

**The New Mexico Youth Football Championship will abide by the official NFHS Rules with the following adjustments listed below:**

- Each team must bring one official team ball to each game with team name on it for I.D. purposes (sharpie):
  - Ball Sizes:
    - 7U & 8U use Pee Wee or K2 ball
    - 9U & 10U use Junior or TDJ ball
    - 11U & 12U use Youth or TDY ball
    - 14U uses Official ball
  - Please note that the football sizes above are a recommendation of the State Youth Championship.
  - However, the State Youth Championship will allow a team to use whatever football is approved by their own league for their division / age group.
  
- **Game Time:**
  - 10-minute Quarters (Regular Running Clock)
  - 8-minute Half-Time
  
- **Mercy Rule:**
  - If a team is ahead of the other team by 24 points or more, the game clock will switch to a running clock for the remainder of the game.
  
- **Overtime Rules:**
  - Tied games will be resolved by following the NFHS rules regarding tied games
  
- **PAT:**
  - Teams kick for 2 points after a touchdown.
  - Teams may run or pass for 1 point after a touchdown.
  
- **Kicking (7U, 8U):**
  - Prior to start of game, both teams can agree to punt the ball live the entire game or choose a 25-yard walk off on 4th down for the entire game if they choose not to go for it.

- Prior to start of game, both teams can agree to kick-off the entire game after a score or choose to start on their own 35-yard line the entire game after a score.
- Failure to agree above will result in standard kick-offs and punts
  
- **Kick-off:**
  - Onside kicks are allowed during the entire game (if there is kicking involved in the game – 7U, 8U).
  
- **Blitzing:**
  - Blitzing is allowed during the entire game at all levels
  
- **Athlete Playing Time:**
  - There are no restrictions on athlete playing time. This decision is at the coach's discretion.
  
- **Team Personnel On-Field:**
  - 7U and 8U teams can have one coach on the field at a time on both the offensive and defensive side of the ball.
  
- **Injuries:**
  - Any head injuries / concussion protocol is at the event's Athletic Trainer / EMT discretion. The Athletic Trainer / EMT will provide their recommendation if an athlete can continue playing in the current game, for the remainder of the event and/or needs immediate attention after sustaining a head injury.
  - Other injuries - The Athletic Trainer / EMT will provide their recommendation if an athlete can continue playing in the current game, for the remainder of the event and/or needs immediate attention after sustaining an injury.
  - Each coach is responsible for reporting all athlete injuries that have not been recognized by referees, event staff or event Athletic Trainers on the field to event staff.
  - The Event Director has final discretion on all decisions relating to whether an athlete can continue playing in the current game or for the remainder of the event after that athlete has been fully evaluated by the event Athletic Trainer / EMT.

- **Football Equipment / Protective Wear:**
  - All athletes must always wear full protective equipment during game play (all pads and mouth pieces).
  - All athletes must always have their chinstraps buckled.
  - All athletes must always wear their mouthpieces.
  
- **Positional Jerseys:**
  - Any athlete, regardless of jersey number can play any position.
  
- **Pre-Game Coin Toss:**
  - Each team will be asked to pick 4 team captains for every pre-game coin toss.
  
- **Team Sportsmanship / Conduct:**
  - Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their coaching staff, team manager, parents and athletes at all times.
  - Referees have final say on the field. Harassment of the referees by coaches, players, or fans will not be tolerated.
  - The State Youth Championship staff have the right to eject anyone and no refunds will be given.
  - The Event Director has final discretion on conduct matters which supersede any referee's call pertaining to sportsmanship / conduct.
  - An athlete can be ejected for a single game or for the entire tournament for misconduct. The Event Director has final discretion on the amount of games an athlete can be ejected for based on the severity of the misconduct.
  
- **Tournament Advancement:**
  - Tie Breaker Criteria (If there are multiple teams within a division that are tied after an advancement round):
    - #1: Point Differential
    - #2: Head-to-Head
    - #3: Points Against
    - #4: Coin Toss
  
- The NM State Youth Championship will not have any player weight restrictions. The team age groups are as follows:
  - 7U – Players age 5-7 as of 31 July
  - 8U – Players age 6-8 as of 31 July

- 9U – Players age 7-9 as of 31 July
- 10U – Players age 8-10 as of 31 July
- 11U – Players age 10-11 as of 31 July
- 12U – Players age 11-12 as of 31 July
- 14U – Players age 13-14 as of 31 July
- No child in High School will be allowed to participate