

The Grid™

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About “Yankee Rules” Football

History

As the twentieth century came to a close, American football as a sport was as exciting and popular as ever. The outdoor game continued to draw millions of fans each year, and a proliferation of new “indoor” leagues began, filling the summer months as well with gridiron battles. During the 2000s and 2010s, the popularity of this faster, nastier version of the game soared to heights its founders could never have imagined. Soon, players in other countries began organizing football clubs along the indoor American model. Fans around the world were drawn to this new game, with its unique intimacy (in many arenas, spectators could literally reach out and touch the players) and intensity (unlike the outdoor game, the same players stayed on the field for the entire match).

Finally, in 2019, representatives from twenty-three countries met in Canton, Ohio, to finalize what became known as the “Yankee Rules” brand of football. With a standardized set of rules, and a myriad of localized leagues, it was only a matter of time before a globe-spanning organization was formed.

Thus, the Federation of American Football Leagues (FAFL) was born. FAFL served as an overarching authority on rules disputes, player arbitration issues, and inter-league play. Two years later, in 2022, the first FAFL World Tournament was held. Conducted every four years, the tournament has grown until it now draws nearly one billion television viewers, with the victors receiving many millions of dollars in prize money.

Rules of Play

The official FAFL rules have changed very little in the three decades since the Caton Conference. Played on 60-yard (54m) field, the object is to carry the ball into the opposing team’s “end zone”, a 10-yard (9m) area extending past the end of the playing field. Eight players start the game for each team; three linemen, three ballcarriers (a halfback and two ends), a quarterback, and a defensive specialist, who replaces the quarterback when the opposing team has the ball.

The game is conducted in two 30-minute halves. The clock runs continuously, stopping only at certain points (such as after a change in possession of scoring play). Each team also has five “time outs” which can be called after any play in order to stop the clock. After the end of the second half, the team with the most points wins the game. Should the score be tied, an additional “overtime” period of 10 minutes is played. If the score is still tied, the game results in a draw (in playoff games, additional overtime periods are played until a winner is determined).

At the beginning of the game, a coin is flipped to determine which team starts with possession of the ball; the other team then automatically gains possession at the beginning of the second half.

Each half begins with a “kickoff”; the team not about to take possession kicks the ball towards the opposing team’s end zone. A player on the receiving team retrieves the ball and returns it as far as possible before being tackled (the player with the ball is considered “down” whenever any part of his body touches the ground aside from his hands or feet, or any part of his body leaves the field of play).

The team in possession of the ball attempts to advance it towards their opponents’ end zone in a series of plays (“downs”). To start each down, the ball is given (“snapped”) to the quarterback, who then does one of two things:

- **Running Play.** The quarterback gives the ball to one of the ball-carriers behind the “line of scrimmage” (the point at which the play begins), who then runs with it until tackled; or,
- **Passing Play.** The quarterback throws the ball forward across the line of scrimmage, again to one of the ball-carriers, who may then run with the ball until tackled.

In no case may the quarterback advance the ball beyond the line of scrimmage himself.

When a team first gains possession of the ball, a “first down” marker is placed 20 yards (18m) from the initial line of scrimmage. After four downs, should the offensive team fail to reach this marker, possession is turned over to the opposing team. After any play in which the offensive team reaches or passes the first down marker, the marker is moved 20 yards (18m) ahead of the new line of scrimmage and the team then has another four downs in which to move the ball the necessary distance.

Crossing into the opposing team’s end zone while carrying the ball (or catching a forward pass while in the end zone) is called a “touchdown”, and awards 6 points to the player’s team. The player who scored the touchdown may then attempt a place-kick from the 5-yard (4.5m) line for an “extra” point. The kicked ball must pass over a crossbar 10 feet (3m) high and between two upright posts 5 yards (4.5m) apart, centered on the back of the end zone. Afterwards, the opposing team receives possession of the ball via a kickoff.

At any point (although usually only on fourth down), rather than attempting to advance the ball, a team may instead try a place-kick (“field goal”) from the line of scrimmage. If this kick is successful, the team is awarded 3 points, and possession is given to the opposing team via a kickoff. If the kick is unsuccessful, the opposing team gains possession of the ball at the spot from which the kick was attempted.

The only other way to score points is by a “safety”. This occurs when a player carrying the ball is tackled in his own end zone; a safety awards 2 points to the tacking team. That team also receives possession of the ball via a kickoff.

About The Grid™

The Grid™ is a board game, officially licensed by FAFL. It simulates the excitement of Yankee Rules football, as players take control of their favorite teams and players. Each of the twelve teams in the 2050 FAFL World Tournament is represented by its complete 15-man roster. Play out your own tournament, and see if you have what it takes to coach your team to the championship!

Game Components

In order to play, you will need to have the following items on hand:

- **The Grid Rulebook:** What you are reading right now.
- **Game Boards:** Two of these are included in this game; one for each player.
- **Player Cards:** This game comes with 30 player cards, each representing a member of one of the teams in this year’s FAFL World Tournament. There are also 30 blank player cards, the use of which is detailed later.
- **Play-Calling Cards:** Each player receives a set of 20 play-calling cards, used to (you guessed it) call the plays each team will run. Each card denotes one of five types of play (Run Inside, Run Outside, Flat Pass, Short Pass, and Long Pass) and a specific ball-carrier (Halfback, Left End, or Right End). There is also one “No Key” card for each play type – these are only used on defense.
- **Playing Cards (Not included):** You will also need to have a standard deck of 52 playing cards, used in this game to keep time and determine when certain special events take place. This deck is hereafter referred to as the “timing deck”.
- **Game Log Sheet:** Each game should have a log sheet filled out for it; players are given permission to make copies of the sample included with this rulebook, or a simple piece of scratch paper can be used. This is how you keep track of the score, as well as statistics for each player (if desired).
- **Dice (Not included):** This game makes use of “polyhedral” dice; there are six types, each referred to by the number of sides it has. The standard cubical die used in most board games has six sides, and is therefore abbreviated as “d6”. The other five die types are d4, d8, d10, d12, and d20. These dice should be

available at any gaming or hobby store. Players will need at least one d20 and two each of the other five types.

- **Markers (Not included):** Each player should have several markers handy; these are used to indicate various things on the game boards. Pennies make very nice (and cheap) markers.

Defining the Players

As indicated earlier, The Grid is a simulation of real-world Yankee Rules football. Obviously, the key to such a simulation are the players themselves. Included with these rules are cards for 30 players; 15 from each of two teams entered in this year's FAFL World Tournament.

Players are divided into three basic types: quarterbacks (QBs), halfback-ends (HBEs), and linemen (LNs). Each type has a different player card; some samples are illustrated below.

- **Quarterbacks:** QBs are the heart and soul of the team while on offense. They call the play to be run, make audibles to adjust to the defensive alignment, and most importantly, are the first to touch the football on every play. QBs have the following abilities:
 - *Passing:* This is an indication of how well the QB throws the ball at each of three distances: flat, short, and long. The higher this number, the more accurate the QB is at throwing that particular type of pass.
 - *Pass Yards:* This is a reflection of the QB's ability to put the ball where a receiver can "make a play". Pass yards is defined by a die type: d4, d6, d8, d10, or d12. The bigger this die, the better the QB is able to hit his receivers in stride.
 - *Interception:* A QB's interception rating determines how safe he is when throwing into coverage. The bigger the QB's interception die, the less likely he is to throw an interception.
 - *Injury:* The player's injury die indicates how susceptible to injury he is. The higher this die, the less likely the player is to suffer an injury during the game.
- **Halfback-Ends:** Players designated as HBEs can play at either the halfback (HB), left end (LE), or right end (RE) position; they are also commonly referred to as "ball-carriers". Ball-carriers are defined by the following characteristics:
 - *Running/Passing Yards:* Each ball-carrier has two yardage dice; one for running plays, and the other for passing plays. In each case the die indicates how well the ball-carrier gains yardage on that particular type of play. The larger the die type, the more yards the player will gain.
 - *Run/Pass Defense:* These numbers are combined into team Run & Pass Defense ratings, which directly affect how well an opponent can run plays of each type. The higher this number, the better the ball-carrier is at playing defense against the run or pass.
 - *Kicking:* Ball-carriers are also responsible for place-kicking; the player who scores a touchdown is responsible for kicking the point-after-touchdown (extra point), while any of the ball-carriers on the field may attempt a field goal. This is rated as a die type; the larger this die, the more accurate a place-kicker the player is.
 - *Fumble:* Every ball-carrier has a chance to fumble the ball after a given play; the frequency at which this happens is determined by that player's fumble die. The larger this die, the less likely the player is to put the ball on the ground.
 - *Injury:* The player's injury die indicates how susceptible to injury he is. The higher this die, the less likely the player is to suffer an injury during the game.
- **Linemen:** The three players "up front" are referred to as LNs – the center (C) and left/right guards (LG/RG). LNs are responsible for blocking on offense, and for overcoming opposing blocks while on defense. LNs are rated in the following categories:

- *Run/Pass Blocking:* These numbers are combined into team Run & Pass Blocking ratings, which then determine how well the team blocks on that type of play. The higher this number, the better a run or pass blocker the player is.
- *Run/Pass Defense:* These numbers are combined into team Run & Pass Defense ratings, which directly affect how well an opponent can run plays of each type. The higher this number, the better the LN is at playing defense against the run or pass.
- *Injury:* The player's injury die indicates how susceptible to injury he is. The higher this die, the less likely the player is to suffer an injury during the game.

Setting Up

Creating a Team

Before you can actually play the game, it will be necessary for you to gather your team together. Each team in The Grid consists of 15 players (in order to avoid confusion, you and your opponent will be called "coaches" from now on, while the term "player" will refer to those individuals represented by your player cards). Each team must contain at least two QBs, five HBEs, and five LNs. The remaining three players can be of any type desired by the coach.

There are four basic ways by which teams can be selected:

- **Real Teams:** As mentioned above, the 30 player cards in this game represent members of two teams from this year's FAFL World Tournament. One way of dividing players is for each coach to simply take the 15 players from one of these teams. This is the recommended method for choosing teams in your first game.
- **Draft Day:** This is especially appropriate when coaches plan on running their own league. Gather together all of the coaches who are to be involved, and divide the available player cards by position – note that it will be necessary for you to have enough different players for all the coaches in the league. The Grid has been released in six distinct "sets"; each set contains 30 players from two different teams. You should have at least one set available for every two coaches in the league. Alternatively, you can create your own players (see below). Randomly determine a draft order, and take turns selecting players until all coaches have a full roster of 15.
- **The Auction:** Similar to but even more interesting than "draft day" is the auction. Give each coach in the league \$100 (not real money, of course, unless you have the cash to spare!). Shuffle all of the player cards into a single pile, and flip over the top five. Pick a coach at random; that coach selects one of the face-up player cards and opens the bidding on that player (bidding must be in whole-dollar increments). Then, continuing clockwise around the table, the other coaches may either increase the bid or pass. Once a coach passes on a player, he may not re-enter the bidding on that player. The winner deducts the appropriate amount from the money he has to spend, and then claims that player for his roster. The coach to his left then flips over the top card from the pile and the process continues until all coaches have 15 players for their teams.
- **Create Your Own:** Finally, coaches may choose to randomly create their own teams. The rules for this are given later.

Arranging the Playing Area

Just prior to starting the game, coaches should do the following:

1. Take one of the game boards and place it in front of you.
2. Select eight of your players as your starting lineup; place them in the appropriate boxes on your game board. Only QBs can play the QB position; HBEs can play either HB, LE, or RE; and LN can play LG, C, or RG. The defensive specialist (DS) can be either an HBE or LN. (A team with an extra LN in the DS position is

playing a “4-3” defense, while an extra HBE denotes a “3-4” defense. This has no effect on play, but is interesting anyway...)

3. Take one marker and place it in the appropriate box for your LNs’ run blocking total. For example, if your LNs have run blocking scores of 0, 1, and 2, you would put a marker in the “2-3” box, as your LNs have a total run blocking value of 3. Do the same thing for your pass blocking total. If at any point you change players (due to injury, for example), you will need to recalculate these scores and move the markers as necessary. The locations of these markers indicate your team’s run and pass blocking dice, respectively.
4. Take one marker and place it in the appropriate box for your players’ run defense total – do not include the QB (who has no defensive values, anyway), but do include the DS. For example, if your players have run defense values of 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 2, and 2, you would place a marker in the “6-8” box, as your players have a run defense total of 6. Do the same thing for your pass defense total. If at any point you change players (due to injury, for example), you will need to recalculate these scores and move the markers as necessary. The locations of these markers indicate your team’s run and pass defense modifiers, respectively.
5. Put a marker in the “5” box under “Time Outs”. Whenever you call a time out during the game, move this marker to the next-lower number. Once the marker reaches zero, you cannot call any more time outs. Remember that time outs do not reset for the second half, so be sure to conserve some for the end of the game!
6. One coach should keep track of the offensive team’s progress. Two markers are used for this – one for the current line of scrimmage, and the other for the first down marker. If using pennies, flip the line of scrimmage marker to “heads”, and the first down marker to “tails”. These markers should be placed on the yardage track in the middle of the appropriate coach’s game board. Note that yardage is only gained (or lost) in 5-yard increments; each box on the yardage track indicates 5 “real” yards (4.5m).
7. The other coach should keep track of the current down by placing a marker in the “1” box under “Down” on his game board. After each play, this marker should be moved to the next-higher number, unless the play resulted in a first down, in which case the marker should be moved back to the “1” box. After fourth down (or after a score), possession is turned over to the opposing team, and the marker is again moved to the “1” box.
8. Each coach should take one set of 20 play-calling cards.
9. Shuffle the 52-card deck of playing cards (the “timing deck”) and set it in between the two coaches.
10. You are now ready to begin!

Playing the Game

The rules in this section govern how a game of The Grid is conducted. While the task may seem a bit daunting at first, a quick glance at what follows should be enough to get things rolling; you should find that the process is relatively straightforward, and after a short while, the number of times you need to consult the rulebook will be cut to a minimum.

The Coin Toss

To begin the game, flip a coin (or roll a die), and have the visiting team declare heads or tails (or odds/evens). The winner of the toss has the option of getting possession of the ball at the beginning of the first half or the beginning of the second half. The other team then receives possession at the beginning of the other half.

The Kickoff

At the beginning of each half, and after any scoring play, a kickoff is conducted. This is done by placing the ball marker in the receiving team’s end zone. The receiving coach then rolls two six-sided dice (d6); the number on the LOWER die indicates how many boxes the ball marker should be moved towards the opposing end zone, representing the length of the return.

This becomes the initial line of scrimmage, and the first down marker should be placed 20 yards (18m), or four boxes, ahead of the ball marker.

The top card from the timing deck is flipped after a kickoff; however, it has no effect, regardless of suit (see below for more information about the timing deck).

Drives

Each series of plays run by a team is referred to as a “drive”; whenever the ball is turned over to the defensive team for any reason, a new drive begins.

At the start of each drive, the down marker should be placed in the “1” box; after each play, the marker is moved ahead one space. If the marker is already at “4”, and the offense has failed to achieve a first down (see below), the ball is immediately turned over.

Selecting Plays

At the start of each play, each coach first selects a play card and places it face-down in front of him.

- The offensive coach chooses a play (run inside, run outside, flat pass, short pass, or long pass) and a ball-carrier (HB, LE, or RE). The HB cannot catch a long pass; neither end can run inside. Further, a long pass cannot be called when the line of scrimmage is at the defensive 15-yard (13.5m) line or closer; likewise, a short pass cannot be called from the defensive team’s 5-yard (4.5m) line.
- The defensive coach chooses the basic play against which his team will be primarily defending, as well as a defensive “key” – indicating that the defense will be focusing on one ball-carrier in particular – or else using one of the “No Key” cards.

After the coaches have chosen their play cards, they are revealed.

Resolving a Play

On any given play, the offensive coach will roll three dice.

- For a running play, the coach will roll a d20, the appropriate ball-carrier’s run yardage die, and the team’s run blocking die.
- For a passing play, the coach will roll a d20, the QB’s passing die, and the appropriate ball-carrier’s pass yardage die.

The d20 is modified by the following circumstances:

Run or Pass Defense total is 0-2	+2
Run or Pass Defense total is 3-5	+1
Run or Pass Defense total is 6-8	0
Run or Pass Defense total is 9-11	-1
Run or Pass Defense total is 12-14	-2
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Defense chose the same play as the offense	-5
Defense chose the same play type (run or pass) as the offense	0
Defense chose the opposite play type as the offense	+2
Quarterback’s Flat/Short/Long pass rating	± Rating*
Defense keying on the correct ball-carrier	-2
Defense chose “No Key”	0
Defense keying on the wrong ball-carrier	+1
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Play originates at the defensive 20- or 15-yard (18 or 13.5m) line	-1
Play originates at the defensive 10- or 5-yard (9 or 4.5m) line	-2

*Only on the appropriate pass play.

The modified d20 roll is compared to the offensive play card to determine the result of the play:

<i>Result</i>	<i>Effect</i>
NG	No gain.
Inc	Incomplete pass; no gain.
5 Yds.	The ball marker is moved forward 5 yards (4.5m), or one space on the yardage track.
Dice	The ball marker is moved forward a number of spaces equal to the LOWER of the two remaining dice.
Dice +5	The ball marker is moved forward a number of spaces equal to the LOWER of the two remaining dice PLUS ONE (+5 yards, or 4.5m).
Dice +15	The ball marker is moved forward a number of spaces equal to the LOWER of the two remaining dice PLUS THREE (+15 yards, or 13.5m).

The Timing Deck

After the initial play resolution has been completed, flip the top card on the timing deck, and check its suit:

- **Hearts:** Possible injury. The coaches must each roll the appropriate injury die for the indicated player:

<i>Card</i>	<i>Player</i>
Ace	Quarterback/Defensive Specialist
2 or 3	Left Guard
4 or 5	Center
6 or 7	Right Guard
8	Halfback
9	Right End
10	Left End
J, Q, K	Ball-carrier (no defensive injury)

If the die comes up a 1, then the player has been injured, and must be removed from the game. Take the appropriate player card from the game board, and select one of your reserve players to fill the vacancy. Injured players may not return to the game.

- **Diamonds:** No effect (reserved for future rules).
- **Clubs:** Possible sack (incomplete pass play only) or loss of yardage (“No Gain” running play only). The offensive coach must roll the team’s run or pass blocking die, whichever is appropriate; on a roll of 1, the play results in a loss of 10 yards (9m) on an incomplete pass play, or a loss of 5 yards (4.5m) on a “No Gain” running play.
- **Spades:** Possible turnover (interception or fumble). On an incomplete pass play, the offensive coach should roll the QB’s interception die; if it comes up a 1, the ball was intercepted instead of incomplete. On any other play, roll the ball-carrier’s fumble die; on a roll of 1, the ball is fumbled.

The point at which an interception occurs depends on the type of pass being attempted: flat pass = 5 yards (4.5m); short pass = 10 yards (9m); long pass = 20 yards (18m). The ball marker should be moved the appropriate number of boxes towards the defensive end zone; if the ball marker enters the end zone, then the interception results in a “touchback”, and the defensive team takes possession of the ball at their own 20-yard (18m) line. Otherwise, the defensive coach should roll two six-sided dice (d6). The LOWER of the two dice indicates the number of boxes the ball marker should be moved back towards the offensive end zone, indicating the length of the return; if the ball marker enters the end zone, then a touchdown is scored (see below).

On a fumble, each coach should roll a d20; the coach with the higher roll gains possession of the ball at the point of the fumble (ties go to the offensive coach). NOTE: The down marker is NOT automatically reset to “1” if the offense recovers the fumble, but it is reset should the defense recover, as this would be a change of possession.

After any effects of this first card are resolved, the offensive coach must turn over either one or two more cards from the timing deck, except in the following cases:

- Field goal attempt
- Fumble recovered by the defense
- Interception
- Safety
- Time out (may be called by either coach before extra cards are flipped)
- Touchdown
- Unsuccessful fourth down attempt (turnover on downs)

These extra cards have no effect on the game other than to represent the passage of time on the game clock. When the last card in the timing deck has been flipped, the half is over.

First and Fourth Downs

If, after the play has been resolved, the ball marker has been moved up to or beyond the first down marker, a first down results. The down marker is moved back to “1”, and the first down marker is moved 20 yards (18m), or four boxes on the yardage track, ahead of the ball’s new location.

Otherwise, move the down marker ahead one space; if the marker was already on “4”, and the offense failed to achieve a first down, then the defensive team takes possession of the ball at its current location.

Scoring

Touchdowns

If the yardage gained on a play moves the ball marker into the opposing team’s end zone, a touchdown has been scored. This awards 6 points to the scoring team. Only one card is flipped in the timing deck after a touchdown, and it has no effect regardless of suit.

The ball-carrier must then attempt a point-after-touchdown (PAT, or “extra point”). This is done by rolling the appropriate player’s kicking die; if the result is a 1, the extra point is failed. Otherwise, the scoring team receives an additional point (for a total of 7). No cards are flipped from the timing deck after an extra point attempt.

After a touchdown, the scoring team gives possession to their opponent via a kickoff.

Field Goals

At any point, instead of calling a regular play, the offensive coach may decide to attempt a field goal. In this case, neither coach needs to select a play card.

A field goal is attempted by first choosing the player who will make the attempt; this can be the HB or either end.

Then, count the number of spaces on the yardage track from the ball’s current location to the opposing end zone; for example, if the ball is on the 15-yard (13.5m) line, there are three boxes between it and the end zone.

Finally, the chosen player’s kicking die should be rolled a number of times equal to this distance (in our example, three times). If any of these dice come up 1, the kick has failed; otherwise, the field goal is successful and the offensive team receives 3 points. Possession is then given to the defensive team via a kickoff.

After a failed field goal attempt, the defensive team gains possession at the spot from which the field goal was attempted.

Only one card from the timing deck is flipped after a field goal attempt, and it has no effect regardless of suit.

Safeties

If a loss of yardage moves the ball marker into the offensive team’s end zone, then a safety results. The defensive team is awarded 2 points, and receives possession of the ball via a kickoff.

Winning the Game

At the end of the second half, the team with the most points wins.

Overtime

If the score is tied after the second half, play an overtime period. Only 17 cards (randomly chosen) are placed into the timing deck. A coin toss should be conducted to determine first possession in the overtime period. If the score is still tied after the overtime period, the game is a draw.

In the playoffs, or whenever a winner must be determined, play additional overtime periods until there is a winner. First possession should alternate between teams for each period.

Other Stuff

Time Outs

Whenever a coach calls a time out, that team's time out marker should be moved to the next-lowest number. If the marker reaches zero, the team may no longer call any time outs.

Time outs are good for two things: 1) stopping the clock (obviously), and 2) formulating strategy for the upcoming play. During the first play after a time out, the coach who called the time out has the option of forcing a re-roll of the play dice. The result of this second roll is final. The dice cannot be re-rolled after a card from the timing deck has been flipped.

Each team receives two time outs in an overtime period; unused time outs do not carry over from the second half into overtime (or from overtime to overtime).

Substitutions

Substitutions (other than for injuries) are allowed only at halftime, and before each overtime period. Once a player has been taken out of the game, he may not re-enter the game.