

# Greater Eastside Junior Football Association Referee's Handbook

## Administration

### **Philosophy**

The highest degree of ethical conduct is expected of all who participate in this program. This includes strict adherence to both the letter and the spirit of the Rules and Regulations of this program. The National Federation of State High School Associations Football Rules apply to our program except as may be modified by the Greater Eastside Junior Football Association Rules.

Posture and attitude play a large part in the official's approach to the game. Flow of the game in part has to do with the application of the rules by the officials. If every penalty by high school standards is applied to a youth game, a penalty could be called on just about every play. Ask yourself, during a play in a game, does the rule violation give a team an unfair advantage or would the play have the same results with the violation? A no harm-no foul application of the rules is desired. Talk to the players to help control the game and keep the number of penalties to a minimum. For example, if Team A sweeps around their right end and A's Left End holds at the line of scrimmage, remind Team A to keep their hands in during blocking rather than assessing a penalty. If Team A sweeps around their left end and A's Left End still holds, then call a penalty.

### **Minimum Requirements**

The minimum age is 18 years old. While we are looking for adult officials, high school students that possess a high degree of maturity are welcome and constitute a large percentage of beginning officials. Prospective officials should have knowledge of football, but an extensive knowledge of the rules is not a prerequisite. However a willingness to learn, the ability to make decisions quickly and fairly are important attributes. New officials should be able to attend several 1-1.5 hour training classes as well as one or two jamborees prior to the beginning of the season to allow you to get "hands on" experience prior to officiating regular season games.

### **Referee Uniforms & Equipment**

Basic referee uniform supplies can be purchased locally from Sound Athletic Supply in Auburn (1-800-683-0154). The GEJFA web site has a number of uniform suppliers listed in the "Referee's References" page under "Official's Corner" category. Minimum uniform requirements include black cap, referee shirt, black pants, beanbag, whistle and flag. Official referee pants are optional but recommended as experience has shown that there is a tendency for coaches to question "less official" looking referees. The Referee's References section on the GEJFA web site has links to several other referee uniform suppliers. For new referees there is a uniform reimbursement allowance. The maximum reimbursement is \$100.00. To qualify for reimbursement you must work at least 16 games during the season. To receive reimbursement for the amount spent you should mail copies of receipts detailing the purchases to the Referee Coordinator at the address shown on the Registration Form by Oct. 20. Before the season, the association will provide new officials with a flag and bean bag.

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### GEJFA Web Site

The Association maintains a web site at <http://www.gejfa.net/>. It is set up as the primary means of distributing information such as field locations/maps, game schedules, as well as other related information. There is also an "Officials Corner" section that has many other referee related items including the following:

1. New Official FAQs
2. Important Dates
3. Referee's Handbook (this document)
4. Registration Form (both online and paper versions)
5. Background Check
6. GEJFA Rules Pocket Guide
7. Referee's Weekly Schedule
8. Referee's Online Game Report Form
9. References (Clothing, 3 Man Mechanics, Rules Enforcement & Other Links)
10. The Referee's Perspective
11. W-9 form

### Pay Rates and Payment Timetable

Referees are paid on a per game basis according to their experience and longevity. The pay scale is as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> Year: \$20.00 per game

Returning officials will receive a \$2.00 raise in pay per game (to a maximum of \$30 per game)

PNFOA: \$36.00 per game      Senior Crew Chiefs: \$38.00 per game

Payment by check at the end of the season. Checks will be available at the Championship Games or mailed out the week following the games. A mid season check will be mailed upon written request (email the Referee Coordinator). W-2 will be mailed out by the Boys & Girls Club in late January if you earn more than \$700.

### Scheduling

The Association will attempt to assign 4 referees to officiate Sophomore, Junior Varsity and Varsity games, however 3 referees will constitute a full crew. At the Rookie and Cub levels 3 referees will be assigned and will constitute a full crew. Game assignments will be sent to the senior official of the crew and he will pass the information to the other referees in his crew. If you are unable to work an assigned game, you must notify the Referee Scheduler at least 24 hours prior to the game.

The Referee Coordinator makes all referee assignments and each referee should list their scheduling preferences on the Registration Form. As much as practical, new and less-experienced referees will be assigned on a "crew" basis with the same senior official each week to create a better working relationship and maximize the learning rate of the newer referees. From week to week, each crew will "cycle" through several fields in the same geographical area as they live. Typically there are 3 to 6

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games at each field each game day. We like to schedule each referee for at least 3 games, and for the entire series of games at a field if the referee wishes.

The senior official will be notified of the game assignments for his crew and he will contact the other officials he is working with to coordinate their assignment. If an official finds that they are unable to work their assignment, they should contact the senior official as soon as possible and he will communicate this fact with the Referee Coordinator so a replacement can be found.

### Game Reports

The senior official of a crew is responsible for submitting a game report as soon as possible after completing their games each week. The report form is found on the GEJFA web site. The officials present and the number of games worked should be selected, boxes for any problem areas should be checked and the narrative portion should be completed for any "exception" items that occurred during their games.

If a player or coach is ejected, the senior official should list the circumstances of the ejection in his Game Report, due by Midnight on game day, although a phone call to the Referee Coordinator (or GEJFA President if he cannot contact the Referee Coordinator) may be appropriate if the situation is complex or otherwise warranted due to the circumstances. If any unusual event occurs that disrupts the game, a report of the incident should also be submitted no more than 24 hours following the game.

## Greater Eastside Junior Football Association Rules

The following information is from the official GEJFA "Rules and Regulations" and information relevant to association officials is reproduced below.

### Field Manager Responsibilities

The general responsibilities of the field manager are as follows:

1. Inspect the playing field;
2. Monitor the coaches' exchange of rosters;
3. Make arrangements for a chain crew;
4. Check with game officials and assist as needed;
5. Inform spectators to stay behind the spectator boundary line; and
6. In the event a dispute arises, mediate as necessary.

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### Home Team Responsibilities

1. Provide the official time clock, down box, yard markers and chains;
2. Provide a clock operator; and
3. Provide the Field Manager.

### Visiting Team Responsibilities

Provide volunteers to operate the down box and chains.

The down box and chains will be operated on the visitors side of the field.

If possible, adults should operate the chains.

### Coaches Responsibilities

1. Ensure the proper conduct of himself, his assistants, players, and players' parents; and
2. Inform the spectators on their side of the field that league rules require all spectators remain in the bleachers or off the fenced game field (including track) or where a fenced field does not exist, then 5 yards or more from the sideline.

### Equipment

1. Jersey numbers have no relation to position played.
2. Detachable cleats are not allowed.
3. All gloves are legal unless they have sticky surfaces.
4. As in high school rules, mouth guards are to be colored and helmet shields are to be clear; unless there is a GEJFA approved exception.
5. No hard substances (casts) are allowed (covered or not).
6. Phone headsets are not allowed.
7. "Junior" designated footballs will be used at Rookie, Cub and Sophomore games. The ball must adhere to the following specifications: length 9.5"-10.5", long circumference 25"-26", short circumference 18"-19", and weight 11-13 oz. "Youth" or "Intermediate" designated footballs will be used at Junior Varsity and Varsity games. The ball must adhere to the following specifications: length 10"-11", long circumference 26"-27", short circumference 19"-20", and weight 12-14 oz. The determining factor of a legal ball is not the name but the above specifications as other manufacturers may have different names for similar sized balls.

## GAME PLAY

### Arrival at Game Field

There is a field locator map under the "About Us" section of the GEJFA web site. All officials should arrive at the game location 15 minutes prior to scheduled game start time. This will give ample time to inspect the field, talk to the field manager, clock operator, coaches, and chain crew as well as discuss game details with the other officials. The association has a limited time of use at our fields and it is important to begin the first game on time.

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### Coaches Pre-Game Briefing

In youth football the pre-game briefing has been shown to be an important time where the game officials can set the tone by which the game will be played. One object should be to create a “partnership” with the coaches in running the game for the benefit of the players. During this briefing the referee should remind the coach that sportsmanship is primary and that he is responsible for the conduct of himself, his assistants, players and parents. Many coaches are new and may become emotional during a game, which may result in over-zealous coaches yelling at the officials. Coaches should be reminded that the Association policy is that coaches will set a good example and will not yell at the officials, or soon the players will adopt a similar attitude. This approach has been shown to be helpful since an official can reference this “we are all here for the kids” attitude when any coach starts to lose perspective in the heat of the game. During this briefing, the referee should ensure that each head coach is provided with a list of the game officials and the positions they will be working as this is required information that the coaches must include in their game report.

### Time Management

1. Rookie and Cub teams will play 8 minute quarters. Sophomore, Junior Varsity and Varsity teams will play 10 minute quarters. All games are played per the High School timing rules. There is a 10 minute half time at all levels.
2. The first game of the day must start on time. If the teams are not ready, the game clock will start on time. Referees should be at the game at least 15 minutes before the starting time. For the first game of the day, Crew chief should strive to be there 30 minutes before the starting time.
3. Because there is a high school rule (we play by high school rules for the most part) requiring a 3 minute warm-up before the start of the second half, teams need to be back on the field 7 minutes into the half-time. Whether or not they warm-up is their decision, but they need to be given the opportunity and we can't afford to tack that 3 minutes onto a 10 minute half time; it has to be part of that 10 minutes.
4. To ensure effective overall time management for the day, all times must be closely adhered to. The teams should be on the sidelines at least 3 minutes prior to the start of the each half, and captains should be called to the field in time to have play begin on time.
5. If a game runs over the scheduled time, try to make up time with the help of both coaches and the Field Manager. You can reduce the half time by 3-5 minutes (make sure both coaches know before the game starts). You can have the captains report early so the second half starts on time. If you are officiating a subsequent game, you can have the coaches' pre-game briefing during half time of the current game.

### Special Rookie Level Rules

1. One coach for each team is allowed on the field during play for Rookie level games. After the offensive team breaks the huddle, neither coach on the field may communicate with their players. If they do, they will be given one warning. A second violation will result in a 5-yard penalty. In a no huddle offense, communications between the coaches on the field and the players shall stop at the time the ball is made ready for play.
2. There is a free punt rule. If the offensive team wishes to have a free punt, they notify the referee. The clock then stops until the ball is punted. Both teams must have 8 players within 3 yards of the

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line of scrimmage and the coach on the field must stay clear of the punted ball. No player may cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted. If a rule infraction occurs prior to the punt, the punt shall be replayed after the penalty has been assessed; however, off sides and infringement penalties shall not apply.

3. There is a free PAT kick rule which allows the offense to try a kicked PAT with no rush by the defense.

### Substitution Rule

Although the officials are not charged with enforcing the substitution rules, it is good that they know the rule and the procedures below so that substitution violations get proper handling. The officials may also be asked later for input during any investigation into the violations before presentation to the Grievance Committee.

1. Upon the change of possession a coach must empty his bench (up to 11 players) and replace all of his players on the field, if possible. Each of those players then on the field must remain on the field for four consecutive plays, unless the ball changes hands. After a minimum of four plays, a coach may substitute freely. But, when possession of the ball changes again, the coach of each team must again empty his bench (up to 11 players) and replace all players on the field, if possible, for a minimum of four consecutive plays.
2. Should a team score a touchdown or kick a field goal, free substitution is allowed for both the extra point and kickoff.
3. At the beginning of a scrimmage play following a kickoff, each team may put any 11 players on the field and, at that time, the substitution rule is re-instituted.
4. If a player is injured, a free substitution may be made for the injured player. The injured player may return to action, after sitting out a minimum of one play.

Protests concerning a violation of the GEJFA substitution rule will be made in the following manner: the coach wishing to protest such a violation will ask the game officials to provide an official's time out for the purpose of discussing a league rule with the opposing coach. The protesting coach will then advance half way across the field of play and state to the opposing coach, "I would like to discuss with you apparent violation of the league substitution rule." He must then specify the exact nature of the violation to the opposing coach. The opposing coach will advance half way across the field of play to meet the protesting coach and they will both make every effort to resolve the situation. Subsequent violation in the same game should be handled in the same manner as in the first instance, although the protesting coach may add, "A formal protest of these violations will be made to the GEJFA Grievance Committee." No further discussion concerning the violation of this rule should be necessary or should occur during the game. The crew chief shall be notified that a formal protest is declared and it should be noted on his official Report.

### Scoring Rules

1. Any point after touchdown conversion kick will be worth two (2) points because of the difficulty at the lower levels. A run or pass will be worth one (1) point. Exception to this rule is at the Varsity Level which follows the current High School Scoring Rule.
2. If there is a foul by B on a successful 2 point try, the penalty is enforced from the succeeding spot.

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### Lopsided Game Rules-General

1. It is the intent and spirit of the Association that no team shall defeat an opponent by more than 32 points. No particular enforcement action is necessary by the officials if a violation occurs, however, the lopsided games will be managed as discussed below to assist in maintaining a more respectable score differential. Officials may also be asked later for their observations.
2. Any time a team is ahead by more than 21 or more points, either coach may call a league time-out in order to discuss further game protocol.
3. If a team exceeds the 32-point margin at any point in the game with last score being offensively, the Head Coach of the offending team is automatically suspended by his system for the next game.

### Lopsided Game Rules-Running Clock

1. At the beginning of the 4th quarter or any time thereafter, if one team is ahead by 25 or more points, the clock shall go to a running clock and remains running for the rest of the game.
2. A running clock will stop only for time outs, either official time outs such as that for an injury, or team time outs which are allowed to both teams.
3. The clock can go to a running clock at any time if both coaches agree.

### Lopsided Game Rules-Change of Possession

When the score differential in a game is 25 or more points and the leading team takes possession outside their own 20 yard line, the ball will be moved back to that team's 20 yard line to start scrimmage (1st and 10 for the leading team at that spot). When the trailing team takes possession at their own end of the field, the ball will be moved to the 50 yard line to start scrimmage.

### Lopsided Game Rules-Scoring

After a score, if a team scores or leads by 25 or more points, the ball will be placed at the 50-yard line with the team that is behind on Offense (no kickoff).

### Lopsided Game Rules-Kickoff

Any team that is behind by 21 points or more, even after scoring a touchdown, field goal, point after touchdown, or at the start of the second half, may elect to receive the kick-off. If the score differential is 25 points or more, that team will start scrimmage at the 50 yard line without a kickoff.

### Playoff Tie-Breaker Rules

1. Tie games during regular season play will remain a tie.
2. Tie games in Championships will be given two tie breaking sessions, after which the tie will stand. The playoff game tie breaker applies.
3. If a playoff game ends in a tie following regulation play, the following tiebreaker format will determine the winning team.
  - a. A coin toss will determine which team gets choice of possession or which goal is to be defended.

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- b. Each team will have a 1st and Goal from the 10-yard line. If this results in a tie, then each team will have a 1st and goal from the 5-yard line. If this results in a tie, then play will continue from the 5-yard line until a winner is decided.
- c. If a touchdown is scored, the teams will then line up and contest the point after touchdown.
- d. The substitution rule is in effect throughout tiebreaker play.
- e. If a tiebreaker format is needed to determine team seeding for playoff games, the following format will be observed. For a three way tie, a coin toss will determine which team will be awarded a first-round bye. Then the above format applies except play starts at the 20-yard line and then, if still tied, play resumes at the 10-yard line.

### Miscellaneous Rules

- 1. The number of Captains for coin toss is limited to 6.
- 2. A team may have an on-field attendant to dry a wet football between plays, but that person may not communicate with the players, coaches, or officials except as required to execute his duty.
- 3. Protests of any nature are discouraged as detrimental to the spirit and intent of the GEJFA. A protest on any official's judgmental call will not be accepted. A protest of the official's interpretation of a game or Association rule may be submitted in writing to GEJFA by either head coach.