

GREATER EASTSIDE JUNIOR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Frequently Asked Questions

These questions and answers address that which is covered in the GEJFA Rules, however, they are far from all inclusive. They are the questions most often asked. Knowing these answers does not substitute for a complete reading and understanding of the rules.

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ORGANIZATION

Q.1. – What is a Club?

A.1. – A Club is one of the independent franchised youth football programs within the Association. There are currently 17 independent Clubs (see list on the web site). Each Club is responsible for its own registration, fund raising, equipment outfitting, and internal Club administration (election of Club Board members) and scheduling (e.g., Club Board meetings, identification and assignment of practice fields, etc.) all consistent with the GEJFA Rules.

ELIGIBILITY

Q.2. – In what GEJFA Club must I register to play?

A.2. – Generally, the boundaries of each Club coincide with the boundaries of the public high in which the player resides. If a player resides outside the boundaries of GEJFA (not within the boundaries of any of the member Clubs) then the player is essentially a free-agent and may elect to play for any GEJFA Club.

Q.3. – What if I played GEJFA football in one Club and then move the next year into the boundaries or another Club?

A.3. – The GEJFA Rules have a grandfather clause that allows a player in which he/she first established eligibility by residing within the Club's boundaries to remain with that Club even if he/she moves to within the boundaries of another GEJFA Club. However, once the player breaks continuity of the grandfather, e.g., doesn't play a season sometime after the move or plays for the Club into which he/she moved, the grandfather provision is voided.

Q.4. – Are there any circumstances under which I may register with a Club other than the one where I reside?

A.4. – In addition to the provisions of the grandfather clause covered by Question 3, under special circumstances to be considered on a case-by-case basis, a player may seek a transfer from one Club to another. An application form for this purpose is available on the web site. Such a transfer must be approved by both of the involved Clubs. There is no requirement that either Club honor these special circumstances (i.e., no Club can be required to give up players to another Club and no Club is required to take players from outside their boundaries). Parents and the involved Clubs are encouraged to do whatever is best for the player.

Q.5. -- Can a ninth grader play in GEJFA?

A.5. -- Yes, but only based on the age/weight option. A ninth grader must not have more than 80 age points and age points added to weight must not exceed 198 points. Ninth graders will be required to weigh in before each game.

Q.6. -- Are there any circumstances by which an eighth grader may not be eligible?

A.6. -- Yes. Besides being prohibited from playing in two football programs in the same season, e.g., GEJFA and Junior High football, an eighth grader who has more than 80 age points would not be eligible. Actually, no player with more than 80 age points is eligible.

Q.7. – Can I play for my school team and also play in GEJFA?

A.7. – GEJFA players may not play on any other football team during the same fall season in which they are participating in the GEJFA program. A player who drops from his (her) junior high team may seek to be considered for GEJFA eligibility, subject to approval by Council. However, since GEJFA starts practicing well before the school teams, such a player will be quite far behind his potential GEJFA teammates. The use of a player in GEJFA who is also participating in another football program is an eligibility violation with serious consequences for the player, the coach, and maybe even the Club. See GEJFA Rule 3.A. and 3.D.

Q.8. -- Does GEJFA require players to undergo a physical examination?

A.8. -- No. However, if a player has any form of disability, parents should seek a doctor's advice/approval regarding participation in sports, particularly a contact sport. Clubs may require all players to undergo a physical as a matter of Club policy. Health and safety of the players is always a very important concern.

PLAYING LEVEL (AGE/WEIGHT; WEIGH-IN; CAP WEIGHT; TEAM SPLITS)

Q.9. – How is a player assigned to a playing level?

A.9. – In 2010, the number of playing levels was reduced from six to five by eliminating the Senior level and adjusting the age/weight points total and age only points range at the five remaining levels. There are still two ways to determine a player's level of play. Since the 2004 season, GEJFA has allow playing level assignment based on the long practiced age weight formula (adding age points from chart to the players weight) or based on age only to determine playing level. Other than the range adjustment in age/weight points total and age only points already mentioned, these two methods for assigning playing level are continued. See the Age/Weight Chart for more details.

Q.10. – My son (or daughter) has an age/weight total that puts him (her) at one level and age points only at a different level. At what level should he (she) play?

A.10. – Generally, a player should always be assigned to the lowest possible playing level for the players benefit using whichever of the two methods accomplishes that.

Q.10.a. – What if the level determined by age/weight point method is two levels below the level determined by the age point only method?

A.10.a. – A player who qualifies for a playing level by age points only method that is two levels below that at which he (she) would otherwise be assigned if using the age/weight point total method could be assigned to either of these levels or the level in between.

Q.10.b. – What if the age point only method puts a player higher than the age/weight total method; at what level should that player be assigned?

A.10.b. – Back to the basic question and answer (Q.10.), a player should generally always be assigned to the lowest possible playing level for which he/she is eligible; this is for their own benefit. Thus, if

a player who would otherwise be eligible for one level by age/weight point total method but also eligible at a higher level by age point only level, that player really should choose to play at the lowest possible level which in this case is determined by age/weight. However, if the player insists on playing up with players of the same age who have a significant weight advantage, a Club may decline to allow this. For those Clubs that do allow it, a waiver indicating that the player and parents have been advised regarding the disadvantages of playing up, should be used. The age point method only was created to allow players to play down with others of the same/similar age, not up with larger players of the same/similar age.

Q.11. – Why the age points only method of playing level assignment?

A.11. – The purpose of the age points only assignment is to let kids play with other kids of their same age without regard to weight, thus allowing that a heavy 8 year old can play as a Rookie, a heavy 9 year old can play as a Cub, etc. It had become very apparent that some such kids were choosing not to play football because their larger size was forcing them to play up with kids sometimes two or three years older. Also, GEJFA is one of the few youth football programs, and maybe the only one in this region, to use an age/weight chart. Other programs have historically used grade level (similar to age only) to determine playing level without regard to weight.

Q.12. – Is there any kind of cap weight?

A.12. – No. When GEJFA first provided for an age only option for determining playing level, a cap weight (maximum weight) was identified for the age point only players at the Sophomore and Junior Varsity level. After some experience with this age point only option and much discussion over several years, GEJFA decided to eliminate the cap weight restrictions at any level. The only time weight is a factor is in the age/weight total option for playing level assignment.

Q.13. – Do players assigned by age points only have to weigh in?

A.13. – No, age point only players need not weigh. See Q&A #12.

Q.14. – What are the rules regarding overweight players participating in practice?

A.14. – No player assigned by the age/weight option shall participate in contact practice if that player is more than five age/weight combined points over the upper limit for that playing level.

Q.15. – What are the rules regarding overweight players participating in a jamboree?

A.15. – A jamboree is considered a practice and the rules regarding overweight players is the same as that covered in Q/A #14.

Q.16. – What are the rules regarding overweight players participating in games?

A.16. – Players, assigned by age/weight combined points, who are more than 9/10s of a pound above the upper limit for the playing level, shall not play in games. Any agreement between coaches to allow such players to play is a violation of the rules and subjects the weigh-master, and both coaches to possible disciplinary action.

Q.17. – How is the equipment allowance factored into the weigh-ins?

A.17. – The equipment allowance is given to all players who weigh-in with their equipment on. The equipment allowance points in the Age/Weight Chart are added on top of the points for the respective playing level. This is not an issue for players assigned by age points only since they are not required to weigh.

Q.18. – When there are two teams at the same level in a Club, how are the players assigned?

A.18. – The maximum size of a team is 33 players, thus players must be turned away or a split is necessary when there are more than 33 players for a particular level. Since the minimum size team is 14 players, the split may also be made when there are 28 or more players at a particular level. When there are two (or more) teams at the same level in a Club, a designed split is required (e.g., a draft, a geographic split by schools or some other landmarks, etc) and must receive GEJFA Council approval. The rule intends that the split will be equal addressing parity of numbers, skill, size, age, etc. However, a geographic split by school boundaries will be considered to satisfy the desire for equity without regard to other factors. The Club's split policy must be applied in a like manner throughout the Club, as necessary. See GEJFA Rule 1.B.(1).

EQUIPMENT

Q.19. – Can player wear a cast and practice or play in a game?

A.19. – Players may not participate in any contact, live or otherwise, in practice or games if wearing a hard or rigid material cast even if said cast is wrapped with protective foam or rubber type substances. Examples of a hard or rigid material casts include those made of metal, plaster type material or fiberglass material. This differs from high school rules which allow those casts with a doctor's written permission and the protective foam cover. However, this is youth football and the individual's health and safety are of concern. The reason for this GEJFA rule is not necessarily the safety of other players, but the safety of the player wearing the cast. If a hard cast is required, then the injury is such that this youth should not be playing contact sports. See GEJFA Rule 4.E.)

Q.20. – Are players allowed to wear tinted shields in their helmets?

A.20. – High School rules require that eye shields on helmets be clear, without tint. The intention of this rule is that those providing aid to an injured player be able to see clearly the player's eyes without having to remove the helmet (which may be harmful to do). 100% clear is required, without exception.

Q.21. -- Why does GEJFA prohibit detachable cleats?

A.21. -- High school rules used to prohibit detachable cleats, primarily for safety reasons, and we in GEJFA follow high school rules with few exceptions. We for sure follow all the high school safety rules. High school rules have been changed in recent years and certain detachable cleats are now allowed. However, we still have high schools within our program that do not allow detachable cleats to be used on their fields, the fields on which we play. As long as there is a prohibition regarding detachable cleats on any field on which GEJFA plays games, then GEJFA will continue prohibit detachable cleats.

SEASON (PRACTICES; GAME SCHEDULE; OFF-SEASON ACTIVITY)

Q.22. -- How are the Conferences and Divisions determined?

A.22. -- For the Conferences we have a working model based on 32 teams that rotates teams in a three year plan so each team will play at least 19 different teams in Conference play in that three year time frame. This has worked very well for our Rookie, Cub, Sophomore & Junior Varsity levels. The Divisions match is by blind draw each year at the Council meeting (usually at the June meeting).

Q.23. – When are we allowed to start practicing?

A.23. – Practice may start on the date specified by the GEJFA Council and published in the GEJFA Calendar, which will usually always be three weeks prior to Labor Day. There shall be no organized practice sessions by any Club or any team prior to the specified first day of practice. All team meetings including skill sessions, movies, etc., shall constitute practice, and shall be counted as such as the number of allowed practices for the week. See GEJFA Rule 5.

Q.24. – How many practices are we allowed?

A.24. – The following sums up the number of allowed practices and jamborees.

- Week 1 – four or five practices, depending on when the All Coaches Meeting is held and as set by the Council. Theoretically, could also participate in a jamboree on Saturday as a freebie (but that would be a bit early for a jamboree).
 - Week 2 – five practices. A team may also participate in a jamboree this week; if it is the team's first jamboree, it is a freebie and could constitute the 6th practice this week. If it is the second jamboree, then another practice must be sacrificed.
 - Week 3 – five practices. Teams are very likely to also participate in a jamboree this week; if it is the team's first jamboree, it is a freebie and could constitute the 6th practice this week. If it is the team's second jamboree, then another practice must be sacrificed.
- In summary, in the first three weeks, a team may have 14 (or 15 as discussed above) practices and 1 jamboree or 13 (or 14 as discussed above) practices and 2 jamborees.
- Week 4 and beyond – three practices a week.

Q.25. – Is the scouting of other teams allowed? In what way?

A.25. – Scouting of other teams is permitted under the following circumstances and conditions:

- May scout only at games;
- No scouting of another teams practice;
- No scouting by video tape;
- May not video tape any game other than those in which your team is participating; and
- No viewing of video tape of another team unless your team is the opponent.

Q.26. – We have other Clubs scheduled for home games on our field. Are we reimbursed for the field costs?

A.26. – The short answer is YES. When teams are unable to provide their own field for home games, then the scheduler will put those home games at the nearest available field with openings. None of the game fields come without costs. The host Club in these cases is expected to pick up the field cost as part of their season package of field costs. At the end of the season, GEJFA will credit those Clubs who hosted another Club's home game(s), based on actual field costs, and charge that cost to the other Club. Since there are usually numerous cases like this, the credits and debits are all done first on paper as Field Use Adjustments. All Clubs will have some Field Use Adjustment as the field costs for Championship Day are divided equally among all Clubs. Also, because the semi-finals are on designated fields, the

competing teams will share the cost of the fields for those games. The Field Use Adjustments sheet is handed out at the end of the season and these credits or debits are also worked into each Club's overall cost for the year (referee and field use costs) to establish the balance owed or credit due.

Q.27. – How does the substitution rule apply to special teams (e.g., kick-off, extra point tries, punting)?

A.27. – After a score, a team may substitute freely up to and including when play resumes at the line of scrimmage following the kick-off. For example, either team scores, both teams may substitute freely for the PAT, the kickoff, and to begin the scrimmage. With the beginning of the scrimmage play, the substitution rule is reinstated and four legal plays must pass before any substitutions (unless the ball is turned over). The same would apply following a field goal, i.e., free substitution for the kickoff and to start scrimmage. The exception to this would be when there is no kickoff because the score differential is 25 or more. When the ball is moved to the 50 to start scrimmage play, you should be using a different 11 players than were on the field at the time of the score.

Q.28. – Why do we have the 32 point rule?

A.28. – See GEJFA Rule 6.N.(2). It is the intent and spirit of the GEJFA Council that no team shall defeat an opponent by more than 32 points. The primary purpose of this rule is to keep a dominant team from humiliating another team. Further, the need to manage the score in these cases gives incentive to the coaches of a dominant team to put players at positions other than those they might normally play.

Q.29. – Our team has a bye this week. Can we practice in place of the game?

A.29. – When there is an odd number of teams at a playing level there will be a bye for one team each week. On rare occasion we may be able to find a team in another League that has a comparable age/weight playing level assignment chart and then schedule an “exchange game.” Any exchange game must have the Council’s approval to ensure acceptable equity in player age and size. If an exchange game is not possible for the team with a bye, that team may practice on Saturday for the fourth practice of the week.

Q.30. – In the off-season, can players participate in other football programs and activities, such as a Spring football program, whether flag, touch or tackle? Can they participate in football camps?

A.30. -- Regarding the in-season activities the rules are clear; GEJFA players are prohibited from participating in any other football program during the season. The rules are less clear regarding the off-season activities. This matter has been discussed by the Council a number of times, however, each year we have new people and the questions resurface. Here are some of the common questions in this regard.

Q.30.a. – Can GEJFA players participate in a spring football program?

A.30.a. – Nothing in the rules prohibits GEJFA players from participating in other football programs in the off-season, however, the rules do prohibit practice prior to the Council approved first day of practice which is usually mid-August. If it turned out that these players were all from the same GEJFA team and were to be coached by their GEJFA coach even in an off-season football activity, Council may view this as something that would constitute practicing prior to the season. If the players are randomly placed on teams and not coached by their GEJFA coach, this is likely not a prohibited activity. These are probably the two ends of the spectrum of off-season participation and somewhere between them is a line. Such situations require review on a case-by-case basis, better before than after the activity. If Council were to rule it as prohibited activity after the fact it might have some negative impact the players and/or their GEJFA team.

Q.30.b. – Are players participating in summer football camps covered by GEJFA insurance?

A.30.b. – NO. The outreach membership fees paid by the Clubs for each player give them membership and insurance coverage only of the GEJFA season which usually starts mid-August and ends mid November. Any activity outside the schedule of GEJFA activities must be approved by the Council for insurance coverage to be applicable. Camps are not GEJFA sanctioned activities for which insurance coverage applies.

Q.30.c. – Can Clubs hold summer football camps?

A.30.c. – If it looks like practice and smells like practice then it is probably practice and prohibited by the GEJFA Rules. The camps that are sponsored and run by or for the high school at which any youth, not just GEJFA players, may participate and the participants are not grouped by GEJFA team but by age or grade or position, etc. are generally acceptable camps.

Q.30.d. – Can GEJFA players be required to participate in summer camps?

A.30.d. – Pressuring players to participate outside the boundaries of the GEJFA season would not be in the spirit of the GEJFA rules. Suggesting to players that they will be penalized for not participating in skills camps or conditioning camps is unacceptable and subject to review by Council.

Q.30.e. – Can my son's teammates attend his birthday party without it being considered practice?

A.30.e. – Absolutely. They can even play football or watch football movies. But if the coach is present and instructs them or if they watch and critique game video, then it will very likely be counted as a practice.

These rules serve several purposes: (1) keeping youth players from be pressured into some extended participation; (2) providing a level playing field for all participants in GEJFA – everyone is subject to the same season boundaries and same number of practices and amount of practice time; and (3) respect for the players' time as well as family time (families get a break between sports and know well ahead of time when football practice is to begin). Clubs need to view these matters with a good knowledge of GEJFA Rules and apply some common sense. If the obsession to win is so great that Clubs, teams, or coaches are compelled to seek some way to circumvent the GEJFA Rules then they are not likely in compliance with the spirit of the GEJFA Rules, if not in violation. Again, if you have doubts about whether or not it is practice, then it is probably practice.