

# **SAN DIEGO COUNTY FOOTBALL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION**

## **POP WARNER AND AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL RULE MODIFICATIONS 2009**

The two San Diego County Football Conferences (San Diego and Palomar) are governed by two different groups. San Diego (South County) is now American Youth Football and they will use the National High School Federation Rule Book. Palomar (North County) is still associated with Pop Warner. Although their coaches have the Pop Warner Rule Book, they still use the modifications set forth below.

All of the rules you apply at the high school level also apply in Pop Warner and American Youth Football games. The local conferences also have several "points of emphasis" that they would like us to keep in mind.

The points of emphasis and special rule modifications are presented in the following order:

- Points of Emphasis
- American Youth Football and Pop Warner Rule Modifications (North and South County)
- Mitey Mite Division Rule Modifications (North and South)
- American Youth Football Rule Modifications (South & North County)
- Pop Warner Rule Modifications (North and South County)

### **POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

1. All sidelines rules pertaining to coaches, players, and non-players should be strictly enforced (25 yard line to 25 yard line team box, 2 yards deep restricted area, etc.).
2. All instances in which a coach touches, punches, or strikes an official must be documented. The Assignment Secretaries have outlined the following mandatory procedure:
  - a) Any time a coach touches, pushes, or strikes an official must be reported in writing to the appropriate Assignment Secretary. This written report should include the following information: the coach's name, team name, division, names of all officials present, and a statement of the circumstances surrounding the incident.
  - b) In addition to the written report, the appropriate Assignment Secretary should receive telephone notification as soon as practicable (no later than the next day) following the incident.
  - c) Any official who fails to report such an incident to the Assignment Secretary will be disqualified from receiving any additional Pop Warner games for the balance of the season.
3. All instances of ejection of a coach from a game must be reported to the appropriate Assignment Secretary as soon as practicable, but no later than one day following the game. A phone report is recommended. Pop Warner/American Youth Football rules mandate that any coach ejected from a game for misconduct will be ineligible for the following game. The San Diego and Palomar Conference President/Commissioners have requested that they be notified following any ejection of a coach. This notification will be handled by the Assignment Secretaries.
4. "Protecting the snapper" has been a National Federation point of emphasis in recent years. This is particularly important at the Pop Warner/American Youth Football level. In North County Pop Warner ONLY, no one can line up over the center.

## AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL AND POP WARNER RULE MODIFICATIONS NORTH AND SOUTH COUNTY

Game Duration: Except for flag, all games will consist of four ten-minute quarters at all levels. The game clock will be managed in accordance with National Federation rules.

Player Numbering System: No mandatory numbering system will be used. Any player at any position may wear any number from 1 through 99. Both "0" and "00" are illegal numbers and may not be worn. (No penalty. Remove the player from the game. He may re-enter after changing jerseys to a legal number.)

Time Outs: Each team will be allowed three time outs per half.

PAT Scoring: Running or passing play - 1 point. Kick - 2 points.

Player's Box and Spectators on the Sidelines: All coaches and players must stay between the 25 yard lines. The only exceptions to this are EMT's, legitimate members of the media, and the chain crew. There are no other exceptions, including the Pop Warner Conference staff. This rule should be strictly enforced. If people are on the sidelines outside the box, the following procedure should be followed: inform the Head Coach and spectators involved that they must immediately leave the sidelines. Inform the coach that the game will not resume until the sideline is cleared.

Mouthpiece Straps: A player's mouthpiece must be attached to his helmet with a strap. Exceptions must be brought to the Referee's attention prior to the start of the game. Exceptions should be granted for players with special needs, such as braces and other legitimate reasons.

Weigh-in Procedure: The weigh-in procedure should be completed 30 minutes before game time. The teams should use the time prior to weigh-in for warm-ups. Teams should not be allowed to delay the start of the game due to extended warm-ups and player introductions following weigh-ins.

Equipment Time-outs: A coach shall not be permitted to delay the game while making an equipment repair or adjustment. 25 seconds are allowed before the player must leave the game or use a charged time-out to complete the repair.

Game Protests: Occasions may arise when a coach or team manager informs game official that the game is "being played under protest." Usually a technical or administrative violation has occurred, unrelated to the actual playing of the game. If a game official is approached with a Formal Protest, he should note who is filing the protest and why (i.e., inaccurate weigh-in scales, roster inaccuracies, etc.). There is no need to file a written report; however, the Assignment Secretary should be notified concerning the Formal Protest.

Dealing with Coaches: If a coach has a question, concern, or complaint, game officials should endeavor to resolve it. They should listen to the problem and discuss it within the time constraints of the game, rather than ignoring him or shutting him down. If an official has a significant problem with a coach, he should call the Assignment Secretary after the game. Both Pop Warner conferences want to deal with misbehaving coaches.

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## **MITEY MITE DIVISION RULE MODIFICATIONS NORTH AND SOUTH COUNTY**

Mitey Mite Coaches: In North County Pop Warner ONLY, one coach is allowed on the field during scrimmage plays. The coach must stand behind and clear of the action during the play.

Blitzing: No defensive player is allowed to blitz. No more than six defensive linemen, lined up in either a 3 or 4 point stance, may charge across the neutral zone at the snap. Lineman in an upright stance may not. A defensive player must be within 2 yards of his line of scrimmage to be considered a lineman. Players who begin the play more than 2 yards behind their line of scrimmage, even if in a 3 or 4 point stance, may not charge across the neutral zone at the snap. Normal pursuit by "up" linemen and linebackers as the play develops is legal. Penalty: Illegal procedure, 5 yards from the previous spot.

Blitzing Scrimmage Kicks: There shall be no blitzing or rushing on punts, field goals, or kick tries. Once declared, all kicks are made uncontested.

Punts: A team may punt on any down under National Federation rules, or may on any down elect to punt under the provisions outlined below:

- a) A declaration of "intent to punt" shall be made to game officials who, in turn, shall notify the defensive team.
- b) The ball shall be put in play by a direct snap to the punter. The punter shall be positioned a minimum of 5 yards behind his line of scrimmage and shall remain in this position until the ball is snapped.
- c) Both the offensive and defensive teams shall be required to have 7 players on their respective lines of scrimmage until the ball has been punted.
- d) No defensive or offensive player shall cross the line of scrimmage until the ball has been punted, even though there may be a fumble or muffed snap.
- e) If the ball is snapped beyond the punter, he should retrieve the ball and punt it. He is allowed to take a maximum of 3 steps from the point where he retrieves the ball until he kicks it.
- f) If a violation of rules 2, 3, or 4 above is committed, the game officials shall call an illegal procedure, and the offending team shall be penalized accordingly. The opposing team shall have the option to accept or refuse the penalty.
- g) If a violation of rule 5 above is committed, the game officials shall call an illegal procedure, as either a running play or a loose ball play, and the opposing team shall have the option of accepting the penalty from the spot of the foul, or from the previous spot, or of refusing the penalty.
- h) If after a declaration of "Intent to Punt," the offensive team runs another type of play, an illegal procedure shall be called against the offensive team, and a penalty shall be assessed accordingly, unless refused by the defensive team.

**In all cases, try to warn them first.**

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## AMERICAN YOUTH FOOTBALL RULE MODIFICATIONS SOUTH & NORTH COUNTY

Halftime: All three tackle youth conferences (AYF and North and South County Pop Warner) have voted to keep the 10 minute half time without the three minute warm-up period. Coaches are responsible for ensuring that players are ready to go.

Casts: **Casts are not allowed** in any AYF game, even with a physician's written exemption. No exceptions.

Lopsided Rule: The AYF lopsided score rule is 35 points or 5 touchdowns, whichever comes first. Once the score differential reaches 35 points, or 5 touchdowns, the game clock will become a running clock. Once the clock becomes a running clock it can only be stopped for injuries and official or team time outs. It will be the losing team's preference as to whether they will receive a normal kickoff or they may choose to take the ball on their own 40 yard line. The winning team is prohibited from running any mis-direction, counter, reverses or "trick plays" of any kind. Skill position starters must be replaced whenever possible. Conferences and Associations cannot limit the winning team to only running between the tackles. Mandatory plays must be completed regardless of the score or game clock. If the winning team does not complete their required mandatory plays, the full force of the mandatory play rules will be in effect.

Misconduct by Coaches: The San Diego Pop Warner Conference is committed to dealing with coaches who set a poor example for their players or who are a discredit to Pop Warner football. Accordingly, all instances of abuse or inappropriate conduct by Pop Warner coaches must be reported in writing to the Assignment Secretary, as stated in the Points of Emphasis section above.

Remember, it is your duty to document misconduct by coaches. Officials help themselves, their fellow officials, and the children who play the game by promptly reporting abusive, discourteous and unsportsmanlike behavior by coaches.

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## POP WARNER RULE MODIFICATIONS NORTH AND SOUTH COUNTY

Halftime: All three tackle youth conferences (AYF and north and south county Pop Warner) have voted to keep the 10 minute half time without the three minute warm-up period. Coaches are responsible for ensuring that players are ready to go.

Casts:  
South County Pop Warner does **not allow** casts, even with a physician's written exemption.  
North County Pop Warner Palomar Conference allows casts and follows NFHS Rules.

Communications: The assigned game referee will be met by a league (home team) representative upon arrival at the game site. This representative will be the point of contact for the game officials for any administrative matters such as pay, weigh-ins, clock problems, issues with coaches, etc. If the referee is not met by this representative, he should search him/her out prior to the start of the first game.

Sideline Control: The home team will identify a free zone around the entire field, including end zones. No one except coaches, players, and cheerleaders may be in this zone. Conference officials will have a

picture ID badge and assist in keeping this area clear of fans.

Ejections: All Conferences strongly support the rules governing the conduct of players, non-players, and coaches. The Conferences follow CIF procedures relating to player or coach ejections. Anytime either a player or coach is ejected, the following procedure should be followed:

- a) The Referee will give the appropriate penalty signal, including the signal for player disqualification. The Referee will inform both head coaches of the uniform number of the player ejected, or in the case of an ejected coach, the name of the coach involved.
- b) All instances involving the ejection of a player or coach must be reported as soon as practicable to the Assignment Secretary. A report should be made by telephone no later than the day following the game. All Conferences require that any coach ejected for misconduct will be ineligible for the following game. Players may be subject to suspension per the San Diego Section CIF procedures as well. All Conferences have requested that we notify their President/Commissioner as soon as possible to facilitate enforcing the follow-on suspension.

28 Point Rule: Lopsided/Intentionally Run Up Scores (Both North and South County Pop Warner)  
The Lopsided Rule goes into effect anytime any one team has a 28 point scoring differential over their opponents. It is not relevant how the points were accumulated. During the lopsided play the game clock is run continuously for the remainder of the game. In addition, the score at this point shall become the final score posted. Once the rule goes into effect, coaching personnel shall be obligated to the "SPIRIT" as well as the letter of the rule:

- a) There shall be no kick-offs whatsoever, by either team.
- b) The losing team is awarded the ball at the 40 yard line of the winning team, and normal play resumes, 1st and 10.
- c) If the losing team scores, the ball is placed on the 20 yard line of the winning team. The winning team takes possession, and the game resumes 1st and 10.
- d) The winning team shall remove all dominant players. If the number of players on the winning team is at where it is not possible to take out all dominant players then they must be put in a less dominant position.
- e) Any coach who employs types of plays without the intent to maximize the action of play shall be in violation of this rule regardless of the final score.
- f) All players must play their minimum plays regardless if the lopsided rule is in effect.

Injured Players: An injured player who requires an official's timeout for evaluation must leave the game for at least one play. If a player is unable to leave the field under his own power shall not re-enter the game without the approval of an EMT, physician, registered nurse, or paramedic. If a player does re-enter the game without the required approval, he shall be removed from the game. No penalty is assessed. Game officials should record the number and team of any player assisted from the field.