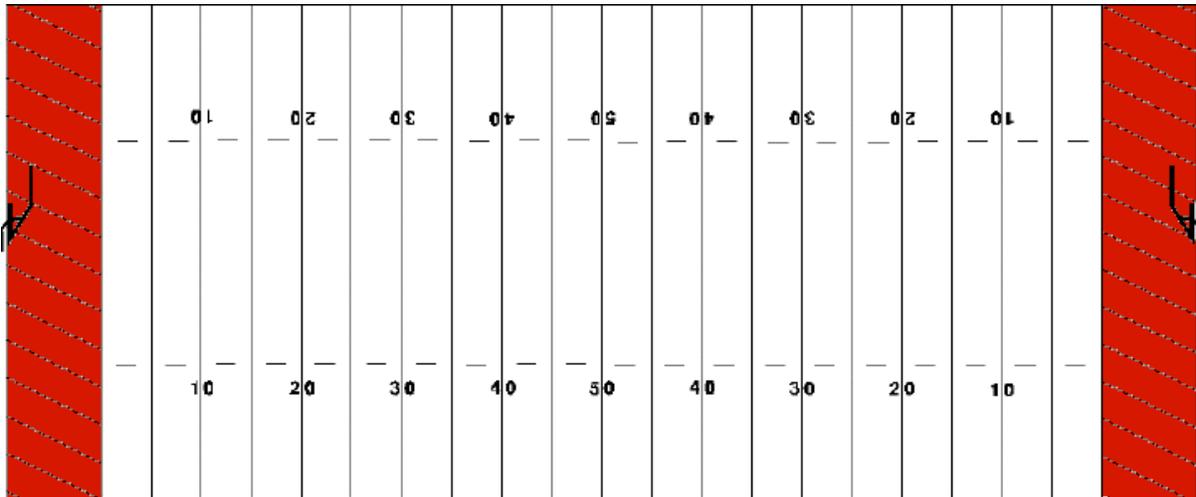


# Football 101

SCYF: Football is a full contact sport. We will help teach your child how to play the game of football. Football is a team sport. It takes 11 teammates working together to be successful. One mistake can ruin a perfect play. Because of this, we and every other football team practices fundamentals (how to do it) and running plays (what to do). A mistake learned from, is just another lesson in winning.

## The field

- The playing field is 100 yards long.
- It has stripes running across the field at five-yard intervals.
- There are shorter lines, called hash marks, marking each one-yard interval. (not shown)
- On each end of the playing field is an end zone (red section with diagonal lines) which extends ten yards.
- The total field is 120 yards long and 160 feet wide.
- Located on the very back line of each end zone is a goal post.
- The spot where the end zone meets the playing field is called the goal line.
- The spot where the end zone meets the out of bounds area is the end line.
- The yardage from the goal line is marked at ten-yard intervals, up to the 50-yard line, which is in the center of the field.



## The Objective of the Game

The object of the game is to outscore your opponent by advancing the football into their end zone for as many touchdowns as possible while holding them to as few as possible. There are other ways of scoring, but a touchdown is usually the prime objective. Note: The MYFL has a Mercy Rule which prohibits a coach/team from running up the score. The maximum point differential is 30. Once that number is reached, the winning coach must make every attempt to not run up the score, by running between the tackles, by using different players in positions etc.



## **Offense**

There must be a minimum of 7 offensive players on the line of scrimmage for every play, if not – 5 yard penalty.

### **Quarterback (QB)**

The player who receives the ball from the center at the start of each play before either handing it to the running back, throwing it to a receiver, or running with it himself.

The quarterback is usually the player in charge of running the offense on the field. He or She is also the player that usually informs the offense of the play while in the huddle.

### **Wingback (WB)**

An offensive player who lines up in the backfield outside the widest lineman on a given side performs various functions such as running with the ball, blocking and receiving passes.

### **Halfback (HB)**

An offensive player who lines up in the backfield (somewhere at least one yard off the line-of-scrimmage, actual location varies) and performs various functions such as running with the ball, blocking and receiving passes.

### **Fullback (FB)**

An offensive player who lines up in the offensive backfield and generally is responsible for run-blocking for the halfback and pass-blocking for the quarterback. He or She sometimes carries the ball and receives passes.

### **Wide Receiver (WR)**

An offensive player who lines up on or near the line of scrimmage, but split to the outside. His or Her primary job is to catch passes from the quarterback.

### **Tight End (TE)**

An offensive player who serves as a receiver and also a blocker. The tight end lines up beside the offensive tackle either to the right or to the left of the quarterback.

### **Offensive Tackle (T)**

A member of the offensive line. There are two tackles on every play, and they line up on the outside of the offensive guards. Their job is to block various defensive players.

### **Offensive Guard (G)**

A member of the offensive line. There are two guards on every play, and they line up on either side of the offensive center. Their job is to block various defensive players.

### **Center (C)**

The offensive lineman who hikes (or snaps) the ball to the quarterback at the start of each play. The center lines up in the middle of the offensive line, between the offensive guards. His or Her primary job is to hike the ball and then to block various defensive players.

Additional Offensive Thoughts: two main advantages

- a. Lineman
  - i. Snap count
  - ii. Direction of play – get position
- b. QB – Limit mistakes
  - i. Throw the short pass short
  - ii. Throw the long pass long
- c. RB
  - i. Run to day light (eyes up)
  - ii. Run hard (keep your knees up)
  - iii. Run north and south – meaning run straight ahead. Limit running sideways
- d. Other considerations
  - i. Moving the chain: You don't need to gain 50 yards on every play. Ideally, gain 3.5 yards per play. Gain 3.5 yard per play average, good chance you'll win more games than you don't.
  - ii. Down & distance: You'll hear this phrase often if you watch the NFL or College games. What it tells you is the down and distance needed for a first down. Favorable down and distance numbers are:
    - 1. 1<sup>st</sup> & < 11 yards (normally 1<sup>st</sup> & 10 yards)
    - 2. 2<sup>nd</sup> & < 7 yards
    - 3. 3<sup>rd</sup> & < 4 yards
      - a. If our down and distance lies outside these numbers then our odds for moving the chains (getting a first down goes down)

Note: See “What is Down & Distance?”

## **Defense**

Normally there are no restrictions on alignment of players for defensive teams. The MYFL prohibits “crashing” linebackers which means no blitzing of linebackers before the ball is snapped (offence starts the play).

**Defensive End (DE):** A defensive player who lines up at the end of the defensive line. The job of the defensive end is to contain the running back/quarter back on running plays to the outside, and rush the quarterback on passing plays. The defensive end may also be called an outside linebacker.

**Defensive Tackle (DT):** A defensive player who lines up on the interior of the defensive line. The duties of a defensive tackle include stopping the running back on running plays, getting pressure up the middle on passing plays, and occupying blockers so the linebackers can roam free. He usually lines up on or near the offensive tackle.

**Nose Tackle (NT):** The defensive player who lines up directly across from the center. Also known as the nose guard, the primary responsibilities of the nose tackle is to stop the run and occupy the offensive lineman to keep them from blocking the linebackers. A Nose Tackle is only used in an odd man front. If an even number of defensive lineman is used, then guards, tackles and ends are used.

Note: different alignment of players can be used. At the youth level, a team would use a 4, 5 or 6 man front.

**Linebacker** A defensive player who lines up behind the defensive line players and in front of the defensive backfield.

The linebackers are a team's second line of defense. Each team has two outside linebackers (also known as DE). In a 5-3 defense, teams have 3 linebackers, usually referred to as left or Sam, right (or Will) and middle (or Mike) linebackers.

**Cornerback** A defensive back who generally lines up on the outside of the formation and is usually assigned to cover a wide receiver.

**Safety** A defensive back who lines up in the secondary between, but generally deeper than the cornerbacks. His primary duties include helping the cornerbacks in pass coverage.

Defense: be aggressive and attack. Advantage: Able to use hands. Need to get off the ball (reacting to the snap) and being aggressive

## **Special Teams**

There are 3 parts of the Special Teams phase of football

1. Kickoff: both kicking and receiving
2. Punting: both kicking and receiving
3. Extra point or Point After Try (PAT): offense & defense

\*These definitions cover the specialized positions on special teams only.

### **Gunner**

The members of the special teams who specialize in racing downfield to tackle the kick or punt returner. The gunners usually line up on the outside of the offensive line and are often double teamed by blockers.

### **Holder**

The player who catches the snap from the center and places it down for the placekicker to attempt to kick it through the uprights of the goalpost. On an attempted field goal, the holder must catch the ball and put it into a good kicking position, ideally with the laces facing away from the kicker.

### **Kick Returner**

A kick returner is the player that catches kickoffs and attempts to return them in the opposite direction. He is usually one of the faster players on the team, often a reserve wide receiver.

### **Long Snapper**

The center position as it would be played on offense, but this player specializes in making longer snaps for punts and field goal attempts. A long-snapper generally has to snap the ball seven-to-eight yards behind him with the accuracy that allows the holder or punter to handle the ball cleanly. MYFL rules prohibit the defense from lining up on the center or hitting the center without proper time to allow for the center to be ready.

### **Placekicker**

The player who kicks the ball on kickoffs (sort of), extra point attempts, and field goal attempts is called a placekicker. A placekicker either kicks the ball while it's being held by a teammate or kicks it off a tee.

### **Punter**

The player who stands behind the line of scrimmage, catches the long snap from the center, and then kicks the ball after dropping it toward his foot. The punter generally comes in on fourth down to punt the ball to the other team with the idea of driving the other team as far back as possible before they take possession of the ball.

### **Punt Returner**

The job of a punt returner is to catch the ball after it has been punted and run it back toward the punting team's end zone.

## **What is Down and Distance?**

Understanding down and distance is probably the biggest key to understanding football, so make sure you really understand this part before moving on to the next section.

- Basically, a down is a play. From the time the ball is snapped (put into play), to the time the play is whistled over by the officials, is considered one down.
- A team's offense is given four downs (plays) to move ten yards toward the opponent's end zone.
- Distance is the number of yards a team needs to get a new set of four downs.
- If they make the ten yards needed within four downs, they are given a new set of downs. This is called getting a first down.
- If they don't make it the required ten yards, the other team's offense takes possession of the ball.

Note: Ideally, the offensive team wants to average 3.5 yards per play. Why? So that they can be assured a new set of 4 plays after they complete three (3) plays.

### **An Example**

- The first play of a series is called first-and-ten because it is the first down and ten yards are needed to receive a new set of four downs.
- Suppose on the first play, the team on offense picks up three yards. The next play would then be second-and-seven, because it is the second play of the set and they still need seven yards to get a first down.
- If they were to pick up six yards on the second play it would leave them one yard shy of the first down marker, therefore setting up a third-and-one situation. Third-and-one because it would be the third play of the series and they would still need one yard to get a first down.
- If the team with the ball can pick up one yard or more on the third-down play, then they will be given a first down, which means they get to start all over with a new set of four downs.
- A team can continue moving the football down the field as long as they continue to pick up first downs.

### **Fourth-Down Strategies**

If a team fails to gain the required yardage on third down, several things could happen on fourth down:

1. A team can elect to "go for it" on fourth down and try to pick up the remaining yardage, but they run the risk of turning the ball over (giving it to the other team) to the other team if they do not get to the first down marker. If they do not get the required yardage, the other team takes possession of the ball at the spot of the last tackle and now has four downs to move ten yards back in the other direction.
- The majority of the time (at high levels of football: high school, college, pro), teams will elect to "punt" the ball away on fourth down. A punt is simply a form of kicking the ball that gives possession of the ball to the other team, but also pushes them back considerably farther away from the end zone. At the youth level, punting the ball is difficult. Getting the ball back to the kicker can sometimes be a challenge that a coach may elect not to take on.

- Another option is to kick a field goal. If a team feels they are close enough to kick the ball between the upright bars of the goal post in their opponent's end zone, they may attempt a field goal, which is worth three points when converted successfully.

A level teams may try a field goal if the ball is inside the 10 yard line.

B & C levels teams will most likely not try a field goal.

### **After a Score**

- After a team scores via a touchdown or field goal, they must, in turn, kick off to the other team, and the process begins all over again.

### **Various Methods of Scoring in a Football Game**

#### *Touchdown*

- The biggest goal for an offense, every time they take possession of the ball, is to score a touchdown. To score a touchdown, a player must carry the ball across the opposition's goal line, or catch a pass in the end zone. Once the ball crosses the plane of the goal line while it is in a player's possession, it is scored a touchdown. A touchdown is worth six (6) points.

#### *Extra point(s)*

- The team scoring a touchdown is given the bonus of trying to add one or two more points. These are called extra point conversion attempts.
- If a team elects to go for two (2) extra points, they will line up at the two-yard line and make one attempt at either running or passing the ball into the end zone. If they make it, they are awarded two points. If they don't, they get no extra points.
- They can also elect to go for just one (1) extra point by kicking the ball through the goal posts from the two-yard line.

Note: Scoring is reversed (1 for run / 2 for kick) at the B & C levels)

#### *Field goal*

- Another way for a team to score is by kicking a field goal.

When a team finds themselves in a fourth-down situation, many times they will attempt to kick a field goal if they feel they are close enough for their kicker to kick the football between the upright bars of the goal post in the opponent's end zone. A field goal is worth three (3) points.

Note: Making a field goal at the youth level is very difficult.

#### *Safety*

- A team can also pick up two (2) points by tackling an opponent possessing the ball in their own end zone. This is called a safety!

### **To summarize:**

Touchdown = **6 points**

Extra Point Conversion = **1 point**

Two-Point Conversion = **2 points**

Field Goal = **3 points**

Safety = **2 points**