

MISSOULA YOUTH FOOTBALL, INC.

**2018**

**OFFICIAL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Ratified and adopted August 12, 2018

Missoula Youth Football wishes to recognize the tireless efforts and sacrifices made by the following key individuals who have made this season a reality. Without their efforts, this would not be possible:

Mike Rahl, Natasha P. Jones , Nikki Schreckendgust, Jennifer Klumph, Scott Gurnsey, Jami Wright, Ann Rausch, Mike Nichols, Lesly Templeton, Gered Allen, Aaron Bay, Rick Wiesemann

***"A League With a Purpose"***

Missoula Youth Football, Inc. is headquartered in Missoula, MT, and is a non-profit organization self-governed by an elected board of directors comprised of individuals whose terms are limited to three (3) years. Board members re-apply and may serve multiple terms with the approval of the MYF Board. Elected board members are barred from participating as rostered head or assistant coaches. MYF maintains a paid affiliation with USA Football®, the youth development wing of the NFL®. At any time, MYF may choose to terminate its affiliation with USA Football® if judged appropriate by its board.

Comments and suggestions are welcomed and encouraged by MYF in an effort to insure that membership in MYF is an enjoyable experience.

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The mission of Missoula Youth Football is to have a positive influence on the lives of children by providing a safe, exciting, and enriching opportunity to learn the game of football. Missoula Youth Football, its officers, coaches and supporters make decisions with the following priorities in mind: **1) Family 2) Education 3) Team 4) Sportsmanship 5) Participation**. For the greater good, a “kids first” philosophy is mandated and expected of ALL MYF members. MYF invites all youth athletes to become involved in football regardless of race, sex, religion, or national origin. In cases of special needs, every effort will be made by MYF to accommodate these children to insure their participation. MYF holds these principles to be inviolate.

Missoula Youth Football, Inc. reserves all rights to review, enhance and/or change its rule structures when deemed appropriate.

The following rules and regulations will only be in force for the season stated above. Each year the Rules & Regulations must be ratified by the MYF Board.

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**Section I: Player Eligibility**

**Player Age/Grade Classifications**

Grade Based / Age Protected			
Grade Max.	Age Range	Protected Age	Protected Age Explanation
3rd	7/8/9	9	9 in 3rd grade cannot turn 10 on or before 12/31
4th	8/9/10	10	10 in 4th grade cannot turn 11 on or before 12/31
5th	9/10/11	11	11 in 5th grade cannot turn 12 on or before 12/31
6th	10/11/12	12	12 in 6th grade cannot turn 13 on or before 12/31
7th	11/12/13	13	13 in 7th grade cannot turn 14 on or before 12/31
8th	12/13/14	14	14 in 8th grade cannot turn 15 on or before 12/31

3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades will compete in a combined division, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades will have their own separate divisions. Based on the number of players registered, MYF reserves the right to alter the league divisions as necessary.

**Falsifying birth, address, or any other documents:**

If a document or statement of any kind is used to falsely make a participant eligible for play in a certain age group or on a certain regions team, the player and his/her parents may be suspended from MYF for up to one full year (365 days). A violation of this kind could also be grounds for forfeiture of all games in which the violator has participated.

A permanent suspension may also be instituted for any coach or coaches that have participated in or failed to report such a violation.

**Forward Promotion Rule:**

On rare occasions, MYF recognizes that there will be participants whose size, abilities and/or growth greatly exceed those of his/her peer players in the same grade. Therefore, MYF reserves the right to forward promote said player(s) to a level more appropriate only when there is a perceived benefit to all parties.

### **Off-Season Football/Passing Leagues:**

Missoula Youth Football (MYF) acknowledges Spring Football and Summer Passing Leagues. MYF recommends that any team participating in Spring Football and Summer Passing Leagues do so by following the format established by their local High School or State High School Athletic Governing Board. Great care should be taken to not interfere with other spring and summer sports. Missoula Youth Football requires that NO pressure be placed on individuals to participate. Coaches who “require” or in any way manipulate Fall participants to join or participate in any way, or coaches who do not plan and allow for participation in other sports and family vacations, will be immediately suspended from coaching any team during the regular (Fall) season.

### **Approved Equipment:**

Missoula Youth Football will provide each player with a quality helmet, shoulder pads, football pants, team jersey, and a mouth guard. Coaches and parents must play an active role throughout the season by continually inspecting and approving the equipment used by each player. Any modification or changes made to the MYF issued equipment voids the warranty of the equipment.

Helmet visors may be used if they meet the following conditions.

- **The visor must be able to be installed WITHOUT removing or loosening any attached pieces, parts, or screws of the helmet.**
- They must be clear (no tinting or colors).
- They must be in good condition and provide the player with a clean field of vision.

## **Section II: Team Formation**

Missoula Youth Football believes in the philosophy that teams should be created based upon two things, where a player physically lives and where they will attend high school. These are the steps taken to determine team formation.

1. What **grade school** district do you live in? MYF uses grade school district as its primary selection process because this will group kids by their geographical location and by which high school they will be slated to attend in the future.
2. In the case where the grade school rule cannot be applied due to not having enough players to form a team from one grade school district, all efforts will be made to place players on teams that are in the same high school district and are in close proximity.
3. In the case where the grade school rule cannot be applied due to having more players than the maximum team size allows, all efforts will be made to place the extra players on teams that are in close proximity and are in the same high school district.

While the goal of MYF is to align player participation with a team in his/her "regional" area, in some circumstances it may be necessary to align a player to play on a different team or combine a group of players with another group of players to afford a proper compliment of players on a team. As stated in steps 2 and 3 above, where there are too many players or not enough players registered for one particular area, it may be necessary to combine players from multiple grade school districts to form a single team. All efforts will be made by MYF officials to insure that a player (or players) is assigned to play on a team that at least serves their aligned high school program based on the address in which they live.

In certain circumstances, exceptions will be made. For example, if a player goes to a "private school", with MYF Board approval, that player will be allowed to participate on the "private high school's" feeder program regardless of what grade school district they live in.

The ultimate goal of regionalized team participation is to operate within the construct of allowing kids who grow up together, and go to school together, to remain as teammates as they progress into the high school ranks. Regions are clearly defined as those boundaries established by the local public school system. If high school boundaries change over time, MYF will change accordingly.

In the case of a player that is "Home Schooled" the first criteria for team placement will be the player's physical address. However, on a case by case basis, the MYF Board reserves the right to place "Home Schooled" players in another region at its discretion.

The formation of teams is done on a first come, first serve participation policy regardless of previous year placement. Each child must be afforded the opportunity to be taught the game of football regardless of their ability. MYF does not form "Select" teams. In other words, you cannot select or recruit only the best athletes for your team. MYF officials are responsible for team formation and conduct team formation making every effort to form teams equally and with similar participation levels.

**Team size:**

**The maximum number of participants allowed on a certified roster is 30.**

The minimum number of participants required to certify a roster is 16. Once a roster is full, no player may be dropped to make room for another player.

It is required that each team must have the minimum number of 13 players eligible and able to participate to start a regulation or play-off game. If the number of players falls below 11 players, the game will be forfeited.

In the event that the number of players registered for a certain area exceeds the maximum roster size the MYF Board reserves the right to take any or all of the following steps to set the size of the team.

- Alter the maximum roster size and allow the team to play with more than 30 players.
- Assign the players that registered after the maximum roster size was reached to another team. All efforts will be made to keep all the "extra" kids together on the same team and in the same high school district as their grade school.
- Divide the team into two equal teams. If this is necessary the MYF TEAM DIVISION RULES will be followed. These rules can be found in ADDENDUM #1.

**The MYF Board reserves the right to alter the minimum or maximum roster size based on a case by case basis.**

In some cases there may be a player who wishes to sign-up after the official close date of registration. It will be the decision of the MYF Board whether to allow the player admission for the season and depend upon an available roster position. No players shall be allowed to join a roster after the first official game of a season.

## **Team Division Rules**

### **Purpose of Dividing a Team:**

The purpose of the TEAM DIVISION is to establish an equal distribution of players within a region or school district that has more than the 30 player per team cap set by the MYF by-laws and has enough players to form two teams. This division procedure shall only be used in this event and when deemed necessary by the MYF Board.

### **Eligibility:**

Players eligible for selection will consist of any player who has registered and has paid to participate in the MYF program and falls into the region of the teams participating in the selection.

### **Skills Assessments:**

All eligible players (including coach's children) will need to attend the skills assessment (try outs) to be eligible. The time and place will be sent out after the end of the registration period and once it is determined by the MYF Board that a team division is necessary. The selection of players will begin immediately following the skills assessments.

### **Coach's Children:**

**The maximum number of predetermined selections will be 2; one for the head coach's child and one for the designated assistant coach's child.** In the event that any coach has more than one eligible child that team must use their early round picks to select the remaining child or children. This rule is to prevent the stacking of teams by adding assistant coaches and their children.

### **Selection Procedure Attendees:**

- The selection process will be attended and officiated by no less than three current members of the MYF Board.
- It is required that at least one head coach of another MYF team in the same division be present.
- The head coach will be the only representatives of the team allowed to participate in the selection process.
- No parents or players will be allowed to attend the selection process.

### **Selection Process Rules:**

- A full list of eligible players will be given to each head coach prior to the event.
- The order of picks will be determined by the flip of a coin. The winner of the coin flip will have the first selection. In the event that the teams are in a division that combines two age levels on the same team, **coaches must alternate their picks between the older age players and the younger age players.**
- There will be a time limit for each pick. This will be determined by the MYF Board members at the time of the event.
- In the event that two or more siblings are eligible, they must be selected to play on the same team. The team that chooses the first sibling must use successive picks to select the others.



- **Players that do not attend the skills evaluation will not be eligible for the selection process. They will be placed on a team by a blind draw process conducted by the MYF Board after the other eligible players are selected.**
- A member of the MYF board will be responsible for documenting the rosters according to the picks during the event.
- The order players were selected will be held in complete confidentiality and will not be discussed with anyone except those present at the event. At no time will any player be told by the coaching staff what round any players were taken in.
- No “negotiating” among coaches for the purpose of “stacking” one team will be allowed.

### **Dropping a Player**

Cutting of players is not allowed in MYF; however, there are certain guidelines that should be met if it becomes necessary to release a player from a team. MYF strongly recommends that the coaching staff work closely with these players before the extreme measure of dropping a player takes place. MYF believes that the game of football may just be a saving grace for this type of participant.

Dropping a player will be acceptable:

1. When a participant is found to have signed up as a result of parent or guardian pressure, or, he/she tells team management he/she does not really want to play football.
2. When a participant cannot furnish the required documents to be certified to a team roster, (e.g., Medical, Proof of Birth Date, etc.).
3. When a Participant shows no interest in football, is disruptive to other participants and the instructions of the coaching staff, and becomes a discipline problem.
4. When a Participant does not show up for practices. Participants must have a valid excuse from the parent(s), guardian(s) or a physician.
5. When a Participant attempts to intimidate fellow participants by word and/or physical act.

### **Dropping A Player Will NOT Be Acceptable**

When excessive team or individual conditioning drills, disciplinary actions or assigning individual player’s laps or intentionally placing player in intimidating hitting drills for the purpose of encouraging weaker players to quit. Coaches determined to be using this or any other tactic to drop weaker players will be immediately dismissed for the remainder of the season and may be permanently suspended.

### **Section III: Season, Practices & Games**

#### **Start/End Dates**

The MYF playing season will generally start as early as the Monday prior to Labor Day weekend and extend until the first weekend in November of the current year. Start and end dates of the playing season may be modified by the MYF Board.

No organized practice may be held prior to official start date of MYF season as ratified by the board each year. Any team, who practices prior to the official start of the season, may be subject to disciplinary committee review and/or game forfeiture. No practice will be allowed on the Labor Day weekend including the Monday of Labor Day.

During the first week of practice, no equipment is to be worn for the first three practices to allow proper conditioning to occur. No contact is allowed during these three days.

#### **Practice Lengths Defined**

Teams will be allowed to practice for a maximum of two hours per day for the first two weeks of practice, or a maximum of 10 hours per week (the week AFTER Labor Day excluded – in which case a maximum of 8 hours the second week). After the first two weeks, practices will be limited for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade to no more than three days per week and one and a half hours per practice. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders can practice four days per week for no more than one and a half hours per practice.

Coaches are allowed their own discretion as to which days they will practice. It's MYF's goal to insure that children are well-rested and energized during school weeks.

#### **Special Note**

The late summer is often characterized by extremes in Montana. Therefore, MYF strongly recommends that coaches, players, and parents take great care to insure that participants avoid over-exertion during hot weather or excessive smoke particulate. All parties are strongly encouraged to have a ready source of water available during practices and/or games. Also, coaches must provide a steady number of at least three water breaks to players during practice.

## **Air Quality Guidelines with regards to Wildfire Smoke**

There appears to be no simple answer to the air quality problem. The following guidelines, which are consistent with guidelines for varsity athletic activity throughout the country, will be followed. These were modified in accordance with the Health Departments Wildfire Smoke document of July 2009, which is attached.

### **Good:**

No Action - Regular outside practices 13 miles and up

### **Moderate:**

No Action - Regular outside practices possible aggravation of heart or lung diseases to 13 miles

### **Unhealthy for sensitive groups:**

Regular outside practices – Student-athletes with a history of respiratory problems are to be monitored. Practice for these individuals or other individuals who develop respiratory problems will be restricted. All athletes should be encouraged by their coaches to report any problems. 5 to 9 miles

### **Unhealthy:**

No Outside practices. Do not increase an individual's respiratory rate. This would include (but are not limited to) no conditioning exercises, no sprinting, running or jogging. Practices can be held indoors as facilities are available. 2.25 to 5 miles

### **Very Unhealthy:**

No Outside practices. Do not increase an individual's respiratory rate. This would include (but are not limited to) no conditioning exercises, no sprinting, running or jogging. Practices can be held indoors as facilities are available. 1.25 to 2.25 miles

### **Warning–Hazardous:**

No outside athletic activity 1.25 miles or less

Note:

1. Simple masks are not a barrier to the pollutants.
2. The air quality hotline can be accessed by calling 258-3600.
3. The web site is: [www.todaysair.mt.gov](http://www.todaysair.mt.gov)

## **Practice Staff Requirements**

- At least one coach must be present during every practice.
- Each and every coach must have a background check performed and reviewed/approved by the process established by MYF.

### **Practice Restrictions**

There shall be no practice or games (i.e. scrimmages) between teams of a different division e.g., 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> vs. 5<sup>th</sup>, or 5<sup>th</sup> vs. 6<sup>th</sup>, or 7<sup>th</sup> vs. 8<sup>th</sup>, etc.; this does not prohibit combined fundamental coaching sessions as long as there is no contact between players of differing teams/divisions.

No more than one-third of any practice can involve full-speed tackling or blocking.

The following Drills and Warm-up Exercises are hereby banned from all MYF activities. Leg Lifts, Neck Bridges, Neck Rolls, Bull in the Ring, Barrel Rolls, and any and all drills and exercises not generally accepted as safe and that may not be reflective of actions that would normally occur during the course of a football game.

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rulebooks contain strong language on blocking and tackling. MYF coaches are responsible to be fully informed and abide by all such rules of their state's governing body (NFHS or NCAA). MYF coaches are also responsible to review these rules every year. In addition to other specific prohibitions in the NFHS and NCAA rulebooks, butt blocking, chop blocking, face tackling or spearing techniques are strictly prohibited. If such techniques or any others forbidden by the NFHS or NCAA rulebooks are taught, the coaches responsible shall be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to probation upon the first offense and suspension for the remainder of the season upon the second offence. Coaches assume all liability for their actions or inactions.

### **Scouting Rules**

Videotaping of another team for the sole purpose of scouting is strictly prohibited. No team is allowed to schedule video review sessions with players in attendance. Coaches, at their own discretion may videotape and review their own team but such recording may not occur from an end zone perspective. At no time is it permitted to scout another team's practice(s). Coaches and other representatives are allowed to scout other teams utilizing written reports during games only. Any coach or representative of a team found to have broken any of the above dictates will be suspended for a time determined by the Board after investigation.

## **Section IV: Game Play**

Unless specified herein, all game play rules specified by the Montana High School Athletic Association are applicable.

### **Length of Quarters**

Each quarter shall be 10 minutes for all age divisions. Maximum halftime allowed will be 10 minutes.

### **Coaches**

In the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Division only, each team will be allowed to have one coach on the field in the huddle. This is mainly to promote the speed of the game by facilitating the calling of the plays. **Once the huddle breaks, no coaching will be allowed.**

Each team in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> divisions will be allowed 7 rostered coaches to be on the sideline during a game. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade divisions will be allowed to have 6 coaches on the sideline during a game.

All coaches must be approved by the MYF Board. All coaches, assistants and head coaches MUST complete the MYF Coaches application, register on the MYF website and be USA Football certified on Heads Up tackling. All coaches will be subject to a background check.

### **Defensive Blitzing(3<sup>rd</sup> / 4<sup>th</sup> Division)**

Blitzing will not be allowed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> /4<sup>th</sup> Division only. To be eligible to rush the passer you must line up on the line of scrimmage.

#### **What constitutes a blitz and what will MYF be watching for:**

Blitzing is a strategy used by a defensive unit in which they will have a player other than a member of the defensive line attempt to pressure the quarterback. Typically, this will result in a linebacker or defensive back attempting to find a gap in the offensive line and tackle the quarterback. The only defensive players allowed to rush the quarterback are the down linemen. They must be lined up on the line of scrimmage and there may be no more than 5 down defensive lineman on any given play. All players intending to rush the quarterback must be in a 3 or 4-point stance when the ball is snapped. If the quarterback drops back to pass and remains inside the pocket, which is defined as in between the tackles, then the only defensive players allowed to cross the line of scrimmage are the down defensive lineman and no more than five. Once the quarterback leaves the pocket, he is treated like a runner and the defense is allowed to pursue. The play-side outside linebacker is allowed to set the perimeter on an option run or pass and may cross the line of scrimmage. Only the play-side outside linebacker may set the perimeter, if the linebacker on the opposite side comes and it is a pass then the officials will call an illegal blitz. If any blitzing occurs, it will be called an Unsportsmanlike Penalty, resulting in a 15-yard penalty. Warnings may be given prior to penalty being called.

If as a board we see or hear from other coaches a play like this is continued to be used, whether flagged or not, an investigation by the MYF board will be initiated. Penalties to the coach/team will be decided by the board.

### **Crack Back Blocking is illegal in Missoula Youth Football**

What does a crack back block mean and what will MYF be watching for:

A crack back block is an offensive strategy in which an offensive player spreads out wide near the sideline then runs back towards the ball at the snap in order to seal off a defender from the wide side and open up the field for a runner. **IN MYF THIS TYPE OF BLOCK IS NOW ILLEGAL IN ALL FORMS.** This person cannot come in motion, reset and then block back towards the ball. They cannot be a TE, WR or RB that comes from an outside lined-up position, comes back towards the ball and blocks above or below the waist. This person cannot come from an outside lined-up position, move back towards the ball and try to shield or get in the way of an unsuspecting player. Anything close to this will be looked at as a crack back block and can be assessed a fifteen yard penalty.

The MYF board is fully aware that a crack back block done correctly is a legal block in High School and College football. Our position to make this illegal is based on safety for the children playing in the league. We believe that in this age group an offensive player will have a hard time executing the block correctly without harming others and a defensive player will have a hard time protecting themselves from this block occurring.

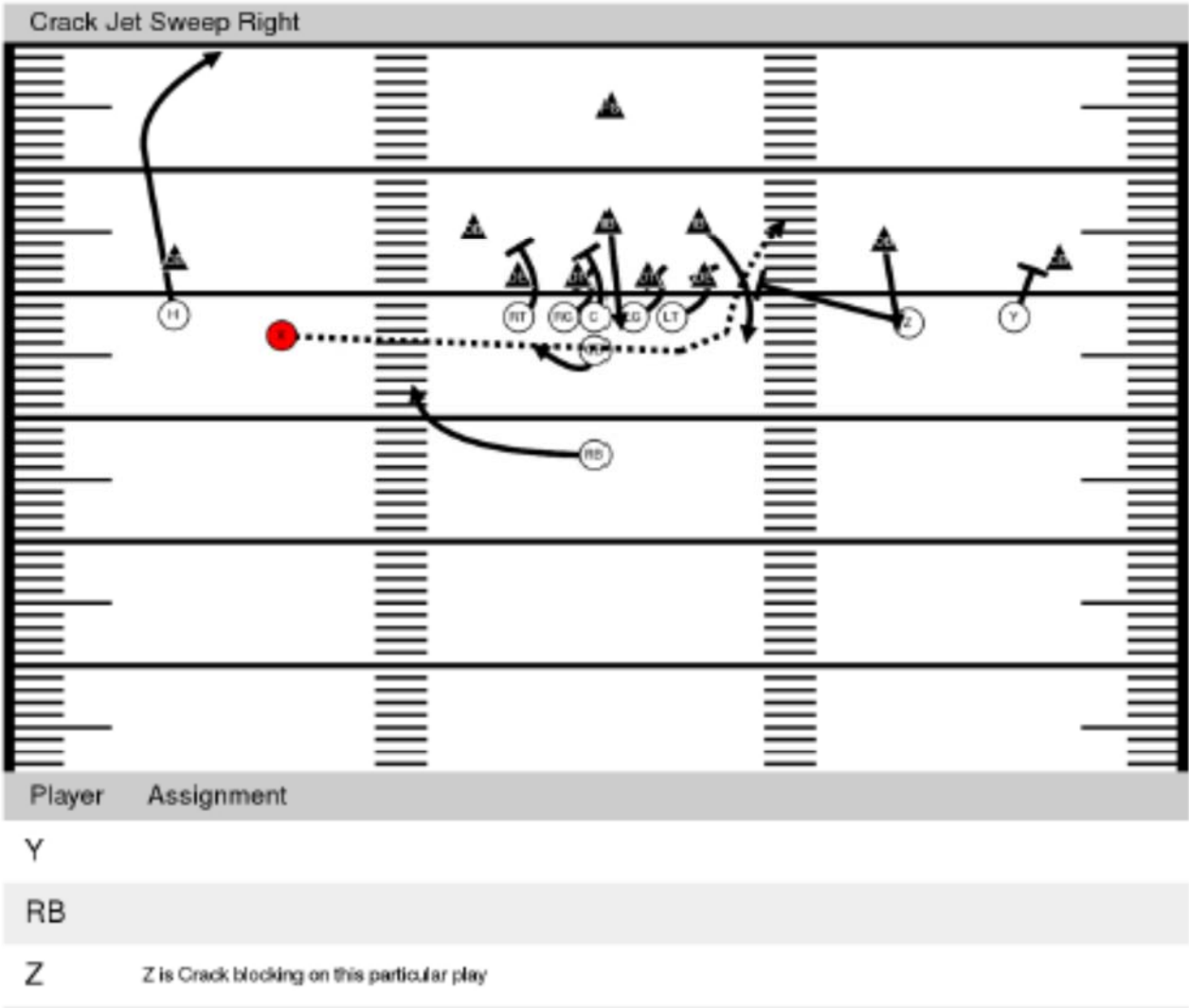
Coaches, we ask that you remove all plays in your play books that encourage this type of blocking and reteach an alternative block. Our advice as a board is to teach the offensive outside player to block the defensive player lined up directly across from them or run them off acting as if it is a pass. Other options are to pull your guards to be lead blockers for your running back.

If as a board we see or hear from other coaches a play like this is continued to be used, whether flagged or not, an investigation by the MYF board will be initiated. Penalties to the coach/team will be decided by the board.

If you have a question about a play, please submit the diagramed play by Thursday before the weekend games to the commissioner of MYF. Finally, please reiterate to your players and coaches that a block in a player's back, other than inside the tackle box, is an illegal block as well. Teach good body position and technique to protect our players.

Below is a diagrams depicting Crack Back Block play:

Example A:



### **Rushing the Center on a PAT / Punt**

As per MHSAA rules, a center who is snapping the ball on a PAT is illegal to hit. You cannot engage on a center when he/she is snapping a PAT or a Punt. When trying to block a PAT, MYF strongly encourages you to go from the outside. A lot of PAT snappers are smaller players, please teach your players to stay off the Center when snapping the Ball.

### **Timeouts**

Each team will have three (3) timeouts per half in all MYF games. Timeouts are not charged against a team for injuries or game officials' timeouts.

### **Game Ball**

3<sup>rd</sup> /4<sup>th</sup> grade divisions will employ the use of "peewee" sized footballs. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade division will utilize the "junior" sized football. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades will use the "youth" sized football.

### **Number of Games**

There will be a six regular season weekends, one playoff weekend, and one championship weekend. Each team shall play a minimum of 5 games. A maximum of 9 games including regular season, non-conference, division playoffs, and championships are allowed.

In the event that a division has an odd number of teams a series of "byes" will be used to accommodate the "odd" team each week. In this scenario it may be necessary for some teams to play more games than others. If this is the case the final regular season game for those teams that played an extra game, **will not** count in any way towards those teams standings (wins/losses, points allowed, points scored).

*Example: If there are 9 teams in a division it would be necessary for one team to have a bye each week. Since the regular season is 6 weeks long this would mean 6 teams would have a bye and only play 5 games. The other 3 teams would play 6 games in which case their sixth and final game would not count in the standings.*

### **Game Day responsibilities for teams**

Home Team = chain gang - 3 people to run

Away Team = field clean up

Note: Last game of the day on Saturday clear field of all field markers, game clocks, and garbage. Last game on Sunday same as above, also ask players to bring pylons and ropes to shed



## **Playoffs and Championship**

At the end of the regular season all teams in each division will be seeded based on the following criteria.

1. Points: Wins = 1 Tie = .5 Loss = 0
2. Head to Head Games
3. Points Allowed
4. Points Scored
5. Coin Flip

The first criteria will seed the teams based on their number of wins and losses. If there is a tie in points then criteria #2, Head to Head Games will be used to break the tie. If there was not a head to head match-up **or** if there are multiple teams tied and there was not head to head match-ups between all tied teams, criteria #2 will not be employed and criteria #3 Points Allowed will be used to break the tie. If teams have the same wins and losses record, and Head to Head criteria does not break the tie, and have given up the same number of points throughout the season criteria #4, Points Scored, will be implemented to break the tie. If a tie still remains after the first four criteria are used a simple flip of the coin will be used to break the tie.

*The reason Points Allowed is given more weight than Points Scored is to discourage running up the score during the regular season. Points against shall be capped at 35 points.*

The top four teams in each age division will advance to the playoffs. These teams will be eligible to advance on to the Championship Game if they win their playoff game in the playoffs the #1 seed will play the #4 seed and the #2 seed will play the #3 seed. The higher seed will be the home team in their respective games. The two winners will advance to face each other in the Championship Game.

## **Tie Breaker**

If a game is tied at the end of regulation, MYF will utilize the ten (10) yard Tie-Breaker System, as stated in the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) Rulebook. The NFHS Tie-Breaker rules amended to start from the 10-yard line. After regulation play has concluded, each team's head coach will meet with game officials to review the "overtime" rules. Following this meeting, team captains will meet with the head official for a coin toss to determine who has right of first possession. Each team will have at least one possession. Each possession will begin from the 10 yard line. In regular season games each team will get one possession. If a winner has not been determined, the game will be declared a tie. During playoffs and championship game if a winner has not been determined, the 10 yard rule will be re-initiated until a winner is determined.

### **Calling a Game / Forfeiture of Game**

MYF board reserves the right to call/stop/postpone/cancel games. A game may only be forfeited with MYF board approval

### **Coaching Communications**

There will be no electronic devices from the press box, coaching box, sidelines or any other position on the field that may be used to relay messages to the coaches or players at any time. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, the use of a cell phone, Blackberry, PDA, computer or other messaging device. All Bluetooth earpiece devices are not allowed within the field of play. A coach using a cell phone for emergency purposes must step outside the coach's box, off the playing field. If it continues, the coach may be asked to leave the field for the remainder of the game. Further disciplinary action may be taken by the league.

### **Medical Requirements**

Coaches MUST have all Emergency Medical Release Forms and Parent/Guardian Emergency Numbers in their possession at all times when team is practicing, traveling or playing in any game or competition.

### **Injury Re-entry**

MYF is dedicated to making a safe environment for practice and play. Therefore, once an injured participant who requires medical treatment is removed from the game, they may not re-enter the game unless first approved by the emergency medical personnel covering the game. If a participant is transported off the field to a medical facility or for any reason seeks medical attention whether from an injury sustained during a game or practice, they may not resume participation without the written consent from the examining medical personnel. A parent(s) approval, or coaches approval is not enough to re-enter a game. If an athlete is suspected of having a head injury or concussion, or currently shows concussion symptoms, the athlete will be immediately removed from practice or play for the remainder of the day. Make sure the athlete is monitored at all times. Do not leave the athlete unattended. The athlete/athlete's parent should be advised that the athlete must see a health care provider who is trained in the care and management of a concussion. The athlete will not be allowed to return to football without written clearance from a health care provider. If for any reason an athlete has been removed from practice or play with a suspected head injury or severe illness (by a parent, coach, official, board member or athletic trainer) the athlete must be seen by a qualified health care provider. The athlete cannot return without proper documentation that allows return. This documentation must be given to the team head coach and MYF board member. If a health care provider has advised an athlete not to return to football during the fall or the athlete has been removed by a parent, due to injury or illness, MYF may require written documentation for record keeping purposes.

## **Scoring**

Scoring is as follows:

Touchdown	6 points
Scoring play after touchdown (run or	1 point
Scoring play after touchdown (kicking)*	2 points
Safety (awarded to opponent)	2 points
Field goal*	3 points
Forfeit	Score of game 6-0
Ties – Regular Season	Declared at the end of

\*There will be no extra point or field goal tries by “kicking” in the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> grade division.

## **Lopsided Rule / Running Clock**

The MYF lopsided score rule is 35 Points or 5 touchdowns, whichever comes first. Once the score differential reaches 35 points or 5 touchdowns, the game clock will become a running clock. Once the clock becomes a running clock it can only be stopped for injuries, official or team time outs, or when points are scored. If in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters of a game the score falls back below the 35 points or 5 touchdowns the clock will revert back to regular running rules. If the lopsided rule is put into place anytime in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> quarters it will remain in effect through the end of the game. Mandatory plays must be completed regardless of the score or game clock. If the winning team does not complete their required mandatory plays, the full force of the mandatory play rules will be in effect.

## **Running up the Score**

An intentionally run-up score occurs when a team continues to “pour it on” even after the game is in their favor and far out of reach for their opponents. Coaches who practice this may be disciplined by the MYF Board. MYF considers this type of coaching contrary to its purposes.

It is the responsibility of head coach to control the scoring to prevent a winning margin of 35 points or more by effectively managing players, playing time, positions and play selection. MYF expects coaches to remove starters and take other appropriate measures to provide teaching opportunities to non-starter athletes when a game becomes out of reach for the opponent. Therefore, points against shall be capped at 35 points.

Excessive score violations, especially repeat violations may result in the Board taking action(s) against an individual(s) or team(s). Additional actions may include, but are not limited to, suspension, removal, forfeiture of a game(s), loss of standing.

### **Punt/Punt Return Plays**

For team divisions in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, there will be no "live" action until the ball is punted by the punting team. **The offensive team MUST declare its intention to punt or to go for the first down.** No rush from the "return" team will be allowed. The team punting the ball, therefore, may not elect to run a "fake punt." It is the choice of the punting team as to whether to hand the ball to the punter or "tosses" it back to the punter from the center.

For team divisions in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, ALL punt situations are "live" and will be conducted under the rules of the Montana High School Athletic Association.

### **Kick-off / Kick-off Return / Onside Kick Exception**

For all divisions 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade; there will be no kickoff with the exception as noted below. The ball will be placed at the 35 yard after every score. No onside kick

Onside Kick Exception: If an offense scores in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, under 3 minutes left in the game, and are still behind 8 points or less, that team will be able to declare that they would like to onside kick. There won't be a kick. The team declaring the onside would have the ball placed at their own 35 yard line (backs against it) and the down and distance would be 4<sup>th</sup> and 10 yards to go. If the offense gets the first down they get to keep the ball and try to score. If the offense does not get the 1<sup>st</sup> down, the ball turns over to the other team.

### **Field Conditions**

The MYF Board shall have sole discretion to decide whether fields are unplayable on the day of the game.

### **Cheating**

Any allegations of cheating or violations of this rulebook or any local rule or regulation should be immediately reported, in writing, to either the Commissioner or their appointed representative for dealing with such issues.

Once the allegations of cheating or rules violation have been reported in writing to the respective official, there shall be NO further discussion until it is reviewed, investigated and acted on appropriately by the MYF Board of Directors. The act of spreading rumors, which is general talk not based on fact, will not be tolerated in Missoula Youth Football. It not only hurts your credibility, but it affects your team and other teams that may become involved in the rumor.

### **Ejection from Game**

Upon ejection from a game the coach must leave the premises. If they do not choose to leave, the game will stop until they choose to do so. MYF will allow that coach to watch the next game from the end-zone as a spectator. The ejected coach cannot be part of early game day prep, they are only to be at that game as a spectator. If a player gets ejected from a game they will not be allowed to participate in the next game they play. They can be at the game, but not suited up. If a coach or player is ejected from the game for an Unsportsmanlike Like Penalty, unless it is a sideline infraction, they must sit out the next game.

### **Incorporation of High School Scheme**

One of MYF's missions is to teach the high school schemes early to create better, more prepared high school players. This is especially important for the older teams. Please support MYF's mission and your local high school.

### **Protests**

Missoula Youth Football shall have complete jurisdiction over protests concerning all games within their programs. It may choose at its sole discretion whether protests of any kind are allowed. MYF must maintain consistency with this discretion.

Protests on matters of judgment rendered by any game official WILL NOT be allowed under any circumstances. No video will be reviewed to overturn any call.

All protests must be in writing and submitted to the local Board-designated person (Director of Public Relations) no later than 24 hours after termination of the game in question. The MYF Board has the responsibility of calling a meeting of MYF Board within 48 hours after receipt of the protest, or in the event of a holiday, the following non- holiday day.

## **Section V: Consent to Play/Mandatory Play**

### **Consent to Play**

Parents or legal guardians are required to furnish to local Associations a written statement declaring their child has permission to participate in MYF activities and that they understand the risks involved. The written and signed statements must include a: Waiver/Release and Image Release.

### **Emergency Information & Consent to Treat**

This document must contain emergency medical information, emergency contacts and consent to treat in the event of a medical emergency. This form must be in the possession of the team at all times in the event an injury occurs.

### **Age Certification**

Upon demand, MYF may require that a participant provide an original record of their birth. MYF strongly recommends a certified copy or a notarized photocopy of an original birth certificate or a copy of the birth certificate with a state-issued identification card that requires an original birth certificate (or equivalent) for issuance. These documents shall set forth the date and year of birth and can be a Certificate from the State, County or City Bureau of Vital Statistics, Department of Health, and the Department of Motor Vehicles, School Certificates or Record of Notification of Birth Registration by the Bureau of Census of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Passports, Military ID cards are also acceptable. These documents must be presented to the MYF officials for verification.

Note: Falsifying birth or any other documents to make a participant eligible is grounds for forfeiture of all games in which they have participated and permanent suspension of the adult(s) and or organization responsible for the act. All evidence will be turned over to the local authorities for any criminal prosecution that may be relevant.

### **Grade & School Verification**

Upon demand, MYF may require a copy of the current or previous year report card to verify the participant's grade level and the school they are attending. This documentation should be maintained along with all other required documentation

## **Mandatory Play Rules**

It is part of the mission of MYF to insure that every participant play an active role in each game. MYF's mechanism for mandatory play is based upon a combination of roster size and the minimum number of plays required for each participant. In some cases whether by injury or absence a team may have fewer active members on its game day roster. It is every head coach's responsibility to notify the volunteer game play auditor of how many kids are available to play in a given game prior to the game's start so that accurate accounting of plays is maintained. The number of plays required is determined by the numbers of players able to participate at the start of each game.

All MYF participants MUST play an active role in a minimum number of plays as follows:

- 26 or More Players = 11 Plays
- 22 - 25 Players = 13 Plays
- 16 - 21 Players = 15 Plays

All Minimum plays must be "Active" plays (punt and punt return are active plays from the line of scrimmage (LOS) and do count). All other special team plays do not count as MPR plays. All plays must be from the LOS. Any penalties resulting in the replay of the down do not count as plays. Plays that result in a quarterback dropping to his knee with the sole purpose of "running out the clock" will not count as plays.

All participants must receive their minimum mandatory number of plays by the end of the 3rd quarter. Any participant that has not received their minimum plays by the end of the 3rd quarter must enter the game and remain in the game until they have received their required number of plays.

Proper coaching involves instructing and educating each player as to offense and defense. Specializing at the youth level is not appropriate. Thus, MYF coaches are required to give all players the opportunity to play both sides of the ball, offense and defense, during practice and games.

The only time a player is exempt from playing a minimum number required during a game is in the event of an injury, chronic documented absences or a serious documented disciplinary matter upon written approval by the MYF board.

All exemptions must be approved by the board prior to game day via email to: [missoulayouthfootball@gmail.com](mailto:missoulayouthfootball@gmail.com). If approved by board, exemptions shall be communicated, by the coach, to athlete's parents and auditors in advance of the game.

### **Auditor(s)**

Each team shall supply up to 3 coaches, to monitor the Mandatory Play Rule (MPR) 1 for each sideline and one to run the clock. Each team will have assigned game(s) and can switch with another team as long as the replacing team is not in the same division as the team playing. Once the minimum number of plays has been achieved for each rostered player, the auditors may stop tracking the remainder of the plays in that game. The auditors are then required to provide their coach with the audit sheet for verification. Failure to audit as assigned (or find a suitable replacement) may result in suspension from games or practices, temporary or permanent exclusion from the program and/or game forfeiture.

After each game the teams audit sheet must be turned in to a MYF official. MYF will aggressively enforce the MPR. If it is discovered that a team has not met the requirement of the rule, it will be reviewed by an MYF Board designate within 24 hours of game completion.

Any team not meeting the Mandatory Play Rule shall forfeit their game. Additional minimum penalties: First offense for the head coach: probation. Second offense for the head coach: suspension for one game and one week of practice. Third offense: suspension for remainder of season. If it is the last game: suspension for the first half of the following season's games.



## **Section VI: Coaches/Administrators**

In its association with USA Football® MYF will conduct background a check on all coaches within its program on an annual basis. Affidavits of these background checks will be maintained by the Secretary of the MYF Board.

All coaches must be approved by and serve at the pleasure MYF. Coaching assignments are for one playing season only and are therefore automatically terminated at the close of each season. Coaches must re-apply for coaching positions annually. The close of the season will be determined by MYF, but must not extend past the championship game.

The coaching staff will be under his/her direction and supervision.

Coach Trainees must be a minimum of 16 years old and may only carry out the instructions of the Head or Assistant coaches.

Head Coaches are required to employ the use of written practice plans for every practice and may be required to have them available for each assistant coach during practice. Additionally, every head coach may be required to email practice plans upon request of the MYF Board.

Head coaches are in complete charge of their players. They are responsible for their own actions or inactions, their assistants' actions or inactions and the actions of their players.

All coaches must be level 1 certified through USA Football prior to the first practice.

All coaches and administrators (board members) by their appointment to coach and administer, are bound by the "Pledge," "Code" and "Standard of Conduct."

### **Pledge:**

Each game and practice I participate in or administer over will provide me with an opportunity to be a Champion of Character. I pledge, as an MYF member to accept the five core character values of Missoula Youth Football and will do my best to represent MYF, my Team, and myself by: respecting my opponent, the officials, my team, my administrators, coaches, myself and the game; taking responsibility for my actions in all areas of my life; having the integrity to stand by my word; providing leadership where I serve others while striving to be a personal and team leader; and being an example of sportsmanship by holding myself to the highest standards of fair play.

Coaches and Administrators can make a conscious choice to uphold the best of values. Individual players can make choices that will define them as athletes. Missoula Youth Football believes in the following five core values.

- Leadership
- Integrity
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Sportsmanship

**Coaches Code:**

- I believe in the power of athletics as a program for the training of youth for a strong and efficient democracy.
- I believe in athletics for the building of good character and personality.
- I believe in athletics as a significant part of a sound educational program.
- I believe in athletics as a constructive force in the lives of millions of sports followers throughout our nation. Therefore, I will hold sportsmanship and fair play high above all other values to be gained through sports participation.
- I consider the privilege of guiding youth through participation in sports as a sacred trust.
- I will always keep the best interests of each participant as my aim. I shall never be guilty of enhancing my progress by the use of a participant's skill for my benefit.
- I will forever keep before the participants under my direction the high ideals, honesty, sincerity, and integrity which have made our nation great. I will not encourage, or tolerate, any form of trickery or evasion of rules in order to gain an advantage over an opponent.
- I will do all in my power to instill in those under my direction a tolerance for all races and creeds, and I will stand out against intolerance wherever it may occur.
- I will strive to instill in every youth great purposes and aims in living and will use the desire to play not as an end, but as a training ground for the participant's highest development.

- I will strive to teach each participant to be humble in victory and gracious in defeat, to be above bragging or using alibis, and shall help develop inner strength and poise.
- I will use only fair and honest means in my desire for personal achievement and shall count the goodwill of my peers far above any achievement unfairly gained.
- I will not sacrifice the values to be gained through a wholesome enjoyment of challenging sports activity for institutional pride or commercial ends.
- I will use only fair and honest means of securing talent for athletic teams and never stoop to trickery or insincere promises in influencing participants in the selection of their experience.
- I will use every means at my command to protect the moral, mental and physical health of the participant's under my guidance and will never be party to the use of athletics for the financial or political gain of any office or group.
- I will encourage each participant to avail himself/herself of the best experience to be gained in a well-rounded education and to progress normally toward graduation. I will never encourage participation in athletics as an end in itself.
- I will help each participant under my guidance toward the development of honest habits of work and pride in work well done and I shall not practice or allow evasion in any obligation surrounding the athletics program.
- I will shoulder my total responsibility as a leader through athletics and will not allow that responsibility to be transferred to any person or group outside the organization. I will not violate this sacred trust for financial support or political prestige.

### **Standard of Conduct:**

All Administrators, Coaches, and Volunteers will abide by a Standard of Conduct, which includes the following provisions. If any of these provisions are violated, MYF shall have the authority to impose any penalty it sees fit. Administrators, Coaches, and Volunteers, having already accepted and agreed to abide by the Coach and Administrators Pledge and the Coach and Administrators Code, by their accepting and active participation in membership, shall follow the intent of the Pledge and Code and shall inclusively and/or additionally agree to:

1. Not smoke and/or use smokeless tobacco on the field or in front of participants at any time.
2. Abstain from the possession and drinking of alcoholic beverages and the possession or use of any illegal substance on the field or in front of participants at any time.
3. Accept decisions of the game officials and judges on the field and in competitions as being fair and called to the best of their ability.
4. Not criticize an opposing team, its players, spirit participants, coaches, or fans by word of mouth or by gesture.
5. Together with team officials, be jointly responsible for the conduct and control of team fans and spectators. Any parent, guardian or fan that becomes a nuisance and out of control must be asked to leave
6. Not use abusive or profane language at any time.
7. Not encourage their team to intentionally run up the score on an opponent. In the event of a commanding lead every effort shall be made to let all players play.
8. Not permit or encourage, "extreme dieting," or "sweating down" tactics of any kind for any reason. Must report any instance witnessed or suspected to the parent/guardian and local administrator.
9. Not recommend or distribute any medication, controlled or over the counter
10. Not deliberately incite unsportsmanlike conduct.
11. Not criticize/berate participants ever, to provide constructive criticism, in private, or in the presence of team/squad members if others might benefit.
12. Remove from a game or practice any participant when his/her health is in question, whether or not as a result of injury, until competent medical advice is available.
13. A coach will follow the parameters of the Anti-Substance Abuse Rule and see that it's carried out faithfully and that all players understand its importance.

14. A coach will not use ineligible players and will take the responsibility of having proper and legal documents on each and every player proving his eligibility at all times.
15. Insure that all participants meet the minimum required number of plays under the Mandatory Play Rules and Regulations.
16. Our team will fulfil our obligation to audit and/or manage the game clock as assigned.
17. Uphold all rules and regulations of Missoula Youth Football, Inc

### **Social Media**

MYF is a "League with a Purpose". Remember football is a game and MYF is here to support and encourage those who play the game of football. Support MYF and all its members in a positive way. Social media is a very strong medium and can be used in a positive way to great things.

As a MYF volunteer, parent, player, coach, official or board member you have a responsibility to uphold a certain level of civility. Social media is no different. Any postings on social media that when viewed in a reasonable light could be construed to have a negative impact on MYF, or that is offensive to (towards) any MYF volunteer, parent, player, coach, official or board member will not be tolerated. When discovered appropriate action will be determine by the MYF disciplinary committee.

### **Advisory/Disciplinary Committees:**

On occasion, the MYF Board may call on parents, officials, and head coaches throughout the season to participate on an advisory committee to discuss a specific topic. These committees would allow individuals to have a voice in a variety of areas that are part of MYF. These areas may include, but would not be limited to, the negative use of social media concerning MYF, rules and regulations, poor sportsmanship, and individuals not following the MYF code of conduct for players, coaches and parents. MYF understands that this is a volunteer committee and would make every effort to make these committees a minimal time drain. These committees would be formed on a case by case basis with individuals (including parents, coaches and MYF Board members) selected from other age groups and regions from which the case has been initiated.

## **Section VII: Violations/Penalties**

MYF reserves the right to discipline coaches, parents and participants for inappropriate conduct including but not limited to:

2. Violations of Rules or Code of Conduct;
3. Badgering, threatening or harassing Officials, MYF Staff or Opposing teams;
4. Playing an ineligible or injured player; or
5. Deliberate indifference to the safety of participants.

Discipline may include suspension from games or practices, temporary or permanent exclusion from the program and/or game forfeiture. Participation in sports generally and MYF's program in particular is a privilege not a right.

Parents/guardians are not allowed to confront a coach, team or league official to discuss any "negative" game or practice situation with the coaching and management staff until at least 24 hours has passed from the completion of the game or practice. A confrontation shall consist of any conversation, which is elevated from a normal speaking tone and demeanor to one which involves yelling, profanity or derogatory comments toward said coach, team or league official. Violation of the 24 Hour Rule may include suspension from games or practices, temporary or permanent exclusion from the program. Participation in sports generally and MYF's program in particular is a privilege not a right.