



ROOKIE TACKLE[®]
6-PLAYER RULE BOOK

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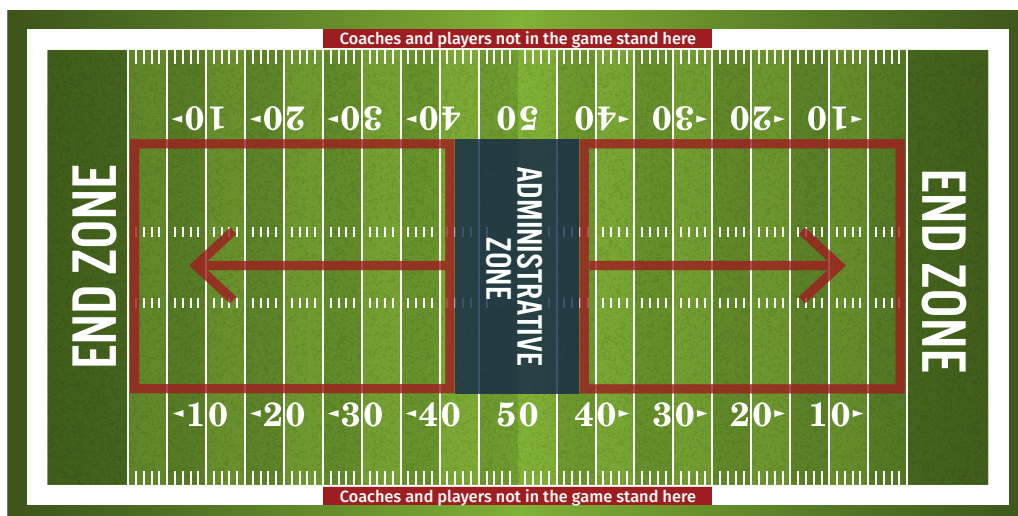
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ROOKIE TACKLE® 6-PLAYER RULES

Playing Field

1. The playing field is 40 x 35 1/3 yards, allowing for two fields to be created on a traditional 100-yard field at the same time.
2. The sidelines extend between the insides of the numbers on a traditional football field and should be marked with cones every five yards. Use traditional pylons, if available, to mark the goal line and the back line of the end zone.
3. Additional cones can be placed between the 5-yard stripes and in line with the inside of the numbers to further outline the playing surface if desired.
4. All possessions start at the 40-yard line going toward the end zone.
 - a. This leaves a 20-yard buffer zone between the two game fields for game administration and safety purposes. Game officials, league personnel, athletic trainers and designated coaches are allowed in this space.
 - b. The offensive huddle may take place in the Administrative Zone.
 - c. Players not in the game stand on the traditional sidelines with one or more coach(es) to supervise.
 - d. The standard players' box should be used for sideline players. With the field split in two, this keeps players between the 25- and 40-yard line on each respective field and side.
5. First downs, down markers and the chain crew are administered in accordance with [National Federation of State High School Associations](#) (NFHS) or local rules – starting from the 40-yard line.



6-Player Rules

Rookie Tackle uses the NFHS rule book as a base and employs the following adjustments for 6-player football.

1. Because of the “all players, all positions, all skills” philosophy, there are no restrictions on jersey numbers or player positions.
 - a. Not all players may play every position every game or even through the course of the entire season. All players should have at least one offensive and defensive line position, as well as one offensive and one defensive backfield position to play each game.
 - b. In practice, players should learn all skills of all positions for developmental purposes in accordance with the [Football Development Model principles](#).
2. All game action takes place on one half of the field with all possessions starting on the 40-yard line going toward the end zone.
3. A turnover on downs brings the ball back to the 40-yard line, and the teams switch sides from offense to defense, defense to offense.
4. Turnovers on interceptions or turnovers on fumbles are blown dead immediately. No returns are allowed in order to protect players from running toward the 20-yard Administrative Zone between the two fields. Play restarts on the 40-yard line with the recovering/intercepting team now on offense. There are no defensive touchdowns.
 - a. Rule application: A fumble is not blown dead, only a turnover. A fumble is a live ball until it is recovered by a player, lands out of bounds or approaches the Administrative Zone and officials determine the play should be blown dead.
 - i. Defensive recoveries, as turnovers, are blown dead.
 - ii. An offensive player may recover and advance a fumble.
5. After each play, the ball is spotted in the middle of the field. Hash marks are not used.
6. Because of the limited field size, all 15-yard penalties are enforced as 10-yard penalties.
7. No penalty on the offense can take the ball beyond the 40-yard line to ensure the Administrative Zone is free.
 - a. Rule application: A five-yard penalty called and accepted on the 38-yard line would result in a loss of two yards and the ball spotted on the 40-yard line.
8. Penalties on the offense called between the 40-yard line and the end zone in which yardage is lost, even if limited in enforcement by the 40-yard line, are enforced as written in terms of down lost or replayed.

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9. Penalties on the offense that are called and accepted on or behind the 40-yard line result in a loss of down. A penalty that would normally include a loss of down would not result in a second loss of down on the same play.
 10. There are no defensive safeties. Tackles behind the 40-yard line are respotted at the 40-yard line with the offense still retaining the ball as long as a down remains.
 11. All personal foul penalties include an immediate required substitution from the field for a minimum of one play to allow coaches to address misconduct and promote good sportsmanship. We call this a “cooling off period.”
 - a. If a team does not have any substitutes for the game, coaches and officials should discuss during the pregame meeting how to apply league standards for this situation.
 12. All plays are blown dead and the ball is returned to the 40-yard line if an offensive ball-carrier or a fumbled ball crosses over midfield (50-yard line) or, at the official’s discretion, if the action of the play penetrates too deeply into the Administrative Zone.

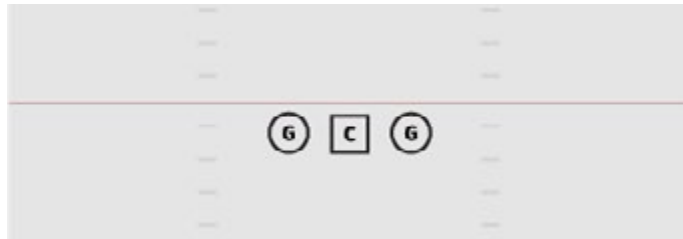
Special Teams Adjustments

1. There are no special teams.
 - a. There are no kickoffs or punts. Each possession starts with the ball on the 40-yard line, regardless of whether there is a score, turnover or turnover on downs.
 - b. There are no extra points by a kick.
 - i. All PATs are attempted through a run or pass try. Coaches can choose to go for one point from the 3-yard line or two points from the 5-yard line.

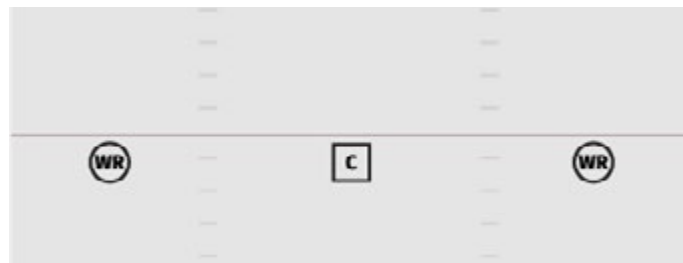
Offensive Adjustments

1. The quarterback-center exchange may be direct, pistol or shotgun.
2. All players are eligible to receive a pass.
 - a. Any pass to the snapper/center must travel at least one yard beyond the line of scrimmage.
3. All players, except for the center, may receive a handoff behind the neutral zone and become a runner.
 - a. Rule application: A player aligned on the line of scrimmage next to the center in a two-point stance may receive a handoff behind the line of scrimmage. He or she is considered an end, not a guard and is not required to align in the backfield to be an eligible runner.

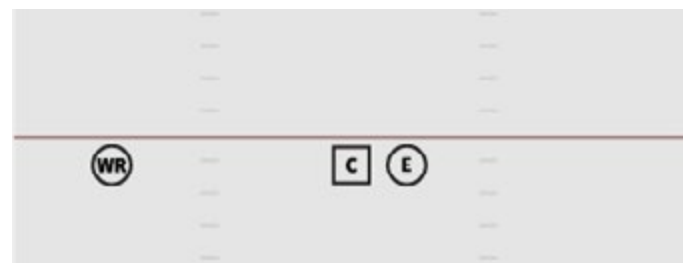
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4. The player who receives the snap may not directly run with the ball. A handoff, pitch or toss must take place and the player who receives the ball may run.
 - a. If the player who is intended to receive the snap fumbles the ball or it touches the ground before a handoff takes place, he or she is still not eligible to advance the ball, only to recover it.
 5. At least three players – one of which is the center – must be on the line of scrimmage at the snap. These players must be on opposite sides of the center but may be aligned close, as if guards,



or wide as if receivers



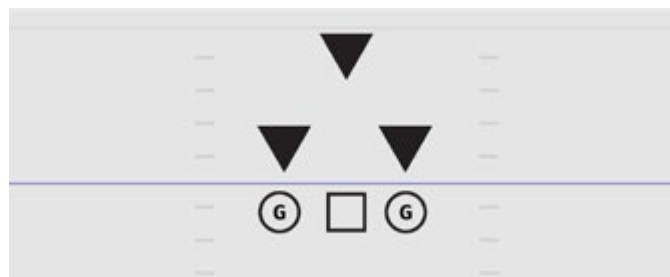
or mixed.



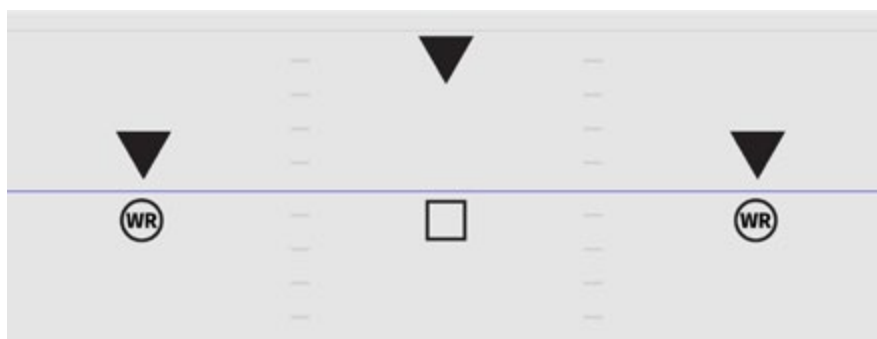
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6. All players must be in a two-point stance even if aligned and functioning as traditional offensive lineman. Only the center may be in a “down stance.”
 - a. Centers may only have the snapping hand down on the ball.
 7. The remaining three players must be aligned in the backfield, but can be deployed at a coach’s discretion: slot receiver, wing back, running back, etc.
 8. Motion is allowed by backfield players.
 9. There is no blocking below the waist by any player anywhere on the field.

Defensive Adjustments

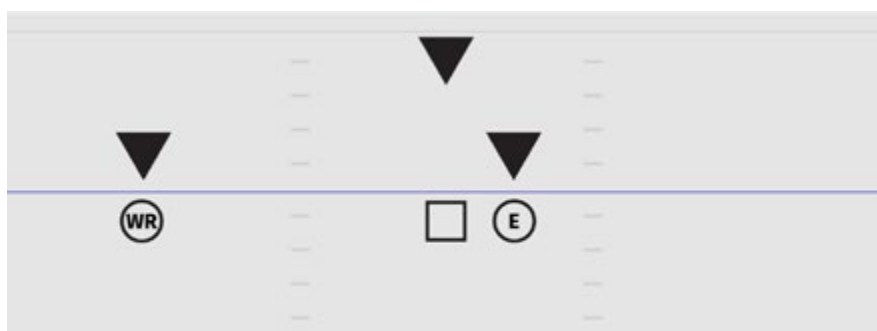
1. The center must be uncovered. A defensive player aligned directly in line with the center must be four yards behind the line of scrimmage.
2. Defensive players covering the other two players on the line of scrimmage may also align on the line of scrimmage but must remain in a two-point stance and must be aligned directly across from the offensive line of scrimmage player.
 - a. They may shade to the outside as long as one of their feet are inside the stance of the opponent.
 - b. They may not shade to the inside.
3. Defensive line of scrimmage players may not directly penetrate the A-gap on the snap of the ball. Contact with the hands must be made with the offensive line player before defeating the block into the A-gap.
 - a. Rule enforcement: Deliberate stunting into the A-gap is to be treated as an illegal procedure foul and enforced as a five-yard live ball penalty.



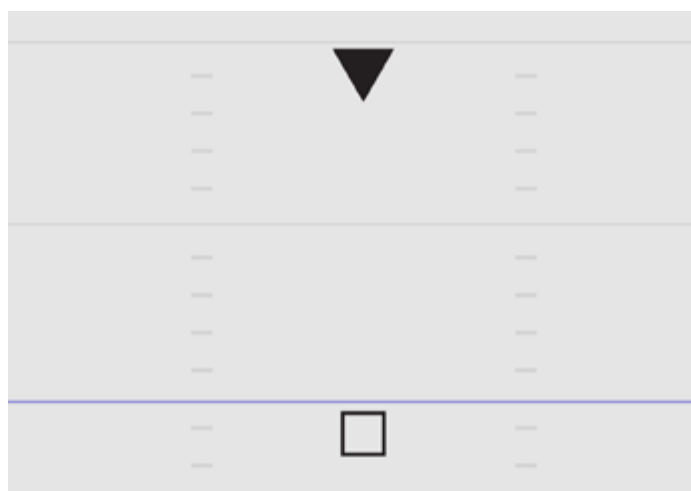
Versus a wide player, defenders still must be head up or shade outside.



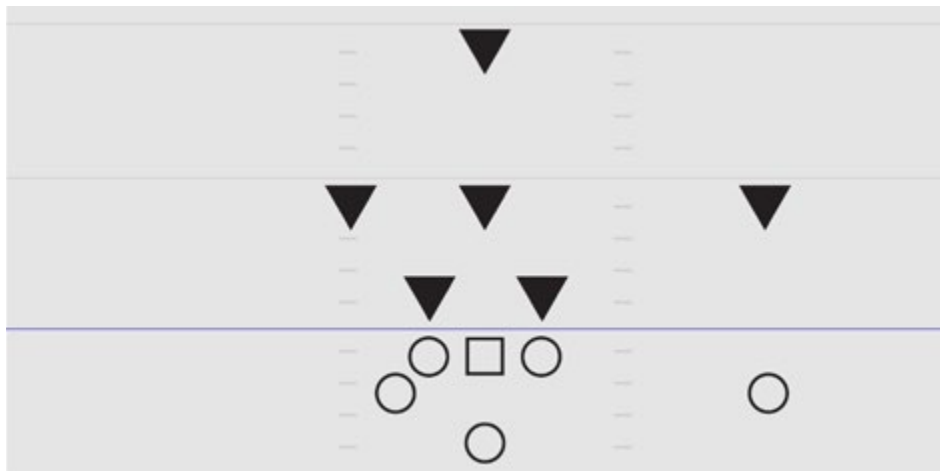
Versus a mixed formation, both defensive players are on the line of scrimmage and either head up or shaded outside.



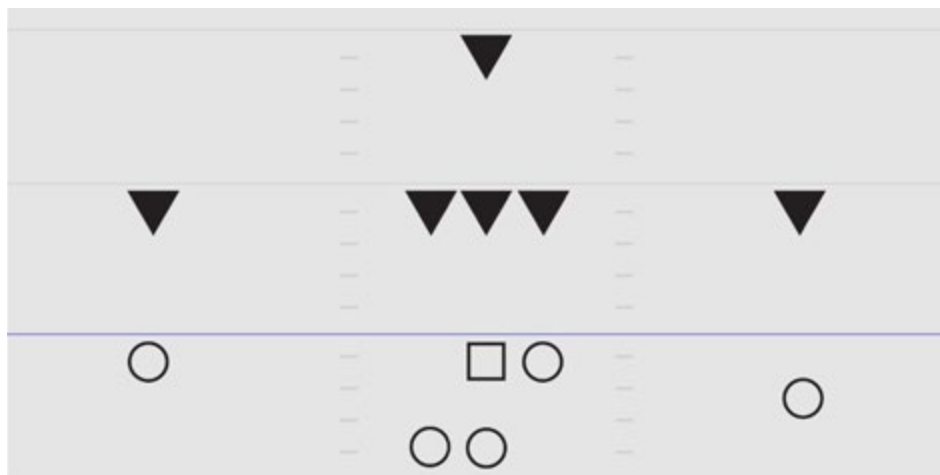
4. At least one player must be aligned at 10 yards depth as if a traditional safety.



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5. All other players must be aligned at a minimum of four yards depth.



6. Defenses are not required to match line of scrimmage players and can align more players at depth if so desired as long as they meet the “four yards deep rule.”



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7. No blitzes are allowed. Defensive players on the line of scrimmage at the snap can penetrate upon the snap. Linebackers, safeties and cornerbacks at depth can flow to the ball naturally after a handoff is made, but predetermining penetration to a specific gap is illegal.
 - a. On pass plays, anyone on the line of scrimmage can rush the quarterback. All others must remain behind the line of scrimmage in pass coverage.
 - i. Defensive formations where all defenders are back off the line at four yards or more depth do not have any eligible pass rushers.
 - b. Coaches are encouraged to be creative with their formations but should not use excessively wide split ends simply to delay defensive penetration.
 - i. Rule application: The restriction on blitzing is intended to encourage skill development within the passing game and allow young players to execute a successful handoff with limited penetration.
 - ii. Rule enforcement: Illegal blitzes by a linebacker or defensive back shall be enforced as an illegal procedure foul and a five-yard live ball penalty. If continued blitzing is determined to be a product of coach encouragement, a 10-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty can occur.
 8. If the ball is inside the four-yard line, all non-linemen, non-deep safety players may align on the goal line – but not within the A-gap or over the center.

Scoring

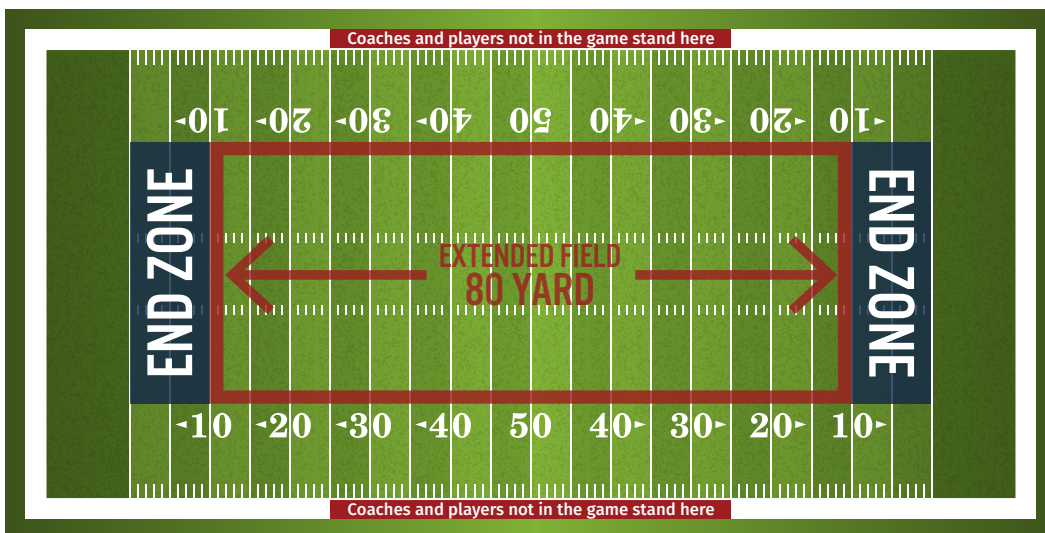
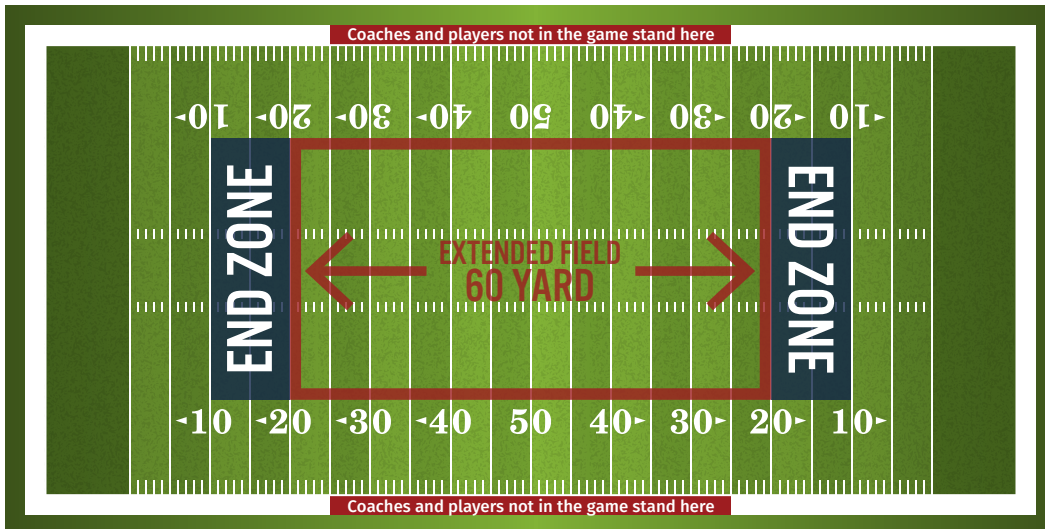
1. Offensive touchdowns are worth six points.
2. PATs are the coach's choice to attempt a one-point try from the 3-yard line or a two-point try from the 5-yard line.
3. With no special teams, there are no field goal attempts.
4. There are no defensive touchdowns as all turnovers are blown dead immediately. No returns are allowed to limit play back in the direction of the Administrative Zone.
 - Fumbles are not turnovers. It is only a turnover if recovered by the defense as the offense is allowed to attempt to recover it.
5. There are no two-point defensive safeties. All tackles behind the 40-yard line result in a loss of down, but the offense retains the ball, and the ball is respotted at the 40-yard line to preserve the Administrative Zone.

EXTENDED FIELD OPTION

An extended field option is available for Rookie Tackle that allows play in both directions. The chart below outlines the rule modifications for this extended field option.

RULE	ROOKIE TACKLE	EXTENDED FIELD ROOKIE TACKLE
Field length	40-yards with one end zone (play goes one-direction)	60-80 yards with two end zones (play goes both directions)
Field width	Not to exceed 40 yards wide	Not to exceed 40 yards wide
Players per side	6, 7 or 8	6, 7 or 8
Possession starts on	40-yard line for all changes of possession	25-yard line after score/safety/ beginning of half or where previous drive ended (play goes both directions)
Coaches in huddle	Yes	Yes
Dead ball on turnover	Yes	No
Kickoffs/punts	No Special Teams	No Special Teams
Field goals/kicked extra points	None	None
Extra points	1 point from 3-yard line; 2 points from 3-yard line	1 point from 3-yard line; 2 points from 3-yard line
Hash marks	Not used	Not used
15-yard penalties	Marked as 10 yards	Marked as 10 yards
Safeties	Ball returns to 40-yard line	Ball is placed on 25-yard line following a safety
QB sneak into A gap	Not allowed	Not allowed
Blitzing	Not allowed	Not allowed
Defensive stunt or slant to A-gap	Not allowed	Not allowed
3-point stance	No	No
Offensive formations	No trips allowed	No trips allowed
Play clock	35 seconds from ready-to-play whistle	35 seconds from ready-to-play whistle
Blocking below the waist	Not allowed in any instance	Not allowed in any instance
Defense line up in A gap	Not allowed	Not allowed
A runner with the ball MUST make an evasive move if considered to be in the open field.	Yes	Yes

EXTENDED FIELD OPTION



** THIS MANUAL REPRESENTS PRACTICE AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES BASED ON OUR CURRENT LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE. RECOMMENDATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS MORE RESEARCH AND INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE. **