

# Rule 5 Players, Substitutes, Equipment, General Rules

## Section 1 Players

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS

**Article 1** The game is played by two teams of 11 players each.

#### PRIOR TO THE SNAP

If Team A has more than 11 players in its formation for more than three seconds, or if Team B has more than 11 players in its formation and the snap is imminent, it is a foul, and the official shall blow his whistle immediately.

**Penalty:** For more than 11 players in the formation prior to the snap: Loss of five yards from the succeeding spot.

#### AT THE SNAP

If a team has more than 11 players on the field of play or the end zone when a snap, free kick, or fair-catch kick is made, the ball is in play, and it is a foul.

**Penalty: For more than 11 players on the field of play or the end zone while the ball is in play: Loss of five yards from the previous spot.**

*Note: It is not a foul if a team has fewer than 11 players on the field of play or the end zone when a snap, free kick, or fair-catch kick is made.*

### PLAYERS NUMBERED BY POSITION

**Article 2** All players must wear numerals on their jerseys in accordance with Rule 5, Section 4, Article 3(c). Such numerals must be by playing position, as follows:

- (a) quarterbacks, punters, and placekickers: 1–19;
- (b) running backs and defensive backs: 20–49;
- (c) centers: 50–79;
- (d) offensive guards and tackles: 60–79;
- (e) wide receivers: 10–19 and 80–89;
- (f) tight ends and H-backs: 40–49 and 80–89;
- (g) defensive linemen: 50–79 and 90–99;
- (h) linebackers: 50–59 and 90–99.

If a player changes his position during his playing career in the NFL, and such change moves him from a position as an ineligible pass receiver to that of an eligible pass receiver, or from a position as an eligible pass receiver to that of an ineligible pass receiver, he must be issued an appropriate new jersey numeral. A change in jersey numeral is not required if the change is from an ineligible position to another ineligible position, or from an eligible position to another eligible position, provided that the player has participated at least one season at his position prior to the change.

Any request to wear a numeral for a special position not specified above (e.g., H-back) must be made to the Commissioner.

During the preseason period when playing rosters are larger, the League will allow duplication and other temporary deviations from the numbering scheme specified above, but the rule must be adhered to for all players during the regular season and postseason. Clubs must make numerals available to adhere to the rule, even if it requires returning to circulation a numeral that has been retired or withheld for other reasons. See 5-3-1 for reporting a change of position.

## Section 2 Substitutes and Withdrawn Players

### NUMBER OF PLAYERS IN HUDDLE

**Article 1** There can never be more than 11 players in the offensive huddle while the play clock is running. **It is** a foul, the whistle is blown immediately, and the ball remains dead. **(5-2-8-a)**

#### SUBSTITUTE BECOMES PLAYER

**Article 2** A substitute becomes a player when he:

- (a) participates in at least one play (including a play negated by penalty prior to the snap or during the play); or
- (b) is on the field of play or the end zone when a snap, fair-catch kick, or free kick is made, or when a snap, fair-catch kick, or free kick is imminent.

A player becomes a substitute when he is withdrawn from the game and does not participate in at least one play. A play negated by penalty prior to the snap or during the play counts as a missed play.

#### LEGAL SUBSTITUTIONS

**Article 3** Any number of substitutes may enter the field of play or the end zone while the ball is dead.

#### ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTIONS

**Article 4** If a substitute enters the field of play or the end zone while the ball is in play, it is an illegal substitution. If an illegal substitute interferes with the play, it may be a palpably unfair act (see 12-3-3).

## OFFENSIVE SUBSTITUTIONS

**Article 5** The following are applicable to any offensive substitute who is entering the game:

- (a) He must move onto the field of play or the end zone as far as the inside of the field numerals prior to the snap to be a legal substitution. If he does not, and is on the field of play or end zone at the time of a legal snap, he is an illegal substitute.
- (b) If he approaches the huddle and communicates with a teammate, he is required to participate in at least one play before being withdrawn. Violations of this rule may be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct.

*Note: The intent of the rule is to prevent teams from using simulated substitutions to confuse an opponent, while still permitting a player (or players) to enter and leave without participating in a play in certain situations, such as a change in a coaching decision on fourth down, even though he has approached the huddle and communicated with a teammate. Similarly, if a player who participated in the previous play leaves the playing field by mistake, and returns to the playing field prior to the snap, he is not required to reach the inside of the field numerals, provided that the defense has the opportunity to match up with him. However, a substitute (i.e., someone who did not participate in the previous play) is required to reach the inside of the field numerals.*

## WITHDRAWN PLAYERS

**Article 6** A player or players who have been replaced must leave the playing field or end zone on their own team's side between the end lines prior to the next snap, free kick, or fair-catch kick.

## DISQUALIFIED AND SUSPENDED PLAYERS

**Article 7** A player must be withdrawn and substituted for when he is disqualified (see 12-2, 12-3) or suspended (see 5-4). A suspended player may re-enter after at least one legal snap, provided that the reason for his suspension has been corrected. A disqualified player must leave the playing field enclosure and go to the team locker room within a reasonable time.

## PENALTIES FOR ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION OR WITHDRAWAL

**Article 8** Penalties for illegal substitution or withdrawal are:

- (a) For 12 or more players in the offensive huddle (whistle blown immediately and ball remains dead): Loss of five yards from the succeeding spot.
- (b) For a substitute entering the field during a live ball: Loss of five yards.
- (c) For interference with the play by a substitute who enters the field during a live ball: Palpably unfair act (see 12-3-3).
- (d) For an offensive substitute who does not move onto the field as far as the inside of the field numerals: Loss of five yards from the previous spot.
- (e) For an offensive substitute who moves onto the field inside the field numerals and leaves without participating in one play: Unsportsmanlike Conduct. **See 5-2-5 Note.**
- (f) For a withdrawn player on the field at the snap, free kick, or fair-catch kick: Loss of five yards from the previous spot.
- (g) For a withdrawn player clearing the field on the opponents' side or across an end line: Loss of five yards from the previous spot.
- (h) For illegal return of a suspended player: Loss of five yards from the previous spot if discovery is made while the ball is in play, or five yards from the succeeding spot if discovered between downs, in which case the ball remains dead.
- (i) For return of a disqualified player: Loss of 15 yards from the previous spot if discovery is made while the ball is in play, or 15 yards from the succeeding spot if discovered between downs, in which case the ball remains dead, and, in either case, exclusion from the playing field enclosure.

## SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE:

If the illegal return of a player is not discovered until the end of a down, but prior to the start of the next one, enforcement is from the previous spot when definitely known. Otherwise, enforcement is from the succeeding spot as a foul between downs (see 14-4-9).

## PROCEDURE FOLLOWING TIMEOUT OR CHANGE OF POSSESSION

**Article 9** Following a timeout or change of possession, the ball will not be declared ready for play until the offense has brought 11 players into its huddle inside the inbounds lines (hash marks). If the offensive team refuses to leave the sideline prior to the ball being declared ready for play, it will be warned once. Thereafter, the offense will be penalized 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct.

**Penalty: For Unsportsmanlike Conduct after a warning: Loss of 15 yards from the succeeding spot.**

## DEFENSIVE MATCHUPS FOLLOWING SUBSTITUTIONS

**Article 10** If a substitution is made by the offense, the offense shall not be permitted to snap the ball until the defense has been permitted to respond with its substitutions. While in the process of a substitution (or simulated substitution), the offense is prohibited from rushing quickly to the line of scrimmage and snapping the ball in an obvious attempt to cause a defensive foul (i.e., too many men on the field). If, in the judgment of the officials, this occurs, the following procedure will apply:

- (a) The Umpire will stand over the ball until the Referee deems that the defense has had a reasonable time to complete its substitutions.
- (b) If a play takes place and a defensive foul for too many players on the field results, no penalties will be enforced, except for personal fouls and unsportsmanlike conduct, and the down will be replayed. At this time, the Referee will notify the head coach that any further use of this tactic will result in a penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct.

*Note: The quick-snap rule does not apply after the two-minute warning of either half, or if there is not a substitution by the offense.*

- (c) On a fourth-down punting situation, the Referee and the Umpire will not allow a quick snap that prevents the defense from having a reasonable time to complete its substitutions. This applies throughout the entire game.
- (d) **If the play clock expires before the defense has completed its substitution, it is delay of game by the offense.**

#### UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

**Article 11** Using entering substitutes, legally returning players, substitutes on sidelines, or withdrawn players to confuse opponents, or lingering by players leaving the field when being replaced by a substitute, is unsportsmanlike conduct. See 12-3-1-k. The offense is prevented from sending simulated substitutions onto the field toward its huddle and returning them to the sideline without completing the substitution in an attempt to confuse the defense.

**Penalty: For Unsportsmanlike Conduct after a warning: Loss of 15 yards from the succeeding spot.**

### Section 3 Changes in Position

#### REPORTING CHANGE OF POSITION

**Article 1** An offensive player wearing the number of an ineligible pass receiver (50–79 and 90–99) is permitted to line up in the position of an eligible pass receiver (1–49 and 80–89), and an offensive player wearing the number of an eligible pass receiver is permitted to line up in the position of an ineligible pass receiver, provided that he immediately reports the change in his eligibility status to the Referee, who will inform the defensive team.

He must participate in such eligible or ineligible position as long as he is continuously in the game, but prior to each play he must again report his status to the Referee, who will inform the defensive team. The game clock shall not be stopped, and the ball shall not be put in play until the Referee takes his normal position.

#### RETURNING TO ORIGINAL POSITION

**Article 2** A player who has reported a change in his eligibility status to the Referee is permitted to return to a position indicated by the eligibility status of his number after:

- (a) a team time out;
- (b) the end of a quarter;
- (c) the two-minute warning;
- (d) a foul;
- (e) a replay challenge;
- (f) a touchdown;
- (g) a completed kick from scrimmage;
- (h) a change of possession; or
- (i) if the player has been withdrawn for one legal snap. A player withdrawn for one legal snap may re-enter at a position indicated by the eligibility status of his number, unless he again reports to the Referee that he is assuming a position other than that designated by the eligibility status of his number.

**Penalty: If a player fails to notify the Referee of a change in his status when required: Loss of five yards for illegal substitution.**

**A.R. 5.1** Offensive tackle A1 is legally shifted to the backfield and is then withdrawn. He returns before the next snap to a tackle position.

**Ruling:** Illegal. He must stay out one play, **unless there is** a team time out. See 5-3-2

**Article 3** Each offensive and defensive team is permitted no more than one player on the field with a speaker in his helmet. Each team is permitted to have a maximum of three active radio receivers to be used on offense by its quarterbacks, and a maximum of two active radio receivers to be used on defense by players who have been designated as a primary and backup user.

Clubs that have a player whose principal position is as a non-quarterback (e.g., wide receiver, running back) and who also is used as a quarterback from time to time must have two helmets for that player—one with and one without radio components.

When a quarterback enters the game for the first time, or re-enters the game if he has previously been in the game and removed, he must report to the Referee.

Whenever the backup defensive user enters or re-enters the game wearing a helmet with a speaker, he must report to the Umpire. If the primary defensive user subsequently re-enters the game wearing a helmet with a speaker, he must report

to the Umpire. If the primary and backup players have been removed from the game, no other player may wear the radio speaker in his helmet. Teams must use other methods to communicate signals to their players.

It is not necessary that the offensive player with the speaker in his helmet receive the snap.

For special teams' plays, only one player per team with a receiver will be permitted on the field.

The coach-to-player system is not subject to the equity rule. In the event one club experiences a coach-to-player radio system malfunction or failure, the other club does not have to shut down its system and may continue using it. However, if the coaches' intercom system has been completely shut down on both sidelines pursuant to the equity rule, all coaches' headsets must be removed, and radio communications from the sidelines to the field must be conducted by walkie-talkie only.

All players that have radio components in their helmet must have a decal, supplied by the League, displayed on the midline of the rear of the helmet. Players who have speakers in their helmets must be identified in the Communication System section of the Game Day Administration Report that is submitted to the Referee or a member of his crew no later than one hour and 30 minutes prior to kickoff.

For additional requirements and policies pertaining to the system, including regulations for the storage of a backup helmet for a non-quarterback who is used as a quarterback, or for the backup defensive player's helmet, please refer to the *Policy Manual for Member Clubs/Game Operations*.

**Penalty: If a player fails to notify the Referee of a change in his status when required: Loss of five yards for illegal substitution.**

## Section 4 Equipment, Uniforms, Player Appearance

### GENERAL POLICY

**Article 1** Throughout the game-day period while in view of the stadium and television audience, including during team pregame warm-ups, all players must dress in a professional manner under the uniform standards. **The helmet and mandatory padding referenced in Article 2 below are intended to provide reasonable protection to a player while reasonably avoiding risk of injury to other players. The development of Playing Rules should be governed by this Article.** They generally must present an appearance that is appropriate to representing their individual clubs and the National Football League. The term uniform, as used in this policy, applies to every piece of equipment worn by a player, including helmet, shoulder pads, thigh pads, knee pads, and any other item of protective gear, and to every visible item of apparel, including but not limited to pants, jerseys, wristbands, gloves, stockings, shoes, visible undergarments, and accessories such as headwear worn under helmets and hand towels. All visible items worn on game day by players must be issued by the club or the League, or, if from outside sources, must have approval in advance by the League office.

### Mandatory equipment, apparel

**Article 2** All players must wear the equipment and uniform apparel listed below, which must be of a suitably protective nature, must be designed and produced by a professional manufacturer, and must not be cut, reduced in size, or otherwise altered unless for medical reasons approved in advance by the Commissioner. During pregame team warm-ups, players may omit certain protective equipment at their option, except that helmets, **shoulder pads, thigh pads and knee pads** must be worn.

### Helmets, face protectors

- (a) Helmet with **all points of the** chin strap (white only) fastened and facemask attached. Facemasks must not be more than  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch in diameter and must be made of rounded material; transparent materials are prohibited. Clear (transparent) plastic eye shields are optional. Tinted eye shields may be worn only after the League office is supplied with appropriate medical documentation and approval is subsequently granted. The League office has final approval. No visible identification of a manufacturer's name or logo on the exterior of a helmet or on any attachment to a helmet is permitted unless provided for under a commercial arrangement between the League and manufacturer; in no event is identification of any helmet manufacturer permitted on the visible surface of a rear cervical pad. All helmets must carry a small NFL shield logo on the rear lower-left exterior, and an approved warning label on the rear lower-right exterior. Both labels will be supplied in quantity by the League office.

### Jerseys

- (b) Jersey must cover all pads and other protective equipment worn on the torso and upper arms, and must be appropriately tailored to remain tucked into the uniform pants throughout the game. Tearaway jerseys are prohibited. Mesh jerseys with large fishnet material (commonly referred to as "bullet-hole" or "port-hole" mesh) are also prohibited. Surnames of players in letters a minimum of 2½ inches high must be affixed to the exterior of jerseys across the upper back above the numerals; nicknames are prohibited. All jerseys must carry a small NFL Shield logo at the middle of the yoke of the neck on the front of the garment. All fabrics must be approved by the League office prior to production.

### Numerals

- (c) Numerals on the back and front of jerseys as specified under NFL rules for the player's specific position. Such numerals must be a minimum of 8 inches high and 4 inches wide, and their color must be in sharp contrast with the

color of the jersey. Smaller numerals should be worn on the tops of the shoulders or upper arms of the jersey. Small numerals on the back of the helmet or on the uniform pants are optional.

#### **Pants**

- (d) Pants must be worn over the entire knee area; pants shortened or rolled up to meet the stockings above the knee are prohibited. No part of the pants may be cut away unless an appropriate gusset or other device is used to replace the removed material. All pants must carry a small NFL Shield logo on the front left groin area of the pants, midway between the fly opening and side seam, and ½-inch below the belt.

#### **Shoulder Pads, Thigh Pads, and Knee Pads**

- (e) Shoulder pads, thigh pads, and knee pads which have been approved by the League office. All pads must be covered by the outer uniform. Knee pads must be at least ¼ inch thick and must cover the knees. Basketball-type knee pads are permitted, but must be covered by the outer uniform. Punters and placekickers may omit thigh pads and knee pads.

#### **Stockings**

- (f) Stockings must cover the entire area from the shoe to the bottom of the pants, and must meet the pants below the knee. Players are permitted to wear as many layers of stockings and tape on the lower leg as they prefer, provided the exterior is a one-piece stocking that includes solid white from the top of the shoe to the mid-point of the lower leg, and approved team color or colors (non-white) from that point to the top of the stocking. Uniform stockings may not be altered (e.g., over-stretched, cut at the toes, or sewn short) in order to bring the line between solid white and team colors lower or higher than the mid-point of the lower leg. No other stockings and/or opaque tape may be worn over the one-piece, two-color uniform stocking. Barefoot punters and placekickers may omit the stocking of the kicking foot in preparation for and during kicking plays.

#### **Shoes**

- (g) Shoes must be of standard football design, including “sneaker” type shoes such as basketball shoes, cross-training shoes, etc. Each team must designate a dominant base color for its shoes, either black or white (with shoelace color conforming to the dominant base color of the tongue area of the shoe). Each team must also designate one of its Constitutional uniform colors as a dominant team color for its shoes. Each team must also designate one of its Constitutional uniform colors as a secondary team color for its shoes. Each team may also designate a third uniform color as a tertiary team color that may be used for accents on its shoes. The designation of team shoe colors as described above must be reported by each team to the League office no later than July 1 each year. Each player may select among shoe styles previously approved by the League office. All players on the same team must wear shoes with the same dominant base color. A player may wear an unapproved standard football shoe style as long as the player tapes over the entire shoe to conform to his team’s selected dominant base color (i.e., white or black). Logos, names, or other commercial identification on shoes are not permitted to be visible unless advance approval is granted by the League office. Size and location of logos and names on shoes must be approved by the League office. When a shoe logo or name approved by the League is covered with an appropriate use of tape, players will be allowed to cut out the tape covering the original logo or name, provided the cut is clean and is the exact size of the logo or name. The logo or name of the shoe manufacturer must not be re-applied to the exterior of taped shoes unless advance approval is granted by the League office. Kicking shoes must not be modified (including using a shoelace wrapped around toe and/or bottom of the shoe), and any shoe that is worn by a player with an artificial limb on his kicking leg must have a kicking surface that conforms to that of a normal kicking shoe. Punters and placekickers may omit the shoe from the kicking foot in preparation for and during kicking plays. Punters and placekickers may wear any combination of the tri-colored shoes provided that the colors are consistent with those selected by the team and with the policy listed above.

#### **OTHER PROHIBITED EQUIPMENT, APPAREL**

**Article 3** In addition to the several prohibited items of equipment and apparel specified above, the following also are prohibited:

##### **Projecting Objects**

- (a) Metal or other hard objects that project from a player’s person or uniform, including from his shoes.

##### **Uncovered Hard Objects, Substances**

- (b) Hard objects and substances, including but not limited to casts, guards or braces for hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, hip, thigh, knee, and shin, unless such items are appropriately covered on all edges and surfaces by a minimum of ⅜-inch foam rubber or similar soft material. Any such item worn to protect an injury must be reported by the applicable coaching staff to the Umpire in advance of the game, and a description of the injury must be provided.

##### **Detachable Toe**

- (c) Detachable kicking toe.

##### **Torn Items**

- (d) Torn or improperly fitting equipment creating a risk of injury to other players, e.g., the hard surfaces of shoulder pads exposed by a damaged jersey.

#### Improper Cleats

- (e) Shoe cleats made of aluminum or other material that may chip, fracture, or develop a cutting edge. Conical cleats with concave sides or points which measure less than  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch in diameter at the tips, or cleats with oblong ends which measure less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  by  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch at the end tips are also prohibited. Nylon cleats with flat steel tips are permitted.

#### Improper Tape

- (f) Opaque, contrasting-color tape that covers any part of the helmet, jersey, pants, stockings, or shoes; transparent tape or tape of the same color as the background material is permissible for use on these items of apparel. Players may use opaque white, black or one dominant club color tape on hands and arms, provided it conforms to above ("Uncovered Hard Objects, Substances") and below ("Approved Glove Color"). Opaque tape either black or white on shoes is permitted, provided it is black or white to match the selected dominant shoe choice of the Club, and provided it does not carry up into the stocking area.

#### Items Colored Like Football

- (g) Headgear or any other equipment or apparel which, in the opinion of the Referee, may confuse an opponent because of its similarity in color to that of the game football. If such color is worn, it must be broken by stripes or other patterns of sharply contrasting color or colors.

#### Adhesive, Slippery Substances

- (h) Adhesive or slippery substances on the body, equipment, or uniform of any player; provided, however, that players may wear gloves with a tackified surface if such tacky substance does not adhere to the football or otherwise cause handling problems for players.

#### Recommended Equipment

**Article 4** It is recommended that all players wear hip pads, thigh pads, and knee pads designed to reasonably avoid the risk of injury. Unless otherwise provided by individual team policy, it is the players' responsibility and decision whether to follow this recommendation and use such pads. If worn, all three forms of pads listed above must be covered by the outer uniform. Basketball-type knee pads are permitted but must also be covered by the outer uniform.

#### OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

**Article 5** Among the types of optional equipment that are permitted to be worn by players are the following:

##### Garments Under Jerseys

- (a) Quarterbacks will be allowed to wear under the game jersey a solid colored T-shirt, turtleneck, or sweatshirt (consistent with team undergarment color) with sleeves cut to any length, as long as both sleeves are evenly trimmed and the edges are sewn and hemmed. All other players may wear garments under game jerseys only if the undergarment sleeves either (a) are full length to the wrist; or (b) are the half sleeve length as provided by the licensee each of which must be approved by the NFL. Players may not wear long-sleeved undergarments that include pebble-grip sleeves. Any garments under jerseys that are exposed at the neck or sleeve area and that carry an exposed logo or commercial name/identification must be licensed and approved by the League office for wear on the field. All members of the same team who wear approved undergarments with exposed necks or sleeves must wear the same color on a given day, which color must be white or a solid color that is an official team color (solid means that sleeves must not carry stripes, designs, or team names).

##### Approved Glove Color

- (b) Gloves, wrappings, elbow pads, and other items worn on the arms below or over the jersey sleeves by interior offensive linemen (excluding tight ends) must be of the color that is mandatorily reported to the League office by the club before July 1 each year. Such reported color must be white, black or other official uniform color of the applicable team, and, once reported, must not be changed throughout that same season. Players at other positions (non-interior linemen) also may wear gloves provided they are either (i) a solid white, solid black, or a solid color that is an official uniform color of the applicable club, (ii) a bi-color combination of black or white with one (1) official uniform color of the applicable team, or (iii) a tri-color combination of black, white, and/or up to two official uniform colors of the applicable club. For clubs with a third official uniform color, player (non-interior linemen) gloves may also incorporate a third official uniform color as an accent only. Clubs are not required to designate to the League office by July 1, the color of gloves that will be worn by their non-interior linemen.

##### Rib Protectors

- (c) Rib protectors ("flak jackets") under the jersey.

##### Wristbands

- (d) Wristbands, provided they are white or black only.

### Towels

- (e) Towels, provided they are white licensed towels approved by the League office for use on the playing field. Players are prohibited from adding to these towels personal messages, logos, names, symbols, or illustrations. Such towels also must be attached to or tucked into the front waist of the pants, and must be no longer than 6 by 8 inches (slightly larger size may be issued to quarterbacks, or may be folded to these limits for wearing in games). A player may wear no more than one towel. Players are prohibited from discarding on the playing field any loose towels or other materials used for wiping hands and the football. Streamers or ribbons, regardless of length, hanging from any part of the uniform, including the helmet, are prohibited.

### Headwear

- (f) When players are on the field, during the pregame, game, and postgame periods, they may wear approved caps, skull caps and bands, approved cold weather gear, or other approved headwear for medical purposes only, as determined by the Commissioner. Any permissible headwear must be approved by the League office, and if worn under the helmet, no portion may hang from or otherwise be visible outside the helmet. Players are not permitted to wear bandannas, stockings, or other unapproved headwear anywhere on the field during the pregame, game, or postgame periods, even if such items are worn under their helmets.

### LOGOS AND COMMERCIAL IDENTIFICATION

**Article 6** Throughout the period on game-day that a player is visible to the stadium and television audience (including in pregame warm-ups, in the bench area, and during postgame interviews in the locker room or on the field), players are prohibited from wearing, displaying, or orally promoting equipment, apparel, or other items that carry commercial names or logos/identifications of companies, unless such commercial identification has been approved in advance by the League office. The size of any approved logo or other commercial identification involved in an agreement between a manufacturer and the League will be modest and unobtrusive, and there is no assurance that it will be visible to the television audience.

### PERSONAL MESSAGES

**Article 7** Throughout the period on game-day that a player is visible to the stadium and television audience (including in pregame warm-ups, in the bench area, and during postgame interviews in the locker room or on the field), players are prohibited from wearing, displaying, or otherwise conveying personal messages either in writing or illustration, unless such message has been approved in advance by the League office. Items to celebrate anniversaries or memorable events, or to honor or commemorate individuals, such as helmet decals, and arm bands and jersey patches on players' uniforms, are prohibited unless approved in advance by the League office. All such items approved by the League office, if any, must relate to team or League events or personages. The League will not grant permission for any club or player to wear, display, or otherwise convey messages, through helmet decals, arm bands, jersey patches, or other items affixed to game uniforms or equipment, which relate to political activities or causes, other non-football events, causes or campaigns, or charitable causes or campaigns. Further, any such approved items must be modest in size, tasteful, non-commercial, and non-controversial; must not be worn for more than one football season; and if approved for use by a specific team, must not be worn by players on other teams in the League.

### GENERAL APPEARANCE

**Article 8** Consistent with the equipment and uniform rules, players must otherwise present a professional and appropriate appearance while before the public on game-day. Among the types of activity that are prohibited are use of tobacco products (smokeless included) while in the bench area and use of facial makeup.

### Penalties:

- (a) For violation of this Section 4 discovered during pregame warm-ups or at other times prior to the game, player will be advised to make appropriate correction; if the violation is not corrected, player will not be permitted to enter the game.
- (b) For violation of this Section 4 that is discovered while player is in the game, and which involves the competitive or player safety aspects of the game (e.g., illegal kicking toe of shoe, an adhesive or slippery substance, failure to wear mandatory equipment), player will be removed from the game until he has complied.
- (c) For any other violation of this Section 4 (e.g., wristbands that are not League-approved, towel with a personal message, impermissible headwear under the helmet) that is discovered while the player is in the game, player will be advised to make appropriate correction at the next change of possession; if the violation is not corrected, player will not be permitted to enter game.
- (d) For violation of this Section 4 detected in the bench area: Player and head coach will be asked to remove the objectionable item, properly equip the player, or otherwise correct the violation. The involved player or players will not be permitted to enter the game until the player has complied.
- (e) For illegal entry or return of a player suspended under this Section 4: Loss of five yards from succeeding spot and removal until properly equipped after one down.
- (f) For repeat violation: Disqualification from game.

**SUPPLEMENTAL NOTES**

*Note 1: In addition to the game-day penalties specified above, the Commissioner may subsequently impose independent disciplinary action on the involved player, up to and including suspension from the team's next succeeding game—preseason, regular season, or postseason, whichever is applicable.*

*Note 2: If a player is suspended (removed from the game for one play) for having adhesive or slippery substances on his body, equipment, or uniform, he must remain out of the game for one play, even if there is a team time out, the two-minute warning, or the end of a period.*

*Note 3: If a player (kicker) is suspended (removed from the game for one play) for having an illegal kicking shoe, he must remain out of the game for one play, unless there is a team time out, the two-minute warning, or the end of the period.*