

4th Grade Southwest Metro League (SWML) 2019 9-man Football Rules

(Note change log on the last page of this document)

BACKGROUND

These rules have been created to establish consistent rules for 4th grade football games played between Eden Prairie Football Association, Chanhassen-Chaska Football Association, and Orono Football Association for 9-man Youth football in 2019. When SWML is referenced below, it refers to the commissioners and presidents of these 3 associations versus the full SWML board.

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 a DEVELOPMENTAL league, not a "Win at all Costs" league. All teams have players of varying abilities. Coaches must ensure that each player has a position on offense or defense for the game. Each player should play at least a minimum of 50% of the game.

The rules section specifies more detail around playing time and related substitution rules, but in general, 50% minimum playing time of games is defined as each player:

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).
3. Plays the corresponding side of the ball during each half for the entire half except for these reasons: a) injury; b) an occasional missed play for instruction/coaching or; c) disciplinary actions related to team rule violations (not due to player performance).
4. Special teams play does not count towards minimum playing time

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 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 Minnesota High School rule interpretation. PLEASE do not argue the point. We would however ask that you refer any questions or issues to your SWML Coordinator, i.e. the person representing your association with SWML. 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 grade level commissioner 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 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.
Roster Dates	Rosters will be posted on local website or SWML league website before games are played.
Team Size	SWML will strive to have each team shall consist of no fewer than (13) players and no more than (20) players.

Scheduling

Season	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practices: Begin anytime after August 1st. Number of practices will be determined by local association. Number of Games: Local association will determine number of games. Season length: Regular season will not extend beyond MEA, however playoff games may run into late October. Playoffs are determined by local association.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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.
Rescheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Games may be rescheduled due to weather cancellations. It is considered a game if 3 quarters have been completed. The SWML will strive to re-schedule weather cancelled games, but field and officiating crew availability will dictate rescheduled events.

Weight Limitations

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 local association 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 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 the single stripe being placed horizontally above the ear holes on the helmet. Stripe 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 Stripers	Positional Limitations - Single Stripers
4 th Grade	Up to 90 lbs	91 lbs & up	Offense: C, G, T, TE, and non-running QB only Defense: D-Line and LB only. Not in defensive backfield.

Note: Official weights will disregard ANY number after the decimal point; there is NO ROUNDING of for official weight purposes. For example, 90.9 or 90.1 are both recorded as 90

Designated Players (Single Stripers) —

A Designated Player may advance the ball on offense ONLY by a legal forward pass caught BEYOND the line of scrimmage when lined up as a Tight End. A Designated player CANNOT receive the pitch on a hook and ladder play, they can catch and pitch.

A Designated Player can be used as a kicker or punter and is subject to the same limitations as a Restricted Player in this position. 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" playing on defense may advance a fumble or interception, and may advance an onside kick.

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

Unrestricted Players (No Stripes)

"Unrestricted" players can line up in ANY position on offense and 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 setting up the yard line markers, down marker and chains. Each team will provide volunteers to run the down marker and chains for a half of the game.
Football Size (recommended)	4 th Junior Size
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 opposition's football.

Fields

Field Size	4 th 80 x 40 yards
Team Location	Team benches will be on opposite sides of the field. Home team has preference on sideline chosen.
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 unsafe, they must correct or contact the field coordinator prior to game play.
Coach's Box	30 yard line to 30 yard line.

Coaches and Fans

On-Field Coaches	<p>4th:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 offensive line is set and until the play is completed. (5-yard penalty).
Coaches Requirements and Conduct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 5 Coach rule in effect. Delay of Game penalty may be enforced if not in compliance. Disciplinary - 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 side line as their team for a minimum of one game (the next game). The coach that was ejected must be reported to the local association within 24 hours.
General - Coaches, Players and Fans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Bleachers or grandstand arrangements are available at games, i.e. high school stadiums, parents MUST be seated in the stands regardless of side. 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 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 or referee's decision is allowed as long as it is done in a respectful, calm and civil manner <u>by coaches only</u>. No coach, player or fan will yell obscenities at or denigrate any player, coach, referee or fan. Physical or verbal abuse by any coach, player or fan is cause for dismissal from current and future games. Players, coaches and fans are not to chastise, give hints, help or instruct officials. Any fan / parent / etc.. that is ejected from a game is also prohibited from attending the next game. The person that was ejected must be reported to the local association within 24 hours.

Officials

Number of Officials	4th: Two (2) officials 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 Rules will apply. The Referee (head Official) has final decision-making authority during the course of a game. (Also see Cancellations)
Officials and 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 rules modification. 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 Referees 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 referees are to come together too <u>calmly and professionally</u> discuss & review the rule.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
If Officials are a "No-Show"	<p>If Officials do not show up for your game, we ask that a coach notify the Local referee coordinator as soon as possible after your game. Please do not hold up your game, especially if there is another game scheduled after yours. Minimizing delays and late starts is the goal.</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 contest.

Rules – General

MSHSL 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 four 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. • Time is stopped until the ensuing kickoff. • The 30 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.
Time Outs	Each team will be allotted three time-outs per half. No carryover.
Halftime	5 minutes for half-time. (shortened if agreed to by both coaches or by referee)
Overtime	<p>Ties are decided by each team trying to score from the ten 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. The second team gets one possession to score. c. If a team scores, they also try an extra point from the three yard line. 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. e. Playoff games will be played until a winner is determined. f. There is no limitation on what players are used on offense or defense (other than positional limitations for strikers).
Scoring	<p>TOUCHDOWN = 6 POINTS; SAFETY = 2 POINTS Point After Touchdown (PAT = 1 or 2 POINTS)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. When run, PAT will be awarded 1 point. b. If a ball is thrown into the end zone and caught by an eligible receiver, it's a 2 point conversion. c. If the ball is thrown to the flat as a forward pass and caught by a RB, 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 WR and lateraled to a RB (as in a hook and ladder play), it would be tabulated as rushing yardage by HS, college and pros, and is therefore a 1 point conversion.
Penalties	4th: The maximum penalty is 10 yards.
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).
Maximum Playing Time Restrictions	No player will be allowed to play more than 75%, which is defined as more than 3 quarters on offense and 3 quarters on defense. No player is to play 4 quarters on either offense or defense.

Rules – General (continued)

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"> player is injured and cannot complete the minimum playing time. an occasional one play "instructional substitution" to enable coaches 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 time (e.g., more than two) under the guise of "instructional substitutions" is NOT allowed and can also be construed as violation of these rules. coach's disciplinary action taken for violation of team rules (e.g., "benching" a player for one series for unexcused absences). Note that players suspended from school are not eligible to compete in SWML games. substitution to insert a punter
Situational Substitution	<p>Situational substitutions are allowed as long as the substitutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> do not impact the General Minimum playing time rules for any player do not impact the Maximum Playing Time rules do not abuse the substitution rules
Player Position Limitation	<p>4th</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams are to have 2 unique offensive backfields, one for each half of the game (quarters do NOT have to be consecutive). Players are not limited to a single position within each of the unique backfields. Departure from 2 unique backfields should be dictated by extenuating circumstances like injury. No player can be in ball carrying or pass catching position for more than 2 quarters. A player who has played or will play 2 quarters in a ball carrying position (i.e., 1, 2, 3 or 4 back) CAN play TE but CANNOT receive a pass. Also, 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 LB position on defense for more than 2 quarters. Offense and Defense rotations and unique backfields will change either at Halftime or by quarters (i.e. quarters 1 and 3 or quarters 2 and 4). The two head coaches should communicate their respective rotation strategies BEFORE kickoff to avoid confusion during the game. No 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 SWML Board of Directors and possible actions could be implemented.</p>

Rules – Offense

Balanced Offense	4 th	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.
Balanced O-Lines	4 th	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).
Legal Offensive Line	4 th	5 in the box (TGCGT balanced line; no split end)
Wide Out or Split Formation Rules	4 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 1 player can be split wide • The player split wide must be a WB; he may not be an end.
No Huddle Offense	4 th	No no-huddle offense is allowed.
Quarterback Sneaks	4 th	No QB Sneaks
Shotgun	4 th	No shotgun formation is allowed.
Players in Motion	4 th	<u>No Motion</u> is allowed.
Designated Players	4 th	A designated (single stripe) player may catch a forward pass, beyond the Line of Scrimmage from the Tackle/End position.

Rules – Defense

Legal Defense	4 th	Only a 4-3-2 defense is allowed.
Defensive Line Movement	4 th	Defensive linemen may not move after they are set in their stance. It is the Referee's discretion to call defensive line movement offside or not; some movement to allow the defensive player to adjust to be head-up to the offensive player may be allowed (we are teaching the game).
Defensive Gap Lineup	4 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lineman must line up directly in front of the offensive lineman in a 3-point stance (helmet to helmet). They may not line up in the gap.
Stunting/ Shooting Gaps	4 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th Grade - Stunting is allowed. Stunting is defined as a defensive lineman shooting the gap or crossing two defensive linemen.
Linebacker/ Safety depth and alignment	4 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linebackers must be a minimum of 3 yards off the line and Safeties a minimum of 8 yards off the line (Safeties may limit their 8 yard distance to 5 yards when on or inside the 10 yard line) • See the section on "Valid Defensive Alignments" for the rules for Linebacker and Safety alignment. • Linebackers and safeties must remain stationary until the snap of the ball although they may move laterally to react to a man in motion.
Short yardage	4 th	Goal line defenses or "cheating" forward of the linebackers in short yardage situations are NOT allowed.
Blitzing	4 th	No blitzing or forward movement prior to the snap of the ball. Ends and linebackers may rush in after the snap.
Stacked LB's	4 th	No stacking of linebackers, i.e. cannot line up behind a defensive lineman.
Tackling	4 th	No tackling by the head/helmet. No horse collar tackles allowed. Both constitute a personal foul.

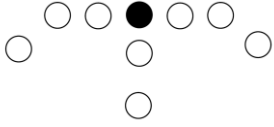
Rules – Special Team

Punting	4 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no punts. The offense may chose 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. • If the ball is inside the 30 yard line, it will be half the distance to the goal.
Coin Toss	4 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The winner of the coin toss may choose the ball, choose to defend a goal, or defer to second half.
Kickoffs	4 th	<p>There are NO kickoffs. The ball will be placed at the 20 yard line and possession will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be determined by the coin toss to start the game • Go to the team which did not receive the ball at the start of the game, for the start the 2nd half. • Go to the opposing team after a team scores. • If a team records a safety, they will receive the ball on the 40 yard line.

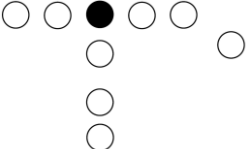
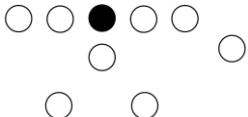
Valid Offensive Formation Definitions

- The formations below are for illustrative purposes as well as a point of reference for any formation. Each grade will have specific rules that dictate what is a valid formation versus others. There are other valid offensive formations.
- Quarterbacks must be under center
- No motion in 4th grade.

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>
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2 Back Formations

<p>"I"</p> 	<p>Fullback and halfback are directly behind the QB</p>
<p>"Pro/Wing"</p> 	<p>1 running back on the left side of the formation and 1 running back on the right side of the formation</p>

Valid Defensive Alignment: 4-3-2

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. 4 players on the line of scrimmage: 2 defensive guards and 2 defensive tackles.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Defensive guards/tackles must be lined up helmet to helmet (head-up) with the offensive guards/tackles in a 3-point stance.2. 3 linebackers: 2 outside linebackers and 1 middle linebacker.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Linebackers cannot be stacked (lined up behind a lineman).b. Place outside linebackers on the outside shoulder of the defensive end or as far outside as you would like.c. But, you cannot move them inside any further. The middle linebacker must be over the center prior to the start of the play.d. Linebackers must be 3 yards from the line of scrimmage at the snap.e. Outside linebackers may also be called corners3. Safeties can line up as far wide, inside or back as you would like.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. They must be at least 8 yards from the line of scrimmage.b. If the ball is inside the 10 yard line, the safety must be 5 yards from the LOS. |
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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. The snapper may not make an act clearly intended to cause the defense to encroach (5 yard penalty).
Protection of Long Snapper	The long snapper has to be allowed the opportunity to snap the ball and then be able to defend himself; no immediate hits on the center are allowed. This is a roughing the snapper penalty and is 15 yards and an automatic first down.
Coin Toss	Not more than four captains from each team may be present at the coin toss. The visiting captain shall call. The winner of the coin toss may choose to receive the ball or to defer.
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)

Some Helpful Minnesota High School Rules (continued)	
Fighting	Illegal Personal Contact. Rule 9-Sec.4-Art.1: No player or non-player shall fight (striking, kicking, kneeing, 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	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	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 2 nd unsportsmanlike foul results in disqualification.)
Unsportsmanlike Conduct (non-players)	Noncontact 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 an official. c. Disrespectfully addressing an 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.) Between the 30-yard lines. 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	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.)

SWML 4th Grade 9-man Summary*

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Field Length	80
Coach's Position	One coach on field
Legal Offense Line	5 in the box
Legal Offense Backs/Ends	Balanced Formation; no overloading one side of offense. One wideout allowed; can be a WB or RB. CAN NOT SPLIT OUT AN END
Shotgun allowed	No
Legal Defense Line	4-3 head up
Legal Defense - Linebackers	No stacking -- 3 Yards from the line of scrimmage
Legal Defense - Defensive Backs	2 safeties - Safeties need to be 8 yards from the line of scrimmage
Legal Defense	4-3-2
Blitz & Stunt	No Blitzing. Stunting (shooting the gaps) is allowed for 4 th grade.
Man in Motion	No
Refs Call Def Line movement offsides	Yes 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
Max penalty	10 yards
Special Teams	No Kick-offs, ball is spotted at 20 yard line. Punts are marked off 20 yards unless you are inside the 30 yard line, then half the distance
Single Striper Defensive Turnover	Striper may advance turnover
Single Striper Offense Lineup	C, G, T, and non-running QB only
Single Striper Offense Ball Handling	Striper may play Tackle/End and catch beyond line of scrimmage (LoS) only. Striper may also play non-running QB.
Single Striper Defense Lineup	D-line or LB only
Playing Time Rules	Need to play a minimum of one half of offense and one half of defense. Can only play in backfield one half (and/or 1 st /3 rd , 2 nd /4 th quarters).
Overtime	Follow the High School rules. Each team gets 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 (other than positional limitations for stripers).
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 30 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 RESPECTIVE ASSOCIATION'S WEBSITE

	4 th Grade
Football Sizes	Junior
Ball Carrying Players	Up to 90 lbs
Single Stripers	91 lbs and up

If the Scale measures to the .1 of a pound. the approach is to drop the 0.1 from the weight, e.g. 100.9 is 100 pounds
Stripes designating Stripers on side of helmet

Change Log

Date	Author	Description
July 24 th , 2018	Mike Rogalski (EPFA)	-Updated document to reflect 9-man rules for 4 th grade.
August 5 th , 2019	Mike Rogalski (EPFA)	-Updated document to reflect Orono Association in SWML -Added language to Trades/Exchanges -Updated document to reflect non-running Striper QB
August 18 th , 2019	Mike Rogalski (EPFA)	-Updated max penalty to be 10 yards for 4 th grade -Updated Pass Interference penalty language to be consistent for with grades 6-8.