

# **MEADOWLANDS**

# **FOOTBALL**

# **LEAGUE**

**2019**  
**BYLAWS**

**Updated and Revised June 2019**

**Errors, Omissions and Typographical  
Errors are not grounds for violating any  
bylaw that has been approved.**

# **1. MEADOWLANDS JUNIOR FOOTBALL LEAGUE, INC.**

The Meadowlands Football League (*to be known from here on as the MFL*) shall consist of communities joined for the purpose of promoting junior football and instilling good sportsmanship practices in our youth.

Organized and/or authorized practices or team meetings may begin no earlier than August 1<sup>st</sup> (See exception in Paragraph 12B). Teams shall be in the following general age and grade groups (*see paragraph 5, Eligibility of Players for further details*):

**Senior Level** – 7th & 8th grades (ages 12 & 13, turn 14 after May 1st)

**Junior Level** – 5th & 6th grades (ages 10 & 11, turn 12 after 8-31)

**Pee Wee Level** – 2nd, 3rd & 4th grades (ages 7-9, turn 10 after 8-31)

**Mighty Mite Level**- 1st & 2nd grades (ages 6-7, turn 8 after 8-31)

## **Structure of the MFL**

The MFL shall consist of two (2) divisions of six (6) teams each set up geographically in the North Division and the South Division. Any town having a Mighty Mite team can only have it play in the MFL. No outside teams or league games are permitted.

### **North Division**

Elmwood Park (*Bombers*)  
Hasbrouck Heights (*Aviators*)  
New Milford (*Knights*)  
Manchester (*Falcons*)  
Saddle Brook (*Falcons*)  
Wood-Ridge (*Blue Devils*)

### **South Division**

Carlstadt/E. Rutherford (*Wildcats*)  
Harrison (*Blue Tide*)  
Lyndhurst (*Bears*)  
North Arlington (*Vikings*)  
Rutherford (*Bulldogs*)  
Wallington (*Panthers*)

# **2. ADMINISTRATION**

A. The MFL shall have an Executive Committee consisting of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. A League Representative and an Alternate League Representative, if desired, shall represent each member town. The President shall have no vote, except in the case of a tie, in any situation that requires a vote of the League Representatives. If there are any grievances against the Executive Committee, the team making the charge shall have no vote. The League Representative from each member town shall be responsible for the **TOTAL ADMINISTRATION** of the MFL Bylaws, credentials, scheduling, and weigh-ins for that member town.

B. The MFL shall have elections for the Executive Committee every two (2) years. The Nomination meeting shall take place at the November Meeting. The election meeting shall be the December meeting. This bylaw shall commence in November 2013.

## **Executive Committee Elected Positions**

President  
Vice President  
Treasurer  
Secretary

**1. Nominations** - Any League Representative (not alternate) of the MFL may be nominated by another League Representative (not alternate) for the opportunity to run for the Executive Committee. Nominations will be taken by the current Executive Committee members.

**2. Acceptance** - The nominated League Representative to office may accept or decline such nomination.

**3. Voting** - All nominations will be voted on by all MFL Representatives or their designee.

**4. Term of Office** - The election winners shall take office the following January 1st after elections and remain in office for two (2) consecutive seasons, ending on the December 31st of the second year.

5. The playoff and Super Bowl site rotation will remain in effect. *Rule (16H)*

**6. Failure to Comply or Commit** - If an Officer of the Executive Committee becomes unable to fulfill his duties, the MFL Officer beneath him will occupy the position. If at the end of a season the position has been vacated, nominations will be taken again and a special vote will fulfill the position. Special Vote: A 2/3 majority vote is needed to remove any member from the board if there is a failure to comply or commit to their board duties.

C. The cost of operating the MFL shall be borne by each member town assessed two hundred (\$200) dollars annually, payable at the February meeting. Each town shall be notified by email from the Secretary or Treasurer.

D. At least one League Representative from each member town shall be present at each MFL meeting. During the playing season (*September-November*) there shall be a meeting 2012 once every two (2) weeks (*second and fourth Thursday of each month*), and monthly the rest of the year, to be held on the fourth (*4th*) Thursday of the month (See paragraph 4 F for fine of violation).

E. Each member town shall have only one vote in any given voting situation.

F. Accident insurance is mandatory for each member town for its teams and a certificate of insurance shall be submitted to the President of the MFL at the August Coaches Meeting.

G. In the absence of the President, any Executive Board member shall be empowered to act on his behalf.

H. The **August meeting** is a **mandatory** meeting of all the **League Representatives, Alternate League Representatives and all head coaches (HEAD COACHES ONLY)** for a full and comprehensive reading/discussion/clarification of the MFL Bylaws (See paragraph 4H for fine of violation).

I. All member towns shall have one (1) League Representative at each of the official MFL Weigh-In dates (See paragraph 4I for fine of violation).

J. The MFL name shall not be used for any outside solicitations.

K. An auditing committee selected by the President shall audit books and treasury reports yearly. The President may request an audit of the MFL treasury any time there exists reasonable suspicion or evidence of improper accounting of the treasury.

L. Revisions or amendments to the Bylaws must be submitted in writing (*twelve copies per bylaw change*) between January & April MFL League monthly meetings. The vote for all new Bylaws, changes or revisions will take place in the mandatory May MFL League meeting. The bylaw change request **SHALL INCLUDE** (*if applicable*) the bylaw that is

being amended or changed and the proposed revision or new amendment. Copies shall be given to each member town and shall be brought back to their town for discussion. Changes or amendments cannot be requested after the May MFL League vote.

M. Teams may have a free exchange of game films, tapes or video recordings of games for review.

N. The taking of films, tapes, video recordings in any manner by coaches, team representatives or individuals associated with a member town is allowed only for all regular season games, playoff games and Super Bowl games. Coaches, League Representatives or individuals associated with a member town are not allowed to view practices or non-game scrimmages of any other member town in which they are not directly involved with at that time. *Only game scrimmages with uniformed referees on the field are allowed to be scouted and/or filmed/video recorded.* (See paragraph 4G for fine of violation).

## 3. NEW MEMBERS

A. Those towns wishing to join the MFL should submit a written application to the MFL President prior to the February meeting. The town's population shall not exceed twenty thousand (20,000) residents.

B. The MFL shall be so informed by the President after receipt of such application and the MFL shall examine the application as to the following:

1. Sponsorship
2. Equipment
3. Playing field
4. Insurance
5. Sufficient squad strength

The MFL shall then decide by vote as to the acceptance into the MFL.

C. No town may be voted into the MFL at the same meeting during which their application is submitted.

D. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of all member towns is needed to vote a new member into the MFL.

E. There shall be a fourteen (14) team maximum in the MFL, until amended by vote.

## 4. EXPULSION & FINES OF MEMBERS

A. If evidence of a MFL Bylaw violation is presented to the MFL President, he shall call a meeting as soon as possible to resolve the situation. Teams or individuals accused of a violation shall be informed of all accusations and shall be presented an opportunity to attend the meeting.

B. The MFL shall examine all facts pertaining to the alleged violation.

C. A team or member under investigation of an alleged bylaw violation shall have a **FULL OPPORTUNITY** for defense.

D. Once the protesting team and the team under accusation have been heard, they shall leave the room and the remaining MFL members shall discuss and vote on a decision. A majority at the meeting shall carry the vote.

E. A team or individual found to have violated a MFL Bylaw (*first offense*) shall be placed on probation for a period of one (1) year from the date of the offense. A team or individual found to have violated a MFL Bylaw for a second (*2nd*) offense during a first (*1st*) offense probationary period shall result in the forfeiture of games for the offending team for that year.

F. The following shall be the fines for missing regular scheduled and bylaw meetings: One missed meeting - ten (\$10) dollars; two consecutive missed meetings - twenty-five (\$25) dollars; 3 three consecutive missed meetings - fifty (\$50) dollars; four consecutive missed meetings - one hundred (\$100) dollars & probation. The fine for not attending the annual bylaw voting meeting shall be one hundred (\$100) dollars.

G. If found guilty of filming, taping, video recording, or recording in any manner, viewing practices or non-game scrimmages, the penalty for violating paragraph 2 M shall be a fine of five hundred (\$500) dollars to be paid prior to the next game. If the fine is not paid prior to the next game, that game shall be forfeited. The head coach of the team found to have taped, filmed, video recorded, or viewed practices of non-game scrimmages in violation of paragraph 2 M shall also be suspended for the next two (2) games, whether regular season or playoff games. If necessary, the suspension shall carry over into the next season. During the suspension, the head coach may attend games as a spectator and only in the stands, not on the sidelines or in the press box. The head coach cannot coach or communicate, in any way, from wherever that coach views the game. The head coach's team shall be placed on probation for one (1) year.

H. The fine for not having representation at the annual August Coaches meeting shall be one hundred (\$100) dollars per member town per level.

I. Any member town who fails to have a League Representative or an Alternate League Representative present during the entirety of any of the official MFL weigh-in days shall be fined two hundred fifty (\$250) dollars. Only one (1) representative per member town needs to be present the entire time.

J. The penalty for not having the proper weigh-in documentation (*ID cards and team rosters*) filled out correctly or completely prior to entering the weigh-in room or causing a delay in the weigh-in procedure shall result in a one hundred (\$100) dollar fine per individual team (*not town*).

K. Member towns shall have two (2) representatives (League Representative and an Alternate) in attendance at the Semifinal Divisional Playoff games and Super Bowl games. Member towns will be fined one hundred (\$100) dollars for having only one (1) representative in attendance during any of the Semifinal Divisional Playoff games and Super Bowl games, and two hundred fifty (\$250) dollars if no representatives are in attendance during any of the Semifinal Divisional Playoff games and Super Bowl games.

L. All fines (except 4G) must be satisfied prior to the start of the playoffs. Unpaid fines may eliminate member towns from the playoffs.

M. Failure of teams to have MFL roster sheets and MFL ID cards present at the pre-game weigh-in procedure may result in the forfeiture of that game.

## 5. ELIGIBILITY OF PLAYERS

A. **Senior Level** – Any player obtaining the age of fourteen (14) prior to May 1st of the playing year shall be ineligible. Also, anyone in the ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) grade or high school shall be ineligible.

B. **Junior Level** – Any player obtaining the age of twelve (12) prior to September 1st of the playing year shall be ineligible for the junior level.

C. **Pee Wee Level** – Any player obtaining the age of ten (10) prior to September 1st of the playing year shall be ineligible for the pee wee level.

D. A player overweight for their age group and wishes to play at the next higher level must present a letter from his/her parents to the member town delegate and MFL granting that permission.

E. A player must reside in the member town for which they play and must finish the season with the team with whom they began the season. The beginning of the season starts when a player has weighed-in with a team on any of the official MFL weigh-in days. Therefore, a player cannot begin the season with a member town and then finish the season with another member town, even if the player moves during the season.

F. Weight Eligibility (*increased 4/06, 5/30/13*)

Senior Level – Lineman 165 lbs. Backfield 145 lbs.  
Junior Level – Lineman 145 lbs. Backfield 125 lbs.  
Pee Wee Level – Lineman 115 lbs. Backfield 105 lbs.

G. One-half (1/2) pound; (.5 as it registers on the digital scale) is added to the maximum weight so that no player shall weigh-in wearing nothing less than a suitable under garment.

H. The Official Weigh-in Committee shall determine all procedures on weight and age.

I. Defensive linebackers shall be considered in the same classification as a lineman. Anyone that lines up more than five (5) yards from the line of scrimmage, which includes halfbacks, cornerbacks and safeties, must be in the backfield weight classification.

J. On kick-off return, any player further back than the front five receiving players must be in the backfield weight classification.

K. **Team Eligibility.** When a Pee Wee, Junior or Senior level team weighs-in with less than fifteen (15) players, at the official MFL Weigh-In prior to the start of the season, they shall be placed on probation for one (1) year. If a repeated problem occurs the following year, that member town may be voted out of the MFL.

L. **Eligibility.** An ineligible team shall forfeit all games to opponents as wins.

M. **Player Ineligibility.** Any of the following conditions would render a player ineligible to play:

1. A player determined to be overweight on any of the official MFL weigh-in days. This applies to the first regular season game only because the player can attempt to make weight every week thereafter.
2. A player whose weight is challenged during the regular season and is determined to be overweight for that game.
3. A player who is too old to play on any competitive level (Refer to the age requirements in Paragraphs 5A through 5C).
4. Any player who is not on the official roster on that team's official MFL weigh-in date.
5. A player who has been suspended by the MFL for any other violation of the MFL Bylaws.
6. Any other player who plays that violates any other MFL Bylaw.

A team that plays an ineligible player must forfeit the game(s) in which the ineligible player played. The Head Coach of the violating team will be placed on probation for one (1) year and the member town of that Head Coach will be fined two hundred fifty (\$250) dollars. A second violation of the MFL Bylaws by the same Head Coach during the probationary period will result in the Head Coach's expulsion from the MFL. In this event, he or she would not be permitted to coach again in the MFL, in any coaching capacity.

N. Any player with a documented continuous or lifetime medical condition, who was held back one (1) year in school prior to second grade due to their medical condition, and does not exceed the current age requirement for the competitive levels of Peewees and Juniors by more than six (6) months (February 28), and for the Senior Level not by more than two (2) months (March 1), may play at the level for their current grade, provided the player also meets the weight limits detailed in Paragraph 5F of the MFL Bylaws. This bylaw does not apply to any player held back more than one (1) year in school. This bylaw also does not apply to any player held back in school for any other reason.

In order to meet the requirements of this bylaw, the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the player must willingly provide medical documents from a licensed physician and school documents that detail the necessity to hold the player back a grade due to their medical condition. These documents would be held in strict confidence, in accordance with HIPAA rules, and only reviewed by the MFL for the purposes of a medical exception consideration under this bylaw.

Any town endeavoring to play a player under this medical exception bylaw must have the player's parent(s) or guardian(s) and their MFL League Representative present the aforementioned medical and school proofs by the June MFL meeting in any calendar year. Any further explanation of the medical exception can also be presented at that time.

The President of the MFL and his Executive Board, or a committee of four (4) League Representatives commissioned by the President, shall conduct a review of the documents to determine if enough proofs exist to proceed with a full vote of the League Representatives. The vote must take place at the next scheduled MFL meeting.

A medical exception under this bylaw is granted based on the documents provided, presentation of the proofs and a majority vote of the League Representatives. 07/19

## 6. ADMINISTRATION OF OFFICIAL MFL WEIGH-IN

A. The official weigh-ins will be held on the first (1st) Thursday and Saturday after Labor Day. (*Committee shall be comprised of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and a League Representative appointed by the President*)

B. The Committee shall act upon any controversy that may arise during the weigh-in.

C. One (1) League Representative from each member town shall be present for the entire MFL Weigh-In, on each of the weigh-in days. Each League Representative shall be given a specific job to perform and shall be instructed in the methods used for that specific job by the official Weigh-In Committee. (*See paragraph 4 I for fine of violation*)

D. It is the responsibility of the member town League Representatives to instruct the head coaches of their town the proper weigh-in procedures and make sure that their head coaches have been shown and told how to properly fill out all official weigh-in documents (*ID cards and league roster forms*) prior to entering the weigh-in room. The proper procedure shall be discussed at the August Coaches Meeting. (*See paragraph 4 J for fine of violation*)

## 7. WEIGH-IN FORMS PROCEDURE

A. **Official League Roster Form** (*minimum of fifteen (15) players*) shall be used or an identical computer printout. The roster form shall be filled out completely (either typed or printed) prior to a team entering the weigh-in room. **DO NOT INCLUDE THE PLAYERS WEIGHT. THIS SHALL BE RECORDED AT THE WEIGH-IN.** Included on the Official Roster shall be the first and last names, dates of birth and jersey number of the player, as well as the names of the coaching staff. These shall be the only people allowed on the sidelines during the games as outlined in the MFL Bylaws and National Federation High School Rules.

B. **League Identification Cards** (*ID cards*) shall be filled out completely before a team may enter the weigh-in room. **DO NOT INCLUDE THE PLAYERS WEIGHT. THIS SHALL BE RECORDED AT THE WEIGH-IN.**

C. **DO NOT** have the players write their signatures on the cards. Rather, have the coach type or print the player's name in that space.

D. **Official Age** documents shall be a Birth Certificate (*search [www.vitalchek.com](http://www.vitalchek.com) or [www.vitalrec.com](http://www.vitalrec.com) to obtain a birth certificate*). **Other acceptable documents are:** Last year's laminated official MFL ID card, a valid Passport, Legal Alien Registration Card (*Green Card*), or a Hospital Certificate. Photocopies of the aforementioned documents, with or without a raised seal, seal of a Notary Public or letter of an attorney will not be accepted.

## 8. INITIAL MFL WEIGH-IN PROCEDURE

A. All players must show up for the official MFL Weigh-In and Certification Day. If a player misses their scheduled weigh-in time, they have until the last member town weighs in to complete the weigh-in and certification.

B. Photographs of all players (*except for Pee Wees*) shall be taken.

C. The maximum weight allowed by the MFL Bylaws shall be set for backfield or linemen. No one except the appointed League Representative of the Weigh-in Committee shall be allowed to touch the scale.

- D. Electronic scales will give exact weights.
- E. If a player fails to make the backfield weight at the official MFL Weigh-In, that player is *not* eligible to play in the backfield at any time during the season, and falls into the linemen classification and their limitations.
- F. Under no circumstances shall an individual, coach or League Representative be told the amount of weight the player is over the limit, unless viewed while using electronic scales
- G. Each player shall step on to the scale and have their weight recorded, if applicable. If overweight, the player shall step off the scale, wait until the scale has been reset, then step back on the scale. If still over the weight limit, that player will have one (1) and only one (1) attempt on the second available scale (but remove no other articles of clothing). If the player is still over the weight limit, an OW shall be recorded in that player's weight space on the MFL official rosters and card. That player shall be ineligible for the first game of the season. The following weeks after the first game, that player will have a chance to make weight before each game of the season.
- H. At the conclusion of each team's weigh-in, the official Weigh-In Committee shall mark the roster as completed. At this point, no exceptions or additions shall be made.
- I. The head coach shall then match the ID cards with the photographs and assist in the lamination of the ID cards. It is important that the coach does this prior to his team leaving, in the event of a bad picture or lost ID card.
- J. The head coach must leave the Official League Roster at the MFL Weigh-In so that copies can be made and distributed to all member towns. It is the responsibility of the member town League Representative to return the copies of the Official Roster back to their respective towns and coaches at the conclusion of the official MFL Weigh-In.

## **9. WEEKLY WEIGH-IN PROCEDURE (*PRIOR TO GAME*)**

- A. The **Home Team Coach** is responsible to contact the visiting coach to facilitate the weekly weigh-in. If the visiting team is late, they shall forfeit their right to weigh the home team. If the home team fails to facilitate the weekly weigh-in then they forfeit their right to weigh the visiting team.
- B. Weekly weigh-in time for the pee wee game is one-half (1/2) hour prior to the start of the pee wee game. The junior level weigh-in is at half (1/2) time of the pee wee game. The senior level weigh-in is at half (1/2) time of the junior game. The MFL Roster forms and MFL ID cards must be present during the weigh-ins (See paragraph 4 M for fine of violation).
- C. Each player shall be given three (3) attempts to make the weight. The player shall be allowed to remove equipment or clothing prior to each attempt, but shall not be allowed to leave the scale area to participate in any weight reduction activities, with the exception of going to the bathroom.
- D. If a player arrives after the game has started and has not participated in the pre-game weigh-in, that player shall be ineligible until the start of the third (3rd) quarter, provided that player has met the proper weigh-in procedures.

## **10. HOME TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. The Home Team shall furnish a field in decent playing condition with the following dimensions:
  - Pee Wee Level – 80 yards. x 53 1/3 yards.
  - Junior Level – 100 yards. x 53 1/3 yards.
  - Senior Level - 100 yards. x 53 1/3 yards.
- B. There shall be three (3) officials for each game to be assigned by the Head Official at a rate (*per game per official*) negotiated between the MFL and the Head Official prior to the start of the season. At least two (2) officials must be

NJSIAA/NFHS certified officials. Optional – A fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) official can be requested and paid for by the Home Team to be assigned to run the official clock on the scoreboard. (Rev. 2018)

- C. Ten (10) yard chains and down marker, line markers, goal line markers and players benches must be utilized.
- D. An emergency squad, EMT, paramedic, nurse, nurse practitioner, certified athletic trainer, or doctor should be present in addition to a first aid kit and an ample supply of water.
- E. For the safety of spectators and players, a rope or barrier should be erected at least fifteen (15) feet from any part of the playing field.
- F. The home team shall notify the opposing team and officials as soon as possible before the game of weather or other cause making the playing of the game impossible, but not later than two (2) hours prior to the game.
- G. The home team shall make available a digital scale for the weekly weigh-in. and a room that is free from unauthorized personnel. Only the member town League Representative or head coach shall be permitted to enter the room. A League Representative or alternate can appoint an assistant coach to take the place of the head coach in his absence.
- H. Violators of the Home Team Responsibilities are to be reported within forty-eight (48) hours to the MFL President, who shall call a meeting if necessary. Repeated violations could result in forfeiture of the game in question.
- I. The home team League Representative shall notify the MFL Secretary or Web Master of the game results by phone or email no later than Sunday evening.

## 11. EQUIPMENT FOR ALL PLAYERS

- A. NOSCE approved helmet with facemask with a mouthpiece.
- B. Shoulder pads and rib pads
- C. Girdle with appropriate pads
- D. Padded football pants
- E. Athletic supporter with a hard cup
- F. Game jersey with 6" numbers on the front and 8" numbers on the back (*dark jersey for home & white jersey for away games, as per the rule 12. Playing Rules: NFHS Rule Book & agreed upon by all MFL Player Reps 5/30/19*).
- G. Sneakers, molded rubber cleats or screw in cleats (*male plastic cleat to female shoe, no metal studs on the cleats*).

## 12. PLAYING RULES

The National Federation High School Rule Book shall be the guide with the following exceptions:

- A. No spring practice or practice prior to August 1st shall be allowed in the year 2017. *Violators of this shall be subject to fines and suspension as deemed by the Executive Board, President Appointed Committee and or the MFL voting body.*
- B. Member towns may hold one (1) week of practice in the Spring, sometime between the dates of April 1st and May 31<sup>st</sup> or Sponsor and/or Host a “football camp” for up to 20 hours sometime in July. This is to be a strict camp for, speed , agility, and football drills. Under no circumstances will team practices, or any offensive, defensive or special

team base game planning be allowed. The purpose of this bylaw is to promote the sport of football and increase player participation for MFL teams.

C. The scouting of scrimmages or the viewing of practices of member towns is prohibited (See paragraph 4 G for fine of violation).

D. Wilson TDY leather or composite football for senior level, TDJ leather or composite football for junior level, and K2 leather or composite football for pee wee level.

E. Free substitutions allowed.

F. No number restrictions are enforced.

G. Three (3) timeouts in each half (1/2) shall be allowed.

H. The game shall consist of four (4) quarters, each consisting of ten (10) minutes for the senior level and junior level (See Special Pee Wee Rules 13 A), with a ten (10) minute halftime.

I. The offensive team shall be allowed thirty (30) seconds to put the ball in play.

J. The offensive end shall not be used as a ball carrier, except after a completed forward pass. The offensive end shall not receive a pass behind the line of scrimmage, with or without blockers set up in front.

K. Punters, place kickers, or holders shall not exceed the maximum weight, and are governed by the eighteen (18) regular season & twenty-four (24) playoff point rules (see paragraph 14 A)

L. Two (2) points are awarded for a successful kicked P.A.T. One (1) point is awarded for a successful run or pass P.A.T.

M. Trick plays and formations may be run as long as they are allowed under the NFHS Rule Book and comply with the MFL Bylaws. One exception to the NFHS rules shall be made for the "Fumblerooski" play. In the MFL, only one (1) of the four (4) running backs may pick up and advance the ball.

N. **Overtime (OT) Procedure** (*Regular Season, Playoffs and Super Bowl*). Teams tied at the end of regulation play shall play an OT period, consisting of an offensive and defensive series for each team. Each team shall get the ball on the opponent's ten (10) yard line and have four (4) downs in which to score, plus the P.A.T. (*if needed*). A coin toss shall determine which team has the choice. Each team receives one (1) timeout per OT period. This procedure is repeated if the score remains tied after each period. If after the third (3rd) OT period the score remains tied, the game shall be declared a tie and both teams shall be awarded one (1) point in the standings (*regular season*) or declared Co-Champions in the Super Bowl. During the playoffs, the OT procedure continues until a winner is determined. Overtime, regardless of penalties incurred: There are only four (4) downs per team, per overtime, regardless of incurred penalties by either team, (i.e. no first downs awarded). Defensive penalties will result in half the distance to the goal line and repeat down; Offensive penalties are treated the same as in regulation.

O. All coaches and players shall contain themselves between the twenty-five (25) yard lines. Penalty is fifteen (15) yards. (See Special Pee Wee Rules 13 F)

P. A flagrant facemask shall bring a penalty of fifteen (15) yards. A second (2nd) offense of this nature by the same player could result in an ejection from the game by the officials.

Q. To prevent injuries, teams must have at least a fifteen (15) minute warm-up period on or off of the field prior to the start of the game.

R. If a MFL Playing Rule is violated during the game, teams shall try to correct the problem before the game is over by requesting an official time out immediately.

S. Protests of games are to be made to the officials and a written report must be sent to the MFL President immediately after the game, postmarked within twenty-four (24) hours.

T. Any infractions of the MFL Playing Rules shall be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and the necessary penalty shall be voted on and administered by the MFL (see paragraph 4 E).

U. Decisions of the game officials shall be final.

V. Officials shall be furnished with a copy of the MFL Bylaws.

## 13. SPECIAL PEE WEE RULES

A. The game shall consist of four (4) quarters. Each quarter shall be ten (10) minutes in duration (*running time*). The clock shall stop for timeouts and scores, and shall not start again until the ball is put back into play. Each team shall receive three (3) timeouts per half. The clock shall be a stop and go clock with four (4) minutes remaining in each half.

B. Game ball is the Wilson K2 leather or composite.

C. The maximum penalty for the pee wee game shall be ten (10) yards.

D. One coach is allowed on the field of play at all times. The on-field Coach can bring a playbook onto the field. Communication devices of any kind are *not* allowed on the field. After the offensive unit breaks the huddle, the on-field coaches (*offensive and defensive*) can no longer give instructions or physically move a player. The on-field coaches should be at least fifteen (15) yards from the line of scrimmage.

E. The first infraction against the above (paragraph 13 D) shall receive a warning. Each subsequent infraction during the same game shall receive a ten (10) yard illegal participation penalty.

F. One (1) coach on the sidelines can go goal line to goal line.

G. A free kick shall be given when a team chooses to punt the ball to the other team. The punter *cannot* move out past the normal tackle splits to punt the ball. If either team moves past the line of scrimmage prior to the ball being kicked, an offside penalty shall be called. Both teams must align in a legal formation. Once a team chooses to punt, there shall be no fakes from the punt formation.

## 14. SPORTSMANSHIP

### A. Mercy Rules

#### Regular Season

**Eighteen (18) Point Rule.** If a team is ahead by eighteen (18) points or more after the third (3rd) quarter of play, or at any time in the fourth (4th) quarter, the game becomes official and the team ahead by eighteen (18) points or more is declared the winner of the game. The score at that time becomes the official score of record.

#### Playoffs

**Pee Wee level (19) Point Rule.** If a team is ahead by nineteen (19) points or more after the third (3rd) quarter of play, or at any time in the fourth (4th) quarter, the game becomes official and the team ahead by nineteen (19) points or more is declared the winner of the game. The score at that time becomes the official score of record.

**Junior level (20) Point Rule.** If a team is ahead by twenty (20) points or more after the third (3rd) quarter of play, or at any time in the fourth (4th) quarter, the game becomes official and the team ahead by twenty (20) points or more is

declared the winner of the game. The score at that time becomes the official score of record.

**Senior level (21) Point Rule.** If a team is ahead by twenty-one (21) points or more after the third (3rd) quarter of play, or at any time in the fourth (4th) quarter, the game becomes official and the team ahead by twenty-one (21) points or more is declared the winner of the game. The score at that time becomes the official score of record.

The game, at the start of fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) quarter, or the remaining time in the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) quarter, is declared a "B" game and both teams shall remove their starters, and replace them with all available substitutes (mandatory). The scoreboard shall be reset to "0" for both teams with a running clock. The score is kept for the remaining time in the "B" game for the sole purpose of the children playing in the game. The scoring in the "B" game has no measurable value in terms of standings or game results. If a situation arises where either team does not have a complete number of "B" players, the following shall apply:

1. An equal number of "B" player substitutions shall be made by each team. Every effort to clear benches of "B" team players for both squads will be made.
2. Each team shall remove their starting backfields from the offensive unit.
3. If either team allows the other team to play with their starters, because of shortage of players, there will be a mandatory "B" game played for the sake of allowing all "B" players the opportunity to play.
4. If items 1, 2 & 3 cannot be met or agreed upon by both teams, the 4th quarter shall not be played or completed and the game is declared officially over. The MFL Board and League Representatives will review for Mercy rule infraction.

B. Failure of the winning team to follow the above Mercy Rules (14A) in the (4<sup>th</sup>) quarter shall result in the stoppage of play and the game being declared a tie or loss after a review by the MFL Board and League Representatives. Both teams could be awarded one (1) point in the MFL standings. Refer to Rule (12Q) in resolving a Mercy Rule in the Playoff Format.

C. Failure of either team in following the above Mercy Rules (14 A) shall result in the following:

1. The head coach shall be suspended for at least one (1) game.
2. The team(s) will be placed on probation for the remainder of the season.
3. A \$100 fine for first infraction, \$200 fine & possible seasonal suspension for second infraction.

D. Head coaches of both teams and the referee shall meet briefly on the fifty (50) yard line before the coin toss to discuss game situations.

E. Any player or coach that is ejected from a game for fighting or any other unsportsmanlike conduct shall be ineligible to participate in the team's next game.

F. If a coach is found guilty after a MFL investigation of giving players instructions to intentionally injure an opposing player, he shall be suspended from the MFL for the remainder of the season. In addition, his team shall be declared ineligible for any post season play that year and shall be placed on probation for the following season.

G. Kickoff Mercy Rule: the receiving team, if down by the specified point margin per level (below), will have the option of taking the ball on offense, without the kick off/return play. This rule is in effect for the complete game, Q1 thru Q4.

Pee Wee level (-18) elect to take ball on own 25 yard line (of 80 yard field).

Junior level (-19) elect to take ball on own 35 yard line.

Senior level (-20) elect to take ball on own 35 yard line.

## 15. GAME SCHEDULING

A. An appointed committee selected by the President of the MFL shall prepare the game schedule.

B. The schedule shall consist of eight (8) regular season games, two (2) playoff rounds and a Super Bowl Championship Game for all three (3) levels.

C. The schedule shall show games that are to be played on Saturday evenings shall start at 5:30 PM. Games that are to be played on Sunday afternoons shall begin at 12:00 PM.

D. When a scheduled game is not to be played, the opposing League Representatives shall reschedule the game. They shall notify the MFL Secretary of their decision. If a date cannot be agreed upon, the matter shall be referred to the MFL President and the Game Scheduling Committee, who shall resolve the matter.

E. **Rainout games** All efforts must be made to make the game up before the next scheduled games. If there are no rainouts, the first week after the regular season shall be used for playoffs.

## 16. PLAYOFFS & SUPER BOWL

A. **Playoffs** The first four (4) teams in each division, regardless of records, shall qualify for the MFL playoffs.

B. Playoff sites are to be considered neutral sites. All teams and coaches shall be granted equal rights and access during all playoff games. Choice of team jersey colors and preferred sideline will be the choice of the higher seed determined at a MFL meeting. Super Bowl participants will be awarded based on divisional tie breaking criteria (see paragraph 16 I).

C. **Quarterfinal Divisional Round** (*First round*). The four (4) teams that qualify shall be seeded, based upon their finish in the standings, one (1) through four (4) in each division. The number one (1) seeded team shall play the number four (4) seeded team, and the number two (2) seeded team shall play the number three (3) seeded team. Winners advance to the Semifinal Divisional Round.

D. **Semifinal Divisional Round** (*Second round*). Winners shall be re-seeded in each division (*remaining divisional winning highest seed shall become the number one (1) seed and the other team becomes the number two (2) seed*).

E. **Super Bowl** The winners from the Semifinal Divisional Round shall play for the Super Bowl Trophy.

F. **Overtime Procedures** (See paragraph 12 M)

G. Playoff sites are awarded alphabetically within the divisions. In order to be a host site, the host field must be certified by NFHS official field standards. If there is no certification for the host site field, then the host site will be moved to another town's field as determined by the MFL Board.

H. All Semifinal playoff games for the North and South Divisions will be scheduled to be played on a Saturday. Any change due to field availability must be approved by the MFL Board. (Rev. 2018)

I. The Super Bowl site will continue in its current alphabetical rotation. (Current rotation in effect as of 2013)

J. **Divisional Tie Breakers** Each division shall have a Champion based upon overall record. However, in the event of a tie for any of the playoff positions, the following tie breaker criteria shall be used:

1. Head to head results
2. Quality points\*
3. Divisional record
4. Record vs. teams with a .500 record or better
5. Road victories
6. Coin flip

**\*Quality Points.** Teams in each division shall receive three (3) points for a victory within its own division, two (2) points for a victory in the opposing division and one (1) point for a tie in either division.

K. During the Super Bowl and Semifinal Divisional Playoff games, the MFL is responsible for the officials' fees including an official clock operator, and shall supply gate, 50/50 and chain crews for all games. All gate proceeds, donations and 50/50 drawings shall go to the MFL. Proceeds from the concession stand go to the host team. The host team shall provide an announcer.

L. During the Quarterfinal Divisional Playoff games, the host team shall be responsible for the payment of the three (3) game officials and one (1) official clock operator, and the supplying of gate, 50/50, chain crews, and announcer for all games. All gate proceeds, donations, 50/50 drawings, or concessions shall go to the host team. (Rev. 2018)

M. All member town League Representatives and Alternate League Representatives must be present at the assigned Semifinal Divisional Playoff site and Super Bowl for all three (3) games. Each delegate shall be assigned specific jobs to perform at the games. (*See paragraph 4 K for fine of violation*)

N. If a member town has two (2) teams participating at different sites on the same day that member town's League Representatives shall be excused from working the Semifinal Divisional Playoff games.

O. Trophies shall be awarded to the winners of each game during the Semifinal Divisional Playoffs.