

This file represents the 4th edition of the CFOA mechanics manual. This 4th edition will be used statewide starting with the 2023-2024 season.

June 27, 2023



**FOURTH EDITION**

**THE OFFICIAL MECHANICS OF  
THE COLORADO FOOTBALL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION**

**FOOTBALL OFFICIATING**

# **MECHANICS MANUAL**



Colorado High School Activities Association



**5 PERSON  
HIGH SCHOOL  
CREW**

**REFEREE**

PUBLISHED BY REFEREE AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPORTS OFFICIALS

## **Colorado Football Officiating Mechanics Manual**

Graphics and layout by Matt Bowen, graphic designer, Referee magazine

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**“We are going to relentlessly chase perfection, knowing full well we will not catch it; because nothing is perfect. But we are going to relentlessly chase it, because in the process we will catch excellence. I am not remotely interested in just being good.”**

**— Vince Lombardi**



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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Colorado Football Officials Association (CFOA) Mechanics Manual, designed to promote “One Rule – One Mechanic – One Interpretation.”

How a rule is officiated on the field requires knowledge of the philosophy behind the rule. Officials must ask themselves, “What is the rule trying to say?” This manual will assist officials with answers to that important question.

There are many ways to officiate a football game and it is the desire of the CFOA to develop officials to become better and more consistent statewide through the use of this Manual.

Good mechanics make the difference between a football game that is well officiated and one that is not. It is one thing to know the rules, but another to know where to position yourself on the field, what to look at, how to interpret what you observe and how to move as the play develops.

For the most part, the mechanics in this manual are based on the NFHS Officials Manual. This manual expands and enhances these core concepts by adding graphics, philosophies, nuances and other information designed to make the basics easier to understand and put into practice.

The CFOA Board of Directors has approved the use of this manual. It is to be followed by all football officials and local associations in Colorado.

We hope you will find this manual useful and informative.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# SECTION 1

# CHAPTER 1

# OFFICIATING FOOTBALL

Officiating twenty-two players who are moving around, competing for space and position, is not an easy task. The officiating crew must work as a team and utilize hustle, angles, distance and planned compromises to observe and control the action all while remaining obscure. There are several scenarios where there is no one best way to cover all possibilities. The following is what is expected of members of the CFOA.

## **Safety**

Our number one priority is safety; both the protection and welfare of the players and our officials. There can be no compromise on that point. Never let an unsafe act take place.

## **Fairness**

Next is fairness. We are necessary to ensure the game is played fairly according to the rules and that neither team gains an unfair advantage. Another way of saying that is avoiding egregious errors that cause the wrong team to win. If a crew does that, it can be said they had a successful game, but that is merely a passing grade and our objective is to significantly surpass that in each and every game.

## **Getting it Right**

Right in line with the principle of fairness is the mandate to “get it right.” Getting the decision correct must prevail over any pride consideration. That means previously rendered decisions may be

reversed, but it doesn't mean that any and all decisions should be changed. The rules have stated limitations on correcting errors which must be honored. Officials must speak up when they believe a rule is being misapplied. The more facts provided, the less likely the whole crew will be embarrassed by a rules error. Judgment calls are more delicate. There are situations where there are multiple covering officials and consultation is essential. In order to change a judgment call, the differing official must be 100% sure of what he observed or he must be able to point out what the calling official did not see. If the two officials cannot agree, the original call should stand.

## **Rules Knowledge**

Game officials must accept the responsibility of enforcing the spirit, as well as the letter, of the rules promptly and with consistency. In order to do that, game officials must have complete knowledge and understanding of the rules. Decisions must be made so quickly they come by reflex. The proper way to prepare oneself for making decisions of this nature is through the thorough understanding of the rules and continued study of possible situations which may occur. Basic fundamentals then become second nature and correct interpretations are virtually automatic. To know the rules thoroughly requires constant study.

Game officials must have a football

sense which supersedes the technical application of the rules so that the game goes smoothly. Game officials are expected to exercise good judgment in applying the rules.

### **Intangibles**

While a thorough knowledge of the rules is important, it is not enough to guarantee the competency of a game official. There are other attributes which are equally important. Game officials must possess a combination of these if they are to fulfill their duties adequately. In addition to a complete mastery of the rules, game officials must have a good knowledge of human nature and the ability to control situations as they arise.

A smooth running game suddenly can get out of hand as a result of an overly officious attitude toward players and coaches, or an undue laxity of enforcement. Conversations with a coach or a player should always be courteous without sacrificing dignity. If something is said or done which 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.

Football is a game played by physically sound athletes blocking and tackling one another. At times, the emotions of players, coaches and crowds run high, and game officials must control themselves in order to provide necessary leadership. No manual can tell officials how to make instant decisions, how to adjust to emergencies, how to show poise and control temper, or how to be courteous and considerate yet firm and decisive.

Tact is necessary but should never be a justification for retreat from a position properly taken or a decision correctly rendered. Staying loose is an asset in officiating, as in any other phase of a sport where fast reflexes are required. A relaxed appearance is a great help if it gives the impression of confidence. Care,

however, should be taken to avoid the appearance of indifference. The poised official is able to remain inconspicuous as he moves to the right place at the right time.

Officials who are familiar with the mechanics and understand their individual duties find the intangible requirements of good officiating usually follows naturally.

### **Preventive Officiating**

Preventive officiating facilitates the smooth conduct of a game within the rules. The good game official, by actions and/or words, can frequently prevent certain fouls from happening. A game official must be able to “draw the line” between preventive officiating and coaching. Telling a coach to “get that player out so I don’t have to throw him out” is dictating playing time to a coach, and has crossed that preventive officiating line. Yet, a well-placed remark with the coach such as “Coach, I could use some help with No. 24” may keep the official out of trouble.

### **Officiating Philosophy**

Both rules and mechanics are published and neither covers every possible situation. An official who does everything by the book is not likely to progress very far. Therein lays the need for officiating philosophy.

Football officiating is truly an art and perhaps the biggest part of that is people skills. Not so much what you call or don’t call, but how you explain what you did and why. Another aspect of the “art” is avoiding the approach that if something can be construed to be a foul, it will be. There are some rules that must be blindly adhered to; after all, that’s why there are rules. An example is a runner who steps on a sideline. By rule, that runner is out of bounds. It has to be called that way every time without exception. At the opposite end of the spectrum is a lineman who has the tip of his helmet right on the edge of the neutral zone. When the player exhales, his helmet extends two millimeters into

the zone and retreats when he inhales. Assuming the official's eyesight is perfect and he can discern to that level of precision, it's a technicality that is best overlooked.

### **Advantage/Disadvantage**

The concept of advantage/disadvantage is both useful and dangerous. It certainly is the foundation for many of the rules, but most rules cannot be written to be eminently fair in all situations. In cases where the rules allow officials to apply discretion, advantage/disadvantage should be applied.

Advantage or disadvantage cannot be blindly applied without risking credibility. There are some plays that must be called by rule regardless of advantage gained because they cannot be defended when they show up on the game video.

An example is a 12th player who is departing the field and is two steps from the sideline when the ball is snapped. That is a foul for illegal substitution. Neither team gained an advantage nor was put at a disadvantage, but a highly visible substitution infraction cannot be ignored. See the chapter entitled "Between Downs."

The philosophy is also dependent upon the level of the game and in some cases the disparity of the abilities of two teams.

### **Patience**

Hurrying should not be mistaken for hustle. When a team is in a hurry-up offense, the officials should hustle to maintain the established tempo of the game. Hurrying fosters mistake; a good example is moving the ball to the hash mark without first checking for the need of a measurement.

Many sports require an official to make an immediate call and those that are slow to react appear indecisive. That is not true in football officiating. While it is natural for humans to react to events before thinking; snap judgments can be devastating. The key words are Pause, Read, and React.

**Pause** – As an official observes action in his primary coverage area, he should hesitate momentarily (take a deep breath) and assess the potential situation. Many plays are not a single act, but evolve through a sequence of actions.

**Read** – While paused, he focuses on player reactions and their consequences to determine the implications of what he just observed

**React** – The final step is to assess the information he gathered and make a decision which may involve throwing a flag, refraining from throwing a flag or moving to gather more information.

### **Our Mechanics**

Mechanics are based on the rules. They tell an official where he needs to be to make a judgment on the rules and they delineate responsibilities for specific aspects of the game. The CFOA mechanics are designed to optimize the limited assets that are available.

## 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.

**Buffer** — The separation between an official and the closest player; usually 10-15 yards is preferable.

**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** — 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.

**Deep or deep official** — The Side Judge (SJ) or Field Judge (FJ). Only used in seven-person crews.

**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** — The direction the offensive team is moving with the ball. On a scrimmage down, it is the area beyond the neutral zone. Opposite of “Up-field.”

**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.

**Flanker** — A wide receiver who lines up in the backfield outside the tight end.

**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.

**Pinch-in** — The movement of an official towards the nearest plays after the ball becomes dead.

**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.

**Press coverage or pressed** — When a defensive player is lined up on the line of scrimmage directly in front of a receiver.

**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.

**Screen pass** — A forward pass that does not cross the line of scrimmage.

**Slot back or wingback** — A back who lines up behind or just inside a tight end or tackle.

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

**Stacking or stacked** — When a receiver is lined up directly behind a teammate or in close proximity to his rear.

**Stakes (or Sticks)** — Poles at either end of the chains which are used to stretch from the line of scrimmage to the line which Team A must reach to achieve a first down. See “Line to gain equipment” and “Chain Crew.”

**Strong side** — For the purposes of this Manual, 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.

**Up-field** — 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.

**Wing or wing official** — The Linesman (L) or Line Judge (LJ).

# CHAPTER 3

# UNIFORM

Your uniform should be clean and well kept. The entire crew must be dressed alike.

**Shirt:** Officials should have collared Referee shirts with 2-1/4-inch stripes, short and long sleeves. All crew members should wear the same length sleeves. Do not wear a long-sleeved garment underneath a short-sleeved shirt. T-shirts and turtlenecks (for cold weather) must be black. The undershirt should not have any letters or pictures that could be seen through your striped shirt. Shirts should always be tucked in. The American flag over the left pocket is required.

**Pants:** Black pants with a single 1-1/4 inch white stripe down each leg and a solid black belt are required for all varsity games. Black coaches shorts (no white stripe) are allowed for sub-varsity games however all crew members must wear the same.

**Shoes:** Black shoes with black laces are required. Shoes with white upper soles should be avoided.

**Socks:** Black socks will be worn with black pants or black shorts. When wearing black shorts crew length socks are preferred.

**Cap:** A black cap with white piping should be worn by all but the Referee.

The Referee's white hat must be clean. All caps should be fitted; adjustable caps appear unprofessional.

On very windy days, no hat may be worn; wearing the hat backward is not acceptable.

During cold, inclement weather ear covers that match the color of the hat may be worn.

**Whistle:** All whistles should be black plastic. Black lanyards and/or finger whistles may be used. Some officials carry both a finger whistle and a lanyard whistle which allows for the use of the lanyard whistle before the snap and the finger whistle at the end of the play. When a whistle is in the official's mouth at the snap, false starts can be whistled immediately. That is the sole purpose of having a whistle in the mouth; therefore, it must then be immediately spit out after the snap. The Referee will find a lanyard whistle handy for the ready-for-play signal. Since the Back Judge does not rule on false starts, he should not need to have a whistle in his mouth at the snap, however, unless he anticipates a delay-of-game penalty. The delay encountered in raising a finger whistle can reduce the chance of an inadvertent whistle. The drawback to finger whistles is they facilitate one-armed signals which should be avoided. Another technique is a plain whistle with no lanyard that is held in

the hand. The disadvantage is obvious – the whistle can be easily dropped. Whichever type of whistle is used, having a spare whistle in a pocket is recommended.

**Jacket:** When local associations allow jackets to be worn during the game, the jacket should be black and white striped and all officials should be the same. Official's jackets may be utilized during pregame warm-ups.

**Accessories:** Each official must have two penalty flags, one in the front belt and the other in a back pocket that is not visible. Throwing a hat appears unprofessional. Each flag should be 15 by 15 inches and have a center weight. Most officials put rubber bands or tape around the weight to form a ball which aids the flight and direction of the flag when it is thrown. Do not use a flag with a metal clip. The flags may be carried in the belt or in pockets. Wherever it is carried, as little of the flag as possible should be visible so the official doesn't appear flag-happy. It is preferable to have the exposed ball black color.

At least one bean bag to mark selected spots (see the chapter entitled "Use of the Bean bag"). Bean bags should be white, black or blue and worn in the belt. All members of the crew should use like-colored bean bags, except the Back Judge shall carry two different color bean bags; one for marking the end of the kick and one for marking first touching.

An information card (to record timeouts, captains, etc.) and a writing utensil.

A wristband, rubber band or other device to keep track of downs. The Umpire should use two elastic bands – one for keeping track of downs and the other to track ball position (see the chapter entitled "Ball Handling").

**Other Accessories:** Gloves, when worn, must be black. The Referee will have a coin. The Linesman shall have two clips that are used on the chain to aid in measurements and setting the box after the first and third quarters (see the chapter entitled "Chain Crew").

The Umpire should bring a white or black towel to use on the field if necessary. In some instances, host schools are not prepared to provide one.

The Back Judge should have a timing device which can be discreetly monitored. A wrist watch is not suitable for varsity games because it diverts attention from the Back Judge's normal duties.



## CHAPTER 4

# PREGAME MEETING

A thorough pre-game meeting is a necessity and an important ingredient of success. If you can talk about it before it happens on the field, you're better prepared to deal with it.

It is suggested the pregame meeting begin after all officials are dressed, no later than 60 minutes before the scheduled kickoff. A pregame crew meeting is mandatory at all levels of play.

An example outline for a pregame meeting is included in Appendix A. There are many different ways to conduct the pregame meeting. However, these topics should regularly be included:

### **Rule Changes/Major Differences**

Cover recent rule changes, especially in the beginning of the season when the rules and interpretations may still be a bit unclear. Cover major rule differences when you work different levels of play (example: A-8, A-6 or 7-person mechanics).

### **Game Tendencies**

If you know of some team history that may affect the game, discuss it. For example, if the two teams were involved in a fight the last time they met, you may want to talk about those ramifications on the game and the players' and coaches' attitudes.

Officials should share knowledge or past experience about the team's offense and defense tendencies, special plays, players with exceptional abilities (such as long-distance kickers, strong passers etc.) acts that may challenge the rules, and things to watch in pregame warm ups.

### **Game Management Issues**

Confirm start time and synchronize watches with game clock to avoid taking the field late and complications with coin flip and kick off schedules. Discuss halftime duration or special events during halftime (such as home coming).

Review Mercy Rule impacts to game clock. If the weather is threatening, discuss how the crew will handle a suspension of play due to lightning.

Review who on the host staff will monitor lightning and how they will communicate with the crew. (See the chapter entitled "Game Management").

### **Special Coverage**

Discuss what to do in the event of hurry-up offense, obvious outside kick situation, the positioning of the wings on tries and field goals, etc. The crew should also decide how it will handle fights or similar altercations.

### Crew Communications

Go over signals used to communicate between officials (receivers on or off the line, “two sticks” for a first down, “clock stops” after fourth down etc.). Review which crew members are responsible for counting players and the signals that will be used to indicate a team has enough or too few players. Remind officials who are sharing coverage to make eye contact and to practice good dead-ball officiating. Punts that go out of bounds in flight require coordination via hand signals. Discuss what to do in the event the Referee does not have the out of bounds spot.

### Reporting Fouls to the Referee

The Referee should tell crew members how he wants fouls reported to him. Does he want the official to identify the offending team by team name or by referring to them as offense and defense? Remind officials to give the number of the fouling player and to indicate the status of the ball at the time of the foul (loose ball, dead ball, etc.) and the result of the play (incomplete pass, kick was good, etc.).

Remind wing officials they are to tell the coach who committed the foul, the nature of the infraction and any special enforcement (loss of down, quarter extended for an untimed down, etc.).

### Timeout Responsibilities

Review timing the timeout, the necessary communication, and where officials are positioned during the timeout. Review telling the coach how many timeouts each team has remaining. The coach should be told how many timeouts each team has left after every charged team timeout. The Referee must inform the head coach, in the presence of the wing official, when all timeouts are used.

The Referee should remind the crew that if an official coach-Referee conference is requested, the Referee must have the wing official on that coach’s side on hand to monitor the conversation.

### Bench Decorum

Make sure that the officials involved have the same expectations about what conduct is out of line and what isn’t. Remind wing officials to find the “get back” coach, the assistant who will help keep players and team personnel out of the restricted area. Always remember, allowing poor sideline behavior creates a perpetual problem for next week’s wing official. Addressing problems early in the game/year can have a big impact later.

### Injured Officials

Discuss how the crew will adjust assignments if an official is injured or becomes too ill to work. Which officials will move where is up to the crew. A 4-person crew will work without a Line Judge and a 5-person crew will work without a Back Judge when a crewmate is ill or injured.

### Cover the Mechanics Manual items identified as “Optional”

1. Bump (Push) or Jump – On obvious onside kicks the Umpire may bump the Line Judge to the kicker’s line and assume the duties of the receiver’s line or he may jump over the LJ and take the kickers line. (See the diagram on “Anticipated Onside Kick Positioning” in the chapter entitled “Positioning and Coverage – Free Kicks”).

2. BJ position when ball is snapped between Team B’s 15- and 10-yard lines. (See the diagram on “Goal Line Plays: Offense Going In, Snap is Between the B-15 and B-10” in the chapter entitled “Positioning and Coverage – Scrimmage Plays”).

3. Having wing official attend pregame meeting with head coach. (See the section on “Meeting with Coaches” in the chapter entitled “On-Field Pregame Duties and Responsibilities”).

4. Swinging gate positioning. (See the section on “Swinging Gate Formation Positioning” in the chapter entitled “Positioning and Coverage – Scoring Kick Plays”).

**Position Coordination**

During the pregame meeting there should be dialog between certain officials which work directly with one another in addition to the routine pregame discussions.

**Referee-Umpire.** Cover counting the offense and communicating the count. Spotting the ball and how the Referee will release the Umpire before the RFP whistle. Explain how the release will be communicated when the offense is on the ball ready to snap. What will be done differently in the hurry-up offense? Review the communications and procedures that will occur when enforcing a penalty.

**Referee-Wings.** Review how a short count (10 or less) of the offense will be communicated. End of play communication as to whether the ball became dead in or out of bound. Review signals/communications when a five-yard penalty on the defense will result in a first down. What cues the flip of the down marker and the release of the chain crew after punts and long plays? Review the procedure at the end of the first and third quarters.

**Referee-Back Judge.** Discuss how tight delay of game will be called and how it will be communicated.

**Umpire-Wings.** The most important communication which takes place between these officials is getting the forward progress spot. Discuss the situations in which cross field mechanics will be utilized and how that will be communicated. The Umpire can remind wings that he will only assist wings in locating the ball at the goal line if in a pile otherwise no communication will be provided. Review assistance needed on line of scrimmage coverage on pass plays regarding ineligible behind the Umpire and screen passes that go beyond the line of scrimmage.

**Linesman-Line Judge.** Signaling whether the nearest player is on or off the line must be accomplished on every scrimmage play. The wing from which a player in motion is moving away has responsibility for ruling on the legality of the motion. Are any other keys changed? Quick passes to the flank: Review who has forward or backward; no signal will be used. Review penalty procedures including obtaining nature of all fouls, then reporting back to respective coaches.

**Wings-Back Judge.** Review the goal post procedure on kick tries and field goals and who has the whistle and over/under. Signaling must be synchronized. Communication on double flags for pass interference must be discussed. What if one official passes on the interference? Discuss coverage on a punt. Discuss counting the defense and signaling the count.

## CHAPTER 5

# ON-FIELD PREGAME DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The crew must take the field together in uniform no later than 30 minutes before kickoff. If one or both teams is known to prefer to return to the locker room before the kickoff, one or more officials may take the field earlier.

The Back Judge and Referee must meet with the game clock operator on the field about 15 minutes before game time (see the chapter entitled “Game Timing”).

### Meeting with Coaches

The meeting with each of the head coaches takes place on the field, out of the way of players. It is best to meet with the home coach first as he may have information about pregame ceremonies that must be relayed to the visiting coach.

The meeting should begin with the officials introducing themselves and getting the coach’s name. He should only be referred to as “Coach Xxxx.”

Smile! There is nothing worse than an official who won’t smile, laugh, or show a human side. Have a little fun

while being out there. Let him know you appreciate being asked to work his game and to be there; show that you enjoy being there. Be excited. If you treat it like a burden you have to get through, that’s exactly what it will become.

The coach must be given a card listing names of crew members; a plain 3 x 5 card will suffice.

The Referee shall decide which officials will attend the meeting, but at least one other official, preferably the umpire or the appropriate wing official must be present. No more than three officials should meet with any one coach.

If the Umpire does not attend the meeting, he should utilize that time to check player equipment. The coach must be asked if all players are properly equipped and if there are players with protective guards, casts, braces, etc. that need to be inspected. The name of the “get-back coach” should be obtained and a brief discussion of sideline control and

expectations held.

Some crews may prefer to obtain the captains' numbers and names. If an official wishes to speak to a captain during the game, perhaps to seek his help in calming an angry teammate, the captain will respond better if he is called by name rather than number. Also, the Referee should ask if the quarterback is right-handed or left-handed and if the place kicker is right-footed or left-footed.

The Referee should ask to see the footballs that are to be used and, along with the Umpire and Back Judge, inspect and approve them so the Back Judge recognizes legal balls when placed under the upright. The coach should be asked if the team plans on using any unique formations or trick plays. Foreknowledge helps the crew be prepared for such instances and increases the chances the play will be officiated correctly. Avoid conversations about "what the other team does."

The coach should be reminded that he (not an assistant coach) may leave the team box to call a timeout as long as he remains off the playing field. This may be necessary when the ball is snapped near the goal line.

The presence of medical staff should be ascertained. If possible, meet with the trainer and make introductions and ask where they will be located during the contest. Also, the Referee should inquire about the lightning detector and how communication will be handled.

The captains should be requested to be on the sideline ready for the coin toss at five minutes remaining on the game clock.

Inquiries regarding any special pregame ceremony or extended Halftime should be made. If so, the Referee should make sure the visiting coach is aware of those events.

### **Preliminaries**

After the meeting with both coaches,

there should be at least 15 minutes to check the field and observe the teams. Officials' duties are as follows:

All officials should inspect the field. Wings should walk down the sidelines and along each end line. If potholes, broken glass or other hazards are discovered, game management should be asked to have the problem taken care of immediately. If the field is marked for another sport (many football fields are also used for soccer), make sure the crew knows which lines are being used for football. Make sure the goal posts are straight and free of decoration and the goal post pads are securely fastened. Check the pylons to ensure they are properly placed. The Referee and Umpire should spot check players. Make a casual visual inspection of players as they warm up. Look for tinted eye shields, knotted jerseys and other uniform-related violations. Ask the head coach to have the players make the necessary corrections.

All officials should spend some time warming up. Run from point to point as the pregame checks are done. Run down to those pylons and then run to check the other end zone. It's a great way to warm up and will show the officials are ready to go. There is only one opportunity to make a first impression. If calisthenics or stretching is necessary they should be performed out of bounds near the end zone.

Casually observe both teams for information that will be helpful during the game. Watch both teams without giving the appearance they are being inspected. Pay attention to player actions similar to those that will be seen during the game. Players play the way they practice. Things to look for include:

- How strong are the punter's and kicker's legs?
- How is the wind affecting kicks? How does the kicked ball spin?
- Does he tend to slice it?

- How does the team line up?
- Do they rush the snap after getting set?
  - What blocking techniques are used?
  - Do the linemen block low?
  - Is the tight end and/or slot back in the free blocking zone?
  - Is the offensive line split or unbalanced?
  - Do they use a double wide, a slot or trips?
    - What patterns do the receivers run?
    - On defense, do linebackers line up tight enough to be in the free blocking zone at the snap?
    - How does the defensive line pass rush?

The Linesman must inspect the box and chains and meet with chain crew (see the chapter entitled “Chain Crew”). The Linesman and Line Judge should learn the names of ball persons and brief them (see the chapter entitled “Ball Handling”).

Avoid using pregame time for nonessential chat with players, coaches, spectators or others, especially if it could give the appearance of favoritism.

### When Duties are Completed

The crew should meet to share the information gleaned while the teams were warming up. Avoid a mid-field gathering that may interfere with pregame ceremonies and focus undue attention to the officials. Even if discussions are productive, this may give the impression that the officials are goofing off. Discussions can wait until teams go back into the locker room or they **finish** their pregame warm-ups.

Discuss unusual plays or formations either team may have either that were observed or mentioned by the coaches.

If both teams return to the locker room, it is permissible for the officials to also return, but they must be on the field no later than seven minutes prior to the kickoff. If necessary, the Back Judge and Line Judge should get their captains from their locker rooms in time for the

coin toss.

### National Anthem

During the playing of the National Anthem, it's important to project an image that commands respect once the game begins. Officials should stand at the **50-yard line** with their heads erect, facing the flag (not lowered facing the ground), hat held over the heart and there should be absolutely no talking, laughing, spitting or chewing during the playing of the Anthem.

# CHAPTER 6

# CHAIN CREW

## Before the Game

It is important for the Linesman to have a thorough pregame meeting with the chain crew. He should introduce himself to the entire crew, thank them for their participation, get their names and write them on his game card. A complete review of responsibilities should be conducted with the chain crew and box man. Officials will often encounter a chain crew that “has been doing this for 30 years” and needs no instruction. In those cases, the Linesman can remind the chain crew that not all crews do things the exact same way, thus creating the need for the meeting. Request they please bear with you while the required instructions are reviewed.

A 4-person chain crew is preferable. If the crew consists of only three members, the person working the down marker or “box” can perform most of the duties involving the clip while the trail chain holder temporarily holds the box. It is recommended that the members of the crew wear distinctive vests or jackets furnished by home or game management. No one on the chain crew should double as a ball person or any other function.

The chain crew is part of the officiating crew and must remain impartial. If they are dressed in home team garb, not much can be done

about it, but they should not be allowed to cheer or criticize the officials and must refrain from remarks relating to players and coaches and expressing opinions concerning any ruling or calls made by the officials. They are not to communicate with the visiting team and may not use cell phones or other electronic devices. That will avoid the impression that they are communicating information to the home team.

Any problems or situations the chain crew encounters while performing their job is to be brought to the Linesman’s attention. Remind them that is your responsibility to resolve the situation, not theirs. If members of the chain crew are unable/unwilling to perform their duties, inform the Referee and the home team coach/athletic director.

## Inspection

The chain should be taped at its midpoint. The tape helps determine if Team A will achieve a first down on a 5-yard penalty, thus precluding the need for a measurement. For instance, if the box is three links behind the tape and Team B is flagged for a 5-yard penalty, the Linesman can check the tape and tell the Referee, “They’ll still be short.” Conversely, if the box is slightly beyond the tape, the Linesman can tell the Referee, “It will be first down” or “5 will get you one.” If, during his pregame

inspection of the chains, the Linesman sees there is no tape on the chain, he should ask a trainer or team manager for a strip of tape about six inches long. The chain is folded in half and the tape wound around the links at the halfway mark.

Ensure the stakes are equipped with safe, flat bottoms and check that the down box to confirm it operates correctly. Next the chain must be checked for length and integrity and that it is securely attached to the stakes and is free of kinks. The best place to check the length is between the 20- and 30-yard lines; that's where the ball will be placed after a touchback. If the chain is too long, the ball could be spotted beyond the 30-yard line and appear to be short of a first down. Both ends of the field should be checked. The examination may also reveal that the lines are not properly placed. Any corrections that are possible should be made.

### Auxiliary Equipment

The Linesman should carry a plastic zip tie to repair chain breaks and provide two clips for the clip man. Provide a spare beanbag to the box man for first and goal situations (see below).

### Procedures

For kickoffs, the chain crew should be positioned well out of bounds near the receiving team's 30-yard line. For a free kick after a safety, the 50-yard line is appropriate.

When a first down is declared, the Linesman goes to the sideline and marks the spot for the down marker holder with his downfield heel. The chains are then set according to the position of the box.

The chain is clipped along the sideline before it is moved off the sideline. Do not "eyeball" the intersecting yard line from two yards off the sideline.

The clip is placed at the rearmost edge (see PlayPic) of the rearmost five

yard line, the yard line is set on the clip and the clip is never removed until the stakes are in a new position. The clip is



a safety valve. If the chains are moved either in error or for safety reasons, the clip provides the exact chain location.

Once the clip is set, the box is moved six feet away from the sideline. The six-foot spacing allows the chain crew some cushion. The trail stake goes immediately behind the box so the officials' view of the box is not obstructed. The lead stake holder is responsible to ensure the chain is taut at all times. When the trail stake is set behind the box, the trail stake holder should step firmly on the chain; that ensures the chain will be taut and that the trail stake will not be displaced when the lead stake is pulled.

On long gains or after a change of possession, the Linesman shall wait for the Referee's signal before directing the chains to move.

The chain crew should not be allowed to slow the pace of play. If the chain crew is not ready when the Umpire has spotted the ball, the Linesman should drop a bean bag for the box man and play should proceed.

All spots are taken from the forward point of the ball. The box holder is not to change the down or move the box until the Linesman echoes the Referee's announcement of the next down. The box holder should repeat the number on



the box when it is changed, “I’ve got one on the box.” Let the box holder know what signals will be used to tell the crew to stay put and to move. Many linesmen use the “stop” signal (arm outstretched, palm up and facing the chain crew) to indicate stay put and a beckoning motion of the hand or arm as the signal to move. A waving signal may be used to move the entire crew for a new series.

It is helpful if the box man is the first chain crew member at the new spot to assist with setting the chains. When he reaches the new spot he shall change the down on the box (old spot old down, new spot new down). A good technique is to have the box man echo the down after he relocates the box. This will let be known he has relocated and has the proper down shown on the box without the Linesman needing to look. The Linesman should avoid looking at the box while players are moving into position.

Should the crew see a flag on the play, it is their job to hold their position regardless of any signal for them to move. If the Linesman tells the crew to move, not seeing that a penalty marker is down, the crew should not hesitate to point out the flag to the Linesman.

Whenever the line-to-gain becomes the goal line, only the box man is required. The Linesman should provide a bean bag to the box man to be placed at the spot for reference in the event the box is removed. The chains are no longer needed and are to be laid down safely out of the way. On free kicks, the box and chains are not used. The chain crew should position themselves well out of bounds near the receiving team’s 30-yard line.

Safety is paramount. If players approach, the chain crew must retreat and drop the equipment. That protects the players and the chain crew. The decision needs to be made early to reduce the possibility of injury. The chains and box are not to be carried away; they are to be dropped.

## Measurements

The role of the chain crew during a measurement is covered in the “Measurements” chapter.

## End of Quarter

At the end of the first and third quarters, the chains need to be moved to the opposite end of the field. All officials record the down, distance and clip position. The Linesman uses a second clip to place on the chain where the box is. This can only be done when there are less than ten yards to go. He then grabs the chain with one hand on both sides of the clip, asks the stake holders to rotate so they are opposite of where they were when the quarter ended and then jog to the corresponding yard line on the other end of the field. It is recommended the Linesman grabs the clip while facing away from the field. That will serve as a double check on the rotation of the stakes as that will leave the Linesman facing the field.

The chain crew may run onto the field between the sideline and the numbers and should not snake through the players and coaches. To insure that the chains are reversed, the Linesman stands with his back to the field of play when first grasping the clip. When placing the clip at the new spot, he stands facing the field.

The Linesman places the clip on the ground at the appropriate line, then asks both stakeholders to pull the ends taut. The box is placed once the Umpire has set the ball. The Line Judge confirms the correct ball position with the Umpire before he spots the ball.

If the quarter ends on a play which results in a first down, the chains and clip may be set before the sides of the field are switched. In most cases the box can be moved to the new spot and the chains and clip set accordingly.

# CHAPTER 7

# MEASUREMENTS

Although the Referee is the final determiner of whether or not the offense has achieved a first down, reaching the correct decision requires a coordinated crew effort and the cooperation of the chain crew.

## When to Measure

The vast majority of first downs can be visually determined. If there is any question as to whether the ball is over or short of the lead stake, a measurement should be conducted as described below. If the Referee decides not to measure, the coach can request a measurement prior to the ball being marked ready-for-play, but if the ball is obviously short of the line-to-gain the request can be denied. Care must be taken to not unnecessarily antagonize a coach by refusing to measure. In some cases the measurement can be conducted in less time than it would take to explain to a coach a measurement is not necessary.

Additionally, there may be situations where the answer is obvious to the crew, but it makes sense to measure to convince the coaches and players the game is being called correctly; that will serve to head off a protest. Those situations are the so-called “political measurements.” The first situation is when the ball is close to the stake after a fourth down play. That decision will determine which team will next snap

the ball. The other situation is when the ball is obviously short of the stake after a third down play, but a measurement will let the coach know exactly how short the ball is and assist his decision to either punt or run a play.

When it is necessary to measure for a first down depends in part on how well the field is marked. Grass fields are often irregularly marked and by rule, need only have five yard lines. There is no requirement to have one-yard lines near the sidelines and hash marks. Consequently, officials will need to measure more often on a grass field than on an artificial turf field. Additionally, proper ball placement can serve to reduce the need for measurement. See the chapter entitled “Ball Handling” for a discussion of starting a series on a “whole yard line.”

## Procedure

If the ball has become dead close to the line-to-gain, the covering wing official should first ensure the clock is stopped and then pinch-in all the way to the ball. The retrieving official will hand him the ball which will then be placed by the covering official at the dead-ball spot. The ball should never be thrown to the covering wing official. Directly handing the ball will ensure the ball is not mishandled causing uncertainty in the covering official's spot.

When the Referee signals for a measurement, the Line Judge should place a bean bag or his foot at the intersection of the five-yard line where the chain is clipped and a line through the ball parallel to the sideline. This is the spot where the Linesman will place the clipped chain; the bean bag enables the Linesman to go directly to the spot with certainty. If the measurement occurs in the side zone, the Line Judge will then obtain a ball from the nearest ball person for use in relocating the ball to the hash in the event the line-to-gain was not achieved.

At the sideline, before the chains are brought in and if there are no flags, the Linesman will have the box man move the box behind the lead stake leaving the previous down showing on the box. That is a reference point in case the line-to-gain should somehow become lost during the process. If there is a flag down, the box man will leave the previous down showing and remain at the previous spot.

The Linesman then goes to the clip and checks to see it is correct. If not, the clip is reset before the chains are moved. Putting one hand on the links on each side of the clip improves the Linesman's chances of keeping track of the proper link in case the clip falls off the chain. At the Linesman's direction, the chain crew will move onto the field. When they reach the other officials, the person with the lead stake will hand it to the Umpire.

The Line Judge should keep all players away from the measurement area. The Linesman places the clip on the rear most edge of the yard line and declares that he is ready for the measurement. The Linesman then states what the next down of the series will be if it is short. (Example: "It will either be first or fourth").

The Back Judge holds the ball, positioning himself outside of the forward stake with his rear end toward the goal line to which the offense is



advancing. He does not let go of the ball until the measurement is totally finished. Once the Linesman tells the Referee he has the chain on the proper mark, the Line Judge should step on the chain to prevent any movement when the Umpire stretches the chain. The Umpire will ensure the chain is stretched tight with the lead stake vertical and about 12 inches off the ground opposite the press box side of the football in full view from the press box. The Referee should be in a position to avoid blocking the view of the press box.

After the front stake is placed on the ground, the Referee rules whether or not the ball is beyond the front stake. The Back Judge shall communicate the clock status to the Umpire and Referee.

### Short of a First Down

The Referee uses his hands (or thumb and index finger if the ball is inches short of the front stake) to inform both benches how short the play ended of a first down (see PlayPic).

### Short of the First Down in the Side Zone

If the measurement is in a side zone and does not result in a first down, the Umpire should keep control of the stake until the new ball is placed by the

Referee at the hash mark. The Back Judge continues to hold the old ball in place. The Referee grasps the chain at the link in front of the ball and rises. The Referee should grasp the link that will be used to place the ball with one hand and hold the ball with the other hand; that will ensure the proper link is maintained.

The Referee, Umpire, Line Judge and Linesman walk to the nearest hash mark. The Line Judge then hands the Referee the ball (see Extra Ball paragraph below), who then places the ball at the proper spot. Once the ball is placed, the Back Judge may remove the ball that was used in the measurement and return it to the ball person.

When the measurement is over, the Umpire will hand the stake back to the chain crew member. The Linesman must hold the clip as he and the chain crew return to the sideline. The Linesman will reset the clip at the appropriate yard line. The Referee must wait for the Linesman'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. 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.

### **Extra Ball**

Depending on which team has the ball, and on which team's sideline the measurement is nearest, the Line Judge can obtain another game ball from the ball person. If the offensive team's sideline is the closest, a new ball can be obtained and put in play. If the defensive team's sideline is the closest, the original ball will be kept in play, but a new ball can be obtained and put in the place of the original ball if the ball will be re-spotted at the hash mark.

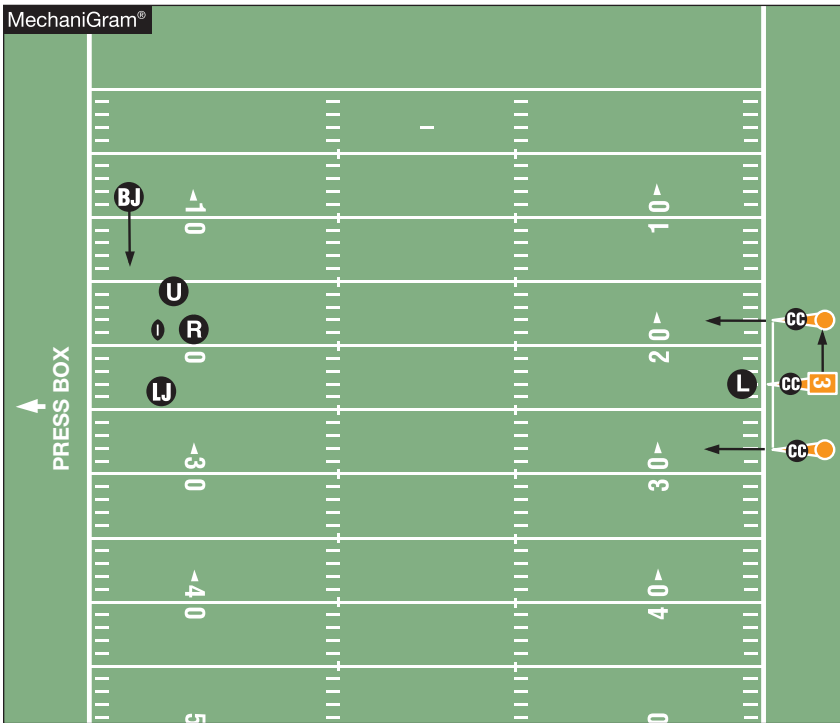
### **First Down**

If the measurement results in the award of a new series, the Referee signals the first down. The Linesman not need to hold the chain as he accompanies the chain crew back to the sideline, but he must go all the way to the sideline and indicate to the chain crew where the new series will begin. If the measurement occurred in a side zone, the Back Judge will remain with the ball on the ground to ensure the ball is spotted properly for the next play. The Referee must wait for the Linesman and chain crew to be back in position before giving the ready-for-play signal.

### **End of Quarter**

If necessary, the chains can be used to re-spot the ball at the end of a quarter.

## MEASUREMENT IN SIDE ZONE OPPOSITE THE CHAINS



**Action on the field:** Play ends in side zone close to a first down.

**Referee:** Stops clock (if not already stopped) after seeing that measurement is necessary. Waits at spot for arrival of chain crew.

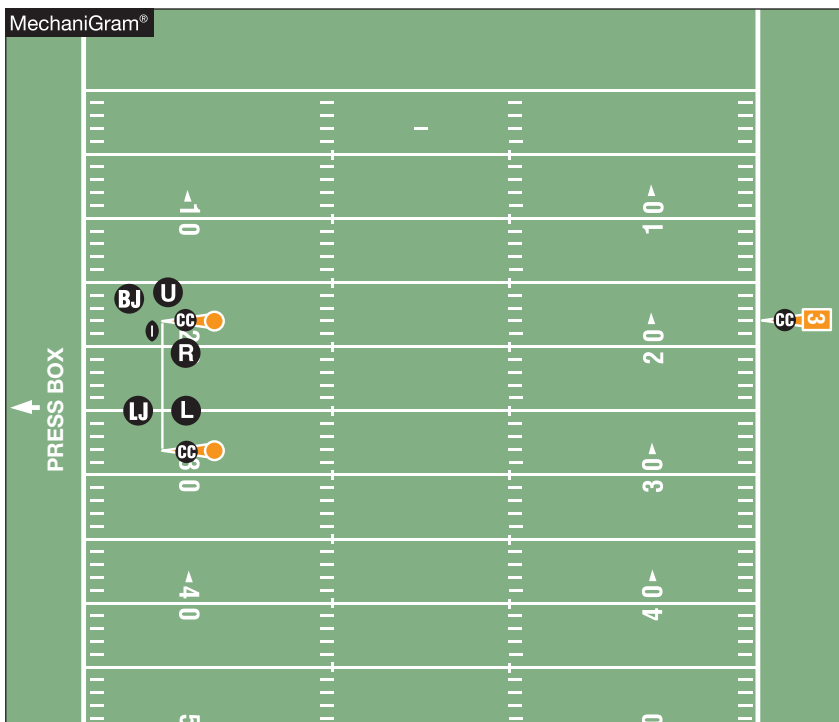
**Umpire:** Stands near ball and waits at spot for arrival of chain crew.

**Linesman:** Has box holder move box behind lead stake, leaving box showing previous down. Brings chain in from sideline with chain crew members to spot indicated by Line Judge. Declares the next down will be either first or the next down.

**Line Judge:** Moves players away from measurement area. Indicates intersection of the five-yard line where chain is clipped and line through ball parallel to sideline with bean bag or foot. Locates ball person for new ball.

**Back Judge:** Moves to spot to hold ball in place on ground with body outside of the chain and rear end toward Team B's end zone.

## SHORT OF A FIRST DOWN - PART 1



**Action on the field:** Team A is short of a first down.

**Referee:** Rules whether or not ball is beyond front stake. Uses hands or fingers to inform both benches how short the play ended of first down. First signals to the press box and then turns and signals to the opposite sideline.

**Umpire:** Holds lead stake vertical.

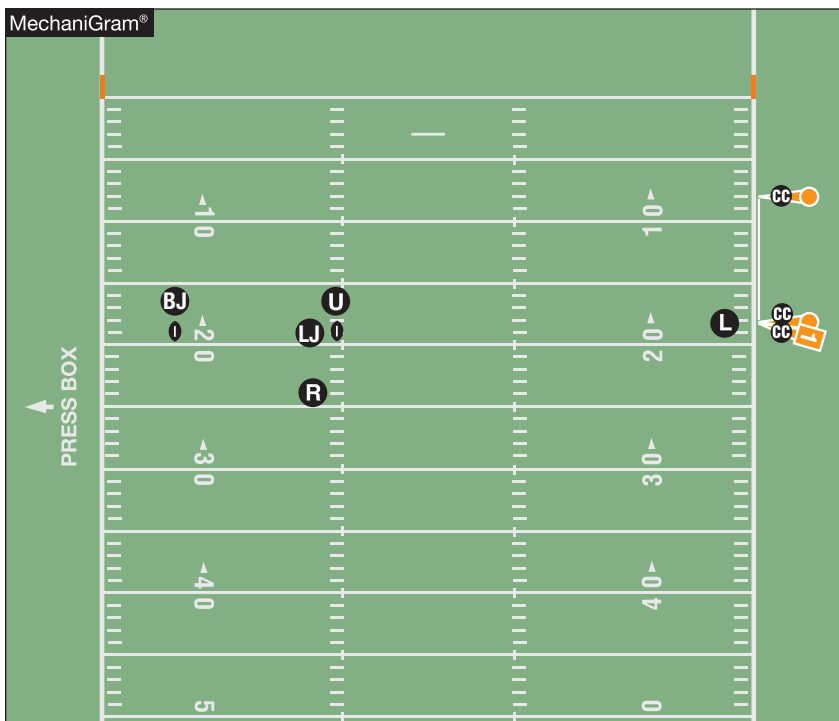
**Linesman:** Holds chain in place.

**Line Judge:** Gets spare ball from ball person.

**Back Judge:** Holds ball in place on ground.



## TEAM A AWARDED A FIRST DOWN



**Action on the field:** Team A is awarded a new series.

**Referee:** Signals first down. Waits for Linesman's signal that chain crew is back in position and other officials are ready before giving ready-for-play signal.

**Umpire:** Moves to hash mark where ball will next be snapped. Gets ball from Line Judge and places it.

**Linesman:** Returns to sideline with chain crew and indicates where new series will begin.

**Line Judge:** Delivers ball to Umpire for placement.

**Back Judge:** Holds ball in place on ground until the Umpire sets the new ball. Declares the status of the clock.



# CHAPTER 8

# GAME TIMING

Correct timing of the game is the responsibility of every official. Each official has responsibilities for stopping the clock as well as keeping it running. These responsibilities must remain consistent. All officials must know the clock status. The Line Judge must know the time remaining in the game on every play.

The Line Judge must have a watch capable of properly timing the entire game in the event the game clock malfunctions. At the end of every play, the Line Judge (the Back Judge is the back-up) must ensure the clock is continuing to run or is stopped based on the result of the just completed play.

It is important to understand the game clock either starts when the Referee gives the appropriate signal or on the snap. However, the game stops by rule and the game clock operator should not wait for a signal if he is certain the game clock is to be stopped.

## Before the Game

The official in charge of timing – the Back Judge in a 5-person crew and the Line Judge in a 4-person crew – should meet with the timer, record his name on his game card and synchronize watches. The first task is to set and begin pregame countdown, so the clock hits 0:00 at game time. A complete review of the timing instructions provided in Appendix B should be conducted.

The following points should be

emphasized:

- Situations and signals that start and stop the clock.
- Confirm the automatic horn is turned off.
- Procedure for resetting the clock, and if it can be reset to an exact time.
- Review Mercy Rule clock procedures (see the chapter entitled “State Association Adoptions for Colorado”).
- Halftime: Start halftime clock on signal. Start the three minute warm-up clock immediately after the halftime clock expires.
- Overtime: A three-minute intermission shall be placed on the clock. The clock will remain at zero for the remainder of the overtime periods.

There are helpful hints for dealing with experienced timers at the end of this chapter.

## Game Procedures

The Referee should consider facing the press box when starting the clock; that allows him to turn his head 90 degrees to check to see that the clock started.

The official facing the clock at the end of a quarter – Referee or Back Judge – is responsible for ensuring a play does not begin if time expires before the ball is live.

It is also important for the Referee to inform the quarterback of the game clock when the ready for play is

whistled within the final 25/40 seconds of the quarter. This will allow the quarterback the option to snap the ball or end the quarter without a snap.

**End of Half**

During the last two minutes of either half, when the clock is running and a foul occurs, the offended team has the option to have the game clock started on the snap if the penalty is accepted. That should be treated the same as any other penalty option and in almost all cases, the Referee should not need to consult with the coach; the wing official should keep the coach apprised. If the offended team is ahead in the score, starting the clock on the ready is their best option; if the offended team is behind, they would want the clock to start on the snap.

The time remaining becomes a very precious commodity near the end of either half. Officials must be diligent to ensure that neither team receives an unfair time advantage. For field goals, do not stop play to allow a wing to get in position. That means the Back Judge may have to rule on a field goal alone if one of the wings is surprised and may not be able to get in position in time.

If the game clock is stopped and will start on the Referee’s signal:

- With at least three (3.0) full seconds remaining, the offense may reasonably expect to spike the ball and have time for another play.
- With less than three (3.0) seconds remaining (2.9 or less), but at least one full (1) second remaining, there is only enough time for one play.
- With less than a full (1.0) second remaining (0.9 or less), there is not enough time for another play. The team should be allowed to attempt to snap the ball and then be told that time expired before the snap.

If the game clock is running and the ball is snapped:

- With at least two (2.0) full seconds remaining, the offense may reasonably expect to spike the ball and have time for another play.

- With less two (2.0) seconds remaining (1.9 or less) when the ball is snapped, there is only enough time for one play.

If the game clock is stopped and will start on the snap, there is enough time for another play if there is any time remaining.

The halftime intermission will start on the Back Judge’s signal which is given after the players leave the field. The clock operator will reset the clock to three minutes for the warm-up period immediately when the halftime expires and start it. Intermission procedures are further discussed in the chapter entitled “Intermissions.”

**Halftime Intermission**

Make sure the timer understands the length of the halftime intermission and that the countdown should not be started until the Back Judge so signals.

If both teams return to the field early, the Back Judge may signal to the timer (Crew Signal L in the chapter entitled “Signaling”) to reset the clock to the 3:00 warmup. The halftime intermission cannot be shortened to less than 10 minutes, but that is an unlikely scenario.

Otherwise, once the halftime intermission expires, the 3:00 warmup should be set and started as soon as feasible without any signal. If a team is late returning to the field, there is no change to the preceding procedure and the team is not given additional time to warm up.

**Clock Adjustments**

Game Clock - 5/5 axiom: In order to adjust game clock errors, there must be more than a 5-second differential if there is more than five minutes remaining in either half.

All timing errors shall be corrected when the game clock is under five minutes. The clock operator’s lag time to react to a timeout signal can be corrected in the last two minutes of either half. There is additional information on the handling of the clock for timeouts in the chapter entitled “Timeouts.”

To have the game clock adjusted, the

Referee should face the press box and use the clock reset signal (Crew Signal L in the chapter entitled "Signaling"). He may then use his fingers to signal the corrected time or otherwise communicate that to the clock operator with the assistance of the coaches.

If the game clock does not start on a kickoff with a typical run back, the median clock adjustment is seven seconds. More or less time can be adjusted based on the Referee's discretion.

On field goal attempts, the typical time utilized is three to five seconds depending on the length of the kick. Anything within that range does not need to be corrected.

**Play Clock**

The Back Judge is responsible for the play clock count. In most games, there will not be a visible play clock. When there is a visible play clock, it may be either controlled in the press box by a play clock operator or it may be controlled on the field by the Back Judge using an electronic device.

When there is a separate play clock operator, the Back Judge should conduct a complete review of the timing instructions provided in Appendix C.

Regardless of who controls the play clock, the Referee should make eye contact with the Back Judge when he blows the ready for a 25-second count.

**Play Clock Count**

When there is no visible play clock, the Back Judge will signal a countdown as follows. With 10 seconds remaining in the count, the Back Judge shall raise an arm and keep it raised for five seconds at which time he shall count down the remaining five seconds by extending the same arm diagonally upward at 45 degrees. Remember, once the hand goes up, the last five seconds are locked. When the count expires, look at the ball before throwing the flag. If the snap is in process, do not call delay of game. If a foul is called, do not run to the Referee to report a delay penalty, simply give the "delay" signal from your downfield position. When there is a visible play clock, the Back Judge will not use the preceding mechanic. To do so will confuse the coaches and players as to which is the official count.

**Scenarios**

The following table shows all the scenarios for determining whether a 40- or 25-second play clock is to be used.

Event*	Play Clock Starts at	Game Clock Starts on	Covering Official's Signal #	Referee's Signal
Dead ball inbounds	40	Running	S7	None
Dead ball out of bounds	40	Snap	S3	None
Incomplete pass	40	Snap	S10	None
Team A awarded 1st down (no measurement or other delay)	40	Signal	S3	Wind
Team A foul	25	Varies*^	S3	Wind

Chart continued on next page

Chart continued from previous page

Team B foul (HEFID 40)	40	Varies*^	S3	Wind
Charged team timeout	25	Snap	S3	Chop
Helmet off/ Equipment Issue/Injury – Team A	25	Ready	S3	Wind
Helmet off/ Equipment Issue/Injury – Team B (HEFID 40)	40	Ready	S3	Wind
Measurement (or other delay in determining a first down)	25	Ready	S3	Wind
Double Change of possession (excluding kicks) - Team A snaps	40	Ready	Event*	Wind
Change of possession- Team B snaps	25	Snap	Event*	Chop
Touchdown	25	N/A	Event*	Chop
Try, FG, Safety	25	Varies**	Event*	Chop
Start of each period	25	Snap	Event*	Chop
Legal kick when new series is awarded	25	Snap	Event*	Chop
Start of an overtime period	25	N/A	Event*	Chop
Other administrative stoppage ***	25	Ready	Event*	Wind

\* If event does not occur in conjunction with any other event that stops the clock.

\*\* The game clock will start by rule on the free kick.

\*\*\* Includes inadvertent whistle and period extension.

^ Offended team option if under 2 min of either half.

# S3 is stop the clock, S7 is “dead ball - start play clock,” S10 is incomplete pass.

**Notes:**

1. If B intercepts then fumbles and A recovers, it is a 40-second play clock.
2. On a 4th down fake punt, if A is short of line-to-gain, it is a 25-second play clock because B snaps next.
3. On a 4th down fake punt, if A makes the line-to-gain, it is a 40-second play clock; same as any other first down for A.

Starting the play clock. The covering official's signal will designate when to start the play clock. When the ball is declared dead, the play clock starts when the following signals are given (only one signal is used):

- The dead ball signal (S7) to indicate the play has ended inbounds. The covering official will raise his arm straight up for two seconds.
- The start-the-clock signal (S2) to indicate the play has ended inbounds near the sideline.
- The stop-the-clock signal (S3) to indicate the play has ended out of bounds.
- The incomplete pass signal (S10).

After an official's timeout, the following occurrences by the defense result in a ready-for-play with a 40-second play clock. The Referee should precede the ready-for-play signal with Crew Signal "L" (two hands). The following acronym may be helpful: HEFID 40:

- H. . . . . Helmet off
- E. . . . . Equipment repair
- F. . . . . Foul
- I. . . . . Injury
- D. . . . . by the Defense

**Resetting the Play Clock**

If the play clock is interrupted, it will always be reset to 25 seconds (Crew

Signal "L" – one hand). If there is an appreciable delay in spotting the ball and the play clock is down to 20 seconds, the play clock should be reset to 25 seconds. When there is no visible play clock the Referee should approximate this interval and use his best judgment.

When in doubt, reset the play clock. The Referee will do this by stopping the game clock and signaling (Crew Signal "L" – one hand) to reset the play clock to 25 seconds. The game clock will start by rule either on the ready-for-play signal or the snap.

**Chain Crew**

When the 40-second count applies, the ball can be snapped as soon as it is spotted. That requires the "box man" to hustle to the next spot after instructed by the Linesman. If the box is not in place when the snap is imminent, the Linesman will drop a bean bag to indicate the placement of the box. Do not delay spotting the ball. Under no circumstances will the play clock be re-set to 25-seconds because of a slow chain crew.

**First Down Inbounds**

When a first down is gained and the play ends inbounds, the game clock stops to award the new series but the 40-second play clock starts when the ball becomes dead (it is not an administrative stoppage).

The Referee is responsible for starting the clock with a "silent wind" and for ensuring it starts. If the clock operator does not respond and the clock does not start until the snap, the Referee should approximate the time lost for subsequent correction, if appropriate.

What is known as A-B-A is a special case of a Team A first down. The term refers to a double change of possession with the teams possessing the ball in that order. That scenario does not occur very often and for that reason confusion may result.

The simple explanation is the game

clock and the play clock are treated the same as if Team A gained first down without any change of possession. The game clock stops and if the play ends out of bounds, the game clock will start on the snap. If the play ends inbounds, it will start on the Referee's signal. In either case, the play clock is set at 40 seconds when the ball becomes dead.

Because there is no need for massive personnel changes, play should proceed as it would after any other Team A first down, but the wing officials should remind their sideline the play clock is running.

The preceding should be distinguished from a K-R-K situation which could take place after a punt. In that scenario, a new series is awarded after a legal kick, so regardless of where the play ends, the game clock stops followed by an administrative stoppage with a 25-second play clock.

### **No Visible Game Clock**

When the field does not have a game clock, the scoreboard is not operational or has malfunctioned, or if the Referee has decided to keep the game time on the field for any reason, there will not be a visible clock.

With approximately four minutes remaining in either half, the Referee shall ensure each head coach is notified of the time remaining. It is not necessary to stop the clock for this notification, but if necessary, the clock may be stopped and started on the ready for play signal. If the mercy rule applies, or the game situation is such that the coaches do not need or want additional notifications, only the four-minute notification is necessary. Otherwise, the notification shall be repeated when there are three and two minutes remaining. With less than two minutes remaining, the time remaining shall be given to the coaches after each play.

### **Dealing with Experienced Timers**

Some game clock operators have performed their duties for many years and will immediately point it out, implying a briefing is not necessary. A discussion should still be held, but it will work best if you allow the timer to be the teacher instead of the student. Thus, if the timer says something along the lines of "You don't have to worry about me. I've been doing this for over 30 years." Your reply should be something like "Great, we should have a smooth game tonight."

The next step should be to ask the timer to tell you how he does things. If he leaves anything out, you can prod him with "How about ....?" or "What if ...?"

# CHAPTER 9

# COIN TOSS

The coin toss is the first visible and formal chance to make everyone comfortable that the game will be fairly administered. It is essential that all games start with a consistent ceremony. Some aspects can be personalized without harm, but other changes can cause problems. If the Referee conveys through his mannerisms that he doesn't know what he is doing, the next two-three hours will be rough going. Once a coach gets the idea the crew is not competent, everything the officials do will be suspect. At a minimum, the crew will be perceived to have a renegade approach to officiating.

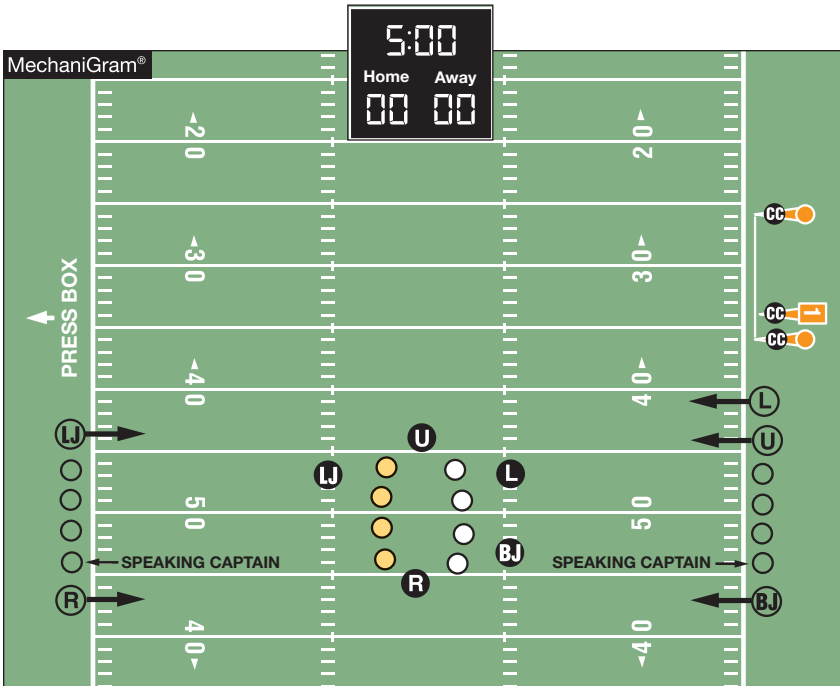
The coin toss ceremony begins with the officials escorting the team captains (maximum of four) to midfield five minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff. It is necessary to clear the field of all other team personnel as stated in the rule book. See the chapter entitled "Game Management" for when complications with other pregame ceremonies occur.

All effort should be made to complete the coin toss no later than two minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff. A ceremony that lasts more than a minute after the captains arrive at midfield means the ceremony has gone on too long.

The Umpire and Back Judge escort the captains from the sideline with the line-to-gain equipment and the Referee and Line Judge escort the captains from the opposite sideline. The Umpire and Referee meet the captains at their respective sidelines and escort them to the middle of the field, positioned so their backs are to their team's sideline. The speaking captains (those who will decide on options given to their teams) should be positioned so they are closest to the Referee when the group meets in the center of the field. The Referee will face the scoreboard during the toss.

When they reach the center of the field, the Referee and Umpire will be across from each other. The Back Judge remains on the hash mark at the 48-yard line; the Line Judge assumes a similar position on the opposite hash. The Linesman remains on his sideline to meet with the chain crew and review line-to-gain procedures and responsibilities, or he may join the crew for the coin toss at the 48-yard line opposite the Back Judge.

Players who are not involved in the coin toss must be kept completely off the field (except that at a designated senior night during the regular season, the home team's seniors may stand at the nine-yard marks during the toss).



Non player honorary personnel can be escorted to midfield. The captains are asked to introduce themselves to each other. It is recommended the Referee shake hands only with the speaking captains.

The meeting of the captains is not a forum for prolonged commentary. Virtually nothing said will be relayed to other players and by the time the ball is kicked off, the captains will have forgotten whatever wisdom was announced. Anything you say can be misconstrued or misinterpreted and the coach will probably take offense.

There is no requirement or expectation to say anything at the coin toss other than what is necessary to conduct the business at hand. If the Referee feels he has to say something, it's okay to remind captains that they are in charge of their teams and that officials may approach them on occasion for help. This may help solidify the status of captains as responsible individuals; however, it is not essential that this be said. The

following should be avoided: reviews of past games, mention of rivalries, rules discussions, "helpful" hints and warnings. Starting the game with any form of warning or admonishment is setting the wrong tone and is inappropriate.

The Referee should allow both speaking captains to view both sides of the coin, identifying which side is heads and which is tails. The visiting captain is instructed to call heads or tails before the coin is flipped. The Referee repeats the choice loud enough for all captains to hear. The coin may be caught by the Referee or allowed to hit the ground (which is recommended on artificial turf fields). If caught, it is not to be turned over. If the coin is dropped, the toss should be repeated and that should be mentioned before the flip. For any repeat of the flip, the captain will not be allowed to change his choice.

Once the winner is determined, the winner is offered the choices in the following order: defer, receive, or



defend a goal. It is not advisable to ask the captain what he wants to do without stating the choices. The order is that of the most likely selection and omits “kick.” Kick is a valid choice, but one which, most likely, will get both the captain and the officials in trouble. If the captain was told to pick “kick,” he will pick it, regardless of whether it is offered. There is no need to give him an opportunity to go astray. As a minimum, if a captain chooses to kick or defend a goal, the Referee shall ensure the implications of that choice are understood.

If the choice is to defer, the Referee immediately faces the press box, points to the shoulder of the deferring captain and signals the declination. He should then state to the deferring captain, “They want the ball. Which way do you want to kick?” If the Referee has a microphone, he will announce the deferral. That will avoid unnecessary movement and posturing later on. The remaining choices are then presented to the other captain and the final selection is made by the deferring captain. If the winner of the coin toss does not defer, no signal is immediately given.

When the final selections are made, the captains are asked to put their backs to the goal line their team will defend and the Referee gives the appropriate signal and announces it using a microphone if available. If the choice is to kick or receive, only the first selection is signaled. If the choice is to defend a goal, two signals are given. First, point both arms toward the goal line being defended. The second is the appropriate signal for the other captain, probably to receive.

If at any time during the toss the Referee errs or gives incorrect information (for instance, giving the wrong team an option), the Umpire should speak up immediately.

When the toss is completed, the other officials join the Referee and Umpire in the center of the field and record the results of the toss. All officials

simultaneously move to their kickoff positions.

### Second Half

The choices for the second half options are obtained by the Referee (in the presence of the sideline official) from the head coaches. It is best to utilize the scoreboard as reference when referring to the direction choice.

### Overtime

If overtime is necessary, the officials wait for the three-minute intermission to end. The Referee and Umpire go to their respective sidelines and once again escort the captains to the center of the field while the other officials assume the same positions as for the pregame toss. The coin toss is repeated with the visiting team again declaring heads or tails. When the winner is determined, the options are explained. The winner has three options (they may not defer): They may choose defense, offense or the end of the field which will be used.

When the selections are completed, the captains of the team on offense are asked to face the goal line in the direction their team will advance and the opposing captains stand with their backs to that goal line. The Referee then points to the shoulder of the captain of the team that won the toss and gives the first down signal in the appropriate direction.

The coin will not be tossed again, nor will the captains be brought out. All subsequent overtime series are handled the same way with the wing officials ascertaining the choice from the head coach on their sideline.

# CHAPTER 10

# BALL HANDLING

Efficient ball handling is essential to maintaining proper game flow, especially during a hurry-up offense. Retrieving the ball is never an official's first priority. The primary focus is always dead-ball officiating. Players should be utilized as much as possible to retrieve balls not readily accessible to an official. The wings must not compromise the forward progress spot to retrieve the ball.

The Back Judge is the primary handler of the ball being removed from play. It is rarely necessary to spot such a ball. There is no need to place the old ball at the dead-ball spot when a different ball is to be set for a new series. The Umpire's primary responsibility is to locate and handle the ball coming onto the field and should rarely handle the ball leaving the field.

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. 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. Not only is it unnecessary for an official to chase after the ball, it removes the official from dead-ball officiating.

If the play ends beyond the line of scrimmage, the Back Judge should be there to assist. If behind the line, the

Referee is responsible to help.

## Ball Mechanics

In an ideal situation there are at least four footballs available and four ball persons, 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.

Each team is entitled to play with the ball of their choice. If the wrong team's ball is spotted, correction should be made before the ready for play. If a play is run with the wrong team's ball, correction can be made during the series.

Officials should strive to keep the ball off the ground by delivering short, crisp, belt-level, under-handed passes in clear passing lanes. Officials should never pass the ball over players, deliver long/high passes, or trap the ball with their feet. Care must be exercised when flinging the ball out of bounds. Flinging the ball eliminates the need for the wing to handle the ball, but if it is not thrown far enough, it could be mishandled and end up rolling back onto the field. Clumsy ball handling reflects poorly on the crew and brings their credibility into question.

## 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 expectations of the officials. A careful orientation of ball persons is important, including where they 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 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 persons. They should introduce themselves to ball persons, write down their names and address them by name throughout the game.

The personnel should be instructed 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. However, ball persons should not go inside the 10-yard line.

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. They are not to enter the field and give the ball to the Umpire.

When requesting the ball, the official should 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 the body as to catch the ball). The ball person should be instructed to toss the ball to the official with an underhand toss only after the official has requested the ball.

An advisement should be given a new ball will not be required on every play, but the ball person must be prepared to provide a ball as quickly as possible upon request in such situations as: a change of possession, measurements, incomplete pass, or if the ball becomes dead in the side zone. Even if the other team is on offense the official may request a "dummy ball" for a double spot. A "kicking ball" will not be allowed to come in on scrimmage kick plays (unless there has been a change of possession on the previous play).

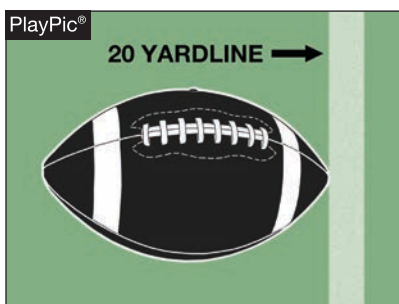
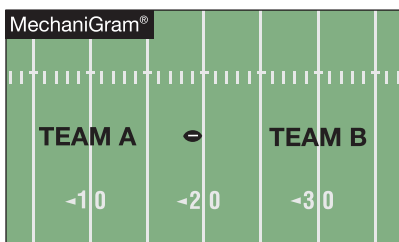
Ball persons are to remain on their sideline except to retrieve an incomplete pass or kicks that become dead out of bounds on the opposing sideline or beyond the end line. If it is not possible for an official to relay the ball back to them, they should run around the end zone to retrieve the ball, being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

After tries and field goal attempts, the ball persons should take a position well behind the posts 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 retrieve. The kicking ball can be inspected by the Back Judge as he makes his way to his free kick position.

## Ball Spotting

After a touchback, the ball is placed on the 20-yard line (normally at the center of the field unless another option is selected) with the downfield point of the football at the edge of the side of the 20-yard line nearest Team A's goal line (see Mechanigram and PlayPic, next page).

When there is a foul for a free kick out of bounds and the receiving team opts to take the ball 25 yards beyond the previous spot (normally their 3five-yard line), the ball is placed on the 3five-yard



line (at the nearest hash mark) with the downfield point of the football at the edge of the 3five-yard line nearest Team A's goal line.

Starting a series on a "whole yard line" should also be used after a change of possession (kick, interception or fumble recovery by Team B) when a new series is awarded. However, between the goal line and the 10-yard line the ball must not be moved to a whole yard line. For example, if a punt return ends with the ball between Team R's 33- and 34-yard lines, move the ball forward to Team R's 34-yard line. However, if a punt goes out of bounds between Team R's 3- and 4-yard lines, the ball is placed at the exact out of bounds spot. After an incomplete pass on fourth down, the ball is returned to the previous spot and the stakes are moved the length of the football.

When a series begins on a whole yard line, a measurement is not needed. It is a first down if the point of the ball is beyond the near edge of the yard line which is 10 yards downfield. That procedure should also be used anytime the crew is certain the series started on a whole five-yard line

on grass fields or on any whole yard line on an artificial turf field. See the chapter entitled "Measurements" for the procedure to be followed.

Before the ready signal for a try or kickoff, following a safety, touchback, a made or awarded fair catch, or for the start of each overtime series, Team A may designate the spot from which the ball is put in play anywhere between the hash marks. The option remains if the down is replayed. If they do not exercise that option, the ball is placed in the center of the field. If such a request is made after the ready signal, accommodate the team and explain that future requests of that nature must be made before the ready signal.

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.

When moving the ball between quarters, the Umpire should delay spotting the ball until the down indicator is correctly positioned.

The Umpire must correctly spot the ball laterally. If the ball becomes dead in a side zone, the ball is placed at the nearest hash mark, except following an inadvertent whistle when the down will be replayed or an incomplete legal forward pass, in which case, the ball is returned to the previous spot.

If the ball becomes dead between the hash marks, the importance of spotting the ball in exactly the right place is not always recognized, but at times, teams will call plays based on where they assume the ball will be spotted, and if it's put in the wrong place it can affect the success of the play. It can also be a factor on field goal attempts, as the spot of the ball will affect the angle at which the kick approaches the goal posts.

A team can sometimes choose where the ball is placed between the hash marks

before the snap or free kick. The Umpire must know those situations and place the ball in the center of the field unless he is requested to do otherwise. If a team makes a belated request to change the lateral placement after the ready, the request should be honored as a one-time exception, as previously mentioned.

When enforcing penalties, the Umpire should note if the distance is to be walked from the spot of the foul or the previous/succeeding spot and maintain the lateral position of the appropriate spot.

For reference purposes, a crew should decide how to describe the lateral positions of the ball. There are three methods in use: (1) Simply refer to the location with respect to the direction the

offense is advancing e.g., left hash; (2) number the positions 1-5 from left to right with respect to the direction the offense is advancing i.e., left hash is position; or (3) number the positions 1-5 in relation to the press box as is done in NCAA play as follows (see MechaniGram):

Position 1: Hash mark closest to the press box.

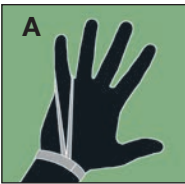
Position 2: Goal post closest to the press box.

Position 3: Middle of the field.

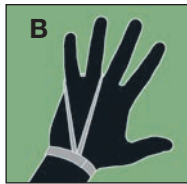
Position 4: Goal post farthest from the press box.

Position 5: Hash mark farthest from the press box.

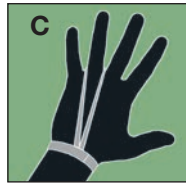
In addition to a looped band on one



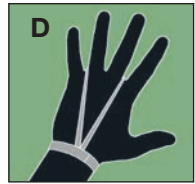
**A**  
Little finger means left upright.  
POSITION 1 OR 5



**B**  
Little finger and ring finger means between left hash and left upright.



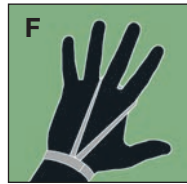
**C**  
Little finger means left upright.  
POSITION 1 OR 5



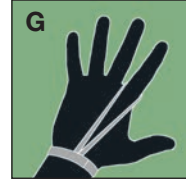
**D**  
Little finger and ring finger means between left hash and left upright.



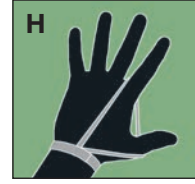
**E**  
Middle finger means middle of field.  
POSITION 3



**F**  
Middle finger and index finger means between right upright and right hash.



**G**  
Index finger means right upright.  
POSITION 4 OR 2



**H**  
Index finger and thumb means between right upright and right hash.



**I**  
Thumb means right hash. POSITION 5 OR 1

hand to keep track of the downs, the Umpire should have one on the opposite hand to track the previous spot. See PlayPics A-I for some examples of how the second indicator can be used.

### Kickoffs

**General:** A kickoff may result in a touchback, a foul for a free kick out of bounds, or it may end with a running play. The important point to remember is a change of possession will almost certainly occur requiring the ball to be switched out. The forward progress official should verbally communicate the yard line to the Umpire. There is no need to place the old ball at the dead-ball spot when a different ball is set for the new series. If the kicking team legally gains possession of the free kick, they can have a new ball positioned at the inbounds spot.

**Touchback:** If the kicked ball ends up over the end line or otherwise off the end zone, the ball should be left for the ball person to retrieve. A new ball will be brought in to be spotted at the 20-yard line as explained below. If the play ends with the ball in possession of a player, the Referee should either give it to a kicking team player to return to his sideline or flip the ball to the wing official on the kicking team's sideline.

**Foul for a free kick out of bounds:** If the kicked ball goes out of bounds on Team K's sideline, the ball should be left out of bounds for the ball person to retrieve. If the ball goes out of bounds on Team R's sideline, the nearest official should retrieve it. Where the next ball comes from depends on if the free kick will be replayed after a five-yard penalty or if Team R will choose to snap from the nearest hash mark. If the free kick will be replayed, the kicking ball will have to be retrieved, regardless of where it came to rest. If Team R will snap from the nearest hash mark, the official nearest the appropriate ball person should get a new ball and flip it to the Umpire.

**Running play – Ball dead in Team R's side zone or out of bounds:** The nearest official retrieves the ball and flips it to the Back Judge who returns it to the

appropriate sideline. A new ball is brought in by the Umpire if he is on Team R's sideline. If the Umpire is on Team K's sideline, the wing official on Team R's sideline will get a new ball and flip it to the Umpire when he gets within 10 yards of the Umpire.

**Running play - Ball dead in K's side zone or out of bounds:** The nearest official retrieves the ball and flips it to the Back Judge who returns it to the appropriate sideline. If the nearest official is the wing on Team K's sideline, the Back Judge need not be involved. The new ball is brought in as in the preceding section.

**Ball dead in between hash marks:** The procedure in the preceding section should be followed.

### Punts

**General:** Punts end in one of four ways: After a running play, with a fair catch, with the ball out of bounds, or with a first down for Team K. The important guideline to remember is all the possibilities except the latter result in a change of possession so the ball has to be switched out. The forward progress official should verbally communicate the yard line to the Umpire as there is no need to place the old ball at the dead-ball spot.

**After a running play or fair catch:** The Back Judge should immediately retrieve the kicking team's ball and return it to the appropriate sideline. Ideally, he should do it with a direct toss to the ball person. However, if the wing official is not bringing in the new ball, the Back Judge can use the wing official as an intermediary. If there is a long return - 20 yards or more - it may make sense for another official to retrieve the kicking ball as the Back Judge must retrieve his bean bag.

**Ball dead out of bounds:** If the ball goes out of bounds on the kicking team's sideline, it should simply be left there for the ball person to retrieve. If it goes out of bounds on the receiving team's sideline, it must be retrieved by the Back Judge and returned to the opposite sideline using the procedure in the preceding section.

**First down for Team K:** If necessary, the

Back Judge should retrieve the ball and flip it to the Umpire when he arrives.

### Field Goal Attempts and Tries

**General:** In order of likelihood, field goal attempts will end with ball over the end line or at rest in the end zone. In rare cases, the kick will be so short that it is caught and returned by the receiving team. As with punts, the important principle to remember is a change of possession will almost certainly occur requiring the ball to be switched out. If the kicking team is awarded a new series following a field goal attempt, there is normally no need to secure a new ball. Before the play, the ball person for the kicking team should place a new ball behind the Back Judge's upright.

**Ball dead over end line:** The kicked ball should be left for the ball person to retrieve. The Back Judge should take the new ball and run to the succeeding spot.

**Ball dead in end zone:** The Back Judge should take the new ball and run to the succeeding spot.

**After a running play:** The procedure for a running play after a punt should be followed.

### Running Plays

**General:** The Umpire should be the primary ball retriever. He is not expected to have a panoramic view of the players for dead-ball officiating. Retrieving the ball is consistent with his primary dead-ball duty of supervising the pile or the players nearest the dead-ball spot.

**Ball dead between the numbers:** The Umpire should immediately go to the ball and spot it. 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 have the spot, Joe."

**Ball dead 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.

#### **Ball dead out of bounds on Team**

**A's sideline:** The wing official should immediately get a new ball from the ball person and flip it to the Umpire allowing the ball person to retrieve the out of bounds ball.

**Ball dead out of bounds on Team B's sideline:** The wing official should retrieve the ball and flip it to the Umpire who should be near the numbers.

### Pass Plays

**General:** Pass plays will result in either a complete or incomplete pass. The ball can become dead anywhere in the field of play or out of bounds. The primary retrieving official will likely be the official closest to the dead-ball spot. In most cases, the ball will be changed after long incomplete passes, as the wing official on Team A's sideline can deliver a new ball to the Umpire more quickly than tracking down and spotting the old ball. Officials should insist players retrieve incomplete passes.

**Ball incomplete inbounds:** Unless the ball comes to rest close to an official, the wing official on Team A's sideline should immediately obtain a new ball and flip it to the Umpire who should come to the area of the numbers. The Back Judge will simultaneously retrieve the old ball and transfer it to Team A's sideline.

**Ball incomplete out of bounds:** If the pass is incomplete beyond Team A's sideline, the ball should be left out of bounds for the ball person to retrieve. If the pass is incomplete beyond Team B's

sideline, the Back Judge should relay the ball to the opposite sideline. In both cases, the official on Team A's sideline will secure a new ball from his sideline to deliver to the Umpire.

**Changes of Possession**

Kickoffs and punts usually result in a change of possession and those procedures are discussed above. Changes of possession may also occur after an interception or fumble recovery, or after Team A is short of the line-to-gain on fourth down. The play may end either inbounds or out of bounds. As previously stated, in the majority of cases the old ball should not be spotted in the field of play; the covering official will verbally announce the dead-ball spot to the Umpire. The sole exception occurs when Team A fails to reach the line-to-gain on fourth down. In this case, the officials should keep the old ball on the field until the new ball arrives so the coaches, players, and fans can clearly see the ball's position at the end of the fourth down play. The wing official on Team B's sideline should obtain a new ball and flip it to the Umpire.

**Hurry-up Offense**

When time is of the essence and a team is using a hurry-up offense, it is essential the officials neither slow the offense down nor create the perception they are delaying putting the ball in play. A team may use a no-huddle offense at any time, but the hurry-up offense is used during the last few minutes of either half.

The Umpire should work sideline to sideline to retrieve the ball. His constant motion reaffirms the officials are moving quickly to spot the ball. Additionally, having the other officials avoid handling the ball eliminates the opportunity for a dropped ball which surely will frustrate Team A. The priority for all other officials is to get in position and be ready for the snap. As much of their movement as possible should be facing the spot of

snap.

The chain crew should not be allowed to slow the pace of play. If the chain crew is not ready when the Umpire has spotted the ball, the Linesman should drop a bean bag for the box man and play should proceed.

**Measurements**

Ball handling during measurements is described in the Measurements chapter.



## 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 become dead 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 following 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 the official will lose respect and credibility if he denies blowing one.

Only the covering official should blow the whistle. Getting the attention of another official is the only exception. An official should use his voice, not his 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 multiple 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, on a field goal when a successful kick passes the upright or when the ball touches the ground beyond the goal line and on touchdowns when he is the covering official.

On a kick try, the Back Judge uses the whistle when a successful kick passes the upright or when the ball breaks the goal line plane and it is obvious it will not score.

*Under no circumstances should a whistle be blown when the ball is kicked.*

The theory is nothing can happen to change the outcome of the play once the ball is kicked. If the ball goes through the uprights, it scores. Once it is apparent the kick has failed, the ball is dead by rule. The alleged benefit is the quick whistle, which is actually an inadvertent whistle, will prevent unnecessary contact. It does not; the players cannot react instantaneously and they'll continue to do what they started. There is no documented evidence that such a quick whistle can or has prevented an injury. It is a bad habit to develop and it runs the risk of prematurely blowing the whistle on a field goal attempt.

## 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 yard line and not thrown; however dropping the beanbag on the exact spot won't always be practical or necessary. 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 the official can take one or two steps to drop the beanbag, he should do so. In other cases, throwing the bag is acceptable. 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. The spot of the fumble will be the enforcement spot for a foul that occurs before the loose ball is recovered or becomes dead. 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.

#### Backward Passes

Similar to fumbles, the spot from which a backward pass is thrown can be the end of a run and must be marked beyond the neutral zone in the event a penalty occurs. Backward passes behind the neutral zone do not need to be marked because they 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 they are 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. The beanbag should not be used when end of the kick is the dead-ball spot.

### 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 forward progress spot 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.

### Down Marker Supplement

Normally the down marker or "box" indicates the line of scrimmage. Whenever the line-to-gain becomes the goal line, only the box man is required. The Linesman should provide a bean bag to the box man to be placed at the spot for reference in the event the box is removed. Additionally, the chain crew should not be allowed to slow the pace of play. If the chain crew is not ready when the Umpire has spotted the ball, the Linesman should drop a bean bag for the box man and play should proceed.

### Situations Not for Use of the Bean Bag

#### Interceptions

Do not drop a beanbag at the spot a player intercepts a pass unless the momentum exception applies. 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 is marked with the flag. See the chapter entitled “Making Calls” for more detail.

**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

# MAKING CALLS

## Throwing the Flag

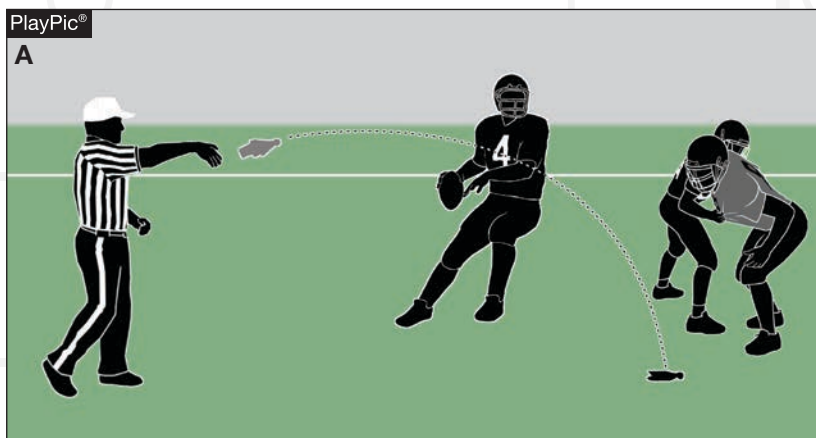
Correct penalty enforcement can be facilitated if the flag is thrown properly. There are two ways to throw the flag: into the air or carefully to a spot. The latter is used when a spot foul occurs (PlayPic A). Since the spot of the foul may be the enforcement spot, the official must get his flag as close as possible to the location that the foul occurred. Care must be taken to not throw the flag at a player or to indicate anger by propelling the flag viciously.

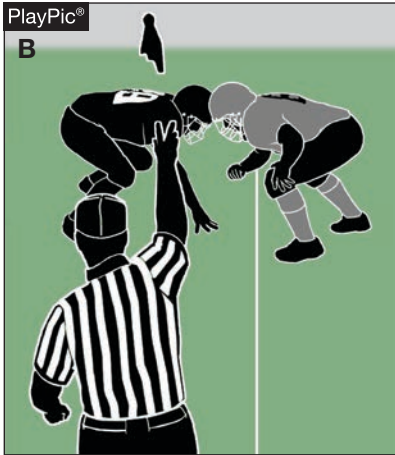
If the flag is off target, the official should relocate the flag as soon as possible after the play by picking it up and moving it definitively.

If there are multiple flags for the same foul and the flags are more than a yard apart, the difference must be quickly reconciled. Either moving both flags to the same spot or picking up the off-target flag works. Enforcing the penalty from the midpoint of the two flags will cause confusion or create the impression the enforcement is incorrect.

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). The flag should not be “skied.” The higher a flag is thrown, the more difficult it is to gauge where it will come down.

For free kicks out of bounds, if the ball goes out of bounds untouched between the goal lines and Team R’s 3five-yard line, the flag should be tossed into the air as that spot will not be needed (Team R will take the ball at their 3five-yard line). If the out-of-bounds spot is beyond Team R’s 3five-yard line, the flag should still be tossed into the air. But the covering official must make a mental note of the yard line as Team R will likely take the ball at that spot.

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 signals are used 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 multiple 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. 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 only one flag is thrown for obvious false starts or encroachments, signaling the foul rather than reporting the foul to the Referee is to be utilized. Assurances must be made that another official does not have a different foul. 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 downfield 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.

In summary, here is a checklist for reporting a foul:

- Foul observed e.g., holding;
- Guilty team e.g., offense/defense or East HS/West HS
- Number of fouling player; and
- Status of the ball e.g., live or dead (if necessary).

### 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.

### The Penalty Decision

The vast majority of fouls do not require any consultation with the offended team before the penalty enforcement is announced. In cases where the choice is obvious for a live-ball foul or there is a dead-ball or double foul, the Referee should not consult with anyone. In any case, the coach should be informed (see below) and he has the right to change the Referee’s choice. When there are multiple live-ball fouls, opting for the one with the greater penalty won’t necessarily yield the better field position. On some occasions it will be

necessary to consult with the coach.

The Umpire and/or wing official should assist the Referee in locating the coach for penalty options. It is permissible to move toward sideline and allow the coach to make the decision. 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.

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. When a microphone is not available, it is recommended the Referee vocalize the announcement just as if he had a microphone. It’s good practice and if there is a flub, not many will hear it.

This communication is important because it emphasizes the need for accuracy in calling fouls and deters phantom calls. See the chapter entitled “Microphone Use.”

### Informing 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.

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.”

When a foul for unsportsmanlike conduct is called, the official recording penalties shall specifically note the player’s team and number and the reason for the foul. The Referee shall then approach the player’s head coach and tell him, “Number X has received a penalty for non-contact unsportsmanlike conduct because he (describe action). By rule, a second foul by him for unsportsmanlike conduct will result in his disqualification from this game.”

### 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 the Umpire should remind the Referee as to the status of the clock and the correct down and verify the correct down with the wing officials. The Umpire stays over ball until the Referee gives the ready-for-play, then goes back out to his position.

**Linesman:** The Linesman makes sure the box man and chain crew hold their positions. He checks the position of the down box as it relates to the 5-yard tape on the chain. If the penalty is five yards, he signals the Referee if the enforcement will leave the ball short or beyond the line-to-

gain.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge should be prepared to give the Referee a signal regarding clock status before the Referee moves back into position and correct the Referee if the clock is not handled properly.

**Back Judge:** If the calling official has the dead-ball spot in a side zone, the Back Judge will take that spot from him so he can report his foul to the Referee.

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

He must pay attention to the enforcement proceedings so he can confirm that they have been conducted accurately. If there is a disagreement, the crew should be alerted immediately.

### Picking up Flags and Throwing Late Flags

Picking up a flag or throwing a late flag should not be done very often and it certainly is not a crutch to compensate for weak officials. The risks entail antagonizing a thin-skinned official and raising the ire of a coach who thought he had a decision in his favor. The important thing is to get the call right. That may mean having a brief crew discussion which affirms the original call.

The scenarios in which picking up a flag may be prudent are grouped in categories based on the circumstances that may dictate the wave-off.

1. The first group is situations where the covering official is not expected to observe events outside his coverage area.

**Ineligible receiver downfield/offensive pass interference.** Whether an ineligible simply goes downfield or goes downfield beyond the expanded neutral zone and initiates a block against an opponent, a flag should be thrown when a forward pass is thrown and there is a possibility the ball crossed the neutral zone. If it is subsequently determined the pass did not cross the line, the flag must be picked up. A pass deflected by a Team B player behind the line is considered to not have crossed the line. Depending on a crew size, a specific official is responsible for

determining if a pass crosses the line and that probably won't be the official who observes the possible illegal act.

**Defensive pass interference.** The flag should be picked up if the pass was tipped prior to the illegal contact. Pass interference restrictions end for all players once a team B player touches the pass. If a team A player tips the ball, restrictions also end for all team B players and for eligible team A players.

**Two forward passes.** An apparent second forward pass should be flagged and picked up if discussion reveals the first pass was ruled backward.

**Illegal participation.** When a player is observed returning inbounds, the flag should be thrown and picked up if discussion reveals the player was blocked out of bounds and he returned immediately.

**Delay of game.** A flag for a delay of game foul can be picked up if another official had granted timeout before the play clock expired.

II. The next group includes acts which are highly dependent on the angle of view and almost always have multiple covering officials. Those crewmates must immediately compare notes even if both had flags. In order to change such a call, the differing official must be 100% sure of what he observed or he must be able to point out what the calling official did not see. If the two officials cannot agree, the original call should stand.

**Targeting.** It's possible to interpret a straight line view of the engagement as head contact (like an eclipse) when in reality the contact was at or below the shoulders.

**Blindside blocks.** If open hands are used, the blindside block is legal. The covering official may be screened by the blocker's back.

**Pass interference.** There are multiple ways for pass interference to occur and in many cases, no one official can see exactly what transpired including which player initiated the contact.

III. The third group includes situations where one official should be able to get

the call correct, but for a variety of reasons including not seeing the whole play, being in a poor position or simply miscounting.

**Roughing the kicker.** If the Referee calls a roughing foul, but the player is blocked into kicker or the ball is tipped by the contacting player, the contact is excused.

**Counting error.** If a team is flagged for too many players in the formation and a recount reveals there were only 11 players, the flag must be picked up. Likewise, if a belated count indicates more than 11 players participated, a late flag should be thrown.

**Illegal blocks.** An official should not call a foul when he doesn't see the whole play. Examples where an official can get wrong picture of what transpired include blocks in the back where the player abruptly turns on the blocker and blocks below the waist where the initial contact is high and the blockers slides down on the opponent.

IV. The final category includes only one foul. Intentional grounding should only be flagged by the Referee and only if he determines the passer was under duress (the embodiment of intent to conserve yardage).

**Intentional grounding.** The Referee can rarely make that call without assistance because he probably will not see where the ball landed. The Referee is responsible for determining if the passer was under duress (the motive for purposefully throwing a pass incomplete to conserve yardage while inside the free blocking zone), the lateral movement of the passer (in or outside the free blocking zone), the spot of the pass (for penalty enforcement), and for making the final decision.

The umpire is responsible for determining if the ball crossed the neutral zone or the neutral zone extended. If yes, he should face the Referee and give a slow tomahawk chop at or below shoulder level (crew signal R). If not, he should face the Referee and yell "no" and/or approach the Referee for discussion. He must remain vigilant for ineligible downfield.

The other members of the crew (covering

wing and/or back judge) should immediately volunteer information regarding whether or not the ball was thrown into an area occupied by an eligible offensive receiver. If yes, the official should point to the receiver and note his number (to answer a coach inquiry). If not, he should face the Referee and yell “no receiver” and/or approach the Referee for discussion.

When a Referee believes the passer’s intent was to intentionally ground the ball to avoid a sack, he should flag it. If it is subsequently determined there was no foul, the flag can be picked up. If the Referee does not throw his flag and is given information allowing him to conclude a foul occurred, it is acceptable to throw a late flag. The clock is started on the ready after an intentional grounding foul.

In cases where the game situation leaves open the possibility for intentional grounding to conserve time, the same procedures apply except duress is not necessary.

### Conflicting Calls

When two officials disagree it sometimes is not obvious and it won’t necessarily involve whether or not a foul has occurred. In those cases, prompt, efficient communication between the differing officials is essential. One example is when an official believes a receiver has caught a pass and another official blows his whistle and signals incomplete. Although the two officials made different judgments, only one signaled and in effect “bought the call.” The likelihood of a changed call on that type of play is slim.

A somewhat similar scenario is whether or not a runner lost the ball before or after he was down. The official who had the runner down by rule will blow his whistle ending the action. If another official judged it to be a fumble, he likely will not have done anything before the whistle is heard, but if he is quick enough, he might have dropped his beanbag to mark the spot. Those occurrences are not prone to creating a big controversy as nothing can be done to change the call and the beanbag can be discreetly picked up.

A third scenario prone to conflicting calls

is the forward v. backward pass. It is a very difficult play to cover properly with five officials because the wings are torn between watching the ball and keeping an eye on their key receiver. If the ball is thrown in a direction away from the Referee, he may also be able to garner an opinion, increasing the odds of brewing a disagreement.

The wing behind the throw has primary responsibility; he has the panoramic view and doesn’t have to watch his key to observe the catch. If a pass to the flank is caught, it doesn’t matter if it was forward or backward unless there is subsequent forward pass. If the ball hits the ground, a whistle indicates an incomplete forward pass and no whistle keeps the ball alive as a grounded backward pass. Where trouble sets in is when one official punches the pass backward while someone else is killing the play. That is why the unnecessary punch is not an accepted mechanic.

Neutral zone infractions are a hot spot because there are always two or three officials with overlapping responsibilities. For instance, say the line judge throws a flag because a team B player entered the neutral zone and contacted the left guard but the umpire throws a flag because the snapper illegally moved the ball. If the line judge stays on the wing, gives the hands-on-hips signal and points to the defense but the penalty is assessed against the offense, the coach of the offensive team is certain to be upset. Instead of signaling from the wing, in that case the linesman, line judge and umpire should get together to discuss what each official has seen, then report their decision to the Referee.

The play from which there is no escape from agony is the goal line plunge when one wing crashes in, raising his hand to start the play clock and marking a spot, while his cross-field partner is signaling a touchdown. Other scenarios with little wiggle room include a wing signaling a false start while the other wing puts his hands on his hips. Scoring kicks have been known to earn both a successful and unsuccessful signal.

Selling a call is great but an official should never try to “outsell” another official. When a signal is given, it should not be superseded

with a conflicting signal with one exception. That doesn't necessarily mean the original call will stand, but, if at all possible, it should be the only call until the officials can get together and discuss the issue. The one exception is when a catch is signaled in the end zone for a touchdown, it is permissible for a second official who clearly sees the ball touch the ground to immediately rush to near the spot where the ball was apparently caught signaling incomplete pass and then tapping the ground with an open palm. It is a widely accepted mechanic because of the distinct possibility the first official was not able to see the ball had touched the ground before it was secured.

Conflicting calls are avoidable but inevitable. The two officials must come together to reconcile the call. Egos cannot be allowed to interfere. The discussion should begin with each official explaining what he saw. That may reveal that something happened which one official did not see. If different acts were observed, one official may be able to convince the other of the priorities.

A useful technique is to use the back judge as the "Referee of the defense" to reconcile any flags thrown downfield. That especially applies to pass plays. Depending upon the position of the receiver, the covering defender and their location on the field, the play may only be viewed from limited angles. An example is an arm bar that is visible only from the sideline and not from the middle of the field. When a play occurs in an overlapping coverage area and there is only one flag, the back judge should convene a quick discussion to piece together the puzzle. As an example, if a wing official has a flag for pass interference and the back Judge is not sure there is a foul, the back judge should approach that official and offer information as to what he saw and let the official make the choice to pick up the flag or stick with the call. It is not appropriate for the back judge to demand the flag be picked up.

When there are two flags (or more), it must be ascertained that the flags were for the same offense. Such a discussion also makes sense on possible catches near a

sideline where one official has the best view of possession and another on whether or not the receiver was inbounds when the catch was completed.

When the preceding doesn't work and a stalemate results, it is up to the Referee to make the final decision. In almost all cases, he will have to do so without having seen any part of the play. Knowledge of each official's abilities and tendencies may be an intangible. If one official had the primary coverage, then going with his call would be a logical option. Cases when the officials have a shared responsibility are more difficult to adjudicate. In some cases, the Referee may be able to discern which official had the better view; it won't always be the official closest to the play.

### Use of the Hat

The hat is designed to be worn as a headpiece and not as an officiating tool. The hat should never be used in place of the flag. The "Uniform" chapter requires each official to carry two flags thus creating a very low possibility any one official would need a third item to indicate a foul.

Additionally, regardless of how the hat is used in other levels of football, the hat should never be thrown or dropped to indicate a player has left the field. When that happens, no foul has occurred so there is no need to mark the spot. If the player subsequently commits a foul as a result of having left the field, the flag is used to mark the spot of the foul.

# CHAPTER 14

# SIGNALING

Effective communication, with both words and signals, play an important role in officiating. Signals must be clear and be concise. Signals can be rushed or dawdled over, neither is very effective. By rushing, the communication is poor; dawdling keeps the game from moving.

## General

Signals look better when given from a stationary position, especially the incomplete pass and touchdown signals. Officials should take care to be still when signaling; however there are limited situations when signaling while moving is acceptable or preferred. Those are:

- Winding the clock during a kickoff return (Signal 2);
- A wing official signaling a dead-ball foul before the snap (See following section entitled “Dead-ball Fouls before the Snap” [Signals 18 and 19]).
- A wing official indicating to the Back Judge that the runner crossed the goal line without stepping out of bounds (Crew Signal I); and
- A wing official signaling a touchdown at the goal line (See following section entitled “Touchdown” [Signal 5]).

## Stopping the Clock

There are four signals in addition to “stop the clock” which also mean stop

the clock: incomplete pass, touchdown, touchback and safety. These signals are “stand-alones” and the stop the clock signal is not to be subsequently used. The timer should be reminded of this in his pregame briefing.

Also, there is minimal value in signaling to stop a clock that was not running (e.g. a false start on a try). The official will get more value by checking to ensure the clock did not start rather than automatically signaling. If the clock did start in error, it will have to be corrected, so a stop-the-clock signal does not complete the task.

## Dead-ball Fouls Before the Snap

For false starts and encroachment before the snap, the wing officials need not run all the way to the Referee to report the foul. Instead they may take a few steps onto the field and signal the foul. If both wings have flagged the act and the foul is not obvious, the wings should confer near the Umpire and then report the foul to the Referee.

Also, The Back Judge may signal a foul for delay of game or a substitution infraction from his position.

## Field Goals and Kick Tries

Officials must look sharp on scoring kicks. The two officials who are under the goal posts should rehearse their routine. Both officials should say “yes-yes” or “no-no.” That serves as a

cue for both officials to take two steps forward, straight out from directly under the goal post counting “one, two,” and then signaling. If the kick is successful, both officials should hold their signal for the same amount of time and drop their hands simultaneously. If the kick is not successful, there should be only one “kick failed” signal given by each official. The two officials should try to end their signal simultaneously. Regardless of the result, the Referee does not echo the signal.

### Two-Point Tries

The covering wing official should signal as after a scrummage play. The touchdown and incomplete pass signals are utilized, if applicable. The Referee does not echo the touchdown signal. If a try is unsuccessful, the wing should mark the forward progress spot and give the dead-ball signal (S7) to indicate the ball is dead. The Referee is the only official who signals the try is unsuccessful.

### Touchdown

When signaling a touchdown, the official must ensure he sees the ball break the plane of the goal line. An official should signal a touchdown only when he sees the entire act and when the goal line is his responsibility. Another official’s touchdown signal is not mirrored. Once it is known that all the requirements for a touchdown have been met, the official should withhold his touchdown signal a moment, then make the signal without regard to other officials. If it is known a foul will cancel the touchdown, no signal is given. Assertiveness is essential. Signaling a touchdown is not a theatrical act; just a clean, crisp, professional act done from a stationary position.

**Referee:** The use of the touchdown signal generally applies to interception or fumble returns, punt returns and recoveries in Team A’s end zone. The Referee does not repeat a touchdown signal to the press box unless it is part of a penalty announcement.

**Umpire:** On scrummage plays at the goal line, the Umpire does not give any signal. If the action is up the middle and a pile of players is making it difficult for the crashing wing officials to find the ball, the only nonverbal assistance the Umpire provides is to simply point to the buried football. This will assist the wing officials to make the right call. On fumbles near either goal line, the Umpire might be the covering official and a signal would be appropriate. It is acceptable for the Umpire to rule on a loose ball in the end zone that is recovered by either team provided he checks with the wing officials prior to giving any signal.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** Most touchdown signals will be given by a wing official. When giving the touchdown signal, the official should rotate as necessary to continue to observe the action of the runner to ensure there are no unsportsmanlike or personal fouls. There is no point in officiating air or the ground.

For plays at the goal line when the Linesman and Line Judge have no spot (ball is in the pile), they should crash in towards the pile staying in the field of play until reaching the pile. If the Umpire senses the wings do not have a spot, he should point to the ball or assist in locating it under the pile. After finding the ball, wings should make a confident touchdown signal or rule the ball short of the goal with the position of their feet. The ruling should not be verbalized as the official crashes into the pile. If the ruling contradicts the opposite wing’s ruling the crew’s credibility will be destroyed. Excessive delays in a ruling after the crashing wing officials get to the ball must be avoided.

Pass plays that involve the sideline in the end zone are the wings’ call. When the Referee or Back Judge has the goal line responsibility, the wing’s job is the sideline, not signaling touchdown.

For dead-ball fouls, the wing officials may signal encroachment or false start to the Referee if they are certain no other official has a conflicting call.

**Back Judge:** Kickoff returns, long runs and long passes require the Back Judge to be on the goal line. See the chapter entitled “Positioning and Coverage: Scoring Plays.” The Back Judge must know where the goal line is and not overrun it. Pass plays from a starting position on the goal line require the Back Judge to move as needed to cover the play. Staying on the goal line is of no value when the pass is at the end line; pass plays that involve the end line are the Back Judge’s calls. On scoring plays when the sideline may be involved and the Back Judge is responsible for the goal line, the touchdown signal should be delayed until the wing official covering the sideline verifies the runner was not out of bounds prior to crossing the goal line (Crew Signal “I”). The Back Judge should then move down the goal line a few steps toward the sideline closest to the score and give the touchdown signal, keeping his eye on the runner for any unsportsmanlike acts including taunting.

For dead-ball fouls, the Back Judge may signal delay of game or a substitution infraction to the Referee.

**Conflicting Signals**

The details of proper signaling have been described in the preceding sections. On most plays there is only one covering official and only that official should signal. On plays with overlapping coverage, officials must be careful to not contradict one another.

When two officials disagree it sometimes is not obvious because the decision made by one of the officials requires neither a signal nor a whistle. Examples are but not limited to:

- Whether a receiver has caught a pass (no signal) or is incomplete (signal);
- Whether a runner lost the ball before (fumble, no whistle) or after he was down (dead ball, whistle); or
- Whether a grounded pass was forward (dead ball, whistle) or backward (live ball, no whistle).

In other cases the clash is immediately

discernible because contradicting signals have been given. Examples are but not limited to:

- Dead-ball fouls before the snap: false start v. encroachment;
- A scoring kick: successful v. unsuccessful; or
- A goal line plunge: touchdown signal v. dead-ball signal accompanied by a crash to the progress spot;
- Whether a receiver has caught a pass for a touchdown (signal) or is incomplete (signal).

Neutral zone infractions are a prone to result in conflict because there are always two or three officials with overlapping responsibilities. There is also great potential for confusion if an official rushes to judgment. Since the ball remains dead, this provides an opportunity for the official to slow down and review all the possibilities. For instance, say the line judge throws a flag because a Team B player entered the neutral zone and contacted the left guard but the umpire throws a flag because the snapper illegally moved the ball. If the line judge stays on the wing, gives the hands-on-hips signal and points to the defense but the penalty is assessed against the offense, the coach of the offensive team is certain to be upset. Instead of signaling from the wing, in that case the linesman, line judge and umpire should get together to discuss what each official has seen, then report their decision to the Referee. It’s okay for the throwing official to provide a preliminary signal, but only when it is absolutely certain there is only one foul and it is obvious which foul it is. Even then the signal must be delayed until the official can move inside the numbers. The few extra seconds will give others the time to react. We may despise cliches, but “haste makes waste” applies here.

Selling a call is great but an official should never try to “show up” another official. When a signal is given, it should never be intentionally superseded with a conflicting signal. That doesn’t necessarily mean the original call will

stand, but if at all possible, there should only be one signal until the officials can get together and discuss the issue. A catch-no catch play is an exception to the above regardless of any signal given by the first official to indicate a catch. A second official who clearly sees the ball touch the ground should immediately rush to near the spot where the ball was apparently caught signaling incomplete pass and then tapping the ground with an open palm. This is appropriate because it should be obvious the first official was not able to see the ball touched the ground before it was secured.

Conflicting calls are avoidable but inevitable. In all the above cases, when any official sees a signal by another official that they believe may be inaccurate, that official should signal timeout at the end of the play and approach the signaling official at a relaxed pace to discuss the ruling. The conversation should reflect mutual respect; egos cannot be allowed to interfere. The discussion should begin with each official explaining what he saw. That may reveal that something happened which one official did not see. If different acts were observed, one official may be able to convince the other of the priorities. In rare cases it may come to be one official did not totally understand the rule or its application.

The Back Judge should be used as the "Referee of the defense" to reconcile any flags thrown downfield. That especially applies to pass plays. Depending upon the position of the receiver, the covering defender and their location on the field, the play may only be viewed from limited angles. An example is an arm bar that is visible only from the middle of the field and not from the sideline. When a play occurs in an overlapping coverage area regardless of whether there is only one flag or two flags, the Back Judge should convene a quick discussion to piece together

the puzzle. When there are two flags (or more), it must be ascertained that the flags were for the same offense. Such a discussion also makes sense on possible catches near a sideline where one official has the best view of possession and another on whether or not the receiver was inbounds when the catch was completed.

When the preceding doesn't work and a stalemate results, it is up to the Referee to make the final decision. In almost all cases, he will have to do so without having seen any part of the play. Again knowledge of each official's abilities and tendencies may be an intangible. If one official had the primary coverage, then going with his call would be a logical option. Cases when the officials have a shared responsibility are more difficult to adjudicate. In some cases, the Referee may be able to discern which official had the better view; it won't always be the official closest to the play.

## Penalty Signaling

The order of the penalty signals used by the Referee is just as important as the clarity of the signals.

The key to quality signaling is remembering that it is a sequence of fluid movements that should not be rushed. Take your time. Signals executed with separate and distinct motions ensure clarity; jumbled quickly together and the messages are lost.

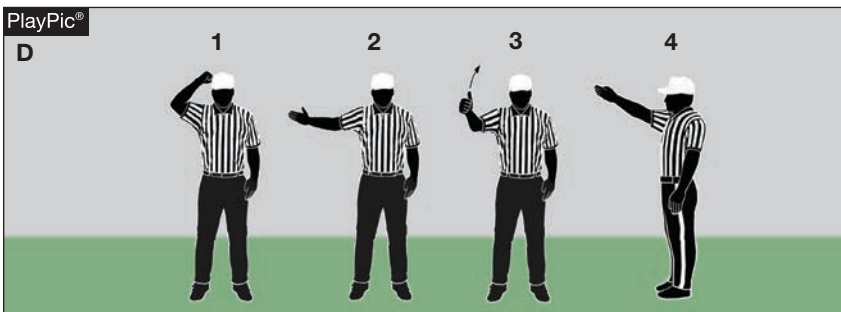
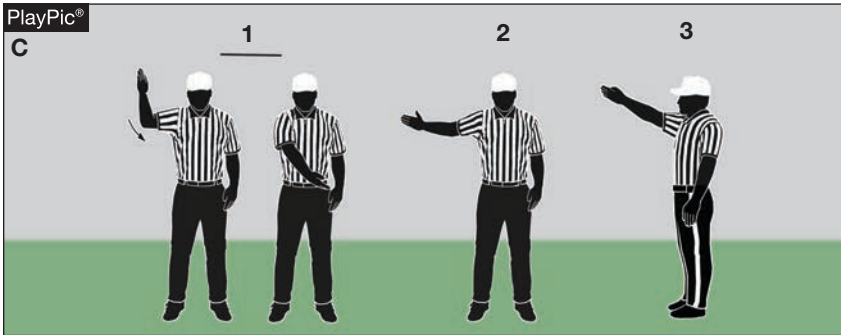
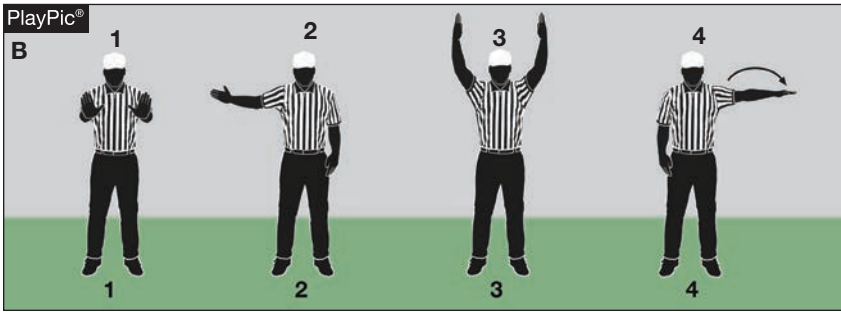
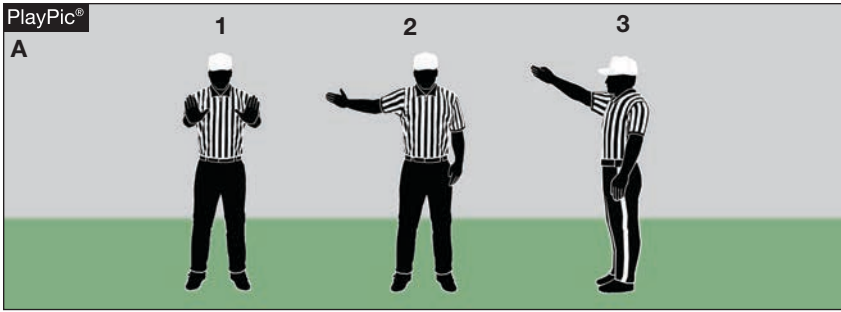
It is also important to face the proper direction when giving the signal. Almost all signals are given facing the press box.

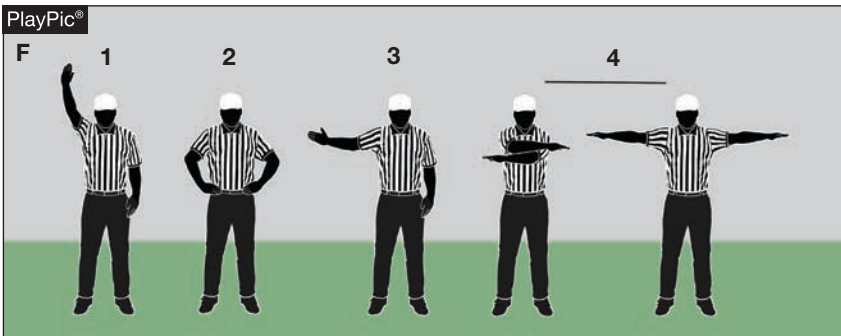
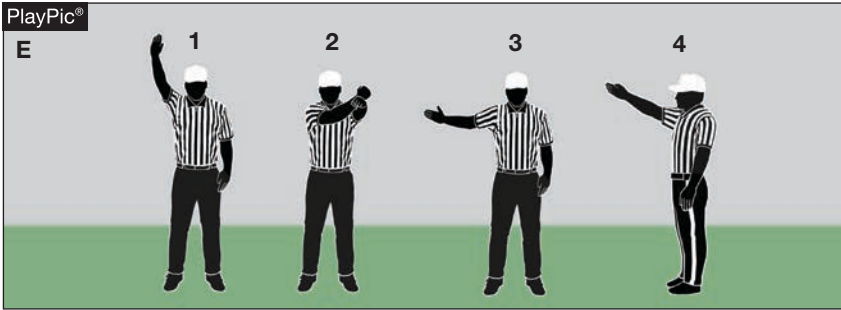
By following these principles and using the correct signals, decisions will be effectively communicated to all involved.

## Live-ball Fouls

Signaling the penalty for a live-ball foul is a multi-step process: foul signal, a point toward the team that fouled and an indication of the next down.







In PlayPic A, Team B has been called for pass interference. The Referee signals the foul (1), indicates which team has fouled (2) and signals that Team A has been awarded a new series if the penalty results in a first down (3).

In PlayPic B, Team B has been called for pass interference, but Team A scored a touchdown. The scoring team may choose to have the penalty enforced on the try. If so, the sequence in PlayPic A is used. If the scoring team chooses to have the penalty enforced on the next kickoff, the Referee signals the foul (1) and indicates which team has fouled (2). The Referee signals the touchdown, then points to the spot of the next kickoff to indicate the enforcement (4).

In PlayPic C, the defense has been called for roughing the passer. The Referee first indicates the foul (1), followed by the fouling team (2). Because the penalty includes a first

down, the Referee signals that Team A has been awarded a new series (3).

Cases that involve an ejection add a step to the process. The Referee must indicate the decision to the press box. PlayPic D, illustrates the sequence for a live-ball foul for illegal helmet contact that results in an ejection. The Referee first indicates the nature of the foul (1) and the fouling team (2). The ejection is then indicated (3). If the penalty results in a first down, the Referee signals that Team A has been awarded a new series (4); if not, the Referee signals the next down. In this example, the penalty has given Team A sufficient yardage for a first down.

**Dead-Ball Fouls**

When a dead-ball foul has been called, the dead-ball signal must precede the signal for the foul unless the foul is exclusively a dead-ball foul such as delay of game. That means signaling includes

the dead-ball signal, followed by the foul signal, followed by a point toward the team that fouled, followed by an indication of the next down.

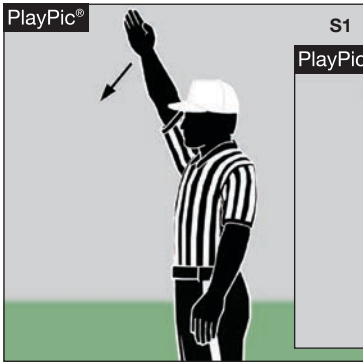
In PlayPic E, Team B has been flagged for a personal foul that occurred during a dead-ball period. The Referee begins with the dead-ball signal (1) followed by the signal for personal foul (2). He then indicates the team that fouled (3) and signals the next down. If the penalty results in a first down, the Referee signals that Team A has been awarded a new series (4); if not, the Referee signals the next down. In the example, the penalty has given Team A sufficient yardage for a first down.

Penalties for dead-ball fouls are rarely declined because the yardage is “free.” However, on those rare occasions when a dead-ball foul is declined, the Referee must indicate the declination after indicating which team fouled.

In PlayPic F, Team K is ready to attempt a try but Team R has been called for encroachment. Team K declines the penalty because its kicker is more comfortable kicking from the present distance. The Referee gives the signals for dead-ball foul (1) and encroachment (2). He indicates which team has fouled (3), followed by the declination (4).

See the chapter entitled “Microphone Use” for the verbiage that should accompany the following signals.

# SIGNAL CHART



Ready for play  
★ Untimed down

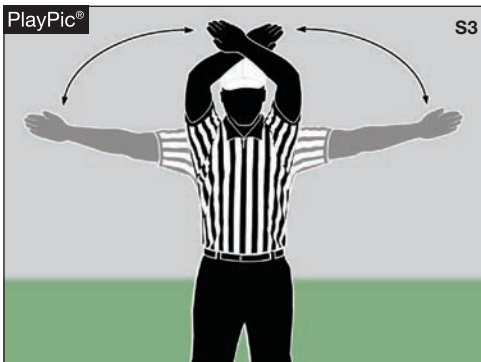


**S1—Ready for play.** Extend the arm fully upward and “pull a light chain.” Blow the whistle first to get the clock operator’s attention, then start the pull and end at the waist. Ensure the clock operator has a clear view.



Start the clock

**S2—Start the clock.** Three easy swings of the arm at full extension are enough. Referees are encouraged to face the clock operator and rotate their arm in front of their body; not to the side like a softball pitcher.



Stop the clock

**S3—Stop the clock.** The signal most frequently made. It looks best when the arms are brought out to a “Y” position and then returned. After two strokes, it’s a good idea to glance at the clock and if it hasn’t stopped, the signal can be continued until no longer necessary.

**S3—Timeout.** Begin with “stop the clock.” If the timeout is discretionary or for an injury, the Referee then taps his chest. Charged timeouts are indicated by pointing in the direction of the requesting team.



TV/radio timeout

**S4—TV/radio timeout.** Form a “T” with open hands just like a technical foul in basketball.

Touchdown/ field goal/  
point(s) after touchdown

**S5—Touchdown.** To signal properly, the arms should be fully extended in a straight line toward the sky. A slight bend in the elbows is acceptable. Bear hugs, arms tilted forward and elbows at a 90-degree angle are not acceptable.



Safety

**S6—Safety.** Hands together in front of the body above the head.



Dead-ball foul



Touchback  
(arm waved side to side)

**S7—Dead ball.** Used by the covering official to start 40-second play clock. Also used by the Referee for dead-ball fouls.

**S7—Touchback.** Similar to a valid fair catch signal given by a player - open hand with arm extended above head and waved side to side; two times is sufficient.



First down

**S8—First down.** Point toward the defensive team's goal line. Do not tomahawk chop. It looks best to hold the signal until it is certain it has been seen. Also used to indicate a change of possession after a fumble.



Loss of down

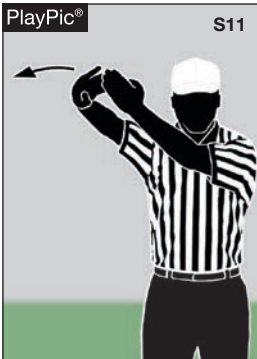
**S9—Loss of down.** Forearms should be parallel to shoulders.



**Incomplete pass/unsuccessful try or field goal/penalty declined/coin toss option deferred**

**S10—Incomplete pass.** The signal should be given while stationary, shoulder high with arms parallel to the ground and an erect posture; do not bend forward at the waist when signaling. One stroke is recommended. Two strokes is acceptable but when the pass falls incomplete in plain view, one is sufficient. In other cases, two repetitions may be needed, when the call has to be “sold.”

**S10—Declination.** This signal is also used to indicate the coin toss winner has deferred his choice, when a penalty is refused or when a try is unsuccessful. In each case, one stroke should be used.



**Legal touching**

**S11—Tipped ball/Legal touching.** From baseball’s foul tip. Give it if a punt or pass is legally touched. Two swipes are sufficient.



**Inadvertent whistle**

**S12—Inadvertent whistle.** Fully extended fist.



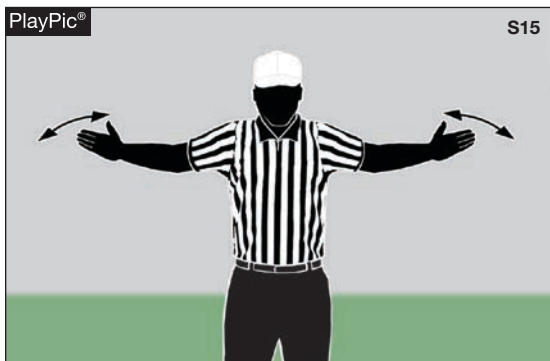
Disregard flag

**S13—Disregard flag.** Two waves are sufficient.



End of period

**S14—End of period.** Full extension of the arm with the ball in the hand.



Sideline warning

**S15—Sideline warning.** Arms outstretched, parallel to ground. Move hands slightly forward and back. Two waves are sufficient.





**First touching**  
**Illegal touching**

**S16—First/illegal touching.** Elbows out with upper arms parallel to ground. Hands on shoulders. Do not bounce hands up and down.



**Encroachment**

**S18—Encroachment.** Hands on hips for a couple of seconds; no bouncing. Although this can only be a dead-ball foul, the dead-ball signal should precede for clarity.



**False start**  
**Illegal formation**  
**Disconcerting signal**

**S19—False start/illegal formation/disconcerting signals.** Arms out from chest. Two rotations are sufficient. Also used for free kicks out of bounds. For false starts and illegal snaps, the dead-ball signal (S7) must precede this signal.



**Illegal motion (1 hand)  
Illegal shift (2 hands)**

**S20—Illegal motion.** Two chops out from the chest parallel to ground with the right arm only and the palm down.

**S20—Illegal shift.** Same as illegal motion except both arms are used.



**Delay of game**

**S21—Delay of game.** Fold the arms and hold for a few seconds with elbows away from the body.



**Substitution infraction**

**S22—Substitution infraction.** Right hand on left shoulder.



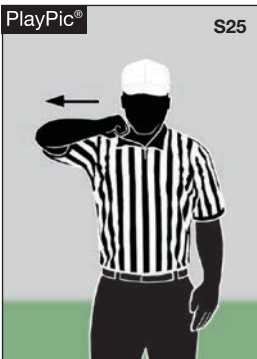
Equipment violation

**S23—Equipment.** The loss-of-down signal with only the right arm.



Illegal helmet contact/  
Targeting

**S24—Illegal helmet contact/targeting.** Intended for spearing and other helmet fouls as well as for targeting. Precede with personal foul signal.



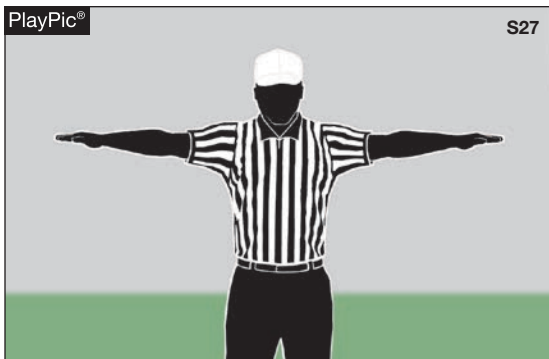
Illegal horse-collar tackle

**S25—Illegal horse-collar tackle.** Right hand grabbing the shirt collar and tugged. One tug is sufficient. Precede with personal foul signal.



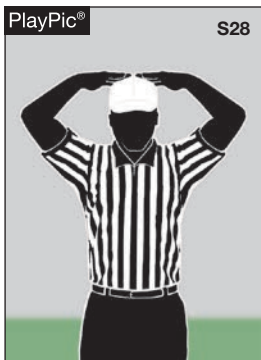
Blindside block

**S26 – Blindside block.** Both fists together in front of the body. Precede with personal foul signal.



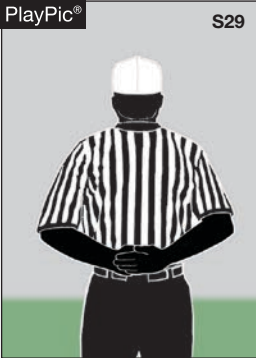
Unsportsmanlike conduct or noncontact foul

**S27 – Unsportsmanlike conduct/non-contact foul.**



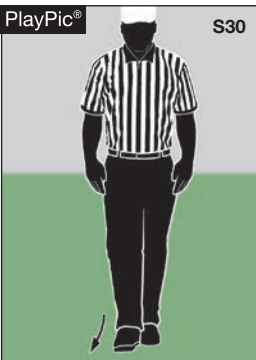
Illegal participation

**S28 – Illegal participation.** Hands on top of head with elbows out.



**Sideline interference**  
**NOTE:** Face press box when giving signal.

**S29—Sideline interference.** Cross the arms behind the back as in the military “parade rest.”



**Running into or roughing the kicker or holder**

**S30—Roughing/running into the kicker.** A short leg kick. Precede with personal foul signal for roughing.



**Illegal batting/kicking**  
 (for illegal kicking, follow with point toward foot)

**S31—Illegal batting.** Elbow out with upper arm parallel to ground. Right hand on right shoulder. Do not bounce hand up and down.

**S31—Illegal kicking.** Follow illegal batting signal by pointing to toe.



Illegal/invalid fair catch

**S32—Invalid/illegal fair-catch signal.** Use a 90 degree arm angle.



Pass interference  
Kick-catching interference

**S33—Pass interference.** One push only, and leave the hands out momentarily. Also used for kick catching interference.



Roughing the passer

**S34—Roughing the passer.** Imitate the passer's throwing motion. Precede with personal foul signal.



**Illegal pass**  
**Illegal forward handing**  
 NOTE: Face press box when giving signal

**S35—Illegal forward pass/handling.** Face the press box and do “parade rest” with right arm behind back.



**Intentional grounding**

**S36—Intentional grounding.** Palms facing each other as if the hands were going to be clapped at head height to the right of the body. One stroke to the ground at 45 degrees with both arms.



**Ineligible downfield on pass**

**S37—Ineligible downfield.** Place the right hand on the head and hold momentarily; do not tap.



Personal foul

**S38—Personal foul.** Raise the left arm head high and strike the forearm with the right fist.



Clipping

**S39—Clipping.** Bend over and slowly chop once at the back of the right calf.



Block below the waist  
Illegal block

**S40—Block below the waist.** Use two hands. Bend over and chop at both knees.





Chop block

**S41 – Chop block.** Chopping motion at the waist with both hands. Don't bend at the waist.



Holding

Illegal use of hands or arms

**S42 – Holding.** The hands should not be held in front of the face and do not pull the hands down in a jerking motion. The grip should be held for a few seconds.



Illegal block in the back

**S43 – Illegal block in the back.** Show the left hand open, grasp the left wrist with the right hand and push away slightly.



**Helping the runner  
Interlocked blocking**

**S44—Helping the runner/interlocked blocking.**

Open hands below the waist with one push away from the body.



**Grasping of facemask,  
helmet opening or chin strap**

**S45—Face mask.** Simply emulate the foul with two pulls. For the major penalty precede with the personal foul signal.



**Tripping**

**S46—Tripping.** A hard one to make visible. Swing the leg into it and don't trip.



Disqualification

**S47 – Disqualification.** Never make a show of an ejection. Thumb up and over, slowly after the penalty is enforced.

# CREW AND SUPPLEMENTARY SIGNAL CHART

Note: When crew radios are available for use, any signal designed for internal crew communication need not be used.



**11 players on field**  
Raise fist at or above head height so it can be seen over players.



**Less than 11 players on field**  
Must face the official who is being signaled to so it can be seen.



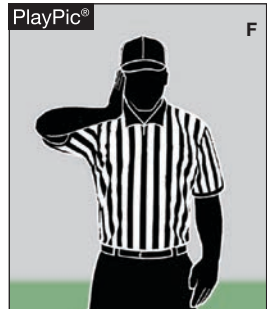
**Play ended inbounds, start clock.**



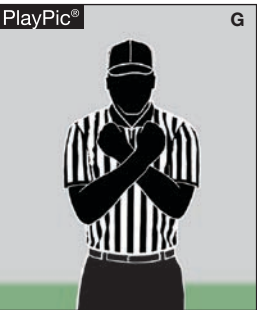
**Play ended out of bounds, don't start clock**  
Crossed wrists at belt. Make sure the Referee can see the signal.



**Receiver caught ball out of bounds**  
Use only when it is clear the ball was possessed.



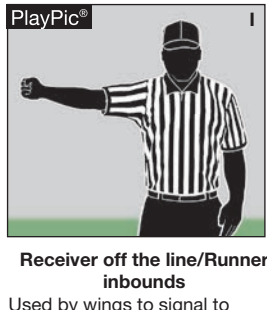
**Unbalanced line**  
Indicates keys will be impacted.



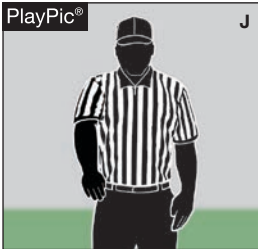
**Double stakes**  
Use it to indicate there is more than 10 yards for a first down.



**Snapper protection rules apply/Clock will stop at end of down**  
Used prior to 4th down plays.



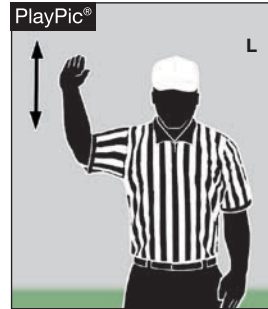
**Receiver off the line/Runner inbounds**  
Used by wings to signal to one another to indicate widest receiver is off the line. Also used by a wing official (quick punch) to signal the Back Judge that the runner remained inbounds during a touchdown run.



**Receiver on the line**  
Used by wings to signal to one another to indicate widest receiver is on the line. Use the arm on the side of the defensive formation.



**Trapped pass**  
Tap the ground twice with an open palm.



**Reset play clock**  
Pumping motion near the head, "push the sky."  
One hand - 25 sec  
Two hands - 40 sec



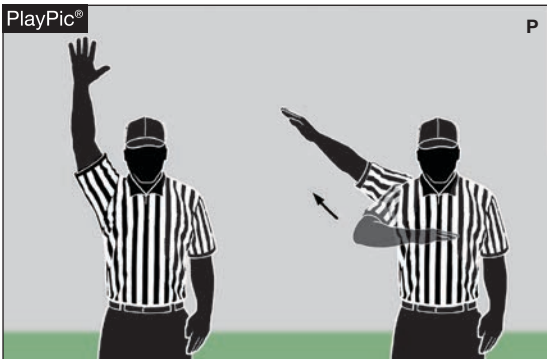
**Formation confirmed**  
Used by a wing to indicate he confirms the formation with the opposite wing.



**Your clock**  
Indicates clock must be observed by official facing scoreboard.



**Clearly a first down**  
Point with index finger on chest. Used by the Line Judge for the Referee.



**Play clock countdown**  
Used by Back Judge for play clock - one arm up with 10 seconds remaining and then count the last five seconds with the same arm at upward angle.

(Chart continued on next page)

**5 Gets One**

Open hand on chest. Used by Referee to ask Linesman if a first down will result from a 5-yard penalty against the defense. The Linesman will respond either by giving signal Q with his downfield hand and indicating a first down with the index finger on his other hand pointing to the line-to-gain stake, signal O, or by giving signal Q with his downfield hand and indicating the number of the current down with his other hand.

## CHAPTER 15

# MICROPHONE USE

Good signals and communication are extremely important. Communication works for those who work at it. Good microphone communication and presentation gives the audience both in the stadium and watching on television the feeling that the officiating crew is competent and capable of working the game. All of this is interpreted through the Referee when he starts talking through the microphone.

### Preparation

The equipment must be tested and a spare battery obtained. The Referee should know who can assist if the equipment malfunctions. In most cases, corrective action won't be possible until half time. Keep in mind the fans will blame the Referee for faulty equipment. It is best to pick someone with distinctive clothing sitting about halfway up the stands between the 4five-yard lines.

If the game is televised, know where the camera is located and pick the exact spot you will face for each announcement.

Practice is essential. Practice all your announcements in front of a mirror as often as you can. Before entering the field, practice using the on/off switch of the microphone without looking at it. Fumbling with the switch is a reason for people to doubt the abilities of the crew.

### General

Please be succinct; the fewer words you use to describe a play the better. Teams should be referred to by name e.g., Central or Springfield or offense/defense and never by color. For kick plays use: receivers or kickers instead of offense/defense.

Include the number of the fouling player on all penalties and explain unusual or complicated plays. If a flag is picked up, announce, "There is no foul for \_\_\_."

Come to a complete stop before speaking and stand upright with your feet shoulder's width apart. Do not walk into your signal. Keep your signals between your chin and sternum and do not sway when pointing.

Avoid saying, "There was" or "We have" before announcing the foul.

When a microphone is utilized, fouls on free kicks should be presented by the Referee. However, when in the absence of a microphone, the Back Judge shall present the signal at the middle of the field.

### Announcements

Below are some examples on what to say when announcing a call.

#### Dead Ball - Before the Play

(It is recommended the words "dead ball" not be used in the announcement.) Instead, please use "There is no play," "Prior to the play," or "Before the play."

- Prior to the play, false start, number 76, 5-yard penalty, remains 2nd down.
- There is no play, snap infraction number 55 offense, 5-yard penalty, remains 1st down.
- Encroachment, number 95 lined up in the neutral zone, half the distance to the goal, remains 2nd down.
- Prior to the play, encroachment, number 96 defense, half the distance to the goal, the ball will be set at the 11/2-yard line for the try.
- Delay of game, offense, 5-yard penalty, by rule the clock will start on the snap.
- Prior to the kick, encroachment number 24 of the kicking team, 5-yard penalty, repeat the kick (When a microphone is utilized, fouls on free kicks should be presented by the Referee. However in the absence of a microphone, the Back Judge shall present the signal at mid-field).

### **Dead Ball - After the play**

- After the play, personal foul, number 24 defense, 15 yards will be added to the end of the run, 1st down.
- The result of the play is a first down. After the play, unsportsmanlike conduct, number 12 offense, 15-yard penalty, 1st and 10 Central.
- Prior to the snap, encroachment number 96 defense, half the distance to the goal, the ball will be set at the 1-1/2 yard line for the try.
- The result of the play is a Touchdown, the score counts; after the score, unsportsmanlike conduct – taunting, number 24 offense, the ball will be placed at the 18-yard line for the try.
- After the score, unsportsmanlike

conduct, number 99 defense, the try is successful, the foul will be assessed on the kick off.

- There were two fouls after the play, personal foul number 55 defense, also personal foul number 88 offense, the penalties for those fouls will cancel, 2nd down.
- There were two fouls after the play, personal foul number 55 defense, also, personal foul number 88 offense, number 88 has been ejected for striking an opponent, the penalties will be enforced in the order of occurrence, the first penalty will be enforced half the distance to the goal which will result in a first down, the second penalty will be 15 yards enforced against the offense, it will be first down. (these penalties should be walked off after the microphone explanation with a signal by the Referee during each enforcement).

### **Disqualification**

- After the play, personal foul, fighting, number 44 defense, 15 yards will be added to the end of the run, 1st down, number 44 is disqualified.

### **Live-Ball Fouls**

- Illegal formation, offense, only 6 men on the line of scrimmage, 5-yard penalty, repeat 3rd down.
- Holding, number 76, offense, 10-yard penalty from the spot of the foul, repeat 3rd down.
- Holding, number 76, offense, that penalty is declined, 4th down.
- Personal foul - roughing the passer, number 96 defense, half the distance to the goal automatic first down.
- Illegal kick out of bounds, 5-yard penalty, repeat the kick.



- Free kick infraction, kick went out of bounds untouched by the receiving team, the ball will be placed on the 35 yard line, first down Central.

### **Two or More Live-Ball Fouls (Double foul)**

- There are two fouls on the play, holding number 76 offense, also defensive pass interference number 30, those fouls offset, replay 2nd down.
- There are two fouls during the return, illegal block in the back number 24 of the receiving team, also personal foul - facemask number 33 on the kicking team, those fouls offset, re-kick.

### **Multiple Fouls**

- There are two fouls on the play by the offense, holding number 76, that penalty is declined, intentional grounding number 10, that 5-yard penalty is accepted and is enforced from the spot of the foul and includes a loss of down, 4th down.
- There are two fouls on the play by the defense, pass interference number 35, that penalty is declined, personal foul – roughing the passer number 96, that foul will be added onto the end of the run, half the distance to the goal, automatic first down.

### **During a Scrimmage Kick**

- During the return, block in the back on the receiving team, 10-yard penalty from the end of the run, first down Central.
- Kick catch interference number 88, the receiving team is awarded a fair catch after a 15-yard penalty is assessed, first down Central.
- During the kick, holding number 80 on the receiving team, 10-yard penalty from the end of the run, first down Central.

# CHAPTER 16

# TIMEOUTS

## Charged Timeout

Any official should grant a valid timeout request from the head coach or his designee or a player and immediately stop the clock if it is running. Per the rules, coaches (or players) may not call a timeout but may request one. Consequently the clock should stop when a timeout is granted, not when the request is made.

When an official signals a timeout, he should glance at the clock. A timeout takes effect when the granting official begins to signal to stop the clock.

A one- or two-second lag for the clock operator to react is acceptable. Any additional time that runs off should be considered an error and corrected. The clock operator's lag time to react to the signal can be compensated for in the last two minutes of either half and the clock corrected.

The official granting the timeout must report the timeout to the Referee.

If a wing official is the official granting the request, after stopping the clock when a timeout is requested from the team bench or by any player, he should hustle immediately to the bottom of the numbers and give a clear signal to Referee as to which team

called the timeout. The Referee will then give the "official" timeout signal.

After signaling to stop the clock (two strokes are sufficient) while facing the press box, the Referee indicates the team being charged the timeout by facing the team and pointing in that team's direction. If the Referee does not have a microphone, holding his arms in the pointing motion for a few seconds will help the press box discern which team has taken the timeout. The Referee should announce the number of the timeout e.g., "Timeout – Coyotes; first charged timeout" or "Timeout – Bulldogs; third and final charged timeout."

All officials must record the number and team of the player requesting the timeout (use "C" for the coach), the quarter and the time remaining on the game clock. Each official then confirms with the Referee the number of timeouts each team has remaining. The number of timeouts remaining for the team that has taken the timeout is given first (e.g., if Team A takes the first timeout of the first half, the check is stated as "2 and 3" or "23."

When either team takes a charged timeout, the Linesman and Line Judge

will inform the coaches on their respective sidelines of the timeouts each team has remaining. That is of particular importance in the late stages of a half. The answer should be known without having to check the information card. If it is a team's last timeout, the Referee must personally inform the head coach in the presence of the wing official and communicate that with all crew members.

The Back Judge or the Umpire is responsible for timing the timeout. The one-minute count begins when the Referee is informed of the timeout. When 45 seconds have expired, the Referee may use a whistle and/or voice to notify the Linesman and Line Judge so they can inform their teams. When the minute has expired, the Referee whistles the ball ready for play.

The head coach (only) may leave his team box to notify the wing official of his request for a timeout when the ball is snapped inside the 20-yard line. When doing so, he may not enter the field of play.

If both teams request a timeout at about the same time, both requests should be granted and each team charged with the timeouts running consecutively. That will avoid a debate over which team should be charged; both teams wanted a timeout and both teams received one.

There is no foul if a timeout is requested in excess of a team's allotment. Officials simply ignore the request. If such a timeout is erroneously granted, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds and the game clock started as soon as possible.

The rules allow only one coach to call timeouts and that almost always will be the head coach. The wing official should discuss timeout request procedures with head coach before the game. Some timeout requests

are urgent because they are needed either to conserve time, to stop the wrong play from being run or to make a defensive adjustment/substitution. In those situations, it may be difficult to determine which coach is requesting the timeout. Nonetheless, such a request should be granted immediately. The wing official should not turn his back to the field to verify it was the head coach who spoke. The interests of the game are best served by granting timeouts immediately and asking questions later.

### **Official's Timeout**

The procedure for signaling an official's timeout is the same as for a charged timeout except that after stopping the clock, the Referee taps his chest to indicate it is an official's timeout. The game clock should be restarted as quickly as possible. When that happens the ready for play should not be rushed. During timeouts, wing officials are responsible for monitoring conferences near their sideline. At the 45-second mark, the wing official should prompt the coach to end his conference.

### **Injury**

When a player is obviously injured, the covering official should advise the player to stay still and call for assistance. Other players should be advised to stay away and not be allowed to assist teammates. Once medical staff arrives, all officials should step away allow the staff to do their job.

If the official's timeout is for injury, any team conference must be an "Outside Nine Yard Mark Conference." If the delay is prolonged, the Referee should encourage teams to go outside the numbers. If a team requests a charged timeout before the officials notice an injured player, the timeout

shall be an official's timeout and the requesting team shall not be charged a timeout unless they wish to take one after the injury is cleared.

It is not within an official's purview to determine if an injury is being faked and no such allegation should be made on the field. Any suspicious circumstances should be noted on the game report.

### Helmet-Off

When a play ends and it is determined that a player's helmet came completely off during the down or if missing or improperly worn equipment (which cannot be immediately corrected) is observed at any time, the covering official will signal an official's timeout which will stop the clock if it is running. The Referee will mirror the signal to the press box followed by a two handed tap to the chest and pointing to the player removed for one play. The wing official whose team requires a substitute for the replaced player must notify the head coach and note the player's jersey number. Recording the number will be helpful if a timeout is taken. Before the ready for play, the Referee must ensure the head coach recognizes that the player must remain out of the game for the one play and that the team has had sufficient time to identify a substitute. This procedure should be followed even if the helmetless player immediately runs off the field when the play ends. Note: the team cannot "buy the player back" into the game with a team timeout.

### Other Equipment

In addition to the helmet coming completely off as described above, if an official notices a player with missing equipment or improperly worn equipment the clock is to be stopped and an official's timeout taken with the player sent out of the game for a down. Minor cases with a quick fix such as

inserting a dangling mouthpiece can be handled without stopping the clock. Officials are expected to use good judgment regarding equipment. It is possible for equipment to be displaced or become loose during contact. Unless the malfunctioning equipment is clearly intentional, there is no foul. If necessary, a player shall be given up to 25 seconds to correct a problem on the field without the assistance of a team attendant. If that cannot be done, the team must replace the player for at least one down.

### Coach-Referee Conference

If an official coach-Referee conference is granted, the wing official on that coach's sideline should accompany the Referee to monitor the conversation. If the coach enters the field, he should be walked back to the sideline. The official must avoid touching the coach.

The conference should be held at the sideline with the coach facing his bench. The Referee should stand with his hands at his side or behind his back. Crossed or folded arms indicate boredom or a non-receptive attitude.

The Referee should emphasize that only the application of the rule will be discussed and not any judgment calls. Regardless of the outcome of the conference, the opposing coach must be told what transpired. If no ruling is changed, the timeout is charged to that team and the coach can subsequently meet with his players. The opposing team can have a conference outside the numbers during the entire discussion. If the team which requested the conference did not have any remaining time outs, a 5-yard penalty for delay of game is enforced.

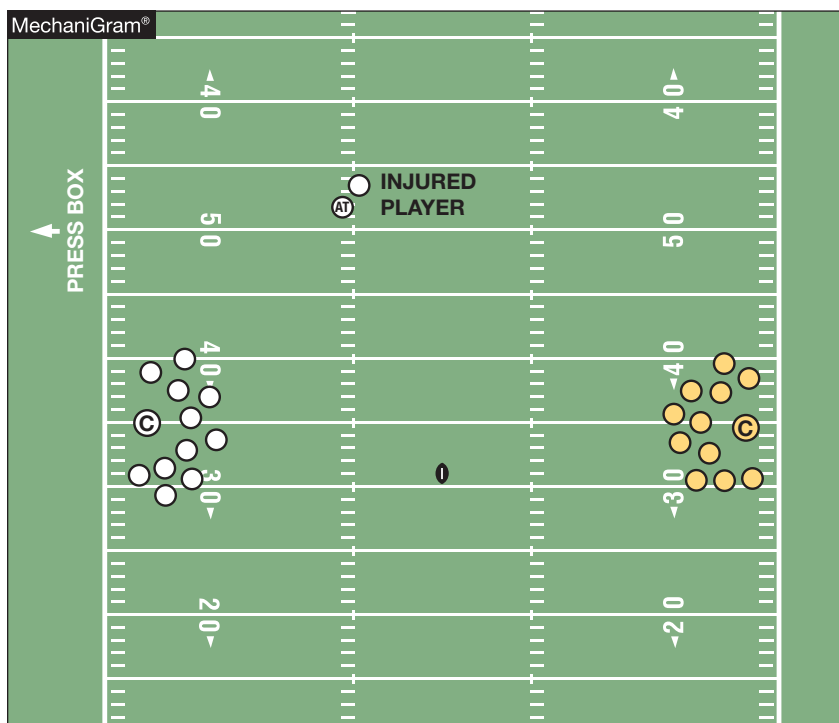
If the conference involves a possible down error, the Referee should consult with all crew members. If necessary, the Referee can check with one or

both team statisticians to get the play sequence for the series in question.

**Official's Positioning**

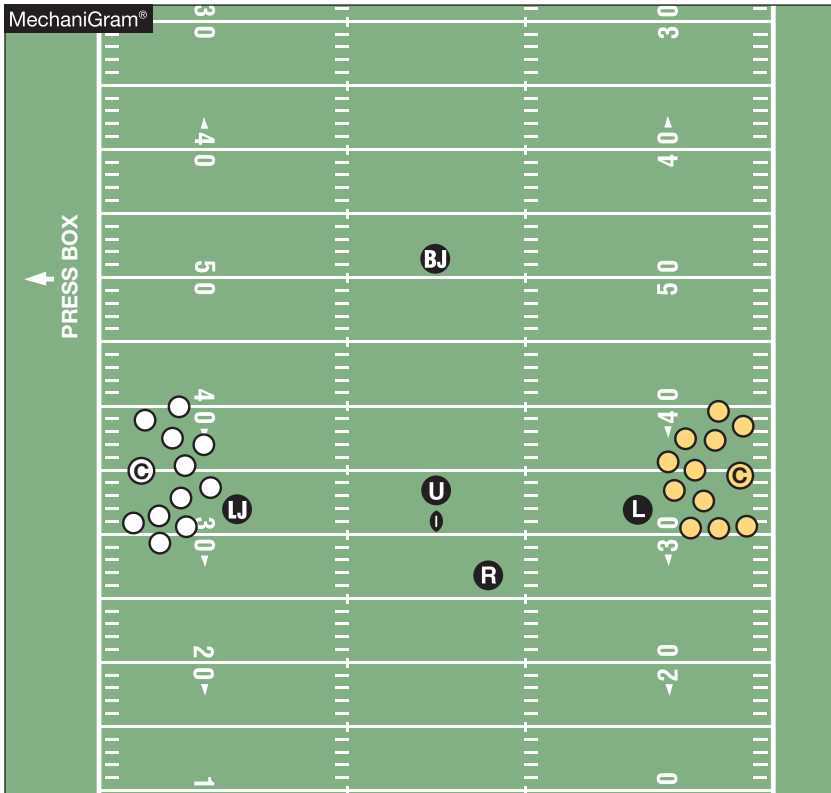
The following three diagrams illustrate the positions officials should take during a timeout. Officials must not congregate as it implies a frivolous attitude.

## INJURY TIMEOUT



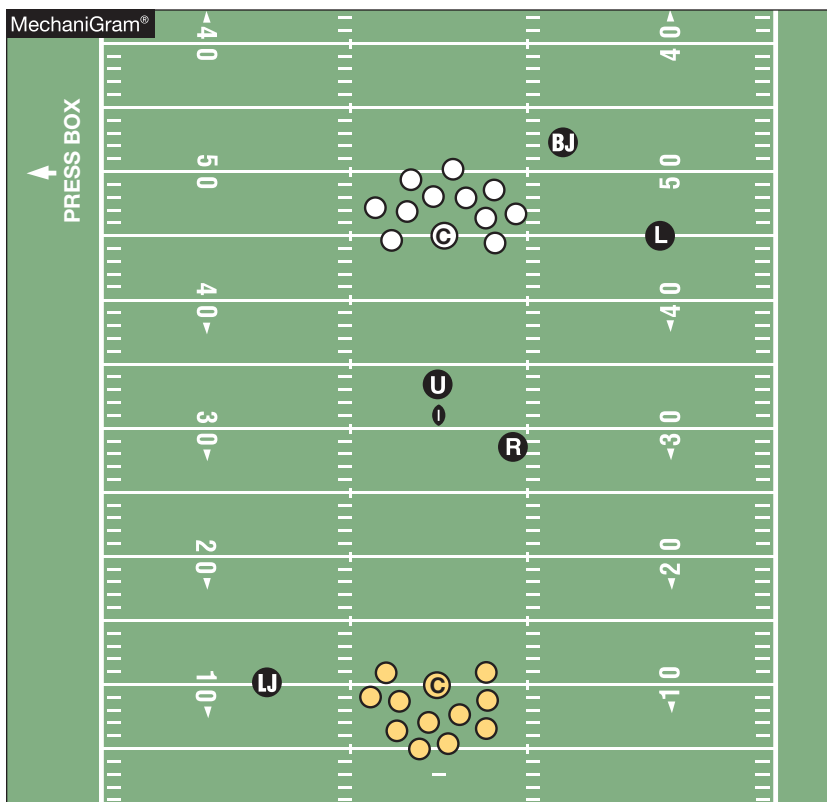
When an injury occurs and the Referee grants an Authorized Conference, it must be an “outside the nine-yard marks conference.” This Authorized Conference should be used when the Referee senses the player will be prone for a prolonged period. This also provides an opportunity for players to get water and coaches to tame emotions that may be fueled by the injury.

## TIMEOUT WITH BOTH TEAMS AT THE SIDELINES



During the timeout, the Referee and Back Judge remain in their positions in the offensive and defensive backfield respectively, the Umpire stands over the ball and the Linesman and Line Judge should take positions midway between the ball and their respective sidelines, and advise the coach of timeouts remaining as he leaves the field. If the team has used its last timeout of the half or overtime, the Referee must personally inform the head coach he is out of timeouts in the presence of the wing official.

## TIMEOUT WITH ONE OR BOTH TEAMS ON THE FIELD



During the timeout, the Referee and Back Judge remain in their positions in the offensive and defensive backfield respectively, the Umpire stands over the ball and the Linesman and Line Judge should take positions midway between the huddle and their respective sidelines, and advise the coach of timeouts remaining as he leaves the field.



## CHAPTER 17

# SIDELINE MANAGEMENT

One of the most frustrating things for wing officials is not having enough room to work along the sideline. We must be consistent in how we manage the sideline and in the use of the sideline warning. The sideline warning is a tool that provides a measure of safety along the sideline for the players, coaches and the officials. Being able to work down a sideline without players or coaches in the way allows officials to have the best possible look at all plays. Having a trustworthy “get back” coach to assist with the team area is essential.

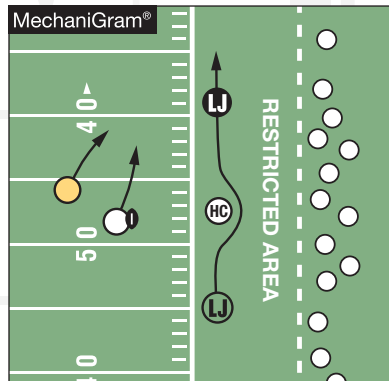
Management of the sideline and restricted area is somewhat left to the discretion of the individual wing official. At the very least, both sideline officials should agree upon a single philosophy that can be applied to both teams in a contest so that one side does not feel the other is receiving an unfair advantage.

If the team is being cooperative by keeping players back and staying out of the way, they should be thanked. Letting them know their efforts are appreciated will pay dividends. There is no need to worry about technical violations between plays when it isn't as important, such as more than three coaches in the restricted area, or a coach stepping two yards onto the field to signal a play (pick battles only when necessary).

Such coaches should simply be asked to move back and escorted back if necessary. If they are out of the

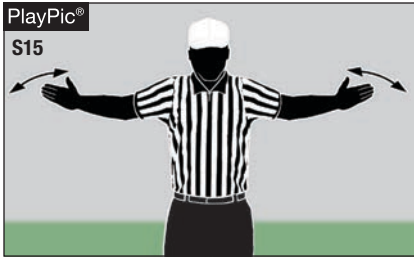
way when it's important, everything will work out. Coaches who enter the field of play and refuse a request to return to the coaching box, or berate an official while circling him must be penalized. The statistician is considered to be an assistant coach, but is allowed to go outside the team box to note the exact yard line of the play. If they abuse that privilege, we can warn, restrict them to the team box or flag them.

The control of the sideline and team box area starts before the opening kickoff. During the pregame meeting with the coaches, they should be reminded the wing officials will be working on or outside the sideline throughout the game. Officials should be diligent at the beginning of the game. It's smart to take care of issues early and then be consistent throughout the game. The fourth quarter is not



the time to begin correcting bad sideline habits.

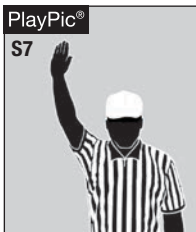
During the dead-ball period between plays, three coaches and related substitutes are allowed to be in the restricted area for the purposes of calling the plays. The head coach should be allowed to take no more than two



steps onto the field in between plays to communicate with a player. If the coach gets half the distance to the bottom of the numbers (3.5 yards), he has gone too far and must be advised to stay back. Repeated violations will draw a flag for unsportsmanlike conduct. This privilege is only for the purpose of talking to his players and is afforded to the Head Coach only. Once the offense has broken the huddle or, in the absence of a huddle, the quarterback is in position to receive a snap that area must be cleared.

**Procedure – Non-Contact Violations**

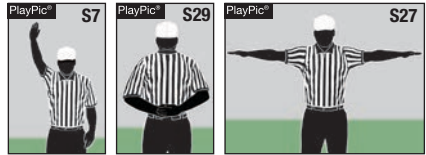
If players or coaches wander into the



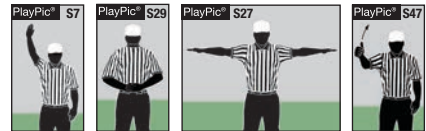
restricted area during a live ball, Rule 9-8-3 applies.

**First Offense (Warning)**

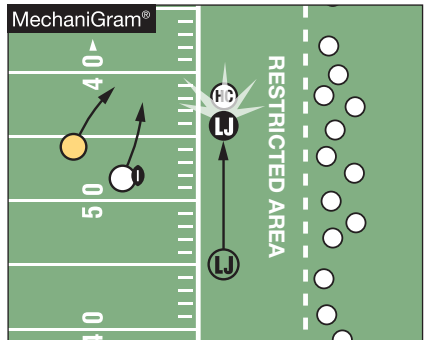
The penalty for the first offense is an official sideline warning with no distance penalty. The wing official throws his flag and after play notifies the Referee that he



is giving a sideline warning for violation of the team box rule. The Referee will give the Sideline Warning signal (S15) to the press box and then point in the direction of the offending team. The calling official



will alert the coach that this will be his one and only warning and any further infractions will result in a yardage penalty. The warning must be recorded and appear



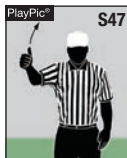
on the game report. The clock is started if it was running prior to the infraction.

After the warning is signaled by the Referee, the responsible wing official should approach the head coach and explain who was in the restricted area, and request his cooperation in keeping the



sideline clear. He will then explain the penalties for subsequent infractions.

### Second Offense (5 yards)



The second infraction is a 5-yard penalty for sideline interference. The wing official notifies the Referee that there has been a second violation of the team box rule. The Referee will give the Sideline Interference signal (S29).

The calling official will alert the coach that this is the only 5-yard penalty and any further infractions will result in an unsportsmanlike conduct foul.

### Third and Fourth Offense (15 yards)

The third and any subsequent infractions result in a 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct - sideline interference. The wing official notifies the Referee that there has been a third violation of the restricted area rule. The Referee will give the Sideline Interference signal (S29) followed by the Unsportsmanlike Conduct signal (S27)

### Procedure – Contact Violations

If the first offense results in unintentional contact with an official, a formal warning is not given.

This is a separate infraction under Rule 9-4-8 and does affect the penalty sequence for non-contact violations.

This will result in a 15-yard penalty

and the Referee will give the Personal Foul signal (S38) followed by the Sideline Interference signal (S29).

The Referee will alert the coach that any subsequent unintentional contact violations on the sideline by rule result in the disqualification of the head coach.

All officials will note the time and quarter on their game cards. The official on the opposite sideline should make that coach aware of the sideline infraction.

If the interference occurs while the ball is live, the wing official must continue to officiate. He will throw his flag and after the play, report the foul to the Referee. While identifying the culprit is desirable, exact identification is not needed.

Only the head coach will be ejected if there is a second violation.

### Other Violations

The preceding discussion applies to violations of the restricted area and the team box. The formal sideline warning is not to be used for other types of violations such as excessive commentary from coaches. Please see the chapter entitled “Communication.”

# CHAPTER 18

# FORWARD PROGRESS

Correctly marking forward progress consistently throughout the game is absolutely, without question, one of the most important responsibilities of officiating. Unless the play clearly ends in a score or a touchback, forward progress must be determined on every play.

Every runner's progress is exactly the same: The forward-most part of the ball when it's declared dead in possession of the runner (when progress is declared dead inbounds [Exception: If part of the ball is in Team A's end zone] or where it crossed the sideline when declared dead out of bounds), whether the ball is parallel to or perpendicular to the sideline, is the forward progress spot. The spot where the runner's knee touches the ground is seldom, if ever, the forward-progress spot. When the knee, elbow, hip, etc., touches the ground, ask yourself, "Where is the ball at that moment?" That is the forward progress spot.

Also, every player in possession of a live ball is a runner, so it is incorrect to treat a quarterback differently than a running back or pass receiver.

Once a runner's forward progress is ruled to have stopped while being tackled and the runner is then driven backwards or sideways, forward progress is exactly where the ball was at that moment. The whistle is blown and the play ended. No fumble may

occur behind the forward progress spot because the ball is dead by rule. If this action occurs near the sideline, wind the clock to indicate the ball became dead inbounds. Keep your head up and eyes on the players as they go out of bounds.

Forward progress for an airborne receiver is the spot where he gains possession and maintains control of the ball while being tackled and driven backward while still in the air. Should an airborne receiver have possession, be contacted, lose possession, then regain possession prior to hitting the ground with anything but his hand or foot, his progress is the spot where he last gained possession.

## Inbounds Plays

The first scenario that requires judgment is when the runner is swarmed upright by several defensive players. When the runner's voluntary movement appears to be stopped and the ball is in his possession, the covering official should hesitate briefly to ensure the runner has indeed been stopped and blow his whistle. The play ended when forward movement was stopped and not where the ball was when the whistle was blown.

Do not allow a "cheap turnover" after progress has stopped. Unless the ball became loose on the initial contact that stopped progress, the correct ruling is "no fumble." If the covering official has

any doubt when the ball became loose, the ruling should be that the play ended before the fumble.

The greatest degree of judgment is required when the runner is knocked backwards and continues to drive his legs. The runner may be able to move forward while in control of an opponent or he may actually free himself of the opponent's grasp. If the runner momentarily frees himself from the tacklers the progress spot is not automatically erased, the official should hesitate before whistling the play dead to ensure the runner's forward progress has been stopped.

### **Quarterback Sacks**

The Referee will almost always be responsible for progress spots on quarterback sacks since the wing officials are likely downfield on pass coverage. Many times the Referee has a poor angle for progress and his greatest priority is ruling on a possible fumble and watching for personal fouls, therefore he may rely on others. There is often a substantial difference (three to five yards) between the spot the quarterback is contacted and where he goes down.

It is permissible to use the beanbag to mark the progress spot in this case, but it will have to be tossed instead of dropped and thus the spot is not likely to be as accurate but should be close enough. The Referee should visually note the spot with regard to the distance in relation to the nearest five-yard line, e.g. two yards behind, three yards in front, etc. He can then tell the Umpire where to place the ball. His immediate responsibility is supervising the safety of the quarterback.

### **Sideline Plays**

For tackles near the sideline, determining the forward progress spot can be challenging. When the runner is airborne as he crosses the sideline, forward progress is where the ball crosses the plane of the sideline, not where the ball is when the runner first touches out of

bounds.

If the runner is stopped in the field of play, the clock is not stopped, but if he went out of bounds, the clock is stopped. A runner who is contacted by an opponent and crosses the sideline as he is moving forward has been forced out of bounds and the clock is stopped. If the runner is displaced laterally or backwards and goes out of bounds, his progress has been stopped in the field of play and the clock continues to run unless it is stopped for another reason such as a penalty or the awarding of a new series. The wing official will indicate the clock should run by using the wind the clock signal.

When a runner steps on the sideline, wing officials almost always mark the progress spot where the runner's foot contacted the sideline. That usually is a fairly accurate spot. However, since the progress spot is at the location of the ball, the spot where the runner's foot touched the sideline is not necessarily the correct location. The ball's location can be judged depending on whether the ball was held in the arm closest to the sideline or the arm away from the sideline.

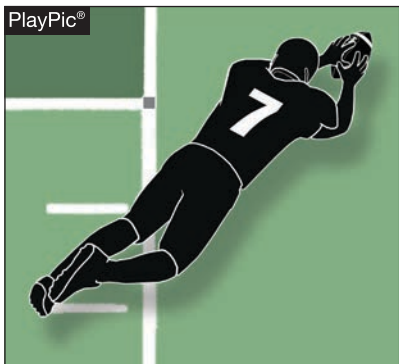
Good wing officials can accurately discern the spot based on the ball location. If the runner steps out of bounds with his lead foot and is carrying the ball in his outside arm, the location of the ball and the spot where his foot touches the sideline are virtually identical. However, if the ball is in his inside arm, it should be spotted about the length of the ball behind the spot where his foot touched out of bounds. The extra precision is most appropriate for plays that end near the goal line or the line-to-gain.

### **Plays at the Pylon**

The goal line pylons, that are placed at the intersection of the goal lines extended and the sideline, not only assist in making out of bounds calls, but also help an official in determining whether a touchback has occurred, and most importantly, whether a touchdown has been scored. Because the goal line

pylons sit on the sideline, they are entirely out of bounds. The end zone is entirely inbounds. For practical purposes, these pylons are considered out of bounds in the end zone

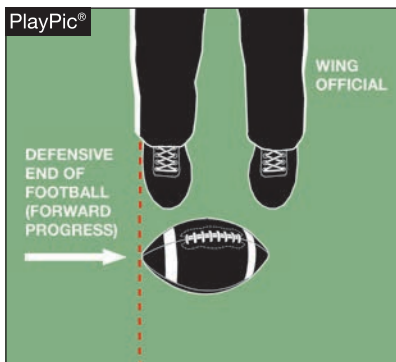
Whenever a runner is contacted near a goal line pylon, it requires the coordination of both the Back Judge and a wing official to get the play right. For a runner who is still touching the ground inbounds, the goal line plane is extended out of bounds. If the ball is held outside the sideline plane and breaks the goal line plane extended, it is a touchdown. The wing official is responsible for determining if the runner stayed inbounds, while the Back Judge (when in position at the goal line) must rule if the ball broke the plane of the goal line. These two officials must communicate with each other before either makes a call.



A ball in player possession is out of bounds when the runner or the ball touches anything, other than another player or game official, which is on or outside the sideline or end line. The spot where the ball becomes dead is under the foremost point of the ball in possession of the runner when he crosses the plane of the sideline at Team B's one-yard line. No touchdown is scored since the runner was airborne and was not touching inbounds when the ball broke the plane of the goal line extended.

Remember that a ball that contacts the pylon is considered to be in the end zone and:

- If it is in possession of a runner, it is a touchdown, touchback or safety.
- If the ball is loose, it is a touchback or a safety.



### Procedure

The wing officials are primarily responsible for forward progress. There are exceptions on free kicks and when the Back Judge is responsible for the goal line. In the latter case the wings will stop at Team B's two-yard line and the Back Judge will get the progress spot inside that line.

Progress should be indicated by putting forward the downfield foot. Keep your head up and observe players while marking a spot. Do not go around or jump over players to mark progress. Move into the field until you approach players, then stop. If a spot is close to the line-to-gain, the covering official must come all the way to the spot where the play ended, if possible. The primary official responsible for determining the forward progress spot is the wing official who can actually see the ball when the play is declared dead, and not necessarily the official that is on the side of the field where the play ended.

When possible, the spotting official should place the ball at his foot on all plays that end outside the numbers toward the sidelines. When possible, leave the ball on the ground and retrieve a new ball for the Umpire to spot the new ball at the hash mark.

## Movement

When the official reads “run,” he should hold his spot then trail the runner while outside the sideline. As he moves down the field, hopping should be avoided. Controlled casual movement provides the impression of a composed confident official. The official must get to the yard line of the progress spot while observing action on around the runner. The correct technique is to square up at the progress spot by making a ninety degree turn and moving into a position that puts the official about five to six yards from the dead-ball spot if the ball is between the numbers and the hash marks. He should stand with his feet about shoulder width apart. The eyes should always be looking at the players and not at the ground, as he squares up and moves in. From that position he will be able to observe all the play around the pile while marking the progress spot.

On plays involving the sideline he must be outside of the sideline trailing the play. He should face down the sideline while his head turns to view the players who are out of bounds. The Referee and Umpire or Back Judge can be expected to assist with the clean up around the play. On those plays, the clock stops when the runner or the ball goes out of bounds, not when the official arrives at the spot.

The covering official should sound his whistle and signal timeout as he moves to the out of bounds spot, keeping his eyes on the players at all times, not on the spot at the sideline. He should avoid leaving the progress spot until the spot has been picked up by the Umpire and he has indicated that he has the spot. Once the ball is spotted, he must check to see the spot is correct.

If a spot is close to a first down, the spotting official must come all the way to the spot where the play ended indicating to the Umpire that “It’s close” or “Let’s take a look.” He must wait for players to clear his path and then continue to spot the ball. The Umpire shall hand (not toss) the ball to an official that has crashed into the field for a critical spot. Umpires appreciate a wing official that verbalizes

confidence in their spot. This avoids confusion when the Umpire looks for a wing official with the best spot.

The Line Judge has primary responsibility for determining if a first down has been achieved. If the ball is clearly beyond the stake, he will stop the clock and signal the first down to the Referee (crew signal O). If the ball is clearly short, he will announce the number of the next down. If it is questionable, he will stop the clock and signal for the Referee to come forward and look at it. He may recommend a measurement to the Referee. Wing officials should include the details of the required line to gain such as, “The line to gain is right on the 43-yard line.”

## Cross Field Mechanic

The cross field mechanic refers to a procedure in which the wing official looks across the field to the opposite wing official for forward progress when the plays requires that he focus other aspects of the action. Examples include a pass, such a buttonhook or any ‘comeback’ pattern where the receiver is returning toward the passer when the ball is caught or a runner is simply is driven backwards while upright after a run or catch.

When those types of situations occur, the wing official across the field should obtain and hold the progress spot. The near official will focus first on completion of the catch, if applicable, and then on behavior of the nearby players. Airborne players and those being manhandled are particularly vulnerable to body slams and other personal fouls.

After playing action ceases, the nearby official should look across the field to ensure his partner has the spot. If so, the opposite wing can indicate it by moving along the dead-ball spot toward the middle of the field saying, “I have a good spot here.” The nearby official can then square off on the correct spot. If the opposite official does not have the spot, the nearby official must approximate the spot.

# CHAPTER 19

# FUMBLES

Officials have specific duties when a pile forms on top of a fumble. The ball will be spotted and the process will be much simpler if each crew member does his job.

When an official sees a fumble, he must drop a bean bag at the yard line at which the ball was fumbled (the spot may be used for penalty enforcement if a foul occurs before the loose ball is recovered or becomes dead). He must also continue officiating. See the chapter entitled “Use of the Beanbag.”

When a fumble is recovered between two officials and the pile consists of four or fewer players, there is usually no need for a digger. The officials should make eye contact and confirm what they’ve seen (e.g. “The offense has it.” “I agree.”). If they agree, and the defense has recovered, the change of possession should be signaled immediately; if the offense has recovered, the number of the next down should be announced immediately. If they don’t agree, one must serve as the digger.

If the covering official sees a player recover the fumble from a prone position, he should blow the play dead. If the defense recovers, the stop-the-clock signal is given, followed by a point in the direction of the recovering team. The official should only point once, avoiding a “tomahawk chop.”

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

If a fumble results in players from both teams forming a pile that prevents the covering official from determining possession, the ball must be “dug out” of the pile. The official closest to the pile becomes the “digger” — the official responsible for un-piling the players and determining who has recovered the fumble. The official nearest the digger signals the clock to stop and looks at the clock to be sure it is stopped. The remaining nearby officials echo the signal if the clock has not stopped and assist with un-piling players.

Assuming the pile consists of four or more players, the digger begins by getting the players on top of the pile to get up. One method is to tap those players and say, “You don’t have it; get up.” Under no circumstances is an official to pull a player off the pile. It is a personal foul for a player to pull an opponent off the pile. Pay attention when you get close to the pile; you don’t want a mouthful of helmet. The digger must aggressively search for the ball. The ball is somewhere on the ground; the digger should be, too.

If the players are slow to un-pile,



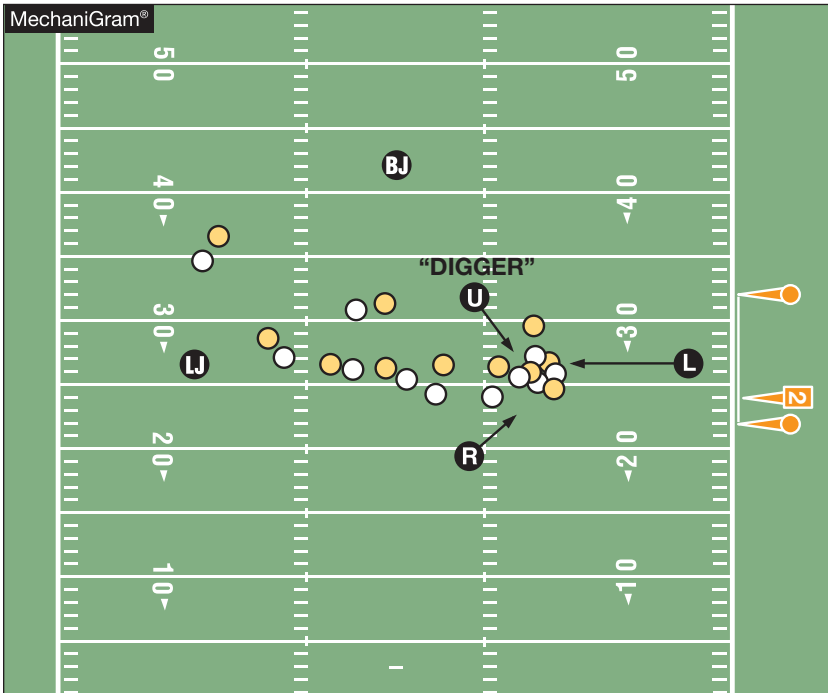
another official can approach the pile and assist the digger; the remaining officials should practice dead-ball officiating and observe the players not on the pile. Officials should be vigilant for players who pull or attempt to pull opponents from the pile. Such an effort will not be well received and may provoke retaliation. Special attention should be paid to incidents that may be personal fouls.

Another digger's trick is to grasp the arm of the player who is clearly in possession of the ball at the bottom of the pile. By saying, "I've got the ball; everyone off the pile," the digger can ensure the proper team is awarded possession while getting the players to disperse.

If the digger can clearly see the ball

or is certain he knows which player has recovered it, he verbally relays that information to the Referee by saying offense/defense or team name. The use of jersey colors is to be avoided. 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 and a digger is involved, the digger may immediately rise and signal the change of possession or he may relay the information to the nearest official who signals.

The digger can help statisticians and spectators by pointing to or otherwise identifying the player who recovered the fumble once the pile has dispersed.



The Back Judge and Line Judge should stay back and observe action away from the pile.

## CHAPTER 20

# THE HALO PRINCIPLE

The halo principle is designed to not only help define coverage areas when the ball is dead, but to ensure that all 22 players are observed on every play.

When a player is in possession of the ball (or the ball is loose on the ground, such as a rolling punt or a fumble), the halo surrounding the ball and all players in it is called the main halo. There is no hard-and-fast definition for the size of halos; use two to five yards as an approximation. The official nearest the main halo is responsible for the actions of players within the halo. The remaining officials are responsible for the secondary halos, which surround the players in their area. If the halo principle is properly applied, it helps prevent ball watching, enhances observation of players and keeps officials' eyes within their coverage zone.

The concept is illustrated in the MechaniGram, which depicts a running play up the middle. The Umpire observes the main halo (light gray shading), around the runner. The wing officials and Back Judge (5-person crew) observe the secondary halo (darker gray shading), looking for holding, illegal blocks and other fouls. The halos shift in depth, width and location as the runner advances and varies his direction left or right.

When the quarterback takes the snap and spins to hand the ball to the halfback, the quarterback, the halfback and any other Team A players in the vicinity

(possibly the fullback, a pulling lineman or a receiver who was in motion) are inside the main halo, which is observed by the Referee. But once the play moves into and beyond the line of scrimmage, the Referee should no longer be watching the ball carrier; he should instead be observing what happens to the quarterback, those other Team A players mentioned above and perhaps any Team B players who have broken through the line. The main halo becomes the responsibility of the appropriate wing official (or the Umpire if the run is up the middle).

When the runner has moved beyond the line of scrimmage, all halos shift. That's the turning point, the pivotal factor in coverage. The appropriate wing official should take the secondary halo in front of the runner, 15 or 20 yards ahead of the runner. The scope of the wing official's observation can be extremely wide, because all the action is directly in front of him.

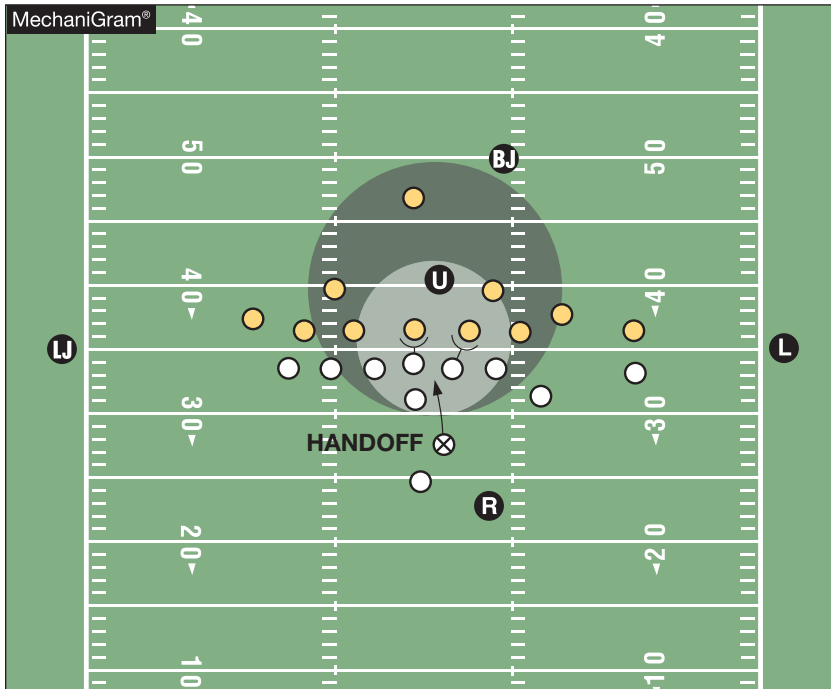
As the runner advances, the main halo moves with him and other members of the crew have to make a sudden shift of focus. The Back Judge in a crew of five must be prepared to sweep past the sidelines to assist in direct coverage if the runner should wind up out of bounds. When the runner goes beyond the sideline, the Back Judge must follow him.

When a punt flies overhead, the Umpire will be in the midst of players streaming

downfield and will actually be inside the secondary halo described earlier (the secondary circle in front of the receiver's immediate perimeter). The Umpire should watch the players who are trying to get into position to make the tackle and the opponents who are blocking them.

Some punters choose not to try to become involved in the pursuit and simply admire their punt as it flies downfield.

If the Referee is also looking at the ball far downfield, he could fail to see an unnecessary and illegal block on the punter. Even if the punter is no longer covered by roughing the kicker rules, an opponent should not get a free shot at punishing a player who is not moving to participate in the play.



# 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 or when the ready-for-play occurs is the best time for officials to change their down indicator to the correct down and confirm the number with at least one other official. Each official should always know the down and yardage needed for a first down. Double stakes require special attention. The final task before the snap is for all officials to identify their keys (see the chapter entitled “Keys”).

## Counting Players

All officials have a role in counting players between downs, although it may not necessarily be a full count of all players. 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 notes the approximate distance. He must check the down box for the correct down.

The Referee should be in position on the passing arm side of the quarterback for the next snap on a regular scrimmage down especially before blowing the ready whistle with one arm raised after an administrative stoppage.

The next priority is counting the offense. Once the count is completed, it must be signaled to the Umpire and wing official who is on the offensive team’s sideline. 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 that to the Umpire and the appropriate 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 than the regular snapper does for scrimmage kick plays. It is recommended that the Umpire know the snapper's name in the event communication is necessary.

The umpire must be cognizant of the play clock at all times. If a 40-second play clock is running, he simply spots the ball and moves promptly to his pre-snap position unless the play resulted in a first down inbounds for Team A. All communication with his teammates should be from his pre-snap position.

After an administrative stoppage, the umpire should stand over the ball until the ready-for-play signal, especially if the snapper is in position to place a hand on the ball; he then moves to a pre-snap position. If preparation for the next down is such that the offense is nowhere near the ball for the next snap before the ready-for-play, the Umpire can move off the ball to his pre-snap position.

In either case, when the umpire is standing over the ball and Team A is ready to snap it, the umpire may ask the snapper "Please wait until I am in position."

Next, the down box is checked for the correct down. The position of the ball should be tracked by using an elastic wrist band indicator on the hand

opposite the down indicator.

The chapter entitled "Ball Handling" has diagrams of the wrist band configurations. If the umpire prefers he can use the following abbreviated version: 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 (those are diagrams A-C-E-G-I in the chapter entitled "Ball Handling").

The next priority is counting the offense. Once the count is completed, it must be signaled to the Referee and viewed by the wing official who is on the offensive team's sideline. If the count is less than 11 the Umpire will signal that to the Referee and the appropriate wing official.

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.

The pre-snap position should be as close to the linebackers as he can get without getting in their way. He should be slightly behind the middle linebacker, but not directly behind him and he should announce his presence. Normally that will result in a position that is 4-7 yards beyond the line. He must have 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 or hands-on-thighs) 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 the beginning of the snap 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. In the latter two cases, the Line Judge should immediately stop the clock.

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 bring any error to the Linesman's attention.

The wing on the defensive sideline is responsible for counting the defense. He must signal his count to the Back Judge when the offense breaks their huddle. The wing on the offensive sideline needs only to count the backfield and he does not signal that.

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" (crew signal "I"). It is recommended a hand pointing to the line of scrimmage with the up-field arm be used to indicate "on the line" (crew signal "J"). It also is recommended to use a tip of the hat signal (crew signal "M") so the crewmate is assured the information is confirmed. Both wings punching back is an indication the formation might be illegal.

The wing officials use an extended

foot or hand while tapping the thigh to advise the widest offensive player of the line of scrimmage. Players must not be coached on about where they need/want to be. If a player is caused to move by a false start or an illegal formation, it will degrade the official's credibility. Officials should do everything possible (short of the preceding) to make the formation legal. Common sense and preventive officiating are the mandate.

Next comes the check for no more than four in the backfield. He can ascertain there are exactly 11 players on the offense from the signal given by the Referee and Umpire when the offensive huddle breaks (crew signal "A"). The wings have primary responsibility for false starts and encroachment on their side of the field. 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. The head coach should be allowed to take no more than two steps onto the field in between plays to communicate with a player (see the chapter entitled "Sideline Management"). 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, the

receiver should be reminded how to signal properly.

The Back Judge counts the defense. If the count is 11 or less, the proper signal should be given to the wing official on the defensive team's sideline when the offensive huddle breaks (crew signal "B"). If the count is greater than 11, the players should be recounted immediately and if no player is departing when the recount is completed, the whistle is blown and a flag thrown for a substitution infraction.

When a player, either offensive or defensive, is departing the field and the snap is imminent, the Back Judge is responsible for determining if the player was on the field at the snap. Such a player is off the field if his next step would be out of bounds.

Unless there is a visible play clock, the Back Judge keeps the play clock. When there are 10 seconds remaining on the play clock, the Back Judge raises one hand above his head; when five seconds remain, the Back Judge visibly counts the remaining seconds (crew signal "P"). The Back Judge also times the 60-second interval between a successful field goal or try and the ensuing kickoff.

## CHAPTER 22

# DEAD-BALL OFFICIATING

It is sometimes difficult for officials to accept the fact that officiating “while nothing is going on” is more important than observing live action. Missing a holding infraction is not as devastating as missing a shot to the head after the ball is dead. Thus, the first step to becoming a great dead-ball official is recognizing its importance, followed by the ability to maintain focus throughout the entire game.

Dead-ball officiating is consistent with an official’s number one priority — player safety. Player fights will ruin a football game. Officials must be able to sense trouble and take the necessary steps to prevent tempers from escalating. Anticipate problems by observing how players behave after the whistle and using voice, whistle, and physical presence to control players. There is a fine line between warning and threatening as well as brutality and firmness. Sometimes letting the players know they are being watched is a sufficient deterrent. The standards should be set early and remain consistent.

Most dead-ball fouls occur within five seconds after the ball becomes dead. All officials need to keep their eyes on players until there is enough separation among opponents. Each official (except the umpire) should gently pinch-in after the play keeping all 22 players in view

if possible. Each official also has a halo area and they need to keep their head up and observe it. Staring down at the progress spot accomplishes nothing. Chasing after the football detracts from dead-ball coverage and should only be done after players have cleared. Fumbles that result in a pile present an opportunity for personal fouls if players decide to “assist” the officials by roughly pulling opponents off the pile.

Plays that end with players out of bounds, especially in the opponent’s team box, deserve special attention. The wing official must turn and watch the players while holding his spot. The Back Judge and/or Referee must get there quickly, carefully avoiding the other players in the bench area. The Back Judge must always be there. The Referee only has a realistic chance of helping if the play goes to the passing arm side of the quarterback. The opponents must be brought out of the bench area visually, if not physically.

When preventive officiating fails and trouble breaks out, officials must keep their cool as those around them are losing their poise. The official’s job then becomes to make sure all violations are identified and that all those penalized are in fact the true violators. The task is to step back and record the numbers.



## Fights

When a fight breaks out, the official's first priority should be safety. In many cases, nothing can be done immediately with regard to the safety of the combatants; however, officials must move swiftly to prevent the fight from expanding. The wing officials should try to prevent additional participants from coming out of the team box. If players have begun to enter the field, a strong presence of officials will encourage the non-participants to stop. Coaches should be allowed to enter the field to assist in separating the combatants.

As a general rule, officials should not attempt to break up a fight. Not only does the official who does so risk personal injury, but he also risks liability if a player is struck while being restrained. Verbal communication with the combatants may help separate the players. "That's it, guys" or "everyone to your sideline" may contribute to calming the players down.

Officials should avoid using threats or reciting the penalties the players face. The best approach is to be assertive without being aggressive. Officials should not use forceful physical action such as pushing players to the ground or pinning them there. Grabbing a player's face mask or jerking them off the pile also must be avoided. The intervening official must also remain calm. Matching the player's anger and frustration will only increase the intensity.

If the players are standing an arm's length apart and exchanging blows, it is ill advised, if not impossible, for officials to get between them. It's not a good idea to get within range of wild swings. However, if the fight becomes a mauling or one player gains a significant advantage and the likelihood of serious injury increases, officials may have to take the risk and intervene.

Players that get locked up with one another will have to be physically

separated. This should be done by two officials, not one. The initial approach must be within the view of both fighters to avoid being a victim of an errant elbow. The two officials should approach "tied up" players from opposite sides of the altercation. It's best to lead with one arm over the top of the entanglement and the other arm underneath while keeping the face from being exposed to a stray punch. The officials should then squeeze together, working their way between the players.

Once the players are separated, the officials should remain between them. If necessary, an official can place a hand on a player's chest to maintain the separation. Once the combatants have been separated, an official should stay with them until they are totally cooled off and then escort them to the team box or turn them over to a coach.

Officials who are not involved in separating players should write down the jersey numbers of the players involved in the fight and the numbers of all substitutes who left the team box during the fight.

One of the most important follow-ups to a fight is to identify the player who started it. Officials must be careful to distinguish between players who retaliated and/or escalated the hostilities and those who were merely protecting themselves. A good example is a player who shoves away an opponent who has struck first – that is not retaliation.

Once order has been restored and the teams separated, the crew should meet to compare notes and discuss the players to be ejected. The Referee should then personally notify each head coach of the ejected players. Those decisions are not negotiable and video cannot be used to make or change ejection decisions. CHSAA and the schools may use video after the game to identify additional culprits.

**Disqualification/Ejections**

No one is to be disqualified from the game prior to consultation with the Referee, including those for two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls. The matter should be discussed among all officials who observed the incident. If the incident involved a fight, officials must be certain they have the correct jersey number of all culprits. For two unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, the Referee must review both fouls to ensure they clearly qualify as unsportsmanlike conduct fouls.

Anyone subject to the rules may be disqualified or removed from the field area. The only exceptions are trainers, the Athletic Directors of each school, school principals and school district superintendents. Objectionable behavior by any of the preceding personnel should be noted in the game report. The statistician is under the control of the head coach and is to be treated as an assistant coach. Problems with other personnel such as announcers, grounds keepers, etc. should be addressed with game management without delaying the game,

When a player is disqualified from a game, he may not participate in the remainder of that game. At the discretion of the head coach, the player may remain in the team bench area, but must remain under adult supervision until the game is concluded. Officials are not authorized to mandate a player's removal from the team area.

When a coach (or any other adult support person) is disqualified from a game, he must leave the stadium area and is prohibited from any further contact with his team, direct or indirect, for the remainder of the game. Such disqualified personnel may not go to the press box or go sit in the stands. For non-compliance, the Referee may forfeit the game.

All disqualifications should be reported to both coaches including the reason for the ejection. The Referee should obtain

the names of all ejected personnel at the time of the ejection.

All disqualifications must be reported to CHSAA within 24 hours. See the chapter entitled "Post Game Duties."

# CHAPTER 23

# INTERMISSIONS

## Between Quarters

When the clock expires at the end of the quarter, the Referee should first ensure there are no flags lying on the ground. He then confirms with the Back Judge that there are no timing issues and holds the ball above his head with one hand to indicate end of the quarter.

All officials must note and record the yard line and down and distance prior to moving the ball. After confirming the information with the Referee and Umpire, the Linesman should relocate the chains (see the chapter entitled “Chain Crew”).

The Umpire determines the exact spot the ball occupies (yard line and position between the hash marks) and moves the ball by directly jogging to that corresponding location on the opposite side of the 50-yard line. He confirms with the Referee and Linesman that the ball is placed at the correct spot before putting it down and stays over the ball until the Referee marks it ready for play.

The Line Judge proceeds to the corresponding spot opposite side of the 50-yard line, faces in and holds that spot unobtrusively until the ball is spotted.

When all officials have completed their duties, the wing officials are notified to ask their teams to get onto the field.

The Back Judge monitors the bench huddle until the Linesman is cleared from chain responsibility up to and including getting the team onto the field, then verifies that the clock is set to 12:00 for the new quarter to begin.

If a measurement is necessary after the last play of a quarter and the ball is short of the stake, the chains should be used to re-spot the ball.

## Halftime

When the clock expires at the end of the first half, the Referee should first ensure there are no flags lying on the ground. He then confirms with the Back Judge that there are no timing issues and holds the ball above his head with one hand to indicate end of the quarter.

Once both teams have left the field, the Back Judge should start the game clock for halftime. The timer should put 15:00 (or previously agreed upon amount) on the clock (see the chapter entitled “Game Timing”). He should also keep the time on his watch.

The Referee should get second half options (kick, receive, choice of goal) directly from the head coach in the presence of the sideline official. In practicality, the Referee will know which team will be receiving and all that is necessary is to find out which direction the opponent’s want to kick. The Back Judge should secure a ball from Team

K upon its return to the field.

At least one official must be on the field before the intermission expires. That official will check to ensure both teams have players on the field before time expires. If both teams have started warming up before the intermission ends, the mandatory three-minute warm-up should be started. That is considered mutual agreement to shorten the intermission; however, it cannot be shortened to less than ten minutes. If the full intermission is utilized, the three-minute warm-up should be started as soon as the clock operator can reset the clock. No signal from the crew is necessary.

The Line Judge and Back Judge should be near the team huddles and work with the coaches to get the teams on the field. They should not go to their kickoff positions until teams are on the field.

### **After-Score Intermissions**

After a score other than a touchdown (try, field goal or safety), there is also a one-minute intermission during which regular timeout privileges are allowed. These should be timed so that the game is not delayed.

Wing officials need to stand in close proximity to the team huddle and be prepared to get the team onto the field for the ensuing kickoff following the score.

### **End of Game**

When the game is over, the Referee holds the ball over his head and the official's jurisdiction typically ends. If he does that without knowing there was a foul on the last play, the game cannot end until the penalty is addressed. If he fails to do so, the official's jurisdiction ends when the Referee leaves the field. However, the game officials retain clerical authority over the game through the completion of any reports, including those imposing disqualifications, that are responsive to actions occurring while

the game officials had jurisdiction. Any post-game confrontations with coaches or fans, or any other acts observed by the officials that reflect negatively on the game, must be reported to CHSAA.

All officials must promptly leave the field together when the game is over. Officials should neither seek nor avoid coaches. Do not take the time to shake hands with coaches or each other. The latter can be perceived by a disgruntled fan as, "Wow! They think they did a great job." It is recommended that the officials wait until arrival in the official's dressing room before making any facial expressions or comments about the game. Remember, there are many disgruntled eyes on the officials during this time. It is also possible for comments made in the locker room to be heard through the wall.

### **Overtime**

If overtime is necessary, both teams return to their boxes at the conclusion of regulation play for a three-minute intermission. That should be timed on the game clock. If additional overtime periods are necessary, the intermission is two minutes and will be timed by the Back Judge.

## CHAPTER 24

# GAME MANAGEMENT

Officials are facilitators. One of their main responsibilities is to manage the game and ensure it flows smoothly and fairly. This chapter provides guidelines for handling a variety of special situations including spectator behavior, bands that are not complying with the established timeframes, teams that want to commemorate special events/players or support worthy causes, and lightning and cold weather procedures.

### Spectators

Officials assigned to officiate a contest are responsible for the conduct of the contest. However, controlling crowds and crowd reactions are not within the officials' province. That responsibility falls to game administrators. There have been situations where the officials have made a bad situation worse by engaging in conversation with unruly spectators.

Officials must be more tolerant of fans than any other group. Spectators can mostly yell whatever they want, but profanity and racially offensive remarks should not be tolerated.

Officials should never engage directly with spectators to include any verbal response. Addressing the spectator directly is a no-win situation and often serves to make a bad situation worse by heightening their level of abuse. Under no circumstance should an official ever

confront, challenge, rebuke, or threaten a spectator, or make gestures of any kind toward a spectator before, during, or after a contest.

If spectators begin to interfere with the conduct of a contest; cause an official to become distracted through continual and unrelenting verbal abuse; or berate players, coaches, or officials in an unacceptable or vulgar manner, officials should stop the action, report the spectator(s) to the home school administration or the nearest uniformed security officer and ask that they be restrained or removed from the facility. If no game administrator is present, as is often the case at sub varsity contests, officials may have to call on coaches or other school personnel to remove an unruly spectator.

In cases where objects are thrown onto the field and the offender(s) cannot be identified, it is permissible to request having a section of the stands cleared. The game may be temporarily halted until the situation is resolved but terminating a game must be an absolute last resort.

Following the ejection of a spectator, please file an incident report with CHSAA.

### Bands and Field Ceremonies

Officials must understand the band's role and be prepared to deal with the

challenges they may present. Band members/leaders have a role and they must be treated with respect. There can be many pitfalls and if the officials take the attitude that it's a football game and the band has no rights, there is sure to be ill will generated.

At many games, there is not a scripted pregame sequence. Even when there is a plan for a ceremony, no one with knowledge of it may be available to inform the officials. Officials must be flexible and not take a rigid approach. If the Referee decides he's going to get the captains at the five-minute mark and toss the coin with three minutes and nothing will get in the way, the game is likely to begin on the wrong foot. If the band is in the middle of the field when it's time for the coin toss or another pregame ceremony such as Parents Night is still in progress, the Referee has two choices:

- Wait for the band to leave or the ceremony to end, or
- Do the coin toss ceremony at another part of the field.

Do not charge through the band or other ceremony with the captains. Work with the game administrator to move things along as quickly as possible. If the Athletic Director plans 25-minute homecoming ceremonies, inform the game administrator that is in violation of the rule and it is required by rule to assess a five-yard penalty against the home team for delay of game. Report the incident to CHSAA through the Area Director.

If the band is on the field or other half time activities are still in progress when the clock starts for the 3-minute warmup, allow the activities to complete. The players can warm up elsewhere if the start of the second half is delayed beyond the control of either coach. General guidance for officials during the game:

- Do not tolerate the use of a whistle. When the first whistle is heard, the game must be stopped and the issue politely addressed.

- Do not ask a band to stop playing unless a complaint is made.

- If a request is by a head coach, the Referee must address the issue with game management. Only in a rare scenario would a band not be able to play at all.

- If the band is playing while their own team has the ball, it is strictly an issue between the coaching staff and game management.

### Special Events

Players may wear items at any game to recognize a charitable organization. The item may not be dangerous or confusing and must comply with all rules. The colors of shoes, socks and spats are not restricted by rule. As in all other cases, the Umpire shall be the final judge of whether or not an item is appropriate.

Possible abuses of this policy should be reported to CHSAA through the Area Director.

The participation of teams in charity recognition events is increasing in popularity; however, officials must be careful to not create a distraction or become the focus of attention. The official uniform cannot be modified, but a colored whistle and matching lanyard may be considered for specific games as part of a recognized charity theme, subject to local association policy. It is important that all officials look alike regarding these events without presenting a clownish appearance.

### Lightning

The monitoring of lightning is the responsibility of game management. Officials shall abide by the policy of the host school district. It is important for crew chiefs to have a pregame conversation with the site director to know the protocol for handling a lightning disturbance. The site director should be the one coordinating that process. The site director will have contact with the Referee, the coaches, the PA announcer, et al to alert them of impending action.

In accordance with Rule 3-1-5, the Referee is authorized to delay the game before it starts or suspend a game in progress when weather conditions are construed to be hazardous to life or limb of the participants. If the site director requests such a delay/suspension, the Referee should comply with the request. The officiating crew will remain on site and be prepared to continue the game unless all three parties (the Referee and both head coaches) agree that the game cannot be continued that day and should be terminated. If the game is terminated due to hazardous conditions, officials should record all relevant information (score, possession, timeouts, ball location, chains, down, etc.), and relay that information in the game report. Resumption of a terminated game is outside the purview of the officials and would be handled by the schools, their league, and CHSAA.

The Referee shall not terminate the game without the concurrence of both coaches; however, if a game being played under the mercy rule is halted by lightning, the game is immediately terminated even without consensus of the coaches. If a game is terminated, the team that is ahead as the winner with the existing score (Rule 3-1-4). If the game is continued, any period may be shortened by agreement of the three parties (Rule 3-1-3). This could include using a running clock or reducing the length of the period. Prior to continuation of the game, the teams shall be afforded sufficient time to warm up as determined by the coaches. The game shall then resume from the point of interruption.

If an administrator is present (Athletic Director, Principal, School Board member, etc.) and expresses disagreement with his head coach regarding game termination, it is the coach's responsibility to resolve the conflict. The Referee shall only consider the decision of the head coaches.

When activity is stopped, the following individuals shall be responsible for the

safety of personnel:

- The head coach for players and other team personnel.
- Game management for spectators and support personnel.
- The Referee for the officiating crew.

If appropriate, the lightning delay can serve as the halftime intermission. For example, if the game is suspended with two minutes remaining in the second quarter, when play is resumed the second quarter will be completed, followed by a short intermission taken before the second half kickoff. Both coaches must agree to any such modification; if they do not agree, the quarter will be finished when play is resumed, followed by the standard 15-minute halftime intermission.

### **Cold Weather**

Dealing with cold weather is not as finite as lightning. A one-size fits all approach does not work equally across the state. As an example, 10 degrees after dark on a wet field is different than 10 degrees at altitude on a sunny day with no wind. In all cases, common sense must be used.

Some school districts may have a cold weather policy. If conditions are such that cold weather may be a factor, the Referee should ascertain local guidelines before the game so that game administrator(s), officials, and both sidelines are aware of potential disruptions.

An extended halftime may be warranted to afford athletes time to warm up/dry off and or change to dry clothing under their uniform. The coaches must mutually agree to terminate the game.

# CHAPTER 25

# COMMUNICATION

Most coaches identify communication as the single most important attribute of an official. Knowing when not to communicate is as important as knowing what to say and when to have a dialogue with a coach. Officials must understand the importance of their relationship with coaches and manage it for the benefit of all of those involved in the game.

Because of their position on the sidelines, wing officials are the main conduit between the coaching staff and the crew. The wing official's poise is a critical component in maintaining a good rapport with the head coach. That includes knowing what to hear and what not to hear. All officials are responsible for proper communication but in some instances the Referee must be prepared to intervene in a statesmanslike manner if the interaction erodes to a point that is detrimental to the game.

## Responsibilities

When the pregame is held on the field with the head coach it represents a transfer of power. The coach has been in charge all week and has had complete control on the practice field, but now the Referee is a superior authority and that may cause strife in some situations. It is helpful to keep in mind officials and coaches have different goals. For the officials, it is

an avocation and the primary interest is implementing the rules of the game in order to have a fair and safe game. The coach is there to win. It is true he is also an educator and he wants his players to learn, but at game time education may sometimes become secondary. His coaching career may pivot on winning so he may have an elevated interest in the outcome. We should accept that he isn't always going to see things in an unbiased manner and he won't agree with every call. The officials must remain steady and without emotion. Officials must understand they are a component of a game that is part of the education system and they get to be part of the formative phase of player's lives.

The assistant coaches are there to help the head coach. Technically, they are not entitled to any information from the officials. However, that doesn't mean ignoring them all the time is the best option. Telling the coach "I only talk with the head coach" may be a valid statement but is not likely to be helpful especially if the coach is sincere and respectful in his approach. If an assistant is affecting the officiating and becoming a "challenge", let the head coach know and give him a chance to take care of it.

Consequently, it's okay to answer any question that is asked in a polite



manner that doesn't interfere with the ability to officiate the game. The wing official should try to respond to simple direct questions such as the down number or how many timeouts remain, will the clock start on the snap, etc. If the coaches are helped in doing their job, the more apt they'll be cooperative. The get-back coach is there to help both his team and the officials. Communicating with him early and often can be very effective in preventing sideline infractions. It is not okay to utilize a sideline warning for unsportsmanlike actions by a member of the coaching staff. However, a verbal warning or two can help avoid the need for a flag.

The head coach is entitled to an explanation of all fouls, and any unusual rulings or situations. A timeout is not charged for those types of discussions. Officials can talk with coaches during a dead-ball period as long as the official can maintain their focus on their prescribed duties. The explanations will normally be given by the wing official, but as necessary, may be given directly by the Referee. The emphasis here is this communication is with the head coaches only. Foul information to be given to the head coaches includes: the type of foul, a brief description of the act, the number or position of the offending player, and the enforcement. For example: "#62 was called for holding; he pulled down an opponent. "It is also okay to explain the penalty and its enforcement, "It'll be 10 yards from the spot of the foul and second down will be repeated." Referees should announce the number of the fouling player whether they have a microphone or not (see the chapter entitled "Microphone Use").

This communication is important because it emphasizes the need for accuracy in calling fouls and deters phantom calls. Under no circumstances should a number be fabricated. If that player wasn't on the field or worse yet,

that number is not assigned, credibility is destroyed. Stating the position instead of the number is acceptable, "the motion man cut up too soon," or "the whole team moved before the snap."

Official's timeouts to talk to coaches outside of a coach-Referee conference should seldom be allowed. The head coach may request a coach-Referee conference at any time while the ball is dead. The purpose of the rule is to review a possible misapplication of a rule by the officials, not to question a judgment call, nor to express an opinion on the quality of the call(s). In addition, a coach should never be allowed to criticize a call or the lack of a call while attending to an injured player. Officials should move away from the injured player to avoid the potential for an emotionally charged comment. When either team takes a charged timeout, there are specific communication responsibilities involving the wing officials and/or the Referee; those are discussed in the "Timeouts" chapter.

### Official's Techniques

Active, effective listening by officials is part of good communication. Officials need to understand thoroughly what the coach is saying. It's important to listen carefully to coaches and ask pertinent questions, if necessary, to find out exactly what is on their mind. Treat them as a valued customer when they think they have a problem.

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. There is a double standard – the coach can yell, the official cannot. When a coach's emotions become elevated, the official must stay calm. Be careful not to take coaches comments personally, but apply any appropriate warnings and/or penalties when warranted. Under no circumstances should an official engage

in an argument with a coach and under no circumstance shall an official reach out and touch the coach. Standing beside the coach with hands at the side or behind the back without using gestures is the best posture. When a coach is convinced a call was incorrect, no amount of discussion is going to change his mind. In some instances, allowing the coach to explain what he saw and providing him the assurance that you respect his opinion will be good for the game and make you a better official. Arguing only inflames the situation and diverts the official's concentration from the job at hand.

When a coach asks about a call, he should never be told, "That's not my call, Coach." It is permissible to say, "I'm sorry, Coach. That's not my coverage area on that play, but I'll try to get you that information when I get a chance" or "I'll ask the covering official when time allows." The wing should then make an effort to follow up with the coach.

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

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.

Officials must also avoid what is commonly referred to as "rabbit ears." The term is commonly used to describe an official who has excessive sensitivity to criticism and uses selective hearing to pick up on comments not directed to him.

### Profanity

There cannot be any profanity of any kind spoken by an official. It is also not a good idea to try using humor in a confrontation. There is no reason to converse with a coach except to answer a question, to give him essential information, or to request help. Request means asking and not demanding. Compare these two approaches: "Coach, you need to stay out of the restricted area because that area is for the officials" vs. "Coach, could you please help us keep the restricted area clear so we can work safely along the sideline and avoid contact with a coach or players?" The first one creates confrontation that isn't necessary. It is demanding space just because it's 'yours'. The second creates cooperation and explains why it is important with a stated benefit for the coach.

There is no clear consensus on the use of foul language by coaches or players. Every official has his own idea of what language is acceptable and what is objectionable. Some will argue that "damn" is profane; others will find any word acceptable dependent on the context in which it is used. An example is "f\*\*k" which is one of the most versatile words in the English language serving as a noun, transitive verb, intransitive verb, adverb, adjective and exclamation. It is the latter form that may very well be ignored. A wide-open receiver drops a pass and as he stomps

his foot, he exclaims “Aw f\*\*k.” Almost any other use of the word should elicit a flag.

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. Crews should find common ground on the acceptability of foul language so the game is officiated consistently. A general approach is to protect the fans from being subjected to the foul language. Many times, a reminder to the players that “as long as it is not directed to the opponent and the fans cannot hear it, I will let it go but please get it under control.”

All officials are expected to abide by the following guidelines:

USC foul with automatic disqualification. Any taunt which includes profanity or a racial slur including the n-word. This is a zero-tolerance policy.

USC foul only (unless there are aggravating circumstances or repeated offenses). Any other use of vulgar or profane language including slurs used among teammates in the spirit of comradery.

The preceding applies if the speaker is clearly identifiable. For unknown culprits, the coach should be told exactly what was heard and asked to address it with his team. The skin color or the heritage of either the speaker or the recipient is not a factor. Colloquial variations of racial slurs are to be treated the same as the racial slur itself. If the inappropriate language is not directed to the opponent and the fans cannot hear it, calling a foul is sufficient.

### Examples of Effective Communication

The following are things which should never be said to a coach and some helpful alternatives.

“One more word and you’re gone.”  
That will jam you into a corner if you don’t back it up. Ultimatums can cause you to lose respect. Any hardline

approach can exacerbate a situation, rather than defusing it. Avoid committing yourself to a specific action.

“Shut up.” It’s antagonistic and unprofessional. Coaches should be allowed to have their say.

“You’re wrong.” That will only serve to prolong the debate. Instead, you can try “That’s not what I saw,” or “I’ll check the play after the game.” Those should serve to mitigate the situation and allow both parties to move on.

“It’s just a game” or “Are you serious?” Those serve to belittle what the coach is objecting to and are not relevant to the coach’s concern.

Watch your tone meaning be careful as to “how” things are said. It’s not simply avoiding bad words, but tone of voice or body language tells participants about lack of care or anger beyond repair, limiting effectiveness. Firm, fair and nonabrasive language with no sarcasm is the way to go. Also, snide remarks can be funny, but there is no telling how they will come across.

While it’s good to think through situations beforehand and be prepared with certain responses, they have to make sense in the context of the game and the player has to understand your intent.

### Unsportsmanlike Conduct and Disqualification

Unfortunately, the situation may get to the point where the flag becomes the next most viable option. Here are some guidelines.

#### Physical Contact

This is almost a certain ejection. Accidental or unintentional contact such as when a coach is pointing or gesturing and inadvertently makes contact with an official should be excused. Other forms of unintentional contact may not be overlooked. An example of an act which deserves a foul is a coach who out of anger rushes an official and doesn’t stop quickly enough, resulting in

a bump or brushing of an official. Some other examples of unacceptable contact worthy of a foul are: deliberate pushing, grabbing an official's arm to keep him from walking away, turning an official's shoulders to get him to face you, and getting close enough face to face so that saliva is sprayed.

### **Integrity Assault**

No one likes to be called a liar or a cheater in any forum. In an athletic contest, an official who ignores accusations that he is biased against one team or has purposely missed calls must eject his accuser or risk being perceived as admitting to the allegation. One example of an improper statement: "Oh c'mon, we're playing 11 against 16." This does not likely draw an immediate flag but should at a minimum result in a warning indicating that is an unacceptable comment and it should cease.

### **Verbal Abuse**

In addition to vulgarity which was previously discussed, voice volume, personal remarks and attacks of excessive duration may justify using the flag. A general guideline is if the improper speech is loud enough for spectators to hear, a penalty is appropriate.

There is no decibel limit for discussions with officials; however, shouting indicates a loss of control. A good official will tolerate a brief outburst as an instinctive reaction and allow the coach a few moments to regain his composure. Excessive tirades should not be permitted. All communications with a coach should occur near the sideline. If a coach is addressing an official on the field of play the official should walk to the sideline which will result in the coach following him.

Remarks directed at the official instead of the call cannot be tolerated. Anything regarding the official's ancestry or heritage is surely inappropriate. Also

suspect is any sentence beginning with "you." One possible exception is "You missed that one (call)." Only the most sensitive officials who feel their uniform grants them immunity from any criticism whatsoever would react to that statement.

### **Objectionable Gestures**

There are many forms of communication, non-verbal as well as verbal. If an objectionable message is discerned, it doesn't matter if it was spoken or not. The first type of sign language which comes to mind is obscene gestures. There are at least three other gestures which are not acceptable. The first is grabbing the throat to indicate the official is choking. Another is a waving motion with a flat palm above the head to say the official is in over his head. The last is any exaggerated display of disgust as evidenced by throwing headsets, clipboards, etc.

### **Prolonged Discussion**

Even though none of the above sins are committed, a prolonged discussion to the point where it interferes with resumption of the game may necessitate a flag or ejection simply to hasten closure of the discussion. Misapplication of rules can usually be corrected. A judgment call cannot be reversed and a filibuster on that issue should draw the flag.

### **Accumulation**

The concept of penalizing a garrulous coach was pioneered by Gary Montel, a prominent Colorado basketball official. The "Montel Rule" deals with extended unsporting conduct by coaches; he refers to it as an "accumulation technical."

The rules specifically prohibit criticism of the officials and the use of foul language. The vast majority of coaches steer clear of those transgressions. However, some coaches have

developed the skill to push the envelope to the limit through repeated and voluminous commentary. Each comment is seemingly innocuous and within the limit of the rules, but the incessant barrage eventually creates a distraction. The Montel Rule allows each official to privately establish his own threshold of tolerance and when the limit is reached, an unsportsmanlike conduct foul for "excessive commentary" is assessed under the provisions of Rules 9-8-1b-d which prohibit commentary relating to officials. The official may or may not choose to issue a warning before calling a foul. In some cases, a warning may be appropriate and is recommended, if possible, "Coach, I've heard enough," or "Please stop, you've made your point."

Brief exclamations such as "Oh, no!" or "That wasn't interference," or requests like "Can you watch for holding on #65?" are acceptable. Football is a game of emotion and no attempt should be made to stifle normal reactions. Comments such as "They are holding on every play" or "If you're not going to call holding today, just let me know" are inappropriate and are attempts to influence decisions or question judgment.

Here are some additional comments that in isolation would ordinarily be ignored. "Call it both ways" implies the officials are biased and are favoring one team over the other. "I'll show you the film" indicates a call was incorrect. "You'll never work here again" is a way of saying the official is not worthy and can also be construed as attempted intimidation.

Regardless of whether the warning is formal or informal, the Montel Rule works best when the coach receives an indication that he has said too much. The Montel Rule by its nature appears to promote inconsistency because the threshold will vary not only from crew to crew but by game to game. That isn't necessarily bad because each game is different and coaches generally behave

somewhat differently from week to week. The only way to achieve thorough consistency is to enforce the letter of the conduct rules without exception. Thus, if it doesn't directly involve the coaching of players, it shouldn't be said. There are very few coaches who can meet that standard.

### Player Communication

As a general rule, the less said to players, the better the game will be served. Some communication is not only necessary, but desirable. Officials should do whatever they can with preventive officiating to facilitate the game. Building rapport with the participants is part of good officiating, but officials must avoid fraternizing with, coaching, criticizing, admonishing or threatening players.

The first opportunity to meet players is normally during the pre-game check. If the coach presents a player to have his cast or bandage checked it is okay to ask about the injury, etc., but the conversation should not be extended. Statements such as "If it becomes loose during the game, just let me know" would be appreciated, but are not required.

The safest way to address a player is by number. "Mister," "Mr. Quarterback" or "Captain" are also acceptable, but "Hey, you" or "Son" should be avoided. "Hey, you" sounds crass. And "son" is condescending. In many situations, you can avoid a direct form of address.

### Coaching

"Coaching" players is verboten. What constitutes coaching is in the ear of the receiver (and his coach), but that should not deter cautioning a player. Letting a player know his actions are close to being interpreted as a violation of the rules is smart officiating. Said differently, telling a player what to do e.g., "move up if you want to be on the line" is coaching. Advising a player of the consequences of his actions e.g., "I

have you in the backfield” is preventive officiating.

### Admonishment

Admonishing players for fouls is not part of an official’s duties. Flags should never be thrown with vengeance. Lectures or sermons to a player who has committed an infraction must be avoided. On the other hand, letting a player know his actions are close to being interpreted as a violation of the rules is smart officiating. Be careful not to threaten or accuse anyone. Avoid statements such as “If I see that again ...” For borderline contact on a passer, you might say something like, “You can make a better effort to miss him, 92.”

### Threats

There is also a fine line between a warning and a threat. For example, if an offensive lineman briefly grabs a defender’s jersey, a threat would be: “If I see you grabbing jerseys again, it’ll cost you ten yards.” Instead, question the player in a mild tone, “You didn’t grab his jersey, did you?” No matter how he replies he knows he is being watched and can expect a flag if he does it again. The risk in threatening a player is announcing a foul has been overlooked. If overheard by an opponent, the response could very well be, “If you saw it, why didn’t you flag it?”

### Suggested techniques

Some situations don’t lend themselves to the “You didn’t ----, did you?” questions. Those are best suited for one player, alone, after the play. Some things are best announced to the group: most unsportsmanlike cautions for instance. When you can’t get to two players who have squared off before they part, go to the guy who is most upset and ask, “72, what’s the problem?” He’ll usually complain of being punched or sworn at. Tell him you’ll take a closer look. If he started it, he knows he’ll be watched. If he didn’t,

the foul can usually be spotted the next time. The fact an official is asking for details seems to make all the players aware the officials are tuned in to what’s going on and monitoring it closely.

To end general yacking or “chesting up” between opponents, try: “You guys don’t need a foul here. Be smarter than that!” The first gripe during a game usually comes from a player. If a player complains about being held, etc., react as if you are interested in his problem. Don’t shrug off complaints. Respond in a positive way, promise to observe and then follow up.

### Problematic players

If a player persists in being argumentative, keep your cool and try to resolve the matter without using your flag. Start with the captain; he may be able to get the riled player under control. That’s one of the captain’s functions: Levelheaded leadership. If necessary, tell the coach. More often than not, the coach will fully support you because the last thing the coach wants is a penalty.

He surely has the power to let the player watch from the sideline until he cools off.

If your discretion fails, you can always fall back on your authority to penalize unsportsmanlike acts. Remember, if you do use your flag, you are penalizing for a foul. Do not penalize because you became upset with the player.

In summary, please remember you are dealing with teenagers and young adults who do not have the benefit of your maturity and experience. Try to do the following: (1) Defuse the situation; (2) Remain calm; (3) Explain the rule; (4) Do not become argumentative; (5) Admit an obvious error; (6) Keep the game moving; (7) Keep a sense of humor and not a sense of importance.

### Nonplayers Subject to Rule

Other than the team players, there are many personnel necessary to support a football game. The chain crew and ball

personnel are part of the officiating crew and should be dealt with directly. The medical staff and statistician are part of the team and the head coach can be relied on to manage them. Anyone else on the field is the responsibility of game management and the head coach should not be burdened with getting involved in any issues they may present. A team must not be penalized for actions by anyone for whom the head coach is not responsible. Superintendents, Principals and Athletic Directors should be given the greatest respect, but cannot be allowed to abuse their field privilege. If photographers and other media personnel become a problem, simply ask the game management to remove the offender from the sideline.

# CHAPTER 26

# POSTGAME DUTIES

## Postgame Review

After the game, it's a good idea to review what happened during the game. The postgame review is another important part of officiating.

When reviewing the game:

- Discuss and review any strange plays or rulings. If necessary, confirm the rulings with the Rules Book and Case Book. Make sure you got it correct and you understand the ruling so you can apply it correctly if it happens again.
- Discuss any unusual penalty enforcements and confirm they were handled properly.
- Discuss if you need to take more or less time when discussing enforcements and other facets of penalties among yourselves or when presenting options to the coaches.
- Discuss availability of game video and coordinate its review.
- Confirm the Referee is reporting penalties, abuses, incidents and disqualifications to CHSAA (see below).

## Points of Emphasis

Were the pregame points of emphasis handled effectively? Did you control the game effectively? Were dead-ball

situations handled appropriately? If the points of emphasis were not handled properly, discuss remedies for the next game.

## Sideline Management

How did you handle the benches? Did you let the coaches go too far? Were you approachable? Did you communicate penalty, timeout and other information sufficiently with the coaches?

## Tempo

Did you let the game come to you or did you assert yourself when you didn't need to? Did the game develop a flow? If not, is there anything you could have done to keep the game moving?

## Solicit Constructive Criticism

Get opinions and advice from others. Your crew is a great source. Always ask if there's anything you could have done differently or better. Calls that an official wasn't sure about can be part of the conversation. Determine what can be taken from the game that will make the crew or an individual better the next time. There is no value if the only conversation after the game is chit-chatting about the coaches or players.

After asking, accept the constructive criticism. It's usually a good idea to start with the positive aspects. Briefly discussing significant items that were



done correctly serves as reinforcement. However, don't be one of those officials who ask, "How'd I do?" expecting a shower of praise. If you don't want to know the truth, don't ask. Take the criticism offered, analyze the comments and apply the changes you feel are appropriate. The most challenging part of a postgame meeting is commenting on partners. Not everyone is welcoming of commentary. However, being honest doesn't mean being cruel. It is not appropriate to have a laundry list of grievances with any one official, but an item or two offered respectfully is valuable. Remember that good criticism leads to good learning.

Be ready to offer a critique when asked. It's frustrating for an official who wants to learn to invite criticism only to hear, "You did a good job." There must be something that needs improving! The Referee ought to be able to give the crew at least three things to think about after every game.

If you don't usually work in crews, or if an official is substituting for a regular member of your crew, ask if you did anything better or less effectively than is done on other crews. While many facets of mechanics or positioning are done virtually the same all over, nuances or variations may be worth trying.

The following questions succinctly summarize a self-evaluation both for a crew and an individual.

#### **Crew**

Did we effectively and fairly manage the game?

Did we consistently apply the rules and philosophies to each play?

Did we demonstrate sound and fundamental mechanics?

Did we work together as team?

#### **Individual**

Was our individual performance up to the standard that is expected?

Mistakes get made, so learn from them, correct them and move on.

#### **Keep a Journal**

Consider keeping a journal during your season. Write down strange plays, your feelings about your performance, notes about your crew, things you did well and things you can improve on. The journal is a great way to look back during and after the season to see if there are patterns. If the same things keep appearing in your journal, you know there are things that need to be addressed. Reviewing the journal is also a great way to start thinking about officiating before next season.

#### **The Officials' Dressing Room**

Be very careful about what is said in the locker room, especially if the discussion is about a person or team. Be sure the microphone is turned off. Do not permit an athletic director or coach to enter the locker room, especially if the intent is hostile. If it happens, politely ask them to leave, without threatening. They should know that they can't enter the officials' room. Report any such confrontations on the game report.

The host school or facility allowed you the use of the locker room. Regardless of the condition it was in when you arrived, take a few minutes to tidy up. If the game was played on a muddy field, wait until you get outside to clean the mud from your spikes. If mud was tracked into the room, clean it up along with all drink cups/ bottles.

Used towels should be placed in the appropriate container or piled out of the way. If you are dressing in a coach's or teacher's office, be respectful and do not disturb personal items or rifle through desk drawers.

#### **CHSAA Game Reports**

All varsity games must have a game report filed on the CHSAA website. Look for the report under the "Officials" tab.

CHSAA assesses penalties and maintains a 5-year file on each school related to all aspects of conduct penalties and sportsmanship related incidents. This is done with a goal of supporting officials and maintaining the educational atmosphere of our activities.

Because of the severe penalties involved with ejections, be sure that the offense warrants the ejection; preventive measures are encouraged. Disqualification decisions cannot be reversed; never contact a coach, school, or Athletic Director following the game to reverse or discuss your decision. Such decisions may only be discussed with your Area Director or CHSAA. Do not attempt to interpret the CHSAA regulations to the administrator, coach, or coaches involved.

Prompt and complete reporting by all officials is essential to provide proper accountability with the administration of CHSAA member schools and their support for exemplary sportsmanship.

The following must be reported by 8 a.m. on the Monday following the game (all varsity and sub varsity) games.

- Player ejections - Secure name(s), jersey number(s) and school at the time of the incident from the head coach.
- Coach ejections – Secure name(s) and school at the time of the incident from the head coach.
- Coach unsportsmanlike conduct penalties that do not lead to ejections.
- Instances of unsportsmanlike conduct by crowds before, during or after games.
- Significant game management and facility problems that detract from the proper administration of the game.

The procedures to be followed when it becomes necessary to eject a participant or member of the coaching staff from a game are discussed in the chapter entitled “Dead-Ball Officiating.”

Although the Referee is required to submit a game report for each varsity

game, all crew members have a role in preparing the game report. The Back Judge tracks the penalties and all crew members can and should suggest items for the report immediately after the game. Ejections and unsportsmanlike penalties must include detail in the comment section of the game report. Reports with no comments or effectively no comments are not helpful and will be considered as “no report.”

The report is used to develop training material and to make suggestions for improvement of the treatment of officials. No punitive action is taken based on anything in a game report unless there is an independent investigation stemming from a complaint filed by a school. This report can protect officials as a record of the situation after memories have faded. Ejection reports become part of a student’s official file and are sent to the school without any editing.

Standard English (no texting lingo) must be used and any foul language is to be quoted. It is important to remain unbiased and to write without emotion. While unlikely, it is possible the report will be made available to a court, so please refrain from derogatory or disparaging comments about game participants – state facts, not opinions.

Here are some details on the items appropriate for the report:

- Explain ejections and USC fouls, including players, but especially on coaches
  - Unique penalty situations, including enforcement errors, IW’s, etc.
  - Problems with clock operators or the chain crew.
  - Lessons learned.
  - Unusual plays or questions from a coach.
- Arrival delays.
- Weather issues or other extensive delays.
  - Field markings/safety concerns.
  - Microphone issues

- Anything that the next crew can benefit from.
- Concerns about official's safety or fan interactions.
- Anything a school could complain to CHSAA about.

Please avoid the following items:

- Anything routinely done well by anyone.
- Self-glorifying remarks.
- Crew performance (i.e., "the crew worked well together" or "the crew handled the players very well so it didn't get out of hand").
- Routine comments about coaches (i.e., they yelled for holding on every play).
- Mercy rule implementation.
- Description of snacks provided.

Note: Internal problems with crew members should be handled privately with the Area Director.

*If you don't receive a copy of your report at the email address you indicated within 15 minutes, it probably did not go through. Please follow up.*

### **Suspended Game Report**

If a game is suspended, most likely because of weather or curfew, it is essential to provide the details of the status of the game so that another crew can resume the game from the point of interruption. Please consult the assignor as to which crew will resume the game and forward the required information as follows to him.

- Coin toss choices for second half.
- Quarter/Time remaining.
- Game clock status; resume with a 25-second play clock.
- Down/distance/yard line/ direction.
- Chain info including location of clip.
- Timeouts remaining for each team.
- USC's.
- Sideline warnings.

- 25-second play clock to resume the game.

## CHAPTER 27

# CFOA PHILOSOPHIES OF OFFICIATING

### Catch

Catching the ball is a process, not an act. The process includes:

- Securing firm control of a live ball in flight with the arms or hands before the ball touches the ground;
- First touching the ground inbounds with any part of his body; and
- Maintaining control of the ball “long enough.”

To catch a ball means that a player secures control of a live ball in flight with his hands or arms before the ball touches the ground, and touches the ground in bounds with any part of his body, and then maintains control of the ball long enough to enable him to perform an act common to the game. Examples are but not limited to controlling it long enough to pitch or hand the ball, advance it, avoid or ward off an opponent.

If a player goes to the ground in the act of catching a pass (with or without contact by an opponent) he must maintain complete and continuous control of the ball throughout the process of contacting the ground, whether in the field of play or in the end zone.

This is also required for a player attempting to make a catch at the sideline and going to the ground out of bounds. If he loses control of the ball which then touches the ground before he regains control, it is not a catch. If he regains control inbounds prior to the ball touching the ground it is a catch.

If the player loses control of the ball while simultaneously touching the ground with any part of his body, or if there is doubt that the acts were simultaneous, it is not a catch. If a player has control of the ball, a slight movement of the ball, even if it touches the ground, will not be considered loss of possession; he must lose control of the ball in order for there to be a loss of possession.

If the ball touches the ground after the player secures control and continues to maintain control, and the elements above are satisfied, it is a catch.

A catch by any kneeling or prone inbounds player is a completion or interception.

A player recovers a ball if he fulfills the criteria above for catching a ball that is still alive after hitting the ground.

When in question, the catch, recovery or interception is not completed.

### False Starts

Determining exactly what constitutes a false start has been a challenge for officials since the beginning of football. Following these guidelines is important, but is superseded by the need to be consistent throughout an entire game. This matter is complicated by the fact that the rules regarding movement vary depending on the position of the offensive player.

A ranking of the positions that are most restricted to the least restricted is as follows: interior linemen other than the snapper, the snapper, tight ends, wide receivers including flankers, backs other than the quarterback and the quarterback.

Any quick, jerky movement or any movement that appears to be the start of the snap is a false start. A player who misses the snap count and begins the movement associated with the snap has committed a false start regardless of how abrupt the movement is or is not and regardless of his position.

By rule, officials are expected to make this judgment regardless of whether Team B encroaches; however, there will always be marginal cases where preventative officiating should take precedence and the effect of the questionable act should be a consideration. That means if the shift is questionable and no encroachment results, the offense can be advised if a similar shift is repeated, it would likely be judged to be a false start.

Likewise, the defense is prohibited from inducing a false start or attempting to induce one. Team B players are prohibited from making quick non-football related movements in an obvious attempt to draw an offensive player into committing a foul.

The defense is allowed to shift to either side or from lineman to linebacker or vice versa. Also, linebackers and defensive backs who run toward the neutral zone attempting to time their blitz with the snap are not in violation.

While it is legal to fake a blitz, repeated fakes, especially in rapid succession, are likely an effort to cause Team A to false start.

Examples of violations include: stomping a foot, clapping hands, quickly and repeatedly standing up or moving to a three- or four-point stance or vice versa, quickly bobbing their head and/or abruptly flexing legs or arms.

### Shifts

In most cases, offensive players can shift as long as they do not commit a false start in doing so. Interior linemen (including covered tight ends), cannot shift once they put a hand on or near the ground. The practical application of "near the ground" is below the knees.

Simultaneous shifts by players on the line can create a judgment dilemma for the officials especially with the added dimension of the game situation, primarily down and distance.

Encroachment by the defense does not automatically mean the movement of the offense simulated a snap. Acts clearly intended to cause encroachment should be ruled a false start. Each situation must be judged on its own merit.

Although it sometimes difficult for officials to determine intent, it can be done. 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 especially with less than five yards to the line-to-gain.

Any time a defensive player jumps toward the neutral zone and there is a question as to whether he broke the plane of 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.

## Defensive Signals

Defensive linemen as well as any other of their teammates cannot use words or signals that disconcert the opponents when they are preparing to put the ball in play. Many players do not understand that and preventive officiating should be exercised, if possible. Restrictions on the defense begin when offensive players take their set positions. Special attention should be given to possible interference during the quarterback's cadence, and particularly during an audible. The defense is not required to be silent during this interval. The defensive captain has a right to call signals while offense is calling theirs as long as the signals do not resemble those of the opponents. There are legitimate defensive signals which may need to be given immediately prior to snap. Examples include: putting a blitz on or off, changing pass coverage, or telling defensive linemen to shift or stunt.

Officials must determine if the defense is making a legitimate call, or merely making a ruse in attempt to interfere. The defense must avoid anything which simulates the sounds or cadence of offensive starting signals. The offense has "first choice" of signals and the defense is required to use, or change to, something completely different. Specific words which the defense should not be allowed to use include: "go," "hike," "hut." Other words which are questionable and require greater judgment to discern their impact include "now," and "shift." The use of "move" would be okay as long as the defense actually shifts and the word is not intended to get the offense to move. General noise, growling, or yelling in an attempt to prevent the offense from hearing their signals is of course prohibited. When in question the defensive signals are legal.

## 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 an

offensive player other than the quarterback 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.

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.

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 between the nine-yard marks.
- A departing player has left the field prior to the snap.

## Substitution

If a substitute does not get inside the nine-yard mark and is observed and covered by the defense, no foul should be called.

A departing player is legally off the field if his next step would get a foot on or past the sideline.

When in question:

- A Team A player has been between the nine-yard marks.
- A departing player has left the field prior to the snap.

## 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

Defensive pass interference can only be called for actions which occur after a forward pass that crosses the neutral zone has been released.

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

Offensive pass interference can only be called on plays when a forward pass crosses the neutral zone.

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 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.

## Roughing the Passer

When a personal foul is committed against a passer, it doesn't have to be clear the hit was after the ball was clearly thrown to be roughing. Any personal foul is to be enforced as roughing, even if it otherwise would not be roughing. If the unnecessary roughness foul occurs after the official status of "passer" has ended, the penalty should be enforced as roughing, but a pass must be thrown for roughing to be called. After an interception, roughing cannot be realistically sold, but the standard for UNR is lower.

## 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. If the ball

inadvertently hits a lineman, the touching is ignored.

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 the contact provided the Referee is certain the contact affected the flight of the ball.

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. The passer cannot use the contact as an excuse for grounding the ball.

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.
- As to "caught or trapped" the pass is incomplete.
- The pass was released in or behind the neutral zone rather than beyond it. There is no doubt when the passer's body is completely over the plane of the neutral zone when the pass is released.
- 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**

Holding should only be called when a material restriction occurs. If a player

who appears to have been held makes the tackle (at that spot), holding is not to be called – no material restriction. Takedowns, regardless of location, must always be called. The point of attack is almost always a consideration. 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.

Offensive holding should not be called if the quarterback is subsequently sacked as it had no impact on the outcome of the play.

In cases where a blocker lays on an opponent and prevents him from getting up, the key is to determine if there is an actual restriction preventing the blocked player from further participation in the play. In most cases, a player who is blocked to the ground isn't realistically going to do anything more on that play. Of course, the question remains if he was legally taken to the ground.

The first occurrence can be written off as over exuberance. After that, holding should be called regardless of any advantage/disadvantage.

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.

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:

- Whether 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 free kick line on onside and short pooch kickoffs should be officiated as a plane. Any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for encroachment. The same plane

applies on normal kickoffs, but officials should not be too technical in regard to players breaking the plane. If the player's foot touches the ground before the ball is kicked, a foul should be called.

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 tackling motion begins while the runner is inbounds but the contact occurs after the runner is out of bounds and a personal foul is not otherwise a personal foul, the defensive player should receive the benefit of doubt regarding whether the contact was a late hit or not.

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 (extra care must be exercised when ruling momentum on plays where the ball is first contacted inside the one-yard line as it is difficult to discern exactly when the ball was possessed by the receiver).
- The ball belongs to Team B under original momentum rules rather than a safety.

### Horse Collar Tackles

For horse collar tackles, the hand need not be inside the collar to a foul to be called. Any high-leverage grip at the collar or name plate area, that subsequently pulls the runner to the ground causing the knees to buckle results in a foul. There are three essential elements for a foul to occur:

- Grip – collar or nameplate area
- Pull – backward or sideways
- Ground – must be the force which puts the player on the ground

### Flagrant Fouls and Fighting

A flagrant foul is “a foul so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury, and/or involves violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive contact.” Players committing flagrant personal fouls must be disqualified. Fighting is a flagrant foul and is most likely to occur while the ball is dead after a play. Excessive arm swinging while blocking may be a foul, but is not fighting.

### Targeting and Spearing

The indicators of targeting/spearing are:

- Launch—a player leaving his feet to attack an opponent by an upward and forward thrust of the body to make forcible contact in the head or neck area.

- A crouch followed by an upward and forward thrust to attack with forcible contact at the head or neck area—even though one or both feet are still on the ground.

- Leading with helmet, forearm, fist, hand or elbow to attack with forcible contact at the head or neck area.

- Lowering the head before attacking by forcible contact with the crown of the helmet.

### Other Personal Fouls

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.

In cases where there are multiple participants in a single unsporting act, such as several players posing for picture in the end zone, there is one penalty enforced, but each participant is charged with a USC foul. Thus, any participant who had a previous USC foul or commits a subsequent USC foul is disqualified. Each participant is held accountable without excessive penalty to the team.

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.

The following is an expanded list of the fouls listed in the Rules Book:

- Using profanity, abusive, insulting, or vulgar language or gestures.
- Taunting such as: racial slurs or innuendo, name-calling, demeaning words, threats of bodily harm, slang references to sexual organs, sexual practices, or body elimination.
- Clapping in the face of or in the vicinity of an opponent.
- Derogatory remarks directed at the officials (not necessarily the officiating)
- Signaling to an official that he needs to throw his flag or indicating “over your head.”
- Back or forward flips.
- Stomping on the home team’s logo
- Dancing in the end zone or any orchestrated routine with teammates.
- Using the football as a prop.
- Spiking the ball.
- Dunking the ball over the cross bar (or attempting to do so).
- Hand the ball to or throw it at an opponent.
- Kick, throw or spin the ball.
- The Heisman pose or any other pose intended to taunt.
- Hand gestures such as choking, throat slashing, pounding one’s chest, pointing to a bicep, saluting or shooting a gun.
- An exaggerated first down signal or such a signal in the face of an opponent.
- A sack dance or prolonged standing over a downed opponent.
- Simulating a phone call or taking a picture.
- Taking a bow.
- Pointing back or waving at an opponent.
- Changing the stride near the goal line including running backward or a prolonged slow down.
- Belly flops, pirouettes or any other dive into the ends zone not judged to be a sincere effort to evade a tackler.
- Going into or near the stands to interact with spectators.
- Punching the goal post pad.
- Encouraging the crowd to boo the

officials.

The following acts are generally considered to be legal especially when they are brief and the result of sincere jubilation:

- Simulating a cross on a player’s own chest
- Pointing to the sky
- Outstretched arms – “hallelujah” (with or without the ball)
- Kneeling and praying
- High fives with teammates
- Chest bumps
- Hugging and raising a teammate into the air
- Raising the ball as the goal line is crossed
- Spontaneously forming a pile on the runner in the end zone
- Slowing down before crossing the goal line when not closely pursued and without gesturing
- Self-critical remarks, with or without vulgarity
- Exuberant exclamations devoid of derogatory verbiage after making a play
- Signaling a touchdown in a non-taunting manner
- Any celebration in the team box
- Merely removing the helmet before reaching the team box.

### 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.
- A player has been blocked out of bounds by an opponent and has not gone out on his own.
- The clock shall be stopped for an injured player.
- Don’t throw the flag.

## CHAPTER 28

# STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTIONS FOR COLORADO

The NFHS rulebook (Table 1-7) delegates authority to the state associations for certain rules. The following shall apply in Colorado.

**1-1-4 Note Determining the number of game officials** – All classifications will use 5-person crews.

**1-1-4 Note Officials' jurisdiction** – Begins when the officials enter the field in uniform to begin the game.

**1-3-2 Note Mandating specific ball for playoff competition** – Any NFHS approved ball with logo except all playoff games will use a Wilson ball.

**1-3-7 Use of supplementary equipment** – Authorized.

**1-5-1b2 and 1-5-1b3 Note Commemorative Patches** – Must be requested of CHSAA on a case-by-case basis.

**1-6-1 Note Use of drum for deaf teams** – Authorized.

**3-1-1 Procedure to resolve ties** – NFHS overtime procedure (as presented in Rules Book).

**3-1-2 Mercy Rule** – The game is functionally over. The objective is to run out the clock as quickly and gracefully as possible with a total focus on safety while retaining some semblance to a normal game. It is an opportunity for second team and sub varsity players to get some snaps. Thus, throwing passes, etc. may appear to be “running up the score” when they are not. Please leave that type of sportsmanship issue to the coaches and be sensitive to teams who want to avert a shutout.

Running clock procedures are as follows:

In all classes except A6, (all conference and non-conference games played in Colorado), when a 40 point-differential exists at any time during the game, the running clock will be used for the remainder of the game. In A6, the margin is 45 points.

The clock will not stop on:

1. Out of bounds plays
2. Incomplete passes
3. First downs
4. Change of possession (including touchbacks and fair catches)
5. Penalties
6. Scores

It also does not stop when the points are scored which create the 40+ margin. If stopped, the Referee will restart it immediately. In all other cases when the clock is stopped, it will start on the ready including the start of a period and after a charged timeout.

- Example 1: Team A leads 35-0 and scores a touchdown. The clock does not stop when the touchdown is scored.

#### NOTES:

- 1 - The clock will start immediately when the requisite point differential is reached.
- 2 - The period will only be extended for an untimed down under Rule 3-3-3 (page 41) in the second period if absolutely necessary to preserve the integrity of the game. The replayed down will be the first play of either the second or fourth period.
- 3 - Clock corrections which restore time will only be made upon a coach's request.
- 4 - Visible play clocks will be turned off and delay fouls called only when a team is confused and there is a pronounced delay.
- 5 - This rule applies to all regular and post season contests, except live televised championship games. The NFHS Network and other streamed games are not live televised games.
- 6 - All safety-related and blatantly obvious fouls must be called.
- 7 - Under the circumstances described above, the officials will continue to use the standard signals. The Referee should refrain from giving a stop-the-clock signal except for charged and injury timeouts. The timer, prior to the game, will be instructed to ignore all signals regarding the clock except those given by the Referee for charged and injury timeouts.
- 8 - The use of this rule does not eliminate the use of Rule 3-1-3 which allows any period to be shortened or the game to be terminated by agreement of the opposing coaches. A lightning delay or any other weather-related stoppage automatically terminates the game.

9 - If a game is halted by lightning, including having to extend the halftime intermission, the game is immediately terminated even without consensus of the coaches.

**3-1-4 Continuation of interrupted games** – Subject to league policy.

**3-1-5 Note 2 Length of halftime intermission** – Subject to league policy.

**3-2-1 Determining when coin toss is held** – On the field, between 3-5 minutes prior to the scheduled start time.

**3-5-7k TV/radio timeouts** – Authorized when a game is broadcast.

**Rule 1 Size of A6 and A8 fields** – 100 yards for 8-man; 80 yards for 6-man.

**8-3-1 Exc & OT 5-1-1** – If a touchdown is scored during the last down of the fourth period or in overtime, the try is not attempted unless the point(s) would affect the outcome of the game.

- Example 1: B is leading 6-0, 7-0, or 8-0 and A scores a touchdown on the last timed down of the fourth period. The try is attempted in all cases because it is needed to determine the outcome of the game.
- Example 2: If B is leading 9-0, B wins with a final score of 9-6. No try is attempted.
- Example 3: If B is leading 3-0, A wins with a final score of 6-3. No try is attempted.

NOTE: Leagues may use points scored or allowed as a tie breaker, but that does not modify the above.

PLEASE CHECK THE CFOA PAGE ON THE CHSAANOW WEBSITE FOR ANY CHANGES TO THESE POLICIES.

# SECTION 2

# CHAPTER 29

## KEYS

- BALANCED FORMATION
- DOUBLE TIGHT ENDS, STRENGTH TO LINESMAN'S SIDE
- DOUBLE WING, DOUBLE TIGHT END FORMATION
- MOTION CHANGES STRENGTH
- MOTION CHANGES FORMATION FROM UNBALANCED (TRIPS) TO BALANCED
- MOTION INTO TRIPS
- MOTION DOESN'T CHANGE STRENGTH
- STRAIGHT T
- STRENGTH TO LINESMAN'S SIDE, WEAK SIDE SPLIT END
- STRENGTH TO LINESMAN'S SIDE, WEAK SIDE TIGHT END
- TRIPS TO LINESMAN'S SIDE
- UNBALANCED FORMATION, STRENGTH TO LINE JUDGE'S SIDE
- VEER
- WISHBONE
- REFEREE AND UMPIRE KEYS

## General

In the Between Downs chapter, the pre-snap process was discussed. It, of course, varies significantly by position. The same can be said for the post-snap process. It consists of four main elements which vary by position. The four elements are: snap, tackle, key and zone. This chapter focuses on the third element – the “key.” All four elements are discussed in detail in the chapters that follow, but it’s essential to understand how the key fits into the post-snap process. Keys can be an exceptional challenge for a 5-person crew because an official can have multiple keys.

Before the snap, each official must be cognizant of the game situation – it will indicate what to expect with regard to the type of play.

The game situation includes down, distance, score, time remaining, offensive and defensive formations and actions of players at the snap. For example, it’s third down and 11. Team A trails by two points with 1:37 to play in the fourth quarter and has the ball on its own 44-yard line. Going without a huddle, Team A lines up in a shotgun formation with three receivers on the right side of the formation. All of that adds up to a pass. That hunch is confirmed when, at the snap, the offensive linemen drop back to pass block, the quarterback retreats into the pocket and the receivers run pass patterns rather than block Team B’s linebackers and defensive backs.

In addition to down, distance and other game factors, offensive and defensive formations provide hints as to what type of play an official can expect in a given situation. Most teams using three backs in the backfield, for instance, are predominantly running teams. Teams using 4-receiver sets and shotgun formations pass more times than not.

## Snap

Each official must be aware of the snap, but their role in officiating it varies. The umpire is responsible for the legality of the beginning of the snap – one quick and continuous backward motion, and the Referee is responsible for the legality of the end of the snap – an immediate release that leaves the hands of the snapper and touches the ground or a back before it touches a Team A lineman. The remaining officials, of course, must be aware the snap has occurred, but they don’t have a role in ruling on its legality. The snap begins the post-snap process.

## Tackle

Following the snap each official must observe the initial block of an interior lineman to determine whether the play is a pass or run. The umpire’s responsibilities include the center, the guards and the tackle nearest the Referee, so he can observe any two adjacent players of those four. A diagram of the Referee’s and Umpire’s responsibilities is at the end of this chapter. For everyone else, observing a tackle is the best choice. Charging linemen indicate a running play. Pulling linemen indicate a sweep or trap block. Retreating linemen indicate a pass.

When offensive linemen provide only passive resistance, allowing defensive linemen to penetrate the neutral zone, a screen pass often follows.

## Key

After determining the nature of the play, the wings and Back Judge will immediately shift their focus to their key. The Referee will continue to observe the blocking of the opposite tackle. The umpire will likely continue to observe the blocks of the two adjacent linemen he has elected to observe. Thus those linemen are the keys for the Referee and umpire. The diagram at the end of the chapter illustrates that. For the remaining



officials, keys are predetermined by the position the official is working in the game and by the offensive formation.

### **Zone**

Once an official has observed the actions of his key receiver, he must be prepared to shift his focus at least one more time. If that player moves into another official's coverage area - his zone, the official shifts his attention to players who have entered his zone.

### **Formations**

The offensive formation determines the keys. The strong side is the side on which there are more eligible receivers outside of the tackle. When determining keys, it doesn't matter if a player is on or off the line of scrimmage.

The Back Judge's main key is the widest eligible receiver on the strong side of the formation (that will usually be a split end or a flanker. It does not matter whether the player is a flanker (a back usually positioned wider than the tight end) or a wide out (split end outside the tackle).

If players are stacked, the player nearest the line of scrimmage is considered to be the widest. For example, if a flanker is stacked directly behind the tight end, the tight end is considered the widest and is the Back Judge's key.

A balanced formation is one in which there are the same number of eligible receivers outside the tackles on both sides of the formation. An unbalanced formation is when one side has more eligible receivers on one side than the other. The Back Judge has priority in determining keys, followed by the wing officials. Wing officials must not key the same player as the Back Judge. Any of the three officials could have multiple keys. If there are three receivers on the same side, the Back Judge will have to key on two players. The wing officials may have a back who runs a pass route as a second key.

Here is a summary of the keys for the various types of formations. There is greater detail in the following diagrams.

#### **Balanced formations**

In a balanced formation, strength is always considered to be on the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge keys on the widest receiver (usually a split end). The wing officials key on receivers other than the Back Judge's key and any backs who move toward them at the snap.

**Double wing formation** — Strength is declared to the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge keys on the widest receiver on the Line Judge's side. The Line Judge keys on the inside receiver. The Linesman has both receivers on his side. **Wishbone** — Another type of a balanced formation, which means strength is declared to Line Judge's side. The Back Judge has the end on the Line Judge's side. The Line Judge keys on the backs. The Linesman keys on the end on his side.

#### **Unbalanced formations**

The Back Judge keys on the widest receiver on the strong side. The wing official on the strong side keys on the inside player of the formation, normally a flanker or wingback. The wing official on the weak side keys on the end nearest his side, normally a wideout.

**Three-receiver (trips) formation** — The Back Judge keys on the two widest receivers and the strong side wing official keys on the inside-most receiver. The weak side wing official keys on the end nearest him.

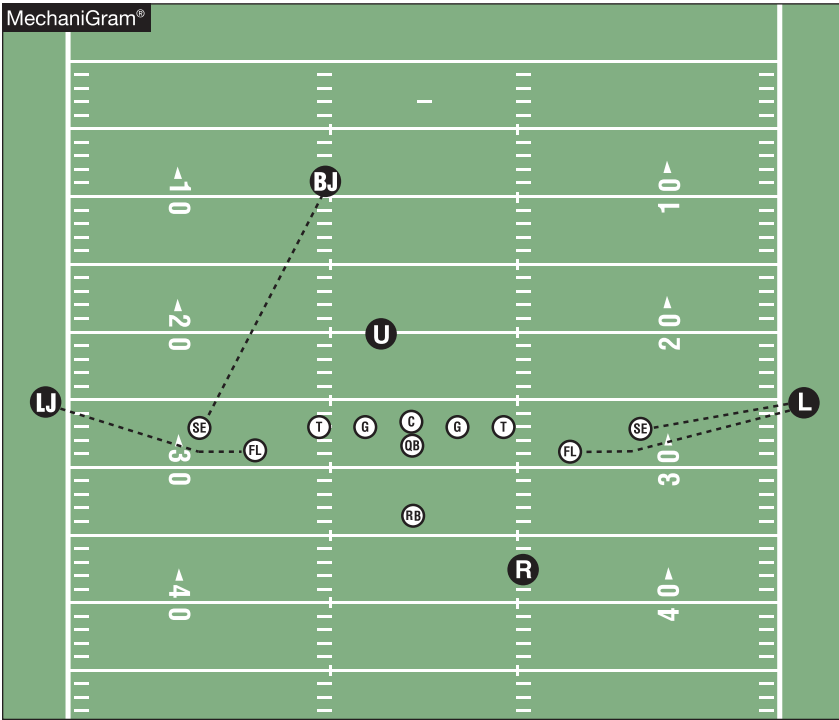
### **Motion**

An offensive player in motion can affect keys. It is crucial that the Back Judge and wing officials know where the motion man is at the snap because the strength of the formation (and therefore the keys) may change.

Say Team A lines up strong to the Linesman's side, but the flanker on the Linesman's side goes in motion toward the Line Judge. If the motion man gets to the Line Judge's side of the ball at the snap, the strength of the formation is now on the Line Judge's side and the keys change. The Back Judge now has the wideout on the Line Judge's side, the Line Judge has the motion man and the Linesman has the end on his side of the line. Although the Line Judge is keying on the motion man's action after the snap, the Linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut downfield before the snap. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player originally moved.

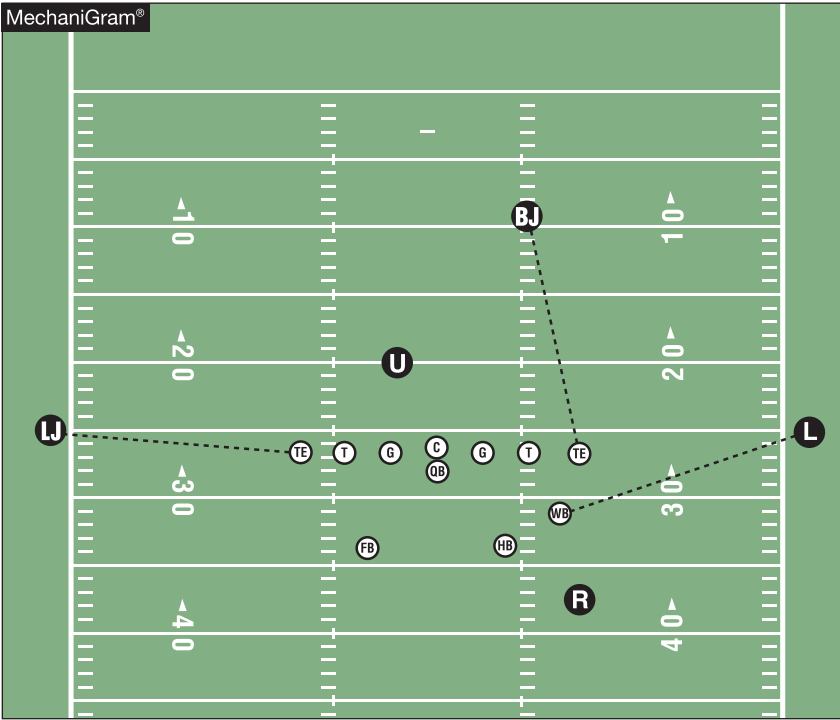
If the motion man does not get to the opposite side of the formation before the snap, the keys do not change because the strength of the formation has not changed.

## BALANCED FORMATION



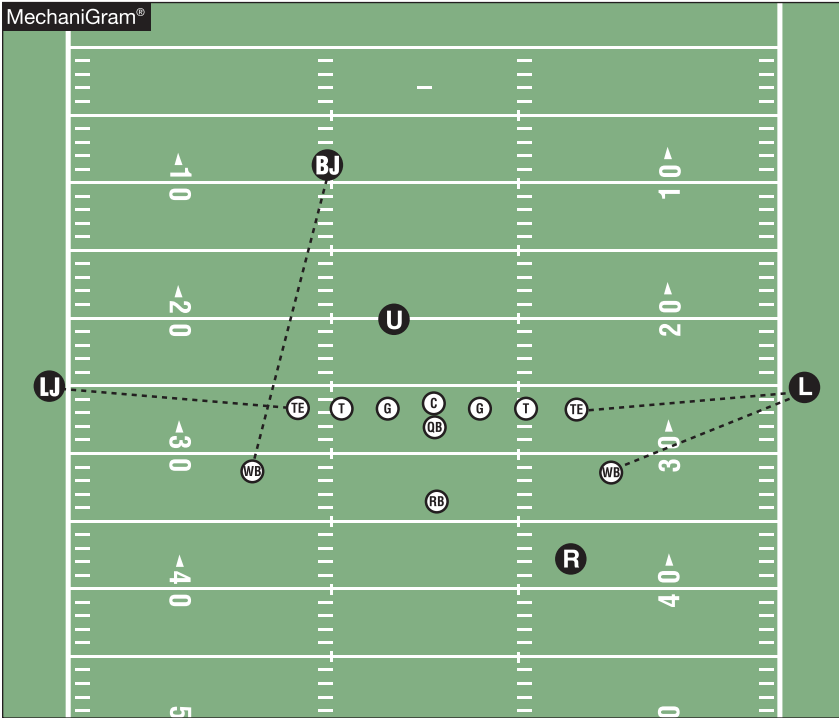
In a balanced formation, strength is always considered to be on the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge keys on the widest receiver (in this case, the split end). The Line Judge keys on the flanker while the Linesman keys on the split end and flanker on his side. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route.

## DOUBLE TIGHT ENDS, STRENGTH TO LINESMAN'S SIDE



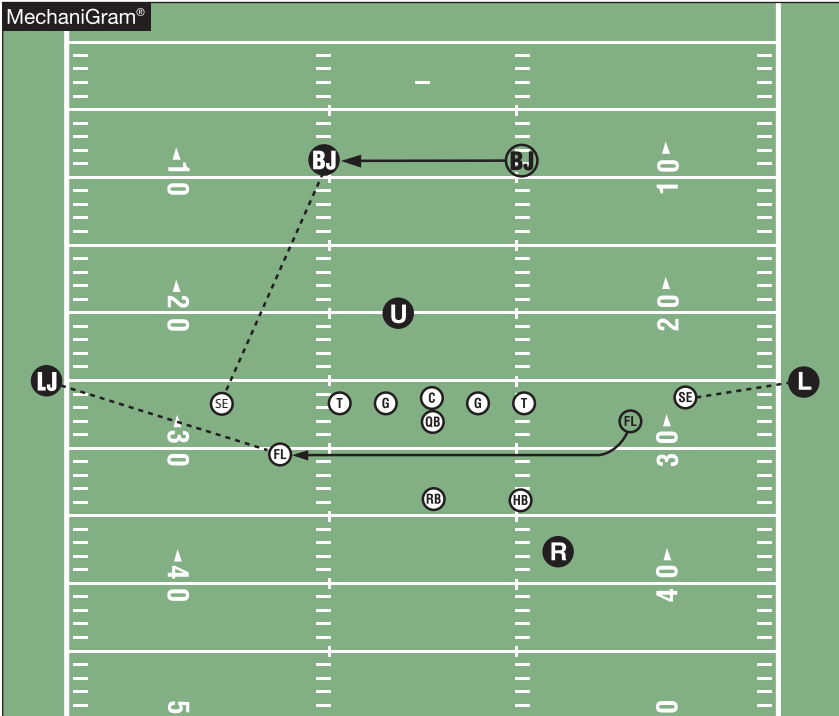
This is primarily a running formation used on short yardage, but teams sometimes throw quick passes out of this formation. The Back Judge keys on the widest receiver on the strong side (the Linesman's side in this case). The Linesman keys on the wingback. The Line Judge keys on the tight end on his side. Either wing official may also have a back who runs a pass route.

## DOUBLE WING, DOUBLE TIGHT END FORMATION



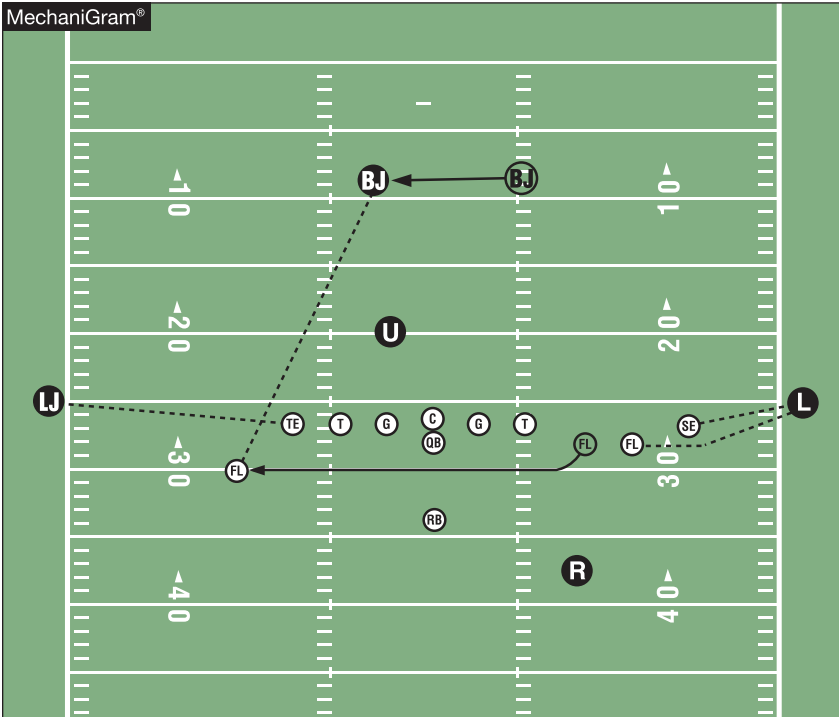
Strength is declared to the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge keys on the wingback on the Line Judge's side. The Line Judge keys on the tight end on his side. The Linesman has the tight end and wingback on his side. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route.

## MOTION CHANGES STRENGTH



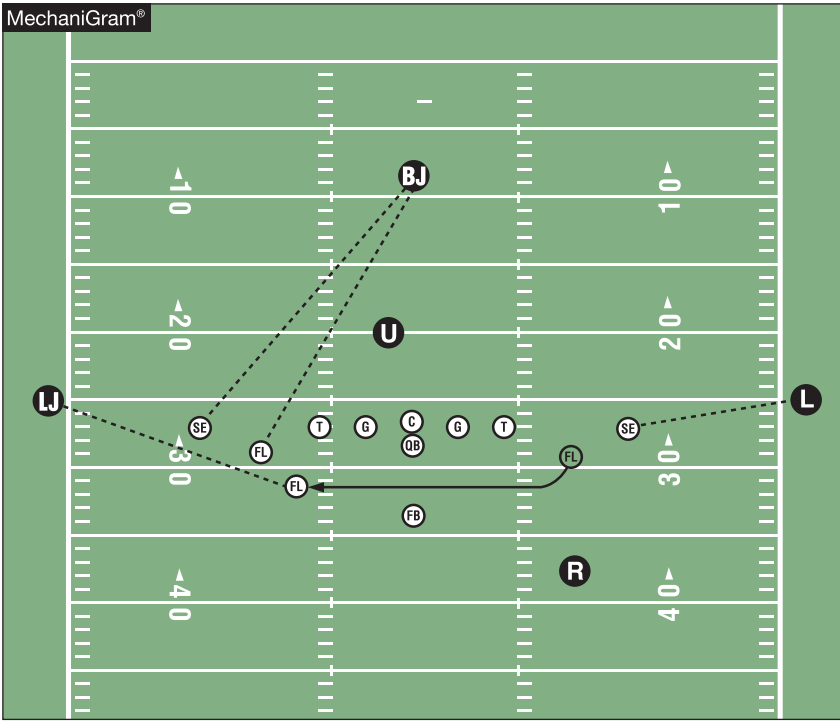
Strength was originally to the Linesman's side, but motion changed the strength to the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge's key is the split end on the Linesman's side and he retains that key because that player does not go into motion. The Line Judge retains his key on the split end on his side and picks up the flanker as a second key regardless of whether the flanker ends up as the widest player on the Line Judge's side. The Linesman picks up the two deep backs as his keys and gives priority to whichever one runs a pass route to his side of the field or to whichever goes furthest downfield. The Linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut up-field before the snap. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving.

## MOTION CHANGES FORMATION FROM UNBALANCED (TRIPS) TO BALANCED



Strength was originally to the Linesman's side, but motion changed the formation from unbalanced to balanced. In a balanced formation, strength is declared to the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge shifts position and keys on the strong side flanker. The Line Judge keys on the tight end and the Linesman keys on the split end and flanker on his side. Although the Line Judge is keying on the motion man's action after the snap, the Linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut downfield before the snap. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving.

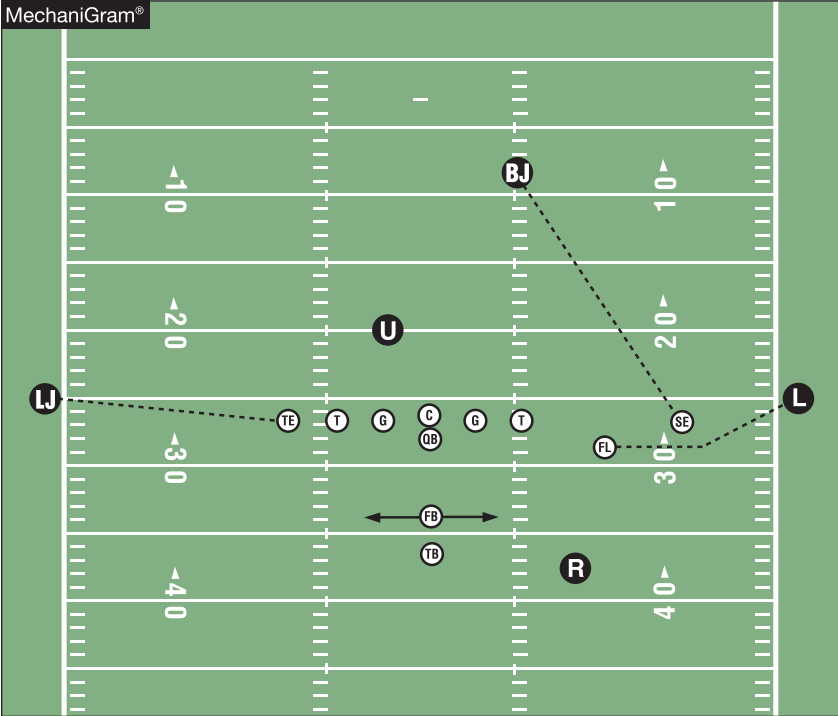
## MOTION INTO TRIPS



Motion by the flanker turned a balanced formation into a trips formation to the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge keys on the set flanker and the split end on the Line Judge's side. The Line Judge keys on the motion man and the Linesman keys on the end on his side of the line. Although the Line Judge is keying on the motion man's action after the snap, the Linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut downfield before the snap. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving.

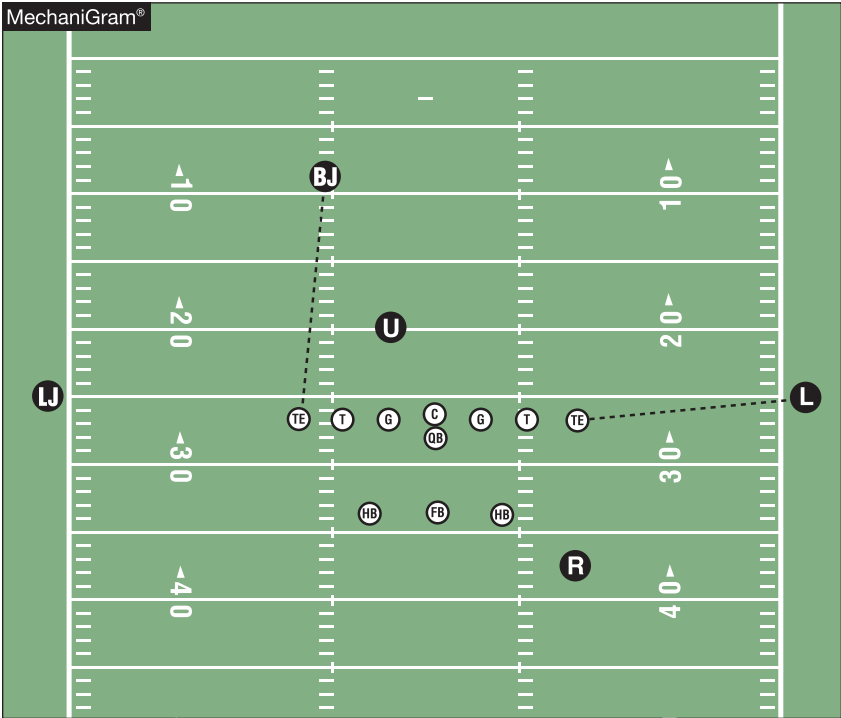


## MOTION DOESN'T CHANGE STRENGTH



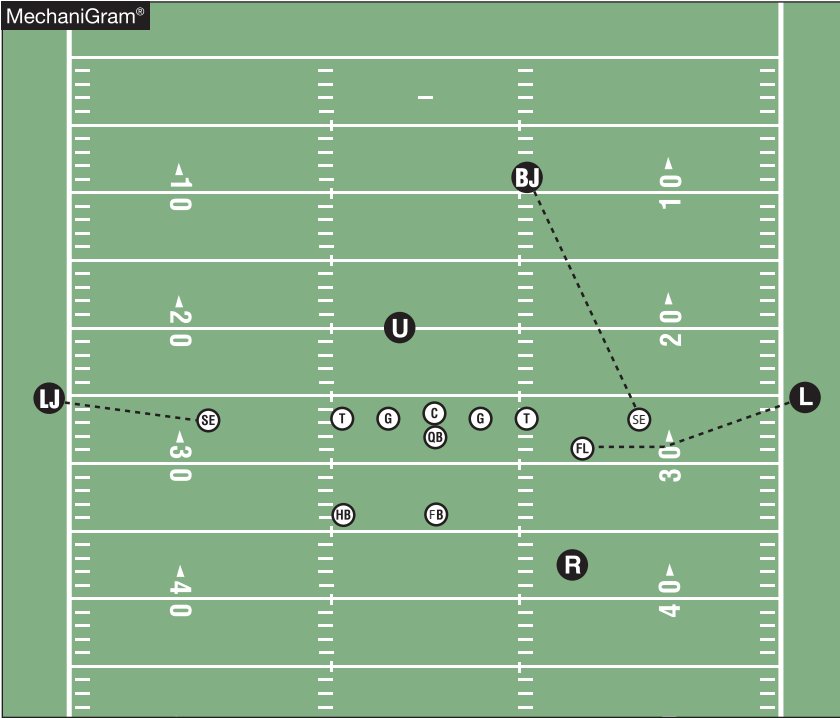
Strength is to the Linesman's side. Even if the back goes in motion to the Line Judge's side, strength is not considered to have changed. The Back Judge keys on the split end and the Linesman keys on the flanker. The Line Judge keys on the split end. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route.

## STRAIGHT T



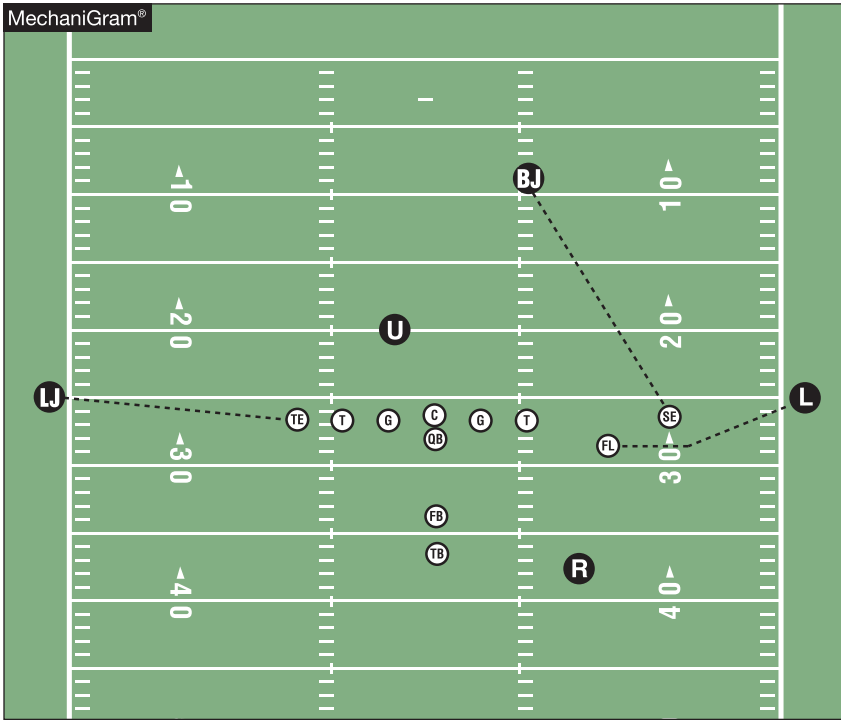
This is primarily a running formation, but on passing downs teams sometimes move a tight end to split end. It's a balanced formation, so strength is declared to the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge keys on the tight end on the Line Judge's side. The Linesman keys on the weak side tight end. The Line Judge has no formal key, but should look through the tight end to observe the tackle on his side and observe the halfback after the snap. Either wing official may have a back who runs a pass route.

## STRENGTH TO LINESMAN'S SIDE, WEAK SIDE SPLIT END



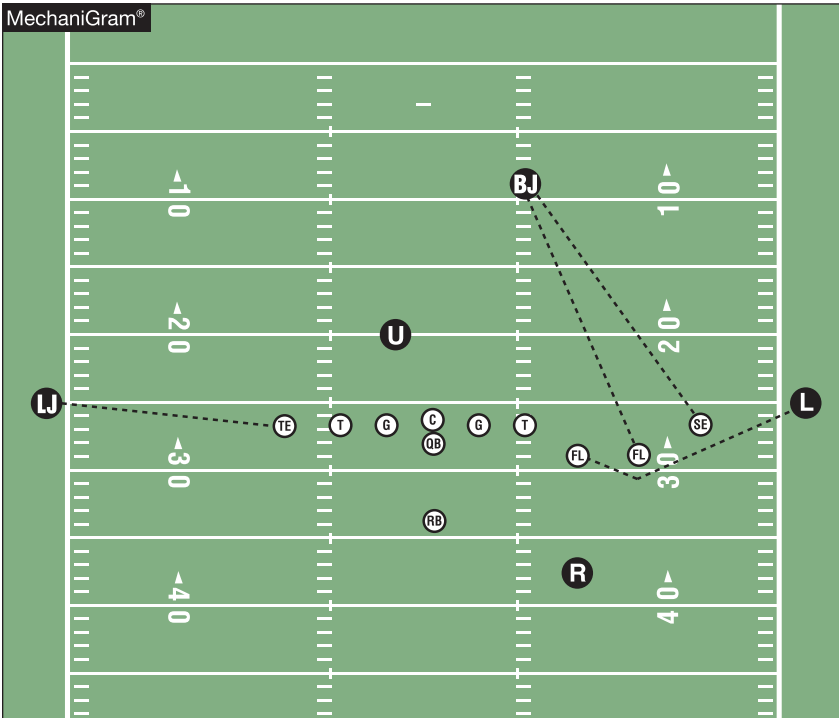
The Back Judge keys on the strong side split end and the Linesman keys on the flanker. The Line Judge keys on the split end on his side. The fullback will likely stay in the backfield for pass protection, but the halfback may run a pass route. If the route is to the Line Judge's side, the Line Judge takes him.

## STRENGTH TO LINESMAN'S SIDE, WEAK SIDE TIGHT END



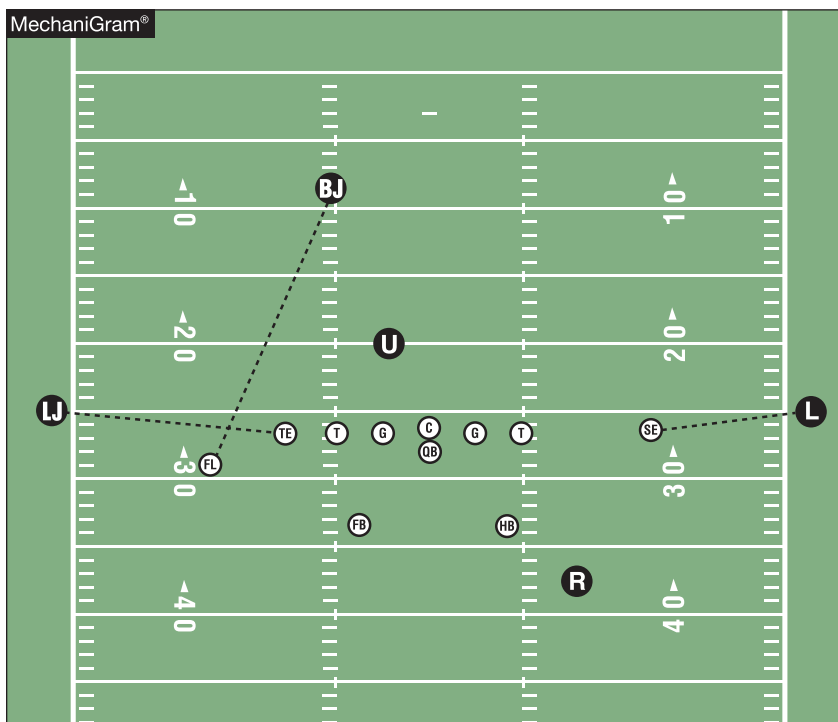
The Back Judge keys on the split end and the Linesman keys on the flanker. The Line Judge keys on the tight end. The fullback will likely stay in the backfield for pass protection, but the tailback may run a pass route. If the route is to the Line Judge's side, the Line Judge takes him.

## TRIPS TO LINESMAN'S SIDE



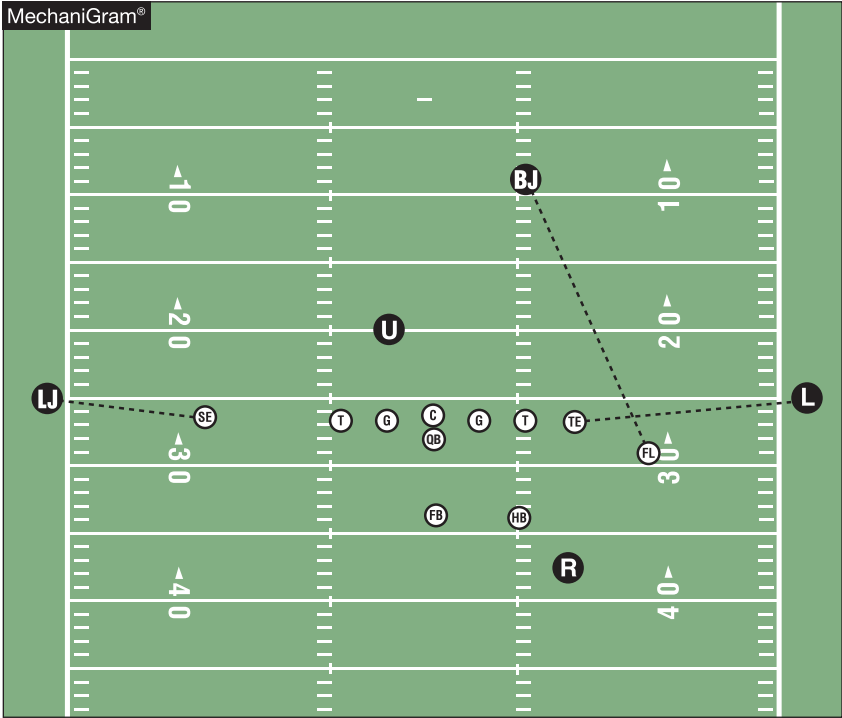
The Back Judge keys on the two widest receivers and the strong side wing official keys on the inside-most receiver. In this formation, that is the flanker, but it could be a tight end if the formation had only two wide receivers. The Line Judge keys on the end nearest him. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route. If the same formation were strong to the Line Judge's side, the Line Judge would key on the inside receiver and the Back Judge on the two widest receivers.

## UNBALANCED FORMATION, STRENGTH TO LINE JUDGE'S SIDE



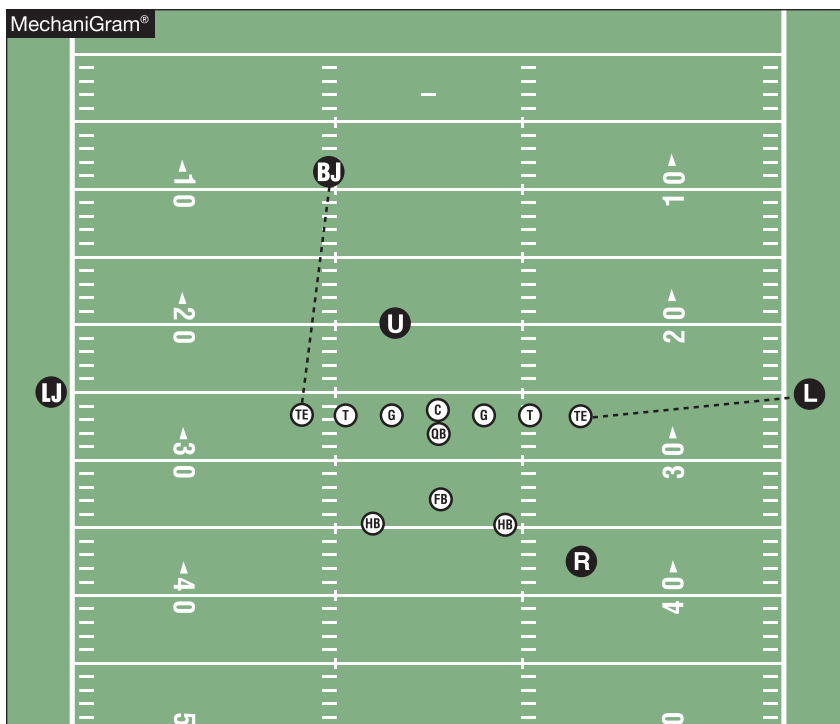
The Back Judge keys on the flanker and the Line Judge keys on the tight end. The Linesman keys on the split end on his side. Either wing official may also have a back running a pass route.

## VEER



Although primarily a running formation, teams will occasionally throw to the flanker or split end. In this example, strength is to the Linesman's side. The Back Judge keys on the flanker and the Linesman keys on the tight end. The Line Judge keys on the split end on his side. The fullback's primary function is as a blocker.

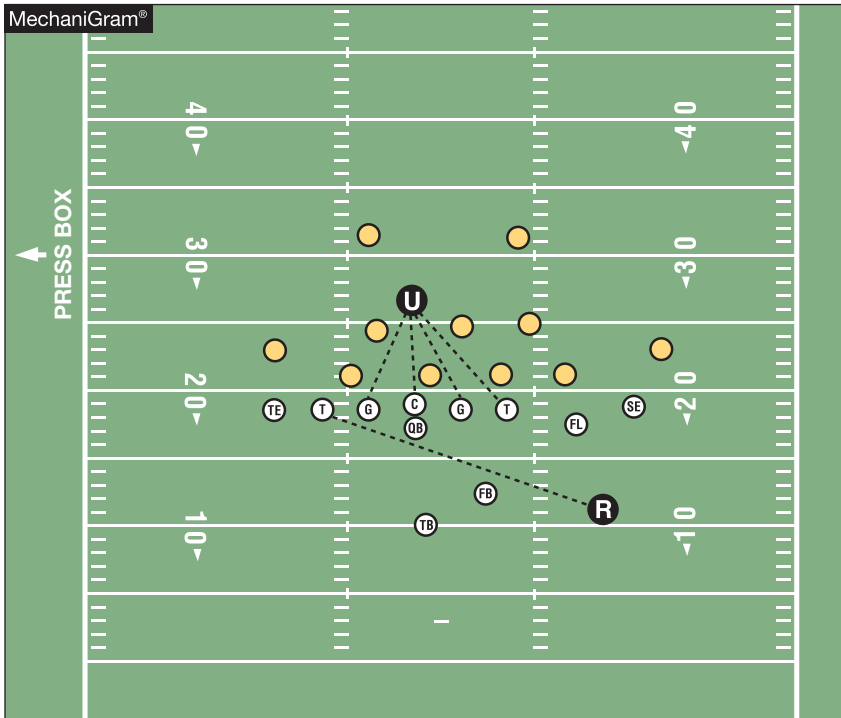
## WISHBONE



A balanced formation, which means strength is declared to Line Judge's side. The Back Judge keys on the tight end on the Line Judge's side. The Line Judge keys on the backs. The Linesman keys on the tight end on his side.



## REFeree AND UMPIRE KEYS



After the snap the Referee reads the block of opposite-side tackle. In the MechaniGram, the quarterback is right-handed, which means the Referee reads the left tackle. The Umpire will initially key on the center and a guard since the legality of the snap is his responsibility. He can then transition his attention to any two of the four linemen: the right tackle, the center and both guards. He may observe any two adjacent players, e.g. right tackle and right guard, left guard and center, or center and right guard. He should randomly vary which of those three combinations he views.

## CHAPTER 30

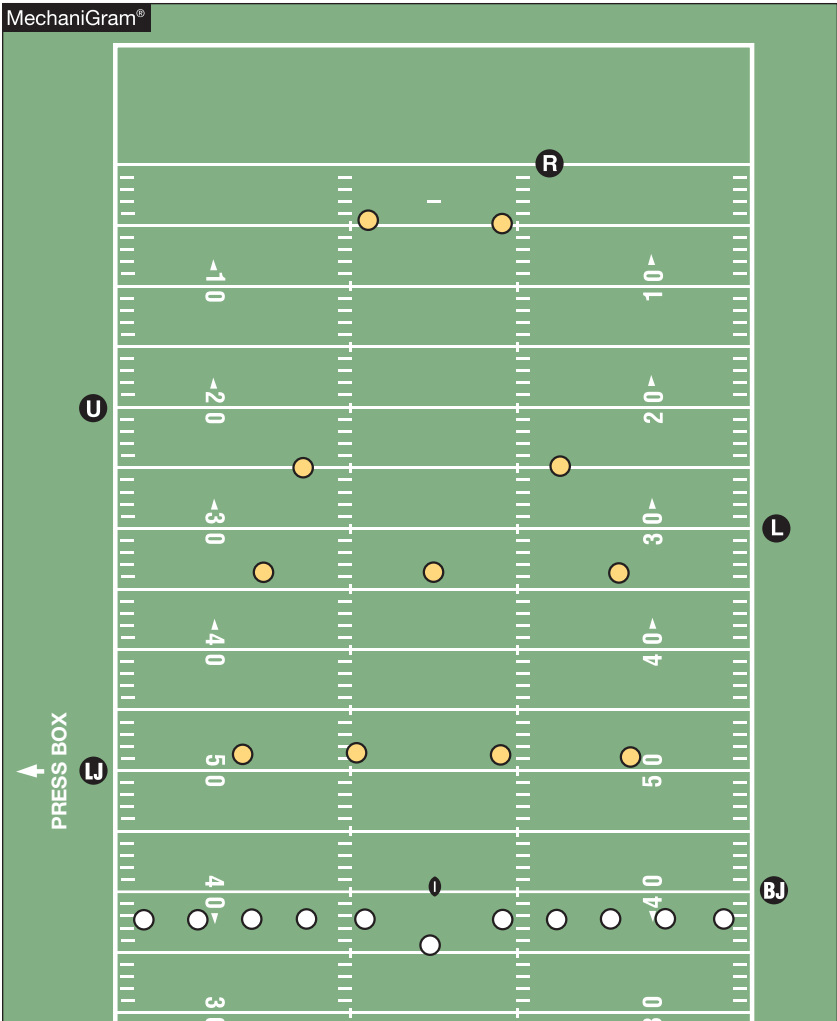
# POSITIONING AND COVERAGE - FREE KICK PLAYS

- KICKOFF POSITIONING
- ANTICIPATED ONSIDE KICK
- FREE KICK AFTER SAFETY

After a score, the officials should ensure the teams get into kick position quickly and do not exceed the permissible one-minute intermission, which is timed by the Back Judge. The ready should not be blown until it is confirmed that 22 players are on the field. During the play, emphasis should be placed on illegal blocks and holding. Other than the Referee, all officials should remain off the field until the play is over. Consequently, it is difficult for an official to immediately get to a pile. The closest official to a pile (there won't always be one) is responsible for getting there and supervising the separation of the players. If there is no pile, the closest official need only note the yard line on which the play ended. When the play ends the priority should be on dead-ball officiating. Be sure to allow players to clear before looking for a new ball.

It is not permissible to solicit information regarding the type of kick (i.e., onside, short, or squib kick) to convey the information to the other officials.

KICKOFF POSITIONING



Positioning

**Referee:** The Referee's starting position is near the hash mark on Team R's goal line on the side of the field on which the chains are located (opposite the press box). He counts Team R players and confirms his count with the Umpire. Once he sees a ready signal from each official, the Referee blows

his whistle and gives the ready-for-play signal. Because the goal line is solely the Referee's responsibility, he must be straddling the goal line before the ball is kicked. Always starting in that position will ensure the Referee knows exactly where the goal line is if the ball or a receiver force him to move.

The Referee must remain on the goal line until it is no longer a factor. If a penalty has moved the spot of the kick a substantial distance toward Team K's goal line, the Referee may move forward but must set up deep enough so he does not have to retreat.

**Umpire:** The Umpire's starting position is on the side opposite the chains, at about Team R's 20-yard line. When in position and ready for the kick after counting Team R players and confirming the signal with the Referee, the Umpire should raise an arm as a ready signal for the Referee.

**Linesman:** The Linesman's starting position is on the chain side of the field, on Team R's 30-yard line. When in position and ready for the kick after counting the players for the team on his sideline and clearing the restricted area of coaches and nonplayers, the Linesman should raise an arm as a ready signal for the Referee.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge is on Team R's free kick line (usually the 50-yard line) and should assist Team R players who are lining up, if necessary. The Line Judge does not go out onto the field, but may do so to get a player's attention. When in position and ready for the kick after counting players from his sideline and clearing the restricted area of coaches and nonplayers, the Line Judge should raise an arm as a ready signal for the Referee.

**Back Judge:** After a score, the Back Judge is responsible for timing the one-minute intermission. He must obtain the ball to be kicked. If the ball was not pre-positioned under the upright, he should go up the sideline of the scoring team to obtain the ball. Otherwise, he should go directly to midfield along the sideline without delay and wait for the kicking team to line up on their free kick line (usually the 40-yard line). If necessary,

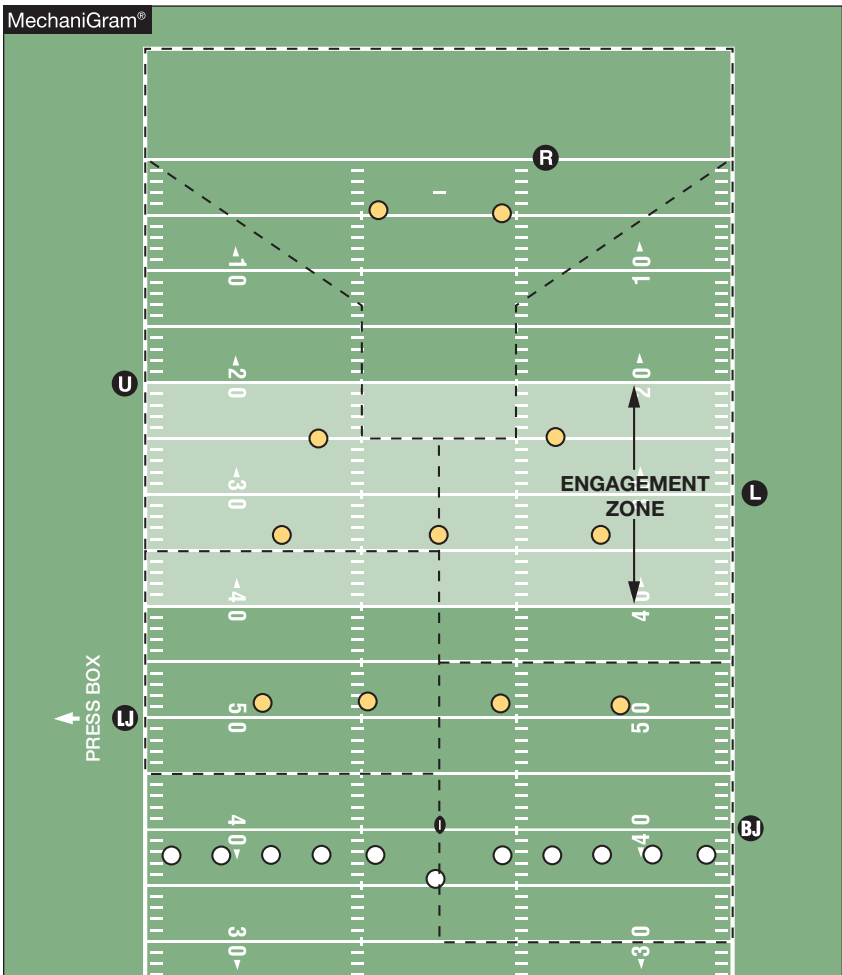
he will blow a double whistle at 45 seconds to prompt the kicking team.

The Back Judge should not give the ball to the kicker until Team K has 11 players on the field and the team is in a legal free kick formation meaning all players other than the kicker are within five yards of their free kick line. He should remind the kicker to raise his arm when his team is ready to kickoff and to not to kick the ball until the Referee has sounded his whistle.

When the kicker indicates his team is ready, the Back Judge will then move to his position on the sideline, remind coaches and nonplayers to clear the restricted area, pause and determine the kicking formation is legal before raising an arm as a ready signal for the Referee. The Back Judge will point to the kicker when the ready is blown. If the team subsequently shifts players, the Back Judge will ensure no player violates the five-yard belt.

If the kicking team is excessively delaying by not returning to the field for the kickoff, the Back Judge may set the ball in the center of the field on Team K's free kick line and point to the Referee indicating the one-minute intermission has expired. That will cue the Referee to immediately whistle the ready for play upon which the 25-second play clock is started. If the football falls off the tee just prior to the kick, the Back Judge sounds whistle to prevent action and moves to the kicker to restart the process. If the ball blows off the tee a second time, he will request that a holder be used. The Back Judge will whistle the play dead if any kickoff rules are violated.

FREE KICK COVERAGE ZONES



**Coverage**

The coverage of a runner advancing from one official's area to another depends on the imminence of contact when the runner reaches the transition line. Transitioning coverage from the Umpire's (Linesman's) area into the Line Judge's (Back Judge's) coverage area is generally guided by the yard lines shown above and discussed below. The first official cannot shift focus on the runner if the runner is being or is about to be contacted. As an example, if the runner is moving through the Umpire's coverage area the Umpire will maintain coverage on the runner until he has separated from would be tacklers and is in breakaway status, when the Line Judge takes over coverage. On free kicks, the engagement zone is generally between Team R's 20- and 40-yard lines. Officials must have heightened awareness to activity inside the engagement zone which is the prime area for blindside blocks, blocks in the back and holding.

**Referee:** The Referee is solely responsible for action around the near goal line pylon and will get help from the Umpire for the opposite pylon. He must move toward either pylon if it is threatened. When in doubt, it is a touchback and not a kick out of bounds.

The Referee is responsible for ensuring there are four players on each side of the kicker when the ball is kicked.

On kicks inside Team R's five-yard line, the Referee is solely responsible for determining whether the momentum exception applies or whether the kick is to be ruled a touchback.

If a touchback occurs, the Referee should whistle the play over and move quickly toward the middle of the field to signal touchback, getting between the receiver and oncoming opponents to deter late hits. If the momentum exception applies, he must bean bag the spot where possession is obtained.

If the kick is down the middle of the field, the Referee stays with the runner to about Team R's 2five-yard line. If the kick is to the Umpire or Linesman's coverage area, they will be responsible for the initial coverage of the runner, and the Referee cleans up behind the play, but must move cautiously in case the runner reverses his direction. In almost all cases, the Referee will wind the clock when the ball is touched.

On shorter runbacks the Referee will likely be the first official to the pile and will supervise the un-piling, if necessary.

**Umpire:** If the kick is deep and near the Umpire's sideline, he should move towards the pylon in case it becomes threatened. If the ball is advanced from or has moved into the Umpire's coverage area, he stays with the runner to approximately Team R's 3five-yard line, where the Line Judge takes over.

He winds the clock only if the kick is touched by Team R in his coverage area.

When the Umpire is responsible for the initial coverage of the runner, he can count on the Referee to clean up behind the play. When the kick is outside the Umpire's coverage area, his initial responsibility is the legality of the blocks in front of the runner (initial wedge of blockers at about the 20- 2five-yard line).

The Umpire shall avoid watching the ball in flight but sense its location based on player reactions and peripheral vision. He must dead-ball officiate and allow players to clear before retrieving a new ball.

**Linesman:** The Linesman's initial blocking/contact coverage is the four Team K players nearest his sideline.

If the kick is to the Linesman's side and as wide as the hash mark, the Linesman takes up the coverage at about Team R's 2five-yard line and stays with the runner to about Team R's 4five-yard line, where he gives up coverage to the Back Judge.

If the kick is short and the Linesman is responsible for the initial coverage of the runner, he can count on the Referee to clean up behind the play. If the kick goes to the opposite side, the Linesman watches for legality of blocks in front of the runner (initial wedge of blockers at about the 2five-yard line) and action away from the ball.

The Linesman shall not watch the ball in flight but sense its location based on player reactions and peripheral vision. He must dead-ball officiate and allow players to clear before obtaining the new ball.

**Line Judge:** When the ball is kicked, the Line Judge assists the Back Judge in determining whether or not a pop-up kick is attempted.

After the ball is kicked, the Line Judge

moves with intent about 10-15 yards downfield, while watching the blocks on the four Team K players nearest his sideline.

He should go no farther than Team R's 3five-yard line in case the runner breaks off a long return and enters his coverage area.

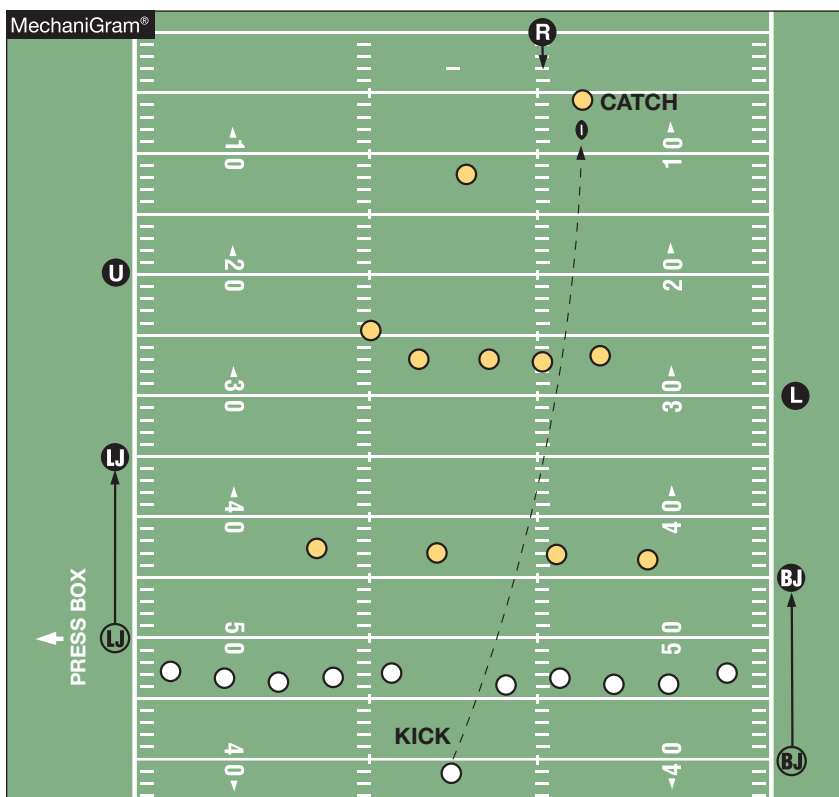
The Line Judge has responsibility for the goal line on his side of the field.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge must determine whether or not a pop-up kick is attempted.

After the ball is kicked, the Back Judge moves with intent about 10-15 yards downfield, while watching the initial blocks on the three middle Team K players and maintains special protection of the kicker until he participates in the action. He should not go beyond Team R's 4five-yard line in case the runner breaks off a long return and enters his coverage area. The Back Judge has responsibility for the goal line on his side of the field.

If the Referee does not have a microphone, the Back Judge signals dead-ball fouls on free kicks and administers any penalties enforced.

FREE KICK TO SIDE ZONE - PART 1



**Action on the field:** The receiver catches a kick in the side zone nearest the Referee.

**Referee:** The Referee observes the catch. He signals the clock to start when the ball is touched by the receiver. He then moves to trail the receiver and observes the action of the runner during the return.

**Umpire:** The Umpire observes the players in his area and in front of the runner. He is prepared for the runner to enter his coverage area.

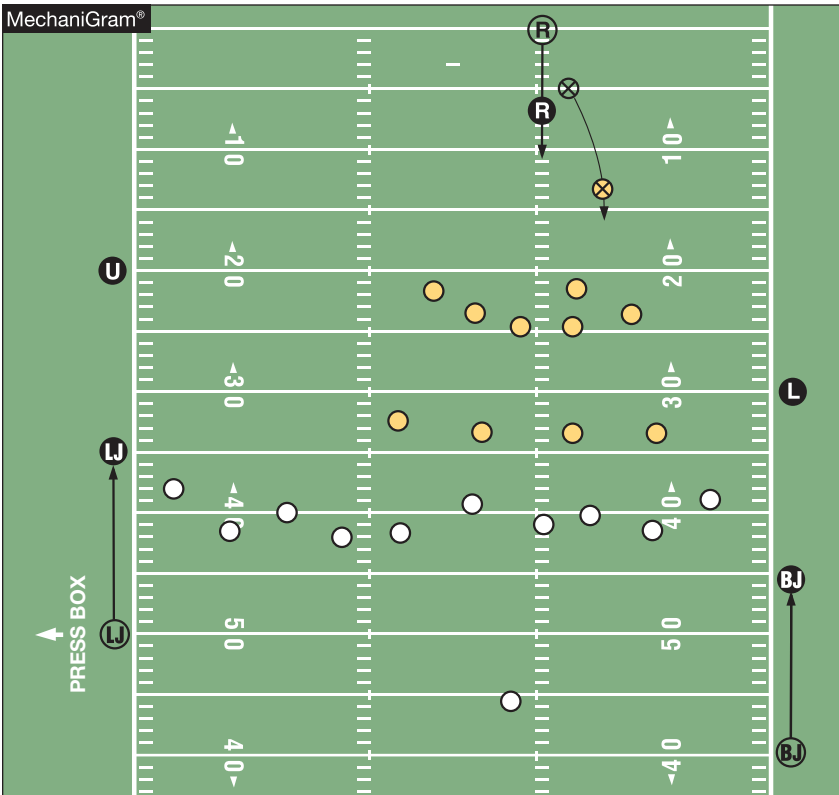
**Linesman:** The Linesman maintains his position and observes the action in his area and in front of runner.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge watches for infractions involving his free kick line, assists the Back Judge in determining whether or not a pop-up kick is attempted and observes contact involving the players nearest him while moving downfield no farther than Team R's 3five-yard line.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge watches for infractions involving the kick and his free kick line, including whether or not a pop-up kick is attempted, and observes contact involving the players nearest him, including the kicker, while moving downfield no farther than Team R's 4five-yard line.



FREE KICK TO SIDE ZONE - PART 2



**Action on the field:** The runner advances staying on one side of the field.

**Referee:** The Referee gives up coverage of runner to Linesman and picks up action in front of the runner (halo principle).

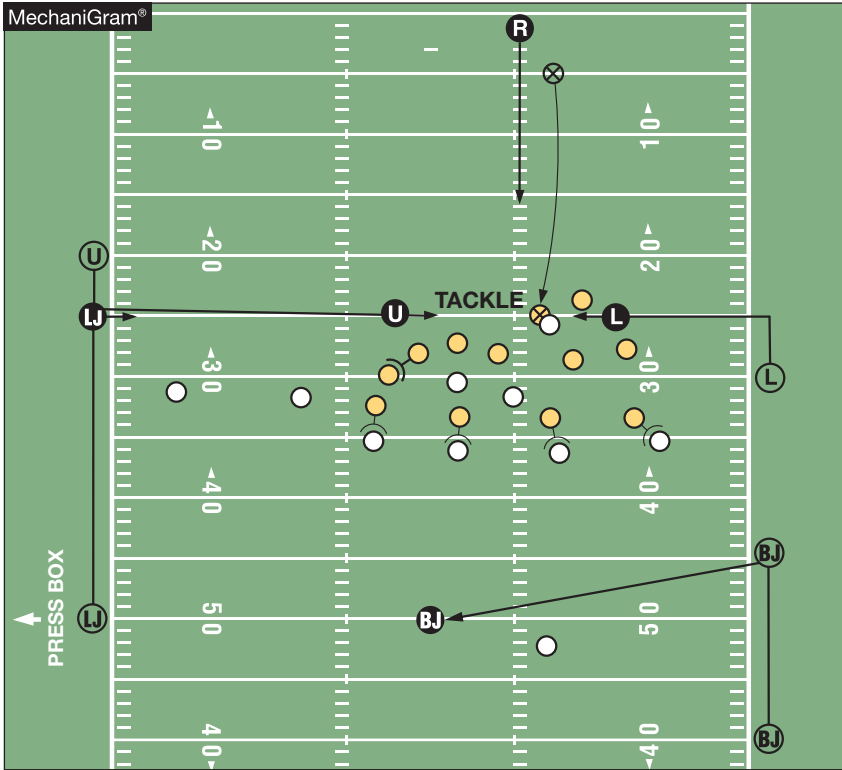
**Umpire:** The Umpire observes action in front of the runner on his side of the field.

**Linesman:** The Linesman maintains his position and takes coverage of runner when the runner enters his area (about Team R's 20-yard line).

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge observes action in front of the runner on his side of the field.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge observes action in front of the runner.

FREE KICK TO SIDE ZONE - PART 3



**Action on the field:** The runner continues to advance and is downed near the 25-yard line.

**Referee:** The Referee moves downfield trailing the runner. He observes action in his area and helps separate them if there is a pile. When he is certain no penalty flags have been thrown, he signals a new series for Team R.

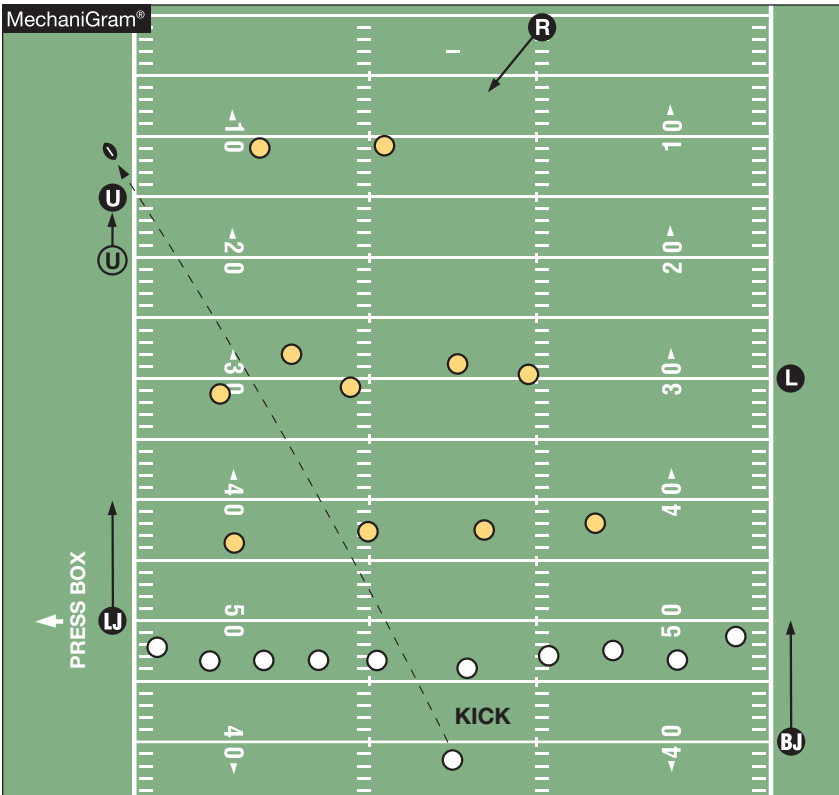
**Umpire:** The Umpire observes action in his area. He notes the yard line on which the play ended. He then obtains a new ball and spots it for the next down.

**Linesman:** The Linesman observes action in his area. He blows his whistle and gives the stop-the-clock signal when the runner is downed. He squares off and holds the spot until he is sure the Umpire knows where to spot the ball. When the Referee signals possession for Team R, he instructs the chain crew to set the chains for a new series.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge observes action in his area. If he is on the defense's sideline, he mirrors the Linesman's spot. If he is on the offense's sideline he obtains a new ball.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge observes action in his area. He retrieves the old ball and returns it to the appropriate sideline. He then moves to his position for the next down.

FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS - PART 1



**Action on the field:** The ball is kicked out of bounds in flight in the Umpire's side zone.

**Referee:** The Referee observes action in his area.

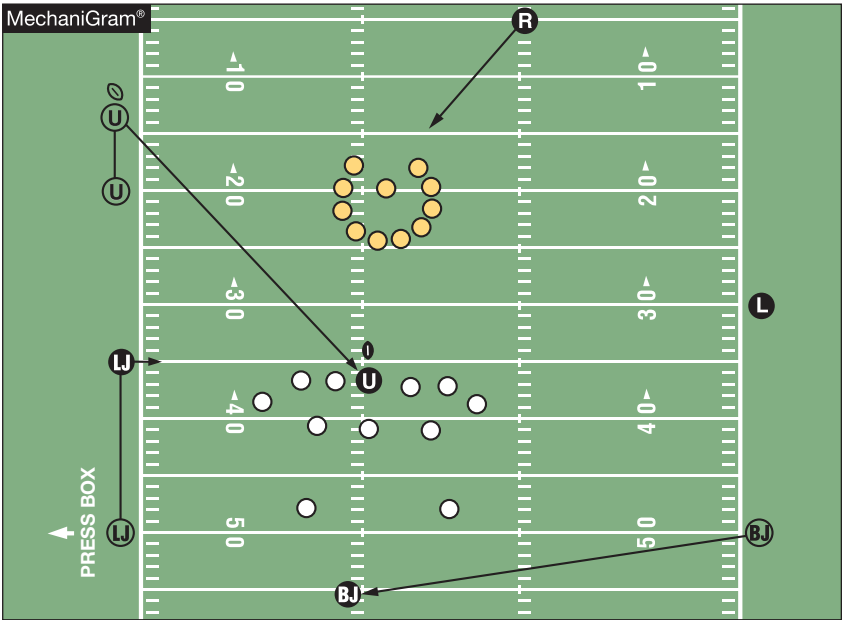
**Umpire:** The Umpire observes action in his area. He checks to make sure the clock did not start. He blows his whistle as he throws his flag into the air when the ball lands out of bounds. He does not give the stop-the-clock signal (the clock should not have started).

**Linesman:** The Linesman observes players in his area. If the team on his sideline was Team R, he goes to the Head Coach and ascertains that the ball is to be put in play at their 3five-yard line (25 yards from the previous spot).

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge watches for infractions involving his free kick line and contact involving the players nearest him. If the team on his sideline was Team R, he goes to the Head Coach and ascertains that the ball is to be put in play at their 3five-yard line.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge watches for infractions involving his free kick line and contact involving the players nearest him including the kicker.

FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS - PART 2



**Action on the field:** Team R chooses to take ball at its own 3five-yard line (25 yards from the previous spot).

**Referee:** The Referee observes the action in his area. He communicates with the Umpire to determine result of play. He obtains Team R's choice from the wing official. He goes to the hash mark nearest the out-of-bounds spot at Team R's 3five-yard line where ball will next be put in play and signals Team K's foul, followed by the first down signal. If Team R chooses a re-kick after enforcement, he returns to his position for the re-kick and does not signal the penalty unless he has a microphone.

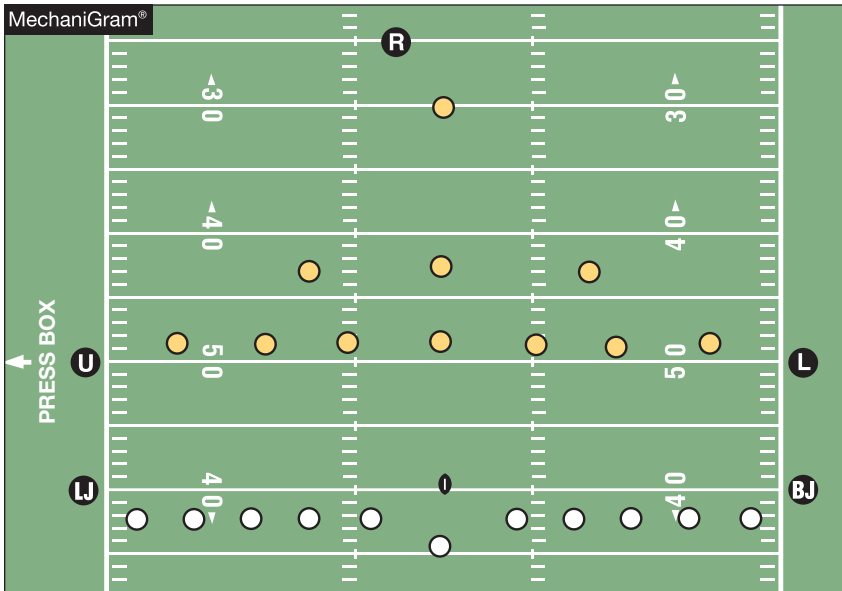
**Umpire:** The Umpire observes the action in his area. He confirms the result of play with the Referee. He moves to the hash mark on the out-of-bounds side of the field at Team R's 3five-yard line and spots the ball for a new series. If Team R chooses to re-kick, he returns to his position for the re-kick.

**Linesman:** The Linesman observes the action in his area. He moves to Team R's 3five-yard line, where Team R will begin new series and assists the chain crew in setting the chains. If Team R chooses a re-kick after enforcement, he returns to his position for the re-kick.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge observes the action in his area. He moves downfield to Team R's 3five-yard line, where the new series will begin. If Team R chooses a re-kick after enforcement, he returns to his position for the re-kick.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge observes the action in his area. He moves to his position for start of the new series. If Team R chooses a re-kick after enforcement and the Referee does not have a microphone, he signals Team K's foul, walks off the penalty and returns to his position for the re-kick.

ANTICIPATED OUTSIDE KICK POSITIONING



The following is the procedure for an anticipated outside kick. The Referee may direct this positioning at any time depending on the game situation and team tendencies. However, in the last half of the fourth quarter, if the team kicking off is behind in the score, this positioning must be used. This positioning must also be used for teams who always attempt an outside kick. During an outside kick, officials must assert additional scrutiny regarding encroachment. Team K's free kick line is treated as a plane. The crew must be especially vigilant for contact by Team K before they are eligible to do so.

**Positioning**

**Referee:** The Referee's starting position is in the middle of the field, five yards deeper than the deepest R receiver. He should set up deep enough so he doesn't have to retreat and so that he can cover the goal line if a line drive kick gets past the deepest receiver.

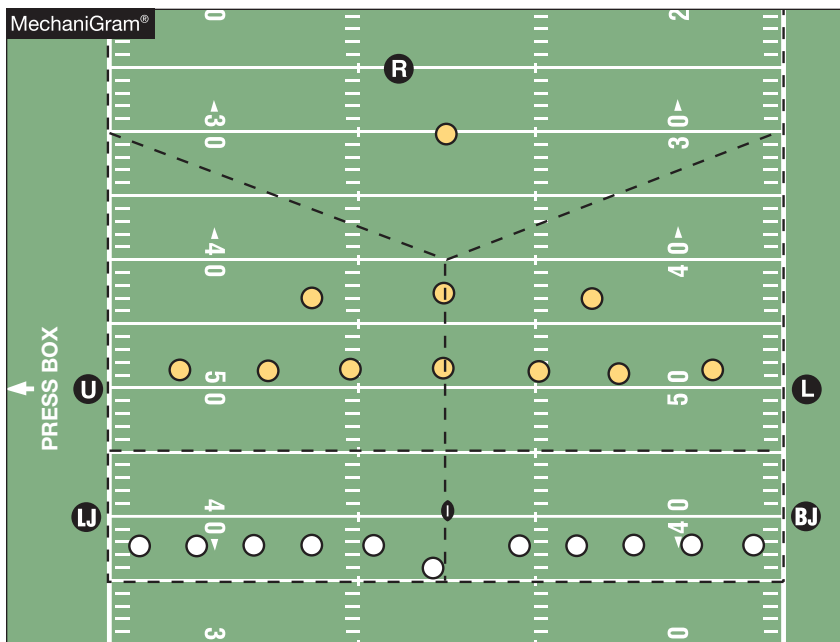
**Umpire:** The Umpire's starting position is on Team R's free kick line, on the same side of the field as the Line Judge. As an option the Umpire may "leapfrog" over the Line Judge and position himself on Team K's free kick line. This option should be confirmed in the pregame.

**Linesman:** The Linesman's starting position is on Team R's free kick line, opposite the Umpire, (unless the umpire has leapfrogged).

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge's starting position is on Team K's free kick line, opposite the Back Judge, (unless the umpire has leapfrogged).

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge's starting position is on the Linesman's side of the field and on Team K's free kick line.

ANTICIPATED ONSIDE KICK COVERAGE ZONES



**Coverage**

**Action on the field:** Team K attempts an onside kick (anticipated or unanticipated).

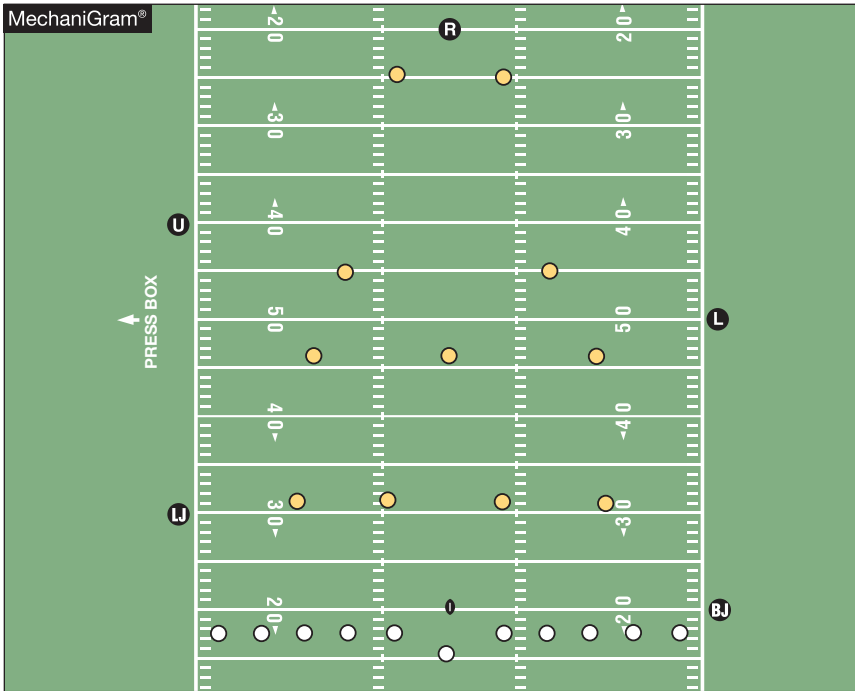
**Referee:** If the kick gets to or past the deepest receiver, he covers the recovery and run as usual. The Referee will then wind the clock. If the kick remains in the zone of the officials, he observes players in his area.

**All Other Officials:** All officials have responsibility to know when the ball is touched. Each official will have his bean bag in his hand to mark the spot if Team K touches the kick before it goes 10 yards and will be prepared to blow the ball dead if a prone player from either team recovers the kick, regardless of whether it has traveled 10 yards. If the kick goes to the other side, officials must watch for action away from the ball.

**Line Judge and Back Judge (on Team K's free kick line):** Responsible for encroachment by Team K (free kick line is treated as a plane) and determining if a pop-up kick is made. Primary responsibility for illegal blocks. The Back Judge must also be alert for illegal action on the kicker.

**Linesman and Umpire (on Team R's free kick line):** Responsible for encroachment by Team R. Primary responsibility for determining touching and final possession.

FREE KICK AFTER SAFETY POSITIONING



The mechanics for a free kick that follows a safety are generally the same as those for a kickoff.

**Positioning**

**Referee:** The Referee's starting position is in the center of the field at Team R's 20-yard line. The exact-yard line may be adjusted depending on the ability of the kicker and the position of the deepest receiver(s).

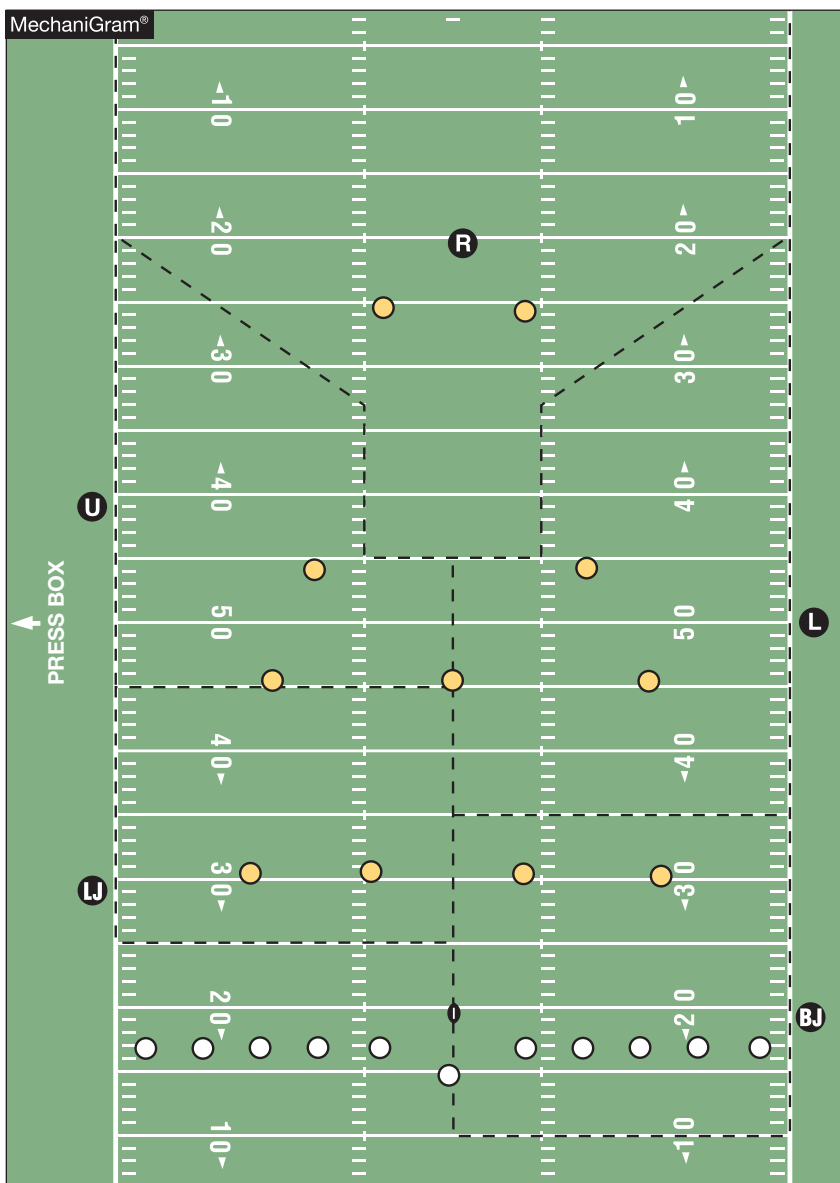
**Umpire:** The Umpire's starting position is on the side opposite the chains, at about Team R's 40-yard line.

**Linesman:** The Linesman's starting position is on the chain side of the field, on the 50-yard line.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge is on Team R's free kick line. It may be necessary for him to enter the field to align Team R players with their free kick line. When in position and ready for the kick, after counting the players for the team on his sideline, the Line Judge should raise an arm as a ready signal for the Referee.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge will be near the center of the field at the 20-yard line waiting for the kicking team to line up on their free kick line. He should remind the kicker that the ball may either be punted or kicked from a tee.

FREE KICK AFTER SAFETY COVERAGE ZONES



**Coverage**

Coverage for a free kick that follows a safety is the same as that for a free kick except for the yard lines where the action occurs. See the Free Kick Coverage section earlier in this chapter.



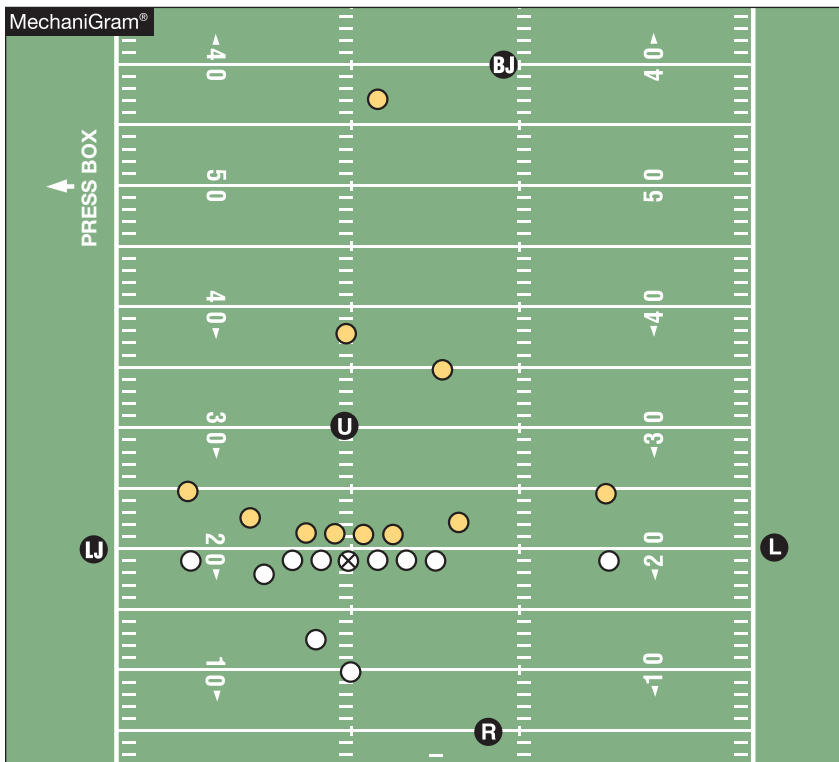
## CHAPTER 31

# POSITIONING AND COVERAGE - SCRIMMAGE KICK PLAYS (NON-SCORING)

- SCRIMMAGE KICK POSITIONING
- SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS
- SCRIMMAGE KICK TO SIDE ZONE

Punts are usually less than 40 yards with a minimal runback. Officials must be cognizant of first touching and illegal contact away from the ball. Officials must continue to watch for unnecessary contact especially during rolling punts.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK POSITIONING



### Positioning

**Referee:** The Referee's position is about five yards outside the kicker and roughly the same distance behind him. It doesn't matter which side of the kicker the Referee stands but coordination with the crew is essential (see below). The Referee must be able to view the snap and the initial block by the opposite tackle as well as the action around the kicker before, during and after the kick. The Referee must be ready to move in the appropriate direction if an errant snap leads to a loose ball in the offensive backfield and must have an awareness of the goal line.

**Umpire:** Deeper is better on scrimmage kicks. The Umpire should start at least 10 yards off the line of scrimmage, favoring the sideline opposite the Referee.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The starting position is the same as for other plays from scrimmage.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge begins the play three to five yards behind the deepest receiver and wide enough to observe the receiver's hands. That position must be between the hash marks. If there are two deep receivers,

the Back Judge must be between and behind them. The Back Judge must be prepared to move up-field if the kick is short or downfield if the receiver has to retreat. If the deep receiver is near or behind Team R's 15-yard line, the Back Judge must start on the goal line and not move off the goal line unless it is certain it will not be threatened.

### Coverage

**Referee:** As the ball travels from the snapper to the punter, the Referee should observe the initial block by the opposite tackle and watch for illegal blocks by the backfield protectors (holding, BBW) and then shift his focus to any player who becomes a threat to contact the ball or the kicker. If the snap is errant or mishandled, the Referee must be prepared to rule on the legality of any contact with the kicker. He must stay focused on the kicker until all threat of harm has passed. He should alert the defenders when the ball is kicked: "Ball's away, ball's away." Do not move too quickly downfield after the scrimmage kick.

The Referee must be ready to move in the appropriate direction (typically a 45 degree angle away from the spot of the block) in case of a blocked kick. On blocked kicks, the Referee should be ready to rule on the recovery and observe the advance of any player who runs with a recovered ball. If the kicker runs with the intent to kick rugby style, the Referee must move with him and note the nearest defenders to rule on the legality of any contact.

The Referee must strive for a position where he can watch both the kicker and the flight of the ball. Once it is clear the ball will not go out of bounds in flight, the Referee should no longer be concerned with the ball.

If the kick goes out-of-bounds in flight, the Referee will raise his hand to line up the kick for the covering official. The covering official will move up the sideline and stop when the Referee drops his

hand. If there is continuing action on the kicker, the Referee must disregard the preceding and let the covering official get the out-of-bounds spot by himself.

If the receivers begin a return, the Referee should move slowly downfield; if the runner breaks a long return, the Referee may ultimately assume responsibility for the runner. The Referee has responsibility for the goal line and will get an inside-out look regardless of which sideline is involved since the appropriate wing official has sideline responsibility from end line to end line.

**Umpire:** The Umpire is responsible for the initial action on the snapper and for blocks by the snapper, guards and the tackle nearest the Referee. The Umpire must also be ready to observe ineligible men downfield if a pass is thrown during a broken play or fake punt. After the ball is kicked and all linemen/backers have cleared his position, he should move slowly downfield along the hash opposite of the Referee keeping as many players in view as possible.

The Umpire should be aware of a short kick or a partially blocked kick. The Umpire must observe the action around the ball and help determine if the ball is touched first by Team R beyond the neutral zone and prepare to drop a beanbag if first touching occurs by K. On a return, the Umpire has responsibility for blocks between his position and the runner.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wing officials observe the initial line charge and are responsible for encroachment/false start on their side of the field. The wing officials are also responsible for making sure the gunners are not held at the line.

The Linesman remains on the line until the kick crosses the neutral zone which normally only takes 1 to 2 seconds. He should make certain the kick will remain beyond the neutral zone, especially on windy days.

The Line Judge releases downfield when the ball is snapped. If a team uses a punter who kicks rugby-style and the punter runs toward the Line Judge's side, the Line Judge must proceed slow enough so that he can cover the play if there is no kick. The wing's focus should include blocking/restraint by Team R on the gunners followed by coverage around and in front of the kick receiver.

If the ball is punted from the end zone, the wing officials must be alert for a blocked punt or a broken play and may have to cover action involving the goal line.

The Line Judge shall remain on the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked to assist the Linesman with the goal line in the event of a scrambling punter or a blocked punt. The priority is to cover the goal line.

If the kick is blocked, the Linesman has primary responsibility for determining if the ball is touched first by Team R beyond the line and whether the spot of a recovery is beyond or behind the line.

The distance the wing officials move after the kick is dependent on the length of the kick, but each should strive for covering approximately half the distance between the line and the end of the kick.

The Back Judge has responsibility for the runner until the wings take the coverage; the point at which the transfer occurs depends on how far downfield the wings have gotten after the kick. On the vast majority of punts, both wing officials are responsible for forward progress, players going out of bounds and blocks in front of the runner when the return is to their area. If the run is to the opposite sideline, they are responsible for action behind and away from the ball.

If the kick goes out-of-bounds in flight, the Referee will raise his hand to line up the kick for the appropriate wing official. The covering official will move up the sideline and stop when the Referee drops his hand. The wing officials should not always expect the Referee to help line up a kick that has gone out-of-bounds in

the air. If the Referee has a hand up, that means he can help. Otherwise, the wing will have to select the best spot possible.

Once a spot is chosen, it must sold. If the ball lands inbounds and bounces out of bounds, the wing official shall spot the ball at the nearest whole yard line.

**Line Judge:** If a scrimmage kick goes over the receiver's head, the Back Judge shall cover the ball and the Line Judge will observe the receiver for any blocking after a fair catch signal (valid or invalid).

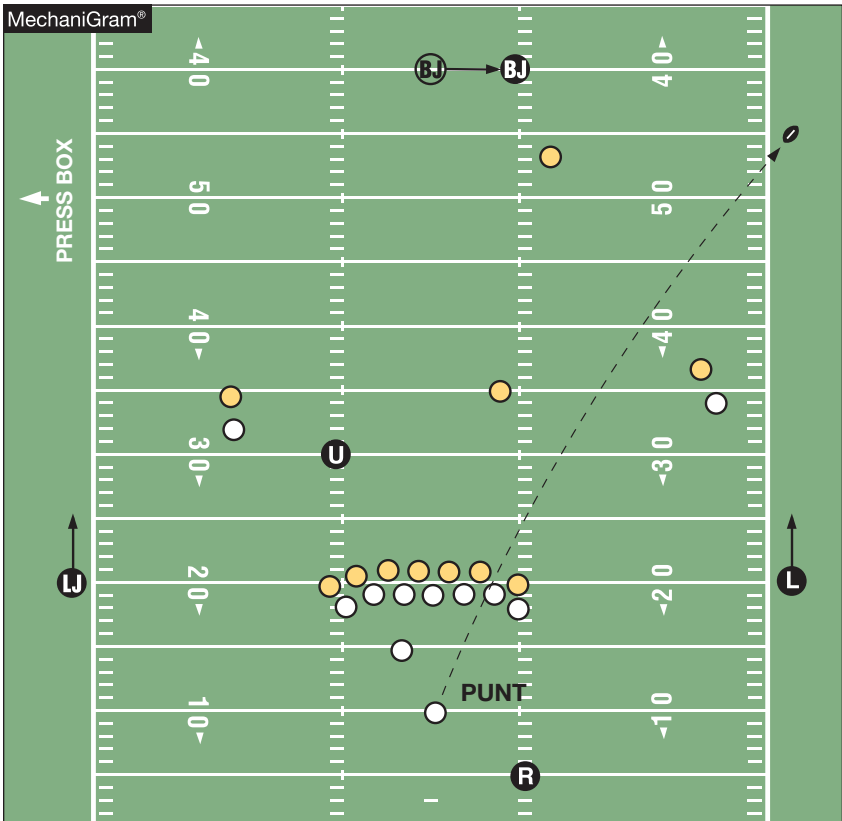
**Back Judge:** All deep receivers are the responsibility of the Back Judge. Once the ball is kicked, he judges the validity of any fair catch signal, moves with the receiver and maintains a position to rule on catch vs. muff. Once the receiver catches the kick, he must watch the players who approach the runner and should track the ball with his peripheral vision.

If the kick goes out-of-bounds after landing inbounds, the Back Judge's responsibility is for the players chasing the ball. He should not be concerned with the out-of-bounds spot, but if it is near him, he may assist the wing official.

If the ball is kicked over the head of the deepest receiver, the Back Judge must retreat and not allow any player to get behind him. He will release the receiver to the Line Judge and proceed to cover the ball. The Back Judge has sole responsibility for determining if a touchback occurs or the momentum exception applies.

The Back Judge must bean bag the spot where the kick ends unless that spot is also the dead-ball spot in which case the Back Judge will stop the clock and hold the spot. That spot may be used for post-scrimmage kick penalty enforcement.

SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS - PART 1



**Action on the field:** The ball is kicked toward either sideline.

**Referee:** Freezes to observe the flight of the ball in order to assist with the out-of-bounds spot. May move toward kicker while ball is in flight.

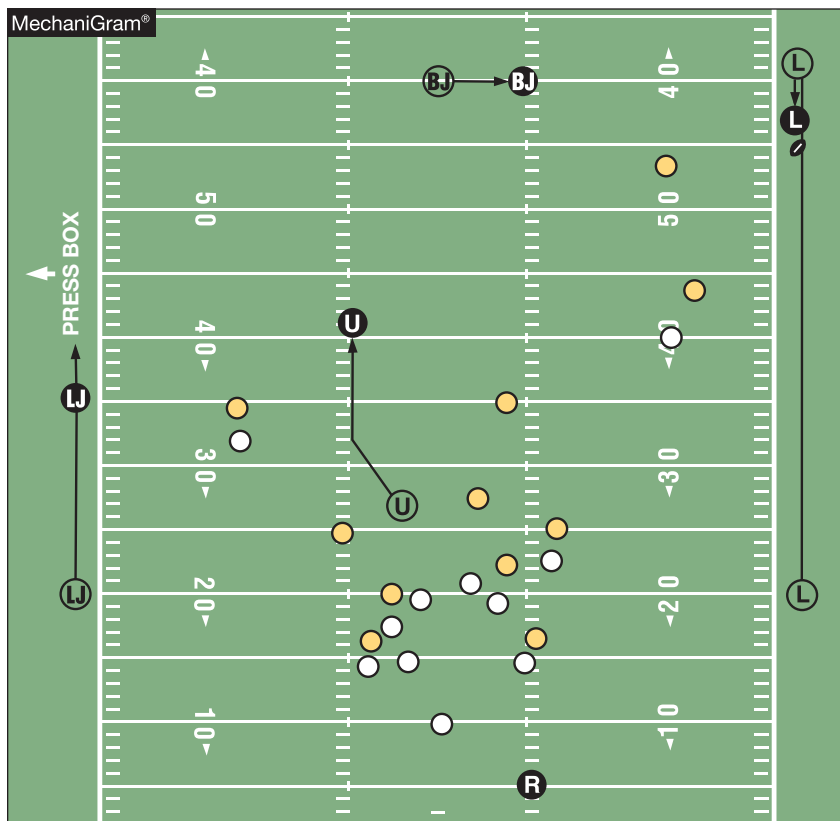
**Umpire:** Observes players as they move downfield. Moves downfield on the Line Judge's side of field.

**Linesman:** Moves down the sideline when the kick crosses the line and he is certain the kick will remain beyond the line. Observes the action of the players in front of the ball. May give stop-the-clock signal when he sees the ball go out of bounds. Moves five to seven yards beyond the line where ball apparently went out of bounds, pivots and makes eye contact with Referee.

**Line Judge:** Moves down the sideline when the ball is snapped. Observes the action of the players in front of the ball.

**Back Judge:** Gives stop-the-clock signal when he sees ball go out of bounds, observes the action of the players within his field of view.

SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS - PART 2



**Action on the field:** The kick is dead out of bounds.

**Referee:** The Referee raises his arm to signify that he has determined the path of the flight of the ball and can assist with spotting the ball.

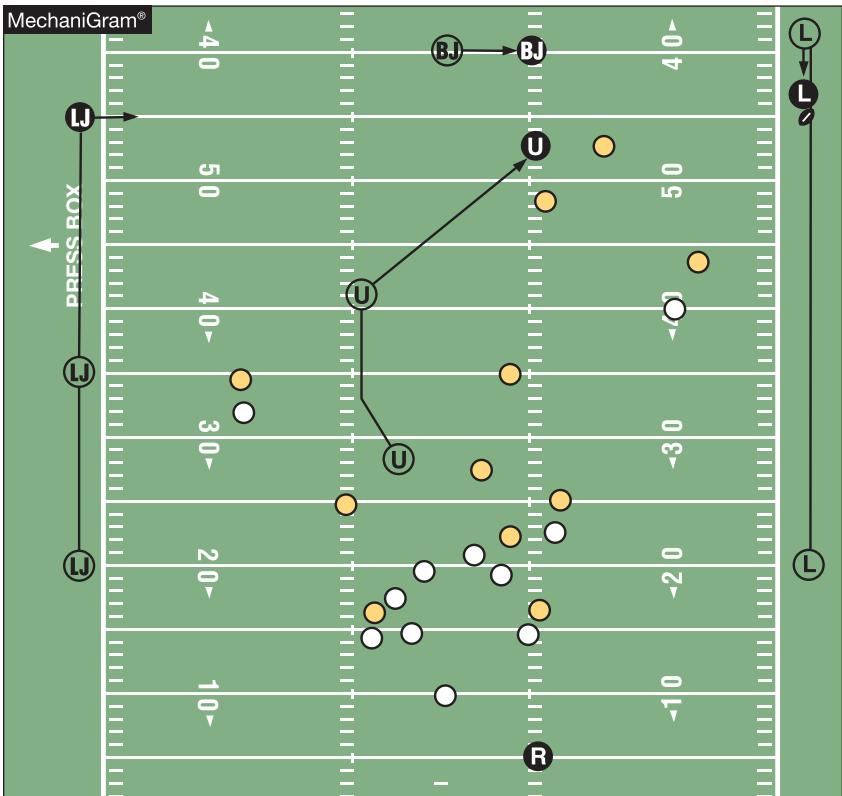
**Umpire:** The Umpire continues to move downfield on the Line Judge's side of field.

**Linesman:** The Linesman starts to walk toward the Referee with his arm upraised.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge continues to move down the sideline observing the action of the players in front of the ball.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge holds his position looking inside-out observing the action of the players nearest the ball.

SCRIMMAGE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS - PART 3



**Action on the field:** The ball is spotted for a new series.

**Referee:** When the Linesman reaches the path the Referee has lined up, he drops his arm with one chopping motion and then moves to his new position.

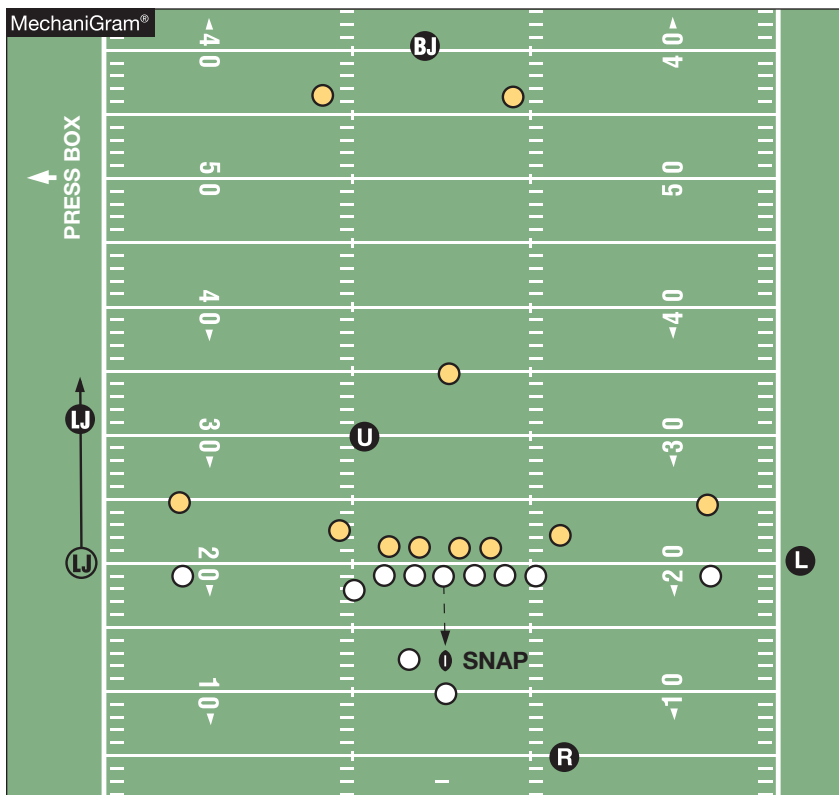
**Umpire:** The Umpire gets the yard line for the next snap from the Linesman. He then moves to get a new ball either from the Line Judge or from the ball boy on the Linesman's side and spots it.

**Linesman:** The Linesman stops when the Referee chops his arm and tells the umpire the yard line for the next snap.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge gets a new ball if appropriate and moves to his new position.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge retrieves the old ball if appropriate and moves to his new position. If the old ball belongs to the team on the Linesman's side, the Back Judge will allow the ball boy to retrieve the ball. If the old ball belongs to the team on the Line Judge's side, the Back Judge will retrieve the ball and return it to the ball boy on that side of the field.

SCRIMMAGE KICK TO SIDE ZONE - PART 1



**Action on the field:** The ball is snapped to a punter.

**Referee:** The Referee observes the snap and the action in front of and around kicker.

**Umpire:** The Umpire observes action on the snapper and the initial line charge.

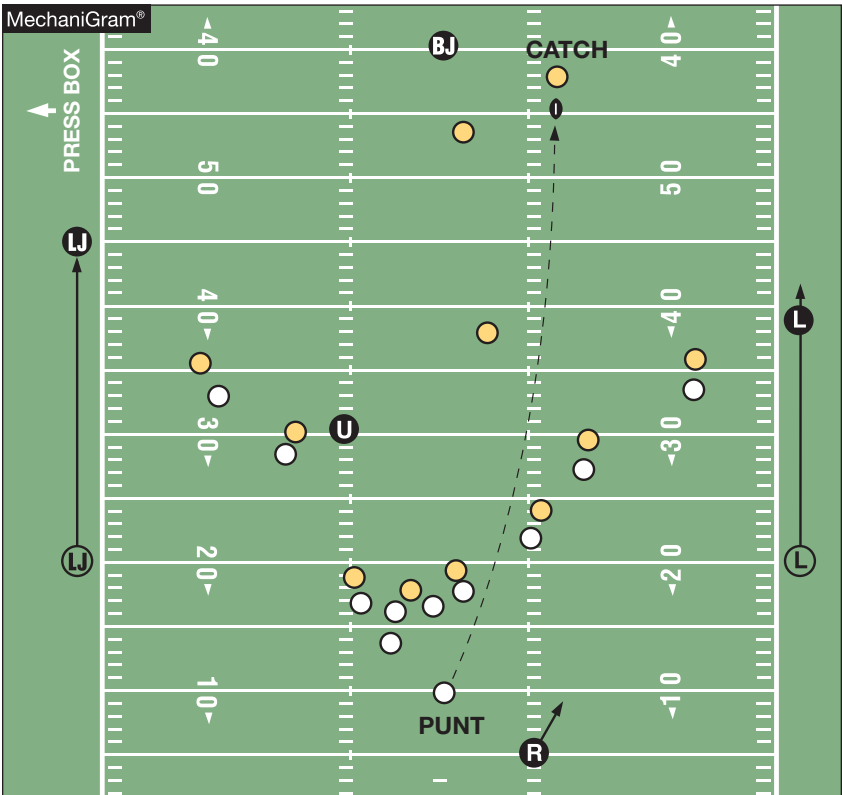
**Linesman:** The Linesman observes the initial line charge and remains on the line until the kick crosses the neutral zone he is certain the kick will remain beyond the line.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge releases at the snap and begins to move downfield. He observes action on his side of the field between the neutral zone and the receivers.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge observes the action of the receivers.



SCRIMMAGE KICK TO SIDE ZONE - PART 2



**Action on the field:** The receiver catches the punt.

**Referee:** The Referee observes the line play after ball has cleared neutral zone. He moves slowly downfield.

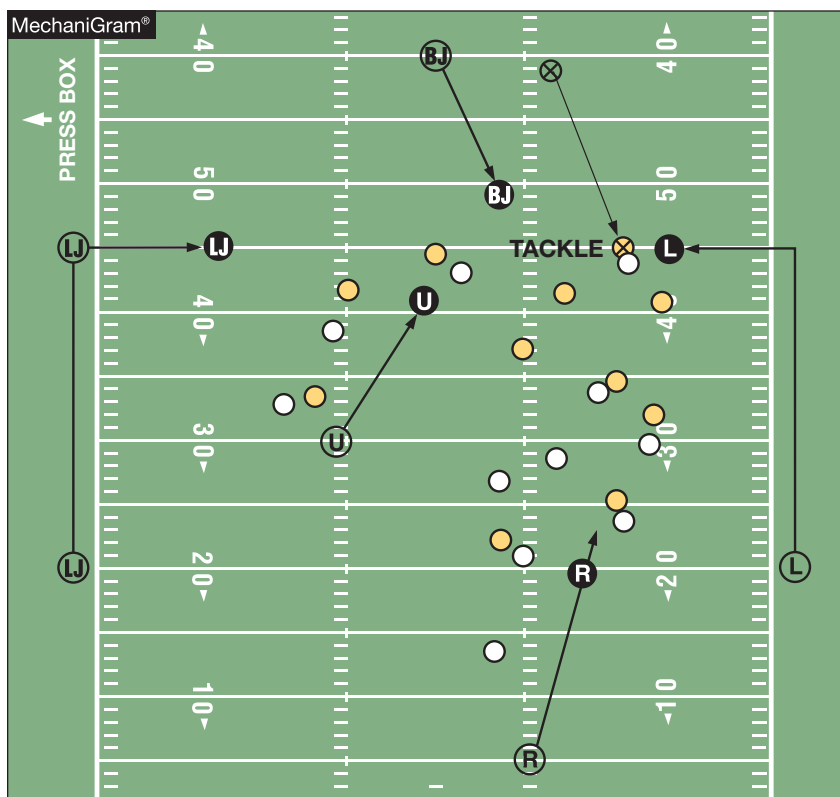
**Umpire:** The Umpire observes players as they move downfield and moves with the flow.

**Linesman:** The Linesman observes the action of the players in front of the ball.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge observes the action of players in front of the ball.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge drops a bean bag at the spot where the kick ends. He moves with the runner.

SCRIMMAGE KICK TO SIDE ZONE - PART 3



**Action on the field:** The runner advances and is downed.

**Referee:** The Referee observes the action of the players. When he is certain there are no penalty markers down, he signals Linesman to move the chains.

**Umpire:** The Umpire observes the action of the players. He moves to spot the ball for a new series.

**Linesman:** The Linesman takes coverage of the runner when the runner enters his coverage area. When the runner is downed, he squares off to mark the spot and stops the clock. Upon signal from Referee, he instructs chain crew to move.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge observes the action of the players. He squares off to mirror the Linesman's spot.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge gives up coverage of the runner when the runner enters the Linesman's coverage area (halo principle). He observes the action of the players.

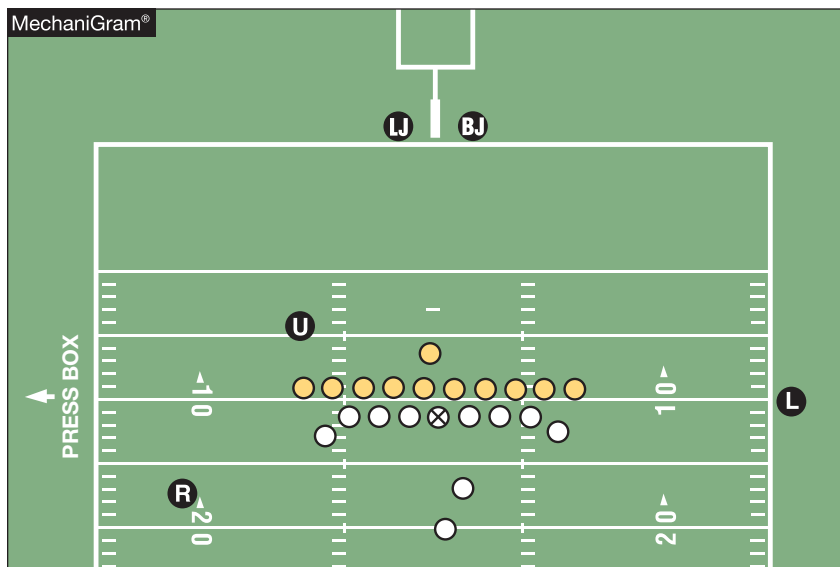
## CHAPTER 32

# POSITIONING AND COVERAGE - SCORING KICK PLAYS

- FIELD GOALS AND TRIES
- SWINGING GATE FORMATION
- SWINGING GATE PASS TO SNAPPER
- FREE KICK AFTER FAIR CATCH OR AWARDED FAIR CATCH

Scoring kick plays are very difficult to officiate because so many different things can happen. The crew must always be ready for broken plays or fakes and be prepared to adjust accordingly.

## FIELD GOALS AND TRIES



### Positioning

**Referee:** The Referee's starting position is even with and facing the front of the holder. It is permissible for the Referee to line up 1-2 yards behind the yard line of the holder to get a better view of the block by the nearest lineman. The distance from the holder may vary depending on personal preference, keeping the mind that the Referee is responsible for the sideline and the pylon behind him if there is a run or pass to that side.

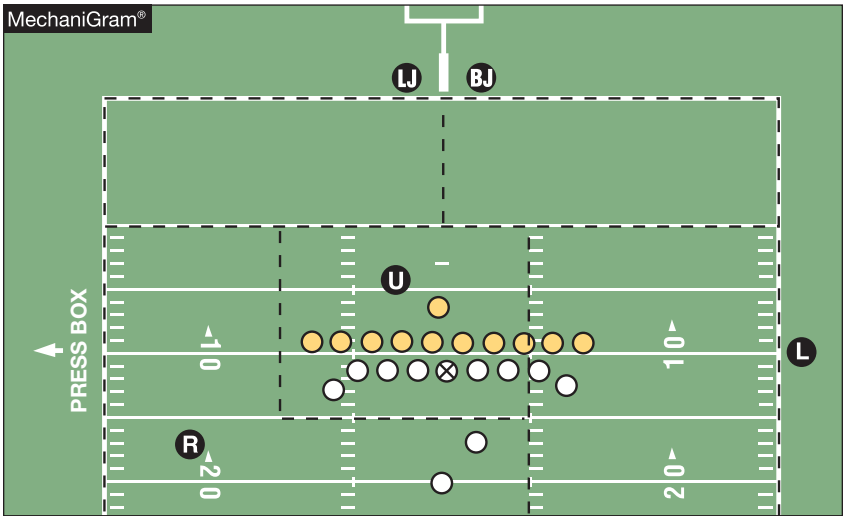
**Umpire:** The Umpire's starting position is the same as a regular scrimmage down — 4-7 yards off the line of scrimmage. However, he must be shaded to the same side as the Referee. This will allow better coverage of the goal line on the open side if a run or pass play develops.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wing official facing the Referee remains in his normal position (on the line and off the field). The opposite wing official (from behind the Referee) joins the Back Judge at the upright nearest his sideline. The MechaniGram depicts a situation in which the Line Judge is deep and the Linesman remains on the line. In order to avoid confusion during a last-second field goal attempt, the positioning of the wings must be a point of emphasis during the pregame.

The wing official that remains on the line of scrimmage must be prepared to rule on the entire goal line if the try turns into a run or pass play and the Umpire is not in position to assist.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge's starting position is at the upright opposite the Referee.

## FIELD GOALS AND TRIES COVERAGE ZONES



### Coverage

**Referee:** The Referee must watch the holder receive the ball and the action of the holder's knee as the rules distinguish between the lifting of the knee during a muff and after possession of the ball has been obtained. The position of the knee is also critical if the ball is subsequently passed or handed off.

After the kick, the Referee is responsible for ruling on contact on both the kicker and holder. Once he is confident the kicker and holder are no longer in danger of being contacted, the Referee should dead-ball officiate for two-three seconds and then look to the deep officials to learn the result of the kick. The signal should be relayed to the press box once players have separated.

If a kick try is blocked, the Referee should blow his whistle immediately as the play is over and the ball is dead; however, a blocked field goal remains live. Communication with the crew prior to the kick regarding the live-ball/dead-ball status of a blocked kick or a kick that fails to reach the goal line is essential.

In cases of a fake or a broken play, if a run or pass develops to his side, the Referee is responsible for sideline coverage including the pylon (acts as the wing). If Team R recovers the ball and runs for a score, the Referee is responsible for his sideline all the way to the goal line.

**Umpire:** Initially, the Umpire rules on the legality of the snap. His primary responsibility then is action on the snapper. He must also watch the blocks by the snapper and guards. The Umpire should step towards the snapper after the try kick with a vocal presence to reduce the chance of unnecessary acts.

If a blocked kick or fake results in a play toward the goal line, the Umpire has the inside-out look at blocks near the point of attack and goal line coverage on the open side of the field.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wing official on the line of scrimmage has sole responsibility for encroachment/false starts.

If the try is a fake and becomes a run or pass play this wing must move to the goal line immediately. He can also help rule on ineligible downfield on fake kicks that result in a pass that crosses the neutral zone. When a runner approaches the goal line, the wing official on the line must be at the goal line to rule on the potential score.

If the kick is blocked, is obviously short or the play turns out not to be a kick (fake or broken play), the wing official under the upright should quickly move along the end line toward the nearest (his original) sideline. Once the sideline has been reached, the official can move toward the goal line to assist with coverage of the runner.

After the kick, the wing official must pinch-in toward the offensive and defensive linemen to dead-ball officiate and use his voice to encourage players to un-pile and return to the sideline.

**Back Judge:** The opposite wing official and Back Judge stand beyond the end zone and behind the upright on their side of the field. Their position can be adjusted to provide the best look possible once the lateral placement of the ball is determined. Once the ball is kicked, neither official must move. The wing official is responsible for ruling whether the ball passed inside or outside the upright on his side; the Back Judge is responsible for ruling whether the ball passed inside or outside the upright on his side as well as whether the ball cleared the crossbar.

When a successful kick passes the upright or when the ball breaks the goal line plane and it is obvious the kick will not score, the Back Judge sounds his whistle. Under no circumstances should a whistle be blown when the ball is kicked. The Back Judge and wing official with him should confirm their ruling verbally using “yes, yes” or “no, no, no.” Both officials shall then take two steps straight forward into the end zone and signal. They should not flare out toward the sideline. Their signal should end simultaneously. There is no need for eye contact before signaling. If an official does not rule on the kick, he should simply mirror the other official’s signal.

If the kick is blocked, is obviously short or the play turns out not to be a kick (fake or broken play), the Back Judge has sole responsibility for the end line.

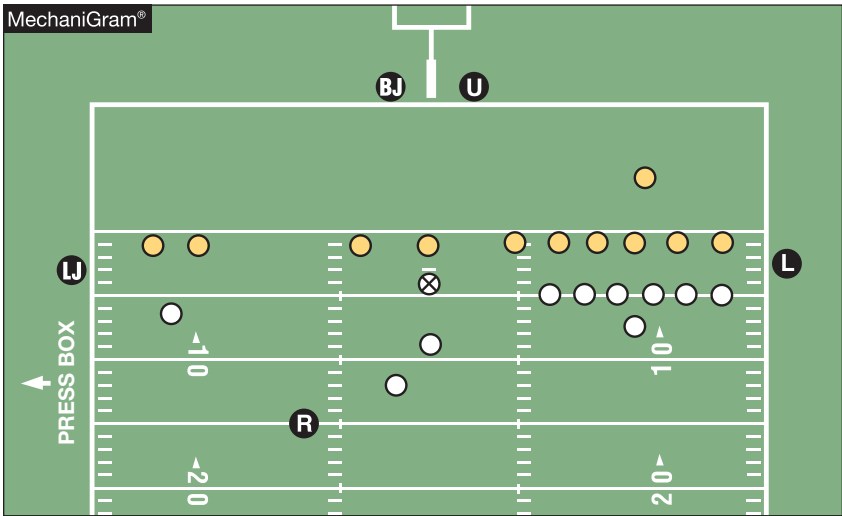
If the kick is unsuccessful and the ball crosses the goal line in flight, the “no good” signal is given using the above procedure.

If the ball hits the ground in the field of play and subsequently breaks the plane of the goal line, only the Back Judge will step forward and give the touchback signal. Both officials must continue to dead-ball officiate behind the ball.

If the ball does not reach the goal line and no player attempts to recover it and the ball comes to rest or a member of the kicking team gains possession, the Back Judge will give the “stop-the-clock” signal while the wing official steps forward to officiate action behind the ball.

If the ball does not pass the goal line and a member of the receiving team picks up the ball, no signal is given and the ball remains in play. The wing official will move forward towards his pylon and cover his sideline.

## SWINGING GATE FORMATION POSITIONING



**NOTE:** This is an optional coverage. If a team lines up in the swinging gate, the Referee may opt to have the crew line up in these positions or remain in their normal kick try positions.

### Swinging Gate Formation

The Swinging Gate formation is occasionally used during a try. The swinging gate formation presents a unique challenge to officials because the players line up in unusual positions. Team A will typically line up in the formation at or prior to the ready-for-play whistle with the snapper, holder and kicker between the hash marks and the majority of the remaining players in the side zones. Many times Team A will shift into a normal scoring kick formation if the defense recognizes and makes the proper adjustments to the formation. Because the Swinging Gate formation presents several options for scoring, officials must be in position to maximize coverage of the multiple plays that can be run from this formation.

Some plays that are typically run out of this formation include:

- An angled long snap (not between the snapper's legs) to a running back behind the linemen with a subsequent bull rush to the goal line.
- The holder receives the snap and passes to an eligible receiver (by position and number) which can include the snapper.
- The holder pitches the ball to the kicker and becomes a blocker.

Since the normal mechanic for scoring kicks leaves the line of scrimmage and goal line exposed on one side, the use of this mechanic is recommended. This will allow the best coverage of a run or pass play. It is highly unusual to have an actual kick out of the Swinging Gate formation; however, Team A will frequently quickly shift into a kick formation. Therefore, it is recommended that the Umpire maintain a position near the upright ready to rule on kick or be ready to move forward for normal coverage of a scrimmage play.

The Referee is encouraged to ask during the pregame discussion with the head coach if he has any trick plays including the use of the Swinging Gate. If so, the crew should subsequently discuss the use of this mechanic in detail.

### **Pre-snap reminders:**

- If it is a try, the play is whistled dead if a change of possession occurs.
- Officials under the upright shall vocalize the eligible receiver's numbers on their side of the formation with each other.
- The snapper may be an eligible receiver if he has an eligible number and is on the end of the line.
- If a scrimmage play is utilized, normal officiating signals are used. If the two-point try is unsuccessful, only the Referee needs to signal no good and that is to the press box.
- If a Swinging Gate formation is used on a normal scrimmage down the crew must be aware of the numbering exception requirements.

### **Positioning and Coverage**

Once officials start in the Swinging Gate mechanic position, they will remain in these positions even if the offense shifts to a conventional kick try formation (except for the Umpire who will step back under the upright).

**Referee:** The Referee faces the holder about three yards behind and five to seven yards to the side of the kicker. The Referee will move forward to his normal field goal position if Team A shifts into a kick try formation.

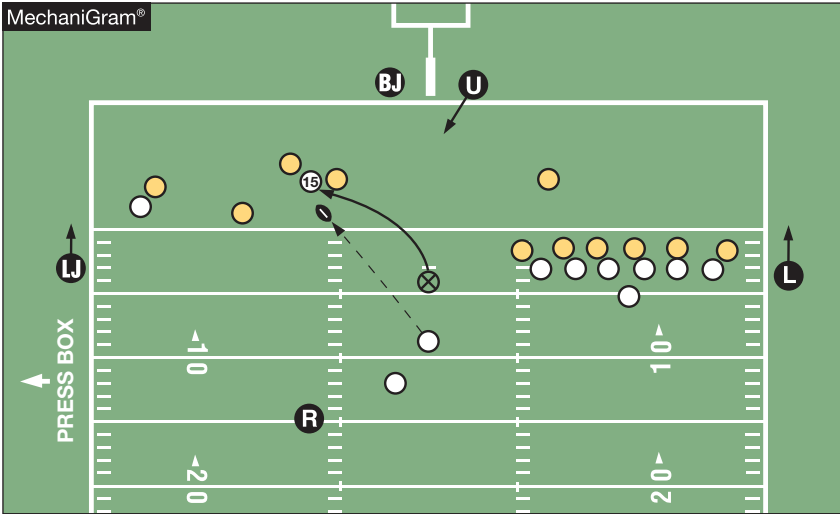
**Umpire:** The Umpire's initial position is five yards deep in the end zone, favoring the bulk of players in the swinging gate formation. If Team A shifts into a normal kick try formation, the Umpire will take a position behind an upright along with the Back Judge. He should vocalize to the Team B players to avoid illegal action against the snapper. The Umpire will communicate the eligible receiver's numbers on his side of the formation with the Back Judge.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wing's starting position is off the sideline straddling the line of scrimmage. They must ensure the offensive formation is legal. Each moves to the goal line at the snap as for any other goal line coverage situation. If Team A shifts into scrimmage kick formation, the wings shall remain on the line of scrimmage.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge's position is beyond the end line and behind the upright opposite of the Umpire. He must be vocal and communicate the eligible receiver's numbers on his side of the formation with the Umpire.



SWINGING GATE PASS TO SNAPPER



**Action on the field:** The snapper snaps the ball to the holder (or kicker) who throws a legal forward pass to the snapper (eligible by number and position).

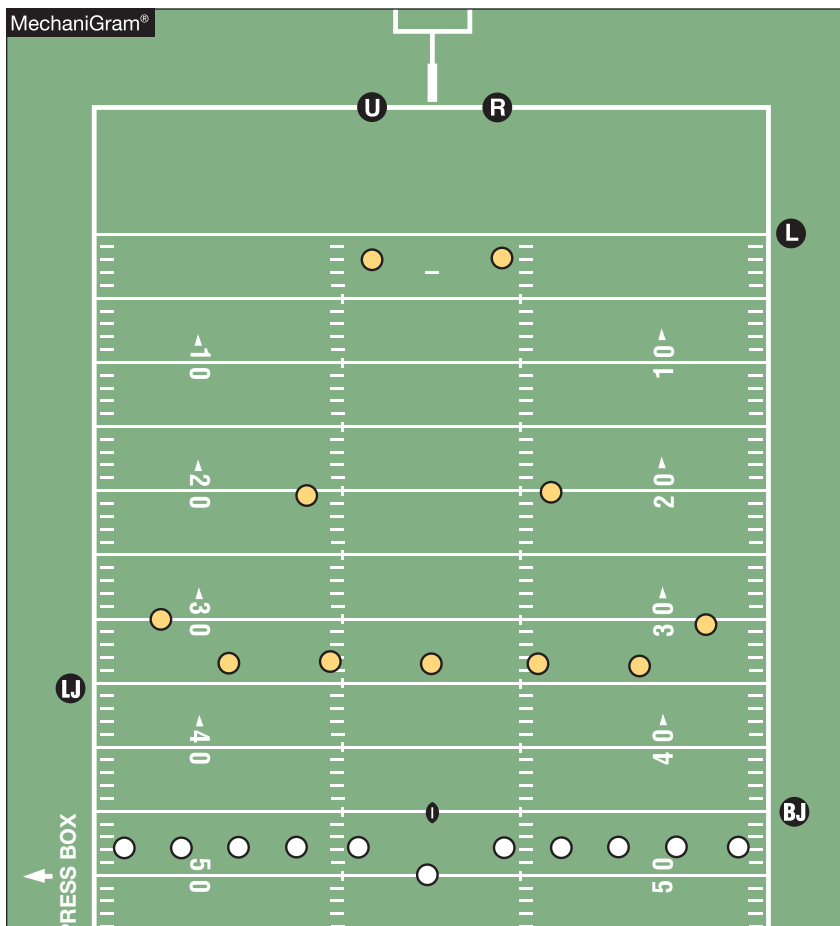
**Referee:** The Referee must be aware of the knee of the holder to confirm the ball is live when the pass is released and he must ensure once the holder becomes a passer he gets the same protection afforded to any other passer.

**Umpire:** The Umpire moves into the end zone and observes action of the snapper and linemen on the line of scrimmage. After the kick, he rules on his upright.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wings must confirm eligible receivers by position and number prior to the snap. The wing official on side of field with linemen shall be aware of ineligible receivers downfield if a legal forward pass is thrown and crosses the neutral zone. The wings will move to the goal line at the snap to rule on a score.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge maintains coverage of the end line.

FREE KICK AFTER FAIR CATCH OR AWARDED FAIR CATCH POSITIONING



**Free Kick After Fair Catch or Awarded Fair Catch**

A free kick may be chosen after a fair catch or an awarded fair catch (offered as part of the penalty for kick catching interference). It is both a field goal and a free kick so the crew must be ready to cover either play. Despite the fact that this play is rarely utilized, it is essential that the crew move promptly to their proper positions and assist coaches and players with alignment.

**Positioning**

If Team K attempts a field goal by free kick after a fair catch, the Referee shall confirm all players and officials are in position before signaling ready for play and moving to a position under the upright. The Referee and Umpire will rule on their corresponding uprights and the Umpire is responsible for the cross bar. Except for the Linesman who will be positioned on the goal line, all other officials assume their normal positions for a free kick.

## Coverage

**Referee and Umpire:** If the kick fails to reach the goal line, the Referee and Umpire will move downfield along their respective hash marks working inside out and trailing the runner. The Umpire will blow the whistle if/when the kick breaks the plane of the end line.

**Linesman:** The Linesman will be positioned on the goal line and must rule on a touchback and determine if the momentum rule applies. The Linesman will blow the whistle if/when the kick breaks the plane of the goal line while signaling touchback.

**Back Judge and Line Judge:** The Back Judge and Line Judge assume normal free kick coverage.

It is important to note that the following free kick rules apply: kick out of bounds, kick catching protection, and a kick that advances ten yards is free for possession by Team K.

## CHAPTER 33

# POSITIONING AND COVERAGE - SCRIMMAGE PLAYS

### SCRIMMAGE PLAYS

#### POSITIONING

#### COVERAGE – RUN PLAYS

#### COVERAGE – PASS PLAYS

### GOAL LINE PLAYS

#### OFFENSE GOING IN

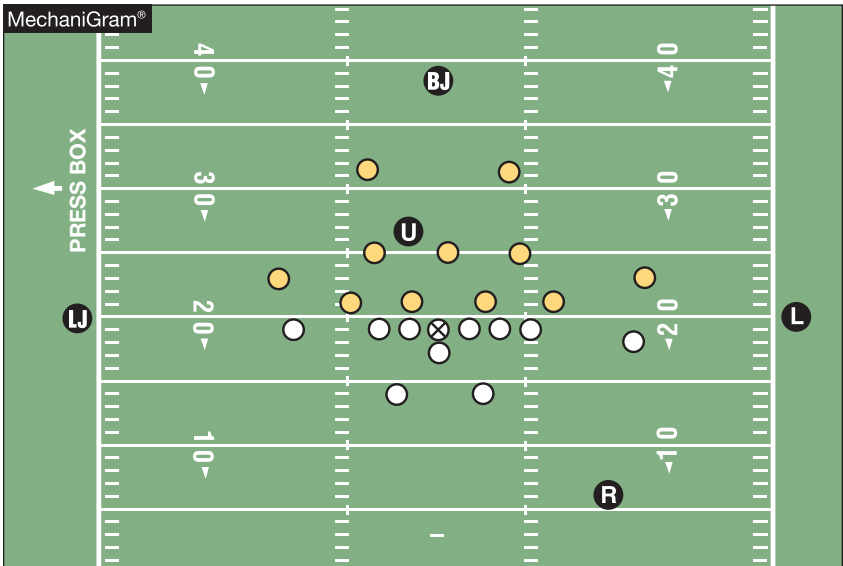
#### OFFENSE COMING OUT

### VICTORY FORMATION

#### Scrimmage Plays

The vast majority of plays during a game are scrimmage plays. The officials are not likely to know exactly what play will be run when the offense lines up for a scrimmage down, but the down and distance, offensive formation, and the offensive linemen's stance are good pre-snap indicators that can be used to help put the official in the best position and mindset to officiate the play. The following scrimmage plays are divided into two categories: run and pass. Goal line plays require a special approach due to the proximity and importance of the goal line.

## SCRIMMAGE PLAY POSITIONING


**Positioning**

**Referee:** The Referee's starting position is 12-15 yards back and about 4-5 yards outside the tight end (approximately at a 45 degree angle) on the quarterback's throwing arm side in a position where he can view the backs and the tackle on the far side. He should adjust his position when the game situation dictates a change e.g. move up on fourth and inches. The Referee should be in an upright stature with a balanced and athletic posture. The Referee is responsible for ensuring Team A does not violate substitution rules and must strive to always know how many players are in the huddle. He observes the offensive huddle and counts the offensive players and signals to the Umpire when the huddle breaks, holding it until the offense reaches the line of scrimmage or the Umpire acknowledges it.

If the next play will be using a 25-second play clock, he should allow all players to return to their side of the ball before marking the ball ready-for-play. The

Referee should be as near to his position as possible and visible to the clock operator and Back Judge when marking the ball ready. He must also ensure all officials are in position before blowing the ready.

**Umpire:** After an administrative stoppage, the Umpire should maintain control of the ball until the Referee blows the ready for play whistle. He does that by standing with his feet straddling the ball observing the offensive huddle and as the huddle breaks in order to count players. He will signal his count to the Referee when it is made. If Team A is running a no-huddle offense, the Umpire can advise the snapper verbally to wait for the ready-for-play whistle.

Once the snapper touches the ball, the Umpire must keep his eyes on it all times including while he is moving to his position, which is generally 4-7 yards off the line and between the tackles. Laterally, he may line up anywhere

opposite the tackles, but he should vary his position to lessen the possibility that he will be used as part of the blocking scheme. His position will also vary based on the adjacent linemen he has elected to observe for a specific play. There is no prohibition on taking a position on the same side of the snapper as the Referee.

The Umpire should strive to work as close to the line of scrimmage as the linebackers will allow him. He must give the linebackers the freedom to move laterally and should not stand immediately behind a player.

He must be in a hands-on-knees position so as to not interfere with the quarterback's view of the defense. He checks offensive line numbering for 50-79 and he must know which players are on the line of scrimmage in the free blocking zone and must monitor the defensive team's signal calling to ensure it does not interfere with the offense. If the defensive verbiage is marginal, it is preferable to warn, if possible, before throwing the flag. He should note the position of ball between hash marks so he can return the ball to that spot after an incomplete pass (a second wrist band is recommended).

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wing officials line up straddling the line of scrimmage and off the field of play in all cases, even when the ball is on the opposite hash mark. It is easier to move in than to retreat backward when the play comes toward the sideline. Wings will use an upright stance.

Before the snap, the wing officials identify the eligible receivers on their side of the field. They count the players of the team on their sideline (not necessarily a full count of all 11 players). The wing on the defensive sideline is responsible for counting the defense. He must signal his count to the Back Judge when the offense breaks their huddle. The wing on the offensive sideline need only count

the backfield and he does not signal that. With four players in the backfield, and the Referee and Umpire confirming there are 11 Team A players, the offensive wing does not need to count seven players on the line of scrimmage.

They must remain alert for illegal substitutions and encroachment or false starts. As the widest receiver approaches his position near the wing official, the Wing will indicate the location of the line of scrimmage by placing his up-field foot on the line of scrimmage and patting his hand on his thigh. After the receiver has established his position, the wing official will signal and declare the receiver's position. If the receiver is in the backfield the wing will extend his arm toward the offensive backfield (Crew Signal I) and state "you are in the backfield." If he is on the line of scrimmage the wing official shall point with the up-field arm to the ground (Crew Signal J) and verbalize "you are on the line."

Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official from whom the player initially moves away from, even if the player reverses his motion.

If the play ends resulting in the line to gain to be more than 10 yards, the wing officials will give the "double stakes" signal (Crew Signal G) prior to the snap.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge should start about 20 to 25 yards deep depending on player/game situations and no closer than 10 yards from the nearest defensive back. He may be anywhere between the hash marks and must have a clear view of his key. On obvious passing downs, a deeper position is acceptable. The Back Judge will always have all defensive players in front of him. He counts the defense and verifies it with the wing official on the defensive team's sideline. When the ball is snapped inside Team B's 2five-yard line he must be aware of the goal line. See the section

“Goal Line Plays - Offense Going In” and the associated Table later in this chapter.

### Coverage – Run Plays

**All officials:** At the snap, each official must observe a lineman, which will almost always be a tackle. A detailed discussion of this technique is in the chapter entitled “Keys.” The initial movement of a tackle will indicate whether the play is a pass or run. On running plays, the tackles will almost always charge forward to initiate a block.

The play must always be properly boxed in and before blowing the whistle; the official must be able to see the ball and be certain the play is dead.

**Referee:** The Referee is responsible for snapper’s release of the snap. He will then focus on the opposite tackle, which will help him read whether the play is a pass or run. He will also rule on illegal movement by the backs in the backfield including questionable movement by the quarterback during his cadence.

On a running play, the Referee focuses on the ball, the runner and the blocking around the runner. The Referee is responsible for the runner until he crosses the neutral zone.

If the play goes to the opposite side, the Referee should first hesitate to ensure the play is not a reverse and move toward the runner at a 45 degree angle; attempting to loop around the runner will keep the Referee further from the play. The Referee is not responsible for the spot nor the action outside the sideline if the runner goes out of bounds on the opposite sideline.

If the play is to the Referee’s side, the Referee moves behind the play and is responsible for the runner until he crosses the neutral zone or turns upfield. The Referee should watch the

handoff or the pitchout, see the runner head outside the free blocking zone, and watch to see that no one contacts the quarterback before drifting along to follow the play. He will not have much to observe besides the quarterback because little significant action is likely to take place behind the runner, and the runner himself is being watched by the appropriate wing official. The priority is protecting the quarterback. The Referee should be able to get to the sideline to get the spot and help the wing official with action out-of-bounds to include helping escort players out of opponent’s bench area.

When the play ends on the near sideline, the Referee may assist the wing official with players who go into the opposing team’s bench area. Otherwise, the Referee becomes the primary dead-ball official for the offense and must strive to keep all players in his view.

**Umpire:** The Umpire is responsible for the start of the snap. He is responsible for snap infractions by the snapper and he is responsible for illegal pre-snap movement by any of the linemen. He will then focus on the two linemen he has selected to initially watch for that play. Their block will determine whether the play is a pass or run. He must be vigilant observing possible chop blocks which will almost always occur immediately after the snap and any other block that violates the restrictions of the free blocking zone.

On a running play, the Umpire must determine the point of attack because of the potential for holding, and other fouls. The Umpire does not watch the runner, but instead focuses on action in front of the runner. On runs into a side zone, he should move toward the play as it develops while covering the point of attack. He should continue to observe action around the action around the runner. The Umpire’ will officiate from the

“inside out.”

When the play ends, the Umpire, with an effort that exhibits hustle, is responsible for retrieving the ball going all the way to the bottom of the numbers to get the ball from the wing official if necessary. On plays ending near the line of scrimmage, the Umpire should always get to the pile quickly to assist with the un-piling of players and encourage sportsman like behavior. Particular attention should be paid to cheap shots in the pile and players using opponents for leverage to get up. The latter is often done innocently, but will likely be interpreted as provocation. The Umpire’s voice commands will reduce the chance of unsportsmanlike acts and personal fouls.

When piles form the Umpire should use his voice to let players know the play is over. Rarely does he blow his whistle, but should do so if no other official can see the ball or if a player’s safety is a concern due to the absence of a whistle. While no whistle on a play as a result of wing officials not being able to see the ball, is normally not a problem, frequent ‘no whistle’ plays are apt to raise concerns. In that case a perfunctory late whistle is appropriate.

The Umpire is responsible for spotting the ball. While facing the wing official he should communicate with him so he does not move until the spot is confirmed. If the ball is under a pile between the hash marks, the Umpire should clear players until a wing official can see the ball to mark forward progress. Umpires must be careful not to create the impression they are spotting the ball unilaterally without confirmation from the wings.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wing officials are responsible for forward progress; their movement must facilitate getting the correct progress spot. At the snap, the wing will read the block of the near tackle to determine whether the play

is a pass or run and then shift his focus to the action of his key.

On a running play toward his sideline, the wing official will step backward and observe the blocking and action in front of the runner. The wing will keep his eyes on the blockers until the tackle is imminent.

As the runner advances, the wing should stay even with the runner until the runner approaches the sideline at which time, he should let the runner get ahead and trail the play. When the wing official feels pressure from the runner (typically the numbers) he should side step towards the offensive backfield (up-field) two to three yards. That will lessen the chance the official will get run over by the runner or his pursuers.

On long runs, the official should trail the play by straddling the sideline. That will give him the best view if the runner steps on the sideline. He should not go all the way to the goal line because it is the Back Judge’s responsibility. He may use Crew Signal I to affirm to the Back Judge the runner stayed inbounds or otherwise communicate with the Back Judge. If the official is pressured by pursuing defenders during the run, he may move away from the sideline.

If the play continues out of bounds the official shall rotate into the field of play observing the action out of bounds and establishing the spot with his feet. The eyes should be kept up and attention not focused on the ground. He should not leave the sideline unless absolutely necessary to break up a fight. The Back Judge and/or Referee will assist with the players in the bench area. If he does leave the sideline, he should use bean bag to mark the out-of-bounds spot.

On a running play away from his sideline, the wing official must clean up behind the play, but must stay off the field until



the play ends. He must remain alert for reverses. In that case, he should pinch in and observe the blocking near the neutral zone, then hold the forward progress spot as a cross field mechanic (see the "Cross Field Mechanic" section in the chapter entitled "Forward Progress").

When the play ends, the wing official will square off at the line through the forward progress spot and pinch-in to the bottom of the numbers. Detailed procedures for marking forward progress are in the Forward Progress chapter.

On runs longer than 10 yards that end in a touchdown, the Back Judge is responsible for the goal line. If such a run is near the sideline, the Back Judge will wait for an inbounds signal (Crew Signal I) from the wing. Crew Signal I is given as soon as the runner crosses the goal line. The signal connotes the runner remained inbounds during the run. The Back Judge will then give the touchdown signal. The wing will continue to the end zone and watch dead-ball action in the field of play or out of bounds. Anytime the runner goes out of bounds on a run along the sideline before reaching the goal line, the wing will immediately blow his whistle and stop the clock while progressing to the out-of-bounds spot. The wing does not initiate a touchdown signal nor does he echo the Back Judge's signal.

The Line Judge has primary responsibility for determining if a first down has been achieved. If the ball is clearly beyond the stake, he will stop the clock and signal the first down to the Referee. If the ball is clearly short, he will announce the number of the next down. If it is questionable, he will stop the clock and signal for the Referee to come forward and look at it; he may recommend a measurement to the Referee. Wing officials should include the details of the required line to gain such as "the line to gain is right on the 43-yard line."

**Back Judge:** At the snap, the Back Judge will observe the tackle adjacent to his key to determine whether the play is a pass or run and then observe the actions of his key.

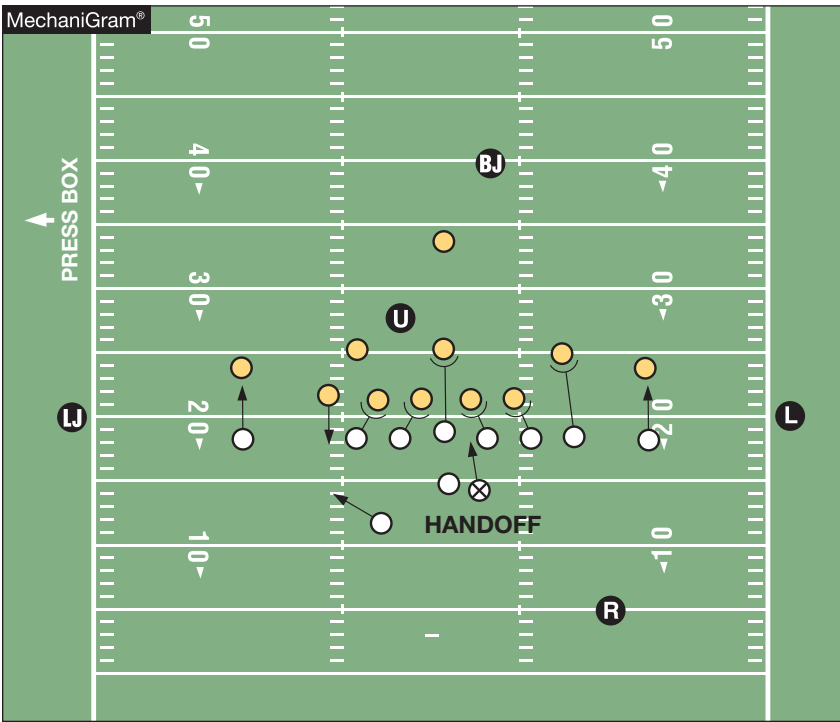
On a running play, the Back Judge will remain stationary and observe the blocking ahead of the runner. He should pick up the runner himself and move as necessary if the runner should advance more than 10 yards downfield.

The Back Judge rarely has forward progress; the wing officials will come down and spot the ball. He will always have the goal line if the run is greater than ten yards.

For runs longer than 10 yards near the sideline which result in a touchdown, the Back Judge will make eye contact with the wing official after the runner crosses the goal line. If the wing official has not blown his whistle indicating the runner stepped out of bounds, the Back Judge will expect to receive Crew Signal I as confirmation of the touchdown when the runner crosses the goal line. Only then will the Back Judge signal the touchdown.

When the play ends, the Back Judge and/or Referee may assist the wing official with players who go into the bench area. Otherwise, the Back Judge becomes the primary dead-ball official for the defense and must strive to keep all players in his view. He should maintain inside-out coverage then pinch-in to a point about 10-15 yards from where the play ended.

**RUN UP THE MIDDLE - ENDS BEYOND NEUTRAL ZONE - PART 1**



**Action on the field:** The ball is handed off to a back.

**Referee:** The Referee reads the blocking of the left (opposite) tackle and reads run. He observes the handoff and action around the quarterback after the handoff.

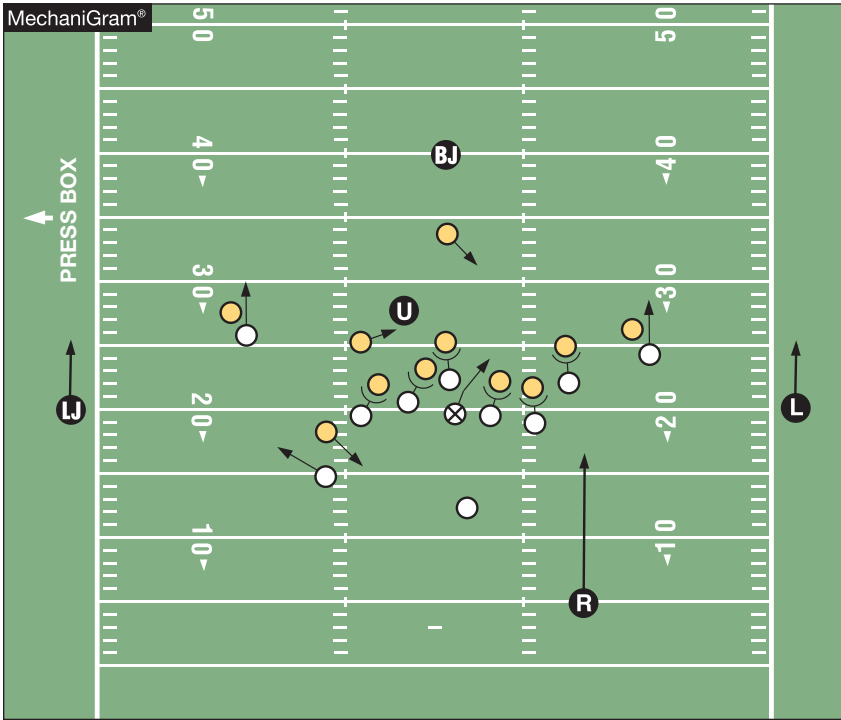
**Umpire:** The Umpire reads the blocking of the center and a guard and reads run. He determines the point of attack and observes the blocking there.

**Linesman:** The Linesman reads the blocking of his tackle and reads run. He observes the blocking of that tackle.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge reads the blocking of left tackle and reads run. He observes the blocking of that tackle.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge reads the blocking of the right tackle (adjacent to his key) and reads run. He then immediately shifts to observe the blocking of his key, the split end on the Linesman side.

**RUN UP THE MIDDLE - ENDS BEYOND NEUTRAL ZONE - PART 2**



**Action on the field:** The runner advances.

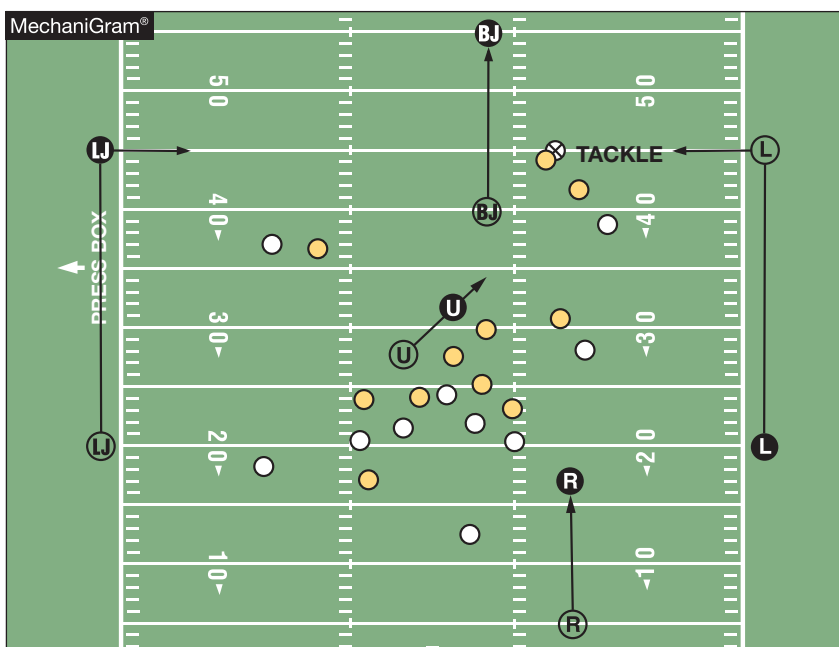
**Referee:** The Referee keeps his eyes on the quarterback until he is no longer in danger and then moves slowly downfield and observes the action behind runner.

**Umpire:** The Umpire pivots to observe the play. He observes the action around the point of attack.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wings move slowly downfield, keeping even with the runner and maintaining sight of the ball, if possible. Priority is action in front of the runner.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge retreats to keep his buffer in front of the play and observes the action in front of the runner.

**RUN UP THE MIDDLE - ENDS BEYOND NEUTRAL ZONE - PART 3**



**Action on the field:** The runner continues to advance and is downed.

**Referee:** The Referee moves slowly downfield and observes the players behind the ball in his area keeping all offensive players in his view, if possible. The Referee cannot take his eyes off a defensive player who gets behind him. If a first down has been achieved and no penalty markers are down, he signals the Linesman to have the chain crew move the chains.

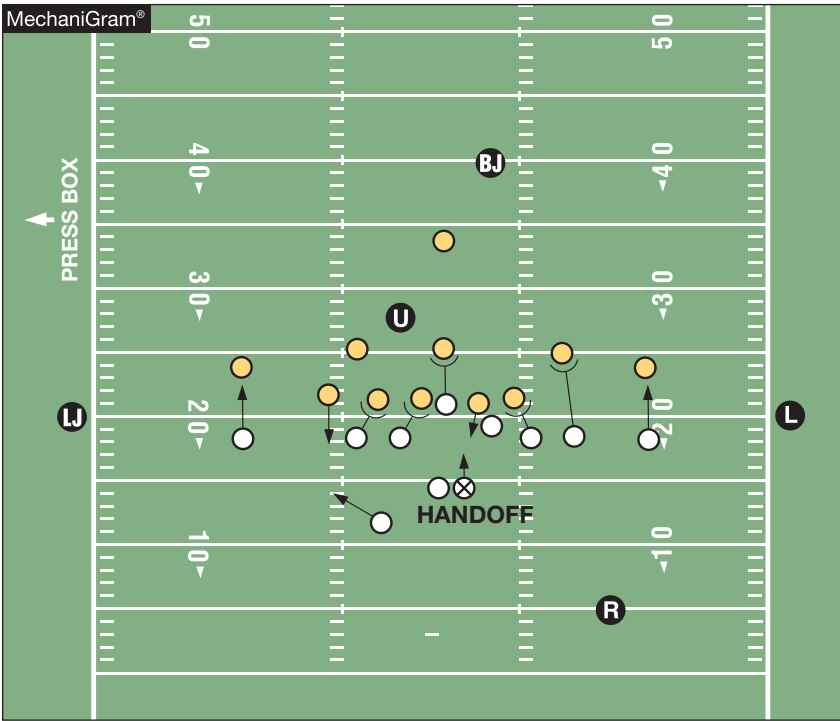
**Umpire:** The Umpire moves downfield and observes the action behind the runner. He moves to a position to receive the ball from the Linesman or to get it directly from the runner while dead-ball officiating.

**Linesman:** The Linesman moves quickly downfield and observes the action around the runner. He blows his whistle when the runner is downed. He squares off to mark spot of forward progress and pinches-in so he can retrieve the ball and pass it to the Umpire. If a first down has been achieved, he gets the signal from the Referee and instructs the chain crew to move. He assists the chain crew in setting the chains for a new series.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge observes the action on his side of the field back to the line of scrimmage. He squares off to mirror the forward progress spot and pinches in to his hash mark while dead-ball officiating. If a first down has been achieved, he stops the clock and signals the first down to the Referee. He observes the players in his area.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge moves into position to observe the runner and maintains a 10- to 15-yard buffer in front of the runner. If a first down is achieved and the Line Judge stops the clock, the Back Judge checks the clock to see that it has stopped. If not, he repeats the stop-the-clock signal. He then pinches-in slightly to dead-ball officiate.

**RUN UP THE MIDDLE ENDS BEHIND NEUTRAL ZONE - PART 1**



**Action on the field:** The ball is handed off to a back.

**Referee:** The Referee reads the blocking of the left (opposite) tackle and reads run. He observes the handoff and action around the quarterback after the handoff.

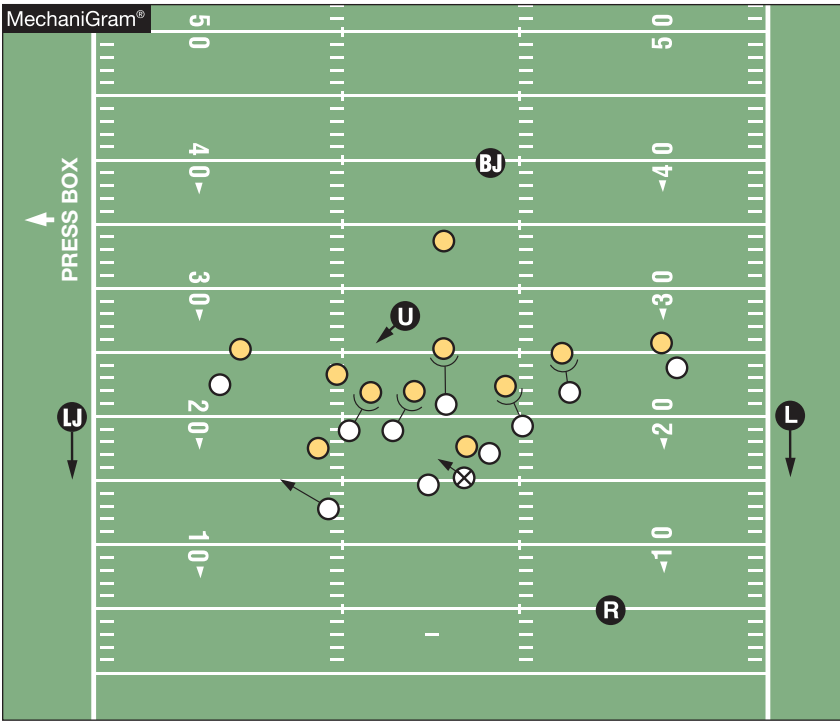
**Umpire:** The Umpire reads the blocking of the center and a guard and reads run. He determines the point of attack and observes the blocking there.

**Linesman:** The Linesman reads the blocking of his tackle and reads run. He observes the blocking of that tackle.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge reads the blocking of left tackle and reads run. He observes the blocking of that tackle.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge reads the blocking of the right tackle (adjacent to his key) and reads run. He then immediately shifts to observe the blocking of his key, the split end on the Linesman side.

RUN UP THE MIDDLE ENDS BEHIND NEUTRAL ZONE - PART 2



**Action on the field:** The runner is contacted as soon as or immediately after receiving the ball.

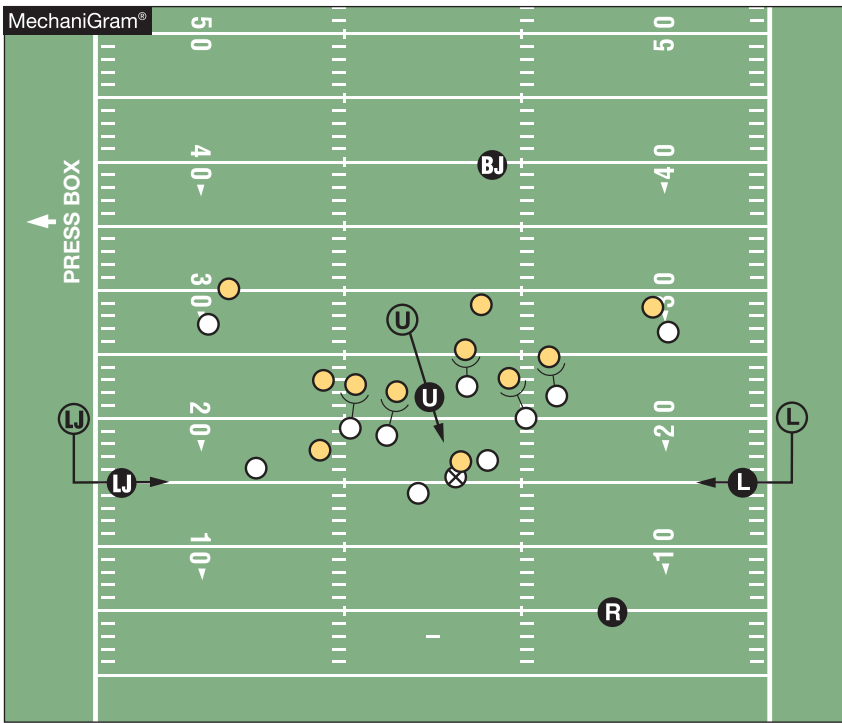
**Referee:** The Referee keeps his eyes on the quarterback until he is no longer in danger and then observes the action behind runner.

**Umpire:** The Umpire pivots to observe the play. He observes the action around the point of attack.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wings hold their position while maintaining sight of the ball, if possible. Priority is action in front of the runner and blocks developing outside the point of attack in the event that the runner bounces it outside.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge holds his position and continues to observe the blocking at the point of attack.

RUN UP THE MIDDLE ENDS BEHIND NEUTRAL ZONE - PART 3



**Action on the field:** The runner is unable to advance beyond the neutral zone and is downed.

**Referee:** The Referee holds his position and observes the runner keeping all offensive players in his view, if possible. Forward progress is a challenge in these situations due to the difficulty of seeing the ball and determining when the runner is stopped. If neither wing blows his whistle (likely because they cannot see the ball), the Referee should blow his whistle.

**Umpire:** The Umpire moves directly to get the ball while dead-ball officiating.

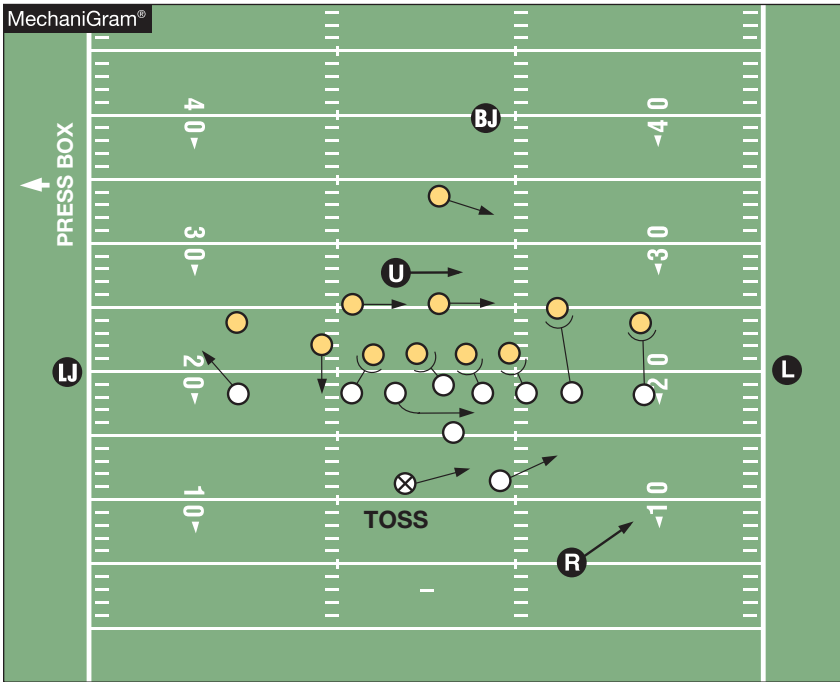
**Linesman (the nearer wing to the runner\*):** The Linesman holds his position and observes the runner action around the runner. He blows his whistle when the runner is downed or his forward progress is determined. While dead-ball officiating, he steps into the backfield to square up and mark the spot of forward progress while pinching-in a couple of steps.

**Line Judge (the wing furthest from the runner\*):** The Line Judge observes the action on his side of the field in the vicinity of the line of scrimmage. He squares off to mirror the forward progress spot and pinches in while dead-ball officiating. He observes the players in his area.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge moves into position to observe the runner and maintains a 10-15 yard buffer in front of the runner. He then pinches-in slightly to dead-ball officiate.

\* The nearer and further wings may have to switch roles depending on which one can see the ball; the nearer wing won't always be able to have a clear view of the ball.

**SWEEP TO LINESMAN'S SIDE - PART 1**



**Action on the field:** The ball is tossed to a back.

**Referee:** The Referee reads the blocking of the left (opposite) tackle and reads run. He observes the backward pass and action around the quarterback after the pass. He begins to move with the flow of the play.

**Umpire:** The Umpire reads the blocking of the right tackle, center and right guard and reads run. He determines the point of attack and observes the blocking there. He begins to move with the flow of the play.

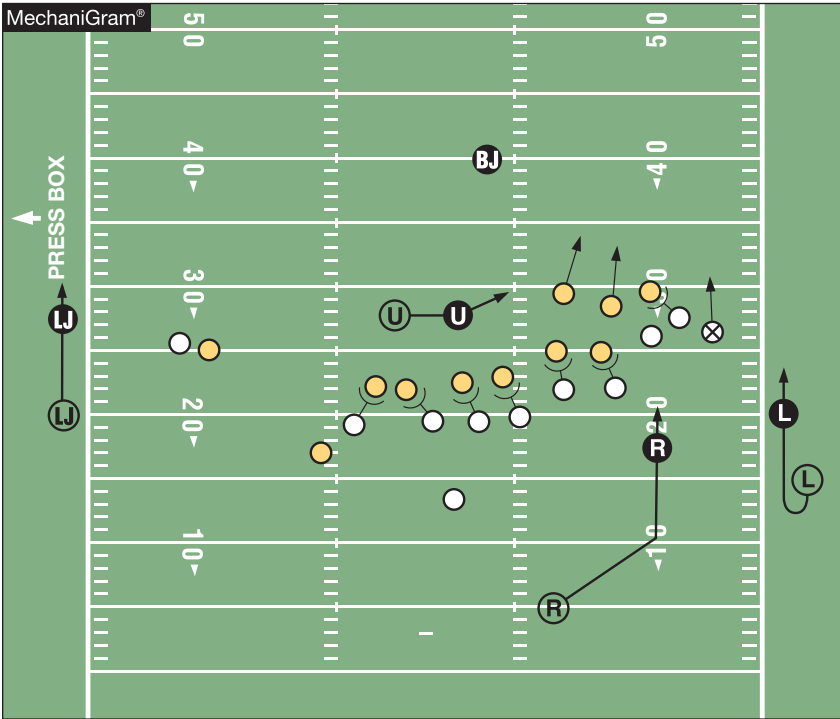
**Linesman:** The Linesman looks through the split end, reads the blocking of the right tackle and reads run. As the action comes to his side, he holds his position and observes the blocks of the split end and tight end. He remains stationary until the ball carrier reaches the line of scrimmage unless his position is previously threatened.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge looks through the end, he reads the blocking of the left tackle and reads run. The pulling left guard indicates a sweep to the opposite side. He remains on the sideline and observes the blocking and the action of the players behind the flow of the play.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge observes the blocking of the right tackle (adjacent to his key) and reads run. He maintains his position and observes the action of three defensive players who are moving toward the runner.



**SWEEP TO LINESMAN'S SIDE - PART 2**



**Action on the field:** The runner advances past the line of scrimmage.

**Referee:** The Referee moves slowly downfield and observes the action behind runner.

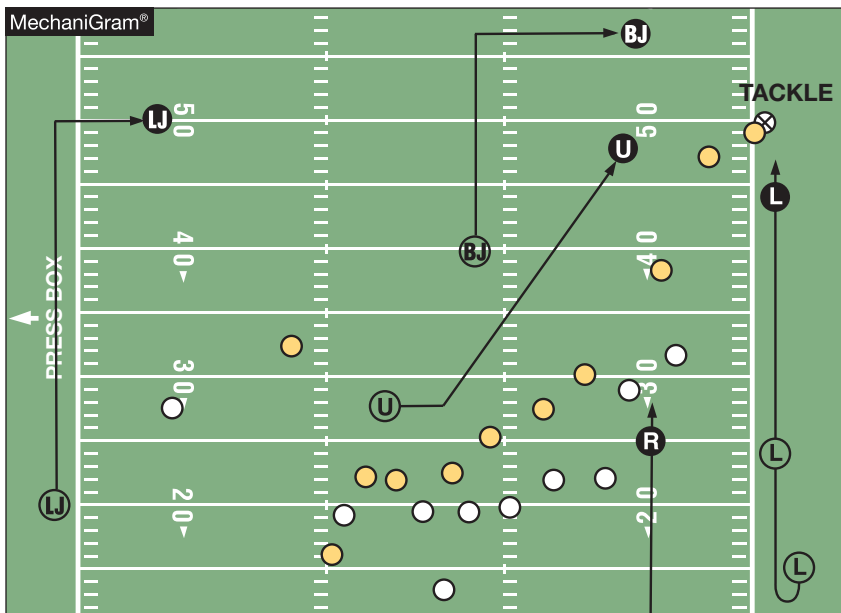
**Umpire:** The Umpire steps back to avoid interfering with the play and pivots to observe the play. He observes the action in front of the point of attack.

**Linesman:** The Linesman picks up the action of the runner and allows him to pass. He moves downfield to cover the play focusing on the ball carrier and action immediately around him.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge moves downfield with the flow maintaining a wide view of the action to catch illegal acts away from the ball.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge retreats to keep his 10- to 15-yard buffer in front of the play and observes the action in front of and to side of the runner.

**SWEEP TO LINESMAN'S SIDE - PART 3**



**Action on the field:** The runner continues to advance and is tackled near the sideline.

**Referee:** The Referee trails the play. After the end of the run he will watch for any unnecessary actions behind the spot of the tackle, keeping all offensive players in his view as much as possible. If a first down has been achieved and no penalty markers are down, he signals the Linesman to have the chain crew move the chains. If the run is less than 10 yards, the Referee can assist with players out of bounds.

**Umpire:** The Umpire continues to observe the action around the runner and moves into position to receive the ball from the Linesman while dead-ball officiating.

**Linesman:** The Linesman moves quickly downfield and observes the action around the runner. He blows his whistle when the runner is downed. He squares off to mark spot of forward progress and pinches-in so he can retrieve the ball and pass it to the Umpire. If a first down has been achieved, he gets the signal from the Referee and instructs the chain crew to move. He assists the chain crew in setting the chains for a new series. If any players go out of bounds, his priority becomes watching them; the wings should never turn their back to out-of-bounds players.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge observes the action on his side of the field back to the line of scrimmage. He squares off to mirror the forward progress spot and pinches in to his hash mark while dead-ball officiating. If a first down has been achieved, he stops the clock and signals the first down to the Referee. He observes the players in his area.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge moves into position to observe the runner and maintains a 10- to 15-yard buffer in front of the runner. If a first down is achieved and the Line Judge stops the clock, the Back Judge checks the clock to see that it has stopped. If not, he repeats the stop-the-clock signal. He then pinches-in slightly to dead-ball officiate. If any players go out of bounds, his priority becomes watching them and he goes out there if necessary.

## Coverage – Pass Plays

**All officials:** At the snap, each official must observe a lineman, which will almost always be a tackle. A detailed discussion of this technique is in the chapter entitled “Keys.” The initial movement of a tackle will indicate whether the play is a pass or run. On passing plays, the tackles will almost always stand up and take a step backward to block. The play must always be properly boxed in and before blowing the whistle, the official must be able to see the ball and be certain the play is dead.

**Referee:** The Referee is responsible for snapper’s release of the snap. He then focuses on the opposite tackle, and determines whether the play is a pass or run.

On a passing play, the Referee will scan the blocking, emphasizing the backs, to ascertain legality. He must be vigilant for defenders who break through the line to threaten the quarterback. The Referee should not have to move if the quarterback simply drops back into the pocket (that is why the Referee is wide and deep). If the quarterback rolls to either direction, the Referee must move with him, keeping at least a 10 yard buffer. By maintaining spacing between himself and the quarterback, the Referee will widen his field of vision. The wider view allows the Referee to determine if the pass is forward or backward while continuing to focus attention on the passer.

If the quarterback scrambles away from the Referee, the Referee needs to keep pace. If the quarterback scrambles toward the Referee, the Referee needs to move to the sideline, keeping his 10- to 15-yard buffer as long as possible. He is responsible for the spot if the runner goes out of bounds behind the line of scrimmage on either sideline. If

the runner goes out of bounds into the opposing team’s bench area, the Referee follows the play into the bench area. He should help escort players out of opponent’s bench area.

The Referee is the sole guardian and protector of the passer. He cannot follow the ball when it is released by passer, but must continue to focus on passer until he is not threatened. He should help on-rushing defenders by yelling “Pass is away!” or “It’s gone!”

If the flight of the pass is altered because the passer’s arm is hit by a defender, the Referee must determine whether the resultant loose ball is a forward pass or a fumble. If the Referee rules the play to be an incomplete pass, he must blow his whistle and signal emphatically. If the play results in a fumble, the Referee need not bean bag the spot where possession was lost as it is a loose-ball play and the basic spot will be the previous spot.

An intentional grounding flag is thrown **ONLY** by the Referee, but he can rarely make that call without assistance because he will not see where the ball landed. Other members of the crew should immediately volunteer information regarding whether or not the ball was thrown into an area occupied by an eligible offensive receiver. When a Referee believes a quarterback is intentionally grounding the ball to avoid a sack, he should flag it. If an eligible receiver was nearby, the flag can be picked up. If the Referee does not throw his flag and is told the ball went into an area not occupied by an eligible offensive receiver, it is acceptable to throw a late flag, which should be “soft tossed” to the spot of the pass.

Similarly, illegal forward passes are the primary responsibility of the Referee who is aided by the Umpire. As he trails the quarterback, he should move to the spot of the pass to judge whether

it was thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage. If it is clearly a foul, he should drop his flag at the spot of the pass. If the spot is questionable, he should drop his bean bag. In either case, he must continue to officiate.

If the quarterback is sacked, the Referee is solely responsible for the progress spot (the wings will have gone downfield with the receivers) and must go immediately to him ensure nothing illegal happens when the players un-pile. A bean bag may be used (it will have to be thrown) to mark the spot, but it is preferable for the Referee to mentally note the progress spot in relation to the nearest five-yard line without using a beanbag. It is much more important to officiate the dead-ball activity than to get a precise progress spot.

**Umpire:** The Umpire is responsible for the start of the snap. He is responsible for snap infractions by the snapper and he is responsible for illegal pre-snap movement by any of the linemen. He will then focus on the two linemen he has selected to initially watch for that play. Their block will determine whether the play is a pass or run. He should not allow the defense to interfere with the quarterback's signal calling. Warn, if possible, before throwing the flag. He must be vigilant observing possible chop blocks which will almost always occur immediately after the snap and any other block that violates the restrictions of the free blocking zone.

On a passing play, the Umpire must promptly move to the line of scrimmage to rule on passes or passers that cross the neutral zone. In doing so, the Umpire must avoid interfering with a receiver who is running a short pattern over the middle. On quick passes over the middle, the Umpire must pivot and watch the pass to help rule on catch/no catch. If the pass is ruled 'trapped' and incomplete

the Umpire must move swiftly toward the spot and give a strong signal.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wing officials are responsible for forward progress; their movement must facilitate getting the correct progress spot. At the snap, the wing will read the block of the near tackle to determine whether the play is a pass or run and then shift his focus to the action of his key.

On a passing play, the wing officials have to follow receivers downfield but they need to be aware of what the quarterback is doing. There is no need to release downfield quickly. The wing can allow the receiver to go 10 yards downfield before he needs to follow. Most passes are relatively short; the wing should strive to be within 10 yards of the spot of a catch on his side of the field. Wing officials have responsibility for the passer if he scrambles past the line of scrimmage.

If there is a quick pass to either sideline, the wing from which the pass is thrown is responsible for determining whether the pass is forward or backward. When in question, it is a forward pass. The opposite wing is responsible for the catch and any foul on or by the receiver.

The wing officials also look off-ball for action by a second or third defender on passes over the middle where the Back Judge has primary coverage and must be alert for action against a defenseless receiver.

On catches where the receiver comes back toward the ball, the near wing is responsible for the catch and any fouls by or on the receiver. That wing should go to the receiver and not try to hold the progress spot. The opposite wing is responsible for the progress spot; this is one example of "cross field mechanics."

For possible cases of intentional grounding, the wings should point to the eligible receiver in the area and immediately go to the Referee and discuss the situation and where the pass landed. A flag for intentional grounding is the Referee's decision.

When the play ends, the wing official will square off at the line through the forward progress spot and pinch-in to the bottom of the numbers. Detailed procedures for marking forward progress are in the Forward Progress chapter.

If there is a run after a pass is caught and the runner goes out of bounds into the a team's bench area, the wing official will hold the out-of-bounds spot while watching the action. He should not leave the sideline unless absolutely necessary to break up a fight. The Back Judge and/or Referee will assist with the players in the bench area. If he does leave the sideline, he should use bean bag to mark the out-of-bounds spot.

**Back Judge:** At the snap, the Back Judge will observe the tackle adjacent to his key, and determine whether the play is a pass or run, then observe the actions of his key.

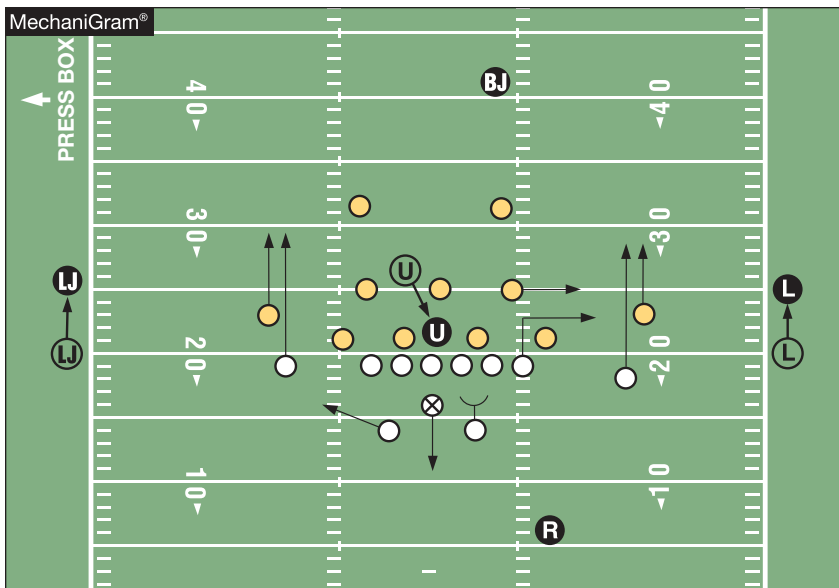
On a passing play, the Back Judge will remain stationary until his key or another receiver threatens his buffer. He must retreat far enough so he is always deeper than the deepest receiver. Once the pass is thrown, he should quickly determine the intended receiver and get into the best possible position to observe the play, bracketing the intended receiver with the appropriate wing official. While the pass is in the air, he should not move toward the ball or watch the flight of the ball. The focus must be on action involving the receiver and defender. Both the offensive and defensive players must be observed for possible interference. He should look off the ball for action by

a second or third defender on passes in the side zones where the wing officials have primary coverage. He must always be alert for action against a defenseless receiver.

The Back Judge rarely has forward progress; the wing officials will come down and spot the ball. He will always have the goal line if the play gains more than ten yards.

When the play ends, the Back Judge and/or Referee may assist the wing official with players who go into a team's bench area. Otherwise, the Back Judge becomes the primary dead-ball official for the defense and must strive to keep all players in his view. He should gently pinch-in to a point about 10-15 yards from where the play ended. If an incomplete pass is left on the field and no player retrieves it, the Back Judge should ask a player to get the ball or, as a last resort, should get the ball himself. Ball chasing is not an excuse for missing extracurricular activity

DEEP PASS - PART 1



**Action on the field:** The quarterback drops back to pass.

**Referee:** The Referee keys on the opposite tackle and reads pass when the tackle retreats; he observes the initial block by the tackle. As the quarterback drops back, he initially freezes and only moves back as necessary to maintain the proper distance between himself and quarterback. Until and if the quarterback is threatened, he observes the blocks by the backs and or the opposite tackle (or any lineman).

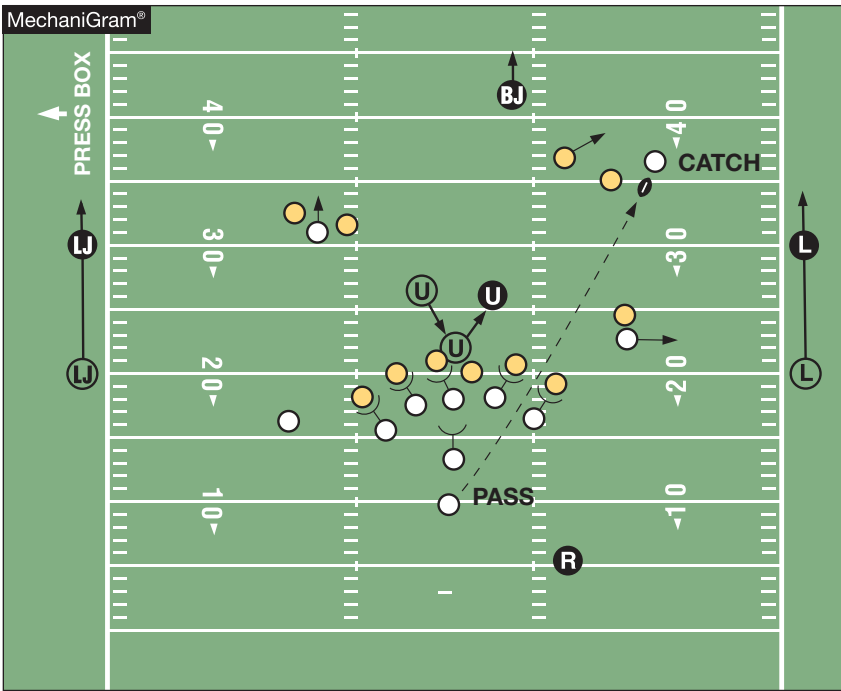
**Umpire:** The Umpire observes the pre-snap adjustments and legality of the snap. The Umpire reads the blocking of the center and a guard and reads pass. He steps up to the line of scrimmage while observing the blocking.

**Linesman:** After the snap, he reads the blocking of his tackle and reads pass. He then immediately shifts to his key, the tight end, observes his blocking, if any, and begins to move downfield focusing on the tight end's actions.

**Line Judge:** After the snap, he reads the blocking of his tackle and reads pass. He then immediately shifts to his key, the split end, observes his blocking, if any, and begins to move downfield focusing on the split end's actions.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge reads the blocking of the right tackle (adjacent to his key) and reads pass. He then immediately shifts to observe the blocking of his key, the widest player on the strong side, the flanker on the Linesman side. He observes his blocking, if any, and begins to retreat backwards focusing on the flanker's actions.

DEEP PASS - PART 2



**Action on the field:** A pass is thrown to and caught by a receiver.

**Referee:** The Referee continues to observe the passer until he is no longer in danger. He holds his position unless his buffer is threatened i.e., the quarterback takes an exceptionally deep drop or rolls out. He then moves downfield with the flow of the play.

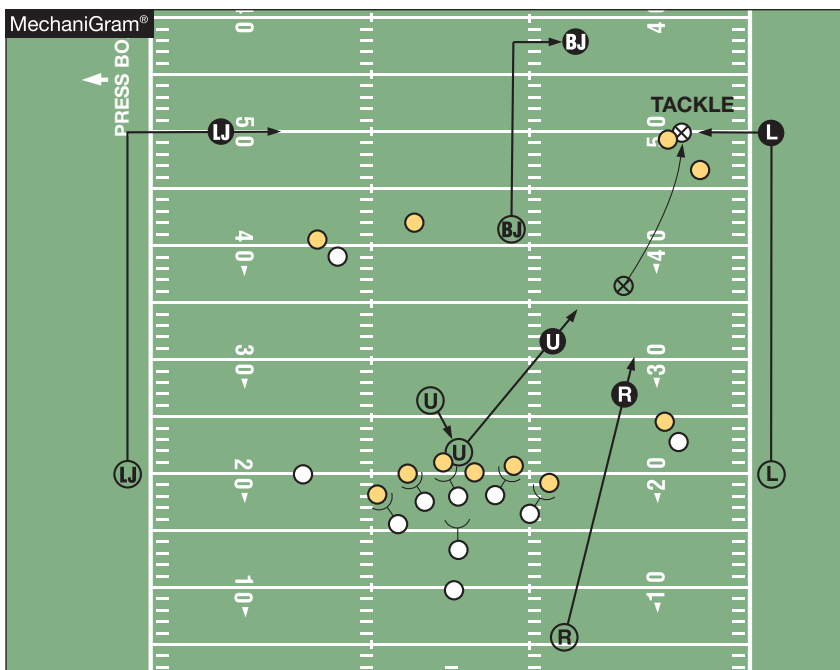
**Umpire:** The Umpire continues to observe the linemen until they begin to move downfield. He then begins to move downfield.

**Linesman:** The Linesman stays with his key from the outset of his pass pattern until his route is no longer threatened and then changes to zone coverage while moving downfield and maintaining a position about five to seven yards short of the deepest receiver on his side. He is aware of the flight of the ball and moves quickly to get an angle to observe the attempted catch.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge stays with his key from the outset of his pass pattern until his route is no longer threatened and then changes to zone coverage while moving downfield and maintaining a position about five to seven yards short of the deepest receiver on his side. He is aware of the flight of the ball and observes the action in his halo area.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge determines the intended receiver and keeps a buffer of 10 to 15 yards from the area of the attempted catch. He focuses on the actions of the nearest defender.

DEEP PASS - PART 3



**Action on the field:** The pass is caught; the runner advances and is downed.

**Referee:** The Referee moves slowly downfield and observes the players in behind the ball.

**Umpire:** The Umpire moves slowly downfield and observes players behind the ball. When the play ends, he hustles to a spot where he can receive the ball from the Linesman or to get it directly from the runner and proceeds to spot it while observing players.

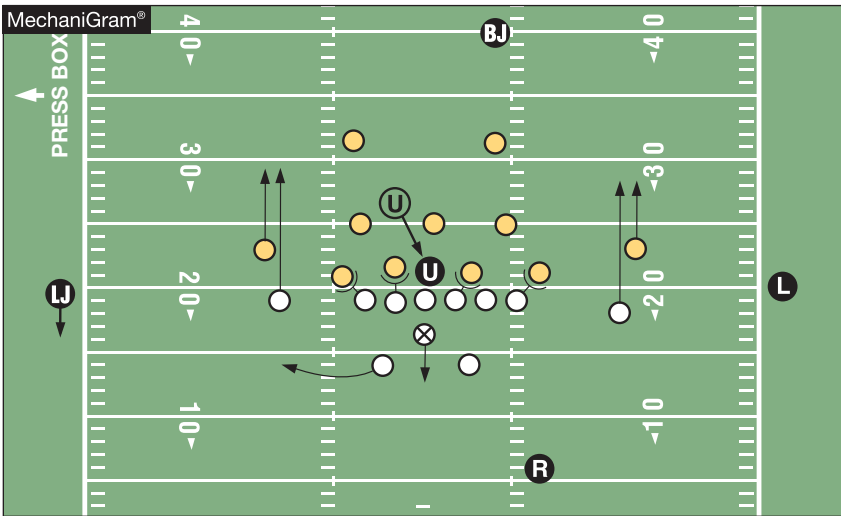
**Linesman:** The Linesman moves quickly downfield and observes the action around the runner. He blows his whistle when the runner is downed. He squares off to mark spot of forward progress and pinches-in so he can retrieve the ball and pass it to the Umpire. If a first down has been achieved, he gets the signal from the Referee and instructs the chain crew to move. He assists the chain crew in setting the chains for a new series.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge observes the action on his side of the field back to the line of scrimmage. He squares off to mirror the forward progress spot and pinches in to his hash mark while dead-ball officiating. If a first down has been achieved, he stops the clock and signals the first down to the Referee. He observes the players in his area.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge moves into position to observe the runner and maintains a 10-15 yard buffer in front of the runner. If a first down is achieved and the Line Judge stops the clock, the Back Judge checks the clock to see that it has stopped. If not, he repeats the stop-the-clock signal. He then pinches-in slightly to dead-ball officiate. If any players go out of bounds, his priority becomes watching them.



PASS TO FLAT ON LINE JUDGE SIDE - PART 1



**Action on the field:** The quarterback drops back to pass.

**Referee:** The Referee keys on the opposite tackle and reads pass when the tackle retreats; he observes the initial block by the tackle. As the quarterback drops back, he initially freezes and maintains that position once he recognizes the quarterback's two-step drop. He would only move back as necessary to maintain the proper distance between himself and quarterback. Until and if the quarterback is threatened, he observes the blocks by the backs and or the opposite tackle.

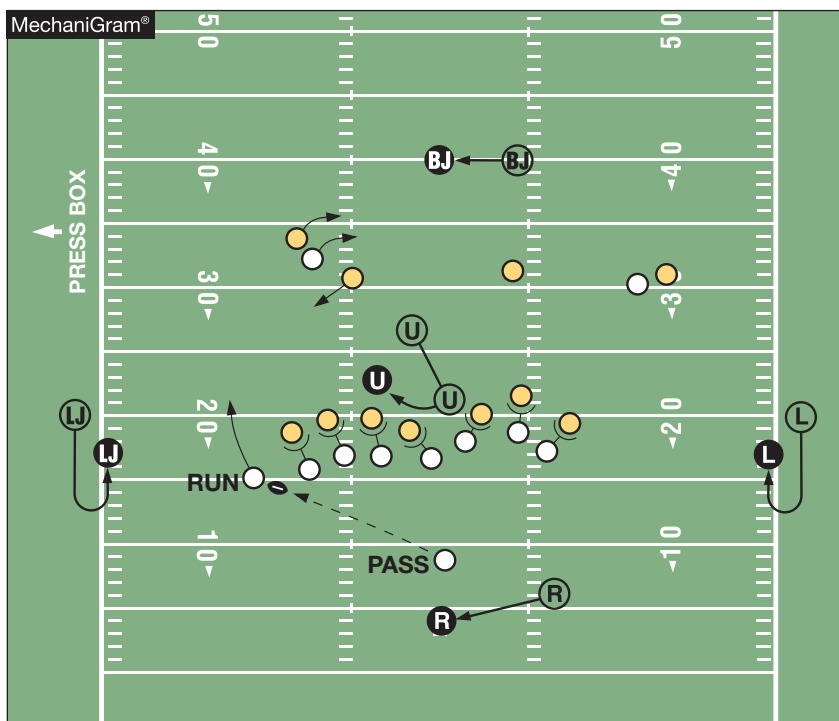
**Umpire:** The Umpire observes the pre-snap adjustments and legality of snap. The Umpire reads the blocking of the center and a guard and reads pass. He steps up to the line of scrimmage while observing the blocking.

**Linesman:** The Linesman identifies the eligible receivers on his side of the field. He uses extended arm signal to alert the Line Judge that his widest player is in the backfield. After the snap, he reads the blocking of his tackle and reads pass. He then immediately shifts to his key, the tight end, and observes his blocking, if any. He recognizes the quarterback has taken a two-step drop and has turned to throw in the opposite direction.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge identifies the eligible receivers on his side of the field. He signals that his widest player is on the line by pointing to the line with an open palm. After the snap, he reads the blocking of his tackle and reads pass. He then immediately shifts to his key, the split end, and observes his blocking, if any. He recognizes the quarterback has taken a two-step drop and has turned to throw in his direction.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge reads the blocking of the right tackle (adjacent to his key) and reads pass. He then immediately shifts to observe the blocking of his key, the widest player on the strong side, the flanker on the Linesman side. He observes his blocking, if any, and begins to retreat backwards, if necessary, focusing on the flanker's actions.

PASS TO FLAT ON LINE JUDGE SIDE - PART 2



**Action on the field:** A pass is thrown and caught by a back.

**Referee:** The Referee shifts his focus to the passer and prepares to assist in ruling the pass forward or backward. (He can only do that because the pass is thrown away from him). When the passer is no longer threatened, he moves to follow the play.

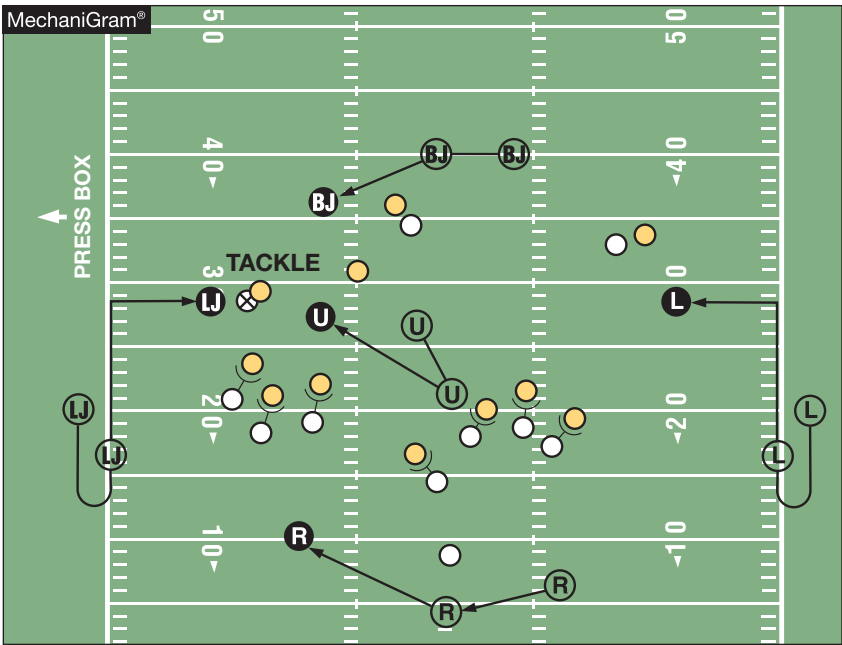
**Umpire:** The Umpire recognizes the direction of the pass, follows its flight and shifts his focus from the blocking linemen to the blockers in front of the receiver.

**Linesman:** The Linesman steps back to the yard line of the quarterback and has primary responsibility for ruling the pass forward or backward. Because the pass is complete he does not signal or blow his whistle.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge identifies the intended receiver and any approaching defenders. If none, he focuses on the blockers in front of the receiver and rules on the catch.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge maintains his position and observes the action in front of the runner.

PASS TO FLAT ON LINE JUDGE SIDE - PART 3



**Action on the field:** The runner advances and is downed.

**Referee:** The Referee moves slowly downfield and observes the players behind the ball.

**Umpire:** The Umpire moves slowly downfield and observes players behind the ball. He hustles to a spot where he can receive the ball from the Lines Judge and proceeds to spot it while observing players.

**Linesman:** The Linesman observes the action on his side of the field back to the line of scrimmage. He squares off to mirror the forward progress spot and pinches in to his hash mark while dead-ball officiating. If a first down has been achieved, he gets the signal from the Referee and instructs the chain crew to move. He assists the chain crew in setting the chains for a new series.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge moves quickly downfield and observes the action around the runner. He blows his whistle when the runner is downed. He squares off to mark spot of forward progress and pinches-in so he can retrieve the ball and pass it to the Umpire. If a first down has been achieved, he stops the clock and signals the first down to the Referee. He observes the players in his area.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge moves into position to observe the runner and maintains a 10-15 yard buffer in front of the runner. If a first down is achieved and the Line Judge stops the clock, the Back Judge checks the clock to see that it has stopped. If not, he repeats the stop-the-clock signal. He then pinches-in slightly to dead-ball officiate. If any players go out of bounds, his priority becomes watching them.

**Goal Line Plays – Offense Going In**

A touchdown can be scored on any play and it must be clear which official has the prime responsibility for covering the goal line.

The touchdown signal is given only by an official who actually sees the ball in possession of a runner break the plane of the goal line. Mirroring the signal is verboten and dangerous; if the covering official is incorrect, the crew will find it difficult to overcome two officials making a mistake. If the covering official is correct, there is no need for a second signal.

There are no circumstances under which the Referee is responsible for the goal line going in (Team B’s goal line) and the Umpire rarely declares a touchdown (see the chapter entitled “Signaling”). Under most circumstances, a wing official will be in a much better position to rule if the ball has broken the plane of the goal line.

**Positioning**

**Referee:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs for the Referee. Moving up closer to the line is not desirable and places the Referee at risk for no purpose.

**Umpire:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs for the Umpire except he should be careful not to position himself on the goal line which could block the wing’s view of the runner.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs for the wing officials.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge’s distance from the goal line will decrease as the spot of the snap gets closer to the goal line. The table below summarizes the initial position for the Back Judge. When the ball is snapped between Team B’s 2five-yard line and their 1five-yard line, he must be on the goal line, but not in front of any defensive player. When the ball is snapped between Team B’s 1five-yard line and their 10-yard line, the Back Judge should be approximately midway between the goal line and the end line. He may choose his exact position depending on his preference for moving backward or forward. If the ball is snapped inside Team B’s 10-yard line, the Back Judge must be on the end line and will not give it up if there is any chance it will be threatened. He must communicate to both wing officials when he releases from the goal line. The details are on the following diagrams.

Ball on Yard Line	Back Judge’s Starting Position *	Coverage End Line or Goal Line
Outside 25	About 25 yards off ball	Both
25 - 15	Goal Line	Both
15 - 10	Midway between Goal and End Line	Both
10 - 5	End Line	End Line
Inside 5	End Line	End Line

\* Never in front of defensive player.

## Coverage

**All officials:** The main difference from other scrimmage plays is the action of wing officials. The priority is determining if a touchdown is scored. As always, the play must always be properly boxed in and before blowing the whistle, the official must be able to see the ball and be certain the play is dead.

**Referee:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs for the Referee. The Referee should be alert for quarterback sneaks where the quarterback does not set for a full second.

**Umpire:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs for the Umpire except he should be careful not to block the wing's view of the runner near the goal line.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The responsibilities of the wing officials are generally the same as regular scrimmage downs. When the Back Judge is responsible for the goal line, the wings will stop at Team B's two-yard line and the Back Judge will get the progress spot inside that line. Also, the wing officials do not observe a tackle when the ball is snapped inside Team B's five-yard line; they go immediately to the goal line. It is imperative the wing officials get to the goal line ahead of the runner when the ball is snapped inside Team B's 10-yard line and must go to the goal line immediately at the snap when the ball is snapped inside Team B's five-yard line. The lone exception is when the line-to-gain and stake is inside Team B's 10-yard line.

When the snap is between Team B's 10- and five-yard lines, the wing official should hesitate at the stake until he is certain the runner has passed it. When the snap is inside Team B's five-yard

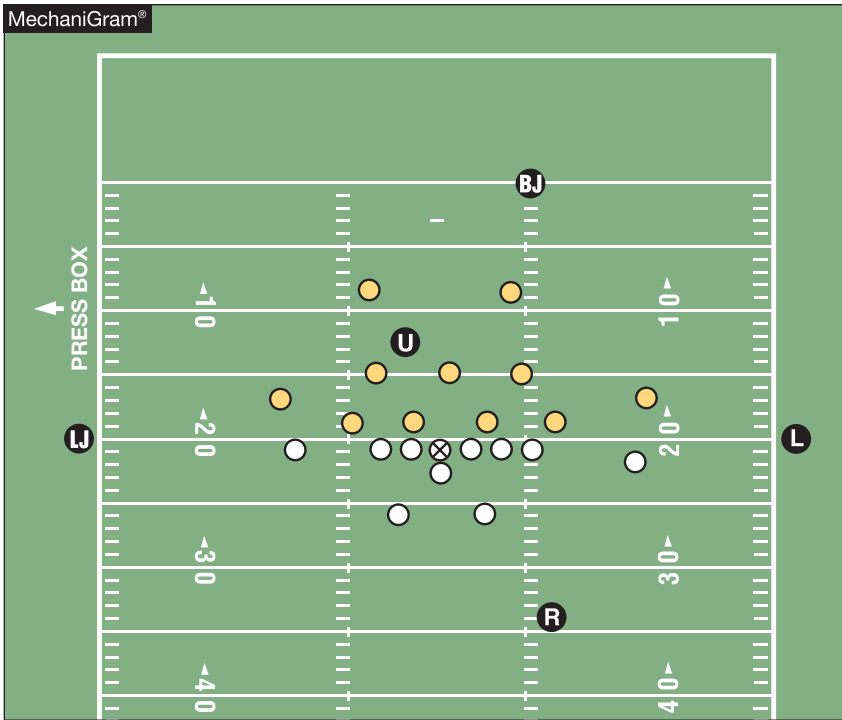
line, the wing official should still go immediately to the goal line and then work back to the stake if the runner has not already passed it.

**Back Judge:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs for the Back Judge, except his movement will take into consideration whether he is responsible for the goal line or the end line. He is also responsible for forward progress inside Team B's two-yard line.

## Linesman, Line Judge and Back

**Judge:** Pass plays when the ball is snapped inside Team B's 10-yard line require special coordination between officials. When such a pass is completed in the end zone, the Back Judge and the nearest wing official have joint jurisdiction and must exercise extreme care to ensure conflicting signals i.e., touchdown and incomplete pass, are not given. The details are in the following sections as appropriate.

**GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN**  
**Snap is between the B-25 and B-15**



**Referee and Umpire:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs.

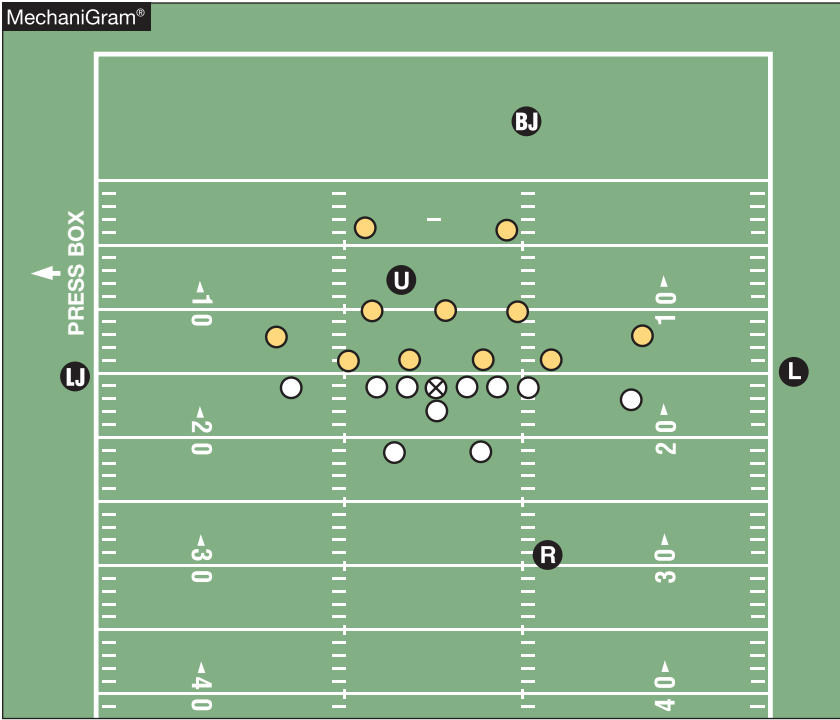
**Linesman and Line Judge:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs except that they are not to proceed past Team B's two-yard line.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge must be on the goal line, but not in front of any defensive player. He should remind both wing officials that he has coverage of the goal line and is responsible for forward progress inside Team B's two-yard line. If a runner crosses the goal line near a pylon, he must wait for crew signal "I" from the appropriate wing official before he signals a touchdown to ensure the runner did not step out of bounds. The Back Judge is to be the sole touchdown signaler.

On a running play, the Back Judge maintains his position on the goal line.

On a passing play, the Back Judge retreats from the goal line only if receivers enter the end zone.

**GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN**  
**Snap is between the B-15 and B-10**



**Referee and Umpire:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs.

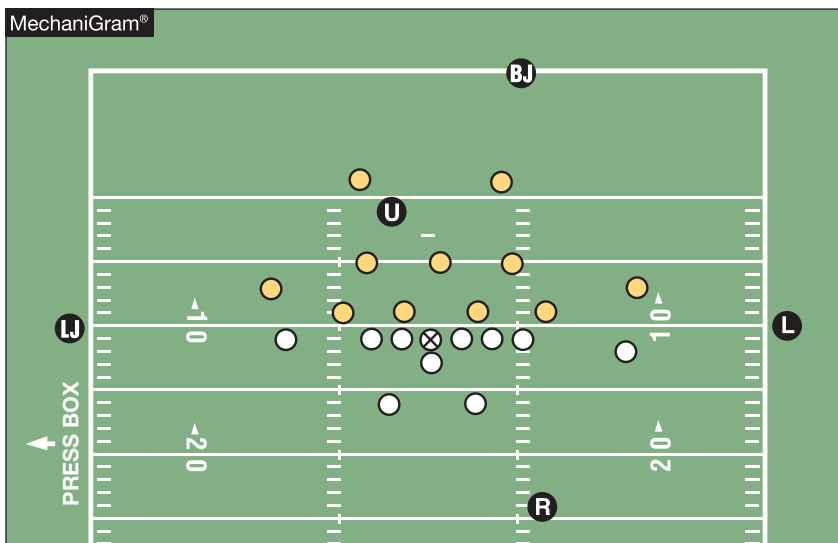
**Linesman and Line Judge:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs except that they are not to proceed past Team B's two-yard line.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge may be anywhere between the goal line and the middle of the end zone, but not in front of any defensive player. He should remind both wing officials that he has coverage of the goal line and is responsible for forward progress inside Team B's two-yard line. If a runner crosses the goal line near a pylon, he must wait for crew signal "I" from the appropriate wing official before he signals a touchdown to ensure the runner did not step out of bounds. The Back Judge is to be the sole touchdown signaler.

On a running play, the Back Judge moves to the goal line.

On a passing play, the Back Judge retreats from his position only if receivers enter the end zone. He cannot allow players to get behind him.

**GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN**  
**Snap is between the B-10 and B-5**



**Referee and Umpire:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wings are responsible for goal line. The wings must stay ahead of the ball carrier.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge must be on the end line regardless of whether it is a run or a pass and he cannot give it up if there is any chance it will be threatened. He should remind both wing officials that they have coverage of the goal line. He does not signal a touchdown unless a pass is caught in the end zone. If a pass is caught in the end zone near a sideline, he must make eye contact with the appropriate wing official before he signals a touchdown to ensure the pass was caught inbounds.

**Linesman, Line Judge and Back Judge:**

If the pass is completed not near a sideline or the end line: The Back Judge and the nearest wing official shall both signal the touchdown.

If the pass is completed near a sideline, but not near the end line: The Back Judge will defer to the nearest wing official who will signal the touchdown.

If the pass is completed near the end line, but not near a sideline: The nearest wing official will defer to the Back Judge who will signal the touchdown.

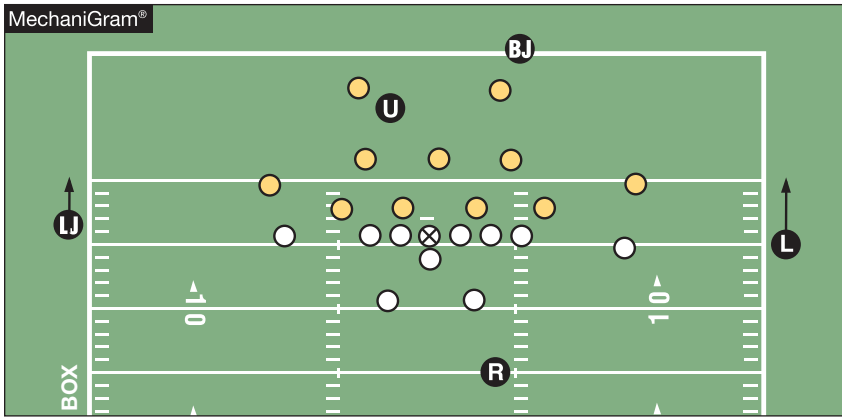
If the pass is completed near both a sideline and the end line (corner of the end zone): The Back Judge and the nearest wing official shall come together and describe what they saw to each other. Once a decision is reached, only the Back Judge will signal.

In any situation, if the pass is obviously incomplete both officials should signal. If the pass is "caught" (possessed in flight) and either official is certain it is incomplete, that official should signal without hesitation.



## GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN

### Snap is inside the B-5



**Referee:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs. The Referee must be careful to keep his normal depth and not move up closer to the line.

**Umpire:** The Umpire must ensure he does not block the wings view of the goal line.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wings are responsible for goal line. The wings must immediately go to goal line and officiate back to the play. On a try, touchdowns are signaled using the normal procedure; however, if a run ends short of the goal line, the wing officials will mark the progress spot and yell “No, no, no” to the Referee. The Referee will then signal to the press box that the try was not successful.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge must be on the end line regardless of whether it is a run or a pass and he cannot give it up if there is any chance it will be threatened. He should remind both wing officials that they have coverage of the goal line. He does not signal a touchdown unless a pass is caught in the end zone. If a pass is caught in the end zone near a sideline, he must make eye contact with the appropriate wing official before he signals a touchdown to ensure the pass was caught inbounds.

#### **Linesman, Line Judge and Back Judge:**

If the pass is completed not near a sideline or the end line: The Back Judge and the nearest wing official shall both signal the touchdown.

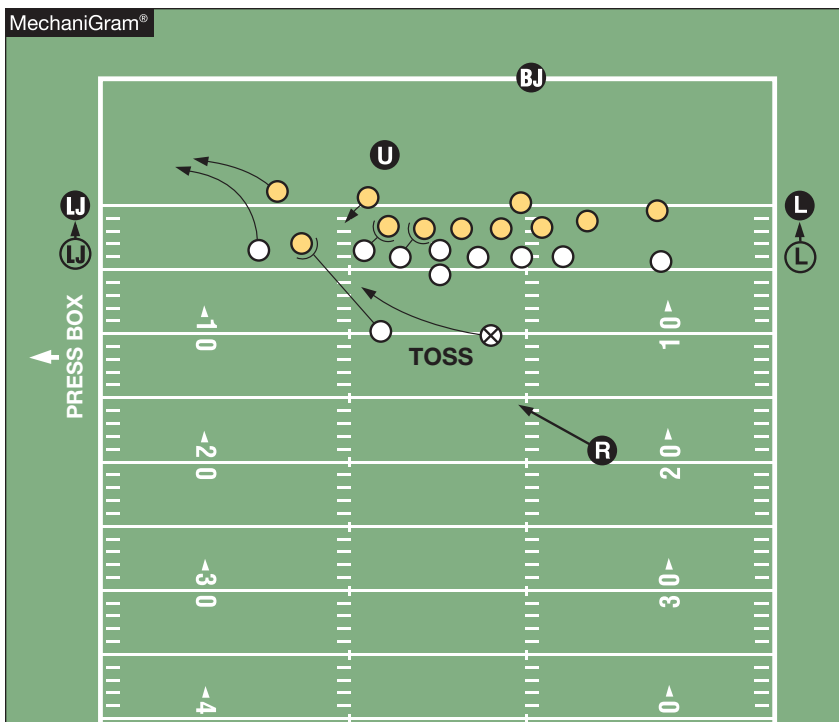
If the pass is completed near a sideline, but not near the end line: The Back Judge will defer to the nearest wing official who will signal the touchdown.

If the pass is completed near the end line, but not near a sideline: The nearest wing official will defer to the Back Judge who will signal the touchdown.

If the pass is completed near both a sideline and the end line (corner of the end zone): The Back Judge and the nearest wing official shall come together and describe what they saw to each other. Once a decision is reached, only the Back Judge will signal.

In any situation, if the pass is obviously incomplete both officials should signal. If the pass is “caught” (possessed in flight) and either official is certain it is incomplete, that official should signal without hesitation.

**GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN – TOSS PLAY - PART 1  
SNAP IS INSIDE THE B-5**



**Action on the field:** The ball is tossed to a back who sweeps left.

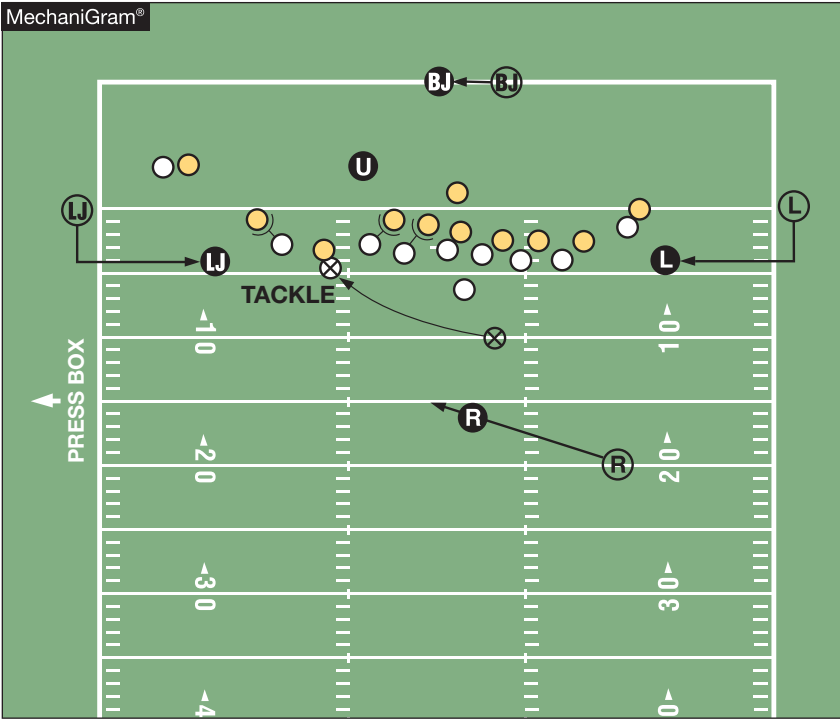
**Referee:** The Referee reads blocking of left tackle and reads run. He moves with the flow of the play at a 45 degree angle toward the sideline and observes the runner and action around the runner.

**Umpire:** The Umpire reads blocking of center and a guard and reads run. He determines the point of attack and observes blocking there. He moves with the flow of the play and observes blocking and action in front of the runner.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wings do not read any blocks, when the ball is snapped inside the five-yard line, the wings must move immediately to the goal line and about two yards outside the pylon.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge reads the blocking of the right tackle (adjacent to his key) and reads run. He stays on the end line and observes the action in front of the runner.

**GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN – TOSS PLAY  
RUNNER STOPPED - PART 2A: SNAP INSIDE THE B-5**



**Action on the field:** The runner is stopped short of the goal line

**Referee:** The Referee moves slowly downfield and observes the action behind runner.

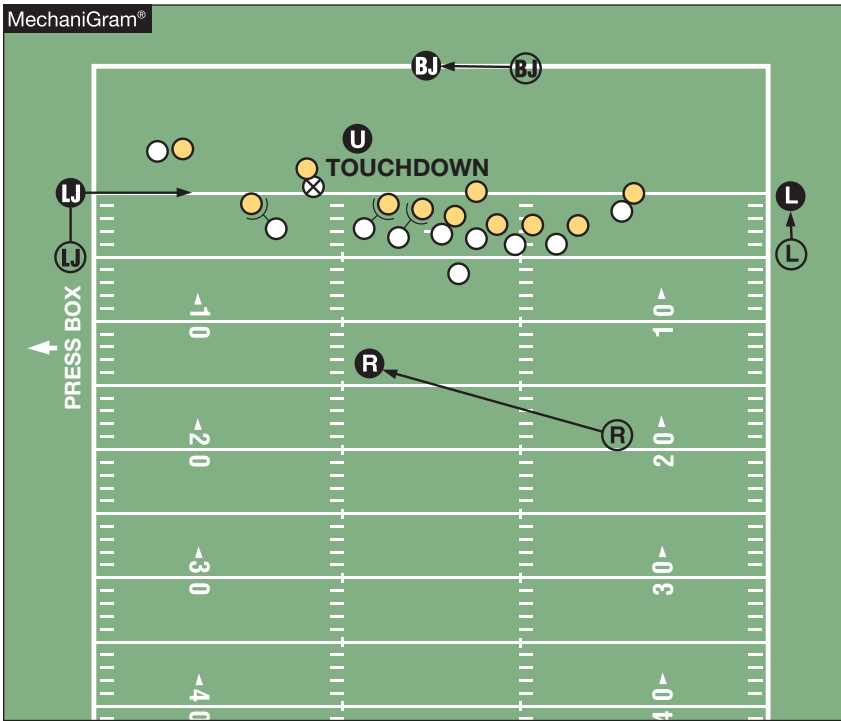
**Umpire:** The Umpire pivots to observe the play. He observes the action around the point of attack.

**Linesman:** The Linesman officiates back to the ball and squares off to mirror the Line Judge's spot while pinching-in.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge officiates back to the ball to observe the contact on the runner and squares off to indicate forward progress. He blows his whistle when the runner is downed. He pinches-in to the ball.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge moves slightly toward the left sideline and observes the action in front of the runner.

**GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE GOING IN - TOSS PLAY  
RUNNER SCORES - PART 2B: SNAP INSIDE THE B-5**



**Action on the field:** The runner is tackled in the end zone.

**Referee:** The Referee observes the action. When the Line Judge signals touchdown (if no flags are down) and after players clear, he turns to press box and echoes the signal.

**Umpire:** The Umpire goes immediately to the downed runner. He does not give any signal that the ball crossed the goal line. It is permissible to point to the ball if wing officials are crashing into the pile looking for the football.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** When the ball breaks the goal line plane in player possession, make eye contact with the opposite wing official and pinch-in while signaling the touchdown. There is no reason to rush this signal.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge dead-ball officiates.

### Goal Line Plays – Offense Coming Out

When the ball is snapped between the goal line and Team A's 10-yard line, proper positioning and coverage is necessary to ensure the goal line is covered. When the ball is snapped inside the five-yard line, attention to the goal line is even more important. This coverage is called Reverse Goal Line Mechanics.

#### Positioning

**Referee:** The Referee should start wider than normal to provide a better view of forward progress if the quarterback scrambles out of the pocket on a pass play or a running back is stopped near the goal line.

**Umpire:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs for the Umpire.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs for the wing officials.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge will shade to the side of the field of the wing that the Referee is facing.

#### Coverage

##### Snap Between the Goal Line and the Five-Yard Line

**All officials:** The priority is determining if a safety is scored. As always, the play must be properly boxed in and before blowing the whistle, the official must be able to see the ball and be certain the play is dead.

**Referee:** The Referee is responsible for the end line. The Referee is also responsible for the goal line on passing plays along with the facing wing official. Be alert for ball becoming dead in the end zone or behind the end line. If the ball becomes dead in the end zone in the

possession of the offensive team, give the safety signal.

**Umpire:** There are no differences from regular scrimmage downs for the Umpire.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The main difference from other scrimmage plays is the wing officials go immediately to the goal line. At the snap, retreat to a position about 6 feet off the sideline and straddling the goal line extended.

On a running play, they must determine if the ball gets completely out of the end zone before it becomes dead and stay on the goal line until it is no longer threatened. They must pinch in on the field of play to mark progress or look for the ball near the goal line and pinch in when in the end zone to signal safety. They must work back toward the line of scrimmage if the runner takes them there and square off to identify the forward progress spot. (REMEMBER: The ball must get completely out of the end zone.) If the progress spot is very close to the goal line, the ball is placed at least a foot into the field of play.

##### Wing Official that Referee is Not Facing:

At the snap, he must retreat towards the goal line while reading the tackle's block for run/pass. If pass is read, he changes direction and observes the receivers on his side. He squares off to identify the forward progress spot if the ball becomes dead in his area.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge must be aware of the void in coverage due to the wing official's need to remain at the goal line on a pass play.

##### Snapped Between the Five-Yard Line and 10-Yard Line

When Team A snaps the ball from between their own five-yard line and the 10-yard line, officials should use the standard scrimmage play mechanics except:

**Referee:** Start 10 yards deep and wider than normal. Starting wider and closer to the line of scrimmage will allow the Referee to get a better look at the quarterback who drops back to pass near the goal line and is in danger of being sacked there. This position also provides the Referee a better chance to rule on the quarterback's forward progress. The Referee is responsible for the end line and the goal line. Be alert for the ball becoming dead in the end zone or behind the end line. If the ball becomes dead in the end zone in the possession of the offensive team, give the safety signal.

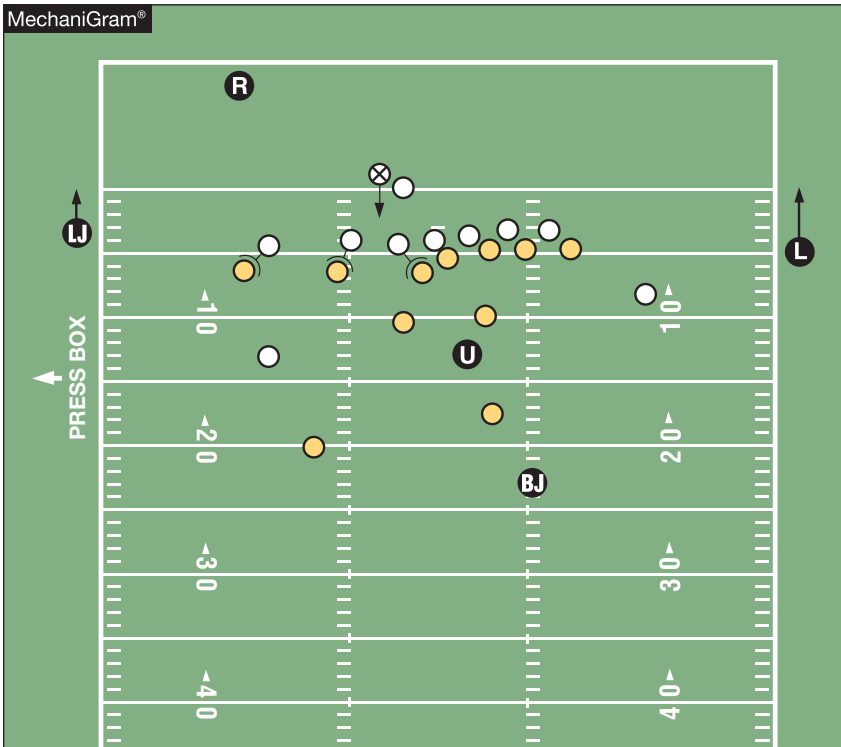
### **Punts**

If the ball is punted from the end zone, the officials will use standard scrimmage kick mechanics. However, the Referee, Umpire, Linesman, and Line Judge must be alert for a blocked punt or a broken play and may have to cover action involving the goal line. The Referee has sole responsibility for the offensive team's end line. The Line Judge shall remain on the line of scrimmage until the ball is kicked to assist the Linesman with the goal line in the event of a scrambling punter or a blocked punt. The priority is to cover the goal line.

### **Change of Possession**

Another reverse goal line mechanic for Referees and wing officials to prepare for is when an interception, fumble return, or punt return is threatening the goal line. Normally the wing officials have the goal line going in however in this case the Referee has the primary responsibility of the goal line. When the play ends near the goal line, wing officials must try to box in the action.

**GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE COMING OUT – RUNNING PLAY - PART 1:  
SNAP INSIDE THE A-5**



**Action on the field:** A handoff to a running back in the end zone.

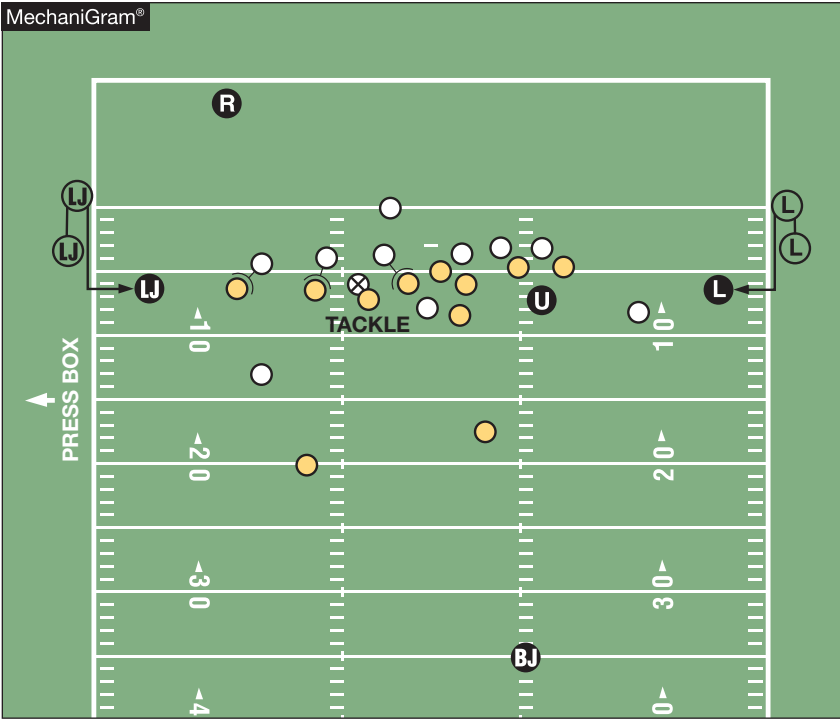
**Referee:** The Referee reads the blocking of the left (opposite) tackle and reads run. He observes the handoff and action around the quarterback after the handoff.

**Umpire:** The Umpire reads the blocking of the center and a guard and reads run. He determines the point of attack and observes the blocking there.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** At the snap the wings must move immediately to the goal line and about two yards outside the pylon and then read a tackle for run/pass.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge reads the blocking of the right tackle (adjacent to his key) and reads run. He then immediately shifts to observe the blocking of his key, the split end on the Line Judge side.

**GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE COMING OUT – RUNNING PLAY  
TACKLE IN FIELD OF PLAY - PART 2A: SNAP INSIDE THE A-5**



**Action on the field:** The runner advances beyond the goal line.

**Referee:** The Referee moves slowly downfield and observes the action behind the runner.

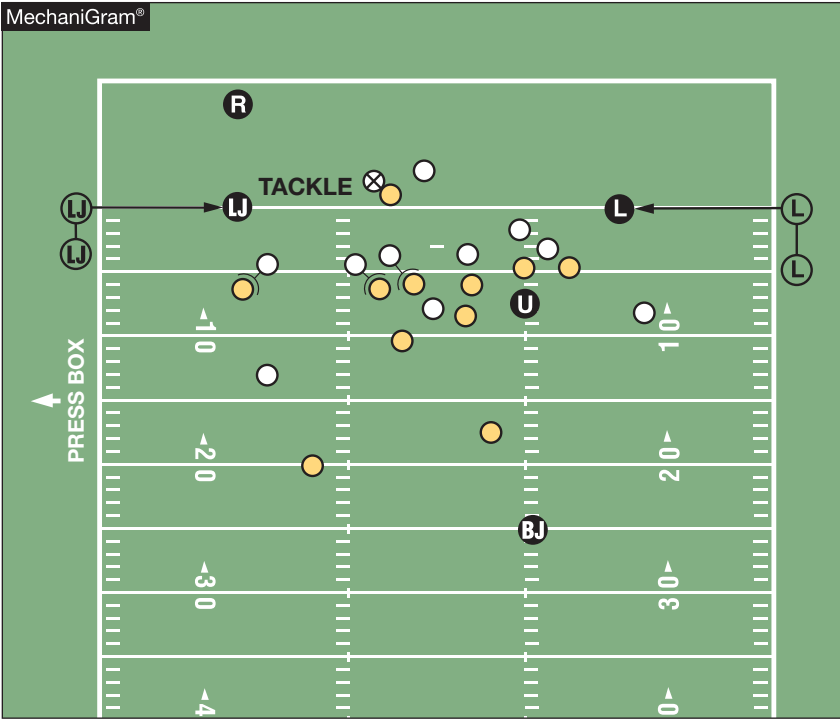
**Umpire:** The Umpire moves to avoid interfering with the play and pivots to observe the play. He observes the action around the point of attack.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wings reverse direction and move slowly downfield, continuing to observe action on the runner.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge retreats to keep his 10- to 15-yard buffer, if necessary, and observes the action in front of the runner.



**GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE COMING OUT- RUNNING PLAY  
TACKLE IN END ZONE - PART 2B: SNAP INSIDE THE A-5**



**Action on the field:** The runner is downed in the end zone near the goal line.

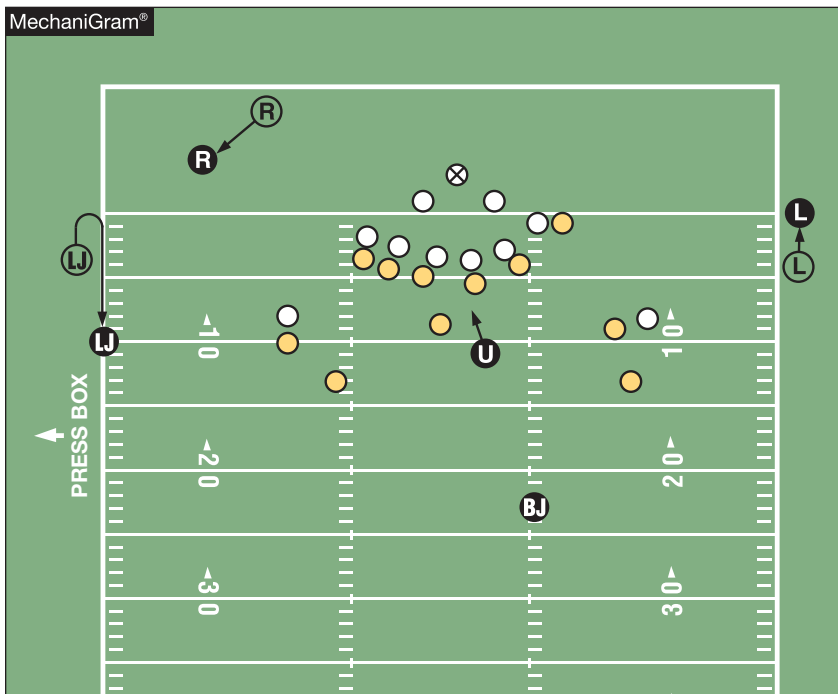
**Referee:** The Referee looks to the appropriate wing official for a safety signal.

**Umpire:** The Umpire immediately moves to the pile.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wings pinch-in and after stopping they will signal safety if they see the ball did not get completely out of the end zone. Both continue to dead-ball officiate. The signal should not be mirrored unless the official can see the ball.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge observes the action of players away from pile.

**GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE COMING OUT- PASSING PLAY - PART 1:  
SNAP INSIDE THE A-5**



**Action on the field:** The quarterback drops back to pass.

**Referee:** The Referee keys on the opposite tackle and reads pass when the tackle retreats; he observes the initial block by the tackle. As the quarterback drops back, he moves wider to stay even with him and becomes responsible for the goal line.

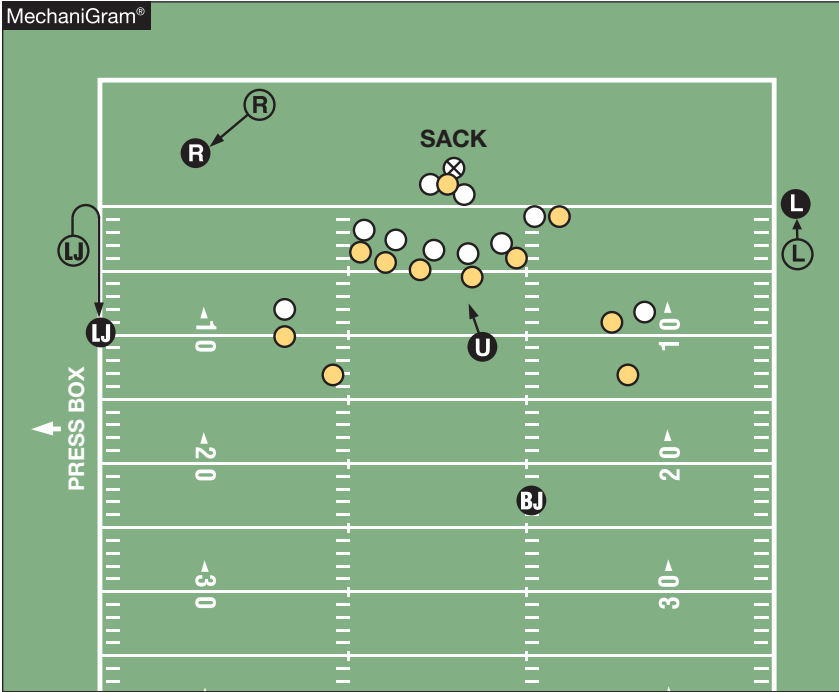
**Umpire:** The Umpire observes the pre-snap adjustments and legality of snap. The Umpire reads the blocking of the center and a guard and reads pass. He steps up to the line of scrimmage while observing the blocking.

**Linesman:** The Linesman's first move is back to the goal line. After the snap, he reads the blocking of his tackle and reads pass. Because he is opposite the Referee, he remains on the goal line and is responsible for it.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge's first move is back to the goal line. After the snap, he reads the blocking of his tackle and reads pass. Because he is on the Referee's side, he changes direction and moves down field five to seven yards observing the receivers on his side.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge reads the blocking of the left tackle and reads pass. He then immediately shifts to observe the blocking of his key, the widest player on the Linesman's side, the split end. He recognizes the Linesman will not be covering a pass. He observes his blocking, if any, and begins to retreat backwards focusing on the split end's actions.

**GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE COMING OUT- PASSING PLAY  
QUARTERBACK IS SACKED - PART 2A: SNAP INSIDE THE A-5**



**Action on the field:** The quarterback is sacked in the end zone.

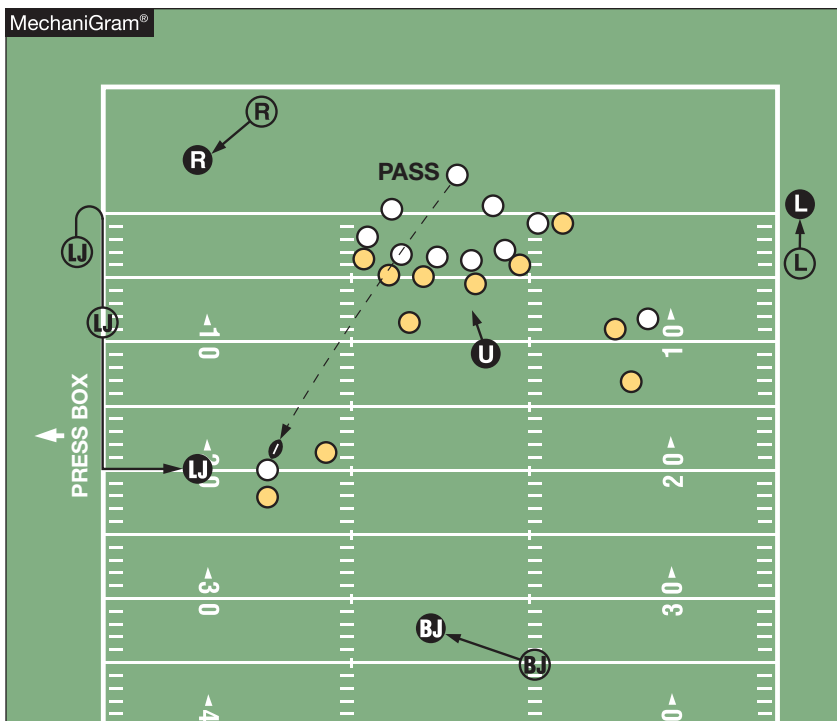
**Referee:** If the sack is deep enough in the end zone that the safety is not questionable, the Referee hustles in and signals safety while maintaining protection of the quarterback. He observes the quarterback until he is no longer threatened. If the sack is close to the goal line, the Referee defers the signal to the Linesman, but still maintains protection of the quarterback. He should not mirror the signal if the Linesman signals.

**Umpire:** The Umpire goes immediately to the pile and dead-ball officiates.

**Linesman:** If the sack is close to the goal line, the Linesman pinches in after the quarterback is tackled and signals safety if ball did not get completely out of end zone. If the sack is deep enough in the end zone that the safety is not questionable, he defers the signal to the Referee. He should not mirror the signal if the Referee signals.

**Line Judge and Back Judge:** They are responsible for dead-ball officiating.

**GOAL LINE PLAYS: OFFENSE COMING OUT- PASSING PLAY  
PASS IS THROWN - PART 2B: SNAP INSIDE THE A-5**



**Action on the field:** The quarterback releases a pass.

**Referee:** The Referee continues to observe the passer until he is no longer in danger. He moves downfield with the flow of the play.

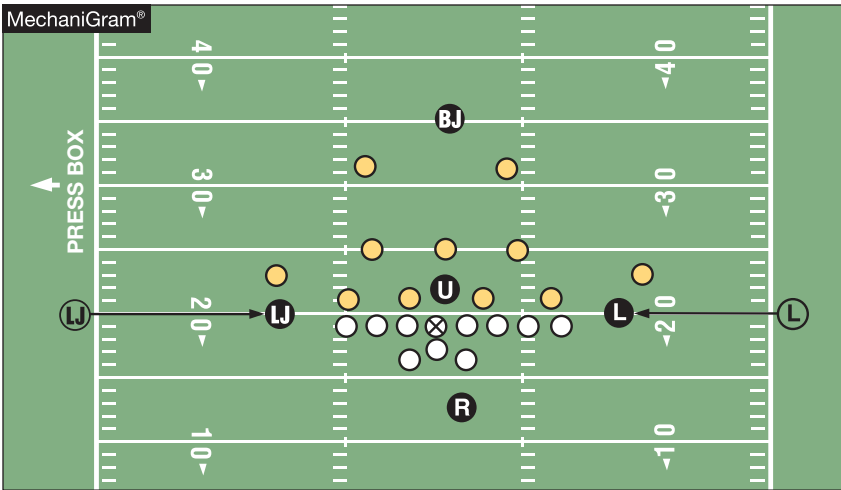
**Umpire:** The Umpire pivots if necessary to rule on a trapped pass. He continues to observe player action as he begins to move downfield.

**Linesman:** After the pass is made the Linesman moves downfield to the yard line of the attempted catch.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge continues to move downfield and maintains a position about five to seven yards short of the deepest receiver on his side. He is aware of the flight of the ball and moves quickly to get an angle to observe the attempted catch.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge determines the intended receiver and keeps a buffer of 10 to 15 yards from the area of the attempted catch. He focuses on the actions of the nearest defender.

VICTORY FORMATION POSITIONING AND COVERAGE



**Victory Formation**

**All:** A gracious way to end a game is for the winning team to “kneel down” or “take a knee.” The officials should be aware that various coaches have differing concepts as to how this play is to be executed and how the defense should react. The officials must use preventative officiating while ensuring they don’t interfere with play. The focus is on safety and preventing the ill will and fighting that may result. Players must be prepared for normal contact without crossing the line to unnecessary roughness. When the game situation dictates this formation, the Referee should ascertain the quarterback will take a knee either from the coach or quarterback and shall announce it to the defense and all officials.

**Positioning and Coverage**

**Referee:** The Referee’s starting position is near the quarterback. The quarterback should be instructed to not take more than one step backward before kneeling and to immediately kneel. Once the Referee ascertains the snap has been handled cleanly and the ball is in possession of the quarterback, he shall blow his whistle immediately. Once the whistle is blown, the Referee should accept the ball from the quarterback.

**Umpire:** The Umpire’s starting position is near the defensive line without presenting an obstacle to linebackers who may pursue a muffed snap.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wing officials starting position is on the line of scrimmage immediately next to the widest player on his side of the line. They should remind the defense not to charge.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge’s starting position is immediately next to the deepest defensive player in the middle of the field.

# APPENDIX A

# SAMPLE PREGAME CONFERENCE OUTLINE

**Kickoff Date/Time:** 7:00 PM, Friday, November 24 . . . **Teams:** East HS vs. West HS

**Departure Time:** 4:00 PM, Park-n-Ride . . . . . **Post-game:** Bar & Grill

Our discussion will begin at 6:00 PM with each member covering as much as we can of the items below. We will discuss overtime procedures at halftime, if necessary. You may choose to include some review questions as part of your pregame discussion. Selected case plays or questions from other sources would be appropriate.

## GENERAL CREW ITEMS:

1. Rule changes
2. Game management (Lightning, ceremonies, etc.)
3. Crew communications (signals)
4. Adjustments for an injured official
5. Game Tendencies (team history, formations, etc.)
6. Slow whistle – See the ball

## REFEREE:

1. Pre-game with coaches
2. Coin toss
3. Counting players and signals
4. Kicks (Scrimmage, Tries, Field goals, Free)
5. Intentional grounding, illegal forward pass
6. Communication regarding movement of box and chains and communicating downs
7. Blocked kicks (ball does or does not cross LOS or goal line)
8. Reporting fouls to the Referee
9. Measurement procedures
10. Use of Bean Bag (momentum, first touching and fumbles)
11. Hurry-up offense

**UMPIRE:**

1. Pregame equipment inspection
2. Linemen Keys, Position, and Coverage
3. Holding & Chop Blocks review
4. Spotting the ball and penalty assessment procedures/communications
5. Pass coverage (spin) on short-low trapped passes over the middle
6. Handling forward progress near the line to gain
7. Piles near the goal line (pointing to ball if wings are crashing)
8. Fouls on scoring plays
9. Unsportsmanlike fouls (taunting, contacting coach in box)
10. Fights

**LINESMAN:**

1. Measurements and penalty enforcement mechanics
2. Illegal offensive blocks (holding & below the waist on the perimeter)
3. Runs away from your side zone
4. Fumbles
5. Goal line coverage
6. Sideline control
7. End of period procedure
8. Procedures for bad snap coverage on scrimmage kicks
9. Onside kicks (fair catches, kicker topping the ball, and illegal blocking)

**LINE JUDGE:**

1. Obvious onside kick (Bump or Jump?)
2. Screen pass coverage
3. Blocks by K on onside kicks
4. Goal line going in and coming out
5. Communication with head coaches and sideline decorum
6. Forward progress and cross field mechanics
7. Receiver coverage at snap (include motion man)
8. Clock status at ready for play
9. Procedures for ball persons and the ball handling
10. Checking balls, procedures and communication for play near line to gain

**BACK JUDGE:**

1. Timing of game (stopping clock & timer briefing)
2. 40/25-second count (signals at 10- and 5-second mark)
3. Kick catching interference
4. Goal line/end line communication and coverage
5. Keys and coverage of receivers
6. Scrimmage kick (bean bag use and momentum)
7. Post-scrimmage kick (PSK) foul enforcement
8. Coverage and signaling on field goals/kick tries
9. Procedure on scrimmage kick and free kick OOB
10. Punt coverage and coffin corner mechanics
11. Fair catch coverage on punts and free kicks
12. Timeout positioning and procedure
13. Waiting for wing punch before signaling touchdown
14. Tracking penalties

## APPENDIX B

# GAME CLOCK OPERATOR INSTRUCTIONS

**A.** The game clock operator is an integral member of the officiating crew and game administration. Unfair advantages occur when the game clock is not started or stopped correctly by rule. Great care must be exercised to ensure excessive time lag does not occur in starting or stopping the clock.

**B.** The operator must go down to the field about 15 minutes before game time to meet with the official responsible for timing the game, normally the Back Judge and the Referee. The following shall be discussed:

The sequence of pre-game and halftime activities.

A complete review of the starting and stopping of the clock in accordance with the playing rules, to include overtime and the running clock procedure.

The procedure for communication with the operator during the game and adjustment of the clock, if necessary.

**C.** The game clock should be started with a countdown to game time as soon as the operator arrives.

**D.** The halftime intermission will start on the Back Judge's signal which is given after the players leave the field. The operator will reset the clock to three minutes for the warm-up period immediately when the halftime expires and start it.

**E.** If the game clock malfunctions, the operator may give the officials the official time. The official responsible for timing will then pick up the correct time on his stopwatch. Should the clock be subsequently repaired, it may be resumed being used at the Referee's discretion.

**F.** The clock operator should react to clock-stopping events without waiting for a signal e.g., a clearly incomplete pass. If there is any question as to what occurred e.g. it is uncertain if the runner stepped out of bounds, the operator should wait for a signal.

**G.** Game procedures:

1. On all free kicks (kick-offs), the nearest official(s) will signal the legal touching of the ball by winding the clock. The clock does not start on kicks into the end zone or those that go out of bounds.



2. The operator will automatically stop the clock:

- a. Following a touchdown, field goal, touchback or safety.
- b. When a forward pass hits the ground.
- c. When a runner is tackled clearly beyond the line-to-gain (first down) stake.
- d. When he is certain the runner has gone out of bounds. If there is any doubt, he should wait for the signal.

Note: On plays near the sideline, an official may give the wind signal to indicate the ball is dead inbounds and the clock shall continue to run.

- e. Following a fourth down play.
- f. At the end of a play where a flag has been thrown.

3. After the clock has been stopped, the Referee may start it on the ready-for-play signal and if he doesn't, the operator will start it on the snap. If the Referee erroneously starts the clock at the ready, the signal should be honored.

4. After a first down inbounds, the Referee will start the clock when the ball is spotted without blowing his whistle. This is known as the "silent wind" and the operator should be prepared for a quick start. Usually the clock will be stopped for only 2-3 seconds.

5. If the clock is erroneously stopped, the Referee may start the clock before the ready-for-play signal.

6. If the clock erroneously runs on a false start, it shall be immediately corrected by the operator without instruction from the Referee.

7. The try (extra point) that follows a touchdown is not a timed down.

8. At the end of a quarter, the clock should not be reset until the Referee declares the period over by facing the press box and holding the ball over his head. If the period is extended for an untimed down, the clock is kept at 0:00 until all untimed plays are completed and the period is declared to be over.

9. Any official may signal a timeout; therefore, the operator should be alert to stop the clock.

## MERCY RULE

When a team goes ahead by 40 or more points (45 points for A6), the running clock will be used for the remainder of the game regardless of a score that reduces the margin to less than the 40- or 45-point margin. The clock will start immediately when the requisite point differential is reached.

The clock will only stop on the following and will start on the next ready for play:

1. Time-outs (charged and injury).
2. End of period.

This rule applies to all regular and post season contests, except the televised championship games. The NFHS Network and other streamed games are not live televised games.

Under the circumstances described above, the officials will continue to use the standard signals. The timer, prior to the game, will be instructed to ignore all signals regarding the clock except those given by the Referee.

## OVERTIME

If the game is tied at the end of the fourth quarter, the 10-yard overtime procedure shall be used.

The operator will put three minutes (3:00) on the clock and start it on the Referee's signal. When it expires, the game clock shall be turned off.

If subsequent overtime periods are necessary, there is a two minute intermission between periods. These will be timed by the Back Judge. There is no need to put this time on the scoreboard as many teams will be ready to play before the two minutes expire.

## APPENDIX C

# PLAY CLOCK OPERATOR INSTRUCTIONS

**A.** The play clock starts at 40 seconds unless there is an administrative stoppage.

**B.** The play clock operator is an integral member of the officiating crew and game administration and should be a separate individual from the game clock operator. Unfair advantages occur when the play clock is not started correctly by rule. Great care must be exercised to ensure excessive time lag does not occur in starting the clock.

**C.** The play clock operator should be in the press box at least 30 minutes before game time to meet with the official responsible for timing the game, normally the Back Judge. The following shall be discussed:

1. A complete review of the starting of the play clock in accordance with the playing rules.
2. Situations when the play clock is to be turned off.
3. The procedure for resetting the clock.

**D.** The play clock shall be turned off whenever it would start with more time than what is remaining in any quarter and the game clock is running. The reason for this is to not confuse the quarterback over the amount of time remaining to snap the ball.

**EXAMPLE 1:** A running play ends inbounds with 12 seconds remaining in the quarter and there is a flag on the play. After disposition of the penalty, the game clock will start on the ready and the offense will have 12 seconds to put the ball in play. The quarterback should not be able to view a play clock that starts at 25 seconds.

**EXAMPLE 2:** A running play ends inbounds on first down with 38 seconds remaining in the quarter. The game clock keeps running, but a 40-second play clock does not start. The second down play is an incomplete pass which stops the game clock with 17 seconds remaining and there is a flag on the play for offensive holding. After disposition of the penalty, the game clock will start on the snap. A

25-second play clock will start because the game clock is not running.

**E.** If the play count is interrupted, whether it is because of a malfunction or for an official's discretionary timeout, it must be reset to 25 seconds. It is never reset to 40 seconds. The play clock will never resume at the interrupted count. When a malfunction occurs, the game clock must also be stopped and will restart on the snap. The signal for resetting the play clock is the right arm extended upwards with the palm facing up. The Referee shall pump his arm three times as if "pushing the sky" (Crew Signal "L").

**F.** If the play clock does not start on time, start it as soon as you are aware. The Back Judge will have a backup 25-second clock. If the play clock continues to malfunction, the Referee may direct that it be turned off. The 25-second count will then be kept on the field with the Back Judge signaling the last five seconds of the count.

**G.** If the play clock gets to zero prior to the snap, or free kick, it is left at zero until the penalty is enforced – then reset.

**H.** If it is close to whether the start of the play beat the expiration of the play clock, and there is no flag, reset the play clock ASAP to 40 seconds.

**I.** If the play clock is still running after the play starts, reset it to 40 seconds during the play.

**J.** The play clock is used during overtime.

**K.** When the mercy rule applies, the visible play clocks will be turned off.

## APPENDIX D

# PRE-SEASON PREPARATION GUIDE

This guide is designed to help a crew prepare for the upcoming season. The crew chief should review the guide beforehand and determine which items to emphasize. The guide is not intended to be all-inclusive, but it should trigger thoughts, suggestions and lively discussions. You may want to take some of the ideas broached here and adapt them to your specific needs; the list also can be abbreviated for use in pregame conferences.

The guide is interactive. That is, the answers to the 156 questions on mechanics procedures and philosophy are not indicated and not all will be found in the Manual. That puts the burden on the crew to find the correct answers or develop the crew philosophies and techniques to match the rules and the mechanics. Reviewing this list should create the momentum to start the season mentally alert, thinking football and approaching things on the same wavelength. All of that helps hitting the ground running instead of sputtering. While the items are listed in random order, an effort was made to group similar topics.

### 1. Pregame Arrival, Meeting Coaches

- a. What time is the crew expected to arrive at the game site?
- b. During the pregame inspection of the field, for what should you be looking? Any specific responsibilities based on an official's position?
- c. Where will officials warm-up and stretch on the field?
- d. When do officials take control of the field and end responsibility after the game?
- e. Which officials should participate in the pregame meeting with the coaches?
- f. Which coach do you approach first for the pregame conference?
- g. What should be discussed during the pregame meeting with the coaches?
- h. What player adornments need to be removed before game begins?
- i. How will observing warm-up drills for keys to the game be utilized?
- j. What crew signals will be used by officials during game?
- k. How will duties between quarters be conducted?
- l. What are the responsibilities for TV games?

- m. What microphone responsibilities will need to be reviewed before the game?
- n. How and will the crew research of team tendencies from prior game?
- o. How will the crew handle sideline management?
- p. What uniform and accessories will be used for a consistent look? Including cold weather gear?

## 2. Coin Toss

- a. What time and where will it be held? What if the band is on the field?
- b. What will the crew do if a team sends out more than four captains?
- c. Where do crew members stand during the toss? And what will they record?

## 3. Halftime

- a. What procedure will be used to monitor teams and keep them separate when exiting the field at halftime?
- b. Who has responsibilities for second half kickoff options?
- c. When will the crew return to the field after half time?

## 4. Philosophy: Flags, Whistles, More

- a. Is there a crew philosophy dictating where flags are carried (inside the front of the pants, in a breast pocket, in a side pocket, in a back pocket) and how much of them are exposed to view? And how many?
- b. How will a quick shift by linemen be ruled?
- c. What is the crew's philosophy for handling borderline calls? When should the flag be thrown and when should it not be thrown? If it's not thrown, under what conditions should a warning of some type be issued? When is it better to waive off a flag?
- d. How will coaches' complaints and questions be handled? When will it be necessary to involve the Referee?

- e. When the snap is imminent, where should each official's whistle be?
- f. When a play ends, should echoing whistles be blown?
- g. When is it acceptable to not have a whistle on a play?
- h. When is it necessary to have more than one whistle at the end of a play?

## 5. Forward Progress

- a. How will forward progress be marked by the covering wing official?
- b. When and how will cross field mechanics be utilized?
- c. How will the wing officials communicate to the Umpire the forward progress spot is theirs?
- d. What guidelines should be used to determine when a runner's forward progress has been stopped?
- e. Should wing officials on opposite sides of the field always mirror each other on forward progress spots? If not, when should spots not be mirrored? and how should those involved handle such cases?
- f. How and when will a covering official signal to indicate to the timer to keep the clock moving?

## 6. Beanbag Use

- a. Under what circumstances should a beanbag be thrown?
- b. How many beanbags should each official carry?
- c. What color of beanbags will the crew use?

## 7. Measurements

- a. What responsibility does each official have with measurements?
- b. What procedure changes when the ball is outside the hash mark?
- c. How is the ball handled for measurement?

## 8. Reporting Fouls

- a. What and how will information be provided to the Referee when reporting a foul?

- b. How should foul-related information be reported to the coaches?
- c. Which official tracks fouls during the game? Unsportsmanlike fouls?

### 9. Penalty Enforcement

- a. When will a preliminary signal be used and not used?
- b. What techniques will the Referee and Umpire use to be sure the choices are presented accurately to the captain?
- c. When will the coach be consulted on the choice of a penalty acceptance or declination?
- d. What responsibilities does each official have when enforcement of the penalty occurs?
- e. Who is responsible to give the Referee status of the clock at conclusion of the penalty enforcement?
- f. What carry over fouls impact quarter changes or going to overtime?

### 10. Personal Fouls

- a. When is it applicable to enforce as a live-ball foul or a dead-ball foul?
- b. Does the foul mandate disqualification of the offender?
- c. Does the personal foul qualify as “fighting”? What are the responsibilities of officials when a fight occurs?
- d. What constitutes a 15 yard face mask vs. a five yard version? What if the mask is touched but not grasped?

### 11. Dead-ball Officiating

- a. How will the halo principle be used by officials to provide coverage?
- b. What situations require extra effort for dead-ball officiating?
- c. What duties is each official responsible for when the ball and players spill out of bounds?
- d. What verbal techniques by an official can diminish unwanted dead-ball action?

### 12. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- a. If in the same game a player is flagged more than once for unsportsmanlike conduct (UC), is he automatically disqualified? What if a coach gets more than one UC foul?
- b. If a player or coach is disqualified, may he remain in his Team Box? If not, where must he go?
- c. How does the crew define taunting?
- d. What type of language will be allowed and what type won't?
- e. What types of “celebrations” are allowed and what types aren't?

### 13. Contact with Kicker/Holder

- a. If there is a foul, must it be 15 yards or are there two degrees of fouls, five and 15 yards?
- b. How can the crew assist the Referee in determining if an opponent is blocked into the kicker?
- c. What contact with the kicker/holder will be ruled incidental? Where is the line drawn to separate legal from illegal contact? Offer examples of each.
- d. How do the parameters change if the ball is snapped over the kicker's head, the kicker grabs the snap then starts to run or something else unusual happens before there is a kick?

### 14. The Chain Crew

- a. What instructions should the Linesman give to members of the chain crew?
- b. After a play, when should the down box be moved?

### 15. Ball Handling

- a. What ball handling duties will each position be responsible for?
- b. What instructions should the wings give to the ball boys?
- c. When can a ball be changed for the next play?

- d. How will weather, offensive tendencies, and time on the clock affect ball handling?
- e. How will each official balance dead-ball officiating with ball handling?

### 16. Between Downs

- a. What are the responsibilities of officials during the time interval between downs?
- b. What are the responsibilities of officials for counting players?
- c. What signals will be used by wing officials to indicate players are on or off line of scrimmage?
- d. What is different with dead-ball periods after scrimmage downs versus kicks?

### 17. Keys

- a. What will each crew member watch after the snap (post snap process)?
- b. What determines the strength of the formation?

### 18. Positioning and Coverage

- a. Are there any potential situations for which the crew would deviate from normal positioning?
- b. When will the Back Judge give up coverage of the goal line and who signals touchdown?
- c. Is mirroring a touchdown signal ever appropriate?
- d. How will the wing official communicate side line information to the Back Judge when the runner is near a pylon at the goal line or end line?
- e. When will the wings go immediately to the goal line at the snap? (going in and coming out)

### 19. Timing

- a. Which official is responsible for the 25-second play clock?
- b. Which official will wear an extra timepiece in case of game clock malfunctions?
- c. Which official has primary responsibility for monitoring the game clock?

- d. What subtle crew signals will be used indicate to each other when the game clock will next start?
- e. What pregame instructions are discussed with clock operator?
- f. When does the mercy rule apply? What stops the clock when the mercy rule is in effect?

### 20. Timeouts

- a. What duties are each official responsible during timeouts?
- b. Where can coaches and players be during timeouts?

### 21. Injury Timeouts

- a. Can team conferences occur during an injury timeout and where can a conference be held?
- b. What procedures are needed for an extended injury?
- c. Will team warm-ups be required for after an extended injury timeout?
- d. Can players go to their bench during an injury timeout?
- e. What responsibilities do officials do with concussed players?
- f. Do any special notes need to be taken on injured players?
- g. If blood saturates through a player's uniform, must he leave the game until the blood-saturated item has been treated?
- h. If a player's wound is oozing blood, he must leave the game for treatment. In order to return to the game later, must the player get written permission from medical personnel?

### 22. Helmetless Players

- a. Does a helmetless player always have to leave the game for one play?
- b. Is an officials' timeout required if a player's helmet comes completely off?
- c. How will the crew communicate that a helmetless player must leave for a play?
- d. When an official's timeout is called for a helmetless player who is responsible for recording/remembering the player's number?

**23. Neutral Zone**

- a. If a Team B player causes a Team A player to false start, who is penalized?
- b. What parameters are used to determine if a Team B player has illegally interfered with A's signals?

**24. Spotting the Ball**

- a. What procedures are used for spotting the ball during hurry-up offense situations?
- b. When should a "whole" yard line be used to spot the ball and when is an exact spot needed?
- c. How will the wings align their feet to present the placement of the football by the Umpire?

**25. Pace of Game**

- a. How will spotting of the ball be handled if the offense is ready to snap and the chain crew or any official is not in their proper position?
- b. How will the crew manage the clock if players slow to un-pile and receivers slow to return from a long pass?
- c. How will the crew communicate to the Referee and understand individually whether to start the clock on the snap or ready?

**26. Substitutions**

- a. If a substitute enters between downs and the replaced player leaves the field, must the substitute stay in the game for at least one play? If not, under what circumstances may he be replaced before a play has been run?
- b. If a substitute enters, within what time frame must the replaced player begin to leave the field?
- c. If 12 are counted just as the play is starting, will the play be killed?

**27. Backs in Motion**

- a. Which official watches the motion man?
- b. If a back is moving directly parallel

to the line at the snap, is that motion legal?

- c. If the motion man cuts downfield too soon, will that be called a false start?

**28. Fumbles**

- a. During a try, may Team B advance if they catch or recover A's fumble?
- b. Who digs for the ball on a fumble?
- c. What procedure is used in determining the team in possession and how is the recovery signaled?

**29. Tries**

- a. How will the crew cover a loose ball and subsequent change of possession on Team A's failed try attempt?
- b. How will the crew handle the swinging gate?

**30. Player Equipment**

- a. How long do you wait before the clock is stopped for equipment-related problems (which requires the player to leave for a down)? Will the crew allow an official's timeout for a player to tie a shoe?
- b. How will the crew handle a player that is found to have illegal equipment? Will a player be sent off the field to avoid a penalty?
- c. What is the penalty if warnings are ignored and who is charged with the foul?

**31. Forward Passes**

- a. Is catchability a factor in judging pass interference?
- b. If while running a pass route, an eligible receiver accidentally steps on the sideline, does he then become an ineligible receiver?
- c. How will face guarding be ruled?
- d. How will the crew communicate the legality of two passes during a down?
- e. How will the crew assist the Referee in possible intentional grounding situations?



**32. Kickoffs (Free Kicks)**

- a. Who goes where, and what adjustments should be made if an onside kick is anticipated?
- b. How will the crew confirm the ball was topped and actually hit the ground on an onside attempt?
- c. Who goes where for a free kick after a safety?
- d. What responsibilities does the Back Judge have before a free kick?
- e. How will a foul on a free kick be communicated to the press box? Referee or Back Judge?
- f. After a fair catch or awarded fair catch; where will the crew line up for an attempt to score a field goal via free kick?

**33. Scrimmage Kicks (Punts)**

- a. What are each officials responsibilities on a punt?
- b. Who covers spotting kicks out of bounds?
- c. Who has responsibility for the ball and who is responsible for the receiver after a fair catch signal is given?
- d. How will the Referee and Umpire cover the middle of the field after the kick?

**34. Scoring Kicks**

- a. What are the crew positions and responsibilities?
- b. How, what and when should the two officials under the goal post communicate to each other?
- c. How should the crew members adjust their positions if the kick is blocked and a broken play develops?
- d. How will the crew adjust to cover a busted kick play advanced by the kicking team?
- e. How will the crew adjust to cover a blocked or fumbled kick play that results in the receiving team advancing the ball in the opposite direction?

**35. Overtime (OT)**

- a. When and under what circumstances will OT be discussed?
- b. When is the coin toss held? At the toss, what are the winner's options? Loser's options?
- c. If the game goes more than one overtime, will there ever be the need for another coin toss?
- d. Do timeouts left in regulation play carry-over for use in overtime?
- e. When there is a change of possession in overtime, is the ball automatically dead or are there times when it stays alive?
- f. When does the ball become dead if on third down in overtime a field-goal attempt is blocked?

**36. Post Game**

- a. When and how do the officials leave the field after a game is concluded.
- b. What game situations will be discussed in the locker room?
- c. Who and when will complete the game report?
- d. What training and self-evaluation will each official do to prepare for the next game?

**Note:** This list originally appeared in the 1996 *Referee* publication *Better Football Officiating*. It has been updated and adapted for CFOA use.

## Notes

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