

CHAPTER 11

The Season

Each team involved in a league starts the season with an active roster, for example, with 46 players, plus 6 practice squad players, the current FOOL standard. The games are played in rounds (or "weeks") where every team plays another. After each game, personnel actions can take place. Sections below describe the use of the free agent list and injured reserve status, which are important to how such transactions are made. The league commissioner may prescribe variations in these procedures, for example by setting the number of games to be played, the allowed roster size, the number of protected moves from injured reserve, or allowing a taxi squad.

11.1 The games

The season is played as a series of games, with all teams playing the same number of games. The commissioner is responsible for setting the schedule. It usually will provide for every team to play each other, with some teams playing twice or more, depending on the total number of teams. At the end of the regular season there is a separate "playoff" season for those teams that did best during the regular season. Again, the commissioner sets the format and criteria for the playoffs. The playoffs proceed through a number of rounds to a championship game. Tiebreakers are also a matter for the commissioner to decide.

11.1.1 Schedule

The format for FOOL through Season XI was 8 teams in a ten game regular season. Teams were in two divisions. The regular season is still 10 games long. (There may be a number of preseason games, which do not count toward the playoffs, and serve primarily for the evaluation of personnel in training camp, a way of trying out various sets and plays, and as a way of becoming familiar with the rules.) Teams were selected for postseason play based on their records. In the FOOL league the division champions met in playoff games with two runners up, followed by a championship game.

Regular Season:

game #	Games:			
1	E#1 at E#3	E#4 at E#2	W#1 at W#3	W#4 at W#2
2	W#3 at E#1	W#4 at E#2	E#3 at W#1	E#4 at W#2
3	E#1 at E#2	E#3 at E#4	W#1 at W#2	W#3 at W#4
4	W#1 at E#1	W#4 at E#4	E#3 at W#3	E#2 at W#2
5	E#1 at E#4	E#2 at E#3	W#1 at W#4	W#2 at W#3
6	W#2 at E#1	W#4 at E#3	E#2 at W#1	E#4 at W#3
7	E#3 at E#1	E#2 at E#4	W#3 at W#1	W#2 at W#4
8	W#3 at E#2	W#1 at E#4	E#1 at W#4	E#3 at W#2
9	W#2 at E#2	W#3 at E#3	E#1 at W#1	E#4 at W#4
10	E#2 at E#1	E#4 at E#3	W#2 at W#1	W#4 at W#3

Postseason:

11	West #2 at East #1	East #2 at West #1	12	Championship
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An alternate template schedule which is superior is shown below. This was used for Season XI. It has the following attributes:

All teams have same opponents and home-away situation with opponents as in existing schedule.

Each division has two home and two away games each week.

Weeks 1 and 10 have intradivisional games.

#1 and #2 each play 2 home games in first 5 games.

#3 and #4 each play 3 home games in first 5 games.

No team plays more than two consecutive home games or more than two consecutive away games.

Every team plays one game and one away game in weeks 9 and 10.

Weeks 7-9 have interdivisional play.

a = away game * = home game

VS	EP	CF	GR	BB	JI	WK	MD	
1	aC	aG	V*	E*	aW	aM	B*	J*
2	aB	J*	aW	M*	V*	aE	C*	aG
3	E*	aV	G*	aC	aJ	B*	aM	W*
4	W*	M*	aB	aJ	C*	G*	aV	aE
5	aG	aC	E*	V*	aM	aW	J*	B*
6	C*	G*	aV	aE	W*	M*	aB	aJ
7	J*	aB	M*	aW	E*	aV	G*	aC
8	aM	W*	aJ	B*	aG	C*	aE	V*
9	B*	aJ	W*	aM	aV	E*	aC	G*
10	aE	V*	aG	C*	J*	aB	M*	aW

Starting in Season XII, the league expanded to nine teams in three divisions. The Season XIII schedule, shown below, is a useful template. Notice that with the presence of bye weeks, time needs to be tracked in “weeks” instead of “games.” Number of games is still used for experience points, but now injury durations are in “weeks”.

Season XIII: Divisions: GG, BB, GR; MD, CA, VS; SS, WK, CF (in order of record, XII)

Week 1:	CF at GG	SS at BB	WK at GR	CA at VS	(MD)
Week 2:	VS at SS	MD at WK	CA at CF	BB at GR	(GG)
Week 3:	GR at MD	GG at CA	BB at VS	WK at CF	(SS)
Week 4:	WK at GG	CF at BB	SS at GR	VS at MD	(CA)
Week 5:	CA at SS	VS at WK	MD at CF	GR at GG	(BB)
Week 6:	BB at MD	GR at CA	GG at VS	CF at SS	(WK)
Week 7:	SS at GG	WK at BB	CF at GR	MD at CA	(VS)
Week 8:	MD at SS	CA at WK	VS at CF	GG at BB	(GR)
Week 9:	GG at MD	BB at CA	GR at VS	SS at WK	(CF)
Week 10:	GR at BB	VS at CA	CF at WK		(GG, MD, SS)
Week 11:	GG at GR	MD at VS	SS at CF		(BB, CA, WK)
Week 12:	BB at GG	CA at MD	WK at SS		(GR, VS, CF)

	GG	BB	GR	MD	CA	VS	SS	WK	CF
1-	CF(h)	SS(h)	WK(h)	----	@VS	CA(h)	@BB	@GR	@GG
2-	----	@GR	BB(h)	@WK	@CF	@SS	VS(h)	MD(h)	CA(h)
3-	@CA	@VS	@MD	GR(h)	GG(h)	BB(h)	----	@CF	WK(h)
4-	WK(h)	CF(h)	SS(h)	VS(h)	----	@MD	@GR	@GG	@BB
5-	GR(h)	----	@GG	@CF	@SS	@WK	CA(h)	VS(h)	MD(h)
6-	@VS	@MD	@CA	BB(h)	GR(h)	GG(h)	CF(h)	----	@SS
7-	SS(h)	WK(h)	CF(h)	@CA	MD(h)	----	@GG	@BB	@GR
8-	@BB	GG(h)	----	@SS	@WK	@CF	MD(h)	CA(h)	VS(h)
9-	@MD	@CA	@VS	GG(h)	BB(h)	GR(h)	@WK	SS(h)	----
10-	----	GR(h)	@BB	----	VS(h)	@CA	----	CF(h)	@WK
11-	@GR	----	GG(h)	@VS	----	MD(h)	@CF	----	SS(h)
12-	BB(h)	@GG	----	CA(h)	@MD	----	WK(h)	@SS	----

Postseason: 3 division winners + wild card, then championship.

11.1.2 Rankings

For purposes of comparing records, the rankings are by games won (with ties counting as 1/2 game), games won within the division, games won (not counting ties), games won not counting ties within the division, and head to head wins. If this does not resolve the relative rankings of two teams, point spread (points scored minus points given up) is used. The commissioner may substitute other tiebreakers as desired.

11.2 The active roster

The active roster is the set of players each team has available to be used in each upcoming game. In the FOOL the size of the active roster is currently 46 players plus an additional 6 practice squad players. (The NFL standards and policies are different.) The active roster may contain some players who are injured, but who are not placed on injured reserve.

11.3 Free agent list

There is a league free agent list of players available, but not currently assigned to a team. This list is normally made up of those players cut during training camp. After each game, teams may select players from the free agent list to replace those on the active roster who were injured and placed on injured reserve, or cut ("waived"). Players who are waived go onto the free agent list. Injured players cannot be waived.

It is possible for two teams to simultaneously select the same player from the free agent list. If this happens, the team with the lower ranking the previous season (had the higher draft choice) has priority, and the other team must make a different selection. Thus, teams which were not at the bottom should, when indicating free agents selected, give alternative picks to be used should this happen. (During a league's initial season, the commissioner establishes an arbitrary priority order for this purpose, for example in the reverse order in which initial teams or rosters were chosen.)

A free agent picked up must stay on the team's roster for at least one game, but may be on the practice squad as described below (and often is).

Following option not yet adopted: In selecting free agents, a team picking up a player to be added to the "active" roster has priority in free agent choices over a team picking up players to add to the developmental/practice squad. (The player involved probably prefers the active roster, and this makes the logistics easier since we can resolve the practice squad pickup conflicts, if any, at leisure without affecting games.)

11.4 Practice squad

The FOOL currently allows each team a "practice squad" of players who are on the team's roster, but are not eligible to play in the upcoming game. Players may be freely moved to and from the practice squad from the active roster between games. If a practice squad is used, it should be given when a team's home setup or away game plan is given. The ULF does not currently have a practice squad. For FOOL the squad is 6 players, so the overall roster is 52 players.

11.5 Injured reserve list

Each team has an injured reserve list of players who have been injured and placed on this list so that they do not count against the limited size of the active roster. Any number of players can be put on the injured reserve list. As an injured player cannot be released, this is the usual destination of players whose injury prevents them from playing for more than a few games. (It is considered unfair to fire an injured player; he must be paid at least until he recovers from his injury. However, he can be activated without using a free move to the active roster and then released.) A player is eligible to be placed on injured reserve only if his injury is for one or more games; a "quarter", "game", or "half" roll for injury during a game does not qualify. Once the player is put on injured reserve, his roster spot can be taken by a player picked up from the free agent list, a player activated from injured reserve, or a player obtained by trade.

The injured reserve list may serve a second function as a place to stash extra players which a team wants to protect, but for whom a roster spot cannot be found. When a player goes on injured reserve, there is no obligation for a team to return him to the active roster even when he is healthy again. This use of the injured reserve list is limited to those players who actually sustain injuries. Once a player is healthy again, he may practice with his team, but may not play until he is activated. Such players are credited as if they are on the roster for experience credit at the end of the season.

The limitation on the injured reserve status is that any player who is placed on the injured reserve list is ineligible to return to the active roster for four games (was weeks; he must miss four or more games). Furthermore, there is a limit on the number of moves allowed from the injured reserve list to the active roster. This limit is currently two (for the 10 game season) plus one additional move which can be made before or during the playoffs. (The limit was 3 in the previous season, but that high a limit is more appropriate to a longer season.) If a team wants to activate a player from injured reserve, but has no protected moves left or does not want to use one, the player is in effect waived first. Such a player may be picked up as a free agent by any other team. If he is not picked by any other team, the team trying to move him can place him on the active roster. Players can be traded from the injured reserve list, but only if they are healthy. A trade does not use up a free move to the active list.

When a home team setup or away team game plan is mailed, the status of players on the active roster (including injury effects) and the identity and status of injured reserve players, as well as free agents picked up, should be included.

Placement on injured reserve, in this case or others, does not have to be immediately after the injury; it must be while the injury is in effect, though.

There is also a "Training Camp Injured Reserve" list. Players placed on Injured Reserve during training camp may only be placed on this list. No moves from it to the active roster are permitted during the regular season. Players may be released though. The Training Camp IR list is used to stash injured players for the next season.

The "Physically Unable to Perform" list works the same way as training camp IR, but is for players who failed to fully recover from a previous injury. They may instead play (with their value reduced by injury) but if the team wants them to be left in an inactive status while recovering, they go on the PUP list, and do not "practice."

11.6 Trades

Teams may trade players to each other for other players or future draft picks. Monetary compensation as part of a trade is strictly prohibited, and trades between leagues are generally not allowed. The league commissioner has final approval on all trades, but trades made are normally assumed to be approved subject to review. The commissioner must rule a trade not allowed within one week in order to prevent its completion. The only grounds for preventing a trade are irregularities such as verification of drug use, illegal payments, mob involvements, or such. Traded players must pass a physical examination at their new team for the trade to be considered consummated.

A trade deadline (generally at halfway through the season) prevents any trades from being made from that time until the season is over. Thus, for a **twelve week** season, all trades must be completed before week **7**. Teams may still make moves to or from the free agent list.

After each trade is consummated, a roll is made for a possible ability change of the traded player. A similar roll is made for free agents acquired during the season. The procedure is described in chapter 12. The free agent roll does not apply to free agents who played last for the same team earlier in the season.

Generally, trades between teams having the same owner (coach) are not allowed. They are too easy to optimize. In some circumstances trades may be allowed, but only after other teams have chances to make competing offers, and approval by the Commissioner or a committee that he may establish. (Formerly this policy was by "division" assuming the owner of teams in a division was the same.) This policy would apply to trades outside the regular season as well. See 12.0 also.

11.7 Statistics

Each team owner is responsible for keeping team statistics for his team, as prescribed by the commissioner or a committee he may establish. Generally these include carries and yardage of various types, fumbles, pass records, and similar information of the sort which may be easily taken from news accounts. In addition, the team owner must track experience for each player over the season. (This is discussed

more fully in chapter 12 where player change procedures are described.) Finally, at the end of the season each owner should submit a season summary to the historical committee.

11.8 Recovery from injury

When a player who was injured for a **week** or more is scheduled to return or to recover from a -C, -S, or -P handicap (in most cases), a die roll must be made to see if the recovery is successful. For injuries that recover within the season, the chance not to recover is 1/6 (Some injuries do not require this roll). A die is rolled, and a 6 indicated that the injury is (relatively) “permanent.” There is a chance to recover from it during the next training camp, with the chance depending on the age of the player. Recovery from injuries which are specified as for the remainder of the season are not rolled until the following training camp.

11.8.1 Recovery from long term injury: (optional, NOT in use)

Some injuries (those with a roll of 5 and 6 on the "longer" table) indicate that an attribute (C or S) is decremented for the rest of the season, and (for roll of 5) that a certain number of games are missed. Normally recovery does not occur until the following training camp, where it has a 1/6 (c) or 1/2 (s) probability. This optional rule would modify the procedure to allow a roll for recovery after a period of twice the number of games the player must miss. For example, suppose a -s2d6 games player (with a 2d6 roll) is found to miss 5 games. After missing those games, he may return at a -S value. After 10 games, a roll is made to determine if the player recovers from the -S effect. The chance is 50%: on a d6 roll of 1, 2 or 3, the player recovers. If he does not, an additional roll is made in camp the following year, with a 50% chance that the injury will be in effect all of the next season.

As modified, this rule allows for some recovery from longer term injuries which occur in training camp or early in the season. If the example injury had occurred during training camp (nominally two games before exhibition season), the player could play again in the first game of the regular season, and might return to full effectiveness halfway through the regular season.

For a player with a "longer" roll of 6, the severity of the injury is such that no recovery is possible until the next training camp.

(Currently this rule is not in use. Probably more complicated than we want.)

11.8.1a Modified recovery by injury type (optional rule, in use):

Severe injuries that are -S (legs, usually) have a 1/2 chance of recovery. -C injuries have a 5/6 chance of recovery. This optional rule is currently in use for the FOOL league. It applies to “full season” injuries (5, 6 from longer table).

11.8.2 Second injury recovery roll: (Advanced rule)

Injured players who fail their recovery roll described above have a second chance during the next training camp. While awaiting this second opportunity to recover, they are listed with the attribute (for their injury) decremented and the modification listed on the team roster. For example a 2-3-3 (-S) player was a 2-3-4 who failed a -S injury recovery roll. The second opportunity to recover depends on age, and is described in

more detail in Chapter 12. If that roll is failed, the player is permanently at the new value, and the injury notation is dropped. The above player would then become simply 2-3-3. Note that a player could simultaneously be bothered by more than one injury, in different stages of recovery. A player who plays with a negative modification due to an injury in a previous season does not have +1 added to injury rolls as would a player playing with a more recent injury.

Players who have failed the initial injury roll and have not yet attempted the second recovery roll may be placed on injured reserve or an "Unable to Perform" list which does not permit moves to the active list. (Players on this list may be released to free agency though.)

11.8.3 Injury duration age effects (An optional rule NOT in effect for XIII!):

This concerns injuries other than the current age effects on the "2nd recovery" roll. These affect the duration of "longer" rolls (within the season as well as in training camp) and the chance to recover on the first recovery roll which has not in the past had any age effects:

30-34: 1/3 rather than 1/6 to recover from a "-c" injury (1st recovery roll).

d6 rather than d3 (duration) and a 1/6 chance to not recover (1st recovery roll) on current "d3" game injuries (which had been automatic recovery for everybody)
d6+2 and 2d6+2 rather than d6, 2d6 for durations respectively

35+: 1/2 rather than 1/6 for a -c injury (to recover, 1st recovery roll)

2/3 rather than 1/2 for a -s injury (to recover, 1st recovery roll)

d6 rather than d3 games and 1/3 chance to not recover (1st recovery roll)
on current d3 game injuries

2d6 rather than d6, and 3d6 rather than 2d6 on durations