



# The Official Sim Madden League Rulebook

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## League Overview

The SML is a simulation style Madden league. Our goal is to emulate the NFL by creating a set of rules that ties realism and the fun of a video game together. The SML reserves the right to stop “UNSIM” play (deemed by commissioner) even if it hasn’t been covered in the playbook.

## League Settings

- Console: PS5 with crossplay enabled
- Game Mode: Simulation
- Difficulty: All-Pro
- League Type: Custom Coach
- Quarter Length: 7 Minute Quarters
- Accelerated Clock: 20 seconds
- Advance Time: 48 Hours
- Communication: Discord
- Sliders: Standard
- Superstar/XF Abilities: On
- Dev Regression: Turned Off
- Practice Squad Stealing: On at the start of week 2.

## Offense Regulations

### 4th Down Rules

You **cannot** go for it if you’re leading by **20 points or more**.

You **can** go for it on fourth down in these situations:

- 4th & 1 or shorter from your own 45-yard line to your opponents 46-yard line.
- 4th & 3 or shorter at or inside your opponent’s 45-yard line.
- Inside your opponent’s 5-yard line in a goal to go situation.
- When you’re trailing by 9 points or more in the fourth quarter.
- When trailing with 5:00 or less in the fourth quarter, you may go for it in any circumstance.
- In Over-Time when its 4th and 3 or shorter when you’re at or beyond your 40 yard line



## Two Point Conversion

It is legal to go for a two-point conversion in any situation except the following situations:

- You're leading by 20 points or more.
- If the game is out of reach late it's illegal to go for 2.

## Clock Management

- No huddle is permitted in the final 2 minutes of each half or any time in the 4th quarter when trailing by 9 points or more.
- It is illegal to use the chew clock feature until the last 2 minutes of the first half, and the last 3 minutes of the second half.
- Intentionally running the play clock down outside of the final 2 minutes of the first half and the last 3 minutes of second half is banned.
- Intentionally running the play clock down outside of the final 2 minutes of OT is illegal.

## The Passing Game

- While user catching is permitted, any unnatural movement such as "swerve catching" is illegal.
- Use of the "playmaker" feature is illegal.
- It is illegal to consistently roll out with your QB to break down zone coverages.
- It is illegal to snap the ball and immediately roll out.
- Rolling out then stopping \*around\* the numbers and waiting for receivers to get open is illegal.
- If you're up by 28+ in the 4th quarter you can only pass on 3rd downs.

## Play Action Passing

- Play Action boot passes are legal, but you shouldn't immediately hit sprint after snap.
- It is illegal to use play action on 3rd and 7 and longer.
- It is illegal to hot route the RB on PA Passes
- It is illegal to use the PA cancel feature unless a defender is applying a great deal of pressure or is coming unabated to the quarterback.
- Users should not be using play action passes in obvious pass situations late in either half to manipulate the AI. (Think when trailing, a team would obviously need to pass and you're using PA to get the CPU to react to the run on a deep pass ETC.)

## The Rushing Game

- It is illegal to immediately bounce an inside run outside unless there is immediate interior penetration.



## Miscellaneous Offensive Regulations

- It is illegal to use RPO's on 3rd and 7 and longer.
- Use of the 'Jurdle' movement is illegal. (This is defined as the juke/hurdle combination at the same time.)
- Subbing your RB at WR or WR at TE or similar position changes is illegal.
- Do not "swerve run." (Moving your player left in right in quick repeated motions to manipulate the defender)
- Users must mix up their play calling, abusing the same play calls is illegal.
- Do not abuse the same route combinations. (Example: Excessive use of drags and corners is illegal)
- It is illegal to use the goal line formation unless you are at or inside your opponent's 5-yard line.
- "Motion snapping" is illegal. You should not manually move players then snap as they are in motion. (Plays that have predetermined motion are allowed.)
- You must maintain a 75/25% run-pass ratio throughout the entire game, regardless of the score. The only exception is when you're up by multiple scores in the fourth quarter and running the clock for sportsmanship purposes.
  - Sacks and QB scrambles will continue to count as "Passing Plays." If it's a read option or designed QB run (such as QB sneak), it will be considered a run play.
- Your top player in receptions, regardless of position, must not have more catches than the combined total of your next two leading players in receptions for the season.

## Defense Regulations

### Defense Gameplay

- Nano/turbo blitzing is not allowed in any circumstance.
- If you move a defensive player out of position you must use that player throughout the play.
  - Commissioners Note: The only scenario where you may move a player out of position and not have to use them throughout the play is if they come out of the huddle misaligned in coverage. For example: Your safety is in man coverage with TE, and he is all the way on the other side of the field.)
- You cannot manually move a defensive back or linebacker out of position to the line of scrimmage pre-snap
- You must rush at least 3 players at all times.
- Users must mix up their defensive formations. It is unrealistic to run dime formation or 46 defense throughout the game. (A good rule of thumb is matching personnel when applicable)
- You are not allowed to commit run



- It is illegal to “User Cover” with a player that is set to be a blitz / rusher.. If you’d like to cover with that player, you must hot route them into zone, spy or man coverage
- It is illegal to use the goal line formation unless your opponent is inside your 5-yard line.

## Miscellaneous Defensive Regulations

- Safeties in the SUB LB spot in the depth chart cannot exceed 88 speed
- Teams are not allowed to have more than one safety in the active area of the SUB LB depth chart.
- Users should never manually sub out a linebacker for a defensive back (outside of using the SUB LB depth chart feature.)
- It is illegal to dive at the opposing quarterback when they are kneeling.

## Special Teams Regulations

### Special Teams Gameplay Rules

- No line-drive punts are allowed
- It is illegal to use the inside DT on FG blocks
- It’s illegal to cancel out the “ice the kicker feature” by calling a timeout, spiking, or doing any other action after an opponent calls a timeout to initiate the ice the kicker feature.
- You are not allowed to take a returner and move him back as a kickoff/punt is in the air so they catch the ball on run and get a speed boost on return.
- Blocking field goals or extra points is not allowed in quarters 1 through 3 unless the kick is from 50+ yards.
- Blocking is allowed at any point in the fourth quarter.
- Fake field goals are legal at any time.

## Gameplay Conduct

### Sportsmanship

- Display good sportsmanship at all times.
- No showboating, doing the whip or diving in the endzone is allowed.
- Do not run up the score or pad the stats when the game is over. Run the clock out.
- If there is no hope of coming back from a huge deficit and your opponent is running the clock in the final few minutes, don’t call a timeout to delay the inevitable.
- If your opponent violates a league rule during the game, pause and let him know about it. Sometimes it could just be an innocent mistake that can be easily fixed.
- Users are not obligated to “take the foot off the gas” in the third quarter.
- Players must inform their opponent immediately of network issues. You should not wait till you’re down multiple scores before reporting an issue – if you do, a fresh restart will be declined.



- Users should not stat pad players. The league reserves the right to remove development increases and superstar abilities in situations where spamming / stat-padding happens.

## **Uniform Regulations**

- Users at home must wear their team's respected home jerseys or color rush home jerseys.
- Users that are away must wear their respected away jerseys or away color rush jerseys.

## **Playing The CPU**

- Do not restart against CPU teams unless approved by admins.
- Do not use super-sim vs CPU teams.
- You must follow all gameplay rules vs the CPU.
- You are not allowed to win a CPU game by more than 28 points.
- Users may not exceed the below stats when playing the CPU:
  - 450 yards passing by your QB
  - 200 yards rushing or receiving by any 1 player
  - 5 total combined TDs passing/rushing by your QB
  - 4 total TDs by any receiver/TE/HB
  - 4 sacks by any player

## **Scheduling Regulations**

### **Force Win / Auto Situations**

- If Your opponent misses a scheduled time by 15 minutes you are eligible to receive a force win.
- If your opponent has to go on autopilot you can either take the force win with injuries on or play the CPU, however – you are not allowed to restart the game at any point.
- The SML tends to favor schedules of users who work standard hours, 8AM till 5PM, meaning if your availability is late at night you may be subject to being placed on auto.
- The SML reserves the right to force win or fair sim a game if it is not scheduled and all other games that week have been played.

### **Disconnects / Connection Issues**

- In the case of a disconnect users have the following options:
  - If a user has the lead of any sort, he reserves the right to recreate the spread. (In example: If he leads 21-14 and the game cuts, the away user must spot him 7 points.)



- If a user has the lead of any sort, he reserves the right to recreate the spread, with the exact time remaining in the game. (Down and distance must be noted from the stream.)
- Users must recreate the coin toss if they choose to take the “recreate spread option.” This means, If in the first game player A gets the ball in the second half, then player A deserves to get the ball in the second half.

## Streaming

### Streaming & Recording Rules

- All games must be streamed on Twitch.
- All games must be archived on Twitch.
- The stream link shall be posted in Social Chat of Discord.
  - The away team must post their link in Social Chat.
- If a game cannot be streamed, it must be recorded by both players.
- If an SML owner chooses to commentate their game, they are expected to not speak negatively of the league / other owner during the stream.
- Users shall not speak negatively of the league or another owner in a stream chat.
- If you commentate on the SML Network you shall not use profanity of any sort.

## Roster Management

### Trade Rules

- All trade requests must be sent through the NeonSports trade tool. They must accurately represent the trade or they will be declined. (This includes including the correct draft pick in the Neon trade tool.)
- Do NOT send another user a trade request on the console without an approval.
- Trades with CPU teams are not allowed.
- Teams are only allowed THREE trades per season. (Free agency Stage 1 – Super Bowl)
- Pick for pick trades do not count against your trades per season.
- If a vote is a tie by the committee it is considered approved.
- Users need to complete one full season in the “SML” before completing a trade where they are sending a “Superstar or better” development player.
- Users need to complete one full season in the “SML” before completing a trade where they are sending a first-round pick.
- All players in the final year of their contract are allowed to be traded if they are at least 26 and are 94 overall or less.

### NO TRADING:

- Rookies
- FA signings who haven’t completed a full season with their team.



- 95 overall and above players regardless of age and development
- X-Factors/Superstars 29 years of age and below UNLESS they are less than or equal to 89 overall.
- Trades that put teams over 20 million in cap penalties will be rejected unless the cap penalty taken still results in a net-gain on the salary cap. (For example: if a player is scheduled to make 36 million dollars in salary and the cap penalty taken is 30 million dollars, trading said player would be a legal trade because you would gain 6 million dollars on your cap.)

## General Roster Management

- You must have 53 players on your roster at the beginning of the regular season, and throughout the full season.
- You are not allowed to edit any player technique (for example, you cannot change a player's throwing motion.)
- Users are NOT allowed to change player names in any circumstance.
- To maintain the integrity of the league's salary cap and prevent potential exploitation of cap rollover no player with a cap savings greater than \$5M may be released after Week 9 of the regular season. If you wish to release a player higher than this number, it must be approved by league admins.

## Contracts

- When re-signing a player or signing from the free agent pool, you may not increase the contract length to more than one year longer than the player's requested neutral deal. You may not reduce by more than one year either. Take screenshots of any contracts you believe could be questioned.
- Admins will be monitoring contracts with zero bonus that are agreed upon. Contracts that are deemed manipulative will be subject to punishment.

## Superstar Abilities / Re-Rolls

- If you have a breakout game, you must take a photo of the breakout scenario and send it to a league admin **before** the game.
- Users are not allowed to edit a player's superstar ability
- If a player gets a super star ability that is against SML league rules, the league will randomly assign an ability that is.
- Any Superstar (SS) or X-Factor (XF) ability that allows you to see the opponent's user or play art will be banned. *Omaha, Film Study, Omniscient, Mind Reader.*



- (Abilities like Blitz Radar and Threat Detector are excluded since they can be bluffed.)

## **Free Agency**

- During the season, and preseason you're allowed to sign three free agents above 65 overall, and as many below 65 overall per advance.
- You can re-sign a player you cut during the season but must wait one advance after cutting the player to do so.
- The SML will not "reserve players" for users who are unable to re-sign or franchise tag players in the regular season or off-season for any circumstance. If a player hits free agency, they are a free agent.

## **Position Changes**

- Position changes such as Guard to Tackle, FS to SS, 4-3 DE to 3-4 Outside linebacker are legal, any other position change must be approved by admins.
- Position changes such as WR to TE, RB to FB, CB to Safety, will be denied, and not approved in any circumstance.
- You can not change a superstar player's position (this will cause a players abilities to "re-roll")
- Users may use a TE at fullback however they must be 80 speed or less.
- You're not allowed to change a player's position on the depth chart IE (TE TO WR) to get around the position change rule. The same goes for defense.

## **Coaching Trees**

- In the coordinator trees there are speed/throw power/acceleration upgrades for certain position groups (QB, RB, WR, LB, S, CB). We are going to limit it to +1 speed/accel/thp upgrade per position group for the entire cycle. So to be clear – you can only do the first upgrade for speed/accel/thp.
- No real life coaches are allowed to be used, you must create a coach.
- No hiring / firing coaches.
- Camp Counselor Coach Ability is banned
- No multiples of coaching abilities.

Users must send a photo of their breakout game before kickoff of their game to the league commissioner. This holds accountability to make sure players aren't wrongfully awarded a breakout award.



## **Waiver Wire**

- If you release a player 80 overall and above during the season they are considered waiver eligible.
- After releasing them you must post their name in the waiver-wire Discord channel.
- Users have 24 hours to put a “claim” in by responding to the original post the waivers channel.
  - The user who puts “claim” must “reply” to the post of the player that is on waivers. This helps avoid confusion in the situation where multiple players are on waivers.
  - Priority will be given to the owner with the lowest ranking in the standings at the time.
  - If it's week one of the regular season, the previous season's standings will be used.
  - If you get a successful claim you are moved to the back of the priority list for the remainder of the season.

## **Chat Regulations**

### **General Regulations**

- Personal attacks on members are not allowed.
- Refrain from political or religious debates.
- Racial slurs of any sort are not tolerated.
- Gossiping is not allowed.
- Complaining about another person's gameplay is not allowed in social chat. Please bring your issue to someone who can help bring a solution in private.

## **Content Regulations**

### **General Regulations**

- Content on the SML Network or NeonSportz shall not include any profanity.
- Attacking members is not allowed.
- Publicly speaking about topics that put the league in a negative light is not allowed.

## **Owners Hall Of Fame Bylaws**

### **General Eligibility Requirements**

- Must be in the SML for three full cycles.
- Must follow all gameplay rules.
- Must follow all chat rules.



- Must be active in the SML community.

### **Nomination / Election Process**

- Four members are nominated by the evaluation team per cycle.
- Two members are elected in the HOF by a league wide vote.
- The two members who are elected are provided a commemorative football.