

3-Man vs 4-Man Positioning Review

Preference

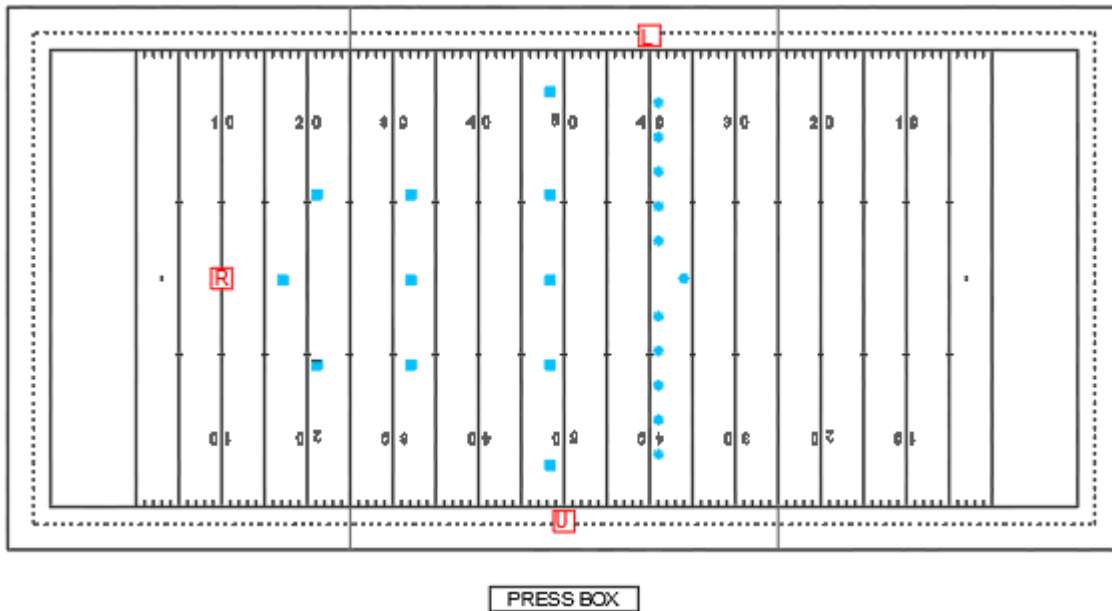
This review will highlight the basic positioning for games officiated with three man crews vs. games officiated with four man crews. For more detailed information, please refer to the appropriate mechanics manual.

This positioning review is based on the “3-Official Football Mechanics Manual” published by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and the “2024-2025 Football Game Officials Manual – Crew of Four” also published by the NFHS.

The 3-Official Football Mechanics Manual may be accessed, and printed off, using the following link:
[3-Official Football Mechanics Manual](#)

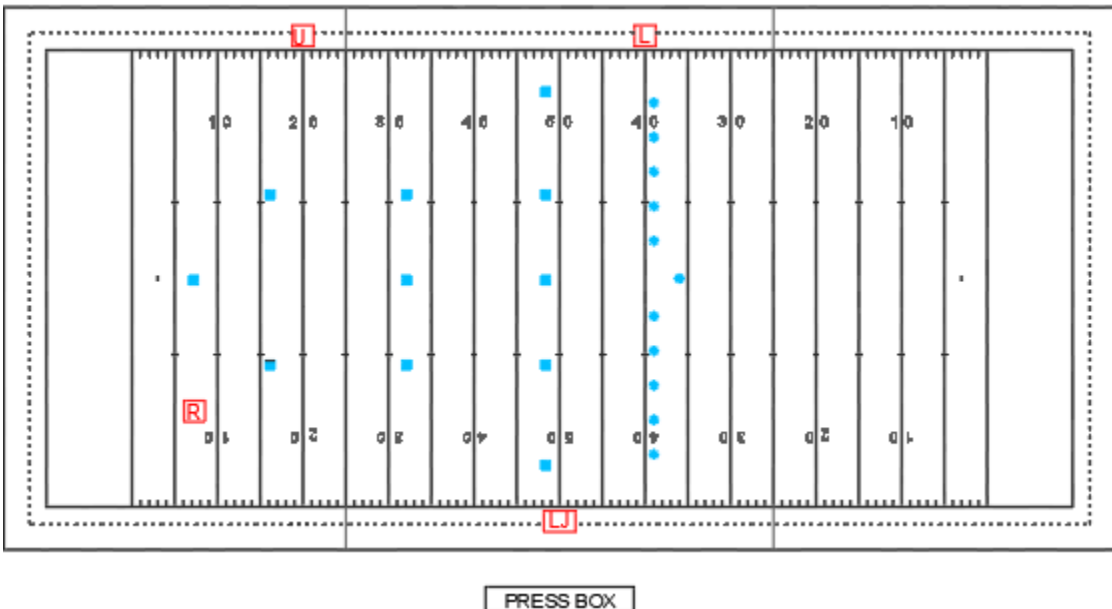
Free Kick

3-Man Positioning



- REFEREE** – Position is near R's 10 yard line in the center of the field. Count R players.
UMPIRE - Position is R's free kick line outside the sideline opposite the Linesman. Count R players.
LINESMAN – Position is K's free kick line outside the sideline on the chains side. Count K players.
 *If a short kick is anticipated, the positions do not change.

4-Man Positioning

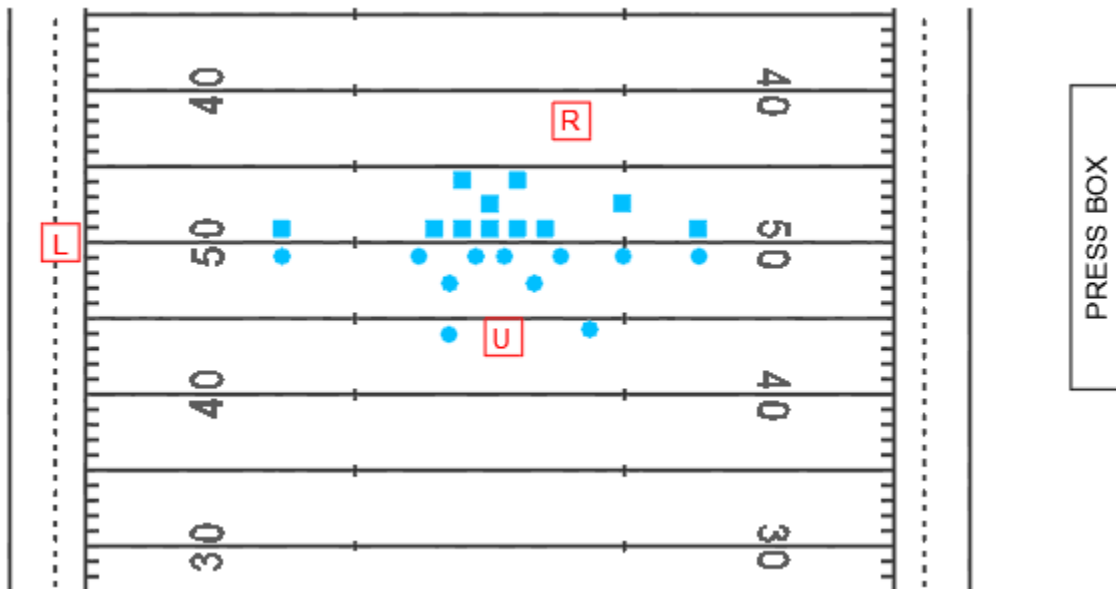


- REFEREE** - Position is near the top of the numbers near R's 5/10 yard line on the Line Judge's side of the field. Count R players.
UMPIRE – Position on the sideline at R's 20 yard line. Count R players.
LINESMAN – Position on the sideline on K's free kick line. Count K players.
LINE JUDGE – Position on the sideline on R's free kick line. Count K players.
 *If a short kick is anticipated, the Referee moves up to R's 10 yard line. The Umpire moves to R's free kick line. The wings position remains the same.

**The covering official signal the game clock to start when the kick is legally touched, only if the ball is even or upfield from you.

Scrimmage Plays

3-Man Positioning



REFEREE -

Position behind team A on the side opposite of the Linesman. Count A players.

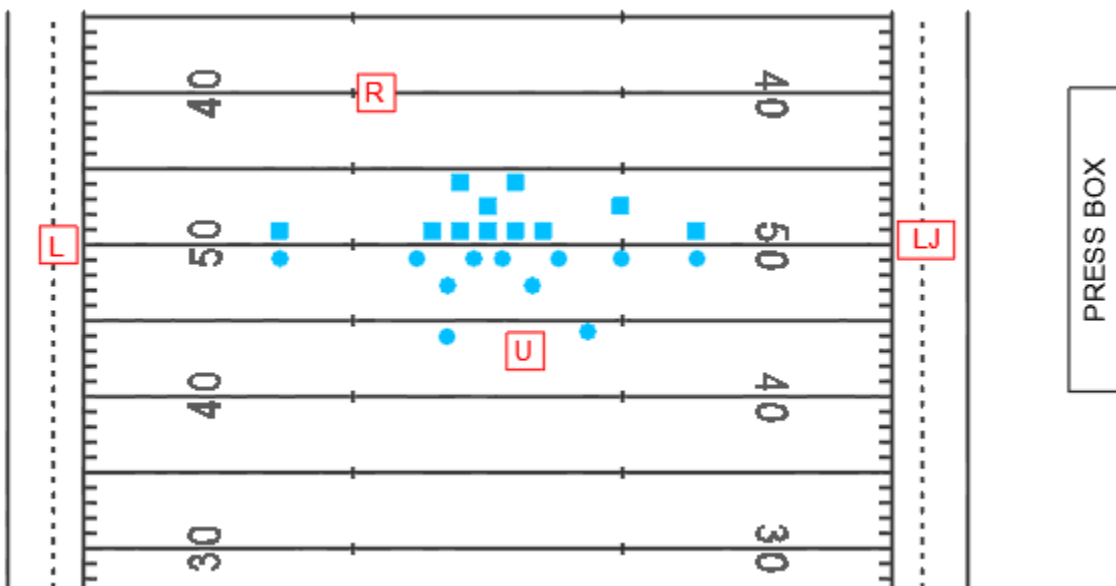
UMPIRE -

Position 3-8 yards behind B's line, near the guard/center gap opposite the Linesman. Count B players.

LINESMAN -

Position straddling the line of scrimmage on the sideline. Count B players.

4-Man Positioning



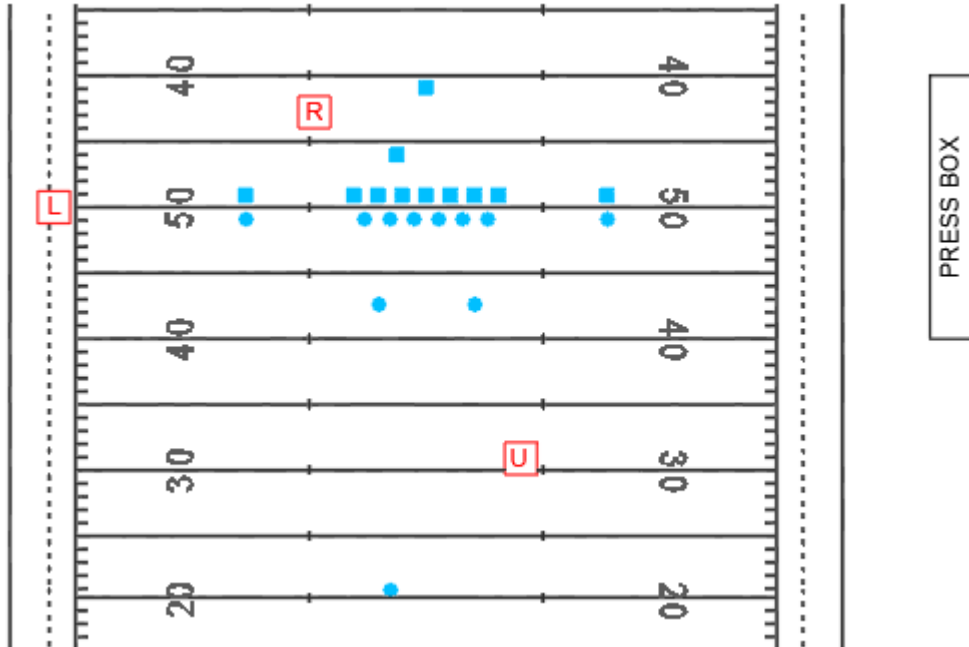
REFEREE – Position on passing arm side of the quarterback, 10-12 yards deep and at least as wide as the tight end. Count A players.

UMPIRE – Position 5-10 yards behind B's line between the ends. Count A players.

LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE – Position straddling the line of scrimmage on the sideline. Count B players.

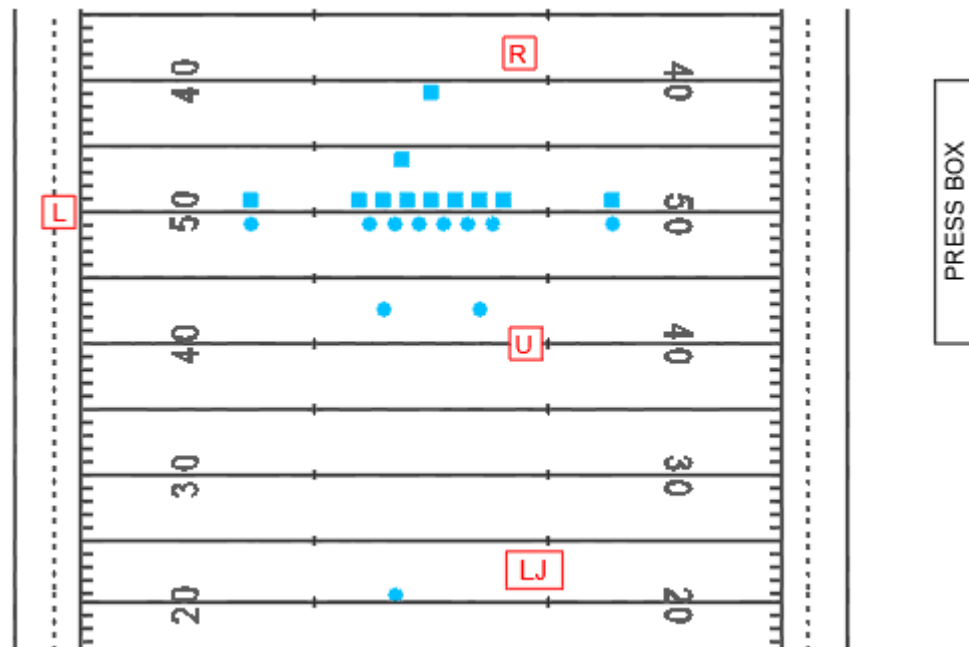
Scrimmage Kicks

3-Man Positioning



- REFEREE** - Position 3-4 yards in advance and 5-7 yards outside the kicker on his kicking leg side. Count K players.
- UMPIRE** - Position wide and 10 yards in front of the receiver. Count R players.
- LINESMAN** - Position the same as any scrimmage play. Count R players.

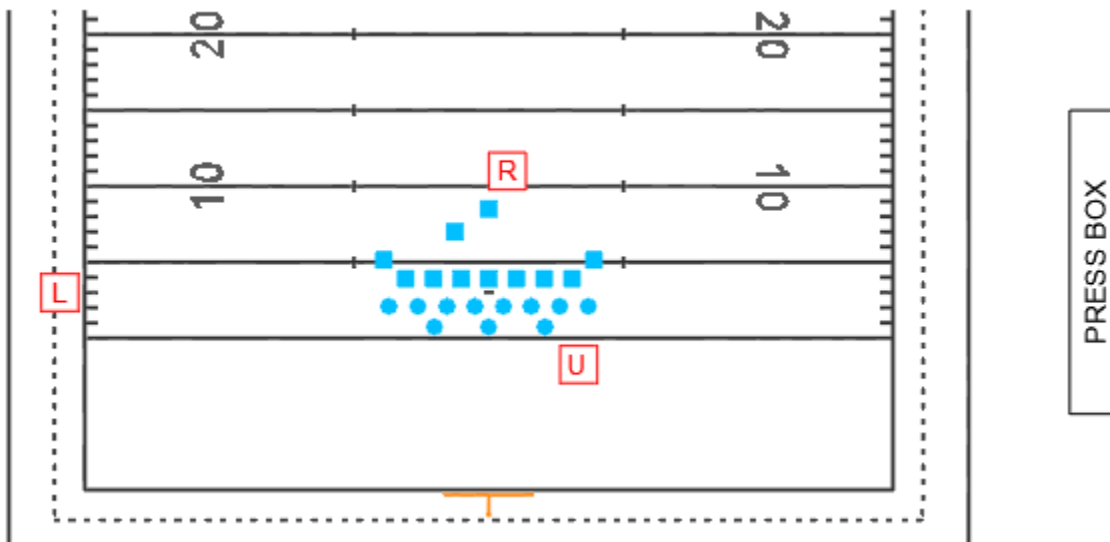
4-Man Positioning



- REFEREE** - Position 2-3 yards behind and 3-5 yards outside the kicker on the Line Judge's side. Count K players.
- UMPIRE** - Position 10 yards deep and favoring the Line Judge's side. Count K players.
- LINESMAN** - Position the same as any scrimmage play. Count R players.
- LINE JUDGE** - Position 7-10 yards wider and in front of the deepest receiver. Count R players.

Field Goal or Try

3-Man Positioning

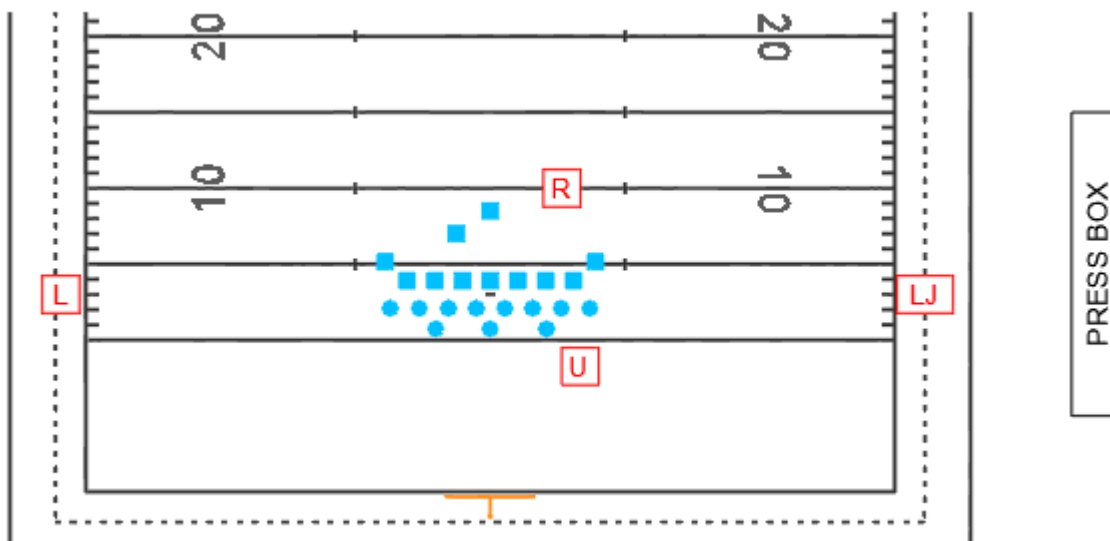


REFEREE - Position behind the kicker and able to see the holder receive the ball. Count K players.

UMPIRE - Position near the goal line. Count R players.

LINESMAN - Position the same as a scrimmage kick. Count R players.

4-Man Positioning



REFEREE – Position facing the holder 1 yard behind and 2-3 yards to the side of the kicker. Count K players.

UMPIRE – Position 10 yards off the ball favoring the Line Judge's side of the field. Count K players.

LINESMAN – Position staddling the line of scrimmage not closer than 9 yards outside the widest offensive player. Count R players.

LINE JUDGE – Position the same as the Linesman. Count R players.

*These positions are for scoring kicks **INSIDE** R's 15 yard line.

****For scoring kicks OUTSIDE R's 15 yard line, the positioning is the same except for the Line Judge. In this situation the Line Judge is positioned beyond the end line and between the uprights.**