Guide for Statisticians

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Statistics Crew

The statistics crew is selected by the NFL and shall have the responsibility to make decisions involving judgment, i.e., yardage on all plays, etc., subject to review by the NFL and the League's official statistician. The statistics crew at each game is to provide the media and club personnel with statistical reports, as requested. These forms are generated by the Game Statistics and Information System (GSIS) and the home club is responsible for circulating the reports to all working media in the press box.

Games Played

A player is credited with a game played when he participated in at least one play, even if the only play(s) in which he is involved is (are) nullified by penalty, or even if no playing time is consumed.

Credit a player with a game started when he participates in Team A's first offensive play, or Team B's first offensive play. For purposes of this rule, the following plays are not regarded as offensive plays:

1. A kickoff
2. An extra-point attempt
3. A punt or a field-goal attempt
4. A free kick following a safety

A play nullified by a penalty shall be regarded as a play for purposes of this rule.

> *Example I*: A player on Team A returns the opening kickoff to Team B's 2-yard line. On first down, Team A uses a double tight-end offense; the second tight end is used in place of a wide receiver, who is the usual starter. On first-and-goal, Team A is penalized for holding. On first-and-goal from the 12, the wide receiver replaces the second tight end in the lineup. *Scoring*: Credit the tight end with a game started; no game started for the wide receiver.

Determining the Yard Line

If any point of the football rests on or above any yard stripe, future action is to be computed from that yard line. However, if all of the football has been advanced beyond any yard stripe, future action is computed from the first yard line in advance of the football.

The principle is to be followed on all spotting situations, regardless of down, with the following exceptions:

1. In certain situations where there is less than a yard to gain for a first down, it may be necessary to spot the ball back one yard to conform with the principle that there must always be, for statistical purposes, at least one yard remaining to be gained for a first down. This principle also shall be applied when a team loses the ball to its opponent on downs.

   NOTE: There may be times when penalty yardage is statistically different than penalty yardage by rule. In these situations, credit penalty yardage from the spot of enforcement to the line of scrimmage of the next play. For example, the offense commits a false start on fourth-and-inches, and the next play begins four statistical

yards behind the previous spot. Four penalty yards would be charged to the offense, rather than five.

2. When, on first down, the ball rests just outside a defensive team's 10-yard line, it will be necessary to designate the scrimmage line at the 11 since it would be possible for the offensive team to advance for a first down without scoring a touchdown.
3. See Field Goal section for determining yard line of attempts.

NOTE: When there is a change of possession and the ball rests between two yard stripes, the line of scrimmage may change as the "nose" of the football is reversed.

First Downs

Statistics are to be compiled on all first downs made via rushing, passing, and penalties.

First downs are compiled only from plays originating from the line of scrimmage. A first down shall be credited on each touchdown resulting from rushes or forward passes, regardless of the distance covered.

If a fumble occurs on a scrimmage play and the resultant fumble return or loose ball yardage provides the yardage necessary for a first down or a touchdown, the first down shall be credited to the category initiating the action. (For a passing category to be initiated, a pass must be thrown.) A first down is never scored if the team loses possession of the ball on the play, even if the required distance is achieved, or even if a team loses and then regains possession on the same play.

On aborted plays where there is a fumble and subsequent recovery, and the advance results in a first down or a touchdown, it shall be considered a first down rushing. Similarly, if following a blocked punt or field-goal attempt, a player on the kicking team recovers and runs for a first down or a touchdown, credit a first down rushing, even though any yardage gained is treated as miscellaneous yardage.

> *Example I:* Passer attempting to pass fumbles. Teammate recovers and advances to first down. This is a *first down rushing*, but yardage is *fumble yardage* (See Fumble section).

Ordinarily, there can be only one first down on a play. However, if a team advances by scrimmage action enough yardage for a first down and then a penalty that would ordinarily produce a first down (i.e., any *automatic first down* penalty or *15-yard penalty*) is assessed against the defense from the spot at which the scrimmage play concludes, two first downs (one by the scrimmage category initiating the action and one by penalty) shall be credited.

On the last play of the second or fourth quarter, or of an overtime period, if, in the scorer's judgment, the offensive team advances the ball to a first down, credit should be given whether or not the officials so signify.

Third-Down Efficiency

A third-down attempt is credited whenever the offensive team is credited with either a rushing attempt, a pass, or a sack on its third-down play. A third-down conversion is credited whenever the offensive team is credited with either a first down rushing or a first down passing on its third-down play.

EXCEPTION: Do not credit a third-down attempt when the offensive team commits a foul (and the penalty is accepted by the defense), the spot of enforcement is in advance of the line of scrimmage, and the down remains the same.

> *Example I*: Third-and-2 at midfield. Running back gains three yards but defense is offside. Offense elects to take a penalty; first-and-10 at the 45. *Scoring*: No entry is made in the third-down efficiency category, since the first down was awarded by penalty.
>
> *Example II*: Third-and-2 at midfield. Running back gains three yards, and defensive team is charged with face mask foul, moving the ball to the 32. *Scoring*: Two first downs are awarded (one rushing, one by penalty); credit a third-down attempt and conversion, since the offense had made a first down without regard to the penalty.
>
> *Example III*: Third-and-10 at midfield. Offensive team ahead with 30 seconds remaining in the game. Quarterback falls to the ground after taking the snap, making no effort to gain yardage. *Scoring*: One third-down attempt.
>
> *Example IV*: Third-and-20 at offensive team's 1-yard line. Quarterback punts from behind the line of scrimmage. *Scoring*: No third-down attempt.
>
> *Example V*: Third-and-10 at midfield. Running back gains six yards, but a teammate is guilty of a personal foul, three yards in advance of the line of scrimmage. *Scoring*: Running back gets one rush for three yards, and his team is charged with a 15-yard penalty. No third-down attempt is scored, since the spot of enforcement of the foul is ahead of the line of scrimmage, and the down is replayed. The next play is third-and-22 at the offensive team's 38.
>
> *Example VI*: Third-and-10 at midfield. Quarterback scrambles one yard beyond the line, then throws a forward pass caught by a teammate. *Scoring*: Quarterback gets one rush for one yard, his team gets a five-yard penalty, and a third-down attempt is scored, since the down changes. Next play is fourth-and-14 at the offensive team's 46.

Fourth-Down Efficiency

The rules are the same as for third-down efficiency.

Time of Possession

Time of possession is computed from the first play initiated by a team from the line of scrimmage until it loses possession, or there is a score, or the half or the game ends. When a change of possession (punt, fumble, interception, blocked kick) occurs during a play, consider the original team in possession until the play ends.

EXCEPTION: On a kickoff or on a free kick following a safety, all time consumed is credited to the team that first gains possession of the kick. If neither team gains possession and the kick goes out of bounds, all time consumed is credited to the receiving team. If a penalty causes one or more kickoffs to be nullified, time consumed on the nullified play(s) is credited to the team that is credited with the time on the first kickoff play that is not nullified. If the half ends after one or more nullified kickoff plays, time consumed on the nullified play(s) is credited to the kicking team.

> *Example I*: Kickoff with 8:00 to play in the first quarter bounces off receiving team player and is recovered by kicking team with 7:50 to play. *Scoring*: Ten seconds of possession time is credited to kicking team, since it was the team that first *gained possession* of the kickoff.
>
> *Example II*: Second-and-goal at the 1-yard line. Quarterback fumbles snap, defensive player recovers and runs the length of the field for a touchdown. Play consumes 25 seconds. *Scoring*: Original offensive team (the team that lost the fumble) is credited with 25 seconds of possession time.

Measuring a Scoring Drive

Scoring drive yardage is measured from the initial line of scrimmage to the goal line, in the event of a touchdown, or from the initial line of scrimmage to the last line of scrimmage for field goals, not the spot from which the kick is attempted. The number of plays in a drive shall be the sum of the number of rushing attempts, passes, sacks and field-goal attempts in that drive. Also, a separate notation shall be made of the number of penalties against the defensive team during the drive. The entire summary shall be expressed in this style: An 80-yard touchdown drive in six plays, plus two penalties.

Penalty Plays

Plays in which penalties are involved are scored as follows:

1. When a penalty is enforced from the *previous spot* (line of scrimmage or spot of a kickoff or free kick), no rushing attempt, pass, sack, punt, or field-goal attempt is recorded, except if there is a loss of down. This includes all live-ball penalties where the play ends at or behind the line of scrimmage.

   NOTE: Penalties for hits to a defenseless receiver should be enforced from the previous spot.

2. When a penalty is enforced from a spot other than the *previous spot*, credit the appropriate player(s) with a rushing attempt, pass, sack, punt, punt return, kickoff return, or field-goal attempt, consistent with the scoring rules. A penalty and penalty yardage are also recorded against the offending team.

   A. When the penalty is enforced from the *dead ball spot* (spot at which a play ended), credit the responsible player(s) with yards gained or lost to the spot of enforcement. Penalty yardage is measured from there.

   B. When the spot of enforcement is beyond the line of scrimmage, or in advance of the spot of possession during a play in which possession changes, credit the responsible player(s) with yards gained or lost to the spot of enforcement. Penalty yardage is measured from there. *EXCEPTION*: On kickoff returns, the spot at which the return begins is used instead of the spot of possession. Usually, these spots will be the same, but they may be different on a play in which the receiver of the kickoff does not try to advance before lateralling to a teammate.

      Fumbles by the offense should be recorded. If the fumble occurred beyond the spot of the penalty enforcement, charge the player with a fumble.

   C. When the spot of enforcement is behind the spot of possession during a play in which possession changes, credit the responsible player with an interception, fumble recovery, punt return, kickoff return, or miscellaneous return for no yards. Penalty yardage is measured from the spot of enforcement. Exception to paragraph B also applies.

Example I: Running back rushes for 25 yards, but a teammate is called for clipping 20 yards in advance of the line of scrimmage. *Scoring*: Running back gets one rushing attempt for 20 yards (to point of infraction). His team is penalized 15 yards. This accounts for forward movement of the ball of net 5 yards.

Example II: Quarterback completes pass for 17 yards to tight end and clipping occurs 15 yards in advance of line of scrimmage. *Scoring*: Quarterback is credited with one pass attempt, one pass completion for 15 yards. Tight end gets one pass reception for 15 yards. Team is charged with 15-yard penalty from point of infraction.

Example III: Running back gains 7 yards rushing, but offensive clipping occurs 5 yards in advance of line of scrimmage. Credit runner with 5 yards rushing (to point of infraction), team with 15-yard penalty from point of infraction even though play results in a 10-yard net loss from scrimmage.

If the overall movement of the ball on a first-down play is to a point beyond that needed for a first down, record a first down on the play. (Do not be confused by the fact that the down does not change; such action on a second-, third-, or fourth-down play would be reflected by officials awarding a first down.)

3. A defensive pass interference call is wholly a penalty play and a penalty first down is credited. The penalty should be considered as enforced from the *previous spot* (line of scrimmage) and penalty distance is measured from there.

4. When an offensive foul occurs on the last play of a half *and the offensive team gains yardage on the play,* the play is *nullified* in its entirety. Charge the team with one penalty for *no yards.*

   EXCEPTION: When the foul is in advance of the line of scrimmage, and the normal spot of enforcement would be beyond the line of scrimmage, credit yards gained to the spot of the foul. Charge the team with one penalty for *no yards*. Also, if on the last play of a half, the defensive team scores on a play during which the offensive team commits a foul, the play stands and the score counts.

5. For kickoffs and punts that end a half, penalties should be scored as follows. If a foul is committed by the receiving team while the ball is in the air, charge the receiving team with one penalty for no yards and a return for no yards as the penalty prevented the possibility of a return. If the receiving team commits a penalty after the return starts and does not gain any yardage, the penalty should be declined. If the penalty occurred beyond the spot where the return began, charge the receiving team with one penalty for no yards and credit the appropriate player(s) with return yardage to the spot of the foul. *EXCEPTION*: If there is a turnover on the play and the kicking team scores, any foul by the receiving team will be declined.

6. If the possession team commits a foul in their own end zone on the last play of a half, charge the team with one penalty for no yards, and credit the opposing team with a safety.

   Example I: Second-and-4 at offensive team's 20-yard line. On last play of half, player runs for 6 yards, but a teammate is offside. *Scoring*: The play is nullified (no rushing attempt). Charge one penalty for *no yards*.

Example II: Second-and-4 at offensive team's 20-yard line. On last play of half, player runs for 30 yards, but a teammate is called for clipping at his own 45-yard line. *Scoring*: Since the foul occurred downfield within the framework of the play, player receives one rush for 25 yards (to point of foul) and his team gets a first down rushing. Charge the team with one penalty for *no yards*.

Example III: Second-and-4 at offensive team's 20-yard line. On last play of a half, a pass is incomplete. Offensive team is called for holding behind the line of scrimmage. *Scoring*: Since the offensive team did not gain yardage, charge the passer with one attempt. Do *not* charge a penalty.

Example IV: Second-and-4 at offensive team's 20-yard line. On last play of half, quarterback is sacked for a loss of 12 yards; a teammate is called for holding behind the line of scrimmage. *Scoring*: Since the offensive team did not gain yardage, score one sack for 12 yards. Do *not* charge a penalty.

Example V: Second-and-4 offensive team's 20-yard line. On last play of half, quarterback's pass is intercepted at the 50. The ball is returned to the 30, but a teammate of the interceptor is called for clipping at the 40. Meanwhile, the original offensive team was guilty of illegal motion at the snap. *Scoring*: The offensive team did not gain yardage, so the play stands; score an interception, and credit the interceptor with 10 return yards (to the spot of the foul). Charge *his* team with one penalty for *no* yards.

Example VI: Second-and-4 at offensive team's 20-yard line. On last play of a half, offensive team is guilty of illegal motion at the snap. Running back gains two yards and fumbles; defensive player recovers at the 22 and returns to the 10. *Scoring*: Since offensive team's runner gained yardage on the play, this play is nullified in its entirety. Charge the offensive team with one penalty for *no* yards.

Example VII: Second-and-4 at offensive team's 20-yard line. On last play of a half, offensive team is guilty of illegal motion at the snap. Running back fumbles at the 22, but ball bounces back to the 18, where anyone recovers and is tackled. *Scoring*: Running back gets one rush for minus 2 yards. Do *not* charge a penalty.

Example VIII: 4th Qtr, 0:01 remaining. A-4 kicks off from the A 35. B-80 receives the kick at the B 20 and immediately laterals it to B-88. B-88 receives the lateral at the B 10, then throws a forward pass. The officials throw a flag for an Illegal Forward Pass. The game ends. *Scoring*: 45-yard kickoff for A-4, one kickoff return for no yards for B-88. The penalty is declined.

Example IX: 4th Qtr, 0:01 remaining. A-4 kicks off from the A 35. B-80 receives the kick at the B 20. During the return, B-90 is charged with an Illegal Block Above the Waist penalty at the B 30. *Scoring*: 45-yard kickoff for A-4, 10 kickoff return yards for B-80, one penalty for no yards for B-90.

7. Penalty yardage may be assessed on an extra-point attempt.

   Example I: Defensive team is offside as an extra-point attempt is good. The penalty is assessed on the subsequent kickoff. *Scoring*: One penalty for 5 yards.

   Example II: Offensive team is offside as an extra-point attempt is good. Ball is moved back from the 15- to the 20-yard line for the next attempt. *Scoring*: One penalty for 5 yards.

   Example III: Defensive team is offside as an extra-point attempt is missed. The offensive team elects:

   (a) To re-kick, with the ball remaining at the 15-yard line. *Scoring*: Defensive team is charged with one penalty, no yards.

   (b) To re-kick, with the ball moved to the 10-yard line. *Scoring*: Defensive team is charged with one penalty for 5 yards.

   (c) To try for two, with the ball moved to the 1-yard line. *Scoring*: Defensive team is charged with one penalty for 1 yard.

8. When a kickoff goes out of bounds and the ball is awarded to the receiving team, no penalty or penalty yardage is recorded. Record an “out-of-bounds kickoff” for the kicker.

Rushing

All plays from scrimmage are rushing plays unless:

1. There is a kick from behind the line of scrimmage; or
2. There is a pass from behind the line of scrimmage; or
3. A player makes an apparent attempt to pass at any time before he or a teammate is tackled, steps out of bounds, or fumbles behind or at the line of scrimmage (in which case the play is ruled a sack.)

There is no separate category for “yards lost” rushing, and the yardage for both individual and team is determined by deducting the minus figures from the plus figures to arrive at *net yards gained.* For example, a player gains 5 yards on one attempt and minus 2 on another. His totals would be 2 rushing attempts and a net gain of 3 yards.

A run from a fake-punt or field-goal formation is considered a rushing attempt.

On a rushing play, credit the rushing attempt to the last offensive player to possess the ball behind the line of scrimmage. If a fumble occurs that is *not* recovered by the player who fumbled, credit the rushing attempt to the last offensive player to possess the ball behind the line of scrimmage *before* the fumble occurred. If the player who is credited with the rushing attempt completes a backward pass (lateral, handoff, reverse, etc.) to a teammate, credit the player responsible with yardage gained to the point of the second player’s possession.

Example I: First-and-10 on opponent's 20-yard line. Player runs to the 18, then pitches back to a teammate on the 22, where the teammate is downed. *Scoring*: Second player gets one rush, minus 2 yards.

Example II: First-and-10 on opponent's 20-yard line. Player runs to the 15, then pitches back to a teammate on the 18; teammate runs to the 8. *Scoring*: First player gets one rush, 2 yards; second player gets 10 yards rushing (no rushing attempt); credit a first down rushing.

Example III: First-and-10 on opponent's 20-yard line. Quarterback hands ball to runner, who is about to be tackled at 25 when he laterals or hands ball to a teammate on the 26, where the teammate is downed. *Scoring*: Last player handling ball gets one rush, minus 6 yards.

Example IV: First-and-10 on opponent's 20-yard line. Player runs to the 3, then laterals to a teammate on the 5, where the teammate is downed. *Scoring*: First player gets one rush, 15 yards; credit a first down rushing.

Example V: First-and-10 on opponent's 20-yard line. Player runs to the 3, then laterals to a teammate on the 5; teammate runs for a touchdown. *Scoring*: First player gets one rush, 15 yards; second player gets 5 yards and a touchdown rushing (*no* rushing attempt); credit a first down rushing.

Example VI: First-and-10 on opponent's 20-yard line. Player runs to the 15, then pitches back to a teammate on the 18; this player pitches back to a teammate on the 20 where he is downed. *Scoring*: Third player gets a rush for 0 yards.

Example VII: First-and-10 on opponent's 20-yard line. Player runs to the 15 and fumbles. The fumble is recovered by a teammate at the 15 who runs back to the 25 and hands off to a third player. The third player is downed at the 22. *Scoring*: First player gets a rush for 5 yards; second player gets a fumble recovery and -10 own recovery yards; third player gets 3 own recovery yards, no recovery.

Example VIII: First-and-10 on opponent's 20-yard line. Player runs to the 15 and fumbles and recovers his own fumble. He then runs back to the 25 and hands off to a teammate who is downed at the 22. *Scoring*: First player gets charged with a fumble and credited with fumble recovery; Second player gets a rush for -2 yards. The logic is that after the first player recovers his own fumble, the rush continues. If a teammate recovers the fumble, the rush ends.

For fumbles on rushing plays, see Fumbles section.

Passing and Sacks (Offensive)

The passing category includes both the forward pass and the forward pass reception. (In this section, the word “pass” shall indicate the “forward pass” unless otherwise noted.)

Passing yardage is computed from the line of scrimmage and includes the length of the pass plus the running yardage gained or lost by the receiver after the completion.

If a forward pass is completed behind the line of scrimmage and the receiver is downed, credit the passer with an attempt and completion and the minus yardage.

A defensive pass interference penalty that is accepted by the offense is wholly a penalty play (yardage and first down). No pass attempt or completion is recorded.

Charge a player with a pass attempt when he throws:

1. A completed pass (except as noted in ‘C’ and ‘E’ below);
2. An intercepted pass;
3. An incomplete pass, including when:

    A. The pass strikes the ground or goes out of bounds;
    B. The pass is touched or is caught by an ineligible offensive player on, behind or beyond the line of scrimmage, and the defense declines the 5-yard penalty;
    C. The pass is the second forward pass from behind the line of scrimmage, and the defense declines the 5-yard penalty; when this occurs, no completion or yardage is credited for the original (completed) pass;
    D. The pass is thrown from behind the line of scrimmage, after having been carried or passed backward from a spot beyond the line, and the defense declines the 5-yard penalty;
    E. The pass is illegally touched by an eligible offensive player returning from out of bounds (and is not thereafter intercepted). If the illegal pass is caught, score as an incomplete pass.

Do not charge a pass attempt when the acceptance of a penalty nullifies the play in its entirety (e.g., roughing the passer on an incomplete pass), if the penalty is for a continuing action foul.

At times, a penalty will be enforced in *addition* to the loss of down, which is the result of an incompletion. In these cases, charge a pass attempt as well as any penalty yardage that is enforced. Examples: intentional grounding, ineligible receiver touches a pass beyond the line of scrimmage, etc.

When a player throws a forward pass from beyond the line of scrimmage, and the penalty is accepted, do *not* charge the passer with a pass attempt. Credit him with yards gained (in the category initiating the action) to the point of the pass: penalty yardage will commence from that spot.

Example I: Second-and-10 at own 30-yard line. Quarterback, back to pass, runs beyond line and throws forward pass at 34. *Scoring*: One rush for 4 yards; one penalty for 5 yards.

Example II: Second-and-10 at own 30-yard line. Pass is completed to 50, where the receiver, attempting to lateral, throws a forward pass. *Scoring*: One completion for 20 yards; one penalty for 5 yards. Credit a first down passing.

When the defense declines a penalty for a forward pass thrown in advance of the line of scrimmage, the scoring shall reflect the actual ball movement during the play.

Example III: Second-and-10 at own 30-yard line. Pass is completed to 50, where the receiver, attempting to lateral, throws a forward pass that is intercepted at opponent's 49 and returned for a touchdown. *Scoring*: One completion (reception) for 20 yards. Player receiving the original pass also gets one pass (intercepted). (Defense declines the penalty in order to score the touchdown.)

The same rules apply when a forward pass not from scrimmage is thrown (e.g., on a punt return): No pass attempt is charged, unless the ball is intercepted. Penalty yardage is assessed from the spot of the foul.

In passing statistics, there is a category called "sacks and yards lost attempting to pass." It shall be determined by the following rules:

1. When the quarterback or a teammate makes an apparent attempt to pass at any time before he or a teammate is tackled, steps out of bounds, or fumbles behind or at the statistical line of scrimmage, the play is scored as a sack and any yards lost attempting to pass. (Should he advance the ball across the statistical line of scrimmage, it is a rushing play.)

2. When the quarterback is tackled or, after gaining possession of the snap, he fumbles or falls down, while retreating to his normal passing position, it shall be scored as a sack and yards lost attempting to pass, even though he may not have assumed a passing position. *EXCEPTION*: When a player retreating to a passing position fumbles behind the line of scrimmage but recovers the fumble himself and runs beyond the statistical line of scrimmage, the play is scored as a rushing play, a fumble, and an own recovery.

   NOTE: On a flea flicker style play, do not record a sack if the player that gets tackled at or behind the line of scrimmage is not the player designed to pass the ball forward (unless he makes an apparent attempt to pass as described above).

Example I: Second-and-1 at own 20-yard line. Quarterback, back to pass, fumbles the ball while standing in the pocket, without any defensive contact. He recovers at the 13. *Scoring:* One sack and 7 yards lost, a fumble, and an own recovery.

Example II: Second-and-1 at own 20-yard line. Quarterback takes snap, then while retreating to pass, fumbles. Ball rolls to 10, and then is batted back to the 5, where a player recovers and is downed. *Scoring*: Charge one sack and 10 yards lost (to point of first batting). The other 5 yards are the result of a loose ball. (See Fumbles, 2, D.)

Example III: Third-and-25 at own 40-yard line. Quarterback fumbles snap on what appears to be a definite passing down. He recovers at the 35. *Scoring*: An aborted play; quarterback gets one rush for no yards, a fumble, an own recovery, and minus 5 (fumble yardage) yards.

Example IV: On a flea flicker, the player that receives the lateral, pitch or handoff from the intended passer gets tackled behind the line of scrimmage before he has a chance to lateral the ball back to the passer. *Scoring: Score the play as a rushing play, not a sack*

3. When a quarterback rolls out, or a player other than the quarterback handles the ball on an option play, and with the ball in his throwing hand looks directly at an eligible receiver running a route, before being tackled or stepping out of bounds behind or at the statistical line of scrimmage, it shall be scored as a sack and any yards lost attempting to pass. If the player tucks the ball away without looking at a receiver, or lifts his arm as if to throw on an apparent designed rushing play (i.e., receivers blocking downfield or not looking back) in order to deceive the defense, the play shall be considered a rushing play.

4. Once a player carries the ball beyond the statistical line of scrimmage, there shall not be a sack scored on that play, even if he or a teammate eventually retreats behind the line and is tackled or fumbles there.

5. The individual passer shall not be charged with an attempted forward pass, or yardage lost, when the play is scored as a sack. However, the yardage lost on such plays MUST be deducted from his team's gross passing yardage to reflect net yards gained passing.

Example IV: First-and-10 on the A 20, Team A's possession. A-12 completes a screen pass to A-20, who is tackled at the A 18. B-98 is charged with a Roughing the Passer penalty. *Scoring*: Penalty for 15 yards, no pass completion or receiving yards. If A-20 had traveled beyond the line of scrimmage, then the pass completion would count as the penalty would be enforced from the dead ball spot. The pass does not count if A-20 is tackled at the line of scrimmage.

For fumbles on passing and sack plays, see Fumbles section.

Sacks (Defensive)

Credit a sack to the appropriate defensive player whenever a sack is scored against the offensive team, subject to the following principles:

1. When the player making an apparent attempt to pass is tackled or downed at or behind the statistical line of scrimmage, credit a sack to the defensive player who tackled or downed the potential passer. If a defender pushes an offensive player into the potential passer, knocking him down, with no subsequent attempt to continue the play, or the contact results in a fumble, credit a sack to the appropriate defensive player.

   EXCEPTION: If the potential passer fumbles on his own prior to any such contact, no sack is credited to any individual defensive player, unless he recovers his own fumble and attempts to advance or pass the ball. However, credit the defensive team with a sack. The number of defensive sacks should be equal to the number of offensive sacks.

2. When the player making an apparent attempt to pass steps out of bounds at or behind the statistical line of scrimmage in order to avoid imminent contact with a defensive player, credit that defensive player with a sack. If the potential passer steps out of bounds without the pressure of such imminent contact, no sack is credited to any individual defensive player.

3. When the player making an apparent attempt to pass loses the ball due to contact by a defensive player at or behind the line of scrimmage, give sack credit as defined by the foregoing principles to the defensive player who caused the fumble, unless the potential passer recovers and makes another apparent attempt to pass (i.e., ball in throwing hand and looking at an eligible receiver(s) downfield). In that case, credit the sack to the player or players who tackled or downed the potential passer at or behind the line of scrimmage.

NOTE: If a defensive player causes the potential passer to fumble after he is already in the process of being sacked by one or more defensive players, and it is deemed the sack would have occurred without the fumble, the player who caused the fumble should not be awarded any sack credit.

When one defensive player is primarily responsible for a sack, as defined by the foregoing principles, he shall receive credit for a sack. When two defensive players are judged by the official scorer to be equally responsible for a sack, credit for the sack shall be divided equally between the two players.

Example I: Second-and-10 at midfield. In retreating to pass, quarterback fumbles the ball on his own and without any contact by a defensive player, and recovers at his own 40, where he is downed by the defensive tackle. *Scoring*: A sack for 10 yards, but no individual defensive player is credited with the sack.

Example II: Second-and-10 at midfield. Quarterback, trying to pass, eludes defensive tackle's rush and, at his own 40, runs toward sidelines. At his own 47, pursued by the defensive tackle, he goes out of bounds before he can be hit by a linebacker, who is charging toward the quarterback, and who was about to stop the quarterback's advance,

should he have remained in-bounds. *Scoring*: A sack for three yards; credit the sack to the linebacker, for it was because of imminent contact with him that the quarterback elected to run out of bounds. (The pursuing defensive tackle has already been eluded by the quarterback.)

Laterals (Backward passes)

The same statistical rules apply to all types of backward passes: laterals, handoffs, pitch-outs, reverses, etc. In other words, if a statistical ruling is made on a play that contains a lateral, the exact same statistical ruling would be made if the ball had been handed off instead of lateralled (assuming it was received at the same yard line.) With that in mind, this document will usually refer to the more familiar term, "lateral" instead of "backward pass." However, the latter is always implied.

NOTE: Statistically, an exchange of the ball does not qualify as a backward pass unless the exchange is completed to a teammate without first touching the ground. If the ball touches the ground, or is intercepted by an opponent, the player who attempted the backward pass is credited with a fumble.

Laterals subsequent to the originating play are considered as part of the play from which they originate. The receiver of a lateral is given credit for the yardage he gains from the point he receives the lateral, BUT he is not given an attempt, return, or reception on the play. (See Exceptions listed under Kickoff Returns.) For example, a forward pass is completed and the receiver advances 40 yards, then laterals to a teammate who advances the ball an additional 20 yards. This is considered a 60-yard pass play. The first receiver is credited with the reception and 40 yards gained; his teammate, although not credited with a reception, would appear in the pass receiving section with 20 yards gained. If a touchdown is scored as a result of such a play, the player who scores shall be credited with a touchdown via receiving. In any case, the original play determines in what category the touchdown was made.

When the receiver of a lateral is beyond the line of scrimmage, or if there is no line of scrimmage, it is *his* position that determines the yardage gained by each of the individuals involved. The player who throws the lateral is credited with yards gained only to the point at which the lateral is caught, provided this point is behind the spot from which the lateral is thrown.

Example: Second-and-20 on own 20-yard line. Player catches a forward pass at his own 40, then attempts to lateral to a teammate who is at the 38. The teammate then:

(a) Catches the ball and is downed at the 38. *Scoring*: First player gets one reception for 18 yards.
(b) Catches the ball and runs to the 45. *Scoring*: First player gets one reception for 18 yards; second player gets 7 yards in pass receiving category, but is not credited with a reception. Credit a first down passing.
(c) Muffs the ball and an opponent recovers on the 33. *Scoring*: First player gets one reception for 13 yards and a fumble. Opponent gets a fumble recovery.

For laterals that occur after a forward pass where the ball has not crossed the line of scrimmage, score the play as you would a rushing play. The reception yardage of the player who received the lateral goes first to reduce the negative reception yardage of the receiver of the forward pass. Once the receiver of the lateral crosses the line of scrimmage, he begins to earn positive reception yards.

> *Example*: First-and-10 at the A 20, Team A's possession. A-12 completes a forward pass to A-88 at the A 10. A-88 runs to the A 14, then laterals the ball to A-80 who caught the lateral at the A 12. A-80 then runs to:
>
> (a) The A 30, where he is downed. *Scoring*: A-12 gets 1 completed pass for 10 yards. A-88 gets 1 pass reception for 0 yards. A-80 gets 10 pass reception yards and 0 pass receptions.
> (b) The A 18, where he is downed. A-12 gets 1 completed pass for -2 yards. A-88 gets 1 pass reception for -2 yards. A-80 gets 0 pass reception yards and 0 pass receptions.

Interceptions

Interception yardage is computed from the point where the impetus of the act of interception ends and the intercepting player begins forward or backward movement on his own. This includes the end zone area of the intercepting player, except that a player making an interception in his own end zone shall not be credited with any return yardage if the ball becomes dead behind his own goal line.

For example, if a player intercepts the ball at his own 15-yard line, but momentum during his reception pulls him back to the 12-yard line, the interception return starts from the 12-yard line.

On the same play, if momentum is not a factor during reception, rather, he is balanced and willingly retreats to the 12-yard line, the interception return starts from the 15-yard line.

> *Example I*: Player intercepts the ball five yards deep in his end zone and returns to his 7-yard line. *Scoring*: 12-yard return.
>
> *Example II*: Player intercepts the ball five yards deep in his end zone, starts to run, but stops one yard short of the goal line, where he downs the ball or is tackled for a touchback. *Scoring*: One interception for no yards; the ball never left the end zone.

Punts

Punts shall be measured from the line of scrimmage to the point at which the impetus of the punt ends, or the ball goes out of bounds, or is downed. If a punt goes into the end zone, measure its length to the goal line, unless the ball is fielded and returned out of the end zone by the receiving team (in such a case, measure the punt to the spot of possession in the end zone by the receiver).

Note that if a punt is downed, goes out of bounds or is fair caught and is spotted between two yard stripes, measure the punt to the statistical line of scrimmage for the subsequent play.

The impetus of a punt continues until the receiving team is in possession or the kickers legally recover, unless:

(a) The ball is batted or kicked by the kicking team (measure the punt to the spot of the bat or kick); or
(b) The receiving team has touched the ball, after which the ball changes direction and bounces toward the kickers' goal line: measure the punt to the spot of the touch.

Example I: A punt from the 50 touches a receiver on the 10 and is recovered by the kickers in the end zone for a touchdown. *Scoring*: A 50-yard punt; punt return for no yards by receiver.

Example II: A punt from the 50 is rolling slowly on the 10 when a kicking team player running downfield accidentally knocks the ball into the end zone for a touchback. *Scoring*: A 40-yard punt.

Example III: A punt from the 50 is muffed by a receiver on the 10. The ball bounces up-field where it is recovered by anyone at the 18. *Scoring*: A 40-yard punt (to the spot of the first touch by receivers).

Example IV: A punt from the 50 goes into the end zone (three yards deep) where a receiving team player fields it and returns to the 7. *Scoring*: A 53-yard punt and a 10-yard return.

A blocked punt is *scored only* when the punted ball does not go beyond the line of scrimmage. A deflected punt that travels beyond the line of scrimmage, either in the air or on the ground, is not a blocked punt. A blocked punt is charged as a punt to the team, but not to the individual punter.

Do not charge a player with a punt unless he actually punts the ball. Note that if the center snap is satisfactory and the punter does not fumble, but is tackled before he punts or while attempting to run, the play is a rushing play. If the play develops as action off a fake punt play, score the play as a rush, pass, or sack consistent with the basic scoring rules on scrimmage plays.

Credit the punter with an inside-20 when the punt is returned and the return ends inside the 20, or the punt is not returned and the distance of the punt is measured to a point inside the 20 (and outside the end zone.) If the ball is muffed and the impetus of the punt goes into the end zone, and the kicking team recovers the ball for a touchdown, credit an inside-20. A touchback is not an inside-20. When there is a penalty during the return, the point at which the return ends statistically is the determining spot for crediting an inside-20.

If, following a punt or punt return, the ball is positioned between the receivers' 19- and 20-yard lines, no inside-20 is scored if the ball is statistically determined to be on the 20-yard line.

Example V: A punt from the 50 is caught on the 15 and returned to the 30. Receivers commit a clipping foul at the 30, and the ball is moved back to the 15. *Scoring*: A 35-yard punt, 15-yard return, and a 15-yard penalty. Do not credit an inside-20, since the return took the ball to the 30. First-and-10 at the 15.

Example VI: Fourth-and-seven at midfield. Punter receives snap, runs toward the line of scrimmage and beyond to opponent's 45, where he punts to opponent's 10, out of bounds. *Scoring*: One rush for five yards, and a penalty for 10 yards at the spot of the kick.

Example VII: A punt from the 50 is caught on the 15 and returned to the 30. Receivers commit a clipping foul at the 18, and the ball is moved back to the 9. *Scoring*: A 35-yard punt, 3-yard return, and a 9-yard penalty. Credit an inside-20, since the return ended at the 18.

Example VIII: A punt is caught on the 15 and returned to the 19 where the ball is fumbled. A teammate recovers at the 25 where he is downed. *Scoring*: Credit an inside-20, since the return ended at the 19.

Example IX: A punt is caught on the 15 and returned to the 25 where the ball is fumbled. A teammate recovers at the 25 and is downed at the 19. *Scoring*: Do not credit an inside-20, since the return ended at the 25.

Example X: A punt is muffed on the 15. The ball is recovered by a teammate who is downed at the 25. *Scoring*: Credit an inside-20, since the return ended at the 15.

Blocked Kicks

When a punt or a field-goal attempt is blocked and recovered by the offensive team behind the line of scrimmage, any running advance is treated as miscellaneous yardage. In the rare case when the offensive player attempts a forward pass after a blocked kick, include it as a passing attempt and any completion as passing yardage. However, if the player is tackled behind the line of scrimmage, do not treat this as yards lost attempting to pass. In the latter case, merely note the player recovered a blocked kick.

NOTE: Regardless of the subsequent actions above, excluding multiple punt or kick attempts, the original blocked punt or field goal must be recorded.

If the kicking team recovers a blocked kick and attempts a subsequent kick, count only the result of the final kick attempt.

If a defender deflects a field-goal attempt in such a manner as to make the field-goal attempt unsuccessful, the field-goal attempt is considered blocked. The impetus of the kick can travel beyond the line of scrimmage. Punts are only considered blocked if the punted ball does not go beyond the line of scrimmage.

Punt Returns

A punt return is credited to the first player on the receiving team who gains possession of the punt, unless such possession occurs in the end zone and the play results in a touchback.

EXCEPTION: If, prior to the receiving team gaining possession of the punt, the ball is muffed or touched by a receiver *who is trying to gain possession*, then the punt return (and a fumble) is credited to the player who first muffed or touched the ball. (Note that this exception does not apply if the ball touches a player who was *not* trying to gain possession.)

If the punt is legally recovered by the kicking team before any receiving team player gains possession, then charge a punt return (and fumble) to the first player on the receiving team who touched (or was touched by) the ball, whether or not he was trying to gain possession.

> *Example I:* Punt from the 50. Receiver tries to catch the ball on the 20, but it bounces off (or through) his hands and is recovered by a teammate on the 12. *Scoring*: A 38-yard punt (the impetus of the punt continued to the 12-yard line). A punt return for 0 yards is credited to the player who muffed the ball at the 20: he also gets a fumble, and the recovering player is credited with an own recovery.
>
> *Example II*: Punt from the 50. Ball is touched by a receiver on the 20 (whether or not he was trying to gain possession) and kicking team player recovers at the 15. *Scoring*: A 35-yard punt (the impetus of the punt continued to the 15-yard line). A punt return for 0 yards is credited to the player who touched (or was touched by) the ball at the 20; he also gets a fumble, and the appropriate player on the kicking team is credited with an opponent's recovery.
>
> *Example III*: Punt from the 50. Ball bounces at the 25 and strikes the leg of a receiver who is trying to avoid the ball. The ball rolls to the 20, where it is recovered by another receiving team player. *Scoring*: A 30-yard punt (the impetus of the punt continued to the 20-yard line). The punt return is credited to the player who recovered (and first possessed) the ball, since the prior touching was not by a player who was trying to gain possession.

Do not charge a punt return to a player when:

(1) He or his teammate makes a legal fair catch, even if the ball touches the ground prior to the reception. Credit the player who receives the ball with a fair catch.
(2) Signals for a fair catch but is fouled before having the opportunity to make the catch.

In both of the above circumstances, credit a fair catch. Do not credit a fair catch, if the player muffs the ball following a fair-catch signal, regardless of who recovers the ball. Credit the player with a punt return and fumble; the appropriate player is credited with a fumble recovery. If the player signals for a fair catch but is penalized for an invalid fair-catch signal, credit the player with a punt return for 0 yards.

The distance of a punt return shall be measured from the point at which the impetus of the punt ends and the receiver is able to initiate forward progress, using the back foot as a starting point.

Example IV: A player takes a punt on his own 30, runs back 10 yards to his own 20, then forward to the 35. The punt return is measured as 5 yards.

Example V: A player takes a punt on his own 30 but retreats 3 yards to the 27 because the impetus of the punt requires him to move backward. He then advances back to the 30. The punt is recorded to the 27 and the punt return is measured as 3 yards.

Example VI: A player catches the ball on his own 30, runs back 20 yards, and is tackled on his own 10. The punt return is recorded as minus 20 yards, and the punt is recorded ONLY to the 30-yard line.

Return by a defensive player of a blocked punt is not considered a punt return. Any advance should be recorded as miscellaneous yards.

On the Team Statistics and Individual Statistics reports, the total punts for the team should equal the total punt returns, plus the fair catches, plus the punts out of bounds, plus the punt touchbacks, plus punts downed, and punts blocked.

For fumbles on punt returns, see Fumbles section.

Kickoff Returns

If a kickoff is caught by a receiving team player, the spot of his possession is the point at which the impetus of the kickoff ends and he is able to initiate forward progress. This includes the end zone area. For example, if a player catches the kickoff at the 1, runs back to the -2, then advances, the spot of possession is the 1. If a player catches the kickoff at the 1 but retreats to the -2 because the impetus of the kickoff requires him to do so, the spot of possession is the -2. (NOTE: “spot of possession” is defined differently here than in the playing rules.)

A kickoff return begins at the spot where a receiving team player first gains possession of the ball, using the back foot as a starting point, and then attempts to advance the ball. If a player gains possession and then fumbles the ball, he is considered to have attempted to advance. If no receiving team player attempts to advance the ball (including the case where no receiving team player gains possession), the following rules apply:

(1) If the player who fields an onside kickoff does not attempt to advance the ball, no kickoff return is credited. If there is any doubt, do not credit a return.

(2) If, prior to the receiving team gaining possession of the kickoff, the ball is muffed or touched by a receiver who is trying to gain possession, and the loose ball is recovered by a teammate who does not attempt to advance the ball, then the kickoff return (for 0 yards) begins and ends at the spot of the muff or touch. A fumble is also charged to the player who muffed or touched the ball. Note that if the teammate who recovers the loose ball *does* attempt to advance the ball, the kickoff return begins at the spot of his possession, and the first player is *not* charged with a fumble.

(3) If, prior to the receiving team gaining possession of the kickoff, the ball goes out of bounds or is recovered by the kicking team *after* touching (or having been touched by) a receiving team player, *and* the first such touching is more than 19 yards from the spot of the kick, the kickoff return (for 0 yards) begins and ends at the spot of the touch. A fumble is also charged to the player on the receiving team who touched (or was touched by) the ball if the ball was recovered by the kicking team. Do not charge a fumble if the ball goes out of bounds before any player gains possession.

(4) If the receiving team gains possession, and Rules 1 and 2 do not apply, the kickoff return begins at the spot where the ball is possessed by the *last* player on the receiving team to gain possession. (For example, if there is a series of backward passes between players who do not attempt to advance, the return begins at the spot where the last backward pass is received.)

EXCEPTION: If the receiving team never possesses the ball outside of its own end zone, and the play ends with a touchback, no kickoff return is credited.

The player who begins the kickoff return is the player who is in possession of the ball at the point that the kickoff return begins (as defined by the rules, above.) The kickoff return continues until the play ends, or a player loses possession of the ball unless he recovers his own fumble, or laterals to a teammate. (If a player recovers his own fumble, his yardage continues to accumulate as if the fumble had not occurred, although he is charged with a fumble and credited with a fumble recovery.) The kickoff, therefore, will be returned by a *series* of one or more runners. Each runner in the series will get kickoff return yardage (possibly 0), but only one of the players will get credited with the kickoff return.

If a runner receives the ball *beyond* the point where the kickoff return began, or a previous runner has done so, then his yardage is measured from the point at which he receives the ball.

If a runner receives the ball *at, or behind*, the point where the kickoff return began, and all previous runners have also received the ball at, or behind, this point, then his negative yardage begins at the point he receives the ball, but his positive yardage begins at the point that the kickoff return began. The yardage he gains up to the point where the kickoff return began is applied to reducing the yardage lost by previous runners in the series.

The kickoff return is credited to the first runner in the series who is credited with more than 9 yards. If there is no such player, the return is credited to the first runner in the series who is credited with the maximum yardage gained by any runner, if that number is positive. If there is no such player, the return is credited to the first runner in the series. (This implies that if no runner gains positive yardage, the return goes to the first runner in the series.)

Example I: Kickoff bounces off hands or leg of receiver on his own 20 and rolls out of bounds at 22 before any player from either team gains possession. *Scoring*: One kickoff return for no yards, since the first touching of the kickoff was more than 20 yards from the kickoff spot.

Example II: Kickoff receiver muffs the ball at his own 12, and it rolls forward. He recovers at the 16 and returns to midfield. *Scoring*: 34-yard kickoff return; the yardage is computed from the spot of possession, not the spot of first touching. No fumble is charged.

Example III: A player receives a kickoff on the 20, does not attempt to advance, but laterals to a teammate on the 15, who then advances to the 17. The first player is not credited with a kickoff return or yardage, but his teammate is credited with one return for 2 yards.

Example IV: A player receives the kickoff on the 20, does not attempt to advance, but laterals to a teammate on the 15. The teammate then retreats and is tackled on the 12. The first player is not credited with a return, but the teammate is credited with one return for minus 3 yards.

Example V: A player receives the kickoff on the 20 and then runs laterally across the field and hands off to a teammate on the 18. The teammate returns to the 25 and is credited with one return for 7 yards.

Example VI: A player receives the kickoff on the 20, *then* advances to the 22 before lateralling to a teammate on the 15. The teammate is tackled on the 17. The first player is credited with one kickoff return for minus 3 yards and second player is not credited with a return or yardage.

Example VII: A player receives a kickoff on the 20, then advances to the 22 before handing off to a teammate. The teammate then runs to the 30. In this instance, the first player is credited with no return for 2 yards and the second player one return for 8 yards.

Example VIII: A player receives a kickoff on the 20, then advances to the 22 before handing off to a teammate, who then retreats and is tackled on the 19. The first player is credited with one kickoff return for 2 yards and the second player with no kickoff return with minus 3 yards.

Example IX: A player receives a kickoff on the 20, does not attempt to advance, but laterals to a teammate on the 15, who then retreats (trying to advance the ball) and laterals to a teammate at the 10 who is tackled at the 12. The second player gets a return for minus 3 yards.

Example X: A player receives a kickoff on the 20, does not attempt to advance, but laterals to a teammate on the 22, who then retreats (trying to advance the ball) and laterals to a teammate at the 15 who is tackled at the 10. The second player gets a return for minus 7 yards. The third player gets minus 5 yards. (No player gained positive yardage, so the return goes to the first player in the series.)

Example XI: A player receives a kickoff on the 20, tries to advance the ball and then laterals to a teammate on the 15, who laterals to a teammate at the 10 who is tackled at the 18. The first player gets a minus 2 yard return. (Yards gained by the third player before the point where the kickoff return began is used to cancel yardage lost by the first two players.)

Example XII: A player receives a kickoff on the 20, tries to advance and then laterals to a teammate on the 15, who laterals to a teammate at the 10 who laterals to a teammate at the 25 who is tackled at the 32. The third player gets 5 kickoff return yards; the fourth player gets a 7-yard kickoff return.

Example XIII: Kickoff receiver muffs ball at his own 12 and it rolls forward. He recovers at the 16 but makes no attempt to advance. *Scoring*: 0-yard kickoff return; the yardage is computed from the spot of possession, not the spot of first touching. No fumble is charged because the player recovered the ball himself and the ball rolled forward.

For fumbles on kickoff returns, see Fumbles section.

The general provisions for scoring a fair catch, which appear in the Punt Returns section, also apply to kickoff returns.

Safety Kicks

A safety kick (the free kick that follows a safety) shall be scored as a kickoff regardless of whether it is punted or made from placement.

Fair-Catch Kicks

On a fair-catch kick (an uncontested field-goal attempt immediately following a fair catch), the kicker shall be charged with a field-goal attempt. Any yardage on a runback by an opposing player shall be credited as miscellaneous yardage, as with any other field-goal attempt.

Fumbles

1. **Definitions of Fumbles and Recoveries**
   A. A fumble is an act (other than pass or kick) that results in a player's loss of possession of the ball or his failure to handle a ball which has been properly centered to him. *EXCEPTIONS*: No fumble shall be charged (a) on an attempted point after touchdown, or (b) on a momentary bobble of the ball, if in the scorer's judgment, the bobble had no effect on the continuing action, provided that the ball has not touched the ground or another player. A fumble is also charged in certain instances in which a player muffs a kickoff or punt. See Kickoff Returns and Punt Returns section.

   B. If a fumbled ball (a) goes out of bounds and remains in possession of the team fumbling, or (b) goes over the end line for a touchback or safety, score the play as a fumble. Also, note it as "fumble out of bounds" under the Fumbles section.

   C. "Own recovery" designates a fumble recovered by any member of the team committing the fumble. "Opponent's recovery" designates a fumble recovered by any member of the team *not* committing the fumble. Note that there must be "recovery" for every fumble charged except for fumbles that go out of bounds. "Fumbles lost" refers to all fumbles which result in opponents' recoveries, or which are fumbled through the end zone for touchbacks. (Note that a fumble through a team's *own* end zone for a safety is *not* a fumble lost. A fumble that is batted by the opposing team through its end zone for a safety is *not* a fumble lost.)

D. When a fumbled ball is touched by several players, only the player who lost possession originally shall be charged with a fumble and only the player who ultimately gains possession shall be credited with a recovery. There can be more than one fumble and more than one recovery on a single play only if possession is clearly established following the original fumble.

E. When a bobbled ball is recovered out of the air by a teammate or an opponent, it shall be scored as a fumble and a recovery. *EXCEPTION*: If a receiver bobbles a pass without establishing possession and a teammate or an opponent gains possession in the air, it shall be scored as a completed pass or interception, whatever the case may be.

2. General Principles of Scoring Yardage on Fumble Plays

A. When a player recovers his own fumble, credit him with net yardage gained or lost on the play in the category initiating the action. (Charge him with a fumble and credit him with "own recovery.") *EXCEPTION*: When a player who has made an apparent attempt to pass fumbles behind the line of scrimmage but recovers the fumble himself and runs beyond the line of scrimmage, the play is scored as a rushing play, a fumble, and an own recovery.

B. A teammate or opponent who recovers shall be credited with fumble yardage for any gain or loss from the point of recovery. For opponent's recovery yardage, this includes yards gained to advance the ball out of their own end zone. *EXCEPTION*: When a teammate recovers behind the line of scrimmage, positive fumble yardage begins at the line of scrimmage. Yardage gained up to the line of scrimmage is used to reduce the negative fumble yardage of the player who fumbled. Negative yardage begins at the point of the recovery. The same exception applies to kickoff returns. The spot at which the return begins serves as the "line of scrimmage."

C. When a fumbled ball rolls free and is recovered beyond the point of the fumble (by either a teammate or an opponent), any yardage between the spot of the fumble and the spot of recovery is loose ball yardage. *EXCEPTION*: If the ball is fumbled behind the line of scrimmage, the runner gets credit for yardage to the point of recovery, or the line of scrimmage, whichever is closer to his goal line. The same exception applies to kickoff returns. The spot at which the return begins serves as the "line of scrimmage."

D. When a fumbled ball is touched, legally batted, or kicked by any player (including the player who fumbled), and the spot of this action is behind the spot of the fumble, charge the player who fumbles with yardage lost (in the category initiating the action) to the spot of the first such touch, bat, or kick; the rest of the yardage is loose-ball yardage. If the spot of the first such touch, bat, or kick is at or beyond the spot of the fumble, charge the player who fumbles with yardage to the spot of the fumble. The act of forcing a fumble is not considered a touch. If an opponent eventually gains possession, his fumble yardage shall be credited from the spot at which he gains possession.

E. If a player fumbles the ball behind the line of scrimmage, and either he or a teammate recovers the ball behind the line of scrimmage and throws a forward pass, fumble yardage should not be recorded. The fumble and own recovery should be recorded.

3. Aborted Plays

An aborted play is a play from scrimmage during which there is neither a pass nor a kick, which falls into one of the following categories:

A. The ball is clearly centered improperly, meaning that the ball does not reach the intended receiver of the snap within the frame of his body or arm-span;

B. The intended ball-handler fumbles the snap from center;

C. A backward pass (hand-off, lateral, reverse, etc.) behind the line of scrimmage is mishandled, or not handled, resulting in a fumble (the ball touches the ground or is caught in flight by another player.)

NOTE: If the ball-handler fumbles when pulling the ball back to run himself, score the play as a rushing play, not an aborted play.

D. A punter who has received the snap from the center correctly, but in the process to punt the ball, the ball is dropped (unforced fumble).

In each of these cases, charge a rush for 0 yards. In A, B, and D, the rush is charged to the player who receives, or intended to receive the snap from center. In C, the rush is charged to the player who attempts the backward pass.

EXCEPTIONS: If the player charged with the rush recovers the loose ball and advances beyond the line of scrimmage, credit any advance as rushing yardage. If the intended ball-handler fumbles the snap from center, recovers the ball, and successfully hands the ball off to a teammate, score the play as a rushing play, not an aborted play. Charge the teammate with a rush and all yardage gained or lost on the play as rushing yardage. If the player who recovers the fumble makes an apparent attempt to pass and is tackled behind the line of scrimmage, score the play as a sack, not an aborted play. If there is doubt as to whether or not the player recovering the fumble was able to collect himself and make a legitimate apparent attempt to pass, the play shall be regarded as an aborted play. In all of these cases, a fumble and recovery are recorded.

If the actions of the defense contribute to the fumble, the play is not aborted.

When the ball is clearly centered improperly, charge the center with a fumble and any yards lost as fumble yardage. On any other aborted play, the player charged with the rush is also charged with a fumble and any yards lost as fumble yardage. (Note that positive fumble yardage cannot be credited.)

If a teammate recovers behind the line of scrimmage, credit that player with a fumble recovery and fumble yardage. Positive fumble yardage for this player begins at the line of scrimmage. Negative yardage begins at the point of his recovery. Yardage gained up to the line of scrimmage is used to reduce the negative fumble yardage of the player who fumbled. *EXCEPTION*: If the player who recovers the fumble was the intended ball handler on a lateral and advances beyond the statistical line of scrimmage, score the play as a rushing play for the intended ball handler. A fumble is still charged to the player who threw the lateral.

If an opponent recovers behind the line of scrimmage, charge the player who fumbled with fumble yardage to the point of recovery.

If a player from either team (other than the player charged with the rush) recovers beyond the line of scrimmage, the player charged with the fumble gets 0 fumble yards. If the player charged with the rush makes such a recovery, credit him with rushing yardage from the line of scrimmage.

Example I: Second-and-10 at own 20-yard line. Quarterback fumbles the snap, and a teammate recovers at the 15, where he is downed. *Scoring*: Quarterback gets one rush for no yards, a fumble, and minus 5 yards as fumble yardage. Teammate gets an own recovery.

Example II: Same play as above, except that the teammate advances to:

A. The 18-yard line. *Scoring*: Quarterback gets one rush for no yards, a fumble, and minus 2 yards as fumble yardage. Teammate gets an own recovery.
B. The 30-yard line. *Scoring*: Quarterback gets one rush for no yards and a fumble. Teammate gets an own recovery, 10 yards (fumble yardage) and team is credited with a first down rushing.

Example III: Second-and-10 at own 20-yard line. Quarterback fumbles the snap, then recovers and advances to the 24. *Scoring*: Quarterback gets one rush for 4 yards, a fumble, and an own recovery.

Example IV: Fourth-and-10 at own 20-yard line. Punter intends to receive snap, but it is clearly centered improperly. Then:

A. Punter recovers at the 5 where he is downed. *Scoring*: Center gets a fumble and minus 15 as fumble yardage. Punter gets one rush for no yards and an own recovery.
B. Punter recovers at the 5 and runs to the 22. *Scoring*: Center gets a fumble. Punter gets an own recovery and a rush for 2 yards.
C. Blocking back recovers at the 5, where he is downed or the ball is declared dead. *Scoring*: Center gets a fumble and minus 15 as fumble yardage. Punter gets a rush for no yards. Blocking back gets an own recovery.

D. Blocking back recovers at the 5 and runs to the 35. *Scoring*: Center gets a fumble. Punter gets one rush for no yards. Blocking back gets an own recovery, 15 yards (fumble yardage), and team is credited with a first down rushing.

Example V: Second-and-10 at own 20-yard line. Quarterback takes snap, turns to hand off to running back, and the exchange is mishandled. The ball bounces free and is recovered by anyone at the 12. *Scoring*: Quarterback gets one rush for no yards, a fumble, and -8 as fumble yardage. Credit the recovery to the appropriate player.

Example VI: Second-and-10 at own 20-yard line. Quarterback receives snap and attempts a backward pass (pitchout or lateral). The pass is satisfactory, but the ball bounces off the running back's hands and is recovered by an opponent at the 11. *Scoring*: Quarterback gets one rush for no yards and a fumble for minus 9 (fumble yardage). Credit the player recovering the ball with an opponent's recovery.

Example VII: Second-and-10 at own 20-yard line. Same play as Example VI, except that when the running back muffs the ball, it bounces forward, and an offensive tackle recovers on the 25 and runs to the 35. *Scoring*: Quarterback gets one rush for no yards and a fumble. Offensive Tackle gets an own recovery and 10 yards (fumble yardage). Credit a first down rushing.

Example VIII: Second-and-10 at own 20-yard line. Quarterback hands off to running back; running back's hand-off to wide receiver is mishandled. The ball is recovered at the 12. *Scoring*: Running back gets one rush for no yards and a fumble for minus 8 (fumble yardage).

Example IX: Fourth-and-10 at the 50-yard line. Punter receives the snap from center and drops the ball while setting up to punt. Anyone recovers at the 40-yard line. *Scoring*: Punter gets one rush for no yards, a fumble, and minus 10 yards as fumble yardage.

4. Rushing Plays

A. If a teammate or opponent recovers the fumble behind, or on, the line of scrimmage:

Credit the player who fumbled with yardage to the point of recovery. Yardage gained by teammate(s) after the recovery up to the line of scrimmage is used to reduce any yardage lost by the player who fumbled.

B. If a teammate or opponent recovers the fumble beyond the line of scrimmage:
   (a) If the fumble occurred behind, or on, the line of scrimmage, credit the player with yardage to the line of scrimmage.
   (b) If the fumble occurred beyond the line of scrimmage, credit the player who fumbled with yardage to the point of his advance or the point of recovery, whichever is less.

Example I: With ball on opponent's 30, running back rushes to the 20, where he is tackled and fumbles. He recovers on the 25 and advances to the 21. *Scoring*: Running back is

credited with one rush for 9 yards, is charged with a fumble, and credited with a fumble recovery.

Example II: With ball on opponent's 30, running back rushes to the 29, where he is tackled and fumbles. He falls on his own fumble at the 31. *Scoring*: Running back is credited with one rush for minus 1 yard, is charged with a fumble, and is credited with a fumble recovery.

Example III: With ball at own 30, running back fumbles at the 35. A teammate or opponent recovers at the a) 29, b) 34, c) 36. *Scoring*: Running back is charged with a fumble and one rush for a) -1, b) 4, c) 5 yards.

Example IV: With ball at own 30, running back fumbles at the 25. A teammate or opponent recovers at the a) 24, b) 26, c) 31. *Scoring*: Running back is charged with a fumble and one rush for a) -6, b) -4, c) 0 yards.

Example V: With ball at own 30, running back fumbles at the 25. A teammate recovers at the 24 and is tackled at the a) 23, b) 27, c) 31. *Scoring*: Running back is charged with a fumble and one rushing attempt for a) -6, b) -3, c) 0 yards. Teammate gets a recovery and a) -1, b) 0, c) 1 fumble yards.

Example VI: With ball at own 30, running back fumbles at the 25. A teammate recovers at the 26 and is tackled at the a) 23, b) 27, c) 31. *Scoring*: Running back is charged with a fumble and one rushing attempt for a) -4, b) -3, c) 0 yards. Teammate gets a recovery and a) -3, b) 0, c) 1 fumble yards.

Example VII: With ball at own 30, running back fumbles at the 25. A teammate recovers at the 20 and fumbles at the 15. A teammate recovers at the 10 and is tackled at the 18. *Scoring*: Running back is charged with one rushing attempt for -10 yards and also with a fumble. Second player gets a fumble recovery and -2 fumble yards. Third player gets a recovery and 0 fumble yards.

5. Sacks

When a player (passer) fumbles behind the line of scrimmage while attempting to pass, charge him with a sack and a fumble, and all yardage lost as yards lost attempting to pass (sack yardage.) *EXCEPTION*: If the player or teammate recovers the ball and attempts a forward pass, charge the player who fumbled the ball with a fumble, and the player who recovered and passed the ball with a recovery and a forward pass.

If the passer recovers his own fumble, he continues to accumulate sack yardage. However, if he advances the ball *beyond* the line of scrimmage, the play is scored as a rushing play. The number of yards *lost* attempting to pass must be zero or greater.

If a teammate or opponent recovers the fumble *behind, or on*, the line of scrimmage, charge the passer with sack yardage to the point of recovery. Yardage gained by teammate(s) after the recovery up to the line of scrimmage is used to reduce any yardage lost by the passer.

If a teammate or opponent recovers *beyond* the line of scrimmage, credit the passer with a sack for 0 yards.

Example I: With ball on the opponent's 30, quarterback goes back to pass and is hit by defense at the 38, fumbles, and ball bounces backward to the 41, where he, a teammate, or an opponent recovers. *Scoring*: Charge quarterback with a sack, 11 yards lost attempting to pass, and a fumble.

Example II: In the same circumstances as Example I, the ball is recovered at the 35, 3 yards in advance of the spot where the fumble occurred. *Scoring*: Charge quarterback with a sack, 5 yards lost attempting to pass, and a fumble.

Example III: In the same circumstances as Example I, a teammate recovers and advances the ball to the opponent's 28. *Scoring*: Charge quarterback with a sack, no yards lost attempting to pass, and a fumble; credit player recovering with 2 yards of fumble yardage.

Example IV: In the same circumstances as Example I, the ball bounces backward to the 41 where it is deflected by an opponent and eventually recovered by the quarterback himself on the 50-yard line. *Scoring*: Charge the quarterback with a sack and 11 yards lost attempting to pass plus a fumble and an own recovery. The additional 9 yards lost are the result of a loose ball.

Example V: In the same circumstances as Example I, the ball bounces backward to the 41, where an opponent picks it up and runs to midfield before being tackled. *Scoring*: Charge quarterback with a sack, 11 yards lost attempting to pass, and a fumble; credit opponent recovering with 9 yards of fumble yardage.

Example VI: In the same circumstances as Example I, the passer recovers his own fumble, and laterals to a teammate at the 40 who is tackled at the 45. *Scoring*: Charge quarterback with a sack, 10 yards lost attempting to pass, and a fumble; charge teammate with 5 yards lost attempting to pass (but no sack.) The defensive player who forced the fumble gets a defensive sack for 15 yards.

Example VII: First and 10 on the A 20, Team A's possession. A-12 drops back to pass. B-98 bats the ball out of A-12's hand at the A 10. A-12 recovers the ball at the A 15, and advances to the A 16 where he is tackled by B-90. *Scoring*: Charge quarterback with a sack, 4 yards lost attempting to pass, a fumble, and an own recovery. The sack is charged from the A 16, since the player was able to perform a football action after recovering the fumble.

6. Kickoff Returns

The rules for kickoff returns are analogous to those for rushes. The point at which the kickoff return begins is analogous to the line of scrimmage on rushing plays.

A. If a teammate or opponent recovers the fumble behind, or at, the point where the return began:

Credit the player who fumbled with yardage to the point of recovery. Yardage gained by teammate(s) after the recovery up to the point at which the return began is used to reduce any yardage lost by the player who fumbled.

B. If a teammate or opponent recovers the fumble beyond the point where the return began:
   (a) If the fumble occurred behind, or at, the point where the return began, credit the player with yardage to the point where the return began.
   (b) If the fumble occurred beyond the point where the return began, credit the player who fumbled with yardage to the point of his advance or the point of recovery, whichever is less.

Example I: Player receives the kickoff at the 10, advances to the 20, where he is tackled and fumbles. He recovers on the 25 and advances to the 30. *Scoring*: Player is credited with a return for 20 yards, is charged with a fumble, and credited with a fumble recovery.

Example II: Player muffs a kickoff on his own 10; the ball is recovered by a teammate at the 5, who runs for a touchdown. *Scoring*: no fumble, second player gets a kickoff return for 95 yards and a touchdown. (See Kickoff Returns section.)

Example III: Player receives kickoff at the 30, and fumbles at the 35. A teammate or opponent recovers at the a) 29, b) 34, c) 36. *Scoring*: Player is charged with a fumble and a return for a) -1, b) 4, c) 5 yards.

Example IV: Player receives kickoff at the 30, and fumbles at the 25. A teammate or opponent recovers at the a) 24, b) 26, c) 31. *Scoring*: Player is charged with a fumble and a return for a) -6, b) -4, c) 0 yards.

Example V: Player receives kickoff at the 30, and fumbles at the 25. A teammate recovers at the 24 and is tackled at the a) 23, b) 27, c) 31. *Scoring*: First player is charged with a fumble and a return for a) -6, b) -3, c) 0 yards. Teammate gets a recovery and a) -1, b) 0, c) 1 fumble yards.

Example VI: Player receives kickoff at the 30, and fumbles at the 25. A teammate recovers at the 26 and is tackled at the a) 23, b) 27, c) 31. *Scoring*: First player is charged with a fumble and a return for a) -4, b) -3, c) 0 yards. Teammate gets a recovery and a) -3, b) 0, c) 1 fumble yards.

Example VII: Player receives kickoff at the 30, and fumbles at the 25. A teammate recovers at the 20 and fumbles at the 15. A teammate recovers at the 10 and is tackled at the 18. *Scoring*: First player is charged with a return for -10 yards and also with a fumble. Second player gets a fumble recovery and -2 fumble yards. Third player gets a recovery and 0 fumble yards.

7. Receptions, Interceptions, and Returns

When a player fumbles while returning a punt or field-goal attempt, or after recovering a loose ball, or after catching or intercepting a pass, he shall be credited with a gain or loss

to (a) his original point of advance or (b) the point of fumble recovery, whichever is less. *EXCEPTION*: If the player recovers his own fumble, all yardage gained or lost shall be credited in the category initiating the action.

Example I: A receiver, after catching a pass, is 40 yards in advance of the line of scrimmage when he fumbles. He, a teammate, or an opponent recovers the ball 37 yards in advance of the line of scrimmage. *Scoring*: Play is listed as a 37-yard pass.

Example II: In the same situation as Example I, the receiver recovers his own fumble and advances to a point 45 yards in advance of the line of scrimmage before being tackled. *Scoring*: Play is listed as a 45-yard pass.

Example III: With the ball at midfield, a pass is completed to a receiver who runs to the 20-yard line and fumbles. The ball is recovered by a teammate on the 25, and the teammate runs to the 10, where he is tackled. *Scoring*: A 25-yard pass completion for passer and receiver; 15 yards of fumble yardage for the player who recovered the fumble.

Example IV: Punt returner receives a punt on his own 10 and returns to his 35 where he fumbles. The ball bounces forward to the 40, where he recovers his own fumble. *Scoring*: Punt returner is credited with a punt return of 30 yards.

Example V: In the same situation as Example IV, the ball is recovered at the 40 by a teammate or an opponent. *Scoring*: Punt returner is credited with a punt return of 25 yards; the remaining yardage is treated as being the result of a loose ball.

Example VI: In the same situation as Example IV, the ball bounces back to the 30, where the punt returner, a teammate, or an opponent recovers. *Scoring*: Punt returner is credited with a punt return of 20 yards.

Example VII: Punt returner receives a punt on his own 20, retreats trying to elude a tackler, and is tackled at the 17, where he fumbles. The ball bounces back to the 15, where it is recovered. *Scoring*: Punt returner is charged with a punt return of minus 5 yards, regardless of who recovers.

Example VIII: Fourth-and-10 on the 50, Team A's possession. A-4 punts the ball. B-27 muffs the catch at the B 10. The ball rolls out of bounds at the B 8. *Scoring*: B-27 is charged with a fumble and a punt return for 0 yards. The length of the punt is measured to the B 8, for a punt of 42 yards.

Example IX: Fourth-and-10 on the 50, Team A's possession. A-4 punts the ball. B-27 muffs the catch at the B 10. The ball rolls out of bounds at the B 12. *Scoring*: B-27 gets charged with a fumble and a punt return for 0 yards. The length of the punt is measured to the B 10,

for a punt of 40 yards. Whenever there is no possession by the returner, give the punter the benefit of the doubt as to where the length of the punt was stopped.

Touchdowns

There are three types of touchdowns – rushing, passing, and returns. The only touchdowns considered touchdowns passing are those that result from a completed forward pass from a teammate. Touchdowns should be noted in their respective categories according to the manner made (rushing, passing, punt returns, fumbles recovered, etc.).

Extra Points

Whenever a player placekicks or dropkicks a ball in an attempt to score an extra point, he shall be credited with an extra-point attempt and, if the kick results in a point, with an extra point. If an extra point is scored as the result of action that would normally (during a non-extra point play) result in a safety against the defensive team, no individual player on the scoring team shall be credited with a point.

Whenever a team fails to score on a conversion attempt during which none of its players attempts a placekick or dropkick, the team shall be credited with an extra-point attempt. No individual shall be credited with an extra-point attempt.

A player scoring a two-point conversion shall receive credit for such; such points shall remain distinct from any extra-point kicking statistics that he may accumulate.

If an extra-point kick is blocked and the ball does not cross the line of scrimmage, and the offense recovers the ball and scores, credit it as a successful two-point conversion in either the rushing or passing category, depending on how the offense scored. Do not record a blocked kick and do not credit a defender with a blocked kick. If the offense does not score, do not record a two-point conversion attempt. It is a blocked extra-point kick.

Whenever a defensive player recovers a blocked kick or fumble, or intercepts a pass, and attempts to score, credit the player with a defensive two-point attempt. If the player scores, credit him with a defensive two-point conversion. If multiple defenders handle the ball, only the player who scores is credited with the attempt and conversion. If the defense does not score, the first defender to possess the ball will be credited with an attempt.

If the defense fails to score on a defensive conversion attempt and either fumbles the ball in the field of play or has an illegal forward pass intercepted, and the offense scores, credit the player who scored with a return extra-point conversion. The original two-point conversion attempt by the offense is not recorded, as the player who advanced the defensive turnover makes up for the original failure.

No rushing, passing, receiving, interception, fumble or sack statistics shall be credited during an extra-point attempt. However, penalty yardage, if assessed, is recorded as if during a scrimmage down.

Field Goals

Field goals shall be measured from the spot of the kick. Spot of the kick is dictated by the same principle as used in determining the line of scrimmage.

> *Example*: If any point of the football when kicked rests on or above any yard stripe, credit distance from that yard stripe. If all of the ball rests between yard stripes, credit distance from the yard line nearest the intended goal.

Kicker is not charged with a field-goal attempt if he does not actually kick:

1) If the player holding the ball bobbles it long enough to prevent the kicker from making an attempt, the play is scored as an aborted play. Charge the holder with a rush for 0 yards, and yardage lost as fumble yardage, plus a fumble and his own fumble recovered.

2) If the center's snap is satisfactory and the holder does not fumble the snap or mishandle the placement of the ball, but is instead smothered at the spot or tackled after he attempts to run, the play is scored as a rushing play. Charge the holder with a rush and any yards lost as rushing yardage.

3) If the play develops as action off a fake field-goal attempt, charge the holder with a rush, or pass, or sack consistent with the basic scoring rules on scrimmage plays.

For blocked field-goal attempts, see Blocked Kicks section.

Safeties

Credit a player with a safety when:

A. He downs an opponent behind the opponent's goal line;
B. He causes an opponent to step out of bounds behind the opponent's goal line;
C. He blocks a kick or deflects a backward pass and the ball goes out of the end zone behind the opponent's goal line.

> *Example I*: Fourth-and-10 at own 4-yard line. Defensive tackle blocks a punt. The ball is recovered in the end zone by the punter, and the cornerback downs the punter there. *Scoring*: Credit the cornerback with a safety.
>
> *Example II*: Fourth-and-10 at own 4-yard line. The offensive team decides to allow a safety rather than to kick on fourth down. The punter receives the snap and lingers near the end line, consuming time until the defensive tackle chases him out of bounds. *Scoring*: Credit the defensive tackle with a safety.

Unless a safety falls into one of the categories listed above, no credit shall be given to any individual.

Qualifications for Individual Leaders

Rushing:	Most net yards gained (minimum 100 carries to qualify for highest average gain).
Passing:	Minimum of 224 passes attempted for season. Standings are based on percent of completions, percent of touchdown passes per attempt, percent of pass attempts intercepted, and average gain per attempted pass. Passers are rated against a standard in each of the four categories and the passer with the most rating points is the leader.
Pass Receptions:	Most receptions (minimum 32 to qualify for highest average gain).
Pass Interceptions:	Most interceptions.
Scoring:	Most total points scored.
Punting:	Longest average distance per punt (minimum 40 punts for season). Blocked punts are not charged to the individual punter.
Punt Returns:	Average per return (minimum of 20 for season).
Kickoff Returns:	Average per return (minimum of 20 for season).

Notwithstanding the applicable qualification level in punting, punt returns, and kickoff returns, if a non-qualifying player has an average which is higher than the average of the leading qualifier, and if the non-qualifier has more yards than the qualifier, the non-qualifying player shall be recognized as the leader. (This rule shall be applied only at the end of the season, rather than in the weekly rankings.)

> *Example*: Johnson has 25 punt returns for 250 yards (10.0 average) and is the leader among qualifiers. Simmons, a non-qualifier, has 19 returns for 260 yards (13.7 average). Under this rule, Simmons would be the league leader since he has both a higher average and more yards than the leading qualifier.

NFL Defensive Scoring Guidelines

These guidelines have been prepared to provide consistent standards for the scoring of defensive statistics. In the event they do not cover every situation that may occur in a game, the ultimate guideline is to use common sense in the recording of any play.

Tackles

If a ball carrier is stopped solely or primarily because of the efforts of one defensive player, that player should be credited with a tackle. A sack is also a tackle. Also, a forced fumble is either a tackle or an assist.

NOTE: If a ball carrier steps out of bounds because a defensive player impeded downfield progress, that player should be credited with a tackle, including when the ball carrier steps out of bounds to avoid a defender.

NOTE: No tackle should be credited following a loose ball recovery if no clear attempt to advance is made.

Assists

Assists may be credited in two distinctively different situations:

(1) If a ball carrier has been stopped primarily (but not solely) by one defensive player, but a second defensive player intervenes to end the play more quickly and possibly prevent additional yardage, credit the second defensive player with an assist, even though the first defensive player will be credited with a tackle.

(2) If two defensive players contribute equally to stopping a ball carrier, credit both players with one assist, but neither with a tackle.

Tackling The Passer (Sacks)

If, through the application of the official scoring rules, a defensive team is credited with a sack of a player who is attempting to pass, the defensive player who is solely or primarily responsible for the stopping of the would-be passer should be credited with a sack. If two players are equally responsible for the stopping of a would-be passer, they should each be credited with one-half sack. For example, if the second defensive player prevents the passer from throwing the ball or gaining additional yardage, he should be credited with one-half sack. A sack is also a tackle.

NOTE: Official individual sack statistics have been kept since 1982.

Passes Defensed

If a pass falls incomplete or is intercepted because of the defensive efforts of one player, that player should be credited with a pass defense. This may come about in two principal ways.

(1) A defensive player who makes contact with the football, thus preventing the intended receiver from making the catch.

(2) A defensive player who makes contact with the intended receiver simultaneously with the arrival of the football, thus preventing the reception. This includes a defensive player who

forces the receiver out of bounds during the process of the catch, thus preventing the reception.

A defensive player who neither touches the football nor makes contact with the receiver simultaneously with the arrival of the football ordinarily should not be credited with a pass defense. No pass defense should be credited when the ball is overthrown or uncatchable.

NOTE: A defender should be credited a pass defense on replay reviews where a simultaneous pass completion and tackle is reversed to an incomplete pass, if, in the scorer's judgment, the defensive player makes contact with the intended receiver simultaneously with the arrival of the football, thus preventing the reception.

NOTE: In rare instances, it may be possible for two defensive players to play such equal roles in defending a forward pass that it is not possible to determine which player was more responsible. In such a rare instance, credit both players with a pass defense.

NOTE: When a first defensive player defends against a pass and a second defensive player intercepts the pass, the first defensive player should be credited with a pass defense while the second player is credited with an interception and a pass defense. The theory of this guideline is that the first defensive player should not be penalized because of the ensuing interception when, in fact, the first defensive player's action may have played a major role in making the interception possible.

NOTE: When a defensive player makes contact with the arm of the passer or the ball during the passers throwing motion, if in the scorer's judgement, the defensive player made an attempt to stop the throw, credit the defender with a pass defense.

Quarterback Hits

On passing plays, if the potential passer is knocked to the ground, either in a prone position or to his knees, because of the defensive efforts of one player, that player should be credited with a quarterback hit. This includes direct hits, as well as pushing an offensive player into the potential passer, causing him to go down.

NOTE: Do not credit a quarterback hit on plays where the hit results in a foul for roughing the passer or any other personal foul.