

Farmers Valley Youth Football League Rules & By-Laws

(Most recently updated May 1, 2025)

Commissioner: Greg Boehr, 402-366-7658, farmersvalleyfootball@gmail.com

Vice Commissioner: Derek O'Connor, 402-366-9197, derekoconnor29@gmail.com

League Mailing Address: Post Office Box 253, McCool Junction, Nebraska 68401

Web Address: www.farmersvalleyyouthfootball.com

A. General League Structure

1. The Farmers Valley Youth Football League (legally recognized as Farmers Valley Football, LLC) is a tackle football league created for the development of 4th through 6th grade players in the state of Nebraska. The league is owned by commissioner Greg Boehr and presently only employs 1 person, vice commissioner Derek O'Connor. Established in 2015, the league offers an 11-man and 8-man division. The FVYFL will follow all current high school football rules established by the Nebraska School Activities Association (<https://nsaahome.org/football/>). As the NSAA adopts new rules for high school football, so will the FVYFL. 11-man and 8-man specific rules will be applied. To meet the needs of the league, the following rules have been changed, modified, or adapted from the NSAA rules of play.

2. **Mandatory Paperwork:** There are 2 forms that are required annually for varsity team participation in the FVYFL. 2025 league dues are \$150.00 per team and may be mailed to the league or submitted at the annual meeting. Required alongside payment is the "League Dues Form." Programs that field more than 1 varsity level team will be required to pay for each team's participation individually. JV teams do not have to pay dues. Dues are used pay postseason officials, book meeting venues, help teams with equipment upkeep, and to purchase trophies and medals for championship events. The "Program Status Form" is also required and is used as an information collection tool by the league. Both of these documents are available for download on the league website (<https://www.farmersvalleyyouthfootball.com/forms>). They are due no later than May 1, 2025.

3. There are 2 meetings that occur annually, 1 for 11-man and 1 for 8-man. At these meetings, rules are discussed, and the league's structure is debated and modified. Each team has 1 official vote with the commissioner being the tiebreaker. A simple majority is required to pass items. If a rule is accepted in the 11-man division that effects the league as a whole, then it will be required to pass in the 8-man division as well before taking effect or vice versa. There are 2 types of rules in the FVYFL.

- I. **Executive:** Rules that help govern the league can be modified by the commissioner at any time without a vote from the teams. These are things that help us make the league more secure & organized. Things like banning certain equipment pieces, outlawing plays, setting dates, organizational structuring, etc.

- II. **General:** Rules that pertain to how the league operates, such as the adding or removing of teams, weight rules, season structure, basic rules of play, etc. are all modified based on a vote from the teams.

B. Notable League Specific Rules

1. All NSAA jersey numbering rules will be suspended except for one case. Duplicate jersey numbers are prohibited and will not be allowed under any circumstance. This rule is in place to help eliminate unscrupulous practices involving roster manipulation.
2. Substitution violations will not be penalized.
3. A forfeit will officially be counted as a victory with a score of 2--0.
4. The “fumblerooski” trick play is illegal and will count as a loss of down if attempted. This play is defined as the quarterback/center intentionally fumbling the ball so that an offensive lineman can pick it up and immediately run with it.
5. The play known as the “swinging gate”, commonly used in PAT attempts, is illegal.
6. Teams are allowed to host any kind of camps or activities that they want during the offseason. They may also charge a fee for camps if desired. Once the season begins, August 1-October 31, any sort of organized team activity counts as a practice. In accordance with rule *H6*, you can only have 3 practices per week. Practices may occur on any day of the week.
7. **Scouting:** Recording games, taking notes from the stands, conversing with opposing coaches, etc., is fully allowed. However, the scouting of any form of practice is strictly prohibited. Teams who are found to have scouted anything that is not an official FVYFL game will be immediately expelled from the league.

C. Player Eligibility

1. Players must be entering 4th-6th grade for the 2025 academic year.
2. Players CANNOT be the age of 13 at any time during the season. That means if they turn 13 mid-season, then they are not eligible for the entirety of that season. Teams that are found in violation of this rule will be subject to season forfeiture and win vacation.
3. Players in 3rd grade may be allowed to practice and play in JV games or 5th quarters but will not be allowed to play in varsity football games. Teams have the option of including them on their roster if they choose. If a program must play 3rd graders in order to field a varsity team, then the commissioner, as well as the team’s weekly opponent, must be notified 1 week in advance.
4. All players must pass an athletic physical (performed by a licensed healthcare professional in the United States) before their first practice. Physicals (or photocopies) must be on hand at every game and can be viewed at the request of an opposing coach. If a coach cannot provide an up to

date physical upon request, then the player in question is ineligible. Per NSAA guidelines, physicals must be completed from May 1 onward to qualify for the upcoming school year and sports seasons. Physicals dated before May 1 will not be valid for the 2025 FVYFL season.

5. All players must sign a unique liability waiver provided by their own team.

6. Equal Opportunity for Participation: If a player meets all of the necessary criteria for participation, then an FVYFL team must grant them the ability to participate in their program. These criteria may include but are not limited to: paying the specific registration fee, passing an athletic physical, signing up during the team's specific registration window, attending school within the team's legal district, etc. Programs cannot discriminate based on name, sex, gender, religion, race, sexual orientation, political affiliation, immigration status, familial status, etc. Teams are also barred from holding tryouts or setting hard limits in an effort to cap their roster size. This is a place for growing the game and we will not tolerate intentional efforts to restrict kids from the chance to be involved.

D. Equipment

1. All players must be outfitted with legal equipment that is in good condition and has been properly fitted by the team's coaching staff. Helmets must be outfitted with a medical warning label or decal. These labels must state that no helmet can prevent concussion-brain injury or the possibility of severe head or neck injuries while playing football. All helmets come with this label from the factory. However, if a label is removed by wear or otherwise, then it is the legal responsibility of the coaching staff to replace that label before the helmet can be used further. These labels can often be acquired at little to no cost direct from the manufacturer.

2. Helmets are to be either reconditioned or replaced every 2 years according to the *National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE)*. **This is the law!** Companies such as Riddell, Schutt, & Harco Athletic (Fort Collins, CO) are all options that some FVYFL teams currently use for reconditioning. Please create a plan to maintain your helmets, your players' safety depends on it.

3. Any helmet, no matter how many times it is reconditioned, has a maximum lifespan of 10 years from its manufacture date, **not from its initial season**. This also means that if a helmet sits unused for a season, that still counts as a year of its lifespan. Please make sure that your helmets are compliant. It is up to the individual teams to make certain that their equipment is properly maintained. The FVYFL shall not be held liable for any injuries resulting from improper, unsafe, or expired equipment.

4. Full metal cleat spikes, such as those commonly used in baseball, are strictly prohibited.

5. Wearing any kind of watch, Fitbit, or related digital device during games is strictly prohibited. This includes anything from the standard digital watch all the way up to a smart watch and beyond.

6. Electronic communication between coaches and players during games is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to earbuds, cell phones, smart watches, etc. Bluetooth-enabled hearing aids are illegal if found to have electronic communication abilities. If a player must wear these,

then their communication ability must be disabled prior to gameday. Coaches may use headsets if they so choose to communicate amongst themselves, but not with their players.

7. If a player needs to wear a hard cast on any part of their body (such as their arm, wrist, hand, leg, etc.) then it must be covered with a soft padding on the outside of the cast. This is required to reduce the risk of injury to both the injured player and their opponents by using the cast as a club.

E. Player Weight Requirements

1. It is REQUIRED that at least 1 official be present at the weigh-in for transparency and rules clarification. Everyone involved with the game needs to be on the same page regarding weight regulations.

2. Players 150 pounds and under will be allowed to participate in all aspects of a game.

3. All players over 130 pounds on the roster will be weighed before each game. The home team will provide the scale. The scale must be digital. All players that need to be weighed will be weighed on that scale only. The player will weigh in football pants with all 7 required pants pads inserted, (That includes 2 knee, 2 thigh, 2 hip, and 1 tailbone pad. Players may wear a padded girdle as long as all 7 pads are present. You cannot weigh without knee pads for example.), a shirt, and socks. They do not have to wear shoulder pads, shoes, or a helmet. Weigh-in will occur 15 minutes prior to game time or earlier. **Weigh-in will occur ONCE. There will be no re-weighs or do-overs after the initial weigh-in.** 2 out of 3 weigh-ins will be used to determine status. A player must weigh under 150 pounds 2 out of 3 times. It is highly encouraged that you weigh in a private area such as a bathroom or equipment shed so as to not cause any undue stress to players. **Parents are not allowed at weigh-in, this is for coaches, officials, & players only.**

4. **Heavyweight Marker:** Any player over 150 pounds **MUST** have a distinct, 1" wide stripe on their helmet running from the crown to the base. This stripe must contrast with the color of the helmet for easy identification by coaches and officials. For example, if your helmet is white then the stripe cannot be silver, or if your helmet is navy, then the stripe cannot be black, etc. If your regular helmet design already utilizes a stripe, then the heavyweight stripe **MUST** be a distinctly different color. For example, if you already have black stripes on your helmets, then the heavyweight stripe cannot be grey. Instead use colors like red, blue, orange, etc. The stripe can be an actual decal, a line of athletic tape, or any other material that will stay on throughout the course of a game. Coaches must be able to re-mark helmets if the stripe comes off during a game. If a coach cannot re-mark a helmet, then that player becomes ineligible. Teams that use Guardian Helmet Caps can use the covers with integrated stripes on them or they can permanently mark their caps with paint or some other marking material. Such covers may be found here: (<https://shop.guardiansports.com/collections/football/products/football-scrimmage-pinnie-cap-single>).

5. Players between 150-180 pounds are classified as "heavyweights." On offense, they are **ONLY** permitted to play left guard, center, or right guard. On defense they are **ONLY** permitted to play left defensive tackle, noseguard, or right defensive tackle. **This does not mean that they can play offensive tackle, tight end, or defensive end!**

6. Only 2 heavyweights are allowed to play on offense or defense at a time per team. In the 8-man division, only 1 heavyweight is allowed to play on offense or defense at a time per team.
7. Heavyweights **MAY NOT** participate in any special teams play. Special teams are defined as kickoff, kick return, punt, punt return, field goal, field goal defense, PAT, and PAT defense.
8. Dedicated 2-point conversion attempts are not considered special teams. This is when a team lines up with their normal offense and plans to run a play. The attempting team must declare if they are “going for 2” or not so that the defense also has an opportunity to put their heavyweights back onto the field. However, if a team lines up to kick a PAT (or field goal or punt during a normal drive) and instead plans to run a fake, then that does not need to be disclosed, and the play may proceed as normal. This is because if a team lines up to kick (or punt) it, then they, as well as the defense, couldn’t have had any heavyweights on the field to begin with by rule.
9. Heavyweights are deemed ineligible for pass receiving or ball carrying. Even if the formation deems them eligible, they may not carry the ball intentionally. That means that typical tackle or guard-eligible pass plays and runs are illegal when involving a heavyweight player as the ball carrier.
10. Heavyweights may possess and advance the football when turnover opportunities arise. Instances such as fumbles, tipped passes, interceptions, strips, etc. are all times that this can occur. Play will proceed as normal.
11. If a player is over 180 pounds, then they are illegal and will not be allowed to participate in any facet of a game, be it JV or varsity. This is non-negotiable. The liability is too great for the FVYFL, and this rule is not to be modified by coach agreement under any circumstances.

F. Team Eligibility

1. Teams must declare whether they are playing 11-man or 8-man to the commissioner by May 1, 2025.
2. FVYFL teams will be comprised of any eligible players that attend the public school district in which their home field resides in. Where you play your home games is your official district. Team jurisdiction will be based on that home field school district only. However, co-op teams may use the kids from their respective cooperative school districts. A current example would be Nuckolls County. They have players from both the Lawrence-Nelson & Superior school districts on the same team.
3. If a program wants to claim more than 1 public school district, then they will be designated as a co-op. Their official team name must reflect that intention. This eliminates larger communities from just claiming that their neighboring schools are also under their jurisdiction. This does not mean that you must change colors, uniforms, mascot, or equipment style, just that your name must reflect that you are in fact a co-op organization. Current co-ops within the FVYFL include Arcadia/Loup City, Bruning-Davenport/Shickley, Fusion, H&H, Newman Grove/St. Edward, Nuckolls County, Shelby-Rising City/Osceola, & Thayer County. If an 8-man program claims 3 or more districts, then their 8-man status will be discussed annually, and that team may be

designated for 11-man play by the commissioner. This is a decision based on roster size and other circumstances in addition to claiming 3 or more districts.

4. If a player attends a private/religious school or is homeschooled, then they are allowed to play as long as that “school” is located within the public school district of their team.

5. **Free Agents:** Any child that attends a public school district in which an FVYFL team does not currently occupy, has the freedom to choose wherever they wish to play. Current examples would be kids who attend Dorchester or Meridian. They may have teams that are close by, but these kids are not bound to a specific district. A Dorchester kid for example may choose to play for Fusion or Milford respectively. They are considered “free agents.”

6. **Opting/Transferring:** If a player currently attends school within another FVYFL team’s jurisdiction and they wish to opt-in to play for a different FVYFL team, then they must complete the “Player Transfer Form” before practicing or playing for their new team. That includes the district that they are leaving and the district that they are joining. This document is available for download on the league website (<https://www.farmersvalleyyouthfootball.com/forms>). An example would be a player who lives in Stromsburg and attends school at Cross County wanting to play for High Plains. This is only an issue if that player attends Cross County Community Schools. If that player lives in Stromsburg, but already attends High Plains for school, then it is legal, and no forms need to be filed. Coaches must be able to verify where their players attend school if a request is made by the league or another coach. Verbal commitments are not verifiable if a dispute arises and will not be honored. Proper paperwork is to be filled out and mailed to the league office for records before August 1, 2025. Teams found in violation of this rule will be subject to post-season probation, league expulsion or both.

7. If the public school district represented by an FVYFL team is playing 8-man at the high school level, then the team has the option of playing 11-man or 8-man at the youth level. A team who represents a school district playing 11-man at the high school level has the option of petitioning the league for the chance to play 8-man at the youth level. After considering the argument represented by the team, all league members from both divisions will vote. They will either accept the request to play 8-man or deny the request. This decision must be completed by May 1, 2025.

8. All teams must be voted into the league by a simple majority from the division that they wish to join, be it 11-man or 8-man. Each program must compete for 1 full season (1 season in the competitive division for 8-man) before being granted voting power.

G. Roster Requirements

1. Each team must submit a properly filled out roster to the league by August 15, 2025. If a roster is not declared and submitted by this time, then that team will NOT be placed on any active schedule for the 2025 season. This allows staff to print in-stadium rosters ahead of time for games as well as prepare for weigh-ins. Do not be late!

2. Rosters MUST include the following:

- ❖ Player jersey number.
- ❖ Player first & last name.
- ❖ Player grade.
- ❖ Player weight.
- ❖ Public, Private, or Home School in which a player attends.
- ❖ Complete list of coaches and student managers.
- ❖ Team sponsors (optional).

Hometowns are no longer needed, please just include the physical location of where your players attend school. If it is a private or local religious school, then please specify what town that school is in on the roster in parentheses. Example: *Grace Lutheran (Geneva, Nebraska)* or *Saint John Lutheran (Seward, Nebraska)*. Please submit by email to the commissioner or website administrator before the deadline above.

3. Players who attend school outside of the state of Nebraska must be specified on the roster in the same manner as a private school. Ex: *Republic County USD (Belleville, KS)*.
4. Children that move into a district after roster submission may be added later, pending they follow all rules pertaining to their participation on that team such as age, weight, school district, etc.
5. Teams may not add any new players once the first official varsity game has occurred. This date is sometimes different for 11-man and 8-man, so please pay attention to that detail!
6. If you have separate digits for home and away games, please list the home digit first followed by the away digit. Ex: 11/14. This is not optional, it is required.

H. Coach Responsibilities

1. All teams must have access to a home field. Sizing of such a surface must comply with rule K6.
2. All players must be properly equipped.
3. Coaches must have a copy of each player's athletic physical on file and on hand at games. They must also be able to verify where their players attend school.
4. Coaches must have each player sign a liability waiver of their own design.
5. Coaches must adopt the concussion and player safety protocol of the high school program in the district that they reside in. If multiple high schools are in your district, then please pick just one. If you have a parks and recreation department or municipal organization that governs your program, then using their concussion and player safety protocol is also acceptable. If your program does not have a governing body or local high school team, then you must create a concussion and player safety protocol on your own before your first practice.
6. Teams may begin practicing on August 1, 2025. They must limit practices to 3 days a week. Practices may be held on any day of the week. Any organized team activity during the official season, August 1-October 31, will count as a practice regardless of intensity or length of time

taken to gather. Conditioning in just helmets is still practicing if it occurs in-season! Events that occur before August 1, 2025 are considered camps and are not bound to in-season practice rules. See rule B6.

7. Each player must have 2 non-contact practices to start the season.

8. Both head coaches must report the outcome of a varsity game, **including whether it ended in overtime or multiple overtime periods**, on gameday to the commissioner or vice commissioner via text, call, or email so that they may be recorded and posted on the website. Both are required to report to help eliminate score discrepancies. Contact information for these individuals may be found at the beginning of this document.

9. All coaches and team governing organizations must adhere to the guidelines of the *Nebraska Concussion Awareness Act*, effective July 1, 2012. It requires that all public, private, and parochial schools, as well as all organized youth sports sponsored by villages, cities, businesses, or non-profit organizations for children ages 19 and under, make available approved concussion training. The law has three requirements:

- I. **Education:** All coaches, youth athletes, and their parents or guardians must be provided with education about the risks and symptoms of concussion and how to seek proper medical attention.
- II. **Removal from Play:** Under any reasonable suspicion of concussion, coaches will remove youth athletes from play.
- III. **Return to Play:** Youth athletes will not be allowed to return to play including games, scrimmages, and practices of any kind, until written approval from an appropriate licensed healthcare professional AND the youth's parent or guardian are obtained. A licensed healthcare professional may be a physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, athletic trainer, neuropsychologist, or any licensed healthcare worker in Nebraska who is specifically trained in pediatric traumatic brain injury. The law was amended, effective July 18, 2014, to include a return-to-learn provision. The return-to-learn protocol recognizes that students who have sustained a concussion and returned to school may need informal or formal accommodations, modifications of curriculum, and monitoring by medical or academic staff until the student is fully recovered. It requires schools to establish a return-to-learn protocol.

10. Additional information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about concussions and their associated risks, can be found at (<https://www.cdc.gov/heads-up/>) or on the league website at

(https://www.farmersvalleyyouthfootball.com/_files/ugd/536dfe_f0ec33f9d3924b159fcd641f7a4b0db9.pdf).

11. Each team is required to have one member of their staff who attends all practices and games complete the free “Concussion in Sports” online course offered by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). Upon completion, the certificate and accompanying completion code must be submitted to the league on or before May 1, 2025. Failure to do so will result in strict disciplinary action. The course can be found at (<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/concussion-in-sports-2>) or on the league website at (<https://www.farmersvalleyyouthfootball.com/forms>).

1. 11-man Season Structure

1. The 11-man division consists of 11 teams divided into 2 conferences; a large Blue & a small Red conference.

Blue Conference

- Aurora
- Beatrice
- Crete
- Seward
- York

Red Conference

- Adams Central
- Fillmore Central
- Malcolm
- Milford
- Raymond Central
- Wilber-Clatonia

2. The Blue conference will play 4 regular season games within itself while the Red will play 5. A 5th/6th non-conference game will occur following conference play. For that final game, each team will play an opponent of equal standing from the other conference. The only exception is that the 6th place team in the Red will receive a BYE because there is not another team to pair them up with from the Blue. This final game is part of the official schedule and is not optional. The champions of the Blue & Red will play for the overall league championship at LOCATION TBD on that same day.

- ❖ September 7
- ❖ September 14
- ❖ September 21
- ❖ September 28
- ❖ October 5
- ❖ October 12 (championship game)
- ❖ October 19 (alternate/weather championship date)

The official schedule may be found on the league website
(<https://www.farmersvalleyyouthfootball.com/schedules-and-scores>).

3. FVYFL teams have the option of competing in a “bowl game” at the end of the regular season. These are games that are independently planned by 2 FVYFL teams for the purpose of playing another game. They are not scheduled by the league! These contests do not impact a team’s final W-L record, but they may be posted to the website upon request. Both head coaches must agree in order for the score to be posted. Remember that you must seek approval from the commissioner before playing any non-FVYFL teams while in season (August 1-October 31).

4. The season shall not extend past October 31, 2025. W-L records will be frozen on November 1.

J. 8-man Season Structure

1. The 8-man competitive division consists of 19 teams divided into 4 conferences; West, North, Central, & South.
2. There are no teams within the Developmental Conference for 2025.

West Conference

- Arcadia/Loup City
- Central Valley
- Fullerton
- Ravenna

North Conference

- Cross County
- High Plains
- Newman Grove/St. Edward
- Shelby-Rising City/Osceola
- Twin River

Central Conference

- Centennial
- Fusion
- Giltner
- H&H
- McCool Junction

South Conference

- Bruning-Davenport/Shickley
- Nuckolls County
- Sandy Creek
- Sutton
- Thayer County

3. Each conference will play a 4-game regular season within itself to determine the final game. The 1 exception is that, since the conferences are unbalanced, the West will receive an extra BYE. Once the first 4 scheduled games occur, teams will then be seeded and matched up with opponents of equal standing from another conference. Then the last game of the season will be played based on those standings. The West & South conferences will host those final games this season. BYE weeks are in place and will occur over the course of the season. They are required to properly format the schedule.

4. The 4 conference champions will compete in a playoff for the championship. The championship game will be held the week following the playoffs on October 19, 2025, at TO BE ANNOUNCED.

- ❖ September 7
- ❖ September 14
- ❖ September 21
- ❖ September 28
- ❖ October 5
- ❖ October 12 (playoffs/non-conference week)
- ❖ October 19 (championship game)
- ❖ October 26 (alternate/weather championship date)

The official schedule may be found on the league website (<https://www.farmersvalleyyouthfootball.com/schedules-and-scores>).

5. FVYFL teams have the option of competing in a “bowl game” at the end of the regular season. These are games that are independently planned by 2 FVYFL teams for the purpose of playing another game. They are not scheduled by the league! These contests do not impact a team’s final W-L record, but they may be posted to the website upon request. Both head coaches must agree in order for the score to be posted. Remember that you must seek approval from the commissioner before playing any non-FVYFL teams while in season (August 1-October 31).

6. The season shall not extend past October 31, 2025. W-L records will be frozen on November 1.

K. Game Day Structure

1. The home team will contact the visiting team 1 week prior to game day to confirm game details. A few teams in the league have only 1 game jersey. Please communicate with each other so that similar colors are not worn. The home team has the right to pick their jersey color first.

2. Varsity games will be held on Sundays at 2:30p unless an alternate time and date is agreed upon by both head coaches. **The home team cannot unilaterally choose a new kickoff time without the approval of the visitors!** When considering a time change, please take Sunday religious services into heavy consideration. The reasoning for 2:30p being the standard kickoff time is to allow for those who practice their religion to be able to go to service and also play football without rushing or being underprepared to play.

3. **No entry fee will be charged to attend regular season games. A fee of \$2 for students (under age 19) and \$3 for adults will be charged at any post-season events such as bowl games or the championship. These proceeds go to the host team’s organization. This does NOT include the playoffs for 8-man or non-conference week for 11-man. Only the 2 championship games (or extra bowl games) are considered the post season for 2025.**

4. Games will consist of 4 quarters, each being 9 minutes in length.

5. The play clock shall be enforced for all varsity games. Both the 25-second and 40-second play clocks shall be used in accordance with NSAA regulations. Please visit the following link for clarification on when each is to be used: (<https://nsaa-static.s3.amazonaws.com/textfile/fbl/fb4025.pdf>).
6. Games shall be played on an 80 or 100-yard regulation football field with adequate markings. It is highly recommended that you play on the field size of your respective 11-man or 8-man division.
7. Each team will be required to play with an official leather or composite Wilson TDY football. “Wilson” is the brand and “TDY” is the size. The letters TDY must be visibly stamped onto the football by the manufacturer in order for it to be legal. If a football is missing these letters or the sizing is generically advertised for youth-level play, then the ball is illegal. Other sizes such as TDJ or K2 are illegal. Other brands such as Nike, Under Armour, Spalding, Baden, Rawlings, Adidas, Franklin, etc. are also illegal.
8. Each team has the freedom to use their own football during their offensive and special teams’ possessions. However, this is not mandatory. The home team is required to provide a football for both teams to use for the entirety of the game(s).
9. The home team will supply all game officials. A minimum of 4 officials is required. 1 of those officials must be NSAA certified. **Gameday officials must be at least 19 years of age or older. High school kids are forbidden from officiating varsity level competition. The only exception to this is if said high school aged kids have actually undergone the necessary training to become certified at the NSAA high school level.** Teams that violate this rule will be subject to discipline. A chain crew of 3 is also required, those operators are not regulated. Please refrain from using the parents or guardians of your players as officials. If those individuals are running chains or the down marker, then they need to do so in a neutral manner. They are, at that point, part of the gameday crew and should act professionally. We respectfully ask that they not show bias while fulfilling their respective roles. Public address announcers and clock operators should also adhere to a high standard of professionalism!
10. It is the home team’s responsibility to educate their officials on the *FVYFL Rules & By-Laws*. Please communicate with your officials prior to gameday so that any confusion is avoided.
11. If the home team cannot supply 4 officials, then it is their responsibility to notify the visiting team 1 week in advance of their game. The visiting team is allowed to supply additional officials in order to reach the required number of 4. This is not required of the visitors, but fully allowed regardless of whether the home team agrees to the specific person(s) chosen or not. 4 officials need to be there and both teams have the ability to make this a reality.
12. Coaches are allowed to go onto the field during timeouts.
13. 1 coach will be allowed out to the hash mark between plays as long as they are not interfering with the other team and are back to the sideline before the snap. If a coach fails to retreat and interferes with the play, then it will result in a 15-yard penalty.

14. A maximum of 2 coaches may move beyond the sideline players box and down to the goal line at a time. This can be any combination of 2 coaches, not just a head coach or coordinator for example. Players must remain inside the players box.

15. Special teams play will be the same as outlined by the NSAA.

16. PAT kick attempts as well as field goals are allowed. The same rules apply for this as for punts. Please see rule *K17* for clarification.

17. Punting is fully legal. The return team/defense are allowed to rush the punter to attempt a block. They are, however, not allowed to place anyone over the top of the long snapper. The long snapper is **not to be hit** prior to the ball leaving the punter's foot. This is a 15-yard unnecessary roughness penalty with an automatic first down (when applicable).

18. Auto-Punt Option: A team will have the option of a 30-yard auto-punt for 11-man or a 25-yard auto-punt for 8-man. The ball will be moved down the field 30 or 25 yards (depending on your division) and will not to be placed any deeper than the opponent's 25-yard line on an 11-man field or the 15-yard line on an 8-man field. After the ball has been moved the down is over. Once 4th down has been declared on the field, the coach with possession can use the entirety of the play clock for that down to make their decision or to call timeout.

19. Overtime: The overtime period will begin with a new coin toss. The winner of the toss will select offense, defense, or which side of the field to play on. There is no game clock in overtime. Each team will have 1 timeout per overtime period. The offense will begin play from the 10-yard line and will have 4 downs to score a touchdown with a subsequent PAT or 2-pt conversion attempt. Then the other team will have a turn to respond. Teams will flip endzones after each OT period. At the start of 4OT, the teams will alternate 2-pt conversion attempts until a winner is declared. Games will never end in a tie in the FVYFL.

20. Mercy Rule: If one team has a 30-point advantage after the first half, then the clock will run continuously with stoppages for timeouts, possession changes, quarter changes, injuries, and penalties. 1 coach will be allowed on the field to assist their team on offense and defense. 1 coach from the team with the 30-point advantage will also be allowed on the field to be able to assist their team. Please utilize this time for second string, younger players, players playing out of position etc.

21. The home team must provide a location of similar size to their own warm-up space for the visitors to get ready on. They must also provide a minimum warm-up time of 30 minutes for the visitors.

22. Defensive 2-pt Conversion: If the offense loses possession while attempting a 2-pt conversion and the defense runs the ball back to the opposite endzone, then the defense shall be awarded 2 points.

23. Conversion 1-pt Safety: If the offense attempts to kick a PAT, it is blocked, recovered by the defense in the endzone and then that defender is tackled within the endzone, then the offense shall be awarded 1 point in the form of a safety.

24. Music is not to be played at any point during a game. Music can be played during pregame, halftime, and postgame only. Failure to comply will result in a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for each occurrence.

25. All gameday officials for league championship games will be supplied and paid for by the league.

L. Junior Varsity Games, Non-League Varsity Games, & Unscheduled In-League Varsity Exhibitions

1. JV Games: Contests between FVYFL teams are not scheduled by the league. They are, however, subject to the same basic rules for safe play as outlined in this document. A JV game may be played to allow younger players to get on-field time. Both coaches will need to agree on terms and conditions. The length of quarters is at the discretion of the coaches. The number of officials for JV games is not regulated. Extra coaches or team reps are allowed to officiate. The league allows for flexibility to create whatever environment is needed to encourage the development of its younger players.

2. Non-league JV Games: These are fully allowed. The rules of a JV exhibition are not governed by the FVYFL. Teams may freely compete with other teams to get younger players on-field time. Seeking permission from the commissioner for non-league JV play is not required.

3. Non-league Varsity Games: However, if a varsity team wishes to play an out-of-league opponent at any time during the official 2025 season (August 1-October 31), then the commissioner must be notified at least 1 week in advance and the team must receive clearance before proceeding with the contest. If a varsity team plays in an out-of-league game without permission from the commissioner, then all wins from the current FVYFL season will be vacated. You are an FVYFL member, and as such, will be expected to participate in our league first. Membership is a privilege, not a right.

4. Unscheduled In-League Varsity Exhibitions: Teams are fully allowed to independently organize in-league varsity exhibitions with other FVYFL members. Approval from the commissioner is not required to hold these events. That being said, the commissioner must still be notified 1 week in advance that this game is occurring during the official season.

5. Games that occur before August 1 or after October 31, are not governed by the FVYFL.

M. Tiebreakers

1. In the event of a tie of W-L records between multiple teams, the following tiebreakers will be implemented, in order to determine season standings, conference champions, postseason berths etc. These rules were adopted at the 2016 spring meeting.

- I. Overall win-loss record.
- II. Head-to-head winner.

- III. Difference in score versus mutual opponents played. This is the number of points scored minus the number of points given up. Higher is better.
- IV. Difference in score versus ALL opponents played. This is the number of points scored minus the number of points given up. Higher is better.
- V. Coin toss at a neutral location with both head coaches and the commissioner present. 2 out of 3 tosses will confirm the decision. The older of the 2 head coaches picks heads or tails.

N. Rules of Conduct

1. Coaches will properly equip their players.
2. Coaches will emphasize correct and safe fundamentals.
3. Coaches will create a positive environment for all players.
4. Coaches will demand good sportsmanship always.
5. Coaches will demonstrate good sportsmanship.
6. Smack talking between players will not be tolerated.
7. Coaches will not direct negative comments at opposing staff or players.
8. If a coach has an issue with an opposing player or coach, then it needs to be brought to the attention of the game officials or it needs to be handled discreetly after the game between the 2 coaches.
9. If an issue cannot be resolved, then it needs to be brought to the attention of the commissioner.
10. After each game, players and staff are required to shake hands and be taught good sportsmanship in victory and in defeat. Encourage players to have their helmets off. It is also encouraged to have a handshake at the conclusion of the JV game if applicable.
11. This is a developmental league, and it is the responsibility of the coach of the dominant team to allow the losing team the ability to have some success. This should be done by giving younger players the opportunity to play to create a more even contest.
12. As a coach, do everything in your power to mitigate blowouts. **It is not an achievement to put up 70 points on your youth aged opponents!** Players at this level can really be discouraged if they have a sour experience. We want them to continue to play the game and to teach it to their potential children in the future. Please get as many kids as you can onto the field at every possible opportunity and help them prosper. A single play in a lopsided game could mean the world to a kid. Be the reason that they fall in love with football, not the reason that they resent it.
13. The goal is to give all players the opportunity to improve and to learn the game in a competitive and SAFE environment. Safety isn't just physical. Emotionally support your players as well. They are still young children, treat them with patience and respect. This goes a very long way.

14. Football is a great game, and it needs to be FUN for the players. Remember, at the end of the day, they are still kids. Your actions as a coach will imprint on your players whether you think so or not. Be a good example and set the bar very high for your own actions!

O. Disciplinary Procedures

1. If a team or coach violates the “*Farmers Valley Youth Football League Rules & By-Laws*” and especially “*Section N: Rules of Conduct*”, then discipline will be determined by the commissioner or team representatives that are not directly involved with the incident in question or both. Severity along with the number of times an incident has occurred will heavily factor into punishment. Punishment can range from fines to post-season probation to full program expulsion. If the commissioner requests the aid of non-affiliated teams when handling discipline, then the 11-man & 8-man teams will deal with their own respective divisions internally.
2. Fines may be levied against those programs who break the rules. All fines will be made public in a *Discipline & Fine Report* (updated weekly) posted on the league website. Fines must be paid in full by October 31, 2025. Failure to pay on time will result in all wins from that season being vacated and a 1-season suspension being imposed. If a team voluntarily exits the league and does not pay their fines, then full legal action will be taken in order to recuperate the outstanding funds.
3. **Expulsion:** If a program or team is expelled, then their readmission bid will have to first be approved by the commissioner after waiting the required 2-season probationary period. Once given permission to be voted upon, their admission will have to pass by a 2/3 vote from the teams of their division. If voted back in, then they will have to wait the requisite 1 year before being granted their own voting authority, just like any other new member would. All previous FVYFL records and data will be kept with that program upon readmission.

By participating in the Farmers Valley Youth Football League, you commit to playing by and upholding the rules outlined in this document. Disputes or challenges will be resolved first by citing the rules contained herein.

Before the season began, an authorized representative from each team signed the “Program Status Form.” By signing, the team declared that its head coach and administrator: knew of the existence of these rules, had the ability to access this document 24 hours a day year-round, and declared that their team leadership, staff, player’s parents/guardians, and players would follow these rules in their entirety. They also committed to educating their entire home game officiating crew on the rules of the FVYFL.