







**COLLEGIATE  
COMMISSIONERS  
ASSOCIATION**

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**2024**  
**Football Officiating Manual**  
**For a Crew of 7 & 8**  
**(Supplemental Mechanics for 6)**

***2024 Football Officiating Manual  
For a Crew of Seven & Eight***

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# David M. Parry Award

The David M. Parry Award was established in honor of the first CFO national coordinator of football officiating. It is presented annually to a college football officiating coordinator for exemplary professionalism, leadership and a commitment to sportsmanship on and off the field.

2012	Jim Keogh, Wheaton, Ill.
2013	Jim Blackwood, Sunnyvale, Texas
2014	Milt Halstead, Pipersville, Pa.
2015	Phil Laurie, Topeka, Kansas
2016	Don Lucas, Boone, N.C.
2017	Doug Rhoads, Charlottesville, N.C. (Posthumous)
2018	Ed Tschannen, Florissant, Mo.
2019	Jim Maconaghy, Plymouth Meeting, Pa.
2020	Rogers Redding, Helena, Ala.
2021	Harold Mitchell, Ellenwood, Ga.
2022	Gerald Austin, Summerfield, N.C.
2023	Tom Fiedler, Eau Claire, Wis.
2024	Ken Rivera, Fresno, Calif. (Posthumous)

# National Football Foundation Outstanding Football Official Award

YEAR	NAME	AFFILIATION
2011	Ted Ruta	SIAC, Conf. USA, Sun Belt official
2010	Rogers Redding	SEC official
2009	Tim Millis	Big 12 official
2008	Thomas Robinson	WAC, Mountain West official
2007	Jim Kemmerling	Big Ten official
2006	A. C. "Butch" Lambert Jr. and Sr.	SEC father-son officiating tandem
2005	Michael Orlich	Big West official



2005	Verle Sorgen	Pac-10 official
2004	Al Hynes	Big East official
2003	R. I. “Buddy” Patey	SEC, OVC official
2002	Jimmy Harper	SEC official
2001	Albert Benson	ECAC official
2000	David Scobey	SEC, OAC official
1999	David Parry	Big Ten official
1998	Bradley Faircloth	ACC official
1997	Ron Abdow	ECAC, CIFOA, Big East official
1996	Earl Galdeira	WAC, PCAA official
1995	Robert Gaston	SEC official
1994	Ken Faulkner	Southwest Conference official
1993	John Adams	WAC, Big-8 official
1991	John J. Daly	NEFOA, ECAC official
1991	E. C. “Irish” Krieger	WAC official
1990	Pete Williams	SEC official
1989	Wilburn C. Clary	ACC official
1988	Joseph McKenney	Eastern Officials Association leader
1987	George Gardner	SEC official
1986	Jack Sprenger	Pac-10 official
1985	Ellwood A. Geiges	ECAC official
1984	John Waldorf	Big 8 official



## Other Prominent Figures

Albert “Abb” Curtis	NCAA Football Rules Committee member
Dotson Lewis	Southwestern Conference supervisor and association leader
Norval Neve	Mechanics authority and manual editor
J. Dallas Shirley	Southern Conference supervisor

## Commissioners Honors and Awards Program

The CCA awards program was established to select and honor those outstanding CCA members who have served the CCA membership and college athletics with dedication, duty and leadership.

### CCA Football Officials Award of Merit

1984	John Waldorf, Big Eight
1985	Ellwood A. Geiges, ECAC; E.C. “Irish” Kreiger, Big 10
1986	John Adams, WAC
1987	Herman Rohrig, Big 10
1988	Abb Curtis, SWC
1989	Jack Sprenger, Pac-10
1990	Wilburn Clary, ACC
1991	Cliff Shaw, SWC
1992	Jack McLain, MAC
1993	Ken Faulkner, SWC
1994	Bruce Finlayson, Big Eight
1995	Bob Sandell, ACC
1997	Bradley Faircloth, ACC





## Collegiate Commissioners Association

Founded 1938

CONFERENCE	COMMISSIONER	COORDINATOR
American Athletic	Tim Perneti	Bryan Platt
Atlantic Coast	James Phillips	Alberto Riveron
ASUN	Jeff Bacon	Matt Young
Big Sky	Tom Wistrick	Randy Campbell
Big South	Sherika Montgomery	Matt Young
Big Ten	Tony Petitti	Bill Carollo
Big 12	Brett Yormark	Greg Burks
Coastal Athletic	Joseph D'Antonio Jr.	Chris Smith
Conference USA	Judy MacLeod	Mike Defee
Ivy League	Robin Harris	Jeff Akers
Mid-American	Jon Steinbrecher	Bill Carollo
Mid-Eastern Athletic	Sonja Stills	Andre Lowe
Missouri Valley Football	Patty Viverito	Bill Carollo
Mountain West	Gloria Nevarez	Mike Defee
Northeast	Noreen Morris	Dennis Crim
Ohio Valley	Beth DeBauche	Matt Young
Pacific-12	Teresa Gould	David Coleman
Patriot League	Jennifer Heppel	Jeff Akers
Southeastern	Greg Sankey	John McDaid
Southern	Michael Cross	Perry Havener
Southland	Christopher Grant	Byron Boston
Southwestern Athletic	Dr. Charles McClelland	Eddie Kelly
Sun Belt	Keith Gill	John McDaid
WAC	Brian Thornton	Matt Young



# Introduction

The integrity of college football games is entrusted to its officials. For the most part college football officials officiate as an avocation and are representatives of what is good in collegiate athletics. The efforts of college football officials are appreciated by the NCAA, its member conferences and game participants.

The NCAA and the CCA member conferences have worked to develop this system of mechanics by reviewing all other existing systems and compromising in many areas to develop a system that is simple, consistent and offers the very best field coverage for college football officials.

The growing popularity of football and public interest in the sport throughout the United States has combined with the annual increase in the number of intersectional games to make uniformity of performance and rules interpretations by all officials an absolute necessity. The manual provides uniformity.

Conferences may have policies in place that are not listed in this manual. Conference officials need to review their respective conferences policies and procedures on football officiating.

Knowledge of the procedures outlined in this manual must be supplemented by a thorough understanding of the materials and statements of the NCAA. Intelligence, imagination, perspective and good judgment must be combined with study and interpretation of both the rulebook and mechanics manual.

– Collegiate Commissioners Association

## Manual Committee

Byron Boston  
Bill Carollo  
John McDaid (Chair)  
Steve Shaw (Ex-officio)  
Matt Young



# Opening Kickoff

## Q&A with Steve Shaw

### CFO National Coordinator of Football Officials



**Q:** What impact did the 2023 new timing rules have on length of game & average number of snaps?

**A:** The new timing rules from 2023 were focused on three goals: game flow – to keep the game moving, to modestly reduce the number of plays per game, and drive consistency in officiating mechanics in dealing with the clock. Although there was some apprehension concerning the new clock rules heading into the season, especially around the first down timing rules, as the year progressed coaches adjusted to the new rules and the overall sentiment was very positive concerning game flow. The changes resulted in a reduction of 4.37 plays per game in FBS, a 5.30 play reduction for FCS and a 4.38 play reduction for D-II. As you recall, D-III delayed implementation of the first down timing rules until the 2024 season, and D-III games increased by 1 play per game. Overall, the game flow was better, and the changes that were made in 2023 are now viewed as positive for the game. D-III will implement the first down timing rule for this season, bringing all divisions back in alignment together.

The timing mechanics brought nationwide alignment dealing with game clock stop / start consistency, game clock stoppage within the last two minutes of each half and starting the play clock. There was strong focus with the Referees in gaining uniformity in dealing with the substitution process. We made great progress with consistency in our mechanics and that was positive for our game.

Although not the focus of the rule changes, game durations were slightly reduced in 2023. FBS games averaged 3 hours 16 minutes in the regular season and that was down 5 minutes from 2022. Maybe more importantly, the number of games going over 3 ½ hours was reduced from 22% in 2022 to 15.7% in 2023, a significant reduction in longer games.



**Q:** What was the catalyst for implementing the Two-Minute Timeout this year?

**A:** The Two-Minute Timeout is being introduced to address two specific game issues and so far, the change has had very strong support from both our media partners and our coaches. The first issue to address was around the improved game flow from the first down timing rules implemented last year. Our TV partners in certain games got concerned that they may not have enough normal breaks to get in their full inventory of commercials. There began to be a growing trend of taking “back-to-back” media timeouts after a Touchdown and following the ensuing Kickoff. This created significant dead times that were not good for game flow. The other issue is that there are ten identified areas where the timing rules of the game change, and these changes were not implemented consistently, some occurring after two minutes remaining in the half, and some after one minute.

**“As an officiating community we need to not get distracted...and focus on delivering great performances.”**

The new Two-Minute Timeout will address both issues. Our TV / radio broadcast partners will hold back at least one media break to coincide with the Two-Minute Timeout, so we are not creating an additional timeout. This will be a guaranteed stop and will help alleviate the concern of missing a break.

Additionally, all timing rule changes will be synchronized to take effect after the Two-Minute Timeout, and this will simplify the rules for all involved. The Two-Minute Timeout will add a strategy component for the coaches and will create a natural stop for the crew to come together and confirm all game information and remind one another of the timing rule changes.

**Q:** Per game targeting numbers continue to decrease – is continued emphasis working?

**A:** As a reminder, Targeting is a player safety rule and is designed to promote player safety, reduce player head contact, and eliminate specific targeting actions from the game. For the past four seasons we have seen the number of confirmed targeting fouls where a player is disqualified go down. This is a very good trend for the game, but as officials (both on the field and in replay), we must not let up in our work around targeting. It is the most important and impactful call that an official will make, and replay will review.

In FBS for 2023, we confirmed 139 Targeting fouls, and this was an average of 0.16 targeting fouls enforced per game. FCS numbers were similar with 102 targeting fouls confirmed and this also averaged 0.16 targeting fouls per game. The change that was made in replay for the 2019 season requiring all aspects of targeting be confirmed to disqualify a player has been very helpful, and we avoid situations where we disqualify a player on marginal action.

We received 102 second half Targeting appeals for the 2023 season, and the result by division were as follows:



FBS: 42 Appeals . . . . . 4 Targeting Overturns  
FCS: 26 Appeals . . . . . 10 Targeting Overturns  
D-II: 11 Appeals . . . . . 8 Targeting Overturns  
D-III: 22 Appeals . . . . . 22 Targeting Overturns

One final note to help illustrate that player behavior is improving concerning Targeting. For 2023, we only had five players in all of FBS receive two targeting fouls for the season and only four in FCS. There were no players that received a confirmed third targeting foul. This is good for the player's overall health and safety.

**A:** What impact has conference realignment had from a national coordinator and CFO perspective?

**Q:** There are so many issues facing college football beyond just conference realignment, but as an officiating community we need to not get distracted by all that is going on and focus on delivering great performances. Some people get concerned about how fans react to the dynamic and changing environment, but fan interest, attendance and TV ratings have never been higher. The expectations for our performance and overall integrity has never been higher. Conference realignment has created an environment where we have had more movement of officials, and sometimes this creates new opportunities. It is imperative that coordinators and officials continue to communicate together as we navigate these changing times. Even though teams move to new conferences, the net of the number of games that we must officiate does not change. Let's all commit to preparing to do our job exceedingly well in 2024 and let the conference leaders continue to navigate the overall landscape of collegiate athletics.

**Q:** Based on the changes coming in 2024 to the NFL kickoff, did the NCAA Rules Committee discuss potential changes to the current college kickoff rule?

**A:** Kickoff rules, outcomes of the kickoff play and overall injury rates on the kickoff are evaluated each year by the rules committee. In FBS we averaged 10.5 kickoffs per game with 33.8% of the kicks being returned. The play remains an exciting component to our game as, for example, we had 41 kickoffs in the regular season returned for touchdowns. FCS numbers are similar but the return rate on kickoffs was higher at 53.1%. Additionally, the onside kick has also stayed a viable play in NCAA football as we had 173 onside kick attempts in FBS in 2024 with 31 of these plays being recovered by the kicking team for a 17.9% success rate. The success rate for onside kicks in FCS was even higher at 23.2%.

The kickoff remains a viable play and can change momentum and outcomes of games. With all the success of the play, the Rules Committee has continued to evolve the play to improve player safety, as highlighted by the limited run-up for the kicking team, the touchback placing the ball at the 25-yard line, adding a fair catch option, and eliminating double team blocks and illegal blind side blocks. These rules changes have worked together to reduce the overall injury rate on kickoffs. In fact, our current data shows that the injury rate on kickoff plays is below that of a normal scrimmage down – so the kickoff is in a good spot.

The NFL has made significant adjustments to their kickoff rule to address the competitive value of the play and maintain player safety. We will watch



the outcomes of their change in terms of results and injury data and continue to discuss if any adjustments to the NCAA kickoff rule need to be considered.

**Q:** How will your Bowl Season assigning process be affected by the new 12-team College Football Playoff?

**A:** Let me start by thanking all officials that worked in the postseason last year. We probably had our overall best year of officiating in Bowl Season and in the playoffs, and the results were very impressive. As far as Bowl Season assignments for the upcoming season, we will continue to assign all Bowl Games to the conferences on the evening after the Bowl Season selection show and all assignments will continue to avoid any conference or individual conflict. What will be new this year is the assignment process for the new expanded CFP. We will pre-assign the four first round games in the CFP and the four games in the quarterfinals. These games will be assigned to our best eight elite crews. New for this year will be that advancement to the semi-final games and

**“There is no place in our game for unfair tactics as we start each play.”**

National Championship Game will be based on crew performance from the first eight CFP games and avoiding conflict – all subject to approval of the CFP. This will mirror the playoff assignment principles that we have followed in FCS where we assign the first two rounds of games and then advancement is based on performance with the avoidance of conflict. That process has worked well, and I look forward to implementing this process for the CFP.

**Q:** What’s your outlook on collaborative replay, conference replay centers, onsite replay officials, etc? How is the process working from a national perspective?

**A:** Collaborative Replay overall has been a successful addition to replay. This process makes replay decisions more consistent, more efficient, and ultimately more accurate. In 2023, seven of our FBS conferences utilized collaborative replay, and all support the process as a better replay solution. In fact, this past season we used a neutral site collaborative replay for the CFP Semi-finals and the National Championship Game, and the process worked well. In 2023, the CFO developed a set of national officiating standards for collaborative replay, and these updated standards will appear in Part II of the rules book and in the CCA Mechanics Manual. These standards and the adoption of the process by the conferences led to moving the collaborative replay process from an experimental rule to a permissive rule for the conferences in 2024.

Collaborative Replay is here to stay, and the coordinators will continue to evolve and innovate the process as they work to drive increased success. I don’t see a diminished role for the onsite replay officials in our current environment, but I do see the process continuing to advance for overall improvement.

**Q:** How do you feel about defensive stemming and offensive movement from a national coordinator perspective? Do you see a proclivity for



offenses to use officiating standards to their advantage in being intentionally ambiguous with formations?

**A:** There is no place in our game for unfair tactics as we start each play. We have made editorial changes in Rule 7 and several mechanics adjustments in the CCA manual to ensure a fair scrimmage line for each team. These adjustments impact both the offense and defense in terms of pre-snap actions. These changes make it clear for Team A, that any movement that simulates action at the snap is a foul. This includes abruptly shifting a player or players that simulates the start of a play. Team B will be held to the same standard of not simulating action at the snap as Team A. Coordinated Team B movement, including lateral and backward movement that simulates action at the snap is a foul. Additionally, the defense cannot use words or signals that simulate the sound or cadence of, or otherwise interfere with the offensive starting signals. This includes using a clap on the defensive side of the ball that may disconcert the offense. Also, for 2024, special focus on the offensive alignment is a point of emphasis. Guidelines have been introduced to ensure we are consistent nationally in dealing with restricted linemen that are not on their line of scrimmage. Also, we will ensure that Team A is in proper alignment at the snap, especially when there is a player with an eligible number covered up. These type formations will be evaluated just as we do for “gadget plays” and the offense must be precise in their alignment or should be penalized.

**Q:** What are your final thoughts as we head into 2024?

**A:** The popularity of college football has never been greater and the many issues facing the structure of our sport are numerous. Based on all the factors involved, there has never been a time when our performance on the field and the integrity that we demonstrate is more expected. We must work to be “One CFO” in all we do including rules interpretations, mechanics, and officiating standards. It is a national game, and we must work each play with consistency.

We must continue to be honorable people. Mistakes will be made, but we must work incessantly to correct them, and prevent them when we can. We will continue to be under incredible scrutiny, but we just need to embrace this, and go do our job on every play.

As a CFO official, I hope you have a work plan to be better every year, every game, and every play. Concentration and communications are so important as we officiate, and always use your “winning words” with players and coaches. Display your integrity, courage, and poise in all situations. Be mentally and physically prepared to work each time you walk out onto the field and make your calls without favor or prejudice. I look forward to a great 2024!

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**Mechanics Points of Emphasis**

**Officiating Axioms**

**Officiating Standards**

**Character**

**Conduct and Ethics**

**Monitoring Pregame Warmups**

## 1.1 Targeting and Dangerous Contact Fouls

The NCAA Football Rules Committee continues to embrace the targeting rule in order to promote player safety, reduce head contact and eliminate specific targeting actions from the game.

The language in 9-1-3 and 9-1-4 stipulates that no player shall target and make forcible contact to the head or neck area of a defenseless player or contact an opponent with the crown (top) of their helmet. The term “forcible contact” has replaced the word “initiate” to ensure the intent of the rule is clear. Instant replay now has a broader authority to review all aspects of a play involving targeting, and can now create a targeting foul from the replay booth. If no targeting foul is called on the field but the Instant Replay Official can confirm all aspects of the targeting foul, then they should stop play for review. The Instant Replay Official should not stop play if video evidence would only result in a ruling of STANDS. Additionally, if instant replay overturns the player disqualification for targeting, the yardage penalty for targeting is not enforced. If another personal foul is committed in conjunction with the targeting foul, the penalty for that personal foul will be enforced.

Implementation of the rule requires that the calling official and the crew must take special care in analyzing and reporting any foul in conjunction with targeting. The addition of an automatic disqualification for a player guilty of a targeting foul has resulted in significant progress in modifying player behavior. It is imperative that officials continue to aggressively enforce those dangerous contact fouls.

Also note, the definition of a defenseless player in Rule 2-27-14 has been expanded. Each official must thoroughly understand the list and understand how it impacts enforcement of Rule 9-1-4 targeting fouls. Playing time is the most precious commodity to players, and a potential impact on playing time is the most effective way to modify player and coach behavior. It is imperative that targeting actions be penalized in all games. Officials must be diligent in penalizing targeting fouls in order to promote player safety and continue to drive that behavioral change.

The NCAA Football Rules Committee introduced more stringent guidelines in 2008 around initiating contact and targeting an opponent. Those rules are now contained in Rule 9-1-3 (Targeting and Initiating Contact with the Crown of the Helmet) and Rule 9-1-4 (Defenseless Player: Contact to Head or Neck Area). As more data is accumulated and understood about the impact of those fouls, it is imperative that officials are vigilant in recognizing those fouls and are ready to penalize offenders.

Additionally, officials must have the courage and be prepared to make that call regardless of the penalty and remember that when in question, it is a foul.

It is important that each official completely understands the rules, namely that no player shall target and make forcible contact against an opponent with the crown (top) of their helmet and that no player shall target and initiate contact to the head or neck area of a defenseless opponent with the helmet, forearm, elbow or shoulder. Each official must review the definition of a defenseless player and understand the examples provided in Rule 2-27-14.

Many times officials simply walk away from a foul thinking that the contact was “just a good football play.” That line of thinking must change, and officials must view the contact and determine if it met the guidelines of Rules 9-1-3 or 9-1-4.

Some of the key indicators for an official to help recognize a targeting foul include but are not limited to:

- The presence of a launch — a player leaving their feet to contact an opponent by an upward and forward thrust of the body, making contact in the head/neck area.
- A player leading with forearm, fist, hand or elbow to the head/neck area.
- A player lowering the head before initiating contact to the head/neck area of a defenseless player. A player completing a heads up or wrap up tackle may indicate less risk of a foul.

For games involving instant replay, for a player to be disqualified and the targeting foul to be enforced, all elements of a targeting foul must be confirmed by the Instant Replay Official. There is no option for stands as a part of a targeting review. If any element of targeting cannot be confirmed, then the Replay Official shall overturn the targeting foul. This change made in 2019 has been seen as overwhelmingly positive and now players are only disqualified if the targeting action can be confirmed.

In addition, if a student-athlete receives a third or any subsequent targeting foul within the same season, that player is disqualified for the remainder of that game and the player would receive an automatic one-game suspension in their team’s next scheduled game.

As coaching techniques and player behavior continues to change on those dangerous contact fouls, it is important that officials fulfill their role and penalize these acts. There is no change to the targeting rule in 2024. Beginning with the 2022 season, games involving replay have an opportunity to appeal second-half targeting fouls where the disqualification carries over to the next game. Officials must continue to be alert to targeting action and it is their top priority. This will help preserve our great game.

## **1.2 Pre-Snap Actions/Disconcerting Signals/Clapping/Defensive Shifts/Offensive Alignment**

The intent of pre-snap rules is to define and govern what is allowed by the offense and defense. The offense by design has an advantage of knowing the starting signal, cadence, or sound, and the defense has an advantage as they are not limited in terms of overall player movements before the snap. To discourage tactics at the line of scrimmage designed to cause an opponent



to foul or to give either team an unmerited advantage, officials must be on high alert for any type of illegal pre-snap actions by either team.

New language in Rule 7 makes it clear that any Team A movement that simulates action at the snap is a foul. This includes abruptly shifting a player or players that simulates the start of a play. Team B will be held to the same standard of not simulating action at the snap as Team A. Coordinated Team B movement, including lateral and backward movement that simulates action at the snap is a foul. Additionally, the defense cannot use words or signals that simulate the sound or cadence of, or otherwise interfere with the offensive starting signals. This includes using a clap on the defensive side of the ball that may disconcert an offense that uses a clap cadence. Also, for 2024, special focus on the offensive alignment is a point of emphasis. Guidelines have been introduced to ensure we are consistent nationally in dealing with restricted linemen that are not on their line of scrimmage. Also, we will ensure that Team A is in proper alignment at the snap, especially when there is a player with an eligible number covered up. Formations with eligible-numbered players intentionally covered up will be evaluated just as we do for “gadget plays” and the offense must be precise in their alignment or should be penalized.

### 1.3 Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls

The NCAA Football Rules Committee, the CFO National Coordinator of Football Officials and the conference coordinators want to continue to emphasize to coaches, players and officials the expectation of appropriate behavior by all who are a part of the game of football.

Currently the Rules Committee is satisfied with the solid judgment that officials are demonstrating evaluating celebration issues and this focus will continue. For the 2024 season, it will continue to be a point of emphasis for officials to penalize any taunting action that is directed at an opponent. These actions are a bad look for the game and can lead to unnecessary confrontations between the teams and must be eliminated.

The pregame warm-up rules have been modified recently to ensure proper sportsmanship before our contests. Officials should be vigilant during the pregame whenever players are on the field. Unsportsmanlike acts before the game are a bad look for college football and must be cleaned up.

The Rules Committee added a set of second-half warm-up guidelines to the rules for the teams. It is important that the officiating crew has two officials back on the field whenever game management determines that the field is available to the teams. This will ensure decorum during the second-half warm-up period.

Special attention should be given to Rule 9-2-6, which states that any player, coach or identified squad member in uniform who commits two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls in the same game shall be ejected. To highlight this fact, after a player's first unsportsmanlike foul, the Referee should include in their announcement that it was the player's first



unsportsmanlike conduct foul. This will subtly provide the information and reminder to all of the consequence of the second unsportsmanlike conduct foul. Game officials must continue to consistently apply the unsportsmanlike conduct rule for behavior that clearly extends beyond what is acceptable. While officials are directed to not be overly technical in applying the rule, there are certain acts that should be penalized without warning.

### **TAUNTING**

- “In your face”; standing or bending over an opponent.
- Comments that are racist, ethnic or demeaning.
- Gestures toward an opponent, coaches or opponent’s sideline.

### **GESTURES**

- Throat slash.
- Demonstrate violence such as six guns or machine gun.
- Remove helmet to celebrate or protest.

Being demonstrative after making an exceptional play or score is accepted as long as it’s a spontaneous burst of energy that’s not prolonged, clearly self-congratulatory or makes a mockery of the game. When possible, give the head coach an opportunity to correct and instruct their players on what is appropriate celebratory behavior.

A list of Unsportsmanlike Fouls are listed in the NCAA Rules and Interpretations under rule 9-2-1-a through j. Officials should be familiar with those fouls.

Other than taunting and those actions appearing in Appendix F, officials should use the same judgment in determining whether to call a UNS foul. Officials should say to themselves, “It’s a foul ... it’s a foul ... now throw.” If officials cannot complete that process, they shouldn’t throw a flag but advise the head coach that they should talk with their player(s), after that player(s) has been warned.

Also in the rules, a personal foul can now be included in the UNS category for a possible later ejection if there are two UNS fouls. However, to be included, the foul should be clearly after the play was over and not part of the continuing action of the play. That means the action may be after the play and a personal foul, but the separation of time would not be sufficient to meet the UNS requirement.

Using the “accordion effect” after a play is over helps to keep players under control. However moving too quickly and too close, especially after a score, reduces an official’s “cone of vision” to officiate the entire dead-ball area when there is no threat of a problem.

Appropriate and timely intervention by the officials for action by one or both teams should act as a deterrent to unsportsmanlike fouls.

## 1.4 Coaches' Sideline Management and Control

Keeping the working area (six-foot white border) clear of coaches and players while the ball is in play has consistently been a Point of Emphasis. Although some teams have made some progress, that area continues to be a challenge for officials. For the 2024 season, officials will be instructed to aggressively enforce the rule.

Coaches that need to have conversations with officials about specific rulings within the game must do so from the Team Area. Coaches are encouraged not to enter the field of play or leave the Team Area to debate officiating decisions, and those that do so will have committed an automatic Unsportsmanlike Conduct Foul.

Coaches will be allowed to only step to the sideline to call offensive and defensive signals after all action has ceased. That working space (six-foot white border) is intended to allow officials to adequately perform their duties; to protect the safety of officials, players and coaches; and to allow teams to demonstrate good sportsmanship within the team area. New for 2024, if any player, coach, or team personnel approaches an official with a tablet to review or view video during the game, that will result in an automatic unsportsmanlike conduct foul. Special attention should be given to the rule stating that if a coach receives two unsportsmanlike fouls in a single game, they are ejected.

There is no place for the excessive demonstrations that are occurring after plays by coaches and/or players coming onto the field of play, and there is no reason anyone should be on the field even during dead-ball action unless allowed by rule, such as to attend to an injured player. For this year, special emphasis has been communicated to coaches, officials and administrators from the national coordinator concerning sideline management and control. As noted in the rules, "During the game, coaches ... shall not be on the field of play...without permission of the referee." Rule 9-2-1-b-1 NOTE: Coaches who enter the field of play to question, protest or otherwise demonstrate disagreement with an officiating decision are subject to an immediate 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct. This unsportsmanlike conduct foul counts as one of the two leading to ejection from the game (Rule 9-2-6).

Relative to game administration rule, a flag should be put down even on the first infraction of Rule 9-2-5. Referees need to be sure to announce that the first instance of sideline interference is a warning and does not include a yardage penalty.

The NCAA Football Rules Committee has instructed officials to be more diligent in their observations of those actions and they are instructed to flag violations of the rule when it occurs in an area they can observe. Officials have also been instructed to aggressively enforce Rule 9-2-5 dealing with sideline and coaching box violations. Coaches are expected to set an appropriate, professional example for their players, fans and the many others who watch the game and to intervene when they see members of their team exhibit behavior that is not acceptable under the Sportsmanship guidelines of the Football Code.



## 1.5 Managing Pace of Play, Substitutions and Length of the Game

Since the implementation of the 40-second play clock, we have seen an ever-increasing use of the up-tempo offense. That style of play is often used to prevent the defense from matching up to the current game situation by not being able to substitute, which may create an advantage for the offense.

The rules and properly executed officiating mechanics work well to prevent the offense from gaining an unintended advantage by allowing the defense to match up when the offense substitutes. The addition of the Center Judge in 2015 enhanced the crew's ability to consistently administer the substitution process. Note that the crew will work the substitution process any time Team A substitutes, even if the substitution is into the huddle. This will allow more consistency as teams innovate on new and varied type huddles.

The section on no-huddle substitutions has been updated and is being emphasized here to make certain that all officials thoroughly understand the role of game officials in that situation. Adherence to those guidelines will allow a reasonable amount of time for the defense to change personnel if desired following an offensive substitution.

Equally important are plays in which the offense does not substitute. In those situations, officials have been instructed that they should not significantly increase the pace used to spot the ball and make it ready for play. Doing so places the defensive team at a distinct disadvantage not intended by rule. These guidelines have also been updated. It is important that a consistent pace be maintained when spotting the football and making it ready for play in all games. That will allow defensive coaches the ability to recognize how much time is available prior to the ball being ready for play and whether they will have an opportunity to make adjustments to personnel.

Proper implementation of the guidelines will ensure that the mechanics of game officials will not affect the balance between offense and defense and that neither team will gain an advantage not intended by rule regardless of the style of play.

The NCAA Rules Committee is concerned about the flow of the game and the number of plays per game and is instructing our officiating crews to be actively engaged in keeping our games moving. This includes the administration of halftime, working efficiently with our TV partners and being consistent in restarting the clock after out of bounds plays and awarding first downs when prescribed by rule.

By working as a crew to efficiently manage the game and keep it moving, officials can help prevent potential future rule changes that may have a more significant impact on our game.



## 1.6 Illegal Contact Against the Passer/Quarterback

As a consequence of the position they play, passers are often in a vulnerable position, with little or no opportunity to protect themselves from, or to prepare for, forcible contact. In recognition of this, there is an explicit rule (Rule 9-1-9) which addresses this unique situation: “No defensive player shall unnecessarily rough a passer when it is obvious the ball has been thrown.” The rule then lists several specific acts which are illegal when they occur against a passer or potential passer. The NCAA Football Rules Committee over time has given options for quarterbacks to protect themselves, such as sliding feet first and to legally throw the ball away outside the tackle box. Because of the extremely vulnerable situation the quarterback position presents, it is important for all officials, and the Referee and the Center Judge in particular, to be a presence and recognize when a passer is threatened or is in a defenseless position. The crew must make it a priority to afford the passer all the protection the rules provide.



## Section

# 2

## Officiating Axioms

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1. We want quality fouls. See everything you call, but don't call everything you see. No technical fouls. Let 'em play.
2. Do not reach for your marker unless you intend to drop it. Get a number and keep officiating. When you put your marker on the field, your integrity is linked to it.
3. Always see the ball before you blow your whistle. (Instant replay – be sure.)
4. Be a good dead-ball official. View all players until they are back with their teammates.
5. Be deliberate in ruling on a fumble — and get a bean bag down.
6. Crisp ball movement, no committee meetings, no walking on the field.
7. Count players EVERY down.
8. Excellent communications with coaches, players and other officials. Courtesy always and use your “winning words.”
9. If you miss one, don't look back! We must always be ready to officiate the “next” play.
10. Concentration. Give everything you have on every play for 60 minutes, that's all (or extra periods if required).
11. Use preventive officiating when needed.
12. Display integrity, courage and poise. Let the “tight” situations reveal your true character.
13. Be mentally and physically prepared to work the game.
14. And above all else, keep hustling!

The following rules-based standards have been adopted for all NCAA games.

### Ball-Spotting

1. The ball can be placed on a yardline to begin the next series after a change of possession. (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.) For example, if a punt return ends with the ball between Team B's 33 and 34 yardlines, move the ball forward to Team B's 34 yardline. At all other times, the ball is placed where it became dead.
2. If a punt is downed on the ground inside team B's five yardline, the ball should be left and not moved to the next yardline.

### Line of Scrimmage

1. When in question as to whether an action is a false start or illegal motion, it is a false start.
2. Officials will work to keep offensive linemen legal and will call 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 rule. Officials shall treat formation warnings separately for normal scrimmage downs, punts and field goal/PAT.
3. If an ineligible lineman's helmet is breaking a line drawn through the waistline of the snapper, he is legally on the line of scrimmage. If an ineligible lineman's helmet is anywhere between the waistline of the snapper and his rear end, a warning should be given but a foul will be called if multiple warnings have already been given. If the offensive player is lined up with their head clearly behind the rear end of the snapper, a foul will be called without warning.
4. Don't be technical on an offensive player who is a wide receiver or slot back in determining if they are off the line of scrimmage. Any wide receiver lined up more than one yard off the LOS is considered in the backfield. When in question, it is not a foul.
5. 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 not clear separation between their alignments. Any covered wide receiver intentionally lined up in an ineligible position must meet the same requirements as an originally ineligible lineman. If in question, they are not covered up.
6. 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.



7. Any time a defensive player initially aligned tight to the line of scrimmage jumps forward, and there is a question whether they were in the neutral zone and the appropriate offensive player(s) moves, shut down the play and penalize the defense.
8. Any time a defensive player shoots the gap, and there is a question as to contact, err on the side of offside and shut the play down to avoid a free shot on the quarterback.
9. Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal.
10. When in question, a quick or abrupt movement by the center or quarterback is a false start.
11. The snapper shall not be permitted to move the ball more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  yard forward when taking his stance nor allow the ball to be moved over the line to gain or goal line. The play shall be shut down, the ball reset, and the player and his coach warned. A foul for a False Start shall be considered after a warning.

## Fumbles

1. When in question, the runner fumbled the ball and was not down.
2. When in question regarding whether the quarterback passed or fumbled, it will be ruled a fumble.

## Defensive Pass Interference

Actions that constitute defensive pass interference include, but are not limited to, the following six categories:

1. 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.
2. Playing through the back of a receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.
3. Grabbing and restricting a receiver's arm(s) or body in such a manner that restricts their opportunity to catch a pass.
4. Extending an arm across the body (arm bar) of a receiver thus restricting their ability to catch a pass, regardless of the fact of whether or not the defender is looking for the ball.
5. Cutting off or riding the receiver out of the path to the ball by making contact without playing the ball.
6. 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.

## Offensive Pass Interference

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

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



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

## Not Offensive Pass Interference

1. Offensive pass interference for blocking downfield will not be called if the passer is legally grounding the ball out of bounds, near or beyond the sideline.
2. 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 line of scrimmage and linemen are blocking downfield, unless such blocking prevents a defensive player from catching the ball.
3. On a pick play, it is not offensive pass interference if the defensive player is blocking the offensive player when the pick occurs and the offensive player doesn't make a separate action, or if the blocker's entire body is clearly not beyond the neutral zone.

## Other Passing Situations

1. When in question on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer if the defender attempts to punish.
2. The Team A player who originally controls the snap can throw the ball anywhere if they are not under duress, except spiking the ball straight down. The clock is not a factor. Exception: Rule 7-3-2-f allows the passer to spike the ball to stop the clock.
3. An uncatchable pass must be blatantly uncatchable in order to disregard a foul for pass interference.
4. When the Team A player who originally controls the snap is outside the tackle box and is throwing the ball away to avoid a sack, when in question as to whether the ball is beyond the neutral zone, it is beyond the line. Don't be technical.
5. If in question as to whether passers are or have been outside the tackle box, they are outside the tackle box.
6. Up to five yards between where a pass lands in bounds and the nearest eligible receiver may be used for determining "in the area" during short passes or when the receiver is relatively stationary on the field. This distance should be increased on long passes and when the receiver is running towards the spot where a pass lands in bounds. When the pass lands out of bounds, an eligible receiver is "in the area" if he is between the top of the numbers and the sideline, or in the end zone, and the pass is thrown over the vicinity of the receiver's head. An eligible receiver shall be deemed "not in the area" no matter where he is positioned when the passer intentionally throws a pass significantly outside of the playing enclosure.
7. If the passer is contacted after starting the passing motion, it may be ruled no intentional grounding due to this contact.
8. If the passer is contacted clearly before starting the passing motion, there will be a foul for intentional grounding if there is no eligible



receiver in the vicinity or if the pass does not reach the line of scrimmage after the quarterback has been outside the tackle box.

9. If an interception is near the goal 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.
10. If the passer is legally throwing the ball away and it lands near or beyond the sideline, do not penalize the offense for having ineligible players downfield.

## Blocking

1. If a player is illegally blocked or held “into” making a tackle, no foul should be called unless the action is a personal foul or there is an element of time between the foul and the tackle.
2. Obvious and intentional takedowns create special focus and should be called.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 a foul if the contact propels the player past the runner or prevents the player from making the play. If the force is clearly from the side, it is not a foul. If the blocker is in a “chase mode” all the action must be from the side to be legal.
6. 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.
7. Blocks in the back that occur at or about the same time a runner is being tackled should not be called, unless they are in the nature of a personal foul or there is forcible contact that involves player safety.
8. A grab of the receiver’s jersey that materially restricts the receiver and takes away their feet should be defensive holding if other criteria are met, and could also be defensive pass interference.
9. Holding can be called even if the quarterback is subsequently sacked, and there is an element of time between the foul and the tackle.
10. 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.
11. When in question if an illegal block occurs in the end zone or field of play, it occurs in the field of play.
12. Regarding blocking below the waist, when in question, the ball has not left the tackle box.



## Kicking Plays

1. 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 offside. The same plane applies on normal kickoffs, but officials should not be too technical in regard to players breaking the plane.
2. 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, as should forcible contact that involves player safety.)
3. It shall always be roughing the kicker when there is forcible contact to the plant leg, whether or not that leg is on the ground. It shall be running into the kicker if a defender simply "runs through" the kicking leg and there is no forcible contact. All other contact shall be based on the severity and the potential for injury to the kicker.
4. On kicks into the end zone, when in question, during the return the ball has not left the end zone.
5. When in question, a foul by the receiving team on a scrimmage kick occurs after the ball is kicked.
6. When in question, the kicker is outside the tackle box.
7. The intent of the scrimmage kick formation numbering exception is to allow teams to make substitutions that are not deceptive. When in question, it is not a scrimmage kick formation.

## Plays at the Sideline

1. Substitution mechanics will be used in a situation in which a play ends with Team A player(s) going out of bounds into their own team area.
2. If legal contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out of bounds, consider it a legal hit. If runners have obviously given themselves up very near the sideline and forcible contact is made attempting to punish, a foul should be called.
3. If the whistle has blown and a runner continuing 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.
4. When in question as to whether the runner stepped out of bounds, officials should rule the runner did not step out of bounds.

## Scoring Plays

1. When in question, it is not a touchdown.
2. When in question, it is not a safety.
3. When in question, it is a touchdown when a non-airborne runner crosses the goal inside the pylon with the ball crossing the goal line extended.



## Personal Fouls

1. If action is deemed to be “fighting,” the player must be ejected.
2. When in question if an act is a flagrant personal foul or fighting, the player is not fighting.
3. Players committing flagrant personal fouls must be ejected.
4. When in question regarding hits away from the ball near the end of the play, consider it a dead-ball rather than live-ball foul.
5. Regarding defenseless players, when in question, a player is defenseless.

## Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. When in question whether an unsportsmanlike act is a live-ball or dead-ball foul, it is a dead-ball foul.
2. Do not be overly technical in applying Rule 9-2-1.
3. Allow for brief, spontaneous, emotional reactions at the end of a play.
4. 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.
5. A list of specifically prohibited acts is in Rule 9-2-1-a-1 (a) thru (k). 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.
6. Spitting on an opponent requires ejection.

## Game Clock

1. When in question, a charged team timeout precedes a foul that prevents the snap. Exception: When Team A has been flagged for a pre-snap illegal substitution foul, a time-out called at the same time by Team A does not negate the foul.
2. Any time loss due to the clock being started erroneously, such as when a dead-ball foul is called, the clock must be adjusted.
3. 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.
4. As a guideline, when there is between two and five minutes remaining in a half and the clock is stopped to complete a penalty by the team ahead in the score, or the score is tied, the Referee should consider invoking Rule 3-4-3, and afford the offended team the option of starting the game clock on the snap. If the score of the game is not competitive, the Referee should not invoke Rule 3-4-3 in this situation.

## Miscellaneous

1. The ankle or wrist is considered part of the foot or hand, respectively, and does not make a runner down.

# Collaborative Replay

## Pregame Duties

- Test all communications with stadium replay booth at scheduled time prior to kickoff.
- Take part in replay booth pregame and review all in-game procedures and mechanics.
- Review camera layout, including camera names and locations, and which cameras are available directly to the replay booth. No broadcast audio available to the replay official.

## Before the Play

- Monitor the pre-snap routine from the replay booth.
- Know the game situation including field position, down and distance, time remaining, clock status and pay special attention to anything that may have an impact (fourth down, after Two-Minute Timeout).

## During the Play

- Work Through each layer of the play, including:
  - Snap/kick
  - Transfer (handoff/pass) of football
  - Action around ball carrier
  - End of down
  - Clock status
- Identify reviewable aspects that may have a significant impact.

## After the Play

- Be an active listener to communication in the booth.
- Look for status of the football and ruling on the field.
- Ensure all reviewable aspects are considered.
- Both the booth and collaborative replay officials have authority to stop the game for further video review.
- The Collaborative Replay Official will confirm the booth replay official's decisions to clear scores and turnovers.

## During a Review

- The Collaborative and Booth Replay Official will ensure:
  - All reviewable aspects of the play are considered.
  - All pertinent angles and replays are viewed.
  - All decisions, rules and enforcement aspects are correct.
- If there is an aspect of the review being overlooked, the Collaborative Replay Official or Booth Replay Official will offer input immediately at that point.
- The Collaborative Replay Official or Booth Replay Official will “take decisive action” if the process or decision in the booth is incorrect or headed down the wrong path.



## Section **4** Character

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Officials are expected to exhibit and uphold the standards of integrity of the officiating profession. The image of an official demands honesty and high ethical standards. Officials should make every decision based on the circumstances and facts presented, regardless of an official's past history with a particular player or team. No official should ever threaten a player, coach or team with future retaliation.

- 1** Realize the importance of your position and at all times uphold the dignity it demands.
- 2** Have ambition, but also patience, as over-anxiety has ruined many young officials.
- 3** Never be jealous of a good break another official gets. Your turn may be next.
- 4** Never use your senior position to embarrass another official.
- 5** Be receptive. Open your mind to new concepts and ideas.
- 6** Be honest with yourself. Unreal expectations place an extra burden on an already intense job.
- 7** Become a leader. If you adopt a philosophy that you're going to help others reach their goals, you will reach yours.
- 8** Be passionate. If you're passionate about integrity, honesty and professionalism, you've improved your quality of life through officiating.
- 9** Be courageous. Doing what is right — versus what's popular or safe — takes strong will and conviction.

## Section Conduct and Ethics

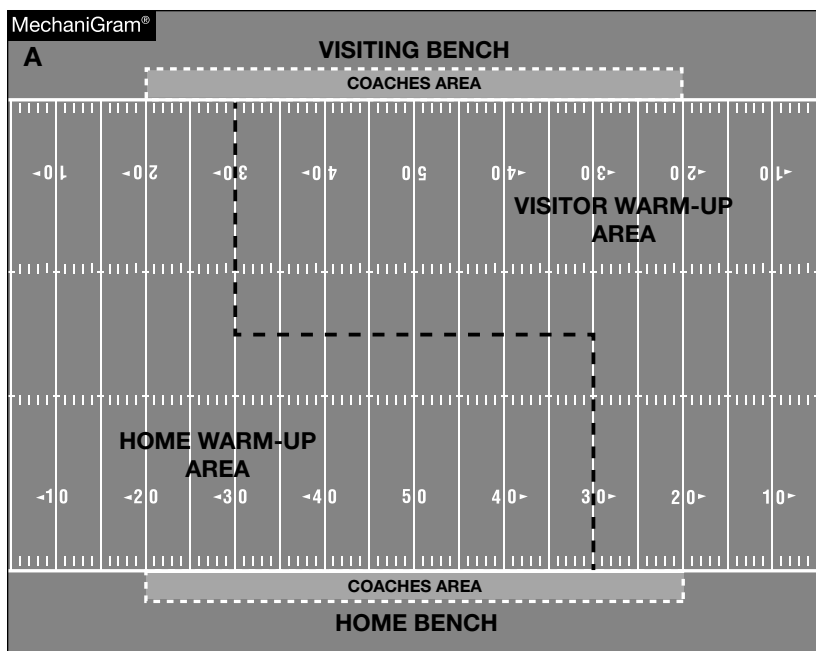
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- ▶ 1. Use of social media to convey information or discuss any aspect of games, coaches, teams or players is strictly prohibited.
- ▶ 2. Officials shall bear a great responsibility for engendering public confidence in sports.
- ▶ 3. Officials shall be free of obligation to any interest other than the impartial and fair judging of sports competitions.
- ▶ 4. Officials shall hold and maintain the basic tenets of officiating which include history, integrity, neutrality, respect, sensitivity, professionalism, discretion and tactfulness.
- ▶ 5. Officials shall master both the rules of the game and mechanics necessary to enforce the rules, and shall exercise authority in an impartial, firm and controlled manner.
- ▶ 6. Officials shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession in all interactions with student-athletes, coaches, school administrators, colleagues and the public.
- ▶ 7. Officials shall display and execute superior communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal.
- ▶ 8. Officials shall prepare themselves both physically and mentally and shall comport themselves in a manner consistent with the high standards of the profession.
- ▶ 9. Officials shall not be party to actions designed to unfairly limit or restrain access to officiating, officiating assignments or to association membership. This includes selection for positions of leadership based upon economic factors, race, creed, color, age, sex, physical handicap, country or national origin.
- ▶ 10. Officials shall be punctual and professional in the fulfillment of all contractual obligations.
- ▶ 11. Officials shall work with each other and their governing bodies in a constructive and cooperative manner.
- ▶ 12. Officials shall never participate in any form of illegal gambling on sports contests, may never gamble on any sporting event in which they have either a direct or indirect involvement, and may never gamble on events involving college athletics.
- ▶ 13. Officials shall not make false or misleading statements regarding their qualifications, rating, credentials, experience, training or competence.
- ▶ 14. Officials shall accept responsibility for all actions taken.
- ▶ 15. Officials should never do anything to draw undue attention to themselves or the crew.

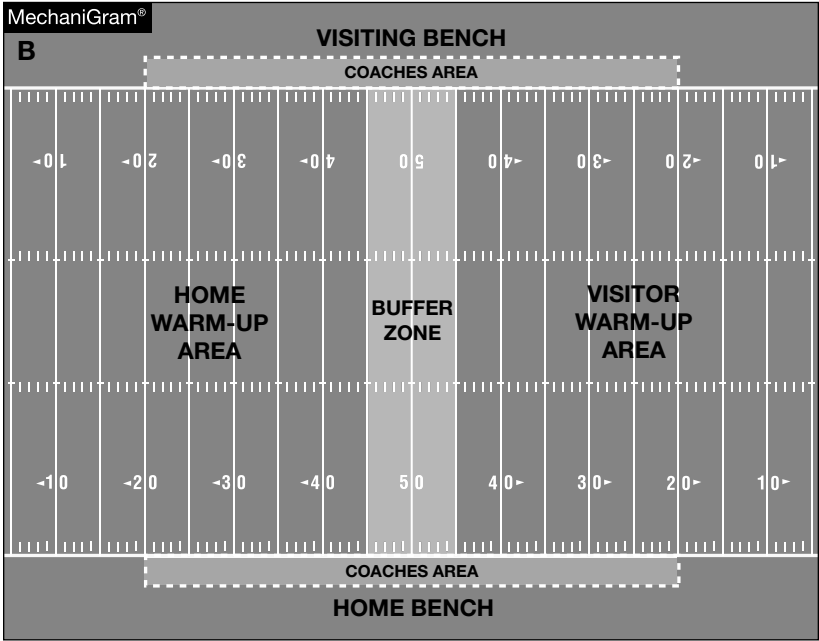


## Section **6** Monitoring Pregame Warmups

In an effort to prevent confrontations between teams during the pregame warm-up period, new procedures have been implemented. All officials should be dressed and ready no later than 90 minutes before game time. It is expected that a minimum of three officials will take the field 90 minutes before kickoff. At 90 minutes before kickoff the playing field will be divided into an L-shaped configuration with the 30-yard lines forming the L (MechaniGram A). The initial warm-ups usually include kickers and punters. The configuration should help ensure that players from opposing teams won't get in each other's way nor interact. No later than 40 minutes



before kickoff, the teams are to warm-up between opposite 45 yardlines and the end zones (MechaniGram B). Officials shall position themselves so they may enforce a 10-yard buffer zone; no players are to enter the 10-yard buffer zone between the 45 yardlines. All officials will be on the field 40 minutes before kickoff.



A decorative graphic consisting of a dark gray rectangular background. In the center, a large white number '8' is positioned above the word 'OFFICIALS' in a white, serif, all-caps font. The entire graphic is framed by a thin white border. On the left and right sides of the rectangle, there are vertical lines of varying lengths, resembling a film strip or a stylized border.

# 8 OFFICIALS

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The Back Judge should receive, test, certify and mark the new or nearly new game balls submitted for approval by each team at least one hour before game time. Each team may submit a maximum of 10 balls unless weather conditions warrant the use of more than 10. All officials are responsible for administering and enforcing legality of footballs throughout the game.

The Referee and Umpire visit each dressing room 90 minutes before kickoff. This meeting may not be conducted by officials other than the Referee and Umpire. The Umpire inspects player equipment and bandages, tape, etc., and should record the numbers of players with illegal equipment. Those players are to be rechecked when they come onto the field.

The Referee confirms the official time and starting time with each head coach or designated representative. Each head coach is to be reminded of equipment rule requirements. The Referee should secure proper certification and review any unusual game situations, including any play that requires prior notification, with the head coach. Defensive coaches should be asked about defensive signals to be used during the game. The head coach may wish to designate an assistant or other sideline personnel to whom foul reports should be given during the game.

Upon returning to the locker room, the Referee should share the discussion with the coaches with their crew.

## Meeting With the Timer

Clock operators should inform the officials whether they will be in the press box or on the sideline. The officials remind the timer to start the field clock 90 minutes before game time and that the game clock will run during the 20 minutes of halftime intermission, which starts when the first half ends. The Referee gives the start the clock signal from the end zone as a reminder to start the halftime clock.

The clock operator must have an extra stopwatch available in case the game clock malfunctions. In case of a clock problem, the clock operator must immediately contact the officials by field telephone, giving them the correct data regarding the official time. The alternate official or designated official will then pick up the correct playing time on their stopwatch.

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, the remaining time can be announced after every dead ball. If not, the officials will alert the P.A. announcer concerning remaining time.

Remind the timer 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

A minimum of three officials will take the field 90 minutes before kickoff and all officials will be on the field 40 minutes before kickoff. 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 and 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 Referee and Back Judge shall inspect the entire field. As noted in NCAA Rule 1-2-8-a through d:

- 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 Referee 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 Center Judge shall communicate to the quarterbacks and snappers to explain the substitution process and procedures for how the ball will be spotted and made ready for play.

At five minutes before game time, the Side Judge and Field Judge escort the captains of the teams on their respective sidelines from the locker room to their respective sidelines. The Line Judge and Head Line-Judge ensure their respective teams are on the field three minutes before the start of the game. On a signal from the Referee, the Field Judge and Side Judge escort the respective captains as far as the nine-yard marks and remain there to ensure no team personnel move closer to the field than the nine-yard marks. The Back Judge, Head Line-Judge, Center Judge and Line Judge remain on their sidelines.



## 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. Similarly, auxiliary chains and box remain on the press box side.

The Head Line-Judge and 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 and 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 yardline 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 mandatory. The clip operator should mark the new yardline with a second clip, 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 or 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 yardline, or when Team A attempts an extra point. The box holder should be instructed that if Team A attempts a field goal outside Team B's 20 yardline, the box must remain in place after the kick. If the kick fails, the ball may be next snapped from the previous spot.

## Meeting with the Ball Personnel

Coordination with the ball personnel is a critical component to having good ball mechanics during a game. An appropriate pre-game meeting is therefore important. The pre-game conversation is led by the Side Judge and Field Judge. It is a single meeting with all ball personnel from each team. It is important to remind the ball personnel that they are a part of the officiating crew, and that their behavior must reflect a neutral demeanor. Additionally, all ball personnel should refrain from "chasing" or "running with" a ball carrier on a long breakaway play.

There should be a minimum of three ball personnel for each sideline. Two of the personnel should be aligned halfway between the line of scrimmage and the Referee/Center Judge in the offensive backfield. The other ball personnel align between the line of scrimmage and the deep wing official.

A new ball will enter through the Center Judge or Umpire, depending on which side of the field the play ends. A new ball enters only when requested by the on-field official. Ball personnel should have a ball available for the Center Judge/Umpire on every play, however, not every play will require replacing the ball. The ball personnel who are on the defensive side of the ball will retrieve the ball on incomplete passes, down outside the hashmarks, punts, or any other situation when the ball is declared dead beyond the line of scrimmage.

Ball personnel are not to enter the field of play at any time to retrieve a ball and are to remain outside the white once the ball exchange has taken place. When the line of scrimmage is outside the team box (20-yard line to goal line), all ball personnel need to be outside the limit lines once a ball exchange has been completed. Ball personnel should not be below the 10-yard lines during a scrimmage possession.

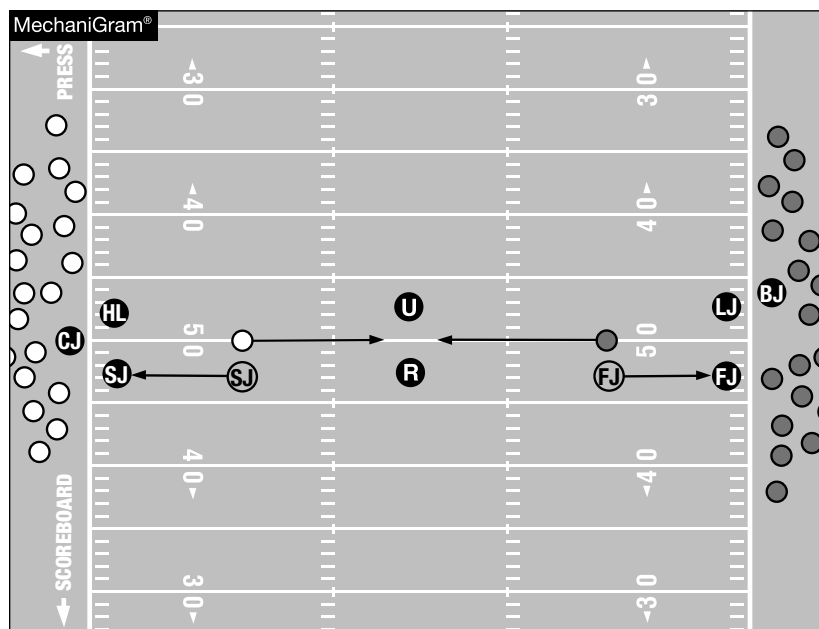
With under two minutes and the clock running, the Umpire will handle the ball and will not require a new ball. If the game clock stops and will restart on the snap, the officiating crew reverts to regular ball mechanics. For Tries and Field Goals, use the same ball mechanics with ball coming in from the side closest to where the play ended.

# The Coin Toss



Three minutes before the scheduled game time, the Referee and Umpire should be in the center of the field. Upon a signal from the Referee, the Field Judge and Side Judge escort their respective captains to the top of the numbers, then remain there to ensure the teams are in their side zones, on their sideline or in the team area. The Head Line-Judge, Center Judge, Line Judge and Back Judge remain at the sideline. No team personnel are to be inside the nine-yard marks during the toss. The Head Line-Judge should have a game ball from each team in their possession. Once the toss is completed, the correct ball can be given to the Center Judge for the opening kickoff.

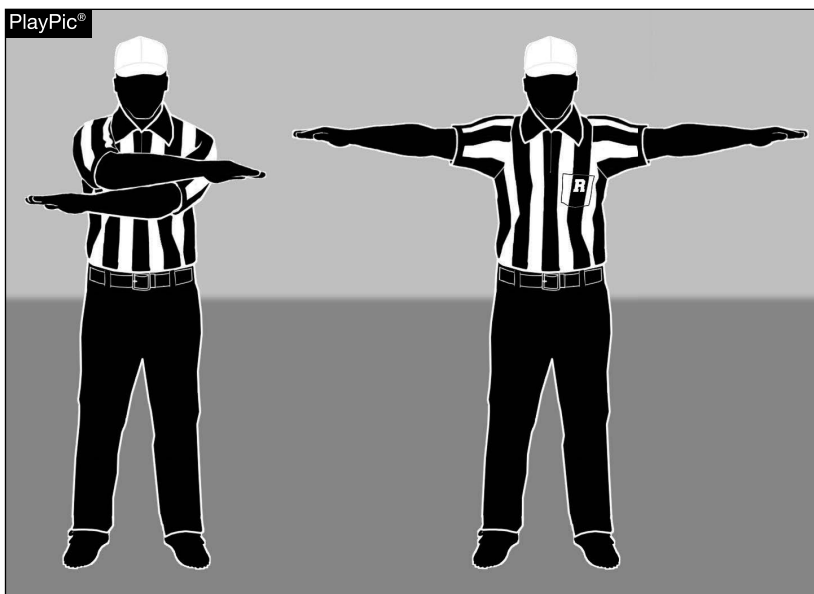
The captains should face each other with their backs to their sidelines. Optionally, the captains may rotate facing opposite goal lines while the Referee faces the press box. The Referee turns on the microphone once the toss begins. The visiting captain calls the toss, telling the Referee the choice before the Referee flips the coin. The Umpire should audibly repeat the captain's choice before the flip.



If the winner of the toss opts to defer the choice until the second half, the Referee stands toward the press box clear of the captains, indicates the toss winner by placing a 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 the 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. 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 Head Line-Judge should take the appropriate game ball to the center of the field and hand it to the Center Judge. The officials make a written record of the results of the toss and move to their kickoff positions simultaneously.



## Free Kicks



Free kick mechanics are designed to best observe potential player safety fouls that are prevalent during free kick plays. The crew's priorities during free kicks plays are 1) player safety fouls by the receiving team, including illegal wedge blocks and illegal blindside blocks, 2) fair catch signals and 3) illegal blocks during a return, such as blocks in the back and holding. It should be noted that fouls related to 1) and 3) most often occur between the receiver's 25- and 45-yard lines. This area of the receiver's side of the field is the "Engagement Zone." Free kicks require the crew to have heightened awareness inside this "Engagement Zone" both during the kick and during returns.

**NOTE:** The Line Judge and Field Judge will be positioned opposite the press box in the first half and the Line Judge will be responsible for the chains. The Head Line-Judge and Side Judge will be opposite the press box in the second half and the Head Line-Judge will be responsible for the chains.

Mechanics and keys do not change regardless of which side of the field the officials are working, other than responsibility for the chains.

If a sideline penalty recorder is present, they shall remain with the Head Line-Judge throughout the game.

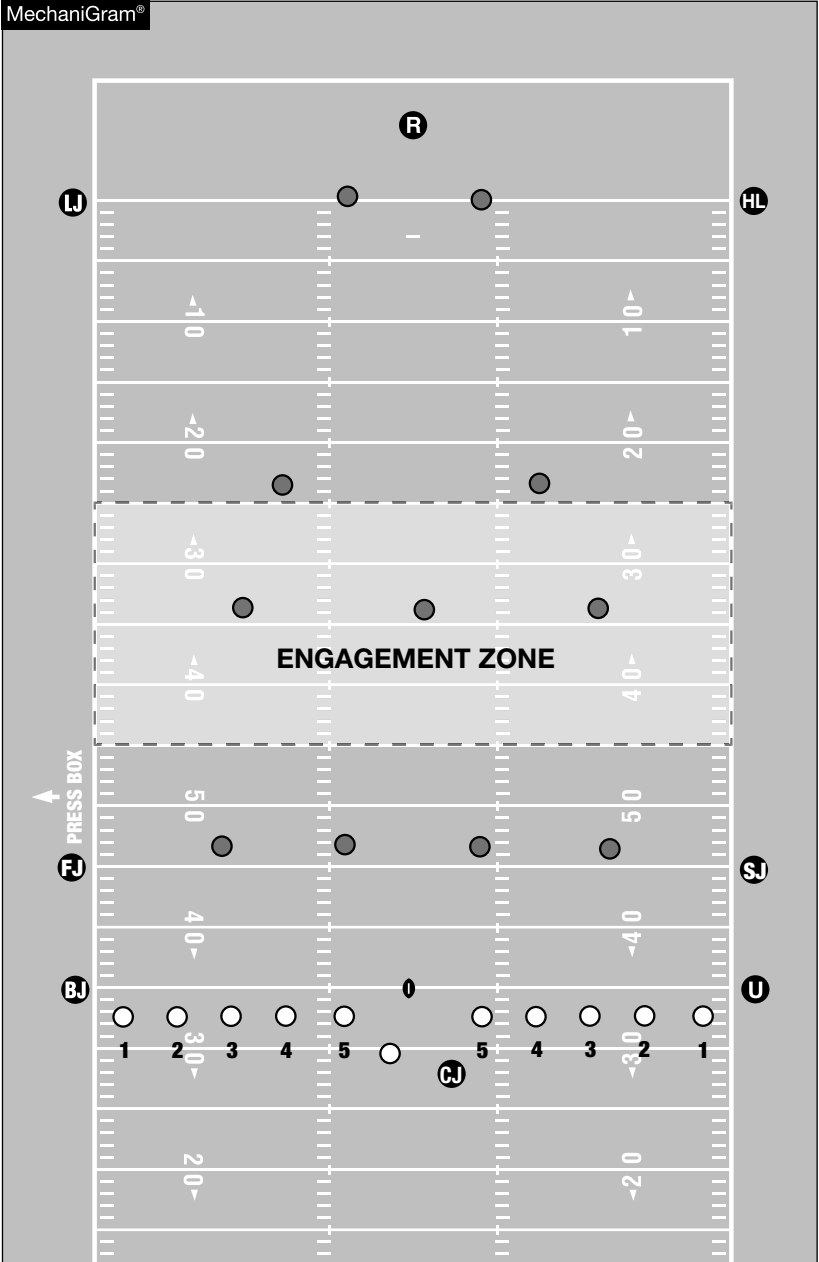
**Please note MechaniGrams in this manual reflect positioning for the second half of a game.**

## Positioning, Zones and Keys

**Referee:** Starting position is in the middle of the field behind the deepest receiver. When players and officials are ready, after the sideline liaison is ready and once the Center Judge is in position after handing the ball to the kicker, sound your whistle and give the ready-for-play signal. Be alert for a touchback or a kick beyond the endline. You are responsible for the endline. You are responsible for the play clock and secondarily responsible for knowing if Team A had at least four players on both sides of the kicker. Should be alert and is primary for illegal wedge formations. Be alert for when a player gives a fair catch signal and observes the actions of players when a signal is given.

**Umpire:** Starting position is just outside the sideline opposite the press box on Team A's restraining line. Ensure kicking team players remain inside the nine-yard marks until the ready-for-play-signal from the Referee. You are

MechaniGram®



responsible for clearing your sideline to Team A's endline. Umpire keys on Team A players four and five from their sideline. Ensure Team A players are within five yards of their restraining line.

**Center Judge:** Hand the ball to and stay with the kicker in the middle of the field. Position in front and to the side of the kicker until the Referee marks the ball ready for play and release the kicker. Move two to three yards wide of the ball and as deep as the kicker. Primary responsibility for verifying four on either side of the kicker.

**Head Line-Judge:** Starting position is just outside the sideline opposite the press box at Team B's goal line. You have goal line and pylon responsibility. Primary for observing fair catch signals and the actions of players when a signal is given. Secondary responsibility is observing illegal wedge formations.

**Side Judge:** Assist in clearing your sideline. Starting position is just outside the sideline opposite the press box on Team B's restraining line. Side Judge keys on Team A players two and three on their side of the field.

**Line Judge:** Starting position is just outside the sideline on the press box side at Team B's goal line. You have goal line and pylon responsibility. Primary for observing fair catch signals and the actions of players when a signal is given. Secondary responsibility is observing illegal wedge formations.

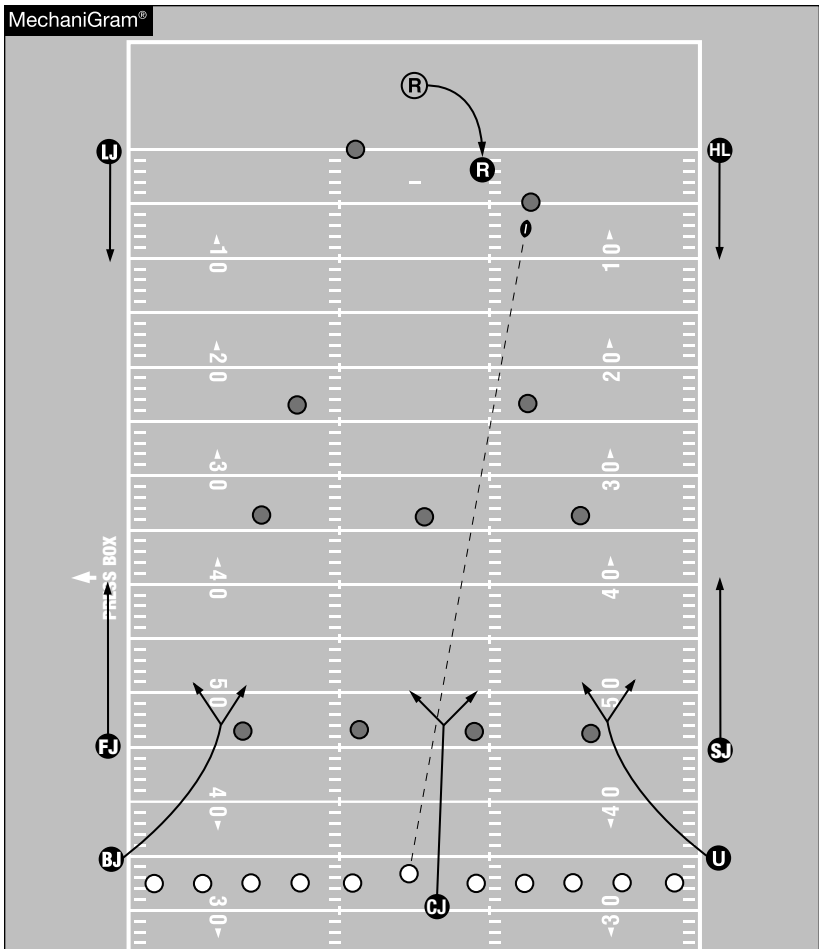
**Field Judge:** Assist in clearing your sideline. Starting position is just outside the sideline on the press box side at Team B's restraining line. Field Judge keys on Team A players two and three on their side of the field.

**Back Judge:** You are responsible for clearing your sideline to Team A's endline. Starting position is just outside the sideline on the press box side at Team A'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 Team A players four and five on their side of the field. Ensure Team A players are within five yards of their restraining line. Note: Team A player one is not accounted for in the keys as that player is normally not threatened until reaching the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge's zone.

## 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. You are primarily responsible for illegal wedge formations and illegal blocks. Follow the play and observe action in front of the runner. Be alert for a handoff and a reverse.



**Umpire and Back Judge:** Depending on the direction of the kick, move quickly downfield 10-15 yards. If the kick is to the opposite side, move toward the hashmark and observe action toward the center of the field and off-ball action. As the receiving team turns to block, settle into your position.

**Center Judge:** Follow the kicker for their five-yard protection, knowing the status and initial flight of the ball and watch for early blocks on surprise onside kicks. Judge the direction of the kick, move toward the appropriate hashmark if the ball is kicked to a side zone. After the kick, move upfield 10 to 15 yards, slightly behind the Back Judge and Umpire. Serve as a backup for fair catch signals on pooch kicks. Goal line responsibility 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. The clock will start when the ball crosses the goal line after being first touched by the receivers in the end zone. Stay at 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.

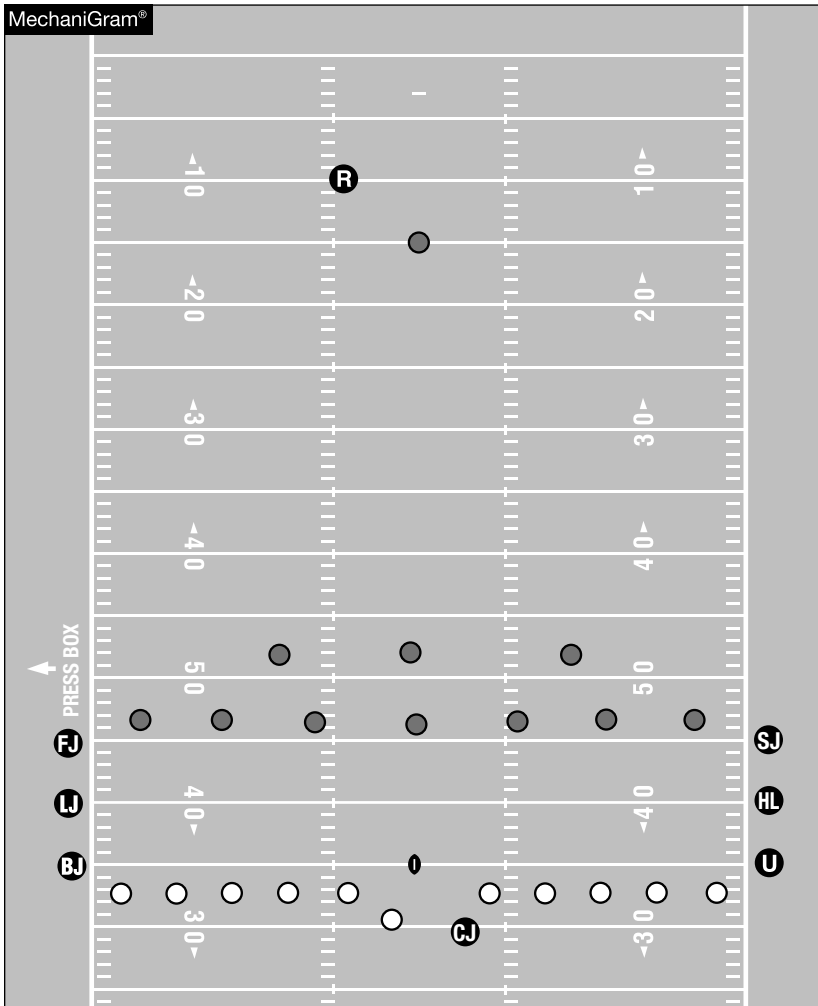
**Side Judge and Field Judge:** Know if the ball was kicked into the ground or if it has taken more than one bounce. Move quickly 10 to 15 yards toward Team B's goal line. That will give better coverage in the critical area where contact occurs between the kicking and receiving team. You have goal line responsibility on long returns.

### **Lateral Position of the Ball**

After a touchback or fair catch inside the Team B 25-yard line, all crew members, especially wing officials on Team B's sideline, should be alert if the head coach wants to relocate the position of the ball. That must be communicated before the play clock goes under 25 seconds.

## 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 B's goal line, the end zone and the endline. When players and officials are ready and once the Center Judge has handed the ball to the kicker, sound your whistle and give the ready-for-play signal. Be alert to assist the Center Judge there are at least four players on either side of the kicker.



**Umpire:** Starting position is just outside the sideline opposite the press box on Team A's restraining line.

**Center Judge:** Starting position is just to the side of and just behind the apparent kicker.

**Head Line-Judge:** Starting position is just outside the sideline opposite the press box, midway between the two restraining lines.

**Side Judge:** Starting position is just outside the sideline opposite the press box on Team B's restraining line.

**Line Judge:** Starting position is just outside the sideline on the press box side, midway between the two restraining lines.

**Field Judge:** Starting position is just outside the sideline on the press box side at Team B's restraining line.

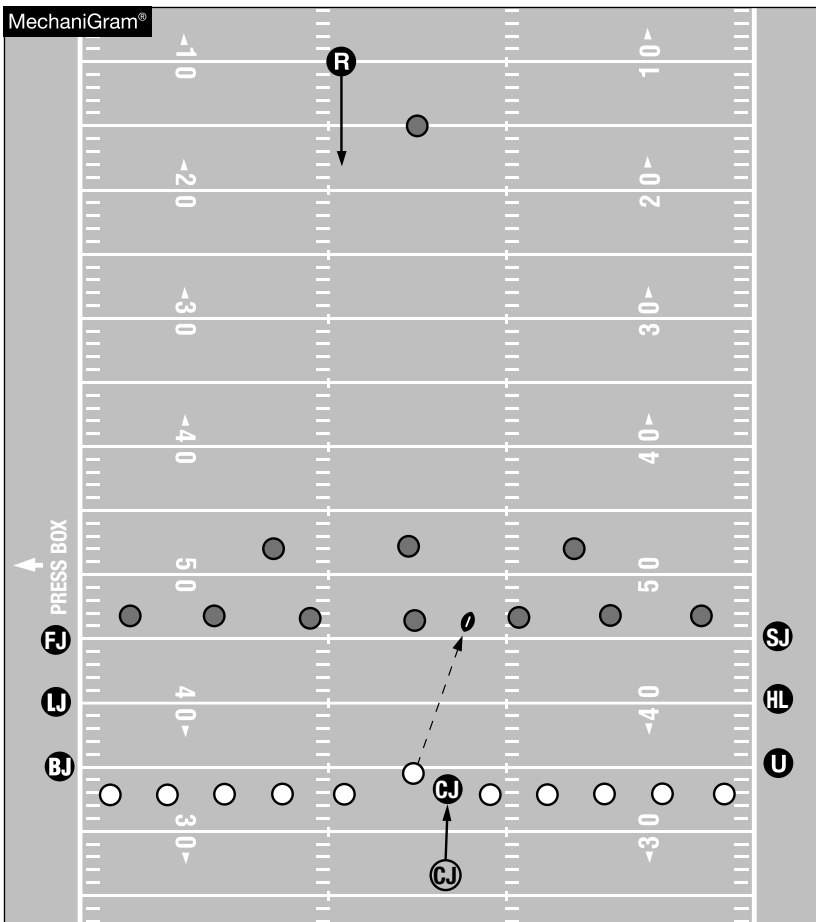
**Back Judge:** Starting position is just outside the sideline on the press box side at Team A's restraining line.

**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 A kicks deep instead of onside.

**Umpire and Back Judge:** Have bean bag in hand. Treat Team A'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 offside. 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 B and be prepared to cover the play if a Team B player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.



**Center Judge:** Know the initial status of the ball. Follow the kicker for their five-yard protection. Assist in observing blocking and ruling on touching of the kick. Be alert for immediate recovery or advance by Team B.

**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge:** Have bean bag in hand. Observe blocking by both teams. Know if the ball was kicked into the ground or if it has taken more than one bounce. Be alert for a fair-catch signal by Team B and be prepared to cover the play if a Team B 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 B's restraining line. You are primarily responsible for touching by either team. Be alert for a fair-catch signal by Team B and be prepared to cover the play if a Team B 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 offensive team's game ball always comes in from the press box side.

**Referee:** 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 Umpire. Check the offensive formation and note the tackle box. 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 right side of the quarterback, at least as wide as the tight end and 12 to 15 yards deep. Get into a position deep and wide where you may comfortably see the ball and stationary backs inside the tackle box and the tackle on the right 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. 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. As a backup, 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 on the side opposite the tight end, generally eight to 10 yards off 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.

**Center Judge:** The Center Judge will be primary for spotting the ball after all plays. After spotting the ball, the Center Judge moves to a position behind but to the side of the center to prevent the snap. That position allows the Center Judge to clear the linemen's feet as they get set and to avoid having to step over or through the gap between the center and the guard. That also affords a position in front of or to the side of the quarterback to clearly see that the snap is being prevented. While the Center Judge has primary responsibility for spotting the ball, it does not prevent other officials from spotting if it expedites the process. When that occurs, the Center Judge continues to the ball until released by the Referee.



The Center Judge should maintain that position as long as the Referee shows signal O12. Otherwise, the Center Judge promptly backs into position facing the Referee and quarterback. That allows the Center Judge to pick up the tackle on their side, which will be the primary key after the snap and in pass blocking. The Center Judge should be prepared to communicate directly with the center and quarterback, especially if there is a late substitution and the Referee extends their arms, indicating that the snap should not occur. The Center Judge assists the Referee regarding the status of the game clock as needed.

**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge:** 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 player goes in motion, observe the player if they are 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). On fourth down with two or less yards to the line to gain and Team A not in scrimmage kick formation, the Head Line-Judge and Line Judge should be prepared to move immediately to the line to gain after the snap. The Line Judge assists the Referee regarding the status of the game clock as needed.

**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 Field Judge and Side Judge are 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 yards from the line of scrimmage and on the sidelines.

**Back Judge:** Monitors all timing involving the 25/40-second count. Ensure that the play clock is started at the correct time in every situation throughout the game. If the play clock hits :00, look immediately at the ball; if the snapper has not begun the snap, that is, the ball has not

started moving, stop the game and penalize the offense for delay of game. 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 yards from the line of scrimmage, favoring the strong side of the field (the side with more eligible receivers outside the tackles). 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.

In certain situations, the rules dictate how long a team has to correct a problem with too many players on the field or in the huddle. There are other situations in which the issue does not become a foul until the ball is snapped or free kicked.

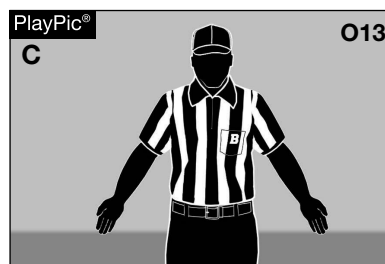
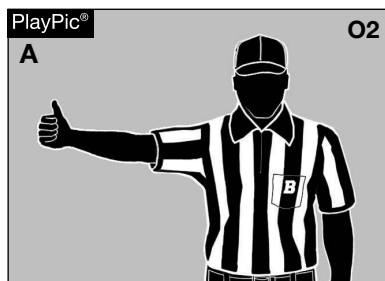
Officials with counting duties must count and confirm their count with other officials who share the responsibility. The signals: thumb up for a count of 11 (signal O2, PlayPic A), twirling index finger (signal O9, PlayPic B) for more than 11 players, open palms below waist level (signal O13, PlayPic C) for less than 11. All officials are expected to monitor the legality of substitutions.

The counting assignments:

**Free kick:** The Umpire, Back

Judge, Field Judge, Center Judge and Side Judge count Team A; the Referee, Head Line-Judge and Line Judge count Team B.

**All other plays:** The Referee and Umpire have primary responsibility to count Team A; Head Line-Judge and Line Judge are secondary for



counting Team A. The Field Judge, Side Judge and Back Judge count Team B. The Center Judge has no counting responsibility.

## Substitution Procedures

To help simplify the application of rules regarding substitution, we will use the substitution procedures any time Team A substitutes. This includes if Team A substitutes into a formation or into a huddle of any type.

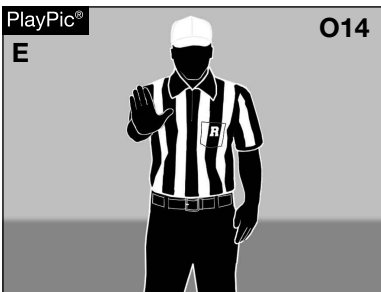
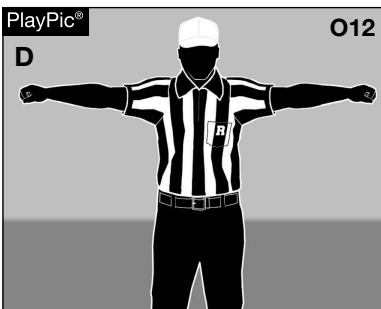
When Team A substitutes, the Center Judge will be primary in spotting the ball. For consistency, the officials shall not significantly increase the pace of spotting the football for teams seeking to snap the ball as soon as possible. The Center Judge should neither sprint nor walk but move throughout the game at a consistent pace that puts neither team at a disadvantage. After the ball is properly spotted, the Center Judge looks to the Referee to determine if they must remain near the ball to prevent the snap or if they are released to their normal position.

The Referee will manage the no huddle substitution process and the Center Judge must assume all responsibility to prevent the snap as determined by the Referee. The Referee must assume their normal position as soon as possible in order to manage the process described below.

The Center Judge is not required to count the number of players on offense as their primary responsibility is to prevent a quick snap prior to the defense being allowed to complete their substitution under Rule 3-5-2-e and then to assume their position as quickly as possible once cleared by the Referee.

If Team A substitutes, Rule 3-5-2 goes into effect: Team A is prohibited from rushing quickly to the line of scrimmage with the obvious intent of creating a defensive disadvantage. If the ball is ready for play, the game officials will not permit the ball to be snapped until Team B has placed substitutes in position and replaced players have left the field of play. Team B must react promptly with its substitutes.

If Team A does not substitute and is in hurry-up mode, Team B must be prepared to react promptly and is not afforded any match-up provisions.



The following mechanics will be used:

- Both officials on the Team A sideline must be aware throughout the game of Team A substituting, as well as when a play ends with a Team A player going out of bounds into his team area. In both of these instances, officials on the Team A sideline shall immediately give the extended arms “T” signal (signal O12, pg. 55), and shall hold that signal until recognized by the Referee. The O2O communication system may be used to provide information to the Referee, but shall not be used as a substitute for giving the extended arms “T” signal.
- Officials on the Team A sideline should also be aware of and shall signal (O12) when Team A substitutes. Officials on the opposite side, as well as the Back Judge, may also assist in recognition by the Referee.
- The Center Judge shall check with the Referee prior to leaving the ball after placement. Should they notice the Referee with extended hands or the stop sign (Signal O14, PlayPic E) at any point, they should remain in the vicinity of the ball or return to the vicinity of the ball until the Referee clears them with a distinct and positive signal. While waiting for the signal, the Center Judge should make note of the best exit route to be clear of players when the ball is snapped. The Referee should only use the substitution signal O12 if a team is actually substituting. The Center Judge will manage the snapper even if they do not spot the ball, except on scrimmage kicks, when the Umpire electively manages the process.
- Once Referees initiate the substitution rule by extending the arms, they monitor the offensive substitution until it is obvious who the replaced player(s) are and they begin leaving the field. They then observe the defense and allow them three seconds to begin any defensive substitutions. If the defense substitutes in this time window, the Referee will allow a reasonable time to match up, position its players and allow replaced players to leave the field.
- If Team A substitutes so late that the play clock expires while Team B, reacting promptly, was not in position prior to the play clock expiring, the offense is responsible for and will be penalized for delay of game.
- The Center Judge should be alert for the Referee’s signal for late substitutions. If the Center Judge is remiss the Referee must move in quickly to prevent the snap. The Center Judge should then assume a position in the vicinity of the ball as the Referee returns to their position prior to the snap.
- If the officials are delayed in getting to the ball to prevent a snap, the officials will stop the game and warn Team A that it must allow Team B the opportunity to substitute. Further attempts by Team A to create a defensive disadvantage in that manner will result in a 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct.



- Any official should be prepared to step in and shut down a play that violates the substitution rule.

## Other Substitution Provisions

• If Team A breaks the huddle with 12, it is an immediate foul; if Team A fails to send the replaced player out of the huddle more than three seconds after the substitute enters the huddle, it is an immediate foul. Therefore, the Referee and Umpire must count Team A players while they are still in the huddle. Too often, teams are allowed to break the huddle with more than 11 players and a foul is not called until the snap is imminent.

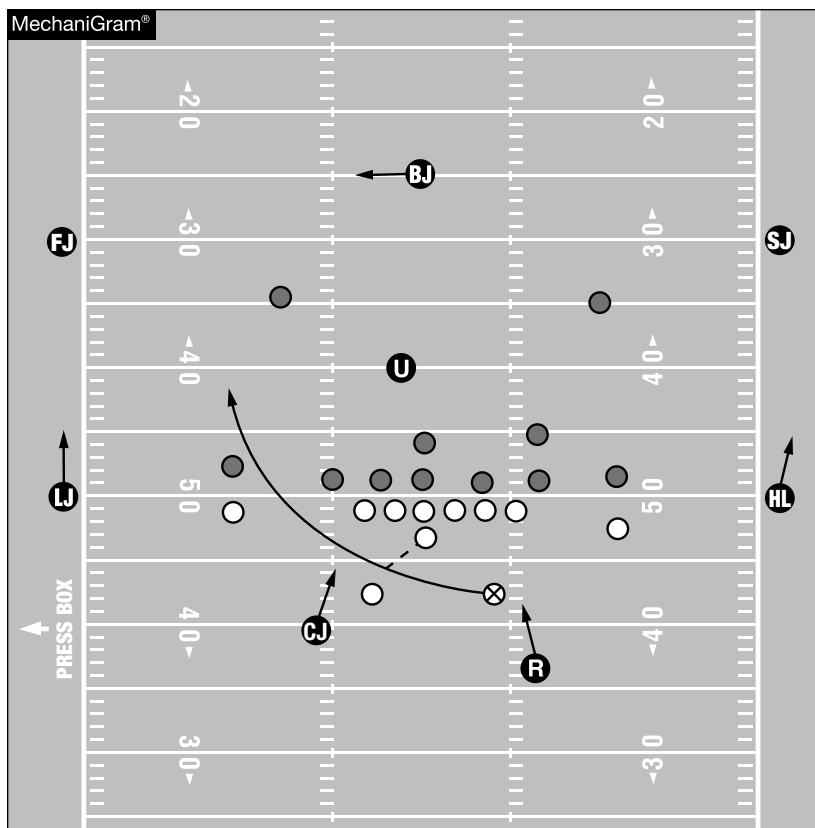
• When Team A players enter the game having changed jersey numbers, they must report to the Referee. The Referee uses the microphone to announce the player's former number and the new number and the appropriate sideline official relays the information to the opposing head coach. The game clock and play clock do not stop. Team A must complete the process before the play clock expires. During the process, the officials will not allow the ball to be snapped. Normal substitution rules still apply.

• When Team B players enter the game having changed jersey numbers, they must report to the Referee. The Referee uses the microphone to announce the player's former number and the new number and the appropriate sideline official relays the information to the opposing head coach. The game clock and play clock do not stop. The player must complete the process and get into position on their side of the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped or be subject to a foul. During the process, if the ball is ready, the officials will not prevent Team A from snapping the ball. Normal substitution rules still apply.

• These procedures, which are intended to prevent the defense from being unable to match up during normal scrimmage situations, should not be used in the case of substitution for a last-second field goal. In that situation, the offense is making a normal and expected personnel change. The defense should be prepared to respond appropriately. In no case should the Center Judge be standing over the ball to prevent the snap as the clock runs out.

## 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 on backward passes. Once you read run to your side, focus on the blocks at the point of attack. On a run to the other side, focus on backside blocks. Stay with any threatened runner behind



the line on your side. Be prepared to go into the side zone to cover the play as necessary. If the quarterback goes out of bounds to your sideline, 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 to your side, be prepared to cover action around the quarterback. If the quarterback pitches the ball, stay with the quarterback. After any change of possession be alert for action on the quarterback who is a defenseless player. Specifically be alert for targeting 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, be prepared to cover action around the quarterback, assist the Referee or Center Judge on backside blocks and transition to any blocks developing at the second level. In addition to offensive and defensive holding and chop blocks, be alert for clipping fouls behind the play. If the ball is dead between the hashmarks, place the ball in accordance with the forward progress designated by the wing official. If the ball is dead in a side zone or out of bounds, assist in relaying the ball to the Center Judge for placement.

**Center Judge:** 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 on backward passes. Once you read run to your side, focus on the blocks at the point of attack. On a run to the other side, focus on backside blocks. Stay with any threatened runner behind the line on your side. Be prepared to go into the side zone to cover the play as necessary. If the quarterback goes out of bounds to your sideline, 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 to your side, be prepared to cover action around the quarterback. If the quarterback pitches the ball, stay with the quarterback. After any change of possession, be alert for action on the quarterback who is a defenseless player. Specifically be alert for targeting at all times and illegal blocks when the quarterback is clearly out of the play.

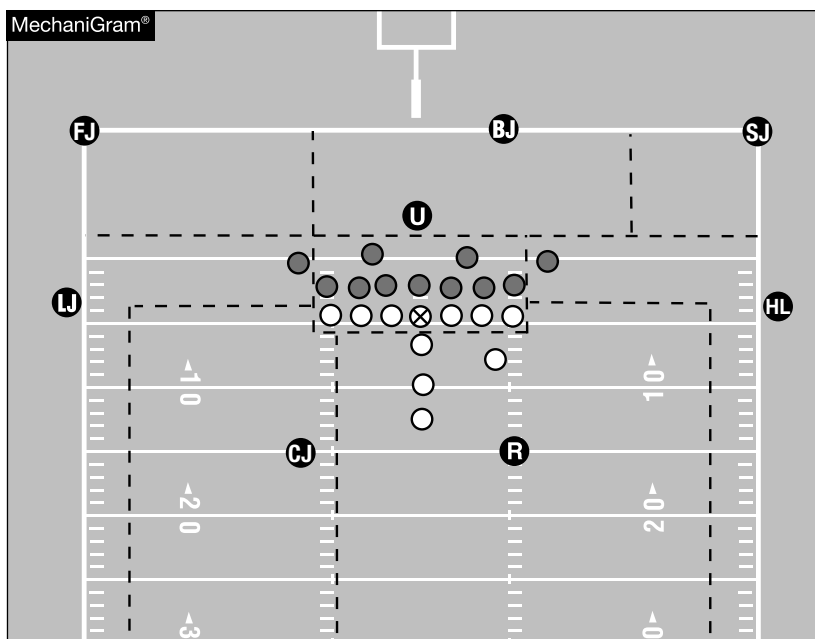
**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge:** Observe the initial action on or by the offensive player who is your key, especially if they're pressed. Observe the blocking in front of the runner behind the line of scrimmage on runs to your side or in the neutral zone. Determine forward progress when necessary.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

**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 goal line. 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 yardline.

**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, you may spot the ball at the end of the play, in which case, remain with the ball until the Umpire or Center Judge gets to the ball. Also, be prepared to rule on goal line plays on long runs.

## Goal Line Positioning and Zones

The MechaniGram depicts the positioning and zones when Team A is on or inside Team B's five yardline. 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.” Quarterbacks may not be moving toward the line of scrimmage as they take the snap; all Team A players must be set before the ball may be legally snapped. Watch also for Team A players 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 onfield ruling after a conference by officials. If the ball is snapped on or inside Team B’s seven yardline, you are responsible for knowing if a pass is backward or forward.

**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 yardline 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.

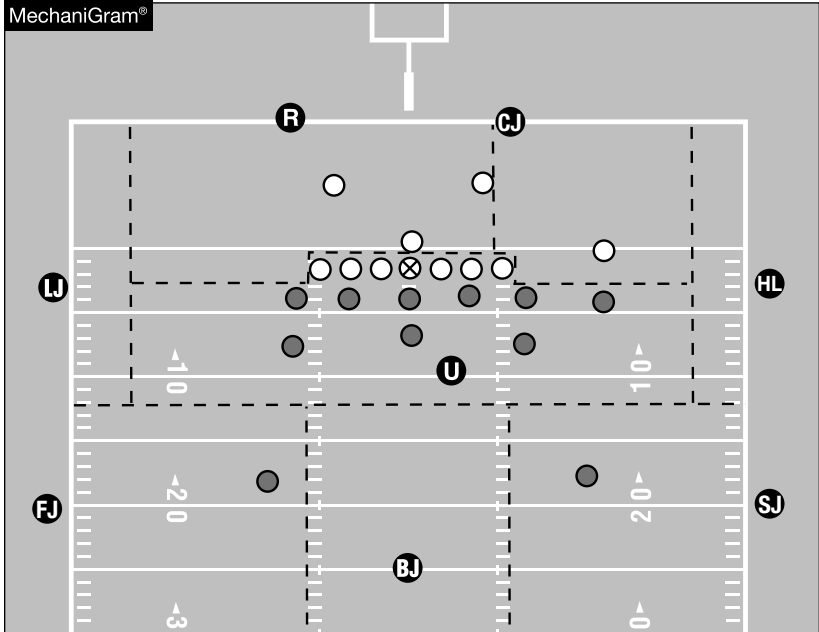
**Center Judge:** Starting position and coverage is the same as for any scrimmage play, except if the ball is snapped on or inside Team B’s seven yardline and there is no alternate official available, you are responsible for knowing if a pass is backward or forward.

**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 yardline. 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 yardline, starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. When the ball is snapped from inside Team B’s 25 yardline to Team B’s seven yardline, 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 yardline 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 yardline in, starting position is on the endline where it intersects with the sideline, one step off the sideline at a 45-degree angle from the endline corner pylon.

**Back Judge:** When the ball is snapped outside Team B’s 25 yardline, starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. When the ball

is snapped on or inside Team B's 25 yardline to the goal line, starting position is on the endline. 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 yardline in, you will get help on the endline from the deep wings. If necessary on a close play, look through and coordinate with the official facing the receiver.



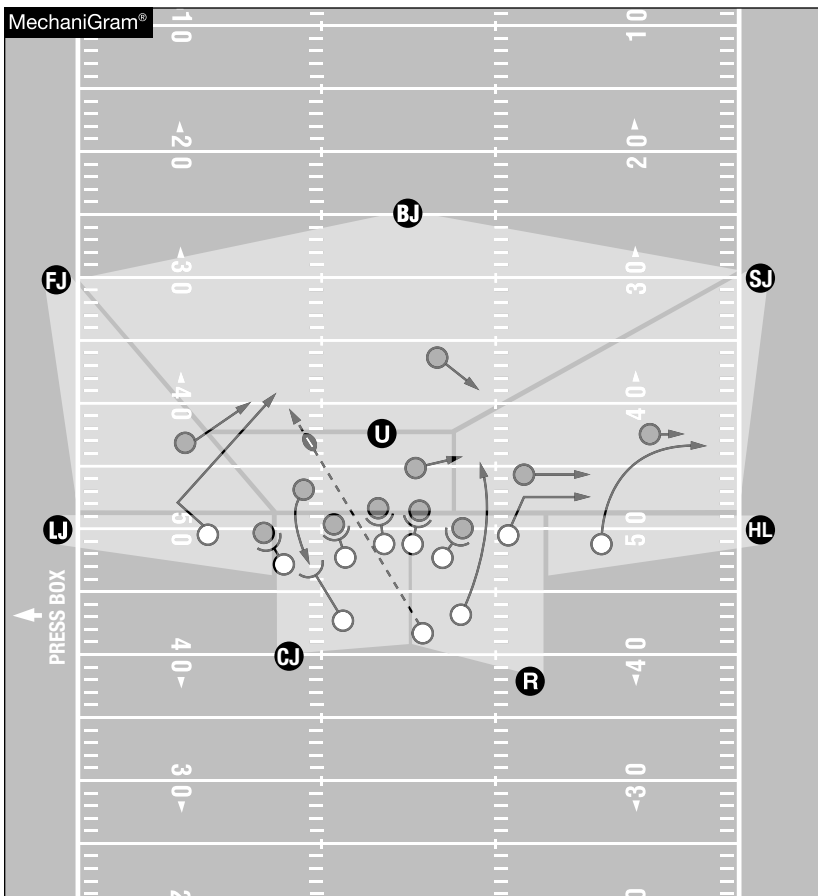
## Reverse Goal Line Mechanics

When Team A snaps the ball on or inside its own three yardline, the Head Line-Judge and Line Judge must use reverse goal line mechanics. Move immediately to the goal line at the snap. If the snap is between the three and 10 yardline, 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

**Point of emphasis:** Priority and focus for safety fouls against quarterbacks when they are under duress supersedes the potential for other fouls.

**Referee:** Primarily responsible for the passer until there is no threat of a foul. Then, any lineman who is a threat for a foul, including the initial key, the tackle on the right side. Verbally alert defenders when the passer has released the ball. Assist the Line Judge on the legality of a forward pass thrown beyond or behind the neutral zone, or out of bounds. Be prepared to rule on intentional grounding; know the status of the passer in relation



to the tackle box and know if they were under duress. 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. 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 they are clearly out of the play. After action on the quarterback, move into the area and be a presence to prevent potential fouls.

**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 prepared to assist the wing officials on ineligibles downfield. When there is an empty backfield or on passes over the middle, you must be on high alert. When the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's seven yardline and there is no alternate official, you are primarily responsible to rule if a pass crossed the line or if the passer was beyond the line.

**Center Judge:** Responsible for the passer until there is no threat of a foul. Then, any lineman who is a threat for a foul, including the initial key, the tackle on the left side. Be prepared to help the Referee on intentional grounding. Responsible for Team A's goal line after a change of possession. Be alert for targeting fouls and illegal blocks at all time. When the quarterback drops back, retreat at a 45-degree angle to maintain a proper cushion. You are responsible for the quarterback when they scramble outside the numbers and into the left sideline bench area.

**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 the player. 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. 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, observe where the ineligible are at the time the passer releases the ball. The offside line of scrimmage official has primary responsibility for ineligible downfield.

**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, that player 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 behind or beyond the line of scrimmage. 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, observe where the ineligible are at the time the passer releases the ball. The offside line of scrimmage official has primary responsibility for ineligible downfield.

**Side Judge and Field Judge:** Observe contact on your eligible receiver and the defensive back. Cover the sideline from your original position to the endline. 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.



**Back Judge:** The basic responsibility for preliminary action on the line are 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. and is determined at the snap. On long pass plays, you may spot the ball at the end of the play, in which case, remain with the ball until the Umpire or Center Judge gets to the ball.

**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 (O3) 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 (O5) 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. When contact occurs on a pass that is blatantly uncatchable and the covering official drops the penalty marker, the non-covering official will give the covering official information that the pass was uncatchable. If the covering official agrees and has no other foul, the covering official reports that information to the Referee. The Referee announces that there is no foul and gives the reason, and optionally gives the disregard the flag signal.

### 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.

# Initial Responsibilities for Receivers

## 8 OFFICIALS

Most offensive formations have five eligible receivers, not counting the backfield player that receives the snap. It is important to establish which official has initial responsibility for each eligible receiver. The two line of scrimmage officials and the three deep officials are assigned these initial responsibilities.

The duration of initial responsibility starts at the snap and extends until the assigned receiver is moving freely in space 1) without near and immediate threat from a defender and 2) without the receiver moving directly towards an opponent for a potential pick play. This position in open field is called “free of foul.” Man-to-man defensive coverage on eligible receivers typically produce longer durations of initial responsibility since the defender sticks close after the receiver moves after the snap. Crossing patterns that start at the snap (receivers that move immediately inside) also create longer durations of initial responsibility because of the threat of picks. A receiver may be free of foul immediately after the snap if the defensive secondary is in a zone coverage and the receiver releases towards open space.

The five officials read the offensive formation and determine how many receivers are outside the tackle box on either side. This determination is made only at the snap to account for a receiver that is in motion. A numbering system is used to identify each of the outside receivers on either side of the formation. The widest receiver is #1, the next widest is #2, and so on.

### Determining Initial Responsibilities

The Side Judge and Field Judge have initial responsibility for the widest receiver on their side. The exception is when two or more outside receivers are lined up in a Stack or Bunch (see below).

The assignments for the Back Judge and two line of scrimmage officials are determined as follows:

#### Three backs in the tackle box

- The Back Judge has initial responsibility for the first back that releases downfield.
- The line of scrimmage officials have initial responsibility for any back that leaves the tackle box toward their side zone.



## 2 x 1 formation

- The Back Judge has initial responsibility for the #2 receiver on the side of the formation with two receivers.
- The line of scrimmage officials have initial responsibility for the back in the tackle box closest to them at the snap.

## 2 x 2 formation

- The Back Judge has initial responsibility for the #2 receiver on the Line Judge's side of the formation.
- The Head Line-Judge has initial responsibility for the #2 receiver on their side.
- The Line Judge has initial responsibility for the back in the tackle box.

## Trips Formation

When three receivers are outside the tackle box on one side of the formation, the Back Judge has the #3 receiver, and the line of scrimmage official has the #2 receiver. If the #3 receiver is lined up as a Tight End and stays in to block, the Back Judge goes to the #2 receiver and the line of scrimmage official takes #3.

## Stacking/Bunching

Formations that have two or more receivers that are in close proximity to each other are called Stacks (receivers in vertical column) or Bunches (one on the line of scrimmage, one or more in backfield).

Initial responsibilities for Stacks/Bunches are determined as follows:

- If only the #2 and #3 receiver are in a Stack/Bunch, the Back Judge and line of scrimmage official will read the routes to determine initial responsibility. The Back Judge is assigned initial responsibility of the receiver that releases vertically or away from the line of scrimmage official; the line of scrimmage official has the other.
- If three receivers are in a Stack/Bunch as trips on one side of the formation, the line of scrimmage official defaults to the receiver with the shallowest route. The Back Judge and either Side Judge or Field Judge take the remaining vertical routes, with the Side Judge or Field Judge taking the outside (closest to the sideline) route.
- If four receivers are in a Stack/Bunch on one side of the formation, the determination for initial responsibilities is the same as for a three-receiver Stack/Bunch above, except the Back Judge has the two, interior vertical routes instead of just one.

### Other Factors for Initial Responsibility

- On multiple receiver sets, officials should prioritize observing any receiver that has a defender pressing him at the snap. “Press” or “pressing” is a defender lined up immediately across the neutral zone from a receiver with the intent to jam him as soon as the ball is snapped. This includes multiple officials observing this action against a single receiver if other receivers are not pressed.
- An official’s initial responsibility ends when the receiver gets to a position that is free of foul. At this point, the official should go into zone coverage, observing receivers in their area of coverage.
- An official should expect situations where they need to observe two receivers at the same time. This is especially true when receivers line up near each other and intentionally cross their patterns or when waiting for Stacks/Bunches to declare their route.
- It should be expected that the duration of initial responsibility is longer when in the Red Zone. Man-to-man defense is most prevalent in the Red Zone and receivers getting to a position that is free of foul usually occurs if and only when the pass is delayed due to a scrambling passer.

# Punts



## Positioning and Zones

**Referee:** Take a position slightly behind and to the side of the kicker, outside the tight end position and on the right 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 the kicker when the ball is kicked. If the kicker is near the endline, straddle the endline and warn the kicker before the snap.

**Umpire:** Position is approximately 10 yards off the line. Find a spot that allows you to observe the action on and around the snapper. On regular punts with normal substitution processes (no delay by Team A or last-moment switch from scrimmage formation to punt formation), it is acceptable for the Umpire to assume the duties of holding the snap while facing the Referee. Once released, the Umpire can then retreat to the normal position. If the punt formation is late in forming or Team A originally sets in a normal scrimmage formation, the Center Judge will continue with normal duties spotting the ball and holding it until the snap at the Referee's instructions.

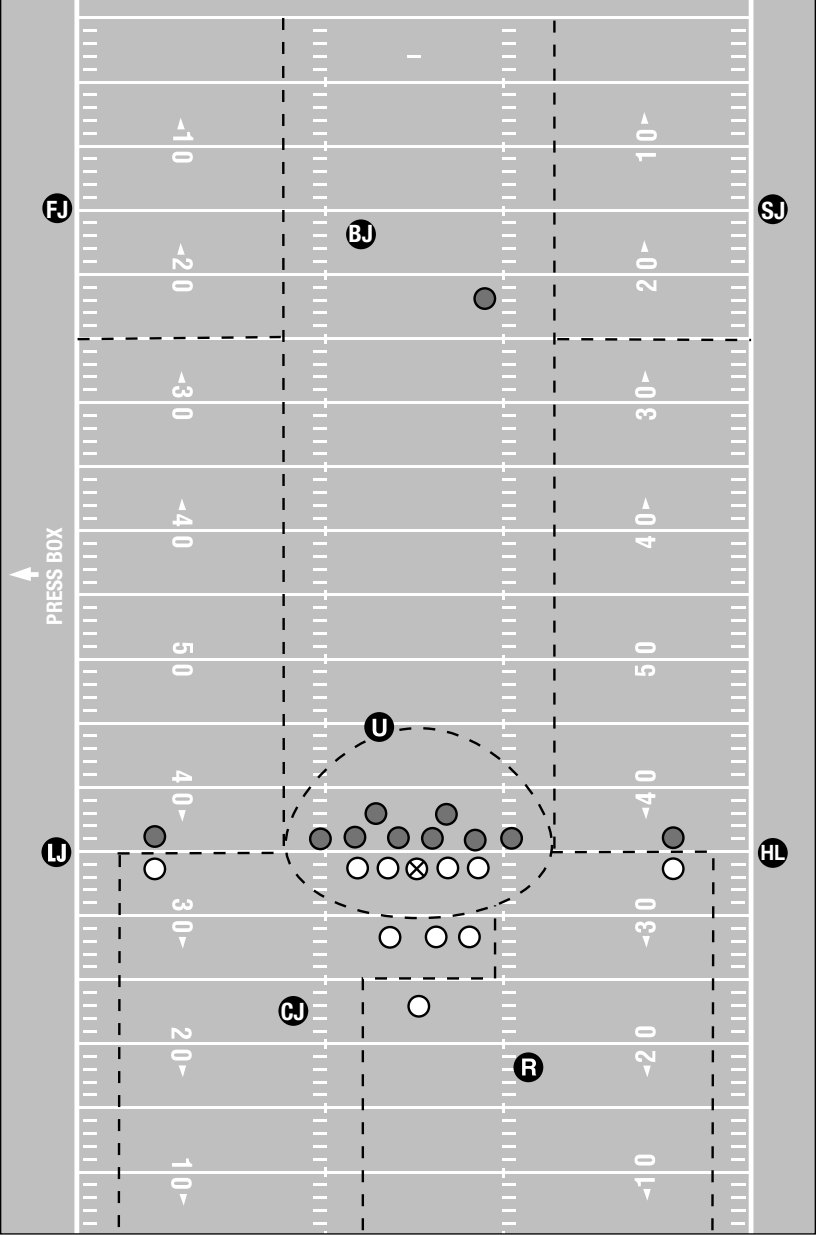
**Center Judge:** Coordinate substitution process with Referee. Be diligent in communicating with Team A not to snap the ball until they are released to do so. Take an initial position between the snapper and the shield or personal protector and in line with the punter. When released by the Referee, work to get into a position even with the punter and outside the normal tight end position. (See acceptable Umpire mechanic above.)

**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 A's 45 yardline, take an initial position at the goal line pylon.

**Back Judge:** The basic position is no less than five yards behind and at the side of the deepest receiver, favoring the wide side of the field. However, if the deepest receiver takes a position inside their 10 yardline, line up on the goal line. Work to maintain a 45-degree angle with the receiver while the ball is in flight.





## Coverage

**Referee:** Observe action on the kicker and be aware of the flight of the ball off their 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, during the kick and on the return. Specifically, be alert for targeting fouls at all times and illegal blocks of players clearly out of the play.

**Umpire:** Observe the blocks of Team A and action by Team B players. Pay particular attention to the Team B player over the snapper. Turn and move toward the return area when the first wave of Team A linemen has reached you.

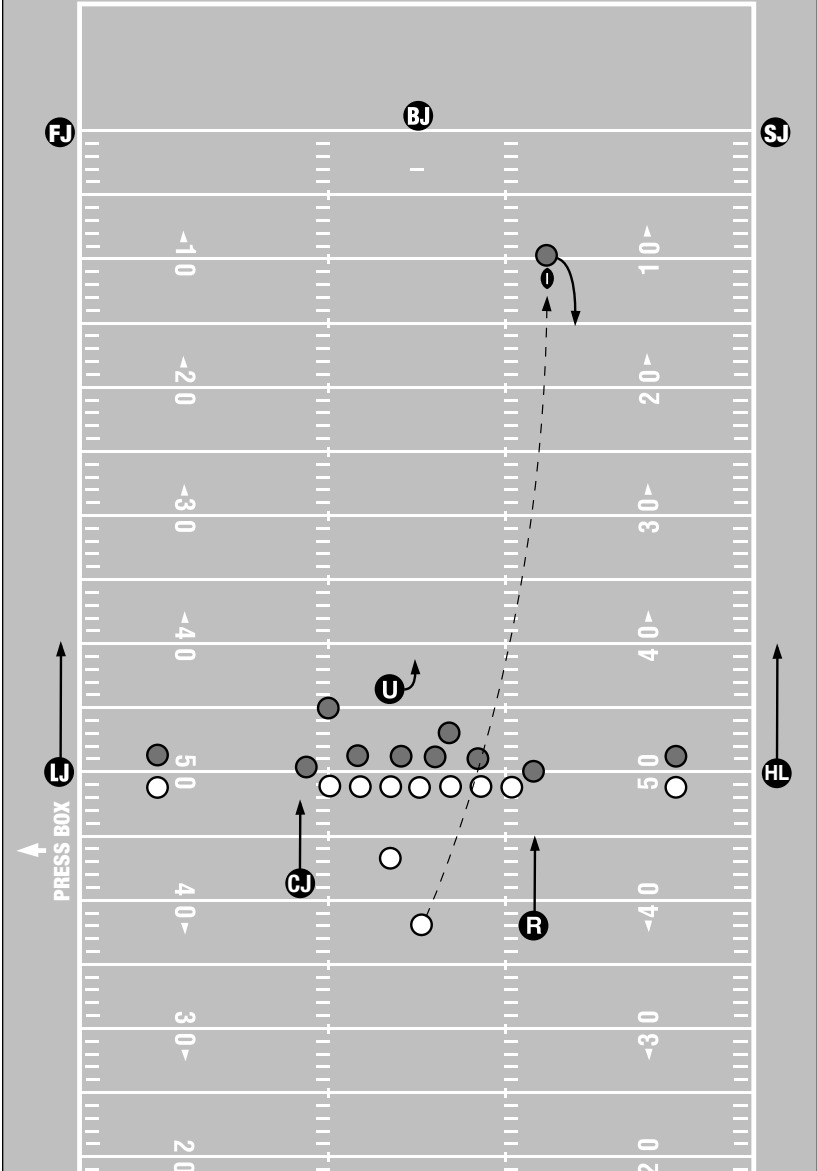
**Center Judge:** Primarily responsible for observing blocking by the shield and secondarily for action on the kicker. Assists the Referee in determining whether contact on the kicker is illegal. You have goal line responsibility on long returns.

**Head Line-Judge:** After the snap, hold your position until the ball crosses the neutral zone and signal if the kick is tipped. 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:** 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 they start 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

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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**

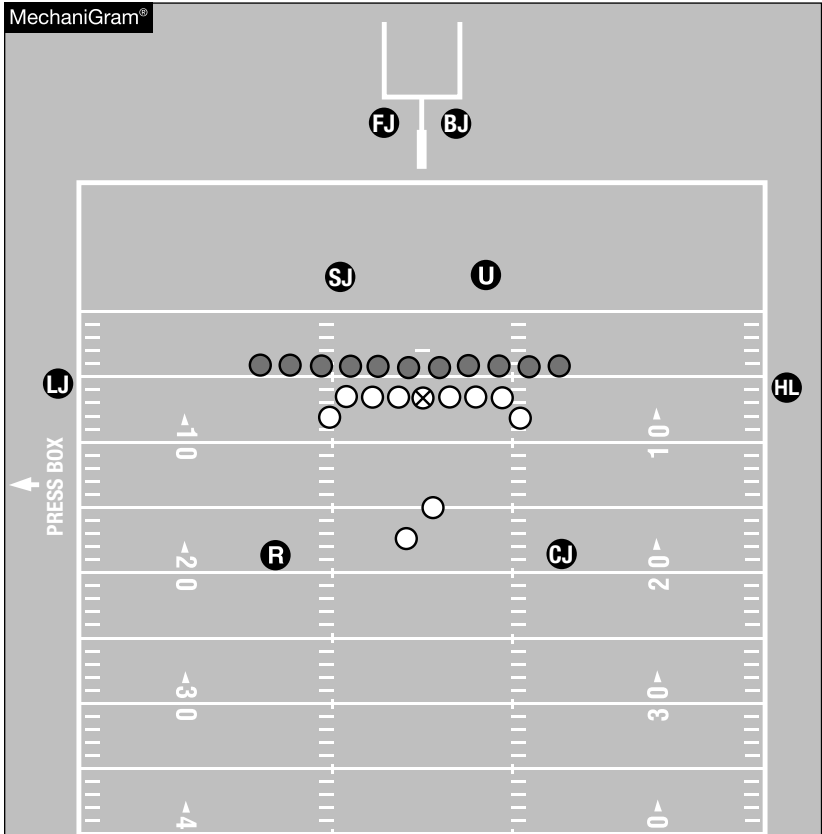
The Center Judge and the wing official they are facing will retreat and box in the play. The wing official on the same side of the formation as the Center Judge will hold the line of scrimmage until it is no longer threatened. As the play develops, that wing official must adjust to officiate the play.

# Scoring Kicks and Tries



## Positioning and Zones for Tries

**Referee:** After a touchdown, the Referee will not allow the offense to snap the ball for the try until they have received clearance from replay that the game will not be stopped. In order to help TV know when to exit their replays of the score and surroundings, Referees will position themselves between the snapper and holder and will remain in this position as we wait on replay. When receiving the



confirmation signal from replay, the Referee will move back into position, signal to clear the Center Judge or Umpire and will ensure that the play clock has at least 25 seconds remaining. If the play clock is under 25 seconds when they receive confirmation from replay, they will give signal O7 to the play clock operator to immediately reset the play clock to 25. This should allow TV time to be back and ready for live action. If a team has no kicker and holder on the try, use normal scrimmage mechanics and the Center Judge 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.

**Center Judge:** The Center Judge spots the ball and coordinates with the Referee when to release the center to snap the ball. The Center Judge also coordinates the substitution process with the Referee. After being released, the Center Judge takes a position at least 10 yards wide of the holder, opposite the Referee in Team A's backfield. Primary keys are the tackle and tight end on your side. The Center Judge has goal line responsibility on long returns after possession by Team B.

**Umpire and Side Judge:** The Umpire and Side Judge line up on Team B's side of the ball. The Side Judge is positioned opposite the Center Judge. The Umpire takes a position five to seven yards off the ball opposite the Side Judge while keeping the snapper in their view. After the snap, the Umpire is primarily responsible for action by and against the center and action by and against the two guards. The Side Judge should be positioned five to seven yards off the ball. They observe action on and against the tackle and tight end on their side of the field. Both officials should be alert for leverage, leaping and the pull and shoot. Umpire is primary to observe the defense's formation over the snapper and defensive action on the snapper.

**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge:** Take regular positions. Always know the eligible and ineligible receivers on your side of the ball.

Observe action by and against the tight end and wingback on your side. At the snap, step one or two yards onto the defensive side of the ball to give you a better view of action (e.g., the pull and shoot) by and against the wingback and tight end. Be ready to cover the sideline from the line of scrimmage to the endline. Both are responsible for covering the goal line when the kick is blocked or faked. They are responsible for determining and ruling on whether a kick crosses 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 in the end zone or on kick 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 endline. The Field Judge moves to any position that will allow them to help on the play.

### **All**

Be alert if a Team B player is positioned to return the kick.

### **Fake Kicks**

As a guideline on fake kicks, when the ball is snapped inside Team B's 20 yardline, 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 yardline, 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 A uses a swinging gate formation with a kicker and holder in position, take initial positions as a normal scoring kick with the Side Judge or Center Judge adjusting to a wider position in front of the gate on their respective side. 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 A is spread with no holder and kicker in position, assume normal scrimmage down positions. If Team A subsequently shifts to a traditional scoring kick formation with a kicker and holder in position, take normal scoring kick positions.

## 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 play clock goes under 25 seconds.

## 2-Point Try

If a 2-point try ends short of but near the goal line, the covering official should work the end of the play as they would any other scrimmage down. That would include giving a dead ball signal, using the whistle and marking a spot. After the play is clearly over, the covering official or Referee may then use Signal 10 indicating an unsuccessful try. This will avoid any confusion with Instant Replay, coaches, fans etc. that the crew is signaling that the try is unsuccessful.

## Positioning and Zones for Field Goals

**Referee:** Responsible for Team A substitutions and coordinating with the Umpire on when to clear the snapper. The Referee uses the same mechanics as for tries after the ball is made ready for play. The Referee has responsibility for Team A's goalline when the kick is blocked.

**Umpire, Center Judge and Side Judge:** All three line up on Team B's side of the ball. The Umpire takes a position five to seven yards off the ball with a good view of the snapper. After the snap, the Umpire is primarily responsible for action by and against the snapper and action by and against the two guards. The Umpire is primary to observe the defense's formation over the snapper and defensive action on the snapper. The Center Judge and Side Judge flank the Umpire, with the Center Judge to the Umpire's left and the Side Judge to the Umpire's right. This alignment is the same for field goal attempts from any spot between the inbounds lines. They observe action on and against the tackle and tight end on their side of the field. If the kicking team has a tackle-over formation, they should key on both tackles if on their side. All three officials

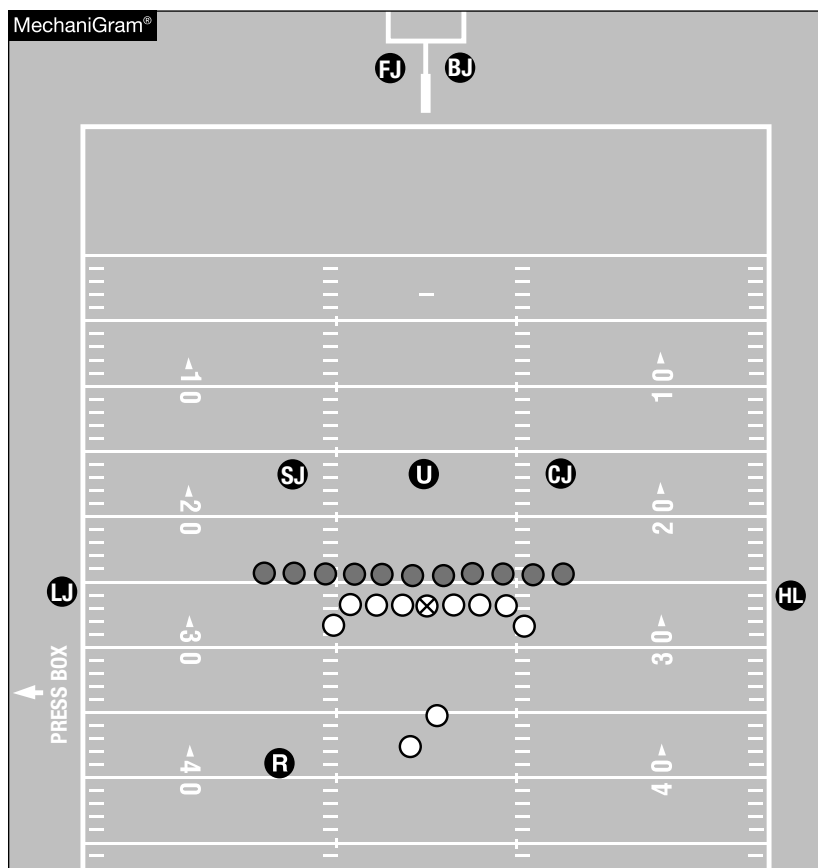
should be alert for leverage, leaping and the pull and shoot. On a blocked kick, the Center Judge has responsibility for observing potential fouls against the kicker and holder.

**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge:** Same mechanics as for tries. Both are responsible for covering the goal line on short field goals when the kick is blocked or faked.

**Field Judge and Back Judge:** Same mechanics as for tries.

**All:**

Be alert if a Team B player is positioned to return the kick.



# Timeout



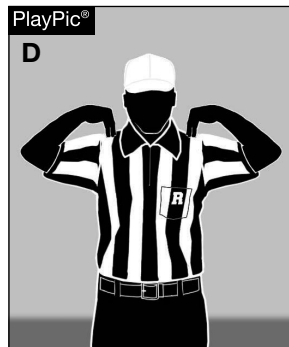
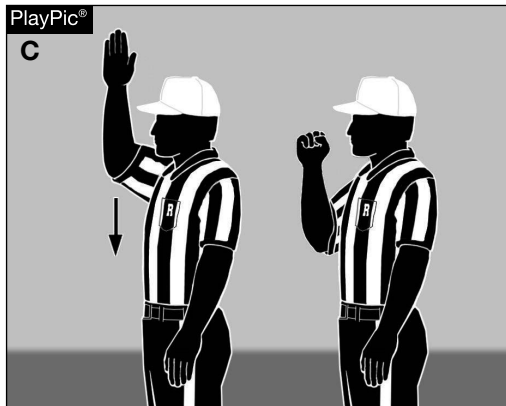
To indicate which team took the timeout, the Referee should “chuck” their hands in the direction of the team (PlayPic A). Optionally, the Referee may point to that team. PlayPic B shows the signal for a TV or media timeout.

The red hat will stand at the top of the numbers for a full TV timeout and at the bottom of the numbers for a floater timeout.

The Referee should use the microphone to announce which team took the timeout and how many it has used. If not miked or if the mike fails, the Referee should signal the third timeout by making three tugs on an imaginary steam whistle, as seen in PlayPic C. In non-TV games, teams have the option of calling a 30-second timeout. To indicate a 30-second timeout, the Referee gives the signal shown in PlayPic D.

All officials should record the team requesting the timeout, the quarter and the time remaining on the game clock. The calling official also records the player’s number or that 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.

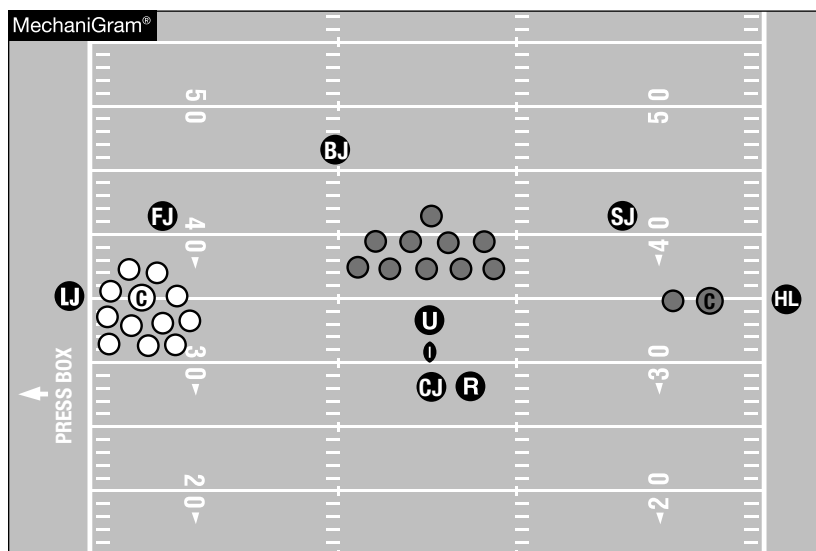


**Referee:** Stand away from other officials and the players. On the Back Judge's signal, which comes with 30 seconds remaining in the timeout, point to the appropriate sideline officials so they may tell the teams the timeout is over. On the Back Judge's subsequent signal that the timeout has expired, 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, the referee shall inform the head coach.

**Umpire:** Stand in position to prevent the snap. With 10 seconds left in the timeout, move to position and perform presnap duties.

**Center Judge:** Stand over the ball during the timeout, then be in position to prevent the snap until the Referee gives the ready-for-play signal. If a team takes a timeout after assuming a position over the ball, make certain the ball is accurately reset to its proper spot.

**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge:** Inform the head coach which team took the timeout, how many each team has remaining and when the timeout has expired. Stand near their respective sidelines near the coach(es) and player(s). (Note: In some conferences, those officials will be administering the timeout.)



**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. For TV time outs, go to the red hat and stay with them until 30 seconds remain in the time out, then jog to your position, alerting officials near the sideline huddles to begin getting the teams back on the field. At the end of the timeout, the Back Judge will point to the Referee who will then make the ball ready for play.

# 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 will report to the Side Judge prior to the game. The clock operator is to inform them if they will be located in the press box or on the sideline, and to confirm the procedure the officials should use for communicating with the timer during the game.

All pregame and halftime activities will be synchronized with the official game clock. The clock operator should start the game clock 90 minutes before game time. The halftime intermission will be timed on the game clock. The game clock starts when the Referee gives the start-the-clock signal.

The electric clock operator must have an extra stopwatch available 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. The Side Judge will then pick up the correct game time on their stopwatch.

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 Team A is awarded a first down after the Two-Minute Timeout in each half, when Team B 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.

On scrimmage downs, if the game clock has been stopped, it will be restarted on the next snap or when the Referee gives the start-the-clock signal according to rule. On plays where the ball carrier is out of bounds and the clock is not inside two minutes, the Referee will signal the game clock restarted when the ball next to be snapped is on the field and being relayed to the Center Judge or Umpire to be spotted. The intent is to be consistent and keep the game moving when the game clock is not inside two minutes. It will be started on the snap if the ball carrier is out of bounds after the Two-Minute Timeout in each half.



The game clock will no longer stop when Team A is awarded a first down inbounds except after the Two-Minute Timeout in each half. When the game clock is stopped to award Team A a first down after the Two-Minute Timeout in each half, the clock will be restarted by the Referee when the ball is ready for play. The ball is ready for play when the official places the ball down, steps away to their position and is in a position to officiate.

When the 40-second interval applies and the game clock is to start when the ball is spotted, the Referee blows the whistle and gives the start-the-clock signal, which indicates the ball is ready for play. When the 25-second clock is in force, the Referee will give the traditional ready-for-play 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 incompletion 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.



Remind the timer 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 game clock to zero if the ball is legally snapped.



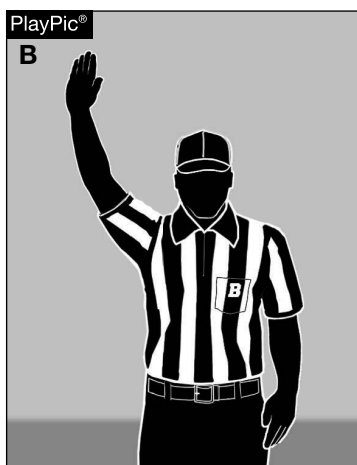
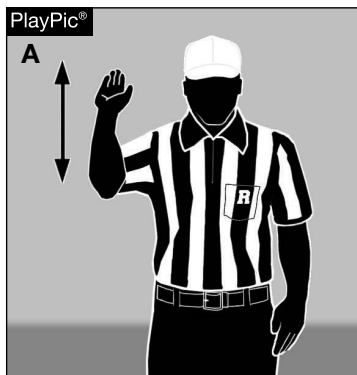
When the period officially ends, the Referee holds the ball above their head.

## Play Clocks

When play clocks are available, they are the official delay-of-game timepiece. The play clock operator will report to the Back Judge prior to the game. They should be instructed to set the displays to either 25 or 40 seconds and to start the clocks at the proper time. The following game scenarios, including official's signals and resultant play clock operation, should be reviewed by the Back Judge with the play clock operator (see Section 12 – Game and Play Clocks on Page 122).

- Scrimmage down ends with a running game clock
- Scrimmage down ends with a stopped game clock
- Touchdown and try
- Free kick
- Game clock stopped for injury/helmet off

If the 40-second clock has run down to less than 25 seconds, the Referee should have the clock reset to 25 seconds by using signal O7 (alternately raising and lowering their arm in a pumping motion with their palm flat and facing up, see PlayPic A, next page). If the play clock has run down to less than 25 seconds and the ball is not ready for play, the Referee should use signal O7 to have the play clock operator reset the play clock to 25 seconds. 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. If the Referee must reset the clock to 40 seconds, the signal is made with both



arms. Play clock operators should be instructed that they are to react to those signals only from the Referee. Another official may communicate a play clock problem to the Referee by using one of those signals, but only the Referee's signal should result in the play clock being reset.

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 25/40-second count, the displays should be immediately reset.

At the end of a period, the play clock should be reset to 40 or 25 as usual and will start even if there is less time on the running game clock than the proper time on the play clock.

If there is a malfunction, 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 with the Back Judge manually timing the count on their watch. The Back Judge will raise both arms when the play clock reaches 0:15 to alert the Coach to Player operator to turn off the system. The Back Judge will then raise one arm straight overhead when the play clock reaches 0:10 (PlayPic B) and the arm moved down continuously. The arm is straight out with five seconds left. (PlayPic C). When the arm is at their thigh, the play clock has expired.

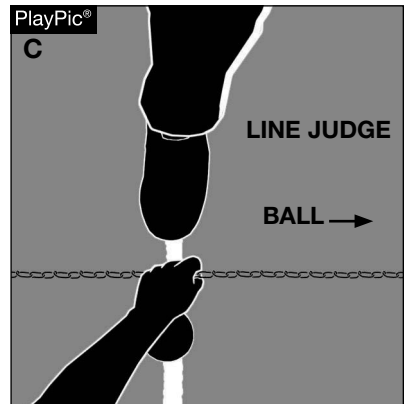
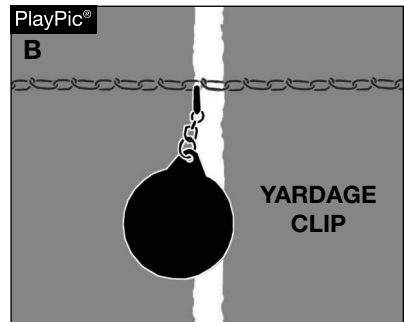
When any time is lost due to the game clock being started erroneously, such as when a dead-ball foul is called, the game clock must be adjusted. If the game clock operator knows the time that needs to be reset to in this circumstance, they should do so without prompting from the Referee.

# Measurements

## 8 OFFICIALS

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 their 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 pressbox. 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 pressbox side of the ball. The Field Judge ensures that officials or players do not block the pressbox's view of the measurement. If the measurement is outside a hash, the Center 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 they have 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 the chain is down, the Referee will always face the pressbox to make their ruling. 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 their 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 hashmark. Center Judge will have obtained a new ball and have it at the inbounds mark. The Back Judge maintains their 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 they accompany 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 the goal line Team A is defending (PlayPic E). 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

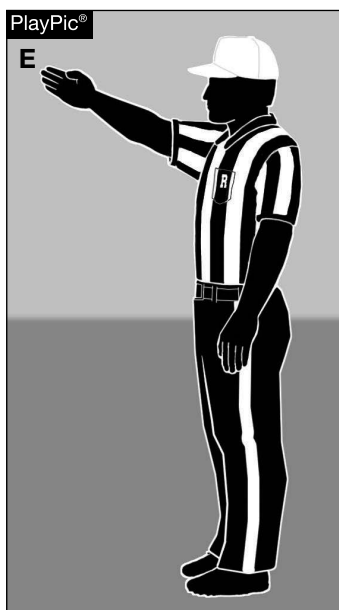
If the measurement results in a new series, the Referee signals the first down, as seen in PlayPic E. The Head Line-Judge or Line Judge need not hold the chain as they accompany the chain crew back to the sideline, but they must go all the way to the sideline and indicate to where the new series will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

Use of a second clip is mandatory. The clip operator should mark the new yardline with a second clip, leaving the original clip in place until after the first-down play ends.



# Intermission Between Halves



When the Referee has determined the first half has ended, they will immediately start the 20-minute halftime clock. The Side Judge starts their 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.

At the end of the first half, after the teams have left the field and the Referee has cleared the final play with the on-field crew and the instant replay official, and there is no coach challenge, the Referee will declare the half ended. After the Referee has declared the first half ended, there can be no additional replay reviews from the previous play (Exception: For games in which Instant Replay is not used, a halftime Targeting video review as outlined in the Penalty section of Rule 9-1-3 & 9-1-4 may be completed).

Game management will determine the timing of halftime activities. The field will be available to squad members no later than three minutes prior to the second half kickoff. When the field is available to players, at least two game officials must be present back on the field. The field is again divided into the L-shaped warm-up configuration for the balance of the halftime intermission. When any squad member enters the playing enclosure during the halftime intermission, a staff member from that team must be present on the field.

When the field is available to players as determined by game management during the halftime intermission, the playing field will be divided into an "L-shaped" configuration with the 30-yard lines forming the "L" (See Section 6 – MechaniGram A).

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 Center Judge obtains the proper ball for the kickoff.

When the field is available to players, at least two game officials must be present back on the field.

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 Center 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, Center Judge and Head Line-Judge meet and record on their game cards the yardline on which the ball is spotted, the down and the line-to-gain. The ball should not be moved by the Center Judge until that is complete.

The Line Judge goes to the proper yardline 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 Enforcement

### 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 their 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, Center Judge, Head Line-Judge and Line Judge will work together to enforce the yardage distance while the Referee makes the announcement.

The Umpire is an especially unique position to ensure that the Center Judge, Head Line-Judge and Line Judge marked off the penalty correctly.

## 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 their choice to the Referee.

It should not be necessary, in most cases, for the Referee to confer with the Center Judge 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.

### **Umpire**

The Umpire will delay along with the official not in charge of the chains and independently mark off the penalty yardage to confirm that the Center Judge and official in charge of the chains have enforced the penalty correctly.

### **Center Judge**

The primary responsibility for marking off penalties is assigned to the Center Judge. As such, it is imperative they have absolute knowledge of all penalty enforcement principles and are able to enforce any penalty with minimal Referee involvement.

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

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

They 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 their sideline position at approximately the same time as the Center Judge, who will look to the sideline official 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 Center Judge and the official in charge of the chains have completed their duties. The opposite official will then, along with the Umpire, mark off the penalty yardage and confirm that the Center Judge 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, Center Judge, Head Line-Judge and Line Judge and make sure that no errors have been made.

Any official who feels a mistake has been made 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 their 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 and offending player.

**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.

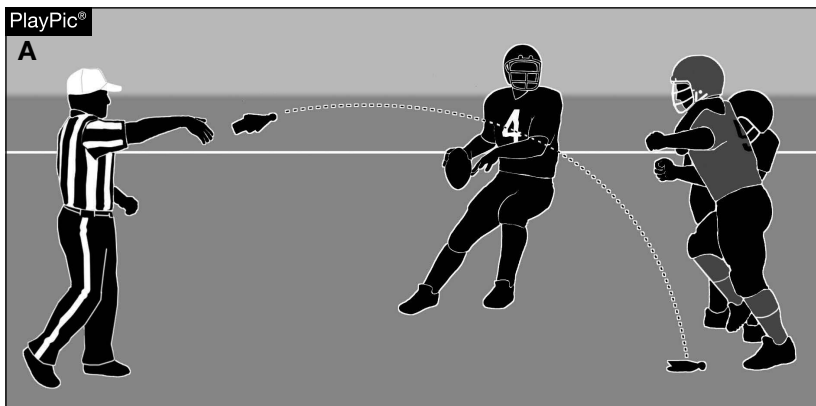
**NOTE 2:** The personal foul signal and announcement are to be used before the signal for any personal foul that has its own signal.

If a player who scores a touchdown commits an unsportsmanlike conduct foul before crossing the goal line (live-ball foul), the Referee should announce that fact. If the foul occurs after the player has scored and the ball is dead, the Referee should announce that fact as well.

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.

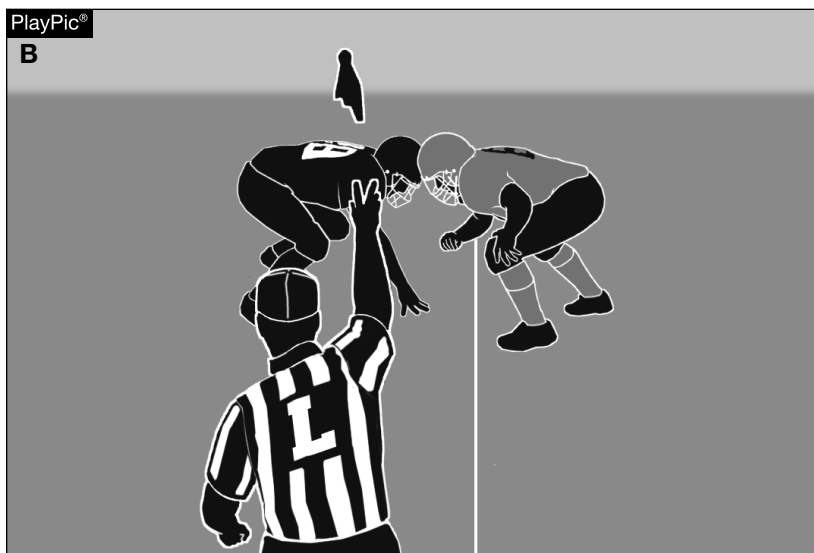
## Fouls

An official calling a foul will either throw or drop their 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). 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 yardline, 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 the 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 moving 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 **Center Judge** starts 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 Center Judge 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.



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 of a targeting foul, the calling official must determine if the action would have been a foul if targeting were not involved. If the targeting foul does include another foul, both fouls must be reported to the Referee. The Referee will then announce both fouls. For example, "Personal foul, kick catch interference, with targeting, kicking team, (player number), 15-yard penalty. The previous play is under review." The signals should be coordinated with the announcement. In the example above, that would be signals 38, 33, 24 and 47. If targeting is the only reason there is a foul

on a defenseless passer, do not announce roughing the passer. After the review, if the foul for targeting is confirmed, the Referee will add to their announcement that by rule the player has been disqualified.

### **Additional Guidelines**

If the enforcement is correct, the down box should be moved to the spot and the chains moved (if appropriate). If an auxiliary down box is used, the Line Judge or Head Line-Judge instructs the holder to move the marker to the spot.

While the Center Judge is marking off the penalty, the Referee should take a position in the clear where they 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, horizontally in the direction of the offending 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, it should be switched on when the penalty is being enforced, announce the foul, the number and 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) number 76 (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 Center Judge 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 Center Judge will enforce the penalty at the succeeding spot without signaling.

An official who calls a foul requiring disqualification or ejection 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 speech with signaling. For instance, for an offensive holding penalty, the Referee should come to a complete stop in an area that is clearly visible to the press box, turn on the 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.

## Extra Periods



If regulation time ends with the teams tied, the game proceeds to extra periods as provided by the rules.

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 Field Judge and Side Judge escort their respective captains to the inbounds line, then return to the vicinity of the sideline. The Head Line-Judge, Center Judge, Line Judge and Back Judge remain at the sideline. No team personnel are to be inside the nine-yard marks during the toss. The Center 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 should face each other with their backs to their sidelines. The visiting captain calls the toss, telling the Referee their choice before the Referee flips the coin. The Umpire should audibly repeat the captain's choice before the flip.

The Referee indicates the toss winner by placing their 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. The remaining option is given to the captain 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 their 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 25 yardline.

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.

If a 2-point try ends short of but near the goal line, the covering official should work the end of the play as they would any other scrimmage down. That would include giving a dead ball signal, using the whistle and marking a spot. After the play is clearly over, the covering official or Referee may then use Signal 10 indicating an unsuccessful try. This will avoid any confusion with Instant Replay, coaches, fans etc. that the crew is signaling that the try is unsuccessful.



# Instant Replay



## Booth Review

- The Referee announces the result of the play.
- The Referee announces the ruling on the field and that the previous play is “under further review.”
- The Referee gets a brief description of the play from the covering official(s) to discern what unique aspects of the ruling can be relayed to the replay official.
- The Referee moves to the side of the field where the headset is located. A sideline replay assistant (SRA) hands the headset to the Referee. The SRA steps several yards away so they are out of camera view.
- Experimental mechanic: The use of the O2O communications system is allowed for communications between the Referee and the replay booth on Replay stoppages. The SRA communication is still required, but will be a back-up system.
- Before the game (or season if working in crews), the Referee designates one official to be the replay field official (RFO). The RFO accompanies the Referee each time a play is reviewed. Referees will designate the RFO, who will accompany them to the replay headset. Either the Side Judge, Back Judge or Field Judge should be selected as the RFO. When working in crews, the RFO should remain consistent throughout the season.
- The RFO ensures coaches and players are away from the review area.
- When the Referee first puts on the headset, the replay official must respond so that both know they have an audio connection and there is clear two-way communication between the Referee and the replay official.
- The Referee and RFO must avoid facial expressions, gestures or negative body language.
- The RFO is responsible for recording the following information:
  - Down.
  - Distance to the line to gain.
  - Yard line.
  - Hash.
  - Time.
  - Clock status (snap or ready).
  - Charged timeout.
- The RFO will stay with the Referee until the announcement is complete.
- The Center Judge stays with the ball and the players.
- The Head Line-Judge/Line Judge checks with the chain crew to determine the status of previous play should the play be reversed, then assists the Side Judge/Field Judge with communication with the head coach on the appropriate sideline.



- The Line Judge/Head Line-Judge and non-RFO officials stay with the coach on their respective sides of the field.
- The RFO stays with the Referee and is responsible for getting the outcome to the sidelines and the Center Judge. That will allow the coaches and players to know where the ball will next be put in play.
- Unless unusual circumstances exist, the official involved in the play does not accompany the Referee to the headset unless they are the RFO.

## **Coach's Challenge**

- The sideline official informs the Referee of a challenge.
- The Referee and respective sideline official confer with the coach to understand the nature of the challenge and ensure that the play is reviewable. It is the responsibility of the entire crew to know which plays are reviewable.
- Announce the challenge: "(Team) has challenged the ruling of (state the ruling). The play is under further review."
- The crew follows the same procedure as with booth reviews.
- The Referee ensures that the replay official reviews the entire play, not just the coach's challenge.
- After completing the announcement, the Referee should be prepared to briefly explain the ruling to the head coach IF the situation dictates.
- If the Referee is paged for a booth review prior to announcing a coach's challenge, that stoppage will be considered a booth review.

## **Field Announcements That Enable a Booth Review**

- If the ruling on the field is that there is a tip of the punt in the vicinity of the kicker, and that is the reason there is no foul for roughing or running into the kicker and no marker is on the ground, the Referee to enable a replay review should make an announcement, "There was no foul for roughing or running into because the ball was tipped." With this announcement, replay can review, overturn and create a roughing or running into foul if there is indisputable video evidence that there was no tip of the ball.
- If the ruling on the field is that there is a tip of the pass not in the vicinity of the receiver, and that is the reason there is no foul for pass interference and no marker is on the ground, the Referee to enable a replay review may make an announcement, "There was no foul for pass interference (OPI or DPI) because the ball was tipped." With this announcement, replay can review, overturn and create a pass interference foul if there is indisputable video evidence that there was no tip of the ball.
- If the ruling on the field is that there is a fumble rather than an incomplete pass, and that is the reason there is no foul for intentional grounding and no marker is on the ground, the Referee to enable a replay review may



make an announcement, "There was no foul for intentional grounding because the ball was fumbled." With this announcement, replay can review, overturn and create an intentional grounding foul if there is indisputable video evidence that the ball was not fumbled.

### **After a Score or Change of Possession**

- After a score or change of possession, the Referee will hold their ready for play signal until they have received clearance from replay that the game will not be stopped.
- From off the field, the SRA will use Signal O12 to indicate they have received information from the instant replay official that the game will not be stopped. The SRA should be unobtrusive and the signal must not be flamboyant.



## 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 NCAA 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 their own position and must also be fully informed concerning the duties of each of the other officials. They 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 endline 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. A 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**

The CFO National Coordinator, in conjunction with conference coordinators, has developed the following policy concerning officials' dealings with the media:

No one associated with a conference officiating program should have conversations with any members of the media without the express approval of that conference's coordinator of officials. This includes onfield officials, instant replay personnel, observers, technical assistants, etc. There must be no exceptions.

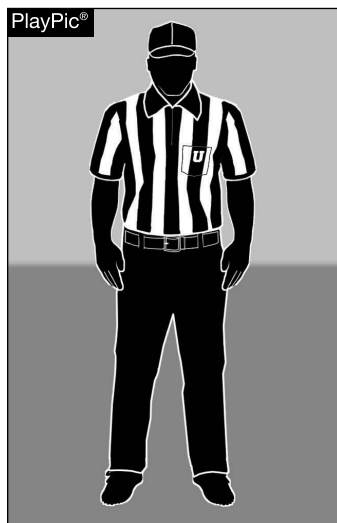
Use of social media to convey information or discuss any aspect of games, coaches, teams or players is strictly prohibited.

## **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 shirt should 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. The official's position should be worn on the back of the shirt and on the breast pocket. The position designation on the back must be a full block letter on a black background measuring 10 and one-half by eight inches should be centered on the stripes on the back of the shirt. The position letters are: R – Referee; U – Umpire; C – Center Judge; H – Head Line-Judge; L – Line Judge; F – Field Judge, S – Side Judge and B – Back Judge. Numbers are prohibited. Mesh shirts are allowed, but all members of the crew must wear the same style of shirt. If worn, an American flag should be sewn one inch above the breast pocket. The blue field with stars should be on the viewer's left. The CFO patch is sewn three inches below the left shoulder seam.

### **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.

### **Jacket**

If jackets are worn before the game, they must be all black. Crews are to dress identically (all members wear jackets or none wear jackets).

### **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.



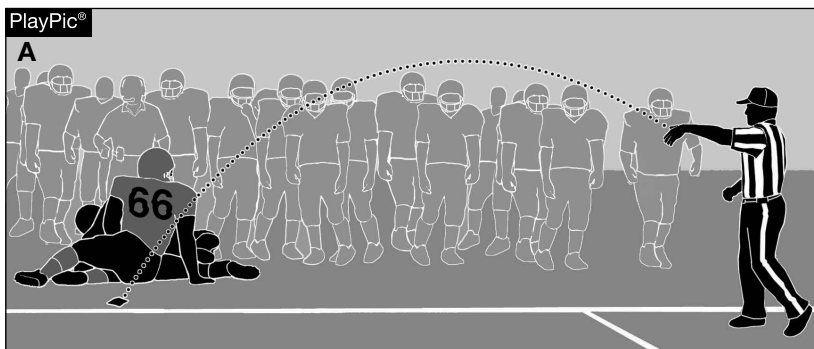
- At least one bean bag to mark non-penalty spots, except the Back Judge, who has two. Bean bags should be worn in the belt. All members of the crew should use black bean bags.
- An information card (to record timeouts, captains, etc.) and a writing utensil.
- An elastic down indicator or other device to keep track of downs. The Center Judge and Umpire should 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. Foul-weather hoods, when worn should be all black except for the Referee's, which should be white.
- The Referee must have a coin.
- Unless provided by the home team, the Head Line-Judge should have two devices that are clipped to the chain as an aid for measurements, etc.
- 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, that 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).

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 they see the ball fumbled. If the official sees the ball loose but not actually fumbled, the spot of their bean bag will not be accurate.

The covering official should also drop a bean bag when, between their five yardline and their 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.

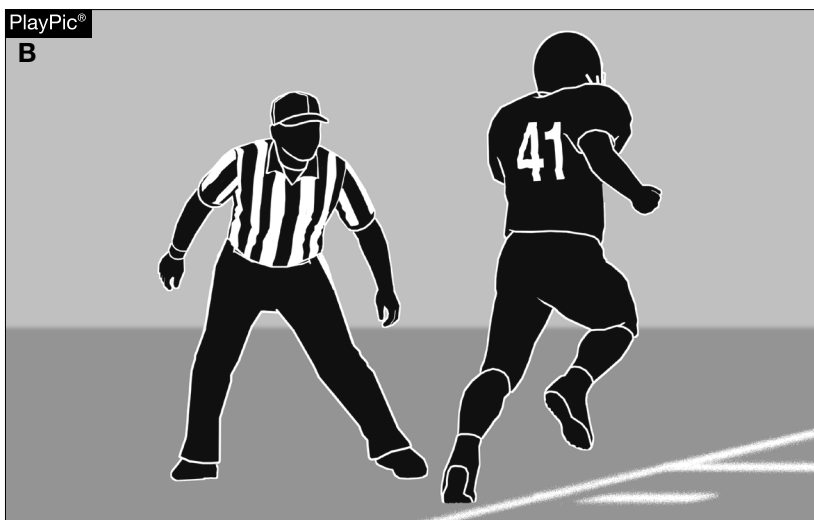
The bean bag may be used on kick downs to indicate illegal touching by Team A. On free kicks, if Team A touches the ball before the ball crosses Team B's restraining line and before it is touched there by any Team B player, the spot must be marked with the bean bag. For a scrimmage kick, the spot must 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 their bean bag. To do that, they 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 their bean bag to denote the spot where the kick ended. The spot may be used for post-scrimmage kick penalty enforcement.

PlayPic®

B



When an official inadvertently blows their whistle, causing the ball to become dead, the covering official must drop their 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 their 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, Center Judge 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

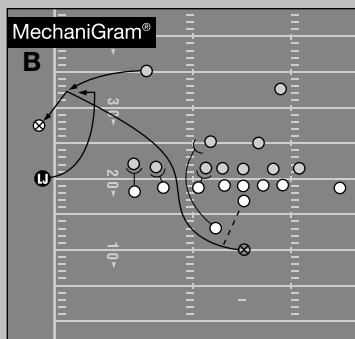
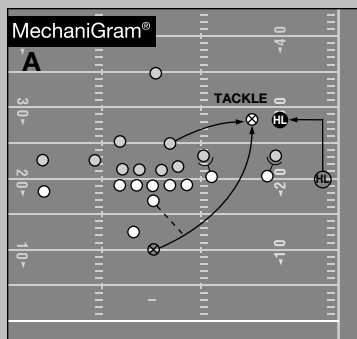
Forward progress should be handled by the wing official moving up and down the field with the runner, parallel to the sideline, and then moving to the selected place at right angles to the sidelines (“squaring off”). Not only does squaring off look sharper than arriving at a spot in an arc, it adds credibility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

### 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 their 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 their 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.



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 yardline 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 hashmarks 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 hashmark and the sideline.

When runners are downed inbounds near a sideline but momentum carries them beyond where they 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.

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: they are down by rule, their forward movement is stopped, they step out of bounds or they fumble the ball out of bounds. A runner is down by rule when any part of the body other than a hand or foot touches the ground and 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 the forward-most spot.



When the contact pushes runners backward when they were running forward or backward, runners are entitled to the forward-most spot of the ball at the point of contact with the opponent.



When the runners are airborne (with or without contact) as they go 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, a bean bag must be dropped (rather than thrown) at the yardline at which the ball was fumbled (the spot may be used for penalty enforcement if a foul occurs while the ball is loose). The official must also continue officiating.

If the covering official sees a player recover the fumble from a prone position, the play should be blown 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 after the Two-Minute Timeout in each half; 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 unpling 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 they know which player has covered it, they verbally relay 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.

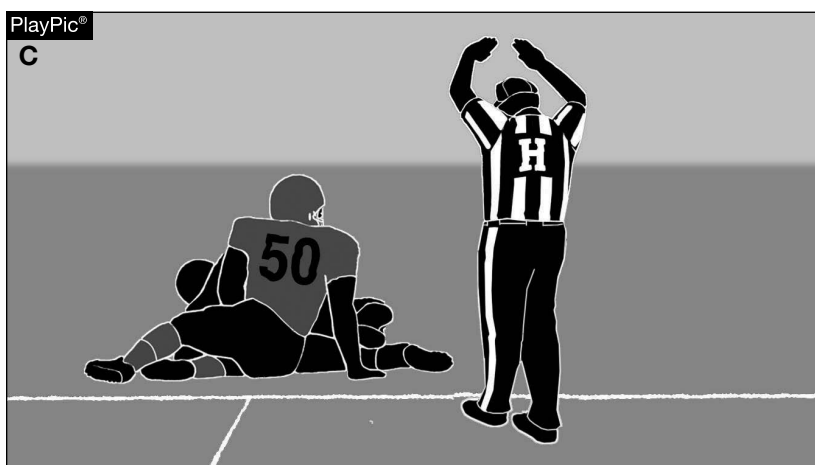
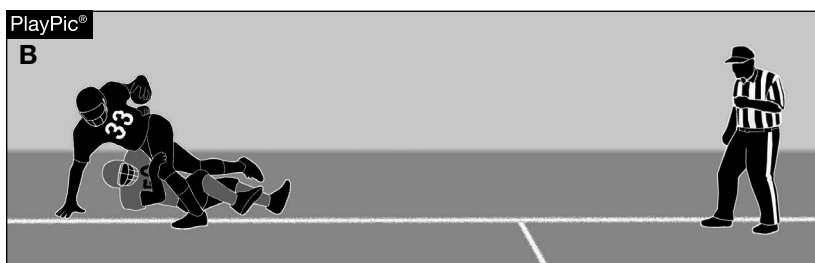
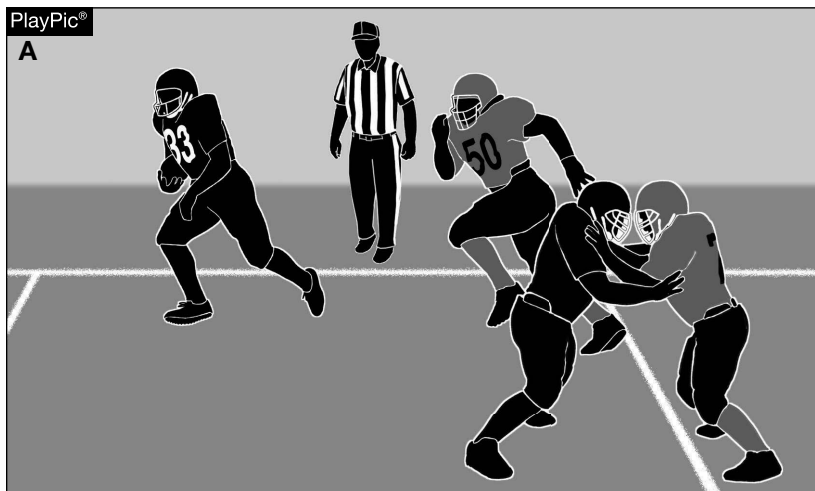
All officials should be alert for players using forcible contact to push or pull a player off the pile.

If the ball is ruled dead on the field in possession of a ballcarrier but is immediately loose, be alert and be able to confirm to replay a recovery in the immediate continuing action. Similarly if a loose ball by a passer is ruled an incomplete forward pass, be alert and be able to confirm to replay a recovery in the immediate continuing action.

## 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 on the next page. 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 they step out of bounds.

When the ballcarrier steps or is taken out of bounds, sound your whistle, stop the clock and get to the spot. Move quickly but cautiously (PlayPic B next page). Make a one-quarter turn, facing away from the field, and direct your attention to the pile (PlayPic C next page). You’ll need to be doubly alert if the ballcarrier 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 personnel. The nearest official not marking the spot should be alert to obtain ball from a ball personnel 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 unpenalized) 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.

If opposing players begin shoving or fighting, the covering official should drop their 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 hashmark), the covering official blows their 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 the Two-Minute Timeout in each half**. After all action has ceased, obtain a ball from a ball personnel to be placed at the inbounds line. A non-covering official should be alert to obtain a ball from a ball personnel 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 their 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, Center 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 their crew get the call right, the helping official owes it to their 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.

For this year, special emphasis has been communicated to coaches, officials and administrators from the national coordinator concerning sideline management and control. As noted in the rules, "During the game, coaches ... shall not be on the field of play....without permission of the referee." Rule 9-2-1-b-1 NOTE: Coaches who enter the field of play to question, protest or otherwise demonstrate disagreement with an officiating decision are subject to an immediate 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct. This unsportsmanlike conduct foul counts as one of the two leading to ejection from the game (Rule 9-2-6).

Relative to game administration rule, a flag should be put down even on the first infraction of Rule 9-2-5. Referees need to be sure to announce that the first instance of sideline interference is a warning and does not include a yardage penalty.

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 coaches the same information you'd give them if their player had fouled. You may also expedite the enforcement process by giving 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 their 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 their outburst. Conversely, if the coach repeats the objectionable comment or responds with even stronger language, they've earned a flag.



However, under no circumstances should an official engage in an argument with a coach. When coaches are convinced a call was incorrect, no amount of discussion is going to convince them 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 berating officials while circling them 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. Ball Mechanics

The main goal of ball mechanics is to be as efficient as possible in getting the ball to the succeeding spot. It is important to get the ball spotted in a consistent and timely manner, nominally before the play clock reaches 30 seconds. Ball mechanics need to account for the appropriate handling of substitutions and getting all officials in position to officiate the succeeding down. Ball mechanics are outlined for various game play situations below. The crew, especially the Umpire and Center Judge, should read each other; some end-of-play situations may have someone spotting the ball other than what is described below but still allowing the crew to meet the goal of being efficient. Other than on scrimmage kick downs, regardless of who spots the ball, the substitution mechanics will be worked by the Center Judge in coordination with the Referee.

- **Dead ball spot behind the line of scrimmage.** The Center Judge will spot the ball at the succeeding spot if it is behind the original line of scrimmage.
- **Dead ball spot beyond and between the inbounds lines.** The Center Judge will likely spot the ball if the succeeding spot is near the original line of scrimmage. The Umpire is more likely to spot the ball if the succeeding spot is two or more yards beyond the line of scrimmage.
- **Dead ball spot beyond and between the inbounds lines and top of numbers.** The Umpire will retrieve the ball and Center Judge will read the Umpire as to who will spot the ball.

- **Dead ball spot beyond and in side zone (outside the top of numbers).** If the ball is in the Center Judge's side zone, he will get the ball from the ball personnel and relay to the Umpire for spotting the ball. If in the Referee's side zone, the Umpire will get the new ball from the ball personnel and relay to the Center Judge. The Referee can get involved only if substitution mechanics are not required for the next snap. The Referee needs to be certain an offensive substitution is not missed due to getting involved with ball mechanics.

- **Incomplete pass.** The new ball will come in from the side closest to the area of the incomplete pass. When the incomplete pass is down the middle of the field, the new ball should come in from the Center Judge sideline. A new ball should be relayed in from the Center Judge sideline if a new ball is needed due to weather.

- **Scrimmage kick downs.** The Umpire is responsible for spotting the ball and working substitution mechanics for punt, field goal and try downs.

- **Hurry up under 2:00 in half.** The Umpire will go from sideline to sideline if the previous down ends in bounds and with the game clock is running. There should be no tossing of the ball from one official to another with a running game clock. If the game clock becomes dead and will start on the succeeding snap, normal ball mechanics will apply.

- **Kickoff and safety kicks.** The Center Judge will handle ball for all free kicks. After a free kick down ends, the new ball comes in from press box side. The Center Judge will go to succeeding spot and spot the ball.

- **Penalty enforcement.** The Center Judge will handle ball and mark off the penalty yardage. A discussion and agreement with the Umpire will occur before spotting the ball.

### 13. Game and Play Clocks

Play clocks time either a 25- or 40-second interval. Mechanics related to the starting of the play clock is dependent on the how the previous down ends.

When the 40-second interval is in force, officials' signals will serve as the trigger for the play clock operator to start the play clock. The play clock operator will consistently start the 40-second play clock within one second of the trigger signal from the on-field official. All scenarios below assume no live-ball foul is called during the down.

- **Scrimmage Down Ends with a Running Game Clock.** The covering official(s) will raise one arm completely above the shoulder with the hand open and the palm facing forward. This signal informs the play clock operator that the 40-second interval should begin. It is acceptable for the covering official(s), after giving that signal, to then indicate with their hand the next down. The Referee will not blow their whistle and give the ready-for-play signal unless there has been a Team B injury or a helmet



off. Instead, the Referee will give the start-the-clock signal when the ball is placed on the field for the next snap and the game clock is to be started by rule.

- **Scrimmage Down Ends with a Stopped Game Clock.** The covering official(s) signal stops the game clock (Signal 3 for runner out of bounds, fumble or backward pass out of bounds, ball advanced past the line to gain inside of 2 minutes of either half, down ends with Team B in possession, after a legal kick down or Signal 10 for an incomplete pass). The 40-second play clock should start after these signals and the raised hand signal is not required. If the game clock is stopped for a runner or backward fumble out of bounds before the Two-Minute Timeout, any forward fumble out of bounds or for Team A making the line to gain, the Referee will give the start-the-clock signal when the ball is placed on the field for the next snap and the game clock is to be started by rule.

- **Touchdown and Try.** The covering official(s) touchdown signal (Signal 5) stops the game clock. This signal also serves to start the 40-second play clock. A 40-second play clock is not used if there are any live-ball fouls called during the down, even if the touchdown stands. Once the 40-second play clock starts, the Referee will monitor the remaining time if waiting to be cleared for the Try in a game that includes instant replay. The play clock should not be allowed to expire while waiting to be cleared. The Referee shall pump the play clock back to 0:25 (Signal O7) if it approaches 0:10 in this situation. The play clock could require being pumped back up multiple times if instant replay needs extra time to clear the touchdown. Team A shall be afforded at least 0:25 on the play clock once instant replay has cleared. This may necessitate the Referee pumping the play clock to 0:25 one last time after getting the clear.

- **Free Kick.** The covering officials will stop the game clock at the end of a free kick down. Unless there is a live-ball foul called during the down, the 40-second play clock will start on this signal. The Referee shall monitor both Team A and Team B substitutions. Team A should not be allowed to snap the ball until Team B completes its substitutions. The Referee shall pump the play clock back to 0:25 in circumstances where Team A is ready and Team B delays its substitutions until less than 0:25 are on the play clock.

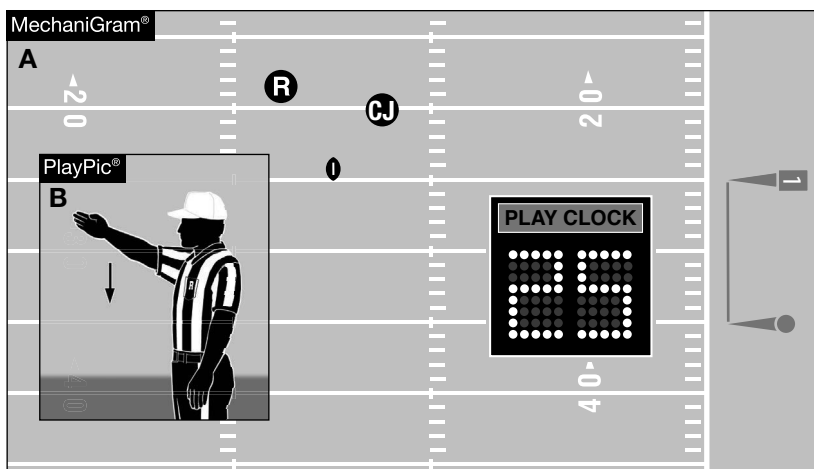
- **Clocked Stopped for Injury/Helmet Off.** When there is an official's timeout for an injured player or a helmet off, the play clock is set to 40 seconds if the injury or helmet coming completely off involves a player of the defensive team or 25 seconds if the injury or helmet coming completely off involves a player of the offensive team. It is set to 40 seconds if both teams have an injury and/or a helmet off on the same play. The play clock starts on the Referee's signal when the ball is declared ready for play. That applies regardless of the status of the game clock when the official's timeout occurs.

When the 40-second interval is in force, officials' signals will serve as the trigger for the play clock operator to start the play clock. One arm raised completely above the shoulder with the hand open and the palm facing forward informs the play clock operator that the 40-second interval should begin. It is acceptable for the covering official, after giving that signal, to then indicate with their hand the next down.

When a pass is incomplete, Team A has gained a first down **after the Two-Minute Timeout in each half**, or a ball carrier goes out of bounds, the appropriate signals will cause the timer to start the 40-second clock. In those instances, the raised hand is not necessary.

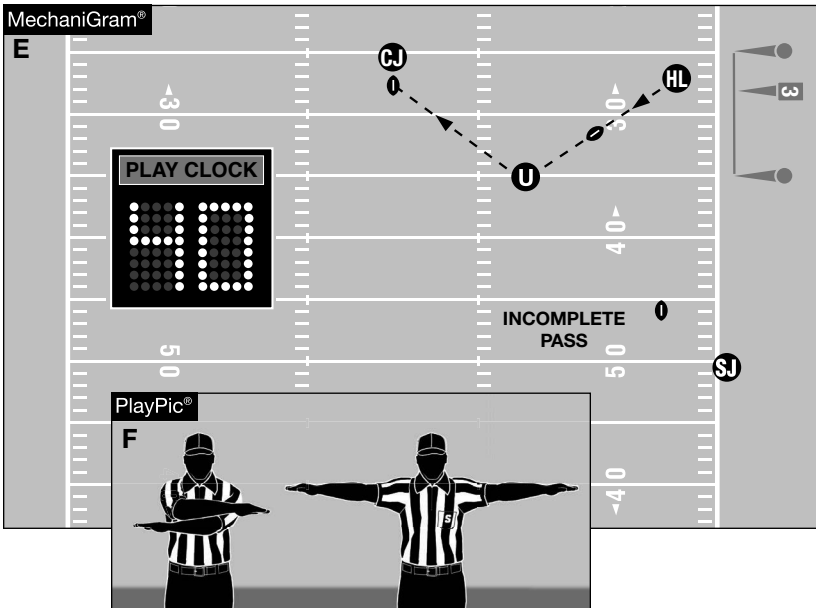
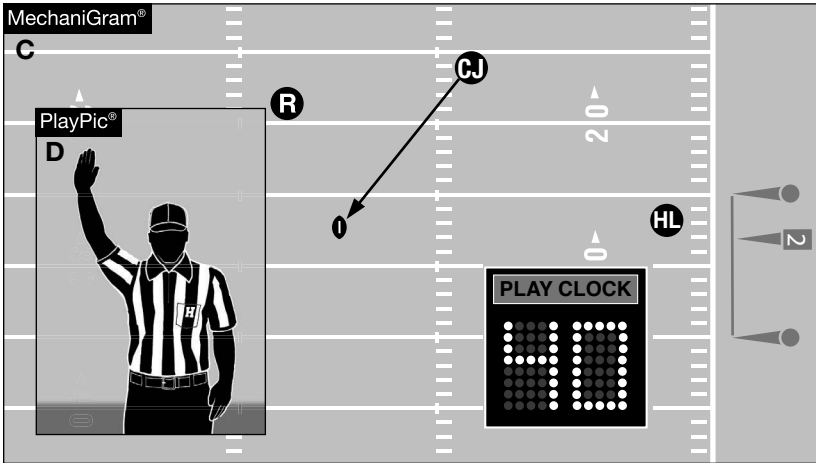
Note the following examples, illustrated on the preceding and following pages.

After a change of possession other than a free kick, Team A begins a series (MechaniGram A). The play clock is set to 25 seconds and it starts when the Referee blows the ready (PlayPic B). The game clock does not start until the snap.

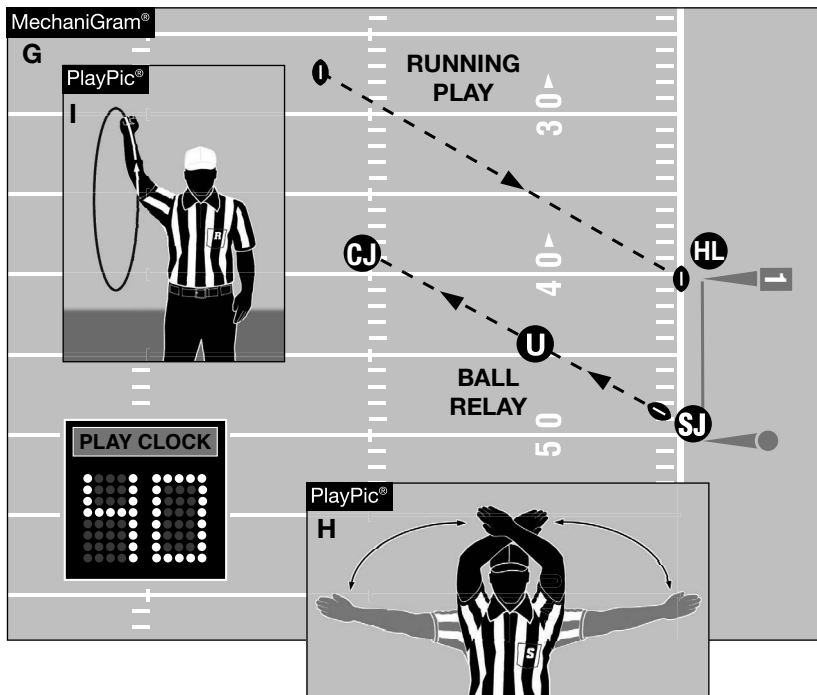


The first play is a run off tackle for a gain of three yards, ending between the hashmarks (MechaniGram C). The covering official blows their whistle and raises their hand (PlayPic D). The 40-second interval then begins. The Referee does not give a ready-for-play signal or blow their whistle because the play and game clocks are already running.

The second-down play is an incomplete pass deep in the Side Judge's coverage area (MechaniGram E). The 40-second interval begins when the official signals the incomplete pass (PlayPic F). The raised hand is not necessary in that case. Because the play clock is running but the game clock does not start, the Referee makes no signal.



On third down, a running play results in a gain of 14 yards (MechaniGram G). The ball is declared dead when the ball carrier steps out of bounds. The 40-second interval begins when the covering official signals the clock to stop (PlayPic H). The raised hand is not necessary in that case. The Referee signals the first down. Because the running play ended out of



bounds, the Referee gives the start-the-clock signal (PlayPic I) accompanied by the whistle.

**Other situations.** If the play clock must be reset to 25 seconds, the Referee will indicate that by making a pumping motion, alternately raising and lowering one arm, palm flat and pointed toward the sky. If the play clock is to be reset to 40 seconds, the Referee makes the same signal with both hands.

Play clock operators should be instructed that they are to react to those signals only from the Referee. Another official may communicate a play clock problem to the Referee by using one of those signals, but only the Referee's signal should result in the play clock being reset.

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. Any time loss due to the clock being started erroneously, such as when a dead-ball foul is called, must result in the clock being adjusted.

If there is a delay in placing the ball and the 40-second clock has run down to 0:25 or lower, the Referee will attempt to reset the play clock without stopping the game clock. If not, the Referee declares a Referee's

timeout, has the play clock reset to 25 (signal O7), then gives the ready. The game clock starts on the snap unless it had been running when the Referee declared a timeout.

Following a loose ball, the Referee should be aware of a running game clock in situations where the crew is unsure of the result of the play. The game clock should be stopped by the Referee using the stop-the-clock signal in circumstances where there is unusual delay. When it is determined that Team A has recovered the ball, the Referee should start the game clock and pump the play clock up if there is less than 25 seconds remaining when the ball is made ready for play.

As an aid to officials and to play clock operators, the procedure — which details which play clock interval is appropriate for which situations — is printed in the Appendix at the back of this book. The material may be copied and presented to the clock operators before the game. A smaller version of the list is also provided for the official to copy, laminate and take onto the field for reference.

#### **14. Crew Meeting During Two-Minute Timeout**

The game clock shall be stopped in the 2nd and 4th quarter when 1) a running game clock hits 2:00 during a dead ball period or 2) the game clock is at 2:00 or lower at the end of a live ball period. The Referee shall make an announcement “Two-Minute Timeout” and, if applicable, give the signals for a media timeout. The crew should meet in the middle of the field to discuss the following items. The Back Judge joins the meeting before meeting with the Red Hat. The items to discuss include:

- Number of team timeouts remaining for each team,
- The number of remaining media timeouts remaining after the Two-Minute Timeout (if any),
- The crew should use one-ball mechanics if Team A is in a hurry-up offense,
- A runner, fumble, or backwards pass out of bounds for the remainder of the half will cause the game clock to start on the snap (Exception: forward fumble out of bounds),
- All first downs in bounds for the remaining of the half will stop the clock,
- Ten-second runoff rules are in effect for the remaining of the half,
- Clock adjustments now possible after an instant replay overturn, and
- The offended team for all fouls, if the offended team is behind or score tied, has an option for game clock status for the remainder of the half.

At the conclusion of the crew Two-Minute Timeout meeting, the Head Line Judge/Side Judge and Line Judge/Field Judge will take this information to their respective sidelines to review with the Head Coach. The Back Judge will meet with the Red Hat.

## 15. Mechanics for the 10-Second Runoff Rule

Situations involving the 10-second runoff rule require extreme focus and concentration by the entire crew so that the rule is administered correctly and as efficiently as possible. By definition, the rule will almost always come into play in hurry-up situations when players and coaches are working against the clock to get plays called and defenses set. It is imperative that officials completely understand all possibilities concerning the various options available to each team so they are able to administer what can be a complex enforcement. Referees should use the term “runoff” rather than “subtraction” for announcements.

The following guidelines will serve as the CFO mechanics for administering the 10-second runoff rule.

### **Fouling team has no timeouts remaining and it is obvious the opponent would want the 10-second runoff.**

The Referee will:

- Make the announcement (See below);
- Inform the quarterback the game clock will start on the ready;
- Give the offense a chance to move quickly to the line (if they so desire);
- Declare the ball ready for play and wind the clock.

The Center Judge must be in position to prevent the snap.

Announcement with more than 10 seconds remaining on the game clock:

“False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The foul occurred with the clock running and **after the Two-Minute Timeout**. By rule, the penalty includes a 10-second runoff. Please reset the game clock to (appropriate) seconds and it will start on the ready for play.”

Announcement with 10 or fewer seconds remaining on the game clock:

“False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The foul occurred with the clock running and less than 10 seconds on the game clock. By rule, the game (or half) is over.”

### **Fouling team has timeouts remaining and it is obvious the opponent would want the 10-second runoff.**

Ask the head coach of the fouling team if they would like to use a timeout to avoid the 10-second runoff.

Announcement if head coach chooses to use a timeout to avoid the runoff:

“False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The offense has chosen to use its (first, second or third) timeout to avoid the 10-second runoff.”

Announcement if head coach chooses not to use a timeout to avoid the runoff:



"False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The foul occurred with the clock running and after the Two-Minute Timeout. By rule, the penalty includes a 10-second runoff. Please reset the game clock to (appropriate) seconds and it will start on the ready for play."

**Fouling team has no timeouts remaining and it is not obvious the opponent would want the 10-second runoff (e.g., foul occurs on third or fourth down in the first half).**

Ask the head coach of the offended team if they want the 10-second runoff.

Announcement if head coach does not want the 10-second runoff:

"False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The defense has elected to decline the 10-second runoff. The game clock will start on the snap."

Announcement if the head coach chooses the 10-second runoff:

"False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The foul occurred with the clock running and after the Two-Minute Timeout. By rule, the penalty includes a 10-second runoff. Please reset the game clock to (appropriate) seconds and it will start on the ready for play."

**Fouling team has timeouts remaining and it is not obvious the opponent would want the 10-second runoff (e.g., foul occurs on third or fourth down in the first half).**

Ask the head coach of the offended team if they want the 10-second runoff.

Announcement if head coach does not want the 10-second runoff:

"False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The defense has elected to decline the 10-second runoff. The game clock will start on the snap."

Announcement if the head coach chooses the 10-second runoff:

"False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The foul occurred with the clock running and after the Two-Minute Timeout. By rule, the penalty includes a 10-second runoff. Please reset the game clock to (appropriate) seconds and it will start on the ready for play."

Announcement if head coach chooses to use a timeout to avoid the runoff:

"False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The offense has chosen to use its (first, second or third) timeout to avoid the 10-second runoff."

The latter situation will require a decision by both head coaches. It will be crucial that sideline officials recognize when it arises. They should get the appropriate information to each head coach so that the proper decisions can be made with as little delay as possible.

## 16. After the Game

### Postgame Duties and Review

When the game ends, all officials should note the total elapsed time from the initial kickoff to the final whistle (including all intermissions). All officials should leave the field together. Neither seek nor avoid coaches.

If the last play of the game could have a direct competitive effect, the crew should not leave the field until released by the replay official.

### Postgame Reports

In your postgame review, complete any required game reports and forward them immediately. If there is any breakdown in cooperation between game officials and the clock operators during the game, or if any malfunction of the clocks occur, the official in charge of the timer is to inform the conference office or assigning agency immediately following the game. Timers are encouraged to report crews that are not cooperative or whose signals are not clear and accurate.

For postgame media access to officials, refer to conference, bowl game or postseason policies. Any comments or explanations on rules or interpretations shall be governed by conference, bowl game or postseason policies.

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.

The Referee will contact the assigning agent (usually the conference officiating coordinator) to report who was ejected for fighting. The report must include the point of the game in which the ejection occurred.

The assigning agency will notify the athletic director that one or more of the institution's student-athletes or coaches was ejected for fighting. Such notification will include an explanation of the rule dealing with the suspension. If the ejected person is not under the jurisdiction of the assigning agency, that agency will notify the agent who represents the institution, and similar procedures will be followed. The assigning agent also will alert the next scheduled opponent of the ejection if it carries over to the next game.

## 17. Tracking and Reporting Fouls

In the FBS and FCS conferences, official must record each foul they call during a game. After the game, the penalties are compiled and set to the conference office.

Penalty reports allow conference coordinators as well as the NCAA Football Rules Committee to spot trends. For instance, if there is an appreciable increase in the number of holding calls from one season to the



next, it could mean that officials are becoming more attuned to holding, or perhaps it is the result of a point of emphasis in college football at large or in that conference. It could also be that players are just flat holding more than they have in previous seasons.

The data provided by the penalty reports could lead to rule or mechanics changes that improve the game.

The penalty reports use abbreviations to identify the fouls. Although officials may use different designations on the penalty card they carry during the game, the following designations (provided by QwikRef, Inc.) should be used on the report sent to the conference or coordinator.

BAT .....	Illegal Bat
BBW .....	Block Below Waist
BOB .....	Blocking Out of Bounds
BSB .....	Blind Side Block
CHB .....	Chop Block
CLP .....	Clipping
DH .....	Defensive Holding
DOD .....	Delay of Game (Defense)
DOF .....	Defensive Offside
DOG .....	Delay of Game (Offense)
DPI .....	Defensive Pass Interference
DSC .....	Disconcerting Signals (Defense)
ENC .....	Encroachment Offense
EQV .....	Equipment Violation
FBG .....	Fighting Before Game
FFH .....	Fighting First Half
FHT .....	Fighting Halftime
FMM .....	Face Mask (15 Yards)
FSH .....	Fighting Second Half
FST .....	False Start
GAI .....	Game Admin Interference / DOG
GAI / SLW .....	Sideline Warning
GAIM .....	Game Admin Interference Major (15yd)
HUR .....	Hurdling
IBB .....	Illegal Block in Back
IBK .....	Illegal Block Kickers
IBS .....	Illegal Block After Fair Catch Signal
ICS .....	Illegal Contact w / Snapper
IDP .....	Ineligible Downfield on Pass
IFD .....	Illegal Formation Defense
IFK .....	Illegal Free Kick Formation
IFP .....	Illegal Forward Pass
IHR .....	Illegally Helping Runner

IIN .....	Interlocked Interference
IKB .....	Illegally Kicking Ball
ILF .....	Illegal Formation
ILM .....	Illegal Motion
ILS .....	Illegal Substitution
ING .....	Intentional Grounding
INU .....	Illegal Numbering
ISH .....	Illegal Shift
ISP .....	Illegal Snap
ITK .....	Illegal Touch of Kick
ITP .....	Illegal Touch-Pass
IWG .....	Illegal Wedge
KCI .....	Kick Catch Interference
KIK .....	Illegal Kick
KOB .....	Kickoff Out of Bounds
LEA .....	Leaping
LEV .....	Leverage
LPS .....	Leap Over Punt Shield
OFK .....	Offside on Free Kick
OH .....	Offensive Holding
OPI .....	Offensive Pass Interference
PFH .....	Personal Foul Helmet Off
RFH .....	Roughing Holder (15 yds)
RFK .....	Roughing Free Kicker
RNH .....	Running into Holder (5 yds)
RNK .....	Running into the Kicker
ROB .....	Return From OOB
RPS .....	Roughing the Passer
RRK .....	Roughing the Kicker
SKE .....	Striking, Kicking, Kneeing, Elbowing
TGT .....	Targeting
TRP .....	Tripping
UNR / BTH .....	Blow to Head
UNR / BUT .....	Butting, Ramming w / Crown Helmet
UNR / HCT .....	Horse Collar Tackle
UNR / HDP .....	Hit on Defenseless Player
UNR / HTF .....	Hands to Face
UNR / LTO .....	Late Hit Out of Bounds
UNR / LTP .....	Late Hit / Piling On
UNR / OTH .....	Other
UNS / ABL .....	Abusive Language
UNS / BCH .....	Unsportsmanlike Act / Bench
UNS / CTO .....	Unsportsmanlike Conduct / Contact Official
UNS / DEA .....	Delayed Excessive Act
UNS / HCH .....	Unsportsmanlike Conduct / Head Coach

UNS / NFA ....	Non-Football Act
UNS / OTH ....	Other
UNS / PSH ....	Pushing / Shoving Opponent
UNS / RHT ....	Removal of Helmet
UNS / SLI ....	UNS / Sideline Interference
UNS / STB ....	Spiking/Throwing Ball
UNS / TAU ....	Taunting or Baiting
UNS / UFA ....	Unfair Acts

## 18. Guidelines on Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls

Player behavior in committing unsportsmanlike conduct fouls continues to be a major point of emphasis for the NCAA Football Rules Committee and the CFO Board of Managers. 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 (Rule 9-2-1). 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.

A list of specifically prohibited acts is in Rule 9-2-1 (a) through (h). This list is intended to be illustrative and not exhaustive.

We can all agree that when these acts are clearly intended to taunt or demean, they should not be allowed — not only because they are written in the book, but because they offend our sense of how the game should be played. We now have enough experience with this rule to know what “feels” right and wrong. Note that most if not all of these actions fall outside the category of brief, spontaneous outbursts. Rather, they present themselves as taunting, self-glorification, demeaning to opponents, or showing disrespect to the opponents and the game.

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.

The guidelines for officiating unsportsmanlike conduct fouls by players are clear and have been in place for a number of years. Players, coaches, and officials should have no question when a foul has occurred. Spontaneous reactions to a great play are allowed as long as the specific act does not become prolonged nor violate the restrictions of Rule 9-2-1-a-2.

In the past, officials have attempted to prevent unsportsmanlike acts by rushing toward the player who has scored, intercepted a pass, sacked the quarterback, etc. There are several issues that arise in an official's zeal to prevent a foul. The official:

- Appears over-officious by "attacking" a player who has done nothing wrong;
- Narrows their field of vision making it difficult to discern the exact nature of the player's actions; and
- Is put in harm's way when they enter an area where multiple players are excitedly celebrating a good play by a teammate.

Officials should not rush toward any player or players to prevent potential celebratory, unsportsmanlike acts. They should maintain a presence at a reasonable distance and observe the actions of the players. If the actions border on unsportsmanlike conduct, no foul is to be called and that information should be relayed to the head coach. If a foul is committed, a flag should be thrown without emotion or further action toward the player.

Note 1: These mechanics are for situations when the actions involve the players of only one team. If there is a threat of a foul involving opponents, officials should, as always, intervene to avoid further escalation, such as taunting or unnecessary roughness fouls.

Note 2: If both teams leave the team area to engage in something other than a fight, and the crew cannot identify squad members leaving the team area vs. players, substitutes, etc., it is acceptable for the Referee to announce all players of both teams are guilty of an unsportsmanlike conduct foul. This mechanic should only be used in extreme circumstances when both teams' tempers are running extremely high. This is significant because now every player has been charged with an unsportsmanlike conduct foul and any subsequent unsportsmanlike conduct foul will result in that player's ejection. Fouls for which the penalty includes automatic ejection or disqualification will be administered by rule.



## 19. Unfair Acts

Rule 9-2-3 gives the Referee much latitude in handling obviously unfair acts during a game. This would include situations that arise when a team commits a blatant, obvious and intentional foul or fouls to gain a clock advantage late in a game. As cited in The Football Code, such actions are in direct conflict with the strong statements under Coaching Ethics.

As a new interpretation, crews should penalize these intentional fouls as unsportsmanlike conduct fouls and subsequently reset the game clock in these type situations back to the time at the snap of the play in question. Officials will also note that each player committing these unsportsmanlike acts will have a counter in terms of unsportsmanlike conduct fouls. As point of note, this does not apply to intentional fouls committed during the course of the game, as the rules handle these situations quite well.

## 20. Setting the Pace

While officials have little impact on how well a game is played, a good pace of the game can be set and maintained by implementing a few time-saving measures.

### Free Kicks

Upon the Center Judge giving the ball to the kicker, the Referee whistles the ready and signals the 25-second clock to begin.

If the game is not televised, after a try or successful field goal, the Center Judge should take the ball to the middle of the field after 45 seconds have expired.

### Timeouts

During televised games, the “red hat” or liaison signals the Referee before a play if a timeout is requested. The Referee signals the timeout and adds the media timeout signal.

The liaison times the commercials. Timing begins when the Referee gives the media timeout signal. With 30 seconds left in a timeout on a TV game (30 seconds in a non-TV game or before a free kick), the Back Judge informs the liaison, who signals the Referee. The wing officials should then instruct the teams to return to the field. When the liaison indicates that 10 seconds remain in the timeout, the Referee may give the ready-for-play signal. The Referee has discretion to slightly delay the ready-for-play signal.

Following a timeout, all officials must be in position. That allows the Referee to give the ready-for-play signal without delay.

**After a Play**

If the play has ended with a change of possession or a new series for Team A, the officials must hustle to their positions. That allows the Referee to give the ready-for-play signal without delay.

If the play has ended with a touchdown, the covering officials should encourage the scoring team to keep their celebration short and get ready for the try.

The official who calls a foul that prevents the snap should alert the Referee by signaling the nature of the foul. The signal should be given when the ball is dead. The Referee can then give the preliminary signal in a more time-efficient manner.







7  
OFFICIALS

# Section Mechanics Changes 2024

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## Crew of 7 Umpire in the Backfield Experiment

As an ongoing experiment beginning in the 2020 football season, conferences will be allowed to work the crew of seven mechanics with the Umpire opposite the Referee in the offensive backfield. Included in Appendix A on page 230 are the modifications required to a crew of seven mechanics to work this experiment. It is the expectation that officials will follow these mechanics in order to ensure consistency on the national level and create a baseline set of mechanics that we can learn from and build on.



## Section

# 10

## Pregame Duties

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The Back Judge should receive, test, certify and mark the new or nearly new game balls submitted for approval by each team at least one hour before game time. Each team may submit a maximum of 10 balls unless weather conditions warrant the use of more than 10. All officials are responsible for administering and enforcing legality of footballs throughout the game.

The Referee and Umpire visit each dressing room 90 minutes before kickoff. This meeting may not be conducted by officials other than the Referee and Umpire. The Umpire inspects player equipment and bandages, tape, etc., and should record the numbers of players with illegal equipment. Those players are to be rechecked when they come onto the field.

The Referee confirms the official time and starting time with each head coach or designated representative. Each head coach is to be reminded of equipment rule requirements. The Referee should secure proper certification and review any unusual game situations, including any play that requires prior notification, with the head coach. Defensive coaches should be asked about defensive signals to be used during the game. The head coach may wish to designate an assistant or other sideline personnel to whom foul reports should be given during the game.

Upon returning to the locker room, the Referee should share the discussion with the coaches with their crew.

### Meeting With the Timer

The clock operator should inform the officials whether they will be in the press box or on the sideline. The officials remind the timer to start the field clock 90 minutes before game time and that the game clock will run during the 20 minutes of halftime intermission, which starts when the first half ends. The Referee gives the start the clock signal from the end zone as a reminder to start the halftime clock.

The clock operator must have an extra stopwatch available in case the game clock malfunctions. In case of a clock problem, the clock operator must immediately contact the officials by field telephone, giving them the correct data regarding the official time. The alternate official or designated official will then pick up the correct playing time on their stopwatch.

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 equipped with a microphone, the Referee can announce the remaining time after every dead ball. If not, the officials will alert the P.A. announcer concerning remaining time.

Remind the timer 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

A minimum of three officials will take the field 90 minutes before kickoff and all officials will be on the field 40 minutes before kickoff. 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 and 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 Referee and Back Judge shall inspect the entire field. As noted in NCAA Rule 1-2-8-a through d:

- 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 Referee 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.

At five minutes before game time, the Side Judge and Field Judge escort the captains of the teams on their respective sidelines from the locker room to their respective sidelines. The Line Judge and Head Line-Judge ensure their respective teams are on the field three minutes before the start of the game.

## 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. Similarly, auxiliary chains and box remain on the press box side.

The Head Line-Judge and 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 and 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 or Line Judge. The chains are then set on the sideline and the clip attached to the chain on the side of the yardline 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 mandatory. The clip operator should mark the new yardline with a second clip, 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 or 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 yardline, or when Team A attempts an extra point. The box holder should be instructed that if Team A attempts a field goal outside Team B's 20 yardline, the box must remain in place after the kick. If the kick fails, the ball may be next snapped from the previous spot.

## Meeting With the Ball Personnel

Coordination with the ball personnel is a critical component to having good ball mechanics during a game. An appropriate pre-game meeting is therefore important. The pre-game conversation is led by the Side Judge and Field Judge. It is a single meeting with all ball personnel from each team. It is important to remind the ball personnel that they are a part of the officiating crew, and that their behavior must reflect a neutral demeanor. Additionally, all ball personnel should refrain from "chasing" or "running with" a ball carrier on a long breakaway play.

There should be a minimum of three ball personnel for each sideline. One of the personnel should be aligned halfway between the line of scrimmage and the Referee in the offensive backfield. The other two ball personnel align between the line of scrimmage and the deep wing official.

A new ball will enter through the Side Judge or Field Judge, depending on which side of the field the play ends. A new ball enters only when requested by the on-field official. Ball personnel should have a ball available for the Side Judge/Field Judge on every play, however, not every play will require replacing the ball. The ball personnel who are on the defensive side of the ball will retrieve the ball on incomplete passes, down outside the hashmarks, punts, or any other situation when the ball is declared dead beyond the line of scrimmage.



Ball personnel are not to enter the field of play at any time to retrieve a ball and are to remain outside the white once the ball exchange has taken place. When the line of scrimmage is outside the team box (20-yard line to goal line), all ball personnel need to be outside the limit lines once a ball exchange has been completed. Ball personnel should not be below the 10-yard lines during a scrimmage possession.

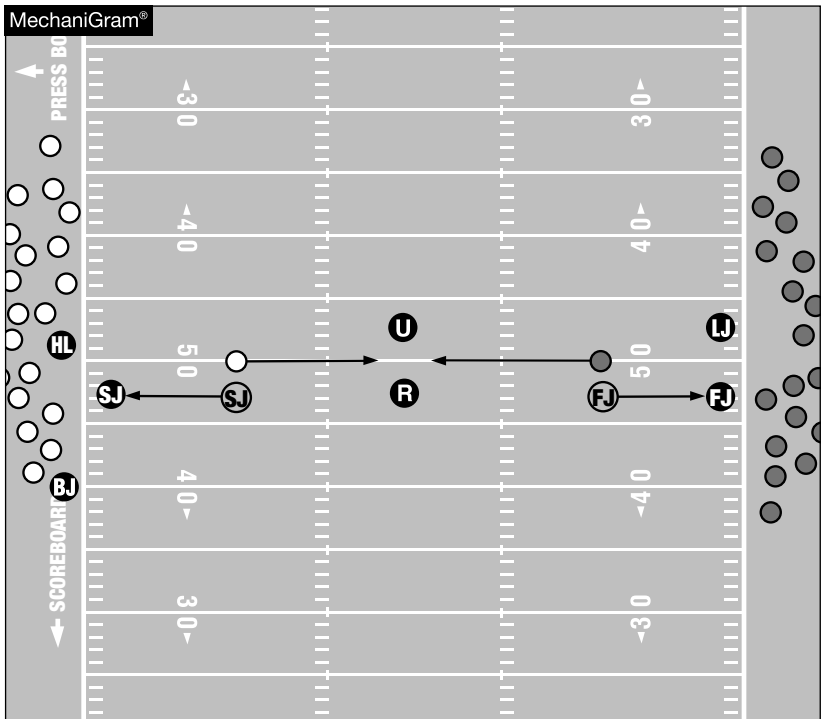
With under two minutes and the clock running, the Umpire will handle the ball and will not require a new ball. If the game clock stops and will restart on the snap, the officiating crew reverts to regular ball mechanics. For tries and field goals, use the same ball mechanics with ball coming in from the side closest to where the play ended.

# The Coin Toss



Three minutes before the scheduled game time, the Referee and Umpire should be in the center of the field. On a signal from the Referee, the Field Judge and Side Judge escort the respective captains to the top of the numbers, then remain there to ensure the teams are in their side zones, on their sideline or in the team area. The Back Judge, Head Line-Judge and Line Judge remain on their sidelines. The Head Line-Judge should have a game ball from each team in their possession. Once the toss is completed, the correct ball can be given to the Back Judge for the opening kickoff.

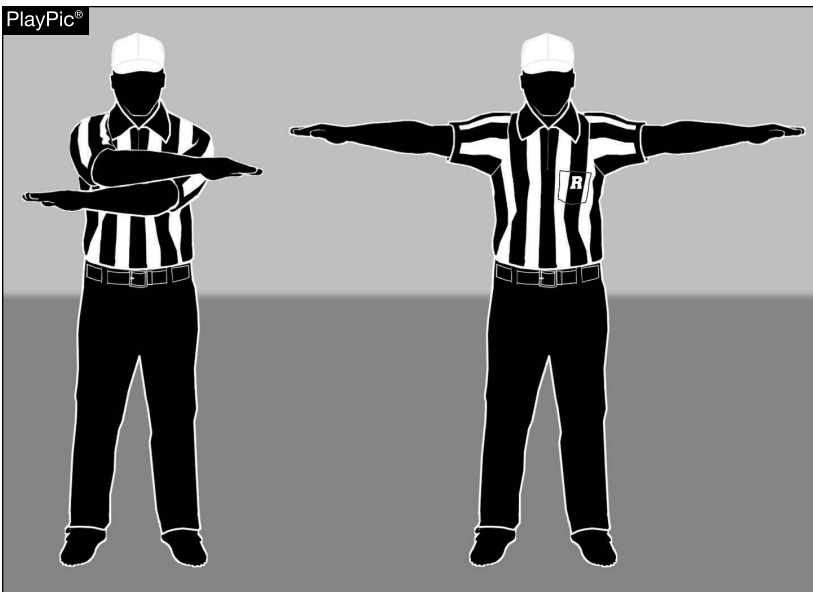
The captains should face each other with their backs to their sidelines. Optionally, the captains may rotate facing opposite goal lines while the Referee faces the press box. The Referee turns on their microphone once the toss begins. The visiting captain calls the toss, telling the Referee their choice before the Referee flips the coin. The Umpire should audibly repeat the captain's choice before the flip.



If the winner of the toss opts to defer their choice until the second half, the Referee stands toward the press box clear of the captains, indicates the toss winner by placing their 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 their 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. 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 Head Line-Judge should take the appropriate game ball to the center of the field and hand it to the Back Judge. The officials make a written record of the results of the toss and move to their kickoff positions simultaneously.



# Free Kicks



Free kick mechanics are designed to best observe potential player safety fouls that are prevalent during free kick plays. The crew's priorities during free kicks plays are 1) player safety fouls by the receiving team, including illegal wedge blocks and illegal blindside blocks, 2) fair catch signals and 3) illegal blocks during a return, such as blocks in the back and holding. It should be noted that fouls related to 1) and 3) most often occur between the receiver's 25- and 45-yard lines. This area of the receiver's side of the field is the "Engagement Zone." Free kicks require the crew to have heightened awareness inside this "Engagement Zone" both during the kick and during returns.

**NOTE:** The Line Judge and Field Judge will be positioned opposite the press box in the first half and the Line Judge will be responsible for the chains. The Head Line-Judge and Side Judge will be opposite the press box in the second half and the Head Line-Judge will be responsible for the chains.

Mechanics and keys do not change regardless of which side of the field the officials are working, other than responsibility for the chains.

If a sideline penalty recorder is present, they shall remain with the Head Line-Judge throughout the game.

**Please note MechaniGrams in this manual reflect positioning for the second half of a game.**

## Positioning, Zones and Keys

**Referee:** Starting position is in the middle of the field behind the deepest receiver. When players and officials are ready, after the sideline liaison is 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 for a touchback or a kick beyond the endline. You are responsible for the endline. You are responsible for the play clock and for knowing if Team A had at least four players on both sides of the kicker. Should be alert and is primary for illegal wedge formations. Be alert for when a player gives a fair catch signal and observes the actions of players when a signal is given.

**Umpire:** Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side on Team A's restraining line. Ensure kicking team players remain inside the nine-yard marks until the ready-for-play-signal from the Referee. You are responsible for clearing your sideline to Team A's endline. Umpire keys on





Team A players four and five from their sideline and observes action on the kicker. Ensure Team A players are within five yards of their restraining line.

**Head Line-Judge:** Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box at Team B's goal 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. Primary for observing fair catch signals and the actions of players when a signal is given. Secondary responsibility is observing illegal wedge formations.

**Side Judge:** Assist in clearing your sideline. Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on Team B's restraining line. Side Judge keys on Team A players two and three on their side of the field.

**Line Judge:** Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at Team B's goal 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. Primary for observing fair catch signals and the actions of players when a signal is given. Secondary responsibility is observing illegal wedge formations.

**Field Judge:** Assist in clearing your sideline. Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at Team B's restraining line. Field Judge keys on Team A players two and three on their side of the field.

**Back Judge:** You are responsible for clearing your sideline to Team A's endline. After handing the ball to the kicker, starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box at Team A'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 Team A players four and five on their side of the field. You are responsible for Team A's goal line on any long return. Ensure Team A players are within five yards of their restraining line.

**Note:** Team A player one is not accounted for in the keys as that player is normally is not threatened until reaching the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge's zone.



## 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. You are primarily responsible for illegal wedge formations and illegal blocks. Follow the play and observe action in front of the runner. Be alert for a handoff and a reverse.

**Umpire and Back Judge:** Move between the numbers and the hashmark. The Umpire will watch 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 hashmark.

**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. The clock will start when the ball crosses the goal line after being first touched by the receivers in the end zone. Stay at 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 or if it has taken more than one bounce. Move no more than 10 yards toward Team B's goal line. That will give better coverage in the critical area where contact occurs between the kicking and receiving team.

### Lateral Position of the Ball

After a touchback or fair catch inside the Team B 25-yard line, all crew members, especially wing officials on the sideline of Team B, should be alert if the head coach wants to relocate the position of the ball. That must be communicated before the play clock goes under 25 seconds.



## 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 B's goal line, the end zone and the endline. When players and officials are ready, after the sideline liaison is 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.

**Umpire:** Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side on Team A'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 A 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 B'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 A 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 B's restraining line.

**Back Judge:** After handing the ball to the kicker, starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box at Team A'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 A kicks deep instead of onside.

**Umpire and Back Judge:** Have bean bag in hand. Treat Team A'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 offside. 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 B and be prepared to cover the play if a Team B 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 kicked into the ground or if it has taken more than one bounce. Be alert for a fair-catch signal by Team B and be prepared to cover the play if a Team B 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 B's restraining line. You are primarily responsible for touching by either team. Be alert for a fair-catch signal by Team B and be prepared to cover the play if a Team B 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 offensive team's game ball always comes in from the press box side.

**Referee:** Count the offensive players before they break the huddle, confirming the count with the Umpire. Check the offensive formation and note the tackle box. 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 right-hand 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 within the tackle box 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. 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 on the side opposite the tight end, generally eight to 10 yards off 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:** 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 player goes in motion, observe the player if they are 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). On fourth down with two or less yards to the line to gain and Team A not in scrimmage kick formation, the Head Line-Judge and Line Judge should be prepared to move immediately to the line to gain after the snap. The Line Judge assists the Referee regarding the status of the game clock as needed.

**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 Field Judge and Side Judge are 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 yards from the line of scrimmage and on the sidelines.

**Back Judge:** Monitors all timing involving the 25/40-second count. Ensure that the play clock is started at the correct time in every situation throughout the game. If the play clock hits :00, look immediately at the ball; if the snapper has not begun the snap, that is, the ball has not started moving, stop the game and penalize the offense for delay of game. 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 yards from the line of scrimmage, favoring the strong side of the field (the side with more eligible receivers outside the tackles). 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.

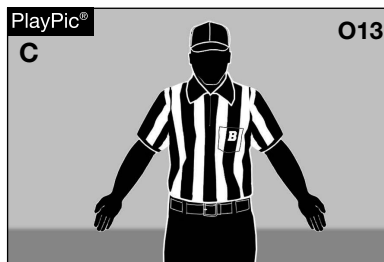
In certain situations, the rules dictate how long a team has to correct a problem with too many players on the field or in the huddle. There are other situations in which the issue does not become a foul until the ball is snapped or free kicked.

Officials with counting duties must count and confirm their count with other officials who share the responsibility. The signals: thumb up for a count of 11 (signal O2, PlayPic A), twirling index finger (signal O9, PlayPic B) for more than 11 players, open palms below waist level (signal O13, PlayPic C) for less than 11. 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 A; the Referee, Head Line-Judge and Line Judge count Team B.

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



## Substitution Procedures

To help simplify the application of rules regarding substitution, we will use the substitution procedures any time Team A substitutes. This includes if Team A substitutes into a formation or into a huddle of any type.

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

the pace of spotting the football for teams seeking to snap the ball as soon as possible. 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 they must remain near the ball to prevent the snap or if they may assume their normal position.

The Referee will manage the no huddle substitution process and the Umpire must assume all responsibility to prevent the snap as determined by the Referee. The Referee must assume their normal position as soon as possible in order to manage the process described below.

When the offense is in a hurry-up offense, the Umpire is not required to count the number of players on offense as their primary responsibility is to prevent a quick snap prior to the defense being allowed to complete their substitution under Rule 3-5-2-e and then to assume their position as quickly as possible once cleared by the Referee.

If Team A is in a no-huddle formation and sends in substitutes, or if Team A has already broken the huddle and a substitute then enters the field, Rule 3-5-2-e goes into effect: Team A is prohibited from rushing quickly to the line of scrimmage with the obvious intent of creating a defensive disadvantage. If the ball is ready for play, the game officials will not permit the ball to be snapped until Team B has placed substitutes in position and replaced players have left the field of play. Team B must react promptly with its substitutes.

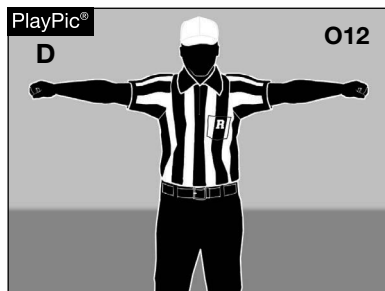
If Team A does not substitute and is in hurry-up mode, Team B must be prepared to react promptly and is not afforded any match-up provisions. The following mechanics will be used:

- The Referee is primarily responsible to use signal O12 (see PlayPic D) when Team A is substituting and Team B is allowed a match-up opportunity.

- Officials on the Team A sideline should also be aware of and shall signal (O12) when Team A substitutes. Officials on the opposite side, as well as the Back Judge, may also assist in recognition by the Referee.

- The Umpire shall check with the Referee prior to leaving the ball after placement. Should they notice the Referee with extended hands or the stop signal (O14, PlayPic E, next page)

at any point, they should remain in the vicinity of the ball or return to the vicinity of the ball until cleared by the Referee who will drop the extended hands and point. While waiting for the signal, the Umpire should make note of the best exit route to be clear of players when the ball is snapped.



- Once the Referee initiates the substitution rule by extending the arms, monitor the offensive substitution until it is obvious who the replaced player(s) are and they begin leaving the field. Observe the defense and allow them three seconds to begin any defensive substitutions. If the defense substitutes in this time window, the Referee will allow a reasonable time to match up, position its players and allow replaced players to leave the field.

- If Team A substitutes so late that the play clock expires while Team B, reacting promptly, was not in position prior to the play clock expiring, the offense is responsible for and will be penalized for delay of game.

- The Umpire should be alert if the Referee signals for late substitutions. If the Umpire is remiss the Referee must move in quickly to prevent the snap. The Umpire should then assume a position in the vicinity of the ball as the Referee returns to their position prior to the snap.

- If the officials are delayed in getting to the ball to prevent a snap, the officials will stop the game and warn Team A that it must allow Team B the opportunity to substitute. Further attempts by Team A to create a defensive disadvantage in that manner will result in a 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct.

- Any official should be prepared to step in and shut down a play that violates the substitution rule.



## Other Substitution Provisions

- If Team A breaks the huddle with 12, it is an immediate foul; if Team A fails to send the replaced player out of the huddle more than three seconds after the substitute enters the huddle, it is an immediate foul. Therefore, the Referee must count players while they are still in the huddle. Too often, teams are allowed to break the huddle with more than 11 players and a foul is not called until the snap is imminent.

- If the replaced player clearly leaves the huddle first, and then the huddle breaks and is not hurrying to the line of scrimmage before the substitute leaves the field, Team A has met its requirements and Team B must be prepared to play in a normal manner.

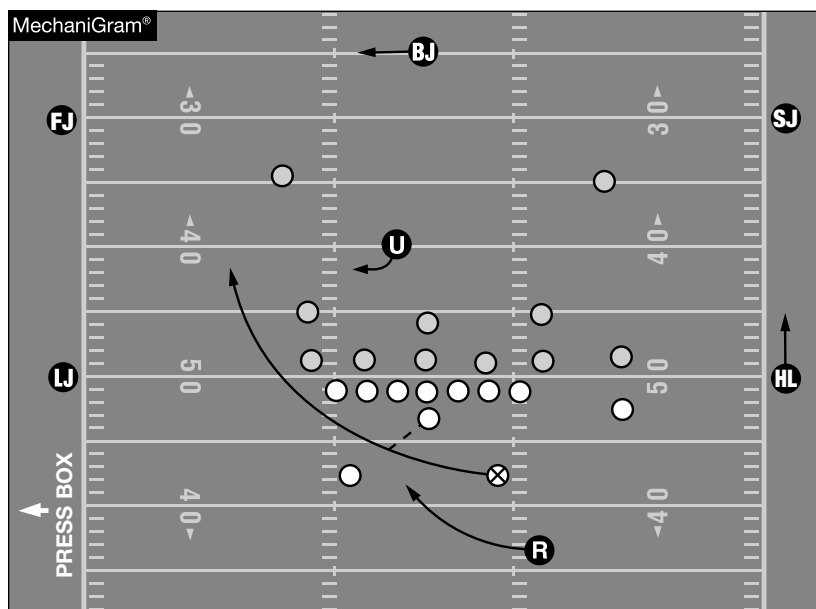
- When Team A players enter the game having changed jersey numbers, they must report to the Referee. The Referee uses their microphone to announce the player's former number and the new number and the appropriate sideline official relays the information to the opposing head coach. The game clock and play clock do not stop. Team A must complete the process before the play clock expires. During the process, the officials will not allow the ball to be snapped. Normal substitution rules still apply.

- When Team B players enter the game having changed jersey numbers, they must report to the Referee. The Referee uses their microphone to announce the player's former number and the new number and the appropriate sideline official relays the information to the opposing head coach. The game clock and play clock do not stop. The player must complete the process and get into position on their side of the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped or be subject to a foul. During the process, if the ball is ready, the officials will not prevent Team A from snapping the ball. Normal substitution rules still apply.

- These procedures, which are intended to prevent the defense from being unable to match up during normal scrimmage situations, should not be used in the case of substitution for a last-second field goal. In that situation, the offense is making a normal and not unexpected personnel change. The defense should be prepared to respond appropriately. In no case should the Umpire be standing over the ball to prevent the snap as the clock runs out.

## 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 upfield, 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. 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 hashmarks, place the ball in accordance with the forward progress designated by the wing official. If the ball is dead in a side zone or out of bounds, assist in relaying the ball to the Referee for placement.

**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge:** Observe the initial action on or by the offensive player who is your key, especially if they're 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 yardline, 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.

**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 goal line. 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 yardline.

**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

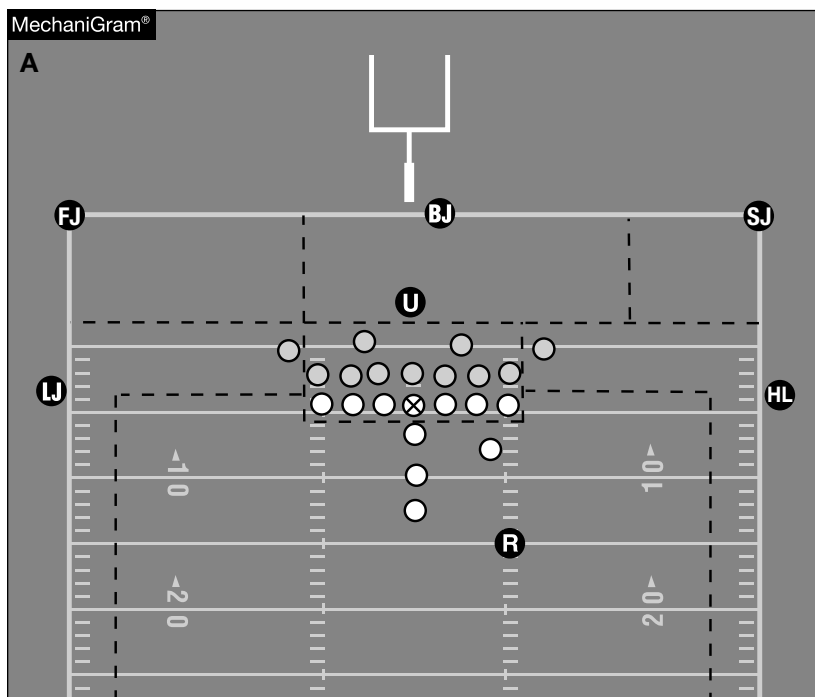
immediate area. When the play is not in your area, hold your position and observe the action after the ball becomes dead. Assume coverage of any runner who breaks loose and goes downfield. When the runner goes out of bounds, cover the area around the runner. On long runs, be prepared to rule on goal 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 yardline. 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." Quarterbacks may not be moving toward the line of scrimmage as they take the snap; all Team A players must be set before the ball may be legally snapped. Watch also for Team A players 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 onfield ruling after a conference by officials. If the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's seven yardline, you are responsible for knowing if a pass is backward or forward.

**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 yardline 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 yardline. 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 yardline, starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. When the ball is snapped from inside Team B's 25 yardline to Team B's seven yardline, 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 yardline 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 yardline in, starting position is on the endline where it intersects with the sideline, one step off the sideline at a 45-degree angle from the endline corner pylon.

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

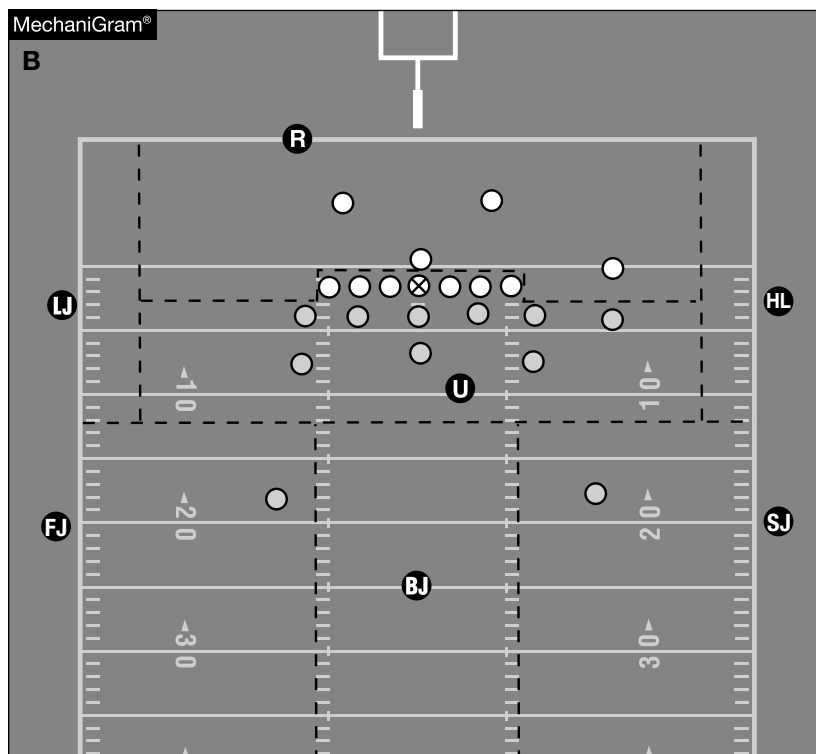
## Reverse Goal Line Mechanics

When Team A snaps the ball on or inside its own three yardline (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 the snap is between the three and 10 yardline, 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

**Point of emphasis:** Priority and focus for safety fouls against the Quarterback when they are under duress supersedes the potential for other fouls.

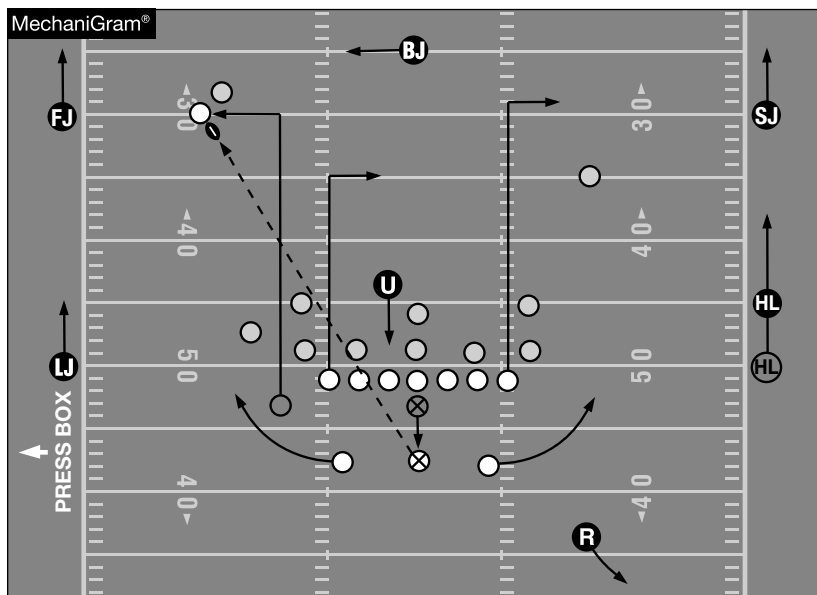
**Referee:** Primarily responsible for the passer until there is no threat of a foul. Then, any lineman who is a threat for a foul, including the initial key, the tackle on the right side. Verbally alert defenders when the passer has released the ball. Assist the Line Judge on the legality of a forward pass thrown beyond or behind the neutral zone, or out of bounds. Be prepared to rule on intentional grounding; know the status of passers in relation to the tackle box and know if they were under duress. 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 they are clearly out of the play. After action on the quarterback, move into the area and be a presence to prevent potential fouls.

**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 yardline, 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 the key. 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 are at the time the passer releases the ball.

**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, they have 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 behind or beyond the line of scrimmage. 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 are at the time the passer releases the ball.

**Side Judge and Field Judge:** Observe contact on your eligible receiver and the defensive back. Cover the sideline from your original position to the endline. 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.

**Back Judge:** The basic responsibility for preliminary action on the line are 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 player in motion will be put into the normal numbering of wide man, second man in, etc. and 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. When contact occurs on a pass that is blatantly uncatchable and the covering official drops their penalty marker, the non-covering official will give the covering official information that the pass was uncatchable. If the covering official agrees and has no other foul, that information is reported to the Referee. The Referee announces that there is no foul and gives the reason, and optionally gives the disregard the flag signal.

### 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.

# Initial Responsibilities for Receivers



Most offensive formations have five eligible receivers, not counting the backfield player that receives the snap. It is important to establish which official has initial responsibility for each eligible receiver. The two line of scrimmage officials and the three deep officials are assigned these initial responsibilities.

The duration of initial responsibility starts at the snap and extends until the assigned receiver is moving freely in space 1) without near and immediate threat from a defender and 2) without the receiver moving directly towards an opponent for a potential pick play. This position in open field is called "free of foul." Man-to-man defensive coverage on eligible receivers typically produce longer durations of initial responsibility since the defender sticks close after the receiver moves after the snap. Crossing patterns that start at the snap (receivers that move immediately inside) also create longer durations of initial responsibility because of the threat of picks. A receiver may be free of foul immediately after the snap if the defensive secondary is in a zone coverage and the receiver releases towards open space.

The five officials read the offensive formation and determine how many receivers are outside the tackle box on either side. This determination is made only at the snap to account for a receiver that is in motion. A numbering system is used to identify each of the outside receivers on either side of the formation. The widest receiver is #1, the next widest is #2, and so on.

## Determining Initial Responsibilities

The Side Judge and Field Judge have initial responsibility for the widest receiver on their side. The exception is when two or more outside receivers are lined up in a Stack or Bunch (see below).

The assignments for the Back Judge and two line of scrimmage officials are determined as follows:

### Three backs in the tackle box

- The Back Judge has initial responsibility for the first back that releases downfield.
- The line of scrimmage officials have initial responsibility for any back that leaves the tackle box toward their side zone.



**2 x 1 formation**

- The Back Judge has initial responsibility for the #2 receiver on the side of the formation with two receivers.
- The line of scrimmage officials have initial responsibility for the back in the tackle box closest to them at the snap.

**2 x 2 formation**

- The Back Judge has initial responsibility for the #2 receiver on the Line Judge's side of the formation.
- The Head Line-Judge has initial responsibility for the #2 receiver on their side.
- The Line Judge has initial responsibility for the back in the tackle box.

**Trips Formation**

When three receivers are outside the tackle box on one side of the formation, the Back Judge has the #3 receiver, and the line of scrimmage official has the #2 receiver. If the #3 receiver is lined up as a Tight End and stays in to block, the Back Judge goes to the #2 receiver and the line of scrimmage official takes #3.

**Stacking/Bunching**

Formations that have two or more receivers that are in close proximity to each other are called Stacks (receivers in vertical column) or Bunches (one on the line of scrimmage, one or more in backfield). Initial responsibilities for Stacks/Bunches are determined as follows:

- If only the #2 and #3 receiver are in a Stack/Bunch, the Back Judge and line of scrimmage official will read the routes to determine initial responsibility. The Back Judge is assigned initial responsibility of the receiver that releases vertically or away from the line of scrimmage official; the line of scrimmage official has the other.
- If three receivers are in a Stack/Bunch as trips on one side of the formation, the line of scrimmage official defaults to the receiver with the shallowest route. The Back Judge and either Side Judge or Field Judge take the remaining vertical routes, with the Side Judge or Field Judge taking the outside (closest to the sideline) route.
- If four receivers are in a Stack/Bunch on one side of the formation, the determination for initial responsibilities is the same as for a three-receiver Stack/Bunch above, except the Back Judge has the two, interior vertical routes instead of just one.

### Other Factors for Initial Responsibility

- On multiple receiver sets, officials should prioritize observing any receiver that has a defender pressing him at the snap. “Press” or “pressing” is a defender lined up immediately across the neutral zone from a receiver with the intent to jam him as soon as the ball is snapped. This includes multiple officials observing this action against a single receiver if other receivers are not pressed.
- An official’s initial responsibility ends when the receiver gets to a position that is free of foul. At this point, the official should go into zone coverage, observing receivers in their area of coverage.
- An official should expect situations where they need to observe two receivers at the same time. This is especially true when receivers line up near each other and intentionally cross their patterns or when waiting for Stacks/Bunches to declare their route.
- It should be expected that the duration of initial responsibility is longer when in the Red Zone. Man-to-man defense is most prevalent in the Red Zone and receivers getting to a position that is free of foul usually occurs if and only when the pass is delayed due to a scrambling passer.

# Punts



## Positioning and Zones

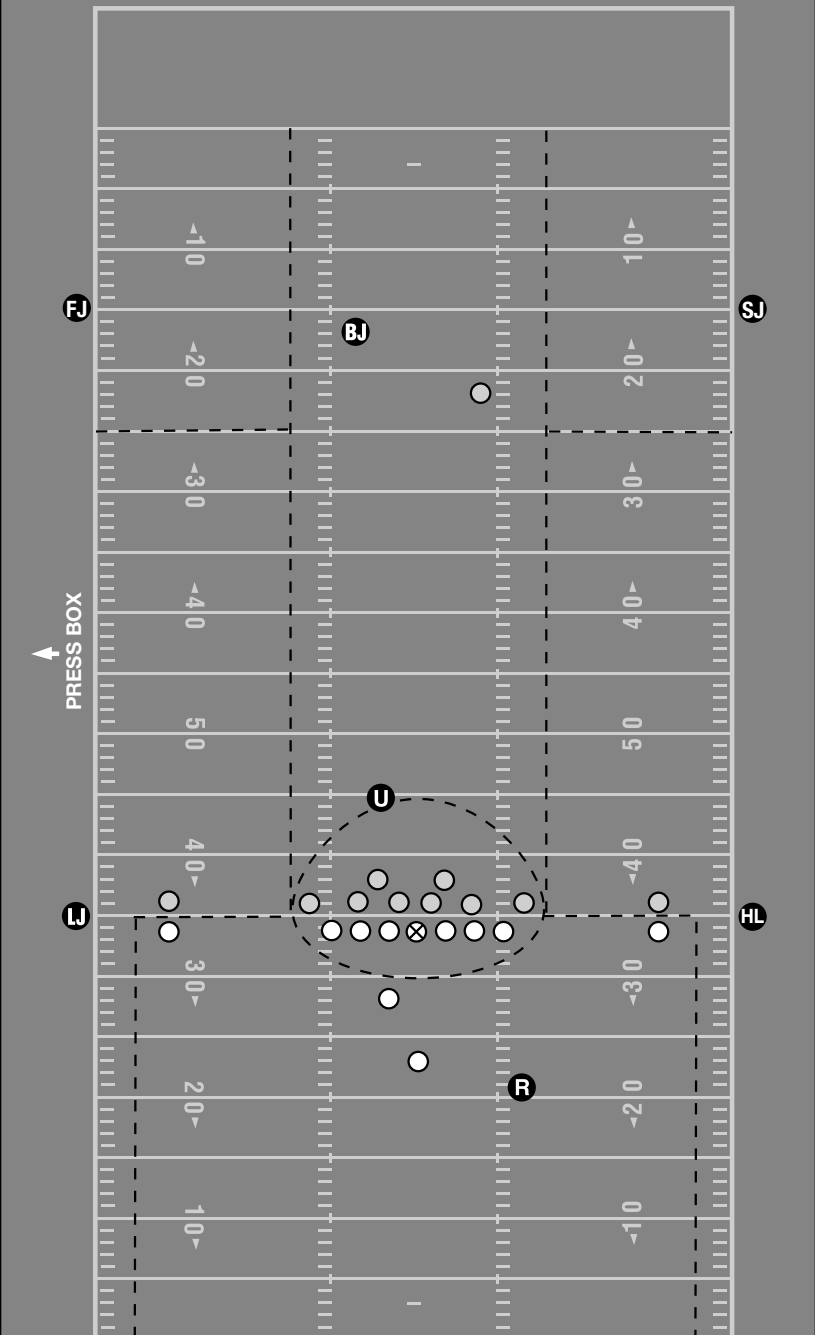
**Referee:** Take a position slightly behind and to the side of the kicker, outside the tight end position and on the right side. See the ball from snap to kick and observe the blockers and kicker at the same time. Be in position to be at a 45-degree angle with kicker when the ball is kicked. If the kicker is near the endline, straddle the endline and warn the kicker before the snap.

**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 A's 45 yardline, take an initial position at the goal line pylon.

**Back Judge:** The basic position is no less than five yards behind and at the side of the deepest receiver, favoring the wide side of the field. However, if the deepest receiver takes a position inside their 10 yardline, line up on the goal line. Work to maintain a 45-degree angle with the receiver while the ball is in flight.



## Coverage

**Referee:** Observe action on the kicker and be aware of the flight of the ball off their 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, during the kick and on the return. Specifically, be alert for targeting fouls at all times and illegal blocks of players clearly out of the play.

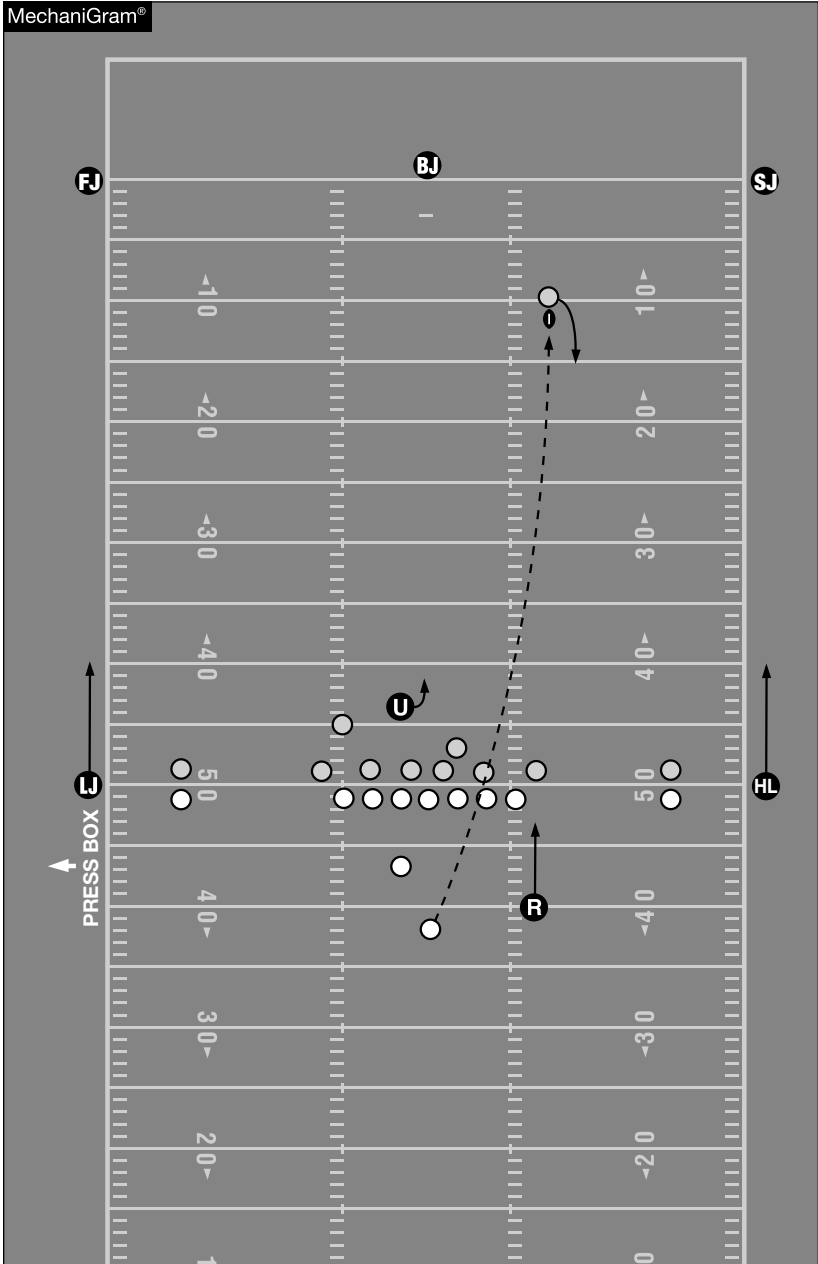
**Umpire:** Observe the blocks of Team A and action by Team B players. Pay particular attention to the Team B player over the snapper. Turn and move toward the return area when the first wave of Team A linemen has reached you.

**Head Line-Judge:** After the snap, hold your position until the ball crosses the neutral zone and signal if the kick is tipped. Along with the Line Judge, 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:** Along with the Head Line-Judge, has primary responsibility for observing blocking by the shield. 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 they start 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.

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**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 they are 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, they must adjust to officiate the play.

# Scoring Kicks and Tries

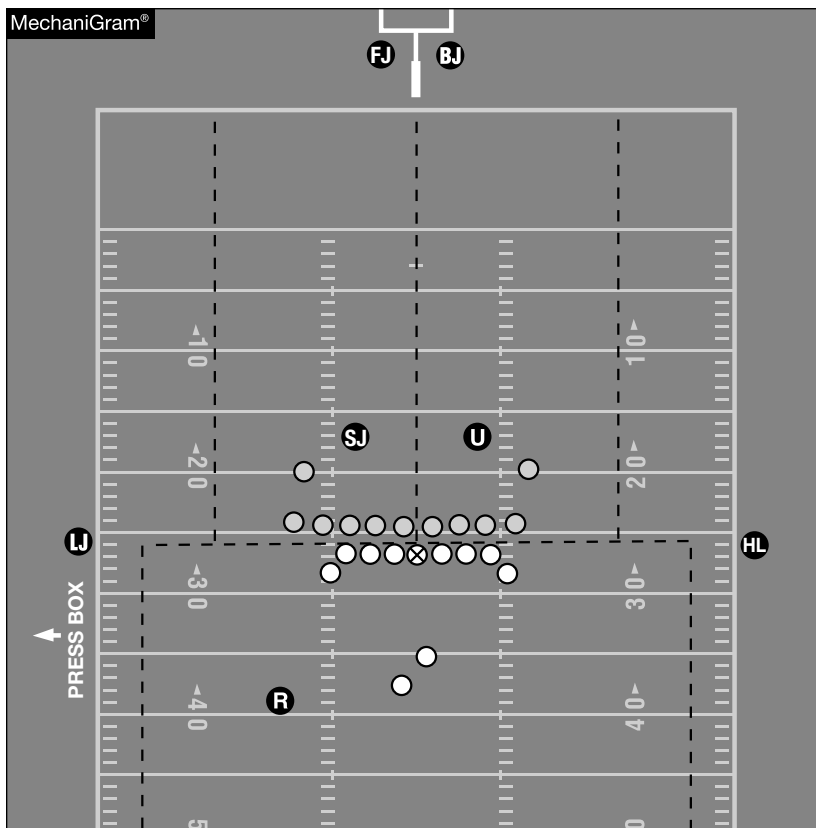


## Positioning and Zones

**Referee:** After a touchdown, the Referee will hold their ready for play signal for the try. Until they are ready to mark the ball ready for play, Referees will position themselves between the snapper and holder and will remain in this position. When the Referee sees the crew in place, they 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. If replay is in use, the Referee will not allow the offense to snap the ball for the try until they have received clearance from replay that the game will not be stopped. When the Referee receives the confirmation signal from replay, they will move back into position, signal to clear the Umpire and will ensure that the play clock has at least 25 seconds remaining. If the play clock is under 25 seconds when they receive confirmation from replay, they will give signal O7 to the play clock operator to immediately reset the play clock to 25.

**Umpire and Side Judge:** The Umpire and Side Judge line up on Team B's side of the ball. The Side Judge's position is dictated by the type of scoring kick. For kick tries, the Side Judge is positioned opposite the Referee. For field goals, the Side Judge is opposite the Referee when the snap is from the middle of the field; the Side Judge is positioned to the wide side of the field on field goals when the ball is snapped from any position other than the middle of the field. The Umpire takes a position five to seven yards off the ball opposite the Side Judge while keeping the snapper in their view. After the snap, they are primarily responsible for action by and against the center and action by and against the two guards. The Side Judge should be positioned five to seven yards off the ball. They observe action on and against the tackle and tight end on their side of the field. If the kicking team has a tackle-over formation, the Side Judge should key on both tackles on their side. Both officials should be alert for leverage, leaping and the pull and shoot. Umpire is primary to observe the defense's formation





**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge:** Take regular positions. Always know the eligible and ineligible receivers on your side of the ball. Observe action by and against the tight end and wingback on your side. At the snap, step one or two yards onto the defensive side of the ball to give you a better view of action (e.g., pull and shoots) by and against the wingback and tight end. Be ready to cover sideline from the line of scrimmage to the endline. Both are responsible for covering the play on short field goal and try attempts and fake field goals. You are responsible for determining and ruling on whether a kick crosses 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 in the end zone or 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 endline. The Field Judge moves to any position that will allow them to help on the play.

### **All**

Be alert if a Team B player is positioned to return the kick.

## **Fake Kicks**

As a guideline on fake kicks, when the ball is snapped inside Team B's 20 yardline, the Line Judge and Head Line-Judge have the goalline 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 yardline, the Field Judge and Back Judge move toward the pylons on their sides of the field and have the goalline.

## **Swinging Gate Formations**

When Team A 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 A is spread with no holder and kicker in position, assume regular scrimmage down positions. If Team A 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.

## **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 play clock goes under 25 seconds.

## **2-Point Tries**

If a 2-point try ends short of but near the goal line, the covering official should work the end of the play as they would any other scrimmage down. That would include giving a dead ball signal, using the whistle and marking a spot. After the play is clearly over, the covering official or Referee may then use Signal 10 indicating an unsuccessful try. This will avoid any confusion with Instant Replay, coaches, fans etc. that the crew is signaling that the try is unsuccessful.



# Timeout



To indicate which team took the timeout, the Referee “chucks” their hands in the direction of the team (PlayPic A). Optionally, the Referee may point to that team.

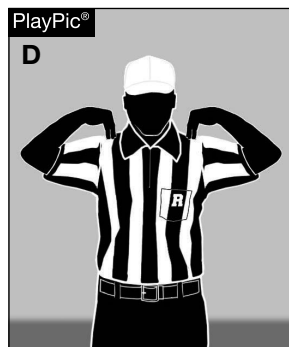
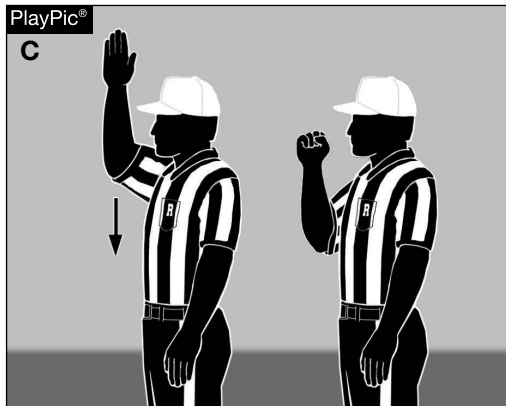
PlayPic B shows the signal for a TV or media timeout.

The red hat will stand at the top of the numbers for a full TV timeout and at the bottom of the numbers for a floater time out.

The Referee should use the microphone to announce which team took the timeout and how many it has used. If not miked or if the mike fails, the Referee should signal the third timeout by making three tugs on an imaginary steam whistle, as seen in PlayPic C. In non-TV games, teams have the option of calling a 30-second timeout. To indicate a 30-second timeout, the Referee gives the signal shown in PlayPic D.

All officials should record the team requesting the timeout, the quarter and the time remaining on the game clock. The calling official also records the player’s number or that 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.

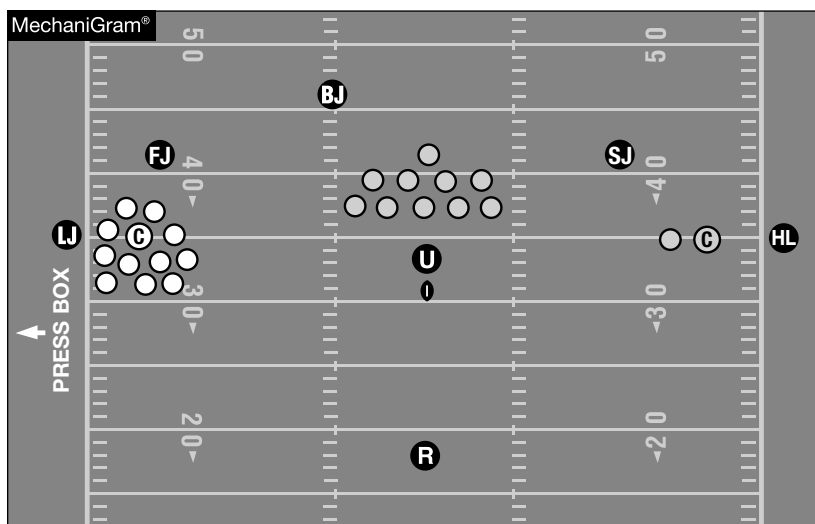


**Referee:** Stand away from other officials and the players. On the Back Judge's signal, which comes with 30 seconds remaining in the timeout, point to the appropriate sideline officials so they may tell the teams the timeout is over. On the Back Judge's subsequent signal that the timeout has expired, 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, the referee shall 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 will report to the Side Judge prior to the game. The clock operator is to inform them if they will be located in the press box or on the sideline, and to confirm the procedure the officials should use for communicating with the timer during the game.

All pregame and halftime activities will be synchronized with the official game clock. The clock operator should start the game clock 90 minutes before game time. The halftime intermission will be timed on the game clock. The game clock starts when the Referee gives the start-the-clock signal.

The electric clock operator must have an extra stopwatch available 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. The Side Judge will then pick up the correct game time on their stopwatch.

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 Team A is awarded a first down after the Two-Minute Timeout in each half, when Team B 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.

On scrimmage downs, if the game clock has been stopped, it will be restarted on the next snap or when the Referee gives the start-the-clock signal according to rule. On plays where the ball carrier is out of bounds and the clock is not inside two minutes, the Referee will signal the game clock restarted when the ball next to be snapped is on the field and being relayed to the Center Judge or Umpire to be spotted. The intent is to be consistent and keep the game moving when the game clock is not inside two minutes. It will be started on the snap if the ball carrier is out of bounds after the Two-Minute Timeout in each half.



The game clock will no longer stop when Team A is awarded a first down inbounds except after the Two-Minute Timeout in each half. When the game clock is stopped to award Team A a first down after the Two-Minute Timeout in each half, the clock will be restarted by the Referee when the ball is ready for play. The ball is ready for play when the official places the ball down, steps away to their position and is in a position to officiate.

When the 40-second interval applies and the game clock is to start when the ball is spotted, the Referee blows their whistle and give the ready-for-play signal. Once the ball is spotted, the Referee gives the start-the-clock signal and blows their whistle. When the 25-second clock is in force, the Referee will give the traditional ready-for-play 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.



Remind the timer 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 game clock to zero if the ball is legally snapped.



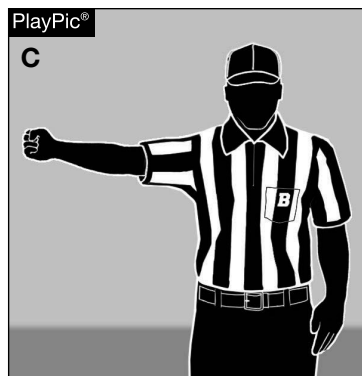
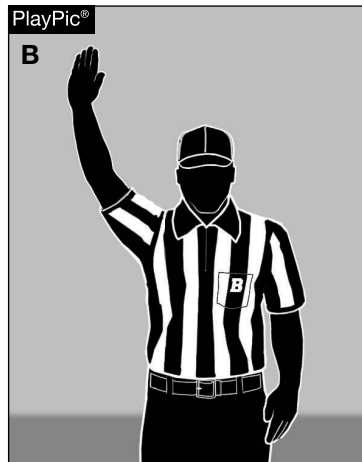
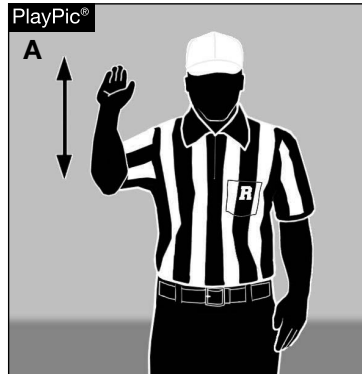
When the period officially ends, the Referee holds the ball above their head.

## Play Clock

When play clocks are available, they are the official delay-of-game timepiece. The play clock operator will report to the Back Judge prior to the game. They should be instructed to set the displays to either 25 or 40 seconds and to start the clocks at the proper time. The following game scenarios, including official's signals and resultant play clock operation, should be reviewed by the Back Judge with the play clock operator (see Section 12 – Game and Play Clocks on Page 214).

- Scrimmage down ends with a running game clock
- Scrimmage down ends with a stopped game clock
- Touchdown and try
- Free kick
- Game clock stopped for injury/helmet off

If the 40-second clock has run down to less than 25 seconds, the Referee should have the clock reset to 25 seconds by using signal O7 (alternately raising and lowering their arm in a pumping motion with their palm flat and facing up, see PlayPic A, next page). If the play clock has run down to less than 25 seconds and the ball is not ready for play, the Referee should use signal O7 to have the play clock operator reset the play clock to 25 seconds. 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. If the Referee must reset the clock to 40 seconds, the signal is made with both arms.

Play clock operators should be instructed that they are to react to those signals only from the Referee. Another official may communicate a play clock problem to the Referee by using one of those signals, but only the Referee's signal should result in the play clock being reset.

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 25/40-second count, the displays should be immediately reset.

At the end of a period, the play clock should be reset to 40 or 25 and will not be started when there is less time on the running game clock than the proper time on the play clock.

If there is a malfunction, 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 with the Back Judge manually timing the count on their watch. The Back Judge should raise one arm straight overhead when the play clock reaches 10 (PlayPic B) and the arm moved down continuously. The arm is straight out with five seconds left. (PlayPic C). When the arm is at their thigh, the play clock has expired.

When the ball becomes dead inbounds, the covering official uses the same signal to denote the end of the play. That is a signal to the timer that the play clock should be started. Note: That signal does not kill the ball. It is to be given after the ball is already dead.

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.

When there is an official's timeout for an injured player or a helmet coming completely off a player, the play clock will be set at 40 seconds for a player of Team B, at 25 seconds for a player of Team A or 40 seconds if players from both teams are involved. The game clock starts on the Referee's signal when the ball is declared ready for play.

Remind the timer 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.



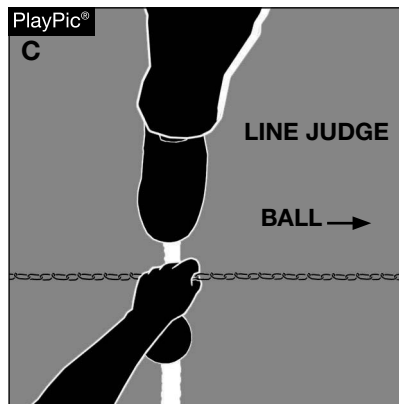
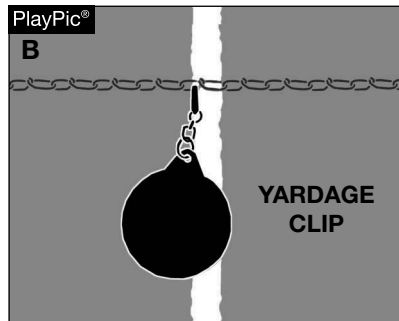
# Measurements

## 7 OFFICIALS

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 their 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 pressbox.



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 pressbox 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 they have 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 the chain is down, the Referee will always face the pressbox to make their ruling. 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 their 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 hashmark. The Field Judge or Side Judge will have obtained a new ball and have it at the inbounds mark. The Back Judge maintains their 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 accompanying 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 the goal line Team A is defending. 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 while accompanying the chain crew back to the sideline, but they 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.

Use of a second clip is mandatory. The clip operator should mark the new yardline with a second clip, leaving the original clip in place until after the first-down play ends.



## Intermission Between Halves



When the Referee has determined the first half has ended, they will immediately start the 20-minute halftime clock. The Side Judge starts their 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.

At the end of the first half, after the teams have left the field and the Referee has cleared the final play with the on-field crew and the instant

replay official, and there is no coach challenge, the Referee will declare the half ended. After the Referee has declared the first half ended, there can be no additional replay reviews from the previous play (Exception: For games in which Instant Replay is not used, a halftime Targeting video review as outlined in the Penalty section of Rule 9-1-3 & 9-1-4 may be completed).

Game management will determine the timing of halftime activities. The field will be available to squad members no later than three minutes prior to the second half kickoff. When the field is available to players, at least two game officials must be present back on the field. The field is again divided into the L-shaped warm-up configuration for the balance of the halftime intermission. When any squad member enters the playing enclosure during the halftime intermission, a staff member from that team must be present on the field.

When the field is available to players as determined by game management during the halftime intermission, the playing field will be divided into an “L-shaped” configuration with the 30-yard lines forming the “L” (See Section 6 – Mechanigram A).

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 yardline 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 yardline 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 Enforcement



## 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 their 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 their 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.

### Umpire

The primary responsibility for enforcing penalties is assigned to the Umpire. As such, it is imperative that they have 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. They will immediately mark off the penalty yardage from the correct enforcement spot.

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



They 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 the sideline position at approximately the same time as the Umpire, who will look to that official to make sure the penalty was marked 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, they 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 their 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 and offending player.

**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.

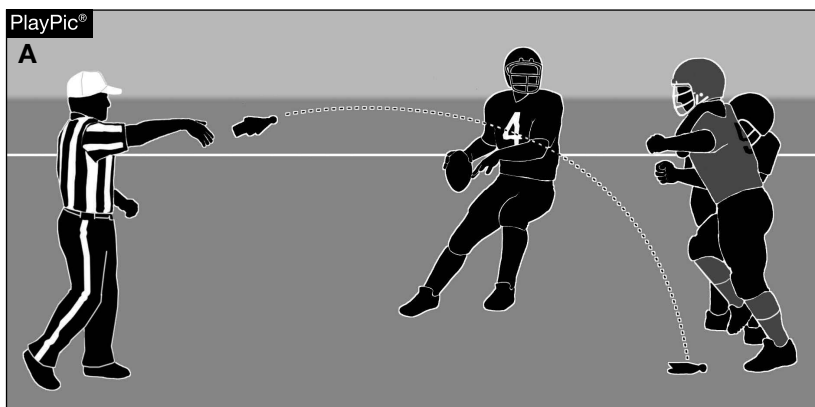
**NOTE 2:** The personal foul signal and announcement are to be used before the signal for any personal foul that has its own signal.

If players who score a touchdown commit an unsportsmanlike conduct foul before they cross the goal line (live-ball foul), the Referee should announce that fact. If the foul occurs after the player has scored and the ball is dead, the Referee should announce that fact as well.

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 their 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). 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 yardline, 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 the 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 moving 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 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.



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 of a targeting foul, the calling official must determine if the action would have been a foul if targeting were not involved. If the targeting foul does include another foul, both fouls must be reported to the Referee. The Referee will then announce both fouls. For example, "Personal foul, kick catch interference, with targeting, kicking team, (player number), 15-yard penalty. The previous play is under review (in games using instant replay)." The signals should be coordinated with the announcement. In the example above, that would be signals 38, 33, 24 and 47. If targeting is the only reason there is a foul on a defenseless passer, do not announce roughing the passer. In games using instant replay, after the review, if the foul for targeting is confirmed, the Referee will add to their announcement that by rule the player has been disqualified.

### **Additional Guidelines**

If the enforcement is correct, the down box should be moved to the spot and the chains moved (if appropriate). If an auxiliary down box is used, the Line Judge or Head Line-Judge instructs the holder to move the marker to the spot.

While the Umpire is marking off the penalty, the Referee should take a position in the clear where they 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, horizontally in the direction of the offending 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 equipped with a microphone, the Referee should switch it on when the penalty is being enforced, announcing the foul, the number and 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) number 76 (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 Back Judge will enforce the penalty at the succeeding spot without signaling.

An official who calls a foul requiring ejection or disqualification 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 speech with signaling. For instance, for an offensive holding penalty, the Referee should come to a complete stop in an area that is clearly visible to the press box, turn on the 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.

# Extra Periods



If regulation time ends with the teams tied, the game proceeds to extra periods as provided by the rules.

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 Field Judge and Side Judge escort their respective captains to the inbounds line, then return to the vicinity of the sideline. The Head Line-Judge, Line 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 should face each other with their backs to their sidelines. The visiting captain calls the toss, telling the Referee their choice before the Referee flips the coin. The Umpire should audibly repeat the captain's choice before the flip.

The Referee indicates the toss winner by placing their 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. The remaining option is given to the captain 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 their 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 25 yardline.

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.

If the final play is a 2-point try and the play ends short of the end zone but near the goal line, the covering official should work the end of the play as they would a scrimmage down. That would include giving a dead ball signal, using the whistle and marking a spot. After the play is clearly over, the covering official or Referee may then use Signal 10 indicating an unsuccessful try. This will avoid any confusion with Instant Replay, coaches, fans etc. that the crew is signaling that the try is unsuccessful.



# Instant Replay



## Booth Review

- The Referee announces the result of the play.
- The Referee announces the ruling on the field and that the previous play is “under further review.”
- The Referee gets a brief description of the play from the covering official(s) to discern what unique aspects of the ruling can be relayed to the replay official.
- The Referee moves to the side of the field where the headset is located. A sideline replay assistant (SRA) hands the headset to the Referee. The SRA steps several yards away so they are out of camera view.
- Before the game (or season if working in crews), the Referee designates one official to be the replay field official (RFO). The RFO accompanies the Referee each time a play is reviewed. Referees will designate the RFO, who will accompany them to the replay headset. Either the Side Judge, Back Judge or Field Judge should be selected as the RFO. When working in crews, the RFO should remain consistent throughout the season.
- The RFO ensures coaches and players are away from the review area.
- When the Referee first puts on the headset, the replay official must respond so that both know they have an audio connection and there is clear two-way communication between the Referee and the replay official.
- The Referee and RFO must avoid facial expressions, gestures or negative body language.
- The RFO is responsible for recording the following information:
  - Down.
  - Distance to the line to gain.
  - Yard line.
  - Hash.
  - Time.
  - Clock status (snap or ready).
  - Charged timeout.
- The RFO will stay with the Referee until the announcement is complete.
- The Umpire stays with the ball and the players.
- The Head Line-Judge checks with the chain crew to determine the status of previous play should the play be reversed, then assists the Side Judge with communication with the head coach on the appropriate sideline.
- The Line Judge and non-RFO officials stay with the coach on their respective sides of the field.
- The RFO stays with the Referee and is responsible for getting the outcome to the sidelines and the Umpire. That will allow the coaches and players to know where the ball will next be put in play.



- Unless unusual circumstances exist, the official involved in the play does not accompany the Referee to the headset.

## **Coach's Challenge**

- The sideline official informs the Referee of a challenge.
- The Referee and respective sideline official confer with the coach to understand the nature of the challenge and ensure that the play is reviewable. It is the responsibility of the entire crew to know which plays are reviewable.
- Announce the challenge: "(Team) has challenged the ruling of (state the ruling). The play is under further review."
- The crew follows the same procedure as with booth reviews.
- The Referee ensures that the replay official reviews the entire, not just the coach's challenge.
- After completing the announcement, the Referee should be prepared to briefly explain the ruling to the head coach IF the situation dictates.

## **Field Announcements That Enable a Booth Review**

- If the ruling on the field is that there is a tip of the punt in the vicinity of the kicker, and that is the reason there is no foul for roughing or running into the kicker and no marker is on the ground, the Referee to enable a replay review should make an announcement, "There was no foul for roughing or running into because the ball was tipped." With this announcement, replay can review, overturn and create a roughing or running into foul if there is indisputable video evidence that there was no tip of the ball.
- If the ruling on the field is that there is a tip of the pass not in the vicinity of the receiver, and that is the reason there is no foul for pass interference and no marker is on the ground, the Referee to enable a replay review may make an announcement, "There was no foul for pass interference (OPI or DPI) because the ball was tipped." With this announcement, replay can review, overturn and create a pass interference foul if there is indisputable video evidence that there was no tip of the ball.
- If the ruling on the field is that there is a fumble rather than an incomplete pass, and that is the reason there is no foul for intentional grounding and no marker is on the ground, the Referee to enable a replay review may make an announcement, "There was no foul for intentional grounding because the ball was fumbled." With this announcement, replay can review, overturn and create an intentional grounding foul if there is indisputable video evidence that the ball was not fumbled.
- After a score or change of possession, the Referee will hold their ready for play signal until receiving clearance from replay that the game will not be stopped.
- From off the field, the SRA will use Signal O12 to indicate information has been received from the instant replay official that the game will not be stopped. The SRA should be unobtrusive and the signal must not be flamboyant.



# 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 NCAA 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 their own position and must also be fully informed concerning the duties of each of the other officials. They 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 endline 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. A 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**

The CFO National Coordinator, in conjunction with conference coordinators, has developed the following policy concerning officials' dealings with the media:

No one associated with a conference officiating program should have conversations with any members of the media without the express approval of that conference's coordinator of officials. This includes onfield officials, instant replay personnel, observers, technical assistants, 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 shirt should 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. The official's position should be worn on the back of the shirt and on the breast pocket. The position designation on the back must be a full block letter on a black background measuring 10 and one-half by eight inches should be centered on the stripes on the back of the shirt. The position letters are: R – Referee; U – Umpire; H – Head Line-Judge; L – Line Judge; F – Field Judge, S – Side Judge and B – Back Judge. Numbers are prohibited. Mesh shirts are allowed, but all



members of the crew must wear the same style of shirt. If worn, an American flag should be sewn one inch above the breast pocket. The blue field with stars should be on the viewer's left. The CFO patch is sewn three inches below the left shoulder seam.

### **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.

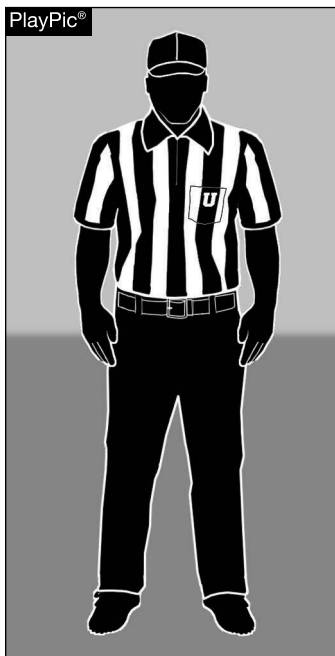
### **Jacket**

If jackets are worn before the game, they must be all black. Crews are to dress identically (all members wear jackets or none wear jackets).

### **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. All members of the crew should use black bean bags.



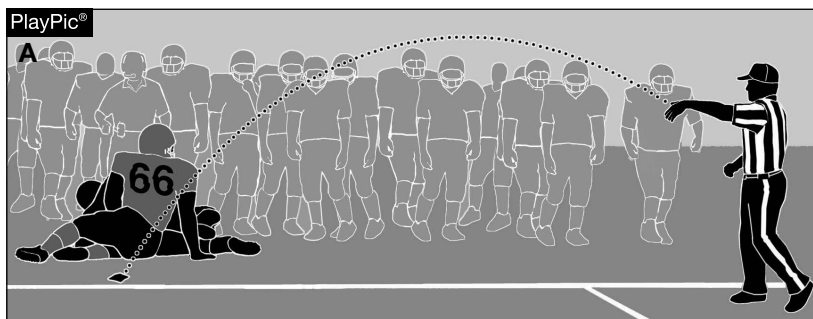
- An information card (to record timeouts, captains, etc.) and a writing utensil.
- An elastic down indicator or other device to keep track of downs. The Umpire should wear a second device to keep track of the area of the field from which the ball was last snapped.
- Gloves, when worn, should be black. Foul-weather hoods, when worn should be all black except for the Referee's, which should be white.
- The Referee must have a coin.
- Unless provided by the home team, the Head Line-Judge should have two devices that are clipped to the chain as an aid for measurements, etc.
- 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, that 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).

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.



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

The covering official should also drop a bean bag when, between their five yardline and their 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 their bean bag. To do that, 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 their 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 their whistle, causing the ball to become dead, the covering official must drop their 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 their 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 yardline 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.

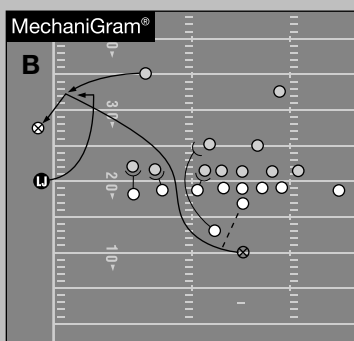
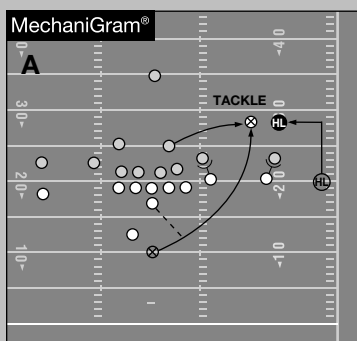
Be very aware of forward progress when there is drive-back action of the runner and be alert for subsequent ball-stripping action, which would not be a fumble.

## 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 their 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 their 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.



Officials should not penetrate the hashmarks 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 hashmark and the sideline.

When runners are downed inbounds near a sideline but momentum carries them beyond where they 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.

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: they are down by rule, their forward movement is stopped, they step out of bounds or they fumble the ball out of bounds. A runner is down by rule when any part of the body other than a hand or foot touches the ground and their 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 the forward-most spot.



When the contact pushes runners backward when they were running forward or backward, runners are entitled to the forward-most spot of the ball at the point of contact with the opponent.



When the runners are airborne (with or without contact) as they go 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, a bean bag must be dropped (rather than thrown) at the yardline at which the ball was fumbled (the spot may be used for penalty enforcement if a foul occurs while the ball is loose). The official must also continue officiating.

If the covering official sees a player recover the fumble from a prone position, the play should be blown 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 after the Two-Minute Timeout in each half; 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 unpling 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 they know which player has covered it, they verbally relay 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.

If the ball is ruled dead on the field in possession of a ballcarrier but is immediately loose, be alert and be able to confirm to replay a recovery in the immediate continuing action. Similarly if a loose ball by a passer is ruled an incomplete forward pass, be alert and be able to confirm to replay a recovery in the immediate continuing action.

## 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 they step out of bounds.

When the ballcarrier 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 ballcarrier 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 personnel. The nearest official not marking the spot should be alert to obtain ball from a ball personnel and to relay it to the Referee or Umpire.

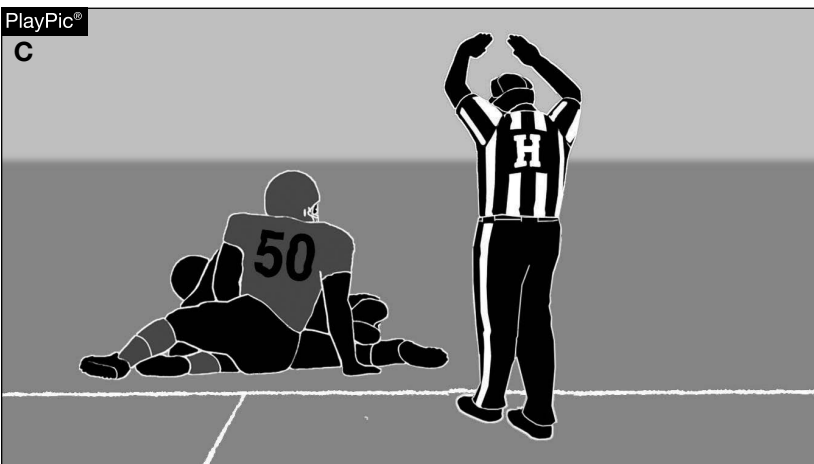
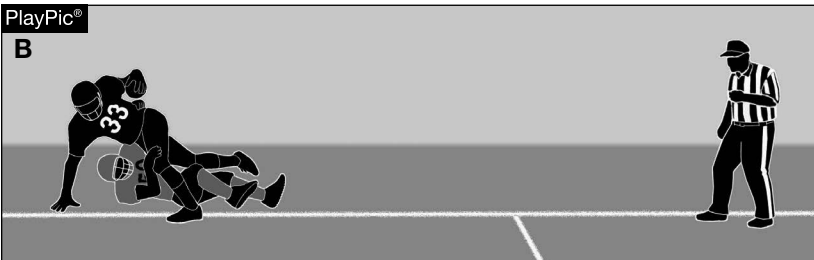
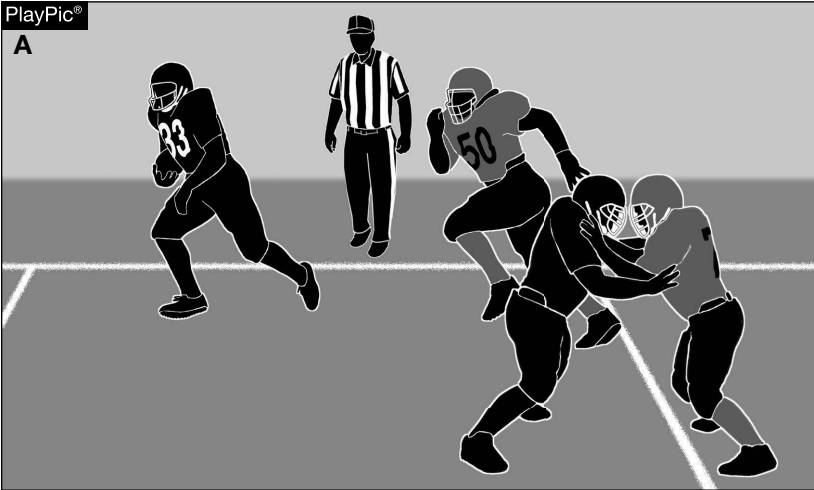
The tasks multiply when the play ends in or near a team area. An unseen (and unpenalized) personal foul gives players the impression that anything goes outside the boundaries of the field.

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.

If opposing players begin shoving or fighting, the covering official should drop their 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 hashmark), the covering official blows their 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 the Two-Minute Timeout in each half. After all action has ceased, obtain a ball from a ball personnel to be placed at the inbounds line. A non-covering official should be alert to obtain a ball from a ball personnel 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 their 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 their crew get the call right, the helping official owes it to their 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.

For this year, special emphasis has been communicated to coaches, officials and administrators from the national coordinator concerning sideline management and control. As noted in the rules, "During the game, coaches ... shall not be on the field of play....without permission of the referee." Rule 9-2-1-b-1 NOTE: Coaches who enter the field of play to question, protest or otherwise demonstrate disagreement with an officiating decision are subject to an immediate 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct. This unsportsmanlike conduct foul counts as one of the two leading to ejection from the game (Rule 9-2-6).

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 coaches the same information you'd give them if their player had fouled. You may also expedite the enforcement process by telling them 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 their 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 their outburst. Conversely, if the coach repeats the objectionable comment or responds with even stronger language, they've earned a flag.

However, under no circumstances should an official engage in an argument with a coach. When coaches are convinced a call was incorrect, no amount of discussion is going to convince them 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 officials while circling them 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. Ball Mechanics

The main goal of ball mechanics is to be as efficient as possible in getting the ball to the succeeding spot. It is important to get the ball spotted in a consistent and timely manner, nominally before the play clock reaches 30

seconds. Ball mechanics need to account for the appropriate handling of substitutions and getting all officials in position to officiate the succeeding down. Ball mechanics are outlined for various game play situations below. The crew should read each other; some end-of-play situations may have someone spotting the ball other than what is described below but still allowing the crew to meet the goal of being efficient.

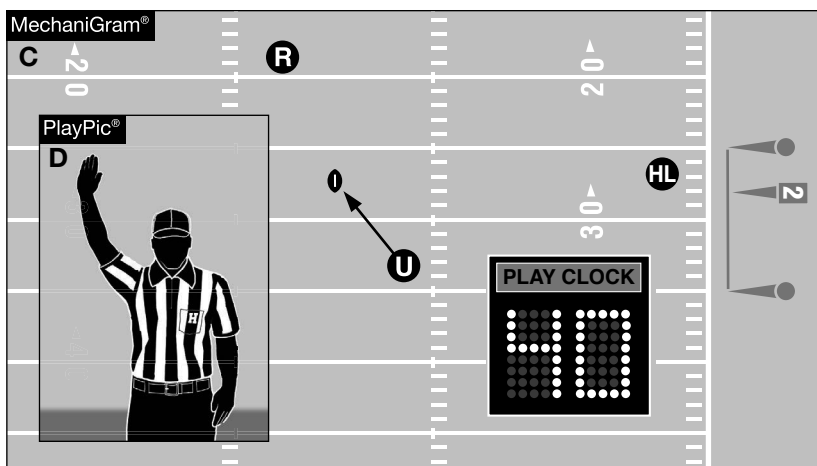
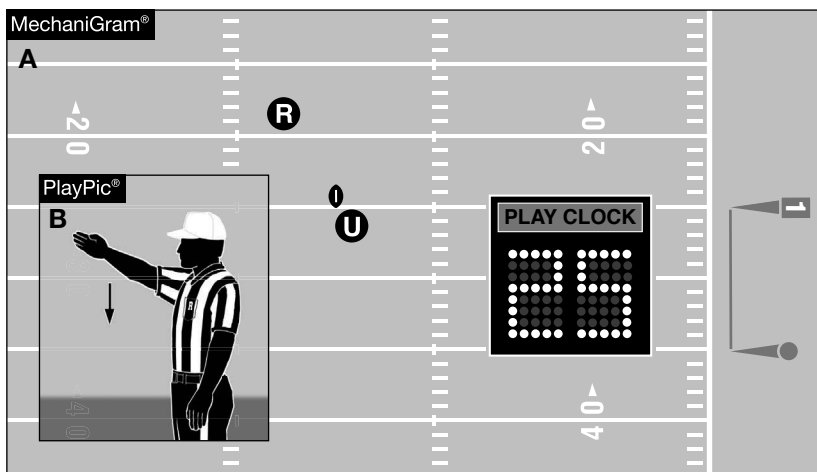
- **Dead ball spot behind the line of scrimmage or beyond and between the top of the numbers.** The Umpire will spot the ball at the succeeding spot if it is behind the original line of scrimmage or if it is beyond the line of scrimmage and between the top of the numbers.
- **Dead ball spot beyond and in the side zone (outside the top of numbers).** The Side Judge or Field Judge will get a new ball from the ball personnel and relay into the Umpire, who will spot the ball. The Referee can get involved only if substitution mechanics are not required for the next snap. The Referee needs to be certain an offensive substitution is not missed due to getting involved with ball mechanics.
- **Incomplete pass.** The new ball will come in from the side closest to the area of the incomplete pass. When the incomplete pass is down the middle of the field, the new ball should come in from the Press Box sideline. A new ball should be relayed in from the Press Box sideline if a new ball is needed due to weather.
- **Scrimmage kick downs.** The Umpire is responsible for spotting the ball and working substitution mechanics for punt, field goal and try downs.
- **Hurry up under 2:00 in half.** The Umpire will go from sideline to sideline if the previous down ends in bounds and with the game clock is running. There should be no tossing of the ball from one official to another with a running game clock. If the game clock becomes dead and will start on the succeeding snap, normal ball mechanics will apply.
- **Kickoff and safety kicks.** The Back Judge will handle ball for all free kicks. After a free kick down ends, the new ball comes in from press box side. The Umpire will go to succeeding spot and spot the ball.
- **Penalty enforcement.** The Umpire will handle ball and mark off the penalty yardage.

### 13. Game and Play Clocks

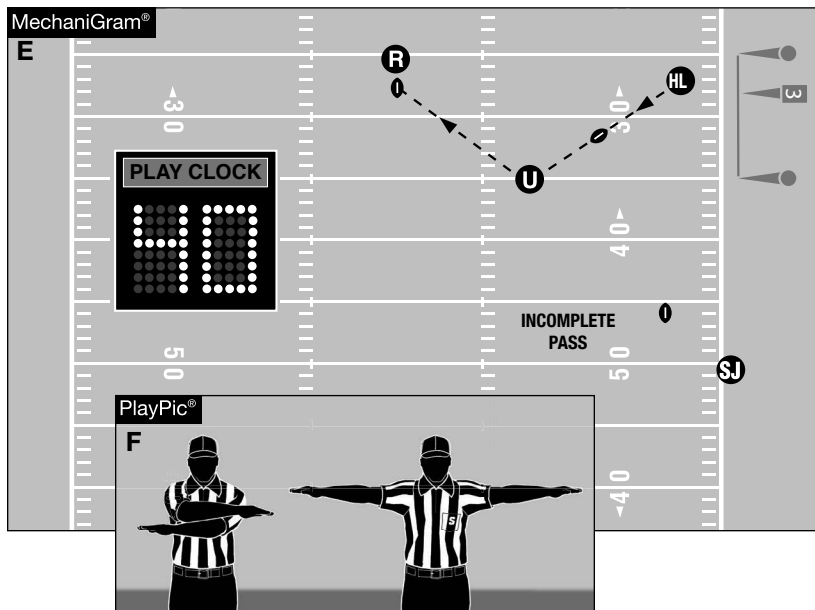
Play clocks time either a 25- or 40-second interval. Mechanics related to the starting of the play clock is dependent on the how the previous down ends.

When the 40-second interval is in force, officials' signals will serve as the trigger for the play clock operator to start the play clock. The play clock operator will consistently start the 40-second play clock within one second of the trigger signal from the on-field official. All scenarios below assume no live-ball foul is called during the down.



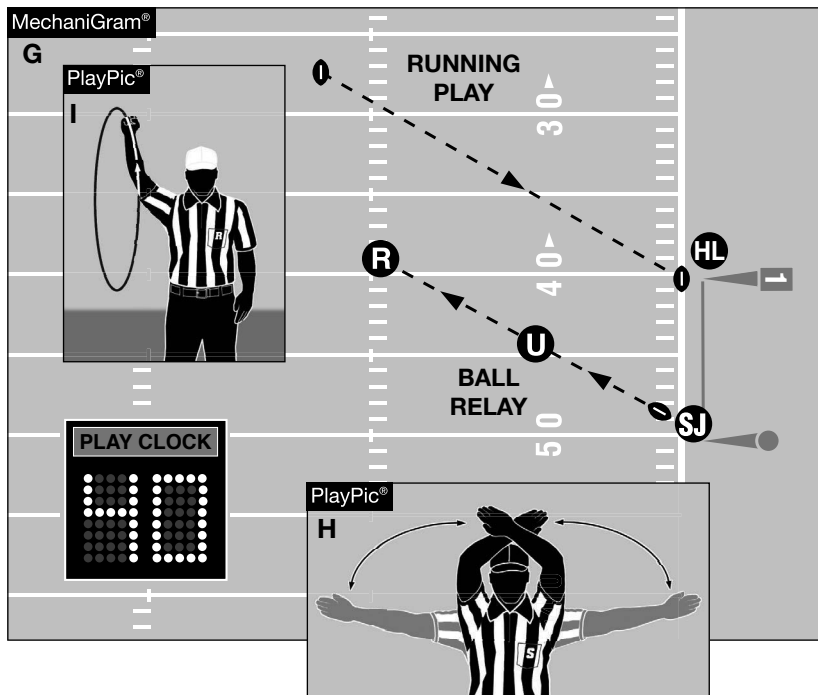


- **Scrimmage Down Ends with a Running Game Clock.** The covering official(s) will raise one arm completely above the shoulder with the hand open and the palm facing forward. This signal informs the play clock operator that the 40-second interval should begin. It is acceptable for the covering official(s), after giving that signal, to then indicate with their hand the next down. The Referee will not blow their whistle and give the ready-for-play signal unless there has been a Team B injury or a helmet off. Instead, the Referee will give the start-the-clock signal when the ball is placed on the field for the next snap and the game clock is to be started by rule.



• **Scrimmage Down Ends with a Stopped Game Clock.** The covering official(s) signal stops the game clock (Signal 3 for runner out of bounds, fumble or backward pass out of bounds, ball advanced past the line to gain, down ends with Team B in possession, after a legal kick down or Signal 10 for an incomplete pass). The 40-second play clock should start after these signals and the raised hand signal is not required. If the game clock is stopped for a runner or backward fumble out of bounds before the Two-Minute Timeout, any forward fumble out of bounds or for Team A making the line to gain, the Referee will give the start-the-clock signal when the ball is placed on the field for the next snap and the game clock is to be started by rule.

• **Touchdown and Try.** The covering official(s) touchdown signal (Signal 5) stops the game clock. This signal also serves to start the 40-second play clock. A 40-second play clock is not used if there are any live-ball fouls called during the down, even if the touchdown stands. Once the 40-second play clock starts, the Referee will monitor the remaining time if waiting to be cleared for the Try in a game that includes instant replay. The play clock should not be allowed to expire while waiting to be cleared. The Referee shall pump the play clock back to 0:25 (Signal O7) if it approaches 0:10 in this situation. The play clock could require being pumped back up multiple times if instant replay needs extra time to clear the touchdown. Team A shall be afforded at least 0:25 on the play clock once instant replay has



cleared. This may necessitate the Referee pumping the play clock to 0:25 one last time after getting the clear.

- **Free Kick.** The covering officials will stop the game clock at the end of a free kick down. Unless there is a live-ball foul called during the down, the 40-second play clock will start on this signal. The Referee shall monitor both Team A and Team B substitutions. Team A should not be allowed to snap the ball until Team B completes its substitutions. The Referee shall pump the play clock back to 0:25 in circumstances where Team A is ready and Team B delays its substitutions until less than 0:25 are on the play clock.

- **Clocked Stopped for Injury/Helmet Off.** When there is an official's timeout for an injured player or a helmet off, the play clock is set to 40 seconds if the injury or helmet coming completely off involves a player of the defensive team or 25 seconds if the injury or helmet coming completely off involves a player of the offensive team. It is set to 40 seconds if both teams have an injury and/or a helmet off on the same play. The play clock starts on the Referee's signal when the ball is declared ready for play. That applies regardless of the status of the game clock when the official's timeout occurs.

When the 40-second interval is in force, officials' signals will serve as the trigger for the play clock operator to start the play clock. One arm raised completely above the shoulder with the hand open and the palm facing forward informs the play clock operator that the 40-second interval should begin. It is acceptable for the covering official, after giving that signal, to then indicate with their hand the next down.

When a pass is incomplete, Team A has gained a first down **after the Two-Minute Timeout in each half**, or a ball carrier goes out of bounds, the appropriate signals will cause the timer to start the 40-second clock. In those instances, the raised hand is not necessary.

Note the following examples, illustrated on the preceding and following pages.

After a change of possession other than a free kick, Team A begins a series (MechaniGram A). The play clock is set to 25 seconds and it starts when the Referee blows the ready (PlayPic B). The game clock does not start until the snap.

The first play is a run off tackle for a gain of three yards, ending between the hashmarks (MechaniGram C). The covering official blows their whistle and raises their hand (PlayPic D). The 40-second interval then begins. The Referee does not give a ready-for-play signal or blow their whistle because the play and game clocks are already running.

The second-down play is an incomplete pass deep in the Side Judge's coverage area (MechaniGram E). The 40-second interval begins when the official signals the incomplete pass (PlayPic F). The raised hand is not necessary in that case. Because the play clock is running but the game clock does not start, the Referee makes no signal.

On third down, a running play results in a gain of 14 yards (MechaniGram G). The ball is declared dead when the ball carrier steps out of bounds. The 40-second interval begins when the covering official signals the clock to stop (PlayPic H). The raised hand is not necessary in that case. The Referee signals the first down. Because the running play ended out of bounds, the Referee gives the start-the-clock signal (PlayPic I) accompanied by the whistle.

**Other situations.** If the play clock must be reset to 25 seconds, the Referee will indicate that by making a pumping motion, alternately raising and lowering one arm, palm flat and pointed toward the sky. If the play clock is to be reset to 40 seconds, the Referee makes the same signal with both hands.

Play clock operators should be instructed that they are to react to those signals only from the Referee. Another official may communicate a play clock problem to the Referee by using one of those signals, but only the Referee's signal should result in the play clock being reset.

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. Any time loss due to the clock being started erroneously, such as when a dead-ball foul is called, must result in the clock being adjusted.

If there is a delay in placing the ball and the 40-second clock has run down to 0:25 or lower, the Referee will attempt to reset the play clock without stopping the game clock. If not, the Referee declares a Referee's timeout, has the play clock reset to 25 (signal O7), then gives the ready. The game clock starts on the snap unless it had been running when the Referee declared a timeout.

Following a loose ball, the Referee should be aware of a running game clock in situations where the crew is unsure of the result of the play. The game clock should be stopped by the Referee using the stop-the-clock signal in circumstances where there is unusual delay. When it is determined that Team A has recovered the ball, the Referee should start the game clock and pump the play clock up if there is less than 25 seconds remaining when the ball is made ready for play.

As an aid to officials and to play clock operators, the procedure — which details which play clock interval is appropriate for which situations — is printed in the Appendix at the back of this book. The material may be copied and presented to the clock operators before the game. A smaller version of the list is also provided for the official to copy, laminate and take onto the field for reference.

## 14. Crew Meeting During Two-Minute Timeout

The game clock shall be stopped in the 2nd and 4th quarter when 1) a running game clock hits 2:00 during a dead ball period or 2) the game clock is at 2:00 or lower at the end of a live ball period. The Referee shall make an announcement "Two-Minute Timeout" and, if applicable, give the signals for a media timeout. The crew should meet in the middle of the field to discuss the following items. The Back Judge joins the meeting before meeting with the Red Hat. The items to discuss include:

- Number of team timeouts remaining for each team,
- The number of remaining media timeouts remaining after the Two-Minute Timeout (if any),
- The crew should use one-ball mechanics if Team A is in a hurry-up offense,
- A runner, fumble, or backwards pass out of bounds for the remainder of the half will cause the game clock to start on the snap (Exception: forward fumble out of bounds),
- All first downs in bounds for the remaining of the half will stop the clock,
- Ten-second runoff rules are in effect for the remaining of the half,
- Clock adjustments now possible after an instant replay overturn, and

- The offended team for all fouls, if the offended team is behind or score tied, has an option for game clock status for the remainder of the half.

At the conclusion of the crew Two-Minute Timeout meeting, the Head Line Judge/Side Judge and Line Judge/Field Judge will take this information to their respective sidelines to review with the Head Coach. The Back Judge will meet with the Red Hat.

## 15. Mechanics for the 10-Second Runoff Rule

Situations involving the 10-second runoff rule require extreme focus and concentration by the entire crew so that the rule is administered correctly and as efficiently as possible. By definition, the rule will almost always come into play in hurry-up situations when players and coaches are working against the clock to get plays called and defenses set. It is imperative that officials completely understand all possibilities concerning the various options available to each team so they are able to administer what can be a complex enforcement. Referees should use the term “runoff” rather than “subtraction” for announcements.

The following guidelines will serve as the CFO mechanics for administering the 10-second runoff rule.

### **Fouling team has no timeouts remaining and it is obvious the opponent would want the 10-second runoff.**

The Referee will:

- Make the announcement (See below);
- Inform the quarterback the game clock will start on the ready;
- Give the offense a chance to move quickly to the line (if they so desire);
- Declare the ball ready for play and wind the clock.

The Umpire must be in position to prevent the snap.

Announcement with more than 10 seconds remaining on the game clock:

“False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The foul occurred with the clock running and after the Two-Minute Timeout. By rule, the penalty includes a 10-second runoff. Please reset the game clock to (appropriate) seconds and it will start on the ready for play.”

Announcement with 10 or fewer seconds remaining on the game clock:

“False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The foul occurred with the clock running and less than 10 seconds on the game clock. By rule, the game (or half) is over.”

### **Fouling team has timeouts remaining and it is obvious the opponent would want the 10-second runoff.**



Ask the head coach of the fouling team if they would like to use a timeout to avoid the 10-second runoff.

Announcement if head coach chooses to use a timeout to avoid the runoff:

"False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The offense has chosen to use its (first, second or third) timeout to avoid the 10-second runoff."

Announcement if head coach chooses not to use a timeout to avoid the runoff:

"False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The foul occurred with the clock running and after the Two-Minute Timeout. By rule, the penalty includes a 10-second runoff. Please reset the game clock to (appropriate) seconds and it will start on the ready for play."

**Fouling team has no timeouts remaining and it is not obvious the opponent would want the 10-second runoff (e.g., foul occurs on third or fourth down in the first half).**

Ask the head coach of the offended team if they want the 10-second runoff.

Announcement if head coach does not want the 10-second runoff:

"False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The defense has elected to decline the 10-second runoff. The game clock will start on the snap."

Announcement if the head coach chooses the 10-second runoff:

"False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The foul occurred with the clock running and after the Two-Minute Timeout. By rule, the penalty includes a 10-second runoff. Please reset the game clock to (appropriate) seconds and it will start on the ready for play."

**Fouling team has timeouts remaining and it is not obvious the opponent would want the 10-second runoff (e.g., foul occurs on third or fourth down in the first half).**

Ask the head coach of the offended team if they want the 10-second runoff.

Announcement if head coach does not want the 10-second runoff:

"False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The defense has elected to decline the 10-second runoff. The game clock will start on the snap."

Announcement if the head coach chooses the 10-second runoff:

"False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The foul occurred with the clock running and after the Two-Minute Timeout. By rule, the penalty includes a 10-second runoff. Please reset the game clock to (appropriate) seconds and it will start on the ready for play."

Announcement if head coach chooses to use a timeout to avoid the runoff:

“False start, offense number 72. Five-yard penalty. The offense has chosen to use its (first, second or third) timeout to avoid the 10-second runoff.”

The latter situation will require a decision by both head coaches. It will be crucial that sideline officials recognize when it arises. They should get the appropriate information to each head coach so that the proper decisions can be made with as little delay as possible.

## 16. After the Game

### Postgame Duties and Review

When the game ends, all officials should note the total elapsed time from the initial kickoff to the final whistle (including all intermissions). All officials should leave the field together. Neither seek nor avoid coaches.

If the last play of the game could have a direct competitive effect, the crew should not leave the field until released by the replay official.

### Postgame Reports

In your postgame review, complete any required game reports and forward them immediately. If there is any breakdown in cooperation between game officials and the clock operators during the game, or if any malfunction of the clocks occur, the official in charge of the timer is to inform the conference office or assigning agency immediately following the game. Timers are encouraged to report crews that are not cooperative or whose signals are not clear and accurate.

For postgame media access to officials, refer to conference, bowl game or postseason policies. Any comments or explanations on rules or interpretations shall be governed by conference, bowl game or postseason policies.

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.

The Referee will contact the assigning agent (usually the conference officiating coordinator) and report who was ejected for fighting. The report must include the point of the game in which the ejection occurred.

The assigning agency will notify the athletic director that one or more of the institution's student-athletes or coaches was ejected for fighting. Such notification will include an explanation of the rule dealing with the suspension. If the ejected person is not under the jurisdiction of the assigning agency, that agency will notify the agent who represents the institution, and similar procedures will be followed. The assigning agent also will alert the next scheduled opponent of the ejection if it carries over to the next game.



## 17. Tracking and Reporting Fouls

In the FBS and FCS conferences, officials must record each foul they call during a game. After the game, the penalties are compiled and sent to the conference office.

Penalty reports allow conference coordinators as well as the NCAA Football Rules Committee to spot trends. For instance, if there is an appreciable increase in the number of holding calls from one season to the next, it could mean that officials are becoming more attuned to holding, or perhaps it is the result of a point of emphasis in college football at large or in that conference. It could also be that players are just flat holding more than they have in previous seasons.

The data provided by the penalty reports could lead to rule or mechanics changes that improve the game.

The penalty reports use abbreviations to identify the fouls. Although an official may use different designations on the penalty card carried during the game, the following designations (provided by QwikRef, Inc.) should be used on the report sent to the conference or coordinator.

BAT .....	Illegal Bat
BBW .....	Block Below Waist
BOB .....	Blocking Out of Bounds
BSB .....	Blind Side Block
CHB .....	Chop Block
CLP .....	Clipping
DH .....	Defensive Holding
DOD .....	Delay of Game (Defense)
DOF .....	Defensive Offside
DOG .....	Delay of Game (Offense)
DPI .....	Defensive Pass Interference
DSC .....	Disconcerting Signals (Defense)
ENC .....	Encroachment Offense
EQV .....	Equipment Violation
FBG .....	Fighting Before Game
FFH .....	Fighting First Half
FHT .....	Fighting Halftime
FMM .....	Face Mask (15 Yards)
FSH .....	Fighting Second Half
FST .....	False Start
GAI .....	Game Admin Interference / DOG
GAI / SLW .....	Sideline Warning
GAIM .....	Game Admin Interference Major (15yd)
HUR .....	Hurdling

IBB .....	Illegal Block in Back
IBK .....	Illegal Block Kickers
IBS .....	Illegal Block After Fair Catch Signal
ICS .....	Illegal Contact w / Snapper
IDP .....	Ineligible Downfield on Pass
IFD .....	Illegal Formation Defense
IFK .....	Illegal Free Kick Formation
IFP .....	Illegal Forward Pass
IHR .....	Illegally Helping Runner
IIN .....	Interlocked Interference
IKB .....	Illegally Kicking Ball
ILF .....	Illegal Formation
ILM .....	Illegal Motion
ILS .....	Illegal Substitution
ING .....	Intentional Grounding
INU .....	Illegal Numbering
ISH .....	Illegal Shift
ISP .....	Illegal Snap
ITK .....	Illegal Touch of Kick
ITP .....	Illegal Touch-Pass
IWG .....	Illegal Wedge
KCI .....	Kick Catch Interference
KIK .....	Illegal Kick
KOB .....	Kickoff Out of Bounds
LEA .....	Leaping
LEV .....	Leverage
LPS .....	Leap Over Punt Shield
OFK .....	Offside on Free Kick
OH .....	Offensive Holding
OPI .....	Offensive Pass Interference
PFH .....	Personal Foul Helmet Off
RFH .....	Roughing Holder (15 yds)
RFK .....	Roughing Free Kicker
RNH .....	Running into Holder (5 yds)
RNK .....	Running into the Kicker
ROB .....	Return From OOB
RPS .....	Roughing the Passer
RRK .....	Roughing the Kicker
SKE .....	Striking, Kicking, Kneeing, Elbowing
TGT .....	Targeting
TRP .....	Tripping
UNR / BTH .....	Blow to Head
UNR / BUT .....	Butting, Ramming w / Crown Helmet
UNR / HCT .....	Horse Collar Tackle
UNR / HDP .....	Hit on Defenseless Player

UNR / HTF	.....	Hands to Face
UNR / LTO	.....	Late Hit Out of Bounds
UNR / LTP	.....	Late Hit / Piling On
UNR / OTH	.....	Other
UNS / ABL	.....	Abusive Language
UNS / BCH	.....	Unsportsmanlike Act / Bench
UNS / CTO	.....	Unsportsmanlike Conduct / Contact Official
UNS / DEA	.....	Delayed Excessive Act
UNS / HCH	.....	Unsportsmanlike Conduct / Head Coach
UNS / NFA	.....	Non-Football Act
UNS / OTH	.....	Other
UNS / PSH	.....	Pushing / Shoving Opponent
UNS / RHT	.....	Removal of Helmet
UNS / SLI	.....	UNS / Sideline Interference
UNS / STB	.....	Spiking/Throwing Ball
UNS / TAU	.....	Taunting or Baiting
UNS / UFA	.....	Unfair Acts

## 18. Guidelines On Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls

Player behavior in committing unsportsmanlike conduct fouls continues to be a major point of emphasis for the NCAA Football Rules Committee and the CFO Board of Managers. 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 (Rule 9-2-1). 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.

A list of specifically prohibited acts is in Rule 9-2-1 (a) through (k). This list is intended to be illustrative and not exhaustive.

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

in the book, but because they offend our sense of how the game should be played. We now have enough experience with this rule to know what “feels” right and wrong. Note that most if not all of these actions fall outside the category of brief, spontaneous outbursts. Rather, they present themselves as taunting, self-glorification, demeaning to opponents, or showing disrespect to the opponents and the game.

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.

The guidelines for officiating unsportsmanlike conduct fouls by players are clear and have been in place for a number of years. Players, coaches, and officials should have no question when a foul has occurred. Spontaneous reactions to a great play are allowed as long as the specific act does not become prolonged nor violate the restrictions of Rule 9-2-1-a-2.

In the past, officials have attempted to prevent unsportsmanlike acts by rushing toward the player who has scored, intercepted a pass, sacked the quarterback, etc. There are several issues that arise in an official’s zeal to prevent a foul. The official:

- Appears over-officious by “attacking” a player who has done nothing wrong;
- Narrows their field of vision making it difficult to discern the exact nature of the player’s actions; and
- Is put in harm’s way when they enter an area where multiple players are excitedly celebrating a good play by a teammate.

Officials should not rush toward any player or players to prevent potential celebratory, unsportsmanlike acts. They should maintain a presence at a reasonable distance and observe the actions of the players. If the actions border on unsportsmanlike conduct, no foul is to be called and that information should be relayed to the head coach. If a foul is committed, a flag should be thrown without emotion or further action toward the player.

Note 1: These mechanics are for situations when the actions involve the players of only one team. If there is a threat of a foul involving opponents, officials should, as always, intervene to avoid further escalation, such as taunting or unnecessary roughness fouls.

Note 2: If both teams leave the team area to engage in something other than a fight, and the crew cannot identify squad members leaving the team area vs. players, substitutes, etc., it is acceptable for the Referee to announce



all players of both teams are guilty of an unsportsmanlike conduct foul. This mechanic should only be used in extreme circumstances when both teams' tempers are running extremely high. This is significant because now every player has been charged with an unsportsmanlike conduct foul and any subsequent unsportsmanlike conduct foul will result in that player's ejection. Fouls for which the penalty includes automatic disqualification or ejection will be administered by rule.

## 19. Unfair Acts

Rule 9-2-3 gives the Referee much latitude in handling obviously unfair acts during a game. This would include situations that arise when a team commits a blatant, obvious and intentional foul or fouls to gain a clock advantage late in a game. As cited in The Football Code, such actions are in direct conflict with the strong statements under Coaching Ethics.

As a new interpretation, crews should penalize these intentional fouls as unsportsmanlike conduct fouls and subsequently reset the game clock in these type situations back to the time at the snap of the play in question. Officials will also note that each player committing these unsportsmanlike acts will have a counter in terms of unsportsmanlike conduct fouls. As point of note, this does not apply to intentional fouls committed during the course of the game, as the rules handle these situations quite well.

## 20. Setting the Pace

While officials have little impact on how well a game is played, a good pace of the game can be set and maintained by implementing a few time-saving measures.

### Free Kicks

- Upon the Back Judge giving the ball to the kicker, the Referee whistles the ready and signals the 25-second clock to begin.
- If the game is not televised, after a try or successful field goal, the Back Judge should take the ball to the middle of the field after 45 seconds have expired.

### Timeouts

- During televised games, the "red hat" or liaison signals the Referee before a play if a timeout is requested. The Referee signals the timeout and adds the media timeout signal.
- The liaison times the commercials. Timing begins when the Referee

gives the media timeout signal. With 30 seconds left in a timeout on a TV game (30 seconds in a non-TV game or before a free kick), the Back Judge informs the liaison, who signals the Referee. The wing officials should then instruct the teams to return to the field.

- When the liaison indicates that 10 seconds remain in the timeout, the Referee may give the ready-for-play signal. The Referee has discretion to slightly delay the ready-for-play signal.
- Following a timeout, all officials must be in position. That allows the Referee to give the ready-for-play signal without delay.

### **After a Play**

- If the play has ended with a change of possession or a new series for Team A, the officials must hustle to their positions. That allows the Referee to give the ready-for-play signal without delay.
- If the play has ended with a touchdown, the covering officials should encourage the scoring team to keep their celebration short and get ready for the try.
- The official who calls a foul that prevents the snap should alert the Referee by signaling the nature of the foul. The signal should be given when the ball is dead. The Referee can then give the preliminary signal in a more time-efficient manner.





## **Appendices A-H**

# Appendix A

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## Crew of 7 Umpire in the Backfield Experiment

### FREE KICKS

- **All Positions** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.

### SCRIMMAGE PLAYS

#### Before The Snap

- **Referee** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **Umpire** - Primary for spotting the ball on all plays. After spotting the ball, move to a position behind but to the side of the center to prevent the snap. Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined for the Center Judge in the 8-person mechanics.
- **Head Line-Judge and Line Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **Field Judge and Side Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **Back Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.

#### Substitutions and Counting Players

- **Free Kick:** The Umpire, Back Judge, Field Judge, and Side Judge count Team A; the Referee, Head Line-Judge and Line Judge count Team B.
- **Scoring Kicks:** Referee, Umpire, Head Line-Judge, and Line Judge count the offense. The Field Judge, Side Judge, and Back Judge count the defense.
- **Punts:** Referee, Head Line-Judge, and Line Judge count the offense. The Field Judge, Side Judge, and Back Judge count the defense. The Umpire has no counting responsibility on punts.
- **All Other Non-kicking Plays:** The Referee has primary responsibility to count Team A. Head Line-Judge and Line Judge are secondary for counting Team A. The Field Judge, Side Judge and Back Judge count Team B. The Umpire has no counting responsibility.

#### Substitution Procedures

- The Umpire is to assume the duties of the Center Judge position as outlined in 8-person mechanics. Primary for preventing the snap as determined by the Referee. The Umpire should neither walk nor sprint when spotting the ball; rather, move with consistency throughout the game to put neither team at a disadvantage.
- On punts, the Umpire remains in the offensive backfield and must assist the Referee in managing the substitution process.
- All other officials to use the same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.



### Running Play Coverage

- **Referee** - Running Play Coverage is identical with the Referee position in the 8-person mechanics.
- **Umpire** - Running Play Coverage is identical with the Center Judge position in the 8-person mechanics.
- **Head Line-Judge and Line Judge** - Running Play Coverage is the same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **Field Judge and Side Judge** - Running Play Coverage is the same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **Back Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics being mindful to look for illegal blocks (Blindside, Chop, Illegal Low blocks) which may occur at the second level in the area of the linebackers.

### Goal Line Positioning and Zones

- **Referee** - Goal Line Positioning is identical with the Referee position in the 8-person mechanics.
- **Umpire** - Same responsibilities and positioning for the Center Judge as outlined in the 8-person mechanics. Additionally, assist line of scrimmage officials with determining if a pass was backwards or forward, if the passer was beyond the line-to-gain, and if the touched pass is beyond or behind the line of scrimmage.
- **Head Line-Judge and Line Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics. Additionally, be alert to rule if a pass was backwards or forward, if the passer was beyond the line-to-gain, and if the touched pass is beyond or behind the line of scrimmage.
- **Side Judge and Field Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **Back Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.

### Reverse Goal Line Mechanics

- **All** - Reverse Goal Line Mechanics is identical to the traditional seven person mechanic currently in use.

### Forward Pass Coverage

- **Referee** - Primary for Guard and Tackle on their side. Primary coverage for the Quarterback. Primary responsibility to rule on Intentional Grounding. Be alert for action on the Quarterback following a change of possession.
- **Umpire** - Primary for Center, Guard and Tackle on the left side of the formation. Secondary coverage for the Quarterback. Eyes shift to the Quarterback when contact is imminent. Be prepared to assist the Referee with Intentional Grounding if needed. Responsible for Team A's goal line after a change of possession. Responsible for the Quarterback when scrambling outside the numbers and into the left sideline bench area.



- **Head Line-Judge and Line Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional seven person mechanics; except, offside line of scrimmage official has primary responsibility for ineligible players downfield.
- **Side Judge and Field Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **Back Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **All** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **Coverage Notes** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics. However, with no Umpire in the defensive backfield to quickly turn and assist with a potential trapped pass, other officials, including the Replay official, need to be diligent to assist.

## READING AND UNDERSTANDING KEYS

- **All** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.

## PUNTS

### Positioning and Zones

- **Referee** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **Umpire** - Coordinate substitution process with Referee. Stand between the snapper and personal protector shield in line with the punter until released by the Referee. When released align even with the punter and outside normal tight end position.
- **Head Line-Judge and Line Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **Field Judge and Side Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **Back Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.

### Coverage

- **Referee** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **Umpire** - Primary for blocking by the shield, secondary for action on the kicker. Following the kick, quickly hustle down field and move toward the return area following and observing the first wave of Team A linemen down field.
- **Head Line-Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **Line Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.
- **Back Judge** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.



### **Blocked Kick or Snap Over the Kicker/Holder's Head**

- Referee and Umpire - Retreat and box in the play. Responsible for officiating the play from inside/out perspective as play develops.
- Head Line-Judge and Line Judge - Hold the line of scrimmage until it is no longer threatened. Adjust to officiate the play as the play dictates.

### **SCORING KICKS**

#### **Positioning and Zones**

- **All** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.

#### **Fake Kicks**

- **All** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.

### **TIMEOUTS**

- **All** - Same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional 7-person mechanics.

### **BALL HANDLING**

Following plays that require a new football, the new ball is delivered by the Umpire or Referee. There are times where expediency results in the ball coming from another position. Because this experiment is new and different from past patterns, officials should be diligent in instructing ball personnel to work trailing plays, that is on the offensive side of the neutral zone, since the new ball will no longer arrive from downfield.



## Appendix B

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### Duties of the Alternate Official

If an Alternate Official is assigned to a game, that official should be ready at any time to replace an official on the crew who cannot continue in the game. Many times, the Alternate Official will be assigned a duty, such as running the clock from the press box, red hat, etc. In those cases, the assigned conference duty will override the following recommended mechanics. If available, the Alternate Official will perform the following duties as that official maintains a state of readiness to enter the contest:

1. Attend the pregame conference with the officiating crew.
2. Dress in full uniform ready to officiate.
3. Initial position on scrimmage plays is three yards downfield on the press box side; at the option of the assigning conference, the Alternate Official may switch to the opposite side of the field for the second half. When the Head Line-Judge and Line Judge have goal line responsibility, initial position is at the neutral zone behind the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge.
4. Primary responsibility is to monitor and support the crew on ineligible players downfield. When the Head Line-Judge and Line Judge have goal line responsibility, monitor the neutral zone as a backup to determine ball and player status relative to the neutral zone.
5. Assist the Referee when needed (signaling from the sideline) with clock status when a ready for play signal is to be given.
6. Know the down as a backup on every play.
7. Record and check penalty enforcement spots. Assist with the identification of the number of the player that committed a foul.
8. On free kick plays, initial position is at the receiver's restraining line, performing backup monitoring of that line.
9. Assist in monitoring the game clock.
10. If the game clock fails, operate the clock and coordinate communication each play with the Referee.
11. Assist in counting charged team timeouts.
12. Assist in coordinating timing at halftime.



# Appendix C

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## Pregame Duties

The purpose of a pregame conference is to prepare the crew and solidify the thinking of officials in regard to procedures, rules and interpretations and enforcement. As a result, attendance at the pregame conference is mandatory. Only an emergency and notice to the Referee may excuse absence. No unauthorized visitors are to be allowed.

In the absence of the Referee, the Alternate Referee is responsible that a pregame conference is conducted. The Side Judge is responsible for having the correct time. Other officials should confirm their watches with the Side Judge.

Referees will vary their approach to the pregame conference, but the value of organizing and unifying the techniques to be employed in a game cannot be overemphasized. Here is a list of suggested topics for the pregame:

### PREGAME OUTLINE



#### **Pregame duties**

- Coaches' equipment certification
- Spot check players' equipment
- Check and mark game balls
- Identify medical staff
- Instruction of chain crew and alternates
- Instruction of ball personnel
- Instruction for timer
- Inspection of field



#### **Coin toss procedure**

- First half procedure
- Second half options



#### **Free kicks**

- Positions
- Instructions to teams
- Restraining lines
- Count players
- Starting clock

Momentum into end zone  
Touchback  
Untouched kick out of bounds  
Blocking below waist  
Kick-catch interference  
Fair catch  
Forward handoffs  
Onside kicks  
Free kick after safety



### **Scrimmage plays — general**

Positions  
Crew communication  
Count players  
Substitutions  
Legality of offensive line — wing officials signals  
Eligibility of receivers  
Man in motion  
Dead-ball fouls  
Legality of snap



### **Scrimmage plays — runs**

Coverage of runner — in backfield, between tackles, sweeps, pitchouts  
Action in front of runner  
Dead ball coverage  
Forward progress — out of bounds  
Goal line/short-yardage situations  
Coverage of fumbles, ensuing advances and returns



### **Scrimmage plays — passes**

Coverage of passer — roughing  
Passer/pass behind/beyond line of scrimmage:  
clarify jurisdiction on forward/backward pass

Intentional grounding — clarify jurisdiction  
Ineligibles downfield  
Keys and zones  
Coverage of receivers  
Complete/incomplete  
Pass interference — offensive, defensive  
Coverage on interception — momentum into end  
zone, blocking below waist



### **Punts**

Positions  
Contact on kicker  
Blocked/touched on line of scrimmage — ball  
beyond/behind neutral zone  
Kick-catch interference  
Fair catch  
Untouched in end zone  
Out of bounds — marking spot  
Illegal touching  
Coverage of runback — ball carrier, other action,  
blocking below waist  
Fakes



### **Field goals and try attempts**

Positions — coverage of posts  
Contact on kicker/holder  
Blocked/touched on line of scrimmage — ball  
beyond/behind neutral zone  
Fakes  
Coverage when defense gain possession



### **General duties**

Fumble pileups  
Ball relay



### **End of quarter**

Changing end after first and third quarters

Halftime

End of game



### **Instant replay**



### **Extra periods**

#### **Timeouts**

Records

Positions and duties



### **Measurements**



### **Fouls and enforcement**

Reporting — who, what, where, when

Recording fouls

Options

Signals

Enforcement



### **Reserve positions in case of injury**

If one official is hurt

If two officials are hurt

## Appendix D

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### 40/25-Second Play Clock For Timers

The play clock will be automatically reset to 40 seconds at the end of each play. The covering official's signal will designate when to start the play clock. The play clock operator will consistently start the 40-second play clock within one second of the trigger signal from the on-field official.

When the ball is declared dead in field of play on a play from scrimmage: Play clock starts when covering official raises their arm or gives a wind signal if near the sideline.

Incomplete pass: Play clock starts when covering official signals incomplete pass.

Ball dead out of bounds: Play clock starts when covering official signals to stop the game clock.

The play clock will be manually set to 25 seconds when these occur or upon signal from Referee (one hand pump above head, or the Referee's ready for play signal):

- Penalty administration
- Charged team timeout
- Media timeout
- Injury timeout (offense)
- Measurement
- Team B awarded first down other than after a free kick
- Start of each period
- Start of possession series in extra period
- After any score other than a touchdown
- Instant replay review
- Helmet off (offense)
- Other administrative stoppage

### Special Situations

On a delay of game penalty, keep the play clock at :00 until the penalty is completed.

If the play clock hits :00 and there is no delay of game, reset to 40 seconds immediately after the snap, then wait for the appropriate signal to start the play clock.

If play clocks are not synchronized, or if one fails, the clocks must be turned off and the appropriate official will be responsible.

On kickoffs and free kicks after a safety, the play clock starts on the ready for play signal by the Referee. If the kickoff does not occur before the 25-second play clock elapses and a delay foul is called, the same procedure will be followed. Officials have the authority to reset the play clock to 25 seconds if the wind blows the ball off the tee or other circumstances warrant. Watch for arm pump signal by Referee.

Under no circumstances should the play clock be reset to 25 seconds upon a signal by any official other than the Referee. It is common practice for officials to communicate to the Referee to "ask" if they want to consider resetting by making the pumping signal. Resetting is the sole discretion of the Referee.

Be alert for signal from Referee if you notice any type of administrative delay while the play clock is running, especially after it gets under 25 seconds.



## Appendix E

### 40/25-Second Play Clock For Officials

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- Charged team timeout
- Media timeout
- Injury timeout (offense)
- Measurement
- Team B awarded first down other than after a free kick
- Start of each period
- Start of possession series in extra period
- After any score other than a touchdown
- Instant replay review
- Helmet off (offense)
- Other administrative stoppage

### Game Clock Procedures For Timers

The game clock starts on the Referee's start the clock signal after:

- A player in possession of the ball goes out of bounds
- A fumble, or
- A backward pass goes out of bounds

NOTE: The rule does not apply after the Two-Minute Timeout in each half.

The game clock starts on the Referee's start the clock signal after:

- A fumble forward and out of bounds anytime during the game (even after the Two-Minute Timeout in each half).

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.



## Appendix F

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### **Automatic Unsportsmanlike Actions for Players**

The following list of actions by players that are intended to show off or that disrespects the game or the opponent shall always be penalized when observed:

- Throat slash
- Demonstrations of violence, such as “six guns” or “machine gun”
- Removal of helmet to celebrate or protest
- Gestures with a sexual connotation
- Somersault or flip
- High step
- Dunking the ball over the crossbar
- Using forcible contact to push or pull an opponent off the pile
- Spitting on an opponent

### **Automatic Unsportsmanlike Action for Coaches**

The following action by coaches shall always be penalized when observed:

- Coming onto the field to protest an officiating decision.



# Appendix G

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## Protocol for Red Hats

To be used by all CFO conferences for all televised games or other games where a Red Hat person is used for communication with the media broadcast truck or center.

1. While conference policy might dictate various lengths for each media timeout, the mechanics of how media timeouts are administered should be consistent in every game.

Arrive at the game site at least 2-1/2 hours before the game. You should report to the TV production truck at least two hours before kickoff and report to the officials' locker room no later than one hour and 45 minutes prior to the kickoff to meet with the Back Judge and Referee.

If possible, it is preferred that the TV producer and the Red Hat be there together so that there can be effective communication and ALL can be on the same page. Conferences may have separate policies for the meeting between the Referee, TV producer and Red Hat as well as other persons. This meeting should serve to resolve the number of timeouts each quarter, the length of the timeouts and whether extra timeouts may be needed.

The field location of the Red Hat during TV breaks should be discussed (preferably on the 20 yardline, but never farther than halfway between the sideline and the bottom of the numbers on the press box sideline).

2. At each allowed TV or media timeout, the Back Judge will stand next to the Red Hat. They should confirm the number of timeouts taken during the quarter and the length of the current timeout. While timing the timeout, the Back Judge and Red Hat should agree on the consumed time.
3. The Red Hat will not start the TV timeout until the Referee gives the "TV timeout signal," which is punching out with both fists (signal S4). In requesting a TV timeout, the Red Hat will cross both arms and the Referee will acknowledge if they plan to grant the request by pointing to the ground. Once granted, keep arms crossed as you step out onto the field so that it is clear to both benches that a TV timeout has been granted.
4. When 30 seconds remain in the TV timeout, the Back Judge should jog to their position. This is an indication to the coaches, players, game day managers and other officials that the TV timeout is less than 30 seconds from concluding. At the same time, the Red Hat will extend their left arm fully down to their side at a 45 degree angle. The right hand will remain crossed.



5. When 15 seconds remain in the TV time out, the Red Hat will raise their right hand above their head to signal “15 seconds until the end of the TV timeout.” The officials with each team will tell the coach “15 seconds” and be proactive in getting the teams onto the field to begin play.

At the end of the timeout, the Back Judge will point to the Referee who will then make the ball ready for play.
6. Red Hat officials should strive to stay within prescribed parameters. The prescribed uniform in part 9 below should uniformly identify them. They should handle themselves professionally and realize that they are an integral part of the game administration.
7. Red Hat officials should be advised not to request timeouts after an important momentum-changing play. Requested or not, media timeouts will only be allowed at the Referee’s discretion. This also applies to player injury situations.
8. The game officials (i.e. Back Judge) have the final determination regarding the amount of time remaining or the amount of time elapsed in a timeout.
9. Uniform: All Red Hat persons will wear the same uniform attire during games: officials uniform black pants with white stripe, black football shoes, black belt, red polo shirt and/or jacket (or red vest provided by the conference), and the Red Hat provided by the conference. No team name, logo, lettering, insignia or other markings that would be related to any team is allowed.
10. The coordinator of football officials will provide the host school game day manager documentation for TV timeouts utilized during the game.



# Appendix H

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## Instant Replay Overview

Instant replay video review is a process used to analyze certain onfield decisions made by game officials. The fundamental assumption of replay is that the ruling on the field is correct. Based on the available video evidence, the call on the field will be confirmed, reversed or allowed to stand as called.

The replay crew consists of a replay official, a communicator and a replay technician. In some instances an assistant communicator or an assistant technician will also be present. In order to initiate a replay review, a play must be reviewable by rule and have a competitive effect on the game. A head coach may also challenge the onfield ruling of a reviewable play when allowed by rule.

The decision regarding the outcome of a review rests solely with the replay official. When indisputable video evidence exists, the replay official will either confirm the ruling on the field was correct or reverse the ruling and reset the game to correct conditions. When indisputable video evidence does not exist, the ruling on the field stands.

It is imperative that effective and consistent review procedures are used by replay personnel. The review process requires each member of the replay crew perform specific tasks for each play. Effective coordination and teamwork by replay personnel allows each play to be reviewed in an efficient and timely manner.

### Pregame activities

The replay official and the communicator should conduct several pregame activities to ensure accurate and efficient review procedures are used during the game. Pregame activities include but are not limited to:

- Attending the pregame meeting with the field officials to discuss items such as procedures for when the game is stopped for a review, rules regarding reviewable plays and procedures used to confirm scoring and change of possession plays, as well as communication to the Referee and crew through the replay headset or other communication devices.
- Meeting with the television production personnel to discuss review procedures which includes determining the number and location of cameras, broadcast schedule, procedure used for confirming scores, synching of the game clock and procedures for when a stoppage occurs.
- Securing and testing pagers before distributing to the field officials.
- Testing all communication devices that may be used during the game. This would include but are not limited to the sideline headphones, ring down phones and backup hand-held radios.



- Identifying and conducting a pregame meeting with the replay sideline assistants to review procedures for confirming scoring and change of possession plays as well as when the game is stopped for a review.
- Confirming with the replay technician that all replay equipment is fully functional and backup procedures can be performed.
- Conducting a pregame meeting with all replay booth personnel to review procedures that will be used during the game.

### **Pre-snap routine**

The replay crew should establish a pre-snap routine that will be used before every play of the game. Specific information regarding the upcoming play should be identified and announced. This includes identifying the down and distance needed for a first down, line of scrimmage, line to gain and on which hash the ball is located. The replay official and the communicator should count the number of players on the field for each team. The crew should be aware of the status of the game clock and play clock and when less than two minutes remain in each half. The replay crew monitors the accuracy of administrative tasks performed by the field officials.

### **Initial review**

Every play is reviewed by the replay official and the communicator. When a reviewable event occurs during the previous play the following procedures should be used to determine if a replay review should occur:

- **Communicator.** The communicator will watch the play live and stay focused on the field until the result of the play is clearly determined. While the play is occurring any reviewable aspect of the play should be announced. At the conclusion of the play the ruling on the field should be determined and announced. The communicator then focuses on their/her monitor to analyze replays of the previous play. An announcement should be made when a helpful replay comes to the monitor. During this activity the communicator also observes and informs the replay official of the activity on the field. The communicator should use statements like “in the huddle,” “going to the line” and “under center” to alert the replay official when a decision to stop the game must be made.
- **Assistant communicator/technician.** The assistant communicator/technician maintains a written log of each play and keeps the replay official informed as to when a snap is imminent during the initial review of a play. The assistant communicator/technician announces other meaningful events occurring on the field.
- **Replay official.** The replay official controls the replay review process and makes the ultimate decision regarding whether the game is stopped. The replay official watches the play live and then uses their or her monitor to analyze additional replays. The replay official may view the



communicator's monitor to view meaningful replays that arrive on that monitor.

After learning the exact ruling on the field and performing an initial video review, the replay official determines if the game will be stopped. If a reviewable play, which has a competitive effect on the game, cannot be confirmed before the next snap, a stoppage should occur and the replay review initiated.

A booth confirmation occurs when the replay official confirms that the ruling on the field of a reviewable play was correct without stopping the game.

### **Review procedures after stopping the game**

Once the game is stopped the following procedures should be used to further review the play.

- The aspect(s) of the play being reviewed should be clearly communicated to the replay crew by the replay official. The designated crewmember should call the production truck and inform the producer what is being reviewed.
- The communicator should continue viewing their/her monitor and evaluate whether incoming video replays are helpful.
- The replay official will talk with the Referee through the sideline headset to clarify the ruling on the field and indicate what is being reviewed. The Referee should share any pertinent information they have regarding the play with the replay official.
- The replay official will review all video replays that provide evidence regarding the play being reviewed. Based upon these video replays, the replay official will decide if the ruling on the field is confirmed, reversed or stands. The replay official will inform the Referee of the decision.
- A decision that the ruling on the field is confirmed or stands will result in the Referee announcing the decision and play being resumed.  
A decision that the ruling on the field is reversed will result in the communicator and the replay official recording resumption of play information on a replay reversal card. A review of video replays should occur to ensure the data recorded on the card is accurate.
- Once confirmed to be accurate, the replay official will convey the information on the replay reversal card to the Referee. The Referee, or designee, will record the data on an identical card.
- The Referee will make an announcement indicating the play will be reversed and state resumption of play information. The replay official should provide the Referee details regarding the reversal that can be included in the replay announcement.

### **Things to consider**

The replay crew should be expedient when reviewing a play. In most instances, the length of game stoppages should be two minutes or less.

Upon request of the replay official, the communicator should offer information that will expedite the review process.

All booth personnel should listen when the replay official conveys the decision to the Referee to ensure the information is relayed accurately and completely.

### **Competitive effect**

When deciding if the game needs to be stopped for a review, the replay official must consider how the outcome of a particular play impacts the competitive balance of the game. Competitive effect is the term used for subjective guidelines used by the replay official to decide if a play is significant enough to warrant a stoppage and review. The rules of competitive effect may change depending upon the time remaining in a game, location of the ball in the field of play, score of the game, or weather conditions. The closer to the end of either half and/or closer the score, the more likely the game should be stopped for a review.

### **The replay process**

The following questions should be considered by the replay crew throughout the course of a game:

- What is the ruling on the field?
- Does the play have any reviewable aspects?
- Does the play create significant competitive effect?
- What are the best camera angles to review the play?
- Do the replays provide indisputable video evidence?
- Does this play require a shutdown or can it be a booth confirmation?
- Has each step of the review process been completed?
- Has the decision regarding the review been effectively communicated?

### **Instant replay for games without an instant replay booth official**

The optional use of instant replay in games that do not have an instant replay booth official is permissible and must be in full compliance with Rule 12 with the following exceptions:

- The Referee will be the sole decision maker on any review and may include one additional crew member to consult on the review.



- The equipment used in the review must be located outside the limit lines on the sideline or end zone and must be completely outside the team area. The Referee and additional crew member must be provided a separate, secure location away from fans and sideline personnel, with a tent or similar type shelter structure.

- The Referee will stop the game to review all targeting fouls that are called on the field. The only other method to stop a game for a replay review is through a head coach challenge as specified in Rule 12-5-1.

- When the head coach requests a timeout for replay review, the replay challenge flag must be dropped onto the field of play.

- Other than for a targeting review, the crew on the field may not initiate an instant replay review.

- The head coach may initiate a targeting review if the team has a timeout available and a coach's challenge remaining.

A graphic of a football field yard line. It features a large white number '6' in the center, with the word 'OFFICIALS' in white capital letters below it. The background is a dark gray rectangle with white yard line markings on the left and right sides.

## **Supplemental Mechanics for a Crew of Six Officials**

**Note:** The following serves as a review of the basic mechanics for crews of six officials. It is presented here in the event injury or other occurrence results in a crew being reduced to six officials.

# Reading and Understanding Keys



Three signals help identify keys. In PlayPic A, the official is indicating an unbalanced line to their side. The unbalanced side of the line usually has no more than two eligible receivers.

An outstretched fist (PlayPic B) helps a wing indicate the closest receiver is off the line. Use two fingers to indicate two receivers off the line (PlayPic C).

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. The tight end will usually (but not always) be on the strong side.

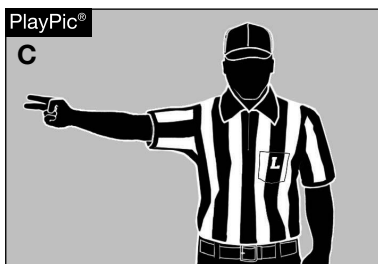
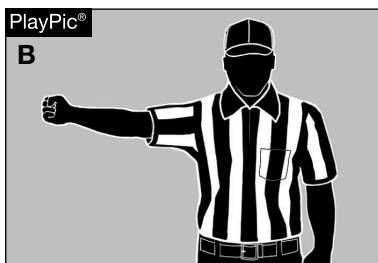
- In a balanced formation, strength is declared to the Line Judge's side.

- A tight end is the end man on the line and no more than four yards from the nearest offensive lineman.

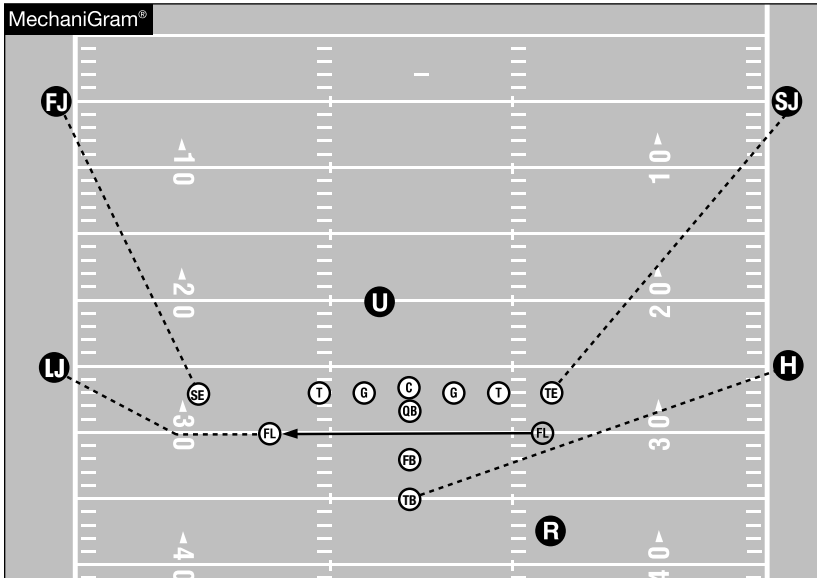
- A back is a player in the backfield between the tackles at the snap.

- A trips formation is one in which three or more receivers are positioned outside the tackles on the same side of the ball.

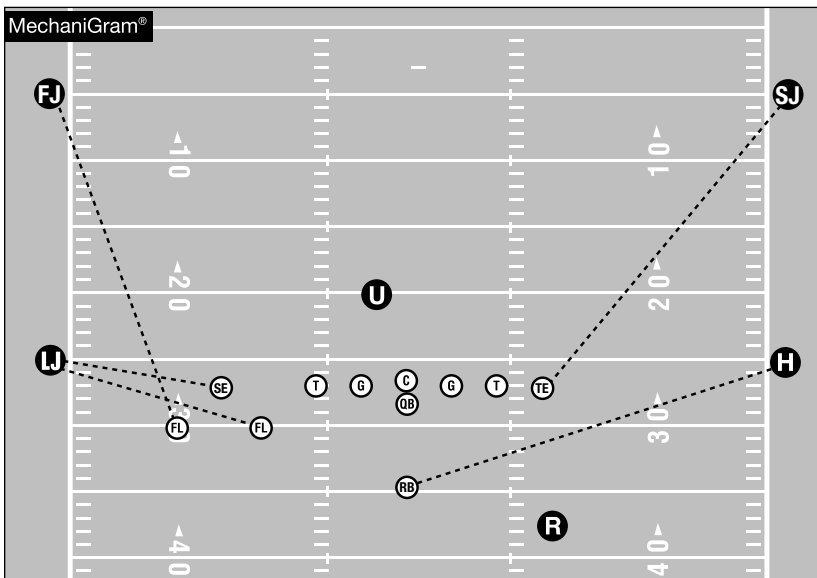
- Motion may change the strength of the formation.



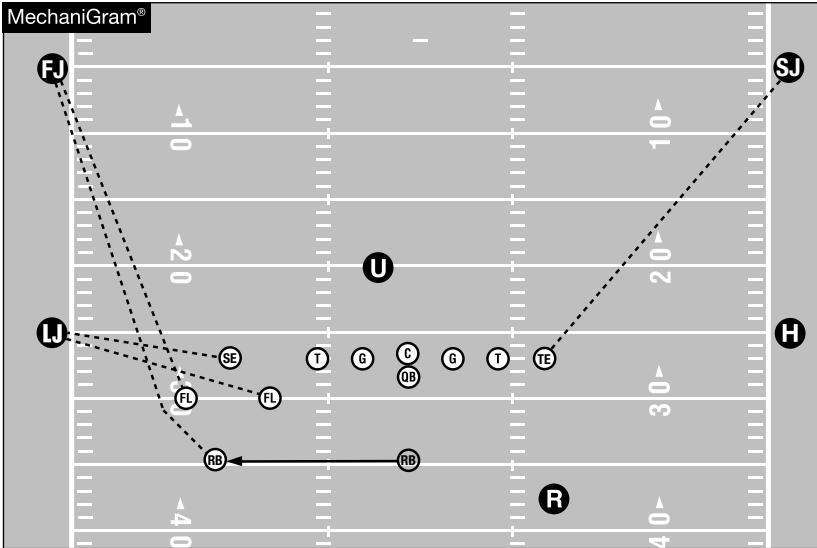




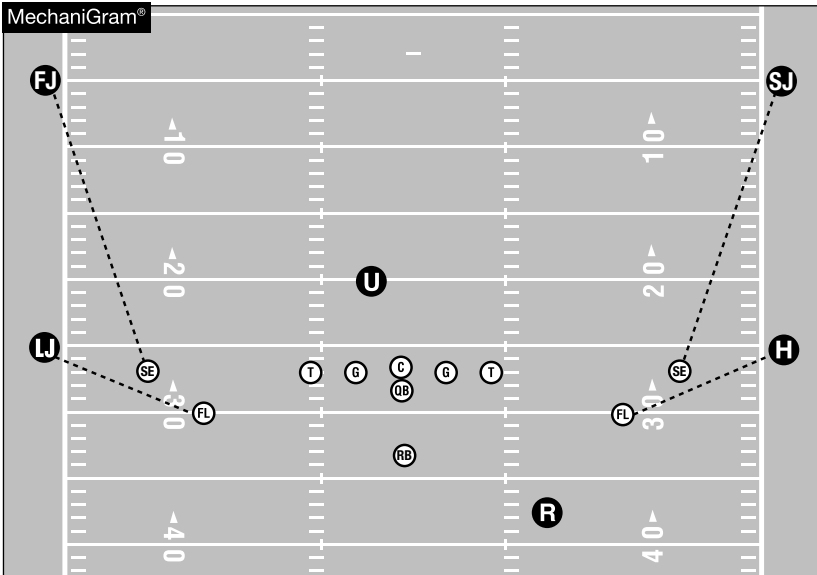
KEYS: TRIPS



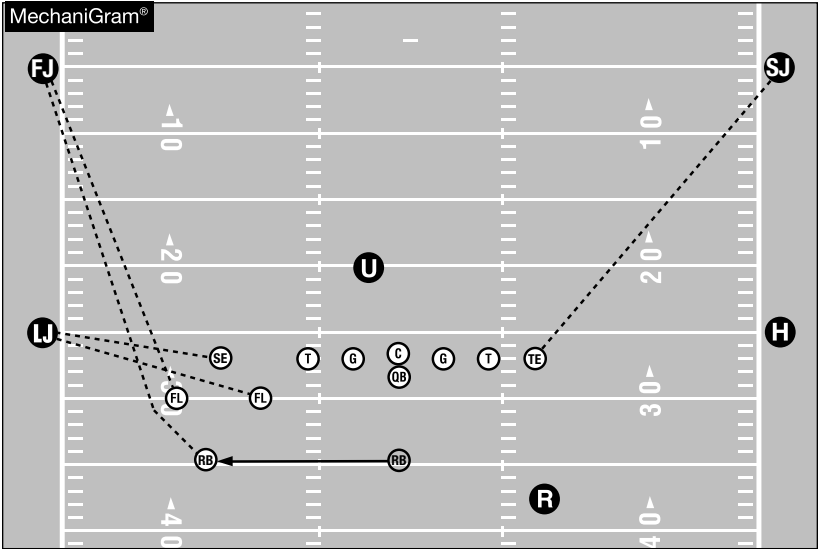




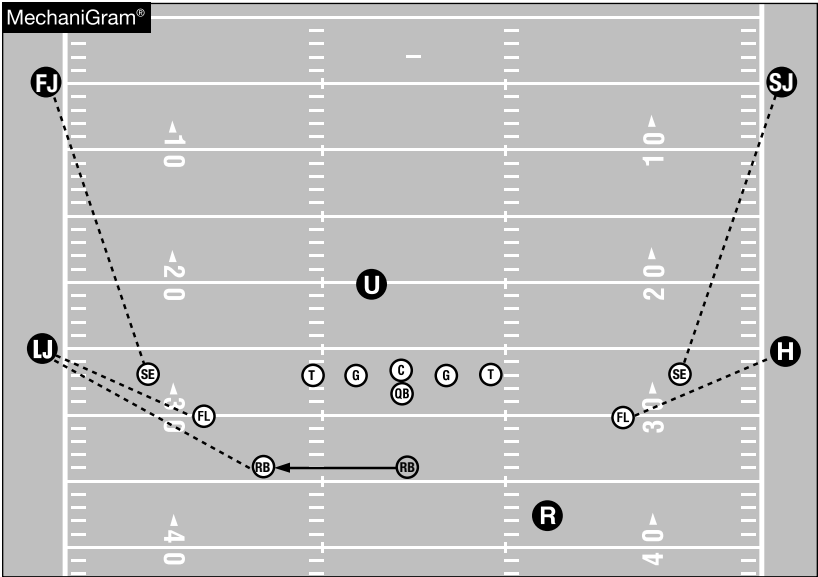
## KEYS: RUN AND SHOOT (DOUBLE WING)



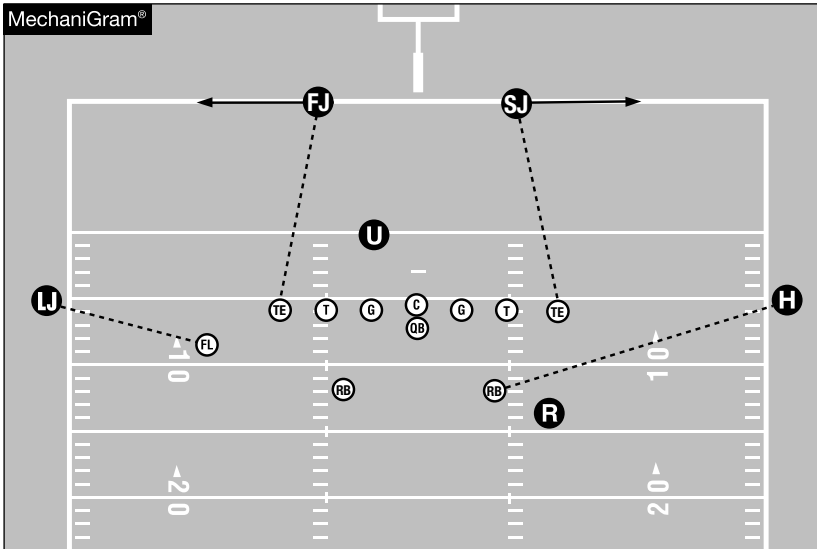
KEYS: RUN AND SHOOT MOTION INTO TRIPS;  
MOTION MAN IS WIDEST



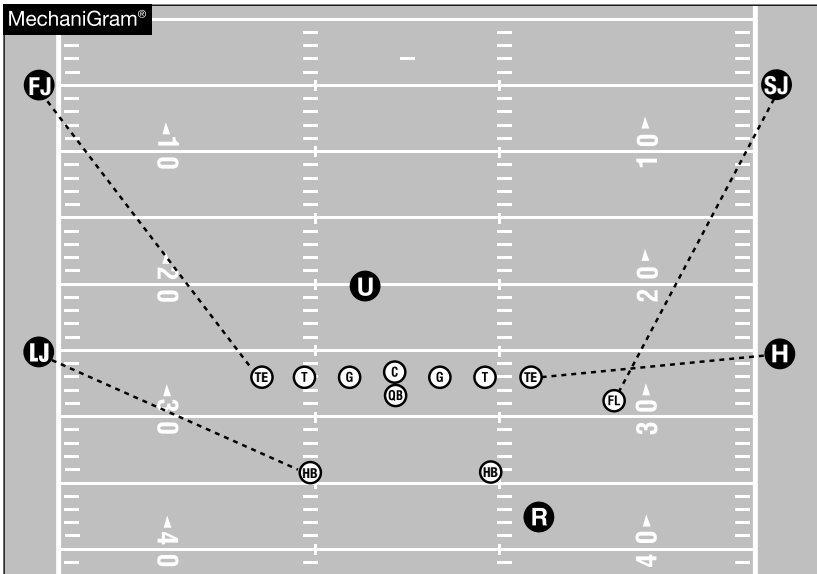
KEYS: RUN AND SHOOT MOTION INTO TRIPS;  
MOTION MAN IS NOT WIDEST



KEYS: GOAL LINE (AT OR INSIDE TEAM B'S FIVE YARDLINE), TWO TIGHT ENDS



KEYS: OUTSIDE TEAM B'S FIVE YARDLINE, TWO TIGHT ENDS

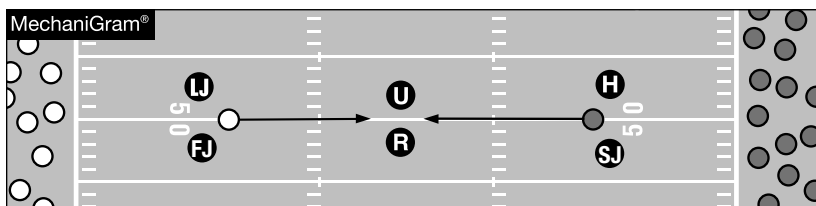


# The Coin Toss



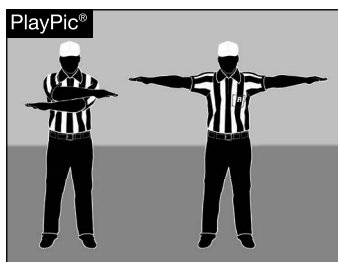
Three minutes before the scheduled game time, the Referee and Umpire should be in the center of the field. Upon a signal from the Referee, the Line Judge and Field Judge escort the home team captains to the top of the numbers, then remain there. The Head Line-Judge and Side Judge escort the visiting team captains to the top of the numbers, then remain there.

The captains should face each other with their backs to their sidelines. Optionally, the captains may rotate facing opposite goal lines while the Referee faces the press box. Referees introduce themselves to the captains and has them introduce each other. The visiting captain calls the toss, telling the Referee the choice before the Referee flips the coin. The Umpire should audibly repeat the captain's choice before the flip.



If the winner of the toss opts to defer their choice until the second half, the Referee stands toward the pressbox clear of the captains, indicates the toss winner by placing their hand on the shoulder of the appropriate captain and gives the choice declined signal.

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 their 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.



Once it has been determined which team will kick off, the Line Judge or Head Line-Judge should take the appropriate game ball to the center of the field and hand it to the Umpire. The officials make a written record of the results of the toss and move to their kickoff positions simultaneously.



# Free Kicks



**NOTE:** The Line Judge and Field Judge will be positioned opposite the press box in the first half and the Line Judge will be responsible for the chains. The Head Line-Judge and Side Judge will be opposite the press box in the second half and the Head Line-Judge will be responsible for the chains.

Mechanics and keys do not change regardless of which side of the field the officials are working, other than responsibility for the chains.

If a sideline penalty recorder is present, they shall remain with the Head Line-Judge throughout the game.

Please note Mechanigrams in this manual reflect positioning for the second half of a game.

## Positioning and Zones

**Referee:** Starting position is in the center of the field in Team B's end zone. Clear the sideline liaison before giving the ready for play. When players and officials are ready and after the Umpire has handed the ball to the kicker, sound your whistle and give the ready for play signal to the kicking team. Be alert for a touchback or a kick beyond the endline. You are responsible for knowing if Team A had at least four players on either side of the kicker.

**Umpire:** After moving onto the field from the kicking team's side, hand the ball to the kicker. Ensure kicking team players remain inside the nine-yard marks until the ready-for-play-signal from the Referee. When the ready signal is blown, point to the ball to let the kicker know the ball is ready to be kicked, then move to Team A's 25-yard line for the kick.

**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge:** Starting position is on the sideline on Team B's goal line. You are responsible for your sideline to Team A's endline.

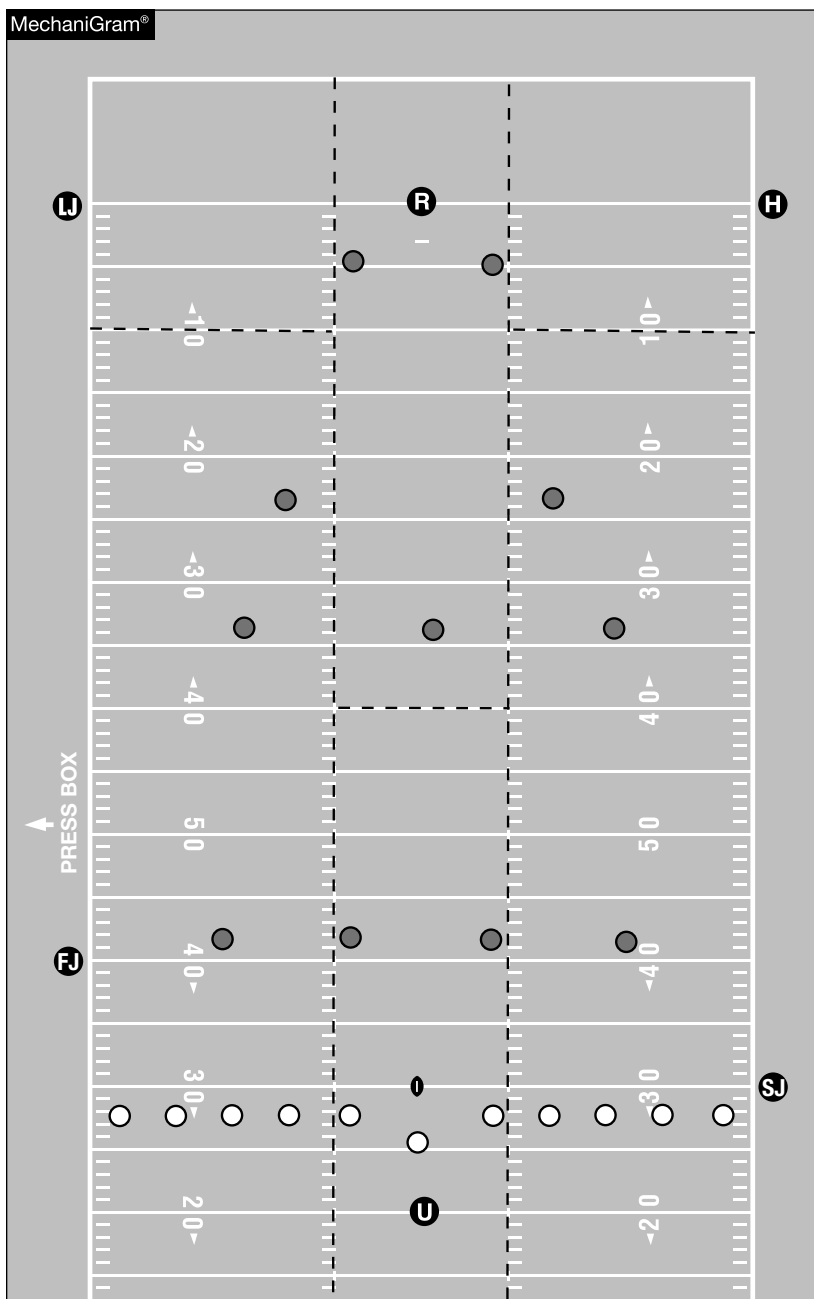
**Side Judge:** Move up the sideline, clearing the area. Starting position is opposite the pressbox on the sideline on Team A's restraining line. Ensure kicking team players remain inside the nine-yard marks until the ready-for-play-signal from the Referee.

**Field Judge:** Move up the sideline, clearing the area. Starting position is on the pressbox side on the sideline at Team A's 40-yard line.

- Blocks in the back that are personal fouls should be called regardless of their timing relative to a fair catch or the runner being tackled.



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## Coverage

**Referee:** 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. The clock will start when the ball crosses the goal line after being first touched by the receivers in the end zone. If the kick is fielded between the numbers, follow the runner and cover the runback. If the runner moves into the Line Judge's or linesmen's area, the Referee officiates from behind. Watch for illegal blocks and other fouls.

**Umpire:** After the kick, watch for illegal action on the kicker, illegal blocks and illegal touching. Move slowly downfield and officiate from the inside out when the runner is in your area. If the runner breaks off a long run, you have the goal line.

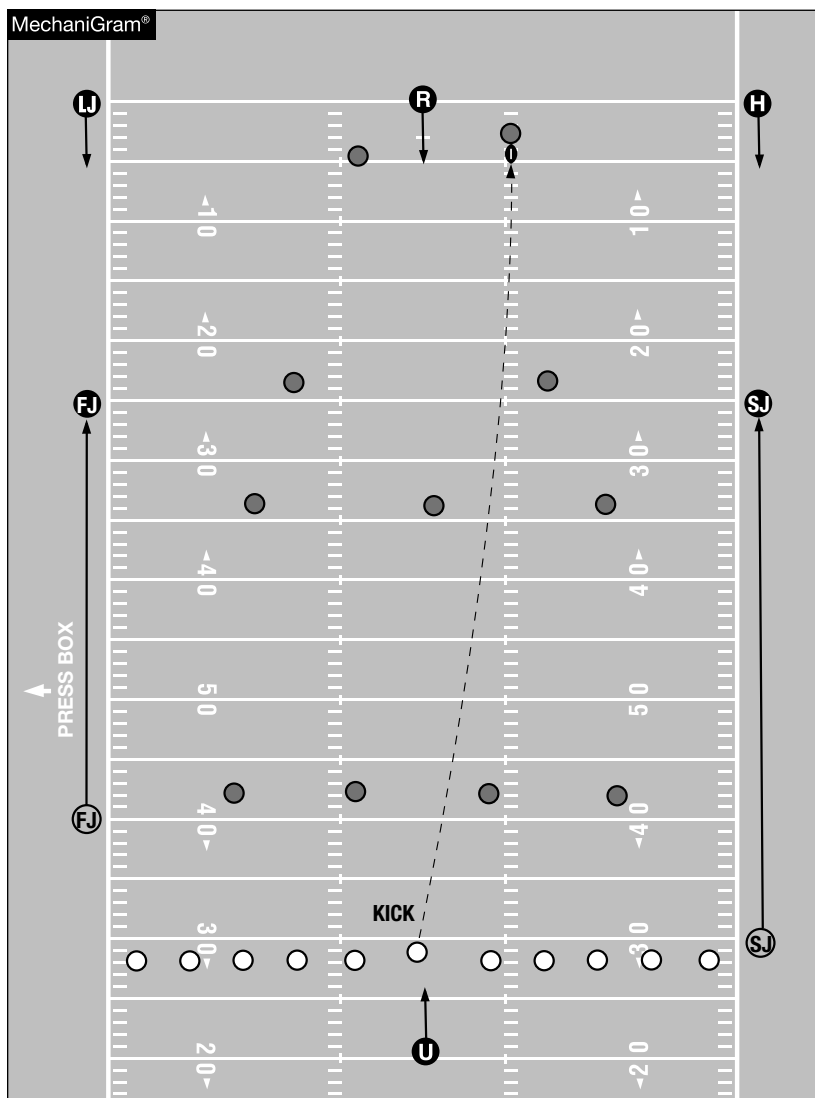
**Head Line-Judge:** When the ball is fielded between the numbers, observe the action in front of the runner and officiate from the outside in. Wind the clock when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, unless the ball is caught or recovered by a player who is legally down. The clock will start when the ball crosses the goal line after being first touched by the receivers in the end zone. If the runner moves outside the numbers on your side, you are responsible for the sideline from Team B's endline to Team B's 40-yard line. Watch for illegal blocks and other fouls, including Team B forming an illegal wedge.

**Side Judge:** Watch for encroachment by Team A and ensure that Team A has the proper number of players on either side of the kicker. After the kick, move slowly downfield and officiate ahead of the runner from the outside in. Watch blocking ahead of the runback and be ready to pick up the runner on long runbacks. If the runner moves outside the numbers on your side, you are responsible for the sideline from Team B's 40-yard line to Team A's endline. Watch for illegal blocks and other fouls.

**Line Judge:** When the ball is fielded between the numbers, observe the action in front of the runner and officiate from the outside in. 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. The clock will start when the ball crosses the goal line after being first touched by the receivers in the end zone. If the runner moves into the Field Judge's area, clean up behind the runner. If the runner moves outside the numbers on your side, you are responsible for the sideline from the Team B's endline to Team B's 40-yard line. Watch for illegal blocks and other fouls, including Team B forming an illegal wedge.

**Field Judge:** Watch for encroachment by Team B. After the kick, move slowly downfield and officiate ahead of the runner from the outside in. Watch blocking

ahead of the runback and be ready to pick up the runner on long runbacks. If the runner moves outside the numbers on your side, you are responsible for the sideline from Team B's 40-yard line to Team A's endline. Watch for illegal blocks and other fouls.



## Onside Kick Positioning and Zones

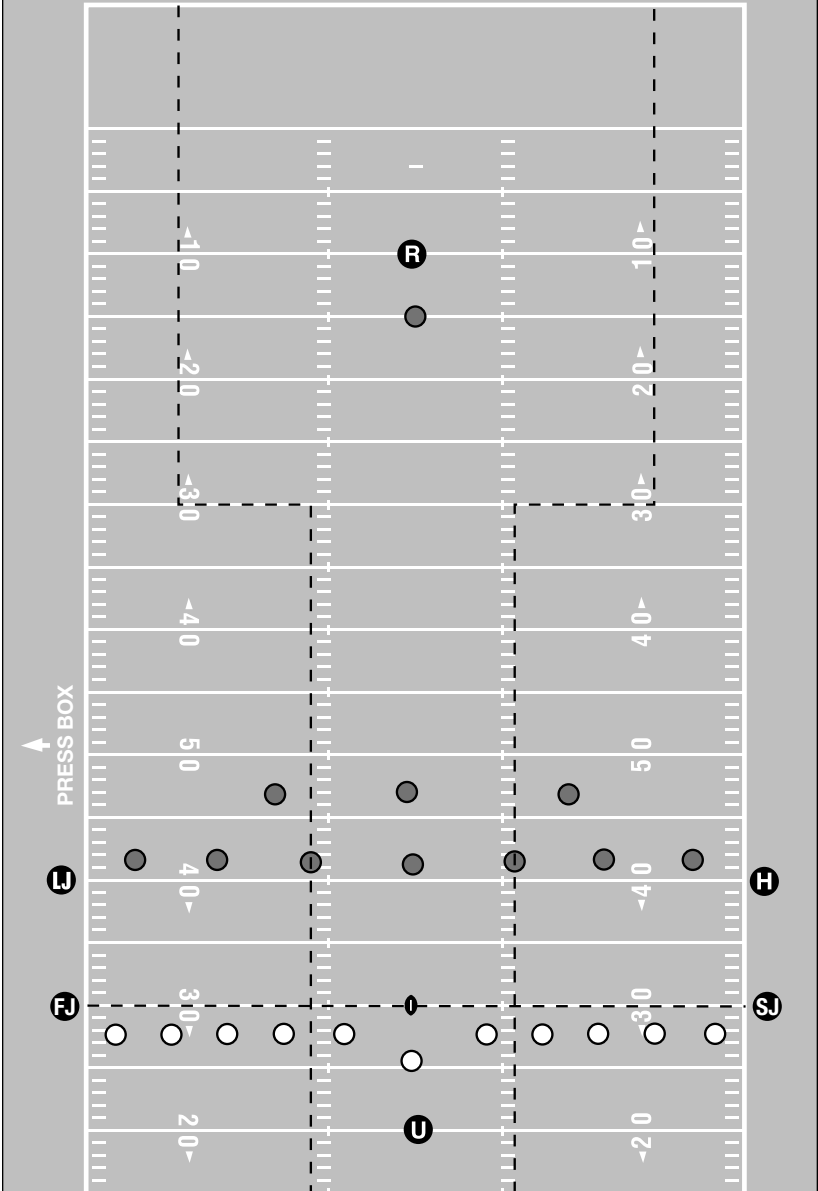
**Referee:** Starting position is in the center of the field at Team B's 10-yard line. When players and officials are ready and after the Umpire has handed the ball to the kicker, sound your whistle and give the ready for play signal to the kicking team. Be alert for a deep kick.

**Umpire:** After moving onto the field from the kicking team's side, hand the ball to the kicker. When the ready signal is blown, point to the ball to let the kicker know the ball is ready to be kicked, then move to Team A's 25-yard line for the kick. When the ball is kicked, watch for illegal action on the kicker, illegal blocks and illegal touching.

**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge:** Starting position is on the sideline on Team A's 40-yard line. After the kick, watch for illegal action on the kicker, illegal blocks and illegal touching. Observe the action in front of the runner and officiate from the outside in. Wind the clock when appropriate. On the runback, watch for illegal blocks and other fouls.

**Side Judge and Field Judge:** Starting position is on the sideline at Team A's 30-yard line. Ensure that Team A has the proper number of players on either side of the kicker. After the kick, watch for illegal action on the kicker, illegal blocks and illegal touching. Clean up behind the play and officiate from the outside in. Be ready to cover the runner if they break off a long return.

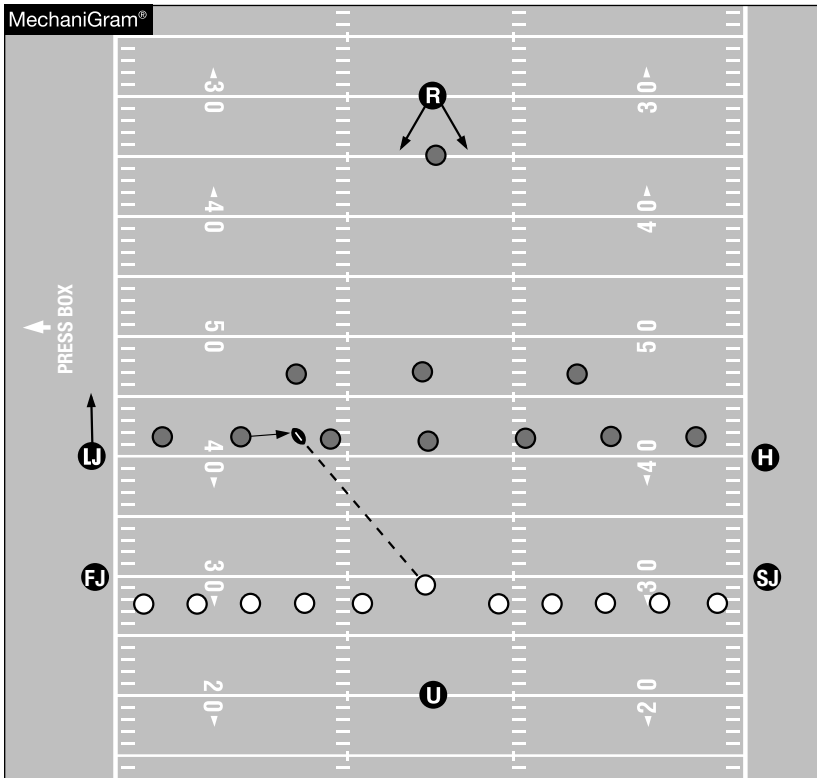
MechaniGram®



## Onside Kick Coverage

Kickers have developed a strategy in which they kick the ball in such a way that it hops crazily, making it difficult for Team B to recover it. As a result, officials must be prepared to follow the bouncing ball and the action around it (MechaniGram A). Also be on the alert for the kick that is intended to land behind the Team B players on or near its free-kick line.

Not all onside kick situations result in short kicks. Teams may attempt to trick the receiving team by kicking the ball deep (MechaniGram B). In that instance, the Referee must be prepared to take primary coverage of the runner for a greater distance than normal. The Line Judge and Head Line Judge must move quickly downfield to observe the inevitable rush of players downfield or cover the runner if they are in their area. The Field Judge, Side Judge and Umpire must take the runner if they break off a long run, and watch for illegal acts in front of the runner.

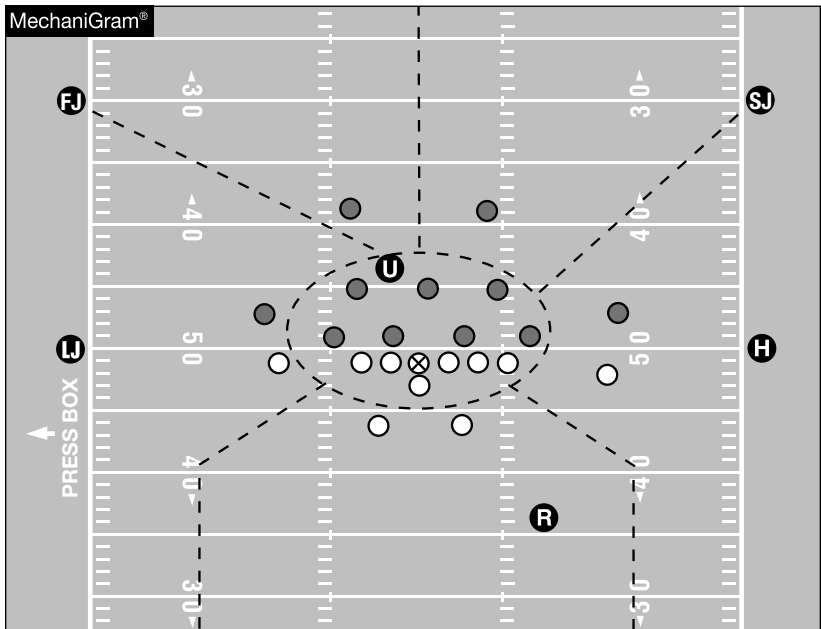


# Scrimmage Plays

## 6 OFFICIALS

### Positioning and Zones

**Referee** — Always work on the throwing-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 tackle on your side, except the flankers or a man in motion toward you.



**Umpire** — The starting position is on the side opposite the tight end, generally five to seven yards off the ball, but is variable according to the formations of both teams. 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. Whenever possible, coordinate your position with the Referee for the best coverage of interior line play.

**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge** — The basic starting position is on 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** — The basic starting position is on the sideline and approximately 15 to 20 yards deep or deeper than the deepest back.

## Goal Line Positioning and Zones

MechaniGram A shows the positioning and coverage when Team A is threatening Team B's goal 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 when taking the snap; all Team A players must be set before the ball may be legally snapped. Watch also for Team A players helping the runner.

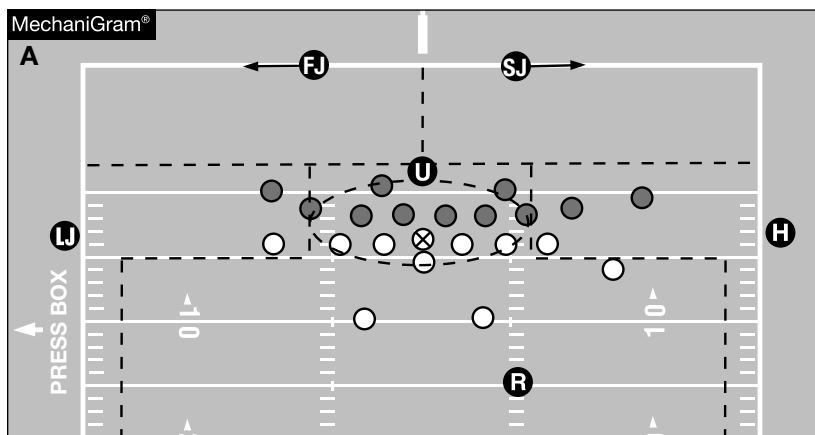
When the play is over, all officials should move toward the pile to prevent late hits and to ensure that the players untangle in a prompt manner. That is especially important on quick hitters into the line.

**Referee** — Starting position and coverage the same as for other scrimmage plays. Signal a score only if you're positive all requirements have been met.

**Umpire** — Starting position needn't be as deep as for other scrimmage plays. When the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's 5-yard line, you are responsible for determining if the passer was beyond the line of scrimmage.

**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge** — Starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. Be sure you are not trapped inside. When the ball is snapped from Team B's 5-yard line and in, move to the goal line at the snap. Be alert for a pass.

**Field Judge and Side Judge** — When the ball is snapped on or outside Team B's six yard line, starting position is the same as for other scrimmage

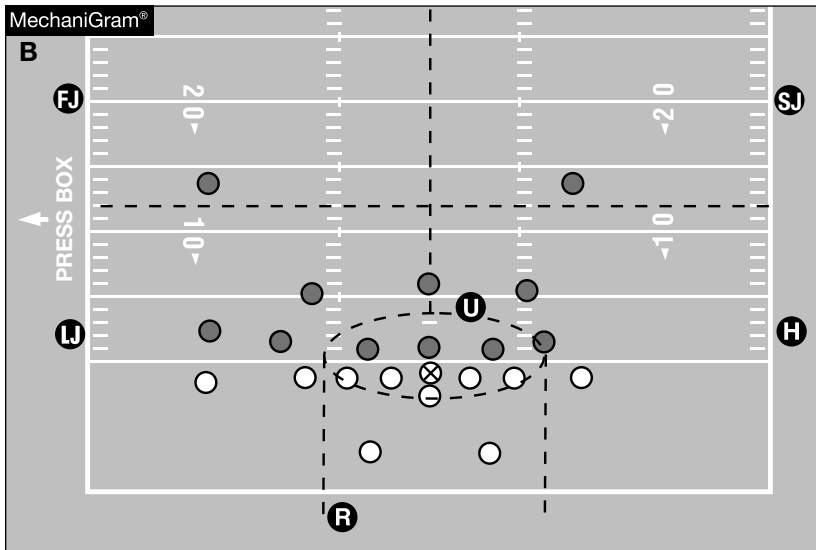


plays. When the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's 5-yard line, the basic starting position is on the endline at the pylons denoting the hashmarks. You may have to adjust your position along the endline.

## Reverse Goal line Mechanics

When Team A snaps the ball on or inside its own 5-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.

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 into the end zone.



## Running Play Coverage

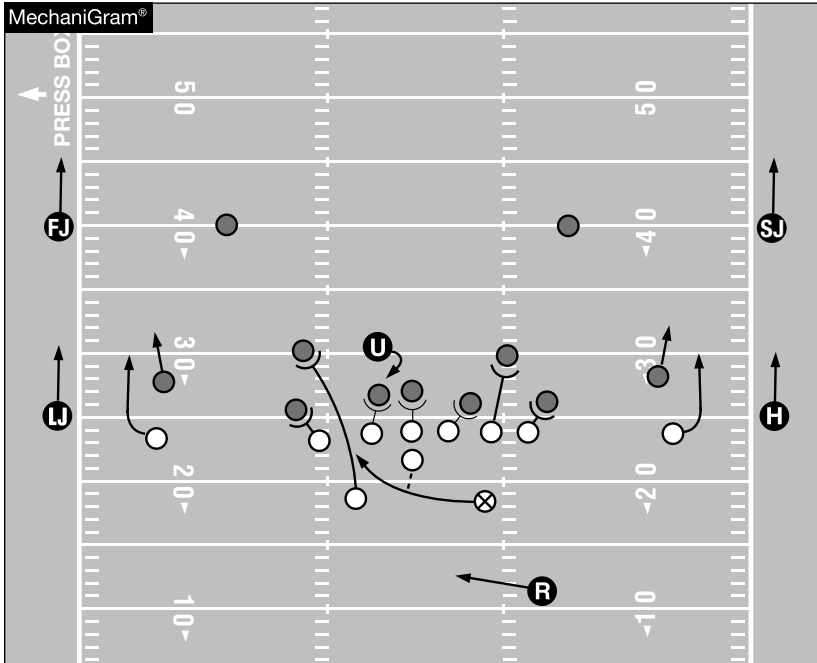
**Referee** — After the snap, observe the action behind the line and the runner to the neutral zone, as well as action on the ball and the quarterback on handoffs and backward passes. If the play is not run in the direction of your original position, move toward or parallel to the scrimmage line, maintaining position approximately in line with the runner's progress. If the play is run in the direction of your position, stay deep enough so you do not have to step back to allow necessary clearance. As the play develops, move toward or parallel to the scrimmage line and maintain a position approximately in line with the runner's progress. Close in on the ball when it becomes dead and there is no threat of a foul. On plays into the line, if the runner is driven back after forward progress is stopped, retrieve the ball from the runner and relay it to the official who is covering the spot. On option plays, if the quarterback keeps the ball and turns upfield, assume responsibility for the trailing back until there is no longer a threat of a foul. 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, read the point of attack and the action on or by the interior linemen. When a hole opens, move away from it as nearly lateral as possible. As the play develops between the tackles, your primary responsibility is to cover the action of players at the point of attack, then behind the ball and finally around the runner. On short, quick runs through the line, between the tackles in close formation, declare the ball dead when a quick run terminates in front of you, directly beside you or when a fumble is recovered in your vicinity. You are responsible for obtaining the forward progress from the wing official who is nearest to the dead-ball spot.

**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge** — Your initial position should prevent you from ever being caught in too close. Should it occur, retreat toward Team A's goal line, but never turn your back to the ball. After the snap, observe the initial action on or by the interior lineman nearest you and by the offensive player who is your designated responsibility. Observe the blocking in front of the runner behind the line of scrimmage or in neutral zone. Cover the runner in your side zone as far as possible beyond the line of scrimmage and out of bounds. Release the runner to the deep wing official when the runner reaches the deep wing and cover action behind runner. On option plays toward a wing official, the covering official observes the trailing back. When you are responsible for marking forward progress, do it by extending your downfield foot. Do not run around or jump over players. Converge rapidly on the dead-ball spot when play in your area permits. When the flow of play is away from your position, move cautiously toward the flow and clean up action behind the play.



**Side Judge and Field Judge** — After the snap, observe action on or by the widest receiver on your side of the field, paying special attention to crackback blocks. Box in the widest player on your side. Cover your sideline from approximately 20 yards beyond the neutral zone to the endline. If the play is to your side of the field and the Head Line-Judge or Line Judge marks the out-of-bounds spot, you are responsible for cleaning up the action around the play.



## Forward Pass Coverage

**Referee** — Observe dropback blockers in your vision 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. Be prepared to rule on intentional grounding; you may consult other officials on the position of an eligible receiver. When the quarterback drops back, retreat to maintain a 12- to 14-yard cushion. Observe the tackle on your 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 the quarterback is clearly out of the play.

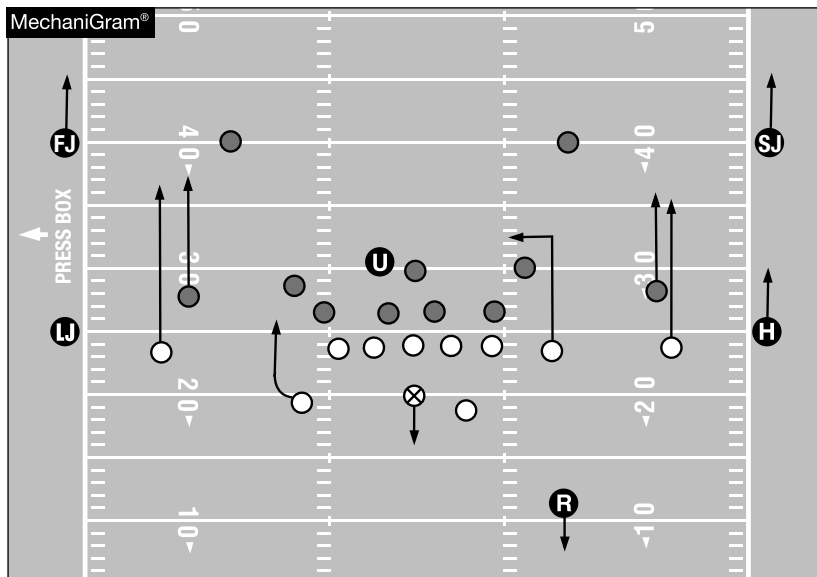
**Umpire** — When you read a forward pass, move toward the line of scrimmage. You must know whether or not a forward pass crossed the neutral zone. Be prepared to pivot on low-trajectory and short passes and assist on ruling on trapped passes. Continue to observe your area of responsibility as long as there is a threat of action. Cover continuing action around the runner in the side zone. Look for ineligible downfield and interior linemen. When the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's 5-yard line, you are primarily responsible for a legal pass.

**Head Line-Judge** — When you read a forward pass, watch your key receiver and action in the crackback zone. Move slowly off the line five yards. You are responsible for covering pass receptions from the line to 15 yards beyond the line of scrimmage. Observe action on and by receivers in your area. If the pass is thrown out of your area, observe the action of players other than the pass receiver. Be prepared to determine whether a quick pass thrown toward you is forward or backward. You are primarily responsible for the legality of a forward pass near the line of scrimmage.

**Line Judge** — When you read a forward pass, watch your key receiver and action in the crackback zone. Remain on the line of scrimmage until the ball crosses the line. Observe action on and by receivers in your area. If the pass is thrown out of your area, observe the action of players other than the pass receiver. Be prepared to determine whether a quick pass thrown toward you is forward or backward and to assist the Umpire if help is needed in ruling whether or not a pass crosses the line of scrimmage. You are primarily responsible for the legality of a forward pass near the line of scrimmage.

**Side Judge and Field Judge** — Initial movement is about 15 to 20 yards downfield. Stay wider than the widest man on your side. Observe contact on your eligible receiver and the defensive back. Cover the sideline from your original position to the endline. Maintain deep positioning. Cover the play and watch the defenders' actions on the receiver when the ball





is thrown in your area. If the pass is to the opposite deep wing's sideline, move into the field to cover the middle of the field. Be alert for eligible receivers out of bounds and for an illegal pass; observe touching or catching by an ineligible player; watch particularly for holding or illegal chucking of eligible receivers and all contact beyond the neutral zone before and after the pass is thrown.

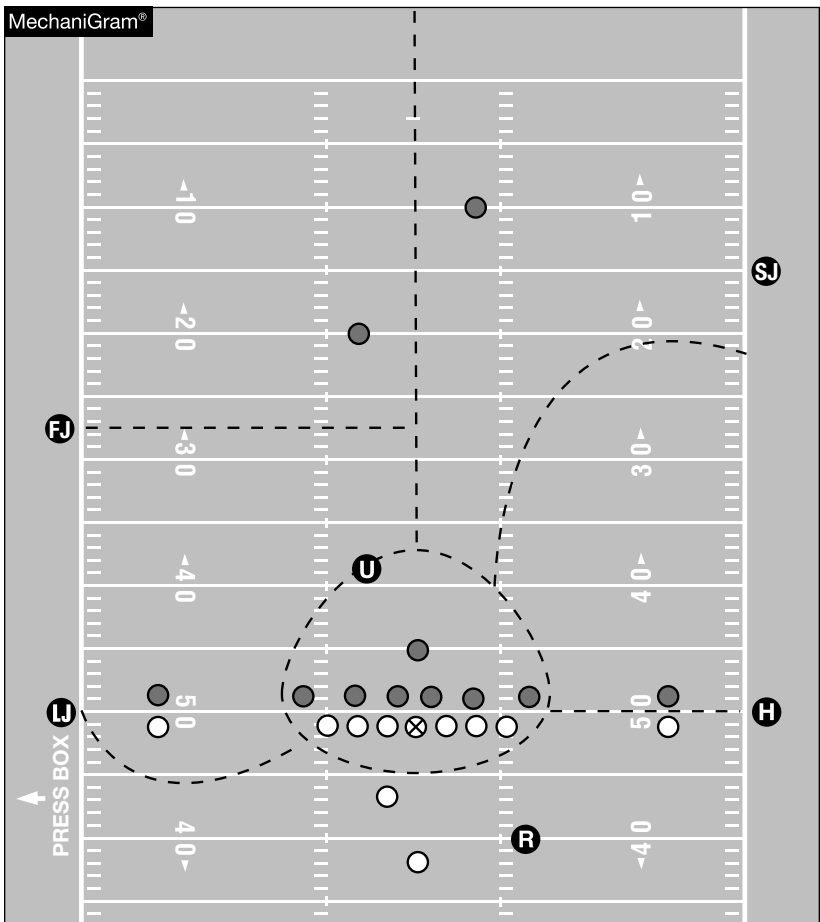
**All** — When ruling on a reception at the sideline, give only the incomplete signal or the timeout signal (if the pass is complete). The "sweep" signal may be used if an airborne player receives a pass near the sideline and first returns to the ground out of bounds, or the "bobble" signal if a receiver fails to maintain control of the ball before going out of bounds. Be sure the result of the play is properly communicated to the Referee. When contact occurs on a pass that is uncatchable and the covering official drops the penalty marker, the non-covering official will give the covering official information that the pass was uncatchable. If the covering official has no other foul, they pick up their flag and give the uncatchable pass signal after giving the incomplete pass signal. On a tight reception at the sideline, the "catch" signal (O11) may be used.

## Punts



## Positioning and Zones

**Referee** — Take a position in front of the kicker, wider than the tight end position and on the kicking-foot side. See the ball from snap to kick and observe the blockers and kicker at the same time. Be in position to be even with the kicker when the ball is kicked. If the kicker is on or outside the



endline, warn the kicker before the snap. Be alert for delay by the kicker's team to confuse the opponent.

**Umpire** — On a punt, the Umpire may adjust the position five to 10 yards off the line. Find a spot that allows you to observe the action on and around the snapper.

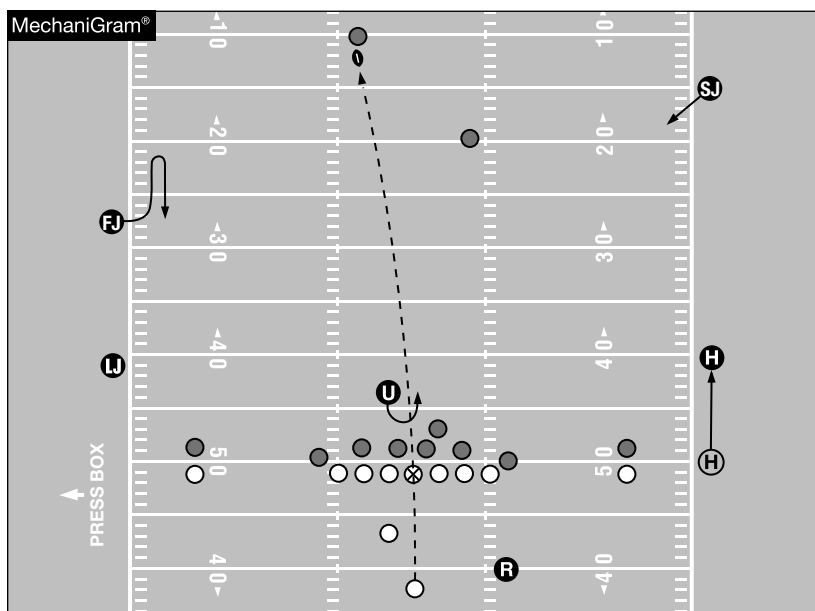
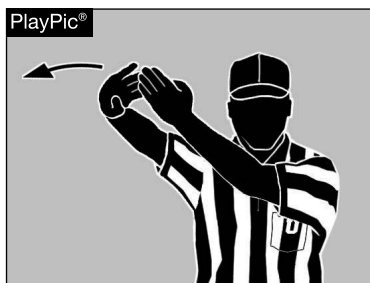
**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge** — Take your basic position. Be alert for the pull and shoot.

**Side Judge** — With a beanbag in hand, take a position on your sideline approximately five yards in front of the deepest receiver on your side of the field. When the ball is snapped at approximately Team B's 35-yard line, take an initial position at the goal line pylon so you can cover a kick going out of bounds or into the end zone.

**Field Judge** — With a beanbag in hand, take a position on your sideline in line with or slightly in front of the receiver on your side of the field. When the ball is snapped at approximately Team B's 35-yard line, take an initial position at the goal line pylon so you can cover a kick going out of bounds or into the end zone.

## Coverage

The legal touching signal shown in the PlayPic is crucial because some rules apply or don't apply if Team B touches the kick. For instance, partial touching of the kick may legalize certain contact on the kicker that would otherwise be a foul. Although the Referee or Umpire will be the officials most likely to use the signal, any official who sees such touching should signal.



**Referee** — Primarily responsible for observing the shield in front of the kicker. 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, during the kick and on the return. Specifically, be alert for targeting fouls at all times and illegal blocks when the kicker is clearly out of the play.

**Umpire** — Be alert for the pull and shoot. Observe the line at the initial charge, checking blocks of Team A and action by Team B players. Pay particular attention to the Team B player over the snapper. After players go past your position, turn and move toward the return area to observe the entire picture by players of either team. If the kick is short or partially blocked, assist in determining if the ball crosses the neutral zone.

**Head Line-Judge** — Assist Referee in observing the shield in front of the kicker. After the snap, hold your position until the ball is kicked. Move slowly downfield after the kick crosses the line, covering play ahead of the runner if the Side Judge has the runner. You are responsible for a player who blocks after signaling for a fair catch.

**Line Judge** — Remain on the line of scrimmage until the ball crosses the neutral zone. You are responsible for determining if the ball crosses the neutral zone. Move slowly downfield. Cover the play ahead of the runner if the Field Judge has the runner.

**Side Judge** — When it's obvious the kicked ball will not land in your area, remain in the original lateral position while the ball is in the air, which will alert the Field Judge that you are covering action in front of the receiver. If the return is to your side, take the runner. If there is any question who is the covering official, communicate verbally. Be prepared to rule on the legality of handoffs on the return. Follow the ball if the receiver fails to field a kick. You are responsible for marking the end of the kick from your sideline to the hashmark.

**Field Judge** — When it's obvious the kicked ball will not land in your area, remain in the original lateral position while the ball is in the air, which will alert the Side Judge that you are covering action in front of the receiver. If the return is to your side, take the runner. If there is any question regarding who is the covering official, communicate verbally. Be prepared to rule on the legality of handoffs on the return. Follow the ball if the receiver fails to field a kick. You are responsible for marking the end of the kick from your sideline to the opposite hashmark.

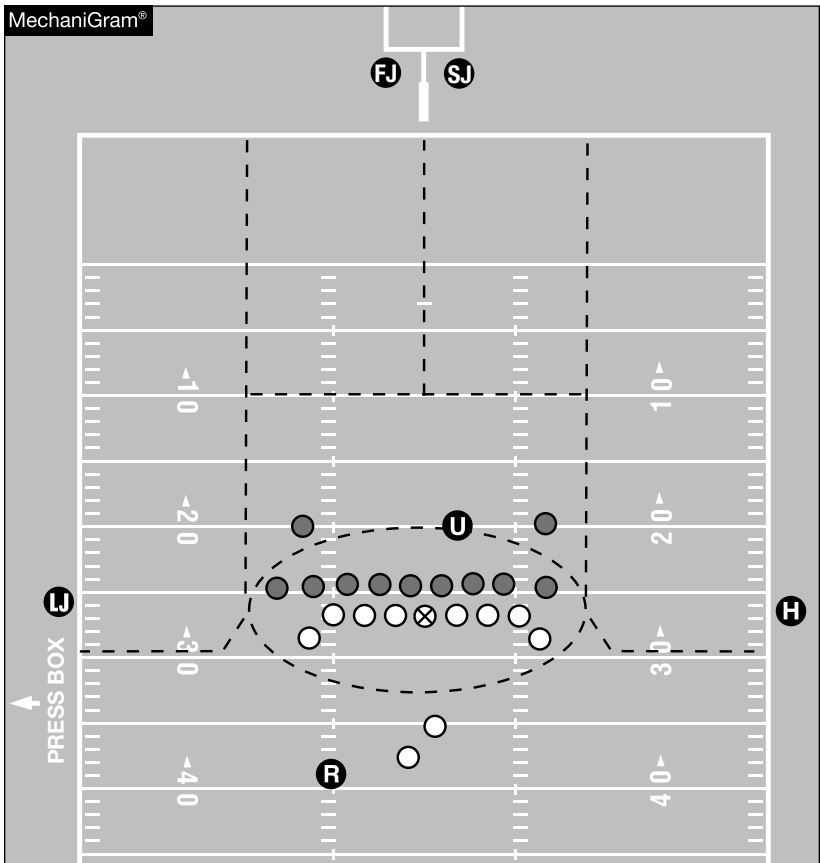
**All** — Watch for recovery and advance of blocked kicks and fake kicks. The covering official must drop a beanbag on the yard line where the kick ends. Don't hesitate to call a foul that occurs away from your position if you are certain a foul occurred.

## Scoring Kicks



## Positioning and Zones

**Referee** — Starting position is one to three yards behind and at least five yards to the side 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** — Initial position is at least seven yards deep. Observe line play and defensive action on the snapper, and be alert for the pull and shoot.

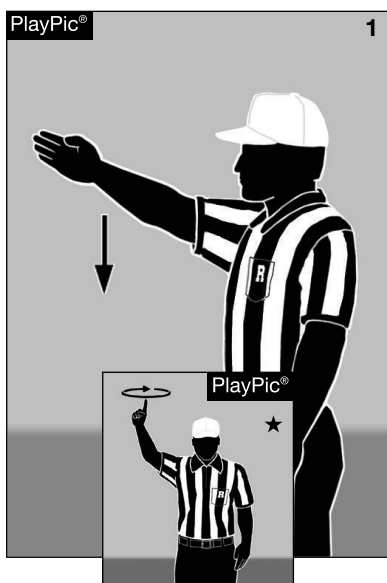
**Head Line-Judge and Line Judge** — Take regular positions and be ready to cover your sideline from the line of scrimmage to the two deep officials. Both are responsible for covering the play on short field goal and try attempts and fake field goals, and for knowing whether or not the kick crossed the goal line. The Line Judge is responsible for knowing whether or not the kick crossed the line of scrimmage. Be alert for leaping fouls. After the play, pinch in toward the middle of the field and clean up.

**Field Judge and Side Judge** — Take positions behind the goalpost 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, communicating the ruling with the other official, who then mirrors the signal. When the attempt narrowly passes outside an upright, the official nearer the ball may give a sweeping motion with both arms away from the upright. Both should be prepared to move out into position to cover a play in the end zone or 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 Field Judge is responsible for the ruling. Both officials have sideline and endline responsibilities.



**All** — Do not sound your whistle until you are certain the ball is dead by rule.

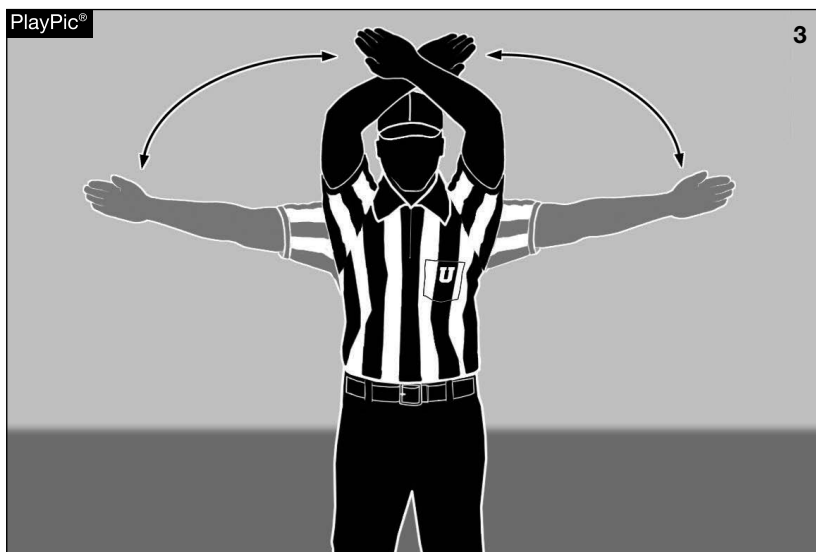
# Official Football Signals



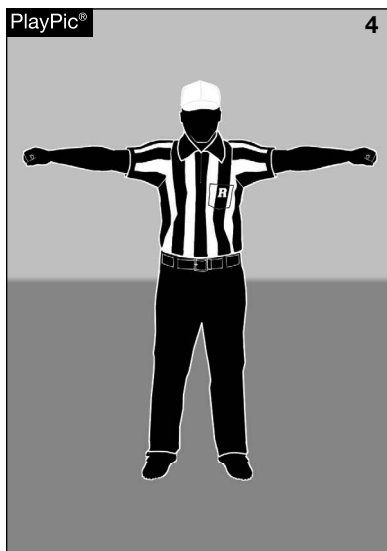
Ready for play  
★ Untimed down



Start the clock



Stop the clock



**TV/radio timeout  
Substitution in progress**



**Touchdown**



**Safety**



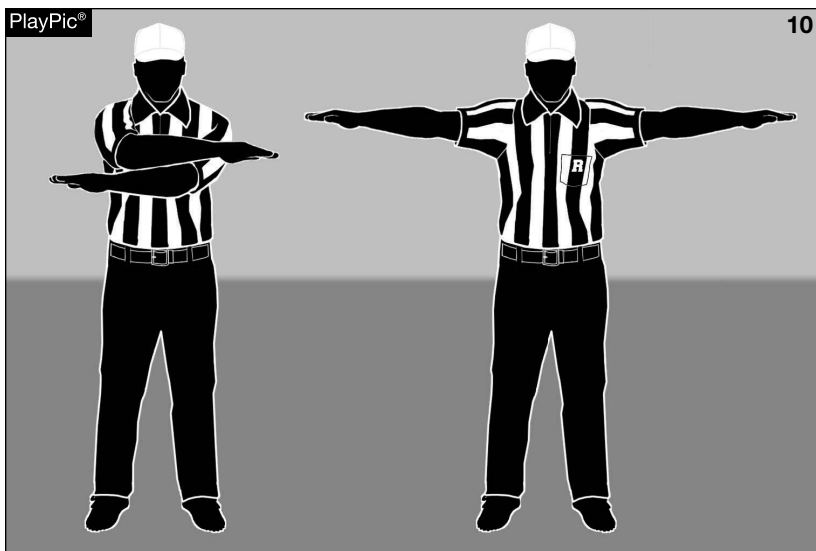
**Dead-ball foul/  
touchback (move side to side)**



**First down**



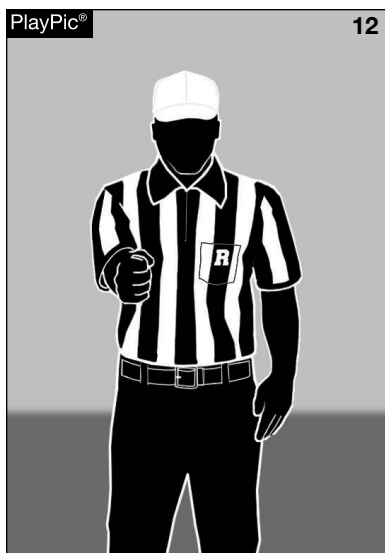
**Loss of down**



**Incomplete pass/unsuccessful try or field goal/  
penalty declined/coin toss option deferred**



**Legal touching**



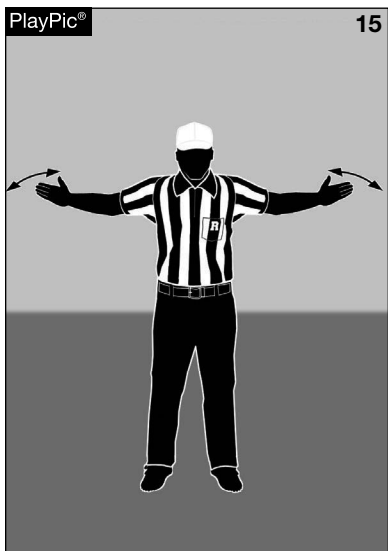
**Inadvertent whistle**



**Disregard flag**



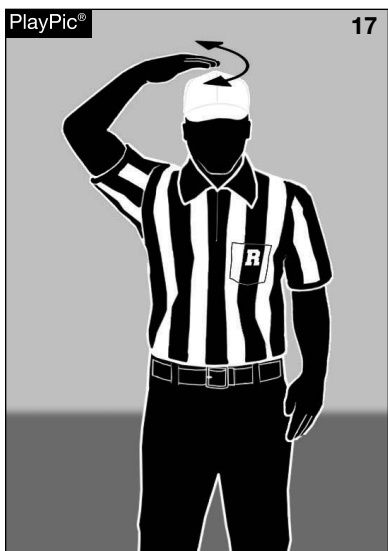
**End of period**



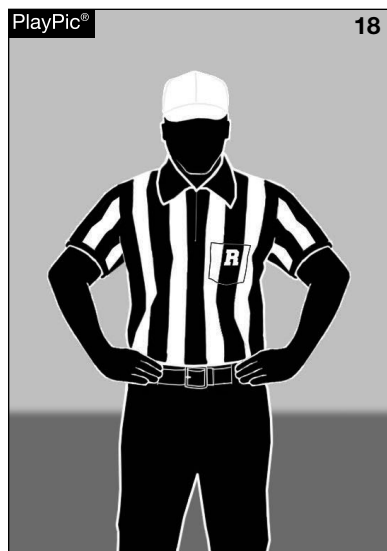
**Sideline warning**



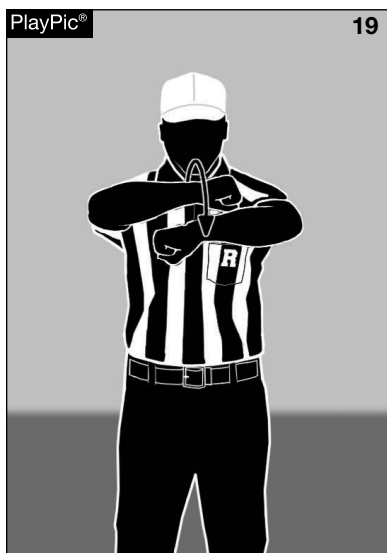
**Illegal touching**



**Uncatchable pass**



**Offside B/Offside A or B on  
Kickoff**



**False start/Encroachment A**  
**Illegal formation**



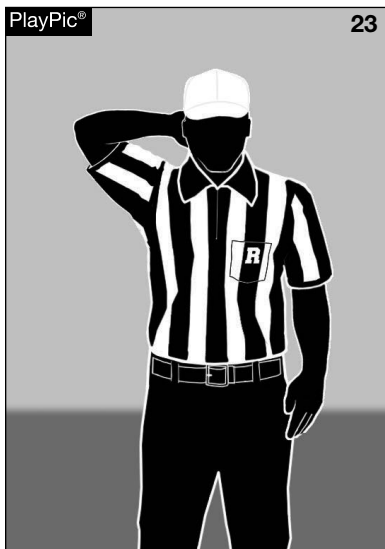
**Illegal motion (1 hand)**  
**Illegal shift (2 hands)**



**Delay of game**



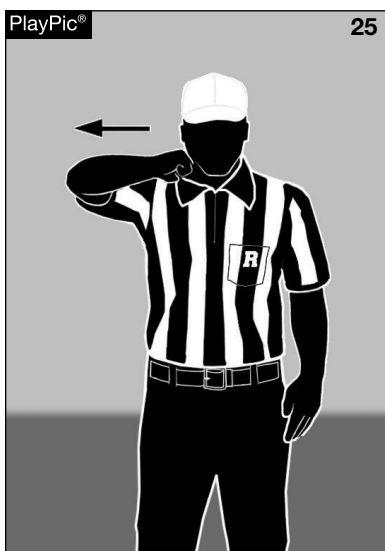
**Substitution infraction**



**Equipment violation**



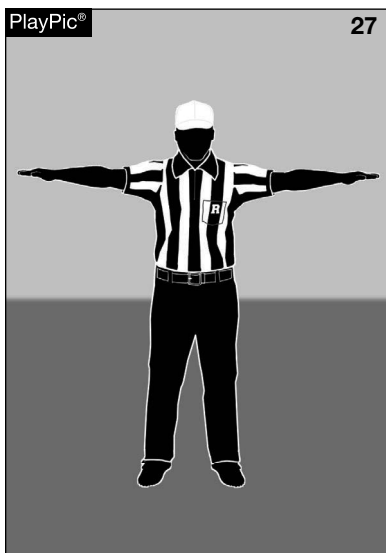
**Targeting**



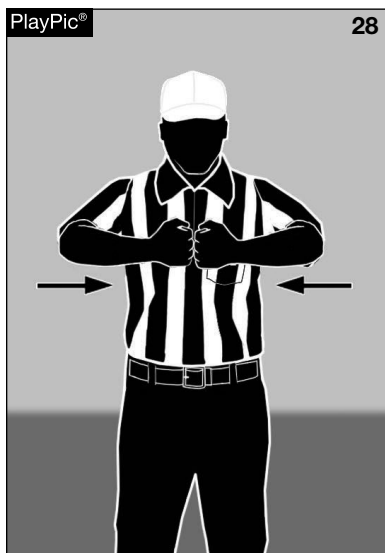
**Horse-collar**



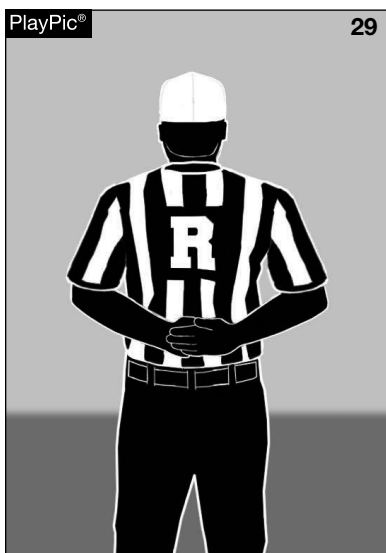
**Hands to the face**



**Unsportsmanlike conduct**

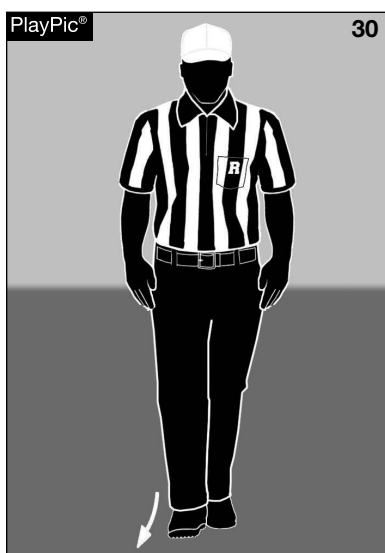


**Illegal blindside block**

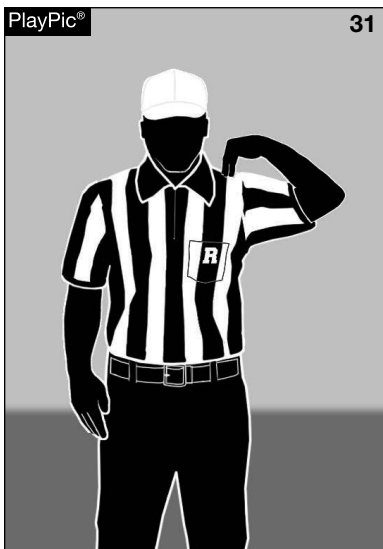


**Sideline interference**

NOTE: Face press box  
when giving signal.



**Running into or roughing the  
kicker or holder**



**Illegal batting/kicking**  
(for illegal kicking, follow with point  
toward foot)



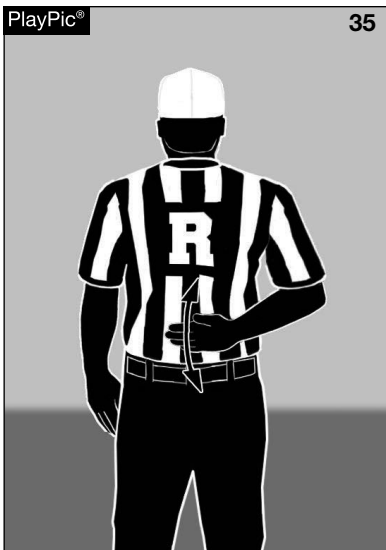
**Illegal fair catch**



**Pass interference**  
**Kick-catching interference**



**Roughing the passer**



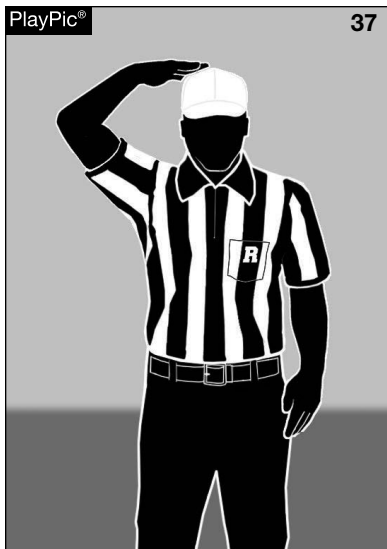
### Illegal pass

### Illegal forward handing

NOTE: Face press box when giving signal.



### Intentional grounding



### Ineligible receiver downfield

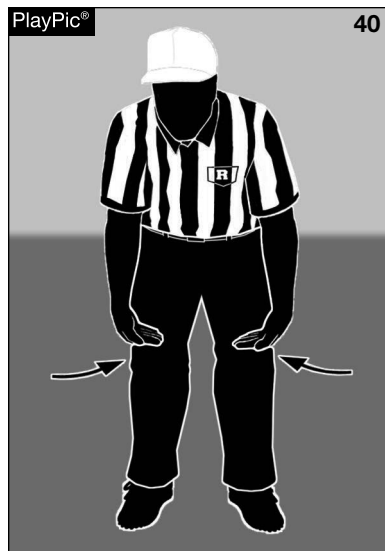


### Personal Foul

NOTE: Signal precedes any other prescribed personal foul signal



**Clipping**



**Block below the waist  
Illegal block**



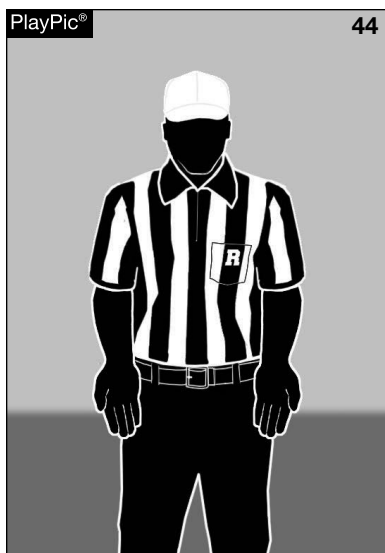
**Chop block**



**Holding  
Obstructing  
Illegal use of hands or arms**



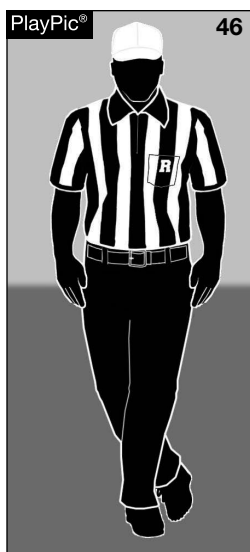
**Illegal block in the back**



**Helping the runner  
Interlocked interference**



**Grasping of  
facemask or helmet  
opening**

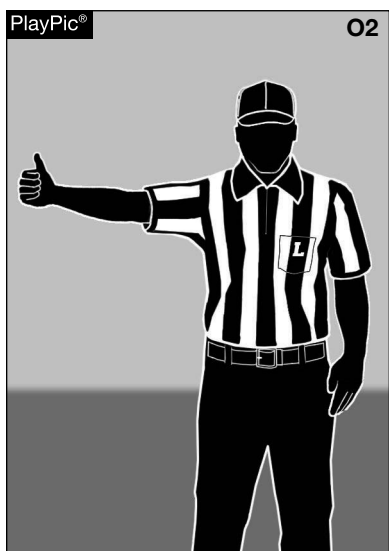


**Tripping**



**Disqualification  
Ejection**

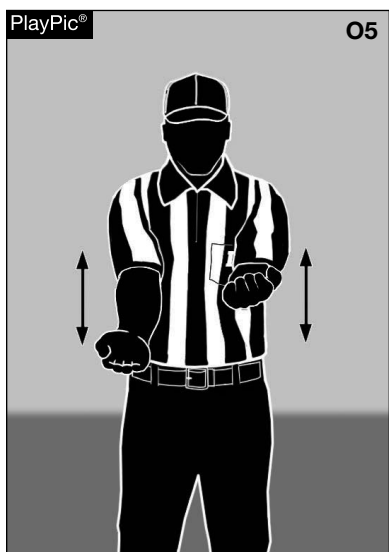
## Optional Crew and Supplementary Signal Chart



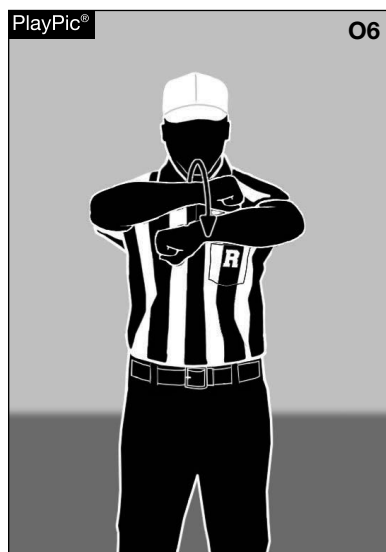
**11 players**



**No catch: Receiver out of bounds**

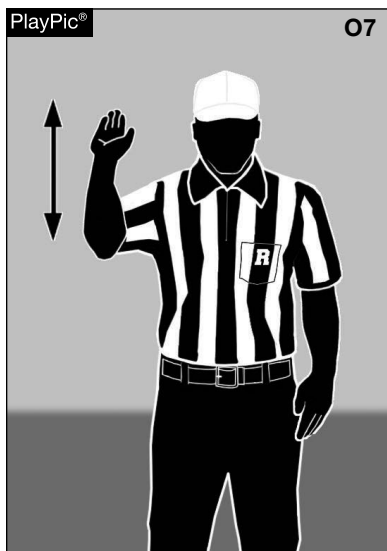


**Pass juggled**

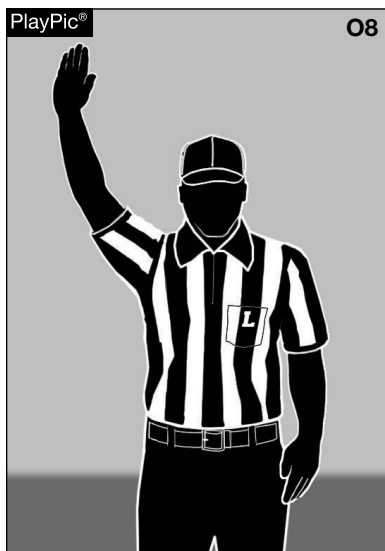


**Fourth-down fumble rules apply**





**Reset play clock to 25 seconds  
(Use both hands to have play  
clock reset to 40 seconds)**



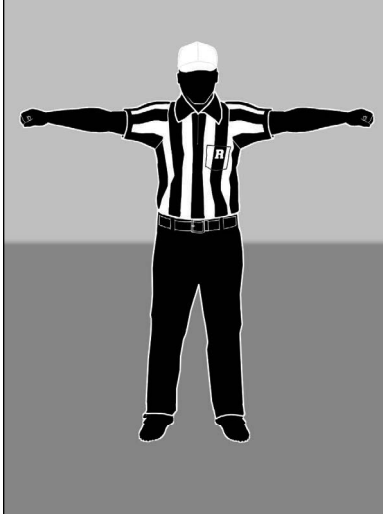
**Ball dead/  
start play clock/10 seconds left  
on play clock**



**Recount players**



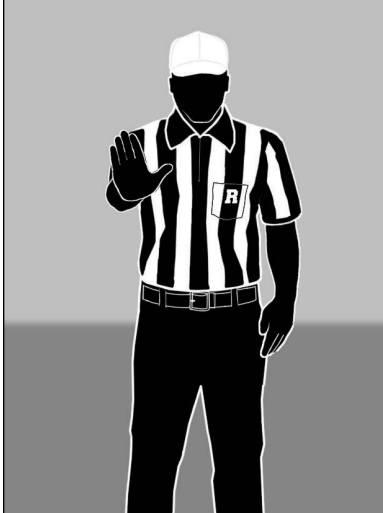
**Catch**



**Substitution in progress/  
All clear from the sideline  
replay assistant**



**10 players on the field**



**Stop sign**

