

OBJECT OF THE GAME

NFL football is a game of possession and scoring between two teams of 47- 49 players each. Eleven players are on the field from each team at any one time.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

- The Offensive team tries to score by moving the ball down the field (Drive).
- The Defensive Team's job is to stop the Offense by:
 - Taking the ball away by recovering a loose ball (fumble) leads to a turnover.
 - Catching a pass thrown by the Quarterback (interception) leads to a turnover.
 - Forcing the Offense to kick the ball away (Punt) or fail to reach the line to gain on 4th down.

COIN TOSS

- A coin toss determines which team will kick the ball to the other team to start the game (Kickoff). The visiting team makes the call of heads or tails as the Referee tosses the coin into the air.
 - If the call is correct, the visiting team's captain may choose to kick or receive the ball, or defend one goal or the other.
 - If the call is incorrect, the captain of the home team gets to choose.
- Another kickoff begins the second half.

THE HUDDLE

- The Quarterback is the leader of the Offensive Team. He has the time shown on the play clock to begin each play.
- After receiving the play from the coach, he steps into the circle of his players (Huddle) and tells them:
 - How they will line up (Formation).
 - What offensive play they will run (Play Call).
 - When the play will begin (Snap Count).
 - To go set up on the line of scrimmage (Break the Huddle).
- At the line of scrimmage, the Quarterback will:
 - Give the players time to get in position (Get Set).
 - Look at the Defense and change the play (Call an Audible), if necessary.
 - Call out a series of words and numbers (Cadence).
 - Take the ball (Snap) from the Center to begin every play.

DOWNS

- The offense has 4 chances (Downs) to move the ball (a Series) 10 yards toward the opponent's goal line.
- If after 4 downs the offense does not gain 10 yards, the opponent is given possession of the ball.
- Each down is numbered: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th.
- For each new down the ball is placed (Spot) on the yard line where the last play ended. After a pass that is not caught (Incompletion) the ball is returned to the previous spot. (For Chain Gang information see Penalties Panel.)
- The Offense can gain the necessary 10 yards by running or passing the ball or by a penalty being assessed on the Defense.
- Between each down any of the 11 players on either team may be replaced (Substitution).
- If during the 4 downs the offense gains the 10 yards, the process begins again with a new 1st down.
- The Offense may elect to kick (Punt) the ball to the other team on any down, but usually on 4th, or they may try to score by attempting to kick a field goal.
- Following a punt or missed field goal, the opposing team will take possession of the ball, and their offensive unit will begin with a set of 4 downs and will need to gain 10 yards to keep the ball.



OFFENSE

- The Offense is the squad of 11 players that has possession of the ball.
- It is the responsibility of the Offense to move down the field by running or passing the ball. They have the advantage of knowing when the play begins.
- The goal is to keep the ball and score.
- The Offense is divided into three groups: **OFFENSIVE LINEMEN**, **OFFENSIVE RECEIVERS**, and the **OFFENSIVE BACKFIELD**

RECEIVERS (WIDE RECEIVERS AND TIGHT ENDS)

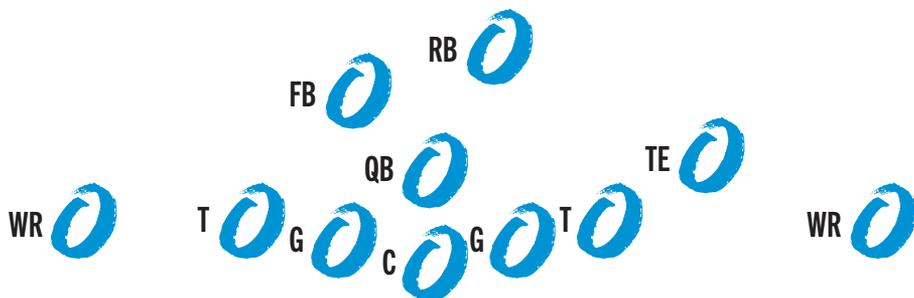
- **WIDE RECEIVER'S JOB:** Catch passes on passing plays and block on running plays.
 - **ATTRIBUTES:** Wide Receivers must have great speed, hand-eye coordination, quickness and agility.
- **TIGHT END'S JOB:** Catch passes and block.
 - **ATTRIBUTES:** The larger Tight Ends need size, athleticism, catching ability, balance.

BACKFIELD (QUARTERBACK, FULLBACK, AND RUNNING BACK)

- **FULLBACK'S JOB:** Block for Running Back or Quarterback and occasionally be a delayed receiver for the Quarterback (Safety Valve).
 - **ATTRIBUTES:** Fullback must be big, strong, and run with power.
- **QUARTERBACK'S JOB:** Pass the ball on passing plays and give the ball to the Running Back on running plays (Hand Off).
 - **ATTRIBUTES:** Quarterback must be smart, tough, and an accurate passer.
- **RUNNING BACK'S JOB:** Carry the ball and occasionally serve as a receiver coming out of the backfield.
 - **ATTRIBUTES:** Running Back (Halfback) must have speed, vision, quickness, and an ability to change direction quickly (Cut).

OFFENSIVE LINE (CENTER, GUARDS, AND TACKLES)

- **LINEMAN'S JOB:** Block defenders on running and passing plays.
 - **ATTRIBUTES:** Must have great strength, balance, and quickness in a short area.



OFFENSIVE FORMATIONS

- How offensive players line up prior to each play is called the Formation. In every formation the offense must have at least seven players lined up on an imaginary line extending from the ball to both sidelines (Line of Scrimmage – LOS).
- Formations change with the positions of the running backs (Alignments and the personnel in the game). How players line up can give you clues to whether the team is going to run or pass the ball.

DEFENSE

- The Defense is the squad of 11 players that does not have possession of the ball. They are divided into 3 groups: **DEFENSIVE LINEMEN**, **LINEBACKERS**, **DEFENSIVE BACKS (SECONDARY)**.
- The responsibility of the Defense is to stop the Offense from advancing the ball. They react to the movement of the offense once the play begins.
- The goal is to stop the opposing Offense, get the ball for their offense, and if possible, score.

DEFENSIVE LINE (ENDS, TACKLES, AND NOSE TACKLE)

- **DEFENSIVE LINEMAN'S JOB:** Defeat blockers, get the man with the ball.
 - **ATTRIBUTES:** Must have great strength, quickness, and speed in a short area.

LINEBACKERS (MIDDLE, INSIDE, AND OUTSIDE)

- **LINEBACKER'S JOB:** Recognize the run or pass, get the man with the ball.
 - **ATTRIBUTES:** Must be smart, strong, have great quickness and good speed, and be excellent tacklers.

DEFENSIVE BACKS (CORNERBACKS AND SAFETIES)

- **DEFENSIVE BACK'S JOB:** Stop pass completions, prevent long runs.
 - **ATTRIBUTES:** Must have extreme speed, be sure tacklers, have the ability to catch the ball (Interception).



! The actual number of players from each group on the field at any time will vary with the Defense that has been called for the next play.

COACHING INSIGHT: PREVENT DEFENSE

- At the end of each half, the Defensive Backs and Linebackers may line up farther from the Line of Scrimmage before the play begins allowing the Offense a small gain, but “preventing” the Offense from making a really big gain or scoring.



SPECIAL TEAMS

- When the ball is being kicked, the 11 players on the field for each team will include offensive and defensive players (Special Teams), plus either a Punter or Kicker (Specialists). On Kick plays, teams try to score or change field position.
- The players on the kicking team other than the kicking specialists are called Coverage Players and Gunners.
- The players that aren't on the kicking team are called Returners and Blockers.
- There are three types of kicks: **KICKOFFS**, **PLACEKICKS**, and **PUNTS**.

KICKOFFS

- The Placekicker kicks the ball off a 1" rubber base (Tee) that is placed on the field on his own 35-yard line to the opposing team (Receiving Team).
- An onside kick must be declared beforehand by the kicking team if trailing and can be recovered by either team if touched first by the receiving team or reaches at least 10 yds past the spot of the kick but not 25 yds beyond where the ball was kicked.
- Once the ball touches the ground or a player in the landing zone (area from the receiving team's 20-yard line to its goal line) or end zone
- Blockers on the receiving team attempt to create openings for the Returner by blocking the Coverage Players (from the kicking team).
- The goal of the kicking team is to tackle the Returner as soon as possible. The goal of the receiving team is to advance the ball as far as possible.
- If the ball lands in the end zone and goes out of bounds in the end zone or the Returner kneels with the ball in the end zone, the receiving team starts with the ball at their own 20 yard line. If the ball lands in the landing zone and goes out of bounds in the end zone or the Returner kneels with the ball in the end zone, the receiving team starts with the ball at their own 35 yard line.
- If the ball goes out of bounds or lands short of the landing zone, the receiving team starts with the ball 25 yards from the spot of the kick (30 yards from the spot of a kick after a safety) or where the spot of the ball went out of bounds or landed short of the landing zone.

PLACEKICKS

FIELD GOALS AND POINT AFTER TOUCHDOWN KICKS (PAT)

- The Placekicker must be able to kick the ball accurately from a hold on the ground through the uprights of the opponent's goal post to score points.
- The Holder, usually a Punter:
 - *Kneels down 8 yards behind the Snapper.*
 - *Catches the ball snapped by the Snapper.*
 - *Holds the ball on the ground and balances the ball on its point for the Kicker to kick.*
- The Defense attempts to block or deflect the kick to prevent it from going through the uprights.

PUNTS

- The Punter must catch the ball from the long snapper, step forward, and punt the ball down the field (high and far).
- Two men on either side of the ball, on the punting team, sprint downfield as soon as the ball is snapped (Gunners) in an attempt to prevent the punt returner from returning the kick.
- Blockers on the opposing team attempt to block the punt, then prevent the Coverage Players from going down field (Hold Them Up).
- The returning team's Offense starts their next drive at the location the Returner is tackled, or where the ball goes out of bounds. If the ball lands in the End Zone, the returning team's offense begins on their own 20-yard line (Touchback).

SCORING

- The team with the most points at the end of the game **WINS**. There are four ways for a team to score points.

6 POINTS = TOUCHDOWN

- A touchdown is scored when:
 - A player with the ball crosses the opponent's goal line
 - A Receiver catches a pass in the opponent's end zone
 - A player recovers a loose ball in the opponent's end zone

1-2 POINTS = POINT AFTER

- A point after may be scored after a team scores a touchdown. The scoring team is given one additional play to score with the ball placed on the opponent's 2-yard line (conversion).
- Two points are scored by running with the ball across the opponent's goal line or by catching a pass in the opponent's end zone
- One point is scored if the ball is kicked from a hold through the uprights and over the crossbar of the opponent's goal posts

3 POINTS = FIELD GOAL

- A Field Goal is scored when:
 - A team kicks the ball from a hold through the uprights and over the crossbar of the opponent's goal posts (Usually on 4th down), and from anywhere on the field, usually inside the 50-yard line

2 POINTS = SAFETY

- A safety is scored when:
 - A player with the ball is tackled in his own End Zone
 - An offensive player commits a penalty in his own End Zone
 - A blocked punt goes out of the kicking team's End Zone

COACHING INSIGHT: HOW LONG IS A FIELD GOAL?

- If the offensive team lines up for a field goal on the opponent's 20-yard line, the kick will actually be 38 yards. Here's where the extra yards come from: 8 yards from the snapper to the holder, plus the 10-yard depth of the End Zone. Or: $20 + 8 + 10 = 38$.



TIME

- One-hour games are actually stretched out to three hours because the **GAME CLOCK** stops:
 - When the ball changes possession from one team to another.
 - When a player is injured.
 - After an incomplete pass.
 - For TV commercials (Watch TV Commercial Person).
 - For 2-minute intermissions between the 1st and 2nd, and the 3rd and 4th quarters.
 - For 12-minute intermission (Halftime) between the 2nd quarter (end of the 1st half) and the 3rd quarter (start of the 2nd half).
 - When 2 minutes remain in 1st and 2nd half (2-Minute Warning).
 - Each team can call three time outs during each half.
 - And during the last 2 minutes of the 2nd quarter and the last 5 minutes of the 4th quarter the Game Clock is not started until the next play begins whenever the ball carrier goes out of bounds or following a penalty.
 - Instant Replay (when requested).

GAME CLOCK

- Each game is divided into four 15-minute quarters of actual playing time. At the end of the 1st and 3rd quarters, the teams will switch ends of the field.
- Time In
 - Signal given by the Referee to start either the Play Clock or Game Clock.
- Time Out
 - Signal given by Referee to stop the Game Clock.

PLAY CLOCK

- The Play Clock is located at each end of stadium. The offense has 40 seconds to run a play except when there are certain administrative stoppages or other delays in which they will have 25 seconds.

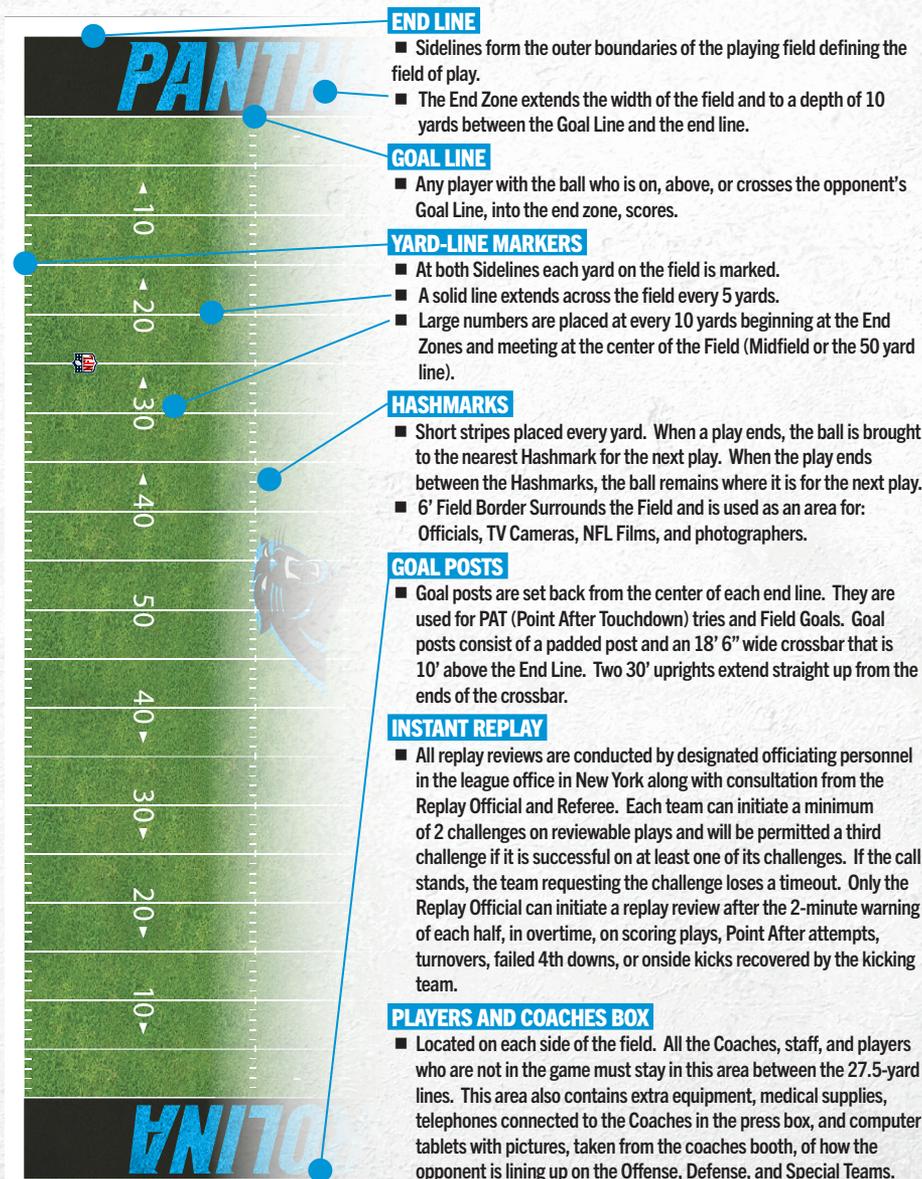
SUDDEN DEATH

- If a regular season game is tied at the end of the 4th quarter, there will be a 10-minute overtime period. Both teams must have the opportunity to possess the ball unless the kicking team to start the overtime period scores a safety on the receiving team's initial possession to win the game. After each team has had an opportunity to possess the ball, if one team has more points than its opponent, it is the winner. If the team that possesses the ball first does not score on its initial possession or if the score is tied after each team has had an opportunity to possess the ball, the next team to score wins. If the score remains tied at the end of the 10-minute overtime period, the game ends in a tie. In the postseason, 15-minute overtime periods are played until there is a winner.



FIELD

NFL Stadiums are all different; some are open-air, some are covered. But in every stadium the field is exactly the same size and shape and has the same features:



END LINE

- Sidelines form the outer boundaries of the playing field defining the field of play.
- The End Zone extends the width of the field and to a depth of 10 yards between the Goal Line and the end line.

GOAL LINE

- Any player with the ball who is on, above, or crosses the opponent's Goal Line, into the end zone, scores.

YARD-LINE MARKERS

- At both Sidelines each yard on the field is marked.
- A solid line extends across the field every 5 yards.
- Large numbers are placed at every 10 yards beginning at the End Zones and meeting at the center of the Field (Midfield or the 50 yard line).

HASHMARKS

- Short stripes placed every yard. When a play ends, the ball is brought to the nearest Hashmark for the next play. When the play ends between the Hashmarks, the ball remains where it is for the next play.
- 6' Field Border Surrounds the Field and is used as an area for: Officials, TV Cameras, NFL Films, and photographers.

GOAL POSTS

- Goal posts are set back from the center of each end line. They are used for PAT (Point After Touchdown) tries and Field Goals. Goal posts consist of a padded post and an 18' 6" wide crossbar that is 10' above the End Line. Two 30' uprights extend straight up from the ends of the crossbar.

INSTANT REPLAY

- All replay reviews are conducted by designated officiating personnel in the league office in New York along with consultation from the Replay Official and Referee. Each team can initiate a minimum of 2 challenges on reviewable plays and will be permitted a third challenge if it is successful on at least one of its challenges. If the call stands, the team requesting the challenge loses a timeout. Only the Replay Official can initiate a replay review after the 2-minute warning of each half, in overtime, on scoring plays, Point After attempts, turnovers, failed 4th downs, or onside kicks recovered by the kicking team.

PLAYERS AND COACHES BOX

- Located on each side of the field. All the Coaches, staff, and players who are not in the game must stay in this area between the 27.5-yard lines. This area also contains extra equipment, medical supplies, telephones connected to the Coaches in the press box, and computer tablets with pictures, taken from the coaches booth, of how the opponent is lining up on the Offense, Defense, and Special Teams.



PENALTIES

- ON ANY PENALTY the Game Clock stops; the Referee signals the penalty, points to the offending team, announces the penalty, and identifies the player who committed the foul.

5 YARD PENALTY

- **DELAY OF GAME**
 - The Offense does not start the next play within the time limit on the Play Clock.
- **OFFSIDE**
 - A player crosses the line of scrimmage or lines up in the Neutral Zone prior to the play.
- **FALSE START**
 - An offensive player on the line of scrimmage moves after he is set.
- **ILLEGAL SHIFT**
 - Two or more offensive players do not come to a complete stop for one second prior to snap of the ball.
- **ILLEGAL CONTACT**
 - Defender initiates contact with an eligible Receiver attempting to evade him more than 5 yards downfield with the Quarterback in the pocket area (automatic 1st down)
- **ILLEGAL MOTION**
 - An offensive player in motion is moving forward when the ball is snapped.
- **ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS**
 - Quarterback crosses the line of scrimmage before throwing the ball (loss of down).
- **INELIGIBLE RECEIVER**
 - Ineligible receiver moves downfield more than 1 yard beyond line of scrimmage without contacting a defender prior to a forward pass being thrown
 - An ineligible receiver being the first to intentionally touch a forward pass
- **INVALID FAIR CATCH**
 - Kick returner did not fully signal; extend one arm over his head and wave it side to side.

10 YARD PENALTY

- **HOLDING**
 - Illegal use of hands, arms, or body by an offensive player. If by a defensive player, penalty is 5 yards and automatic first down.
- **INTENTIONAL GROUNDING**
 - Quarterback throws an incomplete pass to avoid being tackled for a loss. Loss of down and 10 yard penalty or at spot of the foul if more than 10 yards from previous spot.
- **ILLEGAL USE OF HANDS**
 - A player uses his hands to strike an opponent above the shoulders or in the back. If by offense 10 yards, if by defense 5 yards and automatic 1st down.

15 YARD PENALTY

- **PASS INTERFERENCE**
 - One player stops another from having the chance to catch a pass – if by Offense 10 yards, if by Defense 1st down at point of foul.
- **TRIPPING**
 - Any player uses his feet or legs to trip an opponent.
- **FACEMASK**
 - A player grasps an opponent's facemask.
- **PERSONAL FOUL**
 - Any dangerous play that could result in a serious injury; for example, roughing the Passer or Kicker, or striking with helmet.
- **CUT BLOCK**
 - An offensive player illegally blocks an opponent below the waist.
- **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**
 - Actions contrary to the generally understood principles of sportsmanship.

■ PENALTY REFUSED

- A penalty is declined for strategic purposes. Signal also used for incomplete pass and failed PAT or Field-Goal Attempt.

THE CHAIN GANG

- The three-man Chain Gang stands on one sideline. Their responsibility is to mark the yard line of the ball on 1st down (the beginning of each series). They keep track of the Down (you can see the down marker 1, 2, 3, 4 on the sideline) and the Yardage (measured with two poles attached to a 10-yard chain) needed by the Offense to make the necessary 10 yards for a new 1st down. A Virtual Measurement using Sony's Hawk-Eye Optical Tracking Camera technology will be used when a close measurement is needed to determine if the offense reached the line to gain.

OFFICIALS	WHERE THEY ARE POSITIONED ON THE FIELD
Referee <i>In charge of all officials, he wears a white hat</i>	Behind the offense's right side
Umpire	Behind the offense's left side
Down Judge and Side Judge	On one sideline
Line Judge and Field Judge	On the other sideline
Back Judge	Behind the defense in the center of the field



UNIFORM

Today's NFL players are protected by hard plastic, multiple pads, and Spandex – all manufactured to League specifications.



OUTER HELMET

- Hard plastic, impact-resistant outer shell.

INSIDE HELMET

- Inflatable cells on inside of helmet allow custom fitting to protect the head. The Quarterback's helmet has two interior receivers and two speakers.

SHOULDER PADS

- Outer high-density plastic with special impact padding underneath.

FLAK JACKET

- Padded rib protector; usually worn by quarterbacks.

HIP PADS

- Soft form-fitting foam pads used to protect the hip bone.

THIGH PADS

- Hard plastic over foam pads, which fit into pocket inside front of player's pants.

FOOTBALL

- Made of four equal panels of water-resistant pebble-grain leather. It has an inner lining to protect bladder and valve opening used for inflation. Laces aid grip, particularly when passing.

FACEMASK

- Hard metal bars covered with rubberized coating formed in many designs for various positions.

CHIN STRAP

- Soft leather adjustable strap that helps hold helmet in place.

JERSEY

- Custom tailored for each player in a mesh nylon and lycra blend.

PANTS

- Form-fitting Spandex blend.

KNEE PAD

- Fits Inside Pants. An optional knee brace may be form fitted to knee giving protection to both sides of the joint.

SOCKS

- One-piece knee high cotton socks.

TAPE

- Almost all players have their ankles taped before each game for protection.

COACHING INSIGHT: HIGH-TECH TALK

- An NFL Quarterback's helmet contains special one-way radio receivers. The Quarterback on the field can't speak to the coach. He hears a decoded "Play Call" from the Coach on the sideline between each offensive play. The system is shut off when 15 seconds are left on the Play Clock or when the ball is snapped, whichever comes first.



