



## Introduction

While EA's Madden franchise has taken the NFL license and run with it, 2k Sports was left to deal with the vacuum their competition's exclusivity left. In the end, there appeared to be very little left, at least until the idea was sprung on someone that using ex-NFL players would be an interesting route to take. And so All-Pro Football 2k8 was born, a game with a whole slew of ex-NFL all-stars. By creating your own team with these players under the moniker of fictional team names in a completely farcical league full of outrageous stadiums and interesting home city choices, you can play an NFL-style season full of some of the best football players in football history without being tied to the so-called NFL form.


Some may consider this a positive, and others a negative. Regardless, All-Pro Football 2k8 offers a lot of that Madden simply doesn't, and that's why we're here at IGN Guides - to help you out. The Football 101, Offense and Defense sections of the guide cover the essentials of American football (also known as *real* football), while the Choosing Your Team section will run down the unique statistics in the game, how to choose your own teams, and even our own choice for the perfect team.


***In this All-Pro Football 2k8 strategy guide, you'll find:***

- **BASICS** // All things elementary.
- **FOOTBALL 101** // Keys to help you understand the game of football.
- **OFFENSE** // A novice's guide to offense.
- **DEFENSE** // Fundamentals to stopping the pass and run.
- **CHOOSING YOUR TEAM** // The meat of the guide - how to choose the perfect team.

**Guide by: Colin Moriarty**

© 2007, IGN Entertainment, Inc. May not be sold, distributed, transmitted, displayed, published or broadcast, in whole or part, without IGN's express permission. You may not alter or remove any trademark, copyright or other notice from copies of the content. All rights reserved.





**IGN Insiders get exclusive access to extra guide features:**

- Downloadable PDF guides for offline viewing and printing.
- PSP-formatted guides for instant access, anywhere.
- Video tips and strategy for added gameplay assistance.

[\*\*JOIN TODAY\*\*](#)

## Basics

Even without the NFL license, All-Pro Football 2k8 proves to be an intensely detailed and stimulating football experience that essentially mimics NFL rules. For more information on the game of football itself, you should refer to the Football 101 section of this very guide. For information and tips on picking your team, you should check out the Choosing Your Team section of the guide. Otherwise, read on for information on how to navigate your way through the game with ease.

### Quick Game

After choosing your team or loading one you've already created (both of which are covered in the aforementioned Choosing Your Team section of this guide), you'll be greeted with the Quick Game option. Generally, this is the option you'll use most often if you're trying out a new roster, want to play a (wait for it) *quick* game, or want to play against a friend. Remember that if playing outside of a league, the makeup of opposing teams will generally be randomized. You'll face some strong teams, some weak teams, and some standard teams. League play, since the teams will be more ultimately determined, will have a more concrete roster makeup from team to team.

Remember that, if you so choose, you can alter the variables of a quick game, including the stadium played in, the difficulty of the CPU (if you're playing a one player game), the length of a quarter, the time of day, and the weather. Definitely explore these options since they will make the game more interesting.

### Teams

By choosing this option, you open yourself up to many more options that you can deal with. The Teams option allows you to create a new team (probably some of the most fun you can have in the game), as well as manage created teams, and view the rosters of created teams and default squads alike. Since the team names and makeups are made up and completely randomized, it's best to view your competition first hand when you can, to see what the CPU has created for you and the teams surrounding you.

While in the Teams section, you can also create brand new players to your liking, and edit any players you've already created. Player Abilities, which we cover in-depth in the Choosing Your Team section of the guide, can also be viewed here. Remember that each position has specific Player Abilities that you should explore, as some are definitely more useful than others.

## Season

Part of the fun of playing any sports game, especially when you're by your lonesome, is playing through a season. In the fictional world of All-Pro Football 2k8, the seasons are made up of fictional teams playing other fictional teams with rosters that are a hodgepodge of real ex-NFL all-star talent and fictional characters that will make up the rest of your squad. You can save multiple seasons playing as multiple teams at once so you can try out different stuff with different teams, or start a new season at any time, all via this menu option.

## Practice

If you want to practice your skills, then you needn't look any further than the Practice option, which will allow you to try out a plethora of plays and skills in order to get comfortable with the game's feel and control scheme, which are in many ways a complete contrast to the Madden feel and scheme that many gamers will otherwise be comfortable with during 2k's football hiatus.

## Options

This section, not surprisingly, allows you to control the game options. This includes things like quarter length, play calling, game speed and things of that nature (so you can make your games as NFL-like or non-NFL-like as you want). This also includes other options such as CPU difficulty and presentations, as well as what penalties will and won't be called, and yes indeed, control options as well. The latter is especially important to explore to make your controller as comfortable as you can make it for your style of play. Your button preferences are key to in-game playability!

## Features

If you want to see all of the cool extras 2k has put into the game for you, then the Features section is the place to go. You can listen to all in-game music, watch some videos, check out the trophies you've won, and more. The coolest part of this section, however, is by far the Celebration Maker. In the real NFL, excessive celebration is frowned upon. But in the fictional world of All-Pro Football 2k8, excessive celebration is applauded and encouraged. Why not check out what special celebrations you can put together to really rub it in to the other team?

## Xbox Live

Of course, no sports game in the *nextgen* would be complete without the option to play online, and by selecting the Xbox Live option, you can do just that.

## Football 101

Welcome to the "Football 101" part of the guide. This section of the guide covers the basic aspects of the game of football itself, in case you may find yourself lost or confused on certain aspects of playing the game. Most All-Pro Football 2k8 players can skip this part; this is simply a refresher course for those unfamiliar with the game of football, or who have been away from it for a while. Hey, we can't all know everything!

Positions	Flow
-----------	------

One of the most confusing parts of the game of football is learning all of the positions on both the offensive and defensive sides of the ball, and knowing exactly what that person does. Below is a grid of the offensive and defensive (*and* the often-overlooked special teams) positions and a brief overview of what each position does/is expected to do.

**Please Note:** The position explanations are brief. They are simply to give you an idea of what each player generally does. It is by no means a complete, in-depth positional reference.



Offense	
Position Name	Explanation
C (Center)	Hikes the ball to the quarterback on each play, blocks defensive linemen, opens up holes for the running game, ensures against blitzes and pass blocking.
FB (Full Back)	A running back (RB) who is used primarily to block for the half back, and is also used to sometimes run the ball.
HB (Half Back)	A running back (RB) who is used primarily for running plays, though he can also block.
LG (Left Guard)	An offensive lineman to the left of the center who blocks, creates holes, and ensures against the pass block and blitz when applicable.
LT (Left Tackle)	An offensive lineman on the left side of the line who is more mobile than a guard. Blocks, but has more movement.
QB (Quarterback)	The "captain" of all offensive plays. Hands off the ball, throws the ball, runs the ball... everything is done through him.
RG (Right Guard)	An offensive lineman to the right of the center who blocks, creates holes, and ensures against the pass block and blitz when applicable.
RT (Right Tackle)	An offensive lineman on the right side of the line who is more mobile than a guard. Blocks, but has more movement.
TE (Tight End)	A versatile player who can catch passes, block
WR (Wide Receiver)	Wide receivers (of varying varieties) are the primary receivers of thrown balls by the quarterback.

Defense	
Position Name	Explanation
FS (Free Safety)	A pass defense specialist who is versatile enough that he can be used against the run as necessary.
LCB (Left Cornerback)	Speedy runners who keep up with the wide receiver's motions and spoil any pass attempts to the man they cover.
LDE (Left Defensive End)	A more mobile version of the defensive tackle who blocks passes, closes holes, and blitzes. Also a more eligible tackler.
LDT (Left Defensive Tackle)	Does battle with the offensive lineman, tries to get to the quarterback, close holes, and block passes, amongst other things.
MLB (Middle Linebacker)	The most versatile "tight end-like" player who sits amid the weakside and strongside and is effective against the run and the pass.
RCB (Right Cornerback)	Speedy runners who keep up with the wide receiver's motions and spoil any pass attempts to the man they cover.
RDE (Right Defensive End)	A more mobile version of the defensive tackle who blocks passes, closes holes, and blitzes. Also a more eligible tackler.
RDT (Right Defensive Tackle)	Does battle with the offensive lineman, tries to get to the quarterback, close holes, and block passes, amongst other things.
SLB (Strongside Linebacker)	Versatile, defensive version of the tight end who plays defensive roles in both the run and pass defense.
SS (Strong Safety)	A run defense specialist who is versatile enough that he can be used against the pass as necessary.
WLB (Weakside Linebacker)	Versatile, defensive version of the tight end who plays defensive roles in both the run and pass defense.

Special Teams	
Position Name	Explanation
K (Kicker)	Responsible for extra point and field goal attempts, as well as kickoffs.
P (Punter)	Responsible for all punting.

The flow of a football game is, of course, an important thing to understand. Even modest football fans have a basic understanding of how NFL style games operate, but here's a brief reminder in case you might have forgotten. All-Pro Football 2k8 doesn't take place in the NFL, but rather in a fictional league. However, the rules are the same, and so discussing the NFL-style game of football makes the most sense.

NFL games are made up of four 15-minute quarters for a 60 minute game. Each 30 minutes (or two quarters) is a "half," and in between halves is halftime, where players rest, get advice (or yelled at, when needed), and get their heads together and their strategies in line for the upcoming half. The clock, 15 minutes per quarter as aforementioned, will generally run even when the ball is dead, except under certain circumstances, such as a first down, a ball that has been thrown, caught, or run out of bounds (or in the case of injury, et cetera).

A flip of a coin with referees and team captains present will give one team the power in the beginning of the game to declare themselves the kicking or receiving team (for what it's worth, we recommend kicking whenever you can in the first half... you never know if you'll desperately need some offense come the second half, where if you kicked in the first half you are guaranteed to receive in the second). Thereafter, both teams' "special team units" will come on. The kicking team will have their kicker (almost always the same person who will kick PATs and field goals, though some teams have two kickers) kick the ball to the other team, where special team specialists on the offense will try to do what they can with it.

Hereafter, the basic offensive and defensive units for the teams take the field and the traditional four down cycle of NFL football (and all "American-style" football, for that matter) begins. Teams always start out (unless a penalty is called) with what is called "1st and 10," or more simply, the first of four downs with ten yards to go. Football games consist of 100 yard fields diverging on a "50 yard line" where the numbers count down to 40, 30, and so on going in both directions (hence there is never a "100 yard line.") Using a variety of passing and running plays, the offense attempts to continue to climb up-field and get first downs to secure a few more plays to reach that same goal. Ultimately, they want a touchdown (worth six points, plus a PAT, almost always made, which is worth an extra 1 point), but getting into field goal range (which for most kickers starts at about the defensive 40 yard line) is also desirable, a field goal being worth 3 points if made.

The defense, on the other hand, runs coverage plays and often blitzes (or rushes the quarterback) in order to keep the offense stationary, or better yet, make them lose yards. If a 1st down isn't achieved via yardage gains (keeping in mind that teams can gain or lose yards with penalties) and 4th down is reached, this almost always means the offensive team will punt the ball and the team once playing defense will now play offense, and vice-versa. Of course, there are several exceptions to the rule, the most notable being if the offensive team is in field goal position, they will usually attempt a field goal instead of punting to try to net some points. Another exception is in "4th and 1" opportunities, or desperation acts. 4th and 1 opportunities are usually very appealing to teams, especially if they are near midfield and have little to lose, or as mentioned earlier are desperate for offense. If this is the case, they may attempt to get the needed yardage on 4th down to recycle and get back to 1st down. However, if a team fails a 4th down attempt without achieving the 1st down (except in the common case of punting), they turnover the ball at the exact spot they had it downed on the 4th down, which can be detrimental or even devastating when a team could have just punted and put more of a distance between the opposing team and their end zone.

The team with the most points at the end of the four 15 minute quarters (60 minutes total) wins the game. Since there are only four ways to score in football (touchdown [6 points], PAT [1 point], field goal [3 points], and the never-mentioned safety [2 points - a safety is simply sacking the opposing team's quarterback or another player in possession of the ball in their own endzone... also, 2 points can be achieved in place of the 1 point PAT, called a "two point conversion"]), teams usually plan strategies based on what they need. Almost always, in a close game, whatever points you can get you will take. In other cases, field goal attempts will be replaced with more desperate actions, like a last minute touchdown attempt or replacing a sure 1 point PAT with a more questionable play call on a two point conversion. In regular season play, if the teams are tied at the end of four quarters, they go into a fifth quarter, so to speak, called overtime. Overtime is 15 minutes long, and the first team that scores wins automatically. Since that is the case, teams play a different brand of football in overtime where field goal attempts are more desirable. If the overtime ends with no one scoring, the game ends in an ultra-rare tie. In the playoffs, however, overtimes must be played consecutively until one team wins.



## Offense

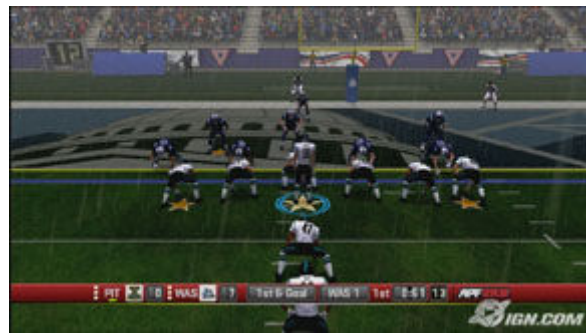
Passing	Rushing	Other Tips
---------	---------	------------

The offensive side of football is almost always the most enjoyable aspect of playing football to many All-Pro Football 2k8 players (even if you've got, for instance, that corner back mentality - interception!), and takes the most skill to execute properly. While it's easy to run blitzes out of a 3-4 defense all day and all night, it takes more know-how to execute plays out of your team's versatile (and completely unique) play book on offense, because you have to keep the defense on its toes, exploit its weaknesses, and above all else, mix up the pass and the run. Only by combining these three aspects will you net positive yardage in your drive towards the end zone.

But it's not easy. Understanding your play book can, at times, be hard enough. Reading the defense, playing properly under extreme pressure and improvising broken or well-covered plays is truly the name of the game, however. We'll try to give you some guidance so no matter what team you're playing as, you have a general idea of just what to do next.

### The Passing Game

There's no doubt about it - passing the ball is a lot more fun than say running the ball on every down. That's simply because, in the grand scheme of things, it's a more interactive way to play the game when you're not actually on the field but rather playing remotely with a videogame controller. But the passing game shouldn't be overused. Keep in mind a few of these suggestions to make your passing game more streamlined, effective, and above all else, neither under- nor-over used.



**Try Disguising the Play** - If you want to keep the defense on their toes and want them to expect a running play, going into the shotgun formation play book is probably not a good idea. Instead, do something more ambiguous, like lining up in the Singleback formation, or better yet, the I-formation, which will almost certainly suggest to the defense that you're going to run the ball. But that's not always the case, as you can show the defense by example when their blitzing corners leaves a wide receiver open for a long gain.

**Throw It Away or Scramble!** - Good defensive coverage can eliminate any throwing options a quarterback has, and when 300 pound defensive linemen are barely being held at bay by your hard-working offensive line, things will look especially dire. Don't be afraid to leave the pocket and throw the ball away - just make sure not to intentionally ground the ball or do anything else that may result in negative yards. While throwing the ball away, even if you're well-behind the line of scrimmage, will result in a return to the previous play's status quo (plus one down), scrambling out of the pocket and attempting to run the ball with your quarterback is another option. It's dangerous because many quarterbacks in the league are beyond fragile and prone to injury, but some quarterbacks are made to run, hit, and be tackled. They are especially good candidates for scrambling towards some positive yardage when a pass play doesn't go as intended. Just try to run out of bounds, take a light hit, or slide if some big defenders are coming your way. After all, you never know when your quarterback's card will be pulled... and scrambling in lieu of throwing the ball away can lead to negative yardage (and hence a sack) too.

**Read the Routes** - Unless you tell a player otherwise (or are controlling another player, like a wide receiver), players who are expected to run routes will do so pretty effectively. Therefore, it's a good idea to examine player routes both in the play book and again on the field to ensure that you know where to expect players to be at certain times, hence increasing your rate of success when chucking a ball their way and hoping for a reception. Knowing when a player is going to cut, screen, streak, et cetera is vital when you need to deliver the ball to them *before* anything ever really happens.

**Have "Plan A"** - When you're using the pass game, you're going to have options. It's not as fundamentally simple as handing the ball off to your running back and hoping for the best. You can have two, three, four, five, even six options when throwing the ball, and you need to utilize them all. But when you choose the play, have "plan A" in your head, the one player you will look to throw the ball to before you consider any other options. This particular plan might involve your

must trustworthy and talented wide receiver, or use a route that you know will stump the defense. If your first plan is exhausted, you can then look around the field for other open and eligible receivers. But remember, you have to be quick! All of this will happen in a matter of seconds, and the pressure of the situation necessitates quick decision making. If "Plan A" falls through, abandon it and immediately think of another solution.

**Keep On Trucking!** - The quarterback's throwing of the ball to a receiver is really only half of the pass game, because once in the hands of a tight end, wide receiver, running back... *whoever*... the ball is still live until the player with possession of the ball runs out of bounds or has his knees touch the ground. This means that, aside from forward progress, you can actually lose attained yards by not being quick enough to keep your momentum running forward towards your endzone. Once the ball is caught and you gain control of the ball carrier, immediately think of your next move. Even if you can only gain a yard or two, it's better than nothing. At best, if your receiver was open to begin with, you should have plenty of room to move up-field and get great position for your team. In other words, don't get lax and lazy... get as many yards as you can. A 20 yard pass is great, but when you can add 10 yards to it by running up-field, that becomes a 30 yard pass. And isn't that better?

**Interceptions Happen** - The best quarterbacks of all time throw interceptions on a fairly regular basis - it's simply part of the game. Many times, it's not even the quarterback's fault, but rather a receiver for missing his route or the defense's fault (like a cornerback) for intuitively knowing where to be to make the pick. It's a team sport, and there are a lot of factors completely out of your hands. If an interception happens (and they will), playing defense is obviously your first priority. Make sure that if the defense flips the script on you like this that you are prepared. Interceptions might hurt enough, but when an interception is combined with a 30 yard gain, that sucks even more. Limit your losses! Also, be especially ready for interceptions when you're throwing into traffic - they seem to be most common when the defensive numbers are high, and hence their probability to grab an interception is mathematically increased.



There are teams in the NFL that choose to run the ball almost exclusively, giving their quarterback something like 10-15 *attempts* per game. The teams of All-Pro Football 2k8 are no different. That's fine and dandy (though we don't really recommend it, especially in a game like this one which can be manipulated by constant play variety), but the running game is still an integral and highly vital part of the game, and there are better ways to do it than others.



**The Defense Will Probably Know** - Or, at best, they'll have a pretty good idea that you're going to run the ball, especially in certain formations. You can throw them off ever-so-slightly by running a play from shotgun that involves the so-called pounding of the rock, but running the ball effectively relies less on deception and more on old-fashioned grit. The running game is, fundamentally, more about smaller, consistent gains as opposed to game-shaking 50 yard gains (though they happen often enough). If you're a patient player of the game, shooting off 3, 4 and 5 yard gains will do you well and net you first down after first down. In other words, it doesn't really matter whether or not the defense knows you're coming with the run, because you can still net positive yardage against almost any formation (except maybe some overly-aggressive blitz formations).

**Follow Your Blocks** - This may seem obvious, but All-Pro Football 2k8 players tend to call a running play and then change it on the fly depending on their mood or preference. Keep a close eye on your play book when you're choosing a play and see where the ball carrier is supposed to go. The book will show where blocks will take place in order to create a hole for positive yardage. Changing your run on the fly will do nothing but injure your chances of getting the maximum amount of yardage possible under most circumstances, and puts your offensive line's hard work to waste. Call a play and stick to it, unless the rare circumstance arises where you simply know that you're not going to gain any yardage or might even lose some if you run the play as is. If this happens, call a timeout, an audible, or simply wing it to the best of your ability.

**You Have Some Tools** - So use them. When running the ball (and this works in the passing game as well), you can shake off defenders, juke them, pull spin moves on them, push them away, or power right through them. Running the ball is not simply a matter of holding the turbo button down and running through gaps you see on the field. You can manipulate certain gaps and holes by pulling some of the aforementioned moves on the defense. If a defender thinks you're going left, and then you juke right only to go left again, you'll have his momentum heading in the opposite direction long enough that you can sneak by him. This is all about feel and practice, however - the more you run the ball and practice alluding the defenders, the more skilled you will get.

**Specialize on Short Yardage Situations** - When you only have a yard or two, or even inches to go, the running game is almost always going to be your best friend (throwing a pass play in there, however, is a *great* way to keep unsuspecting defenses on their toes). Make sure to utilize the veritable plethora of plays in your book to find one that fits the situation best. Usually on inches situations, running straight up the middle does the trick. For short yardage situations of other varieties, consider anything and everything, including pitch and weak side plays that might not get you an incredible amount of yardage, but just enough where the defense wasn't suspecting what you give to them just long enough for you to pass the first down marker.

Passing	Rushing	Other Tips
---------	---------	------------

We've covered amply the running and passing game featured in All-Pro Football 2k8... but what about other situations, situations so nebulous that you may not be sure what to do? Well, we'll cover a few of those issues briefly below as well. Then, we'll move onto the lackluster but extremely important defensive side of the ball.

**Fourth Downs** - A fourth down is your last shot to attain the first down or score. It's really that simple. Anything beyond your opponent's 40 yard line on fourth down should equate to instant consideration of a field goal, depending on the strength of your kicker. Behind that, more towards the center of the field, and definitely in your own defensive end, you should punt the ball away, without question, on fourth downs. There are three exceptions to this rule, however.

Firstly, fourth and inches plays, or fourth and one plays, are extremely tempting and are attempted more in videogame football than you would ever find in professional football leagues (such as the NFL that didn't endorse this title!) The second exception is that you're down with little time left and you *need to score now*. The third exception is that sort of wild card situation, whether you're so close to the end zone that you want to go for the touchdown, or you're in an awkward area of the field where it makes no sense to punt or kick a field goal. You have to take these situations as they come, though here's what we recommend - unless you're fighting deep in your own zone, go for fourth and inches plays. Otherwise, punt the ball away. Unless there's little time left and you're losing by a touchdown or two, opting for the touchdown in lieu of the field goal makes no sense and will almost certainly cause you 3 points that you could have otherwise had. But this all leads to our next tip, which is...

**Know When You're Beat** - When you get to fourth down, it's do-or-die time... and unfortunately, that usually means that it's time to die. Whether it means you should punt or kick a field goal is contingent to where you are on the field. Don't get greedy - know when it's time to play a little defense. If anything, it should rile you up enough where you play especially well on defense in order to get the ball back on offense and try again. You can't be on the offensive side of the ball the entire game.

**Other Special Teams Concerns** - Fake field goals and fake punts are seldom used in the real NFL and are hard to execute in All-Pro Football 2k8, so unless you're playing against a friend or feel like doing something new and unique, stay away from the tempting fake punt and fake field goal plays. They will almost certainly fail and leave your opponent with excellent field position when they take the ball over. As far as returning punts and field goals, which is technically on the offensive side of the ball, have the same mentality as we suggested you should have in the running game. Use all of the tricks and abilities granted to you to gain as much positive yardage as possible. Nothing is more satisfying than running a punt or kickoff back for a touchdown - don't overlook these unique special teams circumstances to create some monster offense on your team's behalf.

## Defense

The defensive side of the ball is where a lot of thankless hard work comes into play. Some of the most glamourless positions in football are played on defense. This section is dedicated to the hard working defensive linemen, especially, who lack any popularly-known statistics in order to suppress the other team's offense.

But playing defense isn't easy. There's certainly ways to cop out of it, we're not going to pretend like there's not, but understanding just what's happening on defense will make your life a lot easier when the going gets tough. Many people dread playing defense in football videogames because, unlike when playing offense, few things are really explained to you. It's a more hands-off variety of the game, where all you can see in-game are your various coverage areas. Knowing your team's defensive playbook is vital, as is knowing how to counter certain plays and formations.

Don't worry - we got you covered. We're not going to suggest to you "do this for this play," because you really have to take so many things into account. For instance, there's no guarantee that a team on 3rd and 20 will throw the ball. It depends on so many factors. But we will show you to follow some trends, and do certain things that will likely make your defense more successful. Other than that, playing defense is largely a by-feel endeavor. The more you play defense and become comfortable with your team's playbook, the better your defense's so-called "anti-production" will be.



### What First?

Well, most times, a running play will be employed on first down situations, though this is hardly always the case. Many players of videogame football will employ the 4-3 formation almost exclusively because of the fact that it covers both the run and the pass. This isn't necessarily a bad idea, though it can be easily exploited, which is why you need to know when the opposing team on offense might be attempting to flip the script a little bit on you to exploit your formations. However, if you're expecting the run or don't know what to expect, especially on first down, blitzing with the 4-3 formation isn't a bad idea at all.

### Changing It Up

Dime and Nickel formations are designed primarily for pass coverage, though there are viable ways to stop the run with both formations as well. Familiarizing yourself with your playbook is a sure way to know off the top of your head what formation and/or play will fit into certain situations. If it's 3rd and 20, for instance, running a Dime play is a pretty sure shot since you know they're probably gonna pass. On the other hand, if it's 2nd and Goal, stack your players on the goal line with a goal line formation, which is your best protection against the run.

### Suggested Formation

Yes, we suggest the 4-3, and we suggest blitzing on every play, too. This isn't a realistic approach to football and would get torn apart in real life by real teams and real coaches, but the CPU teams and coaches don't think like their human counterparts. They can adjust to your play calling and predict what you're going to do, but 4-3 coverages are so effective against both offensive options, especially the pass, that it's probably going to be your main workhorse on the defensive side of the ball. As far as the blitz is concerned, blitzing constantly puts a sort of perpetual stress on the offensive line and especially on the opposing team's quarterback, forcing him to rush to make a throw. Additionally, if they choose to run the ball, there's a chance that blitzing corners, for instance, can take the back down for a loss of yards. It's all a risk, though, because 4-3 blitzes will dedicate your defense to a certain course of action that, in certain circumstances, can be used against you for gigantic gains. It's more a formation of momentum, so you need to learn to use the momentum in your favor.

## Blitzing

Blitzing is fun and should be done often. If you're playing a skilled CPU or human opponent, blitzing doesn't make much sense on every play since they can adjust accordingly. But if you're an average All-Pro Football 2k8 player playing through a season or against a friend, throwing a blitz on every play doesn't hurt, as long as you have the pass and other run options properly covered to the best of your ability as well. Remember, it's better to be safe than sorry in football. Blitzing is a risk, so make sure it's a calculated risk. Don't call a 4-3 blitz on your own five yard line when the other team can run the rock right up the middle into the end zone. Call them to ensure that they don't get to that point to begin with. Putting the other team in constant pressure situations will only make your life that much easier.



**Inherent In-Game Variables** - No matter how hard a developer tries, football games won't play exactly like their real life counterparts. This is actually a positive thing since, in regular modes of gameplay, you can literally switch between any player on the defensive side of the ball. This is All-Pro Football 2k8's inherent in-game variable, because it allows you to get firsthand, controlled coverage of literally anyone on the field. You can throw a tackle with a defensive lineman or prevent a wide receiver from making a reception with your cornerback... and you can do that on the same play. Make sure to toggle between your players and get the most out of your defense - otherwise, the defense can be highly computer-controlled... and wouldn't you rather praise your successes and blame your failures on yourself than the CPU?

**Interceptions and Fumbles** - The fun part of playing defense is completely flipping the script on your opponent with game-breaking defensive plays that will put your team back on the offensive side of the ball. Remember that you have full control over stripping balls from your opponent's clutches, or scooping a ball from midair right before it strikes the receivers hands. While these things happen randomly and automatically at times, by controlling these players in said situations, you can catalyze events that would make them happen more often. And naturally, that benefits you and your team. Interceptions are more straight-forward in that once you intercept a ball, you simply want to run towards the other endzone, hopefully scoring, but at least getting some positive yardage for your offense to work with. Controlling a fumbled ball is a horse of a different color, since you must first gain control of the ball before you can do anything with it. In most cases, it's more conducive to your cause to simply jump on the ball, downing it and securing possession for your team, rather than trying to pick up the oddly-shaped ball, gaining possession, and going some extra yards. Of course, the situations will differ as they come at you, but this is a general rule. Interceptions will almost always net you some positive yards. Fumbles will simply give you possession. Don't push it!

## Choosing Your Team

Unlike the Madden franchise, All-Pro Football 2k8 doesn't have access to the NFL license. Because of this, the game delves instead into the depths of the Hall of Fame, with a plethora of skilled ex-football players to choose from. Creating your team is as simple as following the in-game formula. You get to choose two "Gold Star" players for any position. These players are considered the cream of the crop of football history. Then, you get to choose three "Silver Star" players, which are the next echelon down. And finally, you get to choose six "Bronze Star" players whom are great, memorable players in their own right, but not on the Gold or Silver level. Any vacant spots on your roster (which will be a majority of your team) will then be filled in by the game automatically with fictional in-game players.

This section of the guide - possibly the most important section within - will instruct you on how to fill out your squad, and what pieces to build with and around, or not at all. The three sections in the table below will bring you to where you need to go.

<a href="#">Getting Started</a>	<a href="#">Choices</a>	<a href="#">Skill Grid</a>
---------------------------------	-------------------------	----------------------------

Getting Started	Choices	Skill Grid
-----------------	---------	------------

So you want to create a team? Well, you've come to the right place. The strength of a game like All-Pro Football 2k8 is in its ability to create a team catered to your tastes. This is done via a rather intensive system of statistics, as well as varying echelons of players. There are literally thousands and thousands of combinations of in-game ex-NFL all-stars that can end up on your team. But you can't create a team of *just* all-stars. Roster spots left empty after you've chosen your eleven players will be filled in automatically by the game, so choosing your team is a delicate operation indeed.

Begin by analyzing and weighing your options. Then, use the two other sections of Choosing Your Team (Choices and Skill Grid) to pick the perfect team that caters to your liking. Remember – players you've created can be chosen for your team as well, so if you want to create a few players to add into the fray, definitely feel free. Just remember that they are limited to the same rules as the real ex-NFL all-stars - they have to be in a certain star tier, and can only have a certain amount of Player Abilities given to them as a result.

Also remember, as we mention several other times throughout the guide, that the computer can choose a team for you. This is certainly the most balanced and fair way to choose a team, especially when you compare your team to the teams you'll be playing in the fictional league you'll be thrust into, but that's no fun!

After forming your team (utilizing the two other sections of Choosing Your Team), you'll be able to sift through a series of other options, including your defensive alignment (will you be better against the run or the pass?... we recommend staying balanced), the name of your team, the city they play in, and even the look of their uniforms. And when that's all said and done, a stadium complimentary to your team can be chosen for full effect. Pretty neat, huh?

If you're ready to choose your team, then read on...



Choosing a team is no easy feat. With so many choices to make, it's seemingly impossible to make all of the right ones. There's no denying that the style of the team you want to choose will vary from player to player, and no set of rules or tips will be all-defining and definitive for all players of the game. Regardless, there are certain rules we here at IGN Guides think you should keep in mind when assembling your squad. We'll take 'em step-by-step, echelon by echelon.

Please Note: You can make the CPU pick your team for you, which is a rather fair and even way to choose a team that will compare to most other fictional teams you will play against in the game. But follow our instructions if you want to work with a powerhouse.

**Gold Star Players** - There is indeed a lot of Gold Star-caliber players to choose from. With only two slots available on your team for such players, it might be difficult to figure out who the lucky ones are you'll want to include, and who you'll want to ignore completely.

Our personal recommendation is to go with a quarterback of the Gold Star rating. Quarterbacks, of course, are integral positions to the offensive side of the football, and giving your team the best offensive conduit to work with is definitely a good idea. Unitas? Marino? Elway? Baugh? It doesn't matter, really. That's all about preference. But *definitely* use one of your Gold Star roster spots for your quarterback.

The other position should probably be used by another offensive weapon, preferably a wide receiver or tight end. Why? Well, the answer is simple. Since your quarterback is of such a high caliber, why not give him someone nasty to throw to? They will make up the ultimate one-two combination on the offensive side of the ball. If you want to go with a halfback here, we wouldn't necessarily object. But preferably, you should go with a receiver.

**Silver Star Players** - If you're following our recommendations for Gold Star Players, then you'll want to strike an all-important balance with your Silver Star Players. Go for at least two key defensive acquisitions here, and use your third slot to pick up an offensive weapon (such as a halfback, if you've yet to acquire one, or a tight end).

So, for instance, if you chose John Elway as your quarterback and Jerry Rice as your wide receiver when scoping out Gold Star players, then maybe you'll want to pick up Ottis Anderson as your Silver Star halfback. On the defensive side of the ball, take a look at a defensive end like Chris Doleman, or a free safety like Eric Turner. Don't waste silver star talent on stagnant positions like center (though they're important, no doubt about it).

If you've taken our recommendations so far, then you'll have a pretty impressive roster thusfar. Gold Star talent like John Elway at quarterback and Jerry Rice at wide receiver, and Silver Star talent in players like halfback Ottis Anderson, defensive end Chris Doleman, and free safety Eric Turner. Not bad. Not bad at all. But what about those six Bronze Star slots?

**Bronze Star Players** - Bronze Star talent is going to be the last choices you have to work with before the computer fills out the rest of your roster with fictional filler. These six positions will fill in all of the key positions you might want to consider before the computer takes its turn.

First, choose a kicker. While kickers don't seem that important, they really are. PATs and kickoffs are not all they're capable of – kickers that can make a clutch 50 yard field goal are kickers you want on your roster. A kicker like Jeff Jaeger is a great choice at the Bronze Star skill level, and will serve your team well.

With the remaining positions, you'll want to consider your offense for two positions and your defense for three. Since you spent your Gold Star positions on potent offense (which is something we highly recommend), you'll want to give your defense extra consideration in the Silver and Bronze Stars. A tackle, a defensive tackle, and a guard are three great defensive positions to consider with Bronze Star talent. We were inclined to choose Joe Jacoby, William Perry, and Randy Cross for those three positions respectively, but you can consider any player of your choice. Remember, as with the rest of our particular player choices, the position chosen by us is much more important to follow than the actual player itself.

With your two remaining Bronze Star spots, which should be aimed at offensive positions, consider a fullback (like Merrill Hoge) and a reliable center, such as Jesse Sapolu. Both of these positions are indispensable to the success of your offense, but not enough to warrant higher than Bronze Star consideration.

So, ultimately, this is what our sample roster would look like if we here at IGN Guides were creating a team (and we created many). Remember, while we chose players that we personally liked, paying attention to the positions and position types we chose for each echelon of talent is more important.

Echelon	Position	Sample Player
Gold Star	Quarterback	John Elway
Gold Star	Wide Receiver	Jerry Rice
Silver Star	Halfback	Ottis Anderson
Silver Star	Defensive End	Chris Doleman
Silver Star	Free Safety	Eric Turner
Bronze Star	Kicker	Jeff Jaeger
Bronze Star	Tackle	Joe Jacoby
Bronze Star	Defensive Tackle	William Perry
Bronze Star	Guard	Randy Cross
Bronze Star	Fullback	Merril Hoge
Bronze Star	Center	Jesse Sapolu

Remember - empty roster spots will be filled in subsequent to team building by the computer, automatically. So make sure not to leave any vital positions unfilled. Also, feel free to make several teams and see what works best for you. We created a balanced team that leans towards offensive power, but perhaps playing defense is your forte. Whatever works best for you is what should be explored, but use our guidelines for a surefire good team.

Getting Started	Choices	Skill Grid
-----------------	---------	------------

In this section, you can take a look at all of the in-game skills (called Player Abilities) that your players might be blessed with, along with which position types each skill can be attributed to. You'll want to remember that it's pertinent to research which players have which skills when assembling a team (so you can get the players with the skills you desire). It's also useful to know these skills when creating your own player. Gold-ranked players will get three skills, while silver and bronze-ranked players will get two skills and a lone skill respectively.

<b>4th Quarter Comeback</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-
Description: QB is at his best when trailing in the 4th quarter.								
<b>Acrobatic Catches</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player is able to make difficult circus catches.								
<b>Arm of Steel</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player has a 2nd level charge stiff arm.								
<b>Ankle Breaker</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player has a 2nd level charge juke move.								
<b>Ball Hawk</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	-
Description: Defender has a keen sense for the ball on passes.								
<b>Ball Strip</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-
Description: Player is adept at forcing fumbles.								
<b>Battering Ram</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player has a 2nd level charge shoulder charge.								
<b>Big Hit</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-
Description: Defender is particularly adept at big hit tackles.								
<b>Branching Tackles</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player is good at shaking off tackles by tapping A/X.								
<b>Break Away Burst</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player has an extra gear when running away from defenders.								
<b>Brick Wall</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-
Description: Player has superior pass blocking skills.								
<b>Bull Rush</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	X	X	-	-
Description: Defender has a 2nd level charge bull rush.								
<b>Bulldozer</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	X	-	-	-	-
Description: Player has superior run blocking skills.								

<b>Bump Buster</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player is talented at beating bump n' run coverage.								
<b>Bump Master</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-
Description: Player is skilled at bump n' run coverage.								
<b>Cadence</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Description: QB's cadence is good at drawing defenders offside.								
<b>Closing Speed</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-
Description: Defender is able to cover ground quickly when closing in on the ball.								
<b>Club</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	X	X	-	-
Description: Defender has a 2nd level charge club.								
<b>Clutch</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Description: Player's performance is best in all clutch situations and games.								
<b>Coffin Corner</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
Description: Player is good at pinning punts inside the 10 yard line.								
<b>Coverage Bonus</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-
Description: Player has excellent pass coverage skills.								
<b>Cutback Ability</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player is quick out of cuts.								
<b>Deception</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Description: QB's pump fakes are more likely to deceive defenders.								
<b>Deep Threat</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Receiver is skilled at catching deep passes and draws extra attention from safeties.								
<b>Durability Bonus</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Description: Player is resilient to injuries and very dependable.								
<b>Finesse</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player has a second level Spin and Juke move.								
<b>Finesse And Power</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player has a 2nd level Spin, Juke, Shoulder Charge and Stiff Arm.								
<b>Footsteps</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	-
Description: Defender strikes fear in receivers and this can result in gator arms.								
<b>Hops</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Description: Player has excellent jumping ability.								

<b>Kick Accuracy Bonus</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
Description: Player has excellent kick accuracy.								
<b>Kick Power Bonus</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	X
Description: Player has excellent kick power.								
<b>Laser Arm</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Pinpoint accuracy with QB charge.								
<b>Leadership Bonus</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Description: Player makes his teammates better.								
<b>Loose Ball Magnet</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-
Description: Defender has a knack for recovering fumbles.								
<b>Magic Feet</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player has the footwork and balance to stay in bounds on sideline catches.								
<b>Mr. 3rd Down</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Receiver is clutch in third down situations.								
<b>Pass Rush Bonus</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-
Description: Player is skilled at rushing the passer.								
<b>Pass Threat</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Description: QB's threat of passing makes draw plays more lethal.								
<b>Play Fake</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Description: QB's play action fake is great at fooling defenders.								
<b>Pocket Presence</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Description: QB is at his best when in the pocket.								
<b>Possession Receiver</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Receiver is particularly talented at running short routes.								
<b>Power</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player has a 2nd level Shoulder Charge and Stiff Arm.								
<b>Quick Feet</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Description: Player has top notch agility for his position.								
<b>Quick Release</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Description: QB has a quick throwing motion.								
<b>Reach Tackle</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-
Description: Defender has the strength to pull down ball carriers with reach tackles.								

<b>Return Specialist</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	-	-	-	-	X	-
Description: XXX								
<b>Rip</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	X	X	-	-
Description: Defender has a 2nd level charge rip.								
<b>Rocket Arm</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Description: QB has top flight arm strength with QB charge.								
<b>Route God</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Receiver is a great route runner.								
<b>Run Coverage</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	-	-	-	X	X	X	-
Description: Player is good against the run and when pursuing ball carriers.								
<b>Run Reader</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-
Description: Defender has a sixth sense that allows him to hit the hole.								
<b>Sack Master</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-
Description: Defender is particularly skilled at sacking the QB.								
<b>Scissor Kick</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player has a scissor kick special move.								
<b>Scrambler</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Description: QB is talented at throwing the ball out of the pocket.								
<b>Secure Ball Bonus</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player is good at holding onto the football.								
<b>Signal Stealer</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	-	-	-	-	X	X	-
Description: Press X/Square with your QB or Defender to try and steal your opponent's play!								
<b>Soft Hands</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player has excellent hands.								
<b>Special Team Demon</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Description: Player is talented at covering punts or kicks.								
<b>Speed Burner</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Description: Player has top notch speed for his position.								
<b>Spin</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	X	-	-	-
Description: Defender has a 2nd level charge spin.								
<b>Stamina Bonus</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Description: Player doesn't tire easily.								



<b>Stonewall</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
Description: Lineman is such a stalwart that the QB is extra composed around him.								
<b>Stop on a Dime</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Player has a 2nd level charge stop.								
<b>Strength Bonus</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Description: Player has top notch strength for his position.								
<b>Tough in the Middle</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Receiver isn't afraid to get hit on catches in the middle.								
<b>Workhorse</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
Description: Ball carrier gets better the more he gets the ball.								
<b>Wrap Up Tackler</b>	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	SC	K
	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	-
Description: Defender is a text book wrap tackler.								