It's nice to see the suits at the NFL home office aren't allowing a little thing like a complete work stoppage slow down their attempts to sissify a game that's becoming increasingly bland. While the owners and players engage in the violent blood sport of splitting a $9billion pot, the league office passed a rule moving kick-offs up to the 35-yard line in what appears to be nothing more than an attempt to actually *increase* the amount of time during a 3-hour NFL game *where nothing happens*
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I'm at a loss to understand how a $9billion pot can't be split equitably between two parties and I'm at a loss how the NFL could believe this new kick-off rule is either good for the game or will keep its players safer. I'm not going to get into the labor stoppage because, frankly, I don't understand enough about it other than to say both sides are so greedy it makes my stomach turn. But I have said previously that the NFL needs to take care of their own in terms of safety and in terms of benefits available to retired players.

The kick-off rule helps neither cause.

Having the football placed at the 35 yard line will cause more touchbacks without a doubt. Which means when I'm sitting through yet another TV timeout in CBS, and I'm awaiting that kick-off, that I'll have 3 minutes of nothing going on down on the field followed by 30 more seconds of nothing going on down on the field.

Nothing in terms of meaningful football action anyway. But aside from that annoyance I'm not sure the NFL thought this thing through ***at all***.

The only guys ***not*** getting hit on a touchback are the kick returner and the kicker. The fact there will likely be an impending touchback doesn't mean the special teams players on each side of the scrum aren't going to bust their asses down the field and hit each other. They will and they will.

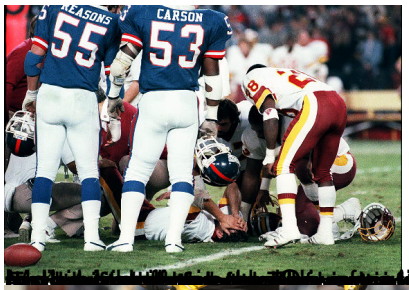
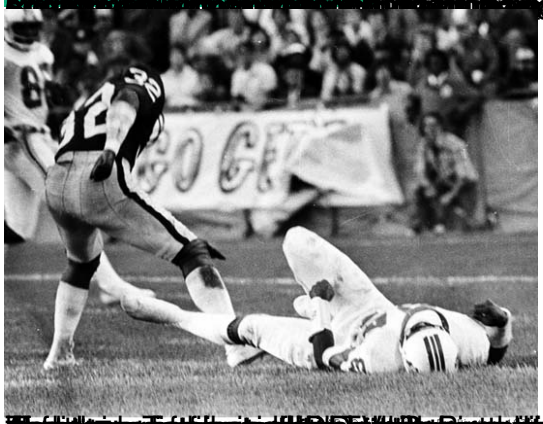
And the other part of the rule is just as ridiculous. By making the players on the kicking team start no further back than five yards from where the ball is placed the NFL is doing what exactly? Most players are up to full speed after 10 yards. So instead of those 225lb human missiles hitting full speed at their own 40 they'll hit ramming speed at their own 45yd line and still have a little bit more gas left in the tank to do bodily damage to someone on the return team.

Where it really gets interesting is when the kick return man *does* bring the ball out of the end zone or receives it short of the goal line and is able to start up field. Because the NFL also completely outlawed the forming of wedges by the return team's blockers.

So stay with me here: you have 225lb human missiles at full speed after ten yards and with some steam still left in their legs because they have five less yards to cover, converging on a return man who's either chosen to or is forced to return the kick, and that return man is not able to look up and see at least a wedge formation in front of him that his best interests at heart?

Conceivably the return man will also have a full head of steam by the time he reaches his 10 or 15-yard line. If I have all that math and physics correct I truly believe you're going to see some collisions that have all the charm and impact of a car accident somewhere near the 15 or 20 yard line on most kicks that are returned.

And that's going to benefit who exactly other than orthopedic surgeons, neurologists and the manufacturer of smelling salts?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