

SOUTHERN MARYLAND YOUTH ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

**Rule Book - 2025
Version 19.6**



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1. POLICY

The purpose of the Southern Maryland Youth Athletic Conference (SMYAC) is to provide the youth of Southern Maryland an opportunity to learn the fundamentals of football and, under competent leadership, to enjoy participation and competition in this organized league so that they may become happier, better people. Objectives shall include the development of positive social values and character traits; good citizenship; physical and mental health; and a knowledge, appreciation, and interest in football. It is a goal of this league to instill the will to win and the courage to accept defeat or disappointment, with emphasis on clean play and sportsmanlike conduct.

- 1.1 Teams should be comprised of players who meet the age requirements established by the league. If a team is found to be in violation of this policy, penalties will be imposed on the team, coach, and/or club in accordance with the rules.
- 1.2 1.2 The SMYAC Board of Directors (referred to as the Board) will be made up of the commissioners and/or presidents of the member organizations.
- 1.3 The Board shall act as the governing body responsible for overseeing all rules and regulations related to league play, including team placement and scheduling.
- 1.4 Attendance at SMYAC Board meetings is mandatory for A Commissioner, President, or his/her designated representative. Failure to comply with this rule could result in the organization's forfeiture of its voting privileges for the remainder of the season.
- 1.5 New organizations must apply in writing to the Board for approval for assignment to appropriate divisions under these rules. Consideration will be given to a new club's geographic location and potential impact on neighboring clubs that already exist in the league. All applications must be received prior to the January Meeting
 - 1.5.1 Proof of Establishment (including Tax ID number, organizational charter, by-laws, established Board of Directors, and non-profit status documentation)
 - 1.5.2 Minimum of 3 teams at lowest consecutive age groups (not including Flag).
 - 1.5.3 \$250.00 deposit (credited toward league fees for the current year)
 - 1.5.4 Identification of Uniform Colors
 - 1.5.5 All new organizations shall not except any SMYAC players who participated with any SMYAC organization the previous season. Also, no current SMYAC organization shall accept any players who played for the new organization their previous season. This will remain in effect until the new organizations 2-year probation period ends. Exceptions will only be granted to players that have physically moved to a distance considered to be a hardship and must be approved by SMYAC board.
 - 1.5.6 All new organizations shall be considered on probation for the first two years and shall not have any voting rights during that time.
- 1.6 Each organization sponsoring a team shall appoint a Commissioner and as many Assistant Commissioners or coordinators as deemed necessary to direct its football program. Only the President, Commissioner or his designated representative shall vote on matters placed before the Board. Any issue presented for a decision by the Board that recommends change to an existing policy and/or rules must pass with a minimum of 2/3 of all the Board members voting in favor of it. All other issues will require a majority vote of those Board members in attendance.

- 1.7 Each organization shall have only one vote.
- 1.8 All SMYAC organizations must maintain three teams per year. Any organization failing to meet that requirements will face the following:
 - 1.8.1 No home games.
 - 1.8.2 Probation first year
 - 1.8.3 Expulsion from SMYAC
- 1.9 All specified fees for each club shall be paid to the SMYAC Treasurer by the before week one of the fall season. All other fines or debts must be paid within one month of notice from the SMYAC Board. Non-payment will result in the organization's suspension and voting rights being revoked until the debt is paid.
- 1.10 The Board shall appoint a scheduling committee responsible with preparing all game schedules. The schedule shall only contain league games. The committee should include one member from each county.
- 1.11 The SMYAC will be composed of teams from its member organizations who compete in in 2 divisions within each age group – with Division 1 being the most advanced. SMYAC is divided into the following age divisions:

Example

6U (6 and under)	
7U (7 and under)	Division 1 and Division 2
8U (8 and under)	Division 1 and Division 2
9U (9 and under)	Division 1 and Division 2
10U (10 and under)	Division 1 and Division 2
11U (11 and under)	Division 1 and Division 2
12U (12 and under)	Division 1 and Division 2
14U (14 and under)	Division 1 and Division 2

- 1.11.1 Age groups with 11 teams or less will not be split into two divisions. They will form one division and all teams will be placed in Division 1.
- 1.11.2 Age groups with 12 teams or more will split into two divisions. Example:
12 teams split 8 Div. 1 and 4 Div. 2. 13 teams split 9 Div. 1 and 4 Div. 2. 14 Teams split 9 Div. 1 and 5 Div. 2. SMYAC board will decide all placements.
- 1.11.3 At the conclusion of each season, the first and second place teams in Division Two will be promoted to Division One for the following season."
- 1.11.4 A team may appeal if they believe their division placement is inaccurate, unfair, or does not reflect their current competitive level.
- 1.12 Each team must have a minimum of 13 players on their roster at the beginning of the season. A team may split into two teams when their roster reaches 28 players. A team **MUST** split at 30.
- 1.13 Clubs with two teams shall place one team in Division 1 and one in Division 2. If a club has 3 teams in an age group, the split will be 1 in Division 1 and two in Division 2. If 4 teams in

an age group, the split will be 2 Division 1 teams and 2 Division 2 teams. Clubs with only a single team shall be placed in their respective division by the board based on the club's recommendations, last season's record, and SMYAC's need to balance the 2 divisions within the age group.

- 1.14 All head coaches must be 21 years of age or older by August 1st of the season. It is required by the board that all head coaches be certified by NYSCA (or equivalent organization). All clubs will track certifications for their own club and any fees shall be the responsibility of each member or organization.

Because some county Parks and Recs may no longer require background checks for field usage, SMYAC policy shall be as follows:

All clubs participating in SMYAC shall be required to ensure that anyone who may have direct contact with children submit to a background check annually. All background checks must be performed by an accredited third-party organization. All clubs must have background check results readily available upon request from the SMYAC board. Each organization shall submit written and signed documentation stating such requirements have been fulfilled by their organization. Upon approval, coaches shall be issued an ID badge indicating that they have been cleared to coach. This badge must be worn during all games. Any person not wearing their badge shall not be allowed on the sidelines. All coaches must be certified prior to participating in any practices or games. Organizations that allow non-certified or background checked coaches to participate in practices or games may be fined up to \$100.00 per incident and/or face other sanctions as the board directs. Said coach shall be removed from team and is not eligible until he/she is certified.

- 1.15 The Board recommends that each player be examined by a personal physician before participating in football practice and/or games. No player shall be allowed to participate in the league if a physician recommends non-play. It is the responsibility of the parents and each respective organization, and not the SMYAC to determine and monitor the health of individual players on a continuing basis.
- 1.16 Firearms shall not be permitted within the playing field boundary, ropes, fence, etc., at any time. Coaches, Team Managers, Chain Crew members, Board Members, etc., shall not enter the field boundary, rope, fence, etc., with a firearm, even when legally allowed to carry. This restriction applies to concealed permit carry holders, police officers, on or off duty, unless responding to a complaint, or anyone who can legally carry a firearm. A game may be stopped for any person, in possession of a firearm, who refuses to leave the field boundary.

2. GENERAL

- 2.1 National High School Federation rules apply to all scheduled league games unless amended by these official league rules, or the amended list provided each season by the SMYAC Board. Please see attached SMYAC Rule Amendments Appendix G.
- 2.2 Any questions not covered by the official league rules, official interpretation thereof, or any conflict not subject to protest shall be decided by the Board.
- 2.3 Scheduled league games shall be officiated by a recognized Football Officials Association.
- 2.4 League play will commence on the date agreed upon by the Board. The number of regular season games shall be at least eight and no more than ten.

3. ELIGIBILITY

- 3.1 Divisions shall be as defined in Appendix B.
- 3.2 Only youth between the ages of 6 and 14 years of age on August 1, may participate in the SMYAC tackle football program. No player can reach the age of 15 prior to December 1st. For safety reasons, we recommend that players play in the youngest age division (per table in Appendix B) they are eligible to play in. Commissioners are responsible to check birth dates at club registration. High school players will be eligible for both 14U Divisions if age eligible but may not weigh more than 120lbs in either Division. A player who turns 13 years old during the current league year and meets all other eligibility requirements from the leagues, shall be exempt from weight in's
 - 3.2.1 SMYAC Weigh-In Coordinator will be announce preseason and playoff weigh-ins for high school players at sites determined by the Board. Any additional weigh-ins are by appointment only. High school players must pass preseason weigh-in prior to playing in a game and playoff weigh-in prior to playing in playoffs.
 - 3.2.2 A 10lb "blow up" allowance is provided for playoff weigh-in; player may not weigh more than 130lbs.
 - 3.2.3 Players should wear shorts and a t-shirt to weigh-ins.
- 3.3 Waivers will be considered for medical reasons by the SMYAC Board on a case-by-case request. Medical documentation may be required for consideration. Players approved to waive down for medical reasons may at no time play quarterback, run the ball or receive the ball in any designed play. These players shall be designated on both 1) the official league roster and, 2) the game day play sheets. They will also be identified with a SMYAC-approved sticker placed on their helmets. It shall be the players coach's responsibility to enforce this policy and the opponent's responsibility to monitor (not officials) and any coach who violates this rule may face sanctions by the SMYAC Board.
- 3.4 Each player must have a SMYAC-approved ID card. Each player's ID card will be available at all league games for verification of that child's age. Either the coach or club commissioner shall have custody of the ID cards. It is the responsibility of the home team to ensure ID cards are checked. See Rule 4.5 for acceptable SMYAC-approved ID cards.

- 3.5 At any time during the season, if a protest is filed against a player regarding their age eligibility, the Commissioner and/or Head Coach of the player against whom the protest has been lodged shall attend a meeting, as specified, with the Player Identification Card.
- 3.6 No youth may participate who is also a member of an inter-scholastic football squad (on any high school team), or any other youth football league. Also, no high school player who has practiced with a high school team is eligible after the first game of the SMYAC season. PENALTY: Forfeiture of all games in which the player participated and any other such penalties as the Board of Directors may determine.

4. OFFICIAL ROSTERS

- 4.1 All clubs must submit their official roster to the league one week before first league game.
- 4.2 Copies of team rosters will be sent to each club commissioner once the Board has processed them. Rosters will ONLY contain name, date of birth, league age, pass or fail status for high school players and waiver status if applicable.
 - 4.2.1 Roster will list all players for the team within the age group, as well as designate any players that have medical waivers to waive down, as well as any high school players.
 - 4.2.2 The league shall distribute copies to all clubs prior to first game.
 - 4.2.3 This shall be referred to as the “official opening day roster”.
 - 4.2.4 After this point, it shall be the club commissioner’s responsibility to contact the league to add any new registrants prior to playing in a league game. Once the season begins, the “official opening day roster” on file with the league may differ from the copies held by each club/coach due to newly registered players.
 - 4.2.5 The league shall maintain a running list of all players that have registered late and will be easily accessible to all club commissioners to verify a player’s eligibility (there may be a couple of days lag time due to number of players who may be registering late).
 - 4.2.6 Any player who participates in any league game before being added to the “official opening day roster” shall be deemed an illegal player.
- 4.3 No player shall be added to any roster after October 1st.
- 4.4 Only SMYAC approved ID cards shall be used for participation in any league games. Approved ID cards may be state ID cards, military ID cards, and passports.
- 4.5 Once a child has registered with a particular club, he/she cannot switch/register with a different club after August 1st except in cases of a club not filling a team, hardship, or a move.
- 4.6 Players are only allowed to play one age group up. It’s not mandatory for any player to play up an age group.

5. EQUIPMENT/UNIFORM

- 5.1 All equipment must meet minimal and acceptable standards to qualify for league use. Equipment violations may be subject to penalties of unsportsmanlike conduct.
- 5.2 All players must be completely uniformed. The place-kicker or punter may not elect to remove his shoe to kick the ball. The following equipment must be used by all participants during league play:

- Helmet (with face guard and chin strap)
- Mouthpiece (Colored)
- Shoulder Pads
- Football Pants (with thigh pads and knee pads)
- Hip pads
- Tail pad
- Jersey (Number front and back)
- Shoes – Cleats worn will be rubber cleats. No metal cleats will be permitted. Screw-in rubber cleats are allowed.

- 5.3 No athlete is permitted in any SMYAC football practice or game with a hard cast, splint, or any protective appliance except in accordance with the National High School Federation Rule 1; Section 5; Article 3c, which states below:

“Hard substances in its final form such as leather, rubber, plastic, plaster or fiberglass when worn on the hand, wrist, forearm or elbow must be covered on all exterior surfaces with no less than ½ inch thick, high density, closed cell polyurethane, an alternate material of the minimum thickness and similar physical properties to protect an injury as directed in writing by a licensed medical physician.”

Any team who has a player where this rule applies must inform their commissioner, the opposing head coach, and officials prior to a game so the player may have the cast inspected to ensure it complies with the rule stated above.

- 5.4 The approved game ball will be as follows:

Age	6U -10U	11U	12U	14U
Ball(s)	K2	TDJ	TDJ or TDY	TDY

6. PRACTICES

- 6.1 No team shall meet for practices more than FOUR (4) times per week (Sunday through Saturday) prior to the start of the school year. After school starts, teams may practice a maximum of THREE (3) times per week. Games and scrimmages against other clubs will not count as a practice. Violations of the rule: 1st offense – coach suspended for one game; 2nd offense – coach suspended for the remainder of the season. Once SMYAC league season, league playoffs, and league championships have completed, there shall be no restrictions as to the amount a teams may practice.
- 6.2 No club or team will begin season practices prior to the start date established by the SMYAC Board. Any club or team found in violation of this rule shall forfeit an equivalent number of practices and the Head Coach will be suspended for one game.
- 6.3 Practices shall not exceed one 2-hour period per day.
- 6.4 Practice locations will be determined by Calvert, St. Mary's, Charles, King George and Prince Georges Counties.

7. GAMES

- 7.1 Games will consist of two (2) 27-minute halves with a two-minute warning prior to each half. After the two-minute warning, the clock will stop according to NFHS rules.
Exceptions: Clock will stop for injuries and team timeouts.
- 7.2 Blowout Rule: The following rules only apply in the 4th quarter, or last 13:30 of a game, when one team is leading by 21 points or more. If the lead changes to less than 21 points, the Blowout Rule restrictions shall be lifted. The officials shall let a team re huddle if blowout rule takes effect after they have called their play
- 7.3 The clock shall only stop in the event of an injury. The clock shall continue to run during called timeouts.
- 7.4 The offensive team, leading by 21 points or more, shall only advance the ball by performing direct hand- offs or by the QB advancing the ball from under center or in shotgun. There are no restrictions regarding where a player can advance the ball. The leading team shall not pass the ball, pitch the ball, or perform double handoffs.
 - 7.4.1 The offensive team, down by 21 points or more, is permitted to pass, perform double handoffs, and pitch the ball.
 - 7.4.2 Both team defenses, team leading by 21 points and the team down by 21 points, shall not blitz.
 - 7.4.3 Officials shall notify and discuss Blowout Rule restrictions with both head coaches when the Rule initially goes into effect.
 - 7.4.4 When the team leading by 21 points or more, is in possession, and the game is entering the 4th quarter, the play clock will reset. This provision allows the leading team to adjust their calledplay to comply with Blowout Rule restrictions.
- 7.5 The consumption and/or use of alcohol products on any of the county parks and/or school grounds is prohibited. The Club Commissioner or his/her designee is responsible for enforcing this rule. Consumption and/or use of tobacco products is prohibited in the immediate area of practices, games, or other club activities. Use of tobacco products (smoking or chew) is always prohibited entirely on any of the school grounds. If the individual is a coach/assistant coach and refuses to cooperate, he will be warned that continued failure to comply with this rule will result in the forfeiture of the game by his team. If this occurs, the coach is also subject to suspension for one game, if deemed necessary by the Board. If the individual is not a coach and refuses to comply with the rule, he/she will be ejected from the area.
- 7.6 All ID's checks must be completed 30 minutes prior to the game start time.
- 7.7 No game shall commence until both teams have submitted their lineup cards and all ID's have been checked. During the ID check, the number of players being checked shall match the number of players listed on the play sheet. Any players not listed on the play sheet shall be considered inactive (injury, disciplinary reasons) these players may stand on the sidelines to support their teams but must remove their shoulder pads and helmet. If a team does not have ID cards, they have until halftime to produce the cards or the coach and/or team may face sanctions from the SMYAC Board. Once ID cards have been checked, no player may change jerseys/numbers during the game unless that jersey becomes damaged and deemed to be un- wearable by the officials. If a jersey becomes damaged and must be changed, that team must notify the opposing team prior to re-entering the game so the game sheet will reflect the change. Any player on the field whose jersey number does not match the official game sheet shall be deemed an illegal player.

- 7.8 Any player arriving after the opening kickoff may still play but must report to opposing coach with his id card before entering the game. Player must be on the game sheet and listed as LATE. Once checked in, the player will still be subjected to the full must play rule. Player cannot play if not checked in by the halftime.
- 7.9 Teams DO NOT have to start their games until their scheduled kick-off time. As a courtesy, please have your captain's ready for the coin-toss five (5) minutes prior to your scheduled game. If BOTH teams agree and the referees are ready, you may start your game prior to the scheduled kickoff. Teams are given a grace period of 10 minutes for the first game of the day only!
- 7.10 A maximum of SEVEN coaches will be permitted in the designated coaching area between the 25-yard lines. All spectators must stand behind rope, fence and/or barrier during the game. If there are no barriers, spectators must be a minimum of 15 feet from the bench area.
- 7.11 A coach, assistant coach, trainer or any other person connected with a participating team (i.e., those entitled to be within the ropes and/or within the 25- yard lines) may not enter the playing field without a proper timeout being called. If a timeout has been called and the party or parties fail to leave the field promptly upon the expiration of the timeout, the officials may issue an unsportsmanlike penalty.
- 7.12 Only coaches, Board members, officials, players, chain crew, videographers, team parents, and equipment managers may be inside of the boundaries during the ballgame. Parents/spectators are NOT allowed inside the ropes during the game and may result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on the offending team.
- 7.13 Coaches must be easily recognizable by appropriate apparel, such as a cap, sweatshirt or jacket identifying them with their organization and/or team. They must also wear their coach's ID badge.
- 7.14 The home team may supply three (3) responsible individuals, minimum age of 16, acceptable to the game officials, to operate the 10-yard markers and the down marker. Additionally, one person from the away team may assist with operating the chains under the supervision of the game officials.
- 7.15 Games will be postponed only in case of inclement weather or unplayable field conditions. This decision will be made by the Sports Office approximately two hours prior to the first scheduled games. Commissioners and Coaches may call the parks. If there is no recording, games will be played as scheduled. Once games are started, the officials in collaboration with field authorities have final call if the weather changes/fields become unplayable. If officials or field authorities call the games, teams shall not take it upon themselves to play/finish the game. All postponed and suspended games will be rescheduled – or resume - as necessary. Call the phone numbers on your schedule for cancellation information.

- 7.15.1 OVERTIMES: Regular season and postseason games which end in a tie score will result in overtime play. The following SMYAC tie break system along with High School Federation rules will be utilized during this time. A coin toss will be used to determine possession and field side. Winner of the coin toss may choose to play offense or defense or side of field. If additional overtimes are required, the loser of overtime coin toss shall have choice of offense or defense in the 2nd overtime. Choice will continue to alternate for any additional overtimes until the game is completed. The initial field side selected will remain the same.
- 7.15.2 First series, the Offensive team is allowed 4 plays from the 10-yard line to score or is stopped by a lost fumble, interception, or downs. Defensive team is then allowed 4 downs to score, same procedure as above.
- 7.15.3 If the game is still tied after the first series of plays, the ball is moved to the 5-yard line and a repeat of the above procedures, until a winner is determined.
- 7.15.4 Extra points will be attempted after touchdowns; fumbles and interceptions on the extra points are treated as a dead ball and cannot be returned for a score.
- 7.15.5 Successful extra-point kicks are worth 2 points at all age groups. All other type of extra point attempts is worth 1 point.

8. TEAM ROSTER AND GAME PROCEDURES (MANDATORY PLAY)

MANDATORY PLAY APPLIES TO ALL AGE GROUPS

- 8.1 While checking ID cards prior to each game, each coach shall exchange the first copy of the Play sheets which will list players names, jersey numbers, and waiver status, if applicable.
- 8.2 Each player MUST play a minimum of 10 plays per game on teams with active game day rosters of 20 players or less, a minimum of 8 plays per game on teams with active game day rosters of 21-24 players or more and 6 plays per game on teams with an active gameday roster of 25 and more. Players may play any combination of offense, defense, or special teams. No play rule applies to 13/14u division.
- 8.3 Each team shall have a designated field monitor who will track the opponents must play. At halftime, the home teams monitor shall meet with the other teams monitor to show which players still require more playing time. After half time, only those players who still have not reached their minimum number of plays should continue to be tracked. The field monitor may stand on either sideline or in the end zone during the game. If team monitor chooses to stand on opponent's sideline, they must stand behind the ropes.
- 8.4 Each club shall retain these forms until end of season in case a must play Challenge is brought to the board's attention. This challenge should be presented to the board as soon as noticed (i.e., after watching the game film, parent complaint, etc.)
- 8.5 Because some teams may be rotating players in the first half, there will be no "hurry up" offense allowed in the first half until the 2-minute warning. This will ensure that rotating players have time to get on and off the field. The entire second half may be hurry up.

9. SPECIFIC GAME RULES

9.1 7U Divisions:

- 9.1.1 The stated rules below will be followed in administering the 7U football program for the SMYAC. The 7U league is intended for instructional purposes and emphasis should be placed on good sportsmanship, teaching the basic principles of the game of football, participation, and fun. The environment should be free of any pressure to “win.” Playing Field – 7U teams will play on a 100-yard field, in both directions. The ball will be placed on the 50-yard line for the first play of the game, after halftime, and following scores.
- 9.1.2 RULES OF PLAY: All rules apply as written by SMYAC Board and/or the current NFHS rules and its amendments or as stated below:
- 9.1.2.1 Penalties: During the first half of the game, two (2) warnings are allowed without penalties being called. ** Offensive penalties (warnings) shall be replayed from the line of scrimmage, with exception of the defense declining a live ball penalty. Any live ball Defensive penalties (warnings) may be declined by the offense or replayed from the line of scrimmage. A declined penalty will not count as a warning used. This rule only applies up to MID-SEASON (OCT 1ST), then, no warnings are allowed. All penalties will be called in the second half of the game. All penalties will be 5 yards with the exception of unsportsmanlike penalties which will carry a 10-yard penalty (remind ref’s).
- 9.1.2.2 Extra points/field goals – No rushing is allowed on declared attempted PAT/FGA kicks. No fake kicks are allowed. All snaps must be cleanly handled and cannot hit the ground on the snap – result dead ball play is over. The holder must be standing/kneeling at least 5 yds from center even with the kicking tee (cannot go under center to receive the snap). On all kicks both teams must be aligned in proper offensive and defensive positions. Successful extra-point kicks are worth 2 points.
- 9.1.2.3 Players may not line up over the center (no nose guard). Middle Linebackers must be 2 yards behind the line and may not be in motion.
- 9.1.2.4 All punts are declared, the kicking team has the option of moving the ball 20 yards up field or kicking. There are no restrictions as to where a declared punt may take place but if the line of scrimmage is the 20-yard line or closer, the result is a touchback, and the ball is placed on the 20-yard line.
- 9.1.2.5 Once the Official places the ball, the Offensive team has sixty (60) seconds to snap the ball (remind ref’s).
- 9.1.2.6 The defensive player lined up nearest to the center may not be in motion until the ball is snapped. There will be no greater than six (6) players on the defensive line.
- 9.1.2.7 Any player not lined up on the line of scrimmage may NOT blitz the “A” gap. TWO coaches are allowed on the field for the offense and defense. The coaches may instruct players on pre-snap positioning until official's ready for play. Defense coaches will be provided an opportunity to promptly instruct prior to ready for play, except against a hurry up offense in the last 2 minutes of each half. Once the players are lined up

for a play, the coaches must stand at least ten (10) yards from the deepest player on the field. During the play, on-field coaches may give encouragement, however not instruction. In no way, may a coach insult or taunt the other team or be a disruption to the game. Coaches may not touch players during “live” play situations. Referees have the authority to remove a coach from the field for unsportsmanlike and/or inappropriate conduct (remind ref’s).

9.2 8U/9U Divisions:

- 9.2.1 RULES OF PLAY: All rules apply as written by the Board and/or the current NFHS rules and its amendments or as stated below: No coaches are allowed on the playing field during the game.
- 9.2.2 All punts will be declared, the kicking team has the option of moving the ball 20 yards up field or kicking. There are no restrictions as to where a declared punt may take place but if the line of scrimmage is the 20-yard line or closer, result is a touchback, and the ball is placed on the 20-yard line.
- 9.2.3 Extra points/field goals – No rushing is allowed on declared PAT/FGA kicks. No fake kicks are allowed. All snaps must be cleanly handled and cannot hit the ground on the snap – result dead ball play is over. The holder must be standing/kneeling at least 7yds from center even with the kicking tee (cannot go under center to receive the snap). On all kicks both teams must be aligned in proper offensive and defensive positions. Successful extra-point kicks are worth 2 points.

9.3 10U Divisions:

- 9.3.1 All punts will be declared. The kicking team MUST punt the ball once declared. No rushing is allowed on punts. No fake punts are allowed. All snaps must be cleanly handled and cannot hit the ground on the snap – result dead ball. The punter must be standing at least 7 yds from the center (cannot go under center to receive the snap). On all kicks both teams must be aligned in proper offensive and defensive positions.

9.4 ALL DIVISIONS

- 9.4.1 Officials are permitted to whistle a play dead and issue a warning when a player or players are lined up in the neutral zone, fail to have their mouth guard in their mouth, etc. The warnings provide an opportunity for the team’s coaches to correct the violation. A team will only receive two warnings. Upon a third violation, and on each subsequent violation, a delay of game penalty shall be enforced. Officials will communicate with both head coaches after a second warning has been issued to inform them that the next violation will result in a delay of game penalty.
- 9.4.2 Each team must have 11 players to start the game. Once game begins, a team may continue to play with 10 players. If at any time a team drops below 10 players, the game shall end in a forfeit (Safety reasons).

10. SMYAC CLASSIC

- 10.1 The won/loss records will apply to determine league standings during the regular season. Best overall records will be used to determine who will advance to the SMYAC Classic.
- 10.2 In the event of a tie (two teams only), the following tiebreakers will be used to determine the seeding for the final regular season standings:
 - Head-to-Head Record
 - Fewest points allowed head-to-head
 - Fewest points allowed total
 - Coin flip
- 10.3 In the event of a tie between three or more teams, the following tiebreakers will be used.
 - Total points allowed total will be used to eliminate teams until only two teams remain. Once two teams remain, resort back to rule 10.2 to determine the top two seeds.
- 10.4 The SMYAC Classic matches the top four (4) finishing teams in each age division in a playoff format (1 vs 4 and 2 vs 3) with the winners of the first-round games advancing to the championship for divisions with 10 or less teams. In divisions with more than 10 teams, the top six (6) finishing teams will play in a 1 vs 4/5 and 2 vs 3/6 format. There are no consolation games. The SMYAC Classic will determine the overall league champion in each division. There are no regular season champions. First round games will be played at the higher seeded team's home park. In some instances, this will not be possible so the Board will try to schedule the game to the next closest park to that team.
- 10.5 Trophies will be awarded to the first and second place teams. Each club is responsible for paying half of the official's fees for the games they have participated in.
- 10.6 The Championship sites will be determined by Board.
- 10.7 The winner of the SMYAC Classic in each division must represent the SMYAC at the State Tournament

11. CONDUCT

- 11.1 The local President/Commissioner or his/her designee shall have the responsibility to assist officials in maintaining proper conduct of players, coaches, and spectators.

11.2 COACHES:

- 11.2.1 Coaches shall be responsible for the conduct of their players and spectators. Improper conduct, in the judgment of the game official, on part of the players, coaches, or spectators may result in penalties, expulsion, and suspension or forfeiture of games.
- 11.2.2 If at any time the Board of Directors finds the conduct of any coach to be detrimental and contrary to the best interest of the program, such individual may be suspended from further participation for whatever period of time may be deemed reasonable and proper. Detrimental conduct by any coach shall first be investigated by his local Commissioner then the Board.
- 11.2.3 No Head Coach, Assistant Coach, Team Parent, Club representatives, or any other club shall recruit players from another club. Any coach so accused shall be required to appear before the Board. The Board will be responsible for determining any penalties per Section 14.0 of these rules.
- 11.2.4 Any coach who repeats any of the offenses will be suspended for the remainder of the season and possibly the next.
- 11.2.5 All head coaches and assistant coaches of the SMYAC must read, understand, and sign the SMYAC Youth Football League Code of Conduct form (Appendix A). The completed Code of Conduct forms should be held by the club Commissioners. The SMYAC Board will be responsible for determining any penalties per Section 14.0 of these rules for violation of the Coaches Code of Conduct.

11.3 PLAYERS:

- 11.3.1 Any player who is ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct will be suspended for the following game. Any player allowed by game officials to return to a game shall not be considered as being ejected from a game. Game Officials shall notify the Club Commissioner of any ejections. The Commissioners shall notify the Board of any ejection as soon as possible.
- 11.3.2 Any player who is involved in a fight immediately before, during, or after his/her game will be suspended for the next game and is subject to further sanctions by the Board.
- 11.3.3 Any player who repeats any of the offenses will be suspended for the remainder of the season and possibly the next.
- 11.3.4 Any coach or player suspended for a game due to conduct reasons will not be permitted to attend the game in question in any fashion. This includes participation as a spectator

12. PROTESTS

12.1 The Board will make a recommendation whether a protest should be heard. There shall be no protests allowed involving a judgment call by a game official.

12.2 The following procedures will be followed in the event of a protest (unless otherwise specified in the paragraphs below):

12.2.1 The protesting coach must communicate his complaint to the referee and ask referee to notify opposing coach at the time of the alleged rules infraction.
(Game protest only)

12.2.2 The protesting club's Commissioner must submit his protest in writing to the Board within 48 hours after the incident along with a \$100.00 protest fee (refunded if protest is upheld).

The Board shall convene within a reasonable period after receipt of the protest. The Board will request that all parties & witnesses involved in the protest appear before the board to state their case. Each party will be given 15 minutes to state their case and answer any questions the Board may have for them. The Board will issue a final ruling at that time. No Appeals.

12.3 Player Eligibility: Protests concerning a player's age can be made at any time throughout the season. The SMYAC Board reserves the right to request documentation to verify if the protest is valid or not. Each club should have copies of birth certificates available in instances such as these.

13. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

- 13.1 Where disciplinary actions for rules violations are not specified, they will be decided by a vote of the Board for both players and coaches.
- 13.2 Where discipline for rule violations is not specified and for other matters that may require action, if deemed appropriate by the Board may include any of the following:
- Letter of Reprimand/Probation of individuals (Probation would only apply for the current season unless extended by 2/3 majority vote of the Board.
 - Organizational fine to be determined by Board
 - One (1) game suspension
 - Two (2) game suspension
 - Rest of the current season suspension
 - Permanent suspension from SMYAC
 - Forfeiture of a game or games
- 13.3 All monies collected for fines will be used for the benefit of the football program (i.e., trophies for the SMYAC Classic, official's fees for the SMYAC Classic, etc.)
- 13.4 All board decisions are final. No appeals will be heard.
- 13.5 Player is Over Age:
The penalty for over age player's participating in games, if discovered whether protested or not, will result in forfeiture of all games in which the illegal player participated and be given an organizational fine of \$250.00. The player will be suspended from any further league activities for the current season and any other penalties deemed appropriate by the Board.
- 13.6 Use of Illegal player
All clubs and teams must use eligible players per Section 3.0. Any team or club that uses an ineligible player shall forfeit all games in which the player participated. Other penalties as the Board may determine may apply.
- 13.7 Violation of Mandatory Play Rule
Any coach or coaches, who violate the mandatory play rule, will be subject to the following penalties: First violation - Suspension of 1 game and possible forfeiture of game to be decided by the Board. Second violation - Suspension from the league for the remainder of the season and possibly the next.
- 13.8 Recruiting
No Head Coach, Assistant Coach, Team Parent, or any other person associated with a particular club shall recruit players from another club. Any coach so accused shall be required to appear before the Board. As a minimum, the player recruited will not be allowed to play for the team recruited to and the person doing the recruiting will receive a letter of reprimand for the first occurrence. The Board will be responsible for determining any further penalties per Section 13.2.
- 13.9 Practice Violations
No club or team will begin season practices prior to the start date established by the Board (usually 1 August of each year). Any club or team found in violation of this rule shall forfeit an equivalent number of practices and the Head Coach will be suspended for one game.
- 13.10 Failure to obtain NYSCA Certifications/Background Checks
See Section 1 Policy and Rule 1.14 within for disciplinary action.

13.11 Violating Code of Conduct

For violating any part of the Coaches Code of Conduct, the offending Coach will be brought before the Board for possible disciplinary action per Section 13.2 of these rules.

13.12 Blowout Rule violation

Per Section 7.2, if a team is up by 21 points or more in the 4th quarter of a game, the leading team's coach should take action to show sportsmanship to the opposing team. If a coach does not follow the rules in Section 8.2 in the spirit of sportsmanship, the Board will address the issue according to Section 13.2.

13.13 Registration of Players who previously played with a different club

Each club, after registering any player who played for a different club during the previous season, shall be required to notify the losing club within 7 days (E-mail will be fine). This serves two purposes:

- (1) It will give the losing club an opportunity to ensure that there is no outstanding equipment or monies owed.
- (2) It will give the losing club an opportunity to track who may be leaving and where they are going. Players who may be leaving one club to join another may not attempt to convince others to go along with them. This is a form of recruitment and cannot be permitted. It is within the Board of Directors authority to ensure this does not take place by denying registration where they feel recruitment has taken place.
- (3) Any player waived/giving scholarship from previous season shall not be held financially responsible for current season.

The losing club shall respond to the gaining club within 7 days regarding equipment and financial status.

14. FORFEITS

- 14.1 Any game not played for what is determined by the Board as uncontrollable reasons shall be recorded as a 6-0 loss in the standings.

- 14.2 Any game not played and is determined by the Board to be an unnecessary forfeit (i.e., Not playing for personal reasons or not playing to help their team in the standings), the following shall occur.

14.2.1 The game shall be recorded as a 6-0 loss.

14.2.2 The forfeiting team shall be ineligible for the playoffs.

14.2.3 Any organization who forfeits a game for any reason shall be required to pay the full cost of the officials for that game.

14.2.4 All forfeits will go to the SMYAC board for review

15. FLAG FOOTBALL RULES AND REGULATIONS

The flag football program is designed to be an instructional league only. Coaches should concentrate on teaching the fundamentals (How to snap a football, Proper stance). Every effort should be made to allow every player the opportunity to carry the football each game. The coaches are also the referees and MUST work together to ensure the safety of the players. Any child not following the rules or being too aggressive for flag football should be sat down for a couple plays and explained what he was doing wrong. It is also the coach's responsibility to control their sidelines/parents. It should be explained before the season starts that although this is flag football, the players are going to be knocked down occasionally when flags are being pulled.

- 15.1 Flag teams will play on a 50 yard by 30-yard field. The ball will be placed on the 25-yard line for the first play of the game. No kick-off will take place.
- 15.2 The game will consist of 2 halves of 20 minutes running time with a maximum of 10 minutes for half time. The field must be cleared at least 10 minutes prior to the first scheduled tackle game.
- 15.3 Penalties will not be enforced during the game. Warnings and corrective instruction will be given to the players during the game.
- 15.4 No parents will be allowed on the field. They should remain outside ropes at all times.
- 15.5 The Board of Directors approved all rules on February 7, 2001.
 - A K2 or similar football is to be used for play.
 - Maximum of 16 players on the field – 8 on offense and 8 on defense.
 - Defensive players must line-up 5 yards from the line of scrimmage. No more than 4 players may rush forward from that point per play. No defensive player may be in motion at the time of the snap. All remaining players must stay 5 yards back in a zone defense. If any player steps into the 5- yard neutral zone before the ball is snapped, the play shall be stopped, and the play restarted.
 - A maximum of 5 players per team is allowed to be on the line of scrimmage for offense.
 - No blocking.
 - No tackling.
 - No pushing in the back or hits of any kind to the legs or head. Safety purpose.
 - Each team is allowed 5 plays on offense.
 - Once the flag is pulled, play stops and the ball is down at that spot.
 - Quarterback cannot run the ball; he/she must hand off or pass the ball.
 - No fumbles. If the ball is dropped while the player is running the ball is down at that point and play stops. Safety first.
 - If the line of scrimmage is the five-yard line or closer to the goal line, the offensive team must pass the ball to score a touchdown.
- 15.6 Coaches of both teams will officiate the game. There is no limit to the number of coaches allowed on the field during play. Coaches should refrain from communicating with the players while play is in progress; unless a situation arises that becomes a safety issue.
- 15.7 The Flag Football League was started as an introduction to the game of football. The league is designed as a learning level and non-competitive in nature. Remember there are NO LOSERS— ONLY WINNERS. Let the children learn to enjoy football. The flag football league is run strictly by the SMYAC board.

Appendix A - COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

In order to ensure that the principles of sportsmanship, fair play, skill development, and mutual respect among players, coaches, officials and spectators are the primary considerations governing competition in the Southern Maryland Youth Athletic Conference, the following Code of Conduct has been established and adopted:

1. I acknowledge that my primary responsibility is to foster the stated purpose of the league which is to promote a healthy, pleasant, and safe environment for youth to participate in football. To satisfactorily meet this responsibility, I will:
 - a. Fully abide by the policies, rules, and guidelines as set forth in this handbook.
 - b. Respect the game officials and refrain from communicating with them in an abusive manner.
 - c. Encourage SMYAC team fans to conduct themselves with sportsmanship and maturity at all times while in attendance at all league functions, i.e., games, practices, etc.
 - d. Always refrain from remarks, criticisms, or actions that may be detrimental and cause loss or respect and/or integrity of the SMYAC or any of its participants.
 - e. Assist the game officials in maintaining control of spectators during games.
 - f. Be a positive role model for players by never:
 - (1) Using obscene language and gestures.
 - (2) Physically or verbally intimidating, abusing or assaulting a player, parent, Coach, or official.
 - (3) Making discriminatory remarks based on race, religion, gender, or national origin.
 - (4) Consuming or allowing the consumption of alcohol or be in an inebriated state during practices, games, or in the presence of my players.
 - (5) Encouraging, tolerating, or indulging in substance abuse.
 - (6) Smoking or using tobacco products in front of players during practice, games or other official team functions.
2. I will not knowingly allow a player to be included on a roster or play in a game that does not meet all of the eligibility rules.
3. I fully understand that the game of football should be a fun, rewarding, and positive learning experience for all participants, and playing time is key to providing that experience for my players.
4. I accept and support the principles established by the Code of Conduct and will abide by the Code of Conduct as long as I participate in SMYAC activities.
5. I acknowledge the conditions of this Code of Conduct and understand that any violations will be subject to disciplinary actions by the officials of the SMYAC to include my personal removal and/or expulsion of the organization that I represent.
6. I acknowledge that I have been certified by NYSCA (or equivalent) and my certification is current.

CLUB: _____

WT CLASS: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

Appendix D - UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS FOR BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

HOW TO HANDLE BLOOD OR BODY FLUID SPILLS SAFELY

- (1) Wear latex gloves when touching blood or body fluids.
- (2) Wash hands before and after contact, and after removing gloves.
- (3) Thoroughly wash skin that comes into contact with blood.
- (4) Clean up blood spills:
 - Wear latex or utility gloves
 - Use paper towels to soak up liquids
 - Clean area with water and detergent
 - Wash area with a freshly prepared mixture of 4 ½ cups of water and ½ cup of bleach.
 - Leave on 20 minutes and rinse with water.
 - Discard paper towels, soiled materials and gloves in double plastic bags.
- (5) Any visible blood on game uniform will warrant a change in uniform before player may return to game field.
- (6) Any open wound must be covered with bandage.

It is the policy of the SMYAC Board to make sure that every precaution is taken when assessing the condition of our young athletes for all suspected injuries and especially concussions. The following list of guidelines has been mandated by the State of Maryland on the subject of concussions. Coaches, parents and players must abide by these guidelines for the safety and wellbeing of all athletes. The following has been mandated by the state.

- Coaches, parents and athletes must have the opportunity and or resources to receive training.
- Any player suspected of having received a concussion must be removed from play immediately and is required to have written authorization from a medical professional before the athlete can return to practice/game.

This website is an online training tool on the basics of concussions you must complete it and give certificate to your AD. The course is free.

<http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=15000>

You may also go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/Training/HeadsUpConcussion.html>

All coaches, parents and players should take advantage of the Sport Concussion Management Program as outlined on XLNTbrain Sport. This tool(www.xlntbrain.com).

YOUTH FOOTBALL RULES DIFFERENCES for SMYAC

**These rules have been adopted to enhance the
Game for youth participants, and differ from those
Adopted by the National Federation for high school games.**

1. Game officials are required to be at the sight at least **45** minutes prior to scheduled game time, at which time proper uniform is decided. The officials then enter the field **15** minutes prior to assume authority for the game.
2. The referee shall decide only whether a ball is fit for play and each team may snap and free kick its own ball at any time. After a score a new ball may be brought in for the extra point. Give 30 second ready for play as normal.
3. Jersey numbers have no bearing on the position of a player. Two players on the same team may have the same number. **During a charged, or injury time out, two coaches may be on the field to confer with not more than 11 players at their team's huddle or they may bring their team to their sideline.**
4. **Sideline Conference** - There shall be no team sideline conferences following a try, or a successful FG, or a safety, or a touchdown. Penalty five yards delay of game.
5. Officials shall not allow the ball to become live if they are aware that any player is not wearing required player equipment. If mouthpiece is not in, ref shall instruct player to put in before play begins.
6. **Timing: There shall be two 27-minute running time halves. Teams will not change direction at the 13-½ minutes of each half. Up to the 2-minute warning of each half, the clock shall stop for charged and injury timeouts only. After the 2-minute warning the game shall be timed in accordance with National High School Federation Rules.**
7. The clock shall stop, and a 2-minute warning shall be given to each team prior to the end of each half. The clock will then start with the next snap or when a free kick is legally touched.
8. At the 2-minute warning the clock is run strictly Federation.
9. The snapper may position the ball sideways for a legal snap, but any motion that draws the defense into the neutral zone constitutes a false start.
10. **Lining up in the neutral zone is not a foul. Players should be instructed to move back before play begins. Without hurting the flow of the game.**
11. After the referee's "ready-for-play" signal, the offense has **30 seconds** in which to snap the ball. 60 seconds for 7u
12. A replaced player may leave the field at any point but must go directly to his bench.
13. During a dead-ball period, a substitute may enter and withdraw, or a player may withdraw and re-enter.
14. Twelve players breaking the huddle is not a foul, but once the center is over the ball illegal substitution is enforced.
15. At the snap, it is not a foul if the offense has fewer than 7 players on the line of scrimmage, but it is a foul if more than 4 players are in the backfield. 6 on the line and 4 in the backfield is not a foul.

16. Except for an illegal forward pass or a foul committed by the offense in their end zone, the acceptance of any foul committed by the offense behind their line of scrimmage is penalized from the previous spot.
17. All distance penalties that are 15 yards in National Federation (high school) are **10 yards** in youth football, except **unsportsmanlike conduct or flagrant fouls which remain 15 yards.**
18. Chucking of a receiver is legal within 5 yards of the line scrimmage. Two open hands pushing the opponent as they are trying to separate. **Illegal or out of zone 5-yard penalty.**
19. A try-for-point following a touchdown is: 1 point by successful pass or run, and 2 points by successful kick.
20. Players acting in an unsportsmanlike manner may be "benched" for any amount of time deemed appropriate by the referee, including for the remainder of the game. **The coach of the benched player must be given amount of time the "benched" player will be out of the game. If the same player is benched a second time he shall not return.**
21. A free-kick out of bounds untouched:
 - a. Kick may be accepted at the inbounds spot or
 - b. Put in play 25 yards beyond the previous spot. (K's free-kick line) NOTE: You do not re-kick

When Applicable:

Overtime. After both teams have completed their first series of downs. The remainder of series will begin at the 5-yard line. The entire overtime shall remain at the one end of the field.

ALL FIELDS MUST HAVE RESTRAINING ROPES ON BOTH SIDE LINES FROM END LINE TO END LINE. IF POSSIBLE, ALONG THE BACK OF THE ENDZONE.