



# LEAGUE RULES

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## **ARTICLE 1. LEAGUE AUTHORITY, STRUCTURE & ADMINISTRATION**

**SECTION 1.1 (GOVERNING RULE:)** It is agreed the following rules contained within the Junior GAC Football League Rule Book represent an agreement between the respective member organizations, their coordinators, coaches, parents and players. All participants agree to abide and uphold them for the benefit of the league.

**SECTION 1.2 STANDING COMMITTEES:** In accordance to league bylaws the following standing committees: Game Scheduling and Rules & Disciplinary shall be organized. In addition, a League Referee Committee shall be organized to help manage referees for games.

**SECTION 1.3 LEAGUE DIVISIONS:** The league shall organize the respective teams into as many divisions as deemed necessary by the LEAGUE board. Each division will consist of an equal number of teams, if possible.

**SECTION 1.4 LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT:** The league shall organize an end of the season championship tournament that will also include a bracket in order to allow all teams post season game opportunities. The first two weekends in November shall be set aside for playoff games.

**SECTION 1.5 GAME SCHEDULING:** The Game Scheduling Committee shall be responsible for creating regular season and post-season tournament scheduling for the league. The committee shall have a final schedule prepared by May 31st of each year. Scheduling shall be done in the fairest manner possible. Scheduling will be done, if possible, in such a manner that all League Members will have as many home games as away games. All League games will normally be scheduled on Saturday.

**SECTION 1.6 GAME REFEREE'S:** The Referee Committee shall be responsible for managing this function on behalf of the league. The committee shall be responsible for contracting with MSHAA certified or otherwise trained referee's to officiate league games. In addition, the committee shall be responsible for managing referee schedules, training, and performance reviews and discipline.

**SECTION 1.7 REFEREE TRAINING, DISCIPLINE & REVIEW:** The Referee Committee shall be responsible for recruiting and training league referee's. In addition, the committee shall be responsible for handling all complaints regarding referee performance and discipline. The committee shall conduct annual performance reviews of each referee and respective crew.

**SECTION 1.8 REFEREE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:** Referees shall be provided for all League games in accordance with Referees contract. The home team will supply a clock operator for all games. If a clock operator is not available then a Referee shall manage the official time kept on the field. All league games shall have a minimum of three (3) Referees on the field. If Referee Crew is a "no show" the home League Member Representative shall attempt to secure substitute refs subject to the approval of both teams. The home team will be responsible for paying game Referees. The Referees will be paid as per the Referees contract. No member may offer additional payment beyond that negotiated in the Referee's contract with the LEAGUE. The host League member shall pay for all Referee fees incurred on their field regardless if their teams are playing. The host team pays the Referee fees.

## **ARTICLE 2. LEAGUE RULES & DISCIPLINE**

**SECTION 2.1** The League Board will create a Rules & Disciplinary Committee (RDC) that shall have the responsibility for developing, reviewing and enforcing the league rules. The RDC shall consist of a minimum of three board members appointed by the President to serve two year terms. A Chairman will be appointed by the President. All rules proposed by RDC must be approved by the entire League Board by a 2/3 vote. The RDC shall meet as needed.

### **SECTION 2.2 CODE OF ETHICS FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS**

**A)** All coaches, players, parents, relatives, or fans shall NOT touch in an offensive manner a Referee or League Members personnel, representatives, coaches, players, parents, relatives, or fans, whether on or off the field. Any action determined by the League Board to be committed as such, will be treated as a confrontation and possible expulsion from the League could occur.

**B)** All LEAGUE events are to be deemed TOBACCO FREE. The use of any tobacco product is strictly prohibited at any League functions.

**C)** The use of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited. If any party is found to be using illegal drugs the RDC committee shall review the case and make a recommendation to the board for disciplinary action.

**D)** The use of alcoholic beverages is strictly prohibited at any league activity or function.

### **SECTION 2.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF HOME AND AWAY LEAGUE MEMBERS**

- A.** To have the member organization Coordinator or his designee be available when games are in progress.
- B.** To provide a safe environment for fans, players, referees, and coaches.
- C.** Having their field properly marked, according to high school standards, lines and goal posts padded and in proper place.
- D.** Supply down markers, chains and a crew to work them by the start of the game. **Chains shall be located on the home field side of the field.**
- E.** The chain crews will not speak to, cheer or instruct players on the playing field at any time. They are to remain impartial at all times. It is the responsibility of the Home League Representatives to replace them if necessary. No cell phone use is permitted by the chain crew.
- F.** If for any reason a change in home field or the inability for a League Member to field a team arises, the home League Member shall notify the League President and the opponent's League Member shall notify the League President and the opponent's League Member Representative promptly.

**SECTION 2.4 COMPLAINT & DISPUTE PROCEDURES** Complaint Defined: a) An alleged Bylaw or Rule infraction, actual or possible. b) A complaint against a League Member's actions or personnel to include its representatives, coaches, players, parents, relatives, or fans. c) An alleged confrontation on the playing area, or an adjacent area, between League Member's personnel, representatives, coaches, players, parents, relatives, or fans.

**A.)** Any incident reported to, or witnessed by, a League Member Representative, must be submitted via email by a League Coordinator to the RDC Chairman and/or league President, within 48 hours of the incident. No person other than a League Representative may report an incident directly to the League Rules & Disciplinary Committee (RDC) Chairman or the League President.

**B.)** The accused parties will have 48 hours to respond by email to the RDC Chairman request for additional information or clarification. Failure to respond by the accused party within 48 hours will result in the complaint being determined valid.

**C.)** The Rules & Disciplinary Committee (RDC) will conduct an investigation of the complaint by reviewing all information from eyewitnesses, documentation and videotape if applicable.

**D.)** The RDC will act in an unbiased manner. Any member of the Rules Compliance Committee who is also a party to the complaint will recuse themselves from the investigation and findings.

**E.)** At the conclusion of the investigation, the RDC Chairman will present the results of the investigation to the League Board along with a recommended penalty or to dismiss the complaint as without merit.

**F.)** The Committee's recommendation shall include an explanation of the basis for the Committee's decision.

**G.)** League decisions shall be communicated within 5 business days; however, the league reserves the right to take additional time to render a decision.

**SECTION 2.5 LEAGUE PENALTIES** For a violation of any Bylaw or rule herein set forth, or in addition to any penalty herein set forth, or for any conduct deemed undesirable, or for any complaint found to be valid, the League Board may impose any or all of the following penalties to the accused party, parties or League Member:

**a) SUSPEND THE PARTY: Suspension** is defined as a period of time, determined by the LEAGUE Board, during which the party may **not** participate in LEAGUE activities and functions (i) Coach Suspension: A coach who is suspended may not have ANY contact with his team, on or off the field, during the period of suspension. This includes participating in or attending practices, meetings or any other team function. He also may not attend any of his team's games, on the sidelines, in the stands, or in view of the playing field, during the period of his suspension. Violation of the conditions of suspension WILL result in an additional two weeks of suspension. A second violation will result in expulsion. (ii) Player Suspension: A player who is suspended shall be permitted to practice with his team during the period of suspension, but shall not be permitted to dress for or play in any games occurring during the period of suspension.

**b) EXPEL THE PARTY: Expulsion** is defined as permanent loss of League membership, participation and involvement. The Rules & Disciplinary Committee must recommend expulsion to the league board prior to a vote by the entire board. The Board must have a 2/3 thirds vote majority of voting members to impose an expulsion. The expelled party may apply for reinstatement after a period of time determined by the LEAGUE Board. No expelled coach, player or parent may attend any League function during the period of their expulsion. Refusal to adhere to this rule will result in the automatic loss of the right to apply for reinstatement.

**c) PLACED ON PROBATION:** The League Board may decide in certain situations to place the party on probation rather than enforce any penalty defined in these Bylaws, or set forth by the Board. **Probation** is defined as a period of time, determined by the Board, during which the party **may** participate in League activities and functions, but the behavior of said party will be monitored.

**e) LOSS OF POST-SEASON PLAY FOR A League Member.**

**f) LOSS OF VOTING PRIVILEGES FOR A League Member.**

**g) LOSS OF HONORS OR AWARDS**

**SECTION 2.6 League rules shall supersede club rules regarding disciplinary actions.**

**SECTION 2.7 PROTEST PROCEDURE** - Games may be protested; however, a formal complaint must be filed to the RDC Chairman and League President within 24 hours.

**SECTION 2.8 HARDSHIP** - The League Board, with a 2/3 vote, may waive any provision under these rules, if it appears that extreme or unintended hardship would result, unless said provision has been explicitly defined as 'not waiveable under hardship'.

**SECTION 2.9 TYPES & SEVERITY LEVELS OF VIOLATIONS**

When the lodging of a complaint results in the determination that punitive action is required, the offense will be categorized as a Level 1,2,3,or 4 with commensurate results:

**A) LEVEL 1 OFFENSE:** Generally categorized as being of an 'administrative' nature, or include offenses not directly perpetrated by the member and not reasonably under his/her immediate control. Level 1 offenses shall be penalized as indicated in the appropriate bylaw and rule. Typical penalty shall be warning or probation or small fine.

**B.) LEVEL 2 OFFENSE:** Generally categorized as attempts to gain an unfair advantage over a competitor through cheating. Level 2 offenses shall be penalized by probation of the member for the duration of the season. Any additional violation of any level during the probationary period will result in suspension for one or more games as determined by the board.

**C.) LEVEL 3 OFFENSE:** Generally categorized as offenses involving the use of illegal/banned substances, or situations that could lead to violence (i.e. taunting, inciting to fight) or otherwise jeopardize the health or safety of players, coaches, officials or fans. Any offense which results in suspension shall automatically be considered a Level 3 violation. Level 3 offenses shall be penalized by suspension for the next official game played by the member's team.

**D.) LEVEL 4 OFFENSE:** Generally categorized as those offenses which could potentially result in criminal prosecution of the offender, or which clearly indicate that the offender should not be entrusted with the well-being of youth athletes. Level 4 offenses shall be penalized by expulsion from the League.

The table below summarizes the maximum penalty Levels associated specific offenses. The board may consider aggravating or mitigating circumstances in penalty assessments, and based on that consideration, award a penalty less than that indicated in the matrix.

<b>Offense:</b>	<b>Level:</b>	<b>Offense:</b>	<b>Level:</b>
Ineligible player dressed on the field	2	Touching of any referee, League/Field Rep, coach, player or parent in offensive manner	3/4
Playing ineligible player during game	3	Acting in any manner deemed by League Board to be grossly disrespectful to a team or another person	2
Minor Unsportsmanlike Conduct	2	Disrespect to League Representative	2
Major Unsportsmanlike Conduct (Ejection)	3	Attempting to interfere with or influence on field officials in capacity of League or Field Rep.	2
Use of illegal substances by player	3	Willful misrepresentation before League Board	2
Use of illegal substances by coach	4	Chain Crew communication with players	2
Use of tobacco products or alcoholic beverages within school premises	3	Chain Crew usage of cell phones on the sidelines.	2
Inappropriate disruption of the game	2	Failure to report player on roster	2

### **SECTION 2.9a MISCELLANEOUS RULES**

**A.)** Any League Member, it's personnel, representatives, coaches, players, parents, relatives or fans, found by the League Board, to knowingly give false information, or misrepresent by word or deed to the League, it's Board, Officers, Commissioners, Representatives, or League Members, will be suspended on the recommendation of the Rules and Disciplinary Committee and vote of the League Executive Board.

**B.)** Any League Member, it's personnel, Representatives, coaches, players, parents, relatives or fans, found by the League Board to violate any Bylaw, or who acts in any manner deemed by the League Board to be grossly disrespectful to a team or another person, or who engages in a fight or other major un-sportsmanlike conduct, or conducts themselves in a manner found disrespectful to a League Member Representative will be subject to disciplinary action from the board which could include suspension or expulsion from the league.

**C.)** Any coach, player or fan ejected from a game by the game officials may at the discretion of the board be suspended for the following game.

**D.)** The League Board, following an Incident Report, may discipline any League Member; its personnel, representatives, coaches, players, parents, relatives, or fans as defined in the League Bylaws and Rules.

**E.)** Coach and/or Player Suspension(s): a) The League Rules & Disciplinary Committee or the League Board shall be empowered to suspend coaches and or players for one or more games for unsportsmanlike conduct and any major violation of the league by-laws or rules. The League has at their discretion the option to conduct an in person hearing with all related parties in order to hear testimony regarding the incident in question.

F.) The Executive Board may inspect any/all fields prior to any game, and may re-inspect any field any time during the season. If a field is determined to be unsafe or unplayable, this may result in the loss of home games for a League Member until the condition is corrected.

G.) Any team that receives a PROTEST WIN automatically is awarded a plus 13 points win.

## **ARTICLE 3. PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS**

**SECTION 3.1** League members agree to only roster players who reside in their respective high school attendance area. Players that attend a private school, but reside within a particular school district are eligible to participate in the league where they reside.

### **SECTION 3.2 Age Requirements:**

**5th Grade** - player cannot turn 12 before July 1st

**6th Grade** - player cannot turn 13 before July 1st

**7th Grade** - player cannot turn 14 before July 1st

**8th Grade** - player cannot turn 15 before July 1st

**SECTION 3.3** Once a player receives a equipment from a League Member, the player must remain with that League Member for the duration of that season, unless that player transfers to another school and receives a written release from the original league member club. The Board will approve all Player Release's.

**SECTION 3.4 ROSTER REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:** Each respective member organization shall be responsible for collecting appropriate documentation to verify eligibility of their players. Each member organization shall submit a roster(s) to the league one week prior to the first game. Roster information will be added to the league website with member only access to the information.

**SECTION 3.5** A player and teams will be considered officially registered by a League Member after submitting an official team roster to the League Secretary. The following data is required and can be provided in a table or spreadsheet electronic format.

- a) *Name, home address and contact phone number.*
- b) *Date of Birth.*
- c) *Grade and School currently attending this season.*
- d) *Uniform Number, Position(s), Height & Weight*
- g) *Any other information required by the Board for that particular year.*

### **SECTION 3.6 INELIGIBLE PLAYERS**

- a) Any player who does not reside in a member organization school district boundaries.
- b) Any player that is over the age limit of the league.
- c) Any unregistered player with the league.
- d) Any player on official discipline by the League, or otherwise declared ineligible by the League.
- f) Any Player who has moved to another member organization school district but has NOT had an official League release form signed and approved by the League.
- g) Any player determined by the League Executive Board not to be currently attending school:



A child, not currently enrolled in school shall not be deemed ineligible until it is determined by the League that he is not currently attending school. Players that are homeschooled are eligible to play.

**SECTION 3.7** Any team that is determined by the League Board to have played ineligible player(s) in a game or games will forfeit the game or games in which the ineligible player(s) participated in. Participation is defined as the player(s) in question having stepped onto the game field. The Rules & Disciplinary Committee will investigate the status of the player, and the Board will decide if any further action will be taken against the player and/or the team.

### **SECTION 3.8 COACH ELIGIBILITY RULES**

All coaches shall successfully complete all training requirements as required by the league.

## **ARTICLE 4. TACKLE GAME RULES**

### **SECTION 4.1 MSHSAA Freshman Game Rules**

**A.)** Unless otherwise provided within these rules, the NFHS rule book, complemented by the Missouri State High School Athletic Association (MSHSAA) Freshman game rules and regulations will apply to all League games.

**B.)** Prior to starting a game both League Member Representatives should inspect the playing conditions and agree that the conditions are safe or unsafe for playing. If a game is called, the game shall be resumed according to the MSHSAA rules. A makeup should be made up within two (2) weeks.

**C.)** Teams will avoid the opponent's bench at all times prior to and after games, including during pregame warm-ups.

**SECTION 4.2 OFFICIAL PRACTICE & GAME START DATES** - Teams are allowed to hold two weeks (10 days) of summer football camps not to exceed 2 hours per day without pads or helmets where attendance is mandatory. An unlimited number of optional team meetings, get-togethers, conditioning practices and touch or flag games in the off season are permitted provided that players are not in pads or helmets. **Tackle games will start the last weekend of August or first weekend of September. August 1st shall be the first official day of practice with pads.** All players must have 3 days of practice without pads before they are allowed to practice in pads. The 3 day requirement may be fulfilled by players attending mini-camps prior to the season.

**SECTION 4.3 GAME FIELD REQUIREMENTS** - Game fields should be clearly lined, have yard markers, end zone markers, and goal post pads, if necessary.

**A.)** Home team will also supply the down markers and the chain gang for each home game.

**B.)** In lieu of MSHSAA rule that the chains be located on the opposite side of the press box field, the JRGAC League requires that the **chain crew be located on the home field side.**

**C.)** All playing fields are required to have an operational scoreboard clock for each game.

**SECTION 4.4 EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS** - Game balls shall be Junior Size for 5th & 6th Grade and Intermediate or Youth Size for 7th and 8th Grade. Each program will supply their own game balls.

**A.)** All safety equipment required by MSHSAA must be worn at all times during games and practices.

- B.) Official league footballs shall be the following Nike, Rawlings, Wilson, and Under Armour.
- C.) Mandatory equipment will consist of football pants with pads, shoulder pads, a helmet with face bar guards, (mask), NOSCE required, numbered jersey front and back and mouthpiece. Any special mouthpiece must be shown to a referee prior to beginning of game.
- D.) All league teams must have both a home (dark color) and away (white) jerseys to ensure that both competing teams contrasting uniforms. The home team shall wear dark jerseys and the away team shall wear light jerseys, unless the teams mutually agree to reverse the assignments. The penalty for non-compliance in the regular season is forfeiture of game for the non-compliant team.

#### **SECTION 4.5 SPECIAL LEAGUE RULES**

A.) A successful kicked "**Extra Points**" shall count as 2 points and a successful play from scrimmage will count as 1 point.

**SECTION 4.6 STANDARD PLAY & GAME TIMES** - All grades shall play 8 minute quarters. If under 2 minutes remaining in a half/game, if a team takes a knee, it is understood that they are running out the clock and will subsequently take a knee for the remaining downs in the series. Running a play thereafter will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and will result in a 15 yard penalty.

**A.) GAME TIMES are set at 9:00 am for 6th, 10:30 am for 7th, 12 noon for 8th and 1:30 pm for 5th grade.** Any game time changes must be made at least 7 days in advance and be approved by the coordinators involved, the league board and the Referee Committee.

**B.) DELAY OR POSTPONEMENT OF GAME RULE:** When weather is a factor, the Home Coordinator will inspect the playing field and weather conditions and also consult with the high school athletic director to determine if the field is playable. If the field is determined unplayable or conditions are considered dangerous (i.e., Lightning) the Home Coordinator will notify Away Coordinator and Referee Coordinator of the situation and whether the game should be delayed or be re-scheduled.

**SECTION 4.7 OVER-TIME RULE:** If tied after regulation play is over, the football will be placed at 10 yard line and each team will have four (4) plays to score. No time outs will be allowed during the overtime period. A coin toss before overtime begins will determine who gets the football first. After one team has an offensive possession, the other team will have an offensive possession to match or exceed the score of the previous offensive team. If a game is still tied after the first overtime, then a second overtime will take place with the same format with the exception of the team that receives the football first. The team that got the football first in the first overtime will now play defense first. At the start of the second overtime, both teams must attempt a field goal after a touchdown. The 3rd overtime will be field goals only. The snap will be on the 10 yard line and the kick will be from the 17 yard line. If both teams make that field goal, then the next snap will take place on the 15 yard line and the kick from the 22 yard line and the ball will be moved back 5 yards on each subsequent kick until someone misses.

**SECTION 4.8 MERCY RULE:** **A Mercy Rule shall be enforced.** The intent of this rule is to prohibit teams from running up the score and to encourage coaches to utilize other less skilled players on their team when they are playing against an inferior opponent. **NO KILL RULE IN EFFECT.** If at any time there is a 32 point differential the winning team is encouraged to utilize second or third string players in order to prevent running up the score. In addition, the home scoreboard shall not reflect the true score beyond the 32 point differential in order to show respect and good sportsmanship. The actual score will be submitted to the league even though it is not reflected on the score board. **After the second half a RUNNING CLOCK** will begin once a team reaches a 32 point differential. **NO MORE KICKOFFS** and the ball is placed on the 40 yard line.