

TACONIC YOUTH FOOTBALL RULES

Amended May 6, 2024

SECTION 1 - MEMBER COMMITMENT

- 1.1 Taconic Youth Football & Cheer (TYFC) is completely dedicated to the boys and girls who participate in TYFC with safety and enjoyment paramount at all times. TYFC has provided a basic set of rules, which are not to be ignored or broken. In all instances the TYFC regulations will be followed.
- 1.2 Priority shall be given to the highest level of play for the purpose of maintaining competition at the highest level of play. It is the obligation of each member organization to first complete the most senior age division roster before attempting to complete any feeder team rosters, in this, we hope to prevent the stacking of feeder teams.
- 1.3 All member organizations are obligated to complete all regularly scheduled games, including crossover, playoff, bowl and championship games at each level of competition during the season. Failure to comply shall be investigated by the TYFC Executive Board and may be subject to any rules governing forfeiture.
- 1.4 Member organizations must fully register all players & teams in the TYFC. Under no circumstance can an organization field a team in a competing, outside organization at a level currently offered by TYFC (8U-13U)
- 1.5 Member organizations must fully comply with all required validation rules in the required format & at the required time as determined by the Executive Board. Any incomplete / inaccurate / unformatted forms will result in the rejection of the entire team book and could result in a player / team being ineligible for play.
- 1.6 Any town or organization may apply for TYFC membership by submitting a formal request to the Executive Committee as instructed on the “TYFC New Membership Application Form” posted on the league website. Submission of this form confirms the applicant's acknowledgement that they have read, understand, & will comply with all TYFC Rules as noted.

SECTION 2 - PLAYER & COACH REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1 Player registration is determined by the league designated school boundaries established:
 - School district as listed on the TYFC website “District Boundaries” & all member websites
 - Member organizations may accept out-of-district applicants in accordance with the School District Schematic listed on the TYFC website (“District Boundaries”) & all member websites.
 - Any player (not previously grandfathered) from a school district that is not assigned to a member organization is not eligible to play in the TYFC without approval from the Executive Board.
 - A player that is approved to play from outside the school district boundaries is not grandfathered for the following season and all situations will be reviewed each year on a case by case basis

- It is the responsibility of each member organization that they, upon acceptance of a registrant, perform the necessary due diligence to ensure the child has registered in the correct program. If it is found at a later date (prior to the start of the regular season) that the child has registered in the wrong program the organization in which the child has registered must assume full responsibility & the child will be placed in the correct organization as designated by the league approved boundaries.

2.2 In such cases where no TYFC team exists in a player's town, the youth may play for the closest neighboring organization only with the approval of the Executive Board. The closest neighboring organization is determined as follows:

- **The organization having its primary game field, as noted on the TYFC website "District Boundaries" within the closest proximity in terms of miles to the youth's residence**

At the time of registration, the player must be Waitlisted & informed that they cannot play in the TYFC without Executive Board approval. If at a later date a TYFC team is formed in the players town, the player is expected to play for the team assigned in that School District; unless extenuating circumstances are presented to & approved by the Executive Board. If it is the child's first year in a neighboring program as **a new player on an 8U level** then he or she may choose if they want to stay in the current program or go back to home organization that did not have a team or program. This will only be for a player leaving the 8U team/level moving up to 9U. Once a decision is made the player will remain in the program of choice.

2.3 The level of play is based upon an Aged Based Unlimited Weight structure as listed on the league website under the "All-American Divisions" tab. It is expected that all registrants will play within their appropriate division (based on age). In accordance with National regulations, the Age-Based Division will always be the determining factor relative to roster placement. Any exception must be approved by the Executive Board.

2.4 Each member organization must submit a roster of at least 16 eligible football players for each team it intends to field (exceptions must be approved by the TYFC board), made up of players who reside within the designated boundaries of such organization. If a player starts in town A and moves to town B, the player may stay with town A or switch to town B (The grandfather clause that allows a player who has moved to remain with the original organization can also be applied to the player's siblings. However, the grandfather clause does not apply to other family members such as cousins, good friends etc.). If the player decides to switch to town B, they may not switch back to town A at a later date/year

There is no team maximum. TYFC will comply with National if there is a max number; therefore player 37 and up will be notified of such rule and could be ineligible for Regional & National Championship play.

2.5 All TYFC member organizations are prohibited from waiving players from their respective organizations. Participants are required to register, play for, & remain with their town/member organization as noted in article 2.1 (above). No exceptions to this rule will be granted.

- 2.6 In order for a member association to field two (2) teams at any one level, you must fill the following criteria: no less than 40 players at the same level, the first roster must be a complete 36 player roster and a waiting list must be maintained by the head coach of the originating team (reviewable by the TYFC Board). The process to separate the teams evenly should be via a “Draft” process. Final approval by the Executive Board on the team separation process is required. The objective is to create evenly balanced teams. If the results represent the creation of an “A” and “B” team, changes need to be made the following year unless extenuating circumstances exist that have been presented to & approved by the Executive Board.
- 2.7 All football players & coaches must be validated in the National Sports ID platform (NSID). All required AYF documents & items referenced below will be validated; failure to have all items validated will prohibit participation in the TYFC.

(1) **PROOF OF BIRTH:** A Birth Certificate, Certificate of Baptism, Visa or Passport, or a letter from a School Administrator on school letterhead are acceptable.

(2) **REPORT CARD -** Most recent quarter Report Card with Final Grades. This is to validate participants’ scholastic eligibility & home school district. School ID cards will also be accepted.

(3) **PARENTAL CONSENT:** A signed statement by the parent or legal guardian, permitting the child to participate in tackle football or cheerleading and extending permission to administer necessary first aid or medical attention, including the transport of the injured child to the nearest medical facility when required. In cases when no permission is received regarding medical matters, the parent/guardian responsible for that child must be in attendance at all practices and games in which the child participates. The information contained on the form provided by TYFC must be used, as a minimum, on all local association contracts.

(4) **PHYSICAL FITNESS:** A signed & stamped statement by a physician declaring the youth physically sound and capable of playing tackle football or performing cheerleading exercises & drills. This statement must be signed by the physician after January 1st of the current year. The physician’s signature must be accompanied by a stamped name.

(5) **PHOTO OF PLAYER:** Full face; helmet off; from head to waist, preferably in game jersey. Cheerleader photo will be a full-face photo.

(6) **WAIVER & RELEASE OF LIABILITY & CONCUSSION AFFIDAVIT:** Required for all participants in the TYFC.

(7) Individual player forms will be populated via the NSID platform. Organizational forms must be retrieved from the MyAYF website after April 1st of the current year. No other versions of these forms will be accepted.

(8) If applicable, team forms can be retrieved from the TYFC website & must align to the official NSID time-stamped roster.

- 2.8 The NSID time-stamped roster will be recognized as the official roster for TYFC.
- 2.9 It is the responsibility of the TYFC Executive Board to determine the eligibility of each player or cheerleader, and thereof shall conduct any investigation of same. At no time shall a member organization or individuals undertake a private investigation of any member organization's player records.
- 2.10 A copy of each roster shall remain on file with the League. The League Registrar shall keep current each roster and shall record add-ons and drop-offs as required. Players can be added to a team up to the NSID cut-off, provided the player has met all necessary requirements. This includes players moving up from lower levels of play. Under no circumstances shall a player be moved down to a level of play once validated to play at a higher level of play.
- 2.11 All coaching positions are subject to approval by the TYFC Executive Board. Head Coach positions, regardless of which level of play, may be subject to interview and approval by the Taconic Youth Football & Cheer Executive Board. A person holding any position in any other youth League or Conference may not hold any coaching position in the Taconic Youth Football & Cheer League.
- 2.12 The league will have a Mandatory meeting to validate all Head Coaches, to review any points of emphasis of TYFC Rules & Regulations, By-Laws, as well as, review the Officials' points of emphasis or changes. In the event a Head Coach cannot attend they must send a delegate in their absence. All teams must be represented; those who do not attend will not be "validated" and will not be allowed to coach. The respective organization will be subject to penalty if the Head Coach (or a delegate) is not present.
- 2.13 Every coach must successfully complete the required certifications as determined by the TYFC. This includes all AYF & USA Football certifications.
- 2.14 The Executive Board of TYFC will oversee and have final say on all team rosters.

SECTION 3 - GAME DAY PROCEDURES

- 3.0 TYFC follows all rules & regulations set forth by AYF regarding roster size on game day:
It is required that each team must have the minimum number of 13 players eligible and able to participate to start a regulation or local play- off game. For the Regional championship game/state championship (qualifying game for berth at the National Championships) and 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.
- 3.1 Roster Validation - Prior to each game, opposing Head Coaches (or a delegate) will validate players to the official TYFC/Game-Day roster including checking photo to player participant. Players that arrive after check-in can only be validated as follows: 1) At the end of the 1st or 2nd quarter; 2) If the player's Head Coach calls a timeout to request the check-in. Once the 2nd half begins no player can be validated for the rest of the game.

- 3.1A Coach Validation - Prior to each game, all coaches must be validated against their photo in NSID. All certifications must also be present NSID. Coaches must wear league approved ID badge at all times when accessing the field of play/coaches box. ID badge must contain the name & photo of the coach along with the year & team name.
- 3.2 It is the obligation of every coach to complete the schedule of games. A game may be canceled under unusual adverse weather conditions. If a recognized town authority deems the home team's field unplayable, the visiting team has the opportunity to provide their own town field for the game with a reasonable accommodation of 2 hours within the originally scheduled game time. Once the game is in progress, only the referee may cancel a game, because of inclement weather, field conditions, darkness, or in questions of crowd behavior, where the safety of the players are in jeopardy.
- 3.2A Failure to play or complete (forfeiture) in a league scheduled game, including preseason, regular season, or post-season, could result in a one (1) week suspension of the Head Coach. Multiple forfeits can result in cancellation of all remaining games; forfeiture of games previously won, and permanent suspension of the Head Coach. Decisions on penalty assigned are at the sole discretion of the TYFC Executive Board.
- 3.3 Game cancellation decisions must be made at least 2 hours before game time. Failure to do so may result in liability for official's fees, and/or forfeiture of game. The makeup of a canceled game will be under the direction of the TYFC Scheduling Coordinator or the Executive Board. In the case of any rescheduled games, the host team is responsible for the official's fees.
- 3.4 Coaches are responsible for each player being equipped properly.
- 3.5 Tentative Game Times are as follows:
Due to varying organizational circumstances, game start times could be as early as 8:00AM or as late as lights are permitted on certain fields. Host sites are expected to begin each game promptly at the scheduled time.
- 3.6 The schedule may not be revised once finalized, except to accommodate canceled games and must be approved by the Executive Board. Only the TYFC can schedule league games.
- 3.7 Every effort shall be made for all teams within the conference to play each other during the regular season.
- 3.8 A maximum of eight (8) shirted coaches, with approved lanyard, are allowed in the coaches box during a game. Coaches can only remain on the sideline for levels in which they are a rostered coach.
- 3.8A The coaches box is the area from the 25 yard line to the other 25 yard line.
- 3.8B One photographer per team is allowed on the field. They must remain on their sideline, outside the coaches box, and away from the back of the end zones.
- 3.8C TYFC Board Members shall be allowed on any field (outside the coaches box) with lanyard.

- 3.8D No other non-medical personnel (i.e. Team Mom, parent, siblings, HS players, waterboys) shall be allowed on the field at any time.
- 3.9 It is required that host sites designate an appointed organization official to oversee the fields & ensure all game-day requirements are met. This person must identify themselves to a member of the opposing team prior to each game; the opposing team is also accountable to seek out & meet said host official.
- 3.10 Only two validated coaches are permitted on the playing field during called time-outs. Coaches are not allowed on the field, or permitted to speak to a player or the team on the field when time-out is called because of injury or for official purposes.
- 3.11 Each team is permitted three (3) time-outs per half. There is a ten minute time-out at halftime, of which five minutes should be reserved for warm up time prior to the start of the second half.
- 3.12 Required Officials: All levels require 4 Officials per game.
- 3.13 A) For the 2024 season there are 14 Organizations in TYFC:

Beacon	Navy Blue, Gold	Orangetown	Red, Blue
Brewster	Green, Black	Poughkeepsie	Black, Red
Carmel	Red, Royal Blue	Somers	Black, Red
Mahopac	Royal Blue, Yellow	SD	Navy Blue, Silver
MHV	Maroon, Gold	Suffern	Navy Blue, White
MW	Purple, Black	Wappingers	Red, Navy Blue
N Rockland	Red, White	Yorktown	Green, Black

B) A scheduling committee will determine the schedule. The regular season will begin the weekend after Labor Day & with playoffs ending the first weekend in November.

C) The highest seed will host the Playoff Games. Championship games location will be determined by the TYFC Board. The League will set the starting times.

D) All five championship games can be played at a neutral site on the same day, if determined by the League. If a neutral site is not available, the highest seed will host the Championship Game.

E) Tie Breakers in regard to standings will be decided in the following priority:

I Head-to-Head results

II Record vs. common opponents

III Common Opponent & Strength of Schedule

IV Coin Flip - this can determine seeds 1 thru 3

V The last playoff seed (ONLY): decided by one quarter of play (played as a 4th qtr.)
2 time-outs per team, minimum plays do not apply).

If tied after a quarter of play then a Kansas City Shoot-out is played.

Bowl Games will be decided by a coin flip.

- 3.16 Each team is expected to do their best to provide home and away jerseys of contrasting colors. White or light color should be worn at away games. If a team has only one jersey, they must notify the TYFC Executive Board prior to the start of the season and must also notify their opponents 3 days prior to game day to ensure that there are no game day uniform color issues. The League shall enter agreement with any Member organization, which so wishes to wear white (or light colored jerseys) at home. Opposing coaches must be made aware of “right to wear rule”, not less than five (5) days prior to the scheduled game. Any deviations from this rule must have the approval of the Executive Board or could result in a forfeit.
- 3.17 One number shall be assigned to each player, home and away jerseys alike.
- 3.18 Organizations will maintain oversight to determine playing time requirements for their teams & have an obligation to ensure a safe & positive experience for all players.

Team size is defined as the number of players dressed to play at the time of pre-game validation. Absent or injured players do not count against team totals.

3.19 **EJECTIONS:**

Any coach or player ejected is subject to all local organization penalties as defined in the organization’s code of conduct policy.

Per TYFC rule, any player or coach ejected from a game by an official will not play in the next scheduled game & cannot participate in any practice held prior to the next scheduled game.

The penalty for any player or coach ejected that has been ejected previously from a prior game, regardless of season/year, will be two weeks. Enforcement of local & TYFC policy can run concurrently or can be mutually exclusive at the discretion of the TYFC Executive Board.

Any coach on multiple staffs that gets ejected is ejected from all games that day & suspended from all teams the following week.

The Organization's League Rep of the team of which the player/coach is a member must notify the TYFC Executive Board or designated committee of the officials’ action. If the Organization allows this particular player/coach to play or coach in the next scheduled game, the coach is subject to a one (1) year suspension.

- 3.20 **PLAYING FIELDS:** All playing fields must meet minimum acceptable standards to ensure the safety of all participants and spectators as well as ensuring that the field provides neither team with an unfair advantage. The host team must provide a grass or turf area or field, sufficient and safe for 2 teams to conduct warm up drills 60 minutes prior to the start of their game. If a field or area is not available at the host site, Games are scheduled two (2) hours apart, to allow for adequate warm up time before a game. Any incremental fees associated with the delayed start (such as referee fees, are the sole responsibility of the host team). Local high school fields or their equivalent are preferred. Acceptable standards which are disputed will be resolved by the Executive Board.
- 3.21 Filming of games is allowed from the sideline stands only (not from the endzone). Visiting teams are to be given the same opportunity to film from the same vantage point as the home team. Cannot scout or attend another team’s practice.
The use of drones is prohibited.

3.22 The League Reps of all associations are responsible to report the scores of all their games by 8:00pm Sunday night (An exception to the 8:00pm deadline will be granted for night games, in which case the scores must be reported no later than two hours after the completion of the game). The TYFC Executive Board will determine the method by which these scores are reported prior to the season.

3.23 TYFC Sanctioned Football Requirement:

All teams must use Wilson footballs (leather or composite):

- 13U: Wilson TDY
- 11U – 12U: Wilson TDJ
- 8U – 10U: Wilson K2

TYFC will make further clarification to the football requirement at the Coaches Certification

3.24 Protest gestures / political statements must be approved in advance by the league, and unlike the NFL, AYF will allow a helmet decal or arm band if approved in advance by the local league. Violations, be it by player or coach, will result in disqualification for the following week's game.

3.25 **Violations of Game Day Procedures could result in the following:**

- **A loss of home games and/or**
- **Postseason Participation**

SECTION 4 - RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 All organizations must have a risk management plan in place for all practices & games

4.2 The home team is responsible for providing medical personnel. EMT is a minimum requirement, a Physician or Registered Nurse is preferred. In all cases, immediate on-location access to EMT/Ambulance facilities is required. (e.g. phone, 2 way radio, etc.).

4.3 **No game or jamboree can begin without on location medical personnel.** Failure to have on site medical personnel throughout all home games will result in a forfeit for the host site for all games played & to be played. Additionally, host organization will not be allowed to host games for the remainder of the season. (Home team shall assume responsibility of having the phone number to the nearest first responder facility (Police/Fire/Ambulance) within their community to respond to said location.

4.4 **The home team shall furnish on location an A.E.D. (Automated External Defibrillator) at any & all fields where games & practices will be played.** In the event an A.E.D. is not available every attempt must be made to secure one (i.e. request opposing team to bring one).

4.5 Organizations are required to submit a TYFC Injury Report form for all **MEDICALLY CONFIRMED** player injuries that result in missed game/practice time. When applicable a TYFC Resume Participation Medical Clearance form is required prior to a child being allowed to participate in any football activity.

SECTION 5 - SCORING AND CONTROL OF GAME

5.1 TYFC will follow National guidelines for all levels except 8U.

An *intentionally* run-up score is 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 TYFC.

Lopsided Score Rule:

For age levels 9U-13U the lopsided score rule is **35 points**; for 8U it is **30 points**. Once the score differential reaches **30 points**, the game clock will become a running clock. Once the clock becomes a running clock it can only be stopped for injuries and 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 mis-direction, counter, reverses, down field passes or "trick plays" of any kind. **At a 30 point differential** both offensive and defensive skill position starters must be replaced. The winning team can only run 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.

5.2 Any infraction to Section 5.1 will result in an automatic two (2) week suspension of the Head Coach. A second incident of the same will result in a suspension of the Head Coach for the remainder of the season, including all playoffs, Regionals, & Nationals. No hearing notices will be sent out nor will any hearing be held.

5.3 PLAYING TIE BREAKERS IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED DURING REGULAR SEASON PLAY, but allowed in post season play-off games, when it becomes necessary to determine a conference champion or League champion. In both instances, only the Kansas City tiebreaker can be used.

KANSAS CITY RULE:

At the end of regular play, the teams flip a coin to determine which team gets the ball first. Each team will take possession of the ball from the 10-yard line and given 4 downs to try to score. When the first team scores, the ball is given to the other team. Should the second team fail to score in 4 tries, the first team is declared the winner.

SECTION 6 - PRACTICE SESSIONS

6.1 Authorized team practice for the **fall** season can begin approximately 5 weeks before the start of the season, pending approval by the Executive Board. The first week shall be used exclusively for conditioning.

6.2 Physical contact is prohibited prior to the completion of 10 hours of conditioning for all players. No participation in intra-squad scrimmages until after the 10 hours of conditioning and 10 hours of physical contact is completed.

- 6.3 Practice is limited to 10 hours per week prior to Labor Day weekend, and 8 hours per week thereafter, not to exceed 2 hours per day (Mandatory 10-minute breaks each hour not to be counted against allowed practice time). Exceptions to the 2 hour per day rule may be granted based on an organization's field availability for practice sessions.
- 6.4 All practice sessions must be attended by at least one person holding Red Cross Multi-Media Card or its equivalent as a minimum requirement.

SECTION 7 - PRE & POST SEASON GAMES

- 7.1 All pre-season and post-season games played outside of the TYFC League must meet the approval of the TYFC Executive Board. Under no conditions will any member team arrange a game or accept an invitation to play a game without the consent of the Executive Board. Violation of this rule will result in automatic suspension.
- 7.2 TYF is a Local AYF conference; the season ends at the conclusion of the league championship games.

SECTION 8 - OFF-SEASON FOOTBALL

- 8.1 TYFC football players & coaches can participate in any off season indoor passing league, or tackle football league. Players & coaches are required to notify their local organization who must then notify the TYFC Board upon registration. Failure by the local organization to notify the TYFC Executive Board will result in penalties determined at the discretion of the Executive Board.
- 8.2 The TYFC follows all rules & regulations set forth by AYF regarding Spring Football / Summer Passing Leagues. Individual organizations may decide, at their discretion, the appropriate level of participation for their respective members, within the framework set by AYF. Actions determined to be contradictory to these rules will be punished in accordance with AYF policy.

SECTION 9 - OFF-SEASON CAMPS OR CLINICS RUN BY TYFC ORGANIZATIONS

- 9.1 TYFC organizations can run a camp or, clinic for their own players and/or, for players from other towns. As noted in Rule 8.2, organizations must follow all rules & regulations set forth by AYF regarding off-season activities.
- 9.2 Coaches can work at the camp/clinic run by their organization or by their local high school.

SECTION 10 – 8U INSTRUCTIONAL LEVEL

10.1 The 8U level will follow all TYFC and NFHS Rules except for the modifications noted below:

Team, Roster, Field requirements:

- Teams will play 11-man football (11v11)
- Roster size - must have at least 14 players to be validated as a team
- Player must be 6 years old as of August 1st of the current year to be eligible; the local organization maintains sole discretion as to the preparedness of the player to participate
- Field width is 40 x 35 ½ (set up from far-side hash to near-side sideline)
- If available scoreboard should only be used for time & down; scores should not be posted

Game Information:

- **If a team arrives at a field with 10-12 players the game will be played as 8v8 (8-man football)**
- There must always be a minimum of 2 substitutes on the sideline
- A game cannot be played with less than 10 players at the field
- Games are 4 quarters; 10 minutes each (not a running clock)
- All possessions begin at the offense's 40 yard line
- Coaches are allowed on the field prior to October; only 2 per team at a time
- Coaches must be organized & hustle between plays to maximize the number of plays

Special Teams:

- No kickoffs or punts. All change of possessions restart at the 40 yard line as noted above
- Field goal attempts / PAT are optional - Defense cannot rush on either try; Offense cannot fake attempt
- In the case of a bad snap on a FG/PAT kicking team can pick up ball & kick or re-snap ONCE

Formations / Game Play:

- Offense can line up with or without a TE (can have 2 TE but not on same side)
- Offense can motion for Jet Sweep but cannot motion to crack/block defender
- QB cannot keep/dive up middle but can run outside the guards
- Fumbled snaps from under center can be recovered by the defense. If recovered by the offense they can be advanced
- Fumbled snaps from shotgun are blown dead & count as a play from scrimmage
- Defense cannot advance a fumble or interception
- Defensive Lineman must line head up on the Guards, Tackles, or TE's
- Defense cannot line head-up over the center
- Defense cannot line-up or shade in any gaps; must line-up & play through OL
- **Blitzing is prohibited - no shooting the "A" gap from any defensive position**
- Defensive minimums from LOS: LB 2 yds; CB 4 yds, Safety 6 yds
- Defensive player can follow motion on jet sweep

Scoring:

- Lopsided Score Rule takes effect at 30 points
- Final scores & wins/losses are reported only to ensure compliance to lopsided score rule
- Standings will not be kept
- All teams required to compete in the Opening Jamboree & Red Zone Tournament