

# FASTBALL



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# Fastball

## Basics

Two teams of 7 players, with three interchange substitutes, attempt to score goals by throwing an oval ball into goal nets at either end of the pitch; one team defends one goal, whilst the other team defends the opposite goal. Players may throw the ball, to shoot or to pass the ball, but not kick the ball or touch the ball with any part of the body below waist height. The defending team may attempt to stop the attacking team by making tackles, blocks or interceptions. A match will consist of three periods of 30 minutes, with 5 minutes break between periods.

- ***Player Positions***

Players may move anywhere within the *field of play* (see below for definition) and are not restricted to zones or certain areas based on position. There are no goalkeepers or players that may stand in the goal area, see below, whilst it is expected that teams will operate with the following starting positions:

*Backdrop* - This player will be the most defensive and tend to remain in defensive or covering positions.

2 x *Stops* (one left sided and one right sided) – These players will primarily adopt defensive roles, but will push forward to support the attacking play under certain circumstances.

*General* – This player will operate through central areas and aid in both offensive and defensive scenarios.

2 x *Runners* (one left sided and one right sided) – These players will operate in more advanced areas, primarily supporting the attacking play, but defending when necessary.

*Deep* – This player will be the main target or goal scorer, primary playing in the most advanced positions and aiming to shoot when possible.

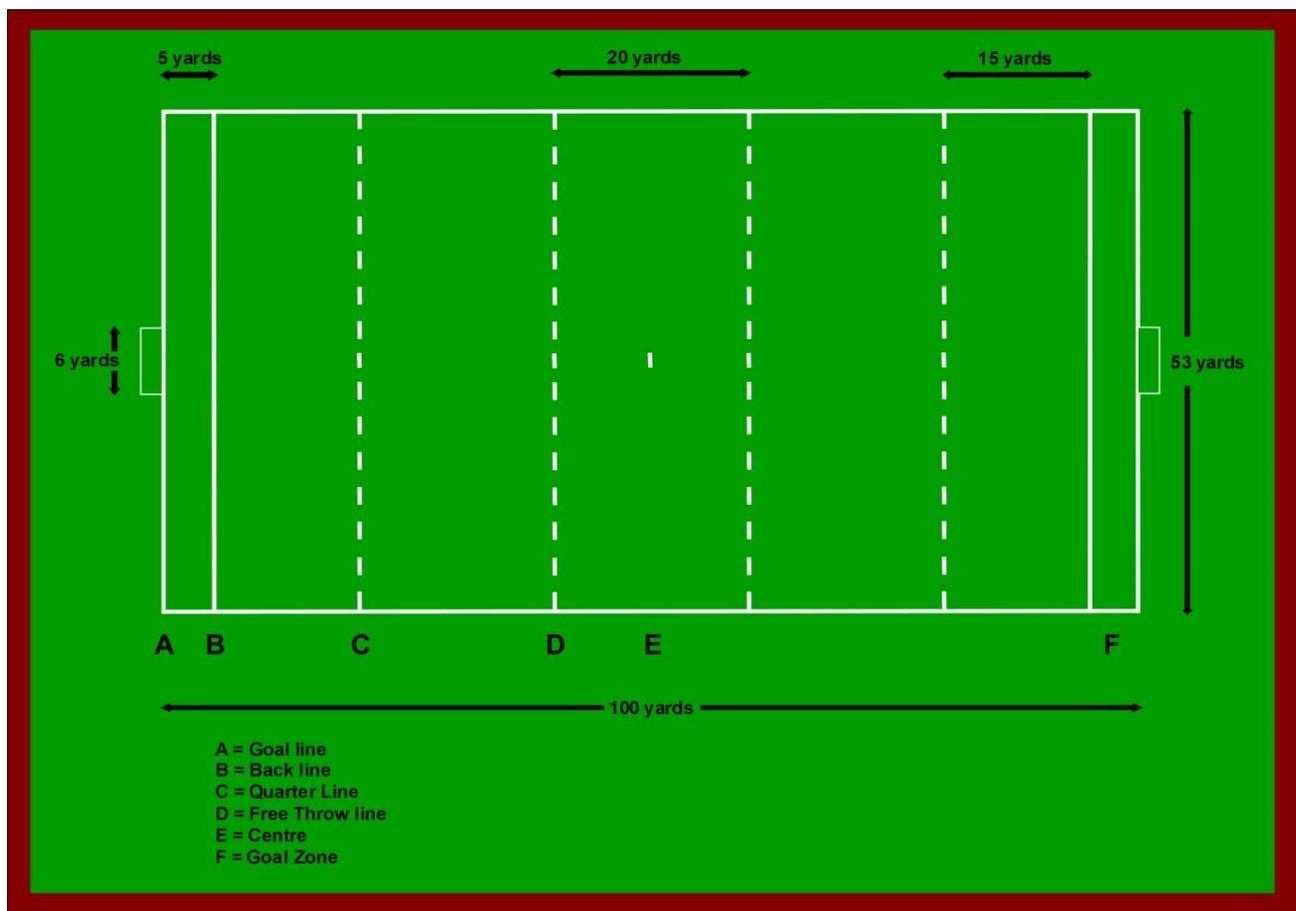
Plus three interchange (substitute) players who may come on and off as necessary, during a stoppage in play. These players may play in any position and can switch with any player on the pitch, as long as each team does not have any more than seven players on the pitch at any one time (although a team may be reduced in number depending on disciplinary situations).

- ***Injury Replacement***

A provision for an additional player or players to replace any injured players should also be included, although once a player has been replaced through injury (by a replacement player not in the initial ten players selected), then he will not be allowed to come back onto the pitch.

## The Pitch

Fastball is played on a field  $100 \times 53$  yards.



## Field of Play

At each end of the field is a *goal line*; with the goal posts situated at the centre of each *goal line*.

Near each end of the field is a *back line*; they are 90 yards apart and situated 5 yards in from each *goal line*. This 5 yard zone cannot be used by any player from either team while the ball is 'active' and can only be entered for the ball to be retrieved by the defending team after the ball is deemed 'dead'. All play will occur within the *field of play*.

The *field of play*, is then divided into five further sections; 15 yards in from each *back line* is the *Quarter line* and then a further 20 yards in from the *Quarter line* is the *Free Throw line*. The pitch then has a 20 yard wide *central zone*, with a centre spot situated in the middle of the pitch for use at the start of each period.

On each goal line are two goal posts 6 yards wide and 8 feet high, with a net attached to each goal.

## The Ball

The ball will be oval in shape and measuring 21" x 28" in circumference (the same size as a full size 9 American Football)

## Mode of play

After a coin toss with the two captains and referee, the winner elects to start off in possession or offer the start to the opposition; instead the toss-winning team may select which direction they wish to attack.

Play commences once the team in possession of the ball has thrown the ball toward another player, although the ball does not need to be touched by a player in the same team as the team that started the game in possession, for the ball to be active. Each team is responsible for defending their goal.

- ***Attacking***

The team with possession of the football is the team in attack. The primary aim of this team is to 'work' the ball out from their own end of the field, into a more favourable position towards the opposition's goal, and then attempt to score a goal by putting the ball into the opposition's goal. The attacking team may either 'pass' the ball, by throwing it over arm, under arm or with both hands (like Rugby), or 'Run' with the ball.

A 'pass' (throw) has to be over a distance of 5 yards to be legal, a successful pass that is made over a distance of less than 5 yards will be deemed illegal and possession will be awarded to the defending team at the point where the initial pass was attempted; however, if the defending team are able to 'intercept' the pass (see below), then play will be allowed to carry on with the defending team now in possession of the ball.

A player in possession of the ball may attempt to 'Run' with the ball, but he will only be allowed to 'carry' the ball over one line (*Quarter line* or *Free Throw line*) and must release the ball or pass the ball before crossing over a second line. A player is deemed to have crossed a line whenever any of his feet touch the ground beyond the line; a player who has both feet off the ground has not crossed the line, therefore diving to make a pass is deemed legal. Once a player has crossed one line, he will also not be able to retreat back over that line when 'Running' with the ball, as this would effectively be crossing over a second line.

A player is deemed to be in possession of the ball if he 'runs' with the ball in hand or was the last player to touch the ball with his hands (hitting the head or the body is not considered as being in possession), therefore until another player has touched the ball with his hands, the last player in 'actual' possession, remains in possession. A player may not throw the ball in the air and then re-catch the ball to evade the 'One line running rule', as he remains 'actually' in possession until the ball is touched by another player's hands.

- ***Defending***

The objective of the defensive side is to prevent the team in possession from scoring and obtaining their shorter term objectives. The defensive team carries out these objectives by:

- Making tackles to gain possession themselves (see tackles)
- Making interceptions to 'turn over' possession
- Blocking shots on goal

If a ball goes 'dead' as in the ball goes out of play or touches the ground within the *field of play* (between the back lines at each end), then play restarts with possession given directly to the team who is defending the half of the pitch where the ball went dead. A defending player may block a shot or palm away a pass to prevent an opponent gaining possession, and intentionally make the ball 'dead' either forcing the ball out of play or to hit the ground, if they do this in their own half, then they will be given possession of the ball to restart at the point at which the ball either touched the ground or went out of play.

### ***Tackling***

A defending player may not 'tackle' an opponent who is not in possession of the ball. As there is no offside rule in Fastball, players can be tackled from any direction, and often blindsided.

In Fastball the move commonly described as a "tackle" is similar to rugby and involves wrapping, holding or wrestling a player who has possession of the ball to the ground.

If tackled, the player has to dispose of the ball immediately or is penalised and the tackler is rewarded with a '*free throw*'. This is only paid if the player tackling does not either deliberately or unintentionally hold the ball to their opponents body or prevent him from releasing the ball.

A tackle must make contact below the shoulders and above the knees, and a player is able to be thrown to the ground, so long as the tackle is not reckless. Pushing in the back is illegal making tackling more difficult.

Players wear no padding to cushion the impact of tackles, however mouthguards are essential for keeping teeth. As there is no offside rule in Fastball, tackling is more often when chasing a player down rather than frequent head on contact.

Although the term "tackle" is used in Fastball to exclusively describe wrapping, holding or wrestling a player in possession, there are also several other ways of contesting possession in Fastball that one would describe as a "tackle" and that also involve a degree of contact.

Colliding with other players whilst trying to catch the ball is part of the game, however tackling a player jumping in the air to catch a ball is strictly prohibited. Bumping a player who is jumping to catch the ball is not allowed unless the player is deemed to have intentions to contest for possession or have "eyes for the ball". The defensive tactic of punching away (commonly known as spoiling) from a player is allowed, whilst *Blocking*, which involves using the arms or body to get in the way of an opponent's throw, is similar to a *charge down*, is also allowed, although blocking using any part of the body below the waist is illegal.

## Goals

A Goal is scored whenever an active ball is thrown into the net and the game restarts at any point along the attacking teams own *Quarter line*. The ball may deflect off of other players or off of the posts/crossbar or may bounce off the ground, as long as the whole of the ball has crossed the line or is over the *goal line* when the ball comes to rest, then a goal is awarded; if the ball crosses the line and then bounces back out, then the goal is not awarded. If the ball strikes an attacking player below the waist before going into the net, then the goal will be disallowed; whilst if a defending player blocks a shot on goal with any part of his body below the waist, whether intentionally or not, and this results in the shot missing the goal, then a *free throw* will be awarded (see free throw below). Note: the referee can overrule this law if in his opinion the attacking player has intentionally aimed his shot at a defending player below the waist.

### *Free Throws*

A free throw is common and awarded to a team when the opposing team has been penalised for serious foul play or illegal defending, i.e. Blocking or challenging a player directly when in the air or a high or low contact when attempting to tackle.

When a free throw is awarded, the attacking teams nominated 'Free Throw' player will attempt to score directly into the opposing net from a position along the 'Free Throw' line but in line with where the infraction took place, as directed by the Umpire.

Defending players may position themselves in blocking positions between themselves and their goal, but they must stand at least 10 yards away from the free thrower and not beyond the 'Back line'. The free throw taker may take one step before releasing the ball, but may not step over the 'Free Throw' line before releasing the ball.

If a goal is successfully scored then the defending teams restarts the play at any point along their own *Quarter line*, as normal; if the defending team are able to block the effort or the shot misses the goal, then the game restarts with the team that defended the free throw in possession on their own *Quarter line* (not from where the block or interception took place).