

Wheatland Athletic Association

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES, 1-4 Grades



GENERAL

- Games: Saturday
- Practices: One weeknight per week
- Preseason Practice Camp:
- Field Size: 80 yards with two 10-yard end zones
- Parent(s)/legal guardian must sign a waiver for each participant.
- League Scrimmage games: August 11
- Games will start around August 18.
- 1-4 Grades use "Junior" sized footballs.

ROSTERS

- 6-10 teams per age division, 12 players per team; It is important that all players attend every week.
- Players will rotate positions on both offense & defense.
- Poor attendance will result in less offensive playing time.
- The director of the league and the coaching staff has the responsibility to keep the teams as fair and equal as possible. If changes in team rosters are necessary, the director and staff will do so by the third game of the season.

CONDUCT

- This is a non-contact league; come prepared to have fun.
- Intentional tackling, fighting, swearing, inappropriate gestures, taunting, and unsportsmanlike conduct will be penalized and in severe cases dealt with on an individual basis according to the situation.
- Players will be subject to one or more of the following for conduct violations: team penalized 15-yards; the offending player(s) may not be allowed to participate for half of the game, ejected from participating in the game, suspended from participating in multiple games, or ejected from the league.
- Parents will be contacted in cases of severe conduct violations.
- All players, coaches and fans must follow the WAA Code of Conduct.

EQUIPMENT

- All players should wear plastic/rubber spikes. No metal spikes.
- Mouthpiece, knee pads and elbow pads are optional. They can be purchased at any sporting goods store.
- Baseball hats are not allowed on the field.

GAME RULES

- Coin Flip: Coaches and captains must be prepared for the coin flip 10-minutes before the scheduled start of the game. Team can choose to kick or receive only and cannot defer their choice. Teams switch direction at halftime.
- Player "Bench" areas: Each team must stay between their own 20-yard line and 40-yard line. Coaches and reserve players are not allowed to stand inside the 20-yard line.
- For safety reasons players must be at least 5 yards back from the sideline if they are going to be sitting or kneeling.
- Players can only wear league issued belts.
- Games will start at their scheduled time.
- Games will consist of two 25-play halves with a 5-minute intermission between halves. Kickoffs count as a play. Extra point attempts count as a play.
- 8 vs. 8.
- Each team gets one time out per half.
- Substitutions: All players will be in constant rotation throughout the game. A player CANNOT sit 2 consecutive rotations, unless injured or for player conduct (which must be reported to the officials).
 - 1st offense: 15-yard unsportsmanlike penalty and player is rotated back in
 - 2nd offense in same game: 15-yard unsportsmanlike penalty, head coach is ejected, and player is rotated back in
- Coaches must attempt to give every player 1 offensive play/touch during a game. Hand-offs, pass attempts and kick-off returns count as a touch.
- One coach is allowed to call offensive plays in the huddle. One extra coach is allowed to help with rotations and set-up before the snap.
- One coach is allowed on the field for defense and must stand behind the deepest player on defense.
 - Once the offense line-up up, the coach on the field may only help his players identify their "cover"
 - The coach on the field cannot talk once the players line-up and the QB starts the cadence.
- Scoring
 - Touchdown: 6 points
 - Extra Points (the scoring team chooses one):
 - 1-point conversion: No play – automatic point, unless the team chooses to go for 2 points.
 - 2-point conversion: 5-yard line – if missed, no additional points awarded.

- The defense may return an interception. If the interception is returned to for a score: 2 points.
- A game is considered over after 60 minutes from opening kickoff, unless the game is a playoff game.
- A game cannot end on a defensive penalty. The offense will be awarded the proper yardage and another play.
- Playoff Overtime:
 - A coin toss will determine alternating possession. Each team will have a possession in each OT period.
 - Each team will have a four-play possession beginning at their opponent's 10-yard line.
 - If a team scores, they can take 1-point or attempt the two point conversion.
 - The team with the most points at the end of each OT period wins the game.
 - After the 2nd OT period, each team must attempt a 2-point conversion if they score a touchdown on their possession.
- **Offense-** 3 interior linemen, 2 tight or split ends, 2 running backs, and 1 quarterback.
 - Offensive lineman must line up within an arms length of each other and in a 3-point stance.
 - Offense must have 5 players on the line of scrimmage with a receiver (WR or TE) on each side.
 - The Quarterback and 2 backs must line up at least 1 yard in the backfield anywhere along the line of scrimmage.
 - **Important:** *Players who miss several practices or consistently forget offensive formations & plays will have their offense participation limited. Coaches will try to work with these individuals, but for safety issues, these players will be restricted to defensive positions until they learn the offensive system.*
 - Offense will have 40 seconds between plays.
 - Every time the offense crosses a "coned" 20-yard line, they are awarded a first down.
 - **"Man in Motion" is NOT allowed**
 - Interior linemen are allowed to receive a forward passed ball under the following conditions:
 - The offensive lineman is **on** or **behind** the line of scrimmage.
 - The offensive lineman does not go beyond the line of scrimmage before receiving a forward pass.
 - The offensive lineman **cannot** run a pass route.
 - The offensive lineman **cannot** receive a handoff or backward lateral.
 - The league director reserves the right to nullify this rule at any point during the season if it will benefit the quality of the program.
 - **Quarterbacks:**
 - Quarterback must have shoulders square to the line of scrimmage and 2 hands on the ball before the snap
 - No silent count
 - Quarterback is NOT allowed to run up the middle between the tackles unless the quarterback takes at least 2-steps backwards before running up the middle. Penalty-Illegal procedure-dead ball penalty, 5 yards loss, replay the down.
 - **Kneel downs:** If the QB kneels down with the ball on the snap and is giving himself/herself up, the player is down and the play is whistled dead without the defense pulling the QB's flags.
 - **1-2 Grade:** Coaches play quarterback.
 - The coach cannot run across the line of scrimmage with the ball.
 - The coach must release a pass within 5 seconds of the snap. After 5-seconds the play is over and ruled an incomplete pass
 - The coach is down if touched (1-hand is acceptable) by a defensive player.
 - **Blocking:**
 - The blocking player must put both hands directly in front of his/her chest in an open position.
 - The blocking player may screen a defensive player by standing in front of them and putting their hands on the chest of the defending player(s).
 - Both players CANNOT grab. Their hands must remain open and within the body frame of the defending player(s).
 - The Blocking player cannot hook or wrap their arms around a defending player.
 - Lineman must stay in the buffer zone until the QB released a forward pass.
 - Overly physical or unnecessary contact while blocking will result in a 10 yard penalty enforced from the L.O.S. if done at or behind the L.O.S. or from the spot of the block if done beyond the L.O.S. or on a kickoff. If the block is ruled to be flagrant it will result in a 15 yard unsportsmanlike penalty. A second offense by the same player will result in an ejection from the game. The object of the blocker is to screen the defender from being able to pull the flag and not to knock the defensive player to the ground.
 - **Defense-** 1 safety, 2 cornerbacks, 2 linebackers, 3 linemen.
 - Lineman must lineup directly across from the corresponding offensive lineman no wider than their outside shoulder and must be in a 3 or 4 point stance (1 or 2 hands on the ground)
 - The defensive backfield (linebackers, cornerbacks, and the safety) must line up 1-yard behind defensive line of scrimmage and are NOT allowed to blitz the quarterback on a pass attempt.
 - Overly physical or unnecessary contact by a defensive player on a blocker will result in a 10 yard penalty enforced from the L.O.S. if play ends behind the L.O.S. or from the end of the play if play ends beyond the L.O.S. If the contact is ruled to be flagrant it will result in a 15 yard unsportsmanlike penalty. A second offense by the same player will result in an ejection from the game. The object of the defender is to get around the offensive blocker and pull the flag, it is not to run over the blocker.
 - 3-Yard Buffer Zone
 - Defensive line (nose tackle and both defensive ends) line-up 3-yards from offensive line. Upon the snap of the football, the defensive line may rush the offensive player with the ball.
 - When the offense is within 6 yards of a first down the defense lines up half the distance between the ball and the first down line.
 - **Kickoffs:** Kick-off from the 40-yard line








- The ball must travel 10 yards when kicked; otherwise the receiving team gains possession at the point where the ball stops or is touched by either team.
 - If the kickoff is the final play of the game and the kick does not travel 10-yards or is kicked out of bounds and untouched by the receiving team, the ball is spotted where it stopped or went out of bounds and the receiving team is awarded 1-offensive play.
- Kickoff that goes out of bounds
 - If an untouched kickoff goes out of bounds, the ball is spotted at the return team's 30-yard line
 - A touched kickoff that goes out of bounds is spotted at the approximate location where the ball was last touched.
- The receiving team may call a fair catch on kickoffs.
- Onside kicks are not allowed by a team winning by 8-points or more. The receiving team is awarded possession of "illegal onside" kickoffs.
- **Punting/4th Down rule:** In lieu of punting, the offense is required to do one of the following
 - When the first down line is the defense's 20-yard line or the end zone, the offense is required to "go for it."
 - When the first down line is the Offense's 20-yard line or midfield (40-yard line), there are 2 choices:
 - "Go for it"
 - Attempt to reach the next first down line.
 - Turn over possession at the spot of the completed play if the offense does not reach the next first down line
 - Extended First Down
 - The offense must reach the first down line, plus the next first down line. For example, if the offense must reach the 20-yard line for a 1st down now they must reach the 40-yard line.
 - Turn over possession of the ball at new 1st down line (midfield or the 20-yard line) if the offense does not reach the new first down line
- **Tackling (pulling the offensive player's flag):** A player in possession of the ball is tackled when the flag is pulled from their waist.
 - The flag belt must be on the outside of the uniform and worn as the product is intended to be worn. Any alteration is considered unsportsmanlike conduct.
 - Offensive players cannot block or cover their flag with anything.
 - Defensive players must grab the belt & immediately release. If a defensive player does not grab the flag, they must release the offensive player immediately.
 - Defensive players cannot wrap-up the ball carrier and then pull the flag. (5-yards or half-the-distance added to end of play)
 - If the offensive player's flag falls off without a defensive player pulling the flag off, the defensive team must touch the players in possession of the ball with (one hand only).
- **Last Man Back:** A touchdown or extra point will be awarded if in an official's judgment, an offensive or defensive player who has obviously broken loose and has an apparent touchdown made is tackled (pulled to the ground by contact), held, tripped, or deliberately pushed out of bounds. The penalty will be unsportsmanlike conduct, and it will be enforced on the next down.
- **Turnovers:**
 - Fumbles: the offensive team can only advance a Fumbled ball. If the offensive player is on the ground when recovering the ball, they are down at the spot of the recovery and cannot get up.
 - If the ball is recovered by the defensive team, it is down at the spot of recovery.
 - **Forced Fumble:** If a player attempts to force a fumble by punching, slapping, slashing or otherwise, it will be penalized and the team in possession of the ball will retain possession. These actions are considered initiating contact and are not allowed. Please have your players pull the flag.
 - If the defense intercepts a backwards lateral: possession at the spot of the interception; the ball cannot be advanced.
 - Interceptions: An intercepted ball on a forward pass can be advanced by the defending team.

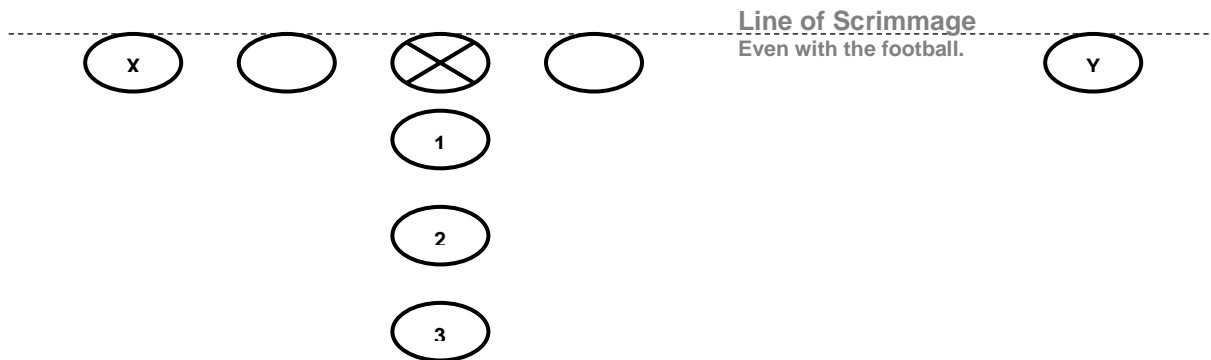
PENALTIES

- **Offside (dead ball foul)**, either team: 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- **Illegal Formation (live ball foul)**, offense: 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- **Illegal Shift & Motion (live ball foul)**, offense: 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- **Illegal Forward pass**, offense: 5 yards from the spot of the illegal forward pass.
- **Illegal Procedure/false start (dead ball foul)**, offense: 5-yards from the line of scrimmage. Play whistled dead.
- **Illegal Blitz (LB, CB, or S)**: 5-yard from the line of scrimmage, replay down
- **Illegal Receiver Downfield**, offense: 5 yards from the line of scrimmage.
- **Illegal Contact, Defense:** Illegal contact with the passer, illegal contact with blocker, 10-yards from end of play OR 10-yards from the line of scrimmage if the play ends behind the line of scrimmage.
- **Illegal Contact, Offense**, Illegal contact during blocking, 10-yards from the spot of the foul OR 10-yards from the line of scrimmage if the play ends behind the line of scrimmage.
- **Stiff Arming, Flag Guarding or Blocking the Flag**, offense: Ball carrier is whistled down where a defensive player attempted to pull flag. Unsportsmanlike conduct foul may also be called.
- **Roughing the Passer:** The defensive player may only make contact with the passer at the waist in an attempt to pull the flag. Any other contact with the passer, even if the ball is tipped, will result in roughing the passer – 10 yards and automatic first down. If pass is completed 10 yards will be added to the end of the play, if the pass is incomplete the 10 yards will be enforced from the L.O.S., if the result of the play is a touchdown the 10 yards will be enforced on the kickoff.
- **Block in the Back**, offense: 5 yards from the point of the foul.
- **Holding-Offense:** 10-yards from the spot of the foul.

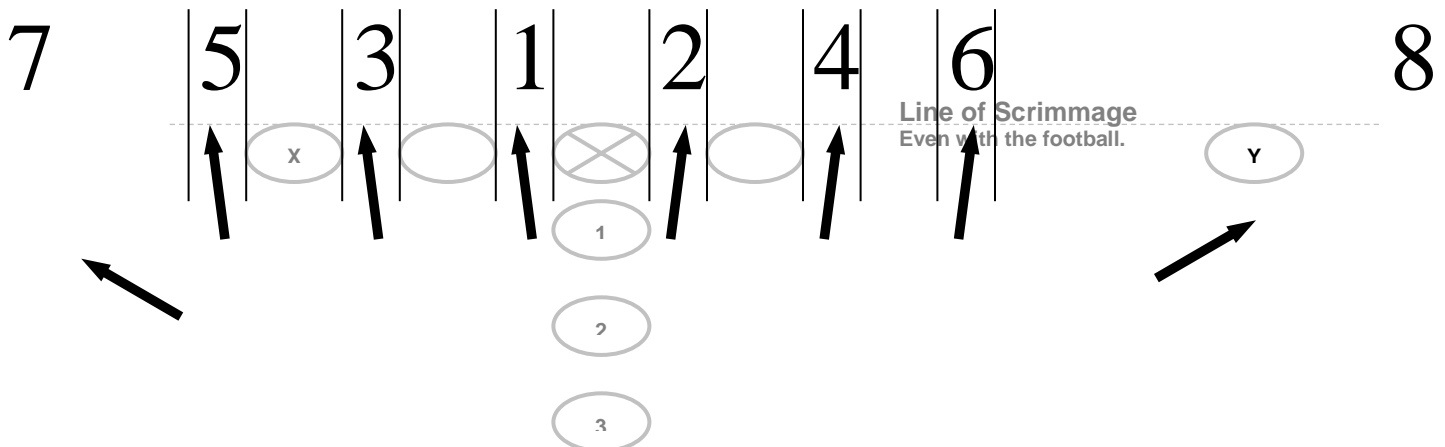
- **Pass Interference**, offense: 10-yards from the line of scrimmage and loss of down.
- **Pass Interference**, defense: Ball spotted at the point of the foul and is an automatic 1st down. If this penalty occurs in the end zone, the ball is spotted at the 3-yard line and a 1st down is awarded.
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct**, 15 yards from the point of the foul and automatic 1st down. Add in: By Defensive player results in an automatic 1st down AND 15 yards enforced from the L.O.S. if the play ends behind the L.O.S. or 15 yards from the end of the play if the play ends beyond the L.O.S. By Offensive player results in loss of down AND 15 yards from the L.O.S.
- **Diving into a ball carrier/ Contact tackling**, defense: Unsportsmanlike conduct (see above).
- **Holding a ball carrier in the act of tackling**, defense: 5-yards added on the end of the play.
- **Forward dive by a ball carrier to prevent tackling**, offense: Down at the point of foul.
- **Rules Changes**: These rules may change before the start of the season. All players will be notified of changes.
- **Live Ball Coaching by any coach on the field**. 1st Offense is a warning, all subsequent penalties will be 5 yards and replay down. Repeated violations by the same coach may result in the coach being removed from his role as an "On Field Coach" and being restricted to coaching from the sideline.

OFFENSE, POSITIONS AND ALIGNMENT

 <p>-CENTER Lines up on the line of scrimmage. Blocker, Snaps the ball to Quarterback. May catch pass behind the line of scrimmage. CANNOT run pass routes.</p>	 <p>-RECEIVER Lines up on the right. Lines up on the line of scrimmage. Receiver, runs pass routes. Handles the ball. Blocks in certain situations.</p>	
 <p>-TACKLE Lines up on the line of scrimmage. Blocker. May catch pass behind the line of scrimmage. CANNOT run pass routes.</p>	 <p>-QUARTERBACK Lines up behind the center. Field leader on offense. Takes the snap from the center. Calls plays. Hands the ball off to running backs. Passes the ball to receivers or backs.</p>	 <p>-RUNNING BACK Lines up in backfield. Main running back. Takes handoffs from the Quarterback. Runs pass routes. Blocks on certain plays.</p>
 <p>-RECEIVER Lines up on the left. Lines up on the line of scrimmage. Receiver, runs pass routes. Handles the ball. Blocks in certain situations.</p>	 <p>-RUNNING BACK Lines up in backfield. Running back. Takes handoffs from the Quarterback. Runs pass routes. Blocks on certain plays.</p>	



Running Holes (the space the ball carrier will run the ball through or run fake runs through)
*EVEN holes are to the right, ODD holes are to the left.



OFFENSE, PASSING ROUTES

1. IN

Run 5 yards straight ahead and cut in to the **MIDDLE** of the field.

2. OUT

Run 5 yards straight ahead and cut **OUT** to the **SIDELINE** of the side of the field that you are on.

3. FLY

Run 10 yards straight ahead **AND LOOK OVER YOUR INSIDE SHOULDER TOWARDS THE QB.** Do not stop running...Do not slow down.

4. SLANT

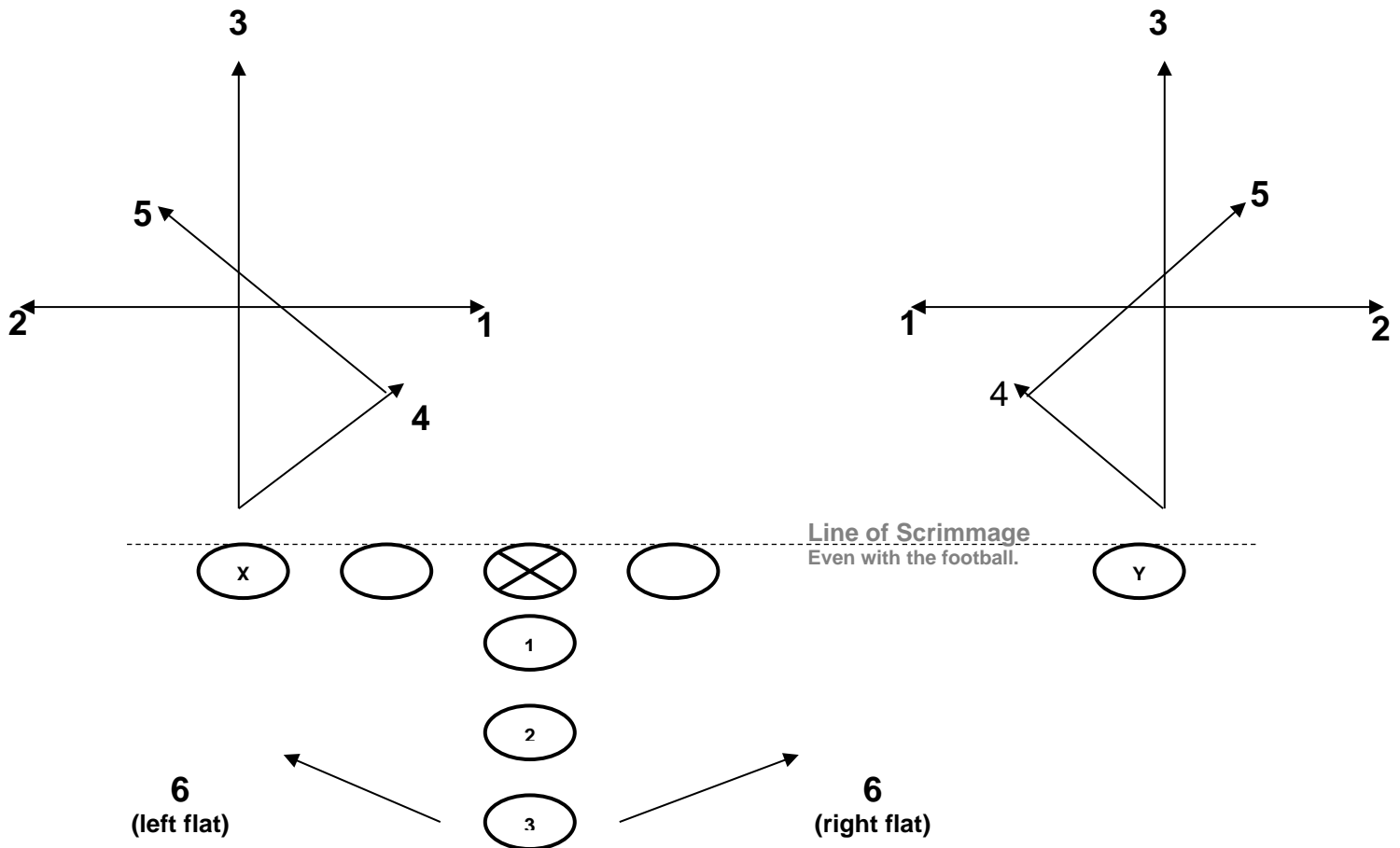
Run towards the middle of field and stay in front of the CB. Look for the ball after 3 steps.

5. BOUNCE


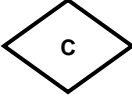
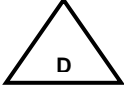
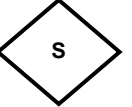

Run a slant route, then cut ("bounce") out to the sideline after three steps. Look for the ball after the "bounce."

6. FLAT

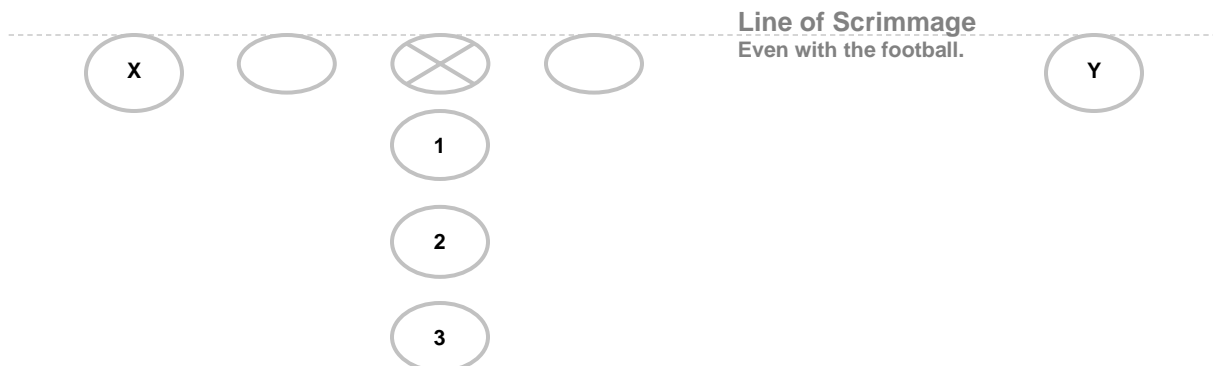
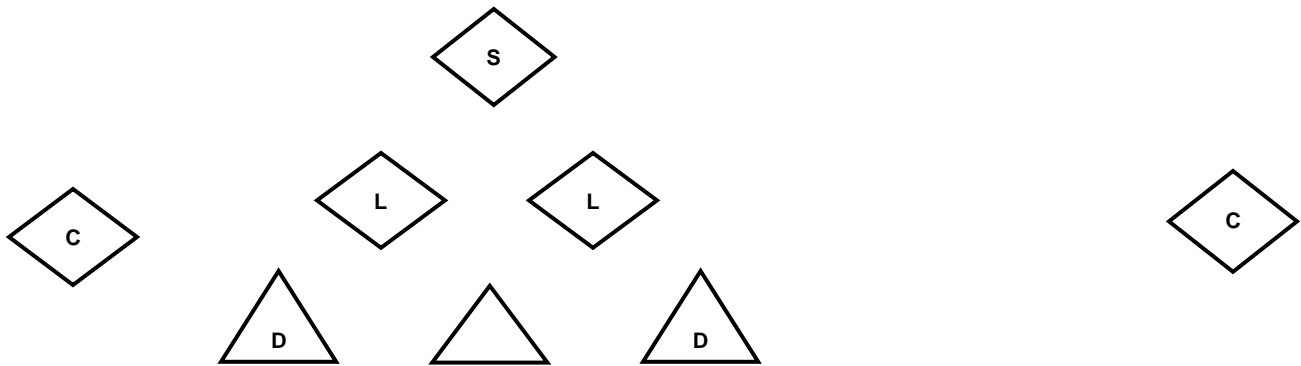
The area to either side of the backfield, behind the line of scrimmage. As indicated below.



DEFENSIVE POSITIONS AND ALIGNMENT

	<p>-NOSE TACKLE Lines up across from the center. Defends against the run. Goes after the quarterback on pass plays.</p>		<p>-CORNERBACK Lines up across from and outside of wide receiver or tight end in the defensive backfield. Covers them on pass routes. Tries to force running plays back into the middle.</p>
	<p>-DEFENSIVE END Lines up across from the offensive tackle. Defends against the run. Tries to force the outside run into the middle. Goes after the quarterback on pass plays.</p>		<p>-SAFETY Lines up in the defensive backfield. The safety is the last line of defense. Tries to cut off running plays. Stays deeper than the deepest receiver on offense.</p>
	<p>-LINEBACKER Lines up in defensive backfield. Cover running back on pass plays. Tries to stop running plays by filling holes that running back carry the ball through.</p>		

Defensive Formation – “3-2”



KICK-OFF ALIGNMENT



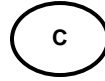
-KICKER

The ball must travel at least 10-yards before anyone touches it. The kicker generally tries to kick the ball to an open spot on the receiving team side of the field.



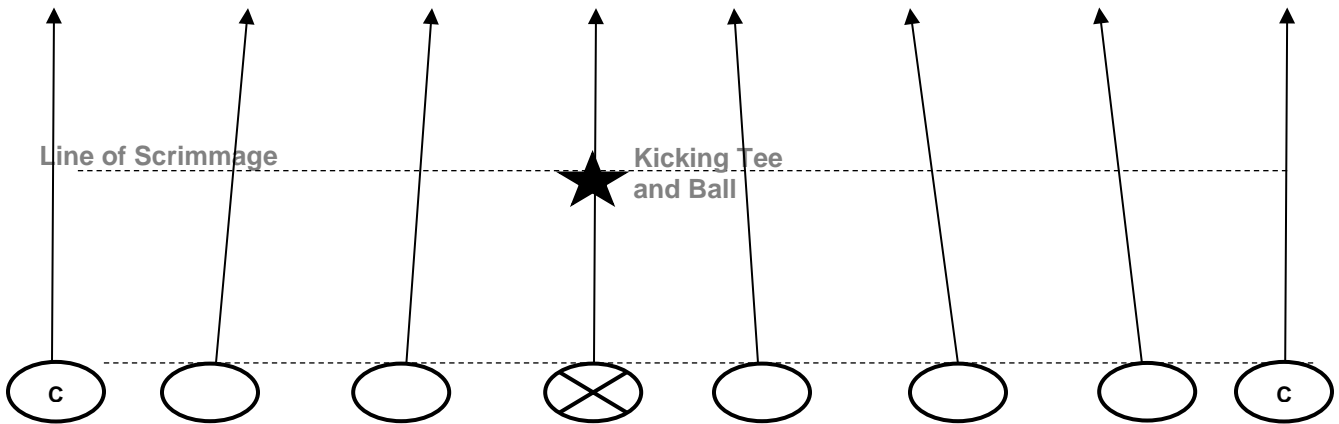
-DEFENDER

Pursue the ball carrier or RECOVER the kickoff if you can get to the ball before the receiving team.

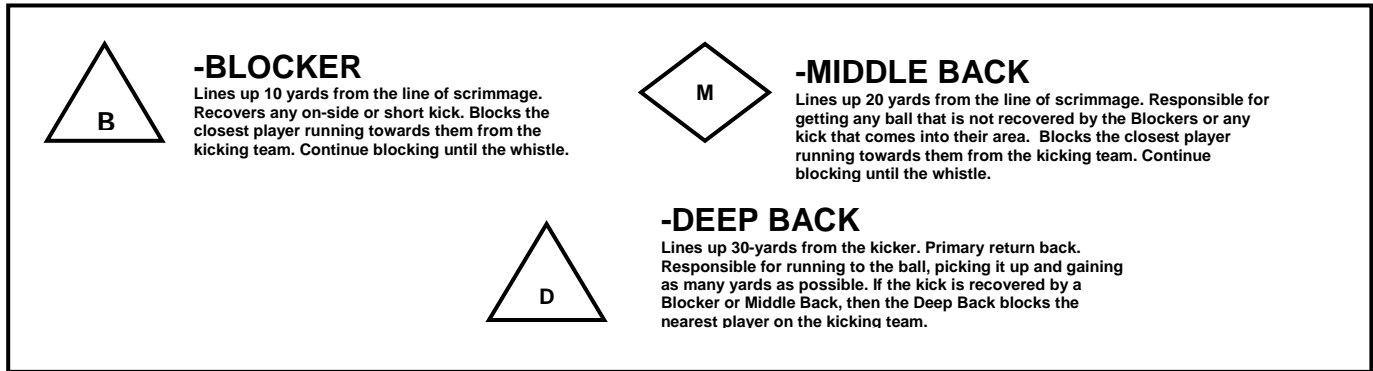


-CONTAIN

Stay along the sideline and keep the ball carrier to the inside of the field.



KICK-RETURN ALIGNMENT



Kick Return Set-up

The receiving team must stay 10 yards from the line of scrimmage until a kicked ball travels 10 yards. The receiving team gets possession of any short kick (<10 yards) at the spot of the ball. The receiving team gets possession of any untouched, kick that travels out of bounds at the 40-yard line.

