

FOOTBALL TERMS

Audible: When the quarterback changes the football play at the line of scrimmage.

Backfield: The area of the football field behind the line of scrimmage.

Backs: Football players who stand behind the line of scrimmage. For a legal formation the offensive team must have 4 backs. They usually include the quarterback, running back, and full back.

Blitz: A football play where the defensive team rushes more football players than usual to try and sack the quarterback.

Blocking: What the offensive team does to prevent a defensive player from tackling the player with the football.

Bump-and-run: When a defender hits a receiver and then goes into pass coverage. This defensive play is used to slow down the receiver and mess up any timing on the offensive play.

Eligible receiver: The football players on the offense that are allowed by the rules to catch a forward pass.

Encroachment: A penalty when any football player contacts the other team prior to the snap.

End zone: The area at the end of the football field where the offensive team must have possession of the football to score a touchdown.

Extra point: After a football team has scored a touchdown, they have the opportunity to score additional points. They can kick an extra-point for 1 point or try a 2-point conversion for 2 points.

Fair catch: By signaling with a wave, the football player making a kick return can choose to catch the football and take possession of the ball where he made the catch. He will not get tackled, but he also will not be allowed to run with the football.

Field goal: A three point score, when the kicker kicks the football above the crossbar and between the uprights of the goalpost.

Fumble: When a football player drops the football. The ball is available for any other player to gain possession for his team.

Holding: A penalty where a football player grabs an opponent.

Intentional grounding: A penalty called when the quarterback purposely throws an

incomplete pass just to avoid a sack.

Interception: A pass that is caught by a football player on the defense.

Lateral: A backward pass. Football players may lateral the football as many times per play as they want. If a lateral is dropped, the ball is still live (like a fumble) and any player may recover it.

Line of scrimmage: The location on the field where the football is spotted and the next play begins.

Linemen: The offensive and defensive football players who start each play at the line of scrimmage.

Neutral zone: The area between the offense and defense at the start of the play. Only the center is allowed in this zone until after the ball is snapped.

Nickel defense: When the defense brings in a 5th defensive back to help cover the pass play.

Offside: A penalty that occurs when any part of a football player's body is beyond his line of scrimmage when the football is snapped.

Pass protection: Blocking by the offensive football players to keep defenders away from the quarterback to give him time to throw the football.

Play-action pass: When the quarterback fakes handing off the football and then attempts a pass.

Pocket: The place where the quarterback stands just behind the center.

Punt: A football kick to the other team to give them the ball downfield rather than lose the football on downs.

Quarterback: This is the football player that starts each play. He takes the snap from the center and either runs with it, hands off the football to another player, or passes it.

Receivers: The football players who catch the football.

Rush: When the football player runs with the football. Also, when a football player tries to tackle the quarterback while in the pocket.

Sack: When the quarterback is tackled behind the line of scrimmage.

Safety: When a football player is tackled in his own end zone. The defense gets 2 points and the possession of the football from a free kick.

Scrambling: When the quarterback runs around trying not to get sacked with the football.

Snap: Also called the hike, the snap starts the football play. The center hands or passes the football between his legs to a player standing behind him (usually the quarterback).

Special teams: These are the football players who are involved in the kicking plays.

Tackle: When a football player causes the player carrying the ball to touch the ground such that they are considered down. The end of the play.

Touchdown: A 6-point score. When a player has control of the football within the end zone.

Turnover: When, with either a fumble or an interception, one team loses possession of the football to the other.