



FOOTBALL 101

A quick intro to the basics of American football

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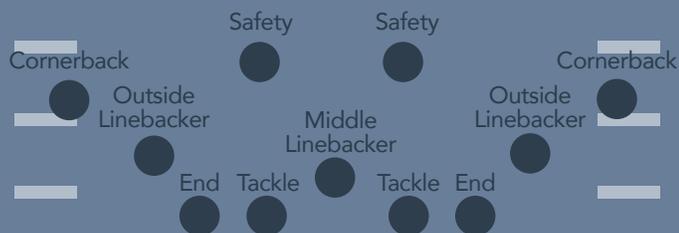


What does a tight end do? What's the difference between an incomplection and an interception? Why does everyone just pile on top of each other?

Here are a few basics that apply to every game: Two teams with 11 players on the field at a time battle it out over the course of four 15-minute quarters. The aim of the game is to score more points than your opponent before the time runs out. Simple, right?

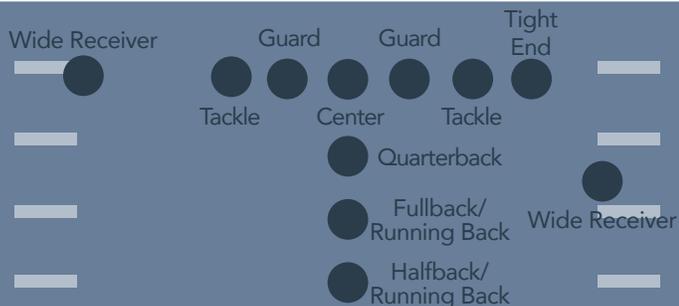
Touchdowns are your most lucrative point-scoring option. A touchdown is scored when the ball is either passed or carried to your opponent's end zone (the 10-yard long area at the end of the field). Either the Quarterback sends a pass to the Receiver or the quarterback hands off the ball to the running back who rushes it forward.

DEFENSIVE PLAYERS



THE DEFENSE

The job of the defense is to stop the offense. The 11 men on the defensive side of the ball all work together to keep the offense from advancing toward the defense's end zone. Linebackers defend against the pass, and push forward to stop the run or tackle the QB. The defensive line (ends and tackles) battles head-to-head against the offensive line. Cornerbacks and Safeties defend against the pass from the QB to the Wide Receiver and help to stop the run.



THE OFFENSE

While the Quarterback (QB), Running Backs, Wide Receivers and Tight Ends can legally handle the ball, it is the Quarterback who is the leader of the team and the play maker. In fact, he's a man of many talents – he not only throws the ball, he outlines each play to his team.

OFFENSIVE PLAYERS

THE GAME

FIRST DOWN

All progress in a football game is measured in yards. The offensive team tries to get as much “yardage” as it can to try and move closer to the opponent’s end zone. Each time the offense gets the ball, it has four downs, or chances, in which to gain 10 yards. If the offensive team successfully moves the ball 10 or more yards, it earns a first down and another set of four downs. If the offense fails to gain 10 yards, it loses possession of the ball. The defense tries to prevent the offense not only from scoring, but also from gaining the 10 yards needed for a first down. If the offense reaches a fourth down, it usually punts the ball (kicks it away). This forces the other team to begin its drive further down the field.

MOVING THE BALL

THE RUN AND THE PASS

A football play begins with the snap. At the line of scrimmage (the position on the field where the play begins), the Quarterback loudly calls out a play in code and the player in front of him, The Center, passes, or snaps the ball under his legs to the Quarterback. From there, the quarterback can either throw the ball, hand it off, or run with it.

THE INTERCEPTION

An aggressive defense can regain possession of the ball by catching (intercepting) passes meant for players on the other team.

TOUCHDOWN = 6 POINTS

A touchdown is the biggest single score in a football game. It is worth six points, and it allows the scoring team an opportunity to attempt to get an extra point. To score a touchdown, the ball must be carried across the goal line into the end zone, caught in the end zone, or a fumble recovered in the end zone.

FIELD GOAL = 3 POINTS

If the offense cannot score a touchdown, it may try to kick a field goal through the goalposts at the back of the end zone. Field goals are worth three points and often are the deciding plays in the last seconds of close games. They can be attempted from anywhere on the field on any down, but generally are kicked from inside the defense’s 45-yard line on a fourth down. For a field goal to be “good,” The Placekicker (or field goal kicker) must kick the ball through the goal-post uprights and over the crossbar. The defense tries to block the kick and stop the ball from reaching the goal post.

HOPEFULLY, THIS PROVIDED A BIT OF INSIGHT

of the exciting game of football. In case you’re still confused, don’t worry: if all else fails and other people start standing and cheering, just follow suite!





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