2012 Oshkosh YMCA 4th Grade Football Rules

Playing Field: The field is 40 X 60 yards.
Practice: Two practices of no longer than 90 minutes will be allowed during the weeks of Aug. 13, Aug. 20 and Aug. 27.
Starting September 8th teams are allowed two practices per week no longer than 60 minutes.
All teams are allowed one (1) scrimmage the week of August 27 – 31. If you scrimmage you must notify Paul Trebiatowski at 230-8449 ext. 126 or paultrebiatowski@oshkoshymca.org

Game length: The game will consist of four, (4) twelve, (12) minute quarters. The clock will run continuously. There will also be a 45 second play clock to keep the game moving.

Time outs: Each team will receive two (2) time outs per half.

Start of Game: The game will begin with a coin toss, and the winning team will start with the ball from their 15-yard line. Teams will switch directions at halftime.

Kick-off: There will be no kick offs. Teams will start with the ball from their 15-yard line.

Game Balls: Junior size footballs will be used.
Equipment: A helmet, mouth guard, shoulder pads, and football pants must be worn.

Playing Time: The goal of the Oshkosh YMCA Football program is to spread playing time equally between all players; each player should play close to two quarters. They should also get a chance to play both Offense and Defense.

Coaches: Two (2) coaches will be allowed on the field to help with plays in the huddle. After the ball is snapped coaches must stop coaching.

Officials: There will be two officials provided for each game. No coach or player should argue with an officials call. All calls stand and any problems with coaches or player will result in their removal from the game.

Offense

A. Teams will have nine (9) players on the field at a time.
   - Five (5) offensive linemen are required.
   - There should be two, (2) players in the backfield. The Quarterback is considered to be part of the backfield. A player is considered to be in the backfield if they are one yard off of the line of scrimmage and between the tackles.
B. The offensive line must assume a 3- point stance for at least one (1) second before the center snap, backfield players are not required to be in a 3 – point stance, but there may only be one player in motion.
C. The quarterback may take the snap from under the center or take a direct snap as a setback (shotgun).

Note: Quarterback, running backs & tight ends/receivers must weigh 95 pounds or less.
A fifteen yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be called on players at wrong positions.

D. Wide Receivers and Tight Ends must remain one yard behind the line of scrimmage.

E. Only the ends, receivers and backs of offensive team are eligible to receive a forward pass. The center and interior linemen cannot advance more than one (1) yard past the line of scrimmage on a pass play. No pulling linemen.

F. The offensive team must position themselves on the line of scrimmage and remain behind the “neutral zone” (the length of the ball) until the snap is made. Failure to do so will result in an offsides penalty. The center’s head may intrude into the neutral zone, but not past the far end of the football.

G. The center may adjust the position of the ball on the line of scrimmage for his snap. Picking up the ball a short distance off the ground will not be construed as movement of the ball by the defensive team. Once the center has positioned the ball for his snap, he may not move it again except to start the offensive play. The ball may not be moved forward by the center!

H. On 4th down or any other down of his choice, the offensive captain must inform the referee of his intention to punt the ball. If the offensive team is punting, the referee will give the defensive team proper notification that the offensive team is punting. Any time you are going to punt you must notify the opposing team.

I. Crack back, see interpretation #2, blocking by any offensive player from the Wide Receiver or Tight End position shall be illegal. Trap blocks are also illegal. Other block methods for example double teams and down blocking shall be allowed.

J. Cross blocking will be allowed when a lineman is uncovered.

K. The offensive team shall have forty-five (45) seconds in which to start play from the time the ball has been spotted by the official from the preceding play.

L. On a safety, The team will start with the ball from the fifteen (15) yard line

M. No heavyweight (96 pounds or more) may advance the ball.

N. Offense cannot block below the waist downfield.

O. The offensive team will have 4 downs to gain 10 yards (from the original line of scrimmage) failure to do so will result in a turn over on downs and the other team will receive the ball from that spot.
Defense

A. The defensive team must have four (4) defensive linemen on the line of scrimmage at the start of a play. The Center will be left uncovered. These defensive linemen must be in a three (3) or four (4) point stance for one full count before the snap of the ball. **The first movement must be forward by the defensive line only until contact has been made, at which time the defensive player may pursue the offensive ball carrier. CONTACT MUST BE MADE!**

B. **All players weighing over 95 pounds must play the defensive line.**

C. The defensive lineman can change stances (3 point to 4 point or vice versa), but cannot stand up or shift positions on the line.

With regards to set defense:

- Linebackers (between offensive tackles) must be three (3) yards off the line of scrimmage and defensive backs must be five (5) yards off the line of scrimmage.

D. The defensive team may position its defensive backs and linebackers as they wish; however, linebackers must position themselves between the offensive tackles and no closer than 3 yards from the line of scrimmage and in an upright position. Defensive backs must position themselves 5 yards off the line of scrimmage and in an upright position. **There shall be no blitzing of defensive backs or linebackers through the line of scrimmage from the normal end to end position in a balanced line formation.** If the offense sends a player in motion, the defense can put one back or linebacker in motion as well.

E. When the offensive team is punting, the defensive team may not rush the kicker. The offensive and defensive linemen must be in the usual down position at the line of scrimmage, but no contact will be made. The receiver may catch the punt, but **NO run back of the punt will be allowed.** If the receiver fumbles the attempt to catch the punt or the ball touches any member of the receiving team, it will be a dead ball.

F. Heavyweights may be back to receive the punt because it is a dead ball.

G. Fumbles, except punts, by either team can be recovered and advanced (with the exception of heavyweights, who may not advance fumbles).

H. Defenses allowed will be:
   a. 4 – 3 – 2
   b. 4 – 2 – 3
   Or follow these guidelines: linebackers/defensive backs cannot cross the line of scrimmage between the two offensive tackles, except on a fumble. They must pursue the ball down the line of scrimmage until the ball gets outside the tackle position; then, and only then, can the defensive backs and linebackers cross the line of scrimmage. Defensive line must line head up from an offensive lineman. There shall be no slanting from the defensive line.

I. **No more than three (3) linebackers**
Interpretations

1. It shall be noted that it is the intent of the program to give each player as close to as possible two quarters of playing time in each game regardless of his age or athletic ability. However, it shall also be recognized that it is the coach’s prerogative to assign individual players; to specific positions (offensive or defensive), assess their physical and emotional abilities, teach all players the fundamentals of football and good sportsmanship, and promote the general well being of the entire team as a unit. Players missing practice might not be able to play in game.

2. Crack back blocking: The intent of this rule is to prevent a “blindside” block by a flanker or split-end on the opposing linebacker, end or defensive back. This rule shall not prevent a flanker or split end from making a block on such defensive men as long as the blocker positions himself in front of the defensive man before attempting to block. It shall not prevent a flanker or split end from making a down field block on an off tackle (end) or sweep type play. Cross body or roll type blocks are not permitted.

3. Blitz: The intent of this rule is to prevent a linebacker from standing at the line of scrimmage in front of the center and charging into him at the snap of the ball and thereby preventing a normal exchange of the ball and subsequent handoff. Also the rule is intended to prevent a linebacker from “shooting the gap” from the normal end-to-end position of the offensive team on either a running or pass play. This rule shall not prevent a linebacker/defensive back from: 1) Coming up to meet a running play at the line of scrimmage from the tackle to tackle positions. 2) Recovering a fumble on the offensive side of the line of scrimmage. 3) Penetrating into the backfield on an obvious broken play or when and offensive player is obviously “scrambling” when attempting to pass the ball. 4) “Blitzing” from the outside linebacker’s position – 3 yards off the line of scrimmage. On a “blitz” outside linebackers have to remain behind the line of scrimmage until the ball carrier has advanced to the outside of the offensive tackle. 6) Defense shall set first, then the offense. The intent of this rule is to keep the defensive line from taking one step back and becoming linebackers and thus mismatching a heavyweight against a lightweight.

The above situations require a “judgment call” by the referee and he should keep in mind the intent of the rule and apply it in such a fashion as to not inhibit the normal defensive reactions to an offensive play.

Penalties

All penalties will be assessed as W.I.A.A. states.
Horse Collar tackles are illegal and will be a 15 yard penalty.