. Registration length: minimum of 6 weeks
2. Registration must also be advertised in 3 of the 5 following outlets:
  - a. Newspaper
  - b. Website
  - c. Flyers and or brochures
  - d. Other social media outlets
  - e. Signs, posters, banners located in schools and or public places
3. Registration opportunities must include 2 of the 4 following options:
  - a. In person registration of at minimum 5 dates with at least one hour for each date
  - b. Online registration and email are acceptable as well as other online avenues
  - c. Phone registration
  - d. Mail in registration
4. In addition to the mandatory 6-week registration period, all agencies must add any eligible player up until **May 15th** of the current year.
5. Any agency that has at least 14 players within a two-year age group must field a team in the higher age group. It is acceptable for agencies to field teams that have players who are within two years of age (ie 7-8, 9-10, 11-7<sup>th</sup> Grade), or any combination.
  - a. Players may not be released to the nearest agency if they meet this criterion.
  - b. This rule does not prevent agencies from fielding teams with less than 14 players if they wish.
6. If a player fails to register by the appropriate date, the only agency that the player is eligible to play for is the agency they are districted to play in. No player is eligible for any other agency for failure to register by the appropriate date.

## **Post-Season Awards**

Super Bowl Champions will receive a team trophy with the players receiving rings. Super Bowl Champion Cheerleaders will receive medals. Super Bowl Runner-Up team players and cheerleaders will receive medals.

## **Director Of Officials**

### **Notable rule changes per NFHS and GHSA**

1. Profanity will be dealt with severely. Zero tolerance policy for players and coaches whether on the field or sideline.
2. Coach's box infractions will now result in a 15-yard penalty AND conduct penalty on the Head Coach.
3. Chop blocks will be highlighted this season and will be monitored heavily.
4. The "under the 2-minute rule" which prevents the losing team from having the clock run after a declined penalty now gives the option for both teams to decline the penalty and allow the clock to resume.

5. In intentional grounding scenarios, if the ball crosses the neutral zone outside the tackle box, the play will no longer result in intentional grounding. Additionally, quarterback attempting to “clock” the football may now do so from the shotgun without resulting in intentional grounding. The ball must be secured by the quarterback without a bobble before being clocked.
6. All visors **must** be clear. There are **no exceptions** to this rule.
7. Game Day officials will check with head coaches to ensure players are legally and properly equipped. It will be the responsibility of the Head Coach to ensure players are legally and properly equipped.

### **Rule 2.3 – Season Schedule Timeline**

<b>July 2026</b>	NGYFA Team Declarations and No-Host Meeting (Locations for playoff hosts & cheer bowl will be determined)
<b>TBD</b>	First Day of Practice
<b>TBD</b>	Football Roster Check-In
<b>TBD</b>	Opening Day
<b>October 2026</b>	<b>NGYFA Cheer Bowl – TBD</b>
<b>TBD</b>	<b>First Round of Playoffs</b> NE – TBD NW – TBD SE – TBD SW – TBD
<b>TBD</b>	<b>Quarter-Finals</b> NE – TBD NW – TBD SE – TBD SW – TBD
<b>TBD</b>	<b>Semi-Finals – TBD</b>
<b>TBD</b>	<b>Super Bowl – TBD</b>