

Football

How the Game is Played

The game begins with a kickoff. A player on one team kicks the ball from a designated yard line off a tee toward the opponent's goalline. A player of either team can field the ball after it travels 10 yards downfield. If, as usually happens, a player on the receiving team gains possession, that player tries to advance the ball as far as possible toward the kicking team's goal line. The kicking team tries to tackle the ballcarrier, pull the ballcarrier's flag (in flag football), or touch the ballcarrier (in touch football) as close to the receiving team's goal as possible. When any of these three things happen or the ball carrier runs out of bounds, the officials whistle the ball dead and momentarily stop play.

The point where play resumes is called the *line of scrimmage*. The line of scrimmage stretches from one sideline to the other, passing through the point of ball nearest to the defense. The team with the ball is the offense; the opposing team is the defense. In 11-man football, the offensive team must begin each play with at least 7 players at the line of scrimmage, facing the defense. Each play starts when one of these linemen, the center, snaps the ball to a teammate, typically the quarterback.

The offense is allowed four plays, or downs, to advance the football 10 yards towards the opponent's goal line. If successful, the offense is given a new set of downs and can maintain possession until it:

- is stopped by the defense and has to punt, typically on fourth down;
- turns the ball over to the defense by means of a fumble, interception, or failure to gain 10 yards in 4 attempts;
- attempts a field goal;
- scores a touchdown

In flag and touch football a team achieves a first down by passing a stationary *zone line to gain*, located at the 20- and 40-yard lines.

Team Objectives

The primary objective of the offensive team is to score, although many coaches also want their offenses to maintain possession of the ball for as long as possible. By doing so, they reduce the number of chances the opposing teams offense has to score.

The defensive team's main objective is to prevent the offense from scoring. In addition, the defensive team tries to make the offense give up possession of the ball as far as possible from the goal line it is defending.

What's the Score?

Description

<u>Play</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Description</u>
Touchdown	6	Player in control of the ball crosses the vertical plane of the opponents goal line.
Field Goal	3	Placekick from scrimmage that, without touching the ground, goes through the uprights of the goal.
Point After Touchdown	2	Scoring on a run or pass play from the 2-yard line.
Point After Touchdown	1	Placekick from the 2-yard line. (15 yard line in NFL)
Safety	2	Offensive player is tackled or loses ball out-of-bounds in his own end zone.