



**COLLEGIATE  
COMMISSIONERS  
ASSOCIATION**

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**2013  
Football Officiating Manual  
For a Crew of 7**

**2013 Football Officiating Manual  
For a Crew of Seven**

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Printed in the United States of America

ISBN-13: 978-1-58208-210-3

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# National Football Foundation Outstanding Football Official Award

YEAR	NAME	AFFILIATION
2012	No award	
2011	Ted Ruta	SIAC, Conf. USA, Sun Belt official
2010	Rogers Redding	SEC official
2009	Tim Millis	Big 12 official
2008	Thomas Robinson	WAC, Mountain West official
2007	Jim Kemmerling	Big Ten official
2006	A. C. "Butch" Lambert Jr. and Sr.	SEC father-son officiating tandem
2005	Michael Orlich	Big West official
2005	Verle Sorgen	Pac-10 official
2004	Al Hynes	Big East official
2003	R. I. "Buddy" Patey	SEC, OVC official
2002	Jimmy Harper	SEC official
2001	Albert Benson	ECAC official
2000	David Scobey	SEC, OAC official
1999	David Parry	Big Ten official
1998	Bradley Faircloth	ACC official
1997	Ron Abdow	ECAC, CIFOA, Big East official
1996	Earl Galdeira	WAC, PCAA official
1995	Robert Gaston	SEC official
1994	Ken Faulkner	Southwest Conference official
1993	John Adams	WAC, Big-8 official



## Outstanding Football Official Award recipients cont.

1991	John J. Daly	NEFOA, ECAC official
1991	E. C. "Irish" Krieger	WAC official
1990	Pete Williams	SEC official
1989	Wilburn C. Clary	ACC official
1988	Joseph McKenney	Eastern Officials Association leader
1987	George Gardner	SEC official
1986	Jack Sprenger	Pac-10 official
1985	Ellwood A. Geiges	ECAC official
1984	John Waldorf	Big 8 official

## Other Prominent Figures

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



# Commissioners Honors and Awards Program

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

## CCA Football Officials Award of Merit

1984 John Waldorf, Big Eight

1985 Ellwood A. Geiges, ECAC; E.C. "Irish" Kreiger, Big 10

1986 John Adams, WAC

1987 Herman Rohrig, Big 10

1988 Abb Curtis, SWC

1989 Jack Sprenger, Pac-10

1990 Wilburn Clary, ACC

1991 Cliff Shaw, SWC

1992 Jack McLain, MAC

1993 Ken Faulkner, SWC

1994 Bruce Finlayson, Big Eight

1995 Bob Sandell, ACC

1997 Bradley Faircloth, ACC





## Collegiate Commissioners Association

Founded 1938

<b>CONFERENCE</b>	<b>COMMISSIONER</b>	<b>COORDINATOR</b>
American Athletic	Michael Aresco	Terry McAulay
Atlantic Coast	John D. Swofford	Doug Rhoads
Big Sky	Doug Fullerton	Karl Richins
Big South	Kyle Kallander	Doug Rhoads
Big Ten	James Delany	Bill Carollo
Big 12	Bob Bowsby	Walt Anderson
Colonial Athletic	Thomas E. Yeager	Jim Maconaghy
Conference USA	Britton Banowsky	Gerald Austin
Missouri Valley Football	Patty Viverito	Bill Carollo
Ivy League	Robin Harris	Jim Maconaghy
Mid-American	Jon Steinbrecher	Bill Carollo
Mid-Eastern Athletic	Dennis Thomas	Rosario Amato
Mountain West	Craig Thompson	Ken Rivera
Northeast	Noreen Morris	Milton Halstead Jr.
Ohio Valley	Beth DeBauche	Jim Jackson
Pacific-12	Larry Scott	Tony Corrente
Patriot League	Carolyn Schlie Femovich	Jim Maconaghy
Southeastern	Mike Slive	Steve Shaw
Southern	John Iamarino	Jack Childress
Southland	Tom Burnett	Byron Boston
Southwestern Athletic	Duer Sharp	Harold Mitchell
Sun Belt	Karl Benson	Don Lucas





# Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

– Collegiate Commissioners Association

## Manual Committee

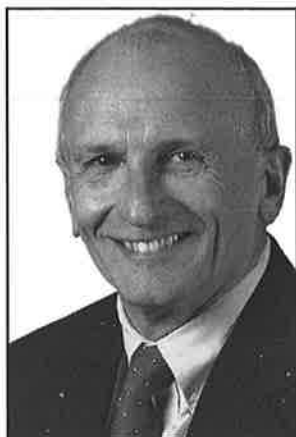
Don Lucas  
Terry McAulay  
Ken Rivera  
Steve Shaw (Chair)



# Opening Kickoff

## Q&A with Rogers Redding

### CFO National Coordinator of Football Officials



**Q:** From a national perspective, was 2013 a good year for collegiate football officiating?

**A:** I think that we had a good year. What you always want is a lack of attention on officiating, and we were not the story of the game ever. I think there are always improvements we can make, but there's nothing that jumps out as a major area of real concern from a mechanics standpoint. I think we're in pretty good shape. We're always working to get better, we're always using a lot of video to help the officials understand where they need to be and what they need to be thinking about on every play. I think there's nothing that jumps out as a real troublesome area.

**Q:** The CFO website is an extremely useful tool. Is it being utilized as much as you'd like?

**A:** It is. We've continued to increase membership over the last few years, and I don't know to what extent we've completely penetrated the market, but clearly people are looking at it. We can track how many people go on at various dates and that sort of thing. It tends to slack off a little bit as the season progresses, which is not a big surprise because everybody's more focused on the new material early in the year. One thing we're going to do this year is a little bit of a change. Typically the single-topic videos that we put up during the year are focused more on the rules. This year we're going to focus as much on the mechanics as we do on the rules, partly because we made some significant changes to the mechanics manual, especially last year. Now that we've let those settle for a year, we feel it would be useful not to necessarily fix any problem area, but just to have a little more focus on mechanics to provide a balance. We put a lot of focus on the rules but we want some more focus on mechanics in those single-topic videos. That's an area in which the CFO website will be helpful.



**Q:** The Big 12 is experimenting with an eighth official. Any predictions on how it will work?

**A:** I think it's going to be an interesting experiment. I was very supportive of it. I had an opportunity to talk with the NFL Competition Committee after the NCAA Football Rules Committee had approved that experiment. The NFL has been thinking about an eighth official for some time, and they're thinking about putting their eighth official deep so that you would have, in effect, two back judges. The eighth official in the experiment in the Big 12 will be in the offensive backfield; a mirror image of the referee. The Big 12's eighth official will be in the position now where the NFL has moved their umpire, leaving the middle open behind the linebackers. A couple of things that we anticipate here. Part of the reason for doing the experiment involves the head linesman and line judge. They have a lot of responsibility on every play. Now that more teams are spreading the field, there's a lot more passing. Often as many as five receivers are going downfield on any one play. The responsibilities the linesman and line judge have a lot of things to think about. So the hope is that the eighth official in the offensive backfield can be more focused on the line play and relieve the head linesman and line judge from some of the responsibilities they have for, let's say the offensive tackles. We've always had the referee on the throwing arm-side of the quarterback. Say you've got a right-handed quarterback. The referee is looking through to see the left tackle. He can focus on the quarterback and still see the left tackle in his periphery. From the backfield we don't have a good look at the right tackle, who would be the front-side tackle so to speak as far as the quarterback passing the ball is concerned. So the idea would be for the eighth official to have some responsibility for that, and taking some of the responsibility of that line-of-scrimmage play from the flank officials. It's going to be an interesting experiment. Whether it's adopted is a different question, and as always whenever there's an experiment, part of the agreement is that the conference doing the experiment tracks the results during the season and makes a report to the rules committee for the next year in the event that they want to seek a rule change. From the standpoint of the rules committee it's not a big deal, because the rule now says that the game is officiated with five, six, or seven officials. So it would be just be a matter for rewriting the rule to account for five, six, seven or eight. But there are economic impacts. That would be a concern for many conferences. Do we want to pay the extra money that's going to be required to increase our staffs and have an extra official in the game? There are a lot of things to think about. I think officiating needs to keep up with the game, and the game continues to increase in speed and complexity. More and more teams are going to the no-huddle offense. Sometimes that means the hurry-up,

**“The hope is that the eighth official in the offensive backfield can be more focused on the line play and relieve the head linesman and line judge from some of the responsibilities they have for, let's say the offensive tackles.”**



sometimes it doesn't. But certainly the pace of the game has changed, so we're wanting the pace of the officiating to be able to keep up with that.

**Q:** Is it totally outlandish to think that there may be a day when there would be crews of nine? An eighth official in the offensive backfield, and a ninth deep as the NFL has considered?

**A:** I'm guessing in the days when games were worked by crews of five, nobody ever dreamed there would be seven. How far do you go with it? I think having an odd number of officials deep makes a lot of sense. In other words, to have the head linesman and line judge, and then field judge, side judge and back judge deep, makes a lot of sense. I think everybody who has worked crews of seven, six and five would tell you that five and seven are better than six. From my standpoint, I think there is some concern that if we were to go to nine and have the center field split, that would mean having two back judges, effectively. I think that's a reduction in effectiveness compared with what we have with seven or with eight if we had the eighth in the offensive backfield. If we went to nine, I don't know where the ninth official would go. I think we'd have to think very carefully about splitting center field deep because I think you lose that effectiveness in the middle of the field.

**Q:** It's fairly unusual that PROP would turn down a change or a proposal, but one of the proposals that was rejected was having the chains move from one side of the field in the first half to the opposite side in the second half. Can you explain what PROP's thinking was in turning that down?

**A:** There was some concern that it may increase costs. I think a lot of people were concerned that their TV partners are going to want that chain and down box on the opposite side of the field from the press box because of the visibility of seeing the chains and the down box. If the chain and down box are on the press box side and the action is in the team area, you've got obscuring of the down box and the chain by the individuals of the team. At the same time, typically there's an alternate down box on the press box side anyway. I wasn't in on the PROP meeting so I don't know what that conversation was about. I think it had more to do with economics than anything else.

**Q:** On the surface, the number of officials and the position of the chains seems like more of a mechanics issue than a rules issue. Why would the rules committee be concerned with that sort of thing?

**A:** It turns out that there are a lot of things in the rulebook and you wonder why they're in the rulebook at all. Stuff about the marking of the field, what goes on in the press box or the coach's box — that kind of thing. If you think about it, the NCAA has rules concerning playing the game and rules concerning recruiting and compliance. There's not a separate set of rules concerning mechanics. Technically the NCAA doesn't control, so to speak, the mechanics. That's a CCA thing and it sort of evolved that way over time. If you remember, Rule 11 — which is the rule about the officials — used to be a lot more extensive than it is. There was a lot of detail in there about where people lined up, what their responsibilities were and so on. That really did get into something in the playing rules that probably ought



not be there. But in terms of the number of officials, I think it is something that the rules committee is going to want to have some say about. I think probably they're not going to want to turn all that loose. We were talking about the possibility of moving the umpire to the offensive backfield. That would not have required a rule change; the rules said nothing about it. But we would not have done that without having gone to the rules committee to get the sense of the committee and their wisdom on it. So part of it is just trying to be collegial, and trying to make sure that all the stakeholders are aware of what's going on. From a technical standpoint, there's nothing mechanical about the NCAA rules, but at the same time there are things that impact the game that the rules committee really needs to have some jurisdiction over.

**Q:** The last few years, there were a number of rule changes devoted to free kicks. There were no changes in that area this year. Does that indicate the committee is pleased with the changes that were implemented?

**A:** It does. What the committee was trying to do was to cut down on the number of kickoff returns because

that's where concussions occur. That is a player safety issue. The numbers for kickoff returns are hugely out of proportion to any other part of the game. In 2011, it was taking six kickoffs to get one touchback. In 2013, it took two and three-quarter kickoffs to get a touchback. In other words, the number of touchbacks went up by more than a factor of two. The thinking is that was a combination of moving the kickoff up to the 35 yardline and bringing the ball out to the 25 on a touchback. The data shows that if a player brought the ball out of the end zone, the field position for the new series was around the 22 or 23 yardline. They could save two or three yards by downing the ball in the end zone, so from a field position standpoint it made sense. It certainly made sense from a safety standpoint. Concussions on kickoffs dropped 50 percent from the previous year. The committee felt the changes made coming into 2013 worked. There were still kickoff returns. I haven't seen the data, but my understanding is there were as many kickoff returns for touchdowns in 2013 as there were in 2011. One of the things that people were concerned about that did not materialize was kickers would try to pooch-kick the ball trying to put it inside the five yardline. The committee thought that was giving the kickers way too much credit. One of the reasons the NFL didn't go to the 25 yardline on the touchback is because their kickers are able to pooch the ball; they're more talented. We didn't see that as a situation that presented itself. From the rules committee's standpoint, there wasn't any sense of wanting to fix it. It ain't broke, don't fix it.

**Q:** Has those results ended conversation at all about completely eliminating kickoffs?

**“Rule 11 ... used to be a lot more extensive than it is. There was a lot of detail in there about where people lined up, what their responsibilities were and so on. ... But in terms of the number of officials, I think it is something that the rules committee is going to want to have some say about.”**



**A:** It will always come up, but it certainly was not a part of our deliberations this year. When Greg Schiano was the head coach at Rutgers, he floated that idea. Part of the wind went out of that when Schiano went to coach in the pros. I think also the fact that the rule changes had their intended effect meant that people were satisfied. That doesn't mean it's a closed issue. We'll continue to watch it, and the game will continue to change. But player safety continues to be the dominant consideration as far as the rules committee is concerned.

**Q:** An editorial modification changed how post-scrimmage kick enforcement (PSK) is handled. Can you explain?

**A:** The old rule was difficult to officiate sometimes. Let's say the umpire calls holding by the receiving team four yards beyond the line of scrimmage, but he doesn't know where the ball is when the foul occurs. Maybe the foul happened during the return, maybe the kick is still in the air, but he doesn't know because he's watching the play. It was hard to reconstruct that, to say, "We've got a foul by the umpire for defensive holding. Where was the ball?" Well, nobody else saw the flag; the officials had their own responsibilities. With the change, any foul that takes place after the ball is kicked other than roughing the kicker, leaping the shield, running into the kicker — anything that's after the kick — is going to be PSK, and it doesn't matter whether it's three yards downfield or not. From a philosophical standpoint, the feeling is that, once the ball is kicked, it changes everything. So why not have it be PSK as much as possible? If you think about it, the idea behind PSK is, "Let's pretend possession has changed even though it really hasn't." Because while it's still a kick, it's in possession of the offensive team. Even though the offensive doesn't literally have the ball, technically it does. The idea is once that ball is kicked, as much as possible, let's treat things as if they take place after the change of possession. So anything in the line — defensive offside, a pull and shoot — we're going to treat it as if that's all taking place before the ball is kicked. Those kind of things would still be previous-spot enforcement. If we're not sure that the ball was kicked, everything in the line is going to still be previous-spot enforcement. But if we had something that occurred while the players are still hanging around the line of scrimmage, that's going to be PSK, whereas before it wouldn't be because it wasn't three yards downfield.

**Q:** There has been another change to the rule regarding blocking below the waist. Would you explain the change?

**A:** The committee took a really hard look at it and said, "What is the danger here? If a player is blocked below the waist and he can see the block coming, is there really a danger? It may be an ugly-looking block, but is there really a danger?" Part of the thinking is, we're trying to get the guys to lower their strike zone because of the head hits. Now if we lower the strike zone but then can't let them block low, that strike zone is getting squeezed down. It's going to be so much easier to officiate. What we want is this: You look at a block, you can tell whether or not it's a foul. Last year you couldn't do that because you had to know, was the guy restricted? Was he in motion? Which sideline was he going toward? Which sideline is the adjacent sideline? If you saw a block down the field after the play developed, you had to map



the blocker back to where he was at the snap, regardless of what the block was. Two guys throwing identical blocks on the same play, one of them might be legal and the other one might be illegal just because of where the players happen to be when the ball is snapped. It made no sense. Now we're allowing blocking below the waist in close line play by defining the low blocking zone and saying, "OK, if the ball hasn't left the zone, players who were stationary inside that zone at the snap can block below the waist as long as that zone is in place." Once that zone goes away, then you can only block below the waist clearly from the front. We're describing "the front" as 10 o'clock to two o'clock to provide a visual to describe how a player is likely to be able to see the block coming. If it's from his side — if it's from three o'clock — he's not going to be able to see it very well. We don't want to fly-speak it. If it's questionable it's going to be a foul, but at least it's got to be from the front. So now, especially once the ball has left that zone, you can look at a block and you can tell if it's a foul or not. You don't care where the guy was at the snap, you don't care which sideline the block is aimed for, you don't care which direction it is. The only caveat to that is the offense cannot block below the waist back toward its own goalline. That's intended to get at the so-called peelback block. Even though that block may be directly from the front, within the 10 o'clock to two o'clock, if it's back toward one's own goalline it's a foul. So really it's pretty simple. The rules for the defense have not changed. It's still legal within the 10-yard belt, sideline to sideline, five yards on each side of the neutral zone. For a long time we've had rules that a defensive player can't block below the waist against a player in position to receive a backward pass, the defense can't block below the waist against an eligible receiver beyond the line, nobody can block below the waist on a change of possession and nobody can block below the waist on a kick down. Those have not changed.

**Q:** There is now a definition for a defenseless player. Do you feel every instance of a defenseless player covered by the definition?

**A:** Probably not. We may continue to expand that. We've always said that a defenseless player basically is one who doesn't have an opportunity to defend himself. Then we said "includes but is not limited to." You know how it is; you make a list of six things, and people are going to think about those six things. They're not going to focus on the "is not limited to." The committee felt the need to expand the list to include the blindside block, to include a player on the ground, those kinds of things. It does offer more protection for players.

**Q:** Fouls for what people like to call "chicken fighting" have gone from being personal fouls to being unsportsmanlike. What is the rationale for that change?

**"Part of the thinking is, we're trying to get the guys to lower their strike zone because of the head hits. Now if we lower the strike zone but then can't let them block low, that strike zone is getting squeezed down. It's going to be so much easier to officiate."**



**A:** The rule addresses a situation in which the play is clearly over and opposing players start pushing and shoving. In the past we'd throw the flag, have meaningless offsetting penalties and go about our business. Under the new rule those are contact fouls, but they're what some guys have referred to as unsporting. We're going to call those unsportsmanlike conduct so if a player is penalized twice for unsportsmanlike conduct, he's automatically disqualified. What we don't want to include in ordinary dead-ball fouls, such as piling on or a late hit out of bounds, something like that. It's similar to the rule in basketball in which a technical foul also counts against the player's five personal fouls. Overall, the number of unsportsmanlike conduct fouls has gone down a lot by the way.

**Q:** The penalty for targeting now includes disqualification. At the higher levels of play, where instant replay is used, the ejection only is subject to video review. What about at the levels that don't have replay? How would you recommend that situation be handled at those levels?

**A:** We don't want the officials to do anything different than they've done in the past in terms of calling the foul. We've done a reasonably good job. We're going to miss some. The rule illustrates the difference between a foul and a penalty. There is no change to the foul. The difference is that the penalty includes an automatic disqualification. The only thing subject to replay review is whether or not the contact was actually initiated in the head and neck area. Part of the penalty mimics the fighting rule as far as the penalty is concerned. If the foul takes place in the first half, the guy is out for the game. If it takes place in the second half he's out for that game and the first half of the next game. In the case of Division II, Division III or FCS where there is no instant replay, what we're saying is this: We're not ever going to get it perfect. We're going to miss some. But what the players need to understand is, if they don't go high, there's not going to be a problem. The players are in absolute control of this. What the officiating community and what the rules committee wants is, if a player goes high, he risks being thrown out of the football game. When a player does commit one of those fouls, he's prancing around, chest bumping, acting like he won the World Series or something. What we want, when he makes a hit like that, is for him to grab his helmet as if to say, "Oh my goodness. What have I just done?" Get that different mind-set. We may miss a few. The individual coaches are not going to buy this, but if we throw a player or two out of the game erroneously, so what? If we get that play out of the game, does it really matter in the larger scheme of things that we missed one or two?

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**Mechanics Changes**  
**Mechanics Points of Emphasis**  
**Character**  
**Conduct and Ethics**  
**General Principles**  
**Pregame Outline**



# Section



# Mechanics Changes 2013

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## 2.1 Targeting And Dangerous Contact Fouls

For the 2013 season, the NCAA Football Rules Committee made a dramatic and significant decision regarding player safety to protect players and the game. Although the fouls described in Rules 9-1-3 and 9-1-4, Targeting — Crown of Helmet and Defenseless Player, have not changed, the penalty for those fouls will now carry an automatic disqualification.

As a point of note, the definition of a defenseless player in Rule 2-27-14 has been expanded. Each official must have a strong working knowledge of that list and understand how that can impact those fouls. Playing time is the most precious commodity to players, and a potential impact on playing time is the most effective way to modify player and coach behavior. The rule change will also allow a consistent approach to punishment for targeting fouls at all levels of NCAA play. It is imperative that officials are diligent in calling those fouls, and we must penalize those acts in order to do our part to promote player safety and drive that behavioral change.

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

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

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

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

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

- The presence of a launch — a player leaving his feet to contact an opponent by an upward and forward thrust of the body, making contact in the head/neck area.
- A player leading with forearm, fist, hand or elbow to the head/neck area.



- A player lowering the head before initiating contact to the head/neck area of a defenseless player. A player completing a heads up or wrap up tackle may indicate less risk of a foul.

As coaching techniques and player behavior begin to change on those dangerous contact fouls, it is important that officials fulfill their role and penalize those acts. That will help preserve our great game.

## 2.2 Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls

In June 2010, CFO National Coordinator of Football Officiating Rogers Redding released guidelines for enforcement of actions that are deemed unsportsmanlike and those that are not. In 2013, those guidelines were also included in the CCA manual as a Point of Emphasis.

The application of the guidelines by game officials has contributed to a significant improvement in consistency. Players have been allowed a spontaneous display of emotion without foul and have been penalized when those displays extend beyond what is acceptable sportsmanlike behavior. In an effort to continue the positive direction noted in recent years, the guidelines are again emphasized.

Remember that the game is one of high emotion, played by gifted teenagers who are affirmed by playing a game at which they are exceptionally talented.

Do not be overly technical in applying the rule.

Do allow for brief spontaneous emotional reactions at the end of a play.

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

A list of specifically prohibited acts is in (a) thru (h) on FR-122,123; the list is intended to be illustrative and not exhaustive. We can all agree that when the acts are clearly intended to taunt or demean, they should not be allowed — not only because they are written in the book, but because they offend our sense of how the game should be played. We now have enough experience with the rule to know what “feels” right and wrong. Note that most if not all of the actions fall outside the category of brief, spontaneous outbursts. Rather, they present themselves as taunting, self-glorification, demeaning to opponents, or showing disrespect to the opponents and the game.

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

If it feels OK, let it go.

If it feels wrong, flag it.

It will never be possible to be totally specific in writing what should and should not be allowed. But we trust our officials to be men of good judgment who know in their hearts what should and should not be allowed in the heat of an emotional game.

An addition to Rule 9-2-1 now specifies that contact fouls during the dead-ball period that are not part the normal continuing action once the



down has ended are now unsportsmanlike. Those would be applied toward disqualification if a player commits two unsportsmanlike fouls. Officials should use the following guidelines when determining whether a specific action warrants its inclusion as an unsportsmanlike foul:

Contact fouls that would be considered unsportsmanlike include those actions that are not football-related or occur at the point where players would be expected to return to their respective huddles. Examples include pushing an opponent to the ground while returning to the huddle and striking an opponent after they have separated.

Fouls that would be personal fouls and not unsportsmanlike include those that are during the continuing action and are football-related. Those include late knockdowns or grasping the facemask while players are still engaged after the play.

Normal pushing and shoving that is not excessive, commonly referred to as “chicken fighting,” should not be penalized unless those actions become continuous and repeated warnings have been ignored. Officials must be alert to these actions and separate players immediately. Should those warnings be ignored, that type of foul would be considered unsportsmanlike.

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

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

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

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

## 2.3 Coaches’ Sideline Behavior

Even though there were some improvements in the area of sideline behavior in 2012, it remains enough of an issue that it is again one of the Points of Emphasis.



Examples of unacceptable coaches' behavior made the National Coordinator's Video Review on multiple occasions in 2013, just as they did in 2011. It is important that we emphasize that it is not our intent to take away a coaches' passion for the game or to take away his ability to coach. However, unsportsmanlike sideline actions which are directed at officials are not only distracting, but they are unprofessional and are in violation of the NCAA's Code of Conduct for coaches.

The rules (9-2-1-a-1 and 9-2-2-b-1) give officials full authority to keep coaches off the field and to penalize them when they are verbally abusive or using tactics meant to incite the crowd or "show up the official(s)." Historically, officials have been inconsistent in their handling of unruly coaches and because of that inconsistency, it has presented a challenge for all of us. We must start with our first game of the new season and continue with a consistent effort in every game thereafter. It should not be a "conference initiative." It has to be a consolidated effort by all officials, with support from their administration, across all divisions — FBS, FCS, D-II, D-III and NAIA.

The initiative goes far beyond coaches just being "in the white." Officials must not allow coaches to come onto the field during dead-ball situations to question calls and to berate officials with abusive language and hand gestures and actions that are demeaning to the official. Those unsportsmanlike actions provoke ill will and are not healthy for the game. Officials have been taught since their early years of officiating to strive to be good communicators with coaches and to use preventive officiating whenever possible to defuse potentially volatile situations. However, when their best diplomatic techniques are not working, officials have to penalize action by coaches when they are verbally abusive and unprofessional.



## Section

# 3

## Officiating Axioms

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



## Section

# 4

## Officiating Philosophies

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The following rules-based philosophies have been adopted for NCAA games. They also appear in the appropriate sections of this manual.

### Ball-Spotting

- The ball can be placed on a yardline to begin the next series after a change possession. (Exception: If the change of possession occurs on a fourth-down running or passing play, the ball will be left at the dead-ball spot to begin the next series.) For example, if a punt return ends with the ball between team B's 33 and 34 yardlines, move the ball forward to team B's 34 yardline. At all other times, the ball is placed where it became dead.

### Line of Scrimmage

- Officials will work to keep offensive linemen legal and will call only when obvious or when a warning to the player and a subsequent warning to the coach are ignored. Don't wait till the fourth quarter to enforce rule.
- If the offensive player is lined up with his head clearly behind the rear end of the snapper, a foul will be called without a warning.
- Don't be technical on an offensive player who is a wide receiver or slot back in determining if he is off the line of scrimmage. When in question, it is not a foul.
- Wide receivers or slot backs lined up outside a tight end will be ruled on the line of scrimmage and covering the tight end if there is no stagger between their alignments. If in question, he is not covered up.
- When in question regarding player position on movement by the defense into the neutral zone which causes the offense to move, a player is moving toward the offensive player. This protects both that player and the two adjacent offensive players.
- Any time a defensive player jumps toward the neutral zone and there is a question whether he was in the neutral zone and the appropriate offensive player(s) moves, shut down the play and penalize the defense.
- Any time a defensive player shoots the gap, and there is a question as to contact, err on the side of offside and shut the play down to avoid a free shot on the quarterback.
- Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal.
- When in question, a quick or abrupt movement by the center or quarterback is a false start.

### Fumbles Philosophies

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





## **Defensive Pass Interference**

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

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

## **Offensive Pass Interference**

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

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

## **Not Offensive Pass Interference**

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

## **Other Passing Situations**

- When determining if an untouched pass is beyond the line of scrimmage, the neutral zone will be expanded one yard.



- When in question on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer if the defender's intent is to punish.
- 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: Rule 7-3-2-e allows the quarterback to spike the ball to stop the clock.
- An uncatchable pass must be blatantly uncatchable in order to disregard a foul for pass interference.
- If the quarterback is outside the tackle box and is throwing the ball away to avoid a sack, when in question as to whether the ball is beyond the neutral zone, it is beyond the line. Don't be technical.
- If the passer is contacted after he starts his passing motion, it may be ruled no intentional grounding due to this contact.
- If the passer is contacted clearly before he starts his passing motion, there will be a foul for intentional grounding if there is no eligible receiver in the vicinity or if the pass does not reach the line of scrimmage after the quarterback has been outside the tackle box.
- If an interception is near the goal line (inside the one yardline) and there is a question as to whether possession is gained in the field of play or end zone, make the play a touchback.
- If the passer is legally throwing the ball away out of bounds, near or beyond the sideline, do not penalize the offense for having ineligible players downfield.

## Blocking

- Takedowns at the point of attack, those in the open field, within the tackle box and affecting the result of the play create special focus and should be called in those situations.
- If there is a potential offensive holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, offensive holding should not be called.
- If there is a potential for defensive holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, defensive holding should not be called. Example: A defensive back on the opposite side of the field holding a wide receiver on a designed run play to the other side.
- For blocks in the back, if one hand is on the number and the other hand is on the side and the initial force is on the number, it is a block in the back. The force of the block could be slight and still a foul if the contact propels the player past the runner or prevents him from making the play. If the force is clearly on the side, it is not a foul. If the blocker is in a "chase mode" all the action must be on the side.
- Blocks that start on the side and subsequently end up in the back are not fouls as long as contact is maintained throughout the block.
- Blocks in the back that occur at or about the same time a runner is being tackled shall not be called, unless they are in the nature of a personal foul.
- A grab of the receiver's jersey that restricts the receiver and takes away his feet should be defensive holding if other criteria are met, and could also be defensive pass interference.



- Holding can be called even if the quarterback is subsequently sacked as it may be the other half of an offset foul.
- Blocks in the back that are personal fouls in nature should be called regardless of their timing relative to the runner being tackled.
- Rarely should you have a hold on a double team block unless there is a takedown or the defender breaks the double team and is pulled back.
- When in question if an illegal block occurs in the end zone or field of play, it occurs in the field of play.
- Regarding blocking below the waist, when in question, the ball has not left the low blocking zone.

## Kicking Plays

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

## Plays at the Sideline

- If legal contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out of bounds, consider it a legal hit.
- If the whistle has blown and a runner continuing to advance down the sideline has eased up, contact by the opponent against the runner is a foul. Officials should be alert and be sure any action is not part of the initial play 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, it is not a touchdown.
- When in question, it is not a safety.
- A non-airborne runner crossing the goal inside the pylon with the ball crossing the goal line extended is a touchdown.



## Personal Fouls

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

## Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- Do not be overly technical in applying Rule 9-2-1.
- Allow for brief, spontaneous, emotional reactions at the end of a play.
- Beyond the brief, spontaneous bursts of energy, officials should flag those acts that are clearly prolonged, self-congratulatory, and that make a mockery of the game.
- A list of specifically prohibited acts is in Rule 9-2-1 (a) 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.
- Spitting on an opponent requires disqualification.

## Game Clock

- 5/5 axiom: In order to adjust game clock errors, there must be more than a five-second differential if there is more than five minutes remaining in either half.
- Any time loss due to the clock being started erroneously, such as when a dead-ball foul is called, the clock must be adjusted.
- As a guideline, referees should consider invoking Rule 3-4-3 when the game clock is under five minutes of each half.

## Miscellaneous

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



## Section **5** Character

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

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



## Section Conduct and Ethics

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

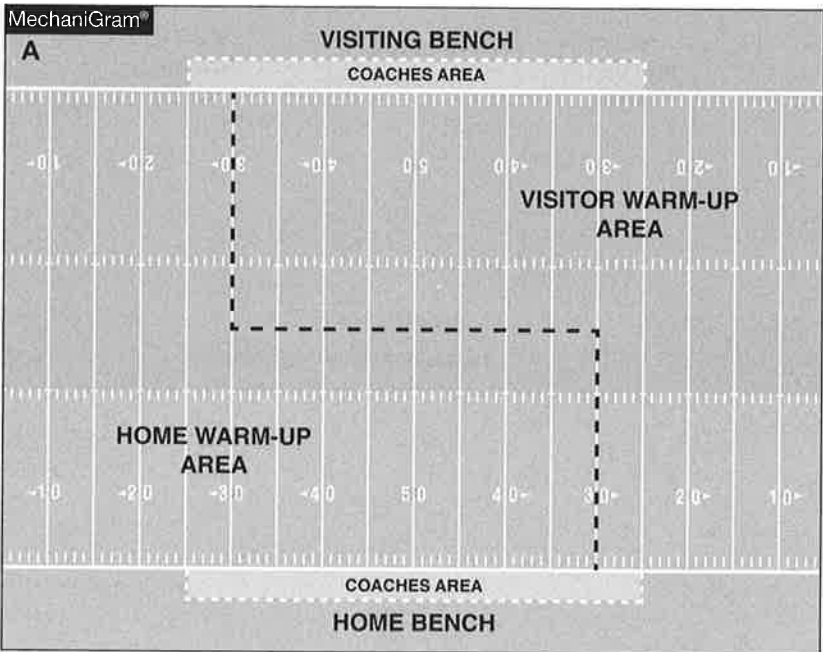
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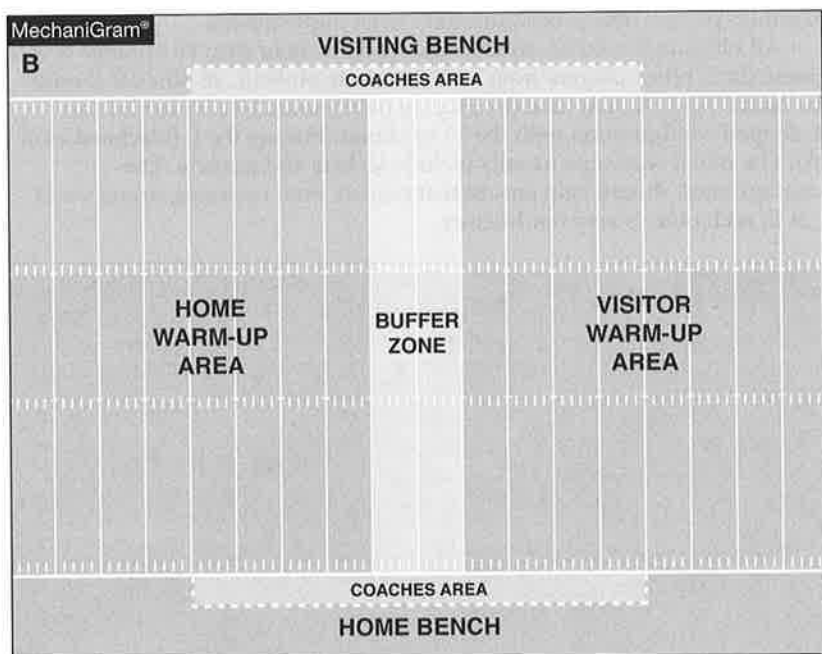
# Monitoring Pregame Warmups

In an effort to prevent confrontations between teams during the pregame warmup period, new procedures have been implemented.

All officials should be dressed and ready no later than 60 minutes before game time. When players from both teams are on field, all officials should be on the field. At that time the playing field should be divided into an L-shaped configuration with the 30 yardlines forming the L (MechaniGram A). The initial warmups usually include kickers and punters. The configuration should help ensure that players from opposing teams won't get in each other's way nor interact.



At 40 minutes before kickoff, or earlier if the balance of either team comes onto the field, the teams are to warmup between opposite 45 yardlines and the end zones (MechaniGram B). Officials shall position themselves so they may enforce a 10-yard buffer zone; no players are to enter the 10-yard buffer zone between the 45 yardlines.





## Section Pregame Duties

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At least one hour before game time, the back judge should receive, test, certify and mark the new or nearly new game balls submitted for approval by each team. Each team may submit a maximum of six balls unless weather conditions warrant the use of more than six.

The referee and umpire visit each dressing room 75 minutes before kickoff. The umpire **inspects player equipment and bandages, tape, etc.**, and should record the **numbers of players with illegal equipment**. Those players are to be rechecked **when they come onto the field**.

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

Upon returning to the locker room, the referee should share the discussion with the coaches with his crew.

### Meeting With the Timer

The clock operator should inform the officials whether he will be in the press box or on the sideline. The officials remind the timer to start the field clock 60 minutes before game time and that the game clock will run during the 20 minutes of halftime intermission, which starts when the first half ends. The referee gives the start the clock signal from the end zone as a reminder to start the halftime clock.

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

Should the field clock become inoperative, the referee will indicate to the crowd that the field clock will not be official until the malfunction is corrected. If the referee is equipped with a microphone, he can announce the remaining time after every dead ball. If not, the officials will alert the P.A. announcer concerning remaining time.

Remind the timer that if the game clock is stopped with two seconds or less in any period and will start on the referee's signal, run the clock to zero if the ball is legally snapped.



## On the Field

All seven officials will be on the field 60 minutes before game time and remain as long as both teams are on the field. If one or both teams leave, the crew will leave as well, and return no less than five minutes before game time. The head linesman and umpire should spot check player equipment and check the chain crew. The head linesman and umpire should arrive on the field approximately 30 minutes before game time to spot check player equipment and check the chain crew equipment. The chain should be measured against field markings to ensure that the chain is 10 yards long. If it's not already attached, a piece of tape should be wound around the links in the exact middle of the chain to aid in determining whether a five-yard penalty will or will not result in a first down. The chain should be inspected for kinks, knots, weak spots and tape. The down box must be in working order.

The referee and back judge inspect the entire field. If any unusual markings or serious irregularities are discovered, the other officials should be advised. The officials should work with stadium management to have any hazards or obstructions within or near boundary lines to be removed or repaired.

The side judge and field judge ensure that the game balls are available and instruct ball retrievers on their duties.

At five minutes before game time, the side judge and field judge escort the captains of the teams on their respective sidelines from the locker room to their respective sidelines. The line judge and back judge remain with their teams to ensure they are on the field three minutes before the start of the game. On a signal from the referee, the field judge and side judge escort the respective captains as far as the nine-yard marks and remain there to ensure no team personnel move closer to the field than the nine-yard marks. The back judge, head linesman and line judge remain on their sidelines.

## Meeting With the Chain Crew

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

The box holder and chain crew should be instructed to place markers, rods and the clip where indicated by the head linesman. When a new series begins, the chains should be positioned adjacent to the sideline. The box holder places the marker on the sideline where indicated by the head linesman. The chains are then set on the sideline and the clip attached to the chain on the side of the yardline closest to the rear chain rod. When the chains are set, the box holder retreats six feet and establishes the spot where the chains are to be reset after the clip has been attached.

The chains must not be moved or the number on the box changed until the head linesman instructs the appropriate personnel to do so. Once instructed to move, the chain crew must move quickly. Chain personnel are



to make no remarks to players nor express opinions concerning any ruling.

On free kicks, the chain crew should remove themselves and all equipment outside the limit line. The chains are to be laid down outside the limit line and only the down box is to be used when team A has a first down inside team B's 10 yardline, or when team A attempts an extra point. The box holder should be instructed that if team A attempts a field goal outside team B's 20 yardline, the box must remain in place after the kick. If the kick fails, the ball may be next snapped from the previous spot.

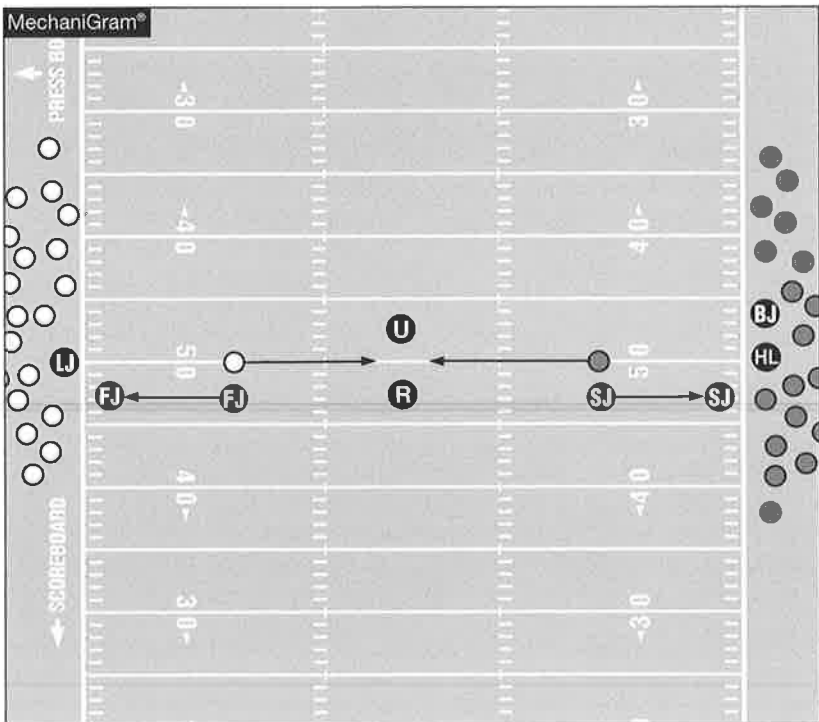


# The Coin Toss



Three minutes before the scheduled game time, the referee and umpire should be in the center of the field. Upon a signal from the referee, the field judge and side judge escort their respective captains to the inbounds line, then return to the vicinity of the sideline. The head linesman, line judge and back judge remain at the sideline. No team personnel are to be inside the nine-yard marks during the toss. The line judge should have a game ball from each team in his possession. Once the toss is completed, the correct ball can be given to the back judge for the opening kickoff.

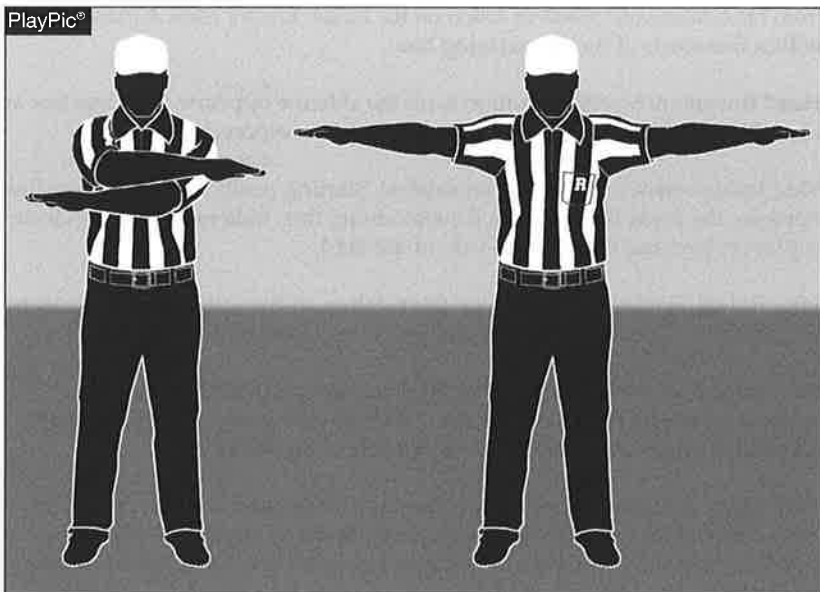
The captains should face each other with their backs to their sidelines. Optionally, the captains may rotate facing opposite goal lines while the referee faces the press box. The referee turns on his microphone once the toss begins. The visiting captain calls the toss, telling the referee his choice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



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

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

Once it has been determined which team will kick off, the line judge should take the appropriate game ball to the center of the field and hand it to the back judge. The officials make a written record of the results of the toss and move to their kickoff positions simultaneously.



# Free Kicks



## Positioning, Zones and Keys

**Referee:** Starting position is in the middle of the field behind the deepest receiver. When players and officials are ready, after the sideline liaison is ready and once the back judge has reached the sideline after handing the ball to the kicker, sound your whistle and give the ready-for-play signal. Be alert for a touchback or a kick beyond the endline. You are responsible for the endline. You are responsible for the play clock and for knowing if team A had at least four players on both sides of the kicker.

**Umpire:** Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on team A's restraining line. Ensure kicking team players remain inside the nine-yard marks until the ready-for-play-signal from the referee. You are responsible for clearing your sideline to team A's endline. Umpire keys on team A players four and five from his sideline and observes action on the kicker. Ensure team A players are within five yards of their restraining line.

**Head linesman:** Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box at team B's goal line. You have goal line and pylon responsibility.

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

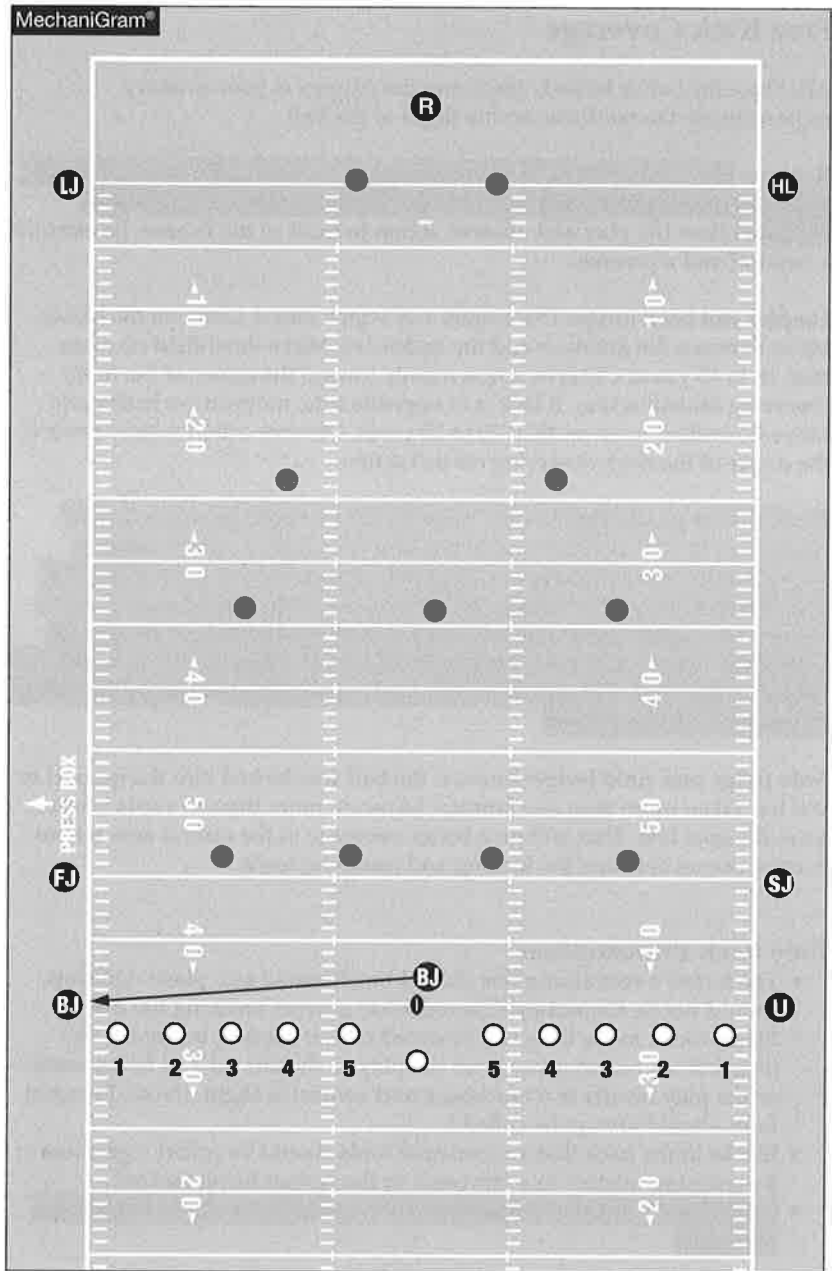
**Line judge:** Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at team B's goal line. You have goal line and pylon responsibility.

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

**Back judge:** You are responsible for clearing your sideline to team A's endline. After handing the ball to the kicker, starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at team A's restraining line. Ensure kicking team players remain inside the nine-yard marks until the ready-for-play-signal from the referee. Back judge keys on team A players four and five on his side of the field. You are responsible for team A's goal line on any long return. Ensure team A players are within five yards of their restraining line.

Note: Team A player one is not accounted for in the keys as he normally is not threatened until he reaches the head linesman/line judge's zone.





## Free Kick Coverage

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

**Referee:** Move laterally to be in position to see action at the point of attack. You are primarily responsible for illegal wedge formations and illegal blocks. Follow the play and observe action in front of the runner. Be alert for a handoff and a reverse.

**Umpire and back judge:** The umpire will watch illegal action on the kicker. Move between the numbers and the hashmark. Move downfield no more than 10 to 15 yards. Observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action. If kick is to opposite side, move to the hashmark. Move downfield no more than 10 to 15 yards. Observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action.

**Head linesman and line judge:** Wind the clock when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, unless the ball is caught or recovered by a player who is legally down. The clock will start when the ball crosses the goal line after being first touched by the receivers in the end zone. Stay at the goal line until it is no longer threatened. When the runner is on your side of the field, you are responsible for blocks at the point of attack and the runner. When you do not have the ball, take a position to observe blocks on the backside of the runner.

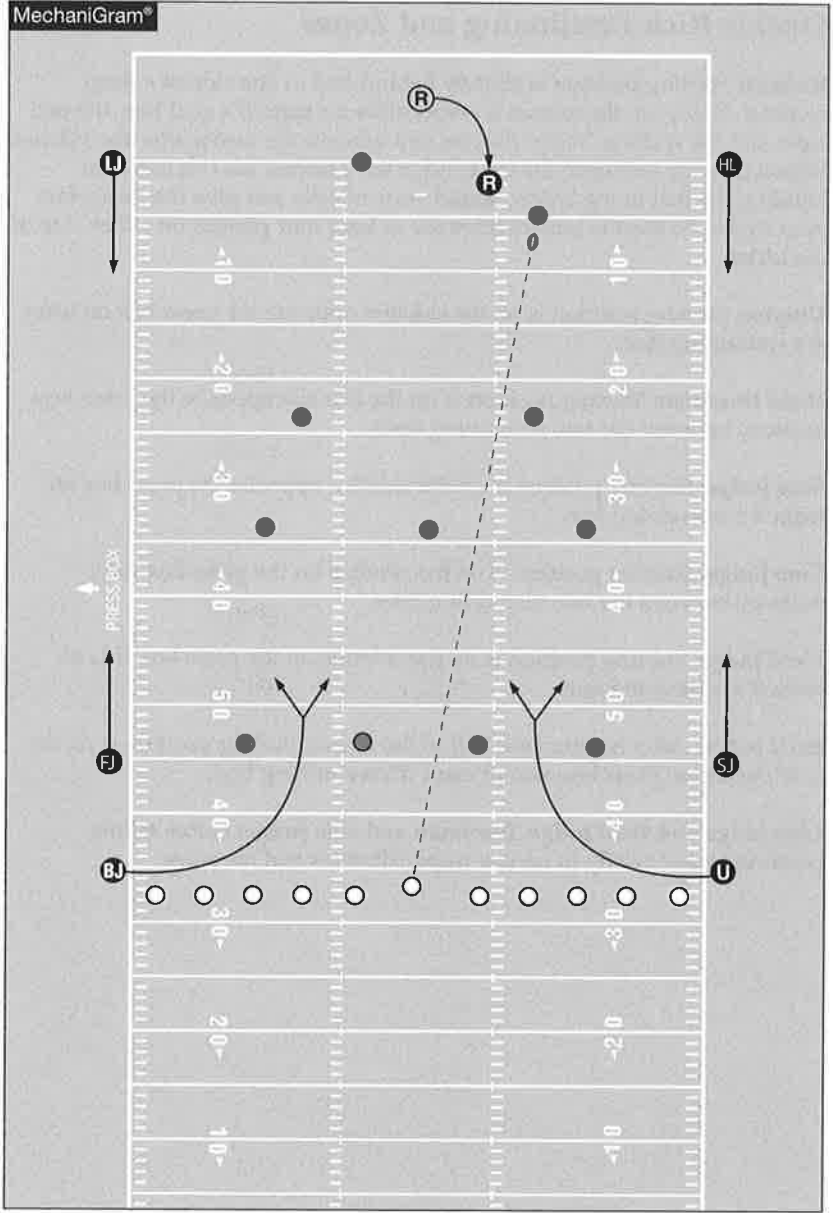
**Side judge and field judge:** Know if the ball was kicked into the ground or if it has taken more than one bounce. Move no more than 10 yards toward team B's goal line. That will give better coverage in the critical area where contact occurs between the kicking and receiving team.

## Free Kick Philosophies

- The kicker's restraining line should be officiated as a plane. Officials should not be too technical in regard to players breaking the plane.
- Illegal block in the back can be called on fair catches, but not if the illegal block occurs away from the play as the fair catch is being made, or the play results in a touchback and contact is slight. (Note: Personal fouls should always be called.)
- Blocks in the back that are personal fouls should be called regardless of their timing relative to a fair catch or the runner being tackled.
- On kicks into the end zone, when in question, the ball has not left the end zone.



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## Onside Kick Positioning and Zones

**Referee:** Starting position is slightly behind and to one side of a deep receiver. However, the referee is responsible for team B's goal line, the end zone and the endline. When players and officials are ready, after the sideline liaison is ready and once the back judge has reached the sideline after handing the ball to the kicker, sound your whistle and give the ready-for-play signal. Be alert to ensure there are at least four players on either side of the kicker.

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

**Head linesman:** Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box, midway between the two restraining lines.

**Side judge:** Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on team B's restraining line.

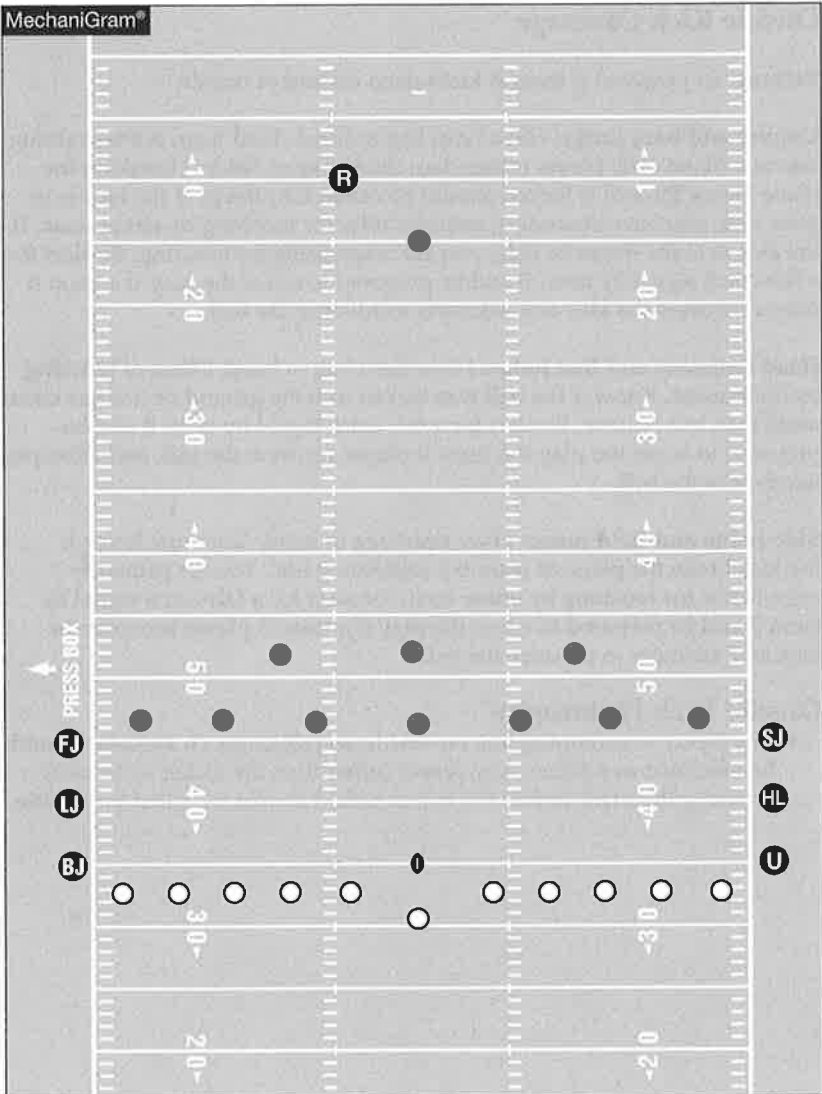
**Line judge:** Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side, midway between the two restraining lines.

**Field judge:** Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at team B's restraining line.

**Back judge:** After handing the ball to the kicker, starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at team A's restraining line.

**Line judge and field judge, linesman and side judge:** Before taking positions, meet briefly to review responsibilities and coverage.

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## Onside Kick Coverage

**Referee:** Be prepared if team A kicks deep instead of onside.

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

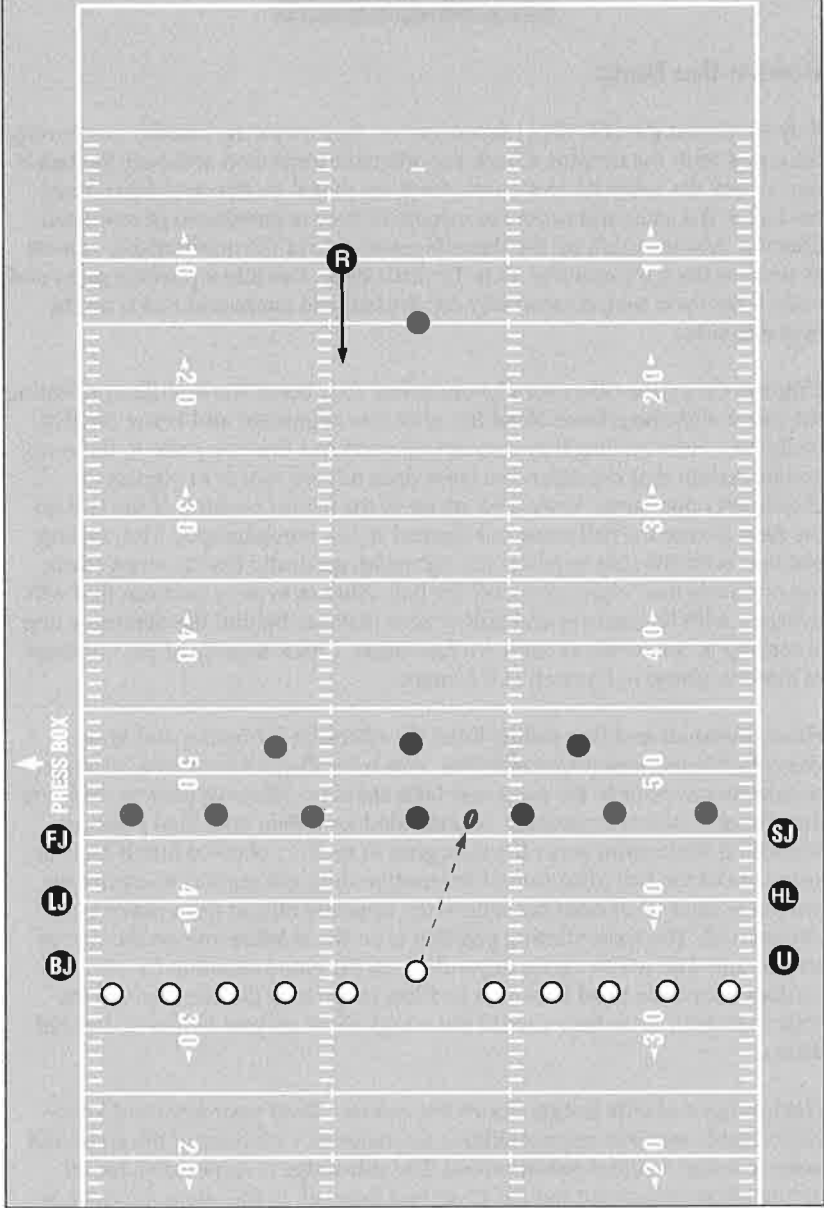
**Head linesman and line judge:** Have bean bag in hand. Observe blocking by both teams. Know if the ball was kicked into the ground or if it has taken more than one bounce. Be alert for a fair-catch signal by team B and be prepared to cover the play if a team B player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

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

### Onside Kick Philosophy

- The kicker's restraining line on onside and short pooch kickoffs should be officiated as a plane. Any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for offside.

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# Scrimmage Plays



## Before the Snap

**Referee:** Count the offensive players before they break the huddle, confirming the count with the umpire. Check the offensive formation and note the tackle box. Check the setbacks and quarterback for illegal motion and false starts, the ball at the snap and assist the umpire if there is movement of restricted linemen. Always work on the throwing-arm side of the quarterback, at least as wide as the tight end and 12 to 14 yards deep. Get into a position deep and wide where you may comfortably see the ball and backs and tackle on the opposite side.

**Umpire:** Count the offensive players before they break the huddle, confirming the count with the referee. Read the offensive alignment and know the five ineligible. Rule on illegal movement by restricted linemen prior to the snap, and be certain that the defensive team does not use words or signals to disconcert opponents. Always be aware of the lateral position of the ball on the field in case the ball must be returned to the previous spot. The starting position is on the side opposite the tight end, generally five to seven yards, but not more than eight yards, off the ball. Always avoid a position that will interfere with linebackers and adjust your distance behind the defensive line according to the width of team A's formation. Check legality of the numbers of interior offensive linemen at the snap.

**Head linesman and line judge:** Read the offensive formation and know your eligible receiver responsibilities. Watch for illegal formations, including encroachment prior to the snap and false starts by offensive players. Indicate the offensive line of scrimmage by extended foot, then take final position straddling the neutral zone. If a man goes in motion, observe him if he is on your side of the ball (direction of the motion does not matter) to ensure the motion is legal. That does not relieve the opposite official from making an obvious call. The basic starting position is on the sideline and on the line of scrimmage. The width varies depending on the game situation (on short-yardage plays, the head linesman and line judge may choose to pinch the ends; however, at no time should the wings allow players to line up behind them).

**Field judge and side judge:** Count the defense. Read your keys and know your eligible receiver responsibilities. Be aware of violations of the restricted team area and monitor substitutions. The side judge is responsible for all timing situations except the 25/40-second interval. In the event the clock is



running when it should be stopped, give and repeat the appropriate signal until the clock has been corrected. If an appreciable error on the game clock is noted, or if inefficiency is habitual, the side judge shall call a timeout and advise the referee. The basic starting position is approximately 20 yards from the line of scrimmage and on the sidelines.

**Back judge:** Monitors all timing involving the 25/40-second count. Counts the defense. Read your keys and know your eligible receiver responsibilities. Be aware of violations of the restricted team area and monitor substitutions. The basic starting position is 25 yards from the line of scrimmage, favoring the strong side of the field (the side with more eligible receivers outside the tackles). The position may have to be adjusted if a back goes in motion.

## Line of Scrimmage Philosophies

- Officials will work to keep offensive linemen legal and will call illegal formations only when it's obvious or after repeated warnings are ignored. Officials should not wait until the fourth quarter to enforce the rule.
- If the offensive player is lined up with his head clearly behind the rear end of the snapper, a foul will be called without a warning.
- Don't be technical on an offensive player who is a wide receiver or slot back in determining if he is off the line of scrimmage. When in question, it is not a foul.
- Wide receivers or slot backs lined up outside a tight end will be considered to be on the line of scrimmage and covering the tight end if there is no stagger between their alignments. If in question, the tight end is not covered up.
- When in question regarding player position on movement by the defense into the neutral zone that causes the offense to move, consider the defensive player to be moving toward the offensive player. That protects both that offensive player and the two adjacent offensive players.
- Any time a defensive player shoots the gap and there is a question as to whether he made contact with an opponent, officials should err on the side of offside and shut the play down to avoid a free shot on the quarterback.
- Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal.

## Substitutions and Counting Players

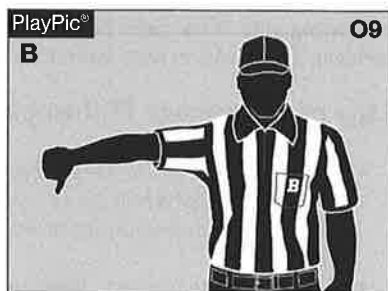
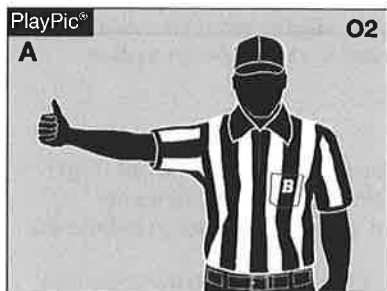
The seemingly mundane task of counting players must be done on every play. There is no excuse for allowing one team a manpower advantage for even one play.





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

Officials with counting duties must count and confirm their count with other officials who share the responsibility. Suggested signals: thumb up for a count of 11 (signal O2, PlayPic A), thumb down (signal O9, PlayPic B) for more or less than 11. All officials are expected to monitor the legality of substitutions.



The counting assignments:

**Free kick:** The umpire, back judge, field judge and side judge count team A; the referee, head linesman and line judge count team B.

**All other plays:** The referee and umpire have primary responsibility to count team A; head linesman and line judge are secondary for counting team A. The field judge, side judge and back judge count team B.

## Substitution Procedures

To help simplify the application of rules regarding substitution, consider that the elements for team A involve either a huddle or no-huddle. If team A is in a huddle and sends in a substitution, team B must be alert and be prepared to react promptly.

In the absence of team A breaking the huddle quickly and rushing to the line, team B is not afforded any additional time to match up. If team A breaks the huddle with 12, it is an immediate foul; if team A fails to send the replaced player out of the huddle more than three seconds after the substitute enters the huddle, it is an immediate foul. If the replaced player clearly leaves the huddle first, and then the huddle breaks and is not hurrying to the line of scrimmage before the substitute leaves the



field, team A has met its requirements and team B must be prepared to play in a normal manner.

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

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

- The referee is primarily responsible to use signal O12 (see PlayPic C) when team A is substituting and team B is allowed a match-up opportunity.
- The wing officials on the team A sideline should also be aware of and signal when team A substitutes in match-up situations, as can officials on the opposite side to assist in recognition by the referee. Because of his position deep in the middle, the back judge can also assist greatly in recognizing substitutions and signal to assist the referee.
- The umpire should make a habit of quickly glancing at the referee as he is coming off the ball after placement. Should he notice the referee with extended hands at any point, he should get back over or stay over the ball until the referee clears him by dropping his extended hands and pointing at him. While waiting for the signal, the umpires should make note of the best exit route to be clear of players when the ball is snapped.
- Once the referee activates the substitution rule by extending his hands, he should monitor the defense to allow it reasonable time to match up, position its players and allow substitutes to leave the field.
- If team A substitutes so late that the play clock expires while team B, reacting promptly, was not in position prior to the play clock expiring, a delay of game penalty on the offense is warranted.
- The umpire should be alert to look back at the referee regularly after he has spotted the ball and moved to his position to notice when the referee has extended his hands, which will happen when late



substitutes come in. At that time, the umpire should move quickly back up to the ball and hold his position until cleared by the referee. Because the umpire is most often looking toward the offense (and the referee), he is the person who must step in and prevent the snap.

- If the officials are delayed in getting to the ball to prevent a snap, the officials will stop the game and give team A a warning that it must allow team B to match up. Further attempts by team A to create a defensive disadvantage in that manner will result in a 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Any official should be prepared to step in and shut down a play that he notices falls within the substitution rule. That is especially true in hurry-up situations, when dead-ball actions involving the previous play often prevent covering officials from being fully aware that conditions have been created that trigger the procedure.
- When a team A player enters the game having changed jersey numbers, he must report to the referee. The referee uses his microphone to announce the player's former number and the new number and the appropriate sideline official relays the information to the opposing head coach. The game clock and play clock do not stop. Team A must complete the process before the play clock expires. During the process, the officials will not allow the ball to be snapped. Normal substitution rules still apply.
- When a team B player enters the game having changed jersey numbers, he must report to the referee. The referee uses his microphone to announce the player's former number and the new number and the appropriate sideline official relays the information to the opposing head coach. The game clock and play clock do not stop. The player must complete the process and get into position on his side of the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped or be subject to a foul. During the process, if the ball is ready, the officials will not prevent team A from snapping the ball. Normal substitution rules still apply.
- These procedures, which are intended to prevent the defense from being unable to match up during normal scrimmage situations, should not be used in the case of an obvious last-second field goal. In that scenario, when the offense is making a normal and not unexpected personnel change, the defense should be prepared to respond appropriately.

## Running Play Coverage

**Referee:** After the snap, observe the action behind the line and the runner to the neutral zone, as well as action on the ball and the quarterback on handoffs and backward passes. Once you read run, focus on the blocks on

the front side (the area immediately around) of the point of attack. Assist in spotting the ball on runs that end in the side zone and out of bounds. Stay with the runner behind the line. Trail but don't chase the runner into the side zone, covering behind the play. If the quarterback goes out of bounds, coordinate sideline coverage with the head linesman or line judge to ensure the spot is maintained and players return to the field. On option plays, if the quarterback keeps the ball and turns upfield, assume responsibility for the trailing back until there is no longer a threat of a foul. If the quarterback pitches the ball, stay with the quarterback. **After any change of possession, be alert for action on the quarterback, who is a defenseless player. Specifically, be alert for targeting fouls at all times and illegal blocks when the quarterback is clearly out of the play.**

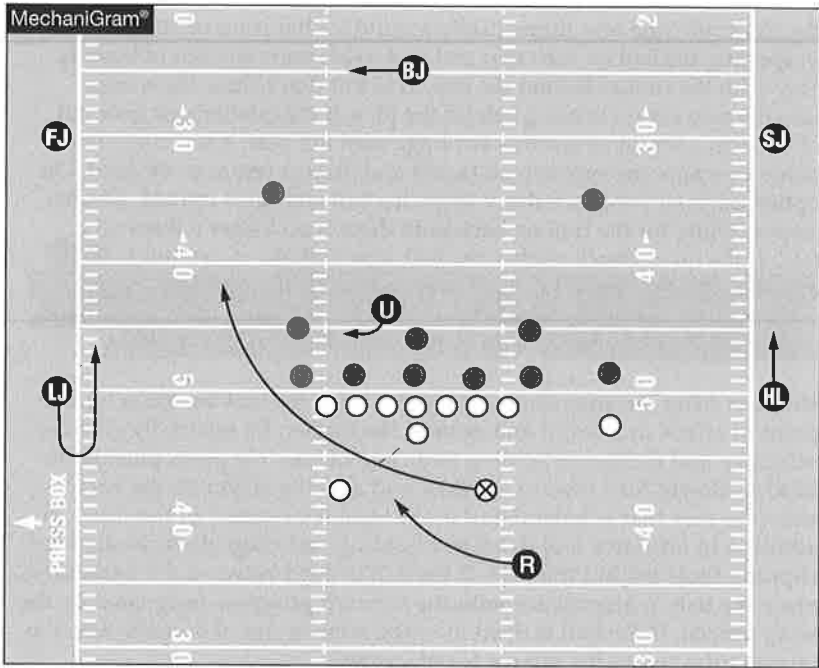
**Umpire:** After the snap and on plays between the tackles, focus on the point of attack in front of and around the runner. Be especially alert for offensive and defensive holding and chop blocks. On plays outside the tackles, slowly turn toward the flow and observe action on the back side (the area that is behind and away from the runner) of the flow. In addition to offensive and defensive holding and chop block, be alert for clipping fouls behind the play. If the ball is dead between the hashmarks, place the ball in accordance with the forward progress designated by the wing official. If the ball is dead in a side zone or out of bounds, assist in relaying the ball to the referee for placement.

**Head linesman and line judge:** After the snap, the line judge may take two steps into the backfield to read the point of attack and observe blocking. Observe the initial action on or by interior lineman nearest you and by the offensive player who is your designated responsibility. Observe the blocking in front of the runner behind the line of scrimmage or in the neutral zone. Determine forward progress when necessary. You have the runner in your side zone to team B's two yardline, attempting to maintain 5 to 10 yards of separation. When the flow of play is away from your position, move downfield and clean up action behind the play.

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

**Back judge:** After the snap, observe action on or by eligible receivers on





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

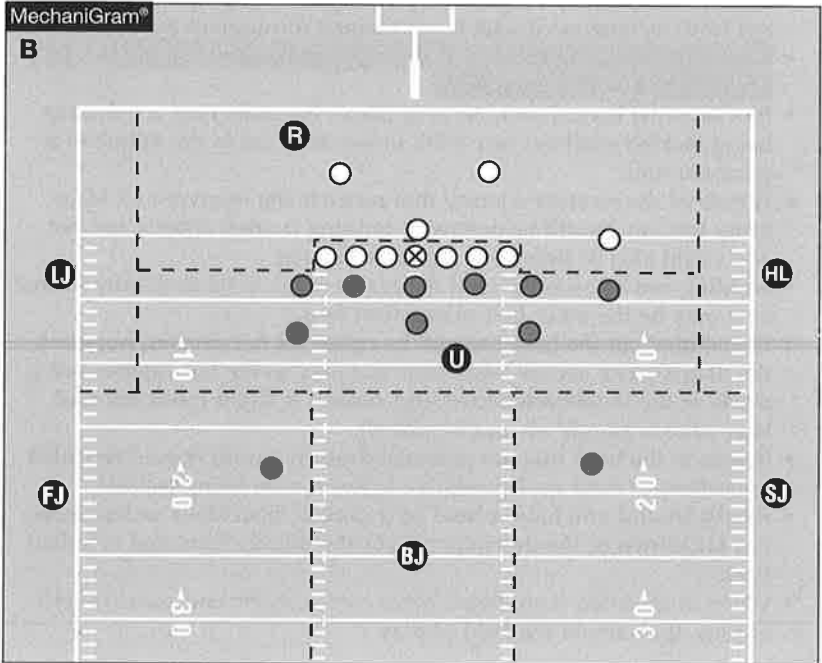
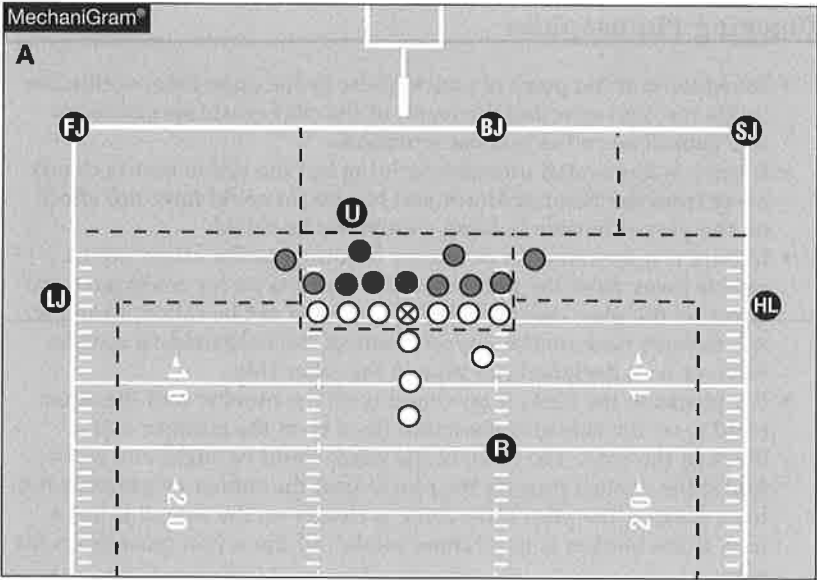
### Scrimmage Play Philosophies

- When in question, the runner fumbled the ball and was not dead.
- When in question, it is not a touchdown.
- When in question, it is not a safety.
- A non-airborne runner crossing the goal inside the pylon with the ball crossing the goal line extended is a touchdown.

## Blocking Philosophies

- Takedowns at the point of attack, those in the open field, within the tackle box and affecting the result of the play create special focus and should be called in those situations.
- If there is a potential offensive holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, offensive holding should not be called.
- If there is a potential for defensive holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, defensive holding should not be called. Example: A defensive back on the opposite side of the field holding a wide receiver on a designed run play to the other side.
- For blocks in the back, if one hand is on the number and the other hand is on the side and the initial force is on the number, it is a block in the back. The force of the block could be slight and still a foul if the contact propels the player past the runner or prevents him from making the play. If the force is clearly on the side, it is not a foul. If the blocker is in a "chase mode" all the action must be on the side.
- Blocks that start on the side and subsequently end up in the back are not fouls as long as contact is maintained throughout the block.
- Regarding blocking below the waist, when in question, the ball has not left the low blocking zone.
- Blocks in the back that occur at or about the same time a runner is being tackled shall not be called, unless they are in the nature of a personal foul.
- A grab of the receiver's jersey that restricts the receiver and takes away his feet should be defensive holding if other criteria are met, and could also be defensive pass interference.
- Holding can be called even if the quarterback is subsequently sacked as it may be the other half of an offset foul.
- Illegal block in the back can still be called on fair catches, but not if the illegal block occurs away from the play as the fair catch is being made or the touchback occurs and contact is slight (personal foul type actions should always be called).
- Blocks in the back that are personal fouls in nature should be called regardless of their timing relative to the runner being tackled.
- Rarely should you have a hold on a double team block unless there is a takedown or the defender breaks the double team and is pulled back.
- When in question if an illegal block occurs in the end zone or field of play, it occurs in the field of play.







## Goal Line Positioning and Zones

MechaniGram A depicts the positioning and zones when team A is on or inside team B's five yardline. On passes to the back corners of the end zone, the side judge or field judge and covering wing official can work in tandem to rule on the catch.

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

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

**Referee:** Starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. Signal a score only if you're positive all requirements have been met. **If the ball is snapped on or inside team B's five yardline, you are responsible for knowing if a pass is backward or forward.**

**Umpire:** Starting position needn't be as deep as scrimmage plays. When the ball is snapped on or inside team B's five yardline, you are primarily responsible for the line of scrimmage in determining if the passer was beyond the line of scrimmage and if the pass is beyond the line of scrimmage.

**Head linesman and line judge:** Starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. You are responsible for the goal line when the ball is snapped on or inside team B's five yardline. In order to rule on a score, you must be on the goal line. Be alert for a pass.

**Side judge and field judge:** When the ball is snapped outside team B's 25 yardline, starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. When the ball is snapped from inside team B's 25 yardline to team B's five yardline, starting position is on the goal line at the pylon and you are responsible for the goal line. You should never take an initial position between the five yardline and the goal line. In order to rule on a score, you must be on the goal line. When the ball is snapped from team B's five yardline in, starting position is on the endline where it intersects with the sideline.

**Back judge:** When the ball is snapped outside team B's 20 yardline, starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. When the ball is snapped from team B's 20 yardline to team B's five yardline, starting position is on the endline. You may get help from the deep wings on passes to the corners of the end zone. When the ball is snapped from team B's five yardline in,



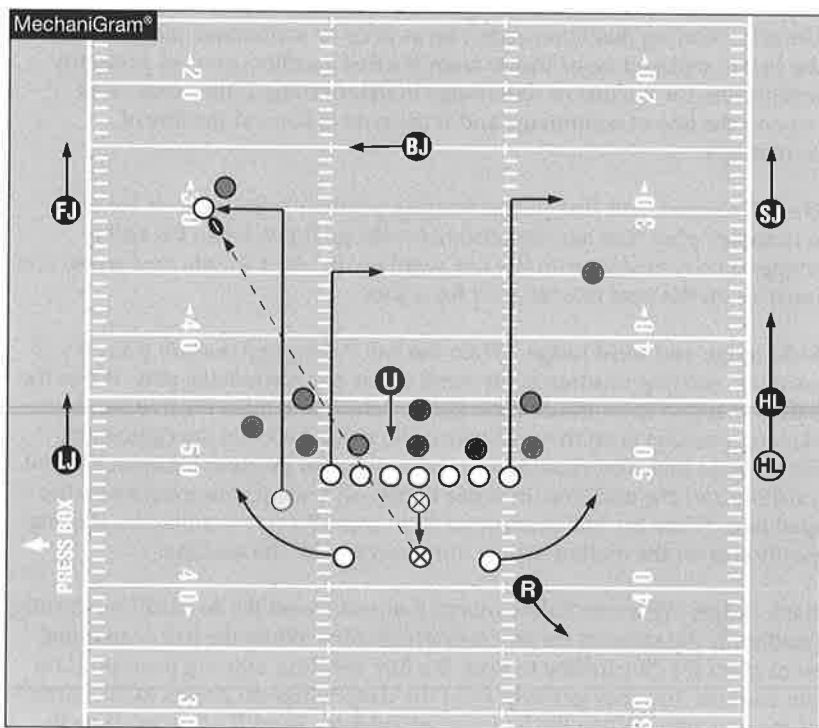
you will get help on the endline from the deep wings. If necessary on a close play, look through and coordinate with the official facing the receiver.

## Reverse Goal Line Mechanics

When team A snaps the ball on or inside its own three yardline (MechaniGram B), the head linesman and line judge must use reverse goal line mechanics. Move immediately to the goal line at the snap. If the snap is between the three and five yardline, the line judge retreats immediately to the goal line and the head linesman reads the play and retreats to the goal line if necessary. Remember that a team A runner must advance the ball completely over the goal line to avoid a safety. Be alert for fumbles and know which team provided the impetus for a ball that goes into the end zone.

## Forward Pass Coverage

**Referee:** Primarily responsible for the tackle on the opposite side; any





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

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

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



reducing movement while the ball is in the air will improve your ability to see the play more accurately. If your receiver is not threatened, assist with the tackle on your side. You are responsible for covering pass receptions in the area between the line of scrimmage and the deep officials. Provide information to the referee on eligible receivers in the area of the pass. If the pass is thrown out of your area, observe the action of players other than the pass receiver after you have observed the pass being caught, intercepted or incomplete.

**Line judge:** The basic responsibility for preliminary action on the line is the same as during a running play. When you read a forward pass, your primary responsibility is to your tackle and your receiver. If your receiver goes downfield or is threatened, he has priority over the tackle. If the pass is thrown out of your area, observe the action of players other than the pass receiver after you have observed the pass being caught, intercepted or incomplete. You are primarily responsible to rule on whether a pass is forward or backward behind the line of scrimmage and shall punch back on backward passes. Be prepared to rule whether the pass was thrown from behind or beyond the line of scrimmage. Provide information to the referee on eligible receivers in the area of the pass and whether the pass reached the line of scrimmage.

**Side judge and field judge:** Observe contact on your eligible receiver and the defensive back. Cover the sideline from your original position to the endline. Maintain deep positioning, Cover the play and watch the defenders' action on the receiver when the ball is thrown in your area. Be particularly alert when a receiver flashes back toward the ball.

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

**All:** Be alert for eligible receivers out of bounds and for an illegal pass (especially after a completion); observe touching or catching by an ineligible player; watch particularly for holding and all contact beyond the neutral zone before and after the pass is thrown. When ruling on a reception at the sideline, give the incomplete signal or the timeout signal (if the pass is complete). On a tight reception at the sideline, the "catch" signal (O11) may be used. The "sweep" signal may be used if an airborne player receives a pass near the sideline and first returns

to the ground out of bounds, or the “bobble” signal if a receiver fails to maintain control of the ball before going out of bounds. After an incompletion, form a relay to return the ball to the official nearest the previous spot. When there is a change of team possession, immediately switch to reverse mechanics to cover the return and the goal line. Be sure the result of the play is properly communicated to the referee. When contact occurs on a pass that is blatantly uncatchable and the covering official drops his penalty marker, the non-covering official will give the covering official information that the pass was uncatchable. If the covering official agrees and has no other foul, he reports that information to the referee. The referee announces that there is no foul and gives the reason, and optionally gives the disregard the flag signal.

### Coverage notes

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

When a pass is thrown, all officials except the referee must focus on the spot of the catch. That is especially important for the umpire, who must immediately turn in the direction of the pass.

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

The head linesman and line judge may be responsible for backs if they come out of the backfield to run pass patterns.

## Defensive Pass Interference Philosophies

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

- Early contact by a defender who is not playing the ball is defensive pass interference provided the other requirements for defensive pass interference have been met, regardless of how deep the pass is thrown to the receiver.
- Playing through the back of a receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.
- Grabbing and restricting a receiver’s arm(s) or body in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.
- Extending an arm across the body (arm bar) of a receiver thus restricting his ability to catch a pass, regardless of the fact 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 Philosophies

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

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

## Not Offensive Pass Interference Philosophies

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

## Other Passing Philosophies

- The neutral zone will be expanded one yard when determining if a pass (untouched) is beyond the line.
- When in question on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer if the defender's intent is to punish.
- 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: Rule 7-3-2-e allows the quarterback to spike ball to stop clock.
- An uncatchable pass must be blatantly uncatchable in order to disregard a foul for pass interference.
- If the quarterback is outside the tackle box and is throwing the ball away to avoid a sack, when in question as to whether the ball is beyond the neutral zone, it is beyond the line. Don't be technical.
- If the passer is contacted after he starts his passing motion, it may be ruled no intentional grounding due to this contact.

- If the passer is contacted clearly before he starts his passing motion, there will be a foul for intentional grounding if there is no eligible receiver in the vicinity or if the pass does not reach the line of scrimmage after the quarterback has been outside the tackle box.
- If an interception is near the goal line (inside the one yardline) and there is a question as to whether possession is gained in the field of play or end zone, make the play a touchback.
- If the passer is legally throwing the ball away out of bounds, near or beyond the sideline, do not penalize the offense for having ineligible players downfield.
- If the passer is legally throwing the ball away anywhere in the field of play, do not penalize the offense for having ineligible players downfield within the expanded line of scrimmage (up to three yards.).



# Reading and Understanding Keys



Three optional signals may help identify keys. In PlayPic A, the official is using signal O4 to indicate an unbalanced line to his side. The unbalanced side of the line usually has no more than two eligible receivers.

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

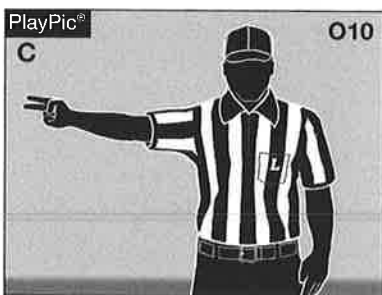
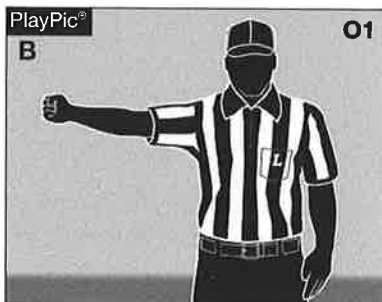
Because keys are often determined by whether a team A player is on or off the line, the signal should be given from the moment team A takes its initial set positions. Subsequent shifts may require the official to either drop the arm or raise it. The signal should be given until the ball is snapped.

Other important elements about keys:

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

## Three-receiver sets

A numbering system is used to help identify initial keys. The widest receiver is number 1, next widest is number 2, etc. At the snap, if there is a number 3 receiver, he is the back judge's key, the head linesman or line judge has number 2 and the side judge or field judge has number 1.



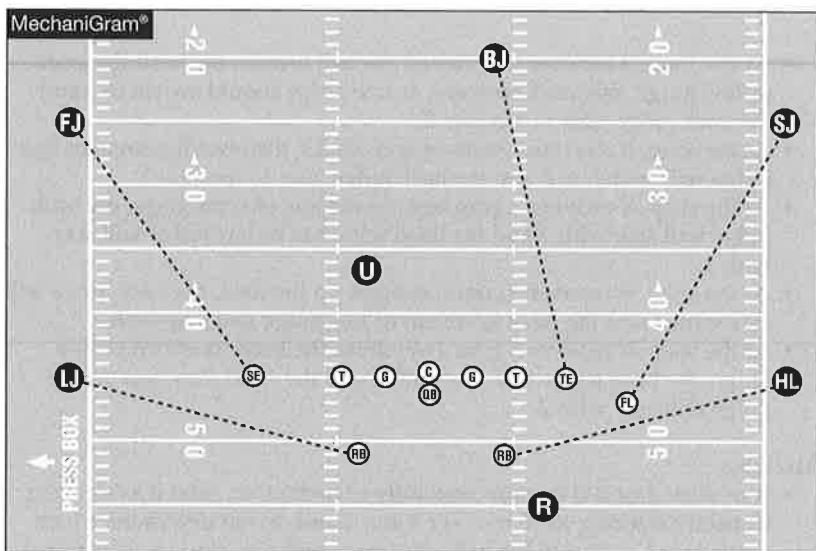
- At the snap, if receiver 3 comes off the ball toward the head linesman or line judge, the head linesman or line judge should switch to 3 and the back judge goes to receiver 2.
- At the snap, if receiver 3 stays in and blocks, the head linesman or line judge will switch to 3 and the back judge goes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

### Stacking

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



## KEYS



**Referee:** Quarterback, backs and tackles.

**Umpire:** Interior linemen.

**Head linesman:** Third eligible receiver from the sideline to your side of the formation. In this case, the back on your side of the field if he leaves the backfield.

**Side judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the flanker.

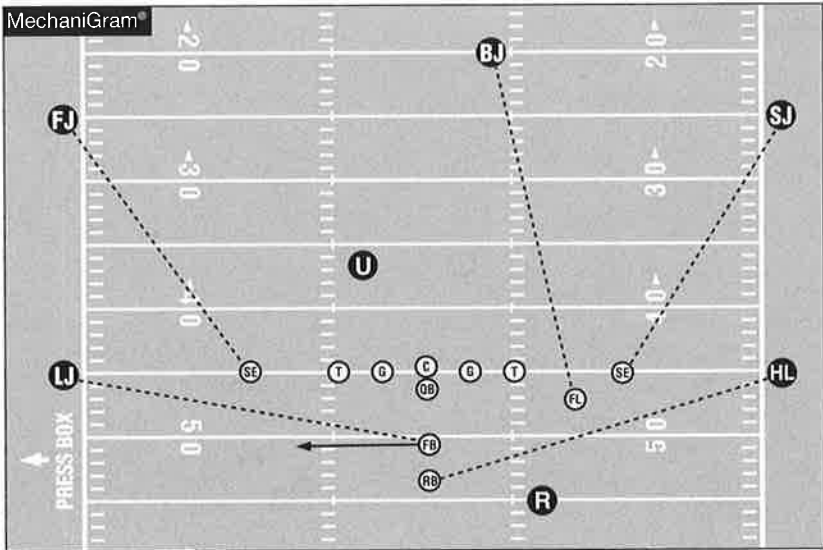
**Line judge:** Normally the third eligible receiver from the sideline to your side of the formation. With only two eligibles on your side, your key is the inside receiver. In this case, that's the back on your side of the field if he leaves the backfield.

**Field judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the split end.

**Back judge:** Second eligible receiver on the strong side of the field. In this case, the tight end.



## KEYS



**Referee:** Quarterback, backs and help on tackles.

**Umpire:** Interior linemen.

**Head linesman:** The motion man until he crosses the opposite tackle. When that happens, key is the running back.

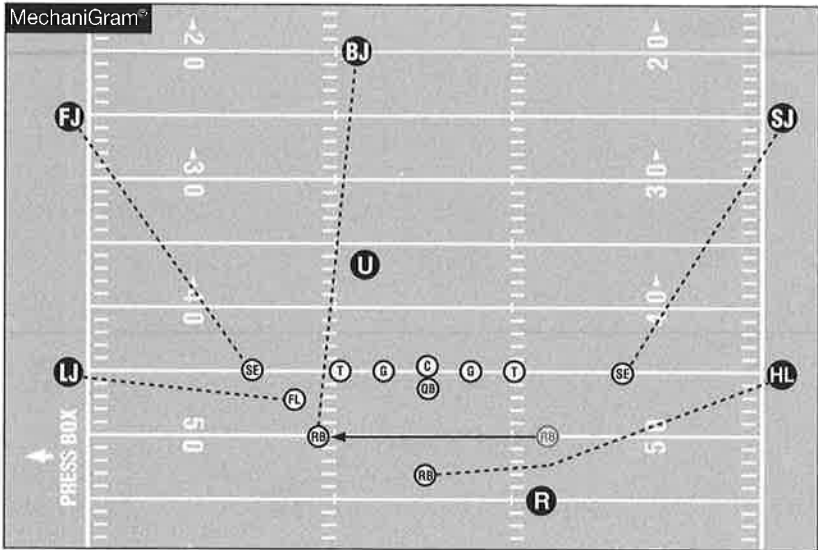
**Side judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the split end.

**Line judge:** Normally the third eligible receiver from the sideline to your side of the formation. With only two eligibles on your side, your key is the inside receiver. In this case, that's the motion man if he gets outside the tackle.

**Field judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the split end.

**Back judge:** The second eligible receiver on the strong side. In this case, that's the flanker.

KEYS



**Referee:** Quarterback, backs and help on tackles.

**Umpire:** Interior linemen.

**Head linesman:** The motion man until he crosses the opposite tackle. When that happens, key is the running back.

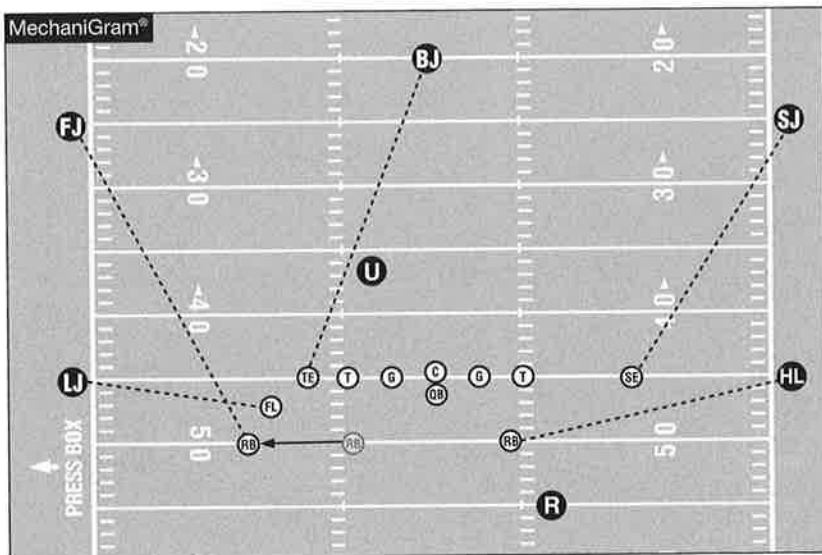
**Side judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the split end.

**Line judge:** Because the motion man is outside the tackle, key is the flanker.

**Field judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the split end.

**Back judge:** Because the motion man is outside the tackle, key is the running back.

KEYS



**Referee:** Quarterback, backs and help on tackles.

**Umpire:** Interior linemen.

**Head linesman:** Normally the third eligible receiver from the sideline to your side of the formation. With only two eligibles on your side, your key is the inside receiver. In this case, that's the back on your side of the field.

**Side judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the split end.

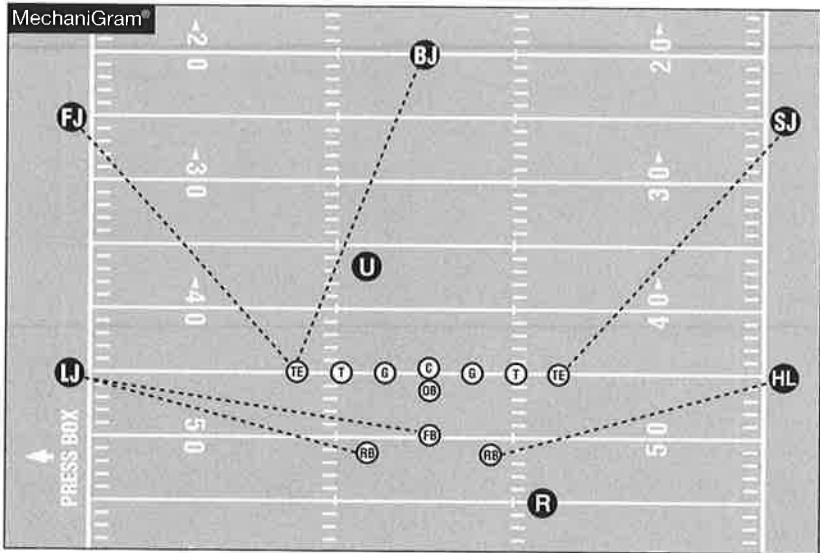
**Line judge:** Because the motion man is outside the tackle, key is the flanker.

**Field judge:** The widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the motion man.

**Back judge:** Because the motion man is outside the tackle, key is the tight end.

## DOUBLE TIGHT END, BALANCED FORMATION

### KEYS



**Referee:** Quarterback, backs and help on tackles.

**Umpire:** Interior linemen.

**Head linesman:** Normally the third eligible receiver from the sideline to your side of the formation. With only two eligibles on your side, your key is the inside receiver. In this case, that's the back on your side of the field.

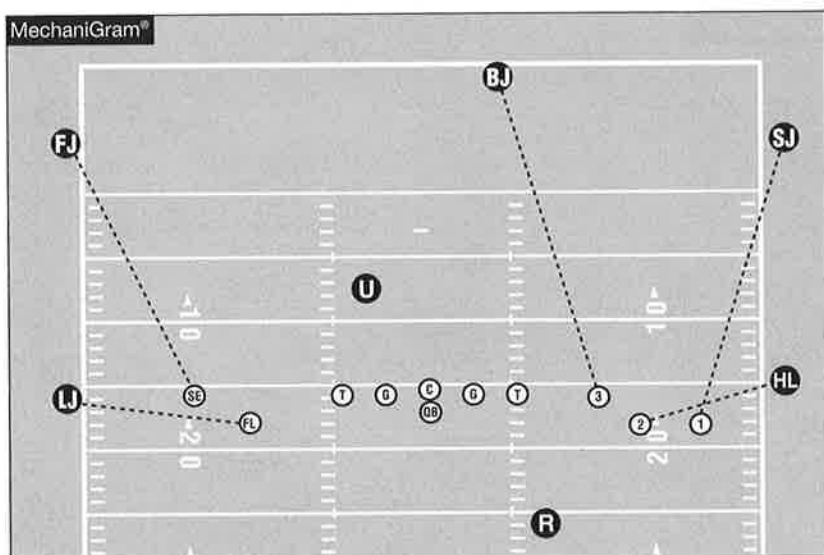
**Side judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the tight end.

**Line judge:** The widest backs on his side. In this case, the running back and the fullback.

**Field judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the tight end.

**Back judge:** The back judge assists to the line judge's side when the formation is balanced. He has the widest receiver on the line judge's side. In this case, that's the tight end.

## KEYS



**Referee:** Quarterback, help on tackles.

**Umpire:** Interior linemen.

**Head linesman:** Number 2.

**Side judge:** Number 1.

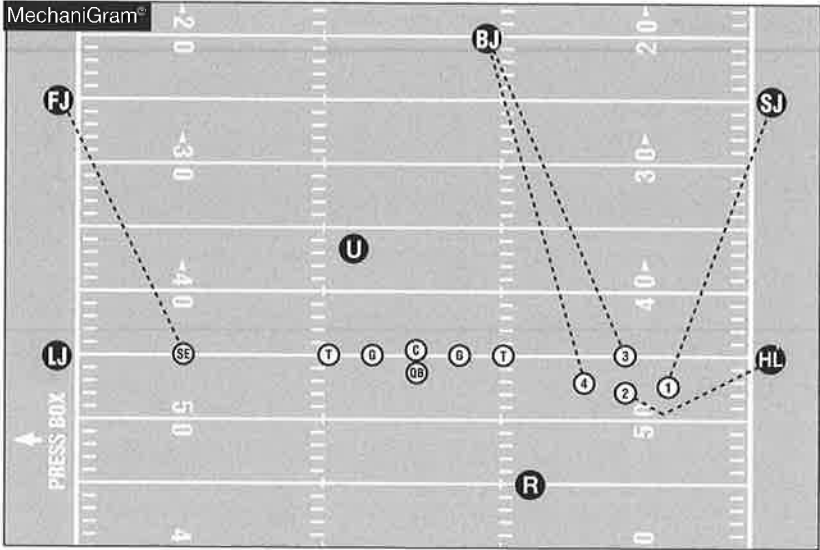
**Line judge:** Normally the third eligible receiver from the sideline to your side of the formation. With only two eligibles on your side, your key is the inside receiver. In this case, that's the flanker.

**Field judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the split end.

**Back judge:** Number 3.

FOUR RECEIVERS, UNALIGNED

KEYS



**Referee:** Quarterback, help on tackles.

**Umpire:** Interior linemen.

**Head linesman and back judge:** Head linesman takes 2 initially and the back judge has 3 and 4. At the snap, if 4 comes toward the head linesman, stays in and blocks or goes behind the line of scrimmage, the head linesman will switch to 4 and the back judge will take 2 and 3. If 2 comes straight up the field or goes away from the head linesman, the back judge stays with 2 and the head linesman takes 3 and 4.

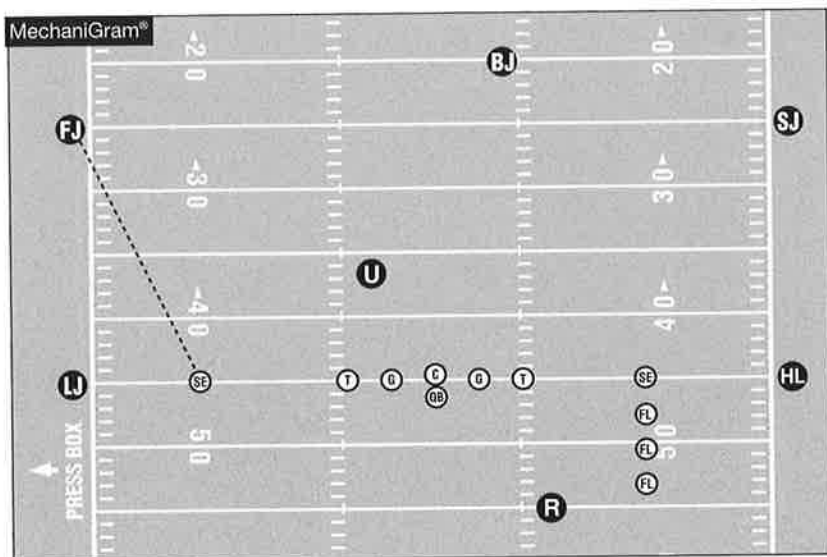
**Field judge:** Number 1.

**Side judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the outside flanker.

**Line judge:** No formal key.

## FOUR RECEIVERS, STACKED

### KEYS



**Referee:** Quarterback, help on tackles.

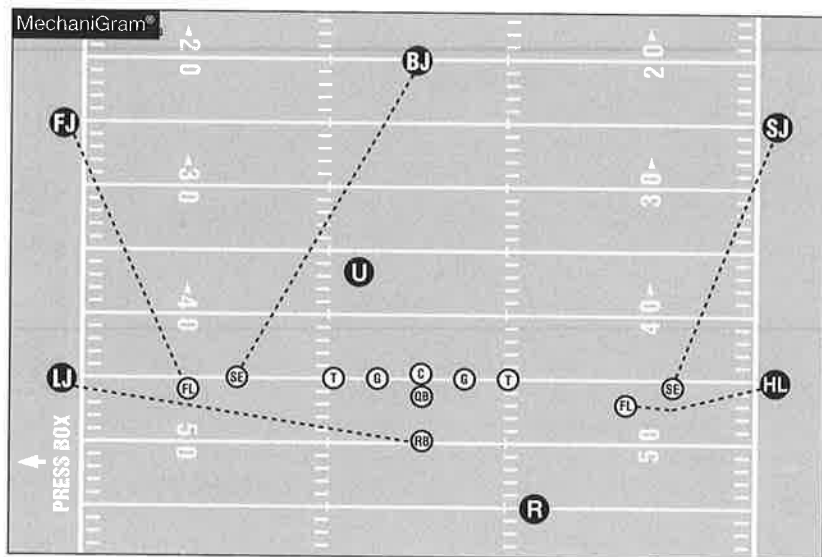
**Umpire:** Interior linemen.

**Head linesman, side judge, back judge:** No formal keys. Once play begins, each takes receiver(s) in general coverage area.

**Line judge:** No formal key.

**Field judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the split end.

KEYS



**Referee:** Quarterback, back and help on tackles.

**Umpire:** Interior linemen.

**Head linesman:** Normally the third eligible receiver from the sideline to your side of the formation. With only two eligibles on your side, your key is the inside receiver. In this case, that's the flanker.

**Side judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the split end.

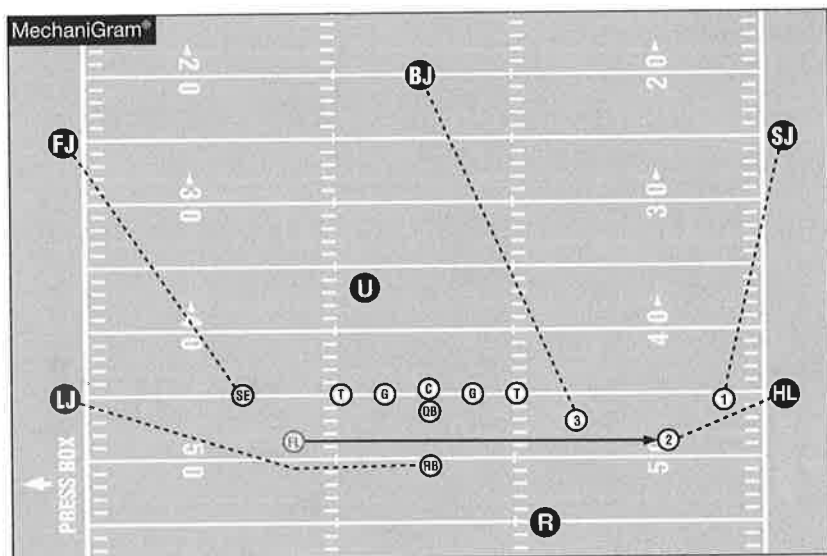
**Line judge:** The third eligible receiver from the sideline to your side of the formation. In this case, that's the running back.

**Field judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the flanker.

**Back judge:** In a balanced formation, strength is declared to the line judge's side. Your key is the second eligible receiver on the strong side. In this case, the split end.



## KEYS



**Referee:** Quarterback, back and help on tackles.

**Umpire:** Interior linemen.

**Head linesman:** Original key was 3. When motion changed the strength, key became 2.

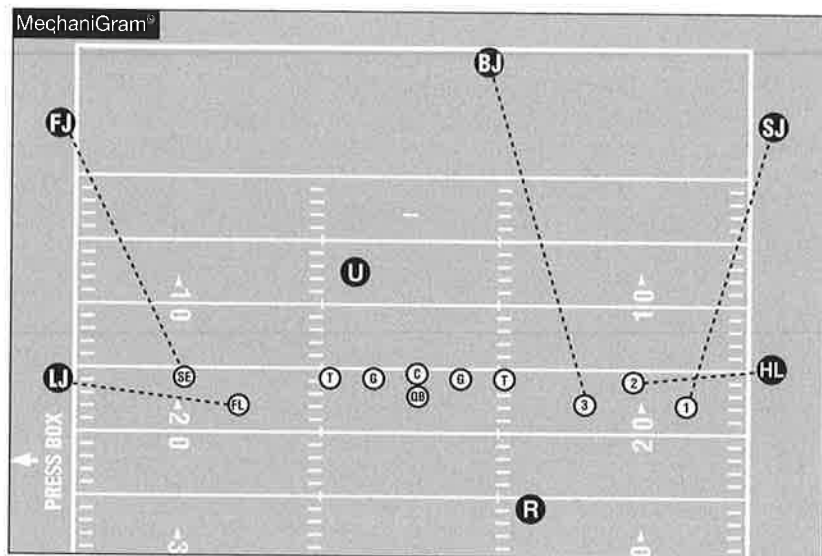
**Side judge:** Number 1.

**Line judge:** Original key was the third eligible receiver on your side, the running back. Motion changed the formation to trips on the opposite side. With only two eligibles on your side, your key is the inside receiver. In this case, that's still the running back.

**Field judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, 1.

**Back judge:** Original key was the flanker on the line judge's side. When motion changed the strength of the formation, key became 3.

## KEYS



**Referee:** Quarterback, back and help on tackles.

**Umpire:** Interior linemen.

**Head linesman:** Number 2.

**Line judge:** Original key was the third eligible receiver on your side, the running back. Motion changed the formation to trips on the opposite side. With only two eligibles on your side, your key is the inside receiver. In this case, that's still the running back.

**Side judge:** Number 1.

**Field judge:** Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, 1.

**Back judge:** Number 3. Note: When ball is snapped between team B's 20- and 25 yardline, initial position is two to three yards deep in end zone, in line with the goal post support. When the ball is snapped inside team B's 20 yardline, initial position is on end line in line with goal post support.



# Punts



## Positioning and Zones

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

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

**Head linesman and line judge:** Take your basic position and officiate as on a scrimmage play. Hold your position until the ball crosses the line.

**Field judge and side judge:** Take a position on your sideline no less than five yards behind the deepest receiver. Weather conditions and the kicker's ability will help dictate when to take a position on the goal line. When the ball is snapped at approximately team A's 45 yardline, take an initial position at the goal line pylon.

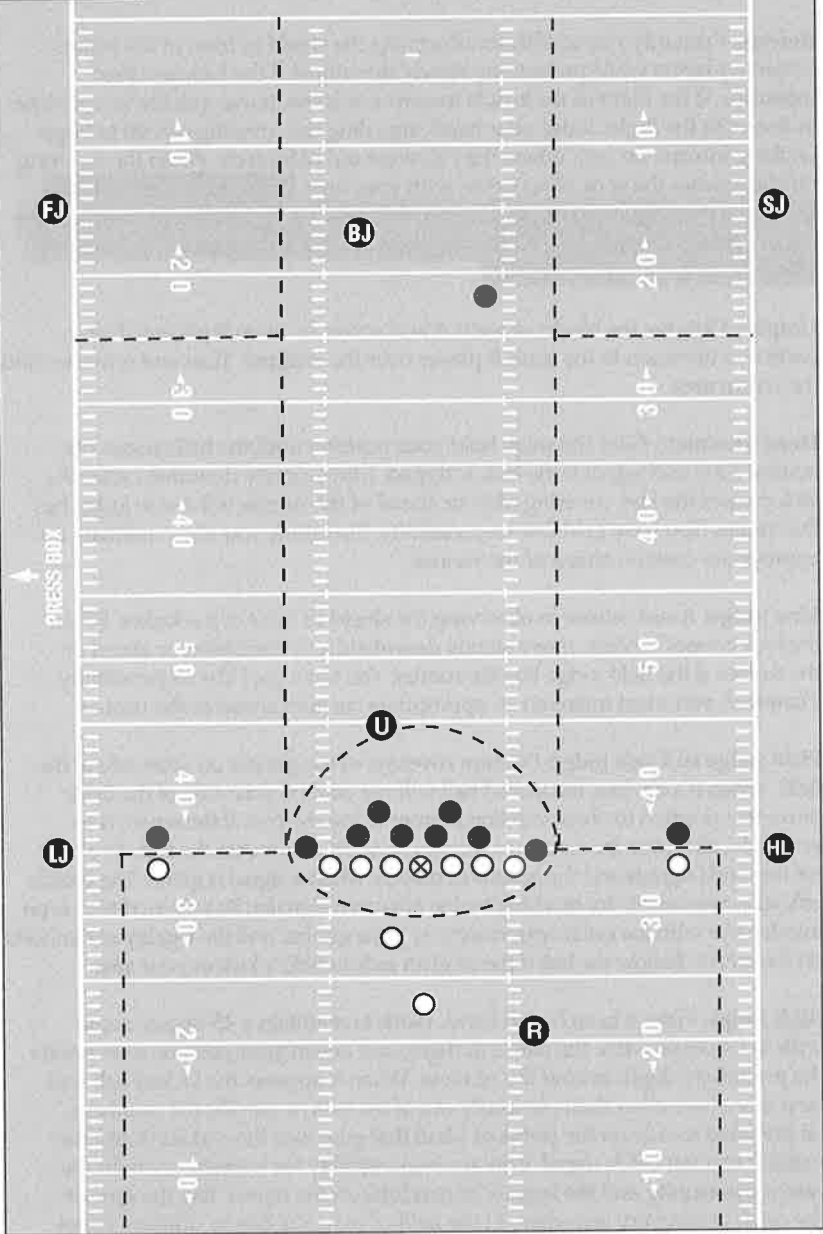
**Back judge:** The basic position is no less than five yards behind and at the side of the deepest receiver, favoring the wide side of the field. However, if the deepest receiver takes a position inside his 10 yardline, line up on the goal line. Work to maintain a 45-degree angle with the receiver while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

## Punt Play Philosophies

- When in question, a foul by the receiving team on a scrimmage kick occurs after the ball is kicked.
- Illegal block in the back can be called on fair catches, but not if the illegal block occurs away from the play as the fair catch is being made, or the play results in a touchback and contact is slight. (Note: Personal fouls should always be called.)
- On kicks into the end zone, when in question, during the return the ball has not left the end zone.
- It shall always be roughing the kicker when there is forcible contact to the plant leg, whether or not that leg is on the ground. It shall be running into the kicker if a defender simply "runs through" the kicking leg. All other contact shall be based on the severity and the potential for injury to the kicker.



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## Coverage

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

**Umpire:** Observe the blocks of team A and action by team B players. Pay particular attention to the team B player over the snapper. Turn and move toward the return area.

**Head linesman:** After the snap, hold your position until the ball crosses the neutral zone and signal if the kick is tipped. Move slowly downfield after the kick crosses the line, covering play, or ahead of the runner if the side judge has the runner. You have goal line responsibility. Therefore, you must maintain an appropriate cushion ahead of the runner.

**Line judge:** Assist referee in observing the shield in front of the kicker. When the kick crosses the line, move slowly downfield, covering play, or ahead of the runner if the field judge has the runner. You have goal line responsibility. Therefore, you must maintain an appropriate cushion ahead of the runner.

**Field judge and side judge:** Primary coverage of the gunner on your side of the field. When it's obvious the kicked ball will not land on your side of the field, move to a position to observe action in front of the receiver. If the return is to your side, take over the runner as soon as he starts to advance the ball. Be alert for fair catch signals and the actions of players when a signal is given. The offside official is responsible for blocking by the fair-catch signaler. Be prepared to rule on interference with the catch opportunity by your gunner and the legality of handoffs on the return. Follow the ball if the receiver fails to field a kick in your area.

**Back judge:** Have a bean bag in hand. Work to maintain a 45-degree angle with the receiver while the ball is in flight, and adjust your position to maintain the prescribed depth behind the receiver. When it appears the kicked ball will land anywhere other than obviously out of bounds or outside the numbers, be prepared to rule on the status of a ball that goes into the end zone and the validity of a fair catch signal. Primary responsibility for interference with the catch opportunity and the legality of handoffs on the return. Bag the spot of the catch or recovery anywhere in the field of play, sideline to sideline. Follow



the ball if the receiver fails to field a kick. When the runner advances, observe blocking in the middle of the field in front of the runner and give up coverage of the runner to the side judge and field judge. When it is obvious the kicked ball will land out of bounds or inside the area between sideline and nine-yard marks, concentrate on the action in front of the runner after the catch is made and move into position to cover play around the runner.

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

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

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

# Scoring Kicks



## Positioning and Zones

**Referee:** Starting position is even with an approximately 10 yards wide of the potential kicker, facing the holder. Observe the motion of the backs within your line of vision and action on the kicker and holder. Be prepared to move with the ball if the snap cannot be controlled by the holder. Cover as usual if the play results in a run or pass. Signal a score only after being positive that requirements are met.

**Umpire and side judge:** On all kick tries and field goal attempts, the side judge will be a "double umpire." The side judge should be positioned on the side of the defensive formation that has more players. The umpire and side judge should adjust based on the field position, generally five to seven yards, but not more than eight yards, off the ball. Both should observe line play and be alert for the pull and shoot and leaping fouls. Umpire is primary to observe defensive action on the snapper,

**Head linesman and line judge:** Take regular positions. Be ready to cover sideline from the line of scrimmage to the endline. Both are responsible for covering the play on short field goal and try attempts and fake field goals. Neither official should leave the line of scrimmage until the ball has crossed the neutral zone.

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

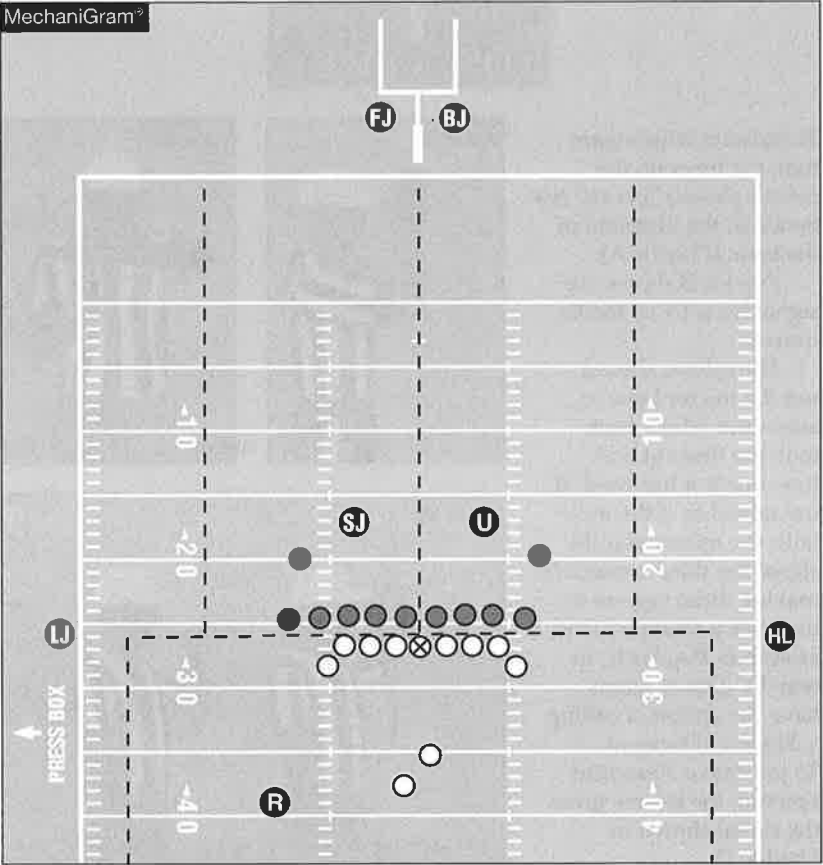
## Fake Kicks

As a guideline on fake kicks, when the ball is snapped inside team B's 20 yardline, the line judge and head linesman have the goalline the back judge and field judge move along the end line to the sideline. When the ball is snapped on or outside team B's 20 yardline, the field judge and back judge move toward the pylons on their sides of the field and have the goalline.





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# Timeout



To indicate which team took the timeout, the referee should “chuck” his hands in the direction of the team (PlayPic A).

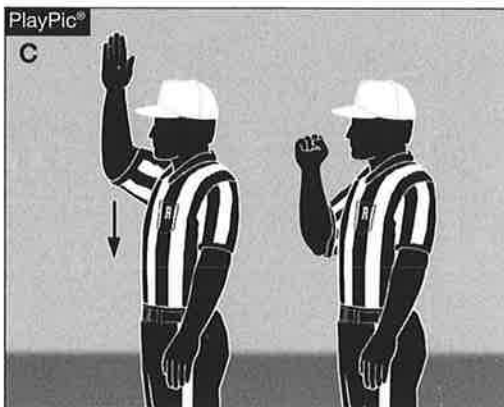
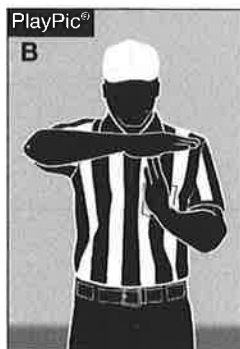
PlayPic B shows the signal for a TV or media timeout.

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

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

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

**Referee:** Stand away from other officials and the players. On the back judge’s signal, which comes with at least 10 seconds remaining in



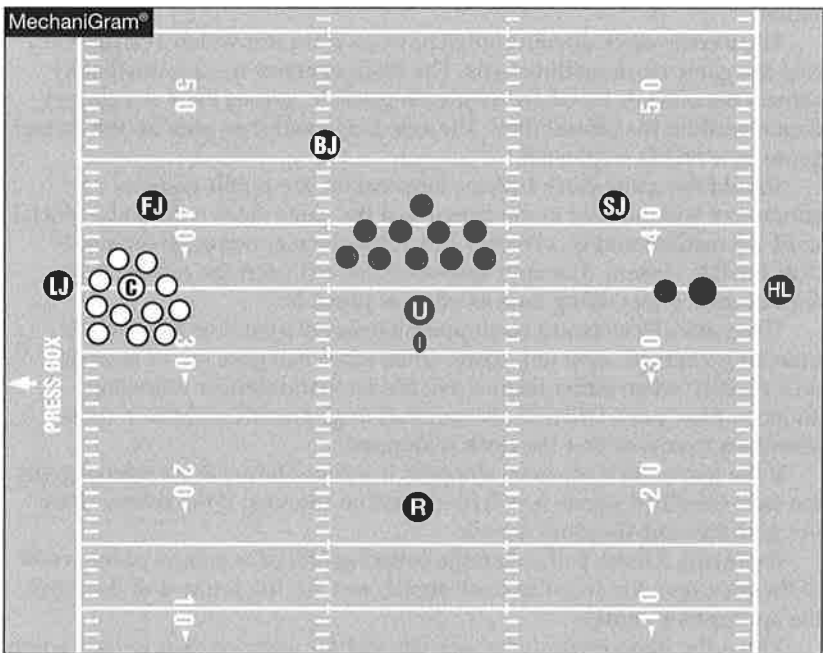
the timeout, point to the appropriate sideline officials so they may tell the teams the timeout is over. On the back judge's signal that the timeout has expired, or if both teams return to the field before the time expires, blow your whistle and give the ready-for-play signal.

**Umpire:** Stand over the ball until the referee gives the ready-for-play signal.

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

**Side judge and field judge:** Take a position halfway between the team on your sideline and its team area.

**Back judge:** Time the timeout.



# Working With the Timers



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

## Game Clock

The game clock operator will report to the side judge 90 minutes prior to the game. The clock operator is to inform them if he will be located in the press box or on the sideline, and to confirm the procedure the officials should use for communicating with the timer during the game.

All pregame and halftime activities will be synchronized with the official game clock. The clock operator should start the game clock 60 minutes before game time. The halftime intermission will be timed on the game clock. The game clock starts when the referee gives the start-the-clock signal.

The electric clock operator must have an extra stopwatch available in case the game clock malfunctions. The clock operator must immediately contact the officials by whatever means possible, giving them the correct data regarding the official time. The side judge will then pick up the correct game time on his stopwatch.

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

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

If the game clock has been stopped, it will be started if the referee gives the start-the-clock signal. It will be started on the snap if the referee does not give the start-the-clock signal.

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

When the 40-second interval applies and the game clock is to start when the ball is spotted, the referee blows his whistle and give the ready-for-play signal. Once the ball is spotted, the referee gives the start-the-clock signal



and blows his whistle. When the 25-second clock is in force, the referee will give the traditional ready-for-play signal.

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

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

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

#### Other reminders:



Any official may signal a team timeout, so be alert to stop the clock.



In case of a pile-up anywhere on the field, be alert for an official's signal to stop the clock. Once the congestion has cleared, the referee will start the clock again before the ready-for-play signal.



The game clock should not be stopped if the play clock is started in error.



When the period officially ends, the referee holds the ball above his head.

## Play Clocks

When play clocks are available, they are the official delay-of-game timepiece. The play clock operator will report to the back judge at least 90 minutes prior to the game. He should be instructed to set the displays to either 25 or 40 seconds and to start the clocks at the proper time.

If an unusual situation delays the placing of the ball and the 40-second clock has run down to 20 seconds, the referee should have the clock reset to 25 seconds. The referee shall declare a timeout and signal that the play clock be set at 25 seconds by using signal O7 (alternately raising and lowering his arm in a pumping motion with his palm flat and facing up, see PlayPic A, next page). When play is to be resumed, the referee will give the ready-for-play signal and the play clock shall begin the 25-second count. The game

clock will start on the snap unless it had been running when the referee declared a timeout; in that case it will start on the referee's signal.

If the referee must reset the clock to 40 seconds, the signal is made with both arms.

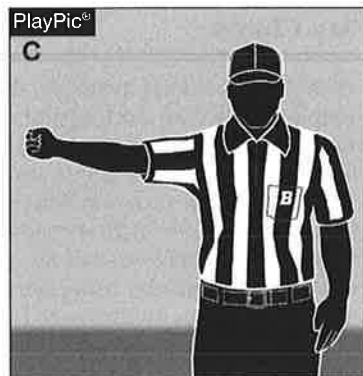
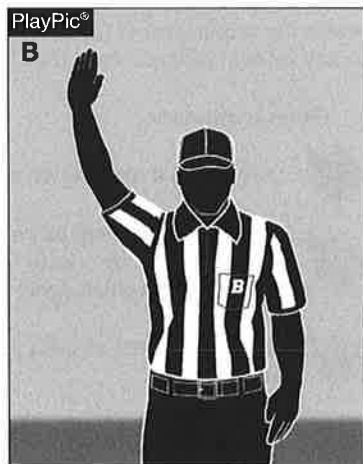
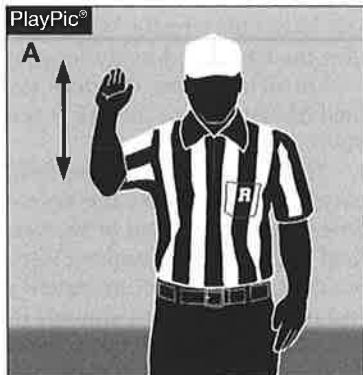
When the clock expires and there is a delay of game penalty, the display should be left at zero. When the ball is put in play and there is no delay foul, or if the referee interrupts the 25/40-second count, the displays should be immediately reset.

At the end of a period, the play clock should be shut off if there is less time on the game clock than the proper time on the play clock.

If there is a malfunction, the play clocks will be turned off until the problem is corrected. Both coaches will be notified if the field play clock is no longer official. The 25/40-second count will then be restarted at 25 seconds with the back judge manually timing the count on his watch. The back judge should raise one arm straight overhead during the last 10 seconds of the manual count (signal O8, PlayPic B) and out to the side during the last five seconds (signal O1, PlayPic C).

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

The referee may employ the 5/5 axiom: In order to adjust the game clock when it has been running, there must be more than a five-second differential if there is more than five



minutes remaining in either half. When any time is lost due to the game clock being started erroneously, such as when a dead-ball foul is called, the game clock must be adjusted.

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

Remind the timer that if the game clock is stopped with two seconds or less in any period and will start on the referee's signal, run the clock to zero if the ball is legally snapped.



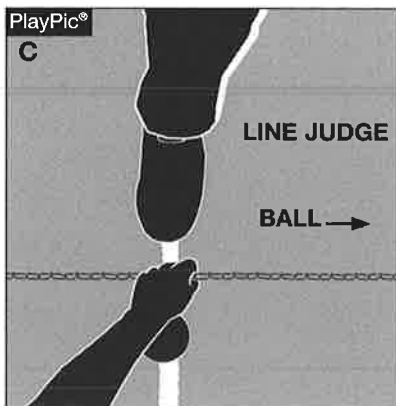
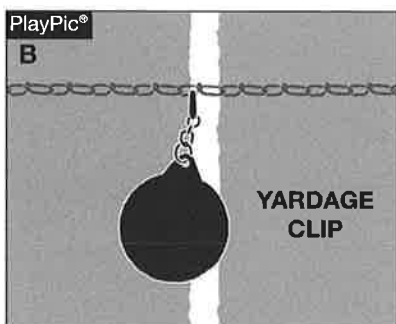
# Measurements



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

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

The back judge holds the ball in place from the downfield side (the side of the ball opposite from the sideline the chains are coming from). Holding the ball in that way





will preclude the ball from being accidentally displaced. The field judge ensures that officials or players do not block the press box's view of the measurement. If the measurement is outside a hash, the field judge should have a new ball ready to be spotted.

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

### Short of a first down

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

After signaling, the referee grasps the chain at the link in front of the ball and rises. The referee should grasp the chain with two hands with the link that will be used to place the ball between his hands; that will ensure

the proper link is maintained.

The back judge continues to hold the ball in place. Referee, umpire and head linesman walk to the nearest hashmark. The field judge will have obtained a new ball and have it at the inbounds mark. The back judge maintains his position and holds the ball on the ground until the new ball is placed.

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



Otherwise, the clip could break or simply come off.

The referee must wait for the head 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 toward team A's goal line. The referee then sets the ball in the same position as it was when it became dead so its foremost point becomes the rear point when the direction is changed. The new rear stake is then moved to the new foremost point of the ball.

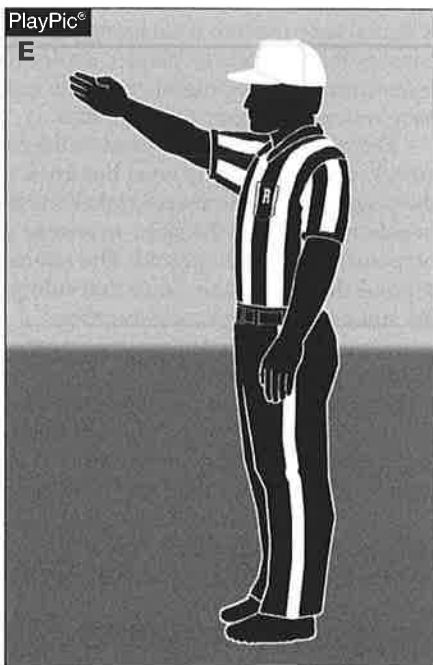
### First down

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

If the measurement occurred in a side zone, the back judge should remain with the ball on the ground to ensure the ball is spotted properly for the next play. The field judge then spots the ball. The side judge should assist the head linesman by indicating the spot on the sideline where the rear stake of the chains should now be placed.

Since the down has been completed, moving the down marker forward is routine and having it on the forward point of the ball is necessary in the event the ball is inadvertently moved. The exception is if the measurement is a prelude to a penalty acceptance decision. An example: With about five yards to go, team A punts on fourth down and is happy with the results. Team B is flagged for a five-yard live-ball foul. Team A requests a measurement. They will accept the penalty if it yields a first down and decline it otherwise. In that case the down marker must remain at the previous spot.

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



## Intermissions Between Halves



From the end zone, the referee gives the start-the-clock signal when the field is clear of officials and players and 20 minutes are on the game clock. The side judge starts his watch on the referee's signal and keeps the crew informed as to remaining time to ensure they return to the field at least three minutes before the second-half kickoff.

With five minutes left in the intermission, the side judge and back judge and field judge and line judge go to the locker rooms to alert the teams. The coaches' second-half options may be obtained either in the locker room or on the field before the second half.

## End of First and Third Periods



At the end of first and third periods, the referee, umpire and head linesman meet and record on their game cards the yardline on which the ball is spotted, the down and the line-to-gain. The ball should not be moved until that is complete.

The line judge goes to the proper yardline on the opposite end of the field to ensure proper placement of the ball.

The head linesman and side-judge rotate the chains and move them to the opposite end of the field.

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

The head linesman and line judge assume their positions and complete their responsibilities before the next period may begin.

# Fouls and Enforcement



## Efficient Enforcement of Penalties

Penalty enforcements are a critical game management function and the ability to administer penalties in an efficient manner enhances the credibility and professionalism of the crew. Conversely, a crew that is perceived to have difficulty in enforcing obvious fouls loses the confidence of coaches, players, fans and the media.

Coordinators have become increasingly concerned with the amount of time taken for officials to complete the administration of penalties, especially in situations where the penalty enforcement is obvious based on the foul and the result of the play. Far too often, there are extended crew conferences that are unnecessary.

This manual now includes a specific process that crews will use to minimize the amount of time between the end of the play in which a foul occurs and the next ready for play signal. Note that we do not advocate rushing to get the ball in play; rather, we are seeking to minimize unnecessary and lengthy discussions. This process requires each official to completely understand his role so that the potential for errors is virtually eliminated.

### The Process: Overview

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

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

The umpire, head linesman and line judge will work together to enforce the yardage distance while the referee makes the announcement.



## Roles and Responsibilities

### Calling Official

Give a preliminary signal to include the foul signal and the direction of the offending team as soon as the play is over. Advance toward the referee to provide the number of the player that committed the foul and any other information required to correctly enforce the penalty. If multiple officials call a foul, they should quickly determine they have called the same foul and one of them would then give the signal and report the number.

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

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

### Referee

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

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

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

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

Announcements should be made in a normal tone. Do not raise your voice.

### Umpire

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

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

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

He will work with the head linesman and the line judge to ensure the penalty is correctly enforced.

### Head Linesman

The head linesman shall mark off the yardage from his sideline position at approximately the same time as the umpire who will look to him to make sure they have enforced the foul correctly.

Any discrepancy should be corrected immediately.

### Line Judge

The line judge will hold the spot from which the penalty is enforced until the umpire and the head linesman have completed their enforcement. He will then, independently, mark off the penalty yardage and confirm that the umpire and head linesman have enforced the penalty correctly.

Any discrepancy should be corrected immediately.

### Other Officials

Observe the actions of the referee, umpire, head linesman and line judge and make sure that no errors have been made.

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

### Other Concepts

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

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

Referees may be able to administer pre-snap fouls with no discussion, as quite often, the foul and the offending player is easily determined. For example, an offensive tackle wearing number 76 fires out prior to the snap. The referee would simply glance at the responsible official for the preliminary signal, then turn and announce the foul and offending player.

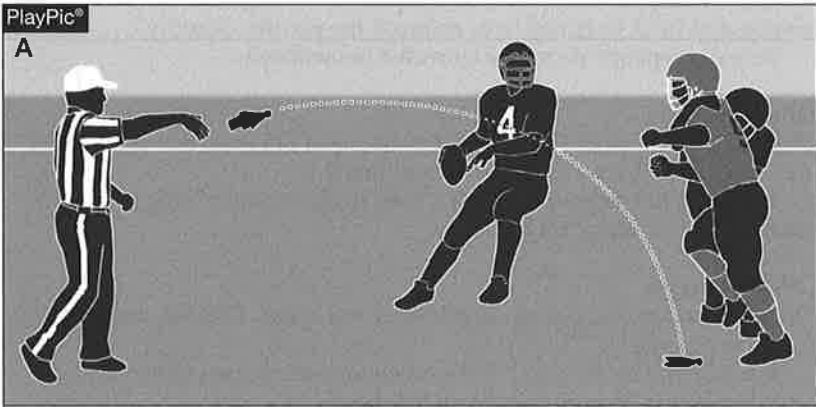
**NOTE:** The dead-ball foul signal is now reserved for fouls that occur *after* the play and should not be used for pre-snap fouls. The language, "Prior to the snap" for pre-snap fouls should not be used unless there is doubt as to whether the ball became live and it is necessary for clarification.

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

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

## Fouls

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



For dead-ball fouls or fouls simultaneous with the snap, the flag should be tossed into the air overhead and directly in front of you (PlayPic B). When wing officials throw a flag for a dead-ball foul prior to the snap, they should give the stop-the-clock signal (whether or not the clock is running), move immediately toward the referee and give the preliminary signal in a controlled manner while officiating any dead-ball action. If there is to be a discussion to determine the foul, it should take place in the offensive backfield, away from players.

After throwing the flag, the calling official should mentally mark










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

When the play ends, if the ball is not at the dead-ball spot, an official not involved in the play should assist in getting it there. The nearest non-calling official should cover and hold the dead-ball spot and mark the end of the run. When the umpire starts to mark off the penalty, the flag should be picked up and returned to the official who called the foul.

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

The calling official must know:

-  The foul.
-  The offending team (jersey color, team A or team B, offense or defense, etc.).
-  The offending player's number.
-  Pertinent spots (spot of the foul, the end of the run or kick, etc.).
-  The status of the ball when the foul occurred.
-  The outcome of the play, if applicable (touchdown, incomplete pass, which team recovered a fumble, etc.).
-  Whether the clock should start on the ready or the snap after enforcement.

On certain fouls, it is critical that the referee be told whether a player who was fouled was an eligible receiver, or whether the foul results in an ejection.

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

The umpire, head linesman and line judge will work together to enforce the yardage distance while the referee makes the announcement. The official nearest the benches will notify the head coach of the player's number and the foul. If a player is disqualified, the referee will inform the head coach.

If a choice is obvious, the referee should announce it and proceed with enforcement or declination. If the captain objects, explain alternatives and accede to his wishes. If the choice is not obvious, explain the options briefly, but correctly, clearly and courteously.

The calling official should give a preliminary signal to include the foul signal and the direction of the offending team as soon as the play is over. Advance toward the referee to provide the number of the player that committed the foul and any other information required to correctly enforce the penalty. If multiple officials call a foul, they should quickly determine they have called the same foul and one of them would then give the signal and report the number.

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

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

If a flag is to be disregarded, the referee announces that there is no foul for (name of violation, in most cases with no further explanation), and optionally gives the disregard the flag signal (S13).

In cases of a targeting foul, the referee should use one of the following announcements: "Personal foul, targeting a defenseless player, (player number), 15-yard penalty, and by rule the player is disqualified," or "Targeting with the crown of the helmet." The signals should be coordinated with the announcement, using signals 38, 24 and 47.

## Referee

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

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



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

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

Announcements should be made in a normal tone. Do not raise your voice.

### **Umpire**

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

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

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

He will work with the head linesman and the line judge to ensure the penalty is correctly enforced.

### **Head Linesman**

The head linesman shall mark off the yardage from his sideline position at approximately the same time as the umpire who will look to him to make sure they have enforced the foul correctly. Any discrepancy should be corrected immediately.

### **Line Judge**

The line judge will hold the spot from which the penalty is enforced until the umpire and the head linesman have completed their enforcement. He will then, independently, mark off the penalty yardage and confirm that the umpire and head linesman have enforced the penalty correctly.

Any discrepancy should be corrected immediately.

### **Other Officials**

Observe the actions of the referee, umpire, head linesman and line judge and make sure that no errors have been made.

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

### **Other Concepts**

If the enforcement is correct, the down box should be moved to the spot and the chains moved (if appropriate). If an auxiliary down box is used, the line judge instructs the holder to move the marker to the spot.



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

If the referee is equipped with a microphone, he should switch it on when the penalty is being enforced, announcing the foul, the number and team of the player committing it and other pertinent information (down, enforcement spot, extent of penalty, etc.). Speak in an unhurried, conversational and measured tone, matching the verbal description to the signals. For example, "Holding (pause) number 76 (pause) offense. The 10-yard penalty is enforced from the previous spot (pause). Repeat the down (pause). Second down."

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

When fouls are committed that require enforcement at the next free kick, the referee should give the preliminary signal and point to the spot of the free kick. The umpire will repeat the signal to the press box-side only following enforcement at the succeeding spot.

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

A few techniques to avoid:

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

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

## Use of the Microphone

Some reminders for referees regarding the microphone:

- **Don't shout.** The microphone will sufficiently amplify your voice.

Shouting can cause feedback that will drown out the announcement. It also may convey you are angry. Speak in a measured, conversational tone.

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

## Extra Periods



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

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

The first extra period is preceded by a coin toss. The referee and umpire should be in the center of the field. Upon a signal from the referee, the field judge and side judge escort their respective captains to the inbounds line, then return to the vicinity of the sideline. The head linesman, line judge and back judge remain at the sideline. No team personnel are to be inside the nine-yard marks during the toss. The line judge and head linesman should have a game ball in their possession; once the toss is completed, the ball can quickly be put in place for the first series.

The captains should face each other with their backs to their sidelines. The visiting captain calls the toss, telling the referee his choice before the referee flips the coin. The umpire should audibly repeat the captain's choice before the flip.

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

Once the choices are determined, the referee instructs the captain of the team starting on offense to face the opponent's goal line. The other captain faces his opponent's goal line. The referee gives a first down signal in the direction the offensive team will be advancing. The head linesman and line judge instruct the players to promptly move to their positions. The officials then move immediately to the proper 25 yardline.

If additional extra periods are needed, the head linesman and line judge obtain the choices from the respective coaches and report the results to the referee, who uses the microphone to announce the choices.



# Instant Replay



## Booth Review

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



to the sidelines and the umpire. That will allow the coaches and players to know where the ball will next be put in play.

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

### **Coach's Challenge**

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



# Basic Officiating Guidelines



## 1. Personal Responsibilities

### Conditioning

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

### Rules and Mechanics

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

### Getting a Look

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

### Hustle

Hurry should not be mistaken for hustle. Hustle is essential; hurry is a hazard. Keep the game moving smoothly from start to finish. Do not permit haste to interfere with duties or correct determinations. There are times it is proper to speed the tempo of the game in order to get the ball back in play after an incomplete pass, to take a position on a foul situation, to prepare for a measurement, etc. Never hurry an injured player off the field. Never rush the ball to the inbounds line without checking measurements or press



for a captain's decision on a difficult option. Precision and care should be exercised in all situations.

### **Courage**

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

### **Media and Other Commentary**

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

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

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

## **2. Uniform**

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

### **Shirt**

Two-inch black and white vertical stripes are worn. The shirt should have a Byron collar, black cuffs and a breast pocket. The zipper should be zipped at or very near the top. Officials should have shirts with short and long sleeves. All crew members should wear the same length sleeves. T-shirts and turtlenecks (for cold weather) should be black. The undergarment should not have letters or pictures that could be seen through the striped shirt. Shirts should always be tucked in. The official's position should be worn on the back of the shirt and on the breast pocket. The position designation on the back must be a full block letter on a black background measuring 10 and one-half by eight inches should be centered on the stripes on the back of the shirt. The position letters are: R – referee; U – umpire; H – head linesman; L – line judge; F – field judge, S – side judge and B – back judge. Numbers are prohibited. Mesh shirts are allowed, but all members of



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

### **Pants**

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

### **Shoes**

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

### **Hat**

A black hat, with a brim between 2/3-4 and three inches long and the traditional narrow white piping, are worn by all but the referee.

The referee's all-white (no black trim) Brooklyn-style hat must be clean. All caps should be fitted (sized). Hats may have the manufacturer's logo.

### **Whistle**

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

### **Jacket**

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

### **Accessories**

Each official must have:

- At least one light gold penalty flag, 15 by 15 inches with a center weight that is not a hard substance. The flags may be carried in the belt or a pocket, but should be inconspicuous.
- At least one bean bag to mark non-penalty spots. Bean bags should be worn in the belt. All members of the crew should use black bean bags.
- An information card (to record timeouts, captains, etc.) and a writing utensil.

PlayPic®



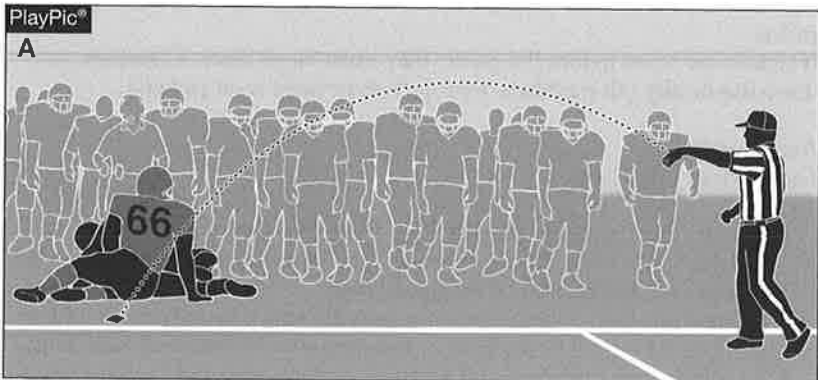
- An elastic down indicator or other device to keep track of downs. The umpire should wear a second device to keep track of the area of the field from which the ball was last snapped.
- Gloves, when worn, should be black. Foul-weather hoods, when worn should be all black except for the referee's, which should be white.
- The referee must have a coin.
- Unless provided by the home team, the head linesman should have a device that is clipped to the chain as an aid for measurements, etc.
- Officials who have timing responsibilities should wear a countdown-style wristwatch with a black band.

### 3. Bean Bag and Hat

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

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

For penalty enforcement, the basic spot on a running play is where the run ends. If the ball is fumbled, the run ends at the spot where possession was lost. Consequently, the spot of the fumble must be marked in the event a penalty occurs and that **spot is needed**. Technically, the spot is required only for fumbles beyond **the neutral zone**, but officials should develop the habit of bagging all fumbles, **failed handoffs or muffed backward passes**. The covering official should also drop the bean bag when a handoff or backward pass occurs beyond the neutral zone or when there is no neutral zone.



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

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

The bean bag may be used on kick downs to indicate illegal touching by team A. On free kicks, if team A touches the ball before the ball crosses team B's restraining line and before it is touched there by any team B player, the spot must be marked with the bean bag. For a scrimmage kick, the spot must be marked if team A touches a kick that has crossed the neutral zone before team B touches the ball.

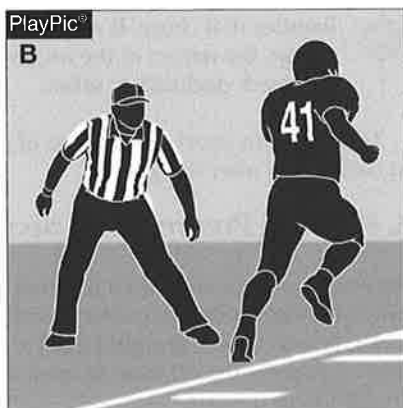
If the quarterback is sacked behind the line, the referee must take responsibility for marking the forward progress spot with his bean bag. To do that, he should step forward and drop the bag on the appropriate spot while keeping an eye on the post-tackle activity.

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

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

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




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








## 4. Using Info Cards

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

Information you need to log before the game begins:

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

Information you'll want to record during the game:

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

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

## 5. Forward Progress and Spotting the Ball

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

The head linesman and line judge will keep primary responsibility for spotting the ball down the entire field and will transition responsibility to the side judge and field judge at the two yardline going in. On very long plays, the side judge or field judge may assist with getting the spot if play and position dictate.

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

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

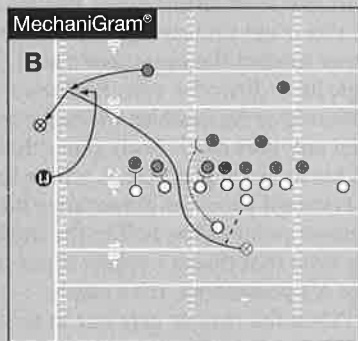
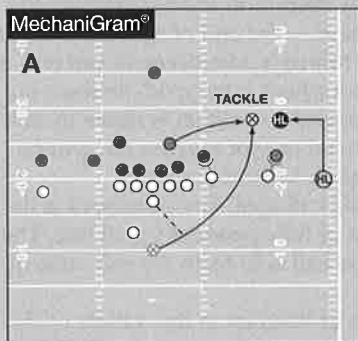
Be very aware of forward progress when there is drive-back action of the runner and be alert for subsequent ball-stripping action, which would not be a fumble.

## Marking Progress

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

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

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



Officials should not penetrate the hashmarks for a spot unless the spot needs to be sold (such as on a fourth-down play when team A only needs to advance the ball a short distance in order to achieve a first down). When the play ends between the hashes, the wings can give the spot from approximately midway between the hashmark and the sideline.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



When the contact pushes the runner forward (running forward or backward), the runner gets his forward-most spot.



When the contact pushes the runner backward when he was running forward or backward, the runner is entitled to the forward-most spot of the ball at the point of contact with the opponent.



When the runner is airborne (with or without contact) as he goes over the sideline, the spot is where you judge the ball crossed the sideline, not where the ball is when the runner first touches out of bounds.

### Ball-Spotting Philosophy

- The ball can be placed on a yardline to begin the next series after a change of possession. (Exception: If the change of possession occurs on a fourth-down running or passing play, the ball will be left at the dead-ball spot to begin the next series.) For example, if a punt return ends with the ball between team B's 33 and 34 yardlines, move the ball forward to team B's 34 yardline. At all other times, the ball is placed where it became dead.

## 6. Fumbles

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

If the covering official sees a player recover the fumble from a prone position, he should blow the play dead. If the defense recovers, the stop-the-clock signal is given, followed by a point in the direction of the recovering team. If the offense recovers, the covering official should only signal the next down (unless a first down was achieved; in that case, the stop-the-clock signal is given, followed by a point in the direction of the recovering team).

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



## 10. Changing Calls

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 11. Communicating With Coaches

Because of their position on the sidelines, wing officials are the main conduit between coaches and the officials. Handled correctly, being in close

proximity to a coach improves the lines of communication and can actually be a benefit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

The referee will:

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

The umpire must stand over the ball until cleared by the referee just prior to the ready-for-play signal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ask the head coach of the offended team if he wants the 10-second runoff.

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

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

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

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

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

Ask the head coach of the offended team if he wants the 10-second runoff.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

The referee will:

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

The umpire must stand over the ball until cleared by the referee just prior to the ready-for-play signal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ask the head coach of the offended team if he wants the 10-second runoff.

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

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

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

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

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

Ask the head coach of the offended team if he wants the 10-second runoff.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **14. After the Game**

### **Postgame Duties and Review**

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

### **Postgame Reports**

Once in the locker room, complete any required game reports and mail them immediately. If there is any breakdown in cooperation between game officials and the clock operators during the game, or if any malfunction



of the clocks occur, the official in charge of the timer is to inform the conference office or assigning agency immediately following the game. Timers are encouraged to report crews that are not cooperative or whose signals are not clear and accurate.

It is permissible for the sports information director of the home school to contact the referee regarding rules interpretations. The referee should provide explanations on rules or interpretations, but judgment calls are not to be discussed.

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

The referee will contact the assigning agent (usually the conference officiating coordinator) and inform him who was disqualified for fighting. The report must include the point of the game in which the disqualification occurred.

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

### **Tracking and Reporting Fouls**

In the FBS and FCS conferences, each official must record each foul he calls during a game. After the game, the penalties are copied to a master sheet which is sent to the conference.

More and more Division II and Division III conferences are requiring penalty reports.

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

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

The penalty reports use two- or three-letter abbreviations to identify the fouls. In order to ensure that everyone is marching to the same music, the fouls and the appropriate abbreviations appear below. Although an official may use different designations on the penalty card he carries during the game, the following designations should be used on the report sent to the conference or coordinator.



ABUSIVE LANGUAGE .....	ABL
BLOCKING BELOW WAIST .....	BBW
BLOW TO HEAD / TARGETING .....	BTH
BUTTING RAMMING WITH HELMET .....	BUT
CHOP BLOCK .....	CHB
CLIPPING .....	CLP
DELAY OF GAME , OFFENSE .....	DOD
DELAY OF GAME, DEFENSE .....	DOG
DELAYED/EXCESSIVE ACT .....	DEA
DISQUALIFICATIONS .....	DSQ
ENCROACHMENT OFFENSE .....	ENC
EQUIPMENT VIOLATION .....	EQV
FACE MASK, 15 YDS .....	FMM
FALSE START .....	FST
FIGHTING BEFORE GAME .....	FBG
FIGHTING FIRST HALF .....	FFH
FIGHTING HALF TIME .....	FHT
FIGHTING SECOND HALF .....	FSH
FREE KICK OUT OF BOUNDS .....	KOB
HANDS TO THE FACE .....	HTF
HIT ON DEFENSELESS RECEIVER .....	HDR
HOLDING, DEFENSE .....	DH
HOLDING, OFFENSE .....	OH
HORSECOLLAR TACKLE .....	HCT
HURLING .....	HUR
ILLEGAL BATTING .....	BAT
ILLEGAL BLOCK IN BACK .....	IBB
ILLEGAL CONTACT WITH SNAPPER .....	ICS
ILLEGAL CRACKBACK .....	ICB
ILLEGAL FORMATION .....	ILF
ILLEGAL FORWARD PASS .....	IFP
ILLEGAL FREE FORMATION .....	IFK
ILLEGAL KICK .....	KIK
ILLEGAL MOTION .....	ILM
ILLEGAL PARTICIPATION .....	ILP
ILLEGAL SHIFT .....	ISH
ILLEGAL SNAP .....	ISP
ILLEGAL SUBSTITUTION .....	ILS
ILLEGAL TOUCHING OF A FORWARD PASS .....	ITP
ILLEGALLY KICKING BALL .....	IKB
INELIGIBLE RECEIVER DOWNFIELD .....	IDP
INTENTIONAL GROUNDING .....	ING
INTERLOCKING LEGS .....	INL
KICK-CATCH INTERFERENCE .....	KCI



LATE HIT OUT OF BOUNDS .....	LTO
LATE HIT/PILING ON .....	LTP
LEAPING .....	LEA
LEVERAGE .....	LEV
OFFSIDE, DEFENSE .....	DOF
OFFSIDE, KICKING TEAM .....	OFK
OTHER UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS .....	UNR
OTHER UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT .....	UNS
PASS INTERFERENCE, DEFENSE .....	DPI
PASS INTERFERENCE, OFFENSE .....	OPI
REMOVAL OF HELMET .....	RHT
ROUGHING FREE KICKER .....	RFK
ROUGHING KICKER/HOLDER, 15 YDS .....	RRK
ROUGHING PASSER .....	RPS
RUNNING INTO KICKER/HOLDER .....	RNH
SIDELINE INTERFERENCE — 15 YDS .....	SLM
SIDELINE INTERFERENCE — 5 YDS .....	SLI
SPIKING/THROWING BALL .....	STB
STRIKING, KICKING, KNEEING, ELBOWING .....	SKE
TAUNTING/BAITING .....	TAU
TRIPPING .....	TRP
UNFAIR TACTICS .....	UFT
UNSPORTSMANLIKE ACT/BENCH .....	BCH

## 15. Guidelines On Unsportsmanlike Conduct Fouls

Player behavior in committing unsportsmanlike conduct fouls continues to be a major point of emphasis for the NCAA Football Rules Committee and the CFO Board of Managers. Recognizing these fouls and enforcing the penalties place our officials in a difficult situation. It is the nature of the business to be criticized, and it seems especially true when we try to apply the relevant rules (Rule 9-2-1). These are judgment calls, as are all the decisions officials make during the action of the game.

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

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

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

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

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

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

If it feels OK, let it go.

If it feels wrong, flag it.

It will never be possible to be totally specific in writing what should and should not be allowed. But we trust our officials to be of good judgment who know in their hearts what should and should not be allowed in the heat of an emotional game.

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

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

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

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



Effective with the 2011 season, officials should not rush toward any player or players to prevent potential celebratory, unsportsmanlike acts. They should maintain a presence at a reasonable distance and observe the actions of the players. If the actions border on unsportsmanlike conduct, no foul is to be called and that information should be relayed to the head coach. If a foul is committed, a flag should be thrown without emotion or further action toward the player.

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

## 16. Setting the Pace

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

### Free Kicks

Upon the back judge giving the ball to the kicker, the referee whistles the ready and signals the 25-second clock to begin.

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

### Timeouts

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

The liaison times the commercials. Timing begins when the referee gives the media timeout signal. With 15 seconds left in a timeout on a TV game (30 seconds in a non-TV game or before a free kick), the line judge informs the liaison, who signals the referee. The wing officials should then instruct the teams to return to the field.

When the liaison indicates that 10 seconds remain in the timeout, the referee may give the ready-for-play signal. The referee has discretion to slightly delay the ready-for-play signal.

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

## After a Play

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

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

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



# Appendix A

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

In the absence of the referee, the head linesman is responsible that a pregame conference is conducted. The field judge is responsible for having the correct time. Other officials should confirm their watches with the field judge.

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

## PREGAME OUTLINE



### Pregame duties

Coaches' equipment certification

Spot check players' equipment

Check and mark game balls

Identify medical staff

Instruction of chain crew and alternates

Instruction of ballboys

Instruction for timer

Inspection of field



### Coin toss procedure

First half procedure

Second half options



### Free kicks

Positions

Instructions to teams



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



### **Scrimmage plays — general**

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



### Scrimmage plays — runs

Coverage of runner — in backfield, between tackles, sweeps, pitchouts

Action in front of runner

Dead ball coverage

Forward progress — out of bounds

Goal line/short-yardage situations

Coverage of fumbles, ensuing advances and returns



### Scrimmage plays — passes

Coverage of passer — roughing

Passer/pass behind/beyond line of scrimmage: clarify jurisdiction on forward/backward pass

Intentional grounding — clarify jurisdiction

Ineligibles downfield

Keys and zones

Coverage of receivers

Complete/incomplete

Pass interference — offensive, defensive

Coverage on interception — momentum into end zone, blocking below waist



### Punts

Positions

Contact on kicker

Blocked/touched on line of scrimmage — ball beyond/behind neutral zone



Kick-catch interference

Fair catch

Untouched in end zone

Out of bounds — marking spot

Illegal touching

Coverage of runback — ball carrier, other action,  
blocking below waist

Fakes



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

Positions — coverage of posts

Contact on kicker/holder

Blocked/touched on line of scrimmage — ball  
beyond/behind neutral zone

Fakes

Coverage when defense gain possession



### **General duties**

Fumble pileups

Ball relay



### **End of quarter**

Changing end after first and third quarters

Halftime

End of game





### **Timeouts**

Records

Positions and duties



### **Measurements**



### **Fouls and enforcement**

Reporting — who, what, where, when

Recording fouls

Options

Signals

Enforcement



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

If one official is hurt

If two officials are hurt

# Appendix B

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## 40/25-Second Play Clock For Timers

The play clock will be automatically reset to 40 seconds at the end of each play. The covering official's signal will designate when to start the play clock.

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

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

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

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

- Penalty administration
- Charged team timeout
- Media timeout
- Injury timeout (offense)
- Measurement
- Change of possession
- Try for extra point
- Start of each period
- Start of possession series in extra period
- Instant replay review
- Kickoff or safety kick
- Helmet off (offense)
- Other administrative stoppage

## Special Situations

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

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

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

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

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

Be alert for signal from referee if you notice any type of administrative delay while the play clock is running, especially after it gets under 20 seconds.



## Appendix C

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

The play clock will be automatically reset to 40 seconds at the end of each play. The covering official's signal will designate when to start the play clock.

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

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

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

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

- Penalty administration
- Charged team timeout
- Media timeout
- Injury timeout
- Measurement
- Change of Possession
- Try for extra point
- Start of each period
- Start of possession series in extra period
- Instant replay review
- Kickoff or safety kick
- Other administration stoppage

### Game Clock Procedures For Timers

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

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

NOTE: The rule does not apply in the last two minutes of either half.

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

- A fumble forward and out of bounds anytime during the game (even the last two minutes of either half).

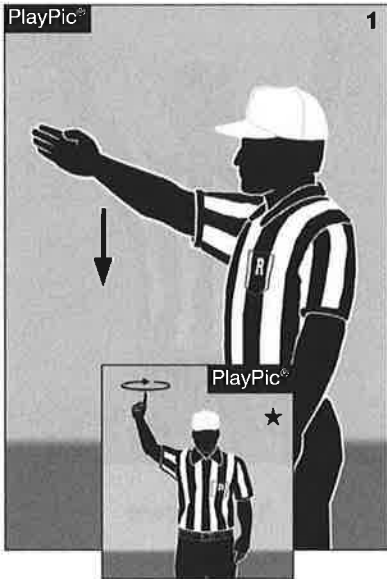
The game clock starts on the referee's start the clock signal after:

- A fumble forward and out of bounds anytime during the game (even the last two minutes of either half).

If the game clock is stopped with two seconds or less in any period and will start on the referee's signal, run the clock to zero if the ball is legally snapped.



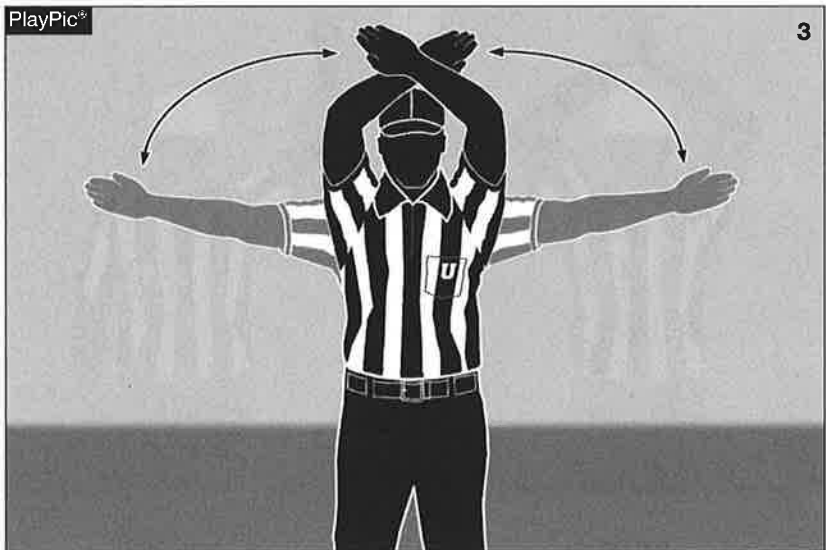
# Official Football Signals



Ready for play  
★ Untimed down



Start the clock



Stop the clock



**TV/radio timeout**



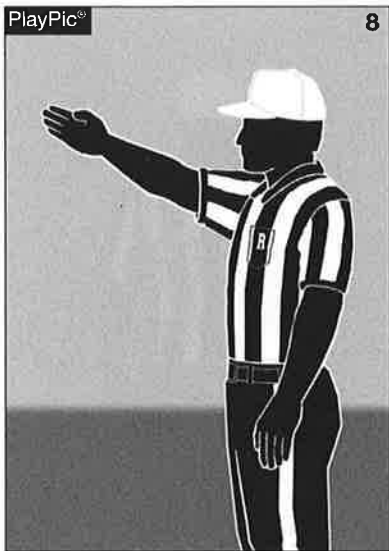
**Touchdown**



**Safety**



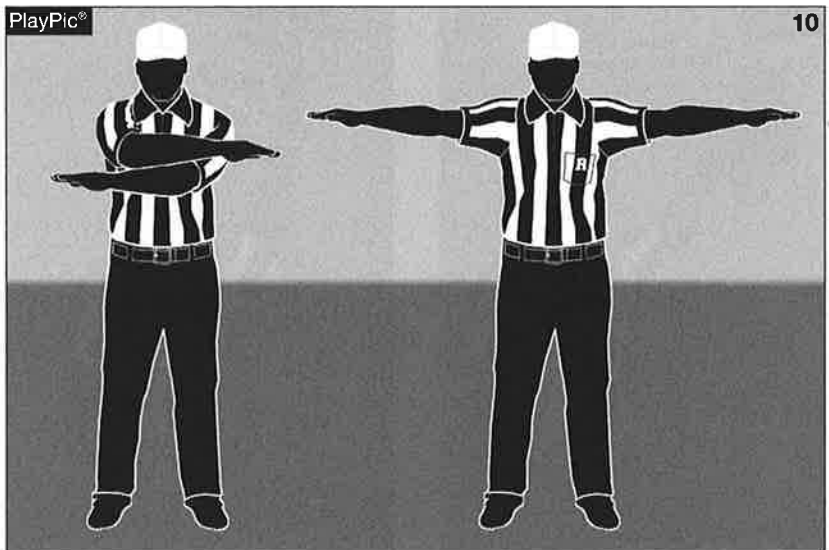
**Dead-ball foul/  
touchback (move side to side)**



**First down**



**Loss of down**



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



**Legal touching**



**Inadvertent whistle**



**Disregard flag**



**End of period**





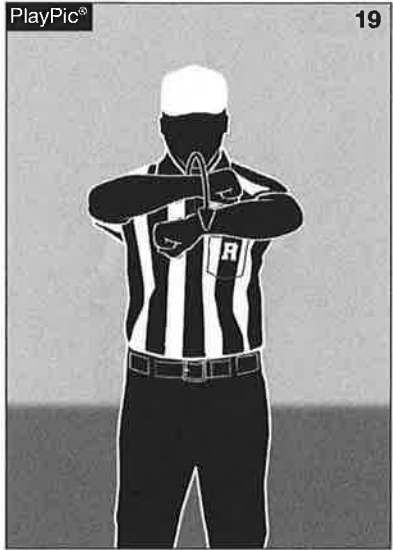
**Illegal touching**



**Uncatchable pass**



**Offside B/Offside A or B on Kickoff**



**False start/Encroachment A  
Illegal formation**

PlayPic®

20



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

PlayPic®

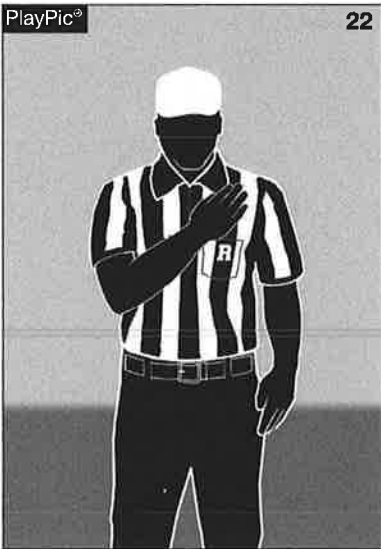
21



**Delay of game**

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22



**Substitution infraction**

PlayPic®

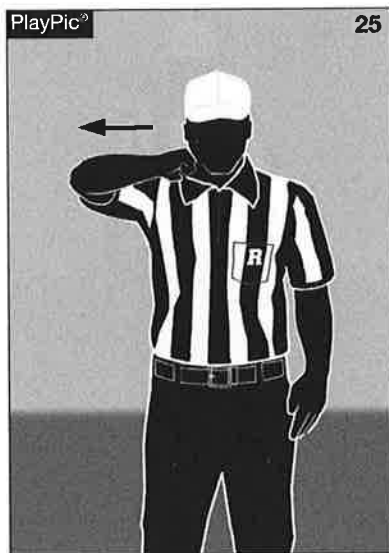
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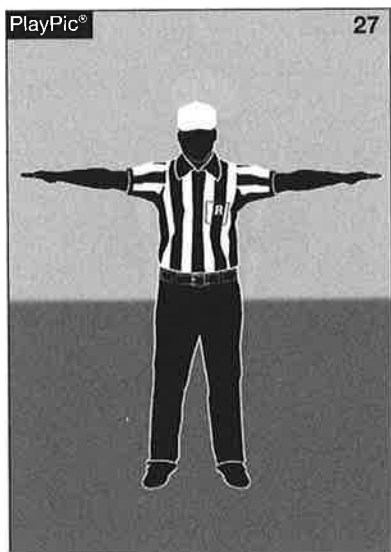
**Equipment violation**



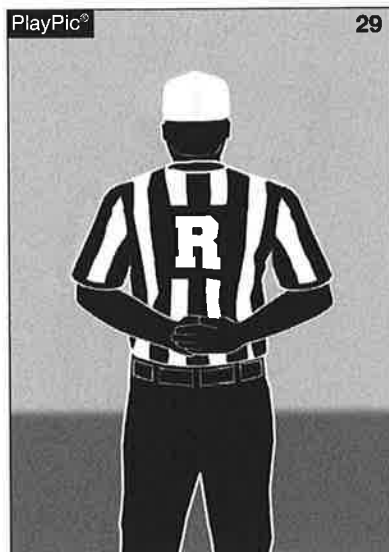
**Targeting**



**Horse-collar**



**Unsportsmanlike conduct**



**Sideline interference**

NOTE: Face press box  
when giving signal.

NOTE: Signal 26 is for future expansion





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



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



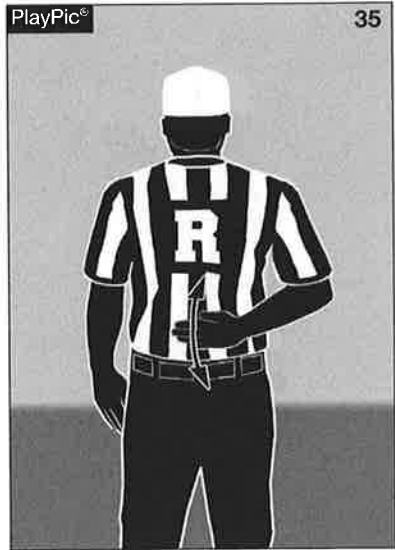
**Illegal fair catch**



**Pass interference**  
**Kick-catching interference**



**Roughing the passer**



**Illegal pass**  
**Illegal forward handing**

NOTE: Face press box when giving signal.



**Intentional grounding**



**Ineligible downfield on pass**



### Personal Foul

NOTE: Signal precedes any other prescribed personal foul signal



### Clipping



### Block below the waist Illegal block



### Chop block



**Holding  
Obstructing  
Illegal use of hands or arms**



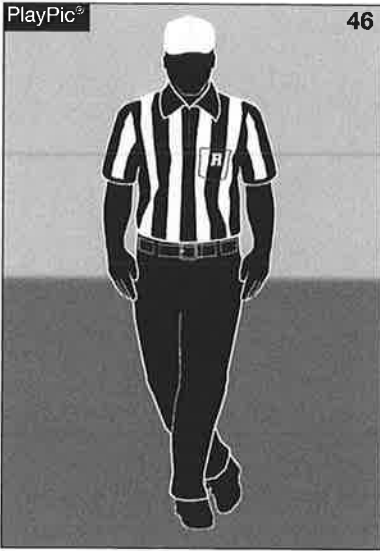
**Illegal block in the back**



**Helping the runner  
Interlocked blocking**



**Grasping of facemask or  
helmet opening**



**Tripping**



**Disqualification**

## **Optional Crew and Supplementary Signal Chart**



**Receiver off the line/Five seconds left on play clock**



**11 players**



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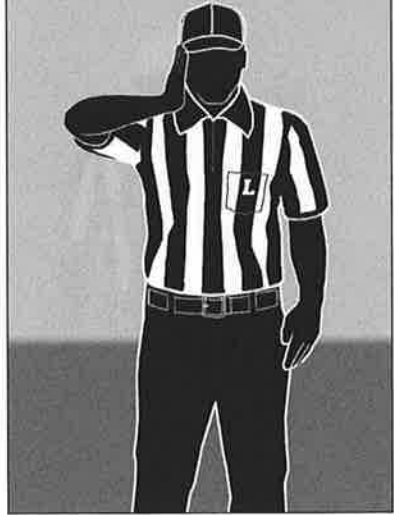
03



**No catch: Receiver out of bounds**

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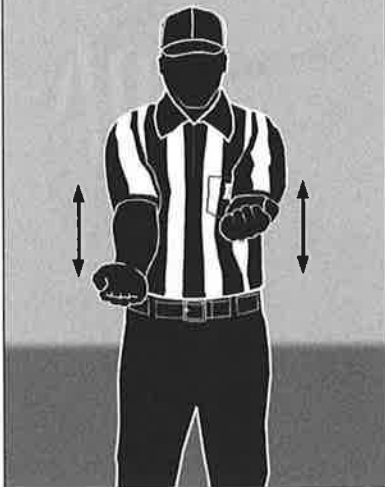
04



**Unbalanced line**

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05



**Pass juggled**

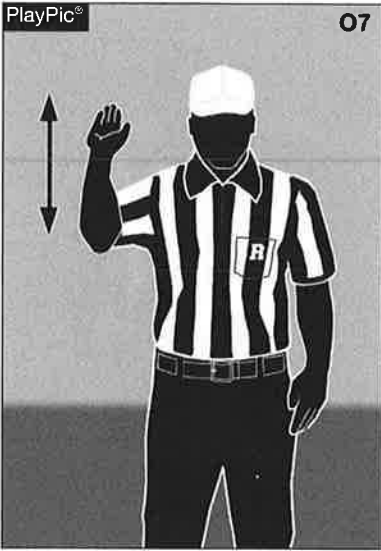
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06



**Fourth-down fumble rules apply**

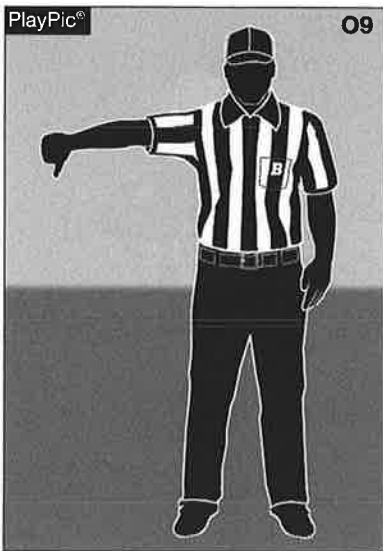




**Reset play clock to 25 seconds  
(Use both hands to have play  
clock reset to 40 seconds)**



**Ball dead/  
start play clock/10 seconds left  
on play clock**



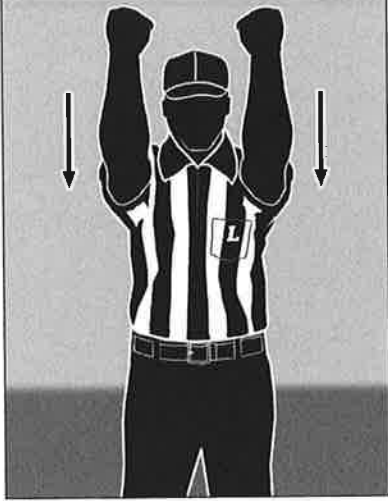
**More than 11 players**



**More than one receiver  
off the line**

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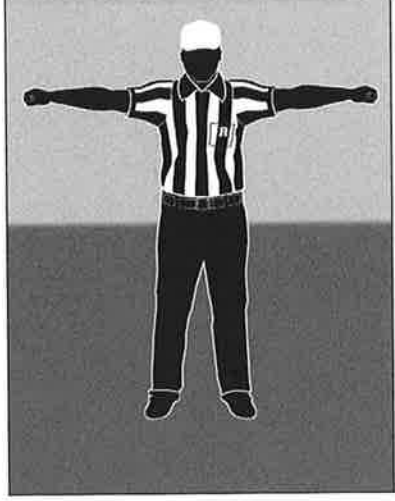
011



**Catch**

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012



**Substitution in progress**

## Notes

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