

AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL, INC.



OFFICIAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

REVISED

AYF wishes to recognize and acknowledge the following individuals for not only their contributions to the world of football but for their tireless efforts, support and encouragement, in developing the partnership between AYF and the NFL:

Wellington Mara - Bill Walsh - John McVay - Bill Polian

**For “the only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today”
Franklin D Roosevelt**

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American Youth Football, Inc.

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AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL, INC.

The international headquarters of AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL, INC. (AYF) is located in Miami, FL.

Your comments and suggestions are solicited and encouraged to make your membership with AYF a more enjoyable experience.

The AYF website at www.AmericanYouthFootball.com is a good way to keep current with AYF activities and offers. For all AYF membership management, services, and publications, visit the control panel at MyAyf.com. Each local Association should have its own password and access to all of the information and benefits of AYF. Your password will be given to you upon registration. If you do not have a password, please contact your conference representative or the AYF National Office by email to services@americanyouthfootball.com.

Contact: **AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL**
 1000 South Pointe Drive TH-9
 Miami, FL 33139
 Email -services@americanyouthfootball.com

American Youth Football is on a mission to give back to the community. The **NFL** recognizes American Youth Football's firm commitment to its **GIVING BACK** campaign and has made AYF a national youth partner of the National Football League. American Youth Football's "Giving Back" programs range from: financial grants to leagues who need assistance; shoes/uniform donations, equipment; field development; recognition for administrators who are making a difference in the AYF Hall of Fame; and in partnership with **Sadler Sports Risk Management**, making league safety and communication a priority.

MISSION STATEMENT

*“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power.”
~ Abraham Lincoln*

AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL, Inc., (AYF) established in 1996, is an international youth football organization established to promote the wholesome development of youth through their association with adult leaders in the sport of American football. Rules and regulations are established to ensure that players play in an atmosphere of safety with a competitive balance between teams. Scholastic requirements for participation ensure that each participant understands that schoolwork comes first. Being all-inclusive for those teams who cannot or do not want to participate in AYF-sanctioned post-season, AYF encourages Independent Local Leagues to join, in order to receive the same benefits and services as our National Tournament members.

For the greater good, a “Kids First” Philosophy is mandated to and expected of all AYF member organizations.

OBJECTIVES

“Winning is only half of it. Having fun is the other half.” - Bum Phillips

AYF welcomes all youth athletes to become involved in football and cheerleading, regardless of race, religion, national origin, and sex. Special divisions exist to serve various ages and weight groups, as well as children with special needs.

AYF welcomes all leagues, regardless of financial capabilities, location and participation. At AYF, we pledge to support youth football and do our best to help leagues who exist, in order to strengthen their local communities.

AYF allows its **Members** to govern themselves by remaining non-intrusive, so long as they subscribe to the following principles:

1. Safety
2. Sportsmanship
3. Full Participation (everyone gets to play).
4. **GENERAL LIABILITY AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE COVERAGE**

AYF requires its **Conferences/Leagues committing to the National Tournament to adhere to the official rules and regulations in this rulebook.**

AYF brings consistency to its rule interpretations and compliance by its effort to have open and constant communication with all of its members. If any AYF members have questions regarding the rules outlined here, please contact the Football Commissioner. AYF will strictly enforce its rules to maintain the integrity of its programs, as well as the safety and well being of its participants. By following these guidelines, we hope to ensure that AYF coaches and administrators are exemplary adult role models for our young athletes.

All AYF members have the ability to communicate directly with the AYF National Staff. The AYF National Staff will not tolerate disciplinary actions being taken against members or parents who choose

to contact the National Office directly. Contact information can be found online at www.AmericanYouthFootball.com.

AYF members believe that each of us can make a difference where we live and how we live. AYF believes that ALL kids deserve equal opportunities, special attention and respect.

"Never mistake kindness for weakness" - Joe Galat

GOALS

"It's 4 the kids" - Ralf D'Andrea, Jr.

- To provide a wholesome competitiveness within the scope of our rules and regulations that will protect the youth athletes.
- To teach the fundamentals of football and coordinate cheerleading activities.
- To provide a responsible football and cheerleading program when none are provided by the local public school system.
- To influence good sportsmanship, teamwork, highest moral and physical standards and the importance of scholarship by recognizing and rewarding academic achievement.
- To lend leagues support while remaining NON-INTRUSIVE to local operations.
- To make youth football ALL-INCLUSIVE by not excluding participants based on superficial factors (such as weight).
- To provide programs for special needs, at-risk and anti-gang groups, and the international football community.
- To recognize and reward Organizations, Coaches, Volunteers, and those involved in the sport of football and cheerleading who exemplify the highest degree of Integrity, Honor and Servant Leadership (ability to put the team ahead of self in every decision, accepts and fulfills a role).
- To provide opportunities, regardless of organizational size, by offering a Division I and Division II competition at championship events in the National Competition. The DII level of play is for organizations that may be located in smaller communities or for whatever reason may not be able to compete at a level that would afford them the opportunity to compete in an inter-conference Regional/National tournament.
- To annually communicate, update and revise the rulebook in order to provide clear, concise and consistent rules, thereby eliminating real or perceived violations of those stated rules. This allows for strict enforcement of rules, whether a direct violation or a violation of the spirit of the rule. Thereby insuring the integrity of AYF and fair play by all. Understanding always that this is a youth organization and we are all role models for our youth

ORGANIZATION

"Organization is a habit" - George Allen

Board of Directors

A Board of Directors guides AYF. The Board is responsible for overseeing the National staff on matters that relate to their individual talents and expertise. The AYF National Office conducts the day-to-day

operations of AYF. This staff will be under the guidance of the President of AYF. Positions will be added to the staff as necessary.

Football Advisory Board

The AYF Football Advisory Board is composed of individuals whose knowledge and experience provide valuable advice and insight to issues that affect AYF. The primary purpose of the AYF Football Advisory Board is to advise and guide AYF on matters related to rules and regulations that affect all forms of play.

SECTION 1 - MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE

AYF stays true to the AYF objective of remaining non-intrusive and supporting all football and cheer regardless of their competitive intentions. Organizations that **DO NOT** plan to participate in AYF inter-league tournament competitions have the freedom to participate as a member of AYF; as long as organizations abide by the three principals of: safety, sportsmanship and full participation (everyone gets to play). Leagues can retain independence in creating a structure that specifically fits their group's needs. **AYF encourages its members to follow this Official Rulebook whenever possible.**

AYF Conferences that plan to participate in AYF inter-league play: AYF sanctioned regional tournament competitions, AYF National Championships, must strictly abide by AYF Rules and Regulations as outlined in this Official AYF Rulebook. This Rulebook must be followed at all times; this includes but is not limited to pre-season, In-Season, and postseason play (Year Round). All Tournament members must make their intention to participate in the AYF National Tournament known to the current National Football Commissioner at Football@americanyouthfootball.com by **August 1**.

SECTION 2 - STRUCTURE DEFINITIONS

A Region is defined as a geographic territory. The geographic territory is determined by, the AYF National Office. The nine regional territories that make up AYF can be found online at MyAyf.com. A Region is comprised of Member Conferences within a territory that has applied for and has been granted membership by the National Office.

B) Conference:

A Conference is defined by the geographic boundary of its membership. A Conference's membership is comprised of the Associations that have applied for, and have been granted membership by the Conference's governing body. In keeping with the American Youth Football's Goals and Philosophies, no application for membership should be unreasonably withheld.

C) Association:

An Association is an organization, whether legally formed or not, assembled for the purpose of organizing and operating a youth football and/or cheer program. Locales, cities, towns or community groups may organize associations. The Association must be restricted by its Conference from drawing participants from certain geographic territory/boundaries. The Conference/Region to which it is a member will govern the acceptable method and determination of what participants can register within

any given Association. The movement of a participant from one member Association to another must be strictly governed and enforced by the Conference/Region to which it is a member and or by this rulebook. When controversy exists over player movement or territorial boundaries or draw areas the AYF National Staff will have the final say.

An Associations' members are the Participants who have applied for, and have been granted membership by the Associations governing body. In keeping with the American Youth Football's goals and philosophies, applications must be taken on a first come, first serve basis and teams must be formed regardless of player ability (see Formation Of Teams contained in this rulebook) no application for membership should be unreasonably withheld and under no circumstances will a participant be discriminated against.

NOTE: When a participant wants to play in another Conference, a waiver agreement must be signed by the Association President and Conference Commissioner of the home Association/Conference and the Association President and Conference Commissioner the player/participant wants to move to, this waiver agreement would be for one year only and kept with the player/participants team paperwork. This protects the team/association/conference and player if a protest is filed.

D) Participant:

A Participant is defined as a minor child that has applied for and has been granted membership within a given Association.

E) Division:

A division is defined as a grouping of Teams in specific Age and Weight Class or Grade Based Class. These Divisions are further defined under the heading of "Divisions" in this rulebook.

F) Team:

A Team is defined as a grouping within an age and weight class such as: Junior Pee Wee, Pee Wee, Junior Midget, etc.

SECTION 3 - RULE ENFORCEMENT / AUTHORITY

A) National:

All Conferences, Associations, Administrative Personnel, Coaches, Volunteers, and Participants are subject to disciplinary actions including, but not limited to, Permanent Suspension or Non-Renewal of Membership for violation of the Rules and Regulations and Terms of Service. American Youth Football National Office will not interfere with local matters and/or local rule violations, unless asked to do so by the local governing body, but does reserve the right, at its sole discretion, to enforce any and all of its rules and the spirit of its rules at any time including, but not limited to, postseason activities. American Youth Football, Inc. may impose consequences upon any of its members without conducting hearings or appeals.

B) Regional Level of Authority:

Regional Committees are required to inspect and enforce all of the AYF Participant Paperwork and Requirements for compliance with AYF Participant Certification. No participant or team shall be allowed to compete in a regional tournament game who has not met all of these requirements. The National Office may call upon regional Committees from time to time, to: (1) mediate disputes between member organizations and individuals, (2) discipline both adult and juvenile members. In these events, the Regional Committees may, at the request of the AYF National Office conduct

investigations/hearings, but may only make disciplinary or dispute resolution recommendations to the National Office. The National Office will, at its sole discretion, decide on the course of action to be taken.

The Regional Committee will recommend a Conference to host the Regional Championships. The hosting of Regional Championships should be considered a fundraiser and be rotated annually among the Conferences that apply to host.

C) Conference/Association Level of Authority:

Conferences are hereby required to enforce the AYF Rules and Regulations contained herein. Conference/Associations have the obligation and authority to enforce the AYF rules, regulations and the spirit of the rules and Regulations and its own rules, by-laws and other organizational materials. Additionally, Conference/Associations have the right to make any rule more stringent, but do not have the right to make these rules less strict. Any organization found not enforcing this rulebook, the rules regulations and the spirit of the rules and regulations may be suspended until compliance is achieved. Conferences are asked to submit their Rules and Regulations to the National Office by **August 1** of the current season.

All Conferences, Associations and Teams in accordance with their organizational and operational materials, may be called upon from time to time to: (1) resolve disputes between member organizations and individuals, (2) discipline both adult and juvenile members and (3) may be required to take action to enforce AYF National and Rules and Regulations.

American Youth Football, Inc. does not hold hearings or appeals. Conferences, Associations and Teams are advised to set up their own procedures to handle these matters in a timely fashion.

SECTION 4 - GOVERNING RULEBOOK

AYF members that are committing to the Regional/National competitions follow their state and/or high school governing Rulebook for their regular season games, except where superseded by this Rulebook. **The National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS), for all inter-conference/tournament games including, but not limited to, Regional and National competitions will govern AYF members.** All AYF Rules and Regulations supersede any and all other rulebooks. The AYF National Office will determine and be the final adjudicator on any and all rule conflicts. AYF requires that all coaches receive and read this rulebook, and strongly recommends that the local organizations supply the appropriate state and/or high school rulebook to all of its coaches. Any organization found to have allowed a variance to this rulebook, the rules regulations and the spirit of the rules and regulations without filing and receiving written approval may be suspended.

SECTIONS 5 - DIVISIONS

A: Instructional Division

*INSTRUCTIONAL DIVISIONS		
Team	Age (as of July 31 st)	Max Stripped Weight + Uniform Allowance = Max Dressed Weight
Tiny Mite **	7 and Under	85 + 5 = 90 lbs
Mitey Mite **	9 and Under	100 + 5 = 105 lbs
*Instructional Division can be established/adjusted as you see fit. This chart is a guideline. Sample playing rules for Instructional Division play can be found online. **When committing to come to the AYF National Invitational games, you will be playing 7 and under (unlimited weight) and 9 and under (unlimited weight).		
Pre-Game Weigh-In MUST be conducted for Tiny Mite and Mitey Mite Divisions prior to each game. PLEASE SEE TINY MITE & MITEY MITE GUIDELINES on MyAYF.com NOTE: THE MITEY MITE INVATIONAL GAMES PLAYED AT THE NATIONAL TOURNAMENT WILL USE THE GUIDELINES LISTED ON AYFChampionships.com or MyAYF.com		

B: National Division

NATIONAL DIVISION		
Team	Age (as of July 31 st)	Max Stripped Weight + Uniform Allowance = Max Dressed Weight
Cadet	8, 9 and 10 O/L	109 + 5 = 114 lbs, 89 + 5 = 94 lbs
Jr. Pee Wee	10 and Under, 11 O/L	119 + 5 = 124 lbs, 99 + 5 = 104 lbs
Pee Wee	11 and Under, 12 O/L	134 + 5 = 139 lbs, 114 + 5 = 119 lbs
Jr. Midget	12 and Under, 13 O/L	149 + 6 = 155 lbs, 129 + 6 = 135 lbs
Midget	14 and Under, 15 O/L	174 + 6 = 180 lbs, 154 + 6 = 160 lbs
Pre-game weigh-in must be conducted prior to each game		

C: All-American Division

ALL-AMERICAN DIVISION		
Age Protected/Unlimited Weight		
Team Division	Protected Age Explanation	Year of Birth
*INSTRUCTIONAL DIVISIONS		
7U (previously 1st Grade)	Cannot turn 8 on or before 12/31	2007
8U (previously 2nd Grade)	Cannot turn 9 on or before 12/31	2006
9U (previously 3rd Grade)	Cannot turn 10 on or before 12/31	2005
*COMPETITIVE DIVISIONS		
10U (previously 4th Grade)	Cannot turn 11 on or before 12/31	2004
11U (previously 5th Grade)	Cannot turn 12 on or before 12/31	2003
12U (previously 6th Grade)	Cannot turn 13 on or before 12/31	2002
13U (previously 7th Grade)	Cannot turn 14 on or before 12/31	2001
*14U (previously 8th Grade)	Cannot turn 15 on or before 12/31	2000
*15U (previously 9th Grade)	Cannot turn 16 on or before 12/31	1999
TEAM DIVISIONS CAN BE COMBINED		
Age divisions provide young athletes the opportunity to compete with other athletes based on birth date. AYF updated From Grade Based to Age Protected, as the starting age at first year of school eligibility varies across the nation.		
*8th Grade Max for 14U and Below *9th Grade Max for 15U		

D: Conference All-Star Division (See End Of Rulebook)

E: AYF National All-Star Game (See End Of Rulebook)

American Youth Football strongly supports school football programs and will encourage all participants to join their local school team over any youth league.

- **1) Definition of “Max Stripped Weight”**
The definition of the term “Max Stripped Weight” is as follows:
The participants weight wearing Gym Shorts and a T-Shirt as the minimum clothing.
- **2) Definition of “Max Dressed Weight”**
The definition of the term “Max Dressed Weight” is as follows:
The participants weight wearing (uniform allowance) Football Cleats, Game Sox, Football Pants With Pads, and Game Jersey as the minimum clothing. No Clothing, Padding, Cleats etc. can be exchanged once the weigh-in has been conducted.

If your participant is so close to the weight that you are concerned about the thickness of the participant’s socks, then your participant is on the wrong team level. Understand that the participants

will not be allowed to play if they do not make weight. If this becomes a big issue in your Association, consider the All-American Division where it is a grade-based, age-protected system.

For determining the Participant's age (Protected Age), the term "on or before" and the term "as of" is intended to have the same definition (age cutoff date):

An age cutoff date of (on or before/as of 7/31) **July 31st** of the current season is as follows: ie: 14 yrs old on **July 31st**, turns 15 yrs old on August 1st the participant plays as a 14 yr old. For the National Division. (Exception in All-American).

An age cutoff date of (on or before/as of 12/31) **Dec. 31st** of the current season is as follows: ie: 14 years old on Dec. 31st, turns 15 years old on January 1, the participant plays as a 14 year old in the All-American Division.

Associations and Conferences may alter the weights in any of the weighted divisions/teams to a weight less than BUT NOT more than the listed maximum weight to accommodate any special condition that may exist in your local organization such as the desire to allow for in season growth.

No other alterations to the above listed divisions are allowed without the prior written consent of the National Office. An official AYF Waiver Request Form can be found at MyAyf.com.

F: Spring Football / Summer Passing Leagues

American Youth Football (AYF) acknowledges Spring Football and Summer Passing Leagues. AYF recommends that any Conference, Association, Team participating in Spring Football and Summer Passing Leagues do so by following the format established by their local High School or State High School Athletic Governing Board.

Great care should be taken to not interfere with other Spring and Summer sports such as Baseball, Lacrosse and family vacations. American Youth Football requires that NO pressure be placed on individuals to participate. Coaches who "require" or in any way manipulate Fall participants to join or participate in any way, or coaches who do not plan and allow for participation in other sports and family vacations, should be immediately suspended from coaching any team during the regular (Fall) season. Conferences are required to monitor any Spring or Summer events. Outlines and ideas for Spring Football and Summer Passing Leagues can be found at MyAyf.com.

G: Division I and Division II

The AYF National Division is the only division that offers a Division I ("DI") and Division II ("DII") level of play. The default level of play for all National Division teams is DI. For Conferences that want to offer DII level of play for inter-conference, Region/National tournaments must submit a request to the National Office by **September 1st**. Any Conference may offer a DII level structured in any way they see fit, however they will be entered into inter-conference, Regional / National tournament play as a DI level if they have not submitted a request and been granted, in writing, a DII Level Status for inter-conference, Regional / National tournament play. An official AYF DII Request Form can be found online. This request must be submitted by September 1st of the current season. The only criteria at this time needed for receiving DII Status, is your methodology for determining who in your organization is a legitimate DII Team. Your methodology must fit within the AYF Goals and Philosophy for its DII Level of play. DII status is reserved for organizations that may be located in smaller communities or for whatever reason may not be able to compete at a level that would afford them the opportunity to

compete in an inter-conference Regional/National tournament (AYF strongly recommends a Win/Loss component be added to your methodology).

D2 champions will be reviewed by AYF Staff on future return at this division

DII status can also be determined at the end of the regular season, but under no circumstances will a DI Conference Champion Runner up be allowed to be the DII team sent to compete in the Regional or National Tournament. It is up to your Conference to ensure that you have a fair process in place. Your methodology must be sent to the National Football Commissioner before the teams can compete in the Regional or National tournaments.

EXAMPLE: Determining DII Status at the end of the regular season: You have X number of teams at a division (Cadet - Midgets), Seeds 1 through X advance to play-offs to compete for the Division I berth, and seeds X through X compete for the Division II berth.

H: Inspiration Division (Formerly known as Contender Division)

The AYF Inspiration Division enables youth with either cognitive or physical disabilities to participate in football and cheer. The Inspiration Division is further explained in the Official AYF/AYC Contender Rulebook.

I: Flag Division

AYF has established rules and regulations for flag football. These can be found at MyAyf.com. It is a good, economical move because the cost is minimal and no padding is needed or allowed. One of the best benefits is that you keep the kids in your program and eventually they may move into your tackle program. All the football skills are available in flag and touch football; the only exception is that there is no contact.

J: Tiny Mite/Mitey Mite Division

AYF has established some guidelines for the Tiny Mite and Mitey Mite divisions.

SECTION 6 - WEIGH-IN RULES - Tiny Mite/Mitey Mite/National Divisions

“To make a man, you must first build a boy”. - Tiger Ellison

*American Youth Football will strictly enforce the age and weight restrictions contained in this Rulebook, as well as all other Rules and Regulations. **Anyone who is determined to be over the maximum weight limit listed herein will not be allowed to participate in any Local, Regional or National game or event.***

If a participant within your program is determined to be over the maximum weight limit at the National Tournament they will not be allowed to participate. You are hereby obligated to inform all that there will be no exceptions, no travel refunds, and no appeals of the weigh masters decision.

Associations, Conferences, and Regions must adopt and agree on weigh-in rules and procedures but must meet the following minimum requirements.

1. Weigh-ins **MUST** be conducted prior to each game.
2. When Pre-Season practice begins, all players must be weighed to insure proper team placement. Parents **MUST** be informed of the possibility of the participant not being allowed to play if they do not make weight prior to each game.

3. When Pre-Season practice begins, any participant found to be ten or more pounds above the Max Stripped Weight for their specified team level, at the Pre-Season, or In-Season weigh-in, must move up a level prior to the roster certification cutoff date, or be dropped if no All-American Division exists. No child may practice or remain on a team if they are 10 or more pounds over the Max Stripped Weight.
4. Any “Sweat Down” or Extreme” weight loss used by a player to make weight will be grounds for immediate suspension for the player’s own safety.
5. Any Coach, Administrator or Team Personnel found to have advised, encouraged, or tolerated any “Sweat Down” or “Extreme” weight loss techniques will be grounds for immediate suspension. Suspension will be anywhere from one year to permanent depending on the severity. Head Coaches will be held responsible for the actions and/or inactions of all team personnel.
6. The only two acceptable methods of verifying a participants weight are as follows:
 - a. Maximum Stripped Weight - Player steps on scale wearing at a minimum gym shorts and a tee shirt.
 - b. Maximum Dressed Weight - Player steps on scale wearing football cleats, game socks, football pants with pads, game jersey as the minimum clothing. No clothing, padding, or cleats can be exchanged once the weigh-in has been conducted.
7. Any Participant that exceeds the maximum weight for his registered team must not be allowed to play in that week’s game.
8. Conferences/Regions can adopt their own weigh-in procedures as far as who conducts the weigh-in but must allow at least one member from each coaching staff to attend/witness. AYF recommends that each head coach be present as they will be held responsible should any weigh-in rules be violated.
9. The Team Books including participant picture, documents, and MPR form, must be available to the weigh-in officials for player verification.
10. No player jersey numbers can be changed once the official weigh-in has been completed.
11. No two players may have the same jersey number under any circumstances.

SECTION 7 - INSURANCE REQUIREMENT

All teams must furnish proof of General Liability and Accident Insurance. The required coverage can be seen at MyAyf.com. “Additionally, American Youth Football, Inc. 1000 South Pointe Drive TH-9, Miami, FL. 33139, must be named as an additional insured. All members, not covered under the AYF endorsed insurance policy are required to deliver (mail or email) to AYF a certificate of insurance prior to conducting ANY practice or games. ALL CONFERENCES/ ASSOCIATIONS/TEAMS/SQUADS must provide this documentation, no exceptions. Any team or squad participating in the Regional or National venues will not be allowed to take the field or stage until acceptable proof of insurance is provided”.

THE MINIMUM GENERAL LIABILITY AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE COVERAGE IS:

The minimum Accident is \$100,000

The minimum General Liability is \$1,000,000

For more information on the AYF-endorsed insurance plan, please visit MyAyf.com.

SECTION 8 - FORMATION OF TEAMS

“We all start out as children. It’s a good way to start. But only the wisest and luckiest few hold on to a Child’s heart” - Unknown

The formation of teams is done on a first come, first serve, and participation policy basis. AYF does allow registration/sign-up for “veteran (returning) players” prior to “open” registration/sign-up. Each child must be afforded the opportunity to be taught the game of football regardless of its ability. AYF does not form “Select” teams. In other words, you cannot select or recruit only the best athletes for your team. Tryouts of any kind can only be done to determine what team level the participant will be placed on and to ensure that all teams are created equally and have similarly competitive skill levels. Cutting of players is not allowed in AYF; however, there are certain guidelines that should be met if it becomes necessary to not assign a player to a team. AYF strongly recommends that the coaching staff work closely with these players before the extreme measure of dropping a player take place. AYF believes that the game of football may just be a saving grace for this type of participant.

A) Dropping a player will be acceptable:

1. When a participant is found to have signed up as a result of parent or guardian pressure, or, he/she tells team management he/she does not really want to play football/cheer.
2. When a participant cannot furnish the required documents to be certified to a team roster, (e.g., Medical, Proof of Birth Date, etc.).
3. When a Participant shows no interest in football/cheer, is disruptive to other participants and the instructions of the coaching staff, and becomes a discipline problem.
4. When a Participant does not show up for practices. Participants must have a valid excuse from the parent(s), guardian(s) or a physician.
5. When a Participant attempts to intimidate fellow participants by word and/or physical act.
6. When a Participant is actively a member of another football team or cheerleader squad while actively participating with an AYF team (For dual participation, some exceptions may apply).

B) Dropping A Player Will NOT Be Acceptable:

Excessive team or individual conditioning drills, disciplinary actions or assigning individual player’s laps or intentionally placing player in intimidating hitting drills for the purpose of encouraging weaker players to quit is not acceptable. Coaches determined to be using this or any other tactic to drop weaker players will be immediately dismissed for the remainder of the season and may be permanently suspended.

C) Dual Participation:

Playing flag or touch football as part of the physical education requirement in the school curriculum is not counted as school team participation. While dual participation is prohibited as stated above, AYF recognizes that extenuating circumstances do exist in certain parts of the country with respect to school football/cheer programs. Any organization may request a waiver by submitting the AYF Waiver Request form, which can be found MyAyf.com. Players can not be certified on two rosters ie: Jr Pee Wee and Pee Wee. This is a safety issue. Players may end up playing two games in one day - and this should not be allowed.

D) Participant Recruitment:

Conferences are required to establish “Draw Areas” or “Boundaries” for its member Associations. Should an organization/team wish to accept the application of a participant (special participant) who is

(1) outside of the Associations defined draw area, or (2) previously listed on a roster with another Association, it must provide full disclosure of these conditions to the Conference members they participate with and receive permission from the Conference in a manner to be determined by the Conference. Permission should only be granted on a limited basis when it is in the best interest of the participant and when it is determined that the participant has NOT been recruited. Conferences are required to create and enforce rules and regulations to prevent one Association from recruiting the players of another Association. Under no circumstances can a Conference allow any individual team to accept the application of more than 3 “Special Participants” without written permission from the National Office.

E) A and B Teams/Squads:

Associations that have a large number of participants at a specific team level (Jr. Pee Wee, Pee Wee, etc.), may form multiple squads, hereinafter referred to as A and B squads. Associations may roster participants on either the A or B team as their Conference/Association Rules and Regulations allow. However, the association may not “stack” one team over the other by intentionally placing all of the most talented players on the A team in order to qualify for Tournament play. Remember you cannot cut players or put them on a waiting list with the sole intention to form a superior squad.

F) All-Star Teams:

At no time during regular season or post-season play, shall a non-all-star division team be allowed to form by moving participants from existing certified rosters. All newly formed, stacked teams, considered an All-Star team will be considered “Cheating” and are subject to disciplinary actions.

At no time is a team allowed to form what a reasonably prudent person would consider an All-Star team based on the spirit of all the rules contained in the previous “Formation of Teams” paragraphs and be considered “Cheating” for purposes of determining disciplinary actions.

The formation of an “All-Star” Team is only permitted for Intra-Conference play. Conferences may establish an All-Star game (e.g., east vs. west) at the same Team level at the end of its regular season only. No Participant certified on a team that is still actively participating in post-season play is allowed to also participate on the All-Star Team.

Conferences may choose to name an All-Star team or All-Conference team as an honor without playing a game. AYF fully recognizes this honor.

All Star selections with or without game participation should require the highest of Academic Standards and should be reserved for the oldest players only.

AYF All - Conference All-Star and AYF National All-Star teams are excluded from this rule.

Details on the AYF Conference All-Stars and AYF National All-Stars can be found at the end of this Rulebook.

SECTION 9 - PLAYING SEASON / PRACTICE / CONDITIONING / TRAINING CAMP

“Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see” - James Whitehead

A) Start Dates:

The AYF playing season may start as early as the **fourth Monday in July** and extend until **December 31** of the current year. Start and end dates of the playing season may be modified for teams playing in regions with severe weather conditions. Written permission by the AYF National Office is required before any such modifications may be made. A later start date may occur for any league.

No Conference shall commence team practice until the fourth Monday in July, with the first week being dedicated to Ten (10) Hours of conditioning ONLY, before full contact is allowed.

B) Conditioning/Training Camp:

Can begin on the 4th Monday in July and it will consist of the first 4 weeks, for 10 Hours max each week.

Starting the 5th Week practice is limited to 8 Hours per week.

(First thru end of Season Games Prep time = 8 hours per week, NO EXCEPTIONS)

MANDATORY 10 MINUTE BREAKS EVERY HOUR ARE REQUIRED BUT ARE NOT COUNTED TOWARD THE PRACTICE TIME.

All players, regardless of when they join the team, must have at least one week (10 Hours) of conditioning before they are allowed to have live contact. Even if a player joins the team after the start of the regular season schedule, the 10 hours of conditioning requirement must be met.

C) Coaching Staff Requirements:

At least one coach must be present during every practice.

- Each and every coach must have a background check performed and reviewed/approved by the process established by the Association/Conference.
- There shall be at least one person holding a Red Cross Card, or of similar equivalency, present at all practices. This can be a coach or any volunteer approved by the Association.
- All coaches must attend and pass a course on Concussion, coaches can take and pass the concussion test on the CDC website, the AYF/AYF endorsed program, documentation can be downloaded that the test was taken and successfully passed, go to: www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html .
- You can check with the Red Cross for classes on concussion. The National Federation of High School also has free concussion classes and a test, www.nfhs.com.
- The CDC has several free program kits that you can download or send for at www.cdc.gov.
- We also suggest using the “American Academy of Neurology” website for valuable information and additional tools, AAN is a participating organization with the CDC, go to www.aan.com/concussion. This site also has a FREE iTunes app on concussion that can be downloaded.
- As in all AYF/AYC Rules, Conferences/Leagues and Association may enforce stricter rules on Concussion Courses and Clinics
- Documentation that the coaching staff (each coach) has successfully passes the course/seminar/class or online course test on concussion awareness must be included in the team book.

Conferences are required to enforce these “Staff Requirements” with its member Associations.

***Special Note: When attending the AYF National Championships there are a limited number of coaches and field personnel credentials given out. Make sure your staff is aware of this. See Section 23 Regional/National Championship Eligibility, Rules & Penalties.**

D) Practice/Game Restrictions:

There shall be no “inter-team” practice or games between Teams/Divisions e.g., Pee Wee vs. Jr. Pee Wee, National Division teams vs. All-American Division teams, etc.; this does not prohibit individual fundamental coaching sessions as long as there is no full contact between players of differing teams/divisions.

The following Drills and Warm-up Exercises are hereby banned from all AYF activities. Leg Lifts, Neck Bridges, Neck Rolls, Bull in the Ring, Barrel Rolls, and any and all drills and exercises not generally accepted as safe and that may not be reflective of actions that would normally occur during the course of a football game.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rulebooks contain strong language on blocking and tackling. AYF coaches are responsible to be fully informed and abide by all such rules of their state’s governing body (NFHS or NCAA). AYF coaches are also responsible to review these rules every year. In addition to other specific prohibitions in the NFHS and NCAA rulebooks, butt blocking, chop blocking, face tackling or spearing techniques are strictly prohibited. If such techniques or any others forbidden by the NFHS or NCAA rulebooks are taught, the coaches responsible shall be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to probation upon the first offense and suspension for the remainder of the season upon the second offense. Associations are encouraged to establish their own rules regulations and monitoring of their coaches. Coaches assume all liability for their actions or inactions.

Equipment Note: Helmet visors are not allowed according to the NFHS rulebook, unless it is completely clear and glass-like. If a visor is slightly tinted and an Official can see the tint on his game data card the visor must be removed. There are no exceptions.

SECTION 10 - PLAYING SEASON / GAMES

“Compete! In the Classroom and on the Gridiron” -- Dee Grayer

A) Game Clock Details / Playing Requirements/Number of Players:

Only 10-minute quarters will be utilized in all Divisions/Class of play within AYF. Maximum half time allowed will be 15 minutes.

Each team will have three (3) timeouts per half in all AYF games. Timeouts are not charged against a team for injuries or game officials’ timeouts.

A maximum of 14 regular season games including Conference championships are allowed.

It is required that each team must have the minimum number of 13 players eligible and able to participate to start a regulation or play-off game. For the first games of National Championship play, each team must have a minimum of 16 players eligible and able to participate. If the number of players falls below 11 players, the game will be forfeited.

Football games are to be scheduled no more than one (1) game per week with a minimum of 48 hours (2 days) between games. The AYF National Office reserves the right to waive this rule when extenuating circumstances exist or to accommodate a championship tournament.

B) Coaching Communications:

There will be no electronic devices from the press box, coaching box, sidelines or any other position on the field that may be used to relay messages to the coaches or players at any time. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, the use of a cell phone, Blackberry, PDA, computers, tablets, iPads, smart phones or other messaging device. All Bluetooth earpiece devices are not allowed within the field of play. A coach using a cell phone for emergency purposes must step outside the coach's box, off the playing field. If it continues, the coach may be asked to leave the field for the remainder of the game. Further disciplinary action may be taken by the Conference

C) Medical Requirements:

AYF requires the home team or hosting organization to provide medical coverage at each game. In the absence of a physician and or ambulance on site, the minimum requirement will be the presence of an individual who is a Certified Athletic Trainer, EMT-certified, or is currently certified in Red Cross Community First Aid and Safety or its equivalent. Therefore, no game shall start without proper medical assistance on hand.

Coaches MUST have all Emergency Medical Release Forms and Parent/Guardian Emergency Numbers in their possession at all times when team is practicing, traveling or playing in any game or competition.

Home team or hosting organization is required to introduce the emergency medical personnel to the visiting team and to review the emergency medical plan with the visiting team. The emergency medical plan shall include but not be limited to (1) ambulatory access to the field, (2) directions to the facility, (3) location of the emergency communication device, in the absence of a cell phone, and the emergency medical services numbers, as well as the local fire and police numbers.

Once an injured participant is removed from the game, they may not re-enter the game unless first approved by the highest medical authority covering the event that will make the final decision regarding injuries on the field and the ability for a player to return. If present, the licensed/certified athletic trainer will make the final medical decision unless a medical doctor is present and covering the activity". **In the case of a diagnosed or suspected concussion a player may not return to the game or next game without a written consent to return to play from a medical doctor. An AYF Doctors Resume Participation Consent Form can be found online on www.MyAyf.com**

D) Sanctioned Football:

The AYF Sanctioned football manufacturer is Wilson®. AYF strongly recommends using an AYF Wilson football (leather or composite) during the regular season games.

As the exclusive ball of the postseason, AYF requires the use of an AYF logoed Wilson football during all AYF-sanctioned tournament and postseason play. This includes regional tournaments and the AYF National Championships. A team can play with their own game ball ONLY if it is an AYF Wilson Football; if teams do not bring their own AYF Wilson Game Ball, one will provided at game time.

The following is the recommended size breakdown per team level. To order official AYF Wilson Footballs - visit MyAyf.com.

Division	Ball Size
Instructional	Wilson K2
Cadet	Wilson K2
Jr. PeeWee - PeeWee	Wilson TDJ
Jr. Midgets - Midgets	Wilson TDY
10U (Previously 4 th Grade)	Wilson K2
11-12U (Previously 5 th /6 th)	Wilson TDJ
13-14U (Previously 7 th /8 th)	Wilson TDY
15U (Previously 9 th Grade)	Wilson TDS

“You can be a hard, but good loser. Any coach or team that cannot lose or treat opponents with respect has no right to win.”- Knute Rockne

E) Scoring, Tie Breakers, Lopsided Rule:

Scoring is as follows:

Touchdown	6 points
Scoring play after touchdown (running or passing)	1 point
Scoring play after touchdown (kicking)	2 points
Safety (awarded to opponent)	2 points
Field goal	3 points
Forfeit	Score of game 6-0
Ties	Declared at the end of regulation

AYF will allow each Conference to set their own tie-breaker system if needed for regular season play. However, “Sudden Death” tie-breakers are prohibited. **AYF Inter-Conference, Regional and National Tournament/Championship Games will utilize the ten (10) yard Tie-Breaker System, as stated in the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) Rulebook. The NFHS Tie-Breaker rules amended to start from the 10-yard line.**

An **intentionally** run-up score is occurs when a team continues to pour it on even after the game is in their favor and far out of reach for their opponents. Coaches who practice this are to be disciplined by the local Conference/Association. AYF considers this type of coaching contrary to its purposes.

The AYF lopsided score rule is 35 Points or 5 touchdowns, whichever comes first. Once the score differential reaches 35 points or 5 touchdowns, the game clock will become a running clock and stay a running clock for the remainder of the contest and a win is automatically declared. Once the clock becomes a running clock it can only be stopped for injuries, official or team time outs. It will be the losing team's preference as to whether they will receive a normal kickoff or they may choose to take the ball on their own 40-yard line. The winning team is prohibited from running any misdirection, counter, reverses or "trick plays" of any kind, or any play that has been consistently run with success during the game. Skill position starters must be replaced whenever possible. Conferences and Associations cannot limit the winning team to only running between the tackles. Mandatory plays must be completed regardless of the score or game clock. If the winning team does not complete their required mandatory plays, the full force of the mandatory play rules will be in effect.

Conferences are required to investigate/review all reported losses of more than 35 points or 5 touchdowns. Conferences are required to establish their own disciplinary actions for coaches that are determined to have **intentionally** run-up the score, in all cases an appeal process must be afforded to the coach, unless the coach has signed acceptance of an agreement prior to the start of the season indicated that the conference will not allow appeals of its disciplinary decisions.

F) Regional / National Tournament:

Special Warning Regarding Rumors:

No one should be allowed to participate in a Local, Regional or National event until all of his or her paperwork, grade and/or weight have been verified. Any allegations of cheating or violations of this rulebook or any local rule or regulation should be immediately reported, in writing, to either the Association and/or Conference president or their appointed representative for dealing with such issues. Associations and Conferences are required to fully investigate all claims and keep on file a written record of all investigations.

Once the allegations of cheating or rules violation have been reported in writing to the respective official, whether it be Association or Conference, there shall be NO further discussion until it is reviewed, investigated and acted on appropriately by the Association and/or Conference. The act of spreading rumors, which is general talk not based on fact, will not be tolerated in American Youth Football. It not only hurts your credibility, but it affects your team and other teams that may become involved in the rumor.

Any allegation of Cheating or Violations of this Rulebook during post-season play should be reported in writing to the National Office for investigation. Given these facts, any Organization, individual or group of individuals (which includes any member of the organization) spreading rumors of cheating, special treatment or any other false information, whether causing an incident or not during a Regional or National event may be banned from participation in any future Regional or National events for a period of time deemed reasonable by the National Office.

SECTION 11 - PROTESTS

“Win without arrogance, lose without excuses.” - Chris Corkum

Conferences shall have complete jurisdiction over protests concerning all games within their programs. Conferences may choose at their sole discretion whether protests of any kind are allowed. Conferences must maintain consistency with this discretion.

Protests on matters of judgment rendered by any game official WILL NOT be heard under any circumstances.

All protests must be in writing and submitted to the local Conference-designated person no later than 24 hours after termination of the game in question. Conferences have the responsibility of calling a hearing within 48 hours after receipt of the protest, or in the event of a holiday, the following non-holiday day.

“You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give.” - Winston Churchill

SECTION 12 - PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION / ELIGIBILITY

“Look for players with character and ability. But remember, character comes first.” - Joe Gibbs

Note: Falsifying birth or any other documents to make a participant eligible is grounds for forfeiture of all games in which they have participated and permanent suspension of the adult(s) and or organization responsible for the act. All evidence will be turned over to the local authorities for any criminal prosecution that may be relevant.

Consent to Play: Parents or legal guardians are required to furnish to local Associations a written statement declaring their child has permission to participate in local and any AYF activities and that they understand the risks involved. The written and signed statements must include a: *Waiver/Release and Image Release*. Sample copies of these documents and Regional/National team book format Instructions can be found online at MyAyf.com. Teams, leagues and associations should consult with local legal counsel to determine if these sample forms meet their individual needs.

Emergency Information & Consent to Treat: This document must contain emergency medical information, emergency contacts and consent to treat in the event of a medical emergency. This form must be in the possession of the team at all times in the event an injury occurs.

Medical Clearance: All AYF participants must deliver to their local Association proof of a Medical Clearance before participating in AYF programs. This includes but is not limited to Preseason Practice. The Medical Clearance must attest to, or contain the statement:

“I, hereby my signature below, do certify that I am licensed by the state and am qualified in determining that: (Child’s Name:) _____ is physically fit and I have found no medical or observable conditions which would contra-indicate him/her from

participating in youth flag football, tackle football, cheer or dance athletic activities. I am, therefore, clearing this individual for athletic participation without limitation.”

This document will be good for one year from the date it was signed. A sample copy of an acceptable document can be found online at MyAyf.com.

AYF/AYC highly recommends that each child that participates in an AYF/AYC program receive pre-concussion testing prior to the start of conditioning/training camp.

Age Certification: AYF requires that all participants present to their local Association an original record of their birth. AYF strongly recommends the use of state-issued DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles) ID cards, certified copy or a notarized photocopy of their original birth certificate or a copy of the birth certificate with a state-issued identification card that requires an original birth certificate (or equivalent) for issuance. These documents shall set forth the date and year of birth and can be a Certificate from the State, County or City Bureau of Vital Statistics, Department of Health, and the Department of Motor Vehicles, School Certificates or Record of Notification of Birth Registration by the Bureau of Census of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Passports, Military ID cards are also acceptable. These documents must be presented to the Conference officials for verification and is part of the mandatory player certification process.

NO HOSPITAL CERTIFICATES WILL BE ACCEPTED. The age certification date is specified under “Divisions.”

Grade Verification: ALL divisions of play (National and All American) will require a copy of the current or previous season report card to verify the Participant’s age/grade level in school. This documentation should be maintained along with all other required documentation in the team book.

Scholastic Eligibility: All participants must have received a passing grade average for the school year ending just prior to the beginning of the season (e.g., school year ending June 2014 for the Fall 2014 season) to be eligible for AYF participation. If verification of grades is necessary, or if passing grades are not achieved, Parent/Guardian/School administrator can make the final ruling regarding scholastic eligibility as to whether or not continued participation will benefit the participant. Each team will be required to submit an AYF Affidavit of Scholastic Eligibility to participate in Regional and National Tournament play.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL A CHILD BE ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY ACTIVITY UNTIL ALL PAPERWORK IS COLLECTED AND CERTIFIED.

SECTION 13 - ROSTERS

“Whatever you think you can, or, think you can’t - you are right” - Henry Ford

Associations must have all AYF Required Participant Paperwork collected, complete, and inspected for compliance by August 31. Conferences must certify that their Associations have met this requirement and have a system in place for paperwork and roster certification. A Certified Roster means that all of the participants listed on the roster have submitted the AYF Required Paperwork and that all paperwork is authentic and compliant with AYF Rules and Regulations and the participant fits the criteria established for the specific team level and division to which the Participant is certified

including but not limited to the Participants Age/Weight and/or Grade. Conferences must maintain in their possession a copy of the final certified copy of all rosters. Players added to the roster after **August 31** must be certified prior to participating in any game but no later than **September 15**.

The maximum number of participants allowed on a certified roster is **36**. The minimum number of participants required to certify a roster is **16**. (See minimum number of players required to play a regulation game Section 10 Playing Season/Games)

Once a roster is full, no player may be dropped to make room for another player. After rosters have been certified, Participants can be moved up to a higher level of play for any reason until **September 15th**. After rosters have been certified, a Participant can only be moved down to a lower level prior to the second regularly scheduled game, as long as that game is prior to the roster add/drop deadline of **September 15**. Any movement of a certified participant to a level lower than the level that the participant was originally certified at should only be done if the participant is determined to have been placed on a level above his/her ability to participate safely. There must also be room on the roster as no one can be cut/dropped just to make room. There can be no roster movement for any reason after **September 15**.

Under no circumstances shall a players be placed on two rosters/teams in the same Association, Conference, or any other youth football organization.

Conferences must receive all of their Associations rosters and certify all of their player documentation by **September 15**. Conferences must maintain in their possession a copy of the final certified copy of all rosters. Conferences must then submit all rosters to AYF National Office by **October 1**.

Conferences must submit a copy of the same rosters to the designated National Football Commissioner by **October 1**. It is requested that all Conferences submit rosters to the AYF National Office by entering them into the MyAyf.com system run by AYF Headquarters by the deadline of **October 1**, of the current playing season. Failure to submit rosters and certificates of insurance may result in the loss of certain services provided by AYF, including post-season and championship game eligibility.

Special Note regarding Conference (Local or Championship) Duties:

1. All Conferences must verify insurance that their Associations or individual teams buy (if not purchased by the Conference). Conference Staff must make sure that the Association/Teams' insurance coverage protects the children in Flag, Tackle, Cheer, Dance, and Step, all volunteers, the Association, the Conference and AYF. All Conferences/Associations/Teams must have and provide a Certificate of Insurance in the name of American Youth Football, Inc., see Section 7, for address.

IF FOR ANY REASON YOU WILL NOT MEET THE OCTOBER 1 DATE, YOU MAY REQUEST AN EXTENSION FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE. ALL REQUESTS MUST BE MADE BY OCTOBER 1.

SECTION 14 - MANDATORY PLAY RULES

"To win without struggle is to triumph without glory." - George Allen

All AYF participants **MUST** play an active role in each game. Unless noted prior to the start of the game, by absence, by injury, or the participant fails to make weight.

All AYF participants MUST play an active role in a minimum number of plays as follows:

- 31 - 36 Players = 4 Plays
- 26 - 30 Players = 6 Plays
- 16 - 25 Players = 8 Plays

The number of plays required is determined by the numbers of players able to participate at the start of each game.

All Minimum plays must be “active” plays (punt and punt return are active plays from the line of scrimmage (LOS) and do count). All other special team plays do not count as MPR plays. All plays must be from the LOS. Any penalties resulting in the replay of the down, do not count as plays. Plays that result in a quarterback dropping to his knee with the sole purpose of “playing it safe” will not count as plays.

All participants must receive their minimum mandatory number of plays by the end of the 3rd quarter. Any participant that has not received their minimum plays by the end of the 3rd quarter must enter the game and remain in the game until they have received their required number of plays.

Designating a player as “Disciplined” at the Regional or National tournament will not be an acceptable means of meeting the Mandatory Play Requirement without the approval of the National Commissioner. No player may be designated as “Injured” as an acceptable means of meeting the Mandatory Play Requirement without the onsite trainer’s evaluation and designation.

Each team will supply two adults, 18 years of age or older, to monitor the Mandatory Play Rule. Failure to supply two adults as described will be considered a violation of the Mandatory Play Rule and may result in the forfeiture of the game.

Any person assigned to be a Mandatory Play Monitor must be instructed to be respectful while on the opponent’s sideline or working with the opponent’s volunteer. There is to be no excessive cheering, cell phone use and no coaching of any kind. At any time the opponent for any reason may ask that the volunteer be replaced. This request must be complied with immediately without question. Failure to comply will be considered a violation of the Mandatory Play Rule and may result in the forfeiture of the game.

Conferences shall enforce the Mandatory Play Rule. Any team not meeting the Mandatory Play Rule shall forfeit their game. Additional minimum penalties: First offense for the head coach: probation. Second offense for the head coach: suspension for one game and one week of practice. Third offense: suspension for remainder of season. If it is the last game: suspension for the first half of the following season’s games. In the event a suspension should carry over into the next season, the Association that may appoint the offending coach will be obligated to enforce the suspension.

The exception to this penalty is the following: In Conference/League Championship play-off games the penalty is: Head Coach suspended for one game and one week of practice. In the case of the Regional or National play-off games the penalty is: Head Coach is suspended for one game.

If you do not have a Mandatory Play Form (MPR) please use the official AYF MPR Form found online at MyAyf.com.

SECTION 15 - BOWL GAMES

Associations/Conferences wishing to participate in post-season bowl games taking place during the same timeframe as the AYF National Championship Tournament must send request to the National Football Commissioner.

Bowl Games in general do not require permission from the National Office.

SECTION 16 - COACHING REQUIREMENTS/BACKGROUND CHECKS/SCOUTING

“With the instant credibility one gains by the Privilege to coach football, comes the obligation to coach safe fundamentals.” - Bill Walsh

All coaches by their appointment to coach are bound by the “Coaches Pledge,” “Coaches Code” and “Standard of Conduct.”

Associations are required to perform background checks on all of their Coaches and any and all Volunteers deemed to have repeated contact with the participants, each year. **Conferences are required to obtain an Affidavit that all background checks have been completed from their member associations. Conferences must submit all collected Affidavits to the AYF National Office.** American Youth Football, Inc. has no control over the selection of volunteers, each Association shall be required to indemnify and hold harmless American Youth Football, Inc. against all legal actions based upon allegations arising from a failure to enforce all or part of this regulation and or the decision making process used in volunteer selection.

All coaches must be approved by and serve at the pleasure of the local Association. Coaching assignments are for one playing season only and are therefore automatically terminated at the close of each season. Coaches must re-apply for coaching positions annually. The close of the season will be determined by the local Association but must not extend past the “End of the Year Banquet.”

All coaching appointments and their appropriate contact info must be submitted to the National Office each year by **August 31**.

Head coaches must be at least 21 years old. The coaching staff will be under his/her direction and supervision.

Assistant coaches must be at least 18 years old and have graduated from high school or hold a GED certificate. They must have a general knowledge of the game of football.

Coach Trainees must be a minimum of 16 years old and may only carry out the instructions of the Head or Assistant coaches.

“What makes a good coach? Complete dedication.” - George Halas

Each Team must have a Coach or Volunteer that is the holder of a current Red Cross Certificate in Community CPR and First Aid or its equivalent, **in addition all coaches and Red Cross Certified volunteers must attend and complete a course on Concussion.**

Head coaches are in complete charge of their players. They are responsible for their own actions or inactions, their assistants' actions or inactions and the actions of their players.

Head coaches may be required to be certified through any available training program available to their Association/Conference. The Association/Conference may also make this a requirement of assistant coaches.

All FOOTBALL COACHES participating in the AYF Regional or National Championships are required to complete the AYF/AYC Online Coaches Courses (see Section 23).

Online Coaching Certifications, coaching resources and special AYF member background check services visit MyAyf.com.

Minimum scouting rules are as follows: any videotaping allowed by your local Conference is prohibited from the field level end zone. Scouting of any kind during a team's practice session is strictly prohibited. Any coach, team member or associate found or determined to be scouting another team's practice will be cause for the immediate suspension of the person involved and the head coach. AYF will allow scouting of teams during post-season play in the form of video and written reports, as long as the minimum rules listed above are followed.

SECTION 17 - COACHES AND ADMINISTRATORS PLEDGE

“Coach a boy as if he is your own son.” - Eddie Robinson

All administrators and volunteers are bound by the “Pledge,” “Code” and “Standard of Conduct.”

Each game and practice I participate in or administer over will provide me with an opportunity to be a Champion of Character. I pledge, as an AYF member to accept the five core character values of American Youth Football and will do my best to represent AYF, my Conference, my Association, my Team, and myself by: respecting my opponent, the officials, my team, my administrators, coaches, myself and the game; taking responsibility for my actions in all areas of my life; having the integrity to stand by my word; providing leadership where I serve others while striving to be a personal and team leader; and being an example of sportsmanship by holding myself to the highest standards of fair play.

“One athlete of character will improve a team. One team of character will improve a school. One school of character can impact an entire community.” - Bruce E. Brown

Coaches can make a conscious choice to uphold the best of values. Individual players can make choices that will define them as athletes. American Youth Football believes in the following five core values.

- Leadership
- Integrity
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Sportsmanship

The five core values can be exemplified as described below:

How an athlete shows LEADERSHIP

- **Selflessness** - Teamwork, has the ability to put the team ahead of self in every decision, accepts and fulfills a role.
- **Enthusiasm** - Plays for the love of the game, shares it with teammates, brings it every day.

How an athlete shows INTEGRITY

- **Integrity** - Tells the truth, keeps commitments, does not lie, cheat, or steal, purity of intent. Honorable and genuine, being worthy of respect.

How an athlete shows RESPECT

- **Teachable Spirit** - Takes correction as a compliment. Consistently seeks new information. Is eager to learn.
- **Work Habits** - Commits to hard, productive work. Commits to continuous improvement.
- **Attentiveness** - Listens to coaches and teammates. Concentrates on the task at hand.
- **Confidence** - Quiet, inner feeling based on preparation, not arrogance. Values the work and accomplishments of the team - is not arrogant. Shared joy of the inner circle. Does not require or expect special treatment. Proud, feels a sense of dignity.

How an athlete shows RESPONSIBILITY

- **Academic Progress** - Turns in assignments on time. Assumes responsibility for academic effort. Maintains academic eligibility. Covers all responsibilities for any classes missed due to travel.
- **Accountability** - Accepts responsibility for outcomes. Solves problems - does not make excuses. Looks to self-first when improvement is needed. Can be counted on by self and teammates.
- **Mental Toughness** - Nothing breaks spirit - stays enthusiastic, confident and positive.
- **Determination** - Is a self-starter, recovers from mistakes quickly. Accepts and embraces discipline for the benefit of the team, and exhibits self control on and off the field. Focuses attention and effort.
- **Competitive** - Is determined to work within the rules of the game to be successful. Makes a quick recovery from mistakes or misfortune.

How an athlete shows SPORTSMANSHIP

- **Sportsmanship**: Respects the rules and the game. Respects and accepts the judgment of others. Respects opponents as guests and reacts correctly, even when others do not.

SECTION 18 - COACHES AND ADMINISTRATORS CODE

“Watch your thoughts for they become words. Choose your words, for they become actions. Understand your actions, for they become habits. Study your habits, for they will become your character. Develop your character for it becomes your destiny.” - Unknown

- I believe in the power of athletics as a program for the training of youth for a strong and efficient democracy.
- I believe in athletics for the building of good character and personality.
- I believe in athletics as a significant part of a sound educational program.
- I believe in athletics as a constructive force in the lives of millions of sports followers throughout our nation. Therefore, I will hold sportsmanship and fair play high above all other values to be gained through sports participation.
- I consider the privilege of guiding youth through participation in sports as a sacred trust.

- I will always keep the best interests of each participant as my aim. I shall never be guilty of enhancing my progress by the use of a participant's skill for my benefit.
- I will forever keep before the participants under my direction the high ideals, honesty, sincerity, and integrity which have made our nation great. I will not encourage, or tolerate, any form of trickery or evasion of rules in order to gain an advantage over an opponent.
- I will do all in my power to instill in those under my direction a tolerance for all races and creeds, and I will stand out against intolerance wherever it may occur.
- I will strive to instill in every youth great purposes and aims in living and will use the desire to play not as an end, but as a training ground for the participant's highest development.
- I will strive to teach each participant's to be humble in victory and gracious in defeat, to be above bragging or using alibis, and shall help develop inner strength and poise.
- I will use only fair and honest means in my desire for personal achievement and shall count the goodwill of my peers far above any achievement unfairly gained.
- I will not sacrifice the values to be gained through a wholesome enjoyment of challenging sports activity for institutional pride or commercial ends.
- I will use only fair and honest means of securing talent for athletic teams and never stoop to trickery or insincere promises in influencing participants in the selection of their experience.
- I will use every means at my command to protect the moral, mental and physical health of the participant's under my guidance and will never be party to the use of athletics for the financial or political gain of any office or group.
- I will encourage each participant to avail himself/herself of the best experience to be gained in a well-rounded education and to progress normally toward graduation. I will never encourage participation in athletics as an end in itself.
- I will help each participant under my guidance toward the development of honest habits of work and pride in work well done and I shall not practice or allow evasion in any obligation surrounding the athletics program.
- I will shoulder my total responsibility as a leader through athletics and will not allow that responsibility to be transferred to any person or group outside the organization. I will not violate this sacred trust for financial support or political prestige.

SECTION 19 - ADMINISTRATORS, COACHES, VOLUNTEERS STANDARD OF CONDUCT

"Don't pray for an easy victory, but pray for the strength to do your best at the moment of decision!" - Joe Galat

All Administrators, Coaches, and Volunteers will abide by a Standard of Conduct, which includes the provisions listed below. If any of these provisions are violated, the Association/Conference shall have the authority to impose any penalty they see fit. If any of these provisions are violated during a Regional or National event, the National Office at its sole discretion shall have the authority to impose any penalty it sees fit with no right to appeal. Administrators, Coaches, and Volunteers, having already accepted and agreed to abide by the Coach and Administrators Pledge and the Coach and Administrators Code, by their accepting and active participation in membership, shall follow the intent of the Pledge and Code and shall inclusively and/or additionally agree to:

1. Not smoke and/or use smokeless tobacco on the field or in front of participants at any time.
2. Abstain from the possession and drinking of alcoholic beverages and the possession or use of any illegal substance on the field or in front of participants at any time.

3. Accept decisions of the game officials and judges on the field and in competitions as being fair and called to the best of their ability.
4. Not criticize an opposing team, its players, spirit participants, coaches, or fans by word of mouth or by gesture.
5. Together with team officials, be jointly responsible for the conduct and control of team fans and spectators. Any parent, guardian or fan that becomes a nuisance and out of control must be asked to leave.
6. Not use abusive or profane language at any time.
7. Not encourage their team to intentionally run up the score on an opponent. In the event of a commanding lead every effort shall be made to let all players play.
8. Not permit or encourage, "extreme dieting," or "sweating down" tactics of any kind for any reason. Must report any instance witnessed or suspected to the parent/guardian and local administrator.
9. Not recommend or distribute any medication, controlled or over the counter
10. Not deliberately incite unsportsmanlike conduct.
11. Not criticize/berate participants ever, to provide constructive criticism, in private, or in the presence of team/squad members if others might benefit.
12. Remove from a game or practice any participant when his/her health is in question, whether or not as a result of injury, until competent medical advice is available.
13. A coach will follow the parameters of the Anti-Substance Abuse Rule and see that it's carried out faithfully and that all players understand its importance.
14. A coach will not use ineligible players and will take the responsibility of having proper and legal documents on each and every player proving his eligibility at all times.
15. Insure that all participants meet the minimum required number of plays under the Mandatory Play Rules and Regulations.
16. Uphold all rules and regulations of Association, Conference, Region, and National AYF.
17. A coach must discourage the wearing of gang colors or any gang symbol and the use of any gang related forms of communication during any and all team related activities including but not limited to team.
18. The act of spreading rumors, which is general talk not based on fact, will not be tolerated in American Youth Football/American Youth Cheer. It not only hurts your credibility, but affects your team/squad/association, the other team/squad/association or conference that may become involved in the rumor. In the case of cheating or rules violations, these must be reported in writing and given to the Association or Conference Official for review.

SECTION 20 - ANTI-SUBSTANCE ABUSE RULE

Each team will present a Substance Abuse lecture to players and cheerleaders at all levels of play. The lecture will be presented during the first week of practice and will be repeated as many times as necessary to ensure all American Youth participants are aware of the harmful effects of drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

A member of the coaching staff must give the lecture or an adult volunteer designated for that purpose. Some examples would be “just say no” or “DARE” programs. Also included with this talk should be topics like “Academics - Tolerance - Giving Back to the Community.”

SECTION 21 - MINIMUM PENALTIES

A) Coach/Administrators

The following are the minimum penalties to be enforced for violation of, but not limited to the following rules. Any organization found to have allowed a variance to this rulebook, the rules regulations and the spirit of the rules and regulations without filing and receiving written approval may be suspended.

Any organization found not enforcing this rulebook, the rules regulations and the spirit of the rules and regulations may be suspended.

Cheating: Permanent Suspension. (Roster/Participant Manipulation will be considered cheating)

Failure to keep faith with juveniles and parents: Defined as any deliberate practice of a coach, team, or Association, which placed the health, welfare and safety of juveniles in jeopardy, or exploits or treats them in such a manner that the juvenile becomes a “tool” of the team.

- *First offense:* suspension for one game and one week of practice.
- *Second offense:* permanent suspension.

Badgering of game officials with threats and inciting fans to display poor sportsmanship: First offense: suspension for two games and two weeks of practice. Second offense: permanent suspension.

Fighting of any kind: Suspension for the remainder of the season and subject to arrest.

Teaching players dirty tactics:

First offense: Suspension for one game and one week of practice.

Second offense: Permanent suspension.

Falsifying birth or any other documents to make a participant eligible is grounds for forfeiture of all games in which they have participated and permanent suspension of the adult(s) responsible for the act and all evidence will be turned over to the local authorities for any criminal prosecution that may be relevant.

Playing ineligible players: Suspension for rest of season. League will review status for next season. Suspension may be appealed (if an appeal process exists) to the Conference depending on the nature of the ineligibility.

When ineligible players are found, all games of which the ineligible players have participated in are forfeited and will count in the league standings as such.

When ineligible players are found, the entire team is ineligible for post-season play of any kind regardless of the number of losses it has suffered for playing ineligible players.

In the absence of local rules and regulations regarding participant extreme behavior, the following minimum penalties should be enforced whether in game or practice when the act is not covered by the governing state or high school rules, within the coach/administrators discretion:

Fighting:

- *First offense:* Suspension for one game and one week of practice.
- *Second offense:* Suspension and parental/guardian conference.

A player suspended in the Regional Finals will carry over the suspension for the first round of the AYF National Championships. If that suspended player's team receives a first game bye - he will be suspended for the first half of that game.

Disrespect for coaches, participants, and game and team officials:

- *First offense:* Removal from the game/practice and parental/guardian conference.
- *Second offense:* Suspended for one game and one week of practice.
- *Third offense:* Suspension and parental conference.

Badgering opponents and or teammates by word or act with the purpose of intimidation:

- *First offense:* Removal from the game/practice and parental/guardian conference.
- *Second offense:* Suspended for one game and one week of practice.
- *Third offense:* Suspension and parental/guardian conference.

B) Organization Offenses

In the absence of local rules and regulations regarding the following, it is AYF's recommendation that the guidelines below be implemented.

Any Player, Coach, Administrator, Parent/Guardian, or Fan should strike (hit) a game official, or member of the coaching staff, shall be subject to arrest by local law enforcement agencies, and permanent suspension including but not limited to being banned from all AYF events and activities.

Failure to control parents or fans: Suspension of the Association from the Conference until the administration of the Association can submit evidence satisfactory to the Conference that the problems have been rectified.

Failure to control coaches from actions contrary to the health, safety and welfare of players.

- *First offense:* Probation for the entire Association for the season.
- *Second offense:* Suspension of the Association from the Conference until the Association can submit satisfactory evidence to the Conference that the problems have been rectified.

SECTION 22 - HEARINGS AND APPEALS

Conferences shall have complete jurisdiction over hearings and appeals within their programs.

All hearings and appeals must be conducted in the manner the Conference has constructed in its bylaws/organizational documents. Should no process exist, it will be at the complete discretion of the Conference to allow or disallow a hearing or appeal. The AYF National Office will not hold hearings or

appeals of any kind concerning local issues. At its sole discretion, the AYF National Office may or may not allow a hearing or appeal of any of its decisions and rulings.

See section on “Rule Enforcement Authority” for additional information.

SECTION 23 - REGIONAL/NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP ELIGIBILITY/RULES & PENALTIES

Regional Committees are required to establish a system for inspecting the AYF required paperwork for all Regional Tournament teams prior to the first Regional tournament game. All paperwork must be verified to prevent a team from qualifying and traveling to the AYF National Championships when they do not legitimately qualify. In the event that a team is to be disqualified by this review the Conference runner-up would be allowed to enter the Regional tournament.

Conferences must commit to the National Office the Divisions and Team Levels they will be sending to the Regional/National Tournament by **September 15**.

Regional Committees must meet to set the Tournament brackets by **October 1**.

Regional Committees must submit the tournament brackets to the AYF National Office by **October 15**. Failure to comply may result in loss of opportunity to participate in National Tournament play.

Associations that commit to their Conferences their participation in the Regional and AYF National Championships and do not compete will be subject to suspension from the following year’s post-season play including but not limited to, Regional tournament and the AYF National Championships. Any team competing in the Regional Tournament and winning the right to advance and then not traveling will be subject to suspension from the following year’s post-season play. Any team that commits to the National Championships and then not participate, the team and the Association will be subject to suspension from the following year’s post-season games. These incidents will be reviewed and acted on by the National Commissioner.

Any team participating in the AYF National Championships and not participating in all scheduled games will cause their entire Association to be subject to suspension from the following year’s post-season play. Any team walking off the field during an AYF-sanctioned Regional or National event without the prior consent of the National Commissioner will be subject to suspension and subject their entire association to suspension from the following year’s post-season play.

Any Team entered into post-season play of any kind must have filed a Certified Roster with the AYF National Office by the specified cutoff date

All teams must travel with a copy of the Certified Roster as well as all Participant and Tournament required paperwork. Teams must have an absentee form for any participant listed on a certified roster that does not accompany the team. All paperwork must be available for official weigh-in and player verification prior to each game. AYF Absentee Form can be found online at MyAYF.com.

All Teams traveling to the AYF National Championships must have with them, in addition to the above, **Proof of Insurance**, Background Check Affidavits and filled in AYF Mandatory Play Forms. (See MyAYF for instructions on formatting your team book so it is ready for the Regional and National tournaments)

All teams traveling to the AYF National Championships must book their stay through the AYF authorized booking agent and stay in approved accommodations. This insures that all of our members will receive the discounted accommodations we have secured and allow us to host the tournament in the locations you have chosen

SPECIAL RULES REGARDING NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES

- Field Etiquette = NO BULL HORNS
- Mercy Rule = 35 points or 5 touchdowns whichever comes first
- In case of conflict of Jersey color the Officials will make the final decision
- Penalties, Ejections, Coaches, Players @ National Games will be handled by the Officials and rules set forth by NFHS and AYF, all appeals will be reviewed by the Officials Administrator and the AYF National Office Administrators.
- Head Coaches are responsible for controlling their Staff and Fans
- Home Team provides the Chain Crew unless AYF has acquired non team volunteers
- Credentials: Certified rostered coaches (as of 10/1) will be allowed up to a maximum of 8 coaches credentials, (example: 2 (two) coaches on the certified roster 10/1, you will be allowed 2 (two) credentials)
- If you have a Team Mom, General Manager or Business Manager, only 1 (one) credential will be distributed no matter what the title is. Please note: Team Mom, General Manager or Business Manager must be CDC "Heads Up" concussion certified to be on the field with the children.
- MPR Monitors only 2 (two) credentials will be distributed

ALL Regional/National Football Coaches: Football Coaches are required to complete the "Tackle Sure" online course. ALL Coaches must present proof of this course completion at the Regional and National Championships. Certificates must be kept in the Team Book for certification purposes. If the Tackle Sure course was taken last year the ASEP refresher courses will be required. *Revised 5/1/14 to comply with the AYF/AYC standard of safety.

SECTION 24 - WILD CARD ELIGIBILITY

Wild Card berths may be awarded to teams wherever an opening exists in the Regional or National Championship brackets.

To be considered for a Wild Card slot in the Regional or National Championship bracket you must make your interest and commitment known to your conference president/commissioner and the AYF National Office by **November 1**.

Wild Card teams must have the approval of their Conference to travel to the National Championships. Conference Staff should review all paperwork for the Wild Card team and follow the same procedures for checking books as they did with their Regional Champs going on to Nationals.

To be accepted as a Wild Card team, you must demonstrate the ability to compete at the Regional and National level, have verified each participant's paperwork, filed a Certified Roster with the National Office by the specified cutoff date. You must meet all other requirements contained in this rulebook.

SECTION 25 - SUMMARY OF DUE DATES

August 1

- Entry of one contact per team is due at MyAyf.com

August 31

- All AYF required participant paperwork collected, complete, and inspected for compliance and roster certification.

September 1

- Request for DII status is due on AYF DII Request form.
- Waivers of any kind are due on AYF waiver request form.

September 15

- Last date participants can be added/moved and certified to a roster.
- Conferences must complete certification and seal all of its association rosters.
- Conferences must commit teams to the regional/National Tournament to the AYF National Office.

October 1

- Rosters due to the National Office by input at MyAyf.com.
- Roster submission extension request due.
- Regions set their regional tournament brackets.

November 1

- Wild Card tournament entry request due.
- Finalize commitment of teams for the National Tournament to the AYF National Office.
- All-Star nominations are due.

“Little Eyes are Watching”

There are little eyes upon you
And they're watching night and day
There are little ears that quickly
Take in every word you say.
There are little hands all eager
To do anything you do
And a little kid who's dreaming
Of the day they'll be like you.

You're the little angel's idol
You're the wisest of the wise.
In that little mind about you
No suspicions ever rise.
They believe in you devoutly
Holds all you say and do:
They will say and do, in your way
When they're grown up just like you.

There's a wide-eyed little kid
Who believes you're always right.
And those eyes are always opened
And they're watching day and night.
You are setting an example
Every day in all you do:
For the little kid who's waiting
To grow up to be like you.

Author - “To those we call coach”

SECTION 26 - CONFERENCE ALL-STAR DIVISION

AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL CONFERENCE All-Star Division

The Conference All-Star Division was created to allow the older participants, those leaving youth football, the opportunity to travel and experience participation with kids from other teams they may have competed against over the years of their involvement. It will allow some better understanding and friendships to develop and give coaches from different organizations the opportunity to work together to further the objective of providing and giving back to the youth of their communities. It should be understood that while the participation is in a championship format, it is the exposure and experience being offered to the kids that is the most important feature of this effort. Winning is the result of the contest the reward is the wisdom one will gain from this opportunity.

CHEERLEADING TEAMS ASSEMBLED IN ANY FORM ARE WELCOME TO COME AND CHEER FOR THEIR TEAM ON THE SIDELINE.

Conference All-Star Guidelines:

1. Conference All-Star teams have two distinctly different division classifications. They are as follows:
 - a. **Conference All-Star - MIDGETS:** Eligible players would be any player who would qualify to play in the National Division, Midget Classification.
 - i. (14 and Under, as of 7/31, 174/180 max dressed weight, 15 (O/L) as of 7/31 154/160 max dressed weight, or as currently published in the AYF National Rulebook under National Division - Midgets).
 - b. **Conference All-Star - 8th GRADE:** Eligible players would be any player who would qualify to play in the All-American Division 8th Grade Classification.
 - i. (14 in 8th grade (and under) cannot turn 15 on or before 12/31, or as currently published in the AYF National Rulebook under All-American Division - 8th Grade)
2. Participation commitment deadline is September 15. Commitments are to be made directly to the National Football Commissioner. Commitment means that each player's parent/guardian has committed and understands the financial, practice and travel obligations. You must have a committed team of players and coaching staff prior to making your commitment to the National Office. Please understand plans are being made based on your commitments - other organizations are making plans or staying home based on your commitment.
3. A determination will be made by November 15 as to the status of this Tournament Bracket.
4. You must declare, and receive approval for your uniform shirt color upon declaring your commitment to participate. Jersey colors will be accepted on a first come first serve basis with prior year's participation having priority.
5. Conference All-Star teams will be required to pay the tournament registration fee upon commitment and acceptance into the National Tournament. This fee is non-refundable and therefore forfeited should a team back out of the tournament. In addition, any Conference that commits to sending a team to the National Tournament and does not compete will be suspended from participation for 1 year. Repeated offenses will result in longer suspensions. If less than four teams commit or legitimately qualify for participation, all games will be played as bowl games.

6. Conference All-Star teams must be made up from kids who participated on/represent at least four different associations within the Conference. No single Association can dominate in participation. You must have a system in place to establish a team with enough kids so that if a team of nominated kids were to make it into the AYF National Tournament you would still have a team and coaching staff.
7. Conferences will develop their own system for nominating and selecting coaches and players, utilizing the minimum guidelines set forth below. The coaches and players will be those not involved in post-season tournament play.

Coaching Selection:

1. Conferences must develop their own system for All-Star Coaching nomination and selection. You may want to consider developing a certificate you can use to award the coaches nominated/selected as a souvenir and recognition for their contributions to your organization.
2. All Star Coach Nominees should be coaches who have a positive history with the organization.
3. All Star Coach Nominees must be coaches who have demonstrated not only the competence one would expect from a football coach but one who demonstrates the understanding that while every game is played to win, the point of this all-star event goes past the winning and losing, it is a great opportunity for the kids to experience lessons in life that will go way beyond the win or loss of the game. Therefore, the coach must have an **"It's For The Kids"** attitude and demonstrate the highest of moral integrity and character as described in the National Rulebook under Section 17 Coaches; therefore, coaches who use foul language with or in front of the kids should be deemed unacceptable for appointment. Coaches must also understand that while this is a championship bracket, we will adjust where necessary to give each kid the best experience we can and help the Conference All-Star program grow. We will make every effort to include all involved with any adjustments made. Any deviation from the requirements outlined in this document may result in the team being eliminated from participation or required to participate in a bowl game basis only. In other words, a team would forfeit all its games but be allowed to play with everyone's understanding.

Player Selection:

1. Conferences must develop their own system for All-Star player nomination and selection. You may want to consider developing a certificate you can use to award the players nominated and or selected as a souvenir and recognition for their contributions to your organization.
2. Conference selections must be done to ensure an even number of lineman and skill type players are ultimately selected to make up the team. With this in mind, conferences are advised to request nominations from each of their member associations.
3. The player selection process must include a scholastic component. This means that the process should encourage academic achievement.
4. The team must be comprised of kids from at least four different associations; no single association can dominate in participation.
5. Only players who, by the September 15 deadline, were certified, listed on the final roster and actively participated with their team during the entire regular season are eligible.
6. Players cannot play on both the conference all-star team and teams who are participating in postseason play. Therefore, you must select enough players so that you will have a team with or

without the players still in post- season play. The timing of the selection and formation of the team must be determined by the Conference, understanding that you will not be allowed to start practice sooner than the second Monday in November, no more than three practices per week, no more than three hours in duration with a mandatory 15-minute break (“Mandatory Break”) after each hour of practice is required. Mandatory Breaks are not counted against the hours per week or the maximum hours per day.

7. Player nomination and selection should not only take into account a player physical abilities but should consider their contributions and adherence to the five core values attributed to the term “Athlete.” Each All Star athlete should subscribe to the AYF “Circle of Giving Back” philosophy.

Conference Requirements:

1. Conferences must certify that each player nominated and selected is properly listed on the final roster and certified (submitted all of the required documentation) to their respective team by the September 15 deadline.
2. Along with each player’s documentation, Conferences are required to provide a photocopy of the roster that was submitted on the October 1 deadline for the team they are certified to. One roster for each player even if two or more players are from the same team.
3. Conferences must insure that each player actively participated with their team for the entire season.
4. Conferences are required to ensure that all coaches have received a background check and have been cleared by the Association they are affiliated with for their regular season participation. In addition to this requirement, the Conference must review the Association’s background check documentation and complete its’ own review and approval process.
5. The Conference is to complete a roster for this new All-Star team via the documentation provided by the National Office.
6. The Conference is required to guard that the practice rules are adhered to, they are as follows: Practice may not start sooner than the first Monday in November, no more than 10 hours of practice per week, no more than three hours in duration with a mandatory 15-minute break (“Mandatory Break”) after each hour of practice is required. Mandatory breaks are not counted against the hours per week or the maximum hours per day.

Note: Falsifying birth or any other documents to make a participant eligible is grounds for permanent suspension of the adult(s) and/or organization responsible for the act and all evidence will be turned over to the local authorities for any criminal prosecution that may be relevant.

SECTION 27 -THE AYF NATIONAL ALL-STAR GAME

AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL NATIONAL ALL-STAR GAME Football & Cheer

The annual AYF National All-Star Game was established to allow the older participants, those leaving youth football/cheer, the opportunity to travel and experience participation with kids from other teams they may have competed against over the years of their involvement. It will allow some better understanding and friendships to develop and require coaches from different organizations the opportunity to work together to further the objective of providing and giving back to the youth of their communities. It should be understood that while the participation is a competition for the football players, it is the exposure and experience being offered to the kids that is the most important feature of this effort. Winning is the result of the contest and the reward is the wisdom one will gain from this opportunity.

- The annual AYF National All-Star **Football** teams will be made up of the oldest participants 8TH Grade or below. There will be no weight restriction for these players.
- The annual AYF National All-Star **Cheer** teams will be made up of the oldest participants 15 and under.
- Any player/cheerleader may be nominated post- season competition or not. Nominations must be made by November 1. Nominations must be made directly to the National Commissioner.

AYF ALL-STAR NOMINATION GUIDELINES:

Coaching & Administrator Nominations:

1. Conferences must develop their own system for AYF All-Star Coaching & Administrator nominations and submit directly to the National Commissioner.
2. Nominations must be made by **November 1** and/or selections will be made at the discretion of the AYF National Office.
3. AYF All Star Coach Nominees should be coaches who have a positive history with the organization. Each conferences cooperation in communicating with the National Office and 100 percent participation as a tournament member will weigh heavily into coaching selections.
4. AYF All Star Administrator Nominees should be Administrators who have a positive history with the organization.
5. AYF All Star Coach Nominees must be coaches who have demonstrated not only the competence one would expect from a football/cheer coach but one who demonstrates the understanding that while every game is played to win, the point of this all-star event goes past the winning and losing, it is a great opportunity for the kids to experience lessons in life that will go way beyond the win or loss of the game. Therefore, the coach must have an *"It's for the Kids"* attitude and demonstrate the highest of moral integrity and character as described in the National Rulebook under Section 17, Coaches. Therefore, coaches who use foul language with or in front of the kids should be deemed unacceptable for appointment.
6. Coaching selection/appointments are at the complete discretion of the National Office. Whenever possible Head Coaches will be selected from the previous seasons Assistant Coaches. Head Coaches can and may be re-appointed more than once.

7. Administrator nominations, follow all guidelines above, should be reserved for Administrators who understand the difficulty in organizing all of the required paperwork, and should be administrators deserving of prominent recognition.
8. Coach and Administrator nomination forms will be sent to each conference president (or his/her appointed representative) for completion.

Player Nominations:

1. Conferences must develop their own system for All-Star player/cheerleader nominations and submit directly to the National Commissioner.
2. Nominations must be made by **November 1**.
3. Player/cheerleader nomination forms will be sent to each conference president (or his/her appointed representative) for completion.
4. Football - Nominations must be done to ensure lineman and skill type players are ultimately nominated from each conference.
5. Football - A maximum of 10 players can be nominated from each conference, nominations do not guarantee any of the players will ultimately be selected. Dependent upon regional participation and total nominations only 7 to 9 players will be selected per region. Each conference's cooperation in communicating with the National Office and 100 percent participation as a tournament member will weigh heavily into player selections.
6. Cheer - A maximum of 3 cheerleaders can be nominated from each conference; nominations do not guarantee any of the cheerleaders will ultimately be selected. Dependent upon regional participation and total nominations only 6 to 8 cheerleaders will be selected per region. Each conference's cooperation in communicating with the National Office and 100% participation as a tournament member will weigh heavily into selections.
7. The player/cheerleader nomination process must include a scholastic component. This means that the process should **encourage** academic achievement.
8. Player/Cheerleader nominations should be reserved for the player/cheerleader that will no longer have the eligibility to play with the youth league. Participants must be eighth grade or below for football and 15 and under for cheerleading, max age of 15 as of **July 31**.
9. Only players who, by the September 15 deadline, were certified, listed on final roster and actively participated with their team during the entire regular season are eligible.
10. Player/cheerleader nominations and selection should not only take into account physical abilities but should consider the contributions and adherence to the five core values attributed to the term "Athlete", and should understand the AYF "Circle of Giving Back" philosophy.

Association/Team Conference Requirements:

1. Conferences must certify that each player/cheerleader nominated and selected were properly listed on the final roster and certified (submitted all of the required documentation) to their respective team by the **September 15** deadline.
2. Association/Teams are required to provide each player/cheerleader's documentation, a photocopy of the roster they were certified to, and that was submitted by the **October 1** deadline. Documentation is required for each player/cheerleader, even if 2 or more player/cheerleaders are from the same team.
3. Association/Teams are required to ensure that each participant fills out the required additional event paperwork and submit to the AYF National All-Star Team Administrator.
4. Conferences are required to ensure that all coaches have received a background check and have been cleared by the Association they are affiliated with as required for their regular season

participation. The Conference must review the Association's background check documentation and complete its own review and approval process.

Note: Falsifying birth or any other documents to make a participant eligible is grounds for permanent suspension of the adult(s) and or organization responsible for the act and all evidence will be turned over to the local authorities for any criminal prosecution that may be relevant.

It is the intent of American Youth Football to include all youngsters so they may benefit by learning the values taught through participating in the greatest team sport known to man.