



Nisqually Junior Football League (NJFL) Rules

1. ROSTERS:

a. Team Rosters

- i. These are final after the conclusion of the last weigh in, September 15th.
 - ii. All final rosters will be turned into the league for verification of eligibility to play.
 - iii. All rosters for football and cheer must be in the official NJFL roster format sent out by the league secretary in the correct format to be accepted.
 - iv. Sample rosters for each organization need to be turned in for review. IF sample rosters are not correct, you will have to redo and have turned in by the official due date in order for it to be accepted.
- b. No more than 15% of players within an organization can be outside of their district.
- c. Minimum # players per team= 15
- i. Teams that fall under 15 players during the season (2024)
 1. Anytime a team falls below the 15 player minimum, they can move players up to the team that fell below the 15 player minimum.
 2. ***Once a player is moved up to an older division team, they have to remain on that team for the remainder of the season, no exceptions.***
 3. ***A player cannot move to a lower division team.***
 4. When this situation arises, Organization president must notify the NJFL Exec Board, and the organization coaches of this change. NJFL will respond and approve this request and verify teams.
 5. Once player is moved up, that coach MUST carry all approved rosters for all teams that current players who moved up, are on.

2. ADDING non-military players after League weigh-in dates

- a. Will accept all (military or non military) additional players to teams and add a 2nd weigh in date September 15th @ Orting Lions at 6:30 pm. Main rosters for a team should be 95% complete before 2nd weigh in. If new player is added and doesn't come to weigh in, they will be considered a non-skilled player by the league. New NJFL rosters will be sent to organizations by that Friday evening.
- b. Exception Policy After Roster Cutoff Date for Military Players Only
 - i. MUST turn in a copy of Military orders with date listed on order from Military Branch.
 - ii. The cut-off date to add new players under this policy is September 15th, NO EXCEPTIONS.
 - iii. Player(s) will NOT be weighed in and will be automatically listed as a non-skilled player for the season.
 - iv. If you add a player under this policy, a new roster with player(s) information must be turned in by midnight of September 15th.
- c. Official NJFL Team Rosters must include:
 - i. Name
 - ii. Birthday
 - iii. Weight
 - iv. Grade (Fall semester)
 - v. Jersey number
 - vi. Player picture with jersey number
- d. Additional Requirements/Information:
 - i. Each team's representative will need to be present during team weigh-ins with 2 copies of their roster and all required paperwork. A League Officer will verify and approve rosters and required paperwork.
 - ii. Weigh-ins will be administered by a League Officer and a "Non-Partisan" witness.
 - iii. Each team will be responsible for having their own official printed paper roster on hand at all games. Those with no printed paper copies will automatically forfeit said game. Please see Game Day approval form for official info.



- iv. An official report card from the school and/or district office confirming a player's grade for the season will need to be turned in and on file with the League. No handwritten documents will be accepted. Official school district ASB cards will also be accepted.
- v. A certified copy of the athlete's birth certificate is required to be turned in and on file with the League. Unofficial hospital records will not be accepted.
- vi. Physicals are NOT mandatory, but highly recommended. Each organization may ask for proof of physical and if so, should be turned in to the requesting organization.

3. GAMES:

- a. All games will be held at a location sanctioned by the Board of Directors prior to games.
- b. Due to many factors, games may be changed with very little or no warning. We try to give as much notice as possible up to 2 weeks but that is not always an option. People should monitor the league website and keep in contact with the team you are registered with.
- c. LAST MINUTE GAME CANCELLATION RULE (2024)
 - i. If a last minute cancellation occurs (Thursday, Friday) for any reason on your host field and the NJFL cannot reschedule the games for the same day at another host field the home/host team will forfeit the games for that day and be responsible for all fees/expenses.
 - ii. Away teams will revert back to the tiebreaker results for the forfeit.
- d. Nobody is allowed on the field without a badge.
- e. All badges must be printed out in NJFL format (please see NJFL badge format on website).
- f. Badges MUST show the following:
 - i. Name
 - ii. ORGANIZATION
 - iii. TITLE
 - iv. Background check approval number (assigned by NJFL).
 - v. USA certification card
- g. The only approved positions allowed on the ANY playing field are:
 - i. Approved organization board members, football coaches, cheer director, Field Marshal, and photographer. Team moms are not allowed personnel.
 - ii. Team moms are not allowed on fields, do not require nor shall receive a badge, and must pay admission fees.
- h. All coaches who are authorized to be on the sidelines MUST be able to be identified. All coaches are REQUIRED to have a USA football badge showing that they are certified through the league

4. RULES:

- a. Roster Rules
 - i. Rosters for all combined grade teams are limited to a maximum of 48 (2024). If a team exceeds that, they must break into 2 competitive teams.
 - **If a team needs to split into 2 teams, the teams MUST be split competitively and fair.**
 - **Definition of competitive and fair:** A team will split and target for a mixture of equal grades between the 2 teams with a mix of 60/40 ideally of grades. Coaches should have had time to evaluate talent, and based on talent, compile a *competitive, well balanced*, and evenly talented roster utilizing a draft scenario per organization."
 - ii. All players must be weighed in prior to being added to any roster and being permitted for play.
 - iii. If they have not weighed in, they cannot play in the game. This excludes 7/8 grade as they do not have weight restrictions.
 - iv. Weigh in MUST be witnessed by League Officer and Non-Partisan witness.
- b. Weight Limits (2024)
 - i. 1st/2nd grade teams: 100 lbs. weight limit for skilled position on offense. If over this weight must be a down lineman on defense.



- ii. 3rd/4th grade teams: 130 lbs. weight limit for skilled position on offense. If over this weight must be a down lineman on defense. (weights voted 1/10/19 approved)
 - iii. 5th/6th grade teams: 160 lbs. weight limit for skilled position on offense. If over this weight must be a down lineman on defense.
 - iv. No weight limits for 7th/8th grade teams.
 - v. Weight Limit is: the weight listed with ALL actual playing equipment on.
 - vi. Players that are over the weight limit are considered non-skilled positions. These players will be identified by a select sticker on the back of players helmets as previously voted and agreed upon by NJFL Executive and Subsidiary Boards. Stickers will be placed on players helmets at the time of weigh in by a League Official. This will be noted by the League on official Rosters put online as well (see attached policy).
- c. **Practice:**
- i. Practice start date is August 1st.
 - ii. A player **MUST** complete 3 non-contact and 2 contact practices to be eligible for competition.
 - iii. All camps/conditioning are allowed, for those being held prior to August 1st, they **MUST** be stated as open and advertised to the public and cannot be mandatory. Advance notice must be given to the NJFL of such event.
 - iv. Camps/conditioning camps do **NOT**, can **NOT** and will **NOT**, count as any sort of practice.
- d. **Skilled Positions (Pertains to all grades EXCEPT 7th/8th):**
- i. Any player who is not in a 3 point stance including (receivers and tight end).
 - ii. Any player who is not on the Line of Scrimmage.
 - iii. Any player who is a kicker or punter.
 - iv. Only skilled positions under the listed weight can carry the ball, catch the ball, or line up in a position eligible to catch or carry the ball.
 - 1. Fumbles and Interceptions can be recovered, received, and returned by any player.
 - 2. There can be **NO** designed or simulated fumble plays (i.e. Fumblerooski) to get the ball in the hands of a player beyond the skilled position weight limit.
 - v. All offensive linemen must be in a 3 point stance.
 - vi. All defensive linemen must be in a 3 or 4 point stance.
 - vii. If a defensive end is over the skill position weight limit they must start in a 3 point stance. If they are under the weight limit they are permitted to use a 2 point stance.
 - viii. Linebackers **CANNOT** be over the weight limit because they start in a 2 point stance
- e. **Special Teams (NO SPECIAL TEAMS FOR 1st/2nd - Ball on own 40):**
- i. If a team does not have enough players to field a kickoff or kickoff return team with 11 players who are under weight limit for a skilled position player for their respective grade levels then there will be no special teams played. The ball will be spotted on own 40 yard line **(2024)**.
 - ii. If a team starts a game with less than 11 players and both coaches agree to play the game with less players, there will be no special teams played and the ball will be placed on own 40 yard line *(approved in 2018)*.
 - iii. Kick off and Kick returns cannot have players over the skilled position weight limit.
 - I. If the kicking team does not have enough players at or under the sanctioned weight limit then the team is subject to the following:
 - a. Game ball spotted on own 40 (-40) yard line. Similar to if the ball is kicked out of bounds.
 - iv. If the receiving team does not have enough players at or under the sanctioned weight limit then the team is subject to the following:
 - 1. Game ball spotted on own 40 (-40) yard line. Similar to if the ball is kicked out of bounds.
 - v. 3rd – 8th grade are subject to standard high school rules for punt/kick.
 - 1. Can rush but **CANNOT** hit the long snapper- He is in a prone position and there will be a penalty called if he is hit regardless if ball is live or not.
 - vi. Punts and Extra Points:
 - 1. Extra points are 2 points for kick; 1 point for a play run as an extra point.
- f. **Age Limits**



- i. MUST be 1st or 2nd grade.
 - ii. MUST be 3rd or 4th grade.
 - iii. MUST be 5th or 6th grade.
 - iv. MUST be 7th or 8th grade.
 - v. Suitable proof requirement is a Certified Birth Certificate and a report card from the child's school.
 - vi. Birth Certificates are MANDATORY to be eligible for play.
 - vii. Report cards and official school district ASB cards will also be accepted.
 - viii. A maximum age limit has been established. This age limit does NOT apply to new players. New players must play in their respective grades. If a player reaches the maximum age listed before August 31st, they are ineligible to play in that age group and must move up.
 1. Ages
 - a. 1st/2nd: 9 years old
 - b. 3rd/4th: 11 years old
 - c. 5th/6th: 13 years old
 - d. 7th/8th: 15 years old
- g. **Pre-Game Roster Verification**
- i. Each team is responsible for having a printed paper copy of their own team's roster for verification. If you do not provide a printed paper roster at roster checks, you will automatically forfeit said game.
 - ii. Prior to each game starting, teams will verify each other's rosters to the players on the field and sign off that they agree and there is no discrepancy regarding players, rosters, numbers, or teams.
 - iii. If a player shows up after the pre-game roster verifications, the coach will have the player check in with the field marshal to be signed off and eligible to play.
 - iv. This applies to all teams including 7/8 as there is no weight limit restriction. Numbers names and visual verification still need to be made.
- h. **Games**
- i. 1st/2nd ONLY: A SINGLE coach can be on field. It is up to each club if they choose to do so.
 1. No coaches allowed on the field for any other grades, regardless of division.
 2. If a coach is using the opportunity to be on the field as a way to stop time, steel signs, steel plays, or use this in an unsportsmanlike manner, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be assessed. If the behavior continues, it could lead to ejection. See rules on game ejections.
 - ii. For 1st/2nd: There will be a 40 second clock to run a play.
 - iii. 1st thru 4th grade - Each game will consist of four (4) 8 minute quarters with stoppages in play.
 - iv. 5th/6th grade – Each game will consist of four (4) 9 minute quarters with stoppages in play.
 - v. 7th/8th grade – Each game will be (4) 10 minute quarters with stoppages in play.
 1. If a game is running behind, half time will be shortened.
 - vi. Clock will start and stop on the snap during the following situations: Time Outs, Out of Bounds, and Incomplete Passes. vii) Clock will stop and start on the ready during the following situations: Penalties, First Downs, and Change of Possession.
 - vii. There will be a 2 minute warning by the officials in the 2nd and 4th quarters, no clock stop.
 - viii. Mercy rule – 28 point lead (2024)
 1. Continuous running clock (including for out of bounds). Only stops for TO's, scores, and injuries. Once mercy rule activated, continuous clock will remain throughout the rest of the game
 - ix. Overtime will fall under Kansas Tie Breaker Rules:
 1. Coin flip for possession that the visiting team calls at the captain meeting.
 2. Offensive team starts at the 10 yard line, Regular football rules apply.
 3. After 1st overtime period, if game is still tied, ball is moved to the 5 yard line.
 4. If the game is tied after 2nd overtime possession then the ball is moved to the 3 yard line with 1 play for both teams that equals 2 points and this will go back and forth until the game is decided. Regular football rules still apply. No Game will end in a Tie.
 - x. **Criteria for determining placement and scheduling:**
 1. 1st/2nd was completed first based on number of teams.



2. Geography
3. Requests
4. Take into consideration as many as possible. Importance was placed on avoiding youngest teams traveling alone; older teams were put into same section. This may impact where teams play.

xi. League standings

1. Organization Presidents and/or Secretaries will forward all organization team scores to League (Tony) no later than 5:00 PM on Sunday evenings.
2. Head coaches for the winning teams must send in scores.
3. Coin flip for possession that the visiting team calls at the captain meeting.

5. IN-GAME RULES:

- a. Rules for in game are based upon the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) football rulebook.
- b. As a League, we are in compliance to the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association. (WIAA).
- c. If a rule needs to be changed or there is conflict about either NFHS or WIAA rule, then it needs to be presented prior to the season starting in a meeting with the League Commissioner and the Board of Directors present.
- d. **RULES FOR EJECTION OF PLAYERS/CHEERLEADERS OR COACHES:**
 - i. **Parameters for if coaches and/or players kicked out :**
 1. The ejection of a player/cheerleader/coach from a ball game will result in the following: Any player/cheerleader/coach ejected by a referee/field Marshall from a game will leave the stadium for the remainder of said game and ineligible to play/coach/cheer in the team's next league game. The ejected player/cheerleader will remain on the bench unsuited throughout the following game. Coaches will remain suspended from stadium for the following game. All coaches shall make this rule clear to all players/cheerleader/other coaches prior to the start of the season.
 2. The ejection of any person (parent, spectator, chain gang.) will require this person to leave the stadium and field area immediately. The ejection will result in this person being suspended for the following game and from attending all NJFL sponsored events and may result in further disciplinary actions pending the investigation and findings of the NJFL Executive Board into the incident.
 3. Coach can appeal suspension in writing only by 5:00 PM Monday following game.
- e. **PROCESS FOR NONSKILLED PLAYING SKILLED POSITION IN GAME:**
 - i. Refer to pregame checklist.
 - ii. If still questionable coach goes to Marshall, Marshall and coach go to ref, and ref stops game. At this time the player will be pulled from position and the player removed position can go back to a non-skilled position. The head coach will be removed from game and stadium. The Marshall and ref will sign the pregame form stating occurrence. Form will be sent in to NJFL at end of game. Please see rules below for full written rule.
 - iii. Team in question will forfeit said game. There will be no appeals process available for these occurrences
- f. 1st/2nd AND 3rd/4th grade level, when blitzing the A gap, the defensive player must line up outside the A gap no closer than his toes even with the down defensive lineman's heels. If the defensive player lines up within that point a 5 yard penalty can be assessed. The standup Blitzer has to have his toes behind at least 1 yard.
- g. 1st/2nd is allowed to have A SINGLE coach on the field during play.
- h. Minimum football sizes will be as follows (regardless of brand):
 - i. 1st/2nd – Pee Wee
 - ii. 3rd/4th – Pee Wee
 - iii. 5th/6th – Junior
 - iv. 7th/8th – Youth
- i. Playoffs – Depending on number of teams.
 - i. League championship format: Traditional - One and done.



- j. Tie Breakers (Based on number of teams).

6. TIE BREAKERS/CROSSOVERS

- a. #1- Two Team Tie Breaker- (Both teams have same divisional record at the end of regular season).
- b. Head to Head during regular season.
- c. Pre-season card seeding draw results (#11 team gets preference first).
- d. #2- Three Team Tie Breaker- (All 3 teams have same divisional record at end of regular season).
 - i. Head to Head during regular season.
 - 1. Example - Team A beat Team B, Team A beat Team C – Team A advances.
 - 2. If two or 3 spots are open- Team A (from above) 1st Seed, Team C beat Team B –Team C is #2 Seed and Team B is #3 Seed.
- e. Still 3 way tied after head to head (assuming Team A beat Team C, Team B beat Team A, and Team C beat Team B) – Total Point differential (for and against)- with 14 (+/-) points max
 - i. Team A – 24 vs Team C -10 (A=+14 / C= -14), Team B -7 vs Team A- 6 (B=+1 / A= -1), Team C- 13 vs Team B – 3 (C= +10 / B= -10)
 - 1. Team A = +13 (+14+-1- (from Bi above)) (1st Seed)
 - 2. Team C = -4 (-14 + +10- (from Bi above)) (2nd Seed)
 - 3. Team B= -9 (+1 + -10- (from Bi above)) (3rd Seed)
- f. If 2 teams tie for Total Point Differential - the head to head match up will determine seed.
 - i. Example - after Total Point Differential -Team D and E are tied- but Team E beat Team D in the regular season – Team E gets higher seed – Team D gets lower seed.
- g. If still tied after head to head (#2A) and Total Point Differential (#2B) - Preseason card seeding draw result (largest number receives seed preference).
- h. #3- 4 or 5 or 6 way tie breaker – (identical to three team tie breaker method).
- i. If tiebreakers were needed and once they have been determined, in the event that an age group has more than one division, which means that the total number of playoff teams typically exceeds 10, Crossovers will be used to determine the top 10-12 seeds, with only the top 8 making the playoffs.
 - i. North #1 vs. South #1: Winner is #1 seed for the age group; Loser is #2
 - ii. N #2 vs. S #2: Winner is #3 seed for the age group; Loser is #4
 - iii. N #3 vs. S #3: Winner is #5 seed for the age group; Loser is #6
 - iv. N #4 vs. S #4: Winner is #7 seed for the age group; Loser is #8
 - v. N #5 vs. S #6: Winner plays winner of the game below; Loser plays loser of the game below, both the following week. These are not officially playoff games but are added as two more league regular season games.
 - vi. N #6 vs. S #5: Winner plays winner of the game above; Loser plays loser of the game above, both the following week. These are not officially playoff games but are added as two more league regular season games.
 - vii. NOTE: In the event that there is not a 6th team in the North or South Division, NJFL will try to schedule a game to fill in until a winner of the other 5/6 game has been determined, likely with the Black Hills Jr. Football League (BHJFL).
 - viii. In addition, due to the importance of some of these games on playoff seeding, these games are scheduled with priority given to travel first and foremost. Since there are multiple teams in an organization traveling to different sites. If the case of 1v1, 2v2, etc. since seeds are equal going in, the home team is given preference as HOME. In the event of equal seeds playing at a site that is not their home field, the division of the home site is the home team, i.e.:
 - 1. If AR is playing Orting, if they are both #1 seeds but are playing at Fife, Fife is a South Team, therefore AR will be the home team since they are in the South division.
 - ix. Also, if a 5v6 is playing, whichever team is the #5 seed, regardless of division or hosting, will be the home team.



- x. Lastly, All AWAY teams must still provide chains as per the regular season rules.

7. PHOTOGRAPHERS

- a. All photographers, regardless of team, need a badge and must have PASSED a background check with the league just as any coach has been required to do, to be on the field. Each team must have an official NCSI approval code on file for photographers along with their coaches.
- b. Regardless of having the credential, a photographer must pay gate fees and is not allowed access to ANY field without first checking in with the Field Marshal at that location.
- c. Any photographer claiming to be from an official publication other than representing the team, must check in with the Field Marshal at all fields and are required to show credentials.

8. FORMAL COMPLAINTS:

- a. **No complaint will be taken in ANY form during games. The games will be played to completion regardless of the complaint.**
- b. Complaints need to be in written form and submitted to NJFL.
- c. Verbal complaints will not be reviewed or responded to.
- d. If relative to a game the written complaint must be received by the NJFL on the Monday following the game no later than 5pm.
- e. A decision will be made by all NJFL EXECUTIVE BOARD members, unless a member is directly involved or their organization is involved. Decisions will be made by that Thursday, unless more information is needed. If additional information is needed an email will be sent out to the Organization's president stating reason for delay.