

8/9-PLAYER Rookie Tackle RULES

Rookie Tackle uses the NFHS rule book, and USA Rookie Tackle Rules as a base and employs the following adjustments for 8/9-player football:

1. Because of the all players, all positions, all skills philosophy, there are no restrictions on jersey numbers or player positions.
2. All game action takes place on one half of the field with all possessions starting on the 30-yard line going toward the end zone.
3. A joust (Rock, Paper, Scissors) will determine who gets the ball first.
4. Teams move the ball on offense for 10 minutes, and then flip to defense for 10 minutes, halftime is 5 minutes and then second half is 10 minutes of offense/defense again. Teams on the goal line will get four downs to score and if they don't the ball returns to the 30 Yard line.
5. Turnovers on interceptions or fumbles are blown dead immediately. No returns are allowed in order to protect players from running toward the 20-yard administration zone between the two fields. Play restarts on the 30-yard line with the SAME offense with the ball, the defense stays as well. (Substitutions are ok)
6. After each play, the ball is spotted in the middle of the field. Hash marks are not used.
7. Because of the limited field size, all 15-yard penalties are enforced as 10-yard penalties.
COACHES ARE REFEREES – Coach the penalty out first – then assess the yards.
8. No penalty on the offense can take the ball beyond the 30-yard line to ensure the administration zone.
9. Penalties on the offense that are called and accepted on or behind the 30-yard line result in a loss of down.
10. Penalties on the offense called between the 30-yard line and the end zone in which yardage is lost, even if limited in enforcement by the 30-yard line, are enforced as written in terms of down lost or replayed.
11. There are no defensive safeties. Tackles behind the 30-yard line are spotted at the 30-yard line.
12. All personal foul penalties include an immediate substitution from the field for a minimum of one play to allow coaches to address misconduct and promote good sportsmanship. We call this a cooling off period. Recurring infractions may demand extended time off the field.
13. All plays are blown dead and the ball is returned to the 30-yard line if an offensive ball-carrier or a fumbled ball crosses over midfield or at the official's discretion if coaches, administrators or players from the multiple fields and the dead zone area become close enough in proximity to be a concern for safety.

Special teams' adjustments:

1. There are no special teams. There are no kickoff or punts. Each possession starts with the ball on the 30-yard line, regardless of whether there is a score, turnover or turnover on downs.

There are no extra points by a kick. All PATs are attempted through a run or pass. Coaches can choose to go for one point from the 3-yard line or two points from the 5-yard line.

Offensive adjustments:

1. Each play must include three offensive linemen – a center and two guards, one on either side of the center. These players are ineligible for first touch as the receiver of a pass regardless of the numbers on their jerseys. Player rotations may result with traditional non-lineman numbers at these positions for the purpose of fundamental skill development.



2. Guards are required to play from a two-point stance. There are no three-point stances.

3. The center may only have his or her snapping hand down.

4. The distance between a guard and center may not exceed three feet (1 yard) but may be no closer than one foot (1 foot).

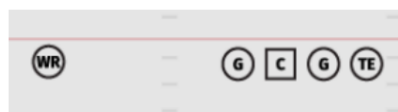
5. Because of the all players, all positions, all skills philosophy, players should change positions during the game. Note: The three offensive linemen must stay as the lineman when they break the huddle. Once identified as an offensive lineman, players may not shift to another position. All three offensive linemen are ineligible for first touch on a pass, including a guard who is uncovered by an end.

6. The quarterback-center exchange must be Direct/Under Center Snap to the QB through the legs. NO SHOTGUN. This is due to player safety on muffed snaps.

7. Quarterback sneaks are prohibited in all situations because the defense is not allowed to have players aligned over the center or in the center-guard A gap.

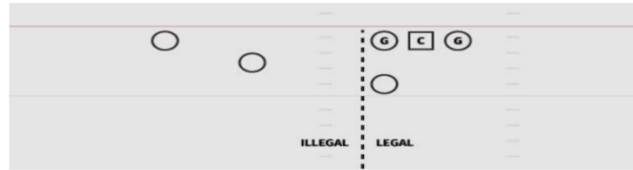
8. The offense must have five players on the line of scrimmage. No more, no less. The fourth and fifth players can be tight ends, split ends or a combination of the two. Only the two end players on the line of scrimmage are eligible for first touching of a pass. There are no unbalanced lines. The split ends/tight ends must be on opposite sides of the center.

Examples:



9. The five offensive players who are not playing guard or center may be deployed in positions at the coach's discretion as long as two are on the line of scrimmage. a. Multiple running backs, slot receivers, wing backs, etc., are allowed but also must be balanced.

10. No trips formations are allowed. For purpose of Rookie Tackle, Trips is defined as any three players outside the guard-to-guard box.



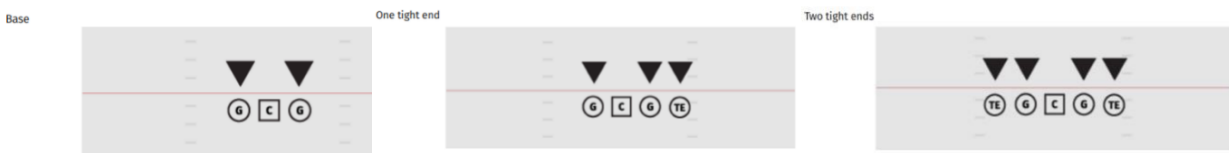
11. Motion is **not** allowed at this time - you must start in a base formation

12. All blocks below the waist, in any situation, are illegal.

Defensive Adjustments

1. Defenses may only have two defensive linemen unless an offensive formation includes a tight end(s). In that case, a third/fourth defensive player may line up over the tight end. Two tight ends allow the defense to use four defensive players on the line of scrimmage.

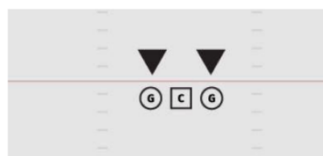
Examples Below:



2. Defensive linemen must be in a two-point stance.

3. Defensive linemen over guards must be aligned in a head up or outside shade position.

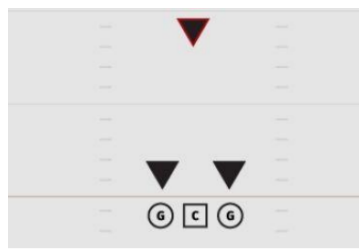
4. Players in an outside shade must always have one foot aligned inside the stance of the opposing guards.



5. Defensive line of scrimmage players may not penetrate the A-gap on the snap of the ball. Contact with the hands must be made with the offensive line player before defeating the block into the A-gap.

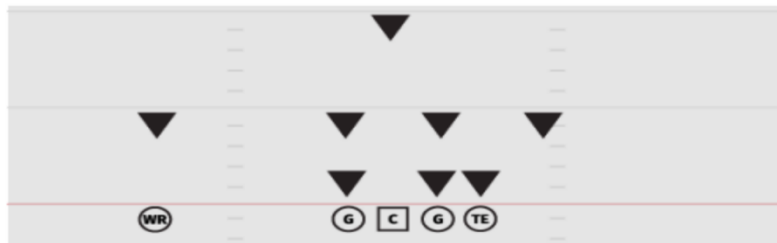
- a. **Rule enforcement:** Deliberate stunting into the A-gap is to be treated as an illegal procedure foul and enforced as a five-yard live ball penalty.

6. The defense must have one player at least 10 yards from the ball. (Free Safety)



The remaining players can be deployed at the coach's discretion **but must be four yards off the line of scrimmage unless covering a tight end or split end on the line of scrimmage.**

Example: If the offense aligns with a fourth or fifth line-of-scrimmage player as a tight end, then the defense may align a player directly over the tight end on the line of scrimmage to balance the running surface. Defenses are **not required** to match the player on the line of scrimmage but have the option to do so. **You may have a "middle" linebacker, but they are always 4 yards off the ball and can ONLY come at the line of scrimmage during a run play. Only lineman may rush on a pass play.**



7. No blitzes are allowed. Players within the box at the snap can penetrate upon the snap. **Linebackers, safeties and cornerbacks (both on the line and at depth) can flow to the ball naturally after a handoff is made, but predetermining penetration to a specific gap is illegal.** The box includes offensive players who line up within two yards of the ball and on the line of scrimmage along with the defensive players lined up directly over them.

8. On pass plays, anyone outside the box on the snap **cannot** rush the quarterback and must remain behind the line of scrimmage in pass coverage. **ONLY LINEMAN MAY RUSH THE PASSER** **NOTE:** The restriction on blitzing is intended to encourage skill development within the passing game and allow young players to execute a successful handoff with limited penetration.

9. If the ball is inside the 4-yard line, the five non-linemen, non-deep players may align on the goal line.

10. **QBs may NOT scramble/run beyond the line of scrimmage to gain yards – they may run to avoid pressure with the INTENT to throw the ball to a teammate downfield, or away/out of bounds. If a QB does go beyond the line of scrimmage on purpose or on accident the play is blown dead for safety.**