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**TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT  
ATHLETIC ORGANIZATIONS  
(TAIAO)**

**SUBCHAPTER L  
Football Athletic Plan**

(Last Edited August 1st, 2025)

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**Except to the extent otherwise provided the Football Plan is governed by and subject to the General Rules of TAI AO**

# PART A - Division and Zone Alignment

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**The Rules in Subchapter J – “Classifications and Districts” also apply to this Subchapter L, Part A.**

## **Section 400 – Zone and Division Assignment**

- A. Division and Zone assignments shall be established by the TAIIO Football Committee as follows:
  - a. Zone assignments shall be made by the TAIIO Football Committee annually and shall be based on a North/South or East/West basis.
  - b. Division assignments shall be established annually in the manner provided in Section 402 below.
- B. Within 7 calendar days of publication of Zone and/or Division assignments any member organization assigned may petition the Football Committee electronically or in writing for reassignment.
- C. The Football Committee will respond to all timely filed appeals within 5 calendar days of receipt of the petition.

## **Section 401 – New Member Organizations**

- A. Upon admission to TAIIO, each new member organization shall be assigned to a Zone and Division.
- B. Within 7 calendar days of receipt of notification of a Zone and/or Division assignment, the new member organization may petition the Football Committee in writing for reassignment.
- C. The Football Committee will respond to all timely filed appeals within 7 calendar days of receipt of the written petition.

## **Section 402 – Division Assignment**

- A. Division assignment will be made annually and shall be based on each member organization’s most current Official Roster (**as defined in Section 405 below**).
- B. In each Zone, Division assignment will be as follows:
  - 1. The first 16 teams with the largest Official Rosters will be assigned to Division 1,
  - 2. The next 16 teams will be assigned to Division 2 with all remaining teams being assigned to Division 3
  - 3. The roster size cut off between all Divisions will be designated annually by the Commissioner after the official roster deadline and the Commissioner has verified player eligibility.
  - 4. In the event of Official Rosters of equal size raising a question of assignment to a larger Division class the following rules shall apply:
    - a. The Commissioner shall calculate the average roster size for each team based on the current season’s Official Roster and the previous season’s Official Roster.

- b. The team with the higher average roster size shall be assigned to the larger Division class.
  - c. If the average roster sizes are equal, a coin toss shall occur on behalf of the teams with equal averages.
  - d. The winner of the coin toss may choose to be assigned to either the larger or smaller Division class, and the loser shall be assigned to the opposite Division class. The coin toss will be performed by the Commissioner
  - e. All members of the Football Committee, the TAI AO Commissioner, and head coaches of the affected teams shall be notified within 24 hours of the results of the coin toss.
  - f. Any or all of the teams subject to the tie-breaker process may voluntarily decide to be assigned to a larger Division class, which shall preclude the need for their participation in the average calculation or coin toss.
  - g. Other factors such as win-loss record, MaxPreps ranking, etc. shall not be considered.
- h.

**Sections 403 to 404 are reserved for expansion.**

**Section 405 – Official Rosters and Eligibility.** *(See also Section 236 – Eligibility)*

- A. All High School football players and coaches, regardless of classification, shall be included on the appropriate team roster in MaxPreps.com.
- B. Rosters can be adjusted until **September 1<sup>st</sup>** at which time the Roster in MaxPreps becomes the FINAL and Official Roster for the team for the remainder of the season. Players which are temporarily ineligible for academic or other reasons are to be included on the Final Roster.
- C. The Roster information shall include;
  - 1. For each player
    - a. First and Last Name
    - b. Jersey Number
    - c. Grade Classification
    - d. School Status (Homeschool, Partially Enrolled, Fully Enrolled)
    - e. Dates of Birth for each player (not included in MaxPreps; must be emailed to TAI AO Admin or uploaded on the TAI AO website before the roster deadline)
  - 2. For each Coach
    - a. Head Coach First and Last Name
- D. An organization shall not add to their rosters after the roster deadline; however, an organization who has reported their middle school roster may play a middle school player up for a single week (not to exceed twice in a regular season) if the middle school player:
  - 1. makes the 6th, 7th or 8th player able to suit up
  - 2. did not play a varsity game the week before

3. has not played in a middle school game the week of the varsity game

## PART B - Off Season & Spring Training

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The Rules in Subchapter K – “General Plan” also apply to this Subchapter L, Part B.

### Section 406 - Calendar

- A. The TIAO calendar for Football Off Season and Spring Training shall be from December 1<sup>st</sup> until the following May 31<sup>st</sup>.
  - 1. Full contact practices in December are only approved for teams and players directly participating in the TIAO sanctioned State Championships and the TIAO Sanctioned All-Star Games.
  - 2. Full contact practices (other than as mentioned above) are only allowed during Spring Training.
- B. No organized instruction or activities may be given on a Sunday.

### Section 407 – Off Season

- A. From January 1<sup>st</sup> until May 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year, coaches may conduct approved football off season programs.
- B. Accelerated physical education activities, calisthenics, individual skills, strength training and conditioning exercises may be conducted starting no earlier than 6:00 AM and concluding no later than 8:00 PM.
- C. These activities shall not;
  - 1. Exceed one continuous period of up to but not to exceed 90 minutes per day; and,
  - 2. A total of 300 minutes per week.
- D. Practice may include six-on-six drills and other full team drills without contact activities.
- E. Allowed equipment is limited to a football, cleated shoes, passing and punting machines and physical education attire.
  - 1. Air or padded blocking dummies or devices, and other similar devices are prohibited.
  - 2. No contact equipment or activities are allowed.
- F. Coaches shall make every effort to see that students understand that participation in Off Season activities is strictly **voluntary and never required**. Participation shall not be a prerequisite for trying out for a football team or getting more playing time.

**Section 408 – Member Organization Facilities Use (Off Season)** (*See Section 262 of the General Rules*).

## Section 409 – Spring Training

A. Spring Football Workouts (“Spring Training”) for each member organization shall be an optional activity.

### B. Calendar

1. Spring Training may **start no earlier than March 1<sup>st</sup> and must end no later than May 31<sup>st</sup>.**
2. A team shall have;
  - a. No more than 18 practice days (the first 4 of which must be acclimation practices),
  - b. Only one practice session per day,
  - c. No practice which exceeds 3 hours,
  - d. A maximum of 12 hours per week with contact activities or equipment.

C. ***Four Day Acclimatization Practice Requirement.*** Each student participating in Spring Training must undergo a 4 practice acclimatization period. This requirement shall also apply to all students joining the team after the first day of Spring Training practice. The acclimatization period shall include the following;

1. The first four days of practice for each student shall be conducted without any contact equipment except helmets. Other contact equipment may be fitted and issued prior to the first day workouts.
2. During the first four days, only shoes, socks, T-shirts, shorts and helmets may be worn.
3. During the four-day acclimatization period, no contact activities shall be permitted.

### D. Contact

1. Full contact activities and football equipment are allowed for Spring Training.
2. Football equipment is defined in Section 441 B.

### E. Activities

1. Football practice or training is interpreted to mean any organized instruction in football plays, formations or team skills.
2. No contests (games or scrimmages) with other schools are allowed.
3. No Sunday activities unless authorized by TAI AO.

## PART C - Summer Activities

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The Rules in Subchapter K – “General Plan” also apply to this Subchapter L, Part C.

### **Section 410 - Calendar**

- A. The TIAAO calendar for Football Summer activities shall be from June 1<sup>st</sup> until the first day of the Fall Season.
- B. No organized instruction or activities may be given on a Sunday.

**Section 411 – Summer Activities** (*See Section 265 of the General Rules*).

**Section 412 - Member Organization Facility Use (Summer)** (*See Section 262 of the General Rules*).

**Sections 413 to 420 are reserved for expansion.**

# PART D - Football Season Calendar

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## Section 421 - Calendar

- A. The TAI AO calendar for Pre-Season, Regular Season and Post Season Football shall begin with the first day of the Football Season (practice commencement week during first week of August) and conclude at the end of the All Star games in December.
- B. The Pre-Season shall not exceed three weeks beginning with the first day of the Football Season (practice commencement week during first week of August) and continuing for 3 full weeks.
- C. The Regular season shall not exceed ten weeks beginning with the fourth week of the Football Season (Week 1) and continuing for 10 full weeks (Week 10).
- D. Post Season shall consist of the weeks following Week 10 in the following format;
  - 1. Two playoff brackets; one for Division 1, and another for Division 2. If a Division 3 playoff bracket is necessary, it will follow the same format as Divisions 1 & 2.
  - 2. The Saturday of week 11 will be reserved only for middle school bowl games.
  - 3. Week 11 will commence the High School playoff brackets. The playoffs will proceed from Week 11 through Week 14. Week 14 will be the State Championship games.
  - 4. Exception Clause: Due to unforeseen circumstances the football committee may need to deviate from this schedule. Examples may be due to a playoff expansion because of league growth, a decrease in the amount of playoff eligible teams, scheduling conflicts, venue availability etc. This exception may be granted by the TAI AO League Commissioner on a case by case basis.
- E. The All-Star games shall be one week after the State Championships.
- F. No organized instruction or activities may be given on a Sunday.

# PART E - Pre-Season and Regular Season

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## Section 422 – Fall Practice Schedules

- A. Four Day Acclimatization Period Requirement.** The first four days of fall season practice for each student shall be conducted without any contact equipment except for helmets.
1. This four-day acclimation requirement shall also apply to any students joining the team after the first day of practice.
  2. During the first four days only shoes, socks, T-shirts, shorts and helmets may be worn.
  3. Other football equipment may be fitted and issued prior to the first day workouts.
  4. Only one practice per day may be scheduled during the Acclimatization Period.
  5. A walk through in addition to the one practice is also allowed during the Acclimatization Period. However, helmets may NOT be worn during the walk through.
- B. Pre-Season Practices.**
1. Pre-season shall last no more than 3 weeks beginning with the first Monday of August.
  2. After completion of the Acclimatization Period,
    - a. Member organizations may schedule more than one practice per day; but may not schedule more than three practices in any two-day period during pre-season, nor more than two practices in any one day.
    - b. If two practices are scheduled on day one, day two is limited to one practice session. (Two practices are not allowed on consecutive days.)
    - c. No member organization may schedule nor require a student to participate in more than three practices in any two-day period regardless of level of participation.
  3. On days when two practices are held,
    - a. The padded session shall not last longer than three hours; and,
    - b. The other session shall not last longer than two hours and is limited to
      - i. No conditioning
      - ii. No contact activities
      - iii. No player equipment – helmets may not be worn during this time
    - c. There shall be a minimum break of at least two hours between sessions.
  4. On days when one practice is held the session shall not last longer than three hours.
  5. During the rest/recovery time between multiple practices there shall be no practice activities. This time is exclusively for students to rest and recover for the following practice session.
- C. Regular and Post Season Practices.**
1. Beginning with week 1 and continuing until the end of Post Season play only one practice per day may be scheduled.
  2. The maximum length of practice shall not exceed three hours.
  3. During the Regular and Post Season, no student is allowed to participate in more than 90 minutes of full contact practice per week.

- a. Students may participate in “air”, “bags”, “wrap” or “thud” drills at any point. These are not deemed “contact”.
  - i. Air means running unopposed without bags or any opposition.
  - ii. Bags means executed against a bag, shield or pad to allow for a soft- contact surface.
  - iii. Wrap means full speed drills until contact, which is above the waist with students remaining on their feet.
  - iv. Thud means same as wrap but with a competitive tempo and no pre- determined winner and students are not tackling to the ground.

#### **D. Definitions.**

1. The following activities are “practice activities”;
  - a. Actual on field practice
  - b. Sport specific skill instruction
  - c. Mandatory conditioning
2. The following activities are not considered “practice activities”;
  - a. Meetings
  - b. Film Study
  - c. Injury Treatment
  - d. Weight Training
  - e. Water Breaks
  - f. Rest Breaks
  - g. Voluntary Conditioning (may not be coach directed or supervised)
3. Football practice or training is interpreted to mean any organized instruction in football plays, formations or individual and/or team skills.
4. Football equipment is as listed in NCAA Rule 1.4.3-4.

### **Section 423 – Pre Season Scrimmages**

- A. Pre-season scrimmages with other teams may not be held until completion of the Acclimatization Period and 5 days of contact in practice.
- B. No member organization shall participate in more than
  1. One preseason scrimmage per week; and,
  2. Two preseason scrimmages per season.

### **Section 424 – Regular Season Games**

#### **A. Game Schedule**

1. The Regular Season shall begin on the Monday of Week 1 and conclude on the Saturday of Week 10.
2. Preferred game days are Friday and Saturday.
  - a. Member organizations may play their first Regular Season game as early as Thursday of Week 1.
3. No games will be scheduled on Sunday

## **B. Inter-TAIAO Games**

1. The scheduling of Inter-TAIAO games are strongly encouraged; especially games against teams within the same Division level.
2. Starting with the 2022 season, a following minimum inter-TAIAO games shall be required. The minimum number of inter-TAIAO games shall be determined by the distance between the Member Organizations. Inter-TAIAO games shall be scheduled, regardless of the Division the team is in, based upon the distance between the Member Organizations, as set forth below:
  - a. Teams within 100 miles of TAIAO teams shall play 5 TAIAO teams;
  - b. Teams within 150 miles of TAIAO teams shall play 3 TAIAO teams;
  - c. Teams within 200 miles of TAIAO teams shall play 2 TAIAO teams;
  - d. Teams within 250 miles of TAIAO teams shall play 1 TAIAO teams.
3. There shall be a one (1) year grace period for new schools/organizations joining TAIAO beginning with the 2022 season

## **C. Postseason Qualification.**

1. Member organizations are required to play a minimum of 6 Regular Season games to qualify for Postseason play. Forfeiture of a game does count towards the 6-game requirement but canceling of a game ten days or less to the day of the game does count. Canceling within 192 hours of the game constitutes a forfeiture by the team that causes the game to be canceled unless the opponent who did not cancel finds another varsity opponent..
2. Students are required to participate in a minimum of 2 quarters of play in 6 Regular Season games to qualify for Postseason player honors.

## **Section 425 – Game Participation Limits**

- A. No team or student may participate in more than 10 varsity games during the Regular Season.
- B. No member organization may schedule more than 1 varsity game per week.
- C. No team or student shall be permitted to take part in more than one varsity game within five calendar days.

**Example:** A team playing Saturday cannot play again until the following Thursday. A team playing Monday could play any time on the following Saturday. You may not schedule more than 1 game per week.
- D. Junior Varsity students may be allowed to dress out for a second game within a week so long as the student does not exceed playing more than the equivalent of 6 quarters of play for the week.
  1. Participation in an overtime period will not be counted against allowable quarters.
  2. Playing a single play in a quarter will be defined as participation in that quarter.

## PART F - Game Administration

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The Rules in Subchapter K – “General Plan” also apply to this Subchapter L, Part F.

### Section 426 - Game Rules

- A. All Football games shall be governed by the NCAA football rules, including NCAA Six-Man Rule variations and exceptions.
- B. **Tied Games.** The NCAA overtime system shall be used in all varsity games tied at the end of regulation play.

### Section 427 – Post Game Reporting Requirements

#### A. Game Statistics

- 1. Posting of each game team and individual statistics shall be kept current with the stats being posted **no later than the end of Tuesday following the date the game was played.**
  - 2. The timely entry of stats will be monitored.
  - 3. Failure to keep stats current will result in disciplinary action up to and including non-qualification for post season player honors.
- B. **Week 10 Game Reporting.** Teams shall report the final score of Week 10 games on MaxPreps no later than midnight the Sunday following the date the game was played.

### Section 428 – Pre and Post Game Activities

#### A. Prayer Encouraged.

- 1. At each contest between TAIIO member organizations pre-game and post-game prayer is encouraged (not required).
- 2. When a TAIIO member organization is playing a non TAIIO School, the TAIIO member organization is encouraged to offer to pray before or after the game with the non TAIIO School.

#### B. Quarters.

- 1. Varsity game quarters shall be 10 minutes in length.
- 2. The break between the 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> quarters shall be 2 minutes.

#### C. Half Time.

- 1. The time between halves shall be 15 minutes unless otherwise mutually agreed to prior to the game by both participating teams.

**Section 429 - Tickets & Admissions – Regular Season Games.** (*See Section 267 D. of the General Rules*).

## **Section 430 - Game Officials – Regular Season Games**

- A. All Game officials shall be UIL Certified, TASO Certified and TAI AO approved.
- B. Four officials are expected for a Varsity game. A minimum of 3 officials are required. If less than 3 officials show up, it is at the discretion of the visiting coach whether to play or not. If visiting coach elects to play the game, the game will count without forfeit; otherwise, a scrimmage can be played. For a regular season game to count towards a team's win-loss record, a minimum of one official must be present to regulate the game. Under no circumstances will a regular season game count without an official present, regardless of any agreement between the two coaches. Any violation of this rule may constitute league sanctions. If a competition without an official is entered into MaxPreps, violation of the rule regardless of intention is presumed and the team entering the game in violation of this rule will at a minimum be disqualified from post season play.

**Sections 431 – 440 are reserved for expansion**

# PART G - Equipment

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## Section 441 - Equipment

- A. **Head Coach Responsible.** The head football coach of each member organization shall be responsible for annually certifying compliance with each of the following equipment rules and requirements.
- B. **Football Equipment.** All equipment worn in practices and games shall be NOCSAE certified and shall comply with NCAA Rule 1.4.3-4.
1. At a minimum football equipment shall include the following:
    - a. Helmet
    - b. Hip pads
    - c. Jersey
    - d. Knee pads
    - e. Mouthpiece
    - f. Pants
    - g. Shoulder pads
    - h. Socks
    - i. Thigh guards
    - j. Cleats
- C. **Helmets.** Football helmets shall be reconditioned and certified every two years. Helmets shall be replaced upon sustaining irreparable damage or at the end of their warranted life expectancy (not to exceed 10 years).
1. Eye Shields. Only eye shields that are completely clear will be allowed.
- D. **Jerseys – Home & Away.** See Section 271 of the General Rules.
1. Exceptions for new programs must be approved by the Football Committee Chairman.
  2. The jersey shall be full length and tucked into the pants. The length of jersey becomes an issue of safety when it does not properly cover rib protectors and/or back plates that are attached to the shoulder pads.
- E. **Team Colors.** See Section 271 of the General Rules.
- F. **Game Uniforms.** See Section 271 of the General Rules.
1. All students shall wear and be properly equipped with football equipment as defined in subsection B above.
- G. **Equipment Infractions.**
1. The first three infractions for failure to wear mandatory equipment or wearing illegal equipment require a charged timeout per infraction. The fourth infraction in a half requires a five-yard penalty.
  2. Students shall not remove their Game Jersey or uniform while inside the playing area during the contest. Removal of any part of one's uniform shall be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and subject to sanction. Exceptions are granted for injury or equipment repair.
  3. A hard or abrasive substance that is not covered is an illegal equipment violation.

## H. Footballs.

1. All varsity game balls shall be NFHS approved. NFHS approved synthetic and leather footballs may be used. These balls are subject to the approval of the referees.
2. Each team may provide their own balls for use when on Offense and during Kick Offs.
3. Each TAI AO team shall only play with one type of NFHS approved football (leather or synthetic) in a game. The type of football shall be identified to and approved by the referee prior to the beginning of the game. Switching types of football (synthetic or leather) is not allowed during a game.
4. For games against non-TAI AO opponents, the game officials shall determine which footballs are allowed.

# PART H - Coach and Team Personnel Training and Certification Concussions

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## **Section 442 - Coach Training & Certification** *(See Section 272 of the General Rules).*

This section was removed 08-01-2024

## **Section 443 - Concussions**

- A. In addition to required training, every TAI AO head football coach will follow the UIL mandated protocol related to any student who shows signs, symptoms or behaviors associated with a concussion, which include the following:
1. Immediate removal from the contest or practice
  2. May not return to play on the same day
  3. Shall not return until cleared to play by an appropriate health-care professional
  4. Return to Play protocol shall, at a minimum, include the following:
    - a. Day 1 – 24 hours symptom free
    - b. Day 2 – light aerobic exercise; 5 to 10 minutes of light workout
    - c. Day 3 – Moderate aerobic exercise; 15 -20 minutes of running at moderate intensity
    - d. Day 4 – Non-contact training drills in full uniform; weight training and resistance training permitted
    - e. Day 5 – Full contact practice or training
    - f. Day 6 – Eligible for game play

# PART I - Post Season Play

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## Section 444 - Post Season Play

### A. **Minimum Game Requirement.**

1. Teams shall have completed a minimum of 6 Regular Season games in order to be eligible for PostSeason play.
2. Beginning in the year 2022, teams shall have completed the minimum number of inter-TAIAO games in order to be eligible for PostSeason play.
3. In the event that a team is unable to comply with the minimum number of inter-TAIAO games, and that team otherwise qualifies for post-season play, then that team shall submit a request to the Football Committee as to why it failed to meet the inter-TAIAO game requirement. The report shall be filed no later than midnight on Wednesday following Week 10. The Football Committee shall decide whether the team shall advance to postseason play within 48 hours after the report is filed. Should the Football Committee decide to deny the request, then that decision shall be automatically appealed to the Steering Committee, which shall make a decision on the request within 72 hours after the decision of the Football Committee is submitted to the Steering Committee. The decision from the Steering Committee is final with no further appeal.
4. Forfeiture of a game does count towards the 6-game requirement but canceling of a game prior to the day of the game does not. Canceling within 192 hours of the game constitutes a forfeiture by the team that causes the game to be canceled. The team that cancels shall be listed as 45 point loss in MaxPreps.

B. **Mandatory Participation in Playoffs.** Participation in post season playoffs by a qualifying Member Organization is **mandatory, not optional**. A Member Organization's failure to participate will result in the forfeiture of the game in question and will subject the Member Organization to a monetary fine of not less than \$350.00. In addition, the Member Organization shall be subject to additional discipline and penalties pursuant to Sections 246 and 247 of the General Rules.

C. **Post Season Play Duration.** Post Season Play shall begin Week 11 for middle school bowl games and Week 11 for High School playoff competition and shall continue through the completion of the All Star game.

D. **Playoff Selection.** For all divisions:

1. Either an 8, 10 or 12 team bracket playoff system will be used; the top 8, 10 or 12 ranked teams (per MaxPreps after the game results of Week 10 are posted) from the two Zones shall be seeded according to their rankings.
2. A division must have at least 13 teams to field a 12 team playoff bracket
3. A division must have at least 11 teams to field a 10 team playoff bracket
4. A division must have at least 9 teams to field a 8 team playoff bracket

E. The playoff brackets shall consist of the following format;

1. Two playoff brackets; one for Division 1, and another for Division 2. If a Division 3 playoff bracket is necessary, it will follow the same format as Divisions 1 & 2.
2. The brackets will be separated according to zones (North/South or East/West). The four or six highest ranking teams in each zone according to MaxPreps will participate in the playoffs.

3. Week 11 will commence the High School playoff for 10 and 12 team brackets and Week 12 for 8 team brackets . In a 12 team bracket, the three seed will compete against the six seed and the four seed will compete against the five seed. The one seed and two seed (top two ranked according to MaxPreps) will have a bye again in Week 11. In a 10 team bracket, the 4 and 5 seed will compete in the first round and the 1-3 seeds will have a by week 11.
  4. The winner of Week 11 games will advance to Week 12. The lowest seed will compete against the number one seed. The highest seed from the Week 11 games will play the number two seed.
  5. The winners from the Week 12 games will advance to the Week 13 semifinal round. At the semi-final round, the brackets will cross with the 1 seed in the north playing the two seed in the south and the 1 seed in the south playing the 2 seed in the north.
  6. The winners from the semifinal rounds will advance to the State Championship games during Week 14.
  7. Exception Clause: Due to unforeseen circumstances the football committee may need to deviate from this playoff model. Examples may be due to a playoff expansion due to league growth, a decrease in the amount of playoff eligible teams, scheduling conflicts, venue availability etc. This exception may be granted by the TAI AO League Commissioner on a case by case basis.
- F. **Game Scheduling Limits.** No team or student shall be permitted to take part in more than one varsity playoff game within five calendar days.

### **Section 445 is reserved for expansion.**

### **Section 446 Playoff Brackets.**

- A. The Football Committee shall be responsible for preparation of each Divisional Playoff bracket. The brackets shall be prepared after Week 10 results are complete.
- B. Each bracket shall be ready for posting on Sunday of Week 10.

### **Section 447 - Playoff Games**

#### **A. First and Second Round games – Regional and Semi-Final Playoffs.**

1. **Home Team.** The higher ranked team shall be the Home Team.
2. **Game Date, Time and Location.**
  - a. The Home Team shall choose the site for the game.
    - i. **180 Mile Rule.** In the event the location of the home game site of two teams is greater than 180 miles apart, a “neutral” site shall be mutually agreed on by both member organizations to play the game by noon on Tuesday the week of the game. The intent is for the “neutral site” to be approximately half way between both teams.
    - ii. **Football Chairman Determination of Game Site.** In the event the head coaches of a game subject to the “180 Mile Rule” are unable, by noon on Tuesday of the week of the game in questions, to mutually agree on a neutral site the following procedural steps shall apply:
      - a. Head coaches of both teams shall, no later than 12:30 PM on the

Tuesday of the week of the game, submit their proposals to the Football Chairman,

- b. A proposed site, in order to be valid and considered must be neutral in location and must not be the equivalent of a “home” game proposal,
  - c. No later than 5:00 PM on Tuesday of the week of the game, the Football Chairman shall conduct a coin flip between the two submitted proposals and shall inform both teams of the result of the coin flip. Provided, however, in the event only one valid proposed site is submitted, no coin flip shall be required, and;
  - d. Both affected teams shall be obligated to play the playoff game according to the outcome of the Football Chairman’s decision without a right of appeal.
- b. The Home Team shall determine the day (Thursday, Friday or Saturday) of the game. The preferred day for playoffs is Saturday.
  - c. The time for the playoff game shall be agreed to by both member organizations.
3. **Game Confirmation.**
- a. Playoff sites and times shall be confirmed with both schools and the TAIIO Football Committee Chairman no later than noon on the Tuesday prior to the game.
  - b. In the event the involved member organizations are unable to reach an agreement by the Tuesday noon deadline, then the TAIIO Football Committee Chairman shall make a final determination on behalf of the teams.
4. **Home Team Responsibilities.**
- a. The Home Team shall manage and be responsible for all game day activities and personnel including the scheduling and payment for the field, referees, concessions, announcer, clock operator, security, a 3 man chain crew, etc.
  - b. All costs (or net proceeds) shall be split 50/50 between the 2 teams **when playing at a neutral site.**
5. **Game Passes.** All game and season passes issued by any member organization are suspended for playoff games.
6. **Film Exchange.** Upon request, each member organization involved is REQUIRED to exchange a minimum of two quality films with their opponent as provided in Section 275 no later than Sunday preceding the game.
7. **Tickets & Admissions.**
- a. The Home Team will be responsible for setting ticket prices for the game.
  - b. Ticket prices for the game may not exceed the following:
    - i. Adults - \$10.00
    - ii. Students & Children (18 and under) - \$5.00
    - iii. Family - \$25.00
  - c. Coaches, players, officials and primary game personnel (ball boys, officials, team managers, trainers, etc.) are exempt from paying admission.
8. **Reporting Results.** The head coach of the winning team of each playoff game shall report game results as soon as possible after conclusion of the game to the Football Committee Chairman.

**B. State Final Games.**

1. The State Final Games (All Divisions) shall be played at a “central location” designated by TAIIO.
2. The State Final Games shall be played on a day and at a time designated by TAIIO.
3. TAIIO shall manage all game day activities.
4. **Game Passes.** All game and season passes issued by any member organization are suspended for playoff games.
5. **Film Exchange.** Upon request, each member organization involved is REQUIRED to exchange a minimum of two quality films with their opponent as provided in Section 275 no later than Sunday preceding the game.
6. **Tickets & Admissions.**
  - a. TAIIO will use its best efforts to choose playoff locations in a manner to appropriately “size” the location to the expected crowd and to create an admission fee that is reasonable.
  - b. Ticket prices for State Championship games shall be determined by the TAIIO Steering Committee taking into account the venue, the expense of the event, the impact on expected spectator population and the overall TAIIO organizational welfare. This policy is consistent with those procedures used by like organizations and is the guidance that will be applicable to all TAIIO activities.
  - c. Coaches, players, officials and primary game personnel (ball boys, team managers, trainers, etc.) are exempt from paying admission.

## PART J - Post Season Honors and All Star Games

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*(Until the establishment of Districts, Post Season Honors will consist of All-Region and All-State. Beginning with the establishment of Districts, Post Season Honors will consist of All-District and All-State.)*

### **Section 448 - Player Honors; Eligibility and Statistics**

- A. The purpose of awarding Post Season Honors to students is to recognize exceptional talent and performance of an individual player as consistently demonstrated throughout the season.
- B. A student shall have played in at least 2 quarters of 6 regular season games in order to qualify for this recognition (one can be a forfeit).
- C. Statistics for the individual student shall be maintained at the member organization's website in MaxPreps.
  - 1. Individual student statistics must be kept current (*as required in Section 427*) and shall be as accurate as possible.
  - 2. Failure to post statistics as required will disqualify a student from consideration.

### **Section 449 – Honors Team Composition**

- A. Each Post Season Honors team shall have a 1<sup>st</sup> team, 2<sup>nd</sup> team and Honorable Mention for the following 16 positions:
  - 1. 5 utility offensive players per team
  - 2. 5 utility defensive players per team
  - 3. 2 Athletes (offense, defense or special teams)
  - 4. 1 center per team (i.e. one that can accurately and reliably snap the ball for punts, PATs, Spread offense and under center)
  - 5. 1 Quarterback/Spread back per team (i.e. an “on the field leader” who can pass the ball and run when necessary)
  - 6. 1 Kicker per team (i.e. reliable in PATS, deep kicks, squib kicks and/or onside kicks; best percentage with a minimum/reasonable number of PATs)
  - 7. 1 Return Specialist per team (e.g. best yardage percentage per return with a minimum/reasonable number of returns)
  - 8. The football committee chairman with approval from the TIAAO League Commissioner has the authority and flexibility to alter this format as needed to effectively manage the All-Star selection.

### **Section 450 - All – Region Selection and Recognition**

- A. For the Post Season Player Honors and participation in the All Star game selections shall be made for each Division in each Zone.
- B. At the conclusion of the Regular Season but prior to 10:00 AM on Tuesday of Week 10, the head coach of each member organization shall select and forward to the Football Committee Chairman deserving students for All-Regional honors and recognition for his team only using the following guidelines:

1. **Player and team statistics shall be a primary guide but they shall not be used exclusively,**
  2. No one player shall receive recognition for more than 2 different positions,
  3. Nominations shall be for teams and positions as specified in Section 449.
- C. All-Regional Honors for his team shall be announced by each head coach during Week 11.
- D. The football committee chairman with approval from the TAI AO League Commissioner has the authority and flexibility to alter this format as needed to effectively manage the All-Star selection.

**Section 451 is reserved for future expansion.**

**Section 452 - All – State Selection and Recognition**

- A. Prior to 12:00 noon on Thursday of Week 10, the Football Committee Chairman shall convene (in person or by conference call) meetings for the purpose of determining All-State Honors;
- B. Selections by Zone and Division;**
1. One meeting shall be held for each Division (Division 1 and 2) in each Zone for the purpose of nomination and selection of All-State Honors.
  2. Each meeting shall consist of the head coaches in that Zone and that Division (For example: Division 1, North Zone or Division 2, South Zone).
  3. There shall be 4 All-State Teams. One for each Division in each Zone.
  4. Nomination and selection shall be based on the following guidelines:
    - a. Head coaches shall review the 1<sup>st</sup> Team All-Region selections in their Division and Zone as automatic nominations for consideration for All State honor & recognition.
    - b. Each All-State Player shall be selected by a majority of the head coaches in attendance.
      - i. **The Football Committee Chairman shall have final determination in the event a majority decision is not reached by the head coaches.**
    - c. No one player may receive recognition for more than 1 position as 1<sup>st</sup> team.
    - d. Selection shall be for teams and positions as specified in Section 449.
    - e. Each 1<sup>st</sup> Team All Region player considered for All-State honors but not selected for All State for either the 1<sup>st</sup> Team or 2<sup>nd</sup> Team shall automatically receive All State Honorable Mention.
  5. The Football Committee Chairman shall submit the final list of All State honors to the TAI AO League Commissioner for final approval. All-State Honors (1<sup>st</sup> Team, 2<sup>nd</sup> Team and Honorable Mention) shall be announced by the Football Committee Chairman during Week 11.

**Section 453 - All-Star Games (See Section 274 of the General Rules.)**

**A. Player Selection.**

1. Player selections for each All Star game shall be from the players previously named and recognized as 1<sup>st</sup> Team All-State selections for each Division in each Zone along with;



- a. The 2<sup>nd</sup> team Quarterback/Spread back,
- b. The 2<sup>nd</sup> team Center, and:
- c. An optional invitation to the holder and center of the 1<sup>st</sup> team All-State Kicker. (The holder's and center's participation is intended to be limited to the role of holder and center for PATs and field goals. Provided, coaches may choose to extend playing time for these two players, but only in response to extenuating circumstances and when such extended play shall not compromise the game experience of the other players selected to play in the game.)

**B. Coach Selection and Guidelines.**

1. Each All Star Coach accepting the invitation is expected to fulfill the guidelines provided in Section 274 and to make every effort to not "45" the other team. Adjust defense and personnel to extend the game; run not pass – if needed.
2. Head Coaches and coaching staff for each All Star team shall be selected from the #1 and #2 MaxPreps ranked teams at the end of the Regular Season in each Division.
3. Head Coaches will be required to coordinate and all coaches will be required to participate in at least 2 coaches' meetings/conference calls prior to the All Star game. The purpose of the meetings/conference calls shall be to review the All Star game expectations and guidelines as provided in Section 274 and 453.
  - a. The first meeting/conference call shall be held at least 1 week prior to the All Star game.
  - b. The second meeting/conference call shall take place prior to kick off on the day of the All Star game.
4. All Star coaches shall coordinate at least one post practice dinner (a TAI AO allowance will be provided for each attending player and **up to 5 coaches**).
5. No onside kicks are allowed. Kick offs must exceed the 25 yard line of the opposing team.
6. Coaches are responsible for informing their team players and parents of the intended purpose of the all Star game and the expectation of keeping a positive attitude and not taking a negative approach to the referees, game officials or either team (coaches and players).
7. All Star coaches shall provide typical sideline equipment and support such as water, medical/1<sup>st</sup> aid, balls, tees, etc.

**Sections 454 – 464 463 are reserved for expansion**

# PART K - Videotaping and Filming

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The Rules in Subchapter K, Section 275 – apply to this Subchapter L, Part K.

## A. Section 464 - Regular Season Film Exchange

1. **Film Exchange.** Upon request, each member organization involved is REQUIRED to exchange a minimum of two quality films with their opponent as provided in Section 275 no later than Sunday preceding the game. What two game films are at the discretion of the requesting coach. Each coach is expected to honor this request in an expedient and courtesy manner. Game film shall be exchanged no later than 5:00 PM on the Sunday prior to the scheduled contest. TAI AO does not regulate non-member organizations therefore all though this tradition of sportsmanship is expected when dealing with non-member organizations, this rule is not applicable in contests played against non-member organizations. If a non-member organization attempts to exchange film with a TAI AO member organization, the TAI AO member organizations will exchange the same number of film(s) in the same time frame as the non-member organization.

# PART L - Removal from Contest

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**The Rules in Subchapter I – “Discipline, Protests & Appeals” also apply to this Subchapter L, Part L.**

## **Section 465 - Removal from Contest**

- A. Incident Report.** Any coach or student ejected from a contest and/or receiving two or more 15 yard unsportsmanlike penalties during a contest, shall;
1. File an Incident Report with the TAI AO Football Committee Chairman on the TAI AO authorized form.
    - a. The Incident Report is due by noon of the 2<sup>nd</sup> school day following the incident.
  2. Provide the opposing team’s head coach with a copy of the filed Incident Report.
  3. Member organizations who fail to properly report an ejection are subject to further sanctions.
- B. Discipline.**
1. The TAI AO Football Committee Chairman shall be free to determine appropriate discipline in addition to the minimum sanctions listed below.
  2. **Minimum Sanctions;**
    - a. Students.**
      - i. Any student ejected from a contest shall be suspended from the next scheduled contest as shown on the schedule submitted prior to the season to the TAI AO Office.
      - ii. Any student ejected from a contest for a 2<sup>nd</sup> time within the same season shall be suspended from the next 2 contests as shown on the schedule.
      - iii. Any student ejected from a contest for a 3<sup>rd</sup> time within the same season shall be suspended for the remainder of the season (including postseason).
      - iv. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any student ejected from a contest for targeting shall be suspended as follows:
        - a. If the ejection occurs in the first half of the contest, the suspension shall be limited to the remainder of that contest.
        - b. If the ejection occurs in the second half of the contest, the suspension shall be limited to the first half of the next contest.
    - b. Coaches.**
      - i. Any coach ejected from a contest shall receive a private reprimand AND shall be suspended from the next scheduled contest as shown on the schedule submitted prior to the season to the TAI AO Office.
      - ii. Any coach ejected from a contest for a 2<sup>nd</sup> time within the same season shall receive a public reprimand AND shall be suspended from the next 2 contests as shown on the schedule.
      - iii. Any coach ejected from a contest for a 3<sup>rd</sup> time within the same season shall be suspended for the remainder of the season (including post season).
- C. Playoff Games**
1. Any student or Coach ejected during the last contest played before the Post season

- begins, or during a postseason game, shall be sanctioned as provided for in Paragraph 2.a. and 2.b. above, as applicable, with the sanctions going forward to the next post season contest the player or coach is eligible to participate in.
2. Any ejections during a regular season game shall carry forward into the postseason.
- D.** If a total of three ejections, coaches and students combined, are received by a member organization during the season, the athletic director and coaching staff of the member organization will be required to meet with the TAI AO Football Committee Chairman.

### **Section 466 - Dispute with an Official.**

- A. A Coach or student who deliberately comes into physical contact with or threatens to harm an official shall receive a minimum five (5) game suspension.
- A. A parent or spectator who deliberately comes into physical contact with or threatens to harm an official **shall** be prohibited from attending the next immediate five games of their member organization and/or any other TAI AO sponsored event. If the member organization fails to enforce this rule, sanctions by the league will be imposed and at a minimum will include that the parent or spectator will be barred from any TAI AO sponsored event for the remainder of the season and a minimum \$500 fine for the member organization. Additional penalties may be imposed at the discretion of the Steering Committee.

### **Sections 467 – 480 are reserved for expansion**

# PART M - Middle School Football

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**Rules in Sections 406-412, 422, 426-429, 441-443, Part K, 465-466 also apply to Middle School Football.**

## **Section 481 - Season Calendar**

- A. The TAI AO calendar for Middle School Pre-Season and Regular Season Football shall begin on the same date as provided in Section 421 for high school football and end at the end of Week 10.
- B. The Pre-Season shall continue for 3 full weeks and shall be subject to the same acclimation, no contact and practice time limitation rules for high school football as provided in Section 422.
- C. The Regular season shall not exceed ten weeks beginning with Week 1 and continue for 10 full weeks (Week 10).
- D. No organized instruction or activities may be given on a Sunday.

## **Section 482 - Eligibility**

- A. Participation in TAI AO Middle School football is open to students who;
  - 1. Will reach their 11th birthday no later than May 31<sup>st</sup> of the current season and will not have reached their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday earlier than May 31<sup>st</sup> of the current season; and,
  - 2. **Students may only have three consecutive years of eligibility at the Middle School Level unless granted an exemption to play at 10 years old.**
- B. A member organization may adopt eligibility rules related to Middle School participation that are more stringent than TAI AO rules for eligibility (including academic eligibility).
- C. **All non-TAI AO member teams invited to participate in post season bowl games shall conform to TAI AO eligibility rules.**
- D. Questions concerning eligibility shall be referred to the Football Committee for review and a decision.

## **Section 483 - Games**

- A. A Maximum of 10 regular season games are allowed beginning in Week 1 and ending Week 10.
- B. Week 11 shall be reserved for the Post Season bowl games.

## **Section 484 - Game Officials**

- A. All Game officials shall be UIL Certified, TASO Certified and TAI AO approved.
- B. Three officials are expected for a Middle School game. A minimum of 2 officials are required. If less than 2 officials show up, it is at the discretion of the visiting coach whether to play or not. If the visiting coach elects to play the game, the game will count without forfeit; otherwise, a scrimmage can be played.

- C. A minimum of 1 official must be present for a game to count towards the team's regular season win/loss record. If no officials are present, the contest is considered a scrimmage.

## **Section 485 – Middle School Post Season**

- A. Post Season for TAI AO Middle School programs will consist of a ONE game playoff system at the end of the season referred to as the “Grid Iron Bowl”.
- B. The Grid Iron Bowl date shall be on Saturday of Week 11.
- C. It is an “all play” post season play concept where any TAI AO Middle School team desiring to enter can do so. Member organization fees are covered as part of their annual costs with TAI AO. All non-member non-TAI AO teams, other than UIL or TAPPS teams, will be **required to pay league fees in full to participate in the post season bowl games**. UIL and TAPPS teams will be required to pay a one time \$500 fee to participate. The TAI AO League Commissioner has the authority and flexibility to alter, adjust, or change fees if necessary, for the benefit of the league.
- D. Team commitments to the Grid Iron Bowl are required by 10:00 AM on Tuesday of Week 8. (Typically the second full week in October.)
- E. Participating teams shall be divided into 2 Regions (e.g. North and South) for Grid Iron Bowl games.
- F. Multiple games in each region will be played on the same date. Bowl names are Freedom, Patriot, American, etc. Other Bowl game names can be added as necessary for additional games, but all names must be approved by the League Commissioner prior to the contest.
- G. Hosts and game day sites shall be selected in Week 8.
- H. Seeding for each Region shall be based on the following, in this order:
  - 1. Win-Loss record
  - 2. Head to Head competition (if applicable)
  - 3. Common Opponents (if applicable)
  - 4. Coaches agreement
  - 5. Coin Flip
- I. Each team will receive a team trophy for either winning the bowl game or placing as Runner Up of the bowl game.