

EDINA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION



2011 6th GRADE RULES

© 2011 Edina Football Association

OVERVIEW -- EFA PHILOSOPHY

The Edina Football Association (“EFA”) was established in 1962. Its primary purpose is to:

- Teach players the fundamentals of football in a safe and positive manner;
- Instill a love for the game of football; and
- Reflect and amplify our community’s values. These include sportsmanship, team play, and discipline.

The EFA is fundamentally committed to the development of character and sportsmanship. It believes that an athletic contest is an educational experience. The coaches (who so generously give of their talents and time) should instill in their players a sense of fairness, teamwork, self-control, courtesy, and respect for the rules of the game, its participants, coaches, and officials.

In the EFA, the primary objective is not to win at all costs. We want to provide a learning experience for both football skills and sportsmanship. We expect that our coaches and parents will not only teach this to the players, but practice it themselves. By adhering to both the rules and philosophy of the program, the playing experience for all is improved.

Finally, football – when properly taught – is fun. Players who have fun generally continue to play the sport. Understanding that children drop out of sports for a variety of reasons (some of which are entirely outside of a coach’s control) one of the primary metrics for evaluating EFA coaches is whether their players return the next year.

6th GRADE

The 6th grade program plays a vital role in the EFA’s developmental program. These Rules are designed to help players and coaches transition from 9-man football to the 11-man game. Specifically, these Rules largely follow the Southwest Metro League (SWML) Rules that govern play in the 7th and 8th grades. The EFA’s goal is to introduce new concepts – e.g., 11-man play, blitzing, and having coaches off the field – during the 6th grade so that EFA coaches and players find the transition to SWML play in 7th grade less dramatic.

NFSHSAA & SWML RULES

Unless expressly contradicted by these Rules, 6th Grade EFA games are governed by the “2010 Football Rules” published by the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations (“NFSHSAA”). Unless otherwise stated, the penalties provided in the NFSHSAA Rules apply to 6th Grade EFA games. Accordingly, there are no prohibitions on maximum penalties (a departure from EFA 4th/5th Rules).

These Rules also attempt to follow the Southwest Metro League (“SWML”) Rules as closely as possible. In the event of any ambiguity, these Rules will be construed to conform to SWML Rules for the 6th Grade.

REFEREES

The referees hired by the EFA work at a variety of different levels under a host of different rules. The EFA alone has four different sets of rules that apply to its tackle leagues. And it is not uncommon for the referees retained by the EFA to work with a number of youth leagues.

For these reasons, the referees may not always be aware of every rule applicable to EFA league play. Coaches are expected to work collaboratively with the referees (and each other) to make sure that games are officiated in a fair, sportsmanlike manner and in accordance with these Rules. In other words, if the referees make a mistake, don't scream like an idiot and run onto the field to thrust a hi-lited, annotated version of the Rules in their faces. Instead, work it out in a calm, deliberative manner — model behavior that you want your players to emulate.

If teams have a question about a ruling or some other matter, coaches may talk to referees in a calm, professional manner. A team's spectators may not talk to the referees. Coaches are responsible for reminding their team's spectators of this rule. A chronic failure to abide by this Rule can result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty. In extreme cases, Grade Coordinators (in consultation with the EFA Coaches' Education Committee) may ban spectators.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Coaches

1) **Selection.** Coaches are selected on the basis of their ability to work with young people and their ability to teach the fundamentals of football in a safe and fun manner. Coaches are required to sign an EFA Coaches' Conduct Pledge and to abide by the spirit of these Rules and the EFA's philosophy. Grade Coordinators, with the approval of the Coaches' Education Committee, have the discretion to remove any coach who violates these Rules. As vital as coaches are to the success of the EFA, they should always remember that the program is for players – not the coaches.

2) **Coaches' Conduct Pledge.** No coach may coach in a practice or game until that coach has signed a Coach's Conduct Pledge and turned it into the Grade Coordinator.

3) **Training.** All head coaches and assistant coaches shall attend the mandatory training conducted by the Coaches' Education Committee. Coaches are expected to follow the requests and instruction of the Grade Coordinator.

4) **Retention.** A coach who has coached the year before has priority at the subsequent grade level. Second priority is given to qualified parents who desire to coach.

Registration

1) **Deadline.** Registrations are accepted through the end of the official sign-up date or until rosters are filled. Any other registrations must be approved by the Grade Coordinator and the EFA President. That player will not be allowed to play until he has passed through the evaluation process and has been assigned to the team deemed to have the greatest need. Players who wish to enroll after the beginning of the season must pass through the process

described. Failure to do so may result in forfeiture of games and removal of player from that team.

2) **Registration Form.** No player will be allowed to practice or play in a game until a complete, signed registration form (including medical information) with the appropriate fee is returned to the EFA.

3) **Financial Hardship.** In case of financial hardship, the registration fee may be waived at the President's discretion.

4) **Refunds.** All requests for refunds must be in writing and must be made by the parent/guardian to include; (i) the name/relationship to the player of the person requesting the refund,(ii) name of the player, (iii) reason for the request, (iv) instructions for distribution. Upon approval by the EFA President, funds will be immediately disbursed.

Selection of Teams

1) **Number of Teams.** The Grade Coordinators, in consultation with the Coaches' Education Committee, establish the number of teams to be fielded by each grade level.

2) **Equidraft.** Teams will be organized with the use of the "Equidraft" system. All players will be evaluated at skill sessions that take place during the first practices. The length of the evaluation period will be established by the Grade Coordinator (in consultation with the Coaches' Education Committee).

The Grade Coordinator will weigh and time each player during the skills evaluation. A draft is then held using the results of the skills sessions to assemble equal teams. Players are assigned to teams, which are identified by a team number. Once the coaches and coordinator agree that all of the teams are as equal as reasonably possible, the coordinator shall assign coaches to teams. No changes or swapping of players between coaches are permitted after the drawing takes place without the approval of all the other coaches in the grade and the Grade Coordinator.

3) **Transfer of Players.** The Grade Coordinator shall determine how many head coaches and assistant coaches may have their sons transferred to their teams. The same number of coaches per team shall be permitted to request transfers. In other words, if 3 coaches from team "A" are allowed to transfer players to their team, every team shall be allowed to transfer 3 players.

If coaches are allowed to have their sons transferred to their team, they shall be traded for players of equal ability.

4) **Rosters Fixed.** Once rosters are set, players may be moved only if an extreme inequity, injury, or special circumstance is identified. This will be done by the Grade Coordinator in consultation with the Coaches' Education Committee.

Equipment

- 1) All players must use EFA-approved equipment. Players who do not have EFA-approved equipment may not practice or play until they obtain the appropriate equipment – with no exceptions. Each player must have:
 - a. **Helmets**-All players must wear a NOCSAE certified helmet with face guard and chin strap with hard plastic chin guard
 - b. **Mouth guards**-All players must wear approved mouth guards. Failure to wear a mouth guard during a game results in a 10-yard penalty.
 - c. **Shoulder pads.**
 - d. **Pants** -- all players must wear football pants with hip, thigh and knee pads.
 - e. **Athletic cup and supporter**
 - f. **Shoes** -- All players must wear approved shoes. Any cleats must be permanently molded into the sole of the shoe and not to exceed one-half inch in length. Screw-in cleats are not permitted.
- 2) Coaches are expected to see that each player is fitted properly in approved equipment. Any player wearing faulty or ill-fitting equipment will not be allowed to play.

Practice

- 1) The practice schedule is set by the Grade Coordinator. **Any coach violating the schedule by holding practice outside the times approved by the Grade Coordinator may be removed or, in the Grade Coordinator's discretion (in consultation with the Coaches' Education Committee), subject to lesser discipline.**
- 2) The early season practice schedule has been set:
 - August 16 - August 20: Monday through Friday - 6 - 8 p.m.
 - August 23 - August 27: Monday through Friday - 6 - 8 p.m.
 - August 30 - August 31: Monday and Tuesday - 6 - 8 p.m.
- 3) The Grade Coordinator shall establish the practice schedule for the remainder of the season. Generally speaking, teams will practice three nights a week (M, T, Th) for 1.5 hours apiece. The start time for practice is adjusted to account for diminishing daylight as autumn progresses.

Weather

The 6th grade league practices on grass fields and may also play some of its games on grass fields. The use of those fields is controlled by the Edina Parks and Recreation Department. When the weather is wet and the Parks Department perceives the possibility that play will

permanently damage the fields, it cancels practice and/or games. The EFA does not have any control over those decisions.

The Parks Department tries to work cooperatively with the EFA to provide prompt notice of its decisions to cancel play, but it also tries to err on the side of allowing games to be played. This occasionally results in games or practice being cancelled on short notice. Coaches and parents are asked to be mindful of the fact that the EFA is not in control of these decisions and that the seemingly late notice sometimes received from the Parks Department is a result of the fact that all involved would prefer to see league play go forward if at all possible.

If the Parks Department determines that the EFA may play during wet or snowy conditions, the Grade Coordinator retains the discretion to cancel play if the weather poses a risk to players' safety – e.g., lightning or extreme cold. Generally, football is a game played in inclement weather and league play will go forward if the Parks Department permits the EFA to use its fields.

If games are cancelled, the Grade Coordinator will attempt to re-schedule games to the extent possible.

Weight Restrictions: “Designated Players” (or “Single Black-Strippers”)

1) **Weigh-ins.** Weights are determined in shorts and “t”-shirt, without shoes, when player evaluations begin. Unweighed players may not carry the ball.

2) **Designated Player Limit.** Players who weigh more than 115 pounds will be termed “Designated Players” (often referred to as “Single Black Strippers”). They will be designated with a single black stripe on their helmet. These players may not carry the ball or line up in a backfield position (e.g. as a blocking back) at any time during the game.

3) **Defensive Positions.** Designated Players may play ANY position on defense. Designated Players may advance fumbles and interceptions.

4) **Offense.** On offense, Designated Players may line up as tight ends and advance the ball by catching forward passes (passes thrown beyond the line of scrimmage) and running after the reception. But Designated Players may not advance the ball on any offensive play as part of a punt, fumble, “shovel pass,” lateral, hand-off, or “end-around.”

5) **Kicking Game.** Designated Players may return inside kicks only if the Designated Player's original alignment on the play was ten yards from the kicking team. If a “Designated Player” catches a kick-off that goes more than fifteen yards from the point where the ball was kicked, the play is dead and the player may not advance the kick.

Designated Players may not advance punts. If a punted ball touches a Designated Player, the ball is “down” where it struck the Designated Player.

A player of any weight can be used as a kicker or punter.

EQUAL PARTICIPATION

EFA Philosophy on Playing Time

Equal participation is one of the EFA's core principles. The EFA requires that every player at every level be given a starting position on both offense and defense each game and that every player play at least half the game. This requirement is consistent with the EFA's philosophy – to maximize participation and develop as many players as possible.

This principle also takes into account the fact that football players develop at significantly different rates. A player who dominates the league in 6th grade might be relegated to a secondary role in high school – and a player who plays a secondary role in the 6th grade might be the star in high school. But if a player who struggles early in his development quits because he is never given a chance to play, the player is deprived of a valuable experience and EHS is deprived of a player who might ultimately contribute to the team's success.

Playing Time Rules

Each player should play a minimum of 50% of the game. Over the course of the season, all of the players on a particular team's roster should play roughly an equal amount of time. In each game, each player should have:

- a. One starting position on defense during one half.
- b. One starting position on offense during the opposite half.
- c. Unless there are legitimate reasons why the player should be held out for a play or more, the player should play every play during the half that he is starting. For example, if player "A" is starting on offense in the second half, he should play every play that his team is on offense in the second half. "Legitimate reasons" for taking a player out of the game are limited to: i) injury; or ii) disciplinary reasons (e.g., in response to an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty).
- d. Special teams play does not count towards minimum playing time

The EFA expects that, in 2010, the 6th grade league will be comprised of 8 teams of 17(+) players. If each team complies with these Rules and they have a full roster available, each team will have to play approximately 5 players both ways in the first half.

- For example, 11 players from team "A" play offense the first half. The remaining 6 players on the roster play on defense. 5 players from the offensive side of the ball must also play defense in order to field a team.
- Under this scenario, the players who play both ways in the 1st half may not play both ways in the 2nd. Rather, 5 new players must play both offense and defense in the 2nd half.
- Assuming a full roster of 17 players, 7 players per team will only play ½ of Any given game (½ on offense, ½ on defense). To the greatest extent possible,

the 7 players in this example who only played $\frac{1}{2}$ of the game should play $\frac{3}{4}$ of the game the following week. Coaches are required to rotate their roster and playing time so that their players play equally throughout the season. Coaches are required to maintain records of who plays. The Grade Coordinator may request those records at any time.

Unless required by injury, disqualifications, or absences, no player should play the entire game.

Backfields

Teams must play two entirely separate offensive backfields (QB, A, B, and Z backs) each half.

Substitutions

The only time that teams may substitute is

- The start of a new quarter;
- Injury (and the injured player shall return to his position as soon as it is safe for him to do so);
- Disqualification; or
- After mid-season (when coaches will no longer be permitted on the field), coaches may use players to messenger in plays. If coaches utilize this method, they may not use the same two players to messenger in plays during the remainder of the season until the rest of the players on their roster have been used as messengers.

These substitution Rules do not apply to special teams. In other words, kickers, punters, and long-sappers may substitute on any kicking play.

GAME PLAY

Time-Keeping

Teams will play 15-minute running quarters with “stop-time” rules being used during the last 2 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 game clock will re-start on the kick-off as in NFSHSAA Rules.

25-Second Clock

The offense will have 25 seconds from the referee’s spot of the ball to snap the ball for the next play. The game officials will keep the 25-second clock. Failure to initiate play within 25 seconds will result in 5-yard penalty to be assessed from the line of scrimmage.

Although the game clock will not run on extra points, the 25-second rule will still apply. The 25-second clock will be started by the officials for extra points, with delay of game receiving the usual 5 yard penalty.

Football

“Youth” size footballs will be provided by the EFA and used for league play.

Fields

Games shall be played on regulation football fields. The coaches’ box shall extend from each 25-yard line.

Home team responsibilities

The home team is responsible for down marker and chain attendants. Both teams are responsible for policing the field and picking up trash and equipment after the last game of the day.

Scoring

- 1) **No FGs or Kicked PATs.** There are no field goals or kicked extra points in 6th grade.
- 2) **Extra Points.** One point is awarded for extra points achieved by runs, 2 points for extra points achieved by forward pass.
- 3) **Ties & Overtime.** All ties will be official. There will be no overtime, except in playoff games. In a playoff game, ties are decided by each team trying to score from the 10 yard line. Overtime begins with a coin flip. Each team gets four plays to score. The second team gets four plays to score, even if the first team scores on its first play. If a team scores, they also try an extra point from the three yard line. If a team loses possession of the ball they cannot run any further plays. The team with the highest score wins the tie-breaker.

Time-Outs

Each team shall have 2 time-outs per half. Each time-out will last 1 & ½ minutes. A time-out shall not be charged to a team in the event of player injury. An injured player must leave the field for at least one play.

Half-time

Half-time shall be 5 minutes.

Four-Minute Warning

Coaches will be advised by officials when 4 minutes are left before the end of each half.

Coaches on the Field

Coaches are not permitted on the field. They may only come on the field during time-outs.

Spectators

Football is a game that incites passion. Occasionally, even some adults have a hard time putting youth football in its proper perspective. Too often we see reports of unruly and even violent behavior during or after children's games.

Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their team's spectators. Spectators who talk to the referees, are unruly, or who yell at the opposing team's players or coaches can be assessed a penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct (see below), asked to leave the field, and/or banned from EFA games.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct & Ejections

- 1) **Penalty.** Any unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches, players, parents or spectators will result in an automatic 15-yard penalty. A preliminary warning is not required before an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty is called. If a player is penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct, he will be removed from the game for at least two plays and shall be permitted to return only when the head coach has satisfied himself that the player understands the nature of his misconduct.
- 2) **Ejection.** There shall be automatic ejection from the game for any fighting, kneeling, kicking or other deliberate actions taken to injure another player.
- 3) **One-week Suspension.** If a player is ejected from the game, the player may not play the next game.

OFFENSE

Formations and Plays

The EFA will issue mandatory playbooks. Those playbooks will utilize the EHS formations, plays, and terminology – and they will be consistent with the SWML Rules. The permissible formations are attached as Exhibit 1.

Teams may not deviate from the playbooks without the Grade Coordinator's permission. Generally, if the Grade Coordinator grants permission for one team to deviate from the playbook, all teams may do so. For example, if one team is permitted to run a trick play not included in the playbook, every other team in the league will be permitted to run a trick play. But this is subject to a rule of reason – not every team need run the same trick play.

A non-exhaustive list of factors for the Grade Coordinator to consider in granting deviations includes:

- **SWML Compatibility.** The extent to which the requested deviation is consistent with SWML Rules. The SWML Rules regarding formations are attached as Exhibit 2.

- **Parity.** One of the EFA's primary goals is parity. Allowing deviations from the playbook may heighten disparities that already exist in an uneven league. In contrast, allowing teams in a well-balanced league to run a few plays not included in the playbooks does not raise the same concerns.
- **Skill level.** The extent to which teams have mastered the plays in the playbook – and the skills necessary to execute them. Crawl before you can walk, walk before you run. Does a team that can't execute an off-tackle play really need to run a triple reverse?
- **Timing.** As the season winds down and teams settle in with their primary plays, players tend to get bored. Introducing a few gadget plays can spice things up and make practice more fun.
- **EHS Compatibility.** The extent to which a proposed deviation teaches schemes or skills that are relevant to an important football concept that players will be required to implement later (especially at EHS) or whether or not the proposed deviation is legal under SWML play.

Motion

Motion and shifting are allowed, but they must result in a legal formation.

Quarterback Sneaks

Quarterback sneaks are permitted unless:

- The ball is within 3 yards of a 1st down or the goal-line; or
- It is 3rd or 4th down.

Any play where the quarterback starts under center and runs between the guards is a "sneak." So, for example, a "quarterback draw" -- where the QB takes a drop-step and then proceeds to run between the guards -- is still a "sneak" and not permitted in the circumstances described in this rule.

A run by a quarterback who receives a snap 3 or more yards from behind the center is not a "sneak" as that term is used in these Rules. But a run by a quarterback between the guards from the "pistol" or "revolver" formations is a "sneak" and prohibited if it is made under the circumstances identified above.

This rule is in place in order to compensate for the fact that linebackers are required to remain 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage.

Violation of this rule shall result in the ball being returned to the original line of scrimmage and a loss of down.

Offensive line

The only limitations on offensive line play are those provided in the NFSHSAA Rules. Offensive linemen may pull, trap, or utilize any other legal technique.

DEFENSE

Defensive Goals & Philosophy

EFA players in the 4th and 5th grades are not permitted to “shoot the gap,” blitz, or “stunt.” There are several reasons why. First, blocking is one of the hardest skills to develop in young football players. These prohibitions on the defense allow developing offensive linemen a fair opportunity to begin to master difficult skills without having to contend with gapping linemen and blitzing linebackers. Second, the prohibition encourages coaches to teach defensive players the fundamentals – gap responsibility and the ability to stun, control, and shed blockers.

The SWML Rules, however, permit defensive players to shoot gaps, stunt, and blitz. And these techniques are a staple of the EHS defense. Accordingly, the EFA has decided to allow these techniques in 6th grade so that defensive players may begin to master these skills – and so that, offensively, they are prepared to face them in 7th grade. At the same time, coaches are encouraged to continue to emphasize fundamentals – particularly gap responsibility and the ability to stun, control, and shed blockers.

Tackling

With the increasing awareness of the danger of head injuries and their lingering effects, coaches are reminded that one of the EFA’s primary goals is to teach safe play. Accordingly, coaches are required to teach safe methods of tackling and to insure that their players do not tackle using the helmet, spear, or make horse-collar tackles. All of these techniques are personal fouls and will be penalized 15 yards.

Base Alignments

Teams are restricted to either the 6-3 defense (leaving the center uncovered) or a 5-4 defense. Acceptable defensive alignments are displayed in [Exhibit 3](#).

6-3

- 6 players on the line of scrimmage: 2 defensive guards, 2 defensive tackles and 2 defensive ends. Defensive guards/tackles must be lined up helmet to helmet (head-up) with the offensive guards/tackles. Defensive ends can be lined up on the outside shoulder of the tight end.
- 3 linebackers: 2 outside linebackers and 1 middle linebacker. Linebackers cannot be stacked (lined up behind a lineman). Place outside linebackers on the outside shoulder of the defensive end or as far outside as you would like. But, you cannot move them inside any further. The middle linebacker must be over the center at the snap of the ball.

- Safeties must be at least 8 yards from the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. There are no other restrictions on their alignment.

5-4

- 5 players on the line of scrimmage: 1 nose guard (lined head up on the center), 2 defensive tackles (lined head up on the offensive tackles) and 2 defensive ends. Defensive ends can be lined up on the outside shoulder of the tight ends.
- 4 linebackers: 2 outside linebackers and 2 inside linebackers. Linebackers cannot be stacked (lined up behind a lineman). Place outside linebackers on the outside shoulder of the defensive end or as far outside as you would like. You cannot move them inside any further than the outside shoulder of the defensive end, though. The inside linebackers must be directly over the guards at the snap of the ball.
- Safeties must be at least 8 yards from the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. There are no other restrictions on their alignment.

Defensive linemen

Other than the defensive ends, defensive linemen must line “head-up” over the offensive linemen. Defensive ends may line up no wider than the shoulder of the offensive linemen or tight end that they are covering. Defensive ends may line up in 2, 3, or 4 point stance. Defensive tackles, guards, and nose-tackles may line up in either a three 3 or 4 point stance.

Once the offensive line takes its stance, a defensive linemen who crosses the neutral zone will be ruled offsides. A 5-yard penalty will be assessed.

Defensive Line Techniques

Defensive linemen may “shoot the gap” between the offensive lineman that they are covering and the next offensive player. They may also “stunt.” A “stunt” is defined as two defensive linemen or blitzing linebackers crossing. When shooting the gap or stunting, defensive linemen and/or linebackers need not make initial contact with the offensive player.

Defensive linemen may not shift or move once the offensive player in front of them takes his stance.

Linebackers

Linebackers must line up head-over an uncovered offensive linemen. They may not be “stacked” behind a defensive linemen or shade into a gap.

The linebackers must be at least 3 yards off of the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. Linebackers may not change the depth of their alignment when the ball is near the goal-line.

Outside linebackers may, however, move laterally before the snap of the ball in order to react to an offensive shift or motion. But they must be in a “legal” position at the snap of the ball.

Specifically, outside linebackers may follow an offensive player who is in motion but must stop when the outside linebacker is behind the near-side defensive end.

Blitzing and Stunting by Linebackers

Generally, linebackers may “blitz” a gap after the snap. They may also “stunt” – cross with either another linebacker or defensive lineman. But the linebackers must still remain 3 yards behind the line of scrimmage until the snap.

Permissible blitzes are displayed in Exhibit 3. The blitzes in Exhibit 3 are illustrative only. Teams are not restricted to those blitzes and may blitz one, two, or more linebackers on a play.

Safeties

Each defense will field 2 safeties. They both must be aligned at least 8 yards off of the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. Unlike linebackers, safeties may alter the depth of their alignment when the ball is inside the 10 yard line. When that occurs, safeties may line up 5 yards from the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball.

Coverage

Coaches are encourage to teach basic cover 2 zone, cover 2 man, cover 1 man (when blitzing), and cover 0 (when blitzing).

SPECIAL TEAMS

Playing Time

Special teams do not count toward “minimum–play” or player participation rules.

Punting

The offensive team must announce that they are going to punt. Fake punts are not allowed. 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. The punter must punt the ball between the tackles positions. Punt coverage cannot take place until the ball is kicked.

Punt Formations

- Use the offensive team on the field as your punting team. The exceptions to this rule are punters and long snappers.
- "Right Tight" and "Left Tight" are the acceptable punt formations. The offensive players must wait until the ball is kicked before they head downfield to cover.
- A punt that hits 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.

Punt Return

The return team may not rush the punter or leave the line of scrimmage until the ball is punted.

- Use the defensive team on the field as your punt return formation.
- No limit on how far back the linebackers/safeties can be for punt returns. The return team must have 6 players on the line of scrimmage, in a 6-3 defense or 5 players in a 5-4 defense.

Kick>Returns

If a "Designated Player" (single black stripe) fields a kick within the first fifteen yards, he may advance the ball. If Designated Players field the ball more than fifteen yards after it is kicked, the ball is dead on contact.

Exhibit 2 – SWML Formations

Keys to Utilizing a valid formation:

- **Wide Out Rules:** For 4th, 5th and 6th grades, only 1 player can be split wide, either at the start of the formation or as a result of being put into motion. The player split wide must be a flanker; he may not be an end. There must be 7 men in the box at the start of each play. 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. 7th and 8th grade may have 2 players wide. See the grade sections for more guidelines.
- **Balance Rules:** Excluding the center and the QB, who compromise the center of the formation, you must have 4 players on one side of the formation and 5 players on the other side of the formation. The exception is the “I” formation. The “I” formation is balanced similar to all other formations in that 3 players (instead of 4) are on one side and 4 players (instead of 5) are on the other side. In other words, one side of the formation can only have 1 more player on that side of the ball than exists on the other side of the ball (with the exception of the Double formation, which is completely balanced).

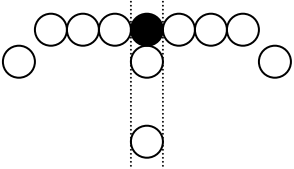
Limitations:

- Teams may have split ends, flankers or wingbacks with certain limitations. It is important to understand the definitions of each before we go into formations. We define a flanker as a back/wingback that is split wide of the formation. A split end is either end that is split wide of the normal spacing from the offensive tackle. A wingback is a back that is outside of either a tight end or tackle, but is within three feet of either. 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. 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.
- Motion players are allowed depending on whether or not they will violate the Balance and Wide Out Rules. Check the formations below for more detailed information.

Valid Formations:

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

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</p>
--	---	--

		don't cross the center of the formation and create an unbalanced formation.
<p>Double wing (with shotgun)</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	A single tight end or wingback may be split out side. 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.

2 back formations

<p>I</p>	Fullback and halfback are directly behind the QB	A single tight end or wingback may be split out wide.
<p>Wing (split backs)</p>	1 running back on the left side of the formation and 1 running back on the right side of the formation	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>Shotgun</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	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.

3 back formations

<p>Full House</p>	3 running backs in the backfield, no wingback. One directly behind the center and one on either side	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>Wishbone</p>	1 full back directly behind the center / QB and 1 running back on each side of the formation	A single tight end may be split out wide or one of the backs may go in motion. The back behind

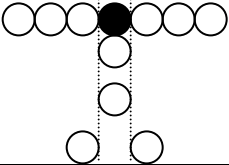
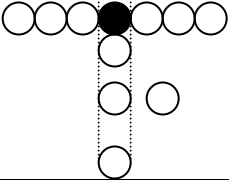
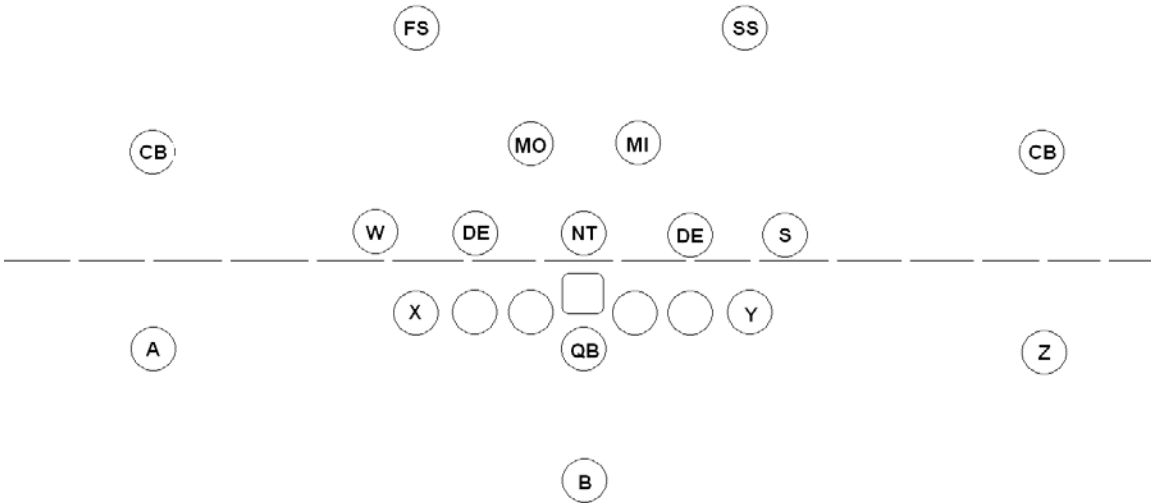
		<p>the QB can go in motion to either side of the formation. The other backs must go in motion to the same side in which they lined up to start the play.</p>
<p>Strong/Power I</p> 	<p>Same as I formation with the wingback directly behind the Guard or Tackle on either side</p>	<p>A tight end or running back may be split wide. A running back can be put in motion keeping in mind the Balance Rules.</p>

Exhibit 3: Defensive Formations and Blitzes

5-4 Defense



5-4 Balanced (Strong Left)

Notes:

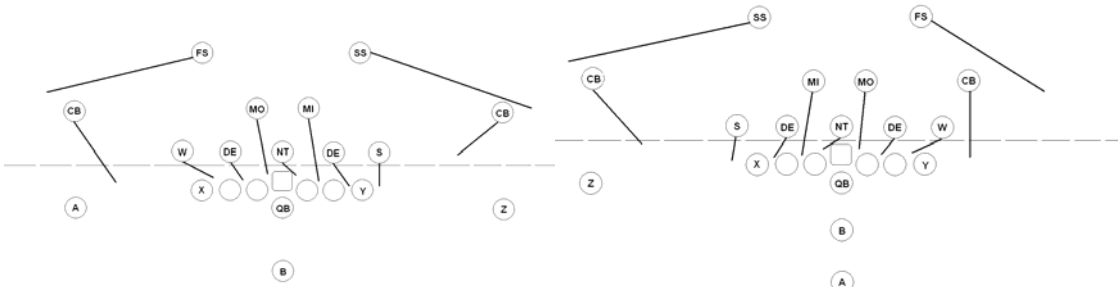
1. CB and MI and MO Linebackers must line up 3yards off the Line of Scrimmage
2. 2 Safeties must line up 8 yards off the Line of Scrimmage
3. CB can line up anywhere between the DE and the sideline
4. CB can follow an offensive player in motion
5. OLB's can line up in 2 (standing up), 3, or 4 point Stance



5-4 Against I Left

5-4 Against I Right

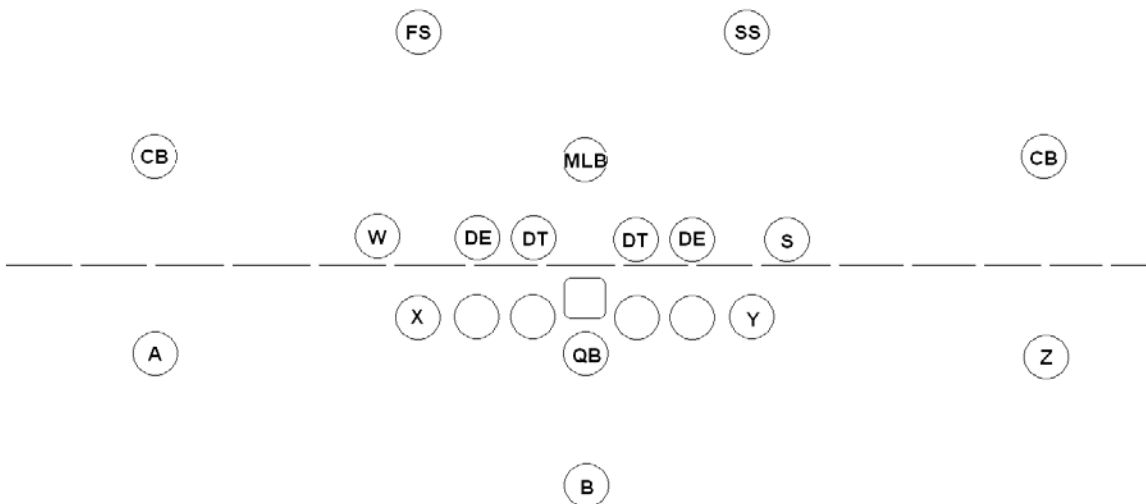
Gap Assignments



5-4 Balanced (Strong Left) Gap Assignments

5-4 Strong Right Gap Assignments

6-3 Defense



6-3 Balanced (Strong Left)

Notes:

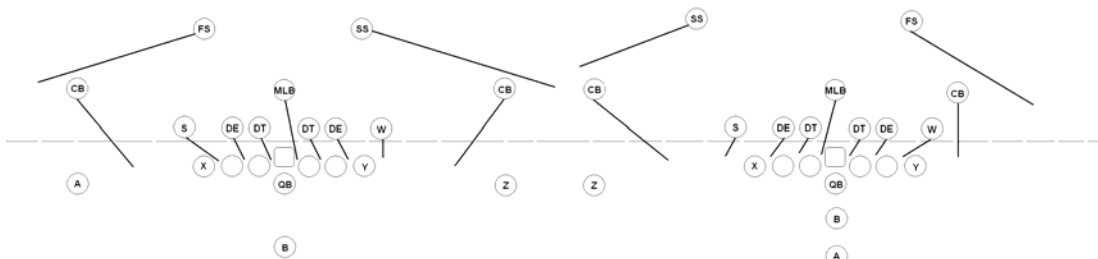
1. CB and MI and MO Linebackers must line up 3yards off the Line of Scrimmage
2. 2 Safeties must line up 8 yards off the Line of Scrimmage
3. CB can line up anywhere between the DE and the sideline
4. CB can follow an offensive player in motion
5. OLB's can line up in 2 (standing up), 3, or 4 point Stance



6-3 Against I Left

6-3 Against I Right

Gap Assignments



6-3 Balanced (Strong Left) Gap Assignments

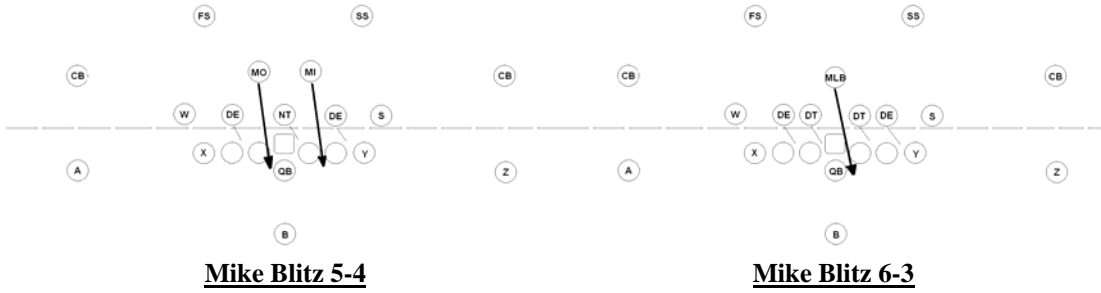
6-3 Strong Right Gap Assignments

Blitzing

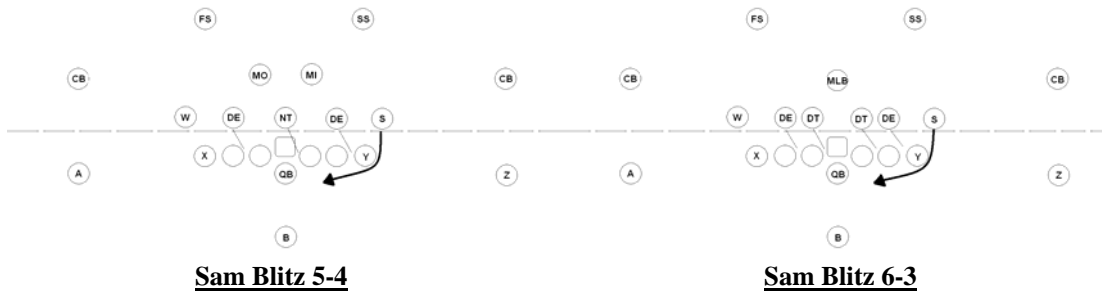
Notes:

1. Players cannot approach or walk up to the Line of Scrimmage
2. These blitzes are examples only and not restrictive. Teams may blitz multiple linebackers. Also, stunting (i.e., crossing or twisting defensive players) is allowed.

Mike Blitz



Sam Blitz



Will Blitz

