

Empire West Youth Football and Cheerleading Association

**P.O. Box 355
East Aurora, NY 14052**

PLAYING RULES

**ALL RULES PRESENTED HEREIN HAVE BEEN AGREED AND
APPROVED BY THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS FORMING THE LEAGUE:**

AIRLANES

ALDEN *(re-joined 2020)*

CSRA *(re-joined 2020)*

EAST AURORA

EDEN

EMW

HOLLAND

LANCASTER *(re-joined 2020)*

ORCHARD PARK

REVISED: May 1, 2020

Empire West Youth Football and Cheerleading Association Objectives

THE GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE *EMPIRE WEST YOUTH FOOTBALL AND CHEERLEADING ASSOCIATION* ARE TO INSPIRE YOUTHS, TO PRACTICE THE IDEALS OF SPORTSMANSHIP, SCHOLARSHIP, AND PHYSICAL FITNESS, REGARDLESS OF RACE, RELIGION, GENDER OR NATIONAL ORIGIN.

THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE LEAGUE ARE TO FAMILIARIZE ALL YOUTHS WITH THE FUNDAMENTALS OF FOOTBALL; TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PLAY THE GAME IN A SUPERVISED, ORGANIZED, AND SAFETY ORIENTED MANNER AND TO KEEP THE WELFARE OF PARTICIPANTS FREE OF ANY ADULT AMBITION AND PERSONAL GLORY.

THE LEAGUE STANDARDS FOR STRUCTURE OF INTERLEAGUE COMPETITION ARE OUTLINED HEREIN.

THE LEAGUE COMPLIES WITH AND ABIDES BY THE OFFICIAL HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PLAYING RULES AND SPIRIT RULES PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TATEHIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, 11724 PLAZA CIRCLE, P.O. BOX 20626 KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI 64195. DEVIATIONS FROM THE OFFICIAL HIGH SCHOOL PLAYING RULES NECESSITATED BY LOCAL CONDITIONS AND BASED ON PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE ARE OUTLINED HEREIN.

Article I.

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***** Every year all coaches must sign off that they have read the Empire West Rules. Each Commissioner will provide a copy of the Empire West Rules to all of their coaches. The League Secretary will provide a waiver to each commissioner which all coaches must sign stating that they read the Empire West Rules. This waiver must be signed and filed with the League Secretary no later than the Saturday before the first scheduled games. (AMMENDED 2018)******

Empire West Youth Football and Cheerleading Association
2020 Playing Rules

RULE 1 - INSURANCE

1. All member organizations must utilize insurance provided by the league.
2. All League member organizations shall pay 25% of the League fees at or before the scheduled June meeting. The balance shall be paid at or before the scheduled August meeting (Insurance).

RULE 2 - REGISTRATION - FOOTBALL/CHEERLEADING

1. All organizations in this league will accept applications for participation in football and cheerleading on a first come, first served basis as outlined in the playing rules. Those organizations with excess applications will direct excess applicants to organizations within this league that will best suit applicants needs and will also put excess applicants on a reserve list noting date and time application was received in case an opening arises on a current team originally applied for. *(Also see By-laws Article 7.3)*
2. At it's discretion, a home organization may set aside the first day of registration for sign ups of veteran players and cheerleaders. (A player/cheerleader having participated the previous year.) Second sign up day would be for new applicants and veterans who missed the veteran sign-up day on a first come first served basis. If a veteran does not register on veteran's day he must register on the second day on a first come first served basis.

RULE 3 - DIVISIONS/FOOTBALL

1. The League will have four (4) age/weight divisions. The maximum age and weight for each division is as follows:

	Pee Wee	Freshman	Junior Varsity	Varsity
Maximum League Age:	7u	9u	11u	13u
Weight:	75 lbs. max. Restricted Striper Unlimited Weight	110 lbs. max. Restricted Striper Unlimited Weight	130 lbs. max. Restricted Striper Unlimited Weight	155lbs max. Restricted Striper Unlimited Weight
<i>***League Ages changed in 2017; Pee Wee and Varsity Weights changed in 2018***</i>				

2. All participants shall have a League Age between the ages of 6-14. League age shall be the participant's age prior to 9/1 of the calander year of that season. At the discretion of each individual organization, 5 year old children may be allowed to participate.
 - A.) If a child is playing football for a High School JV or Varsity team they shall not be able to play regardless of age. (2019)
 - B.) If a player with a league age of 8 years old and weighs 55 lbs or less that player has the option to play down on Pee Wee
 - C.) If a player with a league age of 10 years old weighs 65 pounds or less that player has the option to play down on Freshman
(Ammended in 2020)
3. Weight shall be that of a player wearing gym shorts and tee shirt.

Rule 3A - Striper Rules

1. Striper players must be identified on the official EWYFC roster form with an "S" under the RET column, right after the jersey number.
2. Once a player has been identified as a "striper", that player may change status to non-striper once during the season. Any subsequent failure to make non-striper weight will designate that player a striper for the remainder of the season.
3. "Striper" players will be identified with a six inch piece of pink flourescent tape stripe on both the front and back of the helmet.
4. Playing rules for "striper" players:
 - A. Stripers must bring their helmet, in addition to their jersey, when weighed.
 - B. Stripers are not allowed to advance the ball on defense or offense.
 - C. Sripers must play in a down stance. A player will be considered in a down stance if their elbows can rest on their knees, or in a 3 or 4 point sgtnce. A receiver or sprinters stance not allowed (2019). Stripers may play the interior offensive line or the interior Defensive line. The interior offensive line shall be no wider than 18 feet for PW and Freshmen and no wider than 24 feet for JV and Varsity. The Defensive striper may line up outside of the outermost interior offensive linemen however, the innermost part of his the defensive striper must be across from the outermost part of the interior offensive lineman. A defensive striper must make initial move forward at the snap of the ball. Penalty shall be Illegal Formation.
 - D. Stripers are never eligible for a pass regardless of the formation.
 - E. Only five (5) "striper" players per team are allowed on the field at any given time. Penalty for having more than 5 will be: Defensive penalty: 10 yards and automatic 1st down for offense. Offensive penalty: 10 yards and loss of down for offense.

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RULE 4 – PARENT PERMISSION – FOOTBALL/CHEERLEADING

1. Each player/cheerleader must have a parent or legal guardian's permission in writing to participate in this league. (*Amended 2017*)

RULE 5 – PHYSICAL EXAMINATION – FOOTBALL

1. No child may participate in the league if missing 50% of any vital organ, e.g. eyes, lungs, kidneys, hearing. This information must be included in each organization's waiver which is required for each parent to sign.

RULE 6 – CONDUCT - FOOTBALL/CHEERLEADING

1. There will be a **zero tolerance policy** as it pertains to conduct. The conduct of all participants (including, but not limited to, administrators, coaches, staff, players and spectators) at all league functions should be exemplary. To assure this point, each Commissioner/Coordinator or acting Commissioner/Coordinator is to be recognized as an **officer of the League**. He/she shall have the authority to discipline and/or expel from league functions any member of his organization whom he finds in violation of these rules and/or as a result of the performance of his/her duties in their designated position. Additionally, the game officials are authorized to request any coach or member of his staff to leave the playing field for any improper display of temper or poor choice of language.
2. Any coach, staff member, board member, player or spectator, who strikes or attempts to strike an official or referee before, during, or after a game **shall forever be barred** from participation in any activities involving the League and may be fined a maximum of \$500.00. Any altercations are to be reported by **both commissioners** to a League officer within **forty-eight hours** of the alleged infraction.
3. Any case of a coach, staff member, Board member, player or spectator who threatens, attempts to strike or strikes a Commissioner/Coordinator, Assistant Commissioner/Coordinator, league official, referee or game official, board member, staff member, opposing coach, player or spectator shall be penalized as follows:
 - A. Automatic suspension for one calendar year and/or:
 - B. Forever barred from league activities.
4. Football coaches must stay within the **20 yard lines** (80 yard field), players must stay within the **30 yard lines**.
5. **All coaches and players/cheerleaders must participate in the traditional handshake** at the conclusion of each game. All players shall wear their helmets during the handshake.
6. The League places a 15 yard penalty on unsportsmanlike conduct.
7. **Targeting**, tackles above the shoulders and horse collar tackles shall not be permitted. These infractions are deemed **personal fouls**. Targeting will result in an immediate ejection and is defined as:
 - A., **Launch** – a player leaving his/her feet to attack an opponent by an upward and forward thrust of the body to make forcible contact in the head or neck area.
 - B. A crouch followed by an upward and forward thrust to attack with forcible contact at the head and neck area, even though one or both feet are still on the ground.
 - C. Leading with the helmet, shoulder, forearm, fist, hand, or elbow to attack with forcible contact at the head or neck area.
 - D. Lowering the head before attacking by initiating forcible contact with the **crown of the helmet**. (*Amended 2019*)
8. Any player or cheerleader caught doing any act of vandalism to anyone's property will be suspended from the League for the **remainder of the season**.
9. A **player** who is **ejected** from the game by an official for any unsportsmanlike conduct will automatically sit out the following game. If there is a second offense during the season, the player will be ineligible for one calendar year from the time of the second offense. For two offenses against a player, an organization can request an investigation by the League to decide an outcome of the circumstances. Names of players who are ejected should be submitted to a **League officer** by both commissioners within **forty-eight hours** of the ejection for a matter of record including a brief explanation of the circumstances.
 - A. **Any coach** who is ejected from a game shall serve a **two game suspension** following the ejection. If a coach is ejected in the last game of the season the suspension will carry over to the following season. For two offenses against a coach, an organization can request an investigation by the League to decide an outcome of the circumstances. Names of coaches who are ejected should be submitted to a **League officer** by both commissioners within **forty-eight hours** of the ejection for a matter of record including a brief explanation of the circumstances. (*Amended 2018*)

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10. All **Empire West Youth Football and Cheerleading Association** organizations will provide an alcohol and tobacco-free environment when coaching the players/cheerleaders at practice and at games.
11. At the coin toss before each game, both teams shall line up at the center of the field, facing each other with the captains and shake hands. The officials shall encourage fairplay and sportsmanship.
12. Each organization must submit to the **EWYFCA Board of Commissioners** a list of coaches names {football & cheerleading} who are on probation and/or suspension. This list will include all dates and terms of probation and/or suspension for each coach. It is the responsibility of each organization to submit updates to this list and to keep it current with the **Board of Commissioners**.
13. In any game where one team receives **three unsportsmanship penalties** during said game, that team will automatically **forfeit** said game. The game **shall end immediately** at the assessment of the third unsportsmanship foul. **No plays shall be run.**
14. A player that receives **2 personal foul penalties** in a game may be subject to a suspension pending an in game conference with the 2 commissioners and the Head Official. The conference will determine if player shall be ejected or allowed to continue play.
15. All penalties shall be described by the referee to the **Head Coach** or designee, & accepted or declined by the **HC** or designee.
16. There shall be no **free blocking zone** as it pertains to blocking below the waist.
17. Tackles above the shoulders and **horse collar tackles** shall not be permitted. These infractions are deemed **personal fouls**.
18. Any coach that violates the **Pee-Wee or Freshman Guidelines** shall be subject to a minimum of **ONE** game suspension and forfeiture of the game when the violation has occurred. (Freshman Only). Any complaint must be filed by the opposing commissioner per **Rule 18**. The alleged infraction must be reviewed by the **Board of Commissioners** and a **majority vote** will determine if the violation occurred and the appropriate punishment. Multiple infractions by the same coach in a single season will result in a **ONE calendar year suspension** of the offending coach. It is the responsibility of the opposing coach to provide sufficient evidence of the violation. *(Addition in 2020)*

RULE 7 - PRACTICES & FIRST SCHEDULED GAME FOOTBALL/CHEERLEADING

1. The official season calendar for League purposes and participant membership for teams/squads shall run from March 1- February 28 (Feb. 29th in the case of leap years). Instances where a team/squad has been invited to participate in a national championship event carrying over to a new season, such organization may petition the League for a waiver from the provisions of this section.
2. Practices can begin **FOUR (4) weeks prior to the first scheduled game**, and all games including playoffs and Championship Games must be completed by the first weekend in November. *(Amended 2019)*
3. **Off Season Workouts** will be permitted provided that they are funneled through **Empire West** and that all **Empire West** participants are invited. Written notice must be submitted to the **League Secretary** at least 30 days prior to the start of any such work. Participants shall not wear any football equipment and there shall be **no contact permitted**. *(Amended 2018)*
4. The first game of the season will be scheduled by the **Empire West Board of Commissioners**.
5. No player on any team shall participate in physical contact until he has **five days of conditioning practice**. *(see chart below)*.
6. **No equipment** shall be worn during the **first 3 days** of conditioning practice **except** helmets. The required football uniforms may be issued on August 1st; however, the helmet is the only piece of equipment that may be worn during the first 3 practices.
7. If a player will not participate in a game, it is his/her coach's responsibility to notify his/her Commissioner who will in turn notify the opposing team prior to the game.
8. **Empire West Youth Football and Cheerleading Association standards for structure of the interleague competition:**

# Conditioning	# Contact Practices Prior to any pre-season or regular season scrimmage/games	Maximum # of league games per team of individual	Minimum # days between games
Five No Contact Practices Minimum	Five Contact Practices Minimum	Eleven Games {Regular Season} Maximum	Two Days Minimum

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RULE 8 - POSTPONEMENT AND FORFEITURES - FOOTBALL

1. In order to postpone a game because of poor traveling conditions, the Commissioner of the opposing team shall be contacted no less than **4 hours** before game time. If the Commissioner of the team requesting the postponement cannot reach agreement with the visiting teams Commissioner, he shall contact the **President** of the Empire West League for a decision.
2. Upon arrival at the playing field, the Commissioners of **both teams** shall make the decision for a postponement should the weather dictate it impossible to play.
3. Make-up games will be played as soon as possible and shall have at least **one calendar day** between games.
4. The League shall be notified within **24 hours** by the home team Commissioner should there be a postponement, and/or the rescheduling of a game or in any case where the Commissioners are not in agreement.
5. Any contested game shall come before the **Board of Commissioners** for a decision which shall be final.
6. If a team does not show for a scheduled game, that team shall forfeit that game and be declared the loser 3-0.
7. If a team does not show for the scheduled game within **one-half hour** of the scheduled starting time, it shall forfeit that game. The officials shall also wait **one-half hour** from scheduled game time.
8. The forfeiting organization shall be responsible for the reimbursement of referee feed incurred by the scheduled opponent and additionall be subject to a **\$125** penalty for **each** forfeiture. Subsequent forfeitures occurring after the first may face fines in addition to those above at the discretion of the **Board of Commissioners**. The League will reimburse the other team for the cost for the officials and in turn will assess such fees and penalties to the forfeiting organization.

RULE 9 - JERSEY NUMERALS/TEAM COLORS

TEAMS	HELMETS	JERSEY	PANTS
AIRLANES	WHITE	RED	BLUE
ALDEN	GOLD	ROYAL BLUE	ROYAL BLUE
CSRA	WHITE	CAROLINA BLUE	NAVY
EAST AURORA	ROYAL BLUE	ROYAL BLUE	ROYAL BLUE/SILVER
EDEN	BLACK	GRAY/MAROON	MAROON
EMW	WHITE	RED/WHITE/BLUE	BLUE
HOLLAND	SILVER	BLACK (ALT. WHITE)	BLACK
LANCASTER RED	RED	RED	BLACK
LANCASTER BLACK	RED	BLACK	BLACK
LANCASTER WHITE	RED	WHITE	BLACK
O.P. MAROON	MAROON	MAROON/WHITE	MAROON
O.P. WHITE	MAROON	WHITE/MAROON	MAROON

*****EAST AURORA COLOR CHANGE MADE IN 2017 AND EMW COLOR CHANGE MADE IN 2018*****

1. Each player's jersey must have two sets of numerals.
 - A. 8" or larger numerals on back.
 - B. 6" numerals on front or 3-4" numerals on sleeve.
2. Team colors: The following team colors are acceptable colors for competition in our league.

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RULE 10 - HOME TEAM RESPONSIBILITY

1. Lining and preparing the field for play. Lines for extra point try must be marked **3 yards** from the goal line.
2. Supply yardsticks, downsmarkers, yard markers, goal line markers, and first aid equipment. The yard sticks and downs marker will be kept on the **visiting team's side of the field** and shall have the points removed. The **visiting team** must supply the chaincrew on gameday. *(Amended in 2016)*
3. Report the final score to the **LEAGUE SECRETARY** by 12:00 p.m. on the **Sunday** of the weekend the games are played. Violated organizations will be subject to a \$25.00 fine.
4. Maintain crowd control, keeping people not involved in the game at least ten feet from the playing field, including the end zone. The referee is authorized to penalize the home team **15 yards** for not complying.
5. A Qualified “**EMT**” (Emergency Medical Team) or first aid squad must be on site when there is more than one game scheduled at that site. The EMT should be introduced to the officiating crew and the visiting team before the beginning of the first game. If the EMT changes they should be introduced in the same fashion through out the day. Also local fire department phone numbers must be posted in concession stands and given to visiting commissioners/ coordinators and League schedules with playing times must be provided to local fire departments. *(Amended in 2017)*
6. **15 minutes** prior to first game, announcements should be done by **adults only!**
7. There will not be any general admission charges for any League games **except** invitational tournaments. It will be at the discretion of an organization whether to passing the hat at their respective home games.
8. Admission and program charges at “Super Sunday” may be allowed to finance programs and officials fees.

RULE 11 - TEAM ROSTER/FOOTBALL

1. Each team shall not have **more than 35** nor **less than 16** players on it's roster. An organization can field a team of less than 16 players if it so chooses that is less than 16 players present at game time.
2. A complete roster, including given name, phone number, date of birth, jersey number, actual weight of players, name of school district the player attends and coaches names and phone numbers must be prepared in numerical order by jersey numbers., cheerleading rosters must be in alphabetical order. **Official Rosters** must be furnished to **the league secretary** as a league record and to each organization commissioner/coordinator by the date set annually by the **Board of Commissioners**. Any member organization failing to meet their obligation under this rule is subject to a mandatory one hundred dollar (\$100.00) fine for the initial week and fifty dollars (\$50.00) for each succeeding week until such time as the organization comes into compliance with the requirements contained within this rule. Further failure of any organization to pay any imposed fine under this rule shall result in loss of voting privileges and any other penalties the **Empire West Youth Football and Cheerleading Association Board of Commissioners** may deem appropriate. All organizations will use a standard roster format as determined by the BOC.
3. Game roster must include **actual weights** of player as measured on or after 8/1 of that calendar year.
4. No player within a given age and weight division can be recorded on more than one roster.
5. A player may be dropped but not added to a roster after the roster has been mailed to the **President** and the Commissioners with the following exceptions:
 - A. A player held on a roster by one organization can be added to the roster of a team in the area of his new residence after he has moved. To play in the upcoming game, the player must meet the requirements under **Article 2**, and must have a statement from an **official of the organization** he is leaving stating that he was on the roster of that organization.
 - B. A player who has not participated in football and moves to a different area in the league after the rosters have been mailed may be added to the roster. The player must meet the requirements under **Article 2** before he can play in a scheduled game.
6. Any organization that submits a team roster with **less than 22** players may request an extension of increasing that team to a 22 player maximum. (The extention deadline shall be determined by the **Board of Commissioners** annually.)

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RULE 12 - REQUIRED EQUIPMENT/WEIGH-INS/FOOTBALL

1. Required equipment:
 - A. Head gear with suspension and face guard.
 - B. Padded football pants with all pads (Thigh, knee, hip and tail).
 - C. Shoulder pads with cantilever suspension.
 - D. Athletic supporter with fiber cup/jills.
 - E. Mouthpiece, either rubber or molded and must have a strap securing it to the facemask (not clear) and visible by the referees.
 - F. Football shoes or sneaker/football shoes with molded cleats or ordinary rubber soled, sneakers. Removable female cleats are prohibited. Spikes must conform to **E.C.I.C. high school rules** (blunt/no cutting edge) and not longer than one-half inch in length and not be composed entirely or in part of metal.
2. All players shall wear the following equipment at the time of the weigh-in:
 - A. Football pants with all pads (thigh and knee).
 - B. Girdle with all pads (hip and tailbone).
 - C. Males must wear athletic supporters with cups.
 - D. Females must wear “Jills”.
 - E. It should be noted that if a player is close to the weight limit, they will be allowed to weigh in wearing as little as gym shorts and tee shirt.
3. **Weigh-ins** will be performed at the following times: PeeWee, **30 minutes before game time**; Freshman, Junior Varsity and Varsity during half time of the previous game. Weigh-ins will be not less than 15 minutes before game time. **All strippers** shall be weighed in before non strippers. *All pre-weighs* for the day will be done immediately after the PeeWee weigh in only for those persons endanger of exceeding their weight class. **All weigh-ins will be performed at the game site.**
4. **All weigh-ins** will use a beam-type scale, which shall be furnished by the home team. Each scale will be **certified annually** prior to the first game by the **Bureau of Weights and Measures** with a seal afixed to it.
5. The home team is responsible for keeping **all unauthorized personnel** away from the scale.
6. Commissioners or a designated representative will be present to check each team’s roster and identification book.
7. The scale will be calibrated before each game with a certified 50-lb. weight. This calibration will be done by the Commissioners and they shall be the sole judge as to whether or not the player has complied with the weight regulations.
8. The scale weight will be placed in the correct beam position for the given weight of the division; if the beam touches the top bar and remains in that position, the player will be declared overweight for the game. This information is recorded by the Commissioners and given to the coaches and the officials.
9. Any player who arrives after the official weigh-in must wait and be weighed in at half-time intermission or at the discretion of the Commissioner(s).
10. Commercial padding and tape shall be allowed to be used at the discretion of each respective team covered under the high school rules, but can be challenged by the opposing coaches or Commissioners and the referees will be the deciding judges as to its necessity.
11. A cast must be covered by at least one (1) inch of foam padding. The Commissioner(s) must submit a doctor’s written permission for that player to participate.
12. An official is authorized to expel any player who does not have all the proper equipment.
13. No rule may be waived by any coach, referee, commissioner, official or the league.
14. An adult female must be present at the weigh-in and equipment check for a female player.
15. All roster players must weigh-in and be present for a minimum of **5 games** to be eligible for playoffs.

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RULE 13 - SPECIFICS/FOOTBALL

1. It is the responsibility of the individual League Commissioners and staffs to verify the players meet the proper age requirements.
2. Each organization shall prepare, identification books that contain individual clear plastic sleeves {one per player} containing in alphabetical order the following:
 - A. A picture of the player within 2 years.
 - B. Original application
 - C. Copy of birth certificate
 - D. Medical approval form

Or prepare a card book* and each ID card shall contain:

- A. A picture of the player within 2 years.
- B. Name
- C. Date of Birth
- D. Any Medical Restrictions/conditions

** If an organization is using a prepared card book, player's original application and copy of birth certificate must be kept on file .*

3. There shall be one identification book or prepared card book per team which shall be certified by the area commissioner and used at all game weigh-ins. Any member of the League may be challenged with respect to the age of a player at any time. The challenging organization shall post \$50.00 (fifty dollars) with the League President and if the challenge proves false, the money will go to the League. Should the challenge prove to be correct, the violating organization will be required to pay the \$50.00 (fifty dollars) fine and challengers money will be returned. All games the overage player(s) had participated in will be forfeited. All Commissioners will carry an up to date roster to each game. This roster may not be used in the absence of a players' picture.
 - A. There will no longer be a need to carry all participant information from game to game. Instead, each organization shall maintain and keep on file all individual participant information; name, picture of player within 2 years, birth certificate, medical waiver, and original application. In the event that a question is raised regarding a participant, the accused organization shall have until Midnight of the following Monday to provide adequate documentation. (Please note that the challenging organization will still have to file a formal grievance with the League President as stated above in rule 13.3) **(Amended in 2018)**
4. No team may use a meeting/locker room, shelter, communication system or heating/cooling device and/or system unless it provides the same for their opponent. If a team or organization films (video tapes) any games, all video needs to be shared on a public media platform to allow all organizations access for viewing. **(AMMENDED IN 2020)**
5. At all **Empire West Youth Football and Cheerleading Association** sponsored games, there must be a Commissioner and a Coordinator or a Designate at all times. Organizations that field 2 teams must have a Comm./Coordinator present at both fields.
6. All head coaches and assistant coaches must each prior to the first week of practice have completed the following:
 - a) **Heads Up Football and USA Football Level 1 Coaching certification {football coaches only}.**
 - b) **Authorized and have completed a Criminal Background Check as adopted by the Western New York Amateur Football Association or by EWYFC {all coaches football and cheerleading}**
 - c) **All first year Head Coaches and first year Coaches must attend an in person Coaches Calibration Clinic before the first game of the season. Dates and times for these clinics shall be determined by the BOC on an annual basis.** **(Amended in 2017)**

All first year Head Coaches and first year Coaches **must attend** an in person **Coaches Calibration Clinic** before the first game of the season. Dates and times for these clinics shall be determined by the **BOC** on an annual basis. **(AMMENDED 2017)**

7. On defense **blitzing the A gap is not allowed**. Linebackers must be **3 yards** off the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball, when lined up over the A gap. The penalty will be the same as hitting the center on a punt. **10 yards and automatic 1st down**. **This rule applies to ALL divisions!** (2019)
8. No player shall be allowed to line up over the center on a punt. The center cannot be touched until they have snapped the ball and made an attempt to go down field. **(AMMENDED IN 2017)**

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9. The **game ball** must meet the specifications outlined by the league. The ball used for each division will be specified each year by the Board of Commissioners. Each team will use their own ball. Ball specifications are as follows: (These are examples of specified footballs). This information shall be updated each year no later than the second Wednesday of the month of May.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| A. Peewee | Ball must state PeeWee Official Size and Weight |
| B. Freshman | Ball must state PeeWee Official Size and Weight |
| C. Junior Varsity | Ball must state Junior Official Size and Weight |
| D. Varsity | Ball must state Youth Official Size and Weight (<i>Amended 2019</i>) |

*****FOOTBALL SIZES AMENDED IN 2019*****

10. After 3 years from the time of purchase or last inspection, helmets must be inspected or reinspected and tested unless they have a five or seven year seal from the manufacturer, all reinspected helmets must have the **NOCSAE seal** affixed to them.

RULE 14 - PLAYER PARTICIPATION

1. All organizations participating are required to play every player on the team(s) participating in every game a minimum of 3 plays per half, however, if the roster size is under 23 participating players on a **EWYFCA** roster players must play 5 plays per half, unless health, injury, or disciplinary reasons prevent a player from participating, or the team shall be subject to forfeit. Kickoff and Kick Return participation will **NOT** be counted in satisfying this requirement. Number of players is based on the number of players eligible to legally participate in that day's game.
2. The commissioner (or an appointee) is responsible for tracking plays for his/her organization on a tracking sheet, and shall turn in the tracking sheets with rosters to the **League Secretary**. Any organization that fails to turn in their weigh in sheets and/or play count sheets shall be fined **\$50** per missing sheet. (*AMENDED IN 2017*)
3. The Head Coach, **within 24 hours**, must report to his commissioner if the minimum play requirement is not met due to health, injury, or discipline. The commissioner shall, within 72 hours after the last game of his/her organization's games, to file a Memorandum with the **League Secretary** containing the reason for failure & a synopsis of a follow-up with the player & parent.
 - A. Any Head Coach that fails to maintain a play count sheet during a game **shall be suspended for 1 game**. If there is a **second offense** said coach will be suspended for the **remainder of the season**. (*AMENDED 2018*)

RULE 15 - FIELDS, SCORING, QUARTERS, TIME OUTS

1. There will be **no kick offs at any level**. Instead, the ball will be placed at the possessing teams 30 yard line. In the event a safety occurs, the scoring team shall take possession of the ball at the 40 yard-line. (*NO KICKOFFS AT ANY LEVEL AMMEDNED IN 2017; SAFTEY RULE AMMENDED IN 2018*)
2. At any time in the second half if a team is losing, they may elect to an **"onside kick"** to retain possession of the ball after a score. The ball will be placed at the **30 yrd line** of the team that is electing the option. They will have **ONE** play to gain **10 yards**. If the yardage is gained that team will retain possession at the resulted spot of the try and it shall be 1st and 10. If the yardage is not gained the opposing team will take possession at the resulted spot of the try and it shall be 1st and 10. *The clock will start on the snap of the ball and stop upon completion of the play.* (2019)
3. The width of the playing field shall be a minimum of **45 yards wide and a maximum of 53 1/3 yards wide**. The minimum width may be less than 45 yards if the **"lay of the land"** does not provide for a 45 yard field. Violators will be subjected to game forfeitures for each occurrence and a fine not less than \$50 or greater than \$250 per occurrence, amount of such fine being determined by the **Empire West Board of Commissioners**.
4. Goal posts will not be used.
5. **One point** shall be awarded after a touchdown for a successful **running play**. **Two points** shall be awarded after a touchdown or a **completed pass** caught beyond the line of scrimmage and downed in the end zone. No field goal kicking is allowed.
6. All quarters will be twelve minutes and Halftime shall be ten minutes. (*QUARTER LENGTH AMMENDED IN 2016; HALFTIME LENGTH AMMENDED IN 2018*)
7. On change of possession, clock management will be determined on the outcome of the prior play, except within the **four (4) minute mark of the first half or end of the game**, the clock will be stopped at the change of possession and will not be restarted until the snap of the ball. (September 2008)

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8. All divisions shall follow **NYS High School** rules as the number of time outs permitted throughout the game. During a charged time out, in addition to **rule 9-6 Article 1B of the Official State High Scholl Association Rules**, one coach from each team will be allowed to go out into the huddle of the field to instruct team members only.
9. A 2 minute warm-up is **mandatory** at half-time and before game start.
10. During the course of a league game, a coach **may twice request** a rules interpretation from the referee without being charged a time out. Should the request concern a judgement call, the team will be charged with a time out. The **Head Coach** will be called on to the field to meet with the official. No other coach or player will be allowed to participate in the discussion.
11. The officials are required to notify each bench 4 minutes before the half and 4 minutes before the end of the game.
12. Division points and standings - each team shall receive two points for a win and one point for a tie game. Trophies will be awarded to the first, second and third place teams of each division at the end of the season based on final standing (total points). In the event of a tie or ties more than one trophy will be awarded for each place to qualifying teams.
13. All games times are to be determined annually by the **Board of Commissioners**.
14. When the point spread is **24 or more** points, measures shall be taken by the league commissioners to ensure game management. A prescribed set of guidelines will take effect. Anytime during the game, the point spread should be **less than 24 points** the guideline will no longer be in effect.

These guidelines shall be reviewed by a committee appointed annually at the **April Board of Commissioners Meeting**. Any changes to the guidelines will need a **majority vote** at the subsequent **May meeting** for ratification.

When the final score has a point spread of **32 or more points** the **League Secretary** shall obtain a game review from both commissioners and submit them to the president. Multiple negative reviews will be brought to committee to determine proper action.

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15.13 Guidelines (AMMENDED 2018)

When 24-point score differential:

- A. Losing commissioner may remove players from the winning team on the next possession, not including the extra point conversion. (**AMMENDED 2020**). For rosters with 20 or less, up to 2 players may be removed from the game, rosters with 21-30 players, up to 4 and rosters greater than 30 up to 6 may be removed. Roster size will be number of eligible player for that game. If players need to be inserted back into the game due to injury, player ineligibility, or to maintain minimum play requirement said players must play on the interior line on offense and must play 5 yards off the ball and defense. When on defense these players will not be allowed to blitz. If a returning player is a striper, his/her participation will be defined but the commissioners on site.
- B. If at the beginning of the 2nd half the point spread is **less than 32 points but greater than 23 points** the leading team will be allowed, for only their first offensive possession, to utilize all players to help fulfill minimum play requirements.

***** Please note that Empire West minimum play requirements supersede this guideline. *****

Once a team has achieved a point spread of 32 points or greater the following guidelines will go into effect:

- A. At the beginning of the 2nd half the **trailing team will receive the ball regardless** of the outcome of the coin toss.
- B. Losing Commissioner may remove players from the winning team. For rosters with 20 or less, up to 4 players may be removed from the game, rosters with 21-30 players, up to 8 players, and rosters greater than 30 up to 12 players may be removed. Roster size will be the number of eligible players for that game. If players need to be inserted back into the game due to injury, player ineligibility, or to maintain minimum play requirements the following must be followed:
 - I. If players are re-inserted to achieve their minimum play requirements they cannot all take the field at the same time, unless injury or player ineligibility allow for it.
 - II. They can only play on the interior line on offense.
 - III. They must play 5 yards off the ball on defense and will not be allowed to blitz.
 - IV. If a returning player is a stripper, their participation will be determined by the commissioners on site.
- C. The game clock will become a running clock and the scores shall be removed from the score board. The officials will be responsible for keeping the score on the field. The game clock will only stop for an injury or if a team calls a timeout.

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- D. Leading team may **not** advance the ball on Defense.
 - E. Leading team will **not** be permitted to pass for a 2-point conversion.
 - F. Both Commissioners **WILL** ensure that **both teams** are using “B” and “C” players whenever possible.
 - G. A game review must be submitted to the **League Secretary** that includes steps taken by the winning coach to ensure game management.
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- 15. Each organization shall declare home and visitor sidelines at the beginning of the season. If necessary teams may share a sideline.
- 16. Annually a committee will be appointed at the **March Board of Commissioners** meeting to discuss and propose a set of guidelines {rules} to be followed for all Freshmen games. These guidelines will be voted on by the **Board of Commissioners** at the **April meeting**. These guidelines will require a majority vote to be ratified.
- 17. If a team possesses the ball in **their own half of the field**, they will have the option after **3rd** down of turning the ball over to the opposing team instead of attempting a punt. The ball will be placed **25 yards from the previous line of scrimmage** and it would then be 1st and 10 going the other way. There will be **no run off of time** on the play clock. (**AMMENDED 2020**)

RULE 16 – PLAYOFF AND TIE BREAKER PROCEDURES

- 1. Post Season format shall be established each year by the **Board Of Commissioners** no later than the **June** Commissioner’s Meeting. Playoff locations and times will be determined based upon the standings. If the teams with highest seed are not interested hosting, the option will then be given to the organization who have not hosted most recently. Preference will be given to any organization that can secure a turf playing surface. (**2019**)
- 2. The winners of each game shall play in a championship game no earlier that **7 days** after the last game of the opening round.
- 3. Location and date for the post season will be determined and agreed upon by all commissioners.
- 4. Tie breakers to determine the final standings shall consist of the following:
 - A. Head to head results if all teams that are tied have played each other.
 - B. A “**play-in**” head to head tie breaker game(s) on a mutually agreeable site(s) when the loser of the play-in game is eliminated from the playoffs. Teams will be responsible for any and all fees associated with this game(s), including but not limited to, scheduling fees to revise the referee schedule, and referee fees for a single game.
The League cannot guarantee a “play-in” head to head game can be executed.
 - C. Record against common opponents shall be used if head-to-head results **do not** yield a final order.
 - D. Strength of schedule (total points of all opponents as outlined in **Rule 5.11** herein) shall be used if record against common opponents does not yield a final order.
 - E. If strength of schedule yields a tie or any discrepancy; we refer to **Section VI** rules. (**AMMENDED 2020**)
- 5. A **Pee-Wee moving up game** shall be scheduled upon agreement of all commissioners, The **Pee-Wwee division coordinator** shall receive the rosters of eligible players from each team’s head coach, and create a combined roster from geographically close teams. Minimum roster size for a combined team shall be 26.

RULE 17 - OFFICIALS/FOOTBALL

- 1. Each official is to be presented with a copy of these rules, Pee-Wee guidelines and have a copy present at each game, should a dispute arise not covered by the official football rules.
- 2. Any complaint of officiating, **must be submitted in writing** to the **Board of Commissioners** for their action.
- 3. The standard number of officials will be **two (2) for Pee-Wee games** and **four (4) for all other games**. The league will contract with an officials association to provide game officials for the season. If necessary Freshmen, JV or Varsity games may be played with two officials and PW may be played with 1 official assigned from each participating organization.
- 4. The referee shall remove from the game, any player who appears to have been injured. **The officials’ decision is final** should he judge the player to be removed for the balance of the game.
- 5. Each home organization must keep a ledger so that referees can sign in for the games they are doing. They must write down how many games they did that day and what they got paid for that game or games.

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RULE 18 - COMPLAINTS: ALLEGED INFRACTIONS

1. All game day complaints are to be handled by **both** commissioners. All complaints received by the League must have been filed by an organization commissioner. All filed complaints will be given to a committee appointed by the **League President** to investigate and may be presented to the League no later than as prescribed in subsections 2, 3 and 4 of this section. **The Board of Commissioners**, at its discretion, may act upon communications and or complaints filed by members of an organization other than the commissioner.
2. Alleged infraction must be **verbally reported** to a **League officer** within **48 hours** of the alleged infraction(s). A **written notice** will follow within **7 business days** along with a check or money order in the amount of **\$50** that will be forwarded to the **League President** by the organization filing the complaint. The **Executive Board** in extingent circumstances, **may suspend** a player, coach, or organization personell pending an investigation by the **League Board of Commissioners**. The **President** shall call a special meeting of the **Board of Commissioners** should the complaint need immediate action. This money shall be forfeited to the League should the protest be ruled unfounded. Complaints should be a factual as possible. (*Ammeded 2016*)
3. The **Board of Commissioners** upon hearing all parties to a complaint may dismiss the complaint or take any of the following action(s):
 - A. **Notify in writing** the violating organization of the violation(s) and the potential consequences should the violation continue or occur again.
 - B. Notification (as in "A") and assess a \$50.00 fine on the violating organization to be paid within 90 days of date set by the **Board of Commissioners**.
 - C. Notification and fine (as in "A & B" above) and placement of the violating organization on a **one (1) year probation** status: To include notification any future violations may lead to expulsion according to **League Constitution Article IV, Section 6**.
4. The **Board of Commissioners** may also determine any other action(s) or notifications including fines, suspension and expultion, the **Executive Board** deems necessary and in the best interest of the League,
5. All communications shall be directed to organizations without reference to specific individuals.

RULE 19 - RULE CHANGE AND/OR ADDITIONS

1. All proposals for rule changes **MUST be submitted in writing** at the scheduled meeting in **November**. All proposals will be **open for discussion** and/or changes at the scheduled meeting in **January**. **Voting** on final drafts of these proposals will take place at the scheduled meeting in **February**. Rule changes shall be in effect for **two (2) seasons**; however, any rules or bylaws can be changed at any time with **100% agreement of the Board of Commissioners** or with **80%** or greater agreement during the scheduled **February** vote.

RULE 20 - TROPHIES/AWARDS

1. Trophies for football and cheerleading:
 - A. Football teams: A first, second and third place trophy will be awarded.
 - B. Cheerleading squads: Participation awards go to all participants competing/exhibiting.
 - C. Commissioners Cup Award_- To be given to the organization which best exemplifies the ideals of **Empire West Youth Football and Cheerleading Association/Southern Tier Football and Cheerleading**. Voting shall take place at the **first** Commissioners meeting following the completion of the League's regular season.
 - D. The Commissioner's vote shall be based on the consensus of his/her home organization. Voting will be done by paper ballot. In case of a tie, the **Empire West Cheerleading Board** will vote again. Only the tied organizations will remain in contention. In the event of a dead lock, the tied organizations involved will share the award.

Criteria - Votes shall be based equally on conduct of players, cheerleaders, coaches, directors, commissioners, coordinators, and fans, based on good sportsmanship, decorum of teams (**players, cheerleaders and especially coaches**) before and after games. We shall strive to achieve a **"win/humble and lose/gracefully attitude"**. The League will award a cup/trophy to the designated organization for it to keep. The League will also award a plaque to be retained by the League and passed on year to year.

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RULE 21- DIVISIONS/CHEERLEADING SPECIFICS

1. Participants for each cheerleading division is **no less than 5 cheerleaders** and **no more than 32 cheerleaders**.
Age and divisions will be the same as in football with the following exceptions:
 - A. Athletes entering Kindergarten, Five (5) years of age, are eligible for the **PW level**. Mascots allowed starting at age Four (4), for Sideline Cheer. Mascots will not be competition eligible with consideration to the current age and grade requirements. **(2019)**
 - B. If a participant is nine (9) years old but entering the **5th grade** they may move up to the **JV Division**.
 - C. If a participant is eleven (11) years old but entering the **7th grade** they may move up to the **Varsity Division**.
2. Only a bonafide and **age appropriate** member of a cheer squad will be allowed to be a **flyer** in a mount or stunt. Cheerleaders who move up early may base and back spot but **are not permitted** to be a **flyer**.
3. Stunting and tumbling are permitted on the sidelines, provided that the play on the field is at the opposite end. Stunting and tumbling will not be permitted at Airlanes home field.
4. Bobby pins/hair pins are permitted for **both games and competition**.
5. **No jewelry of any kind is permitted**, including but not limited to earrings. **Taping of ears is not permitted**.
6. Artificial nails, or nails in excess of 1/4" are **not** permitted.
7. Cheerleaders shall be accompanied by **at least one certified coach** when they are within the participation area on any field. Coaches must also be present until all participants have been picked up by their parent or legal guardian.
8. **Spirit of sportsmanship** shall be observed at all times during games; specifically, a team shall start a cheer while the other team is performing a cheer.
9. A minimum of **two certified spotters** shall be on the field during the halftime cheer. At any **EWYFCA** sponsored cheerleading competition, no spotters are needed below prep level but will be allowed at coaches discretion. Prep level and higher, each stunt group must have a spotter, within a **minimum 2 spotters** on the mat. All spotters **MUST** stand within **three (3)** feet of a mount and make **every effort** to protect flyers from landing on the ground or mat. **(AMMENDED 2020)**
10. The **hello cheer** shall be decided by the coordinators or their designees each week. (To be done first by home team, second by the visiting team, and simultaneously by both teams to their own stands)
11. No twistdowns are allowed in the **Pee Wee Division**.
12. **EWYFC** conditioning standards shall be followed as outlined in **Rule 7.5** as applicable.
13. Each squad will be required to have a **CPR/First Aid Certified** representative at all practices and games.
14. **All Coaches** will be required to complete the **Heads Up** online concussion class offered through the CDC prior to the season.
15. All **EWYFC** organizations must have all of their teams participate in the **EWYFC** competition. If an organization does not fully participate they may be fined accordingly. Special circumstances discussed and voted upon by the **BOC** on a case by case basis.
16. All **EWYFC Coordinators** are to attend, actively participate, and stay for the duration of the **EWYFC** competition.
17. An organization may not attend another competition in lieu of the **EWYFC** competition, if that other competition is held on the same day as the **EWYFC** competition.
18. All cheerleading **head coaches** must be at least **21 yrs of age** as of August 1st and all assistant coaches must be **18 yrs of age** by August 1st. Insured teaching coaches must be **16 yrs of age** or older prior to August 1st. Any other teaching coaches will need to be insured separately from **EWYFC** insurance policy and may not enter the ropes, have physical contact with the girls, or count as an adult for athletes to be left with at any time.

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19. An appropriate **hello cheer** is to be done during halftime of each game. The words for the **hello cheer** must be submitted by email to coordinator by the Friday of the first week of practice. The cheer must include the words “**hello**” and “**good luck**” and not include any degrading statements. Any **hello cheer** deemed inappropriate by a majority of the coordinators must be changed and resubmitted for approval.
20. Cheerleader participation is **mandatory** at all scheduled regular and post season games, including but not limited to bowl games.
21. All Freshman, JV & Varsity cheerleaders **must be** sideline ready after halftime by the **8 minute mark** on the game clock of the 3rd quarter. Pee-Wee cheerleaders must return to the sidelines at the **32 minute mark** on the game clock of the 2nd Half.
(AMMENDED 2020)

RULE 22 - TEAM ROSTER/CHEERLEADING

1. Each Coordinator must submit a completed roster at the August EWYFC monthly meeting before the start of the regular season.
2. A binder or portfolio containing all of the rosters given at the **August** meeting is to be placed in the sound booth of each organization prior to the start of the season.
3. No changes in rosters will be permitted unless approved by the **Empire West Board of Coordinators**.
4. The rosters that are submitted in **August** shall remain the same for the competition rosters. No additions or combining of rosters will be allowed for competition rosters. Organizations with multiple teams in the same divisions may combine rosters of the same age level if both teams have under five participants or on the Pee Wee level.
5. No more than **20 athletes** are allowed when combining teams of the same level/ age division at competition or game day contests. In the case of organizations that are able to host two teams at one level/ age division, it is to be expected that each football team has a coordinating cheerleading team on game days and **Empire West Competition**.

IE: if team A rosters 12 athletes and team B rosters 9 athletes, no combination will be granted.
if team A rosters 12 athletes and team B rosters 8 or less athletes, a combination on athletes will be granted.

When and if this combination is needed, it shall be brought to the **Empire West Cheerleading Board**, along with rosters, to allow for an official combination.
(AMMENDED 2020)