

CHAPTER

2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Balanced formation — An offensive formation in which three linemen are on either side of the snapper.

Box — Apparatus (also known as the down marker) used by the chain crew to show ball position and the current down.

Chain crew (or chain crew) — Non-officials in charge of the line-to-gain equipment and box. Considered part of the officiating crew.

Cleaning up after the play — Mechanic in which the official not responsible for the ball carrier observes action behind and around the ball carrier.

Cross field mechanic — A procedure in which the wing official looks across the field to the opposite wing official for forward progress.

Dead-ball officiating — Activity during the time immediately after the ball becomes dead.

Digger — Official who removes players from a pile and determines which team has recovered a fumble.

Double Stakes — When there is more than 10 yards to go for a first down.

Downfield — Refers to the direction the offensive team is moving with the ball. On a scrimmage down, it is the area beyond the neutral zone. Opposite of “Upfield.”

Echoing (mirroring) a signal — Giving the same signal as a crewmate (i.e. stop the clock, touchdown).

Eye contact — Gaining the visual attention of another official before making a ruling. By doing so, officials can avoid conflicting calls.

Flat — The area behind the offensive linemen in a side zone where backs go to receive short passes. A pass to a back in the flat is thrown shortly after the snap, thus making it different from a screen pass.

Halo principle — Technique involving imaginary circles around players that help define coverage areas for officials.

Key — An action or reaction by a player that gives the official a tip as to what type of play the offense will run; a player an official observes for all or part of a down.

Line-to-gain equipment — Ten-yard length of chain connected at each end of stakes used to indicate the line Team A has to reach in order to achieve a

first down. Commonly referred to as “the chains.” The box is also considered to be part of the line-to-gain equipment. See “Box,” “Chain crew” and “Stakes.”

Mirror a spot — Mechanic, usually used by wing officials, in which one official marks the spot of forward progress and another indicates the same spot from across the field.

Nine-yard marks (or numbers) — The yard line identification numbers painted on the field. The distance from the sideline to the top of the numbers is nine yards.

Officiate back to the ball — Mechanic in which a wing official who has moved toward Team B’s goal line moves back toward the play in order to determine the spot of forward progress.

Point of attack — On a running play, the area in advance of the runner through which he runs; on a passing play, anywhere in the vicinity of the passer or any player attempting to reach the passer.

Preventive officiating — Refers to actions by officials who prevent problems from occurring by talking to players and coaches. Preventive officiating is often related to dead-ball officiating.

Square off — Ninety-degree turn made by an official when marking the spot of forward progress.

Strong side — For the purposes of this book, the side of the offensive line on which there are more eligible receivers outside of the tackles; opposite of “Weak side.”

Team designations — Offense is the team which is in possession of the ball. The opponent is the defense. Team A is the team which puts the ball in play. The opponent is Team B. Team K is the team

which legally kicks the ball during the down. The opponent is Team R.

Trips — Three eligible receivers on one side of an offensive formation.

Upfield — The direction the defense or receiving team is moving. Opposite of “Downfield.”

Weak side — For the purposes of this manual, it is the side of the offensive line on which there are fewer eligible receivers outside of the tackles; opposite of the “Strong side.”

Wideout — An eligible receiver who lines up outside the last player on the offensive line, on the line of scrimmage.

CHAPTER

10 BALL HANDLING

Ball Mechanics

The proper and effective use of ball mechanics — retrieving and spotting the ball — is critical to the flow of the game and the effectiveness of the crew. In an ideal situation there are at least four footballs available and four ball boys, two on each sideline. Each team is likely to have its own football, so a particular team's ball always goes out and comes in from their own sideline. Also, if the field is wet, the ball may have to be changed more often than described. Wet ball procedures should include a towel for the Umpire.

The ball should be changed after long incomplete passes. If the ball becomes dead out of bounds, the old ball is left in place until the new ball is properly positioned at the succeeding spot. The new ball is relayed in directly to the Umpire who should be at the tops of the numbers.

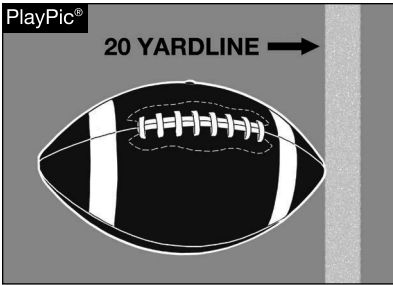
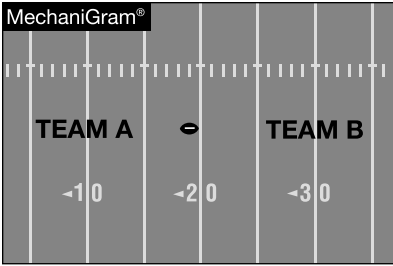
Every effort must be made to get the correct team's ball on the field. If an official's error is discovered, stop play and correct it. If the correct ball is not available, use the existing ball until a replacement is available.

Any time you are relaying the ball to another official the ball is to be thrown underhand. Make short passes (no longer than 10 yards) and make sure there is no one in the way of your toss. Before tossing the ball, the official should ensure players returning to

their side of the line will not get in the way. If necessary, the official should hesitate until the players clear the area or move a couple of steps to find a clear path. Never try to “thread the needle” between players or try to throw over their heads. Both officials and players have on occasion been hit in the head by errant tosses. If the ball ends up on the turf, it could be accidentally kicked, wasting further time. Few things will discredit a crew faster than having the ball on the ground due to poor ball mechanics.

Ball Spotting

After a touchback, the ball shall be placed on the 20 yard line with the downfield point of the football at the edge of the 20 yard line nearest Team A. After change of possession, long run/pass play, or after assessment of a spot foul that results in a new series, the ball can be placed on a yard line to begin the next series when outside Team B's 20 yard line. For example, if a punt return ends with the ball between Team B's 33 and 34 yard lines, move the ball forward to Team B's 34 yard line. At all other times, the ball is placed where it became dead. (Exception: If possession changes on downs the ball will be left at the dead-ball spot to begin the next series.)



Kicks

A kicking play, be it a kickoff or punt, usually means a change of possession. That dictates the old ball comes out and a new ball comes in. Spotting the old ball and waiting for the new ball before removing the old ball is unnecessary and not only wastes time, but places the conveying official at a disadvantage by reducing the time he has to count players and perform his pre-snap duties.

While the ball is normally placed where it becomes dead, the new ball should be placed on a yard line as shown above after a kickoff or punt return. That facilitates the placing of the chains for the first possession and makes it easier to discern if a first down has been achieved. Thus, when such a kick play ends, the covering official need only note the starting yard line and tell that to the Umpire.

Between the Numbers

When the play ends between the tops of the numbers, the Umpire will almost always be the first official to get to the ball. An astute Umpire can discern which

wing official had the best view of the play and will take the spot from that side. The spot should not automatically be taken from the Linesman to avoid the impression the Umpire is gauging his spot by the line-to-gain stake, nor is the closer sideline always the better sideline. There is an opportune time for crewmates to communicate, “I got the spot, Joe.”

Outside the Numbers

When the ball is dead outside the numbers, the Umpire should move into position to receive the relayed ball. It is improper for the Umpire to always wait at the hash mark while the ball is brought to him. That puts a strain on the wing officials and Back Judge with regard to dead-ball officiating and getting in position for the next play. In most cases, the Umpire need not go further than the top of the numbers. He can then either pick up the ball himself or take it from the wing official if the wing had already retrieved it.

If the ball needs to be dried or wiped off, the ready should be blown as soon as the ball is spotted without the normal delay.

Out of Bounds

The quickest way to get the ball spotted after the play ends out of bounds is to get a new ball from the ball person and let him later retrieve the old ball. Not only is it unnecessary for an official to chase after the ball, it removes the official from dead-ball officiating.

Unfortunately, getting a new ball only works on the offensive team’s sideline. On the defensive sideline the ball will have to be retrieved. If the play ended beyond the line of scrimmage, the Back Judge should be there to assist. If behind the line, the Referee is responsible to help.

Incomplete Passes

On incomplete passes, the players should be requested to retrieve the

ball or the Back Judge must assist. Meanwhile, the sideline official can get a new ball to the Umpire.

Measurements

Ball handling during measurements is described in the Measurements chapter.

Hurry-up Offense

During a hurry-up offense, the Umpire must range further than normal to retrieve the ball so to avoid errant passes that may cause a delay in the ready for play. All other officials must be in position to observe the snap when the ball is spotted. This avoids creating the appearance the officials are holding up the game.

Summary

Here is a summary of ball handling responsibilities by position.

Umpire: The Umpire will spot the ball most of the time, leaving the Referee to handle other responsibilities. The Umpire and Referee must work closely so that that is a smooth transition. Whoever spots the ball needs to move to an open space so the relaying official can safely toss him the ball. Do not stand on the succeeding spot waiting for the ball to find you. On occasion the Umpire will have placed the ball on the ground and the wing official will request an adjustment. Pick up the ball and “wipe it off” or check that “the ball is OK” and place it at the new spot. Do not slide the ball on the ground or make a production out of moving it.

Linesman and Line Judge: These two officials are pivotal in getting a new ball on the field. Be especially aware on plays involving a change-of-possession. That will take a coordination of effort to get the new ball in and the old ball off of the field.

Back Judge: Assists with the ball only when absolutely necessary. Remember,

dead ball officiating is the Back Judge’s primary responsibility and helping with ball mechanics cannot take priority. After the action stops and fouls are no longer a concern, help if necessary.

Referee: Assists with the ball only when absolutely necessary. It usually doesn’t make sense for the Referee to handle the ball or spot it. The Umpire will almost always have to come to the ball before the snap. The Referee’s primary responsibilities are dead-ball officiating and keeping track of the offensive huddle.

Ball Persons

It is imperative that the ball persons are properly instructed and that they understand the importance of their role. Ball persons must stay off the field to lessen the chance they’ll run on at an inappropriate time. The number of ball persons and their attentiveness and ability is important, but those individuals will only perform to the standards and desires of the officials.

A careful orientation of ball persons is important, including where the ball people should position themselves, when they can expect to deliver a ball, how they should shovel it, and how they should adjust to circumstances, including punts and kickoffs.

In inclement or muddy conditions, the ball persons must ensure that their ball is kept dry and clean. It is the responsibility of game management to supply towels for that purpose.

The wing official(s) must conduct a meeting with the ball persons before the game. The Linesman and Line Judge should try to build a positive rapport with their respective ball person.

Introduce yourself to ball persons. Identify the lead and write down his name; be sure to address him by name.

Instruct the personnel that they are to stay behind the sideline in close proximity to the wing official at all times. They are to begin each play

approximately five yards in the offensive backfield and six feet off the sideline. The ball persons must keep up with the play at all times, normally mirroring the position of the wing official on their side of the field.

When a new ball is required the wing official will turn to the ball person and request that it be tossed to him.

When requesting the ball, establish direct eye contact with the ball person and then ask for the ball verbally and non-verbally (i.e. clapping hands together or placing hands in front of you as to catch the ball). Instruct the ball person to toss the ball to you with an underhand toss only after an official has requested the ball.

Advise that a new ball will not be required on every play, but they must be prepared to provide a ball as quickly as possible at your request in such situations as: a change of possession, measurements, incomplete pass, or if the ball becomes dead in your side zone. Even if the other team is on offense you may request “dummy ball” for double spot. We will not allow the “kicking ball” to come in on kick plays.

Ball persons are to remain on their sideline except to retrieve an incomplete pass or kicks that become dead out of bounds on the opposing sideline or beyond the end line. If it is not possible for an official to relay the ball back to them, they should run around the end zone to retrieve the ball, being careful not to enter the field of play.

After tries and field goal attempts, the ball persons take a position well behind the posts in order to recover the ball after the kick. They will place the kicking ball at the base of the goal post for the Back Judge to take to the kickoff.

The kicking ball can be inspected by the Back Judge as he makes his way to his free kick position.

CHAPTER

11 WHISTLE MECHANICS

There is nothing wrong with having a few plays where no one blows their whistle. If no official can see the ball when the play ends, there should not be a whistle blown. A couple of good habits to develop are waiting one second after seeing the ball and letting an incomplete pass bounce twice before sounding the whistle.

One whistle on a play is enough. Two are okay in most circumstances. More than that is an indication that someone on the crew is ball watching instead of watching their responsibilities.

Echoing a whistle is usually unnecessary. Repeating a whistle may be appropriate on occasion. If a crewmate's whistle is weak and some players don't stop, a repeated blast may be helpful. When a runner is stopped upright, repeated blasts on the whistle may prevent the runner from being unnecessarily thrown to the ground.

All officials should strongly consider having the whistle in their mouths prior to the snap in case a dead-ball foul occurs or a team's timeout request is granted. Once the snap occurs, no official should have a whistle in the mouth until the ball becomes dead.

Remember that, by rule, the whistle rarely causes the ball to become dead. Blowing the whistle only confirms that something has happened to cause the ball to become dead.

If an official blows an inadvertent whistle, do not attempt to conceal it. Someone will have heard it, and you will lose respect and credibility if you deny blowing one.

Only the covering official should blow the whistle. Getting the attention of another official is the only exception. Use your voice, not your whistle, to prevent or break up extracurricular activity.

When, at the end of a play, any official sees that a flag has been thrown, he should alert the crew by giving three short blasts of the whistle. That helps ensure the box is not moved or the chains moved until the penalty is sorted out.

The Referee uses the whistle to indicate the ball is ready for play, there is a timeout (charged or official), there is a player injury and to prevent the ball from becoming live due to a dead-ball foul before the snap. Rarely will the Referee use the whistle to confirm that the ball is dead after a play.

The Umpire whistles to indicate a timeout, a dead-ball foul that prevents the snap and a player injury. The Umpire should refrain from using the whistle to confirm the ball is dead at the end of the play unless no other official has blown a whistle and he can see the ball.

Wing officials use the whistle to indicate timeouts, dead-ball fouls that

prevent the snap, injuries, when the ball becomes dead following plays in their coverage areas (usually their side zone) including incomplete passes and the runner or a live ball going out of bounds and touchdowns when he is the covering official.

The Back Judge uses the whistle to indicate timeouts, injuries, the end of a quarter, a touchback, when the ball is dead in his coverage area and touchdowns when he is the covering official.

CHAPTER

12

USE OF THE BEANBAG

The beanbag is used to mark spots, other than the spot of a foul, which may later be needed as a reference point. Most often, only the correct yard line is needed and not an exact spot. Under no circumstances should the beanbag be used as a substitute for hustle.

The beanbag should be dropped on the correct spot and not thrown; however that won't always be practical. If the spot is in a side zone, then only the correct yard line is needed because any penalty enforcement would bring the ball back to the nearest hash mark. If a thrown bean bag misses the correct spot, the bag should be picked up and moved to the correct spot after the play ends. Kicking the bag appears lazy.

Situations for Use of the Bean Bag

Fumbles

The spot of the fumble must be marked in the event a penalty occurs and that spot is needed to determine where the run ended. Technically, the spot is required only for fumbles beyond the neutral zone, but it is permissible to bag all fumbles. Many officials bag all fumbles out of habit. Fumbles behind the neutral zone are part of a loose-ball play and the basic spot is the previous spot.

First Touching

During both free and scrimmage kicks, there are times when it is improper for Team K to touch a ball that has been kicked. That is known as "first touching" and it applies only when Team K touches the ball when it is not entitled to possession. On free kicks, if Team K touches the ball before the ball crosses Team R's free kick line and before it is touched there by any Team R player, the spot must be marked with the beanbag. For a scrimmage kick, the spot must be marked if Team K touches the ball in the field of play beyond the line before Team R touches it.

The spot must be marked because Team R may have the right to take the ball at that spot.

End of a Scrimmage Kick

If a scrimmage kick ends between the goal lines, the covering official must mark the yard line where the receiver begins his return (also known as the end of the kick) with a beanbag. That is in case post-scrimmage kick enforcement (PSK) is needed on a foul. The Back Judge should use two different-colored beanbags: one for marking the end of a kick and the other for marking first touching.

Momentum Exception

The momentum exception allows a defender or kick receiver to make a play without fear of giving up a safety. When a defensive player intercepts an opponent's forward pass; intercepts or recovers an opponent's fumble or backward pass; or a Team R player catches or recovers a scrimmage kick or free kick between his five yard line and the goal line, and his original momentum carries him into the end zone where the ball is declared dead in his team's possession or it goes out of bounds in the end zone, the ball belongs to the team in possession at the spot where the pass or fumble was intercepted or recovered or the kick was caught or recovered. The bean bagged spot might also be used to enforce a penalty that occurs after possession was obtained.

Quarterback Sacks

On quarterback sacks, the progress spot is where the defensive player first contacts the potential passer. Wing officials are generally downfield and cannot help with forward progress behind the line. The Referee must keep his attention on action on the passer.

Dropping the bean bag and then moving to cover that action is an acceptable procedure, but Referees should be able to note and remember the correct line without using the bag.

Inadvertent Whistles

When an official inadvertently blows his whistle while the ball is in player possession, causing the ball to become dead, the covering official may drop his beanbag at the spot of the ball when the whistle was blown (it is no different than most progress spots). 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.

Situations Not for Use of the Bean Bag

Interceptions

Do not drop a beanbag at the spot a player intercepts a pass. Unlike the spot of a fumble, that spot has no bearing on penalty enforcement. The same applies to any other change of possession other than a scrimmage kick.

Out of Bounds Spot

It is not a good idea for wing officials to drop a bean bag on an out-of-bounds spot and then leave to retrieve the ball. Hold the spot and continue to officiate any dead-ball action. The Referee and Back Judge have primary responsibility for tending to players out of bounds. In the rare situation where the wing official finds it necessary to escort players from beyond the sideline back to the field, the beanbag should be dropped (not thrown) only after the official has squared off to the spot.

Free Kick Out of Bounds Spot

On free kicks, if the ball is kicked out of bounds untouched, do not use a bean bag because that is a foul and the spot is marked with the flag.

Player Out of Bounds

If a player is pushed or blocked off the field, he may legally return and participate as long as he immediately reenters; that spot does not need to be marked. If a player of Team A or Team K goes out of bounds before a change of possession, it is not a foul unless he returns and the return spot should then be marked with a flag.

Forward Progress

The bean bag should not be used for marking the forward progress of a ball carrier when he has been pushed back and there is continuing action on him. Wing officials should use cross-field mechanics in this situation.

CHAPTER

13

FLAGS AND PENALTIES

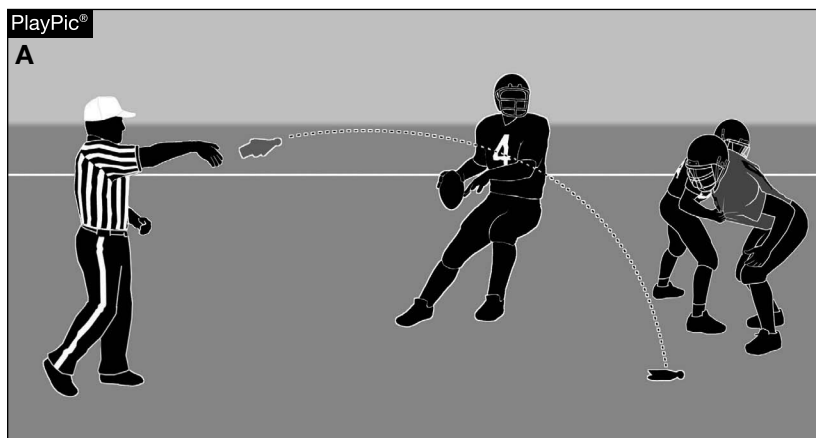
Use of the Flag

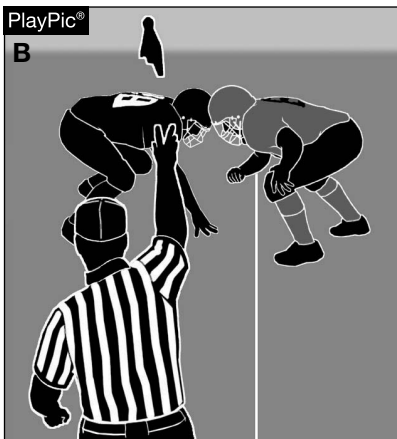
Correct penalty enforcement can be facilitated if the flag is thrown properly. There are two ways to throw the flag: into the air or carefully to a spot. The latter is used when a spot foul occurs (PlayPic A). Since the spot of the foul may be the enforcement spot, the official must get his flag as close as possible to the location that the foul occurred. If the flag is off target, the official should relocate the flag as soon as possible after the play by picking it up and moving it definitively. The longer you delay making this correction, the more it will appear you are manipulating the situation. Also, attempting to kick it

to the correct spot denotes laziness and discredits the accuracy of your call.

For dead-ball fouls or fouls simultaneous with the snap, the flag should be tossed into the air directly in front of the official (PlayPic B).

A few techniques to avoid: slam-dunking the flag to the ground; looking angry when you toss it; holding the flag and waving it, instead of throwing it; pointing at the player and flippantly tossing it as if to say “gotcha” or throwing it at the fouling player. On late hits, the latter looks confrontational and worse yet, might hit the player in the face.





Notification

Fouls and the number of the fouling player must be reported to the press box and both coaches. Additionally, all fouls must be communicated to all members of the officiating crew as each official has a role in penalty enforcement. Your signals and sequence speak a language. Using signals to report is just like talking to the press box and spectators, only you're using signals instead of words.

Once the flag is thrown, the official who threw it must ensure both the Referee and Linesman are aware as soon as possible after the play ends. It is recommended that three short blasts on the whistle are made after the ball is dead to bring the flag to the Referee's attention. The Referee should do the same if he has a foul during a punt while everyone else is downfield.

The Linesman will ensure the chains and box are not moved and the Referee will prepare for the steps that follow.

The Referee's first step in quality communication is to get an accurate report from the official who threw the flag. When wing officials throw a flag for a dead-ball foul prior to the snap, they should hustle toward the middle of the field to report the foul to the Referee if necessary. Remember to practice good

dead-ball officiating during the jog; if a player has crossed the neutral zone and contacted an opponent, the contacted opponent may try to retaliate.

When necessary, the calling officials should get together to discuss what each official has seen, then report their decision to the Referee. Nothing will discredit a crew faster than overturning the initial signal on a dead- ball foul. The delay of game and illegal substitution signals from the Back Judge lend themselves to signaling instead of running all the way to the Referee to report the foul.

The Back Judge covers the spot of the foul or the dead ball spot while the calling official is reporting a foul to the Referee and should help keep players away from conferring officials.

Getting the Explanation

Take whatever time is necessary to get penalty enforcement right. Make sure you have all the necessary information. Ask questions if necessary. Errors in penalty enforcement are a crew responsibility.

It is preferable to tell the Referee what the reporting official saw, "No. 49 cut upfield too soon, instead of simply relaying the foul and offender, such as, "No. 49 offense, illegal motion." It may make sense to use both techniques dependent upon the experience level of the crewmate and the nature of the foul.

On certain fouls, it is critical that the Referee be told the status of the ball when the foul occurred or whether a player involved was an eligible receiver. Of course the guilty team must also be identified. Referring to teams by jersey color must be avoided. The pregame conference should include a discussion of how to report fouls.

Signaling

With the exception of dead-ball fouls, a preliminary signal is required. Give the final signal after moving clear of players while standing still and facing the press box. The final signal is given while the Umpire walks off the penalty yardage.

Giving the Explanation

Do not consult with captains if the choice is obvious or there is a double foul, but on some occasions it will be necessary to consult with the captain. The Umpire should assist the Referee in locating captains for penalty options and stand with the Referee as he explains the options. State the options briefly, but correctly, clearly and courteously. The Umpire must listen to the Referee's explanation to ensure the options are properly offered. Umpires must have good rules knowledge and may have to assist a less experienced Referee with a complicated enforcement situation.

Turn the captain toward his bench so he can see what his coach wants to do. Do not allow the captain to make an incorrect choice if the coach is communicating what he wants. On complicated choices, it is permissible to move toward sideline and allow the coach to make the decision. On kicking plays, a captain may not be on the field so it's best to talk directly with the coach.

The wing official on the sideline of the penalized team must tell the coach the number of the guilty player and explain the foul in non-technical terms, e.g., "Your man in motion cut downfield too soon," instead of, "There was illegal motion." The other wing official need only tell the coach the nature of the foul. Inform the coach of the player's number; however, if the covering official didn't get the number, don't guess or make one up. Don't give up other officiating duties to report numbers to the coaches. If a non-existent number is reported, crew credibility is immediately destroyed.

Once the Referee determines the penalty has been accepted or declined,

he must inform the other members of the crew. If the penalty is accepted, the Umpire must understand where to walk from – the enforcement spot, how far to walk and which direction to walk.

Making the Announcement

All penalties must be announced to the press box, with or without, a microphone. See the chapter on the proper use of the microphone.

This communication is important because it emphasizes the need for accuracy in calling fouls and deters phantom calls.

Informing the Coach

The head coach is entitled to the following information for all fouls: the type of foul, a brief description of the act, the number or position of the offending player and the enforcement. For example, "Number 62 was called for holding. He pulled down an opponent. It'll be 10 yards from the spot of the foul and second down will be repeated."

Enforcing the Penalty

The Umpire must not leave the Referee until he is 100 percent certain of the enforcement.

If the foul occurred in a side zone, the ball is returned to the nearest hash mark before the penalty is walked off.

The Umpire does not set the ball down at the new spot until he confirms correctness with the Linesman. The Linesman walks off the yardage with Umpire. The Line Judge holds the enforcement spot while the penalty is walked off and checks the correctness of the succeeding spot. The Line Judge does not release his spot until the Umpire has placed the ball at the new spot.

Umpire: Before the next play remind Referee as to the status of the clock and the correct down. Verify correct down to wing officials. Stay over ball until Referee gives the ready-for-play, then back out to your position.

Linesman: Make sure the box man and chain crew hold their positions. Check the position of the down box as it relates to the five-yard tape on the chain. If the penalty is five yards, signal the Referee if the enforcement will leave the ball short or beyond the line-to-gain.

Line Judge: The Line Judge should give the Referee a signal regarding clock status before the Referee moves back into position.

Back Judge: If the flag is not yours: If the calling official has the dead-ball spot in a side zone, take that spot from him so he can report his foul to the Referee.

If the calling official has a spot foul, you may be required to cover his flag to ensure it is not moved.

Pay attention to the enforcement proceedings so you can confirm that they have been conducted accurately. If you are in disagreement, alert the crew immediately.

CHAPTER

21

BETWEEN DOWNS

The time interval between plays is crucial to officials because that is when the groundwork is laid for officiating the next play. Each official has specific duties and priorities while the ball is dead. The first priority for all officials when the previous play ends is dead-ball officiating. Dead-ball fouls almost always occur within five seconds after the whistle and all officials must observe their area (see the chapter entitled “Halo Principle”).

Before the Referee gives the ready-for-play signal, all officials must change their down indicator to the correct down and confirm the number with at least one other official. Always know the down and yardage needed for a first down. Pay special attention to double stakes. The final task before the snap is for all officials to identify their key (see the chapter entitled “Keys”).

Counting Players

All officials have a role in counting players between downs. If 12 or more players are in formation or moving into formation or a replaced player has not started to leave the huddle within three seconds, a dead ball foul should be whistled for a substitution infraction.

Referee

As dead-ball officiating is being conducted, the Referee must check

the line-to-gain. Assuming it is not a first down or close enough to measure, he announces the next down and approximate distance. He must check the down box for the correct down.

Next is the ready for play signal. The Referee should be in position on the passing arm side of the quarterback for the next snap on a regular scrimmage down before blowing the ready whistle with one arm raised.

The next priority is counting the offense. Once the count is completed, it must be signaled to the Umpire. If the Referee counts 12 players in the huddle, he should immediately recount. By the time he completes the recount, the replaced player should be leaving the field or a dead ball foul should be whistled for a substitution infraction. If the count is less than 11 the Referee will indicate this information to the Umpire and wing officials.

The Referee is responsible for observing the huddle to ensure Team A is not violating substitution rules, identifying eligible receivers in the backfield, observing shifts and watching for false starts and other pre-snap violations by the offense. He is also responsible for ensuring the snap is legally released by the snapper. It is recommended that the Referee know

the quarterback's name in the event communication is necessary.

Umpire

As dead-ball officiating is being conducted, the Umpire must move promptly to retrieve the ball. The Umpire should know how each center wants the laces of the ball positioned. While the center may rotate the ball, asking for a preference is a form of preventive officiating. The closer the ball is to what the snapper wants, the less chance something questionable will happen. Be prepared for some long snappers to prefer the laces in a different position for scrimmage kick plays. It is recommended that the Umpire know the snapper's name in the event communication is necessary.

Check down box for the correct down. Keep track of the position of the ball on the field by using an elastic wrist band indicator on the hand opposite your down indicator. Show the position of the ball as follows: little finger and thumb represent left or right hash mark, first and third fingers represent the left or right goalposts, middle finger represents the middle of the field.

The next priority is counting the offense. Once the count is completed, it must be signaled to the Referee and viewed by the wing officials. If the count is less than 11 the Umpire will signal this information to the Referee and appropriate wing officials.

The Umpire should check numbering on the offensive line and ensure Team A has five players numbered 50 to 79. He must keep his eyes steadfastly on the ball after it is touched by the snapper. He must remain in control of the ball (standing over the ball if the Referee is not in position) until the ready-for-play signal and then move to a pre-snap position, 5-7 yards beyond the line, out of the way of the linebackers and with a good view of the start of the snap. When leaving the ball, the Umpire should avoid

walking between the defensive huddle and their sideline so that he doesn't block a coach's signal. A standing set (hands-on-knees) position is appropriate. It not only looks more professional, it reduces the chance of obstructing the quarterback's view of the defense.

The Umpire's position should vary from play to play for several reasons. These include being able to observe a different pair of linemen on each play and to reduce his utility to the blocking scheme. The Umpire has primary responsibility for snap infractions and false starts by the linemen. He must also judge whether the defensive signals are interfering with the snap count and protect the snapper in kick formations.

Linesman and Line Judge

As dead-ball officiating is being conducted, the wings must mark the forward progress spot for the Umpire. The spot belongs to the wing that had the best view of the ball; the other wing should come up and match the spot.

The Line Judge is responsible for letting the Referee know if the ball is short of the stake, a first down or close enough for the Referee to come up and look.

If the play does not result in a first down or is not close enough to measure, the Linesman must check the down with the Referee and then step off the line so the box man can properly place his stake. The Linesman should receive a verbal cue from box man that the box has been correctly changed to the next down. The Line Judge should check the down box and help by bringing any error to the Linesman's attention.

The wings are responsible for counting the defense. The count should be checked with the or Back Judge.

After the offense breaks from the huddle, the next priority for both wing officials is to check the closest receiver

by signaling as to whether he is on the line or not. An arm pointing to the backfield indicates "off the line" and a hand pointing to the line of scrimmage with the upfield arm indicates "on the line." It is recommended to use a tip of the hat signal so the crewmate is assured the information is confirmed. The wing officials use an extended foot or hand to advise the widest offensive player of the line of scrimmage. Do not coach the player about where he needs/wants to be. If you cause a player to move and then penalize for a false start or an illegal formation, it is your fault. Do everything you can to make the formation legal. Use common sense and preventive officiating.

Next comes the check for seven on the line. It's a lot easier to count four in the backfield, but that only works if you're sure there are exactly 11 players on the offense which will be indicated by the Referee and Umpire's extended fist.

The wings have primary responsibility for false starts on their side of the field and for encroachment. If an offensive player goes in motion, the wing he is moving away from has responsibility, even though the player may subsequently change direction.

Only players and substitutes are allowed on the field, coaches and nonplayers are to remain off the field except when authorized by an official. Should a coach, player or non-player become abusive to any official any time during the game, the covering official should call timeout and throw his flag for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Finally, each wing must identify where each eligible receiver is for his side of the field.

Back Judge

As dead-ball officiating is being conducted, the Back Judge should gently pinch-in keeping all 22 players in view. If necessary, he may assist with runners who go out of bounds. Retrieving the ball is the last priority and players should be encouraged to assist.

On the first punt for each team, remind the receiver how to signal properly.

The Back Judge keeps the 25-second play clock and counts the defense. If the count is eleven or less, the proper signal should be given to the wing official on the defensive team's sideline.

If the ball has not been snapped 20 seconds after the ready signal has been given, the Back Judge will use the dead-ball signal for the last five seconds. The Back Judge also times the 60-second interval between a successful field goal or try and the ensuing kickoff.

CHAPTER

26

CFOA PHILOSOPHIES OF OFFICIATING

Quick Shifts

Simultaneous shifts by players on the line can create a judgment dilemma for the officials. Simulating action at the snap is a false start and can be judged by the abruptness of the movement. Officials are expected to make this judgment regardless of whether Team B encroaches. Also encroachment by the defense does not automatically mean the linesman's movement simulated a snap. Each situation must be judged on its own merit.

Acts clearly intended to cause encroachment should be ruled a false start. While it is very difficult for an official to judge what may be in the mind of a coach or a player, the game situation can serve as a guideline. A team that frequently shifts throughout the game should receive a greater benefit of doubt than a team that only shifts on third or fourth down with less than five yards to the line-to-gain.

Line of Scrimmage

Officials will work to keep offensive linemen legal and will call a foul only when obvious or when a warning to the player and a subsequent warning to the coach are ignored. Don't wait until the fourth quarter to enforce the rule.

If the offensive player is lined up with his head clearly behind the rear end of the snapper, a foul will be called without a warning.

Don't be technical on an offensive player who is a wide receiver or slot back in determining if he is off the line of scrimmage. When in question, it is not a foul.

Wide receivers or slot backs lined up outside a tight end will be ruled on the line of scrimmage and covering the tight end if there is no stagger between their alignments. If in question, the tight end is not covered up.

Any time a defensive player jumps toward the neutral zone and there is a question whether he was in the neutral zone and the responding offensive player(s) moves, shut the play down and penalize the defense.

Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal.

If the quarterback bends over while a man is in motion and does not take a step, it should be judged that he has not moved to a new position and it is not an illegal shift as long as the quarterback pauses for one second before the snap.

When in question:

- A quick or abrupt movement by the linemen or quarterback is a false start.
- The one-second pause has not been violated.
- Offensive players are legally on the line.
- Offensive players are legally in the backfield.
- Players are legally moving rather than in illegal motion.
- A Team A player has been within 15 yards of the ball.
- A departing player has left the field prior to the snap.
- Defensive signals are legal.

Fumbles

When in question:

- The runner was down and did not fumble the ball.
- Regarding whether the quarterback passed or fumbled, it will be ruled a pass.

Defensive Pass Interference

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

- Early contact by a defender who is not playing the ball is defensive pass interference provided the other requirements for defensive pass interference have been met, regardless of how deep the pass is thrown to the receiver. When in question the defensive back has legally initiated contact.
- Playing through the back of a receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.

- Grabbing and restricting a receiver's arm(s) or body in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.
- Extending an arm across the body (arm bar) of a receiver thus restricting his ability to catch a pass, regardless of whether or not the defender is looking for the ball.
- Cutting off or riding the receiver out of the path to the ball by making contact with him without playing the ball.
- 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:

- Initiating contact with a defender by shoving or pushing off thus creating separation in an attempt to catch a pass.
- Driving through a defender who has established a position on the field.
- Blocking downfield during a pass that legally crosses the line of scrimmage.
- Picking off a defender who is attempting to cover a receiver by contacting him.

Not Offensive Pass Interference

Offensive pass interference will not be called on a screen pass when the ball is overthrown behind the line of scrimmage but subsequently lands beyond the expanded neutral zone (two yards) and linemen are blocking downfield, unless such blocking prevents a defensive player from catching the ball.

It is not offensive pass interference on a pick play if the defensive player

is blocking the offensive player when the contact occurs and doesn't make a separate action, or if the contact occurs within two yards of the line of scrimmage.

Other Passing Situations

When determining if an untouched pass is beyond the line of scrimmage, the neutral zone will be expanded two yards.

The quarterback can throw the ball anywhere if he is not under duress, except spiking the ball straight down. The clock is not a factor. Exception: The quarterback may immediately spike the ball to stop the clock.

Contact on a blatantly uncatchable pass shall be deemed to have occurred after the play ended unless it is a personal foul.

If the passer is contacted after he starts his passing motion, then it may be ruled not intentional grounding due to this contact.

If the passer is contacted clearly before he starts his passing motion, then there will be a foul for intentional grounding if there is no eligible receiver in the vicinity.

If an interception is near the goal line (inside the one yard line) and there is a question as to whether possession is gained in the field of play or end zone, rule a touchback.

When in question:

- On action against the passer, it is roughing the passer if the defender's intent is to punish.
- The passer has not intentionally grounded the ball.
- The ball is a forward pass and not fumbled during an attempted forward pass.
- The pass is incomplete rather than a fumble.
- As to "caught or trapped" the pass is incomplete.

- The pass was released in or behind the neutral zone rather than beyond it.
- The pass is forward rather than a backward pass when thrown in or behind the neutral zone.
- The pass is backward rather than forward when thrown beyond the neutral zone or when there is no neutral zone.
- The ball has not been touched on a forward pass.

Blocking

Takedowns at the point of attack, those in the open field, within the tackle box and affecting the result of the play create special focus and should be called in those situations.

If there is a potential offensive holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, offensive holding should not be called.

If there is a potential for defensive holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, defensive holding should not be called. Example: A defensive back on the opposite side of the field holding a wide receiver on a designed run play to the other side.

For blocks in the back, if one hand is on the number and the other hand is on the side and the initial force is on the number, it is a block in the back. The force of the block could be slight and still a foul if the contact propels the player past the runner or prevents him from making the play. If the force is clearly on the side, it is not a foul. If the blocker is in a "chase mode" all the action must be on the side.

Blocks that start on the side and subsequently end up in the back are not fouls as long as contact is maintained throughout the block.

Blocks in the back which occur at or about the same time a runner is being tackled shall not be called, unless they are a personal foul.

A grab of the receiver's jersey that restricts the receiver and takes away his feet should be defensive holding if other criteria are met, and could also be defensive pass interference.

Holding can be called even if the quarterback is subsequently sacked as it may be the other half of a double foul.

An illegal block in the back can still be called on fair catches, but not if the illegal block occurs away from the play as the fair catch is being made or the touchback occurs and contact is slight (personal foul type actions should always be called).

Blocks in the back that are personal fouls in nature should be called regardless of their timing relative to the runner being tackled.

Rarely should you have a hold on a double team block unless there is a takedown or the defender breaks the double team and is pulled back.

When in question:

- If an illegal block occurs in the end zone or field of play, it occurs in the field of play.
- It is legal use of the hands rather than holding or illegal use of the hands.
- The contact is below the waist (for blocking below the waist and block in the back).
- It is a block at the side rather than behind (for block in the back or clipping).
- As to disintegration of the free blocking zone, assume it is intact.
- The contact is at the knees or below (for chop block).
- A player has been blocked out of bounds by an opponent.

Kicking Plays

The kicker's restraining line on onside and short pooch kickoffs should be officiated as a plane. Any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for offside. The same plane applies on normal kickoffs, but officials should not be too technical in regard to players breaking the plane.

It shall always be roughing the kicker if there is forcible contact to the plant leg, whether that leg is on the ground or not. It shall be running into the kicker if a defender simply "runs through" the kicking leg.

All other contact shall be based on the severity and the potential for injury to the kicker.

When in question:

- It is roughing rather than running into the kicker/holder.
- A ball is accidentally touched with the foot rather than intentionally kicked.
- A fair catch signal is valid rather than invalid.
- The player has not touched rather than touched the ball.
- The ball has been muffed rather than caught.

Plays at the Sideline

If legal contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out of bounds, consider it a legal hit.

If the whistle has blown and a runner 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 (renewed effort) before calling a foul.

When in question as to whether the runner stepped out of bounds, officials should rule the runner did not step out of bounds.

Scoring Plays

When in question:

- The ball is dead in the field of play rather than a touchdown.
- The original force has not been expended and a new force has not been applied.
- It is a touchback rather than the ball belonging to Team B under original momentum rules.
- The ball belongs to Team B under original momentum rules rather than a safety.

Personal Fouls

If action is deemed to be “fighting,” the player must be disqualified. When in question if an act is a flagrant personal foul or fighting, the player is not fighting.

Players committing flagrant personal fouls must be disqualified.

Spitting on an opponent requires disqualification.

When in question:

- Regarding hits away from the ball near the end of the play, consider it a dead-ball foul rather than live-ball foul.
- It is twisting, turning or pulling the facemask.
- It is touching the facemask rather than grasping it.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Do not be overly technical in applying Rule 9-5-1 (unsportsmanlike acts).

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 9-5-1 a thru h. That list is intended to be illustrative and not exhaustive. All agree that when those acts are clearly intended to taunt or demean, they should be penalized.

Miscellaneous

The ankle or wrist are considered part of the foot or hand, respectively and do not make a runner down.

When in question:

- The runner’s knee has not touched the ground.
- The runner’s forward progress is stopped rather than a fumble.
- A player is inbounds rather than out of bounds.
- The clock shall be stopped for an injured player.
- Don’t throw the flag.
- Don’t blow the whistle.