

# The Bowl Game

## Rule book, summarized

*Ratified June of 17803*

### **About this document**

This is an abridgement and summarization of the full Rule Book for the Bowl Game, scheduled to begin on New Year's Day, 17804.

### **1 – The game**

All football rules are carried over from traditional college football, except as specified in this document. For example, offenses are still granted four downs to advance ten yards for a first down.

One notable exception is the down rule. A college player is no longer declared immediately down if their knee touches the ground; they must also be touched by an opponent.

### **2 – The teams**

There are exactly 111 teams. Each team is permitted a maximum roster size of 125 players, *all of whom must remain on the field at all times* except for in specific circumstances detailed below.

Uniforms are permitted but not required.

### **3 – The ball**

Every team begins the game in possession of one football. Each football is of regulation size, shape, and weight, and is equipped with a sensor to allow game officials to track its precise location at all times. Additionally, every ball emits a faint glow in the dark, and floats in water. The ball is designed to feel exactly like a regulation football, but is built with materials that prevent it from ever deteriorating in any outdoor conditions.

The game is won when one team is in possession of every football in the game.

### **4 – Standard players and defensive players**

There are two classes of players. Each team is allowed 100 “standard” players, who are free to roam on any field they choose. The remaining 25 players are “defensive” players, who must remain on their home field and are not allowed to set foot on another field at any point.

Teams are permitted to reassign players from standard to defensive, and vice versa, every New Year’s Day.

## 5 – The field

The field, in fact, comprises 111 individual fields. Each field is a regulation-size 160 feet wide, and sits directly on its team’s home field. However, there are no end zones, and the field extends great distances in both directions, terminating only at international borders.

Typically, a team’s field intersects with many other fields. A team is free to enter any opponent’s field and play at any time.



*Fig. 1 – Louisville’s field remains exactly 160 feet wide, but extends far past the traditional field of play, through downtown Louisville and beyond.*



A team enters scrimmage play if a team encounters, identifies, and issues a verbal challenge to an opposing team in possession of a football. The challenging party must be within 50 yards of their opponent.

If a team fails to achieve a first down, the ball is turned over on downs, and that team is then on defense.

The onus is on the offense to break through the defense with a big play. If the ball carrier eludes being tackled for a period of 24 hours, this team returns to “free play” mode, and can roam the field with the football until challenged again.

At times, two teams who each possess a football may encounter one another. In this circumstance, both teams will simultaneously play both offense and defense, with all above rules applying.

In the rare event that a ball carrier in scrimmage play reaches the end of a field, the play is whistled dead, the ball is spotted 10 yards from the terminus, the offense and defense switch sides, and play continues in the opposite direction.

#### **6c – Third parties**

Players who do not belong to teams engaged in scrimmage play must stay a minimum of one mile away from the line of scrimmage. However, if an offense breaks through its opposing defense with a big play, these third-party players **are** permitted to make a play on the ball. If they are able to tackle the ball carrier, they then replace the original defense as the scrimmage-play defense.

For example, suppose Georgia and Michigan are engaged in scrimmage play, with a number of Oregon players a mile behind the line of scrimmage. Georgia’s running back takes the ball and bursts through Michigan’s defense and runs a mile upfield, where they meet the Oregon players. Oregon is now allowed to tackle Georgia’s running back. If successful, Georgia’s offense must line up at the spot against Oregon’s defense for scrimmage play. Having just gained approximately 1,700 yards, Georgia is naturally awarded a first down. Michigan, having lost its place on the line of scrimmage, must return to free play.

#### **6d – Stealth play**

A team with a football can avoid scrimmage play if it remains undetected on the field. For example, suppose a lone Arizona State player has a football in “free play.” This player may choose to hide in a building or some tall grass, to avoid having to line up against an approaching opponent. If the opponent does not issue a verbal challenge, the ball carrier is *not* required to make themselves known, and is free to continue play without having to confront the defenders.

Teams are not permitted to blindly issue challenges in the event an opponent is hiding. If a player issues a challenge with no opponent present, that player receives a penalty. They must retreat and place both feet on their home field before returning to play, no matter how far from their field they are.

## **7 – Possession**

A team possesses a football if said football is located *anywhere* on its home field, regardless of whether it's held by that team, held by an opposing team, or simply sitting untouched.

Teams are allowed to hide footballs, but they are not permitted to bury them or build a structure to hide them. Teams must rely solely on pre-existing structures to obscure their footballs.

Balls cannot be hidden within any structure that is not publicly accessible, such as behind a locked door. Every team has an equal right to make a play on any given football. As such, every football must be in a recoverable location. Game officials will make these rulings on a case-by-case basis.

## **8 – The scoreboard**

The score of each team, in terms of footballs held, is tracked in real time by game officials. However, the full scoreboard information is kept highly confidential. Teams *do* have access to:

- the number of footballs they themselves possess on their field
- the ranking of all 100 teams

Teams do *not* have access to:

- the specific number of footballs possessed by any other team
- the precise location of any football, apart from what they can independently confirm

For example, suppose that Clemson has 15 footballs on their field. They are provided this information, which they already know because they have all 15 footballs guarded in a secure location.

Suddenly, they receive a notification that they are now in possession of 16 footballs. They make the most reasonable assumption, which is that an opposing ball carrier is crossing through their field. They have no idea where, and no Clemson player is reporting a sighting. After a few moments, the number drops back down to 15. Their assumption was correct.

Meanwhile, suppose these 15 players put Clemson in second place nationwide, one behind the game leader, NC State. For just a moment, every other team in the country saw Clemson move up into a tie for first on the leaderboard before falling back to second again. They have no way of knowing exactly how many footballs Clemson possesses, but they can safely assume they have a lot.

## **9 – Out of bounds**

Upon stepping or being forced out of bounds, a player has 10 seconds to return to the field of play. If they still have not returned, they begin spending their “out of bounds time,” or OBT.

A player accrues one second of OBT for every year they spend on the field. Hence, if a player has avoided spending any OBT after 30 years, they have 30 seconds of OBT saved. Combined with the 10-second grace period, this player would theoretically be able to spend 40 seconds out of bounds, although it will take them a great deal of time to accrue more OBT.

If a player is out of bounds beyond the 10-second grace period, and has no OBT remaining, *that player is ejected from the game and permanently banned from ever returning, without exception.*

## **10 – Alliances**

Teams are permitted to form alliances and enter agreements with one another, so long as no rules are violated. However, game officials do not enforce the terms of any agreement. Teams are permitted to violate agreements and betray one another at any time.

## **11 – Civilians**

Non-players are prohibited from loitering on or near any part of the field unless they live, work, or otherwise have business on the field. They are allowed to interact with players, providing food, shelter, and intelligence, but they are not allowed to directly interfere with gameplay in any way.

## **12 – Air vehicles**

No powered air vehicles are permitted for ball transport, player transport, or surveillance.. This includes, but is not limited to, airplanes, helicopters, drones, hot air balloons, and zeppelins.

Hang gliders are permitted, although if a player on a hang glider breaks the plane of a field, they are considered out of bounds and OBT rules apply.

## **13 – Land vehicles**

In free play mode, a player is allowed to travel by land vehicle, be it car, train, bicycle, or any other means of transport, **for a maximum of 100 yards**. If a player is transported via vehicle, that player must wait 24 hours before utilizing any sort of vehicle.

Use of any manner of vehicle is strictly prohibited in scrimmage play.

## **14 – Cannons**

No cannons. No trebuchets. No onagers. Using any machine to propel a player or football through the air is strictly prohibited. WE HAVE BEEN OVER THIS.

## **15 – Water vehicles**

Certain parts of the field run across stretches of water, most notably the Great Lakes and the Southern Great Lakes. Manually-powered craft, such as rowboats and canoes, are allowed, but motorized craft are illegal.

Water is considered strictly “free play” territory. Scrimmage rules do not apply. While in water, any player is allowed to make any play on the ball at any time.