

Use of Third Quarterback

Third Quarterback. Provided that the club has two and only two quarterbacks on its 45-player Active List, one player who is deactivated on the day of the game may be designated as the Third Quarterback, who is eligible to dress for and participate in the game. He also is eligible to participate in all pregame and halftime warm-ups. The two quarterbacks on the 45-player Active List must be bona fide quarterbacks: a club is not permitted to designate as one of its two quarterbacks a player whose primary position is not quarterback.

If a club has three-or-more quarterbacks on its 45 player Active list for the game, it is prohibited from designating a player on the Inactive List as a Third Quarterback for that game.

Limitation of Participation of Third Quarterback. If the Third Quarterback enters the game, he must report to the Referee and may participate only at the quarterback position during the first play (i.e., under center or in the shotgun formation). If the quarterback lines up under center or in the shotgun formation, there is no limitation on what he may do during the first play, pursuant to customary playing rules; he may run, throw a pass, quick-kick, or catch a pass, if he becomes an eligible receiver. After the first play, he must continue to play quarterback, but he also is eligible to be used in kicking situations as a punter, kicker, or holder. However, he is prohibited from being used at a position other than quarterback.

Entry in First Three Periods. If the Third Quarterback initially enters the game during the first three periods, the club's other two quarterbacks become ineligible to participate and may not return at any time under any circumstances.

Entry in Fourth Period or Overtime. If the Third Quarterback initially enters the game during the fourth period or an overtime period, both of the club's other two quarterbacks remain eligible to return to the game and participate as a quarterback, punter, kicker, or holder. However, under no circumstances can the Third Quarterback participate in the game at the same time as either of the club's other two quarterbacks.

Re-entry of Third Quarterback. If the Third Quarterback initially enters the game during the fourth period or an overtime period and is removed, he remains eligible to return to the game. Since he has already participated in the game, on the first and any subsequent play of his return, he may participate as a quarterback, punter, kicker, or holder, but he is prohibited from being used at a position other than quarterback. However, under no circumstances can the Third Quarterback participate in the game at the same time as either of the club's other two quarterbacks.

Re-entry of First Two Quarterbacks. If either of the first two quarterbacks returns to the game, he can immediately be used on the first play and any subsequent play only as a quarterback, kicker, holder, or punter. It is permissible under these re-entry procedures for both of the club's first two quarterbacks to participate in the game at the same time only as a holder and kicker, but under no circumstances can the Third Quarterback participate in the game at the same time as either of the club's other two quarterbacks.

Reporting to Referee. Upon his initial entry into the game or his re-entry, the Third Quarterback must report to the Referee. If one of the club's other two quarterbacks returns to the game to replace the Third Quarterback, he also is required to report to the Referee.

Coaching Decision. It is not necessary that the club's first two quarterbacks be injured in order for the Third Quarterback to participate; his participation is purely a coaching decision. Likewise, if the Third Quarterback initially enters the game during the fourth period or an overtime period, the permissible return of either of the club's other two quarterbacks is purely a coaching decision, as is the subsequent return of the Third Quarterback, if removed during the fourth period or an overtime period.

Any violations of the provisions for participation by a Third Quarterback could result in an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty during the game and possible disciplinary action, depending upon the circumstances, by the Commissioner after the game.

