

PLAYER MANUAL / OCTOBER 2026

ONE FAMILY. ONE FIELD. INFINITE BRAGGING RIGHTS.

FAMILY BOWL

OFFICIAL 8-BIT ARCADE RULEBOOK

01

BOOT CAMP

From menu to kickoff in less time than a huddle.

YOUR FIRST DRIVE

1. **Choose a mode.** Quick Game is the fastest route to the field. Season keeps an eight-game record and can lead to the playoffs.
2. **Pick your side.** Choose a family team, confirm the opponent, then set quarter length (1-3 minutes), weather and control preferences.
3. **Call the play.** Browse the book by category - runs, short, medium, deep - tap the concept you want, and press SNAP when ready. On defense, pick from 14 calls.
4. **Execute.** Move the ball carrier, select a receiver, choose a throw, and protect possession.
5. **Reset and answer.** The next down keeps the same rhythm: situation, play call, read, action.

Arcade prime directive: first downs beat forced highlights. Take the easy yards until the defense cheats.

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THE PLAY LOOP



Figure 1. Every possession is a chain of small decisions, not one long button mash.

BEFORE THE SNAP

Read down, distance, field position, clock, weather, and the defensive look.

AFTER THE SNAP

Follow the selected play's actual routes. Move only when the pocket or lane tells you to.

AFTER THE WHISTLE

Bank the result, watch stamina, then break your own tendency before the AI does.

02 CONTROLS

Touch, keyboard, or gamepad: the same football brain in three layouts.



Figure 2. Use the device that feels fastest; the simulation stays frame-independent.

TOUCH

- **Move:** drag the virtual joystick or hold the directional pad. The ball carrier auto-runs toward the end zone, but a hard drag down (or ArrowDown / S) cancels the auto-run so you can retreat and reverse field.
- **Target:** tap a receiver to select him before the throw.
- **Throw:** tap a receiver to select him, then drag back and release - the ARM meter sets the throw - or use THROW. BULLET and LOB force the arc (second finger or the panel buttons).
- **Game panel:** below the field sit the full move set - JUKE, SPIN, STIFF ARM, DIVE, HURDLE, PUMP FAKE, SPRINT and TURBO for the runner; TIMEOUT, SPIKE, SCRAMBLE, REPLAY, SUB, SPECTATE, DRAW PLAY, MARKET, WX and LIMITS for the game itself.
- **Run play:** use the blue HANDOFF button when it appears.

KEYBOARD

- **WASD** or arrow keys move.
- **Space** throws while controlling the quarterback.
- On a penalty prompt, press **N** to decline, or tap the choice on screen.
- Mouse clicks can operate the on-screen action buttons.

GAMEPAD

- **Stick / D-pad:** move.
- **A:** snap or throw.
- **B:** dive.
- **X:** arm the next bullet pass.
- **LB / RB:** previous / next receiver.
- **Right trigger:** sprint.
- **Start:** pause; **Y:** audible pre-snap or timeout.

Mobile setup tip: choose D-pad for sharp lane changes or joystick for smoother analog cuts. Keep thumbs clear of the field before selecting a receiver.

03 THE PLAYBOOK

38 offensive plays and 14 defensive calls, sorted for speed and built for real concepts.

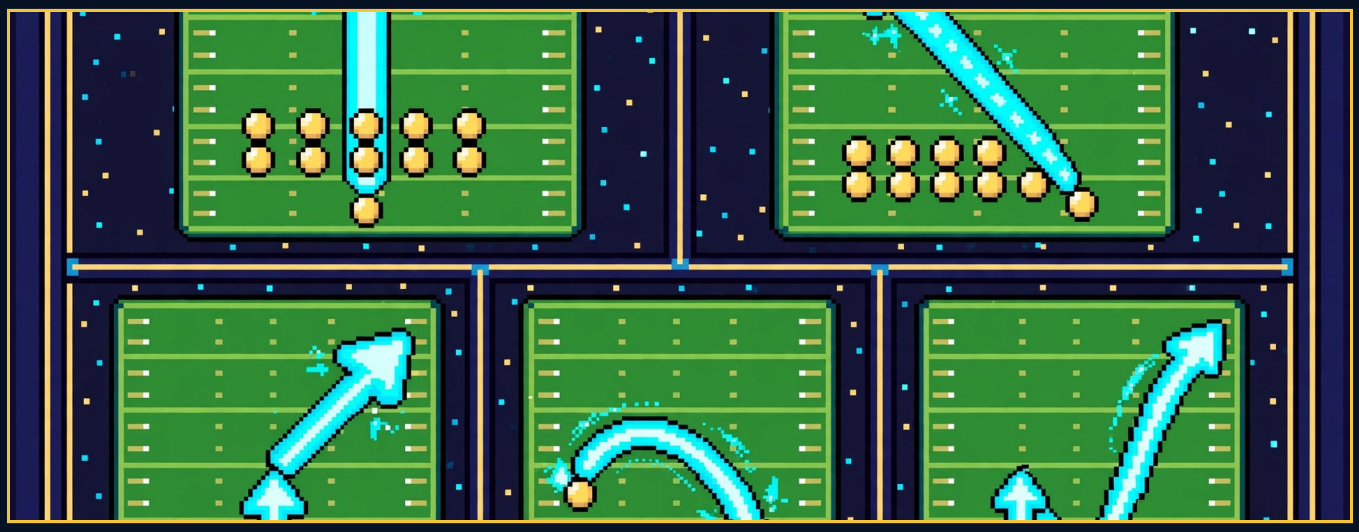


Figure 3. Runs, quick answers, deep shots, misdirection, and pressure packages each create different geometry.

FIND THE RIGHT CALL

- **Browse by category:** Runs, Short, Medium and Deep tabs group the offense; defense has its own 14-call sheet.
- **Tempo row:** the NO-HUDDLE toggle and a timeout button sit pinned above the book - hurry-up is one tap away.
- **Draw your own:** DRAW PLAY lets you tap up to five waypoints on the field and save the route as a Custom call.
- **Save custom plays** under your own name and they join the book next to the built-ins.

Call what you mean. Play Action only works if the run fake sells first. A screen should invite pressure before releasing the target. Watch the route preview, then execute that design.

THE PLAY FAMILIES

FAMILY	WHAT IT ATTACKS
Runs	Dive, Power O, Counter, Wham and Stretch work inside; Sweeps, Toss and the Option attack the edge; Draw, Zone Read and QB Sneak keep the defense honest.
Short	Slants, Quick Outs, Curls, Hitch, Mesh Drag, Stick, Snag and the Screen beat pressure and off coverage.
Medium	Dig, Comeback, Corner, Smash, Flood, Shallow X, Dagger, Mills and Y-Cross stress underneath coverage.
Deep	Post, Go Routes, 4 Verticals, Play Action, the Wheel, Double Move, Seam Shot and the Hail Mary punish safeties.
Defense	Run Stop and Goal Line Stand up front; Pass Rush, Zone Blitz, Man Blitz and the All-Out Blitz bring pressure; Cover 2, Cover 3, Nickel looks, QB Spy and Prevent sit behind them.

04 OFFENSE

Own the cadence, protect the football, and make the defense wrong.

BEFORE SNAP

1. COUNT THE BOX

Extra defenders near the line invite a quick pass or screen. A light box invites a run.

2. FIND LEVERAGE

A defender shaded inside gives up the sideline. Outside leverage opens slants, posts, and the run lane underneath.

3. RESPECT THE CLOCK

Use sideline concepts in the two-minute drill. In a four-minute situation, stay in bounds and make the opponent spend timeouts.

AT THE SNAP

1. Let run-action and play-action exchanges finish. Do not steer the wrong player away from the handoff point.
2. On a pass, read short to deep unless the play is a designed shot.
3. Select the receiver before throwing when traffic is heavy.
4. Scramble only after the lane exists. Tap **SCRAMBLE** behind the line to toggle back to throw mode; sprint drains stamina faster.
5. As the ball arrives, a **TAP TO CATCH!** prompt flashes - tap inside the window to boost the catch odds.
6. Complete **three passes in a row** and your QB is **ON FIRE**: +10% throw power until the next incompletion.

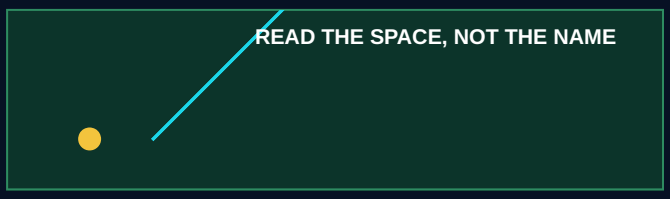


Figure 4. The route is an instruction. The coverage decides when it is open.

BALL SECURITY

Fresh runner

Heavy fatigue

Use special moves with a reason. Juke beats a square tackler. Spin escapes an angle. Stiff arm fights one nearby defender. Dive reaches the marker but exposes the finish. Hurdle is for a low challenge, not open grass.

Coach's rule: if the first read is covered and the pocket is clean, move to the next target. If the pocket is collapsing, throw away the dream and save the down.

FIELD POSITION

Cross the line to gain to reset the series. Four failed downs turn the ball over. Near scoring range, compare the risk of fourth down with the value of a field goal.

05

RUN & PASS READS

Each concept has a tell, a patience point, and a bailout.

RUN CALLS

CONCEPT	WINNING READ
Dive / Power O	Press the interior, then cut once a linebacker commits.
Stretch / Sweep / Toss	Stretch the edge. Turn upfield before stamina and pursuit erase the angle.
Counter / Wham	Let the invited defender cross, then hit the crease behind the block.
Option / Zone Read	Read the edge defender: if he crashes, the QB keeps; if he sits, hand it off.
Draw / QB Sneak	Wait for pass defenders to widen, then accelerate through the middle.

SCREEN CALLS

The screen's first seconds may look dangerous by design. Let rushers enter, locate the releasing target, then put the ball in front of the blockers. Throwing too early keeps the defense compact; throwing too late invites a sack.

PASS CALLS

DEPTH	READ
Short	Win immediately against blitz or off coverage. Catch, turn, and take the sure yards.
Medium	Wait for crossers and breaks to clear linebackers. Bullet into windows; lob over underneath traffic.
Deep	Confirm the safety. Lead the receiver and accept that a contested catch may trigger slow motion.
Mesh family	Read one defender with paired options: Mesh Drag, Shallow X, Stick and Snag spacing concepts.
Play Action	Honor the fake. The run action creates the window; rushing it removes the advantage.

Play Action checkpoint: sell the run first, let the fake pull defenders down, then take the deep shot if the safety has bitten. If not, use the secondary route.

BULLET

Fast, low arc. Best for tight windows and timing breaks. Easier for nearby defenders to deflect.

STANDARD

Balanced speed and arc. The default when neither a laser nor a moon ball is required.

LOB

Higher arc. Clears underneath defenders and gives deep targets time, but the ball hangs longer.

06

DEFENSE & SCORING

Win the leverage battle, then turn stops into scoreboard pressure.

DEFENSE

- **Read the offense's habit.** The same formation and direction become clues.
- **Choose the right body.** SWITCH cycles you through your defensive stars - your character's favorite NFL team's real defenders, shown by name. SUB swaps in fresh legs from the bench.
- **Contain first.** Running past the ball carrier creates a cutback lane.
- **Blitz with a purpose.** Pressure shortens the throw, but vacates coverage.
- **Protect the sticks.** On third-and-long, a short completion is often a defensive win.

TACKLING ANGLE

Aim through the near hip rather than chasing the ball. Use the sideline as an extra defender, and avoid diving unless the path is closing.

PENALTIES

Flags fly: **Offensive Holding -10**, **False Start -5** (only after three or more audibles), **Delay of Game -5**, **Defensive Holding +5** with an automatic first down, **Face Mask +15** and **Pass Interference +15** (pass plays only), each with an automatic first down. The offended team chooses to **accept or decline**; fouls on both sides offset.

KICKOFFS & RETURNS

Every kick uses an **oscillating meter**: tap once to lock the swinging aim needle, tap again to lock the power - the same input on kickoffs, punts, field goals, and extra points, all kicked live on the field with your real NFL kicker (check his KCK rating in the scouting line). Returns are played out too: steer the returner - your fastest player - follow blockers, and use JUKE for a brief dodge window. A return touchdown scores six.

SCORING BOARD

6
TOUCHDOWN
Reach the opponent's end zone by run, catch, return, or turnover return.

3
FIELD GOAL
Lock the oscillating aim meter, then the power meter. Account for distance and wind drift.

2
SAFETY
Tackle the offense in its own end zone.

2
TWO-POINT TRY
After a touchdown, run one play from the 15-yard line.

1
EXTRA POINT
After every touchdown, choose the safer kick (worth one point) or a two-point try - the CPU chooses too. Walk-off overtime scores skip the try.

End-game math: down 8, a touchdown plus two can tie. Down 3, protect field-goal range. Up late, field position and clock are often worth more than one extra risky play.

07 ARCADE PHYSICS

Deterministic timing underneath; stadium drama on top.



Figure 5. Weather changes speed, ball security and kicking, not just the background.

WHAT THE ENGINE TRACKS

DELTA-TIME MOVEMENT

Movement is scaled against elapsed time so a 60 Hz phone and a high-refresh monitor run at comparable game speed. Faster screens should look smoother, not make players faster.

STAMINA

Sprinting and repeated effort drain the ball carrier. Low stamina cuts speed, so bursts should be saved for the lane, edge, or goal line.

SNOW & WIND

Snow slows **everyone** to 85% speed, and tackles get slippery: a 5% fumble roll on every hit. Wind is rolled at kickoff - direction plus 5-20 mph - and bends kicks and deep balls. Rain, snow and wind are set from the pre-game menu.

ARCADE PRESENTATION

- **Screen shake** sells touchdowns and heavy contact without changing the result.
- **Slow motion** highlights contested catches and gives the moment extra weight.
- **Action camera** follows high-stakes plays more tightly.
- **Crowd and weather audio** respond to momentum and conditions.
- **Booth commentary** lands in the game log after every play - play-by-play plus color from the booth.

Snow habit: direct paths win. With everyone at 85% speed, angles matter more than raw pace - and hold the ball with two hands: every tackle rolls the fumble dice.

08 MODES & MULTIPLAYER

Pick the pressure you want: one game, one season, or one family rivalry.

QUICK GAME

A complete single game with no long-term commitment. Best for learning controls, testing a new play family, or settling an immediate argument.

SPECTATE

Toggle SPECTATE and the AI calls and plays both sides - coin toss, kicks and all. Toggle it off to take your team back at any point. Your two-minute drill lives here too: NO-HUDDLE plus your timeouts, whenever the clock demands it.

SEASON MODE

Play an eight-game schedule, build a record, and reach the playoffs with a strong finish. The season is saved locally so you can continue later on the same browser.

2-PLAYER CHALLENGE

One phone creates a short challenge code and the other joins it; codes expire after two hours. Both phones stay in sync through the coin toss, kickoffs, play picks, turnovers, punts, field goals, safeties, halftime, overtime, and extra points - with a 45-second idle-forfeit offer, quit alerts, and reconnect logic on a bad connection.

CUSTOM LEAGUE

Load teams and rosters from any public Sleeper, ESPN or MFL league and play as them, exhibitions and season alike (Yahoo is not supported yet). Or create a character: name, colors, a logo upload, and a favorite NFL team whose stars become your defense.

THE COIN TOSS

Call heads or tails; the winner chooses to RECEIVE or KICK. In a 2-player game the toss is shared and deterministic, so both phones always agree. Overtime gets its own toss, and an opening-drive OT touchdown is a walk-off - no try needed.

MULTIPLAYER KICKOFF CHECKLIST

01 / CONNECT

Confirm both players see the same teams, score, possession, and weather.

02 / ASSIGN

Decide offense, defense, or co-op jobs before the play clock becomes a debate.

03 / RECOVER

If synchronization fails, pause, preserve the score, and reconnect before the next snap.

Fair-play pact: no peeking at the other phone's play call. Family honor is worth more than one interception.

09

WINNING GUIDE

Beat the opponent, the clock, and the AI's memory.

BREAK THE ADAPTIVE AI

The defense records tendencies by play type and situation. If you repeat the same run direction or pass depth, it can shade toward the answer.

1. **Build the tendency.** Show two or three safe calls that look alike.
2. **Attack the adjustment.** Pair inside run with play action, bubble screen with a pump-and-go, or Mesh with a quarterback draw.
3. **Reset your pattern.** Change formation, direction, tempo, or depth before the defense settles again.

COMEBACK PRESSURE

When the CPU trails heavily late, its comeback logic can tighten the interception window. Protect the ball, stay in bounds, and make it earn every remaining possession.

WEATHER EDGE

Snow slows everyone to 85% and puts a fumble roll on every tackle - direct paths, short throws, two hands on the ball. Wind bends kicks and deep balls; check its direction before a long field goal. The player who adjusts first owns the hidden advantage.

TEN RULES FOR WINNING

1. Use favorites as a core menu, not the entire offense.
2. Call a run when the defense empties the box.
3. Throw short against pressure.
4. Lead deep receivers away from the safety.
5. Save sprint for a real lane.
6. Take one clean cut on wet turf.
7. Know the line to gain before the snap.
8. On fourth down, let score and field position decide.
9. In the final two minutes, treat the sideline like a teammate.
10. After a big play, expect the defense to adjust.

Championship mindset: spectacular plays win clips. Situational discipline wins seasons.

LEADING LATE

Run safely, stay in bounds, protect possession, and kick when points end the argument.

TIED LATE

Protect field-goal range. One needless sack can turn a winning drive into overtime.

TRAILING LATE

Preserve time, seek the sideline, and take the two-point math seriously.

10

QUICK REFERENCE

One page for the coffee table, sideline, or emergency timeout.

DRIVE CHECKLIST

- Down, distance, field position.
- Clock, score, and timeouts.
- Weather and traction.
- Defenders in the box.
- Primary, secondary, checkdown.
- Safe finish if the first idea fails.

CONTROL FLASH CARD

INPUT	CORE ACTION
Touch joystick / D-pad	Move the controlled player
TARGET / tap receiver	Select receiving option
THROW / Space / A	Release pass
Drag back from the QB	Throw with the ARM meter
SWITCH	Cycle your controlled defender
N (penalty prompt)	Decline the penalty
LB / RB	Cycle gamepad targets
Right trigger / SPRINT	Acceleration at stamina cost
Start	Pause on gamepad

IF SOMETHING FEELS WRONG

THE PLAY LOOKS DIFFERENT

Confirm the selected play name and route preview before SNAP. Clear search filters if the intended play is hidden.

CONTROLS DO NOT RESPOND

Tap the game area once, check the chosen control scheme, reconnect the gamepad, and make sure the play is in a controllable phase.

MOVEMENT FEELS SLOW

Check stamina, weather, and whether the carrier is skidding after a sharp cut. Release sprint, straighten the path, then burst again.

MULTIPLAYER DRIFTS

Pause between plays, verify score and possession on both devices, then reconnect before resuming.

Last word: call the right play, trust its design, make one clean read, and leave the field with the bragging rights.

11 GAME TOOLS & DISPLAY

Watch modes, HUD helpers, and presentation options added since launch.

👁️ SPECTATE MODE

The AI plays **both sides** automatically. Toggle SPECTATE on the control panel. It auto-resolves the coin toss, auto-runs every play, and auto-taps the kick meters. **Toggle it off to take back control** at any moment.

📼 INSTANT REPLAY

After any play, open replay to watch it again with **all 22 players** re-enacting the action. Tap the field to exit back to the game.

📊 BOX SCORE

Every game tracks a **full box score** - team and player stats as the game unfolds, with a play-by-play recap and booth color after each snap.

ⓘ LIMITS PANEL

The LIMITS button opens the **attribute limits table** - the caps that govern allocated attribute points, shown for reference.

⬆️ ATTRIBUTE POINTS

Allocate points across **QB Power, receivers, backs and defense**, five levels each. QB points steady every throw - about +4% accuracy control per level.

🏪 FRANCHISE MARKET

Earn points as you play and spend them in the MARKET: **FLASH** (+5 Speed, 150), **THOR** (+5 Power, 150) and **TANK** (+5 Stamina, 100). Boosts last for the current game.

🌤️ WEATHER BUTTON

The WX button on the panel shows the **live conditions**; rain, snow and wind are chosen on the pre-game menu and saved for next time.

🔍 SCOUTING REPORT

Before kickoff the log prints the opponent's ratings line - **SPD, THR, CTH, DEF and KCK** - so you know where they are strong before the first snap.

🧢 CUSTOM TEAMS

Create a character with your own name and colors, upload a logo, and pick a **favorite NFL team** - its real defensive stars take the field for you.

📱 ON-SCREEN CONTROLS

A D-pad (or free drag) plus the move-button grid sits under the field; a second finger taps BULLET/LOB mid-play. A connected gamepad gets its own on-screen indicator.

🎙️ BOOTH COMMENTARY

Every play gets a **text recap with booth color** in the game log - the call, the result, and the crowd's verdict.

🏆 FAMILY LEADERBOARD

Save exhibition wins and finished seasons to the **shared family boards** and compare scores with everyone else in the league.

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GAMEPLAY UPGRADES

Touch controls, scoring fixes, smarter AI, team tools - plus a full ratings rebuild from 2026 stats, rest-of-season projections, and consensus rankings.

🏈 SNAP! BUTTON

Now a **small button at the bottom-left of the field** during pre-snap - right where the thumb rests, easy to find and tap.

TOUCH DISCIPLINE

Edge taps on the game field **no longer scroll the page away**. The playbook and game log still scroll normally.

AUTO-SCROLL

After picking an offensive or defensive play, the **field scrolls back into view** automatically. No more getting stuck below the playbook.

NAMED KICKERS, LIVE KICKS

Every team kicks with its **real NFL kicker** (KCK rating in the scouting line), and every kick happens **on the field**: snap, hold, rush, two-tap meter.

YARD MARKERS

Yard-line **numbers now appear on both** the offensive and defensive views, not just when you have the ball.

GO FOR IT, FIXED

Choosing **"Go For It"** on 4th down now correctly opens the playbook for your conversion attempt.

EXTRA POINTS = 1

PAT kicks are worth **1 point** (a bug briefly awarded 3). Two-point conversions are attempted from the **15-yard line**.

CATCH DUELS

Contested balls are a **timed-tap duel**: the TAP TO CATCH! window rewards the receiver's sharp tap, and a defender needs real proximity to take it away - picks feel earned, not cheap.

SMARTER CPU QB

The CPU quarterback **checks down when double-covered**, **throws it away** when nothing is open, and runs a **real hurry-up** when trailing late.

⏩ NO-HUDDLE TEMPO

The **NO-HUDDLE** toggle above the playbook cuts the huddle runoff from about 25 seconds to about 8. Timeouts per half: 2 in short games, 3 with 3-minute quarters.

📝 DRAW A PLAY

With **DRAW PLAY**, tap up to **five waypoints** on the field to draw a custom route, save it, and call it as **Custom** from the playbook.

🛡️ DEFENSIVE STARS & SUBS

Your favorite NFL team's **real stars** man the MLB, OLB, CB, S and DE spots. SWITCH between them mid-play; SUB brings fresh legs in.

👥 **Custom League:** load any public Sleeper, ESPN or MFL league's teams and rosters and play as them - or build your own character and defend with your favorite NFL team's stars.

GAME OVER? NEVER. RUN IT BACK.

FAMILY BOWL

Official Player Manual / Version 1.3 / October 2026