



CODE OF CONDUCT

Coaches must act professionally at all times.

- Competitive trash talk and rivalries are fine.
- Anything that can be interpreted as a slur or profanity by the general population will not be tolerated.
- Disrespectful personal attacks will not be tolerated.
- Avoid conversations about politics and religion (We have hidden channels designated for such conversations if people wish to have them)
- Constant or excessive use of profanity is not allowed. Keep the chat PG-13 if not PG.

Some people might have the chat open within eyesight of their children.

MISSION STATEMENT

We seek to build a League devoted to 32 teams running realistic football strategies and schematic systems based on real life Xs and Os within the limitations of the game.

To this end, each coach is tasked with developing and cultivating a philosophy on both sides of the ball that is based on real world football principles. To employ a scheme to exploit the offense, defense, and opponent's tendencies. As a group, **we will avoid exploiting the limitations of the game** (*hereafter referred to as "Cheese"*).

If you need guidance or help with creating a scheme, we have resources to help guide you. USFL is not about quick advances or thirst in any aspect. It's about the process of running a football team. From implementing your scheme at the start of the off-season and building your roster around the scheme, to implementing film study to get the better of your opponent during the regular season.

For these reasons:

ALL COACHES MUST BUILD AN OFFENSIVE & DEFENSIVE IDENTITY

TEAM STRATEGY

PLAYBOOK AND PERSONNEL

- All coaches are tasked with developing a system that takes the following into account:
 - What are the strengths of the players on my roster?
 - What are the weaknesses of the players on my roster?
 - How can I focus our offense/defense around those strengths?
 - How can I limit the impact of our weaknesses?
 - Who are my primary competitors?

- How can I best develop my team and strategy to defeat our most important competition (division rivals, annual playoff contenders, consistent powerhouses)?
- What will be my base offensive personnel? Defensive personnel?
- What will be my base formations? (4-3, 3-4) (Singleback, Gun Spread, Gun Ace) Sets that are meant to be situational (Bunch, Compressed, Stack etc.) should not be your base or what you call your gameplan around.
- Each Coach will declare their scheme and core concepts before each season and every game is streamed. This allows for accountability while also helping every coach really narrow in on their identity.
- **ONCE THE REGULAR SEASON STARTS YOU MUST STICK WITH YOUR DECLARED SCHEMATIC SYSTEMS.** It's not realistic to change between different schemes throughout a season. So once FA opens in the offseason and the new league year begins, your coaching staff is locked in and your schemes are set. Now you go about building your roster towards that scheme, just like real NFL teams do.

DEVELOPING YOUR STRATEGY:

- Install a philosophy that is consistent, has a distinct identity and fits your personnel.
- Settle on a scheme that fits your roster while simultaneously grooming your current players.
- Continue to mold your team through the draft and strategic trading.
- Be careful who you give extensions to, we will not bail you out from cap hell.
- Build a simple, logical, well-organized playbook that allows you to execute your strategy and gives you dynamic range in your playcalling. Opponents will be forced to scheme around your signature plays, and you will punish them with constraint and tendency breakers. Avoid playbooks with every formation, every concept, etc. Focus your playbook for the personnel and your scheme.
- As a general rule, aim to get your gameday offensive playbook under 200 plays, and at maximum 300 plays. Eliminate formations you don't really use and be intentional about what you do include. It is ok to tweak your playbook and add or remove sets throughout the season to keep your playbook fresh, but you must stay within your declared scheme.
- Likewise on defense your playbook should not have 9 nickel sets, Choose your core 4 Base sets, 5 Nickel Sets, 3 Dime/Dollar Sets, a prevent set, and 2 heavy sets/goalline.

UN-SIM PLAY

- Play which exploits the limitations of the game
- Play for which a reasonable football explanation cannot be given.

Un-Sim play will not be treated as infractions, but rather learning opportunities. When a player employs questionable methods, it's up to us as a league to educate that player and provide examples of realistic alternatives. One of the primary objectives of the league is the continued development of its members.

Examples of Known Exploits:

- Rolling out your QB & using the Offensive Playmaker mechanic to exploit zone logic.
- Intentionally running youtube "one play touchdown" plays that exploit zone logic.

- o Waiting for a slant route to cross the field, or abusing “glitchy routes” that get open vs all coverages. Such as the Gun Bunch / Tight Corner route.
- o Further examples can be found in the #Madden-Flaws channel in the discord.

We will not tolerate the abuse, exploit, manipulation, or cheating of the AI or the league in any way. If you are caught doing so you will be banned from the league permanently. We are a sim league. To us, that means we will do everything we can to replicate what happens in the NFL and NCAA FB. From the way we call plays, to attacking and reading coverages, the way we think, substitute, and game-manage, while also taking into account the limitations of the game.

If you make a hot route or motion and get a UNCOVERED receiver, do not make that adjustment again.

SCHEME & PLAYBOOK RULES

SCHEME DECLARATIONS:

In the #Guides channel we have our [Madden Scheme Guide](#), it gives a birds eye view of what makes up a scheme and what the in game schemes align with them. Review it and help narrow down your ideal scheme. It also features example Scheme Declarations. You don't have to follow this to the letter, it is just what a generic ___ scheme might look like.

Now it's time for you to make your own Scheme Declaration in our #Scheme-Declarations channel. Referencing the guide at #Scheme-101 and using the below form, fill out the form and submit it before the start of the offseason Free Agency period or before your first game if you join after the offseason.

The 3x cap on scheme declared concepts is a “soft cap” meaning we are not sitting here counting every concept in every game, however, if you didnt list verticals as one of your concepts and then in the first half of a game you ran it 7 times, that is clear and egregiously over the line and can face consequences. Choose the concepts that will give you answers vs a lot of the common defensive fronts, shells, and coverages and give you answers for those without having to reach beyond your base concepts. “But he was sitting in 1 high all game, I'd be stupid not to throw seam balls there!” is not a valid excuse. If that is how you feel then you should have declared Verticals one of your core concepts or been ok with only running it 3x a game. The 3x rule applies to both offensive concepts and defensive coverages.

So what counts as a concept? Is it what the play art shows? Is it what plays out on the field? What about plays that can be categorized under multiple concepts? Well what the play art shows isn't as important as what plays out on the field. A concept is any named 2+ route combination that work together to beat zone or man coverage. A guide to concepts can be found [here](#). Some plays can have a concept on the left or one on the right, as long as one sides concepts are listed, the play does not count towards the soft cap. For instance, if someone doesn't have Divide/Double Post declared but does have smash declared and they run the play Fade Smash, which has double post backside. This play is not capped because it includes Smash.

Further, if you call a match coverage that doesn't match vs trips (3 seam and 3 buzz seam) or 4 strong (trips with hb to trips side or quads) these plays play out as zone. So if you called 4 Palms vs gun trips, that counts as 4 zone even if you have match toggled on. To help accommodate this we have expanded defensive coverage selections from 7 to 8. **You can also choose to forgo this 8th coverage for a 5th front instead if you so choose.** Plan accordingly.

You can create your **SCHEME SCOUTING CARD** using the  M23 Playbook Creator v0.96 .

(If on mobile you will need the google sheets app free from the iTunes Store/Play Store)

CUSTOM PLAYBOOKS

In order to fully implement your own unique Scheme, Gameplan and Team Strategy you shouldn't be using cookie cutter team strategies designed to replicate the 2014 Arizona Cardinals but with a few minor tweaks and now labeled "TB - Todd Bowles", for your new team, you should be custom tailoring your teams playbooks around your team identity, scheme, personnel, and choosing plays and alignments that are consistent with your declared offensive and defensive schemes (see scheme guide).

No team runs every formation, likewise your playbook should reflect your team's strategies. As a general rule your custom playbook should NOT EXCEED 300 plays (including the 42 undeletable plays). A healthy size for your custom offensive playbook is 175-225 total plays. On defense it should be between 100-150, with 200 as the total play cap.

We do allow no-huddle in this league and some teams will run it repeatedly. Set your audibles and make your formation choices accordingly.

When assembling your playbook, have your Scheme Declaration pulled up as a roadmap/blueprint. You should mostly be sticking to those concepts and the fronts and shell decisions made defensively will dictate which formations you include on defense. The vast majority of your plays should conform to your Scheme Declaration, however concepts you run a total of 3 times or less can be included.

GENERIC PLAYBOOKS

Non-team playbooks (Run and Shoot, West Coast, Run Heavy, etc) are also allowed. These playbooks often can have more concepts in them than are on your Scheme Declaration, however you still must define your offense with the Scheme Declaration and non declared plays are still affected by the concept soft cap.

OFFENSIVE FORMATION LIMITS:

While condensed / compression formations are a part of Football at all levels, Madden has had issues with "Close", "Tight", "Stack", and "Bunch", (and to some degree "Trips TE / Trio") formations for years, with no likelihood that will change anytime soon. For these reasons when in Gun or Pistol, do not base more than ~30% of your playcalls around these types of formations. There is no limitation on these formations under center.

You should not exceed 30 formations in your custom playbook.

DEFENSIVE FORMATION LIMITS:

Your custom defensive playbook is limited to:

- 2 Heavy / Goal Line Sets
- 4 Base sets
- 5 Nickel / Big Nickel Sets
- 3 Dime / Dollar Sets
- a Prevent set (regardless of your fronts on your scheme declaration)

(For more information on these definitions see: [here](#))

OFFENSIVE COACHING DECISION RULES

4th Down

Just because you can go for it doesn't mean you always should. Try and make reasonable coaching decisions on 4th down. But as a hard rule follow this:

BEFORE MIDFIELD:

4th and 1 or less

AFTER MIDFIELD:

4th and ANY.

If losing or tied in the 4th quarter or anytime in overtime, 4th Down is allowed from any distance anywhere.

2 Point Conversions

With the latency/lag issues some people have with the FG minigame, 2 point conversion attempts are a coach's choice. Fake special teams plays however are banned on extra point plays and only can be ran rarely in other situations.

Stat Caps (per season)

- No more than **75%** of a team's carries & rushing yards should be by a single rusher.
- No more than **35%** of your team's receptions or receiving yards should be by a single receiver (wr/te/hb/etc). Spread the ball around, don't force feed your rookie

Clock Management

With 10 minute quarters, the chew clock mechanic is allowed inside the 2 minute periods of either half as well as anytime in the 4th if winning and the score is a 2 score lead (9+ point lead).

No Huddle is permitted at any time of the game, however when **No Huddling**, you are not permitted to spam the same play. You may only run the same exact play back to back once. You must audible every time you **No Huddle**, even if it is just to reset the play to run it again. This keeps your play calls diverse and allows your opponent a second to punch up at least a basic defensive audible as well. You do not have to give your opponent time to make all of their adjustments, just as long as their players are horizontally set.

EXCEPTIONS: If the play clock is expiring, you can snap it at :02 or :01 on the play clock or at the very end of each half on the game clock. If

someone's corners have flipped sides pre-snap on 10+ plays, where it seems like a deliberate strategy to make the offense wait, this protection for the defense is lifted until the constant flipping ceases.

If when you are no-huddling and audibling a WR lines up at TE or any other odd out of position alignments, it is on the offensive player to call a TO and not run the play. If they are out of TOs they must take a delay of game penalty.

Good & Bad Sportsmanship

If you see the defense's corners flipping sides, that's obviously an issue of the game's programming being sub-par, don't quick snap it (See Quick Snap section below), let those switching corners come to a stop before snapping the ball. Failing to do this can result in forced punt or giving up a free score if you score on a broken play due to the game's limitations. This is just good sportsmanship.

Prior to the 4th Quarter, no team is expected to limit their offense, take their foot off the gas, bench their starters, or in any way stop running their normal offense irregardless of the score. If a coach chooses to run more or slow up, that is their own personal choice, but not one that anyone should expect. It is every team's responsibility to stop the opponents offense when on defense.

That being said, if you have a multiple-score lead in the 4th. Keep the clock moving with high efficiency passes and running plays ending in bounds. Avoid no huddling. Do not run up the score unnecessarily. If your opponent is still passing or not, just run clock with short in bounds throws or runs and get first downs but stop going for touchdowns (unless its goal to go obviously), the point is to secure the win and get out of the game while eating up as much of the time remaining. That means don't be throwing fades up 25 points in the 4th. If you break a big run, hit the deck or let yourself be tackled after you gain a first down. Milk the clock. If up by 4 scores in the last half of the 4th, bench your key starters utilizing formation subs. Give your backup playmakers some reps. Continuing to run up the score or stat pad in a blowout is just bad sportsmanship.

If you are getting blown out, and it happens to everyone at some point. Keep your cool. Don't start just running Engage 8 or playing prevent defense or taking your players out of the play. Don't call timeouts when all hope is lost. Just help run clock and get out of the game, if you choose to keep throwing deep shots or run it out, is up to you, and either way you go doesn't justify the team with a lead to play differently. When in doubt, try and: **"Win with grace, lose with dignity"**.

OFFENSIVE GAMEPLAY RULES

Offensive Hot Routes

The only instances when Hot Routes should be used are below:

- Make an existing concept more realistic.
(EX: Changing the quick out on Curl-Combo to a Flat route)
- Tagging in a half field concept. See: [here](#).
(EX: Curl Flat on backside of Smash concept)
- Adjust to the blitz or mis-alignment as a one man hot read.
(EX: Slot slant, hb swing, or max protection)

- Adjust a WR outside the numbers to a Pressed or Cloud Corner.
(EX: the Quick Out in Levels to a Fade route)
- Adjust a WR outside the numbers to a Off Corner.
(EX: the Fade route on 4 verticals to a Smoke route)
- Adjusting a seam route to better conflict a single-high safety.
(EX: the locked seam on 4 verticals to a Streak or Fade route)

The following uses of hot routes is intentionally forbidden:

- Hot routing Streaks or Fades from compression (bunch, close, tight, snugs, stacks).
(EX: Streaking the WRs in I Form Close)
- Hot routes that make an existing concept less realistic.
(EX: Putting the stick route in Y Stick on a Slant)
- Hot routing your RB to cancel play action.
(EX: the PA fake to a HB Block hot route on PA Comebacks)

Motioning

While motioning is definitely a part of real football, in Madden it is programmed very poorly.

It is illegal to:

- **MANUAL MOTIONING ACROSS THE FORMATION IS NOT ALLOWED ON PASSING PLAYS.**
- **MANUAL MOTIONING PLAYERS OUT OF THE BACKFIELD IS NOT ALLOWED ON PASSING PLAYS.**
- Motion snapping or motion blocking is banned. Any manual motioned player must come to a full stop.

It is legal to:

- Use of plays with Automatic Motions, such as many Drive and Spot plays.
- Use of Audibles to simulate motioning (like motioning from spread to trips) is fine.
- Manually motioning a wide receiver out wider to the same side, or putting a slot wr on the line of scrimmage, or bringing a solo wr in tighter, is legal.
- Manually motioning a back to the other side of the backfield, is legal as long as he is blocking.

Play-Action

Due to the AI biting on Play Action regardless of pass commit or the running back even faking the handoff, the following restrictions are in place:

- Play Action should not be called on 3rd or 4th down and 3+ yards to go.
- Taking a play-action play and blocking the HB to "cancel play action" is not allowed. (see above)
- Any Play Action pass with 3 routes from one side crossing the center's face is banned.
 - This includes Posts, Crossers, Digs, Drags, Ins, Slants, etc.
 - This does not include routes crossing behind the center.

QB Roll Outs

On QB Roll Outs, once the QB breaks outside of the numbers, you cannot throw:

- to anyone more than 20 yards down field
- across the middle of the field.

Quick Throws

On slant patterns you must throw it on time. These are plays that are meant to be quick hitting routes. Not long developing routes.

Split Ends (X) & Flankers (Z): The Ball must be thrown before he crosses the Center's face.

Slot Receivers (H & Y): The Ball must be thrown before he crosses the opposite side Tackle.

HB Angle Routes: The Ball must be thrown before he crosses the opposite side Tackle.

Attached Tight Ends: The Ball must be thrown before he crosses the opposite side Ghost TE.

RPOs

Under Center RPOs should be treated as pre-snap reads. Quarterbacks cannot be facing one direction, faking an under center hand off and reading a backside defender with eyes in the back of their head. Given that, **the QB must throw the ball immediately after the snap**, at **most** before the QB completes **2 full steps** into the handoff animation.

If an under center formation only has an RPO version of a run concept that you declared. You may run the play like a non-RPO version of the run concept. However you can not throw the RPO unless you declare that type of RPO.

Offensive Clicking On

When "Clicking On" to a receiver while the ball is in the air you **may not move the left or right sticks or hit the sprint button**. You're only allowed to select the animation. For Offense (Possession [A], Aggressive [Y], or Run After Catch [X]). This applies from the moment the ball leaves the QBs hands until it is caught by a receiver. Once the ball is caught (or the handoff/toss/lateral is complete), sprint, left stick movement, and rushing moves, etc are fully allowed.

Blocking

Just like in real life, NFL Quarterbacks are asked to read the pass rush and call protection adjustments. To be successful in this league you will need to utilize the slide pass blocking, ID Mike, and Double Team mechanics to neutralize elite pass rushers. Picking up the blitz or adjusting to stop a superstar edge rusher is your responsibility.

Realistic Rushing Angles

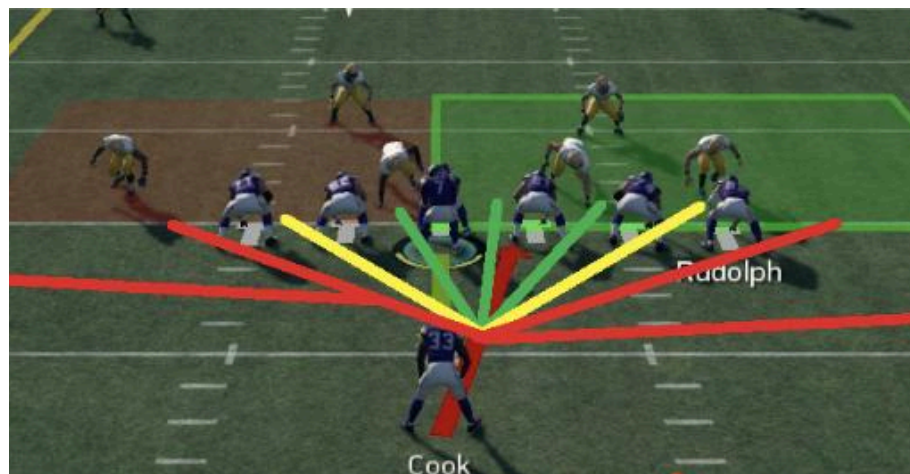
Zig zag running is prohibited. Do not make sharp cuts that allow you to take advantage of the AI pursuit angles. Change of Direction/zig zag has always been an issue.

Green = A realistic motion by a back, no loss of momentum, no special moves needed

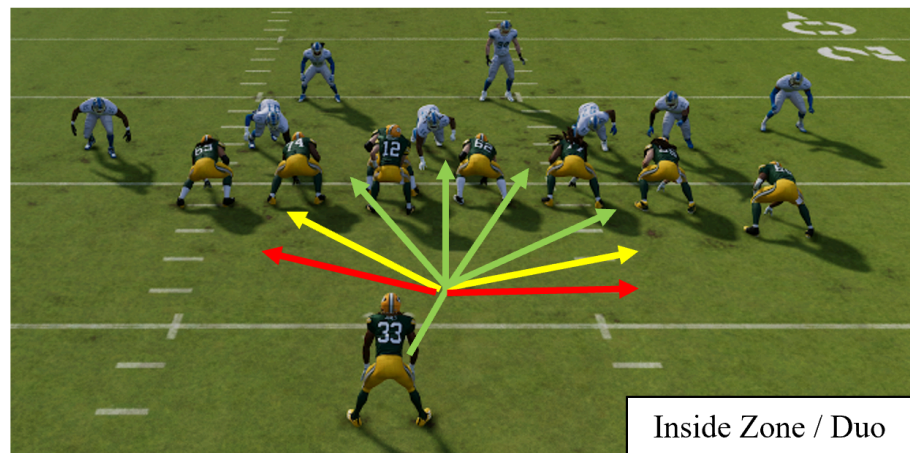
Yellow = A realistic motion by a back, small loss of momentum, a special move is needed

Red = A realistic motion by a back, but a lot of momentum lost, so it is unacceptable in madden due to AI unfortunately.

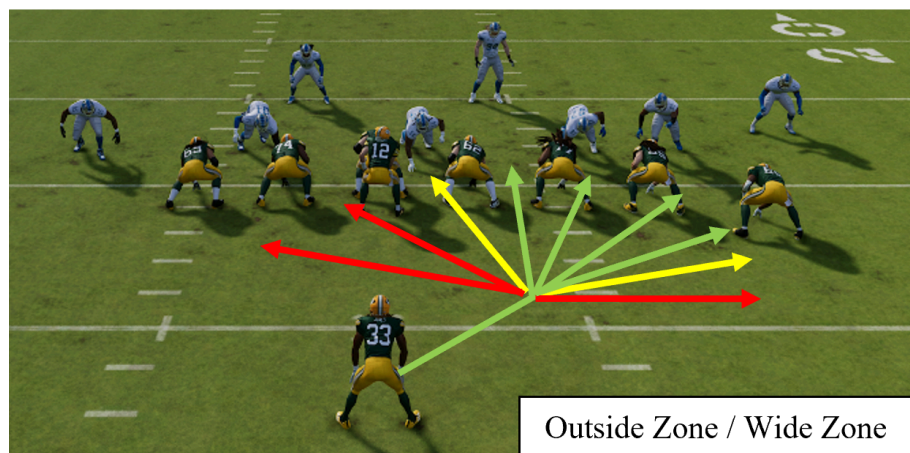
HB DIVE:



INSIDE ZONE / WK ZONE:



OUTSIDE ZONE / STRETCH:



Penalties for Offensive Gameplay Violations

Failure to follow these guidelines **will result in a forced punt** if the violating play results in a first down.

If the violating play results in a Touchdown, on your next offensive drive you must punt the ball on first down.

If the violating play results in a Touchdown near the end of the game, you must give up a Kick Return TD by switching players and diving them repeatedly, or giving up a TD on the first play your opponent has on offense by leaving a WR uncovered with no deep coverage to help over top on purpose. DM your opponent and tag them to coordinate as necessary.

If the violating play is not confirmed to be a violation until after the game is concluded, it can result in the player or the user in question facing a suspension. Continually having issues with running plays incorrectly or seemingly with disregard for the rules will result in a boot.

DEFENSIVE COACHING DECISION RULES

Defensive Formations and Personnel Matching

You should match personnel within 1 personnel grouping. (This means Defense should strive to always pick their play after the offense.)

FORMATION TYPES:

“HEAVY” = 3 DBs = 4-4, Goalline - # of Formations allowed: 2

“BASE” = 4 DBs = 3-4, 4-3, 46, 5-2 - # of Formations allowed: 4

“NICKEL” = 5 DBs = 3-3-5, 2-4-5/4-2-5, Big Nickel - # of Formations: 5

“DIME” = 6 DBs = Dollar, Dime - # of Formations allowed: 3

“QUARTERS” = 7 DBs = Quarters, Prevent - # of Formations allowed: 1
(regardless of your scheme declared fronts)

If the offense calls a play with...

0 WR: Heavy

1 WR: Heavy or Base

2 WRs: Heavy, Base, or Nickel

3 WRs: Base, Nickel, or Dime

4 WRs: Nickel, Dime, or Quarters

5 WRs: Dime or Quarters

Your custom defensive playbook is limited to:

- 4 Base sets
- 5 Nickel Sets
- 3 Dime/Dollar Sets
- 1 Prevent set
- 2 Heavy/goalline Sets

Base Align

The use of Base Align is strictly prohibited. The Autoflip feature does a decent job of aligning your defense, however, it isn't a perfect system. Utilizing show blitz and man align can usually overcome any unusual alignments (LB on WR in gun trips for instance, or better aligning for run defense on short yardage downs.

Safety at Linebacker

It is prohibited to play a defensive back at linebacker through right stick personnel packages, Depth Chart or formation substitutions.

Coaching Adjustments

- Play Ball coaching adjustment is not allowed. Set this to play receiver, swat, or default.
- Auto-Base Align is also not allowed. Man Align or Default are both acceptable.
- Every coach will declare their choice of zone adjusting adjustments between the Match Toggle and Zone Drop Depths
NOTE: Only those with the above declared zone adjusting

adjustments can use those coaching adjustments.

Setting DBs by speed, OVR, Route running, etc can lead to busted coverages. While offenses are asked to wait for criss-crossing DBs to come to a stop before snapping, sometimes assignments flip and the corners won't move, especially if your DBs are pressed. If the corners are flipping sides presnap all game, the offense no longer has to wait for the players to get set. **Use these adjustments at your own risk.**

DEFENSIVE GAMEPLAY RULES

Pre-Snap Movement

It is illegal to:

- manually move more than 1 defender that you're **not** using before the snap of the play
 - Exception:** Nudging both safeties and audible into another play to maintain the coverage shell. Movement is not to exceed 1 yd - unless you are using one of the safeties.
- use a double safety blitz to drop the safeties into the box then audible into a deep coverage
 - Exception:** it is allowed within 5 yards of the goal line.
- pinch the defensive line into an unrealistic front.
 - Example 1: Nickel Over pinched puts all 4 linemen lining up inside of the offensive tackles.
 - Example 2: 3-4 Bear pinched puts all 3 linemen between the guards.
 - Example 3: 3-3 Sam shifted right so the 1 tech lines up as a 1 tech on the same side as the 3 tech.
 - Exception:** all pinch shifting is allowed within 5 yards of the goal line; OR if it is 3 yards or less to go on any 3rd or 4th down.
 - Further Clarification:** Pinching into a realistic front such as a 3-4 Odd into Bear Front, Nickel Wide into a 22 front, or 3-3-5 into Tite front, is allowed. If in doubt, ask the League office.

It is legal to:

- Come out in a single safety blitz and audible into another coverage to provide a 1 high presentation to the offense (IE. Come out in SS Overload 3 and audible into Cover 4 Quarters).

NOTE: if you use DB Alignments, or any of the above disguises or adjustments, and you get out of position due to audibles, shifts, or motions, resulting in bad leverage, that is on you as the defensive play caller.

Pass Rush

You must rush at least 3 players every down. Most downs rush at least 4.

User Pass Rush is in general permitted, however, the following instances are banned:

- if the defensive play is a 3-man-rush/drop-8 coverage.
- If any sub 275 lbs players line up between the B gaps (the gap between tackle and guard)
- If any player with over a 72 COD rating lines up between the B gaps.
- If the defensive line is shifted so a 1 tech crosses the center's face.

(Shifting a 1 tech to a head up 0 tech is fine.)

- If at any point you get 2 user sacks in a single series or 3 user sacks in a drive, or more than 4 user sacks in a game, you will no longer be permitted to user pass rush.

It should go without saying, but any YouTube Nano Blitz setups are strictly forbidden. Intentionally glitching the blocking AI by hovering, set up loop blitzes, etc can result in a boot from the league.

Defensive Hot Routes

- All defensive hot routes and zone drops are allowed, however, putting a user defender on a blitz or a QB Spy in order to get control of the defender faster for user coverage is not permitted.
- Adding a QB Spy to an existing play is only allowed if one of two conditions is met:
 1. The opposing QB has a Speed Rating greater than 85.
 2. The opposing team has called Designed Quarterback Runs earlier in the game.
 - a. EX. Read Option, Triple Option, QB Blast, QB Draw, QB Power, QB Wrap, etc
- No more than 1 flat zone can be on the same side of the field on a given play. (No Madden Mable coverage)
 - **Exception:** For match coverage teams utilizing Cover 2 Sink and/or Cover 9, you may hot route the strong side vert hook to a **curl flat** as a check versus the threat of flood concepts. Be aware such an adjustment may leave a seam open, use at your own risk.

User Coverage

MAN COVERAGE:

You must User your man assignment and cannot break off to another receiver, even if you're trailing your assignment.

If your assignment blocks you may either:

- "Green Dog" (blitz at an angle to attack your man) or
- "Rat In The Hole" or "Robot" to the MOF
 - Gain to a depth of 10 yard and Key the QB / Cut the first crosser / Roll & Run to find the Seam / Crosser / In Cut.

ZONE COVERAGE:

You must strafe within your zone, passing receivers off as they move through to the next defender's zone.

If you cease strafing at any point, even if only for half a second, you are then man-locked on whatever receiver you are running with or sprinting towards. Once man-locked, that is the only person you can cover down the field, even if their route hitches up and sits still.

On Tampa 2 coverage it is permissible to user the Middle Read player and sprint back fifteen yards towards midfield, but then you must strafe and play a deep middle zone.

Play your assignment, don't just freelance every down. If you see an opponent doing so, pause and inform them that they aren't allowed to do that. If they continue, report it to the League Office.

MATCH COVERAGE:

Match Coverage in Madden is coded a specific way and doesn't always have all the solutions it is supposed to. Use it at your own risk. That being said, if you can provide a play diagram or clinic notes that shows how that specific coverage works and that you are using within that structure, you are free to use or make adjustments accordingly. Like with Zone coverage you must strafe until you man lock. If you even for a nano second stop strafing and your defender's hips turn, you are man-locked on the nearest eligible receiver moving in the same direction you are.

VIOLATIONS:

If you violate the user coverage rules and get an interception or a pass breakup on 3rd or 4th down, you must immediately kick a FG out of bounds to turn the ball back over at the same spot on the field. If you score on the illegal coverage, then on the kickoff you must give up a KR touchdown, then after they kick it back off to you, immediately punt the ball back to them to make it right.

Clicking On

When "Clicking On" to a defender while the ball is in the air you **may not move the left or right sticks or hit the sprint button**. You're only allowed to select the animation. For Defense (Play Ball [Y] Play Receiver [A], or Swat [X]). This applies from the moment the ball leaves the QB's hands until it is caught by a receiver. Once the ball is caught (or the handoff/toss/lateral is complete), sprint, left stick movement, and tackle buttons, etc are fully allowed.

Be Aware that we do have Ball Hawk set to off so if you click over and hold Y it may make your defender stop running.

Hit Stick

You may only hit stick/cut stick/strip ball with your player IF you have been using them the entire play from pre-snap to hit/tackle. In other words, if you switch at any point in the play you will not be able to hit or cut stick.

On special teams you have to switch off the punter or kicker right away and your player must take 3 full steps before you hit stick. If you switch at any point after your initial switch you may not hit stick.

After you switch players you may conservative tackle by pushing A or aggressive tackle by pushing X.

The game will say User Hit Stick many times, regardless if it was a hit stick. Therefore, to police this, if you switch over and a fumble is forced, you must short punt the ball straight up to give the ball back.

Run Commit

You may only use the run commit function on 3rd down and 1 or less, 4th down and 1 or less, or on any down between the 3 yard line and the goal line (both sides).

An accidental or intentional run commit outside of those situations will result in the defense leaving a wr uncovered outside for the offense to run a smart routed curl route for a first down. If it's goal to go, taking an offsides penalty to give a new set of downs is acceptable.

Penalties for Defensive Gameplay Violations

Failure to follow these guidelines **will result in a free first down or other actions to right the wrong.**

If you violate the user coverage rules and get an interception, hit stick fumble, or any other form of turnover, you must immediately kick a FG out of bounds or punt the ball straight up and short to turn the ball back over at near the same spot on the field.

If you score on the illegal turnover, then on the kickoff you must give up a KR touchdown, then after they kick it back off to you, immediately punt the ball back to them to make it right.

If the illegal action does not result in a turnover, the defensive user should give up a free first down to make up for the violation. DM your opponent and tag them telling them how you plan to do so. One suggestion is moving a corner way off in cover 1 robber coverage and give up a easy curl to the sticks.

If the violating play is not confirmed to be a violation until after the game is concluded, it can result in the player on your team that was involved or the user in question facing a suspension.

Continually having issues with running plays incorrectly or seemingly with disregard for the rules will result in a boot.

PERSONNEL RULES

Contracts

- Unless a player requests longer than 5 years, then the maximum number of years you can offer a player is 5 years in duration.

Free Agency

In Season the following rules apply:

- At league launch we will have a FA Draft for preseason week 1. No other signings allowed this week.
- In Pre-Season, limit is 1 FA over 65 OVR per week, no rookies.
- Practice Squad stealing is off week 1 but you can sign as many FA as you want.
- Week 2 onward Free Agency is a free market with no restrictions (Practice Squad Stealing on).
- If you cut a player in season you cannot sign them out of free agency for 2 in game weeks (applies across multiple teams GM'd by one user).

Trades

- Please keep all trade talk in the discord server should be done in Trade Block channels or in DMs.
- Users are recommended to look for the best deal by putting their players on the trade block, but this is not necessary.
- Once a trade is agreed to, it can only be backed out-of if it is declined by the League Office.
- No trading rookies.
- No trading with the CPU.
- No trading GM Strat players the year of their upgrade.
- Trades must be posted via Neon Sports website.

- All trades will be auto approved by the commissioner if the point value of the greater valued side is no more than 1.5x the value of the lower valued side.
 - **EX. 1:** Team A offered players and picks that equal 350 points. Team B offered players and picks worth 600 points. Auto-Declined. $1.5 \times 350 = 525$, so the highest value Team A can get is 525 points.
- If a trade is rejected and you feel it should be allowed you can appeal to LO for a veto.
- If one user controls both teams involved in a trade, it requires 2 LOs to approve it.
- LO cannot vote on their own trades.
- The Trading Cap is 1 In Season Trade (from after draft until the opening of offseason FA period) and 2 Off Season Trades per year for new members of USFL. No limit on veterans (people who have been with us for a full season).
 - **Exception:** No cap on trades for players under 70 OVR and involving picks no higher than a 4th round pick.

Personnel Decisions

If a player fits the physical mold and has the skill set to play a position, he may be changed to that position. These changes are at the owner’s discretion. For moving undersized or underskilled players between positions, consult the league office. The commissioner reserves the right to undo any changes if they are deemed unreasonable and adjust any roster to be in compliance if they are discovered set up illegally.

For Example.

- 3-4 Ends and 4-3 DTs should be a minimum of 6’2” and 275 lbs, but typically are above 290 lbs.
- 3-4 OLBs should be pass rushers and should be 245-275 lbs.
- TEs should be at least 6’3 and 220 lbs.
 - Moving a WR to TE results in a -15 to all RR a +15 to all blocking +15 lbs and a 1-3 loss to physical ratings.

Player Numbers & Editing Players

Your team’s players should follow NFL player numbering guidelines at all times. If a player enters the league at a position and later changes positions, they can keep their existing number or, less commonly, change to a number appropriate for their new position. For more on NFL player numbering guidelines see:

Number range	QB	RB	WR	TE	OL	DL	LB	DB	K / P
1–9	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
10–19	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
20–29	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
30–39	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
40–49	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
50–59	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
60–69	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
70–79	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
80–89	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
90–99	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No

Ideally people will not edit their players names, however renaming a single rookie per draft is allowed prior to week 1 with the following naming restrictions:

- The real name of the son or grandson of a real former player who is near 22 years old in age.
 - In the event that said player does not have a son or grandson but they are old enough to have a son or grandson in the NFL (40+ years old), you may make use the players name with a Jr, III, IV, V, etc as makes logical sense. However, if there is a real name possibility go with that one.
- A real college player/draft prospect in real life that is of a similar build and skillset as your rookie player.
- A former teammate or relatives real, legal name.
- No nick names. You can introduce a players nickname in team news articles or in the chat when you discuss your players, but their nickname should not be their madden player name.

Uniform Select

Following NFL Team Uniform guidelines, you must choose a primary home and away uniform that your team will wear for all regular season games per year and for the playoffs. Each game, the home team will select between wearing their white or colored jersey and they will let the away team know their selection for that weeks matchup (do this prior to the team select screen ideally). The Away team will wear the opposite.

The exception to the above rule is "Throwback" week (Week 1) and "Color Rush" week (Week 17).

For the color rush weeks both teams will wear either their teams color rush uniform or a custom all team color jersey.

For Throwback Weeks, the home team will still decide on team color or white jerseys, but the jerseys worn must be throwback jerseys. If your team doesn't have a complete away throwback jersey, mix and match jersey pieces to make a custom throwback to the best of your abilities.

Player Development

In USFL we will have breakout games off, a cap of 160 total players with SS/SSX traits, and 500 players with Star Dev. the CPU will decide who gets raised or lowered in dev trait season to season.

Rookie Boosts

Active users from the prior season (minimal force losses) will have one sub 70 OVR rookie boosted post draft. No one gets to choose who gets boosted. We will try and boost a rookie at a position of need. If there are none at a perceived position of need we will move players as necessary to other positions. If no perceived positions of need then the sub 70 OVR rookie with the more interesting body type or position will be upgraded.

These rookie boosted players will be made into archetypes and skill sets that the Madden generated draft classes often fail at emulating, like players who used to play a different position, true scrambling QBs, power backs, good fullbacks, superstar kickers, elite TEs, hybrid defenders, etc. Sometimes they also will be based off of real college players or the offspring of former legends of the game.

LEAGUE RULES

Streaming

All games **must be streamed** by **both teams** on Twitch. **All Streams must be archived**. This is not optional. Your opponents must be able to access your game film in order to scout you, and your footage is also valuable in the event either you or your opponent believes a rule was violated.

Playing in this league means you must set aside scouting and game planning time for each game. Reviewing an opponent's prior games is necessary for this to function.

Quitting

It is **never** permissible to quit out of a league game unless given permission by the league office. This is a bootable offense.

Settings

League will be on **10 Minute Quarters, SIMULATION** mode and **All-Pro** difficulty. **Abilities are ON**. We have tried All-Madden numerous times in the past and have found that all-madden works by giving CPU controlled players on the field an advantage. This mostly affects non-user controlled Defensive players allowing them to cover 2 WRs at the same time they shouldn't be able to, allowing defensive linemen to shed block easier, and making it far easier for DBs to be in position for interceptions rather than deflections. We use a custom slider set we have labbed at length and find to give the game a good realistic feel.

Forced Wins & Fair Sims

The following instances will result in a forced win:

- User vs CPU Games. User gets force.
- CPU v CPU Games. Home team gets force
 - Users on a leave of absence are counted as CPU.
- If a game is scheduled for a specific time and one party does not show or message up to 30 minutes after your set time. (Still try and reschedule though).
- If an opponent gives force because they have no availability due to IRL.
- If a game disconnects in the 4th quarter and there is no viable path for any sort of comeback (down 31+ with 8 minutes left, 24+ with 4

minutes left, 17+ at the 2 minute warning seconds left, 9+ points with 15 seconds left)

- If one opponent has no availability at all between 7pm and midnight ET either night of the advance, while their opponent does, and no game can be scheduled.
- If one opponent reaches out to schedule and gets no response for over 24 hours (still try and schedule and play when possible).

The following instances will result in a fair sim:

- User vs User, but availability clashes (except where mentioned above)
- User vs User and game disconnects with no clear winner (see above criteria) and no reschedule possible.

Advances

The Week will advance every 48 hours with no advances on the holidays. Extensions are only for late in the season between playoff eligible teams. Advances may be sooner if 90% of the games are completed. Standard advance time will be sometime between 9am and 11am eastern time. We will avoid forced wins in the playoffs whenever possible.

Coach Firings

If you go inactive (without giving the league a heads up) for 3 games you will be fired. This league plays at a steady pace so there is no point in being in it if you cannot commit to the 3-4 games a week.

Also, if you finish in the bottom 5 teams for 2 years in a row or miss the playoffs for 3 years in a row, you will be at risk of being fired (6-sided Di must land on 5 or 6 to keep job).

Pausing

If your opponent pauses the game, do not immediately unpause. The player who pauses must be the one to initiate the unpause countdown. Players have real lives, crying babies, food coming out of the oven, nagging spouses, and other real world concerns. However. If you pause you need to message your opponent and tell them what is up and how long you should be. If any pause lasts longer than 5 minutes that *can* be taken as a concession of the game (proof of time on the game's stream is required).

Multiple Teams

Xbox makes it possible via multiple gamertags to control multiple teams in an online CFM. This is a great way to keep the league full of quality players and gives active users the possibility of a 2 for 1 CFM experience. However we do have the following guidelines:

- Teams must not be in the same division.
- Teams can trade between themselves, but under heavy scrutiny.
- Teams must fair sim or slow mode supersim on twitch when they play each other.
- You must have completed one season with the league prior to applying.

Your Coach's Name

Your Coach must be a Create-A-Coach and their name and likeness must be either:

- A scheme related real coach who is living and under age 75.
- A scheme related former player who is potentially coaching material, living, & < age 70.

- Your own professional name (what do people call you at work).

Coaching Tree Perks

Due to the ability to stack ratings enhancing coaching tree perks on the same position group, the following restrictions are in place:

- All coaching tree perks that upgrade physical attributes (SPD, ACC, AGI, COD, STR, JMP, THP) are limited to First Tier upgrades only.
- You can upgrade multiple physical attributes to the first tier, however you cannot stack upgrades on the same physical attribute slot.

Relocations

You are free to relocate your team, however, prior to relocation you must submit your relocation plans to the League Office for approval, including your relocation city, team name, Uniforms, and stadium choices, etc. League Office can approve, deny, or recommend changes. We do not wish to see a NFC west team relocate to London or a NFC East team relocate to Mexico City. Teams that have been floated as relocating to a location or teams with a history in a city are given preference.

Community Policing

- Report the issue to your opponent in the Game-Day-Chat channel
- If someone tells you of a possible infraction, this is not **"crying"** or **"complaining"** any allegations that someone is **"crying"** or **"complaining"** will result in a penalty. This and similar language escalates tensions and resolves nothing.
- We rely on our league members to know the rules and we expect everyone to follow them to the best of their abilities. If you break a rule on accident or out of ignorance, it's ok. Talk it out, fix the issue and move on.
- If the alleged rule violator does not take steps to correct the behavior, report the issue to the League Office.
- Any League Member or League Office/Commissioner can audit any streamed game at any time, live or after the fact.
- The correct response when accused of breaking a rule is "Thank you, I will fix the issue immediately and re-read the rules ASAP".
- Anyone accusing someone of breaking the rules frivolously, unwarrantedly, or maliciously will receive a punishment from the League Office.

Rule Suggestions

If you think we need a new rule or need to revise an existing rule, by all means we want to hear what you have to say, but please direct these messages to the League Office via Direct Messages, not in the discord server. Same goes for slider suggestions, league setting suggestions, etc.

Potential Punishments

If the League Office becomes involved the possible actions include:

- a) Warning
- b) Suspension of a team's player(s)
- c) Forced Loss for the next x weeks.
- d) Boot

*U*S*L* RULEBOOK CHEAT SHEET

1. Before the 50, only 4th and 1.
After the 50 or late, 4th and Any.

- 2.** Don't Manually Motion Across on Passing Plays.
- 3.** Don't Base Align
- 4.** Match Personnel : #CBs (+/-1) # WRs
- 5.** Don't exploit the game's flaws.
- 6.** Run a realistic scheme based around your team's identity and declared scheme/concepts.
- 7.** Strafe when using unless you are locked in & committed in coverage.
- 8.** When the ball is in the air you can "Click On" and hit an animation button, but don't move your player until the ball is caught.
- 9.** Stream & archive all of your games.
- 10.** Quitting out of a game without L.O. Approval is not allowed.
- 11.** Don't accuse people of "crying" if they correct you on the finer points of the rulebook.