



# FOOTBALL OPERATIONS

T. David Gardi | Sr. Vice President

January 19, 2015

Mr. Robert Kraft  
Owner  
New England Patriots  
One Patriot Place  
Foxborough, MA 02035

## **Via Electronic Mail**

Dear Mr. Kraft:

As part of our efforts to enforce playing rules and preserve game integrity, NFL Security will conduct an immediate investigation into our preliminary findings that game balls used by the Patriots in yesterday's AFC Conference Championship game did not meet the standards established by the Playing Rules and may have been tampered with after the normal inspection procedures were followed prior to kickoff.

Rule 2, Section 1 of the NFL Official Playing Rules states in part, "[t]he ball shall be made up of an inflated (12½ to 13½ pounds ("psi") urethane bladder enclosed in a pebble grained, leather case (natural tan color) without corrugations of any kind." The rules and procedures concerning game balls are further explained in the 2014 Policy Manual for Member Clubs (Game Operations). Page A39-40 of the Game Operations Manual sets forth the procedures related to this requirement in greater detail:

*(1) All game footballs must be prepared properly and consistently for use on game day, especially to the satisfaction of quarterbacks. No player or any other person is permitted to alter the fundamental structure or surface characteristics of the footballs to be used in a game.*

*(3) ...These footballs will be delivered to the Officials' locker room two hours and 15 minutes prior to game time. The Referee will ensure that they are properly inflated and give final approval for their use.*

*(8) If, at any point during the game, the Referee determines that some game balls are in unsatisfactory condition, he can direct that new balls be brought into the game. This applies to both team-supplied game balls and kicking balls.*

*Once the balls have left the locker room, no one, including players, equipment managers, ball boys, and coaches, is allowed to alter the football in any way. If any individual*

*alters the footballs, or if a non-approved ball is used in the game, the person responsible and, if appropriate, the head coach or other club personnel will be subject to discipline, including but not limited to, a fine of \$25,000.*

Prior to kickoff, the game balls for both clubs were approved for use based on the inspection procedures set forth above. Upon information provided to League office personnel in attendance at the game, an inspection of the Patriots and Colts game balls was conducted at halftime by League office personnel and at least one alternate Game Official. The inspection, which involved each ball being inspected twice with different gauges, revealed that none of the Patriots' game balls were inflated to the specifications required under Rule 2, Section 1. In fact, one of the game balls was inflated to 10.1 psi, far below the requirement of 12 ½ to 13 ½ psi. In contrast, each of the Colts' game balls that was inspected met the requirements set forth above.

Under the circumstances we think it is appropriate to conduct an investigation to determine if there was a violation of the Playing Rules and the Policy on Integrity of the Game & Enforcement of Competitive Rules. Accordingly, we have asked Jeff Miller, NFL Senior Vice President and Chief Security Officer, or his designee, to commence a thorough investigation of this matter, including interviews of club personnel and players. Please ensure that Patriots' personnel and players are available to be interviewed upon request. We appreciate your club's full cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,



T. David Gardi  
Sr. Vice President

cc: Commissioner Goodell  
Jeff Pash  
Troy Vincent  
Jeff Miller  
Jonathan Kraft  
Bill Belichick