American football game customization option ideas

Field size:

    Length:

        040

        045

        050 (5, 6, 7-man default)

        055

        060

        065

        070

        075

        080 (8, 9-man default)

        090

        100 (10, 11, 13-man default)

        110 (12-man default)

        120 (14, 15-man default)

    Width:

        025 (5, 6, 7, 8-man default)

        030

        035

        040

        045

        050 (9, 10, 13-man default)

        053 (11-man default)

        055 (12-man default)

        060 (14, 15-man default)

        065

Maybe sanity check to make sure that fields aren't square or wider than long, although a square field is quite an interesting idea, not necessarily sensible though. I like the size of the CFL field, it makes things more open, and also a small Arena League style field for smaller games. 15 man on an NFL size field is also an interesting idea.

End zone sizes:

    008 (5, 6, 7, 8-man default)

    010 (9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15-man default)

    015

    020 (12-man default)

    025

10 yards could also be used for 5, 6, 7 and 8 man too. 5 yards is a bit too small for any type of game, maybe it should be allowed though.

Goal post position:

    Goal line (5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15-man default)

    End line (8, 9, 10, 11-man default)

    Middle of EZ

Dunno if anyone has ever used a middle of the endzone goal post in real life. If not it's an interesting idea, although might not be seen as 100% safe (not that havingit on the goal line is either...). This raises an issue of what happens of a passed or kicked ball hits the goalposts. In real

life it has been a safety before. Also raises the issue of potentially fractional field goal distances (eg in a 15 yard end zone, the goal posts would be 7.5 yards deep, meaning that you get, for example, a 37.5 yard FG if the ball is kicked from the 30 yard line. Maybe only allow middle of the end zone if the end zone is an even number of yards deep? But does that stifle creativity too much?

Goal post shape:
      H-shape (13, 14, 15-man default)
      Y-shape (all other default)

Should be self explanatory. The other possible option is to allow either on a team by team basis, which kind of makes sense. 13, 14 and 15 man use the H shape because they are modelled on rugby.

Players per team:
      Between 5 and 15 (default = 11).

The reasons for this because I invented a set of rules for 5-man football, and I think the idea of 13+ man football is quite interesting (Rugby League with forward passes!). 5-man is designed to be pretty wide open, but still allow good defences to make plays. 15 man may get a bit crowded, depending on field size and other rules. It's kind of tempting to extend this to allow like 19 man football, but frankly that's madness (and if I say it's madness then, believe me, it is). The main issues with adding players is the ratio of OL to "skill positions". I've tried below to follow a vaguely sensible system by extrapolating from 5, 11 and 12 man.

Players on LOS:
      3 (5, 6, 7-man default)
      4 (8-man default)
      5 (9-man default)
      6
      7 (10, 11, 12-man default)
      8
      9 (13, 14, 15-man default)

Obviously the number who are TE and the number who are OL will vary based on the next option. Of course this could, in theory, lead to some very odd situations. Eg: 15 man where everyone is eligible as a receiver could potentially be mayhem (but fun!).

Ineligible receivers:
      0 (5, 6-man default)
      1
      2
      3 (7, 8, 9-man default)
      4
      5 (10, 11, 12, 13-man default)*
      6
      7 (14, 15-man default)
      8
      9

*In the NFL the QB isn't eligible when under center, so technically they have 6 ineligible receivers. No other league does that though, and it doesn't apply to shotgun formations. Clearly this should be sanity checked to ensure there are eligible receivers. I'm not quite sure how the current iteration of the arena league works, but I believe it is still 3 / 4 on the OL ineligible. In the case of all players

being eligible, the ball must completely leave the Center's hands before he becomes eligible. The penalty is an illegal forward pass (or maybe a false start?)

Number of defenders allowed to cross the LOS:*
 1
 2
 3 (5-man default)
 4 (6, 7, 8, 9-man default)**
 5
 6
 7
 All (10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15-man default)

*Before the ball changes hands or hits the ground. After that all bets are off. It's tempting to make the 5-man default "2", but I think that restricts defences too much. In 5 man if 3 guys blitz and the QB is good enough it should be a big gain or TD.
** The Arena League uses (used?) the "Jack-in-the-box" rule, specifying which Linebacker could blitz or not. I don't like the rule too much, but it could be included as an "on-off" option. I'm not sure of the exact real life rules for 7 or 9 man football, but I'm fairly sure it's 4.

Forward Passes:
 Anywhere
 Within 5 yards either side of the LOS
 Anywhere behind the LOS (default for all)
 >= 5 Yards behind the LOS
 Not at all

Not at all is included to replicate rugby and the very early days of football. The others have I think all been used at some point, and if not are included for completeness. No forward passes could make a very boring game depending on the other rules (sanity check this), especially if you have a rugby union style downs system (ie "unlimited – goal", see below)

Punting:
 Anywhere (12-man default)
 Within 5 yards either side of the LOS
 Anywhere behind the LOS (5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15-man default)
 >= 5 Yards behind the LOS
 Not at all (8-man default)

8-man is based mostly on the Arena League, which is why there is no punting. The Canadian (12-man) rule makes for some quite interesting plays at times. Kicking generally has slightly different rules in 5 man, in regards to players allowed to cross the LOS, and 5 man probably needs a "no yards" (see the real life CFL rules for what this means) type rule.

Drop kicks:
 Anywhere (12-man default)
 Within 5 yards either side of the LOS
 Anywhere behind the LOS (default for all except 12-man)
 >= 5 Yards behind the LOS
 Not at all

I'm not sure if any league has actually removed drop kicks altogether, although they are very rare

outside of rugby. I personally like them though, so I'd definitely keep them in. See scoring systems below for how they are treated differently to normal field goals sometimes.

Downs:
> 3 (12-man default)
> 4 (default for all except 12 and 13-man)
> 5
> 6 (13-man default)
> Unlimited

6 is like rugby league. Unlimited would be like rugby union (and probably make a pretty boring game, unless people started playing for field position more). Maybe there should be options for one or two, but I think that's going a little too far. Might make for some slightly insane games though.

Distance for first down:
> 05 (default on fields =< 80 yards in length)
> 08 (default for fields between 80 and 100 yards in length)
> 10 (default other times)
> 15
> 20
> Goal

"Goal" is like rugby. I think all existing leagues use 10. I used "goal" for my 5-man rules because the fields we played it on (being soccer fields) weren't marked with yard lines. It makes for some interesting choices on the last down if you are just on the edge of FG range. Of course kicking in 5 man is difficult anyway.

Scoring system:
> **Touchdown:**
> > 0
> > 1
> > 2
> > 3
> > 4
> > 5
> > 6 (default for all)
> > 7
> > 8

Rugby league uses 4 and Rugby union uses 5. See below for other notes.

> **Kicked PAT:**
> > 0
> > 1 (default for all except 5 and 6 man)*
> > 2 (5, 6- man default)
> > 3
> > 4
> > 5
> > 6
> > Not available

Rugby (union and league) uses 2 (and doesn't allow the defence to try and block it), and has no

other conversion option.

"2-point" PAT:
   1 (5, 6-man default)
   2 (default for all others)
   3
   4
   5
   6
   Not available

The reason these are backwards in 5 and 6 man is due to the difficulty of kicking when you have at most 3 blockers. Account also needs to be made of Conversion safeties, of both offence and defence, despite the fact that 1) they only exist in college and 2) they have happened 2 and zero times respectively...

Field Goal:
   1
   2
   3 (default for all)
   4
   5
   6
   Not available

Drop Kick:
   1
   2
   3 (default for all except 5 and 8 man)
   4 (5, 8-man default)
   5
   6
   Not available

In rugby league (and nowhere else) it's 1.

"Long" Field goal:**
   1
   2
   3 (default for all except 5 and 6 man)
   4 (5, 6-man default)
   5
   6
   Not available

Safety:
   0
   1
   2 (default for all)***
   3
   4
   Not available

I think the CFL uses either 0 or 1 currently. Rugby effectively uses 0, although the rule is only

vaguely similar. Also you should allow the customisation of the yard line which the safety kick takes place from (20 in the NFL, 5 in Rugby League, etc)

Single:
> 1 (12-man default)
> 2
> 3
> 4
> Not available (default for all others)

*This could be changed, although it seems logical.
**Exactly how to define "long" is debatable. NFL Europa used 50+ yards and 4 points.
*** This is ignoring the possibility of a 1 point safety on a PAT in college, because it's never happened. Worth mentioning in a design doc though.

Also not accounted for is the idea of having an XFL type system of no kicked PATs, but a 1, 2 or 3 point play from progressively further away, although I like the rule.

The reason for allowing a TD to be worth 0 is worth mentioning, since it seems illogical. In the very early days of Football (and Rugby IIRC) a TD was only used to allow you to attempt a kick to score points (hence the name "Try" in Rugby).

Singles are a cool idea. Basically the rule is that if you kick a ball out of the end-zone on a punt or FG try (or the other team can't get the ball out of the end-zone) then you get 1 point. It's pretty rare for teams to only score 1 point in a CFL game, but it does happen.

The scoring system would, I hope obviously, need to be sanity checked to make sure it's actually possible to score points.

Substitutions:
> Free (default for all)
> Certain number per half + for injuries [input amount]
> Certain number per game + for injuries [input amount]
> None except for injuries

It should be assumed that unless you select "None" that players can return. Having a non-zero limit to that might be desirable in some situations though. Rugby league has 4 named substitutes who can be used for a total of 12 substitutions. So if player A is replaced by player E and then A comes back on for B that uses 2 substitutions. A "certain number per half / game full stop" (I.e like soccer) doesn't really work for football because of the higher risk of injury.

League roster stuff

The NFL currently has 53 man rosters, with an 8 man practice squad (reserve roster, essentially). Of the active roster 45 are active on gameday. There used to be a rule where you could designate a 46th player as a 3rd QB, but if he played before the 4th quarter then no other Quarterbacks could come back in the game. This rule was changed in 2010 IIRC. Originally the Arena league (8-man) used 20 man rosters and some odd substitution rules that forced some players to play both offence and defence. I think they still have 20 man rosters, but the "ironman" rules disappeared a while ago. College football has a 102 man roster limit, with a lower active limit for gameday.

For 5 and 6 man, rosters would be fairly small and would depend on the substitution rules. Maybe

10 or 15 man rosters, with a 4 or 5 man practice squad. 7 and 8 man should default to 20 man rosters. 9 and 10 man need to be a bit bigger, maybe 30 to 35 man rosters. Obviously 11 man needs to default to 53 since it would be representing the NFL. I'm not sure of the CFL's roster rules, but I'm sure someone is. 13+ plus man is a crap shoot really, but should probably trend towards the college limit. Limits should go from about 10 to about 120. Sanity check to make sure the roster limit is at least 1 larger than the number of players per team...

Player numbering

Most leagues use 1-99 as uniform numbers, although I think some allow 0 and 00. I see no reason to not allow number over 100, although it might be a bit silly to allow 00-999 (IIRC though the Indian Premier League (of Cricket) allows 1-999).

In the NFL player numbers are restricted by position. QB, K, P, WR can use 1-19; RB, FB, CB, S can use 20-49; OL and DL can use 50-79; LB can use 50-59 and 90-99; TE and WR can use 80-89, plus TE can use 40-49.

In college there are no restrictions except for OL, who have to wear 50-79. College can also have more than one player wear the same number but they can't be designated as the same position or be on the field at the same time.

Play creation

Any plays use in the game should be able to created by the play creator that is provided to the users. Ideally the play creator should be the exact one used to create the default playbooks. All types of plays should be creatable:

Run, Pass, Option, FG, Punt, Fake Punt, Fake FG.

Same goes for defensive plays.

Penalties

Each individual penalty should be toggleable, on or off, plus be able to be set at different yardage values, maybe just 5, 10, 15 or spot of the foul, and be able to specify whether it's a loss of down or automatic first down. Stuff like illegal formation should be essentially random, and based on player's awareness ratings or something (eg. WR lining up off the line or on it by mistake and similar). Sliders for each individual penalty, plus penalties overall is a good idea too (including things like Helping the Runner, which is never called (I can't find any reference to it, so it's probably never been called, ever)) (In fact the Helping the Runner penalty was removed from the rules prior to the 2013 season, so it can safely be ignored, I'm leaving it here for completeness lol).