

RULE 16 Overtime Procedures

Section 1 Overtime Procedures

Article 1 If the score is tied at the end of the regulation playing time of all **preseason**, **regular season**, and postseason NFL games, a system of modified sudden-death overtime shall be in effect, pursuant to the following.

Article 2 At the end of regulation playing time, the Referee shall immediately toss a coin at the center of the field, in accordance with rules pertaining to a usual pregame toss (4-2-2). The visiting team captain is to again call the toss.

Article 3 Following an intermission of no more than three minutes after the end of the regular game, the extra period shall commence.

- (a) Both teams must have the opportunity to possess the ball once during the extra period, unless the team that receives the opening kickoff scores a touchdown on its initial possession, in which case it is the winner, or if the team kicking off to start the overtime period scores a safety on the receiving team's initial possession, in which case the team that kicked off is the winner.
- (b) If the team that possesses the ball first does not score on its initial possession, the team next scoring by any method shall be the winner.
- (c) If the team that possesses the ball first scores a field goal on its initial possession, the other team (the second team) shall have the opportunity to possess the ball.
 - (1) If the second team scores a touchdown on its possession, it is the winner.
 - (2) If the second team scores a field goal on its possession, the team next scoring by any method shall be the winner.

NOTES:

- (1) *If the second team loses possession by an interception or fumble, the down will be permitted to run to its conclusion, but if the second team's possession has legally ended with the fumble recovery or interception, any subsequent action will not affect the outcome of the game. (If the change of possession occurs in the second team's end zone, the score counts.)*
- (2) *Fouls by one or both teams after the change of possession, or a subsequent loss of possession by the team that intercepted the pass or recovered the ball, cannot change the result. The team that received the opening kickoff is the winner, since the second team had possession of the ball and failed to score.*
- (3) *In such situations, if the player who intercepts the pass or recovers the fumble goes to the ground and makes no effort to advance, the covering official will blow his whistle to end the game.*
- (4) *If the second team loses possession by an interception or fumble, but the first team committed a foul prior to the change of possession, the second team's possession has not legally ended, and the game cannot end on the down. However, in certain situations (see Approved Ruling 16.24) the second team cannot decline the penalty and accept the result of the play, no matter how beneficial, because it would create a second possession for itself. It must accept the penalty enforcement, which will extend its initial possession.*
- (5) *The situation in (4) may also affect the team that receives the opening kickoff during its first possession. If there is a foul by the second team followed by a double change of possession, and the first team declines the penalty and accepts the result of the play, the second team has had its required possession, and the first team has possession of the ball for the second time and needs only a field goal to win. However, if it accepts the penalty, it will extend its initial possession (see Approved Ruling 16.25).*
- (d) A player is in possession when he is in firm grip and control of the ball inbounds (3-2-7). The defense gains possession when it catches, intercepts, or recovers a loose ball.
- (e) The opportunity to possess applies only during kicking plays. A kickoff is the opportunity to possess for the receiving team. If the kicking team legally recovers the kick, the receiving team is considered to have had its opportunity. A punt or field goal attempt that crosses the line of scrimmage and is muffed by the receiving team is considered to be an opportunity to possess for the receiving team. Normal touching rules by the kicking team apply.
- (f) All replay reviews will be initiated by the Replay Official. Coaches' challenges will not be allowed.

Article 4 The following shall apply to overtime games in the preseason and regular season.

- (a) There shall be a maximum of one 15-minute period, **even if the second team has not had an opportunity to possess the ball or if its initial possession has not ended**. If the score is tied at the end of the period, the game shall result in a tie.
- (b) Each team shall be entitled to two timeouts, and if there is an excess timeout, the usual rules shall apply (4-5). The general provisions for the fourth quarter of a game, including timing, shall apply.

Rule 16, Section 1, Article 5

Article 5 The following shall apply to overtime games in the postseason.

- (a) If the score is tied at the end of a 15-minute overtime period, or if the second team's initial possession has not ended, another overtime period will begin, and play will continue, regardless of how many 15-minute periods are necessary.
- (b) Between each overtime period, there shall be a two-minute intermission, but there shall be no halftime intermission after the second period. At the beginning of the third overtime period, the captain who lost the coin toss prior to the first overtime period shall have the first choice of the two privileges in Rule 4, Section 2, Article 2, unless the team that won the coin toss deferred.
- (c) At the end of the first and third extra periods, etc., teams must change goals in accordance with Rule 4, Section 2, Article 3.
- (d) Each team is entitled to three timeouts during a half. If there is an excess timeout, the usual rules shall apply (4-5).
- (e) At the end of a second overtime period, timing rules shall apply as at the end of the first half. At the end of a fourth overtime period, timing rules shall apply as at the end of the fourth quarter.

Article 6 Disqualified player(s) shall not re-enter during any extra period or periods in the preseason, regular season, and postseason.

Article 7 Except as provided for above, all other general and specific rules shall apply during any extra period or periods in the preseason, regular season, and postseason.