

Metro Youth Football Association

3rd Grade Modified Football Rules

Effective 2017

Pilot Season: Because this is a pilot season, the league has reserved the rights to modify or change the rules during the season of play to ensure a positive experience for all of the athletes in the program.

Practices

1. Will begin a week after the 4th-6th grade tackle practice season begins
2. Prior to the first game, teams may practice a maximum of 90 minutes three times a week
3. After the first week of games, teams may practice a maximum of 90 minutes two times a week
4. Teams agree to provide 30 minutes a practice dedicated to the USA Football Heads Up Football techniques
5. The Head Coach determines the location of practice. (Typically local schools and parks).
6. The first three practices will be helmets only. The next two practices will be with helmets and shoulder pads and dummies. The 6th practice will allow player to player contact.
7. Players must have a minimum of 5 practices before they are eligible to play in a game.
8. Each team will be required to play in a scrimmage. This will be coordinated by the league.
9. Please be in contact with the school or park that you are practicing at.
10. If they require insurance certifications, please let a member of the Metro Board know.

Games

1. The playing field will be regulation width but only 40 yards long.
2. Home teams provide the game ball and the "chain gang".
3. Home Team Sidelines: Team will take the West sideline and bench.
4. Visiting Team Sidelines: Team will take the East sideline and bench.
5. Game balls will be provided by the league. This will be a junior sized ball.
6. Games will consist of four ten minute continuous quarters.
7. There will be a one-minute break between the first and second and the third and fourth quarters. There will be a 10-minute break between halves. Teams will change directions at half time only.
8. Each team is allowed two 30-second time outs per half.
9. There will be a coin toss to start the game.
10. There are no kick-offs. The ball will be placed on the 10-yard line for the start of the first and second halves. The ball will be placed on the 10-yard line after any score.
11. Safety: After a safety, the defensive team will retain possession of the ball at the opposite 10 yard line.
12. A maximum of one coach, per team, will be allowed on the field during the game. On field coaches must not interfere with play. All other coaches must be on the sideline during the game.
13. Each team will get a series of four downs, within the rules, to move the ball ten yards for a first down.
14. Referees - Games will have at least two referees. Referees will keep time.

Scoring

1. Since “winning” is not the primary emphasis in this league, referees will not keep track of the score.
2. An “extra point” try will be run from the 2 yard line following a score.

Equipment

1. Each player will be required to use the league issued helmet and shoulder pads. We will not be using padded football pants for this modified flag league.
2. Players will also be issued a numbered mesh jersey by the league.
3. Each player shall wear a flag belt with two flags.
4. Shorts or pants should not be the same color as the teams flags.
5. **Each player shall wear a protective mouthpiece.** This applies to **practice** as well as **games**.
6. Players must keep their “jerseys” and undershirts tucked in at all times.
7. Footballs issued by MYFA will be used for each game.
8. Players can wear rubber molded cleats. Screw in cleats will not be allowed.
9. No player will be allowed to wear jewelry during practice or games. This includes, but is not limited to earrings, watches, rings and necklaces

Players

1. Play is limited to athletes entering the 3rd grade. We will not allow younger or older players to participate in this league.
2. Players will be assigned to a team after all registrations are closed.
3. Players will be assigned to a team based upon the following:
 - a. What High School they will be attending
 - b. What elementary school they will be attending
4. Each team shall have a roster of 8-16 players.
5. Each team shall play an 8 player squad at a time.
6. These squads shall play continuously, except in the case of an injury, on both offense and defense.
7. Mandatory playing time for each player will be 2 full quarters.
8. No players will leave the field during a quarter (Exception – team with 17 players).
9. All players will play **BOTH** offense and defense.

Substitutions

1. Substitutions may only be made when a player is injured or because of player fatigue.
2. In the event a team has more than 16 players available for a game, that team may substitute freely, in an attempt to make sure that all players have a reasonable opportunity for equal playing time.
3. Games will be played even if one or both teams scheduled have less than 8 players available, but if a team has less than 7 players available at game time, it shall forfeit that day’s game. Make up games are at the discretion of the league.

Offense

1. Each play must have a Balanced Line. (Two players on the line of scrimmage on each side of the center)
2. There must be five players on the line of scrimmage.
3. All 5 players on the Line of Scrimmage must line up with traditional splits no wider than an arm length away. (IE...Splitting a player wide on the LOS is not legal)
4. The backfield will consist of three players off the line of scrimmage. The backfield can line up in any legal formation.
5. All shifting and motion plays must be within the rules of football.
6. Lineman must begin in a two point stance.
7. Blocking is allowed: USA Football blocking techniques will be taught and accepted during games. No chop blocking should originate below the waist.
8. All offensive players are eligible to catch a pass.
9. The center must "snap" the ball to the backfield (quarterback or running back). There will be no center sneaks or "fumblerooski's".
10. No "Flag Guarding".
11. All plays shall begin with a huddle.
12. Huddles will last no longer than 30 seconds.
13. Ball carriers cannot "hurdle" or otherwise leave their feet.
14. There will be no "stiff arms".
15. Punts must be declared and will be dead at the spot it is caught, touched, or comes to a stop. Teams choosing to punt can elect to kick or throw the ball down the field.

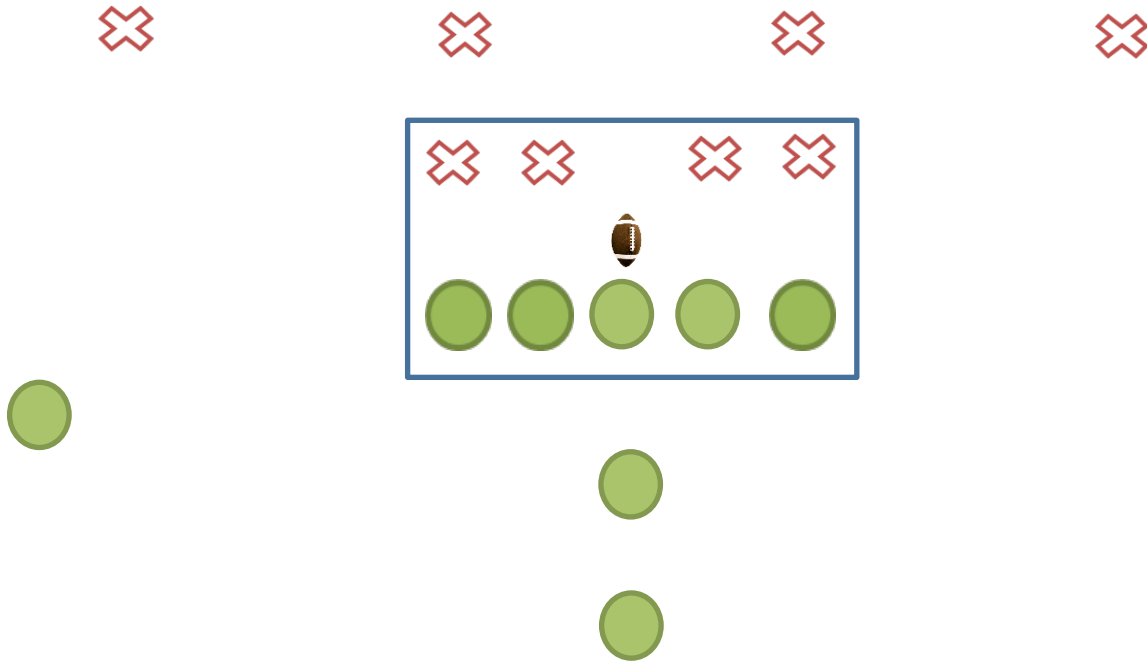
Defense

1. Alignment
 - a. The offensive center must remain uncovered and a nose guard will not be allowed
 - b. Maximum of 4 defensive linemen are allowed and cannot be wider than the outside shoulder of the last offensive player on the line of scrimmage.
2. All defensive players must start in a two point stance
3. No blitzing is allowed and defensive players are not allowed to have definite bodily movement forward prior to the snap.
4. Play is live once the ball is snapped.
5. There are no punt returns. The ball is down at the point it is caught, touched, or stops rolling.
6. **Pass interceptions returns are allowed.**
7. Tackling is absolutely prohibited.
8. Defensive players cannot push or otherwise force a ball carrier from the field of play.

Line of Scrimmage and Defensive Alignment

1. In the Box –

- The offense must have all 5 players on the line of scrimmage in traditional splits no wider than an arm length apart. The outside shoulders of the end players on the line of scrimmage creates “the box”.
- The defense can have a maximum of 4 players on the line of scrimmage and they must be located with “the box” no wider than the outside shoulder of the end.
- All defensive players outside “the box” must line up 2 yards off the line of scrimmage. This includes corner backs.
- The defense cannot line up a player over the center as a nose guard.
- Defensive players can line up in the gap including the “A Gap”.



Dead Balls

1. The Ball is considered “down “ when any of the following occurs:
 - a. Ball carrier is de-flagged
 - b. Ball carrier steps out of bounds
 - c. Ball is fumbled
 - d. When the ball is caught or touched after a punt
 - e. Ball carriers knee hits the ground
 - f. Ball Carriers flag belt falls off
2. Incomplete passes are not considered “live”
3. Fumbles
 - a. A fumbled ball will be considered “dead” and the fumbling team will retain possession at the spot of the fumble.
 - b. If the fumble occurs on 4th down, the ball will be considered “Turned Over” on downs at the spot of the ball.
 - c. Fumbles may not be advanced by the fumbling team.
4. A punt is considered dead at the place the receiving team first makes contact with the ball and cannot be advanced or fumbled.

Penalties

1. Flag Guarding – 5 Yards
2. Unnecessary Roughness – 15 Yards
3. Un-sportsmanlike Conduct – 15 Yards
4. Offside and False Starts – 5 Yards
5. Delay of Game – 5 Yards
6. Holding – 10 Yards
7. Defensive Holding – 10 yards(intentionally holding a player, ball, jersey, or belt, to impede the offensive player from advancing until you are able to grab a flag)
8. Pass Interference – 10 Yards
9. All penalties are assessed from the line of scrimmage
10. Interpretation of the penalties will be based on the intent of the league
11. **There will be no “on field” penalty discussions.** The referee’s calls are final.
12. A Head Coach needing clarification on a particular call should direct his or her question to a **league official after the game.**
13. **Questions concerning penalties will not be taken from fans at any time.**

Spectators

1. Spectators are expected to behave in an appropriate manner at all times.
2. Spectators will not harass any player, coach, or official.
3. Spectators are not to argue with any referee or league official.
4. No alcoholic beverages will be brought on or consumed at the MYFA Complex. Spectators who are inebriated will not be allowed in the complex.
5. Spectators will be removed from the MYFA Complex if found in violation of the preceding.

Injuries

1. Trainers will keep records of all injuries (Players name, number, team, and injury) if removed from a game due to injury. The trainer must then check the player before they are allowed to play again, in either that game or the following game.
2. Federation rules require a player that is unconscious or apparently unconscious in a game to receive written permission from a physician before being allowed to participate further in football.
3. Any player wearing a hard cast or rigid brace may not participate in games or practice.

Coaches Conduct

1. The Metro Youth Football Association will approve the appointment of all head coaches.
2. Playing time for all players is MORE important than winning or losing a game. **REMEMBER: THIS PROGRAM IS FOR THE PLAYERS,** not the coaches or parents.
3. The players in our program are at a very impressionable age; therefore these rules of conduct for the Coaches will help to set a favorable example for these players. All Head Coaches are **Responsible** for their Assistant Coaches following these rules.
4. Head Coaches will be required to sign the MYFA Coaches Conduct Statement and agree to the disciplinary action guidelines outlined in this document that pertain to the behavior and actions of the teams coaching staff, players, chain gang, relatives, and fans.
5. No betting between Coaches.
6. No alcoholic beverages are allowed within 2 blocks of practices or games. This rule includes parents. Coaches are to make sure parents understand this rule. Coaches violating this rule are dismissed from the program immediately. **NO EXCEPTIONS.** Parents violating this rule will be warned once and then their child may be removed from the program by action of the Board of Directors.
7. Coaches will refrain from the use of any tobacco products in the presence of players.
8. No swearing or losing your temper in front of the players.
9. No striking of the players for any reason. These are young children, not young adults, treat them accordingly.
10. **Game films or videotapes, etc. can be used for coaching or scouting purposes.**
Clarification: Coaches may view videotapes, make cut-ups, break down the tape for coaching purposes and show video to their team.
 - A. Video can be filmed of your own team/players only during practice, games or scrimmages in accordance with practice time rules (Sec IV-1).
 - B. Video can be filmed of opposing teams only in accordance with scouting rules (Sec III-9).
 - C. Video can only be shown to players during team practice times. No coach shall assign a player to view video outside of practice time.
 - D. No video will be taken from the score towers. Video recording will only be allowed from the spectator area.
 - E. Drone Video cameras will not be permitted on Metro facilities or practice sites.
11. Scouting of other teams is permitted when:
 - A. The other team is playing a league-scheduled game.
 - B. Your team is scrimmaging the other team.**Intent: Limit when it is permissible to study other teams. Incidental observations by one team of the other do not constitute scouting.**
12. No criticizing officials, Game Monitors or Scorekeepers at any time, on or off the field. This can only hurt the program. If you disagree with a call, or you believe an official misapplied a rule, you can call a time-out and discuss it with the official. This does not apply to judgment calls. If an official agrees that a rule was wrongly applied, the time-out is **NOT CHARGED** and the correction is made. If the official thinks the rule was correctly applied, the time-out is **CHARGED** to your team and the play stands. The referee's decision is final.

13. One Coach is allowed on the field for an injury at the Official's request. In a game, first-aid will be administered by the attending medical official only. Medical Official (trainer) must authorize return of the injured player in the game.
14. Head Coach is responsible for the conduct of their Assistants and the parents of players on their team. Game Monitors will help with the conduct of the parents.
15. Show **SPORTSMANSHIP** at all times.
16. **MANDATORY** - Parents Meeting with Coaches and a member of the Executive Board, or designated representative, during the first or second week of practice. It is **strongly recommended** that the Parents Meeting take place during the first week of practice. Coaches **MUST** have a Parents Meeting by the end of the 2nd week of practice.
17. **Coaches will inform the Registrar within 24 hours when a player drops from the program or if a player has not contacted the coach by the sixth practice.**
18. **USA Football Certification: All tackle coaches (Head and Assistants) will be required to become Level I Certified through USA Football's Heads Up program.**
19. BACKGROUND CHECKS: All coaches (both flag and tackle), Executive and General Board members will submit to an annual background check.
 - A) Coaches and members will sign a form authorizing the performance of the background check. In addition, coaches and members are required to sign a form stating that they have never been convicted of a crime of any kind against a minor. Head flag and tackle coaches are responsible for securing signatures on the background check paperwork of their assistant coaches and have them turned in no later than picture night. **Failure to sign the required forms, secure signatures from assistant coaches and/or turn them in constitutes grounds for dismissal.**
 - B) The results of the background checks are confidential and will only be viewed by the Executive Board. Excepting conviction of crimes against a minor, the Executive Board will use its discretion in determining what behavior is and is not acceptable for persons who wish to coach or be a member of Metro Youth Football. **Any and all convictions against a minor are automatic grounds for dismissal.**
20. ASSISTANT COACHES: All assistant coaches will be chosen at the discretion of the head coach for each team. A team may have as many assistant coaches as the Head Coach desires.
 - A) All assistant coaches are held to the same code of conduct as the head coach and shall pass the required league approved background check.
 - B) During games only 1 head coach and a maximum of 4 assistant coaches will be allowed on the field side of the ropes. All others must remain behind the ropes in the bleacher area.
 - C) Assistant coaches shall be 18 years of age or a High School graduate. This does not remove the ability to have high school players assist teams during practices.
 - D) The Metro Youth Football board has the authority to remove/deny the appointment of an assistant coach from any team.
21. INFRACTIONS OF THE ABOVE RULES ARE SUBJECT TO A VARIETY OF DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS BY THE BOARD, UP TO AND INCLUDING DISMISSAL FROM THE LEAGUE.
22. Any suspended coach may not participate in game day activities. In this situation, the offending coach will be permitted to attend the game and required to observe as a spectator outside the 20s and the designated bench area. Additionally, they will not be permitted to be a member of the chain gang.