

2023

SCFOA

7-MAN

MECHANICS

MANUAL



2023

SCFOA 7-MAN MECHANICS MANUAL

**PRESENTED BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA FOOTBALL OFFICIALS
ASSOCIATION**

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CHANGES DENOTED IN RED

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1.

INTRODUCTION

These mechanics are for SCFOA 7-man crews typically used in quarter-finals, semi-finals, and finals. These mechanics are written to supplement the existing 5-man mechanics by only highlighting changes to existing 5-man crew responsibilities. Responsibilities outlined in the 5-man Mechanics Manual are understood to still apply unless stated otherwise.

These are the official mechanics and procedures, which have been adopted by the SCFOA for use in football games in South Carolina. **No deviation or change should be used when you're officiating football games in South Carolina.** Recommendations for modifications and/or changes should be made to your local District Director and forwarded to the Vice President of SCFOA, who will then make recommendations to the Commissioner of Officials and the Board of Directors for approval before implementation.

SCFOA Board of Directors

2.

PRE-GAME RESPONSIBILITIES

REFEREE

- The alignment and responsibilities are the same as 5-man mechanics

UMPIRE

- The alignment and responsibilities are the same as 5-man mechanics

LINESMAN

- The alignment and responsibilities are the same as 5-man mechanics

LINE JUDGE

- The alignment and responsibilities are the same as 5-man mechanics

BACK JUDGE

- The alignment and responsibilities are the same as 5-man mechanics

FIELD JUDGE

- Accompany and assist Back Judge with instructions of the ball person(s) for home team
- Obtain home team captains for coin toss 5 minutes before game time if necessary

SIDE JUDGE

- Accompany and assist Back Judge with instructions of the ball person(s) for visiting team
- Accompany and assist Linesman with instructions for the chain crew
- Obtain visiting team captains for coin toss 5 minutes before game time if necessary

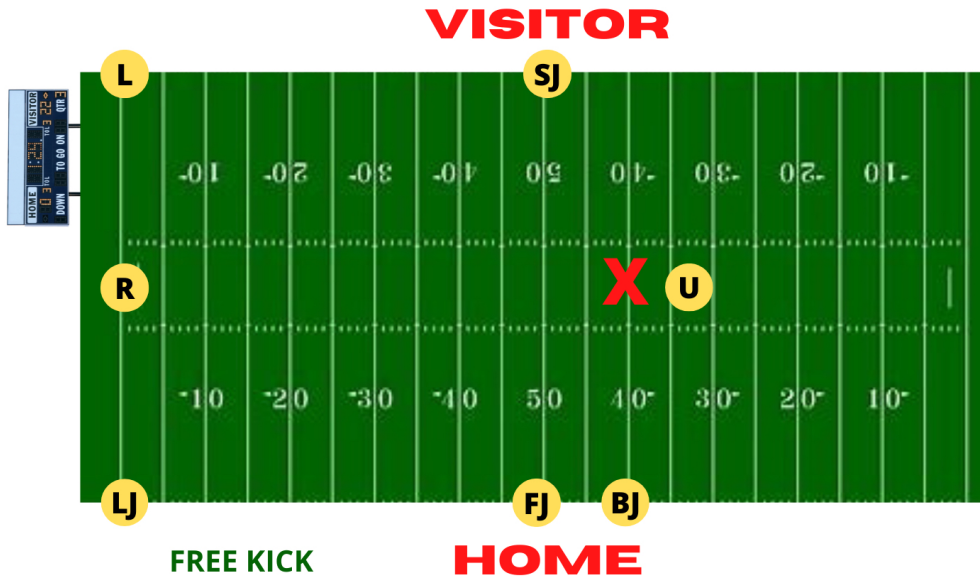
“GAME OFFICIALS MUST ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ENFORCING THE LETTER, AS WELL AS THE SPIRIT, OF THE RULES PROMPTLY AND WITH CONSISTENCY.”

3.

FREE KICKS

3.1

NORMAL FREE KICK



REFEREE

Before the kick

- Line up in the center of the field on the goal line
- Count and confirm, with closed fist number, of R players with Linesman and Line Judge
- Obtain ready signal from all officials and ECO (if assigned)

After the kick

- Responsible for—or share responsibility—for ball on all deep kicks
- Rule on touchbacks or momentum as needed
- Follow the runner until released to up-field officials

UMPIRE

Before the kick

- Same responsibilities and alignment as 5-man mechanics until the ball is kicked
- Count K players and confirm, with closed fist, with Back Judge, Field Judge, and Side Judge

After the kick

- When the ball is kicked, move to the hash mark on the Linesman's side of the field and officiate from the inside out, as is done on a 5-man crew. This includes officiating from inside-to-inside with Back Judge, who is on the other hash mark.
- Watch for fair catch signals on pooch kicks
- Cover initial blocks, and lead runner to the goal line if return is long

LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE

Before the kick

- Line up straddling the pylon on the goal line
- Count and confirm, with closed fist number, of R players with Referee, Linesman/Line Judge
- Responsible (shared) for ball on all deep kicks to your side

After the kick

- Rule on touchbacks or momentum as applicable
- If kick is short of position and on your side of field, quickly move forward to see runner and the catch or recovery
- Follow runner until play becomes dead or the runner moves to the far side of the field
- If kick is to the far side of the field, move up field and towards kick watching action ahead of runner
- Responsible for dead ball spot when run is up your half of field. Runner should be led by the Field Judge/Side Judge, who will rule on a touchdown

BACK JUDGE

Before the kick

- Position on K's free kick line
- Count K players and confirm, using a closed fist, with Umpire, Field Judge, and Side Judge
- Watch for encroachment by K, first touching by K, and kick catch interference by K
- Responsible for 25 second play clock

After the kick

- When the ball is kicked beyond R's 40 (20+ yards), move to the near hash mark and parallel with the Umpire and officiate from inside-out as is done by the Umpire on 5-man crew. This includes officiating from inside-to-inside with the Umpire, who is on the other hash mark.
- Watch for fair catch signals on pooch kicks
- Cover initial blocks and lead runner to the goal line if return is long

FIELD JUDGE AND SIDE JUDGE

Before the kick

- Position on R's free kick line
- Count K players and confirm, with closed fist, with Umpire, Field Judge, and Side Judge
- Watch for encroachment by R, first touching by K, and kick catch interference by K

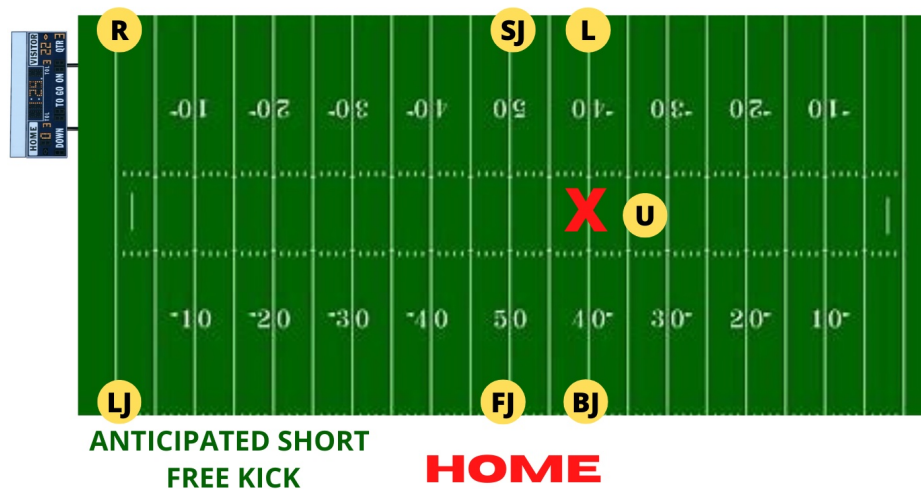
After the kick

- Watch for fair catch signals on pooch kicks and on deeper kicks short of the Line Judge/Linesman
- Cover the initial blocks by R and lead runner to the goal line if return is long
- Line Judge/Linesman should have spot for any out of bounds play. Clean up out of bounds area when this occurs.
- Responsible for sideline to K's goal line

3.2

ANTICIPATED SHORT FREE KICK

VISITOR



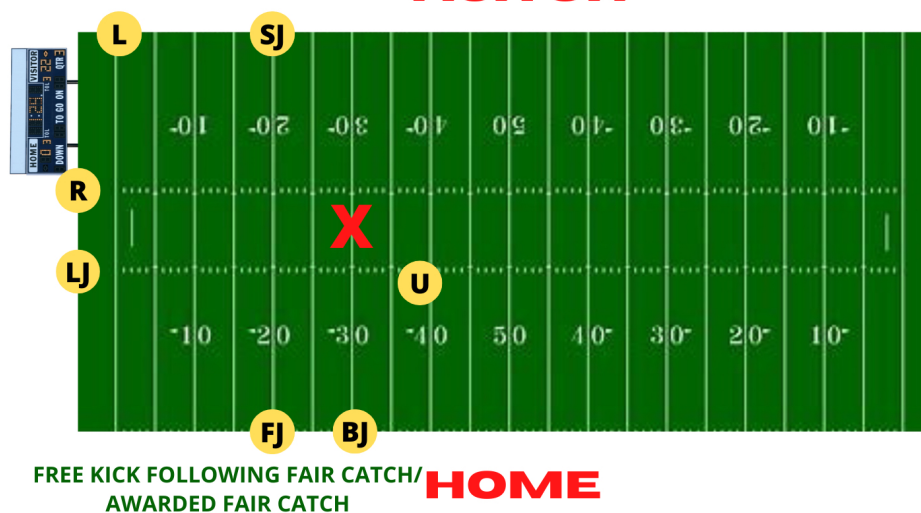
ALL OFFICIALS

- Linesman positions on K's free kick line
- Linesman has normal responsibilities as Back Judge, except for remaining on sideline after a long kick and responsible for sideline to K's goal line
- Referee and Line Judge split the field for possible deep kicks and assume normal responsibilities for Linesman and Line Judge
- Back Judge remains at sideline on K's free kick line on short kicks ruling on first touching, fair catch signals and possession in coordination with the Field Judge. Back Judge is responsible for sideline to K's goal line

3.3

FREE KICK AFTER A FAIR CATCH OR AWARDED FAIR CATCH

VISITOR



ALL OFFICIALS

- Referee and Line Judge are positioned under each upright to rule on kick
- Linesman is positioned on the goal line and has **sole** responsibility for the goal line, touchbacks, and momentum
- For kick that is fielded and returned, Referee and Line Judge must hustle to cover normal responsibilities as best as possible
- Back Judge, Umpire, Side Judge, and Field Judge are positioned and have normal responsibilities
- Field Judge must be prepared to assist on deeper coverage down sideline to cover for the absent Line Judge on kick that is caught and returned

4.

SCRIMMAGE PLAYS

4.1

RUNNING PLAYS

REFEREE

- The alignment and responsibilities are the same as 5-man mechanics

UMPIRE

- The alignment and responsibilities are the same as 5-man mechanics

LINESMAN

- The responsibility with the chains and chain crew are the same as 5-man mechanics

LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE

Before the snap

- Positioned on the line of scrimmage, wider than the widest player. Position does NOT have to be on the sideline on every play unless player position puts you there. Position should be about the same as on 5-man crew.
- Except for the addition of a key receiver, responsibilities before, at, and after the snap are unchanged from 5-man mechanics.
- Key receiver is the second eligible receiver from the outside at the snap. If key goes in motion, the Back Judge takes that player as key and the affected wingman takes the next receiver in. Responsible for action on or by key from the snap until it may be necessary to release your key so that you can cover normal scrimmage action in your zone. Keys are designated so that a set of eyes are on each receiver so that rulings on contact by A against B (clips, block in back, block below waste, hold, pass interference, etc.) and contact by B on A (pass interference, illegal use of hands, holding, etc.) are more easily detected. Keys are for **every** play, not just pass plays.

After the snap:

- Remain on line of scrimmage until ball crosses the line of scrimmage and then officiate normally. Responsible for forward progress, all spots, and out of bounds spots for as far as possible or until the 2 yard line (if snapped outside the 7). If the runner or pass overtakes the Field Judge or Side Judge, they have the spot. The Field Judge or Side Judge lead the runner or pass to the goal line. Except for plays near the goal line, the Linesman/Side Judge and Line Judge/Field Judge should not be close together on the field during a down. A 15- to 20-yard separation should be maintained to keep the play boxed in.
- Assist Umpire in determining if ball crosses the line of scrimmage on any play.
- Assist Referee in determining if pass was thrown or kick made from beyond the line of scrimmage on any play

FIELD JUDGE AND SIDE JUDGE

Before the snap

- Count Team B players. Confirm, using a closed fist, with the Back Judge.
- Position is about 20 yards from the line of scrimmage. Adjust position near goal line as required.
- Key receiver is the widest eligible receiver at the snap. If key goes in motion, the Back Judge will take that player as key and the affected Field Judge/Side Judge will take the next receiver in. Responsible for action on or by key from the snap until it may be necessary to release your key so that you can cover normal scrimmage action in your zone. Keys are designated so that a set of eyes are on each receiver so that rulings on contact by A against B (clips, block in back, block below waste, hold, pass interference, etc.) and contact by B on A (pass interference, illegal use of hands, holding, etc.) are more easily detected. Keys are for **every** play, not just pass plays.

After the snap

- Cover sideline to the end line. Responsible for goal line if ball is snapped outside the 7-yard line.
- Maintain deep positioning such that no player in your area gets deeper than your position
- Have sideline ahead of play all the way to goal line. Maintain separation from Linesman/Line Judge.
- If play ends anywhere in your side zone, assist in getting existing or new ball to the Umpire for spotting.
- If play goes out of bounds on your side, Linesman or Line Judge will typically have spot. Go into out of bounds area and clean up or get opposing players back onto the field.
- Side Judge assists Linesman with set up and operation of chains at any available opportunity.
- Clean up behind Umpire if play goes to the other side of the field.
- If ball is snapped on or inside B's 20 to the 7-yard line, position on the pylon and maintain responsibility for goal line throughout play.

BACK JUDGE

Before the snap

- Count B players and confirm, using a closed fist, with Field Judge/Side Judge
- Responsible for 25 second clock
- Position about 25 yards from the line of scrimmage
- If the ball is snapped on or inside the 20 yard line, position is on the end line

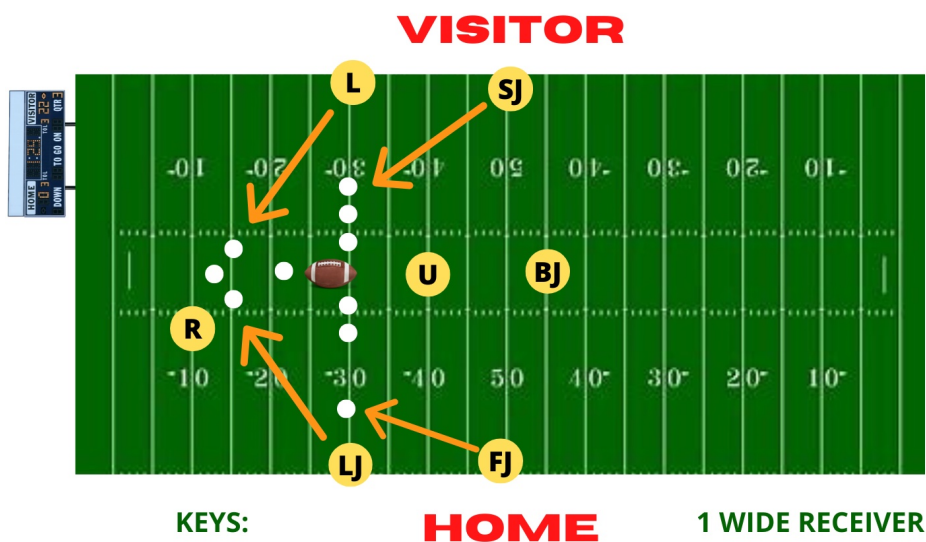
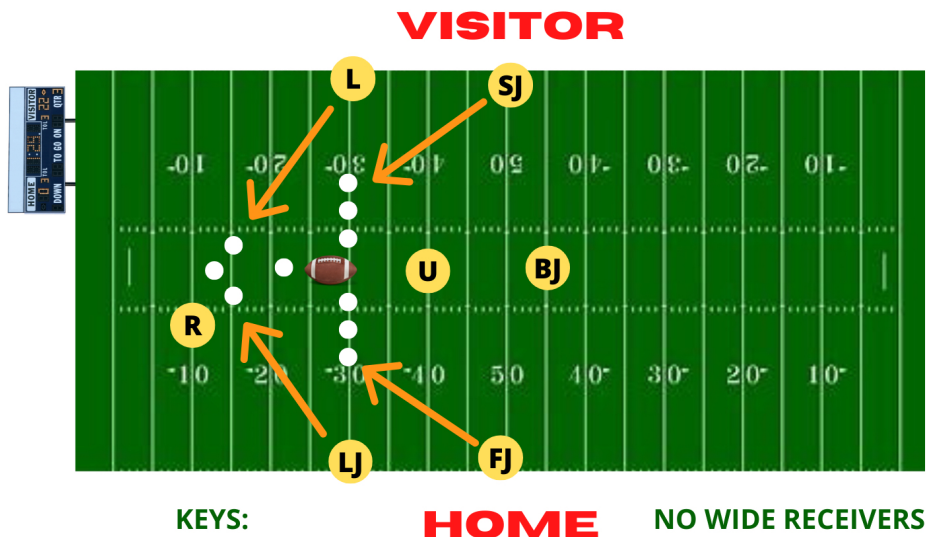
After the snap

- Responsibilities are basically the same as 5-man mechanics. Not typically responsible for getting ball to Umpire or from sideline, but assists in ball retrieval and relaying to proper sideline.
- During the play, keep all players in front of you
- Responsible for the end line in **all** situations.
- Maintain position to officiate from the inside out
- Key receiver is the 3rd eligible receiver from loaded side at the snap **OR** first man out of the back field. If key goes in motion, the Back Judge will take that player as key and the affected Field Judge/Side Judge/ Linesman/Line Judge will take the next receiver in. Responsible for action on or by key from the snap until it

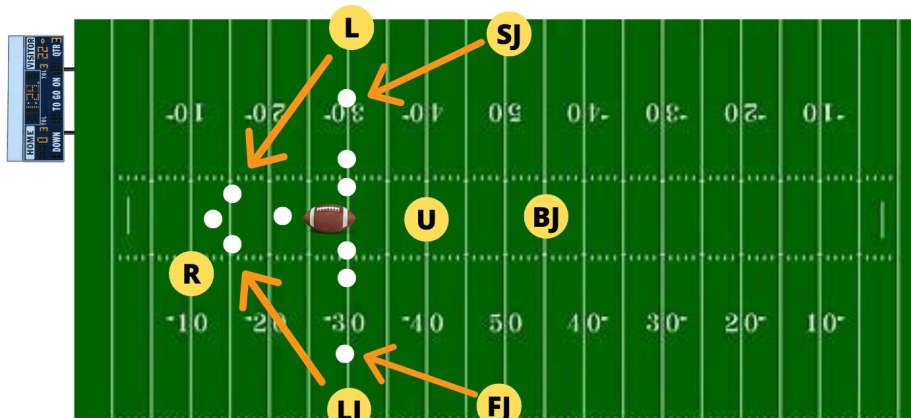
may be necessary to release your key so that you can cover normal scrimmage action in your zone. Keys are designated so that a set of eyes are on each receiver so that rulings on contact by A against B (clips, block in back, block below waste, hold, pass interference, etc.) and contact by B on A (pass interference, illegal use of hands, holding, etc.) are more easily detected. Keys are for **every** play, not just pass plays..

4.2

KEYS FOR 7-MAN CREWS

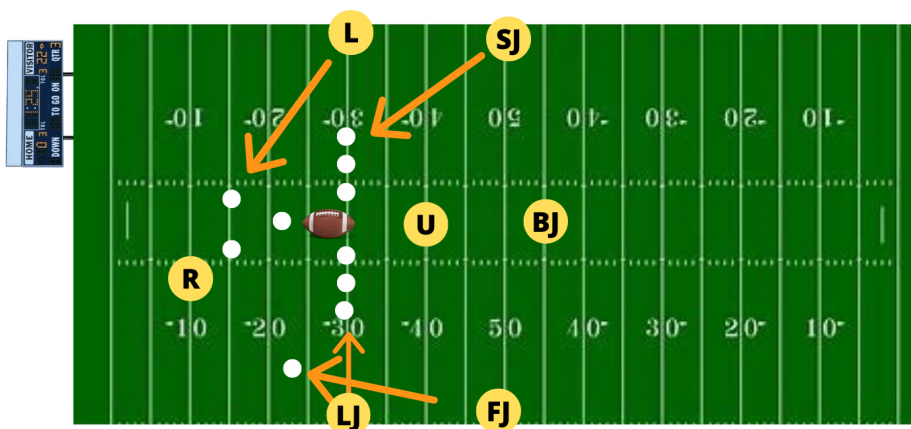


VISITOR



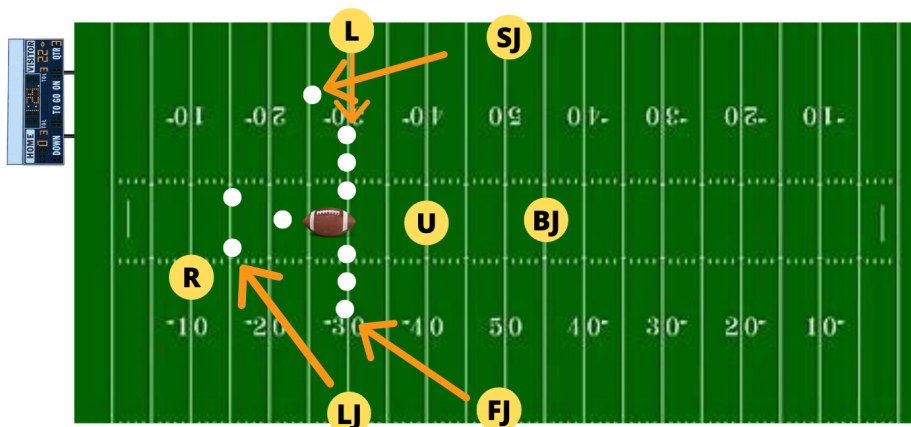
KEYS: **HOME** SINGLE WIDE RECEIVER ON BOTH SIDES

VISITOR



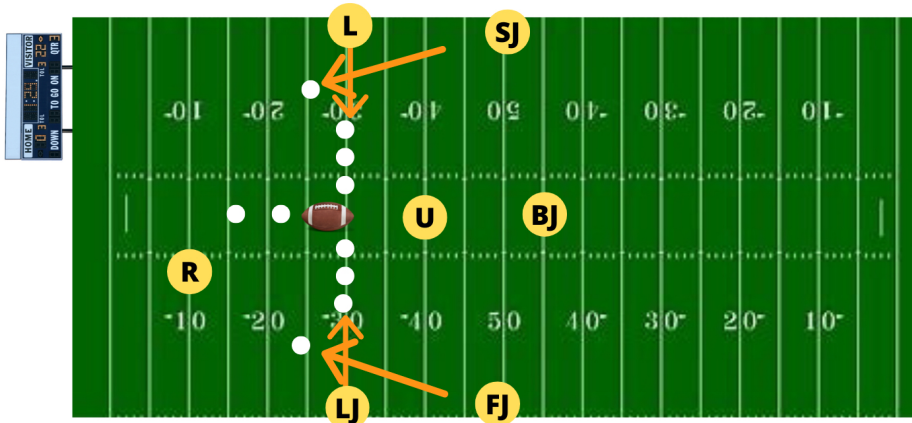
KEYS: **HOME** 2 TEs; WR ON RIGHT SIDE

VISITOR



KEYS: **HOME** 2 TEs; WR ON LEFT SIDE

VISITOR

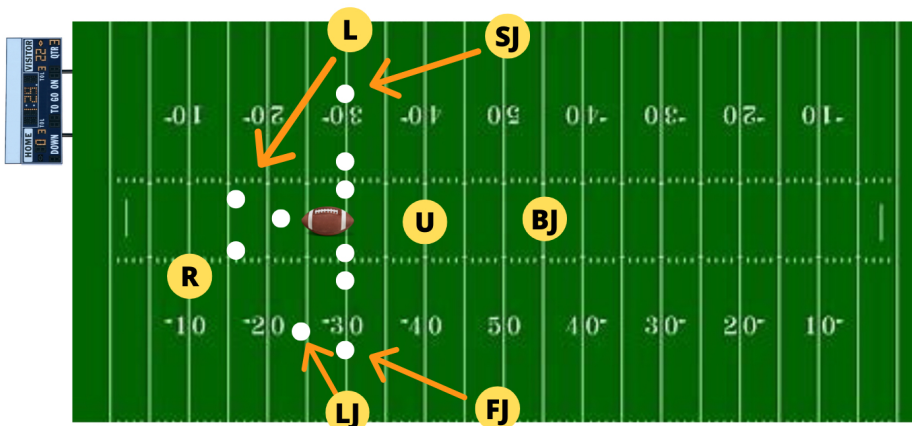


KEYS:

HOME

1 WR AND
TE ON BOTH SIDES

VISITOR

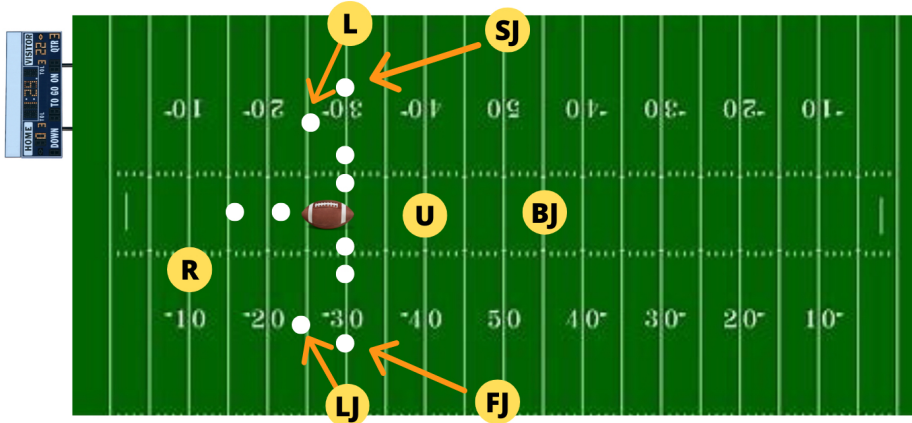


KEYS:

HOME

2 WR RIGHT AND
1 WR LEFT

VISITOR

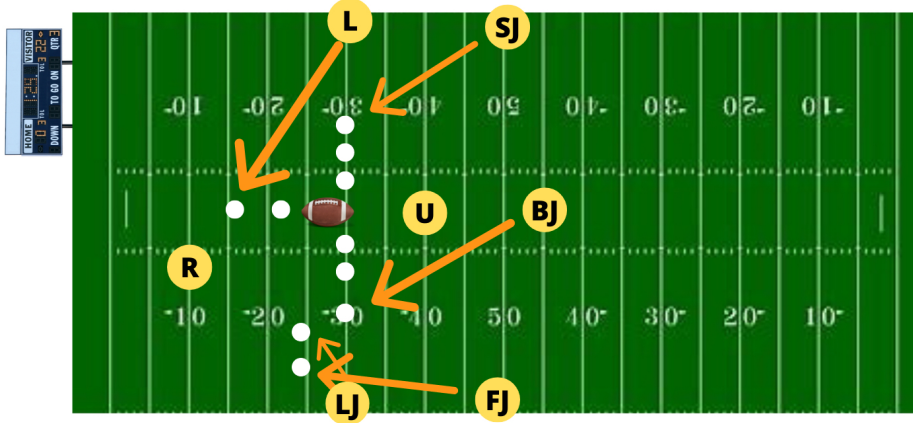


KEYS:

HOME

2 WR ON BOTH SIDES

VISITOR

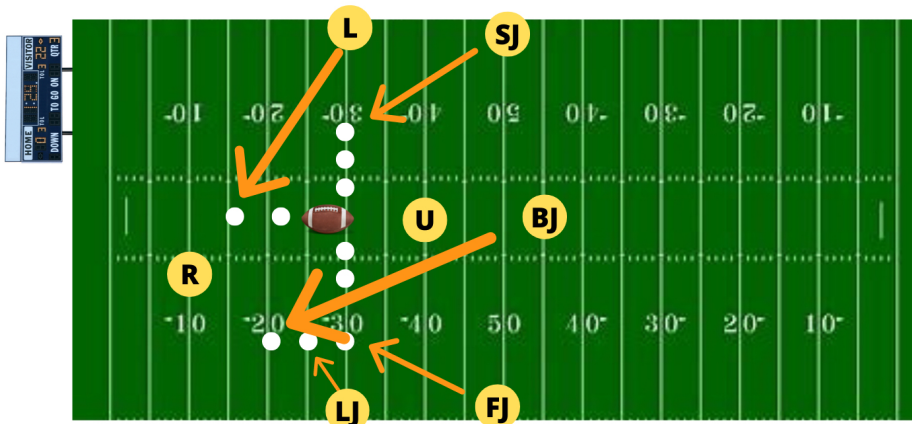


KEYS:

HOME

3 WR RIGHT;
TE ONLY ON LEFT

VISITOR

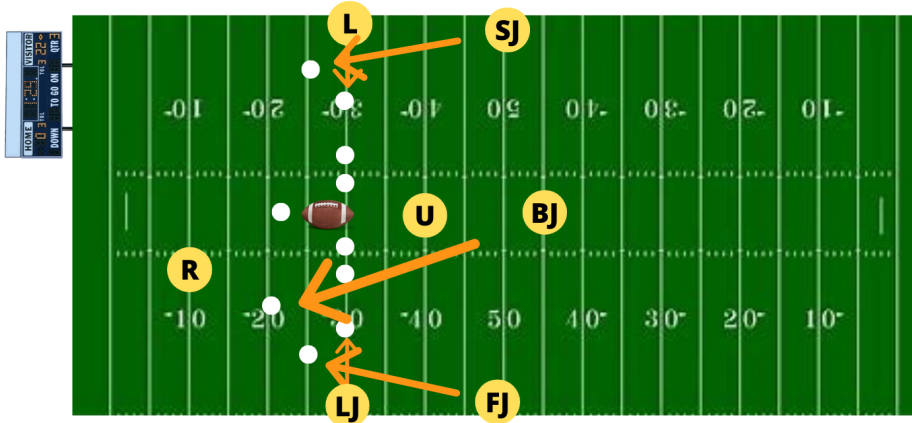


KEYS:

HOME

3 WR RIGHT;
TE ONLY ON LEFT

VISITOR

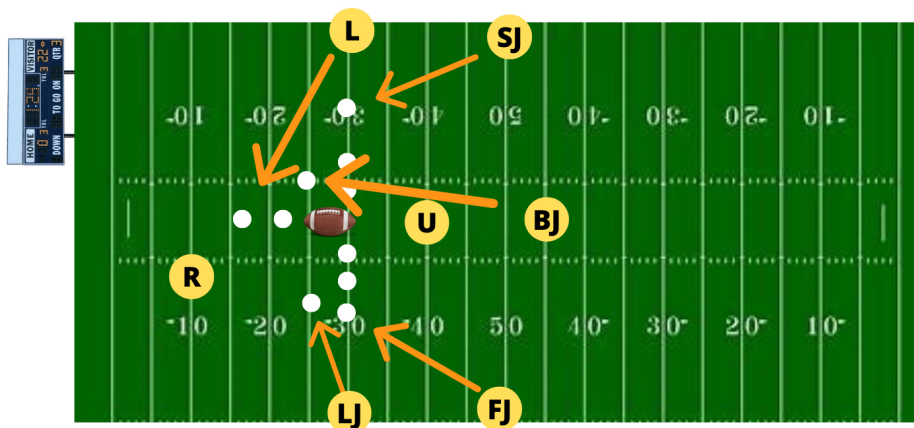


KEYS:

HOME

3 WR ONE SIDE;
2 WR OTHER SIDE

VISITOR



KEYS:

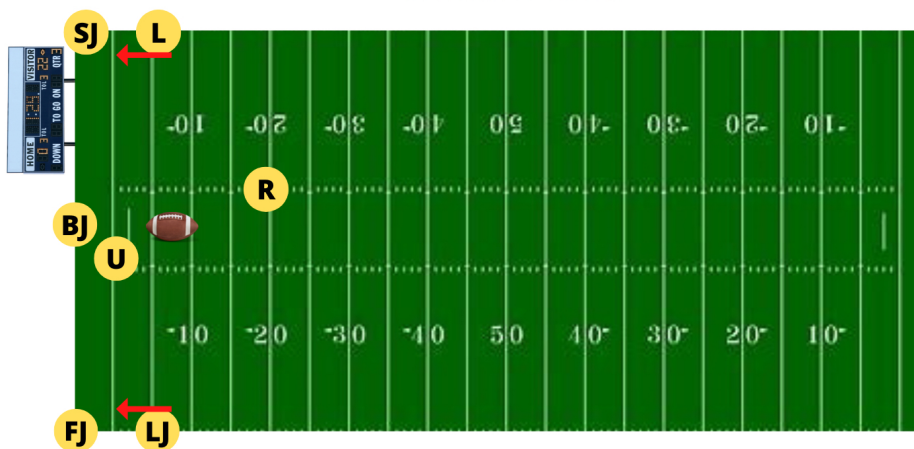
HOME

MAN IN MOTION

4.3

GOAL LINE PLAY

VISITOR



GOAL LINE COVERAGE

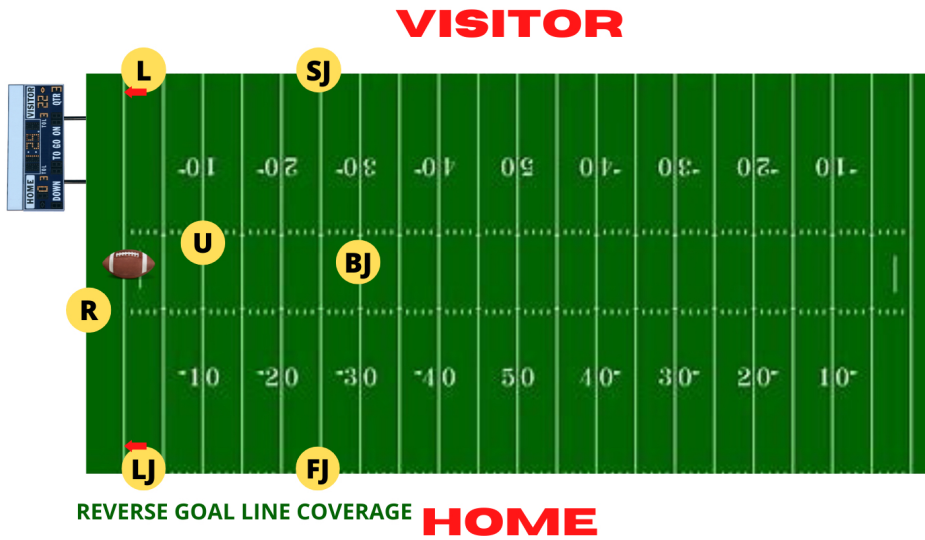
HOME

ALL OFFICIALS

- If the ball is snapped outside of B's 7-yard line, Side Judge and Field Judge are responsible for goal line coverage. Linesman and Line Judge cover runner to the 2-yard line and release him. The side Judge and Field Judge position on the goal line pylon.
- If the ball is snapped on or inside B's 7-yard line, the Linesman and Line Judge are responsible for goal line coverage. Linesman and Line Judge use normal goal line coverage mechanics. The Side Judge and Field Judge position on the end zone corner pylon.

4.4

REVERSE GOAL LINE COVERAGE

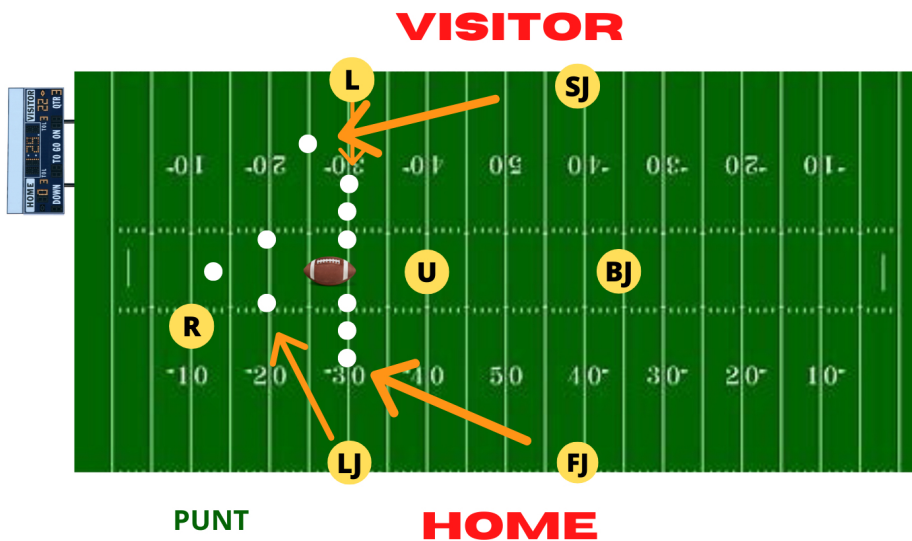


ALL OFFICIALS

- If ball is snapped inside **A's 5-yard line**, Line Judge should move to goal line at snap and officiate out. Linesman should be prepared to move to goal line.
- If ball is snapped inside **A's 3-yard line**, Linesman and Line Judge should move to goal line at snap and officiate out.

4.5

PUNT



REFEREE

- The alignment and responsibilities are same as 5-man mechanics

UMPIRE

- The alignment and responsibilities are same as 5-man mechanics

LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE

- Responsible for 2nd receiver in or nearest receiver in the backfield
- Be prepared to assist on bad snap, blocked kick, or fake
- Remain on line of scrimmage until ball crosses the line or it is necessary to move towards K's goal to assist in coverage for action behind the line of scrimmage
- When kick crosses the line of scrimmage, move slowly and deliberately down field
- Be prepared to lead runner all the way to the goal line on a long return maintaining separation from Side Judge/Field Judge. The roles of coverage are reversed from a scrimmage play for the Linesman/Line Judge and Side Judge/Field Judge regarding coverage of spots and cleanup on a punt.
- Linesman is responsible for knowing if the ball crosses the line of scrimmage
- Line Judge assists in knowing if ball crosses the line of scrimmage

FIELD JUDGE AND SIDE JUDGE

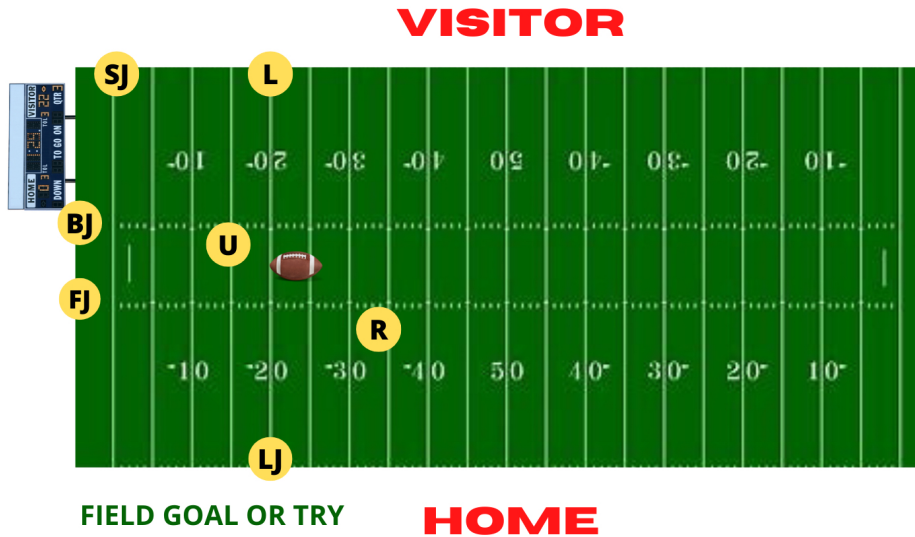
- If ball is snapped on or **inside** R's 40-yard line, position on goal line pylon. Responsible for goal line
- If ball is snapped **outside** R's 40-yard line, position about 3 to 5 yards behind the receiver(s)
- Count R players and confirm, using a closed fist, with Back Judge
- Responsible for widest set man, including the tight end if he is the only receiver on your side
- Responsible (shared) for ball on all deep kicks to your side. Has **sole** responsibility for ball that goes out of bounds on your side
- Rule on validity of fair catch signal
- Observe fair catch signalers that do not field the ball for illegal blocks
- Rule on touchback or momentum as applicable
- Responsible for receivers and their actions if ball goes over their head; Back Judge takes the ball.
- If kick is short of position and on your side of the field, move forward to see runner and the catch or recovery.
- Follow runner until play becomes dead **or** the runner moves to the far side of the field.
- If kick is to the far side of the field, deliberately move up field, watching action ahead of the runner and cleaning up behind the play
- Responsible for dead ball spot when run is up your side of field. Runner should be led by Linesman/Line Judge who rules on touchdown.
- Assist in marking end of kick with bean bag if necessary

BACK JUDGE

- Position to wide side of field and even with—or slightly behind—deepest receiver
- Count and confirm, with a closed fist, number of Team R players with Side Judge/Field Judge
- **ALWAYS** has responsibility for or share responsibility for ball on **ALL** deep kicks, unless the ball goes out of bounds
- Responsible for deepest receiver
- Rule on touchback or momentum as applicable
- Follow runner until released to up field officials
- Primarily responsible for marking end of kick with bean bag
- Rule on validity of fair catch signal
- Responsible for R's goal line

4.6

FIELD GOAL OR TRY ATTEMPT



REFEREE

- The alignment and responsibilities are same as 5-man mechanics

UMPIRE

- The alignment and responsibilities are same as 5-man mechanics

LINESMAN

- The alignment and responsibilities are same as 5-man mechanics. Cover as any scrimmage or scrimmage kick play.

LINE JUDGE

- The alignment and responsibilities are unchanged from 5-man mechanics. Cover as any scrimmage or scrimmage kick play.
- Responsible for goal line and sideline to the end line due to the absence of the Field Judge
- Move in to help separate players after play

SIDE JUDGE

- Positioned on goal line pylon
- Count and confirm, with closed fist, number of Team R players with Back Judge/Field Judge
- Responsible for goal line
- Clean up behind Umpire or behind play
- Move in to help separate players after play

FIELD JUDGE

- Positioned under upright to rule on kick
- Count and confirm, with closed fist, number of R players with Side Judge/Back Judge
- Responsible for upright and ruling on kick
- If field goal attempt rolls to end zone, move to goal line to rule on touchback
- If ball is not kicked, move to goal line to assist in inside-out coverage or down end line to assist with side line and to cover play as situation develops

BACK JUDGE

- Positioned under upright to rule on kick
- Count and confirm, using closed fist, number of R players with Side Judge/Field Judge
- Responsible for whistle when kick passes goal
- Responsible for upright and crossbar, and for ruling on kick
- Responsible for end line

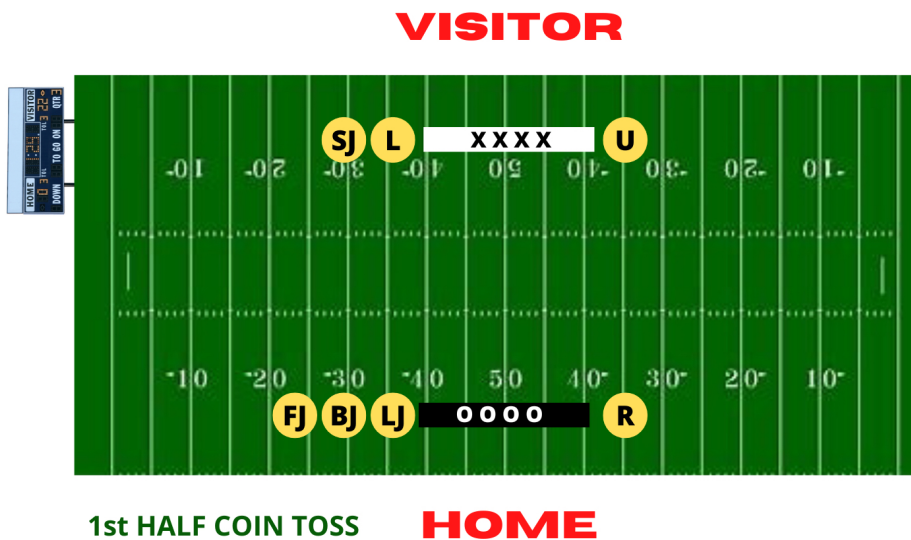
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GAME ADMINISTRATION

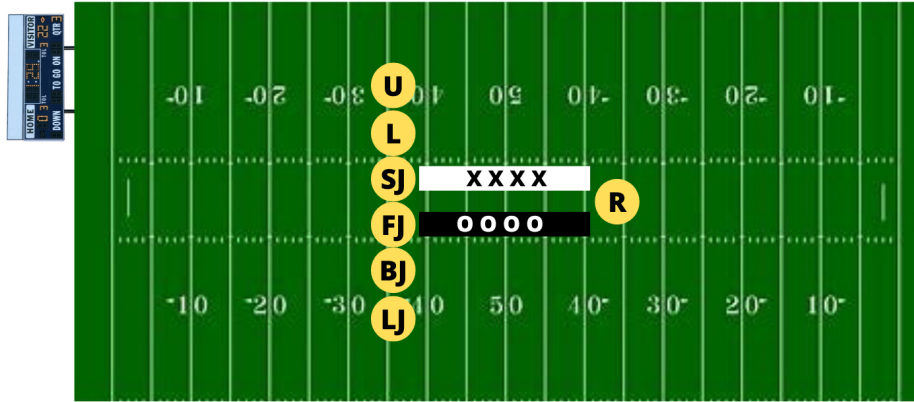
5.1

FIRST-HALF COIN TOSS

The coin toss mechanics are essentially unchanged from standard mechanics. Captains are escorted to the center of the field as shown in the diagrams below.



VISITOR



1st HALF COIN TOSS **HOME**

5.2

SECOND-HALF COIN TOSS

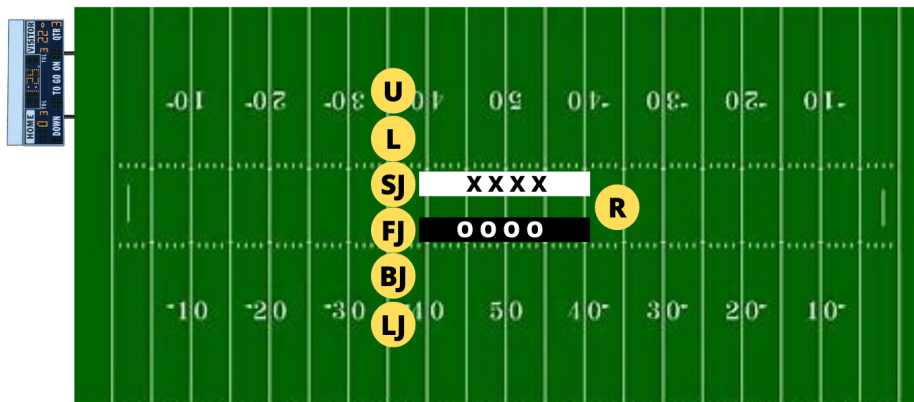
The second half option mechanics are the same as 5-man mechanics.

5.3

OVERTIME COIN TOSS

For overtime, the Referee, Umpire, and Back Judge go to the center of the field to meet the captains. The captains are escorted to the center of the field by the Linesman/Side Judge and Line Judge/Field Judge. When the captains are dismissed, all 7 officials meet in the center of the field to review the selections.

VISITOR



OVERTIME COIN TOSS **HOME**

5.4

TIME OUTS

- **Referee** - The alignment and responsibilities are same as 5-man mechanics
- **Umpire** - The alignment and responsibilities are same as 5-man mechanics
- **Linesman** - The alignment and responsibilities are same as 5-man mechanics
- **Line Judge** - The alignment and responsibilities are same as 5-man mechanics
- **Back Judge** - The alignment and responsibilities are same as 5-man mechanics
- **Field Judge/Side Judge** - Share responsibility with Line Judge/Linesman for team on your side as team conference and ball location dictate. Also share responsibility with Line Judge/Linesman for TV “red hat” if on your side as team conference and ball location dictate.

5.5

MEASUREMENTS

- **Referee** - The alignment and responsibilities are same as 5-man mechanics
- **Umpire** - The alignment and responsibilities are same as 5-man mechanics
- **Linesman** - The alignment and responsibilities are same as 5-man mechanics
- **Line Judge** - The alignment and responsibilities are same as 5-man mechanics
- **Back Judge** - Responsible for assuring that the ball is not moved once it is spotted for measurement
- **Field Judge** - **Clear players for yard-to-gain measurement and secure a ball for the next play if necessary**
- **Side Judge** - Be near the down marker and set the chains for the next series if a first down is awarded