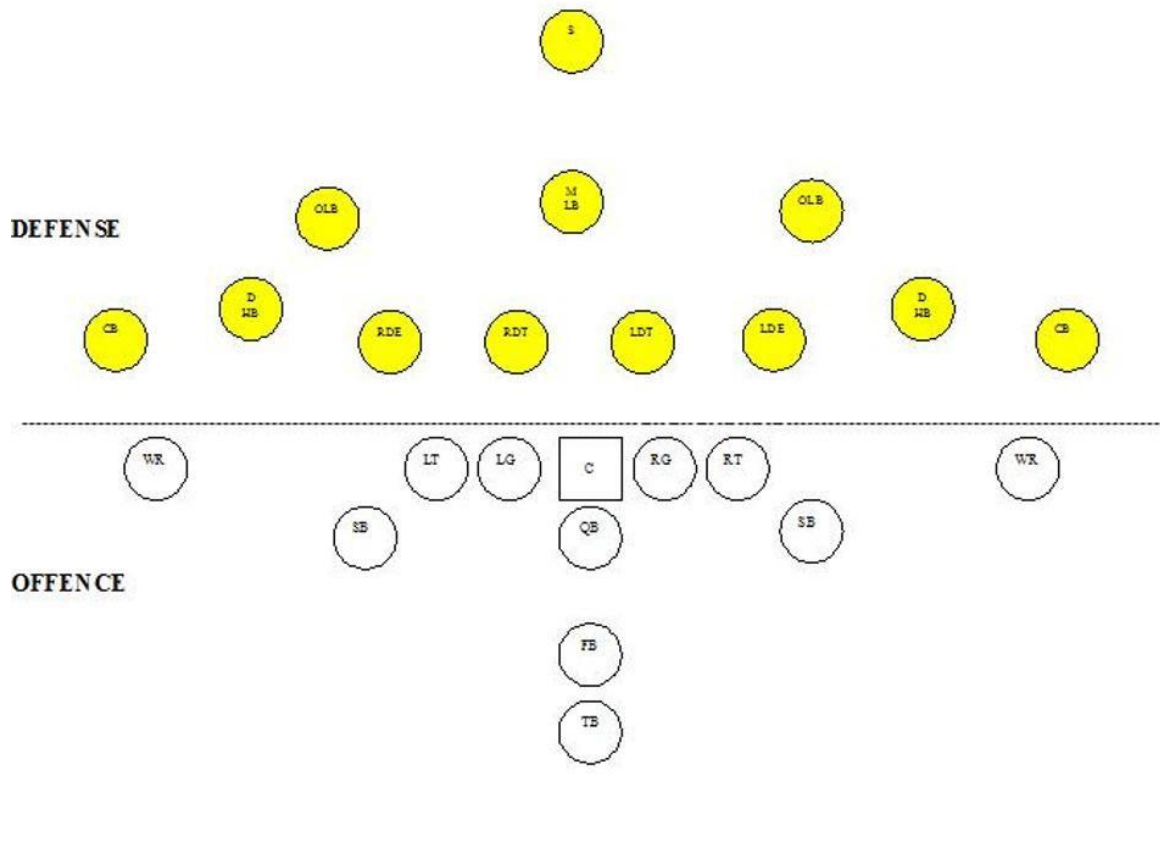


Football Basics

General

- Each team has 12 players on the field.
- Games begin with a kick off, where one team (determined by a coin toss) will kick to the other. The ball is kicked off again in the 2nd half and after each touchdown.
- When a team has the ball, their “offence” is on the field, when the other team has the ball; the “defense” takes the field.
- The game is played on a 110 yard field (55 yards to each end zone from center). The end zones are 20 yards deep.
- Each team tries to defend the end zone behind them.
- The basic goal of football is to have possession of the ball in the other team’s end zone (i.e. a touchdown).
- Time-wise, the game is divided into four quarters.
- The Atoms and Peewees play 15 minutes straight time for quarters 1 and 3; and 14 minutes straight time plus three more plays in quarters 2 and 4.
- The Bantams and Midgets play 12 minute quarters straight time, except that the last 3 minutes of quarters 2 and 4 are stop time (i.e. the clock stops if a pass is dropped or a player runs out of bounds with the ball).
- Teams trade sides after each quarter. There is a 10 minute break between quarters 2 and 3 (“halftime”).
- When the offence has the ball, they are given three plays (“downs”) to gain 10 yards. When 10 yards or more are gained, they get a new set of three downs. If they don’t gain 10 yards in three plays, the other team’s offence gets the ball, right where the first team stopped. It is not uncommon for a team to kick the ball downfield (“punt” or attempt a field goal) on 3rd down to avoid simply turning the ball over.
- There are people on the sidelines who hold up sticks that mark where the 10 yard zone begins and where it ends (the “chains”). If the ball is close to a first down, the referee might bring the chains out on the field for a measurement.
- There is also a third stick which indicates what down (first, second or third) the team is on; it is always lined up where the ball is (the “line of scrimmage”).
- If there is a penalty, usually the offending team loses 5, 10 or 15 yards (from the original line of scrimmage) and the down is repeated. The amount of yards depends on what penalty has occurred. If the non-offending team prefers, they are often able to “decline” the penalty and then the yards are not lost and the down changes (i.e. it is treated as if the penalty never happened).
- The team with the most points at the end of four quarters wins. Teams can score points in several ways:
 1. Touchdown – run the ball, catch the ball or pick up a loose ball in the other team’s end zone – 6 POINTS!

2. Convert – starting at the 5 yard line, after a touchdown, kick the ball through the goal posts (1 POINT for Bantam or 2 POINTS for Atom/Peewee) or run or pass the ball into the end zone (1 POINT for Atom/Peewee or 2 POINTS for Bantam).
3. Field Goal – kick the ball between the other team’s goal posts (3 POINTS)
4. Safety Touch – stopping the other team’s ball carrier in their own end zone (2 POINTS)
5. Single (aka: Rouge) – a kicked ball goes into the other team’s end zone and the other team fails to run it out before they are tackled or it goes out of bounds (1 POINT)



On the Field

Offence

- **The Offensive Line** – Usually five players line up right with ball. The Centre begins with the ball. To the left and right of the center are Guards. Beside the guards are Tackles. The main job of the line is to protect the quarterback and make room for others to carry the ball.

- **The Backfield** – The Quarterback lines up behind the center. The play starts when the center gives the ball (“snaps”) to the quarterback. The quarterback may choose to give the ball (“handoff” or “pitch”) to one of the Running Backs who usually line up a few steps behind the Line. Depending on how and where they stand they could be called: halfback, fullback or tailback.
- **Receivers** - These players line up between the Offensive Line and side line. Outside (or Wide) Receivers line up closer to the sideline. Inside Receivers line up between the offensive line and the outside receivers. Receivers that line up on the line of scrimmage are called “ends”: a Split End is a wide receiver and a Tight End is an inside receiver. A tight end usually is a blocker on running plays. Receivers that line up a yard behind the line are called Slot backs or Flankers. Receivers that are used as running backs are called Fly backs. The quarterback may throw the ball to any receiver or running back to gain yards. Once the ball goes over the line of scrimmage it cannot be passed forward. The ball can be passed backward any number of times; only one forward pass is allowed on each play. If the ball is thrown backwards, it is still live even if it is not caught. If a forward pass is not caught, the ball is dead and the play is over.

Defense

- **The Defensive Line** – usually three to five players line up one yard from the ball facing the other team’s offence line. With four on the line; there are two Defensive Tackles in the middle with Defensive Ends on either side. If there are three or five on the line, the middle player is called a nose tackle.
- **Linebackers** – behind the defensive line are usually three or four players: Inside Linebackers in the middle and Outside Linebackers further out.
- **The Secondary** – The remaining defensive players begin behind the linebackers or closer to the line but nearer the sidelines (depending on where the offensive receivers are). On the outside are Cornerbacks; then Defensive Halfbacks and a Safety in the middle.

Numbering

- When on offence, the team must have at least seven players on the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped. Of the seven line players, only the two on the outside (the “ends”) are ‘eligible’ to be given or passed the ball (usually these are inside or outside receivers). The remaining five players line up at least one yard behind the line. They can move before the snap and are all eligible to be given or passed the ball.
- To assist the officials, eligible offensive players wear numbers between 1 and 39 or 70 and 99; ineligible offensive players wear numbers from 40 to 69. Defensive players can wear any number. A player can wear a number inappropriate for her/his position as long as he/she reports to the referee before each play.