

MECHANICS GEORGIA FOOTBALL OFFICIATING MANUAL



**6-PERSON CREW
AND
7-PERSON CREW**

PLUS COVERAGE FOR 4-PERSON AND 5-PERSON CREWS

REFEREE

PUBLISHED BY REFEREE AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPORTS OFFICIALS

***Georgia Football Officiating Mechanics Manual:
6-Person Crew and 7-Person Crew***

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INFORMATION

A. REVISION TO MANUAL'S CONTENT FROM 2022

For 2024 the GHSA Football Officials Manual has kept the format introduced in the major 2013 revision. The focus of the Manual remains shifted away from detailed explanations of specific coverage to be given, by position, in each of several pre-defined situations to more general coverage by the crew as a whole in more flexibly defined situations. The content of this Manual is meant to cover activities of 6-Person crews (for Varsity games) and 4-Person crews (for Sub-Varsity games). Effective in 2019 an entirely separate manual was used to cover 7-Person crews. However, as much of the mechanics as was deemed feasible was kept in common between the 6-Person and 7-Person versions of varsity crews. While the 7-Person manual is written in an entirely new format, it depends upon the 6-Person manual as a “base.” Wherever in the 7-Person manual there is NO coverage defined, the 6-Person manual should be used. For example, the 6-Person manual covers overtime situations; there is no such coverage in the 7-Person manual. Therefore, for overtime situations, the 6-Person manual remains the controlling document.

These are the major changes from 2022 in the 2024 Officials Manual:

1. Kickoff position for the Referee: line up directly in line with the lateral ball placement for the kick.
2. Wings movement on 3rd and 4th down: when the line to gain is 3 yards or fewer from the line of scrimmage, both wings will go to the line to gain after the snap.

CHAPTER 2

GHSА MANDATES

A. GHSА BY-LAWS EXCERPTS FOR FOOTBALL OFFICIALS

Due to possible conflicts imposed by the timing of changes in publications, officials are directed to the GHSА “White Book” (the Constitution and by-laws for the current school year). In any case of conflict, the information in the “White Book” takes precedence over this manual. The electronic version of the “White Book” can be found at <https://www.ghsa.net/constitution>.

This section has been effectively eliminated from this manual. In its place, officials are directed to the GHSА “White Book” (the Constitution and by-Laws for the current school year). There are a few situations, such as rules for overtime play at the sub-varsity level, that are NOT currently covered in the “White Book.” Such items ARE covered in this Manual. However, in the case where these might be added to the “White Book” at some future time, officials are encouraged to regularly consult the “White Book” for the latest controlling information. In ANY case of conflict, the information in the “White Book” takes precedence.

B. GHSА OVERTIME PROCEDURE

Please see the GHSА “White Book” for the latest Overtime Rules and Procedures and the GHSА Football Training website for mechanics and case plays.

C. GHSА POLICY ON INTERRUPTED GAMES

GHSА policies on interrupted games are covered in the GHSА “White Book.”

D. GHSА EJECTION PROCEDURE

An ejection should occur only when the rules of a sport mandate it, or when the individual to be ejected is so out of control that his/her unsportsmanlike behavior intrudes upon and overshadows the contest. Whenever an official is required to eject an athlete or a coach from a contest, the following procedures need to be followed:

1. Within the rules and the mechanics of the specific sport, announce the ejection by making eye contact with the ejected player or coach. Do not make physical contact with that individual. Try to avoid “toe-to-toe” confrontations, but be within 20 feet of the ejected person.
2. Instruct the player to go to his/her head coach immediately.
3. The Referee shall go to the sidelines, make eye contact with the head coach and announce that the player (identified by jersey number) has been ejected from the contest and state the reason for the ejection.
4. The ejected player shall remain in the team’s bench area. Each additional disturbance results in an unsportsmanlike penalty against the head coach and may result in that coach’s ejection, also. In that case, both the coach and the player will leave the competition area.
5. The ejection of a coach requires that the official approach and make eye contact with the coach, announce the ejection of the coach, and instruct the coach to leave the competition area. In addition, if the head coach is the coach ejected, the official must ask which coach or other official school representative with function as the head coach in the absence of the ejected coach.
6. The ejected coach shall leave the competition area and go to the locker room, the bus, or some other area out of sight and sound of the game. An ejected coach may NOT be allowed to stay in the competition area as a spectator.
7. After the contest, a precise account of the ejection must be filed in a “Game Report” to the Georgia High School Association. A game report may include more than one ejection. An official has no option about whether to report an ejection. The written account should be complete, factual, and non-inflammatory.

E. GHSA GAME REPORT FILING REQUIREMENTS

Game Reports from officials should be filed with the GHSA office as soon as possible for the following situations: (Note: Reports must be filed on the “Game Report” form as provided to the association secretary.)

1. Ejections – Be certain to cite the name, jersey number and school of the ejected player or the name and school of the ejected coach and specify the behavior involved in a brief, professional manner.
2. Any pre-game or post-game problems involving players, coaches, and/or fans. This includes any action that results in a coach’s attempt to “protest” a game. GHSA no longer recognizes protests of football games. However, any condition that results in a coach’s attempt or threat to file a protest should be detailed in a Game Report.
3. Any problems related to field/court conditions.
4. Failure of host management to provide adequate security for officials at the game site.

5. Any major injuries requiring extraordinary attention.
6. Any other incident detailed in this manual that specifically states that a game report must be filed.

NOTE: It is not necessary to report sportsmanship violations that do not result in ejections.

The Game Reports should be factual narratives without any editorial comments. The comments should be written professionally so that they thoroughly describe the behaviors involved without any editorial comments. These reports are sent to the Principal of the school involved along with a letter from the Executive Director of the GHSA. One copy of this report should be sent to the GHSA Office, and a second copy should be kept with the association's records.

Game Reports dealing with unusual situations such as attempted protests, "intentional attempts to injure" or "multi-player fights" must be received by the GHSA within 24 hours of the end of that contest. The GHSA fax machine is operative 24 hours a day, as is the voice mail of the Executive Director (see GHSA.NET).

F. GHSA GAMES WITH RUNNING CLOCKS

GHSA has prescribed procedures for establishing a "running clock" when certain point differentials are reached during any GHSA-sanctioned football game. The following applies:

1. Each quarter of the game ends with the same clock status ("running" or "not running") as the quarter was begun.
2. The threshold for running clock situations occurs at the beginning of the 3rd or 4th quarters, only.
3. The point differential that triggers running clock decisions is 30 or more points.
4. If the 30 point differential is met to start the 3rd quarter, the head coach of the team behind in the score has the option of having (or not having) a running clock.
5. If the 30 point differential is met to start the 4th quarter, there are no options; a running clock shall be used.
6. While in a running clock condition, the clock shall still be stopped for any and all "TIPS" situations:

"T" = Timeouts. This applies to both charged and officials' timeouts (if any).

"I" = Injuries. Any injuries requiring an officials' timeout.

"P" = Penalties. Any penalties requiring an officials' timeout.

"S" = Scores. The clock remains stopped until the ball's being legally touched inbounds during the free kick following the score or on the snap following the free kick down if the clock did not start during the free kick.

CHAPTER 3

GHSAA GENERAL MECHANICS

A. THE “MOBILE BOX” CONCEPT

From the earliest days of officiating, football officials have been taught to “box in the play”. That was a difficult task with two or three officials and was made easier when most schools opted for four officials. Now that officiating has graduated to five, six or seven officials on the field, the task might seem simple. That, however, is not the case.

Many officials believe (or have been taught) that more officials mean less movement by each official, but that is not necessarily true. It will always be important to keep plays boxed in. In fact, keeping the play surrounded on all sides to the greatest extent possible is the PRIMARY mechanic under which each of the detailed mechanics have been developed. The idea of boxing in the play is quite evident in pre-play positioning. Once the play begins, many adjustments have to be made to maintain a “mobile box” surrounding the play.

The “Mobile Box” for officials should move down the field as the players and the ball move down the field. Wing and deep officials need to remain off the field of play until time to square in to a dead ball spot. The box needs to move laterally as the players and ball move in that direction. If at all possible, officials should remain both ahead of and behind the play as the play develops; officials on the periphery should remain outside all players and work an “outside-in” technique. Generally only the Umpire will not be on the periphery; he, alone, routinely works “inside-out.”

Here are some examples of game action. Imagine how the box might need to move on:

- Running plays up the middle (short gainers; long gainers)
- Passing plays (short or deep; down the middle or to the sideline)
- Runs to the side-zone
- Free kicks and their returns
- Scrimmage kicks and their returns

Be aware that the “Mobile Box” should be used even during kicks returns and turnovers. For example, when using a six man crew and the ball is intercepted, the Head Head Line-Judge and Line Judge now reverse responsibilities with that of the Side Judge and Field Judge; this is termed working “reverse mechanics” on such plays.

The “Mobile Box” will have officials who are responsible for observing the action around the point of attack. Other officials will be responsible for observing off-ball action – usually this is called “cleaning up” behind the play. Officials need to be close enough to the play to see the action accurately. But the officials need to be wide enough from the action to have an adequate field of vision without having to turn their heads.

For all the detailed mechanics which attempt to have the official as stationary as possible at the time of his call/no-call, maintaining the “Mobile Box” remains the primary mechanic. Officials must “hustle” but not “hurry” to maintain their proper position in the “Mobile Box” at all times.

B. THE CREW CONCEPT AND AUXILIARY SIGNALS

The proper conduct of the game requires that all officials on the crew work together as a team. Officials working positions adjacent-to or across-the-field-from other officials, especially, must be aware of what those nearby officials are doing. This is true in terms of pre-snap / pre-kick situations as well as what each is doing as the play develops. To facilitate communication between officials who are typically well out of earshot a series of auxiliary signals has been developed:

1. Wing officials’ declaration of players outside the last offensive player on the line of scrimmage (outside the linemen) who are also legal offensive backs.
2. Counts of players prior to the snap or free kick.
3. Dead ball signals.

C. DISTANCE, ANGLES AND FIELD-OF-VISION

Under the “Mobile Box” concept, the idea is to facilitate officials’ movement to the spot where they are most likely to need to be to make a call / no-call even as they strive to be as stationary as possible at the time a call / no-call is made. The ideal distance to be away from action that is being judged is approximately 10-15 yards. While this is clearly not a possibility on all plays, keeping as much distance from the play as possible without being too far away from the action to be judged is important to each official on each play.

In addition to distance, each official needs to strive to have a field-of-vision in front of him of something just short of approximately 45 degrees to either the left or right. That is he needs to be able to see without turning his head all the action in his area of responsibility without having to turn his head to see this action if at all possible. Effective field-of-vision varies between individuals; therefore, there is no one “standard” that can be applied. Based upon individual limits, officials need to be far enough away for their field-of-vision to see all pertinent action in their areas of responsibility. This means people with narrower fields-of-

vision must be more distant from the action they need to observe. However, this comes at the cost of having less ability to see important detail at that distance. Each official has to adjust appropriately to his own physical limitations. And when his visual acuity diminishes for whatever reason, he must know when it is time for him to find a different avocation that doesn't require the good eyesight that is required to be an effective football official.

Officials must avoid artificially narrowing their field-of-vision by concentrating too closely on any one aspect of action in their area of responsibility. The most frequent and obvious problem of this type to be avoided is "ball watching" or concentrating too closely on the ball as to miss important action in the area of the ball. For example, officials with responsibility for forward progress on a play must also have enough concentration away from the ball to be able to correctly determine whether an eventual tackle on the ball carrier was done legally.

Another important concept is to avoid "straight lining" where some important aspect of the play is obscured by another aspect of the play. For example, the official's view to the ball may be blocked by a player's body; or a player's body may block the view of the official to the player's hands – keeping the official from being able to detect Holding. This means keeping an "angle" of observance "to the side" of the action. This does not need to be a large angle, but there must be enough of an angle to observe all action pertinent to the call / no-call to be made.

D. USING KEYS TO DETERMINE COVERAGE

All officials must use "keys" to determine what sort of play is developing and what coverage they must provide as that type play develops. For example, "reading" the block of the offensive tackles gives a good indication of whether a passing or a running play is developing. If the tackle blocks aggressively, "read" run; if he blocks passively, "read" pass. Reading the movement of potential pass receivers can also aid wing officials and deep judges in deciding how deep downfield their movements are likely to need to be made.

The caution with keys is that they provide a good initial method of determining types of plays and the planned development of the play. But mistakes made by the offense or countering moves made by the defense alter the actual course of most plays in the game. Sticking with a "key" too long can take an official out-of-position for the play as it actually develops.

NOTE: See Pre-Snap Routine and Progressions for each position.

E. USING FLAGS, BEANBAGS AND HATS CORRECTLY

1. Flags

FLAGS ARE USED TO INDICATE A FOUL HAS OCCURRED, ONLY.

USING THE FLAG FOR LIVE BALL FOULS:

- During running plays live ball fouls may result in penalty yardage being marked off from the "spot of the foul." Actually, the penalty yardage may be marked off from the

yard line that runs through the true “spot” of the foul. Therefore, flags “thrown” during running plays need to land as close as possible to that yard line.

- During loose ball plays the spot of the foul will never be the spot for penalty enforcement. For example, pass interference (offensive or defensive) will always be enforced from the previous spot. In loose ball plays it is better to have the flag thrown in the general direction of the offending player, but not directly at him, than it is to have it land precisely on the yard line of the foul.
- In addition to the flag for a live ball foul, the calling official should sound a staccato whistle at the down's end to draw everyone's attention to the fact that a live ball foul has occurred and that this needs to be dealt with before any other non-emergency situation has been handled.
- When crews are equipped with radios, use of these to report fouls is encouraged. Some sort of standard method of reporting should be adopted to both enhance accuracy of the reports and minimize the time required to make the report.

Using The Flag For Dead Ball Fouls:

- Dead ball fouls will always be enforced from the succeeding spot.
- For prior-to-the-snap fouls, such as false start or encroachment, the wing officials should drop the flag in the direction of the offending team. This provides a quick, easy and unobtrusive way to signal to the Referee which team was judged at fault.
- For major fouls, such as unsportsmanlike conduct, throwing the flag high indicates to anyone in the stadium who is watching that something seriously wrong has taken place.
- It is rarely necessary to “bring rain” as in the bullet above. Use this technique only for truly ugly fouls.

2. Beanbags

- PRIMARY SITUATIONS IN WHICH YOU SHOULD USE THE BEANBAG:
- Marking the spot a ball carrier lost possession of the ball on a fumble.
- Marking the spot where a kick returner or defensive back gained control of the ball when his momentum carries him into the end zone.
- Marking the spot where possession of a scrimmage kick is gained by the receiving team on a kick that has crossed the neutral zone expanded.

NOTE: The beanbag should be used to mark the above three types of spots every time they are observed.

Secondary Situations In Which You Could Use The Beanbag:

- Marking the spot where a ball carrier went out of bounds (in addition to standing on that spot).
- Marking the forward progress of a ball carrier when he has been pushed back and there is continuing action on him. Note: This mechanic should be used only by the Referee on tackles behind the line of scrimmage (see below).

How To Use The Beanbag When Needed:

- Since the beanbag is always used to mark a precise spot, it should be carried to that spot and dropped – or at least dropped on that yard line extended if you are not near that exact spot.
- Keep the beanbag in your belt or in your hand and develop the habit of using it.
- At the high school level, there is no need to mark the spot of every change of possession.
- Referees may find it helpful to mark forward progress of a passer who is being sacked with the beanbag. The flank officials are generally downfield and cannot help. The passer is being pushed back and the Referee must keep attention on that action. Dropping the beanbag and then moving to retrieve the ball is an easy process.
- It is not a good idea to drop the beanbag on the out-of-bounds spot and then leave it to retrieve the ball. Even in a crew of 4, this should be a last resort. Hold the spot and drop the beanbag just in case an unusual situation arises.

3. Hats

- Primarily the hat should be worn. However, when a player leaves the field during a live ball and his return during the same play would be illegal participation, a hat should be dropped near the point of the player's exit. There is no foul at the point of such exit. But if that player returns illegally, the dropped hat is the indication that the subsequent foul for illegal participation is based on such exit and illegal return.

F. HANDLING FIGHT SITUATIONS

1. Preventive Measures:

- Make your presence known by talking to players at the end of each play. These words should be of an encouraging nature; such as "Good job, everybody up easy," or "OK, the play is over, ease up." When you need to take sterner measures, do so in a professional way. Never use profanity toward a player.
- Be sure to take strong measures early in the ball game to deal with taunting and baiting incidents by issuing warnings and then penalties. Constant warning without penalties becomes meaningless. Remember – flagrant violations do not need warnings before penalties are imposed.

2. Reactive Measures:

- Officials in the immediate area of the fight should use their voice, whistle, and body positioning to separate players who are mouthing at one another chest-to-chest, or who are pushing and “chicken fighting”.
- Officials must not grasp, push, or pull a player unless it is an emergency situation in which a player on the bottom is in jeopardy of being injured by the hitting/kicking of the player on the top in the fight.
- Once a fight breaks out, everyone is better off if the number of people fighting is kept to a minimum. Officials who are near the sidelines and away from the fight should initially turn toward their sideline and let all the players on that sideline know that they must not come onto the field until the fight has ended and the football game has resumed.
- Officials who are not in the area of the field where the fight is occurring should write down the jersey numbers of all players who are involved in the fight, and the jersey numbers of all substitutes who leave the team box area during the fight.
- Allow coaches to come onto the field to separate combatants.
- If this is a large-scale fight and/or substitutes come onto the field, both teams should be sent to their respective sidelines while the officials sort out the players who are to be ejected.
- Once order has been restored and the teams separated, the entire officiating crew should meet together to discuss the numbers of those players to be ejected. Then the Referee should notify each head coach personally about those players who have been ejected. These decisions are not negotiable and videotape cannot be used to make the decision or to change the decision.

NOTE: The jersey number(s) of the ejected player(s) must be recorded in some type of permanent manner and included on the Game Report(s) and filed with the Georgia High School Association. All Game Reports should be transmitted to the GHSA office within 24 hours of the completion of the game.

6. EFFICIENT PENALTY ENFORCEMENT TECHNIQUES

1. Goals

- Create consistency in our mechanics.
- Be as efficient as possible.
- Promote confidence and eliminate the appearance of confusion by moving smartly and with purpose while specifically avoiding the appearance of wandering around.

2. Expected Results

- Move the game along at a more professional pace.
- Appear more confident as a crew.
- Draw less criticism.
- Reduce game time.
- Save steps/energy.

3. Calling Official's Requirements

- Stop the clock.
- If a live-ball foul, sound a whistle so that everyone else is alerted to the fact that a foul call has been made (staccato whistle).
- Get the offending player's number.
- If multiple flags in the same area:
 - a. Get together with other calling official(s) and make a determination as to what will be reported.
 - b. If one foul, make a decision quickly and only one official reports the foul to the Referee.
 - c. If multiple fouls, all 'calling officials' report their fouls to the Referee.
- Report foul(s) to the Referee.
 - a. Fouls prior to the snap:
 - Calling official will meet the Referee at the ball to report the foul.
 - The Umpire and both wings will also come in to hear the report given to the Referee.

NOTE: On Dead Ball Fouls with one official making the call: Wing Official – False Start, Encroachment & Illegal Substitution or Field Judge – Delay-of-Game – the calling official may give the prescribed signal for the type of foul to the Referee as he is moving to report the number of the offending player.

b. Live ball or post-play fouls (when available, reporting by radio is encouraged):

- i. If the end of the play is more than fifteen yards downfield, meet the Referee:
 - a. at the spot of the flag, or
 - b. "half way" as he (the Referee) is advancing downfield.
- ii. If the end of the play is less than fifteen yards downfield or the succeeding spot would otherwise be the previous spot, meet the Referee at the previous spot, or the spot of the flag and report clearly, concisely, completely, and calmly the:
 - Result of the play (catch/no catch, turnover, first down, etc.).

- The type of play from an enforcement point-of-view: Loose ball, Running or Post-Scrimmage Kick (PSK).
 - The type of foul (Holding, Personal Foul, Pass Interference, etc.).
 - The offending team.
 - The offending player's number.
- Reporting Examples:

- I have Defensive Pass Interference on #38 – the pass was incomplete.
- I have Holding on the Offense # 75 – the foul was on the 45 at the Spot of the flag.
- After the play - I have a Dead Ball Personal Foul on #45 of the Offense for a late hit. The offense got a 1st down on the play and the ball carrier went OOB.
- During the Play – I have a Personal foul on #78 of the Defense – there was a touchdown on the play by the Offense

NOTE: Never forget about Clock Status and where the play ended (Spot). Be prepared to discuss enforcement and team options. Then complete other duties specific to your position (below).

4. Other Officials' Duties by Position

Referee

- Gather information (see above 'Report foul(s) to the Referee').
- Give preliminary signal, if needed. – See Notes Below
- Step out of player traffic and make yourself easily visible to press box to give signals (do not Run 10 yards away). Stand completely stationary and face the press box when making all penalty signals.

Note on Referee's signals for fouls –

- No preliminary Signals on Pre-Snap Fouls (FS, IC or Illegal Sub, ODG)
Also no "dead ball" signal (signal 7) for pre-snap violations.
- Start Arms at your side
- Pause
- Give clear signal (Arms straight out or at your chest – never over your head)
- Give the Next down at the end
- Arms down to your side
- Pause
- Jog Away

- If you have a Microphone – Speak clearly – No Numbers – Less is more.
 - Example – False Start – Offense – 5 Yard Penalty – 2nd down
 - Example – After the Play (while giving the DB Signal) – Personal Foul – Defense – 15 yard penalty – 1st down
 - Use “After the Play” instead of Dead Ball
 - Do NOT try to explain penalties like PSK – use “by rule the Penalty will be from ...”
 - Pre-snap Foul – No reason to give Dead Ball Signal everyone knows the Ball was dead.
- d. If obvious, make decisions for a team.
- e. Tell the Umpire:
- The enforcement spot.
 - Direction in which to mark off the penalty.
 - The distance portion of the penalty.
 - The destination yard line if limited to half the distance to the goal.
- f. Move with purpose by walking briskly and/or jogging to position. Do not run around as it gives the appearance of confusion and/or indecision.
- g. Post enforcement:
- Make sure all officials and the chains are in position.
 - Mark the ball ready for play without undue delay.
 - Don't rush the ready for play if players seem confused or disorganized as a result of penalty administration.

Umpire

- a. Find out what the flag is for as soon as possible.
- b. Become an expert in penalty administration and be an aid to the Referee throughout the enforcement process.
- c. If a team decision is needed, find a team captain.
- d. Get the football.
- e. Listen to the Referee's instructions (again, be an aid....don't let the Referee make a mistake).

- f. Walk off the distance, and put the ball down quickly and purposefully.
- g. Check the distance with your wing officials.
- h. Assist the Referee with clock status.

Head Line-Judge

- a. Communicate with the head coach the foul and anything unusual such as a loss of down or status of the clock if near the end of a half.
- b. Cover flags, as needed, if deep judge on your side is calling official.
- c. Walk the penalty off with the Umpire.
- d. You are the primary confirmation on penalty administration.

Line Judge

- a. Communicate with the head coach the foul and anything unusual such as a loss of down or status of the clock if near the end of a half.
- b. You are the secondary confirmation on penalty administration.
- c. Cover flags, as needed, if deep judge on your side is calling official.
- d. Assist the Referee by signaling resulting down and the clock status.

Deep Officials (Field Judge and Side Judge)

- a. Communicate the status of the ball and the result of the play. Be prepared to 'hold the spot' until an enforcement choice is made.
- b. You are primarily responsible for 'covering' flags as the calling official reports the foul(s) to the Referee. All flags should be covered even if it means covering a flag on the opposite side of the field. Exceptions: Dead ball fouls called by wing officials do NOT need to be covered by the deep judges. Similarly, delay-of-game calls by the Field Judge do NOT require coverage by any other official.
- c. You are responsible for clock status.
- d. You are the third party for confirmation on penalty administration.

5. General Commentary

- There are too many scenarios to specifically address exactly where to conduct the 'report foul' discussion between the calling official and the Referee. Common sense should prevail. Once the Referee is aware that a foul has occurred, he should proactively move toward the calling official to expedite the enforcement process. Likewise, the calling official should make every effort to meet the Referee at the most efficient spot, which could be the previous spot. Remember, the mechanic

also requires the Umpire to be a second set of ears in deciphering information from the calling official and determining enforcement options. With that in mind, it makes sense for the deep officials to make every effort to return to an area that is most convenient for both Referee and Umpire to participate.

6. Other Tips about Penalty Enforcement

- Most pre-snap fouls will require very little discussion. The Referee should pick up the player number in most situations, even when he does not have a flag.
- Give preliminary signal as soon as possible.
- Eliminate two signals whenever possible.
- Everyone on the crew should know, understand and be able to explain penalty administration to the coaches.
- Free Kick Fouls: Side Judge or Field Judge should get the decision from the sideline coach ASAP.
- Communicate clock status to the Referee and the entire crew.

H. PRE-GAME MEETING WITH THE CREW

1. Preparation

- Record your game assignment including date, site & time for meeting other officials, and site & time of game.
- Double check to ensure that all of your uniform & officiating equipment is packed and with you.
- Do not consume any alcoholic beverages within 24 hours prior to game time.
- Schedule your arrival time at the game site to allow every crew member to be dressed and the Pre-game started no less than 90 minutes prior to scheduled kick-off time. (Arrival time for playoff games is 2 hours prior to scheduled kick-off).

2. Conference

- Prior to the conference's beginning, the Referee should let the home team management know that the officiating crew has arrived.
- Pre-game should begin no later than 1:30 minutes prior to kick-off with all officials dressed in uniform and ready to participate in the pre-game conference.
- The Field Judge will inform the crew of the official time. The Field Judge will ensure

that the 25-second and 40-second functions on his watch are working properly. In the case of 7-Person crews, 25/40 second functions belong to the Back Judge.

- The Referee will lead a group discussion of the following responsibilities:
- Pre-game field observations and duties of all officials.
- Mechanics for coin toss.
- Mechanics for positioning, coverage, and common rules infractions on:
 - i. Free kicks.
 - ii. Scrimmage kicks.
 - iii. Running plays.
 - iv. Passing Plays.
 - v. Short yardage and goal line plays.
- Mechanics for reporting and administering penalties.
- Mechanics and rules on starting the clock, stopping the clock, and time out periods. He will also release the ECO in time for the ECO to be at the clock control point 40 minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off of all Varsity games.
- Officials who must coordinate their activities on certain types of plays will discuss those issues.
- Discuss any information about the teams involved that will be beneficial for this game.
- Discuss the need to see the ball before blowing the whistle, and discuss the ways to handle inadvertent whistles.
- Save any discussion of the GHSA Overtime Procedure until half time if it will be in effect for this game.

3. Comments about the Pre-game meeting

- “Lead a discussion” does not mean that the Referee talks for 30 minutes. The Referee should have each member discuss with the crew their duties on specific situations and how their responsibilities and coverage interact with other officials, players and coaches. The Referee should listen carefully to each official’s comments and keep them focused on the topic, correct any errors and prompt officials to include anything they may have omitted. Remind the crew that they are a team and that any member who has a question in their mind about the way a penalty is being administered (i.e. direction, yardage, spot etc.) or if there is a question as to the proper down should bring their concern to the Referee at that time so a correction can be made.

I. PRE-GAME FIELD RESPONSIBILITIES AND MEETING WITH THE COACHES

1. General:

- Officials are required to take charge of the field not later than 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the game. Note: 40 to 45 is preferred – But you must have a good pregame.
- Every official has pre-game duties to perform. These duties should be performed in a professional and purposeful manner.
- Safety is our number one concern; establishing this fact is a primary requirement for all officials once they have reported to the field.
- Officials should go as a group to the 50 yard line on the press box side of the field in time to release the ECO to his game-clock-checking duties so that he can begin the countdown to kick-off at 30 minutes of clock time (barring unexpected difficulties with the clock). Exception: The Referee and Umpire may stop to conduct their pre-game meeting with the head coach of the home team if walking past him would produce an unnecessary delay in conducting their pregame meeting with him.
- Here are the questions the Referee should ask each head coach:
 - a. Is your team properly and legally equipped?
 - b. Is your team going to practice good sportsmanship?
 - c. Are you the coach responsible for calling timeouts and accepting or declining penalties?
 - d. If you win the coin toss, what choice would you like?
 - e. (Games of different classifications) Just to confirm, we are or are not playing overtime if we are tied at the end of regulation?
 - f. Who are your captains?
 - g. Is there anything you are planning tonight that might catch me and my crew by surprise?
- Following completion of specific, by position duties it is permissible for officials to:
- Individually return to the dressing area, as needed. However, the crew as a whole remains responsible for the field. Therefore, the bulk of the crew should always remain on the field once responsibility for the field has been established (barring an emergency situation).
- Move to one end of the field for individual warm-up exercises.
- The Referee and Umpire need to schedule time prior to assembling team captains in the end zone(s) with the balance of the on-field crew to discuss any items of concern that arose during the pre-game meeting with the coaches. This includes at a minimum the identification of the team captains for each team.

2. Officials' Duties by Position:

See the individual pre-game responsibilities listed in each of the on-field crew configurations (6-Person, 7-Person & 4-Person).

J. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR ELECTRONIC CLOCK OPERATORS

- Reporting to the Game Site
 1. Report to the site at the same time as the rest of the crew.
 2. Arrive dressed as the rest of the crew, depending on your associations' requirements.
- Participating in the Pre-Game Meeting
 1. Synchronize time with the Field Judge (FJ) or Back Judge (BJ - depending on crew size) like all other crew members.
 2. Be prepared to discuss your role in the game like all other crew members.
 3. Be prepared to discuss what to do if the field clock fails during the game and you have to come down to the field to keep time with your auxiliary timer.
 4. Agree with R on how you will signal your readiness just prior to any free kick.
 5. Ask any questions that you have about how to be the ECO for this game. Don't leave the pre-game meeting with questions in your mind about your role.
- Special Equipment Needed by ECO
 1. The ECO wears a complete game uniform. However, you do not need flags, beanbags or whistles in your ECO role. Other equipment may be useful. Depending upon local association requirements, keeping a game card may be a good idea, for example.
 2. The ECO does need some special equipment and supplies:
 - a. An alternate or auxiliary timer other than the field clock. Any clock with a stopwatch type feature that will count down from 20 minutes will work.
 - b. Something to signal readiness to R prior to each kickoff. This can be a small flashlight, a red LED or your hat. What is satisfactory for any particular game depends on R's choice. When radios are available, use of these is the preferred method of signaling readiness.
 - c. The crew line-up cards if provided by your local association (2 copies, obtained from R). One is for use by the stadium announcer; the other is for use by a GHSA evaluator, if any.
 - d. Paper and pen or pencil for recording events as required by your local association.
- Going to the Field from Pre-Game Meeting
 1. Go directly to the location of the clock controls, usually the press box.
 2. Leave the pre-game crew meeting in time to have COMPLETED your pre-game clock checks and have the clock running down to kick-off time NOT LATER THAN 30 minutes before the game's scheduled kickoff time. For example, at latest the clock would be set at 7 PM to 30 minutes and counting down to zero if scheduled kick-off is 7:30 PM. This generally means the ECO must be at the clock control point 40 minutes before kick-off.
- Testing the Clock under GHSA Procedures
 1. Most sites have electronic controls. Some sites still have electro-mechanical controls. Either way, know how to set time, start and stop the clock and adjust

the time should you be requested to do so. This has to be practiced. Pre-game is the time to practice. Special care should be taken with on/off switches that operate off a pigtail (make sure the pigtail is tightly attached to the control box and that the on/off feature works consistently however the pigtail is held/used by you). Do not wait until game time to discover problems! During this practice time you have ample opportunity to fix any problems you have with the setup (sightlines to the field, location of the control box, etc.).

The GHSA requires that the following minimum tests be performed:

- a. Set the clock to 5 minutes.
- b. Allow it to run down to zero, note whether the horn does (or does not) sound as it should. If it does not, this information needs to be relayed to game management via the LJ and to R before the start of the game.
- c. Compare time on the clock with your alternate countdown timer. Be sure they are in essential agreement. If not, inform R before the game starts.
- d. Be sure the clock starts and stops correctly.
- e. After the tests are successfully completed, set the clock to the remaining time before scheduled kick-off and allow the clock to run down to zero. However, do NOT allow the horn to sound IF it would interrupt any late pre-game ceremony such as the playing of the National Anthem.
- f. If there is a stadium announcer or an evaluator (from either GHSA or your local association) present, offer them their copy of the crew list.
- g. Set the clock to 12:00 and wait for the game to start.

• Game Procedures

1. The ECO cannot “make” a game, but the ECO can surely “break” a game. Your concentration on your duties is essential to the smooth conduct of the game. **Be prepared to take your responsibilities seriously, or don't take the assignment.** Someone else who would take the assignment seriously is staying at home so you can work this job. Honor them by giving your best effort.
2. Your job is to operate the clock ONLY. Do NOT give commentary on the game or how it is being officiated. You may answer specific questions asked of you by an evaluator, if any. But questions asked by any other people should be politely deflected. You may tell them, correctly, that you are prohibited by GHSA policy from making any comments on the game or the way it is officiated.
3. Do NOT operate anything but the clock. You are NOT being paid to keep the score, the down and distance or time-out count on the scoreboard. You may change the quarter indication on the scoreboard when the quarter changes.
4. The length of a quarter in high school varsity football is 12 minutes.
5. You must know the various signals made by the on-field officials and what impact, if any, these have on the clock. Follow the instructions of ANY official who is stopping the clock. The official signals are numbered by NFHS from 1 through 47. (See these in the NFHS rule book.) This is how these numbered signals affect the clock:
 - a. Stop the clock (if running or keep it stopped): signals 3, 5, 6 and 10
 - b. Start the clock (or continue running if already running): signal 2
 - c. Do NOT start clock on snap: 1* - note the * denotes the special case of how a ball is marked ready for play for an un-timed down. Otherwise, the clock DOES start on any snap if it was not previously running. Many Referees will remind you, explicitly, that they want you to start the clock on the snap by pointing at the ball as they blow the ball ready for play. However, you must not count on this.

- d. Signals with NO IMPACT on the clock running: ALL Others. However, the clock should already be stopped when R gives any of these signals.
 - e. There is an old adage: "The clock is your friend when it is running." Your job is NOT to run the clock when you feel like it, but to run it on command of the crew on the field. They know the adage; they will keep it running properly. When in doubt, the clock runs.
 - f. Every time you either start or stop the clock, you need to look at the clock (and your auxiliary timer) to be sure that each is either running or not running, as appropriate to your intent.
 - g. Plays near the sideline SHOULD result in the covering official "winding the clock" (signal 2) if play ended inbounds at play's end. It may be followed immediately by a stop the clock indication (signal 3) in the case of reaching the line-to-gain (1st down) or when a live-ball penalty has been called. You have to be alert for such a combination.
 - h. The "try" (extra point play after a touchdown) is ALWAYS an un-timed down. This should be signaled by the Referee (signal 1*); but if he fails to do this, do NOT run the clock during the try.
 - i. The Referee may require a signal from the ECO that the ECO is ready for any free kick.
 - j. During a free kick, the clock does not start until it has been legally touched inbounds. The covering official who sees a legal touch of the ball inbounds will wind the clock (signal 2).
 - k. Near the end of both halves of the game, especially, operation of the clock becomes a significant aspect of the game. Your operation should be consistent throughout the game. Generally, it takes the greater portion of a second to see, read and process a stop-the-clock signal of any type. As a consequence, there should NOT be a stopped clock with under a second left in either half.
 - l. Prior to taking charge of the field, the Referee should remind the ECO that if the game clock is stopped with two seconds or less in any period and will start on the Referee's signal, run the clock to zero if the ball is legally snapped.
- Out-of-the-Ordinary Game Procedures
 1. If the field clock breaks, you should still have the correct time on your auxiliary timer. Use whatever prearranged plan you have to come to the field once this situation has been relayed to the rest of the crew.
 2. If a period is extended by an un-timed down (signal 1*), do NOT change the clock back to 12:00 minutes and do NOT advance the period indicator until R declares the end-of-period (signal 14).
 3. Rarely the on-field clock may be operated from a location other than the press box. It is OK to run the clock from that location, but the Referee needs to know where you are in such cases.
 4. For whatever reason, the clock may need to be adjusted during the game. Make NO such adjustments until you have been told by R, directly or indirectly, what adjustment is to be made to the clock. Under NO circumstances should you make a clock adjustment on your own.
 - At Period Breaks
 1. Once R has indicated the end of the 1st or 3rd periods by holding the ball over his head (signal 14), it is OK to advance the quarter indicator and set the game clock to 12:00 minutes. Wait for the game to restart in the 2nd or 4th period.
 2. At the end of the 2nd period, you have to be prepared to start the half-time timer.

Half-time is 20 minutes long (unconditionally), followed by a mandatory 3-minute “warm-up” time. After R has indicated the end of the 2nd quarter, go ahead and put 20:00 minutes on the clock. As the crew is leaving the field, R should signal you (signal 2) to start the clock as the last crew member clears the field. If you observe that R fails to order you to start the half-time clock, start it once the whole crew is outside the fence on the way to the dressing room (or other half-time location). You should then join the crew to participate in the half-time discussion. Your auxiliary timer should also be running at this time and you should be able to report remaining time in the 20-minute main half-time period. Upon the end of the 20-minute break, you should be back in the press box. When the 20 minutes runs out, reset the clock to 3:00 minutes and start it immediately. This will time the mandatory warm-up period. (Note: the warm-up period is mandatory; warm-ups are not. The teams can decide whether to warm-up or not; the crew will do nothing to force the teams to warm-up.)

- **Running Clock Situations**

1. See Section II. F., above, where running clock situations are described. Know this section and how your duties will be modified in such situations.
2. Note that in running clock situations, the crew will maintain its normal signaling mechanics. The ECO must know when to ignore and when to follow a “stop the clock” signal based upon the “TIPS” acronym:

“T” = Time-Out

“I” = Injury

“P” = Penalty

“S” = Score

- **Normal End-of-Game**

At the end of every non-overtime game, the job of the crew has ended at the sound of the horn at game’s end. R will quickly decide if there are any reasons to extend the 2nd half. When R decides none exist, he will hold the ball over his head (signal 14) officially ending the game. The crew now needs to leave the field as quickly as can be done in a dignified fashion. Generally, this is not a problem for the on-field crew. The ECO has an entirely different problem. His normal position is in the press box. That places him high and behind the crowd. The crowd, itself, is now intent on leaving, typically jamming the aisles in seconds. Without leaving even a second early, as soon as R gives signal 14, the ECO needs to move as quickly as he can from the press box to join the rest of the crew. Do not delay; move as quickly as you can in a dignified way to come to whatever meeting point has been arranged for you and the rest of the crew.

- **Overtime**

If a game goes into overtime, the need for the game clock has ended. All overtimes are un-timed events. Leave the press box and come down to the field on the side of the chain crew. Stay in the vicinity of the chain crew. This will keep you close to the action and will facilitate your leaving the field with the balance of the crew at the end of overtime. Do NOT leave the field until game’s end. We arrive and work as a crew; we will also leave as a crew.

K. UNIFORMS AND UNIFORM OPTIONS

- The basic uniform for ALL GHSA-sanctioned football games includes:
 1. A striped official's shirt with black Byron collar and GHSA logo above the shirt pocket and American flag on the left sleeve; both the GHSA logo and American flag must be an original pattern in the fabric of the shirt. This shirt may be either long sleeved or short sleeved. However, EVERY member of the crew MUST wear the same sleeve-length shirt.
 2. A black undershirt with no decorations showing through the outer shirt.
 3. Black official's pants fitted to correct in-seam with 1-1/4" outer white stripe. Pants must also be worn with a 1-1/4" to 2" black belt.
 4. Black outer socks of at least above-the-ankle length ("crew" socks or longer).
 5. A pair of predominately BLACK or ALL BLACK athletic shoes. If not wearing an ALL BLACK shoe, EACH member of the crew MUST wear a similar-looking model of shoe; the only other color that may be present on the shoe is WHITE.
 6. A black fitted official's hat with white piping for all officials except the Referee. The Referee will wear a solid white fitted official's hat, instead.
 7. Optionally, an official's jacket with alternating black and white vertical stripes.

L. APPROXIMATING THE TACKLE BOX

Umpires are required to place the ball laterally for scrimmage downs in one of 5 different locations. The purpose of this is to assist the Referee in judging the "Tackle Box" in cases where the Referee must rule on potential Intentional Grounding of a pass. These positions are:

1. The hash mark closest to the press box (generally home team side).
2. The hash mark closest to the press box (generally home team side).
3. The center upright of the goal post (post below the bar).
4. The upright of the goal post farthest from the press box.
5. The hash mark farthest from the press box (generally the visitors's side).

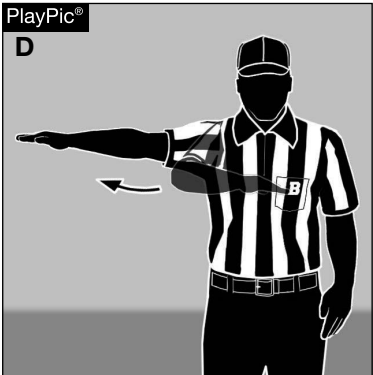
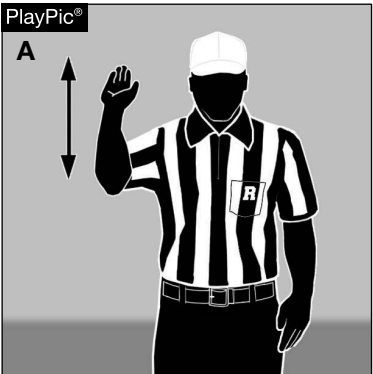
M. 25/40-SECOND CLOCK OPERATION

When play clocks are available, they are the official delay-of-game timepiece. The Play Clock Operator (PCO), when assigned, will report with the rest of the crew prior to the game. Play clocks shall be set to either 40 seconds or 25 seconds by rule depending upon game situations (see table "**Situations That Dictate Use of a 25-Second Play Clock**" pg. 34). Also, if the play clock is connected to its operator wirelessly, the play clock may be operated by either a dedicated PCO, the Field Judge or Back Judge, depending on crew size.

In cases where no on-field play clock is available, the play clock will be kept on the field by the Field Judge. In this case the Field Judge will use signal 1* (hand above head and a twirling motion) to indicate the start of any 40 second clock. Otherwise the 25-second play clock will be started on the Referee's Ready-for-Play signal and NO additional signal will be made by the Field Judge. If the 40 second play clock has run down to less than 25

Situations That Dictate Use of a 25-Second Play Clock	
Situation	Referee's Ready-for-Play Signal
After Administration of a Foul & Penalty	Chop or Wind
At the Start of a Period	Chop
Following Measurements	Chop or Wind
Following a Helmet Coming off a Player during a Down	Chop or Wind
Following an Injury Stoppage	Chop or Wind
Team B or R was Awarded a First Down (change of possession)	Chop
After any Score	Chop
At the start of Team A's possession in overtime	Chop
Following an Inadvertent Whistle	Wind
Following a charged Timeout by either team	Chop
Following ANY Officials' Timeout	Chop or Wind
Following a legal kick play	Chop
Prior to an Untimed Down (such as to extend a period)	Chop

**** Note:** For stoppages made because of a defensive injury or defensive equipment issue, a 40 second play clock rather than a 25-second play clock is required based on a 2020 rule change to this effect.



seconds and the ball is not ready for play for any reason, the Referee should use signal 7 (alternately raising and lowering his arm in a pumping motion with his palm flat and facing up, PlayPic A) to have the play clock operator reset the play clock to 25 seconds. The Field Judge shall also be responsible for indicating when 10 or less seconds remain before a delay-of-game foul would be declared using the following technique: The Field Judge should raise one arm straight overhead when the play clock reaches 10 seconds (PlayPic B) and the arm moved down continuously. The arm should be straight out with five seconds left (PlayPic C). At this point the Field Judge will commence a second-by-second countdown to zero. This will be done by using a single-armed NFHS Signal 20 (“Illegal Motion”) each second (PlayPic D).

In any combination of play clock or no play clock, the rules for timing delay-of-game from 40 or 25 seconds remain the same.

At the end of a period, the play clock should not be started if there is less than 25 or 40 seconds, as appropriate to required play clock settings, on the running game clock.

If there is a malfunction of an on-field play clock, the play clocks will be turned off until the problem is corrected. Both coaches will be notified if the field play clock is no longer official. The 25/40-second count will then be restarted at 25 seconds by the Field Judge manually. The play clock will then be kept by the Field Judge until the play clock has been fixed.

In ALL cases where the play clock should be set to 40 seconds, the clock is to start immediately upon recognition by the play clock operator (PCO or FJ) of a visual signal by the covering official that the previous play has ended. In no case should there be a delay in starting the 40 second clock of longer than 3 seconds. The end-of-down will be signaled by the covering official using any of signals 2, 3 (when the sideline is involved), 7 or 10. In situations where the clock should be set to 25 seconds, the clock is to start on the Referee’s ready-for-play signal, only.

If there is a delay in getting the play clock operator to reset the play clock or there is an unusual situation, the Referee shall declare a timeout and announce that the play clock should be reset to 25 seconds. The Referee shall then signal the ball ready for play.

When the play clock expires and there is a delay of game penalty, the display should be left at zero. When the ball is put in play and there is no delay foul, or if the Referee interrupts the 25-second count, immediately reset the displays.

The following explains the rules for setting the play clock to either 25 or 40 seconds:

Unless there is a Situation as outlined in the table above, the play clock is ALWAYS set to 40 seconds following the end of the previous down. This specifically includes the unusual situation in which there is a double change of possession during the down and Team A is, therefore, awarded a first down at play’s end.

N. SIDELINE OFFICIALS SWITCHING SIDELINES

As a reminder of the 2023 mechanics change, the sideline officials (HL, LJ, FJ, SJ) will work the first half on the “opposite side” from their “traditional sideline” and switch sidelines at halftime. The official will remain on the respective sideline if the game goes to overtime. The official will escort the team/captains from the sideline they will work that upcoming half. It is important to remember that live ball mechanics do not change (i.e. line judge will rule on forward/backward passes and back judge will key on the line judge’s side on a balanced formation. No matter the half, the umpire will walk off penalties starting with the officiating in charge of the chains for that half.

CHAPTER 4

GHSAA OFFICIATING PHILOSOPHIES

A. BALL SPOTTING

- The ball can be placed on a yard line to begin the next series after a change possession. For example, if a punt return ends with the ball between team B's 33 and 34 yard lines, move the ball forward to team B's 34 yard line. At all other times, the ball is placed where it became dead, consistent with spotting in "1, 2, 3, 4, 5" positions for next scrimmage play. (Exception: If the change of possession occurs on a fourth-down running or passing play, the ball will be left at the dead-ball spot to begin the next series.)

B. OFFICIATING THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

- Officials will work to keep offensive linemen legal and will call a foul only when obvious or when a warning to the player and a subsequent warning to the coach are ignored. Don't wait till the fourth quarter to enforce the rule. If the offensive player is lined up with his head clearly BEHIND the rear end of the snapper, a foul will be called without a warning.
- Don't be technical on an offensive player who is a wide receiver or slot back in determining if he is off the line of scrimmage. When in question, it is NOT a foul.
- Wide receivers or slot backs lined up outside a tight end will be ruled on the line of scrimmage and covering the tight end if there is no stagger between their alignments. If in question, the tight end is NOT covered up.
- When in question regarding player position on movement by the defense into the neutral zone which causes the offense to move, a player is moving toward the offensive player. This protects both that player and the two adjacent offensive players.

- When in question regarding a defensive player's jumping into the neutral zone and the appropriate offensive player(s) move(s) in reaction to the defensive player's move, shut the play down and penalize the defense.
- Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal.
- When in question, a quick or abrupt movement by the snapper or Quarterback prior to the actual snap IS a false start.

C. FUMBLES

- When in question, the runner did NOT fumble the ball and was down.
- When in question regarding whether the quarterback passed or fumbled, it will be ruled a PASS.

D. DEFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE (DPI)

Actions that constitute defensive pass interference include, but are not limited to, the following seven (7) categories:

- Early contact by a defender who is not playing the ball is defensive pass interference provided the other requirements for defensive pass interference have been met, regardless of how deep the pass is thrown to the receiver.
- Playing through the back of a receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.
- Grabbing and restricting a receiver's arm(s) or body in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.
- Extending an arm across the body (arm bar) of a receiver thus restricting his ability to catch a pass, regardless of whether or not the defender is looking for the ball.
- Cutting off or riding the receiver out of the path to the ball by making contact with him without playing the ball. (Call this ONLY when it's a big foul.)
- Hooking and restricting a receiver in an attempt to get to the ball in such a manner that causes the receiver's body to turn prior to the ball arriving.
- PCHANG is an acceptable acronym for DPI.

E. OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE (OPI)

Actions that constitute offensive pass interference include but are not limited to the following four categories:

- Initiating contact with a defender by shoving or pushing off thus creating separation in an attempt to catch a pass.
- Driving through a defender who has established a position on the field.

- Blocking downfield during a pass that legally crosses the line of scrimmage.
- Picking off a defender who is attempting to cover a receiver.

F. NOT OFFENSIVE PASS INTERFERENCE

- Offensive pass interference will NOT be called on a screen pass when the ball is overthrown behind the line of scrimmage but subsequently lands beyond the expanded line of scrimmage (up to three yards) and linemen are blocking downfield, unless such blocking prevents a defensive player from catching the ball.
- It is NOT offensive pass interference on a pick play if the defensive player is blocking the offensive player when the contact occurs and doesn't make a separate action, or if the contact occurs within one yard of the line of scrimmage.

G. OTHER PASSING SITUATIONS

- When determining if an untouched pass is beyond the line of scrimmage, the neutral zone will be expanded one yard.
- When in question on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer if the defender's intent is to punish.
- If the passer is contacted after he starts his passing motion, then it may be ruled no intentional grounding due to this contact.
- If an interception is near the goal line (inside the one yard line) and there is a question as to whether possession is gained in the field of play or end zone, make the play a touchback.
- Only the covering official should signal incomplete. All other officials should stop the clock. Both signals (incomplete and stop the clock) should NOT be given by the same official.

H. BLOCKING

- "Takedown" blocks occurring at any of:
 - a. the point of attack,
 - b. in the open field,
 - c. in the tackle box that also impact the play should be given special focus and called as Holding.
- If there is a potential offensive holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, offensive holding should NOT be called.
- If there is a potential for defensive holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, defensive holding should NOT be called. Example: A defensive back on the opposite side of the field holding a wide receiver on a designed run play to the other side.

- For blocks in the back, if one hand is on the number and the other hand is on the side and the initial force is on the number, it is a block in the back. The force of the block could be slight and still be a foul if the contact propels the player past the runner or prevents him from making the play. If the force is clearly on the side, it is NOT a foul. If the blocker is in a “chase mode” all the action must be on the side to be legal.
- Blocks that start on the side and subsequently end up in the back are not fouls as long as contact is maintained throughout the block.
- Blocks in the back that occur at or about the same time a runner is being tackled shall not be called, unless they are personal foul in nature.
- A grab of the receiver's jersey that restricts the receiver and takes away his feet should be defensive holding if other criteria are met, and could also be defensive pass interference.
- Holding can be called even if the quarterback is subsequently sacked as it may be the other half of an offset foul.
- Illegal block in the back can still be called on fair catches, but not if the illegal block occurs away from the play as the fair catch is being made or the touchback occurs and contact is slight (personal foul type actions should always be called).
- Blocks in the back that are personal fouls in nature should be called regardless of their timing relative to the runner being tackled.
- Rarely should you have a hold on a double team block unless there is a takedown or the defender breaks the double team and is pulled back.
- When in question if an illegal block occurs in the end zone or field of play, it occurs in the field of play.

I. ACTION DURING KICKING PLAYS

- The kicker's restraining line on onside and short pooch kickoffs should be officiated as a plane. Any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for encroachment. The same plane applies on normal kickoffs, but officials should NOT be too technical in regard to players breaking the plane.
- Illegal block in the back can be called on fair catches, but not if the illegal block occurs away from the play as the fair catch is being made, or the play results in a touchback and contact is slight. (Note: Personal fouls should always be called.)
- Blocks in the back that are personal fouls should be called regardless of their timing relative to a fair catch.
- It shall always be roughing the kicker if there is forcible contact to the plant leg, whether that leg is on the ground or not. It shall be running into the kicker if a defender simply “runs through” the kicking leg.
- All other contact shall be based on the severity and the potential for injury to the kicker.

J. PLAYS AT THE SIDELINE

- If legal contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out of bounds, consider it a legal hit.
- If the whistle has blown and a runner who has continued to advance down the sideline has eased up, contact by the opponent against the runner is a foul. Officials should be alert and be sure any action is not part of the initial play before calling a foul.
- When in question as to whether the runner stepped out of bounds, officials should rule the runner did NOT step out of bounds.

K. SCORING PLAYS

- When in question, it is NOT a touchdown.
- When in question, it is NOT a safety.
- A non-airborne runner crossing the goal inside the pylon with the ball crossing the goal line extended IS a touchdown.

L. PERSONAL FOULS

- If action is deemed to be “fighting,” the player MUST be disqualified. When in question if an act is a flagrant personal foul or fighting, the player is NOT fighting.
- Players committing flagrant personal fouls MUST be disqualified.
- When in question regarding timing of illegal hits away from the ball near the end of the play, consider it a dead ball rather than live-ball foul.
- Spitting on an opponent is a personal foul and REQUIRES disqualification.

M. UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- Do not be overly technical in applying Rule 9-5-2 (improper handling of a dead ball).
- Allow for brief, spontaneous, emotional reactions at the end of a play.
- Beyond the brief, spontaneous bursts of energy, officials should flag those acts that are clearly prolonged, self-congratulatory, or that make a mockery of the game.
- A list of specifically prohibited acts is in Rule 9-5-1 (a) thru (h). That list is intended to be illustrative and not exhaustive. All agree that when those acts are clearly intended to taunt or demean, they should be penalized.

N. MANAGING/ADJUSTING THE GAME CLOCK

- 5/5 axiom: In order to adjust game clock errors, there must be more than a five-second differential if there is more than five minutes remaining in either half.
- When any time is lost due to the clock's being started erroneously (such as when a dead-ball foul is called), the clock must be adjusted.

O. MISCELLANEOUS

- The ankle and wrist are considered part of the foot or hand, respectively. Touching the ground with the ankle or wrist, only, does NOT make a runner down.
- The covering official (only) may accompany his whistle with a dead ball signal at play's end.

P. DETERMINING THE TACKLE BOX

- Referees at ALL crew sizes are required to judge the so-called "Tackle Box" as part of determining whether Intentional Grounding should be called in cases of incomplete forward passes. Use this technique for making that determination: All of the "1, 2, 3, 4, 5" visual landmarks are approximately four yards from each other, marking the lateral boundary of the free blocking zone. This mechanic will aid the Referee in determining the free blocking zone boundaries (the "Tackle Box") and give secondary assistance in identifying the previous spot for penalty enforcement. For movement by the passer towards the sideline with the ball snapped at the hash mark nearest that sideline the Referee will still have to make a visual assessment of the lateral boundary without an actual mark on the field to explicitly mark the distance. However, note here that the mid-point between the hash mark and the top of the numbers (or 9-yard mark) is slightly less than 5 yards between these two visual markers, a close approximation to the 4 yards of distance needed to mark the limit of the tackle box to that side of the field. Instead of using this approximation, the Referee may use 2 FULL stride lateral steps by the passer as the extent of the Tackle Box. Clearly, if the runner is NOT wider than this, he is subject to the possibility of intentional grounding if he subsequently becomes a passer.

6-PERSON CONTENTS

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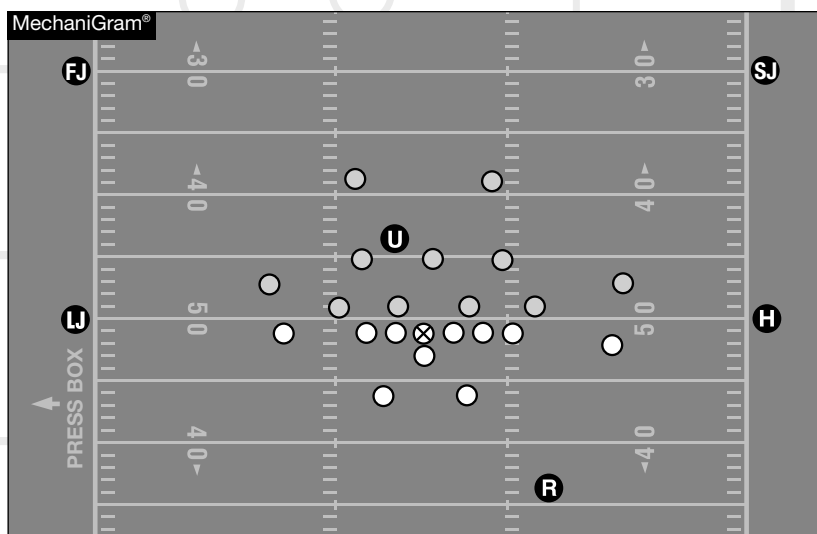
CHAPTER 5

6-PERSON CREWS

NOTE: In 2010 the captains' meeting at the start of the 2nd half was eliminated. In its place, the crew is responsible for obtaining 2nd half options at the end of the half-time intermission (when the teams are returning for the mandatory 3-minute warm-up period). The rationale for this change is to give the captains the benefit of the warmups while giving the coaches approximately the same amount of time to make their decision on 2nd half options as in the past, and after also having had the chance to observe weather conditions on the field before making option decisions.

A. SCRIMMAGE PLAYS ORIGINATING OUTSIDE 7-YARD LINE

This is the so-called “standard” or “mid-field” play set-up. In this situation everyone on the crew lines up in their “normal” positions pre-snap and has “default” coverage as the play develops. Other play situations present greater or lesser deviations from this set-up.



Referee

In 40-second play clock situations, the Referee must be particularly aware of the crew's requirement for making the ball ready for play in a timely manner. He must be prepared to deal with exceptional situations by rule when spotting the ball for play is delayed longer than 15 seconds following the start of the 40-second clock. When dealing with conventional huddles, stand 5-7 yards off the LOS and near the huddle to indicate the ready-for-play (in 25-second play clock situations); when dealing with spread offenses or no-huddle, stand as deep as desired for the actual start of the play before clearing the Umpire to allow the snap. In the case of a "hurry up" offense do NOT release the Umpire to his pre-snap position until certain that all other pre-snap activities have been completed by the entire crew. Line up on the Quarterback's passing arm side to the extent that this can be determined. In general he should be 12-14 yards behind the LOS. He keys the offensive tackle's block to the opposite side of the snapper; therefore, he must alter his pre-snap position so that he has a clear view to that tackle at the snap. The Referee should have a clear line of sight to the ball pre-snap and either he or the Umpire must have sight to the ball at all times once the ball has been blown ready-for-play. The Referee and Umpire will share the count of the offensive team prior to every snap and will NOT allow the ball to become alive if the offense has more than 11 players on the field with the snap's being imminent. The Referee has responsibility for the runner until the runner has crossed the LOS and has responsibility for the passer until the passer decides that he is once again ready to actively participate in the play with no further protection as a passer. On running plays outside the tackles, the Referee trails the play following action around the runner; on running plays that break up the middle (inside the tackles) or on sweeps to the wide side of the field away from his pre-snap position, he trails the entire play operating in a "clean-up" mode. In the case of an interception or fumble recovery, the Referee should be able in most cases to remain farther downfield than the runner and be able to beat him to the goal line, if necessary, to cover the touchdown or any forward progress short of the touchdown that is past the coverage of the wing officials operating in "reverse mechanics" on the play.

Pre-Snap Routine (Mental Check List before every Snap):

- Game Clock – Is status correct?
- Down and Distance – Verify with crew – the down MUST be correct!
- Ready-for-Play – Regular pace is 12 to 14 seconds after last play ended – Is the crew ready? Note any Substitutions.
- Count Offense – confirm with Umpire.
- Pre-snap position – 12-14 yrs. deep and wide – throwing arm side.
- Say to yourself the number of the offside Tackle and all the Backs in the backfield.
- When Snap is imminent, lock on the ball to insure the snap is legal.
- Watch for Pre-snap movement of the backs for a False Start.
- HUSTLE – but do not hurry.
- THINK – is this play likely to be a pass or run – Know the Situation. Note pre-snap position of ball for use in possible ruling regarding Intentional Grounding.

Play Progression after the Snap:

- Run to your side
- Key offside tackle (Read).
- If QB rolls your way, pivot and observe until he gets near the numbers; then trail. Hand off to RB – verify QB is out of danger before giving him up.
- Pivot and move your focus to blocks ahead of the runner (you do not have the spot).
- Trail play – stay back – look for cheap shots and Personal Fouls.
- Be aware of possible fumbles and reverse mechanics.
- Be a good Dead Ball Official.
- Run Away from you
- Key offside tackle (Read).
- If QB rolls away, trail and observe until he gets to the corner.
- Look at the blocks on the corner (inside tackle).
- Hand off to RB – verify QB is out of danger before giving him up.
- Trail and move your focus to blocks ahead of the runner (you do not have the spot).
- Trail play – stay back – look for cheap shots and Personal Fouls.
- Be aware of possible fumbles and reverse mechanics.
- Be a good Dead Ball Official.
- Run up the Middle
- Key offside tackle (Read).
- If QB keeps, focus on him – until past the LOS.
- Look at the blocks up the middle (see Philosophies). Hand off to RB – verify QB is out of danger before giving him up.
- Trail (you do not have the spot; you do have clean up).
- Trail play – stay back outside – look for cheap shots and PF's
- Be aware of possible fumbles and reverse mechanics.
- Be a good Dead Ball Official.

- Pass
- Key offside tackle (Read)
- Be sure you are deep enough (14 or 15 yards off LOS and wide)
- Direction of pass:
 - If to your side, pivot.
 - If away, trail – focus on QB until past the LOS.
 - If pocket, do not move.
 - As Pocket breaks down, focus on QB and most threatening defender.
 - Watch throwing hand – MUST judge Incomplete or Fumble – did contact dislodge ball?
 - Once pass is away, focus on QB – watch for Roughing Passer or Unsportsmanlike.
 - Be a Good Dead Ball Official.

Umpire

When dealing with conventional huddles, the Umpire should move to his pre-snap position upon setting the ball on the ground (make sure the Referee is in position before moving to your position); when dealing with spread offenses or no-huddle, the Umpire should stand over the ball until the Referee waves him off and allows him to get in his pre-snap position. The Referee should not indicate the ready for play until the Umpire is in his pre-snap position. In no-huddle or hurry-up offenses, the Umpire will signal the snapper when it is permissible to snap the ball. He will do this AFTER he has reached his final position to observe the play and in coordination with the Referee. Snappers for both teams must be told of this procedure during pre-game. Six to nine yards off of the ball and head-up of the center, unless you need to move laterally between the tackles to maintain a clear line of sight of the ball. Pre-snap line up 6-9 yards off the LOS approximately between head-up of the center and guard/tackle gap. The Umpire should be offset opposite the Referee, as needed, to have a clear line of sight to the ball, pre-snap. Either the Umpire or the Referee must have a clear line of sight to the ball at all times once the ball has been blown ready for play. The Umpire and Referee will share the count of the offensive team prior to every snap and will NOT allow the ball to become alive if the offense has more than 11 players on the field with the snap's being imminent. The Umpire is responsible for all action on or by the offensive center and guards and has additional responsibility for detecting and signaling forward passes deflected by the defense at or near the LOS. The Umpire is unique to the crew in that he works an inside-out technique which places him inside the Mobile Box during the play. On all running plays, the umpire will move with the play and the referee will move in "clean up" mode. The umpire will be the primary ball spotter. While all officials have responsibility to recognize and flag various forms of illegal blocking, the Umpire has the greatest focus on the "free blocking zone" and recognition of legal and illegal blocks that take place there so long as the zone remains intact by rule. In mid-field passing plays adjust your position to maintain a clear view of the center and two guards and to avoid oncoming pass receivers. Assist the Line Judge in knowing whether or not a forward pass crossed the neutral zone. Be prepared to pivot on all passes and assist on ruling on trapped passes. Continue to observe your area of responsibility until the pass is thrown and be aware of ineligible downfield. At play's end, the Umpire will move to the dead ball spot, if it is inside the hash marks, and will set the ball upon the mark of the covering official; very rarely will the Umpire be the covering official, himself. The Umpire should not treat the hash marks as a wall beyond which he will not go to

retrieve a dead ball. Instead he should move outside the hash marks as needed to most efficiently retrieve the ball and replace it for the next play.

Pre-Snap Routine (Mental Check List before every Snap):

- Spot Proper position
- Huddle – move to pre-snap – No huddle glance to Referee for Hold or Release
- Game Clock – Is status correct?
- Down and Distance – Check within the crew – the down **MUST** be correct.
- Note any Substitutions.
- Count Offense – confirm with Referee.
- 6-9 yards deep – move back as needed – see the Ball & offset as needed to keep it in sight.
- Say to yourself the numbers of the 2 Guards and Center (Keys).
- Remember that any motion man is a potential Blocker.
- When Snap is imminent, lock on the ball to insure the snap is legal.
- Watch for Pre-snap movement of the Linemen.
- **HUSTLE** – but do not hurry.
- **THINK** – is this play likely to be a pass or run – Know the Situation.

Play Progression after the Snap:

- Run to the sides
 - Read Blocks of your Keys
 - Lock on your 3 Linemen – Blocks
 - Adjust Focus as play moves to the corners – blocks on corner and POA
 - Pivot with play (you do not have the spot)
 - Work inside out to box play in
 - Be aware of possible fumbles and reverse mech.
 - Ball rotation mechanics
 - Be a good Dead Ball Official
- Run up the Middle
 - Read Blocks of your Keys
 - Lock on your 3 Linemen – Blocks
 - Adjust Focus to POA Blocks
 - Pivot with play – get out of the way (you do not have the spot)
 - Work inside out to box play in
 - Be aware of possible fumbles and reverse mech.

- Ball rotation mechanics
- Be a good Dead Ball Official
- Pass
 - Read Blocks of your Keys
 - Lock on your 3 Linemen – Blocks
 - Adjust Focus to POA Blocks – possible pressure points on QB
 - Stay stationary – Wide view – move as needed only to view Blocks
 - Work inside out to box play in if QB scrambles
 - On short passes near the middle of the field, it is permissible for the Umpire to turn his head to assist on complete/incomplete calls. Do NOT turn for deep passes.
 - Be aware of possible fumbles and reverse mech.
 - Ball rotation mechanics
 - Be a good Dead Ball Official

Wing Officials

Wing officials should begin each play positioned on the sideline, outside the field of play. They should start each play aligned opposite each other straddling the neutral zone, working just out of bounds but inside the restraining line that aligns with their respective sideline. This will help the wing officials with several field management duties:

- Player and non-player safety as well as sideline control with the prospect for clear communication between the game officials and coaches is very important.
- Positioning along the sideline allows the action to be in front of them.
- Working wide will give the Wings a broader view of the play with complete outside-in coverage while keeping the play boxed in.
- Working outside the field of play will also prevent game officials from having players lining up or positioned behind them.
- It is essential to begin each play wide. This gives the game official a better perspective with a wider peripheral view for better officiating opportunities.

Wing officials are responsible for determining the eligibility of receivers and the alignment of players such that they are aware and will flag fouls for illegal formations at the snap when such fouls occur. Count offensive players in the backfield and rule on whether any players are illegally lined up in “no man’s land” at the snap. “Punch off” any offensive players legally aligned in the backfield who are outside the last man on your side of the line using an explicit count (closed fist for 1 player, 2 fingers for 2 players, 3 fingers for 3 players). In case of any illegal formation fouls, flag them as live-ball, simultaneous with the snap. Note for 5 or more players in the offensive backfield, both Head Line-Judge and Line-Judge should have a flag for this illegal formation at the snap. At the snap, wing officials read the block of the offensive tackle on their side; a passive block gives a read of “pass;” an aggressive block gives a read of “run.” Note that this is just an initial read; wing officials must alter their coverage to the play that actually develops. For passing plays the wing official is responsible for action on or by the inside receiver on his side of the field; this may be a back lined up inside or could be the end when a flanker is used by the offense. The Line-Judge is responsible for forward/backward direction of all passes.

The Head Line-Judge’s primary responsibility is his pre-snap key, if this key takes him downfield then the Head Line-Judge moves with control down the field while focusing on

his key. At times the Head Line-Judge may not move during a pass play if his key stays close to the line of scrimmage; the goal is to still keep all plays boxed in. Certain formations such as trips (3 WR on one side) will usually have at least one route that is run under 5 yards, screen plays need time to develop and in these cases no movement is necessary. Rarely will the Head Line-Judge drift more than 5 yards downfield prior to a pass being thrown; however that could be extended for certain situations such as long pass at the end of a half and fourth and long when all receivers are going a longer distance. He should only drift if his key takes him down field, and he should always stay underneath the shallowest receiver. He must be sure to minimize movement when there is a pass thrown in his area to improve his ability to officiate the play properly. If his receiver is not threatened, assist with tackle on his side or other receivers in the 0 to 10 yard belt. The Head Line-Judge must remember to always hustle when aiding with a cross-field spot for the Line Judge.

The Line Judge must hold the LOS and judge both the position of the passer and the flight of the ball relative to the LOS. In addition, for other than option-type passes the Line Judge is responsible for determining forward or backward pass direction. In cases where the sideline is involved with a pass play, deeps and wings share responsibility for determining catch/no-catch. Judge feet first and then ball possession. On all scrimmage plays the wing officials have primary responsibility for marking the dead ball spot at play's end all the way to the defensive team's 2 yard line. At the 2 yard line, primary responsibility for obtaining the spot or signaling touchdown reverts to the deep judges. In such near-to-the-goal-line cases, the wing official should bypass the deep official and continue to cover any action that occurs in the defensive end zone.

Pre-Snap Routine (Mental Check List before every Snap):

When players separate and are no longer a threat to one another:

- Move to the LOS in the two yard restricted area.
- Consider down, distance, point in game and player alignment when determining width. Remember: Wider is better.
- Establish the LOS with your foot on the offensive side.
- Monitor neutral zone violations by the offense or defense.
- Count offensive players in the backfield.
- Determine whether nearest offensive player is on/off the line.
 - When nearest player is off the LOS, signal by extending your arm straight out towards offensive backfield (fist clenched).
 - Maintain signal until ball is snapped, receiver goes in motion or receiver shifts into legal position on LOS.
- Know the number(s) of eligible receiver(s) on your side of the LOS.
- You are responsible for ruling on ineligible(s) downfield on your side of the field (by number or position).
- A player in motion is your responsibility any time he is on your side of the snapper.

Deep Officials

Deep officials should line up approximately 20 to 25 yards off the LOS prior to the snap and square to the wing official on their side of the field. The Deep officials are responsible for maintaining the deep end of the Mobile Box and have primary responsibility for obtaining the dead ball spot from the defense's 2 yard line to the goal line; they have secondary responsibility for obtaining the dead ball spot for plays that

end on their side of the field and in which the Wing official is unable to get the dead ball spot for any reason. Prior to the snap they are responsible for obtaining a count of the defense and sharing that count; in no case should they allow the ball to become alive if the defense has more than 11 players on the field and the snap is imminent. At the snap Deep officials key the widest receiver on their side of the field; however, they must cover any receiver(s) that flow into their zone, always maintaining a deeper position than any receiver with sufficient buffer from receivers/defenders to allow a call or no-call on passing plays where they have both angle and depth enough to properly judge the entire play without getting straight-lined.

In cases where the sideline is involved with a pass play, the Wings have primary responsibility for judging the catch while the Deep judges have primary responsibility for the feet of the receiver; however, if the Wing is screened from the ball (as in an over the shoulder catch), these responsibilities are reversed. More important than specific catch/feet responsibilities are that Wing/Deep officials work together as a team to determine whether or not a catch was made.

Pre-Snap Routine (Mental Check List Before Every Snap):

- Clock – note time of the clock and ensure it is properly running or properly stopped.
- Down & Distance
- Substitutions
- Count Players– Deep Judges will count the defense on all scrimmage plays.
- Clear the sideline.
- Formation and keys – Deep Judges will key on the widest offensive player at the snap.
- Ensure proper positioning – approximately 20 to 25 yards deep and even with your respective wing official (will be off the field on most scrimmage plays).
- Be turned facing the line of scrimmage in a stance ready to back pedal.
- Know the situation – Is this likely to be a run or pass? Is the ‘go-to’ receiver on my side of the field.

Play Progression After the Snap:

- At the snap, be ready to back pedal and keep a good cushion. Deep Judges should be 10 yards ahead (your original position) of the ball or ball carrier when it becomes dead.
- The basic progression for Deep Judges is ‘Man-Zone-Ball’. At the snap, Deep Judges will watch action on or by their key (the widest man in the formation at the snap). Be ready to switch to ‘zone’ coverage as your initial key leaves your zone and other players enter your zone. Last, be ready to pick up the ball and where it is on the field, and when it may enter your zone. NOTE – The ‘ball’ portion of progression mainly applies to passing plays, on runs to the opposite side of the field, Deep Judges will focus in on their zone and should avoid focusing on the ball on running plays away from them.

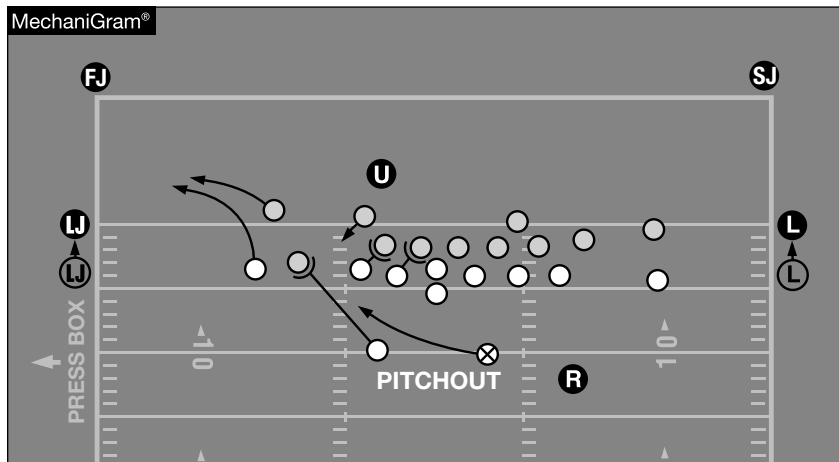
- On scrimmage plays outside the 7, Deep Judges are responsible for spotting the ball inside the 2 yard line and responsible for the goal line. If the ball is snapped on or inside the 7 yard line, Deep Judges will be lined up on the end line, using the position of the ball and the formation to determine how wide they should be.

B. SCRIMMAGE PLAYS ORIGINATING AT OR INSIDE 7-YARD LINE

Plays originating at or inside the 7 yard line of the defense are handled quite a bit differently than those originating outside the 7 yard line. Inside the 7, the focus is generally on the goal line much more than it is on plays originating in the mid-field area. The purpose of having “goal line mechanics” for such plays is to acknowledge the increased importance of coverage at the goal line and into the end zone and allowing the officials to pre-position themselves pre-snap in such a way as to enhance their chances of getting good coverage on all such plays.

Referee

Among all the on-field officials his changes are the fewest of the entire crew. Mechanically, he operates in the same fashion as he would on any other ordinary scrimmage down. However, he has primary responsibility for recognizing that the next snap will be at or inside the 7 yard line (going in) or 3 yard line (going out) and conveying that information to the balance of the crew so that they will properly alter their own mechanics for the goal line situation. He must also rule on all forward or backward passes by A on plays going in toward the goal line.



Umpire

Going in the Umpire may line up at his normal depth (6-9 yards off the LOS). However, as the distance of the snap from the goal line shortens to less than 5 yards, he needs to adjust accordingly to be at a depth where he can assist on judging whether the ball made it to the end zone while it remained alive. He can best do this when he is positioned about 3 yards deep in the end zone. When the ball is snapped on or inside EITHER team's 7 yard line, U is primarily responsible to rule if a pass crossed the line or if the passer was beyond the line. On plays with ball into end zone by Team A, use "hands to the chest" signal to assist wing officials in calling TD or successful non-kick try.

Wing Officials

On snaps from the 7 yard line going in, the Wing officials have primary responsibility for the dead ball spot. They should be able to beat the play to the goal line in all cases. On snaps inside the 5 yard line, they should move immediately from the snap to the goal line and work back out. The goal line is their most important responsibility with one exception – the dead ball spot for 4th down on plays where the line-to-gain is inside the 5 yard line; in that case, they need to give preference over goal line coverage to the line-to-gain. On snaps at or inside the 3 yard line going out, the Wing officials must step back to the goal line initially in order to cover the goal line for a possible ruling on a Safety. If a passing play develops, the Line Judge has responsibility forward/backward direction of the pass except for passes by the Quarterback immediately after receiving the snap or on pitch or option-type passes. On snaps between the 3 and 10 yard line, the LJ has the LOS while the HL is responsible for judgments involving the goal line. Also, be willing to "pinch in" to get (and sell) the dead ball spot; do not remain "glued" to the sideline area.

Deep Officials

On snaps at or inside the 7 yard line going in, Deep officials will be positioned outside the field of play along the end line. Depending on how the offensive formation is organized, their initial position laterally ranges from inbounds pylon (hash mark) on their side of the field all the way to the corner of the field on their side. Their primary call will be on passes; they have the end line and will work with the Wing official on their side to determine catch/no-catch on plays near the corner pylon.

C. PUNT PLAYS

Referee

Signal the Umpire that the offense is in a kicking formation (signal 19) when the offense has met the criteria for such a formation. Line up pre-snap on the punter's kicking foot side. He should be offset to the side wide enough to watch action of the rushers but not so wide that he has difficulty in judging a possible tipped ball. Five yards deep and five yards wide on the kicking leg side should be the starting position. He must be deep enough behind the punter to not be in the way in case of a too-long snap and the scramble for the ball that is likely to follow. His primary responsibility is to cover action on the punter (running into or roughing the kicker). He must stay with the punter until the punter decides to rejoin the play as an ordinary player. Once the ball has been kicked and there is no more action on the punter, move to the spot of the kick for possible coverage of a kick out-of-bounds (see below). For punts that will take place at or near the goal or end lines, his pre-



snap position should give him good coverage of these lines, especially for judging whether a Safety has occurred on the play. In case the play develops into a pass play, be prepared to rule on potential Intentional Grounding as in any other scrimmage down.

Umpire

Acknowledge the Referee's kicking formation signal (signal 19) by repeating it back to the Referee. Check for legal/illegal numbering exception, and check linemen legal/illegal interlocking of feet prior to the snap. After the snap focus on action on the snapper as long as the snapper remains protected by rule then shift to action by the guards and backs behind the neutral zone. The Umpire needs to be in position to judge tipped punts behind the LOS (signal 11). Once the kick is away, verbally say "ball's away;" allow action to flow by, pivoting to follow the action slowly downfield; on short or partially blocked kicks assist with determining whether the kick crossed the neutral zone. During the return work inside-out watching for personal foul, clipping and other illegal blocks.



Wing Officials

Both Wing officials hold the line at the snap. They are responsible for judging action on and by the players in the "blocking shield" in front of the punter. Following the punt drift downfield 5-10 yards from the LOS, prepared to work reverse mechanics to carry the runner all the way to the goal line, if needed. Be aware of post scrimmage-kick type fouls by the receivers. In the case of an errant snap or blocked punt, the Wing opposite from the Referee will retreat into the backfield to assist the Referee with coverage around the ball; the Wing on the same side as the Referee will hold at the LOS. On extremely short punts (typically "shanked" punts), the Wing official must be aware of and prepared to mark the out-of-bounds spot for the kick, if needed, on his side of the field.

Deep Officials

On all punts, brief the receiver(s) on the proper method of calling a fair catch. Pre-snap position is 3-5 yards behind and 9 yards wider than the deep receiver(s). The Field Judge has responsibility for coverage of the receiver on the vast majority of punts; the Side Judge is responsible for blocks in front of the catch in those cases. In the one case where the Side Judge's sideline is "threatened" (catch will be made within approximately 2 yards of that sideline), the roles are reversed; the Side Judge takes the catch and the Field Judge takes the blocks around the catch. In all cases both Deep officials must take care not to get straight-lined on the catch when they are the covering official, and it is completely inexcusable to miss a fair catch call. If the ball is kicked over the receiver's head, the covering official sticks with the ball and action around it; once possession is gained on any punt, the covering official must mark that spot with a beanbag as a potential point of post-scrimmage-kick penalty enforcement.

All officials (except Umpire): If the punt goes out-of-bounds on the fly and the covering official is unable to mark the spot within a yard of the point where the ball crossed the sideline, the covering official should move to the sideline, raise his hand over his head and begin walking briskly toward the Referee. The Referee will have moved to the spot of the kick and will "chop in" the official stepping up the sideline when that official has reached the spot where the ball crossed the sideline.

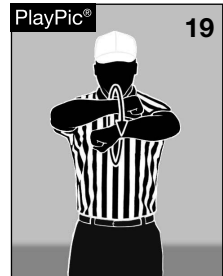
D. FIELD GOAL & KICK TRY PLAYS

All Officials

The largest difference between a Field Goal attempt and a Kick Try is the status of the ball if the attempt fails. In a Kick Try the ball becomes dead as soon as it is apparent that the kick will fail; in a Field Goal attempt the ball remains live until it otherwise becomes dead by rule. Officials must be prepared to stop play immediately for a failed Kick Try but allow play to continue for a failed Field Goal attempt until the ball becomes dead otherwise.

Referee

Signal the Umpire that this is a kicking formation when this is so (signal 19). Line up facing the holder standing 1 yard deeper than the kicker and 5 yards wide from the kicker. The idea is to have a good line of sight to judge action on/by the kicker and holder as well as sight to action on/by the rushers from the outside, looking for pulls or hooks. This position also provides enough distance to not get caught up in the play for situations that develop as a result of fumbles, bad snaps or designed trick plays that involve quick action toward the sideline. When a routine good/no-good is signaled by the covering officials, the Referee will echo their signals.



Umpire

Acknowledge Referee's kicking formation signal (signal 19), if given, by repeating it back to him. Line up approximately 5 yards off the LOS; otherwise, the play is like any other scrimmage kick (see Punt Plays, above).

Wing Officials

On short Field Goals and Kick Tries, initially line up off the field of play; work in as needed. At the snap focus on action on/by the offensive tackles and up backs. Following the kick, jog in toward the offensive backfield to maintain a good angle of action on/by offensive tackles and up backs. On all Field Goal attempts the Wing officials must be prepared to work reverse mechanics for any kicks short of the goal line that may be returned.

Deep Officials

Both officials work behind the goal post upright on their side of the field. The Side Judge has the additional duty of blowing the whistle to end the play. Once the kick has crossed the end line, confirm with the other Deep judge ("yes, yes, yes" or "no, no, no"); then step straight out 2 steps into the end zone and give the appropriate signal together. However, in the case of a kick wide of the goal post, only the official on that side will signal "no good;" the other official will merely step out into the end zone. Unless this is a Kick Try, work the play as any other scrimmage kick; coverage at the goal line for a potential touchback must be obtained on long Field Goal attempts that fall into the field of play.

E. FREE KICK PLAYS

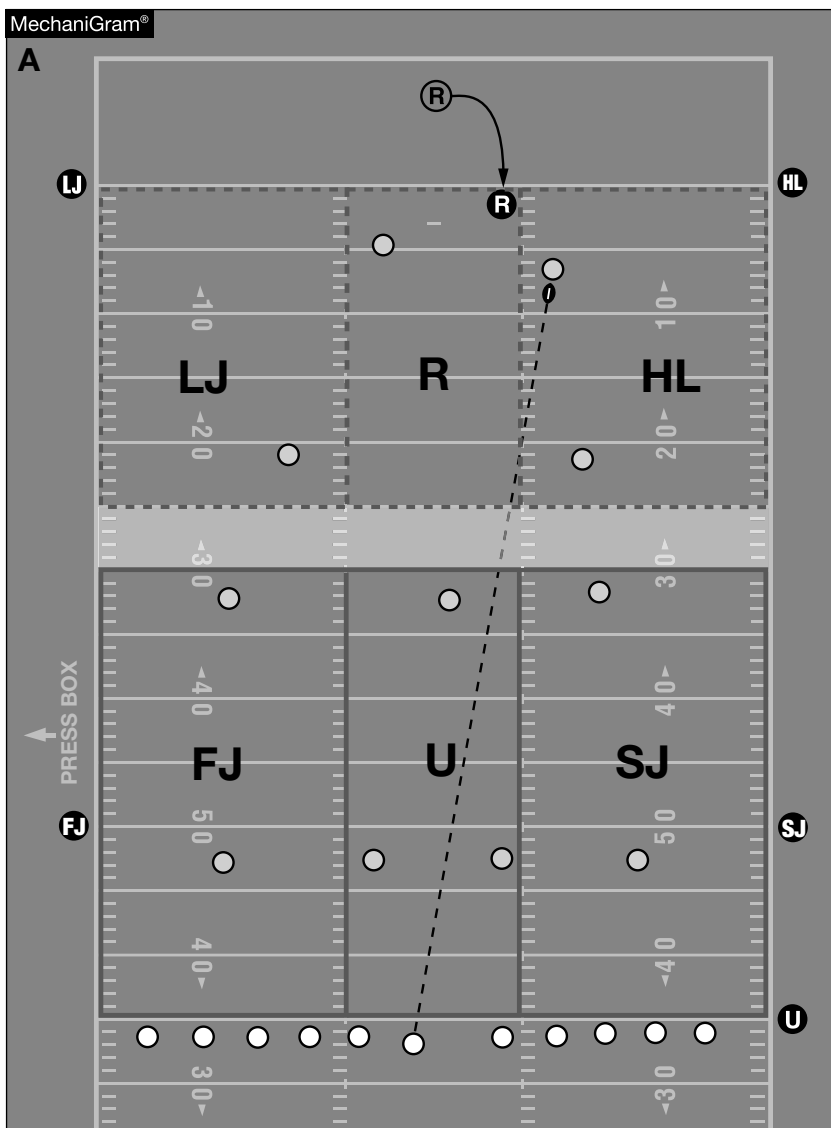
1. Ordinary Kick Off Anticipated

There are 2 types of ordinary kick offs. The first is the one that begins each half; the

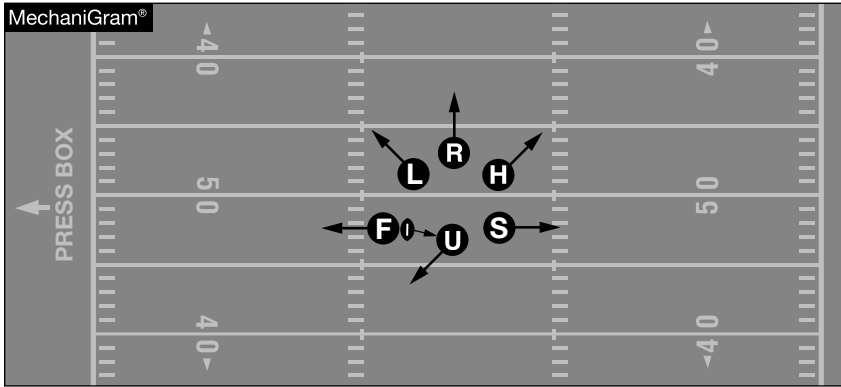
other is the one that follows either a touchdown or a field goal. The pre-kick positioning is the same for each type; however, the method for reaching the pre-kick positions is quite a bit different:

Kick Off To Begin a Half

Following completion of the coin toss ceremony (1st half) or the teams moving to their respective sidelines (2nd half), the crew meets in the center of the field. They are arranged with the Referee on the end where he will be covering the goal line; the Umpire is opposite the Referee. The Wing Officials stand on their side of the field next



to the Referee. The Deep Officials stand next to the Umpire, and the Deep official on the kicking team's side of the field brings the ball from the sideline to the Umpire. When the first of the teams comes onto the field, the crew breaks to their pre-kick positions:



Referee

Turns and runs straight to the receiving team's goal line.

Umpire

Moves to the kicking team's 40 yard line with the ball.

Wing Officials

Break away from the center of the field moving directly to your pre-kick position at the goal line. If observation of kicks (during pre-game or 1st half) shows that kickers will not threaten goal line, wings may move up to better cover anticipated shorter kicks.

Deep Officials

Move down the 50 yard line to the sideline. Both officials remain at the 50 (on the receiver's restraining line).

Kick Off Following a Touchdown or Field Goal

Referee

Move directly to the goal line of the receiving team. If necessary to alter the other official's duties to an "Obvious On-Side Kick" formation, relay that information to the crew before they move to their pre-kick positions. Note: The Referee is responsible for discussing how this will be done during his pre-game meeting.

Umpire

Hold briefly following the Try or Successful Field Goal to see if the Referee might declare an "Obvious On-Side Kick" situation, then move directly out to the numbers on the kicking team's side of the field. Retrieve a new ball from the ball person.

Wing Officials

Hold briefly following the Try or Successful Field Goal to see if the Referee might declare an "Obvious On-Side Kick" situation, then move directly to your pre-kick position.

Deep Officials

Hold briefly following the Try or Successful Field Goal to see if the Referee might declare an “Obvious On-Side Kick” situation, then move diagonally across the end zone to the sideline at the goal line, then turn and move up the sideline to your pre-kick position. Be sure to clear your sideline as you move.

Activities Leading Up to the Ready-for-Play Signal**Referee**

Waits at the goal line near the center of the field for the balance of the crew to signal their readiness for the play to begin. The Referee will line up directly in line with the ball placement for the kick; this is to help him make his ruling on a minimum of 4 players each side of the ball at the time of the kick. Simultaneously, he is to count the receiving team. He shares that count with the Wing officials. In no case will he mark the ball ready for play while the receivers have more than 11 players on the field. Check off that the Wing Officials are ready; then check with the Umpire; finally check off with the ECO and blow to ball ready-for-play.

Umpire

Moves up the numbers with the ball to the kicker's 40 yard line (or other appropriate yard line if a penalty is involved) and moves toward the center of the field. Hand the ball to the kicker and strongly brief him on how to proceed including warning instructions for the entire Kicking team's legal pre-kick positions; allow the kicker to place the ball legally; count the kicking team and share that count with the Deep Officials. In the case that there are more or less than 11 players for the kicking team, give a strong indication that they need to get to 11; under no circumstances allow the ball to come alive with more than 11 players for the kicking team. When the kicker is ready, look to the Referee for his signal then move to a position at the sideline of the Kicking team; raise a hand to signal your readiness for the ball to be made ready-for-play. Wait on the Referee's ready-for-play whistle. Upon ready-for-play drop his arm and await the kick. The Umpire is responsible for judging the Kicker's restraining line. Once the kick has been made the Umpire will move to the center of the field. In the case where the kicker tells the Umpire he will be deliberately kicking short, it is permissible for the Umpire to signal this to the rest of the crew that this is the case (beanbag in hand would be such a permissible and unobtrusive signal). At the conclusion of the free kick, the umpire should move towards the deep official on the side of the field of the team who is next to put the ball in play to retrieve a new game ball before spotting the ball.

Wing Officials

Move down the sideline to the receiver's goal line or 10 yard line (under Referee's direction) and step off the field of play to the restraining line around the field. Count the receiving team and share that count with each other and the Referee. Upon receipt of the Deep Officials' signal that they are ready, with beanbag in hand raise an arm to indicate readiness on that side of the field for the Referee's ready-for-play signal. When the Referee has acknowledged readiness, drop the arm and move to the restraining line.

Deep Officials

Move to the Receiver's kick restraining line, the 50 (unless modified by penalty). Count the kicking team and share that count with each other and the Umpire. Once the count is confirmed, with beanbag in hand raise your arm to indicate readiness. Once the Wing on your side has raised his arm, drop yours. Move back to the restraining line surrounding the field.

COVERING THE KICK ITSELF: KEYS

Free Kicks — Generalized Zone Coverage

Note: Yard lines stated are guidelines only and are not set in stone.

Referee

Deep receiver between hashes (center third of field) from short of R's goal line to approximately R's 25-30 yard line, once receiver has possession and begins his return, shift focus of coverage to action in front of runner.

Umpire

Between hashes (center third of field) from K's restraining line to approximately R's 25-30 yard line.

Head Line Judge and Line Judge

Between sideline and hash marks on your side, boxing in play from short of R's goal line to approximately R's 25-30 yard line. Once receiver has possession of kick, shift focus of coverage to the runner when he is in your side of the field (from center of field to sideline). Otherwise, focus on action of players ahead of runner.

Side Judge and Field Judge

Between sideline and hash marks on your side, boxing in play down to front wave of players to approximately R's 25-30 yard line.

- Zones will ebb and flow as play dictates exactly as they do for punts.
- If player leaves your zone and there is a legitimate "threat of foul," stay with him.
- If there is no legitimate "threat of foul," be alert to other players coming into your zone as you assume responsibility for their actions.
- If there is nothing happening with players in your zone, broaden your vision.

All Officials except Umpire

Have your beanbag in hand to make calls of "beanbag" events.

Referee

Primary responsibility is for the goal line and judging whether a touchback has occurred; immediately judge whether Kicker's were in an illegal formation at the kick; if so, this is a dead ball foul. Stand directly on the goal line and move in the direction of the kick. If a touchback occurs, blow the play dead immediately and signal (signal 7). If the kick is possessed by the receiving team in your area (R's 25 yardline to the goalline), start the clock; as runner starts his run you give him up to the wings; thereafter focus on the blocking ahead of the runner; watch especially for any illegal block that may spring the runner.



Be watchful for:

- Ball being legally touched in your area.

NOTE: Your area includes the entire width of the field at the goal line and will generally include the one, two or three deepest receivers.

- Backward passes and forward hand-offs or passes.
- Illegal blocks and clips.
- Facemask violations.
- Fair catch signals.
- Kick breaking the goal line plane.
- Runner's momentum carrying him into the end zone. (Bean bag in hand!)
- Muff or fumble.
- Recovery of a loose ball.
- Dead balls.

Umpire

After judging action at the Kicker's restraining line, initial coverage is of the kicker. He is protected from contact by the receiving team for the first five yards downfield or until the ball has touched a receiver. The Umpire's responsibility includes players in the center third of the field from the KICKER's restraining line (typically the 40) to approximately R's 25-30 yard line. Move slowly downfield watching action generally away from the ball. On long returns, allow action to bypass you using a typical inside-out technique and operate in a "clean-up" mode for action well behind the progress of the ball.

Wing Officials

Primary responsibility is to judge action at or near the pylon at the intersection of the goal line and sideline. Note: A kick which hits this pylon is a touchback (signal 7). Pick-up the widest KICKING team players if/when they come into your zone. If the ball is legally touched in your area, start the clock; and take the runner up the field all the way to the kicker's 2 yard line. Be watchful for:

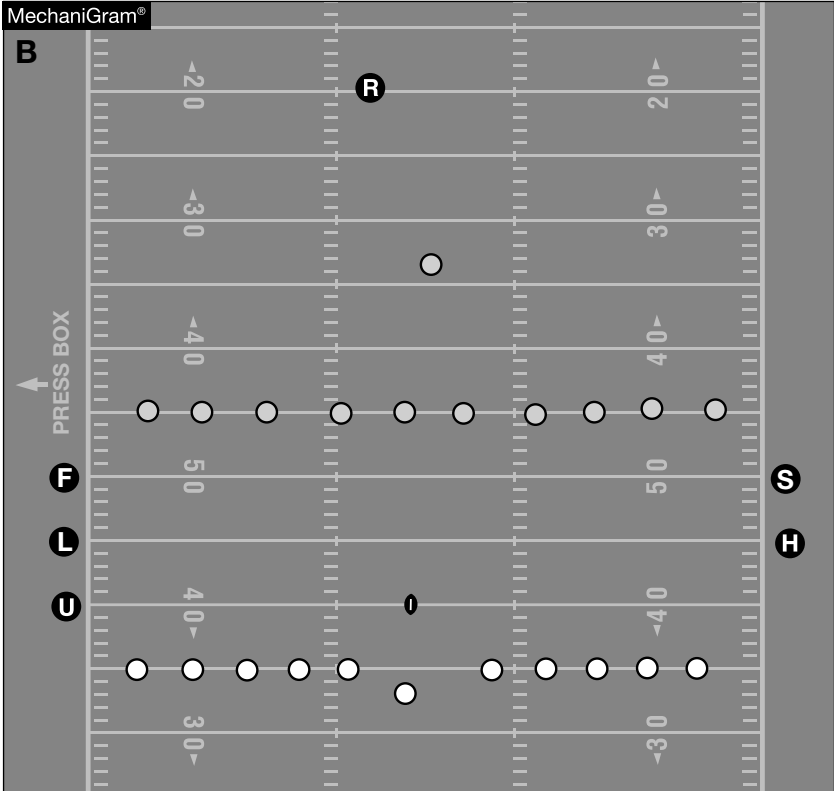
- "Pooch" kicks longer than 25 yards; be prepared to move up-field quickly to cover these. Watch for kick catch interference, fair catch signals (valid and invalid) and other activities associated with the catch.
- Kick going out of bounds -who touched it?
- Winding clock when ball is legally touched in your area.
- Muff or fumble.
- Covering short and on-side kicks. On short (pooch) kicks, wings must move up for the catch. Watch for kick catch interference, fair catch signals (valid and invalid) and other activities associated with the catch.
- Backward passes and forward hand-offs.
- Illegal blocks and clips.
- Facemask violations.
- Fair catch signals.
- Kick-catching interference.

Deep Officials

Primary responsibility is for action on/by opposing players (see chart, above) in your zone. Be aware of and prepared for a short kick regardless of whether one was signaled

2. Obvious “On-Side” Kick Situations

In this case, the Wing officials will move to the 5-yard line between Kicker's and Receiver's kick restraining lines as their pre-kick positions; this will be kicker's 45 unless changed by penalty. The Deep officials will move to the Receiver's kick restraining line.



The Umpire will move to Kicker's restraining line on the kicking team's sideline (depicted below with LJ but could also be HL's side of the field). The Referee, alone, will remain deep to cover an unexpectedly long kick that could threaten the goal line.

All officials in the vicinity of the restraining lines must be aware of the likely short kick and anticipate action in the scramble for the ball. Officials who wind up being away from where the ball is kicked must be aware of all applicable rules governing contact in the neutral zone and must NOT concentrate on the ball. Instead, they must watch action away from the ball and be prepared to rule on a wide range of potentially illegal types of contact by members of each team.

In the unlikely case of a kick being made deep, the coverage responsibilities for Wing and Deep officials are the OPPOSITE of those for any ordinary free kick. Officials will have to hustle especially well, particularly the DEEP officials, as they move toward a position on the field that approximates that which the WINGS would have had during an ordinary free kick. Do not over-hustle in this situation, but move under control as quickly as possible toward the depth of the kick.

3. After a Safety

Following a Safety the elaborate coordinated movement of the crew is somewhat abbreviated. In this case each member of the crew will move directly to his pre-kick position. The free kick line is the kicker's 20 yard line. The kick restraining line for the receivers is the kicker's 30 yard line. The Umpire will likely need assistance from the Deep official on the kicker's side of the field to obtain the ball. Otherwise, duties for a free kick after a safety are the same as normal for all officials following movement to their pre-kick positions except that their location on the field is offset 20 yards closer to the kicker's goal line than normal.

4. After a Fair Catch or Awarded Fair Catch

Following a Fair Catch or Awarded Fair Catch the receiving team has the option to free kick. This free kick differs from all others in that it can result in the awarding of 3 points for a Field Goal if successful. Because this option would only likely be taken if scoring a Field Goal was the intent, mechanics for covering this play are vastly different from all other free kick plays.

In effect, the officials will line up in very roughly the same positions as they would line up for a scrimmage kick Field Goal attempt. Specifically, by position:

Referee

Will handle the ball and will instruct the kicker in much the same way that the Umpire does for an ordinary free kick.

Umpire

Will be positioned on the goal line similarly to a Referee's positioning and coverage for an ordinary free kick. The Umpire must be prepared to rule on the momentum exception, if needed.

Wing Officials

Will position themselves at the restraining lines for each team. The Head Line-Judge will position himself on the kicker's kick restraining line (through the spot of the catch or awarded fair catch), and the Line Judge will position himself 10 yards downfield from that spot.

Deep Officials

Will position themselves under their goalposts as if for an ordinary Field Goal attempt. Deeps must NOT signal anything so long as the ball remains alive on the field of play.

All Officials

In the case that the ball falls short and remains alive, treat this as any other kickoff. Officials will work reverse mechanics during a return of any such kick, much as they would work for a punt.

F. MISCELLANEOUS SITUATIONS

1. Pre-Game On-Field Duties

Referee:

- After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties. (The intent of this mechanic is to show everyone that we, the officials, are the third team on the field and all have jobs to do. Use common sense in implementing this mechanic. For example, if the home team coach is present just as you approach the field, then you and the Umpire go ahead with the coach's meeting and have the remainder of the crew continue to the 50-yard line.)
- Meet with each team's head coach – Home team coach first.
- Rule on the legality of all game balls.
- Give the coaches a list of officials working the game.
- Secure the names and numbers of game captains from each coach.
- Secure verification from each coach that all players are legally equipped.
- Secure verification from the coaches about special pre-game ceremonies, reduction of the half-time period and any overtime arrangements (mixed classification games, only). In mixed classification games, the Referee must ask each head coach if they want to play overtime in the case of a tie at the end of the regulation game. In order to have a reduction of halftime, written notice must be presented prior to game time.
- Ensure that each coach is aware that maintaining good sportsmanship is expected.
- Ask the home team coach if a chain crew has been made available to the crew.
- Notify each coach of the official time.
- Check to insure other officials are in fact taking care of their responsibilities and maintaining a professional manner at all times.
- Observe additional pre-game activities that provide potential guidance to how the game, itself, may be played:

- Identify the quarterbacks. Record their numbers, whether they are right or left handed and their general apparent abilities as passers.
- Similarly identify the punters and field goal kickers and whether they kick with their right or left foot.
- Identify the style of offenses are the teams fielding and the abilities of key players (long snapper or the snapper in shotgun, for example).
- Identify “prime time players” – those who can be expected to be involved in critical situations.
- Make a mental against your pre-snap checklist and think through how these teams will most likely fit into your pre-snap activities.
- Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during your meetings with each coach.

Umpire

- After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
- Accompany the Referee to speak with the home, then the visiting coaches.
- Examine player equipment / medical wrappings / casts etc. & rule on legality.
- Ensure Referee asks if all players are legally equipped.
- Record captains numbers and who speaks at coin toss.
- Secure game balls. Referee to approve.
- Identify ball boys and direct them to wing officials.
- Listen for special plays or formations that coach's use.
- Ensure Referee asks the home team coach about the chain crew.
- Relay each game ball to the respective deep officials.
- Ensure Referee mentions that sportsmanship is expected by the coaches and players.
- Observe additional pre-game activities that provide potential guidance to how the game, itself, may be played:
- Identify the guards and centers (your keys) for both teams.
- Similarly identify the punters and field goal kickers.
- Identify the style of offenses are the teams fielding and the abilities of key players (long snapper or the snapper in shotgun, for example).

- Identify “prime time players” – those who can be expected to be involved in critical situations.
- Make a mental against your pre-snap checklist and think through how these teams will most likely fit into your pre-snap activities.
- Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during the Referee/Coaches meetings.

Head Line-Judge:

- After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
- Locate and communicate with the ball person on your side.
- Check the sideline for safety concerns and proper markings.
- Take a look at the clock to be sure it is working properly.
- Check the line to gain equipment by:
 - Making sure the chains are 10 yards in length with no knots and has a piece of tape secured at the 5-yard mark.
 - Making sure the down box is working properly.
- Instruct your chain crew as follows:
 - Introduce yourself to the entire chain crew.
 - Identify who will be the box person. Know them on a first name basis.
 - Explain the use of the clip (clip the back line, the back of that line) and who will be doing this job.
 - Tell the crew to drop the chains and get out of the way when the flow of action comes toward the sideline.
 - Tell the box person not to change the down or move until you indicate the next down.
 - Explain that you will be “setting” the box person on all first downs. There can be exceptions in the event the Side Judge is in position to do this.
 - Explain the importance of them hustling and how important they are to the crew.
- Observe additional pre-game activities that provide potential guidance to how the game, itself, may be played:
 - Identify the tackles (your keys) for both teams.
 - Similarly identify the punters and field goal kickers.
 - Identify the style of offenses are the teams fielding and the abilities of key players (long snapper or the snapper in shotgun, for example).

- Identify “prime time players” – those who can be expected to be involved in critical situations.
- Make a mental against your pre-snap checklist and think through how these teams will most likely fit into your pre-snap activities.

Line Judge

- After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
 - Find a member of game management and review with this person:
 - The current time-of-day.
 - The starting time of the game.
 - The presence of a working lightning detector and how significant lightning events in the area of the game, if any, will be relayed to the on-field officiating crew.
- Locate the band director / ROTC advisor and let them know that the National Anthem needs to be completed not less than 10 minutes prior to game time.
- Locate and communicate with the ball person on your side.
- Check the sideline for safety concerns and proper markings.
- Take a look at the clock to make sure it is working properly.
- Observe additional pre-game activities that provide potential guidance to how the game, itself, may be played:
 - Identify the tackles (your keys) for both teams.
 - Similarly identify the punters and field goal kickers.
 - Identify the style of offenses are the teams fielding and the abilities of key players (long snapper or the snapper in shotgun, for example).
 - Identify “prime time players” – those who can be expected to be involved in critical situations.
 - Make a mental against your pre-snap checklist and think through how these teams will most likely fit into your pre-snap activities.

Field Judge

- After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
- Check to make sure that the 3-yard marks are correctly marked off. Inform the Umpire of any discrepancies.
- Work with the Side Judge to ensure that neither team, other than the kicker, encroaches over their 45yard line. The kickers may kick from the opponent's 45-yard line.
- Ensure the kickers kick toward their own goal line.
- Survey the field and make mental note of field and sideline danger spots.
- Locate and communicate with the ball person on your side.

- Observe additional pre-game activities that provide potential guidance to how the game, itself, may be played:
 - Identify the wide receivers (your likely keys) for both teams.
 - Similarly identify the punters and field goal kickers.
 - Identify the style of offenses are the teams fielding and the abilities of key players (long snapper or the snapper in shotgun, for example).
 - Identify “prime time players” – those who can be expected to be involved in critical situations.
 - Make a mental against your pre-snap checklist and think through how these teams will most likely fit into your pre-snap activities.
- Obtain possession of the football of your team’s sideline from the Umpire.
- Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during the Referee/Coaches meetings.

Side Judge

- After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
- Work with the Field Judge to ensure that neither team, other than the kicker, encroaches over their 45yard line. The kickers may kick from the opponent’s 45-yard line.
- Ensure the kickers kick toward their own goal line.
- Survey the field and make mental note of field and sideline danger spots.
- Locate and communicate with the ball person on your side.
- Assist the Head Line-Judge with checking the chains and down marker.
- Introduce yourself to the chain crew.
- Observe additional pre-game activities that provide potential guidance to how the game, itself, may be played:
 - Identify the wide receivers (your likely keys) for both teams.
 - Similarly identify the punters and field goal kickers.
 - Identify the style of offenses are the teams fielding and the abilities of key players (long snapper or the snapper in shotgun, for example).
 - Identify “prime time players” – those who can be expected to be involved in critical situations.
 - Make a mental against your pre-snap checklist and think through how these teams will most likely fit into your pre-snap activities.
- Obtain possession of the football of your team’s sideline from the Umpire.
- Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during the Referee/Coaches meetings.

2. Pre-Game Escort Duties

Referee

- In the end zone on the Press Box side of the field in time to walk to the vicinity of the 50 yard line with 5 minutes to go on the countdown to kick off.
- Signal Umpire to start, as well; and walk to approximately the 48 yard line; stop there and stand “at ease” facing the field while awaiting the arrival of captains.
- Captains arrive; speaking captain shall be on the left shoulder of the Referee.
- Signal Umpire and walk to the center of the field.
- As team captains meet, have them shake hands and conduct introductions.
- Conduct coin toss ceremony: Show each speaking captain the coin to be used and which side is heads and which is tails. Determine from the visiting team whether heads or tails is their call. Toss coin in such a way that it spins in the air and comes to rest on the ground. Tap winner of the toss on the shoulder. Resolve options; signal “Toss option deferred” immediately if this is choice of winner of the coin toss. Turn teams with backs to the goal they will defend. Signal which team will kick / which will receive. Give mandatory sportsmanship talk.
- Have captains shake hands, again; then dismiss them to sideline.
- Take position with back toward receiver’s goal line near midfield.

Umpire

- In the end zone OPPOSITE the Press Box side of the field in time to walk to the vicinity of the 50 yard line with 5 minutes to go on the countdown to kick off.
- Walk to approximately the 48 yard line; stop there and stand “at ease” facing the field while awaiting the arrival of captains.
- Captains arrive; speaking captain shall be to the far left of the Umpire.
- Walk to the center of the field on Referee’s signal.
- As team captains meet, Referee will have them shake hands and conduct introductions.
- Stand by during coin toss ceremony, facing in toward the Referee.
- Rotate with the captains as coin toss results are announced.
- Take position with back toward the kicker’s goal line near midfield.

Head Line-Judge

- Obtain captains of team OPPOSITE Press Box side of field (usually, but not always, the visiting team) in time for them to be in the end zone to walk with approximately 4 minutes to go on the countdown to kick off.

- Signal the Line Judge and walk the captains up the sideline to midfield.
- Take position opposite Referee on the sideline, bracketing captains between.
- Walk onto the field with Referee and captains; stop at hash mark; turn to face sideline and stand “at ease.” Control any action from your sideline; there should be none.
- When coin toss ceremony is complete, join the rest of the crew at midfield, lined up beside the Referee and opposite the Line Judge.

Line Judge

- Obtain captains of team opposite Press Box side of field (usually, but not always, the visiting team) in time for them to be in the end zone to walk with approximately 4 minutes to go on the countdown to kick off.
- Acknowledge the Line Judge’s signal and walk the captains up the sideline to midfield.
- Take position opposite Umpire on the sideline, bracketing captains between.
- Walk onto the field with Umpire and captains; stop at hash mark; turn to face sideline and stand “at ease.” Control any action from your sideline; there should be none.
- When coin toss ceremony is complete, join the rest of the crew at midfield, lined up beside the Referee and opposite the Head Line-Judge.

Side Judge

- Stay with the team who will occupy the sideline OPPOSITE the Press Box (usually, but not always, the home team). If they move to the sideline in time for the coin toss ceremony, go with them. If not, remain between the team and the meeting of captains for the coin toss.
If at sideline for coin toss, stand “at ease” facing out toward the field; do NOT walk out with the Head Line-Judge, Referee and captains.
- If the team you are escorting will be kicking as a result of coin toss options, obtain their ball before joining the crew at midfield to await the arrival of a team for the kick off.

Field Judge

- Stay with the team who will occupy the sideline opposite the Press Box side of the field (usually, but not always, the visiting team). If they move to the sideline in time for the coin toss ceremony, go with them. If not, remain between the team and the meeting of captains for the coin toss.
- If at sideline for coin toss, stand “at ease” facing out toward the field; do NOT walk out with the Head Line-Judge, Referee and captains.
- If the team you are escorting will be kicking as a result of coin toss options, obtain their ball before joining the crew at midfield to await the arrival of a team for the kick off.

3. Time Outs

Referee

- Give the time-out signal and specify the team that it is charged to by “whacking” 3 times to the calling team’s side of the ball or charge it to yourself.
- Make sure trainers and/or coaches summoned for injured player are not on the field to coach players.
- Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
- Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.
- Remain positioned near the offensive huddle but in view of the Field Judge and be prepared to receive the 45-second signal.
- When the Field Judge has communicated that 45 seconds have elapsed, warn each team that 15 seconds remain – at the 60 second notice, move to the ball and mark the ball ready for play – then move to a normal position.

Umpire

- Maintain position over the ball.
 - Observe Team A until Referee is ready to start play.
 - Make sure trainers and/or coaches summoned for injured player are not on the field to coach players.
 - Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
 - Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.
- Wing Officials:
- Move to a position halfway between the ball and the team box on your sideline – in position to monitor the team’s huddle.
 - Watch for illegal conferences. Be sure of proper number of players/attendants in huddle.
 - Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
 - Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.
 - Be alert for signal from the Referee to give your team 15-second warning. Go to team huddle and say, “Coach, ball will be marked ready for play in 15 seconds.”
 - Inform the coach of time outs remaining.
 - Be alert of substitutes or attempts to use substitutes for purposes of deception.

Deep Officials:

- Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
- Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.

- Field Judge, only, maintains timing of the time out. Signal the Referee by prearranged signal when 45 seconds of the time-out have elapsed. That is his signal to, in turn, warn the sidelines that only 15 seconds remain before the ball will be marked ready-for-play.

4. Measurements

Referee

- Straighten the ball appropriately and oversee the measurement process.
- Judge whether or not the line to gain has been reached.
- Make the appropriate signal.

Umpire

- Take the forward stake from the chain person at the place of measurement.
- When Head Line-Judge says “ready”, respond by “pulling chain” as you stretch the chain and hold forward stake near the ball until the Referee reaches a decision.

NOTE: If the measurement is in a side zone and short, the Referee will secure chain at the nose of the ball and the chains will be moved to the in-bounds line where they will re-stretched while the ball is placed exactly where it was in the side zone. Be sure not to pull the chain out of the Referee’s grasp.

Head Line-Judge

- When the Referee calls for a measurement, hustle to the sideline. Make sure the box is at the spot of the front stake.
- Pick up the chain at the clip and proceed to where the Line Judge is marking the yard-line (this should be directly behind the ball).
- Hold the clip on the back of the yard line while the Umpire stretches the chain and the Referee signals the result.
- If not a first down, carry the chain and clip to its correct position on the sideline and re-set the chains.
- If the measurement is in a side-zone, use the chains to bring the ball into the hash marks then set the box and make sure of the proper down. When practical, leave the ball that was measured in place until a new ball has been spotted at the hash mark; then release the old ball to the sideline.
- If a first down, release the chains and clip and let the Side Judge set the chains for a new series.
- Note on a setting the chains for change-of-possession in a non-measurement situation: If there is an incomplete pass on 4th down, the ball will be placed at the previous spot so that the rear point becomes the foremost point of the ball. The box and chains must be moved the length of the football in the new direction of the offense. Only move the box after the Umpire has spotted the ball.

Line Judge

- Using your foot, mark the spot on the yard line to be used by the Head Line-Judge.
- Do not permit team attendants to enter field.

Side Judge

- Before the chains are brought on the field, move to the sideline and assist in setting the first down marker on the front end of the line to gain marker.
- When a decision is made, assist in placing the first down marker on the tip of the football.
- Tell the box person the number of the next down. If a first down, set the chains without waiting for the Head Line-Judge to perform this duty.

Field Judge

- Assist in clearing the area of the measurement of all players except a captain from each team.
- In the event of windy weather or poor field conditions, hold the ball firmly in place until measurement is completed.

5. Penalty Administration (Details)**Referee**

- Fully explain all the options afforded to the offended team.
- Confer with the Umpire as to penalty, enforcement spot, direction and distance.
- Give final signal to the press box side of the field. Stand completely stationary and face the press box when making all penalty signals.

Note: The Referee and Umpire will repeat out loud (Referee to Umpire & Umpire back to Referee) the enforcement spot, distance and direction of the mark-off of an accepted penalty BEFORE the walk-off is begun.

Umpire

- Direct offended captain to Referee as he gives the preliminary signal.
- Secure ball.
- Confer with the Referee as to enforcement spot, direction and distance. In situations where the ball has become dead in a side zone, move the ball back to the appropriate hash mark before stepping off the penalty (do NOT step off penalties in a side zone).
- On properly marked field, avoid stepping off each yard between yard lines. Instead step off the first and last yard line.
- Walk briskly using arm signal to point to each yard line you cross. Verbalize distance walked off as you move to spot.

NOTE: The Referee and Umpire will repeat out loud (Referee to Umpire & Umpire back to Referee) the enforcement spot, distance and direction of the mark-off of an accepted penalty BEFORE the walk-off is begun.

Head Line-Judge

- If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official gets the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
- Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.
- Hustle to your sideline and report the foul and offending player's number to the coach.
- If the coach asks you about administration of the penalty, give them the options.
- Mark off the penalty on the sideline (as a double check for the Umpire) and move the box-man when necessary.

Line Judge

- If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official gets the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
- Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.
- Hustle to your sideline and report the foul and offending player's number to the coach.
- If the coach asks you about administration of the penalty, give them the options.

Deep Judges

- If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official get the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
- Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.

6. Between First and Third Periods

All Officials

- When facing clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter).

Referee

- Meet with the Umpire and Head Line-Judge at the ball and check to be certain there are no penalties to be enforced or no requests for a Coach-Referee conference – then record the down, distance and yard line. Verify this info with the Head Line-Judge before he proceeds to move the chains.

- Be certain the results are recorded on your game card.
- Signal the end of the quarter by raising the ball above your head.
- Move to the appropriate spot at the other end of the field.
- The official who marks the end-of-quarter spot must mark the beginning-of-quarter spot on the other side of mid-field.
- When notified by the Field Judge that it is time to play, mark the ball ready for play.

Umpire

- Record down, distance and yard-line nearest nose of the ball – going in or out?
- Hold spot and hand the ball to Referee for end of period signal.
- Re-check spot and set up ball at corresponding spot on the other half of the field.

Head Line-Judge

- Meet with the Referee to verify the down, distance and yard line. Make note of the yard line where the clip is placed.
- Be certain the results are recorded on your game card.
- Pick up chain at the spot of the clip.
- Remember to instruct chain crew to “flip-flop” sides.
- Move to the appropriate yard line on the other side of the 50-yard line to reset the chains.
- Re-check down, distance and yard line.
- Ensure the box person sets the box on the yard line of the ball.
- Inform Referee that you are ready to go.

Line Judge

- Make note of the down, distance, and yard line where the ball will next be put into play as well as the yard line where the clip is placed prior to the chains being moved.

Side Judge

- Be aware of down, distance, and yard line.
- Maintain a presence between mixed colors.
- Make note of the down, distance, and yard line where the ball will next be put into play.
- Monitor any mixed jerseys and the team’s huddle on your side of the field.

Field Judge

- Be aware of down, distance, and yard line.
- Maintain a presence between mixed colors.
- Make note of the down, distance, and yard line where the ball will next be put into play.
- Monitor any mixed jerseys and the team's huddle on your side of the field.
- Time the quarter break. When 45 seconds is completed, notify Referee with one short blast of your whistle and point at him.

7. Between Halves**All Officials:**

- When facing clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- Inform players near you of the situation (end of half).

Referee

- Observe the players as they clear the field.
- Meet with the Umpire and check to be certain there are no penalties to be enforced or no requests for a Coach-Referee conference.
- Signal the end of the half by raising the ball above your head.
- After all players and coaches have left the field, signal the clock operator to start the game clock to time the half-time period.
- Following the 20-minute half-time and after the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field on R's side of the fifty with your back to R's goal line. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break positions at this time.) When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.

Umpire

- Before leaving the field, make sure the deep officials have secured a game ball.
- Following the 20-minute half-time and after the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field on K's side of the fifty with your back to K's goal line. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break position at this time.) When a team takes the field, break to your free kick position.

Head Line-Judge

- Instruct the chain crew to be ready to resume their duties prior to the second half kickoff.
- Following the 20-minute half-time, relay coaches' options for the 2nd half in conjunction with the Side Judge's responsibilities.
- After the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field next to the Referee away from the press box and facing the Line Judge. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break positions at this time.) When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.

Line Judge

- Observe the players as they clear the field. If both teams exit on the same end of the field, get between the teams and keep them separated.
- Following the 20-minute half-time, relay coaches' options for the 2nd half in conjunction with the Field Judge's responsibilities.
- After the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field next to the Referee on the press box side and facing the Head Head Line-Judge. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break positions at this time.) When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.

Side Judge

- Secure your team's football.
- Observe the players as they clear the field. If teams are leaving the field at the same end, get between the teams and keep them separated.
- Repeat team escort duties following half-time in time for your team to arrive for the mandatory 3-minute warm-up period; if your team has the option in the 2nd half, obtain the option from that team's head coach. Relay that information to the rest of the crew via the Head Head Line-Judge. If your team does not have the option, wait to receive the other team's option via the Head Head Line-Judge and relay that to your team's head coach. Then obtain his choice of the remaining option and relay it back to the crew via the Head Line-Judge.

Head Line-Judge

- After the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field next to the Umpire away from the press box and facing the Field Judge. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break positions at this time.) When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your pre-free kick position.

Field Judge

- Secure your team's football.
- Observe the players as they clear the field. If teams are leaving the field at the same end, get between the teams and keep them separated.

- Repeat team escort duties following half-time in time for your team to arrive for the mandatory 3-minute warm-up period; if your team has the option in the 2nd half, obtain the option from that team's head coach. Relay that information to the rest of the crew via the Line Judge. If your team does not have the option, wait to receive the other team's option via the Line Judge and relay that to your team's head coach. Then obtain his choice of the remaining option and relay it back to the crew via the Line Judge.
- After the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field next to the Umpire on the press box side and facing the Side Judge. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break positions at this time.) When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your pre-free kick position.

8. End of Game

All Officials

- When facing clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- Inform players near you of the situation (end of game).
- Once the Referee has signaled the end-of-game, leave the field immediately as a crew. Neither seek nor avoid meeting with coaches at this time. Referee:
- Meet with the Umpire and check to be certain there are no penalties to be enforced or no requests for a Coach-Referee conference.
- Signal the end of the game by holding the ball above your head.

9. Ball Rotation

Rotation Rules

- When the ball is dead from the middle of the field to the numbers (both sides) – the Umpire shall hustle over and retrieve the ball and spot it. Two ball persons per side are required - one short and one deep. (see Mechanigram C.)

Ball is dead outside the numbers (other team's side line):

- Short wing spots the ball on foot
- Offside deep works in a new ball to umpire
- Umpire should be out shouting for a new ball

Ball is dead outside the numbers (same team side):

- Short wings spot the ball on foot
- Umpire gets new ball in from deep wing
- Umpire should be out shouting for a new ball

Long Pass down Field – complete – Middle of the field to #'s

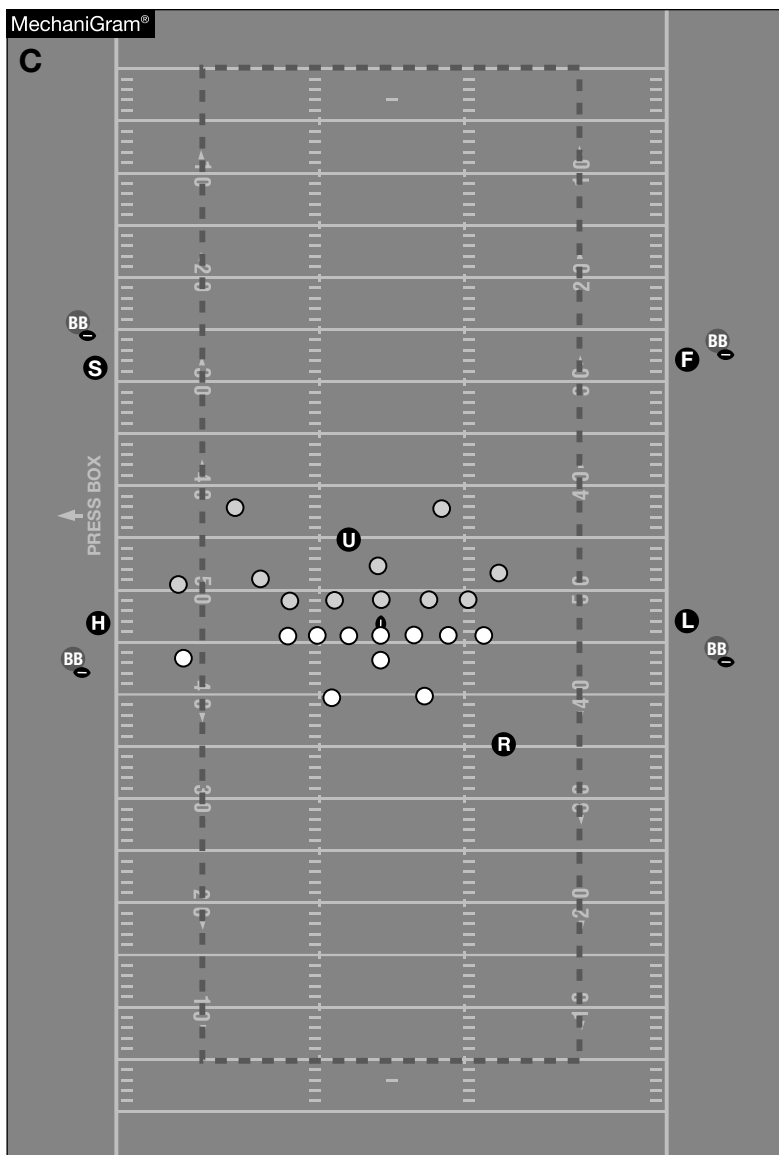
–Umpire gets ball and spots ball

Long Pass down Field – complete – Outside #'s

- Spot ball on wing
- New ball thrown in deep

Long Pass down field – incomplete:

- Ball is thrown out deep
- New ball is thrown in short



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CHAPTER 6

4-PERSON CREWS

The purpose of this section is to document the 4-Person mechanics that are expected by our officials. It is not generally intended to replace the mechanics stated in the NFHS Officials manual, but to expand upon them. In the few instances where differences do exist between the NFHS Officials manual and this manual, this manual's mechanics are to be used. These mechanics are to be used in Sub-Varsity games, only. GHSA requires that all Varsity contests be officiated by an on-field crew of 5 or 6 officials in regular season games and crews of 7 on-field officials are required for all playoff games. 4-Person on-field crews are required for all Sub-Varsity contests.

Differences Between Varsity and Sub-Varsity Games

1. Typically Sub-Varsity games use a clock operator provided by the host school. This makes clock management issues especially important and potentially difficult late in each half, especially in close games.
2. Sub-Varsity contests are often officiated by crews of less experienced officials than a typical Varsity contest would be. This is both necessary and proper. Just as the players in Sub-Varsity games are learning the game of football, so are many of the officials learning the craft of officiating during these games. This does NOT mean that any less care should be spent in the effort by the crew. It does mean that the more experienced officials on a crew need to be aware of younger officials and be prepared to assist these newer officials in learning the craft. Local associations are encouraged to assign a good mix of well-experienced and talented officials to Sub-Varsity games along with the less-experienced officials. This is to facilitate both well-officiated Sub-Varsity games and the mentoring of the newer officials assigned to these contests.
3. Required pre-game crew assembly times are controlled by the various associations. However, all associations are expected to require their crews to be present at the game site in time to conduct an adequate pre-game meeting of the crew, allow the Line Judge time to meet with game management, have a complete pre-game meeting between the Referee, Umpire and each head coach and for the Head Head Line-Judge to conduct a thorough pre-game briefing of his chain crew. When the school provides only an inexperienced clock operator,

additional time may be required to provide them with a detailed pre-game briefing of the ECO's duties. Play clock operation should be done by the most experienced member of the crew, often that is the Referee.

4. The length of quarters is different (shorter) for Sub-Varsity games than for Varsity contests. For both 9th Grade and JV/B-Team – 10 minute quarters.
5. As of 2009, there is no longer a 9:00 PM curfew for sub-varsity games. If there is a double header sub-varsity scheduled on a week night (Monday through Friday) the first game of the double header must be started not later than 5:30 PM.
6. Because the on-field crews are smaller, the portion of the field assigned for coverage is considerably expanded. This is especially true for wing officials. This provides real challenges for the wings especially on passes thrown beyond the line of scrimmage and on breakaway runs. Good reading of keys and continuous hustle are required to adequately cover many plays using 4-Person mechanics.
7. Sub-varsity games may be played to completion using overtime rules, if needed. However, tie games will end in a tie unless both coaches agree prior to the game to play until a winner is determined.

A. SCRIMMAGE PLAYS ORIGINATING OUTSIDE 10-YARD LINE

This is the so-called “standard” or “mid-field” play set-up. In this situation everyone on the crew lines up in their “normal” positions pre-snap and has “default” coverage as the play develops. Other play situations present greater or lesser deviations from this set-up.

Referee

In 40-second play clock situations, the Referee must be particularly aware of the crew's requirement for making the ball ready for play in a timely manner. This is often more difficult in sub-Varsity games for a number of reasons. When dealing with conventional huddles, stand 5-7 yards off the LOS and near the huddle to blow the ready-for-play (in 25-second play clock situations); when dealing with spread offenses or no-huddle, stand as deep as desired for the actual start of the play before clearing the Umpire to allow the snap. Unlike 6-Person mechanics, the Referee will line up toward the center of the field; in the case where the ball is marked near the center of the field, the Referee may elect to line up on the passing arm side of the quarterback for that play, only. In general he should be 12-14 yards behind the LOS. He keys the offensive tackle's block to the opposite side of the snapper; therefore, he must alter his pre-snap position so that he has a clear view to that tackle at the snap. The Referee should have a clear line of sight to the ball pre-snap and either he or the Umpire must have sight to the ball at all times once the ball has been blown ready-for-play. The Referee and Umpire will share the count of the offensive team prior to every snap and will NOT allow the ball to become alive if the offense has more than 11 players on the field with the snap's being imminent. The boundaries of the free blocking zone must be identified during pre-snap duties prior to every scrimmage play in order to properly rule on any potential intentional grounding situation that might develop. The Referee is also responsible for forward/backward direction of all passes except option-type passes and passes thrown by the Quarterback immediately after receipt of the snap.

The Referee has responsibility for the runner until the runner has crossed the LOS and has responsibility for the passer until the passer decides that he is once again ready to actively participate in the play with no further protection as a passer. On running plays outside the tackles, the Referee trails the play following action around the runner; on running plays that break up the middle (inside the tackles), he trails the entire play operating in a “clean-up” mode. In the case of an interception or fumble recovery, the Referee should be able in most cases to remain farther downfield than the runner and be able to beat him to the goal line, if necessary, to cover the touchdown or any forward progress short of the touchdown that is past the coverage of the wing officials.

Umpire

When dealing with conventional huddles, the Umpire should stand in the vicinity of the ball until the huddle breaks; when dealing with spread offenses or no-huddle, the Umpire should remain in position over the ball until signaled to move to his pre-snap position. At pre-snap line up 6-9 yards off the LOS approximately head-up of the center but offset opposite the Referee, as needed, to have a clear line of sight to the ball, pre-snap. Either the Umpire or the Referee must have a clear line of sight to the ball at all times once the ball has been blown ready for play. The Umpire and Referee will share the count of the offensive team prior to every snap and will NOT allow the ball to become alive if the offense has more than 11 players on the field with the snap's being imminent. The Umpire is responsible for all action on or by the offensive linemen and has additional responsibility for detecting and signaling forward passes deflected by the defense at or near the LOS. The Umpire is unique to the crew in that he works an inside-out technique which places him inside the Mobile Box during the play. As running plays move downfield outside the offensive tackles, he allows the Referee to follow the runner; and the Umpire operates in a “clean-up” mode for all other action trailing the play. For running plays that break up the middle (inside the tackles), he and the Referee reverse roles; the Umpire follows action around the runner and the Referee trails the entire play operating in a “clean-up” mode. While all officials have responsibility to recognize and flag various forms of illegal blocking, the Umpire has the greatest focus on the “free blocking zone” and recognition of legal and illegal blocks that take place there so long as the zone remains intact by rule. In mid-field plays, the Umpire is responsible for getting back to the LOS on passing plays to judge whether the ball or the passer crossed the neutral zone as part of the pass. At play's end, the Umpire will move to the dead ball spot, if it is inside the hash marks, and will set the ball upon the mark of the covering official; very rarely will the Umpire be the covering official, himself. The Umpire should not treat the hash marks as a wall beyond which he will not go to retrieve a dead ball. Instead he should move outside the hash marks as needed to most efficiently retrieve the ball and replace it for the next play.

Wing Officials

Wing officials should begin each play positioned on the sideline, outside the field of play. They should start each play aligned opposite each other straddling the neutral zone, working just out of bounds but inside the restraining line that aligns with their respective sideline. This will help the wing officials with several field management duties:

- Player and non-player safety as well as sideline control with the prospect for clear communication between the game officials and coaches is very important.
- Positioning along the sideline allows the action to be in front of them.

- Working wide will give the Wings a broader view of the play with complete outside-in coverage while keeping the play boxed in.
- Working outside the field of play will also prevent game officials from having players lining up or positioned behind them.
- It is essential to begin each play wide. This gives the game official a better perspective with a wider peripheral view for better officiating opportunities.
- Wing officials are responsible for forward/backward direction of passes thrown toward them for option-type passes and those thrown by the Quarterback immediately after receiving the snap. All other directionality belongs to the Referee.

Wing officials are first responsible for the count of the defensive team. Thereafter they are responsible for determining the eligibility of receivers and the alignment of players such that they are aware and will flag fouls for illegal formations at the snap when such fouls occur. Counting of offensive players in the backfield is the SAME for wings in 4-Person as it is in 6-Person. Similarly, signaling of players in the backfield outside the last man on each wing's side of the field is the same as for 6-Person. In the case of an illegal formation due to more than 4 players lined up as offensive backs, BOTH wing officials should have live-ball flags at the snap for an illegal formation foul. At the snap, wing officials read the block of the offensive tackle on their side; a passive block gives a read of "pass;" an aggressive block gives a read of "run." Note that this is just an initial read; wing officials must alter their coverage to the play that actually develops. For passing plays the Wing official is responsible for action on all receivers on his side of the field including a back lined up inside or a flanker if used by the offense. The Wing officials are responsible for all action beyond the LOS all the way to the defensive team's end zone.

B. SCRIMMAGE PLAYS ORIGINATING AT OR INSIDE 10-YARD LINE

Plays originating at or inside the 10 yard line of the defense are handled quite a bit differently than those originating outside the 10 yard line. Inside the 10, the focus is generally on the goal line much more than it is on plays originating in the mid-field area. The purpose of having "goal line mechanics" for such plays is to acknowledge the increased importance of coverage at the goal line and into the end zone and allowing the officials to pre-position themselves pre-snap in such a way as to enhance their chances of getting good coverage on all such plays.

Referee

Among all the on-field officials his changes are the fewest of the entire crew. Mechanically, he operates in the same fashion as he would on any other ordinary scrimmage down. However, he has primary responsibility for recognizing that the next snap will be at or inside the 10 yard line (going in) or 3 yard line (going out) and conveying that information to the balance of the crew so that they will properly alter their own mechanics for the goal line situation.

Umpire

Going in the Umpire may line up at his normal depth (6-9 yards off the LOS). However, as the distance of the snap from the goal line shortens to less than 5 yards, he needs to adjust accordingly to be at a depth where he can assist on judging whether the ball made it to the end zone while it remained alive. He can best do this when he is positioned about 3 yards deep in the end zone. He must also be able to come quickly and easily to the LOS on passing plays as he must now judge whether the ball and/or the passer crossed the LOS (the Line Judge's responsibility on snaps outside the 10 yard line). Going out, coverage is the same as in a mid-field scrimmage play.

Wing Officials

On snaps from the 10 yard line going in, the Wing officials should be able to beat the play to the goal line in all cases. On snaps inside the 5 yard line, they should move immediately from the snap to the goal line and work back out. The goal line is their most important responsibility with one exception – the dead ball spot for 4th down on plays where the line-to-gain is inside the 5 yard line; in that case, they need to give preference over goal line coverage to the line-to-gain. On snaps at or inside the 3 yard line going out, the Wing officials must step back to the goal line initially in order to cover the goal line for a possible ruling on a Safety.

C. PUNT PLAYS

Referee

Signal the Umpire that the offense is in a kicking formation (signal 19) when the offense has met the

criteria for such a formation. Line up pre-snap on the punter's kicking foot side. He should be offset to the side wide enough to watch action of the rushers but not so wide that he has difficulty in judging a possible tipped ball. He must be deep enough behind the punter to not be in the way in case of a too-long snap and the scramble for the ball that is likely to follow. His primary responsibility is to cover action on the punter (running into or roughing the kicker). He must stay with the punter until the punter decides to rejoin the play as an ordinary player. Once the ball has been kicked and there is no more action on the punter, move to the spot of the kick for possible coverage of a kick out-of-bounds (see below). For punts that will take place at or near the goal or end lines, his pre-snap position should give him good coverage of these lines, especially for judging whether a Safety has occurred on the play. He must also be prepared to rule on intentional grounding in case a passing play develops.

Umpire

Line up initially shaded to the Line Judge's side of the field to help fill the gap caused by the Line Judge's coverage of the receiver(s). Acknowledge the Referee's kicking formation signal (signal 19) by repeating it back to the Referee. Check for legal/illegal numbering exception, and check linemen legal/illegal interlocking of feet prior to the snap. After the snap focus on action on the snapper as long as the snapper remains protected by rule then shift to action by the guards and backs behind the neutral zone. The Umpire needs to be in position to judge tipped punts behind the LOS (signal 11). Once the kick is away, verbally say "ball's away;" allow action to flow by, pivoting to follow the action slowly downfield; on short or partially blocked kicks assist with determining whether the kick crossed the neutral zone. During the return work inside-out watching for personal foul, clipping and other illegal blocks. In case a pass play develops the Umpire must be prepared to rule on potential Ineligible Downfield situations.

Head Line-Judge

Take responsibility for the entire LOS prior to the snap to fill the gap caused by the Line Judge's coverage of the receiver(s). Hold the line at the snap and remain there until certain that the kick will travel past the LOS and not return. Once this is done, drift downfield 10-15 yards from the LOS and be prepared to carry the runner on your side all the way to the goal line. On kicks that go out-of-bounds in the air, be prepared to go past the most distant point the ball could have crossed the sideline and then walk back up the sideline to be "chopped in" by the Referee to mark the outof-bounds spot.

Line Judge

Release all responsibility for the LOS to the Head Line-Judge. Pre-snap move downfield and brief the receiver(s) on the proper method of calling for a fair catch. Remain shaded to your side of the field a few yards in front of the deepest receiver. You are responsible for handling the catch and whether any receiver called for a fair catch. Be prepared to take the receiver all the way to the goal line if he breaks to your side. Also be prepared to rule on force and momentum on kicks that are near the goal line. On kicks that go out-of-bounds in the air, be prepared to go past the most distant point the ball could have crossed the sideline and then walk back up the sideline to be "chopped in" by the Referee to mark the out-of-bounds spot.

D. FIELD GOAL & KICK TRY PLAYS

All Officials

1. The largest difference between a Field Goal attempt and a Kick Try is the status of the ball if the attempt fails. In a Kick Try the ball becomes dead as soon as it is apparent that the kick will fail; in a Field Goal attempt the ball remains live until it otherwise becomes dead by rule. Officials must be prepared to stop play immediately for a failed Kick Try but allow play to continue for a failed Field Goal attempt until the ball becomes dead otherwise.
2. Referee and Umpire each continue to count kickers and Wing officials count receivers. Referee and Umpire also share snapper protection when conditions are met for a legal scrimmage kick (signal 19).
3. Everyone must be aware of the numbering exception and be able to identify players who are wearing eligible numbers but are ineligible by position.
4. There is a major difference in crew configuration for kicks where the LOS is at or inside the 15 yard line and outside the 15:

At or inside the 15

Referee has the call for inside the uprights or not; he lines up behind directly behind the center deeper than the kicker's initial position by about 3 yards. The Line Judge holds the line and observes initial contact at the snap but also determines if ball went under the crossbar on the kick; he ONLY signals if the ball fails to cross above the crossbar (signal 10). If the ball is inside the uprights and above the crossbar, the Referee has the only signal (signal 5). The Head Line-Judge is responsible for judging roughing of the kicker/holder; therefore, he must quickly shift his attention to the kicker/holder after the snap. The Umpire has ordinary line coverage.

Outside the 15

The Line Judge locates directly behind the goal post and has the entire call – good (signal 5) or no-good (signal 10) regardless of the reason for no-good. The Head Line-Judge is responsible for the entire LOS (similar to a punt). The Referee offsets similarly to a 6-Person configuration and is responsible for roughing of kicker/holder. The Umpire has ordinary line coverage.

E. Free Kick Plays

1. Ordinary Kick Off Anticipated

Referee

1. Position as the deepest official (near R's 5 or 10-yard line) and on the press box side of the field (opposite the chains). This is to give the best "box" of officials possible prior to the kick.
2. Check-off with all other officials before blowing ball ready-for-play.
3. After kick, start clock if ball is legally touched in your area.
4. Initially follow runner in your area eventually turning him over to other officials farther downfield if play develops that way.
5. Follow play once the runner has been released; observe locks and other action away from the ball (operate in "clean-up" mode).
6. If ball becomes dead in your area, blow the play dead and mark the spot.

Umpire

1. Position yourself around 20 yard line on Head Head Line-Judge's (chains) side of field.
2. Count Team-R and clear sidelines in your area.
3. Raise hand (with beanbag in it) indicating to Referee that you are prepared for the "ready signal" to be given.
4. After kick, start clock if ball is touched legally touched in your area. First touching by Team-K does NOT start the clock.
5. Pick up runner as he moves into your area of coverage. Follow play; mark spot at play's end; stop clock.
6. If first touching by Team-K, mark spot with bean bag (on the yard line where it occurred); play continues on until ball becomes dead by rule.
7. If kick travels out of bounds, the following applies:
 - If in player possession, mark spot and stop clock.
 - Beanbag out-of-bounds spot if touched by Team-R inbounds.
 - Penalty flag if not touched by Team-R inbounds.

8. Coverage technique: Stay on side line if play is to your side, trail play if action is away from you.
9. Observe blocks and other action away from ball when your responsibility is not covering the runner (operate in “clean-up” mode).
10. At end of play move to spot the ball for the down to follow.

Line Judge

1. Line Judge is responsible for Team-R.
2. Move to the center of the field at Team-R's free kick line and face Team-R.
3. Remind all players to have their mouthpieces in and to not cross the free kick line until the ball has been kicked.
4. Count Team-R players; in cases where there are too many players, tell a captain to count his players. Do not allow the ball to become alive with too many players on field for Team-R. As a courtesy, you may offer the same “count your players” advice when too few are on field; however, if Team-R so elects they may elect to receive the ball with too few players.
5. Remain at center of field until communicating unobtrusively with the Head Head Line-Judge that he has the Team-K ready to kick. Then turn and run to your sideline.
6. Take a position straddling the free kick line. Remove your bean bag and hold it above your head to show the Referee that you and Team-R are prepared for the ready for play signal. Continue to hold the bean bag above your head until ready for play is blown by Referee.
7. At the kick be aware of encroachment by any Team-R players. This is a dead ball foul if it occurs.
8. Line Judge is responsible for marking spots of first touching with bean bag. Also responsible for marking short kicks out of bounds. If not touched inbounds by Team-R, free kicks out-of-bounds are flagged as a penalty on Team-K.
9. Be aware of illegal blocks, clipping, illegal use of hands and holding.
10. On long returns, pickup runner at about 35 yard line and proceed with him all the way down the field.

Head Line-Judge

1. Head Head Line-Judge is responsible for Team-K.
2. Move to the center of the field at Team-R's free kick line and give the ball to the kicker.

3. The kicker may place the ball at any point between the hash marks along the free kick line on a legal kicking tee and / or the ball may be held by one of his teammates.
4. In the case of a free kick, the kicker may also elect to put the ball into play by punting or drop kicking.
5. Remind all players to have their mouthpieces in and to not cross the free kick line until the ball has been kicked. Caution kicker not to kick ball until Referee has signaled ready for play with his whistle.
6. Count Team-K players; in cases where there are too many players, tell the kicker to count his players. Do not allow the ball to become alive with too many players on field for Team-K. As a courtesy, you may offer the same "count your players" advice when too few are on field; however, if Team-K so elects they may place the ball in play with too few players.
7. Remain with the kicker until communicating unobtrusively with the Line Judge that he has the Team-R ready to receive. Then turn and run to your sideline.
8. Take a position straddling the free kick line. Remove your bean bag and hold it above your head to show the Referee that you and Team-K are prepared for the ready for play signal. Continue to hold the bean bag above your head until ready for play is blown by Referee.
9. At the kick be aware of encroachment by any Team-K players. This is a dead ball foul if it occurs.
10. Head Head Line-Judge is responsible for marking spots of first touching with bean bag, and for illegal contact on kicker until kicker has proceeded downfield for a minimum of 5 yards. Also responsible for marking short kicks out of bounds. If not touched inbounds by Team-R, free kicks out-of-bounds are flagged as a penalty on Team-K.
11. Be aware of illegal blocks, clipping, illegal use of hands and holding.
12. On long returns, pickup runner at about midfield and proceed with him all the way down the field.

2. Obvious "On-Side" Kick Situations

In a crew configuration this small, only minor adjustments can be safely made for an "Obvious 'On-Side' Kick Situation." The Referee will declare this following a successful field goal attempt or the completion of any try. This will typically happen only late in the game and the scoring team trails. If the situation is such that the scoring team "must" get the ball back quickly to have any chance of winning or tying the game, this will trigger the Referee's declaration; this is a judgment call for the Referee.

In this case, the Umpire will "cheat up" to the receiver's kick restraining line. The Referee will remain the deepest official, but he will also "cheat up" the field to about the receiver's 20 yard line; he must still be able to retreat to the goal line in the unlikely event that the kick is actually sent deep.

3. After a Safety

In this case, the entire crew shifts their ordinary pre-kick positions to account on a yard-for-yard basis of the relocation of the kicker's kick restraining line to their 20 (for a normal kick off their kick restraining line would be their own 40). This is the only adjustment to the crew's position and duties in this case. However, the kickers do have the option of legally punting the ball from within one yard behind this free kick line if they choose.

4. After a Fair Catch or Awarded Fair Catch

In this case, the selection of a free kick is almost certainly for the purpose of attempting to score a Field Goal from a free kick formation. The crew alignment for this play is:

- Referee: Handles the kicker and the kicking team much as the Head Line-Judge would normally do; however, he operates from the Line Judge's side of the field.
- Umpire: Moves to the goal line to judge the possibility of a touchback.
- Head Line-Judge: Covers the receiver's free kick line in absence of the Line Judge.
- Line Judge: Moves under the goal post and judges the entire attempt at a Field Goal.

F. MISCELLANEOUS SITUATIONS

8. Pre-Game On-field Duties

The duties of a 4-Person crew are essentially the same as for a 6-Person crew. See the 6-Person section for details for each of the 4 positions in a 4-Person crew. In addition, the 4-Person crew must also police the 10 yard buffer zone (between the 45 yard lines) that would be covered by the deep judges in a 6-Person crew. Generally, the Line Judge will be the "most free" to take on this duty; but flexibility is the watchword. This area must be policed regardless of other duties that may have to be delayed; however, most sub-varsity level games do not present much of a problem in this regard.

9. Pre-Game Escort Duties

Unlike Varsity games, there is not an elaborate set of procedures to be followed to get the game started. As kick off time approaches, the Referee and Umpire merely call for the captains of each team to meet on their appropriate side of the field. As soon as all captains and officials are assembled at the sideline, the walk to the center of the field commences. Refer to the 6-Person section of the manual for individual escort responsibilities. Note that this leaves the teams without an escort. This is fine as long as they have gone to their sideline already. If not, the appropriate Wing official should stay with the team until they come to the sideline, thereby missing the coin toss ceremony. Also, since there are no deep judges in a 4-Person crew the Wing officials are also responsible for getting the ball from the team who will be kicking off following the coin toss.

10. Time Outs

Referee

1. Signal time out (signal #3, see rule book) and indicate by “whacking” with both hands which team the time out is to be charged to or, alternately, indicate that it is an official's time out.
2. In the case of a charged time out, move to a spot between the ball and offensive huddle. Record the time and quarter of the time out and relay that information, along with remaining times out for both teams, to all crew members.
3. In the case of an official's time out, move as appropriate to deal with the situation which caused the time out to be called. Official's time outs may last as long as needed to deal with the situation in question. Charged times out have a total duration of 60 seconds.
4. When 45 seconds have expired in a charged time out, signal Head Head Line-Judge and Line Judge to announce to both teams “15 seconds to ready.” This is to let any coaches on the field know it is time for them to begin to move to the sidelines.
5. At the expiration of the full 60 seconds, blow the ball ready for play. The clock will start on the snap, if in a timed down period.
6. Move to your pre-snap position appropriate to the anticipated play.

Umpire

1. Maintain ball position (stand over ball) and watch Team-A for Referee.
2. If injury time out, make sure no one is coaching teams. (Note: for an extended injury time out, Referee may decide to make other disposition of the teams. In that case Referee's decision would apply.)
3. On charged time outs, with other members of the crew, share the time of the time out, which team it is charged to and the REMAINING time outs available to each team.

Wing Officials

1. Record the time and quarter and which team is charged for charged times out.
2. Communicate this with other crew members to be sure all members agree.
3. Take position midway between position of ball and the team box on your side.
4. Control legal participation during any team conferences that may occur.
5. Relay 15 second warning from Referee when time out is to expire.
6. Inform the coach of how many time outs he has remaining.
7. When the time out has ended, return to normal position.

11. Measurements

Referee:

1. The Referee rules on whether line to gain was reached.
2. Position yourself so that the chains do not have to be passed through your position to be stretched.
3. Once the Umpire has the chains stretched, look at the position of the ball relative to the rod. If the most downfield part of the ball is equal to or past the inside of the rod (figuratively "touching" the rod), it is a first down. If the ball is not this far advanced. The next down is that which would next be by rule. In the case of a first down for either team in this circumstance, the signal for first down should be made quickly, forcefully and in the correct direction.
4. In the case of short distances to go in a side zone, hold the chain at the foremost point of the ball as the chain is moved back to the hash mark; then place the ball accordingly.

Umpire

1. Pre-position yourself near the ball, toward the chain side of the ball. There is NO need for the chains to move past the ball toward the press box side of the field; do not let chains move to the press box side of the ball.
2. Take the forward rod of the chain set from the member of the chain gang. Wait at your spot for him/her to bring the rod to you!
3. After Head Line-Judge has indicated that he has the chain positioned for the measurement to begin, pull the rod forward to tighten the chain.

Head Line-Judge

1. Have the box man move the box to the position of the forward rod.
2. Move quickly to the sideline and clip the chain with a clip disk (or flag if no clip disk is available) on the (5 or 10) yard line most distant from the ball.
3. Once clipped, move out with the two people holding the rods to the position being marked for you by the Line Judge.
4. Place the chain down at that spot with the clip in the same position it was relative to the (5 or 10) yard line on the sideline. The Umpire will take control of the front rod. The back rod should be allowed to be held upright but slack.
5. In the case of a short condition in a side zone, be prepared to move the chains in to the hash mark for the ball to be precisely spotted.
6. In the case of a measurement where line to gain was not reached, return chains to sideline setting them via the clip and marking spot for box as appropriate.
7. In the case of a first down, simply move the chains back to the sideline and mark there as any other first down.
8. Unclip the chain.

Line Judge

1. Move to a spot nearly in line with the ball along the length of the field. However, you should be positioned just to the chain side of the ball.
2. Place your toe on the (5 or 10) yard line at the spot where it intersects with the line determined above. Make sure this will NOT cause the chains to need to cross the ball when chains are extended.
3. Hold that position for placement of the clip when the chains are brought out by the Head Head Line-Judge.

12. Penalty Administration (Details)**Referee**

- Fully explain all the options afforded to the offended team.
- Confer with the Umpire as to penalty, enforcement spot, direction and distance.
- Give final signal to the press box side of the field. Stand completely stationary and face the press box when making all penalty signals.

NOTE: The Referee and Umpire will repeat out loud (Referee to Umpire & Umpire back to Referee) the enforcement spot, distance and direction of the mark-off of an accepted penalty BEFORE the walk-off is begun. Umpire:

- Direct offended captain to Referee as he gives the preliminary signal.
- Secure ball.
- Confer with the Referee as to enforcement spot, direction and distance. In situations where the ball has become dead in a side zone, move the ball back to the appropriate hash mark before stepping off the penalty (do NOT step off penalties in a side zone).
- On properly marked field, avoid stepping off each yard between yard lines. Instead step off the first and last yard line.
- Walk briskly using arm signal to point to each yard line you cross.
- Verbalize distance walked off as you move to spot.

NOTE: The Referee and Umpire will repeat out loud (Referee to Umpire & Umpire back to Referee) the enforcement spot, distance and direction of the mark-off of an accepted penalty BEFORE the walk-off is begun.

Head Line-Judge

- If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official gets the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
- Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.
- Hustle to your sideline and report the foul and offending player's number to the coach.

- If the coach asks you about administration of the penalty, give them the options.
- Mark off the penalty on the sideline (as a double check for the Umpire) and move the box-man when necessary. Line Judge:
- If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official gets the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
- Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.
- Hustle to your sideline and report the foul and offending player's number to the coach.
- If the coach asks you about administration of the penalty, give them the options.

13. Between First and Third Periods

All Officials

- When facing clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter).

Referee

- Meet with the Umpire and Head Line-Judge at the ball and check to be certain there are no penalties to be enforced or no requests for a Coach-Referee conference – then record the down, distance and yard line. Verify this info with the Head Line-Judge before he proceeds to move the chains.
- Be certain the results are recorded on your game card.
- Signal the end of the quarter by raising the ball above your head.
- Move to the appropriate spot at the other end of the field.
- The official who marks the end-of-quarter spot must mark the beginning-of-quarter spot on the other side of mid-field.
- Mark the ball ready for play after the 1-minute intermission period between quarters.

Umpire

- Record down, distance and yard-line nearest nose of the ball – going in or out?
- Hold spot and hand the ball to Referee for end of period signal.
- Re-check spot and set up ball at corresponding spot on the other half of the field.

Head Line-Judge

- Meet with the Referee to verify the down, distance and yard line. Make note of the yard line where the clip is placed.
- Be certain the results are recorded on your game card.
- Pick up chain at the spot of the clip.
- Remember to instruct chain crew to “flip-flop” sides.
- Move to the appropriate yard line on the other side of the 50-yard line to reset the chains.
- Re-check down, distance and yard line.
- Ensure the box person sets the box on the yard line of the ball.
- Inform Referee that you are ready to go.

Line Judge

- Make note of the down, distance, and yard line where the ball will next be put into play as well as the yard line where the clip is placed prior to the chains being moved.

14. Between Halves**All Officials**

- When facing clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- Inform players near you of the situation (end of half).

Referee

- Observe the players as they clear the field.
- Meet with the Umpire and check to be certain there are no penalties to be enforced or no requests for a Coach-Referee conference.
- Signal the end of the half by raising the ball above your head.
- After all players and coaches have left the field, signal the clock operator to start the game clock to time the half-time period.
- Following the half-time, position yourself appropriately for the 2nd half kick off.

Umpire

- Observe the players as they clear the field.
- Following the half-time, position yourself appropriately for the 2nd half kick off.

Wing Officials

- Observe the players as they clear the field. If both teams exit on the same end of the field, get between the teams and keep them separated.
- Instruct the chain crew to be ready to resume their duties prior to the second half kickoff.
- Following the half-time, relay coaches' options for the 2nd half.
- Position yourself appropriately for the 2nd half kick off.

15. End of Game**All Officials:**

- When facing clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- Inform players near you of the situation (end of game).
- Once the Referee has signaled the end-of-game, leave the field immediately as a crew. Neither seek nor avoid meeting with coaches at this time.

Referee

- Meet with the Umpire and check to be certain there are no penalties to be enforced or no requests for a Coach-Referee conference.
- Signal the end of the game by holding the ball above your head.

CHAPTER 7

5-PERSON CREWS

5-PERSON CREWS

GHSA allows 5-Person crews to be worked in Varsity games during the regular season, only. However, this practice is discouraged as the coverage is not as good as with a 6-Person crew. Around 2006, the section on 5-Person mechanics in the Officials Manual had its content frozen; there have been no changes made to that section since then. Trying to keep the Manual updated for both 5-Person and 6-Person mechanics seemed a waste of effort since GHSA wanted to discourage the use of 5-Person. The 2013 edition of the Manual took this one step further by eliminating coverage of 5-Person, altogether. Associations may continue to use the 2012 Manual's 5-Person section if they choose to use this crew configuration. However, the format of that section is at odds with the re-write of this version of the Manual and so is not included here.

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CHAPTER 8

7-PERSON CREWS

INTRODUCTION

This is the Georgia Football Officials Manual for a crew of 7 on-field officials. This manual deviates from the CCA 7-person mechanics as little as possible. However, there are significant differences between the college and high school mechanics as implemented in the state of Georgia. Fortunately, these differences are largely based on the different sets of rules that apply to the two levels of competition, AND these differences favor the high school game in terms of simplifying some aspects of the mechanics when compared to college.

The source of the major differences between levels revolve around just a few issues:

- 1 – Effective with rule changes in 2019, there is both a 25- and 40-second play clock at the high school level. However, other aspects of offensive and defensive substitution management in effect at the college level are not pertinent to the high school game.
- 2 – There is no specific reaction-to-Team-A-substitution relief given to Team-B in high school. Therefore, none of the signaling and holding the offense off snapping the ball mechanics need to be applied to the high school game. In place of these mechanics are guidelines for controlling the pace of the game by high school crews.
- 3 – Unlike college crews, high school wing (Head Line Judge and Line Judge) and deep (Side Judge and Field Judge) officials work the same side of the field for the entire game; they do NOT switch sides of the field between halves.

Those officials who work in both levels of the sport should feel comfortable with the simplified mechanics that follow. These “hybrid” officials will have to “unlearn” very little from college level games that applies to their work at the high school level. High school, only, officials who have not previously worked in a 7-Person technique will find several important changes required of them, however. This is especially true for deep officials in relation to identifying and covering their keys in ordinary scrimmage downs.

These are the specific changes from the 2022 Officials Manual:

1. Coverage of ordinary kick-offs will be by flexible zones instead of keying on players at the kick. (pp. 104-6)
2. Reverse mechanics for goal line situations (Team A moving away from their own goal line) were updated to clarify coverage of the line of scrimmage in pass plays. (p. 116)
3. Adjustment to the play clock table was made to cover 2020 NFHS rule change when a time-out is required for a defensive player injury or equipment issue. (p. 140)

PREGAME RESPONSIBILITIES

The Back Judge should receive, test, certify and mark the new or nearly new game balls submitted for approval by each team during the crew's pre-game on-field activities. All officials are responsible for administering and enforcing legality of footballs throughout the game.

The Referee and Umpire visit each head coach during the crew's pre-game on-field activities. The Umpire inspects player equipment as well as bandages, tape, etc., and informs both the players and the coach of such gear that requires correction before any players in question may legally participate in the game.

Per NFHS rules, an official other than the Umpire may be the official who accompanies the Referee during this meeting. In such a case, the other official will perform the Umpire's player inspection duties.

The Referee confirms the official time and starting time with each head coach or designated representative. Each head coach is to certify all players are legally equipped and are to be reminded of sportsmanship requirements. The Referee should review any unusual game situations with the head coach.

Following the completion of the coaches' meetings, the Referee should share the results of the discussions with the coaches with his crew.

MEETING WITH THE TIMER

The pre-game activities of the Electronic Clock Operator (ECO) are no different when working with a 7-Person crew than with a 6-Person crew.

The ECO must have an alternative timing device available in case the game clock malfunctions. In case of a clock problem, the ECO must immediately contact the on-field officials by a pre-arranged method, giving them the correct data regarding the official time. The alternate method of keeping game time will then be put into effect until such time as the game clock's operation can be restored.

Should the field clock become inoperative, the Referee will indicate to the crowd that the field clock will not be official until the malfunction is corrected. If the Referee is equipped with a microphone, he can announce the remaining time after every dead ball. If not, the officials will alert the P.A. announcer concerning remaining time by the best means of communication then available for this purpose.

Prior to taking charge of the field, the Referee should remind the ECO that if the game clock is stopped with two seconds or less in any period and will start on the Referee's signal, run the clock to zero if the ball is legally snapped.

ON THE FIELD

All seven officials (initially accompanied by the ECO) will be on the field 45 minutes before game time and remain as long as both teams are on the field. If one or both teams leave, the crew may leave as well, and return no less than five minutes before game time. The Umpire should spot check player equipment and the Head Line-Judge check the chain crew equipment. The chain should be measured against field markings to ensure that the chain is 10 yards long. If it's not already attached, a piece of tape should be wound around the links in the exact middle of the chain to aid in determining whether a five-yard penalty will or will not result in a first down. The chain should be inspected for kinks, knots, weak spots and tape. The down box must be in working order.

The Crew shall inspect the entire field. At minimum, the following procedure for setting the field for safety must be followed:

- All markers and obstructions within the playing enclosure shall be placed or constructed in such a manner as to avoid any possible hazard to players. This includes anything dangerous to anyone at the limit lines.
- After the officials' pregame inspection of the playing enclosure, the Referee shall order removed any hazardous obstructions or markers located inside the limit lines.
- The Line Judge shall report to game management personnel any markers or obstructions constituting a hazard within the playing enclosure but outside the limit lines. Final determination of corrective action shall be the responsibility of game management personnel.
- After the officials have completed their pregame inspection of the playing enclosure, it is the responsibility of game management personnel to ensure that the playing enclosure remains safe throughout the game.

The Side Judge and Field Judge ensure that the game balls are available and instruct ball retrievers on their duties.

The Line Judge and Head Line-Judge escort their captains same as in GHSA 6-Person. The Side Judge and Field Judge ensure their respective teams are on the field three minutes before the start of the game. In effect GHSA 6-Person escort duties remain in effect except for the addition of the Back Judge.

MEETING WITH THE CHAIN CREW

The official chains and down box remain on the side of the field opposite the press box throughout the game.

The Head Line-Judge shall meet with the chain crew before the game. The box holder and chain crew should be instructed to place markers, rods and the clip where indicated by the Head Line-Judge.

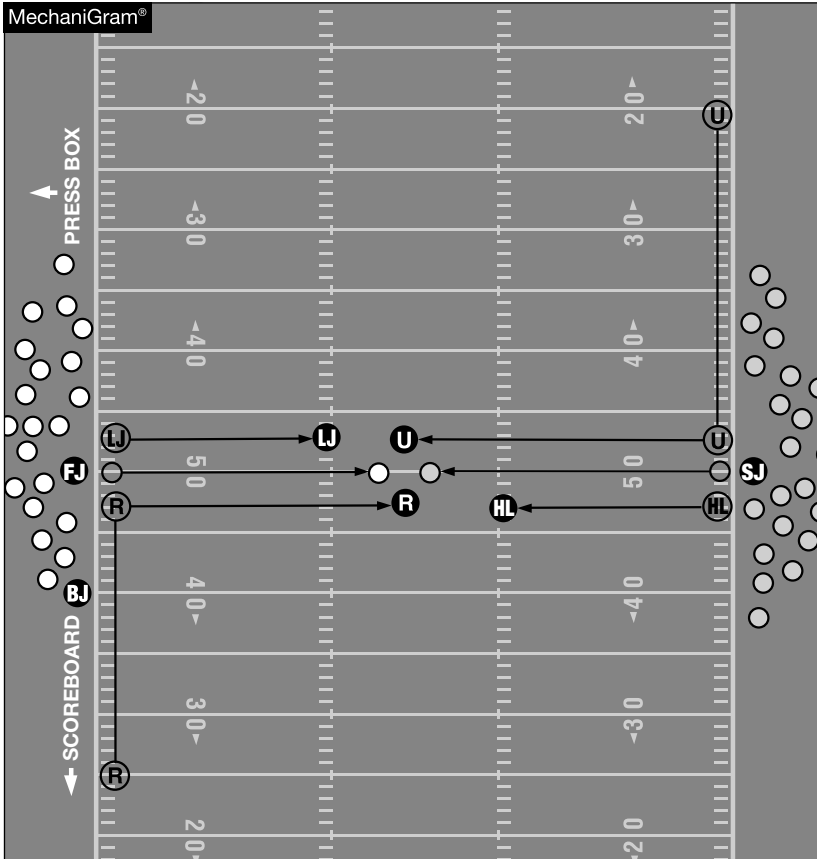
When a new series begins, the chains should be positioned adjacent to the sideline. The box holder places the marker on the sideline where indicated by the Head Line-Judge. The chains are then set on the sideline and the clip attached to the chain on the side of the yard line closest to the rear chain rod. When the chains are set, the box holder retreats six feet and establishes the spot where the chains are to be reset after the clip has been attached. Use of a second clip is optional. The clip man should mark the new yard line with a second clip, if available, leaving the original clip in place until after the first-down play ends.

The chains must not be moved or the number on the box changed until the Head Line-Judge instructs the appropriate personnel to do so. Once instructed to move, the chain crew must move quickly. Chain personnel are to make no remarks to players nor express opinions concerning any ruling.

On free kicks, the chain crew should remove themselves and all equipment outside the limit line. The chains are to be laid down outside the limit line and only the down box is to be used when Team A has a first down inside Team B's 10 yard line, or when Team A attempts an extra point.

COIN TOSS

Five minutes before the scheduled game time, the Referee and Umpire shall start their walk toward mid-field from the goal line as in 6-Person mechanics. Similarly, at 4 minutes before game time, the Head Line-Judge and Line Judge will escort their respective captains to mid-field. When all are at mid-field, the Referee and Umpire will escort their captains to the center of the field for the coin toss. The Head Line-Judge and Line Judge will stop at the hash marks and turn toward their sideline and remain there to ensure the balance of the teams remain on their sideline. The deep wing officials will remain with their teams and the Back Judge will be with the Side Judge being sure both teams remain on their sidelines. Following the coin toss the Field Judge will obtain a ball if his team is to kick; otherwise the Back Judge will obtain the ball to be kicked.



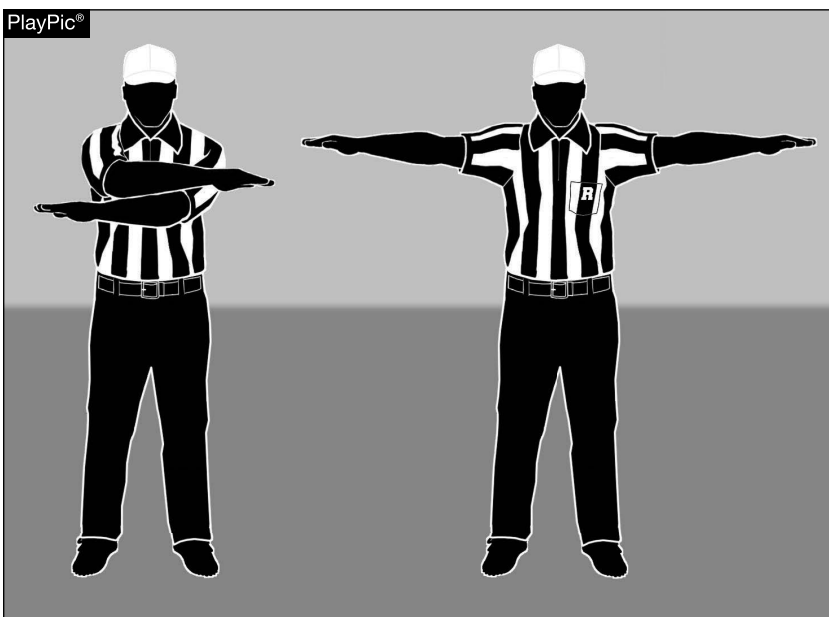
Except for the Back Judge the coin toss matches GHSA 6-Person mechanics.

If available, the Referee turns on his microphone once the toss activity begins. The visiting captain calls the toss, telling the Referee his choice before the coin flip. The choice selected will be verified before the toss.

If the winner of the toss opts to defer his choice until the second half, the Referee stands toward the press box clear of the captains, indicates the toss winner by placing his hand on the shoulder of the appropriate captain, and giving the choice deferred signal (as seen in the PlayPic).

The Referee then obtains the choice of the other captain. The Referee instructs the captain of the team that will receive the kickoff to face the opponent's goal line. The other captain faces his opponent's goal line. The Referee gives a catching motion to indicate the team that will receive. If a captain chooses to kick, the Referee indicates by the choice by making a kicking motion. If the captain chooses one end of the field, the Referee points with both arms extended toward the appropriate goal line. If available, the Referee confirms the results of the toss with an announcement using the microphone.

Once it has been determined which team will kick off, the appropriate game ball will be taken to the center of the field for handling by the Back Judge. The officials make a written record of the results of the toss and move to their kickoff positions simultaneously.



FREE KICKS

NOTE: Contrary to the CCA mechanics, wing and deep wing officials will NOT change sides of the field at the half.

POSITIONING, ZONES AND KEYS

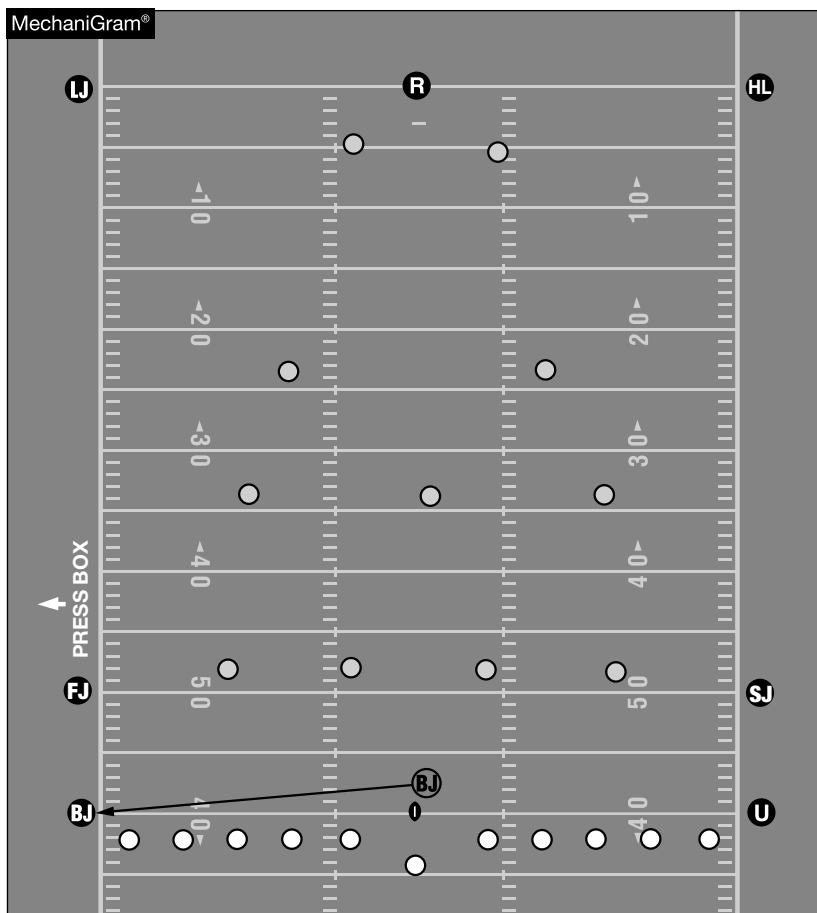
Referee: Starting position is on the goalline and directly in line with placement of the kicking tee. When players and officials are ready, after the Back Judge has reached the sideline after handing the ball to the kicker, sound your whistle and give the ready-for-play signal. Be alert for a touchback. You are responsible for the goal line except when the judgment of the wing official comes into play near the pylon; how this is to work must be discussed in pre-game; when in doubt it is a touchback. You are responsible for the play clock and for knowing if Team K had at least four players on both sides of the kicker at the kick. Be alert for fair catch signals and the actions of players when a signal is given. During the return your zone of coverage is from the goal line to approximately R's 25-30 yard line in the center third of the field (between the hash marks).

Umpire: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on Team K's restraining line. You are responsible for clearing your sideline to Team K's goal line. Umpire keys on action in the center quarter of the field on his side from five yards behind K's restraining line to approximately R's 25-30 yard line and observes action on the kicker. Ensure Team K players are within five yards of their restraining line.

Head Line-Judge: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box at Team R's goal line. Under direction of the Referee, you may be initially positioned at Team R's 10 yard line. You have goal line and pylon responsibility. You are secondary for knowing if Team K had at least four players on both sides of the kicker. Be alert for fair catch signals and the actions of players when a signal is given. During the return your zone of coverage is from the goal line to approximately R's 25-30 yard line in the outer third of the field on your side (between the hash mark and sideline).

Side Judge: Assist in clearing your sideline. Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on Team R's restraining line. Side Judge keys on action in the outside quarter of the field on his side from five yards behind K's restraining line to approximately R's 25-30 yard line.

Line Judge: Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at Team R's goal line. Under direction of the Referee, you may be initially positioned at Team R's 10 yard line. You have goal line and pylon responsibility. You are secondary for knowing if Team A had at least four players on both sides of the kicker. Be alert for fair catch signals and the actions of players when a signal is given. During the return your zone of coverage is from the goal line to approximately R's 25-30 yard line in the outer third of the field on your side (between the hash mark and sideline).



Field Judge: Assist in clearing your sideline. Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at Team R's restraining line. Field Judge keys on action in the outside quarter of the field on his side from five yards behind K's restraining line to approximately R's 25-30 yard line.

Back Judge: You are responsible for clearing your sideline to Team A's goal line. After handing the ball to the kicker, starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at Team K's restraining line. Ensure kicking team players remain inside the nine-yard marks until the ready-for-play-signal from the Referee. Back Judge keys on action in the center quarter of the field on his side from five yards behind K's restraining line to approximately R's 25-30 yard line. Ensure Team K players are within five yards of their restraining line.

FREE KICK COVERAGE

All: Once the ball is kicked, observing the players is your primary responsibility. Do not focus on the flight of the ball.

Referee: Move laterally to be in position to see action at the point of attack. Start the clock when the ball is caught from R's 25 yardline to the goalline. You are primarily responsible for illegal blocks. Follow the play and observe action in front of the runner. Be alert for a handoff and/or a reverse.

Umpire and Back Judge: Move between the numbers and the hash mark. The Umpire will watch for illegal action on the kicker. Move downfield no more than eight to 10 yards. Observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action. If kick is to opposite side, move to the hash mark. The Back Judge has coverage to the goal line; the Umpire allows play to move past him and cleans up behind the play on long returns.

Head Line-Judge and Line Judge: Wind the clock when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, unless the ball is caught or recovered by a player who is legally down. Cover the goal line until it is no longer threatened. When the runner is on your side of the field, you are responsible for blocks at the point of attack and the runner. When you do not have the ball, take a position to observe blocks on the backside of the runner.

Side Judge and Field Judge: Know if the ball was kicked into the ground in the manner of an illegal "pop up" kick. Move no more than 10 yards toward Team R's goal line. That will give better coverage in the critical area where contact occurs between the kicking and receiving teams.

Note: Yard lines stated are guidelines only and are not set in stone.

Referee

Once runner catches ball and leaves end zone to about 25-30 yard line, center third of field or in front of runner.

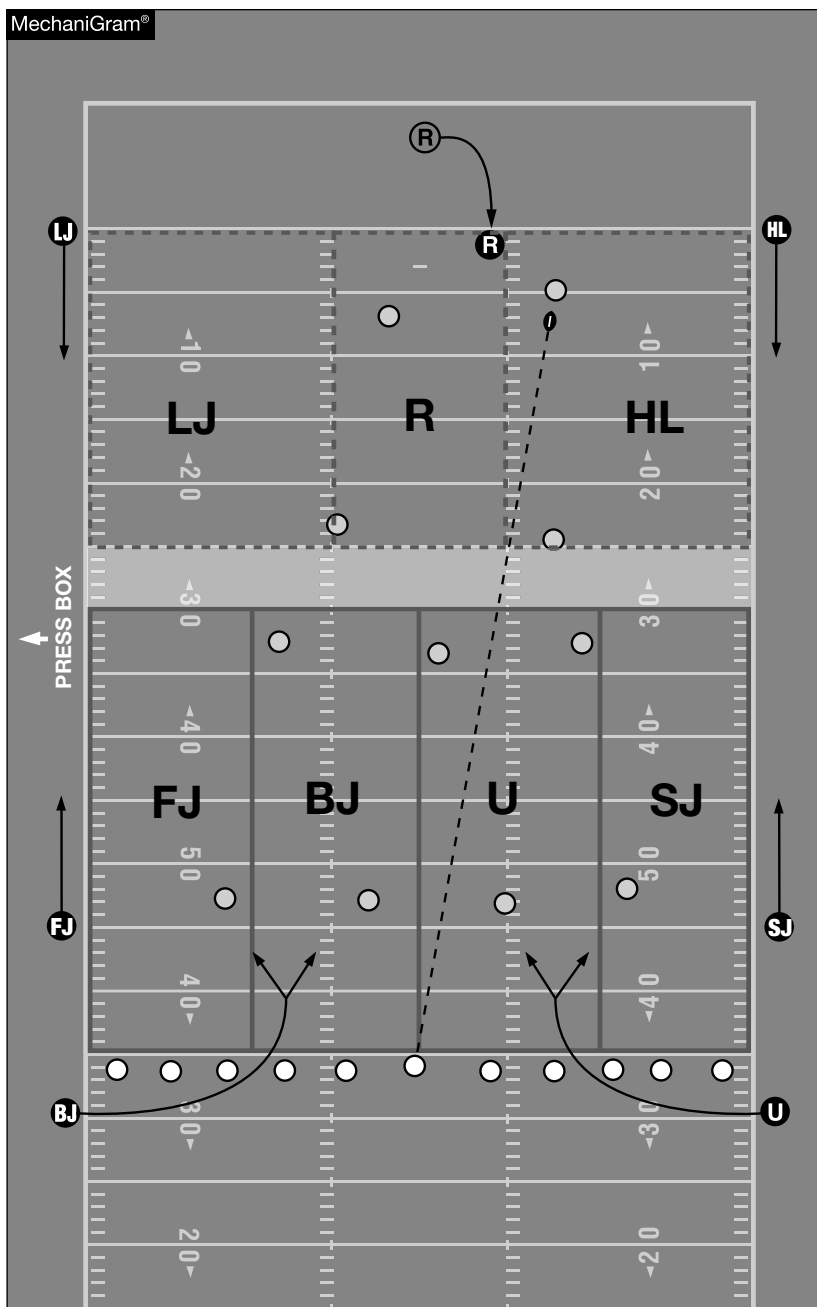
Umpire and Back Judge

Halfway between hashes and numbers boxing in play down to front wave of players — about 25-30 yard line.

Side Judge and Field Judge

Sideline to halfway between numbers and hashes, boxing in play down to front wave of players — about 25-30 yard line.

- Zones will ebb and flow as play dictates exactly as they do for punts.
- If player leaves your zone and there is a legitimate "threat of foul," stay with him.
- If there is no legitimate "threat of foul," be alert to other players coming into your zone as you assume responsibility for their actions.
- If there is nothing happening with players in your zone, broaden your vision.



ONSIDE KICK POSITIONING AND ZONES

Referee: Starting position is slightly behind and to one side of a deep receiver. However, the Referee is responsible for Team R's goal line. Do not move up any closer than the 25 yardline. When players and officials are ready and once the Back Judge has reached the sideline after handing the ball to the kicker, sound your whistle and give the ready-for-play signal. Be alert to ensure there are at least four players on either side of the kicker as the ball is kicked.

Umpire: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on Team K's restraining line.

Head Line-Judge: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box, midway between the two restraining lines. You are secondary for knowing if Team K had at least four players on both sides of the kicker.

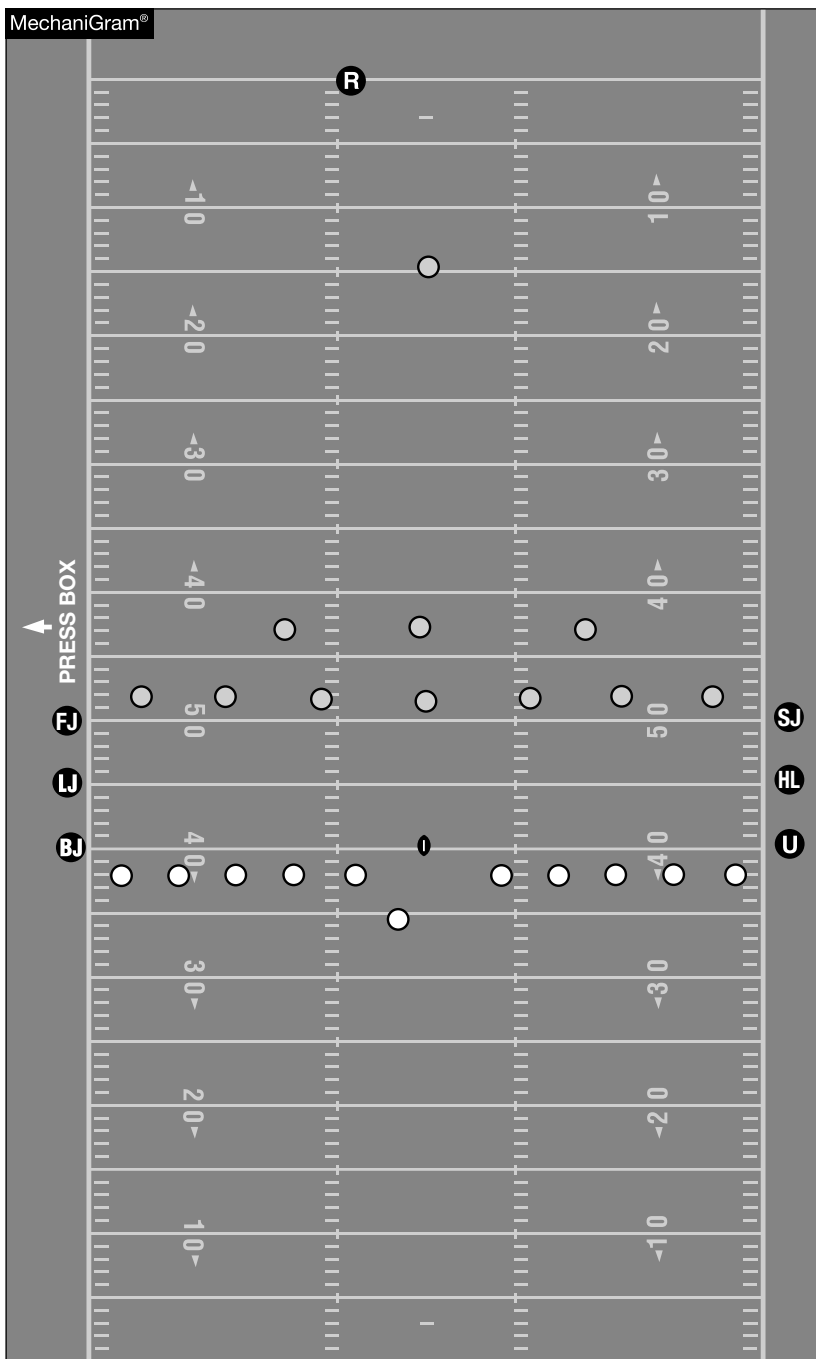
Side Judge: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on Team R's restraining line.

Line Judge: Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side, midway between the two restraining lines. You are secondary for knowing if Team K had at least four players on both sides of the kicker.

Field Judge: Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at Team R's restraining line.

Back Judge: After handing the ball to the kicker, starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at Team K's restraining line.

Line Judge and Field Judge, Head Line-Judge and Side Judge: Before taking positions, meet briefly to review responsibilities and coverage.



ONSIDE KICK COVERAGE

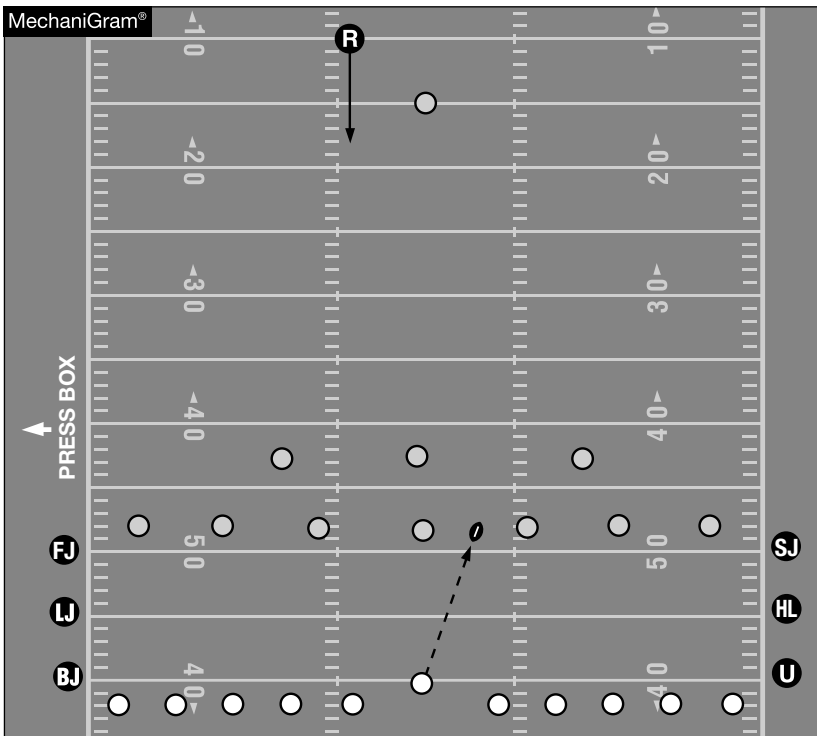
Referee: Be prepared if Team K kicks deep instead of onside.

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

Head Line-Judge and Line Judge: Have bean bag in hand. Observe blocking by both teams. Know if the ball was illegally kicked into the ground in the manner of a "pop-up" kick. Be alert for a fair-catch signal by Team R and be prepared to cover the play if a Team R player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

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

All: Remember that the clock needs to be properly started and stopped on onside kick plays.



SCRIMMAGE PLAYS

BEFORE THE SNAP

NOTE: After any change of possession, the new offensive team's game ball always comes in from their side of the field.

Referee: Count the offensive players before they break the huddle, confirming the count with the Umpire. In the case of a "hurry up" offense do NOT release the Umpire to his pre-snap position until certain that all other pre-snap activities have been completed by the entire crew. Check the setbacks and quarterback for illegal motion and false starts. Be alert for obvious movement of restricted linemen that is not detected by other officials. Always work on the passing arm side of the quarterback, at least as wide as the tight end and 12 to 14 yards deep. Get into a position deep and wide where you may comfortably see the ball and backs and the tackle on the opposite side.

Umpire: Count the offensive players before they break the huddle (or in the absence of a huddle, early in the play clock), confirming the count with the Referee. In the case of a "hurry up" offense stand over the ball after placement until released to pre-snap position by the Referee. Do NOT allow the snap to occur before the Referee's release. Read the offensive alignment and know the five ineligible. Be alert for obvious movement of restricted linemen that is not detected by other officials. Rule on illegal movement by center and both guards prior to the snap, and be certain that the defensive team does not use words or signals to disconcert opponents. Be aware of the lateral position of the ball to assist if the ball must be returned to the previous spot. The starting position is generally six to nine yards off of the ball and head-up of the center, unless you need to move laterally between the tackles to maintain a clear line of sight of the ball. Always avoid a position that will interfere with linebackers and adjust your distance behind the defensive line according to the width of Team A's formation. Check legality of the numbers of interior offensive linemen at the snap.

Head Line-Judge and Line Judge: Count offensive players in the backfield and rule on whether any players are illegally lined up in "no man's land" at the snap. "Punch off" any offensive players legally aligned in the backfield who are outside the last man on your side of the line using an explicit count (closed fist for 1 player, 2 fingers for 2 players, 3 fingers for 3 players). In case of any illegal formation fouls, flag them as live-ball, simultaneous with the snap. Note for 5 or more players in the offensive backfield, both Head Line-Judge and Line-Judge should have a flag for this illegal formation at the snap. Read the offensive formation and know your eligible receiver responsibilities. Be alert for obvious movement of restricted linemen, especially tackles on your side and be prepared to help with other linemen that are not detected by other officials. Watch for illegal formations, including encroachment prior to the snap and false starts by tackle and players outside the tackle on your side. Indicate the offensive line of scrimmage by extended foot, then take final position straddling the neutral zone. If a man goes in motion, observe him if he is on your side of the ball

(direction of the motion does not matter) to ensure the motion is legal. That does not relieve the opposite official from making an obvious call. The basic starting position is just outside the sideline and on the line of scrimmage. The width varies depending on the game situation (on short-yardage plays, the Head Line-Judge and Line Judge may choose to pinch the ends; however, at no time should the wings allow players to line up behind them.

Field Judge and Side Judge: Count the defense. Read your keys and know your eligible receiver responsibilities. Be aware of violations of the restricted team area and monitor substitutions. The Side Judge is primarily responsible for the game clock. In the event the clock is running when it should be stopped, give and repeat the appropriate signal until the clock has been corrected. If an appreciable error on the game clock is noted, or if inefficiency is habitual, the Side Judge shall call a timeout and advise the Referee. The basic starting position is approximately 20 to 25 yards from the line of scrimmage and on the sidelines.

Back Judge: Either performs or monitors all timing involving the play clock count depending on whether a play clock operator (PCO) is present. Counts the defense. Read your keys and know your eligible receiver responsibilities. Be aware of violations of the restricted team area and monitor substitutions. The basic starting position is 25 to 30 yards from the line of scrimmage, in the middle of the field. The position may have to be adjusted if a back goes in motion.

SUBSTITUTIONS AND COUNTING PLAYERS

The task of counting players must be done on every play. There is no excuse for allowing one team a manpower advantage for even one play.

High school rules dictate that all substitutions must be made within three seconds of the notification of the replaced player by his substitute (rule 3-7-1).

Officials with counting duties must count and confirm their count with other officials who share the responsibility. Use the same auxiliary counting signals for 7-Person as GHSA 6-Person. All officials are expected to monitor the legality of substitutions.

The counting assignments:

Free kick: The Umpire, Back Judge, Field Judge and Side Judge count Team K; the Referee, Head Line-Judge and Line Judge count Team R.

All other plays: The Referee and Umpire have primary responsibility to count Team A/K; Head Line-Judge and Line Judge are secondary for counting Team A/K. The Field Judge, Side Judge and Back Judge count Team B/R.

SUBSTITUTION PROCEDURES

Unlike CCA, there is no specifically prescribed “substitution procedure” for use in high school ball. This does NOT relieve officials from monitoring substitutions, but it does simplify their monitoring activity.

When Team A uses a no-huddle offense, the Umpire will be primary in spotting the ball. For consistency, the officials shall not increase the pace of spotting the football

and marking it ready for play beyond the crew's ability to perform all its required pre-snap activities. For teams seeking to snap the ball as soon as possible this will generally limit the time between dead-ball and ready-for-play for the next down. This will vary based on dead ball spot, previous play type, whether the chains must be relocated, etc. The Umpire should neither sprint nor walk but move throughout the game at a consistent pace that puts neither team at a disadvantage. After the ball is properly spotted, the Umpire looks to the Referee to determine if he must remain near the ball to prevent the snap or if he may assume his normal position.

The Umpire must assume all responsibility to prevent the snap as determined by the Referee. The Referee must assume his normal position as soon as possible in order to manage the process described below. The Referee will determine when the Umpire may move to his regular pre-snap position, and will signal the Umpire when to so move. The Referee controls the legality of the snap by also controlling when the ball is marked ready-for-play. In no circumstance should the ready-for-play be sounded until verification that the entire crew is, indeed, ready to monitor the impending live ball action.

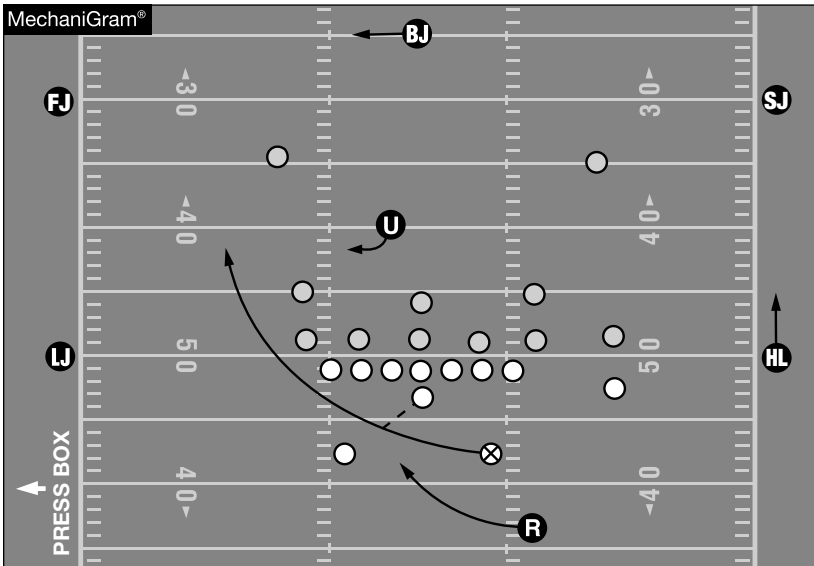
RUNNING PLAY COVERAGE

Referee: After the snap, observe the action behind the line and the runner to the neutral zone, as well as action on the ball and the quarterback on handoffs and backward passes. Once you read run, focus on the blocks on the front side (the area immediately around) of the point of attack. Assist in spotting the ball on runs that end in the side zone and out of bounds.

Stay with the runner behind the line. Trail but don't chase the runner into the side zone, covering behind the play. If the quarterback goes out of bounds, coordinate sideline coverage with the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge to ensure the spot is maintained and players return to the field. On option plays, if the quarterback keeps the ball and turns up-field, assume responsibility for the trailing back until there is no longer a threat of a foul. If the quarterback pitches the ball, stay with the quarterback. Responsibility for forward or backward direction of the pitch is with the wing official in the direction of the action. This is typical of option-type offensive action (NOT spread formation or drop back pass situations). After any change of possession, be alert for action on the quarterback, who is a defenseless player. Specifically, be alert for targeting fouls at all times and illegal blocks when the quarterback is clearly out of the play.

Umpire: After the snap and on plays between the tackles, focus on the point of attack in front of and around the runner. Be especially alert for offensive and defensive holding and chop blocks. On plays outside the tackles, slowly turn toward the flow and observe action on the back side (the area that is behind and away from the runner) of the flow. In addition to offensive and defensive holding and chop block, be alert for clipping fouls behind the play. If the ball is dead between the hash marks, place the ball in accordance with the forward progress designated by the wing official and the lateral position in accordance with the GHSA five designated spots. The umpire is the primary ball spotter.

Head Line-Judge and Line Judge: Observe the initial action on or by the offensive player who is your key, especially if he's pressed. Observe the blocking in front of the runner behind the line of scrimmage on runs to your side or in the neutral zone. Determine forward progress when necessary.



You have the runner in your side zone to Team B's two yard line, attempting to maintain 5 to 10 yards of separation. When the flow of play is away from your position, and clean up action behind the play. For pitches in option-type offenses, the wing in direction of the action is responsible for forward or backward direction of the pitch. This needs to be discussed in pre-game and coordinated with the Referee.

On third and fourth down, when the line to gain is three yards or fewer from the line of scrimmage, BOTH wings (HLJ/LJ) will go to the line to gain immediately after the snap. All other responsibilities remain the same (i.e. the line judge rules on direction on backwards passes).

Side Judge and Field Judge: After the snap, observe action involving the widest receiver on your side of the field. Pay special attention to crackbacks. Box in the widest player. Cover your sideline from about 20 yards beyond the neutral zone, trying to maintain a 15- to 20-yard cushion to the goalline. Do not turn your back toward the play. If the play is to your side of the field and the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge marks the out-of-bounds spot, clean up action around the play and out of bounds. You have goal line responsibility and spots inside the two yard line.

Back Judge: After the snap, observe action on or by eligible receivers on which you are keying. Move laterally and backward to observe actions of players ahead of the runner as the ball moves toward a sideline and assist the Umpire with second level blocking. Be ready to take over on cutback and breakaway runs. Go to the football when it becomes dead in your immediate area. When the play is not in your area, hold your position and observe the action after the ball becomes dead. Assume coverage of any runner who breaks loose and goes downfield. When the runner goes out of bounds, cover the area around the runner. On long runs, be prepared to rule on goal line plays.

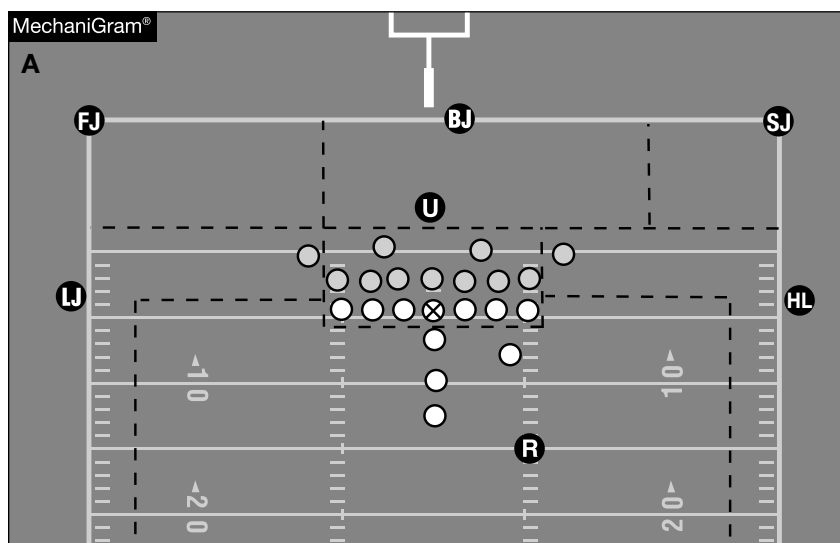
GOAL LINE POSITIONING AND ZONES

MechaniGram A depicts the positioning and zones when Team A is on or inside Team B's seven yard line. On passes to the back corners of the end zone, the Side Judge or Field Judge and covering wing official can work in tandem to rule on the catch.

The Referee must be alert for the quarterback "walking into the snap." The quarterback may not be moving toward the line of scrimmage as he takes the snap; all Team A players must be set before the ball may be legally snapped. Watch also for Team A players illegally helping the runner.

When the play is over, all officials should move toward the pile to prevent late hits and to ensure that the players untangle in a prompt manner.

Referee: Starting position and coverage is the same as for any scrimmage play. Signal a score only if necessary, such as a delay in the on-field ruling after a conference by officials.



Umpire: Starting position needn't be as deep as scrimmage plays but don't block goal line for wing officials. When the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's seven yard line and no alternate official is available, you are primarily responsible for the line of scrimmage in determining if the passer was beyond the line of scrimmage and if the pass is beyond the line of scrimmage.

Head Line-Judge and Line Judge: Starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. You are responsible for the goal line when the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's seven yard line. In order to rule on a score, you must be on the goal line. Be alert for a pass.

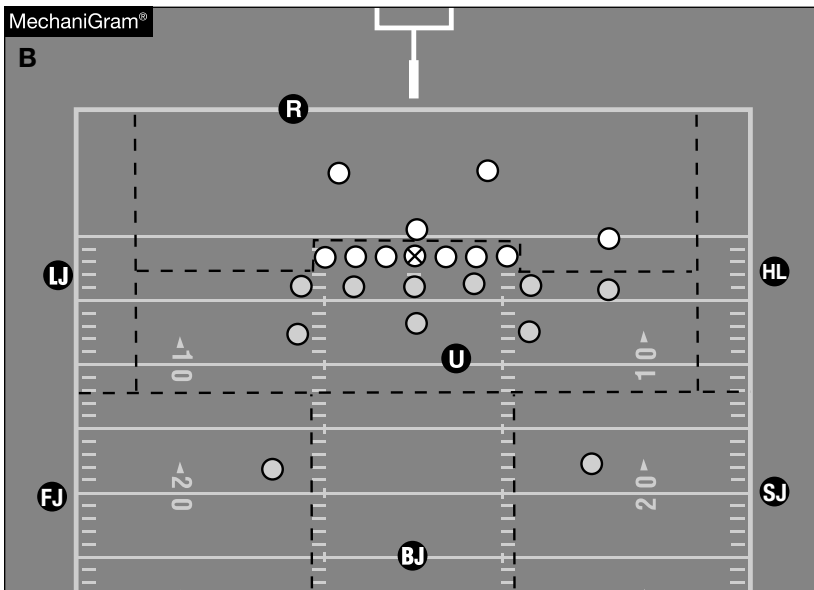
Side Judge and Field Judge: When the ball is snapped outside Team B's 25 yard line, starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. When the ball is snapped from on or inside Team B's 25 yard line to Team B's seven yard line, starting position is on the

goal line at the pylon and you are responsible for the goal line. You should never take an initial position between the five yard line and the goal line. In order to rule on a score, you must be on the goal line extended. When the ball is snapped from Team B's seven yard line in, starting position is on the end line where it intersects with the sideline, one step off the sideline at a 45-degree angle from the end line corner pylon.

Back Judge: When the ball is snapped outside Team B's 25 yard line, starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. When the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's 25 yard line to the goal line, starting position is on the end line. You may get help from the deep wings on passes to the corners of the end zone. When the ball is snapped from Team B's seven yard line in, you will get help on the end line from the deep wings. If necessary on a close play, look through and coordinate with the official facing the receiver.

REVERSE GOAL LINE MECHANICS

When Team A snaps the ball on or inside its own 3 yard line (MechaniGram B), the Head Line-Judge and Line Judge must use reverse goal line mechanics; move immediately to the goal line at the snap. If a pass play develops, the wing opposite the passer moves back to the line of scrimmage and assumes responsibility for the ball's and passer's position relative to the line of scrimmage and possible ineligible's downfield. If the snap is between the three and 10 yard line, the Line Judge holds the line of scrimmage and the Head Line-Judge reads the play and reacts to the goal line if necessary. Remember that a Team A runner must advance the ball completely over the goal line to avoid a safety. Be alert for fumbles and know which team provided the impetus for a ball that goes in the end zone.



When Team A snaps the ball on or inside its own 3 yard line (MechaniGram B), the Head Line-Judge and Line Judge must use reverse goal line mechanics; move immediately to the goal line at the snap. If a pass play develops, the wing opposite the passer moves back to the line of scrimmage and assumes responsibility for the ball's and passer's position relative to the line of scrimmage and possible ineligible downfield. If the snap is between the three and 10 yard line, the Line Judge holds the line of scrimmage and the Head Line-Judge reads the play and reacts to the goal line if necessary. Remember that a Team A runner must advance the ball completely over the goal line to avoid a safety. Be alert for fumbles and know which team provided the impetus for a ball that goes in the end zone.

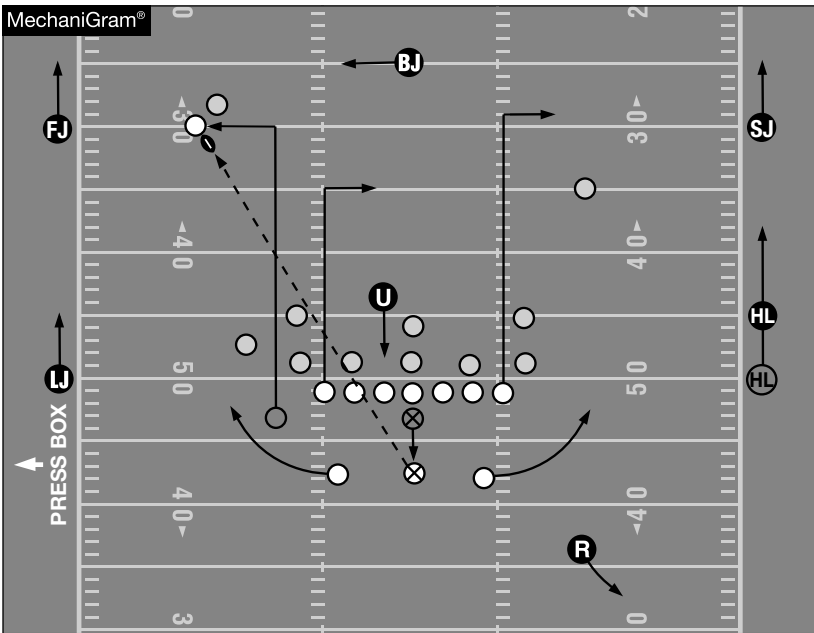
FORWARD PASS COVERAGE

Referee: Primarily responsible for the tackle on the opposite side; any other lineman who is a threat for a foul; and the passer, who is your responsibility until there is no threat of a foul. Verbally alert defenders when the passer has released the ball. Assist the Line Judge on whether a forward pass was thrown beyond vs. in or behind the neutral zone, or away from eligible receivers. Be prepared to rule on intentional grounding. You shall receive help from the covering official in respect to eligible receivers being in the area and the designated wing official on status of the pass crossing the line. When the quarterback drops back, retreat at a 45-degree angle to maintain a proper cushion. When there is a trips formation to the Line Judge's side, assist to watch action of the tackle on that side. After any change of possession, be alert for action on the quarterback, who is a defenseless player. Specifically, be alert for targeting fouls at all times and illegal blocks when he is clearly out of the play.

Umpire: When you read a forward pass, adjust your position to maintain a clear view of the center and two guards and to avoid oncoming pass receivers. Assist the Line Judge in knowing whether or not a forward pass crossed the neutral zone. Be prepared to pivot on all passes and assist on ruling on trapped passes. Continue to observe your area of responsibility until the pass is thrown and be aware of ineligible downfield. When the ball is snapped on or inside either team's seven yard line, you are primarily responsible to rule if a pass crossed the line or if the passer was beyond the line.

Head Line-Judge: The basic responsibility for preliminary action on the line is the same as during a running play. When you read a forward pass, your primary responsibility is to your receiver, so be prepared to move downfield along the sideline at a pace that allows you to stay in control and maintain focus on your keys. This could be quickly, more slowly or not at all depending on how the play develops and the pace and routes of the receivers. Keep in mind that you can still maintain coverage of your key even if reading the play would position you closer to the line of scrimmage. Movement should be deliberate and with purpose and avoid any preset distance that you feel you should always achieve. Rarely will your drift be more than five yards downfield prior to the pass being thrown; however that could be extended in certain situations such as the long pass at the end of a half to the end zone, or fourth and long when all receivers are going a greater distance. Note: The drift should only take place if your key takes you downfield. For example, if your key stays in to block, you should not move downfield. If your key does move downfield, do not advance beyond him. Once the pass is thrown, especially if thrown in your area of responsibility, reducing movement while the ball is in the air will improve your ability to see the play more accurately.

If your receiver is not threatened, assist with the tackle on your side or other receivers in the 0- to 10-yard belt if they are threatened. You are responsible for covering pass receptions in the area between the line of scrimmage and the deep officials. Provide



information to the Referee on eligible receivers in the area of the pass. If the pass is thrown out of your area, observe the action of players other than the pass receiver after you have observed the pass being caught, intercepted or incomplete. Provide information to the Referee on eligible receivers in the area of the pass and whether the pass reached the line of scrimmage. To provide better coverage for observing ineligible linemen downfield, on passes thrown out of your area of responsibility, assist the Umpire with ineligible downfield. Observe where the ineligible players are at the time the passer releases the ball. For passes where the sideline is involved be sure to straddle the sideline to be in perfect position. On these tight sideline plays both the wing and deep need to first focus on the feet and then on the ball – after they have observed that the feet are good.

On third and fourth down, when the line to gain is three yards or fewer from the line of scrimmage, BOTH wings (HLJ/LJ) will go to the line to gain immediately after the snap. All other responsibilities remain the same (i.e. the line judge rules on direction on backwards passes).

Line Judge: The basic responsibility for preliminary action on the line is the same as during a running play. When you read a forward pass, your primary responsibility is your receiver or other receivers in the 0- to 10-yard belt if they are threatened. If your receiver goes downfield or is threatened, he has priority over the tackle. If the pass is thrown out of your area, observe the action of players other than the pass receiver after you have observed the pass being caught, intercepted or incomplete. You are primarily responsible to rule on whether a pass is forward or backward behind the line of scrimmage and shall punch back on backward passes. Be prepared to rule whether the pass was thrown from in or behind vs. beyond the line of scrimmage. Provide information to the Referee on eligible receivers in the area of the pass. To provide better coverage for observing ineligible linemen downfield, on passes thrown out of your area of responsibility, assist the Umpire with ineligible downfield. Observe where the

ineligibles are at the time the passer releases the ball. For passes where the sideline is involved be sure to straddle the sideline to be in perfect position. On these tight sideline plays both the wing and deep need to first focus on the feet and then on the ball – after they have observed that the feet are good.

On third and fourth down, when the line to gain is three yards or fewer from the line of scrimmage, BOTH wings (HLJ/LJ) will go to the line to gain immediately after the snap. All other responsibilities remain the same (i.e. the line judge rules on direction on backwards passes).

Side Judge and Field Judge: Observe contact on your eligible receiver and the defensive back. Cover the sideline from your original position to the end line. Maintain deep positioning. Cover the play and watch the defenders' action on the receiver when the ball is thrown in your area. Be particularly alert when a receiver flashes back toward the ball. For passes where the sideline is involved be sure to straddle the sideline to be in perfect position. On these tight sideline plays both the wing and deep need to first focus on the feet and then on the ball – after they have observed that the feet are good.

Back Judge: The basic responsibility for preliminary action on the line is the same as during a running play. You are responsible for action on your designated receiver from the time the ball is snapped until it may be necessary to release your specific player responsibility so you can cover the action in your zone. The man in motion will be put into the normal numbering of wide man, second man in, etc.; this is determined at the snap.

All: Be alert for eligible receivers out of bounds and for an illegal pass (especially after a completion); observe touching or catching by an ineligible player; watch particularly for holding and all contact beyond the neutral zone before and after the pass is thrown. When ruling on a reception at the sideline, give the incomplete signal or the timeout signal (if the pass is complete). On a tight reception at the sideline, the “catch” signal (O11) may be used. The “sweep” signal may be used if an airborne player receives a pass near the sideline and first returns to the ground out of bounds, or the “bobble” signal if a receiver fails to maintain control of the ball before going out of bounds. After an incompleteness, form a relay to return the ball to the official nearest the previous spot. When there is a change of team possession, immediately switch to reverse mechanics to cover the return and the goal line. Be sure the result of the play is properly communicated to the Referee.

COVERAGE NOTES

As a pass play develops, officials may be required to shift their focus from their initial keys and go to “zone coverage,” observing players in their area.

When a pass is thrown, all covering officials in the area must focus on the spot of the catch. That is especially important for the Umpire, who must immediately turn in the direction of the pass if the play dictates.

Judging whether or not a catch was made and the legality of the contact on the receiver are paramount. If the pass is caught, officials resume watching players in their zone. If there is a question on the catch, the officials away from the pass may be able to help rule on the play.

READING AND UNDERSTANDING KEYS

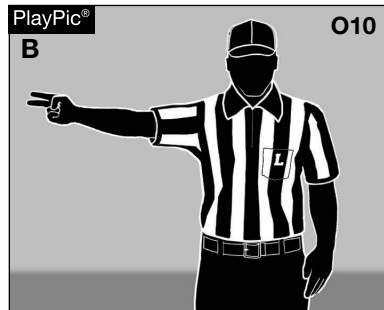
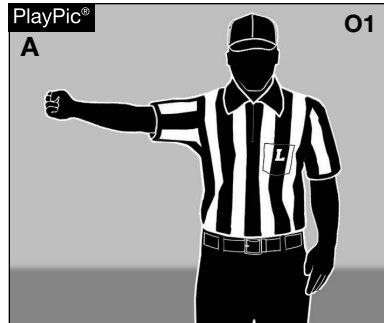
Signaling to indicate unbalanced lines remains the **SAME** for 7-Person as GHSA 6-Person.

An outstretched fist (signal O1, PlayPic A) helps a wing indicate the receiver closest to him is off the line. Use two fingers to indicate two receivers off the line (signal O10, PlayPic B) and three to indicate three receivers.

Because keys are often determined by whether a Team A player is on or off the line, the signal should be given from the moment Team A takes its initial set positions. Subsequent shifts may require the official to either drop the arm or raise it. The signal should be given until the ball is snapped.

Other important elements about keys:

- Strength of the formation is determined by the number of eligible receivers on a side of the formation.
- Motion may change the strength of the formation and the motion man's position is determined at the snap.



THREE-RECEIVER SETS

A numbering system is used to help identify initial keys. The widest receiver is number 1, next widest is number 2, etc. At the snap, if there is a number 3 receiver outside tackle, he is the Back Judge's key, the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge has number 2 and the Side Judge or Field Judge has number 1.

- At the snap, if receiver 3 comes off the ball toward the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge, the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge should switch to 3 and the Back Judge goes to receiver 2.
- At the snap, if receiver 3 stays in and blocks, the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge will switch to 3 and the Back Judge goes to receiver 2.
- At the snap, if receiver 3 goes beyond the line of scrimmage, the Back Judge will stay with 3 and the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge will stay with 2.
- At the snap, if receiver 3 comes straight up the field, the Back Judge will stay with 3 and the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge will stay with 2.
- At the snap, if receiver 3 goes away from the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge, the Back Judge will stay with 3 and the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge will stay with 2.

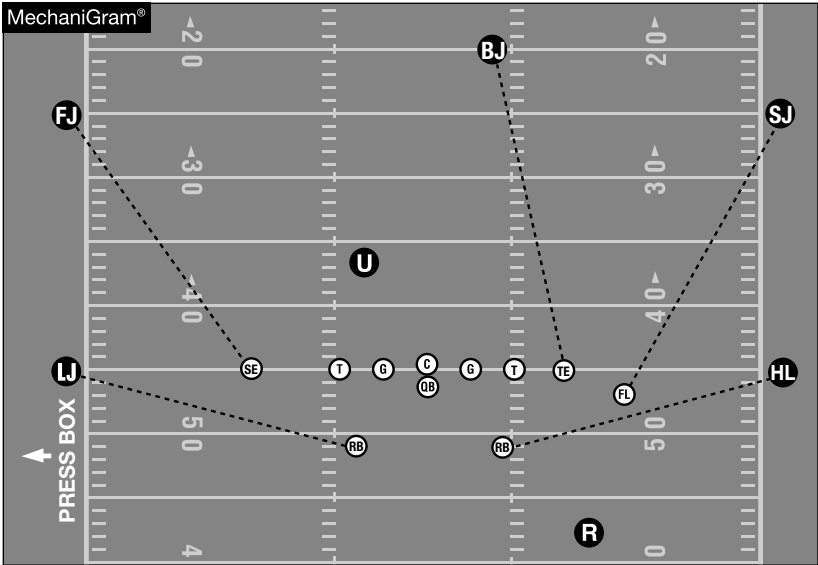
STACKING

- If receiver 2 or 3 is in close proximity of each other, treat it as stacking. Consider stacking to be receiver 2 and 3, but do not determine which receiver is 2 or 3 until the ball is snapped and they declare their route. The Back Judge will take the receiver that comes toward him and his area.
- On a trips formation that has stacking, Head Line-Judge or Line Judge will stay with either 2 or 3 if he comes toward the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge, stays in and blocks or goes behind the line of scrimmage. The Back Judge will then take the other receiver. If 2 or 3 goes straight up the field, the Back Judge will pick up that receiver and the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge will take the other stacked receiver regardless of where he goes.
- On a 4-receiver set, the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge takes 2 initially and the Back Judge has 3 and 4. At the snap, if 4 comes toward the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge, stays in and blocks or goes behind the line of scrimmage the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge will switch to 4 and the Back Judge will take 2 and 3. If 2 comes straight up the field or goes away from the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge, the Back Judge stays with 2 and the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge takes 3 and 4.

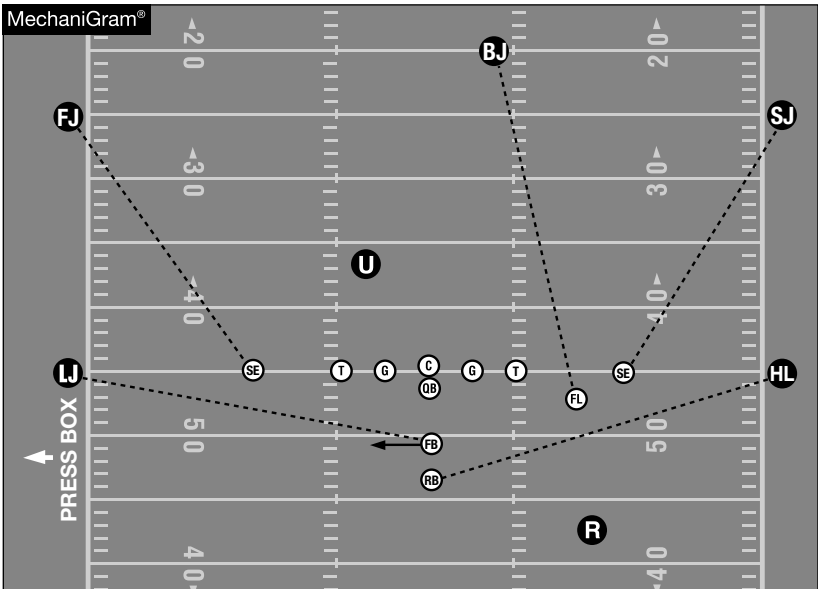
RED ZONE

Inside team B's 20 yard line and in third and fourth and short, be especially alert for your keys running pick plays. Because the field is short, Team B will be more likely to be in press or man coverage. That means there will be less switching of keys for the officials.

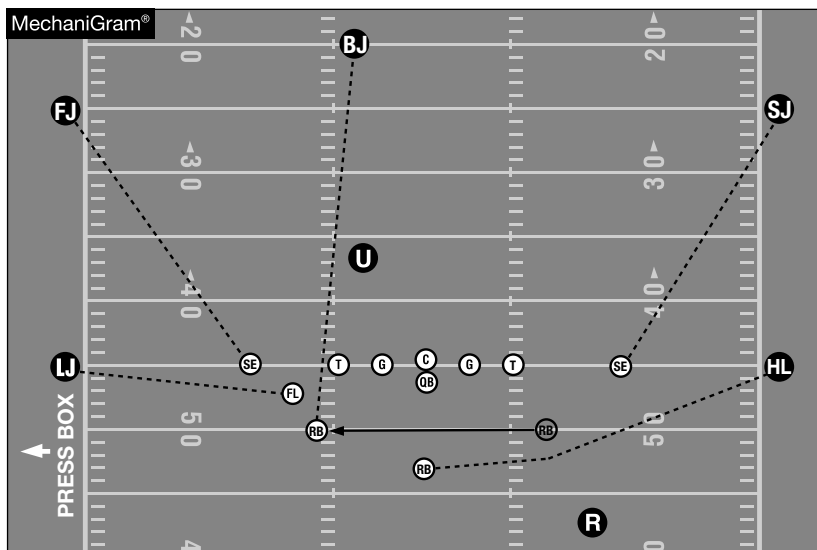
PRO SET, STRENGTH TO HEAD LINE-JUDGE'S SIDE KEYS



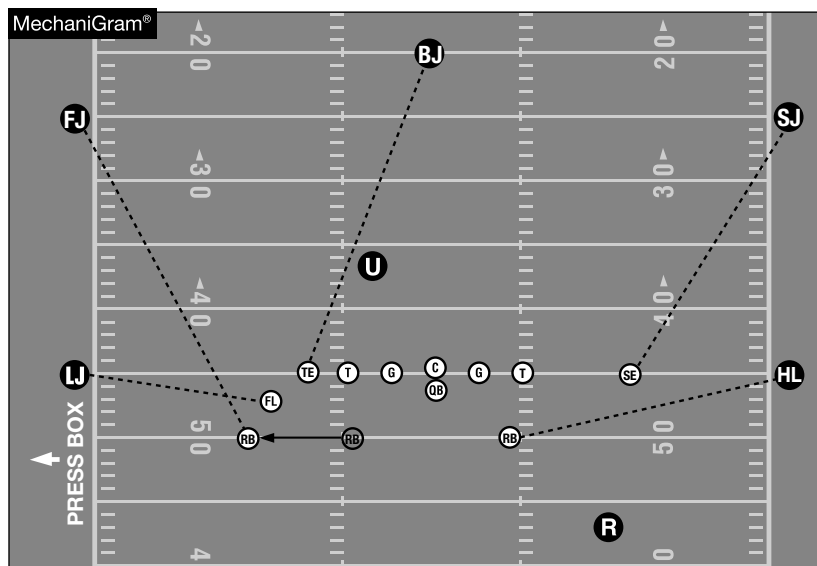
MOTION MAN INSIDE TACKLE AT SNAP KEYS



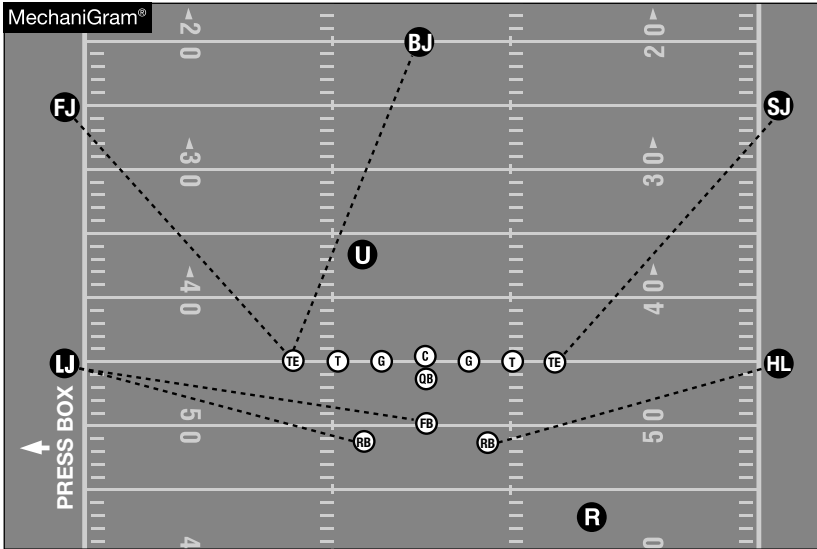
MOTION MAN OUTSIDE TACKLE AT SNAP KEYS



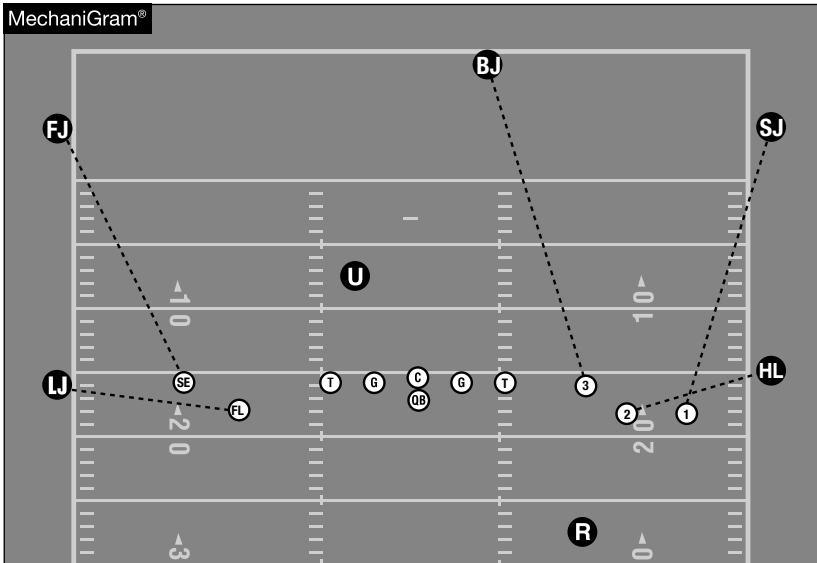
MOTION MAN IS WIDEST AT SNAP KEYS



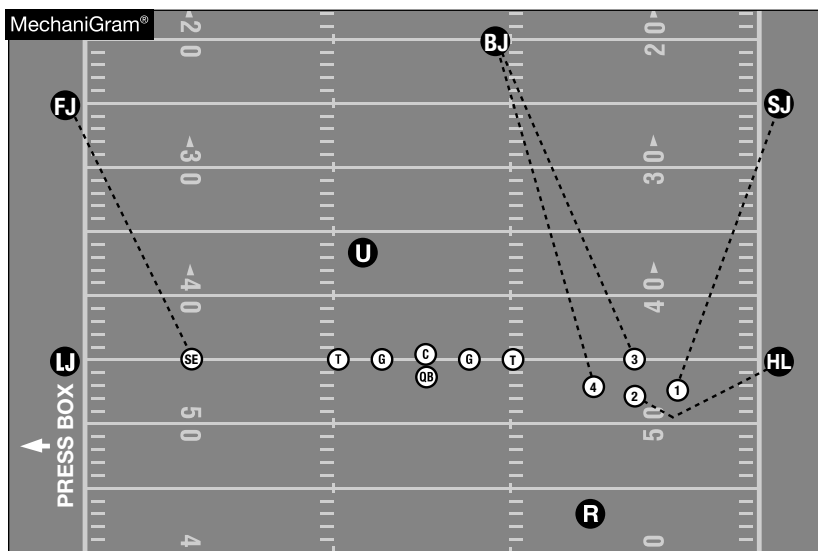
DOUBLE TIGHT END, BALANCED FORMATION KEYS



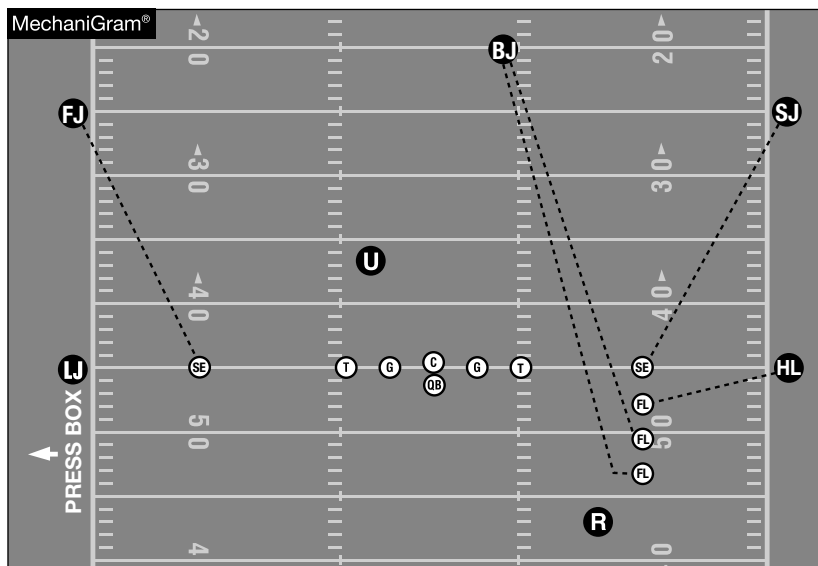
TRIPS, EMPTY BACKFIELD KEYS



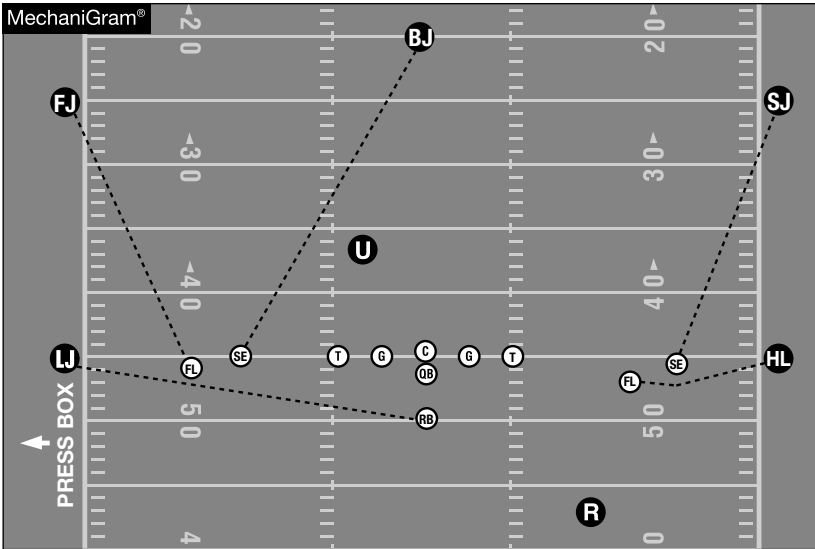
FOUR RECEIVERS, UNALIGNED KEYS



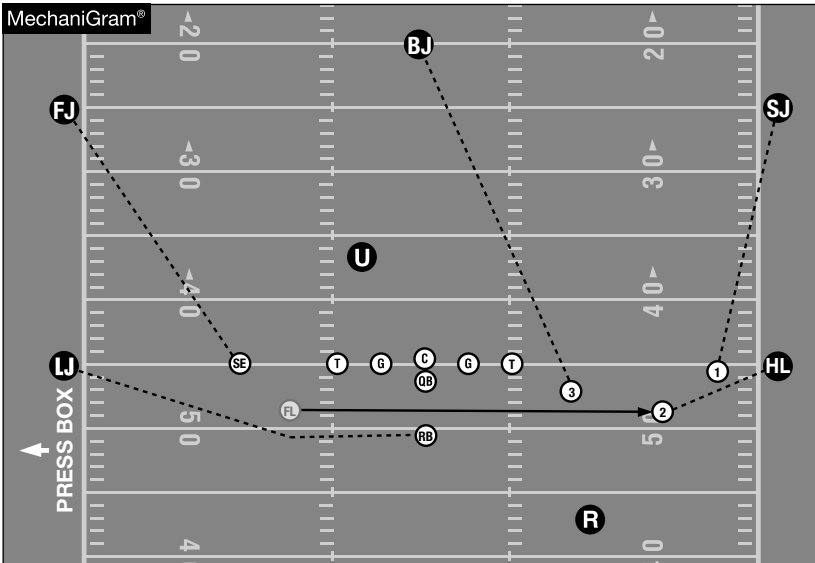
FOUR RECEIVERS, STACKED KEYS



DOUBLE WING, BALANCED FORMATION KEYS



MOTION INTO TRIPS KEYS



PUNTS

POSITIONING AND ZONES

Referee: Take a position three to five yards deeper and five yards wider than the kicker on the kicking leg side. See the ball from snap to kick and observe the blockers and kicker at the same time. Be in position to be at a 45-degree angle with kicker when the ball is kicked. If the kicker is near the end line, straddle the end line and warn the kicker before the snap of the risk of a safety if he steps on the end line.

Umpire: Position is approximately 10 yards off the line. Find a spot that allows you to observe the action on and around the snapper.

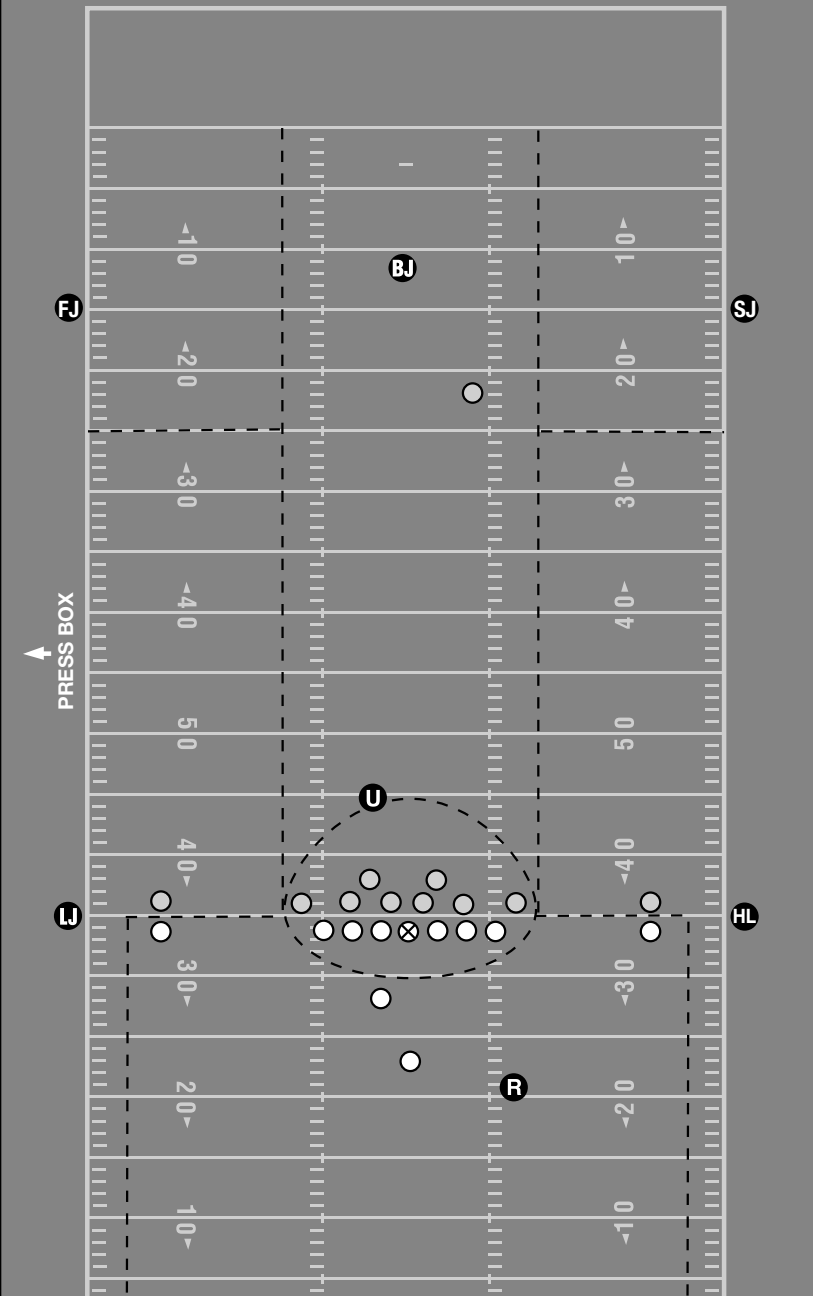
Head Line-Judge and Line Judge: Take your basic position and officiate as on a scrimmage play. Hold your position until the ball crosses the line.

Field Judge and Side Judge: Take a position on your sideline no less than five yards behind the deepest receiver. Weather conditions and the kicker's ability will help dictate when to take a position on the goal line. When the ball is snapped at approximately Team B's 40 yard line (or farther out based on conditions as above), take an initial position outside the goal line pylon.

Back Judge: The basic position is 10 yards behind and 2-5 yards to the side of the deepest receiver, favoring the wide side of the field. However, if the deepest receiver takes a position inside his 10 yard line, line up on the goal line. Work to maintain a 45-degree angle with the receiver while the ball is in flight.

All: Be cognizant of the rules for legality of numbering exceptions for punts on each of 4th down and 1st, 2nd or 3rd down; and enforce any illegal numbering that occurs.

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COVERAGE

Referee: Observe action on the kicker and be aware of the flight of the ball off his foot. Secondly responsible for observing blocking by the shield. Observe players while proceeding slowly downfield if the kick remains inbounds. If the flight of the kick is toward a sideline, move quickly to a position in line with the flight. Raise your hand, signaling the covering official to begin walking toward the area where the ball went out of bounds. When the covering official reaches the spot, chop down with your arm. Be alert for action on the kicker, who is a defenseless player after kicking the ball until he moves to participate in the play. Be alert for targeting fouls at all times and illegal blocks of players clearly out of the play.

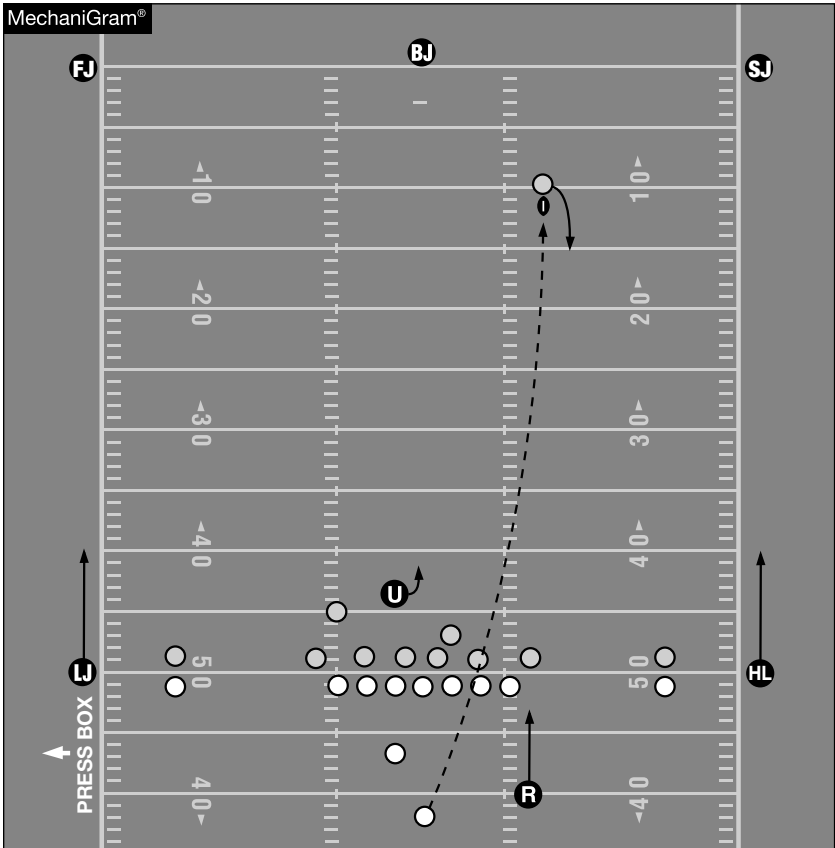
Umpire: Observe the blocks of Team K and action by Team R players. Pay particular attention to the Team R player over the snapper. Turn and move toward the return area when the first wave of Team K linemen passes you.

Head Line-Judge: After the snap, hold your position until the ball crosses the neutral zone and signal if the kick is tipped. Has primary responsibility for observing blocking by the shield. Move deliberately downfield after the kick crosses the line, covering play, or ahead of the runner if the Side Judge has the runner. Therefore, you must maintain an appropriate cushion ahead of the runner. You have goal line responsibility on long returns.

Line Judge: Remain on the line of scrimmage until ball crosses the neutral zone. You are responsible for determining if the ball crosses the neutral zone. When the kick crosses the line, move deliberately downfield, covering play, or ahead of the runner if the Field Judge has the runner. You have goal line responsibility on long returns. Therefore, you must maintain an appropriate cushion ahead of the runner.

Field Judge and Side Judge: Primary coverage of the gunner on your side of the field. When it's obvious the kicked ball will not land on your side of the field, move to a position to observe action in front of the receiver. If the return is to your side, take over the runner as soon as he starts to advance the ball. Be alert for fair catch signals and the actions of players when a signal is given. The offside official is responsible for blocking by the fair-catch signaler. Be prepared to rule on interference with the catch opportunity by your gunner and the legality of handoffs on the return. Follow the ball if the receiver fails to field a kick in your area. If initial starting position is on the goal line, Field Judge and Side Judge must remain on the goal line until it is no longer threatened. If initial position is not on the goal line, Field Judge and Side Judge must move immediately to the goal line should it be threatened at any point during the down.

Back Judge: Have a bean bag in hand. Work to maintain a 45-degree angle with the receiver while the ball is in flight, and adjust your position to maintain the prescribed depth behind the receiver. When it appears the kicked ball will land anywhere other than obviously out of bounds, be prepared to rule on the status of a ball that goes into the end zone and the validity of a fair catch signal. Primary responsibility for interference with the catch opportunity and the legality of handoffs on the return. Bag the spot of the catch or recovery anywhere in the field of play, sideline to sideline. Follow the ball if the receiver fails to field a kick. When the runner advances, observe blocking in the middle of the field in front of the runner and give up coverage of the runner to the Side Judge and Field Judge. When it is obvious the kicked ball will land out of bounds or inside the



area between sideline and nine-yard marks, concentrate on the action in front of the runner after the catch is made and move into position to cover play around the runner. If all deep officials are lined up on the goal line and there is a short kick, the Back Judge has primary responsibility for the ball and must leave the goal line if necessary.

All: Be alert for blocked or fake kicks and for recovery and advance of blocked kicks. Don't hesitate to call a foul that occurs away from your position if you are certain a foul occurred.

BLOCKED KICK OR SNAP OVER THE KICKER/HOLDER'S HEAD

The Referee and the wing official he is facing will retreat and box in the play. The wing official on the same side of the formation as the Referee will hold the line of scrimmage until it is no longer threatened. As the play develops, he must adjust to officiate the play.

SCORING KICKS

POSITIONING AND ZONES

Referee: After a touchdown, the Referee will hold his ready for play signal for the try. Until he is ready to mark the ball ready for play, the Referee will position himself between the snapper and holder and will remain in this position. When the Referee sees the crew in place, he will move back into position, signal to clear the Umpire and then whistle the ball in play. If a team has no kicker and holder on the try, we will use our normal scrimmage mechanics and the Umpire will stay in position to prevent the snap until being cleared by the Referee. Starting position is even with and approximately 10 yards wide of the potential kicker, facing the holder.

Observe the motion of the backs within your line of vision and action on the kicker and holder. Be prepared to move with the ball if the snap cannot be controlled by the holder. Cover as usual if the play results in a run or pass. Signal a score only after being positive that requirements are met.

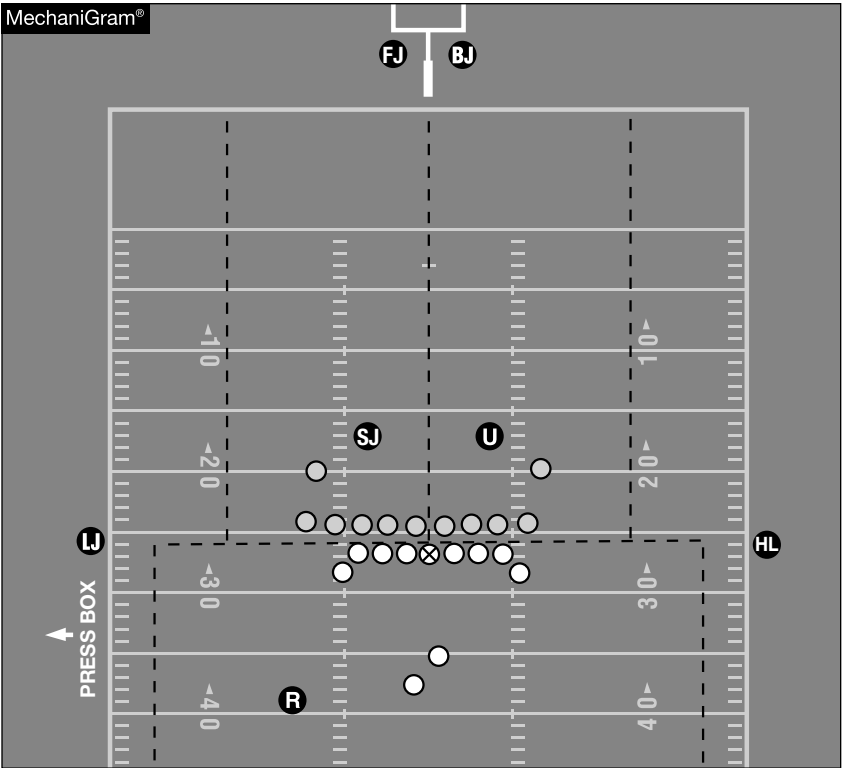
Umpire and Side Judge: On all kick try and field goal attempts, the Umpire spots the ball. The Umpire coordinates with the Referee when to release the center to snap the ball. The Umpire will move back five to seven yards off the ball opposite the Side Judge while keeping the center in his view. After the snap, he is primarily responsible for action by and against the center, guard and tackle on his side of the formation. The Side Judge should be positioned five to seven yards on the defensive side of the ball on the side of the defensive formation that has more players. He observes action on and against the guard and tackle on his side of the formation. Both officials should be alert for leverage, leaping and the pull and shoot.

Head Line-Judge and Line Judge: Take regular positions. Observe action by and against the tight end and wingback on your side. Be ready to cover sideline from the line of scrimmage to the end line. Both are responsible for covering the play on short field goal and try attempts and fake field goals. Neither official should leave the line of scrimmage until the ball has crossed the neutral zone.

Field Judge and Back Judge: Take positions inside the limit line to look up the upright of the goal on your side of the field. You are responsible for ruling on the success or failure of field-goal attempts. The official nearest the ball rules on the play. Both should be prepared to move out into position to cover a play on short field goal and try attempts. Be prepared for illegal touching or batting of ball, a blocked kick or a kick striking an upright or crossbar. If the ball strikes the crossbar, the Back Judge is responsible for the ruling. The Back Judge is responsible for the end line. The Field Judge moves to any position that will allow him to help on the play.

All: Be alert if a Team B player is positioned to return the kick. Be cognizant of the rules for legality of numbering exceptions for punts on each of 4th down and 1st, 2nd or 3rd down; and enforce any illegal numbering that occurs.

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FAKE KICKS

As a guideline on fake kicks, when the ball is snapped inside Team B's 20 yard line, the Line Judge and Head Line-Judge have the goal line the Back Judge and Field Judge move along the end line to the sideline. When the ball is snapped on or outside Team B's 20 yard line, the Field Judge and Back Judge move toward the pylons on their sides of the field and have the goal line.

SWINGING GATE FORMATIONS

When Team K uses a swinging gate formation with a kicker and holder in position, take initial positions as a normal scoring kick with the Side Judge adjusting to a wider position in front of the gate on their side and the Umpire over the snapper. If the original swinging gate shifts to a traditional scoring kick formation, move to your normal scoring kick position.

On a scoring kick down when Team K is spread with no holder and kicker in position, assume regular scrimmage down positions. If Team K subsequently shifts to a traditional scoring kick formation with a kicker and holder in position, the Umpire and

Side Judge will shift to their normal positions for a scoring kick. If the offense lines up in any version of a swinging gate, all officials should be prepared to help ensure the formation and numbering is legal. Also, similar to any other play, the officials will not allow the ball to be snapped until all officials are in position to officiate the play.

LATERAL POSITION OF THE BALL

All crew members, especially wing officials on the sideline of the scoring team, should be alert if the head coach wants to relocate the position of the ball on a try. That must be communicated before the ball is marked ready for play.

FREE KICK AFTER FAIR CATCH OR AWARDED FAIR CATCH

Relative positioning of officials is similar to that for a field goal or kick try except as noted here. Take care that this is a free kick formation and free kick rules apply even though the relative officials' positioning is more like that for a scrimmage kick down.

Referee: Hands the ball to the kicker pre-kick and remains with the kicker during the kick. He is responsible for all action on or by the kicker.

Umpire and Side Judge: Initial position is on the sidelines on the receivers' restraining line (U occupies the same sideline as the HL). Zone coverage should be used once the ball has been kicked. Concentrate on action by the receivers with each official focusing on action out toward his sideline from the middle of the field.

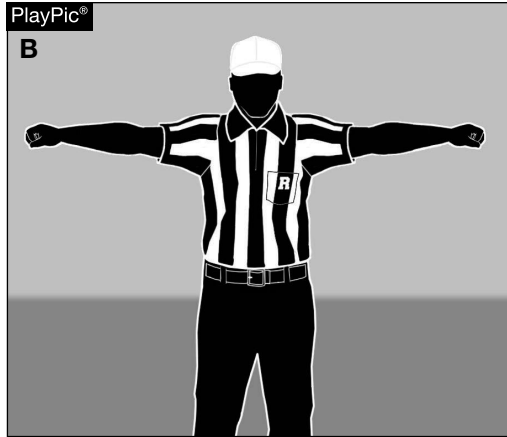
Head Line-Judge and Line Judge: Initial position is on the kickers' restraining line. Zone coverage should be used once the ball has been kicked. Concentrate on action by the kickers with each official focusing on action out toward his sideline from the middle of the field.

Back Judge and Field Judge: Position behind the goal posts, same as for a field goal attempt. Responsibilities are the same on this play as for a field goal attempt.

All: This situation is rare. The focus of the teams is likely to be on the success or failure of the kick. However, this play is like any other free kick down with the exception of the opportunity to score three points. A ball that falls short but in the field of play remains live and is subject to recovery by either team and advancement by the receivers.

TIMEOUTS

To indicate which team took the timeout, the Referee “chucks” three times his hands in the direction of the team (PlayPic A). Optionally, the Referee may point to that team. PlayPic B shows the signal for a TV or media timeout.



All officials should record the team requesting the timeout, the quarter and the time remaining on the game clock. The calling official also records whether a player or the coach called the timeout.

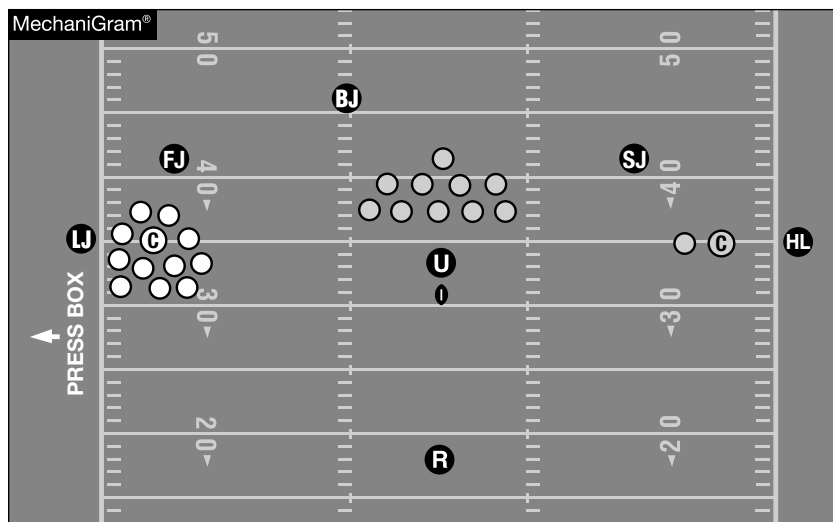
Should a coach request a coach-Referee conference, another official accompanies the Referee to act as a witness in case a dispute arises.

Referee: Stand away from other officials and the players. On the Back Judge's signal, which comes with 45 seconds remaining in the timeout, point to the appropriate sideline officials so they may tell the teams the timeout is over. On the Back Judge's subsequent signal that the timeout has expired, or if both teams return to the field before the time expires, blow your whistle and give the ready-for-play signal. If a team has used its last timeout of a half, inform the head coach.

Umpire: Stand in position to prevent the snap until the Referee gives the ready-for-play signal.

Side Judge and Field Judge: Observe team on your side of the field and be ready to assist Head Line-Judge and Line Judge in getting teams back to the field promptly once the timeout expires. If a team huddles near the sideline, all players and coaches must remain outside the numbers and in front of the team area.

Back Judge: Time the timeout.



WORKING WITH THE TIMERS

The electric game clock and play clock operators are integral members of the officiating crew and game administration. Unfair advantages occur when the clocks are not started or stopped promptly. Great care must be exercised to see that no time lag occurs in starting or stopping the clocks.

GAME CLOCK

The game clock operator (ECO) will report with the rest of the crew prior to the game. The clock operator is to inform them if he will be located in the press box or on the sideline, and to confirm the procedure the officials should use for communicating with the ECO during the game.

All pregame and halftime activities will be synchronized with the official game clock. The clock operator should start the game clock 30 minutes before game time. The halftime intermission will be timed on the game clock. The game clock starts when the Referee gives a start-the-clock signal.

The ECO must have an extra alternative timing device in case the game clock malfunctions. The clock operator must immediately contact the officials by whatever means possible, giving them the correct data regarding the official time. Timing of the game will continue via ECO's alternate timer until such time as the on-field game clock is again operative.

Should the game clock become inoperative, the public address announcer will indicate to the crowd that the game clock will not be official until the malfunction is corrected and subsequent announcement made over the P.A. system. The appropriate official will alert the Referee, who announces the remaining time as often as possible.

The game clock should be stopped whenever a team or an official's timeout is charged, after any score, when a live ball goes out of bounds, on a penalty, when either team is awarded a first down, or following an incomplete pass. Officials are required to glance at the clock in those situations to ensure that the clock is stopped.

If the game clock has been stopped, it will be started if the Referee gives the start-the-clock signal. If applicable by rule, the Referee may signal to start the clock while the Umpire is spotting the ball and before the Referee gives the ready-for-play signal. The ECO must follow the Referee's signal in these cases. Outside of two minutes, the intent is to keep the game moving. The clock will be started on the snap if the Referee does not give the start-the-clock signal.

Following a loose ball, when the covering official is unsure of the result of the play, give the stop-the-clock signal, sort out the action and then give the appropriate signal.

On all free kicks, the clock starts when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, unless the ball is caught or recovered by a player who is legally down.

The timer should be reminded that the clock is not to be stopped on plays near a boundary line unless an official signals the clock to stop. Many times the ball goes out of bounds after having been declared dead in the field of play and no timeout legally occurs. If a pass is touched or caught out of bounds, the incompleteness signal will stop the clock. On plays that end near the sideline inbounds in advance of the line to gain, the covering official should give the stop the clock signal only; do not wind the clock.

Remind the timer that the official who declares the ball dead will be the first official to signal a timeout when the team in possession of the ball meets the requirements for first down. It is important for the clock operator to key on that official, since the clock will usually stop on long gainers.

Other reminders:

- Any official may signal a team timeout, so be alert to stop the clock.
- In case of a pile-up anywhere on the field, be alert for an official's signal to stop the clock. Once the congestion has cleared, the Referee will start the clock again before the ready-for-play signal.
- The game clock should not be stopped if the play clock is started in error (Example: Clock running with less than 25 seconds in any quarter).
- When the period officially ends, the Referee holds the ball above his head.
- The Referee may employ the 5/5 axiom: In order to adjust the game clock when it has been running, there must be more than a five-second differential if there is more than five minutes remaining in either half. When any time is lost due to the game clock being started erroneously, such as when a dead-ball foul is called, the game clock must be adjusted.
- If the game clock is stopped with two seconds or less in any period and will start on the Referee's signal, the ECO MUST run the clock to zero if the ball is legally snapped.

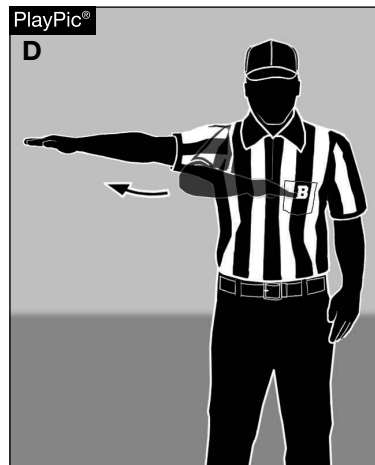
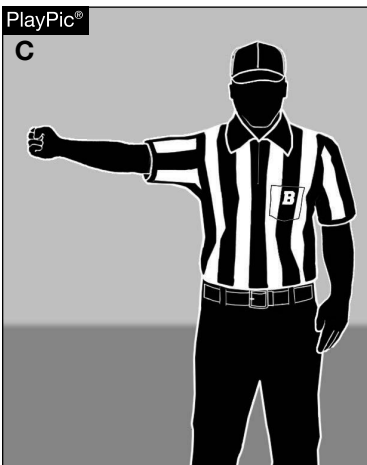
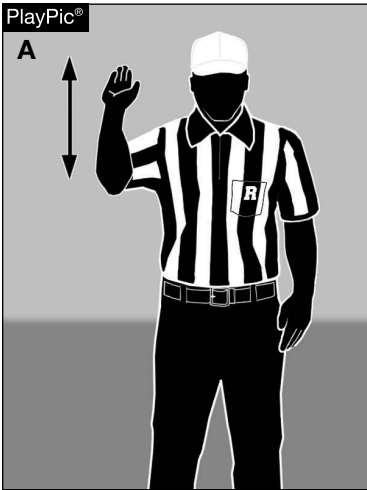
PLAY CLOCK

When play clocks are available, they are the official delay-of-game timepiece. The Play Clock Operator (PCO), when assigned, will report with the rest of the crew prior to the game. Play clocks shall be set to either 40 seconds or 25 seconds by rule depending upon game situations (see table "Situations That Dictate Use of a 25-Second Play Clock" p. 140). Also, if the play clock is connected to its operator wirelessly, the play clock may be operated by either a dedicated PCO or the Back Judge.

In cases where no on-field play clock is available, the play clock will be kept on the field by the Back Judge. In this case the Back Judge will use signal 1* (hand above head and a twirling motion) to indicate the start of any 40 second clock. Otherwise the 25-second play clock will be started on the Referee's Ready-for-Play signal and NO additional signal will be made by the Back Judge. If the 40 second play clock has run down to less than 25 seconds and the ball is not ready for play for any reason, the Referee should use signal 7 (alternately raising and lowering his arm in a pumping

motion with his palm flat and facing up, PlayPic A) to have the play clock operator reset the play clock to 25 seconds. The Back Judge shall also be responsible for indicating when 10 or less seconds remain before a delay-of-game foul would be declared using the following technique: The Back Judge should raise one arm straight overhead when the play clock reaches 10 seconds (PlayPic B) and the arm moved down continuously. The arm should be straight out with five seconds left (PlayPic C). At this point the Back Judge will commence a second-by-second countdown to zero. This will be done by using a single-armed NFHS Signal 20 (“Illegal Motion”) each second (PlayPic D).

In any combination of play clock or no play clock, the rules for timing delay-of-game from 40 or 25 seconds remain the same.



At the end of a period, the play clock should not be started if there is less than 25 or 40 seconds, as appropriate to required play clock settings, on the running game clock.

If there is a malfunction of an on-field play clock, the play clocks will be turned off until the problem is corrected. Both coaches will be notified if the field play clock is no longer official. The 25/40-second count will then be restarted at 25 seconds by the Back Judge manually. The play clock will then be kept by the Back Judge until the play clock has been fixed.

In ALL cases where the play clock should be set to 40 seconds, the clock is to start immediately upon recognition by the play clock operator (PCO or BJ) of a visual signal by the covering official that the previous play has ended. In no case should there be a delay in starting the 40 second clock of longer than 3 seconds. The end-of-down will be signaled by the covering official using any of signals 2, 3 (when the sideline is involved), 7 or 10. In situations where the clock should be set to 25 seconds, the clock is to start on the Referee's ready-for-play signal, only.

If there is a delay in getting the play clock operator to reset the play clock or there is an unusual situation, the Referee shall declare a timeout and announce that the play clock should be reset to 25 seconds. The Referee shall then signal the ball ready for play.

When the play clock expires and there is a delay of game penalty, the display should be left at zero. When the ball is put in play and there is no delay foul, or if the Referee interrupts the 25-second count, immediately reset the displays.

The following explains the rules for setting the play clock to either 25 or 40 seconds:

Unless there is a Situation as outlined in the table below, the play clock is ALWAYS set to 40 seconds following the end of the previous down. This specifically includes the unusual situation in which there is a double change of possession during the down and A is, therefore, awarded a first down at play's end.

SITUATIONS THAT DICTATE USE OF A 25-SECOND PLAY CLOCK

Situation	Referee's Ready-for-Play Signal
After Administration of a Foul & Penalty	Chop or Wind
At the Start of a Period	Chop
Following Measurements	Chop or Wind
Following a Helmet Coming off a Player during a Down	Chop or Wind
Following an Injury Stoppage	Chop or Wind
Team B or R was Awarded a First Down (change of possession)	Chop
After any Score	Chop
At the start of Team A's possession in overtime	Chop
Following an Inadvertent Whistle	Wind
Following a charged Timeout by either team	Chop
Following ANY Officials' Timeout	Chop or Wind
Following a legal kick play	Chop
Prior to an Untimed Down (such as to extend a period)	Chop

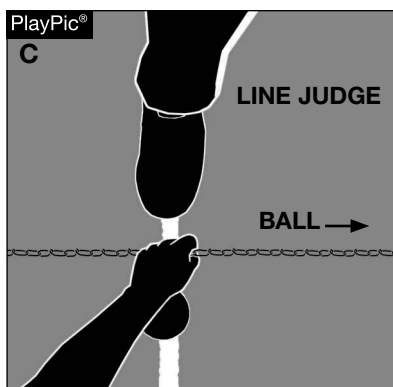
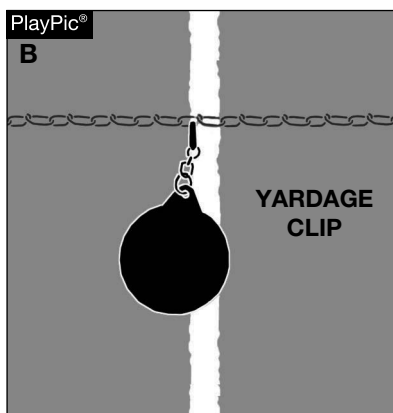
** Note: For stoppages made because of a defensive injury or defensive equipment issue, a 40 second play clock rather than a 25-second play clock is required based on a 2020 rule change to this effect.

MEASUREMENTS

When a down ends with the ball close to the line to gain, officials must be alert and inform the Referee. The ball should never be moved from the dead-ball spot until it's determined that there will be no measurement. If there is any question, a measurement should be taken. A captain may request a measurement, and the request should be honored when reasonable. There can be no measurement after the ball is moved from the dead-ball spot or after the ready-for-play signal.

The Head Line-Judge or Line Judge brings the chain in from the sideline with the chain crew members. Putting one hand on the links on each side of the clip improves the Head Line-Judge's or Line Judge's chances of keeping track of the proper link in case the clip falls off the chain (PlayPic A). The clip must be placed on the back edge of the line for the measurement (PlayPic B). Upon arriving at the measurement spot, the Line Judge or Head Line-Judge uses his foot to indicate the spot at which the clip should be placed (PlayPic C). A good double-check is for the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge to state that the next down will be first if the ball is beyond the stake or the next down of the series if it is short. (Example: "It will either be first or fourth.")

The Back Judge holds the ball in place from the downfield side shading away from the press box. Holding the ball in that way will preclude the ball from being accidentally displaced and will allow room for the Umpire to place the chain on the press box side of the ball. The Field Judge ensures that officials or players do not block the press box's view of the measurement. If the measurement is outside a hash, the Field Judge should have a new ball ready to be spotted.



The down marker is moved to the forward point of the ball by the chain crew member. Once the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge tells the Referee he has the chain on the proper mark, the Umpire takes the forward stake from the chain crew member, then pulls the stake to ensure the chain is taut and the stake is perpendicular to the ground. The Referee rules whether or not the ball is beyond the front stake. Once that ruling is announced, the Umpire returns the stake to the chain crew member.

SHORT OF A FIRST DOWN

If the measurement is in a side zone and does not result in a first down, the Umpire should keep control of the stake. The Referee uses his hands (or fingers if the ball is inches short of the front stake, as in the PlayPic) to inform both benches how short the play ended of a first down.

After signaling, the Referee grasps the chain at the link in front of the ball and rises. The Referee should grasp the chain with the link that will be used to place the ball. The Back Judge continues to hold the ball in place. The Referee, Umpire and Head Line-Judge or Line Judge walk to the nearest hash mark. The Field Judge or Side Judge will have obtained a new ball and have it at the inbounds mark. The Back Judge maintains his position and holds the ball on the ground until the new ball is placed.

When a first down is not made, the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge must again hold the chain on either side of the clip while he accompanies the chain crew and the chains are moved back to the sideline.

Otherwise, the clip could break or simply come off.

The Referee must wait for the Head Line-Judge's or Line Judge's signal that the chain crew is back in position before giving the ready-for-play signal.

If the measurement occurred on fourth down and Team A is short, the Referee signals the change of possession by giving the first down signal toward Team A's goal line. The Referee then sets the ball in the same position as it was when it became dead so its foremost point becomes the rear point when the direction is changed. The new rear stake is then moved to the new foremost point of the ball.

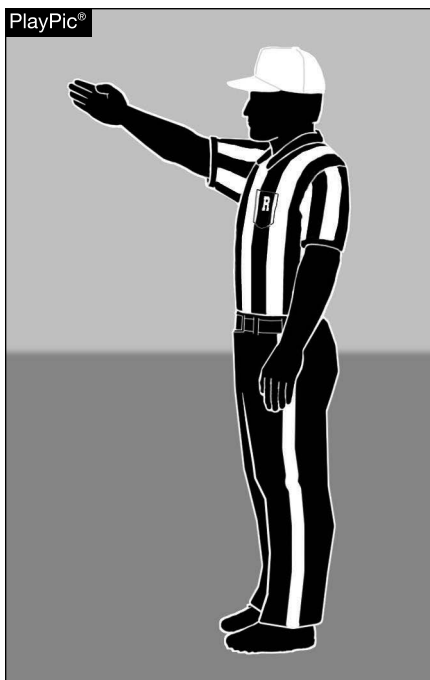


FIRST DOWN

If the measurement results in a new series, the Referee signals the first down, as seen in the PlayPic. The Head Line-Judge or Line Judge need not hold the chain as he accompanies the chain crew back to the sideline, but he must go all the way to the sideline and indicate to where the new series will begin.

If the measurement occurred in a side zone, the Back Judge should remain with the ball on the ground to ensure the ball is spotted properly for the next play. The Side Judge or Field Judge should assist the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge by indicating the spot on the sideline where the rear stake of the chains should now be placed.

Since the down has been completed, moving the down marker forward is routine and having it on the forward point of the ball is necessary in the event the ball is inadvertently moved. The exception is if the measurement is a prelude to a penalty acceptance decision. An example: With third down and seven to go Team A completes a pass near the line to gain. Team B is flagged for a live-ball foul. Team A will accept the result of the play if it yields a first down or accept the penalty if the measurement is short. In that case the down marker must remain at the previous spot.



INTERMISSIONS

BETWEEN HALVES

When the Referee has signaled that the first half has ended, he will start the 20-minute halftime clock upon determination that the field has been cleared and half-time activities may safely proceed. The ECO starts his watch on the Referee's signal and keeps the crew informed as to remaining time to ensure they return to the field at least three minutes before the second-half kickoff.

With five minutes left in the intermission, the Side Judge and Head Line-Judge and Field Judge and Line Judge go to the locker rooms to alert the same teams they had for the coin toss. The coaches' second-half options may be obtained either in the locker room or on the field before the second half. The Back Judge obtains the proper ball for the kickoff.

END OF FIRST AND THIRD PERIODS

At the end of first and third periods, the Referee, Umpire and Head Line-Judge meet and record on their game cards the yard line on which the ball is spotted, the down and the line-to-gain. The ball should not be moved until that is complete.

The Line Judge goes to the proper yard line on the opposite end of the field to ensure proper placement of the ball.

The Head Line-Judge and Side Judge rotate the chains and move them to the opposite end of the field.

The Back Judge times the interval between periods unless the game is being televised, in which case the liaison will inform the crew when the game is to resume.

The Head Line-Judge and Line Judge assume their positions and complete their responsibilities before the next period may begin.

FOULS AND ENFORCEMENTS

EFFICIENT ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES

Penalty enforcements are a critical game management function and the ability to administer penalties in an efficient manner enhances the credibility and professionalism of the crew. Conversely, a crew that is

perceived to have difficulty in enforcing obvious fouls loses the confidence of coaches, players, fans and the media.

Coordinators have become increasingly concerned with the amount of time taken for officials to complete the administration of penalties,

especially in situations where the penalty enforcement is obvious based on the foul and the result of the play. Far too often, there are extended crew conferences that are unnecessary.

This manual now includes a specific process that crews will use to minimize the amount of time between the end of the play in which a foul occurs and the next ready for play signal. Note that we do not

advocate rushing to get the ball in play; rather, we are seeking to minimize unnecessary and lengthy discussions. This process requires each official to completely understand his role so that the potential for errors is virtually eliminated.

THE PROCESS: OVERVIEW

It is now mandatory that the calling official give a preliminary signal unless there are mitigating circumstances such as multiple fouls, double fouls or situation that require verbal communications with other officials prior to determination of the foul. It is absolutely crucial that this signal be given so that everyone can make an immediate determination whether the enforcement is obvious or an option is required from the offended team. Additionally, it helps to sell difficult calls such as pass interference.

In the case of the obvious enforcement, the calling official simply needs to provide the offending player's number to the Referee who will, immediately, announce the foul. No preliminary signal is to be given by the Referee. If an option, or some type of crew conference, is necessary, the Referee will give a preliminary signal and then get the choice from the coach of the offended team.

The Umpire, Head Line-Judge and Line Judge will work together to enforce the yardage distance while the Referee makes the announcement.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Calling Official

Give a preliminary signal to include the foul signal and the direction of the offending team as soon as the play is over. Advance toward the Referee to provide the number of the player that committed the foul and any other information required to correctly

enforce the penalty. If multiple officials call a foul, they should quickly determine they have called the same foul and one of them would then give the signal and report the number.

Be prepared to provide the result of the play to the Referee, if necessary.

The calling official, or officials in the case of multiple or double fouls, should remain near the Referee during the announcement to make sure the correct number or numbers are identified.

Referee

Upon noting the preliminary signal by the calling official, the Referee should determine, as soon as reasonably possible, whether the choice is obvious or an option is required. If the choice is obvious, the Referee will make the announcement immediately upon receiving the offending player's number.

If an option is required, the Referee will give a preliminary signal and then get the option from the offended team's coach. Note: the officials on that team's sideline must be prepared to communicate directly with the coach in order to explain the options and then relay his choice to the Referee.

It should not be necessary, in most cases, for the Referee to confer with the Umpire to discuss penalty enforcement.

It should not be necessary for the Referee to take more than two or three steps to clear the players and make an announcement. It should never be necessary to move any significant distance.

Announcements should be made in a normal tone. Do not raise your voice. For pre-snap fouls, the Referee shall NOT also give the dead ball signal (signal 7); this requirement supersedes the Rules Book signals indications.

Umpire

The primary responsibility for enforcing penalties is assigned to the Umpire. As such, it is imperative that he has absolute knowledge of all penalty enforcement principles and is able to enforce any penalty with minimal Referee involvement.

The Umpire, upon noting the preliminary signal of the calling official, will determine the enforcement in obvious cases. He will immediately mark off the penalty yardage from the correct enforcement spot.

If an option is required, he will wait until the Referee receives the option from the offended team and then proceed to enforce the penalty.

He will work with the Head Line-Judge and the Line Judge to ensure the penalty is correctly enforced.

Head Line-Judge and Line Judge

The official in charge of the chains shall mark off the yardage from his sideline position at approximately the same time as the Umpire, who will look to him to make sure they have marked the penalty correctly.

The official opposite the chains will hold the spot from which the penalty is enforced until the Umpire and the official in charge of the chains have completed their duties. The opposite official will then mark off the penalty yardage and confirm that the Umpire and official in charge of the chains have enforced the penalty correctly.

Any discrepancy should be corrected immediately.

Other Officials

Observe the actions of the Referee, Umpire, Head Line-Judge and Line Judge and make sure that no errors have been made.

If any official feels a mistake has been made, he must bring it to the attention of the Referee immediately.

Other Concepts

The emphasis on this process is efficiency, not speed. Officials should never rush this process.

If the option is obvious, but the coach for some reason elects to choose the other option, then simply apply his choice.

Referees may be able to administer pre-snap fouls with no discussion, as quite often, the foul and the offending player is easily determined.

For example, an offensive tackle wearing number 76 fires out prior to the snap. The Referee would simply glance at the responsible official for the preliminary signal, then turn and announce the foul.

NOTE 1: The dead-ball foul signal is now reserved for fouls that occur after the play and should not be used for pre-snap fouls. The language, “Prior to the snap” for pre-snap fouls should not be used unless there is doubt as to whether the ball became live and it is necessary for clarification.

NOTE 2: The personal foul signal and announcement are to be used before the signal for any personal foul that has its own signal.

Crews should seek to minimize on-field conferences. Those should be limited to complex situations that demand officials communicate the specifics of the play to one another.

FOULS

An official calling a foul will either throw or drop his marker at the proper spot. The former is used when a spot foul occurs (PlayPic A). If it is possible the spot of the foul will be the enforcement spot, you must get your flag as close to that spot as possible. If the throw is errant, relocate the flag as soon as possible after the play by picking it up and moving it to the proper spot. The longer you delay making that correction, the more it will appear you are manipulating the situation.

For dead-ball fouls or fouls simultaneous with the snap, the flag should be tossed into the air overhead and directly in front of

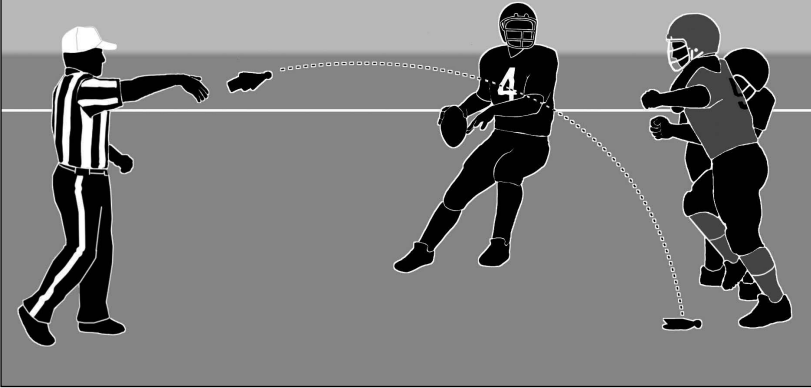
you (PlayPic B) or optionally in the direction of the offending team. When wing officials throw a flag for a dead-ball foul prior to the snap, they should give the stop-the-clock signal (whether or not the clock is running), move immediately toward the Referee and give the preliminary signal in a controlled manner while officiating any dead-ball action. If there is to be a discussion to determine the foul, it should take place in the offensive backfield, away from players.

After throwing the flag, the calling official should mentally mark the yard line, the number of the player who fouled and the status of the ball (live or dead, loose or in possession) at the time of the foul. If ball is live, withhold the whistle until the ball becomes dead. Once the play is over, continue to sound a staccato whistle until you are certain other officials are aware a foul has been called. If the penalty will be enforced from the spot of the foul, the calling official must make sure another official is covering the spot before he moves to report the foul to the Referee.

When the play ends, if the ball is not at the dead-ball spot, an official not involved in the play should assist in getting it there. The nearest non-calling official should cover and hold the dead-ball spot and mark the end of the run. When the Umpire starts

PlayPic®

A



to mark off the penalty, the flag should be picked up and returned to the official who called the foul. For a spot foul, the Umpire would finish marking off the penalty before the flag is picked up.

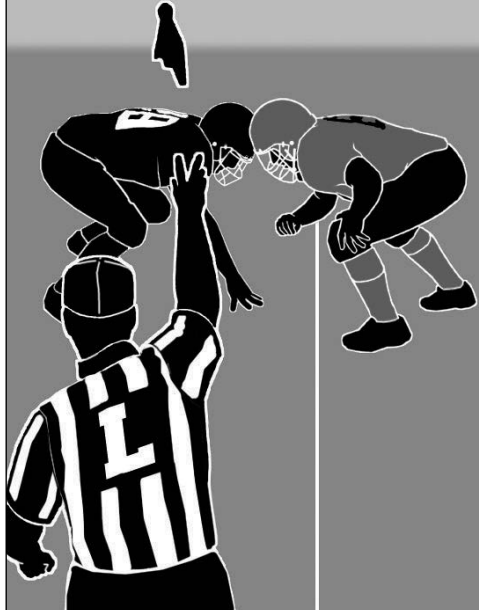
The ball should be left on the ground until it is ready to be moved. Those officials not covering spots or involved in the reporting process should observe players and assist in any way needed.

The calling official must know:

- The foul.
- The offending team (jersey color, Team A or Team B, offense or defense, etc.).
- The offending player's number.
- Pertinent spots (spot of the foul, the end of the run or kick, etc.).
- The status of the ball when the foul occurred.

PlayPic®

B



- The outcome of the play, if applicable (touchdown, incomplete pass, which team recovered a fumble, etc.).
- Whether the clock should start on the ready or the snap after enforcement.

On certain fouls, it is critical that the Referee be told whether a player who was fouled was an eligible receiver, or whether the foul results in an ejection. If a flag is to be disregarded, the Referee announces that there is no foul for (name of violation, in most cases with no further explanation), and optionally gives the disregard the flag signal (S13).

In cases regarding fouls with potential to result in player ejections, it is appropriate and recommended that a brief conference of officials who had connection with the play (at minimum the calling official and the Referee) occur. Any other officials with direct input concerning the foul should also participate.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

If the enforcement is correct, the down box should be moved to the spot and the chains moved (if appropriate).

While the Umpire is marking off the penalty, the Referee should take a position in the clear where he can be seen. If the penalty is accepted, signal the foul and extend one arm in horizontally in the direction of the offending team. If the penalty is declined, signal the foul and the fouling team, then give the penalty-declined signal. If the penalties cancel, signal one foul and the offending team, then repeat the procedure for the foul by the other team. Follow those signals with the penalty-declined signal. Penalties should be signaled to the press box-side of the field only.

If the Referee is equipped with a microphone, he should switch it on when the penalty is being enforced, announcing the foul, team of the player committing it and other pertinent information (down, enforcement spot, extent of penalty, etc.). Speak in an unhurried,

conversational and measured tone, matching the verbal description to the signals. For example, "Holding (pause) offense. The 10-yard penalty is enforced from the previous spot (pause). Repeat the down (pause). Second down."

Turn off the microphone and check with each crew member to ensure they are ready before the ready-for-play signal. Confirm with the Umpire or Line Judge whether the clock starts on the ready or the snap before giving the ready-for-play signal.

When fouls are committed that require enforcement at the next free kick, the Referee make the announcement and point to the spot of the free kick. The Umpire will enforce the penalty at the succeeding spot without signaling.

An official who calls a disqualifying foul may accompany the Referee to that player's sideline to notify the head coach.

A few techniques to avoid:

- Placing a hand on or pointing at the offending player.
- Slam-dunking the flag to the ground.
- Looking angry when you toss the flag.
- Holding the flag and waving it, instead of throwing it.
- Throwing it at the fouling player (that looks confrontational and, worse yet, might hit the player in the face).

The calling official should make every effort to ascertain the number of the fouling player. If that is not possible, do not guess or make one up. Incorrect information will cost officials their credibility.

USE OF THE MICROPHONE

Some reminders for Referees regarding the microphone:

- Don't shout. The microphone will sufficiently amplify your voice. Shouting can cause feedback that will drown out the announcement. It also may convey you are angry. Speak in a measured, conversational tone.
- Think before you speak. Be sure you have all the information you need before you click on the mike.
- Coordinate speech and signals. The Referee should coordinate his speech with his signaling. For instance, for an offensive holding penalty, the Referee should come to a complete stop in an area that makes him clearly visible to the press box, turn on his microphone and speak in a clear, measured tone. Announce, "Holding," while making the signal. Pause briefly and give the number of the offending player. If the reporting official didn't observe the number, don't guess or make one up. It is helpful to have the calling official remain close to the Referee during the announcement to remind the Referee of pertinent information. Then point to while simultaneously identifying the offending team. Drop the arm and state the distance of the penalty. Finally, announce what the next down will be.
- Phrases to avoid. When penalizing a player or team for unsportsmanlike conduct on a scoring play, do not use the term "excessive celebration." Simply report it as unsportsmanlike conduct.

CHAPTER 9

OVERTIME PROCEDURE

If regulation time ends with the teams tied, the game proceeds to extra periods as provided by the rules. Please see the updated Overtime rules in the GHSA White Book.

When the fourth period ends, the officials instruct the teams to return to their sidelines. The officials meet in the center of the field to review tiebreaker procedures.

The first extra period is preceded by a coin toss. The Referee and Umpire should be in the center of the field. Upon a signal from the Referee, the Head Line-Judge and Line Judge escort their respective captains and coaches to the inbounds line, then return to the vicinity of the sideline. The Side Judge, Field Judge and Back Judge remain at the sideline. No team personnel are to be inside the nine-yard marks during the toss. The Line Judge and Head Line-Judge should have a game ball in their possession; once the toss is completed, the ball can quickly be put in place for the first series.

The captains and coaches should face each other with their backs to their sidelines. The visiting captain calls the toss, telling the Referee his choice before the Referee flips the coin. The choice will be verified before the coin is tossed.

The Referee indicates the toss winner by placing his hand on the shoulder of the appropriate captain. The options (offense, defense or end of the field) are explained to and obtained from the winning captain and coach. The remaining option is given to the captain and coach of the team losing the toss.

Once the choices are determined, the Referee instructs the captain of the team starting on offense to face the opponent's goal line. The other captain faces his opponent's goal line. The Referee gives a first down signal in the direction the offensive team will be advancing. The Head Line-Judge and Line Judge instruct the players to promptly move to their positions. The officials then move immediately to the proper 15 yard line.

If additional extra periods are needed, the Head Line-Judge and Line Judge obtain the choices from the respective coaches and report the results to the Referee, who uses the microphone to announce the choices.

CHAPTER 10

BASIC OFFICIATING GUIDELINES

1. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Conditioning

Football officiating requires you to be in good physical condition. You should undergo a physical examination before each season. Stay in shape rather than get in shape. Being physically fit is a lifestyle. If you never get out of shape, it won't be such a chore getting ready for the season.

Rules and Mechanics

Unfailing familiarity with the rules and full understanding of mechanics are necessary for the proper conduct of a game but are no guarantee of optimum performance. Call any foul or rule infraction observed regardless of specific assignment. All rules should be strictly and fairly enforced. There shall be no deviation from the NFHS/GHSA football rules. Rules knowledge must be supplemented by the ability to interpret correctly. The intent of each rule must be kept in mind. Every official should seek the happy medium between excessive strictness and undue laxity. Situations arise in a game that cannot be foreseen and that cannot be covered in a rulebook or manual. Football sense must supersede technical application of the rules and mechanics. Officiating demands a great deal of time and study. Anyone unable or unwilling to invest the time and effort should leave officiating to those who are. Each official must have thorough knowledge of the duties of his own position and must also be fully informed concerning the duties of each of the other officials. He should be prepared to assume any one of the other positions whenever circumstances require rearrangement of assignments.

Getting a Look

Good officials keep the players and not themselves “boxed in.” A position that has the official “outside looking in” is essential for sideline and end line coverage. The ultimate is to have each play viewed from more than one direction.

Hustle

Hurry should not be mistaken for hustle. Hustle is essential; hurry is a hazard. Keep the game moving smoothly from start to finish. Do not permit haste to interfere with duties or correct determinations. There are times it is proper to speed the

tempo of the game in order to get the ball back in play after an incomplete pass, to take a position on a foul situation, to prepare for a measurement, etc. Never hurry an injured player off the field. Never rush the ball to the inbounds line without checking measurements or press for a captain's decision on a difficult option. Precision and care should be exercised in all situations.

Courage

Football officiating requires a maximum of courage for which belligerence is not a substitute. A smooth running game suddenly can get out of hand as a result of an overly officious attitude toward players and coaches. Conversation with coach or player should always be courteous without sacrifice of dignity. If something said or done warrants a penalty, penalization should be done unobtrusively and without dramatization. The game is kept under control by proper administration of the rules, which can be best accomplished if no impression of militant supervision is created.

Media and Other Commentary

No one associated with a GHSA officiating program should have conversations with any members of the media without the express approval of GHSA's coordinator of officials. This includes on-field officials, ECOs, GHSA-sanctioned members of the chain crew, etc. There must be no exceptions.

Use of social media to convey information or discuss any aspect of games, coaches, teams or players is strictly prohibited.

2. UNIFORM

The uniform should be clean and well kept. Check the uniform before leaving home to ensure nothing has been forgotten. Officials should spot-check each other before taking the field. The approved, standard uniform:

Shirt

Two-inch black and white vertical stripes are worn. The GHSA logo and the American flag shall be manufactured into the shirt. The shirt will have a Byron collar, black cuffs and a breast pocket. The zipper should be zipped at or very near the top. Officials should have shirts with short and long sleeves. All crew members should wear the same length sleeves. T-shirts and turtlenecks (for cold weather) should be black. The undergarment should not have letters or pictures that could be seen through the striped shirt. Shirts should always be tucked in.

Pants

Black pants with a white stripe 1-1/4 inches wide down each leg are to be worn for every game. The belt must be black, one and one-half to two inches wide, with a nondescript buckle. All crew members must dress alike.



Shoes

Mostly black shoes with black laces and appropriate soles or cleats. They should be polished and clean.

Hat

A black hat, with a brim between 2/3-4 and three inches long and the traditional narrow white piping, are worn by all but the Referee. The Referee's all-white (no black trim) Brooklyn-style hat must be clean. All caps should be fitted (sized). Hats may have the manufacturer's logo.

Whistle

If a whistle on a lanyard is used, both must be black. Carry a spare in your pants pocket. If a finger whistle is used, it should also be black plastic.

Accessories

Each official must have:

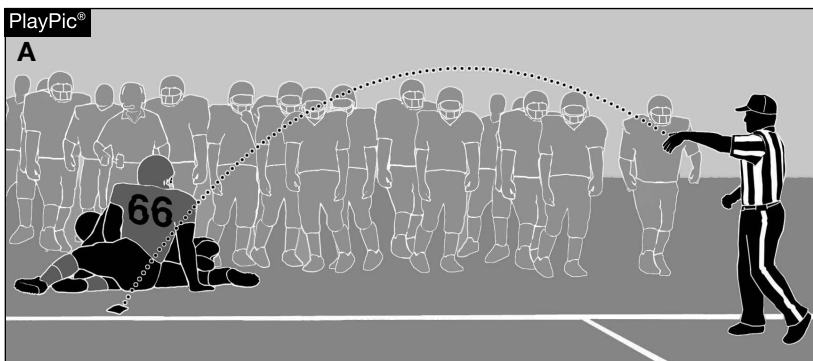
- At least one light gold penalty flag, 15 by 15 inches with a center weight that is not a hard substance. The flags may be carried in the belt or a pocket, but should be inconspicuous.
- At least one bean bag to mark non-penalty spots, except the Back Judge, who has two. Bean bags should be worn in the belt. **Bean bags should be black or at the least, the entire crew should match.**
- An information card (to record timeouts, captains, etc.) and a writing utensil.
- An elastic down indicator or other device to keep track of downs. The Umpire may wear a second device to keep track of the area of the field from which the ball was last snapped.
- Gloves, when worn, should be black.
- The Referee must have a coin.
- Officials who have timing responsibilities should wear a countdown-style wristwatch with a black band.

3. BEAN BAG AND HAT

The bean bag is used to mark spots, other than the spot of a foul, which may later be needed as a reference point. Each official must have at least one bean bag; a second is recommended for rare but important situations. Whenever possible, the bean bag should be dropped rather than thrown.

Under no circumstances should the bean bag be used as a substitute for hustle. One common example of lazy officials using the bean bag instead of proper mechanics involves a play in which the runner is downed near or past a sideline. Do not throw the bean bag toward the players and move to the spot (PlayPic A, next page).

For penalty enforcement, the basic spot on a running play is where the run ends. If the ball is fumbled, the run ends at the spot where possession was lost. Consequently, the spot of the fumble must be marked in the event a penalty occurs and that spot



is needed. Technically, the spot is required only for fumbles beyond the neutral zone, but officials should develop the habit of bagging all fumbles, failed handoffs or muffed backward passes. The covering official should also drop the bean bag when a handoff or backward pass occurs beyond the neutral zone or when there is no neutral zone.

An official should only drop a bean bag when he sees the ball fumbled. If the official sees the ball loose but not actually fumbled, the spot of his bean bag will not be accurate.

The covering official should also drop a bean bag when, between his five yard line and his goal line, a Team B player intercepts a forward pass, fumble or backward pass; catches or recovers a free or scrimmage kick; or recovers a fumble. If the momentum rule applies, that spot could help determine from where the ball will next be snapped.

The bean bag may be used on kick downs to indicate illegal touching by Team A. On free kicks, if Team A touches the ball before the ball crosses Team B's restraining line and before it is touched there by any Team B player, the spot must be marked with the bean bag. For a scrimmage kick, the spot must be marked if Team A touches a kick that has crossed the neutral zone before Team B touches the ball. If the quarterback is sacked behind the line, the Referee must take responsibility for marking the forward progress spot with his bean bag. To do that, he should step forward and drop the bag on the appropriate spot while keeping an eye on the post-tackle activity.

On scrimmage kicks, the covering official should drop his bean bag to denote the spot where the kick ended. The spot may be used for post-scrimmage kick penalty enforcement.

When an official inadvertently blows his whistle, causing the ball to become dead, the covering official must drop his bean bag at the spot of the ball when the whistle was blown. The down may be replayed or the team in possession at the time the whistle was blown may choose to accept the result of the play.

The bean bag should not be used as a substitute for hustle. The official should hustle to the out-of-bounds spot, not throw the bean bag to it (PlayPic A). It is not necessary to drop a bean bag at the spot a player intercepts a pass, catches a free kick or recovers a fumble.

An official's hat is also used as a device to mark where an eligible Team A pass receiver voluntarily or involuntarily goes out of bounds; when an eligible receiver fails to return inbounds immediately after being blocked out of bounds; and when a Team A player goes out of bounds during a free or scrimmage kick down. The hat should be dropped at the spot the player went out of bounds. The hat should be dropped whether the player went out of bounds on his own or was forced out by an opponent.

4. USING INFO CARDS

Whether you choose a reusable card or one on paper, you should never take the field without an info card and at least one writing utensil. The info card is used to register a great deal of vital data.

Information you need to log before the game begins:

- The captains' last names and numbers.
- The coin toss winner.
- Both team's choices. Be sure to note whether the toss winner deferred until the second half.

Information you'll want to record during the game:

- The number of the player who asked for a timeout (calling official only) and the time on the clock when the timeout was granted.
- The number of any ejected player.
- The number of anyone penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- The Referee, Umpire and Head Line-Judge record down, distance and position of the ball (i.e. left hash, slightly right of center) at the end of the first and third quarters. That information will ensure that the crew resets the ball properly to start the next quarter.
- Fouls you called. In some cases, someone other than the officials handles that chore. If not, be sure to record the number of the guilty player, the nature of the foul, when it occurred and whether it was accepted, declined or offset.

The card also provides a means of jotting down reminders for discussion at halftime or after the game.

5. FORWARD PROGRESS AND SPOTTING THE BALL

Forward progress should be handled by the wing official moving up and down the field with the runner, parallel to the sideline, and then moving to the selected place at right angles to the sidelines ("squaring off"). Not only does squaring off look sharper than arriving at a spot in an arc, it adds credibility to the call.

The Head Line-Judge and Line Judge will keep primary responsibility for spotting the ball down the entire field and will transition responsibility to the Side Judge and Field Judge at the two yard line going in. On very long plays, the Side Judge or Field Judge may assist with getting the spot if play and position dictate.

Unless a first down or a touchdown is at issue, marking a spot should be decidedly undemonstrative. Simply placing the downfield foot (the one closest to Team B's goal line) is sufficient for marking a spot.

Remember that the progress point is the spot under the ball in player possession when that player is downed by rule. Where a knee or hip touches the ground is only an indicator that stops the play.

Be very aware of forward progress when there is drive-back action of the runner and be alert for subsequent ball-stripping action, which would not be a fumble.

Officials should not penetrate the hash marks for a spot unless the spot needs to be sold (such as on a fourth-down play when Team A only

needs to advance the ball a short distance in order to achieve a first down). When the play ends between the hashes, the wings can give the spot from approximately midway between the hash mark and the sideline.

When a runner is downed inbounds near a sideline but momentum carries him beyond where he contacted the ground, the clock should not be stopped. The covering official must give the wind-the-clock signal to keep the clock running.

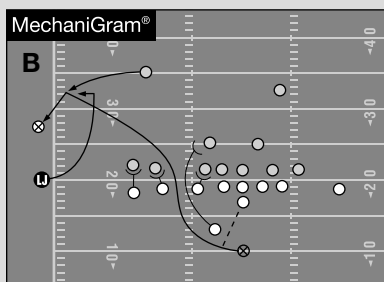
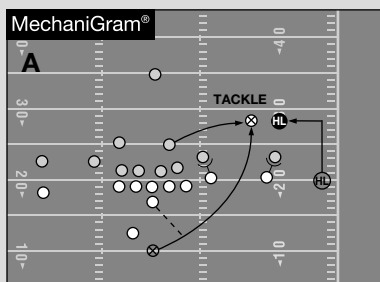
Buttonhook passes pose a challenge because usually the covering official is in front of or behind the receiver, and often a reception is followed instantly by contact. The receiver should be given the full benefit of progress, the point where contact and ball possession occurred. Although not the only situation, this is an excellent example of when wing officials should use cross-field mechanics to ensure the correct forward-progress spot.

MARKING PROGRESS

Forward progress should be handled by the covering official moving with the runner, parallel to the sideline, and then moving to the selected place at right angles to the sidelines. That's called "squaring off" (MechaniGram A). Not only does squaring off look sharper than arriving at a spot in an arc, it adds credibility to the call because you're coming toward the play at a 90-degree angle.

Once the spot of forward progress is established, the covering official marks the spot by placing his downfield foot (the foot closest to the goal line to which the offense is moving) forward. In that way, the official spotting the ball is able to see the spot and place the ball properly.

In MechaniGram B, progress was stopped inbounds but the runner was driven out of bounds. The covering official should mark the progress but wind his arm to ensure the clock continues to run. The fact the runner ended up out of bounds does not change the fact the play ended inbounds.



On some plays a runner may not fall to the ground at all but instead may be stopped and held in an upright position. The official must first be sure that the runner has indeed been halted and secured. The official should stop the play with a whistle and stand motionless to indicate where the ball was when the whistle sounded. If the players continue to tussle after the whistle, the covering official may move toward the pile to encourage the players to return to their sides of the ball; however, the official must not give up the spot.

Spotting the ball for forward progress is a lot like starting and stopping the clock. Most of the time no one pays attention to what you are doing, but in a critical situation, you'd better be perfect. After a 40-yard run from scrimmage, you could conceivably plunk the ball down just about anywhere you wanted to and few would notice. But if it's fourth down and inches, you need to know exactly where forward progress was stopped.

In any football situation, there is a key definition and for spotting the ball you must understand forward progress — the end of advancement of a runner toward the opponent's goal. The runner's advancement can end four ways: he is down by rule, his forward movement is stopped, he steps out of bounds or he fumbles the ball out of bounds. A runner is down by rule when any part of his body other than a hand or foot touches the ground and his forward progress is where the ball is when that occurs.

Forward progress determines the dead-ball spot. The exact spot is the foremost point of the ball in the direction of the opponent's goal line. The only time that doesn't apply: If part of the ball is in Team A's end zone in Team A's possession, it's a safety.

When the runner gets lost in a cluster of linemen in the middle of the field, it can be difficult to determine the exact forward progress spot. When the runner's voluntary movement is stopped, the whistle should be blown.

Tackles near the sideline sometimes confuse officials as to the forward progress spot. It's important to understand whether the runner was stopped in the field of play (don't stop the clock) or by going out of bounds (stop the clock). Here are some tips to help you determine the forward progress spot:

- When the contact pushes the runner forward (running forward or backward), the runner gets his forward-most spot.
- When the contact pushes the runner backward when he was running forward or backward, the runner is entitled to the forward-most spot of the ball at the point of contact with the opponent.
- When the runner is airborne (with or without contact) as he goes over the sideline, the spot is where you judge the ball crossed the sideline, not where the ball is when the runner first touches out of bounds.

6. FUMBLES

When an official sees a runner fumble the ball, he must drop (rather than throw) a bean bag at the yard line at which the ball was fumbled (the spot may be used for penalty enforcement if a foul occurs while the ball is loose). He must also continue officiating.

If the covering official sees a player recover the fumble from a prone position, he should blow the play dead. If the defense recovers, the stop-the-clock signal is given, followed by a point in the direction of the recovering team. If the offense recovers, the

covering official should only signal the next down (unless a first down was achieved; in that case, the stop-the-clock signal is given, followed by a point in the direction of the recovering team).

If a fumble results in players from both teams forming a pile that prevents the covering official from determining possession, the ball must be “dug out” of the pile. The official closest to the pile becomes the “digger,” the official responsible for un-piling the players and determining who has recovered the fumble. The official nearest the digger signals the clock to stop and looks at the clock to be sure it is stopped. The remaining nearby officials echo the signal.

If the digger can clearly see the ball or is certain he knows which player has covered it, he verbally relays that information to the Referee. If Team A has recovered, the Referee announces the next down and restarts the clock (or signals the first down if Team A has achieved a first down). If Team B has recovered, the Referee alone signals the change of possession.

Anytime the Referee is in the area of the pile, the recovery information should be verbally relayed to the Referee. The Referee alone then signals.

All officials should be alert for players using forcible contact to push or pull a player off the pile.

7. SIDELINE PLAYS

Proper coverage on out-of-bounds plays begins when the ball is still inbounds. On sweeps or quick sideline passes, wing officials should allow the play to pass them, then trail the play by a minimum of five yards as seen in PlayPic A. Allow more space if the defensive pursuit is coming from behind the runner. Trailing in that manner may make you uncomfortable if you feel you are always supposed to be “right on top of the play.” But letting the play get by you widens your field of vision, allows you a better view of the action and decreases the chance you will be injured yourself. Keeping your distance also means you’ll have a better chance of seeing a clip or other illegal block, and provides a good look at the runner’s feet to see if he steps out of bounds.

When the ball carrier steps or is taken out of bounds, sound your whistle, stop the clock and get to the spot. Move quickly but cautiously (PlayPic B). Make a one-quarter turn, facing away from the field, and direct your attention to the pile (PlayPic C). You’ll need to be doubly alert if the ball carrier and tacklers have landed in or near the team box; more people in the area means more potential trouble. Don’t leave the spot until the area is cleared of players. After all action has ceased, obtain a ball from a ball person. The nearest official not marking the spot should be alert to obtain ball from a ball person and to relay it to the Referee or Umpire.

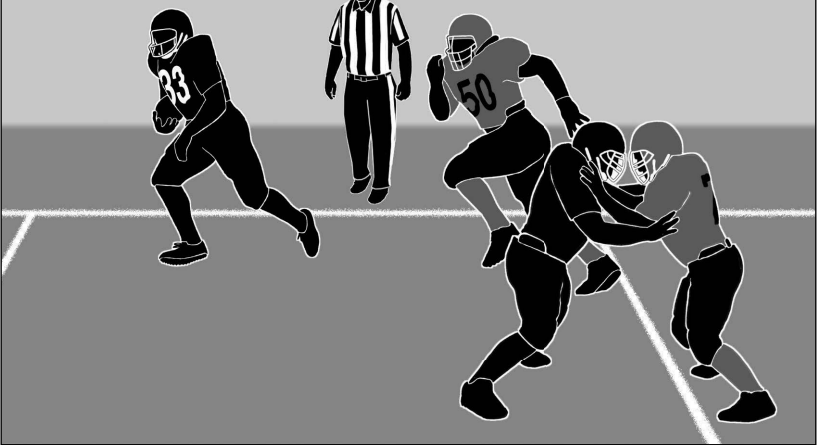
The tasks multiply when the play ends in or near a team area. An unseen (and un-penalized) personal foul gives players the impression that anything goes outside the boundaries of the field.

The official can use voice commands to let the players know an official is present and to encourage them to return to the field quickly and without incident. Phrases such as, “We’re done,” or, “That’s all, fellas,” are more effective than repetitive blasts on the whistle.

Regardless of the ferocity of the tackle or the reaction of sideline personnel, the presence of more than one official on sideline plays is imperative in maintaining control of the game. How many officials are needed depends on the location of other players on the play, the proximity of the action to the team boxes and the actions and reactions of those involved at the sideline.

PlayPic®

A



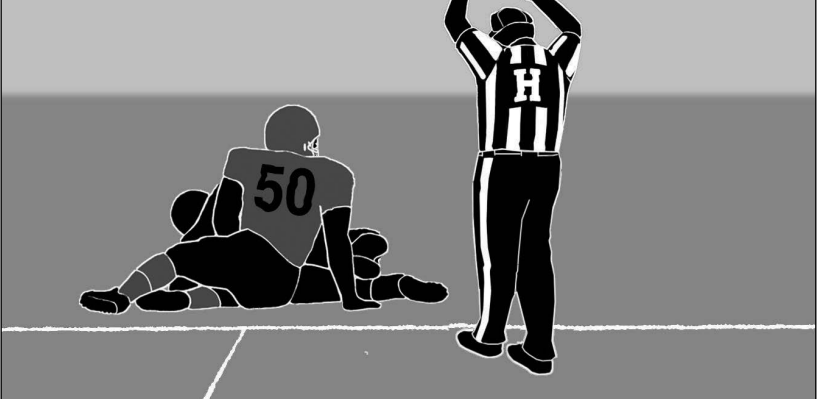
PlayPic®

B



PlayPic®

C



If opposing players begin shoving or fighting, the covering official should drop his bean bag to mark the dead-ball spot and move quickly to separate the players. Officials not needed on the sideline must continue to observe players on the field. The cross-field official can pick up and hold the spot.

At no time while players are out of bounds should officials turn their backs on the play. Never allow opposing players who have crossed the sideline return to the field without an official accompanying them.

When the ball becomes dead inbounds deep in a side zone (nearer the sideline than the hash mark), the covering official blows his whistle, marks the spot and leaves the ball in its position on the ground. If the play ends inbounds within two or three feet of the sideline, give the wind-the-clock signal (unless the play results in a first down). After all action has ceased, obtain a ball from a ball person to be placed at the inbounds line. A non-covering official should be alert to obtain a ball from a ball person and to relay it to the Referee or Umpire.

8. DEAD-BALL OFFICIATING

In almost no instance should every official be watching the player with the ball. The non-covering officials must watch the players who are not involved in running with the ball or tackling the runner, especially when the play is over. On most plays, there are only a couple of players around the ball. That leaves the majority of the players in other areas. If all of the officials had their eyes glued to the ball, the majority of the players would be unattended. That's when problems occur, like rough play or trash-talking. The non-covering official shall keep his head on a swivel and watch all action outside the pile-up. If the non-covering officials watch the players in their vicinity during and after the play, the game stays under control.

Deep officials can help in game control by using the "accordion" method. After a play on which they have no ball-spotting responsibilities, deep officials can move toward the players, especially those who may be entangled after the whistle. Once the players have dispersed, deep officials can return to their positions.

Verbal commands are often more effective than whistles to break up tussles. Telling players, "That's all," or "Walk away," gets the job done more effectively than repetitive and often unheeded blasts of the whistle.

9. COMMUNICATING WITH OTHER OFFICIALS

Because there is quite a bit of distance between officials, verbal communication is often difficult or impossible. Despite limitations, however, officials can and must communicate throughout a game.

All officials should confirm the down after each play. Officials who have player-counting responsibilities should confirm their count with officials who share that duty. Suggested signals: thumb up for a count of 11, thumb down for more or less than 11.

Any official who calls a foul should tell the Referee the clock status in addition to the information relating to the foul. On plays that end at the sideline, covering officials must signal whether the clock should remain running or should be stopped. The Line Judge and Umpire should confirm with the Referee whether the clock should start on the ready or the snap. Suggested signals are a circular motion of the index finger at waist level to

indicate the clock starts on the ready and snapping the fingers at waist level or crossed arms across the chest to indicate it will start on the snap. The appropriate wing official may also help the Referee by placing the ball outside the sideline if the clock starts on the snap or inside the sideline if it starts on the ready.

On pass plays near the sidelines, wing officials can communicate before making their ruling. The officials need only make eye contact and nod “yes” to indicate a legal catch. If either sees the ball dropped or the receiver fail to get a foot down inbounds, the incomplete pass signal should be given. If there is disagreement, both officials should give the stop-the-clock signal but no other signal. They then confer to share information before arriving at a consensus.

Verbal communication is necessary if two officials throw penalty flags in the same area of the field. A brief conversation allows the officials to confirm what they’ve seen and ensure that the proper penalty is enforced.

10. CHANGING CALLS

Changing a call should be a rare occurrence. Excessive or long conferences among the officials will convey the crew is unsure or incompetent.

A call must be changed whenever officials are 100% certain an error has occurred. “I think” is not acceptable. The helping official must see the entire play clearly to offer an opinion. Ninety-nine percent confidence is not enough to change a call.

The change must have a positive impact on the game. Think about the long-term ramifications of changing the call. Is it good for the game or will every judgment by any official from that moment forward be questioned by players and coaches who want an “overrule”?

Virtually any call can be discussed. Whether it’s a catch/no catch or facemask/no facemask, if an official who had a better angle can help his crew get the call right, the helping official owes it to his crewmate to initiate a discussion. Help is expected and commonly accepted.

Incorrect rule applications must be changed. Rules applications are different from judgment calls. If you know your crew is applying a rule incorrectly (such as including a loss of down on an ineligible downfield penalty), step in immediately.

Omit the word “overrule” from your vocabulary. You are not overruling your crewmate; you are helping your crewmate get the call right. That’s a subtle yet critical difference. Officials who have an overruling attitude tend to make calls out of their area and try to dominate the game. Officials who help their crewmates do so only in very rare instances. Maintaining the proper attitude will help prevent over-officiating.

When an incorrect call is made and the calling official agrees to make the change, the calling official signals the correct decision, not the helping official.

Following correct procedure, the helping official blows the whistle and simultaneously uses the stop-the-clock signal. The helping official then runs toward the calling official. That’s an obvious indicator to the calling official that something may be amiss.

The helping official tells the calling official, “Here’s what I had.” That initiates a quick conversation about what happened. The calling official makes the decision on how to handle it.

When two officials cannot agree on what they saw or are unsure, the Referee must become involved. The Referee listens to each official in turn, the three arrive at a decision (the Referee may be forced to break a tie vote) and the Referee alone signals.

11. COMMUNICATING WITH COACHES

Because of their position on the sidelines, wing officials are the main conduit between coaches and the officials. Handled correctly, being in close proximity to a coach improves the lines of communication and can actually be a benefit.

Officials should never be confrontational or short-tempered, nor can they be timid or easily intimidated. Effective officials convey a calm, relaxed demeanor, including direct eye contact.

Coaches will not agree with every call, and they will be even more annoyed if they are not told the number of the guilty player and the nature of the foul. Wings can also improve sideline relations by communicating with the coach when the opponent fouls. Give the coach the same information you'd give him if his player had fouled. You may also expedite the enforcement process by telling him the penalty options. The goal is to make a situation better than when the conversation started.

When either team takes a charged timeout, let the coach know how many timeouts each team has remaining. In the late stages of a half, coaches are likely to ask how many timeouts each team has remaining. Know the answer without having to check your information card.

An official should answer any question that is asked in a sportsmanlike manner. Never tell a coach, "That's not my call, Coach." It is permissible to say, "I'm sorry, Coach. I had a different responsibility on that play. But I'll try to get you the information." When time allows, the wing should then make an effort to find out what happened and report back to the coach.

Even in a stadium jam-packed with thousands of boisterous fans, officials can often hear the tirade of an angry coach. Every official has his own idea of what language is acceptable and what is objectionable. Because of the wide diversity of opinions on the topic, it is virtually impossible to mandate when a flag should or should not be thrown for language.

Many officials give coaches a chance to, in effect, retract their comments by asking, "Do you care to repeat that, Coach?" The theory holds that the coach will take the hint and end or at least modify his outburst. Conversely, if the coach repeats the objectionable comment or responds with even stronger language, he's earned a flag.

However, under no circumstances should an official engage in an argument with a coach. When a coach is convinced a call was incorrect, no amount of discussion is going to convince him otherwise. Arguing only inflames the situation and diverts your concentration from the job at hand.

Non-verbal acts should be handled differently. For instance, coaches who make physical contact with an official, enter the field of play and refuse a request to return to the coaching box, or berate an official while circling him must be penalized.

While verbal communication is critical when interacting with coaches, it shares billing with body language. An official's posture, movements, stance and facial expression send messages that words cannot.

Stand with an upright but relaxed posture, hands behind the back or at your sides, and make eye contact when talking to coaches. Avoid thrusting out the chest or jaw, which indicate aggression; crossing the arms in front of the chest, which suggests

inflexibility; slouching the shoulders or dropping the head, which indicate submission or timidity; standing stiffly, which makes the official appear intimidated; shifting the weight from foot to foot, which communicates uncertainty; or rolling the eyes, which expresses arrogance.

12. AFTER THE GAME

Postgame Duties and Review

All officials should leave the field together. Neither seek nor avoid coaches.

Postgame Reports

In your postgame review, complete any required game reports and forward them immediately.

If a player was ejected for fighting or for receiving two unsportsmanlike conduct penalties, the incident must be reported to the proper authority after the game.

13. TRACKING AND REPORTING FOULS

Under GHSA encouragement each crew is responsible for creating and forwarding to appropriate authorities a complete foul report for each Varsity contest.

14. GUIDELINES ON UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT FOULS

Player behavior in committing unsportsmanlike conduct fouls continues to be a major. Recognizing these fouls and enforcing the penalties place our officials in a difficult situation. It is the nature of the business to be criticized, and it seems especially true when we try to apply the relevant rules. These are judgment calls, as are all the decisions officials make during the action of the game.

As officials apply their judgment, perhaps these guidelines will be helpful:

- Remember that the game is one of high emotion, played by gifted teenagers who are affirmed by playing a game at which they are exceptionally talented.
- Do not be overly technical in applying the rule.
- Do allow for brief spontaneous emotional reactions at the end of a play.

Beyond the brief, spontaneous bursts of energy, officials should flag those acts that are clearly prolonged, self-congratulatory, and that make a mockery of the game.

We can all agree that when these acts are clearly intended to taunt or demean, they should not be allowed.

When such a situation arises, officials should wait a count, take a deep breath and assess what they feel about what they have seen.

If it feels OK, let it go.

If it feels wrong, flag it.

It will never be possible to be totally specific in writing what should and should not be

allowed. But we trust our officials to be of good judgment who know in their hearts what should and should not be allowed in the heat of an emotional game.

15. GHSA RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Communication, both visual and verbal, is vital for crews. We communicate, visually and with our mechanics (signals and positioning) and verbally with our radios. The information in the section of the manual is intended for crews, both six-person and seven-person, which are best practices for radio communications. Radio communication should always be clear, concise and correct!

Pregame Communications

- Arriving at the game site with a fully charged radio is just as important as having your uniform in your bag.
- Referee — For your pregame assignments, assign someone on your crew to make sure that everyone's radio is working correctly and that everyone knows your desired channel for the game. If a channel change is necessary, this official would also make everyone aware of the new channel and the process.
- Crew — Radio checks should be done before leaving the locker room.

In-Game Communications

- Referee — Very little communication. Radio communication is intended to help the Referee obtain information.
- Umpire — Communicate all yardage and the next down on all penalty administration prior to stepping the penalty off with the HLJ. Also, communicate the numerical spot of the ball when necessary. Examples of when applicable: all change of possession plays, especially after punts and touchbacks. Numerical spots are from the press box side to chains as follows: 1=pressbox hash, 2=pressbox upright, 3=middle of the field, 4= chains upright, 5=chains hash.
- Wings — Communicate LOS on all downs. When working chains, give information related to a 5-yard penalty, which gives us a first down. On third down with fewer than three yards to the line to gain, the LJ will remain the HLJ that they are going to the line to gain when the ball is snapped. The LJ will communicate to the crew when in goalline mechanics.
- Deeps — Will give verbal spots for long pass plays from the middle of the field to their sideline to assist wings. Give the status of inbounds or out of bounds for plays to your sideline.
- Field Judge — Communicate presnap information after receiving LOS from HLJ on first down in this format: LOS is ?; Line to gain is ?; Reiterate the line to gain on third and fourth down. Communicate on fourth down that the clock stops regardless. Communicate clock status with the Referee after penalty administration. When inside the red zone, communicate the deeps goalline and the deeps spot from the two yardline in and whether or not the deeps are to stop the clock if deeps have the spot. Communicate the new LOS on all scrimmage kicks. Six-person crews only — Communicate the status of the play clock at ten seconds and five seconds and countdown the play clock from five seconds. Communicate the status of the play clock, if needed, after a penalty or injury, as to 25 or 40 seconds.

- Side Judge — Give verbal spots for long pass plays from the center of the field to the sideline to assist wings with spots. Communicate clock under two minutes for penalty administration at the two minute mark of the second and fourth quarters. Give the status of inbounds or out of bounds for plays to sideline. Communicate a game a game reset, including the score, time left in the game, and number of timeouts each team has left. If required, communicate mandatory three minute timeout around the four, six, eight minute mark of each quarter, depending on the wet bulb reading.

