

McCook YMCA Youth Flag Football Rulebook



YMCA GOAL

The YMCA goal is to provide youth the opportunity to play flag football. To teach the sport and to put positive principles into practice. Sportsmanship, teamwork, and fun are to be emphasized. All participants shall play at minimum, 50% of the game.

YMCA FACILITY POLICIES

All YMCA facilities; game and practice locations included, are smoke, tobacco, and alcohol free zones. All facilities and locations are pet/animal free zones for the direct safety of others. Please clean up your own and others trash when done.

YMCA PARTICIPANT AND SPECTATOR CONDUCT

- All coaches, players, spectators, and volunteers are expected to adhere to YMCA philosophies, guidelines, and codes of conduct and should hold themselves to the utmost integrity.
- Coaches are responsible for all team members before, during and after games and practices.
- YMCA referees, supervisors and volunteers are to not tolerate unsportsmanlike conduct. In the incident of poor sportsmanship, the violator will be reminded on first offense, and ejected on any second offense. Trash talk or taunting in the intent to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstance will not be tolerated. Physical harm to others is unacceptable.

WARNINGS

Players or coaches who consistently infringe upon the rules of the game; make disrespectful remarks or gestures towards others; or otherwise conduct themselves in an unsportsmanlike manner may be warned by the official. If a second warning is necessary; violent conduct or serious foul play continues; or foul or abusive language occurs, then the player or coach may be suspended from the game. The Sports Director and CEO shall review the severity of the act and determine further action and/or discipline.

EQUIPMENT

- Players will wear their provided YMCA team color shirt/jersey respective to their team & sport. Shirts must be tucked in at all times. An untucked-shirt can be called for flag-guarding. Flag belts on, and flags properly secured at the hips of each player with the flags pointing outward.
- Rubber/plastic cleats are recommended, but not required. Regular tennis shoes are fine. Metal cleats are not allowed. It is highly recommended players will wear solid black shorts/sweatpants. – NO jewelry, hats, towels, handwarmers etc.
- Coaches are provided and responsible for equipment bags that include balls, flag belts and cones for each team and for ensuring everything in the bag is returned back to the YMCA at the end of the season.

PRACTICES

Practices will be scheduled by the coach in conjunction with team members. It is recommended teams practice at least two to three times before their first game. At least once, and no more than two practices a week should be conducted thereafter. Practices should be approximately 1 to 1.5 hours in

length. If unable to attend, a Head Coach is expected and required to inform the team and ask for an assistant/team parent to fill in. Practice at the McCook High School & Junior High football fields will not be allowed until 6:30pm on weeknights. Failure to comply with this policy will result in ALL TEAMS being disallowed to utilize these fields for practice.

GAME RULES, PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

DIVISIONS –PLAYERS ON THE FIELD

Team sizes/rosters may vary. If a team is short, coaches must have approval of Sports Director/Game Officials to play with a modified number, or to share players. Minimum matchup should be 5v5 in K-1st and 6v6 in other divisions.

- **K/1st: 6v6; Peewee sized football**
- **2nd/3rd: 8v8; Junior sized football**
- **4th/5th/6th: 8v8; Youth sized football**

TIME & GAME FORMAT

Games will be played at the scheduled times. Please have your teams ready to play 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time.

- **Time and clock conduct:** Two 20-minute halves. 5-minute halftime. All games will be on a running clock. The clock stops for timeouts or injuries only, though officials can stop the clock at their discretion to stop a team from delaying or other unsportsmanlike conduct.
- **Time outs:** Each team has two 30-second timeouts per half. Consecutive time outs by the same team, without a down played between shall not be allowed. When a team has used its two time outs, the referee shall notify the coach to that effect.
- **Game delay:** Each time the ball is spotted, a team has 30 seconds to snap the ball.
- **The following acts shall be ruled as illegal play:**
 - a. Interrupting the 30-second count, except for a free time out or an injury time out.
 - b. Consuming more than 30 seconds in putting the ball in play.
- **Coin toss:**
 - Each coach shall designate a team captain to game officials. Team captains will compete in rock, paper, scissors to determine the calling of the coin. A team captain's choice of any option shall be irrevocable. The winning captain of the rock, paper, scissors shall make his choice of the following options:
 - Offense
 - Defense
 - The loser of the coin toss has the choice of direction. Possession changes to start the second half to the team that started the game on defense. Teams change direction after the first half.
- **Substitutions:** All coaches must play each player an equal amount of time regardless of ability.
 - Incoming substitute or replacement players shall not be on the field simultaneously while the ball is in play.
 - A team allowed an excess time out for an injured player shall be restricted to only replacing the injured player.
 - An injured player, whose injury caused a free time or officials time out charged to his team shall leave the game until a change of possession.
 - A player suspended for unsportsmanlike conduct, or other flagrant violation, shall be barred from further participation in the game and must leave the field of play.

- A substitute may legally enter the game whenever the ball is dead; however, a substitution shall not be made after the referee has declared the ball ready for play.

COACHES

- Teams may have a total of 3 coaches.
- One to two coaches may be allowed on the field for the offense and defense. It is required you have at least one coach on the sideline as well.
- Coaches are responsible for having a rulebook and schedule on hand.

GENERAL RULES AND GAME GUIDELINES

- The lines bounding the sidelines and end zones are out of bounds, in their entirety and those lines bind the inbound area.
- The entire width of each goal line shall be part of the end zone.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball at its 5-yard line and has four plays to cross midfield. Once a team crosses midfield, it has four plays to score a touchdown. Crossing midfield is the only opportunity for an offense to gain a first down within a single possession.
- If the offense fails to score, the ball changes possession and the new offensive team starts its drive on its own 5-yard line.
- If the offensive team fails to cross midfield, possession of the ball changes and the opposition starts its drive from its own 5-yard line.
- If the defense intercepts the ball, a defensive player can attempt to return it until down or out of bounds.
- All possession changes, except interceptions, start on the offense's 5-yard line.
- The ball carrier may not use his hands in any manner to protect his flags. He may not stick out his hand or arm in any way.
- De-flagging is the capture of a ball carrier's flag by a defensive player.
- The flag must be cleanly taken from the ball carrier. If when attempting to take the flag, the defensive player holds the ball carrier until the flag can be removed, this is a penalty of 10 yards from the spot of the violation.
- A down shall be ended and the ball declared dead when a flag is taken from the ball carrier's belt. The ball will be marked at the spot where the capture occurred.
- Should the ball carrier lose a flag before it is pulled, the ball is returned to that spot.
- Players shall not interlock hands/arms or legs with one another.
- No offensive formation shifts.
- All linemen, offense and defense, must be in a 3-point stance.

GENERAL OFFENSE

- **NO HARMFUL INTENTIONAL CONTACT** of any kind is permitted and may also result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and/or player ejection.
- The offense must huddle before each play. No-huddle offenses may NOT be used.
- In 8v8, the offense shall consist of 8 active players--5 lineman and 3 backfield men. The line consists of a center, 2 guards and 2 ends. The backfield is the quarterback and 2 halfbacks/wingbacks. The ends must line up no more than 5 yards from the guards or center. The wings/back must line up no further than 5 yards outside the ends or guards, whichever is closer. On the offensive team, only the backs and ends are eligible for a pass. The center and 2 guards are not eligible to carry or catch the ball. There **MUST** be one guard and end on either side of the center. All backs must be at least one yard off the line of scrimmage. In the K-1st

division, the offense shall consist of the center ineligible, and two ends on the line, (one each on either side of the center) then the quarterback and two backs. Everyone but the center is eligible in 6v6 to receive a pass. If ever playing 7v7, there shall be a center and two guards ineligible on the line as well as an end that is eligible on the line, a quarterback, and two backs.

- The ball must be snapped between the center's legs to start a play. Shotgun snaps are allowed.
- There is a 30-second huddle/play clock, which starts once the line of scrimmage is marked and the ball is spotted.
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time. All motion must be parallel to the line of scrimmage and no motion is permitted towards the line of scrimmage. A motioned player does NOT need to stop, prior to the snap of the ball. Only the two halfbacks are eligible to go in motion.
- Spinning is allowed.
- Jumping or diving to advance the ball is prohibited. However, an offensive player may jump over a defensive player on the ground to avoid a collision. Jumping or diving to catch a pass is permitted.
- The ball will be spotted at the location of where the flag was when it was separated from the belt.

BLOCKING

- Blocking shall be done by use of arms and hands extended directly out in front of the player. Players blocking shall keep their arms in front of them and hands open or closed, NOT holding the defensive player or their shirt in ANY manner, moving their feet to stay in front of defensive players. No part of the blocker's body, except the feet, shall be in contact with the ground during the play.
- NO BODY BLOCKS, ROLLING BLOCKS, BUTTING, OR USE OF THE ELBOWS, OR IN A STRIKING MANNER. Illegal blocking results in a 10-yard penalty.
- Defensive players are restricted in the use of their hands to the upper frame and arms/shoulders of the offensive players.
- Downfield blocking or pushing a ball carrier that is running near a sideline for the purpose of knocking him out-of-bounds and stopping his progress is a 10 yard penalty. A ball carrier's progress can be stopped only by de-flagging that player or them stepping out of bounds on their own.
- Knee blocking or tripping used in slowing down the ball carrier is a penalty of 10 yards.

PASSING GAME

- QB has a seven (7) second "pass clock." If the pass is not thrown within seven seconds, the play is ruled dead, with loss of down. The ball is placed at the original line of scrimmage.
- If the ball is handed off or leaves the hands of the first player to handle the snap, the seven-second pass rule is no longer in effect.
- Passes must be thrown initially from behind the line of scrimmage. Failure to comply results in loss of down.
- Only one forward pass per down.
- A ball carrier may hand or pass backwards at any time.
- A backward pass may NOT be intercepted or picked up by an opponent and advanced the other way.

- When a backwards pass or fumble goes out of bounds it becomes dead and belongs to the team that last possessed the ball at the spot the ball went out of bounds. If it occurs in the end zone then it is a safety.
- A receiver must have at least one foot in bounds when making a catch.
- A receiver is down where his flag belt is pulled.
- To achieve a first down, or a touchdown, the ball must cross the plane of the first down line and/or goal line.
- If a receiver's flag inadvertently falls off, even without contact from another player, that player is ruled down at the spot the flag fell off.
- If a receiver's flag inadvertently falls off prior to receiving the ball and later in the same play catches the ball without replacing the flag, the receiver will be down immediately at the point of reception.
- If a receiver and defender both catch the ball at the same time, and both retain possession to the ground, then the tie would go to the receiver, with the receiver being down at the point of the tied reception. The exception would be if such play was fourth down and line to-gain has not been reached.
- A receiver who willingly runs out of bounds cannot come back in bounds to catch a ball. Loss of down on instance. If a receiver is forced out of bounds by a defensive player, then a 10 yard penalty should be called on the defensive player.
- Interceptions can be returned.

RUNNING GAME

- Any player not on the line behind the line of scrimmage can initially receive a handoff/lateral behind the line of scrimmage. Any backwards handoffs/laterals are legal beyond the line of scrimmage.
- There is no limit to the number of handoffs performed by the offense in a single play.

Quarterback Running Game

- In all age divisions, designed quarterback runs (sweep, draw, option, scramble, other) are permitted only when the quarterback runs outside of his offensive ends (tackles). No quarterback runs will be allowed between the offensive ends (tackles) on the line of scrimmage. However, a quarterback may be involved in a reverse or pitch pass style of play in which they may receive a lateral, handoff, or pass after initially handling the snap. In this instance, the quarterback would then be free to cross the line of scrimmage anywhere.
- A player who takes a handoff can throw the ball, as long as he or she does not pass the line of scrimmage first.
- It is the responsibility of the ball carrier to avoid colliding with defenders that lie in his/her path. Unintentional contact will not be penalized, provided the ball carrier makes an effort to avoid it. Failure to attempt to avoid contact with a defender (charging) may be penalized. Intentional contact will not be tolerated, and may also result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and/or player ejection.
- All fumbles, other than a muffed snap to the quarterback, will be a dead ball at the spot where the fumble occurs. A muffed snap to the quarterback will be blown dead and the down will be replayed.

GENERAL DEFENSE

- **NO HARMFUL INTENTIONAL CONTACT** of any kind is permitted and may also result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty, and/or player ejection.
- In 8v8, the defense shall consist of at least 3 down linemen (1 yard off the ball) and no more than 5. (min. 2, max of 3 in 6v6) Only the down linemen can rush. A player's hand **MUST** be down in a three-point stance in order to rush the passer. **DOWN LINEMAN RUSHING MUST GIVE A 1-SECOND ALLOTMENT (1-Mississippi) TO ALLOW THE OFFENSE TO DEVELOP THEIR PLAY.** Linebackers shall lineup at least 5 yards from the LOS and cannot blitz.
- Once the ball is handed off, or the play is recognized as a designed quarterback run/scramble in the 2nd-6th grade divisions, all defenders are permitted to pursue the ball carrier.
- Defenders must only attempt to grab an offensive players flags when trying to get them down.
- If a defender attempts to pull an offensive player's flags and inadvertently grabs their jersey, the defender must immediately and completely release the jersey before they can reattempt to pull the flag. Failure to do so will result in a holding penalty.
- All defensive players must give the offense a one-yard cushion prior to the snap of the ball. No lineman allowed directly over the center. Diving after a flag is allowed, but not recommended.

FLAG PULLING/GUARDING

- Flag Guarding is an attempt by the ball carrier to obstruct the defender's access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the head, hand, arm, or shoulder or covering the flags with the football jersey.
- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball and defenders can dive to pull flags, but cannot tackle, hold or run through the ball carrier when pulling flags.
- It is illegal to attempt to strip or pull the ball to force a fumble from the ball carrier's possession at any time.
- A defensive player may not intentionally pull the flags off a player who is not in possession of the ball.
- The flag belts (not the flags themselves) must be secured to ensure they do not hang appearing to be a flag. If the belt is hanging, flag guarding may be called.
- Shirts/jerseys must be tucked in always. If a shirt/jersey is hanging out, flag guarding may be called.

REPLAY OF DOWN/INADVERTENT WHISTLE

- In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - a. Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew, and the down is consumed.
 - b. Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage.

DEAD BALLS

- A play is ruled dead when the ball carrier's flag is pulled, the ball carrier's flag inadvertently falls off, the ball carrier steps out of bounds, any part of the ball carrier's body other than hands touch the ground, the ball carrier lets the ball hit the ground, a penalty occurs, QB runs out of time, a ball is fumbled, or after a touchdown or extra point is scored.

SCORING

- A touchdown is equivalent to 6 points.
- Following a touchdown, the offensive team is given an opportunity to score an extra point.
- PAT (Point after touchdown) 1 point (5-yard line) or 2 points (10-yard line).

- A one-point PAT is pass only; two-point PAT can be run or pass.
- An interception or fumble on an extra point will result in a failed attempt. No returns or advances by the defense.

SAFETIES

- A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in his or her own endzone. Runners can be called down when their flags are pulled by a defensive player, a flag falls out, they step out of bounds, a knee or arm touches the ground, a fumble occurs in the endzone or if a snapped ball lands in or beyond the end zone. A penalty in the end zone (i.e. flag guarding) can also be ruled a safety.
- 2 points will be awarded for a safety. The team forcing a safety will receive possession of the ball and begin their drive at their own 5-yard line.

PENALTY ACCEPTANCE/PREFERENCE

- A team may decline the option to accept a penalty when the alternate option benefits them greater. i.e.: (The offensive team is penalized for offensive pass interference on 4th down and the offense did not convert for a first down on the play. It would be to the defensive team's benefit to decline this penalty so they can take possession of the ball, not allowing a replay of the 4th down.)

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES - 5 YARDS FROM THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE, REPLAY DOWN

- False start(offsidess)
- Illegal motion
- Delay of game
- Offensive pass interference
- Too many players on the field
- Improper equipment - equipment tampering etc.
- Illegal QB run- see QB run rule under running game

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES - 5 YARDS FROM THE SPOT OF INFRACTION AND LOSS OF THAT DOWN

- Flag guarding
- Illegal ball advancement – (jumping or diving to advance the ball)

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES – 10 YARDS FROM THE SPOT OF INFRACTION AND LOSS OF THAT DOWN

- Intentional contact – (illegal blocking, grabbing, charging, tackling, tripping, pushing, holding, obstructing, stiff arming)

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES – 5 YARDS FROM THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE, REPLAY DOWN

- Offsides
- Interrupting the 30-second count (play clock)
- Too many players on the field
- Improper equipment - equipment tampering etc.

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES - 5 YARDS FROM THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE, REPLAY DOWN

- Illegally rushing the quarterback
- Roughing the passer

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES - 5 YARDS FROM THE SPOT OF INFRACTION, REPLAY DOWN

- Defensive pass interference
- Intentionally removing a receiver's flag belt before he/she contacts the ball

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES – 10 YARDS FROM THE SPOT OF INFRACTION, REPLAY DOWN

- Intentional contact – (blocking, charging, tackling, tripping, pushing, holding, obstructing, stiff arming)

DEFENSIVE UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT - 15 YARDS FROM END OF PLAY, AUTOMATIC 1st DOWN

OFFENSIVE UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT - 15 YARDS FROM LINE OF SCRIMMAGE & LOSS OF DOWN

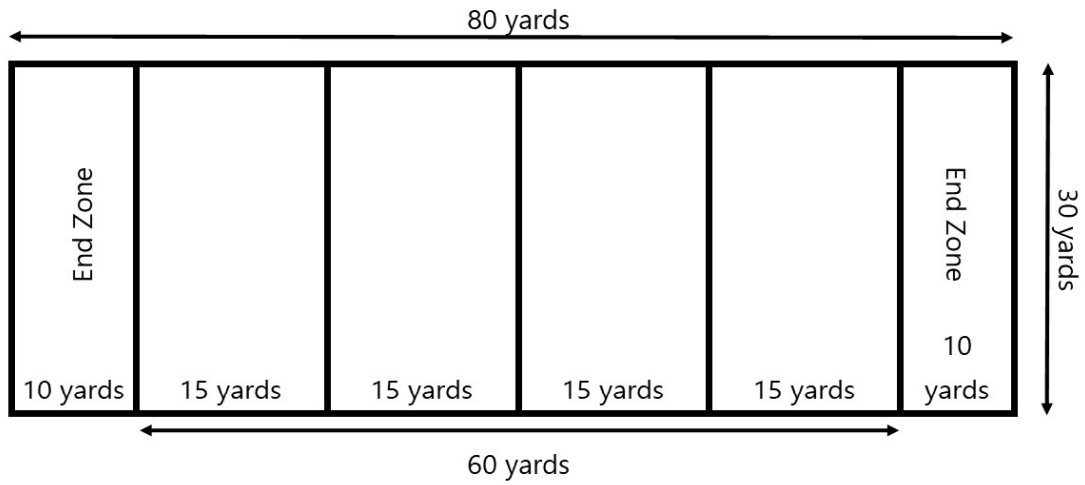
Any time both teams commit equal violations the play will be played over. If one team commits a more severe violation then that penalty will be upheld and assessed accordingly.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

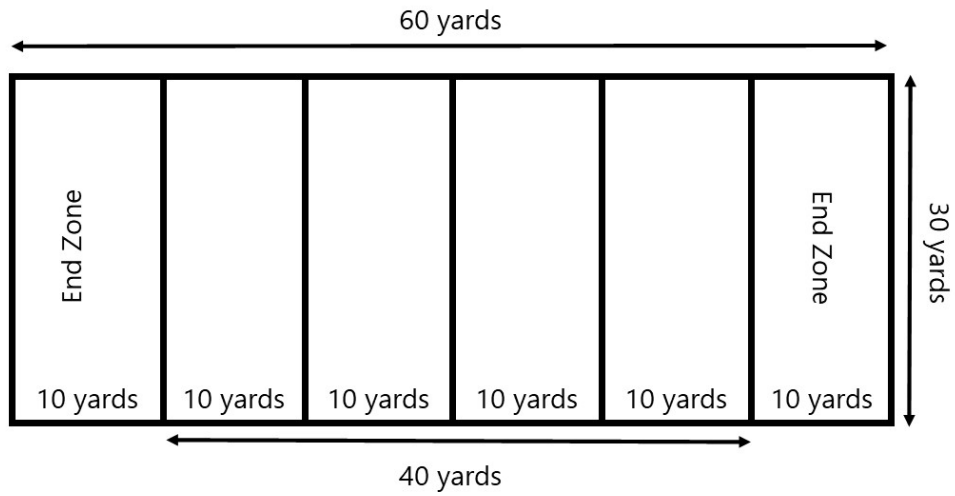
If the event liaison or referee witnesses any acts of intentional contact, tackling, elbowing, cheap shots, blocking or any unsportsmanlike act, the game will be stopped, and the player will be ejected from the game. The decision is made at the referee's discretion. No appeals will be considered. **FOUL PLAY WILL NOT BE TOLERATED! OFFENSIVE/CONFRONTATIONAL LANGUAGE IS NOT ALLOWED.** Officials have the right to determine offensive language. If offensive or confrontational language occurs, the referee will give one warning. If it continues, the player or players will be ejected from the game.

- Players, coaches, and spectators may not physically or verbally abuse any player, coach, official, spectator, or staff member.
- Ball-carriers MUST make an effort to avoid defenders with an established position.
- Defenders are not allowed to run through the ball-carrier when pulling flags.
- Fans must also adhere to good sportsmanship: Yell to cheer on your players, not to harass officials, participants, coaches, staff, or other spectators. Keep comments clean and profanity free. Compliment ALL players, not just one child or team.

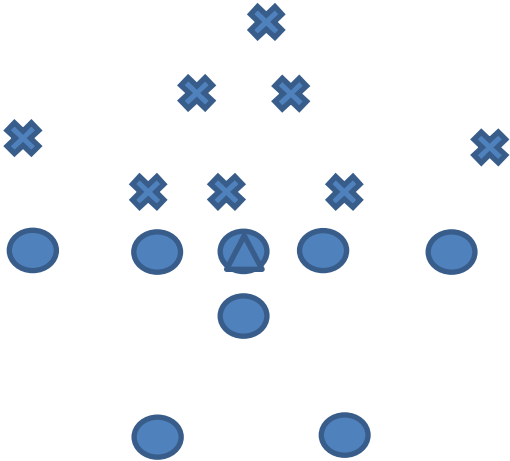
2nd - 6th Grade Field Dimensions



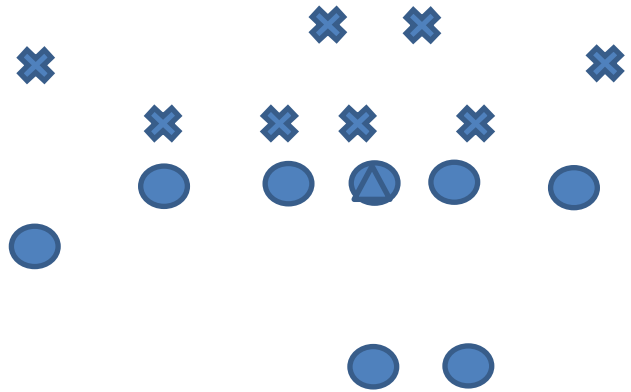
K - 1st Field Dimensions



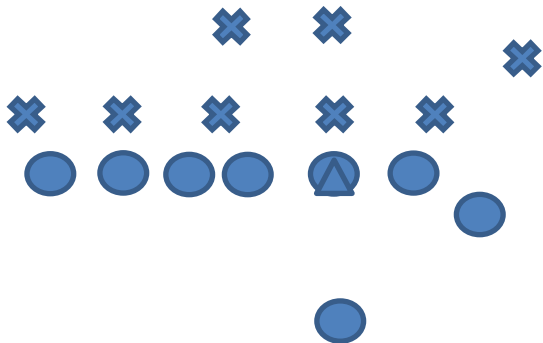
8v8 Example Acceptable formation. 5
on LOS, 1 guard and 1 end on each side
Ends are no further than 5yds from G's



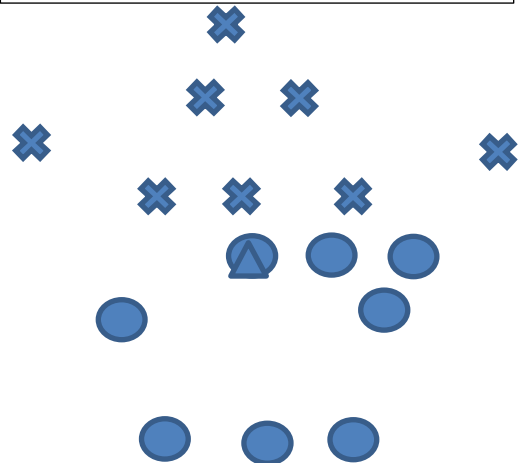
8v8 Example Acceptable formation. 5
on LOS, 1 guard and 1 end on each side
Back is no further than 5yds from End



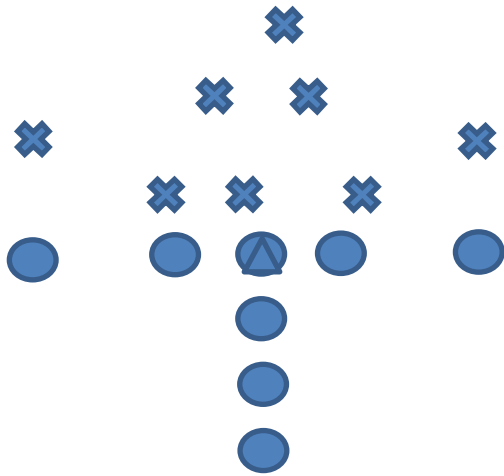
8v8 Example Illegal formation. – No
more than 5 players on LOS. No ends
on the same side. Too many DL.



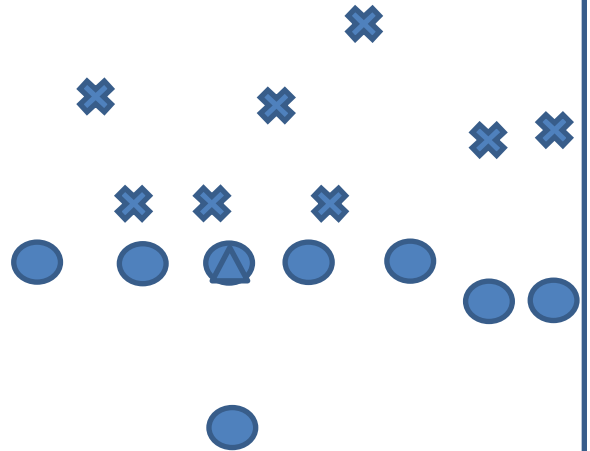
8v8 Example Illegal formation. No less
than 5 on LOS. Must have a guard and
end on both sides



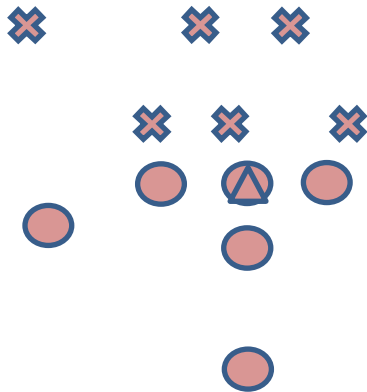
8v8 Example Acceptable formation



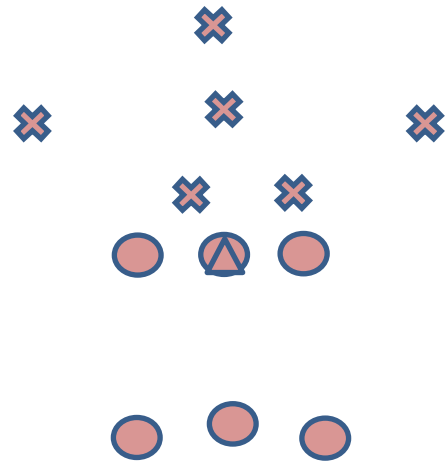
8v8 Example Acceptable formation



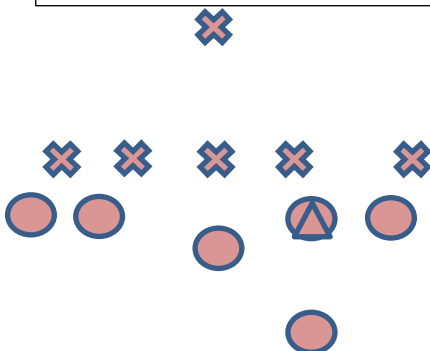
6v6 Example Acceptable formation



6v6 Example Acceptable formation



6v6 Example Illegal formation. Ends must be within 5 yards of Center. Backs off of the LOS. No more than 3 DL on the LOS.



6v6 Example Illegal formation. Ends must be on either side of center. No backs on the LOS. No Backs more than 5 yards from ends.

