



2022 and 2023 NFHS  
**FOOTBALL  
GAME OFFICIALS  
MANUAL**

**Dr. KARISSA L. NIEHOFF, Publisher**  
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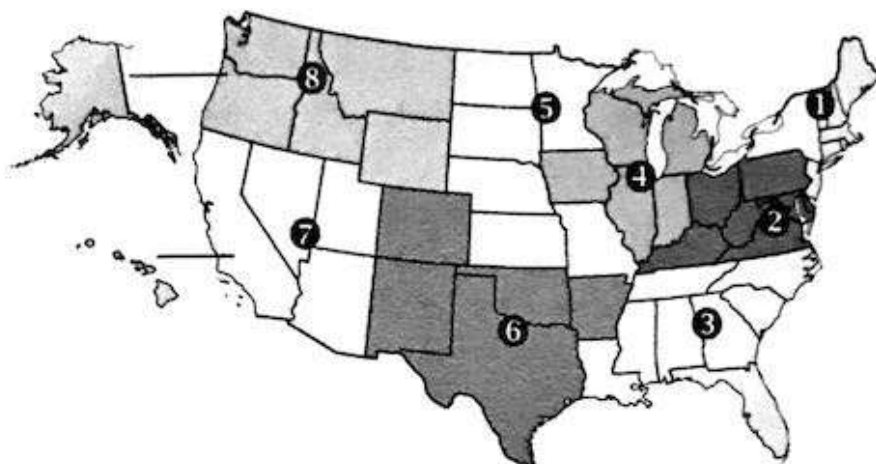
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# 2022-2023 NFHS Football Game Officials Manual Committee



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**THIS NFHS FOOTBALL GAME OFFICIALS MANUAL** is based on procedures used by veteran football game officials in hundreds of organized groups which participate in the rules training programs sponsored by members of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

Because groups vary in their requirements, mechanics for four- five- and seven-person crews are contained in this manual. The recommended procedures for the different crews are correlated so it is possible to adapt easily and quickly from one crew size to the other. State associations are encouraged to adopt mechanics for six-person crews as necessary until this manual provides such mechanics.

## **2022-2023 Game Officials Manual Significant Revisions**

1. Added a new section on Seven-Game Officials.
2. Updated the Guides for – "When in Question."

## **2022-2023 Game Officials Manual Points of Emphasis**

**(For comments on the 2022-2023 Points of Emphasis, see page 104)**

1. Communication Between Coaches and Game Officials
2. Officiating Intentional Grounding
3. Time-Sensitive Situations – End of Second and Fourth Periods
4. Free-Kick Mechanics

Every game official should study this manual to completely understand the basics of the mechanics that have been adopted. **New sections and major revisions are shaded.**

# Basic Philosophy and Principles

## PREREQUISITES FOR GOOD OFFICIATING

The NFHS Football Rules Code permits competition to be conducted in an equitable, exciting and interesting manner while at the same time specifically prohibiting unnecessary roughness, unfair tactics and unsportsmanlike conduct. If the potential values of game experience are to be attained, it is necessary that the action of the players be in conformity to the rules. Game officials must accept the responsibility of enforcing the letter, as well as the spirit, of the rules promptly and with consistency. In order to do this, game officials must have a complete knowledge and understanding of the rules. Decisions must be made so quickly they come by reflex. The proper way to prepare oneself for making decisions of this nature is through the thorough understanding of the rules and continued study of possible situations which may occur. Basic fundamentals then become second nature and correct interpretations are virtually automatic. To know the rules thoroughly requires constant study. A number of supplementary materials which are designed to help game officials study and become thoroughly competent in the rules have been developed by the NFHS. These include the Football Rules Book, Case Book, Handbook, Simplified and Illustrated Rules, Rules by Topic, Pre-Season Guide and Rules Interpretations, as well as a PowerPoint presentation. In addition, Parts I and II of the Football Rules Examination, along with the Game Official's Mechanics Examinations, may be used by those responsible for training game officials. State high school associations generally conduct a series of rules interpretation meetings, at which attendance is required for those game officials who are eligible to work games in that state.

While a thorough knowledge of the rules is important, it is not enough to guarantee the competency of a game official. There are other attributes which are equally important. Game officials must possess a combination of these if they are to fulfill their duties adequately. In addition to a complete mastery of the rules, game officials must have a good knowledge of human nature and the ability to control situations as they arise. Football is a game played by physically sound athletes blocking and tackling one another. At times, the emotions of players, coaches and crowds run high, and game officials must control themselves in order to provide necessary leadership. The game officials' duties and responsibilities are fixed by rules, and this manual is designed to help game officials carry out these duties. However, it cannot tell game officials how to make instant decisions, how to adjust to emergencies, how to show poise and control temper, or how to be courteous and considerate yet firm and decisive. Game officials who are familiar with the mechanics and understand their individual duties find the intangible requirements of good officiating usually follow naturally.

Game officials must have a football sense which supersedes the technical application of the rules so that the game goes smoothly. Game officials are expected to exercise good judgment in applying the rules. There is no magic like hard work, hustle and a sense for being in good position. While officiating is an avocation, it is one which requires dedication. Players who have practiced long hours deserve competent game officials who have a complete understanding of the letter, as well as the spirit and intent of the rules and who administer them consistently and fairly.

Quick and positive decisions are essential. Hesitation or timidity causes a lack of confidence and as a result tends to make everyone uncertain. Game officials must make speedy decisions under pressure and make them in a firm but friendly manner. Decisions must be instantaneous and rulings announced without delay. Self-confidence can be developed and is a necessary attribute. Many decisions will be questioned no matter how they are made, but when the game officials display confidence, the decisions are more readily accepted.

The basic requirement for all sports game officials is courage. When there are infractions, game officials must penalize promptly and consistently. Vigilant administration of the playing rules permits no tolerance for fouls, infractions or violations. This is true regardless of the score or how a call may affect a game official's future relationship with the school or coach. Regardless of the pressure from fans, coaches or players, game officials must have the courage to call fouls as they occur. They must resist these pressures and intimidations in order to build personal reputations for competence. When game officials accept a game assignment, their responsibility is definite. The protection and welfare of the player is paramount and with this there can be no compromise. Game officials who fail to promptly discharge their responsibility of penalizing for infractions are unqualified to officiate interscholastic contests.

Preventive officiating facilitates the smooth conduct of a game within the rules. The good game official, by actions and/or words, can frequently prevent certain fouls from happening. As a traffic officer at a busy intersection keeps the traffic moving without actual arrests, so does a competent game official keep the game moving, using accepted methods to maintain a safe contest while ensuring competitive fairness. A game official must be able to "draw the line" between preventive officiating and coaching. Telling a coach to "get that player out so I don't have to throw him out" is dictating playing time to a coach, and has crossed that preventative officiating line. Yet, a well-placed remark with the coach such as "Coach, I could use some help with No. 24" may keep the experienced game official out of trouble.

Other techniques such as the referee discussing with the coaches before the game any unusual plays, particularly if the game officials may be in the way, and checking wraps, shields, pads, etc., always are acceptable. Routine checking of game equipment and counting players on every play are critical to successful

officiating. Aiding players lining up following a safety or for other free kicks is also acceptable preventive technique.

Game officials can set the tone for the contest by putting a stop to derogatory comments between players. However, game officials should avoid talking to players while the ball is live or when it is about to become live. Remind captains that it is their responsibility to help stop and prevent problems during a game by directing players to abstain from baiting, taunting or similar practices.

During time-outs, the captains' attention should be called to the number of time-outs they have remaining, and the referee should be certain both coaches know when they have taken their legal limit of time-outs. Game officials should check each other regarding this matter during every time-out.

Sounding the whistle sharply contributes to a reduction of fouls. Calling to the players saying "that's all" "that's enough" or "don't hit him" after the ball is dead either inbounds or out of bounds frequently will deter a player from making late contact and thereby fouling. When a kick goes out of bounds, all game officials can call to players, "the ball is out of bounds."

In 2014, the NFHS Football Rules Committee passed rules concerning targeting and contacting defenseless players. Game officials must be alert for such fouls on plays in their primary or secondary areas of coverage. Examples include, but are not limited to: (a) a quarterback moving down the line of scrimmage who has handed or pitched the ball to a teammate, and then makes no attempt to participate further in the play; (b) a kicker who is in the act of kicking the ball, or who has not had a reasonable amount of time to regain his balance after the kick; (c) a passer who is in the act of throwing the ball, or who has not had a reasonable length of time to participate in the play again after releasing the ball; (d) a pass receiver whose concentration is on the ball and the contact by the defender is unrelated to attempting to catch the ball; (e) a pass receiver who has clearly relaxed when he has missed the pass or feels he can no longer catch the pass; (f) a kick returner attempting to catch a kick; (g) a kick receiver who is immediately contacted after touching the ball; (h) a player on the ground; (i) any player who has relaxed once the ball has become dead; (j) a player who receives a blind-side block; (k) a ball carrier already in the grasp of an opponent and whose forward progress has been stopped; and (l) any player who is obviously out of the play. The game official must draw distinction between contact necessary to make a legal block or tackle, and that which targets defenseless players.

### **GENERAL REMINDERS**

Communication with other members of the crew is essential. The smooth conduct of the game is dependent upon how well the officiating crew on the field works with the clock operators and members of the line-to-gain crew. The clock operators shall meet, prior to the game, with the game officials so that they are completely aware of and understand the signals. The procedures near the end of a period or the



game shall be explained at this time. The head linesman will meet with the line-to-gain crew prior to the game in order to review proper procedures. These assistant game officials are part of the officiating team. They add to smooth game administration, and they should be treated as an important part of game administration.

The correct use of the game official signals provides the only means for the crew of game officials to communicate with coaches, assistant game officials and fans. This important aspect of officiating is the only means through which decisions can be relayed. The signals, as adopted by the football manual committee, are dignified, informative and meaningful. Poorly executed or unauthorized signals serve only to confuse the situation and impair communication. The manner in which the signal is given determines, at least to a degree, acceptance by players, coaches and fans.

The game officials' appearance greatly affects the attitude of coaches, players and fans. A sloppily dressed game official will find difficulty in having decisions accepted on the field. The game official who wears the proper uniform, which is neat, will foster proper attitudes from all concerned. The physical condition of a game official is an important part of appearance. Game officials who act in a professional manner, who move quickly from one position to another, and who have stamina to last throughout the game, will have more success than the game official who does not possess these qualities. Officiating is strenuous, exhausting work. In order to meet the challenge, the game official should have a thorough, annual physical examination and be in good physical condition. Adjuncts to good condition are proper rest and care in eating and hydration prior to a game. Game officials should have an athletic appearance. The individual who is out of condition, more often than not, does a poor job of officiating simply because of the inability to cover the play. The appearance of this type of game official on the field detracts from the coaches' and players' confidence in the officiating team.

The game official uniform:

1. Black-and-white vertically striped, long or short-sleeved knit shirt shall be worn. The shirts shall have either 1-inch stripes or a state association adopted shirt with a maximum of 2¼-inch stripes, a black knit cuff and Byron collar. All game officials, in a given game, are to wear the same type shirt.
2. By state association adoption, full-length, lined black pants with a single 1¼ inch white stripe down each leg shall be worn in place of the traditional knickers if worn by the entire crew. When these black pants are worn, the game official must wear black socks.
3. Black football shoes, which may include some white accents, with black laces are required. Shoes should be shined before each game.
4. Black baseball-style cap with white piping is required. For the purpose of identification, the referee shall wear a solid, white baseball-style cap.
5. A plain, black leather belt 1¼ to 2 inches wide with a plain buckle shall be worn.
6. Standard, all-white tapered knickers may be worn with a short overlap below the knee (not more than 4 inches) by the entire crew.

7. One-piece stockings with a modified northwestern stripe ( $\frac{1}{2}$  inch white,  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch black, 1 inch white,  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch black,  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch white) are necessary with knickers. The width of the black showing below the knickers should be the same as the wide black band below the striping pattern.
8. By state association adoption, white or black officiating shorts (5-inch inseam) may be worn in place of the traditional knickers if entire crew wears shorts of the same color. If the shorts have loops, a black belt as described above is required. All game officials, in a given game, are to wear the same type shorts. Wearing shorts for sub-varsity games only is suggested.
9. By state association adoption, a black-and-white vertically striped jacket when worn during the game by all game officials. Jackets are permitted but not encouraged.
10. The uniforms should fit properly and be clean and neat.

All game officials must have the proper equipment; essentials are a whistle, penalty marker and bean bag (all members of the crew should use the same color) to mark non-penalty spots (Back judge shall carry two different colored bean bags; one for marking the end of the kick and one for marking first touching), game card, pencil and rubber bands or some device to keep track of the down number. The penalty marker shall be a light gold flag (15 inches x 15 inches) with a middle pouch weighted with sand or beans, etc. The head linesman shall furnish a clipping device for use in measuring first downs. Use of a second clip is recommended.

Use of any replay or television monitoring equipment in making any decision related to the game is prohibited, unless used in compliance with Rule 1-3-7 NOTE as authorized in a state association postseason contest.

No game official shall use alcohol on the day of the contest or any form of tobacco product (e-cigarette or similar item) beginning with the arrival at the competition site until departure following the completion of the contest.

### **PREGAME RESPONSIBILITIES**

Game officials should arrive at the site of the game at least 1½ hours before the scheduled game time. Lateness in arrival is intolerable in officiating. Game officials should report directly to the game management, thereby assuring them that the game officials are present.

A pregame conference conducted by the referee shall be held before each game. The line judge (four person)/back judge (five person) will have the correct time and all game officials will synchronize their watches accordingly. The pregame conference should follow a set outline to be most effective.

#### **PREGAME CONFERENCE:**

##### **I. CREW ASSIGNMENTS**

###### **A. Referee:**

1. Visit each head coach, starting with the home team. Along with another game official, the referee shall give coaches a list of game officials and notify them of the length of intermission.

2. Ask the head coach to verbally verify in the presence of the referee and another game official that all players have been issued required/legal equipment that will be worn in compliance with NFHS rules and that good sportsmanship is expected to be exhibited throughout the game.
3. Check with each head coach for any unusual plays or formations.
4. Secure name of coaching staff personnel who will be responsible for sideline control of team members and report this information to all game officials.
5. Secure name of coaching staff personnel designated to call time-outs if other than the head coach or in absence of head coach.
6. Secure name of the captain or team representative who will make decisions regarding penalty acceptance or declination.

B. Umpire:

1. Be prepared to examine and rule on any player equipment about which the coach has a question of legality.

C. Head Linesman: Check line-to-gain equipment and meet crew.

D. Line Judge:

1. Secure game balls for referee's approval and meet with ball persons.
2. Be responsible for game clock timing if the game clock is not available.

E. Back Judge:

1. Be responsible for all other timing situations, including the play clock count, time-outs, period change and the time between a score and the succeeding kickoff.
2. Review starting time and be sure an auxiliary stopwatch, which records accumulated time, is available. (Responsibility of the line judge in four-game official crew)

II. REVIEW COIN-TOSS MECHANICS

III. DISCUSS FREE KICKS REVIEWING POSITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Onside kicks.
- B. Pooch kicks.
- C. Fair catch.
- D. Free-kick out of bounds including penalty options.

IV. REVIEW COVERAGE DURING SCRIMMAGE PLAYS

- A. Running plays, positions and coverage.
- B. Forward passes, eligibility of receivers and interference.
- C. Illegal forward passes.
- D. The referee and umpire are responsible for checking numbering requirements.

V. REVIEW POSITIONS AND COVERAGE DURING SCRIMMAGE KICKS

- A. First touching by K.
- B. Fair-catch situations.
- C. Kicks out of bounds.
- D. Kick-catching interference.
- E. Numbering requirements.
- F. PSK foul implications

- VI. REVIEW "MOMENTUM" RULE AS IT APPLIES INSIDE THE 5-YARD LINE ON KICKS, INTERCEPTIONS AND RECOVERIES
- VII. POSITIONS FOR GOAL-LINE PLAY AND TRY
- VIII. REVIEW
  - A. Substitution rule.
  - B. Starting and stopping the game and the play clock.
  - C. Procedures during measurement.
  - D. Duties during time-outs and intermission between periods.
  - E. Penalizing personal and unsportsmanlike fouls.
  - F. Penalty administration.
  - G. Extending a period.
  - H. Overtime procedure, if applicable.
- IX. GAME OFFICIALS DUTIES AND CREW RESPONSIBILITIES FOLLOWING PREGAME CONFERENCE
  - A. All Game Officials:
    1. Enter field together at least 30 minutes before game time or at an earlier time if required by the state association.
    2. Perform duties in business-like manner.
    3. Performance and tempo sets tone for way in which game will be officiated.
    4. Inspect playing field and pylons.
  - B. Referee:
    1. Coordinate the inspection of playing field and pylons.
    2. Direct game management to remove or repair any hazards on or near field.
    3. Approve clock operator(s).
    4. Review signals for starting or stopping either clock with operator(s) and with the public-address announcer.
    5. Inform coaches of starting time and where time will be kept.
    6. Inform visiting coach of any change in halftime intermission or if it has been extended (a maximum of five minutes).
    7. Keep official score.
    8. Instruct the game clock operator to time the halftime intermission. On your signal set at 15 or 20 minutes and start it when teams have left field and allow to elapse completely. Then immediately reset three minutes and time warm-ups.
    9. Secure and approve game ball—use assigned ball person if **multiple approved** balls will be used.
    10. Inform appropriate game official to instruct ball person to hold ball not in use moving up and down sideline(s). When ball is dead following change of possession, hand it to nearest game official. Ball person should not hand new ball until instructed.
  - C. Umpire:
    1. Check player equipment when requested by head coach.
    2. You are the final authority on legality of equipment.
    3. Do not permit use of any illegal equipment.
    4. Be prepared to monitor the play clock in a four-person crew.

**D. Head Linesman:**

1. Secure and check the line-to-gain and down marker indicators, plus all auxiliary equipment. Ensure that the line-to-gain equipment is marked at halfway point with tape. This can help on penalties measured from the previous spot or spot fouls to determine if first down after enforcement.
2. Check whether home management has distinctive vests or jackets for the crew.
3. Remind crew of their duties, responsibilities, and that they are assistant officials, not fans.
4. Instruct crew that you will use your heel to mark at sideline where rear indicator is to be placed for every first down.
5. Instruct crew to clip chain, then move chain 2 yards off sideline.
6. Work on side nearest line-to-gain indicator, which is opposite press box, if there is one.
7. Ask home management to specify side if there is no press box.
8. Provide down-marker operator with a bean bag for first-and-goal situations when the line-to-gain equipment has been removed.

**E. Line Judge:**

1. Carry an accurate watch that has correct time.
2. Other game officials synchronize their watches with yours.
3. Check starting time and assist in getting game started on time.
4. When there is no game clock, time game.
5. Take care of game ball after referee has approved.

**F. Back Judge:**

1. Responsible for securing correct time and carrying an accurate watch.
2. Assist with securing sidelines.

**X. AUXILIARY GAME OFFICIALS RESPONSIBILITIES**

The NFHS has developed "Instructions for Football Game and Play Clock Operators" and "Line-to-Gain Crews," which are available to schools through the state association offices and the NFHS.

**A. Game-Clock Operator/Play-Clock Operator:**

1. The clock operator(s) should report to the game officials at the stadium at least 30 minutes before game time.
2. The game-clock operator and the play-clock operator shall meet prior to game time with the game officials to review the signals and then check the operation of the scoreboard and play clocks.

**B. Line-To-Gain Crew:**

1. In this publication, reference to line-to-gain indicator will be for the traditional two rods and 10-yard chain unless otherwise indicated.

The game management is required to make available a competent crew to operate the line-to-gain indicator, whether it be the traditional rods and chain or some other measuring device, and provide each member with distinctive vests or jackets so that they will be readily recognizable. It is strongly recommended that these individuals will be adults; however, students may be used. A competent crew

is one trained in its responsibilities and capable of discharging the various duties. The crew must be alert, agile, and responsive to the leadership and direction of the head linesman. The line-to-gain indicator shall be removed from the sideline when the line-to-gain is the goal line.

The line-to-gain crew serves as assistant officials and is partly responsible for promoting the smooth operation of the game. Because the crew is serving in official capacities, it must be reminded it has forfeited rights and privileges as fans and shall refrain from making remarks or acting in a partisan manner. It is not required, nor is it necessary for a representative of the visiting team to serve as a member of the line-to-gain crew. This often detracts from efficiency. If a member of the line-to-gain crew has a reputation of incompetency or of being a distracting influence, the referee is authorized to replace such an incompetent crew member.

The home management is expected to provide a line-to-gain crew which will be businesslike and impartial in discharging its responsibilities. Any individual member who cannot comply must be removed. There should be nothing to detract from the efficiency of game administration. While serving on the line-to-gain crew, the crew shall refrain from using items that would distract them from their responsibility (i.e., using electronic devices). Those on each end of the line-to-gain equipment must keep it stretched tightly and not move it until instructed to do so by the head linesman.

A distinctive marker shall be used to mark the intersection of the yard lines with the line-to-gain indicator in order to maintain its location. The assignment of an additional person to perform this task is recommended, where possible. The down marker operator must remain outside and 2 yards from the sideline and check with the head linesman following each down in order to display the proper number. This person is not to change the number of the down or move the down marker indicator until instructed to do so by the head linesman. When the head linesman signals the crew to change positions following a change of possession or a first down, the down marker indicator will be placed at the foremost point of the ball first, and the rear rod placed in an adjacent position. Whenever there is a request for a measurement, the down marker indicator will be placed at the spot of the front rod with the previous down indicated. If there is a dispute regarding the number of the down, the referee shall determine the official down number after consultation with the other game officials.

There are certain mechanics which become essential for game officials to observe following a first down and before the line-to-gain and down marker indicator are moved back from the sideline. It is imperative for chain crew personnel to fasten a "clip" on the line-to-gain equipment at the back edge of the yard line closest to the rear line-to-gain rod. This will give the game official an accurate point of reference should a measurement for a first down be required.

Whenever play action comes near the line-to-gain crew members, they should be ready to drop their indicators so players do not run into them.

Auxiliary indicator(s), which are unofficial line-to-gain indicators, may be positioned off the sidelines on both sides of the field. Whether such auxiliary indicator is to be used is a decision to be made by the home-game management. Such use is optional. When used, they should be of the type which lie flat on the ground and made of materials that pose no danger to players. An unofficial auxiliary down marker indicator may be used on the sideline opposite the official line-to-gain and down marker indicators. The person operating this auxiliary down marker indicator is considered to be a member of the crew and has the same restrictions as discussed in the foregoing paragraphs. The line judge will assist in placing the auxiliary down marker indicator.

### **THE COIN TOSS**

(May be held off field if both coaches agree)

#### **I. REFEREE**

##### **A. Pregame coin toss:**

1. If coin toss is held off field, results shall be simulated at center of field three minutes prior to start of game or as directed by state association. (3-2-1)
2. About three to five minutes (or as directed by state association) before game time, escort to center of field captain(s) of team whose team box is on side opposite line-to-gain indicator. The actual or simulated coin toss shall be at the three-minute mark.
3. Have captains face each other with their backs to sidelines.
4. After umpire introduces captain(s), introduce captain(s) to each other and give them instructions, including emphasis on sportsmanship.
5. In the presence of the umpire:
  - a. Instruct visiting captain to give "heads" or "tails" choice before the coin toss.
  - b. Inform captains if coin is not caught, you will toss again.
  - c. After making toss and determining winner, place hand on captain's shoulder and have captain choose one of following options:
    - (1) Kick or receive.
    - (2) Defend a goal.
    - (3) Defer choice to second half.
  - d. If winner chooses not to defer and makes a choice, give opposing captain choice of remaining options.
  - e. If winner of toss defers, step toward press box and give toss option-deferred signal (S #10) twice.
  - f. Opposing captain then given choice of options followed by deferring captain's choice of remaining option.
6. Place captains in position facing each other with backs toward goal they will defend.

7. While facing in same direction as the first choosing captain, signal choice in this manner:
    - a. Swing leg simulating kick.
    - b. Make catching motion simulating receiving.
    - c. If first choosing captain elected to defend a goal, point with both arms extended toward that goal line, then move to other captains and give appropriate signal for choice of other captain.
  8. Dismiss captains.
- B. Second-half choices:
1. The game official escorting the team with the second-half choice obtains from that team's head coach its second-half choice and communicates same to the referee.
  2. The referee then obtains the opposing team's response to the second-half choice team's choice from the game official escorting that team.
  3. Following the mandatory three-minute warm-up period after the halftime intermission expires, both teams assume their respective free-kick formations.
- II. UMPIRE
- A. Pregame:
1. About three to five minutes (or as directed by state association) before game time, escort to center of field the captain(s) of team whose team box is on side where line-to-gain indicator is located.
  2. After introducing captains to referee, remain with referee to listen to instructions and record toss options.
- III. HEAD LINESMAN, LINE JUDGE AND BACK JUDGE
- A. Pregame:
1. Head linesman gives instruction to line-to-gain crew.
  2. Head linesman (four person)/ back judge (five person) and line judge remain at hash marks to observe team members not involved in toss and who shall not be on the field of play.
  3. Head linesman (four person)/back judge (five person) and line judge bring an approved game ball from each team to the coin toss.
  4. Back judge observes team on head linesman's side while head linesman completes instructions to line-to-gain crew.
- IV. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
- A. Pregame:
1. At conclusion of the coin-toss procedures and after the captains have been dismissed, move together for final instructions from referee.
  2. Record which team has first choice for second half.
  3. At referee's signal, hustle to kickoff positions. Head linesman, umpire and judge(s) clear sidelines before going to kickoff position.
- B. Second-half choices:
1. The game official escorting the team with the second-half choice obtains from that team's head coach its second-half choice and communicates same to the referee at the conclusion of the second period.



2. The referee then obtains the opposing team's response to the second-half team's choice from the game official escorting that team.
3. Hustle to kickoff positions. Head linesman, umpire and judge(s) clear sidelines before going to kickoff position.
4. Following the mandatory three-minute warm-up period after the halftime intermission expires, both teams assume their respective free-kick formations.

### **SOUNDING WHISTLE**

- I. GAME OFFICIAL COVERING RUNNER
  - A. Find ball before sounding whistle.
  - B. When ball becomes dead, sound whistle quickly and loudly.
  - C. Move in quickly to be certain all action stops on whistle.
- II. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
  - A. Player safety is first responsibility.
  - B. Find ball before sounding whistle.
  - C. Actually see ball in possession of runner who is down or forward progress stopped—this prevents early whistle.
  - D. When sounding whistle, do it quickly and loudly.
  - E. Be alert and in position to keep ball in view.
  - F. Be ready to assist covering official after whistle has sounded.
  - G. Use bean bag to mark spot of end of the run if whistle is sounded inadvertently.
  - H. Inadvertent whistle:
    1. Ball becomes dead immediately.
    2. Location at which ball will be put in play and number of next down determined by location and status of ball when whistle was sounded.

### **STOPPING, STARTING AND WINDING THE GAME CLOCK**

- I. STOPPING GAME CLOCK
  - A. Stop clock (S #3) twice when:
    1. The down ends following a foul or any legal kick.
    2. An official's time-out is taken.
    3. A charged or TV/radio time-out is granted.
    4. The period ends.
    5. The ball is out of bounds or any forward pass is incomplete.
    6. A fair catch is made or awarded.
    7. An obvious first down has occurred.
  - B. Official's time-out – requires game clock be stopped when ball becomes dead. Stop Clock (S #3) twice, followed by tapping hands on chest twice:
    1. For measurement of possible first down.
    2. Before first down is declared. (Tapping hands on chest not required)
    3. Following change of team possession. (Tapping hands on chest not required)
    4. When captains and coaches are notified of time remaining.

5. For player who appears injured.
  6. For player in need of equipment repair.
  7. To dry or change ball.
  8. For unusual heat or humidity which may create a health risk to players.
  9. When coach-referee conference concerning misapplication of a rule results in referee altering ruling.
  10. After a foul to administer the penalty. (Tapping hands on chest not required)
  11. For unusual delays in getting ball ready for play.
  12. A TV/radio time-out.
  13. One minute between periods and following a try, successful field goal or safety.
- C. Other reasons:
1. As provided by rule.
  2. Team attempts to consume time illegally.
  3. Covering official determines ball reaches line-to-gain. (Tapping hands on chest not required)

## II. STARTING GAME CLOCK

- A. On ready-for-play-signal (S #1) followed by (S #2) – two different signals – if game clock was stopped:
1. For an official's time-out other than a new series for Team B or a new series following a legal kick.
  2. For dead ball after foul if:
    - a. There was no charged time-out during dead-ball interval.
    - b. The down is not extension of period or try.
    - c. There was no abuse of timing rule, or a delay-of-game penalty.
    - d. Action that caused down to end did not also cause game clock to stop.
  3. Because of an inadvertent whistle.
- B. On snap – if game clock stopped other than listed under Nos. 1, 2, and 3. If clock starts on snap, no visible signal to start game clock is given.
- C. On free kick – when ball is touched other than first touching by K, covering official signals game clock to start (S #2) twice.
- D. If signal to stop game clock (S #3) is erroneously given, restart immediately (S #2) upon discovery of error.

## III. WINDING GAME CLOCK

- A. If ball becomes dead inbounds near sideline (within 2 yards) behind the line-to-gain:
1. Covering official shall use normal coverage.
  2. After determining ball is dead, give the start-clock signal (S #2) twice.
- B. If ball becomes dead near sideline and first down is gained:
1. Covering official shall use normal coverage.
  2. After determining ball is dead, stop the game clock with the time-out signal (S #3) twice.

**SHORTENING PERIODS**

## I. PROCEDURES

- A. If procedures have been adopted by state associations, referee confers with opposing coaches to confirm the decision and provide any necessary instructions.
- B. Referee notifies all other game officials when period-shortening procedures are in effect.
- C. Referee holds the ball up to indicate the end of the shortened period.

**USE OF THE PENALTY MARKER**

## I. ALL GAME OFFICIALS

- A. Penalty marker should be tucked out of sight.
- B. The penalty marker shall be used to mark the appropriate yard line where an infraction has occurred.
- C. Discretion, officiating position and game situation should determine whether the marker is dropped or tossed following an infraction. However, as a general rule, throw the penalty marker in the air on a dead ball foul and throw the penalty marker out to a location or spot on a live ball foul.

**USE OF THE MICROPHONE**

## I. REFEREE

- A. The referee's use of a field microphone adds another dimension to communication – a positive dimension when used properly. The microphone should be used to explain penalties and unusual situations. The referee shall have the option to use or not use a field microphone. The referee shall have control (on/off switch) of the microphone. If used, the microphone should be tested prior to the start of the contest and the following guidelines should be followed:
  1. Signals are still necessary, starting with a preliminary signal (no microphone) and then (after the penalty is accepted or declined) the final signal in conjunction with the use of the microphone.
  2. Normal voice quality – no shouting (realize that there often is a delay between speaking and hearing what was said over the loud speakers).
  3. Speak in short phrases. Pause briefly between phrases.
  4. The number of the player who committed the foul may be announced.
  5. Turn microphone off so other comments are not broadcast.

**USE OF THE BEAN BAG**

## I. ALL GAME OFFICIALS

- A. The bean bag is to be dropped on the appropriate yard line in accordance with the situations calling for such action in this manual.
- B. The bean bag is to serve as an aid to enforcement and not an absolute reference point.

**DECLARING BALL READY-FOR-PLAY**

- I. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
  - A. Hustle to proper positions.
  - B. Teamwork is essential to prevent delay.
  - C. Establish and maintain the same tempo throughout the game.

**GAME CLOCK AND PLAY CLOCK PROCEDURES**

- A. The game and play clock operators should report to the game officials at the stadium at least 30 minutes before game time for the following purposes:
  1. To synchronize timer's watch with official game time as established by the game official responsible for timing.
  2. To advise game officials whether the game clock operator and/or play clock operator will be in the press box or on the field/sideline. Determine procedure for communications with both operators and test procedures prior to the games.
  3. To discuss coordination of starting, stopping and adjusting the game clock or play clock in accordance with the playing rules.
  4. To discuss if the game clock horn (mechanical signal) can be turned off. Preference is for the game clock horn (mechanical signal) to be turned off for the duration of the game.
- B. The game clock is normally started 30 minutes before game time. The halftime intermission will start on the referee's signal when the players and game officials leave the field. All pregame and halftime activities shall be synchronized with the game clock. The mandatory three-minute warm-up period will be put on the game clock after the intermission time has elapsed and shall be started immediately.
- C. The game clock operator shall have an extra stopwatch available. In case of failure of the game clock, the game clock operator shall immediately contact the game officials, giving them the correct data regarding the official time. The game official responsible for timing will then pick up the correct game time on the stopwatch. If the game clock becomes inoperative and is subsequently repaired, it will not be used again until the next period or when the referee determines it is operational. The public-address announcer shall indicate the game clock will not be official until the malfunction is corrected and a subsequent announcement is made on the public-address system.
- D. Game Clock Procedures
  1. The game clock operator is an integral member of the officiating crew and game administration. Unfair advantages occur when the game clock is not started or stopped correctly by rule. Great care must be exercised to see that no time lag occurs in starting or stopping the game clock.
  2. On all free kicks, the nearest game official(s) will signal the legal touching of the ball by indicating that the game clock should start.

3. Any game official may signal a time-out; therefore, the game clock operator should be alert to stop the game clock.
4. The incompleteness signal will stop the game clock.
5. The game clock operator will automatically stop the clock following a touchdown, field goal, touchback or safety after the appropriate scoring signal has been made.
6. After the game clock has been stopped, the referee will start it again on the referee's start-the-clock signal and if no such signal is given, the game clock operator will start the clock on the snap without the signal from the referee.
7. The referee may start the game clock again in certain instances before the ready-for-play.
8. The try is not a timed down.
9. There are instances when a period shall be extended by an untimed down. During these extensions, leave the game clock at :00. Do not reset the game clock for the next period until the referee declares the period over by facing the press box and holding the ball overhead.
10. Each state association may decide whether or not to utilize a running game clock in certain situations, and the procedures for those situations.

E. Play Clock Procedures

1. The following set of instructions is for the play clock operators to assist with the rules on the play clock that now involves a 40-second or 25-second possibility for a delay of game. The following are the instructions for the 40-second and the 25-second play clock, to be used if and when visible play clocks are available to be used.
2. Note to the Play Clock Operator: Starting the 40-second play clock "immediately" is to be interpreted as starting the 40 seconds as quickly as the covering official signals the end of the down using Signal #3 (time-out) or Signal #7 (dead ball with one arm straight up) or Signal #10 (incomplete pass). These are the only three signals the play clock operator should expect at the end of a down prior to the 40-second play clock starting.
3. The following addresses the play situations that require the 40-second option:
  - a. The Team A (offense) runner is stopped inbounds short of a first down. The game clock continues to run and the 40-second play clock is started immediately except at the end of a fourth down.
  - b. The Team A (offense) runner is stopped inbounds beyond the line-to-gain (first down). The game clock is stopped for the first down and the 40-second play clock is started immediately. The referee will then restart (wind) the game clock (no whistle involved) as quickly as the football is placed on the ground and ready for play.
  - c. The Team A (offense) runner or a Team A fumble or a Team A backward pass goes out of bounds. The game clock is stopped

- and the 40-second play clock is started immediately. The game clock will not start again until the next legal snap.
- d. A Team A (offense) legal forward pass is incomplete. The game clock is stopped and the 40-second play clock is started immediately. The game clock will not start again until the next legal snap.
4. There is no signal/whistle from the referee during the 40 seconds except to restart the game clock following a first down inbounds. It is important to note that none of the situations listed above involve an administrative stop/interruption in play. All of those possibilities are addressed in the next section.
  5. Administrative Stoppages/Interruptions: It is always possible for the situations that are listed below to occur during the game that are administrative issues/interruptions to the normal flow of play. This list does not necessarily include every possibility.
  6. Note to the Play Clock Operator: Every situation listed below – with **three** exceptions – will result in a 25-second play clock that is not started immediately at any time, but the play clock operator will wait until the situation has been addressed and the referee will then utilize Signal #1 which is the very common ready-for-play (with the whistle sounded) or Signal #2 (wind) which restarts both clocks (with the whistle sounded). Game Situations: (a) any foul occurs (40 seconds if by a defensive player); (b) play is stopped for an injured player (40 seconds if a defensive player); (c) any down that involves a score; (d) either team is granted a time-out; (e) play is stopped to address an equipment issue (40 seconds if a defensive player); (f) any down that includes a legal kick followed by a new series; (g) a measurement for a first down; (h) team possession changes during or after a down; (i) the beginning of any period; (j) an inadvertent whistle; and (k) an untimed down. This list includes most 25-second play clock situations, but an extremely rare situation is also a possibility (a dog runs across the field; the lights go out; weather conditions).
  7. General Statements
    - a. Always set the play clock back to 40 during a down in progress. The play clock operator will have plenty of time to change it back to 25 at the end of the down if necessary.
    - b. The common ready-for-play whistle/signal is not used for a 40-second play clock.
    - c. It is very important that the same individual in the press box is not responsible for both clocks. An official on the field will be responsible for the play clock if no visible play clocks are used.
    - d. The game clock operator must always be ready for the referee to wind/start the game clock when it is stopped. The game clock will always start on a legal snap if it is not already started/running prior to the legal snap.

- e. The play clock operator should always run the 25-second play clock prior to an extra point try, prior to a kickoff and prior to the kick following a safety.
8. Finally, the play clock operator must always be ready for the referee to reset the 40-second clock to 25 seconds if and when the 40 seconds has run down past and below 25 seconds and the football is still not yet on the ground ready for the next down. The referee's signal for this is a pumping motion with one hand up and down near his head. The same pumping motion with both hands is a reset to 40 seconds.

<b>PLAY CLOCK/GAME CLOCK PROCEDURES</b>				
<b>Event</b>	<b>Play Clock Starts At</b>	<b>Game Clock Starts</b>	<b>Covering Official's Signal</b>	<b>Referee's Signal</b>
Dead Ball Inbounds	40	Running	S #7	None
Dead Ball Out Of Bounds	40	Snap	S #3	None
Incomplete Pass	40	Snap	S #10	None
Team A Awarded 1st Down	40	Signal	S #3	Wind
Penalty Administration	25	Ready	S #3	Wind
Charged Team Time-out	25	Snap	S #3	Chop
Injury / Helmet Off *	40/25	Ready	S #3	Wind
Measurement	25	Ready	S #3	Wind
Double Change Of Possession – Team A Snaps	25	Ready	S #7	Wind
Change Of Possession - Team B Snaps	25	Snap	S #3	Chop
Touchdown	25	N/A	S #3	Chop
Try, Field Goal, Safety	25	Varies **	Varies **	Chop
Start Of Each Period	25	Varies	Varies	Chop
Legal Kick	25	Snap	S #3	Chop
Start Of Overtime Period	25	N/A	N/A	Chop
Other Administrative Stoppages ***	25	Ready	S #3	Wind

* See Rule 3-6-1a(1)e EXCEPTIONS For Defensive Injuries and Fouls
** The Game Clock Will Start on the Legal Touch of a Free Kick
*** Includes Inadvertent Whistle and Period Extension
See the Current NFHS Football Rules Book for the NFHS Official Football Signals

### **AFTER A SCORE OR TRY – PRIOR TO FREE KICK**

#### I. REFEREE

- A. In four-person, start 60-second interval before ensuing kickoff as players and game officials move out to their kickoff positions. Back judge will time this interval in five-person and notify referee.
- B. At 45 seconds, if teams are not in position to play, signal umpire, head linesman and both judges, by pointing directly at them to give their teams 15-second warning.
- C. Count R players.
- D. Pick up ready signs from crew when they are in free-kick positions.
- E. At end of 60-second interval, promptly give ready-for-play signal with sharp blast of whistle.
- F. Penalize for delay of game if ball not kicked within 25 seconds after ready.
- G. On scoring plays involving a penalty by the opponent of scoring team, use the following procedure:
  1. Give preliminary penalty signal and indicate offending team.
  2. Obtain designated representative's choice.
  3. Give penalty signal, and indicate offending team. If penalty is accepted, indicate score counts and if penalty will be enforced on the subsequent kickoff, indicate by pointing to midfield. (head linesman in four-person and back judge in five-person, will give final signal prior to stepping off penalty and prior to the subsequent kickoff).

#### II. UMPIRE

- A. Move up own sideline to prevent illegal conferences and clear sidelines.
- B. Be alert for signal from referee (pointing directly toward you) to give your team 15-second warning; go to team huddle and say: "Coach, ball will be marked ready-for-play in 15 seconds."
- C. Count R players.
- D. Be sure sideline is clear before giving ready sign to referee.

#### III. HEAD LINESMAN

- A. Move up own sideline to clear for play.
- B. Check line-to-gain crew for questions and positions.
- C. Be alert for signal from referee (pointing directly toward you) to give your team 15-second warning; go to team huddle and say: "Coach, ball will be marked ready-for-play in 15 seconds."
- D. Count R players.
- E. Be sure sideline is clear before giving ready sign to referee.



## IV. LINE JUDGE

- A. Move up own sideline to clear for play.
- B. Be alert for signal from referee (pointing directly toward you) to give your team 15-second warning; go to team huddle and say: "Coach, ball will be marked ready-for-play in 15 seconds."
- C. Be sure sideline is clear before giving ready sign to referee.

## V. BACK JUDGE (five-person)

- A. Start 60-second count for subsequent kickoff as players and game officials move out to their positions. Ball person should leave the ball behind the goal post and back judge should carry ball up the sideline.
- B. At 45-second mark, if teams are not in position to play, notify referee who in turn will signal head linesman and line judge to give 15-second warning to their teams.
- C. Obtain ball. Move to sideline opposite umpire at same time as head linesman and line judge.
- D. Count K players, point out referee to kicker, and instruct kicker to wait for referee to give ready-for-play signal before kicking.
- E. If kicker will not accept ball:
  - 1. Place ball at free-kick spot.
- F. Be sure sideline is clear before giving ready sign to referee.

## VI. ALL GAME OFFICIALS

- A. Observe action.
- B. Prevent unnecessary delays when possible.
- C. Encourage both teams to take free-kick positions quickly.
- D. Hustle to free-kick position by jogging first to the sideline and then proceeding up the sideline.
- E. Fill out game cards upon reaching free kick position.

**CORRECTING OBVIOUS ERRORS IN TIMING**

## I. REQUISITES FOR CORRECTING TIMING ERRORS

- A. Must be readily evident and have resulted in acknowledged discrepancy.
- B. Must not involve judgment, but from failure, either human or mechanical, to correctly administer timing rule.

## II. REFEREE

- A. Authorized to correct obvious error in timing by the game clock if discovered prior to second live ball following error, unless period officially has ended as in Rule 3-3-5.
- B. Authorized to correct obvious errors in timing by the play clock if discovery is prior to the snap.
- C. Must be able to reasonably determine interval of time involved when putting time on or taking time off game or play clock. May consult operator.

## III. ALL GAME OFFICIALS

- A. Note time on game clock in dead-ball intervals when game clock is stopped.
- B. Monitor closely if problems arise with the operation of the game clock.
- C. Assist referee as much as possible.

**COACH-REFEREE CONFERENCE**

- I. PURPOSE
  - A. Allows review of possible misapplication or misinterpretation of rules by game officials.
  - B. Allows corrections when error has been made.
- II. PROCEDURES
  - A. Request for conference must be made prior to ball becoming live following the play which is to be reviewed unless period has officially ended.
  - B. Coach directs player to request time-out to confer with referee regarding possible misapplication of a rule.
  - C. Time-out granted—charged to requesting team.
  - D. Referee (accompanied by head linesman/line judge) and coach confer at sideline directly in front of team box in the field of play.
  - E. Rule determined to have been applied correctly:
    1. Time-out remains charged to team.
    2. Foul for delay of game if permissible time-outs have been used.
  - F. Rule determined to have been applied incorrectly:
    1. Correction made immediately.
    2. Time-out previously charged to team becomes an official's time-out.
    3. Referee will review and explain situation to opposing coach before continuing game.

**COACH-DISQUALIFICATION PROCEDURE**

- I. REFEREE
  - A. Provide coach with reason (accompanied by head linesman or line judge).
  - B. Require coach to vacate stadium area.
    1. If coach does not vacate:
      - a. Inform noncompliance could lead to forfeiture.
      - b. Locate local administration for assistance.
    2. Do not continue contest until coach vacates stadium area.
    3. Suspend contest if necessary and notify state association office.
  - C. Comply with all state association reporting requirements.
- II. OTHER GAME OFFICIALS
  - A. Line judge or head linesman accompany referee to sideline.
  - B. Assist referee if necessary.
  - C. Observe all players.
  - D. Notify opposing coach of disqualification.
- III. REMINDER
  - A. Imperative coach be notified by referee or calling game official of all unsportsmanlike fouls against him/her, such as:
    1. Improper conduct toward a game official.
    2. A player wearing illegal equipment.
    3. More than three coaches in 2-yard area between sideline and team-box area prior to ball becoming live.
    4. Having anyone in the restricted area when the ball is live.

- B. Mandatory that any coach receiving two unsportsmanlike fouls carrying 15-yard penalties, vacate stadium area.
- C. If flagrant, shall be disqualified on first foul.

### **CONTROLLING THE SIDELINE AND TEAM BOX**

- I. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
  - A. Consistently administer and enforce team-box and coaches' area restrictions.
  - B. Be firm and professional, ensuring that restrictions are enforced so that all game officials have enough room to work.
- II. FIRST VIOLATION BY TEAM
  - A. Results in sideline warning.
  - B. Covering official sound whistle, drop penalty marker, give proper signal, then report infraction to referee.
  - C. Referee will give proper signal and indicate offending sideline.
  - D. Covering official shall verbally inform the coach of the warning. Communication also should include reminder of distance penalties for further violations.
  - E. All game officials record time and period warning is given.
- III. SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT VIOLATIONS BY TEAM
  - A. Covering official will drop penalty marker, sound whistle, report infraction to referee.
  - B. Referee will give approved signals and umpire will assess distance penalty.
  - C. Covering official will verbally inform and remind coach that each subsequent offense will result in 15-yard penalty.
  - D. All game officials record time and period penalty is assessed.

### **CONTROLLING TEAM PERSONNEL ALTERCATIONS**

- I. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
  - A. If altercation is in your area, attempt to stop initial confrontation.
  - B. If unable to stop altercation, step back and record the uniform number of each player involved and other team personnel.
- II. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE
  - A. Alert coach on your side to keep all team personnel off the playing area.
  - B. Record uniform number of any substitute who enters the playing area during an altercation.

### **END-OF-GAME AND OVERTIME PROCEDURE**

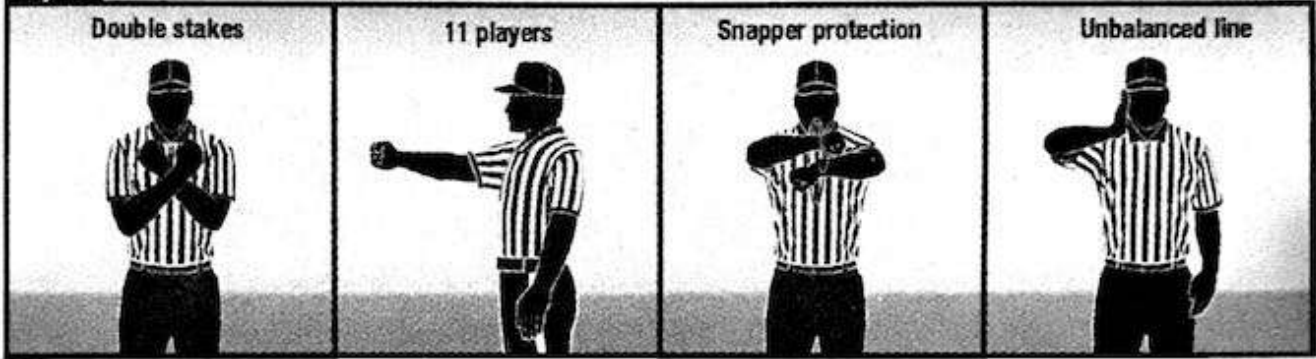
- I. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
  - A. Regulation game:
    - 1. Referee—Indicate end of fourth period (S #14).
    - 2. Leave field together immediately.
    - 3. Neither avoid nor seek coaches.
    - 4. Do not discuss game on field or make any public statement about game to news media.

5. The game officials retain clerical authority over the game through the completion of any reports, including those imposing disqualifications, that are responsive to actions occurring while the game officials had jurisdiction.
  6. Report any flagrant irregularity or disqualification(s) to state association office when applicable.
  7. If your state association has additional penalty for fighting, follow reporting procedure.
- B. Overtime, 10-yard line procedure:
1. Hold coin toss at center of field, using general coin-toss mechanics.
  2. Toss winner shall choose whether to be on offense or defense or choose the end of field at which ball will be put in play.
  3. To start each new series, team may designate location of ball between hash marks.
  4. Referee will indicate winner of toss by placing a hand on his/her shoulder:
    - a. Then position offensive captain facing goal towards which ball will be advanced with defensive captain facing his/her opponent.
    - b. Give first-down signal (S #8) toward opponent's goal being used.



# RECOMMENDED CREW COMMUNICATION SIGNALS

PlayPic®



**Double stakes**  
Indicates that more than ten yards to go before first down, to prevent accidental stopping of clock.

**11 players**  
Fist extended straight out with elbow not bent and the thumb up in fist, indication of 11 players in game when counting complete.

**Snapper protection**  
Indicates to each other (R and U) that this play requires protection for snapper in accordance with rules.

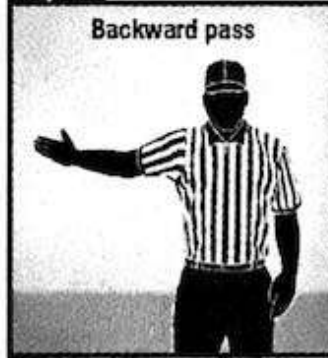
**Unbalanced line**  
Hand on cheek, indicating unbalanced line to trigger all to look for ineligible and umpire to check numbering. Also used for indicating two or more players or no player outside the tackle on the line of scrimmage.

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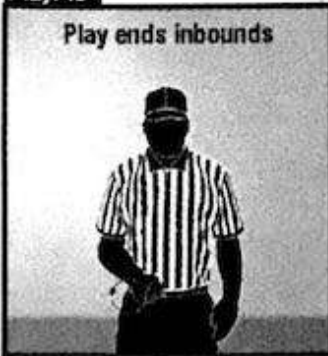
**Start clock on snap**  
Arms crossed at wrists in front of waist. Last play was out of bounds (start clock on snap).

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**Backward pass**  
Given by R unless immediately thrown after snap in which case wing has crew option to signal. NO signal if forward. Also, same signal by wing officials to indicate player nearest wing official is off the line of scrimmage.

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**Play ends inbounds**  
Start clock on ready.

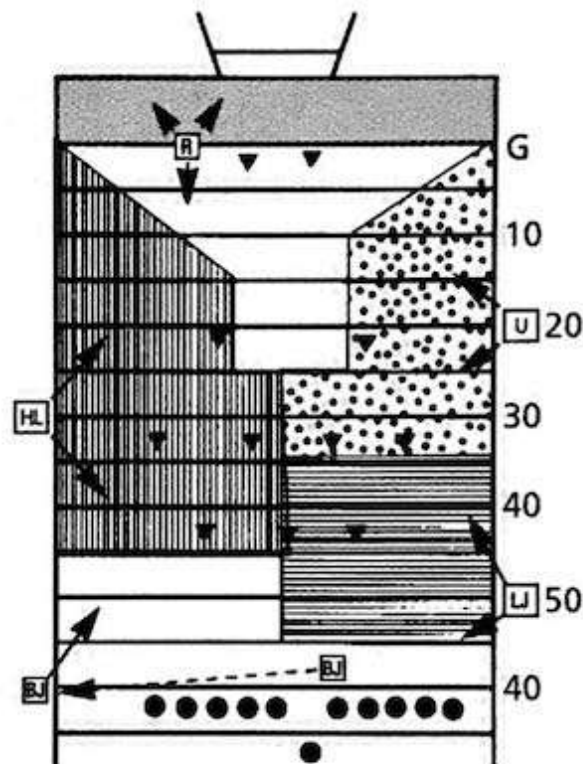
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**Five second count**  
Visible count by R (Four-Game Officials Crew) and BJ (Five-Game Officials Crew) of the last five seconds when on-field play clocks are not utilized.

# Five-Game Officials

## FIVE-GAME OFFICIAL POSITIONS FOR KICKOFF



## KICKOFF

### I. REFEREE

#### A. Before kick:

1. Position: R's goal yard line on the head linesman's side between the center of the field and hash marks.
2. Count R players.
3. Check positions of other game officials.
4. After ready signs have been received from other game officials, declare the ball ready for play and sound whistle and verify that at least four K players must be on each side of the kicker until the ball is kicked.
5. If short free kick is anticipated:
  - a. Take position near R's 10-yard line.
  - b. Be alert to assist other game officials.

#### B. After kick:

1. Kick down the middle:
  - a. Signal game clock to start (S #2) when kick is touched other than first touching by K.
  - b. Pick up runner and follow until releasing to covering official.
2. Deep kick:
  - a. While standing on goal line, rule on touchback.

- b. If kick is caught inside 5-yard line and player is downed in end zone, or ball goes out of bounds there, rule on whether player's momentum took him/her into end zone and mark spot of catch with bean bag.
- 3. Kick outside opposite hash mark:
  - a. Move cautiously with play.
  - b. Observe action of other players in vicinity of runner.
  - c. Serve as clean-up behind, to side of, and around runner.
- 4. Mark out-of-bounds spot if kick goes out-of-bounds in your area:
  - a. Drop penalty marker if untouched inbounds by R.

## II. UMPIRE

### A. Before kick:

- 1. Be certain coaches, players, substitutions and other individuals are in proper locations.
- 2. Position: On R's 20-yard line outside sideline opposite head linesman.
- 3. Count R players.
- 4. Hold arm above head to indicate you are ready.
- 5. If short kick is anticipated, position on R's free-kick line.
  - a. Be alert for first touching by K or kick which does not cross R's free kick line.
  - b. Hold bean bag to mark first touching by K.
  - c. Observe legality of blocks and action away from the ball.

### B. After kick:

- 1. Kick to your side:
  - a. Signal game clock to start when kick is legally touched, only if ball is even or upfield from you.
  - b. Pick up runner and follow along sideline
  - c. When ball becomes dead, sound whistle and give time-out signal (S #3).
- 2. When kickoff goes outside opposite hash mark:
  - a. Move cautiously with play along sideline.
  - b. Observe action of other players in vicinity of runner.
  - c. Serve as clean-up behind, to side of, and around runner.
- 3. Maintain position enabling coverage of your sideline at all times.
- 4. Mark out-of-bounds spot if kick goes out of bounds in your area:
  - a. Drop penalty marker if untouched inbounds by R.

## III. HEAD LINESMAN

### A. Before kick:

- 1. Be certain coaches, players, substitutes and other individuals are in proper location.
- 2. Position: R's 30-yard line outside the same sideline as the line-to-gain indicator.
- 3. Count R players.
- 4. Hold arm above head to indicate you are ready.

5. If short free-kick is anticipated:
    - a. Position on R's free-kick line.
    - b. Be alert for first touching by K or kick which does not cross R's free-kick line. Hold bean bag to mark first touching by K.
  - B. After kick:
    1. Kick to your side:
      - a. Signal game clock to start (S #2) when the kick is legally touched, only if ball is even or upfield from you.
      - b. Pick up runner and follow along sideline.
      - c. When ball becomes dead, sound whistle and give time-out signal.
    2. Be alert for first touching by K, and mark spot with bean bag.
    3. Mark spot where kick goes out-of-bounds on your side of field:
      - a. Drop penalty marker if untouched inbounds by R.
    4. Maintain position enabling coverage of your sideline at all times.
    5. Observe legality of blocks and action away from the ball when you are not covering the runner.
    6. Kick to opposite side of field:
      - a. Move cautiously with play along sideline.
      - b. Observe action of other players in vicinity of runner.
- IV. LINE JUDGE
- A. Before kick:
    1. Be certain coaches, players, substitutes and other individuals are in proper locations.
    2. Position: R's free-kick line, outside sideline opposite head linesman.
    3. Temporarily move to 9-yard marks, then count K players and identify the free-kick line for the receiving team.
    4. Hold arm above head to indicate you are ready.
    5. Watch for any infractions involving R's free-kick line.
    6. If short free-kick is anticipated:
      - a. Position on K's free-kick line.
      - b. Be alert for first touching by K or kick which does not cross R's free-kick line. Hold bean bag to mark first touching by K.
  - B. After kick:
    1. Be alert for first touching by K - mark spot with bean bag.
    2. Watch initial blocks in your area.
    3. If ball becomes dead in your area, sound whistle and give time-out signal.
    4. Mark spot where kick goes out of bounds on your side of field with penalty marker if untouched inbounds by R.
    5. After ball has gone downfield, move deliberately along sideline in that direction while watching for fouls away from ball. Cover 15 yards down sideline.
    6. Be in position to take over coverage of runner in your area on long return.



7. Kick to opposite side of field:
  - a. Move cautiously with play along sidelines.
  - b. Observe action of other players in vicinity of runner.

#### V. BACK JUDGE

##### A. Before kick:

1. Take charge of ball.
2. Position: K's free-kick line outside sideline to monitor bench area and assist kicking team in getting into position.
3. Move on field to kicker and after checking legality of kicking tee, hand kicker ball, point out referee and instruct kicker to wait for referee's signal before kicking. If the kicker is not ready place the ball on the ground and proceed to the sideline.
4. Count K players.
5. Move to a position just outside the sideline on K's free-kick line on the line-to-gain indicator side.
6. Be certain coaches, players, substitutes and other individuals are in proper locations and no K players, with the exception of the kicker, may be more than 5 yards behind the kicking team's free-kick line.
7. Hold arm above head to indicate you are ready.
8. If ball falls or blows off tee, sound whistle to prevent action. Move to kicker to give instructions.
9. Watch for any infractions involving K's free-kick line.
10. If there is a foul to be administered on the free-kick, give final signal and administer penalty.
11. Time play clock.

##### B. After kick:

1. Be alert for first touching by K—mark spot with bean bag.
2. Be alert for a kick which does not cross R's free-kick line.
3. If there is a penalty for a foul before kick ends requiring rekick, administer penalty and place ball ready.
4. Mark out-of-bounds spot if kick goes out of bounds in your area with penalty marker if untouched inbounds by R.
5. Watch initial blocks by players near R's free-kick line and action against kicker and holder. Cover to opposite 45-yard line.
6. After ball has gone downfield, move to the center of the field. Move downfield no more than 10-15 yards while maintaining inside-out coverage. Take responsibility for K's goal line.
7. Be in position to take over coverage of runner in your area on long return.
8. Observe legality of blocks and action away from ball.

#### VI. ALL GAME OFFICIALS

- A. Covering official(s) signal game clock to start (S #2) when kick is touched, other than first touching by K.
- B. Kick out of bounds between goal lines:
  1. Sound whistle.
  2. Give time-out signal (S #3) twice and mark spot.

3. Determine if R had touched.
4. Toss penalty marker if R did not touch the ball.
- C. Maintain position on sideline at all times except for referee and back judge.
- D. Sound whistle when ball becomes dead in your area and give time-out signal.
- E. Carry bean bag in hand.
- F. Free kick following safety:
  1. Each game official assumes same relative position and has same duties as on kickoff.
  2. Ball put in play by drop kick, place kick, or punt.

### **FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT BY FREE KICK AFTER A FAIR CATCH OR AWARDED FAIR CATCH**

- I. POSITIONS
  - A. Referee behind upright.
  - B. Umpire behind upright; rule on crossbar.
  - C. Both game officials determine whether kick is successful.
- II. All other game officials mechanics same as kickoff.
- III. Set the line-to-gain indicator to establish 10-yard neutral zone.

### **KEYS AND PRIORITY OF KEYS**

These keys are intended to help determine coverage at the initial snap only. A game official must be prepared to react to the play as it develops. These do not necessarily determine coverage for the entire play, as constant adjustments are necessary.

- I. In determining keys, several definitions are needed for clarification purposes:
  - A. **STRENGTH OF THE FORMATION** – determined by the number of eligible receivers on a particular side of the offensive formation. It has nothing to do with the number of linemen on each side of the center, but rather the number of eligible receivers outside the tackles. If there is no strong side, strength is declared to the **LINE JUDGE'S** side.
  - B. **TIGHT END** – The end man on the line of scrimmage lined up no more than four yards from the nearest offensive lineman.
  - C. **BACK IN BACKFIELD** – A player in the backfield between the tackles at the snap.
  - D. **TRIPS** (Three or more receivers outside the offensive tackles.)
- II. The priority of keys to determine initial assignments for each game official is as follows:
  - A. **BACK JUDGE** has the first key.
  - B. **LINE JUDGE AND HEAD LINESMAN** have the second key.

**NOTE:** Do not key off of the same player as the game official ahead of you in the priority. The **LINE JUDGE** or the **HEAD LINESMAN** will not key off of the same player as the **BACK JUDGE**. Normally, one wing official will key off of the receiver on the side where the strength is **NOT** declared, and the other wing official will be keying a strong side back.

- III. **BALANCED FORMATION:** When there are the same number of eligible receivers outside the offensive tackles on each side of the formation, then the back judge will key on the widest eligible receiver to the line judge's side of the formation. The line judge will then key on the next widest eligible receiver. The head linesman will key on the eligible/s on his/her side of the formation.

**Example 1:** Team A sets in a balance formation with two tight ends. The back judge will key on the tight end (the widest eligible) to the line judge's side of the formation.

**Example 2:** Team A has a flanker and tight end on the side of the formation next to the line judge. The back judge will take the flanker and the line judge will take the tight end.

**Example 3:** Team A has a split end and a slot back on the side of the formation next to the line judge. The back judge will take the split end and the line judge will take the slot back.

In both examples the head linesman takes the eligible/s on his/her side of the formation.

- IV. **UNBALANCED FORMATION:** The strength of the formation is determined by the number of eligible receivers outside of the offensive tackles. The back judge takes the widest eligible/s to the strength of the formation. The wing to the strong side takes the next widest eligible receiver to his/her side. The wing opposite the strength of the formation takes the eligible/s on his/her side.

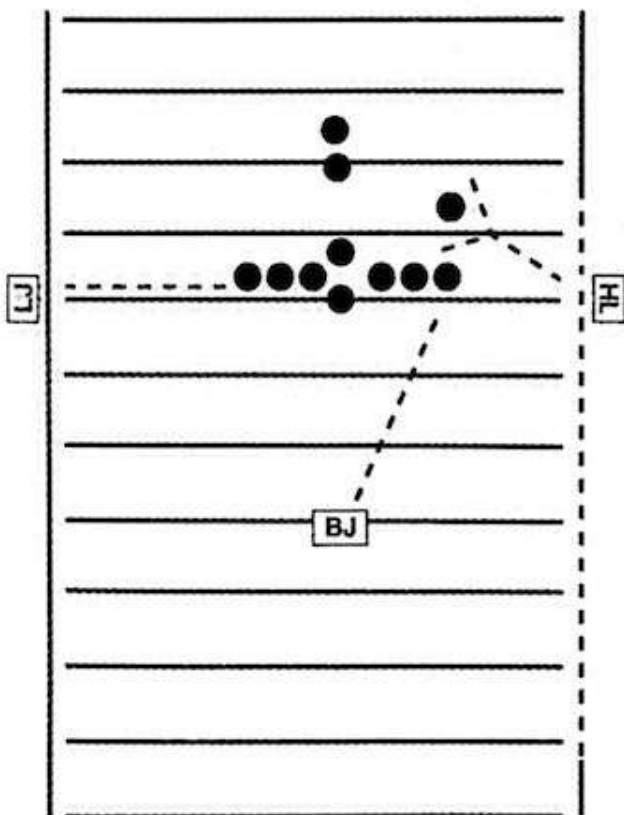
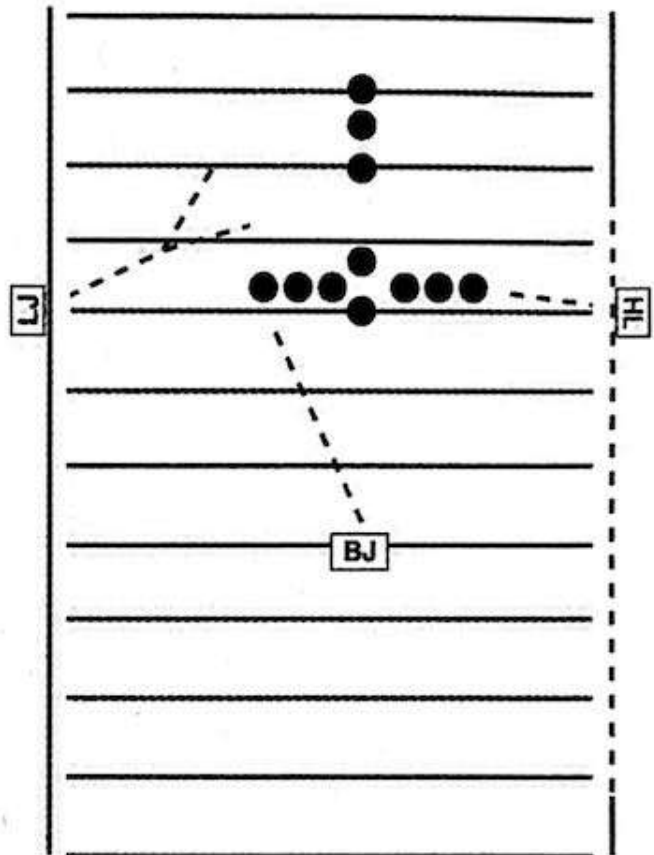
**Example 4:** Team A has a flanker and a tight end to the head linesman's side of the formation. On the line judge's side there is a tight end. The back judge will take the flanker and the head linesman will take the end on his/her side of the formation. The line judge will take the eligible/s to his/her side. If Team A sets in trips the back judge will take the two widest eligible receivers to the strength of the formation. The strong side wing will take the next eligible receiver. If the trips are stacked the back judge takes the front two.

- V. **MOTION:** If motion occurs, the strength of the formation is not determined until the snap. Keys may change with motion.

**Example 5:** Team A sets in a formation with a flanker on the head linesman's side and the tight end on the line judge's side. The head linesman will take the end on his/her side and the back judge will take the flanker. If the flanker goes in motion, his/her position at the snap will determine if the original keys will change. In this example the flanker gets past the tight end on the line judge's side at the snap. The back judge then switches his/her key to the line judge's side and keys on the flanker. If the flanker is behind the tight end at the snap, then the back judge will key on the tight end and line judge will take the motion man. The wing responsible for watching the motion man for illegal motion retains that responsibility.

**BALANCED FORMATION**

Balanced formation, if no strength is declared, declare strength to the LINE JUDGE'S side. The BACK JUDGE keys his/her read from the end on the LINE JUDGE'S side, the HEAD LINESMAN is responsible for initial action on or by the end on his/her side. LINE JUDGE would then have the first back out of the backfield on his/her side. These would also be the keys on a split backfield.

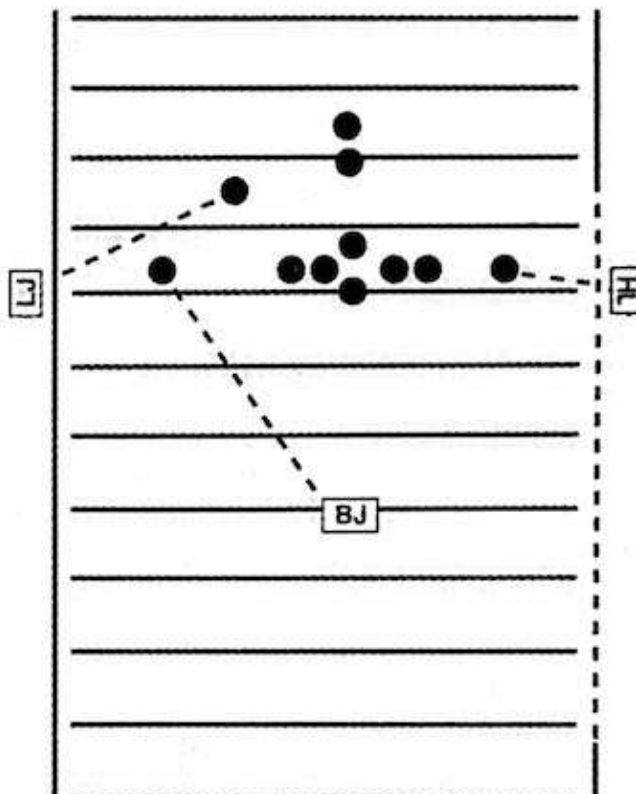


**STRENGTH TO HL'S SIDE**

When the formation is as shown at left, the back shows strength to HEAD LINESMAN'S side. BACK JUDGE has the widest receiver on the HEAD LINESMAN'S side. LINE JUDGE is responsible for initial action on or by the end on his/her side. HEAD LINESMAN would then have the first back out of the backfield on his/her side.

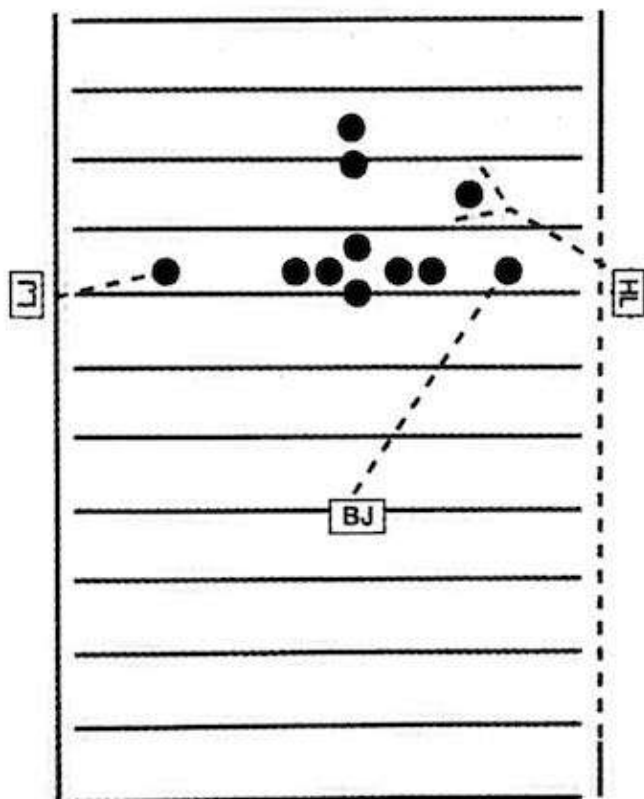
**STRENGTH TO LJ'S SIDE**

When the formation is as shown at right, the back shows strength to LINE JUDGE'S side. BACK JUDGE has the widest receiver on the LINE JUDGE'S side. HEAD LINESMAN is responsible for initial action on or by the end on his/her side. LINE JUDGE would then have the first back out of the backfield on his/her side.



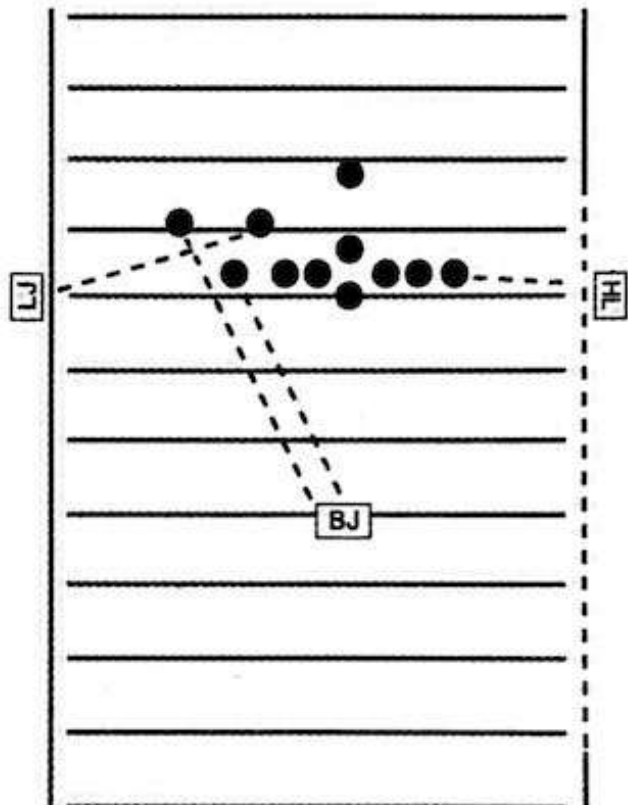
**STRENGTH TO HL'S SIDE**

When the formation is as shown at left, the back shows strength to HEAD LINESMAN'S side. BACK JUDGE has the widest receiver on the HEAD LINESMAN'S side. LINE JUDGE is responsible for initial action on or by the end on his/her side. HEAD LINESMAN would have primary coverage on the back who is on his/her side (that declared the strength) and would then have the first back out of the backfield to his/her side.



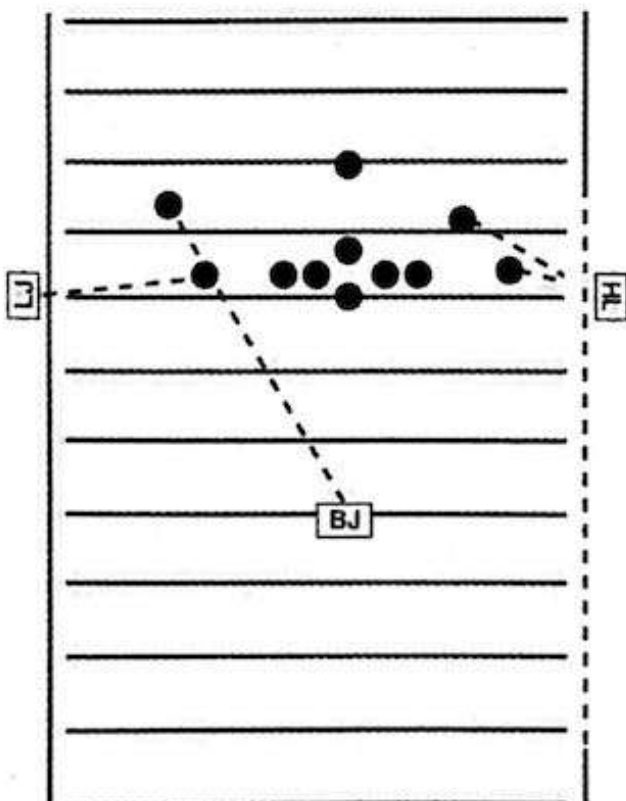
**TRIPS TO ONE SIDE  
(THREE RECEIVERS)**

When the formation is as shown at right, showing "trips," the BACK JUDGE has the two outside receivers. LINE JUDGE is responsible for action on or by the inside eligible receiver. HEAD LINESMAN would have primary coverage on the end who is on his/her side and would then have the first back out of the backfield to his/her side.



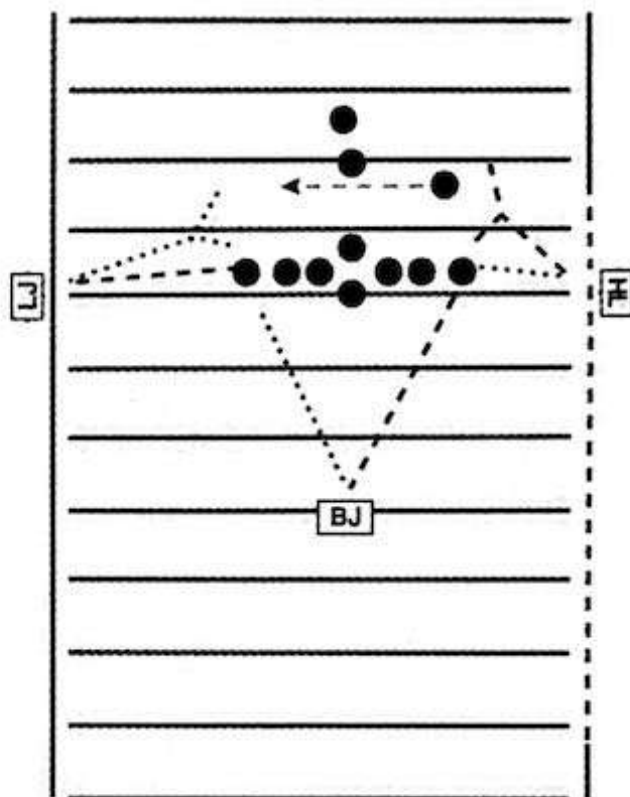
**DOUBLE WING,  
OR ANY FORMATION WITH  
TWO RECEIVERS EACH SIDE**

When the formation is as shown at left showing the double wing or a four receiver set with two on each side, there is no declared strength, so the BACK JUDGE has the widest receiver on the LINE JUDGE'S side. HEAD LINESMAN is responsible for action on or by the two eligible receivers on his/her side. LINE JUDGE would have primary coverage on the inside receiver who is on his/her side and look through the tackle and help if the setback becomes involved in the play.



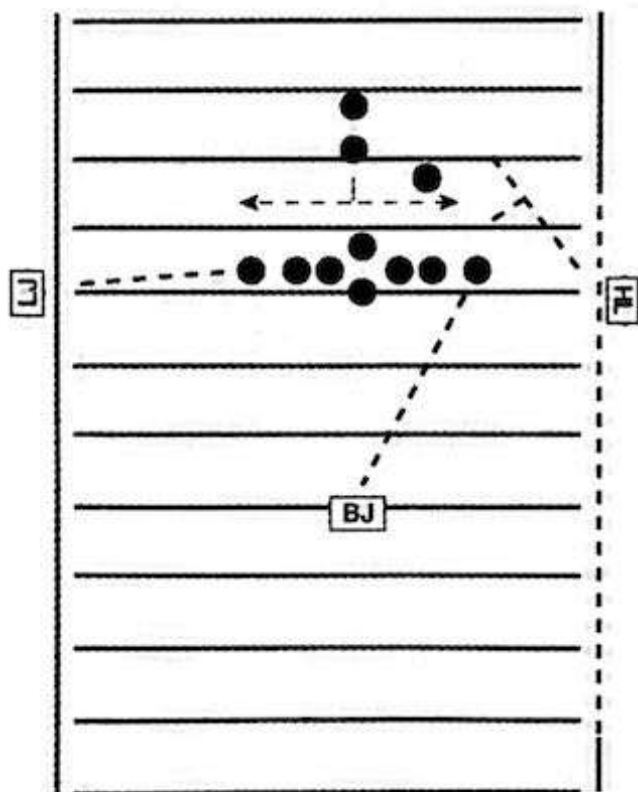
**MOTION WHICH CHANGES STRENGTH (CHANGES KEY)**

When the formation is as at right, when Team A sets, strength is declared to the HEAD LINESMAN'S side, and the BACK JUDGE keys the end on the strong side as normal (— — —). However, when the slotback goes in motion and is clearly on the LINE JUDGE'S side of the ball before the ball is snapped, strength has changed as have the keys (. . .). LINE JUDGE takes the motion back after the snap, HEAD LINESMAN takes the end of his/her side. BACK JUDGE switches keys when the motion back is clearly on the LINE JUDGE'S side of the field at the snap. BACK JUDGE has the end on the LINE JUDGE'S side.



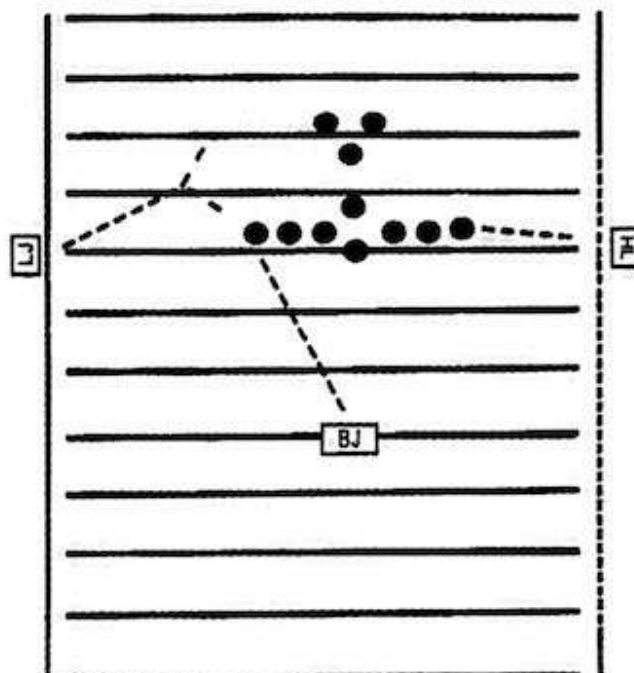
**MOTION WHICH DOES NOT CHANGE STRENGTH (DOES NOT CHANGE KEY)**

When the formation is as at left, when Team A sets, strength is declared to the HEAD LINESMAN'S side, and the BACK JUDGE keys the end on the strong side as normal. When the I-back goes in motion, there is no change in strength of the formation, and strength remains on the declared side. LINE JUDGE takes the end of his/her side. BACK JUDGE has the end on the HEAD LINESMAN'S side. HEAD LINESMAN would have primary coverage on the slotback who is on his/her side and would then have the first back out of the backfield to his/her side.



### BALANCED FORMATION (WISHBONE)

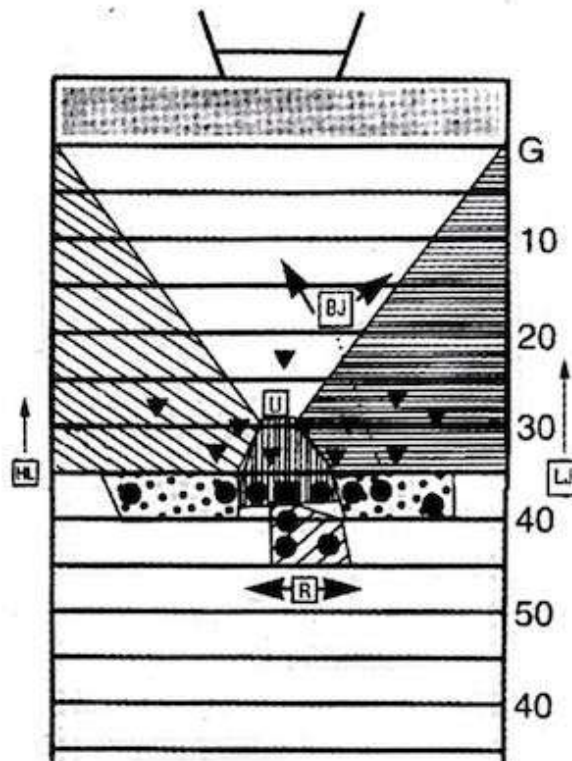
If no strength is declared, declare strength to LINE JUDGE'S side. The BACK JUDGE keys his/her read from the end on the LINE JUDGE'S side. HEAD LINESMAN is responsible for initial action on or by the end on his/her side. LINE JUDGE would then have the first back out of the backfield on his/her side.



- VI. The BACK JUDGE'S assignment is based on the strength of the formation and the number of eligible receivers on one side of the ball; normal assignment is the widest receiver on the strong side.
- VII. When there are trips (triple receivers) on the same side, the BACK JUDGE will work the two outside receivers and the wing official (HEAD LINESMAN OR LINE JUDGE) on that side will work the inside eligible receiver. The wing official on the side where strength is NOT declared has primary key coverage over BOTH of the receivers on his/her side.
- VIII. If there is a motion back, the strength may change by the motion back's location at the snap.



## FIVE-GAME OFFICIAL POSITIONS FOR RUNNING AND FORWARD-PASS PLAYS



### RUNNING PLAY

#### I. REFEREE

##### A. After ball is spotted:

1. Move to a position that is visible to game and play clock operator, approximately 10-15 yards from the line-of-scrimmage and 5 yards wide of the huddle.
  - a. On passing arm side of quarterback.
  - b. Able to view tackle on far side and backs.
2. Declare ball ready-for-play by using established procedure.
3. Check following:
  - a. One-second count after huddle or shift.
  - b. Number of A players and signal to umpire.
  - c. Snap irregularities and movement of linemen.
4. Be alert for illegal shift or player in motion.
5. Identify eligible backs.

##### B. After snap:

##### 1. Areas of responsibility:

- a. Key tackle on opposite side, unless formation dictates otherwise. If he/she blocks aggressively, read run. If he/she pass blocks, read pass.
- b. Ball, runner, action around runner and blocks behind him/her to neutral zone.
- c. If action is not in direction of original position, move toward or parallel to scrimmage line, maintaining position approximately in line with runner's progress.

- d. Delay moving immediately toward line of scrimmage to avoid hindering reverse or delayed play and to assure maximum vision of play.
2. Move behind play toward side of field to which play advances to cover runner if he/she is downed near line.
3. Check following:
  - a. Illegal use of hands by players of A.
  - b. Action behind ball and away from runner near neutral zone.
  - c. Action on quarterback after handoff.
  - d. Backward or forward pass when ball is thrown.
  - e. Out-of-bounds spot behind neutral zone.
4. Continue to observe action behind neutral zone before leaving area.
5. Responsible for runner until he/she crosses neutral zone.
6. When the ball is dead:
  - a. Be positive of ball location before sounding whistle.
  - b. Move quickly toward the spot of forward progress.
  - c. Signal number of next down.
7. Quickly check that down marker is correct and that the rest of the crew is ready, then give ready-for-play signal **if applicable**.
8. If first down has been made or change of team possession has occurred, give time-out signal to stop game clock unless already stopped by rule.

## II. UMPIRE

### A. After ball is spotted:

1. Position:
  - a. Spot and remain over ball, facing referee until ready-for-play signal or released by referee
  - b. Usually **5 to 10** yards behind Team B's line and between A's tackles, keeping snap in view.
  - c. Do not interfere with vision or movement of defensive backs.
  - d. Vary position so players cannot use you as interference.
2. Check following:
  - a. Number of A players and indicate to referee that you have counted the offense.
  - b. Five players numbered 50-79 on offensive line and ineligible receivers.
  - c. Interference with snap, false start or encroachment.
  - d. Disconcerting signals by B.
  - e. Note position of ball between hash marks.
  - f. Note B's players on the line of scrimmage in the free blocking zone.

### B. After snap:

1. Areas of responsibility:
  - a. Key center and guards. If they block aggressively, read run. If they pass block, read pass.
  - b. Read point of attack paying particular attention to free-blocking zone restrictions.

- c. When play is wide to side:
  - (1) Move in that direction observing initial line play and action around runner (especially on short gains or losses in side zones).
  - (2) Remain on inside working out to maintain boxed-in coverage.
- d. When hole opens directly in front of you:
  - (1) React and adjust according to play, possibly move laterally (quick step) from hole being alert for tight end cutting across.
  - (2) Cover action at point of attack and then behind runner.
- 2. Check for illegal use of hands or arms and other fouls near neutral zone.
- 3. Be alert:
  - a. Quick kick or pass.
  - b. Ineligible receivers and point forward pass first strikes anything.
  - c. If fumble occurs beyond neutral zone, assist in determining who secures possession.
  - d. Illegal contact on snapper if offense is in a scrimmage-kick formation.
  - e. Action of players in and just behind neutral zone.
- 4. Do not sound whistle unless covering official is not in position.
- 5. Spot ball for next down.

### III. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE

#### A. After ball is spotted:

- 1. Position: Straddle the line of scrimmage 1 yard beyond the sideline.
- 2. Indicate number of next down on chest. After referee signals next down number, signal number of next down and check down-marker number.
- 3. Use extended-arm signal and hold until snap to indicate closest A player is off line of scrimmage.
- 4. Count B players and indicate to back judge that you have counted the defense.
- 5. Identify eligible receivers on your side.
- 6. Be alert for illegal substitutions.
- 7. Check following:
  - a. Wingbacks, flankers, split ends and slot backs.
  - b. First two players in from your end of offensive line, including backs, as eligible pass receivers.
  - c. Player in motion away from you and maintain responsibility for him/her if he/she reverses direction. Remain in position unless vision is impaired in which case, take one step into offensive backfield.
  - d. Minimum of **five** offensive players on line-of-scrimmage.
  - e. Encroachment or false start.

- B. After snap:
1. Areas of responsibility:
    - a. Observe keys and read tackle to determine run or pass. Stay on line of scrimmage until ball carrier crosses line of scrimmage.
    - b. Be alert for quick plays into line and assist in marking forward progress with downfield foot.
    - c. Watch initial charge of linemen.
    - d. On an end run to opposite side, observe blocking near neutral zone to tackle.
    - e. Check block on eligible receiver.
    - f. When ball comes to your side of field:
      - (1) Cover sideline and check for illegal offensive and defensive blocks.
      - (2) Sound whistle when ball becomes dead and mark forward progress with downfield foot.
      - (3) Square off forward progress by moving down the sideline to the spot the ball became dead and then move perpendicular in towards the center of the field no further than the nine yard marks.
      - (4) Keep all players in front of you unless spot of forward progress is close to a first down or a touchdown in which case come in as far as possible until you reach players on that yard line. Do not go around any players.
      - (5) If ball becomes dead near sideline and first down is gained:
        - (a) Covering official shall use normal coverage.
        - (b) After determining ball is dead, give the time-out signal (S#3) twice.
      - (6) If ball becomes dead in side zone, toss to umpire or back judge for spotting.
    - g. When ball goes to opposite side:
      - (1) Move down sideline until certain there will be no reverse or counter.
      - (2) Observe action on linebackers and backside pursuit.
    - h. On down-the-line option plays toward you, observe pitchman, loose ball, and pitchman as he/she becomes runner.
    - i. Observe late blocks and fouls away from runner.
    - j. Responsible for entire sideline. If ball goes out of bounds:
      - (1) Signal time-out immediately.
      - (2) Hold out-of-bounds spot, monitoring players out-of-bounds, while another game official retrieves ball.
    - k. If obvious first down, signal game clock to stop.
  2. While moving downfield with runner, watch for illegal forward pass or fumble.
  3. If play continues following illegal forward pass, drop penalty marker at spot of pass to indicate where run ended and at spot of any subsequent foul.

- IV. HEAD LINESMAN (Working with line-to-gain indicator and crew):
  - A. Echo referee's signal verbally and with proper hand signal.
  - B. Do not turn back on field of play when having the indicator moved.
  - C. Authorize down indicator operator to be moved only after referee's signal.
  - D. When necessary to move the line-to-gain indicator:
    - 1. Spot foremost point of ball with downfield foot or a bean bag.
    - 2. Have down marker operator mark spot.
    - 3. Have line-to-gain crew set the two indicators.
  - E. When line-to-gain is goal line:
    - 1. Provide bean bag to down marker operator to mark line of scrimmage.
    - 2. Remove line-to-gain indicator from sideline.
- V. BACK JUDGE
  - A. After ball is spotted:
    - 1. Position:
      - a. Approximately 20 yards beyond defensive line of scrimmage and always deeper than deepest defensive back.
      - b. When ball is on hash mark, position no wider than near upright.
      - c. On single- and/or double-spread formation, adjust position to provide best coverage.
    - 2. Areas of responsibility:
      - a. Time play clock count, including providing a visible count of the last five seconds when on-field play clocks are not utilized. (See signal on page 28)
      - b. Count B players and indicate to the wing men that you have counted the defense.
  - B. After snap:
    - 1. Read keys.
    - 2. On runs to either side of field, move so runner is between you and either head linesman or line judge while observing blocks in front of runner.
    - 3. Retreat to be in position behind deepest receiver. Stay far enough away to keep play boxed in.
    - 4. Maintain inside-out coverage, while staying between the hash marks.
    - 5. Cover players who are deeper than head linesman or line judge.
    - 6. When runner breaks free, cover action around him/her.
    - 7. Cover goal line.
    - 8. On out-of-bounds runs, especially in team areas, move into area of dead ball and assist game officials in maintaining order.
    - 9. Assist with relay of ball in side zone from wing official to umpire.
- VI. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
  - A. Areas of responsibility:
    - 1. Keep play properly boxed in.

2. Before sounding whistle:
  - a. See the ball and be certain ball is dead.
  - b. Be certain of location of ball.
  - c. Keep eyes on runner when you are covering.
3. When ball becomes dead in your area, sound whistle promptly, and be alert for dead-ball fouls.
- B. If there is a fumble, covering official should:
  1. Mark yard line of fumble with bean bag if beyond line of scrimmage.
  2. Rule on possession immediately.
  3. If defense recovers, covering official should immediately signal time-out (S #3) twice and then indicate direction the recovering team is going.
  4. If fumbling team recovers, covering official should indicate number of next down with finger(s) or fist if fourth down.
  5. If ball becomes dead before fumble, covering official sound whistle immediately to indicate down has ended.
- C. If ball goes out of bounds:
  1. Covering official:
    - a. Give time-out signal immediately (S #3) twice.
    - b. Mark and hold spot, monitoring players out of bounds.
    - c. Continue to observe action.
  2. Referee or back judge retrieve ball, unless covering official is in best position to do so.
  3. Other game officials:
    - a. Echo time-out signal (S #3) twice.
    - b. Move quickly into position to assist getting ball ready-for-play.
- D. Be alert for substitution infractions.
- E. When line-to-gain has been reached, give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
- F. When ball is blown dead after fourth down, give time-out signal (S #3) twice.

## **FORWARD PASS**

### **I. REFEREE**

- A. After ball is spotted: Same as referee on Running Plays.
- B. After snap:
  1. Read block of offensive tackle on opposite side.
  2. Observe all blocks behind the neutral zone.
  3. As passer retreats, remain wide and deeper than passer.
  4. Give special attention to contact with passer:
    - a. After ball is released, continue to observe passer, not flight of ball.
    - b. Verbally alert defenders when passer has released ball.
  5. Determine whether pass is forward or backward, after quarterback drops back.
  6. Be alert to observe illegal pass:
    - a. Move to spot of pass to determine whether passer's feet were in or behind neutral zone when ball was released.

- b. If illegal, drop penalty marker. Continue to officiate.
- c. If close, mark spot of pass with bean bag and continue to officiate.
7. Solely responsible for intentional grounding, may get assistance from covering official.
8. Continue to observe action behind neutral zone before leaving area.
9. Responsible for runner until he/she crosses neutral zone.

## II. UMPIRE

A. After ball is spotted: Same as umpire on Running Plays.

B. After snap:

1. Be alert for illegal contact on snapper, if offense is in a scrimmage-kick formation.
2. Watch for illegal contact and illegal use of hands.
3. When you read forward pass, step toward neutral zone:
  - a. This removes you as target on shallow drag passes.
  - b. Puts you in position to rule whether ineligible is illegally downfield.
4. Observe action of players in and just behind neutral zone.
5. Assist referee to determine whether passer's feet were in or behind neutral zone when ball was released.
6. Drop penalty marker at spot from which illegal pass is thrown. Continue to officiate.
7. Cover short passes down middle.
8. Know where forward pass first touches anything.
9. Cover fumbled pass in your area, mark spot.

## III. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE

A. After ball is spotted: Same as head linesman and line judge on Running Plays.

B. After snap:

1. Observe keys and read tackle to determine run or pass. Stay on line of scrimmage until ball carrier crosses line of scrimmage or until receiver(s) on your side of the field have gone at least 10-12 yards downfield.
2. Be ready to rule on the direction (forward or backward) of a quick quarterback pass.
3. Move down sideline as required to cover pass on your side of field.
  - a. Watch for interference by either team.
  - b. Be ready to rule on fumble or illegal pass after completion.
4. If pass is incomplete in your area:
  - a. Sound whistle.
  - b. Give incomplete-pass signal (S #10) twice.
  - c. Retrieve ball and relay to game official nearest previous spot.
5. Be ready to adjust coverage if potential passer decides to run.
6. Be alert for sideline action.
7. Be alert for forward progress of runner.
8. Responsible for entire sideline.

**IV. BACK JUDGE**

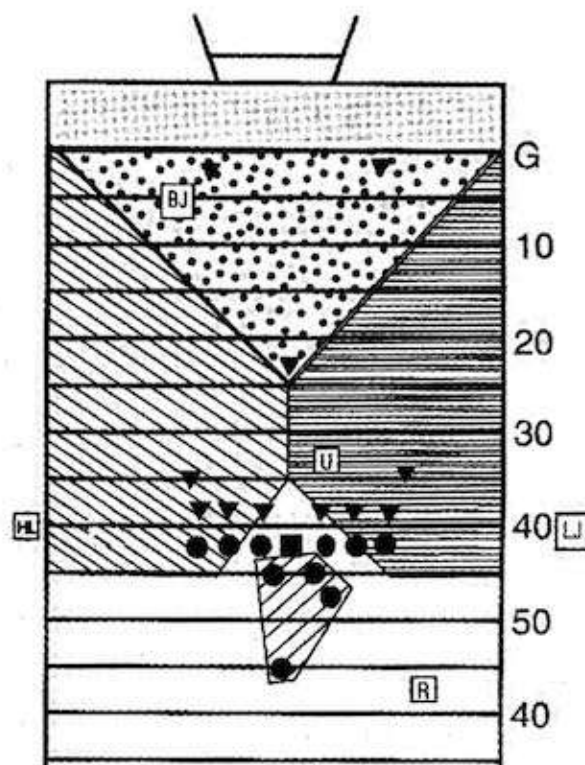
- A. After ball is spotted: Same as back judge on Running Plays.
- B. After snap:
  - 1. Read keys. Retreat in order to be in position behind deepest receivers.
  - 2. Cover deep receivers down middle and to each sideline.
  - 3. When pass is thrown, move quickly to ball:
    - a. Watch for interference by either team.
    - b. Be ready to rule on possible fumble or illegal pass after completion.
  - 4. Be ready to rule on all passes near goal line and end line.
  - 5. If pass is incomplete in your area:
    - a. Sound whistle.
    - b. Give incomplete-pass signal (S #10) twice.
    - c. Retrieve ball and relay to nearby game official.
  - 6. If pass is complete, in your area of responsibility, sound whistle when ball becomes dead:
    - a. Move toward the spot of forward progress.
    - b. When line-to-gain has been reached, give time-out signal (S #3) twice.

**V. COVERING OFFICIALS**

- A. Be alert for illegal passes.
- B. Observe touching or catching by ineligible player.
- C. Watch for holding of eligible receivers and all contact beyond neutral zone both before and after pass is thrown.
- D. If ruling on pass reception involving sideline, only approved signals (S #3 or S #10) should be used.
- E. If pass intercepted inside defensive team's 5-yard line and player making interception is downed in end zone or ball goes out of bounds there:
  - 1. Mark spot of interception with bean bag.
  - 2. Be prepared to rule whether his/her momentum took him/her into end zone.



## FIVE-GAME OFFICIAL POSITIONS FOR SCRIMMAGE KICK



## SCRIMMAGE KICK

### I. REFEREE

- A. After ball is spotted:
  1. Check down and distance with head linesman.
  2. Declare ball ready-for-play by using established procedure.
  3. Position: 3-5 yards outside the tight end and 2-3 yards behind the kicker, on kicking-leg side.
  4. Be able to see ball and observe all backs.
  5. Count K players and indicate to umpire that you have counted the kicking team.
  6. Signal to crew that K is in scrimmage-kick formation.
- B. After snap:
  1. Watch for fouls behind neutral zone especially near kicker.
  2. Be alert for blocked kick and be ready to rule on recovery.
  3. After ball crosses neutral zone, observe line play.
  4. Move downfield slowly following kick.
  5. Watch for fouls and be ready to pick up runner if there is long return.
  6. Determine from covering official if ball was touched beyond neutral zone and by whom.
  7. Kick out of bounds in flight – line up covering official at the spot where the ball crossed the sideline by using an outstretched arm.
  8. If no foul, signal head linesman to move line-to-gain equipment.
  9. Confirm line-to-gain indicator is set before giving ready-for-play signal.

**II. UMPIRE****A. After ball is spotted:**

1. Position: 5-10 yards deep keeping snap in view.
2. Count K players and indicate to referee that you have counted the kicking team.
3. Check numbering exception.
4. Key offensive guards and center.

**B. After snap:**

1. Step toward neutral zone and be alert for roughing the snapper, then shift to action of offensive guards and backs behind neutral zone.
2. Read play. Be alert for run or pass.
3. Be alert to assist referee in covering a short or blocked kick and assist the head linesman in determining if the ball crosses neutral zone.
4. Following kick, pivot to view line-judge side of field to observe blocks in side zone and move toward return area observing players away from ball.
5. Be alert for fouls in secondary and move downfield slowly.
6. When ball goes out-of-bounds, move to help relay ball to inbounds spot.

**III. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE****A. After ball is spotted:**

1. Position: Same as for run or pass.
2. Check down number, count R players and indicate to back judge that you have counted the receiving team.

**B. After snap:**

1. Head Linesman: Hold momentarily after snap. Know if ball crossed neutral zone, then move slowly downfield covering your side between neutral zone and deep receiver(s).
2. Line judge: Release on snap, move downfield covering your side between neutral zone and deep receiver(s).
3. Cover all kicks to your side.
4. Ball out-of-bounds in flight:
  - a. Sound whistle and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - b. Move farther downfield than where it went out.
  - c. Walk upfield until referee spots you on sideline.
5. Ball rolls out of bounds:
  - a. Sound whistle and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - b. Hold spot and continue to observe action.
  - c. Drop bean bag at spot if ball must be retrieved.
6. Assist referee in covering ball on short or blocked kick:
  - a. Note if kick is touched beyond neutral zone.
  - b. Note if recovered in or behind neutral zone.
  - c. Be prepared to mark first touching, fumble or end of kick with bean bag.

7. Routine kick:
  - a. Unless kick comes close to your side delay move to sideline, cover clipping and other fouls in secondary.
  - b. Move with runner if he/she comes to your side.
  - c. Follow to goal line if run is broken.
  - d. When ball becomes dead:
    - (1) Sound whistle, give time-out signal and mark spot.
    - (2) Make sure of possession on fair catch.
8. Line judge: Observe action of signaler when no fair catch is made.
9. If there is a foul, have free game official cover ball while game official who had foul reports information to referee.
10. Head linesman: Watch referee for signal to move line-to-gain equipment.

#### IV. BACK JUDGE

##### A. After ball is spotted:

1. Position: 10-12 yards wider than and 2-3 yards behind the deepest receiver on head linesman's side of field.
2. Count R players and indicate to wing officials that you have counted the receiving team.

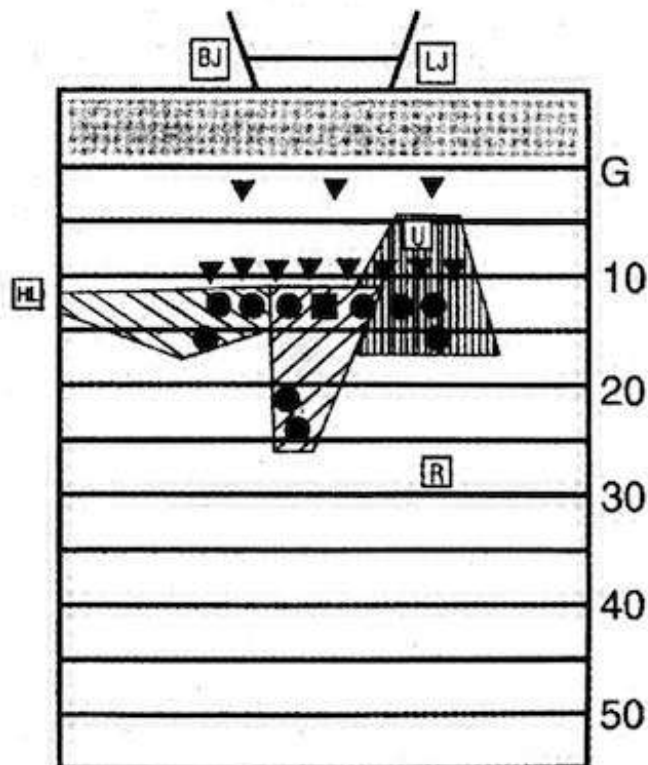
##### B. After snap:

1. Carry contrasting bean bags in hand during down to mark first touching, fumble, momentum or end of kick.
2. When kick is short to either sideline:
  - a. Head linesman or line judge will assume responsibility for ball.
  - b. Observe action of players around ball.
3. Cover long or deep kick out of bounds on head linesman's side.
  - a. When kicked ball goes out in flight, sound whistle.
  - b. Give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - c. Have referee spot you on sideline and hold spot until ball is spotted.
4. Cover all kicks down middle and be ready to rule on whether kick is touched by either team:
  - a. If ball is muffed, be prepared to rule on possession.
  - b. Be alert for hand-off and reverse.
  - c. When K is first to touch scrimmage kick which is moving:
    - (1) Mark spot of first touching with bean bag.
    - (2) Continue to cover play.
  - d. If K is first to touch kick that is motionless beyond neutral zone, sound whistle, give time-out signal (S #3) twice and mark spot.
5. Following fair catch:
  - a. Sound whistle, give time-out signal (S #3) twice and mark spot.
  - b. Be sure referee knows it was a fair catch.
6. Where fair catch is not made:
  - a. Stay with ball.
  - b. Let line judge observe action by signaler.

7. Move with runner who catches kick and advances.
  - a. Other game officials will ordinarily pick up runner near line of scrimmage.
  - b. When this is done, delay and observe action behind ball.
  - c. When one of the other game officials is screened out and not able to pick up runner, move with him/her and sound whistle when ball becomes dead.
8. When kick becomes dead:
  - a. Sound whistle immediately and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - b. Be prepared to rule on touchback and give appropriate signal (S #7) twice.
  - c. Inform referee of ball status before placing it for next play.
9. If kick is caught inside 5-yard line and player is downed in his/her end zone or ball goes out-of-bounds there, be prepared to rule on whether his/her momentum took him/her into end zone.
10. Mark spot of catch inside 5-yard line with bean bag.

**FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE**

**FIVE-GAME OFFICIAL POSITIONS FOR FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY**



**I. REFEREE**

**A. After ball is spotted:**

1. Position: 2-3 yards to rear and 3-5 yards to side of potential kicker, facing holder and able to see holder receive ball.
2. Count K players and indicate to umpire that you have counted the kicking team.
3. Signal to crew that K is in a scrimmage-kick formation.
4. Observe kicker, holder and opposite side tackle.

- B. After snap:
  - 1. Watch for fumble or muff by holder.
  - 2. Cover as usual if run or pass.
  - 3. Assist in sideline coverage if run or pass develops to referee's side.
  - 4. Signal score (S #5) or no score (S #10) twice after receiving signal from game officials ruling on kick.
  - 5. Rule on roughing kicker or holder.
  - 6. If try is blocked, immediately sound whistle and give the no-score signal (S #10) twice.
  - 7. If field goal is blocked, ball remains live.

## II. UMPIRE

- A. After ball is spotted:
  - 1. Position: 5-10 yards deep keeping snap in view.
  - 2. Count K players and indicate to referee that you have counted the kicking team.
  - 3. Check for use of numbering exception.
- B. After snap:
  - 1. Step toward neutral zone reading interior linemen.
  - 2. Check action on snapper.
  - 3. Be alert for determining if kick crosses neutral zone.
  - 4. Be ready to assist referee in covering short or blocked kick.
  - 5. Be alert for action on or by outside offensive linemen and up blocking back on referee's side.
  - 6. Shift observation to contact between defensive players and blockers behind line.
  - 7. After players go past your position, pivot to view referee's side of field and observe blocks in side zone and move toward play to observe action.
  - 8. Assist in goal-line coverage if run develops to referee's side.

## III. HEAD LINESMAN OR LINE JUDGE (whoever is looking at the back of the holder)

- A. After ball is spotted:
  - 1. Position: on line of scrimmage on sideline.
  - 2. Check down number, count R players and indicate to back judge that you have counted the receiving team.
  - 3. Observe neutral zone.
- B. After the snap:
  - 1. If pass or run, move with play as on any other goal-line play.
  - 2. Quickly move to goal line if run develops to referee's side.

## IV. BACK JUDGE AND HEAD LINESMAN OR LINE JUDGE (whoever is looking at the front of the holder)

- A. After ball is spotted:
  - 1. Positions: Beyond end zone and behind your upright where you feel most comfortable and have best coverage of upright.
  - 2. Count R players.
  - 3. Back judge time play clock.

- B. After snap:
  - 1. Assume responsibility for end line and for determining if kick goes over or under crossbar and inside upright:
    - a. Back judge rules on crossbar and upright.
    - b. Head linesman or line judge rules on upright.
  - 2. Sound whistle when successful kick passes upright or when it is apparently unsuccessful after breaking goal-line plane.
  - 3. Both game officials, at the same time, move one yard into the end zone in front of their upright and signal score (S #5) or no score (S #10) twice while facing the line of scrimmage.
  - 4. Be prepared to move if kick is blocked, obviously short, or a fake:
    - a. Key tight end on your side.
    - b. Head linesman or line judge: If run or pass develops to your vacated side, quickly move along end line to back pylon to rule on sideline.
    - c. Next move is toward goal line to assist.
    - d. Mark first touching, fumble, momentum or end of kick.
- V. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
  - A. Take positions for field-goal or try attempt if the kicking tee is brought onto field.
  - B. Be alert for runback of an unsuccessful field-goal attempt which is caught or recovered in field of play.

## GOAL-LINE PLAY

- I. REFEREE
  - A. Position and cover same as scrimmage play.
  - B. Do not give touchdown signal from behind runner.
  - C. After checking with crew, if no foul occurred, give touchdown signal (S #5), while facing the press box to verify score.
- II. UMPIRE
  - A. Position near goal line and cover same as scrimmage play.
  - B. Do not give touchdown signal.
  - C. When runner has made quick thrust into line, be sure ball is not moved forward after it is declared dead. Assist wing official if he or she needs help.
- III. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE
  - A. Position as scrimmage play.
  - B. On snap between 10- and 5-yard line, release slowly downfield and stay ahead of runner to goal line.
  - C. On snap inside 5-yard line, release to goal line and officiate back to ball.
  - D. Note farthest point to which ball is advanced.
    - 1. If short of goal line, move in quickly and help by marking point with downfield foot or by actually placing ball.
    - 2. If you see ball in possession of runner touch or cross goal-line plane, instantly give touchdown signal.
    - 3. If ball does not break goal-line plane, do not give any signal.

- E. Head linesman:
  1. Remove line-to-gain indicator from sideline when line-to-gain is goal line.
  2. Provide down-marker operator with bean bag for goal-to-go situations when the line-to-gain equipment has been removed.
- IV. BACK JUDGE
  - A. Position:
    1. Start on end line if snap is from 20-yard line or inside.
    2. Assume complete responsibility of end-line coverage.
  - B. Time play clock.
- V. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
  - A. Only game officials who actually see touchdown should give touchdown signal (S #5).
  - B. Game officials not observing touchdown do not mirror signal.

### **AFTER A SAFETY, TRY OR FIELD GOAL**

- I. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
  - A. Same as kickoff.
  - B. Be alert for substitutions and any irregularities as to number of players.
  - C. Reminder—on free kick following safety:
    1. Each game official assumes same relative position and has same duties as on kickoff.
    2. Ball may be put in play by drop kick, place kick or punt.
  - D. Back judge begin timing one minute interval after referee signals score or no score (S#5, S#6 or S#10).
  - E. Game officials hustle up sidelines to free-kick position and then fill out game cards.
  - F. Be ready and in position to mark ball ready-for-play within the one minute interval.

### **ADMINISTERING PENALTIES**

- I. REFEREE
  - A. When ball is dead following a foul:
    1. Give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
    2. Get full information from game official who called foul.
    3. Give preliminary signal to press-box side of field only.
    4. Give options to designated representative of offended team.
    5. When designated representative's most advantageous choice is obvious, quickly inform him/her.
    6. When designated representative does not respond, his/her silence shall be considered acceptance of obvious choice. Once made, it cannot be revoked.
    7. Make note of enforcement spot for penalty.
    8. After ball has been spotted, give final signal for foul to press-box side of field only.

- B. When penalty is declined:
    - 1. Go to spot visible from press box.
    - 2. Give foul signal followed by penalty-declined signal (S #10) twice to press box.
  - C. When there is a double foul:
    - 1. Signal each foul, facing press box.
    - 2. Follow this with penalty-declined signal (S #10) twice.
  - D. When two penalties are enforced, give proper signals following each enforcement.
  - E. When penalty is to be enforced on kickoff:
    - 1. Indicate proper foul signal.
    - 2. Point to offending team.
    - 3. Indicate scoring signal (S #5).
    - 4. Point toward succeeding spot.
  - F. Accepted penalty for foul by either team during the last timed down of a period, play continues with an untimed down (S #1) except for fouls listed in Rule 3-3-4.
  - G. When dead-ball fouls occur after fourth down:
    - 1. Signal any live-ball fouls.
    - 2. Signal first down.
    - 3. Signal dead ball.
    - 4. Signal the dead-ball foul(s).
- II. UMPIRE
- A. Secure ball.
  - B. Make note of enforcement spot for penalty.
  - C. Proceed with measurement.
  - D. On properly marked field, avoid stepping off distance between yard lines, except to the first and for the final yard line.
  - E. Walk briskly, use an arm signal to point to each yard line you cross.
- III. HEAD LINESMAN
- A. Be certain of down number.
  - B. Proceed to succeeding spot.
  - C. Be ready to have line-to-gain equipment moved after penalty administration.
- IV. LINE JUDGE
- A. Hold enforcement spot.
- V. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE
- A. Check enforcement.
  - B. Do not permit athletic trainers, attendants, or coaches to come onto field.
  - C. Relay penalty information to appropriate coach and to other game officials if necessary.
- VI. BACK JUDGE
- A. Help obtain ball.
  - B. Assist in holding spot of foul or recovering penalty marker.
  - C. Assist in relaying foul information to appropriate sideline.
  - D. Give final signal for foul to be enforced on kickoff to press-box side of field.



## VII. ALL GAME OFFICIALS

- A. Observe live-ball foul:
  - 1. Withhold whistle.
  - 2. Drop penalty marker at proper yard line and continue to observe play, noting location of ball at time of foul.
  - 3. When ball becomes dead:
    - a. Give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
    - b. Sound whistle.
    - c. Verbally report information to referee.
    - d. Give no visible signal.
    - e. Make mental note as to whether game clock should be started on ready or on snap.
- B. Observe dead-ball foul:
  - 1. Sound whistle, toss penalty marker into air and give time-out signal (S #3) twice immediately.
  - 2. Follow procedures outlined under A.
- C. See that umpire assesses penalty properly in all respects.
- D. Calling game official (umpire, head linesman, line judge, back judge):
  - 1. After calling foul and ball has been declared dead:
    - a. Sound whistle and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
    - b. Get referee's attention by giving short blasts of whistle.
    - c. Make sure another game official is covering spot of foul.
    - d. Verbally report all information fully to referee:
      - (1) Identify foul.
      - (2) Identify offending team including jersey color and offense/defense or kicking/receiving team.
      - (3) Identify offending player's number or position.
      - (4) Indicate spot of foul, end of run or end of kick.
      - (5) Indicate status of ball when foul occurred.
- E. Assist with locating designated representative.
- F. Recover penalty markers and ball.
- G. Enforcement:
  - 1. Stay clear of spot of foul.
  - 2. If spot is different, go to enforcement spot.
  - 3. When umpire begins enforcement, check for correctness and distance.
  - 4. Avoid visiting while penalty is assessed.
- H. When a disqualifying foul is called:
  - 1. Game official who called foul shall inform offending player and report his/her number and type of infraction to referee, coach and other members of officiating crew.
  - 2. Emphasize disqualification is for remainder of game.
  - 3. **If** there are double disqualifying fouls, referee may designate another game official to assist in reporting foul to coaches.
  - 4. The game official shall not place a hand on offending player, nor accompany or escort him/her to sideline.

5. All game officials:
  - a. Record player's number and name if known.
  - b. Observe all other players.
6. Notify state association office, if applicable.
- I. Record unsportsmanlike penalties.

### MEASURING FOR FIRST DOWN USING TRADITIONAL LINE-TO-GAIN INDICATORS

#### I. REFEREE

- A. Give time-out signal (S #3) twice – follow by tapping hands on chest.
- B. Signal head linesman to bring the line-to-gain indicator onto field.
- C. Motion players away from ball.
- D. Rotate ball so the long axis is parallel to sideline.
- E. In side zone, measure before ball is taken inbounds.
- F. If line-to-gain not reached in side zone, use the line-to-gain indicator to accurately place ball at hash marks.
- G. If ball has gone out of bounds, measure to point where ball crossed sideline.
- H. Inside edge of forward indicator marks line-to-gain.
- I. When measurement is completed:
  1. Signal number of next down.
  2. Spot ball at proper place.
  3. Wait for line-to-gain crew to return to position.
- J. If new series awarded to opponent of team which was in possession when ball became dead:
  1. Place ball so that foremost point, when it became dead, becomes rear point when the direction is changed.
  2. New rear indicator set with inside edge at new point of ball so that line-to-gain is 10 yards in advance of this point.
- K. After measurement:
  1. Declare ball ready-for-play (S #1) if ball was out of bounds.
  2. If not out-of-bounds, signal game clock to start with ready-for-play (S #1) and then start game clock (S #2) twice.
  3. If first down for Team B (S #8), game clock will start on snap.

#### II. UMPIRE

- A. Take the forward indicator from crew members at place of measurement.
- B. When head linesman says "ready," tighten the line-to-gain indicator and hold forward indicator near ball until referee reaches decision.

#### III. HEAD LINESMAN

- A. When a measurement is signaled by referee:
  1. Grasp the line-to-gain indicator and clip at back edge of back-yard line (don't just grasp clip since clip could detach).
  2. Instruct down-marker operator to mark front indicator spot and keep same down number.
  3. Bring the line-to-gain indicator behind ball and place clipped part of indicator at back edge of back-yard line.
  4. Hold firmly and call "ready" to umpire to stretch the indicator tight.

5. Wait for referee's decision and signal.
  6. If not first down:
    - a. While holding the indicator, accompany crew to sideline, reset in original position, 2 yards from sideline.
    - b. Have down-marker operator move down-marker indicator to next down.
  7. If new series, set inside edge of rear indicator at foremost point of ball after spotted by referee. First down on down-marker indicator.
- B. Mark foremost point of ball for down-marker operator on all first downs.
- IV. LINE JUDGE
- A. Position: Place foot just behind yard line where clip is to be placed to align head linesman so that the chains are parallel to the sidelines.
- V. BACK JUDGE
- A. Do not permit team attendants to enter field.
  - B. Help clear players from measurement area.
  - C. Observe all players.
  - D. Tend ball at time of measurement.

### **TIME-OUT PROCEDURE**

- I. REFEREE
- A. Sound whistle.
    1. Signal "time-out" (S #3) two times.
    2. If time-out is charged to a team, indicate by moving both arms two times in a horizontal motion toward that team.
    3. If official's time-out, indicate by tapping chest with both hands.
  - B. Duties:
    1. Check number of time-outs remaining for each team.
    2. Check time remaining with back judge.
    3. Check down with head linesman.
    4. Notify coach and captain after a third time-out has been charged.
    5. Take position away from other game officials. Observe Team B.
    6. Inform each team huddle of down and time remaining in period.
    7. Declare ball ready-for-play (S #1).
- II. UMPIRE
- A. Maintain position over ball.
  - B. Observe Team A until referee is ready to start play.
- III. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE
- A. Move to position halfway between ball and your sideline and observe team on your sideline.
  - B. Be alert for whistle from back judge to give your team 15-second warning; go to team huddle and say: "Coach, ball will be marked ready-for-play in 15 seconds."
  - C. Be alert for substitutes by your sideline or attempts to use substitutes for purpose of deception, and maintain proper number of players/attendants in huddle when conferences are held between the 9-yard marks.
  - D. Inform captain and coach of time-outs remaining.

## IV. BACK JUDGE

- A. Time 60-second interval; sound whistle twice at 45 seconds and again when 60-second interval expires.

## V. ALL GAME OFFICIALS

- A. Repeat time-out signal (S #3) twice.
- B. Record time-out, number of player who called it, time on game clock and period.
- C. Stand alertly erect.
- D. Do not visit with players.
- E. Restrict discussion to captain.
- F. Do not huddle in a group.
- G. Confirm number of remaining time-outs.

**INJURY TIME-OUT PROCEDURE**

(Additional responsibilities beyond regular time-out.)

## I. REFEREE

- A. Summon appropriate health-care professional(s) and/or coach(es) on field.
- B. Duties:
  - 1. Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.
  - 2. Be ready to assist appropriate health-care professional(s) and/or coach(es) in securing additional medical help, if needed.
  - 3. Attempt to keep players a significant distance away from the seriously injured player(s). Direct players and coaches toward respective team bench area.
  - 4. Once the appropriate health-care professional(s) begins to work on an injured player, all members of the officiating crew should control the total playing field environment and team personnel and allow the appropriate health-care professional(s) to perform services without interruption or interference. Always ensure adequate lines of vision between the appropriate health-care professional(s) and all available emergency personnel.
  - 5. Players and coaches should be appropriately controlled to avoid dictating medical services to the appropriate health-care professional(s) on the time taken to perform such services.
  - 6. Confirm correct play clock time and declare the ball ready for play.

## II. UMPIRE

- A. Make sure summoned appropriate health-care professional(s) and/or coach(es) are not on the field for coaching purposes.

**END-OF-PERIOD PROCEDURE****I. REFEREE**

- A. If visible game clock is not used:
  - 1. Take official's time-out (S #3) twice – follow by tapping hands on chest with approximately four minutes remaining in second and fourth period.
  - 2. Inform both captains of time remaining and see that both coaches are notified.
  - 3. When time expires and ball becomes dead, sound whistle and repeat time-out signal (S #3) twice.
- B. If visible game clock is used:
  - 1. When facing game clock, be responsible for knowing when time expires.
  - 2. If time expires prior to snap:
    - a. Sound your whistle to prevent snap, if possible.
    - b. If ball is snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long, and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
- C. Following delay to insure no foul, no obvious timing error, no request for coach-referee conference, and no other irregularity has occurred, hold ball in one hand over head to signal official end of period.
- D. If play is in progress and time expires for the period, the horn should not be sounded.

**II. BACK JUDGE**

- A. If visible game clock is not used:
  - 1. Notify referee approximately four minutes before the end of the second and fourth periods.
  - 2. Approximately 30 seconds before time for period expires, notify referee that time may expire during the next down.
  - 3. When time expires and ball becomes dead, signal referee by raising arm above head, sound whistle and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
- B. If visible game clock is used:
  - 1. When facing game clock, be responsible for knowing when time expires.
  - 2. If time expires prior to snap:
    - a. Sound your whistle to prevent snap, if possible.
    - b. If ball is snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long, and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.

**BETWEEN-PERIODS PROCEDURE****I. REFEREE**

- A. Record down, distance, and yard line nearest foremost point of ball while meeting with umpire and head linesman in center of field.
- B. Measure distance from the nearest yard line to foremost point of ball, and estimate distance from hash mark.
- C. In spotting ball, check again with head linesman and umpire.
- D. When notified by back judge that 45 seconds have expired, signal head

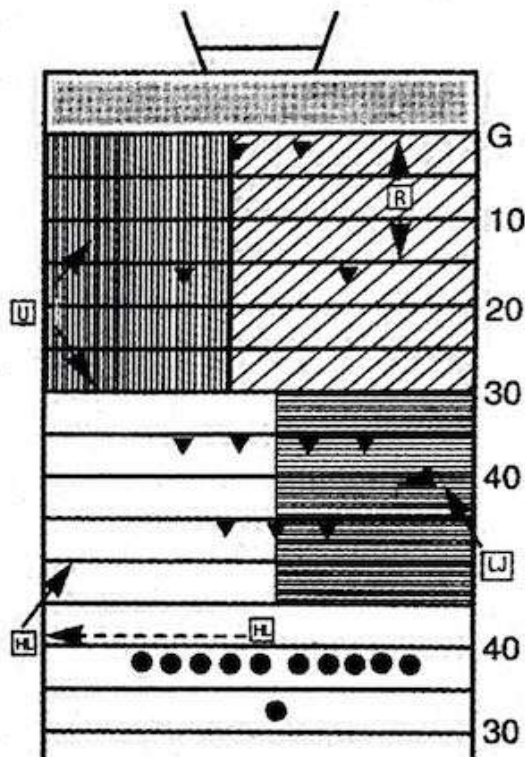
- linesman and line judge to give their teams 15-second warning.
- E. When notified by back judge that 60 seconds have expired, from near the ball announce down and distance.
  - F. Declare ball ready-for-play (S #1).
- II. UMPIRE
- A. Record down, distance and yard line nearest foremost point of ball.
  - B. Assist referee.
  - C. Quickly take ball to a corresponding point on the other half of field and reverse directions.
- III. HEAD LINESMAN
- A. Record down, distance, yard line nearest foremost point of ball.
  - B. Confirm information with referee.
  - C. Clip the indicator at back edge of back-yard line.
  - D. Call down and distance to assistants.
  - E. Reverse ends of the line-to-gain indicator and two crew members.
  - F. Set down marker indicator after referee has spotted ball.
  - G. Check number of down and distance to gain.
  - H. Indicate to referee you are ready by signaling number of down with finger(s) or fist for fourth down.
- IV. LINE JUDGE AND BACK JUDGE
- A. Line judge observe team on your sideline and back judge observe team on head linesman's sideline until head linesman becomes available.
  - B. Assume responsibilities as for time-out.
  - C. Check team box and huddle areas for appropriate conference procedure as during charged time-out.
  - D. Line judge give your team 15-second warning when directed by referee.
  - E. Back judge time 60-second interval; notify referee at 45 seconds and again when 60-second interval expires.
- V. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
- A. Limit of three team attendants are permitted on field.
  - B. Either legal type coach-player conferences may be held.

**BETWEEN-HALVES PROCEDURE**

- I. REFEREE
- A. Signal time to start game clock to time intermission.
  - B. Responsible for seeing that three minutes is placed on the game clock for the mandatory warm-up period prior to start of second half after the intermission time has elapsed.
  - C. Discuss situations in dressing room or other private place.
  - D. Determine which team has choice for second half.
- II. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
- A. Assist referee with halftime intermission responsibilities.
  - B. Leave field together.
  - C. Assemble in dressing room or other private place.
  - D. Discuss the overtime procedure, if applicable.
  - E. Return to field at least five minutes before the second half is to begin.
  - F. Start second half on time.

# Four-Game Officials

## FOUR-GAME OFFICIAL POSITIONS FOR KICKOFF



## KICKOFF

### I. REFEREE

#### A. Before kick:

1. Position: Near R's 5- or 10-yard line inside sideline opposite head linesman.
2. Count R players.
3. Check positions of other game officials.
4. After ready signs have been received from other game officials, declare the ball ready for play and sound whistle and verify that at least four K players must be on each side of the kicker until the ball is kicked.
5. If short free kick is anticipated:
  - a. Take position near R's 10-yard line near the 9-yard marks.
  - b. Be alert to assist other game officials.

#### B. After kick:

1. Kick down the middle:
  - a. Signal game clock to start (S #2) when kick is legally touched other than first touching by K.
  - b. Pick up runner and follow until releasing to covering official.
2. Deep kick:
  - a. Retreat to goal line to rule on touchback.

- b. If kick is caught inside 5-yard line and player is downed in end zone, or ball goes out of bounds there, mark spot of catch with bean bag and rule on whether player's momentum took him/her into end zone.
  3. Kick outside opposite hash mark:
    - a. Move cautiously with play.
    - b. Observe action of other players in vicinity of runner.
    - c. Serve as clean-up behind, to side of, and around runner.
  4. Kick out of bounds—determine if R had touched or last touched ball inbounds.

## II. UMPIRE

### A. Before kick:

1. Position: R's 20-yard line outside sideline opposite line judge.
2. Monitor bench area, then move to sideline opposite line judge.
3. Be certain coaches, players, substitutes and other individuals are in proper location.
4. Count R players.
5. Hold arm above head to indicate you are ready.
6. If short free kick is anticipated:
  - a. Position near R's 50-yard line.
  - b. Be alert for first touching by K or kick which does not cross R's free-kick line. Hold bean bag to mark first touching by K.
  - c. Observe legality of blocks and action away from the ball.

### B. After kick:

1. Kick to your side:
  - a. Signal game clock to start when kick is touched, other than first touching by K only if ball is even or up field from you.
  - b. Pick up runner and follow.
  - c. When ball becomes dead, sound whistle and give time-out signal (S #3).
2. Be alert for first touching by K and mark spot with bean bag.
3. Mark spot where kick goes out of bounds on your side of field:
  - a. Drop penalty marker if untouched inbounds by R.
4. Maintain position enabling coverage of your sideline at all times.
5. Observe legality of blocks and action away from the ball when you are not covering the runner.
6. Kick to opposite side of field:
  - a. Move cautiously along sideline toward play.
  - b. Observe action of other players in vicinity of runner.

## III. HEAD LINESMAN

### A. Before kick:

1. Take charge of ball.
2. Position: K's free-kick line outside sideline to monitor bench area and assist kicking team in getting into position.
3. Move on field to kicker and after checking legality of kicking tee, hand kicker ball, point out referee and instruct kicker to wait for



referee's signal before kicking. If the kicker is not ready place the ball on the ground and then proceed to the sideline.

4. Count K players.
  5. Move to position just outside the sideline on K's free-kick line on the line-to-gain indicator side.
  6. Be certain coaches, players, substitutes and other individuals are in proper locations and no K players, with the exception of the kicker, may be more than 5 yards behind the kicking team's free-kick line.
  7. Hold arm above head to indicate you are ready.
  8. Watch for any infractions involving K's free-kick line.
  9. If there is a dead-ball foul, administer penalty and place ball ready.
- B. After kick:
1. Be alert for first touching by K—mark spot with bean bag.
  2. Be alert for kick which does not cross R's free-kick line.
  3. If there is a penalty for a foul before kick ends requiring rekick, administer penalty and place ball ready.
  4. Mark out-of-bounds spot if kick goes out of bounds in your area:
    - a. Bean bag spot if touched inbounds by R.
    - b. Drop penalty marker if untouched inbounds by R.
  5. Observe the legality of blocks by players and action against kicker and holder. Cover to opposite 45-yard line.
  6. After ball has gone downfield, move to the center of the field. Move downfield no more than 10-15 yards while maintaining inside-out coverage. Take responsibility for K's goal line.
  7. Maintain position enabling coverage of sideline at all times.
  8. Be in position to take over coverage of runner in your area on long return.

#### IV. LINE JUDGE

##### A. Before kick:

1. Be certain coaches, players, substitutes and other individuals are in proper locations.
2. Position: R's free-kick line outside sideline opposite head linesman.
3. Temporarily move to nine-yard marks (top of the numbers), then count K players and identify the free-kick line for the receiving team.
4. Hold arm above head to indicate you are ready.
5. Watch for any infractions involving R's free-kick line.
6. If short free kick is anticipated:
  - a. Position on R's free-kick line.
  - b. Be alert for first touching by K or kick which does not cross R's free-kick line. Hold bean bag to mark spot of first touching by K.
  - c. Observe legality of blocks and action away from the ball.

##### B. After kick:

1. Be alert for first touching by K.
2. Mark spot of first touching with bean bag.
3. Watch initial blocks in your area.

4. If ball becomes dead in your area, including prior to crossing R's free-kick line, sound whistle and give time-out signal.
5. Mark spot where kick goes out of bounds in your area:
  - a. Drop penalty marker if untouched inbounds by R.
6. After ball has gone downfield, move deliberately in that direction along sideline while watching for fouls away from ball. Cover approximately 15 yards downfield.

#### V. ALL GAME OFFICIALS

- A. Covering official(s) signal game clock to start when kick is legally touched, other than first touching by K.
- B. Kick out of bounds between goal lines:
  1. Sound whistle.
  2. Give time-out signal (S #3) twice and mark spot.
  3. Determine if R had touched ball inbounds.
  4. Toss penalty marker if R did not touch the ball.
- C. Maintain position to cover sideline at all times.
- D. Sound whistle when ball becomes dead in your area and give time-out signal.
- E. Carry bean bag in hand.
- F. Free kick following safety:
  1. Each game official assumes same relative position and has same duties as on kickoff.
  2. Ball put in play by drop kick, place kick or punt.

### **FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT BY FREE KICK AFTER A FAIR CATCH OR AWARDED FAIR CATCH**

- I. REFEREE
  - A. Position: Behind and directly between uprights.
  - B. Determine whether kick is successful.
- II. All other game officials' mechanics same as kickoff.
- III. Set the line-to-gain indicator to establish 10-yard neutral zone.

### **KEYS AND PRIORITY OF KEYS**

These keys are intended to help determine coverage at the initial snap only. A game official must be prepared to react to the play as it develops. These do not necessarily determine coverage for the entire play, as constant adjustments are necessary.

- I. In determining keys, several definitions are needed for clarification purposes:
  - A. **STRENGTH OF THE FORMATION** - determined by the number of eligible receivers on a particular side of the offensive formation. It has nothing to do with the number of linemen on each side of the center, but rather the number of eligible receivers outside the tackles. If there is no strong side, strength is declared to the LINE JUDGE'S side.
  - B. **TIGHT END** - The end man on the line of scrimmage lined up no more than four yards from the nearest offensive lineman.

- C. BACK IN BACKFIELD - A player in the backfield between the tackles at the snap.
- D. TRIPS (Three or more receivers outside the offensive tackles.)
- II. In four-person coverage, the keys are fairly straightforward. Each wing official is responsible for action by the players entering his/her zone. The key for each of these game officials would be the action of the first player into that zone.

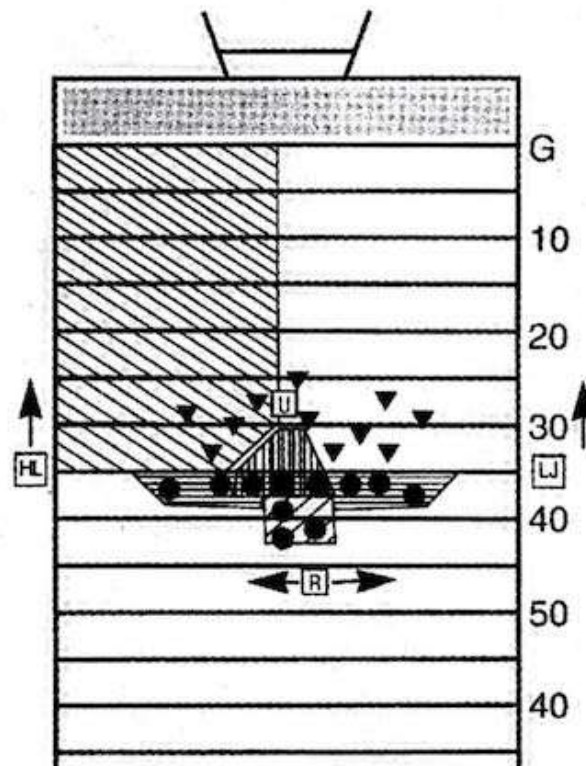
### RUNNING PLAY

#### I. REFEREE

##### A. After ball is spotted:

1. Declare ball ready-for-play by using established procedure.

### FOUR-GAME OFFICIAL POSITIONS FOR RUNNING AND FORWARD-PASS PLAYS



2. Position: Behind Team A. (Distance back or to side varies with A's formation, usually 3 to 4 yards deeper than deepest back.)
  - a. On passing arm side of quarterback.
  - b. Able to view tackle on far side and backs.
3. Check following:
  - a. Play clock count and provide a visible count of the last five seconds when on-field play clocks are not utilized. (See signal on page 28)
  - b. One-second count after a huddle or shift.
  - c. Number of A players and eligible backs.
  - d. Snap irregularities and movement of linemen.
4. Be alert for illegal shift or player in motion.

## B. After snap:

1. Areas of responsibility:
  - a. Key tackle on opposite side, unless formation dictates otherwise. If he/she blocks aggressively, read run. If he/she pass blocks, read pass.
  - b. Ball, runner and action around him/her to neutral zone.
  - c. If action is not in direction of original position, move toward or parallel to scrimmage line, maintaining position approximately in line with runner's progress.
  - d. Delay moving immediately toward line of scrimmage to avoid hindering reverse or delayed play and to assure maximum vision of play.
  - e. If there is a score and no foul, give touchdown signal and record score.
2. Move behind play toward side of field to which play advances to cover runner if he/she is downed near neutral zone.
3. Check following:
  - a. Illegal use of hands by players of A.
  - b. Action behind ball and away from runner near neutral zone.
  - c. Action on quarterback after handoff.
  - d. Signal from head linesman or line judge indicating foremost point of ball on quick line plays.
  - e. Backward or forward pass when ball is thrown.
  - f. Out-of-bounds spot behind neutral zone.
4. Continue to observe action behind neutral zone before leaving area.
5. Responsible for runner until he/she crosses neutral zone.
6. When ball is dead:
  - a. Move quickly toward its location.
  - b. Be positive of ball location before sounding whistle.
  - c. Signal number of next down.
7. Help spot ball, then give ready-for-play signal (S #1) and sound whistle if applicable.
8. If first down has been made or change of team possession has occurred, give time-out signal to stop game clock unless already stopped by rule.

## II. UMPIRE

## A. After ball is spotted:

1. Position:
  - a. Usually will spot and remain over ball until referee releases you or gives ready-for-play.
  - b. Usually 5 to 10 yards behind Team B's line and between B's ends keeping snap in view.
  - c. Do not interfere with vision or movement of defensive backs.
  - d. Vary position so players cannot use you as interference.

2. Check following:
  - a. Number of A players.
  - b. Five players numbered 50 through 79 on offensive line.
  - c. Interference with snap, a false start or encroachment.
  - d. Disconcerting signals by B.
  - e. Note position of ball between hash marks.
  - f. Note B's players on the line of scrimmage in the free blocking zone.

B. After snap:

1. Areas of responsibility:
  - a. Key center and guards. If they block aggressively, read run. If they pass block, read pass.
  - b. Read point of attack, paying particular attention to free-blocking zone restrictions.
  - c. When play is wide to side:
    - (1) Move in that direction observing initial line play and action around runner (especially on short gains or losses in side zones).
    - (2) Remain on inside working out to maintain boxed-in coverage.
  - d. When hole opens directly in front of you:
    - (1) React and adjust according to play, possibly moving laterally (quick step) from hole and being alert for tight end cutting across.
    - (2) Cover action at point of attack and then behind runner.
2. Check for illegal use of hands or arms and other fouls near neutral zone.
3. Be alert for:
  - a. Quick kick or pass.
  - b. Ineligible receivers and point forward pass first strikes anything.
  - c. If fumble occurs beyond neutral zone, assist in determining who secures possession.
  - d. Illegal contact on snapper.
  - e. Action of players in and just behind neutral zone.
4. Do not sound whistle unless covering official is not in position.
5. Assist in spotting ball.
6. Assist with relay if ball goes out of bounds.

III. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE

A. After ball is spotted:

1. Position: Straddle the line of scrimmage 1 yard outside the sideline.
2. Check down indicator number. Signal number of down.
3. Use extended arm signal and hold until snap to indicate closest A player is off line of scrimmage.
4. Count B players and identify eligible receivers on your side. Be alert for illegal substitutions.

5. Check following:
  - a. Wingbacks, flankers, split ends and slot backs.
  - b. First two players in from your end of offensive line, including backs, as eligible pass receivers.
  - c. Player in motion away from you and maintain responsibility for him/her if he/she reverses direction.
  - d. Minimum of five offensive players on line-of-scrimmage.
  - e. Encroachment or false start.
- B. After snap:
  1. Areas of responsibility:
    - a. Key end and wide receiver if defender is covering him/her tightly. If end uncovered, look through to tackle to read run or pass.
    - b. Be alert for quick plays into line and assist in marking forward progress with downfield foot.
    - c. Watch initial charge of linemen.
    - d. On wide-end run to your side, observe blocking near neutral zone to tackle.
    - e. Check block on eligible receiver.
    - f. When ball comes to your side of field:
      - (1) Cover sideline and watch for crackback block.
      - (2) Sound whistle when ball becomes dead and move to spot of ball.
      - (3) If ball becomes dead in side zone, toss it to referee or umpire for spotting.
    - g. When ball goes to opposite side:
      - (1) Move down sideline until certain there will be no reverse or counter.
      - (2) Observe action on linebacker and back side pursuit.
    - h. On down-the-line option plays toward you, observe pitchman, loose ball, and pitchman as he/she becomes runner.
    - i. Observe late blocks and forearm blows away from runner.
    - j. Responsible for entire sideline. If ball goes out of bounds:
      - (1) Signal time-out immediately (S #3) twice.
      - (2) Hold out-of-bounds spot while another game official retrieves ball.
  2. While moving downfield with runner, watch for illegal forward pass or fumble.
  3. If play continues following illegal forward pass, drop penalty marker at spot of pass to indicate where run ended and at spot of any subsequent foul.
- IV. HEAD LINESMAN (Working with the line-to-gain indicator and crew):
  - A. Echo referee's signal verbally and with proper hand signal.
  - B. Repeat referee's time-out signal.
  - C. Do not turn back on field of play when having the indicator moved.
  - D. Authorize down marker to be moved only after referee's signal.

- E. When necessary to move the line-to-gain indicator:
  - 1. Spot foremost point of ball with downfield foot.
  - 2. Have down marker operator mark the spot, informing referee that the line-to-gain indicator is ready.
  - 3. Have line-to-gain crew set the indicator.
- F. When line-to-gain is goal line:
  - 1. Remove line-to-gain indicator from sideline.
  - 2. Provide down-marker operator with bean bag to mark line of scrimmage.
- V. LINE JUDGE
  - A. If obvious first down, signal game clock to stop.
- VI. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
  - A. Areas of responsibility:
    - 1. Keep play properly boxed in.
    - 2. Before sounding whistle:
      - a. Be certain ball is dead.
      - b. Be certain of location of ball.
      - c. Keep eyes on runner when you are covering.
    - 3. When ball becomes dead in your area, sound whistle promptly, and be alert for dead-ball fouls.
  - B. If there is a fumble, covering official should:
    - 1. Mark spot of fumble with bean bag.
    - 2. Rule on possession immediately.
    - 3. If defense recovers, covering official should immediately signal time-out (S #3) twice and then first down.
    - 4. If fumbling team recovers, covering official should indicate number of next down with finger(s) or fist if fourth down.
    - 5. If ball becomes dead before fumble, covering official sound whistle immediately to indicate down has ended.
  - C. If ball goes out of bounds:
    - 1. Covering official:
      - a. Give time-out signal immediately (S #3) twice.
      - b. Mark and hold spot.
      - c. Continue to observe action.
    - 2. Nearest free game official retrieve ball, unless covering official is in best position to do so.
    - 3. Other game officials:
      - a. Echo time-out signal (S #3) twice.
      - b. Move quickly into position to assist getting ball ready-for-play.
  - D. Be alert for substitution infractions.

**FORWARD PASS**

- I. REFEREE
  - A. After ball is spotted: Same as referee on Running Plays.
  - B. After snap:
    - 1. Read block of offensive tackle on opposite side.
    - 2. Observe all blocks behind the neutral zone.

3. As passer retreats, remain wide and deeper than passer.
4. Give special attention to contact with passer:
  - a. After ball is released, continue to observe passer, not flight of ball.
  - b. Verbally alert defenders when passer has released ball.
5. Determine whether pass is forward or backward.
6. Be alert to observe illegal pass:
  - a. Move to spot of pass to determine whether passer's feet were in or behind neutral zone when ball was released.
  - b. If illegal, drop penalty marker, continue to officiate.
  - c. If close, mark spot of pass with bean bag and continue to officiate.
7. Solely responsible for intentional grounding. May get assistance from covering official.
8. Continue to observe action behind neutral zone before leaving area.
9. Responsible for runner until he/she crosses neutral zone.

**II. UMPIRE**

- A. After ball is spotted: Same as umpire on Running Plays.
- B. After snap:
  1. Be alert for illegal contact on snapper.
  2. Watch for illegal contact and illegal use of hands.
  3. When you read forward pass, step toward neutral zone:
    - a. This removes you as target on shallow drag passes.
    - b. Puts you in position to rule whether ineligible is illegally downfield.
  4. Observe action of players in and just behind neutral zone.
  5. Assist referee to determine whether passer's feet were in or behind neutral zone when ball was released.
  6. Drop penalty marker at spot from which illegal pass is thrown.
  7. Cover short passes down middle.
  8. Know where forward pass first touches anything.
  9. Cover fumbled pass in your area and mark spot.

**III. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE**

- A. After ball is spotted: Same as head linesman and line judge on Running Plays.
- B. After snap:
  1. Key through end to read initial block of tackle.
  2. Move to position to check blocking and contact of eligible receivers and linebackers.
  3. Be ready to rule on direction of quick quarterback pass.
  4. Move cautiously downfield for first 5 to 7 yards, approximately halfway between that zone and deepest receiver:
    - a. Watch for interference by either team.
    - b. Be ready to rule on fumble or illegal pass after completion.
  5. If pass is incomplete in your area:
    - a. Sound whistle.



- b. Give incomplete-pass signal (S #10) twice.
- c. Retrieve ball and relay to game official nearest previous spot.
- 6. Be ready to adjust coverage if potential passer decides to run.
- 7. Be alert for sideline action.
- 8. Be alert for forward progress of runner.
- 9. Responsible for entire sideline.
- 10. Always be prepared to come back to rule on play near neutral zone in addition to sideline action.

#### IV. COVERING OFFICIALS

- A. Be alert for an illegal pass.
- B. Observe touching or catching by ineligible player.
- C. Watch for holding of eligible receivers and all contact beyond neutral zone both before and after pass is thrown.
- D. If ruling on pass reception involving sideline, only approved signals (S #3, or S #10) should be used.
- E. If pass intercepted inside defensive team's 5-yard line and player making interception is downed in end zone or ball goes out of bounds there:
  - 1. Be prepared to rule whether his/her momentum took him/her into end zone.
  - 2. Mark spot of interception with bean bag.

### SCRIMMAGE KICK

#### I. REFEREE

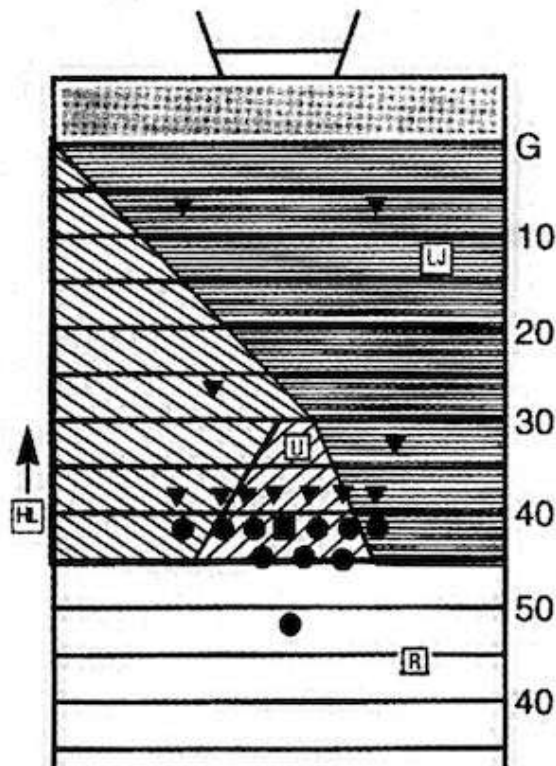
- A. After ball is spotted:
  - 1. Check down and distance with head linesman.
  - 2. Declare ball ready-for-play by using established procedure.
  - 3. Position: 3-5 yards outside the tight end and 2-3 yards behind the kicker, on line judge's side of the field.
  - 4. Count K players.
- B. After snap:
  - 1. Watch for fouls behind neutral zone especially near kicker.
  - 2. Be alert for blocked kick and be ready to rule on recovery.
  - 3. After ball crosses the neutral zone, observe line play.
  - 4. Move downfield slowly following kick.
  - 5. Watch for fouls and be ready to pick up runner if there is long return.
  - 6. Determine from covering official if ball was touched beyond neutral zone and by whom.
  - 7. Kick out of bounds in flight – line up covering official at the spot where the ball crossed the sideline by using an outstretched arm.
  - 8. Check with line judge for possible fair catch.
  - 9. If no foul, signal head linesman to move line-to-gain indicator.
  - 10. Confirm line-to-gain indicator is set before giving ready-for-play signal.

#### II. UMPIRE

- A. After ball is spotted:
  - 1. Position: 10 yards deep keeping ball in view.

2. Count K players.
  3. Check numbering exception.
  4. Key offensive guards and center.
- B. After snap:
1. Step toward neutral zone and be alert for roughing the snapper, then shift to action of offensive guards and backs behind neutral zone.
  2. Read play and be alert for run or pass.
  3. Be alert to assist referee in covering a short or blocked kick and be responsible for determining if the ball crosses neutral zone.
  4. Following kick, pivot to view line-judge side of field to observe blocks in side zone and move toward return area observing players away from ball.
  5. Be alert for fouls in secondary and move downfield slowly.
  6. When ball goes out of bounds, move to help relay ball to hash mark.

**FOUR-GAME  
OFFICIAL POSITIONS  
FOR SCRIMMAGE KICK**



**III. HEAD LINESMAN**

- A. After ball is spotted:
1. Position: Same as for run or pass.
  2. Check down number and count R players.
  3. After "Ready" responsible for neutral zone.
- B. After snap:
1. Cover all kicks to your side.
  2. Ball out of bounds in flight:
    - a. Sound whistle and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
    - b. Move farther downfield than where it went out.
    - c. Walk upfield until referee spots you on sideline.

3. Ball rolls out of bounds:
  - a. Sound whistle and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - b. Hold spot and continue to observe action.
  - c. Drop bean bag at spot if ball must be retrieved.
4. Assist referee in covering ball on short or blocked kick:
  - a. Note if kick is touched beyond neutral zone.
  - b. Note if recovered in or behind neutral zone.
  - c. Carry bean bag in hand during down to mark first touching, fumble, momentum or end of kick.
5. If fair-catch signal is made, observe if signaler blocks.
6. Routine kick:
  - a. Unless kick comes close to your side, delay move to sideline, cover clipping and other fouls in secondary.
  - b. Move with runner if he/she comes to your side.
  - c. Follow to goal line if run is broken.
  - d. When ball becomes dead:
    - (1) Sound whistle, give time-out signal (S #3) twice and mark spot.
    - (2) Make sure of possession on fair catch.
7. If there is foul, have free game official cover ball while game official who had foul reports information to referee.
8. Watch referee for signal to move line-to-gain indicator.

#### IV. LINE JUDGE

- A. After ball is spotted:
  1. Position: 7-10 yards wider than and in front of the deepest receiver, in position to cover sideline as well as kick.
  2. Count R players.
- B. After snap:
  1. Carry bean bag in hand during down to mark first touching, fumble, momentum or end of kick.
  2. Responsible for initial action on or by the end on your side.
  3. Cover all kicks down the middle and to your side.
  4. Ball rolls out of bounds:
    - a. Sound whistle and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
    - b. Hold spot and continue to observe action.
    - c. Drop bean bag at spot if must retrieve ball.
  5. Ball out of bounds in flight:
    - a. Sound whistle and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
    - b. Go deeper than the spot where the ball went out of bounds and walk back toward referee.
    - c. Have referee spot you on sideline and hold spot until ball has been spotted for next down.
  6. Ball stays inbounds:
    - a. Be ready to rule on whether kick is touched by either team.
    - b. If ball is muffed, be prepared to rule on possession.
    - c. Be alert for hand-off and reverse.

- d. If K is first to touch a kick which is moving, mark spot of first touching with bean bag and continue to cover play.
- e. If K is first to touch kick that is motionless beyond neutral zone, sound whistle, give time-out signal (S #3) twice and mark spot.
7. Following fair catch:
  - a. Sound whistle, give time-out signal (S #3) twice and mark spot.
  - b. Observe action of signaler when no fair catch is made.
  - c. Be prepared to rule on touchback or safety, or whether receiver's momentum took him/her into end zone.
8. When kick is returned:
  - a. Move with runner if he/she runs up the middle or to your side until another game official picks him/her up.
  - b. When this is done, delay and observe action behind ball.
9. When kick becomes dead:
  - a. Sound whistle immediately and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - b. Inform referee of ball status before placing it for next play.
10. If kick is caught inside 5-yard line and player is downed in his/her end zone or ball goes out of bounds there, be prepared to rule on whether his/her momentum took him/her into end zone.
11. Mark spot of catch inside 5-yard line with bean bag.

**FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY WHEN SNAP IS FROM 15-YARD LINE OR INSIDE****I. REFEREE****A. After ball is spotted:**

1. Position: About 1 yard to the rear and 2 to 3 yards to side of potential kicker, facing potential holder and able to see holder receive ball.
2. Count K players.
3. Rule on motion of backs within line of vision.

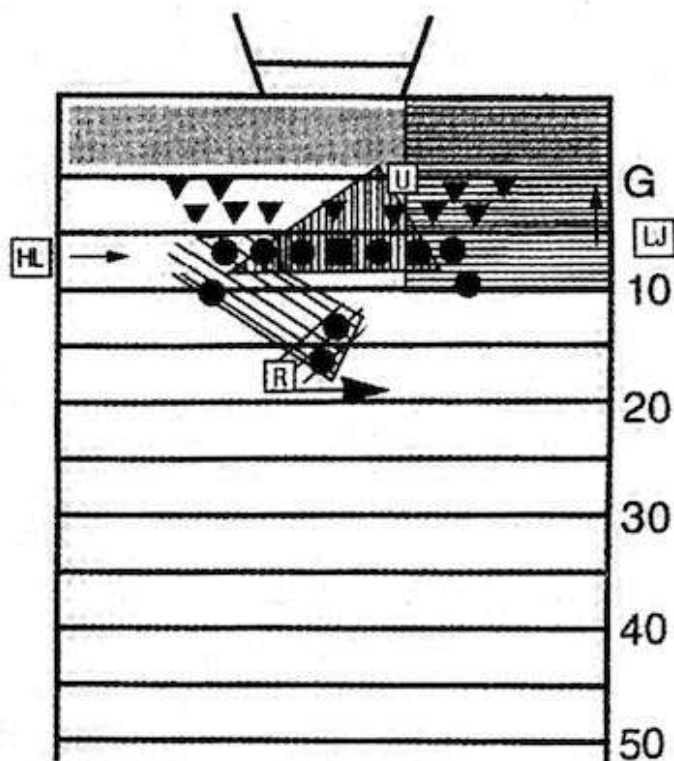
**B. After snap:**

1. Watch for fumble by holder.
2. Be alert for run or pass and assist in sideline coverage if run develops to referee's side of field.
3. If ball is kicked, move quickly behind kicker into line of flight of ball.
4. Rule on kick passing through uprights and signal score (S #5) or no score (S #10) twice after getting signal from line judge who rules on whether ball passed over crossbar.
5. If try is blocked, immediately sound whistle and give the no-score signal (S #10) twice.
6. If field goal is blocked, ball remains live.

**II. UMPIRE****A. After ball is spotted:**

1. Position: 5 to 10 yards deep keeping snap in view.
2. Check for use of numbering exception.
3. Count kicking team players.
4. Key action of center and guards.

**FOUR-GAME OFFICIAL  
POSITIONS FOR FIELD-GOAL  
ATTEMPT OR TRY WHEN  
SNAP IS FROM 15-YARD LINE  
OR INSIDE**



**B. After snap:**

1. Step toward neutral zone reading interior linemen.
2. Check action on snapper.
3. Be alert for kick crossing neutral zone and short or blocked kicks.
4. Following kick, pivot to view line-judge side of field to observe blocks in side zone and move downfield watching action away from ball.

**III. HEAD LINESMAN**

**A. After ball is spotted:**

1. Position: on sideline
2. Observe neutral zone.
3. Count receiving team players.

**B. After snap:**

1. Read end and tackle—be alert for run or pass.
2. If ball is kicked, watch for roughing kicker or holder.

**IV. LINE JUDGE**

**A. After ball is spotted:**

1. Position: on sideline.
2. Count R players.
3. Handle as any goal-line play.

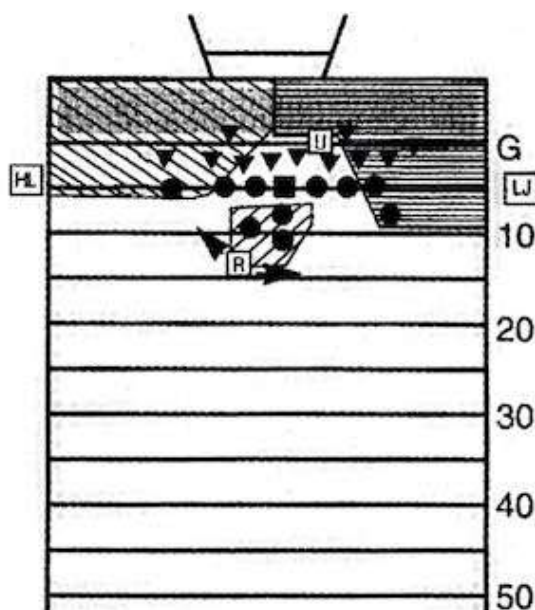
**B. After snap:**

1. Read offensive end.
2. Move towards end line to determine if ball passes over or under crossbar—if ball passes under crossbar, immediately signal no score (S #10) twice.
3. Sound whistle when successful kick passes uprights or when it is apparently unsuccessful after breaking goal-line plane.

**FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY WHEN BALL IS SNAPPED OUTSIDE 15-YARD LINE**

- I. REFEREE
  - A. Position: Same as inside 15-yard line.
  - B. Responsible for kicker and holder after snap.
  - C. Cover as any scrimmage kick.
- II. UMPIRE
  - A. Position: Same as inside 15-yard line.
  - B. Cover as any scrimmage kick.
- III. HEAD LINESMAN
  - A. Position: Move downfield as any scrimmage kick.
  - B. Cover line of scrimmage to end line.
- IV. LINE JUDGE
  - A. Position: 5 yards behind and directly between uprights.
  - B. Rule whether kick is successful or unsuccessful.
  - C. If unsuccessful, rule on a possible touchback.
  - D. Give appropriate signal (S #5 or S #10).
  - E. Responsible for your sideline and end line on runs and passes.

**FOUR-GAME OFFICIAL POSITIONS FOR GOAL-LINE PLAY**



**GOAL-LINE PLAY**

- I. REFEREE
  - A. Position and cover same as scrimmage play.
  - B. Do not give touchdown signal from behind runner unless obvious.
  - C. Give touchdown signal if touchdown has been signaled by another game official and no foul occurred.
- II. UMPIRE
  - A. Position: Near goal line with coverage same as scrimmage play.
  - B. Do not give touchdown signal from in front of runner unless obvious.
  - C. When runner has made quick thrust into line, be sure ball is not moved forward after it is declared dead. Assist wing official if he or she needs help.

### III. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE

- A. Position as scrimmage play.
- B. On snap between 10- and 5-yard line, release downfield staying ahead of runner to goal line.
- C. On snap inside 5-yard line, release to goal line and officiate back to ball.
- D. Note farthest point to which ball is advanced:
  - 1. If short of goal line, move in quickly and help by marking point with downfield foot.
  - 2. If you see ball in possession of runner touch or cross goal-line plane, instantly give touchdown signal.
  - 3. If ball breaks goal-line plane, give touchdown signal.
- E. Head Linesman:
  - 1. Remove line-to-gain indicator from sideline.
  - 2. Provide down-marker operator with bean bag.

### IV. ALL GAME OFFICIALS

- A. Only game official(s) who actually see touchdown should give touchdown signal (S #5).
- B. Game officials not observing touchdown do not mirror signal.
- C. Count your respective team.

## AFTER A SAFETY, TRY OR FIELD GOAL

### I. ALL GAME OFFICIALS

- A. Same as kickoff.
- B. Be alert for substitutions and any irregularities as to number of players.
- C. Reminder: On free kick following safety:
  - 1. Each game official assumes same relative position and has same duties as on kickoff.
  - 2. Ball may be put in play by drop kick, place kick or punt.
- D. Strive to put ball in play without delay.

## ADMINISTERING PENALTIES

### I. REFEREE

- A. When ball is dead following a foul:
  - 1. Give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - 2. Get full information from game official who called foul.
  - 3. Give preliminary signal to press-box side of field only.
  - 4. Give options to designated representative of offended team.
  - 5. When designated representative's most advantageous choice is obvious, quickly inform him/her.
  - 6. When designated representative does not respond, his/her silence shall be considered acceptance of obvious choice. Once made, it cannot be revoked.
  - 7. Make note of enforcement spot for penalty and confirm yardage with umpire.
  - 8. After ball has been spotted, give final signal for foul to press-box side of field only.

- B. When penalty is declined:
  - 1. Go to spot visible from press box.
  - 2. Give foul signal followed by penalty-declined signal (S #10) twice to press box.
- C. When there is a double foul:
  - 1. Signal each foul, facing press box.
  - 2. Follow this with penalty-declined signal (S #10) twice.
- D. When two penalties are enforced, give proper signals following each enforcement.
- E. When penalty is to be enforced on kickoff:
  - 1. Indicate proper foul signal.
  - 2. Point to offending team.
  - 3. Indicate scoring signal (S #5).
  - 4. Point toward succeeding spot.
- F. Accepted penalty for foul by either team during the last timed down of a period, play continues with an untimed down (S #1) except for fouls listed in Rule 3-3-4.
- G. When dead-ball fouls occur after fourth down:
  - 1. Signal any live-ball fouls.
  - 2. Signal first down.
  - 3. Signal dead ball.
  - 4. Signal the dead-ball foul(s).
- II. UMPIRE
  - A. Secure ball.
  - B. Make note of enforcement spot for penalty.
  - C. Proceed with measurement.
  - D. On properly marked field, avoid stepping off distance between yard lines, except to the first and for the final yard line.
  - E. Walk briskly, using an arm signal to point to each yard line you cross.
- III. HEAD LINESMAN
  - A. Be certain of down number.
  - B. Proceed to succeed spot.
  - C. Be ready to have line-to-gain indicator moved after penalty administration.
  - D. Give final signal for foul to be enforced on kickoff to press-box side of field.
- IV. LINE JUDGE
  - A. Hold enforcement spot.
- V. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE
  - A. Check enforcement.
  - B. Do not permit athletic trainers, attendants or coaches to come onto field.
  - C. Relay penalty information to appropriate coach and to other game officials if necessary.
- VI. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
  - A. Observe live-ball foul:
    - 1. Withhold whistle.



2. Drop penalty marker at proper yard line and continue to observe play noting location of ball at time of foul.
3. When ball becomes dead:
  - a. Give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - b. Sound whistle.
  - c. Verbally report information to referee.
  - d. Give no visible signal.
  - e. Make mental note as to whether game clock should be started on ready or on snap.
- B. Observe dead-ball foul:
  1. Sound whistle, toss penalty marker into air and give time-out signal (S #3) twice immediately.
  2. Follow procedures outlined under A.
- C. See that umpire assesses penalty properly in all respects.
- D. Calling game official (umpire, head linesman, line judge):
  1. After calling foul and ball has been declared dead:
    - a. Sound whistle and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
    - b. Get referee's attention by giving short blasts of whistle.
    - c. Make sure another game official is covering spot of foul.
    - d. Verbally report full information to referee:
      - (1) Identify foul.
      - (2) Identify offending team including jersey color and offense/defense or kicking/receiving team.
      - (3) Identify offending player's number or position.
      - (4) Indicate spot of foul, end of run or end of kick.
      - (5) Indicate status of ball when foul occurred.
- E. Assist with locating designated representative.
- F. Recover penalty markers and ball.
- G. Enforcement:
  1. Stay clear of spot of foul.
  2. If spot is different, go to enforcement spot.
  3. When umpire begins enforcement, check for correctness and distance.
  4. Avoid visiting while penalty is assessed.
- H. When a disqualifying foul is called:
  1. Game official who called foul shall inform offending player and report his/her number and type of infraction to referee, coach and other members of officiating crew.
  2. Emphasize disqualification is for remainder of game.
  3. If there are double disqualifying fouls, referee may designate another game official to assist in reporting foul to coaches.
  4. The game official shall not place a hand on offending player, nor accompany or escort him/her to sideline.
  5. All game officials:
    - a. Record player's number and name, if known.
    - b. Observe all other players.

6. Following contest, notify state association if applicable.
- I. Record unsportsmanlike penalties.

**MEASURING FOR FIRST DOWN USING TRADITIONAL LINE-TO-GAIN INDICATORS****I. REFEREE**

- A. Give time-out signal (S #3) twice – follow by tapping hands on chest.
- B. Signal head linesman to bring line-to-gain equipment onto field.
- C. Motion players away from ball.
- D. Rotate ball so the long axis is parallel to sideline.
- E. In side zone, measure before ball is taken inbounds.
- F. If line-to-gain not reached in side zone, use the line-to-gain indicator to accurately place ball at hash marks.
- G. If ball has gone out of bounds, measure to point where ball crossed sideline.
- H. Inside edge of forward indicator marks line-to-gain.
- I. When measurement is completed:
  1. Signal number of next down.
  2. Spot ball at proper place.
  3. Wait for line-to-gain crew to return to position.
- J. If new series awarded to opponent of team which was in possession when ball became dead:
  1. Place ball so that foremost point, when it became dead, becomes rear point when the direction is changed.
- K. After measurement:
  1. Declare ball ready-for-play (S #1) if ball was out of bounds.
  2. If not out of bounds, signal game clock to start with ready-for-play (S #1 and then S #2) twice.
  3. If first down for Team B (S #8), game clock will start on snap.

**II. UMPIRE**

- A. Take the forward indicator from crew members at place of measurement.
- B. When head linesman says "ready," tighten line-to-gain indicator and hold forward indicator near ball until referee reaches decision.

**III. HEAD LINESMAN**

- A. When a measurement is signaled by referee:
  1. Grasp line-to-gain indicator and clip at back edge of back-yard line (don't just grasp clip since clip could detach).
  2. Instruct down marker operator to mark front indicator spot and keep same down number.
  3. Bring line-to-gain indicator behind ball and place clipped part of indicator at back edge of back-yard line.
  4. Hold firmly and call "ready" to umpire to stretch indicator tight.
  5. Wait for referee's decision and signal.
  6. If not first down:
    - a. While holding indicator, accompany crew to sideline and reset in original position, 2 yards from sideline.
    - b. Have down marker operator move down marker indicator to next down.

7. If new series, set inside edge of rear indicator at foremost point of ball after spotted by referee. First down on down marker indicator.
  - B. Mark foremost point of ball for down indicator operator on all first downs.
- IV. LINE JUDGE
- A. Position: Place foot just behind yard line where clip is to be placed to align head linesman so that the chains are parallel to the sideline.
  - B. Do not permit team attendants to enter field.

### **TIME-OUT PROCEDURE**

- I. REFEREE
- A. Sound whistle:
    1. Signal "time-out" (S #3) two times.
    2. If time-out is charged to a team, indicate by moving both arms two times in a horizontal motion toward that team.
    3. If official's time-out, indicate by tapping chest with both hands.
  - B. Duties:
    1. Check number of time-outs remaining for each team.
    2. Check time remaining with line judge.
    3. Check down with head linesman.
    4. Notify coach and captain after a third time-out has been charged.
    5. Take position away from other game officials, observe Team B.
    6. Time 60-second interval; at 45 seconds, signal head linesman and line judge by pointing directly at them to give their teams 15-second warning.
    7. Inform each team huddle of down and time remaining in period.
    8. Declare ball ready-for-play by using established procedure.
- II. UMPIRE
- A. Maintain position over ball.
  - B. Observe Team A until referee is ready to start play.
- III. HEAD LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE
- A. Move to position halfway between ball and sideline and observe team.
  - B. Be alert for signal from referee to give your team 15-second warning; go to team huddle and say "Coach, ball will be ready-for-play in 15 seconds."
  - C. Be alert for substitutions by your sideline or attempts to use substitutes for purpose of deception, and maintain proper number of players/attendants in huddle when conferences are held between the 9-yard marks.
  - D. Inform captain and coach of time-outs remaining.
- IV. ALL GAME OFFICIALS
- A. Repeat time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - B. Record time-out, number of player who called it, time on game clock and period.
  - C. Stand alertly erect.
  - D. Do not visit with players.
  - E. Restrict discussion to captain.
  - F. Do not huddle in group.
  - G. Confirm number of remaining time-outs.

**INJURY TIME-OUT PROCEDURE**

(Additional responsibilities beyond regular time-out.)

**I. REFEREE**

- A. Summon appropriate health-care professional(s) and/or coach(es) on field.
- B. Duties:
  1. Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.
  2. Be ready to assist appropriate health-care professional(s) and/or coach(es) in securing additional medical help, if needed.
  3. Attempt to keep players a significant distance away from the seriously injured player(s). Direct players and coaches toward respective team bench area.
  4. Once the appropriate health-care professional(s) begins to work on an injured player, all members of the officiating crew should control the total playing field environment and team personnel and allow the appropriate health-care professional(s) to perform services without interruption or interference. Always ensure adequate lines of vision between the appropriate health-care professional(s) and all available emergency personnel.
  5. Players and coaches should be appropriately controlled to avoid dictating medical services to the appropriate health-care professional(s) on the time taken to perform such services.
  6. Confirm correct play clock time and declare the ball ready for play.

**II. UMPIRE**

- A. Make sure summoned appropriate health-care professional(s) and/or coach(es) are not on the field for coaching purposes.

**END-OF-PERIOD PROCEDURE****I. REFEREE**

- A. If visible game clock is not used:
  1. Take official's time-out (S #3) twice – follow by tapping hands on chest with approximately four minutes remaining in second and fourth periods.
  2. Inform both captains of time remaining and see that both coaches are notified.
  3. When time expires and ball becomes dead, sound whistle and repeat time-out signal (S #3) twice.
- B. If visible game clock is used:
  1. When facing game clock, be responsible for knowing when time expires.
  2. If time expires prior to snap:
    - a. Sound your whistle to prevent snap, if possible.

- b. If ball is snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long, and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - C. Following delay to ensure no foul, no obvious timing error, no request for coach-referee conference, and no other irregularity has occurred, hold ball in one hand over head to signal official end of period.
  - D. If play is in progress and time expires for the period, the horn should not be sounded.
- II. UMPIRE (If visible game clock is used):
  - A. When facing game clock, be responsible for knowing when time expires.
  - B. If time expires prior to snap:
    - 1. Sound whistle to prevent snap, if possible.
    - 2. If ball is snapped immediately after time expired, sound whistle loud and long, and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.
- III. LINE JUDGE (If visible game clock is not used, keep official time):
  - A. Notify referee approximately four minutes before the end of the second and fourth periods.
  - B. Notify referee approximately 30 seconds before time for period expires that time may expire during next down.
  - C. When time expires and ball becomes dead, signal referee by raising arm above head, sound whistle, and give time-out signal (S #3) twice.

### **BETWEEN-PERIODS PROCEDURE**

- I. REFEREE
  - A. Time one-minute interval same as in time-out procedure, including signaling head linesman and line judge to give their teams 15-second warning.
  - B. Record down, distance and yard line nearest foremost point of ball while meeting with umpire and head linesman in center of field.
  - C. Measure distance from the nearest yard line to foremost point of ball and estimate distance from hash marks.
  - D. In spotting ball, check again with head linesman and umpire.
  - E. At end of 60 seconds while near ball, announce down and distance.
  - F. Declare ball ready for play (S #1).
- II. UMPIRE
  - A. Record down, distance and yard line nearest foremost point of ball.
  - B. Assist referee.
  - C. Quickly take ball to a corresponding point on the other half of field and reverse directions.
- III. LINE JUDGE
  - A. Observe teams while moving to corresponding spot on other end of field.
  - B. Assume responsibilities outlined for time-out including giving your team 15-second warning when directed by referee.
  - C. Check team box and huddle areas for appropriate conference procedure as during charged time-out.

**IV. HEAD LINESMAN**

- A. Record down, distance and yard line nearest foremost point of ball.
- B. Confirm information with referee.
- C. Clip line-to-gain indicator at back edge of back-yard line.
- D. Call down and distance to assistants.
- E. Reverse ends of line-to-gain indicator and two crew members.
- F. Set down marker indicator after referee has spotted ball.
- G. Check number of down and distance to gain.
- H. Assume responsibilities outlined for time-out including giving your team 15-second warning when directed by referee.
- I. Indicate to referee you are ready by signaling number of down with finger(s), or fist for fourth down.

**V. ALL GAME OFFICIALS**

- A. Limit of three team attendants are permitted on field.
- B. Either legal type of coach-player conferences may be held.

**BETWEEN-HALVES PROCEDURE****I. REFEREE**

- A. Signal time to start game clock to time intermission.
- B. Responsible for seeing that three minutes is placed on the game clock for the mandatory warm-up period prior to start of second half after the intermission time has elapsed.
- C. Discuss situations in dressing room or other private place.
- D. Determine which team has choice for second half.

**II. ALL GAME OFFICIALS**

- A. Assist referee with halftime intermission responsibilities.
- B. Leave field together.
- C. Assemble in dressing room or other private place.
- D. Discuss the overtime procedure, if applicable.
- E. Return to field at least five minutes before the second half is to begin.
- F. Start second half on time.

# Seven-Game Officials

**Referee – R; Umpire – U; Head Linesman – HL; Line Judge – LJ;  
Back Judge – BJ; Side Judge – SJ; Field Judge – FJ**

## PRE-GAME CONFERENCE

The pre-game conference is conducted to prepare the crew mentally. Each game official must have a thorough knowledge of the rules and the mechanics for the assigned position.

Attendance at the pre-game conference is required. The referee will establish the time and location of the pre-game conference. All game officials need to be on the field at least 40 minutes before kickoff and stay on the field until at least one of the teams has left.

## PRE-GAME DUTIES

**R/U:** Visit with the head coaches before the game. Review topics such as: players being properly equipped, special plays, keeping jerseys tucked in and sportsmanship.

**HL/LJ/FJ/SJ/BJ:** Walk field.

**SJ:** Instruct game clock operator.

**BJ:** Instruct the play clock operator.

**SJ/FJ:** Brief ball handlers (Handlers to remain off field at all times and at least 2 yards off of the field when not directly relaying a ball to a game official. They must only work from the 10 to the 10, do not linger in the area of the goal line or red zone).

**HL:** Instruct the line-to-gain crew - insist the crew works 2 yards off of the field, retreat if pressured.

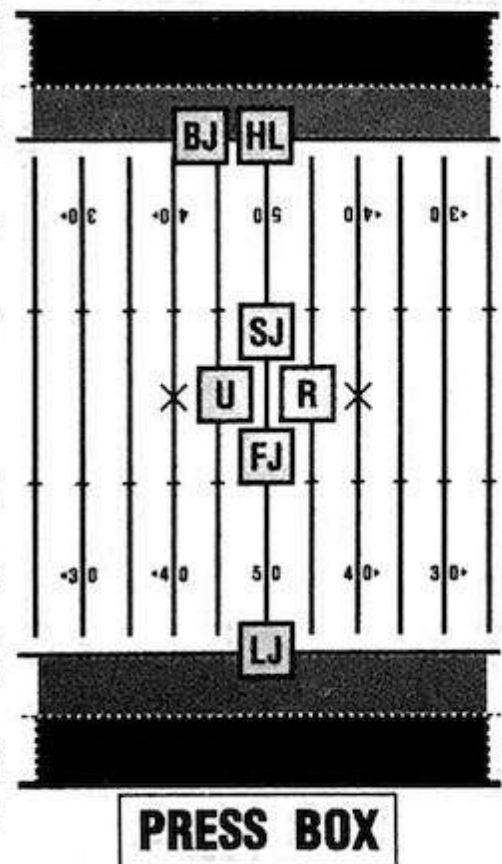
**LJ:** Instruct the alternate auxiliary down marker indicator (if being used).

## COIN TOSS: 3 MINUTES PRIOR TO KICKOFF

**R/U:** Stand in the center of the field to await arrival of captains.

**FJ/SJ:** Get the captains at 5 minutes and escort them in when directed by the referee. At the hash, release them to the center of the field and monitor the activity from the hash.

**LJ/BJ:** You are responsible for getting teams on the field at three minutes before the start of each half.



**HL:** Remain near sidelines during the coin toss and direct the line-to-gain crew.  
**LJ/BJ:** Remain near sidelines and inform coaches of results.

**FREE KICKS**

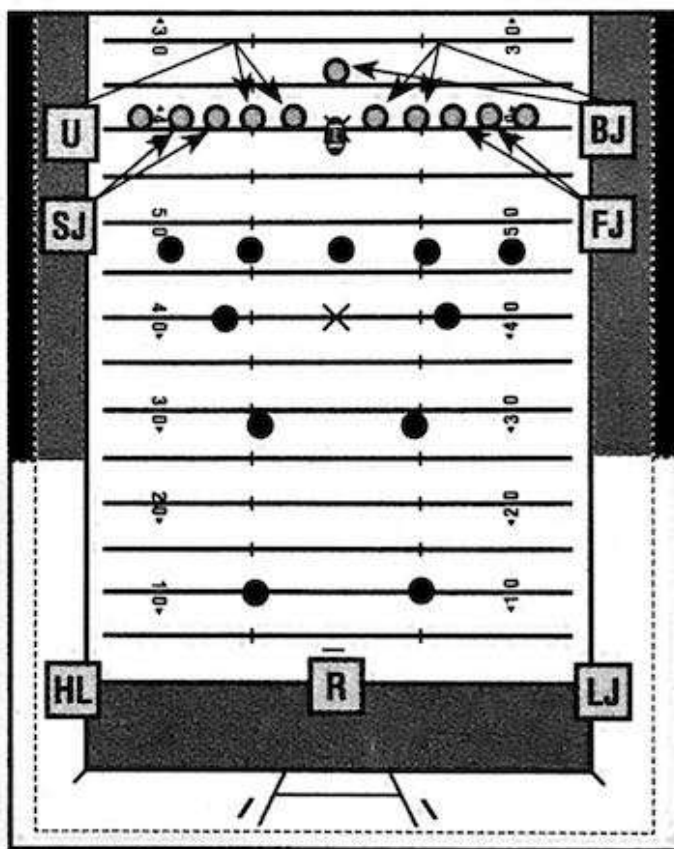
**R:** Position yourself in the center of the field on the goal line. Officiate the blocks in front of the runner in your zone. You are also primarily responsible for the receiving team's goal line and the 4x4 formation.

**HL/LJ:** Position yourself at each respective pylon on the goal line or at least 10 yards deeper than the deepest receiver if moving up field. Count R players. Officiate the blocks in front of the runner in your zone.

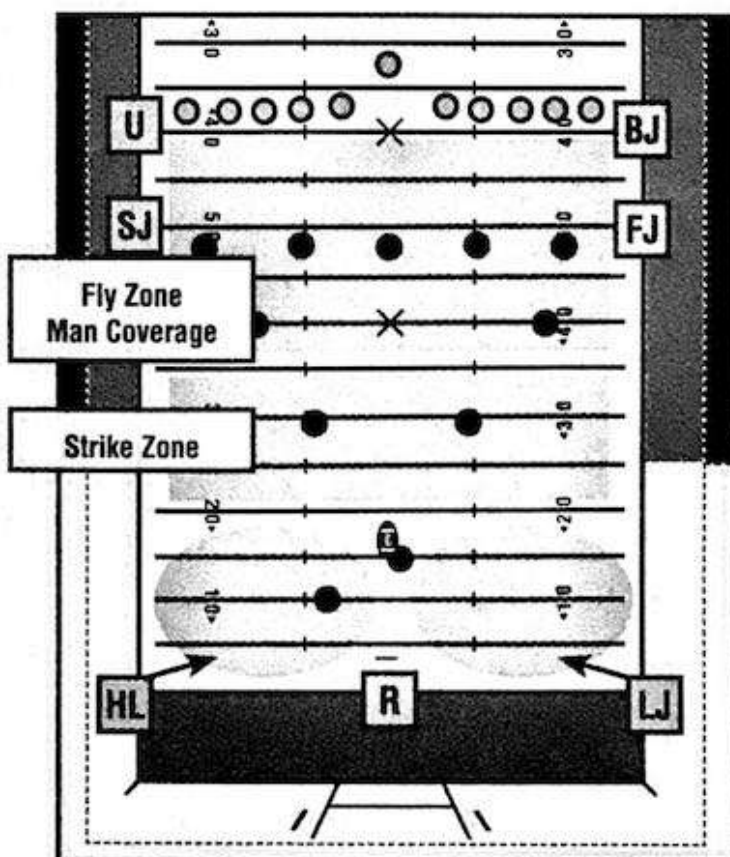
**SJ/FJ:** Position yourself at the receiving team's restraining line (usually the 50-yard line). Be aware for a short or onside kick, if it occurs be alert to K blocking before they are eligible to touch the ball. Otherwise, you are in individual coverage of players 1, 2 and 3 through the Strike Zone. After the kicking team passes you, walk down the sideline covering your area, then check-down as needed. Be aware of a long return. You are responsible for the kicking team's goal line. You are responsible for pop-up kicks.

**BJ:** Count K players and manage the 5-yard belt. Do not give the ball to the kicker unless you have 11 players for K. Hand the kicker the ball and give instructions before moving to the sideline. Position yourself at the kicking team's restraining

**INITIAL POSITIONS W/ INITIAL KEYS**



**COVERAGE AREA**





line (usually the 40-yard line) on the LJ / Press Box side of the field. You are in individual coverage of kicking team players 4 and 5 and shared responsibility for the kicker through the Strike Zone. After the kick, move at 45° angle toward the hash marks on your side of the field and officiate “inside-out.” On unexpected on-side kicks you are responsible for K being behind their line of scrimmage and if the ball is “topped” off the tee.

**U:** Position yourself at the kicking team’s restraining line (usually the 40-yard line) on the HL / opposite Press Box. Count K players and help manage the 5-yard belt. You are in individual coverage of kicking team players 4 and 5 and shared responsibility for the kicker through the Strike Zone. After the kick, move at 45° angle toward the hash marks on your side of the field and officiate “inside-out.” On unexpected on-side kicks you are responsible for K being behind their line of scrimmage and if the ball is “topped” off the tee.

### SHORT FREE KICKS – FOR USE IN OBVIOUS SHORT KICK SITUATIONS

**HL:** The HL will be positioned between the U and SJ. The HL will be responsible for watching the ball immediately after it is kicked and determine if the ball was “topped” off the tee and hit the ground. Next, be prepared to rule on pop-up, first touching, muff, illegal or low block.

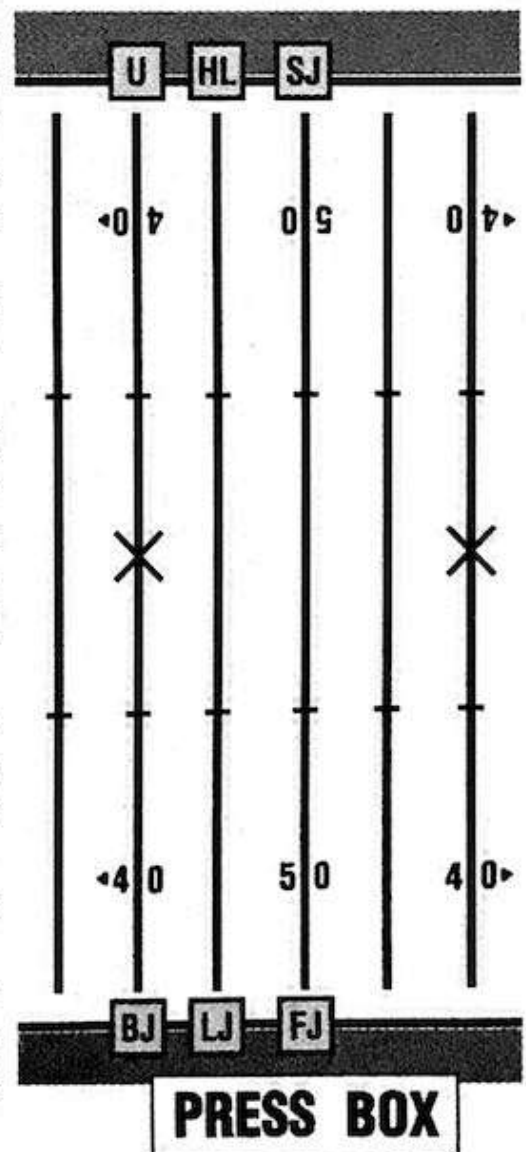
**R:** The referee will maintain a distance and keep an eye out for low blocks. The referee is also responsible for the goal line.

**LJ:** The LJ should be positioned between the BJ and FJ. Responsible for watching the ball immediately after it is kicked and determine if the ball was “topped” off the tee and hit the ground. Next, be prepared to rule on pop-up, first touching, muff, illegal or low block.

**SJ/FJ:** The SJ/FJ should take primary responsibility of whether the ball goes 10 yards, and if any touching, muff or low block occurred within two yards of the line.

**U/BJ:** The kicker’s restraining line is a true line and must not be broken prior to the kick.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THIS MECHANIC IS NOT TO MOVE UNTIL THE BALL IS BEYOND THE RECEIVING TEAM’S RESTRAINING LINE OR RECOVERED.**



## DISCUSSION TOPICS

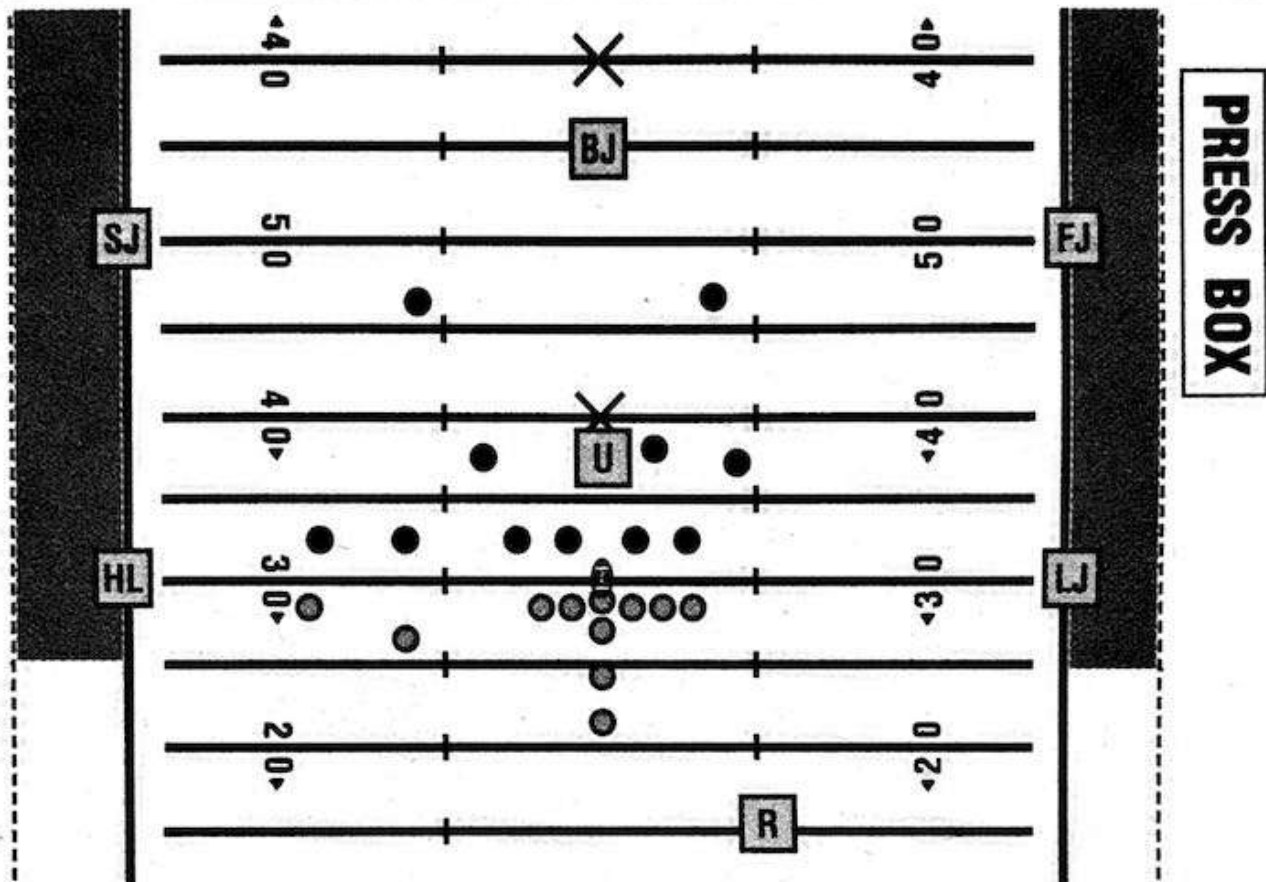
1. Kickoff out of bounds, untouched by "B" – 3 options:
  - a. Take ball 25 yards beyond "K's" free-kick line (usually the 35-yard line).
  - b. 5-yard penalty rekick.
  - c. Ball at the out-of-bounds spot.
2. Review procedure for free kick after safety.
3. Touching by "K" or "R".
4. Clock starting on "legal" touch.
5. Possession and fouls.
6. Status of the ball on fouls.
7. Illegal blocks.
8. Momentum.
9. Interference with the opportunity to catch.
10. Fair catch possibilities.
11. Onside kicks and blocking. The game officials on the side the ball is kicked take primary responsibility for the ball (touched when, where and by whom) and the game officials on the opposite side of the ball is kicked take primary responsibility for the blocks. K cannot initiate a block unless K can possess the ball, it has gone 10 yards, touched by R or R has already initiated a block.

### PLAYS FROM SCRIMMAGE

**R:** Count the offense before every play and a signal should be given and acknowledged by the umpire. Be 13 to 15 yards deep on the passing arm side of the quarterback and at least 1 yard outside the tight end position. Key the tackle on the opposite side unless there are trips to the near side, in which case key tackle on near side. Retreat at a 45-degree angle if the quarterback drops back to pass. On a pass play with a quarterback drop of greater than three steps, the R will be responsible for determining the direction of the pass.

**U:** Position should be from 5 to 10 yards deep and not outside the tackle. Count and signal to the referee the number of players on offense before every play. Vary your position. Key on the center and the two guards. Be alert for false starts. Officiate the point of attack, be aware of takedowns, and twisting or turning by the offensive lineman. Retrieve or get another ball, if the ball is declared dead in a side zone. (Go beyond the hash, if necessary, to expedite retrieval of the ball).

**HL/LJ:** Read the formation and identify your eligible receiver. Shut down the play on false starts and encroachment. Verify formations and rule on motion going away until the snap. LJ is responsible for the tackle on his/her side unless trips are presented. HL will have near-side tackle responsibility when there are trips to the LJ side. In a balanced formation HL covers the second receiver in and the LJ is responsible for the backfield running back. Officiate at the point of attack and take all forward progress spots to the 2-yard line. The goal line is yours on all plays from the 7-yard line and in. This distance can be adjusted situationally by



the HL. Place down-field foot out to signify forward progress to umpire. Utilize cross field mechanics on push back plays. For example, if the runner or receiver is pushed back on the HL side of the field near the sideline, the LJ is responsible for providing the progress spot. This mechanic is used to allow the near game official to maintain a safe distance for optimal viewing of the play. On a quarterback three-step drop, HL and LJ are responsible for forward or backward pass.

**FJ/SJ:** Take initial position 20 to 22-yards deep. Count the defense on every play and signal to acknowledge with the BJ. SJ and FJ will be responsible for the game clock. Take the widest receiver on your side of the field. Retreat as the play develops. You have goal line responsibilities. Officiate the point of attack and be good dead-ball officials. Go into the bench area, if necessary, on plays ending at or beyond the sidelines. Communicate all fouls to the head coach with numbers. On plays starting between B's 25 and 7-yard line, position yourself at the goal line.

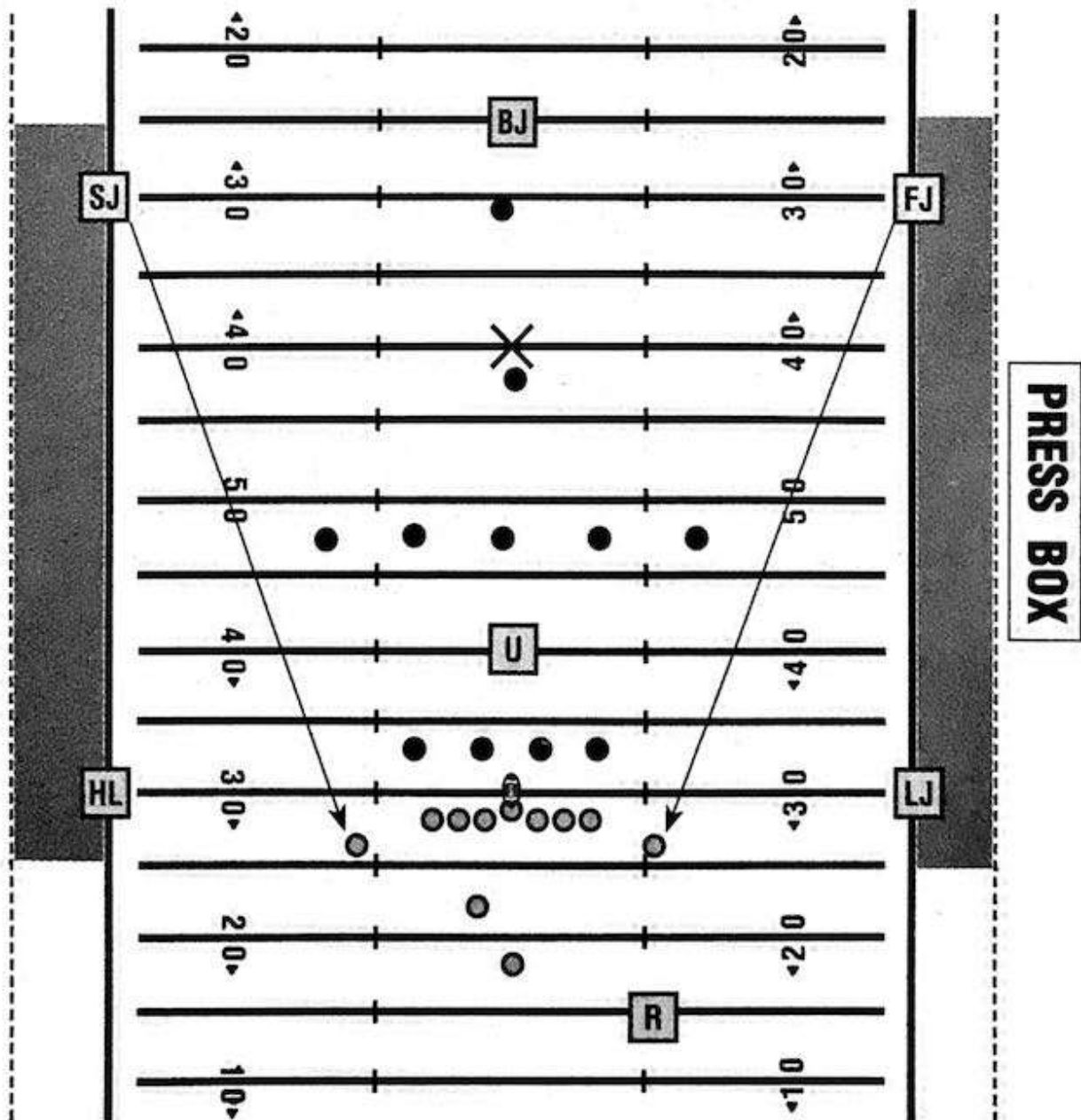
**BJ:** Position 25 to 30-yards deep. Count defensive team, signal, and acknowledge with the SJ and FJ. If the formation is balanced, take the second receiver on the LJ's side. On trips formations take the third receiver in on the trips side. Any play starting from the 25-yard line and in, begin at the end line. You have primary end line coverage. You have the play clock.

### DISCUSSION TOPICS:

1. Dead ball spot – covering official use sharp 90-degree angles.
2. Concentrate on keys and point of attack.
3. Free-blocking zone.
4. False starts: “whistle” shut down play.
5. “Hurry Up” offense.
6. Multiple flags – take your time, get it right.

### PUNTS

**R:** Count offensive players. Take a position 3 yards behind the kicker, wider than the tight end’s normal position and on the kicking leg side. See the ball from the snap to the kicker. Be able to see blockers and kickers. Watch the action on the kicker until the kickers balance has been regained and moves to become an active participant. Proceed down field slowly and be prepared to be at the goal line



if there is a runback. If the ball is kicked out of bounds, be prepared to signal spot to the downfield game official.

**U:** Count the offense. Be 10 yards deep and know your ineligible. Note the numbers of players on the line of scrimmage participating under the “numbering exception rule.” Be very aware of illegal acts against the snapper. Be alert for holding by both teams. After the players go by you, turn around and officiate at the point-of-attack and observe all dead-ball actions.

**HL/LJ:** Count the offense. Know the eligible receivers and hold until the ball crosses the line of scrimmage. Move slowly down field and officiate ahead of the runner. Reverse fade mechanics (see FADE MECHANICS OUTLINE discussion) on the advancing runner and be at the goal line if it's threatened.

**FJ/SJ:** Count R players and signal. Position yourself 10 yards behind deepest receiver. Observe the flyers and/or first threat on your side from the snap until the receiver begins the return upfield. The runner is your key once the runner starts to turn upfield. Responsible for the forward progress and utilize cross-field mechanics push back plays. For example, if the runner or receiver is pushed back on the SJ side of the field near the sideline, the FJ is responsible for providing the progress spot. This mechanic is used to allow the near game official to maintain a safe distance for optimal viewing of the play. If the kick is from the 50-yard line and in, start at the pylons. Track the players around the ball location if the receiver fails to field the kick.

**BJ:** Initial position will be between the hash marks approximately 8 to 10-yards deeper than the deepest receiver. With a single receiver, line up in a straight line with the kicker and receiver and adjust to wide side once the kick is away. With two receivers, split them and adjust as necessary once the kick is away. Count R players and signal. Be in position to rule on the validity of the catch or signal. BJ has primary coverage of the receiver, ball and signal (any action by or against the receiver) until he advances and then officiate the point of attack action.

## DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Eligible “R” receivers in case of fake kick.
2. Kick out of bounds.
3. Handoff/reverses.
4. Blocked or partially blocked kicks.
5. Spot where kick ends.
6. At the goal line: batting.
7. Roughing or running into the kicker.
8. Fair catch signals.
9. Post scrimmage kick spot.
10. Illegal block below waist.
11. Scrimmage kick fails to cross the neutral zone (anyone can advance).

**GOAL LINE**

*(Also used in the field of play for teams going for it on fourth down. Use the line-to-gain as the goal line)*

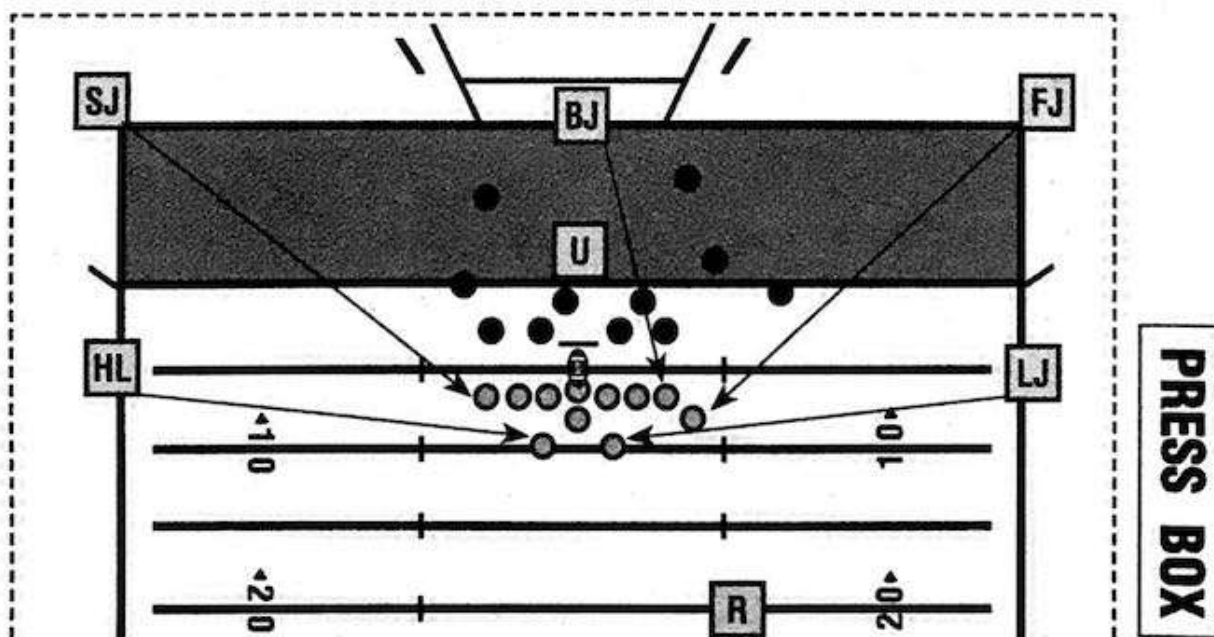
**R:** Normal position. Responsible for direction of pass (forward vs. backward). Signal only after being positive all requirements have been met for a score and dead-ball action has concluded.

**U:** Normal scrimmage play responsibility. Do not signal touchdown. Let the wing and deep game officials rule and signal if a score has been made.

**HL/LJ:** You have goal line responsibilities from the 7-yard line and in. Be at the goal line. Communicate on every play with your downfield game official to let them know you will assume complete responsibility for ruling on all goal line plays. Only signal if you see the ball cross the goal line. Do not mirror signals.

**FJ/SJ:** When the ball is snapped outside the 25-yard line, assume your normal positions as in any scrimmage play. When the ball is put in play from the 25 to 7-yard line, position yourself on the goal line at the pylon. When play terminates on or near the goal line, you must be on the goal line to rule on the play. You are responsible for the goal line and your sideline. If the ball is snapped at the 7-yard line and in, you will now position yourself at the pylon on the end line.

**BJ:** Normal position on balls snapped outside the 25-yard line. On balls snapped from the 25- yard line and in, be at the end line. You have primary end line coverage. When the offense is in a tight power run formation (i.e., no split receivers), responsible for low blocks relating to linebackers and lead blockers.



## DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Touchdown requirements.
2. Digging at the goal line.
3. Signals at the goal line: umpire should not physically indicate whether ball is in end zone.
4. Catch requirements.
5. "In the air" possession.
6. End zone fouls.
7. Foul during touchdown: offense/defense.
8. "Hurry-up" offense.
9. Loss of down and automatic first down fouls.
10. Goal line plays are player compressed and tend to have more helmet-off plays.

### TRYS AND FIELD GOALS

**R:** Count the offense and signal. Position at an angle at least 7 yards to the side and a yard or two back of the kicker facing the holder. Responsible for action on the kicker and holder.

**U:** Take your regular position. Observe the action on the snapper. Note the jersey numbers of players on the line of scrimmage participating under the "number exception rule." Be very aware of illegal acts against the snapper.

**HL/LJ:** Take your regular positions. Observe the legal snap, tackle and back on your side. Don't leave the scrimmage line until the kicked ball crosses the line of scrimmage or you have a broken play. LJ be ready to cover the sideline from the line of scrimmage to the end line. You have goal line responsibility in case of a fake.

**FJ/BJ:** Take positions under the goal post to rule on the success or failure of the kick with both game officials giving a signal. BJ has the ruling on the cross bar.

**SJ:** Take position as a "second umpire" on all scoring kick formations on the defensive strength side.

## DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Eligible receivers in case of fake.
2. Roughing holder or kicker.
3. Protect snapper.
4. Blocked kick ends a try but a blocked field goal behind line of scrimmage can be advanced by either team.
5. Short field-goal attempt beyond line of scrimmage – treat as a scrimmage kick.

### REVERSE GOAL LINE

**HL/LJ:** When the ball is snapped on or inside A's 3-yard line, immediately move to the goal line.

**LJ:** When the ball is snapped from on or inside A's 7-yard line to the goal line, move toward the goal line to help the R with the forward progress as it relates to the goal line.

### TIME-OUTS

**ALL:** Communicate and confirm team time-outs taken.

**R:** Indicate a charged time-out by pointing to the requested team. Notify the head coach when team time-outs are exhausted.

**HL:** Stay with line-to-gain crew and inform coach of remaining team and media time-outs.

**BJ:** Time each time-out / stay with the defensive team or red hat if used.

**U:** Stay over the ball.

**LJ:** Inform coach of remaining team and media time-outs.

**FJ/SJ:** Be in a position to assist with bringing the teams back on the field.

### MEASUREMENTS

**R:** Clear Team A players from area where chains will be placed. Rule on first down.

**U:** Clear Team B players from area where chains will be placed. Take lead stake from line-to-gain crew.

**HL:** Holds chain clip at the appropriate yard line.

**LJ:** Marks spot for the HL.

**SJ:** Move down indicator to lead stake/set the new line-to-gain if a first down is declared.

**BJ:** Hold the ball for measurement on B's side of the ball. If short, maintain the spot until the ball is placed at the inbounds line.

**FJ:** Ensure that players and/or game officials don't block the view of the ball from the press box during the measurement. Have another game ball to give to the R if spot is short.

**HL:** If a first down, release the chains. SJ will set chains. If short, walk chain to sideline.

### GENERAL DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Be professional and polite when communicating with coaches and players.
2. Concentrate on your primary area. Know the game situation – anticipate what might happen on the play. Run through some possibilities in your mind. Know the number of the players for whom you are responsible.
3. Be in position. Proper mechanics can save you on the close ones. See the entire play. If there is a foul, it will present itself.
4. The best game officials have pre-loaded the mechanics, rules and philosophies. Judgment then comes naturally.



**MEDIA TIME-OUT GUIDELINES (IF APPLICABLE)**

**Time-Out Alert:** BJ inform the crew of a media time-out and move directly to the red hat.

**Time-Out Confirmed:** SJ/FJ immediately inform the coaches and stay with the teams.

**30-Second Mark:** BJ will alert crew and return to your position. SJ/FJ or LJ/HL bring out the teams and get player counts. Red hat extend arm directly out to the side.

**15 Second Mark:** R verify crew and team readiness. Red hat raise extended arm directly overhead and move to the sideline.

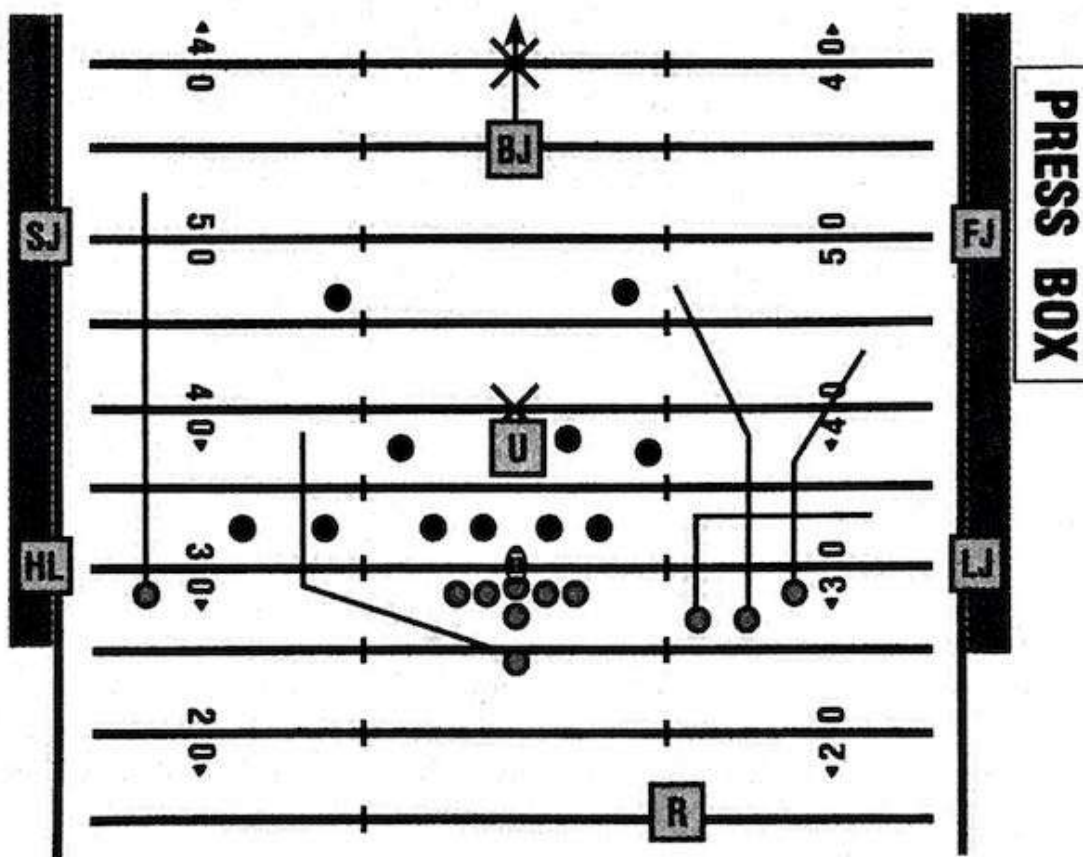
**Media Out:** Red hat give extended arm wind signal. R final check and ready for play signal.

**FADE MECHANICS OUTLINE**

Fade mechanics are the key to 7-game official officiating. When using seven-game officials on the field, fade mechanics provide the crew with the best possible looks at all plays and complete goal line coverage.

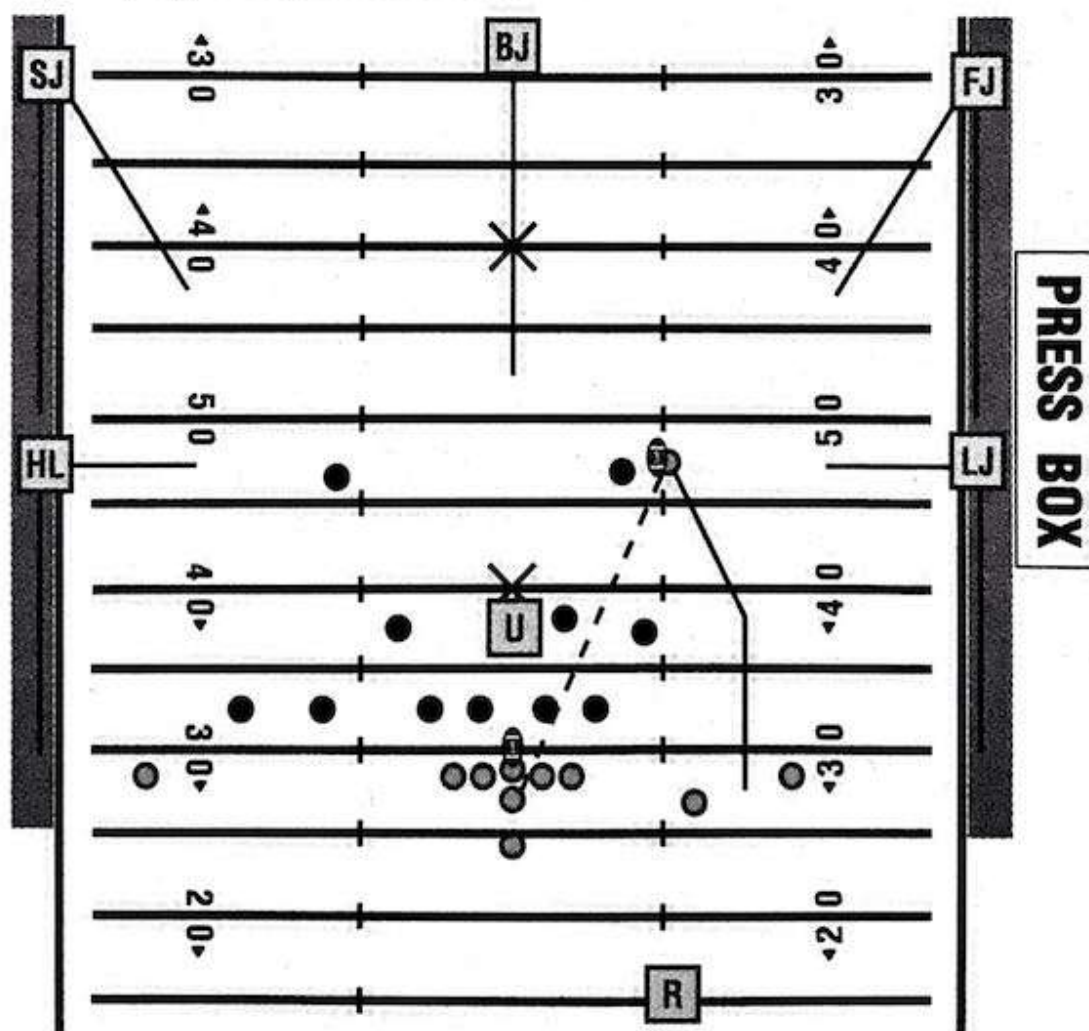
Fade mechanics are easy to explain and for some reason difficult to master. The SJ, FJ and BJ will be moving back (fading) on all pass plays and they are responsible for the goal line on ALL plays except short goal line mechanic situations. In other words, the deep game officials are responsible for the deep look. The HL and LJ will be responsible for the forward progress on all plays.

The only way to maintain a correct mechanic is for the crew to communicate constantly about situations that start to break down the proper mechanic. SJ & FJ



you are not responsible for forward progress so don't try to stay close to the play to get it. If the BJ sees that the SJ or FJ was a little tight on a play, bring it up. Do not move in on a play until it is over, including short runs. The best place to make a sideline ruling is from 10 to 15-yards away so get deep and keep it deep. The space between a deep game official and a receiver closes quickly so read and react even quicker. Just because you start with a 20-yard lead doesn't mean that you can take it easy. It only takes two seconds for a fast receiver to close that gap so be prepared on every play.

A typical pass play is diagramed below.



Trips right with a single receiver on the left and a back that goes out. This is an easy play to read pass out of. So, at the snap, start moving back and keep it going. As you can see, there are no deep receivers on the SJ side of the field. But because it is a pass, the SJ still needs to stay deeper than the deepest receiver. So, the SJ, FJ & BJ will all be moving back together. LJ stay home until the pass crosses the line. HL can go down five yards, but as you can see in this play, it would be better to stay on the line so that the #3 receiver can pass in front.

After the play is over the HL & LJ get the forward progress spot and the deep game officials angle in five to seven yards. All deep game officials need to respect the deepest receiver and the goal line when necessary. In a two minute or hurry-up situation you can stop the accordion mechanic to keep pace with the game.

**REVERSE FADE MECHANICS**

On a change of possession with a defensive return, line of scrimmage game officials (HL and LJ) become responsible for the goal line. Deep game officials (SJ and FJ) become responsible for forward progress.

**GUIDES FOR – "WHEN IN QUESTION"**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incomplete pass ..... incomplete pass or fumble</li> <li>• Forward or backward pass..... forward</li> <li>• Kick or pass touched or not..... not</li> <li>• Catch or not..... no catch</li> <li>• Passer has thrown ..... has thrown or fumbled</li> <li>• Touchback or safety ..... touchback</li> <li>• Defenseless or not..... defenseless</li> <li>• Excessive/unnecessary ..... excessive/unnecessary</li> <li>• Fumble or dead ball ..... dead ball</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helmet on or off..... off</li> <li>• Accidental or intentional .....accidental                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Contact</li> <li>b. Touching</li> <li>c. Kicking</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 5-15 Face Mask ..... 15</li> <li>• 5-15 Kicker/Holder..... 15</li> <li>• Forward pass crossed the.....has crossed neutral zone or the neutral zone extended</li> <li>• Passer in or outside..... outside of free-blocking zone</li> </ul>
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**PENALTY SUMMARY**

<b>LOSS OF 5 YARDS</b>		
<b>Foul</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Signal</b>
Delay of game	6-5-5	7-21
Illegal substitution	3-7	22
Free-kick infraction	6-1-2, 6-1-3b, 6-1-4, 6-1-11	7-19
Encroachment	6-1-3a, 7-1-1, 7-1-5, 7-1-6	7-18
Free kick out of bounds	6-1-9	19
Invalid or illegal fair-catch signal	6-5-7, 6-5-8	32
Snap infraction	7-1-2, 7-1-3	7-19
False start	7-1-7	7-19
Disconcerting act	7-1-9	7-23
Illegal formation	7-2-1, 7-2-2, 7-2-3	19
Less than five players on A's line or numbering violation	7-2-5	19
Illegal shift or illegal motion	7-2-6, 7-2-7	20
Planned loose-ball infraction	7-2-8	19
Illegally handing ball forward (also loss of down)	7-3-2, 7-3-3	35-9
Illegal forward pass (by A; also loss of down)	7-5-2	35-9
Illegal forward pass (by B)	7-5-2	35
Intentional grounding (also loss of down)	7-5-2d	36-9
Ineligible receiver illegally downfield	7-5-12	37
Illegal touching (also loss of down)	7-5-13	16-9
Helping runner	9-1	44
Incidental grasping of an opponent's face mask (or any helmet opening, chin strap or attached tooth and mouth protector)	9-4-3	45
Running into kicker/holder	9-4-5	30
Sideline interference	9-8-1k	7-29
Attendant illegally on field	9-8-2	19
Nonplayer outside of the team box, but not on field	9-8-3	7-29
<b>LOSS OF 10 YARDS</b>		
<b>Foul</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Signal</b>
Illegal kicking or batting the ball	6-2-1, 9-7	31
Illegal blocking technique	9-2-1a, 9-2-3a	42
Interlocked blocking	9-2-1b	44
Holding	9-2-1c; 9-2-3c, e	42
Runner grasping a teammate	9-2-2	42
Illegal use of hands or arms	9-2-1a; 9-2-2; 9-2-3a, b, d	42
Illegal block in the back	9-3-5	43
Illegal block on free kicks	9-3-7	43

LOSS OF 15 YARDS		
Foul	Reference	Signal
Unsportsmanlike conduct by player or nonplayer	9-5, 9-8-1	27
Illegal helmet contact against a defenseless player	2-32-16, 9-4-3i(3)	38-24
Illegal block after valid or invalid fair-catch signal	6-5-1, 9-3-3	43
Kick-catching interference	6-5-6	33
Forward-pass interference	7-5-10	33
If intentional an additional 15 yards	7-5-10	27
Illegal block below the waist	9-3-2	40
Illegal block on free-kicker or holder	9-3-4	30
Clipping	9-3-6	39
Chop block	9-3-6	41
Tripping	9-4-3o	38-46
Illegal personal contact outside restricted area	9-4-3	38
Charging into an opponent obviously out of the play	9-4-3	38
Grasping an opponent's face mask (or any helmet opening, chin strap or attached tooth and mouth protector)	9-4-3	38-45
Hurdle an opponent	9-4-3d	38
Butt block, face tackle or spear (Illegal Helmet Contact)	9-4-3i	38-24
Horse-collar	9-4-3	38-25
Initiate contact with a helmet-less opponent	9-4-3	38
Targeting an opponent	9-4-3m	38-24
Illegal blindside block	9-4-3n	38-26
Roughing passer (also first down)	9-4-4	38-34-8
Roughing kicker or holder (also first down)	9-4-5	38-30-8
Roughing snapper (also first down)	9-4-6	38-8
Slapping blocker's head	9-4-7	38
Illegal personal contact in restricted area	9-4-8	38-29
Illegal participation	9-6	28
Participating without a helmet beyond immediate action	9-6-4	28
Sideline interference (third and subsequent)	9-8-1k, 9-8-3	7-29-27
Nonplayer illegally on field	9-8-3	27
Unfair acts	9-9	27
DISQUALIFICATION ASSOCIATED WITH CERTAIN 15-YARD PENALTIES		
Foul	Reference	Signal
Fighting by player or nonplayer	9-4-1	38-47
Intentionally contacting a game official	9-4-2	38-47
Striking, kicking, kneeling	9-4-3j	38-47
Any act if unduly rough or flagrant (give proper signal and follow with 47)	9-4	47
A second unsportsmanlike foul by player or nonplayer	9-5, 9-8	27-47
A substitute leaving team box during a fight	9-8-1l	27-47



















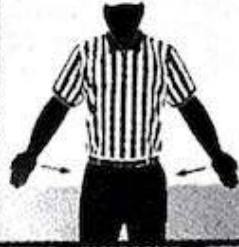








# NFHS OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS

<p>1 Ball ready for play *Untimed down</p>	<p>2 Start clock</p>	<p>3 Time-out Discretionary or injury time-out (followed by tapping hands on chest)</p>		
<p>4 TV/radio time-out</p>	<p>5 Touchdown, Field goal, Point(s) after touchdown</p>	<p>6 Safety</p>	<p>7 Dead ball foul, Touchback (move side to side)</p>	
<p>8 First down</p>	<p>9 Loss of down</p>	<p>10 Incomplete forward pass Penalty declined No play, no score Toss option deferred</p>	<p>11 Legal touching of forward pass or scrimmage kick</p>	<p>12 Inadvertent whistle</p>
<p>13 Disregard flag</p>	<p>14 End of period</p>	<p>15 Sideline warning</p>	<p>16 First touching Illegal touching</p>	<p>17 Reset play clock to 25 seconds (Use both hands to have play clock reset to 40 seconds)</p>
<p>18 Encroachment</p>	<p>19 False start Illegal formation Free kick infraction</p>	<p>20 Illegal shift (2 hands) Illegal motion (1 hand)</p>	<p>21 Delay of game</p>	<p>22 Substitution infraction</p>



# NFHS OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS

23 Disconcerting act 	24 Illegal helmet contact Targeting 	25 Illegal horse-collar tackle 	26 Illegal blindside block 	27 Unsportsmanlike conduct Noncontact foul 
28 Illegal participation 	29 Sideline interference (Face press box) 	30 Running into or Roughing kicker or holder 	31 Illegal batting/kicking (Followed by pointing toward toe for kicking) 	32 Invalid fair catch Illegal fair catch signal 
33 Forward pass interference Kick catching interference 	34 Roughing passer 	35 Illegal pass/forward handing (Face press box) 	36 Intentional grounding 	37 Ineligible downfield on pass 
38 Personal foul 	39 Clipping 	40 Blocking below waist 	41 Chop block 	42 Holding/obstruction illegal use of hands/arms 
43 Illegal block 	44 Helping runner Interlocked blocking 	45 Grasping face mask or helmet opening 	46 Tripping 	47 Disqualification 

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## **2022-2023 GAME OFFICIALS MANUAL**

### **POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

#### **Communication Between Coaches and Game Officials**

Football is an emotional game, due not only to the amount of physical contact between players but also to the competitive spirit ingrained in most players and coaches. Game officials and coaches must recognize the passion and intensity inherent in the game and manage their interactions in a way that avoids stoking the fire of emotional response to game situations.

Game officials must recognize their role in the game: to provide a service to the coaches and players in an unemotional and impartial manner. Game officials must always be respectful and maintain a calm demeanor in their comments to coaches, especially when tension is high. Game officials must avoid the urge to respond in kind to coaches who are vocal in their disagreement of the judgment of game officials. The game official's job is to de-escalate the tension and explain the decision in a concise and matter-of-fact manner. This is difficult to do, especially when a coach is screaming at a game official. In those cases, the game official must actively listen to what the coach is saying and then respond factually and unemotionally. Game officials must anticipate game situations where coaches will be upset and pre-emptively diffuse the situation. This requires strong communications skills and empathy and understanding of the coach's perspective. A game official should never threaten the coach with consequences for their behavior, nor should a game official become defensive. If a coach crosses the line, then the game official's option is to flag the coach for unsportsmanlike conduct. However, throwing a flag should be a last resort. A better approach is to clearly and calmly tell the coach that the comments or behavior are unacceptable, and that it's difficult to focus on the action on the field if the coach is repeatedly distracting the game official.

Coaches must understand that their behavior has a profound impact on their players. Players tend to behave the way their coaches behave. If coaches show little respect for game officials and make derogatory comments, players will likely treat game officials similarly. Coaches should win gracefully and lose with dignity. Coaches must also understand that the football field is an extension of the classroom and must set a strong example for their players to follow. This includes respecting the decisions of game officials even when they disagree, and handling disagreements in a civil and dignified manner. This doesn't mean that coaches must accept everything that occurs during the game without emotion. Rather, it means that if there is a disagreement, any discussion with game officials regarding that disagreement should be constructive and respectful, not confrontational. Handling any disagreement in a business-like manner teaches players good sportsmanship, which is a perennial focus of the NFHS.

By communicating respectfully, both game officials and coaches will leave with a positive experience. Neither game officials nor coaches do their jobs for the money; rather, they do it because of their love of the game. Through coaches' and game officials' behavior toward each other, players will learn a valuable life lesson regarding how to handle conflict.



### Officiating Intentional Grounding

A new, second exception to the intentional grounding rule has been added effective with the 2022 season.

Intentional grounding is a foul when a forward pass is thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible offensive receiver, or, when a forward pass is intentionally thrown incomplete to save loss of yardage or to conserve time. These acts are fouls in NFHS play with two exceptions:

- NFHS Rule 7-5-2 EXCEPTION 1. – It is legal for a player positioned directly behind the snapper to conserve time by intentionally throwing the ball forward to the ground immediately after receiving the snap that has neither been muffed nor touched the ground.
- NFHS Rule 7-5-2 EXCEPTION 2, (NEW) – It is legal for a player to conserve yardage by intentionally throwing an incomplete forward pass if:
  - a) The passer has been beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone as established at the snap; and
  - b) The pass reaches the neutral zone including the extension beyond the sideline.

The free-blocking zone, as determined at the snap, is 4 yards on each side of the football (3 yards in 6-, 8-, and 9-player) The referee can use the following guidelines to judge whether the passer has been beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone:

- If a passer moves at least three full steps laterally they have likely left the free-blocking zone.
- In normal splits, the inside foot of the tight end is in the free-blocking zone.
- The distance between a hash mark and the nearest goal post upright is 5 yards.
- The goal post uprights are almost 4 yards from the center of the field.
- By keeping these distances in mind, if the ball is spotted on a hash mark, on a goal post upright, or in the center of the field, then these become very convenient points of reference to assist in determining whether the passer was beyond the lateral boundary of the free-blocking zone.

Remember, if the passer has not met both requirements in EXCEPTION 2, it remains a foul if there was no eligible offensive receiver in the area, or, if an eligible offensive receiver in the area cannot make a bona-fide attempt to catch the forward pass (e.g., the forward pass is intentionally thrown to the ground short of an eligible offensive receiver, or the forward pass is intentionally thrown over an eligible offensive receiver's head). Many game officials choose to ignore this foul if there is an eligible offensive receiver in the general area of the forward pass. However, if the referee judges the forward pass was intentionally thrown incomplete, it is a foul. This is a foul that requires good crew communication and could be called after the game officials have gathered and discussed the play, or could result in the referee rescinding a flag that was dropped at the time the pass was thrown should a game official have additional information to provide to the referee that could alter the ruling.

Knowledgeable game officials recognize that some passes are incomplete or do not arrive in the immediate vicinity of the eligible offensive receiver because of the lack of skill on the part of the passer, a broken pattern on the part of the intended eligible offensive receiver, or because the passer's accuracy was affected by the action of the defense. These game officials can also recognize an intentional and purposeful act and they can consistently and judiciously administer the rules so that the team whose passer purposely incompletes a pass is penalized as required. When a foul does occur, the penalty flag needs to be thrown by the referee. The penalty is 5 yards from the spot of the foul and loss of down.

**GUIDES FOR "WHEN IN QUESTION"**

- Passer in or outside of free-blocking zone.....outside
- Forward pass crossed the neutral zone.....has crossed or the neutral zone extended

**Time-Sensitive Situations – End of Second and Fourth Periods**

Why is this important? One minute at the beginning of the game and one minute at the end of the game are both 60 seconds. Factors impacting the time remaining in a game include: score, field position, available time-outs, injury and penalty timing, and an early season game against a state championship. When one or a number of these situations occur, the game can become time-sensitive and the number of seconds in a minute carry great importance. Not only will the game be on the line, but everyone will be watching the clock.

NFHS football rules have been put in place to protect the integrity of the game timing. These rules are designed to prevent a team from either using an excessive amount of time or unfairly conserving time. The key to working time-sensitive situations is to understand the environment, and communicate that understanding to the game officials, coaches and players.

Working in a time-sensitive environment requires a heightened sense of awareness. When there are natural breaks in the game, game officials should remind each other when these conditions may exist. Game officials should discuss special clock rules relating to game time, fouls and injuries. Coaches should be reminded of the number of remaining time-outs, and that the game officials will be looking to them for their use. Game officials should also keep both teams informed of when the game clock will be starting (on the ready-for-play or on the snap). Game officials must know when to hustle to get the ball spotted, and referees should maintain a consistent tempo when winding the clock after an awarded first down, usually six to eight seconds into the play clock. If time may expire during live play, the off-game official (first to complete dead ball officiating) should check the game clock to determine if time remains in the half. If there is a penalty or other clock stopping event, game officials need to know whether the half is over, there is time remaining on the game clock or whether there will be an untimed down.

So, why is all of this important? Being prepared for time-sensitive situations can be the difference between a good night's sleep and multiple restless nights.

**Free-Kick Mechanics**

Except for the kickoffs starting each half, all others follow success or failure of teams on the previous series and are an opportunity to improve their position for subsequent play. During a kickoff, all 22 players are briefly moving the same direction (no kickoff shall start with more or less than 22 players), then heading toward each other at full speed eventually merging at a point of attack. Contact must be observed over the entire field while officials themselves are moving – a challenging task whether four-, five- or seven-crew members are present.

Successful coverage of kickoffs rests on a thorough pregame discussion. Depending on the number of crew members used, specific assignments of free-kick lines, the legality of the kick, downfield areas or numbered kicking team members must be acknowledged. For the traditional deep kick, coverage of the goal line and pylons, downfield movement, return in or away from the game official's position, clock starting and likely areas of illegal contact

must be covered. Teams may prefer a shorter kick (referred to as a "pooch" kick) or they may execute a squib kick. Both types of kicks limit return options. A fair catch is a possible outcome of a pooch kick. Understanding of which game official has responsibility for the catch versus contact around the receiver must be discussed. The squib kick is quickly grounded and maintains the status of a kick and the officiating challenges of a loose ball. Illegal contact, first touching and ultimate possession require precise crew actions.

The onside kick is a unique challenge. Responsibility for the kick legality, free kick lines, first touching by Team K, contact – both who initiated and if legal – must be discussed because contact will occur quickly. Possession will be aggressively fought for. Quick and decisive movement, determination of possession and restraining of extra participants are needed.

Fouls on free kicks range from the dead ball (encroachment and illegal kicking formation), live-ball fouls where it is critical to determine if the foul occurred during the kick or after change of possession to correctly enforce and the most common – the free kick out of bounds untouched by Team R. Careful explanations of options to the offended sideline requires precise crew communication in offering possible enforcement scenarios.

With a thorough pregame discussion of free kick mechanics, rules and different kick scenarios, the crew will be better equipped to handle unusual circumstances that may arise.



National Federation of State High School Associations

# OFFICIALS CODE OF ETHICS

Officials at an interscholastic athletic event are participants in the educational development of high school students. As such, they must exercise a high level of self-discipline, independence and responsibility. The purpose of this Code is to establish guidelines for ethical standards of conduct for all interscholastic officials.

- **Officials** shall master both the rules of the game and the mechanics necessary to enforce the rules, and shall exercise authority in an impartial, firm and controlled manner.
- **Officials** shall work with each other and their state associations in a constructive and cooperative manner.
- **Officials** shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession in all interaction with student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, school administrators, colleagues, and the public.
- **Officials** shall avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products beginning with the arrival at the competition site until departure following the completion of the contest.
- **Officials** shall prepare themselves both physically and mentally, shall dress neatly and appropriately, and shall comport themselves in a manner consistent with the high standards of the profession.
- **Officials** shall be punctual and professional in the fulfillment of all contractual obligations.
- **Officials** shall remain mindful that their conduct influences the respect that student-athletes, coaches and the public hold for the profession.
- **Officials** shall, while enforcing the rules of play, remain aware of the inherent risk of injury that competition poses to student-athletes. Where appropriate, officials shall inform event management of conditions or situations that appear unreasonably hazardous.
- **Officials** shall take reasonable steps to educate themselves in the recognition of emergency conditions that might arise during the course of competition.
- **Officials** shall maintain an ethical approach while participating in forums, chat rooms and all forms of social media.



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