



**Minot Family YMCA
Youth Tackle
Football
League Rules**

YMCA Youth Tackle Football Basic League Rules

1. The purpose of the YMCA Youth Tackle Football league is to provide basic fundamental football instruction and to put it into play during scheduled games. The sole purpose is not to teach winning, but to teach basic football. Therefore, two important major rules must be kept in mind during the season.
 - a. There is no score kept during the game.
 - b. There are no team standings kept.
2. The football used for practice and games are as follows:
 - a. Third/Fourth Grade League - Pee-Wee Official Football
 - b. Fifth/Sixth Grade League – Junior Official Football
3. Standard Football marked fields will be used during the playing of league games. The length of the football field from end zone line to end zone line is 80 yards. The back of the end zones are an additional 10 yard.
4. Playing fields will be set up with yard markers and end zone markers to distinguish the playing field from other surrounding features.
5. First downs require forward progress from the original line of scrimmage of at least 10 yard in a maximum of four downed plays from the offense.
6. First down chains and a football position/down marker will be used to determine forward progress by the offense.
 - a. Home team coach is responsible to find volunteers to work the down marker and the first down chain markers. Please check schedule well before game time to prepared for this responsibility
 - b. The game cannot begin, or will be stopped if volunteers cannot be located. Home coaches should plan ahead and try to have volunteers scheduled prior to the start of the game.
 - c. The chains and down marker shall be on the home side of the field.
7. The team sideline area is reserved for players, coaches and authorized team personnel only. Other than coaches/players participating on the field no authorized team personnel can leave the team sideline area during the game. Also, at no time should parents and/or spectators be allowed to stand directly in the area designated for authorized team personnel. This is mostly an imaginary line, but coaches must enforce this area. Bench areas are as follows:

- a. Bench area is between both 20 yard field markers.
 - b. Players and coaches must also remain a minimum of one (1) yard from the side line to allow chain and down marker volunteer's sufficient room to work.
8. Players are required to keep helmets on while on the sidelines and field. Exception: time outs and injury timeouts.
 9. Teams are required to be warmed up and ready to play at the scheduled game time.
 10. Injured players must sit out at least one play.
 11. No sound equipment may be used by the coaches, parents or spectators.
 12. Game time shall consist of four (4) twelve (12) minute quarters of continuous clock with the following exceptions:
 - a. After touchdowns, safeties, injuries, and timeouts.
 - b. Last two minutes of each half, the clock will be stopped for out-of-bounds, penalties, first downs and change of possessions.
 13. There is a thirty (35) second time limit between plays. Time starts when the ball is set by the officials.
 14. Each team is allowed one (1) time out per half. Time outs will not exceed one (1) minute.
 15. In all games, one (1) offensive/defensive coach is allowed on the field of play on their side of the line of scrimmage. The coach, at the snap of the ball, must be far enough away as to not impede any portion of the play being run. Coaches may not physically move any player once the players are set for the play.
 16. There is a one (1) yard neutral zone on the line of scrimmage. The ball is the center of the neutral zone. No player of either team may invade the neutral zone before the snap other than the player snapping the ball. .
 17. No player may be in the offensive back field, carry, receive or advance the football that weighs in excess of 85 pounds (3rd/4th), or 100 pounds (5th/6th). These players are distinguished with a blue circular dot on both sides of their helmets. They are referred to as "Blue Dot" players. In the event, for example, a "blue-dot" player should intercept a pass, the interception remains valid, however, officials will whistle the ball dead at that spot, thus prohibiting advance of the ball.
 18. Blue dot players can be used in the position of punter and kicker.

19. There will be no blocking or initial blocking contact below the waist. No Exceptions.

20. There will be no intentional contact, or tackling done above the shoulder pads. No Exception.

21. Before the game, there will be a coin toss which will be called by the visiting team. The winner of the toss will have first choice of options for the opening half. There is no coin toss after half time. The receiving team during the opening half will kick off to start the second half. Options during the coin toss are:

a) Kick-Off.

b) Receive

c) Defend a particular goal

22. Once direction of teams is determined during the coin toss the teams change directions of field position after each quarter (including after half time).

23. Each half will start with a kick-off by a team from the 35 yard line.

a. The receiving team will line up at there own 35 yard line

b. Neither team may cross their 35 yard line prior to the kick-off.

c. The kicked ball must travel a minimum of 10 yards OR is touched by the receiving team. Once the ball is touched by the receiving team, or after 10 yards it is a free ball.

d. If the ball is kicked out of bounds inside the receiving team's 35 yard line, the ball will be placed on the 35 yard line.

e. When a kickoff goes out of bounds after being touched last by receiving team, it is receiving team's ball at the out out-of-bounds spot.

f. Any ball caught by a blue dot player is dead at the spot of possession.

24. There are no kickoffs after a team scores a touchdown or safety.

25. After scores, the ball will be put into play at the 25 yard line. (Touchdowns or safeties)

26. No player may deliberately kick any ball except as a punt or kick-off.

27. A player may not bat or punch:

a) A loose ball (in field of play) toward his opponent's goal line or in any direction in either

end zone.

(b) A ball in player possession. Note: If there is any question as to whether a defender is stripping or batting a ball in player possession, the official(s) will rule the action as a legal act of stripping the ball.

28. Mouth guards must be in the mouth before, and during, all plays. Players will be allowed to place the mouth guard prior to being set. Once set if the mouth guard is not in place a penalty is called.

29. The distinction between a fumble and a muff should be kept in mind in considering rules about fumbles. A fumble is the loss of player possession of the ball. A muff is the touching of a loose ball by a player in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain the football.

30. A fumble may be advanced by any non-blue dot player on either team regardless of whether recovered before or after ball hits the ground.

a. A fumble that goes forward and out of bounds will return to the fumbling team at the spot of the fumble unless the ball goes out of bounds in the opponent's end zone. In this case, it is a touch back.

b. If an offensive player fumbles anywhere on the field during fourth down, or within the two (2) minutes of the half's, only the fumbling player is permitted to recover and advance the ball. If recovered by any other offensive player, the ball is dead at the spot of the possession.

31. For simplicity penalties are five (5) yards for a minor penalty, and 10 yards for a major penalty. Most penalties are enforced from the original line of scrimmage. There are some penalties that the yardage is in addition to the play for example a facemask penalty. If the play resulted in a loss of yardage then the penalty is from the original line of scrimmage.

32. When a penalty occurs, the team will have the following choice:

a. Accepting the penalty and replay the down

b. Declining the penalty, and let the play stand.

33. If a Penalty is committed by the defense on last play of half or game, the down is replayed if the penalty is accepted.

34. If a penalty is committed by the offense on last play of the half or game, the down is not replayed and the play in which the foul is committed is nullified.

35. **OFFENSE:**

a. A balanced offensive line will be used for every play during league play. Their must be a

guard, tackle, and end on each side of the center on the interior line of scrimmage. Line splits between players may not be wider than 3 feet.

b. There can be no more than seven (7) players on the line of scrimmage.

c. Offensive players not on the line must be at least one yard behind the line of scrimmage with the exception of the quarterback.

d. All interior linemen from end to end must be in a three (3) or four (4) point stance prior to the snap of the ball. No interior lineman may move after taking a three/four point stance.

e. Once on the line of scrimmage the offensive line players must be set for at least one second with no movement of hands, feet, head, or swaying of body prior to the snap of the ball.

f. Only one back may be in motion parallel to scrimmage line or backward (not forward).

g. Quarterbacks can be called for a false start penalty if their actions are judged to be an obvious attempt to draw an opponent offside.

h. No blue dot player may be used as an offensive back or split end. Blue dot players may be used as ends on the interior line of scrimmage.

i. Ends are eligible receivers provided they are not blue dot players.

j. No player on offense may assist a runner except by blocking for him.

k. A runner may ward off opponents with hands and arms but no other player on offense may use hands or arms to obstruct an opponent by grasping with hands, pushing, or encircling any part of his body during a block.

l. There shall be no offensive or defensive player interference during a forward pass thrown from behind the line.

1) The restriction for the passing team starts with the snap.

2) The restriction on the defensive team starts when the ball leaves the passer's hand.

3) Both restrictions end when the ball is touched by anyone.

4) It must be remembered that defensive players have as much right to the ball as offensive eligible receivers.

5) Pass interference by the defense is not to be called when the forward pass is clearly not catchable. Note: There is no pass interference behind the line of scrimmage

6) Any pass not forward is regarded as a backward pass. A pass parallel to the line of scrimmage is a backward pass.

a) A runner may pass backward at any time.

b) Any player on either team may catch the pass or recover the ball after it touches the ground.

m. Ineligible linemen cannot be more than five (5) yard downfield from the line of scrimmage before the ball is thrown during a pass play.

36. **Defense:**

a. Teams will use a 5 or 6 player front on the line of scrimmage. The only exception is when the offensive team is within the defensive team's ten yard line. The defensive team may then be allowed to use more than six (6) players on the line of scrimmage (goal line defense).

b. Blue dotted players can only play line or linebacker positions. No defensive back positions.

c. All linemen from end to end must be in a three (3) to four (4) point stance.

d. No player of the defensive team can move into the neutral zone, or make an abrupt movement in an attempt to cause the offense to false start.

e. Linebackers must remain three (3) yards behind the defensive linemen (approximately 3 1/2 yards) and cannot make any forward advance before the snap of the ball. If forward movement is made, or positioned too close to the line, a penalty can be called.

f. Defensive backs are not allowed to move in a forward motion until the ball is snapped.

g. If a Blue Dot defensive player makes an interception or picks up a fumble the ball will be considered dead at that spot, but the defense retains possession of the ball.

h. A defensive player may not tackle or hold an opponent other than a runner. Otherwise, he may use his hands, arms, or body to defend or protect himself against an obstructing opponent.

i. No defensive player may run into a passer of a legal forward pass after the ball has left the passer's hand. The Referee must determine whether the opponent had a reasonable chance to stop their momentum during an attempt to block the pass or tackle the passer while they still had the ball.

j. No defensive player who has an unrestricted path to the quarterback may hit them flagrantly in the area of the knee(s) or below when approaching in any direction.

k. Officials are to blow the play dead as soon as the quarterback is clearly in the grasp and control of any tackler or their safety is in jeopardy.

37. **Punting:**

- a. On fourth down the offense must declare to the referee if they are going to punt the ball.
- b. The Defense is not allowed to rush the punter.
- c. The offensive team must punt the ball. No Faking.
- d. Neither team may move or cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked.
- e. Receiving team must have 5 or 6 players on the line of scrimmage.
- f. There must be a long snap, followed by a punt

38. **Game Suspension/Cancellation**

a. The Minot YMCA Youth Tackle Football League requires all site managers, referees and coaches to use their best effort to see that each game is played to its conclusion. The YMCA recognizes, however, that conditions may arise that make a game's completion, or playing, impossible or inadvisable. Such circumstances may include, but are not limited to, severe inclement weather, natural or manmade disaster, power failure, and spectator interference. Games should be suspended, cancelled, postponed, or terminated when circumstances exist that pose a threat to the safety of participants or spectators.

b. If conditions threatens to occur during the playing of a game the starting time of the game will not be moved to an earlier time unless there is clearly sufficient time to make an orderly change.

c. All games that are suspended temporarily and resumed on the same day are resumed at the point of suspension. On suspension, the referee will call timeout and make a record of the following: team possessing the ball, direction the offense was headed, position of the ball on the field, down, distance, period, time remaining in the period, and any other pertinent information required for an orderly and equitable resumption of play.

d. The YMCA Youth Sports Director will make every effort reschedule cancelled games. If unable to reschedule the game will not be played.

e. Rain, snow or cold temperatures will NOT be grounds to cancel games.

39. Examples of some penalties are listed below:

Five yards

Defensive holding or illegal use of hands (automatic first down).
Delay of game on offense or defense.

Encroachment.

Defensive illegal formation (not enough on line)

Linbacker encroachment (three yard buffer)

False start.

Illegal formation.

Intentional grounding of forward pass (safety if passer is in own end zone).

Illegal shift.

Illegal motion.

More than 11 players on the field at snap for either team.

Less or more than seven men on offensive line at snap.

Less or more than five/six men on defensive line at snap.

More than one man in motion at snap.

Unintentional Grasping facemask

Offside.

Failure to pause one second before snap of the ball

Neutral zone infraction. (Entering the one yard buffer zone)

Ineligible player downfield during passing down.

Second forward pass behind the line.

Forward pass touches or is caught by an ineligible receiver on or behind line.

Forward pass thrown from behind line of scrimmage after ball once crossed the line.

Forward pass thrown from beyond line of scrimmage. (loss of down)

Helping the runner.

Deliberately batting or punching a loose ball.

Deliberately kicking a loose ball.

Mouthguard violation

Offensive pass interference.

Holding, illegal use of hands, arms, or body by offense.

Tripping by a member of either team.

Illegal block above the waist. (blocking in the back)

10 Yards

Chop block.

Clipping below the waist.

Illegal crackback block by offense.

Piling on (automatic first down).

Roughing the passer (automatic first down).

Intentional facemask.

Unnecessary roughness.

Unsportsmanlike conduct.

Illegal low block.

Using the helmet to butt, spear, or ram an opponent. (Possible automatic game ejection)

Striking opponent with fist.

Kickkng or kneeing opponent.

Intentional striking opponent on head or neck with forearm, elbow, or hands

Malicious unnecessary roughness.
Unsportsmanlike conduct.