

## Posted on the BC Community Football Website

Just thought I'd clear up a few things about 9-man football. I led the VMFL working group on it, and did a fair amount of research in the off-season.

9-a-side (aka 9-Man) is a recognized format of tackle football in both Canada and the USA. There's a one-page section in the Canadian Rule Book for Tackle Football (CRBTF) on it, and when you read it you see there's very few differences between 9- and 12-man football. As has already been stated, it's still blocking, tackling, passing, catching, defending...good ol' football. It's not meant to be a "lower" grade or tier of football. Rather, it's a great way to have a competitive, fun level of football for teams that have rosters too small or large for 12-man football. If you're struggling with a roster in the high teens, your 12-man season could be painful, but that's a great level for 9-man ball. Likewise with a roster of 40 kids, juggling playing time in 12-man will make you tear your hair out, but that's two 9-man teams there with plenty of on-field time for the kids.

### The Field

The CRBTF says that the regulation field is 50 yards wide by 100 yards long (between the goal lines), with endzones being 15-yards deep. Note that this is very similar to an "American" lined field, but with deeper endzones. To make things easier for field logistics where 12-man ball is also being played, you can use the 12-man field (110y long, 20y endzones) but just bring in one sideline by 15 yards (from 65 to 50).

### The Players

The key difference is that you only have 5 players on the LOS, with the two end players being eligible receivers. You can think of it as taking away the offensive tackles. What a lot of teams do is keep 5 OL-type bodies on the LOS (in essence "losing" the split ends, and replacing the tackles with tight ends). But, as long as you keep within that rule of 5 players on the LOS, you have all the variety that you've come to love with 12-man football. You can line up with two split ends, empty backfield, and trips to one side - sling it! Or load up your backfield and run the ball down someone's throat. Whatever suits your kids' abilities and your preferences as a coach.

Other than that, there really isn't anything different. You do have to think a bit about how/if you can adapt your 12-man systems to this format, but who doesn't love scribbling ideas on the back of scrap paper at the dinner table (while your wife glares at you...)?!? Enjoy!

If you have any other questions, feel free to reply to this thread or email me directly at [rleslie@hyackfootball.com](mailto:rleslie@hyackfootball.com). I'm on the BCCFA 9-Man Championship Committee, so I'm fairly plugged in to what's actually going on.

[CoachLeslie](#)

**Posts:** 25

**Joined:** Fri Aug 08, 2008 2:09 am

*Excerpt from the 2008 2009 Canadian Rule Book for Tackle Football*

All standard rules of tackle are upheld with these exceptions;

- Any place in the rules where it says '12 man' replace with '9 man'
- Any place in the rules where it says 20 yards replace with 15 yards
- Placement of ball on all occasions subtract 5 yards

Playing Field;

- 100 yards long and 50 yards wide
- End zones are 15 yards deep
- 20 yard and 40 yard lines are doubled and zoned (kick offs, red zone, etc.)
- Hash marks 15 yards in from each side; such boundary will be the Dead Line

Playing Time;

- Length of game shall be 48 minutes of actual playing time divided into 4 periods of 12 minutes each. There will be a 15 minute rest period @ the half time

There must be 5 on the line of scrimmage at every ball snap – the three inside line men are ineligible receivers