
Northeast Commonwealth Youth Football Conference

Rules & Guidelines for Football

Updated 9/29/23

For football, the NCYFC will follow as many guidelines from the MIAA that can be adapted to youth football. Any rule or regulation not specifically covered in our documents automatically falls back to the written rules in the AYF Official Rules and Regulations.

ASSOCIATION TEAM STRUCTURE:

Teams will be grouped together by grade and based on registrations an association may have a team at every grade level. The grade guideline is as follows:

1st / 2nd grade. 3rd / 4th grade. 5th / 6th grade. 7th / 8th grade.

The grade-based levels will be referred to as:

1st / 2nd – Flag or Titans 3rd / 4th – Crusaders 5th / 6th – Spartans 7th / 8th – Gladiators

The AYF structure of age protected grade levels will be the guide used by the NCYFC for all football teams. Weight Limits – No Limits on a player’s weight for any position on the field.

FLAG FOOTBALL (Grades 1st and 2nd)

NCYFC will follow the NFL Flag Football Rules, with some adaptations that will be explained in detail later. TITANS level will be 8v8 tackle

ROSTER SIZES:

Flag Football rosters will vary, but the game will be 7v7 whenever possible. In order to split into multiple teams the first team must have a min. of 7 players. Titans (grade 1-2 tackle) will have a minimum roster size of 11. Grades 3-8 Football teams will be allowed to have a maximum of 39 players and a minimum of 14 players to be considered a valid team roster.

Note: Football teams must have 14 eligible players to play the game (not only a roster of 14). See “Valid Rosters for Games” below.

Teams must be split evenly by method of drafting players or cheerleaders. An even amount of kids from each grade level must be on each team. The Conference must approve any potential split before it takes place. When a team roster reaches 40 players then it must split into two (2) teams.

Football Teams being divided due to the amount of registrations must have a minimum of 20 per team to be a valid split. We will work within the guidelines, but at the start of the season conference judgment can be made on a team with less than 20. **Titans level must split into 2 teams at roster size of 30**

TRYOUTS:

Tryouts are not permitted for football. Roster is the same for games, playoffs, championships and competitions.

PRACTICES:

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Each season will officially start on an agreed upon start date along with a no later date voted on during the Annual Conference Board meeting.

Football players and teams will not be penalized for participating in out of season clinics. Anything that promotes football and teaching developmental pieces to the game is something we encourage and certainly do not want to penalize anyone for. Practice start dates will be discussed and decided on during the preseason meetings for the following season. Any association not abiding by these guidelines will be penalized.

All associations must condition for at least 10 hours before full contact is allowed. Practice times and guidelines are; pre- season, 10 hours maximum; in- season, 8 hours maximum with a maximum of 2 hours per day. Mandatory breaks are required; this time is not included in the count. This will include any time used for team meetings. At least one coach must be present during practice. It is recommended that a coach be present at least 15 minutes prior to designated practice start time. All associations must have a process for dealing with medical emergencies during practice. A person whom is CPR or First Aide certified should be available during practice times.

COACH EXPECTATIONS:

No more than 5 coaches on the roster and two MPR monitors the sidelines during a game. Head coaches will be responsible for controlling the coaches during a game (SEE BELOW). Only the head coach will be allowed to address the referees during a game. The Flag level will have an option to have coaches on the field.

Minimum age for a head coach is 21 yrs. old and minimum age for an assistant coach is 18 yrs. old.

High school aged student can be a JR coach, but must coach at a level in which they are a minimum of 2 grades older than (example a freshman **can Not** coach at gladiator level 7/8 grade but can coach 5/6 grade team)
All JR coaches **will be** counted as one of the 5 coaches and or 2 MPR coaches maxed per team

All coaches and workers (defined as board members / team parents) in the association will be CORI and SORI checked. All associations must have the provided CORI/SORI proof designated by the conference by the designated date within the present season. Each association must assign a CORI/SORI representative to be the contact for the Safety Officer of the NECYFC.

Coaches are expected to stay with their team until a parent or guardian picks up the last player.

GRADE & EQUIPMENT Confirmation:

All associations will collect report cards handed out in June showing the final decision for the student's grade in September of the present Season. This is to verify the grade being declared by the registrant.

All associations must also have the provided Equipment Affidavit signed and returned to the conference by the designated date of the present season. Any special pricing deals established through the conference will always be made available to the associations. All equipment must meet NOCSAE standards. No

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metal cleats allowed. Molded or removable cleats will be acceptable. Face shields **MUST BE CLEAR** not tint allowed. No Medical excuse allowed to wear a tinted face shield. Eyes must be seen clearly!

BOOKS:

There will be a formal book check prior to the start of any game, where all appropriate paperwork is expected to be available and complete.

Included with paperwork should be pictures and rosters as well as forms with coaches' pictures in front of book. All required paperwork must be completed and stored in a book organized and sorted by jersey number order for football.

REQUIRED PAPERWORK:

Required for each participant is an association registration form with appropriate parental signatures and permission, copy of child's birth certificate, physical or medical form stamped/signed by a physician as of July 1st of the previous year, and an end of present year report card. Associations are also required to provide current season pictures of each participant on the registration forms. Football players must be wearing their jersey number along with team designation. Coaches for football and cheering are required to have a coach's registration form along with a current season picture/team designation. Student demonstrators in cheering and Jr coaches for football have the same paperwork requirements as players though they need not pay a registration fee. Paperwork for student coaches must be included in official books along with being included on all team rosters.

CORI/SORI:

All associations agree that all CORI/SORI checks will be submitted to the conference and the CORI/SORI checks will be paid for by the association. Any coach or parent assistant not CORI/SORI checked by the official book check will not be considered an eligible coach or parent assistant.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS AT PRACTICE:

Only CORI / SORI checked coaches and personnel should have direct contact with football players during games and while practicing.

GAMES:

VALID ROSTER FOR GAMES:

Flag football (grades 1-2) should do whatever possible to make all games 7v7. To accommodate each community with different roster sizes, Football Directors can discuss possible reductions to a minimum of 5v5. No player can play on another field once he/she has entered a game on a different field.

Titans – 8v8 Min (11)

Grades 3-8 teams must have no less than Fourteen (14) players ready and able to play at the start of a game. Any team not able to field 14 players will forfeit the game although it may be played with caution by the referees based on the true number of able players. A late player must be declared and enter a game before

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the end of the first half to be eligible (before half time begins). In the case of each team not meeting the minimum player requirement must forfeit, each team will be given a loss.

MPRs:

Flag Football – All players should play as equally as possible! However, there is no MPR sheet for this level MPR's will abide by the following

Grade 1-4 (Titans and Crusader level)

14-28 players = 8 plays

29-36 players = 6 plays

Grades 5-8 (Spartan and Gladiator level)

14-25 players = 8 plays

26-30 players = 6 plays

31 & up = 4 plays

Grades 1-8: Minimum Play Sheets must be used and turned over signed to the Football Director. All plays are considered valid plays except plays called in a Victory Formation (Taking a Knee). Special teams DO NOT count on MPR's. If a team uses the walk off punt, this will not count as a play. All players must play, but the conference will not govern as of now the enforcement of getting players in by the start of the fourth quarter, but expects associations to have coaches understand the reasons are best for all.

The referees will give a reminder notification at the beginning of the fourth quarter.

MPR coaches are expected to communicate with each other after each quarter or a minimum of at half time to go over what they expect as concerns of kids and playing time. At end of game both coaches should sign the MPR sheet to verify it was complete. If there is a conflict then the coach should not sign the sheet and He/she must immediately bring this to the Football Directors attention to decide if there will be a protest.

FOOTBALLS:

All associations will use the same footballs. The 7th and 8 grades will be using the TDY (Youth ball) and the 5 and 6 grades will be using the TDJ (Jr ball) and the 1 through 4 graders are using the K2 (ball). Football brand is teams choice, but required size equivalents must be followed.

BOOK RECOGNITION:

Each association will keep a book for each level of football containing the registration form and a picture of every player in a numbered jersey attached to said form. For all games, a book recognition period will take place, and the time to do this will be no later than the beginning of the 4th quarter of the presently played game. First games of the day should have the book recognition period no later than 20 minutes before the start of the first game. Any player late for a game must be declared as present to the opposing team and enter the game before the end of the first half. Additionally, players known to be arriving late must be declared to the opposing team's head coach at book recognition. A team without a book for book check

will forfeit unless the book is presented before the start of the game. In the case of each team, having a valid reason to forfeit each team will be given a loss.

TIME:

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Flag football (grades 1-2) Will play 50 minute continuous clock with 25 minute half's. The clock stops only for time-outs. One-60 second time-out per half. Half time is 1 minute long.

Titan's level will play 35-minute running time halves with a 5 minute half time

Grades 3-8; all games will have 10-minute quarters with 10-minute half times. Each team will have 3 time outs per half.

REFEREEES:

There will be three referees at each game except the Flag level will have minimum of 1 Ref and Titans will have a minimum of two. Host associations are expected to pay referee fees for only the quantity designated; 2(Flag and Titans) or 3 (all other levels).

The conference assignor for all games will assign referees from grades 1-8. (Titans, Crusader, Spartan, Gladiator) The home team will provide referees for the flag level. (Suggestions of using high school football players from your community has been used as a great role model and connection between programs, but is not mandatory).

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT:

No Electronic equipment can be used for communication between coaches during any game situations. No Walkie-talkies, no text messaging, Headphones, etc... There can be no electronics used during a game to gain an advantage on the opposing team.

EMT's:

Certified EMT's must be at all games with the home team paying for the EMT and referees for those games. It is assumed that each association has confirmed individual qualifications for all EMT's used at their games. A game can NOT start or be played unless an EMT or higher qualifications is present. It is recommended that some level of medical professional be available at all practices also.

POSTPONED GAMES & RESCHEDULING:

Games being rescheduled for either time or venue must be approved by the conference and must be decided at least one week before the requested change. Games being cancelled for any reason on game day must be cancelled two hours prior to game so the referees and all parties can be notified. On game day, referees not notified of a cancellation will expect to get full pay for the game if they show up to referee at the allotted time. Postponed games must be made up within the week (Mon, Tues, Wed, or Thurs) of the scheduled date or the home team forfeits. In the case of a field cancellation due to rain or any other circumstances, opponent should be given the opportunity to host game. If game is switched from home field to opponent field, both associations will split game day costs 50/50. If home team opts to rent a neutral field, they are responsible for field rental fee; however, both teams will split ref fees. If a team fails to communicate to their opponent that they will not be able to play in a game (lack of players, etc...) and officials arrive to officiate their game, then they (the team who does not have enough players or for whatever other reason cannot play the game) must pay the officials for that game

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SITE ADMINISTRATORS:

Every association must submit to the conference the name of a person that will be designated as the Site Administrator for their home field.

FILMING / SCOUTING:

Filming games and scouting is allowed. All filming must be done from the stands or spectator area and it is an infraction to film games from any location. In the spirit of fair play tape exchange concept like the high schools do is recommended to avoid any unfair advantages. Filming a team's practice is prohibited. Filming is allowed at the league Jamboree for only the teams that are participating in the event.

SIDELINE INFRACTIONS:

Any coach penalized and ejected from a game must leave the park; the team will not be penalized. Two infractions in the same game by the same team, then the head coach will be ejected and a penalty will be attached to the ejection. The next game following the ejection must be sat out by the coach ejected. That coach whom was ejected can be allowed in the park, but not on the field (all situations will be reviewed by executive board and certain situations could cause the coach not to be allowed at the field for a period of time)

SCORING:

Touchdowns will be scored as 6 points at all levels. Extra points will be valued as opposite of High school rules, Ex: Kicking will be worth 2 points and rushing will be worth 1 point. This philosophy is in place to encourage the development of a kicker. This will hold true at Spartans and Gladiator levels. . Titan Level (1/2 grade) and Crusader level will have a different point attempt for the point after. You will earn 1 point for a rush and 2 points for a pass. This is to try to help encourage the development of passing.

SLAUGHTER RULE:

All games will be subject to a slaughter rule that will go into effect at any point of a game when a team is ahead by twenty eight points (28): A letter explaining the reason for lopsided scores must be submitted to the conference by the presidents and the head coaches of the teams involved in the infraction, **both teams.**

ADJUSTMENTS TO GAME AFTER; Invoking the Slaughter Rule: Running clock, once the clock begins to run there is no going back to a normal stoppage play clock, even if the score retreats to under the 28 point deficit. The team that is behind has the choice of getting the ball on the 50 yd. line instead of a kickoff. If a kickoff is selected then the team ahead must kick from their 25 yard line, No onside kicks. The team ahead cannot make a pass attempt at all, and must run the ball between the tackles (Iso, Dive, wedge, Lead, etc....)

There is absolutely no blitzing allowed by either team!

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Noticeable actions should be taken with the leading team's roster to try to prevent the score from exceeding the 28 pt. lead. (MPR rules should still try to be adhered to)

For our league standings, we use a half time point differential. The most points allowed will be a +21. This is to help with our slaughter rules and hopefully prevent teams from trying to score more and display poor sportsmanship.

OVERTIME

Games that end in a tie will be decided by a 10 yard shootout (ball is placed at the 10 yard line going into the end zone). During the Overtime period both teams will be given 4 downs (a first and goal situation) a team scoring a touchdown has a choice of kicking the extra point or running a play. Ball possession alternates. Both teams will get a turn with the ball during each OT period, unless the defense scores and there is no need. When a team scores a TD they can decide to go for 1pt or 2pt extra point no matter what OT period they are in.

SPECIFIC RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE FLAG LEVEL (1ST / 2NDGrade):

Having 1 coach per team on the field is optional, coaches are allowed to be in the huddle and assist in aligning players up, but must be at least 5yds behind the deepest player on the field both offensively and defensively before the ball is snapped.

Centers do have to snap the ball between their legs for shotgun and or with a QB under center. Centers cannot turn and flip the ball to the QB. It is a recommendation of the conference that players be taught how to snap the ball between their legs. A fumbled snap will be a warning (not a loss of downs) for 3 warnings for the game. After the 3rd warning, a fumbled snap is a loss of down

50 minutes continuous clock with two 25 minute halves. The clock stops for time-outs only. Each team has one 60 second time-out per half. A suggested guideline will be 60 seconds to get a play in and out the huddle.

Flag football will also adhere to the league slaughter rule

The Conference will provide flags must be purchased by communities) so that all teams have the same type of flag.

NCYFC follows NFL flag rules, but have tweaked them to best fit us (NCYFC).

26) SPECIFIC RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR TITAN LEVEL :

A) Titan level must adhere to the same defensive requirements as the Crusader level. Mandated to play very specific defense (all explained in Crusader level) Also must adhere to the same restrictions on offense as Crusader level for unbalanced looks. Exception to the rule is inside the 10 yard line (goal line area) This is different than crusader level rule. The adjustment at Titan level is that all second level players can move to a

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distance of 2 yards off LOS (still all other rules apply including no blitzing) Normal alignment is 4 yard from LOS.

B) There will NOT be any kick-offs at the Titan level (Zero). Ball starts on the 30 yd line

C). 45 seconds is the maximum to execute each play.

D) 1 coach per team on the field is optional. (Coaches MUST remain 10 yds. from the LOS).

E) There is no Punting at all. A team has a choice to attempt a 4th down play (run or pass) or take the walk off punt option. The ball will be placed 25 yards downfield from previous spot. A walk off punt can never exceed the 20 yard line of the opponent (you cannot pin someone against their goal line with a walk off punt).

No fake punts.

F). Blitzing is strictly forbidden.

G) 35 minute running clock each half. 5 minute halftime. 1 Time Out per half.

28) OFFENSIVE PLAYER NUMBERING: DOES NOT APPLY AT THE TITAN AND CRUSADER LEVELS.

SPECIFIC RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE CRUSADER LEVEL (3RD / 4TH Grade).

Having 1 coach per team on the field is optional **for the first half of the season**. A specific date will be determined by the conference as to when coaches will no longer be allowed on the field. Coaches are allowed to be in the huddle and assist in aligning players up, but must be at least 5yds behind the deepest player on the field both offensively and defensively before the ball is snapped. Coaches on the field **CAN NOT COACH**. They are on the field to help line kids up and call the play after that all coaching comes from the sideline

To promote the conference philosophy as being **developmental** as our number one priority. The conference has voted that all teams are mandated to run a **4-4** defense at this level. There must be 4 defensive lineman at all times no more, but can have less on the L.O.S. Furthermore:

Inside Defensive Tackles must align Head up on the offensive Guard, No exceptions! This means no defender can be over the center or in the gap (hopefully allowing for a better chance for a clean exchange between Center and QB). They can play this position freely (attack guard, Slant into either Gap), But There is no targeting the center. Which means the inside tackles first attack cannot be aimed at the center. The defensive tackle can make secondary contact immediately after and as soon as possible as long as the first attack attempt is at either the offensive guard or the gap.

Any defender who aligns head up on the tackle or inside (toward the center) must be in a 3pt or 4pt stance. They can not under any circumstances be standing in a 2pt stance

Outside Tackles (Defensive Ends) can align freely where they want as long as they are:

1. On the line of scrimmage (LOS)

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2. Their alignment can never go any further down (closer to the center) than Head up on the tackle.
3. Can Align anywhere from head up on the tackle to moving outward (toward the sideline) as far as they feel comfortable or strategic.

Secondary Defenders (are every other defender aside from the 4 D-Lineman) consist of Linebackers; Inside and Outside, Safeties, and Cornerbacks. All must align with the following parameters:

1. Can never align closer than 4 yards to the LOS. (No matter what). Once the ball is snapped any defender can cross their 4 yd. alignment and play football.
2. Can never blitz. They can react as fast as they want, but should be reading something as a read and then react.

Any Defender Head up on the Tackle or lined up anywhere inside the tackle must be in a 3 or 4 point stance.

There is no Blitzing allowed. No fake blitzing or walking up into gaps (rule above states secondary defenders can never be closer than 4yards to the LOS until the ball is snapped). We are looking to have a cookie cutter Defense to promote the learning of the game. Giving offensive teams a chance to learn blocking schemes and possibly have more success with running a play.

Exception to the rule; Goal line defense. Whenever the ball is on or inside the **10yd line** going into the end zone. A Team can choose to go to a 6-2 defense. At this time, and this time only, can a defense line up with 6 men on the L.O.S. They can align in any gap or shade they strategically want. (They can never align head up on the center) and the remaining five defensive players must adhere to the normal alignment in the 4-4, and that is they can align anywhere they want as long as they never start closer than 4yds to the LOS, and do not Blitz.

Offensively:

No team can align in an unbalanced formation. This is simply said by not allowing any formation that has more than 3 players on the LOS to one side of the center. (No tackle over, no double TE). Out flanking, a defense with men off the LOS is legal.

Crusader level Special teams:

Kick-Off:

There will only be two kick offs for this level (Crusader) 1 to start the game and 1 to start the 2nd half. The ball will be place at the 35-yard line after all scores.

Punting:

Is optional. A team may choose 1 of 2 options after 3rd down and prior to a 4th down attempt:

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- 1. Walk off Punt.** The offensive team forfeits their 4th down attempt and the ball gets advanced 25 yards from the LOS. Not to exceed the opposing teams 20 yd. line and it becomes the opposing team's ball.
- 2. Run a play.** This can consist of a normal line of scrimmage attempt (run or pass), it may include an actual true punt attempt, or a fake punt.

If a team chooses to run a play (option 2), no matter what the choice they need to accept all consequences that come with that play (fumbles, bad snaps, blocked punt, etc...) There is no do over.

If a team chooses to line up for a punt, the DEFENSE can attempt to block the punt, but cannot break any of the defensive alignment rules that must be adhered to in a 4-4 Defense (as explained previously above).

ALL LEVELS - FLAG - GLADIATOR

CUT BLOCKING - (NOT Allowed)

Cut blocking **is not allowed at all at any level at any time.** This rule is new to the NCYFC as of July 1, 2018. After looking at the NCAA rules and how the College level and High school levels are trying to restrict the cut block for safety purposes, limiting how and when you can, we decided to just eliminate it all together.

PROTEST

All protest must be based on incorrect rulings of our football rules. You cannot protest a referee's judgment call (*for example: a player did or did not step out of bounds, a player caught or dropped a pass.*) If a team is going to protest the game then it needs to be announced immediately at the point of the issue. The referee needs to be told as well as the opposing team. The game should continue to be played as scheduled and the protest filed with the NCYFC Executive Directors for settlement later. When Protest are granted the game should return to the exact spot of the issue to replay with exact time, down and distance, as well as the game must be played with the same eligible players that played in the original game. Other actions will be based on the executive board's decision.

Offensive Player Numbering System: Spartan and Gladiator level only!!!

Numbering for offensive players must be as follows in the chart below. We follow this procedure to better control putting big lineman in the backfield. If a coach wants a player to be a running back then supply that

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player with the proper number and teach them to play the position. This is only for offensive positions. Defensive ball players can play any position on defense wearing any number. This is not for Flag level! Flag can wear any number they want and in fact do not need a number on their jersey at all if preferred. This numbering system is to be followed by grades 5-8 (Spartan, and Gladiator). The Flag AND Crusader teams do not need to follow the numbering rule.

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POSITION BY THE NUMBERS

T G C G T

O-Line must wear jerseys #50- #79 (Tackles, Guards and Centers)

*All skilled people including Running Backs, QB's, Tight Ends, Wide Receivers, Slot backs. (Anyone who is not an O-Lineman) can wear any number at all as long as it is not an o-lineman number 50-79.

Numbers that are available to a skilled player: 1-49 and 80-99.

Please note: If you are attempting a non-kicking "PAT" you must adhere to the Numbering system rule.

Penalties for violations are as follows:

1st offense is 5 yd. illegal procedure calls and sideline warning.

2nd offense is 15 yd. unsportsmanlike conduct and Head coach ejection.

Once a player is certified by league Official book check. He or she cannot change their number without notifying the league of the change. Violation will be discussed by executive board

The rule must be and will be adhered to by all levels! Except Flag, Titans, and Crusaders

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES:

An EMT will be present at all games, playoffs, championships. All associations should have an emergency plan for practices for football When an EMT is on site working, he/she should not be used in any other such capacity such as coaching. Their focus needs to be 100% on the safety of our athletes.

END OF SEASON Competitions and Tournaments:

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FOOTBALL GRADES 3-8

Playoff structure: This season the top 6 teams will make the playoffs. Teams ranked 1&2 will get byes in first round of playoffs .

THIS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE EVERY YEAR . IT WILL BE VOTED ON AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SEASON.

Specifics of each season's playoff structures will be distributed and updated accordingly through the season.

FLAG AND TITANS FOOTBALL GRADES 1-2

Flag and Titan Football will have an end of the year play off or tournament, but this is determined each year by the Board of Directors. We start the season with a jamboree. Anything different will need a Board of Directors vote.

END OF THE YEAR STANDINGS

End of the year final records will consist of only in conference games

At the end of the season if 2 teams are tied. The first tiebreaker used is **Head to Head**

If multiple teams are tied it goes to

- 1) Head to Head
- 2) Wins & losses overall record
- 3) First half point differential not to exceed a max +21per game
- 4) Coin flip

3A) if there is a tie between teams that will result in one of them not qualifying for the playoffs, then a dog fight will be used to determine the playoff team(s)

4) At no time, can there be a contact practice within 24 hours before or after a game. If in playoffs and teams participate in a dogfight (OT procedure to determine playoffs) executive board can decide if teams can have contact practice within that 24 hour period. Things that will be determined is how many periods did the dogfight go. The longer to dog fight goes the harder it will be to allow.

UPDATED AS OF 9/29/23