



SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS YOUTH FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

LEAGUE BY-LAWS

2026 Edition | *Red text indicates changes adopted for 2026*

ARTICLE I - NAME

This organization will be known as the Southwestern Illinois Youth Football Conference. The Southwestern Illinois Youth Football Conference is a non-profit organization.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of the Conference shall be to promote the game of football in the area, to inspire children to practice good health, citizenship, and character, to bring area children together through the means of a common interest in sportsmanship, fair play, and fellowship, to impart to the game elements of safety, sanity, intelligent supervision, and to keep the welfare of the children first.

In addition to the above general purposes, specific purposes are as follows:

1. To acquaint the children with the fundamentals of the game, running, passing, kicking, blocking, and tackling.
2. To teach through the game sportsmanship, love of the game, and the ability to take a few knocks and bumps.
3. To promote safe play by encouraging children to play in their own weight and age division and preventing unsportsmanlike conduct.

ARTICLE III - LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP

1. The league shall be composed of no less than four organizations and no more than 12 organizations whose teams have met the eligibility requirements listed in these by-laws. The fiscal year shall run January 1 through December 31.
2. All original member organizations will be charter members. They will each have 2 votes on all matters of the league.
3. New organizations will have 1 vote for a 3-year probation period, when entering their 4th year they will then become a charter member and have all rights that go along with charter membership.
4. To become a member of the league your organization must have a 2/3rds vote of Charter members.
5. No organization may join the Southwestern Illinois Youth Football Conference if they have a high school in the home community (zip code) that exceeds an enrollment of 750 students.
 - a. All SWIYFC charter members are grandfathered into the league.
 - b. A notable exception is small towns that feed into a neighboring community high school that would exceed the above enrollment.
6. No current Southwestern Illinois Youth Conference organization will be allowed to remove teams from our conference to play in a conference which is not affiliated with an organized school system. Violation of this would result in the removal of that organization from our conference.

ARTICLE IV - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. The Board of Directors and the Executive Board will be members from each Charter members organization. They will serve from January through December of the current year. The Executive Board will consist of a President, Vice President/Treasurer and Secretary.
2. Each organization will be allowed to hold only 1 Executive Board seat each year.
3. The Board of Directors will consist of 1 representative from each charter organization. The representatives will be appointed by their own organization.

ARTICLE V - ORGANIZATION'S FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Each new organization will be required to pay \$100 to the league.
2. Each organization will be required to pay \$50 each year to the league.
3. All organizations yearly fees will be suspended if the League treasury goes over \$1000, whenever the treasury amount goes under that \$1000 then the organizations yearly fees will be reinstated.

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS

1. Regular meetings will be held from March through November each year. Meetings will be held every 1st Wednesday of each month at 7pm. The month of February will be for special meetings, such as if there are changes to be made with the by-laws or the rules of play.
2. Only two members from each organization will be allowed to participate at the SWIYFC meetings.
3. Any organization that misses a meeting will be subject to penalty. Starts over each calendar year.
4. First offense \$25.00 fine.
5. Second offense loss of voting rights for six months.
6. Third offense out of league.
7. The League president may call for a virtual meeting from time to time. However, all business requiring a vote shall only be conducted at an in person meeting.

ARTICLE VII - LIABILITY

1. The league officers, coaches, managers, referees, and all other supervisory personnel will not be held responsible for injuries to persons or damage to property.
2. Each organization will be responsible for all coaches, parents, players and spectators.

ARTICLE VIII - TEAM ELIGIBILITY

1. **Each team shall register a maximum of 38 players and a maximum of 8 coaches. No player can be added to the Roster after the Wednesday before the 1st weekend of game, providing the roster does not exceed 38 players or result in splitting a team.**
2. **Splitting of teams must be done as equal as possible considering age. Example: if you have 34 players signed up for a division with 17 younger and 17 older. The split will be no greater or less than 3 players as it relates to age. 15/19 will not be acceptable. The split of Strippers shall be no more than 2. The split for play down players shall be no greater than 2.**
 - a. All team rosters will be turned in at the September league meeting and a copy will be provided to each organization's league representative. A player cannot be listed on a team roster if he has not been weighed with a stamped League ID card. A coach must have in his possession on game day a League ID card for any player listed on his team roster regardless of if the player is participating or not. Failure to provide a complete set of League ID cards could result in a forfeit

if a protest is made by an opponent. All team rosters must be in compliance with Article VIII, sub-paragraph B at the time rosters are due to the league. Any changes or additions made to team rosters before the deadline set in Article VIII, subparagraph A, must also follow the rules set in this paragraph.

- b. Team Insurance Rosters shall be listed according to age with the oldest on top. All teams should weigh each of their players and have it listed correctly on insurance roster and identification cards before verification.
- c. There will be an official pre-season identification card check for each player. This will take place at the last meeting prior to the start of the season. At this time, two teams will exchange player cards and birth certificates, and verify that the information on the player card is accurate. These cards will list the name, date of birth (to be verified by a birth certificate, baptismal record, military ID card, passport or past player ID card), grade in school, name of school, weight, organization and division, team number, head coaches name, a current picture (not more than 2 years old) of the child affixed to the card. Each card will be stamped with an official stamp covering part of the picture and initialed by a League officer. A play down player's card will have the Date of Birth highlighted in Yellow. All ID cards must be individually laminated by week 2 of the season.
- d. On game day the home team is responsible for furnishing weigh in equipment. Each Team shall supply the opposing team with 2 rosters with players names and Jersey numbers listed in Numerical Order. Rosters must be typed or printed legibly. Yes

A representative from both teams must be a witness to the weigh in of each team.

All players must have a Stamped League ID card to present at weigh in. The opposing coach may review the ID card at any time during the game in case of protest.

*The mandatory weigh will commence as early 60 minutes before, but no later than 15 minutes before the league scheduled game time.

- e. An additional weigh in will be provided at half time of each game for any late arrivals or overweight players. Example: If scheduled game time is 1:00 pm., any player arriving or is overweight after 12:45 pm. must weigh in at halftime and is ineligible for the first half. If a card(s) is lost, the organization must notify the President of the League, prepare a new card and have it authenticated by the President of the league or the next ranking officer available, using the official League stamp.

ARTICLE IX - INSURANCE

All organizations must carry insurance on all teams. Certification of Insurance must be submitted to the league before practices begin. The 1st installment will be due at the regularly scheduled July Meeting. The remainder will be due at the regularly scheduled September meeting.

ARTICLE X - PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

Division	Ages	Weight	Position Eligibility	Play Down Rules
Freshman	6 & 7 yr. old	70 lbs. & under	Any Position	
		Over 70 lbs.	Lineman Position	
Sophomore	8 & 9 yr. old	90 lbs. & under	Any Position	8 yr. old - 55 lbs. & under may play down to Freshmen
		Over 90 lbs.	Lineman Position	
JV	10 & 11 yr. old	110 lbs. & under	Any Position	10 yr. old - 70 lbs. & under may play down to Sophomore
		Over 110 lbs.	Lineman Position	
Varsity	12, 13, 14 yr. old	140 lbs. & under	Any Position	12 yr. old - 90 lbs. & under may play down to Sophomore
		Over 140 lbs.	Lineman Position	

1. Minimum age for participation shall be six years of age. Organizations who wish to include participation of 5-year-olds may do so but will want to acknowledge that not all organizations must offer participation to 5-year old's. The player's age shall be considered that as of September 1st of the current year. If born on September 1st the player has the option to play with the lower team if they so, choose. No Southwestern Illinois Youth Football Conference player will be eligible in a like sport defined by IHSA rules (Except Punt, Pass, & Kick activities). No Southern Illinois Youth Football Conference player shall have completed the 8th grade, nor be in 9th grade.
2. No change of team classification will be permitted after the child has participated in any League game.
3. A weight allowance (growth factor) will be provided. In the Freshman, Sophomore, Jr. Varsity and Varsity divisions, an allowance of one pound every 2 weeks starting with the second week of the regular season game.
4. A player cannot turn 15 during the designated season including playoffs.
5. A play down player may not turn a year older during the designated season including playoffs.

ARTICLE XI - GENERAL LEAGUE RULES

1. All teams will follow the IHSA Rules unless otherwise noted to include weather guidelines.
 - a. All teams must adhere to the most current IHSA heat and lightning safety protocols for practices and games. Teams will use a Wet Bulb device or the Heat Alert application to monitor the temperature and take the directed action in accordance with IHSA guidelines. If a game is canceled due to weather, the teams will reschedule adhering to the restrictions in ARTICLE XI - GENERAL LEAGUE RULES, paragraph 23 and notify the league president of the new date.
2. Any Southwestern Illinois Youth Football Conference member organization hosting a football camp must conclude said camp by the last weekend in June.
3. Practice may not begin before the first day of August. The Declaration of Teams will be no later than 21 days prior to Labor Day.
4. An organization that declares a team and then cannot field that team during the season, will be penalized by forfeiting the chance to host any playoff games for that season.

5. The scheduling committee will distribute the home schedules to all clubs 3 days after the Declaration Date.
6. Scheduling will be done manually at a scheduling meeting held on Saturday two weeks prior to the start of the season.
7. If an organization folds a team prior to the start of the season there will be a special scheduling meeting to redo that division's schedule.
8. All away games will be counted as an away game no matter whether it is an inter-program game or a game against a different organization. If an age division has 10 or more teams, and an organization has split teams at that age level, the split teams from the same organization will not play each other in regular season.
9. The season will consist of an Eight (8) week schedule. The season will typically begin the weekend following Labor Day but in the event that it falls later in the month the league has the freedom to begin games the weekend before Labor Day, then have a league wide bye week on Labor Day weekend and continue with week 2 the following week. Said freedom can be exercised by a simple majority vote on or before the July meeting.
10. Top 4 teams in each division will participate in a 2-week playoff, with the 1 seed hosting the 4 seed and the 2 seed hosting the 3 seed. Exceptions to this rule are no field availability then the game will be moved to the lower seeds field. Another exception is if the 2 seed has had 4 or more home games and the 3 seed has had 3 or fewer home games then that game would be played at the 3 seeds field if they have field availability. Championship games will take place at the highest remaining teams' field with the exception being no field availability and it will be played at the other site. A bye is considered a road game as it pertains to the home away split on the schedule. Regular season ties in the standings will use the following tiebreakers:
 - a. Head to Head
 - b. Total Opponent Wins
 - c. Coin Flip
 - d. In the event of a tie between more than 2 teams, Head-to-Head will not apply unless all tied teams played each other during the regular season. Coin Toss to be the last resort to break any ties.
 - k. The Top 8 teams will participate in a week 9 playoff game as follows; The top 4 teams will be in Group A, #1 seed plays #4, #2 seed plays #3. The next 4 teams will be in Group B, #5 seed plays #6, #7 seed plays #8. The Higher seed will host with only exception to this will be, field availability or if the lower seed had fewer home games in the regular season. The winning teams in Group A will advance to week 10. The winning teams in Group B will advance to week 10. In week 10 the highest remaining seed will host with only exception being field availability.
11. Each team will control their fans and keep them at least 5 yards behind the players' bench and boundary line. This shall be accomplished using a restraining line. The home team shall be responsible for providing said restraining line. The restraining line is defined as a visible barrier, portable or permanent, at least 2 feet off the ground, running the length of the field, end zone, on both sides of the field. Only the following personnel will be allowed in the above-mentioned boundaries: players, coaches, game officials, Southwestern Illinois Youth Football Conference Representatives, Athletic Directors, Chain Gang, Stats Person and Emergency personnel.
12. All team personnel, maximum of 8 adult coaches/statisticians (age 17+), shall stay in a designated box as defined by I.H.S.A. rules during the game time. Coaches and statisticians shall wear some kind of visible organizational identification at all games.
13. A copy of the Southwestern Illinois Youth Football Conference by laws will be available at all games at all playing fields.

14. All playing fields are subject to inspection and approval by Southwestern Illinois Youth Football Conference Board at any time. If a venue needs to be changed it must be inspected by a board member.
15. Scores will be kept in all divisions.
16. All games shall consist of 4, 10-minute quarters.
17. There shall be free substitution.
18. There shall be a 10-minute half time between the second and third quarters.
19. All players will play a minimum of 8 plays per game. Plays do not include kick-offs, receiving teams plays or extra point plays.
20. All League games will play on Saturday and Sundays. Freshman and Sophomore division will be scheduled on Saturday or Sundays. All Jr Varsity and Varsity games will be scheduled on Sunday unless agreed upon by both organizations involved.
21. Scheduled home games shall be at least 2 hours between the start of games. In the event of a serious injury, teams will be allowed to continue up to 15 minutes of the next game's starting time's grace period.
22. Points after touchdown shall be 2 points for a kick and 1 point for a run or pass.
23. Regular season games shall consist of 4 quarters. In the event of a tie at the end of regulation, only one overtime will be played. Postseason play off games will include unlimited overtimes, if necessary. In the event a regular season game can't be played or finished due to inclement weather due to lightning, hail or tornado sirens, then that game can be made up before season end. Game must be played at a mutual place and time. The Original missed game striper/playdown weights for rescheduled game will still apply. A playoff game can be rescheduled due to inclement weather. Playoff games must be made up and finished by the end of the following Wednesday of that playoff week. Games must be played at a mutual place and time. If a playoff game cannot be made up then the higher seed will advance.
24. Equipment shall be as follows: A durable helmet approved by NOCSAE with face guard (may not be exposed metal), shoulder pads, pants, thigh pads, knee pads, mouth pieces, hip pads, tailbone pads and shoes, which meet the requirements as outlined in the National Federation of State High School Associations rule book and adopted by the Illinois High School Association. Socks, a cup, kidney pads and supporters are optional.
25. Two game jerseys are required. A colored 1 for home games and a white 1 for away games. The use of a gray colored away jersey shall also be permitted. The front and back of the jersey shall be reserved for the numbers, team name, team or other logo (such as a flag) and players name only. Numbers shall be a minimum of 6 inches on the front and 8 inches on the back.
26. A team should wear no duplicate numbers.
27. The home team shall furnish all the following:
 - a. Game Ball Specification - Freshman and sophomore divisions must use a ball of equal size to a Wilson K-2 ball. Jr Varsity division must use a ball of equal size to a Wilson TDJ ball. Varsity division must use a ball of equal size to a Wilson TDY ball.
 - b. Weigh In Scale - Scales must be a balance type, no spring type.
 - c. Yard Markers - All yard markers must meet I.H.S.A. safety requirements.
 - d. Official Time - A working Time Clock must be displayed at each field. When an official time is being kept on the field, any coach may request and must be given the time remaining in a quarter.
 - e. Penalties - All preliminary and final penalty reports will be given to both team benches by the referee.

- f. Officials - Each home team will provide at least 3 officials for each game, at least 2 of these officials must be licensed and in uniform, and all officials must be at least 18 years of age. Failure to provide at least two licensed officials prior to the start of the second quarter will result in a forfeit by the home team. Prior to game time, all licensed officials are required to show their license and identification if requested. A game may start with 2 licensed officials if mutually agreed upon by the opposing coaches. If the 3rd official is not present by the start of the 3rd quarter, the game is over and the result is a forfeit by the home team. No coaches, parents, or siblings may officiate a game in which their team and/or family member participates. This rule is to avoid a possible conflict of interest.
28. Awards will be presented at the League's discretion. Trophies and plaques will be approximately equal monetary value.
29. Game cards of all football games must be completed correctly and must be received by the official recorder, bearing postmark no later than the Tuesday following the Saturday or Sunday games played. If a player or coach was ejected from a game. Game officials must record the ejection on the back of the game card. SWIYFC President must be notified of the ejection on the game day.
30. Any changes to rules of play or by-laws that are to be voted on should be discussed at one meeting and voted on at the next conference meeting. This gives organizations time to take the issue back to their organization and discuss the issue in order to decide how to vote.
31. When scheduling regular season games, byes should be distributed evenly between organizations in each division.
32. If a team is up by 24 points at any point the losing team gets the OPTION to receive the kickoff or take the ball at their own 40 yard line.
33. If a team is down by 24 points at half time the losing team has the option to start a running clock, however once team has chosen the running clock the clock will remain running even if the deficit is less than 24 points. The clock will stop for TD, timeout and injury.
34. All players will play a minimum of 8 plays per game. All plays will count towards a player's total, including special teams and extra point attempts.

RULES OF PLAY - STRIPERS (UNLIMITED WEIGHT PLAYERS)

1. No striper will be allowed to advance the ball unless: The striper was a Defender at the onset of the play and was the first to touch the ball after the change of possession. Should this same player fumble, the play will be ruled dead immediately.
2. Regarding Kick offs, and Kickoff returns, Stripers will be on the front line at the onset of the play.
3. A Striper will not be allowed to advance the ball on any special teams play.
4. There will be no more than 5 stripers on the field at any time.
5. Defensive stripers must be on the line of scrimmage and no wider then head up on the furthest covered Offensive linemen from the ball. A 5-yard penalty will be assessed for each violation.
6. Each Striper shall have an adhesive "stripe" of contrasting color, and at least one inch in width on their helmet from ear hole to ear hole.
7. All Stripers will be "covered" by a Non-striper on the Offensive Line of Scrimmage. A Striper cannot be the outermost player on the line of scrimmage. A 5-yard penalty will be assessed for each violation.
8. A striper is allowed to be the punter allowing 6 stripers to be on the field if this is the case, regardless of the events that occur the striped punter cannot advance the football.

FRESHMEN DIVISION

1. Two coaches will be allowed on the field. Coaches will not give verbal instructions or aid the players in any way once the QB starts his cadence. 1st offense will result in a warning. 2nd offense will result in the coach being removed from the field of play for the remainder of the game.
2. When a team requests to punt, the ball will be automatically advanced 20 yards from the line of scrimmage.
3. There will be a maximum of 6 players on the defensive line. The defensive line will be from sideline to sideline. A 5-yard penalty will be assessed for each violation after initial warning.
4. There will be no defenders over the Center and/or will hit the center at the snap of the ball. A 5-yard penalty will be assessed for each violation.
5. No blitzing. All defensive players who are not playing on the defensive line will be at least 4 yards off the line of scrimmage. The distance is reduced to 3 yards if the opponent is on the 1 yard line about to score.
6. There will only be two (2) Kickoffs per game, 1st and 3rd quarters. Following a score, the ball will be placed on the 40 yard line to resume play.
7. A 35 second play clock will be utilized in the Freshman Division.
8. Two Referees may be used instead of three in Freshman Division only.
9. If a safety occurs the team that was on defense and got the safety will be awarded 2 points and the ball on their opponents 40 yard line.
10. When kicking the extra points the ball shall be placed on the extra point hash mark and the defense may rush after the ball has been snapped. If the kick is good the score is worth 2 points.

SOPHOMORE DIVISION

1. No rushing of the punter and no one leaves the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked. Once declared, the offense must punt the ball. A 5 yard penalty will be assessed for each violation.
2. There will be a maximum of 6 players on the defensive line. The defensive line will be from sideline-to-sideline. A 5 yard penalty will be assessed for each violation after initial warning.
3. There will be a maximum of one (1) blitzing player. All defensive players who are not playing on the defensive line will be at least 3 yards off the line of scrimmage. A 5-yard penalty will be assessed for each violation.
4. There will be no defenders over the Center and/or will hit the center at the snap of the ball. A 5-yard penalty will be assessed for each violation.
5. When kicking the extra points, the ball shall be placed on the extra point hash mark and the defense may rush after the ball has been snapped. If the kick is good the score is worth 2 points.

JUNIOR VARSITY DIVISION

All IHSA rules will apply.

VARSITY DIVISION

All IHSA rules will apply.

GAME PROTEST

There will be only 2 areas of condition for which a game may be played Under Protest:

1. Issues of player eligibility.
2. Field Conditions.
 - a. Clock Function or lack thereof.
 - b. Scale Function of lack thereof.
 - c. Improper number of officials.
3. The Game Officials, A member of The Board of Directors, and the Opposing Head Coach must be notified as soon as possible after the alleged infraction has occurred. The protesting coach must write a summary of the alleged infraction on the back of the game card. In case of a protest, the game will be played in its entirety unless there is an immediate safety concern for the players. The protest can be initiated at any time, but will require a \$100 deposit by the coach/team that initiates the protest. At first convenience after the end of the game, the Board of Directors will appoint a committee to determine the validity, and subsequent outcome of the protest. If the protest is upheld the deposit will be returned to the protesting team. If denied the deposit money will be placed into the general.

ARTICLE XII - WEIGHT ALLOWANCE CHART

Table to Display Weight Allowances

Level		Week (Regular Season)								Playoffs	
Level	Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
FRESHMEN	Striper	70	71	71	72	72	73	73	74	74	75
	Play Down	55	56	56	57	57	58	58	59	59	60
SOPHOMORE	Striper	90	91	91	92	92	93	93	94	94	95
	Play Down	70	71	71	72	72	73	73	74	74	75
JR VARSITY	Striper	110	111	111	112	112	113	113	114	114	115
	Play Down	90	91	91	92	92	93	93	94	94	95
VARSITY	Striper	140	141	141	142	142	143	143	144	144	145
	Play Down	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A