

PIAA FOOTBALL MECHANICS FOR 7 OFFICIALS



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GENERAL REMINDERS

Communication 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 attend the pregame conference with the field officials so that he is completely aware of and understands the signals. The procedures near the end of a period and 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 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 way 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 neat, 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, who move quickly from one position to another, and who 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. To meet the challenge, the official should 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.

PREGAME RESPONSIBILITIES

Lateness in arrival is a cardinal sin in officiating. For playoffs, officials should arrive at the site of the game at least two (2) hours before the scheduled game time. They should report directly to the game management thereby assuring them that the officials are present.

The electric field clock operator shall attend the pregame conference with officials one and one half (1½) hours before game time to review the signals and then check the operation of the scoreboard clock. Review signals for starting or stopping clock with operator. Instruct clock operator to time halftime - set at 15 minutes and start on Referee's signal- when the 15:00 runs off, reset 3 minutes and start immediately for mandatory warm-up.

The game management is required to make available a competent crew of registered officials to operate the line to gain equipment and provide each member with distinctive vest or jackets so that they will be readily recognizable. When the line-to-gain is the goal line use only the down marker.

Line-to-gain marker shall be used to mark the intersection of the yard lines with the chain in order to maintain its location. The down marker operator must remain outside and within six (6) feet of the sideline and check with the head linesman following each down in order to display the proper number. This person is not to change the number of the down or move the marker until instructed to do so by the head linesman. When the head linesman signals the crew to change positions following a change of possession or a 1st down, the down marker will be 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 will be placed at the spot of the front rod with the previous down indicated. If a ball person is not available, the front rod operator is responsible for retrieving the ball following a kick try. If there is a dispute regarding the number of the down; the referee shall determine the official down number.

There are certain mechanics which become essential for officials to observe following a 1st down and before the line-to-gain and down markers are moved back from the sideline. It is imperative for officials to fasten a "clip" at the back of the yard line closeted to the rear line-to-gain rod. This will always give the officials an accurate point of reference should a measurement for a 1st down be required.

Auxiliary marker(s), which are unofficial line-to-gain ground markers may be positioned off the sideline on both sides of the field. Whether such auxiliary marker is to be used is a decision to be made by the game management. Such use is optional. When an auxiliary marker is used, it is unofficial. When used, they should be of the type which lie flat on the ground and made of materials that pose no danger to players. An unofficial auxiliary down marker may be used on the sideline opposite the official 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.

Use of any replay or television monitoring equipment in making any decision related to the game is **prohibited**.

A **pregame conference** conducted by the referee shall be held before each game. The conference should start after the crew is dressed for the game at approximately one and one half (1½) hours before the scheduled game starting time. The Referee should notify game management to have the clock operator and the chain crew attend this pre-game conference. The **Back Judge** will have the correct time, and all officials will synchronize their watches accordingly. The pregame conference should follow a set outline to be most effective. The following checklist includes the major subjects to be covered.

PREGAME DUTIES

I. Crew Assignments: On the field in uniform, approximately 45 minutes prior to scheduled kickoff time.

A. Referee:

1. Visit with the home team head coach first then the visiting team head coach. Give the head coaches a list of officials and notify them of the length of intermission.
2. Check with each head coach for any unusual plays or formations, including any that require prior notification. **Secure the name of the individual who will make penalty decisions for the team.**
3. Secure name of coaching staff personnel who will be responsible for sideline control of team members and report this information to all officials.
4. Conduct the official coin toss at 30 minutes prior to scheduled kickoff at mid-field or the scoreboard end zone. The Referee will read the sportsmanship message. Get verbal confirmation by each head coach that his players are legally equipped in compliance with NFHS rules and PIAA adoptions.

B. Umpire:

1. Accompany Referee and examine any player equipment which the coach has a question of legality.

C. Head Linesman:

1. Check line-to-gain equipment, meet and instruct chain crew.

D. Line Judge:

1. Check auxiliary line-to-gain equipment (if available), meet and instruct auxiliary chain crew.

E. Field Judge:

1. Review starting time and be sure an auxiliary stopwatch, which records accumulated time, is available. Field Judge times the game. **(This is a change from the CCA Football Officiating Manual for a crew of 7 which lists this as a side judge responsibility)**

F. Back Judge:

1. Is responsible for all timing situations, (except game clock), including one minute intervals after scores and periods, timeouts, halftime, 25/40-second play clock (see page 31).

G. Side Judge and Back Judge:

1. Instruct ball person to hold ball not in use moving up and down sideline. When new ball is requested by official, ball person should toss new ball to official. Ball person will have to retrieve their team's footballs that are thrown or kicked out of play. They should not enter field unless beckoned.

II. Review coin-toss mechanics.

III. Discuss free kicks reviewing positions and responsibilities.

IV. Review coverage during scrimmage plays:

- A. Running plays, position and coverage.
- B. Forward passes, eligibility of receivers and interference.
- C. Illegal forward passes.
- D. The umpire is responsible for checking numbering requirements.

V. Review positions and coverage during scrimmage kicks:

- A. First touching by K.
- B. Fair catch situations.
- C. Kicks out-of-bounds.
- D. Kick catching interference.
- E. Numbering requirements.

VI. Review "momentum" rule as it applies inside the 5-yard line on kicks and interceptions.

VII. Goal line plays and tries.

- A. Variation of positions near goal line.

VIII. Review the following:

- A. Substitution rule.
- B. Starting and stopping clock.
- C. Procedures during measurement.
- D. Duties during time-outs and intermission between periods.
- E. Penalizing personal and unsportsmanlike fouls.
- F. Penalty administration.
- G. Overtime procedure, if applicable.

IX. Responsibilities following conference:

A. All Officials:

- 1. Enter field together at least fifteen (15) minutes before game time.
- 2. Perform duties in business-like manner.
- 3. Performance and tempo sets tone for way in which game will be officiated.

B. Referee:

- 1. Inspect playing field and pylons with the Line Judge.
- 2. Direct game management to remove any hazards on or near field.
- 3. Approve clock operator; either scoreboard or sideline; must know where he is.
- 4. Keep official score.

C. Umpire:

- 1. Final check player equipment when requested by head coach.
- 2. You are the final authority on legality of equipment.
- 3. Do not permit use of any illegal equipment.

D. Head Line Judge:

- 1. Secure and check the line-to-gain equipment and down markers plus all auxiliary equipment.
- 2. Check whether game management has distinctive vests or jackets for the crew.
- 3. Remind crew of their duties and responsibilities.
- 4. Instruct crew that you will use your heel to mark at sideline where rear rod is to be placed for every first down.
- 5. Work on side nearest line-to-gain equipment, which is opposite the press box.

E. Line Judge:

- 1. Inspect field with Referee.
- 2. Line Judge/Field Judge will notify Home head coach when to bring team onto field and remain with team to see it arrives on time at start of each half.

F. Field Judge:

- 1. Approve and mark home team game balls and instruct ball personnel.
- 2. Field Judge/Line Judge will notify Home head coach when to bring team onto field and remain with team to see it arrives on time at start of each half.
- 3. Times the game.

G. Side Judge:

1. Approve and mark visiting team game balls and instruct ball personnel.
2. Side Judge/Back Judge will notify Visiting head coach when to bring team onto field and remain with team to see it arrives on time at start of each half.

H. Back Judge:

1. Responsible for securing correct time and carrying an accurate watch.
 2. Will have all timing situations except game clock.
 3. Back Judge/Side Judge will notify Visiting head coach when to bring team onto field and remain with team to see it arrives on time at start of each half.
 4. Assist Field and Side Judges with approving and marking game balls.
- Before opening kickoff, Field Judge/Line Judge and Back Judge/ Side Judge are responsible to escort teams from locker rooms to field. Have teams on sidelines no later than 5 minutes before opening kickoff. Follow game script timeline if provided.

THE OFFICIAL COIN TOSS

R, U The official coin toss will be held on the field thirty (30) minutes before kickoff either at mid-field or in the end zone near the official scoreboard with Head Coaches and team Captains of each team. The Referee will read the PIAA sportsmanship message and get verbal legally equipped confirmation from each head coach. The Referee and Umpire will record the results of the official toss; winner, choice, and which goal to defend.

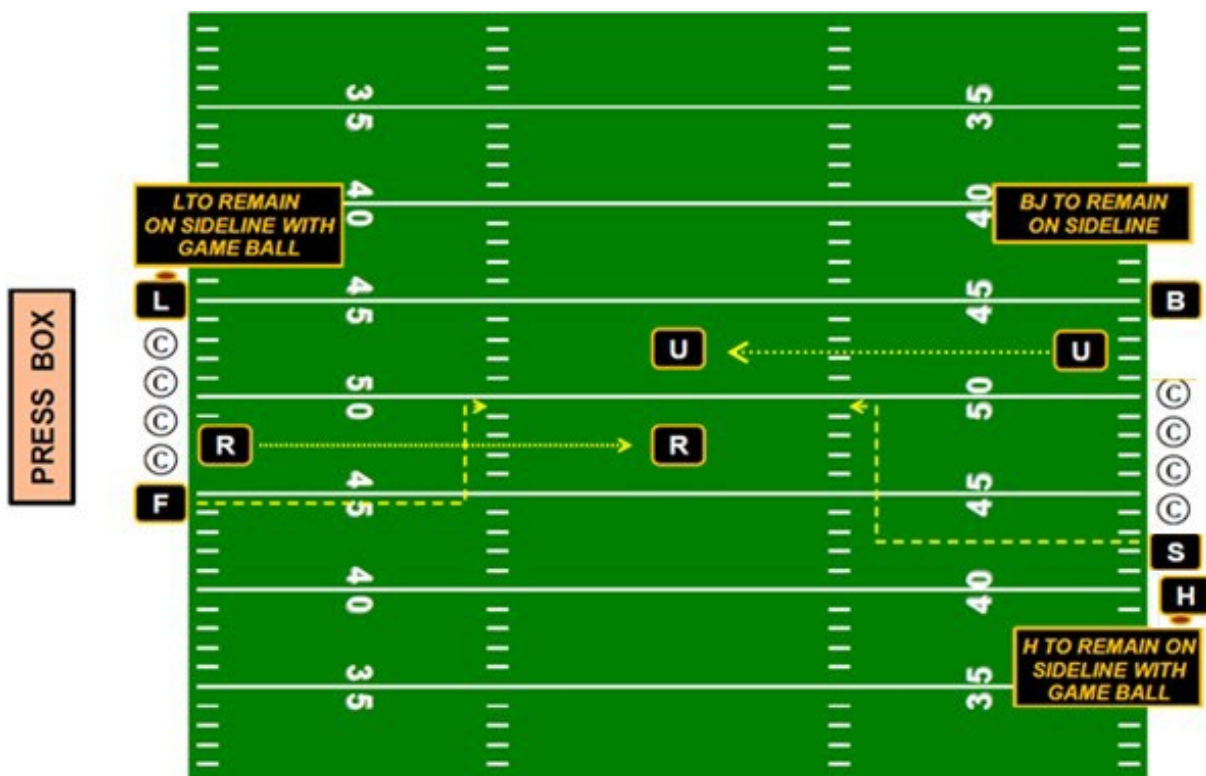
THE CEREMONIAL COIN TOSS

R, U At 3 minutes before kickoff, come to the center of the field. Referee from the press box side, Umpire from opposite press box side. Referee facing scoreboard. 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.

F, S On signal from Referee, will escort their captains to the inbounds line and from there return to the vicinity of the team area. At conclusion of the ceremonial coin toss procedures and captains have been dismissed, move together for final instructions from referee.

L, H, B Remain at sideline. Restrict all other team personnel to their team box areas or well away from the vicinity of the toss. Do not allow teams to come to center of field at the conclusion of the coin toss keep them at their sidelines. At conclusion of the ceremonial coin toss procedures and captains have been dismissed, move together for final instructions from Referee. H/L on kicking team's sideline, bring kicking team's ball to center of field and give to Back Judge. At Referee's signal, hustle to kickoff positions. Lines People and Judges clear sidelines before going to kick off position.

SCOREBOARD



SECOND HALF CHOICES

1. As teams are being escorted to the field the Field Judge/Side Judge will get choices from the Head Coaches, and they will report them to the Referee.
2. Hustle directly to kickoff positions after warm-up period. Linesmen and Judges clear sidelines before going to kickoff position.
3. 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-minutes elapse even if both teams are ready to play.

END OF GAME PROCEDURE

ALL OFFICIALS

A. Regulation game:

1. Leave field together.
2. Neither avoid nor seek coaches.
3. Do not discuss game on field or make any public statement about game to news media.
4. Report any flagrant irregularity or disqualification(s) to state association office when applicable.

B. Overtime, ten (10) yard line procedure:

1. Hold coin toss at center of field, using overtime coin toss mechanics.
2. Toss winner shall choose to go on offense or defense, or end of field at which ball will be put in play.
3. To start each new series, team may designate location of ball between inbounds lines.
4. Referee will indicate winner of toss by placing a hand on his shoulder:
 - a. Then position offensive captain facing goal toward which ball will be advanced and defensive captain facing his opponent and opposite goal.
 - b. Give 1st down signal toward goal being used

Review the overtime procedure thoroughly with all crew members prior to each game. The overtime procedure is outlined in NFHS Football Rules Book and is included at the end of this manual. Each team will be permitted **one timeout during each overtime period** (a series for Team A and a series for Team B). The team scoring the greater number of points in the overtime shall be declared the winner. The final score shall be determined by totaling all points scored by each team during both regulation time and overtime periods.

PROPER UNIFORM

1. The PIAA Official's Emblem must be worn on the upper left sleeve of the official's standard shirt when officiating in all PIAA sponsored games.
2. All PIAA-registered officials must wear identical uniforms during a contest.
3. Required uniform for football officials:
 - Hat - Black fitted baseball cap with white piping. The referee shall wear a solid white fitted baseball cap.
 - Shirt – Black-and-white vertically striped, long or short-sleeve knit shirt shall be worn. The shirts shall have either 1-inch stripes or a state association adopted shirt with a maximum of 2 ¼ - inch stripes, a black knit cuff, and Byron collar. All games officials are to wear the same type of shirt.
 - Belt - Black leather, if worn, 1¼ to 2 inches wide.
 - Pants - Black – Tailored black pant with white stripe on outside of leg only. Knickers are precluded from the official uniform.
 - Shoes - Solid Black or Predominantly Black with some white, cleaned, and shined.
 - Jacket - Black and white vertically striped jacket (not to be worn during the game).
 - Lanyard - Black.
 - Whistle - Black finger style (recommended)
 - Undershirt – Black
 - Turtleneck - Black or white (if needed)
 - Gloves – Black (if needed)

The wearing of jewelry (except wedding bands and medical-alert bracelets) and wrist watches (except as a required timing device) is prohibited. Smoking and/or tobacco chewing is prohibited.

PIAA sports' officials may display an American flag (maximum size 2 by 3 inches) on the right sleeve of their uniform shirt approximately three inches down from the shoulder seam. - Turtleneck - Black
Gloves - Black (if needed)

DURING PRE-GAME DUTIES, PLAIN OR PIAA LOGO BLACK JACKETS MAY BE WORN BY ALL MEMBERS OF THE CREW - NO JACKETS ARE TO BE WORN DURING THE GAME.

NORMAL FREE KICK

I. Referee

- A. Before kick:
 1. Position **at but not on the goal line**, well behind deepest receive, between the hashes, align with the kicker.
 2. Count receiving team and confirm with visual signal with H and L.
 3. Check with Back Judge and when he indicates players and other officials are ready, sound whistle and give ready-for-play signal to kicking team.
 4. 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.
 5. 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.
 6. If short free kick is anticipated:
 - a. Take position near R's ten (10) yard line, in the middle of the field.
 - b. Be alert to assist other officials.

B. After kick:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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. H/L will have action immediately near the runner. Don’t watch the Ball!!

II. Umpire

A. Before kick:

1. Initial position is on the kicking teams restraining line opposite the press box side, outside the sideline.
2. Verify count with Side Judge and then Back Judge (thumbs up).
3. Be certain all non-team personnel are behind the limit lines.
4. Bean bag in hand.
5. Ensure Team K players are within 5 yards of their restraining line and be sure there are at least 4 players on each side of the kicker when ball is kicked.
6. Align your back foot (foot closest to kicking team) on the kicking team’s 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)
7. If short free kick is anticipated, stay on K’s free kick line opposite press box.

B. After kick:

1. Keys are #4 and #5 on your side.
2. Be alert for ball kicked directly into the ground.
3. After the ball is kicked, let the kicking team pass you before moving @ 45 degree angle towards the receiver’s 50 yd. line near hash. Keep all 22 players in front of you, stop when ball is possessed
4. Watch initial blocks by players in five (5) yard zone and action against kicker.
5. U and BJ have responsibility for judging an illegal pop-up kick. If an illegal pop-up kick is judged, whistle the play dead immediately.
6. 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.
7. Be in position to take over coverage of runner in your area on long return. Work inside out.
8. Watch for any infractions involving free kick lines.
9. Do not feel obligated to get to the goal line. S/F/B will have goal line.

III. Head Line Judge/Line Judge

A. Before kick:

1. Be certain all bench personnel are out of the restricted area.
2. Initial Position is on the Goal Line at the pylon out of bounds.
3. Count R players and confirm count with Referee and Line Judge or Head Line Judge.
4. 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)
5. 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)

B. 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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:

1. Move slowly up field along your sideline toward the play after the kick has ended and is in possession of R.
2. 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.
3. Once the return develops and the runner is threatened, observe blockers and action immediately in front of the runner.
4. Serve as clean up behind, to the side of, and around runner.
5. 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:

1. Move up field along your sideline toward the play.
2. 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.
3. Serve as clean up behind, to side of, and around runner.
4. Sideline responsibility from R's end line to K's two-yard line.
5. Be prepared to use cross-field mechanics to assist with progress spot (soft spot) if run ends on that side of the field.

V. Field/Side Judge

A. Before kick:

1. On sideline opposite the press box on Team R's restraining line.
2. Monitor bench area and assist receiving team in getting into position.
3. Be certain all non-team personnel are behind the limit lines and coaches and substitutes are in team box.
4. Count K players. Signal to U, (thumbs up).
5. Start with bean bag in hand.
6. If short free kick is anticipated:
 - a. Position on R's free kick line, opposite the press box
 - b. Be alert for first touching by K or kick which does not cross R's free kick line.

B. After kick:

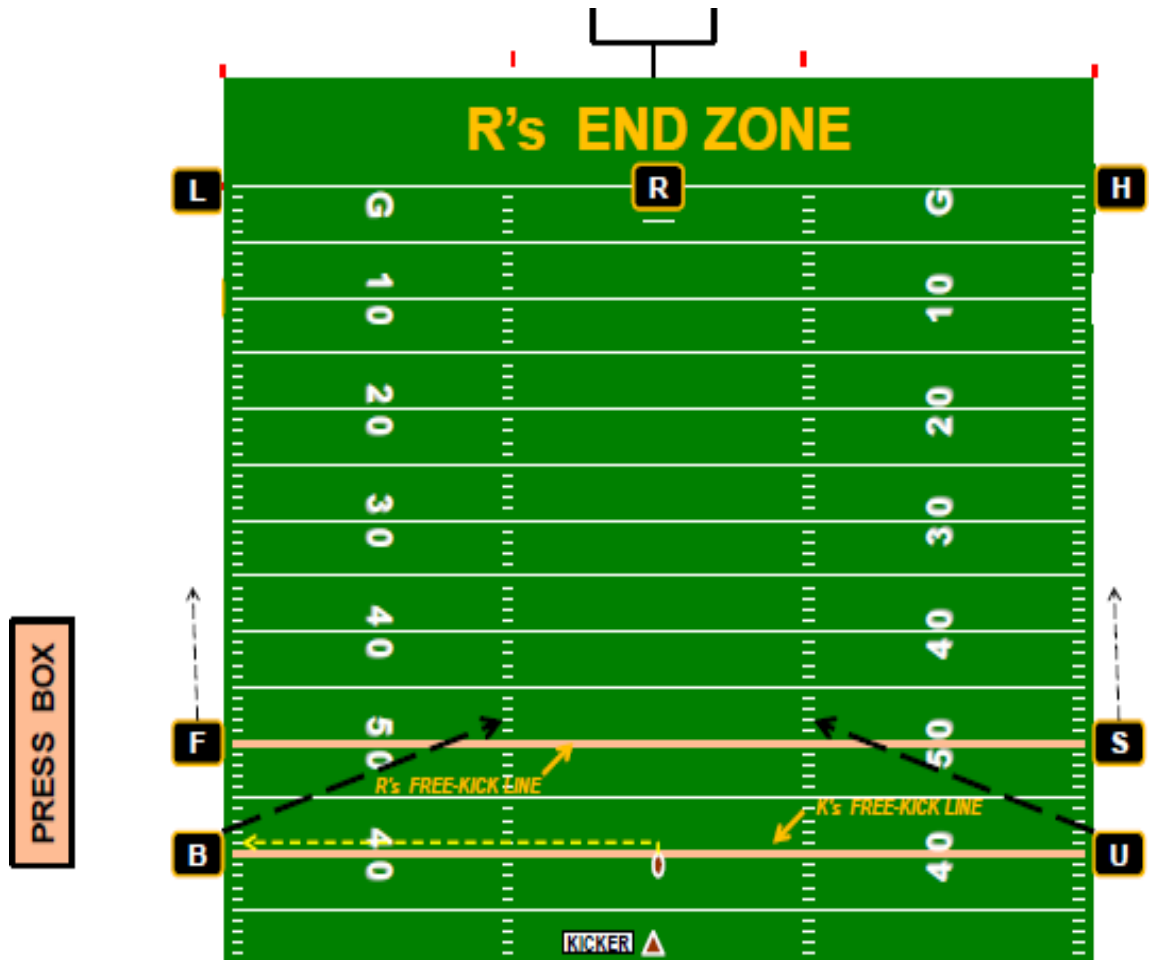
1. Keys are #2 and #3 on your side.
2. Mark out-of-bounds spot with a penalty marker if kick goes out-of-bounds untouched by R.
3. Be alert for kick which does not cross R's free kick line.
4. Be in position to take over coverage of runner in your area on long return. You have coverage of your sideline to end line at all times. You are responsible for K's goal line.
5. Watch for any infractions involving free kick lines.
6. Observe legality of blocks and action away from ball when not covering runner.
7. Kick to opposite side of field:
 - a. Move cautiously toward play.
 - b. Observe action of other players in vicinity of runner.
8. 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.

VII. Back Judge

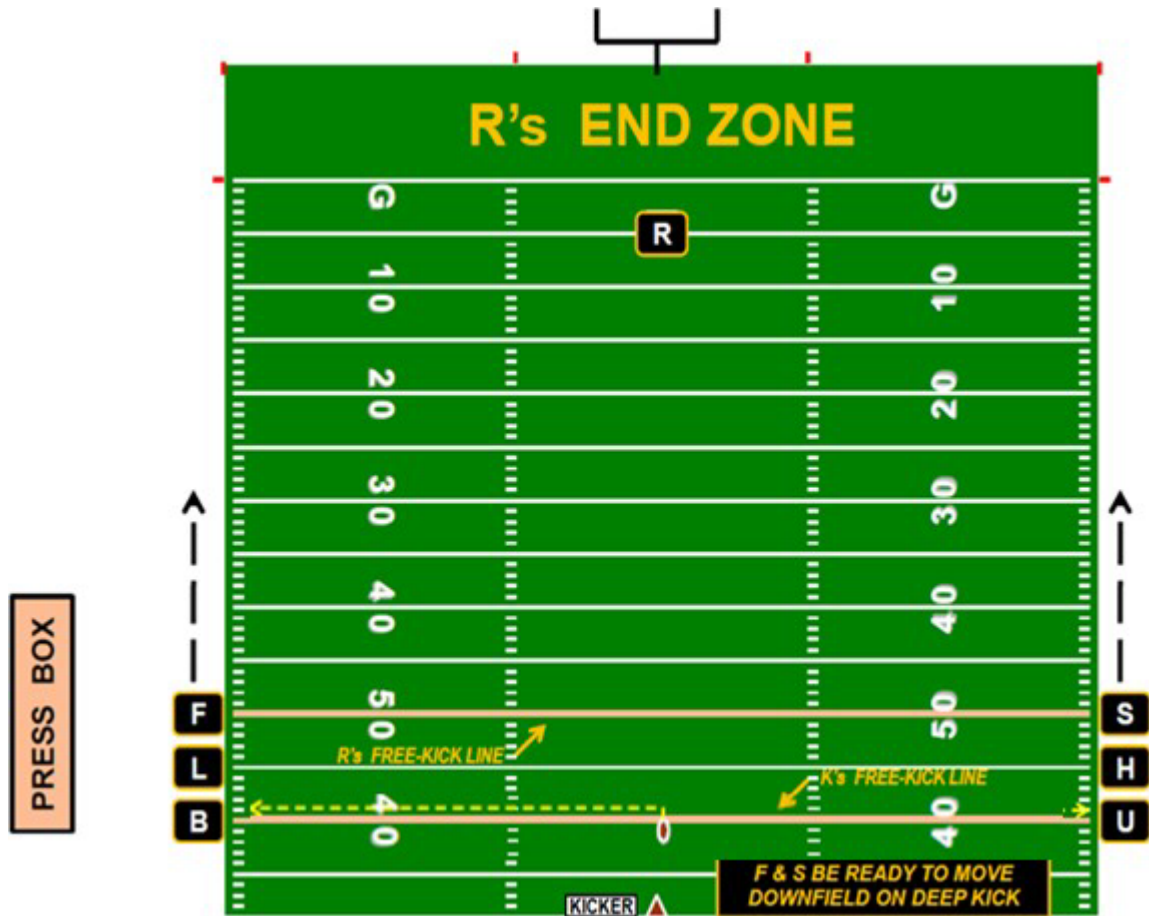
- A. Before kick:
 - 1. After score, take charge of ball and move up sideline to place ball for kickoff.
 - 2. Time one minute interval.
 - 3. Move on field to kicker and after checking legality of kicking tee, hand kicker ball, point out referee and instruct kicker to wait for referee's signal before kicking.
 - 4. Verify count with Umpire (thumbs up).
 - 5. 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.
 - 6. Move to a position on sideline press box side. Signal the Referee to sound his whistle and declare ball ready for play.
 - 7. Ensure Team K players are within 5 yards of their restraining line and be sure there are at least 4 players on each side of the kicker when ball is kicked.
 - 8. Align your back foot (foot closest to kicking team) on the kicking team's restraining line. This helps to get an angle to see the entire line. Position off the sideline, back of restricted area. (2 yards offsideline) 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 Back Judge will mark off the yardage, there is NO need for the Back Judge to signal.
 - 9. If short free kick is anticipated, stay on K's free kick line on press box side.
- B. After kick:
 - 1. Keys are #4 and #5 on your side.
 - 2. Be alert for ball kicked directly into the ground.
 - 3. After the ball is kicked, let the kicking team pass you before moving @45 degree angle towards the receiver's 50 yd. line near hash. Keep all 22 players in front of you, stop when ball is possessed
 - 4. Watch initial blocks by players in five (5) yard zone and action against kicker.
 - 5. U and BJ have responsibility for judging an illegal pop-up kick. If an illegal pop-up kick is judged, whistle the play dead immediately.
 - 6. 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.
 - 7. Be in position to take over coverage of runner in your area on long return. Work inside out.
 - 8. Watch for any infractions involving free kick lines.
 - 9. Work to the goal line if possible, on a long return to assist the SJ and FJ.

NORMAL FREE KICK



Field Judge and Side Judge are responsible for K's goal line when in Normal Free Kick formation. When play becomes dead, be sure to move into the dead ball area and continue to dead ball officiate. Be aware of late hits and unsportsmanlike conduct around and away from the ball.

SHORT FREE KICK



Field Judge and Side Judge be ready to move downfield on a deep kick.
Back Judge and Umpire are responsible for K's goal line when in Short Free Kick formation.
When play becomes dead, be sure to move into the dead ball area and continue to dead ball officiate.
Be aware of late hits and unsportsmanlike conduct around and away from the ball.

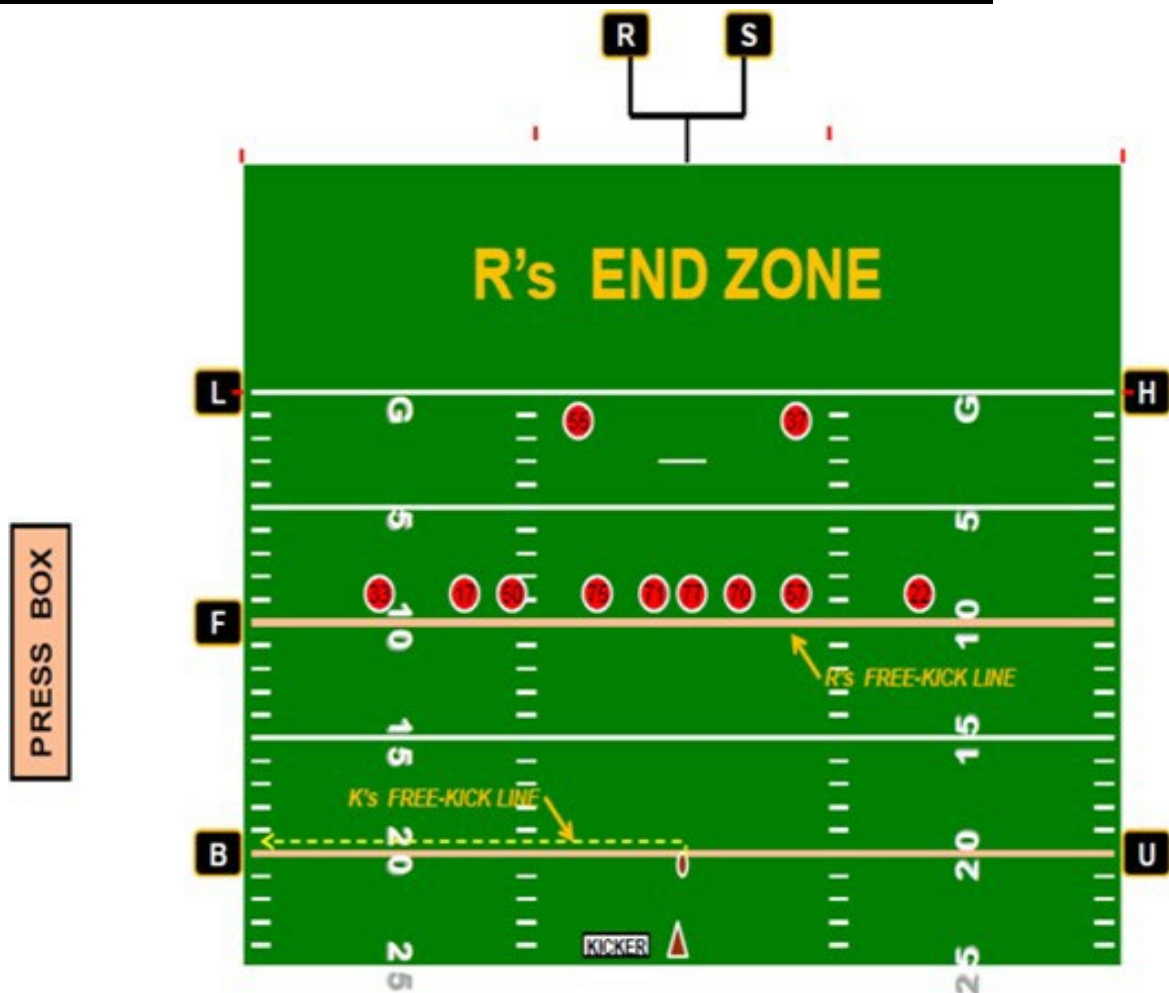
Back Judge and Umpire are primarily responsible for judging an illegal pop-up kick. If illegal pop-up kick is judged, blow the play dead immediately.
Field Judge and Side Judge are secondarily responsible for judging an illegal pop-up kick. If an illegal pop-up kick is judged, whistle the play dead immediately.

FREE KICK FOLLOWING A FAIR CATCH OR AWARDED FAIR CATCH

- R, S** Referee sounds ready for play whistle. Each man will cover one of the two goal posts. Ensure that there are at least 4 players on each side of the kicker when the ball is kicked. Both men are responsible for indicating whether or not field goal has been made. R will sound whistle.
- U, B** Initial position is same as normal free kick, kicker's free kick line. You are responsible for determining that kicking team is on side at time of kick. Ensure Team K players are within 5 yards of their restraining line and be alert that there are at least 4 players on each side of the kicker.
- F** Initial position is same as normal free kick, receiver's restraining line. You are responsible for seeing to it that receivers remain behind their restraining line until ball is kicked.
- H, L** Initial position is same as normal free kick, on your sideline at goal line pylon.
- R** Is responsible for sounding whistle when attempt is determined to be successful or unsuccessful.

NOTE: The same kicking rules apply as any other normal free kick.

FREE KICK FOLLOWING A FAIR CATCH OR AWARDED FAIR CATCH



SCRIMMAGE KICKS (PUNTS)

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 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.

Head Line Judge and Line Judge:

- Hold your position 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 ineligible 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, 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.
- HL to assist LJ 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 referee's 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/FJ. 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)

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 FJ/SJ/BJ.
- Remind yourself of possibility of illegal touching, fair catch, kick catching interference
- 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 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 for 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.

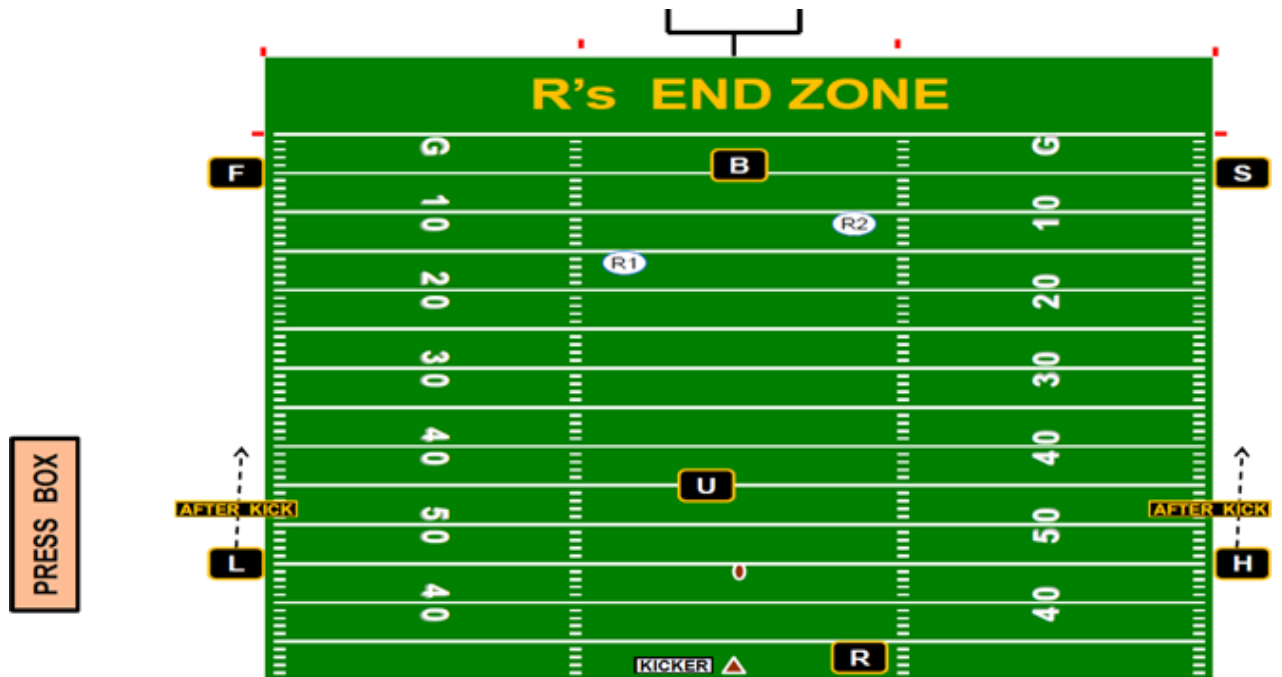
When kicking team snaps ball from the forty (40) yard line in toward R's goal line; S and F should take a position at the goal line pylon to rule on kicks going into end zone.

Back Judge:

- You are responsible for:
 - Initial position is 7-8 yards behind the returner, just inside his shoulder to the wide side of the field. Get a feel of the direction of the kick off of the punter's foot. If the kick goes to the wide side of the field, let the returner cross in front of you and get the angle from the other side. If the returner goes to the short side of the field, stay put and work to maintain angle. If the returner doesn't move, widen out to the wide side of the field to get your angle. Angle should be approx. 45 degrees from the returner.
 - If there are 2 returners, initial position should split the difference between the two. Maintain the same principles above based on the direction of the kick. You will most likely form your angle toward the middle of the field relative to the returner.
 - Primarily responsible for fair catch signal by the returner. Do not miss a signal. Primary on kick catch interference. After the ball is caught, focus your attention up field to watch blocking.
 - You are responsible for bagging the end of the kick across the entire field. Bean bag illegal touching if you see it.

- If the kick is not caught, be ready to take ball into end zone and rule on touchback, giveup receiver.
- Be patient in blowing your Whistle on a Fair catch, make sure the ball is possessed!!

SCRIMMAGE KICKS (PUNTS)



FIELD GOALS AND TRYS

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 badsnaps.
- 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.

Umpire:

- Basic positioning is same as for all scrimmage downs
 - Always be able to see the snapper's hands.
- You will line up on the "weak" side of the defense. If the defense has 6 players to the left of the snapper and 5 players to the right, you will line up on the side with the least defensive players (so in this case, the right). The SJ will be on the strong side. This lets the U have a better look at the ball.
- Key the Center, Guard, and Tackle on your side.
- 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.

Side Judge:

- Line up in a twin umpire position 6-9 yards deep and cover all line of scrimmage action. U will have primary responsibility to protect snapper. Be aware of numbering exceptions if applicable.
- You will line up on the “strong” side of the defense. If the defense has 6 players to the left of the snapper and 5 players to the right, you will line up on the side with the most defensive players (so in this case, the left). The U will be on the weak side. This lets the U have a better look at the ball.
- Key the Guard, Tackle, and End on your side.

If Offense lines up in a “Muddle Huddle” the U stays with the ball and the S moves out with the Linemen, when they shift back in S moves back in. If muddle huddle is to the opposite side, S goes out and U will just slide over if offense shifts back in. Know the shift rule in this situation.

Head Line Judge and Line Judge:

- Basic Positioning is same as any scrimmageplay.
- 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 wing back 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 (Field Goal only)
 - Beat them to the goal line. H/L has responsibility for blocks in front of runner.
- After kick is dead, move in toward players watching for dead ball fouls.

Field Judge and Back 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 FJ will move directly to the GL and work inside-out. Look to either wing for help when play goes to a sideline. BJ 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.
 - ❖ BJ 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 BJ 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.

- AFTER TRY - Moves up sideline with ball to place ball for kickoff.

REMINDER: During a TRY, if B secures possession or as soon as it is apparent a kick has failed to score, the ball is dead and the play is over. Officials should sound their whistle immediately.

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/Side Judge:

- U-Line up with the ball. Be in position to see the ball. 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.
- S-Move out with the Muddle huddle and observe linemen, numbering, and positions.
- **If Offense lines up in a “Muddle Huddle” the U stays with the ball and the S moves out with the Linemen, when they shift back in S moves back in. If muddle huddle is to the opposite side S goes out and U will just slide over if offense shifts back in. Know the shift rule in this situation.**

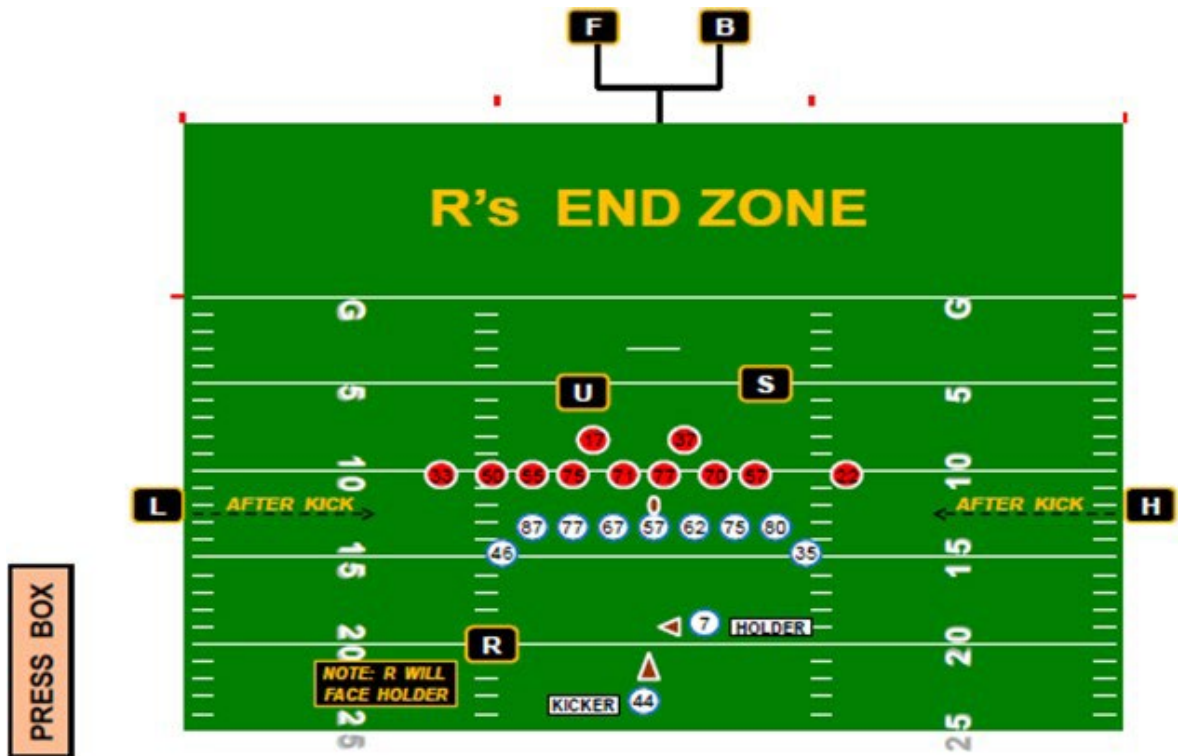
HL/LJ:

- 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.

FJ/BJ:

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

FIELD GOAL AND TRYS



SCRIMMAGE PLAYS BASIC POSITION AND DUTIES

BASIC POSITIONS MAY VARY, DEPENDING UPON PLAY SITUATIONS, TEAM FORMATIONS, THE FIELD AND WEATHER CONDITIONS. Always box in the play. Avoid positions that may cause scrambling to avoid interference with players.

A. Determining and Priority of Keys:

- ALL**
1. In determining keys, the following definitions are needed for clarification purposes:
 - a. 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.
 - b. Tight End - the end man on the line of scrimmage lined up no more than four yards from the nearest offensive lineman.
 - c. Back In Backfield - a player in the backfield between the tackles at the snap.
 - d. Trips - three or more receivers outside an offensive tackle.
 2. The priority of keys to determine initial assignments for each group of officials is as follows:
 - a. Field Judge and Side Judge.
 - b. Back Judge.
 - c. Line Judge and Head Line Judge.

3. The general rule is not to key the same player as the group of officials ahead of you priority wise. For example, the Line Judge or Head Line Judge should not key the same player as the Back Judge and the Back Judge should not key the same player as the Field Judge or the Side Judge.

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. (Never outside the numbers)
- 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 to see the football, backs, and the Team A tackle opposite your side.

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.

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 ineligible 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/nocatch.
- 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.
- 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.

Passing Plays:

- HL will always have the #2 receiver on his side. LJ will only have the #2 receiver if there's trips to his side. Otherwise, he will watch the running back. 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 ineligible 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.
- Read the offensive formation, initial key is the #1 receiver from your sideline.
- Responsible for counting defensive team.
 - Confirm count with S/F/B 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.
- Be aware of violations in restricted team areas.

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 HL/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.
- When pass goes far side, Stay in sideline and work backside of the play.
- 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/HL will have the spots inside the 2-yard line and Goal line.

Back Judge

- Position 25 yards deep favoring the tight end's side of the field. B must always be in position to cover from the inside (looking out) and is responsible for the end line. Formation and player position should dictate the distance from the line of scrimmage.
- 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.
 - The BJ has responsibility for the end line. He should move to get best look of the endline.

Running Plays:

- Read Tight End/Tackle for run pass, if run focus action on or by your key eligible receiver.
- Observe action behind the Umpire as the play progresses towards you.
- Focus on action ahead of the runner, don't look for the ball.
- On long runs, be at the Goal Line ahead of the runner. On runs near the sideline be sure to check with the deep wing F/S before signaling TD.
- Help with cleaning up backside after the play, watch for Personal/UNS fouls.

Pass Plays:

- Key is the #2 receiver to the LJ's side of the field. If trips, your key is #3 on the trip side of the formation.
- Read Run/Pass if Pass maintain cushion while observing your eligible key receiver. Stay with your key until ball is thrown and release him to cover the pass in your zone.
- Be at the Goal Line ahead of the receiver when GL is threatened.
- When ball is snapped from the 20 yd. line in, start at the GL.
- Back Judge is always responsible for the Back/End Line.

REMINDERS:

ASSIGNMENTS AND BASIC KEYS

For complete coverage, all officials must cover their assigned keys at the snap.

Referee: Assume the position described in this manual. Key on the quarterback backs and the opposite tackle. Has quarterback responsibility throughout the play, until and unless the quarterback / runner advances beyond the neutral zone where a Wing official picks up coverage.

Umpire: Insure legal snap. Has primary responsibility for the center and both guards and action on or by them. Officiate at and behind the point of attack.

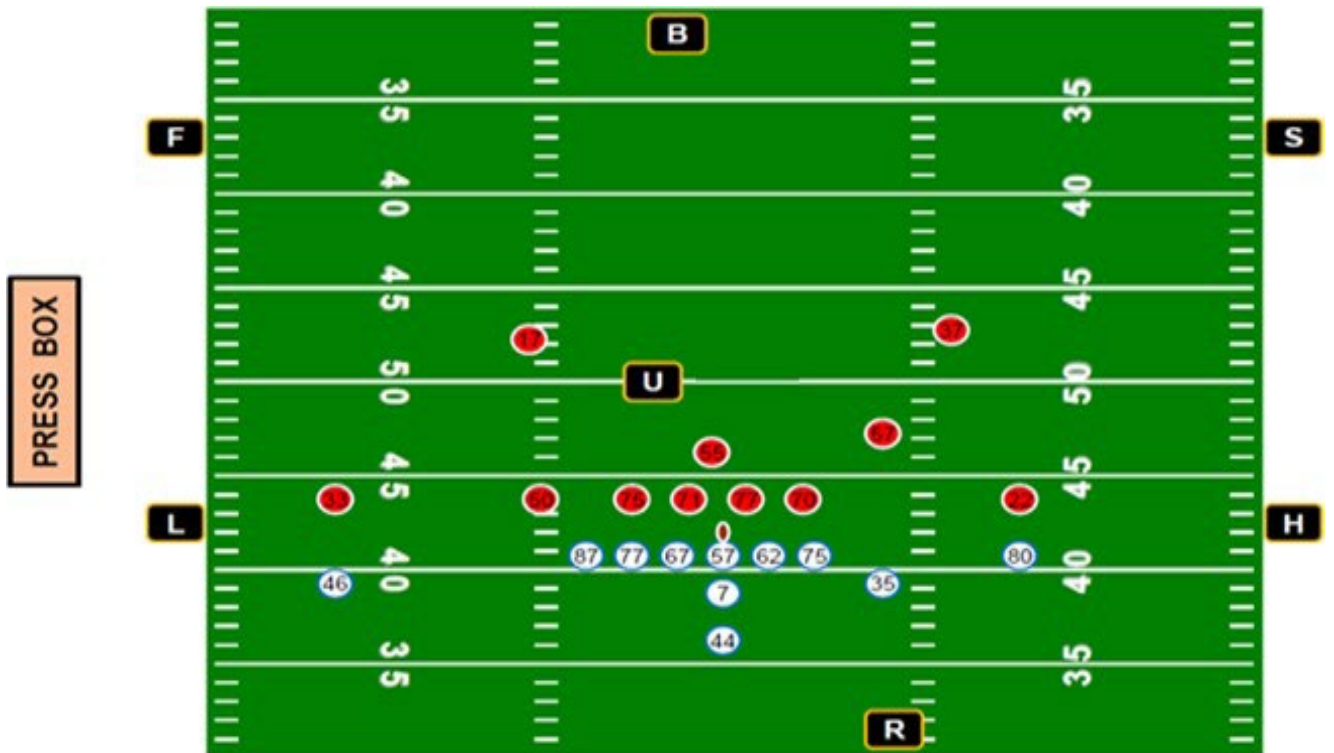
Head Line Judge and Line Judge: At the snap, Help with tackle on side of Referee. If there is a balanced formation, the Line Judge's side is the strong side. If trips are present, key on the second receiver. **STAY WITH YOUR KEY(S) FOR INITIAL CONTACT ON HIM OR BY HIM. DO NOT RELEASE YOUR KEY TOO EARLY OR GO TO ZONE COVERAGE; BUT DO NOT JUST TUNNEL VISION KEY.** Only after initial contact should you go to zone coverage.

Field Judge and Side Judge: At the snap, key on the widest receiver.

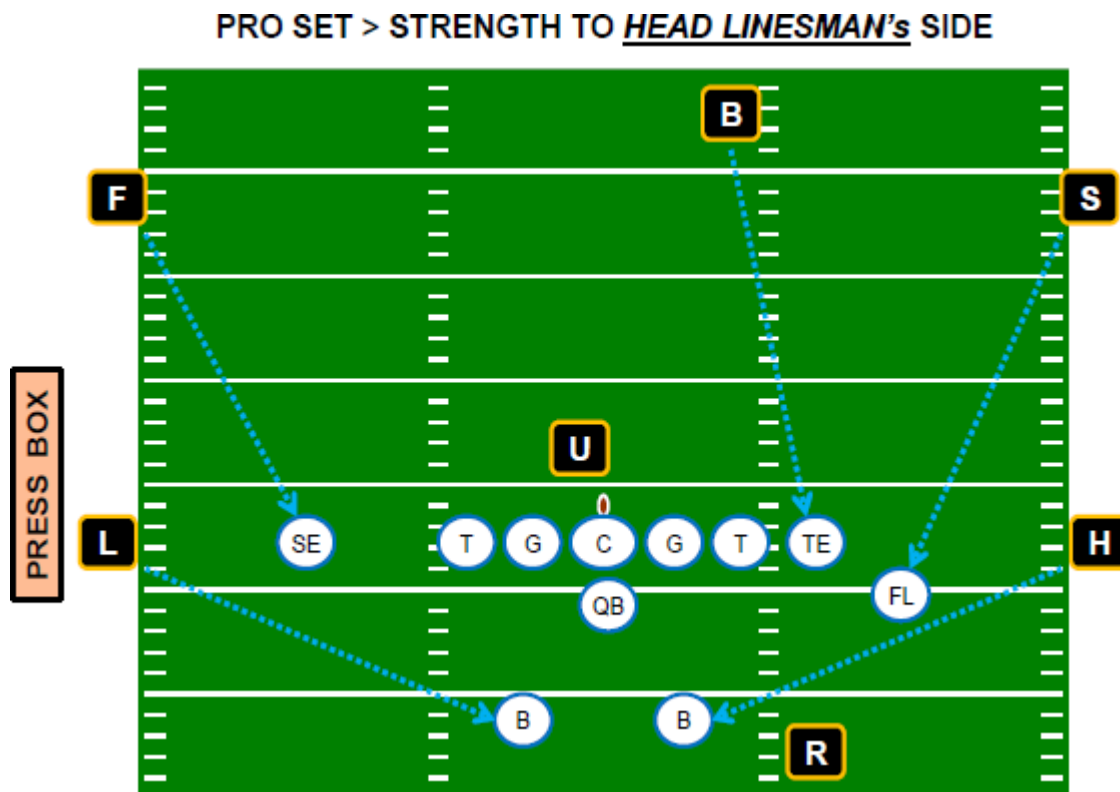
Back Judge: Key on the second receiver on the strong side. If balanced formation, the Line Judge's side is the strong side. If trips are presented, key on the third receiver.

Shifts: Your keys are set at the snap. Therefore, if there is a shift before the snap, your keys may change. **BE ALERT FOR SHIFTS PRIOR TO THE SNAP.**

NORMAL SCRIMMAGE PLAYS



Examples of the application of these keys are illustrated on the following diagrams:



Referee: Quarterback, backs and opposite tackle.

Umpire: Center and both guards.

Head Line Judge: Key RB to your side.

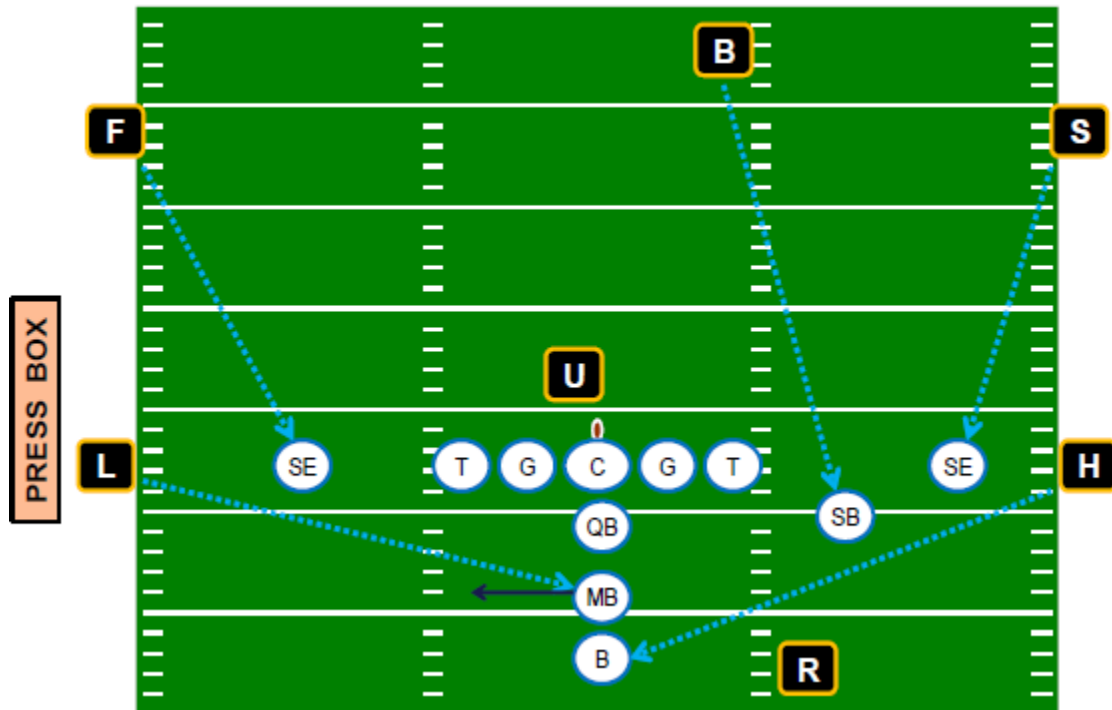
Side judge: Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the flanker.

Line judge: Key RB to your side.

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

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

MOTION MAN INSIDE TACKLE AT SNAP



Referee: Quarterback, backs and opposite on tackle.

Umpire: Center and both guards.

Head Line Judge: If a back motions to your side, that is your key. Otherwise, key the remaining back

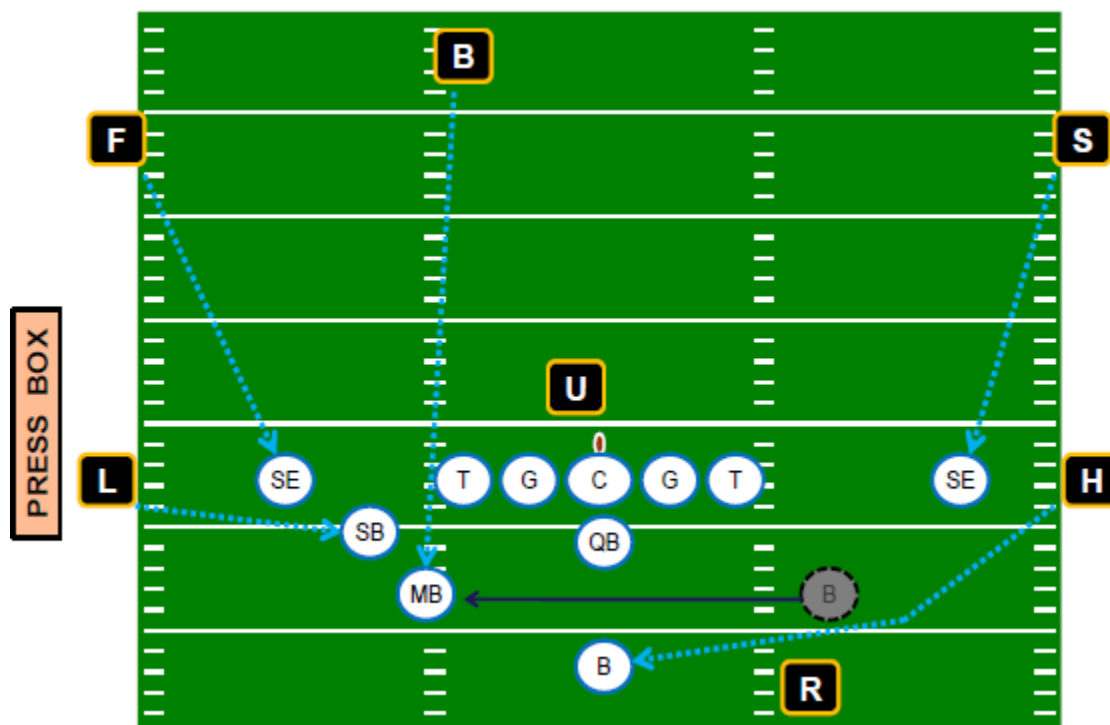
Side judge: Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the split end.

Line judge: If a back motions to your side, that is your key. Otherwise, key the remaining back.

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

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

MOTION MAN OUTSIDE TACKLE AT SNAP



Referee: Quarterback, backs and opposite tackle.

Umpire: Center and both guards

Head Line Judge: Initially the motion man until he crosses the opposite tackle. Afterwards, the back not in motion.

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

Line Judge: Initial key is the RB. When the motion man gets outside your tackle, key the #2 receiver since this is now a trips formation.

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

Back Judge: Initial key is the #2 receiver to the LJ side. When the motion man gets outside the tackle, you are keying the #3 receiver, since this is now a trips formation.

The diagram shows a football pitch with the following player positions and movement arrows:

- Goalkeepers:** MB (left), B (right, dashed circle).
- Defenders:** WB (left), B (right).
- Midfielders:** TE, T, G, C, G, T (center line).
- Forwards:** SE (right), QB (center line).
- Other markers:** F, B, U, L, S, H, R.

Arrows indicating movement:

- Blue dotted arrows from F to WB, B to TE, U to C, L to WB, S to SE, and H to B.
- A black solid arrow from B to MB.

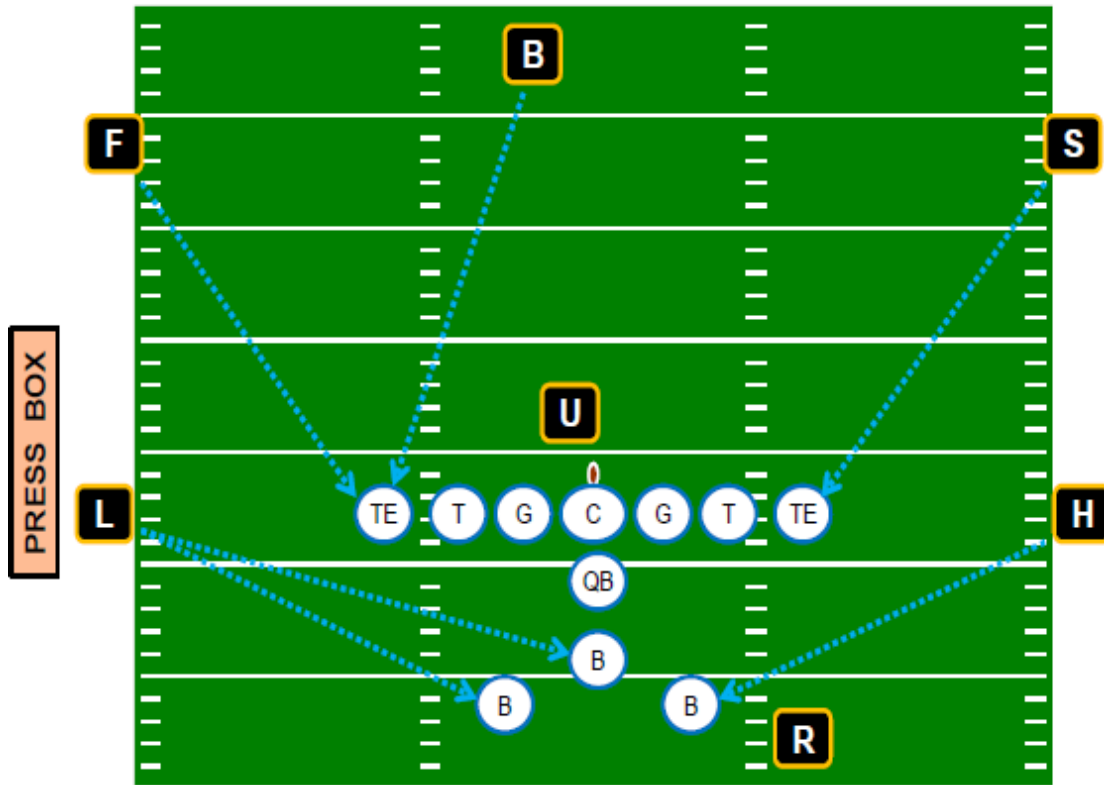
Umpire: Center and both guards.

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

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

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DOUBLE TIGHT END > BALANCED FORMATION



Referee: Quarterback, backs and opposite tackle.

Umpire: Center and both guards.

Head Line Judge: Key the backs and let them declare as to which one you will pick up. Typically, this will be the closest one to you.

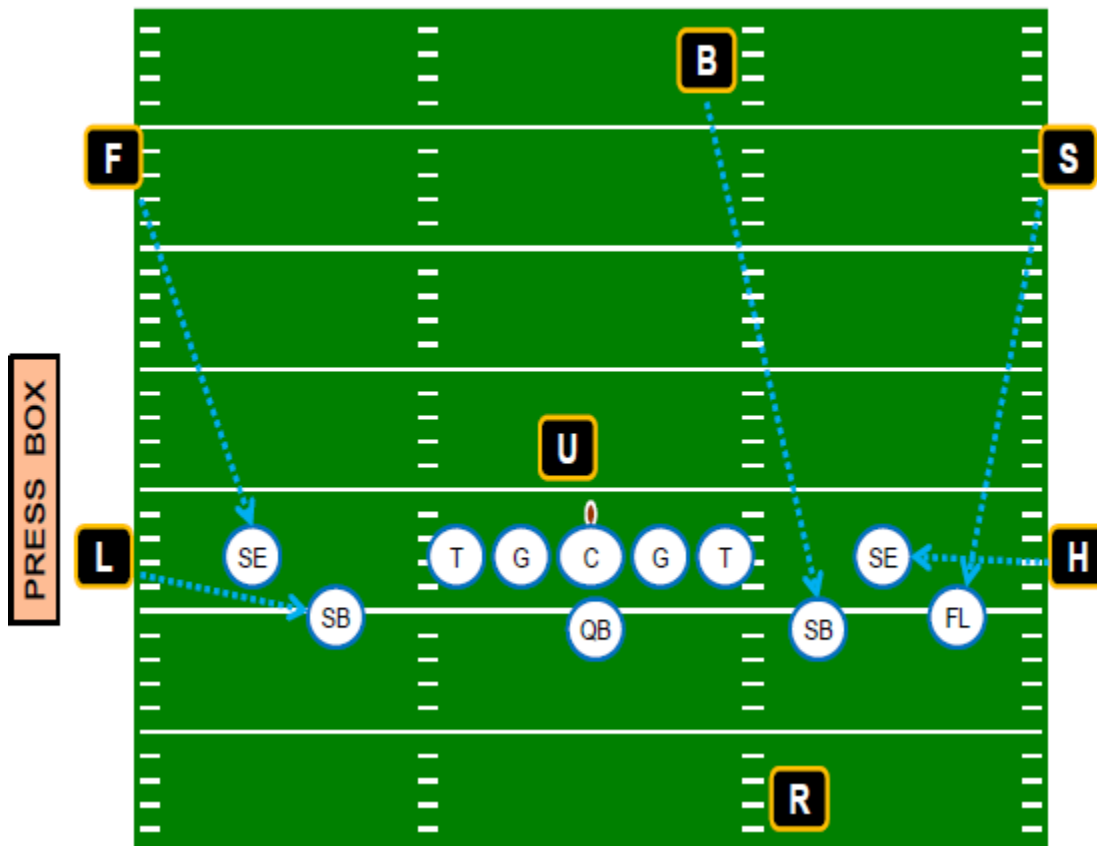
Side Judge: Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the tight end.

Line Judge: Key the backs and let them declare as to which one you will pick up. Typically, this will be the closest one to you.

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

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

TRIPS > EMPTY BACKFIELD



Referee: Quarterback, opposite tackle.

Umpire: Center and both guards.

Head Line Judge: Second eligible receiver from the sideline to your side of the formation. In this case, the split end. This is an exception to his normal key receiver.

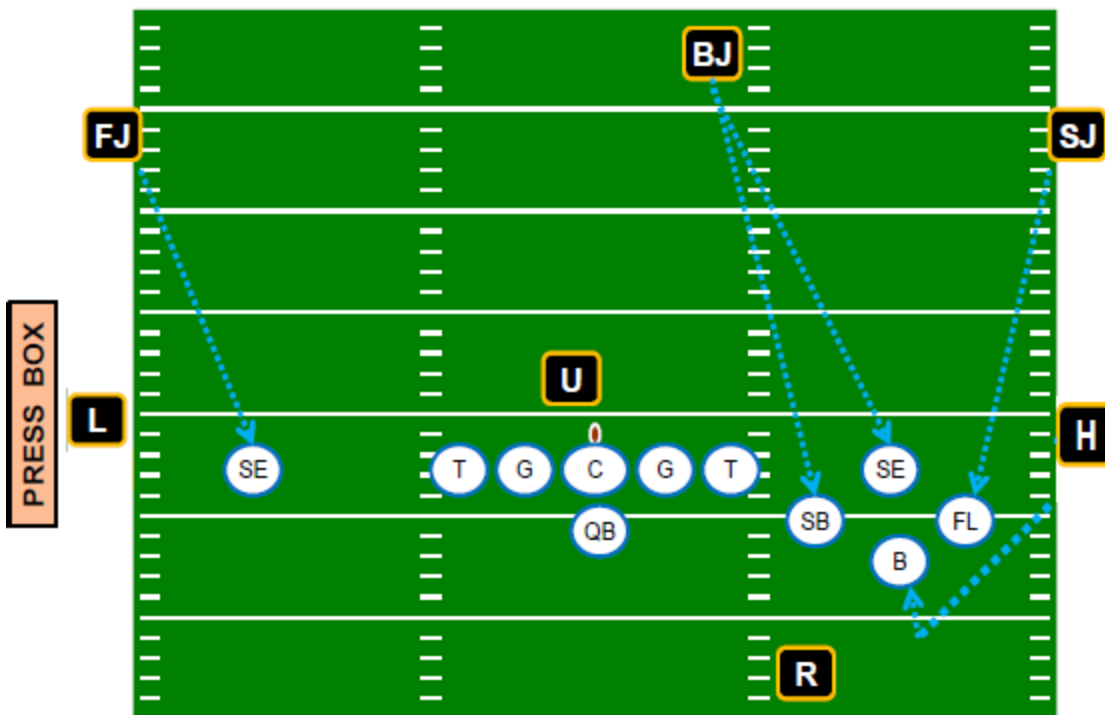
Side Judge: Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the outside flanker.

Line Judge: Key the #2 receiver to your side when there is an empty backfield.

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

Back Judge: The third eligible receiver on the strong side. In this case, the slot back. This is an exception to his normal key receiver.

FOUR RECEIVERS > UNALIGNED



Referee: Quarterback, opposite tackle.

Umpire: Center and both guards

Head Line Judge: Second eligible receiver from the sideline to your side of the formation. Let them declare.

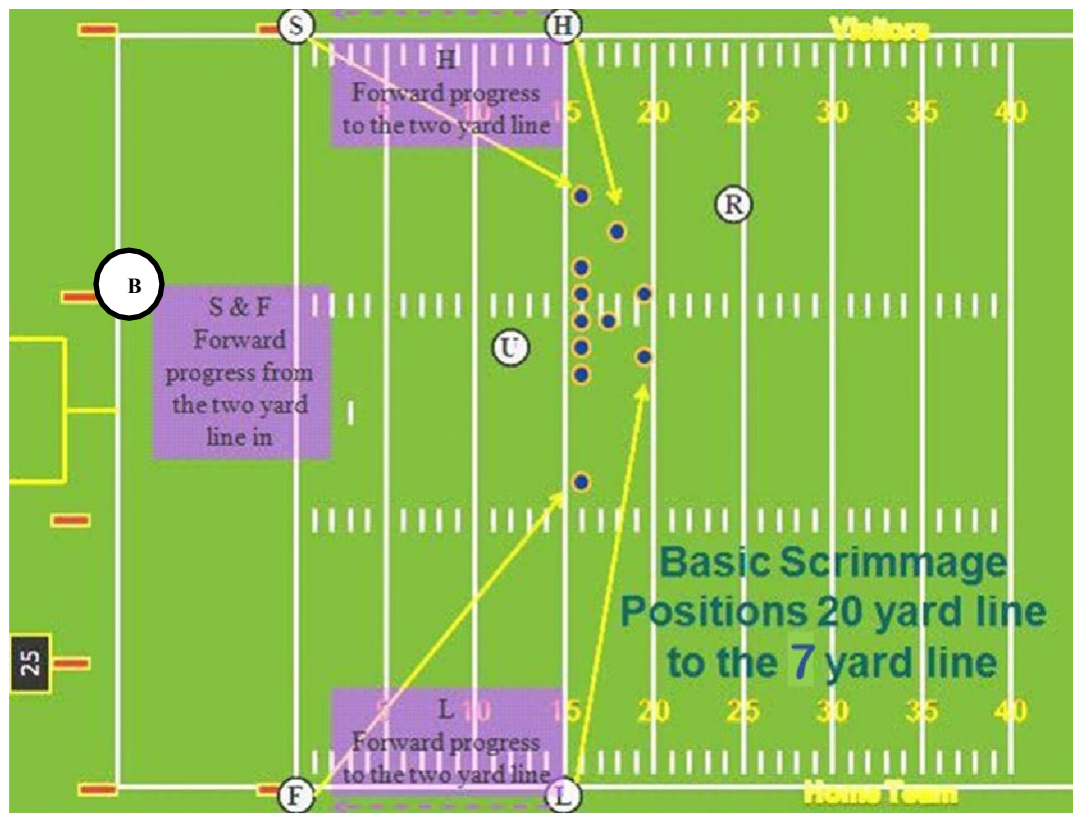
Side judge: Widest eligible receiver in the formation on your side of the field. In this case, the outside flanker. Let them declare.

Line judge: No formal key. Observe tackle and blocking.

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

Back judge: The third and fourth eligible receiver on the strong side. Let them declare.

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



FJ/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.

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.)

Head Line Judge and Line Judge:

- Take regular position out of bounds at sideline.
- 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, ineligibles 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 on or inside B's 7-yard line, starting position is end line pylon.
- Set up off the pylon at a 45 degree angle off the sideline, be ready to assist the H/L on the sideline and the B on the end line.

Back Judge:

- Position on the end line favoring the strong side of the formation.
- Observe your key, be aware of "pick play" on or for your key.
- Observe action after a score, use verbal commands to prevent an UNS actions.

Goal Line Positioning/Mechanics Notes:

- SJ/FJ, if you are positioned at the endline pylon, take a position at the back of the restricted area (2 yards from sideline and end line) at a minimum, a 45 angle off pylon. 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 HL/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 HL/LJ could have him stepping out of bounds prior, so be sure not to signal touchdown when that happens.
- HL/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.

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 Head Linesman 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 Head Linesman 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/Side Judge/Back Judge:

- Coverage is the same as for any other scrimmage plays.
- Observe dead ball action on back side of the play.

TIMEOUTS

- R** Quickly take position, well clear of officials and players, and be ready to handle any emergency. Give timeout signal and "chuck" hands toward the team's huddle who requested the timeout. Record timeout information on game card. On the Back Judges signal that the timeout has expired, or if both teams return to the field before the timeout expires, blow your whistle and give the ready for play signal.
- U** Take charge of the ball making sure it does not move. Record timeout information on game card.
- H, L** Head Line Judge and Line Judge assume positions near team huddles on their side of field. Inform the head coach which team took the timeout, how many each team has remaining and when the timeout has expired.
- F, S** Take position halfway between teams and its team area. Observe team on your side of the field and be ready to assist the Head Line Judge and Line Judge in getting teams back to the field promptly once the timeout expires.
- B** BJ will time the timeout, notifying Referee when 15 seconds remain in the timeout period. Take position to communicate with the TV Liaison. (If applicable)
- H, L, F, B** Be aware of substitution infractions. Record timeout information on game card.

MEASUREMENTS

- R** Remain over ball and announce down and distance. Rule if line to gain has been made or not.
- U** Once the Head Linesman places the clip down and secure, will take the front stake from the chain crewman and stretch the chains so the Referee can rule on whether the front of the ball is beyond the line to gain.
- H** Will take the chain at the clip and direct the chain crew to take the chains onto the field toward the ball.
- L** Will help the Head Line Judge align the chains on the field for measurement by giving him a spot on the yard line with the clip and in line with the ball.
- B** Will hold the ball in place on the ground.
- F** Will keep the area clear so that the press box can observe the measurement. Get a football ready in case the ball must be relocated from the side zone.
- S** Will mark and hold the front stake with the down box. Will keep the area clear so that the press box can observe the measurement.

When a measurement is needed and the ball is dead outside the hash marks, the same process is used. However, if the ball is short of the line to gain, the old ball should remain at the spot until a new ball is spotted at the hash mark for the next play. In this situation, the Field Judge should obtain a new ball and hand it to the Referee. The Referee will take the new ball from the Field Judge and also grab the link of the chain just in front of the foremost point of

the old ball. The Head Line Judge, holding the clip, the Referee, holding the chain link, and the Umpire, holding the front stake, should bring the chains to the hash mark and align them with assistance from the Line Judge. The Head Line Judge shall hold the chain and clip.

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.

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//F/B:

- 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.

RESOLVING TIED GAMES

An overtime period is untimed play after a regulation game has ended with the score tied. During an overtime period each team has an opportunity for an offensive series of downs. However, an overtime period may include only one offensive series of downs if the defensive team scores a safety or touchdown.

Modifications and Notes Compared to Regulation Play:

3-1: When the score is tied at the end of the fourth period, the referee will instruct both teams to return to their respective team boxes. There will be a three-minute intermission during which both teams may -confer with their coaches. All officials will assemble at the 50-yard line, review the overtime procedure, -and discuss how penalties, if any, including any carry-over penalties from the regulation contest will be assessed to start the overtime procedure. (See 8-3-5,6) At the end of the intermission, the linesman will go to the team on the side of the field where the line to gain equipment is located and the line judge will go to the other team. They will inform the coaches of any -special penalty enforcements that apply.

3-2-1: At the coin toss in the center of the field the visiting-team's captain shall be given the privilege of choosing "heads" or "tails" before the coin is tossed. The winner of the toss shall be given his choice of defense or offense first, or of designating the end of the field at which the ball will be put in play for this set of downs. The loser will have his choice of the other options. The referee will indicate the winner of the toss by placing a hand on his shoulder. To indicate which team will go on offense, the referee will have that captain face the goal toward which his team will advance and indicate this with the first-down signal. The other team captain will face the offensive captain with his back toward the goal he will defend.

3-5-1: Each team shall be permitted one time-out during each overtime period (a series for A and a series for B). The team scoring the greater number of points in the overtime shall be declared the winner. The final score shall be determined by - totaling all points scored by each team during both regulation time and overtime periods.

5-1-1 : To start the overtime, the offensive team shall put the ball in play, first and goal, on the defensive team's 10- yard line or succeeding spot if carry-over penalty has been administered (15-yard line for six-player football) anywhere between the inbounds lines. The first offensive team shall have a series of four downs. That series shall be terminated by any score by the -offensive team or if the defensive team has possession of the ball. If the team on offense scores a touchdown, it is entitled to the opportunity for a try unless the points would not affect the outcome of the game or playoffqualifying.

A field-goal attempt is permitted during any down.

If the defensive team gains possession, the ball becomes dead immediately and the offensive team's series of downs is ended.

After the first team on offense has completed its series of downs, the first team on defense will become the offensive team with the ball in its possession at the same 10-yard line anywhere between the inbounds lines. The same end of the field will be used for possessions by both teams during the two sets of downs to ensure equal game conditions and conserve time.

If the score remains tied after each team has been given one series of downs in an overtime period, then the procedure shall be repeated with other overtime periods until a game winner is determined. In this case, there shall be an intermission of two minutes. At the subsequent meeting of team captains, the loser of the overtime coin toss will be given first choice of the options.

If additional overtime periods are required, then first options will be alternated with no coin toss.

5-1-2 : If a safety is scored by the offensive team, the succeeding spot will be the 10-yard line in -possession of the team that was on defense, provided the defensive team has not had its series of downs (the temporary overtime score is: Team A-2; Team B-0).

When the defensive team gains possession of the ball, the down and series immediately end for the -offensive team.

5-2-1: The offensive team shall be awarded a new series of downs when any one of the following occurs:

- a. Offensive team recovers a scrimmage kick (field-goal attempt) between the goal lines after it has been touched first by the defensive team beyond the neutral zone.
- b. Defensive team is guilty of roughing the kicker, place-kick holder, snapper or passer.

5-3-1: The line to gain is always the goal line.

8-1: If the defensive team scores a safety or touchdown, the game is ended.

8-3: No try will be attempted if the winner of the game has been determined.

10-4-3 a: Post scrimmage kick enforcement is not applicable in this procedure.

Refer to **2026 NFHS Rulebook for Resolving Tied Games Interpretations. Page 89.**

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 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: Defensive foul, injury to a Defensive player, or an equipment related issue with a Defensive player.**

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 (signal #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.

If an official's timeout is taken for an injury or a helmet coming off any player, the 25-second play clock will be reset.

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 (BJ in 7 man) at 10 seconds remaining in the count will raise one hand into the air. At 5 seconds that official will count down 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.