

PIAA FOOTBALL MECHANICS FOR 6 OFFICIALS



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Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

This manual was adopted from the CCA Football Officiating Manual for a Crew of 6 and modified to assist PIAA football officials when officiating PIAA football games with a crew of 6 officials.

The mechanics within this manual are not all inclusive and not intended to be. The mechanics within this manual are basic in scope and based on the CCA Football Officiating Manual for a crew of 6.

The **2026** basic mechanics manual edition was reviewed, updated, and approved by Dave Blair, PIAA Statewide Football Rules Interpreter.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

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Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

PRE-GAME FIELD DUTIES

At least 45 minutes before kickoff the Referee and Umpire, or any other designated official, will visit each team's coach on the field. The Referee will confirm the official starting time with the coach, review any unusual game situations and secure the name of the individual who will make penalty decisions. The Umpire, or any other designated official, if asked by the coach, will inspect any player equipment. After visiting with both teams' coach has been completed, the coin toss shall be completed 30 minutes prior to kickoff, and the results recorded. After the coin toss and Sportsmanship message, share the results with entire crew and continue pregame observation and inspection of player equipment.

At approximately 5 minutes after the Referee and Umpire, or any other designated official, have left to visit the teams, all other officials should leave to visit the field to perform their pre- game duties (such as inspect the field; inspect player equipment and advise them of any illegal equipment, record the number of the players as those players are to be re-checked when they come back onto the field; Linesman inspect chains; SJ and FJ inspect, test and mark game balls from each team and instruct ball retrievers on their duties also check the game and play clocks, etc.). After completing pre-game field duties return to the locker room (there is no need to wait for the Referee and Umpire). When the Referee and Umpire return any information obtained during the pre-game field duties should be discussed with them.

R & U will return to the field together, the HJ/SJ and LJ/FJ who will escort their teams to the field. Teams shall be on the field 5 minutes before game time. Always send two officials to escort teams.

TIMING RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Field Judge is responsible for the game clock only.
- The Side Judge is responsible for all other timing (except the game clock), including the 25/40-second play clock (see mechanics on pages 45-46), one minute interval after scores and periods, timeouts, halftime, etc. If the visual 25/40-second play clocks become inoperable, time the interval yourself and raise one arm straight overhead during the last 10-seconds and countdown the last 5-seconds of the count.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

Coin Toss / Halftime / Overtime Responsibilities



According to the PIAA, the official coin toss should be held prior to the game's ceremonial coin toss. The official coin toss will be held in either end zone or mid-field, 30 minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off time, with the Head Coaches and Captains of each team. At this time the crew has now taken authority of the game.

Timelines:

- The official toss will be done thirty minutes (30) before kick-off. Officials are to read the PIAA Sportsmanship Message at this time and get legally equipped confirmation from each head coach. The Referee & Umpire will write down the results of the official coin toss: winner, choice, and direction of kick.
- The ceremonial/mock coin toss (see page 6) will be done at the center of field three (3) minutes prior to start of game.
- At least five minutes before game time the HJ/SJ and the LJ/FJ will escort the teams from locker rooms to the sidelines.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

Mid-Field Ceremonial/Mock Coin Toss:

- The Referee and Umpire will move to the middle of the field 5 minutes prior to scheduled kickoff. They will assume a position at the opposite 45 yard lines facing the 50 yard line. The Referee will face the end zone scoreboard.
- With 3 minutes and 30 seconds on the clock, Head line Judge/ Side Judge will instruct the visiting team players, coaches, and personnel to remain off the playing field and within team box. The Side Judge will escort the visiting team captains toward the center of the field, stopping at the top of the numbers and then return to the sideline. The captains will continue to mid-field. The Headline Judge will remain on the sideline.
- The Line Judge / Field Judge will instruct the home team players, coaches, and personnel to remain off the playing field and within team box. The Field Judge will escort the home team captains toward the center of the field, stopping at the top of the numbers and then return to the sideline. The captains will continue to mid-field. The Line Judge will remain on the sideline.
- The captains should face each other with their backs to their sidelines. The referee reintroduces himself to the captains and has them reintroduce each other. The referee will then review the results of the official coin toss.
- If the winner of the toss opted to defer their choice until the second half, the referee stands toward the press box clear of the captains, indicates the toss winner by placing his hand on the shoulder of the appropriate captain and gives the declined signal.
- The referee will instruct the captains of the team that will receive the kickoff to face the opponent's goal line. The other captains will face their opponent's goal line. The referee gives a catching motion to indicate the team that will receive. If the team chooses to kick, the referee indicates the choice by making a kicking motion. If the team chooses one end of the field, the referee points with both arms extended toward the appropriate goal line.
- The line judge or head linesman will take the kicking team's game ball to the center of the field and hand it to the umpire. The officials make a written record of the results of the toss and move to their kickoff positions simultaneously.

Second half choices:

- As the teams are being escorted to the field the Field Judge/Side Judge will get the choices from the head coaches, and they will report them to the Referee.
- Hustle directly to kickoff positions after warm-up period. H/L and F/S clear sidelines before going to kick off position.
- Referee must allow the 3:00 mandatory warm-up period to completely run down to :00. Do not start the 2nd half until the 3-minute elapse even if both teams are ready to play.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

Overtime:

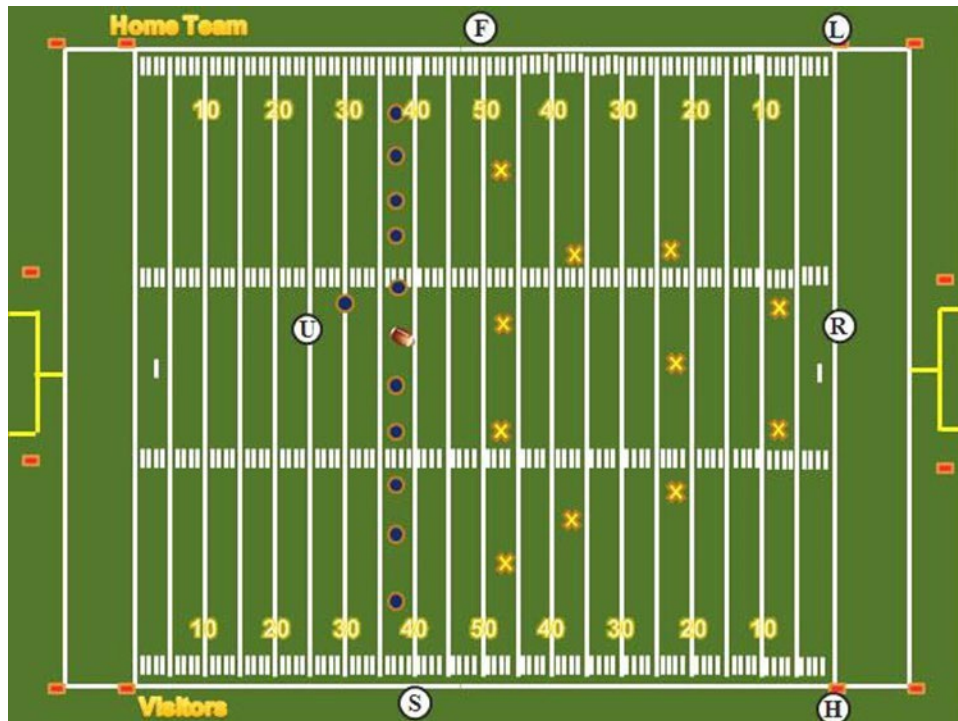
- NFHS / PIAA football-playing rules apply. (Page 89 of the 2026 NFHS Rules Book)
 - One coin toss
 - One time-out per overtime period
 - Penalty carryover
 - No clock
 - Line to gain is always the Goal Line.
 - No chains (only the box)
 - 10-yardline to begin series
 - Series ends when A scores or with B possession.
 - Try is attempted by A
 - Try attempted by B unless winner is determined.
 - If defense scores a safety, game is over.
- Immediately after the conclusion of the fourth quarter, officials will instruct both teams to retire to their respective team areas. The officials will assemble at the 50-yard line and review the tiebreaker procedures.
- Three-minute intermission
- The Head Line Judge / Side Judge will instruct the visiting team players, coaches and personnel to remain off the playing field and within team box. The Side Judge will escort the visiting team captains toward the center of the field, stopping at the top of the numbers and then return to the sideline. The captains will continue to mid-field. The Head Line Judge will remain on the sideline.
- The Line Judge / Field Judge will instruct the home team players, coaches and personnel to remain off the playing field and within team box. The Field Judge will escort the home team captains toward the center of the field, stopping at the top of the numbers and then return to the sideline. The captains will continue to mid-field. The Line Judge will remain on the sideline.
- The captains should face each other with their backs to their sidelines. The referee re-introduces himself to the captains and has them introduce each other. The referee will then explain the overtime procedure. The visiting team captain calls the toss, telling the referee his choice before the referee flips the coin. The Umpire should audibly repeat the captain's choice prior to the flip.
- The winner of the toss shall choose one of the following options:
 1. Offense or defense.
 2. Choice of end of field to put ball in play... only one end will be utilized during the two sets of downs to ensure equal game condition and conserve time.

Note: The winner of the toss may not defer his choice.
- The Referee will indicate the winner of toss by placing a hand on his shoulder
- Then position the offensive captain facing the goal toward which the ball will be advanced and defensive captain facing his opponent and opposite goal.
- Then standing next to the offensive captain give the "First Down" signal

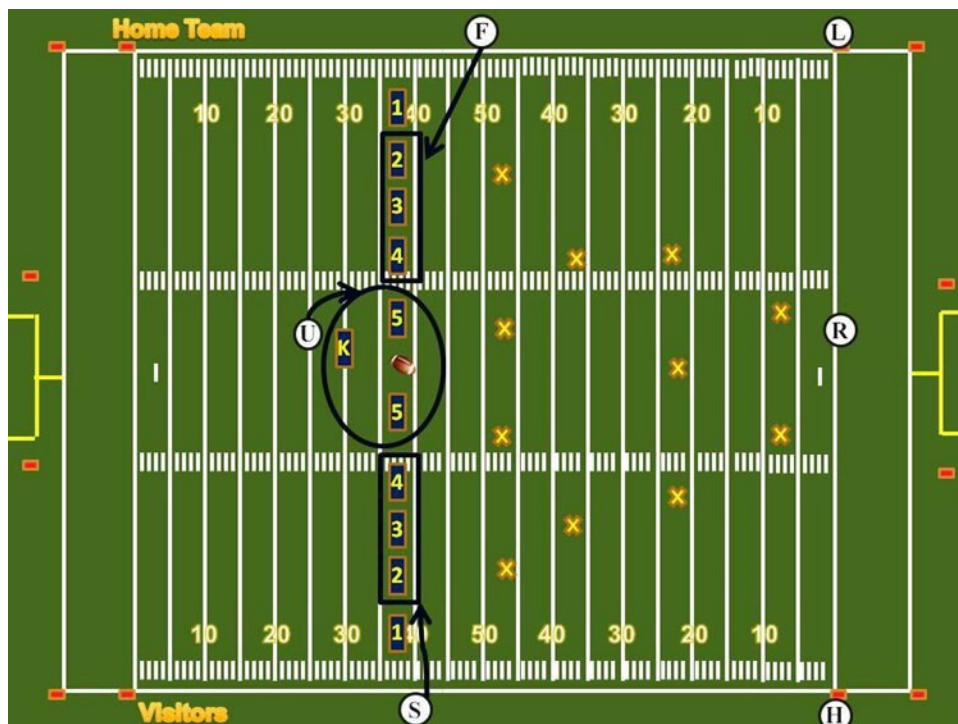


Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

BASIC FREE KICK POSITION



BASIC FREE KICK KEYS





Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

All Officials – Interval Prior To Free Kick:

The free kick following a PAT attempt or other scoring play should occur within one minute after the previous play. This is necessary to keep the pace of the game consistent. The following will occur:

1. The Side Judge is responsible for timing this one-minute interval.
2. After the PAT or scoring play, the Side Judge will position himself on the 40-yard line. At the :30 second mark the Side Judge will provide a quick blast of his whistle, then move into the sideline huddle to bring his team on to the field.
3. The Field Judge should be monitoring the Side Judge, and when the Side Judge moves into the sideline to bring out his team, the Field Judge should do likewise.
4. At the same time, the umpire should move to the middle of the field to meet the kicking team.
5. The Headline Judge and Line Judge should move to their positions at the pylon and the Referee should move to his position on the goal-line in the middle of the field.
6. The umpire should hand the ball to the kicker as soon as he approaches. Point out the location of the Referee to the kicker and reminding him that the Referee will give the ready for play signal at which time the 25 second count begins.

NOTE: If both teams are on the field ready prior to the timelines above, the Referee shall proceed with the ready for play signal.

Kickoff Keys Notes:

- See diagram above.
- Kicking team keys will be referenced by counting kicking team players from each sideline, 1 through 5, outside-in, excluding the kicker.
- So, if “#2” is referenced in the manual, it refers to the 2nd player in from the sideline on your side.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

Referee:

Before Kick:

- Position at the goal line or behind deepest receive, between the hashes, align with the kicker.
- Count receiving team and confirm with visual signal with H and L.
- Check with Umpire and when he indicates players and other officials are ready, sound whistle and give ready-for-play signal to kicking team.
- Be alert to ensure that the kicking team has the proper number of players on either side of the kicker. At least 4 players must be on either side of the kicker when the ball is kicked. Dead ball foul.
- You are secondary responsible for goal line from sideline to sideline. Be ready to rule on action at or near goal line (touchback, safety, momentum, etc.). If kick travels into the EZ, back out towards the endline.

After kick:

- Move laterally along the goal line with the kick, (looking down the barrel), no further than the hash to that side. This will give you a good inside-out look. **H/L will wind the clock.** Stop the clock if it crosses the goal line.
- Progress your eyes from inside to outside on blocks. Focus attention ahead of the runner to the first wave of Team K defenders. Identify R players in “Chase Mode” or getting beat on a block and focus your attention there looking for low/in the back/blind side blocks.
- Move with the play, keeping all 22 players in front of you. Keep enough cushion to have a wide view of players. Observe players around the pile near the runner. HJ/LJ will have action immediately near the runner. Don’t watch the Ball!!



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

Umpire:

Before Kick:

- Initial position is with kicker.
- Count members of kicking team.
- Verify count with Side Judge and Field Judge (thumbs up).
- Hand the kicker the ball and remind him to wait for the Referee to sound his whistle and give the ready-for-play signal, before kicking the ball.
- Move to a position behind the ball and away from the kicker at approximately 7-10- yards behind the kickers restraining line and raise hand to signal the Referee to sound his whistle and declare ball ready for play. Do not align too deep so you take yourself out of the play.
- Be alert to ensure that all kicking team players, except the player that kicks the ball, are no more than 5 yards behind the kicking teams restraining line from the ready-for- play until the ball is kicked.
- Be alert to ensure that the kicking team has the proper number of players on either side of the kicker. At least 4 players must be on either side of the kicker when the ball is kicked. Dead ball foul.
- If there is a penalty that requires a re-kick, it is the Referee's responsibility to give the penalty signal to the press box then the Umpire will mark off the yardage, there is NO need for the Umpire to signal.

After Kick:

- Key on team K players (5) on both sides and observe action on the kicker - protect Kicker, see diagram above. Stay with your keys all the way down the field till you can't see them, at that time officiate inside-out, look for blockers in "Chase Mode".
- After the kick, watch for illegal action on the kicker, watch for illegal blocks and illegal touching. If the runner breaks a long run, do not feel obligated to get to the goal line, keep officiating illegal blocks and clean up play behind the runner, responsibility for GL is the F/S.
- Umpire is primarily responsible for judging an illegal pop-up kick. If illegal pop-up kick is judged, blow the play dead immediately.
- When the ball is kicked, jog down the field and set up around the 50-yard line. Try to get there before the return starts.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

Head Line Judge and Line Judge:

Before kick:

- Be certain all bench personnel are out of the restricted area.
- Initial Position is on the Goal Line at the pylon out of bounds.
- Count R players and confirm count with Referee and Line Judge or Headline Judge.
- Count K players on your side of the ball and communicate that to the Referee to assist him in ruling on kick. (Read Left to Right, 5&5 or 6 & 4)
- Be ready to mark out-of-bounds spot if kick goes out-of-bounds in your area. Drop flag at the Spot, not just toss it in the air. (Need that spot)

After Kick:

- Be alert, even as the back-side official, for fair catch signals by Team R, especially on a shallow/high “mortar kick” into a dead area in the formation.
- Kick to your side:
 - Signal clock to start when kick is touched legally in the field of play if the kick is touched in your 1/2 area of coverage. (Note: Kill the clock so the ball cannot come out of end zone when a touchback occurs.) Rule with Referee if a Touchback.
 - Stay on the GL until kick has ended, especially if kick is directed toward your pylon. If the kick is going toward the pylon and is low, back out in the same direction the ball is traveling to get an angle on the pylon to judge if the ball passes inside or outside the pylon.
 - If kick is toward pylon and clearly over your head, stand directly over the pylon and look up. If the ball passes over your inside shoulder, it’s a touchback, if over your outside shoulder, it’s a foul.
 - Pick up runner and follow when in your 1/2, otherwise look in front of the play for illegal blocks.
- When kickoff goes inside the top of the numbers:
 - Move slowly up field along your sideline toward the play after the kick has ended and is in possession of R.
 - Progress through your blocks from outside to inside. Look ahead of the runner to the first wave of Team K defenders. Identify R players in “Chase Mode” or getting beat on a block and focus your attention there.
 - Once the return develops and the runner is threatened, observe blockers and action immediately in front of the runner.
 - Serve as clean up behind, to the side of, and around runner.
 - You are responsible for progress spot on any play that goes to K’s two-yard line.
- When kickoff goes to the other side of the field:
 - Move up field along your sideline toward the play.
 - Progress through your blocks from outside to inside. Look ahead of the runner to the first wave of Team K defenders. Identify R players in “Chase Mode” or getting beat on a block and focus your attention there.
 - Serve as clean up behind, to side of, and around runner.
 - Sideline responsibility from R’s end line to K’s two-yard line.
Be prepared to use cross-field mechanics to assist with progress spot (soft spot) if run ends on that side of the field



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

Side Judge and Field Judge:

Before kick: - Side Judge

- Responsible for timing interval and ensuring your team is on the field and ready to play by end of interval.
- Ensure all bench personnel are out of the restricted area.
- Initial position is on the kicking teams restraining line opposite the press box side, outside the sideline.
- Align your back foot (foot closest to kicking team) on the kicking teams restraining line. This helps to get an angle to see the entire line. Position off the sideline, back of restricted area. (2 yards off sideline)
- Count K players and confirm with FJ and U.
- Be alert to ensure that all K players except the kicker are not more than 5 yards behind K's restraining line from the ready-for-play until the ball is kicked.
- Responsibility for 25 play clock, if clock on field, R will also help.
- Be alert for short free kick and possible fair catch signals.

Before kick:-Field Judge

- Initial position is on the receiving team restraining line, press box side of the field, outside the sideline. Position at back of restricted area (2 yds off sideline)
- Ensure all bench personnel are out of the restricted area.
- Count members of the receiving team and confirm count with Side Judge and Umpire.
- Be alert to ensure that all kicking team players, except the player that kicks the ball, are no more than 5 yards behind the kicking teams restraining line from the ready-for-play until the ball is kicked.
- Be alert to short free kicks and possible fair catch signals.

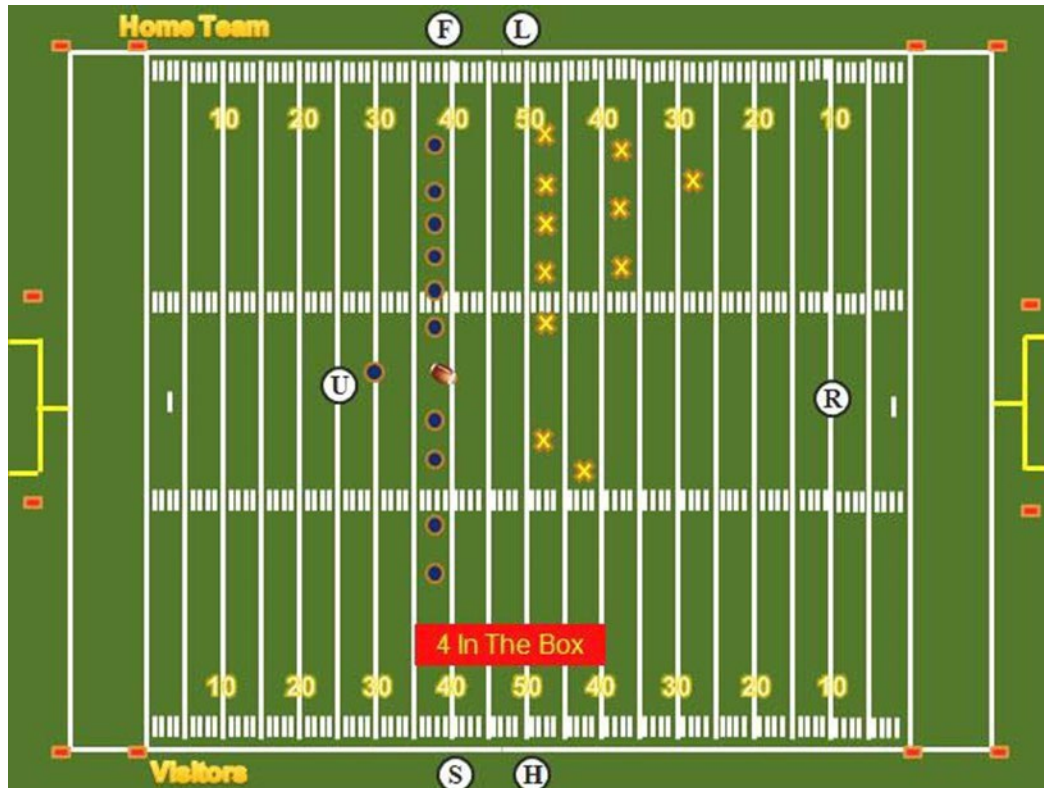
After kick – Side Judge and Field Judge

- Keys are #2, #3, and #4 on your side. (See diagram above)
- After the ball is kicked, let the kicking team pass you before moving 10-15 yards towards the receiver's goal line. Keep all 22 players in front of you, stop when ball is possessed,
- Both have secondary responsibility for judging an illegal pop-up kick. If an illegal pop-up kick is judged, whistle the play dead immediately.
- Be alert to K going out of bounds.
- Stay with your keys all the way down the field until you can't track them anymore, officiate outside-in and find any blockers in "Chase Mode" or getting beat and focus on those players. Don't look for the ball.
- On long returns, keep everything in front of you, don't get beat to the GL, your spot from the 2 yd line to the GL. Allow the H/L to get everything else.
- Be on the goal line before runner crosses.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

SHORT FREE KICK POSITION



FOUR IN THE BOX

Referee:

Before the Kick:

- Initial positioning is at the 10-yard line in the middle of the field.
- Count receiving team.
- Check with Umpire. When he indicates players and other officials are ready, sound whistle and give ready-for-play signal to kicking team.
- Be alert to ensure that the kicking team has the proper number of players on either side of the kicker. At least 4 players must be on either side of the kicker when the ball is kicked. Dead ball foul.

After the ball is kicked:

- Be alert to possible fair-catch signals.
- Wind clock when ball is legally touched in the field of play.
- If ball is kicked deep follow runner and coverrunback.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

Umpire:

Before the Kick:

- Initial positioning is the same as for all free kicks, with kicker.
- Be alert to ensure that all kicking team players, except the player that kicks the ball, are no more than 5 yards behind the kicking teams restraining line from the ready-for-play until the ball is kicked.
- Be alert to ensure that the kicking team has the proper number of players on either side of the kicker. At least 4 players must be on either side of the kicker when the ball is kicked. Dead ball foul.

After the ball is kicked:

- Focus on kicker and action in center of field. Watch for illegal blocks and touches.
- Watch for illegal touching of kick in the middle of the field (hash mark to hash mark).
- Umpire is primarily responsible for judging an illegal pop-up kick. If illegal pop-up kick is judged, blow the play dead immediately.

Head Line Judge and Line Judge:

Before the Kick:

- **Head Line Judge:** Initial positioning is on receiving team's restraining line at sideline opposite press box. Count Receiving team.
- **Line Judge:** Initial positioning is on receiving team's restraining line at sideline on the press box side. Count Receiving team.

After the ball is kicked:

- If ball is kicked to your side of field, you are responsible for legality of touching and recovery/catch of the ball.
- If ball is kicked to the opposite side of the field, you are responsible for the legality of any blocking/contact between the kicking and receiving teams.

Field Judge and Side Judge:

Before the Kick:

- **Field Judge:** Initial positioning is on the kicking team restraining line on the press box side of the field.
- **Side Judge:** Initial positioning is on the kicking team restraining line opposite the press box.
- Count members of the kicking team.
- Be alert to ensure that all kicking team players, except the player that kicks the ball, are no more than 5 yards behind the kicking teams restraining line from the ready-for-play until the ball is kicked.
- Rule if K violates the restraining line prior to the kick.

After the ball is kicked:

- If ball is kicked to your side of field, you are responsible for legality of blocking/contact between the kicking and receiving teams.
- Responsibility to rule on K players stepping out of bounds during the down.
- If ball is kicked to the opposite side of the field, you are responsible for the legality of any blocking/contact between the kicking and receiving teams.
- Field Judge and Side Judge are secondarily responsible for judging an illegal pop-up kick. If an illegal pop-up kick is judged, whistle the play dead immediately.

S - F - H - L:

- Determine legality of ball traveling 10 yards.
- If kick is toward you, wind clock to start when kick is legally touched other than first touching by K.
- Officials away from kick have responsibility to rule on legality of all blocks.
- Be aware of K stepping out of bounds and returning to the field of play.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

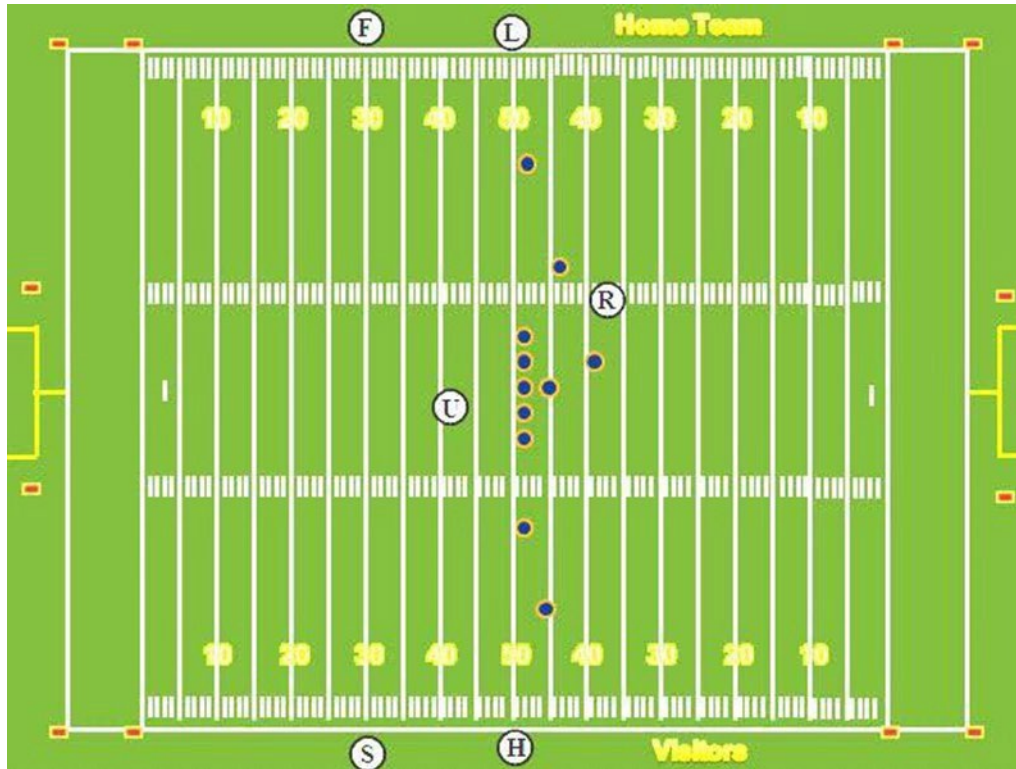
ALL OFFICIALS:

- Be alert to game clock. Remember “the clock is going to be wrong” after this play.
 - If Team R recovers the ball clean while on the ground, no time will run off.
 - If Team R signals for a fair catch and catches or recovers the ball clean, no time will run off.
 - If Team R recovers or catches the ball while upright, then goes immediately to the ground, 1 second should come off the clock.
 - If Team K recovers or catches the ball clean anywhere on the field, no time will run off.
 - If Team K touches the ball legally beyond Team R’s restraining line but does not recover, or if Team R touches the ball but doesn’t recover anywhere on the field, wind the clock.
 - Own the clock as a crew. A couple seconds make a big difference to the teams!!



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

BASIC SCRIMMAGE POSITION



The following are basic mechanics for normal scrimmage action prior to and after the snap.

Referee:

- Usual position is at least 5 to 7 yards deeper than the deepest back or backs (13-15 yards behind the LOS) and outside/wider than the normal tight end position.
- Always work on the throwing arm side of the quarterback. (see note below)
 - If team is using 2 QB system and one is Left and one is Right-handed, stay one side and work to get the angle of passer. (don't rubber band)
 - Check the offensive formation and count the offensive players. Signal to Umpire with closed fist in front of you, toward the line of scrimmage, to confirm that the offense has 11 players as Team A leaves their huddle. Hold this signal until Team A reaches the line of scrimmage.
 - Monitor the substitution process and verify that replaced players leave the field immediately (3 seconds).
- You must be in position to view the quarterback's arms and hands prior to the snap, the legality of the snap, and interchange between the center-quarterback.
- Observe the Team A backs between the tackles (including the quarterback) for false starts, and assist the Umpire if there is movement of restricted lineman. Be aware of motion/shifts by backs and be ready to rule on them.
- Be in a position where you may be comfortable seeing the football, backs, and the Team A tackle opposite your side.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

- Running plays:
 - Observe action behind the line of scrimmage and the runner while he is behind the line.
 - Observe action on the Quarterback on hand-offs and pitchout after the possession changes to another A player.
 - If runner is the quarterback, follow the player out of bounds.
 - PROTECT THE QUARTERBACK AT ALL TIMES FROM FLAGRANT FOULS.
 - The guards will take you to the play. On a play off-tackle or to the outside, progress inside-out scanning for blockers where the defender has “beat the feet” of the blocker toward the runner. Greater potential for holding foul.
 - Be active on dead ball officiating. Break up players on the ground or tied up at the end of the play. Use your voice and show a presence to deter potential PF/UNS fouls.
- Passing plays:
 - If pass is indicated, slowly drop at a slight angle getting deeper and wider as passer drops back into pocket.
 - Immediately following snap, watch the blocking technique of the Team A tackle on the opposite side of the formation.
 - As passer drops back, observe action of assigned Team A tackle behind the line. Switch from the tackle and observe drop back blockers who are now near and around the passer (your primary responsibility) until there is no threat of a foul. Defenders breaching the line on a rush should grab your attention as they are likely to be fouled.
 - If QB rolls to your side, hold your ground, let him cross in front of you. If your depth is too close back out and let him cross in front of you. Slowly follow him as he turns up field. Attempt keep an eye on him for PF's.
 - If QB rolls away from you, take a “flat” angle and follow him, be cautious about turning up field to quickly.
 - Ensure that the Passer is not roughed or thrown to the ground. Verbally alert the defenders when the passer has released the ball.
 - Rule on intentional grounding. (The Referee shall consult with other officials regarding positions of eligible receivers in the vicinity).
 - Remember, THREE steps laterally by the passer and he is outside the tackle and may not be grounding provided ball goes beyond LOS. When in doubt, he's outside of the “Free Blocking Zone”.
 - Rule on whether the Passer was in the act of passing or if he fumbled.

Umpire:

- Position varies according to the formations of both teams; avoid position that will interfere with linebackers. Adjust distance behind the defensive line according to the width of Team A's formation and (except on goal line or try situations) be **at least 6 but seldom more than 9 yards deep**. Whenever possible, coordinate your position with the Referee for best coverage of the interior line play. Normal position is on side opposite the tight end.
- Count offensive players and signal to Referee as Team A breaks the huddle with an extended arm and closed fist in front of you, toward the line of scrimmage, if the offense has 11 players.
- Hold your signal until Team A reaches the line of scrimmage.
- Read offensive alignment and know 5 ineligible prior to the snap.
- Rule on false starts by restricted linemen prior to the snap and the legality of the snap.
- Be certain the defensive team does not use words or signals to disconcert the opponents.
- At the snap, primary keys are the center and two guards. If the play allows, observe the action of Team A tackle on LJ's side of the formation.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

- Running Plays:
 - Up the middle, read your primary keys which are the center and two guards. Watch lead blocks. Do not watch ball and runner.
 - Run to either side zone, stay with keys. Slowly progress to point of attack. Do not watch ball and runner.
 - Be alert for blocks below the waist, chop blocks, hands to the face.
 - Signal DEAD BALL if at your feet.
 - Be alert for second-level blocks on linebackers.
 - Watch action behind play. Be active in dead ball officiating. Break up players on the ground or at the end of the play. Use verbal commands to deter PF's/UNS fouls.
 - Hustle to place ball at new spot. When coming in from a side zone use the "soft spot" from opposite wing. Keep track of ball position with second down indicator.
 - Spot the ball on one of these 5 lateral positions: Left hash, Left Upright, Middle of field, Right Upright, or Right hash. This will assist the R in determining the lateral confines of the free blocking zone. For example, if the ball is spotted directly on the Left Upright, the lateral confines of the free blocking zone will approximately be on the Left Hash and Middle of the field.
- Passing Plays:
 - Be alert to possible illegal snaps, false start by offense. Keys are Center and two Guards.
 - You can move up towards the line when reading pass, you react to the drop of the linemen, don't be in a hurry, LJ has the LOS.
 - Assist LJ with ineligibles down field. Determined by the location of the player when the pass is released. Have them clearly beyond 2 yds for a foul.
 - Be aware of touching in or behind neutral zone. Signal tipped ball.
 - Pivot and turn on passes over your head. Help out, when possible, on catch/no catch.
 - On interceptions and all change of possession plays, be alert for low blocks.

Head Line Judge and Line Judge:

- Take initial position on the line of scrimmage at the sideline/off the field.
- Read the offensive formation and know your eligible receiver responsibilities.
- You are primarily responsible for false starts by the tackle, tight end, wing backs, and wide receivers on your side of the ball. Assist the Umpire with calling false starts and snap infractions on the Center and Guard to your side. You are also responsible for defensive encroachment for all players on your side of the ball and immediately beyond the center in the "A-gap" on the other side of the ball.
- Indicate the offensive line of scrimmage by extended foot to help receivers line up and then take final position straddling the neutral zone. If needed, adjust your position so that you can see all the players that you are responsible for, listed above.
- You are responsible for receivers in motion on your side of the ball. If the receiver is going in motion away from you to the other side of the formation, drop him off at the Center and the opposite wing official will pick him up the rest of the way.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

- You are primarily responsible for the legality of the offensive formation. If widest eligible receiver is off the line of scrimmage, hold arm extended towards the backfield until the signal is acknowledged by the flank official opposite from you. Drop signal if receiver goes in motion, and if the widest remaining receiver on your side of the formation is off the line, provide a new signal.
- Check the alignment of the offensive tackle (and guards) and make sure he is breaking the waistline of the center. Warn him to move up if he is close. If you see daylight between the tackle's helmet and the backside of the center, it is a foul without warning.
- You are primarily responsible for Illegal Shifts. Ensure the entire offense gets set out of the huddle. Ensure the entire offense gets set before a receiver goes in motion.
- Confirm the down is correct on the down box. HL, confirm the down box is spotted on the front tip of the football and the chains are where they are supposed to be. LJ, signal to the HL if the down box is showing the incorrect down by holding up the correct down with one hand and spinning your finger in a circular motion around it with the other hand (like you are signaling the down box to "flip" to the next down).
- Running Plays:
 - On runs to your side, progress through blocks from outside to in. Look past the widest receiver since that is the SJ/FJ's key. Be sure to see the block on the "edge" of outside running plays. Scan for blockers where the defender has "beat the feet" of the blocker toward the runner. They will be more likely to commit holding.
 - You are responsible for spots and forward progress all the way to Team B's 2 yard line.
 - Use the "dead ball" signal in conjunction with your whistle to signal the runner down, unless you have to stop the clock.
 - "Square in" your spots by moving down the sideline to the appropriate yard line, then come in at a 90-degree angle to show where the spot is with your downfield foot. Do not round off your spots. Slow down, the spot will always be there.
 - On plays out of bounds, go to your spot, and turn your chest to the runner, observing action out of bounds. Be alert for late hits, cheap shots, or unsportsmanlike acts by or against the runner while he is out of bounds.
 - On runs away from you, observe back side blocks, and watch for cheap shots.
 - If the opposite wing official has the spot, match up with him on the same yard line. This is called the "soft spot". Work together with your partner.
 - Do not blow the whistle unless you see the football. If the run is to your side, but the runner's back is to you so that you can't see the football, do not blow the whistle until you are sure the ball has not come out. The opposite wing official can help and blow the whistle in this instance.
 - Be active in dead ball officiating. Break up players if they are on the ground or tied up at the end of the play. Use your voice and show a presence to deter potential personal and unsportsmanlike fouls.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

- Passing Plays:

- Your initial keys are the #2 and #3 receiver to your side. If something happens to your key, you are expected to be able to speak to that action. This is covered more in depth in the key section.
 - Line judge will hold the line of scrimmage and is primarily responsible for the pass being touched behind or beyond the line and the passer being beyond the line.
 - Head Line Judge will initially hold then line, then may optionally drift down field if his key takes him down field. Do not drift beyond your key or the shallowest receiver to your side. Drift with a purpose. You have concurrent jurisdiction with the LJ to determine if the pass was touched behind or beyond the line of scrimmage or if the passer is beyond the line.
 - Both wing officials will be primary for ineligibles down field, with the back side wing official likely having the best opportunity to catch these. An ineligible receiver being down field is determined by the location of the player when the QB releases the ball. Have them be clearly beyond 2 yards to make this call.
- Reverse mechanics
 - ❖ On interceptions and fumble returns, you are responsible for the goal line and spots inside the Team A 2 yard line. Stay ahead of the runner. SJ/FJ has the spot.
 - ❖ Observe blocks in front of runner.
 - ❖ Get to goal line before runner.
 - ❖ Clean up around dead ball spot and out-of-bounds after the play.

Side Judge and Field Judge:

- Take original position 20 yards from the line of scrimmage at the sideline/off the field.
- Always be aware of the clock status, down and distance. If the clock is running - should it be? If the clock is stopped - should it be? Field Judge is primary for the game clock, but Side Judge should be aware too.
- Side Judge, ensure play clock is starting properly at the conclusion of the play and is properly set to 40 or 25 seconds as the situation dictates. Use a two-arm pumping motion to reset the play clock to 40 seconds and one-arm pumping motion to reset to 25.
 - If there is no visible play clock, raise your arm with 10 seconds remaining. Visibly count/chop the last 5 seconds like a basketball official's count.
- Read the offensive formation, initial key is the #1 receiver from your sideline.
- Responsible for counting defensive team.
 - Confirm count with each other using an extended fist extended toward the line of scrimmage; once in agreement, drop hand. Observe defensive substitution process and that replaced players leave the field immediately.
- You have Spots inside the Team B 2-yardline and the goal line. Be sure to keep your cushion between you and the receivers (or Runner) and don't get beat to the goal line.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

- Running Plays:

- You are responsible for action by/against your key. Be alert to downfield blocks by other receivers on your side too. Do not be afraid to call something on/against your key, even if he is closer to the wing official since the wing may be looking past that player to other blockers. Own all action by/against your key.
- Maintain a 15–20-yard cushion ahead of the runner. Be at the goal line when the runner crosses
- Observe action in advance of the runner.
- On plays out of bounds, the HJ/LJ will get the spot. Hustle back towards the spot and help get players out of the team area and back onto the field. Be alert for late hits, cheap shorts, or unsportsmanlike fouls by or against the runner while he is out of bounds. Don't be in a hurry to get a ball.
- On plays away from you, observe back side blocks and watch for cheap shots. Watch for back side action behind the Umpire.
- When the play is over, jog into the field to help clean up (aka "accordion in"). Be active in dead ball officiating. Break up players if they are on the ground or tied up at the end of the play. Use your voice and show a presence to deter potential personal and unsportsmanlike fouls.

- Passing Plays:

- Your initial key is the #1 receiver to your side. If something happens to your key, you are expected to be able to speak to that action. This is covered more in depth in the key section.
- Maintain cushion and keep all 22 players in front of you at all times.
- On passes into the end zone, the play side deep official should stay at the goal line, unless the pass is thrown deep into the end zone on his side and the goal line is no longer threatened. The official can move toward the back of the end zone along his sideline.
- The back side deep official has responsibility for the end line. He should move toward the middle of the end line, if necessary, on a play to the other side of the end zone.
- When pass goes far side, S/F may step into the numbers to help with deep passes to opposite side.

- Reverse Mechanics:

- ❖ On interception or fumble returns, FJ/SJ has the spots and forward progress all the way to Team A's 2-yard line. LJ/HJ will have the spots inside the 2-yard line and Goal line.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

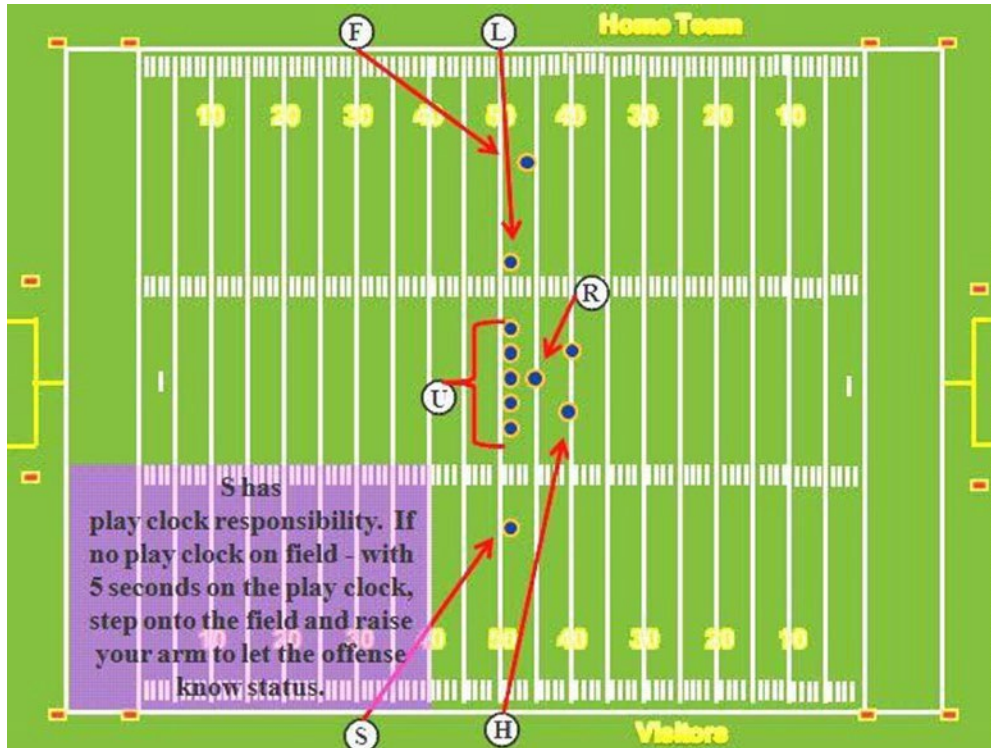
Counting Players – Scrimmage Plays:

- Referee and Umpire will count Team A (the offense).
- Head Line Judge and Line Judge will count the number of Team A offensive backs to determine the legality of the formation.
- Side Judge and Field Judge will count Team B (the defense).
 - To confirm your count with your primary partner:
 - ❖ If you have 11 players, you will hold an arm extended with the hand in a fist, pointed toward the line of scrimmage;
 - ❖ If you have less than 11 players, you will hold your hands near your waist, with all fingers pointing toward the ground.
 - ❖ If you have more than 11 players, you will make a short circular motion with your hand near your waist and recount.
 - Excess B Players Prior To Scrimmage Down:
 - ❖ If you count more than 11 players on B, count again. If A is at the line of scrimmage and B is not attempting to remove the excess players from the field, sound the whistle and call a dead ball foul against B.
 - ❖ If A is at the line of scrimmage and Team B is attempting to remove the excess players from the field, give B that opportunity. If the excess players do not get off the field prior to the snap, the deep official on the offending team's side will have a live ball 5-yard illegal substitution penalty. (3-7-4,5)



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

BASIC PASS COVERAGE RESPONSIBILITIES



General Terminology Regarding Keys for Deep and Short Wing Officials:

- The general rule is not to key the same player as another official.
- In determining keys, the following definitions are needed for clarification purposes:
 - Strength of the formation is determined by the number of eligible receivers on a particular side of the offensive formation. It has nothing to do with the number of linemen on each side of the center but rather the number of eligible receivers outside the tackles.
 - ❖ Tight End - the end man on the line of scrimmage lined up no more than two yards from the nearest offensive lineman.
 - ❖ Back In Backfield - a player in the backfield between the tackles at the snap.
 - ❖ Trips - three or more receivers outside an offensive tackle.
 - ❖ Quads - four or more receivers outside an offensive tackle.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

ALL:

- REMEMBER: Your keys are determined by the relative position of the eligible receivers at the time of the snap. (The “snap-shot”)
- If A player is in motion at the snap, his position at the snap (a picture or “snap-shot”) indicates which official will cover the players.
- CAUTION: After the snap, do not release too quickly in assuming zone responsibility. Observe the actions of the players on whom you are keying.
- Stay with your key until the player has cleared any potential contact with an opponent, has moved into his pass route, or the evolving action of the play takes your focus to another part of the field.

Referee:

- Position is at least 5 to 7 yards deeper than the deepest back or backs (13-15 yards behind the LOS) and outside/wider than the normal tight end position.
- Always work on the throwing arm side of the quarterback.
- Retreat at a 45-degree angle, always working to get wider and deeper as the passer drops back in the pocket.
- Observe blocking by the Team A tackle on the opposite side of the formation
- After snap observe tackle on HJ's side.
- Stay behind and aside from passer - be deep enough and wide enough to be able to "see through" the passer, observing the blocking in and around the pocket.
- Observe backs illegally blocking below the waist; observe that backs and lineman are not clipping, holding, or chop blocking rushing defensive lineman.
- Do not release coverage too quickly - remain focused on the passer after the throw and observe action around the passer.
- Know if Passer has moved THREE steps laterally to properly rule on intentional grounding.
- Be ready to rule on forward pass vs. fumble, grounding, and other illegal forward passes, and roughing the passer.

Umpire:

- Focus attention on action involving the center and guards.
- Watch for potential chop blocks.
- Make sure no lineman passes you prior to the forward pass being thrown.
- Be aware of touching in or behind neutral zone.
- On rollout passes, step forward towards line of scrimmage and turn to observe blocking in front of the passer as he rolls-out. Not necessary to get to LOS.
- Pivot and turn on passes over your head. Help, when possible, on catch/no catch.
- On interceptions and all change of possession plays, be alert for low blocks.
- In goal line mechanics (7-yard line & in), you have responsibility for passes crossing the LOS, and whether the passer is beyond the line prior to the pass.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

Head Line Judge and Line Judge:

- Responsible for the 2nd eligible receiver in from the sidelines to your side of the formation
- (2nd & 3rd receivers in from the sidelines to your side of the formation in trips).
- Line Judge hold the line of scrimmage and do not move downfield until after the ball has been thrown or at the latest crossed the line of scrimmage.
- Head Line Judge can slowly when you read pass, don't be in a hurry. Allow your key to take you down the field.
- Observe action on your receivers - that the receiver is not held attempting to move downfield and that the receiver is not illegally blocking or clipping defensive players (especially linebackers).
- Do not peek in the backfield too much. You must know what happens to your key while he is running his route and not just after the ball is in the air.
- If your key is not pressed by a defender, you can watch the block of the offensive tackle on your side briefly. When your key approaches a defender, be sure to watch him out of his break on his route.
- LJ will have responsibility to rule on whether a forward pass has crossed the line of scrimmage. (Exception: goal line mechanics – 7-yard line & in).
- On a quick pass thrown toward you, be prepared to rule if forward or backward. If the pass is backward and toward you, you should punch back.
- If the play ends in bounds, near the sideline and it is a first down, give stop the clock signal only.
- Reverse mechanics on interceptions

Side Judge and Field Judge:

- Responsible for the widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field (motion towards trips 2 widest receivers).
- Observe action on your keys (receivers) - that the receiver is not held attempting to move downfield and that the receiver is not illegally blocking or clipping defensive players (especially linebackers).
- Observe contact on your eligible receiver and the defensive back.
- Be alert to wide receiver going out of bounds.
 - Flag if player goes out-of-bounds and comes back in (unless blocked out).
 - Do not drop hat.
- When the ball is snapped:
 - Read your keys as dictated by the formation at the snap.
 - When pass is thrown into your area watch the defender's action on the receiver.
 - ❖ Be alert for eligible receivers out of bounds.
 - ❖ Flag if player goes out-of-bounds and comes back in (unless blocked out).
 - ❖ Watch for holding or illegal contacting of eligible receivers and all contact beyond the neutral zone both before and after the pass is thrown.
 - ❖ Focus on initial contact between the shoulders and waist of the players before and during the pass.
 - ❖ When ruling on a pass reception involving the sideline, watch foot and then ball. Give only incomplete signal if incomplete, timeout signal if complete. No other signal(s) are necessary or warranted!



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

- The deep official in whose direction a forward pass is thrown has goal line responsibility and is to remain at the goal line pylon, (1-2 yards off sideline) unless the pass is thrown deep into the end zone on his side and the goal line is no longer threatened. The official can move toward the back of the end zone along his sideline.
- Reverse mechanics on interceptions
 - On interception run backs, switch responsibilities with the H/L.
 - You are responsible for the runner's forward progress, the H/L will rule on action in advance of the runner.
- **Zone Coverage:**
 - Don't think of zone coverage as a specific area. Think of it as switching keys with your sideline partner when routes develop. Covering an "area" inevitably leads to gaps in coverage.
 - For example, let's say there are two receivers to the HJ/SJ side of the field. SJ is keying the #1 receiver and HJ is keying the #2 receiver.
 - ❖ In the first 5 yards, both receivers run straight down field. Both officials remain on their initial keys.
 - ❖ At that point, the #1 receiver breaks inside on a drag route. The #2 receiver continues to run straight down field.
 - ❖ This is the point where we would switch keys as they continue their routes and declare. HL would watch #1 and SJ #2.
 - Communicate with your partner about switches during the game. If a play develops where you were not sure if both of you were on the same page, just ask your partner, "Did you switch on that last play? Who did you pick up?".
 - In the red zone, stay with your initial keys a little longer. Watch for pick plays by the offense.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

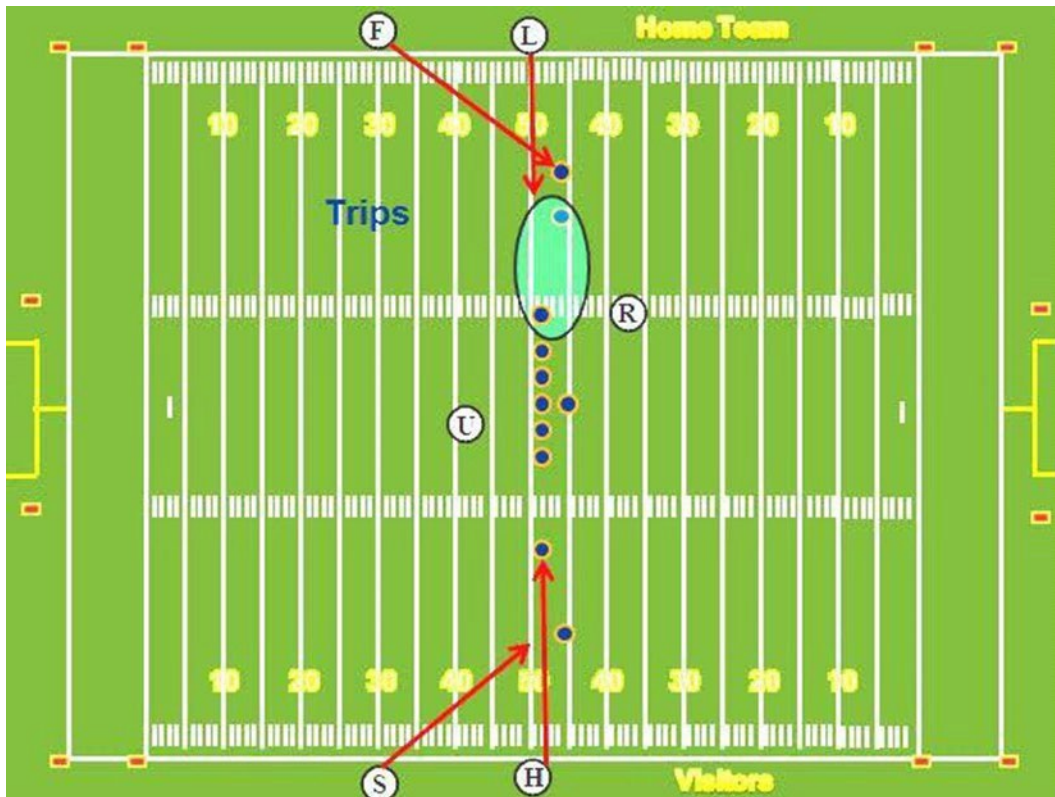
- **Sideline Catches**

- On a sideline catch, both officials should be working “football” ... we look at the foot first, then the ball.
- Watch the receiver’s feet and determine if he is in bounds. You can hear/feel the catch when the ball gets to the receiver to determine if he has a foot in bounds when he initially sticks the ball.
- Once you’ve established, he’s in bounds, move your eyes to the ball and ensure he has secured the football and is not bobbling it.
- Typically, one official can see both the foot and the ball and the other will not be able to see the ball. Do not assign responsibilities pregame as hard and fast rules. Both officials work feet then ball. Sometimes just one will be able to complete the equation.
- If you have a foot in and secure possession of the ball, look at your partner and give a “yes” head nod. If both of you agree, then kill the clock and HL/LJ will spot the ball, if outside the Team B 2-yard line. SJ/FJ will get the spot inside the 2.
- If you definitely have a foot out or a bobble, signal incomplete right away. If it’s close and you have doubt, look at your partner and give a “no” head shake and hustle to the spot to discuss. Once you come up with a ruling, either signal incomplete or kill the clock and give a “catch” signal.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

PASS COVERAGE RESPONSIBILITIES (TRIPS OR QUADS)



ALL:

CAUTION: After the snap, do not release focus from your keys too quickly in assuming zone responsibility.

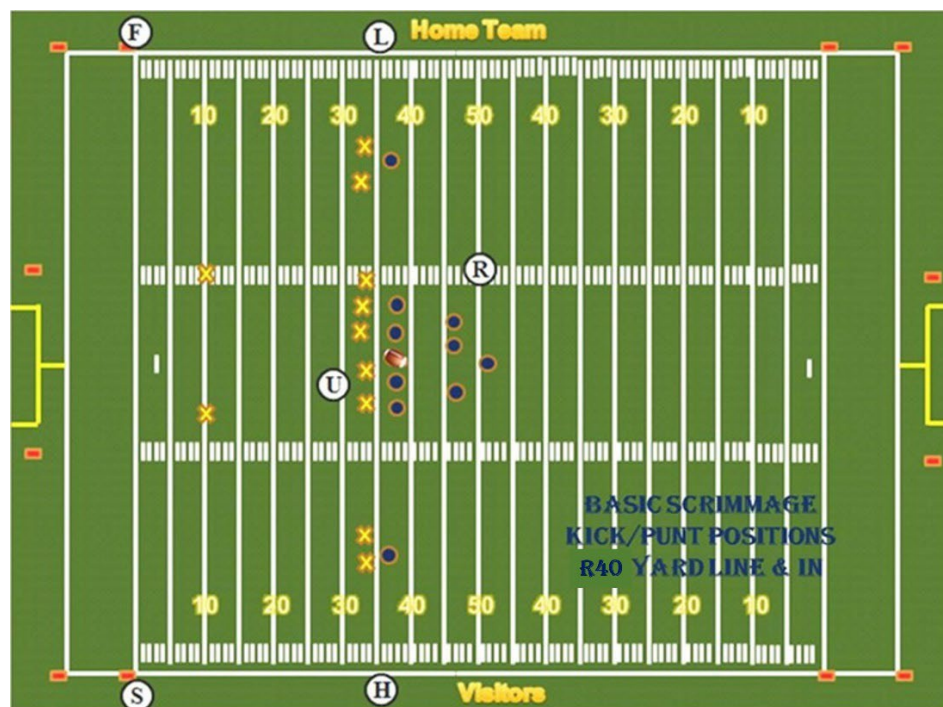
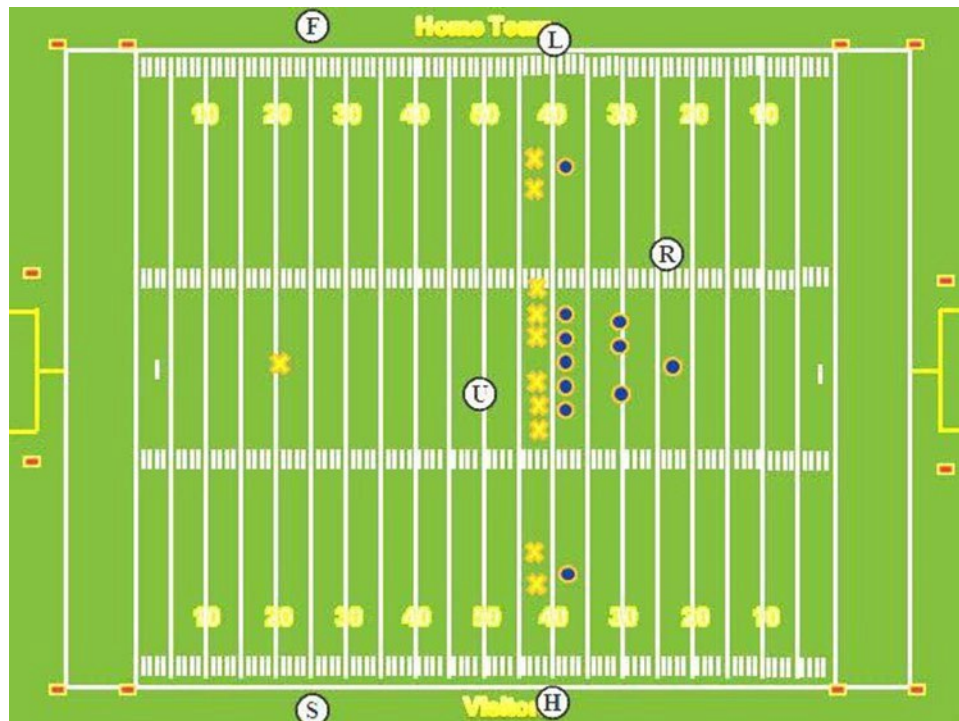
REMINDER: The terms “trips” or “quads” refer to the number of eligible receivers on one side of the offensive formation prior to the snap. To the trips (or stack) side of the field:

- In trips, the Field Judge or the Side Judge will cover the widest receivers.
- In quad receivers, the Field Judge or the Side Judge will have the two widest receivers.
- The Head Line Judge or the Line Judge will cover the 2nd and 3rd receiver from the sideline (trips); or the 3rd and 4th from the sideline in the quads.
- The side opposite trips or quads is covered in the normal manner.
- If receivers are bunched or start crossing early in the route, let them “declare” and switch to the appropriate key. One receiver will typically go toward the sideline, one straight up the hash, and one cross toward the middle.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

BASIC SCRIMMAGE KICK / PUNT POSITION





Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

Referee:

- Initial position is slightly behind the kicker (2-3 yds) and wider than the normal tight end position of the kicking foot side.
 - See the ball from snap to kick.
 - Be in position to see blockers, rushers, and kicker at the same time.
- Count the kicking team (offense) and signal prior to A approaching the line of scrimmage.
- Be alert to the kicking team's substitution process and timing.
- When kick is from the End Zone position near or on endline.
- Watch blocking and action by players behind the line of scrimmage.
- Observe action of and against the kicker. (Give signal if ball is tipped.) Be alert to the kicker fielding a low snap with knee on the ground.
- If the snap is unsuccessful or the punt is blocked, Referee can help in GL coverage, and the status of the football (recovery). Keep the ball boxed in with the L or H
- If the ball is loose near to or in A's / K's end zone due to a bad snap or blocked punt, anticipate A's / K's potential bat or kick of the loose ball out of A's / K's end zone to deny B / R the opportunity to recover the ball.
- After the ball is kicked, clear action behind the line of scrimmage; then, if kick remains in bounds, observe player's activity between your position and the umpire while proceeding down field.
- If the scrimmage kick lands in bounds, then goes out of bounds beyond the line of scrimmage, it is the responsibility of the deep officials to mark and sell the out of bounds spot. Continue to observe player activity for personal fouls or flagrant acts.
- If kick goes out of bounds in the air, it is your responsibility to raise your hand above your head and chop the FJ/SJ in at the spot.
- If the kick is caught or recovered in bounds, be ready to use 'reverse mechanics' on return and work to get to GL but not need to be there, you have Kicker responsibility for PF during the return.

Umpire:

- Position Approximately 8-9 yds off the LOS. Find a spot to observe the action on and around the snapper.
- Count offensive players prior to Team A/K approaching the line of scrimmage.
- Memorize the ineligible players and players with eligible numbers who are exceptions to the numbering requirement and are replacing numbers 50 to 79 on the line of scrimmage. This will help when a play breaks down and a pass is thrown to determine illegal touching or ineligible players down field.
- If A (kicking team) leaves the sideline and goes directly to the line of scrimmage, stay over the football until the referee releases you.
- If the snap is mishandled or the punt blocked, move slowly toward A's goal line observing the action of the players around and in pursuit of the football. DO NOT WATCH THE BALL.
- Remind defense to avoid the snapper.
- Observe defensive man over center. (Avoid serious injury to the snapper. Know the rule).
- Once the kicked ball is beyond the line of scrimmage, turn and focus your attention towards the return areas, with particular attention to clips or illegal blocks in front of the runner who is returning the kick. You will primarily focus on the second wave of players coming down the field. Identify R players in "chase mode" or getting beat on a block and focus your attention there.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

Head Line Judge and Line Judge:

- Hold your positions until ball crosses the neutral zone.
- Memorize the numbers of the offensive players on your side of the line who are covered up. This will help when a play breaks down and a pass is thrown to determine illegal touching or ineligibles down field.
- Prior to the kick, look past the widest gunner and watch players on your side of the ball block and release down field. Be sure they do not get held on their release down field. Help the SJ/FJ on any quick action against the gunner right after the snap.
- When the kick is in the air, and the kick is to your side, assist the SJ or FJ in watching first wave blocking immediately in front of the returner. The SJ or FJ will be watching the catch and may miss blocks that happen right before or after the catch.
- When the kick is in the air, and the kick is to the other side, watch the second wave of the kicking team going down field.
- Identify R players in “chase mode” or getting beat on a block and focus your attention there.
- Assist Referee in knowing if kick is tipped by a blocker.
- HJ to assist Ruling on whether the kick has crossed neutral zone.
- If the snap is unsuccessful or the kick is blocked, and if the referee is facing you, move into A’s backfield to assist the referee with action around the football. If the referees back is facing you hold the LOS to rule on whether or not the kick has crossed neutral zone.
- On short line-drive kick, watch for ball being touched by K or R beyond the neutral zone expanded.
- If kick is caught or recovered in bounds, be ready to use ‘reverse mechanics’ on return and be at the goal line when runner crosses.
- Reverse mechanics on punt returns
 - Back pedal and give up progress to SJ. Keep your cushion.
 - Observe blocks in front of runner.
 - Get to goal line if necessary.
 - Clean up around dead ball spot and out-of-bounds.
 - Watch dead ball action
- **Head Line Judge** is secondarily responsible for legality of fair catch signal by receivers and action by that player (blocking after giving the signal)



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

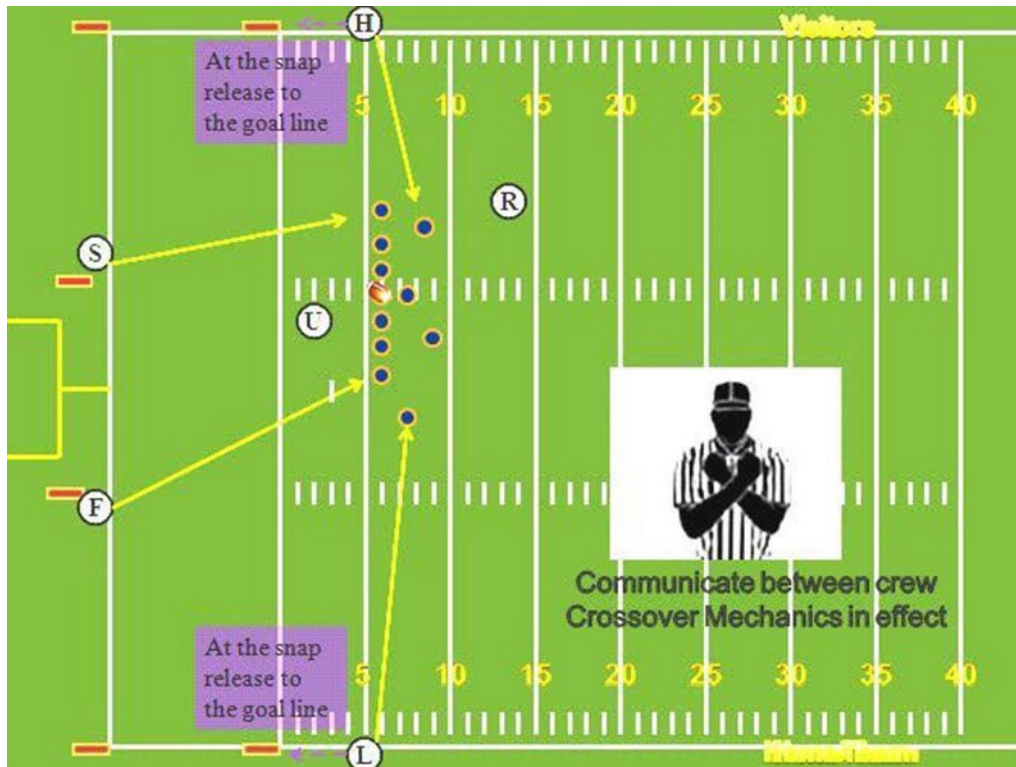
Side Judge and Field Judge:

- Initial Position with bean bag in hand is on the sideline, slightly behind (3-5 yds) the deepest receiver on your side of the field. Same Yard line as the FJ. Always keep all 22 players in front of you.
- Set up on goal line to cover the pylon for a kick going out of bounds when ball is snapped on or inside B's 40-yard line.
- Count Team B Players and confirm with Field Judge.
- Split the field in half with the Field Judge.
 - The Side Judge is responsible for 1/2 of the field, the Field Judge for 1/2.
 - **(Optional)** The Field judge is responsible for 2/3 of the field and the Side Judge is responsible for 1/3 of the field. (Hash mark gives a definite line of demarcation. This eliminates miscommunication).
 - **The FJ is the primary and if there is any question regarding who is the covering official it would be the FJ and the FJ should communicate that he is taking coverage by using the punch back signal; thereby alerting the SJ to take the coverage in front of the receiver. Make sure to discuss this in pre- game with the S.J.**
- Remind yourself of possibility of illegal touching, fair catch, kick catching interference
- Remind yourself to mark spot where kick ends with beanbag. Official covering the receiver will drop the bean bag.
- Be patient in blowing your Whistle on a Fair catch, make sure the ball is possessed!!
- When it is obvious the kicked ball will clearly land in your 1/2 of the field, immediately signal by extended arm towards B's goal line that you will take the ball. Once you have signaled that you have the ball, you must stay with the ball even if it lands in the Field Judge's territory. You are then responsible for:
 - Moving to a position so that when the receiver/runner catches the kick, you are positioned in behind and to the side of the receiver at approximately a 45-degree angle and are able to rule on validity of catch or signal, ruling on kick catch interference, and following the ball if receiver fails to field kick.
 - Rule of legality of fair catch, kick catch interference and batting by kicking team. Primarily responsible for legality of fair catch signal by receivers.
 - Bean bag spot of illegal touching and/or spot where kick ends
- If kick is caught or recovered in bounds and the runback is away from your sideline, cover runner until he enters the Field Judge's 1/2 of the field.
- If kick is caught or recovered in bounds and the runback is to your sideline, be ready to use 'reverse mechanics' on return and rule on the runner's forward progress to the two-yard line.
- If the kick is not caught, be ready to take ball into end zone and rule on touchback, giveup receiver.
- If the flight of the kick is toward your sideline, move quickly to the out-of-bounds spot
 - Kick that is out of bounds in flight, the deep official on that side of the field is responsible raising hand and being chopped in at the out of bounds spot by Referee. If grounded first the deep official on that side of the field is responsible for and must sell the out of bounds spot.
- When it appears that the ball will not land in your 1/2 of the field, you are responsible for:
 - Covering the play in front of the receiver, especially the action by B / R against the first A / K players ("the gunners") at or near the catch.
 - Cover action behind the runner if the run back is away from you.
 - Being ready to take over runner if return is to your side.
 - If the kick is returned to your side of the field you have the sideline responsibility to A's / K's two yard line.
 - If the kick is returned to the FJ's side of the field, Watch the action of man who signaled fair catch and does not touch the ball (prohibited from blocking).
 - Identify R players in "chase mode" or getting beat on a block and focus your attention there.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

GOAL LINE POSITIONS SNAP AT OR INSIDE THE 7-YARD LINE



Referee:

- Take normal basic scrimmage positions and officiate as you would any other scrimmage down.
- If necessary to stop clock to un-pile players at the goal line only the Referee will stop the clock and then will wind as soon as the pile is cleared. When time is critical!!
- Be alert for QB “walking into the snap”.

Umpire:

- Use basic scrimmage play mechanics but may not need to be as deep. 6-7 yds off LOS, don't block GL from wing officials. (Don't stand on the GL, position 1-2 yds either side of the GL)
- On pass plays, assist LOS officials for passes crossing the LOS or the passer crossing the LOS prior to the pass being released.
- DO NOT assist wings with forward progress. That is their responsibility.
- Discuss means of communication during pregame. (Back out or Dig for the ball.)



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

Head Line Judge and Line Judge:

- Take regular position out of bounds at sideline.
- Keys change on or inside B's 7-yard line. Key is closest receiver.
- When ball is snapped from on or inside the 7-yard line go immediately to the goal line and work back to the play.
- You are still responsible for forward/backward pass, ineligible down field, the pass being touched beyond/behind the line, and quarterback over the line.
- You have sole responsibility for your sideline.

Field Judge and Side Judge:

- When the ball is snapped outside B's 7-yard line, starting position is the same as for other scrimmage plays (see below). Responsible for spots inside the 2-yd line to the GL.
- Keys change when the ball is snapped on or inside B's 7-yard line. Key is inside receiver.
- When the ball is snapped on or inside B's 7-yard line, the basic starting position is on the end line at the pylons denoting the hash marks. Depending on the formation and the ball's hash mark position, you may vary your position on the end line between the corner pylon and the hash mark pylon.

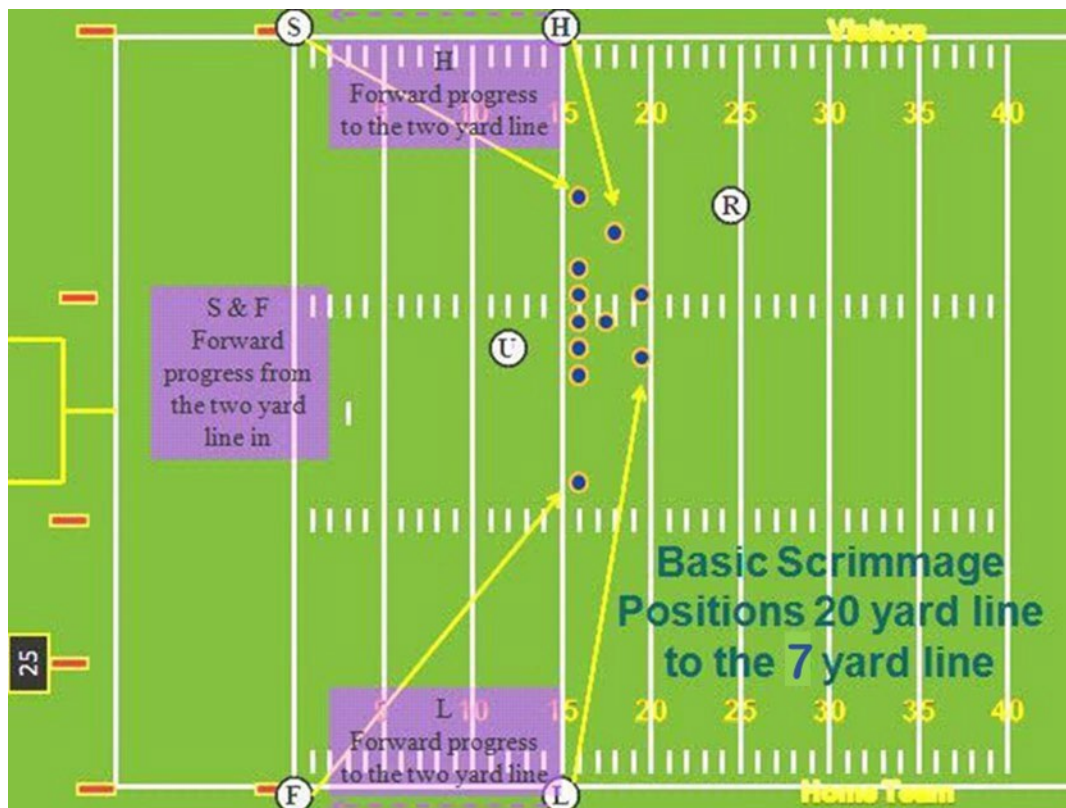
Goal Line Positioning/Mechanics Notes:

- SJ/FJ, if you are positioned at the pylon, take a position at the back of the restricted area (2 yards from sideline) at a minimum. You are encouraged to get even a few more yards away from the sideline than that. This keeps you safe on a pylon play and prevents you from having to move to make a judgment. You do not need to be right on top of the pylon to make a judgment there. Depth is your friend.
- Your HJ/LJ partner can help you with any catches on the sideline, even in the end zone. Verify with your partner before making a ruling.
- SJ/FJ, on a play where a runner is near the sideline prior to crossing the goal line or pylon, always check with your HL/LJ before signaling touchdown. The HJ/LJ could have him stepping out of bounds prior, so be sure not to signal touchdown when that happens.
- HJ/LJ, if you are in goal line mechanics, start the play at the back of the restricted area. When you move to the pylon, you will already have good depth from your starting position. Feel free to get more depth than the minimum 2 yards.
- If a player scores near the sideline or end line, turn with him and signal touchdown to observe dead ball action. You do not have to be square to the goal line to signal touchdown. Never turn your back to the runner since you will miss unsportsmanlike or personal fouls by or against him.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

BASIC SCRIMMAGE POSITIONS SNAP 20-YARD LINE TO 7-YARD LINE



EJ/SJ Note:

- If you find at any time your initial positioning places you 2-3 yards from the GL, set up on the GL 2-3 yds off the sideline. Allow the play to come to you at the GL.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

REVERSE GOAL LINE MECHANICS BALL SNAPPED ON OR INSIDE 10-YARD LINE GOING OUT

Referee:

- Positioning is the same as for any other scrimmage plays.
- COMMUNICATE AND THINK GOALLINE.
- Coverage is the same as for any other scrimmage plays.
- Responsible for the End Line
- Responsible for signaling a Safety after communicating with H & L.

Umpire:

- Coverage is the same as for any other scrimmage plays.
- On pass plays, assist wing officials for passes crossing the LOS or the passer crossing the LOS prior to the pass being released.

Head Line Judge and Line Judge:

- Basic positioning is the same as any other scrimmage play.
- When the ball is snapped inside Team A's 3 yard line, both the Headline Judge and Line Judge will go immediately to the goal line.
- When the ball is snapped between Team A's 3 and 10 yard line, the Line Judge will hold the line and the Headline Judge will read the play and react back to the goal line if necessary.
- If Team A fails to get the ball (the whole ball) out of the EZ, communicate that to the Referee. It is the Referee's responsibility to signal a safety.

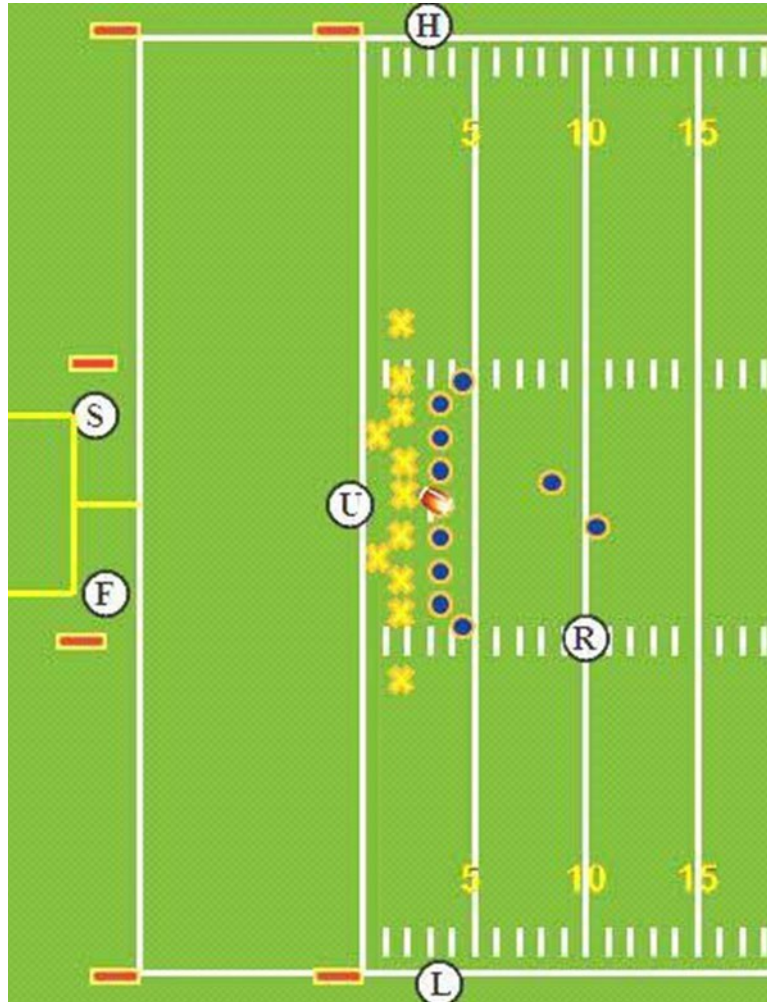
Field Judge and Side Judge:

- Coverage is the same as for any other scrimmage plays.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

FIELD GOAL AND TRY FOR POINT POSITION



Referee:

- Starting position is on the **same yard line or 1-yard behind** the kicker and slightly wider than normal TE, facing the holder. See the ball from snap to kick. Be in position to see both sides of the offensive formation, see blockers, rushers, and kicker at the same time.
- Be alert to possible fakes and or bad snaps.
- Memorize eligible numbers in ineligible positions. (Communicate to nearest wing.)
- Referee is responsible for action by and on kicker and holder.
- On fakes observe action behind the line of scrimmage and the runner while he is behind the neutral zone. Be aware of the holder's knee on the ground. If the holder passes or hands the ball while his knee is on the ground, he is down.
 - Cover passer if runner throws a legal forward pass.
- Reverse mechanics on kicks that are returned by B / R. (Field Goal Only)
 - If kick is caught or recovered in bounds, be ready to use 'reverse mechanics' on return and help at the goal line when runner crosses.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

Umpire:

- Basic positioning is same as for all scrimmage downs
 - Always be able to see the snapper's hands.
- Count kickers. Be alert to defense using words or signals to disconcert the opponents.
- Memorize eligible numbers in ineligible positions. Be aware of the numbering exception rules.
- After snap, watch for:
 - Immediate contact with snapper.
 - Holding and personal fouls.
 - Watch for defense using teammate or opponent to gain leverage to block kick.
- Close in on pile after kick is away and clean up action, use verbal acknowledgement to players that play is over. Do not watch the ball go through the uprights!
- On fakes move to line of scrimmage.

Head Line Judge and Line Judge:

- Basic Positioning is same as any scrimmage play.
- Memorize eligible numbers in ineligible positions on your side of the Center. Be aware of the numbering exception rules.
- After snap, watch blocking by the end and wingback on your side. Look for low blocks.
- On fakes you have sideline responsibility to the end line. You also have goal line responsibility if snapped inside the 15. Be at the goal line pylon and ready to rule on possible touchdown if necessary.
- Reverse mechanics on kicks that are returned by B /R
 - Beat them to the goal line. H/L has responsibility for blocks in front of runner.

Field Judge and Side Judge:

- Take position behind the goal post to look up the upright of the goal on your side of the field. Be directly under the upright.
- Count B players and verify count.
- Read the offensive formation and determine your player responsibility. Identify eligible receivers on your side of the formation.
- Be alert for blocked or 'fake kick'. If ball is snapped outside the 15 yard line, the SJ will move directly to the GL and work inside-out. Look to either wing for help when play goes to a sideline. FJ will move along the endline and have endline responsibility.
- After the snap
 - Be ready to rule on success or failure of field goal/try attempt.
 - ❖ FJ has whistle on PAT kicks and field goal attempts
 - Be alert for fake field goal attempts; be ready to cover runs or passes.
 - Be alert for illegal touches or batting.
 - Be alert for ball striking an upright or crossbar.
 - ❖ If ball strikes crossbar FJ is responsible for ruling over under
 - Sideline and end line coverage.
 - Communicate before signaling. "Yes, Yes, Yes" if the kick is successful. "No, No, No" if the kick is unsuccessful. We do not use "Good" and "No Good", since there is a chance one official might not hear the other official say "No".
 - If the field goal attempt is clearly short, hustle straight forward to the goal line to rule if the ball crosses the goal line. If the ball does not cross the goal line and nobody tries to return it, spot it where it settles, kill the clock, and point the other direction.
- Reverse mechanics on kicks returned by B /R.
 - If the return is to your side of the field, you are responsible for his forward progress to the opponent's 2-yard line. The flank official will cover action in front of the runner and is responsible for cleaning up the action around the play and in the team area if necessary.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

FIELD GOAL AND TRY FOR POINT POSITION (MUDDLE HUDDLE)

Referee:

- Assume normal position, holder, and kicker/quarterback formation. Help with snapper for numbering and illegal snap if snapped from the muddle formation. If there is no holder, align like a normal scrimmage play. If they shift back to a normal kicking position, then you shift to your normal scrimmage kick position.
- Be aware of numbering exception players being covered and uncovered when the muddle shifts back. Ensure they are in a scrimmage kick formation at the snap if using the numbering exception. Be an expert on this rule and casebook plays

Umpire:

- Move out with the Muddle huddle and observe linemen, numbering, and positions. Be in position to see the ball. Follow them if they shift back in. Know the numbering exception and shift rules.
- Watch for holding by the offensive linemen if they run a play behind the muddle.
- Be aware of numbering exception players being covered and uncovered when the muddle shifts back. Ensure they are in a scrimmage kick formation at the snap if using the numbering exception. Be an expert on this rule and casebook plays.

HJ/LJ:

- Be aware of numbering exception players being covered and uncovered when the muddle shifts back. Ensure they are in a scrimmage kick formation at the snap if using the numbering exception. Be an expert on this rule and casebook plays

SJ/EJ:

- Take normal position as for a Field Goal/PAT. If ball is snapped on a fake kick, be prepared to move along the endline to rule on catch/no catch, inbounds/out of bounds.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

FIELD GOAL ATTEMPT BY FREE KICK AFTER A FAIR CATCH OR AWARDED FAIR CATCH



Referee and Umpire:

- Take positions behind the goal post to look up the upright of the goal on your side of the field.
- Count B players.
- Be alert to ensure that the kicking team has the proper number of players on either side of the kicker. At least 4 players must be on either side of the kicker when the ball is kicked. Dead ball foul.
- Be ready to rule on success or failure of field goal attempt.
- Be alert for ball striking an upright or crossbar.
 - (If ball strikes crossbar R is responsible for ruling over / under.)
- R sound whistle when successful kick passes upright
- Communicate before signaling.
- Both R & U, at the same time, move one yard into the end zone in front of their upright and signal score (S #5) or no score (S #10) twice while facing the line.

If the attempt is short and returned:

- Trail play, officiate from the inside out. Cleanup around play as necessary.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

Head Line Judge and Line Judge:

- Take a position at the goal line pylon on your side of the field.
- Count B players.
- Be ready to rule on whether the ball has crossed the goal line.
- Be alert of possible fair catch signals.
- Mark first touching, fumble, momentum, or end of kick If try is short and returned:
- Signal clock to start when kick is touched legally in the field of play
- Officiate from the outside and behind the runner.
- You have progress from the goal line to K's two-yard line.

Side Judge and Field Judge:

- SJ hand the ball to the kicker, point out the referee's location and remind him that the R will give the ready for play signal.
 - Position is on the kicking team restraining line opposite the press box side of the field.
 - Be alert to ensure that all kicking team players, except the player that kicks the ball, are no more than 5 yards behind the kicking teams restraining line from the ready- for- play until the ball is kicked.
 - Count K players and indicate to referee that you have counted the kicking team.
- FJ position is on the receiving team restraining line on the press box side of the field.
 - Count R players and indicate to referee that you have counted the receiving team. If try is short and returned:
 - Officiate from the outside and ahead of the runner.
 - Observe blocks by R and action of other players in vicinity of runner.
 - Be ready to pick up runner on long runback.
 - Be on goal line before runner crosses.
 - You have progress from K's two yard line to K's goal line.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

PENALTY ADMINISTRATION

R: When using a field microphone the number of the player who committed the foul will be announced.

- Get information from calling official and verify all details of the foul.
- Seek out the designated team representative's decision of acceptance or declination of the penalty (usually the head coach). It is not necessary to ask for a decision on obvious choices. This speeds up administration.
- Inform the U where the penalty will be enforced from prior to making announcement so they can enforce the foul while you make your announcement.
- Signal to the press box and verbally announce your foul, even if you don't have a microphone. The number of the fouling player and penalty distance shall be announced.
- Mark the ball ready for play and wind the clock when appropriate.
- Preliminary signals should be used sparingly or by the calling official on his way in to report the foul.
- Do not give the dead ball signal on pre snap fouls. Reserve this signal for fouls that happen just after the play is over.

U: When the R informs you of the foul and the offended team, mark off penalty as determined by the team representative's choice.

- When the calling official is reporting to the referee, be part of the conversation to see what the foul is. Do not wait for the R to signal to the press box to find out what the foul is.
- Ideally, the ball should be on the ground at the new succeeding spot prior to or just as the Referee finishes his announcement. Be efficient.
- Jog to the enforcement spot and verify the HL and LJ are starting on the same yard line as you.
- Communicate the distance of the penalty with the HL by showing him 1, 2, or 3 fingers to signify a 5-, 10-, or 15-yard penalty. Chop your forearm for half the distance enforcement.
- Jog the penalty distance with the HL. LJ will hold enforcement spot for verification. Confirm with HL and LJ the proper spot before putting the ball down.
- Do not walk off the distance line by line. Do the math in your head and jog directly to the proper yard line.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

H:

- Move to the enforcement spot and measure the proper distance of the penalty at your sideline. Make eye contact with the U before he places the ball at the succeeding spot and ensure that he measured the proper distance.
- Give hand signal back to the U as mentioned above when he gives it to you. Make eye contact with the U before he places the ball at the succeeding spot and ensure that he measured the proper distance.
- Do not simply mimic the U's enforcement. Go to the spot where you think it should be enforced to and THEN verify the U's spot is in agreement with your spot.

L:

- Hold the enforcement spot until the U and H get to the new succeeding spot to ensure proper enforcement. You are the last check of the correctness of the enforcement.

S and F:

- One of you mark the dead ball spot and cover the game ball until an alternate ball has been placed by the U at the succeeding spot. The other of you cover the dropped flag and when measurement and enforcement have been completed, return it to the calling official.

H, L, S, and F: Communicate with head coach the nature of the foul, down and distance and the number of the player committing the foul. (Use of O2O's to transfer information to opposite side of the field.)

If there is only one penalty marker on an obvious foul, the calling official may give a preliminary signal to the Referee to aid in timely administration of the penalty.

When the Referee is done with his announcement, communicate the clock status to the Referee with a hand signal. Typically, this is a winding motion to signify the clock should start on the ready and either a snapping motion or an "X" with the forearms to signify it should go on the snap. (Make your R look good, help him!)

If there is only one penalty marker on an obvious foul, the calling official may give a preliminary signal to the Referee to aid in timely administration of the penalty.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

25/40 SECOND PLAY CLOCK MECHANICS

The play clock will start at 40 seconds unless there is an administrative stoppage. Below is a list of administrative stoppages - the play clock will reset to 25 seconds in these instances and will start on the Referee's ready for play signal (#1) and whistle. If the Referee is in doubt – reset to 25 seconds and start on the ready for play.

25 Second play clock (administrative stop):

1. Following a OFFENSIVE team penalty administration or of an inadvertent whistle.
2. Following a score either on try or succeeding kickoff.
3. Following a touchback.
4. Following a measurement for a possible first down.
5. Following a charged timeout by either team or a media timeout.
6. Following an official's timeout for an injury to an offensive player, or an equipment related issue with an offensive player.
7. At the start of a period or overtime.
8. Following a change of possession.
9. Following a legal kick, when either team is awarded a new series.
10. Following an official's timeout for a measurement.
11. Following an official's timeout for any other reason.

40 Second play clock:

1. End of a running play, either inbounds or out of bounds.
2. End of a pass play, complete or incomplete.
3. Following an officials' timeout for an injury to a defensive player, or an equipment related issue with a defensive player or a DEFENSIVE penalty administration. (3.6.1.1e)

The 40-second play clock shall start as soon as the play ends and the ball is dead. The covering official will raise one hand over head (#7) when the play ends in-bounds which indicates the ball is dead and the 40-second play clock should start. If there is an incomplete pass or the play ends out of bounds, the incomplete signal (#10) or the stop the clock signal (#3) by the covering official indicates the start of the 40-second play clock.

There will be no ready for play signal nor whistle from the Referee. The clock operator will start the 40-second play clock, unless an administrative stop should occur that requires the 25-second play clock to reset (see above).

The 40-second play clock should be the most used reset following a normal play.

If during the down a change of possession occurs, the 25-second play clock will be reset. The

signal to reset the 25-second play clock is one arm pumped in the air by the Referee.

The signal to reset the 40-second play clock is both arms pumped in the air by the Referee. This will be rarely done.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

After a long play downfield, the “box man” on the chain crew must hustle (run) to the succeeding spot because once the ball is placed, and the Umpire steps away, the ball can be snapped because the 40-second play clock is already running. The Umpire must spot the ball as soon as possible. When the Umpire steps away into position, the ball is ready for play. As soon as the first down is signaled by the Referee, the “box man” must hustle to the succeeding spot. Stopping the clock to signal first down will not reset the play clock to 25 seconds, the 40-second play clock will be running as soon as the play is dead. If the “box man” is not in place and Team A is ready to snap the ball, the Head Linesman will drop a bean bag on the sideline to mark the yard line from where the play started. The 40-second play clock is NOT to be interrupted because the “box” is not in place.

When visible play clocks are NOT used, the play clock official (SJ in 6 man) at 10 seconds remaining in the count will raise one hand into the air. At 5 seconds that official will countdown with a one arm swiping motion (i.e. basketball count).

When visible play clocks ARE used, the official will not use this mechanic.

If for some unusual reason through no fault of Team A, the official’s crew has not been able to place the ball ready in a timely fashion, and the running 40-second play clock gets down to around 20 seconds, the play clock should be reset to 25 seconds.

Rationale for change: The consistency of officiating crews marking the ball ready for play and starting a 25-second play clock is of concern to coaches and administrators. The time between plays, and the number of plays and length of games varies widely from crew to crew. This new timing procedure will allow a more consistent application of the interval between the end of a down and the ready for play for the next down.



Basic Mechanics for Crew of 6

MEASUREMENTS

R: Observe the measurement and rule on whether the line to gain has or has not been reached. Remember that “Line-to-Line” is a first down and does not require any measurement.

- Give the appropriate signal to the Press Box indicating the result of the measurement.
- If the ball must be moved from a side zone to the inbounds line, leave the measured ball with the FJ and grasp the chain appropriately and then move to the hash mark and spot an alternate game ball at the succeeding spot.
- Mark the ball ready for play and wind the clock when appropriate.

U: Secure the front stake from the chain crew and stretch the chain to measure for the first down. If measuring in a side zone, move with the R to the inbounds line and again stretch the chain for placement of an alternate game ball.

H: Grasp the chain and clip at the point intersecting the 5 yard stripe closest to the rear stake and then move into the field of play to place the chain with the clip at the spot indicated by the L for measurement.

- If the line to gain is not reached, return the chain to the sideline using the clip for placement at the proper spot.

L: Mark the spot for the placement of the chain with the clip by the H. Ensure that this spot is perpendicular to the yard line at which the dead ball has been marked.

S: If measuring in a side zone, secure an alternate game ball for placement by the R at the inbounds spot if necessary. If the line to gain has been reached, place this alternate game ball at the proper inbounds spot or hand the ball to the U for such placement.

F: Hold the ball during the measurement and do not allow its position to be disturbed throughout this administration or until an alternate game ball has been placed at the inbounds line at the succeeding spot.

NOTES:

- SJ: Clear Players away from where the chains will be brought in.
- F: When holding the ball, the FJ should be on the defensive side of the ball with his back to the defense and arm outstretched. This keeps the FJ out of the way of the chains.