



NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

ELIGIBILITY RULES

Eligibility of New Players

A member club cannot sign a player to an NFL Player Contract or NFL Practice Player Contract, or select a player in a Draft (principal or supplemental) until such player meets one of the following requirements:

COLLEGE ELIGIBILITY. All college football eligibility of such player has expired through participation in college football (expiration does not include a loss of college football eligibility through withdrawal from school, dismissal or signing of a professional contract in another football league). Or,

GRADUATION. Such player has graduated and received a diploma from a recognized college or university prior to the beginning of the National Football League's next regular season. A diploma of graduation issued by a recognized college or university to a student under an accelerated course or program is acceptable for eligibility purposes despite the fact that the student actually attended such institution for a period of less than four years. Or,

(A "recognized college or university" means any institution listed in the Blue Book of College Athletics published by the Athletic Publishing Company, P.O. Box 931, Montgomery, Alabama 36101-0931 and/or The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System nces.ed.gov/ipeds, U.S. Dept. of Education, Washington, D.C.)

FIVE-YEAR RULE. Five League seasons have elapsed since such player first entered, attended, practiced football at, or participated in football games for a recognized junior college, college, or university ("recognized junior college, college, or university" means any institution listed in appropriate publications by the publishers cited in the above section). Special consideration is granted to those players whose college and/or conference allow five years of football eligibility, during all of which a player may participate full-time, as distinguished from those who "red-shirt," *i.e.*, do not participate during one particular year. If a player under such circumstances has completed four years of participating football eligibility and elects not to avail himself of the fifth year, such player is eligible for selection in the League. Or,

NON-FOOTBALL COLLEGIANS. Such player did not play or otherwise participate in college football, and four League seasons have elapsed since the player first entered or attended college. Or,

PLAYER NOT ATTENDING COLLEGE. Any player who does not attend college is automatically eligible for selection in the next principal Draft that is conducted after four NFL regular seasons have begun and ended following either his graduation from high

school or graduation of the class with which he entered high school, whichever is earlier. If four football seasons have not elapsed, he is ineligible for selection, but may apply to the Commissioner for Special Eligibility pursuant to the conditions in the section below entitled "Special Eligibility." If said player is not selected in the Draft for which he is eligible, he is eligible to be signed as a free agent, unless he subsequently attends college and participates in college football. In such event, he shall become subject to the rules that are applicable to players who attend college. Or,

SPECIAL ELIGIBILITY. Such player has been granted eligibility through special permission of the Commissioner. Any applications for special eligibility must be in the Commissioner's office no later than Monday, January 16, 2017, if the player is to be considered for inclusion in the League's principal Draft scheduled for April 27-29, 2017. No player shall be permitted to apply for special eligibility for selection in the Draft, or otherwise be eligible for the Draft, until three NFL regular seasons have begun and ended following either his graduation from high school or graduation of the class with which he entered high school, whichever is earlier. No player may elect to bypass the regular Draft to apply for a Supplemental Draft.

Other Eligibility Rules

The following additional rules have bearing on the basic requirements listed above:

ANOTHER SPORT. The fact that a player has college athletic eligibility remaining in a sport other than football does not affect his eligibility for the League, provided such player meets all other applicable League eligibility requirements.

COMPLETION OF COLLEGE GAMES. Despite the fact that a player may meet other League eligibility requirements stated here, a member club cannot sign a player to a player contract or in any manner, directly or indirectly, engage the services of a player until completion of all football games, including postseason bowl games, in which the team of the school or college of such player is to participate and in which the player is to participate. If a club violates this section, it is subject to disciplinary action by the Commissioner.

COLLEGE AND NFL IN SAME SEASON. No person who plays college football after the opening date of the NFL training season in any year may be under contract to, practice with, or play games for, a club in the League during the balance of that same football season.

REPEATED ELIGIBILITY. No person who has never been drafted in the League and who has college football eligibility remaining and who registers at a college for the fall term or semester may be signed to a contract by a club in the League until the close of the next succeeding principal draft of the League, at which time he would be eligible for selection regardless of how many seasons in excess of five have elapsed since he first registered at a college and regardless of how many drafts for which he was eligible have transpired.

EARLY SIGNINGS. No person eligible for a Draft (principal or supplemental) may be signed to a contract with a club in the League until he is selected by a club or, if not selected, until completion of the Draft for which he is eligible.

EARLY GRADUATION. Any player who expects to graduate (or graduates) before his college football eligibility expires may become conditionally eligible for the League's principal Draft (i.e., the seven-round annual draft that includes approximately 256 choices) by declaring to the Commissioner in writing his intention to graduate (or notification that he has already graduated) before the League's next succeeding regular season. Such declaration must be in the Commissioner's office no later than 15 days before the date of the opening of the principal Draft (for 2017 the deadline is Wednesday, April 12). The Commissioner has the authority to change the receipt date of the written declaration if he deems such change appropriate. If a player's written declaration of his intention to graduate is received in timely fashion and the League Office determines that he has a reasonable opportunity to graduate before the next succeeding regular season of the League, all member clubs will be advised of his conditional eligibility for the principal Draft. Any player so designated cannot be signed to an NFL Player Contract, regardless of whether he is selected in the Draft, until the League Office is advised by an appropriate authority at the player's college that he has graduated. Any player who makes such a declaration to graduate and who does not graduate before the next succeeding regular season of the League will be ineligible to sign a player contract for that season and postseason; and, if such player has been selected in the principal draft, the selecting club will forfeit its selection choice. Any player who fails to provide timely written notification of his graduation, or any player who fails to make a timely written declaration of his intent to graduate, but does graduate before his college football eligibility expires and before the beginning of the next succeeding regular season of the League, may be eligible for a Supplemental Draft.

ELIGIBLE PLAYER NOT SELECTED. A draft-eligible player who is not selected in a principal or Supplemental Draft is a free agent and may be signed by any club in the League, provided, however, that if such player returns to college to play football, he is subject to the appropriate provisions in GENERAL RULES OF ELIGIBILITY, REPEATED ELIGIBILITY, and/or COLLEGE AND NFL IN SAME SEASON above.

SUPPLEMENTAL SELECTION. Any player who is ineligible for the principal Draft, but who becomes eligible after such Draft and prior to the beginning of the League's next regular season, is not eligible to be signed as a free agent but is eligible for a supplemental selection procedure conducted by the Commissioner. The League office will schedule a maximum of one Supplemental Draft in any year to be conducted no later than the seventh calendar day prior to the opening of the first training camp. To be eligible for a Supplemental Draft, a player's petition for special eligibility must be approved by the League office and his name promulgated to clubs no later than 10 calendar days prior to the last day on which a Supplemental Draft can be conducted. The order of selection in any supplemental draft will be established by a weighted lottery (the weakest club will have its name in the drawing 32 times, the next weakest 31 times, etc., until the Super Bowl winner will have its name in once.) Lottery chances will then be divided into three groups for the drawing, with priority going to the first group which will consist of those teams which won no more than six games in the prior regular season, followed by the second group (all remaining teams except playoff teams) and the third group (playoff teams). The procedure continues by rounds, and any club selecting a player forfeits a selection choice in the next succeeding principal draft equal to that exercised in the supplemental draft.