



THE RULES
Spring Season

Revisions in red

PLEASE NOTE: While these rules are similar to those of the official NFL Flag rules, certain changes have been made to ensure a more competitive experience for the participants of the Yorkville Youth Athletic Association.

1. BASICS

- A coin toss will determine first possession and direction. The winning team will get to determine either their direction or who has the ball first. The team who loses the coin toss will get the other choice (direction or possession). In the second half the teams will change directions, and whichever team opened the game on defense will be on offense to start the second half.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has 4 plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has 4 plays to score a touchdown. If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team takes over on its 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its 5-yard line.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line. In all divisions, a player can run back an interception and change of possession is at the point at the end of the run back.
- Official NFL Flag shirts must be worn during play and must be tucked into pants.
- The home team will wear the dark side of their jersey and the away team will wear the light side of their jersey.
- Players will have 2 flags, 1 on each hip; the "lead strap" must be tucked into the pants.
- Parents and spectators will occupy one sideline, while coaches and Players (of both teams) will be on the other sideline.
- Players must wear pants or shorts that do not camouflage a flag.
- Playmakers Divisions coaches are permitted to be on the field and in the huddle prior to the play. However, they must move towards the sideline before the ball is snapped. In the Mighty Mite, PeeWee, Touchdown, and Gridiron Divisions coaches may stay on the field on offense only as long as they do not interfere with the play and must remain at least 10 yards behind the quarterback. Coaches are not permitted on the field in the Heisman Division except for during timeouts.
 - o Only 1 coach is permitted in the huddle on offense (where applicable).

2. PLAYERS

The Team

- Teams will play with five players on the field
- If a team only has 4 players, then the game is played 4 on 4 and it is an official game.
- Teams with less than 4 players will forfeit, however the game will still be played as an exhibition.

Substitutions (**FOR GIRLS, GRIDIRON, PLAYMAKERS, AND HEISMAN DIVISIONS**)

NOTE: A drive is considered the length of time that a team controls possession. This means each offense is 1 drive OR each defense is 1 drive. For example, a player who plays 2 defensive drives and 2 offensive drives has a total of 4 drives.

- **By game's end, no player should have played more than 2 drives than any other player¹. Referees will track playing time in all games.**
 - **If at any point during the game (prior to free substitutions in applicable divisions) the referee identifies a player who has played 4 more drives than any other player, the referee will stop the game and enforce a "Rotations Penalty" as defined herein.**
 - The on-site director reviews playing time after all games, in all divisions, are done for the day. If a player on a team plays more than 2 drives than any other player on his team, the coach will receive an e-mail informing them on how to properly substitute their players. Additionally, if the offending team had won the game, it will be reflected in the standings as a loss.
- In all divisions, each player must play at least 1 drive on offense and 1 drive on defense.
- **All players must play in each half.**
- In the Gridiron, Playmakers, and Heisman divisions, during the final 5 minutes of the game, and in OT, free substitutions are allowed between downs. In the Mighty Mite, Peewee, and Touchdown divisions substitutions can never be made between downs and the "free substitution" rule does not exist.

Substitutions (**FOR PEEWEE AND TOUCHDOWN DIVISIONS**)

- Each 24-minute half will be divided into three, 8-minute shifts. Teams will substitute their bench in after each shift.
- **By game's end, no player should have played more than 1 shift than any other player. Referees will track playing time in all games.**
 - The on-site director reviews playing time after all games, in all divisions, are done for the day. If a player on a team plays more than 1 shift than any other player on his team, the coach will receive an e-mail informing them on how to properly substitute their players. Additionally, if the offending team had won the game, it will be reflected in the standings as a loss.
- **Players may not sit consecutive shifts, teams must substitute their entire bench in each substitution instance.**
- After the two 24 minute halves, there will be a 2 minute "bonus period" where teams can freely substitute and substitutions are no longer tracked. Teams may

¹ In the Gridiron, Playmakers, and Heisman divisions, playing time is no longer tracked during free substitutions, so playing time must be within 2 drives by the 5-minute mark of the 2nd half

substitute each play if they wish

- Regarding the second quarterback rule, the first shift of the first half must utilize one quarterback for the duration of the shift. The second shift of the first half must be a different quarterback that is utilized for the entire shift. After the first and second shifts of the game, any other player may play quarterback. For the avoidance of doubt, for shifts 3 through 6, teams may switch their quarterback every play.

3. TIMING

- Girls, Gridiron, Playmakers, and Heisman games are played to 50 minutes running time (2 25-minute periods). PeeWee and Touchdown games are played to 50 minutes running time with 2 24-minute halves each consisting of 3 8-minute shifts. Following the 2 24-minute halves, there will be a “bonus period” of 2 minutes of stopped time and free substitutions.
 - o **For game at Gansevoort on Friday nights, games will be played to 44 minutes running time (2 22-minute periods). PeeWee and Touchdown games will have 3 7 minute shifts in each half plus 2 minutes of free subs**
- The clock will stop during the following:
 - o Time-outs (clock resumes at first snap after TO)
 - o Injuries (clock resumes at Official’s discretion)
 - o At the discretion of the Official (clock resumes at Official’s discretion)
 - o During the final 2 minutes of the game, **and the score within 20 points**, the clock will also stop for the two- minute warning, each incomplete pass, each out of bounds play, penalties, point after attempts, and change of possession.
- Each time the ball is spotted, a team has **25** seconds to snap the ball. The referee will announce when there is 15 seconds remaining, 10 seconds remaining, and will count down from 5 seconds in 1 second intervals.
- Each team has 3 30-second time-outs per game. There are no time-outs in overtime. Unused time-outs do not carry over into OT.
- If the score is tied at the end of regulation time, the game will continue to a modified overtime procedure until a winner is determined:
 - o Each team will have the opportunity to attempt one conversion per overtime period for the point value of its choice (one play)
 - ◆ 1 Point - 5 yards from end-zone & no run zone
 - ◆ 2 Point - 10 yards from end-zone (run or pass + blitz if applicable)
 - ◆ 3 Point - 15 yards from end-zone (run or pass + blitz if applicable)
 - o The winner of a coin toss will have a choice to either go first or second in the first overtime period
 - o If the score remains tied after the first overtime, the team that went second in the first overtime will go first in the second overtime
 - o If the score remains tied after two overtime periods, the game will advance to a final overtime period. Each team will attempt 1 play from its own 5 yard line (where a typical drive would start) and whichever team gains more yards on that play will receive 1 point to their score and be declared the winner. The team that went first in the second overtime will go second in the final overtime period.
 - ◆ If no teams advance the ball in this overtime period, a fourth overtime

period of similar kind will take place with teams reversing who goes first and second.

- o Each team must have the opportunity to possess the ball an equal number of times in overtime until it occurs that one team has more points than the other after an overtime period.
- o All overtime tries will be attempted facing the same end-zone, selected by the official.
- o Interceptions can be returned to the other end zone for the value of the points of the conversion
- o Sacks, defined as a defensive flag pull behind the line of scrimmage, or flag guarding behind the line of scrimmage, are worth 1 point
- o No timeouts carry over nor do teams receive timeouts for overtime
- o The 30 second play clock is still in use
- o If there is a defensive penalty on an overtime try and the offense accepts the penalty, the offense can choose to run the play from the prior line of scrimmage or run the play after the penalty yards are marked off. Under both options, the new overtime try will be worth the same points as the original try. The no running zone will be in effect.
- o **The overtime procedure may be modified at any time by the on-site director**

4. SCORING

Offensive Scoring

- Touchdown:
 - o 6 points
- Points After Touchdown:
 - o 1 point (played from 5-yard line);
 - o 2 points (played from 10-yard line): or
 - o 3 points (played from the 15-yard line)
 - o If there is a defensive penalty on a point after try and the offense accepts the penalty, the offense can choose to run the play from the prior line of scrimmage or run the play after the penalty yards are marked off. Under both options, the new point after try will be worth the same points as the original point after try. The no running zone will be in effect.
 - ◆ Example: Team A chooses to go for a two point try from the 10-yard line. Team B is offsides. If Team A accepts the penalty, they can choose to either go from the 10-yard line again and is allowed to run or pass, or they can go from the 5-yard line but can only pass. However, under both options, the play will count for two points.

Defensive Scoring

- Sack (defined as any flag-pull tackle, of any player, behind the line of scrimmage):
 - o 1 point
 - o A flag guarding penalty committed behind the line of scrimmage or an intentional grounding will also result in 1 point awarded to the defensive team
 - o If the defense has crossed the line of scrimmage and an offensive player falls down

behind the line of scrimmage, this will result in a sack. If an offensive player falls down behind the line of scrimmage without a defensive player crossing the line of scrimmage, this will not result in a sack.

- Safety:
 - 2 points (note: a flag pull in the end-zone will NOT result in a 1-point sack as well, the defense will just be awarded 2 points for the safety and possession of the ball)
 - **An intentional grounding or flag guarding in the end zone will also result in a safety.**
- Points After Touchdown: a defensive interception that is returned to their end zone during an opponent's PAT will result in the defensive team receiving the number of points that the offense was attempting.
 - In all divisions, a sack during a PAT results in a point for the defensive team.

5. OFFENSE

Running

- After 5 seconds, the quarterback may run with the ball beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Handoffs, laterals, and pitches are permitted only behind the line of scrimmage.
- Offense may use multiple handoffs, laterals, and pitches.
- "No-running zones," located 5 yards from each end zone and 5 yards on either side of midfield, are designed to avoid short-yardage, power-running situations.
- The player who takes a handoff, lateral, or pitch behind the line of scrimmage can throw the ball from behind the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball has been handed off, lateralled, or pitched, all defensive players are eligible to rush.
- Spinning is allowed, but players cannot dive, slide, or jump to avoid being tackled.
 - Jumping in the air in a forward motion to advance the ball, or to avoid a flag pull is not allowed. However, lateral moves to the left or right are permitted. Jumping over players is only permitted to avoid stepping on a player who is off his feet and on the ground.
- The ball is spotted where the ball carrier's **front foot is** when the flag is pulled, **not where the ball is**. If a ball carrier is ruled down because he runs out of bounds or his knee hits the ground, the ball is spotted wherever his feet were when ruled down (even if his feet were ahead of the ball).
- A ball carrier cannot charge into a defender who is not mobile
- An offensive player cannot block a defensive player. A block occurs when an offensive player, who is not the ball carrier, hinders a defensive player from making a tackle by contacting the defensive player, running between the ball carrier and the defensive player with or without making contact, or another similar act.
- The quarterback may hand the ball off to the center but only by wrapping the ball around to the center's front. If the quarterback exchanges the ball back through the center's legs it will be deemed an illegal procedure, 5-yard penalty and loss of down.

Receiving

- All players are eligible to receive passes (including the quarterback if the ball has been handed off, lateralled, or pitched behind the line of scrimmage).
 - The quarterback may not throw the ball off the center or another

receiver's body part, catch the ball, and advance the ball. Should this play happen, the referee will blow the whistle and the down will be consumed.

- A player must have at least one foot in-bounds when making a reception.
 - In the case which one foot is in-bounds and one foot is out of bounds simultaneously, the receiver is ruled out of bounds
- If an offensive player's flag falls out, they are eligible to receive a pass but cannot advance the ball after the reception. The play is dead at the spot of the reception.
- In the case of a simultaneous possession by both an offensive and defensive player, possession is awarded to the offense

Passing

- The first two offensive drives of each half must utilize two different players at quarterback for the duration of each drive.
 - A quarterback who plays for the first drive in the first or second half is not permitted to play quarterback during the second drive of that same half.
 - The quarterback for the first drive must only be 1 player for the duration of the drive
 - The quarterback for the second drive must only be 1 player for the duration of the drive
 - Teams may switch quarterbacks every play if they wish on any other drive outside of the first two drives of each half
- A forward pass may be thrown to a receiver who is either behind or beyond the line of scrimmage.
- A forward pass may be thrown either underhand or overhand as long as the passer is behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is released. A passer is considered to be beyond the line of scrimmage if any part of the passer's foot is in contact with the ground beyond the line of scrimmage.
- Only one forward pass may be thrown during a play.
- Intentional grounding will be called when a passer, who is about to be sacked, intentionally drops the ball or throws a pass that is not in the direction and general vicinity of a receiver.
 - Intentional grounding will not be called if the passer throws a forward pass that lands out of bounds (including out of the end zone) beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - A passer may intentionally spike the ball to stop the clock in the last two minutes of a game if he is under center and immediately, after receiving the snap, throws the ball directly to the ground in front of him.
- The quarterback has a 5-second "pass clock." If a pass is not thrown within the 5 seconds, any defensive player may rush, and the quarterback may run beyond the line of scrimmage. Once the ball is handed off, lateralled, pitched, or passed forward, the 5-second rule is no longer in effect.
 - **In the no-run-zone, the referee will sound the whistle in lieu of announcing the 5th second if the ball has not been thrown, and the play will be ruled dead; for timing purposes under 2 minutes in the second half, this will be ruled as an incomplete pass**

- If a QB's flag falls out prior to a pass being made, the ball is dead, and the next play begins from the spot that the flag fell out (including in a no-running zone)
- Only the quarterback can throw a forward pass in the no-run zone. Handoffs, laterals, and pitches are not allowed in a no-running zone.
- A forward pass thrown in the no-running zone must be thrown beyond the line of scrimmage (both of the receiver's feet must be in front of the line of scrimmage upon reception).
- Note: Kneeling is allowed in the no-run zone, including a kneel-down to move the ball back to a position where running can be allowed on the following play
- If an offensive penalty is called on a team while they are in the non-running zone, the offense will be moved back, and they will still not be permitted to run.

Formation

- The ball must be snapped between the legs, **not off to one side**, to start play.
- At least 2 receivers in addition to the center must line up at the line of scrimmage on every play.
- In the Pee-Wee division, there must be at least one receiver on each side of the center.
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. A player in motion cannot be moving forward at the time of the snap. The offense must still have three players set on the line of scrimmage while a player is in motion.
- In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options
 - o Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed
 - o Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage

6. BLITZING THE QB (FOR GRIDIRON, PLAYMAKERS, & HEISMAN)

- Players may blitz by rushing the quarterback prior to 5 seconds.
- All players who blitz the quarterback must be a minimum of 10 yards from the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped (marked by the official).
- Any number of players can blitz the quarterback, as long as they are 10 yards from the line the scrimmage.
- Once a defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage on a blitz, the quarterback can run beyond the line of scrimmage.
 - o Once a defensive player crosses the line of scrimmage on a blitz, all other defensive players, regardless of where they lined up at the beginning of the play, may also cross the line of scrimmage.
- Once the ball is handed off, lateralled, or pitched the 10-yard rule is no longer in effect, and all defenders may rush.
- Teams are limited to one blitz per set of four downs. Teams may also blitz on PATs (unless it is a no-run, no-blitz situation).

7. DEAD BALLS

- Play is ruled "dead" when:
 - o The whistle blows
 - o Ball carrier's flag is pulled.
 - o Ball carrier steps out of bounds.
 - o A touchdown or safety is scored.
 - o Ball carrier's knee hits the ground.

- o The ball hits the ground.
- o There are no fumbles. If the ball carrier fumbles the ball backwards, the ball is spotted where it first hits the ground. If the ball carrier fumbles the ball forward, it is spotted where the ball carrier's feet were at the time of the fumble. Unless the fumble is on 4th down in the final two minutes of the game, the clock continues to run, like it were a fumble recovered by offense. Note: the ball cannot change possession on a fumble – meaning if the ball carrier loses control of the ball and the same team or different team receives the ball, even without touching the ground, the play is ruled dead at the spot of the fumble and the original ball carrier's team retains possession of the ball.
- o If the ball is dropped by an offensive player in their own end zone, it is not a safety. The down will be lost and, unless it was fourth down, the offensive team will retain possession, and the ball will be spotted on their 1-yard line.
- o Ball carrier's flag falls out. (Note: If a ball carrier's lead on his belt is out so that it appears to be a flag, it will be treated as if his flag fell out.)
- o An illegal forward pass is thrown. (Note: An illegal forward pass is a dead ball as soon as it is released. Therefore, the pass cannot be intercepted.)
- o An illegal run (in the no-run-zone). (Note: An illegal run is a dead ball as soon as the QB's foot lands across the line of scrimmage, as soon as there is a handoff, lateral, or pitch, or the referee blows the whistle after the count in the no-run-zone.)

8. PENALTIES (**NOTE: All penalties will be called by the Official.**)

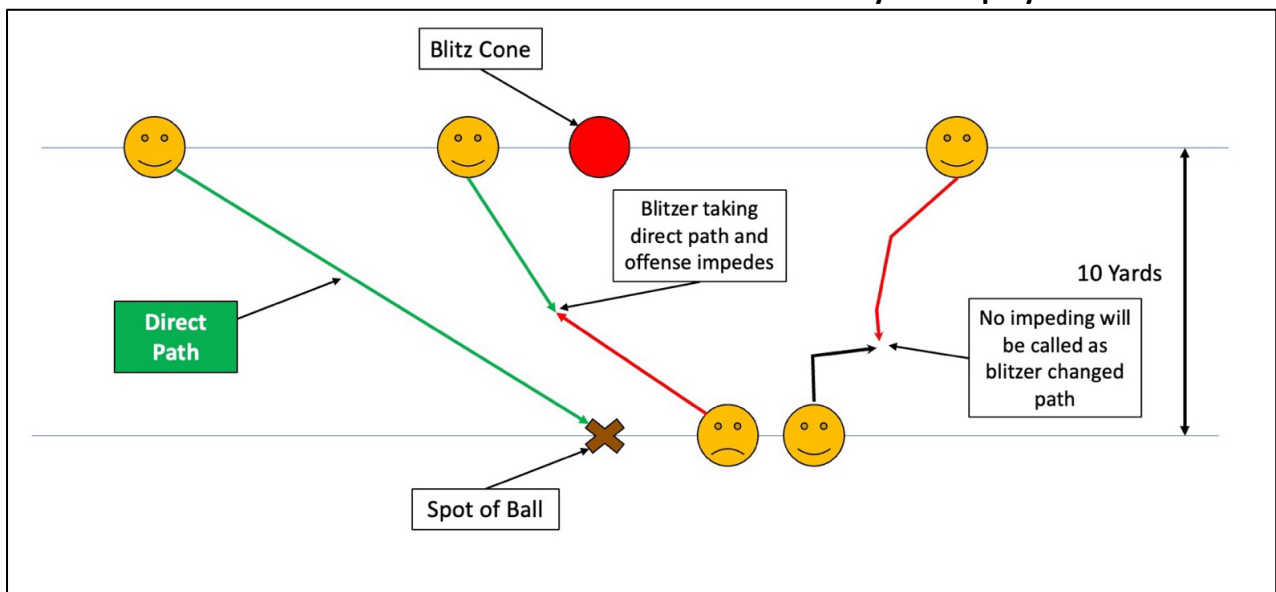
Defensive Penalties

- *5 yards and repeat down*
 - o Offsides
 - o Illegal Rush (rushing prior to 5 seconds)
 - o Illegal Blitz (starting blitz from inside 10-yard marker)
 - o Illegal flag pull (before receiver has ball)
 - o Too Many Players on the Field (this includes defensive coach)
 - o A defender may not attempt to strip the ball from the ball carrier
- *5 yards and automatic first down*
 - o Holding
 - o Illegal Contact
 - o Roughing the Passer
 - o **Equipment Violation (i.e. player not wearing a mouthguard, number not on jersey)**
- *Automatic first down at point of penalty*
 - o Pass Interference
- *15 yards from point of penalty and automatic first down*
 - o Tackling
 - ◆ A clear-path tackle, defined as an illegal tackle or "trip" by the defense as the offensive player, in the judgement of the referee, has a clear path towards the End-Zone, will result in an automatic first down and the ball to be placed at the defense's 1-yard line.
 - o Unsportsmanlike Conduct
 - o **Rotations Penalty**

- ◆ Upon the referee identifying a player attempting to play 4 or more drives than another player, the referee will stop the game, remove that player from the field, assess the 15 yard penalty, and award the offense with an automatic first down.

Offensive Penalties

- 5 yards and repeat down
 - o Illegal formation (3 players not on-line, more than one player in motion or the player in motion moving forward at the time of snap)
 - o Offsides (note that this is only called when a player is lined up on the defensive side of the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped)
 - o Too many players on the field, or coach on the field (Playmakers & Heisman)
- 5 yards from the point of the penalty and loss of down
 - o Intentional Grounding
 - ◆ Will result in 1 point awarded to the defensive team
 - o Flag guarding
 - ◆ A flag guarding penalty committed behind the line of scrimmage will also result in 1 point awarded to the defensive team
 - o Blocking
 - o Delay of Game
 - o Equipment Violation (i.e. player not wearing a mouthguard, number not on jersey)
- 5 yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down
 - o Offensive pass interference (illegal pick play, pushing off/away defender)
 - o Impeding the blitzer – **The blitzer is entitled to a direct path from where they start to where the ball was snapped. If the offense contacts the blitzer in their direct path to the place where the ball was snapped, this will result in a penalty. If the blitzer deviates from this path, contact will be ruled incidental, unless the referee determines that contact was intentional by either player.**



- 15 yards from the point of the penalty and loss of down
 - o Charging

- o Unsportsmanlike Conduct
- o **Rotations Penalty**
 - ◆ **Upon the referee identifying a player attempting to play 4 or more drives than another player, the referee will stop the game, remove that player from the field, assess the 15 yard penalty, and remove a down from the offense.**
- An illegal run (early QB run or run in the “no run zone”) is a loss of down at the spot of the foul and does not result in a yardage loss
- If a player throws the ball while across the line of scrimmage, the play will be ruled dead and the down will be consumed. The ball cannot be intercepted.
- **An illegal touching, defined as a receiver being the first to touch the ball after stepping out of bounds, will result in an incomplete pass and loss of down. There is not a yardage loss. If a defensive player steps out of bounds and is the first to touch the ball, they may not intercept the pass.**
- **If the defense commits a penalty during a play which would result in the offense being placed in the no-run-zone, the offense may either accept the penalty, decline the penalty, or re-do the previous play from outside the no-run-zone.**

Notes:

- Referees determine incidental contact that may result from normal run of play.
- Unless otherwise indicated, all penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage.
- If an offensive penalty is called on a team while they are in the non-running zone, the offense will be moved back, and they will not be permitted to run.
- A half cannot end on a defensive penalty, unless the offense declines the penalty.
- Loss of down means that the penalty is assessed, and the play moves to the next down.
- If the enforcement of a distance penalty would move the ball more than half the distance from the spot of enforcement to the offender’s goal line, the penalty shall be half the distance from the spot of enforcement to its goal line.

9. MERCY RULE (Enforced at the discretion of the on-site director)

- If a team is leading by 30 points or more at any point in the second half, the on-site director has discretion to “call” the game, award a win to the leading team, and play a scrimmage for the remaining duration of the game.

10. COACH’S CHALLENGE

- **Coaches will be allowed to challenge a rule. They will not be allowed to challenge a judgment call. If they wish to challenge a rule, they must use a timeout to do so. The coaches must have an available timeout in order to challenge a rule. Coaches will receive 1 challenge per game. Coaches will retain their timeout and challenge if the challenge is successful. Referees and on-site directors will not look at photos or videos as part of the challenge.**

11. COACHING

- **Game Responsibility** – Coaches are responsible for fielding a team to all Yorkville Youth Athletic Association scheduled games, regardless of the number of players who will attend. Coaches do not have the authority to cancel any game for any reason. Any disputes with fellow coaches, umpires, directors, rules or Yorkville administration, shall be

discussed with parties involved and Yorkville Youth Athletic Association Executive Director at the proper appointed time. The only time a coach may remove a team from the field is in the event of imminent danger.

12. SPORTSMANSHIP

- If the official witnesses any acts of elbowing, cheap shots, or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.
- Trash talking is illegal. Officials have the right to determine offensive language. (Trash talk is talk that may be offensive to officials, opposing players, teams or spectators.) If trash talking occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.
- There will be a Zero Tolerance policy with regard to the behavior of volunteer adult coaches. Any coach who exhibits unsportsmanlike conduct while in attendance at any YYAA sports contest will be immediately relieved of his coaching responsibilities for the duration of the season.

PLEASE NOTE: THE ON-SITE DIRECTOR HAS THE DISCRETION, AND FINAL SAY, ON ANY RULE DECISIONS OR MODIFICATIONS DURING THE COURSE OF A GAME OR SEASON.