



Youth Football League

www.youthfbleague.com

YFL Handbook

**Youth Football League
P.O. Box 1794
Bismarck, ND 58502**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome, Goals and Philosophy	3
Playing Rules	4
Offense	5
Defense	5
Participation Rules	5
Game Cancellations	5
Practices	6
Weight Limits	6
Equipment	6
Coaches	7
Players	8
Parents	8
Parents Letter	9
Equipment	10

Welcome to YFL!

We are very proud of our league and its philosophy, rules, regulations and organization. We expect a lot of our coaches, refs and ourselves as league officials. We also expect a high level of behavior and participation from the players, parent's and coaches.

We have worked hard to try to organize the YFL in such a manner that it is very easy to be a parent or player in our league. However, to make our season fun and successful for everyone, we all need to work together as a team. PLEASE adhere to the schedule and deadlines as given. Conduct yourselves in a manner that earns respect. Always be willing to help out with "chain gang" duty, clean the sideline after your game and follow all YFL rules and regulations and this packet of instructions.

YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE (YFL) GOALS & PHILOSOPHIES

The Youth Football League (YFL) is a local, non-profit organization operated for the benefit of children who wish to participate in the game of tackle football. The YFL would like to remind all Coaches, Parents and Players that the YFL was formed to promote youth football in the Bismarck-Mandan area. The YFL is intended to be an instructional league that places an emphasis on the fundamentals of football. The emphasis of the program will also be to inspire youth to develop life skills of sportsmanship, character and teamwork. The YFL strives to make the game fun and safe for all. This is more easily accomplished when coaches and parents keep in mind the ages and physical abilities of the participants. The YFL asks you to remember you are teaching young, impressionable children who learn by example. We ask that you act as a leader in teaching and guiding the players. The YFL Directors reserve the right to terminate any individual who fails to comply with these guidelines or acts in any manner conflicting with the mission of the league. With these goals in mind, and by providing an opportunity to play football in an organized, safe and supervised environment, the program stresses learning the valuable lessons of friendship, leadership and self-discipline that goes far beyond the playing field.

All regular season games will be played at Cottonwood Softball Complex in Bismarck. We enforce a spectator/team sideline policy. Teams will be on one side and all spectators will be on the opposite side. ONLY authorized coaches and players are on the team sideline. ALL parents & spectators will be on the Parent side – NO exceptions.

For the safety of all of our kids - Obey ALL parking signs at the fields. City officials will enforce the parking regulations. DO NOT climb on or over the fences, please use the gates. NO DOGS ALLOWED AT FIELDS. NO SMOKING ALLOWED AT FIELDS.

The league will provide all the equipment needed to protect the players. However, you will need to provide certain items for games and practices. Please refer to the equipment page for further information.

PLAYING RULES

North Dakota High School Athletic Associations (NDHSAA) playing rules shall apply except as specifically revised in this handbook.

FIELDS, OFFICIALS, TIME AND SCORING

1. The games will be played on the 80-yard fields.
2. There will be 2 officials for each league game.
3. The referee will keep the time on the field.
4. Two coaches are allowed on the field during the game. The coaches on the field call the plays. Do not send in plays from the sidelines. The coaches on the field during play may not advise their team after the quarterback begins his signal cadence.
5. 10-minute quarters will be played with a 5-minute half time. The clock will run continuously except for after touchdowns, injuries, and team timeouts. After a touchdown, the clock starts once the official resets the ball at the 30-yard line. In the last 2 minutes of each half the clock will stop in accordance with high school football rules.
6. Each team will have 2 time-outs per half.
7. There will be no kick-off. There will be a flip of a coin at the beginning of the game. The team that wins the flip has the option of taking the ball on the 30-yard line (first half) or deferring to the second half.
8. There will be no punts. On 4th down, the offensive team has the option to go for it or have the ball advanced 20 yards down field and the opposing team takes over from that spot. If the team is inside the 20-yard line, the ball will be advanced half the distance to the goal line. They must notify the referee and other team of their intention.
9. Should the score be tied at the end of regulation play, there will be no overtime period, the game will end in a tie.
10. Teams will receive 6 points for scoring a touchdown.
11. There will be NO field goal or kicked extra points attempted.
12. Scoring of the Point After a Touchdown (PAT) shall be as follows:
 - A score of one (1) point will be given to a team who runs the ball beyond the goal line from the 2-yard line.
 - A score of two (2) points will be given to a team who passes the ball beyond the goal line from the 2-yard line.

OFFENSE

1. Offensive formations are up to the discretion of the individual coaches, however no trips formations are allowed.
2. Each team will only be allowed to run 2 trick plays per game. Trick plays consist of reverses, halfback passes, receiver passes, etc. A bootleg play is not considered a trick play. If more than 2 trick plays are attempted, a 10-yard penalty will be enforced.
3. See playbook for further offensive instructions.

DEFENSE

1. Defensively, teams will employ a 4-man front on the line of scrimmage. Within a team's goal line and the 5-yard line, goal line defenses are permissible (5 or 6 man fronts).
2. Stunting, "red-dogging," and "blitzing" are NOT allowed.
3. Linebackers and defensive backs must maintain a minimum of a 5-yard setback from the line of scrimmage. Defensive backs and linebackers must not be in a forward motion until the ball is snapped. This will be a penalty.
4. All interior linemen (on defense) must be in a 3- or 4-point stance at the snap.

PARTICIPATION RULES

1. Each player must play a minimum of twelve (12) plays per game. The plays may be performed on offense or defense and need not be played consecutively. Each player must start on offense or defense.
2. A player could have his playing time altered for disciplinary reasons. A coach may exempt a player from the mandatory play rule for discipline, for missing practices, or for physical injury or illness but only if the coach notifies and explains the cause for the exemption to the player prior to the game.
3. You may substitute for injuries and instructional purposes only. For instructional purposes the player is to be out only one play and then is to be placed back in the same position the player came from (i.e., you are not allowed to get all your "studs" back in the game to stop a play or score!). You play with the players you have on the field during that possession.

GAME CANCELATIONS

1. Things such as rain, snow or cold temperatures will NOT be grounds to cancel games. Extreme weather, such as lightning may be cause for canceling a game if it is considered a safety problem. After the game starts, the game's referee has the authority to cancel the game.
2. Every attempt will be made reschedule any games that are canceled because of weather. However, certain situations such as field availability, etc. may not allow for canceled games to be rescheduled.

PRACTICE

1. No player will be allowed on the field for practice until they have a physical by a licensed professional. All such physical forms must be in the possession of the league directors before players are allowed to practice.
2. Practice sessions will be limited to four during the first week and two per week during the remainder of the season.
3. A practice shall be defined as any activity involving at least one coach and one player, lasting more than 10 minutes, where the skill of football is being taught, including viewing game films.
4. The team's coaches will set practice times. It may be a good idea to check with the players to see when some of them may have soccer practice. Maybe it is possible for you and the soccer coach to work together and come up with times that will allow for player to miss as few practices as possible.
5. Each practice will be no longer than 90 minutes.
6. Scrimmage games are not allowed.

WEIGHT LIMITS

1. WEIGH-IN: All players will be weighed in on the League scale on the day of equipment issue. This will be the ONLY weigh-in. An average weight will be determined and 5 pounds will be added to that weight to determine the ball carriers weight.
2. Players exceeding the determined weight will not be allowed to carry the ball and will be identified with a black strip in the middle of their helmet.
3. Non-ball carriers are not to be playing in ball carrier positions (QB, RB, TE or receivers).
4. Weight restricted players may only advance a recovered fumble or intercepted pass.
5. Weight limits are imposed on participants and may change from year to year.

EQUIPMENT

1. A player cannot receive equipment until the player is registered, has paid all fees, has submitted a physical form. Equipment condition is very important to the safety and enjoyment of the game – please take special care of it.
2. Every player must wear equipment provided by YFL. Safe fitting of helmets is a primary safety concern. All helmets will be issued and fitted by league officials.
3. Every player must use a protective mouth guard in all contact practices and games. Mouth guards are not provided by the YFL.
4. Every player must provide his/her own shoes and athletic socks. No player may wear shoes with metal cleats.
5. Game jerseys are to be worn for games ONLY, not practice.
6. Game rosters will be printed after equipment and jerseys are handed out, therefore a player must retain this number throughout the season.

7. If equipment is damaged through abuse or misuse the player will reimburse the League the replacement cost of the damaged equipment.
8. Athletic supporters (cups) are strongly recommended by the league, but are not required.
9. DO NOT wear your equipment except to practice and games. Do NOT alter or attempt to repair your equipment. DO NOT ever put any markings, tape or decals of any kind on any of the equipment. Only the Coaches are allowed to alter any equipment.
10. Clean your equipment weekly.
11. Make sure you try all of your equipment on and become familiar with it before the 1st practice. Come to the 1st practice dressed out and ready to go so the coach can check everyone's equipment.
12. Equipment return will be at the Community Bowl after players play their last game of the season. Please remember to bring a change of clothes on that day.
13. It is very important that we get your equipment on the scheduled day. A player who does not return equipment on time MAY NOT be allowed to play the next season and will be charge replacement cost for any equipment not turned in.

COACHES

1. Each coach will conduct himself/herself in appropriately during games and practices.
2. If a coach receives an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty during a game, the coach will be removed from the game and will not be allowed to coach the next game.
3. Assure that ineligible players are not allowed to practice or play.
4. Lead and participate in the "end of the game handshake" with the opposing team in a sportsmanlike manner in keeping with the spirit of the game of football.
5. All coaches are prohibited from physically pushing/shoving, punching, or any in way physically assaulting another coach, a parent or a player. If any of these actions should occur, the coach may/will be removed from the league.
6. Each coach is responsible for maintaining an attendance roster throughout the season for his/her team. The attendance roster will track player attendance at practices and games.
7. Each coach shall meet with the parents of team to discuss player safety, YFL rules, and other matters of interest to the parents.

PLAYERS

1. Players should attempt to make it to every practice, health permitting.
2. Players are prohibited from using obscene or abusive language during practice, games, or other league activities. Such behavior is subject to disciplinary action by the coach and/or league directors. Disciplinary action will be determined by the coach and/or league director and may include suspension from a scheduled game or expulsion from the league.
3. If a player receives an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty during a game, the player will sit the next 2 quarters of a game. For example if a player receives the penalty in the 2nd quarter, the player will sit out the 3rd and 4th quarter. If the penalty occurs in the 4th quarter, the player will sit the 1st and 2nd quarter of the next game.
4. Players will participate in the "end of the game handshake" with the opposing team in a sportsmanlike manner in keeping with the spirit of the game of football.

PARENTS

1. If a parent has concerns or issues with other parents' conduct, that issue/concern should be brought to the attention of a league director.
2. Parents are required to attend a mandatory parent meeting at the beginning of the football season. This meeting is held to inform parents of rules, schedules, and opportunities to volunteer. YFL appreciates parent volunteers.
3. No parent may use abusive, threatening, or inappropriate language directed toward a YFL director, coach, player, or game official.
4. Inappropriate conduct by an offending parent will result in the suspension of the parent from the games and practices for the remainder of the football season, except to drop off and pick up his/her player. Repeated violations by an offending parent could result in the expulsion of his/her child from the YFL program.

PARENTS LETTER

Dear Parents,

The Youth Football League would like to thank you in advance for the time and support you give while your child participates in the program. The league directors have spent a great deal of time and effort to make this as rewarding as possible for the kids. Your help is also very important to make things run smoothly.

While participating in the YFL, you have committed to follow all of our rules and philosophies. We (fans, parents, coaches, officials, friends, and directors) must conduct ourselves in an admirable fashion. Place the emotional and physical well being of all involved ahead of any personal desire to win or control the game.

Make only positive and encouraging comments to players, officials, coaches and league directors.

Remember, making mistakes is part of the learning and growing process... DO NOT CRITICIZE. Treating the officials and volunteers with respect is imperative. They have given their time and effort to help the league, which is FOR THE KIDS. The YFL works hard to organize and make things as easy as possible on the parents and players. However, the only way to accomplish this is if everyone follows all the instructions and deadlines as given by the league. Penalties do exist for breaking the rules and philosophies.

All coaches in the league have been given a plan, along with the responsibility of executing on the plan.

We are dedicated to continuously improving the program and the league, and would appreciate sincere and objective feedback.

Please keep in mind the fact that **participation and fun are emphasized over winning**. With your cooperation, we look forward to a successful season and a rewarding experience for all involved. Remember, the game is for the kids, not the adults.

Respectfully,

YFL Directors

EQUIPMENT

LEAGUE ISSUED EQUIPMENT:

- Helmet (with jaw pads, chin strap & facemask), which bears the NOCSAE seal.
- Shoulder Pads
- Pants (one piece shell)
- Hip pads
- Thigh Guards
- Knee Pads
- Jersey (games only) DO NOT PRINT ANYTHING (NAME, ETC.) ON GAME JERSEY.

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED EQUIPMENT (not provided by the League):

- Mouth guard - be attached by a strap to the facemask.
- Shoes (no metal cleated spikes allowed)
- T-shirt to wear under pads.
- Practice jersey – jersey or large t-shirt over pads (NO GAME JERSEY FOR PRACTICES)

EQUIPMENT CARE INSTRUCTIONS

1. WASH AND CLEAN ALL EQUIPMENT EACH WEEK.
2. AFTER EACH USE PADS SHOULD BE SEPARATED FROM PANTS AND ALLOWED TO DRY. CLEAN PADS WITH WARM WATER ONLY. DO NOT SUBMERGE OR COMPLETELY SOAK, DO NOT USE CHEMICALS OR HARSH DETERGENTS.
3. WIPE DOWN AND ALLOW SHOULDER PADS TO COMPLETELY DRY BEFORE NEXT USE.
4. FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS FOR WASHING PANTS AND JERSEYS. GENTLY WASH IN COLD AND LINE DRY. TURN JERSEYS AND PANTS INSIDE OUT BEFORE WASHING. DO NOT USE TO BLEACH TO CLEAN JERSEYS OR PANTS.
5. HELMETS SHOULD BE WASHED WITH A DAMP RAG ONLY AND ALLOWED TO COMPLETELY AIR DRY BETWEEN USES.
6. DO NOT PUT ANY TAPE OR DECALS OF ANY KIND ON ANY OF THE EQUIPMENT. ONLY THE COACH CAN ALTER OR APPLY ANYTHING TO YFL EQUIPMENT.

***THE PROPER CARE OF THE ISSUED EQUIPMENT ALLOWS USE BY MANY PLAYERS OVER THE FULL LIFE OF THE GEAR. THIS KEEPS COSTS DOWN AND MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR MORE KIDS TO PARTICIPATE.