



**MINIATURE FOOTBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION
RULES SUB – COMMITTEE**

REPORT TO THE MFCFA OFFICERS

RE: THE CREATION OF AN EDUCATIONAL RULE SET TO EXPLAIN THE BASIC PROCEDURES FOR PLAYING THE GAME OF MINIATURE FOOTBALL WHILE EXPLORING THE MANY VARIATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED BY INDIVIDUAL COACHES AND ORGANIZERS OF LEAGUES AND TOURNAMENTS INVOLVED IN THE HOBBY TODAY.

The original Tudor rules were used as the foundation for these updated rules and are often referred to throughout the document.

PRESENTED BY THE MFCFA

and developed by the

MFCFA RULES SUB-COMMITTEE

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**Miniature Football Educational Rules
for the
Beginning or Returning Coach**

Our Mission: To create an educational rule set for the beginning or returning coach explaining how to play the game of miniature football and to explore the many variations that have been developed by coaches, league and tournament organizers that play the game today.

I. Introduction

Miniature Football is a game that allows you to coach and quarterback a team of miniature football players on a vibrating realistic football field game board. As the coach, you call the plays, and as the quarterback, you execute the play on the field.

Miniature Football is a “hands on” game which puts you on the field and allows you to physically set up your players in offensive and defensive formations. It requires a basic knowledge of football and the ability to analyze your opponent’s strengths, weaknesses and tendencies to formulate a strategic game plan to be victorious.

The basic rules of this game are almost identical to real football but variations are possible so that players may add or change them to create added interest and more realism.

These rules are intended to be a guide only for the beginning or returning player. Basic rules will be given and then variations that have been developed by various coaches used in individual, league and tournament play will be explored.

II. Equipment

A. Game Boards and Accessories

1. **Game Boards** – Game boards are generally constructed of a sheet metal playing surface with an electric motor underneath, that when turned on, causes the field to vibrate and thus emit the familiar “buzz” of miniature football. Fiberboard has also been used to construct the playing surface by various manufacturers. The most popular game boards were manufactured by Tudor beginning in 1947. Some other brands from the past include Gotham and Coleco. Today, game boards and custom game boards are manufactured by many companies. For a current list of manufacturers please visit www.miniaturefootball.org

Game board sizes vary by manufacturer and model number. A game board should be scaled to represent the actual dimensions of a football field with all field markings.

Game boards may be decorated with team or league logos, covered with custom field covers or side line decorations. Such decorations should not interfere with operation of the board or player movements on the field of play.

The game board’s vibration may be regulated for fast or slow action by adjusting the Speed Control Knob. Both coaches should agree on a desirable speed before the game starts. It is suggested to test players on various parts of the field before reaching agreement on the game board’s speed.

2. **Accessories** – All game boards should have the following accessories:

- **10 yard Marker** – Used to mark the yard line that begins a series of downs and the necessary yard line 10 yards down field to gain a first down and new series of downs.
- **Ball Marker** - Used to mark the Line of Scrimmage.
- **Goal Posts** – Used for kicking field goals. (For a clearer result many leagues use a foam board cut out to the width of the goal posts and extending up to 3 feet high. This way when the ball hits the board, it is considered good)
- **Footballs** – Used primarily for kicking field goals and for passing. There are several types available. Foam, felt and leather are the materials used for making footballs.

The above accessories should be scaled to fit the game board and field markings being used.

B. Player Figures – Each team should have a minimum of 11 players. Players may be unpainted or painted in official team colors to represent any pro, college, high school, or fantasy team. Opposing teams should be of contrasting colors to avoid confusion. Today, most coaches use dark jerseys for the offensive team and white jerseys for the defensive team or one full team of dark jersey and one full team of white jersey uniformed teams.

Players should be numbered for identification and to represent roster positions. The following is the current numbering system used by the NFL:

- Quarterbacks, Punters, and Place kickers: 1 – 19
- Running Backs and Defensive Backs: 20 – 49
- Centers: 50 – 59 (60 – 79 if 50 – 59 are unavailable)
- Offensive Guards and Tackles: 60 – 79
- Wide Receivers: 10 – 19 and 80 – 89
- Tight Ends: 80 – 89
- Defensive Linemen: 60 – 79 (90 – 99 if 60 – 79 are unavailable)
- Linebackers: 50 – 59 (90 – 99 if 50 – 59 are unavailable)

Coaches often choose to play with their favorite college or pro team and use current or historical rosters. Some coaches even choose to make up a team of All – Stars from different eras.

There are a wide variety of stock manufactured player figures available in standard poses to represent offensive and defensive player positions. There are also custom player figures available by various individuals.

Figures vary by size (scale for current figures is app. 5 mm = 1 ft) and weight (measured in grams). Coaches should agree on a size and weight to be used when playing a game. Most leagues rules are set for one of two different maximum base and figure combined weights, 3.3 grams or 4.0 grams, but this will vary from league to league and will be covered more in depth with our future publication, *Advanced Rules Suggestions for Miniature Football*.

C. Bases – All players are placed on a base that provides the movement of the player when the game board is switched on. Bases have prongs underneath which may be manipulated or “tweaked” to provide a player with strength, speed and direction. Some bases have a separate dial to give a player adjustable direction.

Bases are available in a wide variety of styles and colors. Most bases “straight out of the bag” will not perform as expected and must be “tweaked” to gain the characteristics desired to build a competitive team.

There are many ways to “tweak” a base. The most acceptable methods are flashing, squeezing, brushing, bending, or curling the prongs. These “tweaks” are accomplished with numerous tools ranging from lighters (used in flashing) and flat nosed pliers to sandpaper, clippers and scissors. Boiling is another method which chemically alters the plastic a base is made of, but this method is not accepted or allowed by most league and tournament organizers. For more information on how to tweak a base please visit the Rookie FAQ section at www.miniaturefootball.com/forum

As with figures, bases vary by size and weight and coaches should agree on an acceptable size and

weight as well as “tweaking” methods before playing a game.

D. Passer / Kicker – Most games come with a QB Passer / Kicker. Most are made of plastic but there are vintage models that are made of metal. There are other methods of passing and kicking that have been developed and these will be discussed in the rules for playing the game.

III. Glossary of Terms and Definitions

The following is a glossary of terms and definitions as they pertain to electric football.

ADJUST – This occurs when a player on a directional or dial base is picked up and his dial is turned from its original position to give the player a new direction of movement. The player is placed back on the playing field in his original position.

ADVANCED PIVOT – An advanced pivot is the act of picking up a player after he has been marked by an on-field referee to adjust his dial and then placing him back to his original position before moving one end of his base (front or back) by his base left or right to advance in a different direction.

ANGLE – The act of angling a player is when a player has been placed on the playing field at an angle, either forward or backward, to the line of scrimmage. This most often occurs when offensive linemen are angled to make their blocks or offensive backs are angled to run to a particular hole to block for another ball carrier.

BROKEN TACKLE – a broken tackle is when a defender falls over, becoming a Fallen Player, when making contact with the ball carrier. Play continues until resolved.

COMPLETED PASS - Pass attempt strikes the intended player in the air prior to hitting anything else. Any player other than the Intended Receiver making first contact with the ball is considered to be an incompleteness, batted ball or interception. In some rule-sets, if the ball initially strikes an unintended and unengaged receiver (see definition for: Engaged), it is considered a completed pass. However, the unintended and unengaged receiver cannot advance the ball and the ball is considered down right there at the most forward down-field portion of the receiver’s base.

ENGAGED PLAYERS - Any player that has not fallen and is making base to base contact with an opponent’s player(s) is considered to be engaged if not the ball carrier. Body parts of a figure do not count for the purposes of determining engagement. Usually engaged players are not eligible to be pivoted or receive a pass. However, this rule may vary depending on the rule-set.

EXTRA POINTS - After a team scores a touchdown an extra point is kicked 7 yards behind the designated line of scrimmage for extra point attempts. Many leagues have specific rules for a contested extra point similar to the field goal rules, while others place just the kicker on the field and attempt the kick uncontested.

FALLEN PLAYERS - Any player that falls and has any part of the figure contacting the field is considered to have fallen. Fallen players must be left alone until that play is resolved. Usually, fallen players are not eligible to catch a pass, receive a pitch, make a tackle, or intercept a pass. A fallen player becomes part of the field until that play is over. Under a few rule-sets, fallen players are treated as a player who has stumbled and is allowed to be placed upright prior to the field being turned back on.

FIELD GOALS - Field goals are usually contested. When attempting a FG, the most forward down-field portion of the kicker’s base must be placed 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage. In most rule sets the maximum distance that a field goal can be attempted from is 63 yards (the current NFL record). That means to attempt a field goal you must be on your opponent’s 46 yard line or closer. (46 yards plus 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage plus the 10 yards from the goal line to the goal posts).

FIRST DOWN - The offensive team is allowed four downs in which to gain ten yards. A first down is rewarded when the ball carrier has at least reached or touched the necessary yard line for a first down. Usually, the ball carrier is considered to have fallen short of a first down when tackled, turned around, ran out-of-bounds or forward progress has been stopped just short of reaching or touching the line of gain.

FPO (Free Play Option) – If the defense is called for offside or too many players on the field, the offense has the option of completing the play after which they may accept the penalty or decline the penalty and take the result of the play.

FUMBLE - If the ball carrier loses the ball for any reasons, it shall be considered a fumble. The first player, including the man who dropped it, to touch the ball after it has touched the playing field, obtains possession of the ball. Play is stopped and the ball is placed at the point at which the ball was recovered.

**** Note**** It is a widely accepted practice that the ball carrier does not actually carry the ball. There are several methods that add fumbles to the play of miniature football. The most common way a fumble is caused is when the ball carrier is knocked down by a defender or defenders and the defense takes possession of the ball at the forward most point of the ball carriers base. In other rule-sets, the defense can return a fumble. The rule for advancing a fumble is usually the same as advancing the ball after an interception.

INTERCEPTION – A ball is considered intercepted if the ball first strikes an unengaged defender in the air. If a pass is intercepted, the intercepting player is still unengaged, the interception can be returned. Only the intercepting player may be pivoted, followed by any unengaged players on the other team in an attempt to make the tackle. If a pass is intercepted in the end zone the intercepting team may elect to take a touch back or attempt a return.

LINE OF GAIN / LINE OF SCRIMMAGE (LOS) – The ball is always marked at the fullest yard gained on any given play. Ex: If the ball carrier's base has passed the 20 yard line, but has not quite touched the 21 yard line, the ball is then marked at the 20 yard line to begin the next play.

OUT OF BOUNDS - If any portion of the ball carrier's base touches the side line of the playing field, he is out of bounds and play stops. Play is resumed on the next down at the most forward downfield portion of the base at the time a portion of the base touched out of bounds.

OVERTIME - If the score is tied at the end of a game, an overtime period will be played. Usually, overtime is resolved by playing a pro style Sudden Death overtime period with the first team scoring winning the game. A coin toss is performed to determine first possession for the overtime period. Some leagues and tournaments play a college style overtime period with each team getting possession of the ball and the team scoring the most points or gaining the most yards winning the game. For other and more specific rules concerning overtime periods please refer to the Rules World forum at www.miniaturefootball.com/forum

PASS ATTEMPT - The action of actually pulling back the throwing arm on the Passing QB must be made in order for it to be considered a pass attempt. If the ball inadvertently falls off of the Passing QB, please allow the offensive coach to reload the ball and throw the pass prior to time expiring if on a clock.

PIVOT – A pivot is the act of moving one end of a player's base (front or back) by his base (left or right) to advance in another direction. The player is not picked up but remains on the playing field.

SAFETY - A safety results in two (2) points being awarded to the defensive team. A safety occurs when the ball carrier is tackled, runs out of bounds, or is forced down due to running backwards without some portion of its base breaking the plane of its own goal line. A Free Kick will follow all safeties. The defensive team will receive the free kick.

STACKING – In offensive and defensive formation set ups, the act of lining up one player directly behind another with little or no space between them. In most rule sets this is not allowed. Most rule sets require that there be at least 5 yards or one base length between players.

TACKLE – The ball carrier is considered tackled when an opposing player touches his base. The ball is downed at the point on the field directly under the forward point of the ball carrier’s base. If the ball carrier turns and moves towards his own goal line, play stops and the ball is downed at the point at which he turned.

TIMEOUTS – Three time-outs is usually allotted to each team per half. A coach can call a timeout at any time during a game prior to saying “set” to begin a play. There are also other variations of how time-outs are administered and the impact of such an act.

TOUCHBACK - A touchback occurs when the ball is kicked into or out of the opponent’s end zone or when a pass is intercepted by a defensive player in his own end-zone and he does not choose to run the ball out. The defense then puts the ball into play at the center of the field on the twenty yard line. Note: Most rule sets do not use an actual kicker, as most kickers can kick much further than the length of the field, but rather base the touchback on the defenders reaching the goal line in an allotted amount of time, usually 4 seconds which approximates the hang time of a ball in the air.

TOUCHDOWN - A touchdown is scored when any part of a ball carrier’s base touches the opponent’s goal line, or when a pass is completed or a fumble is recovered by the offense in the opponent’s end-zone.

TRIPLE THREAT QB - The “passer” and “kicker” figure that was developed by Tudor in the late 1960’s and currently being manufactured by Miggle. The name is derived from the fact that the figure can be used to pass, kick , or run the ball during game play.

TUDOR / MIGGLE – Tudor is the original manufacturer of the game known as “Tru- Action Electric Football” and Miggle is the current manufacturer of “Electric Football” games.

TURN AND BURN – The act of pivoting a receiver to run downfield after a pass has been completed to that receiver followed by any unengaged defenders.

TWO-POINT CONVERSION - After a team scores a touchdown they may choose to go for a two-point conversion rather than a one point conversion. A two-point conversion is worth only 2 points and is run just like any other offensive play with the line of scrimmage being the 2 yard line.

UNCONTESTED / CONTESTED – Field goal attempts or extra point conversion attempts by kicking may be attempted “uncontested” or “contested”. “Uncontested” involves simply lining up the “kicker” 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage and attempting the kick. “Contested” involves lining up the offense and defense in kicking and blocking formations with the “kicker” and “holder” 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage and turning on the board for 1 or 2 seconds to allow the defense to block the kick. The kick is blocked if a player of the defensive team runs into the holder or kicker before the kick is made.

IV. Scoring

Touchdown	6
Field Goal	3
Safety	2
Conversion by Kick	1
Conversion by Run or Pass	2

V. Playing the Game

- A. **Game Length** – Games are usually divided into 4 quarters of game play with a half time intermission between the 2nd and 3rd quarters. Quarters are usually 15 minutes long. Actual game length varies with the method of game timing being used. It is suggested that game length be between 2 and 3 hours
1. **Game Timing** – Currently there are several methods of timing game play. With any rule set it is widely encouraged that a setup time be enforced to keep the games within a 3 hour time frame. (An example would be 1 minute for the offense to set followed by an additional 15 seconds for the defense to set) Penalties for delay of game are assessed if these time limits are not met. These will be discussed further in the “Plays from Scrimmage” section.
 - a) *Continuous clock* - This method involves the use of a running clock. Quarters and / or halves are set to a pre-determined length and the coach who is ahead in score at the end of this time is declared the winner.
 - b) *Play count* - This method involves counting the number of plays run to determine the length of quarters and / or halves. Some types of plays such as kickoffs, punts, field goals, and extra point attempts are not included in this play count.
 - c) *Time Outs* – Time outs are used for clock management to add extra time to game play or to gain extra plays. Each team is usually allowed 3 time outs per half. If a continuous clock is used, then a time out stops the clock for play set up and is restarted when the next play begins. If the play count method is being used, then calling a time out adds an extra play to the play count.
 - d) *Overtime* – if the score is tied at the end of regulation play, coaches may wish to extend the game by one or more overtime periods. Typically overtime periods are played as Sudden Death in which the first team to score in overtime is declared the winner. Leagues and tournaments use a wide variety of methods to break a tie game. Some use the pro rules for overtimes and some use a method similar to the college rules for overtimes. One variation used by various coaches is to declare a winner by using a method that goes by yardage gained in the event that no one scores to end the game.
 2. **Coin Toss** – A coin toss is performed before each game (or to begin an overtime period) to give the winner of the coin toss the option to receive the opening kickoff, kickoff, which end zone to defend, or to defer to the second half. The coin toss is usually called by the visiting coach so it should be determined before the game which team will be the visitors and which team will be the home team.
 3. **Half Time Options** – The loser of the beginning coin toss has their choice of the options described above to begin the second half unless the winner of the beginning coin toss chose to defer to the second half.

Before beginning the game, both coaches should agree on what type of game timing they will use, to complete the game.

- B. **Free Kicks** – A free kick is a kickoff or safety kick that puts the ball in play to start a free kick down. It may be made from any point on the kicking (offensive) team’s restraining line and between the inbounds lines.

Important note regarding free kicks. Currently, very few rule sets allow for using the Triple Threat Quarterback or any type of kicker to perform the kick off. For the most part kickoffs are just returned from the goal line or a coach may choose to just take an automatic touchback and start his series of downs from the 20 yard line.

Other methods of performing kickoffs have been developed to add more realism to kick offs and returns.

Some simply involve the use of a spinner or rolling dice and consulting a chart which provide distances for the kick and results such as a kick out of bounds or a touchback. A special deck of cards has been developed to provide a placement on the field which allows for placing kicks to different areas of the field in addition to random distances.

Most coaches have adopted the 3 or 4 second (simulates hang time of the imagined kicked ball) board runoff to allow for kick coverage and to force an automatic touchback. This means that if a player of the kicking team runs into or passes the marker where the kick would be returned from, within that time, then a return is not allowed.

Other rules provide the opportunity for kicking and receiving team players to be angled and/or adjusted to cover the kick or block for the kick return before the ball carrier attempts to perform the return.

Both coaches should agree on which rules to use for kickoffs and kickoff returns before beginning the game. We have included the following rules as examples of the original style of game play using the Triple Threat QB actually kicking the ball.

The following rule for performing the kickoff is the rule as it was written and published in 1968/69 by Tudor in their official rules.

1. Kickoffs - A kickoff puts the ball in play at the start of each half, after an extra point attempt or 2 point conversion attempt, and after a successful field goal.
 - a) *Formations – The Kicking team lines up in a kick coverage formation with one player designated as the kicker lined up anywhere on the kicking team's restraining line. All other players of the kicking team are lined up anywhere on or behind the restraining line with at least 4 players on either side of the kicker. The receiving team lines up in any kick return formation with all players on or behind their restraining line.*
 - b) *Restraining Lines – Restraining line for the kicking team is their own 30 yard line and the restraining line for the receiving team is 10 yards in advance of the kicking team's restraining line or the 40 yard line.*

NOTE: Some rules have the restraining lines set 20 yards apart with the kicking team's restraining line set at the 30 yard line and the receiving team's restraining line set at the 50 yard line. There are also rules that begin a kickoff by placing the kicking and receiving teams further downfield as though the kick has already been performed having the kicking team set up at the 50 yard line and the receiving team set up at their own 30 yard line.

- c) *Performing the Kickoff – Depending on the direction of the kicker, the ball may be kicked to any part of the field. The figure nearest the spot where the ball hits on the fly becomes the ball carrier. This figure should be given the ball, placed where the ball hit, and then pointed in any desired direction. The switch is turned on and the ball carrier runs until he is tackled, goes out of bounds, reverses direction, fumbles or scores. If the ball is kicked out of bounds, the receiving player may make his opponent kick off again from 5 yards farther back or he may accept the kick. If he accepts the kick the ball is then put into play, first and ten, at the inbounds marker on the yard line at which the ball went out of bounds.*

The following is the rule as it was written and published in 1997 by Miggle in their electric football official rules.

The ball is placed on the kicker's tee and kicked toward the opponent's goal line. If the ball lands on the board and is not a touchback, the ball is placed on the return man and his position on the field is marked with the ball marker. If the ball is kicked out of the back of the opponent's end zone, the return man may either call a touchback or return the kick at the goal line. After the return man's place is marked, the board's ON/OFF switch is turned on for 3 seconds. Now the kicking team may rotate the players from their current positions so the players whose bases are not

touched by an opponent's base are pointed toward the return man. Finally the receiving team places the return man back onto the field and the board's ON/OFF switch is turned ON until the return man is tackled, runs out of bounds, fumbles, turns around or scores a touchdown.

2. **Onside Kick** – Any free kick that is obviously kicked short and does not travel more than 20 yards is defined as an onside kick.
 - a) **Formations** – Kickoff formation rules also apply to onside kicks
 - b) **Restraining Lines** – Restraining lines are the same as for kickoffs.
 - c) **Performing the Onside Kick** – The onside kick may be performed by using the “kicker” or by simply placing the ball on the 40 yard line between the kicking and receiving teams. The ON/OFF switch is then turned on and the first player to touch the ball gains possession of the ball.

The original Tudor/Miggle rules do not provide for onside kicks. Various methods have been developed for performing onside kicks by coaches, leagues and tournaments. Most rule sets only allow onside kicks if a team is behind by a certain amount of points or only in the fourth quarter. The NFL allows onside kicks at any time and on any free kick, including safety kicks.

Before beginning the game coaches should agree on rules for onside kicks.

3. **Safety Kick** – A safety kick is a free kick that puts the ball back into play after a safety has been scored. The team that was scored upon performs the safety kick.
 - a) **Formations** – Kickoff formation rules also apply to safety kicks
 - b) **Restraining Lines** – The kicking team's restraining line is their 20 yard line and the receiving team's restraining line is the 30 yard line.
 - c) **Performing the Safety Kick** – Safety kicks are performed and returned in the same manner as kickoffs.

Before beginning the game coaches should agree on rules for safety kicks.

C. Plays from Scrimmage – After the completion of a free kick down and the ball has been declared dead in the field of play, a line of scrimmage is established and the team that has gained possession of the ball as a result of the previous play is awarded a new series of downs in which to advance the ball downfield and gain a first down and may continue to attempt to advance the ball downfield until that team either scores, fails to gain the necessary 10 yards to receive a new series of downs or, as the result of the previous play, loses possession of the ball. To determine the scrimmage line, the position of the ball should be considered the forward point of the base of the ball carrier on the previous play.

****Note**** in most rules of electric football the ball is spotted on the line of scrimmage in the center of the field due to the size of most game boards. Some rules allow to have the ball spotted on the nearest hash mark as in the actual rules of football. There is an advantage to this in that it allows for more formation and play options to take advantage of certain player's base characteristics.

The 1968/69 Tudor Official rules describe how to run a play from scrimmage as follows:

“On plays from scrimmage, the offensive and defensive lines must be at least half a base apart, equal distance from the line of scrimmage, If any player is forward of this point at the time the switch is turned on, the player's team is charged with offside.

In setting up your teams for a play from scrimmage the following sequence should be used:

1. The offense is set up using a seven man line and any back-field formation; such as “T”, single wing, double wing, etc.
2. The defensive team is set up in any desired formation.
3. The offensive linemen are given their blocking angles.
4. The defensive team players are turned to the desired direction for “slant-left”, “slant-right”, etc.
5. The ball is placed under the selected ball carrier’s arm, or on the quarterbacks hand or tee. Then, the offensive backs may be pointed in any direction.
6. The switch is turned on and the play develops.

In the 2005 Miggle rules after a ball carrier has been selected the defense is allowed to rotate two players to react to this choice of ball carrier. The switch is turned on and continues until stopped for a pass or the play ends.

The following is a suggested sequence to more closely reflect the rules of football.

1. Formations – Teams are set up in offensive and defensive formations as follows:
 - a) *Offensive – The offense must have 7 players on the line of scrimmage. All players not on the line of scrimmage must be at least one yard behind the line of scrimmage. The offense begins by lining up the center at the spot of the ball (either the center of the field or the right or left hash mark). The remaining offensive linemen are lined up on either side of the center with at least one guard and one tackle on either side of the center. These are the interior lineman. The ends or receivers on the line are lined up on either side of the interior lineman. The remaining players are lined up with at least one player directly behind the center to receive the snap and all others either in the back field or as receivers and must be at least one yard behind the line of scrimmage.*
 - b) *Defensive – The defense is lined up in any formation to defend against the offense.*
 - c) *Neutral zone – In real football, the neutral zone is defined as the space between the forward and backward points of the ball or ball length. To establish the neutral zone, the offensive and defensive interior lineman must be at least a ball length apart. This is done by placing the center directly on the line of scrimmage and the guards and tackles one yard behind the line of scrimmage. It is a neutral zone infraction if a player of the interior line (offense or defense) is lined up within this zone. Offside occurs when a player of either team is lined up across the line of scrimmage. In miniature football it is widely accepted that no part of the man or base may extend over the neutral zone which is often set to the length of the felt or foam footballs used in the game.*

There are many variations in regards to offensive and defensive formations and set ups. Many coaches and leagues only allow certain formations to be used by restricting the number of players that can be in the offensive back field, setting boundaries for the offensive and defensive backfields and requiring offensive lineman to be a set length apart. In many rules there are also requirements for how close a player behind another player may stand. This distance is usually set to one base length. Anything closer than this is called “stacking (see the definition section for; Stacking) and is not allowed in many rule sets in order to give the appearance of true to life formations. Offenses and defenses are required to complete their set ups within a certain amount of time to speed up the games.

One interesting rule that has been developed is the use of a strategy divider that is used to divide the offense and defense during set up and is tall enough to hide the coaches players from each other while setting up their plays and formations.

2. Running Plays - Running, also referred to as rushing, is usually called after the offense sets up its formation, then the defense sets up its formation.

a) *Running occurs out of the offensive backfield in which the play originates in an imaginary box or rectangle between the tackles and from directly behind the offensive line to a designated number of yards back, usually 15. The coaches should agree on how far this box should stretch into the backfield before the start of the game.*

b) *The number of players in the backfield could be 1 to 4 depending on the offensive formation. There should always be a player designated as the quarterback. The quarterback can lineup directly behind the center or several yards back in a "shot gun" formation still directly behind the center. The other players in the back field are your running backs, i.e. halfback, fullback, wingback, H-back, etc.*

c) *After both offense and defense have set up their formations, the offensive coach can then pivot (angle) the quarterback and running backs in any direction towards, or parallel to the line of scrimmage. Normally, the defense can pivot the same number of players any direction it so chooses.*

****Note**** It must be agreed upon before the game begins if the defense can pivot players and if so how many.

d) *After both sides have completed their pivots the offense clearly selects which player will run the ball. The defense should make sure they are clear on who has the ball.*

e) *At this point the offense can place the ball under the player's arm or just select the player and let him run without it.*

Again, this should be agreed on before the start of the game.

f) *The defense coach will operate the off/on switch on run plays to allow the players to engage. The switch should run until a tackle is made or the ball carrier turns in a direction away from the line of scrimmage. Many rules allow for a stoppage or stoppages (see definitions for: Stoppage), which allows the offense and defense to perform pivots (see definitions for: Pivots and Advanced Pivots) to better simulate the actual workings of a real play.*

g) *The ball is then down and the new line of scrimmage is set at the most forward part of the ball carrier's base closest to or past the line of scrimmage.*

3. **Passing - A forward pass is the forward movement of the ball to an eligible receiver. Players eligible to receive a pass are tight ends, wide receivers, running backs or quarterbacks who are either lateral with or downfield from the quarterback at the time the pass is to be thrown.**
- a) ***In order to be eligible the player must not be engaged with a defensive player, must not have fallen down and must not have run out of bounds (even if they are in bounds at the time of the pass).***
 - b) ***After both coaches have completed their formations, declare they are set and have performed any/all pivots the offensive coach shall declare pass. The offensive coach will now turn on the board to allow the play to develop.***
 - c) ***The offensive coach then turns off the board to attempt the pass. If there is no eligible receiver when the board is turned off, the play is ruled as a pass incomplection.***
 - d) ***If there is an eligible receiver the offensive coach may now attempt the pass. For attempting the pass, the QB that started the play (if other than the "Passer") will be replaced with the "Passer" and will be placed in the space that the base of the QB occupied when the board was turned off. The pass is now thrown. After completion of the pass (or interception) the "Passer" will be replaced at the same spot with the original QB.***
 - e) ***A "Passer" pass is complete when the ball is thrown to an eligible receiver and hits the player or his base directly without hitting the playing field or another player first. A "Passer" pass is incomplete when it hits the playing field, an ineligible receiver or an engaged player prior to hitting an eligible receiver. A "Passer" pass is intercepted when it hits any unengaged defender prior to hitting the playing field or another player first.***
 - f) ***After a successful pass completion (see definitions for: Completed Pass), the defense may now pivot all unengaged players towards the receiver to make the tackle. In many rules, the offense cannot pivot the receiver who caught the pass. Other rules allow for the WR to be pivoted followed by any unengaged defender (see definitions for: Turn and Burn). The board is then turned on and play will continue until the receiver has either been tackled, runs out of bounds or scores a touchdown.***
 - g) ***In the event that the pass is intercepted, the defensive coach may pivot the player who intercepted the ball to run towards his opponent's goal line. The offensive coach who threw the interception may now pivot all unengaged players to attempt to make the tackle. The board is now turned back on for completion of the play.***
 - h) ***Sack - There are two ways by which a QB can be sacked prior to attempting a pass:***
 - (1) ***A sack occurs when any part of a defensive player's base touches any part of the quarterback's base, behind the line of scrimmage.***
 - (2) ***The quarterback may drop back not farther than 20 yards behind the line of scrimmage. If his base completely exceeds the 20 yard distance from the line of scrimmage, it is considered a coverage sack and the quarterback may not throw a pass. He is considered down at that point.***

**** Note**** There are several other methods of passing that have been developed by various coaches, leagues and tournaments that do not use the "Passer" for attempting and completing passes. These "pass simulation" methods involve the use of passing sticks and/or targets. Please refer to the MFCA website for links to league and tournament rule sets that use these methods. Coaches should agree on which method of passing they will use for passing before beginning the game.

4. **Pitch-Out** - To execute a pitch-out or lateral, the offense must pass the ball to a team mate behind the line of scrimmage and toward his own goal line. If the ball touches any offensive player, (on the fly or on the ground), the pitch-out is caught and the play is continued as in a forward pass. If the ball touches a defensive player first, it is considered a fumbled pitch-out which the defense may pick up and run as in an interception. Some rules allow a pitch to be "automatic" without having to actually throw the ball provided that there is a clear path between the quarterback and running back and that they are no more than two base lengths (or some other agreed upon distance) apart.

5. **Punt** – Defined as a kick to the opponent on a fourth down when scoring or achieving a first down is unlikely. Numerous variations in punting rules exist among the various leagues and tournaments throughout the country. These variations include: using dice, a special deck of cards, or even a pre-determined set number of yards to determine distance, spot on field and hang time. Details on these various approaches to punting can be found in the Rules World forum at www.miniaturefootball.com/forum

The following is an example of the punt rule as explained in the original Tudor rules set and uses the Triple Threat QB

a) *Failure to score or advance the ball 10 yards in four downs results in a change of possession. When scoring or achieving a first down seems doubtful on a fourth down, the offense often elects to punt or kick the ball to the opposing team so that the opponent does not start its possession with good field position.*

b) *It is usually wise to punt on fourth down, unless you are close to your opponent's goal line or in field goal range.*

c) *To punt set up your team with the "Kicker" 12-15 yards behind the center. The kicking team usually lines up similar to an offensive play with a man split out on each end and backs behind the line of scrimmage. The return team (defense) should place at least one player 50 yards behind the line of scrimmage to receive the punt.*

d) *When both teams are set, switch on the power for one second. This allows the return team a chance to block the kick by tackling the punter. Then power is switched off. If the "Kicker" is not tackled, place the ball on the kicking tee and kick it.*

e) *If the kick travels directly out of bounds then the play is dead and the ball is marked at the spot where it left the field. If the ball hits in the field of play then it is returnable.*

f) *The figure nearest the spot where the ball hits on the fly becomes the ball carrier and should be placed where the ball hit. The kicking team is then allowed to angle all unengaged men towards the ball carrier and finally the return man is angled in any desired direction. The switch is turned on and the ball carrier runs until he is tackled, goes out of bounds, reverses direction, fumbles or scores.*

g) *In the event the defense does not have a man at least thirty yards behind the line of scrimmage, a run-back of the punt is prohibited. The defense must then put the ball into play (first and ten) at the point at which the kick hit the field.*

6. **Field Goals** - Field Goals are worth 3 points and count as a play. Field goals must be kicked with the "Kicker" and all attempts will be made with the board running. There are no fake field goals.

a) *FG DISTANCE* - Field goals may be attempted on any down once the offensive team is within field goal range. The maximum field goal attempt that can be attempted is 63 yards. The kicker must be lined up directly behind the center but may be angled. The

front of the kicker's base must be exactly 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage. This means that the line of scrimmage must be at the opponent's 46 yard line or closer to attempt a field goal. Once a field goal attempt has been tried it ends that possession for the offensive team.

b) FG SET-UP - The offense must have no more than 7 players on the line of scrimmage and must have one player somewhere in the backfield clearly between the hash marks and clearly even with or slightly in front of the kicker. This player is to simulate a holder. The holder must be on some type of legal base which is non moving. This is most often achieved by removing the prongs from a poor running extra base. The defense cannot stack players on field goal attempts and no player may be in the shade (see definitions for: In The Shade) of another of its team mates.

c) FG ATTEMPT - Once both teams are set the defensive coach will control the switch and count-down saying "ready, set, go." On "go" the board will be turned on. Any time after the board begins to vibrate the offensive coach may attempt the kick. When the standard field goal is used, the kick must clearly travel between the uprights and over the cross bar for the attempt to be successful. If the field goal board is used, as described previously, the ball must clearly hit the board and above the marked crossbar.

d) BLOCKED FG - If a defensive player's base makes contact with the kicker's base or a defensive player blocks the ball before the kick is clear it is a blocked kick. If a defensive player makes contact with the HOLDER, it is a blocked kick. If a defensive player (any part) touches any part the offensive coach's finger(s), hand(s), wrist(s), or arm(s) that is holding the TTQB before the kick is away, it is a blocked kick. Additionally, any offensive player EXCEPT the HOLDER, that makes contact with the kicker and/or the coach's finger(s), hand(s), wrist(s), or arm(s), it is a blocked kick. All blocked kicks result in the defensive team recovering the ball 15 yards behind the LOS.

e) MISSED FG - All missed kicks result in the defensive team obtaining possession of the ball automatically at the spot of the kick (7 yards behind LOS) unless that spot is less than 20 yards away from the defending team's end zone. In those cases the defending team will start their possession at their own 20 yard line.

**** Note** Some rules allow field goals to be attempted "uncontested" which means the kicker is merely set up 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage and kicked without the board running. Also sometimes field goals are only allowed if the offense is within a certain number of predefined yards of the goal line. Both coaches should agree on how to perform field goals before beginning the game.**

7. Conversion – An extra point try is attempted after a touchdown has been scored. It may be attempted by a kick from scrimmage or by a running or passing play from scrimmage. The line of scrimmage for an extra point try is the defense's 2 yard line.

a) *To attempt an extra point try by kicking follow the same procedures as outlined for a field goal.*

(1) A successful extra point attempt by kicking results in 1 point being scored

b) *To attempt an extra point by running or passing follow the procedures as outlined for running and passing plays.*

(1) A successful extra point attempt by running or passing results in 2 points being scored.

D. PENALTIES - Below is a list of penalties and their corresponding yardages. Some penalties by nature include a "Free Play Option" (FPO), indicating that play can continue and the decision to accept or decline the penalty can occur once the play has been completed. A penalty may be cited before the snap. If play option is elected, play is completed as outlined above. Once play is concluded the offended team then has the option of taking the result of the play OR accepting the penalty. If the play option is selected, this will count as a play from scrimmage. If the penalty is accepted prior to the play being started, it will not count as a play.

Offensive Offside (lined up with some portion of the man and or base over the neutral zone)

5 yards / Repeat Down

Defensive Offside (FPO) (lined up with some portion of the man and or base over the neutral zone) – 5 yards / Repeat Down (unless resulting in a first down)

Too many men on the field (FPO) – 5 yards / Repeat Down (unless resulting in a first down)

Illegal Formation (players placed in illegal positions prior to the snap and after both coaches have called set)

5 yards / Repeat Down

Delay of game (not being set in the required setup times) – 5 yards / Repeat Down (unless resulting in a first down)

We hope that these rules have helped you to understand the basics of playing the game of miniature football. Rule sets have evolved greatly over the past 60 years with many individuals putting a great deal of effort into making the game more fun and realistic. Today the game is played coast to coast in many league and tournament formats by a great number of creative and innovative people who enjoy the fun and fellowship that this hobby provides.

For more information please visit www.miniaturefootball.org and visit our Rules World, Tips and FAQ sections of our website. It is also highly recommended that you contact a league in your area and visit with their coaches for many hands on tips and pointers.