



Northern Illinois Football Conference

Rules and Regulations

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Article I - REGISTRATION OF REPRESENTATIVES/PARTICIPANTS

Section 1 - Head Rep Responsibilities

All team representatives and coaches shall make themselves aware of and acknowledge the current Bylaws and these Rules & Regulations.

Section 2 - Abiding of NIFC Documents

All team representatives, coaches, parents, and players shall read and abide by the Code of Conduct

Section 3 - Participant Contract and Emergency Form

Each participant, along with their parents, shall execute a Participant Contract and an Emergency Form prior to start of any practice, play or participation. (09/Mar/2008)

Article II - CODE OF CONDUCT

Section 1 - Conference meetings:

- a. Conference members must have a representative at all meetings. A discretionary decision can be made by the conference commissioner to excuse an absence in the event of an emergency.
- b. Failure to attend a meeting for the first time will result in an organization being placed on probation.
- c. Failure to attend a second conference meeting will result in disqualification from the Championship or a schedule modification for the following year made at the January meeting.
- d. Failure to attend a third conference meeting will result in the organization being dismissed from the conference. The organization would need to reapply to the conference if they wish to be reinstated. If accepted, the organization would come in under probationary status.
- e. Written notification will be sent to the Head Team Representative of the team in violation within one week of the meeting date for each violation.

Section 2 - Values

Sportsmanship, development of football skills, well-rounded student athlete, team cooperation, and a positive relationship among Conference members is of utmost importance in this Conference.

Section 3 - Intent/Philosophy

All participants, no matter what their skill level, are to be equally instructed, coached and taught within Conference organizations. Playing time is one of the most important elements in developing/retaining athletes and is one of the core philosophies of the NIFC. The NIFC strongly encourages using different athletes for offensive and defensive positions. The NIFC will have no tolerance for Conference organizations or coaches that ignore this philosophy. (04/Apr/2007)

Section 4 - Information Integrity

Any coach, team representative, or player who knowingly falsifies information to the Conference shall be permanently suspended from the Conference.

Section 5 - Adherence to Rules & Regulations

Any coach, team representative, or player who is aware of or promotes parents, players, or officials to bend or break any Rules or Bylaws of this Conference shall be permanently suspended by this Conference. Any coach, team representative, fan or player who a) intimidates (as defined by the Conference) players, team representatives, fans or officials, or b) is ejected from the game by an official shall be subject to the penalties described below at the discretion of the Conference Committee:

- Written warning from the Conference
- Suspension of one or more games
- Relief of coaching duties and or functions with regard to this Conference
- Banned from attending one or more games

Section 6 - Scouting

No coach, team representative, player, or anyone otherwise associated with any team in the Conference shall be permitted to scout or otherwise attend a practice of another team of the Conference except by express invitation which must be made publicly at the Conference meeting prior to such visit. Violation of this rule will result in the suspension of team representatives.

Section 7 - Conduct Detrimental to NIFC

Coaches, representatives or officials of NIFC member organizations whose conduct, behavior or actions are determined to contrary to NIFC philosophies or detrimental to the NIFC's reputation will result in discipline up to, and may include, permanent expulsion from the NIFC at any capacity.

Section 8 - Videotaping

Organizations (Coaches, representatives, fans, board members, players, etc.) are prohibited from videotaping games in which they are not participating. (09/Apr/2009)

Article III - REGISTRATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1 - Registration Information

Teams must register for the current season. Team registration forms will be made available from the Conference at the January Conference meeting and are due at the April Conference meeting. The registration form will include:

- a) Head Organization Representative (one per team, mailing address, phone number, fax number, email address)
- b) Alternate Representatives (two per team, mailing address, phone number, fax number, email address)
- c) Team colors (jerseys and pants, home and away, if different)
- d) Practice site(s)
- e) Playing site(s)

Section 2 - Entry Fee

The annual entry fee will be due at the August meeting. Membership fees are \$600.00 for organizations having up to two teams, any organization with more than two (2) teams will be charged an additional \$200 per team. (20/Apr/2010)

Article IV - ELIGIBILITY- is without regard to Race, Color, Gender, Religion, and National Origin

Section 1 - Academics

The Conference recognizes the importance of academics as a part of a well-rounded student athlete, therefore the Conference strongly encourages member organizations to address and emphasize academics within their program. (04/Apr/2007)

Section 2 - Team Size

Each team will field at least one level and if numbers allow, are encouraged to field teams at all levels. Teams must roster a minimum of seventeen (17) players per level and dress eleven (11), or forfeit the game.

Section 3 - Age

ALL player eligibility will be determined based on their age as of August 1st of the current year.

Section 4 - Exclusivity

No participant in the Conference may be a member of another organized tackle football team/organization/league. No participants may be double-rostered.

Section 5 - Divisions

- a) FLYWEIGHT
Age: Max of 8 years old (04/Apr/2007)
Weight Restrictions: 100 lbs.
Max Ball Carrier Weight: 85 lbs
Game-Day Max Weight: Non-Petitioned - 107 lbs; Petitioned - 110

- b) LIGHTWEIGHT
Age: 9 years old (and under)
Weight Restrictions: 125 lbs.
Max Ball Carrier Weight: 110 lbs
Game-Day Max Weight: Non-Petitioned - 132 lbs; Petitioned - 135 lbs

- c) MIDDLEWEIGHT (10/Feb/2011)
Age: 10 years old (and under)
Weight Restrictions: 135 lbs.
Max Ball Carrier Weight: 120 lbs
Game-Day Max Weight: Non-Petitioned - 142 lbs; Petitioned - 145 lbs

- d) HEAVYWEIGHT
Age: 11-12 years old (and under)
Grades: 6th and under (09/Apr/2009)
Weight Restrictions: 165 lbs.
Max Ball Carrier Weight: 140 lbs
Game-Day Max Weight: Non-Petitioned - 172 lbs; Petitioned - 175 lbs

Definitions:

1. Ball Carrier: Any player that has the opportunity normally granted the ability to advance the ball (i.e. receivers, quarterbacks, running backs, tight-ends, etc.) Tight-ends that are not going to be used as receivers but rather strictly as blockers are not subject to this. Using a player that is Ball Carrier Ineligible to receive a pass or run with the football will be grounds for discipline for the offending team of coaches.
2. Weight Restrictions: the high weight limit for a player to play within the division
3. Max Ball Carrier Weight: the max weigh at which a player is eligible to be positioned as a Ball Carrier, regardless of whether the player carries the ball (see above)

4. Roster Weight and Game Day Weight: Weight of participant in full game day attire except shoulder pads and helmet.

Section 6 - Division Exceptions

Organizations head representatives may petition the Conference Committee in writing and in person with the parent(s) and player for the following division exceptions. The Conference Committee will review and vote on each case individually. Age level petitions will be considered for extreme cases only. Approval requires a majority vote of the Conference Committee prior to final roster turn-ins. The Conference Committee may revoke this exception at any time during or before the season at their discretion and move the player up.
(20/Apr/2010)

- Organizations may petition athletes to play down 1 level if they weigh 60% or less of the maximum weight limits of their age level (20/Apr/2010)
- Players exceeding the weight criteria may petition to play at their age group. Any player who exceeds the weight restriction must be identified and limited to playing on either the offensive line or defensive interior line and not be able to advance the ball on offense. (04/Apr/2007)
- 12 yr old 7th graders may petition to play in the heavyweight division (09/Apr/2009)

Section 7 - Preseason Weigh-ins

Each Conference Organization will conduct preseason Weigh-ins and shall include actual weight (rounded to the nearest lb.) and height on the official roster. Preseason weigh-ins shall be conducted no more than 2 weeks prior to roster the turn in date.

Section 8 - Game-Day Weigh-ins

Thirty minutes prior to the start of the game all players must be weighed in wearing their own jerseys for identification purposes. All players will be marked on the roster as Ball Carrier Eligible, Play Eligible, or Weight Ineligible. Weight ineligible players will not be allowed to play in the game. Players arriving after the start of the game may weigh in at half time to be eligible to play the second half of the game.

Article V - SIGN UP / PRACTICE / EQUIPMENT

Section 1 - Start of Practice

The first day of practice shall coincide with last Monday of July or IHSA starting date of the current year, which ever comes first.

Section 2 - Player Equipment

Each team shall be responsible to furnish or be responsible that each player has the following equipment:

- a) Approved football helmet (Noc SAE approved)
- b) Approved shoulder pads
- c) Cup supporter (females excluded)
- d) Pants with all necessary pads
- e) Jersey with numbers (minimum six inches tall minimum in front and eight inches tall in back)
- f) Shoes (cleats to be rubber or plastic one half inch or less)
- g) Approved mouthpiece attached to the helmet

Section 3 - Tryouts

Conference members are prohibited from holding tryouts to cut players.

Section 4 - Open Registration

The NIFC requires member organizations to have an open registration process. Organizations shall make public their registration schedule and are prohibited from screening, discouraging interested your from registering, or otherwise profiling/rejecting some players while accepting others from within the communities they serve. (09/Apr/2009)

Article VI - ROSTERS

Section 1 - Roster Information

Each Conference member is required to submit complete team rosters on form supplied by the league. Rosters must include player name, weight, height, age, and jersey number.

Section 2 - Roster Turn-In

Completed rosters are to be submitted to the Conference three weeks before the first game. Each Conference member is also required to submit sufficient copies of team rosters to allow distribution to all other teams. Teams may add to their roster until the following week. These additional players must be approved by the Conference Commissioner or appointed Conference Committee member. No additions to rosters will be allowed after roster turn-in.

Section 3 - Jersey Numbers

The roster must be submitted in game (jersey) number sequence. The players must wear these numbers the entire season. Any changes due to lost or damaged jerseys must be approved by the Conference Commissioner or appointed Conference Committee member.

Section 4 - Names of Players on Roster

First names are to be listed first, last names second.

Section 5 - Signatures

The Head Organization Representative must sign all rosters.

Section 6 - Birth Certificates

Each Conference Organization is required to maintain a copy of each player's birth certificate. This certificate shall be made available to Conference Committee members upon request for age verification purposes.

Section 7 - Contracts

Each youth is required to fill out completely and submit to their respective organization the contract as provided by the Conference. This contract shall be maintained by each Conference Organization and shall be made available to Conference Committee members upon request for verification purposes. The contracts will have a term of 1 (one) season.

Section 8 - Contact Disputes

Conference members, after receiving copies of other Conference member's rosters, will have one (1) week to state if any players are under contract to them. After one (1) week, if a player is not so named, he will be considered released from any pre-existing contracts. If a player owes equipment or money to another team, that player may forfeit his/her rights to participate, until such a time when the equipment is returned or the organization owed the equipment or money formally releases this obligation. Any name changes of players must

be indicated on these rosters and approved by the Conference. Any falsification of rosters will be a violation of the Code of Conduct (see Article II, Section 3).

Section 9 - Roster Infractions

Roster infractions, subject to an appeal, will result in a minimum one game suspension for the offender. See Article II Section 8 for additional information. (09/Apr/2009)

Section 10 - Providing Game Day Rosters

All head coaches must provide a copy of their team roster for the opposing coach on game day. Failure to do so will result a one game suspension for the head coach of the offending team".

Section 11 - Insurance

The Conference Secretary is to furnish each Conference member with a Certificate of Insurance and reporting forms so that they may submit the certificate to the playing sites as required.

Article VII - CONFERENCE SEASON

Section 1 - Camps

There shall be no camps held by any Conference member without petition and approval by the conference Committee.

Section 2 - Number of Games

No member team shall play an excess of 12 games. This excludes playoff and championship games.

Section 3 - Game Day

Conference games to be played on Saturday. League games to start at the following times (unless scheduled otherwise): (20/Apr/2010)

- a. Flyweight 9:30 a.m.
- b. Lightweight 11:30 p.m.
- c. Middleweight 1:30 p.m.
- d. Heavyweight 3:30 p.m.

Section 4 - Athlete Playing Requirements

All teams are **required** to ensure that every player plays in every game.

Section 5 - Forfeits

The score of a forfeit or bye game will be 0-12.

Section 6 - Score Reporting

The Head Organization Representative is responsible to email all home game scores to the Standings Coordinator by 12:00 (noon) on Sunday following the game. (19/Jul/2007)

Section 7 - Conference Points

Conference points shall be tallied in the following manner: Each winning team shall get one point for a win, plus a point for every win of the team that just played and lost. For example: Team A has 3 wins and loses to Team B, Team B would get 4 points (1 for the win and 3 for the previous wins of Team A) (19/Jul/2007)

Article VIII - CHAMPIONSHIP

Section 8 - Championship Logistics

The conference shall establish the time and location of the Championship by an alphabetical rotation. The League is to establish proper awards for play-off teams/games. All participating teams in playoffs will receive an award. Requirements for location of championship games will be:

- a. The hosting team will pay \$125.00 to the League
- b. A team under probation is ineligible to host a playoff or championship game.

Section 9 - Playoff Committee

- a. The committee is determined during the January meeting and will consist of the Conference Commissioner, the host Conference member representative, the previous host Conference member representative, the next years host Conference member representative and an at-large conference member.
- b. The committee will meet at least one time, at the current host Conference member's facility, during the month of September.
- c. The committee is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Championship event and presentation of the Championship report at the December meeting.
- d. The committee will be responsible to oversee the presentation of awards at the Championship.
- e. A committee member or appointee will present the awards during the Championship.
- f. A committee member will be responsible for public relations of the Championship event.

Section 10 - Determination of Participants

The following shall be used to determine Championship participants:

1. Conference record
2. Head to head record
3. Conference Points (19/Jul/2007)
4. Flip of a coin by Championship Committee

Section 11 - Income and Expenses

The Conference is responsible for all initial costs of the Championship (which includes, but may not be limited to public relations, rental fees, security, trophies and awards, etc.)

The event should be able to pay for officials, clean-up crew and/or security.

Section 12 - Programs and Public Relations

A committee member will oversee all publications and public relations for the Championship event.

Section 13 - Championship Report

The Championship committee is responsible for the development and presentation of a Championship report.

The Championship report shall consist of financial income and disbursements, overall analysis of the events of the day, teams participating and scores, problems encountered (if any), etc.

Section 14 - Host Conference member Responsibilities

- a) Securing appropriate facilities for the Championship
- b) Having an ambulance / rescue squad at the site
- c) Arrange for concessions to be operating during the event
- d) Arrange for and hire 3 officials for each game
- e) The host school will be responsible for securing the following workers:
 - a. Chain crew
 - b. Clean up crew
 - c. Press box workers
 - d. Ticket takers
 - e. (Security if required)

Article IX - GENERAL RULES

Section 1 - Conference Size

When the Conference reaches eleven (11) teams, consideration for divisions will be up for discussion. Maximum number of teams will be set at sixteen (16).

Section 2 - Schedule

The Conference is required to submit to all teams a copy of the current schedule on or before the July Conference meeting.

Section 3 - Conference Documents Availability on Game Day

The *home team* is responsible to have on hand a copy of the current Bylaws and Rules & Regulations. Head coaches and Officials shall meet prior to the start of each game to review rules not identical to IHSA rules, current rule changes, and / or answer questions.

Section 4 - Officials

Each home team is responsible for paying for the 3 officials / referees. The Conference will negotiate and set the price to be paid on an annual basis.

Section 5 - Game Day Field Preparation

The home team shall be responsible for approved game ball, chains, down markers, and yard markers.

- a. If a team desires to use their own ball on offense, then the opposing team head coach and the officials must approve the ball. The team requesting to use his or her own ball for offense must provide an adequate and responsible ball person.
- b. The opposing team has the right to furnish one member of the chain crew.
- c. Fields must be roped off on both sides, from goal line to goal line, with a minimum distance of five (5) yards from the sideline. If a permanent fence separates the playing field from the fan section, a rope is not needed on the fenced side of the playing field.

Section 6 - Slaughter Rule

- a. If a point spread of twenty-four (24) points or more exists at any time during the game, coaches of the winning team are required to substitute lesser skilled players at quarterback, running backs, receivers, and skilled defensive players. An official time out will be called to substitute players. The time out needed for this substitution will **NOT** be charged against either team. When substituting players due to a point spread, key players may not be substituted to other key positions.
- b. The receiving team, when trailing by 24 points or more, shall retain possession of all Kickoffs under all circumstances. This includes fumbles (whether or not the ball is

advanced), on-side kicks, and kickoff recoveries by the kicking team. In the event the ball is fumbled, the ball shall be spotted at the spot of the fumble. (12/Feb/2011)

Section 7 - Coaches on Field for Flyweight Games

For Flyweight games only: A maximum of 2 coaches per team will be allowed on the field before, during, and after each play. Prior to the actual play, the coaches are permitted to call the play in the huddle, provide very brief instructional help, and help direct players to correct positioning. The coaches shall not interfere with the game in any way, shape or form during the play and must remain neutral and quiet during actual play. (19/Jul/2007)

Section 8 - Punting and Kickoffs

(12/Feb/2011)

- a. Heavyweight Division: Kickoffs and Punting are required.
- b. Middleweight Division: Kickoffs are required. No-rush Punting is required.
- c. Lightweight Division: Kickoffs are required. Punting is disallowed. Punts will be a walk-off of yardage.
- d. Flyweight Division: Kickoffs and Punting are disallowed.

Definitions:

- a) No-Rush Punt (middleweights only): Neither the punting or receiving team may advance or engage prior to the ball making contact with the punter's foot. Other than stepping forward in the punting motion, the punter may not advance the ball before kicking. The punting team shall inform the game officials of the intent to punt prior to punting.
- b) Punt walk-offs (lightweights and flyweights): 25 yards will be walked off in lieu of punting. If the line of scrimmage is within the opposing team's 35-yard line, the ball will be placed on the 10-yard line. Teams have the normal play timer within which to decide to punt or not. If/when the offense decides to punt, the clock will be stopped, 10 seconds will be wound off the play clock, the ball will be spotted by the officials, and the time will continue when the receiving team begins the next play.
- c) Kickoffs (flyweights only): The ball will be placed on the 35 yard line.

Section 9 - Warm-ups

Warm-ups are to be prior to the game and at the start of the third quarter. Warm ups shall be a minimum of ten (10) minutes before the start of the game and three (3) minutes before the third quarter. Half times will be ten (10) minutes long.

Section 10 - Pre-Game and Game Time Requirements

For the entire time from the start of warm-ups to the end of the game, teams must remain in plain sight of each other, including half times. Equitable conditions must be available for both home and visiting teams (ie: if shelter is available for the home team, it must be available for the visiting team, etc)

Section 11 - IHSA Rule Exceptions

All rules and regulations not previously stated will be the same as IHSA rules. Exceptions are as follows:

- a) Exposed hip pads are allowed
- b) There will be four – ten (10) minute quarters. No running clock.
- c) Officials cannot declare a tie. The first overtime period will be run from the 10-yard line, the second overtime period will be run from the 5-yard line, the third and all subsequent overtimes will be run from the 3-yard line. Beginning with the 4th overtime, the team scoring the fewest offensive plays from scrimmage will be declared the winner

Section 12 - Rescheduling Due to Weather Related Emergencies

Game day schedule alterations for weather related emergencies and must be made as early as possible (i.e. 7am). It is the responsibility of the canceling organization to:

- 1) Remedy the situation by contacting and working with the affected organization's Head Representative and discussing the possibility of moving the game to the opponent's field or reschedule the game within the following 10 days;
 - 2) 2) Contact the Head Referee to notify them of the changes and verify availability of officials
 - 3) 3) Notify the Conference Commissioner.
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Change History

Date	Change	Edited By
07/24/2007	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Moved Article IX Section 6 (Exceptions to IHSA rules) to end of section. 2. Added new Article IX Section 7 regarding allowing flyweight coaches on the field. 3. Added Article VII Section 6 regarding score reporting 4. Added Article VII Section 7 regarding Conference Points 5. Added Conference Points to Article VIII Section 4 for playoff eligibility determination 6. Modified Revision date in Header and on Title page. 7. Added NIFC Logo to Title page 8. Added Change History page to Rules and Regulations Document 9. Article VI Section 6: Modified to state that each organization maintains birth certificates. 10. Article VI Section: Modified to state that each organization maintains contracts. 11. Article VIII – Renumbered – Section “3” was missing from numbers. 12. Added Table Of Contents. 	Dennis Kentner, Conference Commissioner
03/09/2008	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Added Article I Section 3: Participant Contract and Emergency Form 2. Article IV: Added text “is without regard to Race, Color, Gender, Religion, and National Origin” 3. Article IV Section 4: Changed youth to participant. 4. Agreement/Accountability Form: Added Hold Harmless and Limited Liability Agreement sections. 5. Article IV Section 7 – added date for earliest preseason weigh-ins 6. Article IV Section 5: Definitions, game-day weigh-in weights, and ball carrier weights added. 7. Article VI Section 9 “Roster Infractions” added new 8. Article II Section 7 “Conduct Detrimental to the NIFC” added new 	Dennis Kentner, Conference Commissioner
04/10/2008	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Article IV Section 5 Definitions: Modified Roster Weight and Game Day Weight. 2. Article VI Section 10: Added new 3. Article IV Section 8: Game Day Weigh-ins modified. Weight Ineligible players (players over the Game Day Max Weight) will not be allowed to play. 4. Article VII Section 3 Game Day: Times changed to allow travel to wider area of membership. 5. Title Page: Date removed from under title 	Dennis Kentner, Conference Commissioner
04/09/2009	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Article II Section 8: Added new 2. Article V Section 4: Added new 3. Article VI Section 9: Modified to allow suspension of offender instead of only the head rep 4. Article IX Section 12: Added new 5. Article IV Section 5: Modified heavyweight restrictions to 6th graders 6. Article IV Section 6: Modified to allow petitions for 12 yr old 7th graders to play heavyweight 	Dennis Kentner, Conference Commissioner
4/20/2010	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Article IV Section 5: Added Middleweight Division 2. Article VII Section 3: Modified game times 3. Article III Section 2: Modified Entry Fee to \$600 4. Article IV Section 6: Modified the exception rule 	Dennis Kentner, Conference Commissioner

2/12/2011	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Article IV Section 5: Modified the middleweight division weight restrictions to 135 lbs.2. Article IX Section 8: Section rewritten.3. Article IX Section 6: Added rule regarding receiving team retaining possession of kickoff and punts when within the slaughter rule.	Dennis Kentner, Conference Commissioner
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Rules & Regulations Agreement / Accountability Form

By Signature below:

Each Head Organization Representative, or Officer, attests that they have authority on behalf of their Organization to enter into agreements with the NIFC and execute documents on the Organization's behalf. Further, each Head Organization Representative or Officer, agrees to and will be held accountable to comply with these current Rules & Regulations of the "Northern Illinois Football Conference". Each Head Organization Representative, or Officer, also assumes responsibility to assure that all respective coaching staff and appropriate personnel read and comply with these current Rules & Regulations for the "Northern Illinois Football Conference".

Organization _____

Head Org. Rep./ Officer Name and Title: _____ (Printed)

Head Org. Rep./ Officer Name and Title _____ (Signed)

Date: _____

HOLD HARMLESS/INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT

The _____ (hereinafter known as the Organization), hereby agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the NIFC, its agents, officers, employees and authorized volunteers, from and against any and all legal actions, claims, damages, losses or expenses arising out of the permitted activity or any activity associated with the conduct of the above-named Organization's operations, including but not limited to claims for personal or bodily injury, disease or death, or injury to or destruction of property. Further, the above named Organization agrees to indemnify the NIFC and any of its agents, officers, or employees and authorized volunteers for any attorneys fees and court costs incurred or to be incurred in defending any actions brought against them

LIABILITY WAIVER:

The above named Organization agrees for itself and or its employees, officers, agents or volunteers associated or to be associated with the activity for which membership in the NIFC is being sought, to waive and relinquish all claims that may result in any manner against the NIFC, its agents, officers, or employees and authorized volunteers from said Organization, except for acts caused by the willful and wanton misconduct.

I have read and understand the above hold harmless/ indemnification agreement and liability waiver. I further attest that I have the authority to execute this document on behalf of the Organization.

Signature/ Title

Date