



## NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

### GENERAL RULES OF ELIGIBILITY

A NFL club cannot select a player in an Annual Selection Meeting (hereafter the “Principal Draft”) or a Supplemental Selection Meeting (hereafter the “Supplemental Draft”), or sign a player as a free agent if he is not selected in a Draft (meaning either a Principal Draft or Supplemental Draft) for which he is eligible, until such player meets one of the following requirements:

- (a) 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
- (b) 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. (See Section 7 below: Early Graduation for a player who graduates from such a college or university without exhausting his eligibility through participation); or
- (c) 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
- (d) 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
- (e) Such player has been granted eligibility through special permission of the Commissioner. To be considered for inclusion in the League’s Principal Draft, his application for special eligibility must be in the League office no later than the deadline in January established each year by the Commissioner. No player shall be permitted to apply for special eligibility for selection in the Draft, or otherwise be eligible for the Draft, until three NFL regular seasons have begun and ended following either his graduation from high school or graduation of the class with which he entered high school, whichever is earlier. No player may elect to bypass the Principal Draft to apply for a Supplemental Draft.

**[Note: Players who only qualify via Subparagraph (b) or Subparagraph (e) above, will be required to notify the Commissioner by a specific date of their intent to enter the 2022 NFL Draft.]**

## ADDITIONAL RULES OF ELIGIBILITY

The following rules also apply when determining a player's Draft eligibility:

1. **PLAYER NEVER ATTENDING COLLEGE.** Any player who never attends college is automatically eligible for selection in the next Principal Draft that is conducted after four football seasons have elapsed since either his graduation from high school or graduation of the class with which he entered high school, whichever is earlier. If four football seasons have not elapsed since the player's graduation from high school or graduation of the class with which he entered high school, he is ineligible for selection, but may apply to the Commissioner for special eligibility, pursuant to the conditions in (e) stated above. If said player is not selected in a Draft for which he is eligible, he is eligible to be signed as a free agent, unless he subsequently attends college and participates in college football. In such event, he shall become subject to the applicable sections of the "GENERAL RULES OF ELIGIBILITY."
2. **FIVE YEARS OF COLLEGE ELIGIBILITY.** If a college and/or conference allows five years of football eligibility, during all of which players may participate full-time (as distinguished from those which allow a "red-shirt" year, or do not permit participation during one of the five years), a player at such college who has participated in college football for four seasons shall be eligible for selection in the Principal Draft if he elects not to avail himself of the fifth year of college eligibility. It is not necessary for such players to notify the League office to become eligible for the Principal Draft under this provision.
3. **ANOTHER SPORT.** The fact that a player has college athletic eligibility remaining in a sport other than football does not affect his eligibility for the League, provided such player meets all other applicable League eligibility requirements.
4. **COMPLETION OF COLLEGE GAMES.** Despite the fact that a player may meet other League eligibility requirements stated herein, a member club shall not sign a player to a player contract or in any manner, directly or indirectly, engage the services of a player until completion of all football games, including postseason bowl games, in which the team of the school or college of such player is to participate. If a club violates this section, it is subject to disciplinary action by the Commissioner.
5. **COLLEGE AND NFL IN SAME SEASON.** No person who plays college football after the opening date of the NFL training season in any year may be signed to a player contract by, practice with, or play games for, a club in the League during the balance of that same football season.
6. **REPEATED ELIGIBILITY.** If a player becomes eligible for the Principal Draft or Supplemental Draft and is not selected or thereafter signed as a free agent, and registers at a college for the fall term or semester of that year, or any subsequent year, to play football, such player may not be signed to a contract by a club in the League until the

close of the next succeeding Principal Draft of the League. At such time, he shall be eligible for selection, regardless of how many seasons in excess of five have elapsed since he first registered at a college and regardless of how many Drafts have transpired for which he was eligible. The above does not apply to a player whose initial enrollment at a college or university occurs after he has been eligible for a previous Draft. Such a player is subject to "GENERAL RULES OF ELIGIBILITY."

7. **EARLY GRADUATION.** Any player who expects to graduate (or graduates) before his college football eligibility expires may become eligible for the League's Principal Draft by declaring in writing to the Commissioner his intention to graduate (or notification that he has already graduated) before the League's next succeeding regular season. Such declaration must be in the Commissioner's office no later than 15 days before the date of the opening of the Principal Draft.

If a player's written declaration of his intention to graduate is received in a timely fashion, and the League office determines that he has a reasonable opportunity to graduate before the next succeeding regular season of the League, all member clubs will be advised of his conditional eligibility for the Principal Draft. Any player so designated cannot be signed to an NFL Player Contract, regardless of whether he is selected in the Selection Meeting, until the League office is advised by an appropriate authority at the player's college that he has graduated. Any player who makes such a declaration to graduate, but who does not graduate before the next succeeding regular season of the League, will not be eligible to sign a player contract for that season or postseason, and said player's selecting club will forfeit its selection choice. Any player who fails to provide timely written notification of his graduation, or any player who fails to make a timely written declaration of his intent to graduate and who graduates before his college football eligibility has expired and before the beginning of the next succeeding regular season of the League, may be eligible for a Supplemental Draft.

A diploma of graduation issued by a recognized college or university to a student under an accelerated course or program shall be acceptable for eligibility purposes despite the fact that the student actually attended such institution for a period of less than four years.

8. **EXTENSION OF COLLEGE ELIGIBILITY.** If a player who entered college with only three years of football eligibility has exhausted such eligibility through participation, but is permitted under NCAA rules to become eligible to participate in another season of college football by completing certain academic requirements by the beginning of his fifth academic year, the following shall apply:
  - (a) Such player is eligible for selection in the Principal Draft, provided that the player does not participate in spring football practice or other team-related activities at his school, and further provided that he does not otherwise indicate that he intends to return to play college football in the following football season.

- (b) If such draft-eligible player becomes eligible to participate in another college football season, and returns to college to play football, any club that has selected him will retain its exclusive rights to him through the date of the Principal Draft that follows the last season in which the player is eligible to participate in college football, and thereafter the player shall be treated, and the club shall have such exclusive rights, as if he were drafted in such Principal Draft by such club (or assignee club).
- (c) If such draft-eligible player is not drafted, he becomes eligible to be signed as a free agent and remains eligible to be signed as a free agent unless he returns to college to play football, in which case he will become eligible for selection in the subsequent Principal Draft.
- (d) If such player participates in spring football or other team-related activities at his school, or otherwise indicates that he intends to return to college to play football, he is not eligible for selection in the Principal Draft. If he subsequently fails to become eligible for participation in the following college football season, he may apply for a Supplemental Draft, if the League elects to schedule one.