



## North Metro Football League (NMFL) 2011 Rules

### **Rule 1.0 - Team Composition**

- 1.1 Maximum number of players allowed on a NMFL team.
- No Limit – NMFL recommends no more than 25 players per team.
- 1.2 The staff of each NMFL team shall be limited to:
- 1 head coach
  - 4 assistant coaches
  - 1 trainer
  - 1 statistician
  - 2 team managers. Team managers must be under 18 years of age.
- 1.3 Team Competitive Balance (Instructional League (D2 ONLY)).
- When an association places more than one team in any age classification; there must be an equal balance of players representing each age group eligible to participate in that class.
  - A form of draft must be used to divide player talent evenly among the association's teams.
  - Maximum number of player freezes shall not exceed two (2) on any team.

### **Rule 2.0 - Official Team Roster**

- 2.1 Each team shall submit a typed roster (attached) and supporting documentation prior to the official NMFL certification.
- 2.2 The roster shall be completed by a team official and contain the following information:
- Team information including
    - a) Division
    - b) School Grade
    - c) Restricted Weight Limit (For School Grade)
    - d) Name of Association
    - e) Team Name
    - f) Team Home Jersey Color (dark jersey; reference rule 5.10)
    - g) Head Coach's Name and Telephone Number
    - h) Staff Names and Phone Numbers
  - Player Information Including:



- a) Game Jersey Number (Jersey Order Number 1-XX)
- b) Full Name (Last, First, MI)
- c) School Grade
- d) Age (as of September 1 of the current year)
- e) Date of Birth

2.3 The roster shall list all player names in jersey number order.

- A NMFL representative will certify weights during the official NMFL certification.
- Restricted players will be identified during the NMFL certification. The NMFL certifying Representative will place an “R” in the designated column on the roster form signifying a restriction.

2.4 Jersey numbers shall not change.

- It is recognized that consideration must be given to the fact that unusual situations may occur, such as loss of or damage to a jersey during the course of a season. If this occurs, the original jersey shall be replaced with a similar jersey in color, material, and if possible, number. If the number cannot be duplicated, then the roster shall be revised with the replacement jersey number and initialed by a NMFL League Executive Board Member. If this situation occurs prior to a game, the player will be allowed to play with an alternate jersey number for that game only upon verification by the opposing head coach and park director that the player is listed on the roster.

2.5 The Head coach and a current year Official Association Board Member must sign the team official roster certifying on behalf of their association that:

- The players listed on the roster are only eligible to play on the team to which they have been assigned.
- A form of draft has evenly selected instructional (D2) teams.

**2.6 Additional Players may be added to a roster until the 3rd regular season game. A member of the NMFL League Executive Board must complete addition.**

2.7 After the 3<sup>rd</sup> game of the regular season players can be added to the roster only if the active number of eligible players drops below 15.

2.8 No player who is either a member or who is trying out for another league or high school football squad (including 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade) may participate in NMFL games. However, if the Player opts not to play for either, they may rejoin an NMFL team prior to the first NMFL game providing that the Player has properly



registered and officially weighed in with the league. The association adding the player must comply with the competitive balance rule (1.4) when adding the player to a roster. A member of the NMFL Executive Committee shall certify the player and addition to the official roster.

**Rule 3.0 - Player Grade, Ages and Weights**

- 3.1 The age of a player shall be determined as of September 1 of the current year.
- 3.2 The following table provides the grade, age and weight schematic that will govern team make up: NMFL Weight Restrictions

Note: 2011 Weight Restrictions are the same for DI and DII.

Division I and II		
Grade Max.	Ages as of Sept 1	Weights
Flag	5/6/7	N/A
3 <sup>rd</sup>	8/9*	Unlimited with restricted weight of 105lbs at skill positions
4 <sup>th</sup>	9/10*	Unlimited with restricted weight of 115lbs at skill positions
5 <sup>th</sup>	10/11*	Unlimited with restricted weight of 125lbs at skill positions
6 <sup>th</sup>	11/12*	Unlimited / No Restrictions
7 <sup>th</sup>	12/13*	Unlimited / No Restrictions
8 <sup>th</sup>	13/14*	Unlimited / No Restrictions
<i>*Players Who Have Advanced A Grade Or Who Are Young For Their Grade May Move Down 1 Level If They Meet The Age Criteria. <u>Example:</u> Player A turned 9 years old on August 29<sup>th</sup> and is in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade would be allowed to play on a 4<sup>th</sup> grade team.</i>		

## Restrictions:

- 3.2.1 All players regardless of weight will be subject to the NMFL certification process including certification weigh-in. Players who meet restricted criteria shall be identified on the official NMFL Roster by the certifying NMFL Representative.
  - 3.2.2 During games each restricted players helmet must have a sticker, approved by the League, attached at the rear center of their helmet.
  - 3.2.3 Players exceeding the restricted weights or ages are restricted to playing on the Offensive and Defensive Line within seven (7) yards of the center (Tackle to Tackle).
  - 3.2.4 Restricted players cannot run the ball, play as a receiver or advance the ball on special teams.
  - 3.2.5 Restricted defensive players can advance a fumble or interception.
  - 3.2.6 Restricted offensive players cannot advance the ball. The ball will be considered dead at the point of contact.
  - 3.2.7 Restricted players can punt and kick extra points, but cannot advance the ball as a runner or when serving as the kicker, act as a lead blocker on special teams. The ball will be considered dead if in possession of a restricted player.
  - 3.2.8 Violation of positioning of a restricted player will be an illegal position foul. Penalty 5 yards
- 3.3 There shall be No "older/lighter.
- 3.5 After certification, progressive weight gain is allowed so a participant's natural growth may take place without preventing continued participation.
- No additional weigh-ins will be required.
  - A change in a player's weight anytime during the current season will have no impact on their certified weight.

## **Rule 4.0 - Certification Documents and Process for Certification of roster, age and weight:**

- 4.1 All players **must** be certified, by NMFL, before he or she is eligible to play in a regular season game.
- 4.2 The NMFL Executive Board shall have overall responsibility for certifying each player and team for play during the current season.
- 4.3 **NMFL does not require submittal of a completed doctors release or physical form for certification however, the NMFL Board has strongly recommended each organization require a completed physical form as part of their registration package.**



4.4 Each team shall provide, at **certification, one (1) complete certification package** containing a complete typed roster, player affidavits with current photograph of the player, from waist up, wearing his/her official roster jersey, and a copy of the following documents; birth certificate and school/grade verification.

- Digital photos allowed on photo paper.
- **Photo must clearly show players face and jersey number.**
- Package shall be assembled by player and in roster order.
- **Do not place papers in plastic sleeves or book prior to certification.**
- One Package (original only) will be presented at the Official Certification.
- At completion of the official certification the “original” certified package will be given back to the head coach. A copy shall be made of the “original” certified package and kept on file by an Association Board Member.
- **Original Certification Documents will be placed in a book after NMFL official certification and shall be available for review at all NMFL games.**

4.5 The player affidavit shall have attached a **copy** of an official hospital, state or county birth certificate showing registration of birth from a state or county bureau of vital statistics (preferred proof).

- If birth certificate is not available, NMFL will accept a passport or an official school registration issued, signed and notarized by a private or public school.
  - Documentation shall be made available to other NMFL member associations upon request by an association only.
  - A parent or guardian attesting to the accuracy of the date of birth and proof of age shall sign the affidavit.

4.6 **The player affidavit shall have attached a copy of one of the following documents:**

- **Previous years report card**

- **School enrollment form**
  - **School attendance record**
  
  - **If none of these documents are available, a signature block has been added to the player affidavit form to allow the parent to obtain the signature from a school official (example: teacher, registrar, principal) certifying that the player is enrolled in the grade for that school. The form should be completed prior to obtaining the signature.**
  
  - Documentation shall be made available to other NMFL member associations upon request by an association only.
  
  - A parent or guardian attesting to the accuracy of the school and grade shall sign the affidavit
- 4.7 Player weight and certification papers (certification package) will be verified by an NMFL Executive Board member at an official certification and weigh-in no later than the Friday prior to the first regular season game. The NMFL league representatives shall determine the exact date, time and location (s).
- 4.8 The Official NMFL Certification will consist of one (1) NMFL Executive Board Member and one (1) NMFL Association Board Member.
- 4.9 All players on a roster **MUST** be in attendance at the official NMFL weigh-in unless injury or illness prevents the player's attendance. Such absence must be supported by a doctor's certification of illness or injury.
- 4.10 The head coach and one (1) assistant coach will be allowed to observe the certification and weigh-in. Parents and other individuals are not to be permitted in the immediate area of the check-in.
- 4.11 Each player's birth certificate and School Grade document will be examined confirming age and grade. The player identification forms will be checked to insure information is correct and that each player can be identified with the photograph provided.
- 4.12 A player listed on the official roster that is in a plaster cast as a result of an injury shall be allowed a late weigh-in if the player cannot meet the official weight. The player must meet the official weigh-in restricted weight upon removal of the cast.
- 4.13 If a player does not meet the weight limit restriction, the player will have thirty minutes from the time his team has completed weigh-in to be weighed again. If the player still does not meet the restricted weight limit, the player will be identified on that team's roster as a restricted player

- 4.14 The NMFL Officials conducting the certification will attest with their signatures to the accuracy of the information contained in the certification package during the certification process. NMFL Officials will signify that each player was in attendance and meet certification requirements by initialing the team roster.
- Players not in attendance at the Official Certification **will** not be allowed to play in any regular season game until they are officially certified by the NMFL.
- 4.13 After the NMFL Certification a copy of the signed certification package shall be made and given a Board Member of their Association. This copy will be made available to an NMFL Representative when requested in case the original was lost or for comparison to the original document.
- 4.14 The original certified package containing a set of each team's identification records will be placed in a book and retained by the head coach for inspection at all pre-game check ins

#### **Rule 5.0 – Pre-Game Check-In**

- 5.1 There shall be No Pre-game weigh-in.
- 5.2 All players must be on the certified roster.
- 5.3 All pre-game check-ins shall be conducted not earlier than one (1) hour and not less than 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time.
- 5.4 The head coach of each team or a designated representative will be responsible for the pre-game check-in.
- 5.5 The visiting team head coach or a designated representative shall report to the home team head coach at the game site not less than one (1) hour prior to the scheduled game time.
- 5.6 Failure of either teams' head coach or designated representative to appear at least one (1) hour prior to game time will exclude the opposing team from the pre-game check-in requirements.
- 5.7 Pre-game check-in must be conducted using the original Roster Book. The book will be made available to the opposing head coach. Each player shall be checked against the certified affidavit and photo contained in the official roster book. Each player designated as a restricted player on the certified roster shall have their helmet inspected to verify application of an R decal that is visible to the officials.



Any and all disputes will be presented to a NMFL Official or the home team assigned Park Director for resolution.

- Players who have not been certified **will not be allowed** to participate in any game. The Official Roster must contain the initials of an NMFL Executive Board Member signifying that they are certified. (Reference rule 4.12).
- 5.8 The pre-game check-in shall not be open to the public. Parents and other individuals are not to be permitted in the immediate area of the check-in. Only NMFL officials, park director, head coach (or their representative) shall be allowed to be in the check-in area.
- 5.9 Dark colored jerseys will be considered the home jersey and must be worn at all designated NMFL home games. The NMFL Schedule will serve, as the official document to designate which team is home and which team is visiting. The NMFL designated Home Team will be allowed to request and change the home team jersey color at pre-game check-in with full agreement of the visiting team head coach.

### **Rule 6.0 – Practice**

- 6.1 The purpose of this rule is to provide standard, fair and equal practice time for all NMFL teams and to keep practice activity at a reasonable level during school days so as not to create a hardship for players with regard to school studies and participation in school activities.
- 6.2 Practice is defined as any gathering of players, prospective players, NMFL team or individual players on a NMFL team, to discuss the subject of football, to view film of football, to exercise or to study football.
- 6.3 NMFL Associations are prohibited from engaging in any organized physical conditioning or other practice-type activities involving players, or prospective players, prior to the date set by NMFL officials. The only activity in which a player or prospective player may take part prior to the set date shall be registration and any one-time equipment issue.
- 6.4 NMFL officials will set the beginning date of practice annually.
- 6.5 Practice will be limited to 10 hours per week (Monday to Sunday) until the date Fulton County begins school. All associations outside of Fulton County will be required to follow the same date.
- 6.6 With the start of school, all teams at 4<sup>th</sup> grade and above may not hold more than practices or a maximum of 6 hrs during any calendar week (Monday to Friday).



Teams will be allowed 2 additional hours for use on weekend days only (Saturday or Sunday) when no games are scheduled.

- 6.7 With the start of school, all teams at 3<sup>rd</sup> grade may not hold more than 2 practices during any calendar week with a maximum of 4 hours of practice per week.
- 6.8 Upon conclusion of the regularly scheduled playing season, any team scheduled to play in a NMFL play-off game may hold 4 practices during the week with a maximum of 8 hours of practice per week.
- 6.9 No practice will continue past 9:00 PM.
- 6.6 Time spent traveling to the location of scheduled NMFL games will not count as practice time or activity. All organized activities of a team conducted from the time of the pre-game weigh-in until the start of the game is considered to be pre-game warm-up activities and is not counted as a practice activity.
- 6.7 In addition to all other authorized practices, weigh-in and warm-up activities, teams may, on the day of a scheduled game, hold one pre-game preparation session, not to exceed 1 hour.
- 6.8 The provisions of this rule are not intended to prohibit a NMFL team or its individual members from viewing or listening to games on TV or radio, provided such is not intended to be used as a practice or training activity. NMFL teams and their individual members who participate in non-practice social, civic, and church activities, picnics, banquets, Pep rallies, league carnivals, and work details, etc., are not in violation of NMFL rules pertaining to practices. This is provided such activity is not also used for NMFL football instruction and practice.
- 6.9 During the regular scheduled playing season no team shall play more than 1 game in any calendar week with the exception of NMFL scheduled mid-week games.
- 6.10 Controlled scrimmages will be permitted but each such scrimmage shall be considered a practice.
- 6.11 Scouting of opponent practices is prohibited. No coaches or team parents shall video or observe other team practices before or during the regular season or at any time during the post-season. The practice of scouting or video taping another team practices in order to gain an offensive or defensive advantage shall be considered detrimental and contrary to the best interest of the NMFL program. Any Player or member of the coaching staff involved with any of the aforementioned offenses will be suspended from league play for the remainder of the season.

## **Rule 7.0 - Home Team Responsibilities**

- 7.1 The home or host team shall have the following responsibilities:
- Preparing and marking of the playing field.
  - Providing all field markers and other necessary officiating equipment.
  - Adequate safety equipment
  - Emergency procedures posted including the telephone numbers.
- 7.2 **Team occupying the chain crew side of the field (opposite from press box) shall provide chain crew. Note the chain crew operates under the direction of the officiating crew and in no way will be allowed to coach or provide their coaching staff any information during play on the field. Violation of this rule will result in removal of the individual from the field of play.**
- 7.3 All associations must provide free admission to all NMFL regular season games.
- 7.4 All associations must provide adequate seating for home and visiting spectators.
- 7.5 All associations must provide a Field Marshall or Duty Officer with the primary responsibility to assist game officials as required and to ensure their safety before, during and immediately following games.

## **Rule 8.0 – Officials**

- 8.1 All Instructional (D2) NMFL regular games shall be played using 4 officials.
- One (1) game clock operator provided by the host association.
  - Three (3) officials on the field provided by designated NMFL Officiating Organizations
- 8.2 All Travel (D1) NMFL regular games shall be played using 5 officials.
- One (1) game clock operator provided by the host association.
  - Four (4) officials on the field provided by designated NMFL Officiating Organizations
- 8.3 Each association shall log and report late arriving and/or absent game officials within 48 hours after completion of the game to their Treasurer and NMFL.
- 8.4 Unless the White Hat and both opposing head coaches agree to play sooner, a minimum of 15 minutes shall elapse between the end of any one game and the beginning (kick-off) of the next following game.

When the regular scheduled starting time allows 15 minutes or more between games, the game shall proceed as scheduled; however a 15-minute period between games must be allowed regardless of the scheduled starting times of any games. An exception to this rule



can be granted by the Head Official (White Hat) after confirming all players from both teams having had sufficient time to do warm ups and agreement from both Head Coaches.

### **Rule 9.0 - Uniforms and Equipment**

- 9.1 Each player must have a complete uniform and be legally equipped. Detachable cleats are permitted only when the shoe contains the receiver ("female") and the cleat contains the insert ("male") and no metal is exposed. All molded type cleats are considered legal.

### **Rule 10 - Team Captains**

- 10.1 A team may have a maximum of 4 team captains, as identified by the head coach to game officials, who may attend the opening game ceremonies and instructions at mid-field.

### **Rule 11 – Headsets**

- 11.1 Headsets are permissible during any game.
- 11.2 No team will be prohibited from using headsets because the other participant does not have access to the same.
- 11.3 Any and all coaches, including coaches allowed on the field in games shall be allowed to use headsets.
- 11.4 Cell Phones may not be used as a substitute for headsets.

### **Rule 12 - Sideline Restrictions**

- 12.1 During any conference game, no one is to be allowed on the sidelines, outside the coaching box, except the following:
- Cheerleaders, when adequate space cannot be provided outside the restraining lines;
  - The official chain crew;
  - Newspaper, magazine and/or television or photographic staff, which have been authorized to take pictures or film the game;
  - A ball boy when specifically requested by the officiating crew;

- NMFL league officials may be on the sidelines at any NMFL conference game, inside or outside the coaching box, when they feel such action is appropriate and in the best interest of the game or conference. Exception to this rule is when the individual is also designated as a coach within that Division and age group. When on the sideline these individuals are prohibited from conducting any form of coaching.
  - Host Park Board Members may be on the sidelines at their designated NMFL home game, inside or outside the coaching box, when they feel such action is appropriate, except when the individual is designated as a coach within that Division and age group. When on the sideline these individuals are prohibited from conducting any form of coaching.
- 12.2 Coaches from other NMFL teams, mascots, guests, spectators and other similar type personnel shall not be permitted on the sidelines inside or outside of the coaching box during NMFL games.
- 12.3 Unless otherwise provided in these rules, during any conference game, no one is to be allowed on the sidelines, inside the coaching box, except the following:
- The members of the participating team and the team's coaching staff who are listed as players and coaches on the official team rosters;
  - The team trainer and statistician as listed on the team's official team roster
  - Two (2) managers under the age of 18. These managers do not have to be listed on the team's official team roster.
  - NMFL league officials may be on the sidelines at any NMFL conference game, inside or outside the coaching box, when they feel such action is appropriate and in the best interest of the game or conference. Exception to this rule is when the individual is also designated as a coach within that Division and age group. When on the sideline these individuals are prohibited from conducting any form of coaching.

### **Rule 13 - Complaints / Misconduct / Protests / Violations of the Rules**

- 13.1 NMFL will enforce all violations of rules, complaints and protests.
- 13.2 All complaints, protests or allegations of a rules violation shall be made to the governing board of the association making the complaints.
- 13.3 Each association shall be responsible for ensuring all coaches, parent, and officials conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. Each association shall fully investigate any allegation lodged against it by another association and advise

- the association lodging the complaint of its findings and any disciplinary actions it has imposed.
- 13.4 Unless self-imposed by an association there shall be no over-turning, re-playing or otherwise setting aside the results of any game as the result of a protest or violation of any rule.
- 13.5 The Head Coach will be held responsible for the conduct of his team, parents of team players and assistant coaches. The head coach will be subject to dismissal or ejection, including game suspension, for any parent or assistant coach misconduct or rule violation.
- 13.6 Any Player exhibiting any form of un-sportsman like conduct may, at the discretion of the game officials, be sent off the field for a “cool down” period of a minimum of 5 plays after which the Player shall be allowed to return to the field. Player warnings shall not be considered as being ejected from the game. Players shall not receive more than one “cool down” period per contest.
- 13.7 Flagrant un-sportsman like conduct, at the discretion of the game officials, or a second Player Warning from the officials shall be cause for Player disqualification and ejection from the game. Any Player so disqualified by the officials, shall remain on the bench for the remainder of that game or, if deemed necessary ejected from the game field.
- a) Any Player allowed by game officials to return to a game shall not be considered as being ejected from a game.
  - b) A Player removed from the game on the final play of the game shall be considered ejected from the game.
  - c) Game officials shall notify the league of any ejections within 24 hours of the completion of the contest. Player name and number shall be recorded and submitted to the League along with the game score.
  - d) Any Player ejected during a League game shall be ineligible for a minimum of one following game.
- 13.8 Flagrant un-sportsman like conduct by the Head Coach or any member(s) of the coaching or sideline staff shall result in disqualification of those involved. Any person so disqualified by the officials, shall be ejected from the game field and if warranted, facility and prohibited from any further contact, direct or indirect, with the team during the remainder of the game. Such conduct may include, but is not limited to, abusive, disrespectful, or profane language, intimidation, fighting, physical confrontations, or other un-sportsman like acts before, during or after the game.
- a) Failure to comply may result in removal from the league.



- b) Any coach or sideline staff ejected from a league game shall be ineligible for a minimum of one following game and will be prohibited from contacting, the team, direct or indirect, during the suspension game.
- c) An ejected coach may not return to their coaching position without the permission of the Association and the NMFL.

#### **Rule 14 – PLAYING RULES (Governing Rules and Exceptions)**

- 14.1 The National High School Football Rules with the following exceptions will govern all NMFL conference games:
- 14.2 For all conference games time duration for each quarter shall be as follows:
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> grade shall be 8 minutes in duration
  - 4<sup>th</sup> grade and up 10 minutes in duration.
- 14.3 The ball shall be of good grade leather, synthetic leather, or rubber with the following specifications:
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> grade - Pee-Wee size ball or K2 (according to Wilson)
  - 4<sup>th</sup> grade and up - junior size ball (according to Wilson). 6<sup>th</sup> grade and up has the option to use a youth sized ball (according to Wilson) during their offensive series.
  - Ball cannot be in like color of uniform. (Example Black Uniform/Black Ball)
- 14.4 Extra points shall score 2 points for kicking and 1 point for passing and running the ball. The ball will be put in play from the 3-yard line.
- 14.5 Goal posts shall be no less than 19 feet, 2 inches in width.
- 14.6 Two-color jersey numbers are permissible. Length of game jerseys must cover all protective gear.
- 14.7 The National High School Federation Rule with regard to numbering interior lineman, eligible receivers, backs, etc. will not apply.
- 14.8 When a team must kick from its own end zone; the team's captain may request the game officials to move the football in order to avoid the possibility of kicking into the goal posts.

- 14.9 All ties shall be broken using National Federation tie breaking rules, except as follows:

### **GHSO OVERTIME PROCEDURE**

1. There will be a 3-minute intermission between the end of regulation play and the coin toss to start the overtime procedure.
  2. The captains will meet for the coin toss, and the winner may choose one of the following:
    - (a) Be on offense first
    - (b) Be on defense first
    - (c) Choose the end of the field on which to play
  3. The ball is placed on the 15-yard line and the offense keeps the ball until:
    - (a) The ball is turned over on downs NOTE: The team on offense can gain a first down.
    - (b) The defense gains possession of the ball (ball is dead immediately)
    - (c) The offense scores a touchdown or field goal
    - (d) The offense misses a field goal
  4. After the first offensive team completes its possession, the opposing team gets its opportunity from the 15-yard line.
  5. If the game remains tied after each team has had an offensive possession, there will be a 2-minute intermission and the team that lost the first coin toss has the first option for the second possession.
  6. For each additional overtime period (i.e., an offensive possession by each team) the original coin toss options are alternated.
  7. Beginning with the third overtime period, a team must attempt a 2-point try after a touchdown.
  8. Each team is allowed one timeout per overtime period. No timeouts may be carried over from regulation play.
  9. Penalty enforcement is handled the same way in overtime as in regulation play.
- 14.10 Mercy Rule" When one team is 28 points or more ahead, the following rules shall apply and rules below cannot be waived by either the winning or losing coaches even if there is an agreement between them to do so:

- 14.10.1 There shall be no further kickoffs by either team.

- 14.10.2 The team behind shall be awarded the ball at midfield after any score.
- 14.10.3 The team that is ahead must substitute **non-skilled players** for their **starting running backs** in the offensive backfield.
- The Head Coach of the leading team may elect to continue to play the starting QB or insert a substitute another skilled player at the quarter back position by notifying the head official and opposing head coach. If the head coach elects to use this option this player shall not be allowed to advance the ball in any manner (pass or run) and is in the game to only hand off the ball to a non-skilled running back. Advancement of the ball by this player or any other skilled player such as a wide out or end, will be considered a violation of this rule resulting in the ball being blown dead (whistled) at the point where that player attempted to advance the ball.**
- 14.10.4 There will be no forward passes by the leading team.
- 14.10.5 After halftime the team behind will be awarded the ball at midfield regardless of which team should receive the second half kick-off.
- 14.10.6 At the time this mercy rule takes effect the game officials will confer with the head coach of the losing team and provide two clock options:
- Option 1 - A “running clock”. The clock will stop only for an official's timeout.
  - Option 2 - A normal clock will be in effect with the score removed from the scoreboard until such time as the difference becomes less than 28 points.
- 14.10.7 The losing coach at any time after choosing either clock Option 1 or 2, may request that the officials begin a running clock. The coach may only switch one time to a normal clock and the game will be played under a running clock unless the point differential becomes less than 28 points.
- 14.10.8 If the point differential becomes less than 28 points, regular game rules will resume including the keeping of the clock and displaying the score on the scoreboard.

### **Rule 15 - Player Participation**

- 15.1 MINIMUM PLAY RULE: For all NMFL games, all teams shall adhere to a "minimum play" rule whereas every player shall be assured 8 plays a game.
- 15.3 RESPONSIBILITY: The Association and Head coach shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with the minimum play rule.

### **Rule 16 - Coach's Participation – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

- 16.1 One coach from each team may participate on the game field during the game.
- 16.2 Coaches allowed to participate on the field of play may not have any form of communication with any player of either team after the offensive team's center touches the ball. Each coach must remain silent and may not give any verbal or visual signals until after the play has ended.
- 16.3 Each of the participating coaches must be at least 15 yards from the line of scrimmage when the play starts and not interfere with the play in any way.
- 16.4 Penalty for Violation of the rules 16.1 through 16.3 will be administered as follows:
- 16.4.1 After the first occurrence the coach shall receive a "team" warning.
- 16.4.2 After the second occurrence the team will be assessed a 15-yard un-sportsmanlike conduct penalty
- 16.4.3 After the third occurrence the team will be assessed a 15-yard un-sportsmanlike conduct penalty and the coach causing the violation shall be restricted to that team's sideline.
- 16.4.4 A replacement coach shall be permitted, but will do so knowing that they are subject to rule 16.4. A violation of Rule 16 by the replacement coach shall be treated as a third occurrence for purposes of this rule.

### **Rule 17 - Free Punts and Automatic Spot – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

- 17.1 A team may request a "free punt". When a free punt is requested, the defensive team may not rush the punter.
- This rule does not mean that a defensive lineman or any other defensive player cannot block to set up a return.

- 17.2 The team requesting the free punt must punt the ball.
- 17.3 A free punt may be requested at any location on the field.
- 17.4 If the game officials determine that an infraction of this rule has occurred, an encroachment violation will be assessed.
- 17.5 The offensive team may request an "automatic spot" in punting situations that occur inside the requesting team's fifty (50) yard-line.
- 17.6 When a team requests an automatic spot the game officials will provide a 20-yard spot from the line of scrimmage. The game clock will run during this process.

### **Rule 18 - Free PAT and field goals – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

- 18.1 A team may request a "free kick" PAT or field goal. If a team requests a "free kick" the defense cannot interfere in any way with any offensive player during the play. This includes rushing the kicker and any attempts to otherwise distract the offense. The defense must take a knee throughout the free kick.
- 18.2 The center must snap the ball between his legs and may not run back or hand the ball to the holder.
- 18.3 There shall be no time limitation on the attempt to kick the ball other than the game official's discretion that the team is making an effort to kick the ball.
- 18.4 If the game officials determine that the defense has committed an infraction of the free kick rule, an encroachment violation shall be assessed.
- 18.5 If the offensive team attempts to advance the ball, a dead ball shall be called and the play ended.

### **Rule 19 - Defensive Line Play – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

- 19.1 On defense, a team may not place a defensive player directly over or in either gap ("A" Gaps) of the offensive center position.
- 19.2 The closest a defensive lineman may line up is directly over the guard positions.
- 19.3 The middle linebacker must line up at least three yards off the line of scrimmage.
- 19.4 Blitzing between the center and guard gap is permissible as long as there is no contact with the center.



- 19.5 If the game officials determine that a violation of this rule has occurred, an "illegal defense" shall be called and a 5-yard penalty assessed.
- 19.6 A personal foul shall be called for subsequent violations of this rule, and a 15-yard penalty assessed.