



2020 Playing Rules Change, and Bylaw Proposals

2020 Playing Rule Proposals Summary

2. By Philadelphia; to amend Rule 15, Section 2, to make permanent the expansion of automatic replay reviews to include scoring plays and turnovers negated by a foul, and any successful or unsuccessful Try attempt.
3. By Philadelphia; to amend Rule 6, Section 1, Article 1, to provide an alternative to the onside kick that would allow a team who is trailing in the game an opportunity to maintain possession of the ball after scoring.
5. By Miami; to amend Rule 4, Section 3, Article 2, to provide the option to the defense for the game clock to start on the Referee's signal if the defense declines an offensive penalty that occurs late in either half.
6. By Baltimore and Los Angeles Chargers; to amend Rule 19, Section 2, to add a "booth umpire" as an eighth game official to the officiating crew.
7. By Baltimore and Los Angeles Chargers; to amend Rule 19, Section 2, to add a Senior Technology Advisor to the Referee to assist the officiating crew.
8. By Competition Committee; expands defenseless player protection to a kickoff or punt returner who is in possession of the ball but who has not had time to avoid or ward off the impending contact of an opponent.
9. By Competition Committee; prevents teams from manipulating the game clock by committing multiple dead-ball fouls while the clock is running.

2020 PLAYING RULE PROPOSAL NO. 2

Amend Rule 15, Section 2 (Instant Replay, pg. 62) (new language underlined):

ARTICLE 2. REPLAY OFFICIAL REQUEST FOR REVIEW. Only the Replay Official or the Senior Vice President of Officiating or his or her designee may initiate a review of a play:

- (a) that begins after the two-minute warning of each half;
- (b) throughout any overtime period;
- (c) when points are scored by either team;
- (d) that is a successful or unsuccessful Try attempt; and
- (e) when on-field officials rule:
 - (1) an interception by an opponent;
 - (2) a fumble or backward pass recovered by an opponent or that goes out of bounds through the opponent's end zone;
 - (3) a scrimmage kick touched by the receiving team and recovered by the kicking team; or
 - (4) a disqualification of a player.

Such plays may be reviewed regardless of whether a foul is committed on the play that, if accepted, would negate the on-field ruling.

The Replay Official may only challenge a play until the next legal snap or kick. The Replay Official may consult with a designated member of the Officiating department at the league office regarding whether to challenge a play.

Submitted by Philadelphia

Effect: Makes permanent the 2019 additions to the list of plays subject to automatic review.

Reason: Competitive equity.

2020 PLAYING RULE PROPOSAL NO. 3

Amend Rule 6, Section 1 (Procedures For A Free Kick, pgs. 23-25) (new language underlined):

ARTICLE 1. FREE KICK. A free kick is a kickoff or safety kick that puts the ball in play to start a free kick down. It must be made from any point on the kicking (offensive) team's restraining line and between the inbounds lines.

(a) A kickoff puts the ball in play at the start of each half, after a try, and after a successful field goal. A dropkick or placekick may be used for a kickoff.

Note: During a placekick on a kickoff, the kicking team may use a manufactured tee that is one inch in height and approved by the League. Once the ball has been placed on the kicking tee, the kicking tee cannot be moved. If the ball falls off the tee, or the tee is moved, the covering officials must stop play and restart the timing process without penalty to the kicking team. If the ball falls off the tee a second time during the same free kick down, the kicking team then must either use a player to hold the ball or must kick it off the ground. The ball may be placed on the ground leaning against the tee, provided the tee is in its normal upright position.

(b) A safety kick puts the ball in play after a safety. A dropkick, placekick, or punt may be used for a safety kick. A tee cannot be used for a safety kick.

(C) As an alternative to the Free Kick a team may elect to retain possession, subject to the following rules:

(1) A team may elect to retain possession no more than two times during the game.

(2) The kicking team must notify the Referee of its intention to forego a kickoff or safety kick and retain possession. The Referee will then notify the opponent of the scoring team's election.

(3) The ball will be spotted on the kicking team's 25-yard line, and the kicking team will possess the ball with the down and distance being fourth and 15 (Line to gain is the kicking team's 40-yard line).

(4) The Play Clock will be set to 25 seconds and winds on the ready for play signal. The Game Clock starts on the snap, and normal NFL timing rules apply.

(5) Standard rules for a scrimmage down apply.

(6) If the offense reaches the line to gain, the result of the play is a first down and all customary rules are in effect. If the defense stops the offense, the defense assumes possession at the dead-ball spot.

(7) If the offense is penalized on its one scrimmage down (fourth and 15), the offense cannot elect to kick off after the penalty is enforced. Example: the kicking team may not elect to kick after incurring a holding penalty on its one scrimmage down.

(8) Scrimmage kicks are prohibited.

(9) Nothing in this exception prohibits a team from attempting a legal onside kickoff under Rule 6.

Penalty: For illegal kick on a free kick down: Loss of five yards.

Submitted by Philadelphia

Effect: Permits a team to maintain possession of the ball after a score by substituting one offensive play (4th and 15 from the kicking team's 25-yard line) for an onside kickoff attempt.

Reason: Provides excitement and competition late in the game.

2020 PLAYING RULE PROPOSAL NO. 5

Amend Rule 4, Section 3, Article 2 (Starting the Game Clock, Pages 12-13) (new language underlined, deleted language struck through):

SECTION 3 STARTING THE GAME CLOCK

ARTICLE 2. SCRIMMAGE DOWN. Following any timeout (3-37-1), the game clock shall be started on a scrimmage down when the ball is next snapped, except in the following situations:

- (a) Whenever a runner goes out of bounds on a play from scrimmage, the game clock is started when an official spots the ball at the inbounds spot, and the Referee gives the signal to start the game clock, except that the clock will start on the snap:
 - (1) after a change of possession;
 - (2) after the two-minute warning of the first half; or
 - (3) inside the last five minutes of the second half.
- (b) If there is an injury timeout prior to the two-minute warning, the game clock is started as if the injury timeout had not occurred.
- (c) If there is an excess team timeout after the two-minute warning, the game clock is started as if the excess timeout had not occurred.
- (d) If there is a Referee's timeout, the game clock is started as if the Referee's timeout had not occurred.
- (e) If the game clock is stopped after a down in which there was a foul by either team, following enforcement or declination of a penalty, the game clock will start as if the foul had not occurred, except that the clock will start on the snap if:
 - (1) the foul occurs after the two-minute warning of the first half;
 - (2) the foul occurs inside the last five minutes of the second half; or
 - (3) a specific rule prescribes otherwise.

For Live Ball fouls in (1) or (2) above, the defense may decline a penalty by the offense and elect to start the game clock when the Referee signals the ball is ready for play.

- (f) If a fumble or backward pass by any player goes out of bounds, the game clock starts on the Referee's signal that a ball has been returned to the field of play.
- (g) When there is a 10-second runoff, the game clock starts when the Referee signals that the ball is ready for play.
- (h) During the Try, which is an untimed down.
- (i) When a specific rule prescribes otherwise.

Submitted by Miami

Effect: Provides the option to the defense for the game clock to start on the Referee's signal if the defense declines an offensive penalty that occurs late in either half.

Reason: Competitive equity.

2020 PLAYING RULE PROPOSAL NO. 6

Amend Rule 19, Section 1 (Officials, pg. 70) (new language underlined, deleted language struck through):

ARTICLE 1. GAME OFFICIALS. The game shall be played under the supervision of seveneight officials: the Referee, Umpire, Down Judge, Line Judge, Field Judge, Side Judge, ~~and~~ Back Judge, and Booth Umpire. In the absence of seveneight officials, the crew is to be rearranged according to the remaining members of the crew.

ARTICLE 2. JURISDICTION. The officials' jurisdiction begins 100 minutes before the scheduled kickoff and ends when the Referee declares the final score.

ARTICLE 3. REFEREE'S AUTHORITY. The Referee is to have general oversight and control of the game. The Referee is the final authority for the score. If there is a disagreement between members of the crew regarding the number of down, any decision, or the application, enforcement, or interpretation of a rule, the Referee's decision will be final. The Referee's decisions upon all matters not specifically placed under the jurisdiction of other officials by rule are final.

ARTICLE 4. RESPONSIBILITIES AND MECHANICS. Officiating responsibilities and mechanics are specified in the Mechanics Manual, published annually by the National Football League.

Submitted by Baltimore and Los Angeles Chargers

Effect: Creates an officiating advisor who is positioned somewhere other than the playing field, with full communication to on-field officials and access to a television monitor that displays all broadcast angles provided through the NFL's network independence system.

Reason: Competitive equity. Pace of play. Player health and safety.

2020 PLAYING RULE PROPOSAL NO. 7

Amend Rule 19, Section 1 (Officials, pg. 70) (new language underlined, deleted language struck through):

ARTICLE 1. GAME OFFICIALS. The game shall be played under the supervision of seven officials and a Senior Technology Advisor to the Referee (STAR); the Referee, Umpire, Down Judge, Line Judge, Field Judge, Side Judge, and Back Judge. In the absence of seven officials and STAR, the crew is to be rearranged according to the remaining members of the crew.

ARTICLE 2. JURISDICTION. The officials' jurisdiction begins 100 minutes before the scheduled kickoff and ends when the Referee declares the final score.

ARTICLE 3. REFEREE'S AUTHORITY. The Referee is to have general oversight and control of the game. The Referee is the final authority for the score. If there is a disagreement between members of the crew regarding the number of down, any decision, or the application, enforcement, or interpretation of a rule, the Referee's decision will be final. The Referee's decisions upon all matters not specifically placed under the jurisdiction of other officials by rule are final.

ARTICLE 4. RESPONSIBILITIES AND MECHANICS. Officiating responsibilities and mechanics are specified in the Mechanics Manual, published annually by the National Football League.

ARTICLE 5. SENIOR TECHNOLOGY ADVISOR TO THE REFEREE (STAR). The STAR will be located in the Replay Booth with access to video technology and the ability to hear and communicate with game officials through the official-to-official communication system. The STAR is an officiating expert who has on-field experience as a game official. The STAR will advise the officiating crew of any relevant information on the following types of rulings:

(a) Game Administration.

(b) Possession.

(c) Touching of a loose ball, boundary line, goal line, or end line.

(d) The location of the football relative to the boundary line, line of scrimmage, line to gain, or goal line.

(e) Down by contact (when the player is not ruled down by contact on the field).

(f) Fouls for Facemask and Unnecessary Roughness Against a Defenseless Player

(g) Number of players on the field at the snap.

(h) Any other information requested by the Referee.

Submitted by Baltimore and Los Angeles Chargers

Effect: Creates an officiating advisor who is positioned somewhere other than the playing field, with full communication to on-field officials and access to a television monitor that displays all broadcast angles provided through the NFL's network independence system.

Reason: Competitive equity. Pace of play. Player health and safety.

2020 PLAYING RULE PROPOSAL NO. 8

Amend Rule 12, Section 2, Article 9 (Players in a Defenseless Posture, pg. 48) (new language underlined, deleted language struck through):

ARTICLE 9. PLAYERS IN A DEFENSELESS POSTURE. It is a foul if a player initiates unnecessary contact against a player who is in a defenseless posture.

(a) Players in a defenseless posture are:

- (5) A runner already in the grasp of a tackler and whose forward progress has been stopped.
- (6) A kickoff or punt returner attempting to field a kick in the air who has not had time to clearly become a runner. If the player is capable of avoiding or warding off the impending contact of an opponent, he is no longer a defenseless player.
- (7) A player on the ground.

(b) Prohibited contact against a player who is in a defenseless posture is:

- (1) forcibly hitting the defenseless player's head or neck area with the helmet, facemask, forearm, or shoulder, even if the initial contact is lower than the player's neck, and regardless of whether the defensive player also uses his arms to tackle the defenseless player by encircling or grasping him;
- (2) lowering the head and making forcible contact with any part of the helmet against any part of the defenseless player's body; or
- (3) illegally launching into a defenseless opponent. It is an illegal launch if a player (i) leaves both feet prior to contact to spring forward and upward into his opponent, and (ii) uses any part of his helmet to initiate forcible contact against any part of his opponent's body. (This does not apply to contact against a runner, unless the runner is still considered to be a defenseless player, as defined in Article 9.)

Notes:

- (1) *The provisions of (b) do not prohibit incidental contact by the mask or helmet in the course of a conventional tackle or block on an opponent.*
- (2) *A player who initiates contact against a defenseless opponent is responsible for avoiding an illegal act. This includes illegal contact that may occur during the process of attempting to dislodge the ball from an opponent. A standard of strict liability applies for any contact against a defenseless opponent, even if the opponent is an airborne player who is returning to the ground or whose body position is otherwise in motion, and irrespective of any acts by the defenseless opponent, such as ducking his head or curling up his body in anticipation of contact.*

Penalty: For unnecessary roughness: Loss of 15 yards and an automatic first down. The player may be disqualified if the action is judged by the official(s) to be flagrant.

Submitted by Competition Committee

Effect: Expands defenseless player protection to a kickoff or punt returner who is in possession of the ball but who has not had time to avoid or ward off the impending contact of an opponent.

Reason: Player safety.

2020 PLAYING RULE PROPOSAL NO. 9

Amend 4, Section 3, Article 2 (pg. 13) (new language underlined, deleted language struck through):

ARTICLE 2. SCRIMMAGE DOWN. Following any timeout (3-37-1), the game clock shall be started on a scrimmage down when the ball is next snapped, except in the following situations:

* * * * *

(e) If the game clock is stopped after a down in which there was a foul by either team, following enforcement or declination of a penalty, the game clock will start as if the foul had not occurred, except that the clock will start on the snap if:

- (1) the foul occurs after the two-minute warning of the first half;
- (2) the foul occurs inside the last five minutes of the second half; ~~or~~
- (3) the offense commits a dead-ball foul during the fourth quarter or overtime that is accepted;
or
- (4) a specific rule prescribes otherwise.

Submitted by Competition Committee

Effect: Prevents teams from manipulating the game clock by committing multiple dead-ball fouls while the clock is running.

Reason: Conserve game time.

2020 Bylaw Proposals Summary

1. By Detroit, Philadelphia and Tampa Bay; for one year only, permits clubs to place players on Reserve/Injured or Reserve/Non-Football Injury or Illness beginning the day of the roster reduction and have such players be eligible to be designated for return.
2. By League Office; increases the number of players that may be designated for return from two to three. Incorporates interpretations applicable to bye weeks during the regular season and postseason.
3. By Competition Committee; increases the number of playoff teams from 12 to 14. Establishes a protocol for seeding Wild Card games and Divisional playoff games.

2020 BYLAW PROPOSAL NO. 1

For one year only, amends Article XVII, Section 17.16 (C) of the Constitution and Bylaws to read (new language underlined, deleted language struck through):

Reserve/Injured

17.16 The following rules govern Reserve/Injured:

- (C) **Designated Free Activation from Reserve Injured and Reserve Non-Football Injury/Illness.** During each season a team will be permitted to return two players from either the Reserve/Injured or the Reserve/Non-Football Injury/Illness List to its 53-player Active/Inactive List. Such players must have suffered a major football-related injury or non-football-related injury or illness (defined as an injury that renders the player physically unable to practice or play football for a period of at least six weeks [42 calendar days] from the date that the injury or illness occurred) after reporting to training camp and must have been placed on the applicable Reserve List after 4:00 p.m., New York time, on the day ~~after~~ prior to the final-roster reduction, or any time thereafter. A player who is eligible to return must be noted as “Designated for Return” on the first day that he returns to practice.

A player is ineligible to practice until six weeks have elapsed since the date he was placed on Reserve, and is not eligible to return to the Active/Inactive List until eight games have elapsed since the date he was placed on Reserve. (A regular season bye week does not count as a game. Conversely, a postseason bye week does count as a game.) The business day (prior to 4:00 p.m., New York time) that a player is placed on Reserve counts as the first day.

At any time after the conclusion of the sixth week that a player has been on Reserve/Injured or Reserve/Non-Football Injury/Illness, a club is permitted to return him to practice for a period not to exceed 21 calendar days, provided that the club has notified the Player Personnel department of the League office that the player has been Designated for Return, which information shall be promulgated to clubs on that day’s Personnel Notice. Provided that the player has been on Reserve/Injured or Reserve/Non-Football Injury/Illness for at least eight games from the date he was placed on Reserve, a club is permitted to return him to its Active/Inactive List at

any time during the 21-day practice period, or prior to 4:00 p.m., New York time, on the day after the conclusion of the 21-day period. After a club has designated two players for return from its applicable Reserve List, no other players on Reserve/Injured or Reserve/Non-Football Injury/Illness shall be permitted to practice or to return to the club's 53-player Active/Inactive List.

If a player is not returned to the Active/Inactive List prior to 4:00 p.m., New York time, on the day after the conclusion of the 21-day period, he is not eligible to return to that club's Active/Inactive List for the remainder of the season and postseason. If the club elects to continue to carry the player on Reserve/Injured or Reserve Non-Football Injury/Illness, whichever is applicable, the player shall not be permitted to practice or to participate in team or individual drills (contact or non-contact) during the remainder of the season, including postseason. Such players are limited to non-contact rehabilitative work under the supervision of the club's trainer or physician. Pads and helmets are prohibited during such rehabilitative activities. Such players are permitted to attend team meetings, and may also attend, but not participate in, practice sessions.

Submitted by Detroit, Philadelphia, and Tampa Bay

Effect: For one year only, permits clubs to place players on Reserve/Injured or Reserve/Non-Football Injury or Illness beginning the day of the roster reduction and have such players be eligible to be designated for return.

Reason: Greater roster flexibility.

2020 BYLAW PROPOSAL NO. 2

Amend Article XVII, Section 17.16 (C) of the Constitution and Bylaws to read (new language underlined, deleted language struck through):

Reserve/Injured

17.16 The following rules govern Reserve/Injured:

- (C) **Designated Free Activation from Reserve Injured and Reserve Non-Football Injury/Illness.** During each season a team will be permitted to return ~~two~~ three players from either the Reserve/Injured or the Reserve/Non-Football Injury/Illness List to its 53-player Active/Inactive List. Such players must have suffered a major football-related injury or non-football-related injury or illness (defined as an injury that renders the player physically unable to practice or play football for a period of at least six weeks [42 calendar days] from the date that the injury or illness occurred) after reporting to training camp and must have been placed on the applicable Reserve List after 4:00 p.m., New York time, on the day after the final roster reduction. A player who is eligible to return must be noted as “Designated for Return” on the first day that he returns to practice.

A player is ineligible to practice until six weeks have elapsed since the date he was placed on Reserve, and is not eligible to return to the Active/Inactive List until eight ~~weeks~~ games have elapsed since the date he was placed on Reserve. (A regular season bye week does not count as a game. Conversely, a postseason bye week counts as a game.) The business day (prior to 4:00 p.m., New York time) that a player is placed on Reserve counts as the first day.

At any time after the conclusion of the sixth week that a player has been on Reserve/Injured or Reserve/Non-Football Injury/Illness, a club is permitted to return him to practice for a period not to exceed 21 calendar days, provided that the club has notified the Player Personnel department of the League office that the player has been Designated for Return, which information shall be promulgated to clubs on that day’s Personnel Notice. Provided that the player has been on Reserve/Injured or Reserve/Non-Football Injury/Illness for at least eight games from the date he was placed on Reserve, a club is permitted to return him to its Active/Inactive List at any time during the 21-day practice period, or prior to 4:00 p.m., New York

time, on the day after the conclusion of the 21-day period. After a club has designated ~~two~~ three players for return from its applicable Reserve List, no other players on Reserve/Injured or Reserve/Non-Football Injury/Illness shall be permitted to practice or to return to the club's 53-player Active/Inactive List.

If a player is not returned to the Active/Inactive List prior to 4:00 p.m., New York time, on the day after the conclusion of the 21-day period, he is not eligible to return to that club's Active/Inactive List for the remainder of the season and postseason. If the club elects to continue to carry the player on Reserve/Injured or Reserve Non-Football Injury/Illness, whichever is applicable, the player shall not be permitted to practice or to participate in team or individual drills (contact or non-contact) during the remainder of the season, including postseason. Such players are limited to non-contact rehabilitative work under the supervision of the club's trainer or physician. Pads and helmets are prohibited during such rehabilitative activities. Such players are permitted to attend team meetings, and may also attend, but not participate in, practice sessions.

Submitted by League Office

Effect: Increases the number of players that may be designated for return from two to three. Incorporates interpretations applicable to bye weeks during the regular season and postseason.

Reason: Greater roster flexibility.

2020 BYLAW PROPOSAL NO. 3

Amend Article XX, Sections 20.1 and 20.2 (Pairings and Priority), 20.3 (Division Ties), and 20.4 (Wild Card Ties) of the Constitution and Bylaws to read (new language underlined, deleted language struck through)

Pairings and Priority

20.1 The four division champions and ~~two~~three Wild Card clubs (the ~~two~~three clubs with the best records other than the division champions) from each conference will participate in the postseason. Tie games are calculated as one-half game won and one-half game lost. ~~Both~~ All three Wild Cards may come from the same division. Clubs eliminated in Divisional Championship tie-breakers are eligible to be Wild Cards if their records qualify them.

20.2 Pairings for the playoffs will be as follows:

The ~~six~~seven postseason participants from each conference will be seeded as follows:

1. The division champion with the best record.
2. The division champion with the second-best record.
3. The division champion with the third-best record.
4. The division champion with the fourth-best record.
5. The Wild Card with the best record.
6. The Wild Card with the second-best record.
7. The Wild Card with the third-best record.

In the first round, the division champion with the second-best record (the #2 seed) will play the Wild Card club with the third-best record (the #7 seed), the division champion with the third-best record (the #3 seed) will play the Wild Card club with the second-best record (the #6 seed) and the division champion with the fourth-best record (the #4 seed) will play the Wild Card club with the best record (the #5 seed). The division champions will host the games.

In the second round, the division champion with the best record (the #1 seed) will play the lowest-seeded team that won its first-round game. ~~winner of the game between the division champion with the fourth-best record will play the Wild Card team with the best record, unless the Wild Card club with the second-best record wins its first round game, in which case the division champion with the best record will play the Wild Card club with the second-best record.~~ The other two winning teams play each other in the other second round game. In either case, the division champion with the second-best record will play the winner of the other first round game. The two highest seeded teams ~~division champions with the best won-lost-tied percentage in the regular season will host games. For example, if in the first round the #7 seed defeats the #2 seed, the #3 seed defeats the #6 seed, and the #5 seed defeats the #4 seed, the #1 seed will host the #7 seed, and the #3 seed will host the #5 seed.)~~

None of the above will be affected by the fact that a Wild Card and division champion are from the same division.

Division Ties

20.3 If, at the end of the regular season, two or more clubs in the same division finish with the best won-lost-tied percentage, the following steps will be taken until a champion is determined:

TWO CLUBS

1. Head-to-head (best won-lost- tied percentage in games between the clubs.)
2. Best won-lost-tied percentage in games played within the division.
3. Best won-lost-tied percentage in common games.
4. Best won-lost-tied percentage in games played within the conference.
5. Strength of victory in all games.
6. Strength of schedule in all games.
- ** 7. Best combined ranking among conference teams in points scored and points allowed in all games.
- ** 8. Best combined ranking among all teams in points scored and points allowed in all games.
9. Best net points in common games.
10. Best net points in all games.
11. Best net touchdowns in all games.
12. Coin toss.

THREE OR MORE CLUBS*

1. Head-to-head (best won-lost-tied percentage in games among the clubs.)
2. Best won-lost-tied percentage in games played within the division.
3. Best won-lost-tied percentage in common games.
4. Best won-lost-tied percentage in games played within the conference.
5. Strength of victory in all games.
6. Strength of schedule in all games.
- ** 7. Best combined ranking among conference teams in points scored and points allowed in all games.
- ** 8. Best combined ranking among all teams in points scored and points allowed in all games.
9. Best net points in common games
10. Best net points in all games.
11. Best net touchdowns in all games.
12. Coin toss.

* Note 1: If two clubs remain tied after one or more clubs are eliminated during any step, tie-breaker re-starts at Step One of two-club format.

* Note 2: If three clubs remain tied after a fourth club is eliminated during any step, tie-breaker re-starts at Step One of three-club format.

** The combined ranking is derived by adding a club's position in the two categories, and the lowest score wins. If Club A is first in points scored and second in points allowed, its combined ranking is "three," and if Club B is third in points scored and first in points allowed, its combined ranking is "four," and Club A wins the tie-breaker. If two clubs are tied for a position, both clubs are awarded the ranking as if they held it solely. For example, if Club A and Club B are tied for first in points scored, each club is assigned a ranking of "1" in the category, and if Club C is third, its ranking will still be "3."

Wild Card Ties

20.4 If necessary to break ties to determine the ~~two~~three Wild Card clubs from each conference, the following steps will be taken:

(A) If all the tied clubs are from the same division, apply division tie-breaker.

(B) If the tied clubs are from different divisions, apply the following steps:

TWO CLUBS

1. Head-to-head, if applicable.
2. Best won-lost-tied percentage in the games played within the conference.
3. Best won-lost-tied percentage in common games, minimum of four.
4. Strength of victory in all games.
5. Strength of schedule in all games.
- ** 6. Best combined ranking among conference teams in points scored and points allowed in all games.
- ** 7. Best combined ranking among all teams in points scored and points allowed in all games.
8. Best net points in conference games.

9. Best net points in all games.
10. Best net touchdowns in all games.
11. Coin toss.

THREE OR MORE CLUBS

1. Apply division tie-breaker to eliminate all but highest ranked club in each division prior to proceeding to step two. The original seeding within a division upon application of the division tie-breaker remains the same for all subsequent applications of the procedure that are necessary to identify the two Wild Card participants.
2. Head-to-Head Sweep (apply only if one has defeated each of the others or one club has lost to each of the others.)
3. Best won-lost-tied percentage in games played within the conference.
4. Best won-lost-tied percentage in common games, minimum of four.
5. Strength of victory in all games.
6. Strength of schedule in all games.
- ** 7. Best combined ranking among conference teams in points scored and points allowed in all games.
- ** 8. Best combined ranking among all teams in points scored and points allowed in all games.
9. Best net points in conference games.
10. Best net points in all games.
11. Best net touchdowns in all games.
12. Coin toss.

* Note 1: If two clubs remain tied after one or more clubs are eliminated during any step, tie-breaker re-starts at Step One of the two-club format.

* Note 2: If three clubs remain tied after a fourth club is eliminated during any step, tie-breaker re-starts at Step Two of three-club format.

** The combined ranking is derived by adding a club's position in the two categories, and the lowest score wins. If Club A is first in points scored and second in points allowed, its combined ranking is "three," and if Club B is third in points scored and first in points allowed, its combined ranking is "four," and Club A wins the tie-breaker. If two clubs are tied for a position, both clubs are awarded the ranking as if they held it solely. For example, if Club A and Club B are tied for first in points scored, each club is assigned a ranking of "1" in the category, and if Club C is third, its ranking will still be "3."

- (C) When the first Wild Card Team has been identified, the procedure is repeated to name the second and third Wild Cards (i.e., eliminate all but the highest ranked club in each division prior to proceeding to step two). In situations where three teams from the same division are involved in the procedure, the original seeding of the teams remains the same for subsequent applications of the tie-breaker if the top-ranked team in that division qualifies for a Wild Card berth.

Submitted by Competition Committee

Effect: Increases the number of playoff teams from 12 to 14. Establishes a protocol for seeding Wild Card games and divisional playoff games.

Reason: Clarifies the procedures for seeding postseason games with an additional club in each conference.