



# 2019 Southwest Metro League 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Football Rules

\*Change log is on the last page of this document

## Participating Associations & Grades

Chaska Chanhassen Football Association	4 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grades	<a href="http://www.chaskafootball.com">www.chaskafootball.com</a>
Eden Prairie Football Association	4 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grades	<a href="http://www.edenprairiefootball.com">www.edenprairiefootball.com</a>
Prior Lake Football Association	5 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grades	<a href="http://www.playinfo.org/page/show/145923-football">www.playinfo.org/page/show/145923-football</a>
Orono Football Association	4 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> grades	<a href="https://www.oronoyouthfootball.org/">https://www.oronoyouthfootball.org/</a>

[www.swmlfootball.org](http://www.swmlfootball.org)

## General Rules Outline

**INTENT AND SPIRIT OF THE RULES AND STRUCTURE:** The intent and spirit of SWML is to simulate and to teach the basic fundamentals needed to play the game of football and to promote sportsmanship. It is our hope that our coaches and parents will not only teach this to the children but also practice it during the games.

SWML is not intended to supersede the community organization programs, but to create a unified and agreeable format for teams from various member communities' youth to play football. We do have a number of basic rules that must be adhered to. Individual organizations may have more specific/detailed rules, however, those rules may not specifically apply to other communities.

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 National Federation of High School Rules. With that said, this is not high school 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 referee has the final say on ANY rule interpretation. PLEASE do not argue the point. We would however ask that you refer any questions or issues to your organization's SWML Representative. 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 and learning experience for ALL players.

Although we make an attempt to instruct the officials in "our rules," they cannot be expected to understand all of the differences between our rules and high school rules. The only way it can work is that we all understand and follow the rules.

## Registration, Eligibility, and Rosters

Team Balance	The Program Director from each member association will strive to create balanced teams from his or her association by 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.
No Outside Recruits	Players for an association must be residents of that city or surrounding area or go to a school in that school district.
Trades/ Exchanges	The exchange of players between teams is prohibited except for very unusual circumstances and with the approval of the SWML Governing Board. If approved by the SWML Governing Board, the coach of the team borrowing player(s) for a game must at least one (1) day prior to the game, inform the opposing coach of the situation by email or phone call. Unless for very unusual circumstances, every effort should be taken to not put borrowed players in skill positions on offense and linebacker positions on defense.
Playing Up a Level	Players may, with the approval of the player's association, play up a grade level.
Roster Dates	Official team rosters must be submitted to the SWML 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 SWML Board.
Player ejection from a game	There shall be automatic ejection from the game for any fighting or serious offense as deemed by the game officials. If a player is ejected from a game, then that player may not play in the next game in which they are eligible to participate. The ejected player's Coach must inform their respective Area Director of the suspension the day of the suspension. The Area Director will notify the SWML League within 48 hours. Failure to report suspensions by the Coach to the Area Director will result in an additional game suspension for the Player and the Coach.
Coach ejection from a game	If a Coach is ejected from a game, then the Coach may not resume his duties until he appears before the SWML Board and the circumstances of the ejection are explored. Reinstatement shall rest solely with the SWML Board and the SWML Board shall have the right to ban that Coach from involvement in any SWML program in the future.
Team Size Requirements	The SWML requires the number of players per team adhere to the following: 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade: Minimum of 24 players per team / maximum of 30 players per team 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade: Minimum of 22 players per team / maximum of 30 players per team 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade: Minimum of 18 players per team / maximum of 24 players per team All exceptions must be approved by the SWML Board prior to the start of the season

## Scheduling

Season	Practices: Begin any time after August 1st. Each organization may have their own rules/regulations on starting dates, length, quantity, etc.
Cancellations	The Program Director of the association where a game is scheduled to be played, in conjunction with the field owners will determine whether a game should be cancelled because of weather or field conditions before the start of the game. Each member association is responsible for the condition of the fields and field equipment it provides for the games. The officials have the authority to cancel a game or delay a game that is 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 and lightning storm.</p> <p>Other weather – Games will be called at the field by the referees 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	<p>Games may be rescheduled only due to weather cancellations. It is considered a game if 3 quarters have been completed.</p> <p>Due to field permit issues and rescheduling of referees, please go to the SWML website for weather cancellations reschedule game information.</p>

## Weight Limitations

Weight rules are in place for safety. Players will be weighed by their respective associations and the player's official weight will be identified on the official team roster listed on the SWML website.

Weights are determined at equipment pickup and weigh-in. Official weight is the weight of a player in 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 local football association 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 SWML Board.

Players qualifying for helmet stripes based on the chart below must be identified by a single stripe 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 by using a contrasting color of tape compared to the color of the helmet (i.e. dark on light / light on dark).

Grade	Ball Carrying	Single Strippers
Positional Limitations	None.	Offense: C, G, T, TE, and non-running QB only. Defense: D-line or LB only.
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Up to 120lbs	Over 120lbs
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Up to 140lbs	Over 140lbs
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Up to 155lbs	Over 155lbs

### Designated Players (Single Strippers)

Designated Players may line up as any lineman (offensive or defensive), TE, non-running QB or LB. The Designated Player CANNOT split out wide at any time and must be no more than one yard from the nearest tackle.

A Designated Player may advance the ball on offense ONLY by a legal forward pass caught BEYOND the line of scrimmage. On a hook and ladder play a Designated Player CANNOT receive the pitch, however they can catch and pitch to another non Designated Player.

A Designated Player can be used as a kicker or punter. When punting they are restricted to punting only. They are allowed to move laterally to avoid defensive pressure but may NOT advance the ball by run, pass, hand-off or lateral, etc. They cannot return a punt at any time during the game. If they catch a short punt, the ball is dead at that spot. However, a Designated Player may advance a fumble or interception. If a Designated Player receives an onside kick, they can advance the ball as long as they are on the front line; however, if they receive the ball behind the front line, the ball is dead at the spot once possession is determined.

A Designated Player in an ineligible position, except a non-running QB, shall result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

### Ball Carrying Players (No Stripes)

Ball Carrying players can line up in a position to carry or receive the football (running backs, quarterbacks, flankers and ends). They can also play ANY position on defense.

As QB, the Single Stripe Player CANNOT run the ball. As QB, the Single Stripe Player can only pass the ball or hand the ball off. A Single Stripe QB CANNOT advance the ball past the line of scrimmage, even on a broken play. If the Single Stripe QB advances the ball past the line of scrimmage, the penalty is loss of down and 10 yards from the line of scrimmage. If the play is broken, the Single Stripe QB will be deemed down at the line of scrimmage and/or the location where they are tackled or deemed "in the grasp". This will be a judgement call by the official.

## Equipment

Field	The Home team will be responsible for the down marker and chains.
Football Size (recommended)	6 <sup>th</sup> : Junior or Youth (old 100)   7 <sup>th</sup> : (Junior or Youth) 8 <sup>th</sup> : Youth (old 200) It is up to each team as to what size ball they use.
Game Balls	Each offense may use its own football as long as it is an official size and inflated to standard high school rules. If multiple balls are being used in a game, the kicking team must kickoff with the opposing team's football.

## Fields

Field Size	100x53 yards
Team Location	It is recommended that the team benches be on opposite sides of the field where feasible.
Field Inspection / Maintenance	Pre-game field inspection – the Home team coach is to do a brief overview of the field and equipment. If anything is considered to be unsafe, they must correct or contact the field coordinator prior to game play.
Coach's Box	25 yard line to 25 yard line.

## Coaches and Fans

On-Field Coaches	Not allowed
Coaches Requirements and Conduct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each association is responsible for providing coaches for each team and no more than five (5) coaches may be on the sidelines during a game.</li> <li>If bleachers or grandstand arrangements are available at games, parents MUST be seated in the stands regardless of side. A Delay of Game penalty may be enforced if not in compliance.</li> <li>Disciplinary - If any member of a coaching staff is ejected from any game, regardless of the situation, that coach is prohibited from being on the same sideline as their team for a minimum of one game (the next game).</li> </ul>
General - Coaches, Players and Fans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cheering and positive encouragement of players, coaches and fans embodies the spirit of athletics. Any conduct in direct conflict of good sportsmanship, by players, coaches and fans can result in ejection from the game and sporting area.</li> <li>No coach, player or fan will disrespectfully argue a decision of a referee. Discussing and trying to understand a referee's decision is allowed as long as it is done in a respectful, calm and civil manner by the Head Coach.</li> <li>No coach, player or fan will yell obscenities at or denigrate any player, coach, referee or fan.</li> <li>Physical or verbal abuse by any coach, player or fan is cause for dismissal from current and future SWML games.</li> <li>Players, coaches and fans are not to chastise, give hints, help or instruct referees.</li> <li>It's the duty of the officials, with the help of the coaching staff, to keep spectators at least 5 yards from the field of play during the game. The game will stop until the area is clear.</li> </ul>

## Referees

Number of Officials	Three (3) referees assigned to each game.
Hired by	Officials are hired by the Home team.
Referee Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referees will only communicate with the Head Coach, Head Coach designate or coach on the field to eliminate confusion and other potential issues.</li> <li>In a situation where any player, coach, or spectator is displaying unsportsmanlike conduct, the referees 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 resolved in a reasonable amount of time (as determined by the referee), the referee has the right to call a forfeit.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referees will officiate each game in accordance with League rules. If League rules do not specifically address a specific situation, National Federation of High School Rules will apply.</li> <li>Referees have final decision-making authority during the course of a game. (Also see Cancellations)</li> </ul>
Referees and Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Please note that the referees also referee 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 rules modification. Also consider that due to the number of referees vs. the number of players and various actions on the field, it is nearly impossible to see everything that happens on the field.</li> <li>We are also asking referees to understand the level and ability of the kids – though it is optional, we give them the authority to offer ‘warnings’ to teach and make kids aware of potential infractions (i.e. lining up off-sides, holding, etc.).</li> <li>We ask that the referees try when possible to communicate the warning to the Head Coach.</li> <li>We, as coaches, must remember that the referees do not have any stake in the outcome of the game.</li> <li>We ask that regardless of the situation, the adults involved show a mutual respect towards each other and set a positive example of sportsmanship for the players.</li> </ul>
Rules 'Review'	If during a game, a coach believes a ruling by a referee is not correct in accordance with the rules, a coach may call a timeout. At that time, BOTH Head Coaches and the referees shall meet to <u>calmly and professionally</u> discuss / review the rule. It is the responsibility of the coach who called the timeout to present the proper documentation to appeal the ruling. If the ruling is overturned, the timeout shall NOT be charged. If the ruling on the field stands, the timeout WILL be charged to the team who called the timeout. Referees have final decision-making authority during the course of a game.

<p>If Referees are a "No-Show"</p>	<p>If referees do not show up for your game, the Home Team Head Coach shall notify the SWML immediately after the game. Please do not hold up your game, especially if there is another game scheduled after your game. We want to limit the number of avoidable late starts.</p> <p><b>**Recommended Solutions**:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is another game nearby that has 2-3 referees, please contact them and notify them that you do not have a referee and ask for their assistance.</li> <li>• If an official referee is not an option, both coaches should discuss and attempt to mutually agree to each select one responsible adult representative from each side to referee the contest.</li> </ul>
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## Rules – General

National Federation of High School League (“NFHS”) rules will be followed except as noted below. The NFHS rules apply to all players, coaches, parents and referees. 8<sup>th</sup> grade teams will use NFHS rules (e.g. no restrictions on offensive formations or defensive alignments other than high school rules).

<p>Game Length</p>	<p>Teams will play 15-minute running quarters with the stop time rules being used during the last two minutes of each half.</p>
<p>Play Clock</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The clock will be stopped for injuries and immediately after a score.</li> <li>b. Extra points will not be run against the game clock.</li> <li>c. Time is stopped until the ensuing kickoff.</li> <li>d. The 25 second clock will be started by the officials for extra points, with Delay of Game receiving the usual 5 yard penalty.</li> <li>e. The game clock will re-start on the kick-off as in High School rules.</li> </ul>
<p>Time Outs</p>	<p>Each team will be allotted three time-outs per half. No carryover.</p>
<p>Halftime</p>	<p>5 minutes (shortened if agreed to by both coaches or by referee due to 1st half running long).</p>
<p>Overtime</p>	<p>Ties are decided by each team trying to score from the 10 yard line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Each team receives one possession to score - - typically up to 4 plays from the 10 yard line, however this could be extended with defensive penalties.</li> <li>b. The second team receives one possession to score.</li> <li>c. If a team scores, they also try an extra point from the 3 yard line.</li> <li>d. 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, the game ends in a tie.</li> <li>e. Playoff games CANNOT end in a tie.</li> <li>f. There is no limitation on what players are used on offense or defense (i.e. Playing Time Requirements are no longer in effect).</li> </ul>
<p>Kickoff</p>	<p>Kickoff will be from the 40 yard line.</p>

Scoring	<p>TOUCHDOWN = 6 POINTS  SAFETY = 2 POINTS  Point After Touchdown (PAT)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A running PAT = 1 point.</li> <li>b. A ball thrown into the end zone and caught by an eligible receiver = 2 points.</li> <li>c. If the ball is thrown to the flat and maintains the rules for a legal forward pass and caught by a RB, even behind the line of scrimmage, and the player runs across the goal line, it is counted as pass = 2 points.</li> <li>d. If a ball is thrown to a WR and lateraled to a RB (as in a hook and ladder play), it would be tabulated as rushing yardage by high school, college and pros = 1 point.</li> </ol>
Penalties	Full Penalties
Playing Time Rules	<p>This is intended to be a Youth developmental league. It is to give players the opportunity to learn and play the game of football regardless of skills and ability. It is not a "Win at all costs" league. The SWML's philosophy is to provide each player an opportunity to play football.</p>



<p>Playing Time Requirements</p>	<p>Each player will have a starting position in each half on Offense / Defense. The SWML suggests that the minimum playing time for the SWML is based on a total number of plays per grade:</p> <p>8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Minimum Plays = 10  7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Minimum Plays = 15  6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Minimum Plays = 20</p> <p>Each Team will have (2) offenses; including playoff games. The offenses can rotate either by quarter or by half.</p> <p>A player can play on both offenses; however, a player cannot play a Skill Position on both offenses (even for one play). <b>A Skill Position is defined as QB, WR, FB, RB, WB.</b> For example, a player cannot play QB on one offense and RB on the other offense. A player can play any non-skill position on either offense.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TE is <u>NOT</u> considered a Skill Position as long as the player is lined up on the line of scrimmage;</li> <li>• Punter is not considered a Skill Position as long as the punt is happening on 4<sup>th</sup> down;</li> <li>• Kicker, Kick Returner, or Punt Returner is not considered a Skill Position.</li> </ul> <p>A player can play defense anytime (i.e. no defensive rotational limitations).</p> <p><u>Violations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The referees will NOT enforce a rotation violation (i.e. no penalty will be assessed).</li> <li>• If a Head Coach thinks a violation occurred, the Head Coach shall ask the Line Judge for a conference with the opposing Head Coach. Each Head Coach shall meet at mid-field and calmly discuss / resolve.</li> <li>• If the complaint cannot be resolved on the field, the Head Coach shall contact their respective SWML Commissioner and file a complaint after the game.</li> <li>• The SWML Board will evaluate each complaint and determine the appropriate action, in its sole discretion.</li> <li>• Each association (not the SWML Board) shall be responsible for disciplinary action</li> </ul>
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## Rules – Offense

Balanced Offense	6	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. QB, center, and "I" formation backs do not count as they are already centered.
	7	One side of the formation can only have at most two players on that side of the ball than exists on the other side of the ball. QB, center, and "I" formation backs do not count as they are already centered.
	8	Any legal NFHS offensive formation allowed.
Balanced O-Lines	6,7	No unbalanced lines are allowed on offense (i.e. no unbalanced line from tackle to tackle - - must have a center and one guard and one tackle on each side of center - TGCGT must be followed).
	8	Any legal NFHS offensive formation allowed.
Legal O-Lines	6	Must have at least 7 in the box
	7,8	Must have at least 5 in the box
Split Formations	6	As long as the offense is balanced (See Balance Rule) the offense may put 1 player wide
	7	The offense may put at most 3 players into a wideout formation. This could be "twins" or 2 wideouts on one side of the ball and 1 wideout on the other side of the ball. "Trips" formations with 3 wideouts is not allowed.
Wideout Rules	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only 1 player can be split wide, either at the start of the formation or as a result of being put into motion.</li> <li>The player split wide can be a RB/WR/TE</li> <li>If you already have 1 player split wide and you send one of your backs into motion, they cannot be outside the tight end position at the snap of the ball.</li> </ul>
	7	May have 3 players wide, but must be 2 on one side and 1 on the other. Trips on one side is not allowed. If one of the wide outs is a split end, wingback must be within 1 yard of tackle or behind tackle.
	8	Any legal NFHS offensive formation allowed.
No Huddle Offense	6,7	A no-huddle offense is not allowed until the last two minutes of either half.
	8	Allowed with no restrictions.
Quarterback Sneaks	6,7	<p>This is defined as taking the snap directly from underneath center and attempting to run behind the center and/or guard.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is NO QB sneak when the distance to a first down or goal line is 3 yards or less.</li> <li>Taking the snap in a shotgun formation and running it DOES NOT constitute a QB sneak.</li> <li>The rule is in place because the defense is restricted by the 3 yard linebacker rule</li> </ol>
	8	Quarterback sneaks are allowed at any time.
Shotgun	6,7	Shotgun formations are allowed. However, if the yardage for a first down/touchdown is less than 3 yards and the QB/RB is less than 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage when receiving the snap, this constitutes an illegal play if they run behind the center and/or guard. This rule is put in place since the LB's are back 3 yards.

	8	Shotgun formation are allowed
Players in Motion	ALL	Motion players are allowed depending on whether or not they will violate the Balance and Wide Out Rules.

## Rules – Defense

Legal Defense	6	Either 4-3 or 6-3 defense is allowed. Defense
	7	A 4-3, 4-4, or 6-3 defense is allowed. The Defensive Line alignment remains the same and if a player shifts to a Linebacker, Cornerback, or Safety position, the depth rules remain the same: Linebackers – 3 yards from LOS, Cornerbacks – 5 yards from LOS, Safeties – 8 yards from the LOS outside the 10 yard line and 5 yards inside the 10 yard line
	8	Any formation
Defensive Line Movement	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defensive linemen may NOT move after they are set in their stance. The official may allow movement if the player who was originally lined up incorrectly moves to be in compliance with the head up rule.</li> <li>Defensive ends lined up on flankers are allowed to move prior to the snap as long as the player does not violate the neutral zone.</li> </ul>
	7,8	No restrictions.
Defensive Gap Lineup	6,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lineman must line up DIRECTLY in front of the offensive lineman (helmet to helmet). They may NOT line up in the gap.</li> <li>Defensive ends may not line up inside of the head of the furthest outside offensive lineman that is not split out wide.</li> <li>Defensive ends can be no wider than the outside shoulder of the TE.</li> </ul>
	8	Defensive lineman CAN line up in the gaps and can line up outside the TE.
Stunting/ Shooting Gaps	ALL	Stunting is allowed. Stunting is defined as a defensive lineman shooting the gap or crossing two defensive linemen.

Linebacker / Corner / Safety depth	6,7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linebackers must be 3 yards off the line. LB's should step off the 3 yard distance;</li> <li>Cornerbacks must be 5 yards off the line;</li> <li>Safeties must be 8 yards off the line. The safeties may limit their 8 yard distance to 5 yards when on or inside the 10 yard line. They must remain stationary until the snap of the ball although the linebackers or defensive backs may move laterally to react to a man in motion.</li> </ul>
	8	Allowed with no restrictions.
Short yardage	ALL	Goal line defenses or "cheating" forward of the linebackers in short yardage situations are NOT allowed. The exception is 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade which follows NFHS rules.
Blitzing	6,7	No blitzing or forward movement prior to the snap of the ball. Ends and linebackers may blitz/rush in after the snap.
	8	Allowed with no restrictions.
Stacked LB's	6,7	No stacking of linebackers (i.e. cannot line up directly behind a defensive lineman).
	8	Allowed with no restrictions.
Tackling	ALL	No tackling by the head/helmet. No horse collar tackles allowed. Both constitute a personal foul.

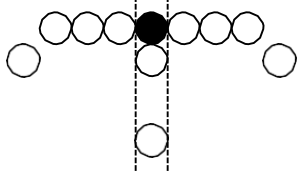
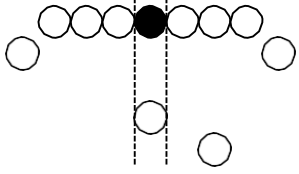
**Rules – Special Team**

Punting Formations	ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recommended to use the offensive team on the field as your punting team. This is not a rule. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The exceptions would be punters and long snappers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Punt formations must also follow the Wide out Rules and Balance Rules.</li> <li>• Recommended formation would be to utilize a Shotgun formation with the QB position becoming the punter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Any player may punt the ball but ball carrying restrictions do apply at each grade level. A punter is not considered a Skill Position as long as it is 4<sup>th</sup> down.</li> <li>○ A punt hitting a defensive player at the line of scrimmage “neutral zone” is not considered a live ball. The ball is down on contact and turns over to the receiving team.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Punt Return Formations	ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is recommended to use the defensive team on the field as your punt return team. This is not a rule.</li> <li>• No additional restrictions other than meeting defensive formation restrictions. A punt returner is not considered a Skill Position.</li> <li>• No limit on how far back the linebackers/safeties can be for punt returns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Must have 6 players on the line of scrimmage, in a 6-3 defense or 4 players on a 4-3 defense (for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Kickoffs	ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No special limitations on Kickoff. A Kicker or Returner is not considered a Skill Position.</li> <li>• Only Ball Carrying Players may field and advance a kickoff return or on-side kick beyond the front line. If a Designated Player gains possession from the front line, they can advance.</li> </ul>
Rushing the Punter	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teams are NOT allowed to rush the punter.</li> <li>• The offensive team must announce they are going to punt (no fakes allowed).</li> <li>• They cannot rush the punter or leave the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted.</li> <li>• The punter may take the ball from the center in any manner. Even if the ball is dropped, the punter may pick it up and punt the ball.</li> <li>• The Punter must punt the ball between the tackles positions. Punt coverage cannot take place until the ball is kicked.</li> </ul>
	7,8	Teams may rush the punter. Not necessary to declare a punt before the play.

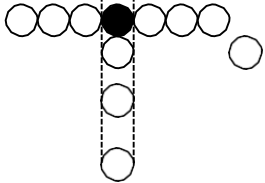
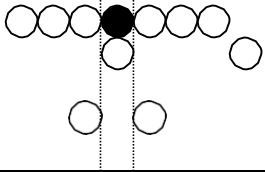
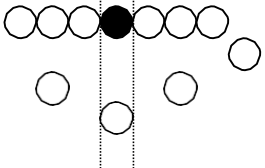
## Valid Offensive Formations

- The formations below are for illustrative purposes as well as a point of reference for any formation, which might be disputed by another coach.
- Quarterbacks must be under center OR any player (QB included) receiving the snap in the "shotgun" formation must be a minimum of 3 yards behind the center.
- It is important to understand the definitions of each before we go into formations.
  - a. We define a flanker as a back/wingback that is split wide of the formation.
  - b. A split end is either end that is split wide of the normal spacing from the offensive tackle.
  - c. A wingback is a back that is outside of a tight end or tackle, but is within three feet of either.
  - d. The difference between a wingback and a flanker is that the flanker is split wide of the formation and the wingback is tight to the formation.
  - e. A flanker or a wide out is a player that is more than 2 yards or more outside of the closest offensive lineman. Both are off the line of scrimmage.

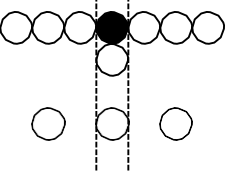
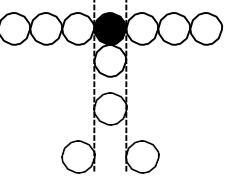
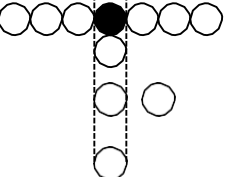
### 1 Back Formations

<p>Double wing</p> 	<p>1 wingback on the left and 1 wingback on the right, a single running back can be behind, or on either side of the center</p>	<p>A single tight end or wingback may be split out wide. Motion out of the running back behind the center is allowed to either side of the formation. One of the other two backs (wingbacks) can go in motion, as long as they don't cross the center of the formation and create an unbalanced formation.</p>
<p>Double wing (with shotgun)</p> 	<p>1 wingback on the left and 1 wingback on the right, a single running back can be on either the left or right side of the formation</p>	<p>A single tight end or wingback may be split out wide. Motion out of the running back behind the center is allowed to either side of the formation. One of the other two backs (wingbacks) can go in motion, as long as they don't cross the center of the formation and create an unbalanced formation.</p>

### 2 Back Formations

<p>"I"</p> 	<p>Fullback and halfback are directly behind the QB</p>	<p>A single tight end or wingback may be split out wide.</p>
<p>Wing (split backs)</p> 	<p>1 running back on the left side of the formation and 1 running back on the right side of the formation</p>	<p>A single tight end or wingback may be split out wide. If no tight end or wingback is split wide, then one of the running backs may be split wide or go in motion outside the tight end on the same side.</p>
<p>Shotgun</p> 	<p>Same as the split backs formation only the QB is lined up 3-4 yards behind the center and between the two running backs</p>	<p>A single tight end or wingback may be split out wide. If no tight end or wingback is split wide, then one of the running backs may be split wide or go in motion outside the tight end on the same side.</p>

### 3 Back Formations

<p>Full House</p> 	<p>3 running backs in the backfield, no wingback. One directly behind the center and one on either side</p>	<p>A single tight end may be split out wide or one of the backs may go in motion. The back behind the QB can go in motion to either side of the formation. The other backs must go in motion to the same side in which they lined up to start the play.</p>
<p>Wishbone</p> 	<p>1 full back directly behind the center / QB and 1 running back on each side of the formation</p>	<p>A single tight end may be split out wide or one of the backs may go in motion. The back behind the QB can go in motion to either side of the formation. The other backs must go in motion to the same side in which they lined up to start the play.</p>
<p>Strong/Power I</p> 	<p>Same as I formation with the wingback directly behind the Guard or Tackle on either side</p>	<p>A tight end or running back may be split wide. A running back can be put in motion keeping in mind the Balance Rules.</p>

### Valid Defensive Alignments

<p>6-3</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 6 players on the line of scrimmage: 2 defensive guards, 2 defensive tackles and 2 defensive ends.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Defensive guards/tackles must be lined up helmet to helmet (head-up) with the offensive guards/tackles.</li> <li>b. Defensive ends can be lined up on the outside shoulder of the tight end (or wingback if a wingback is on the same side).</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. 3 linebackers: 2 outside linebackers and 1 middlelinebacker.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Linebackers cannot be stacked (lined up behind a lineman).</li> <li>b. Place outside linebackers on the outside shoulder of the defensive end or as far outside as you would like.</li> <li>c. But, you cannot move them inside any further. The middle linebacker must be over the center prior to the start of the play.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Safeties can line up as far wide, inside or back as you would like.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. They must be at least 8 yards from the line of scrimmage.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p>4-3</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 4 players on the line of scrimmage: 2 defensive tackles and 2 defensive ends.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Defensive tackles must be lined up helmet to helmet (head-up) with the offensive guards.</li> <li>b. Defensive ends can be lined up no wider than the outside shoulder of the outside player.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. 3 linebackers: 2 outside linebackers and 1 middlelinebacker.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Linebackers cannot be stacked (lined up behind a lineman).</li> <li>b. Place outside linebackers on either the inside or outside shoulder of DE</li> <li>c. The middle linebacker must be over the center prior to the start of the play.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Corners must be line up at least 5 yards from line of scrimmage.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Must line up no closer than the outside shoulder of the outside backer.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Safeties can line up as far wide, inside or back as you would like.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. They must be at least 8 yards from the line of scrimmage.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

<p>4-4 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> only</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 4 players on the line of scrimmage: 2 defensive tackles and 2 defensive ends. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Defensive tackles must be lined up helmet to helmet (head-up) with the offensive guards.</li> <li>b. Defensive ends can be lined up no wider than the outside shoulder of the outside player.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. 4 linebackers: 2 outside linebackers and 2 middle linebackers. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Linebackers cannot be stacked (lined up behind a lineman).</li> <li>b. Place outside linebackers on either the inside or outside shoulder of DE</li> <li>c. The middle linebacker must be over the center prior to the start of the play.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Corners must be line up at least 5 yards from line of scrimmage. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Must line up no closer than the outside shoulder of the outside backer.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Safeties can line up as far wide, inside or back as you would like. They must be at least 8 yards from the line of scrimmage.</li> </ol>
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## Some Helpful National Federation of High School Rules

Referee Authority	Rule 1-Sec.1-Art.6: 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	Rule 3-Section 5-Art. 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.
Free Block Zone	Rule 2-Sec.17-Art.1: The free-blocking zone is a rectangular area extending laterally 4 yards either side of the spot of the snap and 3 yards behind each line of scrimmage. A player is in the free-blocking zone when any part of his body is in the zone at the snap.
Illegal Block	Rule 9-Sec.3-Art.5: A player shall not clip or block an opponent in the back except in the free blocking zone when contact meets requirements of Rule 2-17 (free blocking zone) or when using hands and arms to contact an opponent above the waist in warding off a blocker, or when attempting to reach a runner, or catch or recover a loose ball which he may legally touch or possess, or to tackle a runner or player pretending to be a runner.
Clipping/Blocking in the Back	Rule 2-Sec.5-Art 1: Clipping is a block against an opponent when the initial contact is from behind, at or below the waist, and not against a player who is the runner or pretending to be the runner. Art 2: Blocking in the back is a block against an opponent when the initial contact is in the opponent's back, inside the shoulders and below the helmet and above the waist, and not against a player who is the runner or pretending to be the runner. Art 3: Such cases shall not be ruled clipping unless the official sees the initial contact. When in doubt, the contact is legal and not from behind. (15-yd penalty)
Block below 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	Rule 9-Sec.3-Art.6: A player shall not chop block. Rule 2-Sec.3-Art.8 Chop block is a combination block by two or more teammates against an opponent other than the runner, with or without delay, where one of the blocks is low (at the knee or below) and one of the blocks is high (above the knee). (15 yard penalty)
Illegal 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.) Rule 9-Sec.4-Art.7: No defensive may use his hands to slap the blocker's head (all 15-yd penalties)
Snap Rule	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	Rule 3-Sec. 2: Not more than four captains from each team may be present at the coin toss. The visiting captain shall call.
Walk-ons	Rule 7-Sec.2-Art.1: After the ball is marked ready for play, each offensive player who participated on the previous down and each substitute for the offense must have been, momentarily, between the 9-yard marks, before the snap. (5-yd penalty) Also, Rule 9-Sec.6-Art.4d: To use a replaced player or substitute in a substitution or pretended substitution to deceive opponents at or immediately before the snap or free kick. (15-yd penalty)
Runner Assistant	Rule 9-Sec.1: An offensive player shall not push, pull or lift the runner to assist his forward progress. (5-yd penalty)

Fighting/Illegal Personal Contact	Rule 9-Sec.4: No player or non-player shall fight, strike, kick, or knee an opponent. Also, no player or non-player shall intentionally contact a game official. (15-yd penalty & disqualification)
Neutral Zone	Rule 2-Sec.28: 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	Rule 4-Sec.2-Art.3: An inadvertent whistle ends the down. 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 player possession, the team in possession may choose to accept the play at that spot or replay the down.
Pass Interference	Rule 7-Sec.5-Art.7: Pass Interference restrictions only apply beyond the neutral zone and only if the forward pass crosses the neutral zone. Art. 8: Pass interference restrictions begin for offense at the snap and for defense at the release of the pass. Art. 10: 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 if by defense or 15 yards from previous spot) Art. 11: 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	Rule 9-Sec.4 Art.4: 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	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, refusing to comply with a game official's request. (15 yards & disqualification if flagrant, the 2 <sup>nd</sup> unsportsmanlike foul results in disqualification.)
Unsportsmanlike Conduct (by non-players)	Rule 9-Sec.8-Art.1: No coach, substitute, trainer or other team attendant shall act in an unsportsmanlike manner. Example are, but not limited to: a. Using Profanity, insulting or vulgar language or gestures. b. Attempting to influence a decision by a game official. c. Disrespectfully addressing a game official. (15-yd penalty and if flagrant-disqualification and ejection. The second unsportsmanlike foul with a 15-yard penalty results in disqualification. Failure to comply, the referee may forfeit the game.) Rule 9-Sec.8-Art.3: No Coach, substitute, trainer or other team attendant shall be outside the team box. (1st offense warning-2nd 5 yards, 3rd and so on 15 yards)
Parent/Spectator Conduct	Rule 9-Sec.9-Art.1: A player or non-player or person not subject 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.)
Visors	Rule 1-Sec.5-Art.3c(4b): No tinted or shaded helmet visors.
Spiking Ball to Conserve Time	Rule 7-Sec.5-Art.2 Exception: It is legal to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving a direct hand-to-hand snap.

## Common Misconceptions of NFHS Rules

This is not the NFL or even the NCAA. We follow NFHS rules. There are many rule differences between high school and the upper levels of football that many people may not realize or understand. Here are some policy and rule misconceptions that parents and coaches may not know about.

- Player safety will be the primary rule of enforcement!
- There is no such thing as an Uncatchable Pass in high school. If there is contact while the pass is in flight, regardless if the pass was thrown into the stands, it's 15 yards and an automatic 1st down.
- It IS pass interference if any player (offense or defense) hinders an opponent's vision without making an attempt to catch, intercept, or bat the ball, even if no contact is made. (Rule 7 Sec. 5 Art. 10b)
- Free-Block Zone (4 yards either side of the snap and 3 yards behind each LOS):
  - Blocking below the waist IS permitted in the free-blocking zone by offensive linemen who are on the LOS and in the zone at the snap and the contact is in the zone.
  - Clipping & blocking in the back ARE permitted in the free-blocking zone by offensive linemen who are on the LOS and in the zone at the snap, and is against defensive players who are in the zone at the snap, and the contact is in the zone.
  - The free-blocking zone disintegrates and the above exceptions above are not to continue once the ball has left the zone. (Rule 2 Sec. 17)
- Neutral Zone. If a defensive player jumps into the neutral zone it is an immediate penalty. (Rule 7 Sec. 1 Art. 6)
- Kicks into the end zone cannot be run out. It's a touchback. (Rule 8 Sec. 5 Art. 3)
- Myth: "The ball isn't dead until the whistle blows!" The whistle merely draws everyone's attention to a ball which is already dead.
- Mouthguards do NOT have to be attached to the facemask, but they cannot be clear or white-colored. (Rule 1 Sec. 5 Art. 1c(5c))
- Simply grabbing the player by the shoulder pads is NOT a horse-collar. Horse-collar is defined as "grabbing the inside back or side collar of the shoulder pads or jersey of the runner and subsequently pull that opponent to the ground". (Rule 9 Sec. 4 Art. 3k)

SWML RULES Summary 6 - 8 Grade			
	6th	7th	8th
Field Length	100	100	100
Coach's Position	Sidelines	Sidelines	Sidelines
Legal Offense Line	7 in the box	5 in the box; balanced line	5 in the box
Legal Offense Backs/Ends	Balanced Formation; no overloading one side of offense. One wideout allowed; can be a WR, WB or RB.	Balanced Formation; no overloading one side of offense. Two wideouts allowed on opposites sides; wideouts can be WBs or Split Ends; If there is a Split End, WB MUST be within 1 yard of T or behind tackle	Any legal formation
Shotgun allowed	Yes	Yes	Yes
Legal Defense Line	4 or 6 head up – DE can be no wider than the outside shoulder of the Tight End	4 or 6 head up - DE can be no wider than the outside shoulder of the Tight End -- SEE VALID DEFENSE TAB with SPLIT END	Any formation -- Gap lineup allowed
Legal Defense - Linebackers	3 LB - no stacking -- 3 Yards from the line of scrimmage	3 LB - no stacking -- 3 Yards from the line of scrimmage	Any formation -- Gap lineup allowed
Legal Defense - Defensive Backs	2 corners – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage 2 safeties - 8 yards from the line of scrimmage	2 corners – 5 yards from the line of scrimmage 2 safeties -- 8 yards from the line of scrimmage	Any formation -- Gap lineup allowed
Legal Defense	6-3, 4-3	6-3, 4-3, 4-4	Any formation
Blitz & Stunt	Allowed; but no pre-snap movement	Allowed; but no pre-snap movement	Allowed
Man in Motion	Yes	Yes	Yes
Refs Call Def Line movement offsides	Yes 6th grade NOTE: If a player is adjusting so they are in compliance with the rule -- moving to head up for example -- the ref will not stop the play	No	No
Max penalty	15 yards	15 yards	15 yards
Special Teams	Kick-offs for beginning of each half and following scores. Punts declared; NO rushing punter; play is live after punt.	Kick-offs for beginning of each half and following scores. Punts NOT declared; live play with rush of punter.	Kick-offs for beginning of each half and following scores. Punts NOT declared; live play with rush of punter.
Single Striper Defensive Turnover	May advance turnover	May advance turnover	May advance turnover
Single Striper Offense Lineup	C, G, T, TE, non-running QB only	C, G, T, TE, non-running QB only	C, G, T, TE, non-running QB only
Single Striper Offense Ball Handling	may catch beyond LoS from TE or non-running QB only	may catch beyond LoS from TE or non-running QB only	may catch beyond LoS from TE or non-running QB only
Single Striper Defense Lineup	D-line or LB only	D-line or LB only	D-line or LB only
QB Sneak is NOT allowed when ball is:	within 3 yards of end zone or first down marker -- EXCLUDES Shotgun formation where a QB Sneak / direct snap and run would be legal	within 3 yards of end zone or first down marker -- EXCLUDES Shotgun formation where a QB Sneak / direct snap and run would be legal	QB Sneaks are allowed at any time
Tackling	No tackling by the head/helmet. No Horse Collaring allowed - both constitute a personal foul.	No tackling by the head/helmet. No Horse Collaring allowed - both constitute a personal foul.	No tackling by the head/helmet. No Horse Collaring allowed - both constitute a personal foul.
Playing Time Rules	Refer to pages 7 and 8 for details	Refer to pages 7 and 8 for details	Refer to pages 7 and 8 for details
Overtime	FOLLOW HIGH SCHOOL RULES. Each team receives a possession to score from the 10 yard line; if successful, an extra point attempt is also taken. If game remains tied after 1 OT, game ends in a Tie. Playoff games will be played until a winner is determined. There is no limitation on what players are used on offense or defense during overtime.		
Play Clock	Teams will play 15-minute running quarters with the stop time rules being used during the last two minutes of each half. The clock will also be stopped for injuries and immediately after a score. Extra points will not be run against the game clock. Time is stopped until the ensuing kickoff. The 25 second clock will be started by the officials for extra points, with delay of game receiving the usual 5 yard penalty. The game clock will re-start on the kick-off as in High School rules.		

TEAM ROSTERS & WEIGHTS ARE POSTED TO THE SWML WEBSITE

	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Football Sizes	Junior or Youth	Junior or Youth	Youth
Ball Carrying Players	Up to 120lbs	Up to 140lbs	Up to 155lbs
Single Stripers	Above 120lbs	Above 140lbs	Above 155lbs

If the Scale measures to the .1 of a pound. The approach is to drop the .1 from the weight IE 100.9 is 100 pounds Stripes designating Stripers or Designated Players on the side of helmet

Change Log:

Date	Description of Change	Name
August 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2011	Posted Rules	Gerald Raddatz
August 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2011	Updated Double Striper rules for Defense to be consistent for interior line only	Gerald Raddatz
August 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2011	Updated rules for kickoff	Gerald Raddatz
Sept 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2011	Updated player and coach ejection from a game	Gerald Raddatz
Sept 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2011	Updated 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> grade shotgun rule	Gerald Raddatz
July 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	Updated suggested player min Updated playing time Added Bloomington	Gerald Raddatz
August 15, 2013	Updated for 2013	Jay Hansen
September 19, 2013	Removed Face Mask line item as the intention is to follow the high school rules	Jay Hansen
March 18, 2014	Removed the limitation of splitting out a WR in 6 <sup>th</sup> grade.	Gerald Raddatz
April 23, 2014	Removed all references to 4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> grade. They will have a separate rules document. Removed Bloomington as a participant in the league.	Gerald Raddatz
July 12, 2016	Added the 2 offensive Skilled player rotation rules. Increased the single and double black striper weight limits	Matt Meyer
July 17 <sup>th</sup> , 2017	-Changed defense allowed for 6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> from 5-4, 6-3 to 4-3, 6-3. -Eliminated Double strippers from 6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> -Removed Edina and Shakopee from participant in the league	Peter Blattner
August 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2019	-Updated association participation info -Added language to Trades/Exchanges -Added QB Striper allowed - Added unbalanced wideout option for 7 <sup>th</sup> grade -Added 4-4 as a valid defense for 7 <sup>th</sup> grade	Mike Rogalski