



SOUTHERN MIDDLE TENNESSEE YOUTH FOOTBALL LEAGUE

2026 RULES and REGULATIONS

MISSION STATEMENT

The Southern Middle Tennessee Youth Football League was established to ensure and provide every child the opportunity to participate in an organized recreational football and cheer program regardless of race, creed, national origin, prior experience, athletic ability or size. We desire to provide all of the youth in our respective communities an organized, safe and supervised environment where the goal is to keep the game free from pressure to win at all cost. This Association also believes in and strives to maintain the highest level of competition and coaching possible for the betterment of our youth thereby ensuring their readiness for football at the next competitive level. As an Association, we believe the following values are imperative for each participant so that they may become contributing and active members of our community: Sportsmanship, Honesty, Loyalty, Courage, Scholarship, Integrity, Respect, Commitment, Teamwork and Physical Fitness. We will also strive to challenge our youth to embrace competition and fully appreciate the joys of victory while at the same time to learn and grow from their defeats. These goals will be accomplished and realized through the dedicated effort of our volunteers, parents and community members who desire to support the youth of our area in organized football and cheer.

INTRODUCTION TO THE RULES & REGULATIONS

The rules contained herein are required to be enforced by the league's coaches, and all members involved in the Southern Middle Tennessee Youth Football League. For all purposes, the Southern Middle Tennessee Youth Football League playing season shall be defined as July 1st through December 31st. Actual start date of practices will be determined prior to July 1st. All Leagues, administrative personnel, coaches, players and spirit participants are subject to disciplinary action for violations of Southern Middle Tennessee Youth Football League rules and regulations at any time during a stated playing season. No rules will be added or changed after July 1st unless it is a safety issue.

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PART I - PLAYER ELIGIBILITY and TEAM FORMATION RULES

ARTICLE I: DIVISIONS & AGES

The Southern Middle Tennessee Youth Football League has three age divisions in which participants are eligible to participate in. The divisions and ages are as follows:

1. DIVISION I.....5,6 & 7 year olds
2. DIVISION II.....8, 9 & smaller inexperienced 10 year olds
3. DIVISION III.....10,11 & 12 year olds

Ten year olds playing down must be approved through evaluation of Executive Board. Any misuse of this will result in forfeiture of all games the player participates in and the organization will be placed on probation for the following season.

ARTICLE II: PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

1. Southern Middle Tennessee Youth Football League age cut-off date is August 1st of the current year and shall be the participant's league age for the coming season.
2. Ages shall be verified by providing a copy of participant's birth certificate or approved government ID.
3. A player is ineligible if he is a member of a school tackle program or if he is participating in contact on another youth football team outside of SMTYFL.
4. A player shall furnish a written consent to play from either parent or legal guardian.
5. A player shall furnish a written approved sports physical.

ARTICLE III: INELIGIBLE PLAYERS

Forfeiture of all games in which the ineligible player was a member of the team shall be the penalty applied to the team involved. There shall be no exceptions. There are five (5) unequivocal definitions of an ineligible player, from which there are no appeals:

1. Overage
2. Underage.
3. Residing outside of legal boundaries without a signed waiver by both associations/leagues affected. Boundaries to be defined as follows:
 - a. First by county of residence as stated in our Articles of Organization
 - b. Second by zoning of high school related to the program or school attending.
4. Falsification of data concerning any of the above.
5. Simultaneous Participation in contact on another tackle football team such as middle school or non-affiliated league team is not permissible.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICIAL PLAYING WEIGHT

The Southern Middle Tennessee Youth Football Association does not go by any weight restrictions for skill players on the offensive or defensive side of the ball.

ARTICLE V: FORMATION OF TEAMS AND CHEER SQUADS

1. All participants shall be assigned to the corresponding team for their age. The only exception for teams, if the member organization allows and the parent approves, is a 7 year old may play up to Division II and a 9 year old may play up to Division III. Cheer squads may be made up of combined ages and will follow the cheer guidelines for competition.
2. Each member must field a team in each age division (**NO EXCEPTIONS**) and at least one cheer squad. If a member fails to field a team in each age division, then they are automatically put on probation for the year and lose their rights as a full member in good standing (voting power, hosting, etc.)
3. There shall be a minimum of 11 and maximum of 35 players per team. However, if a team drops below the required number to participate at any time during the season, the offending member will be placed on probation.
4. In the event an organization is required to split teams, a minimum of 2 teams must be split. Also the following are the recommended guidelines for drafting teams:
 - a. The teams will be balanced as close as possible by ages
 - b. Siblings will be assigned to paired teams
 - c. There will be 6 coaches' selections equal to the number of allowed coaches. Coaches' children count as their selection. Coaches without children will select a player prior to draft.
 - d. The remainder of team will be filled by draft. A blind draft is recommended.

ARTICLE VI: DROPS AND ADS

1. At **each member's** discretion, it shall establish its own Drops & Adds cutoff date, but no player may be added to any roster after the Jamboree without being brought to the Board of Directors as a hardship and being voted on and approved.
2. After the Jamboree, if a player is approved to be added to a team's roster, that player will not be eligible until all required paperwork, photos, etc. is submitted to the SMTYFL Chairman or Vice Chairman for approval.

ARTICLE VII: TEAM NOTEBOOKS

Each member will submit to the Board of Directors an official team notebook which will include all required information below. The SMTYFL will keep the notebook until the conclusion of the season, at which time it will be returned to the member. The notebook will be used for the purpose of establishing eligibility for all players if it comes into question during the season.

Required information in the team notebook is as follows:

1. An Official SMTYFL Roster filled out, either typed or neatly printed and filled out completely
2. Copy of registration form showing contact information for each participant
3. Copy of Birth Certificate for each participant
4. Photo of each participant in their game jersey, clearly showing their face and jersey number. If the jersey isn't available they must hold a paper with their jersey number. Jersey numbers must be the same as their game jerseys.
5. Signed boundaries waiver if applicable.

ARTICLE VIII: CERTIFICATION OF NOTEBOOKS

On Jamboree Play Day, Each team will have a scheduled time to bring their team notebook with all required materials and their team participants to the designated SMTYFL location for certification. Members of the Board shall be present to certify the rosters, birth certificates and photo ID's of each participant on the team. NO member of the Board will be allowed to certify their own teams. Any community that does not have the required notebook, with required paperwork, will automatically be on probation and that team will be ineligible to play until it can be certified. Any participant that does not have the required paperwork will be an ineligible player for the season. **This will be the only time that certification of teams will take place. Makeup certification of individual players will be the following Saturday.**

ARTICLE IX: ROSTER SIZE

1. MAXIMUM ROSTER SIZE: 35 players.
2. MINIMUM ROSTER SIZE: All divisions must roster and field a minimum of 11 players to be certified. A minimum of 11 players must be on the field or a forfeit will be declared.
3. If a team has two forfeits in a row because of not fielding enough players, the offending member is on probation.
4. There may be exceptions made to the minimum and maximum as determined by the executive board of SMTYFL.

PART II - FIELD, EQUIPMENT and PRACTICE REGULATIONS

ARTICLE I: THE FIELD AND MARKINGS

1. Each Association/League is responsible for the preparation of the playing field and all required equipment for the playing of games. All fields will be equipped and marked in accordance with high school standards. Lime and other caustics shall not be used. Failure to meet required standards may result in forfeit.
2. The home team is responsible for scheduling volunteers for the chain crew. Chains will be run from the home side of the field.
3. The field shall be situated on level ground with a clipped grass surface. A member's playing site shall furnish a source of drinkable water, some type of rest-room facilities, and a scoreboard.
4. Field Size for Division I, Division II and Division III
 - a. Field must be 100 yards long with two 10 yard deep end-zones. Field width must be a minimum of 50 yards wide but not exceed 53 1/3 yards wide.
 - b. One end-zone must have a goal post.
 - c. A conversion line will be marked 3 yards from the goal line and at an equal distance from each sideline.
 - d. A kickoff area will be marked from the 40-yard line.

5. The following field equipment will be used:
 - a. A four down marker pole to indicate the number of the down.
 - b. Two chain poles attached with appropriate ten yard chain.
 - c. Weighted Pylons or Pylons with flexible staffs will be placed at the four sections of the end zones and the sidelines.

ARTICLE II: REQUIRED PLAYER EQUIPMENT

The following items shall be worn by players in all divisions beginning with physical contact in practice sessions:

1. Helmet: Only helmets bearing the NOCSAE Seal of Certification may be worn. All helmets must bear the current NOCSAE approved "Warning Label" in a visible position on the outside of the helmet. This "Warning Label" is the same label that is furnished by all helmet manufacturers and quality recondition. (Note: Regulations regarding chins traps and face guards are to be followed per the National Federation or NCAA regulations, whichever is applicable.)
2. Shoulder Pads, Hip Pads, Tail Pads, Thigh Pads, Knee Pads
3. Pants: One Piece or Shell
4. Jerseys
5. Mouth guard (Retainer Strap required).
6. Mask shields must be clear. Colored or tinted versions are prohibited.
7. Athletic Supporter or Compression Shorts (male players only) are recommended but not required.
8. Shoes: In all divisions of play: sneakers, molded rubber cleats (soccer style), or detachable rubber or plastic (football style) cleats are permitted. No metal cleats are permitted. Cleats may not exceed a ½" in length.
9. Eyeglasses: When worn, shall be of athletically approved construction with non-shattering glass (safety glass) or contact lenses.
10. Jewelry of any type shall be prohibited, except religious or medical medallions, which must be covered by the player's uniform.
11. The wearing of headgear containing knots, including beads and/or decorative hair ornaments is prohibited.
12. Backplates are prohibited.
13. The League shall approve any additional equipment worn by players.

ARTICLE III: PRACTICE

1. **PRE-SEASON:** In all divisions, the first 8 hours of practice shall be without pads; however helmets shall be permitted. The second 8 hours of practice is permitted with helmets and shoulder pads and may contain light contact. Any camps must follow NFHS and TSSAA guidelines. **No Pre-Season team practices shall occur before the First Monday after July 4th.**
2. **REGULAR SEASON:** Full contact is permissible with required equipment.
3. **WARM WEATHER PRECAUTIONS:** Teams must guard against serious heat problems, which in extreme cases have occasionally resulted in death. The training regimen of any team practicing under high heat and/or humidity conditions must:
 - a. Limit or eliminate laps entirely. Do not assign laps for disciplinary reasons.
 - b. Schedule practices for early evening, after sun is low in sky.
 - c. Each coach must keep an eye on all players and his fellow coaches for the slightest sign of heat exhaustion or fatigue.
4. **MANDATORY BREAKS:**
 - a. A fifteen-minute break is mandatory in the middle of each practice, not to be counted against practice time.
 - b. A mandatory 10-minute break after each hour of practice shall be required. Break time is not counted against the hours per week or per day allowed practice time.
5. **FULL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT REQUIRED:** At all practices, pre-season or in-season, where person-to-person contact takes place, each player must be dressed in the full complement of protective equipment described in Part II -Article II -Required Equipment.
6. **CONTROLLED INTER-SQUAD & INTRA-SQUAD SCRIMMAGE:** After the first week of practice in pads (contact) has occurred, teams are permitted to engage in joint practice sessions with other teams in what are called inter-squad controlled scrimmages (teams within the same league) or intra-squad scrimmage (teams from different leagues – MUST have prior approval from league officials). In a controlled scrimmage, there is prior agreement between coaching staffs that:
 - a. Coaches shall agree beforehand that scrimmages are a learning experience and NOT for competitive purposes.
 - b. Time-outs are taken between plays so that coaching staffs can instruct and critique their players.
 - c. Officials can be present during scrimmages.

- d. Game score is not kept; scoring is not the primary goal.
 - e. No official time is kept other than to assure the practice maximum is not violated
 - f. No player or team is permitted at any time to engage in a controlled scrimmage or any form of contact drills involving a player, players, or team from a different Age/Weight division of play from another community.
7. **BULL-IN-THE-RING:** This drill, which has one (1) participant in the middle of a circle surrounded by the other participants, is banned by the TSSAA and shall be banned by the Southern Middle Tennessee Youth Football Association and its members. Any coach using this drill will be subject to disciplinary actions by their respective league. Any drill that is similar in the same format but called something else is also banned.

ARTICLE IV: BLOCKING AND TACKLING RESTRICTIONS

In addition to other specific prohibitions in the National Federation and NCAA rulebooks, no butt blocking, chop blocking, face tackling or spearing techniques shall be permitted. If such techniques or any others forbidden by the National Federation or NCAA rulebooks are taught by Southern Middle Tennessee Youth Football Association coaches, said coaches shall be dismissed from the program, upon being found guilty following a hearing.

ARTICLE V: TAXI SQUADS

No team is permitted to run a "taxi" or "reserve" squad.

PART III - SCHEDULES and SCHEDULING of GAMES

ARTICLE I: SCHEDULES

1. SCHEDULING PROHIBITIONS:

- a. Under no circumstances will a team be allowed to play a game, scrimmage, or practice against a team of another division from a different community.
- b. No team may schedule a game against a team whose ages and weights are not FULLY in compliance with those printed in this rule-book, unless both teams have identical approved variances.

2. COMMON REQUIREMENTS -ALL SCHEDULING:

The following requirements apply to all scheduling beginning with practice and ending with postseason bowl games:

- a. No team, on its own, may arrange a game. All games, regardless of type, must be arranged through the team's respective organization.
- b. Prior account will be taken of all local and state laws pertaining to the scheduling of athletic contests.
- c. A period of at least four (4) full days (96 consecutive hours) will elapse between the end of any game for a given team and the beginning of the next game for pre-season exhibitions, regularly scheduled league games, post-season and bowl games. A member shall be permitted to waive the four (4) full days (96 consecutive hours) to play necessary make-up games to conclude the season.

3. SEEDING FOR PLAYOFFS

The top eight (8) teams will be seeded for the post-season playoffs by the following method:

- a. Overall Record – used first
- b. Head to Head Record – used second
- c. Points Allowed – used third
- d. Coin Flip – used fourth

4. HOMECOMINGS

All scheduled Homecoming celebrations will be at the discretion of each organization providing officials and opponents are notified prior to game day.

ARTICLE II: SCHEDULED GAMES

The final approved game schedule will not be deviated from unless one of the following occurs:

- 1. Cancellation of games: All efforts will be made to play all games as scheduled. A game will only be cancelled and rescheduled due to weather or lack of officials. Every effort must be made to alert the traveling community at the earliest time possible of the cancelled games.
- 2. No games will be cancelled and rescheduled due to the absence of coaches or players. This reasoning will be considered a forfeit by the offending team.
- 3. All scheduled games will start at their scheduled time unless the previous game exceeds their time limit. The first game may be postponed by no more than thirty (30) minutes from the scheduled start time. Anything longer may

force the game to be rescheduled or forfeited depending on circumstances. All games after the first game will not be postponed more than fifteen (15) minutes from scheduled start time.

4. No games will start before the scheduled time unless all participants are present and both head coaches, officials and site director has agreed to start early.

PART IV - COMMON GAME RULES

NOTE: NATIONAL FEDERATION OF HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL RULES AND REGULATIONS SHALL GOVERN THE OFFICIATING OF ALL SMTYFA GAMES UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED IN THIS RULE BOOK

ARTICLE I: PLAYERS

1. Division I, II & III teams must field 11 players on the field at all times during games.
2. Each team roster shall have a minimum of 11 players. A forfeit may result when the minimum is not met.
3. Only players appearing on the official team roster form are to be counted as players. The Roster is completed before the first game of the season and is verified by the Southern Middle Tennessee Youth Football Association.

ARTICLE II: GAME BALL

Official game balls used in ALL Southern Middle Tennessee Youth Football Association games must be either leather or composite. No rubber footballs will be allowed. Each team will present there game ball to be inspected by the officials at the coin toss.

DIVISION I..... K-2 / Peewee
DIVISION II.....K-2 / Peewee
DIVISION III.....TDJ / Junior

ARTICLE III: PLAYER SUBSTITUTION

1. A free substitution rule is always in effect.
2. Injured player: Once clock is stopped for an injured player, player must set out one play or the coach may choose to use 1 time-out.

ARTICLE IV: SCORING VALUES

1. ALL DIVISIONS
Touchdown6 points
Safety (awarded to opponent)2 points
Field goal3 points (Division I & Division II-FREE KICK, Division III – LIVE KICK)
Forfeit (offended team wins by)35-0
2. PAT'S - **Coaches must declare if attempting a kick (DI & DII ONLY).** The PAT's are as follows:
 - a. One (1) point – Ball placed on the three (3) yard line and try is a successful run, pass, or kick play. (Division I & Division II-FREE KICK, Division III – LIVE KICK)
 - b. Two (2) points – Ball placed on the five (5) yard line and try is a successful run or pass play.
 - c. All Divisions – Turnovers on PAT's are dead balls and can not be returned for points.

ARTICLE V: MERCY RULE

When the point differential reaches a 28 point differential the winning team is required to to **substitute all skill positions(backs, quarterbacks and receivers) or move them to a non-skill position(offensive line) and no trick plays are to be utilized.**This will be done in order to maximize game play. Failure to do so will result in Board review and potential forfeiture of game. Beginning in the second half, if the point differential is 35 points or more, a continuous clock will be used. The clock will only stop for time-outs, injuries, and scores. The try will always be an un-timed down. The clock shall start when the ball is kicked on the kickoff. If the point differential goes below 35 points, the game shall revert back to regular timing rules.

ARTICLE VI: SIDELINE PERSONNEL

The sideline area is reserved for players, coaches, referees, and chain crew. The only other exceptions will be medical and law enforcement personnel and AUTHORIZED members of the press.

ARTICLE VII: RADIOS AND COMMUNICATION DEVICES

No radios or other communicative devices shall be allowed on the sidelines for use in relaying strategy during games from outside the field area.

ARTICLE VIII: TIE BALL GAMES

The “ten yard overtime procedure” tiebreaker as outlined in The National Federation High School Rules will be used without exception.

ARTICLE IX: CONTACT WITH OFFICIALS

If a player or adult should strike (hit) a game official, the offender shall be suspended for one year and/or banned from Southern Middle Tennessee Youth Football Association activities .

ARTICLE X: NUMBER OF COACHES ALLOWED PER TEAM

The number of coaches allowed for a team will be as follows for all divisions: One (1) Head Coach and up to five (5) Assistant Coaches. No more than this will be allowed on the sideline during games.

ARTICLE XI: COACHES ON THE FIELD DURING GAMES

1. **DIVISION III**
 - a. No coaches are allowed on the field.
2. **DIVISION II**
 - a. One (1) coach is allowed on the field during the game for instructional purposes.
3. **DIVISION I**
 - a. Two (2) coaches are permitted on the field during the game time for instructional purposes.
4. **COACHES ON THE FIELD**
 - a. The on field coaches must remain 2 yards behind the player deepest in the offensive or defensive backfield once the huddle breaks. The coach cannot verbally coach the team or move players once the cadence begins.
 - b. Failure to comply is as follows:
 - I. First -warning of infraction
 - II. Second – 5 yard penalty
 - III. Third -10 yard penalty and removal of coach from the field. Offending coach will have to coach from the sideline for remainder of the game.
 - IV. Ejection from game for offending coach.

ARTICLE XII: DOWN MARKER AND CHAINS

All chains are to be run by the home team on the home team's side. If game is delayed by an unprepared home team then said team would forfeit the possession of the ball at the beginning of the 1st or 3rd quarter. Chain crew personnel must be at least 13 years old.

ARTICLE XIII: EJECTIONS

A coach ejected from a game will be removed to the parking lot and suspended for the remainder of season pending an investigation by the executive board plus one uninvolved director. The ejected player will be removed to the parking lot. Failure to cooperate, will result in automatic suspension for the remainder of the season.

1. 1st Offense – Suspended from practice for one full week and will also be suspended from the next scheduled game per SMYFL schedule. A review of the player's conduct must be done by the community as whether they should be allowed to continue. This review must be submitted to the League on an official document prior to the player returning to the team.
2. 2nd Offense – Suspended for two consecutive weeks from practice and also the next two consecutive games per SMYFL schedule. A review of the player's conduct must be done by the community as whether they should be allowed to continue. This review must be submitted to the League on an official document prior to the player returning to the team.
3. 3rd Offense – Players - banned from participation for the remainder of the year. Coaches - permanent ban from participation.
4. Making a Threat - Any coach or player that makes a threat to an official is automatically banned from participating the rest of the season.
5. Any coach ejected in multiple seasons will be reviewed by the board of directors for a lifetime ban.

ARTICLE XIV: PROTESTS

1. Only protests involving rule interpretations or the eligibility of a player shall be considered never the judgment of an official in calling a play.
2. Protests are decided by the Southern Middle Tennessee Youth Football League in accordance with the administrative procedures of the League.

PART V - ASSOCIATION SPECIFIC GAME RULES

NOTE: THIS SECTION, ALONG WITH PART IV, GOVERNS THE RULES FOR THE FOOTBALL GAMES.

ARTICLE I: LENGTH OF QUARTERS / INTERMISSIONS

1. **LENGTH OF QUARTERS**
 - a. Division I and Division II will play four (4) 8 minute quarters.
 - b. Division III will play four (4) 10 minute quarters
2. **INTERMISSION LENGTH**
 - a. Between Quarters.....2 minutes
 - b. Half-time.....10 minutes

ARTICLE II: GAME CLOCK MANAGEMENT

1st & 3rd quarters will start upon the live kick (Div. II & Div. III) or the first snap (Div. I). 2nd & 4th quarters will start upon the first snap and the game clock will continue to run unless one of the following occurs:

1. **ALL DIVISIONS** – Game clock will stop when:
 - a. Team time-out (clock resumes on the snap)
 - b. Official time-out (clock resumes on official's signal)
 - c. Ball carrier goes out of bounds going forward or incomplete pass (clock resumes after spotting for play)
 - d. Change of possession (clock resumes upon snap)
 - e. Touchdowns / Safety - clock resumes on kick-off (Div. II & Div. III) or on the first snap after spotting of ball for play (Div. I)
 - f. Penalty – clock resumes after spotting for play if it is a play that begins with a snap
2. **LAST TWO MINUTES OF EACH HALF** – Game clock will stop on the conclusion of each play for the spotting of the ball and will resume upon the above rules and/or Official's signal.

ARTICLE III: TIME-OUTS

1. Teams are allowed 3 time-outs (60 Seconds) per half. One additional time-out is given per overtime period.
2. During team time-outs:

Division I / Division II / Division III - If the team remains on the field, only one (1) coach is permitted on the field for instructions and one (1) person with water for the players. If the team comes to the sidelines (outside of numbers) then all coaches are allowed on the field for instructions.
3. During Official / Injury time-outs – Teams must remain on the field and no coach is allowed on the field for instructions. Coaches are only permitted on the field to check on injured player.

ARTICLE IV: THE RULES OF THE GAME (ASSOCIATION SPECIFIC)

1. **PLAY CLOCK:** DIVISION I / DIVISION II / DIVISION III – Thirty (30) second play clock.
2. **KICKOFFS:**
 - a. **DIVISION III & DIVISION II**
 - I. The kickoff will be from the 40-yardline.
 - II. When a kickoff goes out of bounds the receiving team shall have the option of: Taking the ball at the point where it went out of bounds OR Accept a five (5) yard penalty and re-kick the ball.
 - b. **DIVISION I**
 - I. The football will be placed on the 30 yard line. Play will begin from this point.
3. **PUNTING:**
 - a. Division I - When elected to punt, will have a “free kick” in which the referee will move the football forward 25 yards and the other team shall take possession at that point. This will also include a ten (10) second run-off of the game clock.
 - b. Division II - Teams shall punt the ball at all times but the kick will not be live. The football will be live when it leaves the punters foot. The defensive team (receiving the punt) must have 7 players inside the tackle box at time of punt.
 - c. Division III – Punts will be live from the snap.
4. **SAFTIES**
 - a. **DIVISION III & DIVISION II** - The ball will be placed on the 20 yard line and the kicking team has the option to either punt or kick-off.

- b. DIVISION I - The ball will be placed on the 30 yard line and then walked off 25 yards (free kick).
- 5. **OFFENSIVE LINEMAN:** May start play from a two point stance as long as their elbows are resting on their knees.
- 6. **INTERIOR DEFENSIVE LINEMAN:**
 - a. All defensive players on the line, between the outermost downed offensive linemen, must line down in either a 3 or 4 point stance.
 - b. Nose guards are not allowed on any play where the offense is in a long snap situation (i.e. punt or field goal attempt). Otherwise, nose guards can be on the defensive line. Violation of this rule will be considered as unsportsmanlike conduct and will result in a penalty.
 - c. DIVISION I Only. No player lined up on center or in the "A" gaps.
- 7. **BLITZING:** No blitzing is allowed from the gaps on the line of scrimmage before the snap. All blitzing players must start from a point behind the furthestmost body part of all down lineman or outside the tackle box once the ball is snapped. No player can walk up, unless outside the tackle box, before the ball is snapped. D1 only – there is no blitzing of "A" gap.
Penalty for Illegal Blitzing player: 1st Offense – Warning, 2nd Offense – five yard penalty and automatic first down.
- 8. **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT:**
 - a. Fighting - offenders ejected from game.
 - b. Insulting and abusive language.
 - c. Interference with progress of the game by coaches or any other team personnel.
 - d. Illegal play.
 - e. Team leaving field before game is completed. Failure to return - Forfeit. Win for team remaining on the field. Head coach will be ejected for the next scheduled game for the first infraction. Head Coach will be suspended for the remainder of the regular and post season for a second infraction.
 - f. Failure of any team to control players or fans. The offender shall be ejected from the game.
- 9. **PENALTIES**
All penalty yardages are per the *National Federation of High School Rules*. NO EXCEPTIONS.
- 10. **MINIMUM PLAYS:**
 - a. Division I – 6 plays per game
 - b. Division II – 6 plays per game
 - c. Division III – 4 plays per game

A play is defined as a defensive, offensive, or special teams play. The exceptions to the minimum play rule will be practice attendance which must be documented, player discipline, injury, or sickness. Parents should be notified prior to game in regards to attendance and discipline issues. Any players not receiving their minimum plays will automatically start the next game and play all their plays for both games before being removed.

Minimum play sheets will be kept by a **person designated by each organization who is not a rostered coach**. A photo will be taken and sent to the Sargent At Arms no later than Saturday at midnight (Sunday 12:00am). Each organization is required to maintain the hard copy until the end of the season. Director will be notified by Sunday at 12:00pm of any failure to report.

Failure to **Comply with Rule or Report Penalties:**

1st Offense – If the violation is committed by winning team, the win will be forfeited and coach will be suspended for 1 game.. If committed by losing team, the Head Coach will be suspended for 1 game. Penalty to carry over to next year.

2nd Offense – If the violation is committed by winning team, the win will be forfeited and coach will be suspended for 3 games. If committed by losing team, the Head Coach will be suspended for 3 games. Penalty to carry over to next year.

3rd Offense – Association suspended from participation in playoffs and coach banned for 1 year. If penalty occurs during Superbowl, penalty carries over to next year.

PART VI - COACH ELIGIBILITY, CERTIFICATION, AND CODE OF CONDUCT

ARTICLE I: BACKGROUND CHECKS

ALL COACHES MUST PASS A BACKGROUND CHECK MEETING THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES

Automatic Disqualifiers (Convictions within last 10 years):

- A. Any sort of abuse or assault/battery – (Physical or Sexual)
- B. Rape
- C. Any crime of a sexual nature, including possession or dissemination of child pornography
- D. Homicide or manslaughter in any degree

- E. Attempted Murder
- F. Child Neglect
- G. Felony Drug Crimes
- H. Animal Cruelty
- I. Theft/Robbery
- J. Kidnapping
- K. Arson
- L. Weapons Violations
- M. Any crime, misdemeanor or felony, involving children as either an accomplice or victim

Potential Disqualifiers:

- A. Domestic Violence
- B. Forgery/Fraud
- C. Driving Under the Influence/Driving while intoxicated within the last three years
- D. Vehicular manslaughter within any time frame
- E. Misdemeanor drug charges within the last five years
- F. Petty theft within the last three years

ARTICLE II: COACHES' CERTIFICATION

ALL COACHES MUST COMPLETE A CERTIFICATION WITH **NAYS**.

A COACH SUSPENDED FROM PARTICIPATION BY AN INDIVIDUAL ORGANIZATION WILL ALSO BE SUSPENDED FROM ENTIRE LEAGUE.

ARTICLE III: CODE OF CONDUCT

ALL COACHES MUST SIGN THE FOLLOWING COACHES' CONTRACT/CODE OF CONDUCT.

SMTYFL Football and Cheerleading is committed to: promoting the proper values of athletic competition by enforcing the ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, and fair play among the young athletes of our program. It is our expectation that our players will always obtain a high standard of citizenship, and show proper respect of others including teammates, coaches, parents, opposing players and coaches, officials, and all other adults. It will be our coach's responsibility for the conduct of their players by promoting these attributes throughout the season on and off the field. We believe that a coach should not only be a leader, but also hold themselves accountable to the highest level of integrity. As a coach you have been given a tremendous amount of responsibility along with a huge amount of opportunity to have an impact on our young athletes. Don't ever take the role of being a coach lightly; for it is not only an honor to be a coach in SMTYFL, it is a privilege. Because of our commitment to our athletes, we have listed below a set of standards that all coaches will follow and be held accountable for. The board of Directors reserves the right to reprimand, suspend, and/or terminate a coach for not adhering to these standards.

Our coaches will.....

- Place the emotional and physical well-being of their athletes ahead of a personal desire to win.
- Promote good sportsmanship not only verbally, but also by their actions on the playing field or at any event. Before each contest we will cordially greet opposing coaches. At the end of each contest we will congratulate and respect opposing players, coaches and clubs by offering a verbal acknowledgment and a hand shake.
- Respect the judgment of the officials and refrain from any outburst or profanity that would compromise the integrity of the SMTYFL Football and Cheerleading Organization. A coach that gets ejected from a game or competition will be suspended from coaching until completion of investigation by the Executive Board including but not limited to statements from all parties directly involved.
- Place a high priority concerning the safety of their athletes. As a coach we will provide a safe environment, carefully plan out practices, properly train our athletes and employ proper preventative injury exercises, provide sufficient times in practice to re-hydrate, and always pay close attention to injury by complying with proper first aid principles and consulting your Director.
- Approach competition as a healthy aspect of athletics. A "winning at all costs" attitude or philosophy will not be tolerated.
- Recognize and promote academics and other achievements outside of football and cheerleading.
- Make sure that all members of the team and parents/guardians are fully aware of all expectations, rules, and procedures that are set forth by the association and the head coach. Coaches will make a positive effort to be good communicators. There will always be an open line of communication between athletes, parents, and coaches.

- Protect the integrity of the game, and realize that both teams are part of the same League. It is the coaches' responsibility to protect the dignity, confidence and self-esteem of their opponents by never intentionally running up a score or purposely trying to embarrass an opposing athlete or team.
- Avoid any behavior that will provoke or incite opposing athletes, coaches, or spectators.
- Remember that our athletes have limitations and will make mistakes. As coaches we are coaching youth athletes, not adults. All criticism should be given in a positive and constructive manner for the betterment of the individual athlete. Avoid degrading an athlete and treat all team members equally and with respect.
- Never grab an athlete with anger or with the intent to discipline, even your own child.
- Never use abusive or profane language in the presence of the athletes.
- Discourage participants the use of alcohol, drugs or tobacco. The use of any type of tobacco products, alcohol, or drugs at games, competition or practice facilities is strictly prohibited. Any coach suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave the premises until an investigation is completed by the Executive Board.
- Work together with other coaches within the association. A coach will never criticize the actions or strategies of another coach in the association.
- Remember that coaches are not coaching to develop superstars, but to teach fundamentals and build team unity.
- Always work toward expanding the participant's knowledge of the rules, strategies. Practice techniques related to football and/or cheerleading.
- Be prepared for every practice and game with well thought out plans and strategies. Practice plans should be challenging, fun, and incorporate maximum participation. Coaches will also make each playing time and strategy decision with thought and care.
- Coach according to the philosophies of the Southern Middle Tennessee Youth Football League.
- Communicate to head coach and director in the event of expected absences or tardiness.
- Treat each team member fairly regardless of talent level. A coach that is coaching their own child will never show favoritism during game or practice situations.
- Set the example for attendance of practices and games for the team..

I completely understand that a violation of the above standards and guidelines are taking a risk of being reprimanded or suspended up to and including termination by the SMTYFL Board of Directors. I have read and will abide by the rules stated in the SMTYFL Articles of Organization and 2025 Rules and Regulations.

ARTICLE IV: COACHES' CREDENTIALS

ALL COACHES' CREDENTIALS WILL BE IN THE FRONT OF THE TEAM NOTEBOOK AND WILL BE REVIEWED AT TEAM CERTIFICATION INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

1. Proof of passing Background Check
2. Certificate(s) of completion of training which will include concussion certification
3. Coaches' Contract signature page.
4. Copy of Identification (Driver's License)

. NOTE: As part of the organizations risk management, It is recommended to all our member organizations that these credentials be complete before a coach even steps on the field for practice.

PART VII - LEAGUE EVENT ROTATION

<u>EVEN YEARS</u>	2022	2024	2026	2028	2030
Columbia	Jamboree	Cheer Comp	Semi-Finals	1 st Round	Jamboree
Franklin County	Playoffs	Superbowl	Cheer Comp	Semi-Finals	1 st Round
Giles County	Cheer Comp		Superbowl	Cheer Comp	Semi-Finals
Manchester	Superbowl	Jamboree	1 st Round	Superbowl	Cheer Comp
Fayetteville			Jamboree	1 st Round	Superbowl
Walter Hill			1 st Round	Jamboree	1 st Round
<u>ODD YEARS</u>	2023	2025	2027	2029	2031
Marshall County	Cheer Comp	Superbowl	1 st Round	Jamboree	Cheer Comp
Rockvale	Jamboree	Semi-Finals	Superbowl	1 st Round	Jamboree
Shelbyville	Superbowl	1 st Round	Semi-Finals	Superbowl	1 st Round
Tullahoma	Playoffs	Cheer Comp	1 st Round	Semi-Finals	Superbowl
Warren County		Jamboree	Cheer Comp	1 st Round	Semi-Finals
Murfreesboro Jr.		1 st Round	Jamboree	Cheer Comp	1 st Round

Note: Rockvale hosted Playoffs/Semi-Finals in 2024 in place of Williamson County.

ALL MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS SHALL PARTICIPATE IN ALL LEAGUE EVENTS THEY QUALIFY FOR OR THE ORGANIZATION WILL BE DISQUALIFIED FROM HOSTING THEIR NEXT SCHEDULED EVENT.

ALL FIRST YEAR PROBATIONARY ORGANIZATIONS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO HOST LEAGUE EVENTS.

NOTE: In the event an organization is unable to host an event, the organization filling in will still keep their next scheduled rotation spot.

PART VIII - LEAGUE AWARDS

ARTICLE I: CHEER COMPETITION

HOST WILL PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING TO BE APPROVED AT JULY BOARD MEETING PROVIDING A MINIMUM OF TWO (2)

OPTIONS:

1. First(1st), Second(2nd) and Third(3rd) place team trophies
2. First(1st), Second(2nd) and Third(3rd) place medallions
3. Medallions for all girls not placing

ARTICLE IV: SUPERBOWL

HOST WILL PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING TO BE APPROVED AT JULY BOARD MEETING PROVIDING A MINIMUM OF TWO (2)

OPTIONS:

1. Champion and Runner-up team trophies
2. Champion and Runner-up rings

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PART IX - CHEER RULES AND APPENDIXES

SMTYFL CHEERLEADING RULES AND REGULATIONS

Rule 1 – SMTYFL Cheerleading Committee

- A. The Cheerleading program is a component of SMTYFL. It will be under the direction of the SMTYFL Cheerleading Commissioner(s).
- B. The Cheerleading Directors from each organization will serve as the voting members on all cheerleading matters.
- C. All Cheer Directors shall be at all regular SMTYFL meetings to report, vote, or discuss all cheer matters.
 - a. If a cheer director is unable to attend a meeting, they may send another board member in their place to represent their organization and cast any necessary vote.
- D. Changes in procedures and regulations may be made at any time during the year with a majority vote from the Cheer Directors where a quorum is present.

Rule 2 – Rosters and Eligibility

- A. SMTYFL Cheer has three age divisions in which participants are eligible to participate in. The divisions and ages are as follows:
 - a. DIVISION I.....5-,6- & 7-year-olds
 - b. DIVISION II.....8- & 9-year-olds
 - c. DIVISION III.....10-,11- & 12-year-olds
- B. SMTYFL age cut-off date is August 1st of the current year and shall be the participant's league age for the coming season.
- C. Ages shall be verified by providing a copy of participant's birth certificate or approved government ID.
- D. Mascots
 - a. SMTYFL Cheer does allow a child to be a "Mascot" if they are 4 years of age by August 1.
 - b. Mascots are only allowed to be a part of the Division I team cheer roster.
 - c. Mascots are ONLY eligible to perform sideline cheers during the football game.

Rule 3 – Ineligible Players

- A. A cheerleader cannot be rostered on a competitive cheer squad, dance team, or school squad during SMTYFL season.
 - a. If a cheerleader is found to be rostered on a competitive cheer squad, dance team, or school squad during the SMTYFL season, he/she will be ineligible to participate once the information has been confirmed by the Cheer Commissioner(s).
- B. Mascots are ineligible to participate in Stunting and are not eligible to participate in Competition.
- C. Other Ineligible player situations:
 - a. Overage Cheerleaders
 - b. Underage Cheerleaders
 - c. Residing outside of legal boundaries without a signed waiver by both associations/leagues affected. Boundaries to be defined as follows:
 - i. First by county of residence as stated in our Articles of Organization
 - ii. Second, by zoning of high school related to the program or school attending.
 - d. Falsification of data concerning any of the above.
 - e. Simultaneous Participation on a competitive cheer squad, dance team, or school squad during the SMTYFL season
- D. **Head Coach/Org Penalties:**
 - a. If an ineligible player performed during the competition, that team will be eliminated from competition and forfeit their competition scores.

Rule 4 - Formation of Cheer Squads

- A. All participants shall be assigned to the corresponding team for their age.
 - a. The only exception for teams, provided the member organization permits, the head coach agrees, and the parent gives approval, is that a 7-year-old may cheer up in Division II, and a 9-year-old may cheer up in Division III.
- B. Each organization is required to provide a cheerleading squad for each football division:
 - a. The organization can not generate participation numbers; in which case the organization may "combine" their participants into 1 cheerleading squad.
 - b. If an organization fails to field at least one (1) cheer squad, then they are automatically put on probation for the year and lose their rights as a full member in good standing (voting power, hosting, etc.)
- C. There shall be a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 35 cheerleaders per squad. However, if a team drops below the required number to participate at any time during the season, the offending member will be placed on probation.

Rule 5 – Team Notebooks

- A. Each organization will submit to the Cheer Commissioners an official team notebook which will include all the required information below.
- B. The SMTYFL Cheer Commissioner(s) will keep the notebook until the conclusion of the season, at which time it will be returned to the Cheer Director or Head Coach of that organization.
- C. The notebook will be used for the purpose of establishing eligibility for all players if it comes into question during the season.

The required information in the team notebook is as follows:

- 1. ALL COACHES' CREDENTIALS WILL BE IN THE FRONT OF THE TEAM NOTEBOOK AND WILL BE REVIEWED AT TEAM CERTIFICATION INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:
 - a. Proof of passing Background Check
 - b. Certificate(s) of completion of training which will include concussion certification
 - c. Coaches' Contract signature page.
 - d. Copy of Identification (Driver's License)
- 2. An Official SMTYFL Team Cheer Roster **typed.**
- 3. Player ID Card or Registration Form
- 4. Photo of each participant, clearly showing their face. (attached to registration form or ID card)
- 5. Copy of Birth Certificate for each participant
- 6. **Physical**
- 7. Any Signed waivers
 - a. Mascot Waiver
 - b. Boundary/Location Waiver
 - c. Age Up Waiver

Rule 6 – Certification of Notebooks

- A. On Jamboree Play Day, each team will have a scheduled time to bring their team notebook with all required materials and their team participants to the designated SMTYFL location for certification.
- B. Members of the SMTYFL Board shall be present to certify the rosters, birth certificates and photo IDs of each participant on the team.
- C. No member of the SMTYFL Board will be allowed to certify their own teams.
- D. Any community that does not have the required notebook, with required paperwork, will automatically be on probation and that team will be ineligible to perform/participate until it can be certified.
- E. Any participant that does not have the required paperwork, or is not certified, will be an ineligible player for the season.
- F. This will be the only time that the certification of players will take place.
 - a. In the event of extreme circumstances, the Cheer Commissioners may decide/agree to a later make up date for participants who miss certification at Jamboree.

Rule 7 - Drops and Adds

- A. At each member's discretion, it shall establish its own Drops & Adds cutoff date, but no player may be added to any roster after the Jamboree without being brought to the Cheer Commissioner(s) and approved.
- B. After the Jamboree, if a player is approved to be added to a team's roster, that player will not be eligible until all required paperwork, photos, etc. is submitted to the SMTYFL Commissioner(s) for approval.
- C. The last date to be considered for approval to add a cheerleader to a team roster is August 30th.

Rule 8 – Cheerleading Coach Guidelines

- A. The number of coaches allowed for a team will be as follows for all divisions: One (1) Head Coach and up to five (5) Assistant Coaches; for a total of 6 coach staff members. No more than this will be allowed on the sideline during games.
- B. All Coaches must pass a background check meeting the following guidelines:

Automatic Disqualifiers (Convictions within the last 10 years):

- 1. Any sort of abuse or assault/battery – (Physical or Sexual)
- 2. Rape
- 3. Any crime of a sexual nature, including possession or dissemination of child pornography
- 4. Homicide or manslaughter to any degree
- 5. Attempted Murder
- 6. Child Neglect
- 7. Felony Drug Crimes
- 8. Animal Cruelty
- 9. Theft/Robbery
- 10. Kidnapping
- 11. Arson
- 12. Weapons Violations
- 13. Any crime, misdemeanor or felony, involving children as either an accomplice or victim

Potential Disqualifiers:

- 1. Domestic Violence
- 2. Forgery/Fraud
- 3. Driving Under the Influence/Driving while intoxicated within the last three years
- 4. Vehicular manslaughter within any time frame
- 5. Misdemeanor drug charges within the last five years
- 6. Petty theft within the last three years

- C. All Coaches MUST Complete a National Certification Course
 - a. NOTE: As part of the organization's risk management, it is recommended to all our member organizations that these credentials/certifications be complete **before** a coach even steps on the field for practice.
- D. All Coaches must sign a SMTYFL Coaches Code of Conduct Form
- E. All cheerleading coaches shall be prohibited from, using any form of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs as well as any form of profanity while on the sideline, practice, or game day field, or at any time while in contact with children
- F. Coaches are to be familiar with cheerleading techniques, stunts, and jumps.
- G. Coaches are to be on time and should always set a good example for their squads and communities
- H. Coaches are to be always in control, whether at a game or practice.
- I. Coaches are to treat all cheerleaders, parents, and other coaches (football and cheerleading) with respect
- J. Coaches should always look the part by dressing appropriately and with spirit in mind at games and practices.
- K. Cheerleading coaches are to treat all cheerleaders fairly, teach all cheerleaders equally, and make them feel a part of the squad.
- L. Cheerleading coaches are to present themselves in a positive manner, even when critiquing their squad.

Rule 9 – Cheerleader Uniform

- A. Uniforms must provide full coverage during all cheerleading activities, including stunts, jumps, and tumbling.
- B. Skirts, shorts, and tops must not be excessively short or revealing. Tops should provide adequate support and coverage.
- C. All cheerleader uniforms must cover the midriff when standing at attention
 - a. Covered midriff does include flesh or nude colored body suits and liners; however, fringe would not count as a cover.
 - b. For "Dress" Style cheer uniforms, proper undergarments must be worn to prevent improper exposure during tumbling (i.e. a tank top/sports bra/bloomers)
- D. Cheerleading Bloomers are REQUIRED to be worn under each uniform
 - a. Bloomers must provide full coverage, ensuring modesty and comfort during all cheerleading activities.
 - b. They should fit securely without being too tight or loose, allowing for unrestricted movement.
 - c. The length of the bloomers should be appropriate, typically covering the upper thigh while avoiding excessive exposure. They should be short enough to allow for flexibility in movement but long enough to maintain modesty during high-energy routines.
- E. Uniforms must fit properly, allowing for ease of movement and flexibility. They should not be too tight or too loose to avoid discomfort or distractions during performances.
- F. Cheerleaders must wear appropriate, non-marking athletic shoes that provide support and stability. Shoes should be clean and in good condition.
- G. Hair should be neatly styled and secured to prevent it from interfering with performance. Typically, ponytails or braids are recommended.
- H. Hair must be worn in a manner that is appropriate for the activity involved. Hair devices and accessories must be secure. In general, hair should be pulled back away from the face and secured.
- I. Uniform accessories, such as bows or headbands, must match the team's uniform colors and design. Excessive or distracting jewelry is not allowed.
- J. Uniforms must be kept clean and in good repair.
- K. No tear-away uniforms or removal of clothing is allowed.
- L. Fingernails must be natural nails and kept short. No artificial fingernails are allowed.
- M. Makeup is at coach's discretion- should be age appropriate
- N. Minimal Glitter is permissible if it is a gel glitter (that is sticky) and not loose or free-falling glitter.
 - a. Examples may include, cheer hair gel glitter, gel face glitter, etc...

Rule 10 – Equipment and Props

- A. Flags, Signs, Megaphones, Pom Poms are the approved props for SMTYFL Cheerleading
- B. The only props allowed to be used while in a stunt or pyramid are pom poms and signs in use by the top person only.
- C. A top can hand a sign to a base or spotter with the intention of the base or spotter immediately releasing it to the ground.

Rule 11 – Practice Guidelines

- A. **SMTYFL Pre Season**
 - a. No Pre-Season official team practices shall occur before the First Monday after July 4th.
 - b. All clinics and camps must be completed before the first Opening Practice Day.
 - i. All Camps and clinics must be open to the public and advertised prior to the clinic or camp start date.
- B. **SMTYFL Opening Season Practice Guidelines**
 - a. In all divisions, the first week of practice shall be foundational skills only.
 - b. The second week of practice is coaches' discretion; however, it is permitted for the cheerleaders to begin learning sideline cheers and halftime routines.
- C. **SMTYFL General Practice Guidelines**
 - a. Organizations, at minimum, should practice 2 days per week once the SMTYFL season begins.
 - b. Coaches should require a 15-minute warm up, including stretches, prior to starting practice.

- c. No squad should perform any stunts, tumbling, or jumps without first performing skill progression drills and procedures.
 - d. All basic skills should be mastered before progressing to the next skill level to ensure safety for the cheerleader.
 - e. Cheerleaders may not stunt or tumble on wet grass.
 - f. Cheerleaders must be in proper practice attire; shorts/leggings, t-shirt/tank, cheer shoes/tennis shoes, hair pulled back away from face.
 - i. Blue jeans, crocs, dress-up clothing are some examples of inappropriate practice attire.
 - g. Cheerleaders may NOT chew gum or have candy in their mouths during practice, games, performances, or competition.
- D. Mandatory Breaks**
- a. A mandatory 10-minute break after each hour of practice shall be required. Break time is not counted against the hours per week or per day allowed practice time.
- E. WARM WEATHER PRECAUTIONS:**
- a. Teams must guard against serious heat problems, which in extreme cases have occasionally resulted in death.
 - b. The training regimen of any team practicing under high heat and/or humidity conditions must:
 - i. Limit or eliminate laps entirely during high heat/humidity conditions.
 - ii. Schedule practices for early evening, after sun is low in sky.
 - iii. Each coach must keep an eye on all players and his fellow coaches for the slightest sign of heat exhaustion or fatigue.
 - iv. Practice in a more shaded or covered area if possible.

Rule 12 – Game Day Procedures

- A. All organizations must provide a cheerleading squad for every scheduled game and for each division.
- B. All coaches and directors that are on the sidelines or field during game day or competition must be listed on the squad's roster and certified.
- C. Each squad must be accompanied by at least one (1) coach on game day. No squad shall be on the field/sideline without a certified coach.
- D. All organizations MUST perform at Halftime during every scheduled game, unless due to weather conditions.
- E. Halftime cheers, dances, and routines should be at a minimum of 1 minute and at maximum 3 minutes long.
- F. The visiting squad shall be introduced and perform first, followed by the home cheer squad.
 - a. The opposite team shall be kneeling on the football field sideline watching and cheering on the other squad while they are performing.
- G. At the end of the game, all cheerleaders shall line up behind the football team for the purpose of shaking hands with the opposing team and their cheerleaders.
- H. If a football player becomes injured during a game, both cheer squads are to stop cheering immediately, kneel on one knee, and be quiet, until the player is up or removed from the playing field, at which time the squads should applaud for the injured player.
- I. All cheers, chants, and music are to be free of vulgar words, phrases, and motions. No types of derogatory cheers will be allowed.
- J. Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated and is subject to go before the SMTYFL Executive Board.
- K. Cheerleading coaches are to keep cheerleaders off the playing field and within the defined sideline boundaries, as designated by the home team, except at halftime.
- L. All stunts, jumps, and tumbling on game day must follow the approved guidelines set forth by SMTYFL.

SMTYFL Cheer Competition Rules and Guidelines

Part 1: General Competition Guidelines (all divisions)

- A. All organizations MUST at least enter the Cheer/Chant Category.
 - a. You may also enter as many other categories as you would like.

- B. All Competition categories are ***Divisional*** and will follow the above referenced team and roster rules.
 - a. D1 – 5, 6, and 7
 - b. D2 – 8 and 9
 - c. D3 – 10, 11, and 12
- C. If your location does 1 mixed age sideline team due to lack of the number of participants, we will average the ages and place them in the appropriate division for competition.
 - a. Your team must have been a single mixed sideline team during the entire season in order for your team to compete as a mixed division at competition.
 - b. The participants must follow the stunt and tumbling guidelines for their age division
- D. Competition routines **CAN NOT** be professionally coached, choreographed, or taught.
 - a. It is the responsibility of the Head Coach and Coaching staff to develop and teach the cheer routine that is presented at competition and all game day events. Outside choreographers are NOT allowed.
 - b. **PENALTIES:**
 - i. The offending team will be disqualified from Competition in all categories.
 - ii. If determined after competition trophies have been provided, trophies will be relinquished.
- E. Coaches and Cheerleaders must be on time to check in.
- F. Coaches are not allowed to be on the mat during any performance.
- G. Cheerleaders during their performance period must not be coached through their routines.
 - a. Coaches are not allowed to sit behind the judges table. Coaches are requested to sit either beside or in front of the judge's table.
 - b. A maximum of 50 points will be deducted from your overall score sheet for coaching your team through their competition performances.
- H. Coaches must have music ready to start for performances.
- I. **Illegal moves/out of age group stunts or tumbling will result in disqualification from that performance category.**
- J. Cheerleaders and coaches must always present themselves in a respectful manner.
- K. Coaches must always stay with their cheerleading squads. Do not leave teams unattended.
- L. Each team must make sure that their area is clean after competition is complete.
- M. All routines should be appropriate for family viewing. Any vulgar or suggestive movements, words, or music will result in a score deduction.
- N. No tear-away uniforms or removal of clothing are allowed.
- O. Good sportsman like conduct is required from all attendees (See Adult and Coach's code of conduct for questions)

Part 2 - Host Site Instructions

- A. Location
 - a. Exact Location date no later than August 15th
- B. Schedule of Events
 - a. Cheer Commissioner handles
- C. Competition Trophies/Medals
 - a. Host site must provide 2 design options to be voted on by cheer directors
- D. SMTYFL Spirit Award Medals or Plaques
 - a. Cheer Commissioners handle design, but host site purchases with reimbursement from all orgs. (same as competition trophy process)
- E. Hosts must set up a handicap/disabled section at the event site.

Part 3 – Competition Judges

- A. All competition judges must be randomly selected/provided
 - a. Preferred: SMTYFL prefers judges provided by a College/University Cheerleading squad within Tennessee.
 - b. Judges must have a cheerleading background.
- B. Judges cannot be related to or affiliated with any direct individual, coaching staff member, or organization.
- C. Judges must be 18 years of age.
- D. Judges are paid \$100/each for their time during the day of competition. (may also provide t-shirts/gear as gifts)
- E. The number of judges must be an ODD number (in the case of tie).
- F. There must be a "score handler": this person transfers the score sheets from the judges to the SMTYFL Executive Board for tallying.
- G. Coaches are not allowed to speak directly with the judges. The SMTYFL Cheer Commissioner/s will handle any necessary communication between judges and coaches.

Part 4 – Competition Categories

***Cheer/Chant Category* (REQUIRED ENTRY)**

- A. 1 Cheer or Chant ONLY
- B. **RESTRICTIONS:** No Music, No Dance, No Stunts, NO Tumbling (DURING ROUTINE) are allowed
- C. Jumps and Spiriting are allowed.
- D. You will be scored on motion technique, voice, and your ability to lead the crowd
- E. Only the Cheerleaders on the floor should be the ones doing the cheer/chant.
- F. Other divisions within that organization must remain quiet during the cheer/chant portion. (Cheering on your team that is performing is allowed for encouragement, but not to be included in participation)
- G. The general crowd, fans, and other teams **CAN** 'reply/respond/interact' to the cheerleaders during their cheer/chant performance when asked to participate/respond/interact.

Halftime Routine Category (Minimum 4 Participants)

- Time Limit of Entire Routine: 2 minutes MAX
- Time begins when 1st cheer motion or music begins
- In this division teams will be sure to include a minimum of the following elements into their routine (*These elements can either be included in the cheer/chant section, a music section, or both*):
 - **1 cheer or chant**
 - **1 jump**
 - **1 stunt or pyramid section**
 - **1 tumbling skill**
- Dance & Music are OPTIONAL (It won't count against you if you don't have them)

Full Floor Routine Category (Minimum 4 Participants)

- A. Time Limit of Entire Routine
 - a. MINIMUM TIME: 2 minutes 30 seconds
 - b. MAX TIME: 3 minutes
- B. Time begins when 1st cheer motion or music begins
- C. In this division teams will be sure to include a minimum of the following elements into their routine:
 - a. 1 cheer or chant (OPTIONAL: you will not be deducted in scores)
 - b. 2 jumps
 - c. 1 stunt or pyramid section
 - d. 1 standing or running tumbling section
 - e. 1 dance section

Part 5 – Competition Score Sheets (below)

Cheer/Chant ONLY Division Score Sheet

Team Name: _____

Age Division: _____

<u>CHEER/CHANT</u>	<u>MAX POINTS</u>	<u>SCORE</u>	<u>NOTES:</u>
Motion Technique	10		
Voice	10		
Crowd Leading (Easy to Follow)	10		
Overall Impression & Spirit	10		
<u>TOTAL:</u>	<u>40</u>		
ILLEGAL SKILL- DISQUALIFICATION	0		
<u>FINAL SCORE</u>	<u>40</u>		

Halftime Routine Style Division Score Sheet

Team Name: _____
 Age Division: _____

<u>HALFTIME ROUTINE</u>	<u>MAX POINTS</u>	<u>SCORE</u>	<u>NOTES:</u>
Motion Technique	10		
Voice & Spirit	10		
Crowd Leading (Easy to Follow)	10		
Tumbling Difficulty & Technique	10		
Jump Technique	10		
Stunts and/or Pyramid Difficulty & Technique	10		
<u>TOTAL:</u>	<u>60</u>		
ILLEGAL SKILL- DISQUALIFICATION	0		
<u>FINAL SCORE</u>	<u>40</u>		

Team Name: _____

Age Division: _____

<u>STUNTS & PYRAMID PORTION</u>	<u>MAX POINTS</u>	<u>SCORE</u>	<u>NOTES:</u>
Partner Stunt Technique & Timing	15		
Partner Stunt Difficulty	10		
Pyramid Technique & Timing	10		
Pyramid Difficulty	5		
Overall Impression, Creativity, and Transitions Used	10		
<u>SUBTOTAL:</u>	<u>50</u>		

(scoresheet continues on next page)

<u>OVERALL, JUMPS, & TUMBLING</u>	<u>MAX POINTS</u>	<u>SCORE</u>	<u>NOTES:</u>
Tumbling Technique	5		
Tumbling Difficulty	5		
Jump Technique	5		
Jump Quantity (5 pts for 1 jump, 10 for 2 jumps)	10		
Dance - Motions, Visual Appeal, Timing, Levels	10		
Overall Choreography - Visual appeal, flow, & transitions	15		
<u>SUBTOTAL:</u>	<u>50</u>		

<u>TOTAL POINTS SUBTOTAL:</u>	<u>100</u>		
ILLEGAL SKILL-DISQUALIFICATION	0		
<u>FINAL SCORE:</u>	100		
Judge Number:			

DIVISION 1 Approved Stunts, Jumps, & Tumbling (age 5, 6, and 7)		
STUNTS (Waist Prep Level)	JUMPS	TUMBLING
Thigh Stands (single or double)	Toe Touch	Forward Rolls
Knee Stands (single or double)	Hurdle	Cartwheel
Shoulder Sit	Pike	Round Off
Teddy Bear/V-Sit	Herkie	Front Walkover
Libs (ground level/waist prep level)	Tuck Jump	Back Walkover
Hitches (ground level/waist prep level)	*combination/series jumps	1 Handed Cartwheel
Heel Stretch (ground level/waist prep level)		Bridge
Pyramids - single (1) level only		Bridge/Kickover
Moving/Walking Stunts Allowed with a layer in a Load or standing Position with both feet in base hands at waist level ONLY		Backbend
		Backbend/Kickover
		*Combination of 2 or more skills in the above listed group
		*Allowed to tumble into a stunt with stop before loading

DIVISION 2 Approved Stunts, Jumps, & Tumbling (age 8 and 9)		
STUNTS (Shoulder Level Prep)	JUMPS	TUMBLING
Thigh Stands (single or double)	Toe Touch	Forward Rolls
Knee Stands (single or double)	Hurdle	Cartwheel
Shoulder Sit	Pike	Round Off
Teddy Bear/V-Sit	Herkie	Front Walkover
Libs (shoulder prep level)	Tuck Jump	Back Walkover
Hitches (shoulder prep level)	*combination/series jumps	1 Handed Cartwheel
Heel Stretch (shoulder prep level)		Bridge
Pyramids - 2 Levels		Bridge/Kickover
Arabesque at shoulder prep level with back spot and side spots.		Backbend
		Backbend/Kickover
*Cradles Allowed		Back Handspring
*Twist Up Loading Allowed		Front Handspring
*Moving/Walking Stunts Allowed with a Flyer in a Load or standing Position with both feet in base hands		
		*Combination of 2 or more skills in the above listed group
		*Allowed to tumble into a stunt

DIVISION 3 Approved Stunts, Jumps, & Tumbling (age 10, 11, and 12)		
STUNTS (Full Extension)	JUMPS	TUMBLING
Thigh Stands (single or double)	Toe Touch	Forward Rolls
Knee Stands (single or double)	Hurdle	Cartwheel
Shoulder Sit	Pike	Round Off
Teddy Bear/V-Sit	Herkie	Front Walkover
Libs (full extension)	Tuck Jump	Back Walkover
Hitches (full extension)	*combination/series jumps	1 Handed Cartwheel
Heel Stretch (full extension)		Bridge
Pyramids - 2 Levels		Bridge/Kickover
Arabesque (at shoulder level prep only, front and back spot required)		Backbend
Shoulder Stand (needs to consist of 3 people; a spotter, base, flyer)		Backbend/Kickover
		Back Handspring
Cradles Allowed (from shoulder prep level or extension)		Front Handspring
*Twist Up Loading Allowed		
Moving/Walking Stunts Allowed with Flyer in a Load or Standing position with both feet in base hands		*Combination of 2 or more skills in the above listed group
		*Allowed to tumble into a stunt

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PART X - APPROVAL AND ADOPTION

The SMTYFL Rules and Regulations accepted as revised and approved this day, March 22, 2025.

Chairman, SMTYFL

Secretary, SMTYFL

Vice Chairman, SMTYFL

Treasurer, SMTYFL

Sargent at Arms, SMTYFL

Co-Cheer Commissioner, SMTYFL

Co-Cheer Commissioner, SMTYFL

Co-Football Commissioner, SMTYFL

Co-Football Commissioner, SMTYFL

Columbia Representative

Franklin County Representative

Giles County Representative

Manchester Representative

Representative

Rockvale Representative

Shelbyville Representative

Tullahoma Representative

Warren County Representative

Murfreesboro Jr. Patriots Representative

Fayetteville Representative

Walter Hill Representative