



JOHNSTON COUNTY YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2026 RULES AND REGULATIONS

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MIN PLAYS

4 per half

QUARTERS

4 x 10 min

TIMEOUTS

3 per half

FAST CLOCK

24+ pt lead

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★ Rules of emphasis

RULE 1

RULES AFFILIATIONS

- 1.1** The JCYFL will be governed by the Football Rules and Guidelines as established and adopted by the NFHS and NCHSAA unless modified by these local rules and regulations. Four (4) certified referees will be required for JV and Varsity games.

RULE 2

AGE DIVISIONS

2.1

DIVISION	AGE RULE
Rookie	May not turn 9 before September 1 of the current year.
Jayvee	May not turn 11 before September 1 of the current year.
Varsity	May not turn 13 before September 1 of the current year.

Varsity eligibility: a player must be 12 before September 1 to be eligible to play Varsity.

RULE 3

WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS

- 3.1** No child will be denied the opportunity to participate based on weight. However, certain positions (skilled positions) will be restricted based on the following weights:

DIVISION	SKILLED POSITION	HEAVYS	MAX
Rookie	100 lbs. max	90+ lbs. to 150 lbs.	150 lbs.
Jayvee	125 lbs. max	120+ lbs. to 200 lbs.	200 lbs.
Varsity	145 lbs. max	140+ lbs.	No max

- 3.2** A player will be required to make weight for skilled positions one time.
- 3.3** Players will be weighed while wearing a minimum of shorts and t-shirts. Players are not required to wear shoes or any football equipment at weigh-in. **Every** child must have a documented weight.

RULE 4

SKILLED POSITIONS

4.1 Offensive skilled positions are considered the following:

Quarterbacks

Running backs

Tight ends

Receivers

Kickoff and punt returners

4.2 Defensive skilled positions are considered the following:

Defensive ends

Linebackers

Defensive backs

Kicker/punter

RULE 5

HEAVYS

5.1 All players over the maximum weight limit for skilled positions will be marked as a Heavy. Their helmet will be marked noting this distinction with a contrasting orange stripe down the middle of the helmet.

5.2 A Heavy can only play the offensive positions of center, guard or tackle and the defensive positions of guard or tackle. He may also act as the punter for **JV only** (since punts for JV are a dead play). A Heavy may **not** act as the punter for **Varsity**, as this would potentially put the Heavy in a position to be an eligible player. A Heavy may **not** line up in any position that would make him an eligible receiver.

5.3 A Heavy may not advance the ball. In the event a Heavy recovers a fumble, makes an interception or receives a punt, the ball will become dead immediately and will be spotted at that point.

5.4 Only 4 Heavys may be on the offensive line at any one time. Heavys may **not** pull on the offensive line. Offensive lines must be balanced (2 ends, 2 tackles, 2 guards and the center).

5.5 Only 3 Heavys may line up on the defensive line. **A defensive Heavy may not line up outside of the offensive tackle prior to the snap.**

5.6 All offensive and defensive Heavys must line up in a 3-point or 4-point stance.

5.7 A Heavy will not be allowed to line up on the kick or kick return team.

5.8 All penalties involving illegal alignment or usage of Heavy players will be assessed as offsides (for defense) or illegal procedure (for offense). Penalty will be 5 yards and replay the down.

RULE 6

PARTICIPATION

- 6.1** All players must participate in a minimum of **4 plays per half** of each game. Kickoffs for JV are considered plays and will count toward the minimum play requirement. Punts for JV will **not** count toward the minimum play requirement because punts are a dead play on JV. Kickoffs and punts for Varsity are both considered plays and will count toward the minimum play requirement. A team representative (coach/team mom) must count plays for their team.
- 6.2** Exceptions to the minimum play rule (for players being disciplined or who have missed excessive practices) must be made known prior to the start of the game. The child's parents, the opposing head coach and the directors from each participating team must be informed.
- 6.3** Players must remove all watches, earrings, wristbands and any other jewelry item that the officials deem hazardous.
- 6.4** Players' jerseys must be tucked into the pants.

RULE 7

GAME BALLS

7.1	DIVISION	BALL
	Rookie/Flex	Spalding J5PW, Wilson K2 or equivalent
	Jayvee	Spalding J5PW, Wilson K2 or equivalent
	Varsity	Spalding J5J, Wilson TDJ or equivalent

- 7.2** Each team will provide a game ball for their team's use while on offense.

RULE 8

LENGTH OF GAME

- 8.1** A 5th quarter will consist of 15 minutes of offense and 15 minutes of defense if teams are sufficiently rostered.

DIVISION	GAME LENGTH
Rookie	4 quarters, 10 minutes each
Jayvee and Varsity	4 quarters, 10 minutes each

- 8.2** An official clock (**as in junior varsity high school games**) will be used. The clock will start on the ready-for-play signal from the head official on all changes of possession.

- 8.3** Once a team is up by 24 points, a fast clock will be used, stopping only on timeouts and changes of possession. If this happens in the 1st half, the regulation clock will resume when the score drops below 24 points. If it happens in the 2nd half, the clock will be a fast clock for the remainder of the game.
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- 8.4** If a team passes the ball with a 24-point lead: 10-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and loss of down.
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- 8.5** During regular season play, in the event of a tie, only one overtime period will be played. NFHS rules for overtime will be used.
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- 8.6** Games will start with a coin toss at the center of the field. The visiting team will make the call. The winner of the toss will choose offense or defense. The second-half possession will belong to the defending team.

RULE 9

FIELD

- 9.1** The field for Rookie, Jayvee and Varsity will be 100 yards long by 53.3 yards wide. (Different widths must be approved by the Board of Directors.)
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- 9.2** End zones will be 10 yards deep.

RULE 10

TIMEOUTS

- 10.1** Teams will receive 3 timeouts per half. In the case of overtime, each team will receive 1 timeout. Timeouts will not carry over from regulation to overtime.

RULE 11

SCORING

- 11.1** Touchdowns will be worth 6 points.
-
- 11.2** PATs will be awarded 1 point if attempted and successful from the 3-yard line, and 2 points if attempted and successful from the 5-yard line.

RULE 12

PENALTIES

12.1

PENALTY	VARDS
NFHS 5-yard penalties	5 yds
NFHS 10-yard penalties	10 yds
NFHS 15-yard penalties	15 yds

RULE 13

KICKOFFS

13.1

DIVISION	KICKOFF
Rookie	Ball will be placed on the defending team's 40-yard line.
Jayvee	Kickoffs will be made from the kicking team's 40-yard line.
Varsity	Kickoffs will be made from the kicking team's 40-yard line.

RULE 14

OFFICIALS

14.1

Games will be played with at least 4 officials. One of the officials must be NCHSAA registered and certified. (Rookie games may use one official.)

RULE 15

COACHES

15.1

Coaches and one official team parent (team mom) are allowed on the sideline. The sideline is defined as the fence, track or barrier intended to separate spectators from the playing area. This may be established by a director, coach or referee at any time for the safety of players, coaches and spectators. A team with any unauthorized person on the sideline that causes a stoppage in game play, for any reason, will be subject to a timeout penalty and a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, at the discretion of the referee.

15.2

Coaches may have a maximum of 6 coaching hours with their team per week. This includes the whole team or any portion of the team. Once games have begun, teams will be allowed 4.5 hours of practice time per week.

15.3

Teams are allowed 6 coaches on the sidelines (only these will be admitted free).

- 15.4** Only head coaches (or a claimed designee, such as a coach on the field during a Rookie game) may address an official during pre-game, during the game or after the game. Assistants who address the officials during this time may be penalized.

RULE 16

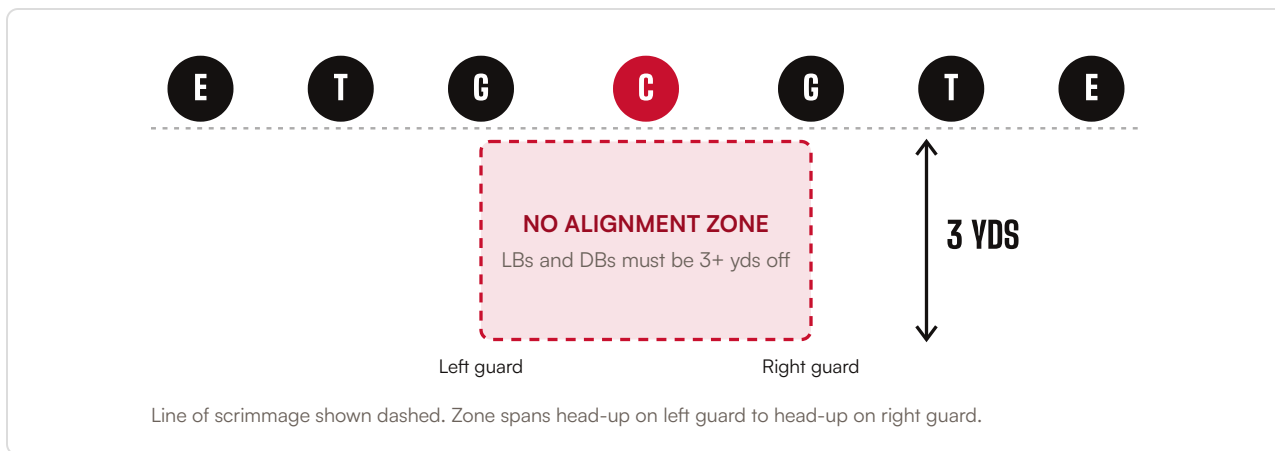
RECRUITING

- 16.1** Recruiting players from one team to another is strictly prohibited, and offending individuals will be subject to review for disciplinary action, not excluding expulsion from the league.
- 16.2** No individual may engage in any conduct designed to discourage any player from participating in the JCYFL. Violators will be subject to review for disciplinary action, not excluding expulsion from the league.

RULE 17

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE AND CENTER PROTECTION

- 17.1** To protect the center, the defense will not be allowed to line up “head-up” on the center. **Defensive line players must be lined up head-up on the offensive guard.** In addition, linebackers and secondary players are restricted from lining up in this area (head-up on the left offensive guard to head-up on the right offensive guard) unless they are **3 yards** off the line of scrimmage. This restriction applies to all age groups. See the diagram below.



Penalty: offsides, 5 yards and replay the down.

- 17.2** The offensive guards may not line up further than 1 yard on either side of the center. Unnaturally wide offensive line splits intended to circumvent the intent of the center protection rule will not be allowed.
- 17.3** Teams may only have 6 players on the defensive line.

RULE 18

SPORTSMANSHIP

- 18.1** A player ejected from a game will be suspended for the next game his team plays. An ejected player may remain at the facility as long as he has retained control.
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- 18.2** A coach ejected from a game will be suspended for a week, including practices and the team's next game. An ejected coach must leave the facility.

RULE 19

PUNTS (JAYVEE)

Jayvee only

- 19.1** A team may declare that it is going to punt. When this occurs, all players on both teams except the snapper, punter and receivers shall take a knee. The punter will kick the ball and the defensive team will take over from where the receiver possesses the ball (not where it is first touched). Teams may have two receivers to catch the punt.
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- 19.2** If the punter does not kick the ball beyond the original line of scrimmage, the ball will be placed at the original line of scrimmage and the defense will take over from there.

RULE 20

RULES OF PLAY (ROOKIE)

Rookie only

- 20.1** 1 coach may be in the huddle.
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- 20.2** No pulling offensive linemen is allowed.
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- 20.3** Rookie teams may declare a punt. The ball will be moved 25 yards and possession will be turned over to the defense. A team **cannot** pin a team inside its own 25-yard line with a declared punt.
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- 20.4** Rookie teams can have 1 coach on the field during the game. Coaches on the field are not allowed to speak once play has begun.

LEAGUE GUIDELINES

RULES OF EMPHASIS

ADMISSION

Adults \$5 (18 and older), school age \$2 (ages 5 to 17), and 4 and under free.

2ND FLAG

On the second flag there will be an ejection. (Does not have to be in the same game.)

FLAGRANT FOULS

2 unsportsmanlike flagrant fouls will result in a one-week suspension, including the next game.

3RD FLAG

On the 3rd flag you will be removed for the remainder of the season.

WEIGH-INS

All players must be weighed and approved by a League Director. Coaches are not allowed to weigh players.

COACH'S LISTS

Coach's lists are due at the Pre-Season Jamboree.

ROSTER FREEZE

Rosters will become frozen on the Thursday following Labor Day at 5:00 PM. Any exceptions must be approved by the League Board of Directors.

Source: Johnston County Youth Football League 2026 Rules and Regulations. Games are governed by NFHS and NCHSAA football rules unless modified by these local rules.