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From ATHLETICS AT PRINCETON  
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**Of the team of 1872**, the Lit. says:  
“Though football is confined to a small portion of the year, and though each graduating class seems to take away our best players, yet the interest in it, year by year, rather increases than diminishes, and the present '25': at least will, we think, compare favorably and we doubt not, would cope successfully with any of their predecessors.”

The team well deserved praise, not only for its skill in the game, but its importance advance in the organization. The rules governing the game at Princeton had hitherto been mainly traditional and were allowed to be varied at pleasure. But this year definite rules were adopted, as follows:

- I. The grounds shall be 500 feet in length by 300 feet in breadth.
- II. The goal post shall be 25 feet apart.
- III. The number for match games shall be 25 to the side.
- IV. To a game, 4 of 7 goals are necessary.
- V. The winner of the toss shall have the choice of goals.
- VI. No player shall throw or carry the ball.
- VII. Any player catching a ball, after it had been kicked or knocked, and before it touches the ground, shall be entitled to a free kick.
- VIII. Any ball passing the boundary lines shall be kicked or

knocked in with full force. If passing the side limits, by the player first touching the ball; if passing goal limits, by a player of the side defending the goal.

- IX. No holding shall be allowed, except when a player has ball in his possession, not caught on a fly.
- X. No tripping shall be allowed, nor shall any player use his hands to push an adversary.

**• A year later the IFA, the Intercollegiate Football Association made-up Yale, Rutgers and Princeton, met October 19, 1873 and unanimously passed the following:**

- I. The grounds shall be 400 feet in length by 250 feet broad.
- II. The distance between the goal post of each shall be 25 feet apart.
- III. The number for match games shall be 20 to the side.
- IV. To win a game, 6 goals are necessary, but that side shall be considered the victors which, when the game is called, shall have secured the greatest number of goals, provided that the number be two or more. To a secure goal, the ball must pass between the posts.

- V. No player shall throw or carry the ball. Any violation of this regulation shall constitute a foul and the player so offending shall throw the ball, perpendicularly in to the air, to a height of at least twelve feet, and the ball shall not be in play until it has touched the ground.
- VI. When a ball passes out of bounds, it is a foul, and the player causing it shall advance at right angles to the boundary line, fifteen paces from the point where the ball went, and shall proceed as in Rule V.
- VII. No tripping shall be allowed, nor shall any player use his hands to push an adversary.
- VIII. The winners of the toss shall have the choice of first goal, and the sides shall change goals at every successive inning. In stating the ball it shall be fairly kicked, not babied, from a point 150 feet in front of the starter's goal.
- IX. Until the ball is kicked, no player on either side shall be in advance of a line parallel to the line of his goals, and distance from it 150 feet.
- X. There shall be two judges, one from each of the contesting colleges, and one referee; all to be chosen by the captains.
- XI. No player shall wear spikes or iron plates on his shoes.
- XII. In all match games a No. 6 ball shall used, furnished by the challenging side, and to become the property of the victors.

### **The Princeton style of play and system of coaching in football**

At Princeton the football players are trained to play straight football and little attention is given to the trick players. But the straight football of today involves many intricate plays and a complex system of signals. From 1876-1883, there were practically no signals, no prearranged plays; chance ruled the game. Whoever could grab the ball, ran with it; whoever got the chance to kicked it. But the ball was not passed to a certain man for a run for a kick.

From 1885 to 1888, a simple system of signals was used. For example, the following is a list of signals used in 1885;

- *Hold your man*, meant a kick;
- *Guard your man*, meant a run;
- *Hold hard*, meant a drop kick;
- *Watch out*, meant a run by the quarter back;
- *Play hard*, meant a run by the end;
- *Mind what you are doing*, meant that the quarter back would delay pass until the rushers got through,

then pass the ball to one of the ends;

- *Play up*, meant a run by the half back, through centre and guard;
- *Get down the field*, meant a run by the guard

football team to score over 500 or more points in a single-season; the Tigers tallied 573 points over an eight-game schedule—(an per game average of 70.8). The defensive unit allowed just 25 points—2.8 per game.

These certainly were not very intricate nor difficult to memorize. The plays were simple and one or two men took part in each; for the rule that all players in advance of the ball were off side and consequently out of the play prevented complex formations and plays devised to conceal the runner. The runner was given the ball and was expected to gain ground by dodging the opposite end, or darting through a quick opening through the line. In this he was aided by the rules which allowed no tackling below the waist.

Excepting the kicking, the line of play in which Princeton was perhaps at this time most proficient, was the passing game, which was developed to such an extent that frequently the ball would change hands four or five times before a down. A runner with the ball, who having a chance to pass it, failed to do so, was severely reprimanded. Speed, agility and the development of what might be called football instinct, “to follow the ball,” were the main features of the game at this period.

**Worth Noting:** Princeton in 1885 season became the first college