

Football

By: Ashish Jain

With pre-season just around the corner (starting August 4th), I thought I would take a break from writing *Daru Ka Nasha* to write about my other passion, football, while my good friend, Javid, writes my regular column.

NFL is the most popular and widely watched sport in the USA and this is a great time to go over the basics of the game.

The NFL is broken down into the following two conferences.

- NFC (National Football Conference)
- AFC (American Football Conference)

Both Conferences have 4 divisions, each consisting of East, West, North and South and every division has four teams, making a total of 32 teams. For example, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers are in the NFC south division. Each team plays 4 pre-season games and 16 regular season games. The top teams then advance to the play offs and the final AFC winner plays the final NFC winner which is the SUPER BOWL!

The purpose of the game is to move the ball towards, and ultimately into, the opposition's end zone. This is done by either running with the ball until tackled, (when the ball or the players knee touches the ground), or throwing the ball downfield to a team member. The attacking team consists of 11 players and is led by the quarterback. The offense needs to move the ball forward at least 10 yards, and they have four chances, or downs, to gain those 10 yards. When they get the 10 yards, they get another set of downs (4 chances to achieve another 10 yards). If the offensive team fails to move 10 yards within four downs, possession is given up by usually kicking or punting to the defending team on fourth down.

There are only 11 players from each side on the field at any one time. The actual team is made up



NFL Football 101

of 45 players, ranging in size, speed and their roles within the team. All teams have three sub teams – offense, defense and special teams.

OFFENSE

The Offense is made up of a team's attacking players who attempt to move the ball forward and score touchdowns. The play starts on the quarterback's signal, the 'center' snaps the ball back between his legs to the QB. The quarterback can then either run with the ball, hand it to a running back, or pass it downfield to one of his receivers. The other positions on the offensive line are:-

- Wide receivers - players who catch the ball
- Tackles, Guards, Center, Tight End, Fullback, Running Back (player who runs with the ball).

The plays used by the QB can either be pre-arranged or improvised to take advantage of the game's changing shape.

DEFENSE

The role of the defense is to stop the other team from scoring by tackling the ball carrier, intercepting passes or causing fumbles. The defense players are generally big, powerful players who try to stop the other team from running the ball, and fast, athletic players trying to prevent the QB's passes from reaching his wide receivers. The defense's power players also attempt to tackle, or sack, the quarterback before he has thrown the ball, while

any defender can cause a fumble by knocking the ball from a ball carrier's grasp. The defense team consists of Cornerbacks, Free Safety, Linebackers, Strong Safety, Defensive Ends, Nose, or Defensive Tackle.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Special teams are responsible for all plays involving kicks or punts. Special teams play a small but vital role. They come onto the field to execute field goals or extra point attempts, and when the team wants to punt the ball downfield on fourth down. They are also responsible for trying to block the opposition's kicks and punts, as well as attempting to return them as far as possible in the other direction.

SCORING

A team scores when it crosses the opposition's goal line with the ball, or catches or collects the ball in the end zone, which is a touchdown and is worth 6 points. While most of the scores come from near the defending team's end zone, a touchdown can be scored from anywhere on the field, and on any down. A field goal (three points) is usually attempted on the fourth down if the kicker is close enough to the end zone to kick the ball through the posts, or uprights. Extra point (one or two points) is earned by kicking the ball through the uprights after a touchdown. Two points are earned by taking the ball into the end zone again. Safety (two points) is awarded to the defensive team when a member of the offensive team is tackled with the ball in his own end zone.

Sounds complicated? The first couple of games should be watched with someone who has knowledge of the game. Once you get the hang of it, it is an extremely entertaining and strategic game.

GO EAGLES!!!

Daru Ka Nasha

small hands



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