

Gameplan Version 2.17 – Rules Update 2

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Rosters & Draft Changes

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VERSION 2.17

These changes, in conjunction with the version 2.15 rulebooks, bring Gameplan up to version 2.17.

CONDITIONAL FREE AGENTS

A number of players on your draftsheet will be shown as conditional free agents. The value of free agents is apportioned (i.e. it will be the same for everyone) but the selection of players is completely random (without regard to position, age/experience, value, step losses or reduced effectiveness). A player who is a free agent one season may still be a free agent the next.

At present the allocation of step losses has been reduced by two points, and allocated the same value of free agents as step losses. The proportion of each could change in the future. Right now it's probably going to be a bit brutal. But remember, it's the same for everyone: your opponents are having to make the same sort of decisions.

Note: you should expect that all teams in your league will come out of the draft with weaker rosters than they did going in.

WHAT TO DO

You have until minicamp to decide what to do with each player. You use your special actions to decide which of your free agents to keep and which to waive.

To sign a player back, use the "fix" action (FX). The cost is the same as if he was a reduced player (ie. five LPs per nominal value). Free agents who are re-signed should be full effectiveness and free of step losses.

To release a player, use the "waive" action (WA). The LPs you get for waiving a free agent are the same as for waiving a reduced player (ie. eight LPs per nominal value and four LPs for each extra strength).

Be aware you aren't restricted to the free agents themselves when dealing with free agency. If you haven't enough LPs to sign back the guys you think are essential then you can waive other less important players who aren't free agents (at the normal rates) and recover the ones that are.

MINICAMP

Any conditional free agents you haven't waived or signed will be waived automatically at the end of minicamp (after your actions are processed). You still get the normal LPs, but by this time it's too late to spend them on signing the other conditional free agents and fixing step losses (they can still be spent on unconditional free agents and coaching, of course).

You will probably want to waive the guys you're going to release sooner so as to make room during the draft or raise LPs for signings and fixing.

CONDITIONAL WAIVERS

You can use the conditional waiver action (the action code is CW) to nominate a player that will be waived if a replacement is signed. Conditional waivers are remembered from turn to turn, up until the end of minicamp, and shown in your draft sheet. If the roster spot occupied by that player is needed for a draftee or a free agent signing then the player will be waived, in the same way as if a normal waive action was made in the turn when the signing is made. Any conditional waivers not triggered before or during minicamp are forgotten.

Note: The default draft routine (that makes a draft pick for you if you mess up or miss your turn) doesn't trigger conditional waivers (because it might be trying to draft someone much weaker than the guy you actually wanted).

Conditional waivers only trigger for players you draft or sign with your own orders (this might mean you miss out on guys you actually wanted and could have signed in the draft, but only if you failed to get your orders in).

Note that conditional waivers may be ordered for full strength players, reduced effectiveness players, step-loss players or conditional free agents. All of these players are considered as "occupying a roster spot" until you waive them (either directly, or via a conditional waiver) or when they are deleted in mini-camp.

STEP LOSSES

A separate change is that players with only a single skill will no longer be subject to step losses: when hit by a step loss they'll be treated as reduced effectiveness instead (this means you can either leave him on your roster as he is, or fix him for only five LPs, or waive him for eight LPs). If the player was already reduced then he retires.

ROOKIES

Rookies are now not included in the normal step loss, free agency, reduction or retirement routines. Instead your rookies get equal numbers of step losses and step gains at the end of their first season. You normally have three rookies, so that makes for one gaining a step, one losing a step, and one being unaffected. A QB with the BQ bonus doesn't count for this routine (they get the bonus instead). This means a much higher proportion of low value rookies will "bust" (see the change to the step losses rule for single-strength players) and a proportion of higher valued ones will disappoint. But equally, most of the guys that don't bust will step up and become more important players.

STEP GAINS

Non-rookie punters and kickers can also gain skills via step-gains, which may allow them to have more than the "usual" three strengths. Other players who have step-gains as rookies may have unusual strengths, or doubles. e.g. a three point rookie OL who gains a fourth strength via a step gain will have a double skill in OQB, ORI or ORO.

ROSTER TOTALS

With the roster listing in your game report there is now a section showing AVERAGE and RELATIVE strengths. These compare your combined squad and form strengths with the average for the league (so it says whether you're strong or weak in that strength) and with the average for the "opposing" strength (ie. your ORI against the average for DRI) as a measure of your "real" effective strength.

PLAYER NAMES ON DRAFTSHEETS

The "names" section has been removed from draftsheets, - you can no longer enter shirt numbers for the players signed in the draft. They'll be named and numbered automatically (the same as for those players who leave them blank, as many of you do) in mini-camp. You can still change names and numbers using the special actions in training camp or later: there are normally plenty of these to spare.

The main reason for this is the number of changes we'd have to make so as to include them in the online draftsheets. It's the one section of the draftsheet that requires game data (so we know who you signed, and you know who you signed, to allow you to name them) and the active website from which you submit orders can't see the game data. We don't want the rules to be different for online players and postal players.

SPECIAL ACTIONS - RENAMING

There are two new special actions. These work ONLY in minicamp. RA renames ALL the players on your roster according to the current data roster (which isn't necessarily up to date, but probably won't be more than one season out). The RN action tries to fill out the no-name, no-star guys but leaves the names already in place on your roster alone (it doesn't work 100% of the time, because it can't use shirt numbers it wants if you've already got them allocated to other players).

For both of these actions, it's best to put them as the last special action you do in mini-camp. We strongly advise you don't do anything that changes the shirt number of a player the same turn as you try to make another special action on the same player (waive him, fix him, coach him, etc) as it's a very good way of making a mess, as you might do it to someone else entirely.

QUARTERBACKS

You now cannot waive your starting quarterback (except via a conditional waiver), you have to move him to the backup slot first and promote the backup. It's not a sensible thing to do, and only happens when people are trying to play between the cracks in the system.

ORDER OF DRAFT TURNS

Note the order in which draft turns are processed – free agent bids are processed before special actions, and special actions are processed before draft picks.

WAIVERS

Players signed in the draft can no longer be waived in mini-camp, you have to wait until training camp. This is partly because you don't know their shirt numbers until mini-camp is over and partly because it's a common way of making a mess.

DRAFT BY TYPE

Using the draft codes to draft by type rather using numbers to draft specific players now only selects players with two or more strengths. Draft by type will no longer select a one point player (because you can identify those directly).

SCOUTING FREE AGENTS

There is a new special action which scouts the free agent list for a given combination of player type and strength (i.e. it's much the same as the FA action, except that it looks for players who are already on the list rather than creating a new one). The ACTION code is FS and you enter a draft code in the NAME box. There is no cost for this action.

FREE AGENT BIDS

The maximum amount you may now bid for a free agent is 10 LPs above than the minimum bid (which is shown on the free agent list).

UNDRAFTED FREE AGENTS

Rookies who are not selected in the draft are now available as free agents in mini camp and training camp ONLY. Any who remain unsigned after training camp are deleted.

You may make free bids for these in the usual way.

Players signed this way do still count as rookies at the end of the season when the computer assesses all rookies for step-losses and step-gains (see earlier in this update).

DEFENCE FORMATIONS - ADVANCED

In the Advanced game you can now put five characters in the defence formations column rather than four (eg BCDLS for the shotgun and spread formations, or XIJUT to exclude the heavy run formations).

SITUATION NAMES - ADVANCED

In the Advanced game the number of characters you can enter in situation names has now been increased to nine (including spaces) rather than eight, so you can enter names like 1ST SHORT and so forth.

ROSTER LISTINGS

The layout of roster listings has changed a bit, since the amount of information needed for each player has expanded to the point we couldn't fit everything in. So the "status" column has been added with a key showing what the different things mean.

LOSING POINTS

Losing Points are a simple way of dealing with something complicated (the combination of resources like time, money, effort, opportunity and room under the salary cap). That's why you gain LPs for releasing a free agent. A real life team doesn't get any money for a free agent, but it does gain all the other stuff and room in the budget to sign the next guy.