United States Patent

[11] 3,547,441

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[54] **FOOTBALL GAME WITH SUPERIMPOSED CARDS**
4 Claims, 6 Drawing Figs.

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **273/94,** 273/130
[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63f 3/00,** A63f 7/06
[50] **Field of Search** ..... 273/94, 88, 134(CG CF), 85(G), 130

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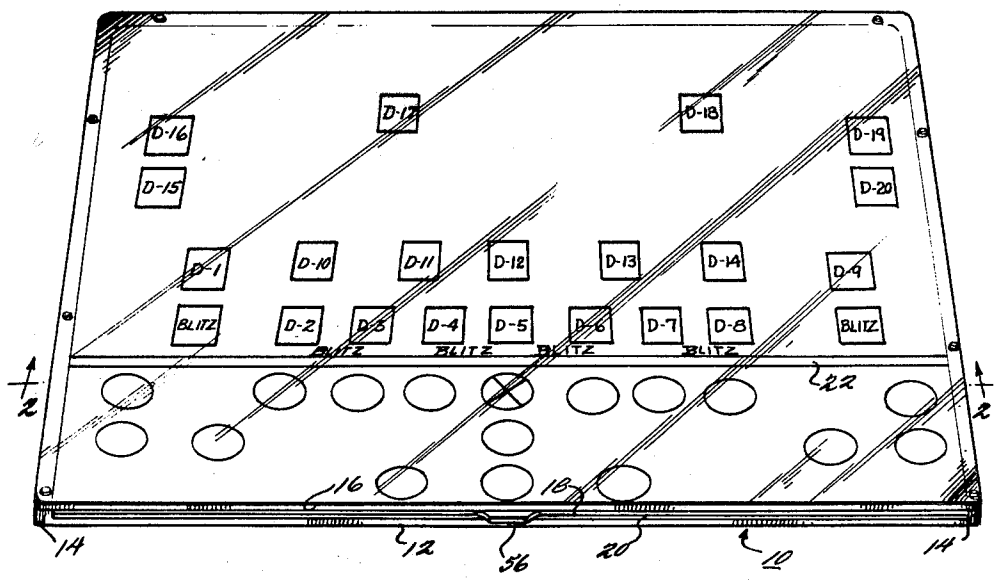
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ABSTRACT: A game simulating the sport of football. Randomly occurring plays such as kicks are developed by rolling dice and relating the roll count to a chart having play information thereon. However, the majority of plays in an actual football game are run from scrimmage, and for such plays, the invention provides a number of play cards each having an offensive play thereon, the cards being individually selected by the offensive player and masked from his opponent. The mask is a master overlay card having areas marked thereon to represent the possible positions for offensive and defensive men. These areas are keyed to all of the play cards. The selected play card and mask are superimposed beneath a transparent sheet so that the mask is visible, and the opposing players each selectively position eleven objects in registry with areas on the mask to set the offensive and defensive alignments. The mask is then withdrawn without moving the play card to thereby expose the selected play and to indicate whether the defense has been positioned to intercept the offensive man indicated on the play card as handling the ball. The sequence and number of plays run by each player are determined substantially in accordance with the usual rules of football.



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SHEET 1 OF 3

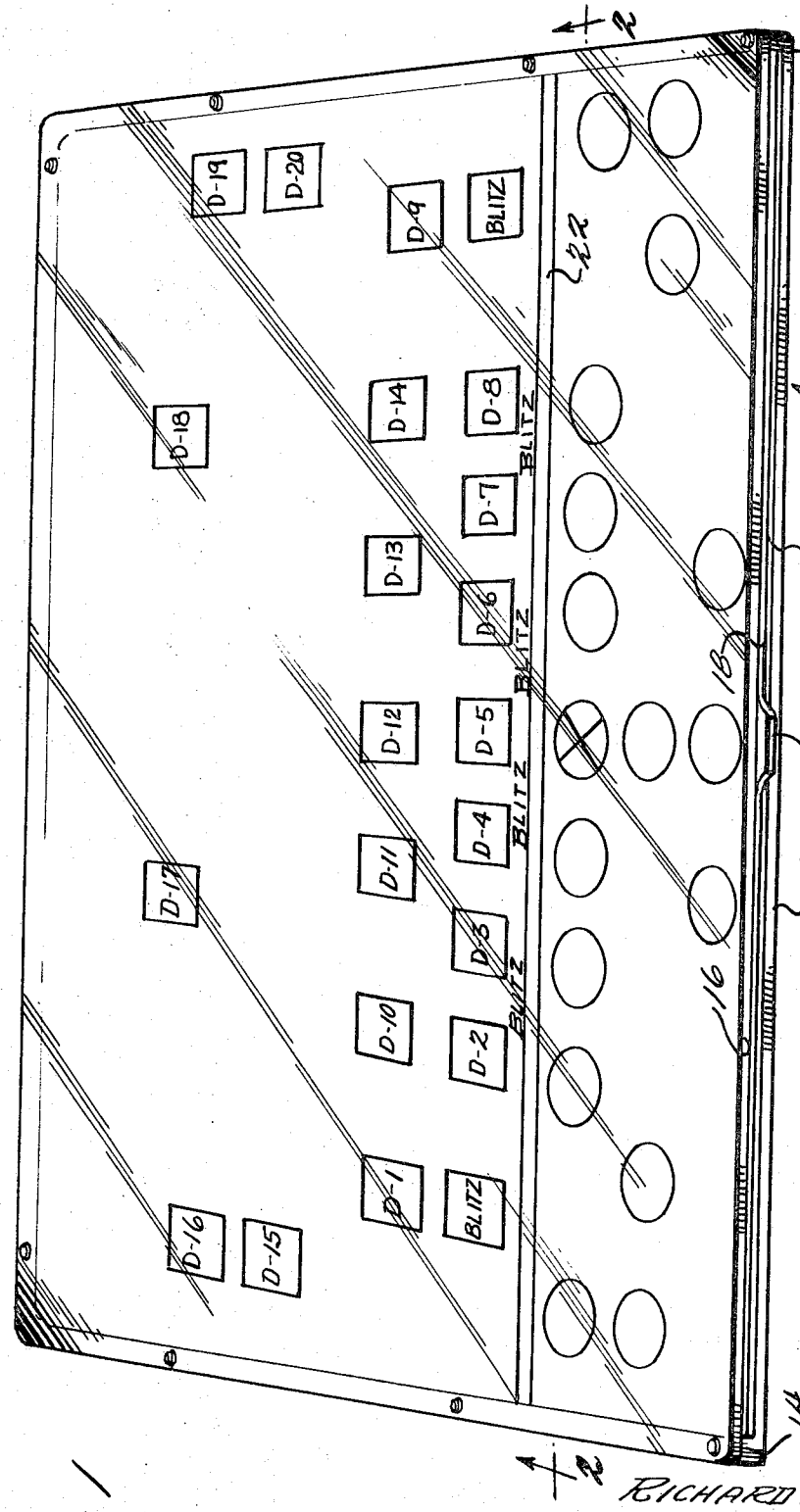


FIG. 1

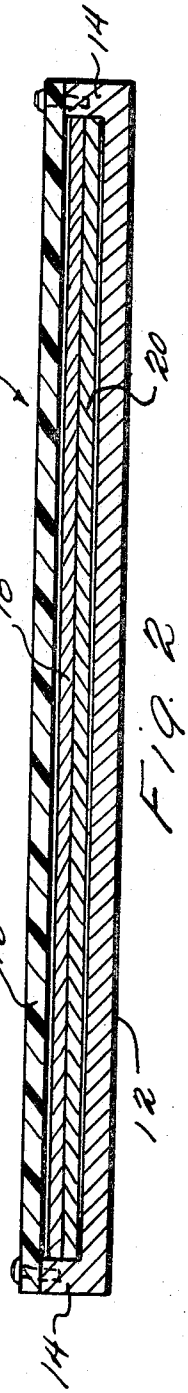


FIG. 2

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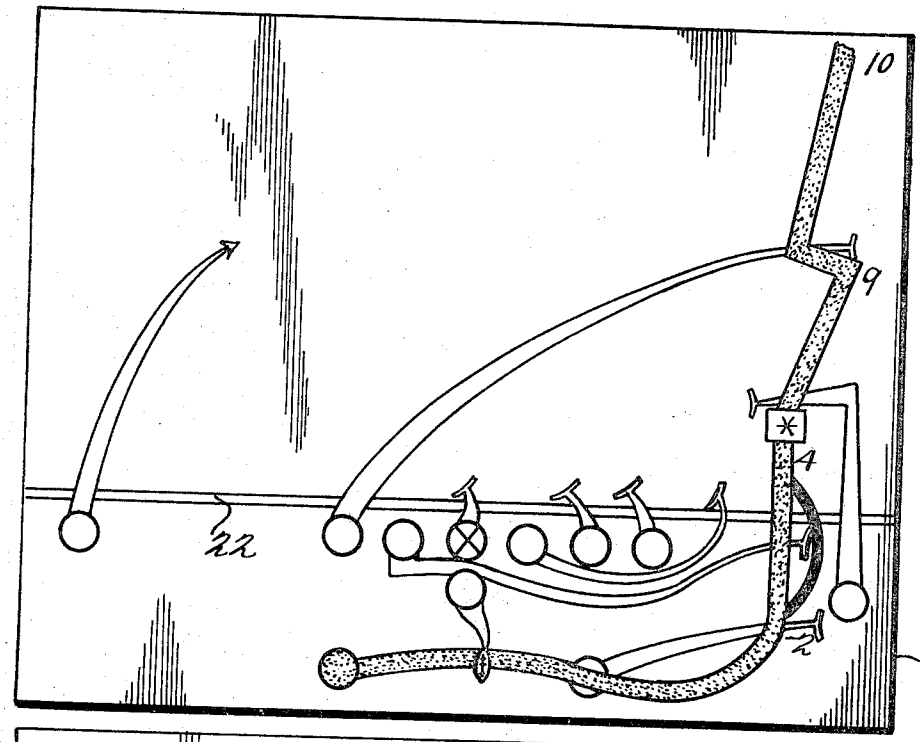


Fig. 4

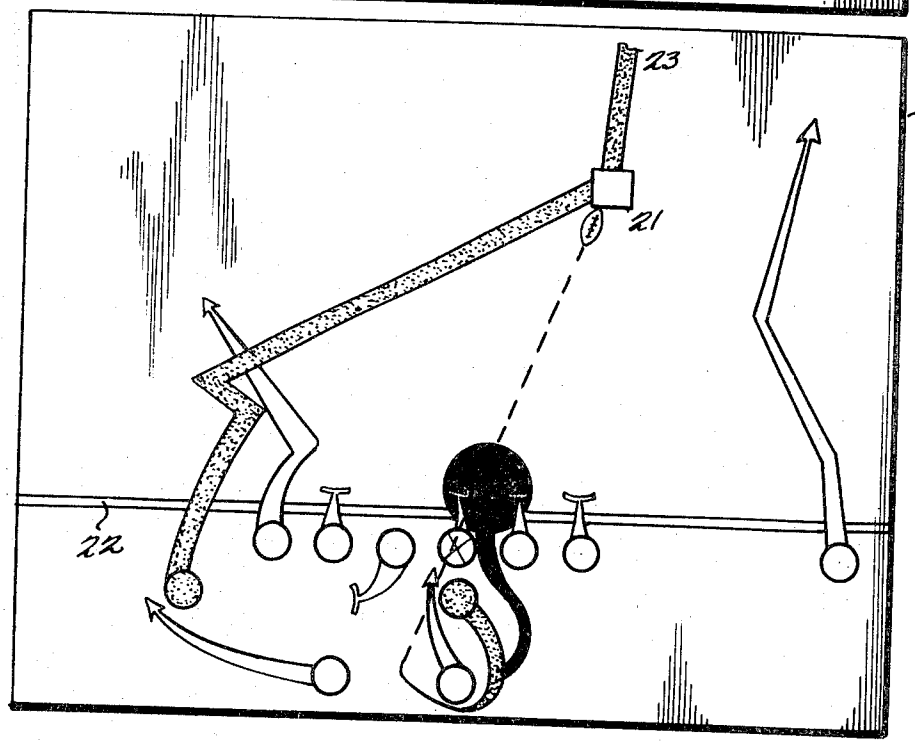


Fig. 5

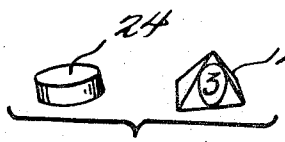


Fig. 3

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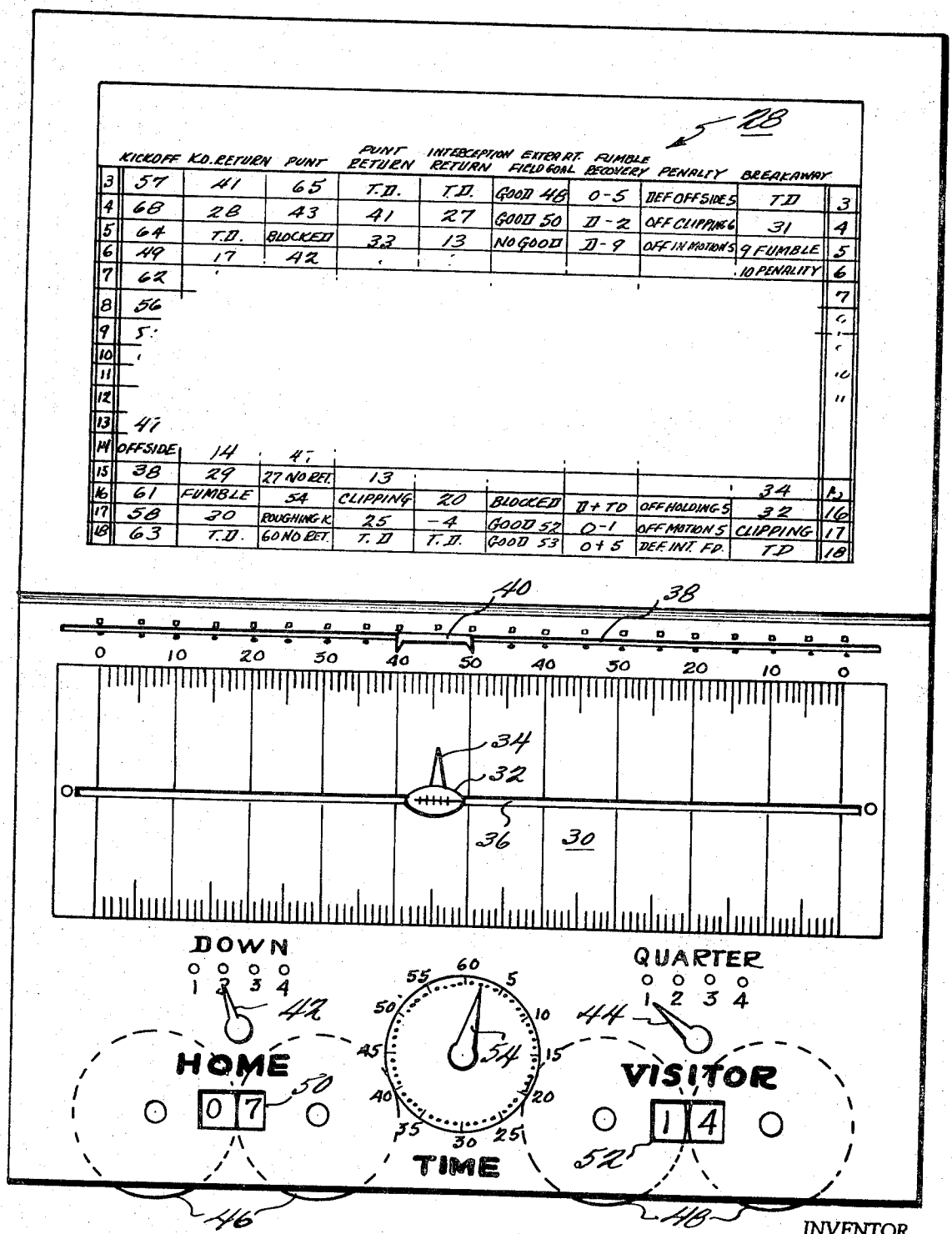


Fig. 6

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FOOTBALL GAME WITH SUPERIMPOSED CARDS

The sport of football for many years has been reduced to various forms of parlor games which can be played by a limited number of persons. However, games developed in the past usually rely heavily on the element of chance rather than an understanding of the sport. For example, the use of spinners, dice, random selection of situation cards or player positions, and various lighting arrangements have characterized most of such known games.

The present invention relates to a football game wherein the bulk of the offensive and defensive plays comprising the game are tailored by opposing players to fit particular situations facing them as they guide their teams. As a result, the game becomes a true contest between the participants since success is to a great measure dependent on an understanding of the basic rules of football, the capabilities of the individual offensive and defensive men, and the exercise of sound strategy.

Briefly, the football game constituting the present invention is divided into two basic types of plays:

1. those randomly occurring, such as kicking plays (kickoffs, and returns, punts and returns, and field goal and extra point attempts), fumbles, penalties, etc.; and
2. plays run from scrimmage (rushes and passes).

The latter by far comprises the majority of plays in an actual football game, and it is to this type of play that the invention is especially directed. More particularly, the offensive player is supplied with a number of cards each having a different rush or pass play illustrated thereon. The offensive player selects the card bearing the play he believes will be the most successful in the particular situation in which his team finds itself. He then masks his selected play card with a master card having a number of areas printed thereon representing possible positions for objects representing offensive and defensive men. These areas are keyed in location to all of the offensive play cards. The sandwich comprising the selected play card and the mask is positioned beneath a transparent sheet. The offensive player then locates eleven objects representing his team in registry with eleven of the areas on the mask, including the area keyed to the individuals indicated on the selected play card as handling the ball. The defensive player observing the alignment of the eleven objects of his opponent evaluates the offensive play possibilities and positions eleven objects representing defensive men in registry with eleven other areas on the mask in an attempt to intercept the path of the ball shown on the selected play card. The mask is then removed from the sandwich leaving the selected play card intact. The players at that time are able to view the play card and the alignment of the defense to determine whether the selected play is successful. The foregoing procedure is repeated for each allotted play from scrimmage. For far less frequently occurring plays such as kicks, the element of chance is introduced to the game inasmuch as the players roll dice and relate the rolls to a chart which indicates the results of the play.

The invention will be described in further detail by reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a view in perspective of a card holding device used in simulating plays run from scrimmage;

FIG. 2 is a view in section taken along line 2–2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a view in perspective of objects, or pieces, representing offensive and defensive men which are selectively positioned on the card holding device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a top plan view of a typical offensive play card illustrating a run;

FIG. 5 in a top plan view of a typical offensive play card illustrating a pass; and

FIG. 6 is a top plan view of a board used in simulating those plays which randomly occur and in keeping track of the progress of the game.

Referring now to the drawings, the invention will be described in detail. FIGS. 1 through 3 illustrate the structure used in simulating plays run from scrimmage. More particularly, in FIGS. 1 and 2 a housing for holding play cards is illustrated. This housing is generally indicated by the numeral 10.

The housing comprises a rectangular base 12 having a wall 14 extending upwardly therefrom along three edges of the base. A rigid transparent sheet 16 of substantially the same size as base 12 is secured to the upper surface of wall 14. Thus, base 12 and sheet 16 are maintained in spaced relationship and define the major surfaces of housing 10 having an open end to permit access to the interior of the housing.

FIGS. 1 and 2 illustrate two superimposed cards within housing 10. These are an offensive play card 20 and a master card 18. The latter has indicia on its upper surface which are visible through sheet 16. These include a line of scrimmage 22, squares representing possible defensive positions and circles for arranging offensive alignments. In the illustrative embodiment, 22 defensive positions and 17 offensive positions are shown. Of course, for each play only 11 of each are utilized.

FIG. 3 illustrates a disclike object, or piece, 24 and a pyramidal object 26 which serve respectively to represent an offensive and a defensive man. The diameter of disc 24 substantially corresponds to that of each circle on master card 18. Similarly, the dimensions of the base of object 26 corresponds to the squares on card 18. As the game is played, pieces 24 and 26 are placed on the upper surface of transparent sheet 16 in registry with selected ones of the circles and squares on card 18. This will be explained in further detail hereinafter.

Typical offensive plays imprinted on the upper surface of offensive cards 20 are shown in FIGS. 4 and 5. The play illustrated in FIG. 4 is a running play in the form of an end sweep. The stippled line is the path taken by the ball carrier. The heavy solid line indicates the possibility that the ball carrier may be trapped behind the line of scrimmage 22. In FIG. 5, a pass play is portrayed. The flight of the ball is shown in dash lines while the pattern run by the receiver is illustrated in stippled line. The heavy solid line indicates the possibility that the passer is successfully blitzed and thrown for a loss before releasing the ball.

The details of the above plays will be described more fully when the rules of game are outlined hereinafter. Suffice it to say at this point that a number of different offensive play cards are provided to permit the offensive player to have a wide variety of plays from which to choose. In each case, however, the 11 circles on play card 20 are keyed to 11 of the circles on master card 18. Also, the movement of the ball as represented on each card 20 is keyed to one or more of the squares on card 18. More particularly, in the case of a running play, the path of the ball carrier shown on card 20 is designed to pass beneath one or more squares on the card 18 when cards 18 and 20 are superimposed within housing 10. Similarly, the path of a pass receiver, from the time the ball reaches him, is arranged to fall beneath one or more squares on card 18 when both the master and offensive cards are in housing 10.

FIG. 6 illustrates a board utilized in simulating randomly occurring plays and for keeping track of the progress of the game. The upper half of the board includes a chart 28. This chart includes side margins having numerals 3—18 thereon which represent all of the possibilities arising from the throw of three dice (not shown). Certain of the interior columns of the chart relate to the following plays:

1. kickoffs
2. kickoff returns
3. punts
4. punt returns
5. extra points and field goals

The remaining interior columns of chart 28 are concerned with other relatively infrequent plays which are inconvenient to program on play cards of the type shown in FIGS. 4 and 5. Such plays include:

1. pass interception returns
2. fumble recoveries
3. penalties
4. breakaways

The manner in which chart 28 is used will be described hereinafter when the game rules are given. Only a portion of the chart is shown for convenience of illustration.

The board of FIG. 6 also includes conventional means for recording the progress of the game. On the bottom half of the board a graduated football field 30 is displayed. A simulated ball 32 having a pointer 34 attached thereto is slidingly mounted in a track 36 running the length of the field. The players move the ball after each play to indicate the field position of the offensive team. An additional track 38 is provided running parallel to the football field. An indicator 40 is slidingly positioned in track 38. Indicator 40 includes a pair of spaced pointers which are scaled to the graduations of field 30 to represent 10 yards. By appropriately moving indicator 40 along track 38, the players are constantly aware of yards necessary to be gained by the offensive team to achieve a first down.

The downs are counted by a pointer 42 pivotally mounted to the board. Similarly, the quarters of the game are recorded by a pivotally mounted pointer 44.

The score of the game is maintained by two pairs of discs 46 and 48 which are rotatably mounted to the board beneath its top surface. Numerals are imprinted about the circumferential edge of the upper surface of the discs. A pair of windows 50 and 52 are provided in the board to expose portions of the periphery of disc pairs 46 and 48, respectively. By appropriate manipulation of the discs, the game score is exposed through these windows.

It has been found that the number of plays which can be run in an actual 60-minute football game is reasonably constant. Therefore, in order to approximate an actual game, a 60-minute "clock" is provided on the board of FIG. 6. The "clock" may be graduated in accordance with the average number of plays which may be expected in an actual game. After each simulated play, a rotatably mounted pointer 54 is advanced one graduation. Of course, the game can also be played using any number of plays agreed to by the players.

Now that the structure of the game has been described, the manner of playing it will be outlined. This can best be accomplished by setting out the rules of the game.

The determination of which player receives the ball at the beginning of the game is made by the flip of a coin or the roll of dice. For the kickoff, the player X representing the kicking team rolls the dice and relates the roll count to chart 28 of FIG. 6. Assume, for example, that player X rolls 8. Referring to the chart it can be seen that the kickoff from player X's 40 yard line travels 56 yards to player Y's 4 yard line. Ball 32 is slid along track 36 to the 4 yard line. Player Y then rolls the dice. Assuming he rolls 6, the chart 28 indicates a kickoff return of 17 yards bringing the ball out to Y's 21 yard line. Ball 32 is appropriately moved to this position; indicator 40 is positioned along track 38 to display that player Y must progress to the 31 yard line for a first down; and pointer 54 is adjusted to indicate completion of a play.

Player Y then prepares for his first play from scrimmage. Taking note of his field position, Y selects one of the many offensive play cards 20 at his disposal, and he conceals the play from X by masking card 20 with the master card 18. This sandwich is then inserted within housing 10 with the printed surface of card 18 exposed. Player Y then positions 11 discs 24 on the top of sheet 16 in registry with 11 of the circles on card 18. Seven of the discs must be placed above seven of the nine circles adjacent the line of scrimmage 22, and four discs must be placed above four of the remaining eight circles representing possible backfield positions. In order to permit player X to subsequently select a defensive alignment which is capable of being keyed to the selected offensive play, player Y must make certain that the ball carrier or the pass receiver in the selected play is covered by a disc.

After player Y sets his offensive, player X places his 11 defensive pieces 26 on sheet 16 above squares on card 18 in an alignment he thinks will best defend against the possibilities suggested by Y's offensive formation. There are some basic rules controlling the defense which may be selected:

1. there must always be a minimum of three defensive pieces adjacent the line of scrimmage 22 (positions D–2 through D–8 on card 18);
2. only three pieces may be positioned in the deep secondary (positions D–15 through D–20);
3. a piece can be played at position D–15 or D–16, but not at both simultaneously;
4. a piece can be played at position D–19 or D–20, but not at both simultaneously;
5. a piece can be played at the cornerback position D–1 or at the blitz square in front of D–1, but not at both simultaneously; and
6. a piece can be played at the cornerback position D–9 or at the blitz square in front of D–9, but not at both simultaneously.

To introduce additional variety to the present game, the defensive pieces 26 are accorded differing strengths and capabilities by the use of appropriate symbols on the pieces. A piece with a zero therein has the capability of stopping the ball carrier at the point of contact, whereas a piece bearing a two denotes that the ball carrier can move two additional yards beyond contact before he is downed. Another piece is provided with a star which indicates that this defensive piece can stop a ball carrier on contact. Such a piece is the only one which can also intercept a pass. A still further piece carries an asterisk. This piece provides three functions:

1. it cannot make a tackle or knock down a pass;
2. under certain conditions it causes a fumble (this will be described hereinafter); and
3. it can participate in a blitz (which procedure will also be developed below).

Another piece marked with the letter P provides an opportunity for a penalty to be called. When this piece makes initial contact with the ball carrier, a penalty has occurred. The play is completed and then the dice are rolled to determine the nature of the penalty as dictated by the appropriate column of chart 28.

After the defensive player X has set his defense, Y withdraws the master card 18 from housing 10 leaving the offensive play card 20 intact. Removal of card 18 is facilitated by a tab 56 mounted at the edge of card 18. The unmasking of card 20 exposes to the players the selected offensive play and defensive alignment, and the success of the play becomes apparent by tracing the path of the ball carrier, whether he is a runner or a pass receiver, to the point of first contract with a defensive player.

As illustrations of actual plays, the offensive cards shown in FIGS. 4 and 5 will be discussed. It will be recalled that following the kickoff the ball was returned to Y's 21 yard line. As the first play from scrimmage, assume Y has selected the sweep illustrated in FIG. 4.

If the defensive player X has positioned a piece 26 at the D–9 cornerback position, the path of the ball carrier intersects this position first. The numeral four on play card 20 adjacent defensive position D–9 indicates that the defensive man makes contact with the ball carrier four yards beyond the line of scrimmage. The point of contact would be the 25 yard line. The actual point where the ball carrier is considered downed is the point where contact is made plus any numeral shown on the piece 26 covering D–9. If instead of a number the piece 26 at D–9 has a star, the ball carrier is considered to be stopped at the contact point. An asterisk on piece 26 at D–9 means that that defensive player has been unable to hold the runner. Should the piece at D–9 carry the letter P, a penalty situation exists. The dice are rolled, and reference is made to chart 28 to determine the nature of the penalty. For example, a roll of three indicates that the defense was offside on the play and the offensive player Y has the option of taking the penalty and the resultant five yard gain, or refusing the penalty and taking whatever the ball carrier has gained on the play.

In the case where player X has positioned a piece on the blitz square in front of position D–9, the heavy solid line on card 20 indicates that the cornerback has succeeded in making contact with the ball carrier shown in FIG. 4 two yards behind the line of scrimmage. The point where the runner is brought down is, of course, dependent on the symbol on the defensive piece 26 occupying the blitz position.

If there is no defensive piece on D–9 or the blitz position in front of D–9, the ball carrier of the FIG. 4 play can only be brought down by there being a defensive piece at D–20 which, as indicated in FIG. 4, is nine yards beyond the line of scrimmage. The absence of a defender at D–20 results in the ball carrier avoiding further defenders and breaking away into the clear. In such a circumstance the ball carrier is considered to have gained the number of yards indicated at the end of the stippled path on the play card. If however the offensive player Y wants to attempt to gain further yardage on the breakaway, he may roll the dice and refer to the breakaway column on chart 28 of FIG. 6. The additional yardage he may gain is added to that shown at the end of play. However, since not all the possibilities in the breakaway column of FIG. 6 are gains, the offensive player has the option of refusing to roll the dice and simply accepting the last number of yards indicated on the offensive play card.

The possibility of a fumble is presented by including in the ball carrier's path on certain play cards a square in registry with one of the defensive positions, the square having an asterisk therein. If defensive player has placed a piece 26 bearing an asterisk over such a square, and if this defensive position is the first in the ball carrier's path, a fumble occurs. The offensive player then rolls the dice and refers to the fumble column on chart 28 in FIG. 6 to determine whether the offensive team (O) or the defensive team (D) recovers. The column also indicates where the fumble is recovered. For example, if the fumble occurs at the 25 yard line of the offensive team and the roll of the dice is 4, the defensive team recovers at their opponents 23 yard line.

As stated previously, the offensive player is obliged to position a disc 24 over the ball carrier before the defensive player selects his defensive alignment. In the case of a running play, failure of the offensive player to do so is interpreted as a fumble at the line of scrimmage, and the dice are rolled as just described to determine which team recovers the fumble and where.

On all pass plays, such as that shown in FIG. 5, the open square on play card 20 indicates the point of possible completion, interception or knockdown of the pass, and the numeral next to the square denotes the distance from the line of scrimmage to the open square. All defensive pieces 26, with the exceptions of those bearing a star or an asterisk symbol, are considered to have knocked down the pass if they are positioned on transparent sheet 16 directly above the open square. If the piece 26 bearing a star is so positioned, an interception occurs. Should the piece carrying the asterisk be over the open square, or if the square is not covered, the pass is completed, and the pass receiver continues until his path is covered by a defensive piece. If no defensive piece is encountered, the play is considered as a breakaway. The gain in such circumstances is determined in the same manner as described with respect to running plays.

In the event that the offensive player neglects to place a disc 24 above the position of the pass receiver is the chosen play, the quarterback is assumed to have grounded the ball intentionally, and an automatic penalty of five yards from the line of scrimmage and the loss of a down is assessed against the offensive team.

Should the open square on a pass play card 20 be covered by the defensive piece 26 bearing a star, the pass, as stated previously, is intercepted. The defensive player then rolls the dice and refers to chart 28 on FIG. 6 to determine the number of yards the interception is returned.

In an actual football game an important defense against a pass is the blitz. This is an attempt to trap the passer in his own backfield before he can release the ball. Already described has been a blitz by a cornerback, this blitz having resulted in the penetration of the offensive team's backfield to contact a runner before he reached the line of scrimmage. However, in addition to the possibility of a blitz by either cornerback, the present game provides four other blitz plays. In these four cases the defense must blitz with two pieces 26 placed side by side. Pieces placed above squares D–2 and D–3, D–4 and D–5, D–5 and D–6, and D–7 and D–8 on card 18, as shown in FIG. 1, each constitute a blitz while pieces placed above D–3 and D–4, and D–6 and D–7 are not blitzes. A blitz is successful when the defensive alignment conforms with an offensive play vulnerable to a blitz. For example in the pass play shown in FIG. 5, the positioning of defensive pieces above D–5 and D–6 of card 18 would result in the successful blitz of the quarterback as indicated in heavy solid lines on card 20 of FIG. 5. The loss on the play is twice the combined total of the numbers printed on the defensive pieces involved in the blitz. The asterisk and star symbols are considered to be zeros, as is the letter P. However, the latter indicates a penalty on the play, the nature of the penalty being determined as herein before explained. A limitation on the employment of the blitz is that the defense may not simultaneously blitz from positions D–2 and D–3 and from positions D–7 and D–8. This is to insure that passes are possible under all conditions.

The foregoing discussion of running and passing plays encompasses by far the majority of plays actually experienced in a football game. As can be seen, such plays from scrimmage challenge both the offensive and defensive player inasmuch as neither can know with certainty what to expect from the other. The game thereby achieves the situation present in an actual game wherein opponents must set their formations in accordance with the circumstances of the moment and by employing sound football strategy.

The more infrequent plays of the game, such as punts, punt returns, kickoffs and kickoff returns are determined by chance in accordance with the roll of dice and use of chart 28 of FIG. 6. On kickoffs that travel into the end zone, the defensive player may elect to take the ball on the 20-yard line instead of running it back, and on punts he may elect a "fair catch" to take the ball at the point of reception rather than attempting a runback.

Also for field goals and extra point attempts the dice and chart 28 are used to determine the distance and accuracy of each kick. Short field goals may be returned, the return yardage being governed by the punt return column.

An onside kick also forms part of the game. In attempting this play, the kicker states his intention and rolls the dice. The roll count represents the number of yards the ball travels. If it is less than 10 yards, the receiving team automatically takes possession of the ball at the 40 plus dice total yard line of the kicking team. If the roll count is 10 or more, the kicker again rolls the dice and checks the fumble column in chart 28 of FIG. 6 to determine which team gains possession. The kicking team is considered as the offensive team under such circumstances.

The structure disclosed herein is an example of an arrangement in which the inventive features of this disclosure may be utilized, and it will become apparent to one skilled in the art that certain modifications may be made within the spirit of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A football game comprising:

a plurality of offensive play cards each card having an offensive play pattern thereon;

a master card having marked areas to represent possible defensive alignments, at least one of said areas being keyed to the offensive play pattern of a selected play card when the master card is superimposed on said selected card;

means for supporting the master card in superimposed relationship with a selected play card in a manner permitting said master card to be withdrawn from such relationship;

a transparent sheet positioned adjacent said master card on the opposite side of the master card from the selected play card when the master card is superimposed on the play card; and

a plurality of pieces adapted to be placed on the opposite side of the sheet from the master card in registry with selected ones of the marked areas.

2. A football game as set forth in claim 1, further comprising additional marked areas on the master card representing possible offensive alignments, at least one of said areas being keyed to the offensive play of said selected play card when the master card is superimposed on the selected card; and additional pieces adapted to be placed on the opposite side of the sheet from the master card in registry with selected ones of the additional marked areas.

3. A football game as set forth in claim 1, wherein said supporting means includes a substantially rectangular base portion and a wall extending upwardly from the base along three of its edges, said transparent sheet being secured to said wall in spaced relationship with said base.

4. A football game as set forth in claim 1, wherein said supporting means includes a substantially rectangular base portion and a wall extending upwardly from the base along three of its edges, said transparent sheet being secured to said wall in spaced relationship with said base, the game further comprising:

additional marked areas on the master card representing possible offensive alignments, at least one of said areas being keyed to the offensive play of said selected play card when the master card is superimposed on the selected card; and

additional pieces adapted to be placed on the opposite side of the sheet from the master card in registry with selected ones of the additional marked areas.