

BEMIDJI YOUTH FOOTBALL 2011 RULEBOOK



TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
BEMIDJI YOUTH FOOTBALL	3
REGISTRATION, ELIGIBILITY AND ROSTERS	4
SCHEDULING	4
WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS	5
EQUIPMENT	6
FIELDS	6
COACHES & FANS	6
OFFICIALS	7
RULES – GENERAL	8
RULES – OFFENSE	10
RULES – DEFENSE	11
RULES – SPECIAL TEAMS	12
OFFENSIVE FORMATIONS	13
DEFENSIVE FORMATIONS	14
SOME HELPFUL MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL RULES	15

BEMIDJI YOUTH FOOTBALL

Bemidji Youth Football (BYF) is a tackle football program comprised of youth in grades 3-5 that reside in Bemidji and the surrounding areas. Each participant will learn to play both offensive and defensive positions during the course of the season. Teams are formed with an equal distribution of talent and weight limits are established for each grade.

The primary purpose of the program is not to win football games, but rather to teach the fundamentals of football, sportsmanship, discipline and the importance of team play to all of the participants. It is our hope that our coaches and parents will not only teach this to the players but also practice it during the games.

The intent of this league is to provide an environment to expose all players to all aspects of the game. Throughout these rules, you may find that certain situations are not spelled out – at that point we refer to the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) Rules. With that said, this is not a high school program where an expected level of knowledge and expertise are assumed. Please attempt to simulate game situations – however keeping in mind the level of player that you are coaching and abide by the rules, goals, intent and spirit of the program.

If an issue arises during a game, the official has the final say on ANY MSHSL Rule interpretation. PLEASE do not argue the point. We would however ask that you refer any questions or issues to the BYF Board. Please remember that as coaches and adults we are to teach and facilitate, not dictate and manipulate a game that is intended to be a fun learning experience for ALL players.

Although we inform the officials about “our rules,” they cannot be expected to understand all of the differences between BYF rules and high school rules. The only way our program will be successful, is if we as coaches, parents and participants all understand and follow the rules.

BYF is a **DEVELOPMENTAL** league. We must remember that the primary objective is not to “win at all costs”. All teams have players of varying abilities. Coaches must ensure that each player has a starting position on offense or defense for the game. Each player can expect to play a minimum of 50% of the game, except for disciplinary reasons.

In general, 50% minimum playing time of a game is defined as:

1. Each player has one starting position on defense during one half.
2. Each player has one starting position on offense during the opposite half.
3. The player should play that side of the ball during the relative half as much as possible except for these reasons:
 - a) Injury
 - b) An occasional missed play for instruction/coaching
 - c) Disciplinary actions related to team rule violations (not due to player performance).

Other specific playing time requirements, if any, will be determined by the BYF Board and communicated to the coaches. Problems with playing time should be addressed with the BYF Board.

REGISTRATION, ELIGIBILITY AND ROSTERS

Team Balance	The BYF Board will strive to create balanced teams for the program by a Draft or similar means (e.g., no All-Star or A, B or C teams).
Player Eligibility	Each player must be a student enrolled in the applicable grade and not be under suspension from school.
Roster Dates	Official team rosters must be submitted to the BYF Board no later than September 1st, identifying the names, dates of birth, weights, jersey numbers, school attended and grade of each player. No player may be added to the official roster of any team after September 1st without the approval of the BYF Board.
Team Size	BYF will strive to have each team consist of no fewer than fifteen (15) players and no more than twenty-two (22) players.

SCHEDULING

Season	<p>Practices: Begin August 29th. The number of events (practices and games) in a calendar week is limited to three (3).</p> <p>Number of Games: Minimum of five (5) regular season games.</p> <p>Season Length: The regular season will not extend beyond MEA; however playoff games will run into late October.</p>
Cancellations	The BYF Board will determine whether a game should be cancelled due to weather or field conditions before the start of the game. The officials have the authority to cancel a game or delay a game that is already in progress.
Inclement Weather	<p>Lightning: If you see it and hear it – CLEAR IT! Lightning can strike up to 10 miles ahead or behind a storm. Games are to be postponed IMMEDIATELY and all players, spectators and officials are to seek appropriate shelter. Games are to resume no sooner than 30 minutes after the last sight and sound of a thunder/lightning storm.</p> <p>Other Weather: Games will be called at the field by the officials after a discussion with both Head Coaches. Please do not assume a game will be cancelled and not show up – it will result in a forfeit.</p>
Rescheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games may be rescheduled due to weather cancellations. It will be considered a “game” if 3 quarters have been completed. • The BYF Board will strive to reschedule weather cancelled games, but field and officiating crew availability will dictate rescheduled events.

WEIGHT RESTRICTIONS

Weight rules are in place for no other reason than safety issues. Players will be weighed and the player's official weight will be identified on the official team roster listed on the BYF website.

Weights are determined at equipment pickup and weigh-in. Official weight is the weight of a player in a t-shirt, shorts and without shoes. Official weight is the weight for the season. Coaches cannot weigh in their own players. The weigh-in must be done by a person on the BYF board or their representative.

Head Coaches are fully responsible for playing players in certain positions and adhering to the weight restriction rules. Any teams found not adhering to a strict weight, will be reviewed by the BYF Board.

Players qualifying for helmet stripes based on the chart below must be identified by the single or double stripe(s) being placed horizontally above the ear holes on the helmet. Stripes must be a minimum of 3 inches in length and clearly visible from the sidelines. Use a contrasting color tape to what the helmet color is (i.e. dark on light or light on dark).

GRADE	Unrestricted – No Stripes	Designated – Single Stripe (SS)	Restricted – Double Stripes (DS)
Positional Limitations	None	Offense: Center (C), Guard (LG, RG), Tackle (LT, RT) & Tight End (TE) only. Defense: None	Offense: Center (C), Guard (LG, RG) & Tackle (LT, RT) only. Defense: Nose Guard (NG) & Defensive End (DE) only.
3 rd Grade	Under 75 lbs.	75 lbs. to 95 lbs.	Over 95 lbs.
4 th Grade	Under 90 lbs.	90 lbs. to 115 lbs.	Over 115 lbs.
5 th Grade	Under 100 lbs.	100 lbs. to 130 lbs.	Over 130 lbs.

Note: Official weights will disregard ANY number after the decimal point; there is NO ROUNDING for official weight purposes. For example, 140.1 and 140.9 are both recorded as 140.

Restricted Players (Double Stripes) =

Restricted Players can ONLY line up in an interior line position; center (C), offensive guard (LG, RG) or offensive tackle (LT, RT) on offense and nose guard (NG) or defensive end (DE) on defense. These players may NOT go downfield for a pass.

If a Restricted Player has possession of the ball on offense or defense, the play is immediately whistled dead.

Designated Players (Single Stripes) –

In addition to playing Restricted Player positions (center, offensive guard, offensive tackle, defensive end and nose guard), Designated Players may line up as a Tight End (TE). As a Tight End, a Designated Player must be no more than one yard from the nearest tackle, i.e. a Designated Player may line up as “Y” in Pro Formations and “X” or “Y” in Tight Formations.

A “Designated Player” playing on defense may advance a fumble or interception.

*****A Designated or Restricted Player in an ineligible position shall result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.***

Ball Carrying Players (No Stripes)

“Unrestricted” Ball Carrying players can line up in ANY position on offense and ANY position on defense.

EQUIPMENT

Football Size	3 rd Grade: Pee Wee size football. 4 th - 5 th Grade: Youth size football.
Game Balls	Each offense may use its own football as long as it is official size and inflated to the standard high school rules.

FIELDS

Field Size	80 yards x 40 yards.
Team Location	Team benches will be on opposite sides of the field.
Field Inspection	Pre-game field inspection – team head coaches are to do a brief overview of the field and equipment. If anything is considered to be unsafe, they must correct it or contact the BYF board prior to game play.
Coach's Box	30 yard line to 30 yard line.

COACHES & FANS

On-Field Coaches	One coach for the offense and one coach for the defense can be in the huddle and on the field during the plays. Coaches on field must stay 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage and remain silent once the offensive line is set and until the play is completed (5-yard penalty).
Coaches Requirements & Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more than five (5) coaches may be on the sidelines during a game. • If a coach or a member of a coaching team is ejected from any game, regardless of the situation, they are prohibited from being on the same sideline as their team for a minimum of one game (the next game).
General – Coaches, Players & Fans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If bleachers or grandstand arrangements are available at games; Parents MUST be seated in the stands regardless of the side. A “Delay of Game” penalty may be enforced if not in compliance. • Cheering and positive encouragement of players, coaches and fans embodies the spirit of athletics. Any conduct that is in direct conflict of good sportsmanship by players, coaches and/or fans can result in ejection from the game and sporting area. • No coach, player or fan will disrespectfully argue a decision of an official. Discussing and trying to understand an official’s decision is allowed as long as it is done in a respectful, calm and civil manner (<i>by coaches only</i>). • No coach, player or fan will yell obscenities at or denigrate any player, coach, referee or fan. • Physical and/or verbal abuse by any coach, player or fan is cause for dismissal from current and future BYF games. • Players, coaches and fans are not to chastise, give hints, help or instruct officials.

OFFICIALS

Number of Officials	Two (2) officials are assigned to each game.
Officials' Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officials will only be communicating with the Head Coach, Head Coach designate or coach on the field to eliminate confusion and other potential issues. • In a situation where any player, coach or spectator is displaying unsportsmanlike conduct, the Officials shall have the right to request that the Head Coach or any coach designee remove the offender(s) from the playing and viewing area, and can suspend play until this is done. If a suitable resolution is not reached in a reasonable amount of time (as determined by the Officials), the Officials have the right to call a forfeit. • Officials will officiate each game in accordance with league rules. If league rules do not specifically address a specific situation, Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) Rules will apply. • The Referee (Head Official) has final decision-making authority during the course of a game.
Officials & Rules	<p>Please note that the Officials also officiate at various levels. Certain rules have been modified to accommodate the goals of our league. At times there may be confusion as to specific rules and rule modifications. Also consider that due to the number of Officials vs. the number of players and various actions on the field, it is nearly impossible to see everything that happens on the field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officials are asked to understand the level and ability of the kids and in this light, they have the discretion to offer 'warnings' to teach and make kids aware of potential infractions (i.e.; lining up offside, holding, etc...) if they so choose. Warnings are discretionary and optional. • Officials are asked to try, when possible, to communicate any warnings to the Head Coach as well. • Coaches MUST remember that the Officials do not have any stake in the outcome of the game. • We ask that regardless of the situation, that the adults involved show a mutual respect towards each other and set a positive example of sportsmanship for the players.
Rules 'Review'	<p>If during a game, the Head Coach believes that a ruling by an Official is not correct in accordance with the rules, the coach may call a timeout. At that time, BOTH Head Coaches and the officials are to come together to calmly and professionally discuss and review the rule. It is the responsibility of the Head Coach who called the timeout to have the proper documentation to address the rule. If the ruling is overturned due to the timeout and discussion, the timeout is not charged. If the ruling on the field stands, the timeout will be charged to the team who called the timeout. The Referee has the final decision-making authority during the course of a game.</p>
If Officials are a "No-Show"	<p>If Officials do not show up for your game, we ask that a coach notify the BYF board as soon as possible after your game. Please do not hold up your game, especially if there is another game scheduled after yours. Our goal is to minimize delays and late starts.</p> <p>**Recommended Solutions**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is another game nearby that has 2-3 Officials, please contact them and notify them that you do not have any Officials and ask for their assistance. • If a league Official is not an option, coaches should get together and mutually agree to each select one responsible adult representative from each side to officiate the game.

RULES – GENERAL

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.

Game Length	Teams will play 15-minute running quarters with the stop time rules being used during the last two minutes of each half.
Play Clock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clock will be stopped for injuries and immediately after a score. • Extra points will not be run against the game clock. • The 25 second clock will be started by the officials for extra points, with a “delay of game” receiving the usual 5 yard penalty.
Time Outs	Each team will be allotted three time-outs per half. No carryover.
Halftime	Halftime will be 5 minutes (shortened if agreed to by both coaches or by the official).
Overtime	<p>Ties are decided by each team trying to score from the 10 yard line.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Each team gets one possession to score. This would typically be up to 4 plays from the 10 yard line; however this could be extended with defensive penalties. b) If a team scores, they also try for an extra point from the 3 yard line. c) If a team loses possession of the ball, they cannot run any further plays. The team with the highest score wins the tiebreaker. If both teams are tied after one overtime in a regular season game, the game ends in a tie. Playoff games will be played until a winner is determined. d) There is no limitation on what players are used on offense or defense, with the exception of weight restrictions.
Scoring	<p>TOUCHDOWN = 6 POINTS SAFETY = 2 POINTS Point After Touchdown (PAT)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A PAT which is run will be awarded 1 point. b) If a ball is thrown into the end zone and caught by an eligible receiver, it is a 2 point conversion. c) If the ball is thrown to the flat as a forward pass and caught by a running back (FB, HB), even behind the line of scrimmage, and run in, it would still be counted as pass receiving yardage and is therefore a 2 point conversion. d) If a ball is thrown to a receiver (X, Y, Z) and lateraled to a running back (FB, HB) (as in a hook and ladder play), it would be tabulated as rushing yardage by high school, college and pros, and is therefore a 1 point conversion.
Penalties	The maximum penalty is 10 yards.
Facemask	Facemask: Any and all grabbing of the helmet opening, no matter how significant, shall always be a 10-yard penalty. A stiff arm by a running back (FB, HB) is allowed as long as the ball carrier doesn't grab the defensive player's mask and a tackler can put their hand on the ball carrier's helmet provided they don't grab an opening.
General Playing Time Rule	<p>Each player should play at least a minimum of 50% of the game; which is defined as each player:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Starts and plays on defense throughout one entire half (e.g., first half). 2. Starts and plays on offense throughout the opposite half (e.g., second half).
Substitution Rules	<p>Substitutions during the progress of a game that would reduce playing time for any player below the minimum playing time rules ARE NOT ALLOWED. The only exceptions to this rule are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) A player is injured and cannot complete the minimum playing time. b) An occasional one play "instructional substitution" to enable coach's instruction for an individual player is acceptable and not a violation of the substitution or playing time rule as long as these instances are of a limited nature. Repetitive "instructional substitutions" for the same player (e.g., more than two or three times in a half) can be construed as violation of substitution and playing time rules. Also, substitution for multiple players at the same

	<p>time (e.g., more than two) under the guise of "instructional substitutions" is NOT allowed and can also be construed as a violation of these rules.</p> <p>c) Coach's disciplinary action taken for a violation of team rules (e.g., "benching" a player for one series for unexcused absences). Players suspended from school are not eligible to compete in BYF games.</p>
Situational Substitution	<p>Situational substitutions are allowed as long as the "substitutions"</p> <p>a) Do not impact the General Minimum playing time rules for any player.</p> <p>b) Do not abuse the substitution rules.</p>
Player Position Limitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams are allowed to have 2 unique offensive backfields, 1 for each half (trick play). • No player can be in ball carrying or pass catching positions for more than 2 quarters. A player who has played or will play 2 quarters in a ball carrying position (QB, FB, HB, X, Y, Z) CAN play tight end (TE) but CANNOT receive a pass. In addition, a player that has played TE for 2 quarters and has received a forward pass is NOT eligible to play a ball carrying position. • No player can be in a linebacker (ILB, OLB) position on defense for more than 2 quarters. • Offense and Defense rotations and unique backfields will change at Halftime; no quarterly or series by series rotations are allowed.
Playing Time Rule Violations	<p>In general, violation of playing time and substitution rules will warrant review by the BYF Board of Directors and possible actions may be implemented.</p>

RULES – OFFENSE

Balanced Offense	Balance Rules: Excluding the center, quarterback, fullback and halfback who compromise the center of the “I” formation, you must have 3 players on one side of the formation and 4 players on the other side of the formation. In other words, one side of the formation can only have at most one more player on that side of the ball than exists on the other side of the ball.
Balanced O-Lines	No unbalanced lines are allowed on offense from tackle to tackle; i.e. there must be a center with one guard and one tackle on each side of the center (LT, LG C, RG, RT).
Legal Offensive Line	5 in the box (LT, LG, C, RG, RT - balanced line)
Wide Out Rules	Wide Out Rules: Only 3 players can be split wide. There must be 5 men in the box at the start of each play.
No Huddle Offense	A no-huddle offense is not allowed unless it is in the last two minutes of either half.
Quarterback Sneaks	A quarterback (QB) sneak is defined as taking the snap directly from underneath the center (C) and attempting to run behind the center (C) or the guards (LG, RG). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The QB sneak is not allowed when the distance to a first down or goal line is 4 yards or less. This rule is in place because the defense is restricted by the 4 yard linebacker rule.
Shotgun	No shotgun formation is allowed.
Players in Motion	No motion is allowed.

RULES – DEFENSE

Legal Defense	Only a 3-4 defense is allowed.
Defensive Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defensive Lineman (DE, NG) in the box (between the tackles) may not move after they are set in their stance. It is the Official’s discretion to call defensive line movement offside or not. Some movement to allow the defensive player to adjust head-up on the offensive player may be allowed (we are teaching the game). • Linebackers (ILB, OLB) & Defensive Backs (CB, SS, FS) must remain stationary until the snap of the ball.
Defensive Gap Lineup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lineman must line up directly in front of the offensive lineman (helmet to helmet). They may not line up in the gap. • Defensive ends (DE) can align helmet on the outside shoulder of the tight end (TE).
Stunting/Shooting Gaps	Stunting is allowed. Stunting is defined as a defensive lineman shooting the gap or crossing two defensive linemen.
Depth & Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linebackers (ILB, OLB) will be in a 2 point stance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inside Linebackers (ILB) must play 4 yards off the line of scrimmage; head up on the guards (LG, RG). ○ Outside Linebackers (OLB) may not line up inside the head of the furthest outside offensive lineman that is not split out wide. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>If there is no tight end (TE) in front of them:</u> OLB must play 3 yards off the line of scrimmage and 3 yards wide (outside the last lineman on the line of scrimmage). ▪ <u>If there is a tight end (TE) in front of them:</u> OLB must line up outside shade (head up on the outside shoulder) of the tight end (TE). • Free Safeties (FS) must be 8 yards back (or farther) from the line of scrimmage. Safeties may limit their 8 yard distance to 5 yards when on or inside the 10 yard line. • Strong Safeties (SS) must be 3 yards wide (outside the last lineman on the line of scrimmage) and 3 yards deep. • Corner Backs (CB) must be 8 yards back, head up on receivers. • Nose Guard (NG) aligns head up on center (C) in a 3 point stance. • Defensive Ends (DE) align head up on the tackles (LT, RT) in a 3 point stance.
Short Yardage	Goal line defenses or “cheating” forward of the linebackers in short yardage situations are NOT allowed.
Blitzing	No blitzing or forward movement prior to the snap of the ball. Defensive ends (DE) and linebackers (ILB, OLB) may rush in after the snap.
Stacked LB’s	No stacking of linebackers, i.e. linebackers cannot line up behind a defensive lineman.
Tackling	Tackling by the head/helmet and/or horse collar tackles are not allowed. Both constitute a personal foul.

RULES – SPECIAL TEAMS

Punting	There are no punts. The offense may choose to concede a “punt” and the ball will be placed 20 yards downfield from the line of scrimmage and possession will go to the opposing team.
Kickoffs	There are NO kickoffs. The ball will be placed at the 20 yard line and possession will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Be determined by the coin toss to start the game; the winner of the coin toss may choose the ball or to defer it.b) Go to the team which did not receive the ball at the start of the game, for the start of the 2nd half.c) Go to the opposing team after a team scores.

OFFENSIVE FORMATIONS

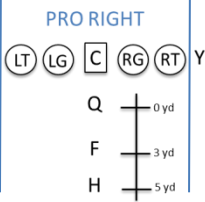
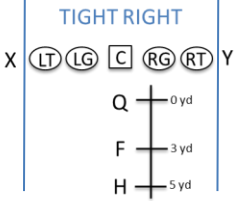
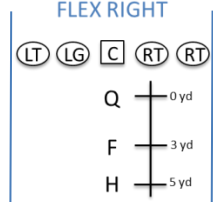
Limitations:

- Teams may have X, Y or Z receivers with certain limitations. It is important to understand the definitions of each before we go into formations.
 - We define “Z” as a receiver that is split wide of the formation and is at least 2 yards or more outside of the closest offensive lineman. “Z” is always off the line of scrimmage.
 - We define “X” and “Y” as receivers or tight ends (TE) depending on the formation. “X” and “Y” are always on the line of scrimmage.

Valid Formations:

- The formations below are for illustrative purposes as well as a point of reference for any formation which might be disputed by another coach.

3 Back “I” Formation: Shown below in a RIGHT formation but can also be run in a LEFT formation.

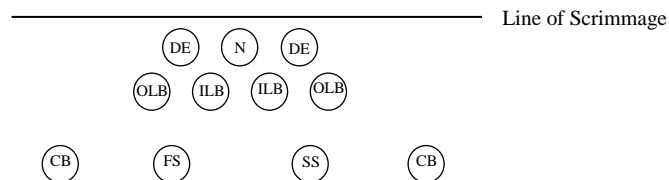
<p>X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PRO RIGHT</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">Z</p>	<p>Quarterback (Q) must be under center.</p> <p>Fullback (F) aligns directly behind Q at a distance of 3 yards.</p> <p>Halfback (H) aligns directly behind Q at a distance of 5 yards.</p>	<p>1 Tight End (Y) on the line. Y is the #2 receiver on his side. Y is on the same side as Z.</p> <p>2 Receivers (X, Z), one on each side. X is on the line; Z is off the line. X is the #1 receiver on his side; Z is the #1 receiver on his side.</p>
<p>X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TIGHT RIGHT</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">Z</p>	<p>Quarterback (Q) must be under center.</p> <p>Fullback (F) aligns directly behind Q at a distance of 3 yards.</p> <p>Halfback (H) aligns directly behind Q at a distance of 5 yards.</p>	<p>2 Tight Ends (X, Y) on the line, one on each side. X is the #1 receiver on his side; Y is the #2 receiver on his side.</p> <p>1 Receiver (Z) off the line. Z is the #1 receiver on his side. Z is on the same side as Y.</p>
<p>X</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FLEX RIGHT</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">Z</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Y</p>	<p>Quarterback (Q) must be under center.</p> <p>Fullback (F) aligns directly behind Q at a distance of 3 yards.</p> <p>Halfback (H) aligns directly behind Q at a distance of 5 yards.</p>	<p>3 Receivers (X, Y, Z). X and Y are on the line; Z is off the line. X and Y are the #1 receivers on their side; Z is the #2 receiver on his side. Y and Z are on the same side.</p>

DEFENSIVE FORMATIONS

Valid Alignment:

3-4 Defense

- 3 players are on the line of scrimmage: 2 defensive ends (DE), one on each end of the line (lined up on the offensive tackles) and 1 nose guard in between (lined up on the center).
 - **Nose Guard** (NG) aligns head up on center (C) in a 3 point stance.
 - **Defensive Ends** (DE) align head up on the tackles (LT, RT) in a 3 point stance.
- Right behind the defensive line are 4 Linebackers (LB), 2 outside linebackers (OLB) and 2 inside linebackers (ILB).
 - **Outside Linebackers** (OLB) may not line up inside the head of the furthest outside offensive lineman that is not split out wide.
 - If there is no tight end (TE) in front of them: OLB must play 3 yards off the line of scrimmage and 3 yards wide (outside the last lineman on the line of scrimmage).
 - If there is a tight end (TE) in front of them: OLB must line up outside shade (head up on the outside shoulder) of the tight end (TE).
 - **Inside Linebackers** (ILB) must play 4 yards off the line of scrimmage; head up on the guards (LG, RG) prior to the start of the play.
 - **At times, one or more of the linebackers will line up on the line of scrimmage.**
- **Safeties** (FS, SS) are not allowed to blitz.
 - **Free Safeties** (FS) must be 8 yards back (or farther) from the line of scrimmage. Safeties may limit their 8 yard distance to 5 yards when on or inside the 10 yard line.
 - **Strong Safeties** (SS) must be 3 yards wide (outside the last lineman on the line of scrimmage) and 3 yards deep.
- **Corner Backs** (CB) must be 8 yards back, head up on receivers.



SOME HELPFUL MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL RULES

Referee Authority	Rule 1-Sec.1-Art.3: The referee has authority to rule promptly, and in the spirit of good sportsmanship, on any situation not specifically covered in the rules. The referees' decisions are final in all matters pertaining to the game.
Timeouts	Time out. 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 his 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.
Illegal Block	Illegal Blocking-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 his back, or the block is from the side, it is not clipping if the opponent was able to see the blocker. (15-yd penalty)
Block below waist	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. (15-yd penalty)
Chop Block	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. (15 yard penalty)
Illegal Contact	Illegal Personal Contact. Rule 9-Sec.4-Art.2: No player shall: b. Charge into or throw an opponent to the ground after he is obviously out of play, or after the ball is clearly 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 an 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.) j. Intentionally use his helmet to butt or ram an opponent. Rule 9-Sec.4-Art.7: A defensive (and offensive) player shall not use his hands to strike (opponents) head. (all 15-yd penalties)
Snap Rule	Snap Rule 7-Sec.1: a. The snapper may be over the ball...and no part of his 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 clearly intended to cause the defense to encroach. (5 yards penalty)
Coin Toss	Not more than four captains from each team may be present at the coin toss. The visiting captain shall call.
Walk-ons	No Walk-ons. Rule 7-Sec.2-Art.1: After the ball is ready for play, each player of the offense must have been, momentarily, within 15 yards of the ball before the snap. (5-yd penalty) Also, Rule 9-Sec.6-Art.4c: To use a replaced player or substitute in a substitution or pretend substitution to deceive opponents at or immediately before the snap or free kick. (15-yd penalty)
Runner Assistant	Assist the Runner: An offensive player shall not push, pull or lift the runner to assist his forward progress. Rule 9-Sec.1 (5-yd penalty)
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.) (15-yd penalty & disqualification)
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.
Inadvertent Whistle	Inadvertent Whistle: Rule 4.-Sec.2-Art.3: During a down, or during a down in which the penalty for foul is declined, if an inadvertent whistle occurs while: a. A legal forward pass or snap is in flight, or during a legal kick, the down shall be replayed. b. The ball is loose following a backward pass, fumble, illegal forward pass or illegal kick, the team last in possession may choose to put the ball in play where possession was lost or replay the down. c. The ball is in possession that the team may choose to accept the play at that spot or replay the down.

Pass Interference	Pass Interference restrictions only apply beyond the neutral zone and only if the forward pass crosses the neutral zone. Pass interference restrictions begin for offense at the snap and for 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. (15 yards from previous spot and automatic first down if by defense or 15 yards from previous spot and loss of down if by offense) It is not pass interference if unavoidable contact occurs when two or more eligible are making a simultaneous, bona fide attempt to move toward, catch or bat the pass. 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.
Roughing the Passer	Roughing the Passer. Rule 9-Sec.3 Art.3: Defensive players must make a definite effort to avoid charging into a passer, after it is clear the ball has been thrown. (15 yards and automatic first down from previous spot or from completion.)
Unsportsmanlike Conduct	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 himself. (15 yards & disqualification if flagrant, the 2nd unsportsmanlike foul results in disqualification.)
Parent/Spectator Conduct	Parents and spectators. Rule 9-Sec.9-Art.1: A player or non-player or person not subjected 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.)