

FOOTBALL.

How It Is Played Today.—Described in "Football."

The following description of how the game is played will enable the spectator to understand it better and enjoy it more:

Football is played on a rectangular field 330 feet in length and 160 feet in width, with goal posts located at the ends of the fields. At intervals of five yards running across the field are the broad white lines giving it a gridiron appearance, whence its common name "gridiron." These lines serve only to locate distances. It is necessary for the team having the ball to make five yards in three trials or "downs" and these lines serve as a basis of measurement, in case the five yards are not made the ball goes to the opposing team. If the team having the ball not merely fails to advance it five yards in the three downs, but loses twenty yards, the ball is returned. This frequently happens in case of a block kick, the kicker or some of his men falling on the ball or otherwise keeping it in his possession.

A "down" occurs when the runner carrying the ball is tackled and thrown down or held so that his progress is stopped. He is down when he yells "down" or when the referee's whistle is blown. When the runner is being shoved back it is, of course, to his advantage to yell "down" as quickly as possible.

A team may score in one of five ways: By a touchdown, a goal kick, a drop kick, a place kick, or by a safety made by the opposing team. A touchdown counts five points and is made by carrying the ball forward and over the opponent's goal line. The goal line is, of course, the white line bounding that end of the field.

When a touchdown has been made the team making it has the privilege of kicking goal. In doing this the ball is carried straight out into the field from the point where it is "downed" back of the goal line. The ball can be carried out any distance desired. One of the players holds the ball—one hand beneath and one above. Just before the ball is kicked the hand beneath it is withdrawn, so that the ball touches the ground when kicked. When the ball touches the ground it is in play. The opposing team lined up under their goal, have the privilege of charging down to spoil the kick the instant the ball touches the ground, it is in play. In a successful goal kick the ball must pass above the horizontal cross bar and on a line between the upright goal posts. There is no objection to its passing much higher than the tops of the posts, provided its line of direction is between them. These posts are on the middle portion of the goal line, and are eighteen feet six inches apart. The cross bar is ten feet from the ground. A goal kick counts one point.

A safety counts two points, and is made when the team having the ball, by its own force, carries the ball back over its own goal line. The two points of course go to the other team. This is one method of preventing the opposing team from making a touchdown, but is very rarely, and almost never resorted to. However, a safety sometimes occurs by accident. Thus in the Minnesota-Grinnell game of 1894, Grinnell secured possession of the ball on her five-yard line. She attempted to punt but the ball going low, struck the line and bounded back, one of her own men falling on the ball back of their goal line. In the Wisconsin-Illinois game last season a safety was made by Wisconsin. O'Dea punted and an Illinois player endeavored to catch and carry it back on about the fifteen-yard line, but he fumbled it, and the ball rolled back across the goal line where he secured it. His efforts to return the ball made it a safety.

A drop kick from the field counts five points when successfully executed. The kicker must drop the ball to the ground and kick it just as it rises. If the ball passes above the cross bar and between the poles it is successful. The great development of expert kicking during the past two or three years has resulted in some wonderful drop kicks. Herschberger of Chicago and O'Dea of Wisconsin were the stars at this feat. Both have made drop kicks from the fifty-yard line or almost the center of the field. O'Dea last year did a little better than this and is credited with a drop kick from

the thirty-five-yard line. To perform this successfully required the highest kicking skill. The eye must be true, the muscles under excellent control, and the ball handled perfectly. Hudson, of the Carlisle Indian team, is the greatest drop kicker in the east. Wheeler, of last year's Grinnell team, gained something of a reputation in this line, having made three in one game. This is a very easy and quick way of piling up scores, if there is only a man on a team capable of doing it. The line must, of course, be able to hold firm, or else the opposing rushes will break through and block the kick. There is considerable sentiment at present in favor of reducing the points given for a drop kick as it seems unjust that it should count as much as a touchdown.

A drop kick may be used in kicking goal after a touchdown.

A place kick also counts five points and is made as described in kicking goal after a touchdown, the only difference, of course, being that it is made when the teams are lined up in play, just as a drop kick is made. The center, instead of passing the ball back to the kicker, passes it to one of the backs who drops down to hold it for the kick. Glover's beautiful place kick in the Northwestern game a year ago is still fresh in the minds of all who saw it.

The greatest place kick on record was made by O'Dea in the game against Illinois last season. He executed a beautiful place kick from the fifty-seven-yard line, and at quite an angle. The magnitude of this becomes apparent when one considers that thirty-five yards is about as much as punts ordinarily average.

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