

COLORADO PRAIRIE YOUTH 8-MAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE OFFICIAL RULES

The Colorado Prairie League will be played under the official rules of the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) with the following amendments below.

SECTION I - PLAYER ELIGIBILITY:

Rule 1 - Divisions and Age Requirements

1. Teams will be grouped into the following grade divisions.
 - a. Flag: 1st – 3rd grade
 - b. Peewee: 3rd & 4th grade
 - c. Midget: 5th & 6th grade
2. In addition to grade, a player must meet the age requirement of the division on or before November 15th, as confirmed by birth certificate. If a player is older than the age limit, then they must play up a division. Players can't play down even if they are under the age requirement. (i.e. a 5th grader can't play peewee even though he is 10)
 - a. Flag - 9 years old
 - b. Peewee - 11 years old
 - c. Midgets -13 years old
3. Players can play up a division but cannot play down a division.
4. A typed roster will be prepared and presented to each district prior to the first official game.
 - a. The roster will include the players name, date of birth, grade, weight, patch designation, and jersey number. The weight, patch designation, and number will be recorded on the roster at the time of the official weigh-in in ink.
 - b. An official roster must be available at all games.
5. A player can only play for one team in their division. If a player plays for a second team in their division, then the second team will forfeit all games the player participated in.
6. If an ineligible player plays in a game, the game is automatically forfeited.
 - a. An ineligible player is defined as a Player who does not meet league age, weight, cut-off-date, or roster/registration requirements.

Rule 2 – Registration Requirements

1. No player shall be eligible to play or practice until registration has been completed including waivers signed.
2. Players should register to play in the town where they live or where they go to school. An exception will be made if the division they play in is not offered or available in the home location.
3. All districts/towns must report to the board the number of teams they will enter into the league in each division by August 1st.
4. Registration will close one week before the first game is played. Exceptions or late registrations should be submitted to the board for approval.

Rule 3 – Weight Limitations and Weigh-ins

1. There is no maximum weight limit at any age.

Division	Patch
Flag	n/a
peewee	100 lbs.

Midget	120 lbs.
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2. All players whose weight as entered on the official roster exceeds the backfield limit for the players' age group by .5 lbs. shall be designated a patch player.
3. All such players shall be designated by a single neon pink disk sticker on the back of the outside of their helmet on the right side.
4. Patch players are allowed to:
 - a. Play as an offensive or defensive lineman on the Line of Scrimmage (LOS).
 - b. Play as a tight end or wide receiver on the LOS and receive a forward pass thrown beyond the LOS
 - c. Run with the ball after having intercepted a pass that was thrown by the opposing offense.
 - d. Line up in the offensive backfield for the purpose of being the kicker of a punt, extra point attempt, field goal, or holder of extra point or field goal. In the event of a muffed snap, the patch player may cover the ball, or block to protect the holder.
 - e. Perform a free kick following a safety or line up at any position on a kick-off or free kick.
5. Patch Players are NOT allowed to:
 - a. Line up in an offensive or defensive backfield position except as defined in Paragraph B above. Patch players are not allowed to retreat upon the snap or during the play into a typical linebacker or defensive back position. Note: Patch players are allowed to chase a ball carrier downfield.
 - b. Line up in a defensive back position.
 - c. Hand off, run, pass, or receive a pass when lined up in the offensive backfield to perform a kick.
 - d. Be a part of a fake play when lined up in the offensive backfield to perform a kick.
 - e. Take a hand-off in the offensive backfield for an end around play when the patch player is playing a tight end or receiver position.
6. All players must attend their official area weigh-in to be eligible to participate in the league.
7. The league will perform weigh-ins at least a week before the first games.
 - a. Each district must conduct its weigh-in with at least one other district.
 - b. Representatives (not a coach) of both teams must be present for the weigh-in and all players should weigh-in on the same digital scale.
 - c. If a player is not weighed in at this time, it is the responsibility of the coach to make arrangements with the league to have the player weighed prior to the player playing his first game.
 - d. A copy of the weigh-in list including players name, jersey #, weight, and signatures of two representatives should be provided to the League President (Board) within 24hrs of the weigh-in.
 - e. The league is opposed to sweating a child down to make weight.

Rule 4 – Coaches

1. All Coaches (Head and Assistant), must consent to and pass a background check, complete concussion training, and mandatory reporter abuse training. **All requirements must be submitted through Team Sideline before the first practice.**
2. Coaches are required to conduct themselves in accordance with both the NFHS and Colorado Prairie League Coaches Code of Ethics at all times.
3. All Coaches, Team Managers and Team Moms are subject to disciplinary action by his or her district/town and/or by the board of directors if said coach's actions or behavior are determined to be detrimental to the players, officials, spectators, the Area, or the league.

SECTION II – PLAYING PERIODS AND START OF PRACTICE:

Rule 1 – Start of Practice and Playing Time

1. The teams may have a maximum of 4 playing periods per week of no more than two hours each.
 - a. A playing period is defined as a practice, game or gathering (such as film review) in which the players are engaged in organized instruction or practice of play.
 - b. A week is defined as Monday through Sunday.
 - c. Multiple practices occurring on the same day will count as multiple playing periods.
2. Practices can start on August 1st.
3. The first 4 days of practice for all players, regardless of date of starting practice, shall consist of conditioning and non-contact practice.
 - a. Non-contact is defined as no physical contact: player to player or player to coach.
 - b. For the first 4 days of practice, players are to wear helmets, cleats, t-shirts, and shorts only, no shoulder pads or leg pads.
4. **The goal is to have all players play 25% of the total plays within a game.** It is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that all players receive an equal amount of playing time as possible.

Rule 2 – Camps

1. Camps are defined as an official league or area function offered to all area athletes during the off-season. Organizers and participants will teach football skills and drills that encourage proper technique and safety.
 - a. All camps will be open to more than one age group.
 - b. Playbooks and schemes may not be discussed or taught.

Rule 3 – Season Dates

Season	Practice Can Start	Weigh-ins	Complete Rosters Due (including weights & jersey #s)	First Game	Championship Weekend
2026	August 1st	No later than August 22nd	August 26th	August 29 th	October 31st in Byers (Playoffs start Oct. 17 th)

SECTION III – PLAYING FIELD:

Rule 1 – Field Size, Markings, and Equipment

1. Pee wee fields will be 30 yards wide by 60 yards long. Midgets will be 40 yards wide by 80 yards long.
2. Each end-zone will be 10 yards long.
3. The playing field will be properly marked and designated at 10-yard intervals.
4. It is mandatory that colored flags or cones will be used as corner markers and sideline markers every 10 yards on at least one side of the playing field. The field shall be clearly marked on side lines and yard stripes with chalk, white tape, paint, or burned in.
5. The team bench for Pee wee goes from the 10-yard line to the opposite 10-yard line. The team bench for Midgets goes from the 20-yard line to the opposite 20-yard line.
 - a. Crossing over these designated yard lines will result in a warning on the first offense and a delay of game penalty on all subsequent occurrences.
6. The home team is responsible for preparing and equipping the field for a safe and competitive game. The home team shall furnish a padded down box, a 10-yard chain, sideline yard markers, and an official game ball.
7. A marker to display the remaining play count will also be provided and remain near the down box or a scorekeeper from both teams will stand together to confirm each play and score.

Rule 2 – Game Officials

8. The Home team must also provide referees and chain crew. These volunteers will meet with the game officials prior to the start of the game to review their responsibilities.
9. High School players can be used for the chain crew. There should be at least 2 referees for each game. The head referees must be at least 21 years of age. All refs should not be a coach or have a family member of a player on the team in the game they are officiating.

SECTION IV – GAME RULES:

Rule 1 – Length of Game and Time-Outs

1. Each quarter for Peewee will be 16 plays and 18 plays for Midgets. Field direction will change each quarter. There will be a 2-hour maximum for Peewee and Midgets.
2. The “2 minute warning” will be substituted with a “6 plays remaining” notification to the teams and coaches.
3. Extra points will not count as a play.
4. Any penalty that is accepted will not count as a play.
 - a. The only exception to this would be on the last play of a half or game. If there is a penalty on the team with the ball that play would count and it would end the half or game. If the penalty is on the defense, then another play would be allowed, because a game cannot end on a defensive penalty.
5. Halftime will be 10 minutes.
6. Huddles will be 60 seconds. (1 warning and then a penalty for delay of game).
7. Each team is allowed 3 time-outs per half. The time-outs will be 1 minute each and the officials will be responsible for keeping the time.

Rule 2 – Position of the Ball

	60 Yard Field	80 Yard Field
“Kickoff”	15	15
Safety and Touchbacks	14/12	21/16
Extra Points	2 1/2	2 1/2

Rule 3 – Scoring

1. The Point After Touchdown (PAT) is worth the following:
 - a. 1 point upon completion of a successful play that is ran across the goal line. A forward passing play that is caught and then ran across the goal line is considered a running play and only 1 point will be awarded.
 - b. Two points will be awarded upon the completion of a successful passing play that is caught in the end-zone.
2. Safeties will count as two points. After a safety the ball will be kicked from the 14-yard line for Peewee and from the 21-yard line for Midgets. This is a free kick, so the ball can be punted or kicked from a tee. The ball is live after it travels 10 yards.
3. The mercy rule is established at 45 points. Upon exceeding a point differential of greater than 45 points after half time, the game will be stopped and declared a victory for the team with the most points. The losing team can decide if they want to continue to play out the remainder of the game, but no score will be kept.

Rule 4 – Overtime

1. Overtime will be conducted as done at the high school level. Only 2 attempts per team to break the tie in regular season. Overtime will continue indefinitely for play-offs.
2. One time-out for overtime.
3. During overtime, the ball starts on the 10-yard line. Each team will get the opportunity to score. The overtime will take place at the same end of the field.
4. During overtime, if the ball is intercepted or fumbled and recovered by the defense, it is not a live ball. The play is dead at that point and now the defensive team gets the ball for their overtime try.

Rule 5 – Penalties and Yardage

1. In Peewee, all NFHS rule infractions that equate to a 15-yard penalty will be assessed 9 yards. A 10-yard penalty will be assessed 6 yards. A 5-yard penalty will be assessed 3 yards.
2. In the Midgets division all NFHS rule infractions that equate to a 15-yard penalty will be assessed 12 yards. A 10-yard penalty will be assessed 8 yards, and a 5-yard penalty will be assessed 4 yards.
3. All distances that are not specified in these rules will be 60% of the high school rules for Peewee and 80% for Midget.
4. All penalties must be accepted or declined by designated team captains except for personal fouls, unsportsmanlike conduct, and false starts.

Rule 6 – Personal Fouls and Ejections

1. Two personal fouls on the same player will result in ejection of that player from the rest of that game (Referees discretion).
2. If a player is ejected from a game, the player must sit 4 consecutive quarters after the quarter of ejection, not including overtime.
 - a. Upon the second ejection in a single season the player may not return to play unless approved by majority vote of the Board of Directors.
 - b. Player ejections are not subject to appeal.
3. If a coach is ejected from a CPYL game, one additional game suspension will be imposed. Coach is not allowed at game site while suspended, violations will result in an additional game suspension.
 - a. Upon the second ejection in a single season the coach may not return unless approved by majority vote of the Board of Directors.
4. All coach and player ejections must be reported by that team by 5pm the following Monday to the Board President. Any ejections not reported will result in suspension for the rest of the year.

Rule 7 – Play Recorders

1. For all games, two play recorders, one representing each team, shall stay together during the game, and shall record the plays on the league score sheet thus determining when the quarters are completed.
 - a. Play recorders shall remain by the down box during the game.
2. The play recorders shall notify the referee, who shall notify both team captains and coaches when six (6) plays remain in each quarter.
3. Any discrepancies between the play recorders shall be resolved by a flip of a coin by the referee.

Rule 8 – Game Balls and Equipment

1. The official league game ball is any brand football with a leather or composite material cover that is labeled peewee for Peewee and Junior for the Midgets.

2. Mouthpieces are mandatory.
 - a. If a mouthpiece is not in at the snap of the ball, it will result in a penalty of 5-yards.
3. Non-abrasive gloves will be allowed.
4. For all age groups, teams must have an official jersey with number corresponding to their individual roster number.
5. Two players with the same jersey number should not be on the field at the same time.
 - a. Jersey numbering restrictions and specifications related to specific football positions do not apply.

Rule 9 – Coaches

1. Only players, maximum of 4 coaches, and one scorekeeper are allowed on the sidelines. Absolutely no spectators.
 - a. It is the coach's obligation to enforce this rule.
 - b. Anyone not following this rule will have a warning, and the next time will result in a flag against the spectator's team.
2. Midget coaches must remain on the sideline during the game.
3. During an injury timeout, it is ok to have 2 coaches on the field. One coach with the team and one coach with the injured player. One Pee wee coach from each team must be on the field during the game and control the game.
 - a. Each coach must be at least 10 yards behind the deepest player.

Rule 10 - Fans and Complaints:

1. Any spectator that becomes unruly and has been given a warning and continues to be unruly will be asked to leave the field before the game will be continued.
 - a. Coaches are expected to control spectators, not referees.
 - b. If the fan does not leave, the team associated with the fan will have to forfeit the game.
2. Because of insurance liability, no fans are allowed to be on the field or sideline.
3. Unruly spectators may be subject to further disciplinary action by the league.
4. Referees are not allowed to explain or converse with spectators but are allowed to explain or discuss calls with the head coach.
5. The league has established the following proper chain of command to deal with complaints or problems:
 - a. The first level to address any complaints or problems is with the head coach of the subject team.
 - b. If further assistance is needed, the issue should be addressed with the subject community's representative.
 - c. Finally, if the issue can still not be resolved, then a written and signed complaint should be sent to the League President and the matter will be addressed by the League Board of Directors.

Rule 11 – Turnovers

1. Non-ball carrying position players can only advance the ball when on the front line of a kick-off, intercepting a pass, recovering a fumble, or a blocked punt.
2. When the snap of the football is "muffed" from the center to the quarterback the play is a live fumble and change of possession is possible.

Rule 12 - Kicking

1. To start the game, half, after a TD, field goal or safety the ball will be placed on the 15 yard line. Any punt that crosses into the end-zone cannot be returned. Punts that go into the end-zone will be brought out to the 15-yard line.

- a. The only exception to this rule is if the ball is touched by the receiving team prior to the ball crossing into the end-zone.
2. Pee wee only:
 - a. On 4th down teams have the option to run a play, punt, or turn the ball over 20 yards down the field to the other team.
 - b. No rushing the punter.
3. Offensive and defensive players cannot make contact until the punter has kicked the ball. Once the ball is punted and makes it to the line of scrimmage, the ball is live and traditional NFHS rules pertain.
4. If the ball is kicked backwards the punter can go get it and come back and re-punt the ball.
5. If the ball does not cross the line of scrimmage the punter will re-punt, but not re-hike.
6. No defensive player can ram the center from a 2-point stance.
7. When the offensive team is in a long snap (kicks or punts, not shotgun) formation, any players lined up within one yard of the defensive line must be even with or outside of the offensive guards.

Rule 13 - Offensive Line and Defense

1. At least five (5) players must be on the offensive line of scrimmage at all times.
2. In pee wee, teams cannot line up a nose guard directly over the center at any time. This includes a player lined up in a 2-point stance. **Defensive players cannot line up or "blitz" the A gap.**
 1. Because of this rule, a quarterback sneak taken from under center must advance the ball to the outside of the guards.
3. A nose guard is allowed in the Midgets division, but the first point of contact must be a lineman other than the center.
4. After a team is up by 4 touchdowns or more in the second half, the winning team will not be allowed to blitz.

SECTION V – LEAGUE STRUCTURE:

Rule 1 - Postponed Games and Rescheduling

1. In general, the League tries to discourage the postponement of games due to inclement weather, if the field is playable.
2. Games may be postponed by the home team's representative or designee.
3. A game may be postponed or suspended by an official if he or she deems the playing surface or conditions to be potentially hazardous to the players.
4. Rescheduled games will be played as soon as possible by mutual agreement.

Rule 2 Playoff Structure

1. Playoff seeds will be determined on regular season standings (6-week season).
2. Ties will be broken by:
 - a. head-to-head results
 - b. Points against
 - c. coin toss.