



WBYP “Protect the Paw” Playing Time Guidelines



“Protect the Paw!”

As a committed coach, player, family, or community member of White Bear Youth Football, we all represent the “paw” with pride, class, and respect. Whether online, at practice, during games, or in the community, you represent something bigger than yourself when wearing White Bear colors. We have a responsibility and a unique opportunity to show our athletes what it looks like, feels like, and sounds like to represent our community with pride, respect, and humility in everything we do.

The WBYP Way

Protecting the Paw means:

- Competing with effort, toughness, and sportsmanship.
- Respecting teammates, coaches, opponents, and officials.
- Demonstrating accountability, discipline, and a team-first mindset.
- Representing White Bear Lake with pride, both ON and OFF THE FIELD.

Playing Time Guidelines → 4th, 5th, & 6th Grade WBYP Teams

All Head Coaches are expected to ***game plan in a way that gives every player the opportunity to participate in at least 50% of the game***. This standard reflects our Protect the Paw philosophy — prioritizing development, fairness, and a team-first culture. At the same time, coaches must recognize that game flow, injuries, special-teams situations, and unpredictable circumstances can impact planned rotations. While the expectation is to plan for 50% participation, we understand that execution may not always match the plan perfectly. Playing time may be adjusted when a player is not meeting the standards outlined in the Protect the Paw Playing Time Philosophy (effort, attitude, preparation, and team values). Any adjustments should be communicated clearly, handled consistently, and always tied back to development and team culture.

Playing Time Guidelines → 7th & 8th Grade

All Head Coaches are expected to game plan in a way that ensures every player participates in at least ***25% or more of either offensive or defensive snaps***. At a minimum, all of WBYP is striving to provide each player at least half of the snaps on one side of the ball during a game. Coaches will also strive to recognize that game flow, injuries, special situations, and other unpredictable factors can impact planned snap counts. While the expectation is to plan for each player to reach the 50% threshold on one side of the ball, understand that actual snap totals may not always align perfectly with the pre-game plan.

“Protect the Paw” Playing Time Philosophy

White Bear Youth Football is committed to providing a safe, competitive, and development-focused experience for all players. Playing time is an important part of development, but it is also earned and maintained through behaviors that align with “Protect the Paw.”

There may be times when playing time is limited or adjusted for the following reasons:

1. Safety of Self

- **Playing time may be limited if a player** is not demonstrating the conditioning, effort, or technique necessary to safely participate in full-contact football. This also includes situations where a player appears injured or ill on game day.

2. Safety of Others

- **Protecting the paw includes protecting each other.**
 - Players must demonstrate awareness, effort, and willingness to safely execute their role.
 - **Playing time may be limited if a player:**
 - Repeatedly violates safety-related rules.
 - Does not understand assignments well enough to perform safely.
 - Does not engage in a way that protects teammates (for example, failing to block or execute responsibilities that expose others to unnecessary contact).

3. Attendance & Commitment

- **Being present and prepared is part of honoring your team.**
 - Consistent attendance and engagement are critical to both individual and team development.
 - **Playing time may be limited if a player:**
 - Frequently misses practice.
 - Is consistently late.
 - Regularly sits out of practice without valid reason.

4. Attitude & Insubordination

- **How you act matters just as much as how you play.**
 - Respect is a core expectation of “Protect the Paw.”
 - **Playing time may be limited if a player demonstrates:**
 - Disrespect toward coaches, teammates, opponents, or officials.
 - Failure to follow coaching directions.
 - Persistent inattentiveness or lack of effort.
 - Bullying, harassment, or negative behavior toward others.

5. Parent Conduct & Playing Time Impact

- White Bear Youth Football expects all parents and guardians to uphold the same “Protect the Paw” standards of respect, sportsmanship, and positive representation as our players and coaches. If a parent or guardian has multiple violations of the Code of Conduct, it may impact their player’s participation in team activities, including playing time.
 - In these situations:
 - The Head Coach and/or WBYF Leadership will communicate concerns directly with the parent.
 - Expectations for behavior moving forward will be clearly outlined.

- Continued violations may result in reduced playing time or other participation restrictions for the player including removal from the team.
- These decisions are not made lightly. Our priority is to maintain a safe, respectful, and positive environment for all players, coaches, officials, and families.

WBYF Coach/Association Communication on Development

If a player is at risk of reduced playing time, coaches will:

- Communicate directly with the player about needed improvements.
- Provide clear, actionable steps for correction.
- Support the player in getting back on track.

If playing time is limited, the **Head Coach and Coaching Coordinator/Director** will communicate with parents, including:

- The reason for the decision.
- Expectations moving forward.
- A path for the player to regain full participation.

Final Thoughts

Do not assume. If you have concerns about your child's playing time, please do not stay on the sidelines feeling frustrated or discouraged without saying anything. Coaches may not always see everything, and open communication is important. We want to hear from you so we can work together to support your player's development.

If a concern arises, please follow a simple process. First, contact the coach to schedule a conversation after a 48-hour period. This allows time for perspective and ensures a more productive discussion. Next, the coach and parent should meet and discuss the concern respectfully. If additional support is needed, the Coaching Director or a Board Representative can be involved.

Coaches will respond within 24 to 48 hours. Game days are considered communication-free unless there is something urgent, and more complex topics are best discussed in person or by phone rather than through text or email.

When meeting, all parties are expected to assume positive intent, keep the focus on the player's development, and communicate with respect. It is important to listen actively, seek solutions rather than assign blame, and keep conversations private, as gossip can be harmful to the team and overall team culture.