



**WEST MICHIGAN JUNIOR
FOOTBALL LEAGUE**

**2025 RULE BOOK & PROCEDURAL/GENERAL
INFORMATION MANUAL**



The West Michigan Junior Football League is a program of service to children in grades 3rd-6th. It is geared to provide an outlet of healthful activity and training under adult leadership in an atmosphere of wholesome community participation. The program aspires to promote the value of teamwork, sportsmanship and fair play.

The West Michigan Junior Football League is a program that is constructed, supervised and assisted by directors who offer organized football to their respective communities. Each community sets up and administers each of their teams. Each community director is responsible for the teams that play under its registration. It is the responsibility of each community director to make sure that their respective program is involved and aware of all things within the organization and implementation of the WMJFL. This includes the following...

- The distribution, explanation, and enforcement of league rules, guidelines, and expectations to coaches, players, parents, and fans
- Attend all league meetings and/or assign a designee from said community if they cannot attend
- Make sure all coaches are properly vetted through their respective background check process
- If more than one team in either division of play, the teams are to be constructed featuring a balance of 3rd/4th and 5th/6th grade players
- Pay any league fees that have been approved by the league directors
- Any other duties that may come up before, during, and/or after each respective season

West Michigan Junior Football League is currently comprised of teams from various communities. They include Allendale, Byron Center, Calvin Christian, Coopersville, Dorr, Fruitport, Grand Haven, Grand Rapids Christian, Grandville, Hamilton, Hastings, Holland, Holland Christian, Hudsonville, Jenison, Kelloggsville, Kenowa Hills, Lee, Middleville, Muskegon Catholic Central, Muskegon Mona Shores, Muskegon Reeths Puffer, North Pointe Christian, South Christian, Spring Lake, Union, Unity Christian, Wayland, West Catholic, West Ottawa, Wyoming, and Zeeland. Our league must adhere to all rules and regulations established by the West Michigan Junior Football League.

The West Michigan Junior Football League has an equal board of directors that consists of one representative from each community. These directors meet to discuss the further advancement of the league. Each community **MUST** provide a representative to attend all necessary meetings. Each community will be assigned a task each football season. If a community fails to attend the necessary meetings or fails to complete their tasks they will risk being eliminated from the league.

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2025 Board of Directors

Allendale - Jessica Meekhof
Calvin Christian - Kyle Reeves
Dorr - Aaron Sturgess
Grand Haven – Andrew Biedenbender
Grandville – Russ Stevens
Hastings – Chad Aiken
Hudsonville – Jason Van Assen
Kelloggsville - Josh Barnes
Lee – Andre Sargeant
Muskegon Catholic Central - Brad McKenzie
Muskegon Reeths Puffer – Mike Beckman
South Christian - Ryan Pylman
Union – Megan Parsons
Wayland - Dan Cassini
West Ottawa – Darrin Duistermars
Zeeland – Mande Matzke

Byron Center - Crystal Laska
Coopersville - Michael Michalak
Fruitport – Joe Casano
Grand Rapids Christian – Kirk Sundberg
Hamilton - BJ Nykamp
Holland/Holland Christian - Aaron Shumaker
Jension – Mike Parnacott
Kenowa Hills - Justin Roerig
Middleville – Jeremiah Bossenberger
Muskegon Mona Shores – Thomas Byrnes
North Pointe Christian – Jeremy Bolker
Spring Lake – Tarah Kline
Unity Christian - Mark Te Slaa
West Catholic - Mark Johnson
Wyoming – Ryan Andrews

Points of Emphasis for 2025 Season

- Rules 6-8, Weigh Ins & Weight Restrictions
 - o Emphasis on weigh in procedure, 10lb weight on-site, weight limits, etc.
- Rule 12, Clock Management
 - o Specific rules on when the clock stops and starts
- Rule 14, Running Clock, Sportsmanship
 - o Specific rules and guidelines of situations involving a running clock, expectations for sportsmanship in those situations, and officials' discretion in those situations
- Rules 17-23, Conduct
 - o Specific rules for conduct of coaches & spectators
- Rule 24, Number of Required Plays, per player
 - o This has been changed from 8 plays to six plays
 - This was changed before the 2024-2025 season
- Rule 44, 3rd/4th Grade Punting Rule
 - o Teams will have two options for punting for the 3rd/4th grade level based on field position
 - This was changed before the 2024-2025 season
- Rule 46 & 54
 - o Allows for players with Yellow Stripes and/or Blue Dots to punt and kick field goals/extra points

- **Home Page**
 - o This section features News items, General Info, Field/Site Status, and more
- **League Info**
 - o This section features the 2025 rules and procedural information for game days as well as a breakdown of the 2025 season featuring important dates and game day expectations
- **Procedures & Conduct**
 - o This section features information on Uniform and Weigh-In procedures, definitions for “yellow striped” and “blue dotted” players, as well as conduct guidelines for coaches and spectators
- **Expectations & Guidelines**
 - o This section features detailed information on Sportsmanship, a Code of Ethics, and Expectations for Directors, Coaches, Players, and Parents
- **Health & Safety Info**
 - o This section features detailed information from the MHSAA on Health and Safety Resources and guidelines for Concussions, Heat/Hydration, Heart, Multi-Sport Benefits, Sports Nutrition, and more
- **USA Football**
 - o This section features information from USA Football including links on Development & Training, Programs, Events, and Resources/Tools. Some communities are a part of this association along with individual coaches while others are not
- **Schedules, Scores, & Standings**
 - o This section will feature the schedules for the 2025 season as well as weekly updated scores and team records, per community
- **Directors & Locations**
 - o This section features a listing of the Board of Directors as well as a listings and directions for all of our home sites for the WMJFL communities

2025 SEASON BREAKDOWN & SITE REQUIREMENTS

Practices

- Teams can practice on dates set by WMJFL
- You can expect 2-3 practices each week, usually on weeknights
- Communities are allowed to begin practicing the week of August 4
- Players are required to have 3 days of practice without pads before being allowed to participate in full contact practices and games
- Before Labor Day, teams are allowed no more than three practices featuring full contact. After Labor Day, teams will then only be allowed no more than two days of full player-to-player contact practice not to exceed 90 minutes per week of contact. This is an MHSAA rule strongly supported by the WMJFL

Scrimmage Saturday

- August 23, 2024. Locations and times will be determined by each community.

2025 Season

- Games will be played on Saturdays beginning September 6, 2025, and will feature six weeks of play. The first four weeks (Sept. 6, 13, 20 and 27) will feature scheduled games. Two (2) additional games will be scheduled for Weeks 5 & 6 (October 4 and 11) against an opponent with a comparable record. A seventh week may be scheduled for teams that had a bye during the regular season (October 18)
- If there are an odd number of teams in the league, teams may have a bye during a given week. A seventh week will be scheduled to accommodate those teams that have byes during the season. In short, no weekday games will be needed unless teams would like to do so on their own

- Make up games will be scheduled by each community director if teams, times, and fields are available due to unexpected cancellations for Saturday games in place of Week #7
- Referees shall be a minimum of 11th grade students. The head official shall wear a white hat, be at least 21 years of age, be an M.H.S.A.A. certified official and must be wearing an updated M.H.S.A.A. patch that is visible. It is recommended that at least four (4) officials be used at all games. If less than 4 officials are available to work then 2 of the officials on the field must be certified.
- Each organizing department prepares the fields at their respective locations. Please be respectful at each location and do your part in taking home whatever you have brought. Trash must be placed in the proper receptacles that are provided. Due to various maintenance issues... Seeds and Peanut Shells are no longer allowed on the field or sidelines, period!
- Prior to the start of the game, the Field Director makes all decisions regarding suitability of the fields for play. Once the game has started, the head referee and the Field Director will make the decisions regarding the delays and cancellations.
- Incomplete games cancelled for any reasons will be attempted to be made up. Any team, which cannot make the reschedule time, will forfeit the game. Check the WMJFL web site for specific "Hotline" options for your community (in case of possible cancellations) by clicking the "Links" tab.
- Injuries that occur during the games are to be reported by one of the coaches to their respective local league director. Each community should already have a concussion protocol in place.
- Coaches need to submit their scores to their respective director. Directors... please report your scores to Darrin Duistermars (darrind@hct.holland.mi.us) and Amanda Bailey (amandak@hct.holland.mi.us) to be recorded and updated on the web site

2025 RULEBOOK & LEAGUE GUIDELINES

2025 WMJFL - Uniform & Weigh-In Procedures & Rules

The West Michigan Junior Football League has specific procedures & rules for Uniforms & Weigh-Ins that all communities must adhere to. They are as follows...

1. Players must wear full uniforms during games.
2. No jewelry is allowed except for medical reasons
3. All home teams must be prepared to supply helmet caps or pennies to the visitors if playing a similar color visitor team
4. Teams must have extra uniforms available in case of a player having blood on any part of their uniform. The player must change uniforms immediately
5. Make sure all equipment is correct, properly worn (helmets, mouth guards, shoulder pads, etc.) and that you have additional parts available if repairs are needed on site. Extra jerseys and pants should be considered, also.
6. **One official weigh-in will occur no more than 30 minutes before game time and no less than 15 minutes before game time.**
7. **All fields will have 10lb weight to check the scale accuracy and must be set up on a hard surface.**
8. A roster with numbers may be asked for by the home team coach if announcers are used at their home field.
9. **All players will weigh in with full uniform and equipment. This includes...**
 - a. **Football pants with knee and thigh pads, hip and tailbone pads or a girdle with hip and tailbone pads with football pants**
 - b. **Helmet with chinstrap**
 - c. **Shoulder Pads**
 - d. **Football cleats or tennis shoes**
 - e. **Mouthpiece attached to helmet**

10. Weight & Ages

- a. A participant's playing level will be determined by his grade rather than his age. The following chart depicts the level of play and the age and weight stipulations for this format to be effective. There will be no deviation from this chart:
 - i. 3rd/4th Grade
 1. Tackle-To-Tackle Weight (Yellow Stripe) – 135 lbs. & Over
 2. Non-Ball Carrying Weight (Blue Dot) – 115 lbs. & Over
 - ii. 5th/6th
 1. Tackle-To-Tackle Weight (Yellow Stripe) - 160 lbs. & Over
 2. Non-Ball Carrying Weight (Blue Dot) - 140 lbs. & Over
- b. In the event a player's grade/age is questioned, please inform your local league director and it will be handled, if necessary, in as timely a fashion as possible.

c. Yellow Striped Players

- i. OFFENSIVELY... Tackle to tackle weight means the player will be playing offensive center, offensive guard, or offensive tackle if you play only ONE Yellow Striped player. If a team has TWO or more "Yellow Striped" players, a team is now allowed to play TWO (only) at the same time. However, they must play on the offensive line in Offensive Tackle positions (on either side of the center), ONLY! No other combinations will be allowed
 - ii. DEFENSIVELY... Teams will be allowed to have ONE yellow-striped player on the defensive line. That player will be allowed to play in ONE of the Defensive Tackle positions, ONLY. There does not need to be a corresponding yellow-striped player on the offensive side of the ball if a team has one on the defensive side
 - iii. No one over the Tackle-to-Tackle Weight (**Yellow Stripe**) will be allowed in the backfield, on special teams (including on 4th down when a team is punting) or in any position to intentionally or unintentionally advance the ball. This includes the positions of kickoff receive (except Front Line player) and punt receive, punter, running back, quarterback or receiver (special teams) as well as any defensive lineman designated as a yellow-striped player.
 - iv. Any child over the Tackle-to-Tackle Weight may have the option to move up a level with parent and coaches' permission. Kick off receive is allowed on front line only.
- d. Blue Dotted Players
- i. **Blue Dots** will be placed on the front and back of a player's helmet to indicate players over the Ball Carrying Weight.
 - ii. OFFENSIVELY... these players must play on the offensive line, **excluding the TE position**.
 - iii. DEFENSIVELY... these players may play any position. However, they may not advance the ball regardless of the situation including interceptions, fumble recoveries, etc. For Special teams, blue-dotted players can handle kicking/punting duties

2025 WMJFL – Clock Management

The West Michigan Junior Football League has specific guidelines for clock management that all communities must adhere to. They are as follows...

11. A 12-minute Running Clock will be utilized
12. **The clock will stop on timeouts, injuries, penalties, & scores**
13. The clock will start once the ball is "placed" regardless of the situation
 - a) Exception
 - a. After a time-out the clock will restart after the ball is "snapped"
 - b. After a score and extra point attempt the clock will restart when the ball is "snapped" for 3rd/4th and when the ball is "kicked off" for 5th/6th

14. If a team is down by 30 points, the clock will be a running clock. The running clock will only stop for time outs and injuries. Please be mindful and respectful to the opposing team if yours is the team in the lead. Sportsmanship is one of the foundations of this league. Any perceived violation on sportsmanship will be under the discretion of the officials/local directors and dealt with accordingly
15. Sixty seconds will be allowed for time outs.
16. Five to Eight minutes will be allowed for halftime. This is under the discretion of the Head Official. Decisions will be based on various issues including time management, weather, field availability, etc.

2025 WMJFL Conduct/Guidelines for Coaches & Spectators

17. All teams will have no more than FIVE coaches on the sidelines. These coaches must be designated as coaches in some manner before the game (Hats, bands, shirts, etc.)
18. Only the Head Coach may communicate with the officials, NOT assistant coaches. Teams will be given a single warning if there is an infraction of this rule. After that first warning, a 15-yard penalty will be assessed and enforced for each infraction
19. Foul language used by a coach or player will be cause for immediate ejection from the game
20. Foul or abusive language used by a parent or fan will result in a 15-yard penalty against the sideline charged. A second offense by the parent will result in ejection from the game of their child.
21. There will be an automatic penalty of 15-yards for any member of the coaching staff and/or spectators entering the playing field and interrupting the normal progress of a game
22. Only players and coaches are allowed on the sidelines. Anyone taking pictures or videos on the sidelines and/or near the field will be asked to leave and sit in the designated spectator areas. This is based on the MHSAA rule
23. Suspensions/Ejections
 - a. Normal procedure for a suspension will include coaches/players receiving a warning, a flag for unsportsmanlike conduct, and finally an ejection if deemed necessary by the Head official. However, players, coaches, & spectators may be ejected without a warning/flag if deemed necessary, again, by the Head official.
 - b. An automatic one game suspension will be enforced. Additional game suspensions could be added by the offending team's local director and/or the WMJFL Board if considered appropriate.
 - c. Any intentional infraction will be treated as a personal foul and will result in a 15-yard penalty and ejection of both the player and the head coach.

2025 WMJFL – General Rules

The West Michigan Junior Football League is for participants currently enrolled in 3rd, 4th, 5th, & 6th grades for the 2025-2026 school year and will follow the MHSAA playing and scoring rules with the following exceptions:

24. Every player must play a minimum of 6 plays in each half of every game. Failure to comply with this rule shall result in a one game suspension of the head coach. **Exception:** The coach does not have to comply with this rule if the player is not making all the practices.
25. NO overtime will be played.
26. Three timeouts per half, per team
27. All age groups shall play on a standard field – 100 yards goal line to goal line.
28. It is recommended that all fields will have a clock available to maintain official game time.
29. In the event of an injury, an official time out will be called. The player injured will be removed from the game and will stay on the sidelines for a minimum of 3 consecutive plays. The field director in charge may remove the injured player from the rest of the game if, in their opinion, the player is unable to safely continue playing. An infraction to this rule will result in a 15-yard penalty. Time outs cannot be used as injury plays. If a player displays concussion-like symptoms, then said player and coaches must adhere to the regulations of the Michigan Sports Concussion Law (see league web site for more details).

30. A player with a cast of any kind will not be permitted to participate in contact drills during practice or participate in a game until the cast has been removed and a doctor's release has been obtained.
31. Any team behind by 21 points or more will receive the ball on their opponent's 35-yard line. This only applies immediately following a score by the team in the lead. Should the team fail to generate a first down with the allotted four "downs" the ball would then be turned over to the opposing team. However, the team that is down does not continue to get the ball after they score if they are still down by 21 points or more
32. The WMJFL shall have a set schedule of 6 games
 - a. Scrimmages – Saturday, August 23
 - b. Regular Season Dates – September 6, 13, 20, 27, October 4, & 11
 - c. Seventh Week for "Bye" teams – October 18
 - d. Game Times: 9am, 10:30am, 12pm, & 1:30pm (unless local director requests alternate time)
33. A game may be canceled or postponed in case of threatening weather or field conditions. Make-up schedules of postponed games will be the responsibility of each team's respective local director. Weekday night games may be an option if both communities agree
34. Extra Point Attempt: Kick = 2 points, Run or Pass = 1 point
35. The "Center Sneak" is an Illegal play and will not be allowed. A Quarterback Sneak is a legal play.
36. No metal cleats of any kind will be allowed. If any metal is found to be a part of a player's shoe, said player will not be allowed to play until they are removed or if shoes are replaced.
37. Per MHSAA rules, tinted face shields are also not allowed. A player will not be allowed to participate until the shield is removed.
38. Mouthpiece must be attached to the helmet.

2025 WMJFL – 3rd/4th Grade Specific Rules

The West Michigan Junior Football League will follow the MHSAA rules of play. However, the league has specific rules for the 3rd/4th Grade division that all communities must adhere to. They are as follows...

39. A single coach from each team in the 3rd & 4th Grade Divisions may remain on the field at all times and may enter its huddle to guide it but must do so in a timely fashion. Each offensive and defensive coach will remain at least 10 yards from the line of scrimmage after the offensive huddle has broken. All other coaches must remain on the sidelines, within the 25-yard lines.
40. For both the offensive and defensive sides of the ball, the Coach must be efficient in the huddle and after the huddle is broken. Communication will be allowed throughout the duration of the pre-snap process. However, once the ball is snapped, communication on both sides must stop, period. One warning will be given if there is an infraction. After that, a 5-yard penalty will be assessed for each violation. Consideration will be given towards coaches by the officials if the game is no longer in doubt and coaches are giving instructions to players as they are moved to different positions.
41. Once the ball is marked teams will have 35 seconds to run a play.
42. Defensive Formation...
 - a. Minimum of four players and a maximum of six players allowed on the line of scrimmage
 - i. The line of scrimmage goes from sideline to sideline
 - ii. Players set on the line of scrimmage in "lineman" positions may rush the passer
 - iii. Secondary players lined up with receivers on the outside will be counted as one or more of the allotted six players allowed. However, they cannot rush the passer
 - iv. Linebackers must line up at least 3-yards off the line of scrimmage and cannot advance towards the line of scrimmage prior to the ball being snapped. Please be mindful that "creeping" or trying to time the snap of the ball could violate this rule
 - v. At least two defensive players must line up at least 5-yards off the line of scrimmage.
 - vi. No blitzing is allowed. However, at the snap of the ball, all defensive players may advance forward towards the line of scrimmage.

1. This rule doesn't apply within 5-yards from the goal line.
 2. An infraction of this rule will result in an illegal defense penalty of five yards
43. No kickoffs will be involved in the 3rd & 4th grade level. The ball will be put in play on the offensive team's 35-yard line.

44. Punting

- a. On 4th down, the coach will advise the referee on the team's intent to punt or go for a first down. If the coach decides to punt, there will be two options...
 - i. **Option 1**
 1. A free punt will be permitted at the 3rd & 4th grade level. Once lined up in a punt formation, there will be no fake punts
 2. After the snap and when the ball is controlled, the punter will have no more than 5 seconds to punt the football. Failure to punt the football within the required 5 seconds will result in a "delay of game" penalty in which the penalty will be a loss of down
 3. There will be no rushing to block the punt. While in punt formation, no defensive player may line head up or touch the offensive center. Violation of this rule will result in a 15-yard penalty and an automatic first down.
 4. The return team may have a player(s) downfield, but no actual return will take place. These players can either "down" the ball at the point of contact or allow for the ball to stop or go out of bounds. In either scenario, the opposing team takes over at the spot where the ball was downed by contact or where it went out of bounds
 - ii. **Option 2**
 1. Instead of punting, the team with possession of the ball may choose to simply move the ball downfield twenty yards and allow for the opposing team to take over possession of the ball at that spot
 - a. **Exception**
 - i. If a team is on or inside their opponent's 40-yard line and they choose to punt on fourth down, the only option they have is the Free Punt scenario in Option 1

45. Extra Points/Field Goals

- a. On 4th down, a free EP/FG attempt will be permitted at the 3rd & 4th grade level.
 - i. The kicking team will advise the referee on the teams' intent to attempt an EP/FG or run an offensive play.
 - ii. Once lined up in a kicking formation, there will be no fake kicks.
 - iii. After the ball is snapped, the kicker will have no more than five seconds to kick the football. Failure to kick the football within the required 5 seconds will result in a "delay of game" penalty in which the penalty will be a loss of down. The "three-step drop" rule has been eliminated.
 - iv. There will be no rushing to block the kick. While in kicking formation, no defensive player may line head up or touch the offensive center. Violation of this rule will result in a re-kick if the kick was unsuccessful the previous try.

46. Since there is no rushing by the defense to block a punt, field goal, or extra point attempt, 3rd/4th players with Blue Dots and/or Yellow Stripes will be allowed to punt and/or attempt extra points and field goals.

47. After a safety, the ball will be placed on the 50-yard line for the 3rd & 4th grade level.

48. Ball Size: Pee Wee or Junior Size

2025 WMJFL – 5th/6th Grade Specific Rules

The West Michigan Junior Football League will follow the MHSAA rules of play. However, the league has specific rules for the 5th/6th Grade division that all communities must adhere to. They are as follows...

49. Once the ball is marked teams will have 35 seconds to run a play.
50. Coaches must remain on the sidelines, within the 25-yard lines.
51. Kickoffs will take place within the 5th & 6th grade division at the 40-yard line.
52. DEFENSIVE FORMATION...
 - a. Minimum of four players and a maximum of six players allowed on the line of scrimmage
 - b. The line of scrimmage goes from sideline to sideline
 - c. Players set on the line of scrimmage in “lineman” positions may rush the passer
 - d. Secondary players lined up with receivers on the outside will be counted as one or more of the allotted six players allowed. However, they cannot rush the passer
 - e. Linebackers must line up at least 3-yards off the line of scrimmage and cannot advance towards the line of scrimmage prior to the ball being snapped. Please be mindful that “creeping” or trying to time the snap of the ball could violate this rule
 - f. At least two defensive players must line up at least 5-yards off the line of scrimmage.
 - g. No blitzing is allowed. However, at the snap of the ball, all defensive players may advance forward towards the line of scrimmage.
 - i. This rule doesn’t apply within 5-yards from the goal line.
 - ii. An infraction of this rule will result in an illegal defense penalty of five yards
53. Punting
 - a. On 4th down, a free punt will be permitted at the 5th & 6th grade level.
 - i. After the snap and when the ball is controlled, the punter will have no more than 5 seconds to punt the football. Failure to punt the football within the required 5 seconds will result in a “delay of game” penalty in which the penalty will be a loss of down.
 - ii. The coach will advise the referee on the teams’ intent to punt or go for a first down. Once lined up in a punt formation, there will be no fake punts.
 - iii. There will be no rushing to block the punt. While in punt formation, no defensive player may line head up or touch the offensive center. Violation of this rule will result in a 15-yard penalty and an automatic first down.
 - iv. Defensively, teams cannot send any kicking team members down field until the ball is kicked.
 - v. Reminder... this is a live ball once it is punted
54. Extra Points/Field Goals
 - a. On 4th down, a free EP/FG attempt will be permitted at the 5th & 6th grade level.
 - i. The kicking team will advise the referee on the teams’ intent to attempt an EP/FG or run an offensive play.
 - ii. Once lined up in a kicking formation, there will be no fake kicks.
 - iii. After the ball is snapped, the kicker will have no more than five seconds to kick the football. Failure to kick the football within the required 5 seconds will result in a “delay of game” penalty in which the penalty will be a loss of down. The “three-step drop” rule has been eliminated.
 - iv. There will be no rushing to block the kick. While in kicking formation, no defensive player may line head up or touch the offensive center. Violation of this rule will result in a re-kick if the kick was unsuccessful the previous try.
 - v. **Since there is no rushing by the defense on any field goal or extra point attempts, players with a Yellow Stripe and/or a Blue Dot will be allowed to attempt to kick the ball in these instances**
55. 5th & 6th grade ball size: Junior or Youth Sizes