



Nisqually Junior Football League (NJFL) Rules

1. ROSTERS:

- a. Team Rosters
 - i. These are final after the conclusion of the official weigh in.
 - ii. All final rosters will be turned into the league for verification of eligibility to play.
 - iii. All rosters for football 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
 - 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, the 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 a 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. We will accept all non-military additional players to teams if they move into the district after weigh-ins. It is the responsibility of the organization to provide proof that they moved into the district AFTER weighs-ins occurred. This does NOT include a player who suddenly wants to come and play with a friend. Main rosters for a team should be 95% complete. It is the discretion of the NJFL Board to decide if there will be a 2nd weigh-in required. If a new player is added and doesn't come to weigh-in (if scheduled), they will be considered a non-skilled player by the league. New NJFL rosters will be sent to organizations before game #1.
- 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 the Military Branch.
 - ii. The cut-off date to add new players under this policy is September 11th, 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 11th.
- 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.

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 but that is not always an option. People should monitor the league Facebook page and keep in contact with the team you are registered with.
- c. **LAST MINUTE GAME CANCELLATION RULE**
 - 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 or weekend, all teams affected will have the game removed from the schedule and their league game winning percentage will determine their playoff eligibility, not the record. This could result in a team making or missing playoffs by ½ a game.
- 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 Football 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. See NJFL VP for specific list.
 - ii. Team moms are not allowed on fields, do not require nor shall receive a badge, and must pay admission fees.
 - iii. **ONLY COACHES CAN GET ENTRANCE TO A STADIUM FOR FREE.** If badged personnel are not an actual on the field coach they must pay for entrance.
- h. All coaches who are authorized to be on the sidelines **MUST** be able to be identified. All coaches are **REQUIRED** to have an NJFL issued 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. 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 AS CLOSE TO 50/50 ideally of grades. Coaches should have taken 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*

- 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 an 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, regardless of if they are under the weight limit or not, must be in a 3 point stance Tackle-to-Tackle.
- vi. All defensive linemen, regardless of if they are under the weight limit or not lined up Tackle-to-Tackle in the tackle box, 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:**
 - i. 1st/2nd:
 - 1. No kick-off or kick return. Team will start each half or after a touchdown, on their own 40 yard line. Failure to get a first down results in turnover on downs at the spot of the ball.
 - ii. All other grades:
 - 1. Kickoff and Kick returns cannot have players over the skilled position weight limit.
 - a. 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 its own 40 yard line. **THERE ARE NO WALK OFFS on 4th DOWN or DECLARED PUNTS.**
 - b. 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 its own 40 yard line.
 - iii. 5th – 8th grade:
 - 1. Are subject to standard high school rules for punt/kick.
 - 2. 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 the ball is live or not. **PUNTS ARE NOT DECLARED. NORMAL FOOTBALL RULES.**
 - iv. Punts and Extra Points:
 - 1. **1st/2nd:**
 - a. 1 point for a play run as extra point from the 3 yard line.
 - b. 2 points for a pass play from 5 yard line (for offenses that are teaching passing - **MUST BE DECLARED; ALL PASSES HAVE TO BE BEYOND THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE. SCREENS, OR BALLS BEHIND THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE WILL RESULT IN DEAD BALL AND LOSS OF POINT ATTEMPT. ANY DROPPED SNAPS RESULT IN DEAD BALL AND LOSS OF ATTEMPT.**
 - 2. **3rd/4th:**
 - a. 1 point for a play run as an extra point from the 3 yard lineExtra points are 2 points for kick; **NO RUSH**
 - b. 2 points for a pass play from 5 yard line (for offenses that are teaching passing - **MUST BE DECLARED; ALL PASSES HAVE TO BE BEYOND THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE. SCREENS, OR BALLS BEHIND THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE WILL RESULT IN DEAD BALL AND LOSS OF POINT ATTEMPT. ANY DROPPED SNAPS RESULT IN DEAD BALL AND LOSS OF ATTEMPT.**



3. **5th - 8th grade:** Extra points are 2 points for kick; 1 point for a play run as an extra point. **FULL RUSH**

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. 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, steal signs, steal plays, or use this in an unsportsmanlike manner, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty can be assessed by game officials. 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.
- viii. Mercy rule - 28 point lead
 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 City Tiebreaker 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 the 1st overtime period, if the game is still tied, the 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 the number of teams.
2. Geography
3. Requests
4. Take into consideration as many as possible. Importance was placed on avoiding younger teams traveling alone; older teams were put into the 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 no later than 5:00 PM on Sunday evenings.
2. Field marshals from each field must send in scores.

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 also in-line with 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 Board of Directors present.
- d. ***RULES FOR EJECTION OF PLAYERS/CHEERLEADERS OR COACHES:***
 - i. A single ejection will result in coach/player/cheerleader being suspended for the rest of the current game and 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.
 - ii. 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 Marshal 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 the 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. **A second ejection in the same season will result in an indefinite expulsion from the organization and the league whether a player, coach, cheerleader, board member, fan or parent.**
 4. Coach can appeal suspension in writing only by 5:00 PM Monday following the game.



- e. **PROCESS FOR NON SKILLED PLAYING SKILLED POSITION IN GAME:**
- IF THE PRE-GAME ROSTERS WERE APPROVED AND SIGNED ON BEFORE THE GAME STARTS, there will be NO further follow up regarding ANY questions about roster. The time to discuss it was at roster checks.**
 - If after kick-off, a coach goes to the Field Marshal or ref about a non-skilled player playing out of position, the game will be stopped to adjust the player. At this time the player will be pulled from position, and must sit out a play before going back to a non-skilled position. If it is determined that it was done intentionally, the head coach will be removed from the game and stadium. The Marshal and Head Official will sign the pregame form stating occurrence. Form will be sent in to NJFL at end of game.
 - If it was determined to be intentional, that 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 by officials. The standup Blitzzer has to be 1 yard off.
- 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):
- 1st/2nd – Pee Wee
 - 3rd/4th – Pee Wee
 - 5th/6th – Junior
 - 7th/8th – Youth
- i. Playoffs – Depending on number of teams.
- League championship format: Traditional - One and done.
- j. Tie Breakers (Based on number of teams).

6. TIE BREAKERS

- Two Team Tie Breaker- (Both teams have the same divisional record at the end of regular season).
 - Head-to-Head during the regular season.
 - Pre-season card seeding draw results (#11 team gets preference first).
- Three Team Tie Breaker- (All 3 teams have the same divisional record at end of regular season).
 - Head to Head during the regular season.
 - Example - Team A beat Team B, Team A beat Team C – Team A advances.
 - 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.
- 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 IN LEAGUE GAMES) - with 14 (+/-) points max (**ANY DIFFERENTIAL OVER 14 POINTS CAPS AT 14**)
 - 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)
 - Team A = +13 (+14+-1- (from Bi above)) (1st Seed)
 - Team C = -4 (-14 + +10- (from Bi above)) (2nd Seed)
 - Team B= -9 (+1 + -10- (from Bi above)) (3rd Seed)
- If 2 teams tie for Total Point Differential - the head to head match up will determine seed.
 - 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.
- If still tied after head to head (#6A) and Total Point Differential (#6B) - **Preseason card seeding draw result (largest number receives seed preference).**
- More than 3 teams tied (4 or 5 or 6 way tie breaker) - identical to three team tiebreaker method.



7. REGULAR SEASON SCHEDULES

- a. In the event that there are too many teams in any grade or due to the uneven number of teams in each grade, grades will be divided into separate divisions i.e North and South. If that occurs:
 - i. Example: Each team will play each other in the North Division at least once. They will also play a few other teams in the South Division as well. Games against the South are NON LEAGUE games and do not count towards playoffs. Only LEAGUE games against their own division count. There may also be years where a team plays another team in their own division more than once. When that happens, the earliest game in the season where that occurs is typically a NONLEAGUE game. Each year is a different situation. ONLY LEAGUE games count towards playoff seeding.

8. PLAYOFFS

- a. Top 4 format regardless of the number of divisions and teams.
- b. Determined by records in LEAGUE games in the regular season.
- c. Since there are multiple teams in an organization traveling to different sites, consideration is given for travel times between sites for parents, coaches, etc. All teams in an organization ARE NOT GUARANTEED to be playing in the same location. NJFL reserves the right to move teams.
 - i. **In the event that a grade group has more than one division, which means that the total number of regular season teams typically exceeds 10 teams, a separate grade division will be established for the regular season. These are called CROSSOVERS and this is a first round playoff game for all grades with divisions. CROSSOVERS take place Week 7 for all grades with divisions. This is how the playoffs are formatted for ANY grade that has divisions:**
 - 1. North #1 vs. South #4: Game A
 - 2. North #2 vs. South #3: Game B
 - 3. North #3 vs. South #2: Game C
 - 4. North #4 vs. South #1: Game D
 - 5. **There is no reseeding.** Winners play out bracket style (i.e. wrestling)
 - a. Semi-finals:
 - i. Winner Game A vs Winner Game C
 - ii. Winner Game B vs Winner Game D
- 6. All AWAY teams must still provide chains as per the regular season rules. This is the lowest seeded team i.e 1 vs 4, 4 is the away team.



9. 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.

10. 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 the reason for delay.