Westchester United Football

2026 Rules - 7th/8th Grade

Last Updated: September 2026 - FINAL

Overview of Weight Limitations & Playing Position Restrictions

Division	Class	Max Weight	Offensive Positions	Defensive Positions
7/8 Grade	Skilled Player	155	QB, RB, TE, SE, P, PK (all positions)	LB, DE, CB, S (all positions)
	X	156-175	C, OG, OT	DG, DT
	XX	176 and above	OT	DT * (DE in 4-4 in down position)

X / XX at a Glance

Class	Offensive Positions	Defensive Positions	Max on Field at Once	Kicking Game
Skilled	All positions	All positions	No limit	May kick, hold, and punt
X	C, OG, OT	DG, DT	No limit at allowed positions	May kick or hold; may NOT punt
XX	OT only	DT, or DE in a down position in a 4-4	2 per team	May kick or hold; may NOT punt

- XX on defense must line up head-up on the OT or shade in or out, but must be on the shoulder.
- X and XX may serve as kicker or holder on PAT and FG attempts because those plays have no fakes. Only skilled players may punt, since the punting team may run a fake.
- There is no EX class at 7/8. Players 176 lbs. and above are XX.

****PRE-GAME:**

There will be a pre-game exchange of rosters between the Head Coaches PLUS a Roster Check to ensure all players are eligible and within their required weight determinations (X, XX). If a child is not on the roster they are not allowed to play in the game.

****TIME CLOCK:**

25-40 Play Clock Will Be Used & Kept By Officials On Field

Offense

- Receivers cannot be more than 10 yards from the widest man on the line of scrimmage.
- You must have a balanced offensive line: T-G-C-G-T.
- Motion is allowed and NOT restricted
- No "crack-back" blocks
- "Cut-block" only allowed in the "box" (between the tackles) - the ball must also be in the box.

Defense

- Allowed Formations: 6-2, 50 Fronts, 40 Fronts
- LB/CB/S must line up at least 2 yards off line of scrimmage.

Defensive Player Restriction Notes *

- Players 176 lbs. and above are considered a "XX" and are restricted to playing DT only... However, they can play DE in a down position in a 4-4 defense. A Defensive "XX" MUST line up either head-up on the OT or shade in or out but must be on the shoulder.
- Each team can play 2 "XX"s at a time at the allowed positions according to Defensive Scheme

Fumbles/Interceptions

- Only skilled position players may advance a fumble or interception. If recovered by a "non-skilled player", the play will be whistled dead and the ball will be placed at the spot of the recovery.

Kicking Game

- No kickoffs - ball is placed on the 40 yard line to start each possession following a score and to start each half.
- After a Safety the ball is placed on the 50 yard line.
- **ALL SPECIAL TEAMS ARE LIVE AT 7/8. Punts, PAT attempts and FG attempts all have a live rush.**
- Punts: Live, full rush on the snap. The punting team may run a fake. Only skilled players may punt.
    - Defenders may rush through the A-gaps on a punt.
    - Defenders may NOT contact the long snapper until he lifts his head after the snap.
- **ONSIDE RULE: In place of an onside kick, a team that has just scored may elect to attempt to retain possession with a single play from its own 40 yard line, treated as 4th and 10.**
    - Declaration: The head coach must declare the attempt to the officials before the ball is spotted. Once declared and the ball is spotted, the attempt is used regardless of the outcome.
    - Offensive penalties: Any penalty committed by the offense, whether dead-ball (such as a false start or illegal formation) or live-ball (such as holding), results in a FAILED attempt. The play is nullified, the defense takes possession at the 40 yard line, and the offense receives no additional attempt that game. As with any penalty, the defense may decline and take the result of the play, for example a turnover returned for a touchdown.
    - Defensive penalties: A penalty committed by the defense does NOT consume the attempt; normal penalty enforcement applies and the offense retains its one attempt. The defense cannot nullify the onside by committing a penalty.
    - The play is LIVE and governed by all normal rules of play. A touchdown scored by the offense on the play counts. An interception or fumble recovery by the defense counts, and the defense may advance and score, subject to the existing rule that only skilled position players may advance a fumble or interception.
    - Success: If the offense gains 10 or more yards, or scores, it retains possession and the drive continues from the dead-ball spot.
    - Failure: If the offense does not gain 10 yards, the defense takes possession at the dead-ball spot.
    - Limit: ONE attempt per team per game.
    - Score restriction: A team leading by 9 or more points at the time of the attempt may NOT use the onside, since a subsequent score would create a three-score lead.
    - Timing: Available after any touchdown or field goal, following the try, at any point in regulation. Not available after a safety, to start a half, or in overtime.
- PAT and FG kicks: Live rush on the kicker. NO FAKES.
    - The defense may not line up over the center and may not shoot the A-gaps. The long snapper must be uncovered.
    - No direct contact with the holder (same penalty as running into / roughing the kicker). Incidental contact with the holder while attempting to block the kick is acceptable.
    - No weight restrictions on holder or kicker.
    - Failed FG - ball placed at the line of scrimmage.
    - On a kicked PAT/FG it is a dead ball on a bad snap.
- **PAT Scoring: ALL PAT attempts are from the 3 yard line.**
    - Run or pass - 1 point
    - Kick - 2 points
- FG Scoring: 3 points. Live rush on the kicker. No fakes.

Time of Game

- 10 minute Stop time per quarter. 4 minute warning in 2Q & 4Q. Goal is to have 90 minute games.
- 3 Timeouts per half per team
- 5th Quarter: A 5th quarter is not standard. It may be played by agreement of both head coaches when a team has a large number of first-year players or qualifies based on roster size.

- 1 Overtime Period: TEXAS SHOOTOUT; EACH TEAM GETS BALL ON 20 YARD LINE (NO KICKED X-TRA POINTS)

Misc

- All Teams must be prepared to play each week of the season from the first week through the last week which includes bowl games.
- All players must have the following minimum practice time before playing in their first game:
  - 2 hours uppers only; 4 hours full gear (no contact); 6 hours full gear with contact (total of 12 hours practice time)
- If a team is winning by 18 or more points ALL plays MUST be running plays & NO TRICK PLAYS during the time period of point differential
- Maximum 5 coaches on the sidelines.
- If a team wins a game by 25 points or more the Head Coach of that team will be "subject" to suspension for 1 game (the very next game).
- All footballs must be same size as Nike Youth, Under Armour Youth, or Wilson TDY equivalent
- The home team is responsible for paying the referee fees. There must be 4 officials at each 7/8 game.
- The home team must supply a "chain gang". The chains will be kept on the HOME team side of the field. Chain gang MUST be silent. Keep the chains on the HOME side.
- All "X" and "XX" players MUST have a large "X" or "XX" clearly defined on both sides of the helmet or on the back if there is a decal on the side. League strongly suggests using the 2" reflective mailbox stickers from Home Depot (very cheap and easy to see).
- Home team's head coach must supply the refs a paper copy of the Quick Rules before each game and review them along with the opposing team's head coach. Specifically go over time of game; weight limits; positioning of X, XX; kicking game....

Administrative

- Season Structure: The Westchester United season follows the New York high school fall season start date. A scrimmage is generally held after the first three weeks of practice, followed by a 6-game regular season and two post-season games. The annual Senior Bowl for 8th graders is held the week following the completion of the post-season and is not counted as a post-season game.
- No player is allowed to play on another tackle football team during the Westchester United Season as defined above.
- Any rule not explicitly listed in this document will follow the NFHS Rules (National Federation of State High School Associations). https://www.nfhs.org/activities-sports/football/
- All programs must have an active registration with USA Football including a PSC (Player Safety Coach) who is actively involved in your program
- All coaches (head and assistants) must have an active certification in place with USA Football - Heads-Up Football; must wear a badge at all times on the field and must be registered with Westchester United.
- Each program must provide current proof of insurance at least 4 weeks prior to the scrimmage.
- Minimum Roster size at the start of the season is 18 and maximum roster size is 40. Any exceptions must be approved by the commissioner.
- If a town has 2 teams in the same division the teams MUST be balanced and split 50/50 based on both talent and grade. The intent is to avoid an "A Team" and a "B Team". Each program director has the responsibility to submit balanced rosters and make sure that if the 2 teams were to play each other 4 times that they would go 2-2 and that the games are close.
  - EXCEPTION: In any division the league has split into A and B, a program with two teams in that division may designate one team to A and one to B. The balanced-roster requirement above applies only when both of a program's teams compete in the same A or B pool.
- Each team must submit an electronic roster with players full name, grade, date of birth, address, school attending, school district and jersey number at the weigh-in. An electronic template will be provided.
- Rosters are to be finalized before the first game. Any team wanting to add players to the roster after that must seek approval from the league.
- Once registered with a team for a given year players cannot switch teams "in league" without written release of originating town and approval by the commissioner.

- All Home teams MUST have an EMT / Athletic Trainer on site for every home game or the game will be forfeited.
- Any "significant" injury that requires a doctor's note in order for the player to return to the field MUST be reported to the league. Example injuries would be concussion, broken bone....
- All players must be 14 years old or younger as of 12/1/2026.
- **TWO-YEAR ELIGIBILITY CAP: No player may participate at the 7/8 grade level for more than two consecutive years.**
  - This rule does NOT apply to players who previously played up into the 7/8 division from a younger grade due to size or weight requirements.
  - Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the commissioner. Examples include learning-disabled students, undersized athletes who need additional development time, and players who have been reclassified back to their correct grade level.
  - Any request for an exception must be submitted to the commissioner in writing prior to the start of the season.
- If a team / program leaves Westchester United for another tackle football league there will be a year waiting period before you will be considered to come back to the league.
- Organizations that do not provide a current list of registered athletes at each level by the league deadline will not have a team in that grade group and those families are allowed to move their athlete to another town team to play at no penalty

Conduct

Sideline Penalties:

1st Flag = Sideline Warning

2nd Flag = 5 Yard Penalty

3rd Flag = 15 Yard Penalty

4th Flag = Ejection

*****Cursing At Officials Will Not Be Tolerated**

- It is imperative that all coaches & players conduct themselves in a positive manner & do not partake in any behavior that is negative or detrimental to the league. Such behavior will not be tolerated. Each team is responsible for the conduct of their coaches, players, parents & fans.
- If a player is ejected by an official for any reason that player will automatically be suspended the very next game. If this occurs on the last week of the season the player is ineligible for the very next game which would be the bowl game.
- If a coach is ejected by an official for any reason that coach will automatically be suspended the very next game. If this occurs on the last week of the season the coach is ineligible for the very next game which would be the bowl game. The coach will be allowed to attend the game but must sit in the stands on the opposite side of his team.
- Any player or coach who is ejected from 2 games will be suspended from the league permanently.
- All fans MUST be in the stands for insurance purposes. No fans are allowed on field or surrounding track.
- Unruly / disorderly fans will be removed from the field and must be reported to the league. They will be on probation the rest of the season.

Senior Bowl

- Location of Senior Bowl will be determined each year and will be rotated between teams if possible. Senior bowl coaches will also be selected each year and rotated if possible. Senior Bowl location and coaches will be at the final discretion of the commissioner.
- Senior Bowl players must be 8th graders and must be "starters" or must have earned the right to be selected to the Senior Bowl based on leadership and attitude throughout the season.
- Only coaches who were at Senior Bowl practices may be on the sideline during the game.