

**NEWS**



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**BILL BELICHICK FINED \$500,000 MAXIMUM;**

**PATRIOTS TO FORFEIT 2008 FIRST-ROUND DRAFT PICK  
IF THEY REACH THE PLAYOFFS OR 2<sup>ND</sup> AND 3<sup>RD</sup>-ROUND CHOICES;**

**CLUB FINED \$250,000**

New England Patriots Head Coach Bill Belichick has been fined the maximum amount under the NFL Constitution and By-Laws of \$500,000 for violating league policy last Sunday on the use of equipment to videotape an opposing team's offensive or defensive signals, the NFL announced today.

In addition, Commissioner Roger Goodell also notified the Patriots that they would forfeit their own first-round draft choice in 2008 if they reach the playoffs, or their own second-round and third-round picks if they do not qualify for the playoffs, and that the club would be fined \$250,000.

"This episode represents a calculated and deliberate attempt to avoid longstanding rules designed to encourage fair play and promote honest competition on the playing field," Commissioner Goodell wrote in a letter to the Patriots.

NFL policy states that "no video recording devices of any kind are permitted to be in use in the coaches' booth, on the field, or in the locker room during the game" and that all video shooting locations for club coaching purposes "must be enclosed on all sides with a roof overhead."

In a memo to NFL head coaches and general managers on September 6, 2006, NFL Executive Vice President of Football Operations Ray Anderson said, "Videotaping of any type, including but not limited to taping of an opponent's offensive or defensive signals, is prohibited on the sidelines, in the coaches' booth, in the locker room, or at any other locations accessible to club staff members during the game."

In his review of the facts, Commissioner Goodell determined that the Patriots' use last Sunday of the video camera, which was seized before the end of the first quarter, had no impact on the outcome of the Patriots-New York Jets game.

Commissioner Goodell also believes that Patriots ownership was unaware of Coach Belichick's action, but determined that penalties should be imposed on the club because "Coach Belichick not only serves as the head coach but also has substantial control over all aspects of New England's football operations. His actions and decisions are properly attributed to the club."

Commissioner Goodell informed the Patriots that the NFL would closely review and monitor the Patriots' coaching video program, effective immediately.

“I specifically considered whether to impose a suspension on Coach Belichick,” Commissioner Goodell wrote. “I have determined not to do so, largely because I believe that the discipline I am imposing of a maximum fine and forfeiture of a first-round draft choice, or multiple draft choices, is in fact more significant and long-lasting, and therefore more effective, than a suspension.”

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