

Ball Carrier: Any player in possession of the football.

Blind Side: The side opposite the direction a player is facing.

Blitz: When a defensive player rushes into the backfield in order to tackle the quarterback behind the line of scrimmage.

Block: The act of engaging an opposing player to keep him from getting to the ball carrier.

Box: Area of the Line of Scrimmage in between and behind the Offensive Tackles.

Cadence: The sequence of words and or numbers a quarterback calls out waiting for the ball to be snapped.

Chain Gang: Assistants to the officials that mark where a team begins a series of downs, the current Line of Scrimmage, and the distance the team needs to go to attain another first down.

Chop Block: An illegal block below the knees.

Clipping: An illegal block in which a player hits an opponent from behind.

Dead Ball: The period of time between plays when the ball is no longer in play.

Defensive Holding (Illegal Use of the Hands): Use of the hands to hold or push an offensive player.

Delay of Game: A penalty called on a team for either letting the play clock expire before snapping the ball or calling a time out after having already used all they were allotted by rule.

Down: Period of time starting when the ball is put into play and ending when the ball is ruled dead.

Drive: The series of plays that begins at the time an offense takes possession of the ball until the point where they either score or turn the ball over to the other team.

Encroachment: A foul in which a defender makes contact with a member of the offense before the snap.

End Zone: A 10-yard section stretching the width of the field at both ends of the playing field.

Extra Point (Point After Touchdown, PAT): After a touchdown, the scoring team is allowed to add additional points by running another play that results in crossing the goal line again or kicking the football through the uprights of the goalpost. To promote kicking at the youth level, kicking is worth two points while running is worth only one.

Face Mask: 1. The bars attached to a football helmet that cover a player's face. 2. A foul for grabbing an opponent's face mask.

Fair Catch: When the player returning a punt signals he will catch the ball without advancing it. He signals this by waving his extended arm from side to side over his head, making it illegal for the opposition to tackle him.

False Start: When an offensive player not in motion moves before the ball is snapped.

Field Goal: A scoring play worth three points that involves a placekicker kicking the ball through the uprights of the goalpost in the opponent's end zone from anywhere on the field.

Formation: A predetermined alignment that the offense or defense uses.

Fumble: When any offensive player loses possession of the football before a play is blown dead.

Gap: The open space between players along the line of scrimmage.

Goal Line: The line that separates the end zone from the rest of the playing field.

Goal Post: The poles at the rear of each end zone through which teams will kick the ball in order to score field goals and extra points.

Handoff: The act of giving the ball to another player.

Hash Marks: The two rows of lines that separate the field into thirds marked off in one-yard increments.

Holding: An illegal action where one player keeps another from advancing by grabbing him and holding him back.

Hole Number: A number assigned to each gap or space between the five offensive linemen and the tight end.

Huddle: When the 11 players on the field from one team form a group to discuss the upcoming play.

Illegal Formation: An offensive formation in which not enough players are on the line of scrimmage. By rule, a team must have seven men lined up on the line of scrimmage to begin every offensive play.

Illegal Motion: When two offensive players are in motion at the same time when the ball is snapped.

Illegal Shift: A foul by the offense where a player fails to reset for at least one second after two players shift position at the same time.

Intentional Grounding: When a quarterback, while he is still in the area between the tackles, purposely throws the ball out of bounds or into the ground to avoid taking a sack.

Interception: A pass that is caught by a defensive player, giving his team possession of the ball.

Interference: 1. Illegally hampering a player's opportunity to catch a pass.

Kickoff: A free kick that puts the ball into play at the start of the first and third periods and after every touchdown and field goal.

Lateral: A sideways or backwards pass thrown from one player to another.

Line of Scrimmage: An imaginary line stretching the width of the field that separates the two teams prior to the snap of the ball.

Motion: When an offensive player begins to move laterally behind the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped.

Neutral Zone: An area defined by the length of the ball that stretches from sideline to sideline, only the Center can be in the neutral zone before the ball is snapped.

Offensive Holding: A foul in which an offensive player keeps a defender from advancing by grasping him with his hands or arms. Offensive linemen are allowed to use their hands as long as they keep

them to the inside of a defender's body, but if they get to the outside of the defender's body, it is a penalty.

Offensive Pass Interference: A penalty in which an offensive player significantly hinders a defensive player's opportunity to intercept a forward pass or pushes off of the defender to give himself an advantage.

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

Pass Interference: Illegally hindering another player's chances of catching a forward pass.

PAT (Point After Touchdown): See Extra Point.

Personal Foul: A flagrant illegal act that is generally deemed to unnecessarily risk the health of other players. Personal fouls include, but are not limited to late hits, unnecessary roughness, and blows to the head.

Pitch: The act of the quarterback tossing the ball to a running back who is moving laterally away from him.

Pocket: The area behind the line of scrimmage and between the two offensive tackles.

Possession: 1. When a team has control of the ball, they are considered to be in possession of it.
2. When a player maintains control of the ball while touching both feet, or any other part of his body other than his hands, to the ground.

Pulling: When a player leaves one area of the field, generally moving back and then over, to block in an area other than his normal position.

Recovery: Taking control of a ball that has been fumbled.

Red Zone: The last 20 yards before the end zone.

Return: The act of bringing the ball back in the opposite direction after a change of possession.

Sack: Any tackle of the quarterback behind the line of scrimmage.

Safety: 1. Two-points scored by the defense when one of its players tackles an opponent in possession of the ball in the opponent's end zone. 2. A defensive player who lines up in the secondary between, but generally deeper than the cornerbacks.

Scheme: A term used to describe offensive and defensive formations and the overall strategy for using such a formation.

Snap: The action in which the ball is thrown or handed by the center to the quarterback, to the holder on a kick attempt, or to the punter.

Strong Side: The side of the offense that has more people, usually the Tight End side.

Stunt: A pass-rushing maneuver by two defensive linemen in which they alter their course to the quarterback, hoping to confuse the offensive linemen.

Tackle: 1. To bring down an offensive player who has the ball. 2. Also refers to a position on both the defensive and offensive lines.

Takeaway: When a defense forces a fumble and recovers the ball or registers an interception.

Touchback: A play in which the ball is ruled dead on or behind a team's own goal line, generally after a kickoff, punt, interception, or fumble. After a touchback, the ball is spotted on the offense's 20-yard line.

Touchdown: A scoring play in which any part of the ball, while legally in the possession of a player who is in-bounds, crosses the plane of the opponent's goal line.

Turnover: A loss of possession of the ball via a fumble or interception.

Weak Side: The side of the offense that has less people, usually the side without a Tight End.