

LAKESHORE LEAGUE
3rd/4th GRADE FOOTBALL RULES

GENERAL

- Rules not stated will conform to the MHSAA Rules.
- Each team will have 7 players on the field (7v7).
- Score will be kept.

PENALTIES

- Officials determine incidental contact that may result from normal play. This is considered a judgement call.
- All penalties will be assessed from the line of scrimmage, except for spot fouls.
- Games cannot end on a defensive penalty unless the offense declines.
- If the distance to the goal is shorter than the penalty yardage, then the penalty will be assessed half the distance to the goal.
- Any loss of down on fourth down results in a turnover on downs and the other team taking possession.

SPOT FOULS

- DEFENSIVE
 - Pass interference – Automatic first down
 - Holding – Automatic first down
 - Stripping the Ball – Automatic first down
 - Unnecessary Roughness – Automatic first down
- OFFENSIVE
 - Charging: -15 yards
 - Flag Guarding: -5 yards
 - Unnecessary Roughness: -15 yards

DEFENSIVE PENALTIES (Yardage from the line of scrimmage)

- Offside: +5 yards
- Illegal Rush: +5 yards
- Illegal Flag Pull: +5 yards
- Roughing the Passer: +15 yards & automatic first down
- Taunting: +15 yards & automatic first down
- Unsportsmanlike Conduct: +15 yards & automatic first down

OFFENSIVE PENALTIES (Yardage from the line of scrimmage)

- Offside/False Start: -5 yards
- Illegal Forward Pass: -5 yards & loss of down
- Pass Interference: -5 yards
- Illegal Motion: -5 yards
- Delay of Game: -5 yards
- Impeding the Rusher: -5 yards
- Illegal Procedure: -5 yards
- Taunting: -10 yards

- Unsportsmanlike Conduct: -10 yards

LIVE BALL/DEAD BALL

- The ball must be snapped between the legs to start play.
- Substitutions may be made on any dead ball. Substitutions must be made from the same side of the field.
- Qualifications of a “dead ball”
 - Ball-carrier’s flag is pulled
 - Ball-carrier steps out of bounds
 - Ball-carrier’s knee hits the ground
 - Ball-carrier’s flag falls out (ball is spotted where the flag is on the ground)
 - Incomplete pass
 - Ball hits the ground
 - Receiver has one or no flags when catching the ball (spotted where the receiver caught the ball).
- Any player who starts a play without a flag is down where they touch the ball.
- There are no fumbles. Ball is spotted where the ball-carrier’s feet were at the time of the fumble.
- In the case of an inadvertent whistle, the offense has two options:
 - Take the ball where it was when the whistle blew
 - Replay the down from the original line of scrimmage

EQUIPMENT

- Players jerseys must be tucked in at all times.
- Players must remove all jewelry deemed hazardous by the officials.
- All players must wear shoes. Molded cleats are allowed, metal cleats are prohibited.
- Pee Wee size football will be used.

GAME

- At the start of each game, captains from both teams meet at midfield for a coin flip.
- The winner of the coin flip has the choice to start on offense or defense. The loser of the coin flip will choose which direction they will defend to start the game.
- The offensive team takes possession of the ball on its 20-yard line and has four plays to get 10 yards.
 - Teams can go for it on 4th down or punt.
 - If an offense goes for it on 4th down and does not get the first down, the other team will take over where the ball is spotted.
 - If a team chooses to punt, the defense is unable to rush and the offense cannot cover the punt until the ball is kicked. If an offensive player leaves early it will be treated as an offside. If a defensive player rushes it will be an automatic first down.
- Teams change directions after the first half. The team that began the game on defense will start the 2nd half on offense.



- One coach is allowed in the huddle at a time. Once the huddle breaks to set up for the play, the coach must remove themselves from the play and be outside of the hash marks.
- The offense must have 3 players on the line on scrimmage to snap the football.
- After a touchdown a team will have the opportunity to go for two from the 3-yard line or go for one on the 1-yard line. The offense must throw the ball to get the extra point(s). Even if the quarterback is rushed, they must throw the ball to receive the extra point(s) due to the “No Run Zone”.
- Defensive safety – if an offensive player gets their flag pulled in their endzone or runs out of their own endzone, the defensive team will get two points and the ball on their own 20-yard line.
- Scoring – touchdowns are worth 6 points. Extra points from the 1-yard line are worth 1-point, extra points from the 3-yard line are worth 2 points. A safety is worth 2 points.

TIMING

- Games are four 10-minute running clock quarters.
- Breaks between quarters are 1-2 minutes long.
- Once the ball is spotted, there is a 30-second play clock.
- Each team will receive two time-outs per half. Time-outs do not carry over.
- Officials can stop the clock at their discretion for injuries.
- The clock will stop after the extra point/2-point attempt and will begin once the ball is snapped for the next possession.

PASSING

- If the quarterback’s flag is pulled before the ball leaves their hand, the play is ruled dead and the ball is spotted where the quarterback’s feet are.
- Interceptions may be returned.
- If a pass is tipped/blocked by the defender and the quarterback catches the ball, the play is ruled dead and considered an incomplete pass.
- The quarterback may throw the ball to avoid a sack. The pass must go beyond the line of scrimmage.
- All pass attempts must be a forward pass. Any pass attempt that is not a forward pass will be considered an illegal pass and loss of down.

RECEIVING

- All players are eligible to receive a pass (the quarterback may receive a pass if the ball is handed off behind the line of scrimmage).
- Only one player is allowed in motion at a time.
- Once the ball is advanced beyond the line of scrimmage, the current ball-carrier is the only player allowed to have possession of the ball until the play is dead.

RUNNING

- The quarterback can only run beyond the line of scrimmage once a defensive player rushes them.



- Only direct handoffs behind the line of scrimmage are allowed. Teams may perform multiple handoffs as long as they remain behind the line of scrimmage. Pitching the ball is not allowed.
- A player that receives a handoff may throw the ball as long as they are behind the line of scrimmage.
- The ball is spotted where the runner's feet are when the flag is pulled, not where the ball is.
- The center may not be the first one to receive a handoff on a play. The "center sneak" is not allowed.
- Direct snaps to the running back are not allowed.
- "No Run Zones" are located 5 yards before the goal line in each offensive direction.
- If the ball is spotted on or inside the "No Run Zone", the offense must use a pass play to advance the football. This includes the extra point/2-point attempt after a touchdown.

RUSHING THE PASSER

- Players that rush the passer must wait 7 seconds. The official will keep track of the 7 seconds. The official will count the last 3 seconds out loud.
- Players not rushing the passer may defend on the line of scrimmage but may not enter the backfield unless the ball is handed off.
- Players rushing the passer may attempt to block the pass, however no contact can be made with the quarterback.

FLAG PULLING

- A legal flag pull takes place when the ball carrier is in full possession of the ball. A defensive player may not pull the flags off of a player who does not have possession of the ball.
- Defenders can dive to pull a flag, but cannot hold, tackle, or run through the ball-carrier when attempting to pull their flags.
- Attempting to strip the ball from the ball-carrier is prohibited.
- Flag guarding is the attempt by the ball-carrier to obstruct the defender access to the flags by stiff arming, dropping the hand, arm, shoulder, or head or intentionally covering the flags.

BLOCKING

- Players are only allowed to block for the ball-carrier at the line of scrimmage. Down field blocks are not allowed.
- Players blocking must have their hands together and at their chest when blocking.
- Players who extend their arms or do not keep their upper body stationary during a block will be flagged for an illegal block.
- Blocks in the back, blindside blocks, or any other dangerous play will be flagged.