



San Diego Pop Warner executive Board and the Board of Presidents have adopted the following football weight matrix for fall 2019 and going forward.

Starting the 2019 Fall Season we will offer the following divisions

Division and Age as of 7/31/2019	Weight
Flag Ages 5-6-7	Unlimited
Mighty Mite Ages 7-8-9	45-100 lbs.
10U Ages 9-10	Unlimited
12U Ages 11-12	Unlimited
14U Ages 13-14	Unlimited

With the many recent changes made by Pop Warner including contact and practice limitations, game play and refereeing practices have made the Pop Warner football game safer than it has ever been. Given the many changes, it is now possible to safely modify how teams are established. We can no longer deny or limit participation for larger than normal kids in the name of safety.

Pop Warner teams have always been established on the basis of age and weight to keep the athletes in similar size and age/maturity levels for safety. With new rules limiting the amount of contact practice time, no full speed blocking or tackling lined up more than 3 yards apart, requirement that all coaches complete the USA Football course to be on a roster, and very strict protocols following illness or injury, changes are now able to be made.

The game is now coached, practiced, played, and refereed differently than ever before making it possible to match players on the basis of age, not weight. In a recent study done by the Mayo Clinic the findings were as follows for a 9-14 grades 4-8.

- A total of 55 injuries occurred during games for the entire season for an incident rate of 5.97 percent
- Most injuries were minor with most being bruise/contusions which accounted for 60 percent of total injuries. Seven percent of total injuries were bad enough to prevent players from participating for the rest of the season; all of these were ankle fractures.
- The risk of injury for an 8th grader was four times the risk of injury for a 4th grader. Therefore, the number one risk factor for injury is age. The higher the age, the higher the chance of injury and as a result, correct age groupings are critical to limiting injuries.
- To the surprise of many, heavier players sustained more injuries than light players. Therefore, specific weight groupings would not appear to protect lighter players.

With all of this in mind SDPW communities are too small to draw enough participants to field teams if restrictive weight categories are continued to be followed. There is an obesity epidemic in this country and too many kids who are overweight may have to sit out and not get much needed exercise resulting in health problems down the road. Specific weight categories may force youth to drop weight in order to make the weight category and the result can be very unhealthy and even dangerous resulting in increased liability potential. One popular technique for dropping weight involves limiting the intake of fluids. This can lead to dehydration which is the number one cause of heat illness.

Our number priority is the safety of all our players. And we strongly believe this change will be a positive move for San Diego Pop Warner.

- With this change we will eliminate younger/heavier players to move up to an older age group can place the younger heavier athlete at increased risk of injury since the primary injury factors are age related based on speed and strength.
- Weight categories that allow older/lighter to move down to a younger age group can place the younger age group participants at a greater risk due to the greater age related speed and strength of the older player.