



# **FOOTBALL OFFICIALS MANUAL 2024 – 2025**

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# ALL OFFICIALS

## OFFICIALS' UNIFORM

All Officials in the crew must

- be dressed alike. Additionally, the Back Judge and Linesman must carry two contrasting bean bags. Bean bags can be white, black or blue but should be consistent among all crew members.
- wear the Football 2-inch stripe collared shirt (short or long-sleeve) with TSSAA logo and the American Flag on each sleeve.
- wear black pants with the 1 ¼" white stripe and black socks.
- wear black athletic shoes with black laces. Some white accents are permitted.
- wear the Official black hat with narrow white piping, with the exception of the Referee. The Referee will wear the white hat with TSSAA embroidered on the front. All hats must be fitted.
- wear a black belt 1-1/4" to 2" wide with a plain buckle.
- wear black undershirts, **if** undershirts are worn. Undershirts cannot show at the collar or through the outer striped shirt or extend below the sleeves of the outer striped shirt. Turtlenecks are allowed for cold weather.

## APPEARANCE AND CONDUCT

All Officials in the crew must

- be neatly groomed.
- treat players and coaches with courtesy and respect at all times.
- never use profanity or inappropriate language or gestures.
- never consume alcoholic beverages on the day of any game at any level of play prior to the contest.
- never purchase alcoholic beverages or even enter an establishment that serves alcoholic beverages while wearing a TSSAA Official's uniform.
- never use any form of tobacco product (e-cigarette or similar item) when arriving at competition site until departure.
- never degrade another TSSAA Official or make any comments about games in public or on social media.
- assume everything said or done is being monitored by the host school.

## PREGAME CONFERENCE

All Officials will

- I. review the coin-toss mechanics.
- II. discuss free kicks by reviewing positions and responsibilities.
- III. review coverage during scrimmage plays.
- IV. review legal formations, running plays, positions and coverage.
- V. review forward passes, eligibility of receivers and interference.
- VI. review positions and coverage during scrimmage kicks:
  - A. First touching by kicking team.
  - B. Fair-catch situations.
  - C. Kicks out of bounds.
  - D. Kick-catching interference.
  - E. Numbering requirements.
  - F. Prerequisites for post scrimmage kick fouls and penalty enforcement options.
  - G. Field goals, including free kicks after a fair catch.
- VII. review “momentum” rule as it applies inside the 5-yard line on kicks, interceptions and recoveries.
- VIII. review correct positions for goal-line play and try.
- IX. review:
  - A. Substitution rule.
  - B. Starting and stopping the game clock and play clock.
  - C. Procedures during measurement.
  - D. Duties during time-outs and intermission between periods.
  - E. Penalizing personal and unsportsmanlike fouls.
  - F. Extending or shortening a period.
- X. review procedures for getting teams back to the field and obtaining choices for 2nd half.

## SOUNDING WHISTLE

- I. The Official covering the runner will
  - A. see the ball in possession of the runner who is down or whose forward progress stopped before sounding his whistle.
  - B. sound his whistle quickly and loudly when the ball becomes dead in his area.
  - C. be the only Official allowed to blow his whistle (no echo whistle).
  - D. move in quickly to be certain all action stops on the whistle.

- E. prioritize player safety; it is his first responsibility.
- F. be alert and in position to keep the ball in view.
- G. use his bean bag to mark the dead ball spot **if** a whistle is sounded inadvertently.
- H. not have an inadvertent whistle, but **if** an inadvertent whistle occurs:
  - 1. the ball becomes dead immediately.
  - 2. the location at which the ball will be put into play and the number of the next down will be determined by the location and status of the ball when the whistle was sounded.

## STOPPING AND STARTING THE GAME CLOCK

- I. All Officials should stop the game clock (S #3) twice when:
  - A. the down ends following a foul.
  - B. an Official's time-out is taken.
  - C. a charged or TV/radio time-out is granted.
  - D. the period ends.
  - E. the ball is out of bounds.
  - F. a forward pass is incomplete (legal or illegal), except for the Official who signals it incomplete (S #10).
  - G. any unusual delay occurs such as "digging out" a fumble.
  - H. a fair catch is made or awarded.
  - I. an obvious first down has occurred.
  - J. the down ends following a change of possession during the down.
  - K. a fourth down play has ended.
  - L. a free kick has ended.
- II. An Official's time-out requires the game clock to be stopped when the ball becomes dead. An Official should stop the game clock (S #3) followed by tapping his hands on his chest twice:
  - A. when there is a measurement for a possible first down.
  - B. when captains and coaches are notified of time remaining.
  - C. when a player appears to be injured.
  - D. when a player is in need of equipment repair.
  - E. to dry or change the ball after the ball had been spotted.
  - F. for unusual heat or humidity which may create a health risk to the players.
  - G. for any other reason relating to the administration of the game.

- III. The following are situations for starting the game clock:
  - A. Unless the game clock will start on the snap by rule, the game clock will start on the Referee's silent wind (no whistle) signal (S #2) following a first down inbounds. The Referee is not required to come to the line of scrimmage to give this signal.
  - B. The game clock will start on the ready-for-play signal (S #1) followed by the game clock wind signal (S #2) - two different signals - if the game clock was stopped:
    - 1. for an Official's time-out.
    - 2. for a dead ball foul.
    - 3. for an inadvertent whistle.
  - C. The game clock will start when a free kick is legally touched.
  - D. If the game clock starts on the snap, no visible signal to start the game clock is given.
  - E. The game clock will start on a free kick when the ball is touched other than first touching by the kicking team, and the covering Official signals the game clock to start (S #2) twice.
  - F. If signal to stop the game clock (S #3) is erroneously given, restart the game clock immediately (S #2) upon discovery of the error.
- IV. If the ball becomes dead near the sideline inbounds and a first down is gained,
  - A. the covering Official will:
    - 1. use normal coverage
    - 2. give one signal to indicate the game clock would normally continue to run (S #2) because the ball became dead in the field of play and then stop the game clock with the time-out signal (S #3) twice to indicate the line to gain was reached.
  - B. the Referee will start the game clock with a silent wind (no whistle) signal (S #2) when the Umpire is inside the hash marks with the ball, unless he receives a signal from the Back Judge that the ball was not ready for play with at least 25 seconds remaining on the 40-second play clock, in which case the Referee will direct the play clock to be re-set to 25 seconds (with a pumping motion with one arm with a flat palm pointed upward) and follow the 25-second play clock procedure. If the game clock is running when the play clock is re-set, the game clock will not stop unless the Referee deems there has been a delay in re-setting the play clock.



## STARTING THE PLAY CLOCK

- I. The play clock will be set to 40-seconds and started after scanning the field to ensure no penalties when:
  - A. the ball is declared dead in field of play on a play from scrimmage and the covering Official raises his open hand (S #7).
  - B. the covering Official gives a time-out signal (S #3) to indicate the line to gain has been reached.
  - C. the covering Official gives a wind signal (S #2) followed by a time-out signal (S #3) to indicate the line to gain has been reached **close to the sideline**.
  - D. the covering Official signals a pass is incomplete (S #10).
  - E. the covering Official signals to stop the game clock (S #3), because the ball is dead out-of-bounds.
  - F. when play resumes after an Official's time-out is taken, **if** initially related to a stoppage for injury, loss of helmet, equipment repair or a foul by a defensive player.
  - G. after the administration or declining of a defensive penalty.
- II. The play clock will be set to 25-seconds when the play clock is started:
  - A. after the administration of an offensive penalty or offsetting penalties.
  - B. when play resumes after a charged or TV/radio time-out is granted.
  - C. or the first play of a quarter or overtime period.
  - D. for a free kick or try.
  - E. when Team A retains possession after a scrimmage kick or when Team B is awarded a first down (being very deliberate to give time for ball exchange and both teams to change sides).
  - F. when play resumes after an Official's time-out is taken for an offensive injury, an offensive player who lost his helmet, offensive equipment repair, a measurement, heat/humidity or any other reason.
  - G. when the Referee requests a re-set of the play clock because at least 25 seconds of a 40-second play clock were not remaining when the ball was ready for play. (The game clock starts on the snap unless the game clock was running when the Referee requested a re-set of the play clock.)

## PLAY CLOCK/GAME CLOCK PROCEDURES

Event	Play Clock Starts At	Game Clock Starts	Covering Official's Signal	Referee's Signal
Dead Ball Inbounds	40	Running	S #7	None
Dead Ball Out of Bounds	40	Snap	S #3	None
Incomplete Pass	40	Snap	S #10	None
Team A Awarded 1st Down	40	Signal	S #3	Wind
Penalty Administration	25	Snap/Ready <sup>2</sup>	S #3	Chop/Wind <sup>2</sup>
Charged Team Time-out	25	Snap	S #3	Chop
Injury <sup>1</sup>	40/25	Snap/Ready <sup>2</sup>	S #3	Chop/Wind <sup>2</sup>
Measurement	25	Snap/Ready <sup>2</sup>	S #3	Chop/Wind <sup>2</sup>
Double Change of Possession – Team A Snaps	25	Ready	S #7	Wind
Change of Possession – Team B Snaps	25	Snap	S #3	Chop
Touchdown	25	N/A	S #5	Chop
Try, Field Goal, Safety	25	Varies <sup>3</sup>	Varies <sup>3</sup>	Chop
Start of Each Period	25	Varies	Varies	Chop
Legal Kick	25	Snap	S #3	Chop
Start of Overtime Period	25	N/A	N/A	Chop
Other Administrative Stoppages <sup>4</sup>	25	Ready	S #3	Wind

1 See Rule 3-6-1a(1)e EXCEPTION for defensive injuries and fouls.

2 The game clock will start on the legal touch of a free kick.

3 See Rule 3-4-2,3 for Starting the Game Clock.

4 Includes inadvertent whistle and period extension.

## FUMBLE PROTOCOL

- I. When a fumble occurs, all Officials who see the fumble must drop their bean bag at the yard line of the fumble.
- II. When a fumble occurs and there is a pile, the nearest Official needs to go into the pile and start digging to see who has possession.
- III. All other Officials need to stop the game clock and keep players from diving onto the pile.
- IV. After the Official who is in the pile determines who has the ball, the nearest Official needs to signal in the direction the ball will be going.
- V. If the team that fumbles has recovered the ball, wind the game clock and start the 40 second play clock immediately.

## OFFICIALS' RADIO HEADSET PROTOCOL

- I. Officials' radios and headsets are legal TSSAA equipment as long as the local association approves the use of them.
- II. Each local association must have a written protocol.
- III. Remember most radio systems are generally not secure from the public, and you need to be careful of the language you use while speaking. DO NOT say anything you would not say over the Public Address system.
- IV. The Linesman will announce the down, yard line and line to gain over the radio prior to the start of each play. Also, the Linesman will announce if a 5-yard penalty will result in a 1st down when the yard line is in the middle of the chains. The Linesman and Line Judge will communicate whether they have a legal formation and may communicate there is a covered receiver, **if** the signal is not used.
- V. The ECO will announce when there are less than 2 minutes remaining in each half.
- VI. Officials will key the radio when reporting fouls to the Referee, so all Officials are aware of the foul and can communicate to the coaches.
- VII. On 4th and short situations, the Referee will remind the Linesman and Line Judge to hustle in and sell a close spot and all Officials to stop the clock at the end of the play.
- VIII. The Umpire will announce the snapper's number when the offense is in a scrimmage kick formation.
- IX. Crew Radios are MANDATORY during all rounds of the Playoffs and the State Championship Games.

## CREW COMMUNICATION SIGNALS

The following signals will be used:

- I. The Linesman or Line Judge will communicate with each other by punching backward if the outside receiver on their side is off the ball and holding until the receiver goes in motion or the ball is snapped. If either has four players on the line of scrimmage on his side of the snapper, he will pat the top of his hat with his hand to indicate a covered receiver. The Umpire will then confirm the covered receiver with the Linesman or Line Judge by patting the top of his hat.
- II. The Referee and Umpire will count the number of offensive players and verify that 5 players numbered 50-79 are on the offensive line (ineligible receivers) and signal to each other with a clenched fist that counting is complete and correct.

Team A Count	LOS	Backs	Status
12	8	4	Foul: too many offensive players
12	7	5	Foul: too many offensive players & too many A backs
11	7	4	Legal
11	6	5	Foul: too many A backs
10	6	4	Legal
10	5	5	Foul: too many A backs
9	5	4	Legal
9	4	5	Foul: too many A backs (Could also be a foul for not enough players on the LOS.)
8	4	4	Foul: not enough on LOS

- III. For Penalty Enforcement, the Umpire will communicate with the Line Judge and Linesman before marking off a penalty. When marking off the penalty the Umpire will jog off the yardage from the spot of the foul, unless the foul was outside the hash marks. If the foul is outside the hash marks, mark the penalty from the hash marks. The following signals should be used:
  - A. One finger indicates a 5-yard penalty.
  - B. Two fingers indicate a 10-yard penalty.
  - C. Three fingers indicate a 15-yard penalty.
  - D. An outstretched arm with the opposite hand to the elbow indicates a half-distance penalty.
- IV. Double Stakes
- V. Snapper Protection/Legal Scrimmage Kick Formation
- VI. Last play was out of bounds

- VII. Receiver covered up
- VIII. Backward punch
- IX. Completed catch (clutch hands to chest in catching motion)



## USE OF PENALTY MARKER

- I. The penalty marker should be tucked out of sight. If the penalty marker is tucked in the front of the pants, the black-ball type is recommended.
- II. The penalty marker will be used to mark the appropriate yard line on which an Official has observed an infraction. Officials will avoid throwing penalty markers at players.
- III. Discretion, officiating position and game situation should determine whether the marker is dropped or tossed following an infraction. However, as a general rule, Officials will throw the penalty marker in the air on a dead ball foul and throw the penalty marker out to a location or spot on a live ball foul.
- IV. If an Official needs to relocate a penalty maker to the proper spot, it should be done immediately and prior to the foul being reported by picking up and placing (not tossing) on the proper spot.

## USE OF THE HAT

- I. The hat is to be tossed to the spot where the player goes out of bounds, voluntarily or involuntarily.
- II. If voluntarily, meaning the player goes out of bounds on his own and during the down (a) returns to the field, (b) intentionally touches the ball, (c) influences the play or (d) otherwise participates, it is a penalty for illegal participation.
- III. If involuntarily, meaning the player is blocked out of bounds and returns at the first opportunity, this is legal and no foul has occurred.

## USE OF THE BEAN BAG

- I. The bean bag is to be dropped on the appropriate yard line in accordance with the situations calling for such action in this manual.
- II. The bean bag is to serve as an aid to enforcement and not an absolute reference point. The bean bag is to be used:
  - A. to mark the spot of first touching by the kicking team on free kicks that have not yet traveled 10 yards.
  - B. to mark the spot of first touching by kicking team on a scrimmage kick that has traveled beyond the expanded neutral zone.
  - C. to mark the spot of possession, **if** at the five yard line or less, for the defense or receiving team, **if** their momentum carries them into the end zone.
  - D. to mark the spot of a fumble.
  - E. to mark the spot where the ball was located when an inadvertent whistle sounds.
  - F. to mark the spot of a backwards pass that occurs beyond the line of scrimmage.
- III. The Back Judge, Side Judge, Field Judge, and Umpire (The Linesman and Line Judge on short free kick situations) should have their bean bag in hand in preparation for all free kicks.
- IV. The Back Judge must carry contrasting bean bags and has responsibility from sideline to sideline on all scrimmage kicks. A bean bag must be dropped, when the kick is returned by the receiving team, to mark the spot the kick ended. A bean bag must also be dropped to mark the spot of a catch inside the 5-yard line or first touching by the kicking team. **No bean bag is needed on a fair catch or when the ball is downed or rolls dead.**
- V. The Linesman must also carry contrasting bean bags to mark the spot after a first down when play is ready to start and the down mark operator is not in place.

## CONTROLLING SAFETY ISSUES ON THE SIDELINE AND IN THE TEAM BOX

- I. All Officials will:
  - A. consistently administer and enforce team-box and coaches' area restrictions.
  - B. be firm and professional, ensuring that restrictions are enforced so that all Officials have enough room to work.

- II. After the First Violation by a team:
  - A. the covering Official will give a sideline warning.
  - B. the covering Official will drop his penalty marker, sound his whistle after the ball becomes dead, give the proper signal, then report the infraction to the Referee.
  - C. the Referee will give the proper signal (S #15) and indicate the offending sideline.
  - D. the covering Official will echo the sideline warning signal (S #15) while verbally informing the coach of the warning. Communication should also include a reminder of enforcement of distance penalties for further violations.
  - E. all Officials record the time and period the warning is given.
- III. After Second and Subsequent Violations by a team:
  - A. the covering Official will drop the penalty marker, sound his whistle after the ball becomes dead, and report the infraction to the Referee.
  - B. the Referee will give the approved signals (S #7, S #29, S #27) and the Umpire will assess the applicable distance penalty.
  - C. the covering Official will verbally inform and remind the Head Coach that each subsequent offense will result in a 15-yard penalty.
  - D. all Officials record the time and the period that the penalty is assessed.

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

### **Positions:**

- I. Back Judge and Line Judge will be behind their upright.(5 Man Crew)
- II. Back Judge and Field Judge will be behind their upright.(7 Man Crew)
- III. Back Judge will rule on the crossbar.
- IV. Both Officials determine whether the kick is successful.
- V. The Referee will line up in the Back Judge position on a normal kick off.
- VI. All other Official mechanics are the same as a kickoff.

## KEYS AND PRIORITY OF KEYS - 5 MAN CREWS

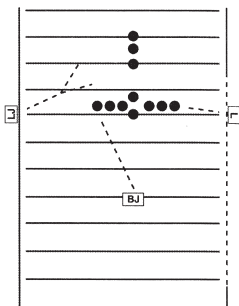
- I. In determining keys, several definitions are needed for clarification:
  - A. Strength of the formation is determined by the number of eligible receivers on a particular side of the offensive information. It has nothing to do with the number of linemen on each side of the snapper, but rather the number of eligible receivers outside the tackles. If there is no strong side, strength is declared to the Line Judge's side.
  - B. Tight end is the end man on the line of scrimmage lined up no more than 4 yards from the nearest offensive lineman.
  - C. Back in backfield is a player in the backfield between the tackles at the snap.
  - D. Trips refers to three or more receivers outside the offensive tackle on the same side of the formation.
  - E. Balanced formation occurs when there are the same number of eligible receivers outside the offensive tackles on each side of the formation. The Back Judge will key on the widest eligible receiver to the Line Judge's side of the formation. The Line Judge will then key on the next widest eligible receiver. The Linesman will key on the eligible(s) on his side of the formation.
    1. Example: Team A sets in a balanced formation with two tight ends. The Back Judge will key on the tight end (the widest eligible) to the Line Judge's side of the formation.
    2. Example: Team A has a flanker and a tight end on the side of the formation next to the Line Judge. The Back Judge will take the flanker, and the Line Judge will take the tight end.
    3. Example: Team A has a split end and a slot back on the side of the formation next to the Line Judge. The Back Judge will take the split end and the Line Judge will take the slot back. In examples 2 and 3, the Linesman takes the eligible(s) on his side of the formation.
  - F. Unbalanced formation occurs when the strength of the formation is determined by the number of eligible receivers outside of the offensive tackles. The Back Judge takes the widest eligible(s) to the strength of the formation. The Linesman or Line Judge to the strong side strength of the formation takes eligible(s) on his side. For example:

Team A has a flanker and a tight end to the Linesman's side of the formation. On the Line Judge's side there is a tight end. The Back Judge will take the flanker and the Linesman will take the end on his side of the formation. The Line Judge will take the eligible(s) to his

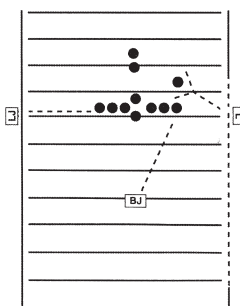


side. If Team A sets in trips, the Back Judge will take the two outside eligible receivers to the strength of the formation. The strong side wing will take the inside eligible receiver. If the trips are stacked, the Back Judge takes the front two.

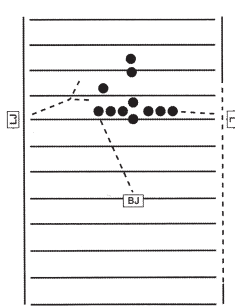
- G. The Back Judge takes the man in motion or the last man in motion.
- II. The priority of keys to determine initial assignments for each Official is as follows:
  - A. Back Judge has the first key.
  - B. Line Judge and Linesman have the second key. Note: Do not key off the same player as the Official ahead of you in the priority. The Line Judge or the Linesman will not key off of the same player as the Back Judge. Normally, one wing Official will key off of the receiver on the side where the strength is not declared, and the other wing Official will be keying a strong side back.



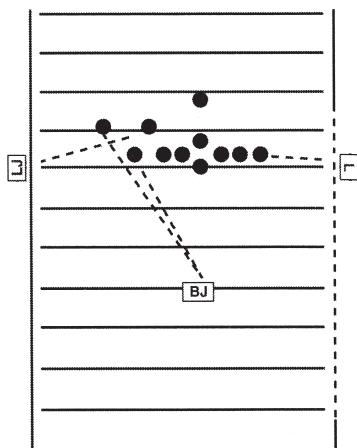
BALANCED FORMATION



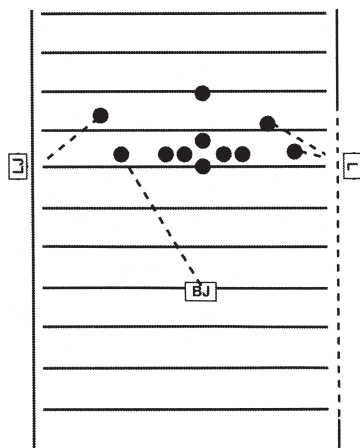
STRENGTH TO L'S SIDE



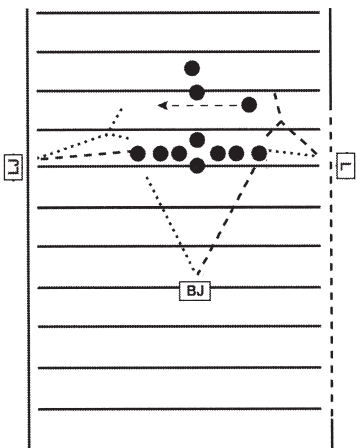
STRENGTH TO LJ'S SIDE



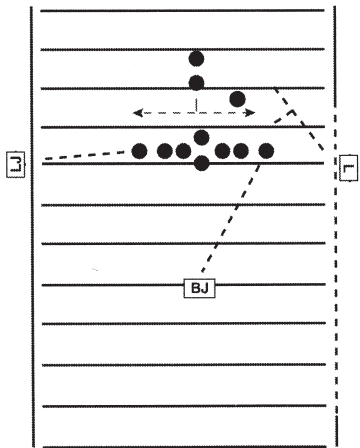
**TRIPS TO ONE SIDE  
(THREE RECEIVERS)**



**DOUBLE WING, OR ANY FORMATION  
WITH TWO RECEIVERS EACH SIDE**



**MOTION WHICH CHANGES STRENGTH  
(CHANGES KEY)**



**MOTION WHICH DOES NOT CHANGE  
STRENGTH (DOES NOT CHANGE KEY)**

## KEYS & PRIORITY OF KEYS - 7 MAN CREWS

- I. The priority of keys to determine initial assignments for each Official is as follows:
  - A. Back Judge has the second key.
  - B. Field Judge and Side Judge have the first key. Note- Do not key off the same player as the Official ahead of you in the priority. The Field Judge or the Side Judge will not key off of the same player as the Back Judge. Normally, one deep Official will key off of the receiver on the side where the strength is not declared, and the other wing Official will be keying a strong side back.
- II. Balanced formation: When there are the same numbers of eligible receivers (2) outside the offensive tackles on each side of the formation, then the Back Judge will key on the second eligible receiver to the Line Judge's side of the formation. The Field Judge will then key on the next widest eligible receiver. The Side Judge will key on the widest eligible on his side with the Linesman keying on the 2nd eligible on his side.
  - A. Example: Team A sets in a balance formation with two tight ends. The Field Judge will key on the tight end (the widest eligible) to the Line Judge's side of the formation and the Side Judge will key the tight end (the widest eligible) to the Linesman side of the formation.
  - B. Example: Team A has a flanker and tight end on the side of the formation next to the Line Judge. The Back Judge will take the tight end and the Field Judge will take the flanker.
  - C. Example: Team A has a split end and a slot back on the side of the formation next to the Line Judge. The Field Judge will take the split end and the Back Judge will take the slot back. In both examples the Side Judge and Linesman take the eligible(s) on his side of the formation.
- III. Unbalanced formation: The strength of the formation is determined by the number of eligible receivers outside of the offensive tackles. The Back Judge takes the 2nd eligible to the strength of the formation. The Field Judge/Side Judge to the strong side strength of the formation takes the widest eligible on his side.

Example: Team A has a flanker and a tight end to the Linesman's side of the formation. On the Line Judge's side there is a tight end. The Side Judge will take the flanker and the Linesman will take the end on his side of the formation. The Field Judge will take the eligible(s) to his side. If Team A sets in trips the Field Judge/Side Judge will take the widest eligible receiver and Back Judge will take the 2nd eligible to the strength of the

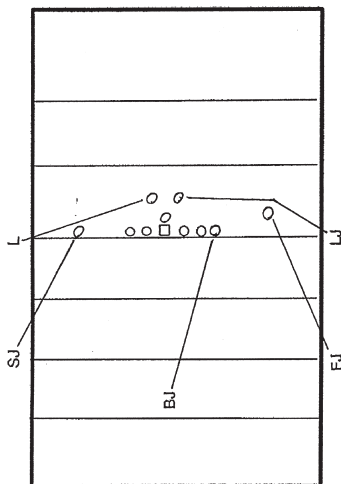
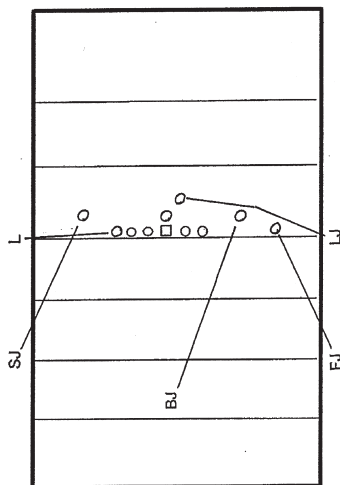
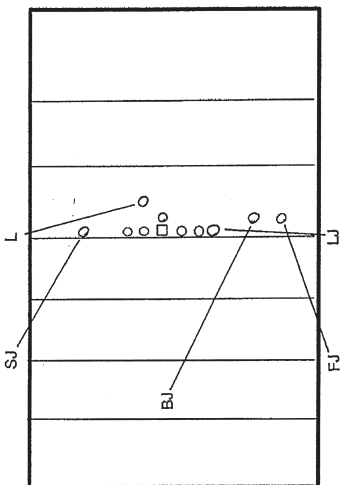
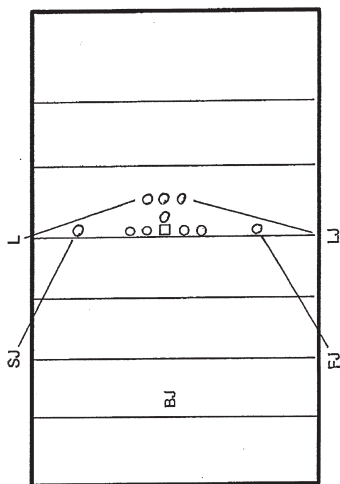
formation. The strong side Linesman or Line Judge will take the 3rd eligible receiver. If the trips are stacked let the receivers declare which direction they go.

- IV. Motion: **if** motion occurs, the strength of the formation is not determined until the snap. Keys may change with motion.

Example: Team A sets in a formation with a flanker and a tight end on the Linesman's side and the tight end on the Line Judge's side. The Back Judge initially takes the tight end, the Side Judge initially takes the flanker and the Field Judge initially takes the tight end on his side. If the flanker goes in motion, his position at the snap will determine if the original keys change. In this example, the flanker gets past the tight end on the Line Judge's side at the snap. The Back Judge then switches to the tight end on the Line Judge side and the Field Judge will switch to the flanker side. The Side Judge will switch to the tight end side. If the flanker is behind the tight end at the snap, the Back Judge will stay with the flanker (motion man) and the Field Judge will stay with his original key, the tight end.

## REVERSE MECHANICS FOR 7 MAN CREWS

- I. Reverse mechanics occur when there is a change of team possession and a return.
- II. The Field Judge and Side Judge will:
  - A. cover the sideline in the restricted area and check for illegal blocks.
  - B. sound his whistle when the ball becomes dead in his area.
  - C. square off forward progress by moving down the sideline to the spot where the ball became dead (if outside the 2-yard line) and then jog perpendicular in toward the center of the field to the numbers and mark forward progress with his downfield foot.
  - D. mirror the opposite Side/Field Judge and help get the spot if they are blocked out.
- III. The Linesman and Line Judge will:
  - A. watch for illegal blocks, clipping and other fouls in the secondary.
  - B. direct his initial movement in reaction to the play situation. Movement in the restricted area should be controlled, but attempt to get a cushion of at least 20 yards in advance of the play.
  - C. **if** there is a break away, be at the goal line before the returner crosses it.
  - D. get the forward progress spot, **if** the ball is downed inside the 2-yard line.
  - E. move quickly and directly into the out of bounds area to observe, clean up any action and retrieve the ball, **if** the play goes out of bounds on his side.

**PRO SET****DOUBLE/DOUBLE SET  
BALANCED****TRIP SET****FULL HOUSE**



## GUIDES FOR – “WHEN IN QUESTION”

• Incomplete pass or fumble	Incomplete pass
• Forward or backward pass	Forward pass
• Kick or pass touched or not	Not
• Catch or no catch	No catch
• Passer has thrown or fumbled	Passer has thrown
• Touchback or safety	Touchback
• Defenseless or not	Defenseless
• Excessive/unnecessary or not	Excessive/unnecessary
• Fumble or dead ball	Dead ball
• Helmet on or off	Helmet off
• Accidental or intentional (contact, touching, kicking)	Accidental
• 5 or 15 facemask	15-yard penalty
• 5 or 15 roughing kicker/holder	15-yard penalty
• Passer inside or outside free blocking zone	Outside
• Receiver on or off LOS	Legal formation/not covered
• Clipping or block in back	Clipping
• Forward pass crossed or did not cross line of scrimmage	Crossed

## 5 MAN CREW REFEREE

### GAME WEEK PREPARATIONS

- I. During the week of the game, the Referee will:
  - A. contact the Athletic Director (or other Administrator) of the host school to verify game time, obtain location of Officials' parking and locker room, and inquire about any special events occurring prior to or during the game or any other unusual circumstances at game site. Request that members of the chain crew and ball boys wear distinctive vests or shirts to be easily identified, if possible.
  - B. if unfamiliar with game site, obtain information regarding location of team dressing rooms to determine if crew should be prepared to prevent the teams from crossing paths entering and leaving the field.
  - C. confirm the Administrators' Meeting will be held immediately after the pregame conference with both Head Coaches, approximately 30-minutes prior to game time.
  - D. contact crew members prior to game day to advise them of the meeting time for travel departure site or the game site and any additional information with respect to the game provided by the host school.
  - E. establish the pregame meeting time, and all Officials will arrive not less than 5-minutes prior to the scheduled time.
- II. Upon arrival at the game site, the Referee will:
  - A. conduct pregame meeting with the crew from a printed outline.
  - B. assure that all members of the crew enter the field together, not less than 45-minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff time.

### PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Referee will:

- I. have the crew enter the field 45-minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff time.
- II. deliver the list of Officials to each Head Coach, starting with the home team.
- III. ask the Head Coach to verbally verify, in presence of all crew members, that all players are legally equipped and in compliance with NFHS rules.
- IV. obtain captains' names/numbers and advise that captains are needed 5-minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff.
- V. check with each Head Coach for any unusual plays, shifts, or formations.



- VI. secure names of coaching staff personnel who will be responsible for sideline safety control of team members and report this information to all Officials.
- VII. secure names of coaching staff personnel designated to call time-outs in absence of Head Coach.
- VIII. verify where teams will be before the game and at half time.
- IX. verify with each Head Coach the preferred choice if his team wins the toss.
- X. inquire about any clock problems with home team Head Coach.
- XI. verify that the home team has the chain crew, and both teams have ball personnel and game balls.
- XII. confirm the time and place for the Game Administrators' Meeting with Head Coaches and Game Administrators.
- XIII. determine whether each team has a designated health care professional on its sideline, and verify that an emergency plan is in place.
- XIV. remind coaches no more than four captains are allowed for the coin toss.
- XV. secure the name of team's designated representative (Coach or Player) who will make decisions regarding penalty acceptance or declination and ask them to communicate decisions through Linesman and Line Judge.

## **FOLLOWING PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE**

The Referee will:

- I. attend the Administrators' Meeting with the two Head Coaches. The Game Administrator should identify security that will escort crew on and off the field and notify both Head Coaches of length of the halftime intermission.
- II. direct game management to remove or repair any hazards on or near the field.
- III. coordinate the inspection of playing field and pylons.
- IV. inform Head Coaches of starting time and whether the game clock will be kept on the field.
- V. inform visiting Head Coach of any change in halftime intermission (a maximum of 5-minutes either way).
- VI. give the visiting Head Coach the option of operating the chains on the press box side of the field if the home team is on the sideline opposite the press box.
- VII. keep the Official score.
- VIII. ensure the ECO instructs the game clock operator to set the pregame clock to expire at the kickoff time.
- IX. ensure the Back Judge instructs the game clock operator to time the halftime intermission. On the Referee's signal, the score board operator will set the game clock to the appropriate time. The game clock will start on the Referee's signal to be given after both teams have left the field. When time has elapsed completely

- (or the Referee has signaled to reset the game clock after both teams have returned to the field), the score board operator will immediately reset 3-minutes on the game clock to time the mandatory warm-up period.
- X. ensure the Line Judge and Back Judge secure and approve the game balls. The Linesman and Line Judge will use the assigned ball personnel **if** two balls will be used.
  - XI. ensure the Line Judge and Linesman inform the ball personnel of the proper way and time to change the footballs between plays.
  - XII. verify heat index with the Game Administrator or training staff of the home team, **if** appropriate.
  - XIII. determine whether the PCO is an Official. If the PCO is not an Official, the Back Judge will conduct a pregame conference on operating the play clock.
  - XIV. instruct the crew to maintain a presence at or near the 50 yard line while both teams are still on the field.
  - XV. let the crew return to their locker room if all pregame duties are completed and at least one team has left the field. All Officials must be back on the field 10-minutes prior to kickoff.

## THE COIN TOSS

- I. Pregame
  - A. The Back Judge and Line Judge will secure game balls from their respective teams to bring on the field for the coin toss. They will have the team captains line up 5-minutes before kickoff. The speaking captain for each team should stand next to the Referee.
  - B. The Referee and the Umpire will jog to the center of the field 3-minutes before kickoff. The Referee will face the scoreboard.
  - C. The Referee will signal the other Officials and captains on the field. The captains will meet the Referee and Umpire in the center of field. All other Officials should stop at the hash marks facing the Referee.
    - 1. The Line Judge and the ECO will come out from the press box side on each 45-yard line. The Line Judge should be on the 45-yard line furthest from the game clock.
    - 2. The Linesman and Back Judge will come out from the chain side on each 45-yard line. The Linesman should be on the 45-yard line furthest from the game clock.
  - D. The Referee will instruct the captains to shake hands.
  - E. The coin will be flipped no later than the 2-minute mark.

- F. In the presence of the Umpire, the Referee will:
1. instruct the visiting captain to give “heads” or “tails” choice before the coin toss and inform the captains that if the coin is dropped it will be tossed again.
  2. make the toss and determine the winner.
  3. place a hand on the winning captain’s shoulder and have the captain choose one of the following options:
    - a) defer choice to second half
    - b) receive, kick, or defend a goal
  4. if the winner of the toss defers, step toward the press box and give the deferred signal (S #10) twice; then ask the deferring captain which direction they would like to kick.
  5. if the winner of the toss chooses to receive, ask the other captain which direction they would like to kick.
- G. The Referee will place the captains in position facing each other with their backs toward the goal they will defend.
- H. While facing in the same direction as the receiving captain, the Referee will signal the choice by making a catch motion to simulate receiving.
- I. The Referee will dismiss the captains.
- J. After captains are released back to their sidelines, all Officials will gather in the middle of the field to verify the coin toss information and receive last minute instructions from the Referee. After instructions are given, all Officials will jog to their positions with 1-minute remaining on the game clock.
- K. If the Home Team requests that military personnel, celebrities, etc. participate in the pregame coin toss, the actual coin toss should be held at the Administrators’ Meeting. A ceremonial coin toss will then be held as described above with the options already being determined. If the coin toss is not done prior to the game, the Referee should toss the coin.

## USE OF THE MICROPHONE

The Referee's use of a field microphone adds a positive dimension to communication when used properly. The microphone should be used to explain penalties and unusual situations. The Referee should have the option to use or not use a field microphone. The Referee should have control (on/off switch) of the microphone. **If** used, the microphone should be tested prior to the start of the contest and the following guidelines should be followed.

When	What	Team	Player	Penalty	Next Down
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<b>When –</b>	Identify ONLY if it is relevant. For a false start, say "Prior to the snap." For a dead ball foul, say "After the play" while giving the dead ball signal. Never say "Dead ball." If relevant, say "During the kick" or "During the return" or "Prior to the fumble/interception". This is not relevant when the ball stays in possession of the offense.				
<b>What –</b>	Always identify the foul. Say "Holding", "False start", "Pass interference", "Free kick out of bounds", etc.				
<b>Team –</b>	Always say a team while pointing in that team's direction. Say "Offense" or "Defense", "Kicking team" or "Receiving team". Never announce color or team name.				
<b>Player –</b>	Give the number of the offending player. Say while still pointing in team's direction. If you don't have a number (do not guess) or it's not relevant (e.g., illegal participation), skip this.				
<b>Penalty –</b>	Always identify length of penalty and enforcement spot. Say 5/10/15 yards "from the previous spot", "from the succeeding spot", "from the spot of the foul", "from the end of the run", etc. Say "Half the distance", when applicable. Say "Penalty is declined", if applicable.				
<b>Next Down –</b>	If applicable, say "Loss of down" while giving the related signal. Always say "(Next) down", while holding your upper arm parallel to the ground, your forearm straight up and your fingers signaling the number. Do not hold your hand in front of your face. If it is a 1st down, signal while announcing.				

**Examples:**

- “During the run, Holding, Offense #72, 10 yards from the previous spot, Replay 2nd down.”
- “After the play, Personal foul, Defense #22, 15 yards, Result is a 1st down.”
- “Pass interference, Defense #14, 15 yards from the previous spot, Result is a 1st down.”
- “Roughing the passer, Defense #89, 15 yards from the previous spot, Automatic 1st down.”
- “During the return, Block in the back, Receiving team #44, 10 yards from the spot of the foul, 1st down.”
- “Illegal forward pass, Offense #12, 5 yards from the spot of the foul, Loss of down, 3rd down.”
- “Prior to the snap, False Start, #77, 5 yards, still 2nd down.”
- “After the play, Unsportsmanlike Conduct Offense #13, 15 yards from the end of the run, 3rd down. That is #13’s first Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul.” or “That is #13’s 2nd Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul, so he has disqualified himself from the game.”

**Reminders for Referees:**

- Ask the calling Official to give you the foul, team and number of offending player, penalty yardage and enforcement spot, live or dead ball, and in or out of bounds.
- For both the preliminary and final signal, come to a complete stop in an area clearly visible to and facing the press box away from any players. Stand still while announcing and look at press box during entire announcement.
- Keep your head level and stationary.
- Think before you speak. Do not turn the microphone on until you have all the information you need and the words in your head.
- “Rehearse” with the Umpire to ensure you have needed information before making the formal announcement.
- Speak in a clear, unhurried and conversational tone. Do not shout; this conveys anger.
- Coordinate statements with signals.
- Do not “over explain.” You run the risk of stumbling on words. When in doubt, say less.
- If anything is unusual, have the calling Official remain close during the announcement to remind you of pertinent information.
- Use the word “correction” to change a previous announcement: “Holding, Offense #65, Correction, #56.”
- When announcing time outs, you can refer to the team name.

- For unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, always tell whether it is the 1st or 2nd for that player/coach.
- When you are finished, turn the microphone off, pause, turn and jog to your next pre-snap position.
- Practice these principles in the following ways to improve and correct any mistakes:
  - Practice in front of a mirror, while talking out loud.
  - Watch replays of your games, when possible.
  - Say the words even in games you are not using a microphone.
  - Consider using a recorder during games to review later.

## DECLARING BALL READY-FOR-PLAY

- I. **If** the play clock is to be set to 25-seconds, after the ball is spotted, the Referee, will:
  - A. move to a position approximately 12-15 yards from the line-of-scrimmage and at least 5 yards wide of the tackle position in a normal scrimmage formation.
  - B. announce the down (using appropriate fingers or fist), check that the crew is ready and in position to officiate, release the Umpire off the ball and to his normal position prior to marking the ball ready-for-play and solely verify the number of offensive players **if** a quick snap is possible.
  - C. sound his whistle, give the ready-for-play signal (S #1) and give the signal to start the game clock **if** necessary (S #2) twice.
- II. **If** the play clock is set to 40-seconds after the end of the preceding play:
  - A. the Referee will move to a position approximately 12-15 yards from the line-of-scrimmage and at least 5 yards wide of the tackle position in a normal scrimmage formation.
  - B. the ball is ready for play when the Umpire returns to his normal position after spotting the ball (without a ready-for-play signal or whistle from the Referee). Unless held in position by the Referee, the Umpire does not linger over the ball.
  - C. stop the game clock and re-set the play clock to 25-seconds (with a pumping motion with one arm with a flat palm upward) and follow the 25-second play clock procedure **if** he receives a signal from the Back Judge that the ball was not ready for play with at least 25 seconds remaining on the 40-second play clock. Stop the game clock to re-set the play clock only if the Referee deems there has been a delay in re-setting the play clock.

## CORRECTING OBVIOUS ERRORS IN TIMING

Requisites for correcting timing errors:

- I. The timing errors must be readily evident and have resulted in an acknowledged discrepancy. The Referee may consult the ECO.
- II. Corrections must not involve judgment but result from failure, either human or mechanical, to correctly administer the timing rule.
- III. Corrections may occur if the error is discovered before the second live ball following the error unless the period has Officially ended.

## COACH-REFEREE CONFERENCE

- I. Purpose
  - A. The conference allows a review of possible misapplication or misinterpretation of rules by Officials.
  - B. The conference allows corrections when an error has been made.
- II. Procedures
  - A. A request for the conference must be made prior to the ball becoming live following the play which is to be reviewed, unless the period has Officially ended.
  - B. The Head Coach calls or directs the player to request a time-out to confer with the Referee regarding possible misapplication of a rule.
  - C. The Referee grants the time-out and charges it to the requesting team.
  - D. The Referee, accompanied by the Linesman or Line Judge, and the Head Coach confer at the sideline directly in front of the team box in the field of play.
  - E. **If the rule is determined to have been applied correctly:**
    1. the time-out remains charged to the team.
    2. the foul for delay of game is called if all permissible time-outs have been used.
    3. If time permits, the Head Coach may talk to the team **for the time remaining in the charged time-out.**
  - F. **If the rule is determined to have been applied incorrectly:**
    1. the correction is made immediately.
    2. the time-out previously charged to the team becomes an Official's time-out.
    3. the Referee will review and explain the situation to the opposing Head Coach before continuing the game.

## DISQUALIFICATION PROCEDURE

The Referee will:

- I. provide the Head Coach with the reason and while accompanied by the Linesman or Line Judge.
- II. require a disqualified player to vacate the field and remain off the field.
- III. require a disqualified coach to vacate the stadium area.
- IV. **if** a disqualified coach does not vacate the stadium area:
  - A. inform the Head Coach (or acting Head Coach) that noncompliance could lead to forfeiture.
  - B. locate the Game Administrator for assistance.
  - C. not continue the game until the disqualified coach vacates the stadium area.
  - D. forfeit the game **if** necessary.

## KICKOFF

- I. The Referee will count receiving team players and confirm with the Line Judge and the Linesman using a clenched fist. The clenched fist by the Line Judge and Linesman is the ready signal indicating the sideline is clear and the Official is ready for the kickoff.
- II. The Referee will pick up the ready sign (open hand above head) from the ECO and PCO when they are in free kick positions, look for the ready sign by the Back Judge and then signal the Back Judge to hand the ball to the kicker by extending his arm toward the Back Judge with a clenched fist.
- III. Once the Back Judge reaches his free kick position and gives the ready sign, the Referee will promptly give the ready-for-play signal (S #1) with a sharp blast of his whistle.
- IV. The Referee will make sure that kickers are in position before he blows the ready signal to avoid a delay of game foul.
- V. On scoring plays involving a penalty by the opponent of the scoring team, the Referee will:
  - A. give the preliminary penalty signal and indicate the offending team.
  - B. obtain the choice from the designated representative of the offended team.
  - C. give the penalty signal and indicate the offending team. **If** the penalty is accepted, the Referee will indicate if the score counts and if the penalty will be enforced on the subsequent kickoff by pointing to the succeeding spot. The Back Judge will give the final signal prior to stepping off the penalty and prior to the subsequent kickoff.



- VI. Before the kick, the Referee will:
- be in correct position: on the receiving team's goal line in the middle of the field.
  - count receiving team players.
  - check positions of other Officials.
  - declare the ball ready for play (S #1) and sound his whistle after ready signals have been received from other Officials.
  - if a short or onside free kick is anticipated:
    - move the Line Judge and the Linesman up.
    - take position on the receiving team's goal line.
    - be alert to assist other Officials.
- VII. After the kick, the Referee will respond according to game situations.
- When the Linesman and Line Judge are positioned on the goal line, the Referee will:
    - rule on a touchback while standing on the goal line.
    - signal the game clock to start (S #2) when the kick is touched other than first touching by the kicking team.
    - pick up the runner and follow until releasing to covering Official for a kick down the middle.
  - If the Line Judge and Linesman have been moved up the field or positioned on the receiving team's restraining line in anticipation of an onside kick and a deep kick is made, the Referee will:
    - rule on touchback while standing on the goal line.
    - be the only Official to wind the game clock on a free kick when the ball is kicked deep.
    - rule on whether the player's momentum took him into the end zone and mark the spot of the catch with a bean bag, if the kick is caught inside the 5-yard line and the player is downed in the end zone.
  - With a kick outside an inbounds line, the Referee will:
    - move cautiously with play.
    - observe action of other players in vicinity of the runner.
    - serve as clean-up behind, to side of and around the runner.
  - When a bean bag is thrown for first touching by the kicking team, the Referee will go near the spot of first touching, signal (S #16) and point at bean bag and determine where the receiving team will put the ball in play.

## RUNNING PLAY

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Referee will:
  - A. move to a position that is visible to the ECO and the PCO (approximately 12-15 yards from the line-of-scrimmage and at least 5-yards wide of the tackle) prior to the ready signal and will then adjust according to the formation. The Referee's initial position will be on the goal line when the ball is snapped from the 10-15 yard line and the end line when the ball is snapped on or inside the 10-yard line. The Referee will be positioned:
    1. on the passing arm side of the quarterback.
    2. to view tackle on opposite side and the backs.
    3. in a standing position with shoulders parallel to the line of scrimmage.
  - B. declare the ball ready-for-play by using the established procedure.
  - C. make sure all players are set for the one-second count before the snap.
  - D. count the number of offensive players and verify that 5 players numbered 50-79 are on the offensive line (ineligible receivers); signal to the Umpire with a clenched fist that counting is complete and correct.
  - E. watch for snap irregularities and movement of linemen.
  - F. watch for illegal shift or player in motion.
  - G. identify eligible backs.
  - H. be alert for a Head Coach requesting a time out.
- II. After the snap, the Referee will:
  - A. key the tackle on the opposite side. **If** he blocks aggressively, the Referee will assume run. **If** he pass blocks, the Referee will assume pass.
  - B. observe the ball, runner, action around the runner, and blocks up to the neutral zone.
  - C. move parallel to the line of scrimmage **if** action is not in the direction of original position, maintaining position approximately in line with runner's progress.
  - D. delay moving immediately toward the line of scrimmage to avoid hindering reverse or delayed play and assure maximum vision of play.
  - E. move behind the play toward the side of the field to which the play advances to cover the runner **if** he is downed near the line.
  - F. watch for illegal use of hands by offensive players.
  - G. observe action behind the ball and away from the runner near the neutral zone.
  - H. observe action on the quarterback after handoff.
  - I. check the out-of-bounds spot behind the neutral zone before leaving the area.

- J. continue to observe action behind the neutral zone before leaving the area.
- K. be responsible for the runner until he crosses the neutral zone.
- III. During a dead ball, the Referee will
  - A. only sound his whistle when the ball carrier is down in his area.
  - B. only go to the forward progress spot **if** he has the ball carrier down deep in the backfield. The Referee will be aware **if** the run ends close to a first down. Otherwise, the Referee will officiate dead ball action no closer than 5-yards from the dead ball spot.
  - C. extend both arms to the side and parallel with the ground, then give the next down with the fingers and confirm next down with Linesman before the down indicator is changed.
  - D. quickly check that the down indicator is correct and that the rest of the crew is ready.
  - E. give the time-out signal to stop the game clock unless it is already stopped by rule, **if** a change of team possession has occurred.

## FORWARD PASS

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Referee will follow the same procedures as described in the Referee section on Running Plays.
- II. After the snap, the Referee will:
  - A. key the block of the offensive tackle on the opposite side.
  - B. observe all blocks behind the neutral zone.
  - C. remain wider and deeper than the passer, as the passer retreats.
  - D. give special attention to contact with the passer by:
    - 1. continuing to observe the passer, not the flight of the ball, after the ball is released.
    - 2. verbally alerting defenders when the passer has released ball.
    - 3. adjusting position during the play to maintain the required view of the passer in the pocket.
  - E. determine whether the pass is forward or backward, when the quarterback drops back after the snap. The Line Judge and Linesman have the primary responsibility for the direction of the pass when thrown toward their sideline by the quarterback immediately after the snap **or when they remain on the line of scrimmage.**
  - F. be alert to observe an illegal pass and will:
    - 1. move to the spot of the pass to determine whether the passer's feet were in or behind neutral zone when ball was released.
    - 2. drop penalty marker **if** illegal, and continue to officiate.

3. mark the spot of the pass with a bean bag **if** close and continue to officiate.
- G. solely be responsible for intentional grounding. Although the Referee may get assistance from the covering Official, he is the only one that drops a penalty marker.
- H. continue to observe action behind the neutral zone before leaving the area.
- I. be responsible for the runner until he crosses the neutral zone.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK - PUNT

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Referee will:
  - A. check the down and distance with the Linesman.
  - B. declare the ball ready-for-play when needed by using the established procedure.
  - C. be in correct position:
    1. 5-7 yards outside the tackle.
    2. 3-5 yards behind the kicker on the kicking-leg side.
    3. in a standing position with shoulders parallel to the line of scrimmage.
  - D. be able to see the ball and observe all backs.
  - E. count kicking team players and signal to the Umpire with a clenched fist that the players have been counted.
  - F. signal to crew the kicking team is in a scrimmage-kick formation **if** the punter is at least 10 yards behind line of scrimmage (S #19).
- II. After the snap, the Referee will:
  - A. turn at an angle toward the kicker.
  - B. watch for fouls behind the neutral zone, especially near the kicker.
  - C. be alert for blocked kick and be ready to rule on recovery. After the kick is away and not blocked, the Referee's first movement should be to "circle" behind the kicker.
  - D. verbally alert rusher(s) that ball has been kicked.
  - E. observe line play after the ball crosses the neutral zone.
  - F. move downfield slowly following the kick.
  - G. watch for fouls and, **if** there is a long return, be in advance of the runner and ready to rule on the touchdown and assist with forward progress near the goal line. When the runner crosses the goal line after running closely down the sideline, the Referee should look to the covering wing Official and assure the runner did not step out of bounds before giving a touchdown signal (S #5).

- H. determine from the covering Official **if** the ball was touched beyond the neutral zone and by whom.
- I. line up the Back Judge or the Line Judge from his position behind the punter by using an outstretched arm and “chopping” where the ball crossed the sideline **if** the kick goes out of bounds in flight.
- J. go directly to the out-of-bounds spot on a short kick out of bounds.
- K. signal the Linesman to move the line-to-gain equipment **if** no foul occurs during the kick.
- L. when a bean bag is thrown for first touching by the kicking team, the Referee will go near the spot of first touching, signal (S #16) and point at bean bag and determine where the receiving team will put the ball in play.
- M. obtain the ready sign from the Linesman before giving the ready-for-play signal.

## FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Referee will:
  - A. be in correct position:
    - 1. 2-3 yards to the rear and 5-7 yards to the side of the potential kicker.
    - 2. in a standing position with shoulders parallel to the line of scrimmage or facing the holder.
  - B. count kicking team players and indicate with a clenched fist to the Umpire that the kicking team has been counted.
  - C. signal to the crew that the offensive team is in a scrimmage-kick formation (S#19).
  - D. observe the kicker, holder and the opposite side tackle.
- II. After the snap, the Referee will:
  - A. turn and face the holder to be able to see the holder receive the ball **if his initial position is parallel to the line of scrimmage**.
  - B. watch for a fumble by the holder.
  - C. observe position of the holder's knee for possible backward pass attempt.
  - D. cover as usual if run or pass.
  - E. assist in sideline coverage **if** run or pass develops to Line Judge's side.
  - F. signal score (S #5) or no score (S #10) twice after receiving the signal from the Officials ruling on the kick.
  - G. rule on roughing the kicker or holder.
  - H. immediately sound his whistle and give the no-score signal (S #10) twice **if** the try is blocked.

- I. If the field goal is blocked, the ball remains live. Treat a missed field goal the same as a punt.

## AFTER A TRY OR SUCCESSFUL FIELD GOAL

- I. The Back Judge will time the 60-second interval.
- II. At 45-seconds, the Back Judge should give two short blasts on his whistle, and the Officials near the team box should get the teams on the field **if** they are not already moving to their positions.
- III. The Referee will meet with the Back Judge after the try **if** a penalty is to be carried over to the kickoff to confirm the correct signal, team to be penalized and distance for the penalty.
- IV. The Referee will only meet with the crew after the try **if** late in the game and an onside kick is possible. The meeting can be replaced by using radios.
- V. The Referee will use the radio to move the Linesman and Line Judge up when an onside kick is anticipated.

## ADMINISTERING PENALTIES

- I. When ball is dead following a foul, the Referee will:
  - A. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - B. get full information from the Official who called the foul.
  - C. give the preliminary signal to the press-box side of the field only on live ball fouls.
  - D. give options to the designated representative of the offended team (quickly when the most advantageous choice is obvious).
    1. If the choice is obvious, interpret silence as acceptance of the obvious choice.
    2. Once made, the choice cannot be revoked.
  - E. make note of the enforcement spot for the penalty.
  - F. give the final signal for the foul to the press-box side of the field while the penalty is being administered.
  - G. look to the Back Judge for status of the game clock after the ready for play.
- II. When the penalty is declined, the Referee will:
  - A. clear away from the players.
  - B. give the foul signal followed by the penalty-declined signal (S #10) twice while facing the press box.
- III. When there is a double foul, the Referee will:
  - A. signal each foul while facing the press box.

- B. follow this with the penalty-declined signal (S #10) twice.
- IV. When two penalties are enforced, the Referee will give proper signals prior to each enforcement.
- V. When the penalty is to be enforced on kickoff, the Referee will:
  - A. indicate the proper foul signal.
  - B. point to the offending team.
  - C. point toward the succeeding spot.
  - D. indicate the scoring signal (S #5).
- VI. If an accepted penalty for foul by either team occurs during a down in which time expires, play continues with an untimed down (S #1) except for fouls listed in Rule 3-3-4.
- VII. When dead-ball fouls occur after fourth down, the Referee will:
  - A. signal any live-ball fouls.
  - B. signal first down for the proper team.
  - C. signal dead ball.
  - D. signal the dead-ball foul(s).

## MEASURING FOR FIRST DOWN USING TRADITIONAL LINE-TO-GAIN INDICATORS

- I. Prior to and during the measurement, the Referee will:
  - A. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice, followed by tapping hands to chest.
  - B. signal the Linesman to bring the line-to-gain equipment onto the field.
  - C. motion players away from the ball.
  - D. not allow the ball to be moved in any manner.
  - E. measure before the ball is taken inbounds from a side zone.
  - F. use line-to-gain indicator to accurately place the ball at inbounds spot, if the line-to-gain is not reached in side zone.
  - G. use inside edge of forward line-to-gain indicator to mark the line-to-gain.
  - H. measure in the 4th quarter on all 4th downs within 1 yard of a 1st down when the scoring margin is within 14 points.
- II. When measurement is completed, the Referee will:
  - A. signal the number of the next down.
  - B. spot the ball at the proper place.
  - C. wait for the chain crew to return to position.
- III. If a new series is awarded to the opponent of the team which was in possession when the ball became dead, the Referee will:
  - A. place the ball so that the foremost point, when it became dead, becomes the near point when the direction is changed.

- B. set the new rear line-to-gain indicator with inside edge at the new point of the ball so the line-to-gain is 10-yards in advance of this point.
- IV. After a measurement, the Referee will:
  - A. inform captains he is ready to play.
  - B. declare the ball ready-for-play (S #1), **if** the ball was out of bounds.
  - C. signal ready-for-play (S #1) and then give the signal to start the game clock (S #2) twice, **if** the ball was not out-of-bounds.
  - D. signal to start the game clock on the snap **if** first down for the defense (S #8).

## TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

- I. The Referee will sound his whistle and:
  - A. signal "time-out" (S #3) twice.
  - B. indicate by moving both arms twice in a horizontal motion toward the team **if** a time-out is charged to that team.
  - C. indicate by tapping his chest with both hands **if** it is an Official's time-out.
- II. During the time-out, the Referee will:
  - A. check the number of time-outs remaining for each team and record the time-out and the game time on his game card.
  - B. check the time remaining with the Back Judge.
  - C. check the down with the Linesman.
  - D. notify the Head Coach when his team has no more time-outs remaining in the half.
  - E. position himself away from other Officials in his pre-snap position.
  - F. make sure all Officials are ready after the Back Judge has sounded the 15-second warning.
- III. The Referee will declare the ball ready-for-play (S #1) when 60 seconds have expired.

## INJURY TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

- I. The Referee will summon the designated health-care professional(s) and/or coach(es) onto field.
- II. The Referee's duties during an injury time-out include the following:
  - A. Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play unless the school has a designated health-care professional to evaluate the player.



- B. The Referee will be ready to assist the designated health-care professional(s) and/or coach(es) in securing additional medical help **if** requested by the designated health-care professional(s) and/or coach(es).
- C. The Referee will attempt to keep players a significant distance away from a seriously injured player by directing players toward their respective team bench areas.
- D. Once the designated health-care professional(s) begin(s) to work on an injured player, all Officials should control the total playing field environment and team personnel and allow the designated health-care professional(s) to perform services without interruption or interference. Always ensure adequate lines of vision between the designated health-care professional(s) and all available emergency personnel.
- E. Players and coaches should be appropriately controlled to allow the designated health-care professional(s) all of the time they want to assist the injured player.
- F. Position himself away from the injured player near his pre-snap position.
- G. Sound whistle twice to bring teams back on the field as the injured player is going off. Do not give the ready for play signal (S #1) until the injured player is inside the team box or has left the confines of the field.

## END-OF-PERIOD PROCEDURE

- I. If a field game clock is NOT used, the Referee will:
  - A. make the Official's time-out signal (S #3) twice, followed by tapping hands on chest. This will occur with approximately 4-minutes remaining in second and fourth period.
  - B. ensure that both Head Coaches are notified of the time remaining.
  - C. sound his whistle and repeat the time-out signal (S #3) twice when time expires and the ball becomes dead.
- II. If a field game clock is used:
  - A. the Referee will be responsible for knowing when time expires when facing the game clock.
  - B. If time expires prior to the snap, the Referee will:
    - 1. sound his whistle to prevent the snap, **if** possible.
    - 2. sound his whistle loud and long, and give the time-out signal (S #3) twice, **if** ball is snapped immediately after time has expired.
- III. The Referee will delay signaling the end of the period for a few seconds to ensure no foul, no obvious timing error, no request for Coach-Referee

Conference, and no other irregularity has occurred. The Referee will hold the ball in one hand over his head to signal the Official end of the period.

## BETWEEN-PERIODS PROCEDURE

The Referee will:

- I. record the down, distance, and yard line nearest the foremost point of the ball while meeting with the Umpire in the center of the field.
- II. confirm the Umpire's spotting of the ball and check with Linesman after the ball is spotted.
- III. make sure the sideline Officials are ready when notified by the Back Judge that 45-seconds have expired and the Back Judge has given two short blasts on his whistle.
- IV. announce the down and distance from his presnap position when notified by the Back Judge that 60 seconds have expired.
- V. declare the ball ready-for-play (S #1).

## BETWEEN-HALVES PROCEDURE

The Referee will:

- I. be responsible for seeing that the appropriate time is placed on the game clock for the half time intermission.
- II. signal the ECO to start the game clock to time the intermission when both teams have cleared the field.
- III. discuss situations with the crew in the dressing room or other private place, assuming all conversations are being monitored by host school.
- IV. review overtime procedures, if applicable.
- V. determine which team has the choice for the second half.
- VI. have the crew back on the field 5-minutes prior to the halftime intermission ending and be responsible for seeing that 3-minutes are placed on the game clock for the mandatory warm-up period prior to the start of the second half after the intermission time has expired completely or the Referee has signaled to reset the game clock after both teams have returned to the field.

## SECOND-HALF CHOICES

- I. The Back Judge (visiting team)/Line Judge (home team) whose team has the second-half choice will obtain the choice from the team's Head Coach. This

occurs at the start of the mandatory 3-minute warm-up and is communicated to the Referee.

- II. The opposite Back Judge/Line Judge will obtain the opposing team's response to the second-half choice and communicate to the Referee.
- III. The Referee communicates the choices obtained to all Officials.
- IV. Officials will go directly to their free kick position with 1-minute remaining on the game clock during the 3-minute warm-up period.
- V. Following the mandatory 3-minute warm-up period, both teams assume their respective free kick formations.

## END OF GAME PROCEDURE

- I. At the end of a Regulation game, the Referee will:
  - A. indicate the end of the fourth period (S #14).
  - B. immediately jog off the field, together with all Officials, with security.
  - C. neither avoid nor seek coaches.
  - D. not comment about the game on social media.
  - E. not discuss the game on the field or make any public statement about the game to the news media.
  - F. report any penalty markerrant irregularity or disqualification(s) to the TSSAA by filing a report through the Arbiter website. This includes ejections for fighting.
  - G. text teams and score to TSSAA (877-395-5091).
  - H. before leaving the dressing room after the game, ensure the room is left in same or better condition than when Officials arrived.
- II. For an Overtime 10-yard line procedure, the Referee will
  - A. hold the coin toss at the center of the field, using standard coin-toss mechanics except with only one captain from each team.
  - B. indicate the winner of the coin toss by placing a hand on the winning captain's shoulder.
  - C. direct the coin toss winner to choose whether to be on offense or defense or to choose the end of the field at which the ball will be put into play.
  - D. position the offensive captain facing the goal toward which the ball will be advanced, with the defensive captain facing his opponent.
  - E. be aware that to start each new series that the team may designate the location of the ball between hash marks.
  - F. give the first-down signal (S #8) toward the goal line to be used during the overtime period.

- G. If the score remains tied after each team has been given a series of downs:
1. The procedure will be repeated at the center of the field for other overtime periods until a game winner is determined.
  2. The loser of the overtime coin toss will be given the first choice of options in the second overtime.
  3. If additional overtime periods are required, first options will be alternated with no coin toss.

# UMPIRE

## PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Umpire will:

- I. participate in the Officials' pregame conference with each Head Coach and examine and rule on any player equipment issues which the coach has a question of legality.
- II. review any appropriate documentation for equipment and artificial limbs.
- III. witness and note each Head Coach's answer regarding his players being legally equipped.
- IV. note each team captain's name and number, and underline the speaking captain as determined by the Head Coach.

## FOLLOWING PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Umpire will:

- I. inspect the playing field and pylons.
- II. observe each team during warm-ups. If any illegal equipment is observed, the Umpire will advise the Head Coach and make certain issues are resolved.
- III. be the final authority on the legality of equipment and not allow the use of illegal equipment.
- IV. talk with the center from each team and remind him that, in the absence of a ready-for-play signal from the Referee, the ball is not ready-for-play and cannot be snapped until the Umpire is in position away from the ball.

## THE COIN TOSS

- I. The Referee and the Umpire will jog to the center of the field from the press box side 3-minutes before kickoff. The Umpire will have his back to the scoreboard.
- II. The Umpire will remain with the Referee to listen to instructions and to witness and record toss choices. After choices are made, the Umpire will verbally repeat the team choices and assist the Referee in lining up the kicking team captains with their backs to the goal they will defend.
- III. After captains are released back to their sidelines, all Officials will gather in the middle of the field to verify the coin toss information and for last minute instructions from the Referee. After instructions are given, all Officials will jog to their positions.

## KICKOFF

- I. Before the kick, during the 1-minute intermission, the Umpire will:
- move to correct position to count kicking team players.
    - For the initial kickoff of each half and all kickoffs after safeties: be on the Linesman's side of the field at the intersection of the hash marks and the receiving team's restraining line.
    - For all other kickoffs: be on the Linesman's side of the field at the intersection of the restricted area and the receiving team's restraining line.
  - count kicking team players and confirm with the Back Judge with a clenched fist.
- II. Before the kick, after the teams are on the field, the Umpire will:
- return to the sideline on the Linesman's side of the field at the intersection of the restricted area and the receiving team's restraining line.
  - make certain coaches, players, substitutes, and other individuals are in proper locations, and ensure the sideline is clear.
  - mentally review possible scenarios that could occur during the kick and subsequent play (e.g. kick out of bounds, muff, fumble, etc.).
  - make certain the kicking team is in a legal kick formation with 11 players.
  - hold open hand above head, to indicate his area is ready for play, until the Back Judge checks him off.
  - have a bean bag in hand.
- III. After the kick, the Umpire will
- let the kicking team go by and immediately move inside the nearest hash marks at a 45 degree angle on the Linesman's side of the field and officiate inside out during an obvious deep kick.
  - observe action toward the center of the field, watch for illegal blocks, and watch for off ball action in front of the runner as he approaches, working inside out as on any running play.
  - advance no more than 10-15 yards up field on a deep kick. The Umpire will echo the covering Official's signal (S #3) to stop the game clock.
  - let the play go by and clean up behind the Back Judge if a long run occurs. The Back Judge will be ahead of the play to cover the goal line.
- IV. During an onside kick the Umpire will:
- be in correct position: on the kicking team free kick line in the restricted area on the Linesman's side of the field.
  - be aware of action in the 10-yard belt.

- C. watch for encroachment by the kicking team, first touching by the kicking team (bean bag), touching by the receiving team, fair catch and recovery if the ball is in his area.
- D. watch for illegal blocking, holding and early blocks by the kicking team.
- E. be alert for first touching, catch and/or recovery, if the ball comes in his area. The other Officials should watch for illegal blocking, holding, clipping and early blocks by the kicking team.
- F. stay in the restricted area and be prepared to cover the play if the receiving team gains possession and advances.

## RUNNING PLAY

- I. The Umpire will spot the ball for the next down while facing the appropriate sideline. As much as possible, spot off of the Line Judge to release the Linesman for chain responsibilities..
- II. After the ball is spotted, the Umpire will:
  - A. remain over the ball until released by the Referee if the snap is imminent and the play clock has been set to 25-seconds.
  - B. back out from the line of scrimmage to his normal position if the play clock has been set to 40-seconds.
  - C. line up 7-10 yards behind the defensive line of scrimmage and between the offensive tackles, keeping the opposite tackle and snap in view, standing tall.
  - D. not interfere with the vision or movement of the defensive backs.
  - E. vary his starting position to prevent interfering with players.
- III. Prior to the snap, the Umpire will
  - A. count the number of offensive players and verify that 5 players numbered 50-79 are on the offensive line (ineligible receivers).
  - B. signal to the Referee with a clenched fist that counting in A above is complete and correct.
  - C. watch for interference with the snap, false start or encroachment.
  - D. watch for disconcerting acts by the defense.
  - E. note the position of the ball between the hash marks.
  - F. note defensive players on the line of scrimmage in the free blocking zone.
  - G. sound his whistle, drop penalty marker, and give the time-out signal (S #3) twice if a dead ball foul occurs on the line of scrimmage.
- IV. After the snap, the Umpire will:
  - A. immediately remove whistle from his mouth.

- B. read the snapper and guards. If they block aggressively, the Umpire will assume run. If they pass block, the Umpire will assume pass.
  - C. read the point of attack, paying particular attention to the free-blocking zone restrictions.
  - D. keep focus on line play in front of him, even after ball goes behind him, to the end of the play.
- V. When play is wide to the side, the Umpire will:
- A. move in that direction observing the initial line play and action around the runner (especially on short gains or losses in side zones).
  - B. move to the side zone when the play dictates.
  - C. remain on the inside working out to maintain boxed-in-coverage.
- VI. When the hole opens directly in front of the Umpire, the Umpire will:
- A. react and adjust according to play, possibly moving laterally (quick step) from the hole, being alert for the tight end cutting across the field.
  - B. cover action at the point of attack and then behind the runner.
- VII. The Umpire will check for illegal use of hands or arms and other fouls near the neutral zone.
- VIII. The Umpire will be alert for:
- A. a fumble occurring beyond the neutral zone and will assist in determining who secures possession.
  - B. illegal contact on the snapper, **if** the offensive team is in a scrimmage-kick formation.
  - C. action of players in and just behind the neutral zone.
- IX. If a dead ball occurs in the side zone or out of bounds, the Umpire will:
- A. move outside the hash mark to retrieve the ball.
  - B. relay the ball to the Referee for spotting, unless he is also in the side zone; if so, the Umpire will hustle and spot the ball.

## FORWARD PASS

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Umpire will follow the same procedures as described in the Umpire section on Running Plays.
- II. After the snap, the Umpire will:
  - A. watch for illegal contact and illegal use of hands.
  - B. assist the Referee to determine **if** the pass was tipped **and give signal (S #11) if the pass was tipped.**
  - C. step forward within 3-yards of the line of scrimmage when he reads forward pass.
    - 1. This action removes the Umpire as a target on shallow drag passes.



2. It puts the Umpire in position to rule whether an ineligible receiver is illegally downfield.
- D. observe action of players in and just behind the neutral zone.
- E. assist the Referee to determine whether the passer's feet were in or behind the neutral zone when the ball was released.
- F. be alert for ineligible receivers downfield prior to the ball crossing the line of scrimmage.
- G. drop penalty marker at the yard line beyond the line of scrimmage where an illegal pass is thrown and continue to officiate.
- H. pivot for short passes to help determine if complete.
- I. know where a forward pass first touches anything.
- J. assist the Linesman or Line Judge in determining **if** the pass crosses the line of scrimmage.
- K. assist the Referee in determining if the pass crossed the line of scrimmage for potential intentional grounding fouls.
- L. move quickly to the pile to assist the Referee, **if** the quarterback is sacked.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK-PUNTS

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Umpire will:
  - A. remind defensive players who are head-up on the snapper or in guard-snapper gaps that the snapper has protection.
  - B. be in correct position: 10 yards deep, standing tall, keeping snap in view.
  - C. count kicking team players and indicate to the Referee with a clenched fist that the kicking team has been counted.
  - D. check numbering exception.
  - E. read the snapper and offensive guards.
  - F. after the Referee signals the kicking team is in a legal scrimmage kick formation, give the signal to indicate the snapper has protection (S #19).
- II. After the snap, the Umpire will:
  - A. hold position and be alert for roughing the snapper.
  - B. shift to action of offensive guards and backs behind the neutral zone.
  - C. read the play and be alert for run or pass.
  - D. be alert to assist the Referee in covering a short, blocked, or tipped kick and determine with the Linesman **if** the ball crosses the neutral zone.
- III. After the kick, the Umpire will:
  - A. slowly pivot to view the Line Judge side of the field while focusing on linemen and action behind the play.
  - B. move toward the return area, observing players away from the ball.

- C. be alert for fouls in the secondary and move downfield slowly.
- D. move to help relay the ball to the inbounds spot when ball goes out-of-bounds.

## FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE

- I. After ball is spotted, the Umpire will:
  - A. remind defensive players who are head-up on snapper or in guard-snapper gaps that the snapper has protection.
  - B. remind defensive players in the defensive backfield, near the snapper, that hurdling kicking team players is illegal.
  - C. be in correct position: 10 yards deep, standing tall, keeping snap in view.
  - D. count kicking team players and indicate to the Referee with a clenched fist that the kicking team has been counted.
  - E. check numbering exception.
  - F. after the Referee signals the kicking team is in a legal scrimmage kick formation, give the signal to indicate the snapper has protection (S #19).
- II. After the snap, the Umpire will:
  - A. read interior linemen.
  - B. verify there is no illegal action on the snapper.
  - C. be alert for determining if the kick crosses the neutral zone.
  - D. be ready to assist the Referee in covering a short or blocked kick.
  - E. be alert for action on or by outside offensive linemen and the front blocking back on the Referee's side.
  - F. observe contact between defensive players and blocker behind the line.
  - G. pivot to view the Referee's side of the field, observe blocks in the side zone, and move toward the play to observe action after players go past his position.
  - H. assist in goal-line coverage if run develops to the Line Judge's side.
  - I. continue to officiate until teams have separated toward their respective sidelines after the ball becomes dead.
- III. On the swinging gate, the Umpire will:
  - A. go with the majority of the offensive linemen while the Referee observes the initial action on the snapper, kicker and holder.
  - B. slide back to his normal position if the swinging gate moves to the normal scrimmage kick position.

## AFTER A SCORE OR TRY

The Umpire will:

- I. jog down his respective sideline along with the Back Judge (Umpire down the chain crew side and Back Judge down the press box side) to their free kick lines.
- II. help the receiving team line up.

## ADMINISTERING PENALTIES

The Umpire will:

- I. secure the ball.
- II. bring the offended team's captain to the Referee, **if** a captain is requested by Referee.
- III. verify the enforcement spot and the distance with the Referee.
- IV. proceed to mark off the penalty and verify with the Linesman and Line Judge per Pre-game Penalty Enforcement Administration.
- V. jog off penalties in between the hash marks on the actual yard lines.

## MEASURING FOR FIRST DOWN USING TRADITIONAL LINE-TO-GAIN INDICATORS

The Umpire will:

- I. take the forward stake from the chain crew member at the place of the measurement.
- II. tighten the line-to-gain indicator and hold forward line-to-gain indicator near the ball until the Referee reaches his decision.
- III. bring the stake to the hash mark and stretch out the chain after the Linesman has placed clip on yard line **if** the ball is outside the hash mark and short of the line-to-gain.

## TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

The Umpire will:

- I. stand over the ball facing the offense and the Referee until the Referee is ready to mark the ball ready for play.
- II. check the number of time-outs remaining for each team and record the time-out and the game time on his game card.

- III. retreat to normal position after cleared by the Referee or the ready for play signal is given.

## INJURY TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

The Umpire will:

- I. maintain location of the ball.
- II. make sure appropriate health-care professional(s) and/or coach(es) are not on the field for coaching purposes.
- III. assist the Referee in moving the teams away from the injured player and, **if** the Referee elects, to the sidelines in front of their respective team box areas.
- IV. be near the ball location and away from the injured player.

## BETWEEN-PERIODS PROCEDURE

The Umpire will:

- I. confirm and record the down, distance and yard line nearest the foremost point of ball, with the Referee.
- II. quickly take the ball to a corresponding point of the other half of the field and reverse directions.

## BETWEEN-HALVES PROCEDURE

The Umpire will:

- I. return to the field 5-minutes prior to the half time intermission ending.
- II. be in his free kick position with 1-minute remaining on game clock during the 3-minute warm-up period.

## END OF GAME PROCEDURE

The Umpire will:

- I. immediately jog off the field together with all Officials, with security.
- II. neither avoid nor seek coaches.
- III. not discuss the game on the field or make any public statement about the game to the news media.
- IV. not comment about the game on social media.

## UMPIRE IN OFFENSIVE BACKFIELD (OPTIONAL)

The mechanics in this section are optional for the 2024 and 2025 football seasons, but it is anticipated that the Umpire will move to the offensive backfield for the 2026 football season.

The mechanics below are not intended to be all-inclusive. Unless noted otherwise, the Umpire will have the same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional mechanics when the Umpire is on the defensive side.

### RUNNING PLAY

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Umpire will:
  - A. move to a position behind the snapper until released by the Referee **if** the snap is imminent and the play clock has been set to 25-seconds.
  - B. back out from the line of scrimmage to their normal position **if** the play clock has been set to 40-seconds.
  - C. be positioned:
    1. 10-12 yards behind the offensive line of scrimmage on the opposite side of the quarterback than the Referee and at least 5 yards wide of the tackle.
    2. to view the ball, tackle on the far side and the backs.
    3. in a standing position with shoulders parallel to the line of scrimmage.
- II. Prior to the snap, the Umpire will:
  - A. count the number of offensive players and verify that 5 players numbered 50-79 are on the offensive line (ineligible receivers).
  - B. signal to the Referee with a clenched fist extended forward that counting in A above is complete and correct.
  - C. have primary responsibility for the snapper and linemen on the opposite side. Assuming a right-handed quarterback, the Umpire would have the snapper, right guard, right tackle and tight end, if applicable; the Referee would have the left guard and left tackle.
- III. After the snap, the Umpire will:
  - A. read the interior linemen and focus on the snapper and linemen on the opposite side. Assuming a right-handed quarterback, the Umpire would have the snapper, right guard, right tackle and tight end, if applicable; the Referee would have the left guard and left tackle.
  - B. on a running play to his side, observe the ball, runner, action around the runner and blocks up to the neutral zone.
  - C. move to the side zone when the play dictates.

- D. after the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, quickly hustle down field observing action behind the ball.
- E. when reverse mechanics are used, clean up behind the ball carrier.
- IV. When the ball becomes dead, the Umpire will:
  - A. when dead between the hashes, retrieve and spot the ball.
  - B. when dead outside the hashes to his side, retrieve the ball and relay to the Referee for spotting, unless he is close to the hashes and can easily spot the ball.
  - C. when dead outside the hashes to the opposite side, hustle to the opposite hash and obtain the ball from the Referee for spotting.

## FORWARD PASS

- I. Unless otherwise noted below, the Umpire will follow the same procedures as described above under Running Play.
- II. After the snap, the Umpire will:
  - A. read the interior linemen and focus on the snapper and linemen on the opposite side. Assuming a right-handed quarterback, the Umpire would have the snapper, right guard, right tackle and tight end, if applicable; the Referee would have the left guard and left tackle.
  - B. if the quarterback drops back in the pocket, focus on all linemen for illegal blocks. Since his focus is on all linemen, he can make his way to the line of scrimmage and drop a penalty marker if he sees linemen go downfield.
  - C. assume responsibility for the quarterback if the quarterback scrambles to his side and crosses in front of him until the quarterback is no longer threatened or becomes a runner, in which case he will observe the ball, runner, action around the runner and blocks up to the neutral zone.
  - D. when the quarterback scrambles to the opposite side of the field, move toward the line of scrimmage and help rule on ineligible receivers downfield, whether a pass is backward or forward, if a passer is beyond the line of scrimmage and if a touched pass is beyond or behind the line of scrimmage. If the quarterback reverses field, the Umpire will stay at the line of scrimmage and the Referee will cover the quarterback through the remainder of the down.
  - E. when the ball is snapped from the goal line to the 15-yard line, not move toward the line of scrimmage but move to and have responsibility for the goal line when the Referee has responsibility for a retreating quarterback.

The Referee will move to and have responsibility for the goal line when the Umpire takes responsibility for a retreating quarterback.

- F. move to the spot of the pass and be prepared to assist the Referee with intentional grounding, **if** needed.
- G. move to the side zone when the play dictates.
- H. after the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, quickly hustle down field observing action behind the ball.
- I. when reverse mechanics are used, clean up behind the ball carrier.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK - PUNT

- I. On punts, the Umpire will:
  - A. be positioned even with the punter and 5-7 yards outside the tackle on the opposite side of the punter than the Referee.
  - B. have responsibility for the snapper and all blocks by linemen and backs in front of the punter.
  - C. be prepared to assist the Referee with action on the punter, **if** needed.
  - D. following the kick, quickly hustle down field and move toward the return area following and observing the first wave of kicking team linemen down field.
  - E. when reverse mechanics are used, clean up behind the ball carrier.

## FIELD GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE

- I. On field goal attempts and tries, the Umpire will:
  - A. be positioned even with the potential kicker and 5-7 yards to the side of the holder on the opposite side of the potential kicker than the Referee.
  - B. have responsibility for the snapper and all linemen blocks.
  - C. be prepared to assist the Referee with action on the kicker, **if** needed.
  - D. when reverse mechanics are used on a field goal attempt, clean up behind the ball carrier.

# LINESMAN

## PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Linesman will:

- I. participate in the Official's pregame conference with each Head Coach.
- II. witness and note each Head Coach's answer regarding his players being legally equipped.
- III. note each team captain's number, and mark the speaking captain as determined by the Head Coach.
- IV. review duties of the Get Back Coach.

## FOLLOWING PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Linesman will:

- I. meet with the chain crew.
- II. secure and check the line-to-gain and down indicators, plus all auxiliary equipment. Make sure backup equipment is available.
- III. ensure the line-to-gain equipment is marked at halfway point with tape, zip tie, etc. This can help on penalties measured from the previous spot or spot fouls to determine **if** first down after enforcement.
- IV. check to see whether home management has distinctive vests or shirts for the chain crew.
- V. remind the chain crew of their duties and responsibilities, and that they are Officials, not fans.
- VI. instruct the chain crew that he will use a heel or bean bag to mark the spot at the sideline where the rear line-to-gain indicator is to be placed for every first down and where the clip should be placed.
- VII. ensure the chain is clipped and set 2-yards off the sideline, **if** space permits.
- VIII. work on the side where the line-to-gain equipment is operated, which is normally opposite the press box.
- IX. ask home management to specify which side the chains will be located **if** there is no press box or a press box on both sides.
- X. locate and instruct the Visiting team ball personnel on their duties and **approve** game balls with assistance from the Back Judge.
- XI. verify a backup down indicator, or replacement batteries, is available if an electronic down indicator is used.



## THE COIN TOSS

- I. At the 5-minute mark, the Linesman will line up at the 45-yard line away from the clock on the chain side of the field and wait for the Referee to signal for the Officials to escort the captains onto the field. The captains will meet the Referee and Umpire in the center of field. All other players must remain out of bounds on the sideline. All other Officials stop at the hash marks and angle in, facing the Referee and standing at parade rest.
- II. The actual coin toss should be at the 2-minute mark.
- III. After the captains are released back to their sidelines, all Officials will gather in the middle of the field to verify the coin toss information and for last minute instructions from the Referee. After instructions are given, all Officials will jog to their positions.

## CONTROLLING TEAM PERSONNEL ALTERCATIONS

The Linesman will:

- I. alert the coach on his side to keep all team personnel off the playing area.
- II. record the uniform number of any substitute who enters the playing area during an altercation.

## KICKOFF

- I. Before the kick, during the 1-minute intermission, the Linesman will:
  - A. check the chain crew for questions and positions.
  - B. go to the goal line position and make sure the sideline is clear, moving all the way up to the edge of the team box area to clear the sideline, if necessary.
  - C. count receiving team players and confirm with the Referee with a clenched fist. The clenched fist by the Linesman is the ready signal indicating the sideline is clear and the Official is ready for the kickoff.
  - D. make sure the sideline is clear before giving the ready sign to the Referee.
- II. Before the kick, after the teams are on the field, the Linesman will:
  - A. be certain coaches, players, substitutes and other individuals are in the proper location.
  - B. be in correct position: on the goal line out of bounds, heels on back edge of the restricted area, making sure the pylon is covered.
  - C. alter his position if a short kick is anticipated and if instructed by the Referee.

- III. After the kick, the Linesman will:
- A. signal the game clock to start (S #2) when the kick is legally touched.
  - B. move deliberately along the sideline while watching for fouls away from the ball and covering to the kicking team's goal line.
  - C. sound his whistle and give the time-out signal when the ball becomes dead in his area.
  - D. rule on touchback while standing on the goal line giving the touchback signal (S #7) once.
  - E. come off the pylon, to the numbers, and stop players from hitting while sounding whistle and giving the time-out signal (S #3).
  - F. be alert **if** a fair catch signal is given by any receiving team player.
  - G. mark the spot where the kick goes out-of-bounds on his side of the field.
  - H. drop his penalty marker **if** the ball goes out-of-bounds untouched inbounds by the receiving team.
  - I. maintain position while enabling coverage of his sideline at all times.
  - J. observe legality of blocks and action away from the ball when he is not covering the runner.
- IV. If it is obvious the kick will be fielded between the inbounds line and the sideline on the opposite side of the field, and the goal line is not threatened, the Linesman should cautiously begin to move up the sideline before the kick is fielded to observe and officiate up field action.
- V. If aligned for a possible onside kick, the Linesman will:
- A. be in correct position: on the receiving team's free kick line in the restricted area on the chain crew side of the field.
  - B. be aware of action in the 10-yard belt.
  - C. watch for encroachment by the receiving team, first touching by the kicking team (bean bag), touching by the receiving team, fair catch and illegal blocks.
  - D. be alert for first touching, catch and/or recovery, **if** the ball comes in his area. The other Officials should watch for illegal blocking, holding, clipping and early blocks by the kicking team.
  - E. stay in the restricted area and be prepared to cover the play **if** the receiving team gains possession and advances.
- VI. If the Linesman is in position on the receiving team's restraining line and there is a deep kick, the Linesman will move quickly down the side, observe and officiate the downfield action.

## RUNNING PLAY

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Linesman will:
  - A. be in correct position: straddling the line of scrimmage on the sideline with heels on the back of the restricted area.
  - B. count defensive team players and confirm with the Back Judge with a clenched fist.
  - C. identify eligible receivers on his side.
  - D. be alert for illegal substitutions.
  - E. check the wingbacks, flankers, split ends and slot backs.
  - F. watch for the player in motion away from him and maintain responsibility for him **if** he reverses direction. Remain in position unless vision is impaired, in which case, the Linesman will take one step into the offensive backfield.
  - G. count the number of backfield players and communicate via radios there is a legal formation to the Line Judge **if** there are four or less players off the line of scrimmage.
  - H. pat the top of his hat to indicate a covered receiver, **if** there are more than three players on the line of scrimmage on his side of the snapper, or communicate this via radios.
  - I. ensure all players have been, momentarily, between the 9-yard marks after the Umpire has spotted the ball and backed away. If not, drop a penalty marker if the defense does not cover the players who have not done so.
  - J. watch for encroachment or false start and throw the penalty marker to the side of the offending team **if** a foul occurs.
  - K. after the snapper has placed his hand(s) on the ball, look both ways and tell any coaches in the restricted area to back up. Drop a penalty marker if they remain in the restricted area after the ball goes live.
  - L. be alert for a Head Coach requesting a time out.
- II. After the snap, the Linesman will:
  - A. work in the restricted area while the ball is live.
  - B. observe the keys and read the tackle to determine run or pass play.
  - C. stay on the line of scrimmage until the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage.
  - D. be alert for quick plays into the line and assist in marking forward progress with the downfield foot.
  - E. watch the initial charge of the linemen.
  - F. (on an end run to the opposite side) observe blocking near neutral zone to tackle.

- G. check the block on an eligible receiver.
  - H. observe if any offensive player goes out of bounds. If so, toss hat at the spot they went out of bounds. If the player illegally returns, drop a penalty marker at the spot they return.
- III. When the ball comes to his side of the field, the Linesman will
- A. cover the sideline and check for illegal offensive and defensive blocks.
  - B. give the wind signal (S #2) twice after determining the ball is dead inbounds near the sideline, especially when forward progress is stopped inbounds.
  - C. sound his whistle when the ball becomes dead in his area and mark forward progress (using the cross-field spot of the Line Judge when needed) with the downfield foot. When contact pushes runners backward, they are entitled to the forward-most spot of the ball at the point of contact with the opponent.
  - D. square off forward progress by moving down the sideline to the spot where the ball became dead and then jog perpendicular in towards the center of the field to the numbers, unless the play ends close to a first down or with a possible change of possession. In this case, the Linesman will move quickly in as far as possible until he reaches players on that yard line and place the ball on the ground after spotting.
  - E. pause after the ball has been blown dead to ensure there is not a foul on the play, then raise his open hand above his head, signaling the 40-second play clock to begin.
  - F. keep all players in front of him unless the spot of forward progress is close to a first down or a touchdown, in which case the Linesman comes in as far as possible to find the location of the ball. He does not go around any players.
  - G. if the ball is marked from the numbers on his team's side of the field, place the ball on his foot and relay in a new ball to the Umpire with the help of the Back Judge.
  - H. if the ball is marked from the numbers, extend both arms to the side and parallel with the ground, then give the next down with the fingers while verbally announcing to the sideline and back out to the sideline.
  - I. turn and face the sideline and jog back when the ball is marked inside the numbers.
  - J. hold the spot until the Back Judge sets the down indicator on first downs.
- IV. If the ball becomes dead near his sideline and a first down is gained, the Linesman will:
- A. use normal coverage.

- B. give the wind signal (S #2) once and then give the time-out signal (S #3) twice after determining the ball is dead.
- C. place the ball on his foot and relay a new ball to the Umpire for spotting with the help of the Back Judge.
- D. if the down indicator is late arriving, drop a bean bag at the dead ball spot.
- V. On down-the-line option plays toward the Linesman, the Linesman will observe the pitchman, loose ball and then the pitchman as he becomes the runner.
- VI. When the ball goes to the opposite side of the field, the Linesman will:
  - A. move down the sideline in the restricted area until the ball becomes dead and then jog perpendicular in toward the center of the field to the numbers.
  - B. observe action on linebackers and backside pursuit.
  - C. mirror the Line Judge spot and help get the spot if he is blocked out.
  - D. after mirroring the spot, extend both arms to the side and parallel with the ground, then give the next down with the fingers while verbally announcing to the sideline and back out to the sideline.
- VII. The Linesman will observe late blocks and fouls away from runner.
- VIII. The Linesman is responsible for the entire sideline. If the ball goes out of bounds, he will:
  - A. signal time-out immediately (S #3).
  - B. hold out-of-bounds spot, monitoring players out-of-bounds, while another Official retrieves the ball.
- IX. If an obvious first down occurs, the Linesman will signal the game clock to stop (S #3).
- X. While moving downfield with the runner, the Linesman will watch for an illegal forward pass or fumble.
- XI. If play continues following an illegal forward pass, the Linesman will drop the penalty marker at the spot of the pass to indicate where the run ended and at the spot of any subsequent foul.
- XII. The Linesman (working with down indicator operator and chain crew) will:
  - A. echo Referee's signal verbally and with proper hand signal.
  - B. not turn his back on the field of play when having the down indicator moved.
  - C. authorize down indicator operator to move only after Referee's signal.
- XIII. When necessary to move the line-to-gain equipment, the Linesman will:
  - A. spot foremost point of ball with downfield foot.
  - B. have down indicator operator mark spot.
  - C. have the chain crew set the two line-to-gain indicators.
  - D. inform the Referee the line-to-gain equipment is ready.

- XIV. When line-to-gain is the goal line, the Linesman will have the line-to-gain equipment removed from the sideline.

## FORWARD PASS

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Linesman will follow the same procedures as described in the Linesman section on Running Plays.
- II. After the snap, the Linesman will:
- A. observe the keys and read the tackle to determine run or pass.
  - B. be ready to rule on the direction (forward or backward) of a quick quarterback pass to his side and a pass on a play down the line of scrimmage and punch accordingly.
  - C. move down the sideline as required to cover a pass on his side of the field on slow developing pass plays. If the Umpire is working in the offensive backfield, stay on the line of scrimmage until the ball crosses the line of scrimmage and have primary responsibility for ineligible receivers downfield.
  - D. watch for interference by either team.
  - E. be ready to rule on a fumble or an illegal pass after the completion.
  - F. give the time-out signal (S #3) and a completed signal, if a completed catch near the sideline.
- III. If pass is incomplete in his area, the Linesman will:
- A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the incomplete-pass signal (S #10) twice.
  - C. get a new ball and relay to the Official nearest the previous spot.
  - D. assist the Referee in determining if the pass crossed the line of scrimmage for potential intentional grounding fouls.
  - E. be alert for sideline action.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK - PUNT

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Linesman will:
- A. be in correct position: same as a run or a pass play.
  - B. check the down number.
  - C. count receiving team players and confirm with the Back Judge with a clenched fist.
- II. After the snap, the Linesman will:
- A. hold momentarily until the ball crosses the line of scrimmage.

- B. release after the ball crosses the line of scrimmage and then move slowly downfield covering his side between the neutral zone and deep receiver(s).
- C. cover all kicks on his side of the field.
- III. If the ball rolls out of bounds, the Linesman will:
  - A. sound his whistle and give the time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - B. hold the spot and continue to observe the action.
- IV. The Linesman will assist the Referee in covering the ball on a short kick.
- V. The Linesman will note if the kick is touched beyond the neutral zone and then will:
  - A. determine if the recovery was in or behind the neutral zone.
  - B. be prepared to mark the first touching or fumble.
- VI. On a routine kick, the Linesman will:
  - A. watch for clipping and other fouls in the secondary.
  - B. move with the runner **if** he comes to his side.
  - C. follow the runner to the goal line **if** there is a break away.
- VII. When the ball becomes dead in his area, the Linesman will:
  - A. sound his whistle, give time-out signal (S #2) twice, and mark the spot.
  - B. make sure of possession on a fair catch before blowing the play dead.
  - C. assure the ball is covered **if** a foul needs to be reported to the Referee.
  - D. watch the Referee for a signal before moving the line-to-gain equipment.
- VIII. If the punt is blocked or the ball is snapped over the punter, the Linesman will:
  - A. move into the offensive backfield and work to the kicking team's goal line to the extent necessary, **if** he is on the opposite side of the punter from the Referee.
  - B. maintain his position on the line of scrimmage to determine whether a kick crosses the line of scrimmage, **if** he is on the same side of the punter as the Referee.

## FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE

The Linesman will:

- I. remain in the restricted area on the line of scrimmage while the ball is live.
- II. check the down number.
- III. count defensive players and indicate to Back Judge with a clenched fist.
- IV. observe the neutral zone.
- V. move with the play as on any other goal-line play if it is a pass or run.
- VI. remember that all blocked field goals are treated the same as a punt.

## GOAL-LINE PLAY

- I. The Linesman will position himself the same as in a running play.
- II. On red zone snaps between the 10 and 5-yard lines, the Linesman will release slowly downfield keeping the runner in front of him to the goal line.
- III. On a snap on or inside the 5-yard line, the Linesman will release to the goal line (staying deep in the restricted area giving players full access to the goal line/pylon area) at the snap and officiate back to the ball. Be mindful of the line to gain.
- IV. The Linesman will note the farthest point to which the ball is advanced.
  - A. If short of the goal line, the Linesman will move in quickly and help by marking the progress spot with his downfield foot or by actually placing the ball.
  - B. If the ball is in possession of the runner and touches or crosses the goal-line plane, the Linesman will instantly give the touch-down signal (S #5).
  - C. If ball does not break the goal-line, the Linesman will not give any signal.
- V. The Linesman will remind the chain crew to remove the line-to-gain equipment from the sideline when the line-to-gain is the goal line.
- VI. On a snap from the goal line to the 8-yard line, the Linesman will release to the goal line at the snap and officiate from behind the ball.
- VII. The goal line is the most important line when the ball is snapped inside the 8-yard line.

## AFTER A TRY OR SUCCESSFUL FIELD GOAL

The Linesman will

- I. go to pylon.
- II. work on establishing a safe sideline.
- III. move to kickoff position at the goal line with heels on the back edge of the restricted area.
- IV. be certain coaches, players, substitutes and other individuals are in the proper location.
- V. count receiving team players.
- VI. confirm both a safe sideline and proper number of receiving team players by signaling the Referee using a clenched fist of the outside arm.



## ADMINISTERING PENALTIES

The Linesman will:

- I. give option to the designated representative of the offended team **if** the offended team is on his sideline.
- II. be certain of the down number.
- III. proceed to the succeeding spot after communicating with the Umpire.
- IV. be ready to have the line-to-gain equipment moved after penalty administration.
- V. verify the enforcement spot from which the yards are stepped off.
- VI. not permit athletic trainers, attendants, or coaches to come onto field.
- VII. relay the penalty information to the appropriate coach and to other Officials, **if** necessary.

## MEASURING FOR FIRST DOWN USING TRADITIONAL LINE-TO-GAIN INDICATORS

- I. When a measurement is signaled by Referee the Linesman will:
  - A. grasp the line-to-gain indicator and clip at the back edge of back-yard line. (Remember not to just grasp the clip because clip could detach.)
  - B. instruct the down indicator operator to mark the front indicator spot with the down indicator and keep the same down number.
  - C. bring the line-to-gain equipment behind the ball, and place the clipped part of the chain at the back edge of the back-yard line marked by the Line Judge's bean bag.
  - D. hold firmly and call "ready" to the Umpire to stretch the line-to-gain indicator tight.
  - E. wait for the Referee's decision and signal.
- II. If not a first down, the Linesman will:
  - A. accompany the chain crew to the sideline while holding the line-to-gain indicator and reset in the original position, 2-yards from sideline.
  - B. have the down indicator operator move the down indicator to the next down.
- III. If a new series, the Linesman will release the chain crew to the Back Judge, who will set for a first down after spotted by the Referee.

## TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

- I. For a conference outside the 9-yard mark, the Linesman will:
  - A. ensure the team is outside the 9-yard mark and above the 25-yard line.
  - B. position himself at the top of the huddle around the 9-yard mark facing team/sideline, mark his game card and stand in parade rest.
  - C. when the 45-second whistle is blown by the Back Judge, walk through the middle of the huddle to get the players and coaches to break up and return to play saying, "Coach, the ball will be marked ready for play in 15-seconds".
  - D. be alert for substitutes by the team on his sideline or attempts to use substitutes for the purpose of deception.
  - E. maintain the proper number of players/attendants in the huddle when conferences are held between the inbounds lines.
  - F. inform the Head Coach of time-outs remaining.
  - G. have time-out huddle responsibilities by advising his team when the time-out has expired.
- II. For a conference between the 9-yard marks, the Linesman will:
  - A. ensure only one coach and no more than three attendants are on the field to confer with no more than 11 players.
  - B. move to a position on the sideline to ensure there are no illegal substitution violations.

## INJURY TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

The Linesman will:

- I. assist the Referee in moving the teams away from the injured player.
- II. position himself away from the injured player near his pre-snap position.
- III. use the same procedure as outlined in the TIME-OUT PROCEDURE for a conference outside the 9-yard mark, **if** the Referee elects to send the teams to the sidelines.

## BETWEEN-PERIODS PROCEDURE

The Linesman will:

- I. record down, distance, and the yard line nearest foremost point of ball.
- II. confirm information with the Referee and the Umpire.
- III. make sure the clip is at the back edge of the back-yard line.

- IV. call the down and distance to the chain crew.
- V. reverse ends of the line-to-gain equipment and the two crew members.
- VI. set the down indicator after the ball has been spotted.
- VII. check the number of down and distance to gain.
- VIII. indicate to the Referee he is ready by signaling the number of down with finger(s) or fist for fourth down.
- IX. not set the chains before switching ends of the field **if** a first down is gained on the last timed down.
- X. assume the same responsibilities as time-out procedures.
- XI. when the 45-second whistle is blown by the Back Judge, walk through the middle of the huddle to get the players and coaches to break up and return to play saying, "Coach, the ball will be marked ready for play in 15-seconds".

## BETWEEN-HALVES PROCEDURE

The Linesman will:

- I. return to the field 5-minutes prior to the half time intermission ending.
- II. be in his free kick position with 1-minute remaining on game clock during the 3-minute warm-up period.

## END OF GAME PROCEDURE

The Linesman will:

- I. immediately jog off the field, together with all Officials, with security.
- II. neither avoid nor seek coaches.
- III. not discuss the game on the field or make any public statement about the game to the news media.
- IV. not comment about the game on social media.

## LINE JUDGE

### PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Line Judge will

- I. participate in the Officials' pregame conference with each Head Coach.
- II. witness and note each Head Coach's answer regarding his players being legally equipped.
- III. note each team captain's name and number and underline the speaking captain as determined by the Head Coach.
- IV. review duties of the Get Back Coach.

### FOLLOWING PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Line Judge will:

- I. observe each team during warm-ups.
- II. check starting time and assist in getting game started on time.
- III. assist with securing sidelines.
- IV. inspect the playing field and pylons, as well as the sideline and end-line boundaries.
- V. locate and instruct the Home team ball personnel on their duties and approve game balls with assistance from the Back Judge.

### THE COIN TOSS

- I. At the 5-minute mark, the Line Judge will line up at the 45-yard line furthest from the clock on the press box side of the field and wait for the Referee to signal the Officials to escort the captains onto the field.
- II. No more than four captains are allowed on the field. All other players must remain out of bounds on the sideline. The captains will meet the Referee and the Umpire in the center of field. All other Officials stop at the hash marks facing the Referee and standing at parade rest.
- III. The actual coin toss should be at the 2-minute mark.
- IV. The Line Judge will carry his team's ball out to the coin toss.
- V. After the kickoff team is determined, the Line Judge will toss his ball to the Back Judge, if his team is kicking off. The Line Judge will return his ball to his team's sideline, preferably to the ball personnel, if his team is receiving.

- VI. After the captains are released back to their sidelines, all Officials will gather in the middle of the field to verify the coin toss information and for last minute instructions from the Referee. After instructions are given, all Officials will jog to their positions.

## CONTROLLING TEAM PERSONNEL ALTERCATIONS

The Line Judge will:

- I. alert the coach on his side to keep all team personnel off the playing area.
- II. record the uniform number of any substitute who enters the playing area during an altercation.

## KICKOFF

- I. Before the kick, during the 1-minute intermission, the Line Judge will:
  - A. go to the goal line position and make sure the sideline is clear, moving all the way up to the edge of the team box area to clear the sideline, **if** necessary.
  - B. count receiving team players and confirm with the Referee with a clenched fist. The clenched fist by the Line Judge is the ready signal indicating the sideline is clear and the Official is ready for the kickoff.
  - C. make sure the sideline is clear before giving the ready sign to the Referee.
- II. Before the kick, after the teams are on the field, the Line Judge will:
  - A. be certain coaches, players, substitutes and other individuals are in the proper location.
  - B. be in correct position: on the goal line out of bounds, heels on the back edge of the restricted area, making sure the pylon is covered.
  - C. alter his position **if** a short kick is anticipated and **if** instructed by the Referee.
- III. After the kick, the Line Judge will:
  - A. signal the clock to start (S #2) when the kick is legally touched.
  - B. move deliberately along the sideline while watching for fouls away from the ball and cover to the goal line.
  - C. sound his whistle and give the time-out signal (S #2) twice when the ball becomes dead in his area.
  - D. rule on touchback while standing on the goal line giving the touchback signal (S #7) once.
  - E. come off the pylon, to the numbers, and stop players from hitting while sounding whistle and giving the time-out signal (S #3).

- F. be alert if a fair catch signal is given by any receiving team player.
  - G. mark the spot where the kick goes out-of-bounds on his side of the field.
  - H. drop his penalty marker **if** the ball is untouched inbounds by the receiving team.
  - I. maintain position while enabling coverage of his sideline at all times.
  - J. observe legality of blocks and action away from the ball when he is not covering the runner.
- IV. If it is obvious the kick will be fielded between the inbounds line and the sideline on the opposite side of the field, and the goal line is not threatened, the Line Judge should cautiously begin to move up the sideline before the kick is fielded to observe and officiate up field action.
- V. During an onside kick, the Line Judge will:
- A. be in correct position: on the receiving team's free kick line in the restricted area on the press box side of the field.
  - B. be aware of action in the 10-yard belt.
  - C. watch for encroachment by the receiving team, first touching by the kicking team (bean bag), touching by the receiving team, fair catch and illegal blocks.
  - D. be alert for first touching, catch and/or recovery, **if** the ball comes in his area. The other Officials should watch for illegal blocking, holding, clipping and early blocks by the kicking team.
  - E. stay in the restricted area, and be prepared to cover the play **if** the receiving team gains possession and advances.
- VI. If the Line Judge is in position on the receiving team's restraining line and there is a deep kick, the Line Judge will move quickly down the sideline, observe and officiate the downfield action.

## RUNNING PLAY

- I. After ball is spotted, the Line Judge will:
- A. be in correct position: straddling the line of scrimmage on the sideline with heels on the back of the restricted area.
  - B. count defensive team players and confirm with the Back Judge with a clenched fist.
  - C. identify eligible receivers on his side.
  - D. be alert for illegal substitutions.
  - E. check the wingbacks, flankers, split ends, and slot backs.
  - F. watch for the player in motion away from him and maintain responsibility for him **if** he reverses direction. Remain in position unless vision is

- impaired, in which case the Line Judge will take one step into the offensive backfield.
- G. count number of backfield players and communicate via radios there is a legal formation to the Linesman if there are four or less players off the line of scrimmage.
  - H. pat the top of his hat to indicate a covered receiver, if there are more than three players on the line of scrimmage on his side of the snapper or communicate this via radios.
  - I. ensure all players have been, momentarily, between the 9-yard marks after the Umpire has spotted the ball and backed away. If not, drop a penalty marker if the defense does not cover the players who have not done so.
  - J. watch for encroachment or false start and throw the penalty marker to the side of the offending team if a foul occurs.
  - K. after the snapper has placed his hand(s) on the ball, look both ways and tell any coaches in the restricted area to back up. Drop a penalty marker if they remain in the restricted area after the ball goes live.
  - L. be alert for a Head Coach requesting a time out.
- II. After the snap, the Line Judge will:
- A. work in the restricted area while the ball is live.
  - B. observe the keys and read the tackle to determine run or pass play.
  - C. stay on the line of scrimmage until the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage.
  - D. be alert for quick plays into the line and assist in marking forward progress with the downfield foot.
  - E. watch the initial charge of the linemen.
  - F. observe blocking near neutral zone to tackle on an end run to the opposite side.
  - G. check the block on an eligible receiver.
  - H. observe if any offensive player goes out of bounds. If so, toss his hat at the spot they went out of bounds. If the player illegally returns, then drop a penalty marker at the spot they return.
- III. When the ball comes to his side of the field, the Line Judge will:
- A. cover the sideline and check for illegal offensive and defensive blocks.
  - B. give the wind signal (S #2) twice after determining the ball is dead inbounds near the sideline, especially when forward progress is stopped inbounds.
  - C. sound his whistle when the ball becomes dead in his area and mark forward progress (using the cross-field spot of the Linesman when needed) with the downfield foot. When contact pushes runners backward, they are

- entitled to the forward-most spot of the ball at the point of contact with the opponent.
- D. square off forward progress by moving down the sideline to the spot where the ball became dead and then jog perpendicular in towards the center of the field to the numbers, unless the play ends close to a first down or with a possible change of possession. In this case, the Line Judge will move quickly in as far as possible until he reaches players on that yard line and place the ball on the ground after spotting.
  - E. pause after the ball has been blown dead to ensure there is not a foul on the play, then raise his open hand above his head, signaling the 40-second play clock to begin.
  - F. keep all players in front of him unless the spot of forward progress is close to a first down or a touchdown, in which case the Line Judge comes in as far as possible to find the location of the ball. He does not go around any players.
  - G. if the ball is marked from the numbers on his team's side of the field, place the ball on his foot and relay in a new ball to the Umpire with the help of the Back Judge.
  - H. if the ball is marked from the numbers, extend both arms to the side and parallel with the ground, then give the next down with the fingers while verbally announcing to the sideline, and back out to the sideline.
  - I. turn and face the sideline, and jog back when the ball is marked inside the numbers.
- IV. If the ball becomes dead near the sideline and a first down is gained, the Line Judge will:
- A. use normal coverage.
  - B. give the wind signal (S #2) once and then give the time-out signal (S #3) twice after determining the ball is dead.
  - C. place the ball on his foot and relay a new ball to the Umpire for spotting with the help of the Back Judge.
- V. On down-the-line option plays toward the Line Judge, the Line Judge will observe the pitchman, loose ball, and then the pitchman as he becomes the runner.
- VI. When the ball goes to the opposite side of the field, the Line Judge will:
- A. move down the sideline in the restricted area until the ball becomes dead, and then jog perpendicular in toward the center of the field to the numbers.
  - B. observe action on linebackers and backside pursuit.
  - C. mirror the Linesman spot and help get the spot if he is blocked out.



- D. after mirroring the spot, extend both arms to the side and parallel with the ground, then give the next down with the fingers while verbally announcing to the sidelines, and back out to the sideline.
- VII. The Line Judge will observe late blocks and fouls away from runner.
- VIII. The Line Judge is responsible for the entire sideline. If ball goes out of bounds:
  - A. signal time-out immediately (S #3).
  - B. hold out-of-bounds spot, monitoring players out-of-bounds, while another Official retrieves the ball.
- IX. If an obvious first down occurs, the Line Judge will signal the game clock to stop (S #3). If a play ends close to a first down, the Line Judge will inform the Referee and other crew members.
- X. While moving downfield with the runner, the Line Judge will watch for an illegal forward pass or fumble.
- XI. If play continues following an illegal forward pass, the Line Judge will drop a penalty marker at the spot of the pass to indicate where the run ended and at the spot of any subsequent foul.

## FORWARD PASS

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Line Judge will follow the same procedures as described in the Line Judge section on Running Plays.
- II. After the snap, the Line Judge will:
  - A. observe the keys and read the tackle to determine run or pass.
  - B. be ready to rule on the direction (forward or backward) of a quick quarterback pass to his side and a pass on a play down the line of scrimmage and punch accordingly.
  - C. move down the sideline as required to cover a pass on his side of the field on slow developing pass plays.
  - D. watch for interference by either team.
  - E. be ready to rule on a fumble or an illegal pass after the completion.
  - F. give the time-out signal (S #3) and a completed signal, if a catch is completed near the sideline.
- III. If pass is incomplete in his area, the Line Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the incomplete-pass signal (S #10) twice.
  - C. get a new ball and relay to the Official nearest the previous spot.
  - D. assist the Referee in determining if the pass crossed the line of scrimmage for potential intentional grounding fouls.
  - E. be alert for sideline action.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK - PUNT

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Line Judge will:
  - A. be in correct position: same as for run or pass.
  - B. check the down number.
  - C. count receiving team players and indicate to Back Judge with a clenched fist.
- II. After the snap, the Line Judge will:
  - A. release on the kick, move downfield covering his side of the field between the neutral zone and the deep receiver(s).
  - B. cover all kicks on his side of the field.
- III. If the ball goes out-of-bounds in flight, the Line Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle and give the time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - B. move farther downfield than where the ball went out of bounds.
  - C. walk up the field with his open hand above his head until the Referee signals him to stop on the sideline by marking the spot with outstretched arm and "chopping" down motion and then signal the direction the ball will be going.
- IV. If the ball rolls out of bounds, the Line Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle and give the time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - B. hold the spot and continue to observe action.
- V. The Line Judge will assist the Referee in covering the ball on a short or a blocked kick.
- VI. The Line Judge will note if the kick is touched beyond the neutral zone and then will:
  - A. determine if the recovery was in or behind the neutral zone.
  - B. be prepared to mark the first touching or fumble.
- VII. On a routine kick, the Line Judge will:
  - A. watch for clipping and other fouls in the secondary.
  - B. move with the runner **if** he comes to his side of the field.
  - C. follow the runner to the goal line **if** there is a break away.
- VIII. If a receiving team player signals for a fair catch and a fair catch is not made, the Back Judge will cover the ball and the Line Judge will cover receiver to make sure he does not block.
- IX. When the ball becomes dead in his area, the Line Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle, give the time-out signal (S #3) twice, and mark the spot.
  - B. make sure of possession on a fair catch before blowing the play dead.
  - C. assure the ball is covered **if** a foul needs to be reported to the Referee.

- X. If the punt is blocked or the ball is snapped over the punter, the Line Judge will:
  - A. move into the offensive backfield and work to the kicking team's goal line to the extent necessary, **if** he is on the opposite side of the punter from the Referee.
  - B. maintain his position on the line of scrimmage to determine whether a kick crosses the line of scrimmage, **if** he is on the same side of the punter as the Referee.

## FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Line Judge will:
  - A. be in correct position: beyond end zone and behind the upright where he feels most comfortable and has the best coverage of the upright.
  - B. count receiving team players and signal with arm extended in front with a clenched fist.
  - C. be alert to sound his whistle and signal time-out (S #3) for a time-out requested by the Head Coach on his sideline.
- II. After the snap, the Line Judge will assume responsibility for the end line and will rule on his upright.
- III. After the ball becomes dead and the Back Judge sounds his whistle, the Line Judge will:
  - A. move 2 steps forward (no angle) in front of his upright and signal score (S #5) or no score (S #10) twice while facing the line of scrimmage.
    - 1. The Back Judge will mirror the Line Judge's actions.
    - 2. The Official who rules needs to verbally communicate "Yes" or "No" to the other Official.
  - B. be prepared to move **if** the kick is blocked, obviously short, or a fake.
  - C. key tight end on his side.
- IV. If run or pass develops to his vacated side, the Line Judge will quickly move along the end line to the back pylon to rule on the sideline.
  - A. Next move is toward the goal line to assist.
  - B. Mark first touching, fumble, momentum, or end of kick.
- V. Remember that all blocked field goals are treated the same as a punt.
- VI. On the swinging gate during a try, the Line Judge will:
  - A. start in an initial position the same as a run or pass.
  - B. move beyond the end zone and behind the upright **if** the swinging gate moves to the normal scrimmage kick position.

## GOAL-LINE PLAY

- I. The Line Judge will position himself the same as in a running play.
- II. On red zone snaps between the 10 and 5-yard lines, the Line Judge will release slowly downfield keeping the runner in front of him to the goal line.
- III. On a snap on or inside the 5-yard line going to the goal line, the Line Judge will release to the goal line (staying deep in the restricted area giving players full access to the goal line/pylon area) at the snap and officiate back to the ball being mindful of the line to gain.
- IV. The Line Judge will note the farthest point to which the ball is advanced.
  - A. If short of the goal line, the Line Judge will move in quickly and help by marking the progress spot with his downfield foot or by actually placing the ball.
  - B. If the ball is in possession of the runner and touches or crosses the goal-line plane, the Line Judge will instantly give the touch-down signal (S #5).
  - C. If ball does not break the goal-line, the Line Judge will not give any signal.
- V. On a snap from the goal line to the 8-yard line, the Line Judge will release back to the goal line at the snap and officiate from behind the ball.
- VI. The goal line is the most important line when the ball is snapped inside the 8-yard line.

## AFTER A TRY OR SUCCESSFUL FIELD GOAL

The Line Judge will

- I. go to pylon.
- II. work on establishing a safe sideline.
- III. move to kickoff position at the goal line with heels on the back edge of the restricted area.
- IV. be certain coaches, players, substitutes and other individuals are in the proper location.
- V. count receiving team players.
- VI. confirm both a safe sideline and proper number of receiving team players by signaling the Referee using a clenched fist of the outside arm.

## ADMINISTERING PENALTIES

The Line Judge will:

- I. give option to the designated representative of the offended team.

- II. hold the enforcement spot.
- III. verify the accuracy and the distance of the yards to be stepped off.
- IV. not permit athletic trainers, attendants, or coaches to come onto the field.
- V. relay penalty information to the appropriate coach and to other Officials, if necessary.

## MEASURING FOR FIRST DOWN USING TRADITIONAL LINE-TO-GAIN INDICATORS

The Line Judge will:

- I. place a bean bag just behind the yard line where clip is to be placed to align the Linesman so the chains are parallel to the sidelines.
- II. tend the ball at the time of measurement in front of the chains.
- III. stay on the chain side of the field to keep the press box view unobstructed.

## TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

- I. For a conference outside the 9-yard mark, the Line Judge will:
  - A. ensure the team is outside the 9-yard mark and above the 25-yard line.
  - B. position himself at the top of the huddle around the 9-yard mark facing team/sideline, mark his game card and stand in parade rest.
  - C. when the 45-second whistle is blown by the Back Judge, walk through the middle of the huddle to get the players and coaches to break up and return to play saying, "Coach, the ball will be marked ready for play in 15-seconds".
  - D. be alert for substitutes by the team on his sideline or attempts to use substitutes for the purpose of deception.
  - E. maintain the proper number of players/attendants in the huddle when conferences are held between the inbounds lines.
  - F. inform the Head Coach of time-outs remaining.
  - G. have time-out huddle responsibilities by advising his team when the time-out has expired.
- II. For a conference between the 9-yard marks, the Line Judge will:
  - A. ensure only one coach and no more than three attendants are on the field to confer with no more than 11 players.
  - B. move to a position on the sideline to ensure there is no illegal substitution violations.

## INJURY TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

The Line Judge will:

- I. assist the Referee in moving the teams away from the injured player.
- II. position himself away from the injured player near his pre-snap position.
- III. use the same procedure as outlined in the TIME-OUT PROCEDURE for a conference outside the 9-yard mark, **if** the Referee elects to send the teams to the sidelines.

## BETWEEN-PERIODS PROCEDURE

The Line Judge will:

- I. go to the ball spot where the new period will begin until the ball is spotted, then observe the team on his sideline.
- II. assume the same responsibilities as time-out procedures.
- III. when the 45-second whistle is blown by the Back Judge, walk through the middle of the huddle to get the players and coaches to break up and return to play saying, "Coach, the ball will be marked ready for play in 15-seconds".

## BETWEEN-HALVES PROCEDURE

The Line Judge will:

- I. return to the field 5-minutes prior to the half time intermission ending and be responsible for the home team returning to the field before the clock expires.
- II. at the start of the mandatory 3-minute warm-up, obtain the second-half choice from the Head Coach of the home team and communicate to the Referee.
- III. be in his free kick position with 1-minute remaining on game clock during the 3-minute warm-up period.

## END OF GAME PROCEDURE

The Line Judge will:

- I. immediately jog off the field, together with all Officials, with security.
- II. neither avoid nor seek coaches.
- III. not discuss the game on the field or make any public statement about the game to the news media.
- IV. not comment about the game on social media.

## BACK JUDGE

### PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Back Judge will:

- I. participate in the Officials' pregame conference with each Head Coach.
- II. witness and note each Head Coach's answer regarding his players being legally equipped.
- III. note each team captain's name and number and underline the speaking captain as determined by the Head Coach.

### FOLLOWING PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Back Judge will:

- I. review starting time and be sure an auxiliary stopwatch, with a countdown timer, is available.
- II. assist with securing sidelines and inspecting player uniforms and equipment.
- III. inspect the playing field and pylons, as well as the sideline and end-line boundaries.
- IV. locate and instruct the team ball personnel on their duties and approve game balls with assistance from the Linesman and Line Judge.
- V. if there is a visible play clock, observe the play clock while the PCO is testing for both 25- and 40-second countdowns.
- VI. be responsible for monitoring the correct time, carrying an accurate watch, and assisting in getting the game started on time.
- VII. locate and meet with both team quarterbacks and give instruction on the Back Judge's visual countdown mechanic of the play clock.
- VIII. instruct or take responsibility for the ECO and PCO, **if** there is one.
- IX. attend the Pregame Emergency Action Plan Meeting.

### THE COIN TOSS

- I. At the 5-minute mark, the Back Judge will line up at the 45-yard line closest to the game clock on the chain side of the field and wait for the Referee to signal Officials to escort the captains onto the field.
- II. No more than four captains are allowed on the field. All other players must remain out of bounds on the sideline. The captains will meet the Referee and the

- Umpire in the center of field. All other Officials stop at the hash marks, angle in facing the Referee and stand at parade rest.
- III. The actual coin toss should be at the 2-minute mark.
  - IV. The Back Judge will carry his team ball out to the coin toss.
  - V. After the kickoff team is determined, **if** the Back Judge's team is kicking off, his ball will be used. **If** his team is receiving, the Back Judge will be given the kickoff ball from the Line Judge and will return his ball to his team's sideline, preferably to the ball personnel.
  - VI. After the captains are released back to their sidelines, all Officials will gather in the middle of the field to verify the coin toss information and for last minute instructions from the Referee. After instructions are given, all Officials will jog to their positions.

## TIMING

The Back Judge will:

- I. be responsible for all timing situations, including 25/40-second play clock, time-outs, quarter change and the time between a score and the succeeding kickoff.
- II. penalize a team for delay of game.
- III. regardless of whether there is or is not a functioning visible play clock, raise his open hand overhead when there are 10 seconds remaining and count down seconds with a downward clock-like motion starting at 5-seconds.
- IV. if there is a visible play clock, not separately time the 25/40 second count as long as the visible play clock is functioning correctly. **If** repeated re-sets of visible play clock are disrupting the game, the Referee will determine whether to discontinue use of the visible play clock.
- V. pause for one count and set the play clock to 40-seconds when:
  - A. the ball is declared dead in field of play on a play from scrimmage and the covering Official raises his open hand to indicate that the ball is dead and indicate the number of the next down or gives the wind signal (S #2) followed by a time-out signal (S #3) to indicate the line to gain has been reached.
  - B. the covering Official signals that a pass is incomplete.
  - C. the covering Official signals to stop the game clock because the ball is dead out-of-bounds.
- VI. set the play clock to 25-seconds when the play clock is started with the Referee's ready-for-play signal and whistle.



- VII. alert the Referee when the ball has not been made ready-for-play with a least 25 seconds remaining on a 40-second play clock. The Referee is responsible for requesting a re-setting of the play clock to 25 seconds.
- VIII. alert the Referee when both clocks are stopped due to a defensive penalty, defensive player injury or defensive equipment issue, and the play clock should be reset to 40-seconds.

## KICKOFF

- I. Before the kick, the Back Judge will:
  - A. make sure there is 12:00 minutes on the game clock for the opening kickoff of the 1st and 3rd quarters. Verify the ball is legal and approved, if the kicker brings out his own ball.
  - B. count kicking team players and never allow the kickoff to proceed without the proper number of players. Confirm with Umpire with a clenched fist. Ensure kicking team players are positioned properly.
  - C. signal to the Umpire to take final position on the sideline on the initial kickoff of each half and all kickoffs after safeties.
  - D. point out the Referee to the kicker, check legality of kicking tee and instruct the kicker to wait for the ready-for-play signal before kicking.
  - E. if the game is televised, make sure the time out coordinator is ready for play.
  - F. pick up the ready sign from the Umpire in his final position and hold open hand above head to indicate to Referee he is ready.
  - G. hand the kicker the ball after the Referee signals by extending his arm toward the Back Judge with a clenched fist and after ensuring the kicking team has the proper number of players and a legal formation.
  - H. place the ball at the free kick spot, if the kicker will not accept the ball.
  - I. jog down the kickoff line to take final position on sideline: on the kicking team's free kick line in the side zone with heels on the back of the restricted area line on the press box side of the field.
  - J. have a bean bag in hand.
  - K. be sure the sideline is clear and hold open hand above head to indicate to the Referee he is ready.
  - L. penalize a team for delay of game if the ball is not kicked within 25-seconds after the ready signal.
  - M. sound his whistle to prevent action, if the ball falls or blows off tee.
  - N. watch for any infractions involving the kicking team's formation after the ready for play signal, the kicking team free kick line, encroachment by the

- kicking team, short kicks, pop-up kicks, onside kicks and spots of first touching.
- O. assist in illegal early blocking by the kicking team.
  - P. if there is a foul to be administered on the free kick, place the football on the ground while giving final signal and then administer the penalty.
- II. After the kick, the Back Judge will:
- A. run onto the field at a 45 degree angle to the near hash marks to observe action mainly toward the center of the field including off-ball action. As the return develops, the Back Judge will work inside-out as on any running play, staying alert for holding, illegal blocks, clipping, etc. He should maintain a cushion and be in advance of the runner at all times and must be on the goal line before the runner crosses.
  - B. watch initial blocks in his area.
- III. If the kick is short, the Back Judge will not run onto the field but will be prepared to cover the play **if** the receiving team gains possession and advances.
- IV. During an onside kick or pooch kick, the Back Judge will:
- A. be in correct position: on the kicking team's free kick line in the restricted area on the press box side of the field.
  - B. be aware of action in the 10-yard belt.
  - C. watch for encroachment by the kicking team, first touching by the kicking team (bean bag), touching by the receiving team, fair catch and illegal blocks.
  - D. be alert for first touching catch and/or recovery, **if** the ball comes in his area. The other Officials should watch for illegal blocking, holding, clipping, and early blocks by the kicking team.
  - E. stay in the restricted area and be prepared to cover the play **if** the receiving team gains possession and advances.

## RUNNING PLAY

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Back Judge will:
- A. be in correct position: 20-yards beyond defensive line of scrimmage and always deeper than the deepest defensive back (3-5 yards), roughly in the center of the field.
  - B. be positioned no wider than near upright, when the ball is on the hash marks.
  - C. adjust position to the strength of the formation to provide the best coverage on single- and/or double-spread formation.

- D. be in initial position on the end line when the ball is snapped on or inside the 20-yard line.
  - E. time the 25/40-second count and ensure his visible signals are in sync with a visible play clock **if** one is used.
  - F. count defensive players and indicate to the Linesman and Line Judge that he has counted the defense by extending an arm with a clenched fist out in front of him when 11 or less are counted. (Multiple counts are recommended) **If** more than 11, recount and **if** 12 or more, blow whistle and drop a penalty marker.
  - G. be alert for a Head Coach requesting a time out.
- II. After the snap, the Back Judge will:
- A. pause and read keys.
  - B. move so the runner is between him and either the Linesman or Line Judge while observing blocks in front of the runner.
  - C. retreat to be in position behind the deepest receiver. Stay far enough away to keep the play boxed in.
  - D. maintain inside-out coverage, while staying between the hash marks.
  - E. cover players who are deeper than the Linesman or Line Judge.
  - F. cover action around the runner **if** he breaks free.
  - G. cover the goal line, which is his primary responsibility when the ball is snapped outside the 20-yard line. When the ball is snapped between the 5- and 20-yard line and a running play develops, move to the goal line to assist with coverage.
  - H. be in advance of the runner and be ready to rule on the touchdown and assist with forward progress near the goal line. When the runner crosses the goal line after running closely down the sideline, the Back Judge should look to the covering wing Official and assure that the runner did not step out of bounds before giving a touchdown signal.
  - I. move into the area of a dead ball and assist Officials in maintaining order on out-of-bounds runs, especially in team areas.
  - J. assist with the relay of the ball in the side zone from the Linesman or Line Judge to the Umpire **or off the field when a new ball is relayed in.**
  - K. glance at the game clock to make sure it is accurate, when the ball becomes dead. Example: Verify the game clock status- running or stopped and the time remaining.
  - L. correct obvious timing errors by stopping the game clock and talking to the Referee.
  - M. move in "accordion" with all other Officials toward the area of the dead ball while keeping all players in front of him.

- N. if a new series is awarded and the Linesman has the spot, set the down indicator for the Linesman or drop a bean bag at the dead ball spot **if** the down indicator is late arriving.
- O. extend both arms to the side and parallel with the ground, then give the next down with the fingers and **back out to presnap position.**

## FORWARD PASS

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Back Judge will:
  - A. follow the procedures as described in the Back Judge section on Running Plays.
  - B. pause observe his keys and retreat in order to be in position behind the deepest receivers, never letting receivers get behind him.
  - C. cover deep receivers down the middle and to each sideline.
  - D. move quickly to the ball when the pass is thrown.
  - E. watch for interference by either team.
  - F. be ready to rule on possible fumble or illegal pass after completion.
  - G. be ready to rule on all passes near the goal line.
  - H. for passes into the endzone, move to the end line and be ready to rule on passes near the end line.
- II. If the pass is incomplete in the Back Judge's area, he will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the incomplete-pass signal (S #10) twice.
- III. If the pass is complete in the Back Judge's area, he will:
  - A. sound his whistle when the ball becomes dead.
  - B. move to the spot of forward progress **if** no other Official can get to the spot.
  - C. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice when line-to-gain has been reached.
- IV. **On all incomplete passes, the Back Judge will assist with relaying the ball off to the opposite side of the field.**

## SCRIMMAGE KICK - PUNT

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Back Judge will:
  - A. be in correct position: 10-12 yards wider than and 5-yards behind the deepest receiver on the Linesman's side of field.
  - B. have his contrasting bean bag in hand.
  - C. count receiving team players and indicate to the Linesman and Line Judge that he has counted the receiving team with a clenched fist extended out in front of him.

- D. be in his initial position: on the goal line when the ball is snapped on or inside the receiving team's 45-yard line or when a receiving team member is on or inside the 10-yard line.
- II. After the snap, the Back Judge will:
  - A. carry contrasting bean bags in his hand during down to mark first touching, fumble, momentum or end of kick if there is a return.
  - B. observe action of the players around ball when the kick is short to either side. The Linesman and Line Judge will assume responsibility for the ball.
  - C. cover all kicks down the middle of the field and be ready to rule on whether the kick is touched by either team.
  - D. be prepared to rule on possession, if the ball is muffed.
  - E. be alert for a hand-off and reverse.
- III. When the kicked ball goes out of bounds in flight on the Linesman's side, the Back Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - C. move farther down field than where the ball went out.
  - D. if he does not have an out-of-bounds spot, walk up the field with his open hand above his head until the Referee signals him to stop on the sideline by marking the spot with an outstretched arm and "chopping" down motion, then signal the direction the ball will be going and hold the spot until ball is potted.
- IV. When the kicking team is first to touch the scrimmage kick that is motionless beyond the neutral zone, the Back Judge will
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice, mark the spot and give the directional signal (S #8).
- V. Do not anticipate a fair catch. The Back Judge should hold his whistle in his hand and see the ball possessed before sounding his whistle (no inadvertent whistles).
- VI. If a receiving team player signals for a fair catch and a fair catch is not made, the Back Judge will cover the ball and the Line Judge will cover the receiver to make sure he does not block.
- VII. Following a fair catch, the Back Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - C. give the directional signal (S #8).
  - D. inform the Referee it was a fair catch.

- VIII. When the runner catches the kick and advances, the Back Judge will:
- drop a bean bag at the spot possession is obtained.
  - delay and observe the action behind the ball and let the other Officials pick up the runner.
  - pick up the runner and sound his whistle when the ball becomes dead, **if** the other Official gets screened out.
- IX. When the kick becomes dead, the Back Judge will:
- sound his whistle.
  - give the time-out signal (S #3) twice and signal the direction the ball will be going.
  - be prepared to rule on a touchback and give the touchback signal (S #7) twice.
  - inform the Referee of the ball status.
  - be prepared to rule on momentum **if** the kick is caught inside 5-yard line and the player is downed in his end zone.
  - mark the spot of the catch inside the 5-yard line with bean bag.

## FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Back Judge will:
- be in correct position: beyond the end zone and behind his upright where he feels most comfortable and has the best coverage of the upright.
  - count receiving team players and signal with arm extended in front with a clenched fist.
- II. After the snap, the Back Judge will:
- assume responsibility for the end line and for determining if the kick goes over or under the crossbar and inside the upright.
    - Back Judge rules on crossbar and his upright.
    - Line Judge rules on his upright.
    - The Official who rules needs to verbally communicate “Yes” or “No” to the other Official.
  - sound his whistle when a successful kick passes the upright or when it is apparently unsuccessful after breaking the goal-line plane.
  - move 2 steps forward (no angle), simultaneously with the Line Judge, in front of their respective upright and signal score (S #5) or no score (S #10) twice while facing the line of scrimmage.
  - assume his primary responsibility for the end line but will be prepared to move **if** kick is blocked, obviously short or a fake:
    - The Back Judge will key the tight end on his side.

2. If run or pass develops to the Line Judge's vacated side, the Line Judge will move quickly along the end line to the back pylon to rule on the sideline.
  3. The Back Judge's next move is toward the goal line to assist.
  4. The Back Judge will mark first touching, fumble, momentum, or end of kick with a bean bag.
- E. remember all blocked field goals are treated the same as a punt.

## AFTER A TRY OR SUCCESSFUL FIELD GOAL

The Back Judge will:

- I. start 60-second count for subsequent kickoff as players and Officials move out to their positions.
- II. obtain the ball which will be used to kickoff. This ball should be left behind the goal post by ball personnel before the try.
- III. meet at respective pylons and jog down his respective sideline along with the Umpire (Umpire down the chain crew side and Back Judge down the press box side) to their free kick lines. The Back Judge will give a signal to the Umpire, so they jog down the field together.
- IV. give a 15-second warning (two short blasts on whistle) to the teams at the 45-second mark, **if** teams are not in position to play.

## ADMINISTERING PENALTIES

The Back Judge will:

- I. help obtain the ball.
- II. assist in holding the spot of the foul or recovering the penalty marker.
- III. assist in relaying penalty foul information to the appropriate sideline.
- IV. give the final signal for a foul to be enforced on the kickoff while facing the press-box side of field and step-off penalty yardage.

## MEASURING FOR FIRST DOWN USING TRADITIONAL LINE-TO-GAIN INDICATORS

When a measurement is signaled by the Referee, the Back Judge will:

- I. not permit team attendants to enter the field.
- II. observe all players.

- III. Move the down indicator operator to the front line-to-gain indicator spot and keep the same down number. Stay with the down indicator operator until the Linesman has returned to the sideline.
- IV. If a first down and a new series is awarded, the Linesman will release the chain crew to the Back Judge who will set the chains for a first down after spotting by the Referee. If there is a penalty, do not move the down indicator until after enforcement.
- V. **If** short of a first down, instruct the down indicator operator to wait until the Linesman has reset the chains before moving the down indicator and changing the down number.
- VI. return to his presnap position on the field and observe the teams.

## TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

The Back Judge will:

- I. time 60-second interval and sound whistle twice to give the 15-second warning.
- II. observe the team on the Linesman's sideline until the Linesman becomes available.
- III. observe the time-out coordinator (red hat) for T.V. games.
- IV. position himself in his pre-snap position, standing at parade rest.

## INJURY TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

The Back Judge will:

- I. assist the Referee in moving the teams away from the injured player.
- II. position himself away from the injured player near his pre-snap position, standing at parade rest.

## END-OF-PERIOD PROCEDURE

- I. If a field game clock is NOT in use, the Back Judge will:
  - A. notify the Referee approximately 4-minutes before the end of the 2nd and 4th periods.
  - B. notify the Referee that time may expire during the next down approximately 30-seconds before the period expires.
  - C. signal to the Referee by raising his open hand above his head, sounding his whistle and giving the time-out signal (S #3) twice when time expires and the ball becomes dead.



- II. If a field game clock is used, the Back Judge will:
  - A. be responsible for knowing when time expires **if** he is facing the game clock.
  - B. sound his whistle to prevent the snap, **if** time expires.
  - C. sound whistle loud and long and give time-out signal (S #3) twice, **if** the ball is snapped immediately after time has expired.
  - D. observe the team on the Linesman's sideline until the Linesman becomes available.

## BETWEEN-PERIODS PROCEDURE

The Back Judge will

- I. go to the Linesman's sideline and confer with the Linesman about the down, distance and spot of the clip. Once they agree the Back Judge will jog to the opposite end of the field where the spot of the clip will be marked. The Back Judge stands outside the yard line where the clip will be placed, marking the spot with his foot. The Linesman brings the chain with the clip and places it at the spot the Back Judge has marked.
- II. observe the team on the Linesman's sideline until the Linesman becomes available.
- III. assume the same responsibilities as for a time-out.
- IV. time the 60-second interval and sound whistle twice to give the 15-second-warning.

## BETWEEN-HALVES PROCEDURE

The Back Judge will

- I. return to the field 5-minutes prior to the half time intermission ending and be responsible for the visiting team returning to the field before the clock expires.
- II. at the start of the mandatory 3-minute warm-up, obtain the second-half choice from the Head Coach of the visiting team and communicate to the Referee.
- III. be in his free kick position with 1-minute remaining on the game clock during the 3-minute warm-up period.

## END OF GAME PROCEDURE

The Back Judge will:

- I. immediately jog off the field, together with all Officials, with security.
- II. neither avoid nor seek coaches.
- III. not discuss the game on the field or make any public statement about the game to the news media.
- IV. not comment about the game on social media.

## 7 MAN CREW REFEREE

### GAME WEEK PREPARATIONS

- I. During the week of the game, the Referee will:
  - A. contact the Athletic Director (or other Administrator) of the host school to verify game time, obtain location of Officials' parking and locker room, and inquire about any special events occurring prior to or during the game or any other unusual circumstances at game site. Request that members of the chain crew and ball boys wear distinctive vests or shirts to be easily identified, if possible.
  - B. if unfamiliar with game site, obtain information regarding location of team dressing rooms to determine if crew should be prepared to prevent the teams from crossing paths entering and leaving the field.
  - C. confirm the Administrators' Meeting will be held immediately after the pregame conference with both Head Coaches, approximately 30-minutes prior to game time.
  - D. contact crew members prior to game day to advise them of the meeting time for travel departure site or the game site and any additional information with respect to the game provided by the host school.
  - E. establish the pregame meeting time, and all Officials will arrive not less than 5-minutes prior to the scheduled time.
- II. Upon arrival at game site, the Referee will:
  - A. conduct pregame meeting with the crew from a printed outline.
  - B. assure all members of the crew enter the field together, not less than 45-minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff time.

### PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Referee will:

- I. have the crew enter the field 45-minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff time.
- II. deliver the list of Officials to each Head Coach, starting with the home team.
- III. ask the Head Coach to verbally verify, in presence of all crew members, that all players are legally equipped and in compliance with NFHS rules.
- IV. obtain captains' names/numbers and advise that captains are needed 5-minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff.
- V. check with each Head Coach for any unusual plays, shifts, or formations.

- VI. secure names of coaching staff personnel who will be responsible for sideline safety control of team members and report this information to any Officials not attending the conference.
- VII. secure names of coaching staff personnel designated to call time-outs in absence of Head Coach.
- VIII. verify where teams will be before the game and at half time.
- IX. verify with each Head Coach the preferred choice **if** his team wins the toss.
- X. inquire about any clock problems with home team Head Coach.
- XI. verify that the home team has the chain crew, and both teams have ball personnel and game balls.
- XII. confirm the time and place for the Game Administrators' Meeting with Head Coaches and Game Administrators.
- XIII. determine whether each team has a designated health care professional on its sideline, and verify that an emergency plan is in place.
- XIV. remind coaches that no more than four captains are allowed for the coin toss.
- XV. secure the name of team's designated representative (Coach or Player) who will make decisions regarding penalty acceptance or declination and ask them to communicate these decisions through Linesman and Line Judge.

## FOLLOWING PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Referee will:

- I. attend the Administrators' Meeting with the two Head Coaches. The Game Administrator should identify security that will escort crew on and off the field and notify both Head Coaches of length of the halftime intermission.
- II. direct game management to remove or repair any hazards on or near the field.
- III. coordinate the inspection of playing field and pylons.
- IV. inform Head Coaches of starting time and whether the game clock will be kept on the field.
- V. inform visiting Head Coach of any change in halftime intermission (a maximum of 5-minutes either way).
- VI. give visiting Head Coach the option of operating the chains on the press box side of field **if** the home team is on the sideline opposite the press box.
- VII. keep the Official score.
- VIII. ensure the ECO instructs the game clock operator to set the pregame clock to expire at the kickoff time.
- IX. ensure the Back Judge instructs the game clock operator to time the halftime intermission. On the Referee's signal, the score board operator will set the game clock to the appropriate time. The game clock will start on the Referee's signal to

- be given after both teams have left the field. When time has elapsed completely (or the Referee has signaled to reset the game clock after both teams have returned to the field), the score board operator will immediately reset 3-minutes on the game clock to time the mandatory warm-up period.
- X. ensure the Side Judge and Field Judge secure and approve the game balls. The Side Judge and Field Judge will use the assigned ball personnel if two balls will be used.
  - XI. ensure the Side Judge and Field Judge inform the ball personnel of the proper way and time to change the footballs between plays.
  - XII. verify heat index with the Game Administrator or training staff of the home team, if appropriate.
  - XIII. determine whether the PCO is an Official. If the PCO is not an Official, the Back Judge will conduct a pregame conference on operating the play clock.
  - XIV. instruct the crew to maintain a presence at or near the 50-yard line while both teams are still on the field.
  - XV. let the crew return to their locker room if all pregame duties are completed and at least one team has left the field. All Officials must be back on the field 10-minutes prior to kickoff.

## THE COIN TOSS

- I. Pregame
  - A. The Back Judge and the Line Judge will secure game balls from their respective teams to bring on the field for the coin toss. The Side Judge, chain side, and Field Judge, press box side, will have the team captains on their sides of the field line up 5-minutes before kickoff. The speaking captain for each team should stand next to the Referee.
  - B. The Referee and the Umpire will jog to the center of the field 3-minutes before kickoff. The Referee will face the scoreboard.
  - C. The Referee will signal the other Officials and captains on the field. The captains will meet the Referee and Umpire in the center of the field. All other Officials should stop at the hash marks facing the Referee.
    - 1. The Line Judge and the ECO will come out from the press box side on each 45-yard line. The Line Judge should be on the 45-yard line furthest from the game clock.
    - 2. The Linesman and the Back Judge will come out from the chain side on each 45-yard line. The Linesman should be on the 45-yard line furthest from the game clock.

3. The Side Judge, chain side and the Field Judge, press box side, will come out from their sides of the field behind the captains on the 50-yard line.
- D. The Referee will instruct the captains to shake hands.
- E. The coin will be flipped no later than the 2-minute mark.
- F. In the presence of the Umpire, the Referee will:
  1. instruct the visiting captain to give “heads” or “tails” choice before the coin toss and inform the captains that if the coin is dropped, it will be tossed again.
  2. make the toss and determine the winner.
  3. place a hand on the winning captain’s shoulder and have the captain choose one of the following options:
    - a) defer choice to second half
    - b) receive, kick, or defend a goal
  4. if the winner of the toss defers, step toward the press box and give the deferred signal (S #10) twice; then ask the deferring captain which direction he would like to kick.
  5. if the winner of the toss chooses to receive, ask the other captain which direction he would like to kick.
- G. The Referee will place the captains in position facing each other with their backs toward the goal they will defend.
- H. While facing in the same direction as the receiving captain, the Referee will signal the choice by making a catch motion to simulate receiving.
- I. The Referee will dismiss the captains.
- J. After captains are released back to their sidelines, all Officials will gather in the middle of the field to verify the coin toss information and receive last minute instructions from the Referee. After instructions are given, all Officials will jog to their positions with 1-minute remaining on the game clock.
- K. If the Home Team requests that military personnel, celebrities, etc. participate in the pregame coin toss, the actual coin toss should be held at the Administrators’ Meeting. A ceremonial coin toss will then be held as described above with the options already being determined. If the coin toss is not done prior to the game, the Referee should toss the coin.

## USE OF MICROPHONE

The Referee's use of a field microphone adds a positive dimension to communication when used properly. The microphone should be used to explain penalties and unusual situations. The Referee should have the option to use or not use a field microphone. The Referee should have control (on/off switch) of the microphone. If used, the microphone should be tested prior to the start of the contest and the following guidelines should be followed.

When	What	Team	Player	Penalty	Next Down
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<b>When –</b>	Identify ONLY if it is relevant. For a false start, say “Prior to the snap.” For a dead ball foul, say “After the play” while giving the dead ball signal. Never say “Dead ball.” If relevant, say “During the kick” or “During the return” or “Prior to the fumble/interception”. This is not relevant when the ball stays in possession of the offense.				
<b>What –</b>	Always identify the foul. Say “Holding”, “False start”, “Pass interference”, “Free kick out of bounds”, etc.				
<b>Team –</b>	Always say a team while pointing in that team's direction. Say “Offense” or “Defense”, “Kicking team” or “Receiving team”. Never announce color or team name.				
<b>Player –</b>	Give the number of the offending player. Say while still pointing in team's direction. If you don't have a number (do not guess) or it's not relevant (e.g., illegal participation), skip this.				
<b>Penalty –</b>	Always identify length of penalty and enforcement spot. Say 5/10/15 yards “from the previous spot”, “from the succeeding spot”, “from the spot of the foul”, “from the end of the run”, etc. Say “Half the distance”, when applicable. Say “Penalty is declined”, if applicable.				
<b>Next Down –</b>	If applicable, say “Loss of down” while giving the related signal. Always say “(Next) down”, while holding your upper arm parallel to the ground, your forearm straight up and your fingers signaling the number. Do not hold your hand in front of your face. If it is a 1st down, signal while announcing.				

**Examples:**

- “During the run, Holding, Offense #72, 10 yards from the previous spot, Replay 2nd down.”
- “After the play, Personal foul, Defense #22, 15 yards, Result is a 1st down.”
- “Pass interference, Defense #14, 15 yards from the previous spot, Result is a 1st down.”
- “Roughing the passer, Defense #89, 15 yards from the previous spot, Automatic 1st down.”
- “During the return, Block in the back, Receiving team #44, 10 yards from the spot of the foul, 1st down.”
- “Illegal forward pass, Offense #12, 5 yards from the spot of the foul, Loss of down, 3rd down.”
- “Prior to the snap, False Start, #77, 5 yards, still 2nd down.”
- “After the play, Unsportsmanlike Conduct Offense #13, 15 yards from the end of the run, 3rd down. That is #13’s first Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul.” or “That is #13’s 2nd Unsportsmanlike Conduct foul, so he has disqualified himself from the game.”

**Reminders for Referees:**

- Ask the calling Official to give you the foul, team and number of offending player, penalty yardage and enforcement spot, live or dead ball, and in or out of bounds.
- For both the preliminary and final signal, come to a complete stop in an area clearly visible to and facing the press box away from any players. Stand still while announcing and look at press box during entire announcement.
- Keep your head level and stationary.
- Think before you speak. Do not turn the microphone on until you have all the information you need and the words in your head.
- “Rehearse” with the Umpire to ensure you have needed information before making the formal announcement.
- Speak in a clear, unhurried and conversational tone. Do not shout; this conveys anger.
- Coordinate statements with signals.
- Do not “over explain.” You run the risk of stumbling on words. When in doubt, say less.
- If anything is unusual, have the calling Official remain close during the announcement to remind you of pertinent information.
- Use the word “correction” to change a previous announcement: “Holding, Offense #65, Correction, #56.”
- When announcing time outs, you can refer to the team name.



- For unsportsmanlike conduct fouls, always tell whether it is the 1st or 2nd for that player/coach.
- When you are finished, turn the microphone off, pause, turn and jog to your next pre-snap position.
- Practice these principles in the following ways to improve and correct any mistakes:
  - Practice in front of a mirror, while talking out loud.
  - Watch replays of your games, when possible.
  - Say the words even in games you are not using a microphone.
  - Consider using a recorder during games to review later.

## DECLARING BALL READY-FOR-PLAY

- I. If the play clock is to be set to 25-seconds, the Referee, after the ball is spotted, will:
  - A. move to a position approximately 12-15 yards from the line-of-scrimmage and at least 5-yards wide of the tackle position in a normal scrimmage formation.
  - B. announce the down (using appropriate fingers or fist), check that the crew is ready and in position to officiate, release the Umpire off the ball and to his normal position prior to marking the ball ready-for-play and solely verify the number of offensive players **if** a quick snap is possible.
  - C. sound his whistle, give the ready-for-play signal (S #1) and give the signal to start the game clock **if** necessary (S #2) twice.
- II. If the play clock is set to 40-seconds after the end of the preceding play:
  - A. the Referee will move to a position approximately 12-15 yards from the line-of-scrimmage and at least 5-yards wide of the tackle position in a normal scrimmage formation.
  - B. the ball is ready for play when the Umpire returns to his normal position after spotting the ball (without a ready-for-play signal or whistle from the Referee). Unless held in position by the Referee, the Umpire does not linger over the ball.
  - C. stop the game clock and re-set the play clock to 25-seconds (with a pumping motion with one arm with a flat palm upward) and follow the 25-second play clock procedure **if** he receives a signal from the Back Judge the ball was not ready for play with at least 25 seconds remaining on the 40-second play clock. Stop the game clock to re-set the play clock only **if** the Referee deems there has been a delay in re-setting the play clock.

## CORRECTING OBVIOUS ERRORS IN TIMING

### Requisites for correcting timing errors

- I. The timing errors must be readily evident and have resulted in an acknowledged discrepancy. The Referee may consult the ECO.
- II. Corrections must not involve judgment but result from failure, either human or mechanical, to correctly administer the timing rule.
- III. Corrections may occur **if** the error is discovered before the second live ball following the error unless the period has Officially ended.

## COACH-REFEREE CONFERENCE

- I. Purpose
  - A. The conference allows a review of possible misapplication or misinterpretation of rules by Officials.
  - B. The conference allows corrections when an error has been made.
- II. Procedures
  - A. A request for the conference must be made prior to the ball becoming live following the play which is to be reviewed unless the period has Officially ended.
  - B. The Head Coach calls or directs the player to request a time-out to confer with the Referee regarding possible misapplication of a rule.
  - C. The Referee grants the time-out and charges it to the requesting team.
  - D. The Referee, accompanied by the Linesman or Line Judge, and the Head Coach confer at the sideline directly in front of the team box in the field of play.
  - E. If the rule is determined to have been applied correctly, then:
    1. the time-out remains charged to the team.
    2. the foul for delay of game is called **if** all permissible time-outs have been used.
    3. If time permits, the Head Coach may talk to the team **for the time remaining in the charged time-out**.
  - F. If the rule is determined to have been applied incorrectly, then:
    1. the correction is made immediately.
    2. the time-out previously charged to the team becomes an Official's time-out.
    3. the Referee will review and explain the situation to the opposing Head Coach before continuing the game.

## DISQUALIFICATION PROCEDURE

The Referee will:

- I. provide the Head Coach with the reason while accompanied by the Linesman or Line Judge.
- II. require a disqualified player to vacate the field and remain off the field.
- III. require a disqualified coach to vacate the stadium area.
- IV. If a disqualified coach does not vacate the stadium area, the Referee will:
  - A. inform the Head Coach (or acting Head Coach) that noncompliance could lead to forfeiture.
  - B. locate the Game Administrator for assistance.
  - C. not continue the game until the disqualified coach vacates the stadium area.
  - D. forfeit the game **if** necessary.

## KICKOFF

- I. The Referee will count receiving players and confirm with the Line Judge and the Linesman using a clenched fist. The clenched fist by the Line Judge and Linesman is the ready signal indicating the sideline is clear and the Official is ready for the kickoff.
- II. The Referee will pick up the ready sign (open hand above head) from the ECO and PCO when they are in free kick positions, look for the ready sign by the Back Judge and then signal the Back Judge to hand the ball to the kicker by extending his arm toward the Back Judge with a clenched fist.
- III. Once the Back Judge reaches his free kick position and gives the ready sign, the Referee will promptly give the ready-for-play signal (S #1) with a sharp blast of his whistle.
- IV. The Referee will make sure that kickers are in position before he blows the ready signal to avoid a delay of game foul.
- V. On scoring plays involving a penalty by the opponent of the scoring team, the Referee will:
  - A. give the preliminary penalty signal and indicate the offending team.
  - B. obtain the choice from the designated representative of the offended team.
  - C. give the penalty signal and indicate the offending team. If the penalty is accepted, the Referee will indicate if the score counts and if the penalty will be enforced on the subsequent kickoff by pointing to the succeeding spot. The Back Judge will give the final signal prior to stepping off the penalty and prior to the subsequent kickoff.

- VI. Before the kick, the Referee will:
- be in correct position: on the receiving team's goal line in the middle of the field.
  - count receiving team players.
  - check positions of other Officials.
  - declare the ball ready for play (S #1) and sound his whistle after ready signs have been received from other Officials.
  - if a short or onside free kick is anticipated:
    - move the Line Judge and the Linesman up.
    - take position on the receiving team's goal line.
    - be alert to assist other Officials.
- VII. After the kick, the Referee will respond according to game situations.
- When the Linesman and Line Judge are positioned on the goal line, the Referee will:
    - rule on touchback while standing on the goal line.
    - signal the game clock to start (S #2) when the kick is touched other than first touching by the kicking team.
    - pick up the runner and follow until releasing to covering Official for a kick down the middle.
  - If the Line Judge and Linesman have been moved up the field or positioned between the receiving and kicking teams' restraining lines in anticipation of an onside kick and a deep kick is made, the Referee will:
    - rule on touchback while standing on the goal line.
    - be the only Official to wind the game clock on a free kick when the other Officials are in an onside kick formation and the ball is kicked deep.
    - rule on whether the player's momentum took him into the end zone and mark the spot of the catch with a bean bag, if the kick is caught inside the 5-yard line and the player is downed in the end zone.
  - With a kick outside an inbounds line, the Referee will:
    - move cautiously with play.
    - observe action of other players in vicinity of the runner.
    - serve as clean-up behind, to side of, and around the runner.
  - When a bean bag is thrown for first touching by the kicking team, the Referee will go near the spot of first touching, signal (S #16), point at bean bag and determine where the receiving team will put the ball in play.

## RUNNING PLAY

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Referee will:
  - A. move to a position that is visible to the ECO and the PCO (approximately 12-15 yards from the line-of-scrimmage and at least 5-yards wide of the tackle) prior to the ready signal and will then adjust according to the formation. The Referee's initial position will be on the goal line when the ball is snapped from the 10-15 yard line and the end line when the ball is snapped on or inside the 10-yard line. The Referee will be positioned:
    1. on the passing arm side of the quarterback.
    2. to view tackle on opposite side and the backs.
    3. in a standing position with shoulders parallel to the line of scrimmage.
  - B. declare the ball ready-for-play by using the established procedure.
  - C. make sure all players are set for the one-second count before the snap.
  - D. count the number of offensive players and verify that 5 players numbered 50-79 are on the offensive line (ineligible receivers); signal to the Umpire with a clenched fist that counting is complete and correct.
  - E. watch for snap irregularities and movement of linemen.
  - F. watch for illegal shift or player in motion.
  - G. identify eligible backs.
  - H. be alert for a Head Coach requesting a time out.
- II. After the snap, the Referee will
  - A. key the tackle on the opposite side. If he blocks aggressively, the Referee will assume run. If he pass blocks, the Referee will assume pass.
  - B. observe the ball, runner, action around the runner, and blocks up to the neutral zone.
  - C. move parallel to the line of scrimmage **if** action is not in the direction of original position, maintaining position approximately in line with runner's progress.
  - D. delay moving immediately toward the line of scrimmage to avoid hindering reverse or delayed play and to assure maximum vision of play.
  - E. move behind the play toward the side of the field to which the play advances to cover the runner **if** he is downed near the line.
  - F. watch for illegal use of hands by offensive players.
  - G. observe action behind the ball and away from the runner near the neutral zone.
  - H. observe action on the quarterback after handoff.
  - I. check the out-of-bounds spot behind the neutral zone before leaving the area.

- J. continue to observe action behind the neutral zone before leaving the area.
- K. be responsible for the runner until he crosses the neutral zone.
- III. During a dead ball, the Referee will
  - A. only sound his whistle when the ball carrier is down in his area.
  - B. only go to the forward progress spot **if** he has the ball carrier down deep in the backfield. The Referee will be aware if the run ends close to a first down. Otherwise, the Referee will officiate dead ball action no closer than 5-yards from the dead ball spot.
  - C. extend both arms to the side and parallel with the ground, then give the next down with the fingers and confirm next down with Linesman before the down indicator is changed.
  - D. quickly check that the down indicator is correct and the rest of the crew is ready.
  - E. give the time-out signal to stop the game clock unless it is already stopped by rule, **if** a change of team possession has occurred.

## FORWARD PASS

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Referee will follow the same procedures as described in the Referee section on Running Plays.
- II. After the snap, the Referee will:
  - A. key the block of the offensive tackle on the opposite side.
  - B. observe all blocks behind the neutral zone.
  - C. remain wide and deeper than the passer, as the passer retreats.
  - D. give special attention to contact with the passer by:
    - 1. continuing to observe the passer, not the flight of the ball, after the ball is released.
    - 2. verbally alerting defenders when the passer has released ball.
    - 3. adjusting position during the play to maintain the required view of the passer in the pocket.
  - E. determine whether the pass is forward or backward, when the quarterback drops back after the snap. The Line Judge and Linesman have the primary responsibility for the direction of the pass when thrown toward their sideline by the quarterback immediately after the snap or when they remain on the line of scrimmage.
  - F. be alert to observe an illegal pass and will:
    - 1. move to the spot of the pass to determine whether the passer's feet were in or behind neutral zone when ball was released.
    - 2. drop penalty marker **if** illegal, and continue to officiate.

- 3. mark the spot of the pass with a bean bag **if** close and continue to officiate.
- G. solely be responsible for intentional grounding. Although the Referee may get assistance from the covering Official, he is the only one that drops a penalty marker.
- H. continue to observe action behind the neutral zone before leaving the area.
- I. be responsible for the runner until he crosses the neutral zone.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK - PUNT

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Referee will
  - A. check the down and distance with the Linesman.
  - B. declare the ball ready-for-play when needed by using the established procedure.
  - C. be in correct position:
    - 1. 5-7 yards outside the tight end.
    - 2. 3-5 yards behind the kicker on the kicking-leg side.
    - 3. in a standing position with shoulders parallel to the line of scrimmage.
  - D. be able to see the ball and observe all backs.
  - E. count kicking team players and signal to the Umpire with a clenched fist that the players have been counted.
  - F. signal to the crew that the kicking team is in a scrimmage-kick formation (S #19).
- II. After the snap, the Referee will
  - A. turn at an angle toward the kicker.
  - B. watch for fouls behind the neutral zone, especially near the kicker.
  - C. be alert for blocked kick and be ready to rule on recovery. After the kick is away and not blocked, the Referee's first movement should be to "circle" behind the kicker.
  - D. verbally alert rusher(s) that ball has been kicked.
  - E. observe line play after the ball crosses the neutral zone.
  - F. move downfield slowly following the kick.
  - G. watch for fouls and **if** there is a long return be in advance of the runner and ready to rule on the touchdown and assist with forward progress near the goal line. When the runner crosses the goal line after running closely down the sideline, the Referee should look to the covering wing Official and assure the runner did not step out of bounds before giving a touchdown signal (S #5).

- H. determine from the covering Official if the ball was touched beyond the neutral zone and by whom.
- I. line up the Side Judge or the Field Judge from his position behind the punter by using an outstretched arm and “chopping” where the ball crossed the sideline **if** the kick goes out of bounds in flight.
- J. go directly to the out-of-bounds spot on a short kick out of bounds.
- K. signal the Linesman to move the line-to-gain equipment **if** no foul occurs during the kick.
- L. When a bean bag is thrown for first touching by the kicking team, the Referee will go near the spot of first touching, signal (S #16) and point at bean bag and determine where the receiving team will put the ball in play.
- M. obtain the ready sign from the Linesman before giving the ready-for-play signal.

## FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Referee will:
  - A. be in correct position:
    - 1. 2-3 yards to the rear and 5-7 yards to the side of the potential kicker.
    - 2. in a standing position with shoulders parallel to the line of scrimmage or facing the holder.
  - B. count kicking team players and indicate with a clenched fist to the Umpire that the kicking team has been counted.
  - C. signal to the crew that the offensive team is in a scrimmage-kick formation (S #19).
  - D. observe the kicker, holder, and the opposite side tackle.
- II. After the snap, the Referee will:
  - A. turn and face the holder to be able to see the holder receive the ball **if his initial position is parallel to the line of scrimmage**.
  - B. watch for a fumble by the holder.
  - C. observe position of holder's knee for possible backward pass attempt.
  - D. cover as usual **if** run or pass.
  - E. assist in sideline coverage **if** run or pass develops.
  - F. signal score (S #5) or no score (S #10) twice after receiving the signal from the Officials' ruling on the kick.
  - G. rule on roughing the kicker or holder.
  - H. immediately sound his whistle and give the no-score signal (S #10) twice **if** the try is blocked.



- I. If the field goal is blocked, the ball remains live. Treat a missed field goal the same as a punt.

## AFTER A TRY OR SUCCESSFUL FIELD GOAL

- I. The Back Judge will time the 60-second interval.
- II. At 45-seconds, the Back Judge should give two short blasts on his whistle, and the Officials near the team box should get the teams on the field **if** they are not already moving to their positions.
- III. The Referee will meet with the Back Judge after the try **if** a penalty is to be carried over to the kickoff to confirm the correct signal, team to be penalized and distance for the penalty.
- IV. The Referee will only meet with the crew after the try **if** late in the game and an onside kick is possible. The meeting can be replaced by using radios.
- V. The Referee will use the radio to move the Linesman and Line Judge up when an onside kick is anticipated.

## ADMINISTERING PENALTIES

- I. When ball is dead following a foul, the Referee will:
  - A. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - B. get full information from the Official who called the foul.
  - C. give the preliminary signal to the press-box side of the field only on live ball fouls.
  - D. give options to the designated representative of the offended team (quickly when the most advantageous choice is obvious).
    1. If the choice is obvious, interpret silence as acceptance of the obvious choice.
    2. Once made, the choice cannot be revoked.
  - E. make note of the enforcement spot for the penalty.
  - F. give the final signal for the foul to the press-box side of the field while the penalty is being administered.
  - G. look to the Field Judge for status of the game clock after the ready for play.
- II. When the penalty is declined, the Referee will:
  - A. clear away from the players.
  - B. give the foul signal followed by the penalty-declined signal (S #10) twice while facing the press box.
- III. When there is a double foul, the Referee will:
  - A. signal each foul while facing the press box.

- B. follow this with the penalty-declined signal (S #10) twice.
- IV. When two penalties are enforced, the Referee will give proper signals prior to each enforcement.
- V. When the penalty is to be enforced on kickoff, the Referee will:
  - A. indicate the proper foul signal.
  - B. point to the offending team.
  - C. point toward the succeeding spot.
  - D. indicate the scoring signal (S #5).
- VI. If an accepted penalty for foul by either team occurs during a down in which time expires, play continues with an untimed down (S #1\*) except for fouls listed in Rule 3-3-4.
- VII. When dead-ball fouls occur after fourth down, the Referee will:
  - A. signal any live-ball fouls.
  - B. signal first down for the proper team.
  - C. signal dead ball.
  - D. signal the dead-ball foul(s).

## MEASURING FOR FIRST DOWN USING TRADITIONAL LINE-TO-GAIN INDICATORS

- I. Prior to and during the measurement, the Referee will:
  - A. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice, followed by tapping hands to chest.
  - B. signal the Linesman to bring the line-to-gain equipment onto the field.
  - C. motion players away from the ball.
  - D. not allow the ball to be moved in any manner.
  - E. measure before the ball is taken inbounds from a side zone.
  - F. use line-to-gain indicator to accurately place the ball at inbounds spot, **if** the line-to-gain is not reached in side zone.
  - G. use inside edge of forward line-to-gain indicator to mark the line-to-gain.
  - H. **measure in the 4th quarter on all 4th downs within 1 yard of a 1st down when the scoring margin is within 14 points.**
- II. When measurement is completed, the Referee will:
  - A. signal the number of the next down.
  - B. spot the ball at the proper place.
  - C. wait for the chain crew to return to position.
- III. If a new series is awarded to the opponent of the team which was in possession when the ball became dead, the Referee will:
  - A. place the ball so that the foremost point, when it became dead, becomes the near point when the direction is changed.

- B. set the new rear line-to-gain indicator with inside edge at the new point of the ball so the line-to-gain is 10-yards in advance of this point.
- IV. After a measurement, the Referee will:
  - A. inform captains he is ready to play.
  - B. declare the ball ready-for-play (S #1) **if** the ball was out of bounds.
  - C. signal ready-for-play (S #1) and then give the signal to start the game clock (S #2) twice, **if** the ball was not out-of-bounds.
  - D. signal to start the game clock on the snap **if** first down for the defense (S #8).

## TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

- I. The Referee will sound his whistle and will
  - A. signal “time-out” (S #3) twice.
  - B. indicate by moving both arms twice in a horizontal motion toward the team if a time-out is charged to that team.
  - C. indicate by tapping his chest with both hands **if** it is an Official’s time-out.
- II. During the time-out, the Referee will:
  - A. check the number of time-outs remaining for each team and record the time-out and the game time on his game card.
  - B. check the time remaining with the Back Judge.
  - C. check the down with the Linesman.
  - D. notify the Head Coach when his team has no more time-outs remaining in the half.
  - E. position himself away from other Officials in his pre-snap position.
  - F. make sure all Officials are ready after the Back Judge has sounded the 15-second warning.
- III. The Referee will declare the ball ready-for-play (S #1) when 60 seconds have expired.

## INJURY TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

- I. The Referee will summon the designated health-care professional(s) and/or coach(es) onto the field.
- II. The Referee’s duties during an injury time-out include the following:
  - A. Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and

shall not return to play unless the school has a designated health-care professional to evaluate the player.

- B. The Referee will be ready to assist the designated health-care professional(s) and/or coach(es) in securing additional medical help if requested by the designated health-care professional(s) and/or coach(es).
- C. The Referee will attempt to keep players a significant distance away from a seriously injured player by directing players toward their respective team bench areas.
- D. Once the designated health-care professional(s) begin(s) to work on an injured player, all Officials should control the total playing field environment and team personnel and allow the designated health-care professional(s) to perform services without interruption or interference. Always ensure adequate lines of vision between the designated health-care professional(s) and all available emergency personnel.
- E. Players and coaches should be appropriately controlled to allow the designated health-care professional(s) all of the time they want to assist the injured player.
- F. Position himself away from the injured player near his pre-snap position.
- G. Sound whistle twice to bring teams back on the field as the injured player is going off. Do not give the ready for play signal (S #1) until the injured player is inside the team box or has left the confines of the field.

## END-OF-PERIOD PROCEDURE

- I. If a field game clock is NOT used, the Referee will:
  - A. make the Official's time-out signal (S #3) twice, followed by tapping hands on chest. This will occur with approximately 4-minutes remaining in second and fourth period.
  - B. ensure that both Head Coaches are notified of the time remaining.
  - C. sound his whistle and repeat the time-out signal (S #3) twice when time expires and the ball becomes dead.
- II. If a field game clock is used:
  - A. the Referee will be responsible for knowing when time expires when facing the game clock.
  - B. If time expires prior to the snap, the Referee will:
    - 1. sound his whistle to prevent the snap, if possible.
    - 2. sound his whistle loud and long, and give the time-out signal (S #3) twice, if the ball is snapped immediately after time has expired.

- III. The Referee will delay signaling the end of the period for a few seconds to ensure no foul, no obvious timing error, no request for Coach-Referee Conference, and no other irregularity has occurred. The Referee will hold the ball in one hand over his head to signal the Official end of the period.

## **BETWEEN-PERIODS PROCEDURE**

The Referee will:

- I. record the down, distance, and yard line nearest the foremost point of the ball while meeting with the Umpire in the center of the field.
- II. confirm the Umpire's spotting of the ball and check with Linesman after the ball is spotted.
- III. make sure the sideline Officials are ready when notified by the Back Judge that 45-seconds have expired and the Back Judge has given two short blasts on his whistle.
- IV. announce the down and distance from his presnap position when notified by the Back Judge that 60-seconds have expired.
- V. declare the ball ready-for-play (S #1).

## **BETWEEN-HALVES PROCEDURE**

The Referee will:

- I. be responsible for seeing that the appropriate time is placed on the game clock for the half time intermission.
- II. signal the ECO to start the game clock to time the intermission when both teams have cleared the field.
- III. discuss situations with the crew in the dressing room or other private place, assuming all conversations are being monitored by host school.
- IV. review overtime procedures, **if** applicable.
- V. determine which team has the choice for the second half.
- VI. have the crew back on the field 5-minutes prior to the halftime intermission ending and be responsible for seeing that 3-minutes are placed on the game clock for the mandatory warm-up period prior to the start of the second half after the intermission time has expired completely or the Referee has signaled to reset the game clock after both teams have returned to the field.

## SECOND-HALF CHOICES

- I. The Side Judge (visiting team)/Field Judge (home team) whose team has the second-half choice will obtain the choice from the team's Head Coach. This occurs at the start of the mandatory 3-minute warm-up and is communicated to the Referee.
- II. The opposite Side Judge/Field Judge will obtain the opposing team's response to the second-half choice and communicate to the Referee.
- III. The Referee communicates the choices obtained to all Officials.
- IV. Officials will go directly to their free kick position with 1-minute remaining on the game clock during the 3-minute warm-up period.
- V. Following the half time intermission and mandatory 3-minute warm-up period, both teams assume their respective free kick formations.

## END OF GAME PROCEDURE

- I. At the end of a Regulation game, the Referee will
  - A. indicate the end of the fourth period (S #14).
  - B. immediately jog off the field, together with all Officials, with security.
  - C. neither avoid nor seek coaches.
  - D. not comment about the game on social media.
  - E. not discuss the game on the field or make any public statement about the game to the news media.
  - F. report any penalty markerrant irregularity or disqualification(s) to the TSSAA by filing a report through the Arbiter website. This includes ejections for fighting.
  - G. text teams and score to TSSAA (877-395-5091).
  - H. before leaving the dressing room after the game, ensure the room is left in same or better condition than when Officials arrived.
- II. For an Overtime 10-yard line procedure, the Referee will:
  - A. hold the coin toss at the center of the field, using standard coin-toss mechanics except with only one captain from each team.
  - B. indicate the winner of the coin toss by placing a hand on the winning captain's shoulder.
  - C. direct the coin toss winner to choose whether to be on offense or defense or to choose the end of the field at which the ball will be put into play.
  - D. position the offensive captain facing the goal toward which the ball will be advanced, with the defensive captain facing his opponent.

- E. be aware that to start each new series that the team may designate the location of the ball between hash marks.
- F. give the first-down signal (S #8) toward the goal line to be used during the overtime period.
- G. If the score remains tied after each team has been given a series of downs:
  - 1. The procedure will be repeated at the center of the field for other overtime periods until a game winner is determined.
  - 2. The loser of the overtime coin toss will be given the first choice of options in the second overtime.
  - 3. If additional overtime periods are required, first options will be alternated with no coin toss.

## UMPIRE

### PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Umpire will:

- I. participate in the Officials' pregame conference with each Head Coach and examine and rule on any player equipment issues which the coach has a question of legality.
- II. review any appropriate documentation for equipment and artificial limbs.
- III. witness and note each Head Coach's answer regarding his players being legally equipped.
- IV. note each team captain's name and number, and underline the speaking captain as determined by the Head Coach.

### FOLLOWING PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Umpire will:

- I. inspect the playing field and pylons.
- II. observe each team during warm-ups. If any illegal equipment is observed, the Umpire will advise the Head Coach and make certain issues are resolved.
- III. be the final authority on the legality of equipment and not allow the use of illegal equipment.
- IV. talk with the center from each team and remind him that, in the absence of a ready-for-play signal from the Referee, the ball is not ready-for-play and cannot be snapped until the Umpire is in position away from the ball.

### THE COIN TOSS

- I. The Referee and the Umpire will jog to the center of the field from the press box side 3-minutes before kickoff. The Umpire will have his back to the scoreboard.
- II. The Umpire will remain with the Referee to listen to instructions and to witness and record toss choices. After choices are made, the Umpire will verbally repeat the team choices and assist the Referee in lining up the kicking team captains with their backs to the goal they will defend.
- III. After captains are released back to their sidelines, all Officials will gather in the middle of the field to verify the coin toss information and for last minute instructions from the Referee. After instructions are given, all Officials will jog to their positions.



## KICKOFF

- I. Before the kick, during the 1-minute intermission, the Umpire will:
  - A. move to correct position to count kicking team players.
    1. For the initial kickoff of each half and all kickoffs after safeties: be on the Linesman's side of the field at the intersection of the hash marks and the kicking team's restraining line.
    2. For all other kickoffs: be on the Linesman's side of the field at the intersection of the restricted area and the kicking team's restraining line.
  - B. count kicking team players and confirm with the Back Judge with a clenched fist.
- II. Before the kick, after the teams are on the field, the Umpire will:
  - A. return to the sideline on the Linesman's side of the field at the intersection of the restricted area and the kicking team's restraining line.
  - B. make certain coaches, players, substitutes, and other individuals are in proper locations, and ensure the sideline is clear.
  - C. mentally review possible scenarios that could occur during the kick and subsequent play (e.g. kick out of bounds, muff, fumble, etc.).
  - D. make certain the kicking team is in a legal kick formation with 11 players.
  - E. hold open hand above head, to indicate his area is ready for play, until Back Judge checks him off.
  - F. have a bean bag in hand.
- III. After the kick, the Umpire will:
  - A. let the kicking team go by and immediately move inside the nearest hash marks at a 45 degree angle on the Linesman's side of the field and officiate inside out during an obvious deep kick.
  - B. observe action toward the center of the field, watch for illegal blocks, and watch for off ball action in front of the runner as he approaches, working inside out as on any running play.
  - C. advance no more than 10-15 yards up field on a deep kick. The Umpire will echo the covering Official's signal (S #3) to stop the game clock.
  - D. let the play go by and clean up behind the Back Judge if a long run occurs. The Back Judge will be ahead of the play to cover the goal line.
- IV. During an onside kick, the Umpire will:
  - A. be in correct position: on the kicking team's free kick line in the restricted area on the Linesman's side of the field.
  - B. be aware of action in the 10-yard belt.

- C. watch for encroachment by the kicking team, first touching by the kicking team (bean bag), touching by the receiving team, fair catch and recovery if the ball is in his area.
- D. watch illegal blocking, holding and early blocks by the kicking team.
- E. be alert for first touching, catch and/or recovery, if the ball comes in his area. The other Officials should watch for illegal blocking, holding, clipping and early blocks by the kicking team.
- F. stay in the restricted area and be prepared to cover the play if the receiving team gains possession and advances.

## RUNNING PLAY

- I. The Umpire will spot the ball for the next down while facing the appropriate sideline. As much as possible, spot off of the Line Judge to release the Linesman for chain responsibilities.
- II. After the ball is spotted, the Umpire will:
  - A. remain over the ball until released by the Referee if the snap is imminent and the play clock has been set to 25-seconds.
  - B. back out from the line of scrimmage to his normal position if the play clock has been set to 40-seconds.
  - C. line up 7-10 yards behind the defensive line of scrimmage and between the offensive tackles, keeping the opposite tackle and snap in view, standing tall.
  - D. not interfere with the vision or movement of the defensive backs.
  - E. vary his starting position to prevent interfering with players.
- III. Prior to the snap, the Umpire will:
  - A. count the number of offensive players and verify that 5 players numbered 50-79 are on the offensive line (ineligible receivers).
  - B. signal to the Referee with a clenched fist that counting in A above is complete and correct.
  - C. watch for interference with the snap, false start, or encroachment.
  - D. watch for disconcerting acts by the defense.
  - E. note the position of the ball between the hash marks.
  - F. note defensive players on the line of scrimmage in the free blocking zone.
  - G. sound his whistle, drop penalty marker, and give the time-out signal (S #3) twice if a dead ball foul occurs on the line of scrimmage.
- IV. After the snap, the Umpire will
  - A. immediately remove whistle from his mouth.

- B. read the snapper and offensive guards. If they block aggressively, the Umpire will assume run. If they pass block, the Umpire will assume pass.
  - C. read the point of attack, paying particular attention to the free-blocking zone restrictions.
  - D. slowly pivot with play action while focusing on linemen and action behind the play.
- V. When play is wide to the side, the Umpire will:
- A. move in that direction observing the initial line play and action around the runner (especially on short gains or losses in side zones).
  - B. move to the side zone when the play dictates.
  - C. remain on the inside working out to maintain boxed-in-coverage.
- VI. When the hole opens directly in front of the Umpire, the Umpire will:
- A. react and adjust according to play, possibly move laterally (quick step) from hole, being alert for the tight end cutting across the field.
  - B. cover action at the point of attack and then behind the runner.
- VII. The Umpire will check for illegal use of hands or arms and other fouls near the neutral zone.
- VIII. The Umpire will be alert for:
- A. a fumble occurring beyond the neutral zone and will assist in determining who secures possession.
  - B. illegal contact on the snapper, **if** the offensive team is in a scrimmage-kick formation.
  - C. action of players in and just behind the neutral zone.
- IX. If a dead ball occurs in the side zone or out of bounds, the Umpire will:
- A. move outside the hash mark to retrieve the ball.
  - B. relay the ball to the Referee for spotting unless he is also in the side zone, **if** so, the Umpire will hustle and spot the ball.

## FORWARD PASS

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Umpire will follow the same procedures as described in the Umpire section on Running Plays.
- II. After the snap, the Umpire will:
  - A. watch for illegal contact and illegal use of hands.
  - B. assist the Referee to determine **if** the pass was tipped and **give signal (S #11) if the pass was tipped.**
  - C. step forward within 3-yards of line of scrimmage when he reads forward pass.
    - 1. This action removes the Umpire as a target on shallow drag passes.

2. It puts the Umpire in position to rule whether an ineligible receiver is illegally downfield.
- D. observe action of players in and just behind the neutral zone.
- E. assist the Referee to determine whether the passer's feet were in or behind the neutral zone when the ball was released.
- F. be alert for ineligible receivers downfield prior to the ball crossing the line of scrimmage.
- G. drop penalty marker at the yard line beyond the line of scrimmage where an illegal pass is thrown and continue to officiate.
- H. pivot for short passes to help determine if complete.
- I. know where a forward pass first touches anything.
- J. assist the Linesman or Line Judge in determining if the pass crosses the line of scrimmage.
- K. assist the Referee in determining if the pass crossed the line of scrimmage for potential intentional grounding fouls.
- L. move quickly to the pile to assist the Referee if the quarterback is sacked.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK - PUNT

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Umpire will
  - A. remind receiving team players who are head-up on snapper or in guard-snapper gaps that the snapper has protection.
  - B. be in correct position: 10 yards deep, standing tall, keeping snap in view.
  - C. count kicking team players and indicate to the Referee with a clenched fist that the kicking team has been counted.
  - D. check numbering exception.
  - E. read the snapper and offensive guards.
  - F. after the Referee signals the kicking team is in a legal scrimmage kick formation, give the signal to indicate the snapper has protection (S #19).
- II. After the snap, the Umpire will:
  - A. hold position and be alert for roughing the snapper.
  - B. shift to action of offensive guards and backs behind the neutral zone.
  - C. read the play and be alert for run or pass.
  - D. be alert to assist the Referee in covering a short, blocked, or tipped kick and determine with the Linesman if the ball crosses the neutral zone.
- III. After the kick, the Umpire will:
  - A. slowly pivot with play action while focusing on linemen and action behind the play.
  - B. move toward the return area, observing players away from the ball.

- C. be alert for fouls in the secondary and move downfield slowly.
- D. move to help relay the ball to the inbounds spot when the ball goes out-of-bounds.

## FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE

- I. After ball is spotted, the Umpire will:
  - A. remind defensive players who are head-up on snapper or in guard-snapper gaps that the snapper has protection.
  - B. remind defensive players in the defensive backfield, near the snapper, that hurdling kicking team players is illegal.
  - C. be in correct position: 10 yards deep, left side of the line opposite the Side Judge, standing tall, keeping snap in view.
  - D. count kicking team players and indicate to the Referee with a clenched fist that the kicking team has been counted.
  - E. check numbering exception.
  - F. after the Referee signals the kicking team is in a legal scrimmage kick formation, give the signal to indicate the snapper has protection (S #19).
- II. After the snap, the Umpire will:
  - A. read interior linemen focusing on the snapper and the side of the line directly in front of him (normally side of line away from chains).
  - B. verify there is no illegal action on the snapper.
  - C. be alert for determining if the kick crosses the neutral zone.
  - D. be ready to assist the Referee in covering a short or blocked kick.
  - E. be alert for action on or by outside offensive linemen and the front blocking back on the Referee's side.
  - F. observe contact between defensive players and blocker behind the line.
  - G. pivot to view his side of the field, observe blocks in the side zone, and move toward the play to observe action after players go past his position.
  - H. assist in goal-line coverage if run develops.
  - I. continue to officiate until teams have separated toward their respective sidelines after the ball becomes dead.
- III. On the swinging gate:
  - A. The Side Judge will go with the majority of the offensive linemen, even if it means jumping the Umpire while the Umpire observes the initial action on the snapper.
  - B. The Side Judge will slide back to his normal position if the swinging gate moves to the normal scrimmage kick position; however, the Side Judge will not jump the Umpire a second time.

## AFTER A SCORE OR TRY

The Umpire will

- I. jog down his respective sideline along with the Back Judge, Side Judge, and Field Judge (Umpire and Side Judge down the chain crew side and Back Judge and Field Judge down the press box side) to their free kick lines.
- II. help the kicking team line up.

## ADMINISTERING PENALTIES

The Umpire will

- I. secure the ball.
- II. bring the offended team's captain to the Referee **if** a captain is requested by the Referee.
- III. verify the enforcement spot and the distance with the Referee.
- IV. proceed to mark off the penalty and verify with the Linesman and Line Judge per Pre-game Penalty Enforcement Administration.
- V. jog off penalties in between the hash marks on the actual yard lines.

## MEASURING FOR FIRST DOWN USING TRADITIONAL LINE-TO-GAIN INDICATORS

The Umpire will:

- I. take the forward stake from the chain crew member at the place of the measurement.
- II. tighten the line-to-gain indicator and hold forward line-to-gain indicator near the ball until the Referee reaches his decision.
- III. bring the stake to the hash mark and stretch out the chain after the Linesman has placed clip on yard line **if** the ball is outside the hash mark and short of the line-to-gain.

## TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

The Umpire will:

- I. stand over the ball facing the offense and the Referee until the Referee is ready to mark the ball ready for play.
- II. check the number of time-outs remaining for each team and record the time-out and the game time on his game card.
- III. retreat to normal position after cleared by the Referee or the ready for play signal is given.

## INJURY TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

The Umpire will:

- I. maintain location of the ball.
- II. make sure appropriate health-care professional(s) and/or coach(es) are not on the field for coaching purposes.
- III. assist the Referee in moving the teams away from the injured player and, **if the Referee elects**, to the sidelines in front of their respective team box areas.
- IV. be near the ball location and away from the injured player.

## BETWEEN-PERIODS PROCEDURE

The Umpire will:

- I. confirm and record the down, distance and yard line nearest the foremost point of ball, with the Referee.
- II. quickly take the ball to a corresponding point of the other half of the field and reverse directions.

## BETWEEN-HALVES PROCEDURE

The Umpire will:

- I. return to the field 5-minutes prior to the half time intermission ending.
- II. be in his free kick position with 1-minute remaining on game clock during the 3-minute warm-up period.

## END OF GAME PROCEDURE

The Umpire will:

- I. immediately jog off the field, together with all Officials, with security.
- II. neither avoid nor seek coaches.
- III. not discuss the game on the field or make any public statement about the game to the news media.
- IV. not comment about the game on social media.

## UMPIRE IN OFFENSIVE BACKFIELD (OPTIONAL)

The mechanics in this section are optional for the 2024 and 2025 football seasons, but it is anticipated that the Umpire will move to the offensive backfield for the 2026 football season.

The mechanics below are not intended to be all-inclusive. Unless noted otherwise, the Umpire will have the same responsibilities and positioning as outlined in the traditional mechanics when the Umpire is on the defensive side.

## RUNNING PLAY

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Umpire will:
  - A. move to a position behind the snapper until released by the Referee **if** the snap is imminent and the play clock has been set to 25-seconds.
  - B. back out from the line of scrimmage to their normal position **if** the play clock has been set to 40-seconds.
  - C. be positioned:
    1. 10-12 yards behind the offensive line of scrimmage on the opposite side of the quarterback than the Referee and at least 5 yards wide of the tackle.
    2. to view the ball, tackle on the far side and the backs.
    3. in a standing position with shoulders parallel to the line of scrimmage.
- II. Prior to the snap, the Umpire will:
  - A. count the number of offensive players and verify that 5 players numbered 50-79 are on the offensive line (ineligible receivers).
  - B. signal to the Referee with a clenched fist extended forward that counting in A above is complete and correct.
  - C. have primary responsibility for the snapper and linemen on the opposite side. Assuming a right-handed quarterback, the Umpire would have the



snapper, right guard, right tackle and tight end, if applicable; the Referee would have the left guard and left tackle.

- III. After the snap, the Umpire will:
  - A. read the interior linemen and focus on the snapper and linemen on the opposite side. Assuming a right-handed quarterback, the Umpire would have the snapper, right guard, right tackle and tight end, if applicable; the Referee would have the left guard and left tackle.
  - B. on a running play to his side, observe the ball, runner, action around the runner and blocks up to the neutral zone.
  - C. move to the side zone when the play dictates.
  - D. after the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, quickly hustle down field observing action behind the ball.
  - E. when reverse mechanics are used, clean up behind the ball carrier.
- IV. When the ball becomes dead, the Umpire will:
  - A. when dead between the hashes, retrieve and spot the ball.
  - B. when dead outside the hashes to his side, retrieve the ball and relay to the Referee for spotting, unless he is close to the hashes and can easily spot the ball.
  - C. when dead outside the hashes to the opposite side, hustle to the opposite hash and obtain the ball from the Referee for spotting.

## FORWARD PASS

- I. Unless otherwise noted below, the Umpire will follow the same procedures as described above under Running Play.
- II. After the snap, the Umpire will:
  - A. read the interior linemen and focus on the snapper and linemen on the opposite side. Assuming a right-handed quarterback, the Umpire would have the snapper, right guard, right tackle and tight end, if applicable; the Referee would have the left guard and left tackle.
  - B. if the quarterback drops back in the pocket, focus on all linemen for illegal blocks. Since his focus is on all linemen, he can make his way to the line of scrimmage and drop a penalty marker if he sees linemen go downfield.
  - C. assume responsibility for the quarterback if the quarterback scrambles to his side and crosses in front of him until the quarterback is no longer threatened or becomes a runner, in which case he will observe the ball, runner, action around the runner and blocks up to the neutral zone.
  - D. when the quarterback scrambles to the opposite side of the field, move

toward the line of scrimmage and help rule on ineligible receivers downfield, whether a pass is backward or forward, if a passer is beyond the line of scrimmage and if a touched pass is beyond or behind the line of scrimmage. If the quarterback reverses field, the Umpire will stay at the line of scrimmage and the Referee will cover the quarterback through the remainder of the down.

- E. when the ball is snapped from the goal line to the 15-yard line, not move toward the line of scrimmage but move to and have responsibility for the goal line when the Referee has responsibility for a retreating quarterback. The Referee will move to and have responsibility for the goal line when the Umpire takes responsibility for a retreating quarterback.
- F. move to the spot of the pass and be prepared to assist the Referee with intentional grounding, **if** needed.
- G. move to the side zone when the play dictates.
- H. after the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, quickly hustle down field observing action behind the ball.
- I. when reverse mechanics are used, clean up behind the ball carrier.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK - PUNT

- I. On punts, the Umpire will:
  - A. be positioned even with the punter and 5-7 yards outside the tackle on the opposite side of the punter than the Referee.
  - B. have responsibility for the snapper and all blocks by linemen and backs in front of the punter.
  - C. be prepared to assist the Referee with action on the punter, **if** needed.
  - D. following the kick, quickly hustle down field and move toward the return area following and observing the first wave of kicking team linemen down field.
  - E. when reverse mechanics are used, clean up behind the ball carrier.

## FIELD GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE

- I. On field goal attempts and tries, the Umpire will:
  - A. be positioned even with the potential kicker and 5-7 yards to the side of the holder on the opposite side of the potential kicker than the Referee.
  - B. have responsibility for the snapper and all linemen blocks.
  - C. be prepared to assist the Referee with action on the kicker, **if** needed.
  - D. when reverse mechanics are used on a field goal attempt, clean up behind the ball carrier.

# LINESMAN

## PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Linesman will:

- I. participate in the Official's pregame conference with each Head Coach.
- II. witness and note each Head Coach's answer regarding his players being legally equipped.
- III. note each team captain's name, and mark the speaking captain as determined by the Head Coach.
- IV. review duties of the Get Back Coach.

## FOLLOWING PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Linesman will:

- I. meet with the chain crew.
- II. secure and check the line-to-gain and down indicator, plus all auxiliary equipment. Make sure backup equipment is available.
- III. ensure that the line-to-gain equipment is marked at halfway point with tape, zip tie, etc. This can help on penalties measured from the previous spot or spot fouls to determine if first down after enforcement.
- IV. check to see whether home management has distinctive vests or shirts for the chain crew.
- V. remind the chain crew of their duties and responsibilities, and that they are Officials, not fans.
- VI. instruct the chain crew he will use a heel or bean bag to mark the spot at the sideline where the rear line-to-gain indicator is to be placed for every first down and where the placement of the clip should be.
- VII. ensure the chain is clipped and set 2-yards off the sideline, **if** space permits.
- VIII. work on the side where the line-to-gain equipment is operated, which is normally opposite the press box.
- IX. ask home management to specify which side the chains will be located **if** there is no press box or a press box on both sides.
- X. locate and instruct the Visiting team ball personnel on their duties and **approve** game balls with assistance from the Side Judge.
- XI. **verify a backup down indicator, or replacement batteries, is available if an electronic down indicator is used.**

## THE COIN TOSS

- I. At the 5-minute mark, the Linesman will line up at the 45-yard line away from the clock on the chain side of the field and wait for the Referee to signal for the Officials to escort the captains onto the field. The captains will meet the Referee and Umpire in the center of field. All other players must remain out of bounds on the sideline. All other Officials stop at the hash marks, angle in, facing the Referee and standing at parade rest.
- II. The actual coin toss should be at the 2-minute mark.
- III. After the captains are released back to their sidelines, all Officials will gather in the middle of the field to verify the coin toss information and for last minute instructions from the Referee. After instructions are given, all Officials will jog to their positions.

## CONTROLLING TEAM PERSONNEL ALTERCATIONS

The Linesman will:

- I. alert the coach on his side to keep all team personnel off the playing area.
- II. record the uniform number of any substitute who enters the playing area during an altercation.

## KICKOFF

- I. Before the kick, during the 1-minute intermission, the Linesman will:
  - A. check the chain crew for questions and positions.
  - B. go to the goal line position and make sure the sideline is clear, moving all the way up to the edge of the team box area to clear the sideline, if necessary.
  - C. count receiving team players and confirm with the Referee with a clenched fist. The clenched fist by the Linesman is the ready signal indicating the sideline is clear and the Official is ready for the kickoff.
  - D. make sure the sideline is clear before giving the ready sign to the Referee.
- II. Before the kick, after the teams are on the field, the Linesman will:
  - A. be certain coaches, players, substitutes and other individuals are in the proper location.
  - B. be in correct position: on the goal line out of bounds, heels on back edge of the restricted area, making sure the pylon is covered.
  - C. alter his position if a short kick is anticipated and if instructed by the Referee.

- III. After the kick, the Linesman will:
  - A. signal the game clock to start (S #2) when the kick is legally touched.
  - B. move deliberately along the sideline while watching for fouls away from the ball and covering to the kicking team's 2-yard line.
  - C. sound his whistle and give the time-out signal when the ball becomes dead in his area.
  - D. rule on touchback while standing on the goal line giving the touchback signal (S #7) once.
  - E. come off the pylon, to the numbers, and stop players from hitting while sounding whistle and giving the time-out signal (S #3).
  - F. be alert **if** a fair catch signal is given by any receiving team player.
  - G. mark the spot where the kick goes out-of-bounds on his side of the field.
  - H. drop his penalty marker **if** the ball goes out-of-bounds untouched inbounds by the receiving team.
  - I. maintain position while enabling coverage of his sideline at all times.
  - J. observe legality of blocks and action away from the ball when he is not covering the runner.
- IV. If it is obvious that the kick will be fielded between the inbounds line and the sideline on the opposite side of the field, and the goal line is not threatened, the Linesman should cautiously begin to move up the sideline before the kick is fielded to observe and officiate up field action.
- V. If aligned for a possible onside kick, the Linesman will
  - A. be in correct position: on the 45-yard line in the restricted area on the chain crew side of the field between the kicking and receiving teams' restraining lines and leapfrog the Side Judge.
  - B. be aware of action in the 10-yard belt.
  - C. watch for encroachment by the receiving team, first touching by the kicking team (bean bag), touching by the receiving team, fair catch and illegal blocks.
  - D. be alert for first touching, catch and/or recovery, **if** the ball comes in his area. The other Officials should watch for illegal blocking, holding, clipping and early blocks by the kicking team.
  - E. stay in the restricted area and be prepared to cover the play **if** the receiving team gains possession and advances.

## RUNNING PLAY

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Linesman will:
- be in correct position: straddling the line of scrimmage on the sideline with heels on the back of the restricted area.
  - communicate with the Side Judge when the ball will be snapped inside the 5-yard line. Determine if the Side Judge/Field Judge should stay on the goal line.
  - identify eligible receivers on his side.
  - be alert for illegal substitutions.
  - check the wingbacks, flankers, split ends and slot backs.
  - watch for the player in motion away from him and maintain responsibility for him **if** he reverses direction. Remain in position unless vision is impaired, in which case, the Linesman will take one step into the offensive backfield.
  - count number of backfield players and **communicate via radios there is a legal formation** to the Line Judge **if** there are four or less players off the line of scrimmage.
  - pat the top of his hat to indicate a covered receiver, **if** there are more than three players on the line of scrimmage on his side of the snapper or **communicate this via radios.**
  - ensure all players have been, momentarily, between the 9-yard marks after the Umpire has spotted the ball and backed away. If not, drop a penalty marker if the defense does not cover the players who have not done so.**
  - watch for encroachment or false start and throw the penalty marker to the side of the offending team **if** a foul occurs.
  - after the snapper has placed their hand(s) on the ball, look both ways and tell any coaches in the restricted area to back up. Drop a penalty marker if they remain in the restricted area after the ball goes live.**
  - be alert for a Head Coach requesting a time out.**
- II. After the snap, the Linesman will:
- work in the restricted area while the ball is live.
  - observe the keys and read the tackle to determine run or pass play.
  - stay on the line of scrimmage until the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage.
  - be alert for quick plays into the line and assist in marking forward progress with the downfield foot.
  - watch the initial charge of the linemen.

- F. (on an end run to the opposite side) observe blocking near neutral zone to tackle.
  - G. check the block on an eligible receiver.
  - H. observe if any offensive player goes out of bounds. If so, toss hat at the spot they went out of bounds. If the player illegally returns, drop a penalty marker at the spot they return.
- III. When the ball comes to his side of the field, the Linesman will:
- A. cover the sideline and check for illegal offensive and defensive blocks.
  - B. give the wind signal (S #2) twice after determining the ball is dead inbounds near the sideline, especially when forward progress is stopped inbounds.
  - C. sound his whistle when the ball becomes dead in his area and mark forward progress (using the cross-field spot of the Line Judge when needed) with the downfield foot. When contact pushes runners backward, they are entitled to the forward-most spot of the ball at the point of contact with the opponent.
  - D. square off forward progress by moving down the sideline to the spot where the ball became dead and then jog perpendicular in towards the center of the field to the numbers, unless the play ends close to a first down or with a possible change of possession. In this case, the Linesman will move quickly in as far as possible until he reaches players on that yard line and place the ball on the ground after spotting.
  - E. pause after the ball has been blown dead to ensure there is not a foul on the play, then raise his open hand above his head, signaling the 40-second play clock to begin.
  - F. keep all players in front of him unless the spot of forward progress is close to a first down or a touchdown, in which case the Linesman comes in as far as possible to find the location of the ball. He does not go around any players.
  - G. if the ball is marked from the numbers on his team's side of the field, place the ball on his foot and relay in a new ball to the Umpire for spotting with help from the Side Judge.
  - H. if the ball is marked from the numbers, extend both arms to the side and parallel with the ground, then give the next down with the fingers while verbally announcing to the sideline and back out to the sideline.
  - I. turn and face the sideline and jog back when the ball is marked inside the numbers.
  - J. hold the spot until the Side Judge sets the down indicator on 1st downs when the ball is marked inside the numbers.

- IV. If the ball becomes dead near his sideline and a first down is gained, the Linesman will:
  - A. use normal coverage.
  - B. give the wind signal (S #2) once and then give the time-out signal (S #3) twice after determining the ball is dead.
  - C. place the ball on his foot and relay a new ball to the Umpire for spotting with the help of the Side Judge.
  - D. if the down indicator is late arriving, drop a bean bag at the dead ball spot.
- V. On down-the-line option plays toward the Linesman, the Linesman will observe the pitchman, loose ball, and then the pitchman as he becomes the runner.
- VI. When the ball goes to the opposite side of the field, the Linesman will:
  - A. move down the sideline in the restricted area until the ball becomes dead and then jog perpendicular in towards the center of the field to the numbers.
  - B. observe action on linebackers and backside pursuit.
  - C. mirror the Line Judge and help get the spot if he is blocked out.
  - D. after mirroring the spot, extend both arms to the side and parallel with the ground, then give the next down with the fingers while verbally announcing to the sideline, and back out to the sideline.
- VII. The Linesman will observe late blocks and fouls away from runner.
- VIII. The Linesman is responsible for the entire sideline. If the ball goes out of bounds:
  - A. signal time-out immediately (S #3).
  - B. hold out-of-bounds spot, monitoring players out-of-bounds, while another Official retrieves the ball.
- IX. If an obvious first down occurs, the Linesman will signal the game clock to stop (S #3).
- X. While moving downfield with the runner, the Linesman will watch for an illegal forward pass or fumble.
- XI. If play continues following an illegal forward pass, the Linesman will drop the penalty marker at the spot of the pass to indicate where the run ended and at the spot of any subsequent foul.
- XII. The Linesman (working with down indicator operator and chain crew) will:
  - A. echo the Referee's signal verbally and with proper hand signal.
  - B. not turn his back on field of play when having the down indicator moved.
  - C. authorize down indicator operator to move only after Referee's signal.
- XIII. When necessary to move the line-to-gain equipment, the Linesman will:
  - A. spot foremost point of ball with downfield foot.
  - B. have down indicator operator mark spot.



- C. have the chain crew set the two line-to-gain indicators.
  - D. inform the Referee that the line-to-gain equipment is ready.
- XIV. When line-to-gain is the goal line, the Linesman will have the line-to-gain equipment removed from the sideline.

## FORWARD PASS

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Linesman will follow the same procedures as described in the Linesman section on Running Plays.
- II. After the snap, the Linesman will:
  - A. observe the keys and read the tackle to determine run or pass.
  - B. be ready to rule on the direction (forward or backward) of all quarterback passes to his side and punch accordingly.
  - C. stay on the line of scrimmage and cover a short pass in his area. If the Umpire is working in the offensive backfield, have primary responsibility for ineligible receivers downfield.
  - D. watch for interference by either team.
  - E. be ready to rule on a fumble or an illegal pass after the completion.
  - F. give the time-out signal (S #3) and a completed signal, if a catch is completed near the sideline.
- III. If pass is incomplete in his area, the Linesman will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the incomplete-pass signal (S #10) twice.
  - C. get a new ball and relay to the Official nearest the previous spot.
  - D. assist the Referee in determining if the pass crossed the line of scrimmage for potential intentional grounding fouls.
  - E. be alert for sideline action.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK - PUNT

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Linesman will
  - A. be in correct position: same as a run or a pass play.
  - B. check the down number.
- II. After the snap, the Linesman will:
  - A. hold momentarily until the ball crosses the line of scrimmage.
  - B. release after the ball crosses the line of scrimmage and then move slowly downfield covering his side between the neutral zone and deep receiver(s).
  - C. cover all kicks on his side of the field.

- 7 MAN CREW  
LINESMAN
- III. If the ball rolls out of bounds on a short kick, the Linesman will:
    - A. sound his whistle and give the time-out signal (S #3) twice.
    - B. hold the spot and continue to observe the action.
  - IV. The Linesman will assist the Referee in covering the ball on a short kick.
  - V. The Linesman will note if the kick is touched beyond the neutral zone and will then:
    - A. determine if the recovery was in or behind the neutral zone.
    - B. be prepared to mark the first touching or fumble.
  - VI. On a routine kick that is returned, using reverse mechanics, the Linesman will:
    - A. watch for illegal blocks, clipping and other fouls in the secondary.
    - B. direct his initial movement in reaction to the play situation. Movement in the restricted area should be controlled, but attempt to get a cushion of at least 20 yards in advance of the play.
    - C. if there is a break away, be at the goal line before the returner crosses it.
    - D. get the forward progress spot, if the ball is downed inside the 2-yard line.
    - E. move quickly and directly into the out of bounds area to observe, clean up any action and retrieve the ball, if the play goes out of bounds on his side.
  - VII. When the ball becomes dead in his area, the Linesman will:
    - A. sound his whistle, give time-out signal (S #2) twice, and mark the spot.
    - B. make sure of possession on a fair catch before blowing the play dead.
    - C. assure the ball is covered if a foul needs to be reported to the Referee.
    - D. watch the Referee for a signal before moving the line-to-gain equipment.
  - VIII. If the punt is blocked or the ball is snapped over the punter, the Linesman will:
    - A. move into the offensive backfield and work to the kicking team's goal line to the extent necessary, if he is on the opposite side of the punter from the Referee.
    - B. maintain his position on the line of scrimmage to determine whether a kick crosses the line of scrimmage, if he is on the same side of the punter as the Referee.

## FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE

The Linesman will

- I. remain in the restricted area on the line of scrimmage while the ball is live.
- II. check the down number.
- III. observe the neutral zone.
- IV. move with the play as on any other goal-line play if it is a pass or run.
- V. remember that all blocked field goals are treated the same as a punt.

## GOAL-LINE PLAY

- I. The Linesman will position himself the same as in a running play.
- II. On red zone snaps between the 10 and 5-yard lines, the Linesman will release slowly downfield keeping the runner in front of him to the 2-yard line.
- III. On a snap, on or inside the 5-yard line, the Linesman will release to the goal line (staying deep in the restricted area giving players full access to the goal line/pylon area) at the snap and officiate back to the ball. Be mindful of the line to gain.
- IV. The Linesman will note the farthest point to which the ball is advanced (snap inside the 5-yard line).
  - A. If short of the goal line, the Linesman will move in quickly and help by marking the progress spot with his downfield foot or by actually placing the ball.
  - B. If the ball is in possession of the runner and touches or crosses the goal-line plane, the Linesman will instantly give the touch-down signal (S #5).
  - C. If ball does not break the goal-line, the Linesman will not give any signal.
- V. The Linesman will remind the chain crew to remove the line-to-gain equipment from the sideline when the line-to-gain is the goal line.
- VI. On a snap from the goal line to the 8-yard line, the Linesman will release to the goal line at the snap and officiate from behind the ball.
- VII. The goal line is the most important line when the ball is snapped inside the 8-yard line.

## AFTER A TRY OR SUCCESSFUL FIELD GOAL

The Linesman will:

- I. go to pylon.
- II. work on establishing a safe sideline
- III. move to kickoff position at the goal line with heels on the back edge of the restricted area.
- IV. be certain coaches, players, substitutes and other individuals are in the proper location.
- V. count receiving team players.
- VI. confirm both a safe sideline and proper number of receiving team players by signaling the Referee using a clenched fist of the outside arm.

## ADMINISTERING PENALTIES

The Linesman will:

- I. give option to the designated representative of the offended team **if** the offended team is on his sideline.
- II. be certain of the down number.
- III. proceed to the succeeding spot after communicating with the Umpire.
- IV. be ready to have the line-to-gain equipment moved after penalty administration.
- V. verify the enforcement spot from which the yards are stepped off.
- VI. not permit athletic trainers, attendants, or coaches to come onto field.
- VII. relay the penalty information to the appropriate coach and to other Officials **if** necessary.

## MEASURING FOR FIRST DOWN USING TRADITIONAL LINE-TO-GAIN INDICATORS

- I. When a measurement is signaled by Referee the Linesman will:
  - A. grasp the line-to-gain indicator and clip at the back edge of back-yard line. (Remember not to just grasp the clip because clip could detach.)
  - B. instruct the down indicator operator to mark the front line-to-gain indicator spot with the down indicator and keep the same down number.
  - C. bring the line-to-gain equipment behind the ball, and place the clipped part of the chain at the back edge of the back-yard line marked by the Line Judge's foot.
  - D. hold firmly and call "ready" to Umpire to stretch the line-to-gain indicator tight.
  - E. wait for the Referee's decision and signal.
- II. If not a first down, the Linesman will:
  - A. accompany the chain crew to the sideline while holding the line-to-gain indicator and reset in the original position, 2-yards from sideline.
  - B. have the down indicator operator move the down indicator to the next down.
- III. If new series, the Linesman will release the chain crew to the Side Judge who will then set for a first down after spotted by the Referee.

## TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

- I. For a conference outside the 9-yard mark, the Linesman will:
  - A. ensure the team is outside the 9-yard mark and above the 25-yard line.

- B. position himself at the top of the huddle around the 9-yard mark facing team/sideline, mark his game card and stand in parade rest.
  - C. when the 45-second whistle is blown by the Back Judge, walk through the middle of the huddle to get the players and coaches to break up and return to play saying, "Coach, the ball will be marked ready for play in 15-seconds".
  - D. be alert for substitutes by the team on his sideline or attempts to use substitutes for the purpose of deception.
  - E. maintain the proper number of players/attendants in the huddle when conferences are held between the inbounds lines.
  - F. inform the Head Coach of time-outs remaining.
  - G. have time-out huddle responsibilities by advising his team when the time-out has expired.
- II. For a conference between the 9-yard marks, the Linesman will:
- A. ensure that only one coach and no more than three attendants are on the field to confer with no more than 11 players.
  - B. move to a position on the sideline to ensure there are no illegal substitution violations.

## INJURY TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

The Linesman will:

- I. assist the Referee in moving the teams away from the injured player.
- II. position himself away from the injured player near his pre-snap position.
- III. use the same procedure as outlined in the TIME-OUT PROCEDURE for a conference outside the 9-yard mark, **if** the Referee elects to send the teams to the sidelines.

## BETWEEN-PERIODS PROCEDURE

The Linesman will:

- I. record down, distance, and the yard line nearest foremost point of ball.
- II. confirm information with the Referee and the Umpire.
- III. ensure the clip is set at the back edge of the back-yard line.
- IV. call the down and distance to the chain crew.
- V. reverse ends of the line-to-gain equipment and the two crew members.
- VI. set the down indicator after the ball has been spotted.
- VII. check the number of down and distance to gain.

- VIII. indicate to the Referee he is ready by signaling the number of down with finger(s) or fist for fourth down.
- IX. not set the chains before switching ends of the field **if** a first down is gained on the last timed down.
- X. assume the same responsibilities as time-out procedures.
- XI. when the 45-second whistle is blown by the Back Judge, walk through the middle of the huddle to get the players and coaches to break up and return to play saying, "Coach, the ball will be marked ready for play in 15-seconds".

## **BETWEEN-HALVES PROCEDURE**

The Linesman will:

- I. return to the field 5-minutes prior to the half time intermission ending.
- II. be in his free kick position with 1-minute remaining on the game clock during the 3-minute warm-up period.

## **END OF GAME PROCEDURE**

The Linesman will:

- I. immediately jog off the field, together with all Officials, with security.
- II. neither avoid nor seek coaches.
- III. not discuss the game on the field or make any public statement about the game to the news media.
- IV. not comment about the game on social media.

## LINE JUDGE

### PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Line Judge will:

- I. participate in the Officials' pregame conference with each Head Coach.
- II. witness and note each Head Coach's answer regarding his players being legally equipped.
- III. note each team captain's name and number and underline the speaking captain as determined by the Head Coach.
- IV. review duties of the Get Back Coach.

### FOLLOWING PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Line Judge will:

- I. observe each team during warm-ups.
- II. check starting time and assist in getting game started on time.
- III. assist with securing sidelines.
- IV. inspect the playing field and pylons, as well as the sideline and end-line boundaries.
- V. locate and instruct the Home team ball personnel on their duties and approve game balls with assistance from the Field Judge.

### THE COIN TOSS

- I. At the 5-minute mark, the Line Judge will line up at the 45-yard line furthest from the clock on the press box side of the field and wait for the Referee to signal the Officials to escort the captains onto the field.
- II. No more than four captains are allowed on the field. All other players must remain out of bounds on the sideline. The captains will meet the Referee and the Umpire in the center of field. All other Officials stop at the hash marks facing the Referee and standing at parade rest.
- III. The actual coin toss should be at the 2-minute mark.
- IV. The Line Judge will carry his team ball out to the coin toss.
- V. After the kickoff team is determined, the Line Judge will toss his ball to the Back Judge, if his team is kicking off. The Line Judge will return his ball to his team's sideline, preferably to the ball personnel, if his team is receiving.

- VI. After the captains are released back to their sidelines, all Officials will gather in the middle of the field to verify the coin toss information and for last minute instructions from the Referee. After instructions are given, all Officials will jog to their positions.

## CONTROLLING TEAM PERSONNEL ALTERCATIONS

The Line Judge will:

- I. alert the coach on his side to keep all team personnel off the playing area.
- II. record the uniform number of any substitute who enters the playing area during an altercation.

## KICKOFF

- I. Before the kick, during the 1-minute intermission, the Line Judge will:
  - A. go to the goal line position and make sure the sideline is clear, moving all the way up to the edge of the team box area to clear the sideline, **if** necessary.
  - B. count receiving team players and confirm with the Referee with a clenched fist. The clenched fist by the Line Judge is the ready signal indicating the sideline is clear and the Official is ready for the kickoff.
  - C. make sure the sideline is clear before giving the ready sign to the Referee.
- II. Before the kick, after the teams are on the field, the Line Judge will:
  - A. be certain coaches, players, substitutes and other individuals are in the proper location.
  - B. be in correct position: on the goal line out of bounds, heels on back edge of the restricted area, making sure the pylon is covered.
  - C. alter his position **if** a short kick **is anticipated** and **if** instructed by the Referee.
- III. After the kick, the Line Judge will:
  - A. signal clock to start (S #2) when the kick is legally touched.
  - B. move deliberately along the sideline while watching for fouls away from the ball and cover to the 2-yard line.
  - C. sound his whistle and give the time-out signal (S #2) twice when the ball becomes dead in his area.
  - D. rule on touchback while standing on the goal line giving the touchback signal (S #7) once.
  - E. come off the pylon, to the numbers, and stop players from hitting while sounding whistle and giving the time-out signal (S #3).



- F. be alert **if** a fair catch signal is given by any receiving team player.
  - G. mark the spot where the kick goes out-of-bounds on his side of the field.
  - H. drop his penalty marker **if** the ball is untouched inbounds by the receiving team.
  - I. maintain position while enabling coverage of his sideline at all times.
  - J. observe legality of blocks and action away from the ball when he is not covering the runner.
- IV. If it is obvious the kick will be fielded between the inbounds line and the sideline on the opposite side of the field, and the goal line is not threatened, the Line Judge should cautiously begin to move up the sideline before the kick is fielded to observe and officiate up field action.
- V. During an onside kick, the Line Judge will:
- A. be in correct position: on 45-yard line, in the restricted area on the press box side of the field, between the kicking and receiving teams' restraining lines and leapfrog the Field Judge.
  - B. be aware of action in the 10-yard belt.
  - C. watch for encroachment by the receiving team, first touching by the kicking team (bean bag), touching by the receiving team, fair catch and illegal blocks.
  - D. be alert for first touching, catch and/or recovery, **if** the ball comes in his area. The other Officials should watch for illegal blocking, holding, clipping and early blocks by the kicking team.
  - E. stay in the restricted area and be prepared to cover the play **if** the receiving team gains possession and advances.

## RUNNING PLAY

- I. After ball is spotted, the Line Judge will:
- A. be in correct position: straddling the line of scrimmage on the sideline with heels on the back of the restricted area.
  - B. communicate with the Field Judge when the ball will be snapped inside the 5-yard line.
  - C. identify eligible receivers on his side.
  - D. be alert for illegal substitutions.
  - E. check the wingbacks, flankers, split ends, and slot backs.
  - F. watch for the player in motion away from him and maintain responsibility for him **if** he reverses direction. Remain in position unless vision is impaired, in which case the Line Judge will take one step into the offensive backfield.

- G. count number of backfield players and communicate via radios there is a legal formation to the Linesman **if** there are four or less players off the line of scrimmage.
- H. pat the top of his hat to indicate a covered receiver, **if** there are more than three players on the line of scrimmage on his side of the snapper or communicate this via radios.
- I. ensure all players have been, momentarily, between the 9-yard marks after the Umpire has spotted the ball and backed away. If not, drop a penalty marker **if** the defense does not cover the players who have not done so.
- J. watch for encroachment or false start and throw the penalty marker to the side of the offending team **if** a foul occurs.
- K. after the snapper has placed their hand(s) on the ball, look both ways and tell any coaches in the restricted area to back up. Drop a penalty marker **if** they remain in the restricted area after the ball goes live.
- L. be alert for a Head Coach requesting a time out.
- II. After the snap, the Line Judge will
- A. work in the restricted area while the ball is live.
  - B. observe the keys and read the tackle to determine run or pass play.
  - C. stay on the line of scrimmage until the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage.
  - D. be alert for quick plays into the line and assist in marking forward progress with the downfield foot.
  - E. watch the initial charge of the linemen.
  - F. observe blocking near neutral zone to tackle **on an end run to opposite side.**
  - G. check the block on an eligible receiver.
  - H. observe if any offensive player goes out of bounds. If so, toss his hat at the spot they went out of bounds. If the player illegally returns, drop a penalty marker at the spot they return.
- III. When the ball comes to his side of the field, the Line Judge will:
- A. cover the sideline and check for illegal offensive and defensive blocks.
  - B. give the wind signal (S #2) twice after determining the ball is dead inbounds near the sideline, especially when forward progress is stopped inbounds.
  - C. sound his whistle when the ball becomes dead in his area and mark forward progress with downfield foot (using the cross-field spot of the Linesman when needed). When contact pushes the runner backward, they are entitled to the forward-most spot of the ball at the point of contact with the opponent.

- D. square off forward progress by moving down the sideline to the spot where the ball became dead and then jog perpendicular in towards the center of the field to the numbers, unless the play ends close to a first down or with a possible change of possession. In this case, the Line Judge will move quickly in as far as possible until he reaches players on that yard line and place the ball on the ground after spotting.
  - E. pause after the ball has been blown dead to ensure there is not a foul on the play, then raise his open hand above his head, signaling the 40-second play clock to begin.
  - F. keep all players in front of him unless the spot of forward progress is close to a first down or a touchdown, in which case the Line Judge comes in as far as possible to find the location of the ball. He does not go around any players.
  - G. if the ball is marked from the numbers on his team's side of the field, place the ball on his foot and relay a new ball to the Umpire with the help of the Field Judge.
  - H. if the ball is marked from the numbers, extend both arms to the side and parallel with the ground, then give the next down with the fingers while verbally announcing to the sideline, and back out to the sideline.
  - I. turn and face the sideline and jog back when the ball is marked inside the numbers.
- IV. If the ball becomes dead near the sideline and a first down is gained, the Line Judge will:
- A. use normal coverage.
  - B. give the wind signal (S #2) once and then give the time-out signal (S #3) twice after determining the ball is dead.
  - C. place the ball on his foot and relay a new ball to the Umpire for spotting with the help of the Field Judge.
- V. On down-the-line option plays toward the Line Judge, the Line Judge will observe the pitchman, loose ball and then the pitchman as he becomes the runner.
- VI. When the ball goes to the opposite side of the field, the Line Judge will:
- A. move down the sideline in the restricted area until the ball becomes dead and then jog perpendicular in towards the center of the field to the numbers.
  - B. observe action on linebackers and backside pursuit.
  - C. mirror the Linesman spot and help get the spot if he is blocked out.

- D. after mirroring the spot, extend both arms to the side and parallel with the ground, then give the next down with the fingers while verbally announcing to the sidelines, and back out to the sideline.
- VII. The Line Judge will observe late blocks and fouls away from runner.
- VIII. The Line Judge is responsible for the entire sideline. If the ball goes out of bounds:
  - A. signal time-out immediately(S #3).
  - B. hold out-of-bounds spot, monitoring players out-of-bounds, while another Official retrieves the ball.
- IX. If an obvious first down occurs, the Line Judge will signal the game clock to stop (S #3). If a play ends close to a first down, the Line Judge will inform the Referee and other crew members.
- X. While moving downfield with the runner, the Line Judge will watch for an illegal forward pass or fumble.
- XI. If play continues following an illegal forward pass, the Line Judge will drop a penalty marker at the spot of the pass to indicate where the run ended and at the spot of any subsequent foul.

## FORWARD PASS

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Line Judge will follow the same procedures as described in the Line Judge section on Running Plays.
- II. After the snap, the Line Judge will:
  - A. observe the keys and read the tackle to determine run or pass.
  - B. be ready to rule on the direction (forward or backward) of all quarterback passes to his side and punch accordingly.
  - C. stay on the line of scrimmage and cover the short pass in his area.
  - D. watch for interference by either team.
  - E. be ready to rule on a fumble or an illegal pass after the completion.
  - F. give the time-out signal (S #3) and a completed signal, if a completed catch near the sideline.
- III. If pass is incomplete in his area, the Line Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the incomplete-pass signal (S #10) twice.
  - C. get a new ball and relay to the Official nearest the previous spot.
  - D. assist the Referee in determining if the pass crossed the line of scrimmage for potential intentional grounding fouls.
  - E. be alert for sideline action.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK - PUNT

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Line Judge will:
  - A. be in correct position: same as for run or pass.
  - B. check the down number.
- II. After the snap, the Line Judge will:
  - A. hold momentarily until the ball crosses the line of scrimmage.
  - B. release after the ball crosses the line of scrimmage and then move downfield covering his side between the neutral zone and the deep receiver(s).
  - C. cover all kicks on his side of the field.
- III. If the ball rolls out of bounds, the Line Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle and give the time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - B. hold the spot and continue to observe action.
- IV. The Line Judge will assist the Referee in covering the ball on a short or a blocked kick.
- V. The Line Judge will note if the kick is touched beyond the neutral zone and will then:
  - A. determine if the recovery was in or behind the neutral zone.
  - B. be prepared to mark the first touching or fumble.
- VI. On a routine kick that is returned, using reverse mechanics, the Line Judge will:
  - A. watch for illegal blocks, clipping and other fouls in the secondary.
  - B. direct his initial movement in reaction to the play situation. Movement in the restricted area should be controlled, but attempt to get a cushion of at least 20 yards in advance of the play.
  - C. if there is a break away, be at the goal line before the returner crosses it.
  - D. get the forward progress spot, if the ball is downed inside the 2-yard line.
  - E. move quickly and directly into the out of bounds area to observe, clean up any action and retrieve the ball, if the play goes out of bounds on his side.
- VII. When the ball becomes dead in his area, the Line Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle, give the time-out signal (S #3) twice, and mark the spot.
  - B. make sure of possession on a fair catch before blowing the play dead.
  - C. assure the ball is covered if a foul needs to be reported to the Referee.
- VIII. If the punt is blocked or the ball is snapped over the punter, the Line Judge will:
  - A. move into the offensive backfield and work to the kicking team's goal line to the extent necessary, if he is on the opposite side of the punter from the Referee.
  - B. maintain his position on the line of scrimmage to determine whether a kick crosses the line of scrimmage, if he is on the same side of the punter as the Referee.

## FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE

The Line Judge will

- I. remain in the restricted area on the line of scrimmage while the ball is live.
- II. check down indicator.
- III. observe neutral zone.
- IV. move with the play as on any other goal-line play, **if** it is a pass or run.
- V. remember that all blocked field goals are treated the same as a punt.

## GOAL-LINE PLAY

- I. The Line Judge will position himself the same as in a running play.
- II. On red zone snaps between the 10 and 5-yard lines, the Line Judge will release slowly downfield keeping the runner in front of him and stop at the 2-yard line.
- III. On a snap on or inside the 5-yard line, the Line Judge will release to the goal line (staying deep in the restricted area giving players full access to the goal line/pylon area) at the snap and officiate in front of the ball. Be mindful of the line to gain.
- IV. The Line Judge will note the farthest point to which the ball is advanced (snap inside 5-yard line).
  - A. If short of the goal line, the Line Judge will move in quickly and help by marking the progress spot with his downfield foot or by actually placing the ball.
  - B. If the ball is in possession of the runner and touches or crosses the goal-line plane, the Line Judge will instantly give the touch-down signal (S #5).
  - C. If ball does not break the goal-line, the Line Judge will not give any signal.
- V. On a snap from the goal line to the 8-yard line, the Line Judge will release back to the goal line at the snap and officiate from behind the ball.
- VI. The goal line is the most important line when the ball is snapped inside the 8-yard line.

## AFTER A TRY OR SUCCESSFUL FIELD GOAL

The Line Judge will

- I. go to pylon.
- II. work on establishing a safe sideline.
- III. move to kickoff position at the goal line with heels on the back edge of the restricted area.

- IV. be certain coaches, players, substitutes and other individuals are in the proper location.
- V. count receiving team players.
- VI. confirm both a safe sideline and proper number of receiving team players by signaling the Referee using a clenched fist of the outside arm.

## ADMINISTERING PENALTIES

The Line Judge will:

- I. give option to the designated representative of the offended team.
- II. hold the enforcement spot.
- III. verify the accuracy and the distance of the yards to be stepped off.
- IV. not permit athletic trainers, attendants, or coaches to come onto the field.
- V. relay penalty information to the appropriate coach and to other Officials if necessary.

## MEASURING FOR FIRST DOWN USING TRADITIONAL LINE-TO-GAIN INDICATORS

The Line Judge will:

- I. place his foot just behind the yard line where clip is to be placed to align the Linesman so the chains are parallel to the sidelines.
- II. observe all players.

## TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

- I. For a conference outside the 9-yard mark, the Line Judge will:
  - A. ensure the team is outside the 9-yard mark and above the 25-yard line.
  - B. position himself at the top of the huddle around the 9-yard mark facing team/sideline, mark his game card and stand in parade rest.
  - C. when the 45-second whistle is blown by the Back Judge, walk through the middle of the huddle to get the players and coaches to break up and return to play saying, "Coach, the ball will be marked ready for play in 15-seconds".
  - D. be alert for substitutes by the team on his sideline or attempts to use substitutes for the purpose of deception.
  - E. maintain the proper number of players/attendants in the huddle when conferences are held between the inbounds lines.
  - F. inform the Head Coach of time-outs remaining.

- G. have time-out huddle responsibilities by advising his team when the time-out has expired.
- II. For a conference between the 9-yard marks, the Line Judge will:
  - A. ensure only one coach and no more than three attendants are on the field to confer with no more than 11 players.
  - B. move to a position on the sideline to ensure there is no illegal substitution violations.

## INJURY TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

The Line Judge will

- I. assist the Referee in moving the teams away from the injured player.
- II. position himself away from the injured player near his pre-snap position.
- III. use the same procedure as outlined in the TIME-OUT PROCEDURE for a conference outside the 9-yard mark, **if** the Referee elects to send the teams to the sidelines.

## BETWEEN-PERIODS PROCEDURE

The Line Judge will:

- I. go to the new ball spot where the new period will begin.
- II. assume the same responsibilities as time-out procedures.
- III. when the 45-second whistle is blown by the Back Judge, walk through the middle of the huddle to get the players and coaches to break up and return to play saying, "Coach, the ball will be marked ready for play in 15-seconds".

## BETWEEN-HALVES PROCEDURE

The Line Judge will

- I. return to the field 5-minutes prior to the half time intermission ending.
- II. be in his free kick position with 1-minute remaining on game clock during the 3-minute warm-up period.

## END OF GAME PROCEDURE

The Line Judge will

- I. immediately jog off the field, together with all Officials, with security.
- II. neither avoid nor seek coaches.



- III. not discuss the game on the field or make any public statement about the game to the news media.
- IV. not comment about the game on social media.

## BACK JUDGE

### PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Back Judge will:

- I. participate in the Officials' pregame conference with each Head Coach.
- II. witness and note each Head Coach's answer regarding his players being legally equipped.
- III. note each team captain's name and number and underline the speaking captain as determined by the Head Coach.

### FOLLOWING PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Back Judge will:

- I. review starting time and be sure an auxiliary stopwatch, with a countdown timer, is available.
- II. assist with securing sidelines and inspecting player uniforms and equipment.
- III. inspect the playing field and pylons, as well as the sideline and end-line boundaries.
- IV. if there is a visible play clock, observe the play clock while the play clock operator is testing for both 25- and 40-second countdowns.
- V. be responsible for monitoring the correct time, carrying an accurate watch, and assisting in getting the game started on time.
- VI. locate and meet with both team quarterbacks and give instruction on the Back Judge's visual countdown mechanic of the play clock.
- VII. instruct or take responsibility for the ECO and PCO, **if** there is one.
- VIII. attend the Pre-Game Emergency Action Plan Meeting.

### THE COIN TOSS

- I. At the 5-minute mark, the Back Judge will line up at the 45-yard line closest to the game clock on the chain side of the field and wait for the Referee to signal Officials to escort the captains onto the field.
- II. No more than four captains are allowed on the field. All other players must remain out of bounds on the sideline. The captains will meet the Referee and the Umpire in the center of field. All other Officials stop at the hash marks, angle in facing the Referee and stand at parade rest.
- III. The actual coin toss should be at the 2-minute mark.

- IV. The Back Judge will carry his team ball out to the coin toss.
- V. After the kickoff team is determined, **if** the Back Judge's team is kicking off, his ball will be used. **If** his team is receiving, the Back Judge will be given the kickoff ball from the Line Judge and will return his ball to his team's sideline, preferably to the ball personnel.
- VI. After the captains are released back to their sidelines, all Officials will gather in the middle of the field to verify the coin toss information and for last minute instructions from the Referee. After instructions are given, all Officials will jog to their positions.

## TIMING

The Back Judge will:

- I. be responsible for all timing situations, including 25/40-second play clock, time-outs, quarter change and the time between a score and the succeeding kickoff.
- II. penalize a team for delay of game.
- III. regardless of whether there is or is not a functioning visible play clock, raise his open hand overhead when there are 10 seconds remaining and count down seconds with a downward clock-like motion starting at 5-seconds.
- IV. if there is a visible play clock, not separately time the 25/40 second count as long as the visible play clock is functioning correctly. If repeated re-sets of the visible play clock are disrupting the game, the Referee will determine whether to discontinue use of the visible play clock.
- V. pause for one count and set the play clock to 40-seconds when:
  - A. the ball is declared dead in field of play on a play from scrimmage and the covering Official raises his open hand to indicate the ball is dead and indicate the number of the next down or gives the wind signal (S #2) followed by a time-out signal (S #3) to indicate the line to gain has been reached.
  - B. the covering Official signals that a pass is incomplete.
  - C. the covering Official signals to stop the game clock because the ball is dead out-of-bounds.
- VI. set the play clock to 25-seconds when the play clock is started with the Referee's ready-for-play signal and whistle.
- VII. alert the Referee when the ball has not been made ready-for-play with a least 25 seconds remaining on a 40-second play clock. The Referee is responsible for requesting a re-setting of the play clock to 25 seconds.

- VIII. alert the Referee when both clocks are stopped due to a defensive penalty, defensive player injury or defensive equipment issue, and the play clock should be reset to 40-seconds.

## KICKOFF

- I. Before the kick, the Back Judge will:
- A. make sure there is 12:00 minutes on the game clock for the opening kickoff of the 1st and 3rd quarters. Verify the ball is legal and approved, **if** the kicker brings out his own ball.
  - B. count kicking team players and never allow the kickoff to proceed without the proper number of players. Ensure kicking team players are positioned properly. **Confirm with Umpire, Side Judge and Field Judge with a clenched fist.**
  - C. signal to the Umpire, Side Judge and Field Judge to take final positions on the sideline on the initial kickoff of each half and all kickoffs after safeties.
  - D. point out the Referee to the kicker, check legality of kicking tee and instruct the kicker to wait for the ready-for-play signal before kicking.
  - E. if the game is televised, make sure the time out coordinator is ready for play.
  - F. pick up the ready sign from the Umpire, Side Judge and Field Judge in their final positions and hold open hand above head to indicate to Referee he is ready.
  - G. hand the kicker the ball after the Referee signals by extending his arm toward the Back Judge with a clenched fist and after ensuring the kicking team has the proper number of players and a legal formation.
  - H. place the ball at the free kick spot, **if** the kicker will not accept the ball.
  - I. jog down the kickoff line to take final position on sideline: on the kicking team's free kick line in the side zone with heels on the back of the restricted area on the press box side of the field.
  - J. have a bean bag in hand.
  - K. be sure the sideline is clear and hold open hand above head to indicate to Referee he is ready.
  - L. penalize a team for delay of game **if** the ball is not kicked within 25-seconds after the ready signal.
  - M. sound his whistle to prevent action, **if** the ball falls or blows off tee.
  - N. watch for any infractions involving the kicking team's formation after the ready for play signal, the kicking team's free kick line, encroachment by

- the kicking team, short kicks, pop-up kicks, onside kicks and spots of first touching.
- O. assist in illegal early blocking by the kicking team.
  - P. if there is a foul to be administered on the free kick, place the football on the ground while giving the final signal and then administer the penalty.
- II. After the kick, the Back Judge will:
- A. run onto the field at a 45 degree angle to the near hash marks to observe action mainly toward the center of the field including off-ball action. As the return develops, the Back Judge will work inside-out as on any running play, staying alert for holding, illegal blocks, clipping, etc. He should maintain a cushion, be in advance of the run at all times, and must be on the goal line before the runner crosses.
  - B. watch initial blocks in his area.
- III. If the kick is short, the Back Judge will not run onto the field but will be prepared to cover the play **if** receiving team gains possession and advances.
- IV. During an onside kick or pooch kick, the Back Judge will:
- A. be in correct position: on the kicking team free kick line in the restricted area on the press box side of the field.
  - B. be aware of action in the 10-yard belt.
  - C. watch for encroachment by the kicking team, first touching by the kicking team (bean bag), touching by the receiving team, fair catch and illegal blocks.
  - D. be alert for first touching catch and/or recovery, **if** the ball comes in his area. The other Officials should watch for illegal blocking, holding, clipping and early blocks by the kicking team.
  - E. stay in the restricted area and be prepared to cover the play **if** the receiving team gains possession and advances.

## RUNNING PLAY

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Back Judge will:
- A. be in correct position: 25-yards beyond defensive line of scrimmage and always deeper than the deepest defensive back (3-5 yards), roughly in the center of the field.
  - B. be positioned no wider than near upright, when the ball is on the hash marks.
  - C. adjust position to the strength of the formation to provide the best coverage on single- and/or double-spread formation.

- D. be in initial position on the end line when the ball is snapped on or inside the 25-yard line, and the end line is his primary coverage responsibility.
  - E. time the 25/40-second count and ensure his visible signals are in sync with a visible play clock **if** one is used.
  - F. count defensive team players and indicate to the Side Judge and Field Judge that he has counted the defense by extending an arm with a clenched fist out in front of him when 11 or less are counted. (Multiple counts are recommended) If more than 11, recount and **if** 12 or more, blow whistle and drop a penalty marker.
  - G. be alert for a Head Coach requesting a time out.
- II. After the snap, the Back Judge will:
- A. pause and read keys.
  - B. move so the runner is between him and either the Linesman or Line Judge while observing blocks in front of the runner.
  - C. retreat to be in position behind the deepest receiver. Stay far enough away to keep the play boxed in.
  - D. maintain inside-out coverage, while staying between the hash marks.
  - E. cover players who are deeper than the Linesman or Line Judge.
  - F. cover action around the runner **if** he breaks free.
  - G. cover the goal line, which is his primary responsibility when the ball is snapped outside the 25-yard line.
  - H. be in advance of the runner and be ready to rule on the touchdown and assist with forward progress near the goal line. When the runner crosses the goal line after running closely down the sideline, the Back Judge should look to the covering wing Official and assure that the runner did not step out of bounds before giving a touchdown signal.
  - I. move into the area of a dead ball and assist Officials in maintaining order on out-of-bounds runs, especially in team areas.
  - J. glance at the game clock to make sure it is accurate, when the ball becomes dead. Example: Verify the game clock status- running or stopped and the time remaining.
  - K. correct obvious timing errors by stopping the game clock and talking to the Referee.
  - L. move in "accordion" with all other Officials on all plays when the ball becomes dead in front of him.
  - M. extend both arms to the side and parallel with the ground, then give the next down with the fingers and back out to presnap position.

## FORWARD PASS

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Back Judge will:
  - A. follow the procedures as described in the Back Judge section on Running Plays.
  - B. pause observe his keys and retreat in order to be in position behind the deepest receivers, never letting receivers get behind him.
  - C. cover deep receivers down the middle and to each sideline.
  - D. move quickly to the ball, when the pass is thrown.
  - E. watch for interference by either team.
  - F. be ready to rule on possible fumble or illegal pass after completion.
  - G. be ready to rule on all passes near the goal line.
  - H. for passes into the endzone, move to the end line and be ready to rule on passes near the end line.
- II. If the pass is incomplete in the Back Judge's area, he will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the incomplete-pass signal (S #10) twice.
- III. If the pass is complete in the Back Judge's area, he will:
  - A. sound his whistle when the ball becomes dead.
  - B. move to the spot of forward progress **if** no other Official can get to the spot.
  - C. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice when line-to-gain has been reached.
- IV. On all incomplete passes, the Back Judge will assist with the relay of the ball off the opposite side of the field.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK - PUNT

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Back Judge will:
  - A. be in correct position: 5-yards behind the deepest receiver in the middle of the field. He will coordinate his position with the Side Judge and Field Judge to ensure they are all on the same yard line.
  - B. have his contrasting bean bag in hand.
  - C. count receiving team players and indicate to the Side Judge and Field Judge that he has counted the receiving team with a clenched fist extended out in front of him.
  - D. be in his initial position: on the goal line when the ball is snapped on or inside the receiving team's 45-yard line or when a receiving team member is on or inside the 10-yard line.

- II. After the snap, the Back Judge will:
  - A. carry contrasting bean bags in his hands during down to mark first touching, fumble, momentum or end of kick **if there is a return**.
  - B. observe action of the players around ball when the kick is short to either side. The Side Judge and Field Judge will assume responsibility for the ball.
  - C. cover all kicks down the middle of the field and be ready to rule on whether the kick is touched by either team.
  - D. be prepared to rule on possession, **if** the ball is muffed.
  - E. be alert for a hand-off and reverse.
- III. When the kicking team is first to touch the scrimmage kick that is motionless beyond the neutral zone, the Back Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice, mark the spot and give the directional signal (S #8).
- IV. Do not anticipate a fair catch. The Back Judge should hold his whistle in his hand and see the ball possessed before sounding his whistle (no inadvertent whistles).
- V. If a receiving team player signals for a fair catch and a fair catch is not made, the Back Judge will cover the ball and the Side Judge and Field Judge will cover the receiver to make sure he does not block.
- VI. Following a fair catch, the Back Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - C. give the directional signal (S #8).
  - D. inform the Referee it was a fair catch.
- VII. When the runner catches the kick and advances, the Back Judge will:
  - A. drop a bean bag at the spot possession is obtained.
  - B. delay and observe the action behind the ball and let the other Officials pick up the runner.
  - C. pick up the runner and sound his whistle when the ball becomes dead, **if** the other Official gets screened out.
- VIII. When the kick becomes dead, the Back Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice and signal the direction the ball will be going (S #8).
  - C. be prepared to rule on a touchback and give the touchback signal (S #7) twice.
  - D. inform the Referee of the ball status.



- E. be prepared to rule on momentum **if** the kick is caught inside the 5-yard line and the player is downed in his end zone.
- F. mark the spot of the catch inside the 5-yard line with bean bag.

## FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Back Judge will:
  - A. be in correct position: beyond the end zone and behind his upright where he feels most comfortable and has the best coverage of the upright.
  - B. count receiving team players and signal with arm extended in front with a clenched fist.
- II. After the snap, the Back Judge will:
  - A. assume responsibility for the end line and for determining if the kick goes over or under the crossbar and inside the upright.
    - 1. Back Judge rules on crossbar and his upright.
    - 2. Field Judge rules on his upright.
    - 3. The Official who rules needs to verbally communicate “Yes or “No” to the other Official.
  - B. sound his whistle when a successful kick passes the upright or when it is apparently unsuccessful after breaking the goal-line plane.
  - C. move 2 steps forward (no angle), simultaneously with the Field Judge, in front of their respective upright and signal score (S #5) or no score (S #10) twice while facing the line of scrimmage.
  - D. assume his primary responsibility for the end line but will be prepared to move **if** kick is blocked, obviously short or a fake:
    - 1. The Back Judge will key the tight end on his side.
    - 2. If run or pass develops, the Back Judge will delay and read the play.
    - 3. The Back Judge will stay on the end line to assist.
    - 4. The Back Judge will mark first touching, fumble, momentum or end of kick with a bean bag.
  - E. remember all blocked field goals are treated the same as a punt.

## AFTER A TRY OR SUCCESSFUL FIELD GOAL

The Back Judge will:

- I. start 60-second count for subsequent kickoff as players and Officials move out to their positions.
- II. obtain the ball which will be used to kickoff. This ball should be left behind the goal post by ball personnel before the try.

- III. meet at respective pylons and jog down his respective sideline along with the Umpire, Side Judge and Field Judge (Umpire and Side Judge down the chain crew side and Back Judge and Field Judge down the press box side) to their free kick lines. The Back Judge will give a signal to the Umpire, so they jog down the field together.
- IV. give a 15-second warning (two short blasts on whistle) to the teams at the 45-second mark, **if** teams are not in position to play.

## ADMINISTERING PENALTIES

The Back Judge will:

- I. help obtain the ball.
- II. assist in holding the spot of the foul or recovering the penalty marker.
- III. assist in relaying penalty foul information to the appropriate sideline.
- IV. give the final signal for a foul to be enforced on the kickoff while facing the press-box side of field and step-off penalty yardage.

## MEASURING FOR FIRST DOWN USING TRADITIONAL LINE-TO-GAIN INDICATORS

When a measurement is signaled by the Referee, the Back Judge will:

- I. not permit team attendants to enter the field.
- II. help clear players from the measurement area.
- III. observe all players.
- IV. tend the ball in front of the chains with an extended arm for the measurement not blocking the view of the press box or coaches.
- V. return to his pre-snap position on the field and observe the teams.

## TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

The Back Judge will:

- I. time 60-second interval and sound whistle twice to give the 15-second warning.
- II. check the number of time-outs for each team.
- III. observe the time out coordinator (red hat) for T.V. games.
- IV. position himself in his pre-snap position, standing at parade rest.

## INJURY TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

The Back Judge will:

- I. assist the Referee in moving the teams away from the injured player.
- II. position himself away from the injured player near his pre-snap position, standing at parade rest.

## END-OF-PERIOD PROCEDURE

- I. If a field game clock is NOT in use, the Back Judge will:
  - A. notify the Referee approximately 4-minutes before the end of the 2nd and 4th periods.
  - B. notify the Referee that time may expire during the next down approximately 30-seconds before the period expires.
  - C. signal Referee by raising open hand above head, sound whistle and give the time-out signal (S #3) twice when time expires and the ball becomes dead.
- II. If a field game clock is used, the Back Judge will:
  - A. be responsible for knowing when time expires **if** he is facing the game clock.
  - B. sound his whistle to prevent the snap, **if** time expires.
  - C. sound whistle loud and long and give time-out signal (S #3) twice, **if** the ball is snapped immediately after time has expired.

## BETWEEN-PERIODS PROCEDURE

The Back Judge will:

- I. go to the Linesman's sideline and confer with the Linesman about the down, distance and spot of the clip. Once they agree, the Back Judge will jog to the opposite end of the field where the spot of the clip will be marked. The Back Judge stands outside the yard line where the clip will be placed, marking the spot with his foot. The Linesman brings the chain with the clip and places it at the spot the Back Judge has marked.
- II. observe the teams to make sure all conferences are legal.
- III. assume the same responsibilities as for a time-out.
- IV. time the 60-second interval and sound whistle twice to give the 15-second warning.

## BETWEEN-HALVES PROCEDURE

The Back Judge will

- I. return to the field 5-minutes prior to the half time intermission ending.
- II. be in his free kick position with 1-minute remaining on game clock during the 3-minute warm-up period.

## END OF GAME PROCEDURE

The Back Judge will

- I. immediately jog off the field, together with all Officials, with security.
- II. neither avoid nor seek coaches.
- III. not discuss the game on the field or make any public statement about the game to the news media.
- IV. not comment about the game on social media.

## SIDE JUDGE

### PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Side Judge will:

- I. participate in the Officials' pregame conference with each Head Coach.
- II. witness and note each Head Coach's answer regarding his players being legally equipped.
- III. note each team captain's name and number, and underline the speaking captain as determined by the Head Coach.

### FOLLOWING PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Side Judge will:

- I. meet with the chain crew.
- II. work with the Linesman on performing his duties.
- III. work with the Linesman when they meet with ball personnel on the Visiting sideline and approve game balls.

### THE COIN TOSS

- I. At the 5-minute mark, the Side Judge will line up at the 50 yard line on the chain side of the field behind the captains and wait for the Referee to signal the Officials to escort the captains onto the field.
- II. No more than four captains are allowed on the field. All other players must remain out of bounds on the sideline. The captains will meet the Referee and the Umpire in the center of field. All other Officials stop at the hash marks facing the Referee and standing at parade rest.
- III. The coin will be flipped no later than the 2-minute mark.
- IV. After captains are released back to their sidelines, all Officials will gather in the middle of the field to verify the coin toss information and for last minute instructions from the Referee. After instructions are given, all Officials will jog to their positions.

## KICKOFF

- I. Before the kick, the Side Judge will:
  - A. be on his hash mark facing receivers on their restraining line, after ensuring they are properly aligned, turn facing the Back Judge and signal with clenched fist.
  - B. move to his position after being signaled by the Back Judge on the initial kickoff of each half and after all safeties.
  - C. be in correct position: the receiving team's free kick line in the side zone with heels on the back of the restricted area line on the Linesman's side of the field to monitor bench area and assist the receiving team in getting into position.
  - D. have a bean bag in hand.
  - E. make sure there is 12:00 minutes on the game clock before starting 1st and 3rd quarter.
  - F. be sure the sideline is clear and the kicking team has 11 players before giving the ready sign to the Referee.
  - G. hold his open hand above his head to indicate he is ready until Back Judge checks him off.
- II. After the kick, the Side Judge will:
  - A. be alert for first touching by the kicking team and mark the spot with a bean bag.
  - B. watch initial blocks in his area.
  - C. observe legality of blocks and action away from the ball when he is not covering the runner.
  - D. maintain position while enabling coverage of his sideline at all times.
  - E. drop penalty marker if the ball is untouched inbounds by the receiving team.
  - F. mark the spot where the kick goes out-of-bounds on his side of the field.
  - G. sound his whistle and give the time-out signal (S #3) twice when the ball becomes dead in his area.
- III. If the kick is obviously deep, the Side Judge will:
  - A. move deliberately along the sideline in that direction while watching for fouls away from ball.
  - B. cover 15-yards down the sideline.
  - C. stay ahead of the ball and cover to the goal line, if a long run occurs.
- IV. During an onside kick, the Side Judge will:
  - A. be in correct position: on the receiving team's free kick line in the restricted area on the Linesman's side of the field.

- B. be aware of action in the 10-yard belt.
  - C. watch for first touching by the kicking team (bean bag), touching by the receiving team, fair catch and illegal blocks.
  - D. be alert for first touching, catch and/or recovery, **if** the ball comes in his area. The other Official should watch for illegal blocking, holding, clipping and early blocks by the kicking team.
  - E. stay in the restricted area and be prepared to cover the play **if** the receiving team gains possession and advances.
- V. If the Linesman is in position between the receiving and kicking teams' restraining lines and there is a deep kick, the Side Judge will move quickly along the sideline to observe and officiate the downfield action.

## RUNNING PLAY

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Side Judge will:
  - A. be in correct position: 20-yards beyond the defensive line of scrimmage on the Linesman's sideline in the restricted area.
  - B. be in initial position on the goal line when the ball is snapped from the 25-yard line to the 15-yard line.
  - C. be in his initial position on the goal line and 3-5 yards off the pylon **to give players full access to the goal line/pylon area** when the ball is snapped from the 14-yard line to the 6-yard line.
  - D. be in initial position on the end pylon when the ball is snapped on or inside the 5-yard line, unless Linesman instructs to stay on the goal line.
  - E. count defensive team players and indicate to the Back Judge and the Field Judge he has counted the defense by extending an arm with a clenched fist out in front of him when 11 or less are counted. Multiple counts are recommended.
  - F. recount if more than 11, and **if** 12 or more, blow his whistle, drop a penalty marker, and give the time-out signal (S#3) twice.
  - G. be aware of the down and distance (pass versus run), strength of formation, eligible receivers and initial key.
  - H. be aware of motion by A as this may change strength of formation and initial key.
  - I. **be alert for a Head Coach requesting a time out.**
- II. After the snap, the Side Judge will:
  - A. pause briefly and read keys.
  - B. observe actions on and by his key.
  - C. be alert for illegal blocks, clipping, blocks below the waist and holding.

- D. direct his initial movement in reaction to the play situation. Movement should be controlled, but a cushion in advance of the play is required. This cushion should be at least 20 yards.
  - E. be at the goal line before the runner crosses it.
  - F. get the spot of forward progress, **if** the ball is downed inside the 2-yard line.
  - G. move quickly and directly into the out of bounds area to observe, clean up any action, and retrieve the ball, **if** the play goes out of bounds on his side.
  - H. cover players who are deeper than the Linesman.
  - I. cover action around any runner that breaks free into the defensive secondary.
  - J. retreat to be in position behind the deepest receiver. The Side Judge will stay far enough away to keep the play boxed in.
  - K. observe if any defensive players go out of bounds and return. **If** so, toss his hat at the spot he went out of bounds.
  - L. move in "accordion" with all other Officials to the numbers on all plays when the ball becomes dead in front of him.
  - M. **if** a new series is awarded and the Linesman has the spot, set the down indicator for the Linesman or drop a bean bag at the dead ball spot **if** the down indicator is late arriving.
  - N. extend both arms to the side and parallel with the ground, then give the next down with the fingers and back out to the sideline.
  - O. turn and face the sideline and jog back when action has taken him inside the numbers.
- III. If the ball goes to the opposite side of the field, the Side Judge will:
- A. stay in the restricted area to officiate until the ball is declared dead, then move at an angle toward the hashes.
  - B. assist in observing action behind the Umpire, but not neglect any downfield players.
  - C. relay a new ball to the Umpire, **if** warranted.
  - D. glance at game clock to make sure it is accurate, when the ball becomes dead. Example: Verify the game clock status- running or stopped and the time remaining.
  - E. correct obvious timing errors by stopping the game clock and talking to the Referee.
  - F. move in "accordion" with all other Officials on all plays.
  - G. if a new series is awarded and the Linesman has the spot, set the down indicator for the Linesman or drop a bean bag at the dead ball spot **if** the down indicator is late arriving.



## FORWARD PASS

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Side Judge will follow the same procedures as described in the Side Judge section on Running Plays.
- II. After the snap, the Side Judge will
  - A. pause and observe his keys and then retreat to be in position behind the deepest receivers, never letting receivers get behind him.
  - B. move down field to maintain cushion and assure maximum vision, once pass is read.
  - C. switch focus from “key” to “zone” as the play develops.
  - D. observe action on and by his offensive key.
  - E. observe action of all players who enter his coverage zone.
- III. When a pass is thrown in the Side Judge’s zone, he will
  - A. narrow coverage focus to the intended receiver and defenders.
  - B. watch for interference by either team.
  - C. be ready to rule on possible fumble or illegal pass after completion.
  - D. be ready to rule on complete/incomplete.
  - E. officiate zone and then the ball.
  - F. be ready to rule on all passes near the goal line and the side line to the back pylon. The Side Judge should remain on the goal line for passes into the endzone.
- IV. If a pass is incomplete in the Side Judge’s area, he will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the incomplete-pass signal (S #10) twice.
  - C. get a new ball and relay to the Official nearest the previous spot.
- V. If pass is complete, the Side Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle when ball becomes dead in his area.
  - B. move to the spot of forward progress, **if** no other Official can get the spot.
  - C. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice when line-to-gain has been reached.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK - PUNT

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Side Judge will:
  - A. be in correct position: 5-yards behind the deepest receiver on the sideline. He will coordinate position with the other two deep Officials.
  - B. count receiving team players and indicate to the Back Judge and Field Judge he has counted the receiving team with a clenched fist extended out in front of him.

- C. be in his initial position on the goal line at the pylon, when the ball is snapped inside the defense's 45-yard line. (This allows for upward view of a ball that crosses the goal line/sideline in the air). In this case, the Side Judge will be ready to rule on a touchback.
- II. After the snap, the Side Judge will:
  - A. assume responsibility for the ball, when the kick is short and is toward his sideline. The Field Judge and Back Judge will watch for illegal blocking, holding and clipping away from the ball.
  - B. observe action of players around the ball.
- III. When the kicked ball goes out of bounds in flight, the Side Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - C. move farther down field than where the ball went out.
  - D. if he does not have an out-of-bounds spot, walk up field with one open hand above his head until the Referee spots him on the sideline by marking the spot with an outstretched "chopping" down motion, then signal the direction the ball will be going and hold the spot until the ball is spotted.
- IV. When the kicked ball rolls out of bounds, the Side Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - C. hold the spot and continue to observe action while giving the directional signal (S #8).
- V. If a receiving team player signals for a fair catch and a fair catch is not made, the Side Judge will:
  - A. observe to make sure the signaler does not block.
  - B. observe for first touching.
- VI. When the punt is returned to his side of the field, using reverse mechanics, the Side Judge will:
  - A. cover the sideline in the restricted area and check for illegal blocks.
  - B. sound his whistle when the ball becomes dead in his area.
  - C. square off forward progress by moving down the sideline to the spot where the ball became dead and then jog perpendicular in toward the center of the field to the numbers and mark forward progress with his downfield foot.
- VII. When the punt is returned to the opposite side of the field, using reverse mechanics, the Side Judge will:
  - A. move down the sideline in the restricted area until the ball becomes dead and then jog perpendicular in toward the center of the field to the numbers.
  - B. observe fouls away from the returner, including blindside blocks.
  - C. mirror the Field Judge and help get the spot if they are blocked out.

- VIII. When the kick becomes dead in the end zone, the Side Judge will:
- sound his whistle immediately.
  - be prepared to rule on a touchback and give the touchback signal (S #7) once.
  - come off the pylon, to the numbers, and stop players from hitting while sounding his whistle and giving the time-out signal (S #3).
  - be prepared to rule on momentum **if** the kick is caught inside the 5-yard line and the player is downed in his end zone, and mark the spot of the catch inside the 5-yard line with a bean bag.

## FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE

- After the ball is spotted, the Side Judge will:
  - be in correct position: 6-9 yards deep, with hands on knees, on the chain side of the line opposite of the Umpire.
  - check for the use of the numbering exception.
  - observe guard and tackle on the chains side of the field.
  - communicate eligible receivers by number.
- After the snap, the Side Judge will:
  - keep hands on knees, observe the neutral zone, reading interior linemen and focusing on the side of the line directly in front of him (normally chain side of the line).
  - be alert for determining if the kick crosses the neutral zone.
  - be ready to assist the Referee in covering a short or blocked kick.
  - be alert for action on or by outside offensive linemen and up blocking back on the Referee's side.
  - shift observation to contact between defensive players and blocker behind the line.
  - pivot to view his side of the field and observe blocks in side zone and move toward play to observe action, after player goes past his position.
  - continue to officiate, with hands on knees, until teams have separated toward their respective sidelines after the ball becomes dead.
- If the field goal or kick turns into a run or pass play toward the Side Judge's sideline, he will:
  - officiate from inside out.
  - assist in goal-line coverage **if** run develops to his side of the field.
  - continue to officiate until teams have separated towards their respective sidelines, after the ball becomes dead.

- D. officiate inside out, and all other Officials will use reverse mechanics, **if** a field goal is blocked and R possesses the ball.
- IV. On the swinging gate, the Side Judge will:
  - A. go with the majority of the offensive linemen, even **if** it means jumping the Umpire while the Umpire observes the initial action on the snapper.
  - B. slide back to the line of scrimmage **if** the gate moves to the normal position; however, the Side Judge will not jump the Umpire a second time.

## AFTER A TRY OR SUCCESSFUL FIELD GOAL

The Side Judge will:

- I. jog down his respective sideline along with the Back Judge, Umpire, and Field Judge (Umpire and Side Judge down the chain crew side and Back Judge and Field Judge down the press box side) with a 10-yard cushion so as to arrive at their Free Kick lines at same time.
- II. give a 15-second warning to the teams at the 45-second mark, **if** teams are not in position to play.

## ADMINISTERING PENALTIES

The Side Judge will:

- I. verify the accuracy and the distance of the yards to be stepped off.
- II. not permit athletic trainers, attendants, or coaches to come onto the field.
- III. relay penalty information to the appropriate coach and to other Officials **if** necessary.

## MEASURING FOR FIRST DOWN USING TRADITIONAL LINE-TO-GAIN INDICATORS

The Side Judge will:

- I. not permit team attendants to enter the field.
- II. help clear players from his sideline area, **if** the ball is in the side zone.
- III. observe all players.
- IV. move the down indicator personnel to the front indicator spot and keep the same down number. Stay with the down indicator operator until the Linesman has returned to the sideline.

- V. if a first down and a new series is awarded, the Linesman will release the chain crew to the Side Judge, who will set the chains for a first down after spotting by the Referee. If there is a penalty, do not move the down indicator until after enforcement.
- VI. if short of a first down, instruct the down indicator operator to wait until the Linesman has reset the chains before moving the down indicator and changing the down number.
- VII. return to his position on the field and observe the teams.

## TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

- I. For a conference outside the 9-yard mark, the Side Judge will:
  - A. ensure the team is outside of the 9-yard mark and above the 25-yard line.
  - B. move to a position 8-10 yards above the pre-snap side of the huddle, mark game card and then stand at parade rest.
  - C. when the 45-second whistle is blown, assist in getting players and coaches to break up and return to play.
- II. For a conference between the 9-yard marks, the Side Judge will:
  - A. ensure that only one coach and no more than three attendants are on the field to confer with no more than 11 players.
  - B. move to a position on the sideline to ensure there is no illegal substitution violations.

## INJURY TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

The Side Judge will:

- I. assist the Referee in moving the teams away from the injured player.
- II. position himself away from the injured player near his pre-snap position.
- III. use the same procedure as outlined in the TIME-OUT PROCEDURE for a conference outside the 9-yard mark, **if** the Referee elects to send the teams to the sidelines.

## BETWEEN-PERIODS PROCEDURE

The Side Judge will:

- I. observe the team on his sideline.
- II. assume the same responsibilities as for a time-out.

- III. check the team box and huddle areas for appropriate conference procedure the same as during charged time-out.
- IV. give his team 15-second warning when directed by the Back Judge.

## **BETWEEN-HALVES PROCEDURE**

The Side Judge will:

- I. return to the field 5-minutes prior to the half time intermission ending and be responsible for the visiting team returning to the field before the clock expires.
- II. at the start of the mandatory 3-minute warm-up, obtain the second-half choice from the Head Coach of the visiting team and communicate to the Referee.
- III. be in his free kick position with 1-minute remaining on game clock during the 3-minute warm-up period.

## **END OF GAME PROCEDURE**

The Side Judge will:

- I. immediately jog off the field, together with all Officials, with security.
- II. neither avoid nor seek coaches.
- III. not discuss the game on the field or make any public statement about the game to the news media.
- IV. not comment about the game on social media.

## FIELD JUDGE

### PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Field Judge will:

- I. participate in the Officials' pregame conference with each Head Coach.
- II. witness and note each Head Coach's answer regarding his players being legally equipped.
- III. note each team captain's name and number, and underline the speaking captain as determined by the Head Coach.

### FOLLOWING PREGAME COACHES CONFERENCE

The Field Judge will:

- I. work with the Line Judge on performing his duties.
- II. work with the Line Judge when they meet with ball personnel on the Home sideline and approve game balls.

### THE COIN TOSS

- I. At the 5-minute mark, the Field Judge will line up at the 50 yard line on the press box side of the field behind the captains and wait for the Referee to signal the Officials to escort the captains onto the field. If the ECO is not on the field, the Field Judge should line up at the 45-yard line closest to the clock.
- II. No more than four captains are allowed on the field. All other players must remain out of bounds on the sideline. The captains will meet the Referee and the Umpire in the center of field. All other Officials stop at the hash marks facing the Referee and standing at parade rest.
- III. The coin will be flipped no later than the 2-minute mark.
- IV. After captains are released back to their sidelines, all Officials will gather in the middle of the field to verify the coin toss information and for last minute instructions from the Referee. After instructions are given, all Officials will jog to their positions.

## KICKOFF

- I. Before the kick, the Field Judge will:
  - A. be on his hash mark facing receivers on their restraining line, after ensuring they are properly aligned, turn facing the Back Judge and signal with a clenched fist.
  - B. move to his position after being signaled by the Back Judge on the initial kickoff of each half and after all safeties.
  - C. be in correct position: on the receiving team's free kick line in the side zone with heels on the back of the restricted area line on the press box side of the field to monitor bench area and assist the receiving team in getting into position.
  - D. have a bean bag in hand.
  - E. make sure there is 12:00 minutes on the game clock before starting the 1st and 3rd quarters.
  - F. be sure the sideline is clear and the kicking team has 11 players before giving the ready sign to the Back Judge.
  - G. hold his open hand above his head to indicate he is ready until Back Judge checks him off.
- II. After the kick, the Field Judge will:
  - A. be alert for first touching by the kicking team, and mark the spot with a bean bag.
  - B. watch initial blocks in his area.
  - C. observe legality of blocks and action away from the ball when he is not covering the runner.
  - D. maintain position while enabling coverage of his sideline at all times.
  - E. drop penalty marker if the ball is untouched inbounds by the receiving team.
  - F. mark the spot where the kick goes out-of-bounds on his side of the field.
  - G. sound his whistle and give the time-out signal (S #3) twice when the ball becomes dead in his area.
- III. If the kick is obviously deep, the Field Judge will:
  - A. move deliberately along the sideline in that direction while watching for fouls away from the ball.
  - B. cover 15-yards down the sideline.
  - C. stay ahead of the ball and cover to the goal line, if a long run occurs.
- IV. During an onside kick, the Field Judge will:
  - A. be in correct position: on the receiving team's free kick line in the restricted area on the Line Judge's side of the field.



- B. be aware of action in the 10-yard belt.
  - C. watch for first touching by the kicking team (bean bag), touching by the receiving team, fair catch and illegal blocks.
  - D. be alert for first touching catch and/or recovery, **if** the ball comes in his area. The other Official should watch for illegal blocking, holding, clipping and early blocks by the kicking team.
  - E. stay in the restricted area and be prepared to cover the play **if** the receiving team gains possession and advances.
- V. If the Line Judge is in position between the receiving and kicking teams' restraining lines and there is a deep kick, the Field Judge will move quickly along the sideline to observe and officiate the downfield action.

## RUNNING PLAY

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Field Judge will:
  - A. be in correct position: 20-yards beyond the defensive line of scrimmage on the Line Judge's sideline in the restricted area.
  - B. be in initial position on the goal line when the ball is snapped from the 25-yard line to the 15-yard line.
  - C. be in his initial position on the goal line and 3-5 yards off the pylon **to give players full access to the goal line/pylon area** when the ball is snapped from the 14-yard line to the 6-yard line.
  - D. be in initial position on the end pylon when the ball is snapped on or inside the 5-yard line, unless Linesman instructs to stay on the goal line.
  - E. count defensive team players and indicate to the Back Judge and the Side Judge that he has counted the defense by extending an arm with a clenched fist out in front of him when 11 or less are counted. Multiple counts are recommended.
  - F. recount if more than 11, and **if** 12 or more, blow his whistle, drop a penalty marker, and give the time-out signal (S#3) twice.
  - G. be aware of the down and distance (pass versus run), strength of formation, eligible receivers and initial key.
  - H. be aware of motion by offensive players as this may change strength of formation and his initial key.
  - I. **be alert for a Head Coach requesting a time out.**
- II. After the snap, the Field Judge will:
  - A. pause briefly and read keys.
  - B. observe actions on and by his key.
  - C. be alert for illegal blocks, clipping, blocks below the waist, and holding.

- D. direct his initial movement in reaction to the play situation. Movement should be controlled, but a cushion in advance of the play is required. This cushion should be at least 20 yards.
  - E. be at the goal line before the runner crosses it.
  - F. get the spot of forward progress, **if** the ball is downed inside the 2-yard line.
  - G. move quickly and directly into the out of bounds area to observe, clean up any action, and retrieve the ball **if** the play goes out of bounds on his side.
  - H. cover players who are deeper than the Line Judge.
  - I. cover action around any runner that breaks free into the defensive secondary.
  - J. retreat to be in position behind the deepest receiver. The Field Judge will stay far enough away to keep the play boxed in.
  - K. observe if any offensive players go out of bounds and return. **If** so, toss your hat at the spot he went out of bounds.
  - L. move in “accordion” with all other Officials to the numbers on all plays when the ball becomes dead in front of him.
  - M. extend both arms to the side and parallel with the ground, then give the next down with the fingers and back out to the sideline.
  - N. turn and face the sideline and jog back when action has taken him inside the numbers.
- III. If the ball goes to the opposite side of the field, the Field Judge will:
- A. stay in the restricted area to officiate until the ball is declared dead, then move at an angle toward the hashes.
  - B. assist in observing action behind the Umpire, but not neglect any downfield players.
  - C. relay a new ball to the Umpire, **if** warranted.
  - D. glance at game clock to make sure it is accurate, when the ball becomes dead. Example: Verify the game clock status- running or stopped and the time remaining.
  - E. correct obvious timing errors by stopping the game clock and talking to the Referee.
  - F. move in “accordion” with all other Officials on all plays.

## FORWARD PASS

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Field Judge will follow the same procedures as described in the Field Judge section on Running Plays.

- II. After the snap, the Field Judge will:
  - A. pause and observe his keys and then retreat to be in position behind the deepest receivers, never letting receivers get behind him.
  - B. move down field to maintain cushion and assure maximum vision, once pass is read.
  - C. switch focus from “key” to “zone” as the play develops.
  - D. observe action on and by his offensive key.
  - E. observe action of all players who enter his coverage zone.
- III. When a pass is thrown in the Field Judge’s zone, he will:
  - A. narrow coverage focus to the intended receiver and defenders.
  - B. watch for interference by either team.
  - C. be ready to rule on possible fumble or illegal pass after completion.
  - D. be ready to rule on complete/incomplete.
  - E. officiate zone and then the ball.
  - F. be ready to rule on all passes near the goal line and the side line to the back pylon. The Field Judge should remain on the goal line for passes into the endzone.
- IV. If a pass is incomplete in the Field Judge’s area, he will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the incomplete-pass signal (S #10) twice.
  - C. get a new ball and relay to the Official nearest the previous spot.
- V. If pass is complete, the Field Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle when ball becomes dead in his area.
  - B. move to the spot of forward progress, **if** no other Official can get the spot.
  - C. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice when line-to-gain has been reached.

## SCRIMMAGE KICK - PUNT

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Field Judge will:
  - A. be in correct position: 5-yards behind the deepest receiver on the sideline. He will coordinate his position with the other two deep Officials.
  - B. count receiving team players and indicate to the Back Judge and the Side Judge he has counted the receiving team with a clenched fist extended out in front of him.
  - C. be in his initial position on the goal line at the pylon, when the ball is snapped inside the defense’s 45-yard line or when a receiving team member is on or inside the 10-yard line. (This allows for upward view of a ball that crosses the goal line/sideline in the air). In this case, the Field Judge will be ready to rule on a touchback.

- II. After the snap, the Field Judge will:
  - A. assume responsibility for the ball, when the kick is short and is toward his sideline. The Side Judge and Back Judge will watch for illegal blocking, holding and clipping away from the ball.
  - B. observe action of players around the ball.
- III. When the kicked ball goes out of bounds in flight, the Field Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - C. move farther down field than where the ball went out.
  - D. if he does not have an out-of-bounds spot, walk up field with one open hand above his head until the Referee spots him on the sideline by marking the spot with an outstretched “chopping” down motion, then signal the direction the ball will be going (S #8) and hold the spot until the ball is spotted.
- IV. When the kicked ball rolls out of bounds, the Field Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle.
  - B. give the time-out signal (S #3) twice.
  - C. hold the spot and continue to observe action while giving the directional signal (S #8).
- V. If a receiving team player signals for a fair catch and a fair catch is not made, the Field Judge will:
  - A. observe to make sure the signaler does not block.
  - B. observe for first touching.
- VI. When the punt is returned to his side of the field, using reverse mechanics, the Field Judge will:
  - A. cover the sideline in the restricted area and check for illegal blocks.
  - B. sound his whistle when the ball becomes dead in his area.
  - C. square off forward progress by moving down the sideline to the spot where the ball became dead and then jog perpendicular in toward the center of the field to the numbers and mark forward progress with his downfield foot.
- VII. When the punt is returned to the opposite side of the field, using reverse mechanics, the Field Judge will:
  - A. move down the sideline in the restricted area until the ball becomes dead and then jog perpendicular in toward the center of the field to the numbers.
  - B. observe fouls away from the returner, including blindside blocks.
  - C. mirror the Side Judge and help get the spot if they are blocked out.
- VIII. When the kick becomes dead in the end zone, the Field Judge will:
  - A. sound his whistle immediately.

- B. be prepared to rule on a touchback and give the touchback signal (S #7) once.
- C. come off the pylon, to the numbers, and stop players from hitting while sounding his whistle and giving the time-out signal (S #3).
- D. be prepared to rule on momentum **if** the kick is caught inside the 5-yard line and the player is downed in his end zone, and mark the spot of the catch inside the 5-yard line with a bean bag.

## FIELD-GOAL ATTEMPT OR TRY FROM ANY DISTANCE

- I. After the ball is spotted, the Field Judge will
  - A. be in correct position: beyond the end zone and behind the upright where he feels most comfortable and has the best coverage of the upright.
  - B. count defensive players and signal with his arm extended in front with a clenched fist.
- II. After the snap, the Field Judge will:
  - A. assume responsibility for the end line and rule on his upright.
  - B. be prepared to move if the kick is blocked, is obviously short, or is a fake.
  - C. key on the tight end on his side.
- III. After the ball becomes dead and the Back Judge sounds his whistle, the Field Judge will:
  - A. move 2 steps forward (no angle) in front of his upright and signal score (S #5) or no score (S #10) twice while facing the line of scrimmage.
    - 1. The Back Judge will mirror the Field Judge's actions.
    - 2. The Official who rules needs to verbally communicate "Yes" or "No" to the other Official.
  - B. be prepared to move if the kick is blocked, is obviously short, or is a fake.

## AFTER A TRY OR SUCCESSFUL FIELD GOAL

The Field Judge will:

- I. jog down his respective sideline along with the Back Judge, Umpire and Side Judge (Umpire and Side Judge down the chain crew side and Back Judge and Field Judge down the press box side) with a 10 yard cushion so as to arrive at their Free Kick lines at same time.
- II. give a 15-second warning to the teams at the 45-second mark, **if** teams are not in position to play.

## ADMINISTERING PENALTIES

The Field Judge will:

- I. verify the accuracy and the distance of the yards to be stepped off.
- II. not permit athletic trainers, attendants, or coaches to come onto the field.
- III. relay penalty information to the appropriate coach and to other Officials **if** necessary.

## MEASURING FOR FIRST DOWN USING TRADITIONAL LINE-TO-GAIN INDICATORS

The Field Judge will:

- I. not permit team attendants to enter the field.
- II. help clear players from the measurement area.
- III. observe all players.
- IV. secure a new ball.
- V. return to his position on the field and observe the teams.

## TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

- I. For a conference outside the 9-yard mark, the Field Judge will:
  - A. ensure the team is outside of the 9-yard mark and above the 25-yard line.
  - B. move to a position 8-10 yards above the pre-snap side of the huddle, mark game card and then stand at parade rest.
  - C. when the 45-second whistle is blown, assist in getting players and coaches to break up and return to play.
- II. For a conference between the 9-yard marks, the Field Judge will:
  - A. ensure that only one coach and no more than three attendants are on the field to confer with no more than 11 players.
  - B. move to a position on the sideline to ensure there are no illegal substitution violations.

## INJURY TIME-OUT PROCEDURE

The Field Judge will:

- I. assist the Referee in moving the teams away from the injured player.
- II. position himself away from the injured player near his pre-snap position.

- III. use the same procedure as outlined in the TIME-OUT PROCEDURE for a conference outside the 9-yard mark, **if** the Referee elects to send the teams to the sidelines.

## **BETWEEN-PERIODS PROCEDURE**

The Field Judge will:

- I. go to the new ball spot where the new period will begin.
- II. assume the same responsibilities as for a time-out.
- III. check the team box and huddle areas for appropriate conference procedure the same as during a charged time-out.
- IV. give his team a 15-second warning when directed by the Back Judge.

## **BETWEEN-HALVES PROCEDURE**

The Field Judge will:

- I. return to the field 5-minutes prior to the half time intermission ending and be responsible for the home team returning to the field before the clock expires.
- II. at the start of the mandatory 3-minute warm-up, obtain the second-half choice from the Head Coach of the home team and communicate to the Referee.
- III. be in his free kick position with 1-minute remaining on game clock during the 3-minute warm-up period.

## **END OF GAME PROCEDURE**

The Field Judge will:

- I. immediately jog off the field, together with all Officials, with security.
- II. neither avoid nor seek coaches.
- III. not discuss the game on the field or make any public statement about the game to the news media.
- IV. not comment about the game on social media.

## ELECTRIC CLOCK OPERATOR (ECO) PLAY CLOCK OPERATOR (PCO)

The ECO holds the previous line of scrimmage until absolutely sure that spot is no longer relevant. (5 and 7 man). If clock control is wired, adjust to length of cord and ability to move down field around players and coaches; prior to the game, lay out the cord in the restricted area and test the clock operation.

If the clock is operated wirelessly, work from the sideline on the press box side of the field. Prior to game time, test the wireless remote operation from one end zone to the other. Make mental note of any dead zones to be avoided during the game.

When a Play Clock is used and operated by other than TSSAA Officials, there are no changes in ECO duties or mechanics. However, the ECO and Back Judge should monitor the Play Clock to ensure it is working and being operated properly. Inform the Referee of any discrepancies. The PCO shall be in full uniform **if** assigned by the local association.

When both the Play Clock and Scoreboard Clock controls are wireless AND both are operated by TSSAA Officials, the following mechanics will apply:

- I. Both operators will work from the sideline on the press box side.
- II. The ECO will be initially positioned on the line of scrimmage, and the PCO will be initially positioned even with the Referee or deeper, **if** necessary, to have a clear view of the Linesman or Line Judge starting the Play Clock.
- III. When the play ends, the ECO moves up the field keeping a mental note of previous line of scrimmage.
- IV. When play ends, the PCO moves initially to the previous line of scrimmage and then to the pre-snap position keying the Referee, keeping a mental note of previous line of scrimmage.
- V. Both the ECO and PCO maintain position with a good view of the Referee.

The Referee will instruct the PCO to reset the play clock to 25 seconds by pumping one hand up and to 40 seconds by pumping both hands up.

Following the Pregame Coaches Conference, the ECO will ensure the game clock is set to expire at the kickoff time.

### KICKOFF MECHANICS

- I. The ECO will be positioned on the receiving team's 40-yard line in all situations.



- II. The PCO position is on the receiving team's 20-yard line with an unobstructed view of the Referee.
- III. The ECO and PCO will hold their open hand above their head to indicate to the Referee they are ready.
- IV. The ECO and PCO will stay on sideline until the Referee gives the ready for play and then back out of restricted area.

## SCOREBOARD CLOCK MALFUNCTION

- I. The ECO stays on the press box sideline using a stopwatch with a countdown timer (this should be taken to each game).
- II. Use radio to communicate time remaining in the half.
- III. Confer with Referee on how often the remaining time is to be announced on the radio.
- IV. Notify Referee when 4 minutes remain in the half.

## 2:00 RULE AT END OF HALF

The ECO will radio the Back Judge and Referee when there are two minutes left in the half. If there is a subsequent foul, the ECO will monitor the radio to see if the offended team chooses to have the clock started on snap.

## RUNNING CLOCK IN 2ND HALF (POINT DIFFERENTIAL OF AT LEAST 30)

There are only three times a running clock may be stopped:

- I. A charged Team time out
- II. Injury
- III. Score

On the kickoff during running clock situations, the clock starts when the ball is kicked. To start the 4th quarter, the clock will start on the snap.

During running clock situations, the PCO will not start the Play Clock until both teams are on the field and ready to participate. Also, the Play Clock will be held or reset to 25 seconds to prevent a delay of game penalty.

## OVERTIME

- I. The ECO will secure the clock controls, wired or wireless.
- II. The ECO will attend the Officials meeting in the middle of the field.

- III. In conjunction with the Referee, the ECO will position himself on the line of scrimmage for all overtime plays. He will remain at the previous line of scrimmage until the ball is marked “ready” for the next play.
- IV. If a PCO is used, his position is on the sideline close to Referee.

## OVERALL

The ECO is an important member of the crew. Responsibilities (including starting the clock on the Referee’s silent wind for 1st downs inbounds) require the ECO to be in the game more than ever before. The ECO (and PCO) will work together with the Back Judge on clock and timing issues. Both the ECO and PCO should observe their respective clocks whenever they change the status, i.e., On to Off or vice versa. If the clock fails to respond, make note of the time when the malfunction occurred and notify the Back Judge.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLAY CLOCK OPERATORS

### Before the Game

- Determine how you will set the play clock to 40/25 seconds.
- After testing the equipment, set the play clock to 25 for the start of the game.
- Advise Officials of any stadium-specific oddities in timing.

### 40-Second Clock

1. When the covering Official signals the ball is dead at the end of a play (inbounds, out of bounds, 1st down, incomplete pass, etc.), the play clock shall be set to 40 and started (after scanning the field to ensure no penalties). DO NOT wait for the ball to be spotted):
2. The play clock shall be set to 40 and started on the Referee’s signal when play resumes after an Official’s timeout related to a stoppage for:
  - injury of defensive players only
  - loss of helmet by defensive players only
  - equipment repair for defensive players only
  - administration of a penalty (accepted or declined) by the defense only

**When in doubt, set to 40 – the crew will correct as necessary.**

If the play clock needs to be reset to 40, the Referee shall signal (both palms up in an over-the-head pumping motion) to communicate the play clock shall be reset to 40 seconds and started immediately.

### **25-Second Clock**

If an Official signals the game clock to be stopped for any of the following reasons, the play clock should be set to 25:

- Penalty administration for foul by the offense or offsetting penalties
- Timeout (team or media)
- Measurement
- Defensive/receiving team is awarded a first down (change of team possession)
- After a score (FG, TD, safety)
- After a try
- Start of each period
- Start of a team's series in an extra period
- Either team is awarded a new series after a legal kick
- Other unusual/administrative stoppages

**In the above situations, the 25 second play clock will start on ready for play signal from Referee.**

If the 40 second clock is running and the ball has NOT been spotted by 25 seconds, the Referee shall signal (one palm up in an over-the-head pumping motion) the play clock shall be set to 25.

### **Other Procedures**

- Set the play clock to 25 on kickoffs and start it when the Referee gives the ready-for-play signal. We do not want Delay of Game fouls on kickoffs if they can be avoided, so the Referee and/or Back Judge may pump their arm to reset play clock if it's approaching 0.
- Reset the 40/25 second clock if ball is snapped when the play clock is close to zero -- RESET so the play clock does not show 0.
- Leave the play clock at 0 when the Back Judge drops a penalty marker for Delay of Game: we want the whole stadium to see 0. Reset to 25 after the Referee announces the penalty.

**End of Periods**

- Do not start the play clock at the end of a period if the game clock is (1) running or (2) will start when the Referee gives the ready-for-play signal, and the play clock is higher than game clock.
- The guiding philosophy is the play clock should run only if a delay of game foul is possible; if not possible, the play clock should be left at 25/40.

**Overtime**

- Throughout overtime, the 40/25 second play clock will continue to run as it did during regulation.

**If Play Clock Fails During Game**

- The play clock will be turned off until the problem is corrected.
- The Referee will notify both coaches the play clock will be kept by the Back Judge.
- The Back Judge shall raise and hold one hand overhead with 10 seconds remaining on the play clock and shall visually count down the last 5 seconds on the play clock.
- When the problem is corrected, the Referee will notify both coaches.























## PENALTY SUMMARY

LOSS OF 5 YARDS		
Foul	Reference	Signal
Delay of game	6-5-5	7-21
Illegal substitution	3-7	22
Free-kick infraction	6-1-2, 6-1-3b, 6-1-4, 6-1-11	7-19
Encroachment	6-1-3a, 7-1-1, 7-1-5, 7-1-6	7-18
Free kick out of bounds	6-1-9	19
Invalid or illegal fair-catch signal	6-5-7, 6-5-8	32
Snap infraction	7-1-2, 7-1-3	7-19
False start	7-1-7	7-19
Disconcerting act	7-1-9	7-23
Illegal formation	7-2-1, 7-2-2, 7-2-3	19
Less than five players on A's line or numbering violation	7-2-5	19
Illegal shift or illegal motion	7-2-6, 7-2-7	20
Planned loose-ball infraction	7-2-8	19
Illegally handing ball forward (also loss of down)	7-3-2, 7-3-3	35-9
Illegal forward pass (by A; also loss of down)	7-5-2	35-9
Illegal forward pass (by B)	7-5-2	35
Intentional grounding (also loss of down)	7-5-2d, e	36-9
Ineligible receiver illegally downfield	7-5-12	37
Illegal touching (also loss of down)	7-5-13	16-9
Helping runner	9-1	44
Incidental grasping of an opponent's face mask (or any helmet opening, chin strap or attached tooth and mouth protector)	9-4-3	45
Running into kicker/holder	9-4-5	30
Sideline interference	9-8-1k	7-29
Attendant illegally on field	9-8-2	19
Nonplayer outside of the team box, but not on field	9-8-3	7-29
LOSS OF 10 YARDS		
Foul	Reference	Signal
Illegal kicking or batting the ball	6-2-1, 9-7	31
Illegal blocking technique	9-2-1a, 9-2-3a	42
Interlocked blocking	9-2-1b	44
Holding	9-2-1c; 9-2-3c, e	42
Runner grasping a teammate	9-2-2	42
Illegal use of hands or arms	9-2-1a; 9-2-2; 9-2-3a, b, d	42
Illegal block in the back	9-3-5	43
Illegal block on free kicks	9-3-7	43

LOSS OF 15 YARDS		
Foul	Reference	Signal
Unsportsmanlike conduct by player or nonplayer	9-5, 9-8-1	27
Illegal helmet contact against a defenseless player	2-32-16, 9-4-3i(3)	38-24
Illegal block after valid or invalid fair-catch signal	6-5-1, 9-3-3	43
Kick-catching interference	6-5-6	33
Forward-pass interference	7-5-10	33
If intentional an additional 15 yards	7-5-10	27
Illegal block below the waist	9-3-2	40
Illegal block on free-kicker or holder	9-3-4	30
Clipping	9-3-6	39
Chop block	9-3-6	41
Tripping	9-4-3o	38-46
Illegal personal contact outside restricted area	9-4-3	38
Charging into an opponent obviously out of the play	9-4-3	38
Grasping an opponent's face mask (or any helmet opening, chin strap or attached tooth and mouth protector)	9-4-3	38-45
Hurdle an opponent	9-4-3d	38
Butt block, face tackle or spear (Illegal Helmet Contact)	9-4-3i	38-24
Horse-collar	9-4-3	38-25
Initiate contact with a helmet-less opponent	9-4-3	38
Targeting an opponent	9-4-3m	38-24
Illegal blindside block	9-4-3n	38-26
Roughing passer (also first down)	9-4-4	38-34-8
Roughing kicker or holder (also first down)	9-4-5	38-30-8
Roughing snapper (also first down)	9-4-6	38-8
Slapping blocker's head	9-4-7	38
Illegal personal contact in restricted area	9-4-8	38-29
Illegal participation	9-6	28
Participating without a helmet beyond immediate action	9-6-4	28
Sideline interference (third and subsequent)	9-8-1k, 9-8-3	7-29-27
Nonplayer illegally on field	9-8-3	27
Unfair acts	9-9	27
DISQUALIFICATION ASSOCIATED WITH CERTAIN 15-YARD PENALTIES		
Foul	Reference	Signal
Fighting by player or nonplayer	9-4-1	38-47
Intentionally contacting a game official	9-4-2	38-47
Striking, kicking, kneeling	9-4-3j	38-47
Any act if unduly rough or flagrant (give proper signal and follow with 47)	9-4	47
A second unsportsmanlike foul by player or nonplayer	9-5, 9-8	27-47
A substitute leaving team box during a fight	9-8-1l	27-47













# NFHS OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS

<b>1</b> Ball ready for play *Untimed down 	<b>2</b> Start clock 	<b>3</b> Time-out Discretionary or injury time-out (followed by tapping hands on chest) 		
<b>4</b> TV/radio time-out 	<b>5</b> Touchdown, Field goal, Point(s) after touchdown 	<b>6</b> Safety 	<b>7</b> Dead ball foul, Touchback (move side to side) 	
<b>8</b> First down 	<b>9</b> Loss of down 	<b>10</b> Incomplete forward pass Penalty declined No play, no score Toss option deferred 	<b>11</b> Legal touching of forward pass or scrimmage kick 	<b>12</b> Inadvertent whistle 
<b>13</b> Disregard flag 	<b>14</b> End of period 	<b>15</b> Sideline warning 	<b>16</b> First touching Illegal touching 	<b>17</b> Reset play clock to 25 seconds (Use both hands to have play clock reset to 40 seconds) 
<b>18</b> Encroachment 	<b>19</b> False start Illegal formation Free kick infraction 	<b>20</b> Illegal shift (2 hands) Illegal motion (1 hand) 	<b>21</b> Delay of game 	<b>22</b> Substitution infraction 



# NFHS OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS

23 Disconcerting act 	24 Illegal helmet contact Targeting 	25 Illegal horse-collar tackle 	26 Illegal blindside block 	27 Unsportsmanlike conduct Noncontact foul 
28 Illegal participation 	29 Sideline interference (Face press box) 	30 Running into or Roughing kicker or holder 	31 Illegal batting/kicking (Followed by pointing toward toe for kicking) 	32 Invalid fair catch Illegal fair catch signal 
33 Forward pass interference Kick catching interference 	34 Roughing passer 	35 Illegal pass/forward handling (Face press box) 	36 Intentional grounding 	37 Ineligible downfield on pass 
38 Personal foul 	39 Clipping 	40 Blocking below waist 	41 Chop block 	42 Holding 
43 Illegal block Illegal use of hands/arms 	44 Helping runner Interlocked blocking 	45 Grasping face mask or helmet opening 	46 Tripping 	47 Disqualification 



## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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