



South Suburban Youth Football League

Rules and Regulations

4th Grade Tackle-Transition

****Rules **HIGHLIGHTED** are null following the transition to tackle**

(Ratified: 07/16/2023)

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Organization: | 3 |
| 2. Registration and Player Eligibility | 3 |
| 3. Team Size, Game Time & Game Play: | 3 |
| 3.5. Game Play: | 4 |
| 3.6. Scoring: | 4 |
| 3.7. Game Time: | 4 |
| 4. Formations: | 5 |
| 4.1. Offensive Line | 5 |
| 4.2. Offensive Backs | 6 |
| 4.3. Defensive Line (DL) | 7 |
| 4.4. Defensive Backs (ILB, OLB, C, S) | 8 |
| 5. Offense Play Rules | 9 |
| 6. Defense Play Rules | 9 |
| 7. Special Teams | 10 |
| 8. Applicable MSHSL Rules | 10 |
| 9. Sources: | 13 |

1. Organization:

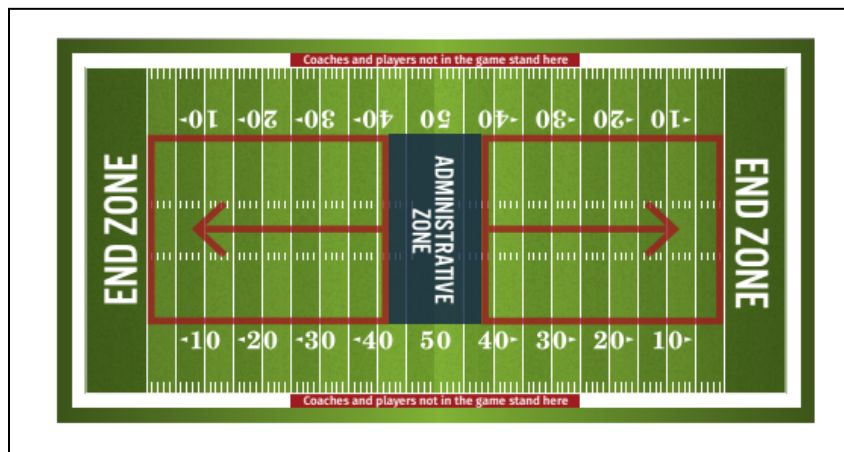
- 1.1. Please refer to the SSYFL By-Laws and Governing Committee for all governance rules.

2. Registration and Player Eligibility

- 2.1. The player must satisfy the participation guidelines of his or her home association.
- 2.2. Players must play at the grade level they are currently enrolled in (for the fall) or above based on home association rules.
- 2.3. **Weight of a player:** Players weighing **95+ lbs** at the beginning of the season are not allowed to advance the ball from behind the line of scrimmage. These players will be identified with a tape stripe on their helmets.

3. Team Size, Game Time & Game Play:

- 3.1. **Number of Players:** 7 vs. 7
- 3.2. **Field Size:** The playing field is 40 yards x 35 1/3 yards. The direction of play is from the traditional 40-yard line toward the end zone.



- 3.3. First downs, down markers, and the “chain gang” are administered in accordance with the MSHSL rules. Supplying equipment and volunteers for the “chain gang” is the responsibility of the home team.
- 3.4. **Penalties:** Developmental youth football aims to educate and foster a fun playing environment. All penalties should be educational for players, coaches, referees, and spectators.
- 3.4.1. Because of this and the size of the field, all penalties will be enforced at 5 or 10 yards.

- 3.4.2. Penalties on the offense called between the 40-yard line and the end zone in which yardage is lost, even if limited in enforcement by the 40-yard line, are enforced as written in terms of down lost or replayed.
- 3.4.3. Penalties on the offense that are called and accepted on or behind the 40-yard line result in a loss of down. A penalty that would typically include a loss of down would not result in a second loss of down on the same play.

3.5. Game Play:

- 3.5.1. Each possession starts with the ball on the 40-yard line, regardless of whether there is a score, turnover, or turnover on downs.
- 3.5.2. The offense has four (4) downs to reach the line-to-gain (first down marker), or score.
- 3.5.3. An interception or fumble recovery by the defense is a dead ball, and possession changes to the recovering team on the 40-yard line. Play is allowed to continue for fumbles recovered by the offense.
- 3.5.4. After each play, the ball is spotted in the middle of the field. Hash marks are not used.

3.6. Scoring:

- 3.6.1. A **Touchdown** is worth six (6) points.
- 3.6.2. All **Point-After-Attempts** are attempted through a run or pass try. Coaches can choose one (1) point from the 3-yard line or two (2) points from the 5-yard line.

3.7. Game Time:

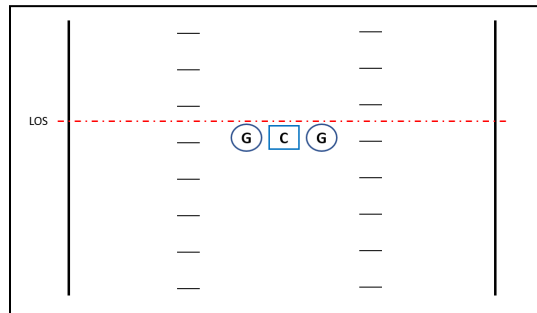
- 3.7.1. **Four (4) quarters of twelve (12) minute running time**. During **running time**, the clock does not stop except for time-outs, injuries, penalties, touchdowns, and changes of possessions).
- 3.7.2. **Stop time applies during the last two (2) minutes of each half**. During **stop time**, the clock will stop for time-outs, injuries, penalties, touchdowns, incomplete passes, first downs, change of possession, and out-of-bounds. However, if a team leads by 28 points with 4:00 minutes left in the fourth quarter, there is no stoppage of time (except for injuries and penalties).
- 3.7.3. **Time Outs**: Each team will get two (2) timeouts per half.
- 3.7.4. **Half Time**: Teams are allowed two (2) minutes between quarters and a five (5) minute halftime.

- 3.7.5. **Overtime:** No Overtime - if a game is tied at the end of regulation, the game is recorded as a tie.
- 3.7.6. **Play Clock:** Referees will maintain a 35-second clock from the referee's 'set of the ball' to the snap (The delay of the game is a 5-yard penalty)

4. Formations:

4.1. Offensive Line

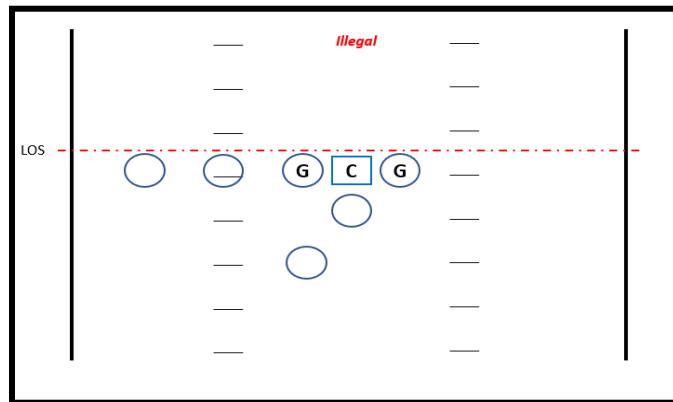
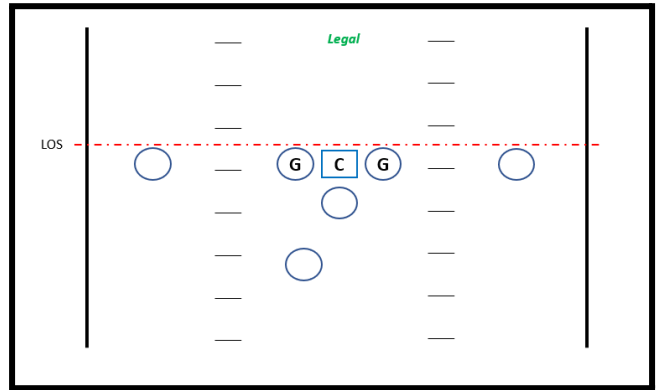
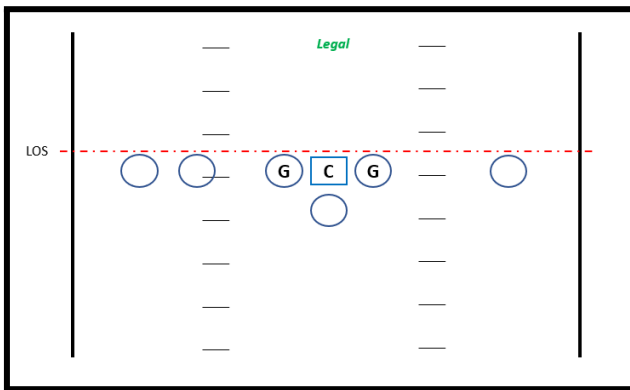
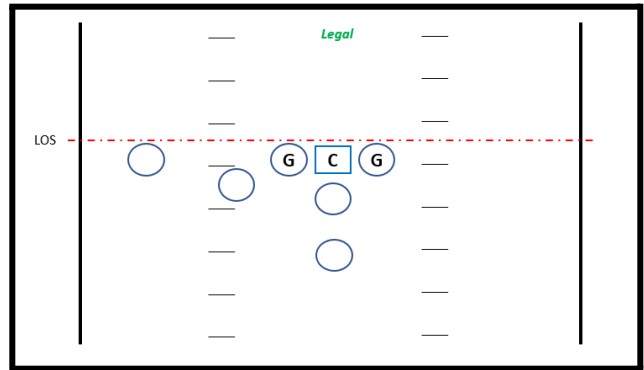
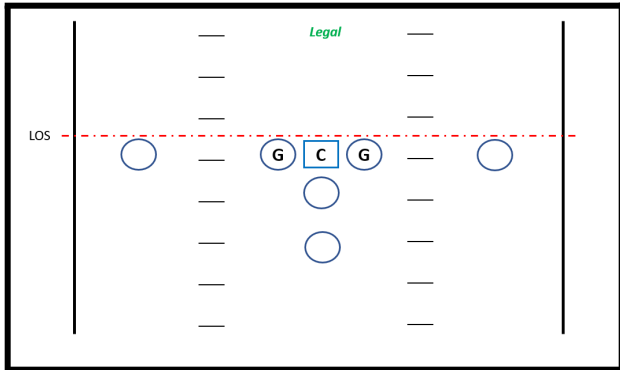
- 4.1.1. **Balanced** - Each play must include three (3) offensive linemen – a center and two guards, one on either side of the center. These players are ineligible for the first touch as the receiver of a pass, regardless of the numbers on their jerseys and if they are covered by an end.



- 4.1.2. **Stance** - The Offensive Line must be set in a three-point stance.
- 4.1.3. **Splits** - Offensive Line (Guard to Guard) splits must be 6"-12" between players.
- 4.1.4. **Tight Ends** - If a team chooses to line up with a tight end. They must follow the same rules for splits; however, they can choose to be in a two-point stance.
- 4.1.5. **Attached/Detached Receivers or Wings**- attached is a TE or Wing, and they must follow the same rules for splits; however, they can choose to be in a two-point stance. Detached must be 3 yards from the nearest OL or Attached WR.

4.2. Offensive Backs

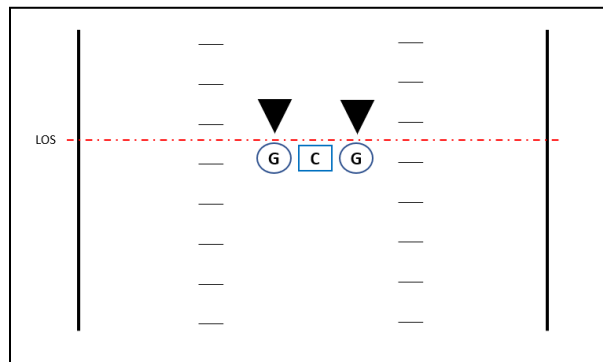
4.2.1. **Balanced Formation** - The remaining players may line up anywhere in the formation as long as there are no more than two (2) players on either side of the centerline. (See Rule: 4.1.5)



4.2.2. **“Motion”** - is not allowed. All players must be set (not moving in a football stance) before the snap of the ball. Since the defense can not blitz, this movement would create an unfair advantage to the offense.

4.3. Defensive Line (DL)

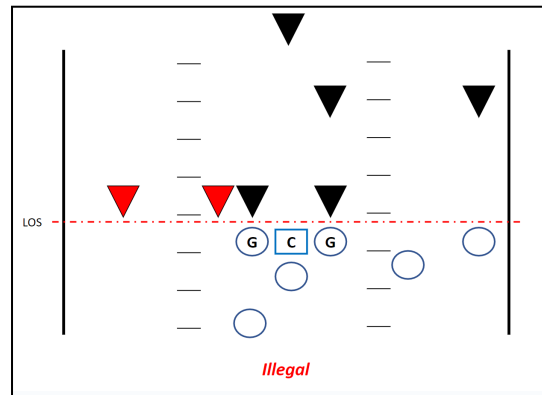
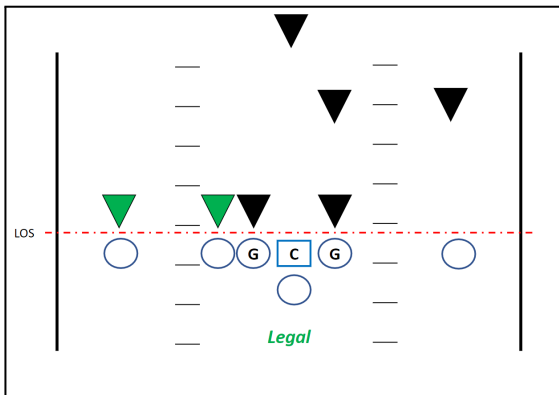
- 4.3.1. The defensive line - must be balanced.
- 4.3.2. **Cover Center** - No defensive player covers the offensive center. (see rule 4.4.1 for rules about linebackers)
- 4.3.3. **Helmet to Helmet** - any player on the line of scrimmage must line up helmet to helmet with an offensive player (except the offensive center). This means no lining up in the gaps or shading to the outside.



- 4.3.4. **Stance** - The Defensive Line must be set in a three or four-point stance.

4.4. Defensive Backs (ILB, OLB, C, S)

- 4.4.1. **Linebackers (ILB, OLB)** - must be 4 yards off of the LOS. A linebacker may be in the center but must be 4 yards off of the LOS. (See rule exception 4.4.5)
- 4.4.2. **Corners (C)** - must be 4 yards off of the LOS and at least 4 yards outside of the DTs. Any player not lined up with a receiver/offensive back must be 4 yards off the LOS. (See rule exception 4.4.5)
- 4.4.3. **Safeties (S)** - must be 7 yards off the LOS. Except inside a team's 10-yard line, safeties line up 1 yard behind the deepest linebacker.
- 4.4.4. **Linebackers & Corners** can choose to be on the line of scrimmage to match any offensive player (except the center) on the line of scrimmage. They must line up head-to-head, **or** outside shade and can be in a three, four, or two-point stance.



5. Offense Play Rules

- 5.1. **Cadence** - the quarterback shall not attempt to draw the defense offside via the use of a hard, irregular count or by bobbing. What cadence is used shall be used throughout the game and not changed. (5-Yard Penalty)
- 5.2. **Snap** - Teams may use an “under center” snap or “shotgun” style. [See: *Snap Rule 8.1.8*]
- 5.3. **Direct Snaps Prohibited**- Quarterback sneaks (QB running the ball between the guards after receiving the snap) are prohibited because the defense is not allowed to have players aligned over the center or in the center-guard gaps. This rule also applies to a wild-cat play (where the ball is snapped directly to an offensive back or receiver).
- 5.4. **Offensive Fumble** - All backfield fumbles or dropped/missed snaps are considered live balls.
- 5.5. All **false starts and offsides** are dead-ball fouls. Play stops immediately when these fouls occur.
- 5.6. No **blocking** below the waist. (10-Yard Penalty)[See: *Blocking Rules - 8.1.3, 8.1.4, & 8.1.5*]
- 5.7. If a Tacklebar or a harness falls off, the ball carrier is down at the spot.
- 5.8. **Charging** – a ball carrier may NEVER lower their head to run through or charge a defensive player. (10-Yard Penalty)[See: *Intentional use of Helmet Rule - 8.1.7*]
- 5.9. **No bar guarding** - the ball carrier can not move or cover their bars to prevent the defense from accessing them (the bars). This does not prevent legal football moves such as “stiff arms,” or movements to avoid a defensive play.

6. Defense Play Rules

- 6.1. **No Blitzing** - 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.
 - 6.1.1. 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 over them.
 - 6.1.2. 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. Once the quarterback leaves the box, and defensive player can rush.
 - 6.1.3. Rule application: 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.

- 6.1.4. Rule enforcement: Illegal blitzes by a linebacker or defensive back shall be enforced as an illegal procedure foul and a five-yard live ball penalty. If continued blitzing is determined to be a product of coach encouragement, a 10-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty can occur.
- 6.2. **Engagement** - Defensive Linemen and Linebackers on the line of scrimmage and inside of the box (see: 6.1.1) must engage their opposing player prior to moving toward the ball carrier. "Engage" means contact with two hands pushed into the chest and/or shoulder area of the opposing player.
- 6.3. The "**Wrap and Rip**" technique is recommended. The defender breaks down, initiates contact, wraps the ball carrier, and rips Tacklebar. This simulates the latest recommended shoulder tackling technique. It is not a penalty if the ball carrier inadvertently goes to the ground during this action. However, contact that deliberately takes the ball carrier to the ground with force may be penalized. [See: *Illegal Personal Contact Rule - 8.1.6*]
- 6.4. Players **may never leave their feet** to launch or dive into another player. (10-Yard Penalty)
- 6.5. No throwing players to the ground. (10-Yard Penalty)[See: *Illegal Personal Contact Rule - 8.1.6*]
- 6.6. No **helmet-initiated** contact. (10-Yard Penalty)[See: *Intentional use of Helmet Rule - 8.1.7*]
- 6.7. A **ball carrier is down** when one Tacklebar is removed...defensive players should hold the bar in the air until the whistle blows.
- 6.8. All **false starts and offsides** are dead-ball fouls. Play stops immediately when these fouls occur.

7. Special Teams

- 7.1. There are **no** Kickoffs or Punts.

8. Applicable MSHSL Rules

- 8.1. Minnesota State High School League ("MSHSL") rules will be followed except as noted below. The MSHSL rules apply to **all players, coaches, parents, and referees.**
- 8.1.1. **Referee Authority** (Rule 1-Sec.1-Art.3): The referee has the authority to rule promptly and in the spirit of good sportsmanship in any situation not specifically covered in the rules. The referees' decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.
- 8.1.2. **Timeouts** (Rule 3-Section 5-Article 11 (paraphrased)): A team may take a time-out to review a decision or problem with the rules. If the conference results in the referee altering their ruling, the opposing coach will be notified, the revision made, and the

time-out shall be an official's time-out. If the referee's ruling prevails, the time-out remains charged to the team requesting the time-out.

- 8.1.3. **Illegal Block-Clipping** (Rule 9-Sec.3-Art.5): A player shall not clip, and there is no free blocking zone. All lines must match up head-to-head or double team block and be above the waist. Clipping Rule 2-Sec.3-Art 1&2) Clipping is: charging or falling into the back or across the back of the leg(s) of an opponent who is not a runner or pretending to be a runner -or- Pushing by use of hands or arms in an opponent's back. Such cases shall not be ruled clipping unless the official sees the initial contact. When in doubt, or the opponent turns their back, or the block is from the side, it is not clipping if the opponent was able to see the blocker. (10-yd penalty)
- 8.1.4. **Illegal Blocking-Below the Waist** (Rule 9-Sec.3-Art.2): A player shall not block an opponent below the waist except a. in the free blocking zone (see Illegal Block Rule) when contact meets requirements (Rule 2-17) b. to tackle a player with, or pretending to have, the ball. (10-yd penalty)
- 8.1.5. **Illegal Blocking-Chop Block** (Rule 9-Sec.3-Art.6): Blocking by offense or defense is illegal when it is a chop block. Rule 2- Sec.3-Art.9 Chop block is a block at the knees or below the waist to an opponent who is in contact with a teammate of the blocker. (10-yd penalty)
- 8.1.6. **Illegal Personal Contact** (Rule 9-Sec.4-Art.2): No player shall: b. Charge into or throw an opponent to the ground after the player is obviously out of play or after the ball is dead, either in or out of bounds. In other words, players shall not HEADHUNT 30 yards away from the play, and coaches should teach their kids that such activity is illegal and dangerous. c. Pile on any player who is lying on the ground. i. Butt block, face tackle, or spear. (Butt Block is a blow driven directly into an opponent with the face mask, frontal area, or top of the helmet as the primary point of contact.) (10-yd penalty)
- 8.1.7. **Intentionally use the helmet** to butt or ram an opponent (Rule 9-Sec.4-Art.7): A defensive (and offensive) player shall not use their hands to strike (the opponent's) head. (10-yd penalty)
- 8.1.8. **Snap Rule** (7-Sec.1a): The snapper may be over the ball...and no part of their person, other than a hand(s) on the ball, may be beyond the foremost point of the ball. b. The snapper may lift the ball for lateral rotation but may not rotate end-for-end or change the location of the ball. c. The snapper may not remove both hands from the ball, make a false snap or fail to pause before the snap. d. An act intended to cause the defense to encroach. (5-yd penalty)

- 8.1.9. **Coin Toss:** Not more than four captains from each team may be present at the coin toss. The visiting captain shall call.
- 8.1.10. **Assist the Runner** (Rule 9-Sec. 1): An offensive player shall not push, pull or lift the runner to assist their forward progress. (5-yd penalty)
- 8.1.11. **Fighting - Illegal Personal Contact** (Rule 9-Sec.4-Art.1): No player or non-player shall fight (striking, kicking, kneeling, and intentionally contacting an official.) (10-yd penalty & disqualification)
- 8.1.12. **Neutral Zone** (Rule 2-Sec.27): The Neutral Zone is as wide as the length of the ball and is expanded following the snap up to 2 yards on the defensive side of the line of scrimmage.
- 8.1.13. **Inadvertent Whistle** (Rule 4.-Sec.2-Art.3): During a down, or during a down in which the penalty for a foul is declined, if an inadvertent whistle occurs during the following, the down shall be replayed; a. A legal forward pass or snap is in flight, b. The ball is loose following a backward pass, fumble, or illegal forward pass.
- 8.1.14. **Pass Interference**
- 8.1.14.1. Pass Interference restrictions only apply beyond the neutral zone and only if the forward pass crosses the neutral zone.
 - 8.1.14.2. Pass interference restrictions begin for the offense at the snap and for the defense at the release of the pass. It is forward-pass interference if any player, offense, or defense that is beyond the neutral zone interferes with an eligible opponent's opportunity to move toward, catch or bat the pass. (10 yards from the previous spot and automatic first down if by the defense or 10 yards from previous spot and loss of down if by offense)
 - 8.1.14.3. It is not pass interference if unavoidable contact occurs when two or more eligible players make a simultaneous, bona fide attempt to move toward, catch or bat the pass.
 - 8.1.14.4. It is not pass interference if contact by the offense is immediately made on the defense, and the contact does not continue beyond the neutral zone.
- 8.1.15. **Noncontact Unsportsmanlike Conduct** (Rule 9-Sec.5): Baiting, taunting, insignias worn that engenders ill will; embarrass, ridicule, or demean on the basis of race, gender, religion, or national origin; profanity, insulting, language or gestures; spiking or kicking the ball, throw it in the air; any delayed excessive or prolonged act by which a player

attempts to focus attention upon themselves. (10 yards & disqualification if flagrant, the 2nd unsportsmanlike foul results in disqualification)

- 8.1.16. **Noncontact Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Nonplayers** (Rule 9-Sec.8-Art.1): No coach, substitute, trainer, or another team attendant shall act in an unsportsmanlike manner. Examples are, but are not limited to: Using Profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures, Attempting to influence a decision by an official, and disrespectfully addressing an official. (10-yard penalty and, if flagrant, disqualification and ejection. The second unsportsmanlike foul with a 10-yard penalty results in disqualification. Failure to comply, the referee may forfeit the game)
- 8.1.17. **Between the 30-yard lines.** No Coach, substitute, trainer, or another team attendant shall be outside the team box. (1st offense warning-2nd 5 yards, 3rd and so on 10 yards)
- 8.1.18. **Electronic equipment on the field** - At no time shall any coach, player, or spectator have any electronic communication or recording equipment on the field. This includes a video camera, radios, computers, and any other equipment that can be used for communication between players and coaches, and or spectators. Personal cell phones are allowed on the sidelines but are not to be used to facilitate communication for the purposes of coaching in the game. Anyone violating this rule will be removed from the game and reviewed by the MEYFL Board for further action. Parents videotaping the game must do so from at least 7 yards back from the sideline and cannot review the tape with any players or coaches during the game.
- 8.1.19. **Parent/Spectator Conduct** (Rule 9-Sec.9-Art.1): A player or nonplayer or person not to the rules shall not hinder play by an unfair act, which has no specific rule. (Penalty-the referee enforces any penalty he considers equitable, including the award of a score. Warnings are recommended but optional.)
- 8.1.20. **Sportsmanship recommendation:** When leading by 21 points, it is recommended to replace skill position players when able.

9. Sources:

- 9.1. USA Football: <https://fdm.usafootball.com/game-types/limited-contact>
- 9.2. USA Football: <https://assets.usafootball.com/documents/rookietackle/resources/ADM-Junior-and-Senior-Rule-book.pdf>

9.3. MN State High School League:

https://www.mshsl.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/football-2021-22-rpb_0.pdf