



## **NTFA Gridiron Coaches Certification Curriculum**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course gives coaches the knowledge, skills and attitude to communicate effectively with the athletes and sport officials to maintain a high level of professionalism while interacting on the Gridiron.

Coaches will understand the importance of effective communication, planning, and safe practices protecting the integrity of the game. The scope of work and practicing in line with the Gridiron rules and regulations, as well as the relationship between other Gridiron officials, coaches and medical personnel in the programme, there are important steps which must be followed to ensure that the sport is played at an optimal level.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES AND INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES**

#### **Basic Concept of Coaching:**

- Alignment: Indicates how each player position lines up in the correct stance and makes a legal formation and/or proper alignment to execute a play or defend a play.
- Assignment: Each player positions basic functionality and responsibility
- Basic Blocking: How to execute basic blocking technique
- Basic Tackling: How to effectively execute basic tackling technique



## Unit One - Understand Football & Terminology

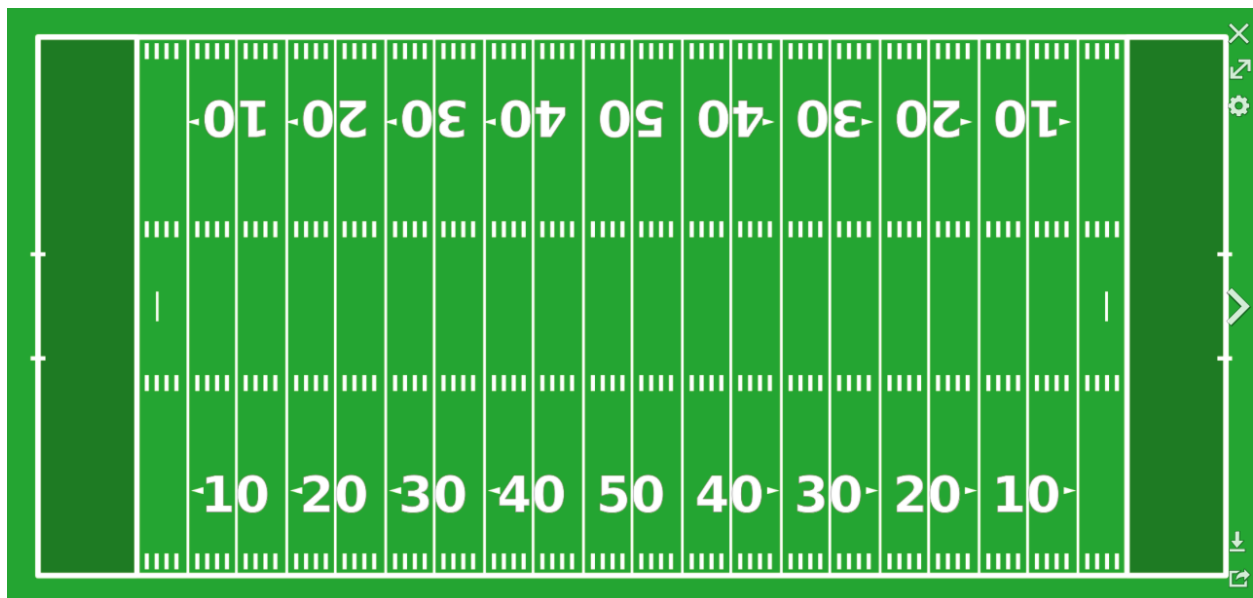
### Specific objectives

Upon completion of this course, coaches are competent when they are able to:

- Outline the dimensions of the Football field
- Explain how the game scored
- Identify all Football personnel and positions
- Recall Football Vocabulary
- Review the Various Football Terminologies

### Gridiron Basics:

**Field Measurement and Layout:** The rectangular field of play used for American football games measures 100 yards (91.44 m) long between the goal lines, and 160 feet (48.8 m) (53 1/3 yards) wide. ... In addition, there are end zones extending another 10 yards (9.144 m) past the goal lines to the "end lines", for a total length of 120 yards (109.7 m).





# NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

**Players:** There are two segments of teams on the Gridiron field 11 Offensive Players and 11 Defensive Players. A total of 22 players on the field of play at any time.

**Scoring:** Points are scored as follows: Touchdown: 6 points. Field Goal: 3 points. Safety: 2 points. Try after touchdown: 1 point (Field Goal or Safety) or 2 points (Touchdown)

## Content

### Basic Terminology

- **Offensive line:** The human wall of five men who block for and protect the quarterback and ball carriers. Every line has a center (who snaps the ball), two guards, and two tackles.
- **Backs:** Football players which stand behind the line of scrimmage. For a legal formation the offensive team must have 4 backs. They usually include the quarterback, running back, full back, and flankers (receivers).
- **Backfield:** The area of the football field behind the line of scrimmage.
- **Blocking:** What the offensive team does to prevent a defensive player from tackling the player with the football.
- **Down:** A period of action that starts when the ball is put into play and ends when the ball is ruled dead (meaning the play is completed). The offense gets four downs to advance the ball 10 yards. If it fails to do so, it must surrender the ball to the opponent, usually by punting on the fourth down.
- **Drive:** The series of plays when the offense has the football, until it punts, or scores and the other team gets possession of the ball.
- **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 to opportunity to score additional points. They can kick an extra point for 1 or try a two-point conversion for 2 points.
- **Fair catch:** By signaling with a wave over the head, 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.



## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

- **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.
- **Handoff:** The act of giving the ball to another player. Handoffs usually occur between the quarterback and a running back.
- **Hash marks:** The lines on the center of the field that signify 1 yard on the field. Before every play, the ball is spotted between the hash marks or on the hash marks, depending on where the ball carrier was tackled on the preceding play.
- **Holding:** A penalty where an offensive football player grabs an opponent on the defensive team.
- **Huddle:** When the 11 players on the field come together to discuss strategy between plays. On offense, the quarterback relays the plays in the huddle.
- **Incompletion:** A forward pass that falls to the ground because no receiver could catch it, or a pass that a receiver dropped or caught out of bounds.
- **Interception:** A pass that is caught by a football player on the defense.
- **Kickoff:** A free kick (meaning the receiving team can't make an attempt to block it) that puts the ball into play. A kickoff is used at the start of the first and third quarters and after every touchdown and successful field goal.
- **Lineman:** The offensive and defensive football players who start each play at the line of scrimmage.
- **Line of Scrimmage:** The location on the field where the football is spotted, and the next play begins.
- **Neutral Zone:** The area between the offense and defense at the start of the play. Only the center is allowed on this zone until after the ball is snapped.
- **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.
- **Offensive line:** The human wall of five men who block for and protect the quarterback and ball carriers. Every line has a center (who snaps the ball), two guards, and two tackles.



## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

- **Punt:** A football kick to the other team to give them the ball downfield rather than lose the football on downs closer to your own endzone. This forces the opponent to go farther to score points.
- **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 player who catches the football
- **Red zone:** The unofficial area from the 20-yard line to the opponent's goal line. Holding an opponent to a field goal in this area is considered a moral victory for the defense.
- **Return:** The act of receiving a kick or punt and running toward the opponent's goal line with the intent of scoring or gaining significant yardage.
- **Rushing:** When the football player runs with the football. Also, when a football player tries to tackle the quarterback while in the pocket (backfield).
- **Sack:** When the quarterback is tackled behind the line of scrimmage while attempting a pass play.
- **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.
- **Secondary:** The four defensive players who defend against the pass and line up behind the linebackers and wide on the corners of the field opposite the receivers.
- **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.
- **Special team:** 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.
- **Turnover:** When, with either a fumble or an interception, one team loses possession of the football to the other
- **Touchdown:** a 6-point score. When a player has control of the football within the Endzone



## Unit two - Understand Time keeping and Field Orientation

### Specific objectives:

Upon completion of this unit, coaches are competent when they are able to:

- Explain how the time is kept
- Label all the areas of the Football field
- Player Positions and Basic Assignment

### Content

- **Length of Periods:** Football games last for a total of 60 minutes in professional and college play and are divided into two halves of 30 minutes and four quarters of 15 minutes. High school football games are 48 minutes in length with two halves of 24 minutes and four quarters of 12 minutes
  - Starting a period – Half
  - Ending a period- Half
- **Starting and Stopping the Clock (Timer):** Upon kickoff, the clock is started when a member of the receiving team touches the ball, or, if the member of the receiving team touches the ball in their end zone, carries the ball out of the end zone. The clock is stopped when that player goes out of bounds. (The clock never starts if the receiving team downs the ball in their own end zone for a touchback.) The clock is then restarted when the offense snaps the ball for their first play and continues to run unless one of the following occurs, in which case the clock is stopped at the end of the play and restarts at the next snap unless otherwise provided:<sup>[1]</sup>
  - A player carrying the ball goes out of bounds. The clock stops in all 4 quarters and, for most of the game, it is restarted upon the referee spotting the ball and blowing the whistle to signal the resumption of play. In college football, the clock restarts upon the snap of the ball when the clock was stopped with less than 2:00 left in either half. The NFL rule is the same as in the college game for the first half of games, but the clock restarts upon the snap when there is under 5:00 left in the 4th quarter.
    - A loose ball is out of bounds. The clock is restarted when the ball is spotted, unless another condition causes the clock to start at the snap.



## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

- A forward pass is ruled incomplete.
  - Either team calls for a timeout or an official call for a timeout, perhaps because a player is injured or there is a penalty on the play. Officials will restart the clock after an official timeout, but not a team timeout, has concluded unless another of the conditions applies, or if the timeout is for a penalty enforcement after the 2-minute warning of the first half or inside the last 5 minutes of the second half/overtime (absent special timing rules for specific fouls).
    - 10 seconds will be taken off the clock, and the clock started when the ball is spotted, if the offense, after the 2-minute warning of either half, fouls or commits certain other acts that cause the clock to stop (including an injury when the offense is out of timeouts, except under certain circumstances), unless the clock will stop anyway for a different reason. In Canadian football, the offense may execute one additional untimed play if the clock expires while the ball is not in play.
  - A score or touchback occurs. Additionally, the clock does not run during or after a conversion attempt in the NFL or NCAA college football.
  - Possession of the football is transferred between teams for any reason.
  - In college football, the clock is briefly stopped when a team earns a first down to allow the chain crew to reposition themselves. The NFL has no such stoppage.
  - If the clock runs out during a play, the current play is allowed to continue to its conclusion. If the clock runs out between downs, the period ends in American football, but in Canadian football the offense is allowed one last down.
  - Each team is given three timeouts per half which they can use to stop the clock from running after a play. In the NFL, teams get two timeouts in a preseason or regular season overtime period, or three in a postseason overtime half.
  - On a fair-catch punt, the clock starts at the snap and stops at the end of the play.
- **Charging and official's time-outs --- Intermissions Ball ready for play and delay:**

In gridiron football, the use and rationing of time-outs is a major part of clock management strategy; calling time-out stops the clock (which normally is running between plays except in the case of a penalty, an incomplete pass, officials requiring time to re-spot the ball and/or down markers, or when the ball is run out of bounds), extending the time a team has to score. Timeouts can be called by both players (typically the quarterback or a linebacker) and the head coach. The number of timeouts is limited to three per team per half in the National Football League, and college and high school levels; Unused timeouts carry over between the first and second quarters and between the third and fourth quarters, but they do not carry over between halves. If overtime is required in the NFL, each team is given two timeouts during a ten-minute regular season sudden-death period (overtime periods are fifteen minutes in the playoffs), while in college football each team gets one timeout per possession. If a timeout above these limits is called, it is usually ignored and no penalty is assessed (however, in many leagues, a coach attempting to call a timeout when he has no timeouts left can be assessed a 5-yard Delay of Game penalty).



## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

**Teams use several methods to stop the clock without exhausting a timeout. These include:**

- Running out of bounds with the ball. In the NFL, this only stops the clock in the final two minutes of the first half and final five minutes of the second half; the rest of the time, the clock stops only temporarily, restarting when the ball is set for the next play. In arena football, the clock stops only for out-of-bounds plays in the final minute of the half.
- Throwing the ball out of bounds. This is an incomplete pass and depending on the circumstance's risks incurring an intentional grounding penalty, but sometimes, the team may choose to sacrifice a down to stop the clock.
- Spiking the ball. This, likewise, is an incomplete pass and sacrifices a down.
- Waiting for the two-minute warning in the NFL, three-minute warning in Canadian football, one-minute warning in Arena football if it is approaching. College and high school football do not have any of these stoppages.
- Committing an offense for which a minor penalty may be called. In some leagues, late in the game, a 10-second runoff may be assessed to discourage this.
- Feigning the injury of a player. If this occurs more than once in a game, a timeout may be charged, and/or a penalty may be assessed. In some leagues, if time is called because of an injury, the injured player may be ordered to sit out at least the next play as a way of discouraging the feigning of injury.





# NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

## Unit Three- Reviewing the rules of the game and penalties

**Specific objectives:** Upon completion of this unit, coaches are competent when they are able to:

**Specific objectives:** State the objective of the game of football

- State how a football game is scored
- Name the three teams within a team
- Discuss the roles of downs and distance

### Content

- **Scoring-** Touchdown is the ultimate goal and it is worth 6 points. A team scores a touchdown when the offensive team carries the ball or a defensive player who has obtained the ball from the other team after recovering a fumble or intercepting a pass, advances from anywhere on the field and breaks the plane of his opponents' goal line with the ball.
- **Extra Point-** 2-point conversion
- **Field goal** which is one point.
- **Safety-** 2 point - This occurs when a quarterback, running back, or receiver is tackled with the ball in his own end zone or goes out of bounds behind the goal line.
- **Teams within a Team**
  - Offensive team
  - Defensive team
  - Special Team
- **Downs and distance-** Basically, a **down** is a play. From the time the ball is snapped (put into play), to the time the play is whistled over by the officials, is considered one down. A team's offense is given four downs (plays) to move ten yards toward the opponent's end zone.
- **Distance** is the number of yards a team needs to get a new set of four downs. If they make the ten yards needed within four downs, they are given a new set of downs. This is called getting a first down. If they don't make it the required ten yards, the other team's offense takes possession of the ball.

[Football 101: Understanding Down and Distance \(liveabout.com\)](http://liveabout.com)



## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

### Unit Four- Understanding players and positions on the field of play.

#### Specific objectives:

Upon completion of this unit, coaches are competent when they are able to:

- List all positions on an American football team
- Recall all the responsibilities of each position
- Discuss the various formations for offensive and defense teams

#### Content

- **Offensive team:** In American football, the offense is the term used to describe the team that has possession of the ball and is advancing toward the opponent's end zone to score points. The eleven players of the offense can be separated into two main groups: the five offensive linemen, whose primary job is to block opponents and protect their quarterback, and the six backs and receivers, whose primary job is to move the ball down the field by either running with it or passing it.
- The organization of the offense is strictly mandated by the rules of the sport: there must be at least seven players on the line of scrimmage and no more than four players (known collectively as "backs") behind it. The only players eligible to handle the ball during a normal play are the backs and the two players on the end of the line (the "ends"). These players make up the "skill positions" and are also referred to as "eligible receivers" or "eligible ball carriers." The remaining players (known as "interior linemen") are "ineligible" to catch forward passes. Within these strictures, however, creative coaches have developed a wide array of offensive formations to take advantage of different player skills and game situations.
- The following positions are standard in nearly every game, though different teams will use different arrangements of them, dependent on their individual game plans.
- **Offensive line:** The offensive line is primarily responsible for blocking the defensive line of the opposition, in order to protect their own quarterback. During normal play, offensive linemen do not handle the ball (aside from the snap from center), unless the ball is fumbled by a ball carrier, a pass is deflected, or a player who is normally an offensive lineman takes a different position on the field.

The offensive line consists of:

- **Centre:** The center is the player who begins the play from scrimmage by snapping the ball to the quarterback. As the name suggests, the center usually plays in the middle of the offensive line, though some teams may employ an unbalanced line where the center is offset to one side. Like all offensive linemen, the center has the responsibility to block defensive players. The center often also has the responsibility to call out blocking assignments and make last second adjustments depending on the defensive alignment.



## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

- **Offensive guard:** Two guards line up directly on either side of the center. Like all interior linemen, their function is to block on both running and passing plays. On some plays, rather than blocking straight ahead, a guard will "pull", whereby the guard comes out of their position in line to lead block for a ball carrier, on plays known as "traps" (for inside runs), "sweeps" (for outside runs), and "screens" (for passing plays). In such cases, the guard is referred to as a "pulling guard".
- **Offensive Tackle:** Two tackles play outside of the guards. Their role is primarily to block on both running and passing plays. The area from one tackle to the other is an area of "close line play" in which blocks from behind, which are prohibited elsewhere on the field, are allowed. For a right-handed quarterback, the left tackle is charged with protecting the quarterback from being hit from behind (known as the "blind side"), and this is usually the most skilled player on the offensive line. Like a guard, the tackle may have to "pull", on a running play, when there is a tight end on their side. Tackles typically have a taller, longer build than interior offensive linemen, due to the need to keep separation from defensive linemen in pass blocking situations. They also tend to have quick footwork skills as they often engage against containing or rushing defensive ends.
- **Backs and Receivers:** Four backs line up behind the line of scrimmage. Additionally, there are two receivers, one on each end of the line of scrimmage, who line up outside of the interior linemen. There are four main positions in this set of players:
- **Quarterback:** The quarterback is the player who receives the ball from the center to start the play. Considered the most influential position on the offensive side because his team's progress down the field is dependent on his success, the quarterback is responsible for receiving the play from the coaches on the sideline and communicating the play to the other offensive players in the huddle, and serves as the leader of the team's passing game. The quarterback may need to make late changes to the intended play at the line of scrimmage (known as an "audible") depending on the defensive alignment. At the start of the play, the quarterback may be lined up in one of three positions. If he is positioned directly behind and in contact with the center and receives the ball via the direct hand-to-hand pass, he is said to be "under center". Alternatively, if he is lined up some distance behind the center, he is said to be either in "shotgun formation" or in "pistol formation" ('shotgun' is generally further back than 'pistol'). Upon receiving the ball from the center, the quarterback has three basic options to advance the ball: he may run the ball himself (most commonly referred to as scrambling), he may hand it to another eligible ball carrier to run with it, or he may execute a forward pass to a player further up the field.
- **Running Back:** Running backs are players who line up behind the offensive line in a position to receive a hand-off from the quarterback and execute a rushing play.



## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Anywhere from one to three running backs may be utilized on a play (or none, which is referred to as an "empty backfield"). Depending on where they line up and what role they have, running backs come in several varieties. The "tailback," also known as the "halfback," is often a team's primary ball carrier on rushing plays. They may also catch passes, often acting as a "check-down" or "safety valve" when all other receivers on a pass play are covered. The "fullback" is often larger and stronger than the tailback and acts primarily as a blocker, though the fullback may also be used for catching passes or for rushing as a tailback does. Fullbacks often line up closer to the line of scrimmage than tailbacks do in order to block for them on rushing plays. A "wing-back" or a "slot-back" is a term for a running back who lines up behind the line of scrimmage outside the tackle or tight end on either side of the offensive line. Slot-backs are usually only found in certain offensive alignments, such as the flex bone formation. There also exists a similar position, known as the "H-back", that is actually considered a modification of the normal tight end position.

- **Wide receiver:** Wide receivers are pass-catching specialists. Typically, fast and tall, their main job is to run pass routes and get open (i.e. find a position with no near defender) for passes, although they are occasionally called on to block. Wide receivers generally line up split "wide" near the sidelines at the start of the play. Wide receivers, like running backs, come in different varieties depending on exactly where they line up. A wide receiver who is directly on the line of scrimmage is called a "split end" and is counted among the seven required players on the line of scrimmage. A wide receiver who lines up behind the line (and thus counts as one of the four backs) is called the "flanker". A wide receiver who lines up between the outermost wide receiver and the offensive line is said to be "in the slot" and is called the "slot receiver".
- **Tight end:** Tight ends play on either side of the offensive line and directly next to the tackles. Tight ends are considered "hybrid players" because they are a cross between a wide receiver and an offensive lineman. Because they play next to the other offensive linemen, they are very frequently called on to block, especially on running plays. However, because they are eligible receivers, they may also catch passes. The position known as the "H-back" is a tight end who lines up behind the line of scrimmage, and is thus counted as one of the four "backs", but their role is otherwise similar to that of other tight ends.

Depending on the style of offense the coaches have designed, the game situation, and the relative skill sets of the players, teams may run formations that contain any number of running backs, wide receivers, and tight ends, so long as the mandated "four backs and seven on the line" rule is followed. For many years, the standard set consisted of the quarterback, two running backs (a tailback/halfback and a fullback), two wide receivers (a flanker and a split end) and a tight end.

Modern teams show a wide variety of formations, from a "full house" formation with three running backs, two tight ends, and no wide receivers, to "spread" formations featuring four or five wide receivers and either one or no running backs.



# NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

## Defensive Positions

**Defensive team:** The defensive team, simply known as the "defense," is the team that begins a play from scrimmage without possession of the ball. The objective of the defensive team is to prevent the other team from scoring and win possession of the ball for their side. The defense accomplishes this by forcing the offense to turn the ball over by either preventing them from achieving a first down and forcing them to punt, forcing and recovering an offensive fumble, intercepting a pass, or, more rarely, forcing a turnover on downs. Unlike the offensive team, the rules of the sport do not restrict the defensive team into certain positions. A defensive player may line up anywhere on his side of the line of scrimmage and perform any legal action. Over time, however, defensive roles have become defined into three main sets of players that encompass several individual positions.

**Defensive line:** Like their offensive counterparts, defensive linemen (also called rushers) line up directly on the line of scrimmage. Defensive linemen will often take a stance with one or both of their hands on the ground before the ball is snapped. These are known as a "three-point stance" and "four-point stance" respectively, and this helps distinguish a defensive lineman from a linebacker, who begins in a two-point stance (i.e. without a hand touching the ground).

There are two positions usually considered part of the defensive line:

- **Defensive tackle:** Sometimes called a "defensive guard", defensive tackles play at the center of the defensive line. Their function is to rush the passer and stop running plays directed at the middle of the line of scrimmage. The most interior defensive tackle who sometimes lines up directly across from the ball and is, therefore, almost "nose-to-nose" with the offense's center is often called a "nose tackle" (alternately "nose guard" or "middle guard"). The nose tackle is most common in the 3-4 defense. Most defensive sets have one or two defensive tackles. If one employs a second defensive tackle, sometimes referred to as an "under tackle", they are usually a bit faster than the nose tackle.
- **Defensive Ends:** Line up outside of the defensive tackles and are the "ends" of the defensive line. Their function is to attack the passer or stop offensive runs to the outer edges of the line of scrimmage, which is often referred to as "containment." The faster of the two is usually placed on the right side of the defensive line (quarterback's left) because that is a right-handed quarterback's blind side.

**Linebackers:** play behind the defensive line and perform various duties depending on the situation, including rushing the passer, covering receivers, and defending against the run.

- **Middle linebacker (MLB):** Sometimes called the "inside linebacker" (especially in a 3-4 defense), and known colloquially as the "Mike" linebacker, the middle linebacker is often known as the "quarterback of the defense", as they are frequently the primary defensive play callers and must react to a wide variety of situations.



## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Middle linebackers must be capable of stopping running backs who make it past the defensive line, covering pass plays over the middle, and rushing the quarterback on blitz plays.

- **Outside linebacker (OLB):** Outside linebackers are given different names depending on their role and the philosophy of the team. Some teams keep their outside linebackers on the same side of the field at all times while others define them as playing on either the "strongside" (SLB) or the "weakside" (WLB). The strongside, or "Sam", linebacker lines up on the same side as the offensive tight end and often is responsible for covering the tight end or running back on pass plays. The weakside, or "Will", linebacker lines up on the side of the offensive line without a tight end and is often used to rush, or blitz, the quarterback or to cover a running back on pass plays.

### Defensive backs

Defensive backs, also known as the "secondary", play either behind the linebackers or outside near the sidelines and are primarily used to defend against pass plays. They also act as the last line of defense on running plays and need to be able to make open field tackles, especially when the ball carrier has gotten past the other defenders. A normal defensive line-up includes two cornerbacks and two safeties, though specialty defensive backs (nickelbacks and dime backs) can be brought in in place of linebackers and defensive linemen when there is a need to cover additional receivers.

- **Cornerback (CB):** Cornerbacks attempt to prevent successful passes by either swatting the airborne ball away from the receiver or by catching the pass themselves. In rushing situations, their job is to contain the runner, either by directing them back to the middle of the field to be tackled, by tackling them themselves, or by forcing them out of bounds.
- **Safety (S):** The safeties are the last line of defense (furthest from the line of scrimmage) and usually help the corners with deep-pass coverage. The *strong safety* (SS) is usually the larger and stronger of the two, providing extra protection against run plays by standing closer to the line of scrimmage, usually on the strong (tight end) side of the field. The *free safety* (FS) is usually the smaller and faster of the two, and is usually the deepest player on the defense, providing help on long pass plays.
- **Nickelback and dime-back:** In certain formations, the defense may remove a linebacker or a defensive lineman to bring in extra pass coverage in the form of extra defensive backs. A formation with five defensive backs is often called a "nickel" formation, and the fifth (extra) defensive back is called a "nickelback" after the U.S. nickel coin, a five-cent



## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

piece. By extension, a formation with a sixth defensive back (dime-back) is called a "dime package" because it employs a second nickelback and the U.S. 10-cent dime coin is equal to two nickels (nickelbacks). Although it is a rare occurrence, a team may also use seven or eight defensive backs on a play, as well.

Defensive formations are often known by a numerical code indicating the number of players at each position. The two most common formations are the 3–4 defense and the 4–3 defense, where the first number refers to the number of defensive linemen, and the second number refers to the number of linebackers (the number of defensive backs can be inferred, since there must be eleven players on the field). Thus, a 3–4 defense consists of three defensive linemen (usually a nose tackle and two defensive ends), four linebackers, and four defensive backs (two cornerbacks, a strong safety, and a free safety)

### Special teams

Special teams are units that are on the field during kicking plays. While many players who appear on offensive or defensive squads also play similar roles on special teams (offensive linemen to block or defensive players to tackle), there are some specialist roles that are unique to the kicking game.

### Kicking specialists

Kicking specialists are in charge of kicking the football. Depending on the type of specialist and the play that was called, the responsibilities of these positions vary.

- **Kicker (K):** Also called a "placekicker", kickers handle kickoffs, extra points, and field goals. All three situations require the kicker to kick the ball off the ground, either from the hands of a holder or off of a tee. Some teams employ two kickers: one kicks extra points and field goals, and the other, known as a "kickoff specialist", handles kickoffs. Most, however, use a single kicker for both jobs, and rarely, the same player may also punt.
- **Kickoff specialist (KOS):** Kickoff specialists are exclusively used during kickoffs. Teams employ kickoff specialists if they feel neither their kicker nor punter is good enough at kicking off. Due to their specialized nature and the limited number of active roster spots, professional KOSs are rare.



## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

- **Punter (P):** The punter usually lines up 15 yards behind the line of scrimmage. However, this distance has to be shortened when it would result in being on or behind the end line. After receiving the snap, the punter drops the football and kicks, or "punts," it from the air in order to relinquish possession to the defensive team and to send the ball as far downfield as possible. This is usually done only on fourth down.

### Other special teams' positions

- **Holder (H):** The holder is usually positioned 7–8 yards from the line of scrimmage and holds the ball for the placekicker to kick. The player occupying this position is often a backup quarterback or a punter because of their "good hands," feel for the ball, and experience taking snaps from a long snapper or center during plays from scrimmage. A holder is occasionally used on kickoffs if the weather or field conditions repeatedly cause the ball to fall off the tee.
- **Long snapper (LS):** The long snapper is a specialized center who snaps the ball directly to the holder or punter. They are usually distinct from a regular center, as the ball often has to be snapped much farther back on kicking plays than on standard offensive plays. Long Snappers are generally the size of Tight Ends or Linebackers, as they have to not only have to be big enough to block for the punter or kicker, but also athletic enough to run down the field on coverage to try and tackle the return man.
- **Kick returner (KR) and punt returner (PR):** Returners are responsible for catching kicked balls (either on kickoffs or punts) and running the ball back. These are usually among the fastest players on a team and typically play either wide receiver or cornerback, as well. However, due to the relatively high likelihood of injury during kick returns, most professional teams will not regularly use their very best WRs or CBs as returners. Teams may also use the same player for both return positions or have a specific returner for punts and another for kick-offs.
- **Upback:** The upback is a blocking back who lines up approximately 1–3 yards behind the line of scrimmage in punting situations. Because the punter plays so far back, the back frequently makes the line calls and lets the long snapper know when the punter is ready to receive the ball. Their primary role is to act as the last line of defense for the





## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

punter; however, upbacks occasionally receive the snap instead on fake punts and will either pass or run with the football in those situations.

- **Gunner:** A gunner is a player on kickoffs and punts who specializes in running down the field very quickly in an attempt to tackle the returner. They usually line up near the sidelines where there will be fewer blockers which allows them to get down the field quickly.
  
- **Jammer:** Jammers try to slow down gunners during punts or kick-offs so the returners have more time to move down the field.



## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

### **Unit 5 - Understanding Offence, Defense and special team on the field of play**

Upon completion of this unit, students are competent when they are able to:

- Explain how a football offense operates
- List at least five offensive formations
- Explain how a football defense operates
- List at least two defensive fronts / formations
- Explain man to man defense
- Explain zone defense
- State the roles of the various special teams

#### **Content**

- Lining Up on the Line of Scrimmage - Is an imaginary line where the ball is placed. Before the snap, it changes based on what happened in the previous play. The line of scrimmage serves as a barrier for offense and defense, and it extends from sideline to sideline at which the ball is placed.
- Offensive line of scrimmage- there should be seven players from the offense of the line of scrimmage at the beginning of each play. Two of the seven players must be receivers that are eligible to catch the ball. The other offensive players must line up a few steps off the line of scrimmage. Before the snap, no offensive players are allowed to move unless brought in motion. If a player moves towards the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped it will result in a false start or illegal motion.
- Defensive line of scrimmage- Defensive team can line up all eleven players on the line of scrimmage. Unlike the offensive team, defensive players can move as much before the play has started. Defensive players can even cross the neutral zone, but they have to get out of the neutral zone or back across the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped. The defense receives a penalty if the ball is snapped and they are caught in the neutral zone.
- Snap- Starts with the ball on the ground with the long axis parallel to the side lines of the field. The act of snapping is carried out by a “snapper”, who delivers the ball to another player. A snapper may hand, throw or even roll the ball to the other player. This action can be done with one hand (Offensive lineman snapping) or with both hands (Long snapper snapping) snapping the ball into the back field.
- Blocking- or interference is a legal movement in which another player uses their body to obstruct another player's path.



## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

- Running plays
  - Blast or dive: The simplest of carries. Usually led by a blocking fullback, the running back takes a quick handoff from the quarterback and hits a hole between an offensive guard and a tackle. The offense calls this run when it needs a yard or two for a first down. The runner lowers his head and hopes to move the pile before the middle linebacker tackles him.
  - Counter: An intentional misdirection run on the part of the offense. The quarterback fakes a lateral toss to one back who's heading right, running parallel to the line of scrimmage. The quarterback then turns and hands off to the remaining runner in the backfield, generally a fullback, who runs toward the middle of the line, hoping to find an opening between either guard and the center.
  - Draw: A disguised run, which means it initially looks like a pass play. The offensive linemen draw back like they're going to pass-protect for the quarterback (QB). The quarterback then drops back and, instead of setting up to pass, he turns and hands the ball to the runner.
  - Off-tackle: A strong-side run, meaning the halfback (HB) heads toward the end of the line where the tight end, the extra blocker, lines up. The runner wants to take advantage of the hole supplied by the tackle, tight end, and his running mate, the fullback (FB). He can take the ball either around the tight end, as shown in the following figure, or outside the tackle. He hopes that the fullback will block the outside linebacker.
  - Pitch: The quarterback (QB) takes the snap and fakes a handoff to the first back (HB), who's heading directly toward the line of scrimmage; he then tosses (or pitches) the ball laterally to the other runner (FB), who has begun to move to the outside. The runner can either take the pitch outside or cut back toward the inside. Pitch plays can be designed to go in either direction.
  - Reverse: The halfback (HB) receives the handoff from the quarterback (QB) and then runs laterally behind the line of scrimmage. (The play can be designed for the back to run in either direction.) The ball carrier meets up with a wide receiver (WR) or flanker running toward him and then hands the ball to that receiver or flanker.
  - Slant: This run is exactly like it sounds. Instead of running straight toward the line of scrimmage, the runner (HB) slants his angle outside after he receives the ball. A slant is used to take advantage of defenses that over pursue, allowing offensive linemen to be more effective by pushing the defenders to one side.



## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

- Sweep: Begins with two or more offensive linemen (which in this figure are labeled as LG and RG) leaving their stances and running toward the outside of the line of scrimmage. The ball carrier (HB) takes a handoff from the quarterback (QB) and runs parallel to the line of scrimmage, waiting for his blockers to lead the way around the end. The run is designed to attack the defensive end, outside linebacker, and cornerback on a specific side.
  - Trap: Teams don't use this run very often because it requires quick and agile offensive linemen, and most teams use big blockers these days. On the trap, a guard (LG in the following figure) vacates his normal area, allowing the defensive player to cross the line of scrimmage and have a clear lane into the backfield. The guard from the opposite side then moves across the line and blocks the defender. This action by the guard is called pulling, hence the term pulling guard. The trap play has to be well-timed, and after the ball carrier receives the ball, he must quickly dart through the hole behind the trap block.
  - Veer: A quick-hitting run in which the ball can be handed to either running back, whose routes are determined by the slant or charge of the defensive linemen. The term veer comes from the back veering away from the defense. The quarterback (QB) hands off to the halfback (HB), who veers to the right behind his blockers.
  - [Running Plays in Football - dummies](#)
- Pass plays
  - Play action Personnel

### **Unit Six - equipment and safety procedures**

Upon completion of this unit, students are competent when they are able to:



## NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

- Apply football equipment on a body safely and properly
- Demonstrate football drills and techniques
- Analyse the importance of Strength and conditioning
- Simulate football game situation
- Show professionalism

### Content

- Helmet Shoulder pads, Thigh pads and Knee pads





# NATIONAL TACKLE



- Helmet



- Tackling drills
- Offensive drills



# NATIONAL TACKLE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

- Defensive drills
- Special team drills
- Endurance
- Mobility
- Flexibility
- Speed
- Strength
- Coordination

The game of football Code of conduct

## Assessment Requirements

	Assessed units	Assessment strategy	Weight
1	1, 2 & 3	Test 1- Football Basics, Rules and Regulation.	20%
2	4, 5 & 6	Practical assessment- Personnel, field of play and equipment	20%
3	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6	Final Exam	60%

## Reference:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/other\\_sports/american\\_football/3192002.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/other_sports/american_football/3192002.stm)

<https://www.dummies.com/sports/football/offense/running-plays-in-football/>