**Football Strategy, Updated Rules of Play**

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**Designer’s Note**

After playing this game twice, I noticed that it was fun but that it was very dated. I looked for a reworking of the rules to make it more accessible to modern fans but didn’t find any. As a result, I decided to try to update the game on my own. Any and all input of this set of rules and tables is welcome and here is hoping that an updated Football Strategy is reprinted.

**I. Football Strategy’s Frequently Used Terms**

**1. Receiving Team (RT)-** The team receiving either a Kick-Off, On-Side Kick, or Punt.

**2. Kicking Team (KT)-** The team kicking either a Kick-Off, On-Side Kick, or Punt.

**3. Offensive Team (OT)-** The team currently possessing the ball and calling Offensive Plays.

**4. Offensive Coordinator (OC)-**The person calling Offensive Plays on a team.

**5. Defensive Team (DT)-** The team trying to prevent the offensive team from scoring.

**6. Defensive Coordinator (DC)-** The person calling Defensive Formations on a team.

**7. Line of Scrimmage (LoS)-** Where the ball is placed on the field.

**8. Out of Bounds (O/B)-** Outside of the playing field; plays ending out of bounds stop the game clock from moving.

**9. In Bounds (I/B)-**Inside the playing field; plays ending inbounds keep the game clock moving unless a time out is called.

**II. EQUIPMENT**

1. Playing Board (Disregard Charts Printed on Original Football Strategy Board)

2. Updated Kicking, On-Side Kicking, Punting, Place Kicking, Long Gain, & 2 Point Conversion Tables (Tables #1-10)

3. Updated Ball Control, Aerial Game, & Pro-Style Offense Plays Charts (disregard or cut off the punting tracks on the last rows)

4. Football

5. Ten Yard Marker

6. 2 Updated Defensive Play Charts (defenses are titled & labeled A-J)

7. Wooden Defensive Formation Squares (retrofitted Scrabble letter squares for discreetly calling defensive plays)

8. 1 Timesheet/Scoreboard

9. 2 twenty sided dice (d20), one for each team

10. 1 Updated Set of Instructions

**III. PREPARING TO PLAY**

1. Players choose which ***Offense Plays Chart*** they intend to use during the game. Once chosen, that chart must be used for the remainder of the game. Any combination is possible; i.e. both players may use the same chart or different ones as they see fit. It is recommended that both players use the "Pro-Style Offense Play Chart" printed on the map board until they are familiar with the game's mechanics; thus assuring perfect play balance.

2. Roll the d20 to determine which player wins the "coin toss." One player should pick odds or evens, and whatever player’s number comes up gets his choice of whether to kick-off or receive. The player losing the “coin toss” will then either receive the 2nd half kick-off or have to kick the ball off, depending on how the first half started.

**IV. KICK-OFFS**

1. The ***Receiving Team*** (RT) announces if it is lining up for a Kick-Off Return OR an On-side Kick Return.
2. After the RT makes its announcement, the ***Kicking Team*** (KT) reveals whether it will Kick- Off or attempt a more risky On-side Kick to try to immediately recover the football.
3. If a Kick-Off is attempted, the KT should first roll a d20 & consult the ***“Table #1- Kick-Off Results”*** to see if the kick results in a touchback (RT receives ball @ own 20 yd. line, no deduction of time off the clock) or it is a returnable kick.
4. If the kick is returnable, then the RT should roll a d20 & consult the “***Table #2- Kick-Off Returns***.” The RT should follow the directions on that chart, adjust the field position on the game board accordingly with the football and 10 yard marker, & mark off 15 seconds of time on the "scoreboard clock." If this is the opening kickoff, the game has begun. If the Kick-Off goes out of bounds, there is no time deduction from the clock.
5. If an On-Side Kick is attempted by the KT, follow these steps instead.
   1. If the RT is lined up for an On-Side Kick Return, consult the ***“Table #3*-*On-Side Kick (Expected) Results.”*** Obviously, the chances for success are lower (10%) if the On-Side Kick is expected by the RT.
   2. If the RT is lined up for an On-Side Kick, the KT may instead run a Kick-Off, which will lead to an automatic touchback and no time deduction from the clock.
   3. If the RT is lined up for a Kick-Off Return & the KT decided to attempt an On-Side Kick, consult the ***“Table #4-On-Side Kick (Surprise) Results.”*** The chances of converting a surprise On-Side Kick (25%) are better than when it is expected by the RT.
   4. If the On-Side Kick goes ***Out of Bounds*** (O/B), there is no deduction of time; if it is ***In Bounds*** (I/B), adjust the field position on the game board accordingly with the football and 10 yard marker, & mark off 15 seconds of time on the "scoreboard clock." If this is the opening kickoff, the game has begun.

**V. ROUTINE OF PLAY**

1. After a Kick-Off, failed On-Side Kick, or punt, the KT becomes the ***Defensive Team*** (DT), and the player controlling the team is called the ***Defensive Coordinator*** (DC.) The RT is now called the ***Offensive Team*** (OT), and the player controlling that team is called the ***Offensive Coordinator*** (OC.)

2. Each down, except those where the OT is punting or attempting a field goal, will work as follows…

a. The DC refers to his set of 10 defensive plays (lettered A-J on his ***Defense Sheet***.) He selects one lettered wooden tile corresponding to the defensive formation on his ***Defense Sheet*** that will be best to stop the offensive play he thinks will be called by the OC, and places it face down on the board.

b. The OC then calls out his first play from among those provided on the ***Offense Plays Chart*** they selected to use for this game (Ball Control, Aerial, or Pro-Style.)

I. **Quarterback Kneel**- In addition to the 20 plays above, the OC can opt to have his quarterback “kneel” on the ball. A “kneel” runs off 30 seconds from the game clock, and moves the ***Line of Scrimmage*** (LoS) back 3 yds. To “kneel” the ball, the OC must announce that he is “kneeling” or taking the knee. The DC can partially counteract this play is by calling a timeout after the “kneel” is announced, which reduces the time run off to 15 seconds. If the DC does not or cannot call a timeout, fall the directions above.

II **Intentional** **Delay of Game Penalty-** The OC also has the ability to run the clock down by 45 seconds by accepting a Delay of Game penalty. If the DC calls a time out, there is just a 15 second runoff. If the DC does not or cannot call a timeout, the OC then deducts 45 seconds from the clock, gets called for the Delay of Game Penalty, and then moves the LoS back 5 yards. **NOTE-** This play can only be called AFTER the previous play ended ***In-Bounds*** (I/B) and CANNOT be called on consecutive downs.

c. The DC then turns up his lettered wooden tile.

d. Refer to the ***Offense Plays Chart***. The players cross-reference the offensive play (1-20) called against the defensive formation (A-J) selected on the ***Offense Plays Chart*** of the OT.

e. Players adjust the football, the time, the down, and the 10 yard marker if necessary.

f. Repeat the above procedure for every succeeding play called from the ***Line of Scrimmage*** (LoS).

g. The OC has 4 downs in which to gain a minimum of 10 yards from the original LoS. If the OC fails to do so after 4th down, the ball reverts to the DC at the spot designated on the ***Offense Plays Chart*** (if specified) or the LoS (if not specified.) If the OC does gain 10 yards from the original LoS in 4 downs or less, he gets another series-of-downs to gain a minimum of 10 yards, etc. If at the start of the 4th down the OC doesn't feel he can make a 1st down, he should then punt.

h. Punting, as stated previously, does not follow the preceding procedure (see ***Section VI, Part 7*** for details.)

**VI. OFFENSE PLAYS CHART**

1. The OC may select Plays 1 through 20 on any yard-line with the following exceptions:

a. Offensive Plays 17-20 CANNOT be called when the ball rests between the DT’s 1-20 yard lines.

b. Offensive Plays 13-20 CANNOT be called when the ball rests between the DT’s 1-10 yard-lines OR during a Two-Point Conversion (See ***Section VIII*** for more details.)

**2. LONG GAIN**: The OC refers to the “***Table #5 Long Gain Chance”*** then rolls the d20 and marks off the gain from the LoS as called for by “***Table #5***.”

**3. FUMBLE**: The OT automatically loses possession to the DT at the LoS.

**4. INTERCEPTION**: The DT takes possession with the yardage gained or lost measured from the LoS.

**Example-** If the LoS is the OT’ s own10 yard line and the DT intercepts on Play 19 with Defense Card "J" (Pro-Style Offense), the DT takes possession on his opponent's 40 yard line. If the result of the interception would place the ball in the defender's end zone, the DT is given possession on its own 20 yard line instead. If the result of the interception places the ball past the physical confines of the defender's end zone it is considered an incomplete pass. If the interception is made "in" or "past" the OT’s end zone, it is an automatic touchdown for the defender.

**5. PENALTY**: All penalties are measured from the LoS. In the case of those penalties where a choice is given, the team the penalty favors has the option to accept either the results of the play or the penalty. If a penalty is accepted, there is no loss of down. Note that a half may not end on a penalty, nor may any score be registered via a penalty. A team may not be penalized more than half the distance between the line of scrimmage and the goal-line.

**6. OUT of BOUNDS (O/B)**: Yards gained and lost that are followed by the letters "O/B" indicate the play ended up out-of-bounds thereby stopping the clock and reducing the time of the play by 15 seconds.

**7. PUNTS**: To complete a punt in this game, follow the subsequent steps.

a. The OT declares it is punting the ball & becomes the ***Kicking Team*** (KT). It assumed that the DT, which becomes the ***Receiving Team*** (RT) lines up in a punt return formation.

b. The KT rolls a d20 and then consults “***Table #9 Punt Distance Results”*** to determine the distance of the punt and then moves the football accordingly.

c. The RT then rolls a d20 and consults “***Table #10 Punt Return Results”*** and then moves the football accordingly and adjusts the time according to “***Table #8 Time Adjustments”*** accordingly.

I. The end zone is 10 yards deep.

II. If the distance of the punt would place the ball "through" the end zone before the ball is run back, there is no need to roll a d20 and consult “***Table #10***.” The RT accepts a touchback, becomes the ***Offensive Team*** (OT) and takes possession of the ball on its own 20 yard line.

III. If the distance of the punt would place the ball "in" the end zone, the RT has the choice of either returning the punt (consult “***Table #10”***) or "downing" the ball and taking a touchback. The RT reverts to the OT and takes possession of the ball on its own 20 yard line.

**VII .TIME**

1. Before the Kick-Off at the beginning of the game, the official time should be 15:00 of the 1st Quarter.

2. Unlike the modern NFL, ***Offensive Teams*** (OT) in this game have a 45 second game clock.

3. The Defensive Team/Kicking Team is always in charge of timekeeping throughout the game.

4. Time is reduced by 15 second intervals throughout the game; after each play, adjust the game clock downwards towards zero according to the length of that play using ***“Table #8 Time Adjustments.”***

a. Time is deducted from the game clock ranging from 0 seconds to 75 seconds for each play, see ***“Table 8”*** for details.

5. Each team is allowed 3 time outs per half; time outs limit the amount of time that a play runs off the clock to just 15 seconds, regardless of its length or yardage involved.

a. Time outs are always called after the results of a play have been determined. Time outs are used to alter the amount of time that is deducted from the game clock.

6. Towards the end of the 2nd & 4th Quarters, there is a Two-Minute Warning/automatic time out at the 2:00 remaining mark. All plays, regardless of length of time or yards in ***“Table 8,”*** stop with precisely 2:00 on the clock when started before the Two-Minute Warnings of the 2nd & 4th Quarters.

7. Four 15-minute quarters make up a complete game. Overtime (see ***Section IX)*** is played without a clock.

8. A play which starts at the end of a quarter cannot use any time in the following quarter. For example, a 20 yard run (which normally would consume 45 seconds) started with only 15 seconds remaining on the clock would use up only 15 seconds. The clock is then reset while the players exchange goal-lines.

**VIII. SCORING**

**1. TOUCHDOWN**: The point of the ball has only to reach the goal line, not cross it. A touchdown counts as 6 points. After a touchdown is scored, the team who scored it must then verbally declare whether it intends to attempt an Extra Point or a Two-Point Conversion.

**2. EXTRA POINT/POINT AFTER TOUCHDOWN** (XP/PAT): All Extra Point attempts (or Two Point Conversion attempts) occur outside of regular game time and do not require any time keeping to take place. Roll the d20 & consult the ***Table #6 Field Goal /Extra Point Results*** for an Extra Point attempt. Once completed or missed, proceed to the kick-off (unless there is no time remaining in the 2nd or 4th quarters or the game is in overtime (see ***Section IX Overtime*** for details on what to do.))

**a. Penalty on the OT During the Extra Point Attempt**- In the case of a penalty being called on the OT during an Extra Point attempt, the OT’s original LoS for all Extra Points is the DT’s 3 yd. line.

**b**. **Rolling a 20 During an Extra Point or Field Goal Attempt**- If a 20 is rolled on a d20 during an Extra Point or Field Goal attempt, roll another d20 and consult ***Table #7 Field Goal/Extra Point Random Events.*** Make the necessary adjustments or changes after the roll.

**3. TWO-POINT CONVERSION**: The OT may only choose Offense Plays 1-12 (no 13-20 allowed); the DT may only choose defensive formations A-G (no H, I, or J allowed.) The ball will be spotted (unlike modern football) at the DT’s 5 yd. line, and just like the Extra Point, the 2 Point Conversion is an untimed play. After the ball is placed on the DT’s 5 yd. line and both the OT and DT take into account the limitations on their play calls, Two-Point Conversion plays are carried out just like any other non-kicking play in the game. Proceed to the kick-off after the play is completed just like you would after an Extra Point attempt.

**4. FIELD GOAL**: OTs may attempt a Field Goal from the DT’s 46 yd. line and in. The farther the kick, the lesser the chance the OT has of making the kick. Roll the d20 & consult the ***Field Goal /Extra Point Results Table*** for a Field Goal attempt and make the appropriate adjustments indicated by the table.

**a. Missed Field Goals Attempts**- If the OT misses an attempted Field Goal, the DT takes over possession 7 yds. behind the LoS of the preceding play.

**5. SAFETY**: Should the OT be pushed back to its own goal line, the DT is awarded 2 points for a safety. The team that just had the 2 points scored against it switches immediately from the OT to the KT and must then conduct a Free Kick.

**b. Free Kicks After a Safety-** To carry out a Free Kick, simply use ***“Table #2- Kick-Off Returns”*** and add 10 yards to the return made by the RT.

**IX. Overtime**

1. If at the end of the game both teams have the same score, an untimed overtime period will result. Roll the d20 to determine which player wins the "overtime coin toss." One player should pick odds or evens, and whatever player’s number comes up gets his choice of whether to kick-off or receive.

**a. Winning the Game in Overtime-** Both teams get a chance at winning in overtime; if the original RT/OT scores on their first possession, then the other team is allowed to have a chance to score on offense as well. If the original RT/OT does not score, however, the overtime period becomes sudden death, or an untimed period when whoever scores first wins the game.

**X. MULTI-PLAYER GAMES**

In 3 or 4-player games, two players may play on the same team, with one being the team’s OC and the other being the team’s DC. As the OC is calling plays, the DC can assist by acting as spotter and looking for trends in the opposing player(s) play calling. He should keep notes on opponent's defensive patterns and thereby attempt to break his strategy. And while on defense, the OC should assist in a similar fashion.