

Nevada Football Officials **Mechanics Manual**



Crew of 5 officials

Crew of 7 officials

Crew of 4 officials

Copyright 2022. Revision 2025. All rights reserved. Republication in any electronic or written form of any material contained herein is expressly prohibited without prior written consent of the author. Please direct questions or comments to nfoasecretary@gmail.com or srohwer8@gmail.com.

NIAA Executive Director: Timothy Jackson

Acknowledgement and Dedication

This manual is the product of decades of work by officials from across the State of Nevada. Officials passed down lessons to new officials, and those officials refined, adapted, and improved upon those lessons. Eventually, officials from local officiating associations put these lessons into the first mechanics manuals (Jeff Dahle, Tony Kiriluk, Jerry Gribble, NNFOA; Terry Tait, Vince Consul, Cris Griffith, Carl Gertz, SNOA). These manuals served as the basis for training and educating officials of all abilities and experience levels. Since 2021, the manuals of the Northern Nevada Football Officials Association (NNFOA) and Southern Nevada Officials Association (SNOA) have been combined to create the Nevada Football Officials Mechanics Manual. Contributing officials since 2021 include Mark Jacoby, Geoff Dieringer, Earl Hintz, and Steve Rohwer from the NNFOA; Doug Suhl, Kyle Lemmon, Jim Cavin, Gary Reed, Joel Kerben, Tau Felise, and Roscoe Meisenheimer from the SNOA; and Bill Cassinelli from the NENOA.

Note: 2025 revisions are highlighted in yellow or ~~stricken through~~ if deleted.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
Preface _____	8
Officiating Excellence _____	9
1 Appearance and Uniforms _____	9
1.1 Appearance _____	9
1.1.1 Physical Condition _____	9
1.1.2 Personal Appearance _____	10
1.2 Dress Code _____	10
1.2.1 Dressing at the Site _____	10
1.2.2 Arriving Partially Dressed _____	11
1.3 Uniform and Accessories for Officials _____	11
1.3.1 Uniform _____	11
1.3.2 Accessory Equipment _____	12
1.4 Uniform for Line-to-Gain Crew _____	13

2 General Mechanics	14
2.1 Ball Handling	14
2.1.1 Relaying the Ball	14
2.1.2 Spotting the Ball	15
2.1.3 Exchanging the Ball	15
2.2 Beanbags	15
2.3 Counting Downs	16
2.4 Counting Players	16
2.5 Dead Ball Officiating	17
2.6 Fouls and Penalty Enforcement	18
2.6.1 Calling Fouls	18
2.6.2 Reporting Fouls	18
2.6.3 Penalty Enforcement	20
2.6.4 Disqualification	21
2.7 Fumbles	22
2.8 Intermissions between Periods	23
2.8.1 Intermission at the End of the First and Third Periods	23
2.8.2 Intermission at the Half	24
2.8.3 Intermission before Overtime Periods	24
2.9 Marking Ball Ready for Play	24
2.10 Marking First Downs	25
2.11 Marking Progress	25
2.11.1 Cross Field Mechanics	27
2.12 Measurements	28
2.12.1 Determining Need for Measurement	28
2.12.2 Measuring for a First Down	28
2.12.3 Resetting the Line-to-Gain Equipment	29
2.13 Sideline Plays	31

2.14 Sideline Warning and Sideline Interference _____	32
2.14.1 Sideline/Warning/Interference _____	32
2.14.2 Coaches or Other Non-Players on the field _____	33
2.15 Time-Outs _____	34
2.15.1 Charged Team Time-Out _____	34
2.15.2 Coach-Referee Conference _____	35
2.15.3 Official's Time-out _____	36
2.16 Timing _____	37
2.16.1 Standard Timing _____	37
2.16.2 Running Clock _____	38
2.16.3 Clock in Whole Seconds Only _____	38
2.17 Whistle Use _____	39
2.17.1 Ready for Play Whistle _____	39
2.17.2 Dead Ball Whistle _____	39
2.17.3 Inadvertent Whistle _____	40
2.17.4 Inadvertent Signal _____	40
3 Signals _____	42
4 Pregame _____	44
4.1 Arrival Times _____	44
4.1.1 Arrival Times for Officiating Crew _____	44
4.1.2 Arrival Times for Auxiliary Crew Members _____	44
4.2 Pregame Activities off the Field _____	45
4.2.1 Preliminary Preparations _____	45
4.2.2 Pregame Conference _____	45
4.3 Pregame Duties on the Field _____	46
4.4 Coin Toss _____	48
4.4.1 Pregame Coin Toss _____	48
4.4.2 Second Half Options _____	50

4.4.3 Overtime Coin Toss	50
5 Mechanics for Five Officials	51
5.1 Free Kicks	51
5.1.1 Kickoffs	51
5.1.2 Onside Kick	55
5.1.3 Free Kick after Safety	56
5.1.4 Free Kick after Fair Catch or Awarded Fair Catch	56
5.2 Scrimmage Plays	57
5.2.1 Referee	57
5.2.2 Umpire	59
5.2.3 Wings	61
5.2.4 Back Judge	64
5.3 Scrimmage Plays – Goal line	67
5.3.1 Goal Line Mechanics	67
5.3.2 Reverse Goal Line	68
5.3.3 Swinging Gate	69
5.3.4 Two-point try after touchdown	71
5.4 Scrimmage Kicks – Punts	71
5.4.1 Normal Punts	71
5.4.2 Illegal Kicks	75
5.5 Scrimmage Kicks – Field Goals and Trys	75
5.5.1 Field Goal Attempts	75
5.5.2 Try by Scrimmage Kick	77
Appendix 5A – Illustrated Initial Keys and Zone Responsibilities	78
6 Overtime	85
6.1 Initial Overtime Period	85
6.1.1 Intermission	85
6.1.2 Coin Toss	85

6.1.3 Prepare to Start Overtime Period _____	86
6.2 Subsequent Overtime Periods _____	86
7 Postgame _____	88
7.1 End of Game _____	88
7.2 Postgame Review _____	88
8. Mechanics for Four Officials _____	90
8.1 General Mechanics Differences for a Crew of Four _____	90
8.1.1 Relaying Ball _____	90
8.1.2 Counting Players _____	91
8.1.3 Reporting Fouls _____	91
8.1.4 Measuring for a First Down _____	91
8.1.5 Timing _____	91
8.1.6 Pregame Duties _____	91
8.1.7 Coin Toss _____	91
8.2 Specific Mechanics differences for Crew of Four _____	91
8.2.1 Free Kicks _____	91
8.2.1.1 Free Kick – Normal _____	91
8.2.1.2 Free Kick – Onside _____	92
8.2.1.3 Free Kick after Safety or Free Kick after Fair Catch _____	93
8.3 Scrimmage Plays _____	93
8.3.1 Scoring Plays from Outside 10-yard line _____	93
8.3.2 Scrimmage Plays – Normal _____	93
8.4 Scrimmage Kicks _____	94
8.4.1 Punts _____	94
8.4.2 Field Goals and Trys _____	94
9 Mechanics for 3 Officials _____	95
9.1 General Mechanics Differences from a crew of four _____	95
9.1.1 Ball Spotting _____	95

9.1.2 Penalty Enforcement	95
9.1.3 Measuring for a First Down	95
9.1.4 Counting Players	95
9.2 Free Kicks	95
9.2.1 Free Kick – Normal	95
9.2.2 Free Kick – Onside (anticipated)	95
9.3 Scrimmage Plays	95
9.3.1 Normal Scrimmage Downs	95
9.3.2 Scrimmage Kicks – Punts	95
9.3.3 Scrimmage Kicks – Field Goals and Trys	96
10 Mechanics for Seven Officials	97
11 Mechanics for Six Officials	130

Appendices

Appendix A Officiating Philosophies.....	131
Appendix B When in Doubt Axioms	133
Appendix C Philosophies Regarding Sideline Management and Control _____	134
Appendix D General Instruction for Chain Crews and Ball Persons _____	136
Appendix E Self Evaluation Guidelines for Officials _____	139
Appendix F Use of Official to Official (O2O) Radios _____	144
Appendix G Use of Social Media Guidelines _____	145
Appendix H State of Nevada Running Clock Rule _____	146
Appendix I Approved Auxiliary Signals	148

PREFACE

Under authority of the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (NIAA), this manual will serve as the official high school football mechanics manual for all associations within the State of Nevada. Adherence to this manual will help provide consistency for football officiating throughout the state, whether the crews are comprised of officials from a single local association or from different associations, such as in state playoff tournament games.

This manual provides descriptions of officiating excellence, personal appearance, uniform requirements, general mechanics and signals as well as specific mechanics for crews of seven, six, five, four, and three officials. The manual focuses on mechanics for a crew of five officials and includes the “dos” and “don’ts” of officiating along with recommendations to ensure mechanics are consistently applied by all officials. Descriptions of mechanics for crews of three or four officials are abbreviated to indicate the major differences between the five-official mechanics and the mechanics for the smaller crew sizes. With many state championship playoff games now having a 7-official crew, 7 official mechanics as well as 6 officials (in event of injury or other contingencies) has also been added. The manual also provides instructions for line-to-gain crews, clock operators/timers, and ball persons. Officials should concentrate on mastering the mechanics for a crew of five officials and then learn the differences and adjustments required to work with crews of three or four officials, or crews of 7 and 6 respectively. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Football Rules Book and Case Book is the official rules book for NIAA sanctioned contests.

OFFICIATING EXCELLENCE

PERFECTION may not be attainable, but EXCELLENCE is what you can achieve if you consistently pursue perfection. The integrity of the game of football is entrusted to its officials who are expected to exhibit the highest ethical standards for honesty and fairness. Officials play a major role in developing and maintaining public confidence in the game. In the pursuit of excellence, football officials shall:

- Prepare themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally to perform at a consistently high level of excellence
- Master both the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to enforce the rules
- Apply rules and mechanics judiciously and consistently
- Exercise authority in an impartial, firm, and controlled manner
- Comport themselves in a manner consistent with the high standards of the football officiating profession including integrity, neutrality, respect, sensitivity, discretion, and tactfulness
- Be punctual and professional in fulfilling all obligations and commitments
- Exhibit superior verbal and non-verbal communication skills
- Accept responsibility and accountability for all their actions

An EXCELLENT OFFICIAL has full knowledge of the rules and mechanics of the game; applies them in a judicious and consistent manner to make the contest fair for all participants; and comports themselves as a professional at all times.

Section 1- APPEARANCE AND UNIFORMS

An official's appearance greatly affects how coaches, players, and fans perceive you as an official. An official who looks the part will be more readily accepted than one who conveys a sloppy or unprofessional appearance. An official who dresses and acts in a professional manner and who moves quickly from one position to another will have a much greater opportunity for success.

1.1 Appearance

An official should be in good physical condition and well-groomed.

1.1.1 Physical Condition

The physical condition of an official is an important part of appearance. Football officials should have an athletic appearance. The official who is out of condition, more often than not, does a poor job of officiating simply because of the inability to properly cover the play. Football officiating requires personal mobility, agility, strength, and stamina. An official must have the

mobility and agility to get into position to effectively cover plays without hindering or obstructing the movements of the players. An official must have the strength and stamina to maintain a consistently high level of athleticism and concentration throughout the game.

1.1.2 Personal Appearance

An official must be well-groomed consistent with the generally accepted standards of the football officiating profession including:

- Hair should be neatly trimmed and should not cover the ears nor extend beyond the top of the collar on the uniform shirt and have a professional appearance.
- ~~Face should be clean shaven with no facial hair (e.g., beards, goatees, or long sideburns). A neatly trimmed moustache that does not extend over the upper lip or past the corners of the mouth is acceptable.~~ Facial hair is allowed but should be neatly trimmed and have a professional appearance. (Local associations may incorporate their own grooming standards for their members)
- Jewelry, other than a wedding ring, shall not be worn. Religious or medical alert medals

are not considered jewelry. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical alert must be taped and may be visible.

- Sunglasses are not recommended to be worn. However, each local association may adopt guidelines for its members. In the event of mixed association crews, the Referee will have final say on whether sunglasses may be worn.
- Cell phones shall not be carried onto or used by officials at any time while on the football field.

Exception: The Referee may carry a cell phone at their discretion during a game, but only for purposes of contacting game administration as necessary. It shall not be visible outside the uniform and must be in silent mode.

Commented [Ma1]: 2025 revision to reflect modern standards and females

1.2 DRESS CODE

In general football officials either dress in a game site facility if available or arrive partially dressed at the game site. The following guidelines have been established to ensure the officials present a proper professional image to the people associated with the games.

1.2.1 Dressing at the Site

Officials should make a good first impression on game management by wearing clean, pressed clothes to and from the game. The dress code for officials is business casual: slacks, shirts with collars, and “street” shoes. Jeans, shorts, T-shirts, baseball caps, sneakers, sandals, sweat suits, and jogging attire are not appropriate.

1.2.2 Arriving Partially Dressed

Officials who arrive at the game site partially dressed in their uniform should complete their preparation in the parking lot near their vehicle. Officials should be appropriately dressed before they approach the field. Socks should be pulled up; shirts tucked into the pants; and hat worn properly. After the game, the officials should return to the vicinity of their vehicles before they begin to get out of their uniforms.

1.3 UNIFORM AND ACCESSORIES FOR OFFICIALS

Officials are required to wear the standard uniform complete with required accessories as described below. Check the uniform and accessories before leaving home to ensure nothing has been forgotten.

1.3.1 Uniform

The uniform should be clean and well kept (i.e., like new). Shirts, black pants, shorts, socks, and hats should not be faded or stained. Shoes should be clean and polished.

- **Shirt:** The shirt shall include the standard 2-inch black and white vertical stripes with black Byron collar, black cuffs and a breast pocket. Each shirt worn for a varsity game may have a 3-inch x 2-inch American flag centered ½ inch above the left breast pocket. The zipper should be zipped at or very near the top. Shirts shall always be tucked into the pants. A short and long sleeve shirt is required and should be brought to all games. The Referee will decide which shirt to wear. All crew members will wear the same type of shirt. Mesh shirts shall not be worn for varsity, JV, or Frosh games.
- **Undershirts:** All shirts worn under the game shirt shall be black. The undershirt shall not have any logos, pictures, or writing that could be seen through the game shirt. The sleeves of the undershirt shall not extend beyond the cuffs of the game shirt. Black T-neck or mock T-neck shirts can be worn for cold weather.
- **Black Pants:** The black pant shall have a 1 1/4" white stripe running from waist to cuff.
- **Shorts:** As authorized by local association, in hot weather, black officiating shorts (5 to 7-inch inseam) with a black belt may be worn instead of the black pants for games below the varsity level. The Referee will decide which type of pants to wear. All crew members will wear the same type of game pants.
- **Belt:** The belt worn with shorts must be all black leather, 1 ¼ to 2 inches wide, with a non-descript buckle.
- **Under-shorts:** Game shirts should be tucked into the pants. Officials shall keep their shirt tucked in at all times outside of the locker room and before, during and after the game. Black under-shorts should be worn with the black officiating shorts. The under-shorts shall not extend below the game shorts.

- Socks: ~~White Black~~ crew socks shall be worn in all games when black officiating shorts are worn. Black socks shall be worn when the uniform is the Black Pants. ~~All White crew socks are acceptable when officiating youth football games as long all crew members wear the same type of game socks.~~
- Shoes: All-black shoes suitable for football officiating with all-black laces shall be worn. Shoes shall be clean and polished for every game. Minimal White is acceptable on the shoes.
- Hat: All officials other than the Referee shall wear a fitted (not adjustable) Brooklyn style black hat with white striping. The referee shall wear a fitted, all white, Brooklyn-style hat. Mesh hats shall not be worn for varsity games. The hat shall be clean and free of any visible dirt or sweat stains.
- Jacket: Jackets are not part of the approved uniform and shall not be worn.

Commented [Ma2]: 2025 Revision

Commented [Ma3]: 2025 Revision

1.3.2 Accessory Equipment

The following equipment is required by all officials:

- Penalty Flags: Officials should carry two light gold penalty flags: (1) nylon ball center or weighted flag as the primary flag, and (2) a smaller flat flag (15 x 15 inches) as a backup. The primary flag should be tucked inside the front waist band of the game pants. The back-up flag should be concealed inside a pocket of the game pants.
- Beanbags: All officials should carry at least one white, blue, or black beanbag. All members of the crew shall use the same-colored beanbags worn outside the uniform. The Back Judge, and Wings who cover scrimmage kicks should carry at least two beanbags. Beanbags should be worn tucked into the belt or front waist band of the game pants. If desired, officials may carry an extra beanbag in a pants pocket. The Back Judge (5-official crew) and the Line Judge/Head Line Judge (4-official crew) shall carry a different colored beanbag to differentiate between first touching and end of kick spot during a scrimmage kick.
- Down Indicator: An elastic wrist band or other device to keep track of downs. An extra down indicator should be carried in a pants pocket as a backup. The Referee and Umpire should have two, or some other way of marking the lateral spot of the ball.
- Game Card: An information card with pens or pencils to record game information.
- Whistles: Whistles and lanyards shall be all black. Whistles shall be the Fox-40 type to ensure a consistent sound amongst the crew. ~~should be plastic, not metal.~~ RECOMMEND: Officials should carry two whistles; one whistle should be carried in a pants pocket as a backup.
- Foul Weather Gear: If worn, foul weather gloves, head bands, or hoods should be all black.
- Special accessories are required for different positions as outlined below:
- Referee: Coin for the toss; and a checklist for the pregame meeting with coaches.
- Umpire: Indicator or device to track the lateral position on the field from which the ball was last snapped. Coin as backup for the Referee. Black towel for drying off the ball.

Commented [Ma4]: 2025 Revision

- Head Line Judge: Two chain clips for use by the line-to-gain crew, if crew is not assigned by the local association. Extra beanbag to be used by the line-to-gain crew.
- Line Judge: Countdown style wrist watch with black band to time the game if a stadium clock is unavailable or fails during the game.
- Back Judge: Countdown style wrist watch with black band to time the 25/40-second ready-for-play interval as well as time-out intervals A Ref-Smart timer or smart watch app can also be used for this.

1.4 UNIFORM FOR LINE-TO-GAIN CREW

There are two basic uniforms authorized for use by line-to-gain crew members assigned by the local Association. The Referee should determine which uniform the crew will wear. All members of the crew will wear the same uniform.

The first uniform includes:

- Black athletic shoes. Minimal white is acceptable
- White crew socks
- Black officiating shorts (5 to 7-inch inseam) with black belt.
- Local Association Official polo shirt.
- Black official's hat with white striping (fitted, not adjustable).

The second uniform includes:

- Black athletic shoes. Minimal white is acceptable
- Black officiating pants or black slacks (not sweat pants).
- Black socks or other socks as authorized by local association
- Local Association Official polo shirt.
- Black official's hat with white striping (fitted, not adjustable).

The line to gain crew should also have

- Chain clips.
- Tape to mark the midpoint of the chain, if needed (usually can be obtained from the team trainer)
- Beanbags to mark progress spots as a back up to the down box operator when the chain is not being used
- Zip ties to repair chains as needed

Section 2- GENERAL MECHANICS

This chapter provides a description of basic mechanics that generally apply to officials working seven, six, five, four, or three-official crews. The descriptions are presented in alphabetic order with focus on the general mechanics for a five-official crew. Exceptions to these mechanics will be highlighted in the separate chapters for seven-, six-, four- and three-official crews. Since the Head Line Judge and Line Judge now switch sides at halftime, The term “Wing” will be used to refer to both positions when their duties are interchangeable, unless otherwise noted, in 3-4-5-official mechanics. In 6- and 7-official mechanics the Head Line Judge and Line Judge will be referred to as “Short Wings” and the Field Judge and Side Judge as “Deep Wings”, unless otherwise noted. As used in this manual the Line Judge refers to the Wing official working on the press box side of the field, and the Head Line Judge refers to the Wing working opposite the press box side (chains side).

2.1 BALL HANDLING

Ball handling includes the mechanics for relaying, spotting, and exchanging balls during the game.

2.1.1 Relaying the Ball

Officials must cover dead-ball situations before retrieving the ball. There is no hurry to get the ball. Do not leave players unattended while retrieving the ball. Use short (less than 15-yard) underhand tosses to relay the ball. Jog toward the official to reduce the distance before making the toss. Do not let the ball touch the ground. If the official receiving the toss is facing the sun, keep the toss below head level.

- Referee and Back Judge: Help retrieve a ball that goes into the side zones or out of bounds.
- Umpire: Go outside the hash marks to retrieve the ball as necessary. There is no ‘invisible fence’ that should keep the Umpire inside the hashmarks, go help retrieve the ball.
- Back Judge: Help relay the ball on side plays that gain over five yards. Do not leave players unattended to help with the relay.
- Head Line Judge, Line Judge, and Umpire: Go downfield as needed to help relay a ball that becomes dead (e.g., incomplete pass) in the Back Judge’s area.

With the increased prevalence of spread and hurry-up offenses in the high school game, it has become imperative to use 2 ball mechanics to keep the game moving smoothly. Each local association should work with all schools at all levels to ensure each sideline has two balls from that team ready for officials. As with all ball relays, all officials must be attentive and ready to assist, but do not let the ball relay take priority over dead ball officiating.

Each team will have at least one ball person on their sideline with the two balls, and it is the responsibility of the flank officials to meet and instruct them. (See General Instructions for Ball Persons) It is advised for the other officials to introduce themselves to the ball persons, as all officials are part of the relay process. When a long incompletion occurs, the flank official on the offensive team's sideline shall turn to the ball person and be given a new team ball, and relay the ball to the Umpire, or Referee if the Umpire is not able to get to the flank official. The Back Judge will retrieve the ball from the field of play and toss it to the ball person. If the ball lands in the defensive team's sideline, the ball person for the defense will toss the ball to the Back Judge, who will then relay the ball to the offense's ball person.

2.1.2 Spotting the Ball

The official spotting the ball should face the official who is marking the forward progress spot before placing the ball on the ground. When needed (e.g., during a "hurry up" offense), take progress from the cross-field official to save time.

Umpire: Spot the ball whenever possible. If either team is starting a new series outside the opponent's 10-yard line, spot the ball on a yard line on a well-marked field, with the nose of the ball on the back side of the yard line. **Exception:** when the ball is turned over on downs to Team B, the ball will be placed at the dead ball spot and down box and chains set accordingly. If a new series is awarded inside Team B's 10-yard line (goal to go), spot the ball at the dead ball spot.

Referee: Spot the ball only if the Umpire has moved some distance from the spot to assist in relaying the ball. In a 5 official crew the Referee should only spot the ball in rare circumstances. In a 4-official crew however the Referee may be spotting the ball occasionally.

Lateral ball position references 1- press box hash, 2 – press box goal post, 3 – Center, 4- chain side post, 5- Chain side hash. These numbers shall be used to communicate previous ball spot location between officials if necessary. "Previous spot" means both previous yard line and lateral position of the ball.

Commented [Ma5]: 2025 revision (added)

2.1.3 Exchanging Balls

Wing or Back Judge: Obtain a new ball from the ball person and relay it to the Umpire.

All Officials: Relay the ball to the spotting official (usually the Umpire) who will place the new ball on the ground at the proper spot. Keep the old ball at the dead-ball spot until the new ball has been placed on the ground. Then pick up the old ball and relay it to the Wing or Back Judge to give to the ball person.

2.2 BEANBAGS

The beanbag is used to mark spots, other than the spot of a foul, which may be needed later as a reference point. Whenever possible, drop the beanbag, rather than throw it, even if the

spot is across the field. After dropping the beanbag, continue to cover the play. If the beanbag lands in the wrong place pick it up and place it at the right spot after the play has ended.

Officials must drop or toss a beanbag on the yard line where any of the following events occur:

- Fumble occurs to mark the end of a run or related run. beyond the line of scrimmage prior to a change of possession.
- First touching of a scrimmage or free kick by the kicking team. (There could be more than one spot of first touching and all spots must be marked.)
- End of a scrimmage kick (for post-scrimmage kick penalty enforcements) when there is possession *and* a return by R on the play.
- Catch, interception, or recovery between the five-yard line and the goal line *when the momentum rule applies*.
- Inadvertent whistle is blown. (Mark the position of the ball when whistle is blown.)

Commented [Ma6]: 2025 Revision to reflect NFHS Rule change 4-3-1

Officials may drop a beanbag to mark other spots such as:

- To mark a progress spot that must be abandoned to deal with dead ball duties.
- Spot where a runner or ball goes out of bounds, if the official must leave the spot to observe ensuing action, retrieve the ball, or escort players back to the field, or any other time the official must leave the progress spot for more pressing duties.
- Spot where the passer released the ball (end of run) for a possible intentional grounding foul

Officials should not drop a beanbag to mark the spot where the following events occur:

- Interception or fumble recovery by B (unless momentum applies as noted above)
- ~~Fumbles by team A behind the line of scrimmage. Some officials may bag this spot of a fumble but if it's behind the LOS it is NOT a spot of enforcement as it is still a loose ball play per 10-3-3. (Removed to reflect 2025 rule change)~~

Commented [Ma7]: 2025 revision to reflect new NFHS rule 4-3-1

Officials may use a hat to mark the spot where a player of A or K went out of bounds prior to a change of possession.

2.3 COUNTING DOWNS

All officials shall verify the number of the down on every play and ensure the down box is displaying the correct down number. Although the Wing officials are primary for this duty, verifying the down is correct is a crew responsibility. If any official has any question as to the number of the next down, he shall call an official's time-out and verify with crewmates the correct down number. Officials should change their personal down indicator consistently throughout the game, e.g., when the ball is marked ready for play.

2.4 COUNTING PLAYERS

All officials shall count players on every down. The responsibilities for counting players depend on the type of play.

For free kicks including kickoffs and kicks after a safety, fair catch, or awarded fair catch:

- Referee, Umpire: Count the receiving team players.
- Back Judge and Wings: Count the kicking team players.

For plays from scrimmage including punts:

- Referee and Umpire: Count the offensive or kicking team players.
- Back Judge, Wings: Count the defensive or receiving team players. (The Wings should give their signal toward the Back Judge.)

Officials will use the following signals to indicate the results of counting players:

- For 11 (or 8 in 1A contests, and as applicable throughout this section) players, extend an arm at shoulder height with a closed fist. ***Do not “punch 11” unless you have counted 11 yourself!***
- For less than 11 players, place an open hand about waist high and pump it up and down two or three times or two open hands pointed downward at the waist.
- For more than 11 players, give a small circular motion with the wrist and index finger in front of the waist to indicate count again.

If an official is certain either team is in formation with more than 11 players on the field, and the snap is imminent, he shall immediately throw a flag and kill the clock for a dead ball illegal substitution foul, and prevent the team from starting the down with 12 players. Officials should make every effort to count players quickly in each dead ball interval. Most veteran officials count in groups (4-4-3, 5-3-3, etc.). Do not visibly point with your finger to count players.

While it is the duty of the team, and not the officiating crew, to ensure that no more than 11 players are on the field during the down, preventive officiating by counting players will impose only a 5-yard Illegal Substitution foul on the offending team. If, however, for some reason officials could not verify their player count prior to the snap, officials should count players on the field after the play is over to verify that not more than 11 participated in the previous down. If it is discovered and verified that 12 players were on the field during the previous down, a late flag for Illegal Participation (9-6-4-c) shall be dropped.

2.5 DEAD BALL OFFICIATING

Do not become a “ball watcher” when the ball is outside your coverage area. Constantly watch players in your area of responsibility during, and after the play has ended. It is particularly important to observe all players when the play is over to ensure that potential problems such as rough play, trash-talking, and other personal or unsportsmanlike fouls are controlled. Do not be in a hurry to get the ball, report fouls, or engage in any other action that will take your attention away from the players. Use verbal commands to let players know that they being observed or to break-up a tussle. To be an excellent official, you must be an excellent dead-ball official.

2.6 FOULS AND PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

2.6.1 Calling Fouls

Use good judgment in applying the advantage-disadvantage philosophy when determining whether to call a foul. Call any foul you see that puts a team at a disadvantage or any personal or unsportsmanlike conduct foul. Make calls that will stand out in films especially when calling holding, block in the back, pass interference, or kick catch interference fouls. If in doubt, do not call the foul. When a foul is detected, throw the flag and continue to officiate. Mentally note the spot of the foul, the number of the offending player, and the status of the ball (e.g., in player possession, loose, or dead). When the play is over, blow the whistle (3-4 short blasts, a “funny” whistle) and give the stop-the-clock (S3) signal. Other officials shall repeat the stop-the-clock signal any time they see a flag or hear a “funny” whistle, once the ball is dead.

There are two ways to throw the flag:

- For fouls by the team in possession (e.g., holding, clipping, block in the back) carefully throw the flag to a spot on the yard line where the foul occurred and near the offending player.
Do not throw the flag at the offending player.
- For fouls that are by the team not in possession (typically team B unless after a change of possession) or dead ball or non-player fouls throw the flag into the air. Do not hold and wave the flag over your head instead of throwing it into the air.
- When the play is over, ensure that the down box and line-to-gain equipment are not moved. The calling official(s) should ensure the flag(s) are at the correct spot(s), unless it is a dead ball foul or a foul by the team not in possession. If the flag landed at the wrong spot, pick it up and place it at the right spot before reporting. If there are multiple flags for the same foul, move all flags to the same spot before the foul is reported to the Referee. (Do not kick a flag to move it to the right position.)
- Place the ball on the ground at the dead-ball spot until the Referee or Umpire asks for it. A non-calling official should cover the dead-ball spot. If possible, another non-calling official should cover the spot of the flag. Continue to observe players while fouls are being reported and penalty options administered.

2.6.2 Reporting Fouls

2.6.2.1 Calling Official

Verbally report your foul to the Referee. Do not use foul signals to communicate with the Referee, players, coaches, or other officials. (Exceptions: The Back Judge may use the foul signal to report a delay of game or illegal substitution foul, or the Wings a false start or encroachment foul)

Provide the following information to the Referee (the Umpire should also be present):

- Type of foul.
- Offense/defense or kicking/receiving team (not the color of the jersey).

- Number of the fouling player.
- Spot of the foul if relevant.
- Status of the ball at the time of the foul. If there was no loose ball (pass, kick, fumble) involved on the play, this step may be skipped, as all officials should know it was a running play.
- The result of the play (touchdown, touchback, interception by B, etc.)
- Be prepared to give a description of what action warranted a foul, if asked

Example: “Holding, Offense #55 at my flag, grab and restrict” or “during the kick, block in the back, receiving team #18, at my flag”.

The calling official is primarily responsible for ensuring that the Referee and Umpire properly assess all aspects of the penalty, however proper penalty enforcement is the responsibility of every crew member, whether or not he is the calling official or Referee. If any official has a disagreement about proper penalty enforcement, that official shall call for a crew conference to discuss and get it right before the next play. ***Do not wait until halftime or the end of the game to bring up possible enforcement mistakes!*** If there are multiple flags on a false start or encroachment situation, the Wings will meet with the Umpire in the middle of the field to determine which foul is to be penalized. The Umpire will report their decision to the Referee.

Referee:

- After being notified of the foul(s), move to a clear area away from the players; come to a complete stop facing the press box; give the preliminary foul signal if necessary; and point to the offending team’s goal line. Give the dead-ball signal prior to all dead-ball foul signals. (Exception: false start and encroachment fouls, most coaches and fans already know these are dead ball fouls). Even if you are not using a field microphone, it is a good practice to verbally announce the foul as you are signaling in a slightly raised voice.
- If the penalty flag was mistakenly thrown and there is no foul, do not give any type of foul signal. Only give the “disregard flag” signal and indicate the number of the next down.
- If the foul involves a false start, encroachment, or illegal snap infraction, only the preliminary signal should be given while the Umpire marks off the penalty. No final signal is required after the penalty has been enforced.
- If the foul requires penalty enforcement at the succeeding free kick spot, give the preliminary foul signal; point to the offending team; and then point to the area of the field where the free kick will occur.

Referee and Umpire: If the offended team’s choice of options is obvious, administer the option (i.e., penalty enforcement or results of play) without consulting with the captain or head coach. If the choice of options is not obvious, meet with the captain or head coach and explain the options to the offended captain or head coach. When a decision is made, instruct the Umpire on how to administer the option (i.e., results of the play or penalty enforcement). If the Wing official on the offended team’s side knows the proper enforcement options, he should explain the

options and get the decision from the head coach and relay the information to the Referee to expedite penalty enforcement. Examples: Free kick out of bounds “they want it placed at the 35, or they want the -5 and re-kick” or “they want to decline” This is a great time to use the O2O radio, if equipped.

Umpire: Meet with the Referee and captain to discuss options. Listen to ensure the explanations of options given by the Referee are correct. Ask for additional clarification if the explanations are not clear or correct.

Wings: Get an explanation of the foul from the appropriate official. Report the foul and penalty options to the respective head coaches. Tell the coach of the offending team the number of the fouling player, the type of foul, and a brief description of what the player did, if asked. Much of this information will be stated by the Referee in the penalty announcement.

All Officials: If an unsportsmanlike conduct or flagrant personal foul is called, record the pertinent information on your game card (i.e., number of a player, name or role of a non-player, name of the team, the period, time remaining in the period, and a brief description of the foul).

2.6.3 Penalty Enforcement

If the penalty is declined or if there are offsetting fouls:

Referee: Go to the area of the ball; face the press box; and give the foul signal or signals followed by the penalty declined signal and the number of the next down.

If the penalty is accepted:

Umpire: Mark off all penalties except those administered by the Back Judge on a succeeding free kick. Carry the ball between the hashes, parallel to the spot of to the spot of enforcement; verify the spot visually and then mark off the appropriate penalty yardage with the Head Line Judge; hold up 1, 2, or 3 fingers to signify a 5-, 10- or 15-yard penalty prior to marking it off. If the penalty will be marked off half the distance to the offending team’s goal line, calculate the distance and new enforcement spot and verify with the Wing official, then mark off the penalty. On a properly marked field, avoid stepping off the penalty. Instead calculate and visualize the distance to be penalized and then jog or walk briskly to that spot. Stand over the ball until the Referee marks the ball ready for play.

Head Line Judge: Ensure that the line-to-gain equipment does not move until you signal them to do so. Go to the spot of enforcement on your sideline stand at the spot until the Umpire confirms the spot. Mark off the penalty yardage along your sideline while the Umpire marks off the yardage in the field of play. Do not simply walk with the Umpire, but independently mark off the penalty yourself, then confirm with the Umpire that the correct yardage has been marked off. Direct the down box to move to the new spot and ensure the correct down number is displayed. If the penalty enforcement results in a first down, personally mark the first down spot on the sideline and direct the line-to-gain crew to set the down box and chain at that spot.

Line Judge: Go to the spot of enforcement on your sideline and hold that spot until the umpire has placed the ball at the new spot. Calculate the new yard line in your head and then go

to that spot to confirm the proper yardage has been marked off. Be especially vigilant in half the distance situations.

Referee: While the Umpire is marking off the penalty, take a position in the clear, facing the press box, and give the final signals for the foul and related enforcement factors. For obvious enforcement situations, only give one signal; there is no need in most situations for a preliminary signal, a conference/decision, then a final signal. Signals should include the type of foul (possibly preceded by the dead ball signal if relevant, except in cases noted above), the offending team, # of offending player, loss of down or first down, and the number of the upcoming down. If using a stadium or field mic, announce the foul when signaling. If not using a stadium mic, it is highly recommended to verbally announce fouls in a somewhat elevated but calm voice. After the penalty has been administered, take your position for the next play. Confirm that the teams and officials are ready to resume play. Blow the whistle while giving the appropriate ready-for-play or start-the-clock signal.

Back Judge: If a penalty is to be enforced on a free kick, go to the succeeding free kick spot; place the ball on the ground; face the press box; and repeat the preliminary foul signal given earlier by the Referee. Pick up the ball; and enforce the penalty yardage. (Do not give another signal to the press box.) Hold the ball at the yard line where the free kick will occur until the kicking team is ready.

In cases involving multiple fouls, the penalty for the first foul should be enforced and the ball should be placed on the ground while the Referee gives the final signals for that foul to the press box. Then the penalty for the next foul should be enforced and the proper signals given to the press box. Continue until all fouls have been enforced.

2.6.4 Disqualification

Players, substitutes, coaches, trainers, or other persons affiliated with the team can disqualify themselves by committing any of the fouls listed below:

Players and Substitutes/nonplayers

- One flagrant personal foul.
- One flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct foul.
- Two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls.

Coaches, Trainers, and Other Affiliated Individuals

- One flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct foul.
- Two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls.
- 2 personal fouls for unintentional contact in the restricted area with an official (Head Coach only) Note: this foul does not combine with an unsportsmanlike foul to DQ a head coach.

The mechanics for handling a disqualified individual are described below:

All Officials: Record pertinent information about the disqualification on your game card (i.e., name of a non-player, number of a player, name of the team, the period, time remaining in the period, and a brief description of the foul).

- Do not touch or point to a disqualified player, coach, or other individual.
- Do not escort a disqualified player off the field.

Referee: Meet the offending team's coach in front of the team box within six feet of the sideline. Notify the coach about the disqualification of any team members or affiliated personnel by identifying the individual and providing a quick description of the foul or fouls that resulted in the qualification. Explain the situation by using statements such as: "Number 73 has disqualified himself by throwing a punch at number 22;" or "Your assistant coach has disqualified himself by committing his second unsportsmanlike foul for swearing." Have the calling official join the conference to provide additional information. Keep the discussion short and to the point. End the conference as soon as the appropriate information has been provided to the coach.

Wing official: The official on the sideline of the offending team, keep the head coach near the sideline in front of the team box until the Referee arrives. Join the Referee to witness the conference discussion and to keep other coaches and sideline personnel away from the area of the conference.

All Officials: Do not direct a player to leave the game to "cool off." You may notify the captain and head coach of a potential problem. You may even suggest that the head coach consider removing a player temporarily. However, the ultimate decision belongs entirely to the coach. If the coach chooses to keep the player in the game and that player behaves in a manner that constitutes a foul, call the foul and enforce the penalty.

2.7 FUMBLES

An official who sees a player fumble the ball should drop or toss a beanbag on the yard line and near where the fumble occurred. (It is not necessary to throw the beanbag to the exact spot where the fumble occurred. What is important is the yard line where the fumble occurred.) If the ball is recovered by a player of either team and not dead by rule, continue to officiate the play. The first official who is certain who has gained possession of the loose ball will give the appropriate signal and not worry about who eventually comes out of the pile with the ball. If the offense recovers the ball, the covering official should signal the number of the next down. If the defense recovers the ball, the covering official should give the stop-the-clock signal and point in the direction of the opponent's goal line.

If the fumble results in a pile-up of players, the official nearest the pile becomes the digger, i.e., the official responsible for removing players from the pile and digging into the pile to determine who recovered the ball. Other officials shall give the stop-the-clock signal and assist with removing players from the pile and keeping other players away from the pile. Notify the Referee verbally when the recovering team has been determined. If the offensive team recovers the ball, the Referee will indicate the next down and give the start-the-clock signal. If

the defensive team recovers the ball, the Referee will give the first down signal while facing in the direction of the opponent's goal line.

2.8 INTERMISSIONS BETWEEN PERIODS

As the time winds down toward the end of the period, all officials must increase their awareness of game clock management. Officials should notify each other when there are two minutes left in either the 2nd or 4th quarter, because an offended team has clock options under two minutes if a penalty is committed. A recommended signal is to hold up two fingers under a horizontal palm, or simply state there are under 2 minutes in the half over the O2O radio.

Any official facing the game clock should pay close attention to the clock to ensure the ball is snapped before time expires in the period. With about two minutes left in a half the Referee or Back Judge (whomever is facing the game clock) should time play clock by using the game clock.

- Referee: When time expires, check with the other officials to ensure there have been no fouls, inadvertent whistles, requests for a coach-referee conference, or timing errors that need to be corrected. If none, hold the ball over your head designating the official end of the period.

2.8.1 Intermissions at the End of the First and Third Periods

All Officials: Record the team in possession of the ball, down, distance to go for a first down, yard line, and lateral position of the ball on the field.

Back Judge: Time the 60-second intermission. ~~Go to the spot at the other end of the field where the ball should be placed to start the next period.~~ Escort down box to new position. Confirm the ball placement with the Umpire. Notify the Referee with a short warning whistle when there are 15 seconds remaining in the intermission, and again when the intermission has expired.

Commented [Ma8]: 2025 revision change

Head Line Judge: While standing with your back to the field of play, grasp the chain and chain clip together and rotate the chain before moving it to the other end of the field. While facing the field, personally reset the chain equipment and the down box in the proper positions to start the next period. Ensure the down box displays the correct down number.

Umpire: Ensure the crew has time to write period change information on game cards, then pick up the ball; jog to the other end of the field; and place it at the spot that corresponds to the previous spot. Stand over the ball until the Referee marks the ball ready for play.

Line Judge: Jog down the sideline to the yard line where the ball will be spotted to start the next period.

All Officials: After the ball and line-to-gain equipment are reset, take positions and assume the duties for regular time-out situations.

Wings: Get the teams back onto the field to start the next period when the Back Judge gives the 15-second warning whistle.

Referee: Confirm that the teams and officials are ready to resume play. Blow the whistle while giving the ready-for-play signal.

2.8.2 Intermission at the Half

Wings: Notify the coaches on your sidelines that they are solely responsible for getting their teams on the field before the halftime intermission ends. (Officials will not go to the locker rooms to alert them.)

Head Line Judge: tell the line-to-gain crew to be back on the field five minutes before the start of the second half.

Line Judge: tell the ball person to be back on the field five minutes before the start of the second half. Take possession of the game balls before leaving the field for halftime.

Referee: Wait until the teams have cleared the field and then give the start-the-clock signal to the time to begin the halftime intermission countdown.

Back Judge: Time the halftime intermission and notify the crew when there are five minutes remaining in the intermission. Ensure that the clock operator starts the 3-minute warmup period as soon as halftime intermission is over.

~~Wing official on side of team that received 1st half kickoff.~~

~~Ask the head coach what direction his team will be kicking. Inform the rest of the crew of the choice.~~

Commented [Ma9]: 2025 revision. Redundancy. Stated in 4.4.2

2.8.3 Intermission before Overtime Periods

Referee: Instruct both teams to return to their respective team boxes.

Back Judge: Time the three-minute intermission between the end of the fourth period of the game and the first overtime period; or the two-minute intermission between any subsequent overtime periods. Notify the Referee when 15 seconds remain in these intermissions and again when the intermissions expire.

All Officials: Meet in the middle of the field at the 50-yard line to review the rules and mechanics for overtime. Take positions for the coin toss for the first overtime period; or for the alternating selection of options for any subsequent periods. (See Chapter 6, Overtime, for a full description of overtime mechanics.)

2.9 MARKING BALL READY FOR PLAY (RFP)

Free Kicks: After each official is in position and has completed his count and that team formations are correct; they will raise a hand (dead ball signal S7) to inform the Referee they are ready. Once the Referee Confirms the rest of the crew is ready, they shall blow the whistle to signify the ball is ready for play.

Scrimmage Downs: If the game clock is stopped for any reason occurring in Rule 3-4-3, and will start on the snap, *after ensuring the crew is in position* the Referee will mark the ball

ready for play with a single sharp whistle blast accompanied by signal S1. If the game clock is stopped and shall start on the RFP per Rule 3-4-2 (such as after penalty enforcement or other officials' timeout such as an injured player or other reason), The Referee shall give a whistle blast accompanied by signal S2. If the play clock is 40 seconds per Rule 3-6-1-a Exception 2, the ball is marked ready for play after the Umpire has spotted the ball and stepped into position (3-6-1-b). If the game clock is stopped in this case (typically when Team A has been awarded a new series and the previous play ended in bounds), the Referee will give a "silent wind" S2 to start the game clock, with no whistle.

1. Situations requiring the Referee to whistle in the Ready For Play (25 sec play clock)
 - a. After any charged timeout
 - b. After any TV or media timeout
 - c. After any official's timeout for injury, equipment malfunction, measurement, hydration break, referee/coach conference or other reason not listed
 - d. After any penalty administration
 - i. As of 2022, except when Team B is the only team to foul. In this situation the play clock will be set to 40 seconds.
 - e. After any change of team possession when Team B is awarded a new series
 - f. For any try attempt
 - g. After any kick play
 - h. At the beginning of any quarter or OT possession
2. Situations where the Referee shall NOT use the whistle when signaling the Ready for Play
 - a. When the 40 second play clock is in force
 - i. Incomplete pass
 - ii. Runner out of bounds
 - iii. Team A awarded 1st down and ball was dead in field of play (in this case the referee will use a "silent wind" signal S2 for the RFP)

2.10 MARKING FIRST DOWNS

The Head Line Judge will personally locate the down box and line-to-gain chain whenever a first down is awarded. At the start of every new series of downs, the Head Line Judge will go to the sideline facing the field and mark the spot of the first down by placing a heel of the downfield foot on the sideline at the foremost point of the ball. The down box operator will place the box at that spot and the chain crew will set the chain accordingly.

2.11 MARKING PROGRESS

One of the more important responsibilities for any football official is determining and marking the runner's forward progress spot. Officials must remember that the progress spot is determined by the foremost point of the ball in player possession when that player's advancement toward the opponent's goal is ended by rule. During most scrimmage plays the forward progress is determined by the wing officials.

Forward progress is determined by one of 4 ways by rule:

1. The runner's knee or other body part other than a hand or foot is on the ground while the ball is in player possession; the progress spot is determined by the foremost point of the ball when the runner is down. Covering officials should be aware *not* to grant "double action" progress, which is progress gained AFTER the knee or other body part is on the ground and the runner falls forward in the ensuing action, or slides forward along the ground after a long gain. Runners should get all the yardage they've earned, but no more.
2. The runner is not down, but his forward progress has completely stopped while being contacted by 1 or more defenders and being driven sideways or backwards. The progress spot is the foremost point of the ball when the runner's forward movement ceased. This also includes a stationary player, such as a quarterback being sacked, who is contacted and driven backwards to the ground. The progress spot should be marked where the player was first contacted, not where he landed. NOTE: If the runner is being tackled one on one by a defender, the covering official should wait a brief moment or two to allow the runner to break free of the tackle, if the runner does not break free, the covering official should rule the play dead at that point by giving a dead ball signal (S7) and blowing his whistle. If two or more defenders have the runner stopped and clearly in their grasp, the covering official should whistle the play dead immediately. The official should not allow the play to continue and a subsequent defender come in a strip the ball from the runner to get a 'cheap' turnover.
3. An airborne player in possession of the ball is contacted *and carried* by a defender so that his forward progress is stopped before the player comes down to the ground, either in bounds or out of bounds. Rule 2-4-1. NOTE: If a defender contacts an airborne player in possession of the ball and the contact knocks the player forward or sideways and the player with the ball first touches out of bounds, it is not forward progress, but an incomplete catch.
4. The foremost point of the ball where it crosses the sideline out of bounds in player possession.

Wing: Move up and down the field with the runner parallel to the sideline; then "square off;" and move to the progress spot at right angles to the sideline. Unless a first down or a touchdown is at issue, marking the progress spot should be decidedly undemonstrative. To mark forward progress, stand erect, hands at the side, feet together, toes pointing at the ball, with the downfield foot (the foot closest to the opponent's goal line) slightly ahead of the other foot, and in line with the foremost point of the ball. Hold the spot until the official who is placing the ball (usually the Umpire) has placed the ball on the ground. In general, if the ball becomes dead inside the hash marks, mark progress from somewhere near the nine-yard marks.

"Crashing In"

Do not penetrate the hash marks to mark a spot unless the spot needs to be sold such as a close play for a first down or touchdown. In that case, the Wing must crash hard in toward the pile, coming all the way to the ball if necessary. The other circumstance a wing may "crash" is to control dead ball action between players. Do not jump over fallen players or run around players to get closer to the dead ball spot.

If the runner comes outside the 9-yard marks (numbers) toward the sideline, the covering wing official should take 2-3 steps toward the offensive backfield and let the play flow in front of him, and trail the play from behind. This allows the official to keep a wide-angle view of the action in front of and near the runner, while staying out of the way of players. If the runner is down in the far side zone short of the line to gain inbounds, give two wind the clock (S2) signals. If the runner is down past the line to gain stake inbounds, give the stop the clock signal (S3) while coming up to mark the progress spot. After colors have separated, communicate to the Umpire or Referee that the clock should run (wind of the finger at the belt) after the ball is spotted or should remain dead (crossed wrists at the belt).

Wings: If the ball becomes dead close to the line-to-gain stake, the Line Judge should notify the Referee that the ball is close to a first down. If the runner goes out of bounds, give the stop the clock signal and turn and face the action out of bounds while coming up to get the spot. Remember, observing dead ball action has priority over accuracy of the exact spot. ***Do not look down at the ground to get the exact spot at the expense of watching players.***

Referee: If the progress spot is close to the line to gain, decide whether to stop the clock for a measurement. However, if you determine that the ball is obviously short of the line to gain, immediately give the start-the-clock signal and move quickly into position and mark the ball ready for play.

2.11.1 Cross Field Mechanics

The Cross-field mechanic technique is a very simple, yet elegant and useful tool that takes very little additional effort and allows the wing officials and Umpire a means of redundancy and efficiency far greater than if only one wing were responsible for a spot. Simply stated, the off-side official squares up and ‘mirrors’ the covering wing’s forward progress spot. If discussed and communicated during the pregame conference, this not only allows the original covering official the ability to release to obtain the ball or attend to player activity as he knows the spot is marked, but also allows the Umpire to move well outside of the hash marks, retrieve the ball, and not have to turn around again and face the covering official in order to set the ball. Instead, he can take the spot off the far wing when moving into position back toward the hash mark.

If the runner or airborne player’s forward progress is stopped as in 2 and 3 above, and the player is within 3 yards of the sideline short of the line to gain, the covering official should stay behind the play and give the wind the clock signal (S2) at least 2 times to signify that progress has been stopped in bounds, as he blows his whistle. The off-side wing should recognize this signal and mark the forward progress spot from across the field. This allows the covering official to observe dead ball action in his area and not be concerned with the progress spot, knowing his partner has it from across the field. After dead ball action has been observed and colors have been separated, the covering official can come to the progress spot, mirroring up on his partner wing. If for some reason the cross-field official does not have the spot, the covering official will go to where he estimated forward progress was stopped once colors have separated.

2.12 MEASUREMENTS

2.12.1 Determining Need for Measurement

There are two primary methods used to help determine the need for a measurement: (1) the chain tape, and (2) the line-to-gain stake.

2.12.1.1 Use of Chain Tape

The middle of the chain should be marked with tape before the game. The tape is used to determine whether a five-yard penalty by the defense will result in a first down for the offense.

Wings: Prior to the game, ensure that the middle of the chain is marked with tape. If the ball becomes dead near the mid-point of the chain, check whether the foremost point of the ball is beyond or behind the tape. Notify the Referee and Umpire of the position of the ball with respect to the tape by pointing with hand at waist level to the front or back stake, if the ball is centered on the tape, indicate by placing a fist over an open palm and bringing them together. This allows the Referee to know immediately if a five-yard penalty on the defense will result in a first down without having to make a measurement.

2.12.1.2 Use of the Line-to-Gain Stake

The line-to-gain stake is used whenever the down ends and the ball becomes dead close to the line to gain.

All Officials: Call out “take a look” and/or “it’s close” to alert everyone not to move the ball. Hand the ball to the covering official to place on the ground with the foremost end of the ball at the point of forward progress and the long axis of the ball parallel to the sideline. Do not toss the ball to the covering official, nor place the ball at the covering official’s feet.

Referee: Determine if a measurement is needed. If the ball is not close to the line to gain, announce and signal the number of the next down. If a measurement is warranted, give the official’s discretionary time-out signal and motion to the Head Line Judge to bring the chain crew for the measurement. A request for measurement by either team shall be considered by the Referee, but it is the Referee’s final decision. If game circumstances warrant a measurement, one should be taken.

2.12.2 Measuring for a First Down

- Referee: After calling for a measurement, maintain a position near the ball, keeping players away from the ball and from the area where the chain will be brought to the ball for measurement.
- Umpire: Stand over the ball until the Back Judge has taken control of the ball on the ground.
- Back Judge: Kneel down at the rear of the ball in a position parallel to the sideline and

on the press box side of the chain. Hold the ball on the ground so it does not move until the Referee has made a decision on the measurement.

- Line Judge: Mark the spot where the Head Line Judge will place the chain clip to make the measurement. Place a foot on the back of the major yard-line stripe closest to the rear stake and in a direct line behind the ball. Hold this spot until the Head Line Judge begins to place the chain clip at the mark. Then move toward the front stake and clear players from the area of the ball, so the press box will have a clear view of the measurement.
- Head Line Judge: Go to the sideline. Ensure the box operator moves the box to the forward point of the ball with the old down showing. Ensure a clip has been placed on the chain at the intersection of the sideline and the back edge of the major yard-line stripe nearest the rear stake. Grasp the chain on either side of the clip and with the two stake holders, carry the chain to the spot marked by the Line Judge. Place the clip at the back edge of the yard line marked by the Line Judge. Direct the front stake holder to take the line-to-gain stake to the forward point of the ball and give it to the Umpire. After getting a firm grip on the clip and chain, notify the Referee and Umpire that you are ready for the Umpire to extend the chain.

- Do not step or stand on the chain to hold it in place during the measurement.
- Umpire: Take the forward stake and pull the chain tight to ensure there are no kinks. Place the stake in a vertical position on the ground on the side of the ball opposite the press box.
- Referee: Determine whether the ball is beyond or behind the line to gain and give the appropriate signal as listed below. (If the foremost point of the ball touches any part of the line-to-gain stake, it is a first down.)

If the ball is beyond the line to gain, give the first down signal for the offensive team. If the ball is behind the line on first, second or third down, use hands or fingers to indicate to the press box the distance between the ball and the line to gain. Signal the number of the next down. If the ball is behind the line to gain on fourth down, give the first down signal for the defensive team. Ensure the ball, chain stakes, and down box have been properly reset. Confirm that the teams and officials are ready to resume play. Blow the whistle while giving the appropriate ready-for-play or start-the-clock signal.

2.12.3 Resetting the Line-to-Gain Equipment

There are six different mechanics scenarios for resetting the line-to-gain equipment and the ball following a measurement. The three primary cases are (1) first down awarded to offensive team, (2) first down awarded to defensive team, and (3) offensive team is short of the line to gain. For each of these three cases there are separate mechanics depending upon whether the ball became dead between the hash marks or in a side zone outside the hash marks.

2.12.3.1 First Down Awarded to Offensive Team

If the ball becomes dead between the hash marks and beyond the line to gain, the offensive team is awarded a first down. The line-to-gain equipment must be reset.

- Umpire: Give the front stake to the stake holder and stand over the ball until the Referee marks the ball ready for play.
- Head Line Judge: Accompany the chain crew to the sideline and mark the spot where the chain will be set to start the next series of downs. Ensure the down box is moved to the forward progress spot and displays “first down.”

If the ball becomes dead in a side zone and beyond the line to gain, the offensive team is awarded a first down. In addition to resetting the line-to gain-equipment, officials must re-spot the ball at the nearest hash mark.

- Back Judge: Mark the forward progress spot of the ball before it is moved.
- Umpire: Give the front stake to the stake holder. Move the ball to the nearest hash mark and place it on the ground at the forward progress spot being marked by the Back Judge. Stand over the ball until the Referee marks the ball ready for play.
- Head Line Judge: Reset chain and down box as previously described for a first down.

2.12.3.2 First Down Awarded to Defensive Team

If the ball becomes dead between the hash marks and behind the line to gain following a fourth down play, the defensive team is awarded a first down. The line-to-gain equipment must be reset and the balls must be exchanged.

- Back Judge or Line Judge: Retrieve the new ball from the ball person and relay it to the Umpire. Receive the old ball from the Umpire and relay it to the ball person.
- Umpire: Give the front stake to the stake holder. Stay near the existing ball to receive the new ball. Set the new ball on the ground alongside the old ball. Pick up the old ball and relay it to the Back Judge or Line Judge for return to the ball person. Stand over the new ball until the Referee marks the ball ready for play.
- Head Line Judge: Reset chain and down box as previously described for a first down.

If the ball becomes dead in a side zone and behind the line to gain following a fourth down play, the defensive team is awarded a first down. The line-to-gain equipment must be reset and the balls must be exchanged.

- Back Judge: Mark the forward progress spot of the old ball. Leave the ball on the ground until the Umpire has placed the new ball on the ground at the hash marks. Then pick up the old ball and relay it as required to the ball person.
- Line Judge: Retrieve a new ball from the ball person and relay it to the Umpire.
- Umpire: Give the front stake to the stake holder. Take a position to receive the new ball from the Line Judge. Set the ball on the ground at the forward progress spot being marked by the Back Judge. Stand over the ball until the Referee marks the ball ready for play.

- Head Line Judge: Reset chain and down box as previously described for a first down.

2.12.3.3 No First Down Awarded

If the ball becomes dead between the hash marks and behind the line to gain on first, second, or third down, the offensive team retains possession of the ball for the next down.

- Umpire: Give the front stake to the stake holder and stand over the ball until the Referee marks the ball ready for play.
- Head Line Judge: Grasp the chain on either side of the clip and with the stake holders return the chain to the sideline. Use the clip to reset the chain and stakes in their previous positions. Ensure the down box is moved to the forward progress spot of the ball and the new down number is displayed.

If the ball becomes dead in a side zone and behind the line to gain on first, second, or third down, the offensive team retains possession of the ball for the next down. The officials must use the chain to move the ball from the dead ball spot in the side zone and re-spot the ball at the hash marks.

- Back Judge: Mark the forward progress spot of the ball in the side zone. Stay at that spot until the Referee has re-spotted the ball at the proper place at the hash marks.
- Referee: Grasp the chain link at the front end of the ball. Pick up the chain and the ball and move them to the nearest hash mark. When the chain has been set and stretched, place the ball on the ground with the foremost tip of the ball at the chain link you are holding.
- Head Line Judge: Grasp the chain on either side of the clip. Pick up the chain on the Referee's signal and move it to the hash mark area. Reset the chain by placing the chain clip at the back edge of the appropriate yard line. Hold the chain at that spot until the Referee has spotted the ball.
- Umpire: Move the front stake to the hash mark area on the Referee's signal. When Head Line Judge has the clip placed at the correct spot, extend the chain and set the forward stake in an upright position on the ground at the hash marks. After the Referee has spotted the ball, give the front stake to the stake holder and stand over the ball until the Referee marks the ball ready for play.
- Line Judge: Keep the area around the chain and ball clear of players.
- Head Line Judge: After the ball has been spotted by the Referee, grasp the chain on either side of the clip; return the chain with the chain crew to the sideline; and reset the chain and stakes in their previous positions. Move the down box to the forward progress spot of the ball and display the new down number.

2.13 SIDELINE PLAYS

The presence of more than one official on sideline plays is imperative to maintain control of the game. The Back Judge and Referee should help on sideline plays as required. Officials

should use voice commands to let the players know an official is present. If opposing players begin taunting, shoving, or fighting, the covering official should drop a beanbag at the dead-ball spot and move quickly to separate the players and any other sideline personnel involved in the confrontation. The Back Judge and the Referee should quickly close on the area to help control the situation. The officials should accompany any players who have gone out of bounds into the opponent's team box area back onto the field. The officials should not leave the spot until the area has been cleared. Officials not needed on the sideline must continue to observe the players on the field.

2.14 SIDELINE WARNING AND SIDELINE INTERFERENCE

2.14.1 Sideline Warnings and Sideline Interference

At all levels of football, establishing and maintaining control of the sideline is an essential element of a well officiated game. Wing officials, including deep wing officials in 6- and 7-official crews, must use good rapport with coaching staffs, along with clear and consistent enforcement of the rules regarding sideline control, throughout the game. Good sideline management starts during the pregame. The Referee shall, during his pregame conference with the head coach, inform the head coach that all coaches, staff and players are to remain out of the Restricted Area (RA) when the ball is live and the immediate action after. The Referee shall also tell the head coach that up to 3 coaches may come into the RA between downs but they are to remain off of the field of play, unless a timeout has been called, or other circumstances such as a melee on the field occurs and coaches need to come onto the field to get players to the sideline. Both wing officials should introduce themselves to both coaches during the pregame and briefly reiterate that coaches are to be out of the RA when the ball is live and to stay off the field between plays. Building early rapport with coaches and also getting the name of the "get back" coach will help. The purpose of the restricted area rules and their enforcement is to ensure the safety of the officials, players (nonplayers), and coaches, and to give wing officials an unencumbered area to officiate and be able to focus on action on the field without worry of colliding into another player or coach.

The RA is defined in Rule 1-2-3-g as the 2-yard belt adjacent to the sideline between the 25-yard lines. The team box is the area between the 25-yard lines behind the RA. Rule 9-8-3 states that "no player, nonplayer or coach shall be in the restricted area when the ball is live". Wing officials should enforce this rule from the opening kickoff. Most times a polite "Coach get back please" prior to the free kick or snap is sufficient. However, if coaches or others refuse to heed this admonishment, and are in the RA when the ball is live, a flag should be thrown, preferably early in the game. Do not wait until the 4th quarter to enforce this foul. The first flag is a formal warning to the head coach and results in no yardage penalty. The wing official shall report this foul to the referee as he would any other foul. The referee should announce the foul as a "sideline warning, team A" and give signal S15. The wing official shall then inform the **head coach** that the next violation will result in a 5-yard penalty. If a 3rd or 4th violation of 9-8-3 occurs, it is a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct foul charged to the head coach, regardless of

who was the actual person or persons violating 9-8-3, and the 4th violation, a second unsportsmanlike, would result in a DQ of the head coach. The referee should inform the head coach of the progressive penalties that will be assessed after each violation, in order to hopefully prevent them from happening. The Referee shall signal the 2nd violation as a sideline warning with S7-S29 and the 3rd as S7-S29-S27, and the 4th as S7-S29-S27-S47. These are all nonplayer/UNS fouls and are enforced from the succeeding spot (as dead ball fouls).

Rule 9-4-8 deals with actual unintentional contact/collisions between officials and coaches or nonplayers in the RA when the ball is live. If this occurs, the official shall throw a flag immediately and after the play is over report this foul to the referee. This is a 15-yard nonplayer personal foul, and shall be announced by the Referee as “Personal foul, Team A bench”, or something similar and give signal S38-S29. A second foul of this type by rule results in the DQ of the head coach, no matter which coach or non-player was involved in either collision.

It is important to note that a 3rd violation of rule 9-8-3 and a 1st violation of rule 9-4-8 do NOT combine to result in the disqualification of the head coach (CASE 9.8.1 D). Also, this rule only applies to players, nonplayers and coaches. Persons such as cameramen, fans, band members, or others are not subject to this rule, and should be dealt with by game administration. Sideline officials must be cognizant of any potential hazards anywhere on the field and keep anyone out of the way they deem necessary. Although a flag cannot be thrown for these situations, if compliance cannot be gained, the wing official should stop the game and inform the Referee, who will get game administration to correct the problem before the game is allowed to continue.

See Appendix B “Philosophies regarding the Restricted Area and Sideline Control” for guidance on issuing warnings and penalties.

2.14.2 Coaches or other nonplayers on the field

Rule 9-8-1-i states that it is a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct foul for any nonplayer “being on the field except as a substitute or replaced player”. Coaches are not allowed to come onto the field of play between downs or during downs to give instructions to their team. It is up to the Wing official to control such behavior. While it is not necessary to be overly officious regarding this, in the same way as a sideline warning, establishing good rapport and control at the beginning of the contest will help curb this behavior. Usually, a verbal warning to the coach wandering onto the field is sufficient to correct the behavior without throwing a flag. If necessary, the Wing official may throw a sideline warning flag instead of an unsportsmanlike conduct foul for repeated conduct that isn’t corrected by a verbal warning. If this is done the official must warn the coach (and Head Coach) that the next violation will be a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct foul. NOTE: this foul is charged to the individual in violation and not necessarily the Head Coach. It is also important to note that if a charged timeout or official’s timeout occurs, then this rule does not apply, as well as in instances of a fracas, fight or similar

situation occurring on the field that coaches are encouraged to come onto the field to control their players and are not subject to being called for a foul.

2.15 TIME-OUTS

There are three basic types of time-outs: charged team time-out, coach-referee conference timeout, and an official's time-out.

2.15.1 Charged Team Time-Out

A player or head coach (or head coach's designee) from either team may request a time-out when the ball is dead and the team has time-outs remaining. The covering official should give the stop-the-clock signal, a "funny" whistle, and notify the Referee which team called the timeout. When time is critical in a close game, especially at the end of a half, all officials and especially the calling official should immediately note the time on the clock when the time out is granted, ensure that the clock has been stopped properly. If necessary, report the correct time to the Referee and the Referee shall order the proper time to be set on the game clock. All officials should mirror the stop-the-clock signal. The Referee will grant the time-out unless there is a penalty that must be administered first. In such cases the Referee will administer the penalty options and then confirm if the team still wants the time-out.

- Referee: Give the stop-the-clock signal facing the press box and indicate which team called the time-out by facing the team, and point towards the calling team's goal line while giving a verbal announcement.
Move to a position about five yards from the ball in the offensive backfield and away from players, coaches, and other officials. When the Back Judge gives the warning whistle with 15 seconds remaining in the time-out, point to the Wings to get their teams lined up for the next play. When the Back Judge gives the time-out expiration signal, confirm that the teams and officials are ready to resume play. Blow the whistle while giving the ready-for-play signal. (REMEMBER: Charged time-outs may be reduced in length only if both teams are ready to play prior to the 25-second ready-for-play signal by the Referee.)
- All Officials: Record the team and player number or coach that called the time-out; and the period and time remaining on the game clock. Confirm the number of time-outs remaining for each team by pointing to the team, and indicating with your fingers the number of time-outs the team has left. Officials should not bunch together or visit with players or coaches during the time-out.
- Umpire: Stand over the ball until the Referee gives the ready-for-play signal.
- Back Judge: Move to a position about 15 yards from the ball in the defensive backfield and away from players, coaches, and other officials. Start timing the 60-second time-out period when the Referee grants and signals the time-out. Notify the Referee with a short toot on the whistle when 15 seconds remain in the time-out. Point to the Referee when the time-out interval has expired. If both teams are ready to resume play before the expiration of the time-out, notify the Referee to mark the ball ready for play.
- Wings: Take a position on the playing field about 5 yards away

from where the players and coaches of your team are huddled and where you can observe the conference, substitutes, and activities on the sideline. Ensure teams comply with the rules for authorized conferences. (2-6)

- The on-field time-out must be conducted between the hash marks anywhere on the field. (Inside 9 yard marks conference)

The sideline time-out conference must be conducted in front of the team box between 25-yard lines and no farther on the field than the top of the numbers (i.e., nine-yard marks).

On the Back Judge's 15-second warning whistle or on the Referee's notification, inform the teams that the time-out is over and direct them to take their positions on the field for the next play. Relay the number of time-outs the teams have remaining to the respective head coach and captain(s). When a team has used all its allotted time-outs for the half, personally inform the head coach that the team has no time-outs remaining. Notify the Referee that the coach is aware that the team is out of time-outs.

2.15.2 Coach-Referee Conference

A head coach, or a player directed by the head coach, may request a time-out to meet with the Referee to review a decision which may have resulted from a misapplication or misinterpretation of a rule. Such a request must be made prior to the ball becoming live following the play to be reviewed. The covering official should grant the time-out and give the stop-the-clock signal. All officials should mirror the stop-the-clock signal. The covering official notifies the Referee that a time-out has been requested for a coach-referee conference.

- Referee: Give the stop-the-clock signal facing the press box and indicate that it is an official's time-out by tapping the chest with both hands. Meet with the coach in front of the team box in the field of play and within five yards of the sideline.
- Wing: If your coach is involved in the conference, join the conference to witness the exchange between the coach and the referee and to ensure the Referee's explanations are correct. Keep assistant coaches and other team personnel away from the conference. The other wing official should stay near the sideline of the team not involved in the conference to keep players on the field and coaches and team attendants off the field. Coaches may talk to players but attendants may not provide water or other assistance to the players.
- Back Judge: Move to a position to keep the players from the team involved in the conference within the hash marks and well away from the coach-referee conference.
- Umpire: Stand over the ball until the Referee informs you of the results of the conference.

If the conference results in a change to the Referee's ruling,

- Referee: Notify the opposing team's head coach of the change. Direct the Umpire and other officials on how to administer the change (e.g., move the ball, change the down, and/or reset the game clock). When the changes are made, confirm that the teams and

officials are ready to resume play. Blow the whistle while giving the ready-for-play or start-the-clock signal as appropriate.

If the conference does not result in a change to the Referee's ruling, the requesting team will be charged a team time-out if they have any time-outs remaining. If the team is out of time-outs, it will be penalized 5-yards for delay of game. The team requesting the coach-referee conference will not be given another 60-second time-out after the Referee has made his decision and given the appropriate signals to the press box.

- Referee: Return to the area of the ball and give the charged team time-out or delay of game signal as appropriate. Following the administration of a delay of game penalty, give a final signal to the press box and indicate the number of the next down. Confirm that the teams and officials are ready to resume play. Blow the whistle while giving the ready-for-play or start-the-clock signal as appropriate.
- Umpire: If required, mark off the delay of game penalty.
- Head Line Judge, Line Judge, and Back Judge: Get the players into position for the next down.

2.15.3 Official's Time-Out

An official's time-out occurs without a time-out being charged to either team. The rule book identifies a list of occasions when an official's time-out is warranted in Rule 3-5-7. In addition, the Referee may call a discretionary official's time-out to deal with any situations not specifically called out in the rules. The mechanics for an official's time-out vary from situation to situation. Some situations have specified mechanics, for example the mechanics for "Measurements" and "Penalty Enforcement." In situations where no specific mechanics have been prescribed, use the following general mechanics.

- Referee: Face the press box. Give the stop-the-clock signal followed by tapping the chest with both hands. At the end of the time-out period, confirm that the teams and officials are ready to resume play. Blow the whistle while giving the ready for play or the start-the-clock signal as appropriate.
- Umpire: Stand over the ball until the Referee marks it ready for play.
- All officials: Ensure players are complying with the rules governing substitutions, and interactions with coaches and team attendants. (In some situations the Referee may allow teams to engage in a sideline time-out conference with their coaches and team attendants.)

2.15.3.1 Injury Time-Out

If a player sustains an injury that appears serious, give the stop-the-clock signal immediately if the ball is already dead, or as soon as the ball becomes dead. Beckon the coach and medical staff onto the field. The Referee must determine if the player is unconscious by observing the player and getting input from other officials or medical attendants. If the Referee

determines the player was apparently unconscious, notify the head coach. The player may not participate in the remainder of the game without medical clearance by an appropriate health care professional. It is the responsibility of the team and not the officials to ensure appropriate guidelines have been followed.

If a player's apparent injury appears less serious, give the player the opportunity to recover before giving the stop-the-clock signal and beckoning assistance from the sideline. If an official's time-out has been called for an apparently injured player, that player must leave the game for one down unless the halftime or overtime intermission occurs. Coaches may not talk to their players when they are on the field to administer to an injured player. During an injury timeout send both teams to their sideline. Officials shall not touch an injured player under any circumstance.

2.15.3.2 Equipment Repair Time-Out

If an official notices a player with an apparent need for equipment repair, notify the Referee who will decide if and when to call an official's time-out. An equipment repair time-out may be called if the equipment can be repaired in less than 25-seconds and without the assistance of sideline personnel. Otherwise, replace the player and give the ready-for-play or start-the-clock signal as appropriate. Officials shall not help any player with their equipment, except for very minor things such as jersey adjustments.

2.15.3.3 Hydration Time-Out

The Referee may declare an official's time-out when high heat could create a health risk to players. The hydration break will be administered using the same mechanics that are used for a charged team time-out, including the Back Judge timing the 60-second break. At the Referee's discretion the break time may be extended.

2.16 TIMING

2.16.1 Standard Timing

The Line Judge is primarily responsible for timing the game. The Back Judge times other intervals (e.g., 25/40-second count, time-outs, and intermissions) during the game. The Referee is authorized to correct obvious timing errors. All officials are responsible for making sure that the clock is stopped, started, and running at the appropriate time.

- Line Judge or Back Judge: If a visible game clock will be used, instruct the clock operator prior to the game. Time the game if there is no visible game clock or if the game clock becomes inoperable. Ensure that the game clock is operated correctly throughout the game.
Check the clock to make sure it is running after the Referee gives the start-the-clock signal; and that it is not running after a score, touchback, or when any official gives the

stop-the-clock signal. Notify Referee of any clock or timing errors as soon as they are observed.

- **Back Judge:** Time all game intervals other than playing time. Assist the Line Judge in confirming that the game clock is operated correctly.
 1. Start the 25-second count after the Referee has marked the ball ready for play. A watch, countdown watch, Redi-Ref or other device may be used.
 2. If the result of the preceding play dictates a 40 second play clock, start the play clock about 2-3 seconds after the last play ended. Starting the play clock should not supersede dead ball officiating duties.
 3. If the play clock reaches 5 seconds, hold one arm above your head (dead ball signal) for the duration of the play clock count down to zero or until the ball is snapped. Watch the ball during these last 5 seconds. If a delay of game foul occurs, sound whistle and throw flag immediately while giving signal S2. It is appropriate to signal to the Referee from your position the delay of game signal. Ensure that the Referee does NOT start the clock after the administration of any accepted delay of game foul.
To the extent possible, use the score board clock to time the 25/40-second intervals in the last two minutes of each half.
 4. Time the 60-second interval for the intermission between periods, a charged timeout, an official's hydration time-out, and between a score and the subsequent free kick.
 5. Time the three-minute intermission between the end of the game and the start of the first overtime period, and the two-minute intermission between subsequent overtime periods.
- **Referee:** Correct an obvious timing error if it is discovered prior to the second live ball following the error and before the period has been officially ended. To reset the 25-second count, signal the Back Judge by giving a pumping motion of the open palm above the head, or two hand pump to reset the play clock to 40 seconds.

2.16.2 Running Clock

If a game situation dictates the use of a running clock to time the game, the clock will be operated according to Appendix H - Nevada Running Clock Rule. In a running clock situation, the Back Judge shall not throw a flag for delay of game foul except under the most egregious circumstances.

2.16.3 Clock in Whole Seconds Only

Tenths of seconds will not be recognized in the State of Nevada.

Back Judge: In pregame conference with clock operator, have clock set to not display tenths of seconds.

Referee: If the clock for some reason does display tenths of seconds, and the game clock becomes dead while reading 0.1 to 0.9 seconds, wind the clock and declare the end of the quarter (or game/end of regulation if 4th quarter). Do not allow another play to be run.

Commented [Ma10]: 2025 revision. New section. Specifically approved by NIAA.

2.17 WHISTLE USE

The whistle is a major communication tool used to

- Mark the ball ready for play.
- Indicate the ball has become dead by rule.
- Draw the attention to specific situations such as a penalty or time out.

Always blow the whistle firmly. The tone and length of the whistle will depend on the situation. Routine plays only require a short, loud toot. A more demonstrative whistle may be required to help sell a tough call or get the attention of players or other officials. Whenever an official has called a penalty, he shall give 3 or 4 sharp quick blasts of the whistle as soon as the ball is dead, or immediately if the ball is already dead (i.e., a “funny whistle”) REMEMBER: The ball becomes dead by rule; the whistle only confirms what has already happened. Learn to officiate without the whistle in your mouth until the ball becomes dead. The Referee, Umpire, Head Line Judge and Line Judge should have their whistle in or near their mouth prior to the snap to cover possible dead ball fouls or last second requests for a time-out. At the snap they should remove/spit/drop the whistle from their mouth to help prevent an inadvertent whistle.

2.17.1 Ready for Play Whistle

When the Referee needs to mark the ball ready for play (typically after a charged or administrative timeout or other circumstances when a 25 sec play clock is used, He shall give one firm blast of His whistle accompanied by either a chop or a wind the clock signal.

2.17.2 Dead Ball Whistle

Only the official covering the area where the ball becomes dead should blow the whistle. Do not blow a whistle when the ball becomes dead outside your area. If officials are following proper mechanics, there is rarely a need for more than one whistle on a play. On occasion when coverage areas overlap there may be two whistles. The covering official *must find the ball* before sounding the whistle. The covering official must actually see the ball in possession of the runner who is down or whose forward progress has been stopped. If you do not see the ball become dead, do not blow your whistle. A delayed or no whistle is better than an early inadvertent whistle. While a whistle being sounded after the ball is dead is routine, and expected, on most plays, it is perfectly acceptable to have no whistle at all on a handful of plays during a game. The tone and length of the whistle used to indicate the ball has become dead by rule varies by situation. A single, firm, short toot is all that is required if a runner is taken down by a single tackler or scores a touchdown on a break-away run, or a pass is obviously incomplete. A longer, louder whistle may be required to designate the ball is dead when a runner whose forward progress has been stopped is being shoved backwards by a host of tacklers. A long, loud whistle also may be effective at the end of kicking downs where players are scattered all over the field. More demonstrative whistles and signals may be required to sell close calls such as a runner down before a fumble occurs or a pass caught near the sideline that is incomplete. A short series

of firm toots may be required to stop players who are still engaged in contact after the ball has become dead.

2.17.3 Inadvertent Whistle

Don't blow one; but if you do, admit it, administer it, and get over it!!! One of the most embarrassing moments in an official's career is blowing an inadvertent whistle, but unfortunately, they occur. Acknowledge the error no matter how soft you think your whistle was. Don't try to cover it up. **If necessary, blow the whistle again to stop the action.** The ball becomes dead immediately when an inadvertent whistle is blown. Note the location and status of the ball when the whistle was sounded. If the ball is in player possession, drop a beanbag on the yard line to mark the spot where the ball became dead as a result of the whistle. Report to the Referee the position and status of the ball when the whistle was blown.

- All Officials: Administer an inadvertent whistle situation by using mechanics very similar to penalty enforcement. Ensure the line-to-gain equipment and down box do not move. Cover the dead ball spot and retrieve the ball.
- Referee: Determine the options applicable to the situation. If the choice of options is obvious, notify the Umpire where to place the ball and give a quick explanation to the affected head coach. Move to a clear area facing the press box; give the inadvertent whistle signal; and indicate the number of the next down. If the option is not obvious, meet with the affected head coach and explain the options in the presence of the Umpire. When the head coach selects an option, notify the Umpire where to place the ball. Take your position for the next play; confirm that officials and teams are ready to resume play. Blow the whistle while giving the start the clock signal. (Since an inadvertent whistle always stops a play while the game clock is running, the clock will be started when the ball is marked ready for play.)
- Umpire: Meet with the Referee and head coach to discuss the options. Ensure the Referee explains the options correctly. Spot the ball as directed by the Referee and stand over the ball until the Referee marks the ball ready for play.
- Wings: Explain the inadvertent whistle options to your respective coaches.
- Head Line Judge: Ensure the down box is placed at the proper spot and reflects the proper down number following administration of the chosen inadvertent whistle option. Be prepared to move the chain and down box if the administration of an option results in a first down for either team.

If during the down, a foul occurs prior to the inadvertent whistle and the penalty for the foul is accepted, the inadvertent whistle is ignored. In this case, use the mechanics for Fouls and Penalty Enforcement.

2.17.4 Inadvertent Signal

While not specifically addressed in the NFHS Rulebook, it shall be the officiating philosophy for NIAA sanctioned games that an inadvertent dead ball signal given by an official, when the ball is still live will be treated the same as an inadvertent whistle, and the provisions of

Rule 4-2-3 will apply. An inadvertent signal kills the play. When an official inadvertently gives any dead ball signal or other signal that signifies the ball is dead and the play is over, he shall blow his whistle, and after ensuing action after the play has stopped, he shall report the inadvertent signal to the Referee, and the Referee will apply the rule as prescribed above. The signals included are S2-wind clock (signifying progress was stopped inbounds), S3 stop the clock, S5 Touchdown, S6 Safety, S7 Dead ball or touchback, and S10 incomplete pass, or when any official verbally declares the play is over or the runner is down.

Section 3- SIGNALS

Whether a Referee has a stadium microphone or not, visual penalty signals are the best means available to communicate to coaches, fans, and the press box. By utilizing a distinct, yet fluid signaling technique, the Referee can easily communicate penalties while conveying confidence and control of the game. There are a few fundamental principles to bear in mind when signaling: First, and most importantly is to appear unhurried. Each signal should be slow and deliberate. Second, the order in which the signals are given is just as important as the signals themselves. Third, during the penalty signaling sequence, the Referee should refrain from displaying any emotion. In other words, the attitude should be that the Referee, on behalf of the entire officiating crew, is indifferent as to the potential effect of the foul. A rules infraction has occurred, and it is the duty of the crew to enforce the associated penalty regardless of the outcome. Abiding by these simple guidelines will significantly enhance the perception of integrity and impartiality.

Prior to signaling, the Referee should move to a spot on the field that is away from players, and other officials should help keep the area clear around the Referee if time allows. The Referee should face the press box and pick a generic spot somewhere between it and the field level. Remember, you are announcing to the crowd, and if you are looking straight forward, those who are higher in the stands will not be able to see your face because of the bill of your hat. Individual signals should be slow and purposeful, with each being held for at least one to two seconds. While technically optional when not using a stadium microphone, many Referees prefer (and it is highly suggested) to verbally announce the penalties in a raised, but again non-emotional voice, and not to the point of actual yelling or shouting. With the exception of the Sideline Warning (S15) and Ineligible Receiver Downfield (S37)—both of which require a minor back-and-forth or up-and-down motion respectively, each signal should be one and only one motion. For example, the signal for Personal Foul (S38) should consist of one forearm moving down and contacting the other forearm in an 'X' at or slightly above the chest. The Referee should not continue a 'chopping' motion during this signal. Another example is the signal for Illegal Shift/Illegal Motion (S20). The open palm(s) and arm(s) are brought in to the chest parallel to the ground and moved outward only once, not back and forth quickly several times. Starting in 2006, the signals for Sideline Interference (S29) and Illegal Forward Pass (S35) are given facing toward the press box.

When using a stadium microphone, it is important to follow the same fundamentals discussed above. Do not hurry your announcement and be clear of players and other game personnel. The announcement should match the signals being given, and should be clear and concise. Some stadium microphones have a slight delay when turning on and off, so it is important to allow the microphone to turn on before making your announcement. Also allow the microphone to turn off before blowing the whistle or talking to someone else. If the crew is using O2O radios, they must not talk on the radio while the Referee is making his penalty announcement.

A relatively new mechanic to note is that the Referee shall now announce the number of the player who committed the foul. This will help with communication to coaches, officials, and other game personnel. This process starts with the calling official mentally noting the number of the player who committed the foul, and then reporting it to the Referee. The key will be consistency and accuracy. Officials already note the number of the player, now that information will be announced as part of the penalty announcement. As previously stated, the order of signals is of great importance and significantly enhances the Referee's ability to effectively communicate the infraction and associated penalties. The signaling sequences are as follows:

Live-ball Fouls

- Signal of Foul (May be preceded by a Personal Foul (S38) signal depending on the infraction)
 - Direction of Offending Team
 - Player Number
 - Offended Team's decision to decline (S10) (if applicable)
 - Loss of Down (S9) (if applicable)
 - Player Disqualification (S47) (if applicable)
 - Signal Next Down, or First Down (S8) if penalty results in an automatic first down or acceptance of penalty otherwise results in a first down by rule.
 - Start Clock (S2) or RFP (S1)
 - Signal Untimed Down (S1*) prior to RFP (S1) if applicable during an untimed down
- ** Some game situations may dictate a signal for a score (S5/S6), no score (S10) or touchback (S7) after step 2a if applicable

Dead-ball Fouls

- Same procedure as Live-Ball fouls, however the penalty sequence is preceded by the Dead-Ball signal (S7), except for pre-snap fouls (false start, encroachment, etc.) because it is generally known by coaches and fans that these fouls are Dead-ball fouls.
- In either scenario, the Referee should wait to ensure that each official—particularly the Head Line Judge and their chain crew—are in position prior to giving the RFP/Start Clock signal

Section 4- PREGAME

The pregame period starts with the arrival of the officials and includes preparation activities performed off the field, specific duties performed on the field, and the coin toss. The mechanics described in this chapter were developed for varsity games and may need to be altered by the Referee as appropriate for application to sub-varsity or youth games. It should be noted that preparation begins well before game day. With access to video from websites such as Hudl.com, officials are encouraged, but not required, to “scout” teams they will be working that week. Valuable information can be gained as to a team’s tendencies, formations they use, identify star players, trick plays attempted and many other things. These observations can be shared in the pregame conference and help the crew be more effective in their performance during the game.

4.1 ARRIVAL TIMES

Arrival times for officiating crew members and auxiliary crew members will vary based upon the level of the game, the availability of officials, and other extenuating circumstances.

4.1.1 Arrival Times for Officiating Crew

Varsity games: Officials shall arrive in the locker room 1.5-2 hours before game time to allow enough time to dress, participate in a thorough pregame conference, and take the field thirty minutes before the scheduled kickoff. Crews that travel together to a game site and conduct their pregame conference in the vehicle can adjust their arrival time accordingly. In such cases, the crew should allow enough time at the game site to dress and take the field thirty minutes before scheduled kickoff. The actual arrival time shall be determined and communicated to the crew by the Referee no less than 48 hours before the game.

Sub-varsity games: If a facility is available, officials shall dress there. If a dressing room is unavailable, officials should arrive at least partially dressed and ready to participate in a pregame conference in the parking lot. The actual arrival time shall be determined and communicated to the crew by the Referee no less than 48 hours before the game.

4.1.2 Arrival Times for Auxiliary Crew Members

All auxiliary crew personnel assigned by local association are welcome to observe the pregame conference. Otherwise, auxiliary crew members should arrive by the times listed below:

- Varsity Games: The timer should arrive about 45 minutes before game time to meet with the Line Judge, receive instructions, and start the 30-minute pregame countdown clock. The person assigned to operate the scoreboard (downs, distance, score, etc.) should arrive no later than fifteen minutes before game time to check the board for potential problems. The line-to-gain crew should arrive about 30 minutes before game time to meet with the Head Line Judge, receive instructions, and inspect the line-to-gain equipment.

- Sub-Varsity Games: The timer, clock operator, and line-to-gain crew should arrive no later than fifteen minutes before game time or at a time requested by the Referee.

4.2 PREGAME ACTIVITIES OFF THE FIELD

The off-field pregame activities include preliminary preparations, a pregame conference, and a uniform check.

4.2.1 Preliminary Preparations

Upon arrival at the site there are several preliminary activities that must be completed before starting the pregame conference. These activities include:

- Prepare a list of officials by position to give to each head coach. This list may be part of an evaluation sheet or card prepared by one of the crew.
- Ensure all officials record the name of the head coach for each team on their game cards.
- Synchronize watches with the Line Judge who is responsible for having the correct time.

4.2.2 Pregame Conference

The purpose of a pregame conference is to prepare the crew and solidify the thinking of officials in regard to procedures, rules, interpretations, and enforcement. The pregame conference is a significant ingredient to success. If you talk about it before it happens on the field, you're better prepared to deal with it correctly. As a result, the Referee must conduct a pregame conference using a written outline. Attendance at the pregame conference is mandatory for all officials. All officials should actively participate in the conference. There are many approaches and outlines for a pregame conference, but there is no special formula for a "successful" conference. Referees may vary their approach to the conference, but the value of organizing and unifying the techniques to be used in a game cannot be overemphasized.

An opening discussion could include the following topics:

- Recent play situations or new rules that may need clarification.
- Game expectations such as teams' offensive and defensive sets, running/passing tendencies, key players, team records, potential rivalries, and interactions with and between head coaches.
- Sideline and bench area control and the use of sideline warnings and interference penalties.
- Communications with coaches.
- Crew rotation to fill the Referee and Umpire positions if either official becomes injured or too ill to work.

- Following the pregame conference, check to see that each official is properly dressed and all officials have the necessary accessories such as beanbags, penalty flags, whistles, game cards, coins, down indicators, chain clips, watches, etc.

4.3 PREGAME DUTIES ON THE FIELD

Officials shall enter the field together 30 minutes before game time and immediately begin their pregame duties.

Referee and Umpire: Meet with each head coach, home team first if able, and cover all the items listed on the coach's pregame meeting checklist including:

- Introduction of officials.
 - Introduce yourselves.
 - Give the coach a list of the officials by position
 - Identify the wing officials who will be working on the coach's sideline and indicate that the wing official will be the primary source for communications between the officials and the coach.
- Equipment and player information.
 - Ask the coach if all players are legally equipped in accordance with NFHS (federation) rules.
 - Ask if there are any players wearing casts or other special equipment that needs to be approved.
 - Ask the coach for the numbers (and names if desired) of the captains and to identify the speaking captain.
 - Ask the coach if the captains know what option they should select at the coin toss.
 - Verify presence of a ball person with 2 game balls.
- Timing Verification
 - Verify if the time on the countdown clock is accurate and confirm the scheduled time for kickoff.
 - Ask the coach to have the captains meet with the officials on the sideline at the 50-yardline with five minutes remaining on the countdown clock.
 - Confirm the duration of halftime and remind the coach that the coach is responsible for getting the team on the field before the halftime intermission clock expires. No officials will come to remind them of the time remaining in the halftime intermission.
 - Confirm whether the overtime rule will be used in a game involving an out-of-state team.
- Team Information.
- Ask the coach to identify any unusual plays or formations.
- Confirm that the coach has a bench control plan including a get-back coach. Reiterate with coach that all personnel are to stay out of the restricted area when the ball is live and that coaches are not allowed onto the field between downs unless there is a time-out.

- Solicit the coach’s support in fostering good sportsmanship throughout the game.
- Ask the coach if there are any questions.

The coaches conference should take no longer than 1-2 minutes. It is important to be professional at all times during this conference. Do not stand and chit-chat or appear overly friendly to either side.

All Officials: After meeting with the coaches, give the game balls to the Back Judge. Inspect the field to identify any potential hazards. Ask game management to have the problem taken care of immediately.

Umpire: Spot check player equipment and uniforms. Look for tinted eye shields, knotted jerseys, missing pads, illegal towels, or other violations. Ask the head coach to have the players make the necessary corrections before the game starts. Find out how the snappers want to have their ball positioned. Meet with the other officials to share the information gathered from the meetings with the coaches and to identify any issues that need to be resolved before the game.

Wings: Check the end line closest to the where the officials entered the field. Ensure hash mark pylons are placed 3-feet beyond the end line and in line with the inside edges of the hash marks. Ensure the goal post pads are secured and the goal posts are free of decoration. Check the sideline opposite the press box. Move yard-line markers at least 6-feet off the sideline, and at least 15 feet away at the goal line. Check that locations of all pylons are proper, especially the goal line pylons. Check the line-to-gain equipment and work with game management to repair or replace any faulty equipment. Ensure the middle of the chain is taped. Instruct the line-to-gain crew on their duties as described in Section 8-3, Instructions for Line-to-Gain Crew. Some key points include:

- Operate line-to-gain equipment 6-feet off the sideline.
- Only move the chain on the Head Line Judge’s signal.
- Do not move if you see a penalty flag or beanbag on the field.
- Old spot – old down; new spot – new down.

Introduce yourself to the head coach on each sideline. Tell the coach you will be reporting information for all foul situations and other concerns the crew may have. Ask the head coach to identify the team’s get-back coach. Introduce yourself to the get-back coach and solicit the coach’s assistance in keeping the 6-foot coaches’ box clear of players, attendants, and excess coaches.

Line Judge or Back Judge: Meet with the timer as you enter the field. Synchronize watches and/or confirm the countdown clock is correct. Instruct the timer on the duties described in Section 8-2, Instructions to Clock Operator/Timer. Some key points include:

- Instruct Clock Operator to not display tenths of seconds per section 2.16.3
- If there is less than 60 seconds left on the pregame countdown clock when the officials break to take their positions for the opening kickoff, reset the clock to 12 minutes.

Commented [Ma11]: 2025 revision (added)

- Start the halftime clock on the Referee's signal. Set the clock to 3:00 for the warmup period and start it as soon as the halftime clock has expired.
- Do not set the clock to time the three-minute intermission between the end of regulation and overtime. (Back Judge will time this period.)

Ask coaches or game management to help designate a responsible (at least 12-years old) ball person. (If a coach insists on using a younger ball person, let the person serve as an assistant and get an older person to be the designated the ball person.) Instruct the ball person(s) on their duties as described in Section 8-1, Instructions to Ball Person. Some key points include:

- Stay near wing official on your side and pay attention to the game.
- Be ready to give new ball to official and retrieve ball on deep incomplete passes
- Have second ball ready for Back Judge after kick tries and retrieve kicked ball.
- Provide ball to Wing official or Back Judge upon request.

Introduce yourself to the head coach on your sideline. Tell the coach you will be reporting information for all foul situations and other concerns the crew may have. Ask the head coach to identify the team's get-back coach. Introduce yourself to the get-back coach and solicit the coach's assistance in keeping the Restricted Area clear of players, attendants, and excess coaches.

Back Judge: Assist wing officials with any field inspection duties as necessary. Take responsibility for and approve the game balls received from the Umpire. When on-field pregame duties are completed, the officials and line-to-gain crew should gather on the sideline opposite the press box and at the 20-yard line farthest from the entrance to the field. Stay away from coaches and players, but continue to observe both teams. Line up in a single row with heels on the sideline and hats over the heart for the presentation of the flag and the playing of the National Anthem. When the pregame ceremonies are completed, the Back Judge and Head Line Judge will move toward the 50-yard line on Head Line Judge's side of the field to meet their captains and prepare for the coin toss. The Line Judge, Umpire, and Referee will cross the field to the press box sideline and move toward the 50-yard line to meet their captains and prepare for the coin toss.

4.4 COIN TOSS

4.4.1 Pregame Coin Toss

The coin toss should be administered at the middle of the field, three minutes before the scheduled game time. If the field is not cleared at the three-minute mark, hold the toss at an available spot such as an end zone. (Penalize the home team for delay of game on the kickoff for not having the field cleared in time.)

- Line Judge and Umpire: With five minutes on the countdown clock, get your captains lined up on the 50-yard line on your respective sidelines. The Line Judge should have possession of an approved game ball for each team. The Line Judge will have the speaking captain next to him and introduce the speaking captain. At the Referee's signal

with three minutes remaining in the countdown, escort your captains to the center of the field and have them stand with their backs to their own sidelines. Introduce the speaking captains to the Referee. Take a position on the 45-yard line nearest the scoreboard with your back to the scoreboard. Record the results of the toss.

- Back Judge and Head Line Judge: The Head Line Judge will have the speaking captain next to him and introduce the speaking captain. The Head Line Judge & Back Judge joins the Line Judge on the 45-yard line nearest the scoreboard.
- Umpire: Move to a position at the end of the captains and facing the Referee. Confirm the captain's call of the coin prior to the toss. Notify the Referee of any errors in administering the toss, such as awarding the wrong team an option. Record the results of the toss.

Referee: With no more than 3:30 remaining in the pregame countdown, walk to the center of field facing the scoreboard. With three minutes remaining, signal the officials on the sidelines to escort their captains to midfield. Acknowledge the introductions of the speaking captains and ask the captains to introduce themselves to each other. Acknowledge the leadership roles of the captains and ask for their support in communicating with teammates and promoting sportsmanship. (Do not use the coin toss as an opportunity to tell the captains how the game will be officiated, nor to engage in light hearted or joking conversations with the captains.) The time for the coin toss may be earlier if desired. Show both sides of the coin to each speaking captain, identifying which side is heads and which is tails. Ask the visiting team to call the coin before you toss it. Confirm that the opposing team and the Umpire have heard the same call. Toss the coin.

- Offer the winner of the toss the choice of options to defer, receive, or defend a goal. If the winning captain defers, immediately turn and face the press box; tap the shoulder of the captain; and give the deferred signal.
- Present the remaining choices (receive or defend a goal) to the other captain. (RECOMMEND: To simplify this process, the Referee should tell the captain, "I assume you want the ball.")
- If the winning captain selects an option other than defer, withhold any signals to the press box until all choices have been made.
- When all the choices have been made, ask the captains to put their backs to the goal lines their teams will defend and then give the final signals.
- Whichever side you are nearest, on the press box side, give a kick signal if the team lined up next to you will be kicking off. Give a receive signal if the team nearest you will be receiving. Do not walk across to the 45-yard line to give a signal for the team lined up next to the crew.
- Ask the captains to shake hands and bring their teams out for the kickoff.

All Officials: Meet with the Referee on the 50-yard line to confirm and record the results of the toss on their game cards. Line Judge gives the kicking team's ball to the Back Judge. On the Referee's signal break the midfield huddle and jog to your respective positions for the kickoff. Line Judge gives the receiving team's ball to the ball person.

4.4.2 Second Half Options

Either at the end of the first half before the teams leave the field, or soon after the teams return to the field after halftime, one member of the crew (typically the wing official on that team's side) will ask the head coach whose team received the first half kickoff which goal they want to defend (or which direction they want to kick). There will be no discussion with captains as to second half options. Inform the rest of the crew the choice made so they can take proper positions for the second half kickoff.

4.4.3 Overtime Coin Toss

The overtime coin toss will be conducted immediately following the completion of a three-minute intermission between the end of the fourth period of the game and the first period of overtime. See Chapter 6 for a full description of overtime mechanics including the coin toss.

Section 5- MECHANICS FOR FIVE OFFICIALS

This chapter provides mechanics for free kicks, plays from scrimmage, punts, and scoring kicks for a crew of five officials. NOTE: Wing Officials will switch sides at halftime. The Line Judge will start the game opposite the press box and be responsible for the chains. The Head Line Judge will start the game on the press box side of the field. When Wing Official duties are specified in this manual, the “Line Judge” duties are referring to the Wing Official working the press box side of the field, and Head Line Judge duties are referring to the chains side of the field.

5.1 FREE KICKS

There are three types of free kicks: (1) kickoff, (2) free kick following a safety, and (3) an optional free kick that may occur after a fair catch or an awarded fair catch. An onside kick is a short free kick that can be used on any free kick down, but which is used almost exclusively as a variation to the regular kickoff.

5.1.1 Kickoffs

The kickoff is used to put the ball in play to start each half of a game, following the try after a touchdown and successful field goal attempts.

Responsibilities by position:

Referee

Initial position/RFP/Before kick

- 1-2 yards out-of-bounds in-line with receiving team’s goal line on sideline opposite press box
- Count Team R; verify with Umpire and ensure he/she is ready
- ~~Starting with the Umpire, check that each official is in position and ready prior to signaling the RFP- verify with back judge that all upfield officials are ready~~
- Visually scan entire field quickly. If nothing unusual, signal RFP

After kick

- Quickly check flight path of ball, then focus on deep receivers
- Signal to start clock when ball is legally touched
- Stay on goal line until certain that kick will not break goal line plane you have goal line responsibility all the way across the field
- Signal touchback if any part of ball breaks the GL plane, or if a Team R receiver penetrates with the ball without completing a catch or recovery
- If catch will be made inside 5-yardline, think momentum. Mark with beanbag
- Box in play. If ball is toward Referee, focus on ball carrier and trail play up sideline out-of-bounds. If ball is away, focus on first wave of contact, then backside player activity. Do not allow illegal or late hits behind play or after play.
- Rule on ball status if it crosses the sideline in the field of play

Commented [Ma12]: 2025 Revision

- Referee has sole responsibility for the goal line on a change of possession after a catch or recovery (fumble return by K). Be at the goal line when the ball arrives.
- Be in position to rule at pylon; back up if needed
- Take progress up to and including the 30-yard line

Umpire

Initial position/RFP/Before kick

- At pylon or 10-yard line press box side
- For each team's initial kickoff be at pylon, may adjust to 10 yard line as game progresses if warranted, however still responsible for pylon coverage on your side
- Count Team R; verify with Referee
- Raise one hand when ready

Commented [Ma13]: 2025 revision (added)

After kick

- Quickly check flight path of ball, then focus on deep receivers
- Signal to start clock when ball is legally touched by R
- If flight of ball threatens your GL pylon, quickly retreat to GL to rule on ball crossing sideline in field of play (kickoff out of bounds foul) or in end zone (touchback) If catch will be made inside 5-yardline, think momentum. Mark with beanbag
- If ball does not threaten your pylon, maintain position. Take runner if he comes into your area. Otherwise focus on blocks immediately in front of and around runner, then backside player activity. Referee has the GL on change of possession. Do not allow illegal or late hits behind play or after play.
- Rule on ball status if it crosses your sideline in the field of play
- If after change of possession K runner comes into your area, stay in front of play and cover your pylon.
- Take progress up to and including the 30-yard line
- After colors have separated, get new R ball and spot ball for new series

Head Line Judge

Initial position/RFP/Before kick

- 1-2 yards out-of-bounds straddling Team R's free-kick line on the sideline opposite the press box at the back of the Restricted Area.
- Clear sideline of coaches/players
- Count Team K; verify with Line Judge and Back Judge. Beanbag in hand (be prepared a for sudden onside kick). Raise one hand when ready (wait for BJ to get into position)

After kick

- Verify Team R is not offside. Quickly check flight path of ball, then focus on the nearest four kicking team players as they progress downfield in your area of responsibility, verify legality of blocks
- Anticipate surprise onside kick on every kick. Be ready to rule on first touching (mark with beanbag), illegal blocks by K before ball has gone 10 yards, possession
- Move down field while the ball is in flight, but no more than 10 yards (usually R-40)
- Signal to start clock when ball is legally touched in your area
- Rule on short kicks out-of-bounds.
- Watch for first points of contact between K and R players in front of the runner
- Move with play while remaining on the sideline
- Be alert for fair catch signals. R can fair catch in or beyond neutral zone
- Be alert for KCI, if K player is first to touch free kick in flight it is KCI
- Box in play by staying wide, rule on legality of blocks. Look for clips, blocks below the waist, illegal blindside blocks. Note: Team K can use their hands and arms to contact an opponent from behind above the waist if they are attempting to reach a runner or a loose ball that they may legally touch or possess (See 6-1-5, 9-3-5-b)
- If ball is to near side, focus on Point of Attack and blocks in front of runner
- If ball is deep and away, focus on illegal or cheap blocks/hits away from the play. Think and see the backside of the play
- After play is over stop clock; practice vigilant dead-ball officiating
- Take forward progress spot past R-30
- Move to forward-progress spot yard line; assist in ball relay; set chains

Line Judge

Initial position/RFP/Before kick

- 1-2 yards out-of-bounds straddling Team K's free-kick line on the sideline nearest the press box at the back of the Restricted Area
- Clear sideline of coaches/players
- Count Team K; verify with Head Line Judge and Back Judge. Beanbag in hand
- (Be prepared for sudden onside kick). Raise one hand when ready (wait for BJ to get into position)

After kick

- Verify Team K is not offside. On deep kickoffs do not rule encroachment unless a K player has at least one foot down a yard into neutral zone before ball is kicked. Quickly check flight path of ball, then focus on the nearest four kicking team players in your area of responsibility as they progress downfield. Verify legality of blocks

- Move down field while the ball is in flight, but no more than 20 yards (usually R-40)
- Signal to start clock when ball is legally touched by R if in your area
- Rule on short kicks out-of-bounds.
- Move with play while remaining on the sideline
- Be alert for fair catch signals. R may fair catch a free kick in the neutral zone
- Be alert for KCI, if K player is first to touch free kick in flight it is KCI
- Box in play by staying wide, rule on legality of blocks. Look for clips, low blocks. Note: Team K can use their hands or arms to contact an opponent from behind above the waist if they are attempting to reach a runner or a loose ball that they may legally touch or possess (See 6-1-5, 9-3-5-b)
- If ball is to near side, focus on Point of Attack and blocks in front of runner
- If ball is away, focus on illegal blocks/hits away from the play. Think and see the backside of the play
- After play is over stop clock; practice vigilant dead-ball officiating
- Take forward progress spot past R-30
- Move to forward-progress spot yard line; assist in ball relay; verify clock stoppage.

Back Judge

Initial position/RFP/Before kick

- After a try or field goal, retrieve scoring team's ball and proceed to K's free-kick line between the inbounds lines. Hand ball to kicker and instruct him not to kick the ball until the Referee has sounded his whistle for the RFP. Spot check Team K equipment
- If a carry over penalty on either team is being enforced on the kickoff, go directly to the succeeding spot (do not march off foul from K-40). Give foul signal and proceed as above.
- Have team K take positions within 60 seconds of last play. Do not allow a prolonged timeout period
- Count Team K, verify with H and L.
- Ensure that HL and LJ are in proper position and that team K formation is legal, then signal to Referee that all upfield officials and players are set and ready for RFP
- Move to a position behind Team K so you can observe player alignment, and clearly observe how the ball is kicked off the tee
- Beanbag in hand (be prepared for sudden onside kick). Raise one hand when ready

Commented [Ma14]: Revision 2025 (added)

Commented [Ma15]: Revision 2025 (added)

After kick

- Be ready to rule on pop-up kick, immediately blow play dead and kill clock if it is one
- Quickly check flight path of ball, then focus on the middle three kicking team players (and kicker) as they progress downfield. Protect the kicker until he has advanced 5 yards past K restraining line or until the kick has touched the ground or is possessed. (9-3-4-a/b) Verify legality of blocks
- Box in play by staying deep, rule on legality of blocks. Look for clips, low blocks. Note: Team K can contact an opponent from behind above the waist if they are attempting to reach a runner or a loose ball that they may legally touch or possess (See 6-1-5, 9-3-5-b)
- Focus on illegal blocks/hits away from the play. Think and see the backside of the play
- Do not move up field more than 10-15 yards (midfield for most kickoffs)
- BJ has sole responsibility for Team K goal line on long runbacks. Do not get beat to the GL
- After play is over stop clock; practice vigilant dead-ball officiating

Commented [Ma16]: Revision 2025 (typo)

5.1.2 Free Kick – Onside (anticipated)

When the game situation dictates that team K will likely attempt an onside kick, the following adjustments will be made:

Referee:

- Initial position: Middle of field at R's goal line.
- You are responsible for watching for personal fouls up field, dead ball officiating, and covering any action if K kicks it deep.

Umpire:

- Initial position: At R restraining line (normally midfield) on the sideline, press box side.
- Rule on first touching by K, illegal blocks by K before ball has gone 10 yards, possession, free kick out of bounds.

Back Judge:

- Initial position: After handing kicker the ball go to K restraining line on the sideline, press box side opposite the LJ.
- Rule on encroachment by K, pop up kicks, first touching by K, help U and H with possession.

Line Judge and Head Line Judge: Initial position same as Free Kick – Normal. Rule on above issues. **Back Judge and Line Judge are primary for illegal blocks by K before ball has gone 10 yards.**

Commented [Ma17]: 2025 Revision

5.1.3 Free Kick After Safety

All: Same as Free Kick – Normal except initial positioning adjusted accordingly (normally K restraining line will be K-20). A punt may be used for a free kick after a safety.

5.1.4 Free Kick after Fair Catch or Awarded Fair Catch

A free kick may be selected by the offensive team as the means for putting the ball in play following a fair catch or an awarded fair catch. The use of a free kick in this situation is a very rare event. The kick must be a place kick; a punt is not allowed. This is the only time a free kick may be used to score a field goal. Some additional mechanics are needed to prepare for this kick.

- Referee: Take a position on the receiving team's end line near the upright opposite the press box. After acknowledging that all officials and both teams are ready, blow the whistle while giving the ready-for-play signal. Move quickly to a position behind the upright to determine whether the field goal attempt is good. You are responsible for the crossbar and to blow the whistle when the ball becomes dead in or beyond the end zone.
- Umpire: Take a position behind the receiving team's upright nearest the press box to determine whether the field goal attempt is good.
- Head Line Judge: Move the line to gain equipment to the spot of the fair catch. Set the box and chain stakes like any first down. The box identifies the kicking team's free kick line. The stake at the line to gain spot marks the free kick line for the receiving team. After setting the chain, help align the receiving team behind their free kick line. Take the same relative sideline position as for a regular kickoff and follow all mechanics for a regular kickoff.
- Line Judge: Help align the kicking team behind their free kick line. Take the same relative sideline position as for a regular kickoff and follow all mechanics for a regular kickoff.
- Back Judge: There is no one-minute intermission between the fair catch and the free kick down. Hand the ball to the kicker who may place the ball anywhere along the free kick line and between the hash marks. Instruct the kicker to wait until the Referee marks the ball ready for play before kicking the ball. Follow all the mechanics for a regular kickoff.

The officials will execute all duties and responsibilities prescribed for a regular kickoff, except the Referee and Umpire will remain at the uprights if the kick approaches the end zone. If the kick is short of the goal line, the Referee and Umpire will move quickly toward their regular kickoff positions to cover players and activities on the field. REMINDER: All kickoff rules apply to a free kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch even if the kick is a field goal attempt. These rules include the right of the kicking team to recover and possess the ball under

certain conditions and the penalty options for kicks that go out of bounds untouched by a receiving team player.

5.2 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS - NORMAL

General Keys All Officials

It is imperative that officials become proficient at reading the play the offense will run. Be “game aware” of each team’s offensive tendencies (primarily a running team or a passing team, ability of QB, does QB run the ball frequently or use a run/pass option (RPO), down and distance, score of game, time remaining in quarter or half. Anticipate, but don’t assume.

Generally speaking, the initial action of the offensive tackles will reveal whether the play called will be a run or a pass. If the tackle rears up and takes a step or two back at the snap, it will most likely be a passing play. If the tackle fires out at the opponent, it will most likely be a running play.

5.2.1 Referee

Initial position

- Within 10 yards of the ball when it is spotted. Look to Line Judge for next down or if there is a need to check for possible measurement
- Check down/down box; signal down visually and verbally
- If needed, signal RFP. Quickly check that crew is in position before signaling

After the RFP

- Back out at a 45-degree angle (facing teams and ball—do not turn back to teams/ball) to a position 13-15 yards behind the line of scrimmage in the offensive backfield on the passing-arm side of the quarterback and wide enough to view all backs, 1-3 yards wider as the near-side tight end position; be able to see the snap
- Count Team A; hold signal for Umpire if formation is trips to your side, signal to Umpire, you will switch tackle keys to near side tackle
 - Make mental note of where lateral sides of Free Blocking Zone are
- Monitor Team A substitutions
- Rule on illegal shifts/false starts

At the snap

- Read progression: Snap—Far-side tackle—Quarterback
- See the entire snap and be able to rule on a fumble or muffed snap
- Read far-side tackle; his actions will immediately signal pass/run

Commented [Ma18]: 2025 Revision clarified verbiage

Keys/Mechanics – Run

- Stay with QB for a second after hand-off, then go to runner/point-of-attack until he turns up field including assisting flanks with keying play-side tackles.
- Flow with play while staying deep and wide. Trail play and as runner moves up field, shift to action behind play
- If QB is the runner, follow him out of bounds into team area and escort him out of the sideline area
- Referee had sole responsibility of Team A's goal line on change of possession. Do not turn back to play when reversing direction
- Assist flanks with forward progress on plays the result in significant loss of yardage
- Move toward dead-ball spot; assist in ball relay; check clock status; dead-ball officiate
- Look to Line Judge for first down/next down status

Keys/Mechanics – Pass

- Stay deep and wide of action. Retreat the same number of yards as the passer, including a scramble. If passer rolls to your side, back out at 45-degree angle to near sideline to maintain distance and wide-angle view, let QB pass in front of you if he continues toward sideline.
- Do not rule on forward/backward pass unless is it obvious, this call is primarily the wing official's call
- Rule on forward pass/fumble. If the passer's arm is moving forward at all prior to contact, it will be ruled a forward pass. When in doubt, it will be ruled a forward pass, if ball is pitched forward to back in motion crossing in front of QB, be ready to rule on whether pass or handoff. If short pass and ball hits ground, be ready to rule incomplete forward pass and sell call.
- Rule on intentional grounding. Was QB under duress when ball was thrown? Slow down and verify with flanks whether a receiver was in the area. Was QB outside the lateral boundary of the free blocking zone? Did pass make it to line of scrimmage? You will need assistance from other officials (usually the wing official) to make this call. If grounding drop a late flag at spot of pass. TIP: Use a 2nd down indicator to mark the lateral placement of the ball to assist in determining free blocking zone parameters (Watch Matt Sumstine's video at www.nnfoa.com).
- Protect the passer. Look for "bad color" (defense breaking through) as fouls tend to happen here. Stay with blocks in front of passer until passer is threatened then focus attention on him. Stay with QB/passers well after ball is thrown. Do not look up field and allow personal fouls (roughing or otherwise) on QB. Ideally, the Referee should not know status or result of downfield action on a pass
- Look for illegal hits on the QB after a change of possession
- Trail play up field slowly. Look for personal fouls well behind play/action
- Move to forward progress inbounds spot and get status/result from umpire
- Look to Line Judge for first down/next down status

5.2.2 Umpire

Initial position

- Do not leave the ball unattended at any time prior to the RFP unless it is to separate players/potential personal fouls. It is the Umpire's responsibility to keep the snap from occurring prior to the RFP. Know the snapper, be able to control snap with your voice if necessary (e.g., "Greg, wait til I give you the ok")
- When spotting the ball after a normal scrimmage down, the Umpire stepping away from the ball is considered the RFP. The Umpire should have the ball spotted and stepped away into position quickly enough so he is not slowing down the offense, but not hurried faster than the Umpire can handle, leading to errors or missed assignments.
- Verify lateral position of ball on or between inbounds lines, adjust extra down indicator to reflect
- Communicate number of down to Referee and HL/LJ
- Keep Team B onside
- Spot check uniforms/equipment
 - Count Team A, signal and vocalize count to R after the RFP. If R is signaling trips to his side acknowledge him, he is taking his near side tackle.
- Move around Team B's huddle to HL's side; check down box
- Take a position 6-9 yards behind Team B's line of scrimmage between guards, and in no case outside of tackles, be able to see ball
- Vary lateral position occasionally, but always be in position to clearly see the ball prior to and at the snap; do not stand directly behind linebackers
- Verify numbering requirements; find 5 ineligible
- Visualize Free Blocking Zone
- Rule on false starts/snap infractions/disconcerting signals

At the snap

- Read progression: Snap—Guards
- Key center and both offensive guards (primary) and ball; tackle on Referee's side (secondary) unless trips to his side
- Rule on legality of snap
- Rule on all line play—illegal use of hands, holding, chop blocks, clipping, etc.

Keys/Mechanics – Run

- Read direction of guards—the initial direction of both guards almost always indicates direction of play/ball/runner
- If one player is double teamed, leave that block and go to 1 on 1 block. Rule on chop blocks

- Turn in direction of action and rule on legality of blocks in front of runner, or behind runner if play is away from you. If sweep to outside, do not watch ball carrier watch blocking action around him, don't be mesmerized by the ball
- Move slowly; let players adjust
- If play is directly up middle; remain stationary and/or pivot around to point-of-attack action.
- Trail play as it moves up field and rule on backside blocking/personal fouls
- Rarely use whistle, if ever. Instead, use firm voice and verbal commands
- Move to forward progress spot. Retrieve ball directly if ball is dead between inbounds lines or move out past inbounds for a ball relay. If ball is in middle of field in a pile of players and you see runner clearly down in possession, give dead ball signal (S7) as wings may not be able to see ball through players. Verbally tell players that runner is down or play is over.
- After being outside inbounds lines and returning to spot ball, take spot from far side official (cross-field mechanics) to avoid having to turn around again
- Spot ball and signal down; make eye contact with Referee and verify that there are no fouls or other irregularities. After most plays the ball should be spotted within 8-10 seconds.

Keys/Mechanics – Pass

- Read guards for pass protection blocking
- Move off of double team blocks quickly, focus on 1 on 1 blocks
- Methodically move to within 2 yards of line of scrimmage, but beware of short crossing routes in front of you
- Keep 5 ineligible in view, even if peripherally
- Pivot on all passes when ball is thrown. Stop walking and spin on plant leg at least 90 degrees and stay settled. Be able to assist on all catch/no catch/traps over the middle where the catch/ball is away from HL/LJ/BJ. Sell close incomplete pass hard. Umpire is often only official to get a look at these.
- Rule on backside personal fouls/low or illegal blocks on long passes and/or changes of possession
- Rarely use whistle, if ever. Instead, use firm voice and verbal commands, move quickly to pile. Have strong command presence, players need to know you're there
- Move to forward progress spot. Retrieve ball directly if ball is dead between inbounds lines or move out past inbounds for a ball relay. Do not stand at hash and wait for ball relay, go get it, even out of bounds if necessary.
- After being outside inbounds lines and returning to spot ball, take spot from far side official (cross-field mechanics) to avoid having to turn around again
- Spot ball and signal down; make eye contact with Referee and verify that there are no fouls or other irregularities

See Appendix 5A (page 75) for different formations and keys and zone coverage responsibilities

5.2.3 Wings

Initial position

- Pivot to signal down to box person, or verbalize next down after Referee's signal (do not turn entire back to field). Take initial position straddling line of scrimmage on or outside sideline opposite of press box. Do not start in field of play; instead, be able to move in quickly and sell close progress
- Keep sideline/coaching box clear
- If first down, mark box spot with heel of downfield foot
- Count 11 of team B/R (count and verify with Back Judge signal)
- Signal next down
- Monitor substitutions; players within 9-yard marks
- Know where the line to gain is on every down, (Head Line Judge) you should never have to look over your shoulder to find the front stake after a play is over. Know if snap starts behind or in front of the 5-yard tape mark on the chain (for 5-yard pre snap fouls).

After the RFP

- Count 4 in Team A backfield
- Verbally tell wide receiver where his LOS is. Do not say, "You're good." Or similar phrases. At most, you can tell the receiver, "You're on the line." Or "You're off the line." It is up to the player to make any adjustment. **May tap upfield leg to assist player on where the LOS is (or downfield leg for defender if he's pressing the receiver).** Rule formation legal when possible. Inform coaches of adjustments if needed, especially early in game. If lineman is "cheating" into backfield it's an indicator he's going to pass block or pull on a running play. Ensure that he is legally on the line of scrimmage (head or foot breaking waistline of snapper). Don't give him a free step and thus an advantage.
- Signal if widest player(s) is lineman or back (punch back and hold until snap). If widest player is on, no signal. If two or more widest are backs, show corresponding number of fingers to partner wing prior to punching back.
- Acknowledge opposite Wing if he is punched back also, recount backs ensuring no more than 4
- Rule on false starts/encroachment (dead-ball) by both teams up to near side of snapper
- Rule on illegal shifts. If team A never gets set, rule false start at snap and kill play. If Team A does a "quick shift" with an abrupt movement designed to cause Team B to encroach, rule false start. If Team B does not encroach, warn Team A Head Coach.
- Rule on legality of motion. Primary if motion man is moving away.
- Know eligible receivers on near side

At the snap

- Know if formation at snap is legal. If 5 in the backfield, both LJ and HL should have flags
- Read progression: Snap—Near-side tackle

Commented [Ma19]: Revision 2025 (added)

- Remain stationary as the play develops

Keys/Mechanics – Run

- If tackle fires out, read point of attack and rule on legality of blocks in front of runner to near side. Do not focus on ball carrier until he is threatened, focus on action in front of runner.
- Rule on low blocks, crackbacks/illegal blindside block, illegal block in back, clips, facemasks. If your receiver goes inside shallow, stay with him, this player often will commit illegal blindside block
- Rule on tackle holding. Make sure it affects the play before calling a foul
- If play is a sweep to near side and may threaten you (runner gets outside numbers), move/slide into offensive backfield along the sideline as far as necessary (at least 3-4 yds) and let play progress in front of you. If ball is pitched, rule on forward or backward pass. Remain on and move up sideline with play. If play breaks open, rule on sideline/out-of-bounds from behind play—BJ has the goal line
- Rule on legality of blocks/hits/tackles on or near sideline
- If ball is away, rule on backside play and personal fouls behind Umpire
- Do not blow the whistle unless the ball is clearly in view when it becomes dead by rule. No whistle is acceptable
- When the ball becomes dead in player possession, raise one hand (Signal 7) to signify the play is over and the play clock shall start. If behind runner when he goes down, remember forward progress spot is foremost point of ball when knee or other body part (other than hand) hit ground. Do not grant “double action” progress, which is progress gained after runner legally down, usually by forward momentum.
- On long runs that result in a touchdown, communicate to BJ that you have runner in bounds if he was close to sideline by pointing to BJ. If you are not at the goal line or within 5 yards, the BJ will have the TD signal. Do not mirror it late or from any location other than the GL pylon.
- If runner steps out or is hit causing him and defenders to go out of bounds, stop clock immediately and pivot 90 degrees to follow action. If behind play do not wait until you get to spot to signal, give stop clock signal and whistle while running to the spot. Do not turn back fully from field of play but do not ignore dead-ball action in team area
- If forward progress is stopped inbounds near sideline or runner is driven out after forward progress is stopped before he has reached the line to gain, give two wind-clock signals (S2). If this occurs and first down has been made, give stop the clock signal (S3). After colors have separated, inform Referee and Umpire to wind the clock on RFP (“silent wind”) This can be done verbally (“clock is hot” “clock is dead”) or by giving supplementary signals at the belt or both simultaneously.
- Always square off progress and move in no farther than halfway to numbers (9yard marks) or until players are met. Do not bring progress in past this point unless selling a close spot. If a first down is made outside Team B’s 10-yard line, mark progress at the

nearest yard line (Exception: close 4th down plays). If inside the B-10, do not go to nearest yard line as the next line to gain is the goal line.

- Utilize cross-field mechanics—off-side flank should take spot from covering official so that covering official can retrieve ball if necessary. Covering flank should visually verify that off-side official has the spot before leaving. Do not be in a hurry to get the ball and do not beanbag spot to get ball. Someone will get the ball at some point—it is secondary to the progress spot and dead-ball preventative officiating. If partner wing official is behind play and has signaled play is over and forward progress stopped by giving signal S2, you have responsibility to mark forward progress from across field—square off spot as normal and come to top of numbers. Partner wing will mirror your spot after colors have separated.
- Remain stationary if you have the spot—walking back slowly signifies to the Umpire that you don't have the spot and to take it from the other flank
- Head Line Judge Move down box or chains as necessary after colors have separated
- Line Judge double check to ensure chains are reset properly and down box is correct, down box is in front of rear stake when new series is awarded.

Keys/Mechanics – Pass

- If tackle shows pass-protection blocking, shift key to widest eligible receiver on near side if he is “pressed” (defender within 5 yards at snap), otherwise stay with tackle
- Pause briefly to be in position to rule on forward/backward pass just after snap. Punch back if pass in either direction (toward or away) is backward or parallel to LOS
Key will be widest eligible receiver to your side. Possibility of having more than one initial key for certain formations.

See Appendix 5A (page 75) for different formations and keys and zone coverage responsibilities

- Keep an eye on your receiver key. If he goes deep release him to Back Judge and go to zone coverage. If receiver starts well outside numbers and is pressed, Rule on if he stepped out of bounds voluntarily (illegal participation if he returns to field) or was blocked out (legal but must return at first opportunity). Do not leave position on LOS. If your receiver starts crossing pattern inside shallow, stay with him and watch for illegal pick plays/OPI. If he goes deep, go to zone coverage and take underneath receivers in your area.
- Wing official must keep dividing attention between receiver/DB action and action at LOS (pass play/scramble/broken play). Stay home at LOS. Most short passes (less than 15 yards) will be your ruling and can easily be ruled on while staying at LOS.
- Think OPI/DPI parameters. PI must be obvious with a clear intent to impede
- On Run Pass Option (RPO) plays stay at LOS and rule on if passer was over LOS when he released ball. Must have one foot down over LOS to rule foul.
- When pass is imminent or thrown, release downfield to help cover play. Eyes to the ball, watch action of defender/receiver. For PI must be clear restriction, both players have a

right to ball. **New in 2022:** Rule on whether eligible receiver is in area of incomplete pass thrown to your side. If so, point to him after play is over. If no receiver in area, rule on whether pass made it to LOS or not (within 1 yard will be ruled as making it to LOS). If so, point to LOS to signal to Referee that pass made the LOS. Note: If pass is thrown out of bounds to your side, rule on whether pass made it to extended line of scrimmage out of bounds, which counts as the same thing. If the incomplete pass did NOT make it to the line of scrimmage AND there was no eligible receiver in the area, after ruling incomplete immediately go to Referee in person (not over the radio) and report your information for a possible intentional grounding foul. Do NOT drop your flag for intentional grounding, this is solely the Referee's responsibility.

- If ball is away, rule on backside play, personal fouls behind Umpire
- Do not blow the whistle unless the ball is clearly in view when it becomes dead by rule. No whistle is acceptable
- When the ball becomes dead in player possession, raise one hand (Signal 7) to signify the play is over and the play clock shall start.
- Rule on trapped passes. If clearly incomplete, sell hard, strong whistle and several incomplete signals. If view blocked by receiver, look to Umpire for help before ruling. If Umpire is giving no help, make a ruling and sell it.
- If ball is caught by airborne receiver near sideline, rule on complete or incomplete. If caught while airborne and carried backward by defender, rule on forward progress and give two wind clock signals. If deep sideline pass, confer with back judge before making ruling. Think possession then foot/feet. If no help from Back Judge, make a ruling and sell it.
- If catch is made by airborne receiver and he goes to ground, ensure he survives ground maintaining possession of ball before ruling. Let the play complete itself.
- Utilize cross-field mechanics if pass is caught on other side of field be ready to mark forward progress spot if necessary. Just because play went away from you doesn't mean you don't have anything to do.
- If play away from you stay on LOS, watch for fouls by players behind Umpire and Referee, backside officiate. Watch dead ball action when play is over.
- Head Line Judge Move down box or chains as necessary after colors have separated
- Line Judge double check to ensure chains are reset properly and down box is correct, down box is in front of rear stake when new series is awarded.

See Appendix 5A (page 75) for different formations and keys and zone coverage responsibilities

5.2.4 Back Judge

Initial position

- 20-25 yards behind Team B's line of scrimmage between the uprights in a position to key tight end or second receiver in on strong side. Never outside the hashmarks and always 5-10 yards behind deepest defensive back
- Signal next down

- Do not have whistle in mouth at any time prior to down
- The Back Judge is in the best position to dead-ball officiate. Do not disregard this responsibility
- Assist with relaying ball, but do not disregard player activity just to retrieve ball
- Positive knowledge of clock status is primary responsibility of Back Judge
- Know play clock status and whether clock should be running or wait for the RFP from the Referee
- If ball is snapped between the 20 and 10, start either on the end line or halfway deep in the end zone, depending on your physical ability. If you read that the goal line is threatened, quickly go to the goal line to beat the runner there, or if you read a short pass that threatens only the goal line. The Wing officials may not be able to get there in time to rule so you need to assist them. You still have end line responsibility. Do not let any receivers behind you in any circumstance if you choose to start halfway deep in the end zone.
- Solely responsible for the end line. If you have given up goal line responsibility (typically between the 10-15), verbally inform each wing that the goal line is theirs either by voice or over the O2O radio and make sure they acknowledge you. You have goal line responsibility until you give it up to the Wings.

After the RFP

- Start 25/40-second play clock if needed
- Count Team B and verbalize/signal to Wings that you have the count.
- Read formation and know all eligible receivers. Motion/shifts may change eligibility

At the snap

- Read progression: Key is pressed—stay with key. Key is not pressed—read key side tackle
- ~~Initial key will be widest eligible receiver to your side #2 receiver on LJ side.~~ Possibility of having more than one initial key for certain formations.
See Appendix 5A (page 75) for different formations and keys and zone coverage responsibilities
- Stay with primary key based on formation if player is pressed. Otherwise, key tackle on key side of formation and read run/pass
- If key is pressed, know if he was held at the line
- Regardless of run/pass, ~~take three walking steps back~~ it is much easier to officiate while remaining stationary. Additionally, it is easier to dead-ball officiate by being in a closer position after a short run/pass

Commented [Ma20]: Revision 2025 (correction not noticed by revision committee)

Commented [Ma21]: Revision 2025 (removed)

Keys/Mechanics – Run

- Read point of attack and focus on legality of blocks in front of runner. Look for crackbacks, clipping, low blocks in front of play but behind Umpire
- Look for holding by offensive receivers in front of play at or near point of attack

- If play ends in pile near sideline or in a side zone, hustle toward pile but focus on area behind Umpire when moving in. Do not miss personal fouls/late hits after play because you were in a hurry to retrieve the ball. Get to pile in sideline and escort players out of opposing team bench and separate colors.
- Fade back to leave at least a 10-yard cushion between position and action
- If play breaks, BJ must be at the goal line when the runner crosses. On long runs that threatened sideline, wait a few moments to signal TD to ensure Wing Official has not ruled runner out of bounds. Look to Wing Official for confirmation. You may point to wing official to signal you are waiting confirmation.
- When signaling TD, pivot with the runner to observe possible dead-ball unsportsmanlike fouls or late personal fouls
- After play, note clock status, start 40 second play clock about 2-3 seconds after dead ball signal, and assist in ball relay (secondary to dead-ball officiating, but that is not an excuse for lack of hustle). Be able to start play clock without looking at watch or timer.

Commented [Ma22]: Revision 2025 (added)

Keys/Mechanics – Pass

- After initial action on key is observed, follow key while reading QB. Although it takes practice, learning to glance back that the QB's eyes will allow the BJ to be in better position to box in the action on the intended receiver with the wing officials
- Think OPI/DPI, illegal use of hands. For PI, see the entire play, process it for obvious intent to impede, and then determine if a foul was committed. Do not rush this call
- Do not rush to fade back—let the play come to you while keeping a cushion; however, do not let any play get between your position and the goal line
- Regardless of initial key(s), switch to zone coverage if any receiver goes 10 yards beyond LOS. You have deep zone, leave shallow zone receivers to wings.
- Regardless of keys, all eyes to the ball when it is thrown. Try to stop and settle eyes just before ball and receivers arrive together.
- See the entire play from the inside looking out, process it, and then make a ruling
- There is no rush to signal, be it touchdown or incomplete pass. Slow down.
- Assist wings on spotting ball on long gaining plays.
- If wing has a foul for PI and you had good look from different angle, hustle in to give information if needed. If both have a foul confer with other official that call is for same thing before reporting to Referee
- After play, note clock status, start 40 second play clock about 2-3 seconds after dead ball signal, and assist in ball relay (secondary to dead-ball officiating, but that is not an excuse for lack of hustle). Be able to start play clock without looking at watch or timer.

5.3 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS – GOAL LINE

This section describes specific mechanics for officiating run or pass plays line when the ball is snapped near the goal. These mechanics are additions to the general mechanics described for all plays from scrimmage.

5.3.1 Goal Line Mechanics

Goal line mechanics are used when the offensive team snaps the ball inside their opponent's 10-yard line. The mechanics are adjusted again if the snap is made inside the opponent's 7-yardline. These goal line mechanics are also used for try attempts made by running or passing the ball. When the offense snaps the ball at or inside the 10-yard line near its opponent's goal, the officials will use standard run/pass mechanics except as noted below.

Wings:

- When the ball is snapped between the 7- and 10-yard line, drift slowly ahead of the play toward the 5-yard line. If you see the runner break free or otherwise threaten the goal line in any way, immediately break free or otherwise threaten the goal line. If the runner is stopped short of the goal line in the field of play, work back to the spot to mark forward progress. Exception: On 4th down and if the forward stake is between you and the goal line, stop at the forward stake until it is no longer threatened, then move to the goal line as necessary. DO NOT trail the runner. If the runner is threatening your goal line pylon, get to a position at least 6 feet, or wider, if necessary, off the sideline and straddling the goal line extended.
- If the ball is snapped between the goal line and the 7-yard line, immediately break to the pylon at the snap. Be wide of the pylon, 4-5 yards, especially if the play comes to your side. If the runner is stopped in the field of play, work back to mark the spot of forward progress.
- You are solely responsible for determining whether a touchdown has been scored on a close play at the goal line. If the runner is going down near the goal line, think knee and ball. If the knee is on the ground locate the ball immediately. If you cannot see the ball in the middle of the pile, do not give a signal. Come in hard to the play on the field side of the goal line. A delayed signal is perfectly fine until you see the ball. Look to the Umpire for possible assistance. If the runner is short of the goal line, give the dead ball signal (S7) or the stop the clock signal (S2) if a first down has been made. If you get to the pile and determine the ball crossed the goal line plane prior to the runner being down or his forward progress stopped, give the touchdown signal. A late signal is ok, but a decision needs to be made.
- Do not mirror your partner wing official's TD signal at any time unless YOU saw the ball cross the goal line plane yourself.
- Be alert for pick plays on passes. Be ready to assist the Back Judge in determining catches of passes in the corner of the end zone. If you see the receiver is out of bounds on the sideline or does not have control of the ball before going out of bounds, immediately signal the pass is incomplete. If neither you nor the Back Judge rules incomplete, make

eye contact and then give the touchdown signal simultaneously with the Back Judge. On catches you have responsibility for the entire sideline. If the sideline is threatened by a catch, in the end zone, get set and pivot 90 degrees with one foot out of bounds and one foot in the field of play, straddling the sideline.

- **NOTE:** When in Goal Line Mechanics AND the Line to Gain stake is between the goal line and the snap, the Line Judge will go immediately to the Line to Gain stake and stop until the line to gain is no longer threatened, then proceed to the goal line. The Head Line Judge will immediately go to the goal line at the snap as normal. It is suggested that the Wings communicate this mechanic over the O20 prior to the snap.

Commented [Ma23]: 2025 revision to provide coverage for both critical lines.

Back Judge:

- If the ball is snapped inside the 10, start on the end line favoring the wide side of the field. Be alert for pick plays on passes. Watch for a receiver going out of bounds on the end line by voluntarily or accidentally stepping on or outside the end line, or touching the goal posts or the pylons in the end zone and then returning to the field of play. On passes to the corner of the end zone, coordinate judgments about whether the pass has been caught with the covering wing official. If see the receiver is out of bounds on the end line or does not have control of the ball before going out of bounds, immediately signal the pass is incomplete. If neither you nor the wing official signals incomplete, make eye contact and then give the touchdown signal simultaneously with the wing official. If you have given up goal line and snap is outside the 10, take initial position either 5 yards deep in endzone or on end line, depending on your physical ability. In either case be ready to move up to goal line quickly if play threatens it.

Umpire:

- When the Back Judge notifies the Wings that he has given up goal line responsibility, this is your notice that the Wing officials now will be of little or no help on rulings of ineligible receiver downfield, whether a pass crosses the line of scrimmage or not, whether the passer throws a pass beyond the neutral zone or not. These type plays become your sole responsibility.
- When the ball is snapped inside the 10, do not stand within 1 yard of the goal line at any time, so the wing officials have a clear view of the entire goal line.
- Never give the touchdown signal. If you clearly see the ball short of the goal line, if possible, get into the pile and trap the ball at its spot to assist the Wing officials with the spot.

Referee: No change from normal mechanics. If a touchdown is scored, view dead ball action briefly to ensure colors have separated, then face press box and give TD signal.

5.3.2 Reverse Goal Line Mechanics

When the offense puts the ball in play inside its own 5-yard line, the officials will use standard run/pass mechanics except as noted below.

Referee:

- Responsible for the end line behind the offense. Pre-snap position should be straddling the end line. Do not leave the end line until ball has clearly left the end zone. Be alert for ball becoming dead in the end zone. If the ball becomes dead in the end zone in the possession of the offensive team, give the safety signal. If the ball becomes dead in the end zone in the possession of the defensive team, give the touchdown signal.
- Umpire: No change from normal mechanics

Wings:

- On the snap immediately retreat to a position about 6 feet off the sideline and straddling the goal line extended to determine if the ball gets completely out of the end zone before it becomes dead. Stay on the goal line until it is no longer threatened. Pinch-in on the field of play to mark progress or look for the ball near the goal line. Pinch-in in the end zone to signal safety or a touchdown by the defensive team.
- Work back toward the line of scrimmage and square off to identify the forward progress spot if the ball becomes dead in the field of play away from the goal line.

Back Judge: No change from standard mechanics

5.3.3 Swinging Gate Formation

The Swinging Gate play is a special formation designed to confuse and distract the defense. It is most typically used on a try after touchdown; however, it can be used for any scrimmage play. Being an unusual or “trick” play, all rules regarding formations and shifts must be strictly adhered to by rule, and any violation of formation requirements, shift requirements, or snap requirements must be called a foul and penalized. Officials need good awareness of the rules and focus on these and other “trick” plays.

A typical Swinging Gate formation has the snapper over the ball, with 4 or more linemen split well wide (10+ yards) of the snapper, with a back behind the wide linemen (the ‘gate’), a back in a typical placekick holding position, a back in kicking position in scrimmage kick formation, and another end or back split wide on the opposite side of the formation. There are variants on these formations as well. Teams will often deploy this formation to see the reaction of the defense. They may opt for a run or pass play or they may shift back into a ‘normal’ scrimmage kick formation, and go for a kick try.

Referee:

- Take normal pre-snap position as if a kick try is taking place, opposite side of placekick holder. Be sure you can see ball and snap. Ensure that entire crew is set and in position BEFORE blowing ready for play, but there should not be an unnecessary delay because officials are trying to get in place.

- If offense shifts into normal kick formation, keep your place. Rule on illegal shifts, ensuring entire team is set for a full second before any other A player goes in motion.
- Rule on whether team A is in scrimmage kick formation or not (2-14-2).
- If A is in scrimmage kick formation, note numbering exceptions of interior linemen if in position to do so. Note which players are backs and thus, eligible receivers.
- Ensure that there is a distinct pause before snap after RFP and after snapper places hands on ball (7-1-3-c). Rule on legality of snap if play run with open gate. Legal snap is a quick, backward motion with immediate release of ball (2-40-2), it can be snapped to back in the gate, but ball cannot be lifted and tossed.
- If snap illegal, kill play as a dead ball illegal snap foul.
- After snap, normal scrimmage duties.
- If team A shifts to kick formation, ensure shift is legal and normal scrimmage kick duties.

Umpire and Back Judge

- If open gate, official on that side of formation slide along end line to position in front of gate, maintaining position on end line. Note interior linemen after snapper places hands on ball if numbering exception being used, and their position. If play is run from open gate help rule on possible ineligible receivers if pass crosses line of scrimmage. Help rule on if entire formation is set for a full second prior to snap. If play run from open gate rule on legality of blocks.
- Official not on open side of gate move to normal umpire position, over ball 5 yards deep in end zone. Be ready to rule on legality of snap (see Referee position above), if illegal snap in any way, kill play as dead ball foul.
- If team A closes gate into normal scrimmage kick formation, shift back to normal position under goal posts and rule on kick, and normal scrimmage kick duties.

Wings:

- Take normal pre-snap position on line of scrimmage. If Team A shifts, you will not deviate from this position. Rule on legality of formation; count backs and ensure there are no more than 4 backs, and that no back is in “no man’s land” (having a body part breaking the plane of the waistline of his nearest teammate legally on the line, rule 2-32-3).
- Ensure that every lineman has at least a head or foot breaking the plane of the snapper’s waistline and has his shoulders approximately parallel with the line of scrimmage (2-32-9).
- Ensure that all team A members are set for a full second before the snap.
- Ensure that wideout on your side has been inside the 9-yard marks after the ready for play and prior to snap, if not, flag for illegal formation (7-2-1) or possibly illegal participation (9-6-4-d).
- If snap comes in open gate, get to goal line immediately and rule on play.
-

- If team A shifts into normal scrimmage kick formation, ensure shift is legal and normal scrimmage kick duties.

5.3.4 Two-point try after touchdown

All Officials: Normal goal line mechanics, Wings to goal line at snap, etc. REMEMBER, once the defense secures possession, the try is over and the ball is dead. In certain unusual circumstances however, Team A can score a 1-point safety (such as the defense forcing a loose ball into its own end zone and the ball becoming dead there in team B's possession). By rule team B cannot score on a try.

5.4 SCRIMMAGE KICKS – PUNTS

This section describes mechanics for covering normal punts, punts when the ball is snapped inside the defensive team's 35-yard line, and quick kicks.

5.4.1 Punts

The initial positions for punt plays:

- Referee: 2-3yards outside normal TE position, 2 yards behind the punter on kicking leg side. You should be able to see the punter, protective backs and the ball.
- Umpire: Set up a little deeper (approximately 10-yards deep) favoring the Head Line Judge's side of the field.
- Wings: Initial positions are the same as for other plays from scrimmage.
- Back Judge: Seven to ten yards wider than the deepest receiver on the wide side of the field, at a 45 degree angle to the receiver. ~~It's acceptable to be in front of or behind the returner, but no more than 7-10 yards either way.~~ If two deep receivers are back, set up in between them and about 5 yards behind them.

Commented [Ma24]: Revision 2025 (removed)

The primary duties and responsibilities for covering punt plays:

Referee:

- Give the snapper protection signal to the Umpire. Be ready to move to cover an errant snap, muff, fumble or blocked kick in the offensive backfield. Be ready to rule on a recovery and to cover the advance of any player who runs with the recovered ball.
- If kicker is not threatened, focus on blocks by protective backs, looking especially for illegal blocks below the waist.
- When the ball has been kicked, alert defensive players by saying something such as "the ball is gone."
- Watch for illegal contact with the kicker. Generally speaking, contact with the kicking leg is running into, whereas contact with the plant leg is roughing.

- Rule on whether defense was blocked into kicker (no foul) or ball was tipped (no foul). If ball was partially tipped/touched by defense, give “tip” signal. If contact is very slight, no foul.
- Be aware that “rugby” style kickers lose some protection when they run with the ball as it lessens the certainty that a kick will be made. Roughing still can be called on a rugby style kicker however.
- REMEMBER: A kick recovered behind the line of scrimmage can be advanced by any team. If, however, a player recovers a blocked or errant kick behind the line and does not attempt to advance after a moment or two, kill the play and declare the ball dead.
- You have sole responsibility for the goal line for blocked kicks and returns by the defense.
- Continue to observe action in the backfield until the players begin to go downfield for a potential return. Slowly follow the players downfield while looking for illegal blocks, personal fouls, or other infractions.
- If kick goes out of bounds in flight and you got a peek at its path, be ready to help wings with spot, otherwise do not indicate you don’t know where it is, let them handle it.
- When play is over, give the kill the clock signal.
- If there is a flag on the play, DO NOT allow the chains or box to move.
- When play ends downfield, after ensuring no foul has been called, help move the chain crew.

Umpire:

- Give the snapper protection signal to the Referee. Remind the defensive players about contacting the snapper.
- Mentally note your 5 ineligible receivers, particularly those not numbered between 50 and 79.
- On the snap watch the defense for illegal contact on the snapper or any other illegal blocks.
- If broken play/muffed snap or fake kick, be ready to help with ineligible receivers downfield if ball is thrown past the line of scrimmage.
- After snap watch for defensive linemen holding to prevent kicking team from getting downfield to cover play
- After the players have gone past you, pivot toward action, keeping wide angle view, looking for illegal blocks in back and blindside blocks in front of runner.
- After play is over, give kill clock signal and hustle to pile to separate colors. Take spot from covering official.

Head Line Judge:

- Have a bean bag in hand and another available to mark first touching and the end of the kick.

- Be alert for a fake kick or a broken play (e.g., bad snap, blocked kick).
- If errant/muffed snap or blocked kick, do not leave position. You have sole responsibility for if kick crosses line of scrimmage. Be ready to help with ineligible receivers downfield if ball is thrown past the line of scrimmage.
- If kick is very short, remain on the line to rule if kick crosses line or rebounds back behind the line of scrimmage.
- REMEMBER: a kick recovered behind the line of scrimmage may be advanced by either team. Do not blow whistle if ball is loose.
- Observe initial action on the widest player “gunner” on the line. Watch for defensive holding on the gunner.
- Remain on the line until the kick crosses the neutral zone and you are sure it will not come back (very short kick)
- Know whether the ball crossed the neutral zone.
- After the kicked ball crosses the neutral zone, hustle downfield on the sideline, but no more than 10-15 yards. Stop and observe the action from there.
- Watch for players going out of bounds voluntarily and returning to the field of play during the kick (flag).
- Observe the action of secondary blockers in front of the runner.
- If the runner comes to your side, you have the runner. If he goes to the opposite side, watch for action behind the play, especially illegal blocks in the back and blindside blocks.
- If kick is short to your side of the field, be ready to rule on first touching, possession by R and other duties normally done by the Back Judge.
- If kick is out of bounds to your side, mark the out of bounds spot.
- If kick goes out of bounds in flight to your side, look to R for assistance first. If he cannot help, estimate the out of bounds spot, go there and sell the call.
- If there is a flag on the play, do not allow the chains or box to move.
- Once assured there are no flags on the play, move chains and box.
- After play is over, give kill clock signal as you mark the forward progress spot. If your team is the return team, once another official has the spot and colors are separated, obtain a new ball from your ball person to relay to the Umpire.

Line Judge:

- Have a bean bag in hand and another available to mark first touching and the end of the kick.
- Be alert for a fake kick or a broken play (e.g., bad snap, blocked kick).
- Hold position on line of scrimmage take a peek at the snap to see if the punter caught it cleanly and is starting a kicking motion, or if it is a fake punt.
- If snap is muffed, break into backfield to assist Referee.
- If it is a fake punt play remain on line of scrimmage and normal scrimmage duties. Be especially aware of ineligible receivers downfield if a pass is thrown, and if the pass crosses the line of scrimmage or not.

- If snap is normal and punter goes into kicking motion, break downfield. Keep an eye on your widest player/gunner, watch for defensive holding on the gunner.
- Do not go downfield more than 15-20 yards. Settle in there and rule on the first block in front of the receiver if there is a return. Assist Back Judge on rulings of KCI, or personal fouls against the receiver while he's defenseless.
- If the runner comes to your side, you have the runner. If he goes to the opposite side, watch for action behind the play, especially illegal blocks in the back and blindside blocks.
- If kick is short to your side of the field, be ready to rule on first touching, possession by R and other duties normally done by the Back Judge.
- If kick is out of bounds to your side, mark the out of bounds spot.
- If kick goes out of bounds in flight to your side, first look to R for help, if he cannot assist, estimate the out of bounds spot, go there and sell the call.
- After play is over, give kill clock signal as you mark the forward progress spot. If your team is the return team, once another official has the spot and colors are separated, obtain a new ball from your ball person to relay to the Umpire.

Back Judge:

- No whistle in the mouth until the ball becomes dead.
- Be a master of Rule 6.
- If snap is inside the R-40, you should be positioned on the goal line at the snap. Do not move off of goal line until you are sure it is not threatened.
- Have a bean bag in hand and another available to mark first touching, momentum spot, the end of the kick, or a fumble on the runback.
- Remind the deep receivers about use of the fair catch signal.
- Pick up the flight of the ball and immediately focus your attention on the receivers.
- If the kick is more than 15 yards beyond the line of scrimmage, you are responsible for kicks from sideline to sideline.
- You have primary responsibility for the deep receiver, possession or muff by the receiver, Kick Catching Interference fouls, or any personal fouls against the receiver, and first touching by K.
- If the receiver moves toward you or away from you, move with him keeping the same distance, the receiver will take you to the ball. Do not watch the flight of the ball except briefly when it left the kicker's foot.
- Do not watch for blocks in front of the receiver/runner until you are sure he has possession and the kick has ended.
- If kick lands inside R-10 and is going to threaten goal line, retreat to goal line to rule on touchback or momentum.
- REMEMBER: Force is NOT a factor on kicks going into R's endzone. A kick into the endzone is always a touchback as soon as the ball breaks the plane of the goal line, even if muffed in the field of play by R.

- Bean bag any first touching violations by K
- Bean bag the end of the kick when R gains possession and he returns it. This is the PSK enforcement spot if a PSK foul was called upfield.

5.4.2 Illegal Kicks

Illegal kicks include punts from beyond the neutral zone or after a change of possession. A penalty flag is thrown at the spot of the kick and the ball remains alive. From a rules perspective the ball is treated as a fumble. There can be no penalties for roughing the kicker, kick catch interference, first touching, or post-scrimmage kick enforcements. The receiving team may not be awarded a fair catch. The ball does not become dead when it crosses the goal line plane. The penalty options include a 10-yard penalty against the kicking team administered from the spot of the kick (no loss of down) or the results of the play. Illegal kicking of the ball (e.g., kicking a ball that is laying or rolling on the ground) is handled the same as an illegal kick.

5.5 SCRIMMAGE KICKS – FIELD GOAL AND TRY ATTEMPTS

This section describes specific mechanics for officiating field goal attempts and kick tries from scrimmage that are additions to the general mechanics described for all plays from scrimmage.

5.5.1 Field Goal Attempts

Initial positions for a field goal attempt:

- Referee: About 1-yard to the rear and 10-yards to the side of the kicker, facing the holder and in a position to be able to see the ball, the snapper, and the holder receive the ball.
- Umpire: Under the upright on Referee's side. Maintain a good view of the ball and the snapper.
- Wings: Normal scrimmage formation.
- Back Judge: With Umpire beyond the end line and behind the upright on the side opposite the Referee. Call out to each other numbers of eligible receivers on your side of formation if numbering exception is being used. (Kicker and holder also eligible)

Field Goal Attempts outside B-20: The crew will decide in pre-game whether to put the Umpire under the post or the Wing on the Referee's side under the post.

Primary duties and responsibilities for covering a field goal attempt:

Referee:

- Give the snapper protection signal to the Umpire. After marking the ball ready for play, give the untimed down signal. Check for illegal interlocking legs of the offensive linemen outside snapper. Observe the snap and be alert for bad snaps, muffs, and fumbles. Be ready to determine if the holder's actions are legal or cause the ball to become dead.

Holder must rise with knee off ground to pass or hand ball, otherwise ball is immediately dead.

- Once the kick is away, watch for fouls against the kicker and holder. Keep your attention on the kicker and holder until the action stops or the play ends. Observe the signals made by the officials covering the uprights. Repeat the successful or unsuccessful signal to the press box.
- Be alert for runs or passes that may result from trick plays, muffs, fumbles, blocked kicks or other situations that could result in the kicking team or the defensive team advancing the ball. If the play comes toward you, work your way to the sideline and cover the play. If the ball goes away from you, cover the play like a regular play from scrimmage. Remember field goal attempts blocked remain live ball and can be advanced by K if behind line of scrimmage.

Umpire:

- Give the snapper protection signal to the Referee. Check for interlocking legs of the offensive linemen outside snapper. Remind defensive players to stay off the snapper.
- Identify numbers of players who are the exceptions to the standard numbering requirements.
- Observe the snap and check for illegal contact against the snapper. Carefully watch the contact along and behind the line of scrimmage. Help determine if a short kick crosses the neutral zone. Watch for runs or pass plays that may result from a trick play, mishandling of the ball, a blocked or short kick.
Watch for defensive players vaulting or otherwise contacting an opponent to gain an advantage by leaping over them (9-4-3-n)

Wings: Normal scrimmage position.

- If muffed snap or fake kick “fire drill play”, normal scrimmage duties
- Beware of ineligible receivers downfield on broken play
- If inside 10-yard line, break to goal line immediately on broken play
- Be aware of trick or unusual plays, must be run precisely to the rule

Back Judge and Umpire: covering the upright.

- Option 1 for knowing eligibles: call out numbers of eligible receivers on your side. You must remember these numbers on a busted play. (Note #50-79 are always ineligible no matter their position in formation). Option 2: Call out the “dirty number” if a player has an eligible number but is ineligible by position. This is most typically only the snapper but can be any player between the ends using the numbering exception. If team K is not using the numbering exception rule, Option 2 does not apply.

Commented [Ma25]: 2025 revision (added)

- Determine if the kick passes above the crossbar and fully inside the upright on your side of the field. Take a step or two into the end zone in front of your upright and give the appropriate successful (touchdown) or unsuccessful (Incomplete pass) signal. If the kick is wide to your side, follow the unsuccessful signal with the wide signal. Hold the signal for a few counts to allow the Referee an opportunity to see it
- Official who's on nearest upright to ball verbalize "yes, yes" or "no, no" to partner on good/no good status. Give appropriate signal simultaneously and hold for 2-3 seconds
- Continue to monitor dead ball action.
- If long field goal attempt is short and ball reaches endzone, it is a touchback
- Back Judge has whistle. Do not blow whistle early before kick is dead.
- If snap is outside 15-yard line, be prepared to move to cover the play if the kick is blocked, obviously short or a fake. Move to the pylon on your side to rule on the sideline.

5.5.2 Try by Scrimmage Kick

All Officials: Same positions as for a field goal attempt.

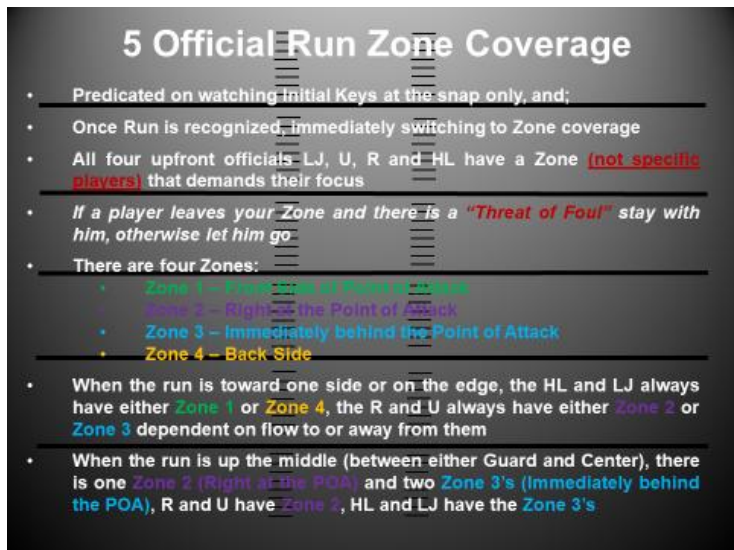
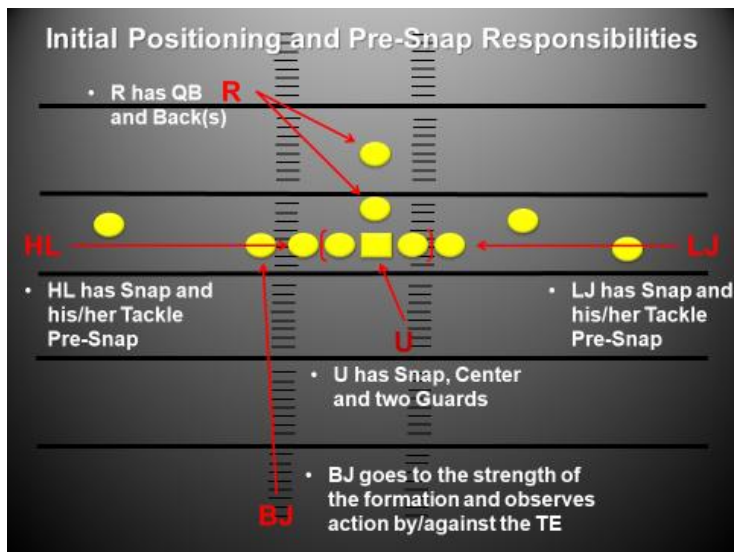
Differences from field goal coverage:

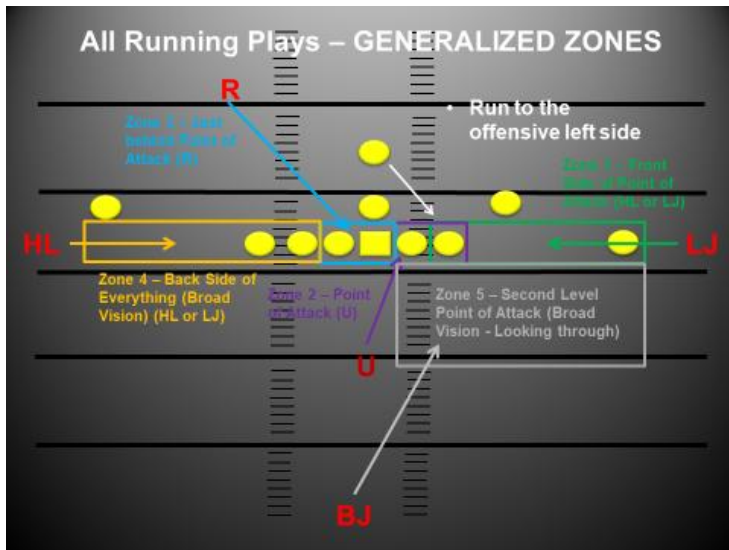
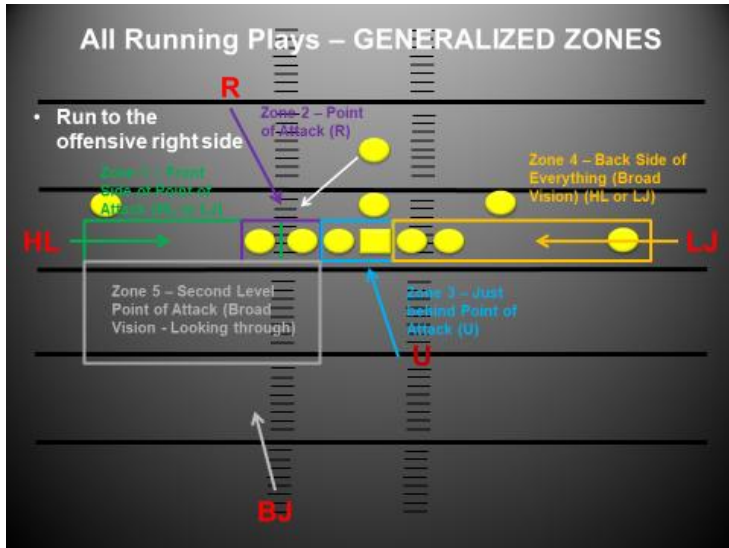
All Officials remember that once it is apparent a kick try will not score, the try is over. B/R cannot recover and advance and neither can A/K. Blow your whistle and kill play do not allow it to continue.

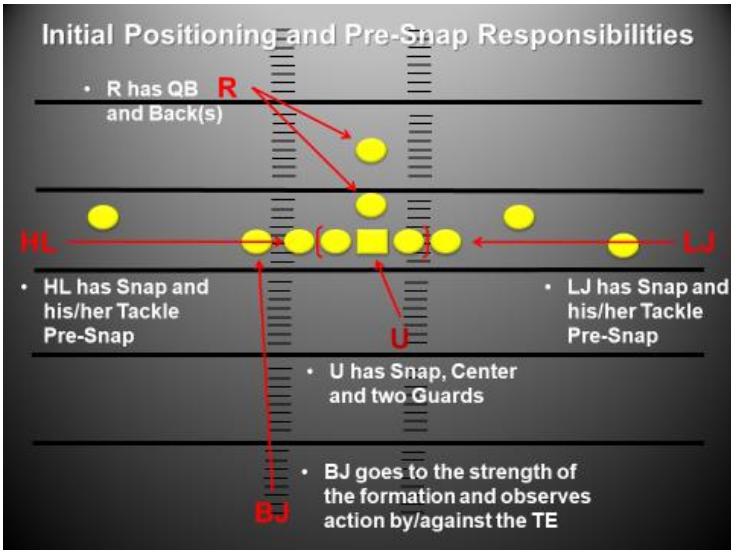
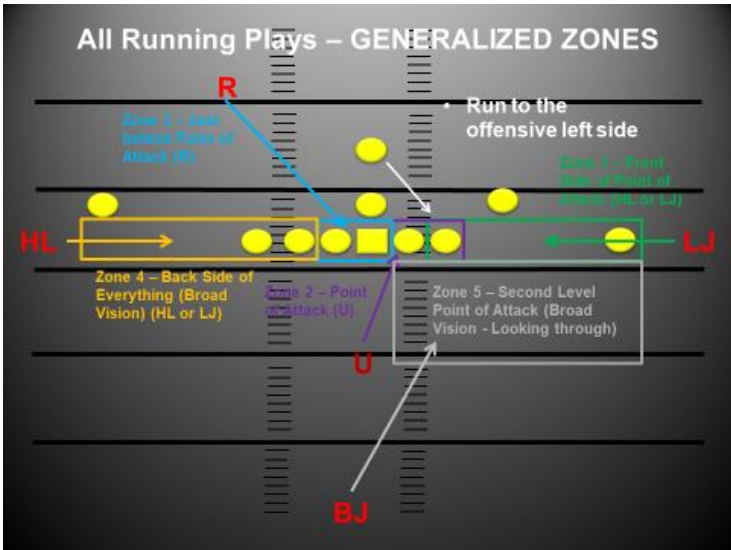
Wings: If snap is muffed, fumbled or it is a fake kick, team A can still score a two point try. Immediately get to pylon and normal scrimmage duties.

Appendix 5A – Illustrated initial keys and Zone Responsibilities

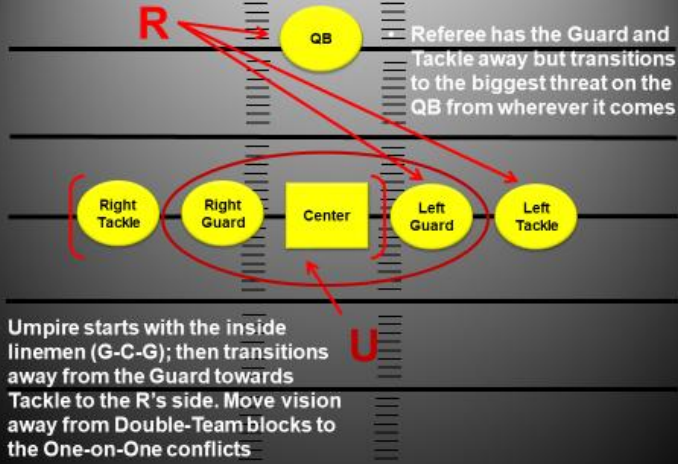
The below illustrations are guidelines to help officials picture their initial pre-snap keys and conversion to zone responsibility after the snap. Obviously not all formations are shown, but this gives a general sense of each official's duties in 5 official mechanics.



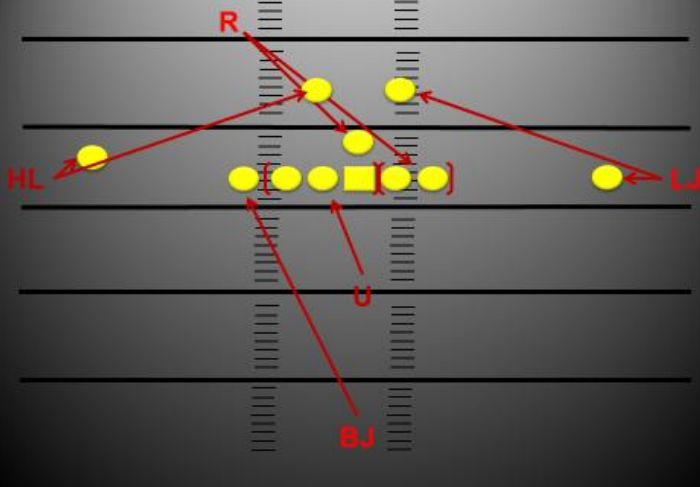


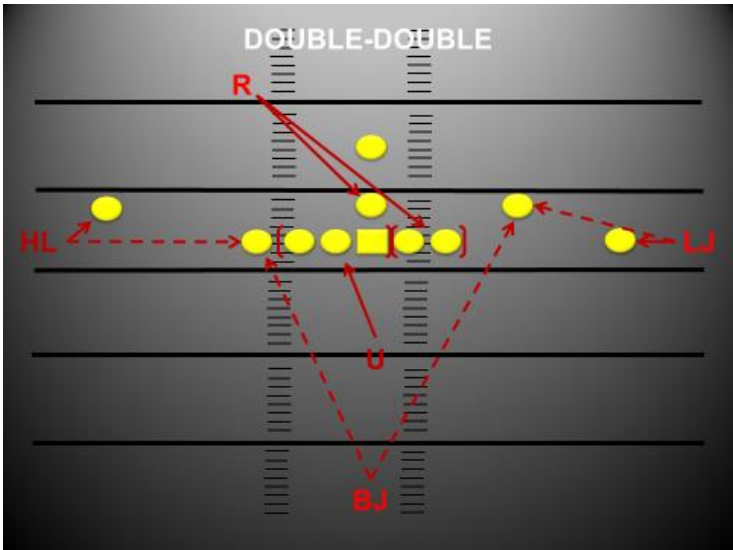
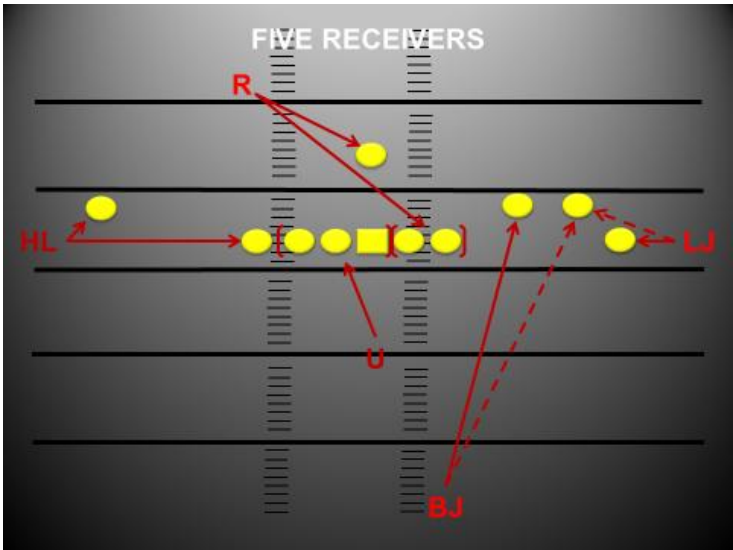


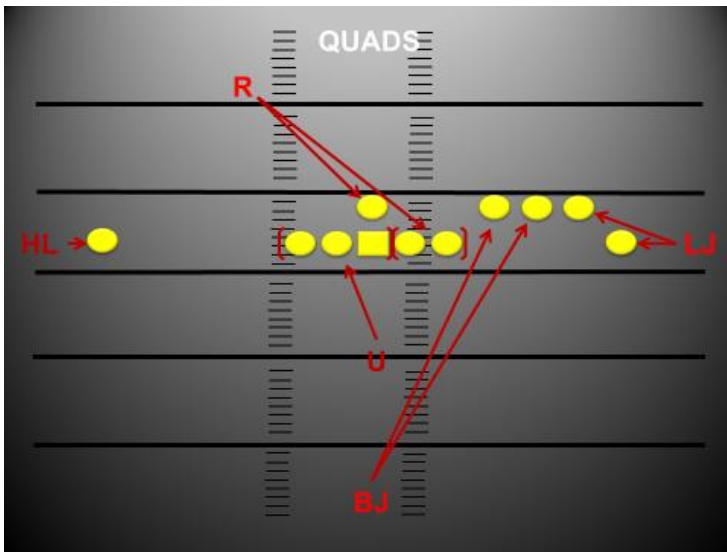
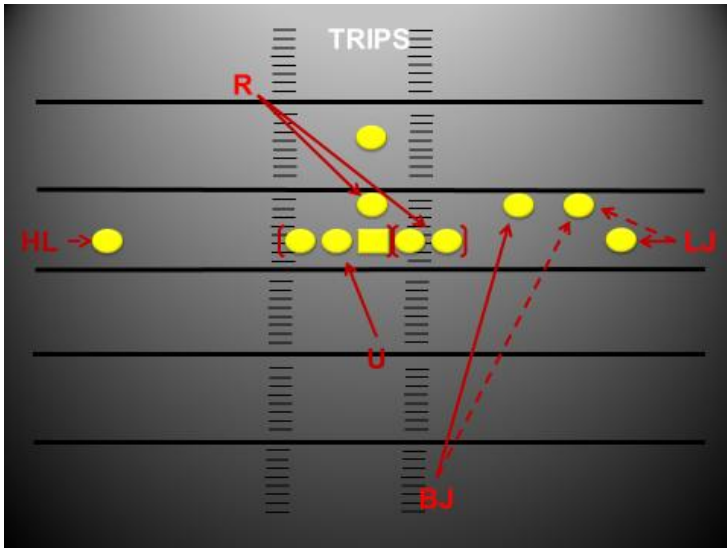
REFEREE & UMPIRE PASS RESPONSIBILITIES

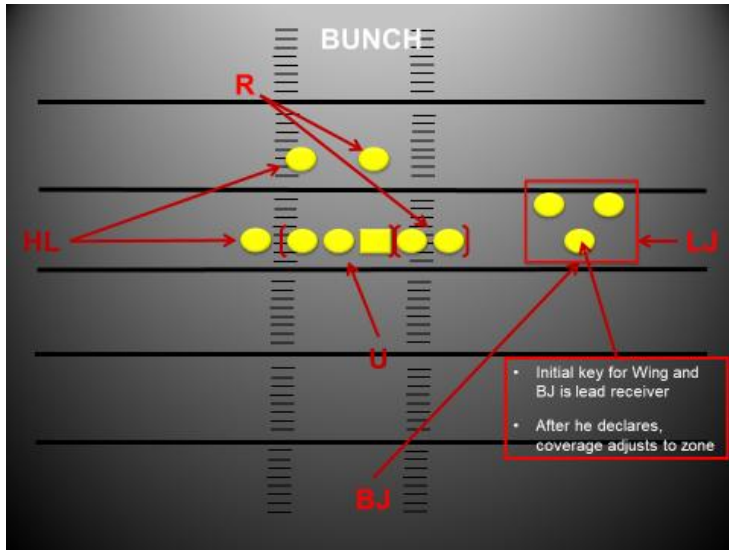


PRO SET









Section 6- OVERTIME

If a game involving two Nevada schools is tied at the end of regulation time, the NFHS overtime rules will be used to determine the winner. (If the game involves an out-of-state team, the Referee will confer with both head coaches before the game to determine if the overtime rules will apply to that game.) This applies only to varsity contests. Sub-varsity games that end in a tie will have that as the final result.

6.1 INITIAL OVERTIME PERIOD

6.1.1 Intermission

If the score is tied at the end of the fourth period, the Referee will instruct both teams to return to their respective team boxes. There will be a three-minute intermission.

All Officials:

- Meet in the center of the field at the 50-yard line to review the overtime procedure and discuss how penalties, if any, including and carry-over penalties from regulation will be assessed to start the overtime procedure. Each team shall be permitted one time-out during each overtime period. (REMEMBER: A team may not use their available time-outs until the ball has become live.)

Referee: Stay in the middle of the field to await the coin toss. If necessary, meet with the head coaches in front of their respective team boxes to answer any questions about the overtime procedure.

Umpire: Go to the team box on the press box sideline to gather the captains for the coin toss.

Head Line Judge: Go to your sideline and instruct the line-to-gain crew that the chain and stakes will not be used at any time during the overtime.

Line Judge: Go to your sideline and check with the head coach for any questions concerning the overtime procedure. Get the game balls from the ball person. Join the Umpire and captains for the coin toss.

Back Judge: Time the three-minute intermission. (The clock operator will not display the three-minute countdown on the scoreboard clock.) Go to the sideline opposite the press box and check with the head coach for any questions concerning the overtime procedure. Join the Head Line Judge and captains for the coin toss. Notify the Referee when the three-minute intermission expires.

6.1.2 Coin Toss

The overtime coin toss will be conducted immediately following the completion of the three-minute intermission. This is the only time the coin will be tossed during overtime. Use the pregame coin toss mechanics as described in Section 4.4, Coin Toss, except for the minor adjustments listed below.

Line Judge and Head Line Judge: There is no need to introduce the captains to the Referee.

Referee: There is no need to have the captains introduce themselves again. The captain winning the coin toss cannot defer, but must choose one of the following three options:

- Offense.
- Defense.
- Goal to defend.

When the options have been selected, align the captains so the offensive captains are facing the goal their team will advance toward; and the defensive captains have their backs toward that same goal line. Tap the shoulder of the captain who won the toss. If the winning captain chose to go on offense, give the first down signal. If the winning captain chose to go on defense, extend two arms toward the goal the team will defend.

6.1.3 Prepare to Start Overtime Period

When the coin toss has been completed:

- All Officials: Meet at the 50-yard line to record the results of the toss. Line Judge will give the offensive team's ball to the Umpire. On the Referee's signal jog to complete duties and take positions for the start of the overtime period.
- Referee: Go to the middle of the field at the 10-yard line where the ball will be put in play. Administer any carry-over penalties. Be alert to for a request by an offensive team captain to move the ball to a different location along the line of scrimmage.
- Umpire: Place the ball on the midpoint of the 10-yard line. Mark off any penalty yardage as directed by the Referee. Move the ball placement as requested by the offensive team's captain and approved by the Referee. Stand over the ball until the Referee has given the ready-for-play signal.
- Head Line Judge: Get your team on the field and into position to start the overtime. Line up the box operator on the yard line where the overtime will start (usually the defensive team's 10-yard line). REMEMBER: The line to gain in overtime is always the goal line no matter what happens on any play.
- Line Judge: Return the unused ball to the ball person. Get your team on the field and into position to start the overtime.
- Back Judge: start the 25 second play clock when the Referee blows in the RFP.

6.2 SUBSEQUENT OVERTIME PERIODS

If the score is tied at the end of any overtime period, the Referee will instruct both teams to return to their respective team boxes for a two-minute intermission timed by the Back Judge.

- All Officials: Meet together in the area of the field where the overtime period ended to confirm which team will have the choice of options; the number of time-outs available for each team for the next period; and the impact of any carry-over penalties.

- Referee: Confer with the Head Coach of the team that lost the coin toss his option (he has first choice) and with the opposite sideline their remaining choice (end of field).
- Umpire, Head Line Judge, Line Judge, and Back Judge: Notify head coach of pertinent information such as time-outs remaining, carry-over penalties, and potential options.

For each OT thereafter, each team switches options until the game is completed.

Section 7- POSTGAME

7.1 END OF GAME

At the end of the game the key objective is to get off the field quickly and without confrontations. It is highly recommended that if the crew is using a field microphone, that any crew owned equipment in the press box has been pre-arranged before the game to be retrieved by a game administrator and returned to the crew in the dressing room. If there is a sanctioned game official operating the clock, s/he may take care of this duty.

- Referee: Hold the ball overhead to indicate the end of the game.
- Back Judge: Return the ball to the appropriate team. Record the total elapsed time from initial kickoff to final whistle.
- Head Line Judge: Get chain clips and/or beanbag from the line-to-gain crew as required.
- All Officials: Hustle toward the goal line pylon nearest the exit from the field. Quickly and silently leave the field together.
 - Avoid any interactions with coaches, players, or fans.
 - Do not say anything about the game until you are well away from the field and out of hearing range.
 - Do not shake hands or congratulate each other about your performance until you are in the locker room or out of view from the coaches, players, and fans.

7.2 POSTGAME REVIEW

Once in the locker room, the officials should gather the information needed to complete any required game reports, such as:

- Game incident reports that address major issues such as
- Disqualification of players, coaches, or other individuals affiliated with a team.
- Major disputes/confrontations between coaches and officials.
- Major confrontations between players or between coaches.
- Major injury to a player or official.
- Game site report that addresses issues such as:
 - Availability of the locker room for pregame preparations.
 - Unauthorized people in the locker room area.
 - Field conditions including field markings, lighting, and potential hazards.
 - Clock and scoreboard operations and line-to-gain equipment.
 - Availability of the field to start the game on time.
 - Access to the locker room after the game.
 - Security before, during, and after the game.

After collecting the information needed to prepare the game reports, it is a good idea to review what happened during the game. The crew should discuss:

- Any strange plays, rulings, or penalty enforcements.
- Sideline decorum and communications with coaches.

- Game tempo and overall game control, including sportsmanship.
- Adherence to mechanics protocols and any possible breakdowns in communications.

Ask the officials to critique their own performance and to offer suggestions for improving the performance of others. Be honest and open in these discussions. Finally, leave the locker room better than you found it. Exit to the parking lot together as a crew.

Section 8- Mechanics for Four Officials

The 4 positions staffed for 4 Official mechanics are Referee, Umpire, Head Line Judge, and Line Judge. For the most part there is very little change from 5 Official mechanics for the Referee and Umpire, except where noted. The biggest change is with the Wing Officials as they take on all downfield responsibility with no Back Judge on the crew. As in 5 Official mechanics, the Wing Officials will switch sides at halftime. It is accepted that with no deep official, that many scoring plays will happen with no official at the goal line when the runner crosses, however that is no excuse for lack of hustle on part of the Wing Officials. Also, with one less set of eyes on the same number of players, officials must be extra vigilant to be good dead ball officials and must work even more as a team in spotting the ball and penalty enforcement.

The General Mechanics (Section 2 above) are the same except where noted below. The specific mechanics for 4 Officials will also be the same as for 5 Officials (Section 5 above) except where noted.

8.1 General Mechanics Differences for a Crew of 4

8.1.1 Relaying Ball

- Referee: On plays that end in the side zone or out of bounds, hustle up near the pile to have a presence and help in the ball relay to the umpire.
- On long deep incomplete passes where the Umpire must go downfield to become part of the “picket line” relay, go to the previous spot or just beyond to receive the ball from the Umpire, you will be spotting the ball in these instances. Communicate with the Umpire as to the lateral location of the previous spot.
- Umpire: Do not stand at the hash waiting for the ball relay, hustle out into the side zone to go get it and also have a presence near the players. Ensure that colors separate before spotting the ball. Take the spot from the offside Wing so you don’t have to turn around when spotting it.
- On long deep incomplete passes, Umpire go downfield about 10 yards to become part of the ball relay. Know the lateral position of the previous spot and tell that information to the Referee (1-pressbox side hash, 2- press box side post, 3 middle, 4 far side post, 5 far side hash).
- Covering Wing: Retrieve the ball and toss to the Offside Wing. If a second ball has been relayed in from the sideline, toss the old ball to that sideline’s ball person.
- Non-Covering Wing: Once colors have separated, hustle into the middle of the field taking a position between your partner Wing who will be retrieving the ball and the Umpire to assist in relaying the ball to the Umpire.
- All Officials: Dead ball officiating always has the priority over ball relay.

8.1.2 Counting Players

- Referee and Umpire: Count the offense and signal each other that you have 11 (or fewer if less) before the ball is snapped.
- Wings: Count the defense; Signal each other with a punch toward the defensive backfield.

8.1.3 Reporting Fouls

Wing Officials: Hold the dead ball spot as long as necessary if any other official has a flag down during the play. If you have a flag down, ensure your partner wing has the dead ball spot before you report the foul to the Referee. If you must leave the spot for any reason, drop a bean bag to mark it or commit it to memory before leaving.

8.1.4 Measuring for a First Down

- Line Judge: After marking the spot with your foot where the Head Line Judge should put the clip, go to the ball and hold it in place for the chain stretch.
- Umpire: Do not stretch the chain until the Line Judge is in place to hold the ball still.
- Referee and Head Line Judge: Same as 5 official mechanics

- **8.1.5 Timing**

- Referee will have responsibility for the 25/40 second play clock
- Umpire will have responsibility for timing timeouts and first and third period changes (60 sec)
- Line Judge will have responsibility for the game clock if it is inoperable or must be kept on the field.

8.1.6 Pregame Duties

Line Judge will go to the press box to go over timing rules with the clock operator.

8.1.7 Coin Toss

- Referee: At midfield facing the scoreboard
- Umpire: At the 45-yard line facing the Referee
- Wings: Escort your respective team captains onto the field from the sideline and introduce them to the Referee.

8.2 Specific Mechanics differences for Crew of Four

8.2.1 Free Kicks

8.2.1.1 Normal Free Kick

Line Judge:

- In the middle of K's free kick line, hand the ball to the kicker. Advise kicker not to kick ball until Referee blows RFP whistle. Count 11 K players and ensure they are in proper formation (at least 4 on each side of the kicker, only kicker can be more than 5 yards behind K's FK line), then take position on press box side of field on K's free kick line.
- "Punch off" that you have 11 with the Head Line Judge, then signal to the R that you are ready.
- Rule on K encroachment. On deep kicks K player must have one foot down 1 yard or more into neutral zone for a foul. If a foul, kill play immediately
- Expect onside kick until you know it's not.
- Watch how ball comes off tee, rule on pop-up kick or not, if foul kill play immediately.
- After kick: Slowly go downfield during kick. Do not go more than 10 yards past K's restraining line (usually the 50). Rule on free kicks out of bounds to your sideline. Watch players in your zone for illegal blocks or other fouls. Pick up runner after he crosses 30-yard line in your zone. Mark progress past the R-30. You have sole responsibility for K's goal line on long return. If you sense runner is breaking free, retreat to K goal line while keeping eyes on action.

Head Line Judge:

- At R restraining line (usually the 50) opposite press box.
- Count K players, "punch 11" with LJ.
- Make sure entire sideline (Restricted Area) is clear
- Ensure no R player is past his restraining line when ball kicked
- Expect onside kick until you know it's not.
- After kick: Go downfield but no more than 10 yards. Watch players in your zone for illegal blocks or other fouls. Pick up runner coming into your zone after he crosses 30-yard line. Rule on free kicks out of bounds to your sideline. Mark progress past the R-30.

Referee and Umpire: Same as 5-official mechanics

8.2.1.2 Free Kick - Onside kicks

Anticipated Free Kick

- Umpire initial position will be on R restraining line opposite Head Line Judge.
- Referee initial position at goal line in middle of field

Line Judge:

- Rule on encroachment by K. Treat K restraining line as a pane of glass. If any part of any K player breaks the glass, it's a foul for encroachment. Rule on first touching by K

Umpire and Head Line Judge:

- Rule on first touching by K, illegal blocks by K before ball has

Traveled 10 yards or can legally recover ball. Rule on free kicks out of bounds to your side. Rule on KCI. Rule on possession by either team.

Referee:

- Keep wide angle view from goal line for illegal blocks, etc. Close in on play and assist as needed.

Unanticipated Free Kick

All officials normal position, duties as above.

8.2.1.3 Free Kick after Safety or Free Kick after Fair Catch

- Same as 5 official mechanics

8.3 Scrimmage Plays

8.3.1 Scoring Plays from outside 10-yard line

Wings:

- It is ok and expected that you will get beat to the goal line. Hustle and follow play. Watch for illegal blocks behind runner, in particular illegal blocks in back that put opponent on ground and blindside blocks.
- Blow whistle only when you are 100% certain that runner is fully within end zone but do not wait to blow whistle until you get there.
- Do not signal touchdown until you reach goal line. Make sure you face any dead ball action while signaling.
- If play is well ahead of you and is very close to goal line pylon, make ruling from where you see it, go to either out of bounds spot or pylon and sell your call.

8.3.2 Scrimmage Plays – Normal

Referee and Umpire:

- Same as 5 Official mechanics

Wings:

It is imperative that you read run or pass quickly and react accordingly. Read your tackle for pass blocking or run blocking. Think down and distance, game situations. Anticipate, but don't assume.

- If play is a running play, same as 5 Official mechanics
- If play is a passing play
 - Quickly observe QB and determine if play is to your side or away from your side
 - If to your side

- Break downfield to cover deep receivers if one goes more than 15 yards past the line of scrimmage.
- You rarely will have to move more than 10-15 yards downfield.
- Rule on OPI/DPI, defensive holding
- Once ball is thrown, break downfield to rule on pass interference, compete/incomplete
- If play is away from you
 - Do not leave line of scrimmage until pass is thrown
 - Observe shallow receivers in your zone
 - You have line of scrimmage all the way across the field
 - Help rule on whether pass was over the line of scrimmage, ineligible receivers downfield behind Umpire
 - Help rule on whether pass made it to line of scrimmage or not for intentional grounding purposes
 - Once ball is thrown, break downfield to rule on pass interference, compete/incomplete

Umpire:

- If play is passing play, you must help rule on if eligible receiver in area or if pass made it to line of scrimmage or not for possible intentional grounding calls and report to Referee

8.4 Scrimmage Kicks

8.4.1 Scrimmage Kick – Punt

Referee:

- Initial position will be normal depth and width on Line Judge side of field rather than based on side of kicking leg. After kick help assist with sideline on LJ side.

Line Judge: Follow mechanics for Back Judge in 5-official mechanics

Umpire and Head Line Judge; Same as 5-official mechanics

8.4.2 Scrimmage Kick – FG and Try

Referee:

- Initial position normal depth and width on Line Judge side of field instead of facing holder.
- You must cover sideline opposite Head Line Judge on fake or broken play

Umpire and Head Line Judge

- No change from 5 Official mechanics

Line Judge

Under upright on both Try/FG

Section 9- Mechanics for a Crew of Three

For a contingency situation where one official of a 4 official crew is injured or otherwise cannot perform his or her duties, the positions filled will be the Referee and both Wings. The umpire position will be abandoned. If the original Referee is the one injured, the Umpire will replace the Referee. The mechanics will be the same as for a crew of 4 officials with the following exceptions:

9.1 General Mechanics Differences from a Crew of 4

9.1.1 Ball Spotting

The Referee will be the official to spot the ball. The crew must solicit the help of players to retrieve the ball when necessary. Control the snapper with your voice to not snap the ball until all officials are in position.

9.1.2 Penalty Enforcement

Line Judge will take over Umpire duties of marking off yardage for accepted fouls. The Head Line Judge will also walk off penalty yardage with the Line Judge as in 4/5 official mechanics.

9.1.3 Measuring for a First Down

Line Judge: Umpire duties in 4/5 Official mechanics

9.1.4 Counting Players

Referee will count offense, Wings will count defense

9.2 Free Kicks

9.2.1 Free Kick – Normal

Referee will be at goal line in the center of the field

9.2.2 Free Kick – Onside (anticipated)

Referee will be in center of field at R-20, but always deeper than deepest receiver

9.3 Scrimmage Plays

9.3.1 Normal Scrimmage Downs

Referee initial position same depth as 4/5 Official mechanics, width slightly narrower, at tackle width on passing side arm of QB. You have responsibility for interior line play and to protect QB. Priority is QB.

9.3.2 Scrimmage Kick – Punt

All: Same as 4 Official mechanics

9.3.3 Scrimmage Kick – FG or Try

Referee:

- Initial position same depth as 4 Official mechanics except slightly narrower width
- Protect snapper
- After kick is away, rule on good/no good

Head Line Judge:

- After kick is away, watch holder and kicker, rule on running into/roughing

Section 10- Mechanics for a Crew of Seven

As the State of Nevada has recently authorized the use of 7 officials in state playoff games, there was a need to add this section to the Mechanics Manual. Following this section will be a short section on 6 official mechanics, in the unfortunate event an official is injured or unable to complete a game using 7 officials.

In 7 official mechanics, the positions of Side Judge and Field Judge are added to the standard crew of 5. The Field Judge and Side Judge may also be referred to as “Deep Wings” in other parts of this manual. The Field Judge is partnered with the Line Judge on the same side of the field, and the Side Judge is partnered with the Head Line Judge on the same side of the field. As in 5 official mechanics, the wing officials will switch sides in the second half. The Line Judge and Field Judge start the game with the chains side opposite the press box, and will have duties related to that side (namely the chain crew). As in 5 official mechanics the slight differences in short and deep wing mechanics are respective to which side of the field one is working, not the “title” of his position.

The biggest differences between 5 and 7 official mechanics generally have to do with kick coverage mechanics, responsibility for marking forward progress, and initial pre snap receiver keys.

What follows has been copied from the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) for 7 official mechanics, and closely follows Collegiate Commissioner’s Association (CCA) 7 official mechanics.

10.1 PREGAME

REFEREE

- Go with the Umpire to meet with the Head Coaches.
- Ask the Head Coach to certify player compliance to mandatory equipment rules.
- Inspect the entire field with the BJ. Note unusual markings or irregularities. Work with home management to correct any hazardous conditions within or near the boundary lines.
- Observe Quarterbacks and Kickers during their warm-ups and note hand/foot used to throw/kick ball.
- Spot check equipment and report any irregularities to the Umpire who will work with the trainer to correct

UMPIRE

Pregame Duties and Responsibilities

- Go with the Referee to meet with the Head Coaches.

- Verify Head Coach certification of player compliance to mandatory equipment rules.
- See trainer regarding bandages, wraps, and other possible equipment questions.
- Discuss with the flanks how to communicate position of the ball.

Pregame Duties on the Field

- Spot-check equipment.
- Observe offensive linemen as they warm up.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

Pregame Duties and Responsibilities

- Discuss signals & communications with LJ.
- Introduce yourself to both head coaches

Pregame Duties on the Field

- Check chain crew equipment. Tape in middle of chain.
- Have pregame conference with the chain crew.

LINE JUDGE

Pregame Duties and Responsibilities

- Discuss signals & communications with HL.
- Introduce yourself to both head coaches

Pregame Duties on the Field

- Join HL for pregame conference with chain crew.

FIELD JUDGE

Pregame Duties and Responsibilities

- Discuss signals & communication with SJ and BJ.

Pregame Duties on the Field

- Introduce yourself to both Head Coaches and determine who is to receive foul reports during the game. Who will handle most communication for the game?
- Who is the Get Back Coach?
- Instruct the ball persons. SJ will assist.
- Have the captains on your side at the sideline 5 minutes before kickoff.

SIDE JUDGE

Pregame Duties and Responsibilities

- Give crew the official time.

- Have a watch capable of timing the game if the field clock malfunctions. Keep the game time during the game.
- Leave the dressing room together at the pre-determined time.
- Discuss signals & communication with FJ and BJ.

Pregame Duties on the Field

- Instruct the game clock operator.
- Introduce yourself to the both Head Coaches and determine who is to receive foul reports during the game.
- Who will handle most communication for the game?
- Who is the Get Back Coach?
- Assist the FJ with instruction of the ball persons.
- Have the captains on your side at the sideline 5 minutes before kickoff.

BACK JUDGE

Pregame Duties and Responsibilities

- Have a watch capable of timing the play clock.
- Discuss signals & communication with FJ and SJ.

Pregame Duties on the Field

- Inspect the field with R.

10.2 COIN TOSS

REFEREE

- 5 minutes before kickoff, go with the U to the middle of the field, R faces the clock.
- 5 minutes before kickoff, FJ and SJ send captains for the coin toss.
- Once the choices have been made by both teams, move the captains so their backs are to the goal they're defending. The REFEREE will indicate winning captains and choice or option deferred. If the captain's choice is to defer, the REFEREE will give the proper signal (signal #10) then move to the other captains and give the signal for the appropriate choice.
- All officials meet and review toss results. Then jog to kickoff positions.

UMPIRE

- 5 minutes before kickoff, go with the R to the middle of the field, R faces the clock.
- 5 minutes before kickoff, FJ and SJ send captains for the coin toss.
- Listen and verify captain's choices and R's options.

- All officials meet and review toss results. Then jog to kickoff positions.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Stay on your sideline at the 50-yard line with game ball. (SJ will be at the numbers).
- Meet with other officials at the center of the field, provide game ball to BJ if your team will be kicking, then jog to kickoff positions.

LINE JUDGE

- Stay on your sideline at the 50-yard line with game ball. (FJ will be at the numbers).
- Meet with other officials at the center of the field, provide game ball to BJ if your team will be kicking, then jog to kickoff positions.

FIELD JUDGE

- On a signal from the R, escort the captains to the numbers and send them to the R.
- Meet with other officials at the center of the field, then jog to kickoff positions.

SIDE JUDGE

- On a signal from the R, escort the captains to the numbers and send them to the R.
- Meet with other officials at the center of the field, then jog to kickoff positions.

BACK JUDGE

- Stay on your sideline nearest the press box at the 50-yard line (SJ will be at the numbers).
- Meet with other officials at the center of the field, then jog to kickoff positions.

10.3 FREE KICKS

10.3.1 Free Kick – Deep/Normal

REFEREE

- Assume a starting position in the middle of the field behind the deepest receiver (usually 5 yards deep in endzone).
- Count R and confirm with the H and L.
- Once the BJ indicates the other officials and players are ready, sound your whistle and give the ready for play signal.
- You are responsible for the end line. Be alert for a touchback or a kick beyond the end line.
- You are responsible for play clock and for knowing if K has at least four players on both sides of the kicker when the ball is kicked.
- Move laterally to be in position to see action at the point of attack. Be alert to a handoff or reverse.

UMPIRE

- Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on K's restraining line. Do not switch at half.
- Count K and confirm with the BJ.
- You are responsible for clearing your sideline to K's end line.
- Umpire keys on K's players #4 and #5 from his sideline and observes action on the kicker (see diagram).
- Ensure K's players are within 5 yards of their restraining line. Watch illegal action on the kicker.
- Once the ball is kicked, move between the numbers and the hash marks moving down field no more than 8-10 yards.
- Observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action.
- If kick is to opposite side, move to the hash marks and observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action.

Note: K's players #1 are not accounted for in the keys as they normally are not threatened until they reach the Head Line Judge or Line Judge's zone (see diagram).

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box at R's goal line. You have goal line and pylon responsibility.
- Stay at the goal line until it is no longer threatened.
- Count the receiving team and confirm with R. Signal accordingly for less than/greater than/or equal to 11 players.
- Wind the clock when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, unless the ball is caught or recovered by a player who is legally down.
- When the runner is on your side of the field, you are responsible for blocks at the point of attack and the runner.
- When you do not have the ball, take a position to observe blocks on the backside of the runner.

LINE JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at R's goal line. You have goal line and pylon responsibility. Stay at the goal line until it is no longer threatened.

- Count the receiving team and confirm with R. Signal accordingly for less than/greater than/or equal to 11 players.
- Wind the clock when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, unless the ball is caught or recovered by a player who is legally down.
- When the runner is on your side of the field, you are responsible for blocks at the point of attack and the runner.
- When you do not have the ball, take a position to observe blocks on the backside of the runner.

FIELD JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side on R's restraining line at the back of the Restricted Area. Assist in clearing your sideline.
- Field Judge keys on K's players #2 and #3 on his side of the field (see diagram).
- You must know if the ball was kicked into the ground.
- Move no more than 10 yards toward R's goal line to provide better coverage in the critical area where contact occurs between the kicking and the receiving team.
- You have sideline coverage to K's goal line on a runback.

Note: K's players #1 are not accounted for in the keys as they normally are not threatened until they reach the Head Lines Judge or Line Judge's zone (see diagram).

SIDE JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on R's restraining line. Assist in clearing your sideline.
- Side Judge keys on K's players #2 and #3 on his side of the field (see diagram).
- You must know if the ball was kicked into the ground.
- Move no more than 10 yards toward R's goal line to provide better coverage in the critical area where contact occurs between the kicking and the receiving team.
- You have sideline coverage to K's goal line on a runback.

Note: K's players #1 are not accounted for in the keys as he normally is not threatened until he reaches the Head Line Judge or Line Judge's zone (see diagram).

BACK JUDGE

- Count K and confirm with the U. Hand the ball to the kicker and move to your starting position at the sideline on the press box side on K's restraining line. Raise your arm to signal the R you are ready.

- You are responsible for clearing your sideline to K's end line.
- Back Judge keys on K's players #4 and #5 from his sideline and observes action on the kicker (see diagram).
- Ensure K's players are within 5 yards of their restraining line. Watch illegal action on the kicker.
- Once the ball is kicked, move between the numbers and the hash marks moving down field no more than 8-10 yards.
- Observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action.
- If kick is to opposite side, move to the hash marks and observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action.
- You are responsible for Team K's goal line on any long return.

Note: K's players #1 are not accounted for in the keys as they normally are not threatened until they reach the Head Line Judge or Line Judge's zone (see diagram).

10.3.2 Free Kick – Onside (anticipated)

REFEREE

- Assume a starting position in the middle of the field behind the deepest receiver. You have goal line and pylon responsibility.
- Once the BJ indicates the other officials and players are ready, sound your whistle and give the ready for play signal.
- Be prepared if K kicks deep instead of onside.

UMPIRE

- Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on K's restraining line. Have bean bag in hand.
- Treat K's restraining line as a plane. Any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for encroachment.
- If the kick is to your side, you have secondary responsibility for touching by either team.
- If the kick is to the opposite side, you are responsible for blocking.
- Be alert for a fair-catch signal by K and be prepared to cover the play if a K player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline, midway between the two restraining lines.
- Observe blocking by both teams. Know if the ball was kicked into the ground.
- Be alert for a fair-catch signal by R and be prepared to cover the play if a R player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.
- You are primary for ruling on illegal blocks by K before ball has gone 10 yards

Commented [Ma26]: 2025 revision (added)

LINE JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline, midway between the two restraining lines. Have bean bag in hand.
- Observe blocking by both teams. Know if the ball was kicked into the ground.
- Be alert for a fair-catch signal by R and be prepared to cover the play if a R player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.
- You are primary for ruling on illegal blocks by K before ball has gone 10 yards

Commented [Ma27]: 2025 revision (added)

FIELD JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline at R's restraining line. Have bean bag in hand.
- You must know if the kick broke the plane of R's restraining line. You are primarily responsible for touching by either team.
- Be alert for a fair-catch signal by R and be prepared to cover the play if a R player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

SIDE JUDGE

- Starting position is on the sideline at R's restraining line. Have bean bag in hand.
- You must know if the kick broke the plane of R's restraining line. You are primarily responsible for touching by either team.
- Be alert for a fair-catch signal by R and be prepared to cover the play if a R player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

BACK JUDGE

- Count K and confirm with the U and F. Hand the ball to the kicker and move to your starting position on the sideline on the press box side at K's restraining line. Once you are in position, raise your arm to signal the R you are ready. Have beanbag in hand.
- Treat K's restraining line as a plane. Any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for encroachment.
- If the kick is to your side, you have secondary responsibility for touching by either team.
- If the kick is to the opposite side, you are responsible for blocking.

- Be alert for a fair-catch signal by K and be prepared to cover the play if a K player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

10.4 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS

REFEREE

Initial Position/Pre-Snap

- Assume a basic position, always on the QB's throwing arm side, outside the normal tight end position and at least five yards deeper than the deepest back (12-14 yards off the line of scrimmage).
- Count the offensive team in the huddle and observe their substitution process. Use visual signal to confirm count with Umpire and alert HL/LJ if there are less than 11 players on offense.
- Check the offensive formation and observe the QB and other backs for possible false start, illegal motion, illegal shift, etc.

Running Play

- After the snap, observe action behind the line and the runner to the neutral zone, as well as action on the ball and the quarterback on handoffs and backward passes.
- Once you read run, focus on the blocks on the front side of the point of attack.
- On option plays, if the QB keeps the ball and turns up field, assume responsibility for the trailing back until there is no longer a threat of a foul. If the QB pitches the ball, stay with the QB.
- Stay with the runner behind the line. Trail but don't chase the runner into the side zone, covering behind the play.
- If the QB goes out of bounds, coordinate sideline coverage with the HL or LJ to ensure the spot is maintained and players return to the field.
- Assist in spotting the ball on runs that end in the side zone and out of bounds.
- On change of possession, be alert for action on the QB.

Passing Play

- If pass is indicated drop at a 45-degree angle getting deeper and wider as the QB drops back into the pocket. Maintain a 12-14-yard cushion.
- As the QB drops back, observe action behind the line. Observe blockers and the QB (your primary responsibility) until there is no threat of a foul.
- Ensure that the QB is not roughed or thrown to the ground. Verbally alert the defenders when the passer has released the ball.
- Rule on intentional grounding; may consult with other officials regards positions of eligible receivers in the area of the pass.

UMPIRE

Initial Position/Pre-Snap

- Line up six to nine yards off the ball, between the linebackers, inside tackles and always able to see the snap clearly.
- Count offense. Signal to Referee (hand closed, extended toward offense) only when sure.
- Key on guard-center-guard.
- Watch the snapper for illegal movements. Be alert to possible illegal snap and false start by the offense. HL and LJ will call neutral zone infractions.
- Be alert to the sound and cadence of the defensive captain's signals.

Running Play

- Up the middle
 - Watch lead blocks. Get out of the way.
 - Take progress from wing officials.
- Into either side zone
- Read keys. Watch lead blocks.
- Watch dead ball and action behind the play.
- Hustle to the number to receive and spot the new ball.

Passing Play

- Focus attention on action involving the center and guards. Watch for potential chop blocks, illegal blocks, clips and holds.
- Be aware of B touching the pass in or behind the neutral zone.
- Pivot and turn on passes. Help out when possible on catch-no catch.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

Initial Position/Pre-Snap

- Read the offensive formation and know eligible receivers.
- Indicate the offensive line of scrimmage by extended foot, then take a position straddling the neutral zone.
- Be alert for obvious movement of restricted linemen.
- Watch for illegal formations, including encroachment and false starts.
- Rule on motion – primary for motion going away but rule on illegal motion to your side if you see it.

Running Plays

- Up the middle focus on blocks and the ball carrier.
- Toward your side of the field focus on blocks in front of the ball carrier, how did he turn the corner, forward progress. Close at a 90-degree angle.
- Away from your side of the field focus on back-side blocks (protect behind the R and U) and cross field spot for LJ.
- You have progress to the B's 2-yard line.
- Change of possession- You have goal line responsibility on long returns. If the change of possession is short and you are close, you can take the spot. If there is a long return, the deep flanks will have the progress spot. This is called reverse fade. You have progress inside the 2-yard line to the goal line.

Passing Play

- Identify the receiver you will be responsible for based on a snap-shot at the snap of the ball.
 - If balanced formation (2 rec on each side), your key is the 2nd receiver in.
 - If balanced formation (1 rec on each side), your key is a back.
 - If un-balanced formation and your side is weak side, your key is the back or 2nd receiver in.
 - If un-balanced formation and your side is strong side with 2 receivers, your key is the back.
 - If un-balanced formation and your side is strong side with 3-4 receivers, your key is the 2nd receiver in.
 - If quads to your side, let them declare after the snap.
- SNAP-TACKLE-KEY-AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY.
- Is the pass behind the line of scrimmage thrown forward or backward?
- Must know if the pass is thrown from beyond the neutral zone.
- Must know if the pass crosses the line of scrimmage.
- Observe where ineligible linemen are at the time the passer releases the ball.
- Stay at line of scrimmage until the ball crosses, then move to get progress.
- Stay with your receiver as long as possible; until another receiver enters your area or the pass is thrown. Know where the ball is. Never guard air.
- You have progress to the B's 2-yard line.
- Reverse fade on interception. Back pedal and give up progress to the SJ. Observe blocks in front of the runner. Get to the goal line if necessary. You have progress inside the 2-yard line. Clean up around the dead ball spot and out-of-bounds. Watch dead ball action.

LINE JUDGE

Initial Position/Pre-Snap

- Read the offensive formation and know eligible receivers.
- Indicate the offensive line of scrimmage by extended foot, then take a position straddling the neutral zone.
- Be alert for obvious movement of restricted linemen.
- Watch for illegal formations, including encroachment and false starts.
- Rule on motion – primary for motion going away but rule on illegal motion to your side if you see it.

Running Play

- Up the middle focus on blocks and the ball carrier.
- Toward your side of the field focus on blocks in front of the ball carrier, how did he turn the corner, forward progress. Close at a 90-degree angle.
- Away from your side of field focus on back-side blocks (protect behind the R and U) and cross field spot for HL.
- You have progress to the B's 2-yard line.
- Change of possession- You have goal line responsibility on long returns. If the change of possession is short and you are close, you can take the spot. If there is a long return, the deep flanks will have the progress spot. This is called reverse fade. You have progress inside the 2-yard line to the goal line.

Passing Play

- Identify the receiver you will be responsible for based on a snap-shot at the snap of the ball.
 - If balanced formation, your key is the back.
 - If un-balanced formation and your side is weak side, your key is the back or 2nd receiver in.
 - If un-balanced formation and your side is strong side with 2 receivers, your key is the back.
 - If un-balanced formation and your side is strong side with 3-4 receivers, your key is the 2nd receiver in.
 - If quads to your side, let them declare after the snap.
- SNAP-TACKLE-KEY-AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY
- Is the pass behind the line of scrimmage thrown forward or backward?
- Must know if the pass is thrown from beyond the neutral zone.
- Must know if the pass crosses the line of scrimmage.
- Observe where ineligible linemen are at the time the passer releases the ball.
- Stay at line of scrimmage until the ball crosses, then move to get progress.
- Stay with your receiver as long as possible; until another receiver enters your area or the pass is thrown. Know where the ball is. Never guard air.
- You have progress to B's 2-yard line.

- Reverse fade on interception. Back pedal and give up progress to FJ. Observe blocks in front of the runner. Get to the goal line if necessary. You have progress inside the 2-yard line. Clean up around the dead ball spot and out-of-bounds. Watch dead ball action.

FIELD JUDGE

Initial Position/Pre-Snap

- Basic position is on the sideline, 20-22 yards beyond the LOS.
- Count the defense and verify count with BJ and SJ.
- Observe the start of the game clock with the R's wind or ready signal.
- Identify the receiver you will be responsible for at the snap. This will be the widest receiver on your side of the formation based on a snap-shot at the snap.

Running Play

- You are responsible for action on or by the widest receiver on your side of the field. Be alert to crackback blocks, blocks below the waist and holding.
- You have progress inside the 2-yard line.
- Toward your side of field
 - Maintain a 10–15-yard cushion. Be at the goal line when the runner crosses.
 - You are responsible for ruling on action in advance of the runner.
 - When the runner goes out of bounds, the LJ will mark the spot of forward progress; you are responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and out of bounds.
- Away from your side of field
 - Clean up behind the U.
 - Be alert to live ball personal fouls, and dead ball fouls.
 - Cover action between you and the area of the runner once the play crosses the line of scrimmage.
- Stay in front of the play at all times. Do not get beat to the goal line. Let the short wings take progress spots up to the B-2. Dead ball officiate.
- On change of possession plays, take forward progress on the return up to the 2-yard line. This is reverse fade mechanics.

Passing Play

- You are responsible for action on and by the widest receiver on your side of the formation based on a snap-shot at the snap.
- Hold your basic position at the snap and observe the type of play as it unfolds. Begin to fade when you read pass and maintain your 10–15-yard cushion at all times.
- Be alert to the wide receiver voluntarily going out of bounds. Throw your hat to signify the receiver is voluntarily (or involuntarily) OB.
- Cover sideline from your original position to the end line.

- Use Modified Fade Mechanics and maintain a 10–15-yard cushion.
- Watch for holding and illegal contact against eligible receivers and all contact beyond the neutral zone both before and after the pass is thrown.
- Stay with your receiver as long as possible; until another receiver enters your area or the pass is thrown. Know where the ball is. Never guard air.
- Once the pass is thrown, all eyes go to the ball.
- When ruling on a pass reception involving the sideline, watch foot and then ball. Give only incomplete signal if incomplete, timeout signal if complete.
- Coordinate close sideline plays with L.
- Reverse fade on interceptions
 - On interception run backs, switch responsibilities with the LJ.
 - You are responsible for the runner's forward progress to the opponent's 2-yard line, the LJ will rule on action in advance of the runner.
 - When the runner goes out of bounds, you will mark the spot of forward progress; the LJ is responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and in the team area.

SIDE JUDGE

Initial Position/Pre-Snap

- Basic position is on the sideline, 20-22 yards beyond the LOS.
- Count the defense and verify count with BJ and FJ.
- Observe the start of the game clock with the R's wind or ready signal.
- Identify the receiver you will be responsible for at the snap. This will be the widest receiver on your side of the formation based on a snap-shot at the snap.

Running Play

- You are responsible for action on or by the widest receiver on your side of the field. Be alert to crackback blocks, blocks below the waist and holding.
- You have progress inside the 2-yard line.
- Toward your side of field
 - Maintain a 10–15-yard cushion. Be at the goal line when the runner crosses.
 - You are responsible for ruling on action in advance of the runner.
 - When the runner goes out of bounds, the LJ will mark the spot of forward progress; you are responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and out of bounds.
- Away from your side of field
 - Clean up behind the U.
 - Be alert to live ball personal fouls, and dead ball fouls.
 - Cover action between you and the area of the runner once the play crosses the line of scrimmage.

- Stay in front of the play at all times. Do not get beat to the goal line. Let the short wings take progress spots up to the B-2. Dead ball officiate.
- On change of possession plays, take forward progress on the return up to the 2-yard line. This is reverse fade mechanics.

Passing Play

- You are responsible for action on and by the widest receiver on your side of the formation based on a snap-shot at the snap.
- Hold your basic position at the snap and observe the type of play as it unfolds. Begin to fade when you read pass and maintain your 10–15-yard cushion at all times.
- Be alert to the wide receiver voluntarily going out of bounds. Throw your hat to signify the receiver is voluntarily (or involuntarily) OB.
- Cover sideline from your original position to the end line.
- Use Modified Fade Mechanics and maintain a 10–15-yard cushion.
- Watch for holding and illegal contact against eligible receivers and all contact beyond the neutral zone both before and after the pass is thrown.
- Stay with your receiver as long as possible; until another receiver enters your area or the pass is thrown. Know where the ball is. Never guard air.
- Once the pass is thrown, all eyes go to the ball.
- When ruling on a pass reception involving the sideline, watch foot and then ball. Give only incomplete signal if incomplete, timeout signal if complete.
- Coordinate close sideline plays with L.
- Reverse fade on interceptions
 - On interception run backs, switch responsibilities with the LJ.
 - You are responsible for the runner's forward progress to the opponent's 2-yard line, the LJ will rule on action in advance of the runner.
 - When the runner goes out of bounds, you will mark the spot of forward progress; the LJ is responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and in the team area.

BACK JUDGE

Initial Position/Pre-Snap

- Basic position is in the middle of the field 25 yards from the LOS.
- When the snap is inside the 25-yard line, your position is on the end line.
- Count the defense and confirm with FJ and SJ.
- Identify the receiver you will be responsible for based on a snap-shot at the snap.
 - If a balanced formation, your key is the second receiver on the LJ side.
 - If an unbalanced formation, your key is the second receiver on the strong side.
 - If trips, your key is the third receiver on the trips side.

- If quads, your keys are the third and fourth receivers on the quads side at the snap, then let them declare if they are bunched or stacked.

Running Play

- You are responsible for action on or by your receiver. Be alert to crackback blocks, blocks below the waist and holding.
- Maintain a 10–15-yard cushion. Be at the goal line when the runner crosses unless you started on the end line.
- You are responsible for ruling on action in advance of the runner.
- If the run ends between the numbers, hold your position and observe dead ball action.
- If the run ends near a sideline, move towards the play and observe dead ball action.
- Be alert to live ball fouls and dead ball personal fouls.

Passing Play

- Identify the receiver you will be responsible for at the snap based on a snap-shot at the snap.
 - If a balanced formation, your key is the second receiver on the LJ side.
 - If an unbalanced formation, your key is the second receiver on the strong side.
 - If trips, your key is the third receiver on the trips side.
 - If quads, your keys are the third and fourth receivers on the quads side at the snap, then let them declare if they are bunched or stacked.
- Hold your basic position at the snap and observe the type of play as it unfolds. Begin to fade only when your 10–15-yard cushion is threatened.
- You are responsible for action on or by your receiver. Be alert to crackback blocks, blocks below the waist and holding.
- Watch for holding or illegal checking of eligible receivers and all contact beyond the neutral zone both before and after the pass is thrown.
- Stay with your receiver as long as possible; until another receiver enters your area or the pass is thrown. Know where the ball is. Never guard air.
- Once the pass is thrown, all eyes go to the ball.
- When ruling on a pass reception involving the end line, watch foot and then ball. Ensure receiver/defender controls the ball throughout the process, even if out of bounds.
- Coordinate with S, F on plays that involve the side line/end line and plays snapped from 7-yard line and in.

10.4.3 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS – PUNTS

REFEREE

- Take position 3 to 5 yards behind the kicker and wider than the normal tight end position on the kicking leg side. See the ball from snap to kick. Be in position to see blockers, rushers, and kicker at the same time.
- Count the kicking team.
- Be alert to the kicking team's substitution process and timing.
- Warn the kicker if he is near the end line prior to the snap.
- Watch blocking and action by players behind the line of scrimmage.
- Observe action by and against the kicker. Give signal #11 if ball is tipped.
- If the kick remains in bounds, observe players (especially the kicker) while proceeding down field.
- If the kick is caught or recovered inbounds, be ready to use reverse fade on the return and be at the goal line when the runner crosses.

UMPIRE

- Line up a little deeper (7-9 yards) than normal position.
- Always able to see the snapper's hands.
- Count kickers and signal to R.
- Get numbers of interior lineman. Know exception rules.
- Remind defense to avoid the snapper.
- Watch for illegal blocks and holding by both teams.
- Pay particular attention to the team B player over the snapper.
- Pivot once the ball passes overhead and watch action ahead of the runner.
- On a fake or broken play, move to the line of scrimmage and cover play.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Stay at the line of scrimmage until the ball crosses, move downfield no more than 10-15 yards
- Reverse fade on punt returns. Back pedal and give up progress to the SJ. Observe blocks in front of the runner. Get to the goal line if necessary. You have progress inside the 2-yard line. Clean up around the dead ball spot and out-of-bounds. Watch dead ball action.
- Look for legal and illegal blocks into the kicker.
- On a bad snap/ blocked kick behind LOS, bracket the ball with the R if you are facing him. LJ has the LOS.
- On fakes, know eligible receivers.

LINE JUDGE

- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Stay at the line of scrimmage until the ball crosses, then move slowly downfield, no more than 10-15 yds.

- Reverse fade on punt returns. Back pedal and give up progress to the SJ. Observe blocks in front of the runner. Get to the goal line if necessary. You have progress inside the 2-yard line. Clean up around the dead ball spot and out-of-bounds. Watch dead ball action.
- Look for legal and illegal blocks into the kicker.
- On a bad snap/blocked kick behind LOS, bracket the ball with the R if you are facing him. HL has the LOS.
- On fakes, know eligible receivers.

FIELD JUDGE

- Take a position on the sideline on your side of field no less than five yards behind the deepest receiver.
- When the ball is snapped at approximately Team A's 45-yard line, take an initial position at the goal line pylon.
- You have responsibility for contact on or by your flyer(s).
- Have a beanbag in your hand.
- Count Team B players and verify count with BJ and SJ.
- Be alert for blocked or fake kick. You have the widest receiver.
- Be alert to kicker's 'flyers' voluntarily going out of bounds. Be ready to throw your flag at the spot of the player's return to the field and participation in the play.
- You must see any illegal blocks on or by your flyer, especially blocks into the receiver.
- Be alert for fair catch signals and the actions of players when a signal is given. The offside official is responsible for blocking by the fair catch signaler.
- Be prepared to rule on interference with the catch opportunity by your gunner.
- When it is obvious that the kicked ball will not land in your area of responsibility:
 - Hold fast in your original position while the ball is in the air.
 - Cover action in front of the receiver and then cover action around the runner if the play is away from you. Use cross field mechanics to assist the SJ with progress.
 - Be ready to clean up and be alert for dead ball fouls.
- If the return is to your side, take over the runner when he takes a step after catching the ball. You are responsible for his forward progress to the opponent's 2-yard line.
 - The LJ will cover action in front of the runner and is responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and in the team area.
 - When the ball comes down near your sideline, be prepared to rule on the receiver's position when he first touches the ball; inbounds or out of bounds.
 - Be in position to rule on the legality of hand-offs on the kick return.
 - On a kick out of bounds in flight, go to the spot where you think it crossed sideline and sell that spot. You are responsible for the out of bounds spot on kicks that come down inbounds and then roll out of bounds on your sideline.

SIDE JUDGE

- Take a position on the sideline on your side of field no less than five yards behind the deepest receiver.
- When the ball is snapped at approximately Team A's 45-yard line, take an initial position at the goal line pylon.
- You have responsibility for contact on or by your flyer(s).
- Have a beanbag in your hand.
- Count Team B players and verify count with BJ and FJ.
- Be alert for blocked or fake kick. You have the widest receiver.
- Be alert to kicker's 'flyers' voluntarily going out of bounds. Be ready to throw your flag at the spot of the player's return to the field and participation in the play. h) You must see any illegal blocks on or by your flyer, especially blocks into the receiver.
- Be alert for fair catch signals and the actions of players when a signal is given. The offside official is responsible for blocking by the fair catch signaler.
- Be prepared to rule on interference with the catch opportunity by your gunner.
- When it is obvious that the kicked ball will not land in your area of responsibility:
 - Hold fast in your original position while the ball is in the air.
 - Cover action in front of the receiver and then cover action around the runner if the play is away from you. Use crossfield mechanics to assist the FJ with progress.
 - Be ready to clean up and be alert for dead ball fouls.
- If the return is to your side, take over the runner when he takes a step after catching the ball. You are responsible for his forward progress to the opponent's 2-yard line.
 - The HL will cover action in front of the runner and is responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and in the team area.
 - When the ball comes down near your sideline, be prepared to rule on the receiver's position when he first touches the ball; inbounds or out of bounds.
 - Be in position to rule on the legality of hand-offs on the kick return.
 - On a kick out of bounds in flight, go to the spot where you think the ball crossed the sideline and sell that spot. You are responsible for the out of bounds spot on kicks that come down inbounds and then roll out of bounds on your sideline.

BACK JUDGE

- Basic position is 7-10 yards behind and just outside shoulder of the deepest punt receiver, always inside the hash marks. Have a bean bag in your hand.
- Count defense and confirm with FJ and SJ.
- You are responsible for the receiver and the ball from sideline to sideline with help from the FJ and SJ when the ball comes down outside the numbers.
- Find the path of the ball and move with the receiver to maintain a 45° viewing angle when ball is caught.
- Rule touchback if the kick crosses R's goal line.
- Rule on legality of a fair catch signal, validity of the catch, kick catch interference, first touching and batting by the kicking team.
- Follow the ball if it is not caught.

- Bean bag the spot of first touching and/or the spot where the kick ends (if there's a return by R).
- After the catch, cover the runner until he takes the first step and then observe blocks around the runner.
- On the return, observe action around the runner while remaining between the hash marks. FJ and SJ have coverage of the runner and forward progress.
- Coordinate with FJ, SJ on fakes and blocked punts.

10.4.4 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS – FIELD GOALS AND KICK TRYS

REFEREE

- Take position mid-way between the holder and kicker outside the normal tight end position and facing the holder. See the ball from snap to kick. Be in position to see blockers, rushers, and kicker at the same time.
- Referee is responsible for action by and on the kicker and holder.
- Be alert to possible fakes and/or bad snaps. Holder must rise to hand, pitch or pass.
- On broken plays and fakes, observe action behind the line of scrimmage and the runner while he is behind the neutral zone.
- Cover passer if runner throws a legal forward pass.
- If the kick is caught or recovered inbounds, be ready to use reverse fade on the return and be at the goal line when runner crosses.

UMPIRE

- Line up behind the defense, always able to see the snapper's hands. Shade to one side opposite S.
- Focus is on the snapper.
- Count kickers.
- Get numbers of interior linemen. Know exception rules.
- Watch for holding, pull-and-shoot, and personal fouls.
- Watch for the defense using a teammate or opponent to gain leverage to block the kick.
- Hustle to the end of the kick and clean up action.
- On a fake or broken play, move to the line of scrimmage and cover play.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Know down & distance, signal with LJ, identify formation, identify eligible receivers, ensure legal snap, watch wing back, think kick rules, who's facing R to help with blocked kick?
- Watch action of widest blocker on LOS.

- Help Referee if rusher is illegally blocked into the kicker.
- You have the goal line and must be at the pylon and ready to rule on a possible touchdown.
- If you are facing the referee, you will retreat on blocked kicks and snaps over the kicker/holder's head and bracket the play with the referee to the opposite goal line. If you are not facing the referee, you will remain on line of scrimmage.
- You have sideline responsibility to the goal line on a runback.

LINE JUDGE

- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Know down & distance, signal with HL, identify formation, identify eligible receivers, ensure legal snap, watch wing back, think kick rules, who's facing R to help with blocked kick?
- Watch action of widest blocker on LOS.
- Help Referee if rusher is illegally blocked into the kicker.
- You have the goal line and must be at the pylon and ready to rule on a possible touchdown.
- If you are facing the referee, you will retreat on blocked kicks and snaps over the kicker/holder's head and bracket the play with the referee to the opposite goal line. If you are not facing the referee, you will remain on line of scrimmage.
- You have sideline responsibility to the goal line on a runback.

FIELD JUDGE

- Take a position just behind the upright of the goal on your side of the field.
- Count Team B players and verify count with the BJ and SJ.
- Read the offensive formation and determine your player responsibility/eligibility.
- Be ready to rule on success or failure of field goal/try attempt.
- Be alert for fake field goal attempts; be ready to cover runs or passes.
- Be alert for the ball striking an upright or crossbar. If the ball strikes your upright, you are responsible for the ruling.
- Coordinate with BJ on fakes and blocked kicks
 - When the ball is snapped outside the 20-yard line:
 - Move at a 45-degree angle to the intersection of the goal line and sideline on your side of the field. Be at the pylon. You have goal line responsibility.
 - When the ball is snapped on or inside the 20-yard line:
 - Move to the intersection of the end line and sideline on your side of the field. Be at the pylon. LJ has goal line responsibility.

- If the return is to your side of the field, you are responsible for forward progress to the opponent's goal line. The LJ will cover action in front of the runner and is responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and in the team area.

SIDE JUDGE

- Take a position as a “double umpire” behind the defensive line.
- The SJ should be over the tackle on the side he's coming in from. Communicate your position with the U.
- Count Team B players and verify count with FJ and BJ.
- Observe line play on your side of the center.
- Be alert for fake field goal attempts; be ready to cover runs or passes.
- If there is a Swinging Gate Formation, start in your normal scrimmage play position then shift to the double umpire position if the offense shifts.

BACK JUDGE

- Take a position just behind the upright of the goal post on the HL side opposite the FJ.
- Make sure FJ is under the goal post with you.
- Give the illegal procedure signal to remind you and other officials that the ball is live during kick on a “field goal” attempt.
- Count Team B players and confirm with FJ and SJ.
- Read the offensive formation and determine your player responsibility/eligibility.
- Be ready to rule on success or failure of field goal/try attempt. Whistle at the end of play when appropriate.
- Be alert for fake field goal or try attempts; be ready to cover runs or passes. You are responsible for the end line
- Be alert for the ball striking an upright or crossbar. If the ball strikes the crossbar or upright, you are responsible for the ruling.
- If a long field goal attempt is short, you may need to move to the goal line and rule on possible touchback.
- Coordinate with F on fakes and blocked kicks.

10.4.5 GOAL LINE PLAYS

The Crew will go to Goal Line Mechanics when the ball is snapped from the B-7 or closer

REFEREE

- Positioning is the same as for any other scrimmage play.
- COMMUNICATE AND THINK GOAL LINE.
- Reverse Goal Line Mechanics – Be prepared to rule on the ball and the goal line (safety)

- Start on a position on or near the end line.
- From seven-yard line and in, you are responsible for knowing if a pass is forward or backward.

UMPIRE

- Use basic scrimmage play mechanics.
- In the pregame, discuss with the flanks how to communicate position of the ball.
- Never signal touchdown.
- From seven yard-line and in be prepared to assist in determining if the passer was beyond the LOS and if the pass is beyond the LOS.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Goal line responsibility when the ball is snapped from the 7 yard-line and in.
- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Get to the goal line immediately and officiate the play-rule on progress from there.
- Stay wide & know the location of the ball when it crosses the goal line.

Reverse Goal Line Mechanics

- Goal line responsibility when the ball is snapped from the 5 yard-line back.
- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Get to the goal line immediately and officiate the play, rule on progress from there.

LINE JUDGE

- Goal line responsibility when the ball is snapped from the 7 yard-line and in.
- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Get to the goal line immediately and officiate the play-rule on progress from there.
- Stay wide & know the location of the ball when it crosses the goal line.

Reverse Goal Line Mechanics

- Goal line responsibility when the ball is snapped from the 5 yard-line back.
- Same position as any scrimmage play.
- Get to the goal line immediately and officiate the play, rule on progress from there.

FIELD JUDGE

- When the ball is snapped outside the 25, assume your normal position. You are responsible for being at the goal line when the runner crosses.
- When the ball is snapped from the 25 to the 7-yard line, your position is on the goal line at the pylon. WHEN THE PLAY TERMINATES ON OR NEAR THE GOAL LINE, YOU MUST BE ON THE GOAL LINE TO RULE ON PLAY. You are responsible for progress inside the B-2.
- When the ball is snapped from the 7-yard line in, take a position at the pylon at the intersection of your sideline and the end line.
- Count Team B players and verify count with BJ and SJ.
- Read the offensive formation and determine your player responsibility.
- Concentrate your attention on the sideline in the end zone and the end line in your area.
- Coordinate with BJ on plays that involve the end line.

SIDE JUDGE

- When the ball is snapped outside the 25, assume your normal position. You are responsible for being at the goal line when the runner crosses.
- When the ball is snapped from the 25 to the 7-yard line, your position is on the goal line at the pylon. WHEN THE PLAY TERMINATES ON OR NEAR THE GOAL LINE, YOU MUST BE ON THE GOAL LINE TO RULE ON PLAY. You are responsible for progress inside the B-2.
- When the ball is snapped from the 7-yard line in, take a position at the pylon at the intersection of your sideline and the end line.
- Count Team B players and verify count with BJ and FJ.
- Read the offensive formation and determine your player responsibility.
- Concentrate your attention on the sideline in the end zone and the end line in your area.
- Coordinate with BJ on plays that involve the end line.

BACK JUDGE

- Start on the end line near the middle of the field.
- Same coverage of receivers as for normal plays.

10.5 GENERAL GAME DUTIES

REFEREE

- Substitutions and counting players
- R (and U) is primarily responsible for counting offense and kickers. Count offense while in their huddle; observe their substitution process.
- Give visual signal to confirm count with Umpire and notify HL/LJ.
- Must know down, distance and clock status every play.

- At the end of the down, communicate with and signal HL the next down.
- R may spot the ball on 2nd and 3rd downs if it helps the flow of the game.

UMPIRE

- Substitutions and counting players
- Always count offense or kickers.
- Use wristbands for lateral position of the ball on the field.
- Spot the ball on runs up the middle, on change of possession, fourth down, hurry-up or no-huddle offense.
- R may help spot the ball on normal 2nd and 3rd downs.
- Know ball location and be ready to advise R of the position when he spots the ball.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Be particularly aware of player and/or substitutes entering or leaving on your sideline.
- Be aware of substitutions to deceive.
- Must know down, distance and clock status every play.

LINE JUDGE

- Be particularly aware of player and/or substitutes entering or leaving on your sideline.
- Be aware of substitutions to deceive.
- Must know down, distance and clock status every play.

FIELD JUDGE

- Be particularly aware of player and/or substitutes entering or leaving on your sideline.
- Be aware of substitutions to deceive.
- Must know down, distance and clock status every play.
- Count B players before every down and confirm with BJ and SJ.

SIDE JUDGE

- You have primary responsibility for the game clock. Know status of the clock before and after every play. Keep the game clock during the game.
- You are responsible for all other timing except for the 25/40-second play clock.

Be particularly aware of player and/or substitutes entering or leaving on your sideline.

- Be aware of substitutions to deceive.
- Must know down, distance and clock status every play.
- Count B players before every down and confirm with BJ and FJ.

BACK JUDGE

- You are responsible for the 25/40-second play clock. Call delay of game penalty if the ball is still on the ground after observing the play clock reading “00”.
- Know status of the game clock before and after every play.
- Be aware of substitutions to deceive.
- Must know down, distance and clock status every play.

10.5.1 PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

REFEREE

Same as 5 official mechanics

UMPIRE

Same as 5 official mechanics

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Mark off all penalties with the U. Verify accuracy.
- All officials are responsible to verify that the penalty has been properly enforced.
- If you are on the side opposite of the chains, stay at the enforcement spot until the march-off is complete, then verify accuracy.

LINE JUDGE

- If you are on the side opposite of the chains, stay at the enforcement spot until the march-off is complete, then verify accuracy.
- All officials are responsible to verify that the penalty has been properly enforced.
- if you are on chain side, walk off penalty with U.

FIELD JUDGE

- You are responsible for reporting the type of foul, number of player who fouled and a brief description of ‘what he did’ to the Head Coach on your sideline.
- All officials are responsible to verify that the penalty has been properly enforced.

SIDE JUDGE

- You are responsible for reporting the type of foul, number of player who fouled and a brief description of 'what he did' to the Head Coach on your sideline.
- All officials are responsible to verify that the penalty has been properly enforced.

BACK JUDGE

- Cover the dead ball spot and/or flags thrown by other officials if you are not involved.
- All officials are responsible to verify that the penalty has been properly enforced.

10.5.2 MEASUREMENTS FOR FIRST DOWN

REFEREE

- When spotting the ball after each play, be alert to the possible need for a measurement.
- Avoid unnecessary measurements; however, if in doubt, measure.
- When the ball becomes dead in the side zone or out of bounds, the measurement should be from at the dead ball spot.
- Once the chain is down, face the press box and rule whether or not the ball is beyond the front stake. Signal appropriately (1st down, or uses hands or fingers to indicate the distance that the ball is short of the 1st down).
- If the ball is short and in the side zone, grasp the chain with the link that will be used to place the ball, and bring the ball with you to re-set the ball at the proper inbounds location, or have the SJ or FJ provide you with a new ball if considered necessary.

UMPIRE

- Pull the forward stake.

HEAD LINE JUDGE

- Box is at the forward stake with the old down. Take the clip into the field.
- If not a first down, personally reset the chains.

LINE JUDGE

- Provide the spot on the appropriate line to place the clip.

FIELD JUDGE

- Ensure that players and/or officials do not block a view of the ball from the press box.

SIDE JUDGE

- Ensure that players and/or officials do not block a view of the ball from the press box.

BACK JUDGE

- Hold the ball. Your back should be to the defensive side of the field.

10.6 FADE MECHANICS

At the snap the FJ / BJ / SJ are to read their keys and the play and react accordingly.

- If the receiver's action at the snap indicates a run or short pass pattern
 - Maintain initial position until cushion (at least 7 to 10 yards from the receiver) is threatened. At that time, begin to fade remaining at least 7 to 10 yards in front of the receiver and, if necessary, be at the goal line when the receiver/runner crosses the goal.
- If the receiver's action at the snap indicates a deep pass pattern
 - Begin to fade immediately in order to maintain cushion of at least 7 to 10 yards from the receiver and, if necessary, be at the goal line when the receiver/runner crosses the goal.
 - The key is to read the receivers initial action at the snap and work to be in the best position to cover the play that is indicated.

10.6.1 REVERSE FADE MECHANICS

Reverse Fade Mechanics are employed when there is a change of team possession. This could be a punt return, interception return or a fumble return.

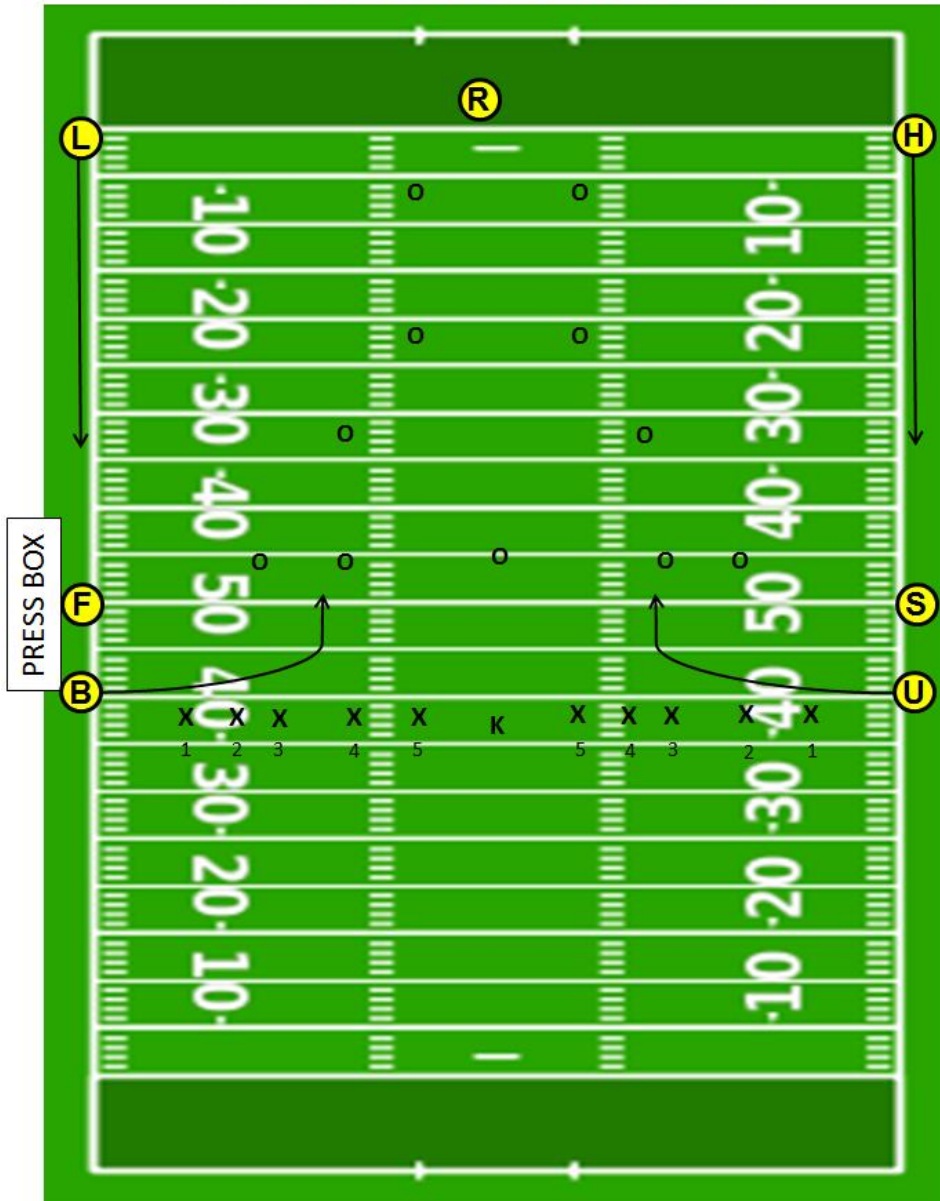
HEAD LINE JUDGE AND LINE JUDGE

- Once you realize team position has changed, begin to fade immediately in order to maintain cushion of at least 7 to 10 yards from the runner and, if necessary, be at the goal line when the runner crosses the goal line.
- You have progress from the 2-yard line to the goal line.

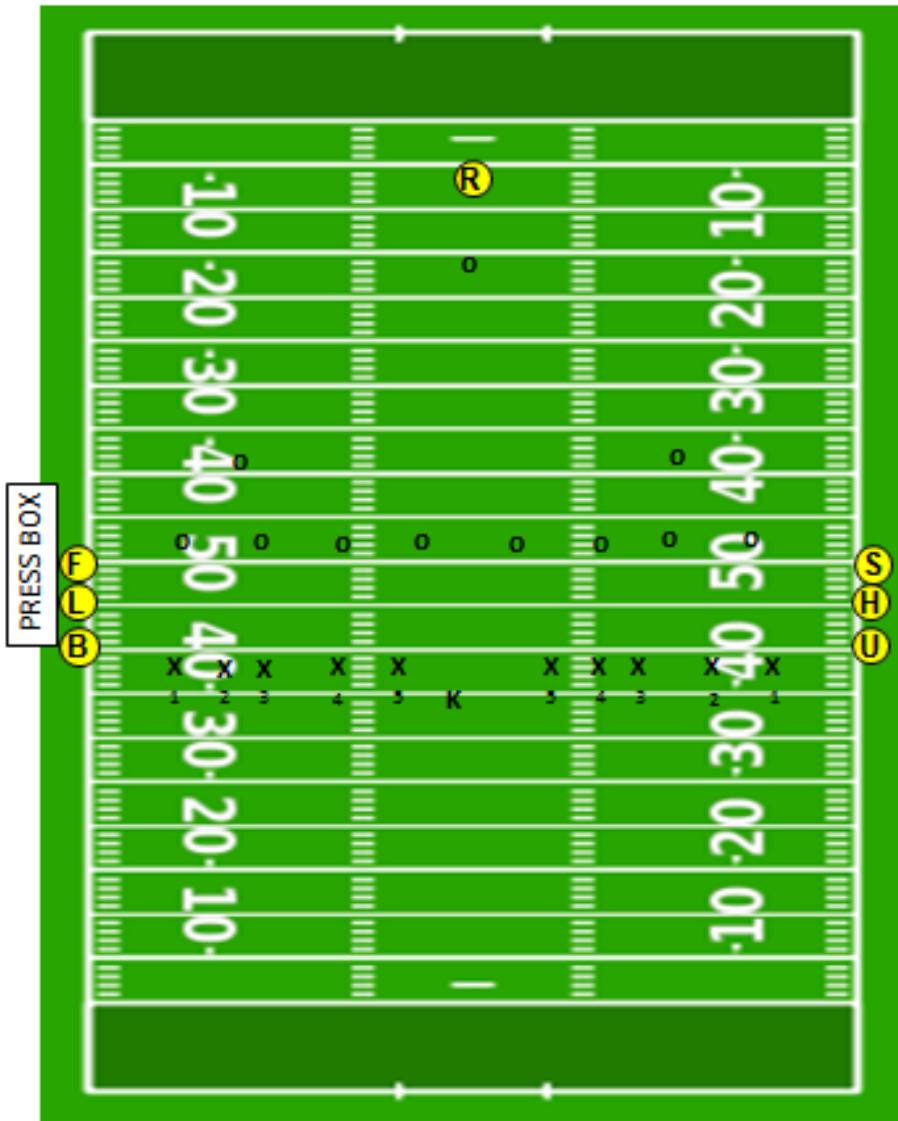
FIELD JUDGE AND SIDE JUDGE

- Trail play. You have progress up to the 2-yard line.

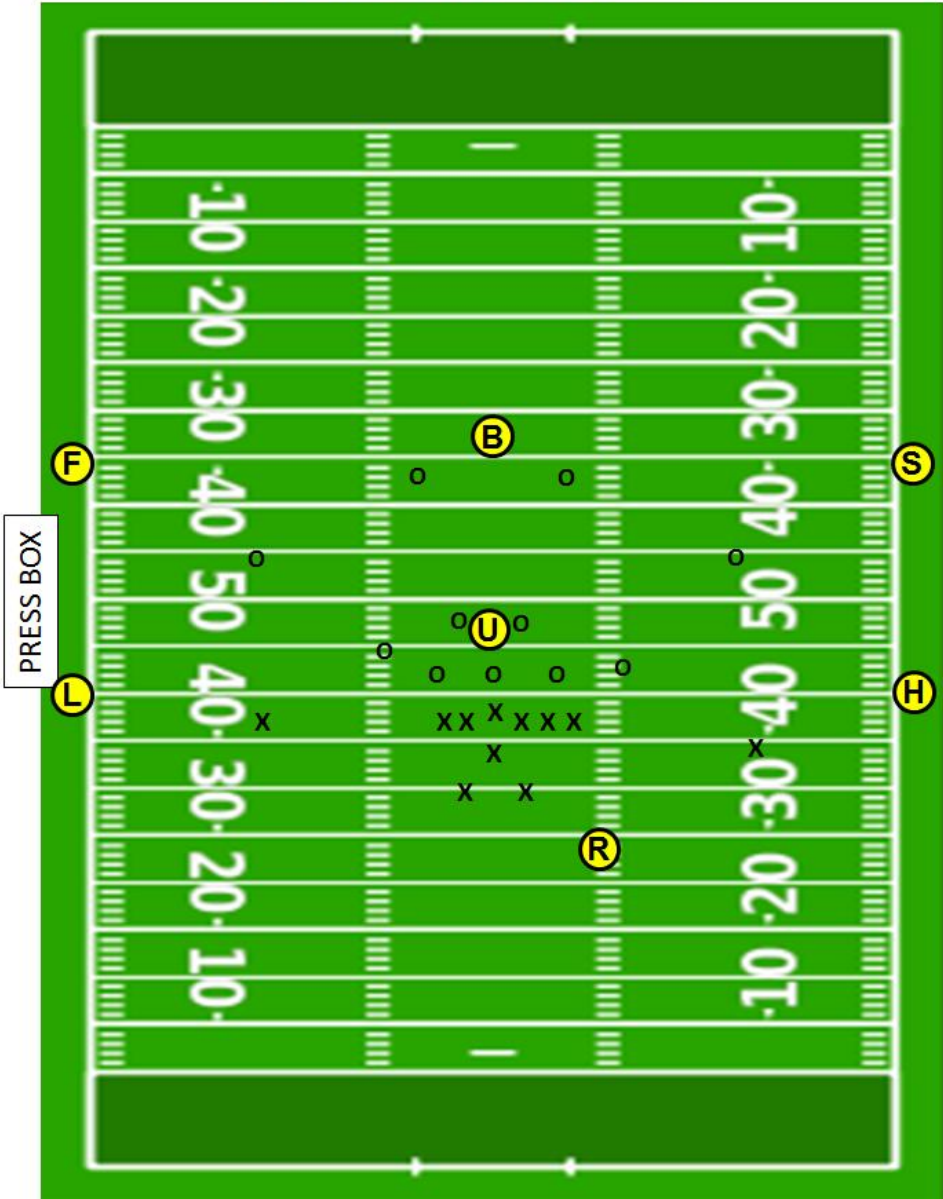
FREE KICK POSITION and COVERAGE



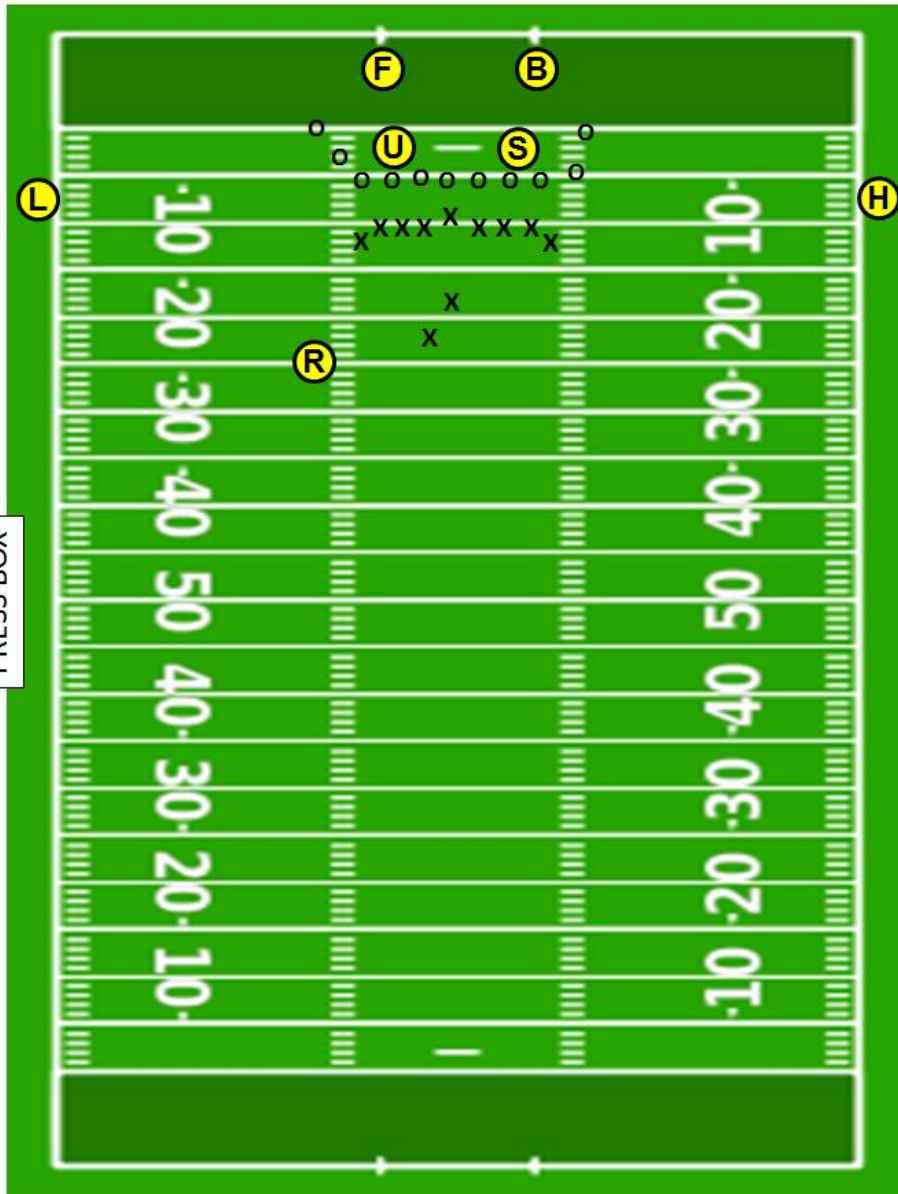
SHORT FREE KICK POSITION



BASIC SCRIMMAGE POSITION

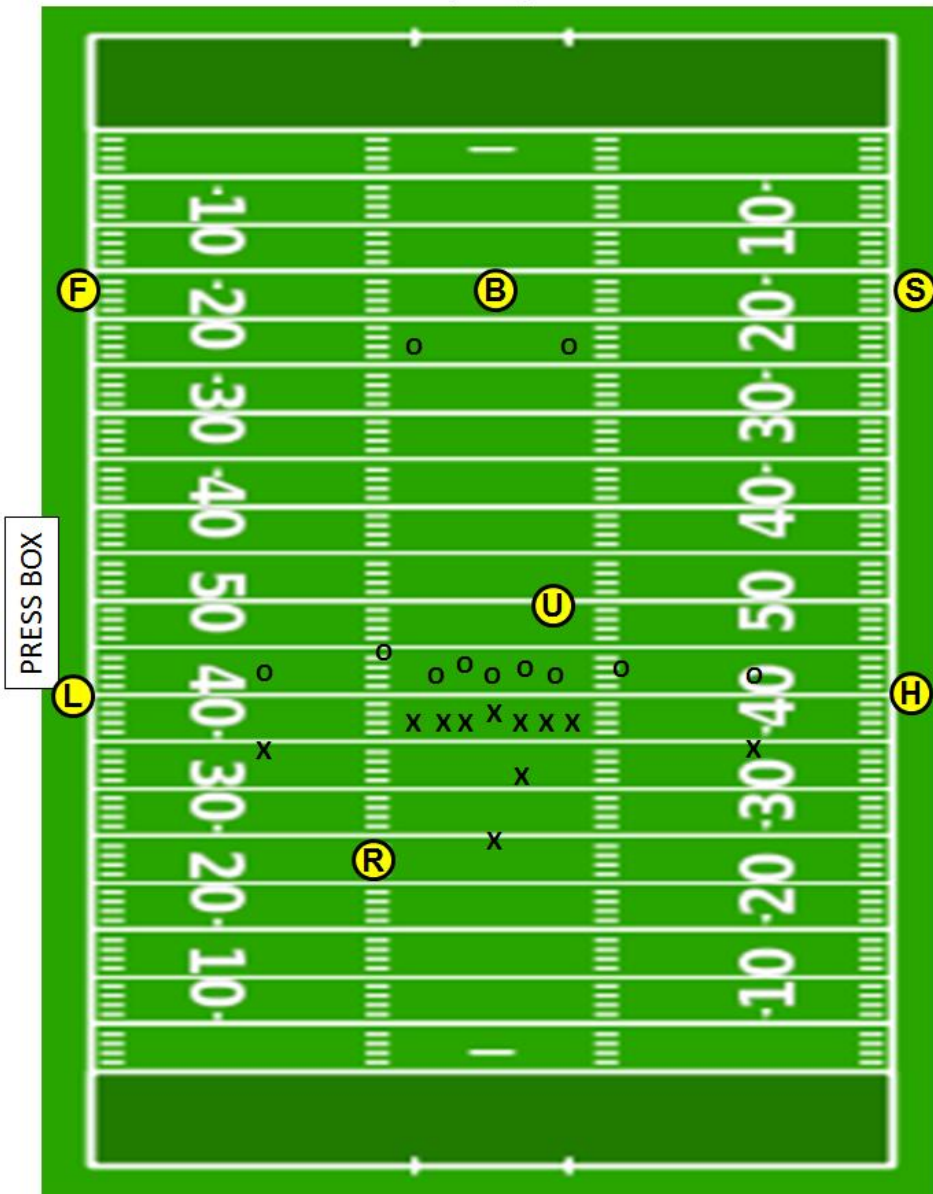


BASIC SCRIMMAGE KICK POSITION (FG AND TRY)



PRESS BOX

BASIC SCRIMMAGE KICK POSITION (PUNT)



11. Mechanics for a Crew of Six Officials

This is only to be used in the contingency that an official is injured in a game with 7 officials. The Back Judge shall replace the injured official, and the Back Judge position shall be vacated. This brief section will only highlight the differences from 7 official mechanics.

11.1 FREE KICKS – Deep and Onside

Referee, Umpire – Same as 5 official mechanics

Field Judge, Side Judge – Same as 7 official mechanics

Line Judge and Head Line Judge – On K restraining line

11.2 SCRIMMAGE KICKS

11.2.1 PUNTS

Side Judge and Field Judge – Pre snap position at top of numbers, 5 yards deeper than deepest receiver. Split field down center. If kick comes to your side, you take receiver and typical Back Judge duties in 7 official mechanics. If away, partner deep wing has receiver, you take first blocks in front of runner.

All other Officials – Same as 7 official mechanics

11.2.2 FIELD GOALS AND KICK TRY

Umpire 5 yards behind ball over one of the guards. Do not line up directly over ball but be able to see snap.

Side Judge – See Back Judge in 7 official mechanics (under post with FJ)

11.3 SCRIMMAGE PLAYS – RUN AND PASS

Deep Wings – Same as 7 officials but split responsibility for your zone down middle of field. Initial key still widest receiver but be ready to switch to zone coverage quickly and assist Short Wings on shallow routes.

11.4 GOAL LINE

Deep Wings – Same as 7 officials but be ready to cover end line on a pass play that threatens it if ball snapped outside 7-yard line.

APPENDIX A - OFFICIATING PHILOSOPHIES

False Starts- Extremely minor, barely noticeable movements by Team A will not be called, unless such action draws the defense into the neutral zone.

Formations- Will be ruled legal if at all possible, especially in sub-varsity games. Repeated warnings for illegal formations will be flagged however. Use “blade of grass” stagger for interior receivers.

Illegal Motion- The player’s shoulders must be parallel or nearly parallel to the goal line and his motion must be obviously toward the line of scrimmage for illegal motion to be called.

Free Kick- A foot must be down on ground at least 1 yard into neutral zone for encroachment to be called on a deep kickoff.

Free Kick- If onside or very short “pooch kick”, K free kick line is like a pane of glass, any body part through the “glass” before the kick is a foul.

Whenever possible a warning will be given both to the player and the head coach at least once before calling 5-yard fouls such as encroachment (lining up in the neutral zone), illegal formation (lineman not breaking waistline of snapper), illegal shift (team not getting set for 1 second prior to snap) or false start (quick-set) fouls are called except in the most egregious circumstances, then a foul will be called without warning.

The neutral zone will be expanded 1 yard when considering whether a pass has crossed the line of scrimmage or not for purposes of ruling on offensive pass interference

The expanded neutral zone will be extended another yard (for a total of 3) past the line of scrimmage for purposes of ruling on ineligible receiver downfield

If **momentum rule** is in effect and the player is between the goal line and the 1-yard line, the catch/recovery will be ruled to have taken place in the end zone, if the ball remains in and becomes dead in the end zone-touchback.

The **line of scrimmage** will be expanded 1 yard into Team A backfield for purposes of whether the pass reached the line of scrimmage if no team A receiver is in the area for purposes of ruling on intentional grounding.

Disconcerting Acts- If a defender commits a disconcerting act to induce Team A to false start, a foul will not be called if Team A does not react. A warning will be given. If the disconcerting act does induce a false start, a foul will be called on Team B. Repeated unheeded warnings will be flagged.

In **running clock games** or games close to a running clock and late in 4th quarter, only the most egregious 5- or 10-yard penalties will be called. Major fouls will all be called if observed no matter the clock status.

Delay of Game fouls will not be called in running clock situations unless egregious.

If a head coach asks for a **measurement**, one will be given if the ball is reasonably close to the line to gain. Final determination rests with the Referee however.

When an action or foul that is observed warrants a **disqualification**, but the offender cannot positively be identified, no player, nonplayer or coach will be disqualified, but the team will still be penalized yardage

When a player in possession of the ball makes no attempt to advance, or tosses or attempts to toss the ball to an official, and the opposing team is acting as if the play has ended, the play shall be ruled dead at that point, even if by rule the runner was not down.

Use of racial epithets towards an opponent or official will be treated as a flagrant unsportsmanlike conduct foul and disqualification.

Spitting on, at, or near an opponent is a flagrant unsportsmanlike act and automatic disqualification

Catch – If an airborne receiver lands near a sideline or an end line, and his foot contacts the ground in a normal “stepping” motion (i.e. toe/ball then heel, or heel then toe) the entire foot must land fully inbounds to be a catch. This does not apply to a “toe tap” or “toe drag” technique.

Commented [Ma28]: Revision 2025 (added)

APPENDIX B – “WHEN IN DOUBT” AXIOMS

In some instances, officials must make a judgement on very close plays. Without the ability to rely on instant replay (except in state championship games when approved), “when in doubt” axioms are designed to help officials make decisions in game situations. They have been developed over years of officiating experience and compiling statistical data of close football plays. When *in doubt*:

- The action is NOT a foul
- Runner down vs. fumble is a FUMBLE
- Forward progress stopped vs. fumble strip will be ruled FORWARD PROGRESS STOPPED
- Catch vs. trap is a CATCH
- Foul by team A in its own end zone vs. field of play is in the FIELD OF PLAY
- The ball did NOT break the plane of the goal line, NOT A TOUCHDOWN
- The runner did NOT step out of bounds
- The passer’s arm was going forward vs. fumble, it was going FORWARD
- Passes that are CAUGHT in the flat for a halfback pass ARE BACKWARDS and not a foul for a 2nd pass. Passes that hit the GROUND in the flat ARE FORWARD and incomplete and not a fumble
- The formation is LEGAL
- The inside receiver is NOT covered (“blade of grass” stagger)
- The player was NOT fighting, but it was a football act (i.e., personal foul, but no DQ)
- On personal foul/player safety calls the act IS a foul
- Catch and fumble or incomplete is INCOMPLETE
- When the action can be a false start or an illegal shift, call a FALSE START
- The player is INJURED rather than not injured
- Was the block in the back or from the side it was from the SIDE
- Did Team A reach the line to gain or not, the crew will MEASURE (especially on grass fields)
- In regards to intentional grounding, the passer is OUTSIDE the pocket/free blocking zone
- In regards to intentional grounding the pass DID get to the line of scrimmage (within 1 yard)

APPENDIX C – PHILOSOPHIES REGARDING SIDELINE MANAGEMENT

Referees shall inform head coaches in each pregame conference that Rules 9-8-1-i (coming onto the field when no timeout has been called) 9-8-1-k (being outside of the team box, but not on the field) and 9-8-3 (being in the restricted area while ball is live) will be enforced by the officiating crew.

Each Wing official will remind the head coach to keep the restricted area clear when they switch sides at halftime. Crews will work to achieve consistency of enforcement within each crew and between crew to crew during the season.

2 verbal warnings will be given to the Head Coach for violations (unless egregious) of the Restricted Area (Rule 9-8-3) before a flag is thrown and thus starting the formal warning process.

If the Restricted Area violation is minor (the coach or nonplayer is less than 18” into the “white”, a verbal warning will be given and no flag will be thrown. (This doesn’t count as 1 of the 2 verbal warnings above)

If the line of scrimmage is more than 5 yards from the lateral boundary of the Restricted Area (25 yd. line) of team B’s side of the field (typically the B-20), no flag will be thrown unless the play reverses (change of possession) or the wing official is otherwise affected.

If one or more coaches or nonplayers exit the team box (such as running down the sideline to celebrate a big play), a flag will be thrown for a sideline warning, 9-8-1-k. This penalty falls into the formal warning-5-15-15 sequence.

1 verbal warning will be given to a coach (or coaches) for being improperly on the field in violation of Rule 9-8-1-i, unless the violation is egregious, which will be flagged with no verbal warning.

If a coach is 1 yard or less onto the field of play between downs (during the time when up to 3 coaches by rule are allowed into the Restricted Area) no verbal warning or flag will be thrown, this will not constitute a violation of 9-8-1-i.

If more than 3 coaches are in the RA during the dead ball period (3 are allowed by rule), only a verbal warning will be given. The only time a flag will be thrown is if repeated verbal warnings are ignored.

After any foul concerning the sideline is thrown, the calling official will inform the head coach of the penalty for the next such violation.

A first Sideline Warning flag may be used at the calling official’s discretion in lieu of a 15-yard unsportsmanlike foul for violations of 9-8-1-i (after the verbal warning), however, the head coach does not get an additional warning flag for 9-8-3 (Restricted Area) violations. If the first SW flag has already been thrown, the 5-yard 9-8-3 penalty may be assessed in lieu of a 15-yard penalty. Each subsequent violation, whether Rule 9-8-1-i/k or 9-8-3, will be a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct foul.

If multiple 9-8-1 fouls occur at the same time (e.g., several coaches onto the field at the same time), only one foul will be assessed and it will be to someone who does not already have a prior violation for the same act.

Coaches entering the field to remove one or more of their players from a dead ball melee that could, or has escalated into a fight is not a violation of 9-8-1. In fact, officials welcome this action if done in good faith.

9-8-1-i type fouls will be charged to the individual, not to the head coach unless the head coach committed the foul.

9-8-1-k, 9-8-3, and 9-4-8 (unintentional contact with an official in the RA while the ball is live) fouls are all by rule charged to the head coach, regardless of who committed the foul. A 2nd 9-4-8 foul will by rule disqualify the head coach (9-4-8 PEN). One 9-4-8 foul does not combine with any unsportsmanlike conduct foul charged to the head coach to disqualify him.

If a head coach or his designee exits the team box on the sideline to get the attention of the wing official to call a timeout (e.g. when the ball is near either goal line), no foul will be called.

Appendix D - General Instructions for Line-To-Gain Crews and Ball Persons

The typical line-to-gain crew consists of at least three individuals – a down-marker indicator operator and two to hold the rods. Unless otherwise possible by use of a fourth crew member, the down-marker indicator operator will attach the clip as specified. It is recommended that the members of the crew wear distinctive vests or jackets furnished by home or game management. Remind crew members that they are assistant officials, not fans.

PREGAME DUTIES

1. The line-to-gain crew shall meet both wing officials on the sideline opposite the press box at least 15 minutes before game time and also 5 minutes prior to the second-half kickoff. If an auxiliary down-marker indicator is used, the operator shall meet the LINE JUDGE on the press-box side at the same time.
2. The Head Line Judge shall make certain that the official line-to-gain and down-marker indicators have been placed opposite the press box or on the designated sideline and that all are in good working order and conform to the rules. The LINE JUDGE shall make certain that the auxiliary down-marker indicator is in good working order and is placed on the opposite side of the field from the line-to-gain crew.
3. The complete concentration of the crew is absolutely necessary if crew members are to discharge their duties efficiently. The crew must refrain from showing any partisan reaction to the events taking place on the playing field. The crew must be prepared to act immediately on instructions from the official so that teams and all concerned will know the exact situation concerning the down and yards to be gained. The crew shall not move or change the number of the down until signaled to do so by the flank official or REFEREE. The auxiliary down-marker indicator operator shall act only on instructions from the official on their sideline. The crew must remain impartial and may not communicate down and distance information to members of the coaching staff or team.
4. While serving on the line-to-gain crew, the crew should refrain from using items that would distract them from their responsibility (i.e., using electronic devices).

GAME PROCEDURES

1. On the wing official's signal, the crew shall move as quickly as possible to the next position.
2. When a runner or pass receiver is going out of bounds in the immediate vicinity, the involved crew member is to quickly and carefully drop the marker and move away from the sideline, keeping his/her eye on the spot of the marker. The crew members away from the play should hold their positions if possible.

3. The wing official will set the spot of all first downs by going to the sidelines and marking, while facing the field, the exact spot where the rear stake will be set. The front crew member will then be sure the chain is fully extended before setting his/her stake.
4. The DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR, on every new series of downs, will set the down-marker indicator at the spot marked by the flank official. When the line-to-gain equipment is moved, the rear rod is to be set behind the down-marker indicator and then the clip shall be placed at the back edge of the 5-yard line nearest the rear rod. The down-marker indicator must be held at all times in an upright position with the down correctly shown.
5. The DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR is to show the number of the down just completed and shall not indicate the new down until the ball is set, indicating the ready-for-play for the new down, or is notified to change to the new down by the flank official. On instruction from the flank official, the DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR will move the down-marker indicator to a new position with the marker indicator placed at the forward point of the ball and change the marker indicator to the correct down when the REFEREE signals the ready-for-play for the new down, or is instructed to change to the new down by the Flank Official.
6. On all measurements for first down when the chain is moved onto the field, the DOWNMARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR is to place his/her marker indicator at the spot of the front rod until a new series of downs is declared or the chain is returned to its previous position.
7. The chain is not extended if it is a first-and-goal situation. The Wing Official should provide the DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR a bean bag in this situation to mark location of the box in case it is moved during the down.
8. The DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR should place the marker indicator on the line of scrimmage on all try situations. This will aid players and officials in determining the line of scrimmage on all plays toward the sideline. The chain will not be placed on a try.
9. If the sidelines become crowded and the crew does not have room to efficiently discharge its duties, the crew is to notify the Wing Official immediately so that a time-out may be called and sidelines cleared before the game will be allowed to proceed.
10. If the game is delayed for any reason, the crew will stay with the game officials.
11. The official line-to-gain and down-marker indicators shall be operated approximately 2 yards outside the sideline opposite the press box, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit. Unofficial auxiliary line-to-gain and down-marker indicators may be used on the sideline opposite the official line-to-gain and down-marker indicators, and shall be operated approximately 2 yards outside the sideline, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit. All indicators shall be operated as far off the sideline (at least 2 yards) as facilities permit and as directed by the HEAD LINE JUDGE and LINE JUDGE.

BALL PERSONS

1. Prior to the game, each team shall be responsible for providing at least one person to assist the officiating crew with changing team balls when one ball is far out of reach of officials and a second can be substituted quickly, between team series, and after changes of possession.
2. Ball persons shall be instructed that safety must be their first priority above and beyond any other game duties.
3. Ball persons are to remain aware and attentive throughout the entire game. They are part of the officiating crew and must remain impartial. They should be positioned behind the sideline and on the offensive side of the line of scrimmage.
4. Upon changes of team possession, ball persons must be in a position to hand a ball to the nearest official, usually the Line Judge or Head Line Judge. They should not be allowed to enter the field unless explicitly authorized to do so by the Umpire. If authorized, they should be instructed to bring the ball directly to and hand it to the Umpire. They should not toss or pass the ball even short distances.
5. During periods of inclement weather, game management should provide the ball persons with towels or other means of keeping balls dry.
6. Players and other team personnel are not allowed to practice with or otherwise use any game ball for any reason once the game is started.
7. Ball persons should assist officials with retrieving balls after scoring kicks and incomplete passes that land well out of bounds. The ball person shall give a new ball to the official before retrieving the old ball.
8. In the interest of safety, the ball person shall stay outside the sideline and on the offensive side of the line of scrimmage at all times. The ball person should not come onto the field to relay a ball to an official. The Referee and/or Back Judge should retrieve the ball from the ball person at the sideline and relay it in to the Umpire.
9. It is highly recommended that the ball person be at least 12 years of age.
10. After a touchdown, the ball person of the scoring team shall place a ball at the base of the goal post, and be in a position to retrieve the subsequent PAT kick. This will allow the Back Judge (Line Judge in 4 Official Mechanics) to pick up the ball at the goal post and move up

Appendix E – Self Evaluation Guidelines for Officials

SELF EVALUATION GUIDELINES – REFEREE

PREGAME

Was the crew on the field 30 min before kickoff? Did I have a 1-2 min conference with each head coach about expectations? Was the coin toss conducted at least 3 min prior to kick off?

BETWEEN DOWNS

Was my initial presnap position consistent? 13-15 yds deep and slightly wide of TE position? Was I on passing arm side of the QB each time, especially if he was a lefty?

Did I mark the ball ready consistently and quickly after my crew was in position? Did I give a “silent wind” properly when needed with my signaling arm on press box side?

Did I count the offense every play and check off with my umpire? Did I announce the next down every play and was my down indicator accurate on every play?

Did I communicate with my Umpire well and effectively?

DURING PLAYS

Did I move well? If QB rolled to my side, did I back out at 45-degree angle and let him cross in front of me keeping a good distance? If he went away from me, did I follow, maintaining proper distance cushion?

Did I protect the QB by staying with him for a bit after he handed ball off, or for several moments after he passed the ball? Did I not look downfield on passes but kept my eyes in backfield?

If the QB went into the side zone area, did I hustle in after the play and escort him out?

On running plays did I trail the play at a distance and focus on back side action if away, or in front of the runner if to my side?

PENALTY SITUATIONS

Was penalty enforcement correct 100% of the time? Did I confer with the Umpire well on marking off penalties? Was I open to crew discussion if I was mistaken to ensure we got it right?

Were my signals crisp and easy to see from the press box? Did I step into a clear area away from players before I signaled? If using a field mic, were my announcements clear, concise and easy to understand?

After giving the signal/announcement, did I hustle back to mark ball ready for play?

POSTGAME

Did the crew leave the field together and in a timely manner?

SELF EVALUATION GUIDELINES – UMPIRE

Focus on your movement and control of the game inside, especially between plays

PREGAME

Did I actively spot check equipment during warmups, addressing and preventing any minor issues such as pants covering knees, illegal sweatbands, tinted eye shields, etc.?

Did I introduce myself to each starting center and know his first name?

BETWEEN DOWNS

Did I have the correct down on my down indicator after spotting the ball every play? Did I have the correct lateral ball position on my other down indicator every play?

Did I count my 5 ineligible on every play? Did I know ineligible on scrimmage kicks/punts?

Did I count the offense on every play and check off with the Referee?

Did I communicate well with the Referee well on result of the play, particularly on pass plays?

DURING THE PLAY

Was my presnap position between 6-9 yards behind the ball between the guards, and never outside the tackle? Did I have the ball in view every time? Was I set and focused before the snap?

If there was a presnap foul, did I give the kill clock signal and hustle in to cover the ball?

Did I focus on the point of attack on runs up the middle? If I called a holding or other foul, did it have an effect on the play? Did I watch line play instead of “ball watching”?

When a low trajectory pass was released, did I stop and spin at least 90 degrees to help rule on trap passes?

AFTER THE PLAY

Did I have awareness of dead ball action? Did I hustle to the pile and use my voice to control players?

Did I hustle outside the hashes into the side zones to get the ball? Did I hustle to spot the ball, and spot the ball properly off the wing official within 8 seconds? Did the wing ever have to correct my spot?

PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

Did I make sure the Referee’s ruling was correct? Did I make sure he considered all options properly?

Did I wait for the HL to get in place to march off the penalty yardage? Did I communicate to him the distance? Did I confirm the yardage was correct before spotting the ball?

SELF EVALUATION GUIDELINES – SHORT WINGS (HL AND LJ)

PREGAME

Did I introduce myself to each Head Coach? Did I remind him about the restricted area/get back coach?

BETWEEN DOWNS

Did I signal the next down to my fellow officials? Was my down indicator accurate on every play?

Did I count the defense before every play and check off with the other wing and Back Judge?

Did I know the spot of the ball and the line to gain before every snap?

Did I spot check my sideline as the offense broke the huddle to ensure the restricted area was clear? Was I assertive but professional?

DURING THE PLAY

Did I mark progress accurately and not give “double action” progress? When marking progress, did I move up the sideline quickly and square off the spot at 90 degrees with a dead ball signal or stop the clock signal if a first down was made???

On pass plays did I hold my place on the line of scrimmage and not break downfield until the pass was imminent? In a 4 official crew did I break downfield when I read pass but only if to my side, and hold the LOS if the pass was away from me?

If I threw a live ball foul, did I kill the clock immediately after the play was over and tweet a “funny whistle”?

Did I crash immediately to the goal line when the ball was snapped going in from inside the 7 or going out from the 5? Did I start to drift toward the goal line if snapped between the 7-10? If the play threatened my pylon, was I well outside of the pylon (3-5 yards) with a good space cushion?

When the runner came to my side outside the numbers on a sweep, did I go into the backfield and let the play flow in front of me?

PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

Did I communicate penalty enforcement options quickly to my head coach if they were the offended team? Did I know the options? Did I communicate the chosen option quickly to the Referee?

If on chain side, did I march off penalty yardage with the umpire but check independently to ensure accuracy? If not on chain side, did I hold enforcement spot, then double check enforcement accuracy?

SELF EVALUATION GUIDELINES – BACK JUDGE

Focus on cushion maintained between you and receivers and closing in after play

PREGAME

Did I do any game prep as far as video review of these teams? Did I know if they were a run or passing team, their skill players, who their best receiver is?

BETWEEN PLAYS

Prior to the snap was I positioned 20-25 yards from the line of scrimmage and at least 5 yards deeper than deepest back? Did I know my presnap keys based on the formation presented?

Did I count the defense on every play and check off with the Wing officials?

Was my down indicator correct on every down?

Did I know the time remaining and game clock status on every down?

DURING THE PLAY

At the snap was my first step back, and if I read run, did I stop and focus on blocks in front of the runner? If I read pass, did I maintain a backpedal and space cushion between myself and deepest receiver?

When a play ended in the side zone, did I crash into the area while watching dead ball action? If it ended out of bounds, was I there quickly to give a presence and help escort players out and separate colors?

On potential pass interference, did I slow down and evaluate before I made a ruling?

On punts, did I move with the deep receiver to maintain a good space cushion or did I let him get too far away from me? Was I in position to rule on first touching by K, possession or muff by R, kick catch interference? When a kick was returned, did I mark the end of the kick with my bean bag every time? If first touching was involved, did I mark that spot with my bean bag? Did I not look at blocks until I knew the receiver had secured possession and the kick was over?

AFTER THE PLAY

Did I start the 25/40 sec play clock on time, within 2-3 seconds after last play ended, while not taking my eyes off dead ball action?

Did I signal the next down to the crew? Did I have positive knowledge of game clock/status?

Did I hustle to the pile in a side zone? Did I help the Wings and Umpire in relaying the ball?

POSTGAME

Did I keep accurate game notes, foul records?

SELF EVALUATION GUIDELINES – DEEP WINGS (Side Judge and Field Judge)

Focus on dead ball responsibility and action after the play

PREGAME

Did I do any game prep as far as video review of these teams? Did I know if they were a run or passing team, their skill players, who their best receiver is?

Did I stretch and hydrate properly in the days before the game?

Did I give good clock instructions to the clock operator?

Did I help the Wing Officials with any of their pregame duties as needed?

BEFORE THE SNAP

Was I positioned on the sideline 20 yards deep, facing in?

Did I count the defense on every play and punch off with my fellow deep officials?

If snap was between the 7 and 20, was I positioned on the goal line pylon? If inside outside the back corner of the end zone? Did I verbally release the goal line to my short wing inside the 7?

DURING THE PLAY

Did I watch my initial key (widest receiver) for illegal blocks on running plays?

Did I maintain distance from the deepest receiver on a pass play backpedaling as long as possible and turning and running when necessary while maintaining focus on the action?

If a running play, did I stop my initial backpedal and focus on lead blocks ahead of the runner?

If a pass play, did I release my initial key to the short wing if he went shallow and pick up any receivers coming into my zone? Did my eyes go to the ball when it was thrown?

Did I let the short wing take progress up to the 2? Did I take it inside the 2? If there was a change of possession, did I transition to reverse fade mechanics? Did I take the spot up to the 2-yard line?

Was my sideline clear during the game? Was I assertive with verbal warnings then flags if compliance not gained? Did I allow coaches onto the field between plays when no timeout was called?

AFTER THE PLAY

Did I focus on dead ball action?

Did I hustle in if the ball was dead in my side zone to help separate colors?

Did I assist in retrieving the ball and relaying to Umpire or getting the 2nd ball into the Umpire once colors were separated?

Appendix F – Use of O2O Radios

O2O Radios

As the game has progressed, the need to communicate more quickly and efficiently has grown. In response, the Executive Boards and Crew Chiefs of the NNFOA and SNOA have authorized the use of Official to Official (O2O) radios for use in Varsity contests only. The approved model of radio is the Midland GXT1000VP4. Officials must use a headset so players, coaches, and others are not able to hear the information conveyed between officials. There are multiple headset and microphone options which fit the GXT1000VP4, so officials may use whichever style they prefer.

Using the radio:

- All officials will use the same channel
- It is recommended to use a sub/privacy channel
- Radio traffic should be kept to a minimum and only include relevant information
- Treat the radios as if anyone can/is listening
- There should NEVER be anything said over the radio that includes profanity or degrading comments. If you wouldn't say it to a coach, player, administrator, or parent, then it should not be said over the radio
- Do not use the radio while the Referee is making any announcement to the crowd
- Do not use the radio when the snap is imminent, all officials should be focused on their keys and the upcoming play
- Radios are best used for
 - Relaying foul information
 - Clock status
 - Information between plays (move offensive line back, fix equipment, etc.)

Appendix G – Social Media

Each local Association may adopt their own social media policy.

Association Social Media

Should promote the ideals and ethics of the Association, and champion the vocation of sports officiating in general and football officiating in particular.

Individual Social Media

Social media accounts held by individual officials, in regards to football officiating, should only reflect the ideals of the official's association. Posts should be treated as if they are public and out there for anyone to see. There should not be any negative or disparaging comments regarding any official in any sport at any level, nor for any team, coach, administrator or fan.

While posting pictures of yourself or your crew is certainly acceptable, it is highly discouraged that individuals mention anything about the game site, schools worked or the score of the contest.

Appendix H – Nevada Running Clock Rule

NIAA POINT-DIFFERENTIAL (RUNNING CLOCK) RULE

FOOTBALL

The National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) Football Rules (1-7, Table 1-7, #10 and 3-1-2) specifically authorizes state associations to establish a point-differential rule to alter timing or terminate games played under their jurisdiction. The rule, originally approved by the NIAA Board of Control in March 2007, and now revised as of April 2016, complies with the guidelines established by the NFHS.

Below is the REVISED NIAA adopted “point-differential rule” to be in effect beginning with the 2016-2017 football season for all levels of play (Varsity / JV and Frosh).

Application

The following running clock rules apply to all NIAA-sanctioned football games played in the state of Nevada, including Varsity, JV & Frosh (B) games. These rules will apply to playoff games, but will not be applied to state championship(final) games.

Point Differential Rule

1. When one team leads by 35 or more points at any time during the game, the officials shall use a running clock to time the game.
2. If the score differential becomes less than 35 points at any time during the game, the officials shall revert to regular timing until the point differential again reaches 35 or more points.
3. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee, 1) a running clock may be used at any time during the game or 2) any remaining period may be shortened at any time or the game terminated. (Rule 3-1-3)

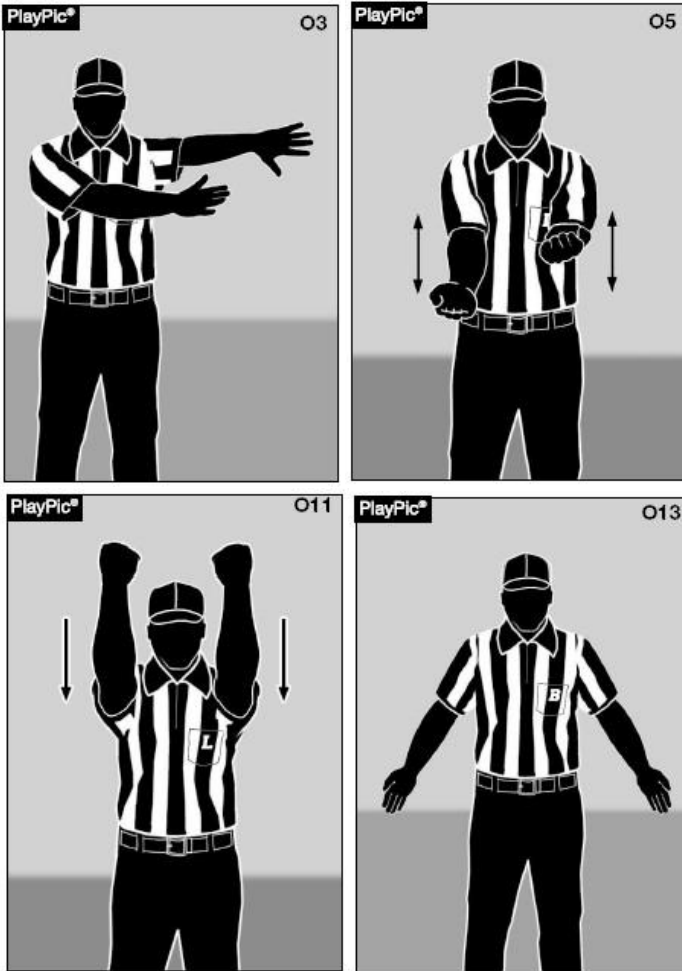
Running Clock Operations Rule

1. The clock will be run continuously when:
 - First down is awarded to either team, including following a change of possession;
 - Ball or runner with the ball goes out of bounds;
 - Legal or illegal forward pass is incomplete;
 - Penalty enforcement that does not require deliberation with captains.
2. The clock shall be stopped for:
 - End of a period;
 - Scores (touchdown, field goal, safety);
 - Try plays following a touchdown;

- Touchback;
 - Free kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch;
 - Charged team time-out;
 - Coach-referee conference;
 - Official's time-out for injury, faulty equipment, or other situations as required;
 - First down measurement;
 - Penalty enforcement that requires deliberation with captains;
 - Inadvertent whistle.
3. Following a clock stoppage, the clock will start when the ball is:
- Marked ready for play, or
 - Legally touched on the free kick following a score, or
 - After a fair catch or awarded fair catch

Appendix I – Approved Auxiliary Signals

Commented [Ma29]: 2025 revision (added)

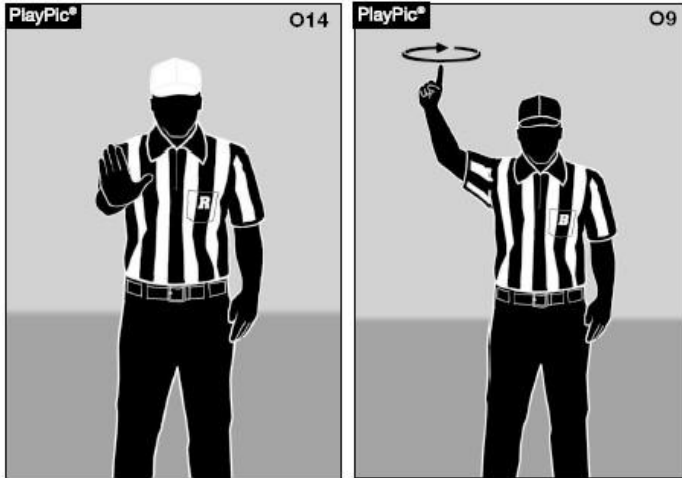


O3 – Ball caught, but out of bounds, should be preceded with S10

O5- Ball not caught, juggled (no possession) precede with S10

O11 – Catch (to be used when not obvious, such as tight to sideline or near ground)

O13 – I've only counted 10 players (palms can be in or out)



O14 – Stop sign, hold the snap. Used by umpire toward snapper to prevent snap

O9 – Recount players I have 12, confirm count.

Other Auxiliary signals without illustration

Clock stops after next play (4th down) – strike two fists together in a stack in front of body

We are in goal line mechanics, go to GL at snap – two hand sweep of chest in downward motion (used by Wings and BJ toward each other). Can also be used in 4th and short situations meaning go to line to gain stake at snap

Crash inside if play is close to line to gain stake or goal line (wings) – S26 (blindside block signal)

I have 5 in backfield (wings) – single tap of cap (S37)

I have trip receivers to my side (Referee to Umpire) – hold 3 fingers out to that side, meaning R will take near side tackle as initial blocking key

I (you) have a left handed QB/left footed kicker (R and U) – hold left arm above head and tap forearm with right hand

Snapper has protection (scrimmage kick formation), and ball is live if muffed or blocked – S19

This eligible receiver was in the area of the pass – point to player