



NEW USFL IS TRADITIONAL FOOTBALL WITH A MODERN TWIST

Rules Will Keep Fans Engaged by Adding Offense and Getting Calls Right

BIRMINGHAM, Ala., March 23, 2022 – When the Birmingham Stallions take on the New Jersey Generals in the new United States Football League's (USFL) inaugural kickoff game on Saturday, April 16 (7:30 PM ET/6:30 PM CT), they'll be playing a brand of football fans know and love, but with a modern twist.

Most of the rules that govern USFL games in the spring are traditional standards, familiar to fans of today's professional and college games. However, the League is instituting some changes to bolster offense and big-play potential, improve game flow, give trailing teams more scoring opportunities as time winds down, enhance player safety, and get officiating calls right in a way that's fair for both teams.

"Fans are the USFL's top priority, so our rules are designed to give fans the traditional physical play they know and love while adding some modern fast-paced elements," said Mike Pereira, USFL Head of Officiating. "The overwhelming majority of rules that govern gameplay in the USFL are standard at the professional or collegiate level. But we are incorporating a few unconventional ideas that we're convinced will add offense, alter some coaching decisions and strategy for the better, and make it easier to get major penalty calls correct. Collectively, these changes will be good for the game of football and keep fans more engaged and entertained."

Through its social media channels, the League will reveal several USFL Rules videos featuring Pereira.

A summary of the USFL's distinctive rules governing gameplay and penalties follows:

GAMEPLAY RULES

EXTRA POINTS

- Scoring teams will have three options to attempt extra points. Teams will receive:
 - One point for a successful kick between the uprights snapped from the 15-yard line.
 - Two points for a successful scrimmage play from the two-yard line.
 - Three points for a successful scrimmage play from the 10-yard line.

Effect: Teams trailing by nine points or less have an opportunity to close the gap to one score.

Reason: Add late-game excitement by improving chances of comebacks.

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INSTANT REPLAY

- USFL Replay Command at FOX Sports Control Center in Los Angeles will make all replay decisions.

Effect: One replay crew will make all decisions.

Reason: Achieve accurate, consistent, and faster rulings.

- Each coach will be allowed one replay challenge.

Effect: Fewer challenges needed thanks to expedited reviews and video assistance.

Reason: Improve game flow.

- USFL Replay Command will have the authority to overrule incorrect personal foul calls, including roughing the passer, hits on defenseless players, facemasks, horsecollars, and more. USFL Replay Command will also be responsible for determining whether the act of pass interference is obviously intentional when it occurs 15 yards beyond the line of scrimmage.

Effect: Correct obvious officiating miscalls related to personal fouls.

Reason: Get the call right and achieve greater fairness.

KICKOFFS

- All kickoffs will be from the 25-yard line. No kicking team member may line up any further back than one yard, while the receiving team must have a minimum of eight players in the set-up zone between their 35- and 45-yard lines. After a kickoff travels 20 yards, the first touch must be by the receiving team. If an untouched kick becomes dead, the ball belongs to the receiving team at that spot.

Effect: Create more, yet safer, kickoff returns.

Reason: Increase big-play potential with more returned kickoffs rather than touchbacks.

ONSIDE KICK VS. SCRIMMAGE PLAY

- Teams will have two options to retain possession of the ball after scoring. The first option will be a traditional onside kick attempt from the 25-yard line. The second will be running a fourth down and 12 play from their own 33-yard line – if the team makes a first down, it retains possession, if it fails, then the defense gets the ball.

Effect: Create an alternate way for trailing teams to keep the ball after scoring.

Reason: Successfully executing and recovering an onside kick is rare, so this provides another option while increasing risk/reward strategy for coaches.

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OVERTIME

- Overtime will be a best of three-play shootout. Each team's offense will alternate plays against the opposing defense from the two-yard line. Each successful scoring attempt will receive two points. The team with the most points after three plays wins. The subsequent attempts become sudden death if the score is tied after each team runs three plays. The overtime period will extend until a winner is declared.

Effect: Both teams have an equal chance of winning.

Reason: Create more excitement and fairness with a designed shootout overtime period.

PUNTS

- Gunners may not line up outside the numbers and they cannot be double-teamed blocked until the ball is kicked.

Effect: Fewer player injuries and fewer penalties.

Reason: Enhanced player safety and game flow.

TIMING

- The clock will stop for first downs inside two minutes of the second and fourth quarters.

Effect: Create more offensive plays during the final two minutes of each half.

Reason: Adds offense and excitement before halftime and at the end of the game.

PENALTIES

DEFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE

- The penalty for defensive pass interference will mirror the NCAA rule with exceptions. First, a defender intentionally tackling a receiver beyond 15 yards would become a spot foul. Also, the penalty will be a spot foul if it occurs 15 yards or less from the line of scrimmage or a 15-yard penalty from the line of scrimmage if the spot of the foul is beyond 15 yards.

Effect: Reduce penalty yardage.

Reason: Decrease punitive nature of defensive pass interference penalties.

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OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE

- If a pass does not cross the line of scrimmage, there can be no pass interference or ineligible player downfield penalties.

Effect: Opens the offense; forgoes punishment for infractions unrelated to play.

Reason: Add offense without undermining defense.

TWO FORWARD PASSES

- It will no longer be illegal to throw two forward passes from behind the line of scrimmage.

Effect: Adds plays to offensive game plans.

Reason: Add excitement and trick-play potential to the game.

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About the USFL

The United States Football League (USFL) is a new, independent football league that is not affiliated with the defunct 1980s league or its owners. The inaugural USFL season will kick off April 16 with eight teams split into two divisions: the Birmingham Stallions, Houston Gamblers, New Orleans Breakers, and Tampa Bay Bandits in the South Division; and the Michigan Panthers, Pittsburgh Maulers, New Jersey Generals, and Philadelphia Stars in the North Division. Each team will play a 10-game regular-season in Birmingham. Playoff semifinals begin in Canton on June 25 between the top two teams in each division and a championship game on July 3 between division winners. The USFL completed its inaugural Draft on March 10 and players reported to Birmingham training camps on March 22. At the conclusion of training camps, each USFL team will carry a 38-man active roster plus a seven-man practice squad. Players will receive base compensation and are eligible for victory bonuses. NBC Sports and FOX Sports are the League's official media partners and will broadcast all 43 regular- and postseason games on FOX, FS1, NBC, USA, or Peacock networks. **Brian Woods** is President of Football Operations, and former Dallas Cowboys standout and long-time NFL on FOX game analyst **Daryl Johnston** is Executive Vice President of Football Operations. Former NFL Vice President of Officiating and FOX Sports' NFL and college football rules analyst **Mike Pereira** is Head of Officiating, and FOX Sports' **Edward Hartman** is Executive Vice President of Business Operations. For more information, visit theUSFL.com and follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/theUSFL), [Facebook](https://facebook.com/theUSFL), and [Instagram](https://instagram.com/theUSFL).

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Editor's Note:

Downloadable high-resolution images of the USFL logo and team logos are available [here](#); coaches [here](#), and uniforms/helmets [here](#).