

# NEW FOOTBALL A CHAOS, THE EXPERTS DECLARE

**Ground Gaining by Carrying the  
Ball Made Impossible.**

**ON-SIDE KICK IS ONLY HOPE**

**Attack Disorganized and Defense Un-  
weakened Makes Interchange of  
Kicks Only Possible Development.**

On the eve of the opening of the football season under the new rules of play there is but one word to describe the conditions confronting coaches and players: Chaotic. The game was tried out all over the country yesterday, with the single exception of Yale. There was everywhere unfamiliarity with the new conditions, lack of preparedness for contingencies arising, and a general mixture. In many cases there was small departure from the old game, especially among the school-boy exponents of the sport.

Locally there were several school-boy games. The most important from the viewpoint of the unusual high calibre of the teams and their coaching was that between the Boys' High School and the Manual Training High School, played at Saratoga Field. A fair and adequate test of the rules was impossible, by reason of the fact that the Boys' High team was so greatly superior that even with straight old-fashioned line-bucking three-man-back plays they could gain five and ten yards steadily with the other team playing the old defense, while the Manual Training High School team could not gain at all. There was no attempt on either side to work any of the forward passes or on-side kicks or anything else, and no attempt on the part of the officials to enforce penalties. There were constant violation of the rule, which were unnoticed, and except for the separation of the two teams by a neutral zone they might have been playing old-fashioned football.

Of course with the college teams an effort was made to apply the new rules, but the uncertainty, even among them, is great. At the Murray Hill Hotel the meeting that convened on Friday night adjourned early yesterday morning, and the hundred or more football experts there were almost a unit in declaring that they did not know what to expect. Most of them have been working on the game in the actual field of play, yet they have no definite ideas of what will occur.

There are many negative opinions formed, and one of these was most marked: That it is not possible by any system of straight running plays to carry the ball forward for consistent gains for ten yards. Almost without exception the experts agreed that the day of continuous, consistent gaining was at an end, and that hereafter each team would carry the ball forward a short distance with the aid of such forward passes, trick plays, on-side kicks, and similar tactics as proved practicable, but that inevitably the ball would change hands within a short time, and that the game would be largely a game of interchanged kicks, in which the low kick that strikes the ground before it can be caught would be used, precipitating a constant scrambling for possession of the pig-skin.

The first question that was asked of every man that entered the convention hall was, "Have you been able to gain ten yards?" The almost invariable answer was negative. The whole tendency of football legislation has always been to weaken the offense. Two tremendous blows were struck at it in the new code when the rule was passed first increasing the distance to be gained to ten yards and then declaring that the sort of plays that had in the past proved the only consistent gainers must not be used. Every one who has played football knows that inevitably teams were compelled to use line-plunging plays to gain, for the reason that end plays were impossible under the highly developed skill of defense both in backing up and tackling on the ends. The only gain that could be made was by forcing a way quickly through the line by speed or mass until an average could be attained of five yards in three tries. When at one blow the average is doubled and the principal means of massing is removed, the whole structural base of the attack falls and the teams enter the field with a strong defense and no attack. This forces constant kicking.

There were only two offsets introduced to relieve this condition. These were devised to vary the attacking possibilities and to, at the same time, weaken by diverting and distracting the defense. These two offsets were the forward pass and the on-side kick, and at this time there is not one of the many players and coaches who can positively say that either will be successful. There has been no team that has proved that the forward pass is anything but a doubtful, dangerous play to be used only in the last extremity. The on-side kick is conceived to be full of possibilities, but after all, the on-side kick is a kick and means only a variation of the kicking game.

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