



2008 HFL RULES & REGULATIONS

Article 1 Definitions

1. **Hometown Football League:** The name of the league and its affiliated franchises.
2. **The HFL will consist of to governing bodies.**
 - A. **Board of Directors**
 - B. **Board of Commissioners**

The Board of Directors will consist of a President and two Vice Presidents. The Board of Commissioners, also known as “ the Board “ will consist of the Board of Directors and a franchise appointed commissioners and/or vice commissioners, if a franchise commissioner is on the Board of Directors.

The HFL Board will meet on a regular basis to discuss rules infractions, game scheduling, game coordination, and any other matter of league importance that may affect individual franchises.

The HFL commissioners will start meeting with the Board of Directors during the first quarter of the New Year to propose any rule changes. At the next scheduled meeting, the Board of Directors will give their rulings on any proposed rule changes. The Board of Directors will be the only individuals voting on matters that pertain to age, weight, and player eligibility.

The HFL Board will vote on any rule changes that affect the general game rules or game play.

3. **Franchise:** Each member program which consists of teams in the following: a varsity and a junior varsity. Programs need to fill a team in each division (one varsity / one junior varsity) in order to compete in the HFL.
4. **Team:** One of the individual units within a franchise whose rosters all meet HFL criteria which includes birth certificates, physicals, and all codes of conducts signed and returned.
5. **Coach:** An authorized instructor by the hometown franchise’s commissioner. The coach also has to have completed, signed, and submitted a HFL Coaches application, a copy of the HFL’s Coaches Code of Conduct. The coach **MUST** also understand and acknowledge the HFL’s “KIDS FIRST!!” Policy. Any violation of rules or codes may result in immediate dismissal of coach by the HFL Board or individual franchise commissioner.
6. **Participant:** A registered, authorized individual of the cheer and football programs who meets the HFL criteria.

Article 2 Playing Rules

1. There are to be **NO gentlemen's agreements**. If it is not a written rule here as follows within the HFL playing rules it does not exist. Any violations of the following may result in dismissal of franchise, team, commissioner, coach, and / or participant.
2. The rules of the Michigan High School Athletic Association shall apply except as hereinafter noted. All the rules of the HFL will be binding on all member franchises.
3. Each tackle game shall be administered by 3 officials maximum and a minimum of 2. If only one official is present at game time, in order to avoid forfeiture, a volunteer may be taken from each team present chosen by the commissioners available.
4. The official game ball of the HFL will be the following: Wilson TDY for Varsity squads and Wilson TDJ for the Junior Varsity. Any composite or leather ball of equivalent size may be used.
5. Football shoes with molded rubber cleats or replacement cleats of no more than 1/2" height will be allowed.
- 5a. All mouth guards will be COLORED and ATTACHED to the facemask of the helmet. No white or clear colors will be allowed.
6. All games for the Varsity and Junior Varsity will consist of four (4) quarters of twelve (12) minutes each. There will be a ten (10) minute intermission between halves. Upon agreement by the two HFL commissioners present special arrangements may be negotiated to extend intermission for special events (i.e. Parent's Night) as long as it is mutually agreed by both parties.
7. Each team will receive three (3) one-minute timeouts per half.
- 7a. The game shall be played on a regulation football field. Any exception for the Varsity and Junior Varsity programs must be mutually agreed upon by each franchise commissioner's and submitted in writing to the HFL Board of Directors.
8. **Winner of the COIN TOSS will automatically RECEIVE on the kickoff. The opposing team will choose goal in which they would like to defend.**
9. No wireless or wired communications will be allowed from press box to on field coaches, chain gang, or staff. The home franchise may use a communication device from its commissioner to the press box announcer in order to facilitate announcements or emergency information. The away franchise commissioner can contact the home team if they must use the communications for an emergency.
10. NO written or visual scouting reports and/or video tapes / DVD's will be allowed to be exchanged between coaches within an organization or between franchises.
11. During the game when the difference in scores between the two teams is twenty-one (21) points or more, the trailing team will automatically receive the ball at 50 yard line following a score by the leading team. Time in the first half will be by a running game clock. During this time there will be a restriction on any fourth (4) down attempt to convert for first down. Any team up 21 points that attempts to convert a 4th down without punting the ball will automatically lose possession of the ball and the opposing team will receive the ball at the 10 yard line of the offensive team who attempted the conversion. Any team who is ahead by 21 points at this time should punt the football as in normal football play or attempt a field goal. During this time, the game clock will stop for "TIPS" Timeouts, Injuries, change of Possession, and Scores.

12. All touchdowns scored will be six (6) points. All PAT attempts shall be made from two (2) yard line. All PAT kicks will be awarded two (2) points; all run or passing conversions shall be awarded one (1) point.
13. On all kick attempts, whether punt, extra point, or field goal no defensive player may rush the kicker. An automatic first down will be given to punt attempts and field goal attempts where this occurs, and an automatic two (2) points given for the extra point attempt. There will be no rushing the punter on any attempts. The offensive team who fakes a punt, a field goal, or PAT will give up possession of the ball to the defensive team. The defensive team will now be on offense, and they will be awarded the ball on the opposing team's 10 yard line.
- 13a. All field goal/PAT attempts where the snap touches the ground shall be blown dead and no further attempt will be made. The holder must be in the kneeling position, unless forced out of position by the snap of the ball, if the holder is forced out of position they must return back to the kneeling position for the kick. All field goals and PAT's must be completed within 15 seconds of the snap of the ball.
14. On all punt attempts if the snap hits the ground the kicker may pick up the ball and continue the punt attempt. No player is allowed to leave the line of scrimmage until the punter actually kicks the ball. Teams receiving the punt will be allowed to return it just as MHSAA rules. For snap attempts that go through the end zone, an automatic safety will be awarded. For dropped snaps in the end zone, kick will be played as above. The returning team is allowed 2 deep receivers; all other players must be within two yards of the line of scrimmage.
- 14a. All punt attempts must go a minimum of 5 yards from the line of scrimmage. If the punt goes less than 5 yards, the play will automatically be whistled dead and turned over at the line of scrimmage.
- 14b. All punts will automatically be whistled dead, if it hits any offensive or defensive players on the line of scrimmage. The ball will be considered turn-over on downs.
15. The home team shall provide a three (3) person crew to work the sideline chains and a qualified scorekeeper. All volunteers MUST be 16 years of age or older. All volunteers should be aware that they are HFL official representatives and conduct themselves accordingly. Officials may penalize any person on the sidelines for breaking any of the HFL Codes of Conduct rules. This is including, but not limited to ejection from the sideline or ejection from the field.
16. The HFL will NOT resolve ties and no officials will be allowed to stay on for an extra period to decide a tie.
17. No team shall be afforded the luxury of entering any team locker room at halftime unless it is offered to the away team.
18. **GAME AND PRACTICE PARTICIPATION:** All players dressed must have game participation in each quarter of the game, with the following exceptions: participants who are overweight, players not meeting the attendance policy and codes of conduct, and players who are physically not fit due to health restrictions. Players must play a minimum of 6 plays per half.
19. **INELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULED HFL GAME OR EVENT. NO EXCEPTIONS!!** Any further disciplinary actions up to and including removal from team or franchise will be at the discretion of the appropriate franchise commissioner. (I.e. Almont coach violating rules, Almont commissioner may remove from team.)

Article 3 Eligibility Rules

1. AGE:

A. The league age of a participant, eight (8) thru twelve (12) is that age attained prior to August 1st of the playing year. No child enrolled in 7th grade will be eligible to play in the HFL.

Eligibility is conditional upon the following: All participants provide a certificate of birth, current physical, and signed codes of conducts and equipment sign out forms, and whose account is currently paid in full will be eligible to receive equipment and start play.

Any participant playing concurrently on another team will not be eligible to play in the HFL.

B. Junior Varsity: Only participants 8, 9, and 10 years old.

C. Varsity: Only participants 10, 11, and 12 years old.

2. WEIGHT:

A. The weight referred to below shall be the official weight of the player in full uniform as described: jersey, shoulder pads, pants, all protective hip, thigh, knee pads, mouth guard, and cup/supporter.

Female participants may exclude cup and supporter and wear a female protective device.

B. ALL PLAYERS MUST BE PRESENTED FOR WEIGH-IN!!

C. The helmet must be brought to the scale and is not to be included in the players' official weight. If a player is over the weight limit, they will be allowed to remove their cleats. No other equipment listed above may be removed or altered to affect a player's weigh-in process. Any violation will result in the player being ineligible to participate in the game. The coach, official, or parent helping in the violation of this rule, will also break coach and or parent Code of Conduct and will face HFL disciplinary action.

D. Weight Rules:

Junior Varsity - Consisting of 8, 9, and 10 years olds.

a. Minimum weight is 50lbs with equipment.

b. Maximum weight is 125lbs with equip.

c. Maximum weight is 90lbs with equip. for 10 years olds.

d. NO VARIANCES WILL BE ALLOWED!

e. JV players weighing 90-125lbs. must play an offensive line position. (I.e. center, guards, tackles, and ends.)

e1. No Offensive line position may receive the ball behind the line of scrimmage.

- f. NO WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS WILL BE ENFORCED ON ANY DEFENSIVE POSITIONS.
- g. On all special teams/ kickoffs/ punts, JV players 90-125lbs. must be within 2 yards of the line of scrimmage.
- h. ANY INTENTIONAL VIOLATION OF WEIGHT RULE WILL RESULT IN AN IMMEDIATE 10 YARD PENALTY FROM THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE.

Varsity - Consisting of 10, 11, and 12 years.

- a. Maximum weight of 160 lbs. with equipment.
- b. NO VARIANCES WILL BE ALLOWED!
- c. Varsity players weighing 136-160lbs. must play an offensive line position. (I.e. center, guards, tackles, and ends.)
- c1. No Offensive line position may receive the ball behind the line of scrimmage.
- d. NO WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS WILL BE ENFORCED ON ANY DEFENSIVE POSITIONS.
- e. On all special teams/ kickoffs/ punts, Varsity players 136-160lbs. must be within 2 yards of the line of scrimmage.
- f. ANY INTENTIONAL VIOLATION OF WEIGHT RULE (e.) WILL RESULT IN AN IMMEDIATE 10 YARD PENALTY FROM THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE.
- g. If an error is discovered during or after the weigh in procedure, but prior to the beginning of the game, the weigh in can be conducted again at the request of the HFL Commissioner.
- h. Each town must furnish certified scales for the weigh in at each game.

Article 4 Rosters

1. All applicants to the HFL will turn in all information to the Board of Directors, for review and team selections. The information needed by the HFL Board of Directors in order to be eligible will be: HFL application and a copy of the players' birth certificate. Final Rosters are due at a roster meeting to be held before the first scheduled game. No additions to the rosters will be accepted after the first scheduled game.
2. The roster maximum will be 35 players. 17 players' minimum to field team.
3. Minimum rosters must be met by July 1st of playing year, to be eligible for participation in the HFL

Article 5 Practice Rules

1. **Practice:** Practice will not begin prior to 5 weeks before the first scheduled game. The first week of practice shall be strictly conditioning only. Conditioning practice will be with a mouth guard, helmet, practice shirt and short.
2. **Pads/Practice:** After week of conditioning players may begin contact drills with full pads (i.e., cup/supporter, knee, thigh, hip, rib, shoulder pads, and practice jersey/practice pants).
3. **Body Contact:** No body contact will be allowed during the conditioning period.
4. **PROHIBITED PRACTICE:** Three (3) practices are allowed during the week prior to a game. Games are played on Saturdays with exception of a possible Sunday game due to field usage. After the first game there shall be two (2) days of the week that are scheduled off days consistent throughout the year.
5. **NO Practices** are to be scheduled on **SUNDAYS!!** It is an automatic **OFF DAY!**
6. Practices are to be limited to two (2) hours and 45 minutes during conditioning week and two (2) and 15 minutes during normal practice weeks. Any violation of the practice rules i.e., extra practices, lengthened practice times, etc. may result in forfeiture of games and loss of franchise.

Article 6 Scheduling Rules

1. Each unit will be allowed one (1) practice scrimmage held no sooner than two weeks before scheduled first game.
2. The HFL may adopt a league scrimmage two weeks prior to the first scheduled game. All teams must attend.
3. No team is to schedule a scrimmage with an outside opponent unless agreed on by the HFL Board of Directors.
4. Night games are allowed on Saturday nights.
5. Sunday games will start at agreed upon time by franchise commissioners.
6. No post season games will be played unless by the consent of the HFL's Board of Directors.
7. All games will be scheduled by the HFL League Office and will start at either 1:00/3:00 PM unless specifically requested times are asked.

Article 7 Weather Rules

1. **To Play or Not to Play:** The decision whether to play a game due to inclement weather shall be in the hands of the officials. If game is stopped all decisions shall be received in the spirit of good sportsmanship.
2. **Called games before half time** will be considered no contest and attempts will be made to reschedule from the start. Any game called after half time will be considered final

Article 8 Awards

1. Awards may be given to any team or individual. Awards and presentation are at the discretion of franchise commissioners'.
2. There will be two HFL Sportsmanship Trophies
 - A. Varsity
 - B. Junior Varsity
3. A league sportsmanship trophy will be awarded to the team who best displays the behaviors the HFL is trying to develop. It will be voted on by the officials who officiate the various games. It is our duty to follow the rules and stress the importance of sportsmanship to all parents, participants, and spectators. If we cannot control our own emotions as adults, how can we teach sportsmanship to young athletes who are trying to have fun. **FOLLOW THE RULES NO MATTER WHAT THE OUTCOME AND EXPRESS THIS TO YOUR PROGRAM.**
4. Sportsmanship Scoring and Rules
 - A. Official scorecards will be given to officials before the start of the first game of the day. Each official will receive 2 scorecards. One for varsity and one for junior varsity. This will equal 3 scorecards per game and 6 score cards per day. Franchises will be scored in four categories: Players' Sportsmanship, Coaches Sportsmanship, Fans' Sportsmanship, and overall organization/ Sports Atmosphere.
 - B. Scorecards will be on a 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) scales.
 - C. 60 points per game are available.
 - D. Rolling year totals will decide winners.
 - E. Official scorecards must be mailed to appointed HFL official on a weekly basis. **ALL** scorecards must be received by appointed HFL official prior to Saturday at NOON of the following week and prior to the next scheduled game.
 - F. It is the **Head Official's** responsibility to get the scorecards to the appointed HFL official. **(IT IS NOT THE COMMISSIONER'S JOB OR OBLIGATION TO MAIL OUT SCORECARDS!!!)**.
 - G. Trophy presentation will happen to the winning franchise by a member of the Board of Directors at the franchises' year end banquet.

Article 9 Penalties

1. Member franchises: Must comply with all above rules or risk losing and/or suspension of their franchise from HFL play.
2. Discipline: Any player, coach, or parent who has knowingly signed and returned the Codes of Conducts may be expelled from participation or barred from entering any HFL contest for violation of any rule of the Code of Conduct or any other behavior not duly noted for the next schedule game. If the problem is ongoing and suspension does not work then the problem will be expelled from all HFL facilities. If the suspension occurs during the last game it will carry over until the first game of the following year.

Article 10 Crowd Control

1. Spectators: Each franchise must keep their spectators a minimum of six (6) feet from the sidelines at both home and away games.
2. End Zones: No spectators will be allowed to view games from the end zones.
3. Tobacco/Alcohol: No drinking of alcoholic beverages will be allowed by spectators on any HFL facilities i.e. school grounds. Smoking may be permitted in designated smoking areas outside the field fences.
4. Any PERSON whose belligerent behavior is not immediately admonished by the commissioner present, the officials may call a stoppage in play until that person is removed from the HFL facility. ANY COMMISSIONER not willing and able to do this for the good of the Hometown Football League and its participants will be asked to step down at the next meeting by the HFL Board or risk forfeiture of all games remaining in the season. The HFL Board will not tolerate commissioners not handling problems immediately and favorably for the Hometown Football League. As a commissioner certified by the HFL you are a representative of the HFL and your actions should be in support of the HFL and its rules. It is your responsibility to see the HFL be successful and with that will come success for your individual program.

***** NOTE *****

As parents, coaches, officials, and spectators we must decide at a point what is best for our children and their development. If we asked our children why do they want to participate in an activity, an overwhelming majority will say for the fun of it! Let us remember when we were children and how much fun it was to be young. The HFL was designed for the best interests of your children and to be loads of fun! Winning and losing go hand in hand in life and we should accept that! Having fun and learning something without pressure takes the sting out of defeat and that is why the HFL was started. Let's be teachers and mentors and positive influences on our children so life's lessons can be more easily dealt with. Let's let our children be "KIDS FIRST!"

Above rules set and approved by the 2008 Board of Director's. This was done in the hopes that the rules are fair and consistent and that they will not change from year to year.

Thank you in advance.