

**2026**

# **SCFOA MECHANICS MANUAL**



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**PRESENTED BY THE SOUTH FOOTBALL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION**

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Changes denoted in **RED**

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# 1.

## INTRODUCTION

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This manual was developed to incorporate the South Carolina Football Officials Association (SCFOA) supplement into the National Federation Officials Manual. The mechanics as written by the National Federation are followed in general. However, SCFOA has adopted different coverage and responsibilities for specific situations that are described herein.

A great deal of time and effort has gone into the development of the lists, checks and keys, and movements to employ during the course of a game. The duties and mechanics which have been used by veteran officials to properly communicate information and cover unusual situations are contained in this document.

Also included as a separate document, is a skeleton for 7-man mechanics, which are used in semifinals and championship games, and any other significant games as determined by the South Carolina High School League (SCHSL). For those games, specific responsibilities and coverage's are highlighted during the pre-game conference. The mechanics are very similar to 5-man mechanics. However the Field Judge and Side Judge share responsibilities normally handled solely by the Back Judge.

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.

## BASIC PHILOSOPHY AND PRINCIPLES

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**T**he National Federation Football Rules Code permits competition to be conducted in an equitable, exciting and interesting manner while at the same time specifically prohibiting unnecessary roughness, unfair tactics and unsportsmanlike conduct. If the potential values of game experience are to be attained, the action of the players must conform to the rules. Game officials must accept the responsibility of enforcing the letter, as well as the spirit, of the rules promptly and with consistency. In order to do this, officials must have a complete knowledge and understanding of the rules.

**Decisions must be made so quickly they come by reflex.** The proper way to prepare for making decisions of this nature is through a thorough understanding of the rules and continued study of possible situations, which may occur. Basic fundamentals then become second nature and correct interpretations are virtually automatic. To know the rules thoroughly requires constant study. A number of supplementary materials, which are designed to help officials study and become thoroughly competent in the playing rules, have been developed. These include the Case Book, Handbook, Rules Simplified and Illustrated, Meeting Folders, and Rule Interpretations, as well as a series of electronic presentations. In addition, examinations on football rules and mechanics are used by those responsible for training officials. State high school associations generally conduct a series of rules interpretation meetings at which attendance is required for those officials who are eligible to work games in that state.

**While a thorough knowledge of the rules is important,** it is not enough to guarantee the competency of an official. There are other attributes, which are equally important. Officials must possess a combination of these if they are to fulfill their duties adequately. In addition to a complete mastery of the rules, officials must have a good knowledge of human nature and the ability to control situations as they arise. Football is a game played by physically sound athletes blocking and tackling one another. At times, player, coach, and crowd emotions run high and officials must control themselves in order to provide necessary leadership. The officials' duties and responsibilities are fixed by rules, and the manual is designed to help them carry out these duties. It cannot tell officials how to make instant decisions, or how to be courteous and considerate, yet firm and decisive. Officials who are familiar with the mechanics and understand their individual duties find the intangible requirements of good officiating usually follow naturally. Officials must be in sound physical conditioning in order to quickly move to the proper position to make an accurate ruling and to possess the stamina to be physically and mentally alert at the end of a demanding game.

**Officials must have a football sense,** which used in conjunction with a thorough understanding of the rules makes for a smoothly run game. Officials are expected to exercise good judgment in applying the rules. There is no magic like hard work, hustle and a sense for being in good position. While officiating is an avocation, it is one which requires dedication. Players who have practiced long hours deserve competent officials who have a complete understanding of the letter, as well as the spirit of the rules and administer them consistently and fairly.

**Quick and positive decisions are essential.** Hesitation or timidity indicates a lack of confidence, and as a result, tends to make everyone uncertain. The ability to make speedy decisions under pressure is necessary and can be made in a firm, yet friendly, manner. Decisions must be instantaneous, and rulings announced without delay. Self-confidence can be developed and is a necessary attribute. Many decisions will be questioned no matter how they are made. But when officials display confidence, the decisions are more readily accepted.

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

**The basic requirement for all sports officials is courage.** When there are infractions, officials must penalize promptly and with consistency. Vigilant administration of the playing rules permits no tolerance for fouls, infractions or violations. This is true regardless of the score, whom it may hurt, or how it may affect an official's future relationship with the school or coach. Regardless of the pressure from fans, coaches or players, officials must have the courage to call fouls as they occur. They must resist these pressures and intimidation in order to build personal reputations for competence. When officials accept a game assignment, their responsibility is definite. **THE PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF THE PLAYERS IS PARAMOUNT, AND WITH THIS, THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE.** Officials who fail to promptly discharge their responsibility of penalizing infractions are unqualified to officiate interscholastic contests.

**Preventive officiating is the preferred action of officials,** which will prevent some fouls from occurring. The good official, by actions and words, can frequently prevent certain fouls from happening. As a traffic officer at a busy intersection keeps traffic moving without actual arrest, so does a competent official keep the game moving, using accepted methods to prevent fouls from occurring, thus insuring a safer game. While there is general agreement that preventive officiating is desirable, there is a difference of opinion as to "how far" it should go. Such matters as the Referee discussing with the coaches before the game any unusual plays, particularly if the officials might be in the way, is always acceptable. The checking of equipment is required by rule. A foul may frequently be prevented by making certain to start with 11 players per team on free kicks. In this situation the official should ask the captain to count his players, but not tell him the number on the field. Cautioning the receiving team to be behind the restraining line for free kicks and aiding players of both teams in lining up following a safety are ordinarily accepted as desirable procedures for officials. These are preventive in nature. Officials can stop derogatory remarks between players and thereby prevent a later foul. Officials should never talk to players while the ball is alive or when it is about to become alive. Remind the captains that they can stop and prevent problems during a game by directing their players to abstain from baiting or taunting and similar practices.

**Sounding the whistle sharply** contributes to a reduction of fouls. Calling to the players and saying, "*That's all!*", "*That's enough!*", or "*Don't hit him!*" after the ball is dead, inbounds, or out-of-bounds will frequently deter a player from making late contact and thereby fouling. When a kick goes out-of-bounds, all officials can call to players to, "*Stand up, the ball is out-of-bounds.*"

# 3.

## GENERAL REMINDERS

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**C**ommunication with other members of the crew is essential. The smooth conduct of the game is dependent to a large extent upon how well the officiating crew on the field works with the timekeeper and members of the line-to-gain crew. The field clock operator must meet with the field officials so that he is completely aware of and understands the signals. The procedures near the end of a period or the game shall be explained at this time. The Linesman will meet with the line-to-gain crew prior to the game in order to review proper procedures. It is important to remember that these assistant officials are part of the officiating team and add to smooth game administration.

**The correct use of the official signals** provides the only means for the crew of officials to communicate with coaches, assistant officials and fans. This important aspect of officiating is the only means through which decisions can be relayed. The signals, as adopted by the football rules committee, are dignified, informative and meaningful. They are the result of many years of study and experimentation. Poorly executed or unauthorized signals do nothing but confuse. The manner in which the signal is given determines, at least to a degree, acceptance by players, coaches and fans.

**The officials' appearance will greatly affect the conduct of the game.** A sloppily dressed official will find he has difficulty in having his decisions accepted on the field. On the other hand, the official who wears the proper uniform, which is clean and properly fitted, will foster proper attitudes from all concerned. The physical condition of an official is an important part of appearance. Officials who act in a professional manner, move quickly from one position to another, and

have stamina to last throughout the game, will have more success than the official who does not possess these qualities. Officiating is strenuous, exhausting work. In order to meet the challenge, each official shall have a thorough annual physical examination and be in good physical condition. Adjuncts to good condition are proper rest and care in eating prior to a game. Game officials should have an athletic appearance. That is to say the chest should protrude farther than the stomach and the official should be able to hustle as the situation necessitates. The individual who is out of condition, more often than not, does a poor job of officiating simply because of the inability to cover the play. The appearance of this type of official on the field detracts from the coaches' and players' confidence in the officiating team.

**Use of any replay or television monitoring equipment in making any decision related to the game can only be used under guidelines set by the State Association for playoff or championship games.**

# 4.

## OFFICIAL UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

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**A**ll officials are required to wear the uniform described below. Uniforms should fit properly, be clean and neat and **must be worn in all varsity, JV, B, and Jr. High contests.**

1. A black and white, vertically striped, long or short sleeved knit shirt. SCFOA's exclusively custom sublimated shirt, featuring a special 2 1/4" stripe pattern with wide black side panels. The U.S. flag is dyed right above the pocket, and the SCFOA logo is seamlessly dyed into the shirt on the right sleeve. Your shirt should be made of moisture-wicking and anti-microbial fabric. All field officials in a given game are to wear the same type shirt. The shirt shall be tucked into the pants.
2. Standard, black pants with 1 1/4" white stripe.
3. Solid black socks.
4. Officials may wear solid black football official shoes with black laces, or black football official shoes with a white manufacturer's logo and white on the midsole, with black laces. Shoes should be polished before the pre-game meeting.
5. A black shirt shall be worn under the game shirt at all times. The shirt shall also be tucked into the pants.
6. A black baseball cap with white piping is required. For the purpose of identification, the Referee shall wear a solid white baseball cap. Hats must be fitted.
7. A black leather belt 1 1/4 to 2 inches wide, with a plain buckle shall be worn. A similar black elastic belt may also be worn.
8. A black and white vertically striped jacket is part of the uniform when appropriate. When patches are worn on the jacket they should be located as follows: The Shrine Bowl patch is to be worn on the right sleeve and the North-South All-Star patch on the left sleeve. Each patch should be attached approximately two inches below the intersection of the shoulder seam and the sleeve inset seam of the jacket with the patches centered below the point of intersection. The SCFOA patch is to be attached over the left breast area.
9. Assigned ECO's shall wear khakis and a solid colored shirt with a collar. For state final playoff games the assigned ECO may elect to wear the same game uniform as the field officials.
10. Radios MAY be used during games with consensus of the crew to assist in communication.

Male grooming standards shall always promote a professional appearance and shall conform to the following:

- Hair must be of a natural color, neatly trimmed, not touching the shirt collar, or extending over the ears. Hair arrangements may be worn, but not visible from underneath the officials' hat.
- Officials wearing only a mustache must conform to the following standards: The mustache must be neatly trimmed and shall not extend below the edge of the lip, nor extend beyond the edge of the mouth. Fu Manchu, handlebar, walrus, or any other type of mustache that may not be considered professional in appearance may not be worn.
- Facial hair, such as full beards or classic-style goatees, may be worn. These must always be neatly trimmed and not exceed 1/2-inch in length. Patchy, spotty, or clumps of hair which do not promote a professional appearance are not allowed. Beards or goatees shall be fully grown one week prior to Week Zero and meet your District Director's approval so as not to be questionable at the start of the season. Facial hair shall not extend below the Adam's apple area of the neck.

**Female grooming standards** shall conform to the following:

- Hair long enough to touch the shoulders should either be a ponytail neatly extending from cap or in a bun.
- Hair should not touch the eyebrows.
- Black hair accessories to hold hair in place is authorized.
- Fingernails will be neatly trimmed and not 1/4 inches in length beyond the tip of the finger.
- All nails should be a natural color without decorations.
- Make-up should match skin complexion.
- Lipstick should be a natural color.

**All officials** must have the following equipment:

- Black whistle.
- Penalty marker made of light gold cloth approximately 15" by 15" with a middle pouch weighted with sand or beans, etc.
- Game card and pencil.
- Down number indicator.
- Bean bag, which shall be either black-and-white striped, white, black, or blue. (No bright orange or other colors.) Pink may be utilized during the month of October.

In addition, **individual officials** must have the following equipment:

- **Referee** – a coin.
- **Umpire** – a set of rubber bands or some device to track the location between the hash marks of the spot of the previous snap.
- **Linesman** – two clipping devices.
- **Line Judge** – an accurate watch for timing the game.
- **Back Judge** – an accurate watch for timing time-outs and the 40/25 second play clock.
- **Back Judge** – two bean bags, including a blue bean bag to mark the end of scrimmage kicks.

# 5.

## PRE-GAME RESPONSIBILITIES

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### 5.1

# ARRIVAL

**L**ateness in arrival is a cardinal sin in officiating. Game officials shall arrive at the site of the game **at least 1½ hours before the scheduled game time**. If the Referee is late, or does not arrive, the crew member with the most experience should handle the pre-game conference. The crew should decide who will replace the Referee and what changes in crew assignments will be made. If the crew cannot decide, the official with the most seniority will decide. If the Referee is present, the Back Judge will replace any other official who does not arrive for the game if no other position swap can be logically arranged by the crew.

## 5.2

### PRE-GAME CONFERENCE

**T**he Referee shall conduct a **pre-game conference** before **each** game. The purpose of the pre-game conference is to allow the crew to coordinate their coverage and to help the crew mentally prepare for the game. Officials and the electric field clock operator (ECO) (if assigned by the SC High School League Office) must attend this conference. The conference should start either before or after the crew dresses for the game approximately **one hour** before the scheduled game starting time. The Back Judge keeps the correct time and all officials will synchronize their watches accordingly.

The pre-game conference should follow a set outline, and to be most effective, should be an interactive process rather than a lecture. The conference should be tailored to the crew. With an experienced crew a detailed review of the rules is not needed. **The officials should know the rules before the season begins.** Discussion of unusual situations or coverage is appropriate. Discussion of each official's primary responsibilities and how the crew will interact with each other is necessary. With a less experienced crew a general rule review may be appropriate. The following outline includes the major subjects to be covered:

#### Pre-Game Conference Outline

1. Crew assignments.
2. Coin toss mechanics.
3. Free kicks reviewing positions and responsibilities.
4. Coverage during scrimmage plays.
5. Positions and coverage during scrimmage kicks.
6. Momentum rule as it applies inside the 5-yard line.
7. Goal line plays and try for point.
8. Review the following:
  - Communication techniques between Back Judge and Linesman/Line Judge on end zone pass plays near the sideline and/or end line.
  - Unusual plays from previous games.
  - Substitution rule and recent rules changes (especially early in the season).
  - Starting and stopping the clock.
  - Measurement procedure.
  - Duties during time-outs and the intermission between periods.
  - Penalty administration.
  - Overtime procedure.
  - A short pre-game rules test and/or review is recommended.
  - Visual review of positions on specific play types (whiteboard) is recommended.
  - Procedures for officials' time-out for heat and humidity (if applicable).

# 5.3

## RESPONSIBILITIES FOLLOWING THE PRE-GAME CONFERENCE

### ALL OFFICIALS

- Enter the field together 30 minutes before game time.
- Meet with the home team coach and then the visiting team coach.
- Perform duties in a business-like manner. Performance and tempo set the tone for the way in which game will be officiated.

### REFEREE

- During coach's conference, cover the following:
  - \* Ask each head coach who will be the designated representative (coach or player) who will make decisions regarding penalty acceptance or declination.
  - \* Ask each head coach to verify, in the presence of the Umpire, that all players are legally equipped in compliance with National Federation rules.
  - \* Explain to each coach that everyone is expected to exhibit good sportsmanship throughout the game.
  - \* Check with the home team head coach on the length of halftime and report this information to the visiting team's head coach.
  - \* Check with each head coach for any unusual plays or formations.
  - \* Approve game ball(s) that will be used during the contest. (Use assigned ball person if two balls will be used.)
  - \* Explain the procedures for the 40/25 second play clock.
- Instruct the clock operator if not assigned by the High School League.
- Inspect playing field, pylons, and ensure that goal posts are properly padded.
- Direct game management to remove any hazards on or near field.
- Inform coaches of starting time and where time will be kept.
- Keep the official score.

### UMPIRE

- Check player equipment when requested by the head coach. You are the final authority on legality of equipment. Do not permit the use of any illegal equipment.
- Arrange for transportation from the pre-game site to and from the field.

### LINESMAN

- Secure and check the line-to-gain equipment and down marker plus all auxiliary equipment.
- Check to see if home management has distinctive vest/jackets for the chain crew.
- Instruct chain crew in their duties and responsibilities. (See *"Instructing the Chain Crew"* below.)
- Work on the side nearest the line-to-gain equipment, which is opposite the press box, if there is one. Ask home management to specify side if there is no press box.
- Mark the middle of the chain with tape or some distinctive material. This tape may determine if a 1st down has been made. (When the Referee is about to enforce a five yard penalty, and he notices that his walk off may place the ball close to the line-to-gain, he may hold one palm against his chest as a signal to question whether or not the down marker is in advance of the tape on the chain's midpoint. The Linesman then should respond with an unobtrusive point in either direction, preferably with his hand in front of his belt buckle. If there is some doubt about the proximity of the ball to the tape, the officials may measure to be sure of the results of the walk off.)

## LINE JUDGE

- If no field clock, time the game.
- Assist the Back Judge and Referee.

## BACK JUDGE

- Be responsible for securing the correct time and carrying an accurate watch.
- Instruct ball persons. Each team's ball person(s) will operate from their own sideline. Ball persons shall be instructed to take balls all the way to the Umpire and hand the ball to him on any ball change.
- Conduct instruction of the play clock operator if visible play clocks are used.

## ECO

- Check the operation of the scoreboard clock upon arriving at the field.
- Place at least 12 minutes on the clock prior to the scheduled kickoff time.
- Clear the clock of all remaining time when the crew of officials begins escorting the captains to the center of the field for the pre-game coin toss.
- Start and stop the clock when signaled to do so by any official.
- Focus on the Referee for the signal to start the clock on scrimmage plays.
- If the game clock malfunctions and is no longer operational
  - \* Set the clock to 0:00.
  - \* If ECO is assigned by the High School League, keep the time on the Line Judge's sideline with a stopwatch. If ECO is not assigned by the High School League, the Line Judge shall take over the timing.

# 6.

## CHAIN CREW

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**NOTE:** Reference to the line-to-gain equipment is for the traditional two rods and 10-yard chain.

## 6.1

### COMPETENT CHAIN CREW

**G**ame management is required to make available a competent chain crew to operate the line-to-gain equipment, and provide each member with distinctive vests/jackets so that they will be readily recognizable. Ideally, these individuals should be adults; however, students may be used. A competent crew is one trained in its responsibilities and is capable of discharging the various duties. The crew must be alert, agile and responsive to the leadership and direction of the Linesman. They must be businesslike and impartial in discharging their responsibilities. Any individual member who cannot comply must be removed from the crew by the Referee. There should be nothing to detract from the efficiency of game administration.

## 6.2

### DOWN MARKER MECHANICS

The down marker operator must remain 6 feet outside the sideline (where space permits) and check with the Linesman following each down in order to display the proper down number. This person is not to change the number of the down or move the marker until instructed to do so by the Referee or Linesman. When the Linesman signals the crew to change positions following a change of possession or when a 1st down is reached, the down marker is placed at the foremost point of the ball first and the rear rod placed in an adjacent position. Whenever there is a request for a measurement, the down marker is placed at the spot of the front rod with the previous down indicated. If there is a dispute regarding the number of the down, the Referee shall determine the official down number.

The Linesman and Line Judge should note the yard line where the down indicator is located before each play. This will aid in proper placement of the down marker if the marker is displaced by play action or erroneously moved and the down is to be replayed from the previous spot for any reason (e.g., replay after a live ball foul or an incomplete forward pass).

## 6.3

### CHAIN CLIP MECHANICS

A distinctive marker (chain clip) must be used to mark the intersection of the yard lines with the chain in order to maintain its location. The Linesman must designate a member of the chain crew to be the “clip man” and supply him with two clips. The first clip is placed on the back edge of the yard line closest to the rear rod whenever the chains are set for the initial series of downs. If this yard line is within one yard of the rear stake, move to the next yard line intersection for clip attachment. If a dial type or yard line indicating type clip is used, the number of the intersecting yard line should be selected each time the clip is placed. Any time that the chains are reset when a new series of downs is awarded to either team the initial clip remains in place. The second clip is then properly placed at the back edge of the proper yard line for the new series. Therefore, both clips will be on the chains during 1st down. After 1st down the initial clip is no longer needed and should be removed. The Linesman should verify the location of the clip each time the chains are set. This will always give the official an accurate point of reference should a measurement for a 1st down be required or the chains become displaced.

## 6.4

### INSTRUCTING THE CHAIN CREW

The following instructions are suggestions for making certain that the chain crew operates as an effective group of auxiliary officials:

- The chains are operated outside of and within 6 feet of the sideline on the side of the field opposite the press box, as prescribed by rule.
- The chain crew must keep the chains stretched tightly and not move the line-to-gain equipment until told to do so by the Referee or Linesman, except when the Back Judge assists with the placement of the down box following a measurement. The crew should ignore the Linesman’s beckoning, if they observe that a flag has been thrown during or just prior to the play.
- The Linesman shall personally mark **ALL 1st DOWNS** by placing a heel at the sideline, except when the Back Judge assists with the placement of the down box following a measurement.
- The proper way for the down marker to be moved following a play is for the Linesman to beckon, with the down indicated, then the marker is moved.
- The Linesman should help the down marker crew member in alignment by extending a toe as a point of reference for sighting. The Linesman may do this by stepping aside (to the downfield side of the ball) and extending his toe.

- When play action moves toward the chain crew, the crew should drag the down marker and chains in rapid retreat so that players will not contact the markers and chain stakes. If it is impossible to drag the equipment, they should be dropped **AWAY** from the playing field.
- The yard line clip should be attached to a chain loop at the back edge of the yard line nearest the rear stake. If this yard line is within one yard of the rear stake, move the clip to the next yard line intersection for attachment.
- The ball person should be responsible for retrieving extra-point kicks, however, the holder of the down marker or the person who attaches the clip may retrieve these kicks if there is no ball person.
- For kickoffs, the chain crew should be stationed out-of-bounds near the receiving teams 30-yard line in order that they may be in position to set up after the ball becomes dead following the kickoff.
- On measurements, the down marker should be placed in the position of the forward stake, with the down number remaining the same as during the play. The chains are then secured at the clip by the Linesman and taken onto the field for measurement. If a 1st down has been reached; the Linesman should drop the chains and retreat to the sideline to mark the 1st down box at the proper spot. If the 1st down has **NOT** been reached, the Linesman shall carry the chains back to the sideline and place them in the proper place as before the measurement.
- When the line-to-gain is the goal line, the chains are dropped to the ground with the down marker remaining in the proper position.
- Inform the chain crew of how the chains will be reset at the end of the first and third quarters when the teams exchange ends of the field. The Linesman grasps the chains at the clip, reverses the ends of the chain and carries the chains to the proper yard line for placement.
- For overtime periods, only the down marker is used for the ball position since the line-to-gain is **always** the goal line.

## 6.5

### AUXILIARY MARKERS

**A**uxiliary markers, which are unofficial line-to-gain ground markers, may be positioned off the sidelines on both sides of the field. The use of auxiliary markers is optional. Game management will decide if auxiliary markers are to be used. When an auxiliary markers are used, they should lie flat on the ground and be made of materials that pose no danger to players. An unofficial auxiliary down marker may be used on the sideline opposite the chain and down marker. The person operating this auxiliary marker is considered to be a member of the chain crew and has the same restrictions as discussed in the foregoing paragraphs. The **Line Judge** will assist in placing the auxiliary marker.

## 7.

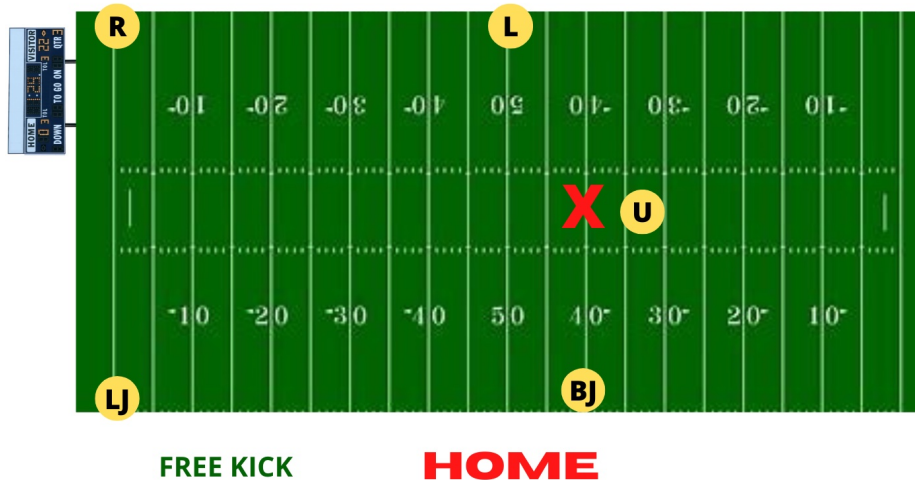
### FREE KICKS

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## 7.1

### NORMAL FREE KICK

## VISITOR



### REFEREE

#### Before the kick

- Position on R's goal line on the Linesman's side of the field, at the goal line pylon.
- Count Team R players and confirm using closed fist with the Line Judge.
- Check the positions of the other officials.
- Hold arm above your head to request the ready sign from the Line Judge and Umpire.
- After the ready signs are received, drop arm and sound the ready-for-play signal.

### LINE JUDGE

#### Before the kick

- Position on R's goal line on the Back Judge's side of the field, at the goal line pylon.
- Hold an arm above your head to indicate you are ready after the Referee points at you.
- Count Team R players and confirm using closed fist with Referee.

### REFEREE and LINE JUDGE

#### After the kick

- If the kick is down the middle of the field:
  - \* Pick up the runner and follow until released to the covering official.
  - \* If the kick is deep communicate with each other before signaling touchback.
- If the kick is deep to your side of the field:
  - \* Rule on a possible touchback.
  - \* If the kick is caught or recovered inside the 5-yard line and the runner is downed in the end zone or the ball goes out-of-bounds there, rule on whether the player's momentum took him into the end zone, and mark the spot of the catch or recovery with your bean bag.
- If the kick is outside the opposite inbounds line:
  - \* Move cautiously with the play.
  - \* Observe the action of other players in the vicinity of the runner.
  - \* Serve as clean-up behind, to the side of, and around the runner.

### UMPIRE

#### Before the kick

- After a score, move up middle of the field to K's free kick line.
- Take charge of the ball.
- Position on the field with the kicker. After checking the legality of the kicking tee, hand the ball to the kicker. Point out the Referee and instruct the kicker to wait for the Referee's signal before kicking. Maintain a position between the kicker and the ball.
- Count Team K players and confirm using closed fist with the Back Judge.
- Obtain the captain's and kickers ready sign.
- Secure the ready signs from the Kicker, Back Judge and Lineman. Hold your arm above your head to indicate you, the Kicker, Back Judge and Lineman are ready after the Referee points at you. After the Referee's ready for play whistle, verbally direct the kicker to kick the ball and move to a position slightly behind kicker.
- If there is a dead ball penalty, administer the penalty and place the ball ready for play.
- Watch for any infractions involving the free kick lines.

#### After the kick

- Watch the ball as it is kicked to determine if it strikes the ground immediately and bounces high into the air.
- Watch the initial blocks by players in your area and any action against the kicker and the holder.
- Be alert for first touching by K or for a kick which does not cross R's free kick line.
- Mark the spot of first touching with a bean bag.
- If there is a penalty for a foul before the kick ends, requiring a re-kick, administer the penalty and place the ball ready.
- If the kick goes out-of-bounds in flight, line up the sideline official with a "chop" of the hand signal.
- After the ball has gone downfield, move deliberately in that direction, while watching for fouls away from the ball.
- Maintain a position enabling coverage of the runner if the possibility of a long return presents itself. The goal line is your responsibility.

### **LINESMAN**

#### Before the kick

- Monitor the team bench area.
- Move to a position on R's free kick line.
- Hold an arm above your head to indicate that you are ready after the Umpire points at you.

### **BACK JUDGE**

#### Before the kick:

- Monitor the team bench area. Be certain that spectators are behind the restricted area and that coaches and substitutes are in the team box.
- Move to a position on K's free kick line.
- Count Team K players and confirm using closed fist with the Umpire.
- Hold an arm above your head to indicate that you are ready after the Umpire points at you.
- Time the 60-second interval following a score.
- Penalize for delay of game if the ball is not kicked within 25-seconds after the ready.
- Signal all officials 15 seconds before ready for play by giving two short blasts of the whistle.

### **LINESMAN and BACK JUDGE**

#### After the kick:

- If the kick is to your side:

- \* Watch for any infractions involving the free kick lines.
- \* Be alert for first touching by K or for a kick which does not cross R's free kick line.
- \* Mark the spot of first touching with the bean bag.
- \* Cover 10-15 yards down the sideline.
- \* Pick up the runner from the deep official and follow on a long return.
- \* After the ball has gone downfield, move deliberately in that direction while observing the legality of blocks and action away from the ball when you are not covering the runner.
- If the kick is to the opposite side of the field:
  - \* Move cautiously toward the play.
  - \* Observe the action of the other players in the vicinity of the runner.

### ALL OFFICIALS

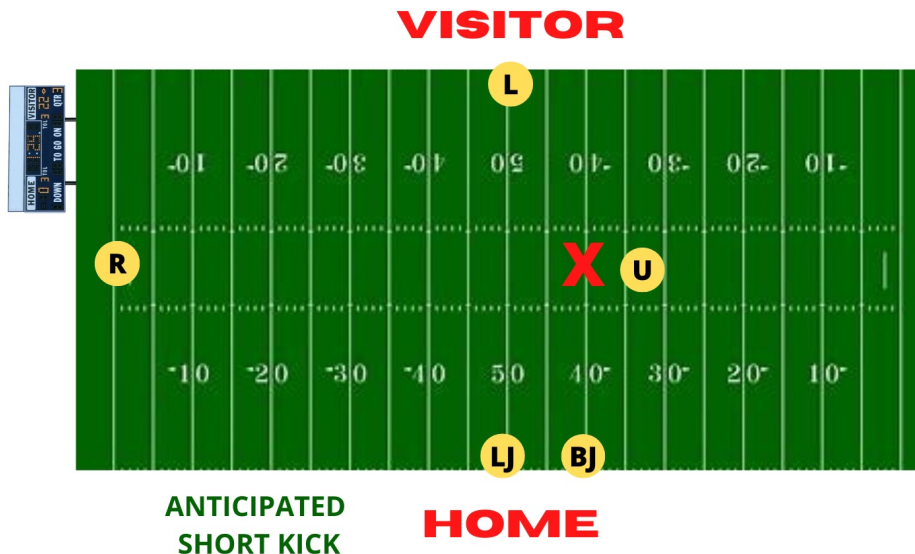
- Signal the clock to start when the kick is touched, other than first touching by K. Echo this signal when given by another official.
- Except for the Umpire, maintain a position to cover the sideline at all times.
- Be alert for fair catch signals by the receivers in or beyond the neutral zone.
- When the ball becomes dead in your area, sound the whistle and signal time-out.
- If the kick is out-of-bounds between the goal lines:
  - \* Sound the whistle and signal time-out.
  - \* Mark the spot where the kick goes out-of-bounds on your side of the field:
    - ◆ With a bean bag if touched inbounds by R.
    - ◆ With a penalty marker if untouched inbounds by R.

### FOR A FREE KICK FOLLOWING A SAFETY

- Record the period, time and the score of the safety on your game card.
- Each official assumes duties in the same relative position as for a normal kickoff.
- Assist with lining up players on the appropriate yard lines.
- Strive to put the ball in play without delay.
- Back Judge: Time the 60-second interval following a safety and notify the other officials 15 seconds prior to the ready by giving two short blasts of the whistle.

# 7.2

## ANTICIPATED SHORT FREE KICK



## REFEREE

- Alert the Line Judge to move to the designated position for short kick.
- Take a position on the goal line in the middle of the field. Adjust position as far up as the 15-yard line when the kicker's ability is determined.
- Be alert to assist other officials.

## LINE JUDGE

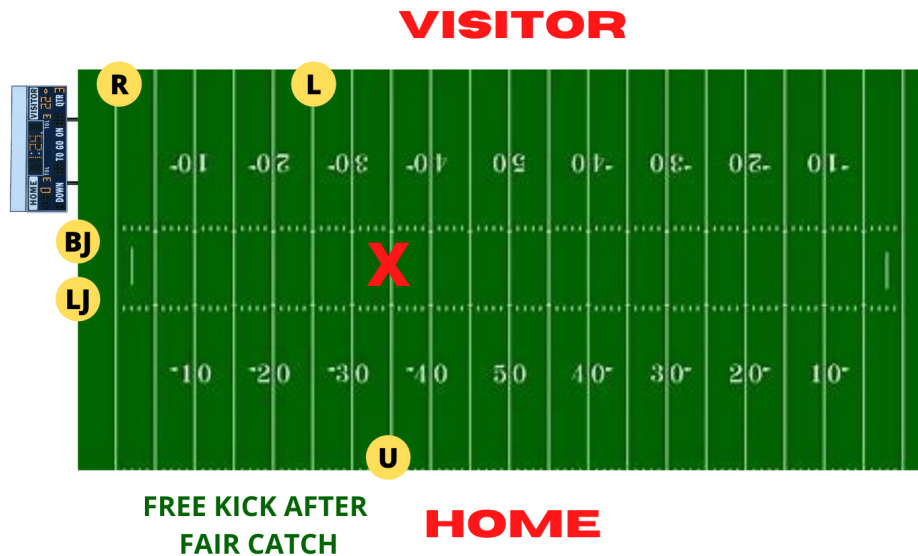
- Position on R's free kick line at the sideline opposite the Linesman. Ensure the Referee and Back Judge are aware of your position.
- Watch for any infractions involving the free kick lines.
- Be alert for first touching by K or a kick which does not cross R's free kick line.
- Mark the spot of first touching by K with a bean bag.
- Watch the initial blocks of converging teams.

## UMPIRE, LINESMAN and BACK JUDGE

- Perform the same duties as a normal kickoff.

# 7.3

## FREE KICK AFTER A FAIR CATCH OR AWARDED FAIR CATCH



## REFEREE

- Position on R's goal line on Linesman's side of field.
- Signal score or no score if appropriate.
- Give the touchback signal if the kick is unsuccessful and the ball breaks the plane of the goal line. (Otherwise, it is a live ball.)

## UMPIRE

- Position on sideline on K's free kick line opposite the Linesman.
- Be responsible for your sideline to the kicker's goal line opposite the Linesman.
- Be responsible for your sideline to the kicker's goal line in the event of a long return

#### LINESMAN

- Position on the sideline on R's free kick line.
- Perform the same duties as a normal kickoff.
- Count K and confirm using closed fist with the Umpire.

#### LINE JUDGE and BACK JUDGE

- Position beyond the end line and behind the upright on your side where you feel most comfortable.
- Give the appropriate signal for score or no score.
- Give the touchback signal if the kick is unsuccessful and the ball breaks the plane of the goal line.
- If the kick is short and lands in the field of play move forward to cover the play. The Line Judge moves forward and to the sideline for coverage.
- Count R and confirm using closed fist.

#### ALL OFFICIALS

- Take charge and get the players into proper positions.
- If the kick is not successful and remains in play, proceed as for a free kick in play.

#### REMINDER

- Place the ball at the center of the field at the proper yard line.

# 8.

## SCRIMMAGE PLAYS

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### 8.1

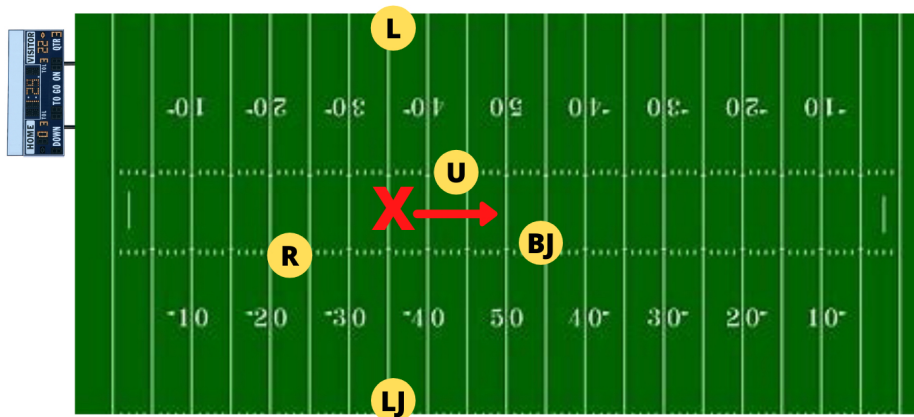
## RUNNING PLAYS

#### REFEREE

##### Before the snap

- The Referee shall be in pre-snap position when the ball is spotted and the 40 second play clock is running.
- **The pre-snap position shall be 12-15 yards from the line of scrimmage, typically on the passing side of the quarterback, but may adjust to the wide side of the field based on ball location and play situation.**
- Sound your whistle for ready-for-play only after administration stoppages (other than a first down). For all other game clock starts, give the winding signal and do not sound your whistle.

## VISITOR



## SCRIMMAGE PLAYS HOME

- Be able to view the ball, backs and the tackle on the far side.
- Check the following:
  1. 11 offensive players with the Umpire with a closed fist signal.
  2. Eligible backs
  3. Snap irregularities and the movement of linemen.
- Be alert for an illegal shift or a player in motion.
- When the play clock is set to 25-seconds:
  - \* Move to your pre-snap position.
  - \* Be sure all officials are in their proper positions.
  - \* Sound your whistle and give the ready for play signal (Signal 1) or the winding signal to start the game clock (Signal 2).

### After the snap

- Key the tackle on the opposite side. If he blocks aggressively, read run. If he pass blocks, read pass.
- Watch the ball, the runner and action around the runner to the neutral zone.
- If the action is not in the direction of your original position, move toward or parallel to the scrimmage line, maintaining a position approximately in line with the runner's progress.
- Delay moving immediately toward the line of scrimmage to avoid hindering a reverse or delayed play and to assure maximum vision of the play.
- Move behind the play toward the side of the field to which the play advances to cover the runner if he is downed near the neutral zone.
- You are responsible for the runner until he crosses the neutral zone.
- Check the following:
  1. Illegal use of hands by players of Team A.
  2. Action behind the ball and away from the runner near the line.
  3. Action on the quarterback after the handoff.
  4. A forward progress spot from the Linesman or Line Judge indicating the foremost point of the ball on a quick line play.
  5. A backward or forward pass when the ball is thrown.
  6. The out-of-bounds spot behind the neutral zone.

### When the ball is dead

- Move quickly to its location.

- Be positive of the ball's location before sounding the whistle. The Referee's whistle should rarely be the first whistle at the end of a play.
- Help spot the ball when possible.
- If a 1st down has been made or a change of team possession occurs, signal time-out to stop the clock unless it is already stopped by rule. (See 9.15 for Play clock procedures.)

## UMPIRE

### Before the Snap

- Spot the ball for the next play and move to your pre-snap position approximately 8 yards behind the defensive line of scrimmage, between Team B's ends, keeping the snap in view. Normally you should be opposite the Referee.
- Do not interfere with the vision or movement of defensive backs or linebackers.
- Vary position so that players cannot use you as interference
- Check the following:
  1. The number of Team A players (confirm with the Referee)
  2. Five players numbered 50-79 on the offensive line.
  3. Interference with the snap, false starts or encroachment.
  4. Disconcerting signals by Team B. (Dead ball – 5 yards, disconcerting act.)

### After the snap

- Key the snapper and guards. If they block aggressively, read run. If they pass block, read pass.
- Read the point of attack.
- When the play is wide to one side, do **not** watch the ball!
  - \* Move in that direction observing the initial line play and action around the runner (especially on short gains or losses in the side zones).
  - \* Remain on the inside working out, to maintain "boxed in" coverage.
- When the hole opens directly in front of you, do **not** watch the ball!
  - \* React and adjust according to the play; possibly move laterally (quick step) from the hole, being alert for the tight end cutting across.
- Cover action at the point of attack and then behind the runner
- Check for illegal use of hands or other fouls near the neutral zone.
- Be alert for the following:
  1. A quick kick or pass.
  2. Ineligible receivers
  3. Touching by Team B of a forward pass behind the line
- If a fumble occurs beyond the neutral zone, assist in determining who secures possession.
- When the ball is dead:
  - \* Move towards its location.
  - \* Be positive of the ball's location before sounding the whistle. The Umpire's whistle should rarely be the first whistle at the end of a play.
  - \* Help spot the ball.

## LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE

### Before the snap

- Position is on the line of scrimmage, outside of the widest receiver, and near/on the sideline.
- Assist players in lining up, if necessary however, do **NOT** tell players to move up or back (inform them that your foremost foot is on the line).
- Check the down box number.
- Signal one receiver off the line of scrimmage on your side with a straight arm closed fist at a 90-degree angle toward the offensive backfield.

- Signal two or more receivers off the line of scrimmage on your side with the corresponding number of fingers ABOVE YOUR HEAD FOLLOWED BY a straight arm at 90-degree angle toward the offensive backfield.
- Identify eligible receivers on your side of the line.
- Identify “covered-up” receivers on your side of the line by extending your arm at a 90° angle and a closed fist towards the defensive side of the line of scrimmage.
- Check the following:
  1. Wingbacks, flankers, split ends and slot backs for legal position and numbers.
  2. The widest two players on your side of the snapper, including backs, as eligible receivers
  3. Player starting in motion on your side of the snapper – you have responsibility for him at all times.
  4. Encroachment, snap infractions, or false starts.
- Be alert for illegal substitutions.

After the snap:

- If 5 or more are counted in the offensive backfield, drop a flag to indicate an Illegal formation foul.
- Watch the initial line charge.
- Key the end and wide receiver if a defender is covering him tightly. If the end is uncovered, look through to the tackle to read run or pass.
- Be alert for quick plays into the line and assist in marking forward progress with the downfield foot.
- Check blocks on eligible receivers and crack back blocks by the receiver.
- When the ball comes to your side of the field:
  - \* Observe the blocking near the neutral zone.
  - \* On down the line option plays toward you, observe the pitchman and watch for a possible loose ball.
  - \* Cover the sideline.
  - \* **Sound the whistle when the ball becomes dead and move off the sideline to the dead-ball spot when the spot is at or inside the numbers.**
- If the ball becomes dead in the side zone, toss it to the Back Judge, Referee or Umpire for spotting.
- If the ball goes out-of-bounds:
  - \* Immediately signal time-out.
  - \* Hold the out-of-bounds spot and continue to watch action on the runner and defenders out-of-bounds. **DO NOT TURN YOUR BACK ON THE PLAY OUT-OF-BOUNDS!** As a last resort, drop the bean bag on the spot and follow the action.
- If the ball goes to the opposite side:
  - \* **Move off the sideline, no further than the numbers, until the down ends.**
  - \* **If not responsible for dead-ball spot, move further in to dead-ball officiate.**
  - \* Observe action on the linebackers and backside pursuit
  - \* Watch for late blocks and forearm blows away from the runner.
- While moving downfield with the runner, watch for an illegal forward pass or a fumble.
- If play continues following an illegal forward pass, drop the penalty marker at the spot of the pass to indicate where the run ended and continue to officiate as for a normal play.

**LINESMAN** (*working with the line-to-gain equipment and crew*)

- When a 1st down occurs:
  - \* Echo the Referee’s signal verbally and with the proper hand signal.
  - \* Repeat the Referee’s time-out signal.
  - \* Do not turn your back to the field of play when having equipment moved.
  - \* Authorize the down marker operator to move box only after Referee’s or Linesman’s signal.
  - \* When it is necessary to move the yardage chain:
    - ◆ Spot the foremost point of the ball with the downfield foot.
    - ◆ Have the down marker operator mark the spot, informing the Referee that the yardage chain is ready.
    - ◆ Ensure that the chains are properly set and that the clip is properly placed.

## LINE JUDGE

- Count Team B players. (Confirm using closed fist with the Back Judge.)

## BACK JUDGE

### Before the snap

- Position between 20-25 yards beyond the defensive line of scrimmage unless forced deeper by the defensive alignment.
- When the ball is on an inbounds line, position yourself no wider than the near upright.
- On single and/or double spread formations, adjust your position according to the location of the Linesman and Line Judge to provide the best coverage.
- Count Team B players (confirm using closed fist with the Line Judge)
- Time the 40/25 second play clock interval
- Give no signal to indicate the 25-second count is about to expire.
- If there is no visible play clock, begin timing the 40 second play clock immediately after the covering official's signal that ends the previous play (dead ball signal #7, timeout signal, incomplete signal, or winding signal by covering official near the sideline), unless rules indicate the use of the 25 second play clock.
- If the play clock expires prior to the start of the next play, sound your whistle immediately, give the timeout signal and give the delay of game signal to the Referee.
- After all administrative stoppages and as specified by rule, set the play clock to 25 seconds and start it at the Referee's ready for play signal.

### After the snap

- Key the tight end or end on the strong side. If the formation is balanced, key the end on the Line Judge's side.
- On runs to either side of the field; move so that the runner is between you and the wing official, while observing blocks in front of the runner
- Stay far enough away to keep the play boxed in.
- Cover players who are deeper than the Linesman or Line Judge
- When the runner breaks free, cover action around him.
- Cover the end line.
- Maintain inside-out coverage; do not move to the sideline unless the runner goes out-of-bounds or the ball becomes dead near the sideline.
- On out-of-bounds runs, especially in team box areas, move into the area of the dead ball and assist the other officials in maintaining order.
- During the play keep all players in front of you.
- Assist wing officials with coverage on blocks by wide receivers moving back inside on sweep plays.
- Assist with relaying the ball from the wing official, or ball person, to the Umpire. Ball persons shall be instructed to take balls all the way to the Umpire and hand the ball to him on any ball change.
- Unless the ball becomes dead down field, the Back Judge should rarely have the first whistle at the end of a play.

## ALL OFFICIALS

- Keep the play properly boxed-in.
- Keep eyes on the runner when you are covering the play, and on your area of responsibility when not covering the runner
- When the ball becomes dead in your area, sound the whistle promptly and be alert for dead ball fouls.
- Before sounding the whistle:
  - \* Be certain that the ball is dead.
  - \* Be certain of the location of the ball.
- Touchdown signals should be given while stationary standing on the goal line; do not signal while running down the field.
- If there is a fumble, the covering official should:

- \* Mark the spot of the fumble with a bean bag.
- \* Rule on possession immediately.
- \* If it is necessary to “dig” for the ball, the first official in should “dig.” The remaining officials should continue to observe dead ball action around the pile and determine whether or not to stop the clock.
- \* If the opponent of the fumbling team recovers while on the ground, the covering official should immediately signal time-out and then 1st down.
- \* If the offense recovers, the covering official should indicate the number of the next down with fingers or fist if 4th down.
- \* If the ball becomes dead before the ball becomes loose, the covering official should sound the whistle immediately to indicate that the down has ended.
- If the ball goes out-of-bounds,
  - \* The covering official should:
    1. Signal time-out immediately
    2. Mark and hold the spot where the ball crossed the sideline.
    3. Continue to observe action. **NEVER TURN YOUR BACK ON A PLAY OUT-OF-BOUNDS!**
  - \* The nearest official should retrieve the ball, unless the covering official is in the best position to do so.
  - \* Other officials should:
    1. Echo the time-out signal.
    2. Move quickly into position to assist in getting the ball ready for play.
    3. Be alert for substitution infractions.
- Additional end of play signals (for 40/25 second play clock rule change):
  - \* If the runner is down inbounds in your area, sound your whistle and give the dead-ball signal (Signal 7).
  - \* If the runner is down inbounds within 3 yards of the sideline, the covering official should give the start-the-clock signal (Signal 2) using only two turns of the arm to indicate that the game clock should continue to run.
  - \* Following a scrimmage play when the line-to-gain is reached, the 40-second play clock starts in accordance with the rules. Once the down indicator is set, the Referee will give the winding signal if the game clock is to start (no whistle). The Umpire should stay over the ball until the Referee gives this signal.

## 8.2

### FORWARD PASS PLAYS

#### REFEREE

##### Before the snap

- Same as a running play.

##### After the snap

- Observe all blocks behind the neutral zone.
- As the passer retreats, remain wider and deeper than the passer.
- Give special attention to contact with the passer.
- After the ball is released, continue to observe the passer, not the flight of the ball.
- Verbally alert defenders when the passer has released the ball.
- Be alert to observe an illegal pass.
  - \* A forward pass thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage is the primary responsibility of the Referee. To rule on a passer near the line of scrimmage, move to the spot of the pass to determine whether the passer’s feet were in or behind the neutral zone when the ball was released. If the pass is illegal, drop the penalty marker.

- \* The Referee is responsible for calling intentional grounding but he may request assistance from other officials to determine if an eligible receiver was in the area. Other officials who have a concern that an intentional grounding may have occurred should advise the Referee that they did not have an eligible receiver in the area of the pass. After receiving input from the crew, the referee is solely responsible for making this call.
- Continue to observe action behind the neutral zone before leaving the area.
- The Referee will have primary responsibility for the intentional grounding rule as it pertains to the ability of the passer to intentionally throw the ball incomplete if the passer has been beyond the lateral boundaries of the free-blocking zone and the pass reaches the neutral zone. (7-5-2d Exception 2.) The Referee will get assistance from the wing officials as to whether the pass reached the neutral zone extended. Such assistance will come in the form of a brief conference among officials.

## UMPIRE

### Before the snap

- Same as a running play.

### After the snap

- Be alert for illegal contact on the snapper.
- Watch for illegal contact and illegal use of the hands and holding.
- When you read forward pass, step toward the neutral zone.
  - \* This removes you as a target on shallow drag routes.
  - \* This puts you in position to rule on ineligible illegally downfield.
- Observe action of the players in and just behind the neutral zone
- You have secondary responsibility in determining if a pass is thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage. Assist in determining whether the passer's feet were in or behind the neutral zone when the ball was released.
- Turn to cover short passes down the middle.
- Know where the forward pass first touches anything. If the ball is touched by Team B, give signal #11 (Legal Touching).
- Always know the previous spot and assist in getting the ball back to the spot for the ready for play after an incomplete pass.
- The Umpire will have secondary responsibility for the intentional grounding rule as it pertains to the ability of the passer to intentionally throw the ball incomplete if the passer has been beyond the lateral boundaries of the free-blocking zone and the pass reaches the neutral zone. (7-5-2d Exception 2.) The Umpire will provide assistance to the Referee as to whether the pass reached the neutral zone extended. Such assistance will come in the form of a brief conference among officials.

## LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE

### Before the snap

- Same as for running play. (Line Judge: **NOTE** the use of the closed fist when counting players on page 22.)

### After the snap

- **Read pass by observing initial tackle action at the snap.**
- **Drift two yards downfield, moving to a position to check the blocking and contact of eligible receivers and linebackers.**
- Rule on the whether a quick, immediate pass by the quarterback is forward or backward.
- Cover your sideline from end line to end line.
- **If the pass is in your coverage area, move downfield for optimal catch/no-catch and pass interference coverage.**
- **If the pass is away, observe ineligible receivers beyond the expanded neutral zone.**
- If the pass is **complete** in your area:

- \* Be alert for sideline action (e.g., the receiver going out of bounds).
- \* Sound the whistle when the ball becomes dead.
- \* If the receiver went out-of-bounds, signal time-out.
- \* If the ball becomes dead near the sideline, give the start-the-clock signal.
- \* Move in to spot the ball.
- \* If the line-to-gain has been reached, signal time-out.
- If the pass is **incomplete** in your area:
  - \* Sound the whistle.
  - \* Give the incomplete pass signal. (**NOTE:** The signal to also stop the clock has been removed.)
  - \* Retrieve the ball and relay to the official nearest the previous spot.
- Be ready to adjust your coverage if the potential passer decides to run.
- Always be prepared to come back to rule on a play near the neutral zone in addition to sideline action.
- The Line Judge and Linesman will have secondary responsibility for the intentional grounding rule as it pertains to the ability of the passer to intentionally throw the ball incomplete if the passer has been beyond the lateral boundaries of the free-blocking zone and the pass reaches the neutral zone. (7-5-2d Exception 2.) The Line Judge and Linesman will provide assistance to the Referee as to whether the pass reached the neutral zone extended. Such assistance will come in the form of a brief conference among officials.
- **NOTE: Goal-line coverage inside B's 15-yard line and A's five-yard line supersedes these mechanics.**

## BACK JUDGE

### Before the snap

- Same as for running play. (**NOTE** the positioning change on page 22 and the use of the closed fist when counting players, also on page 22.)

### After the snap

- Cover deep receivers down the middle and to each sideline.
- Keep all players in front of your position.
- When the pass is thrown, move quickly to the ball.
  - \* Watch for interference by either team.
  - \* Be ready to rule on a possible fumble or illegal pass after a completion.
  - \* Be ready to rule on all passes near the goal line and end line.
- If the pass is complete in your area:
  - \* Sound the whistle when the ball becomes dead.
  - \* Move in to spot the ball.
  - \* If the line-to-gain has been reached, signal time-out.
- If the pass is incomplete in your area:
  - \* Sound the whistle.
  - \* Give the incomplete pass signal.
  - \* Retrieve the ball and relay it to a nearby official.

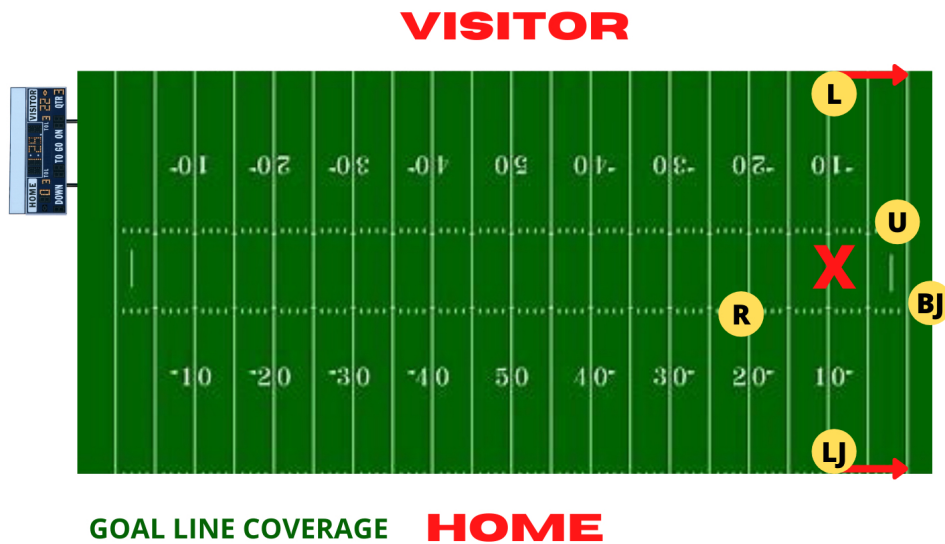
## COVERING OFFICIALS

- Be alert for illegal passes.
- Observe touching or catching by ineligible receivers.
- Watch for holding of eligible receivers and all contact beyond the neutral zone, both before and after the pass is thrown.
- Watch for interference by either team.
- Be ready to rule on a fumble or an illegal pass.
- On passes involving the sideline/end line (corner of the end zone), the two officials should see the play and communicate as to whether the reception has or has not been made and then give the appropriate signal.
- When in doubt about a catch or no catch, the pass should be ruled incomplete.

- If the pass is intercepted inside the defensive team's 5-yard line and the player making the interception is downed in the end zone or the ball goes out-of-bounds there, be prepared to rule whether his momentum took him into the end zone. If momentum is involved mark the spot of the interception with the bean bag.
- If the forward pass is incomplete in your coverage area, sound your whistle, and give the incomplete signal (Signal 10). This is the signal to start the 40 second play clock.

# 8.3

## GOAL LINE COVERAGE



### REFEREE

- Position and cover as for any scrimmage play.
- Do not give signal a touchdown from behind the runner unless the score is obvious.
- Give the touchdown signal to the press box when a touchdown is signaled by another official and no foul has occurred.

### UMPIRE

- Position near the goal line with the same coverage as for any scrimmage play.
- Remind wing officials of the goal line location when inside the 5-yard line.
- Be alert for a quick jump pass over the line of scrimmage.
- If the runner has made a quick thrust into the line:
  - \* Be sure the ball is not moved forward after it is declared dead.
  - \* Assist the wing officials if they are screened/blocked out. If the wing officials are needing help to identify if the ball has crossed the goal line in the runner's possession, the Umpire will place a fist (left or right) across his/her chest to verify to the wing official that the ball has crossed the goal line.

### LINESMAN

- Remove the line-to-gain equipment from the sideline when the line-to-gain is the goal line. The chains should be removed far enough from the side line so they do not impair your movement or create a safety issue for players.

### **LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE**

- Position as for any scrimmage play.
- On a snap from between the 10 and 5 yard lines, release slowly downfield and **STAY AHEAD** of the runner to the goal line.
- On a snap inside the 5 yard line, release to the goal line and officiate back toward the ball if necessary.
- Note the farthest point to which the ball is advanced.
  - \* If short of the goal line, move quickly and help by marking the foremost point of the ball with an extended DOWNFIELD FOOT or by actually placing the ball.
  - \* If you see the ball in possession of the runner touch or cross the goal line plane, move to the goal line (if necessary) and from a stationary position give the touchdown signal.
  - \* If the ball does not break the goal line plane, do not give any signal.

### **BACK JUDGE**

- Position closer to the line of scrimmage than normal. Start on the end line or the goal line (but NEVER in the end zone) if the snap is from the 15 yard line or inside. Back Judge has primary goal line coverage up to B's 15 yard line. BJ should be prepared to cover end line once he/she reads the play and it dictates end line coverage between B's 20-15 yard line.
- You are solely responsibility for end line coverage.

### **ALL OFFICIALS**

- Only the official(s) who actually sees the touchdown should give the touchdown signal!
- Official(s) not observing the touchdown, do **not** mirror the signal!

# 8.4

## REVERSE GOAL LINE COVERAGE

### **REFEREE**

- If the ball is inside the 5-yard line:
  - \* Position near the end line.
  - \* Rely on the wing men to cover potential safeties.
- If the ball is outside the 5-yard line:
  - \* Position as normal.
  - \* Cover the goal line and possible safeties.

### **LINESMAN**

- If the ball is snapped inside A's 3 yard line, move to the goal line at the snap and officiate out.
- If the ball is snapped from A's 4-5 yard line, be prepared to move to goal line.

### **LINE JUDGE**

- If the ball is snapped inside A's 5 yard line, move to the goal line at the snap and officiate out.

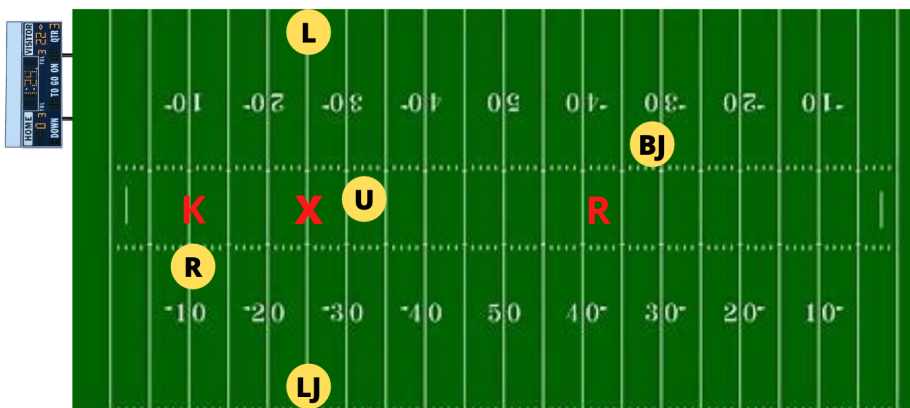
## VISITOR



REVERSE GOAL LINE **HOME**

## 8.5 PUNT

## VISITOR



PUNT **HOME**

### REFEREE

#### Before the snap

- Position on the same yard line, 5 to 7 yards outside the player in the kicking position, on the kicking leg side.
- All other duties are the same as for a running play.

#### After the snap

- Watch for fouls behind the neutral zone, especially near the kicker.

- Be alert for a blocked kick and be ready to rule on possession following the recovery.
- After the ball crosses the neutral zone, observe line play.
- Move downfield slowly following the kick.
- Watch for fouls and be ready to pick up the runner if there is a long return.
- Determine from the covering official if the ball was touched beyond the neutral zone and by whom.
- If the kick goes out-of-bounds in flight:
  - \* Long kick: Line up the covering official with the spot where the ball crossed the sideline by using an outstretched arm.
  - \* Short kick: Indicate out of bounds spot to the covering official by signaling the spot with a downward chop.
- Check with the Back Judge for a possible fair catch.
- If there is no foul, signal the Linesman to move the line-to-gain equipment.
- Obtain the ready signal from the Linesman before giving the ready-for-play signal.

## UMPIRE

### Before the snap

- Position less than 8 yards deep favoring the Line Judge's side of the field.
- Count Team K players (confirm using closed fist with the Referee)
- Check for the numbering exception.
- Give a verbal warning, "Do not foul the snapper," to the defensive player over the snapper.
- Key the offensive guards and snapper.

### After the snap

- Step toward the neutral zone, first observing action on the snapper, then shift to action of the offensive guards and backs behind the neutral zone. If the snap is mishandled, or if there is a question as to whether the kick will be made, move to the neutral zone to assist the Linesman if the ball crosses the line, or assist the Referee if the kick is blocked. Rule on an illegal kick if the ball is kicked from beyond the line.
- Be alert for a run or pass.
- Be alert to assist the Referee in covering a short or blocked kick
- Determine if the ball crosses the neutral zone.
- Following the kick, pivot to view the Line Judge's side of the field to observe blocks away from the ball
- Be alert for fouls in the secondary and move downfield slowly.
- When the ball goes out-of-bounds, move to a position to help relay the ball to the inbounds spot.

## LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE

### Before the snap

- Same as for running play. (Line Judge: **NOTE** the use of the closed fist when counting players on page 22.)

### After the snap

- **Linesman** – Hold your position until the kick crosses the neutral zone, then move slowly downfield covering your side of the field. You have sole responsibility on ruling whether the kick crosses the neutral zone.
- **Line Judge** – Release on the snap, move deliberately downfield, watching the kicker catch the snap as you leave the line. If the snap is not caught or blocked, return and help cover the play. When moving down field, cover your side between the neutral zone and the deep receiver(s).
- Be alert for valid or invalid fair catch signal by **ANY** receiver.
- Cover all kicks to your side.
- Be alert for illegal blocks and holding fouls.

- Routine kick:
  - \* If the kick is to the far side of the field, delay then cover fouls in the secondary.
  - \* Move with the runner if he comes to your side.
  - \* Assist Referee with goal line coverage on a long return
  - \* **Line Judge:** Observe action of the signaler when no fair catch is made
- If the kick goes out-of-bounds in flight:
  - \* Sound the whistle and signal time-out.
  - \* Move farther downfield than where the ball went out-of-bounds.
  - \* Walk up the field until the Referee spots you on the sideline with his outstretched arm.
- If the kick rolls out-of-bounds:
  - \* Sound the whistle and signal time-out.
  - \* Hold the out-of-bounds spot and continue to observe play action.
  - \* Drop the bean bag at the spot if you must retrieve the ball.
- If the kick is short or blocked:
  - \* Assist the Referee in covering the ball.
  - \* Note if the kick is touched beyond the neutral zone.
  - \* Note if the kick is recovered in or behind the neutral zone.
- When the ball becomes dead:
  - \* Sound the whistle, signal time-out and mark the spot.
  - \* Make sure there is possession after a fair catch signal.
  - \* If there is a foul, have a free official cover the dead ball spot and the flag while the official who called the foul reports the information to the Referee.

## BACK JUDGE

### Before the snap

- Position three to five yards behind, and five to seven yards to the wide side of the deepest receiver. Back Judge should never be in a position between two deep receivers (“splitting the receivers”).
- Maintain a distance of 5-7 yards wider than the deepest receiver.
- Count Team R players (confirm using closed fist with the Line Judge)
- Carry a blue bean bag in hand to mark the end of the kick.
- R’s goal line is your responsibility during all punts.
- Be alert for a valid or invalid fair catch signal by ANY receiver.

### After the snap

- Cover long or deep kicks out-of-bounds on the Linesman’s side.
- Use a blue bean bag to mark the end of the kick.
- If the kick is short to either side:
  - \* The Linesman or Line Judge assumes responsibility for the ball.
  - \* Observe the action of players around the ball.
- If the kicked ball goes out-of-bounds in flight:
  - \* Sound the whistle and signal time-out.
- If the kick is down the middle, be ready to rule on whether the kick is touched by either team.
  - \* If the ball is muffed be prepared to rule on possession.
  - \* Be alert for a hand-off or reverse.
- If Team K is the first to touch a scrimmage kick which is moving, mark the spot of first touching with a bean bag and continue to cover the play.
- If Team K is the first to touch a scrimmage kick at rest beyond the neutral zone, sound the whistle, signal time-out and mark the spot.
- If a fair catch signal is made:
  - \* Shift your position and your attention so that the receiver(s) can be observed following the kick, while maintaining the proper distance (5-7 yards) from the receiver(s).
  - \* If the fair catch is caught by the receiver, sound your whistle ONLY after the fair catch has been secured and mark the spot. Inform the Referee that a fair catch was made.
  - \* If the fair catch is NOT CAUGHT, maintain proper distance from receiver(s) and observe action of both ball and receiver. The goal line is still your responsibility.



- If the kick is successful, signal a score after receiving the signal from the Line Judge/Back Judge.
- If the **TRY** attempt is unsuccessful, immediately sound the whistle and signal no score.
- If the **FIELD GOAL** attempt is unsuccessful **and** breaks the plane of the goal line, signal no score, followed by the touchback signal.
- If the **FIELD GOAL** attempt is blocked does not break the plane of the goal line or is a fake, the ball remains live and you should cover as you would for a punt.

## UMPIRE

### Before the snap

- Position less than 8 yards deep, favoring the Line Judge's side of the field.
- Count Team K players (confirm using closed fist with the Referee)
- Check for the use of the numbering exception.
- Key the action of the snapper and guards. Watch for illegal leg locking.

### After the snap

- Step toward the neutral zone, reading the interior linemen.
- Check action on the snapper (Illegal action by the defensive man over the snapper)
- Be alert for assisting in determining if the kick crosses the neutral zone.
- Be ready to assist the Referee in covering a short or blocked kick.
- If a running or passing play develops:
  - \* Be alert for action on or by outside offensive linemen and front-most blocking back on the vacated Line Judge's side.
  - \* Shift observation to contact between defensive players and blockers behind the line
  - \* After players move past your position, pivot to view the Line Judge's side of the field and observe blocks in the side zone and move toward the play to observe action.
  - \* Assist in goal line coverage if a run develops to the Line Judge's side.

## LINESMAN

### Before the snap

- Position 5-7 yards outside the offensive end.
- Observe the neutral zone.

### After the snap

- If a running or passing play by Team K develops:
  - \* Move with the play as on any other goal line play.
  - \* Quickly move to the goal line if a run develops to the Line Judge's side.
  - \* If a **FIELD GOAL** attempt is blocked and Team R recovers, cover your sideline as you would for any running play.
  - \* On a **FIELD GOAL** attempt, hold your position to rule on whether the kick crosses the neutral zone and then officiate as you would on any other play. You have sole responsibility on ruling whether the kick crosses the neutral zone.

## LINE JUDGE

### Before the snap

- Position beyond the end zone and behind the upright in a position that provides the best coverage of the upright.
- Count Team R players (confirm using closed fist with Back judge)
- Identify eligible receivers on your side of the line

### After the snap

- Determine if the kick goes over the crossbar and inside the uprights.
- Communicate verbally with Back Judge with “**YES**” or “**NO.**”
- Remain stationary and signal score or no score.
- Give good, crisp signals and hold signals until acknowledged by the Referee.
- If a **FIELD GOAL** attempt is unsuccessful **and** breaks the plane of the goal line, give the touchback signal.
- If a **FIELD GOAL** attempt is blocked, obviously short or a fake:
  - \* Move to your sideline to provide sideline coverage with the assistance of the Referee.
  - \* Be prepared to rule on a possible touchdown.
- Following a field goal or try, if a kickoff is to follow, the ball person should be instructed to place a game ball behind the goal post

## **BACK JUDGE**

### Before the snap

- Position beyond the end zone and behind the upright in a position that provides the best coverage of the upright.
- Count Team R players (confirm using closed fist with Line Judge)
- Identify eligible receivers on your side of the line

### After the snap

- Determine if the kick goes over the crossbar and inside the uprights.
- Sound the whistle when the kick passes the uprights or touches the ground in the end zone or beyond.
- Communicate verbally with Line Judge with “**YES**” or “**NO.**”
- Remain stationary and signal score or no score.
- Give good, crisp signals and hold signals until acknowledged by the Referee.
- Time the 60-second interval following a try or successful field goal. Notify the other officials 15 seconds prior to the ready by giving two short blasts of the whistle.
- If a **FIELD GOAL** attempt is unsuccessful **and** breaks the plane of the goal line, give the touchback signal.
- If a **FIELD GOAL** attempt is blocked or is obviously short:
  - \* Move to the goal line.
  - \* Use a bean bag to mark the end of the kick.
- If a running or passing play develops:
  - \* Key on the tight end if on your side.
  - \* Quickly move to the end line to rule on end line action.

## **ALL OFFICIALS**

- Take positions for a field goal or try attempt if the kicking tee is brought onto the field.
- Be alert for a runback of an unsuccessful field goal attempt which is caught or recovered in the field of play.
- Remind other officials that if the field goal attempt is blocked, the ball remains alive. Do this verbally and using the rolling fists signal.
- If a team scores, record the period, time and the score on your game card.

# 9.

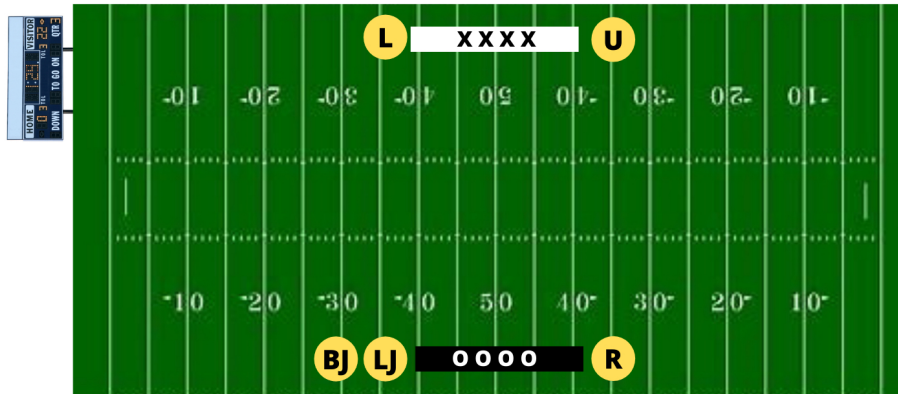
## GAME ADMINISTRATION

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# 9.1

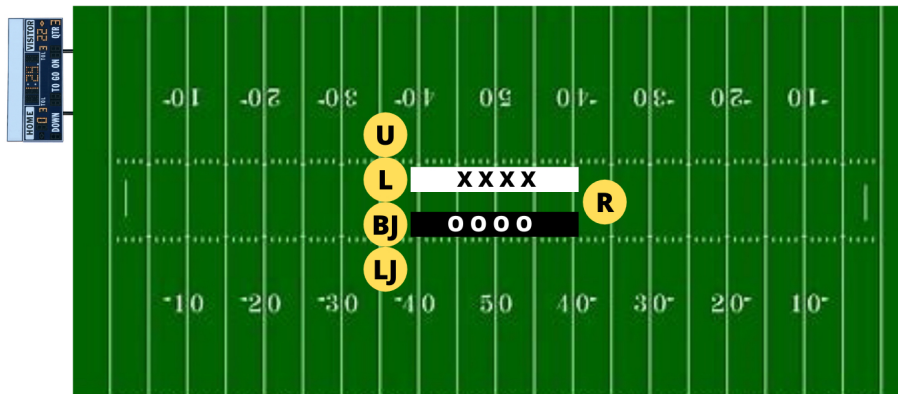
## FIRST HALF COIN TOSS

**VISITOR**



1st HALF COIN TOSS **HOME**

**VISITOR**



1st HALF COIN TOSS **HOME**

### REFEREE

- The coin toss may be held off the field if both coaches agree. If this is done, results may be simulated at the center of the field 3 minutes prior to start of the game.
- About 5 minutes before game time, escort the captains of the team whose team box is on side opposite the line-to-gain equipment to the center of the field.
- Have captains face each other with their backs to the sidelines. The Referee shall face the clock or be on the right if there are two game clocks.
- The Umpire introduces captains, introduce the captains to each other, introduce the fellow officials and then give the captains instructions.
- In the presence of the Umpire:

- \* Instruct both teams' captains that everyone is expected to exhibit good sportsmanship throughout the game.
- \* Instruct visiting captain to call the toss prior to tossing the coin.
- \* Instruct captains if coin is not caught, it will be tossed again.
- \* After making the toss and determining the winner, place hand on captain's shoulder and have captain choose one of the following options:
  1. Kick or receive;
  2. Defend a goal; or
  3. Defer choice to the 2nd half
- \* If the winner chooses not to defer and makes a choice, give opposing captain choice of remaining options
- \* If the winner defers, step toward the press box and give penalty-declined signal. Opposing captain is then given the choice of options, followed by deferring captain's choice of remaining option.
- Place captains in position facing each other with backs toward the goal they will defend.
- While facing same direction as the choosing captain, signal choice:
  - \* Swing leg simulating kick
  - \* Make catching motion simulating receiving.
  - \* If choosing captain elected to defend a goal, point with both arms extended toward that goal line, then give the appropriate signal for choice of other captain.
- Dismiss captains.

## UMPIRE

- Locate the visiting team captains and have them on the sideline 5 minutes prior to the kickoff. Do not use a whistle to signal the captains to report to the field for the toss.
- Escort the captains of the team whose team box is on the side where the line-to-gain equipment is located to the center of the field.
- After introducing captains to the Referee, step back into line-up with other officials for introduction of officials to captains. When Referee introduces you, step forward and observe toss, after which return to the line-up with other officials.
- Secure football of kicking team

## LINESMAN, LINE JUDGE, AND BACK JUDGE

- Help escort captains to center of the field along with Referee or Umpire as shown in the diagram on the previous sheet.

## BACK JUDGE

- Locate the home team captains and have them on the sideline 5 minutes prior to the kickoff. Do not use a whistle to signal the captains to report to the field for the toss.

## ALL OFFICIALS

- At the conclusion of the coin toss procedure and dismissal of the captains, move together for final instructions from the Referee.
- Record which team has first choice for the 2nd half
- At the Referee's signal, hustle to kickoff positions.
- Linesman and Judges clear the sidelines before going to kickoff positions.

# 9.2

## ENDING A PERIOD

## REFEREE

- If a field clock is not used:
  - \* Take an official's time-out with approximately four (4) minutes remaining in the 2nd and 4th periods.
  - \* Inform both captains and both coaches of the time remaining.
  - \* Approximately 30 seconds before the time for the period expires, have the Line Judge notify you that time may expire during the next down..
  - \* When time expires and the ball becomes dead, sound the whistle and repeat the time-out signal.
  - \* If a field clock is used, be responsible for knowing when time expires when facing the clock.
- If time expires prior to the snap:
  - \* Sound the whistle to prevent the snap.
  - \* If the ball is snapped immediately after time expires, sound the whistle loudly and long, and signal time-out.
  - \* Following a delay to insure that no foul, no obvious timing error, no request for a coach-referee conference and no other irregularity have occurred, hold the ball in one hand over your head to signal the end of the period.

## UMPIRE

- If a field clock is used, be responsible for knowing when time expires when facing the clock.
- If time expires prior to the snap:
  - \* Sound the whistle to prevent the snap.
  - \* If the ball is snapped immediately after time expired, sound the whistle loudly and long, and signal time-out.

## LINE JUDGE

- If a field clock is not used:
  - \* Keep the official time.
  - \* Notify the Referee approximately 4 minutes before the end of the 2nd and 4th periods.
  - \* Notify the Referee approximately 30 seconds before the period expires, that time may expire during the next down.
  - \* When time expires and the ball becomes dead, signal the Referee by raising an arm above your head, sounding the whistle and signaling time-out.

# 9.3

## BETWEEN PERIODS

### REFEREE

- Record the team in possession, the down, distance to gain, location of the clip, and yard line through foremost point of the ball.
- Announce this information to the other officials and confirm with the Linesman and Umpire.
- Measure the distance from the nearest yard line to the foremost point of the ball, and estimate the distance from the inbounds line.
- When notified by the Back Judge that 60 seconds have expired, announce the period, down and distance.
- Give the ready-for-play signal.

### UMPIRE

- Record the team in possession, the down, distance to gain, location of the clip, and yard line through foremost point of the ball, and confirm with the Referee.

- Quickly take the ball to the corresponding spot on the other end of the field and reverse directions.
- After spotting the ball, check again with the Linesman and Referee for accuracy.

#### **LINESMAN**

- Record the team in possession, the down, distance to gain, location of the clip, and yard line through foremost point of the ball, and confirm with the Referee.
- Call out the down, distance and the yard line on which the clip is positioned to the chain crew.
- Reverse the yardage chain and chain crew.
- Set the yardage chain at the corresponding spot on the other end of the field.
- Check the number of the down and distance to gain.
- Perform same duties as described for a time-out.
- Indicate to the Referee that you are ready, by signaling the number of the down with finger(s) or fist for 4th down.

#### **LINE JUDGE**

- Record the team in possession, the down, distance to gain, location of the clip, and yard line through foremost point of the ball, and confirm with the Referee.
- Observe teams while moving to the corresponding spot at the other end of the field.
- Perform same duties as described for a time-out.

#### **BACK JUDGE**

- Record the team in possession, the down, distance to gain, location of the clip, and yard line through foremost point of the ball, and confirm with the Referee.
- Assist Linesman in monitoring sideline and go to the succeeding spot at the other end of the field.
- Perform same duties as described for a time-out.

## **9.4**

### **BETWEEN HALVES**

#### **REFEREE**

- Signal ECO to start the clock to time the intermission when teams leave the field.
- Do not visit with anyone.
- Discuss any problems in private.
- Along with the Back Judge, obtain 2nd half choices from the head coach of each team during the 3-minute mandatory warm-up period.

#### **UMPIRE**

- Secure the ball of the kicking team prior to the start of the 2nd half.

#### **LINESMAN**

- During intermission, discuss with the line-to-gain crew any aspects of their duties which may be improved to aid in game administration.
- Station the chain crew near the team box on the receiver's end of the field.
- Clear the sideline before going to kickoff position.

#### **LINE JUDGE**

- Clear the sideline before going to kickoff position.

#### **BACK JUDGE**

- Keep time during the intermission
- Along with the Referee, obtain 2nd half choices from the Head Coach of each team during the 3-minute mandatory warm-up period.

#### ALL OFFICIALS

- Leave the field together.
- Assemble in a dressing room or other private area if available.
- Discuss overtime procedure if applicable.
- Return to the field at least 5 minutes before the 2nd half is to begin.
- Be responsible for placing 3 minutes on the clock once time expires for half time.
- After the 3 minute warm-up period, meet in the center of the field to review second half options and receive last minute instructions.
- Move to normal kickoff positions and start the 2nd half on time.

#### ECO

- At halftime set the field clock to run for the appropriate halftime (from 10 – 20 minutes), if the clock can be set to run the appropriate amount of time. If the field clock can be set to run only 12 minutes, start the clock after timing the first 3-8 minutes on your watch and run the field clock for the final 12 minutes. Start the clock upon signal from Referee when team personnel have left the field.
- Set and run clock for the mandatory 3-minute warm-up period **immediately** after the halftime intermission expires.

## 9.5

### END OF GAME

#### ALL OFFICIALS

- Leave the field together.
- Neither seek, nor avoid coaches.
- Do not discuss the game on the field or make any public statement about the game to the news media.
- Assist Linesman in completing the game card
- Line Judge: Enter game card information (Penalty Report) into Arbiter at earliest opportunity.
- Report any flagrant irregularity or disqualification(s) to the League Office by phone, Email, using the report on the Arbiter, or as a last option, the US Mail. The SCHSL number is (803) 798-0120.

## 9.6

### OVERTIME

#### ECO

- Put 3 minutes on the field clock and start on the Referee's signal.
- For each additional overtime period put 2 minutes on the field clock and start on the Referee's signal.

#### REFEREE

- Discuss any penalty enforcement necessary to begin the overtime period with all officials.
- Move to the center of the field at the 50 yard line.
- Direct the Linesman and Line Judge to escort the team captains from their respective sidelines.

- Hold coin toss at the center of the field. The winner of the toss may choose the end of the field at which the ball will be put in play, or to start on offense or defense.
- Indicate the winner of the toss by placing a hand on the captain's shoulder.
  - \* Then position the offensive captain facing the goal toward which the ball will be advanced and the defensive captain facing his opponent and opposite goal.
  - \* Give the 1st down signal toward the goal being used.

#### UMPIRE AND BACK JUDGE

- Move to the center of the field at the 50-yard line along with the Referee.

#### LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE

- Inform your respective coaches of the effect any penalty enforcement will have on his team to begin the overtime period.
- Escort team captions to the center of the field.

#### REMINDERS

- To start each new series, the team may designate the location of the ball placement between the inbounds lines.
  - The line-to-gain is **always** the goal line.
  - One time-out is granted for each overtime period.
  - If additional overtime periods are necessary, the first choice of options is alternated.
- NOTE:** There is only one coin toss for all overtime periods.

# 9.7

## PENALTY ENFORCEMENT

#### APPROVED SIGNALS

- **The Umpire and Linesman should use the following hand signals to communicate the enforcement distance to each other, prior to stepping off enforcement.**
- **1** = 5-yard penalty.
- **2** = 10-yard penalty.
- **3** = 15-yard penalty.
- **Chop across the elbow** = Half-the-distance.

#### REFEREE

- When the ball is dead following a foul:
  - \* Signal time-out
  - \* Get full information from the official who called the foul.
  - \* Give the preliminary signal to the press box side of the field only. Preliminary signals are not required to be given for "automatic" dead ball fouls such as encroachment and false start.
  - \* Give the penalty options to the player or coach designated to make penalty decisions.
    - ◆ Once made, the choice cannot be revoked
    - ◆ After obtaining the decision, relay penalty information to the other officials
  - \* If the play clock is not set to 25 seconds, signal it to be set with one palm extended upward overhead in a pumping motion.
  - \* Sound your whistle to the mark the ball ready for play (Signal 1) or to start the game clock (Signal 2).
- If the penalty is accepted:
  - \* Discuss and agree on penalty enforcement with the Umpire.
  - \* Make note of the enforcement spot for the penalty
  - \* After the ball has been spotted, give the final signal for the foul to the press box side of the field only.
- If the penalty is declined:

- \* Go to the spot of the ball.
- \* Give the signal for the foul followed by the penalty declined signal to the press box.
- If there is a double foul:
  - \* Signal each foul facing the press box.
  - \* Then give the penalty declined signal.
- If two penalties are enforced, give the proper signals following each enforcement.
- If a penalty is to be enforced on the kickoff or succeeding spot in overtime
  - \* Indicate the score is good.
  - \* Follow with the proper foul signal.
  - \* Point to the offending team.
  - \* Point to the succeeding spot.

#### UMPIRE

- Secure the ball and move to the enforcement spot.
- **Identify and confirm enforcement.**
- **Face Linesman and signal enforcement.**
- **Administer the penalty.**
- **Confirm with Linesman before spotting the ball.**
- On a properly marked field, avoid stepping off the distance between yard lines, except for the first and final yard line.
- Walk briskly, signaling each yard line crossed.

#### LINESMAN

- **Maintain eye contact with Umpire and mirror Umpire's signal.**
- **Walk with Umpire during enforcement.**
- **Confirm enforcement distance.**
- Be ready to have the line-to-gain equipment moved after penalty administration.
- **Verify the down number.**
- Do not permit trainers, attendants or coaches to come onto the field.
- Relay the penalty information to the appropriate coach.

#### LINE JUDGE

- Return the time-out signal to the Referee.
- Hold the enforcement spot to ensure the distance is properly administered.
- Do not permit trainers, attendants or coaches to come onto the field.
- Relay the penalty information to the appropriate coach.
- **The Line Judge shall record all game fouls using a game card or recording device.**

#### BACK JUDGE

- Help obtain the ball.
- Assist in holding the spot of the foul or recovering the penalty marker.
- Assist in relaying foul information to the appropriate sideline.
- Confirm the play clock is set to 25 seconds.

#### ALL OFFICIALS

- When observing a live ball foul:
  - \* Drop the penalty marker on the proper yard line and continue to observe the play, noting the location/status of the ball at the time of the foul.
  - \* Withhold blowing the whistle!
- When the ball becomes dead:
  - \* Calling official
    - ◆ Sound the whistle and signal time-out.
    - ◆ After delay, sound the whistle using several short blasts to alert the rest of the crew that a foul has occurred.
    - ◆ Do not leave the dead ball spot until you are released by another official.
    - ◆ Verbally report the information to the Referee. **GIVE NO VISIBLE SIGNAL!**  
(**Exception:** The Back Judge may give a "Delay of Game" signal when the play clock has expired.)

- Identify the foul.
- Identify the offending team including jersey color and offense/defense or kicking/receiving team.
- Identify the offending player's number or position.
- Indicate the spot of the foul, end of the run or end of the kick.
- Indicate the status of the ball when the foul occurred.
- Make a mental note as to whether the clock should be started on the ready or on the snap.
- ◆ An available official should cover the flag, and must maintain the dead ball spot.
- When observing a dead ball foul, including sideline warnings:
  - \* Sound the whistle, toss the penalty marker into the air and signal time-out immediately.
  - \* Follow the procedures for "When the ball becomes dead" above.
- Penalty enforcement:
  - \* Assist in locating the captains.
  - \* Recover penalty markers and the ball
  - \* Record the foul on the game card, noting the offending player's number if an unsportsmanlike foul is called.
  - \* See that the Umpire assesses the penalty properly in all respects.
  - \* Avoid visiting while the penalty is being assessed.
- When a disqualifying foul is called:
  - \* Calling official:
    - ◆ Inform the offending player and report his number and type of infraction to the coach and all other members of the officiating crew.
    - ◆ Emphasize that the disqualification is for the remainder of the game.
    - ◆ **DO NOT** place a hand on the offending player, nor accompany him, nor escort him to the sideline.
  - \* If there is multiple disqualifying fouls; the Referee may designate another official to assist in reporting the foul to the coaches.
- All officials:
  - \* Record the player's number and name, if known.
  - \* Observe all other players.
  - \* **Line Judge:** Notify the League Office on the game report card.
  - \* Notify the League Office at (803) 798-0120, by e-mail, by using the form on The Arbiter, or as a last option, by US Mail.

# 9.8

## MEASUREMENTS

### REFEREE

- Signal time-out.
- Signal to the Linesman to bring the chains onto the field.
- Motion players away from the ball.
- Place one hand on the ground in a vertical position at the foremost point of the ball.
- Rotate the ball so that the long axis is parallel to the sideline.
- Place the front end of the ball against your hand marking the foremost point.
- If in a side zone, measure before the ball is taken to the inbounds spot.
- If the ball has gone out-of-bounds, measure to the point where the ball crossed the sideline.
- After the chains are in place, decide if the line-to-gain has been reached. The inside edge of the forward rod marks the line-to-gain.
- If the line-to-gain is not reached in the side zone, use the chains to accurately place the ball at the inbounds spot.
- When the measurement is complete
  - \* Signal the number of the next down.
  - \* Spot the ball at the proper place.

- \* Wait for the line-to-gain crew to return to their position.
- If a new series is awarded to the opponent of the team which had possession when the ball became dead:
  - \* Place the ball so that the forward point, when it became dead, becomes the rear point when the direction is changed.
  - \* **Note:** The new rear rod is set with the inside edge at the new point of the ball so that the line-to-gain is 10 yards in advance of this point. (The chains are moved the length of the ball, when this is properly done.)
- After measurement:
  - \* Move to your pre-snap position.
  - \* If the play clock is not set to 25 seconds, signal to set it.
  - \* Sound your whistle to mark the ball ready for play (Signal 1) and to start the game clock (Signal 2) as required by rule.

#### **UMPIRE**

- Take the forward rod from the chain man at the place of measurement.
- When the Linesman calls “ready,” tighten the chain and hold the forward rod near the ball until the Referee reaches a decision. (Do not jerk the chain!)

#### **LINESMAN**

- When the Referee signals for a measurement:
  - \* Grasp the chain and clip at the back edge of the yard line. Don’t just grasp the clip, as it could detach.
  - \* Instruct the down marker operator to move to the front rod spot and keep the same down number on the box.
  - \* Bring the chain onto the field behind the ball and place the clip on the back edge of the yard line.
  - \* Hold firmly and call “ready” to the Umpire to stretch the chain tight.
  - \* Wait for the Referee’s decision.
- If no 1st down:
  - \* If measurement is in a side zone, use chain to place the ball at inbounds line.
  - \* While holding the chain, accompany the crew to the sideline, and reset the chains in their original position.
  - \* Have the down marker operator move the down indicator to the next down.
- If a new series is awarded:
  - \* Set the inside edge of the rear rod at the foremost point of the ball after it is spotted.
  - \* Set the down marker to 1st down.
  - \* Mark the foremost point of the ball for down marker operator on all 1st downs.

#### **LINE JUDGE**

- Position behind the yard line from which the measurement is to be made.
- Align the Linesman with the ball so that the measurement is accurate.
- Do not permit team attendants to enter the field.

#### **BACK JUDGE**

- Do not permit team attendants to enter the field.
- Observe all players.
- Position at the box (down indicator) at the spot of the front rod.
- Ensure the previous down is showing on the box (down indicator) until the measurement is complete.
- Once the measurement is complete and the proper down is determined, ensure the box (down indicator) reflects the correct down.
- Confirm the play clock is set to 25 seconds.

# TIME OUTS

## REFEREE

- Sound the whistle and signal time-out.
- If the time-out is charged to a team, indicate the team by moving both arms in a horizontal motion toward that team.
- If the time-out is an officials' time-out, indicate by tapping your chest with both hands.
- Check the number of time-outs remaining for each team.
- Check the game time remaining with the game clock or Back Judge.
- Check the down and distance with the Linesman.
- Notify the head coach after their third time-out has been charged.
- Take a position away from the other officials and observe Team B.
- When notified by the Back Judge that 60 seconds has elapsed, move to the ball and announce the down and distance.
- If the play clock is not set to 25 seconds, signal to set it.
- Move to your pre-snap position and sound your whistle to mark the ball ready for play.

## UMPIRE

- Maintain a position over the ball
- Observe Team A until the Referee is ready to start play.

## LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE

- Move to a position halfway between the ball and your sideline.
- Check the team box and huddle areas for appropriate conference procedure.
- Be alert for the signal from the Back Judge to give your team the 15-second warning. Go to the team huddle and say, *"Coach, the ball will be ready-for-play in 15 seconds."*
- Be alert for substitutes and substituting for purposes of deception.
- Inform the captain and coach of the number of time-outs remaining.

## BACK JUDGE

- Time the 60-second interval. Notify the other officials 15 seconds prior to the ready for play by giving two short blasts of the whistle.
- Notify Referee when 60 seconds interval elapses by pointing directly at him.
- Observe Team B and count its players when play is ready to resume.
- Confirm the play clock is set to 25 seconds.

## ALL OFFICIALS

- Repeat the time-out signal.
- Record the time-out, the period, the time remaining in the period, and verify with all fellow officials the number of time-outs remaining for each team.
- Make sure that only three attendants enter the field when an on-field conference is chosen.
- Stand alertly erect.
- Do not visit with players.
- Restrict discussion to the team captain
- Do not huddle in a group.

# 9.10

## INJURY TIME OUTS

## REFEREE

- Summon trainers and/or coaches onto the field
- With input from the other game officials, determine whether the injured player is conscious.

- Observe teams
- Be ready to assist trainers and/or coaches in securing additional medical help, if needed.
- Move to your pre-snap position after the player is off the field.
- If the play clock is not set, signal to set it. 40 seconds for defensive team member injury or 25 seconds for offensive team member injury.
- Sound your whistle to mark the ball ready for play (Signal 1) or to start the game clock (Signal 2).

#### UMPIRE

- Move to a position over the ball and observe substitutions.
- Make sure summoned trainers and/or coaches are not on the field for coaching purposes.

#### BACK JUDGE

- Note on game card the position of the ball, the line to gain, the down and distance, and the time on the game clock when the injury time-out began. This will ensure the ball position and the game clock are correct when play resumes.
- Confirm the play clock is set to 25 seconds for injury of offensive team member.
- Confirm the play clock is set to 40 seconds for injury of defensive team member.

#### ALL OFFICIALS

- Do **NOT** touch an injured player.

## 9.11

### STARTING AND STOPPING THE CLOCK

#### STOPPING THE CLOCK

- Stop the clock when applicable rules dictate.
- Echo signal to stop the clock when given by another official

#### STARTING THE CLOCK

- Start the clock on the ready-for-play signal, on the snap, or on a free kick when applicable rules dictate.
  - \* For sub-varsity games, the clock shall start on the ready-for-play signal:
    - ◆ Following a change of team possession.
      - Exception 1: A charged time-out is granted to either team before the ready-for-play signal.
      - Exception 2: Clock will start on the snap inside of 2:00 of each half.
    - ◆ When Team B is awarded a new series.
      - Exception: Clock will start on the snap inside of 2:00 of each half.
    - ◆ When a new series is awarded either team following a legal kick.
      - Exception: Clock will start on the snap inside of 2:00 of each half.
  - \* If the signal to stop the clock is erroneously given, restart the clock immediately upon discovery of the error.
  - \* For JV, B team, and middle school games, the 40/25 second play clock shall be used as dictated by the rules along with mechanics found in the 4-man Mechanics Manual (if used for sub varsity games).

#### SIDELINE PLAYS

- If the ball becomes dead inbounds within 2 to 3 yards of the sideline:
  - \* The covering official shall use normal coverage.
  - \* When the ball becomes dead, give the start the clock signal, using only two turns of the arm, to indicate that the runner is down inbounds and the clock should continue to run.
  - \* If a 1st down is reached, give the time-out signal after the start the clock signal.
- The signal for winding or stopping the clock on a sideline play should be echoed by other officials.

# 9.12

## SOUNDING THE WHISTLE

### OFFICIAL COVERING THE RUNNER

- Find the ball before sounding the whistle.
- Sound the whistle **LOUDLY** when the ball becomes dead by rule. This stops action and prevents rough play
- Move in quickly to be certain all action stops on the whistle

### ALL OFFICIALS

- Actually see the ball in possession of the runner who is down or forward progress is stopped; this prevents an early whistle.
- The ball can be kept in view when officials are in position and alert.
- Be ready to assist the covering official after the whistle has sounded.
- Following a down, in which a live ball foul occurs, give several short blasts of the whistle to alert the rest of the crew that a foul has occurred.

### INADVERTENT WHISTLE

- **PROPER CONCENTRATION AND “SEEING THE BALL” WILL PREVENT MOST INADVERTENT WHISTLES!**
- The ball becomes dead immediately when an inadvertent whistle is sounded.
- The location at which the ball will be put in play and the number of the next down is determined by the location and status of the ball when the whistle was sounded.
- Use a bean bag to mark the spot of last possession if a whistle is sounded inadvertently.

# 9.13

## USE OF THE BEAN BAG

### ALL OFFICIALS

- Drop the bean bag **on the appropriate yard line** in accordance with the situations referenced in this manual.
- The beanbag serves as an aid to enforcement and is not always an absolute reference point.
- The bean bag is to be used to mark the:
  - \* Spot of first touching of a kick.
  - \* Spot of the catch or recovery when momentum is involved.
  - \* Spot where the runner or loose ball goes out of bounds when, as a last resort, the covering official must retrieve the ball
  - \* Spot of any fumble.
  - \* Spot of a backward pass thrown from beyond Team A's line of scrimmage by Team A or any backward pass by Team B.
  - \* Spot of the end of a scrimmage kick.
  - \* Spot of last possession if an inadvertent whistle is sounded.

# 9.14

## USE OF THE PENALTY FLAG

## ALL OFFICIALS

- The penalty marker is used to mark the yard line on which an official has observed a foul.
- Discretion, officiating position and game situation should determine whether the marker is dropped or tossed following an infraction.
- The flag should be tossed into the air for a dead ball foul or a sideline warning.
- When possible the flag should be dropped on the appropriate yard line where a live ball foul was observed. Continue to observe the play, noting the location/status of the ball at the time of the foul. **DO NOT BLOW THE WHISTLE!**
- The official who drops/tosses a penalty marker is responsible for alerting the crew that a foul has occurred. This should prevent the chains from being moved prematurely.
- When a foul is called by another official, be alert to cover the penalty marker or dead ball spot. **DO NOT LEAVE A FLAG OR THE DEAD BALL SPOT UNCOVERED!**

# 9.15

## 40-SECOND CLOCK/25-SECOND CLOCK ("PLAY CLOCKS")

**25 seconds will be on the play clock and start on the ready for play as dictated by the rules:**

- Prior to the try following a score.
- To start a period or overtime series.
- Following administration of an inadvertent whistle.
- Following a charged timeout or official's timeout (except after a first down is awarded or an injury to a defensive team player).
- Following any stoppage of the play clock for any other reason.
- EXCEPTION: The play clock will be set to forty seconds if an official's timeout was called for a defensive player (only) in need of equipment repair; if the defense was the only team to commit a foul during the down; or a defensive player (only) is apparently injured, exhibits signs or symptoms of a concussion, is bleeding, has his helmet come completely off during the down or subsequent dead-ball action, or required player equipment is missing or improperly worn.

**The 40-second play clock should be started immediately after a down is ended (except when the 25-second play clock is specified by rule)**

### PLAY CLOCK RESET

- If the Referee must reset the play clock to 25 seconds, the signal is made with **one** open palm in an over-the-head pumping motion.
- If the Referee must reset the play clock to 40 seconds, the signal is made with **both** open palms in an over-the-head pumping motion.

### END OF DOWN MECHANICS/SIGNALS:

- If the runner is down inbounds in your area, sound your whistle and give the dead-ball signal (Signal 7). This is the signal to start the 40-second play clock.
- If the runner goes out of bounds in your area, sound your whistle and give the time-out signal (Signal 3). Other officials should mirror this signal.
- If the runner is down inbounds within 3 yards of the sideline, the covering official should give the start-the-clock signal (Signal 2) using only two turns of the arm to indicate that the game clock should continue to run.
- Following a scrimmage play when the line-to-gain is reached, the 40-second play clock starts in accordance with the rules. Once the down indicator is set, the Referee will give the winding signal if the game clock is to start (no whistle). The Umpire should stay over the ball until the ball is ready for play.
- Hustle and Teamwork is essential to prevent delays in spotting the ball.

# 10.

# SPECIAL GAME SITUATIONS

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## 10.1

### COVERING TROUBLE SPOTS DURING SCRIMMAGE DOWNS

#### Communication Is Paramount!

Once either or both wing officials have committed to covering potential receivers downfield, they should not feel obligated to retrace their path in an urgent manner to rule on the status of the ball carrier—particularly if the ball carrier never advances beyond the line of scrimmage. They *may* return to help cover out-of-bounds action, retrieve the ball, or exchange the out-of-bounds spot with the Referee.

## 10.2

### WATER BUCKET PLAY

#### REFEREE

- Do not mark the ball ready-for-play until all officials are in the proper position.

#### UMPIRE

- **Stay over the ball!** Do not allow the ball to be snapped until the Referee has marked it ready for play!

#### LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE

- Maintain a position with all players in front of you and do not allow players to get between you and the sidelines. Keep the play and players “boxed-in.”
- If you are on the “loaded side” of the formation, use both arms to indicate that the “loaded side” players are legally on the line of scrimmage.

#### LINE JUDGE

- Stay on the line-of-scrimmage until the kick is imminent.

## 10.3

### CONTROLLING TEAM PERSONNEL

#### ALL OFFICIALS

- If an altercation is in your area, attempt to stop the initial confrontation.
- If unable to stop the altercation, step back and begin to record the uniform number of each player involved, as well as any other team personnel. The **Head Coaches** are allowed to go onto the field to stop the altercation.

#### LINESMAN AND LINE JUDGE

- Alert coaches on your sideline to keep all team personnel off the playing area.

- Record the uniform number of any substitute who enters the playing area during the altercation.

# 10.4

## CORRECTING OBVIOUS ERRORS IN TIMING

### REQUISITES FOR CORRECTING TIMING ERRORS:

- Must be readily evident and resulted in acknowledged discrepancy.
- Must not involve judgment; it must be from failure, either human or mechanical, to correctly administer a timing rule.

### REFEREE

- Is authorized to correct obvious error in timing if discovered in accordance with applicable rules.
- Must be able to reasonably determine the interval of time involved when putting time on or taking time off the clock.
- Notify both coaches that the game clock is to have time added or removed.

### ALL OFFICIALS

- Note time on the clock in dead ball intervals when clock is stopped.
- Monitor closely if problems continually arise with the operation of the clock.
- Assist Referee as much as possible.

# 10.5

## SHORTENING PERIODS

### PROCEDURE

- Shortening a period (or any remaining period or periods) requires the consent of opposing coaches and the Referee.
- The Referee indicates the end of shortened period(s) by giving the prescribed signal to officially end the period.

# 10.6

## COACH/REFEREE CONFERENCE

### PURPOSE

- Allows for review of a possible misinterpretation or misapplication of rule by officials.
- Allows for correction when an error has been made.

### PROCEDURE

- The request for a conference must be made prior to the ball becoming live following the play which is to be reviewed, unless the period has officially ended (at which point, no review is allowed).
- A player, directed by his coach, or the head coach may request a time-out to confer with the Referee regarding application or interpretation of a rule.
- The time-out, when granted, is charged to the requesting team.
- Referee (accompanied by an appropriate official, depending on the situation) and coach confer at the sideline directly in front of the team box. Another official may be used if the Linesman or Line Judge is involved in the dispute.

- If the rule has been applied correctly:
  - \* Time-out remains charged to the team.
  - \* A foul for delay of game is charged if the team has used all permissible time-outs.
- If the rule has been applied incorrectly:
  - \* Correction is made immediately.
  - \* The time-out previously charged to the team becomes an official's time-out.
  - \* The Referee **must** explain the situation with the opposing coach before continuing the game.

## 10.7

### COACH DISQUALIFICATION

#### REFEREE

- Provide the coach with the reason for disqualification (accompanied by another official).
- Require the coach to vacate the stadium area.
- If coach does not vacate the area, inform the coach that noncompliance could lead to forfeiture.
- Locate local school administration for assistance.
  - \* Do not continue the contest until the coach leaves the stadium area.
  - \* Forfeit the contest if necessary. **THIS SHOULD BE THE LAST RESORT!**
- Comply with the SCHSL's reporting requirements.
  - \* Note on game report card the reason for the coach's disqualification.
  - \* Notify the SCHSL office with the report as soon as possible **(803) 798-0120**.
- File a written report with the SCHSL office by email, using the report on Arbiter, or as a last option, the US Mail.

#### OTHER OFFICIALS

- Linesman, Line Judge or Back Judge: Accompany the Referee to the sideline.
- Assist Referee if necessary.
- Notify the opposing coach of the disqualification.

#### REMINDER

- The coach must be notified by the Referee or calling official of **ALL** unsportsmanlike conduct fouls charged against him.
- Any coach receiving two unsportsmanlike fouls (carrying 15-yard penalties) must vacate the stadium area.
- **IF** severe enough, the coach may be disqualified on the first unsportsmanlike foul!

## 10.8

### LIGHTNING SAFETY GUIDELINES

If a 30-second or less flash-to-bang count is measured, the crew of officials shall stop the game with an official's time-out so that coaches may take appropriate actions to protect their players. The crew should wait 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or sound of thunder to resume the contest. Teams must be given at least three minutes to warm up after this delay.

## 10.9

### SOUTH CAROLINA "MERCY" RULE

The SCHSL has adopted a point differential that will enact a running clock when this point differential is reached. Please refer to the table at the back of this manual.

- The “mercy rule” goes into effect once the point differential reaches 42 points at any point in the second half.
- Once the “mercy rule” is in effect, the timing rules will remain in effect for the remainder of the game, even if the point differential falls below 42 points.
- The “mercy rule” is automatically in effect once the point differential is reached, but periods may also be shortened with the approval of both coaches and the Referee. In other words, both rules could be in effect at the same time.
- Here are the only times the clock will be **STOPPED**:
  - \* Heat and humidity timeouts
  - \* Coach-Referee conference
  - \* After a foul/penalty enforcement
  - \* For radio and TV timeouts
  - \* One-minute intermission between first and second periods; between third and fourth periods; and following all scores.
  - \* For an apparently injured player discovered while the ball is dead and for whom the ready-for-play is delayed, or for whom the play clock is stopped.
  - \* For a player exhibiting signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion
  - \* Charged team time outs
- When the clock is stopped in any of the above situations, the game clock shall start again on the next ready-for-play signal.

# 11.1

## MECHANIC CHANGE RATIONALES

### 8.1 - RUNNING PLAYS: REFEREE POSITION

- This establishes a uniform and consistent pre-snap positioning range for all Referees, which previously did not exist.

### 8.1 - RUNNING PLAYS: LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE (BALL TO OPPOSITE SIDE)

- Addresses officials becoming spectators instead of actively officiating during and after the down.

### 8.1 - RUNNING PLAYS: LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE (BALL TO YOUR SIDE)

- Encourages officials to move off the sideline, assist the Umpire, and improve dead-ball officiating.

### 8.2 - FORWARD PASS PLAYS: LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE (AFTER THE SNAP)

- Prevents officials from remaining stationary and improves active coverage during passing plays. Improves secondary responsibility of identifying ineligible receivers downfield.

### 9.7 - PENALTY ENFORCEMENT: COMMUNICATION, UMPIRE & LINESMAN

- Improves accuracy and communication, and promotes a professional appearance.

### 9.7 - PENALTY ENFORCEMENT: LINE JUDGE

- Formally adds recording device as approved equipment.

### 9.7 - PENALTY ENFORCEMENT: ALL OFFICIALS

- Aligns reporting responsibilities with Line Judge game administration duties.

# 11.2

## 2026 SCFOA MECHANICS POINTS OF EMPHASIS

### POST-SCORE EFFICIENCY

- Emphasis on getting teams back on the field promptly following the one-minute officials timeout following a try, successful field goal, or safety and prior to the succeeding free kick.

**FACIAL HAIR / GROOMING STANDARDS**

- Reinforce male grooming standards.
- Request the the President and District Directors send reminder emails, including before-and-after photo examples, statewide.

# 11.2

## TABLE: SOUTH CAROLINA "MERCY" RULE

### SCFOA MERCY RULE RUNNING CLOCK SCENARIOS

The new "mercy rule" adopted by the SCHSL for the 2022 football season allows the game clock to continue to run when it would otherwise be stopped by way of an official's timeout.

Following are all of the situations in which an official's time out should normally be taken, along with game situations that call for the clock to stop, and whether or not the game clock will stop during these time outs while the mercy rule is in effect.

For the time outs denoted by an "X" in the "Clock Continues To Run" column, the game clock will **not be stopped**.  
 For the time outs denoted by an "X" in the "Clock Is Stopped" column, the game clock **shall be stopped**. The game clock shall then restart on the next ready-for-play signal.

OFFICIAL'S TIME OUT SITUATION	CLOCK IS STOPPED	CLOCK CONTINUES TO RUN	CLOCK IS RESTARTED...
Heat and humidity timeouts	X		Ready-for-play
Coach-referee conference	X		Ready-for-play
After a foul/penalty enforcement	X		Ready-for-play
For TV/radio time out	X		Ready-for-play
One-minute intermission between third and fourth period; and following all scores (touchdown, field goal, safety)	X		Ready-for-play
For an apparently injured player discovered while the ball is dead and for whom the ready-for-play is delayed, or for whom the play clock is stopped.	X		Ready-for-play
For a player exhibiting signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion	X		Ready-for-play
Charged team time outs	X		Ready-for-play
For a measurement of a possible first down		X	
When a first down is declared		X	
Following a change of team possession		X	
When captains and coaches are notified of the time remaining		X	
For a player in need of equipment repair		X	
To dry or change the ball		X	
Any unusual delay		X	
For a player discovered to be bleeding, with an open wound, or blood on his uniform		X	
When the helmet comes completely off a player during the down		X	
Any required player equipment is missing or improperly worn		X	
OTHER GAME SITUATIONS	CLOCK IS STOPPED	CLOCK CONTINUES TO RUN	
Ball is out of bounds		X	
A legal or illegal forward pass is incomplete		X	
A fair catch is made		X	
An inadvertent whistle is sounded		X	
An airborne receiver is carried out-of-bounds		X	

#### NOTES ON THE SCHSL MERCY RULE

1. The "mercy rule" goes into effect once the point differential reaches **42 points at any point in the second half**.
2. Once the "mercy rule" is in effect, the timing rules will remain in effect for the remainder of the game, **even if the point differential falls below 42 points**.
3. The "mercy rule" is automatically in effect once the point differential is reached, **but periods may also be shortened** with the approval of both coaches and the Referee. In other words, **both** rules could be in effect at the same time.

#### EXPLANATIONS AND EXAMPLES

The SCHSL has adopted a version of the T.I.P.S. procedure (Time outs, Injury, Penalty, and Scores) of stopping the clock under a mercy rule, a procedure used by many state associations across the country.



## ABOUT THE SCFOA

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Founded in 1944 to provide a means of training and developing football officials and maintaining a booking office for varsity football officials, the South Carolina Football Officials Association has grown from the original 12 officials serving 4 high schools, to its present size of 700 officials serving 206 schools. A basic rating system was developed in 1958 to assess each official. The rating system was incorporated into SCFOA's Constitution and By-laws in 1967 and is used today in assigning officials to varsity football games.

The rating system awards points to officials as follows: a Rules and Mechanics exam - 40%, SCFOA Credit (years of experience) - 15%, Fellow Officials Ratings - 25%, District Classroom meetings and preseason scrimmages - 15% and Cooperation - 5%. Coaches do not rate officials in this rating system.