**7th and 8th grade football ---**

1. **Terminology –** We will have a numbering scheme for the offensive line and the running game, and a four man front for the defense that will be consistent for all our 7th and 8th grade teams. Our running plays will use the numbering system given. We do not run to gaps on the offense, we run to the hips of particular lineman. Defense belongs to gaps, offense belongs to people.
2. **Passing Tree ---** We have numbered routes and a passing tree that they should be starting to learn at this point…The easiest way to call your routes is just describe the route numbers and they can run them. Also, quarterbacks can run 3 step, roll-out and 5 step routes now, so the playbooks will sound a little more like Maple Grove football
3. **Defensively start to emphasize eyes and their keys ----** Defensive line has keys, defensive backs have keys, linebackers have keys…The only player at the snap that is watching the quarterback are the cornerbacks, everybody else’s eyes should be on their guy. Defense is about reacting to what the offense presents us. If we don’t see what they present us, it is tough to be great defensively.
4. **Emphasize “playing fast” on defense ---** Defense is fun, fearless and fast…Great defenses overwhelm offenses with the speed at what they play…Do pursuit drills in practice for about five minutes and get them used to running to the football…They won’t do it, but in time they will when they realize how fun it is.
5. **8th grade coaches should have a simple eval of each player given to the high school program and they are the key to the transition into the high school ---** As 8th grade coaches you have to know the way of the high school, and get those kids excited as they leave this season. They have to be aware of the off-season lifting programs, the summer, and other expectations that being a Crimson means to them.
6. **Make going to the high school game important to them;**  This should go without saying, but get them dreaming and wanting to go the high school games. Obviously, this goes for all levels, but those 7th and 8th graders have to know it’s pretty close to their time, and they should feel excited when not only their game is coming up, but when the varsity one is going on as well.
7. **Every staff should have an offensive line coach** – Take time with these kids…Teach them to the best of your ability, but they need to feel worth when the season is over…I truly believe you win state titles with great defenses and offensive lines. Those linemen have to be addicted to the sport. They won’t be at this point, but the important things is keeping them out and in time they will be.
8. **Offensiv e lineman have to understand what it means to getting to the hip of the offensive lineman next to you ---** Many time offensive lineman want to block guys, when really they are limiting space…Those first three steps are the key to their world, but they want to close off the space between them and their buddy next to them…Also, there is a footwork to being an offensive lineman that needs to start now….It won’t be easy, but they are ready to learn….They have to learn a “Stab” step, “Drop” Step, “Kick” Step, and “Drive” steps.
9. **Aiming points of the running game will be introduced --**  Running backs also have keys at their position, and things that dictate where they are heading…We will learn to run the ball because that is the key as they get older. Like I said, the numbering of the lineman is key for us.
10. **Celebrate scoring on defense and 3 and outs --** The key to defense is getting off the field…If a kid drops and interception they should do 10 push-ups. They have to know it’s not okay to miss those opportunities. Also, we want to score on defense, so we are aggressive to the ball…Our job is not to stop them, it’s to get points for our offense and to put them in the ultimate position to succeed. Also, if the team has a 3rd down against us. It’s our time! We will stop them and force a punt within 3 plays. Get their attitude aimed at being dominant defensively. Not giving up points is not enough.