

Rules Comparison CFL-NFL

The Rhino has reminded me that we have a number of Americans in the Piffle and thought it would be fun to do a comparison between the National Football League and the Canadian Football League, so here goes: Walking into a CFL stadium for the first time, even before the game starts, an American would notice the immense playing field. The CFL field is 152 percent larger. (110 by 65 yards with 20 yard end zones as compared to 100 by 53.5 yards with 10 yard end zones). Because of the size of the field, CFL players (particularly lineman) tend to be smaller than their NFL counterparts. The next thing noticed would be that the CFL uprights are at the front of the end zone rather than at the back. CFL are 110 yards apart, NFL 120 yards apart. CFL hash marks are further apart. In the CFL, a pass to the far sideline can be a very long one indeed. As the players begin the game, other differences will become apparent. There are 12 players per team taking the field rather than 11. All the backfield players can be in motion at the time of the snap. There are only three downs in Canadian football. This makes the Canadian game more of a passing game. For the snap, players line up opposite each other one yard apart. Because of this, a team will more likely go for a third and one with a very good chance of getting a new set of downs. For punting there is no "fair catch" but a five yard zone to allow the receiver to catch the ball. Infringement of the zone results in a "no yards penalty". The scoring rules are very much the same in both leagues except for one difference, which may be the biggest difference between the two games. It is the Rouge (french for red). What is it? It is a one point score and can occur in several ways: A missed field goal that is kicked through the end zone or failed to be run back out of the end zone or a punt that is kicked through the end zone or failed to be run back out of the end zone. Sometimes a team will concede the one point because it will mean they will get better field position after the kick. The rouge has led to some exciting finishes when the two teams are tied and only need the single point for the win. I can remember one game where the ball was punted into the end zone for the win but the receiving team punted the ball back out to avoid the point. There was an exchange of 5 punts back and forth until there was a winner. Here is the best example I could find on youtube. [Click here](#). There are many other differences too numerous to mention in this missive but are of the administrative variety, such as national to international player ratios and designated players and are very complicated to explain.