



## NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

November 8, 2023

Dear College Football Administrators and College Football Head Coaches:

As you know, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the NCAA granted all 2020 fall sport student-athletes an additional year of eligibility. As a result, many college football players participating in the 2023 fall season are using a fifth year of eligibility.

Because of the extra year of eligibility, the NFL is providing clubs, colleges, prospective players, college all-star games, and player advisors clarification regarding player eligibility for the 2024 NFL Draft, as well as the procedures an otherwise eligible player is required to follow in order to withdraw his name from selection in the 2024 Draft (i.e., to "Opt-Out" of the Draft). This letter is intended to provide comparable information concerning eligibility and Opt-Out procedures for the 2024 Draft.

1. **Player Eligibility.** Attached to this document is a chart that can be used to determine a player's eligibility status for the 2024 NFL Draft ("2024 NFL Draft Eligibility Chart").
  - a. **General Rules of Eligibility.** To further assist with the invitation process, please review the following guidelines and clarifications that are in place for the 2024 NFL Draft. The NFL's general rules for eligibility state that a college football student-athlete will become eligible for the upcoming NFL Draft if the player meets one of the following requirements:
    - (1) All college football eligibility of such player has expired through participation in college football (expiration does not include a loss of college football eligibility through withdrawal from school, dismissal, or signing of a professional contract in another football league); or
    - (2) Such player has graduated and received a diploma from a recognized four-year college or university prior to the beginning of the National Football League's next regular season; or
    - (3) Five League seasons have elapsed since such player first attended, practiced football at, or participated in football games for a recognized junior college, college, or university; or
    - (4) Such player did not play or otherwise participate in college football, and four League seasons have elapsed since the player first entered or first attended college; or

- (5) Such player has been granted eligibility through special permission of the Commissioner. (See Section 3. below)

Players who only qualify via Subparagraph (b) or Subparagraph (e) above, will be required to notify the Commissioner by January 15, 2024, of their intent to enter the 2024 NFL Draft.

- b. **Automatic Eligibility.** The following are examples of players who are automatically eligible for the 2024 NFL Draft.

- (1) A player who entered college in 2020, and who did not redshirt in 2021, 2022, or 2023, and was a member of his school's team in 2020 (including any player who opted out), is automatically eligible for the 2024 NFL Draft.
- (2) A player who entered college in 2019, and who received a redshirt year in 2019, 2021, 2022, or 2023, and was a member of his school's team in 2020 (including any player who opted out), is automatically eligible for the 2024 NFL Draft.
- (3) A player who entered college in 2019, and who did not redshirt in 2019, 2021, 2022, or 2023, and is a member of his school's team this fall, is automatically eligible for the 2024 NFL Draft regardless of whether the player removed his name from eligibility in the 2023 NFL Draft ("Draft Opt-Out") or was eligible for the 2023 NFL Draft ("Repeat Eligibility").

- c. **Clarifications.** The following clarifications are in effect for the 2024 NFL Draft:

- (1) Any college football player who participates in his fourth season of full-time eligibility, as distinguished from those who "redshirt," during the 2023 college football season will be deemed to be automatically eligible for the 2024 NFL Draft; and
- (2) The 2020 college football season will be considered one season of participation for all college football student-athletes. This includes, but is not limited to: (i) players who "opted out" of the 2020 college season; (ii) players who received a redshirt year in 2020; (iii) players who were academically ineligible for 2020; (iv) players who attended schools that cancelled their 2020 football seasons; (v) players who attended schools that played their 2020 seasons in the spring of 2021.

It is not necessary for such players to notify the League office to become eligible for the Principal Draft under this provision.

2. **Opt-Out Procedures.** Please read this section carefully, as it details the procedures required for an otherwise eligible player to Opt-Out of the 2024 NFL Draft.
  - a. Any college football player who meets all three of the following criteria must submit written notification of his intention to Opt-Out of the 2024 NFL Draft to the NFL by the

close of business on **Friday, February 2, 2024**: (i) the player is automatically eligible for the 2024 Draft; (ii) the player has remaining eligibility and intends to return to school to play college football during the 2024 fall season; and (iii) the player does not wish to be considered for selection in the 2024 NFL Draft.

The names of all players who elect to Opt-Out will be included in a list that will be made available to all NFL clubs. These players will not be eligible to be selected in the 2024 NFL Draft, or to be signed as undrafted free agents for the 2024 NFL season. Such players will be eligible to be scouted as seniors during the 2024 fall season and will be eligible for selection in a future NFL Draft.

- b. The February 2 deadline does not preclude a player from informing NFL clubs at a later date that he is returning to school in the fall of 2024. However, if a player informs clubs of his decision after the February 2 deadline, he may still be selected in the 2024 Draft. If the player is selected and subsequently returns to school, the NFL club will retain the player's exclusive negotiating rights as if selected in the 2025 Draft, but with the rookie pool amount allocated in the 2024 Draft.

**The player's "Request to Opt-Out of the 2024 Draft," which is attached to this letter, must be signed by the player, and returned to the NFL League office no later than Friday, February 2, 2024.** Please arrange for all draft-eligible players who intend to return to school for the 2024 college football season to sign the document. If a player authorizes the school to return the signed document on his behalf, we ask that one person at each school compile all the completed forms into a singular document prior sending it to the NFL office at the below listed email address. In the alternative, a player, or someone other than a school employee acting on the player's behalf, may return the signed document directly to the NFL League office via email. Completed forms must be emailed to [DraftEligibility@nfl.com](mailto:DraftEligibility@nfl.com).

- c. Also attached to this letter is a handout containing important information about the Opt-Out process ("2024 NFL Draft Opt-Out Rules"). We recommend that it be provided to any player who is considering whether to participate in the Draft or whether to return to school.
3. **College Advisory Committee/Special Eligibility.** Attached to this letter is a two-page handout containing information regarding the College Advisory Committee and Special Eligibility deadlines ("Requesting An Evaluation"). It can be printed back-to-back for easy distribution to your players and staff. Additional information regarding these programs, including the NFL's annual CAC brochures, will be sent to you, and posted on the College Relations Website soon.
    - a. **College Advisory Committee.** Players who are considering applying for special eligibility may submit an evaluation request to the NFL Player Personnel department through their school's athletic department, via the College Relations Website, following the school's last regular season football game. The "soft" deadline, for which an evaluation is guaranteed, is **Friday, December 15, 2023**. The "hard" deadline, for which best efforts will be made to get a player an evaluation prior to the special eligibility deadline is **Friday, January 5, 2024**.

- b. **Special Eligibility.** With respect to players who are not automatically eligible for the 2024 Draft, as described above, the NFL has implemented a new process for players who have completed their college seasons, including postseason games, to petition for special eligibility into the NFL Draft.
  - i. An early "soft" deadline of **Friday, January 5, 2024**, has been added to permit players whose seasons are complete to submit their petitions sooner. Players will then have 72 hours from the deadline to revoke their submission. NFL clubs will receive an initial list of these players on **Tuesday, January 9, 2024**.
  - ii. The traditional "hard" deadline to submit a special eligibility petition is **Monday, January 15, 2024**, seven days after the FBS National Championship Game. Players will have 72 hours from the deadline to revoke their submission. NFL clubs will receive the full list of players who have been granted special eligibility for the 2024 Draft on **Friday, January 19, 2024**.

The additional early date was implemented to permit players who were approved for special eligibility to be invited to select college all-star games in a timely manner. See Section 4. below.

- 4. **Underclassmen in College All-Star Games.** Earlier this year, the NFL revised its policy regarding underclassmen participating in college all-star games. Upon the NFL publicly announcing that a player has been granted special eligibility, the East-West Shrine Bowl, HBCU Legacy Bowl, and Senior Bowl may invite such players to participate in their respective game activities. Only these three games are permitted to invite underclassmen to participate.
- 5. **Revised rules for NFL Personnel to attend College All-Star Games.** To protect the interests of prospective players, the NFL informed college all-star games that it had revised its rules for NFL club personnel to attend such events.

NFL club personnel will be permitted to attend practice sessions and/or game of a college all-star event under the following conditions:

- a. Participating players are not required to pay (e.g., a registration fee) to attend such event. However, the game may require players to pay for reasonable and customary travel and lodging costs (no miscellaneous fees or costs can be included). Additionally, all participants must be treated equally. For example, the all-star game can't pay for travel and lodging for some players and not for others.
- b. Players are not paid by the college all-star game for attendance or participation.
- c. The game administrators carry insurance (*i.e.*, per player liability and/or umbrella) to protect participating players while in attendance at the event, including but not limited to practice sessions and the game.

- d. Practice sessions do not include Combine-type drills. Scouts are only permitted to attend customary practice sessions. Player measurements and interviews are permitted.
- e. The game is played by two squads in a bona fide football game (e.g., 11-on-11, offense/defense/special teams, four downs, win-loss-tie standard), located in a stadium with tickets being sold to the public. The game must consist of timed quarters or halves, with statistics and scoring recorded. The game must use football playing rules from the high school, college, or professional level, and be officiated by game officials from such entities.
- f. Free agents, underclassmen, or players under contract to other professional football leagues do not participate in the event.
- g. Upon being officially announced by the NFL as having been granted special eligibility, the East-West Shrine Bowl, HBCU Legacy Bowl, and Senior Bowl may invite underclassmen to participate in their respective practices and games.
- h. Only members of a college all-star game roster may be timed, tested, and interviewed in the metropolitan area of the city in which the all-star game is being held. Draft-eligible players who are not part of the college all-star game are not eligible for such activities.
- i. The college all-star game does not charge NFL clubs a fee for scouting personnel to attend its event(s) or to pay for different levels of scouting information, including but not limited to access to players, scouting reports, or game information. However, games may charge NFL clubs for the use of a suite at the stadium.

If any of the above-defined conditions are not met, NFL club personnel are prohibited from attending the all-star event and/or receiving video or statistics from the event.

Each game may decide to organize and conduct its event as it desires; these rules apply to NFL personnel only.

As in past years, NFL club employees are prohibited from becoming involved, directly or indirectly, in the recruitment of players for any college all-star event. Such personnel are prohibited from directly participating in the process of selecting and inviting players to any all-star event, though it is permissible to offer opinions about players to the sponsors of such all-star event. NFL club personnel are not permitted to recommend to players or their representatives that they participate in a certain all-star event or withdraw from an all-star event to which they have made a commitment or engage in any other activity that can reasonably be construed as recruiting a player to participate in an event. In addition, such personnel must not discourage players from participating in such events.

6. **Designated Underclassmen.** NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) schools may begin to designate a maximum of five players who will be eligible apply for special eligibility into the **2025** NFL Draft, to be scouted by NFL personnel during the 2024 college football season as if they were draft-eligible seniors. In addition, NFL personnel are able to scout these designated players at a school's upcoming Pro Day for draft-eligible players or rising

senior day. The extent to which a designated player participates in any activity is at the discretion of the school and/or the player.

With the prior approval of the NFL Player Personnel department, non-FBS schools may designate underclassmen.

The window to designate your school's list of names through the College Relations Website begins in early February and concludes on **Tuesday, February 20, 2024**.

Please contact us with any questions. The NFL Player Personnel department can be contacted by phone at 212-450-2215 or by email at [nflplayerpersonnel@nfl.com](mailto:nflplayerpersonnel@nfl.com).

Best wishes for the remainder of your season.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Fiore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ken Fiore  
Vice President, Player Personnel

Attachments (4)