

Wheatland Athletic Association

FLAG FOOTBALL RULES, 3rd-9th Grades



GENERAL

- Games: Saturdays
- Practices: One weeknight per week
- Field Size: 80 yards (60 yards for 3rd/4th Grade) with two 10-yard end zones
- Scrimmages are scheduled for August 12.
- Games will start on Saturday, August 19.
- 3rd-6th Grade use Junior size balls. 7th-9th Grades use Youth sized footballs.

ROSTERS

- 12-13 players per team. It is important that all players attend every week. Poor attendance will result in less playing time.
- Players will rotate positions on both offense & defense.
- The director of the league and the coaching staff have 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 minimal 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 are allowed.
- Mouthpiece, knee pads and elbow pads are optional. They can be purchased at any sporting goods store.
- Baseball hats and sunglasses are not allowed to be worn on the field.

GAME RULES

- Games will be played 9 vs. 9. Note: Modifications may be made due to player enrollment.
- 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. Opponent will choose direction for the 1st half. 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 be 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 flag belts.
- Games will start at their scheduled time.
- Games consist of two 24-minute timed halves with a 5-minute intermission between halves. The clock will only stop for timeouts and the last 2 minutes of the game for incomplete passes, out of bounds, penalties and after scores.
- Each team gets 2 time outs per half.
- Substitutions: Players will be in constant rotation throughout the game.
- One coach is allowed on the field to call offensive plays in the huddle. The first 2 weeks a 2nd coach can be on the field to help organize the players.
 - The coach on the field cannot talk once the players line-up and the QB starts the cadence. 1st Violation will be a warning, 2nd and subsequent violations will be a 5-yard penalty from the previous spot, replay the down.
- One coach is allowed on the field for defense for the first 4 games of the season. Beginning with Game 5, no coach is allowed to be on the field for defense.
 - The coach must be deeper than the deepest player on defense.
 - Once the offense lines-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. 1st Violation will be a warning, 2nd and subsequent violations will be a 5-yard penalty from the previous spot, replay the down or 5 yards added to the end of the play.
 - Sideline coaches can call out changes and instructions.
- Scoring
 - Touchdown: 6 points
 - Extra Points (the scoring team chooses one):
 - 1-point conversion: No play – automatic point.
 - 2-point conversion: 5-yard line – if missed, no additional points awarded.
 - The defense may return an interception. If the interception is returned for a score, 2 points are awarded.
 - Cannot go for 2 if the 1-point conversion would put you up by 21 points, putting the Courtesy Rule in effect.
- 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 one or attempt the 2-point conversion.
 - The team with the most points at the end of the OT period wins the game.
 - Starting with the 3rd OT period, each team must attempt a 2-point conversion if they score a touchdown on their possession.

OFFENSE

- **Offensive Formation**-3 interior linemen, 2 tight or split ends, 3 backs, and 1 quarterback.
 - Offensive linemen must line up within an arm's length of each other (able to touch fingertips) and in a 3-point stance.
 - Offense must have 5 players on the line of scrimmage with one receiver (WR or TE) on the line on each side of the formation.
 - The 3 backs must line up at least 1 yard in the backfield (behind the line of scrimmage). They can line up anywhere in the formation, including all 3 on one side.

OFFENSE (continued)

- **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.*
- Every time the offense crosses a "coned" 20-yard line (15-yard line for 3rd/4th), they are awarded a first down.
- Interior linemen are allowed to receive a forward pass 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.
- **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).
 - Offensive and Defensive 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.
 - Linemen must stay in the buffer zone (3 yards beyond the line of scrimmage) until the QB releases 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.
- **Motion**
 - One of the offensive backs behind the L.O.S. is allowed to go in motion before the snap of the ball. The motion must be backwards or parallel to the line of scrimmage. The receivers on the line of scrimmage cannot go in motion.
 - Multiple Offensive Players can shift, re-set, and then run the play. All players must re-set before a player can legally then go in motion.
- **Quarterbacks**
 - Silent counts are not allowed.
 - Quarterback must have 2-hands on the ball, shoulders square to the line of scrimmage before the snap and cannot rock back before the snap.
 - In the shotgun position, the quarterback must remain stationary until the snap and call the snap count. The center may snap the ball from the side or between their legs.
 - Quarterback is NOT allowed to run up the middle between the tackles unless the quarterback takes a shotgun snap OR at least 2-steps backwards before running up the middle. Penalty-Illegal procedure
 - **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.

DEFENSE

- **Defensive Formation:** 1 safety, 2 or 3 cornerbacks, 2 or 3 linebackers, 3 linemen
 - **Buffer Zone:** There will no longer be a Buffer Zone. There will only be one marker for the line of scrimmage.
 - **One** defensive player may blitz on the snap. The other Linebackers and Defensive Backs cannot cross the line of scrimmage until the ball is out of the quarterback's hand (pass or handoff) or the QB is outside of the tackles. No blitz when winning by 21 points or more.
 - The defensive backfield (linebackers, cornerbacks, and safety) must line up at least 1-yard behind the line of scrimmage. They are allowed one bump within 5 yards of the line of scrimmage.
 - Once the quarterback rolls outside of the tackles, anyone on defense may blitz/cross the line of scrimmage.
 - Defensive line (nose tackle and both defensive ends) line-up no wider than the outside shoulder of the offensive lineman across from them and must be in a 3- or 4-point stance (1 or 2 hands on the ground). Upon the snap of the football, the defensive line can cross the L.O.S.
 - 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 of the ball carrier, it is not to run over the blocker.

KICKOFFS

- 3rd & 4th Grade League will have no kickoffs. Offense will start with the ball at their own 20-yard line, First and 10 to mid-field.
- **5th-9th Grade** Kick-off from the 30-yard line.
 - Receiving Teams front line is on the 40-yard line (mid-field) and they must have at least 4 players lined up here.
 - The ball must travel 10 yards when kicked; otherwise, the receiving team gains possession at the point where the ball stops.
 - If the kickoff is the final play of the game, or 1st half, 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 30-yard line. First and 10 to midfield.
 - A touched kickoff that goes out of bounds is spotted at the approximate location where the ball goes out of bounds.
 - 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 recovered by the kicking team at the 35-yard line, First and 5 to midfield.

TURNOVERS

- Fumbles – ALL FUMBLES are dead at the spot of the fumble (where the ball was fumbled and not where the ball hits the ground). The play will be whistled dead and the team in possession of the ball when it was fumbled will retain possession.
- **Forced Fumble:** If a player attempts to force a fumble by punching, slapping, slashing, or otherwise hitting the ball, it will be penalized 10-yards 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.
- Backwards lateral
 - Defense can advance if they recover the ball in the air.
 - The ball is dead if it hits the ground – considered a fumble.
- Interceptions: An intercepted ball on a forward pass can be advanced by the defending team.

PUNTING

- **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 goal line, the offense is required to “go for it.”
 - When the first down line is the Defense’s 20-yard line (15-yard line for 3rd/4th), there are 2 choices:
 1. “Go for it”
 - Attempt to reach the 20-yard line (15-yard line for 3rd/4th).
 - Turn over possession at the spot of the completed play if the offense does not reach the next first down line.
 2. Turn over possession of the ball (no 4th down play) and the opponent takes over at the 15-yard line (10-yard line for 3rd/4th), First and 5 to the 20-yard line (15-yard line for 3rd/4th).
 - When the first down line is the Offense’s 20-yard line (15-yard line for 3rd/4th) or midfield (30-yard line for 3rd/4th and 40-yard line for 5th-9th), there are 2 choices:
 1. “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.
 2. 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 (15-yard line for 3rd/4th) for a 1st down now they must reach the 40-yard line (30-yard line for 3rd/4th).
 - Turn over possession of the ball at new 1st down line (midfield or the 20-yard line (15-yard line for 3rd/4th) if they do not reach the new first down line.

DEFLAGGING / “TACKLING”

- A player in possession of the ball is tackled when the flag belt is pulled from their waist.
 - Flag belt must be on the outside of the uniform and worn as the product is intended to be worn. Any alteration is unsportsmanlike conduct.
 - Offensive players cannot block a defensive player’s attempt to pull their flag or cover their flag with anything.
 - Defensive players must only grab the flag in an attempt to remove the players’ belt. If a defensive player grabs an article of clothing instead of 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 player in possession of the ball with one hand anywhere on the players’ body. Players should continue to play until the whistle is blown.

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, held, or deliberately pushed out of bounds. The penalty will be unsportsmanlike conduct.

COURTESY RULE

- These rules apply when the point spread is 21 points or more.
 - Winning team removes 1 player when on Defense and will play with 8 defenders.
 - Losing team adds 1 player when on Defense and will play with 10 defenders.
 - No blitzing by winning team
 - Winning team cannot go for 2-point conversion after scoring, they must take the 1-point for an extra point.
 - Clock will not stop in the last 2 minutes of the game when the winning team is on offense.

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 and loss of down
- **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 blocker, 10-yards from end of play OR 10-yards from the L.O.S. if the play ends behind the L.O.S.
- **Illegal Contact, Offense,** Illegal contact during blocking, 10-yards from spot of the foul OR 10-yards from L.O.S. if the play ends behind the L.O.S.
- **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 the 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 (for 3rd/4th enforced for starting spot for possession for the offending team).
- **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 1-yard line and a 1st down is awarded.
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct,** 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, Offense:** Down at the point of foul/dive
- **Live Ball Coaching by any coach on the field.** 1st Offense is a warning, all subsequent penalties will be 5-yards and replay down if on the Offensive Coach and if on the Defensive Coach either 5-yards added on to end of play or 5-yards from LOS 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 the sideline.
- **Rules Changes:** These rules may change before the start of the season. All players will be notified of changes.

OFFENSIVE SYMBOLS AND POSITIONS



-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.



-RECEIVER

Lines up split to the right. Lines up on the line of scrimmage. Receiver, runs pass routes. Handles the ball. Blocks in certain situations.



-TACKLE

Lines up on the line of scrimmage. Blocker. May catch pass behind the line of scrimmage. CANNOT run pass routes.



-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.



-LEFT SLOT BACK

Lines up in backfield, generally as receiver. Runs pass routes. Takes handoffs from the quarterback, too. Blocks on certain plays.



-RECEIVER

Lines up split to the left. Lines up on the line of scrimmage. Receiver, runs pass routes. Handles the ball. Blocks in certain situations.



-RUNNING BACK

Lines up in backfield. Running back. Takes handoffs from the Quarterback. Runs pass routes. Blocks on certain plays.



-RIGHT SLOT BACK

Lines up in backfield, generally as receiver. Runs pass routes. Takes handoffs from the quarterback, too. Blocks on certain plays.

Blocking path



Pass Route path



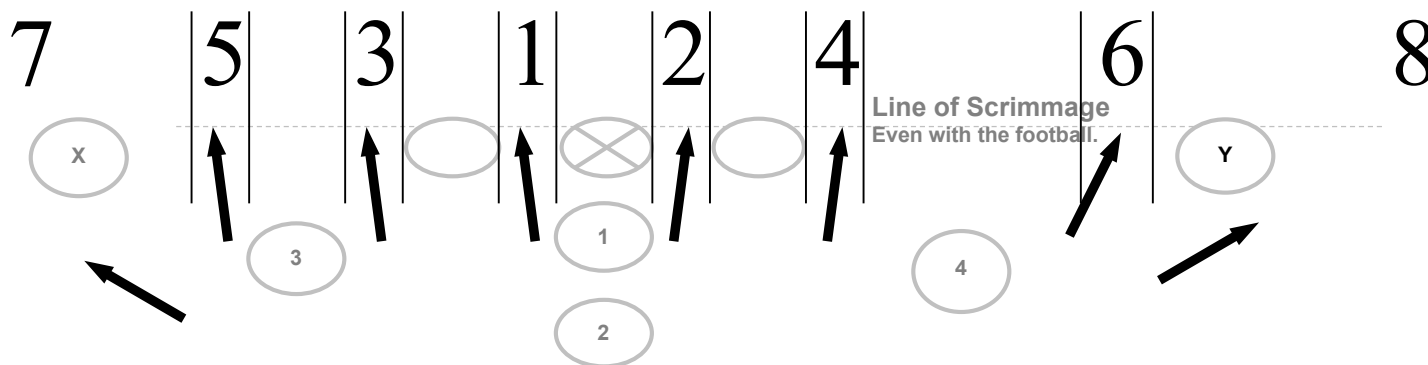
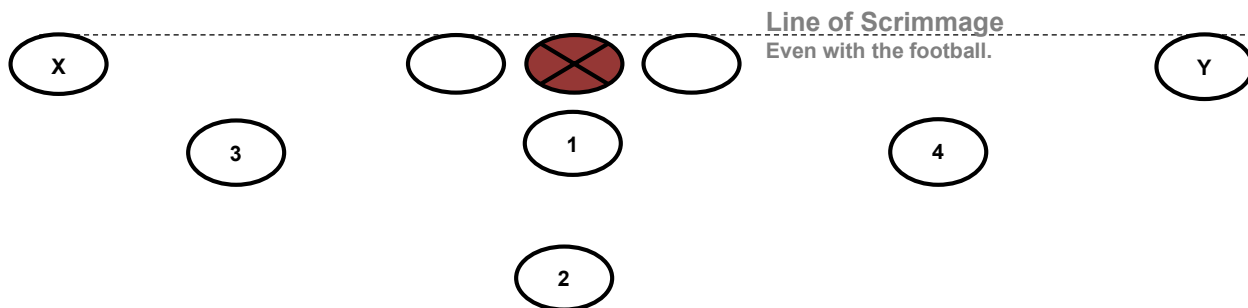
Backfield Motion path



Ball Carrier path



SPREAD SET: WIDE, DOUBLE SLOT



OFFENSIVE 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

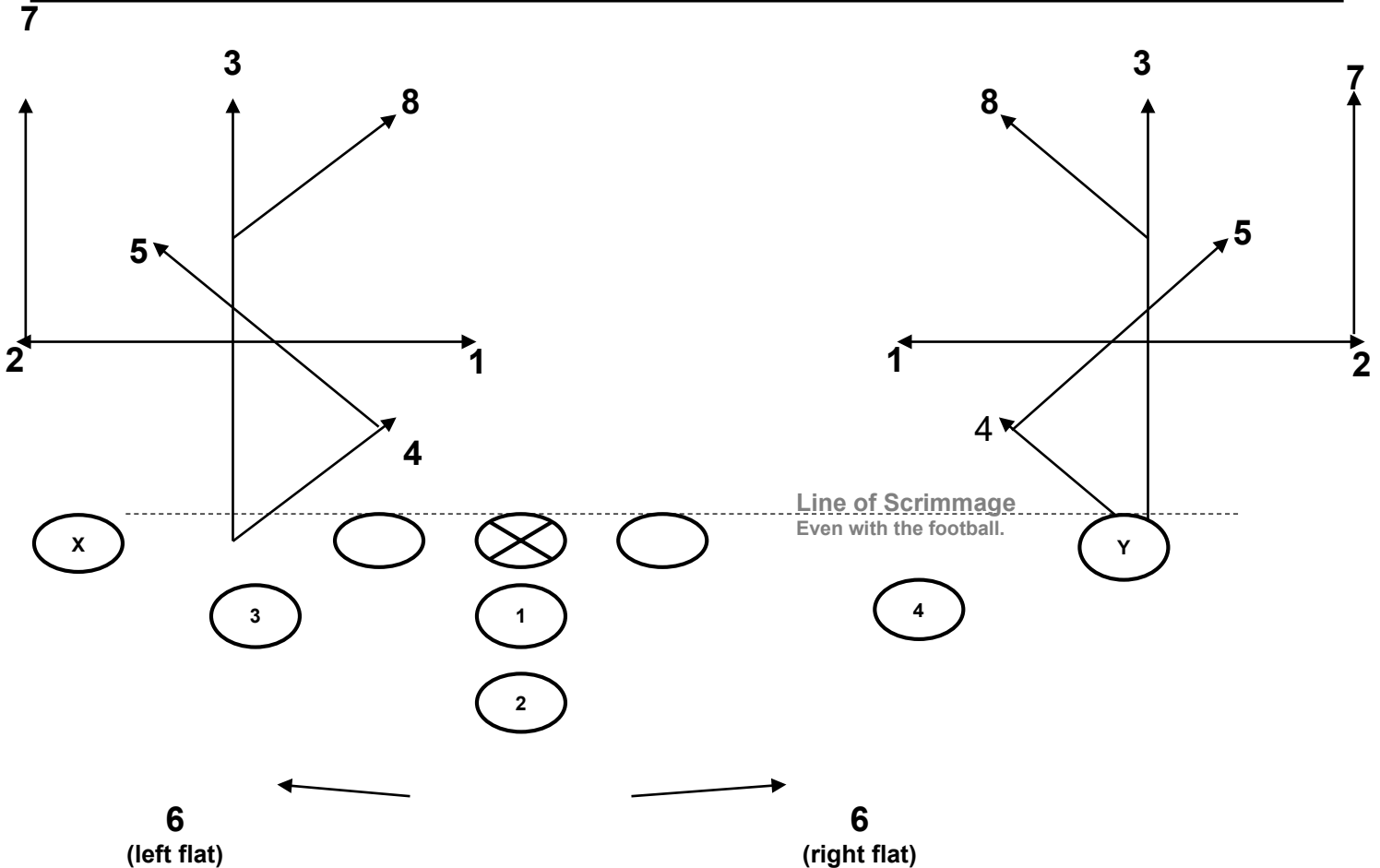
The area to either side of the backfield, behind the line of scrimmage. As indicated below.

7. CHAIR


Out route and then cut down the sideline for a fly route. Also known as the "Down, Out and Up".

8. POST

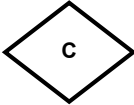
Run 7-10 yards then slant to the inside. Look for the ball on the inside slant.



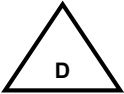
DEFENSIVE SYMBOLS AND POSITIONS



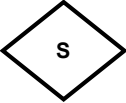
-NOSE TACKLE
Lines up across from the center. Defends against the run. Goes after the quarterback on pass plays.



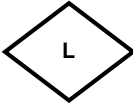
-CORNERBACK
Lines up across from and outside of wide receiver or tight end in the defensive backfield. Covers them on pass routes. Tries to force running plays back into the middle.



-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.

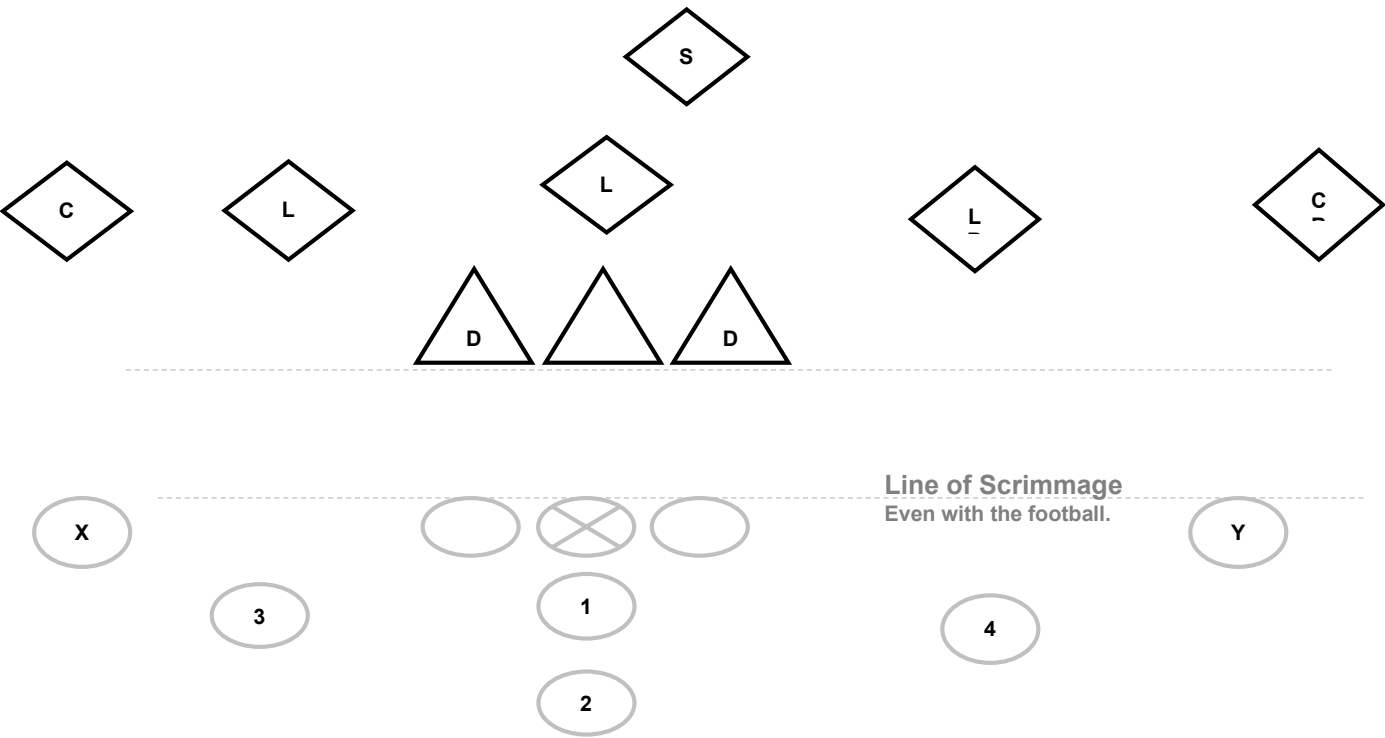


-SAFETY
Lines up in the defensive backfield. The safety is the last line of defense. Tries to cut off running plays. Stays deeper than the deepest receiver on offense.



-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. EAGLE Division, one linebacker may blitz the QB.

Defensive Formation – “3-3”



KICK-OFF SYMBOLS AND POSITIONS



-KICKER

The ball must ravel 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.



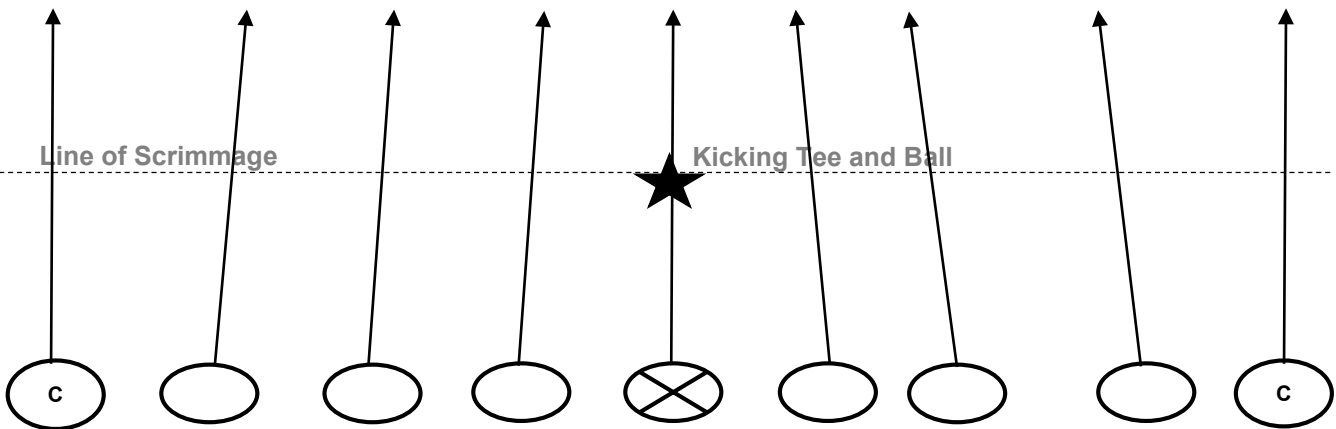
-DEFENDER

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

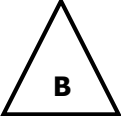


-CONTAIN

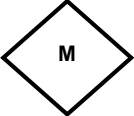
Stay along the sideline and keep the ball carrier to the inside of the field.



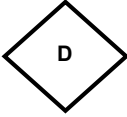
KICK-RETURN SYMBOLS AND POSITIONS



-BLOCKER
Lines up 10 yards from the line of scrimmage. Recovers any on-side or short kick. Blocks the closest player running towards them from the kicking team. Continue blocking until the whistle.



-MIDDLE BACK
Lines up 20 yards from the line of scrimmage. Responsible for getting any ball that is not recovered by the Blockers or any kick that comes into their area. Blocks the closest player running towards them from the kicking team. Continue blocking until the whistle.



-DEEP BACK
Lines up 30-yards from the kicker. Primary return back. Responsible for running to the ball, picking it up and gaining as many yards as possible. If the kick is recovered by a Blocker or Middle Back, then the Deep Back blocks the nearest player on the kicking team.

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.

