

# **GHSA FOOTBALL OFFICIALS MANUAL 2011**



Revision E

For comments about or suggested changes to this manual or the mechanics described herein, send e-mail to: [Footballtraining@comcast.net](mailto:Footballtraining@comcast.net).

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# I. General Information Section

## A. Summary of Officials Manual Changes for 2011

### 1. Wing Officials' Coverage of Forward/Backward Passes Similar to 2009

- Wing officials are responsible for determining forward/backward passes immediately following a hand-to-hand snap. The official in the direction of the pass has the primary call on such a pass. Referees are responsible for determining the direction of all other legal forward passes. This change essentially restores the various officials' responsibilities to those in effect in 2009.

### 2. Uniforms

- Added a new section, C.7., to summarize "Uniforms and Uniform Options".
- For 2011 and 2012, full crews may optionally use black officiating pants.

### 3. Two New 6-Man "Trial Mechanics" Tested in 2010 Are in Effect for 2011

- These are field trials from 2010 adopted for statewide implementation in 2011:

#	Summary Description of 2010 Trial Mechanic Changes	Association(s)
1	Umpires will watch the snapper, the two adjacent linemen to the snapper and action by or on them for fouls on all scrimmage downs.	EVFOA
2	During ordinary scrimmage downs Referees are to line up 11-13 deep (or deeper, if needed, to be 5 yards deeper than the deepest offensive back) and are to be lined up at least as wide as where the tight end is or would normally be to the wide side of the field (wider is better). However, when near the middle of the field, the Referee may line up on the passing arm side of the quarterback at the Referee's option.	AAFOA EVFOA

### 4. Editorial Changes to the Content from the 2010 Manual (mostly 6-Man):

- On free kicks following a fair catch or an awarded fair catch has the LJ should be lined up on "R"'s free kick line (previous version erroneously said "K"'s free kick line).
- Emphasize that Referees will be completely stopped, separated from players and will face the press box for both preliminary and final signals when signaling penalties.
- Remove explicit time-between-downs language from the **4-Man** section of the manual. No hard minimum time limit between an end-of-down and the ready-for-play for the subsequent down will be in effect for any GHSA-sanctioned game.
- Add language to **4-Man** that brings certain routine coverage into line with 6-Man.
- Umpires' movement between downs to retrieve and place the ball has been clarified to allow Umpires to move outside the hash mark for this purpose.
- Use of a new ball in the subsequent down is being encouraged when a measurement for 1<sup>st</sup> down is made in a side zone. Measurement is with the old ball and it should remain in place until the new ball, if used, is in place at the hash mark and the chains have been reset at the sideline.
- Removed having captains being brought out separately from teams at end of the half.
- In both **5-man** and 6-Man coverage, officials on the kickers' and receivers' restraining line for free kicks are NOT to start the game clock on legal touching inbounds unless they are the covering officials of the touching.
- Continued **7-Man** section THE SAME as in 2009 & 2010, adjusting only dates in text.
- Adjusted some details of wings' coverage of running plays to match new "R" pre-snap positioning and coverage during a running play.

## B. GHSA Mandates

### 1. GHSA By-Laws Excerpts for Football Officials

- A. All varsity games must be officiated by officials who are registered members of a GHSA-approved association. Officials may work in on-field crews of four, five or six (a crew of five, six or seven on-field officials are required for varsity games).
- B. Officials and their associations are independent contractors, and are not employees of the local association, member-schools, or the GHSA.
- C. All GHSA games are played according the rules published in the National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) rulebook.
- D. Videotapes may not be used to review officials' decisions.
- E. Game fees for all GHSA football games shall be:
- Regular season varsity (crew of 5 or 6) - \$90.00 per on-on-field official. Travel fees: 1 official \$15, 2 officials \$25, 3 officials \$30 plus \$5 / additional official for contests that require more than 3 contest officials. Travel fees are on a per crew, per competition day basis. Travel fees must be used to compensate contest officials for travel-related expenses.
  - Playoff game (crew of 6) - \$110.00 per on-field official. Travel fees do not apply to state tournament contests.
  - Auxiliary Official (ECO, chains) - one-half of an on-field official's fee.
  - Sub Varsity game - \$53.00 per on-field official.
- F. The host school has the responsibility of providing:
- Dressing and/or meetings facilities for officials.
  - Competent, adult chain crew members. **NOTE: Schools may contract with officials associations to use officials on the chain crew.**
  - Security escorts for officials.
- G. GHSA State Adoptions:
- Halftimes shall be 20 minutes.
  - Bands are not to play during live-ball situations. **NOTE: this includes the situation in which there is no timeout and the teams are in the huddle.**
    - a. If a team claims that band noise is interfering with communication, the Referee shall give a warning to one or both head coaches who will instruct the band(s) to stop playing.
    - b. If there is a second offense by a warned school's band, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be imposed against the same school's team (not the team's head coach).
    - c. The Referee will always wait for a complaint before issuing a warning.
  - In all playoff games, a crew of six on-field officials will be used.
  - In all playoff games, only Wilson brand footballs must be used.
- H. The GHSA overtime procedure must be used in any game between two teams of the same classification that ends in a tie. Schools from different classifications may use the GHSA overtime procedure if both teams agree and communicate it to the Referee before the game begins.
- I. Overtime games are exempt from the 11:30 p.m. curfew.
- J. All games after the end of the regular season are considered playoff games.

### 2. GHSA Overtime Procedure

#### General

Overtime is un-timed play after a regulation game has ended with the score tied.

Overtime play is mandated for all games (including sub-varsity) between schools of the same classification. Overtime may be played between teams of different classifications in the regular

season if both head coaches agree to do so in the presence of the Referee prior to the start of the game. Overtime play is divided into periods. During an overtime period each team has an opportunity for an offensive possession without regard to whether any score has already occurred in the overtime period. However, an overtime period may include only one offensive possession if the defensive team scores a safety or touchdown; such a score by the defense also determines the outcome of the game, and the game is over.

#### Activity prior to Overtime Coin Toss

When the score is tied at the end of the 4th period of a regulation game in which overtime is required or has been elected by the coaches, the Referee will instruct both teams to return to their respective team boxes. This begins a 3-minute intermission during which both teams may confer with their coaches. All officials will assemble at the 50-yard line to review the overtime procedure and to discuss how penalties (if any) will be assessed to start the overtime. At the end of this intermission, the Linesman will go to the team on the side of the field where the line-to-gain equipment is located and the Line Judge will go to the other team. They will inform the coaches about timeouts and any special penalty enforcements that apply. At the end of this intermission, a coin toss will be held.

#### Coin Toss before First Overtime Period

There will be a single coin toss prior to selecting options before the start of any overtime play. At the coin toss in the center of the field, the visiting team captain shall be given the privilege of calling the coin prior to the toss. The winner of the toss shall be given his choice of defense or offense first, or of designating the end of the field at which the ball will be put into play. The loser will have his choice of the remaining options. The Referee will indicate the team with first choice of options (winner of the coin toss) by placing a hand on the shoulder of that team's captain. To indicate which team will go on offense, the referee will have that captain face the goal toward which his team will advance and indicate offensive possession with the 1st down signal. The other team's captain will face the offensive captain with his back toward the goal he is to defend.

#### Timeouts during Overtime

Each team shall be allowed one timeout for each overtime period. Timeouts not used during the regulation periods may not be carried over into overtime. Unused overtime-period timeouts may not be carried over to other overtime periods. Charged timeouts between periods shall be charged to the succeeding period.

#### Penalty Enforcement

Fouls are enforced during each possession of overtime as they would otherwise be enforced during any non-overtime periods. Dead ball fouls that occur between possessions are enforced on the following possession. Live ball fouls during a touchdown or try that would be enforced "on the kickoff" during non-overtime play will be enforced from the spot that would otherwise start the next possession.

#### Overtime Period Possessions

To start each possession during an overtime period, the offensive team shall put the ball in play, 1st and 10, on the defensive team's 15-yard line anywhere between the inbounds lines, unless modified by penalty enforcement. Possession by the offense continues until:

- The offense scores a field goal.
- The offense scores a touchdown, followed by a try (if indicated).
- The offense fails to make the line-to-gain on 4th down.
- The offense otherwise loses possession to the defensive team.

If the defensive team gains possession during a down, the ball becomes dead immediately and the defense may NOT advance. Otherwise, possession will continue as in non-overtime play with all other provisions of Rule 5 of the NFHS Football rules in effect. This means the offense may obtain one or more new series of downs during their possession by reaching the line-to-gain or as otherwise required by rule in conjunction with penalty enforcement. After the first team on offense during the overtime period has completed its possession, the team first on defense will become

the offensive team with the ball in its possession at the 15-yard line on the same end of the field where the team first on offense started its possession, unless modified by penalty enforcement.

#### Overtime Scoring

- 1 - If the team on offense scores a touchdown, a try by that team will be attempted unless the points that might be scored during this try could not affect the outcome of the game.
- 2 - A field-goal attempt is permitted during any non-try down.
- 3 - It is possible for the defense to score either a safety or touchdown in which case the game is over. Note, however, that the defense may NOT advance the ball if they secure possession during a down.

#### Option Selection for Second and Subsequent Overtime Periods

If the score remains tied after each team has been given a possession in any overtime period, there shall be a 2-minute intermission. The Linesman and Line Judge will inform the teams on their respective sidelines about timeouts and the need to attempt 2-point tries in the 3rd and subsequent overtime periods. Prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> overtime period, the loser of the overtime coin toss will be given the 1st option of offense/defense or selecting the end of the field on which to play. If a 3rd or additional overtime periods are required, then the 1st options will be alternated between the teams with no coin toss. That is, the 1st choice of options will go to the winner of the overtime coin toss for odd numbered overtime periods and to the loser of the overtime coin toss for even numbered overtime periods. For 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent overtime periods, the options selected by the teams will be relayed from the sidelines (effectively coaches' choices); and the teams will be lined up according to the selections on the end of the field where play will commence.

#### Non-Kick Tries Are Mandated following Touchdowns in 3rd or Subsequent Overtime Periods

If the score remains tied after 2 overtime periods (in the 3rd or subsequent overtime periods), any team which scores a touchdown MUST attempt a 2-point try. In the case that a KICK try (1-point try) is attempted in 3rd or subsequent overtime periods, even if the kick is successful, the score will not be allowed and the down will count.

#### Determining the End of the Game

- 1 - If the defensive team scores a safety or touchdown, the game is over.
- 2 - The final score shall be determined by totaling all points scored by each team during both regulation time and all overtime periods.
- 3 - The team scoring the greater number of points in overtime shall be declared the winner.
- 4 - No try will be attempted if the winner of the game has already been determined by a touchdown's having been scored.

#### Overtime Play Cases

PLAY 1– On 3rd down and 4 in overtime play, B1 recovers a fumble or intercepts a pass.

RULING –The down ends as soon as B1 recovers or intercepts. Team A's possession is ended.

PLAY 2 – On 3rd and 6 in overtime play, visiting Team A attempts a field goal. The attempt is not successful, and Team B recovers at the one yard line. RULING – The down ends when Team B recovers. The possession is ended for Team A.

PLAY 3 – During a 2-point try in the 4th overtime period with visiting Team A trailing in the score 22-20, the ball-carrier, A1, knocks down the pylon at the goal line on the Linesman's side of the field. The Linesman signals the try is successful, tying the score at 22-22. The home team coach calls time out to complain that A1 was entirely airborne with the ball crossing only the goal line extended when A1 crossed the pylon and therefore the try should have been ruled a failure. He asks that his video tape of the game be used to determine the facts. RULING – The Linesman's call stands; there is no use of video replay allowed under any circumstance. The timeout is charged to the home team as their 5th overtime period timeout since the timeout was called after the 4th overtime period had ended.

PLAY 4 – In overtime play on 2nd down and 3 from the 8 yard line, B1 commits pass interference. RULING – 1st and goal for Team A on the 4 yard line if the penalty is accepted.

PLAY 5 – (a) On 2nd or (b) 4th down and 2 at the defense’s 9 yard-line, A1 interferes on an incomplete forward pass. RULING – in (a) it is Team A’s ball 3rd down from the defense’s 24 yard-line. In (b) Team B will decline the penalty and the possession for Team A comes to an end because Team A failed to either score or make the line-to-gain.

PLAY 6 – In overtime play after several penalties against Team A, it is Team A’s ball on their own 10 yard line. Team A attempts a backward pass which goes into and remains in A’s end zone. Alternatively, (a) Team A falls on the loose ball, or (b) Team B falls on the loose ball. RULING – In (a) it is a safety for Team B. In (b) it is a touchdown for Team B. In either case the game is over. The defensive team, Team B, is the winner.

PLAY 7 – While the captains are meeting between the 1st and 2nd overtime periods, the captain of the team with the first option commits an unsportsmanlike act against the other team’s captain prior to selection of the option. RULING – This is a dead ball unsportsmanlike penalty and will be enforced from the succeeding spot assuming the penalty is accepted. The offending team retains their option to select offense or defense or end of the field on which to play. Should the offending team choose which end of the field on which to play, its down/distance situation will be determined by the other team’s selection of going on offense or defense first. Should the offending team select to go on offense or be forced there by the other team’s selection, it will be 1st and 10 from the defense’s 30 yard line. Should the offending team select to go on defense or be forced there by the other team’s selection, it will be 1st and goal from the defense’s 7 and ½ yard line.

PLAY 8 – During the 1st possession in the 1st overtime period, the offensive team scores a field goal to make the score 17-14. During following possession by the other team during this same overtime period, the offense scores a touchdown to make the score 20-17. RULING – This is the final score. Both teams had an offensive possession. No try is attempted because the winner has already been determined.

PLAY 9 – During the 1st possession in the 3rd overtime period, the offensive team scores a field goal to make the score 20-17. RULING – This is correct. A field goal may be attempted during any non-try down. Had this team scored a touchdown, instead, its try would have had to be a non-kick try. There is no such overtime-period-related restriction against a field goal during a non-try down.

### 3. GHSA Policy on Interrupted Games

Postponed and Games Stopped by Weather: Any GHSA competition may be interrupted due to human, mechanical, or natural causes when it is necessary to protect the safety of players and spectators.

(A) Postponed games are games that are postponed before they actually begin.

- 1) The host school shall notify the opposing team and the officials as early as possible when a contest is postponed.
- 2) The host school is responsible for determining whether an event is to be postponed until the time that game rules turn that responsibility over to game officials.
- 3) After administrators agree on the rescheduling of the postponed contest, the host school must notify the GHSA office.

(B) Games Stopped by Weather

- 1) **All GHSA member schools are responsible for having workable lightning detectors and for having game management personnel trained in the use of these devices; lightning detectors must be monitored by game management throughout the game. Due to their presumed greater accuracy, indications from permanently installed lightning detectors have a higher priority than indications from hand held lightning detectors. Regardless of the type of detector provided by the home school, the officiating crew will honor any request by game management to interrupt the game based upon game management’s determination that the potential for dangerous lightning exists in the area of the game. Notwithstanding the requirement of the home school to have and use an approved lightning detector, the officiating crew will also interrupt play for any thunder that is close or loud as well as for any visible lightning. In such cases, the crew will interrupt the**

**contest without regard to whether game management concurs. Play will also be stopped for extreme cold, weather conditions that game management declares would not permit safe travel home and any other dangerous field conditions noted by the crew.**

(C) Schools of the Same Classification

- 1) All games between schools of the same classification must be played to completion.
- 2) There is NO two-hour cumulative delay.
- 3) There is NO 11:30 p.m. curfew.

(D) Schools of a Different Classification

- 1) All games between schools of different classifications will be called after a two-hour cumulative delay.
- 2) There is a mandatory 11:30 PM curfew unless there is a game in progress in overtime; in that case, the curfew is waived.
- 3) If the game is terminated prior to halftime, it will be a "no contest".
- 4) If the game is terminated after one half has been completed, it shall be considered a complete game. The team leading in the score shall be declared the winner; or if tied at this point, the contest will be declared a tie.

**Note: The GHSA office shall be notified of any terminated game.**

(E) Paying officials - in shortened or postponed games:

- 1) If a scheduled game cannot be started due to weather-related conditions, officials who come to the game site will be paid travel if the official's contract mandates travel fees.
- 2) If a game is interrupted by weather before it becomes a completed game, the officials will be paid one-half of the regular game fee.
- 3) If a game is an official game at the point of interruption, the officials will be paid full fees.
- 4) Beyond these conditions, no officials' group(s) may hold the schools responsible for weather-related postponements.

## 4. GHSA Ejection Procedure

An ejection should occur only when the rules of a sport mandate it, or when the individual to be ejected is so out of control that his/her unsportsmanlike behavior intrudes upon and overshadows the contest. Whenever an official is required to eject an athlete or a coach from a contest, the following procedures need to be followed:

- A. Within the rules and the mechanics of the specific sport, announce the ejection by making eye contact with the ejected player or coach. Do not make physical contact with that individual. Try to avoid "toe-to-toe" confrontations, but be within 20 feet of the ejected person.
- B. Instruct the player to go to his/her head coach immediately.
- C. The Referee shall go to the sidelines, make eye contact with the head coach, and announce that the player (**identified by jersey number**) has been ejected from the contest and state the reason.
- D. The ejected player shall remain in the **team's bench area**. Each additional disturbance results in an unsportsmanlike penalty against the head coach, and may result in that coach's ejection also. In that case, both the coach and the player will leave the competition area.
- E. The ejection of a coach requires that the official approach and make eye contact with the coach, announce the ejection to the coach, and instruct the coach to leave the competition area. In addition, the official must ask which coach or other official school representative will function as the head coach in the absence of the ejected coach.
- F. The ejected coach shall leave the competition area and go to the locker room, the bus, or some other area out of sight and sound of the game. An ejected coach may not be allowed to stay in the competition area as a spectator.
- G. After the contest, a precise account of the ejection must be filed in a "Game Report" to the Georgia High School Association. A game report may include more than one ejection. **An**

**official has no option about whether to report an ejection.** The written account should be complete, factual, and non-inflammatory.

## 5. Filing a GHSA Game Report

Game Reports from officials should be filed with the GHSA office **as soon as possible** for the following situations: (*Note: Reports must be filed on the "Game Report" form as provided to the association secretary.*)

- A. Ejections – Be certain to cite the name, jersey number and school of the ejected player or the name and school of the ejected coach and specify the behavior involved in a brief, professional manner.
- B. Any pre-game or post-game problems involving players, coaches, and/or fans. This includes any action that results in a coach's attempt to "protest" a game. GHSA no longer recognizes protests of football games. However, any condition that results in a coach's attempt or threat to file a protest should be detailed in a Game Report.
- C. Any problems related to field/court conditions.
- D. Failure of host management to provide adequate security for officials at the game site.
- E. Any major injuries requiring extraordinary attention.
- F. Any other incident detailed in this manual that specifically states that a game report must be filed.

**NOTE:** It is not necessary to report sportsmanship violations that do not result in ejections.

The Game Reports should be factual narratives without any editorial comments. The comments should be written professionally so that they thoroughly describe the behaviors involved without any editorial comments. These reports are sent to the Principal of the school involved along with a letter from the Executive Director of the GHSA. One copy of this report should be sent to the GHSA Office, and a second copy should be kept with the association's records.

Game Reports dealing with unusual situations such as attempted protests, "intentional attempts to injure" or "multi-player fights" must be received by the GHSA within 24 hours of the end of that contest. The GHSA fax machine is operative 24 hours a day, as is the voice mail of the Executive Director.

## 6. Running Clock Situations

GHSA has prescribed procedures for establishing a "running clock" when certain point differentials are reached during any GHSA-sanctioned football game. The following applies:

- 1) Each quarter of the game ends with the same clock status ("running" or "not running") as the quarter was begun.
- 2) The threshold for running clock situations occurs at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> quarters, only.
- 3) The point differential that triggers running clock decisions is 30 or more points.
- 4) If the 30 point differential is met to start the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, the head coach of the team behind in the score has the option of having (or not having) a running clock.
- 5) If the 30 point differential is met to start the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, there are no options; a running clock shall be used.
- 6) While in a running clock condition, the clock shall still be stopped for any and all "TIPS" situations:
  - "T" = Timeouts. This applies to both charged and officials' timeouts (if any).
  - "I" = Injuries. Any injuries requiring an officials' timeout.
  - "P" = Penalties. Any penalties requiring an officials' timeout.

- “S” = Scores. The clock remains stopped until the ball’s being legally touched inbounds during the free kick following the score or on the snap following the free kick down if the clock did not start during the free kick.

## C. GHSA General Mechanics

### 1. Handling Fight Situations

#### A. PREVENTIVE MEASURES:

1. Make your presence known by talking to players at the end of each play. These words should be of an encouraging nature; such as “Good job, everybody up easy,” or “OK, the play is over, ease up.” When you need to take sterner measures, do so in a professional way. Never use profanity toward a player.
2. Be sure to take strong measures early in the ball game to deal with taunting and baiting incidents by issuing warnings and then penalties. Constant warning without penalties becomes meaningless. Remember – flagrant violations do not need warnings before penalties are imposed.

#### B. REACTIVE MEASURES:

1. Officials in the immediate area of the fight should use their voice, whistle, and body positioning to separate players who are mouthing at one another chest-to-chest, or who are pushing and "chicken fighting".
2. Officials must not grasp, push, or pull a player unless it is an emergency situation in which a player on the bottom is in jeopardy of being injured by the hitting/kicking of the player on the top in the fight.
3. Once a fight breaks out, everyone is better off if the number of people fighting is kept to a minimum. Officials who are near the sidelines and away from the fight should initially turn toward their sideline and let all the players on that sideline know that they must not come onto the field until the fight has ended and the football game has resumed.
4. Officials who are not in the area of the field where the fight is occurring should write down the jersey numbers of all players who are involved in the fight, and the jersey numbers of all substitutes who leave the team box area during the fight.
5. Allow coaches to come onto the field to separate combatants.
6. If this is a large-scale fight and/or substitutes come onto the field, both teams should be sent to their respective sidelines while the officials sort out the players who are to be ejected.
7. Once order has been restored and the teams separated, the entire officiating crew should meet together to discuss the numbers of those players to be ejected. Then the Referee should notify each head coach personally about those players who have been ejected. These decisions are not negotiable and videotape cannot be used to make the decision or to change the decision.

**NOTE: The jersey number(s) of the ejected player(s) must be recorded in some type of permanent manner and included on the Game Report(s) and filed with the Georgia High School Association. All Game Reports should be transmitted to the GHSA office within 24 hours of the completion of the game.**

### 2. Using the Bean Bag Correctly

#### A. PRIMARY SITUATIONS IN WHICH YOU WOULD USE THE BEANBAG:

**Note: The beanbag should be used every time in the following:**

1. Marking the spot a ball carrier lost possession of the ball on a fumble.

2. Marking the spot where a kick returner or defensive back gained control of the ball when his momentum carries him into the end zone.
3. Marking the spot where possession of a scrimmage kick is gained by the receiving team on a kick that has crossed the neutral zone expanded.

**B. SECONDARY SITUATIONS IN WHICH YOU COULD USE THE BEANBAG:**

1. Marking the spot where a ball carrier went out of bounds (in addition to standing on that spot).

**Note: This mechanic should only be used in a 5 man crew.**

2. Marking the forward progress of a ball carrier when he has been pushed back and there is continuing action on him.

**Note: This mechanic should be used only by the Referee**

**C. HOW TO USE THE BEANBAG:**

1. Since the beanbag is always used to mark a precise spot, it should be carried to that spot and dropped – or at least dropped on that yard line extended if you are not near that exact spot.
2. Keep the beanbag in your belt or in your hand and develop the habit of using it.
3. At the high school level, there is no need to mark the spot of every change of possession.
4. Referees may find it helpful to mark forward progress of a passer who is being sacked with the beanbag. The flank officials are generally downfield and cannot help. The passer is being pushed back and the Referee must keep attention on that action. Dropping the beanbag and then moving to retrieve the ball is an easy process.
5. It is not a good idea to drop the beanbag on the out-of-bounds spot and then leave it to retrieve the ball. Even in a crew of 4, this should be a last resort. Hold the spot and drop the beanbag just in case an unusual situation arises.

### 3. The “Mobile Box” Concept

From the earliest days of officiating, football officials have been taught to “box in the play”. That was a difficult task with two or three officials and was made easier when most schools opted for four officials. Now that officiating has graduated to five, six or seven officials on the field, the task might seem simple. That, however, is not the case.

Many officials believe (or have been taught) that more officials mean less movement by each official, but that is not necessarily true. It will always be important to keep plays boxed in. In fact, keeping the play surrounded on all sides to the greatest extent possible is the PRIMARY mechanic under which each of the detailed mechanics have been developed. The idea of boxing in the play is quite evident in pre-play positioning. Once the play begins, many adjustments have to be made to maintain a “mobile box” surrounding the play.

The “mobile box” for officials should move down the field as the players and the ball move down the field. The box needs to move laterally as the players and ball move in that direction. If at all possible, officials should remain both ahead of and behind the play as the play develops; officials on the periphery should remain outside all players and work an “outside-in” technique. Generally only the Umpire will not be on the periphery; he, alone, routinely works “inside-out.”

Here are some examples of game action. Imagine how the box might need to move on:

- Running plays up the middle (short gainers; long gainers)
- Passing plays (short or deep; down the middle or to the sideline)
- Runs to the side-zone

- Free kicks and their returns
- Scrimmage kicks and their returns

Be aware that the “mobile box” should be used even during kicks returns and turnovers. For example, when using a six man crew and the ball is intercepted, the Head Linesman and Line Judge now reverse responsibilities with that of the Side Judge and Field Judge.

The “mobile box” will have officials who are responsible for observing the action around the point of attack. Other officials will be responsible for observing off-ball action – usually this is called “cleaning up” behind the play. Officials need to be close enough to the play to see the action accurately. But the officials need to be wide enough from the action to have an adequate field of vision without having to turn their heads.

**Note: Let’s make a committed effort to teach and to implement the “mobile box” as we box in all plays in our games.**

## 4. Pre-game Preparation and Conference - Varsity

### Preparation

1. Record your game assignment including date, site & time for meeting other officials, and site & time of game.
2. Double check to ensure that all of your uniform & officiating equipment is packed and with you.
3. Do not consume any alcoholic beverages within 24 hours prior to game time.
4. ***Schedule your arrival time at the game site to allow every crew member to be dressed and the Pre-game started no less than 90 minutes prior to scheduled kick-off time. (Arrival time for playoff games is 2 hours prior to scheduled kick-off).***

### Conference

1. Prior to the conference’s beginning, the Referee should let the home team management know that the officiating crew has arrived.
2. Pre-game should begin no later than 1:30 minutes prior to kick-off with all officials dressed in uniform and ready to participate in the pre-game conference.
3. The Field Judge will inform the crew of the official time. The Field Judge will ensure that the 25-second function on his watch is working properly.
4. The Referee will lead a group discussion of the following responsibilities:
  - a. Pre-game field observations and duties of all officials.
  - b. Mechanics for coin toss.
  - c. Mechanics for positioning, coverage, and common rules infractions on:
    - Free kicks
    - Scrimmage kicks
    - Running plays
    - Pass plays
    - Short yardage and goal line plays
  - d. Mechanics for reporting and administering penalties.
  - e. Mechanics and rules on starting the clock, stopping the clock, and time out periods. He will also release the ECO in time for the ECO to be at the clock control point 40 minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off of all Varsity games.
5. Officials who must coordinate their activities on certain types of plays will discuss those issues.
6. Discuss any information about the teams involved that will be beneficial for this game.
7. Discuss the need to see the ball before blowing the whistle, and discuss the ways to handle inadvertent whistles.
8. Save any discussion of the GHSA Overtime Procedure until half time if it will be in effect for this game.

## Comments on the Pre-game

“Lead a discussion” does not mean that the Referee talks for 30 minutes. The Referee should have each member discuss with the crew their duties on specific situations and how their responsibilities and coverage interact with other officials, players and coaches. The Referee should listen carefully to each official’s comments and keep them focused on the topic, correct any errors and prompt officials to include anything they may have omitted. Remind the crew that they are a team and that any member who has a question in their mind about the way a penalty is being administered (i.e. direction, yardage, spot etc.) or if there is a question as to the proper down should bring their concern to the Referee at that time so a correction can be made.

## 5. Efficient Penalty Enforcement

### Crew Discussion Outline:

#### Calling Official(s):

1. Stop the clock
2. Get the player number
3. If multiple flags in the same area:
  - a) Get together with other calling official and make a determination as to what will be reported
  - b) If one foul, make a decision quickly and one official reports the foul to the Referee
  - c) If multiple fouls, all ‘calling officials’ report foul to the Referee
4. Report foul(s) to the Referee
  - a) Fouls prior to the snap:
    1. Calling official will meet the Referee at the ball to report the foul. (*Exception: Delay of game penalty can be signaled from the Back Judge’s position*)
    2. The Umpire and both wings will also come in to hear the report given to the Referee.
  - b) Live ball or post-play fouls:
    1. If the end of the play is more than fifteen yards downfield, meet the Referee:
      1. at the spot of the flag, or
      2. “half way” as he (the Referee) is advancing downfield
    2. If the end of the play is less than fifteen yards downfield or the succeeding spot would otherwise be the previous spot, meet the Referee:
      1. at the previous spot, or
      2. at the spot of the flag
  - c) Report clearly, concisely, completely, and calmly the:
    1. result of the play (catch/no catch, turnover, first down, etc.)
    2. foul
    3. offending team
    4. player number
5. Be prepared to discuss enforcement and team options
6. Complete duties specific to your position

Commentary: There are too many scenarios to specifically address exactly where to conduct the ‘report foul’ discussion between the calling official and the Referee. Common sense should prevail. Once the Referee is aware that a foul has occurred, he should proactively move toward the calling official to expedite the enforcement process. Likewise, the calling official should make every effort to meet the Referee at the most efficient spot, which could be the previous spot. Remember, the mechanic also

requires the Umpire to be a second set of ears in deciphering information from the calling official and determining enforcement options. With that in mind, it makes sense for the deep officials to make every effort to return to an area that is most convenient for both Referee and Umpire to participate.

## **Position Duties:**

### **Referee**

1. Gather information (see above 'Report foul to the Referee')
2. Give preliminary signal, if needed
3. Step out of player traffic and make yourself easily visible to press box to give signals. Stand completely stationary and face the press box when making all penalty signals.
4. If it is your flag [Referee], give the preliminary signal immediately. Announce a simple foul immediately [false start] and have the Umpire administer without delay.
5. If obvious, make decisions for a team.
6. Tell the Umpire:
  - a) enforcement spot
  - b) direction
  - c) distance
  - d) yard line if half the distance to the goal
7. Move with purpose by walking briskly and/or jogging to position. Do not run around as it gives the appearance of confusion and/or indecision.
8. Post enforcement:
  - a) Make sure all officials and the chains are in position.
  - b) Mark the ball ready for play without undue delay.
  - c) Don't rush the ready for play if players seem confused or disorganized as a result of penalty administration.

### **Umpire**

1. Find out what the flag is for as soon as possible.
2. Become an expert in penalty administration and be an aid to the Referee throughout the enforcement process.
3. If a team decision is needed, find a team captain.
4. Get the football.
5. Listen to the Referee's instructions. (again, be an aid....don't let the Referee make a mistake)
6. Walk off the distance and put the ball down quickly.
7. Check the distance with your wing officials.
8. Assist the Referee with clock status.

### **Linesman**

1. Communicate with the head coach the foul and anything unusual such as a loss of down or status of the clock if near the end of a half.
2. Cover flags, as needed, if deep judge on your side is calling official.
3. Walk the penalty off with the Umpire.
4. You are the primary confirmation on penalty administration.

### **Line Judge**

1. Communicate with the head coach the foul and anything unusual such as a loss of down or status of the clock if near the end of a half.
2. You are the secondary confirmation on penalty administration.
3. Cover flags, as needed, if deep judge on your side is calling official.
4. Assist the Referee by signaling resulting down and the clock status.

## **Deep Officials**

1. Communicate the status of the ball and the result of the play. Be prepared to 'hold the spot' until an enforcement choice is made.
2. You are primarily responsible for 'covering' flags as the calling official reports the foul(s) to the Referee. All flags should be covered even if it means covering a flag on the opposite side of the field.
3. You are responsible for clock status.
4. You are the third party for confirmation on penalty administration.

Commentary: There are too many scenarios to specifically address exactly where to conduct the 'report foul' discussion between the calling official and the Referee. Common sense should prevail. Once the Referee is aware that a foul has occurred, he should proactively move toward the calling official to expedite the enforcement process. Likewise, the calling official should make every effort to meet the Referee at the most efficient spot, which could be the previous spot. Remember, the mechanic also requires the Umpire to be a second set of ears in deciphering information from the calling official and determining enforcement options. With that in mind, it makes sense for the deep officials to make every effort to return to an area that is most convenient for both Referee and Umpire to participate.

### **Goals:**

1. Create consistency in our mechanics.
2. Be as efficient as possible.
3. Promote confidence and eliminate the appearance of confusion by moving smartly, not wandering around.

### **Other Tips:**

1. Most pre-snap fouls will require very little discussion. The Referee should pick up the player number in most situations, even when he does not have a flag.
2. Give preliminary signal as soon as possible.
3. Eliminate two signals whenever possible.
4. Everyone should know penalty administration.
5. Free Kick Fouls: Side Judge or Back Judge get the decision from the sideline coach ASAP.
6. Communicate clock status to the Referee and the entire crew.

### **Expected Results:**

1. More professional pace
2. Appear more confident
3. Less criticism
4. Reduced game time
5. Save steps

## 6. General Instructions for Electronic Clock Operators (ECOs)

### a. Reporting to the Game Site

1. Report to the site at the same time as the rest of the crew.
2. Arrive dressed as the rest of the crew, depending on your associations' requirements.

### b. Participating in the Pre-Game Meeting

1. Synchronize time with the Field Judge (FJ) like all other crew members.
2. Be prepared to discuss your role in the game like all other crew members.
3. Be prepared to discuss what to do if the field clock fails during the game and you have to come down to the field to keep time with your auxiliary timer.
4. Agree with R on how you will signal your readiness just prior to any free kick.
5. Ask any questions that you have about how to be the ECO for this game. Don't leave the pre-game meeting with questions in your mind about your role.

### c. Special Equipment Needed by ECO

1. The ECO wears a complete game uniform. However, you do not need flags, beanbags or whistles in your ECO role. Other equipment may be useful. Depending upon local association requirements, keeping a game card may be a good idea, for example.
2. The ECO does need some special equipment and supplies:
  - a. An alternate or auxiliary timer other than the field clock. Any clock with a stopwatch type feature that will count down from 20 minutes will work.
  - b. Something to signal readiness to R prior to each kickoff. This can be a small flashlight, a red LED or your hat. What is satisfactory for any particular game depends on R's choice.
  - c. The crew line-up cards if provided by your local association (2 copies, obtained from R). One is for use by the stadium announcer; the other is for use by a GHSA evaluator, if any.
  - d. Paper and pen or pencil for recording events as required by your local association.

### d. Going to the Field from Pre-Game Meeting

1. Go directly to the location of the clock controls, usually the press box.
2. Leave the pre-game crew meeting in time to have COMPLETED your pre-game clock checks and have the clock running down to kick-off time NOT LATER THAN 30 minutes before the game's scheduled kick-off time. For example, at latest the clock would be set at 7 PM to 30 minutes and counting down to zero if scheduled kick-off is 7:30 PM. This generally means the ECO must be at the clock control point 40 minutes before kick-off.

### e. Testing the Clock under GHSA Procedures

1. Most sites have electronic controls. Some sites still have electro-mechanical controls. Either way, know how to set time, start and stop the clock and adjust the time should you be requested to do so. This has to be practiced. Pre-game is the time to practice. Special care should be taken with on/off switches that operate off a pigtail (make sure the pigtail is tightly attached to the control box and that the on/off feature works consistently however the pigtail is held/used by you). Do not wait until game time to discover problems! During this practice time you have ample opportunity to fix any problems you have with the set-up (sightlines to the field, location of the control box, etc.).
2. The GHSA requires that the following minimum tests be performed:
  - a. Set the clock to 5 minutes.
  - b. Allow it to run down to zero, note whether the horn does (or does not) sound as it should. If it does not, this information needs to be relayed to game management via the LJ and to R before the start of the game.

- c. Compare time on the clock with your alternate countdown timer. Be sure they are in essential agreement. If not, inform R before the game starts.
  - d. Be sure that the clock starts and stops correctly.
3. After the tests are successfully completed, set the clock to the remaining time before scheduled kick-off and allow the clock to run down to zero. However, do NOT allow the horn to sound IF it would interrupt any late pre-game ceremony such as the playing of the National Anthem.
  4. If there is a stadium announcer or an evaluator (from either GHSA or or your local association) present, offer them their copy of the crew list.
  5. Set the clock to 12:00 and wait for the game to start.

f. Game Procedures

1. The ECO cannot “make” a game, but the ECO can surely “break” a game. Your concentration on your duties is essential to the smooth conduct of the game. **Be prepared to take your responsibilities seriously, or don’t take the assignment.** Someone else who would take the assignment seriously is staying at home so you can work this job. Honor them by giving your best effort.
2. Your job is to operate the clock ONLY. Do NOT give commentary on the game or how it is being officiated. You may answer specific questions asked of you by an evaluator, if any. But questions asked by any other people should be politely deflected. You may tell them, correctly, that you are prohibited by GHSA policy from making any comments on the game or the way it is officiated.
3. Do NOT operate anything but the clock. You are NOT being paid to keep the score, the down and distance or time-out count on the scoreboard. You may change the quarter indication on the scoreboard when the quarter changes.
4. The length of a quarter in high school varsity football is 12 minutes.
5. You must know the various signals made by the on-field officials and what impact, if any, these have on the clock. Follow the instructions of ANY official who is stopping the clock. The official signals are numbered by NFHS from 1 through 47. (See these in the NFHS rule book.) This is how these numbered signals affect the clock:
  - a. Stop the clock (if running or keep it stopped): signals 3, 5, 6 and 10
  - b. Start the clock (or continue running if already running): signal 2
  - c. Do NOT start clock on snap: 1\* - note the \* denotes the special case of how a ball is marked ready for play for an un-timed down. Otherwise, the clock DOES start on any snap if it was not previously running. Many Referees will remind you, explicitly, that they want you to start the clock on the snap by pointing at the ball as they blow the ball ready for play. However, you must not count on this.
  - d. Signals with NO IMPACT on the clock running: ALL Others. However, the clock should already be stopped when R gives any of these signals.
6. There is an old adage: “The clock is your friend when it is running.” Your job is NOT to run the clock when you feel like it, but to run it on command of the crew on the field. They know the adage; they will keep it running properly. When in doubt, the clock runs.
7. Every time you either start or stop the clock, you need to look at the clock (and your auxiliary timer) to be sure that each is either running or not running, as appropriate to your intent.
8. Plays near the sideline SHOULD result in the covering official “winding the clock” (signal 2) if play ended inbounds at play’s end. It may be followed immediately by a stop the clock indication (signal 3) in the case of reaching the line-to-gain (1<sup>st</sup> down) or when a live-ball penalty has been called. You have to be alert for such a combination.
9. The “try” (extra point play after a touchdown) is ALWAYS an un-timed down. This should be signaled by the Referee (signal 1\*); but if he fails to do this, do NOT run the clock during the try.
10. Prior to a free kick (a kick-off is the most frequently seen example of a free kick), R will check off with the crew to be sure they are ready for him to blow the ball ready for play. Typically, he will check off with the ECO last. You need to respond to R’s check off by using your hat or other visible signal you arranged with R at the pre-game meeting.

11. During a free kick, the clock does not start until it has been legally touched inbounds. The covering official who sees a legal touch of the ball inbounds will wind the clock (signal 2).

12. Near the end of both halves of the game, especially, operation of the clock becomes a significant aspect of the game. Your operation should be consistent throughout the game. Generally, it takes the greater portion of a second to see, read and process a stop-the-clock signal of any type. As a consequence, **there should NOT be a stopped clock with under a second left in either half.**

g. Out-of-the-Ordinary Game Procedures

1. If the field clock breaks, you should still have the correct time on your auxiliary timer. Use whatever prearranged plan you have to come to the field once this situation has been relayed to the rest of the crew.

2. If a period is extended by an un-timed down (signal 1\*), do NOT change the clock back to 12:00 minutes and do NOT advance the period indicator until R declares the end-of-period (signal 14).

3. Rarely the on-field clock may be operated from a location other than the press box. It is OK to run the clock from that location, but the Referee needs to know where you are in such cases.

4. For whatever reason, the clock may need to be adjusted during the game. Make NO such adjustments until you have been told by R, directly or indirectly, what adjustment is to be made to the clock. Under NO circumstances should you make a clock adjustment on your own.

h. At Period Breaks

1. Once R has indicated the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> periods by holding the ball over his head (signal 14), it is OK to advance the quarter indicator and set the game clock to 12:00 minutes. Wait for the game to restart in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> period.

2. At the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> period, you have to be prepared to start the half-time timer. Half-time is 20 minutes long (unconditionally), followed by a mandatory 3-minute "warm-up" time. After R has indicated the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, go ahead and put 20:00 minutes on the clock. As the crew is leaving the field, R should signal you (signal 2) to start the clock as the last crew member clears the field. If you observe that R fails to order you to start the half-time clock, start it once the whole crew is outside the fence on the way to the dressing room (or other half-time location). You should then join the crew to participate in the half-time discussion. Your auxiliary timer should also be running at this time and you should be able to report remaining time in the 20-minute main half-time period. Upon the end of the 20-minute break, you should be back in the press box. When the 20 minutes runs out, reset the clock to 3:00 minutes and start it immediately. This will time the mandatory warm-up period. (Note: the warm-up period is mandatory; warm-ups are not. The teams can decide whether to warm-up or not; the crew will do nothing to force the teams to warm-up.)

i. Running Clock Situations

1. See Section I. B. 6, above, which describes running clock situations. Know this section and how your duties will be modified in such situations.

2. Note that in running clock situations, the crew will maintain its normal signaling mechanics. The ECO must know when to ignore and when to follow a "stop the clock" signal based upon the "TIPS" acronym.

j. Normal End-of-Game

1. At the end of every non-overtime game, the job of the crew has ended at the sound of the horn at game's end. R will quickly decide if there are any reasons to extend the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. When R decides none exist, he will hold the ball over his head (signal 14) officially ending the game. The crew now needs to leave the field as quickly as can be done in a dignified fashion. Generally, this is not a problem for the on-field crew. The ECO has an entirely different problem. His normal position is in the press box. That places him high and behind the crowd. The crowd, itself, is now intent on leaving, typically jamming the aisles in seconds. Without leaving even a second early, as soon as R gives signal 14, the ECO needs to move as quickly as he can from the press box to join the rest of the crew. Do not delay; move as quickly as you can in a dignified way to come to whatever meeting point has been arranged for you and the rest of the crew.

k. Overtime

1. If a game goes into overtime, the need for the clock has ended. All overtimes are un-timed events. Leave the press box and come down to the field on the side of the chain crew. Stay in the vicinity of the chain crew. This will keep you close to the action and will facilitate your leaving the field with the balance of the crew at the end of overtime. Do NOT leave the field until game's end. We arrive and work as a crew; we will also leave as a crew.

## 7. Uniforms and Uniform Options

A. Basic Uniform

The basic uniform for ALL GHSA-sanctioned football games includes:

- a. A striped official's shirt with black Byron collar; no mesh shirts are allowed. This shirt may be either long sleeved or short sleeved. However, EVERY member of the crew MUST wear the same type shirt. A GHSA insignia is to be worn on the left shirt sleeve approximately three inches from the bottom of the sleeve of a short-sleeved shirt; if a long sleeved shirt is worn the insignia is to be approximately the same distance from the shoulder as it is for the official's short-sleeved shirt. Certified officials may also wear a "Certified Official" rocker located immediately above the GHSA patch. Optionally, an association patch may be worn on the right sleeve of the shirt; if worn, it should be located similarly to the GHSA insignia on the opposite shoulder.
- b. A black undershirt with no decorations showing through the outer shirt.
- c. Pants shall be white knickerbockers with 1-1/4" to 2" wide black belt, folded over below the knee to cover the top of the socks.
- d. A pair of white "Northwest striped" socks to be worn underneath the fold of the pants.
- e. A pair of SOLID BLACK athletic shoes. The entire shoe must be black including any manufacturer logos or other original decorations that may be present.
- f. A black fitted official's hat with white piping for all officials except the Referee. The Referee will wear a solid white fitted official's hat, instead. Optionally, the local association may mandate an association logo to be centered on the front of the cap above the bill. If worn, all officials on the crew must wear the logo on their hats.
- g. Optionally, an official's jacket with alternating black and white vertical stripes.

B. Uniform Option for 2011 & 2012

For 2011 and 2012, crews may elect to wear an alternate set of pants and socks to the combination of knickerbockers and Northwest striped socks, as follows:

- a. Black officials pants fitted to correct in-seam with 1-1/4" outer white stripe. Pants must also be worn with a 1-1/4" to 2" black belt.
- b. Black outer socks of at least above-the-ankle length ("crew" socks or longer).

## II. 7-Man Mechanics Section

### A. 7-Man Mechanics for 2011

#### 1. Purpose

Trends in football at the high school level have been and remain in the direction of more “wide open” offenses that are typified by “spread” formations. Use of such offensive schemes puts great pressure on downfield coverage by the officiating crew. In addition, the diversity of offensive choices near the goal line and on passing plays into the end zone makes coverage around the goal line a challenge. Adding an official to assist in both coverage of receivers beyond the line of scrimmage and tighter coverage at the goal line and into the end zone is the primary purpose for adopting 7-Man Mechanics at the high school level. For 2011 7-Man mechanics, as outlined below, may be used in the regular season, ONLY, for GHSA Varsity games. Local associations using 7-Man mechanics may bill the host school ONLY for a 6-Man crew, and all other crews from that association working on that date are limited to using crews of either 6- or 7-Man (NO 5-Man on that night).

#### 2. Goals for 2011

- Continue use of the initially adopted (2009) 7-Man mechanics in order to cover the “Purpose” as stated above.
- Hold off ANY changes to this set of 7-Man mechanics until at least the 2012 season.
- Continue an open line of communication with officials so that comments on, and suggestions for improvements to, the current 7-Man mechanics will be evaluated in a prescribed and orderly fashion. To this end, officials may send e-mail with any comments and/or suggestions for changes to: [GHSAFBMechanic@comcast.net](mailto:GHSAFBMechanic@comcast.net).

#### 3. Organization of the 7-Man Mechanics Section

This section will cover 7-Man Mechanics on a per position basis much as in other sections of the Officials Manual. For all but the Back Judge position, each position will be presented as “same as 6-Man” except for the specific differences that are part of that position’s duties in 7-Man. Few changes are required of the Referee, Head Linesman and Line Judge positions. Slightly more changes are required of the Umpire position. Only the Side Judge and Field Judge positions are heavily altered by the advent of the 7<sup>th</sup> on-field position. Continuing this organizational approach to the manual for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of these mechanics’ implementation is meant to ease the transition into this type of coverage by those officials well-trained in the familiar 6-Man mechanics.

#### 4. Changes between 6-Man and 7-Man that impact the ENTIRE crew

- Goal line coverage begins at the 5 yard line going in for 7-Man as opposed to beginning at the 10 yard line as in 6-Man.
- EVERY eligible receiver has a single designated official to cover him initially on EVERY scrimmage play. As in 6-Man, once the play begins, officials must be prepared to cover whichever receivers flow into their zones of coverage. In 7-Man initial keys are determined by the offensive player’s positions:
  - FJ and SJ have the widest receivers on their side of the offensive formation.
  - BJ has the next inside receiver toward the strong side of the formation (the side of the formation with a tight end). If no strong side, BJ has first man out of the backfield.
  - HL and LJ each have the remaining (inside) receivers next closest to them.

- R has unconditional responsibility for the other eligible receiver, the player to whom the ball is snapped (typically the quarterback).

## **B. Referee Mechanics – 7-Man Crew**

All coverage is “same as 6-Man” except as noted below.

- A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties
  - The Referee and Back Judge will walk together from the end zone to the area of the 50 yard line prior to the coin toss and the start of the second half.
- B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties
- C. Scrimmage Plays
- D. Scrimmage Kicks
- E. Try for Point
- F. Goal Line Plays
  - (Goal line mechanics start at the 5 yard line “going in” in 7-Man)
- G. Time-outs
- H. Measurements
- I. End of Period and Procedures between Periods
- J. Penalty Administration

## **C. Umpire Mechanics – 7-Man Crew**

All coverage is “same as 6-Man” except as noted below.

- A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties
- B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties
  - In addition to sharing a good count with the Side Judge and Field Judge, the Umpire will also share his good count of the kicking team with the Back Judge.
- C. Scrimmage Plays
- D. Scrimmage Kicks
  - Field Goals: The Umpire and Side Judge will operate in a “2 Umpire” configuration. The Umpire will work the side of the line toward the offensive team’s sideline. Both the Umpire and Side Judge will watch for illegal contact on the snapper. Each will also cover all other action on the line of scrimmage toward his side of the field.
- E. Try for Point
  - The Umpire and Side Judge will operate in a “2 Umpire” configuration the same as described above under Scrimmage Kicks.
- F. Goal Line Plays
  - (Goal line mechanics start at the 5 yard line “going in” in 7-Man)
- G. Time-outs
- H. Measurements
- I. End of Period and Procedures between Periods
- J. Penalty Administration

## **D. Head Linesman Mechanics – 7-Man Crew**

All coverage is “same as 6-Man” except as noted below.

- A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties
- B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties
- C. Scrimmage Plays
  - Key is the third receiver from the outside on the strong side of the formation if the strong side is to the HL’s side. If there is no strong side presented, key is the second receiver from the outside on HL’s side of the formation.
- D. Scrimmage Kicks
- E. Try for Point
- F. Goal Line Plays
  - (Goal line mechanics start at the 5 yard line “going in” in 7-Man)
- G. Time-outs

- H. Measurements
- I. End of Period and Procedures between Periods
- J. Penalty Administration

### **E. Line Judge Mechanics – 7-Man Crew**

All coverage is “same as 6-Man” except as noted below.

- A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties
- B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties
- C. Scrimmage Plays
  - Key is the third receiver from the outside on the strong side of the formation if the strong side is to the LJ’s side. If there is no strong side presented, key is the second receiver from the outside on LJ’s side of the formation.
- D. Scrimmage Kicks
- E. Try for Point
- F. Goal Line Plays
  - (Goal line mechanics start at the 5 yard line “going in” in 7-Man)
- G. Time-outs
- H. Measurements
- I. End of Period and Procedures between Periods
- J. Penalty Administration

### **F. Field Judge Mechanics – 7-Man Crew**

All coverage is “same as 6-Man” except as noted below.

- A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties
- B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties
  - Kick-offs:
    - Share count of K with BJ as well as with U and SJ.
    - Check off that BJ is ready before signaling ready for the kick-off to LJ.
    - On long returns maintain a cushion ahead with the BJ. The BJ, not the FJ has the goal line on a return to their side of the field.
- C. Scrimmage Plays
- D. Scrimmage Kicks
  - For Punts: Line up approximately even with Side Judge about 5 yards in front of the deepest receiver. Your primary focus is on blocks in front of the receivers except in cases of very short kicks.
- E. Try for Point
- F. Goal Line Plays
  - (Goal line mechanics start at the 5 yard line “going in” in 7-Man)
  - Position on the end line shaded toward the pylon at the corner of the end zone on your side.
  - Your initial key REMAINS the outside receiver on your side.
  - You are responsible for the end line in your area.
  - Be prepared to work with either the Back Judge or the Line Judge on ruling on completion of passes along the end line or sideline, respectively.
- G. Time-outs
- H. Measurements
- I. End of Period and Procedures between Periods
- J. Penalty Administration

### **G. Side Judge Mechanics – 7-Man Crew**

All coverage is “same as 6-Man” except as noted below.

- A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties
- B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties
  - Kick-offs: Share count of K with BJ as well as with U and SJ.
- C. Scrimmage Plays

- D. Scrimmage Kicks
  - For Punts: Line up approximately even with Field Judge about 5 yards in front of the deepest receiver. Your primary focus is on blocks in front of the receivers except in cases of very short kicks.
  - For Field Goals: The Umpire and Side Judge will operate in a “2 Umpire” configuration. The Umpire will work the side of the line toward the offensive team’s sideline. Both the Umpire and Side Judge will watch for illegal contact on the snapper. Each will also cover all other action on the line of scrimmage toward his side of the field.
- E. Try for Point
  - The Umpire and Side Judge will operate in a “2 Umpire” configuration. The Umpire will work the side of the line toward the offensive team’s sideline. Both the Umpire and Side Judge will watch for illegal contact on the snapper. Each will also cover all other action on the line of scrimmage toward his side of the field.
- F. Goal Line Plays
  - (Goal line mechanics start at the 5 yard line “going in” in 7-Man)
  - Position on the end line shaded toward the pylon at the corner of the end zone on your side.
  - Your initial key REMAINS the outside receiver on your side.
  - You are responsible for the end line in your area.
  - Be prepared to work with either the Back Judge or the Head Linesman on ruling on completion of passes along the end line or sideline, respectively.
- G. Time-outs
- H. Measurements
- I. End of Period and Procedures between Periods
- J. Penalty Administration

## **H. Back Judge Mechanics – 7-Man Crew**

Back Judge in a 7-Man crew was an entirely new position for 2009. Although there is some similarity between Back Judge in a 5-Man and Back Judge in a 7-Man, this section is designed to give comprehensive coverage for this position without relying on any knowledge of the (limited use) 5-Man Mechanics section.

### **A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties**

#### **1. On field pre-game duties:**

- a. After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
- b. Work with the other deep judges to ensure that neither team, other than the kicker, encroaches over their 45-yard line. The kickers may kick from the opponent’s 45-yard line.
- c. Ensure the kickers kick toward their own goal line.

#### **2. Secondary on field pre-game duties:**

- a. Survey the field and make mental note of the field and danger spots on the field of play where you will be operating. If these spots need to be addressed before the field is safe for play, relay this to game management via the Line Judge.
- b. Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during the Referee/Coaches meetings.

3. Escort Duties:

- a. You have no escort duties of your own.
- b. Walk with the Referee when he moves from the end zone to the area of the 50 yard line prior to the coin toss to start the game and before the captains' meeting to start the second half. Once you reach the area near the 50 yard line, either stop or continue to walk so that captains will properly fit into the space between yourself and the Referee without your having to swap positions with the Referee after each of you has stopped.

B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties

1. Coin Toss Duties:

- a. Remain on the sideline at the 50-yard line
- b. Ensure the other team members remain on their sideline.
- c. Once the coin toss is completed, and the captains dismissed, meet at the center of the field with the crew to record toss results and any final instructions from the Referee. Position yourself between the Field Judge and Umpire shading toward the Umpire's back so that you will clear the Umpire when the officials' huddle breaks.
- e. When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.

2. Free Kick – Duties:

Initial Position on initial free kick to start either half: Break the huddle, move down the 40 yard line on the press box side to the sideline on K's free kick line.

Initial Position following a try for point or a successful field goal: Move to the sideline on the press box side to K's free kick line and remain on the sideline there.

- a. Count the kicking team and make sure they have 11 or fewer players. In the event there are more or less than 11 players, give a strong indication to that team that they need to get to 11. Confirm with Umpire, Side Judge and Field Judge by giving a "thumbs up" signal.
- b. Wait for the Umpire to raise an arm, raise yours when ready, make eye contact with the Field Judge and lower arm.
- c. Bean bag in hand. Use if the kick is touched by the kicking team prior to going 10-yards.
- d. Watch for any infractions involving K's free kick line and blocks on the front line.
- e. Start the clock when ball is legally touched.
- f. Anticipate a short kick. If kick is short and to your side, watch for fair catch signal and watch the catch.
- g. On an on-side kick, be prepared to mark spot of first touching by K with bean bag, if it is touched before the ball travels 10 yards and be prepared to rule on possession at end of the kick.
- h. If a free kick goes out-of-bounds untouched by R and you are the closest official to the spot of infraction, go to spot and drop your flag.
- i. If team on your sideline is the offended team on a free kick violation, try to get the coaches' choice of either:
  - 1) Taking the ball 25 yards from the previous spot,
  - 2) Re-kicking with a 5-yard penalty, or
  - 3) Taking the ball at the spot of the foul.
- j. After ball is kicked, move down the field slowly while watching for fouls away from the ball. You are responsible for watching action on or by the 1 or 2 RECEIVING team players closest to the center of the of the group of receivers closest to their restraining line prior to the kick.
- k. On runs to your side of the field, maintain your cushion with the Field Judge and be at the goal line to rule on whether the ball breaks the plane.

- l. If return is up the far sideline, move across the field, keeping the play “boxed in” while watching for illegal blocks and holding.
- m. Echo signals to start and stop the clock.
- n. Free Kicks after an accepted free kick penalty:
  - Move to a position 5 yards from your previous free kick position. Do not go to your Initial position.
  - Help clear the sidelines in your area.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.

Free Kicks after a safety:

- Go up your sideline to K’s free kick line and remain on the sideline.
- Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.

Free Kicks after an awarded fair catch:

- Take a position under the goal on the upright on the side of the field opposite the press box.
- Be prepared to give signal on kicks that are good and no good.
- Be prepared to move to the goal line on kicks that are short and near the goal line in order to rule on whether the kick may be advanced or is a touchback.

C. Scrimmage Plays

1. During the offensive huddle:

- a. Remember to move your hand down indicator and be aware of down, distance, and game clock.
- b. Think about your keys, crack back blocks, pass interference rules, etc.

2. Pre Snap:

**Position – about 5 yards deeper than the other deep judges but in no case less than 5 yards deeper than the deepest defensive player. Shade toward the strong side of the offensive formation if there is a strong side to that formation.**

- a. Count defense after the ready for play signal – check-off with the Side Judge and Field Judge with “thumbs up” signal if 11 or fewer players. Try to time your signal with the signal given by the other deep judges.
- b. If after the ready for play signal there are 12 or more players, and no player is attempting to leave the field, then throw your flag for substitution infraction and stop the clock.
- c. Be ready to focus on the near tackle to determine run or pass.
- d. Determine your key receiver. The Back Judge has the second receiver from the outside on the strong side of the offensive formation. If there is NO strong side to the formation, your key will become the first receiver out of the backfield.

3. At the Snap:

- a. If you verify more than 11 players on defense after the snap, throw the flag but do not stop play.
- b. Quickly read the tackle. If he “fires off the line” to block, it probably will be a running play so temporarily hold your position and begin to move back slowly in the event the ball goes outside toward the line of scrimmage. If they set up to pass block, it probably will be a pass play so be prepared to back up quickly. Do not be observed moving several steps backwards when the play is a short quick run up the middle.
- c. **After your initial read of the tackle’s block, immediately shift your attention to your key receiver and observe all action on or by him.**

#### 4. Running Plays:

- a. You are responsible for the end line on all plays.
- b. Work outside in on short runs up the middle, moving in and maintaining a presence towards mixed jerseys. You and the other deep judges should be moving in towards the end of the run together and back to your pre-snap positions together.
- c. Hold until the football is dead. Watch for action in your area such as crack back and other illegal blocks. Move up to area of "mixed jerseys". Assist with dead ball activities, as needed. Keep "mixed jerseys" in front of you at all times.

#### 5. Passing Plays:

- a. You are responsible for the end line.
- b. Initial key is the action on or by the second widest receiver on the strong side of the offensive formation. If there is no strong side of the formation, key on the first receiver out of the backfield.
- c. Be prepared to switch to zone coverage as the play develops. Shift your coverage from your initial key to whichever receivers flow into your zone of coverage.
- e. When pass is indicated down field, move with the deepest receiver giving enough ground to stay out their path. Stay ahead of this deepest receiver.
- f. Be aware of when the pass is in the air in order to rule if action on a receiver is holding or pass interference.
- g. Rule on complete passes in your area; assist in making rulings on passes in the other deep officials' areas.
- h. If the football is intercepted in your area, move in the direction of the play. Be prepared to rule on momentum inside the 5 yard line. Watch for illegal blocks during the return.
- i. If the pass is complete and is a first down, then signal to stop the clock. If the pass is incomplete, give the signal for the incomplete pass.
- j. Be prepared to relay the football as needed on complete or incomplete passes in your area.
- k. Watch for:
  - Illegal blocks by or on the receiver you are watching.
  - Illegal use of hands and holding.
  - Pass interference or face guarding.
  - Dead ball fouls and taunting.

#### D. Scrimmage Kicks

##### 1. Punts:

**Position - Line up at least 5 yards behind the deepest receiver and at least 5 yards toward the wide side of the field from the deepest receiver. If the snap is on or inside R's 40-yard line, line up on the goal line.**

- a. Verify that the receiver(s) have received their verbal and visual briefing on how to make a valid fair catch. If this has not been handled by either Field or Side Judge, give that briefing and coordinate with the Field or Side Judge, as appropriate, to get the briefing handled correctly before the next expected punt.
  - a. Count the defense and signal the Field Judge and Side Judge with "thumbs up" signal if 11 or fewer players.
  - b. You are responsible for all catches made by the deepest receiver. You should maintain an approximate "5 yards back – 5 yards wide" position at a minimum from the receiver. Your goal is to be viewing the catch at approximately a 45 degree angle from behind when the catch is made. This position should also give you an adequate view of the receiver and the flight of the ball at all times during the kick.
- Focus on:

- Fair catch signal by the receiver (valid and legal).
  - Interference on the receiver during the catch.
  - If the football is kicked over the receiver's head, stay with the ball and the action around the ball.
  - Mark the spot with a beanbag where R gains possession of the kick on a kick that crosses the neutral zone expanded.
- c. During a return, trail the runner. Forward progress will be determined by the other deep officials or the wings depending on the length of the return.
- d. Once the runner moves away from you, watch for illegal blocks in front of and around the runner. Focus on action away from the ball.
- e. If the play becomes dead in your area, mark the dead ball spot, and give the time-out signal.
- f. Watch for and be aware of:
- First touching by the defensive team
  - Muffs
  - Fumbles, recovery and advancement
  - Other fouls
  - Football going into the end-zone
  - The momentum rule
- g. On blocked kicks, pick up the football while remaining focused on players downfield.
- h. Be alert for passes that look like kicks.
- i. Be prepared to rule on pass interference during fake kicks that turn into pass plays.
- j. Notify the Umpire of dead ball status (i.e. fair catch or not).

## 2. Field Goals:

**Position – Take position underneath the goal post upright on the side of the field AWAY from the press box.**

- a. After kick has crossed the end line, confirm with the Field Judge if the kick was good or not (say "yes, yes, yes" or "no, no, no")
- b. Once decision is made, move two steps into the end zone and give appropriate signal.
- c. The Field Judge has responsibility for whistle unless kick rolls into the end zone as a touchback on your side of the field.
- d. On blocked kicks or fake kicks, move to normal scrimmage position for the Side Judge and continue to officiate.
- e. Unless otherwise noted, treat as any other scrimmage kick.

## E. Try for Point

### 1. Kick:

Everything is identical as a field goal except:

- Be ready to stop the play if kick try is unsuccessful.

### 2. Scrimmage Play:

- If there is no tee brought onto the field, then coverage is the same as an ordinary scrimmage play (either goal line or not, depending on the spot of the snap).

F. Goal Line Plays

- (Goal line mechanics start at the 5 yard line “going in” in 7-Man)

**Position yourself on the end line shading toward the strong side of the offensive formation if a strong side is presented.**

1. At the snap, your initial key REMAINS the second outside receiver to the strong side of the formation or the first back out of the backfield if no strong side was presented.
2. Once the football is snapped, move to a position to pick up the offensive player who comes into your area. Be prepared to work with either wide deep official to rule on catches along the end line using facing toward/facing away technique to determine which official rules on possession and which rules on feet inbounds.
3. Watch for illegal blocks on the corners and other fouls.
4. Treat as any other scrimmage play.

G. Time-outs

**Position – Near middle of the field approximately even with the Side Judge and Field Judge unless you need to confer with another official. In that case go to the area where the other official is located, have your conference and then return to the middle of the field.**

1. Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
2. Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.

H. Measurements

1. Assist with clearing players from the vicinity of the ball.

I. End of Period and Procedures between Periods

1. End of period

- a. When facing clock, know when time expires.
- b. If time expires prior to snap, sound whistle to prevent snap.
- c. If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- d. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
- e. Be aware of down, distance, and yard line.
- f. Maintain a presence between mixed colors.
- g. If end of game, leave field together as a crew.

2. Between periods (quarters)

- a. Make note of the down, distance, and yard line where the ball will next be put into play.
- b. Monitor any mixed jerseys and usher players toward their respective sidelines.
- c. Move to your approximate new pre-snap location once players have moved to their sidelines.

**Note: Everyone has a job to do during this time. Avoid side conversations and be professional.**

J. Penalty Administration

1. Calling Penalties Live Ball:

- a. Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul.
- b. Drop your penalty marker at the proper yard line.
- c. Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.

2. When ball becomes dead:

- a. Give time-out signal
  - b. Sound whistle (get Referee's attention by sounding several short, loud blasts)
  - c. Verbally report information to Referee. (Live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, offensive or defensive foul).
  - d. Mentally note whether clock should start on the ready or the snap.
3. Administering Penalties:
- a. If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official get the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
  - b. Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.

**Note: If you are not the official who called a foul, cover the flag for that official who did.**

### III. 6-Man Mechanics Section

Note: In 2010 the captains' meeting at the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half was eliminated. In its place, the crew is responsible for obtaining 2<sup>nd</sup> half options at the end of the half-time intermission (when the teams are returning for the mandatory 3-minute warm-up period). The rationale for this change is to give the captains the benefit of the warm-ups while giving the coaches approximately the same amount of time to make their decision on 2<sup>nd</sup> half options as in the past, and after also having had the chance to observe weather conditions on the field before making option decisions.

#### A. Referee Mechanics – 6 Man Crew

##### A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties

###### 1. On field pre-game duties:

- a. After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties. (The intent of this mechanic is to show everyone that we, the officials, are the third team on the field and all have jobs to do. Use common sense in implementing this mechanic. For example, if the home team coach is present just as you approach the field, then you and the Umpire go ahead with the coach's meeting and have the remainder of the crew continue to the 50-yard line.)
- b. Meet with each team's head coach – Home team coach first.
- c. Rule on the legality of all game balls.
- d. Give the coaches a list of officials working the game.
- e. Secure the names and numbers of game captains from each coach.
- f. Secure verification from each coach that all players are legally equipped.
- g. Secure verification from the coaches about special pre-game ceremonies, reduction of the half-time period and any overtime arrangements (mixed classification games, only). In mixed classification games, the Referee must ask each head coach if they want to play overtime in the case of a tie at the end of the regulation game. In order to have a reduction of halftime, written notice must be presented prior to game time.
- h. Ensure that each coach is aware that maintaining good sportsmanship is expected.
- i. Ask the home team coach if a chain crew has been made available to the crew.
- j. Notify each coach of the official time.
- k. Check to insure other officials are in fact taking care of their responsibilities and maintaining a professional manner at all times.
- l. Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during your meetings with each coach.

**Note: Do not spend any more time with each coach than necessary. Definitely do NOT spend noticeably more time with one coach than the other.**

###### 2. Escort Duties:

- a. **Starting on the goal line, seven minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff time, move simultaneously down the sideline to the 50-yard line with the Umpire. You will be on the press box sideline and the Umpire will be opposite the press box sideline.**
- b. Wait on the sideline for the Line Judge and captains.
- c. With the speaking captain on your immediate left, make eye contact with the Umpire while raising your arm to let them know that you are ready to proceed to midfield.

## B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties

### 1. Coin Toss Duties:

- a. Escort the captains to the center of the field. Captains should line up to the Referee's left side, splitting the 50-yard line. Only 4 captains per team are allowed to midfield. On occasions (i.e. senior night) where teams want to recognize more than 4 captains, have the remaining captains stand on the sideline. Do not allow any other players on the field.
- b. When both sets of captains arrive, introduce yourself to the captains escorted by the Umpire and introduce the Umpire to the captains you escorted. Step back and ask both teams' captains to introduce themselves to each other.
- c. Remind the captains that they are the leaders of their teams and that sportsmanlike conduct by all players, at all times, is expected and required.
- d. Ask the visiting captain to make their call of the coin toss and verify with the home captain the visitor's selection. Then toss the coin and reveal the results. If the coin is dropped, toss it again.
- e. Explain all options to the winning captain and ask for their choice. If they defer, signal to the press box immediately.
- f. Get the option from the opposing captain and alternate until all options are taken.
- g. Move the players so their backs are to the goal they will defend and make the proper signals to the press box.
- h. Once the coin toss is completed, and the captains dismissed, meet at the center of the field with the crew to record toss results and give them any final instructions. **Position – In the middle of the field on R's side of the fifty with your back to R's goal line.** (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break positions at this time.)
- i. When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.

### 2. Free Kick Duties:

**For a free kick following a touchdown or field goal, Position – In middle of field on receiving team's goal line:**

- a. Delay any signaling to the rest of the crew until all the crew has moved into their pre-shift free kick positions.
- b. Count the members of R and make sure they have 11 or fewer players. In the event there are more or less than 11 players on R, give a strong indication to that team that they need to get to 11. Confirm with the Linesman and Line Judge with the "thumbs up" signal.
- c. When the umpire indicates he is ready (and facing the Referee), use the illegal motion signal to move U, FJ & SJ into their post-shift free kick positions.
- d. Ensure the crew is ready by checking off with the Umpire, Linesman, Line Judge and the Electronic Clock Operator. If the Linesman and Line Judge are ready then you know the Side Judge and Field Judge are ready.
- e. Whistle the ball ready for play.
- f. Watch for:
  - Ball being legally touched in your area. Note that your area includes the entire width of the field at the goal line and will generally include the one, two or three deepest receivers.
  - Backward passes and forward hand-offs.
  - Illegal blocks and clips.
  - Facemask violations.
  - Fair catch signals.
  - Kick breaking the goal line plane.
  - Runner's momentum carrying them into the end zone. Bean bag in hand.
  - Muff or fumble.

- Recovery of a loose ball.
  - Dead balls.
- g. Start the clock when the ball is legally touched.
  - h. Echo signals to start and stop the clock.
  - i. Signal touchback if ball breaks the plane of the end zone.
  - j. Follow the receiver up the field and watch the action around the ball carrier.
  - k. Turn loose of the ball carrier on long runs and clean up behind the play.

**For free kicks following an accepted free kick penalty:**

- a. Give preliminary signal for the infraction.
- b. Move to pre-kick position. Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
- c. Other officials will not go to their initial free kick positions.

**For free kicks after a safety:**

- a. Same position as on a normal free kick as deep as the deepest kick receiver (around the 25 yard line).
- b. Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
- c. Other officials will not go to their initial free kick positions.

**For free kicks following a fair catch or awarded fair catch:**

- a. Positioned behind the Kicker.
- b. Ensure all other officials are in position before marking the ball ready for play.
- c. Assume the same free kick responsibilities as those of the Umpire during a normal free kick situation.
- d. Be prepared to echo the proper signal on kicks that are good, no good, or a touchback.

C. Scrimmage Plays

1. During the offensive huddle:

**Position – 5 to 7 yards deep, 5 to 7 yards wide (even with the offensive huddle if the huddle is deeper) and facing toward the defense.**

- a. Communicate the next down with the Linesman and then the remainder of the crewmembers.
- b. Be aware of down, distance, and game clock.
- c. When marking the ball ready for play, stand and face the defensive team.
- d. Count offense after the ready for play signal – check-off with the Umpire with “thumbs up” signal if 11 or fewer players. Try to time your signal with the signal given by the Umpire.

**Note: When the teams are at or near the LOS, count the offense before the giving the Ready for Play.**

- e. If after the ready for play signal there are 12 or more players, and no player is attempting to leave the field, then throw your flag for substitution infraction and stop the clock.

2. Pre Snap:

**Position – 11 to 13 yards off the line of scrimmage (and a minimum of 5 yards deeper than the deepest back) to the wide side of the field or on the passing arm side of the quarterback if the ball is near the center of the field. At a minimum, line up directly behind the tight end on that side of the field; or if no tight end is on that side, line up behind where a tight end would have normally been. Lining up wider than this is permissible (wider is better).**

- a. Keep the snap in view.
- b. Count the offense if unable to in huddle.
- c. Be aware of clock.

- d. Be in position to see the off-side tackle's initial block and to pick up keys.
  - e. Watch for:
    - Backs being set for one second.
    - Backs moving forward before the snap.
    - Illegal movements by the offense.
    - Offensive player calling time-out.
3. At the Snap:
- a. Read Keys that will indicate if a play is run or pass.
  - b. Watch for:
    - Holding, illegal use of hands and personal fouls.
    - Chop blocks and other illegal blocks in the free blocking zone.
    - Fumbles (drop beanbag at that spot) and recoveries.
    - Backward pass.
    - Be aware that the quarterback may spike the ball in order to stop the clock.
4. Running Plays:
- a. Focus on the action around the ball carrier while he is behind the line-of-scrimmage. On runs toward the Referee's side, observe tackle for possible fouls.
  - b. Follow the ball carrier sideline-to-sideline.
  - c. Focus on the action behind the ball carrier after the runner has crossed the line-of-scrimmage.
  - d. Watch for:
    - Fumbles and the recovery.
    - Backward passes.
    - Ball leaving the free-blocking zone.
    - Illegal blocks and clipping.
    - Illegal use of hands and holding.
    - Personal fouls against the ball carrier.
  - e. Check for a possible first down.
  - f. Help relay the ball to the succeeding spot if needed.
  - g. Be alert for dead-ball fouls and taunting.
  - h. Be prepared to assist if the ball carrier goes out of bounds.
  - i. In plays that end with a TD, echo the TD signal of the other officials by facing the press box. Ensure there are no fouls prior to giving the signal.
- Preventive Officiating Suggestions:
- Talk to players as they un-pile. "Push off the ground. Good job. Easy now, easy up".
  - Do not allow players to pull opposing players from a pile.
5. Passing Plays:
- a. Stay with the passer even after the pass is released.
  - b. On passes to receivers who are behind the line of scrimmage, move to a position so you can see whether the pass is forward or backward and still see action on the passer. On such passes, be prepared to rule whether the pass is forward or backward. However, the wing official IN THE DIRECTION OF the flight of the ball has the primary responsibility for this coverage on "hand-to-hand snap then pass" plays.
  - c. Communicate to the rushers that the "ball is gone" when the pass has been released.
  - d. Rule whether passer fumbled on a "sack" or whether their arm was moving forward.
  - e. Mark the forward progress of the passer when he is "sacked".
  - f. Watch for:
    - Incomplete shovel or "Utah" passes.
    - Intentional grounding (Only Referee makes this call).
    - Illegal use of hands and holding.

- Personal fouls.
  - Roughing the passer.
  - Pass deflected by the defense (give “tipped ball” signal).
  - Dead-ball fouls and taunting.
- g. At the end of the play, either move to the succeeding spot on a completion or move to the previous spot on an incompleting.
- h. In plays that end with a TD, echo the TD signal of the other officials by facing the press box. Ensure there are no fouls prior to giving the signal.

#### D. Scrimmage Kicks

##### 1. Punts:

**Position – Prior to the snap position yourself in an imaginary box no less than 7 yards behind the punter and no closer laterally than 2 yards on the punter’s kicking foot side. Deeper and wider is permissible based on the Referee’s judgment of the best position for him, but always keep your position more behind the punter than to his side.**

- a. Count the kicking team and signal the Umpire with a “thumbs up” if there are 11 or fewer players.
- b. Signal the Umpire that it is a scrimmage kick formation.
- c. Check the jersey numbers of the up-backs to verify eligibility if it is a fake or a broken play.
- d. On a blocked punt, be prepared to rule on possession.
- e. Watch for:
  - Backs being set for one second.
  - Loose ball on the snap and the recovery.
  - Illegal blocks by the up back.
  - Roughing the kicker or being blocked into the kicker.
  - Fake punt that becomes running or passing play.
  - Punt going out of bounds – move to punter; mark path of the ball with official on the sideline.
  - Dead ball fouls and taunting.
- f. After the punt is away and the punter has regained their balance, slowly move down field and cleanup behind the Umpire.
- g. On long punt returns, pick up the runner and “carry them all the way” – work from the inside of the field looking outward.
- h. Move to the succeeding spot and find out if the ball still belongs to R. Be sure to ask if there was a fair catch.
- i. Check to see if there are any flags on the play and then communicate to Linesman about staying at old spot or moving the chains.

##### 2. Field Goals:

**Position – On the side of the kicker and holder, facing the holder as wide as the last down lineman.**

- a. Treat as a punt unless other wise noted.
- b. On a blocked kick, be prepared to rule on possession.
- c. Watch for:
  - Loose ball on the snap and the recovery.
  - Roughing the kicker & holder or being blocked into the kicker.
  - Fake kick that becomes a running or passing play.
  - Dead ball fouls and taunting.
- d. After the kick is away and the kicker has regained his balance, look for a signal from the Side Judge and the Field Judge as to whether the field goal is good and echo the signal.
- e. If the kick does not cross the goal line, treat it just like a punt.

f. If the kick is good, echo the TD signal of the other officials by facing the press box. Ensure there are no fouls prior to giving the signal.

#### E. Try for Point

1. Kick:

Everything is identical as a field goal except be ready to stop the play if kick try is unsuccessful.

2. Scrimmage Play:

Same as a scrimmage play except the ball becomes dead if the offensive team fails to score.

#### F. Goal Line Plays

1. Remind other officials of the proximity of the goal line.

2. Treat as any other scrimmage play.

3. In your end zone, be ready to rule on a safety, touchback or touchdown.

#### G. Time-outs

1. Give the time-out signal and specify the team that is charged or charge it to yourself.

2. Make sure trainers and/or coaches summoned for injured player are not on the field to coach players.

3. Record the period and time that each time out occurs.

4. Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.

5. Remain positioned near the offensive huddle but in view of the Field Judge and be prepared to receive the 45-second signal.

6. When the Field Judge has communicated that 45 seconds have elapsed, warn each team that 15 seconds remain – at the 60 second notice, move to the ball and mark the ball ready for play – then move to a normal position.

#### H. Measurements

1. Straighten the ball appropriately and oversee the measurement process.

2. Judge whether or not the line to gain has been reached.

3. Make the appropriate signal.

**Note: If the measurement is in a side zone and the ball is short of the line to gain, secure chain at the nose of the ball and the chains will be moved to the in-bounds line where they will re-stretched while the ball is placed exactly where it was in the side zone. If the ball is to be changed, wait until AFTER the measurement has been completed; then leave the old ball in place while moving with the new ball to the in-bounds spot. Leave the old ball in place until the new ball has been placed and the chains have been reset at the sideline.**

#### I. End of Period and Between Period Procedures

1. End of period

a. When facing clock, know when time expires.

b. If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.

c. If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.

d. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).

e. If end of game, be certain there are no penalties and then signal the end of game by holding the ball over your head. Then leave the field together as a crew.

2. Between periods (quarters):

a. Meet with the Umpire and Linesman at the ball and check to be certain there are no penalties to be enforced or no requests for a Coach-Referee conference –

then record the down, distance and yard line. Verify this info with the Linesman before he proceeds to move the chains.

- b. Be certain the results are recorded on your game card.
- c. Signal the end of the quarter by raising the ball above your head.
- d. Move to the appropriate spot at the other end of the field.
- e. The official who marks the end-of-quarter spot must mark the beginning-of-quarter spot on the other side of mid-field.
- f. When notified by the Field Judge that it is time to play, mark the ball ready for play.

**Note: Everyone has a job to do during this time. Avoid side conversations and be professional.**

3. At half time:

- a. Observe the players as they clear the field.
- b. After all players and coaches have left the field, signal the clock operator to start the game clock to time the half-time period.
- c. Following the 20-minute half-time and after the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field on R's side of the fifty with your back to R's goal line. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break positions at this time.) When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.

J. Penalty Administration

1. Calling Penalties Live Ball:

- a. Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul.
- b. Drop you penalty marker at the proper yard line.
- c. Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.

2. When ball becomes dead:

- a. Sound whistle and give time-out signal.
- b. Retrieve information from official that made the call (live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, offensive or defensive foul).
- c. Instruct Umpire to get offended team's captain prior to giving the preliminary signal.
- d. Give a preliminary signal to the press box. Separate yourself from any nearby players. Stand completely stationary and face the press box when making all penalty signals. All penalty signals should be done crisply.
- e. Relay the penalty to the wing officials so they can relay information to both coaches.
- f. Mentally note whether clock should start on the ready or the snap.

3. Administering Penalties:

- a. Fully explain all the options afforded to the offended team.
- b. Confer with the Umpire as to penalty, enforcement spot, direction and distance.
- c. Give final signal to the press box side of the field. Stand completely stationary and face the press box when making all penalty signals.

**Note: Repeat out loud the enforcement spot, distance and direction of every penalty to the Umpire to avoid an error.**

## B. Umpire Mechanics – 6 Man Crew

### A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties

1. On field pre-game duties:
  - a. After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
  - b. Accompany the Referee to speak with the home, then the visiting coaches.
  - c. Examine player equipment / medical wrappings / casts etc. & rule on legality.
  - d. Request to see a physician's release for any casts present. Sign & date the back before returning it to the coach or trainer.
2. Secondary on field pre-game duties:
  - a. Ensure Referee asks if all players are legally equipped.
  - b. Record captains numbers and who speaks at coin toss.
  - c. Secure game balls. Referee to approve.
  - d. Identify ball boys and direct them to wing officials.
  - e. Listen for special plays or formations that coach's use.
  - f. Ensure Referee asks the home team coach about the chain crew.
  - g. Relay each game ball to the respective deep officials.
  - h. Ensure Referee mentions that sportsmanship is expected by the coaches and players.
  - i. Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during the Referee/Coaches meetings.
3. Escort Duties:
  - a. **Starting at the goal line, seven minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff time, move simultaneously down the sideline to the 50-yard line with the Referee. You will be on the sideline opposite the press box and the Referee will be on the press box sideline.**
  - b. Wait on the sideline for the Linesman and the captains.
  - c. Place captains so that the speaking captain will be next to the Referee at mid-field. (On Umpire's far left)
  - d. Instruct captains to move to the center of the field when the Referee drops their hand. Only 4 captains are allowed to midfield. On occasions (i.e. senior night) where teams want to recognize more than 4 captains, have the remaining captains stand on the sideline. Do not allow any other players on the field.

### B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties

1. Coin Toss Duties:
  - a. Escort the captains to the center of the field.
  - b. Move in to see and record results of the coin toss as well as the options selected by each captain.
  - c. Stand with the kicking team as the Referee signals the results of the coin toss.
  - d. Once the coin toss is completed, and the captains dismissed, meet at the center of the field with the crew to record toss results and any final instructions from the Referee. Position—In the middle of the field on the kicking teams side of the fifty with your back to the kicking teams goal line.
  - e. When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your initial free kick position.

2. Free Kick Duties:

**Initial Position – On initial free kick to start either half move to midfield on K's free kick line. Following a try for point or a successful field goal, retrieve the ball for the subsequent kick off near the goal line, move up the numbers on the scoring team's side of the field and take position at midfield on the scoring team's free kick line.**

- a. Wait on the kicking team to come onto the field.
- b. Count the kicking team and make sure they have 11 or fewer players. In the event there are more or less than 11 players on the kicking team, give a strong indication to that team that they need to get to 11. Confirm with the Side Judge and Field Judge with a "thumbs up" signal.
- c. Brief the kicker on ball placement limitations.
- d. Point out the Referee to the kicker. Instruct the kicker to raise his hand when he is ready to kick the football. Instruct the kicker that you will tell him when to kick the football after the Referee blows the whistle marking the football ready for play. Give the kicker the football, and turn to face the Referee.
- e. On Referee's signal, move to a position between the kicker and the football.
- f. Extend one arm into the air to let the Referee know that you and the kicker are ready. Place the other arm parallel to the ground and in front of the kicker. When the Referee blows the whistle, lower your arms, step back, and instruct the kicker to kick the football.

**Note: DO NOT LET THE KICKER KICK THE BALL UNTIL THE WHISTLE IS BLOWN.**

- g. After the kick, make sure you are behind the kicker so you can observe play on him while they are afforded protection (the first 5 yards downfield).
- h. Bean bag in hand. Use if the kick is touched by the kicking team prior to going 10-yards.
- i. Start the clock when legally touched in bounds.
- j. Move downfield slowly observing blocks. Your initial focus must be on the kicker for the first 5 yards. You must also cover the 1, 2 or 3 RECEIVING team players who are nearest the center of the receiver's formation (depending on how many total players are in the group of players closest to the receiver's restraining line at the kick).
- k. Be alert for a long return and officiate inside out as a normal running play
- l. Free Kicks after an accepted penalty:
  - Move directly to the middle of the field at the spot of the last free kick. Do not go to your initial position.
  - Give infraction signal to the press box side and mark off the penalty.
  - Move the kicking team to the new spot for the free kick.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
- m. Free Kicks after a safety:
  - Move directly to the middle of the field at the kicking team's free kick line. Make sure to secure the kicking team's ball.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
- n. Free kick following fair catch or awarded fair catch
  - Move to sideline opposite press box and on goal line.
  - Much as the Referee is responsible for the goal line on an ordinary free kick, you are responsible for ruling on whether the ball crossed the goal line in a return situation, whether the momentum exception may apply and for starting the clock if the kick is legally touched inbounds.
  - If the kick is returned, the runner must be picked up in your area and followed up the sideline. You should focus on blockers in front of the runner and should be looking for any illegal contact.

### C. Scrimmage Plays

#### 1. During the offensive huddle:

- a. **Stand near the nose of the ball; when the Referee reaches his position, turn and go to your position.**
- b. If “no huddle” offense, stay on ball until “ready for play” whistle.
- c. Assist the Referee with whether the clock starts on the snap or “ready”.
- d. Count offense after the ready for play signal – check-off with the Referee with “thumbs up” signal if 11 or fewer players. Try to time your signal with the signal given by the Referee.
- e. If after the ready for play signal there are 12 or more players, and no player is attempting to leave the field, then throw your flag for substitution infraction and stop the clock.
- f. Remember to adjust your down indicator. Also remember to adjust your ball position indicator. In order to remind you of the ball position in relation to the hash marks, this indicator is very helpful in keeping track of previous spots on incomplete passes and accepted penalty enforcement.

#### 2. Pre Snap:

**Position – 4 to 7 yards off the ball, Heads Up with the center.**

**Note: If you cannot see the ball, move to one side slightly “opposite the Referee”.**

- a. Keep the snap in view.
- b. Vary your position to keep offense from using you as a “pick”.
- c. Count the offense if unable to in huddle.
- d. Verify you have 5 players 50-79 on the offensive line.
- e. Know ineligible receivers by number or position. Recognition of covered tight end requires knowledge of auxiliary signals by either Head Linesman or Line Judge. Identify unbalanced line if it exists.
- f. Be aware of clock.
- g. Know what defensive players are on the line of scrimmage (blocking below the waist).
- h. Watch for:
  - Snap infractions and false starts.
  - Excessive quarterback head movements simulating action at the snap.
- i. Listen for disconcerting signals by the defense.

#### 3. At the Snap:

- a. Key on three adjoining interior linemen and vary from snap to snap.
- b. Read point of attack and be aware of free blocking zone.
- c. Watch for:
  - Holding, illegal use of hands and personal fouls.
  - Chop blocks and other illegal blocks in the free blocking zone.
  - Fumbles. Drop beanbag on or parallel to the spot.

#### 4. Running Plays:

- a. Observe the snapper and the two linemen adjacent to the snapper (“center” and both “guards”) for the initial line charge.
- b. Operate hash mark to hash mark and spot the ball at the end of the play. (There may be times that you have to move outside the hash mark but it should be the exception - fights, injury, etc. However, do NOT treat the hash mark as a “wall” through which you may not pass. Instead, be flexible especially in moving to retrieve the ball just outside the hash mark when the ball is downed there.)
- c. Pivot toward the point of attack and know when the ball leaves the zone.

- d. Observe line play and action around the runner.
- e. Work inside - out.
- f. If play is directly at you, freeze and allow the runner to commit to their path.
- g. If possible pivot to face runners as they go by.
- h. Officiate at the point of attack and then behind the runner.
- i. Move downfield slowly. There may be unwarranted action on the line that is still your responsibility. You are the last official to move downfield as the ball moves past the LOS. Your job is to observe those players who do not make an effort to keep up with the downfield play.
- j. When ball is dead between the hash marks, move to retrieve the ball and spot the nose of the ball on the nearest wing official's downfield foot or the official with the best "look".
- k. When ball is dead in a side zone, move to the hash mark at the intersection of the dead ball spot and align the nose of the ball with the forward progress spot normally on the wing official's down field foot.
- l. If clock is stopped by a wing official, echo the wing official's signal.

**Note:**

- **When the ball becomes dead near a first down, allow the wing official to spot the ball on their foot.**
- **Talk to players as they un-pile. "Push off the ground. Good job. Easy now, easy up".**
- **Do not allow players to pull other players from a pile.**

5. Passing Plays:

- a. On drop back or roll out passes, move to the Line of Scrimmage. Move there at a pace that allows you to continue to officiate while on the move.
- b. Be alert to avoid running into a draw play.
- c. Get into a position to rule whether the pass or passer crosses the line of scrimmage.
- d. Be alert for tipped passes. (Give "tipped ball" signal).
- e. On quick passes without a drop to inside receivers such as wing backs – especially passes thrown between the tackles, step forward and hold your position to observe any illegal contact on the LOS. On over-the-middle passes, be prepared to turn with the ball to assist with catch no catch call.
- f. Know when the ball leaves the free blocking zone.
- g. Watch for:
  - Holding, illegal use of hands and personal fouls.
  - Chop blocks and other illegal blocks.
  - Ineligibles downfield.
  - Illegal pass (passer clearly over the line of scrimmage before releasing the ball is your call).
  - Dead ball fouls.

D. Scrimmage Kicks

1. Pre Snap:

**Position – 4 to 7 yards deep behind team B's line, Heads Up the center, keeping the snap in view.**

- a. Count the kicking team players. Signal with a "thumbs up" to the Referee.
- b. Acknowledge Referee's signal for "kicking formation".
- c. Check numbering exception.
- d. Know jersey numbers of interior linemen.
- e. Note eligible numbers that are ineligible by position.
- f. Key on the snapper and offensive guards.
- g. Check linemen (other than center and guards) for interlocked feet. (Illegal formation).

h. Watch for false starts and snap infractions.

**Note: Remind defensive players to “stay off the snapper” until he has had a chance to recover and “don’t rough the kicker and holder” (if appropriate) before each kick.**

2. At & After The Snap:

- a. Step toward the neutral zone and watch action on the snapper.
- b. Shift attention to the offensive guards and backs behind the neutral zone.
- c. Be alert to assist Referee in covering a short or blocked kick. If the kick is touched by a defensive player but not completely blocked, signal with legal touching signal (signal 11).
- d. Assist with determining whether the ball crosses the neutral zone.
- e. Determine when the ball has left the free blocking zone (usually immediately).
- f. Be alert for a fake kick or broken play and subsequent run or pass.
- g. Watch for:
  - Illegal contact on the snapper.
  - Illegal blocks, especially after the ball leaves the free blocking zone.
  - Illegal use of hands and holding.
  - Ineligible downfield or offensive pass interference if a pass crosses the line.

3. After the ball is away:

- a. Allow wave of blockers to move beyond you downfield.
- b. Pivot and move downfield slowly, watching blocks.
- c. Be alert for a long return and officiate inside out as a normal running play.
- d. Watch for:
  - Personal fouls.
  - Clipping.
  - Illegal blocks.

**Note: Once ball has been kicked downfield, notify blocking linemen by yelling “BALLS AWAY”.**

4. When the Ball Becomes Dead:

- a. Be alert for dead-ball fouls and taunting.
- b. Move to the dead ball spot to set up the ball.
- c. Inform the Referee of the status of the play. (Fair catch, no fair catch, etc.)

E. Try For Point

1. Kick:

Everything is identical as other scrimmage kicks except:

- Be ready to stop the play if kick try is unsuccessful.

2. Scrimmage Play:

Remember that the neutral zone does not expand into the end zone. Therefore, offensive linemen may not block into the end zone on pass plays. (Ineligible downfield.)

- Same as a scrimmage play except the ball becomes dead if the offensive team fails to score.

F. Goal Line Plays

1. Position near goal line and cover same as any scrimmage play.
2. Ensure runner does not thrust ball forward after it is declared dead.

**Note:**

- **Look to wing for TD signal.**
- **If you think runner has scored, but wings have not signaled, assist by signaling this with HANDS TO THE CHEST. You are saying that you have the ball in the**

- end zone with this signal. It is still up to the wings to determine if the runner was down before the ball crossed the goal line.**
- **Signal TD when you are the ONLY official CERTAIN that the runner has scored.**

#### G. Time-outs

1. Maintain position over the ball.
2. Observe Team A until Referee is ready to start play.
3. Make sure trainers and/or coaches summoned for injured player are not on the field to coach players.
4. Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
5. Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.

#### H. Measurements

1. Take the forward stake from the chain person at the place of measurement.
2. When Linesman says “ready”, respond by “pulling chain” as you stretch the chain and hold forward stake near the ball until the Referee reaches a decision.

**Note: If the measurement is in a side zone and short, the Referee will secure chain at the nose of the ball and the chains will be moved to the in-bounds line where they will re-stretched while the ball is placed exactly where it was in the side zone. Be sure not to pull the chain out of the Referee’s grasp.**

#### I. End of Period and Between Period Procedures

1. End of period
  - a. When facing clock, know when time expires.
  - b. If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
  - c. If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
  - d. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
  - e. If end of game, leave field together as a crew.
2. Between periods (quarters):
  - a. Record down, distance and yard-line nearest nose of the ball – going in or out?
  - b. Hold spot and hand the ball to Referee for end of period signal.
  - c. Re-check spot and set up ball at corresponding spot on the other half of the field.

Mechanics suggestion:

  - Everyone has a job to do during this time. Avoid side conversations and be professional.
3. At half time:
  - a. Before leaving the field, make sure the deep officials have secured a game ball.
  - b. Following the 20-minute half-time and after the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field on K’s side of the fifty with your back to K’s goal line. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break position at this time.) When a team takes the field, break to your free kick position.

#### J. Penalty Administration

1. Calling Penalties Live Ball:
  - a. Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul.
  - b. Drop your penalty marker at the proper yard line.
  - c. Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.

2. When ball becomes dead:
  - a. Give time-out signal.
  - b. Sound whistle (get Referee's attention by sounding several short, loud blasts).
  - c. Verbally report information to Referee. (Live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, and offensive or defensive foul).
  - d. Mentally note whether clock should start on the ready or the snap.
  
3. Administering Penalties:
  - a. Direct offended captain to Referee as he gives the preliminary signal.
  - b. Secure ball.
  - c. Confer with the Referee as to enforcement spot, direction and distance. In situations where the ball has become dead in a side zone, move the ball back to the appropriate hash mark before stepping off the penalty (do NOT step off penalties in a side zone).
  - d. On properly marked field, avoid stepping off each yard between yard lines. Instead step off the first and last yard line.
  - e. Walk briskly using arm signal to point to each yard line you cross.
  - f. Verbalize distance walked off as you move to spot.

**Note: Repeat out loud the enforcement spot, distance and direction of a penalty to the Referee to avoid error.**

## C. Head Linesman Mechanics – 6 Man Crew

### A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties

#### 1. On field pre-game duties:

- a. After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
- b. Locate and communicate with the ball person on your side.
- c. Check the line to gain equipment by:
  - Making sure the chains are 10 yards in length with no knots and has a piece of tape secured at the 5-yard mark.
  - Making sure the down box is working properly.
- d. Instruct your chain as follows:
  - Introduce yourself to the entire chain crew.
  - Identify who will be the box person. Know them on a first name basis.
  - Explain the use of the clip (clip the back line, the back of that line) and who will be doing this job.
  - Tell the crew to drop the chains and get out of the way when the flow of action comes toward the sideline.
  - Tell the box person not to change the down or move until you indicate the next down.
  - Explain that you will be “setting” the box person on all first downs. There can be exceptions in the event the Side Judge is in position to do this.
  - Explain the importance of them hustling and how important they are to the entire crew.

#### 2. Secondary on field pre-game duties:

- a. Check the sideline for safety concerns and proper markings.
- b. Take a look at the clock to make sure it is working properly.

#### 3. Escort Duties:

- a. Go to dressing room of the team whose bench will be opposite the press box. This will usually be the visiting team. Be there 10 minutes prior to the kick-off.
- b. Escort the captains to the goal line and on their side of the field.
- c. Have the Visiting Captains on the goal line on their side of the field, five minutes prior the scheduled kickoff to start the game. Make eye contact and signal the Line Judge and move simultaneously to the 50 yard line.

### B. Coin Toss & Free Kick Duties

#### 1. Coin Toss Duties:

- a. Walk out to the hash marks on your side of the field with the Umpire and captains.
- b. Be positioned on the 50-yard line and facing the team box.
- c. Once the coin toss is completed, and the captains dismissed, meet at the center of the field with the crew to record toss results and any final instructions from the Referee. Position – Facing press box on R's side of the 50-yard line.
- d. When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your initial free kick position.

#### 2. Free Kick Duties:

**Initial Position – On initial free kick to start either half, break huddle, move down the 50 away from press box to the sideline, turn and go to R's 10 yard-line. Following a try for point or a successful field goal square out to sideline opposite press box and move to R's 10 yard-line.**

- a. Count R and make sure they have 11 or fewer players. In the event there are more or less than 11 players on the kicking team, give a strong indication to that

- team that they need to get to 11. Confirm with the Referee and Line Judge by giving a “thumbs up” signal.
- b. Wait for Side Judge to raise arm, raise yours when ready and make eye contact with Referee. Lower your arm after Referee checks off with you.
- c. Watch for:
- “Pooch” kicks longer than 25 yards; be prepared to move up-field quickly to cover these.
  - Kick going out of bounds - who touched it?
  - Winding clock when ball is legally touched in your area.
  - Muff or fumble.
  - Covering short and on-side kicks. On short (pooch) kicks, wings must move up for the catch. Watch for kick catch interference, fair catch signals (valid and invalid) and other activities associated with the catch.
  - Backward passes and forward hand-offs.
  - Illegal blocks and clips.
  - Facemask violations.
  - Fair catch signals.
  - Kick-catching interference.
- d. Focus on “wedge” in front of the ball carrier.
- e. Pick up the ball carrier in your area and provide coverage using the “mobile box” concept.
- f. If ball becomes dead deep, move in to spot the ball. Stop clock.
- g. If ball becomes dead in the side zone (your area) - stop clock - and once another official holds the spot, move to sideline to set the chains.
- h. If ball carrier goes to other side of the field, move cautiously toward the play, watching for ball carrier to reverse their field. Focus on action away from the ball.
- i. Start the clock when legally touched.
- j. Echo signals to start and stop the clock.
- k. In obvious on-side kick situations, move to R’s free kick line.
- l. Free Kicks after an accepted free kick penalty:
- Move to a position 5 yards from your previous free kick position.
  - Help clear the sidelines in your area.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
- m. Free Kicks after a safety:
- Line up as deep as deepest receiver.
  - Help clear the sidelines in your area.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
- n. Free Kicks following fair catch or awarded fair catch:
- Move to sideline opposite press box on K’s free kick line.

### C. Scrimmage Plays

1. During the offensive huddle:
  - a. Verify with the Referee the correct down. Use a raised hand signal with the appropriate number of fingers extended to indicate the next down (use closed fist for 4<sup>th</sup> down). Make sure the correct down is on the down box.
  - b. Remember to move your hand down indicator and be aware of down, distance, and game clock.
  - c. Make sure your sideline is clear.
  - d. Think about your keys.

#### 2. Pre Snap:

**Position – no closer than 9 yards outside the nearest player on the line of scrimmage and opposite the press box side of the field. Straddle the yard line through the ball. If the nearest player is near the sideline, then position yourself on or outside the sideline.**

- a. In conjunction with the opposite wing establish that there are at least seven (7) offensive linemen on the line-of-scrimmage. Signal when there are exactly three (3) linemen on your side of the center by holding a clenched fist at belt level using your downfield hand (toward the defense). If there are two (2) or less or four (4) or more linemen on your side of the center, give the unbalanced line signal – a hand to the chest (signal 22). Note: The idea is for the wing officials to quickly and mutually determine the number of legal linemen and be prepared to rule on legal (or illegal) formation at the snap.
- b. Establish the line-of-scrimmage with your foot on the offensive side.
- c. Determine whether nearest wide out is on or off the line. If the widest man in the offensive formation is off the line of scrimmage, signal by extending your arm straight out toward the offensive backfield with your fist clenched. This is known as “punching them back”. Hold the signal until the ball is snapped or the receiver goes in motion.
- d. Know the numbers of the eligible receivers on your side and legal position of slot-backs and wide-outs. Be aware of a tight end that might be “covered up”.
- e. You are responsible for a player in motion on your side of the snapper. If he reverses, he is still your responsibility as long as he remains on your side of the snapper. Once a man in motion passes to the opposite side of the snapper, he becomes the responsibility of the wing on that side of the snapper. It may be necessary to take a step toward the offensive backfield to watch the man in motion as long as this does not take away from your ability to watch the neutral zone.
- f. Make sure of no neutral zone violations by the offense or defense.
- g. Never let a player line up behind you.

**Note: If your wide out is over the line on their initial set up in the formation, pat your leg which is on the offensive side of the ball and tell them “this is the line of scrimmage”. This should indicate to him that he needs to back up.**

### 3. At the Snap:

- a. Determine run or pass. Do this by keying on a player (normally a tackle or tight end to your side) that will tell you the type of play.
- b. Watch initial charge of linemen and be alert for quick plays into line.
- c. Watch for holding by your key and illegal blocks by the inside receiver(s).
- d. Watch for illegal blocks by wide-outs.

### 4. Running Plays:

- a. Look into the backfield to determine the direction of the play.
- b. When play is moving toward you, backpedal and give way slightly to the offensive side of the ball until the play heads up field. Remember you have inside blocks in front of the runner and you pick up the runner as he nears the scrimmage line. Follow the runner until he passes you then you have sideline coverage as the runner moves down field.
- c. If play is moving to the far sideline, move across the field, and then angle down field as the ball crosses the line of scrimmage. Focus on action away from the ball, paying particular attention to the offensive tackle nearest you. Be aware of reverses back to your side of the field. Leave opposing players behind you only if they appear to be out of the play and no unnecessary contact is going on.
- d. Always keep the play “boxed in”.
- e. When ball becomes dead, move to spot of the ball.
- f. When you are sure it is a first down, give the time-out signal and notify the Referee. As soon as the Line Judge has the spot, release to set your chains.
- g. When not sure of a first down, put the ball on the spot and notify the Referee.
- h. When the runner goes out-of-bounds, mark the spot, give time-out signal, turn and face out of bounds.

- i. During the run, observe action on linebackers and backside pursuit.
- j. Always square to ball at the end of the play. Mark the forward progress with your down field foot.
- k. Watch for:
  - Fumbles (use beanbag) and recovery.
  - When the ball leaves the free blocking zone.
  - Personal fouls.

5. Passing Plays:

- a. Hold near the line of scrimmage for the initial line charge then key on the inside receiver. Watch for illegal blocks by or on the receiver(s). In the case of “snap” passes thrown approximately parallel to the line of scrimmage from hand-to-hand snap, only, be prepared to rule whether the pass is forward or backward. The wing official IN THE DIRECTION OF the flight of the ball has the primary responsibility for this coverage.
- b. Move down field with the receiver(s) in your area. (Your area is considered to be from just behind the line of scrimmage to 10-15 yards beyond the line of scrimmage).
- c. Split the distance between the shortest and deepest receiver if you are responsible for more than one receiver in your area.
- d. If the ball caught is over the middle with the receivers back to you, then look to the Umpire. If they are not sure of the catch, then rule on what you saw. Make the call and sell it.
- e. Make eye contact with the Side Judge on questionable passes on the sideline. Both of you should have the same call on complete and incomplete passes. Talk about this in the pre-game. For example, the official looking at the receiver’s back will rule on whether their feet were in bounds and the official looking at the front of the receiver will rule on whether a catch was good or not.
- f. Be aware of when the pass is in the air in order to rule if action on a receiver is holding or pass interference.
- g. Make ruling whether a pass is complete or not in your area. Move into position to keep the continuing play “boxed in” as if a running play.
- h. Always square to ball at the end of the play. Mark the forward progress with your down field foot.
- i. Watch for:
  - Action of all receivers coming into your area.
  - Legally numbered receivers who were lined up as ineligible going down field. This normally is a “covered up” tight end or slot back on that was not off the line of scrimmage.
  - Immediate throws by the quarterback down the line of scrimmage to determine if the pass is forward or backward.
  - Early blocks or “pick” plays by the receivers.
  - Incomplete shovel pass.
  - Pass interference or face guarding.
  - Receivers going out of bounds voluntarily and returning.
  - Ineligibles down field that may get behind the umpire

**Note: You should be responsible for getting to all dead ball spots up to the 2-yard line. In the event you are not going to be there to take the spot for plays to your side of the field (i.e. long passes and runs), then the Side Judge should get the spot.**

#### D. Scrimmage Kicks – Including Field Goal Attempts

##### **Position – same as on Scrimmage plays.**

##### 1. Punts:

- a. Count the kickers and verify with the opposite wing that a minimum of 7 offensive players are legally positioned as linemen.
- b. Determine whether nearest wide out is on or off the line. Give the proper off the line signal if necessary.
- c. Know numbers of eligible and ineligible receivers being aware that ineligible receivers can be lined up in positions where eligible receivers normally position themselves. This is important in the case of a pass.
- d. If the Referee is to your side of the field at the snap, you are responsible for holding your position at the line and determining that the kick has crossed the neutral zone and that it will not come back across the neutral zone. If the Referee is to the opposite side, you are responsible for holding at the line of scrimmage until you have determined that there has been a clean snap and the punt has not been blocked. Once the clean snap / not blocked condition has been confirmed, release downfield to assist the deep judges as needed. Be prepared to mark possession for possible PSK enforcement if the kick is short and you wind up being the covering official. Observe action on the first wave of K players and observe blocks in front of the punt receiver(s). Watch for Post Scrimmage Kick type fouls. If there is an errant snap or the kick has been blocked, you must retreat into K's backfield to assist the Referee with coverage.
- e. On a short kick out of bounds in your area, work with the Referee to "chop you in" in order to mark the spot. On a "shanked" kick to your area, be prepared to have the spot in the event the Referee did not see where it went out of bounds.
- f. If the kick has ended and a return (run) has started, wing officials will reverse mechanics with the deep judges. The wing officials will need to keep in front of the ball carrier and concentrate on blocks around the ball carrier during the return. The wing officials will be on the goal line to determine if the runner scores. The deep officials will have preferred responsibility for forward progress from the start of the return to the 2 yard line. Wing officials will have preferred forward progress from the 2 yard line to the goal line.
- g. Watch for:
  - Neutral zone violations by the offense or defense.
  - Illegal blocks.
  - First touching in your area by the kicking team (mark spot with your beanbag).
  - Signal from Referee before moving the chains after the play is dead.

##### 2. Field Goals:

- Treat as any other scrimmage kick.

#### E. Try For Point

##### 1. Kick:

Everything is identical as a field goal except:

- Be ready to stop the play if kick try is unsuccessful.

##### 2. Scrimmage Play:

- Same as a scrimmage play except the ball becomes dead if the offensive team fails to score.

#### F. Goal Line Plays

1. Unless otherwise noted, treat as any other scrimmage play.
2. At the snap, your key REMAINS the inside receiver.
3. On plays where the ball is snapped inside the 5-yard line, move to the goal line on the snap and work your way back to the ball.

4. On plays where the ball is snapped between the 10 to the 5-yard line, at the snap move 3 to 5 yards down field. Read the play and stay ahead of the runner, you have the goal line and you must be at the goal line before the runner.
5. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW IF THE BALL HAS BROKEN THE PLANE OF THE GOAL LINE. Signal Touchdown only if you have seen the ball break that plane.
6. On plays where the ball is dead just short of the goal line, move in quickly to get the spot. Do not jump over players. Sell the spot!!
7. On goal line plays (GOING OUT) where the ball is snapped on or inside the 3-yard line, move to the goal line on the snap and officiate up the field. Be prepared to rule on a safety in the event it occurs. Even when the snap is outside the 3-yard line, the wing official must still be prepared to fall back and assist on ruling forward progress near the goal line.
8. On plays where you are screened from the ball, but you can tell whether the runner was down short of the goal line, the Umpire may be able to help. If the Umpire has HANDS TO THE CHEST, he is telling you he has the ball in the end zone. You must still determine whether the runner was down short of the goal line.

**Note: On any goal line play you must be at the goal line before the runner. Read the play so you are standing still at the goal line ready to make the call.**

#### G. Time-outs

1. Move to a position halfway between the ball and the team box on your sideline – in position to monitor the team’s huddle.
2. Watch for illegal conferences. Be sure of proper number of players/attendants in huddle.
3. Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
4. Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.
5. Be alert for signal from the Referee to give your team 15-second warning. Go to team huddle and say, “Coach, ball will be marked ready for play in 15 seconds.
6. Inform the coach of time outs remaining.
7. Be alert of substitutes or attempts to use substitutes for purposes of deception.

#### H. Measurements

1. When the Referee calls for a measurement, hustle to the sideline. Make sure the box is at the spot of the front stake.
2. Pick up the chain at the clip and proceed to where the Line Judge is marking the yard-line (this should be directly behind the ball).
3. Hold the clip on the back of the yard line while the Umpire stretches the chain and the Referee signals the result.
4. If not a first down, carry the chain and clip to its correct position on the sideline and re-set the chains.
5. If the measurement is in a side-zone, use the chains to bring the ball into the hash marks then set the box and make sure of the proper down.
6. If a first down, release the chains and clip and let the Side Judge set the chains for a new series.

**Note: If there is an incomplete pass on 4<sup>th</sup> down, the ball will be placed at the previous spot so that the rear point becomes the foremost point of the ball. The box and chains must be moved the length of the football in the new direction of the offense. Only move the box after the Umpire has spotted the ball.**

#### I. End of Period and Between Period Procedures

1. End of period
  - a. When facing clock, know when time expires.
  - b. If time expires prior to snap, sound whistle to prevent snap.

- c. If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- d. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
- e. If end of game, quickly thank the chain crew, retrieve your clip, and leave the field together as a crew.

2. Between periods (quarters):

- a. Meet with the Referee to verify the down, distance and yard line. Make note of the yard line where the clip is placed.
- b. Be certain the results are recorded on your game card.
- c. Pick up chain at the spot of the clip.
- d. Remember to instruct chain crew to “flip-flop” sides.
- e. Move to the appropriate yard line on the other side of the 50-yard line to reset the chains.
- f. Re-check down, distance and yard line.
- g. Ensure the box person sets the box on the yard line of the ball.
- h. Inform Referee that you are ready to go.

Mechanics suggestion:

- Everyone has a job to do during this time. Avoid side conversations and be professional.

3. At half time:

- a. Instruct the chain crew to be back prior to the second half kickoff.
- b. Following the 20-minute half-time, relay coaches’ options for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half in conjunction with the Side Judge’s responsibilities.
- c. After the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field next to the Referee away from the press box and facing the Line Judge. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break positions at this time.) When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.

J. Penalty Administration

1. Calling Penalties Live Ball:

- a. Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul.
- b. Drop your penalty marker at the proper yard line.
- c. Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.

2. When ball becomes dead:

- a. Give time-out signal
- b. Sound whistle (get Referee’s attention by sounding several short, loud blasts).
- c. Verbally report information to Referee. (Live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player’s number, and offensive or defensive foul).
- d. Mentally note whether clock should start on the ready or the snap.

3. Administering Penalties

- a. If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official gets the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
- b. Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.
- c. Hustle to your sideline and report the foul and offending player’s number to the coach.
- d. If the coach asks you about administration of the penalty, give them the options.
- e. Mark off the penalty on the sideline (as a double check for the Umpire) and move the box-man when necessary.

**Note: If you are not the official who called a foul, cover the flag for that official who did.**

## D. Line Judge Mechanics – 6 Man Crew

### A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties

1. On field pre-game duties:
  - a. After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
  - b. Find a member of game management and review the starting time of the game as well as the current time.
  - c. Locate the band director / ROTC advisor and let them know that the National Anthem needs to be completed not less than 10 minutes prior to game time.
  - d. Locate and communicate with the ball person on your side.
2. Secondary on field pre-game duties:
  - a. Check the sideline for safety concerns and proper markings.
  - b. Take a look at the clock to make sure it is working properly.
3. Escort Duties:
  - a. Go to the dressing room of the team whose bench will be on the press box side. This will usually be the home team. Be there 10 minutes prior to the kick-off.
  - b. Escort the Home Captains to the goal line and on their side of the field.
  - c. Have the Home Captains on the goal line on their side of the field, five minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff to start the game.
  - d. Make eye contact and signal the Head Linesman and move simultaneously to the 50 yard line.
  - e. Introduce the speaking captain to the Referee.

**Note: Know where your team will be located when they leave the field.**

### B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties

1. Coin Toss Duties:
  - a. Walk out to the hash marks on your side of the field with the Referee and captains.
  - b. Be positioned on the 50-yard line and facing the team box.
  - c. Once the coin toss is completed, and the captains dismissed, meet at the center of the field with the crew to record toss results and any final instructions from the Referee. Position – Facing Linesman on R's side of the 50-yard line.
  - d. When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your initial free kick position.
2. Free Kick Duties:

Initial Position – On initial free kick to start either half, break huddle, move down the 50 toward the press box, turn at the sideline and go to R's **10** yard-line. Following a try for point or a successful field goal square out to the sideline on the press box side and move to R's **10** yard line.

  - a. Count R and make sure they have 11 or fewer players. In the event there are more or less than 11 players on the kicking team, give a strong indication to that team that they need to get to 11. Confirm with the Referee and Linesman by giving a "thumbs up" signal.
  - b. Wait for Field Judge to raise arm, raise yours when ready and make eye contact with Referee. Lower your arm after Referee checks off with you.
  - c. Watch for:
    - "Pooch" kicks longer than 25 yards; be prepared to move up-field quickly to cover these.
    - Kick going out of bounds - who touched it?
    - Winding clock when ball is legally touched in your area.
    - Muff or fumble.

- Covering short and on-side kicks. On short (pooch) kicks, wings must move up for the catch. Watch for kick catch interference, fair catch signals (valid and invalid) and other activities associated with the catch.
  - Backward passes and forward hand-offs.
  - Illegal blocks and clips.
  - Facemask violations.
  - Fair catch signals.
  - Kick-catching interference.
- d. Focus on “wedge” in front of the ball carrier.
- e. Pick up the ball carrier in your area and provide coverage using the “mobile box” concept.
- f. If ball becomes dead deep, move in to spot the ball. Stop clock.
- g. If ball becomes dead in the side zone (your area) - stop the clock.
- h. If ball carrier goes to other side of the field, move cautiously toward the play, watching for ball carrier to reverse their field. Focus on action away from the ball.
- i. Echo signals to start and stop the clock.
- j. In obvious on-side kick situations, move to R’s free kick line.
- k. Free Kicks after an accepted free kick penalty:
- Move to a position 5 yards from your previous free kick position.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
- l. Free Kicks after a safety:
- Line up as deep as the deepest receiver.
  - Help clear the sidelines in your area.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
- m. Free Kicks following fair catch or awarded fair catch:
- Move to the sideline (on the press box side) on R’s free kick line.

### C. Scrimmage Plays

#### 1. During the offensive huddle:

- a. Remember to move your hand down indicator and be aware of down, distance, and game clock.
- b. Make sure your sideline is clear.
- c. Think about your keys.

#### 2. Pre Snap:

**Position – no closer than 9 yards outside the nearest player on the line of scrimmage and on the press box side of the field. Straddle the yard line through the ball. If the nearest player is near the sideline, then position yourself on or outside the sideline.**

- a. In conjunction with the opposite wing establish that there are at least seven (7) offensive linemen on the line-of-scrimmage. Signal when there are exactly three (3) linemen on your side of the center by holding a clenched fist at belt level using your downfield hand (toward the defense). If there are two (2) or less or four (4) or more linemen on your side of the center, give the unbalanced line signal – a hand to the chest (signal 22). Note: The idea is for the wing officials to quickly and mutually determine the number of legal linemen and be prepared to rule on legal (or illegal) formation at the snap.
- b. Establish the line-of-scrimmage with your foot on the offensive side.
- c. Determine whether nearest wide out is on or off the line. If the widest man in the offensive formation is off the line of scrimmage, signal by extending your arm straight out toward the offensive backfield with your fist clenched. This is known as “punching them back”. Hold the signal until the ball is snapped or the receiver goes in motion or shifts into legal position on the LOS.
- d. Know the numbers of the eligible receivers on your side and legal position of slot-backs and wide-outs. Be aware of a tight end that might be “covered up”.

- e. You are responsible for a player in motion on your side of the snapper. If he reverses, he is still your responsibility as long as he remains on your side of the snapper. Once a man in motion passes to the opposite side of the snapper, he becomes the responsibility of the wing on that side of the snapper. It may be necessary to take a step toward the offensive backfield to watch the man in motion as long as this does not take away from your ability to watch the neutral zone.
- f. Make sure of no neutral zone violations by the offense or defense.
- g. Never allow a player to line up between you and the sideline

**Note: If your wide out is over the line on their initial set up in the formation, pat your leg which is on the offensive side of the ball and tell them “this is the line of scrimmage”. This indicates that they need to back up.**

3. At the Snap:

- a. Determine run or pass. Do this by keying on a player (normally a tackle or tight end to your side) that will tell you the type of play.
- b. Watch initial charge of linemen and be alert for quick plays into line.
- c. Watch for holding by your key and illegal blocks by the inside receiver(s).
- d. Watch for illegal blocks by wide-outs.

4. Running Plays:

- a. Look into the backfield to determine the direction of the play.
- b. When play is moving toward you, backpedal and give way slightly to the offensive side of the ball until the play heads up field. Remember you have inside blocks in front of the runner and you pick up the runner as he nears the scrimmage line. Follow the runner until he passes you then you have sideline coverage as the runner moves down field.
- c. If play is moving to the far sideline, move across the field, and then angle down field as the ball crosses the line of scrimmage. Focus on action away from the ball, paying particular attention to the offensive tackle nearest you. Be aware of reverses back to your side of the field. Leave opposing players behind you only if they appear to be out of the play and no unnecessary contact is going on.
- d. Always keep the play “boxed in” using the “mobile box” concept.
- e. When ball becomes dead, move to spot of the ball.
- f. When you are sure it is a first down, give the time-out signal and notify the Referee. If the Linesman has the spot, notify them that you are now taking that spot so he can release to set their chains.
- g. When not sure of a first down, put the ball on the spot and notify the Referee.
- h. When the runner goes out-of-bounds, mark the spot, give time-out signal, turn and face out of bounds.
- i. During the run, observe action on linebackers and backside pursuit.
- j. Always square to ball at the end of the play. Mark the forward progress with your down field foot.
- k. Watch for:
  - Fumbles (use beanbag) and recovery.
  - When the ball leaves the free blocking zone.
  - Personal fouls.

5. Passing Plays:

- a. Hold near the line of scrimmage for the initial line charge then key on the inside receiver. Watch for illegal blocks by or on the receiver(s). In the case of “snap” passes thrown approximately parallel to the line of scrimmage from hand-to-hand snap, only, be prepared to rule whether the pass is forward or backward. The wing official IN THE DIRECTION OF the flight of the ball has the primary responsibility for this coverage.

- b. Move down field with the receiver(s) in your area. (Your area is considered to be from just behind the line of scrimmage to 10-15 yards beyond the line of scrimmage).
- c. Split the distance between the shortest and deepest receiver if you are responsible for more than one receiver in your area.
- d. If the ball is caught over the middle with the receivers back to you, then look to the Umpire. If they are not sure of the catch, then rule on what you saw. Make the call and sell it.
- e. Make eye contact with the Field Judge on questionable passes on the sideline. Both of you should have the same call on complete and incomplete passes. Talk about this in the pregame. For example, the official looking at the receiver's back will rule on whether their feet were in bounds and the official looking at the front of the receiver will rule on whether a catch was good or not.
- f. Be aware of when the pass is in the air in order to rule if action on a receiver is holding or pass interference.
- g. Make ruling whether a pass is complete or not in your area. Move into position to keep the continuing play "boxed in" as if a running play.
- h. Always square to ball at the end of the play. Mark the forward progress with your down field foot.
- i. Watch for:
  - Action of all receivers coming into your area.
  - Legally numbered receivers who were lined up as ineligible going down field. This normally is a "covered up" tight end or slot back on that was not off the line of scrimmage.
  - Immediate throws by the quarterback down the line of scrimmage to determine if the pass is forward or backward. Signal with arm if backward pass.
  - Early blocks or "pick" plays by the receivers.
  - Incomplete shovel pass.
  - Pass interference or face guarding.
  - Receivers going out of bounds voluntarily and returning.
  - Ineligibles down field that may get behind the Umpire.

**Note: On all scrimmage plays, you should be responsible for getting to all dead ball spots up to the 2-yard line. In the event you are not going to be there to take the spot for plays to your side of the field (i.e. long passes and runs), then the Field Judge should get the spot.**

#### D. Scrimmage Kicks – Including Field Goal Attempts

**Position – same as on Scrimmage plays.**

1. Punts:
  - a. Count the kickers and verify with the opposite wing that a minimum of 7 offensive players are legally positioned as linemen.
  - b. Determine whether nearest wide out is on or off the line. Give the proper off the line signal if necessary.
  - c. Know numbers of eligible and ineligible receivers being aware that ineligible receivers can be lined up in positions where eligible receivers normally position themselves. This is important in the case of a pass.
  - d. If the Referee is to your side of the field at the snap, you are responsible for holding your position at the line and determining that the kick has crossed the neutral zone and that it will not come back across the neutral zone. If the Referee is to the opposite side, you are responsible for holding at the line of scrimmage until you have determined that there has been a clean snap and the punt has not been blocked. Once the clean snap / not blocked condition has been confirmed, release downfield to assist the deep judges as needed. Be prepared to mark

possession for possible PSK enforcement if the kick is short and you wind up being the covering official. Observe action on the first wave of K players and observe blocks in front of the punt receiver(s). Watch for Post Scrimmage Kick type fouls. If there is an errant snap or the kick has been blocked, you must retreat into K's backfield to assist the Referee with coverage.

e. On a short kick out of bounds in your area, work with the Referee to "chop you in" in order to mark the spot. On a "shanked" kick to your area, be prepared to have the spot in the event the Referee did not see where it went out of bounds.

f. If the kick has ended and a return (run) has started, wing officials will reverse mechanics with the deep judges. The wing officials will need to keep in front of the ball carrier and concentrate on blocks around the ball carrier during the return. The wing officials will be on the goal line to determine if the runner scores. The deep officials will have preferred responsibility for forward progress from the start of the return to the 2 yard line. Wing officials will have preferred forward progress from the 2 yard line to the goal line.

g. Watch for:

- Neutral zone violations by the offense or defense.
- Illegal blocks.
- First touching in your area by the kicking team (mark spot with your beanbag).

## 2. Field Goals:

- Treat as any other scrimmage kick.

## E. Try For Point

### 1. Kick:

Everything is identical as a field goal except:

- Be ready to stop the play if kick try is unsuccessful.

### 2. Scrimmage Play:

- Same as a goal line play; except the ball becomes dead if the offensive team fails to score.

## F. Goal Line Plays

1. Unless otherwise noted, treat as any other scrimmage play.

2. At the snap, your key REMAINS the inside receiver.

3. On plays where the ball is snapped inside the 5-yard line, move to the goal line on the snap and work your way back to the ball. Remember you have the ball carrier and the Field Judge now has the inside blocks.

4. On plays where the ball is snapped between the 10 to the 5-yard line, at the snap move 3 to 5 yards down field. Read the play and stay ahead of the runner, you have the goal line and you must be at the goal line before the runner.

5. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW IF THE BALL HAS BROKEN THE PLANE OF THE GOAL LINE. Signal Touchdown only if you have seen the ball break that plane.

6. On plays where the ball is dead just short of the goal line, move in quickly to get the spot. Do not jump over players. Sell the spot!!

7. On goal line plays (GOING OUT) where the ball is snapped on or inside the 3-yard line, move to the goal line on the snap and officiate up the field. Be prepared to rule on a safety in the event it occurs. Even when the snap is outside the 3-yard line, the wing official must still be prepared to fall back and assist on ruling forward progress near the goal line.

8. On plays where you are screened from the ball, but you can tell whether the runner was down short of the goal line, the Umpire may be able to help. If the Umpire has HANDS TO THE CHEST, he is telling you he has the ball in the end zone. You must still determine whether the runner was down short of the goal line.

**Note: On any goal line play you must be at the goal line before the runner. Read the play so you are standing still at the goal line ready to make the call.**

G. Time-outs

1. Move to a position halfway between the ball and the team box on your sideline – in position to monitor the team's huddle.
2. Watch for illegal conferences. Be sure of proper number of players/attendants in huddle.
3. Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
4. Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.
5. Be alert for signal from the Referee to give your team 15-second warning. Go to team huddle and say, "Coach, ball will be marked ready for play in 15 seconds.
6. Inform the coach of time outs remaining.
7. Be alert of substitutes or attempts to use substitutes for purposes of deception.

H. Measurements

1. Using your foot, mark the spot on the yard line to be used by the Linesman.
2. Do not permit team attendants to enter field.

I. End of Period and Between Period Procedures

1. End of period

- a. When facing clock, know when time expires.
- b. If time expires prior to snap, sound whistle to prevent snap.
- c. If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- d. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
- e. If end of game, leave field together as a crew.

2. Between periods (quarters)

- a. Make note of the down, distance, and yard line where the ball will next be put into play as well as the yard line where the clip is placed prior to the chains being moved.

**Note: Everyone has a job to do during this time. Avoid side conversations and be professional.**

3. At half time:

- a. Observe the players as they clear the field. If both teams exit on the same end of the field, position yourself between the teams and keep them separated.
- b. Following the 20-minute half-time, relay coaches' options for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half in conjunction with the Field Judge's responsibilities.
- c. After the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field next to the Referee on the press box side and facing the Head Linesman. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break positions at this time.) When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.

J. Penalty Administration

1. Calling Penalties Live Ball:

- a. Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul.
- b. Drop your penalty marker at the proper yard line.
- c. Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.

2. When ball becomes dead:
  - a. Give time-out signal
  - b. Sound whistle (get Referee's attention by sounding several short, loud blasts)
  - c. Verbally report information to Referee. (Live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, offensive or defensive foul).
  - d. Mentally note whether clock should start on the ready or the snap.
  
3. Administering Penalties:
  - a. If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official gets the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
  - b. Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.
  - c. Hustle to your sideline and report the foul and offending player's number to the coach.
  - d. If the coach asks you about administration of the penalty, give them the options.

**Note: If you are not the official who called a foul, cover the flag for that official who did.**

## E. Field Judge Mechanics – 6 Man Crew

### A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties

1. On field pre-game duties:
  - a. After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
  - b. Check to make sure that the 3-yard marks are correctly marked off. Inform the Umpire of any discrepancies.
  - c. Work with the Side Judge to ensure that neither team, other than the kicker, encroaches over their 45-yard line. The kickers may kick from the opponent's 45-yard line.
  - d. Ensure the kickers kick toward their own goal line.
2. Secondary on field pre-game duties:
  - a. Survey the field and make mental note of field and sideline danger spots.
  - b. Locate and communicate with the ball person on your side.
  - c. Obtain possession of the football of your team's sideline from the Umpire.
  - d. Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during the Referee/Coaches meetings.
3. Escort Duties:
  - a. Go to the dressing room of the team whose bench will be on the press box side. This will usually be the home team. Be there 10 minutes prior to the kick-off.
  - b. Escort the team to their side of the field. Remain with the team if both teams are in the same end zone prior to kick off.

**Note: Know where your team will be located when they leave the field.**

**Note: If both teams are in the same end zone, stand between the teams until at least one team moves to the bench area.**

### B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties

1. Coin Toss Duties:
  - a. Remain on the sideline at the 50-yard line with your team's football.
  - b. Ensure the other team members remain on their sideline.
  - c. If the team on your side is kicking, give your football to the Umpire. If not, give it to the ball person on your side.
  - d. Once the coin toss is completed, and the captains dismissed, meet at the center of the field with the crew to record toss results and any final instructions from the Referee. Position – Facing Side Judge on K's side of the 50-yard line.
  - e. When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.
2. Free Kick – Duties:

Initial Position on initial free kick to start either half; break the huddle, move down the 50 yard line with the Line Judge on the press box side and stop at the 9-yard mark on R's free kick line.

Initial Position following a try for point or a successful field goal; move up the field (outside the pylon) on the press box side along the sideline on the press box side to R's free kick line, then turn and move out to the 9 yard mark.

  - a. Count the kicking team and make sure they have 11 or fewer players. In the event there are more or less than 11 players, give a strong indication to that team that they need to get to 11. Confirm with Umpire and Side Judge by giving a "thumbs up" signal. **Retreat to sideline on Referee's "illegal motion" signal.**

- b. Wait for the Umpire to raise an arm, raise yours when ready, make eye contact with the Line Judge and lower arm.
- c. Bean bag in hand. Use if the kick is touched by the kicking team prior to going 10-yards.
- d. Watch for any infractions involving R's free kick line and blocks on the front line.
- e. Start the clock when ball is legally touched in your area of coverage, only.
- f. Anticipate a short kick. If kick is short and to your side, watch for fair catch signal and watch the catch.
- g. On an on-side kick, be prepared to mark spot of first touching by K with bean bag, if it is touched before the ball travels 10 yards and be prepared to rule on possession at end of the kick.
- h. If a free kick goes out-of-bounds untouched by R and you are the closest official to the spot of infraction, go to spot and drop your flag.
- i. If team on your sideline is the offended team on a free kick violation, try and get the coaches' choice of either:
  - 1) Taking the ball 25 yards from the previous spot,
  - 2) Re-kicking with a 5-yard penalty, or
  - 3) Taking the ball at the spot of the foul.
- j. After ball is kicked, move down the field slowly while watching for fouls away from the ball. You are responsible for watching action on or by the 2 widest RECEIVING team players closest to you in the group of receivers closest to their restraining line prior to the kick.
- k. On runs to your side of the field, maintain your cushion with the Line Judge and be at the goal line to rule on whether the ball breaks the plane.
- l. If return is up the far sideline, move across the field, keeping the play "boxed in" while watching for illegal blocks and holding.
- m. Echo signals to start and stop the clock.
- n. In obvious on-side kick situations, move to K's free kick line.
- o. Free Kicks after an accepted free kick penalty:
  - Move to a position 5 yards from your previous free kick position. Do not go to your Initial position.
  - Help clear the sidelines in your area.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.

Free Kicks after a safety:

- Go up your sideline to R's free kick line and then out to the nine yard-marks.
- Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.

Free Kicks after an awarded fair catch:

- Take position under the upright on your side of the field.
- Be prepared to give signal on kicks that are good and no good.
- Be prepared to move to the goal line on kicks that are short and near the goal line in order to rule on whether the kick may be advanced or is a touchback.

### C. Scrimmage Plays

1. During the offensive huddle:

- a. Start the 25-second clock on the Referee's ready for play signal.
- b. Remember to move your hand down indicator and be aware of down, distance, and game clock.
- c. Think about your keys, crack back blocks, pass interference rules, etc.

2. Pre Snap:

**Position – 15 to 20 yards off the line of scrimmage. Parallel with the Line Judge and even with the Side Judge. When the ball is snapped on or inside the 10-yard line, position is at the hash mark end line pylon on your side of the field.**

- a. Count defense after the ready for play signal – check-off with the Side Judge with “thumbs up” signal if 11 or fewer players. Try to time your signal with the signal given by the Side Judge.
- b. If after the ready for play signal there are 12 or more players, and no player is attempting to leave the field, then throw your flag for substitution infraction and stop the clock.
- c. Be ready to focus on the near tackle to determine run or pass.
- d. If the 25-second clock has expired, blow your whistle, then throw your flag and stop the clock.

3. At the Snap:

- a. If you verify more than 11 players on defense after the snap, throw the flag but do not stop play.
- b. Quickly read the tackle. If he “fires off the line” to block, it probably will be a running play so temporarily hold your position and begin to move back slowly in the event the ball goes outside toward the line of scrimmage. If they set up to pass block, it probably will be a pass play so be prepared to back up quickly. Do not be observed moving several steps backwards when the play is a short quick run up the middle.

**Note: Avoid focusing totally on the quarterback.**

4. Running Plays:

- a. You are responsible for the goal line except on plays where the ball is snapped inside the 10-yard line. Always be ready to carry the ball carrier to the end zone.
- b. Work outside in on short runs up the middle, moving in and maintaining a presence towards mixed jerseys. You and the Side Judge should be moving in towards the center of the line together and back to your pre snap positions together.
- c. If the play is within the in-bounds lines, hold until the football is dead. Watch for action in your area such as crack back and other illegal blocks. Move up to area of “mixed jerseys”. Assist with retrieving the football.
- d. If the play is outside the in-bounds line on your side of the field, hold until the ball is dead. Watch for action on the runner after the ball is dead. Move up to area of “mixed jerseys”. Assist with retrieving the football only after the dead ball activity is cleared.
- e. If the play goes to the opposite side zone, move toward the center of the field while focusing on action away from the ball. Keep “mixed jerseys” in front of you at all times.

5. Passing Plays:

- a. You are responsible for the goal line. Always be ready to go with any receiver to the end zone.
- b. Initial key is the action of the widest receiver/defender to your side.
- c. If the receiver doesn't go deep, switch to zone coverage with an eye on the receivers/defenders from the other side of the field.
- d. If the pass goes towards your sideline, hold until the football is dead. If the play becomes dead out-of-bounds, go directly out-of-bounds and assist in retrieving the football. Watch the action between players while out-of-bounds.

- e. When pass is indicated down field, move with the deepest receiver in your area giving enough ground to stay out their path. Always try to stay ahead of the deepest receiver that is in your area or in the middle of the field.
- f. Be aware of when the pass is in the air in order to rule if action on a receiver is holding or pass interference.
- g. Rule on complete passes in your area; assist in making rulings on passes to the middle of the field; assist flank officials in making rulings on passes to the side zones.
- h. Make eye contact with the Line Judge on questionable passes on the sideline. Both of you should have the same call on complete and incomplete passes. Talk about this in the pregame. For example, the official looking at the receiver's back will rule on whether their feet were in bounds and the official looking at the front of the receiver will rule on whether a catch was good or not.
- i. If the football is intercepted in your area, move in the direction of the play. Be prepared to rule on momentum inside the 5 yard line. Watch for illegal blocks during the return.
- j. If the pass is complete and is a first down, then signal to stop the clock. If the pass is incomplete, give the signal for the incomplete pass.
- k. Be prepared to relay the football if the pass is incomplete or the pass is completed in the side zones.
- l. Watch for:
  - Illegal blocks by or on the receiver you are watching.
  - Illegal use of hands and holding.
  - Pass interference or face guarding.
  - Dead ball fouls and taunting.

**Note: The Line Judge has precedent for getting to all dead ball spots. In the event he is not going to be there to take the spot for plays to your side of the field, then you are responsible for that spot.**

#### D. Scrimmage Kicks – Including Field Goal Attempts

##### 1. Punts:

**Position - Line up 3 to 5 yards behind the deepest receiver and outside the in-bounds lines. If the snap is on or inside R's 40-yard line, line up on the goal line.**

- a. Give a visual and verbal fair catch signal to the deep receiver(s).
- b. Count the defense and signal the Side Judge with "thumbs up" signal if 11 or fewer players.
- c. You are initially responsible for 2/3 of the field as well as the kick receiver. The Side Judge is initially responsible for 1/3 of the field.
- d. When the football is kicked to your side of the field, move up in front of the receiver DURING THE FLIGHT OF THE BALL to see the receiver make the catch. Focus on kick receiver and from his actions read where he will make the catch. Focus on:**
  - Fair catch signal by the receiver (valid and legal).
  - Interference on the receiver during the catch.
  - If the football is kicked over the receiver's head, stay with the ball and the action around the ball.
  - Mark the spot with a beanbag where R gains possession of the kick on a kick that crosses the neutral zone expanded.
- e. When the football is kicked to the Side Judge side of the field, watch for:
  - Blocks in front of and around the kick receiver.
  - Fair catch signal by players other than the kick receiver.
  - Illegal blocks after the fair catch signal.

**Note: If the football is kicked over the receiver's head, stay with the receiver and cover the action around the receiver as well as action in front of the ball.**

- f. If the run comes to your side of the field, pick up the runner and watch them until you release to the Line Judge. During a return the deep officials will reverse mechanics with the wing judges; the wings will be responsible for staying in front of the runner and for having preferred coverage of forward progress from the 2 yard line to the goal line. The deep judges have preferred coverage from the point of possession to the 2 yard line.
- g. If the runner goes away from you, watch for illegal blocks in front of and around the kick receiver. Focus on action away from the ball.
- h. If the play becomes dead in your area, mark the dead ball spot, sound your whistle and give the time-out signal.
- i. If the kick is kicked out-of-bounds on your sideline, work with the Referee to "chop you in" in order to mark the spot.
- j. Watch for and be aware of:
  - First touching by the defensive team
  - Muffs
  - Fumbles, recovery and advancement
  - Other fouls
  - Football going into the end-zone
  - The momentum rule
- k. On blocked kicks, pick up the football while remaining focused on players downfield.
- l. On run-backs, assume normal scrimmage position and continue to officiate.
- m. Be alert for passes that look like kicks.
- n. Be prepared to rule on pass interference during fake kicks that turn into pass plays.
- o. Notify the Umpire of dead ball status (i.e. fair catch or not).

## 2. Field Goals:

**Position – Take position underneath the goal post upright on your side of the field.**

- a. After kick has crossed the end line, confirm with the Side Judge if the kick was good or not (say "yes, yes, yes" or "no, no, no")
- b. Once decision is made, move two steps into the end zone and give appropriate signal.
- c. You are responsible for blowing the whistle unless kick rolls into the end zone as a touchback on the Side Judge side of the field.
- d. On blocked kicks or fake kicks, move to normal scrimmage position and continue to officiate.
- e. Unless otherwise noted, treat as any other scrimmage kick.

## E. Try for Point

### 1. Kick:

Everything is identical as a field goal except:

- Be ready to stop the play if kick try is unsuccessful.

### 2. Scrimmage Play:

- Same as a scrimmage play except the ball becomes dead if the offensive team fails to score.

## F. Goal Line Plays

**Position yourself between the pylon at the corner of the end zone and the pylon at the hash mark on your side of the field such that you have “easy” coverage at the corner of the end zone. Place yourself in “balance” with the offensive formation to maximize your flexibility in maintaining the mobile box as the play is likely to develop. In extreme cases of the offensive formation’s being shifted “away” from you, you may move as close to your partner’s side of the field as the upright of the goal post on your side of the field.**

1. At the snap, your initial key REMAINS the outside receiver.
2. Once the football is snapped, move to a position to pick up the offensive player who comes into your area.
3. Assist flank official (as much as possible) on passes that go into the side zone, near the end line.
4. Watch for illegal blocks on the corners and other fouls.
5. Treat as any other scrimmage play.

## G. Time-outs

**Position - Near the team huddle in view of the Referee. This is so you can let the team know when the 45 seconds is up as well as monitor the team for illegal conferences.**

2. Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
3. Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.
4. When 45 seconds is completed, notify Referee with one short blast of your whistle and point at them.

## H. Measurements

1. Assist in clearing the approximate area of the measurement of all players except a captain from each team.
2. In the event of windy weather or poor field conditions, hold the ball firmly in place until measurement is completed.

## I. End of Period and Between Period Procedures

1. End of period
  - a. When facing clock, know when time expires.
  - b. If time expires prior to snap, sound whistle to prevent snap.
  - c. If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
  - d. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
  - e. Be aware of down, distance, and yard line.
  - f. Maintain a presence between mixed colors.
  - g. If end of game, leave field together as a crew.
2. Between periods (quarters)
  - a. Make note of the down, distance, and yard line where the ball will next be put into play.
  - b. Time the quarters. When 45 seconds is completed, notify Referee with one short blast of your whistle and point at them.

c. Monitor any mixed jerseys and the team huddle on your side of the field.

**Note: Everyone has a job to do during this time. Avoid side conversations and be professional.**

3. At half time:

- a. Secure your teams football.
- b. Observe the players as they clear the field.

**Note: If teams are leaving the field at the same end get between the teams and keep them separated.**

- c. Repeat team escort duties following half-time in time for your team to arrive for the mandatory 3-minute warm-up period; if your team has the option in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, obtain the option from that team's head coach. Relay that information to the rest of the crew via the Line Judge. If your team does not have the option, wait to receive the other team's option via the Line Judge and relay that to your team's head coach. Then obtain his choice of the remaining option and relay it back to the crew via the Line Judge.
- d. After the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field next to the Umpire on the press box side and facing the Side Judge. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break positions at this time.) When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your pre-free kick position.

J. Penalty Administration

1. Calling Penalties Live Ball:

- a. Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul.
- b. Drop you penalty marker at the proper yard line.
- c. Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.

2. When ball becomes dead:

- a. Give time-out signal.
- b. Sound whistle (get Referee's attention by sounding several short, loud blasts).
- c. Verbally report information to Referee. (Live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, offensive or defensive foul).
- d. Mentally note whether clock should start on the ready or the snap.

3. Administering Penalties:

- a. If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official get the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
- b. Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.

**Note: If you are not the official who called a foul, cover the flag for that official who did.**

## F. Side Judge Mechanics – 6 Man Crew

### A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties

#### 1. On field pre-game duties:

- a. After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
- b. Work with the Field Judge to ensure that neither team, other than the kicker, encroaches over their 45-yard line. The kickers may kick from the opponent's 45-yard line.
- c. Ensure the kickers kick toward their own goal line.

#### 2. Secondary on field pre-game duties:

- a. Survey the field and make mental note of field and sideline danger spots.
- b. Locate and communicate with the ball person on your side.
- c. Assist the Linesman with checking the chains and down marker.
- d. Obtain possession of the football of your team's sideline from the Umpire.
- e. Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during the Referee/Coaches meetings.
- f. Introduce yourself to the chain crew.

#### 3. Escort Duties:

- a. Go to dressing room of the team whose bench will be opposite the press box. This will usually be the visiting team. Be there 10 minutes prior to the kick-off.
- b. Escort the team to their side of the field. Remain with the team if both teams are in the same end zone prior to kick off.

**Note: Know where your team will be located when they leave the field.**

**Note: If both teams are in the same end zone, stand between the teams until at least one team moves to the bench area.**

### B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties

#### 1. Coin Toss Duties:

- a. If you are no longer with your team in the end zone prior to the coin toss:
  - Remain on the sideline at the 50-yard line with your team's football.
  - Ensure the other team members remain on their sideline.
- b. Once the coin toss is completed, and the captains dismissed, meet at the center of the field with the crew to record toss results and any final instructions from the Referee. Position – Facing press box on K's side of the 50-yard line.
- c. If team on your side is not kicking, give your football to the ball person. If your team is kicking, give your football to the Umpire.

#### 2. Free Kick – Duties:

**Initial Position on initial free kick to start either half; break the huddle, move down the 50 yard line with the Linesman away from the press box and stop at the 9-yard mark on K's free kick line.**

**Initial Position following a try for point or a successful field goal; move up the field (outside the pylon) opposite the press box along the sideline to K's free kick line, then turn and move out to the 9 yard mark.**

- a. Count K and make sure they have 11 or fewer players. In the event there are more or less than 11 players on K give a strong indication to that team that they need to get to 11. Confirm with Umpire and Field Judge by giving a "thumbs up" signal. **Retreat to sideline on Referee's "illegal motion" signal.**

- b. Wait for the Umpire to raise arm, raise yours when ready, and make eye contact with the Linesman and lower arm.
- c. Bean bag in hand. Use if the kick is touched by the kicking team prior to going 10-yards.
- d. Watch for any infractions involving K's free kick line and blocks on the front line.
- e. Start the clock when ball is legally touched, in your area of coverage, only.
- f. Anticipate a short kick. If kick is short and to your side, watch for fair catch signal and watch the catch.
- g. On an on-side kick, be prepared to mark spot of first touching by K with bean bag, if it is touched before the ball travels 10 yards and be prepared to rule on possession at end of the kick.
- h. If a free kick goes out-of-bounds untouched by R and you are the closest official to the spot of infraction, go to spot and drop your flag.
- i. If team on your sideline is the offended team on a free kick violation, try and get the coaches' choice of either:
  - 1) Taking the ball 25 yards from the previous spot,
  - 2) Re-kicking with a 5-yard penalty, or
  - 3) Taking the ball at the spot of the foul.
- j. After ball is kicked, move down the field slowly while watching for fouls away from the ball. You are responsible for watching action on or by the 2 widest RECEIVING team players closest to you in the group of receivers closest to their restraining line prior to the kick.
- k. On runs to your side of the field, maintain your cushion with the Linesman and be at the goal line to rule on whether the ball breaks the plane.
- m. If return is up the far sideline, move across the field, keeping the play "boxed in" while watching for illegal blocks and holding.
- l. Echo signals to start and stop the clock.

Free Kicks after an accepted free kick penalty:

- Move to a position 5 yards from your previous free kick position. Do not go to your Initial position.
- Help clear the sidelines in your area.
- Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.

Free Kicks after a safety:

- Line up on K's free kick line. Do not go to your Initial position.
- Help clear the sidelines in your area.
- Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.

Free Kicks after an awarded fair catch:

- Take position under the upright on your side of the field.
- Be prepared to give signal on kicks that are good and no good.
- Be prepared to move to the goal line on kicks that are short and near the goal line in order to rule on whether the kick may be advanced or is a touchback.

### C. Scrimmage Plays

1. During the offensive huddle:

- a. Remember to move your hand down indicator and be aware of down, distance, and game clock.
- b. Think about your keys, crack back blocks, pass interference rules, etc.

2. Pre Snap:

**Position – 15 to 20 yards off the line of scrimmage. Parallel with the Linesman and even with the Field Judge. When the ball is snapped on or inside the 10-yard line, position is at the hash mark end line pylon on your side of the field.**

- a. Count defense after the ready for play signal – check-off with the Field Judge with “thumbs up” signal if 11 or fewer players. Try to time your signal with the signal given by the Field Judge.
- b. If after the ready for play signal there are 12 or more players, and no player is attempting to leave the field, then throw your flag for substitution infraction and stop the clock.
- c. Be ready to focus on the near tackle to determine run or pass.

3. At the Snap:

- a. If you verify more than 11 players on defense after the snap, throw the flag but do not stop play.
- b. Quickly read the tackle. If he “fires off the line” to block, it probably will be a running play so temporarily hold your position and begin to move back slowly in the event the ball goes outside toward the line of scrimmage. If he sets up to pass block, it probably will be a pass play so be prepared to back up quickly. Do not be observed moving several steps backwards when the play is a short quick run up the middle.

**Note: Avoid focusing totally on the quarterback.**

4. Running Plays:

- a. You are responsible for the goal line except on plays where the ball is snapped inside the 10-yard line. Always be ready to carry the ball carrier to the end zone.
- b. Work outside in on short runs up the middle, moving in and maintaining a presence towards mixed jerseys. You and the Field Judge should be moving in towards the center of the line together and back to your pre snap positions together.
- c. If the play is within the in-bounds lines, hold until the football is dead. Watch for action in your area such as crack back and other illegal blocks. Move up to area of “mixed jerseys”. Assist with retrieving the football.
- d. If the play is outside the in-bounds line on your side of the field, hold until the ball is dead. Watch for action on the runner after the ball is dead. Move up to area of “mixed jerseys”. Assist with retrieving the football only after the dead ball activity is cleared.
- e. If the play goes to the opposite side zone, move toward the center of the field while focusing on action away from the ball. Keep “mixed jerseys” in front of you at all times.

**Note: You can help set the chains in the event the Linesman has a spot and is waiting for the Umpire to spot the ball. Officiate the game first, set the chains last.**

**Note: In the event there is a first down to the opposite sideline, you can help the Linesman in setting the first down marker accurately by marking the spot of the first down at the hash mark on your side of the field.**

5. Passing Plays:

- a. You are responsible for the goal line. Always be ready to go with any receiver to the end zone.
- b. Initial key is the action of the widest receiver/defender to your side.
- c. If the receiver doesn't go deep, switch to zone coverage with an eye on the receivers/defenders from the other side of the field.
- d. If the pass goes towards your sideline, hold until the football is dead. If the play becomes dead out-of-bounds, go directly out-of-bounds and assist in retrieving the football. Watch the action between players while out-of-bounds.
- e. When pass is indicated down field, move with the deepest receiver in your area giving enough ground to stay out their path. Always try to stay ahead of the deepest receiver that is in your area or in the middle of the field.
- f. Be aware of when the pass is in the air in order to rule if action on a receiver is holding or pass interference.
- g. Rule on complete passes in your area; assist in making rulings on passes to the middle of the field; assist flank officials in making rulings on passes to the side zones.
- h. Make eye contact with the Linesman on questionable passes on the sideline. Both of you should have the same call on complete and incomplete passes. Talk about this in the pregame. For example, the official looking at the receiver's back will rule on whether their feet were in bounds and the official looking at the front of the receiver will rule on whether a catch was good or not.
- i. If the football is intercepted in your area, move in the direction of the play. Be prepared to rule on momentum inside the 5 yard line. Watch for illegal blocks during the return.
- j. If the pass is complete and is a first down, then signal to stop the clock. If the pass is incomplete, give the signal for the incomplete pass.
- k. Be prepared to relay the football if the pass is incomplete or the pass is completed in the side zones.
- l. Watch for:
  - Illegal blocks by or on the receiver you are watching.
  - Illegal use of hands and holding.
  - Pass interference or face guarding.
  - Dead ball fouls and taunting.

**Note: The Linesman has precedent for getting to all dead ball spots. In the event they are not going to be there to take the spot for plays to your side of the field, then you are responsible for that spot.**

D. Scrimmage Kicks – Including Field Goal Attempts

1. Punts:

**Position - Line up 3 to 5 yards behind the deepest receiver and outside the in-bounds lines. If the snap is on or inside R's 40-yard line, line up on the goal line.**

- a. Count the defense and signal the Field Judge with "thumbs up" signal if 11 or fewer players.
- b. The Field Judge is initially responsible for 2/3 of the field as well as the kick receiver. You are initially responsible for your 1/3 of the field.
- c. When the football is kicked to the Field Judges' side of the field, watch for:
  - Blocks in front of and around the kick receiver.
  - Fair catch signal by players other than the kick receiver.
  - Illegal blocks after the fair catch signal.
  - If the football is kicked over the receiver's head, stay with the receiver and the action around the receiver as well as action in front of the ball.

d. When the football is kicked to your side of the field, give a quick “punch” signal (arm is parallel to the ground with a clinched fist) to the Field Judge to acknowledge that you now have primary responsibility for the kick receiver. **Move up in front of the receiver DURING THE FLIGHT OF THE BALL to see the receiver make the catch.** Focus on kick receiver and from his actions read where he will make the catch and the Field Judge will now have the action away from the receiver. Focus on:

- Fair catch signal by the receiver (valid and legal).
- Interference on the receiver during the catch.
- If the football is kicked over the receiver’s head, stay with the ball and the action around the ball.
- Mark the spot with a beanbag where R gains possession of the kick on a kick that crosses the neutral zone expanded.

e. If the run comes to your side of the field, pick up the runner and watch them until you release to the Linesman. During a return the deep officials will reverse mechanics with the wing judges; the wings will be responsible for staying in front of the runner and for having preferred coverage of forward progress from the 2 yard line to the goal line. The deep judges have preferred coverage from the point of possession to the 2 yard line.

f. If the runner goes away from you, watch for illegal blocks in front of and around the kick receiver. Focus on action away from the ball.

g. If the play becomes dead in your area, mark the dead ball spot, and give the time-out signal.

h. If the kick is kicked out-of-bounds on your sideline, work with the Referee to “chop you in” in order to mark the spot.

i. Watch for and be aware of:

- First touching by the defensive team
- Muffs
- Fumbles, recovery and advancement
- Other fouls
- Football going into the end-zone
- The momentum rule

j. On blocked kicks, pick up the football while remaining focused on players downfield.

k. On run-backs, assume normal scrimmage position and continue to officiate.

l. Be alert for passes that look like kicks.

m. Be prepared to rule on pass interference during fake kicks that turn into pass plays.

n. Notify the Umpire of dead ball status (i.e. fair catch or not).

## 2. Field Goals:

### **Position – Take position underneath the goal post upright on your side of the field.**

a. After kick has crossed the end line, confirm with the Field Judge if the kick was good or not (say “yes, yes, yes” or “no, no, no”)

b. Once decision is made, move two steps into the end zone and give appropriate signal.

c. Field Judge has responsibility for whistle unless kick rolls into the end zone as a touchback on your side of the field.

d. On blocked kicks or fake kicks, move to normal scrimmage position and continue to officiate.

e. Unless otherwise noted, treat as any other scrimmage kick.

## E. Try for Point

### 1. Kick:

Everything is identical as a field goal except:

- Be ready to stop the play if kick try is unsuccessful.

2. Scrimmage Play:

- Same as a scrimmage play except the ball becomes dead if the offensive team fails to score.

F. Goal Line Plays

**Position yourself between the pylon at the corner of the end zone and the pylon at the hash mark on your side of the field such that you have “easy” coverage at the corner of the end zone. Place yourself in “balance” with the offensive formation to maximize your flexibility in maintaining the mobile box as the play is likely to develop. In extreme cases of the offensive formation’s being shifted “away” from you, you may move as close to your partner’s side of the field as the upright of the goal post on your side of the field.**

1. At the snap, your initial key REMAINS the outside receiver.
2. Once the football is snapped, move to a position to pick up the offensive player who comes into your area.
3. Assist flank official (as much as possible) on passes that go into the side zone, near the end line.
4. Watch for illegal blocks on the corners and other fouls.
5. Treat as any other scrimmage play.

G. Time-outs

**Position - Near the team huddle. This is so you can notify the team when 45 seconds is up as well as monitor the team for illegal conferences.**

1. Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
2. Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.

H. Measurements

1. Before the chains are brought on the field, move to the sideline and assist in setting the first down marker on the front end of the line to gain marker.
2. When a decision is made, assist in placing the first down marker on the tip of the football.
3. Tell the box person the number of the next down.

I. End of Period and Between Period Procedures

1. End of period
  - a. When facing clock, know when time expires.
  - b. If time expires prior to snap, sound whistle to prevent snap.
  - c. If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
  - d. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
  - e. Be aware of down, distance, and yard line.
  - f. Maintain a presence between mixed colors.
  - g. If end of game, leave field together as a crew.
2. Between periods (quarters)
  - a. Make note of the down, distance, and yard line where the ball will next be put into play.
  - b. Monitor any mixed jerseys and the team huddle on your side of the field.

**Note: Everyone has a job to do during this time. Avoid side conversations and be professional.**

3. At half time:
  - a. Secure your teams football.
  - b. Observe the players as they clear the field.

**Note: If teams are leaving the field at the same end get between the teams and keep them separated.**

- c. Repeat team escort duties following half-time in time for your team to arrive for the mandatory 3-minute warm-up period; if your team has the option in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, obtain the option from that team's head coach. Relay that information to the rest of the crew via the Head Linesman. If your team does not have the option, wait to receive the other team's option via the Head Linesman and relay that to your team's head coach. Then obtain his choice of the remaining option and relay it back to the crew via the Head Linesman.
- d. After the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field next to the Umpire away from the press box and facing the Field Judge. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break positions at this time.) When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your pre-free kick position.

#### J. Penalty Administration

1. Calling Penalties Live Ball:
  - a. Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul.
  - b. Drop you penalty marker at the proper yard line.
  - c. Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.
2. When ball becomes dead:
  - a. Give time-out signal
  - b. Sound whistle (get Referee's attention by sounding several short, loud blasts)
  - c. Verbally report information to Referee. (Live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, offensive or defensive foul).
  - d. Mentally note whether clock should start on the ready or the snap.
3. Administering Penalties:
  - a. If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official get the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
  - b. Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.

**Note: If you are not the official who called a foul, cover the flag for that official who did.**

## IV. 5-Man Mechanics Section

The purpose of this section is to document the 5-man mechanics that are expected by our officials. It is not intended to override the mechanics as stated in the NFHS Officials manual, but only to expand upon them. There are mechanics that have been carried out over the years by many associations which have been incorporated in the following pages. Our goal is that by documenting the mechanics in this manual then all officials should be prepared to follow them consistently week to week. Consistency by our officials in judgment and mechanics is expected by the coaches as well as the GHSA. These are the mechanics that crews will be evaluated by.

### A. Referee Mechanics – 5 Man Crew

#### A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties

##### 1. On field pre-game duties:

- a. After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties. (The intent of this mechanic is to show everyone that we, the officials, are the third team on the field and all have jobs to do. Be wise in implementing this mechanic. For example, if the home team coach is present just as you approach the field, then you and the Umpire go ahead with the coach's meeting and have the remainder of the crew continue to the 50-yard line.)
- b. Meet with each teams head coach – **Home team coach first.**
- c. Rule on the legality of all game balls.
- d. Give the coaches a list of officials working the game.
- e. Secure the names and numbers of game captains from each coach.
- f. Secure verification from each coach that all players are legally equipped.
- g. Secure verification from the coaches about special pre-game ceremonies, reduction of the half-time period and any overtime arrangements (mixed classification games, only). In mixed classification games, the Referee must ask each head coach if they want to play overtime in the case of a tie at the end of the regulation game. In order for there to be a reduction of halftime, written notice must be presented prior to game time.
- h. Check with each coach about unusual formations or unusual plays.
- i. Ensure that each coach is aware that maintaining good sportsmanship is expected.
- j. Ask the home team coach if a chain crew has been made available to the crew.
- k. Notify each coach of the official time.

**Note: Do not spend any more time with each coach than necessary. Definitely do no spend more time with one coach than the other.**

##### 2. Secondary on field pre-game duties:

- a. Check to ensure other officials are in fact taking care of their responsibilities and maintaining a professional manner at all times.
- b. Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during your meetings with each coach.

##### 3. Escort Duties:

- a. **Starting on the goal line, seven minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff time, move down the sideline to the 50-yard line. You will be on the press box sideline.**
- b. Wait on the sideline for the Back Judge and captains.
- c. Make contact with the Umpire by raising your arm to let him know that you are ready to proceed to midfield.

## B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties

### 1. Coin Toss Duties:

- a. Escort the captains, whose bench is on the press box side, to the center of the field. Captains should line up to the Referee's left side, splitting the 50-yard line. Only 4 captains are allowed to midfield. On occasions (i.e. senior night) where teams want to recognize more than 4 captains, have the remaining captains stand on the sideline. Do not allow any other players on the field.
- b. Introduce the captains to one another and then introduce them to the Umpire.
- c. Remind the captains that they are the leaders of their teams and that sportsmanlike conduct by all players, at all times, is expected and required.
- d. Ask the visiting captain to make his call of the coin toss. Toss the coin and reveal the results. If the coin is dropped, toss it again.
- e. Explain all options to the winning captain and ask for his choice. If he defers, signal to the press box immediately.
- f. Get the option from the opposing captain and alternate until all options are taken.
- g. Move the players so their backs are to the goal they will defend and make the proper signals to the press box.
- h. Once the coin toss is completed, and the captains dismissed, meet at the center of the field with the crew to record toss results and give them any final instructions.
- i. When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.

### 2. Free Kick Duties:

#### **Position – Shaded towards the Head Linesman's side of the field on about the 5-yard-line of the receiving team.**

- a. Count the members of the receiving team and make sure they have 11 or fewer players. In the event there are more or less than 11 players on the receiving team, give a strong indication to that team that they need to get to 11. Confirm with the Umpire and Back Judge with a "thumbs up" signal.
- b. Ensure the crew is ready by checking off with the Umpire, Back Judge, and the Electronic Clock Operator. If the Back Judge and Umpire are ready then you know the Line Judge and Head Linesman are ready.
- c. Whistle the ball ready for play.
- d. Watch for:
  - Kick going out of bounds – (who touched it?)
  - Winding clock when ball is legally touched in your area.
  - Backward passes and forward hand-offs.
  - Illegal blocks and clips.
  - Facemask violations.
  - Fair catch signals.
  - Kick breaking the goal line plane.
  - Runner's momentum carrying him into the end zone. Bean bag in hand.
  - Muff or fumble.
  - Recovery of a loose ball.
  - Dead balls.
- e. Start the clock when touched by the receivers in bounds.
- f. Echo signals to start and stop the clock.
- g. Signal touchback if ball breaks the plane of the end zone.
- h. Follow the receiver up the field and watch the action around the ball carrier.
- i. Turn loose of the ball carrier on long runs and clean up behind the play.
- j. Focus on the blocks just in front of the receiver if the kick is to the other side of the field.

- k. Move to the in-bounds spot. Be prepared to give ready-for-play signal when the ball has been set up.
- l. Free Kicks after an accepted free kick penalty:
  - Give preliminary signal for the infraction.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
- m. Free Kicks after a safety:
  - Same position as on a normal free kick as deep as the deepest kick receiver (around the 25 yard line).
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
- n. Free Kicks after an awarded fair catch:
  - Positioned behind the Kicker.
  - Ensure all other officials are in position before marking the ball ready for play.
  - Be prepared to give the proper signal on kicks that are good, no good, or a touchback.

### C. Scrimmage Plays

#### 1. During the offensive huddle:

**Position – 5 to 7 yards deep, 5 to 7 yards wide (even with the offensive huddle if the huddle is deeper) and facing toward the defense.**

- a. Communicate the next down with the Head Linesman and then the remainder of the crew members.
- b. Be aware of down, distance, and game clock.
- c. When marking the ball ready for play, stand and face the defensive team.
- d. Count offense after the ready for play signal – check-off with the Umpire with “thumbs up” signal if 11 or fewer players. Try to time your signal with the signal given by the Umpire.
- e. If after the ready for play signal there are 12 or more players, and no player is attempting to leave the field, then throw your flag for substitution infraction and stop the clock.

#### 2. Pre Snap:

**Position – Wide side of the field or on the passing arm side of the quarterback if the ball is in the center of the field.**

- a. Keep the snap in view.
- b. Count the offense if unable to in huddle.
- c. Be aware of clock.
- d. Be in position to see the off-side tackle to pick up keys.
- e. Watch for:
  - Backs being set for one second.
  - Backs moving forward before the snap.
  - Illegal movements by the offense.
  - Offensive player calling time-out.

#### 3. At the Snap:

- a. Read Keys that will indicate if a play is run or pass.
- b. Watch for:
  - Holding, illegal use of hands and personal fouls.
  - Chop blocks and other illegal blocks in the free blocking zone.
  - Fumbles (drop beanbag at that spot) and recoveries.
  - Backward pass.
  - Be aware that the quarterback may spike the ball in order to stop the clock.

#### 4. Running Plays:

- a. Focus on the action around the runner while he is behind the line-of-scrimmage.
- b. Follow the ball carrier sideline-to-sideline.

- c. Focus on the action behind the ball carrier after the runner has crossed the line-of-scrimmage.
- d. Watch for:
  - Fumbles and the recovery.
  - Backward passes.
  - Ball leaving the free-blocking zone.
  - Illegal blocks and clipping.
  - Illegal use of hands and holding.
  - Personal fouls against the ball carrier.
- e. Check for a possible first down.
- f. Help relay the ball to the succeeding spot if needed.
- g. Be alert for dead-ball fouls and taunting.
- h. Be prepared to assist if the ball carrier goes out of bounds.
- i. In plays that end with a TD, echo the TD signal of the other officials by facing the press box. Ensure there are no fouls prior to giving the signal.

**Note: Talk to players as they un-pile. "Push off the ground. Good job. Easy now, easy up". Do not allow players to pull other players from a pile.**

#### 5. Passing Plays:

- a. Stay with the passer even after the pass is released.
- b. On passes to receivers who are behind the line of scrimmage, move to a position so you can see whether the pass is forward or backward and still see action on the passer.
- c. Communicate to the rushers that the "ball is gone" when the pass has been released.
- d. Rule whether passer fumbled on a "sack" or whether his arm was moving forward.
- e. Mark the forward progress of the passer when he is "sacked".
- f. Watch for:
  - Incomplete shovel or "Utah" passes.
  - Intentional grounding (Only Referee makes this call).
  - Illegal use of hands and holding.
  - Personal fouls.
  - Roughing the passer. (Only Referee makes this call)
  - Pass deflected by the defense (give signal #11).
  - Dead-ball fouls and taunting.
- g. At the end of the play, either move to the succeeding spot on a completion or move to the previous spot on an incompletion.
- h. In plays that end with a TD, echo the TD signal of the other officials by facing the press box. Ensure there are no fouls prior to giving the signal.

#### D. Scrimmage Kicks - Including Field Goal Attempts

##### 1. Punts:

**Position – 3 yards ahead of the kicker on the kicking leg side at least as wide as the last down lineman (wider the better!).**

- a. Count the kicking team and signal the Umpire with a "thumbs up" if there are 11 or fewer players.
- b. Signal the Umpire that it is a scrimmage kick formation.
- c. Check the jersey numbers of the up-backs to verify eligibility if it is a fake or a broken play.
- d. On a blocked punt, be prepared to rule on possession.
- e. Watch for:
  - Backs being set for one second.
  - Loose ball on the snap and the recovery.
  - Illegal blocks by the up-back.
  - Roughing the kicker or being blocked into the kicker.

- Fake punt that becomes running or passing play.
- Punt going out of bounds – move to punter; mark path of the ball with official on the sideline.
- Dead ball fouls and taunting.

f. After the punt is away and the punter has regained his balance, slowly move down field and cleanup behind the Umpire.

g. On long punt returns, pick up the runner and “carry him all the way” – work from the inside of the field looking outward.

h. Move to the succeeding spot and find out if the ball still belongs to the receiving team. Be sure to ask if there was a fair catch.

i. Check to see if there are any flags on the play and then communicate to Linesman about staying at old spot or moving the chains.

## 2. Field Goals:

**Position – On the side of the kicker and holder, facing the holder at least as wide as the last down lineman.**

a. Treat as a punt unless otherwise noted.

b. On a blocked kick, be prepared to rule on possession.

c. Watch for:

- Loose ball on the snap and the recovery.
- Roughing the kicker & holder or being blocked into the kicker.
- Fake kick that becomes a running or passing play.
- Dead ball fouls and taunting.

d. After the kick is away and the kicker has regained his balance, look for a signal from the Line Judge and the Back Judge as to whether the field goal is good and echo the signal.

e. If the kick does not cross the goal line, treat it just like a punt.

f. If the kick is good, echo the TD signal of the other officials by facing the press box. Ensure there are no fouls prior to giving the signal.

## E. Try For Point

### 1. Kick:

Everything is identical as a field goal except be ready to stop the play if kick try is unsuccessful.

### 2. Scrimmage Play:

Same as a scrimmage play except the ball becomes dead if the offensive team fails to score.

## F. Goal Line Plays

1. Remind other officials of the proximity of the goal line.

2. Treat as any other scrimmage play.

## G. Time-outs

1. Give the time-out signal and specify the team that is charged or charge it to your self.

2. Make sure trainers and/or coaches summoned for injured player are not on the field to coach players.

3. Record the period and time that each time out occurs.

4. Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.

5. Remain in position near the offensive huddle but in view of the Back Judge and be prepared to receive the 45 second signal.

6. When the Back Judge has communicated that 45 seconds have elapsed, warn each team that 15 seconds remain – at the 60 second notice, move to the ball and mark the ball ready for play – then move to a normal position.

## H. Measurements

1. Straighten the ball appropriately and oversee the measurement process.

2. Judge whether or not the line to gain has been reached.

3. Make the appropriate signal.

**Note: If the measurement is in a side zone and short, secure chain at the nose of the ball and the chains will be moved to the in-bounds line where they will re-stretched while the ball is placed exactly where it was in the side zone.**

I. End of Period and Between Period Procedures

1. End of period

- a. When facing clock, know when time expires.
- b. If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
- c. If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- d. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
- e. If end of game be certain there are no penalties and then signal the end of game by holding the ball over your head. Then leave the field together as a crew.

2. Between periods (quarters):

- a. Meet with the Umpire at the ball and check to be certain there are no penalties to be enforced or no requests for a Coach-Referee conference – then record the down, distance and yard line. Verify this info with the Head Linesman before he proceeds to move the chains.
- b. Be certain the results are recorded on your game card.
- c. Signal the end of the quarter by raising the ball above your head.
- d. Move to the appropriate spot at the other end of the field.
- e. Re-check spot and set up ball at corresponding spot on the other half of the field.
- f. When notified by the Back Judge that it is time to play, mark the ball ready for play.

**Note: Everyone has a job to do during this time. Avoid side conversations and be professional.**

3. At half time:

- a. Observe the players as they clear the field.
- b. Signal the clock operator to start the game clock to time the half-time period.
- c. Repeat escort duties when halftime is completed and give second half choices for the coin toss.

J. Penalty Administration

1. Calling Penalties Live Ball:

- a. Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul.
- b. Drop your penalty marker at the proper yard line.
- c. Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.

2. When ball becomes dead:

- a. Sound whistle and give time-out signal.
- b. Retrieve information from official that made the call (live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, offensive or defensive foul).
- c. Ask for the offended team's captain prior to the preliminary signal.
- d. Give a preliminary signal to the press box. Make sure to stand still and be away from the players while giving a crisp signal.
- e. Relay the penalty to the appropriate wing official so he can relay information to the offended coach.
- f. Mentally note whether clock should start on the ready or the snap.

3. Administering Penalties:

- a. Fully explain all the options afforded to the offended team.
- b. Confer with the Umpire as to penalty, enforcement spot, direction and distance.
- c. Give final signal to the press box side of the field.

**Note: Repeat out loud the enforcement spot, distance and direction of a penalty to the Umpire to avoid error.**

## B. Umpire Mechanics – 5-Man Crew

### A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties

1. On field pre-game duties:
  - a. After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
  - b. Accompany the Referee to speak with the home, then the visiting coaches.
  - c. Examine player equipment / medical wrappings / casts etc. & rule on legality.
  - d. Request to see a physician's release for any casts present. Sign & date the back before returning it to the coach or trainer.
2. Secondary on field pre-game duties:
  - a. Ensure Referee asks if all players are legally equipped.
  - b. Record captains numbers and who speaks at coin toss.
  - c. Secure game balls. Referee to approve.
  - d. Identify ball boys and direct them to wing officials.
  - e. Listen for special plays or formations that coach's use.
  - f. Ensure Referee asks the home team coach about the chain crew.
  - g. Relay each game ball to the respective wing officials.
  - h. Ensure Referee mentions that sportsmanship is expected by the coaches and players.
  - i. Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during the Referee/Coaches meetings.

**Note: Remind coaches that officials may not assist players with equipment repair.**

**Note: Know where your team will be located when they leave the field.**

3. Escort Duties:
  - a. Go to dressing room of the team whose bench will be opposite the press box. This will usually be the visiting team. Be there 10 minutes prior to the kick-off.
  - b. Escort the captains to the goal line and on their side of the field.
  - c. Have the Visiting Captains on the goal line on their side of the field, five minutes prior the scheduled kickoff for each half. Make eye contact and signal the Line Judge and move simultaneously to the 50 yard line.**
  - d. Place captains so that the speaking captain will be next to the Referee at mid-field. (On Umpire's far left)
  - e. Instruct captains to move to the center of the field when the Referee drops their hand. Only 4 captains are allowed to midfield. On occasions (i.e. senior night) where teams want to recognize more than 4 captains, have the remaining captains stand on the sideline. Do not allow any other players on the field.
  - f. Instruct captains to move to the center of the field when the Referee drops his hand. Only 4 captains are allowed to midfield. On occasions (i.e. senior night) where teams want to recognize more than 4 captains, have the remaining captains stand on the sideline. Do not allow any other players on the field.

**Note: Ask the speaking captain what he will do if he wins the toss. Conduct a very short captain briefing to explain what the officials expect from them as leaders.**

## B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties

### 1. Coin Toss Duties:

- a. Escort the captains to the center of the field.
- b. Move in to see and record results of the coin toss as well as the options selected by each captain.
- c. Stand with the kicking team as the Referee signals the results of the coin toss.
- d. Once the coin toss is completed, and the captains dismissed, meet at the center of the field with the crew to record toss results and any final instructions from the Referee.
- e. When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.

### 2. Free Kick Duties:

#### **Position - Head Linesman's side of the field on the receivers 30-yard-line.**

- a. Be sure your sideline is clear.
- b. Count the members of the receiving team and make sure they have 11 or fewer players. In the event there are more or less than 11 players on the receiving team, give a strong indication to that team that they need to get to 11. Confirm with the Referee with a "thumbs up" signal.
- c. Wait for the Head Linesman to raise arm, raise yours, and make eye contact with the Referee. Lower arm after Referee checks off with you.
- d. Bean bag in hand.
- e. Watch for:
  - Kick going out of bounds - who touched it?
  - Winding clock when ball is legally touched in your area.
  - Muff or fumble.
  - Covering short and on-side kicks.
  - Backward passes and forward hand-offs.
  - Illegal blocks and clips.
  - Facemask violations.
  - Fair catch signals.
  - Kick-catching interference.
- f. Focus on "wedge" in front for the ball carrier.
- g. Pick up the ball carrier in your area and take him to the Head Linesman.
- h. If ball becomes dead deep, move in to spot the ball. Stop clock.
- i. If ball becomes dead in the side zone (your area) - stop clock - and once the spot is held by another official, move inside to spot the ball at the in-bounds spot.
- j. If ball carrier goes to other side of the field, move cautiously toward the play, watching for ball carrier to reverse his field. Focus on action away from the ball.
- k. Start the clock when touched by the receivers in bounds.
- l. Echo signals to start and stop the clock.
- m. In obvious on-side kick situations, move to R's free kick line, beanbag in hand.
- n. Free Kicks after an accepted free kick penalty:
  - Move to a position 5 yards from your previous free kick position.
  - Help clear the sidelines in your area.
- o. Free Kicks after a safety:
  - Line up on the 50-yard line.
  - Help clear the sidelines in your area.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.

### 1. During the offensive huddle:

- a. Control the ball, but allow yourself time to be in position to read your keys before the snap
- b. If "no huddle" offense, stay on ball until "ready for play" whistle.

- c. Assist the Referee with whether the clock starts on the snap or “ready”.
- d. Count offense after the ready for play signal – check-off with the Referee with “thumbs up” signal if 11 or fewer players. Try to time your signal with the signal given by the Referee.
- e. If after the ready for play signal there are 12 or more players, and no player is attempting to leave the field, then throw your flag for substitution infraction and stop the clock.
- f. Remember to adjust your down indicator. Also remember to adjust your ball position indicator. In order to remind you of the ball position in relation to the hash marks, this indicator is very helpful in keeping track of previous spots on incomplete passes and accepted penalty enforcement.

2. Pre Snap:

**Position – 4 to 7 yards off the ball, head up with the center.**

- a. Keep the snap in view.
- b. Vary your position to keep offense from using you as a “pick”.
- c. Count the offense if unable to in huddle.
- d. Verify you have 5 players 50-79 on the offensive line.
- e. Know ineligible receivers (number or position).
- f. Be aware of clock.
- g. Know what defensive players are on the line of scrimmage (blocking below the waist).
- h. Watch for:
  - Snap infractions.
  - False starts and encroachment.
- i. Listen for disconcerting signals by the defense.

3. At the Snap:

- a. Key on three adjoining interior linemen and vary from snap to snap.
- b. Read point of attack and be aware of free blocking zone.
- c. Watch for:
  - Holding, illegal use of hands and personal fouls.
  - Chop blocks and other illegal blocks in the free blocking zone.
  - Fumbles. Drop beanbag on or parallel to the spot.

4. Running Plays:

- a. Observe the three linemen you selected for the initial line charge.
- b. Operate hash mark to hash mark and spot the ball at the end of the play. (There may be times that you have to move outside the hash mark but it should be the exception - fights, injury, etc.)
- c. Pivot toward the point of attack and know when the ball leaves the zone.
- d. Observe line play and action around the runner.
- e. Work inside - out.
- f. If play is directly at you, freeze and allow the runner to commit to their path.
- g. If possible pivot to face runner as they go by.
- h. Officiate at the point of attack and then behind the runner.
- i. Move downfield slowly. There may be unwarranted action on the line that is still your responsibility.
- j. When ball is dead between the hash marks, move to retrieve the ball and spot the nose of the ball on the nearest wing official's downfield foot or the official with the best “look”.
- k. When ball is dead in a side zone, move to the hash mark at the intersection of the dead ball spot and align the nose of the ball with the forward progress spot normally on the wing official's down field foot.

**Note:**

- **When the ball becomes dead near a first down, allow the wing official to spot the ball on their foot.**

- **Talk to players as they un-pile. “Push off the ground. Good job. Easy now, easy up”.**
- **Do not allow players to pull other players from a pile.**

#### 5. Passing Plays:

- Move to the line of scrimmage.
- Be alert to avoid running into a draw play.
- Get into a position to rule whether the pass or passer crosses the line of scrimmage.
- Be alert for tipped passes. (Give “tipped ball” signal).
- On short passes over the middle (head high) turn with the ball to help wings rule on caught or trapped passes.
- Know when the ball leaves the free blocking zone.
- Watch for:
  - Holding, illegal use of hands and personal fouls.
  - Chop blocks and other illegal blocks.
  - Ineligibles downfield.
  - Illegal pass (passer clearly over the line of scrimmage before releasing the ball is your call).
  - Dead ball fouls.

#### D. Scrimmage Kicks

##### 1. Pre Snap:

**Position – 4 to 7 yards deep behind team B’s line, keeping the snap in view.**

- Count the kicking team players. Signal with a “thumbs up” to the Referee & appropriate wing official.
- Acknowledge Referee’s signal for “kicking formation”.
- Check numbering exception.
- Know jersey numbers of interior linemen.
- Note eligible numbers that are ineligible by position.
- Key on the snapper and offensive guards.
- Check linemen (other than center and guards) for interlocked feet. (Illegal formation).
- Watch for false starts and snap infractions.

**Note: Remind defensive players to “stay off the snapper” until he has had a chance to recover and “don’t rough the kicker and holder” (if appropriate) before each kick.**

##### 2. At & After The Snap:

- Step toward the neutral zone and watch action on the snapper.
- Shift attention to the offensive guards and backs behind the neutral zone.
- Be alert to assist Referee in covering a short or blocked kick. If the kick is touched by a defensive player but not completely blocked, signal with legal touching signal (signal 11).
- Assist with determining whether the ball crosses the neutral zone.
- Determine when the ball has left the free blocking zone (usually immediately).
- Be alert for a fake kick or broken play and subsequent run or pass.
- Watch for:
  - Illegal contact on the snapper.
  - Illegal blocks, especially after the ball leaves the free blocking zone.
  - Illegal use of hands and holding.
  - Ineligible downfield or offensive pass interference if a pass crosses the line.

3. After the ball is away:
  - a. Allow wave of blockers to move beyond you downfield.
  - b. Pivot and move downfield slowly, watching blocks.
  - c. Be alert for a long return and officiate inside out as a normal running play.
  - d. Watch for:
    - Personal fouls.
    - Clipping.
    - Illegal blocks.

**Note: Once ball has been kicked downfield, notify blocking linemen by yelling “BALLS AWAY”.**

4. When the Ball Becomes Dead:
  - a. Be alert for dead-ball fouls and taunting.
  - b. Move to the dead ball spot to set up the ball.
  - c. Inform the Referee of the status of the play. (Fair catch, no fair catch, etc.)

#### E. Try For Point

##### 1. Kick:

Everything is identical as other scrimmage kicks except:

- Be ready to stop the play if kick try is unsuccessful.

##### 2. Scrimmage Play:

**Note: Remember that the neutral zone does not expand into the end zone.**

**Therefore, offensive linemen may not block into the end zone on pass plays.**

**(Ineligible downfield.)**

- Same as a scrimmage play except the ball becomes dead if the offensive team fails to score.

#### F. Goal Line Plays

1. Position near goal line and cover same as any scrimmage play.
2. Ensure runner does not thrust ball forward after it is declared dead.

##### **Note:**

- **Look to wing for TD signal.**
- **If you think runner has scored, but wings have not signaled, assist by signaling this with HANDS TO THE CHEST. You are saying that you have the ball in the end zone with this signal. It is still up to the wings to determine if the runner was down before the ball crossed the goal line.**
- **SIGNAL TD WHEN YOU ARE THE ONLY OFFICIAL CERTAIN THAT THE RUNNER HAS SCORED.**

#### G. Time-outs

1. **Maintain position over the ball.**
2. **Observe** Team A until Referee is ready to start play.
3. Make sure trainers and/or coaches summoned for injured player are not on the field to coach players.
4. Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
5. Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.

#### H. Measurements

1. Take the forward stake from the chain person at the place of measurement.
2. When Linesman says “ready”, respond by “pulling chain” as you stretch the chain and hold forward stake near the ball until the Referee reaches a decision.

**Note: If the measurement is in a side zone and short, the Referee will secure chain at the nose of the ball and the chains will be moved to the in-bounds line where they will re-stretched while the ball is placed exactly where it was in the side zone. Be sure not to pull the chain out of the Referee's grasp.**

I. End of Period and Between Period Procedures

1. End of period
  - a. When facing clock, know when time expires.
  - b. If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
  - c. If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
  - d. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
  - e. If end of game, leave field together as a crew.
2. Between periods (quarters):
  - a. Record down, distance and yard-line nearest nose of the ball – going in or out?
  - b. Hold spot and hand the ball to Referee for end of period signal.
  - c. Re-check spot and set up ball at corresponding spot on the other half of the field.

**Note: Everyone has a job to do during this time. Avoid side conversations and be professional.**

3. At half time:
  - a. Before leaving the field, make sure the deep officials have secured a game ball.
  - b. Repeat escort duties when halftime is completed.
  - c. Escort captains to sidelines to be ready at 1:30 of the warm-up period.

J. Penalty Administration

1. Calling Penalties Live Ball:
  - a. Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul.
  - b. Drop your penalty marker at the proper yard line.
  - c. Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.
2. When ball becomes dead:
  - a. Give time-out signal.
  - b. Sound whistle (get Referee's attention by sounding several short, loud blasts).
  - c. Verbally report information to Referee. (Live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, and offensive or defensive foul).
  - d. Mentally note whether clock should start on the ready or the snap.
3. Administering Penalties:
  - a. Direct offended captain to Referee as he gives the preliminary signal.
  - b. Secure ball.
  - c. Confer with the Referee as to enforcement spot, direction and distance.
  - d. On properly marked field, avoid stepping off each yard between yard lines. Instead step off the first and last yard line.
  - e. Walk briskly using arm signal to point to each yard line you cross.
  - f. Verbalize distance walked off as you move to spot.

**Note: Repeat out loud the enforcement spot, distance and direction of a penalty to the Referee to avoid error.**

## C. Head Linesman Mechanics – 5-Man Crew

### A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties

#### 1. On field pre-game duties:

- a. After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
- b. Locate and communicate with the ball person on your side.
- c. Obtain possession of the football of your team's sideline from the Umpire.
- d. Check the line to gain equipment by:
  - Making sure the chains are 10 yards in length with no knots and a piece of tape secured at the 5-yard mark.
  - Making sure the down box is working properly.
- e. Instruct your chain as follows:
  - Introduce yourself to the entire chain crew.
  - Identify who will be the box person. Know him on a first name basis.
  - Explain the use of the clip (clip the back line, the back of that line) and who will be doing this job.
  - Tell the crew to drop the chains and get out of the way when the flow of action comes toward the sideline.
  - Tell the box person not to change the down or move until you indicate the next down.
  - Explain that you will be "setting" the box person on all first downs.
  - Explain the importance of them hustling and how important they are to the entire crew.

#### 2. Secondary on field pre-game duties:

- a. Check the sideline for safety concerns and proper markings.
- b. Take a look at the clock to make sure it is working properly.

#### 3. Escort Duties:

- a. Go to the dressing room of the team whose bench will be opposite the press box side. This will usually be the visiting team. Be there 10 minutes prior to the kick-off.
- b. Escort the team to their side of the field. Remain with the team if both teams are in the same end zone prior to kick off.

**Note: Know where your team will be located when they leave the field.**

**Note: If both teams are in the same end zone, stand between the teams until at least one team moves to the bench area.**

### B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties

#### 1. Coin Toss Duties:

- a. Walk out to the hash marks on your side of the field with the Umpire and captains.
- b. Face the team box.
- c. Once the coin toss is completed, and the captains dismissed, meet at the center of the field with the crew to record toss results and any final instructions from the Referee.
- d. Secure the kicking team's ball.
- e. When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.

#### 2. Free Kick Duties:

**Position – Opposite the press box sideline on the kicking teams 40-yard line.**

- a. Count the kicking team and make sure they have 11 or fewer players. In the event there are more or less than 11 players on the kicking team, give a strong indication to that team that they need to get to 11. Instruct the kicker and give him the ball.
- b. Move to the hash mark on your side of the field and face the Line Judge who will be facing you from his hash mark. Ensure that Line Judge is ready by pointing at him, hustle to each sideline simultaneously.
- c. Extend arm above head to indicate you are ready. Lower arm after making eye contact with the Umpire.
- d. Bean bag in hand. Use if the kick is touched by the kicking team prior to going 10-yards.
- e. Watch for any infractions involving K's free-kick line and blocks on the front line. Encroachment by K is a dead ball foul. Bear down hard on the whistle to stop the play.
- f. Unless you are the covering official do NOT wind clock when ball is first legally touched inbounds. Instead, concentrate on covering blocks in your area.
- g. Anticipate a short kick. If kick is short and to your side, watch for a fair catch signal and watch the catch.
- h. On an on-side kick, be prepared to bean bag first touching by K if it is touched before the ball travels 10 yards and to rule on possession at the end of the kick.
- i. If a free kick goes out-of-bounds untouched by R and you are the closest official to the spot of infraction, then go to the spot and drop your flag.
- j. If team on your side is the offended team, try to get the coaches' choice of either:
  - (1) Taking the ball 25 yards from the previous spot.
  - (2) Re-kicking with a 5-yard penalty.
  - (3) Taking the ball at the spot of the foul.
- k. After the ball is kicked, move down the field slowly while watching for fouls away from the ball.
- l. On long returns on your side of the field, pick up the runner and carry him to the end of the run. Mark the forward progress spot and wait until the Umpire is in position to spot the ball. Be aware that you need to be on the goal line at the end of long TD returns.
- m. If return is up the far sideline, move across the field, keeping the play "boxed in" while watching for illegal blocks and holding.
- n. As soon as the play is over, set your chains.
- o. Echo signals to start and stop the clock.
- p. Free Kicks after an accepted free kick penalty:
  - Move directly to the middle of the field at the spot of the last free kick.
  - Give infraction signal to the press box side and mark off the penalty.
  - Move the kicking team to the new spot for the free kick.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
- q. Free Kicks after a safety:
  - Move directly to the middle of the field at the kicking teams 20-yard line. Make sure to secure the kicking teams ball.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.

### C. Scrimmage Plays

1. During the offensive huddle:
  - a. Verify with the Referee the correct down. Use a raised hand signal with the appropriate number of fingers extended to indicate the next down (use closed fist for 4<sup>th</sup> down). Make sure the correct down is on the down box.
  - b. Remember to move your hand down indicator and be aware of down, distance, and game clock.
  - c. Make sure your sideline is clear.
  - d. Think about your keys.

- e. Count the defensive team.
- f. Signal (by giving thumbs up sign) when you have 11 or fewer players.

2. Pre Snap:

**Position – no closer than 9 yards outside the nearest player on the line of scrimmage and opposite the press box side of the field. Straddle the yard line through the ball. If the nearest player is near the sideline, then position yourself on or outside the sideline. Be aware of the tick or 9 yards marks (illegal substitution).**

- a. Check to make sure that there are at least 7 offensive players on the line-of-scrimmage.
- b. Establish the line-of-scrimmage with your foot on the offensive side.
- c. Determine whether nearest wide out is on or off the line. If the widest man in the offensive formation is off the line of scrimmage, signal by extending your arm straight out toward the offensive backfield with your fist clenched. This is known as “punching him back”. Hold the signal until the ball is snapped or the receiver goes in motion.
- d. Know the numbers of the eligible receivers on your side and legal position of slot-backs and wide-outs. Be aware of a tight end that might be “covered up”.
- e. You are responsible for a player in motion going away from you. If he reverses, he is still your responsibility. It may be necessary to take a step toward the offensive backfield to watch the man in motion as long as this does not take away from your ability to watch the neutral zone.
- f. If you have an unbalanced line (any number of lineman except 3 on your side of the center), signal the Line Judge by placing your clenched fist over your chest.
- g. Make sure of no neutral zone violations by the offense or defense.
- h. Never let a player line up behind you.

**Note: If your wide out is over the line on his initial set up in the formation, pat your leg which is on the offensive side of the ball and tell him “this is the line of scrimmage”. This should indicate to him that he needs to back up.**

3. At the Snap:

- a. Determine run or pass. Do this by keying on a player (normally a tackle or tight end to your side) that will tell you the type of play.
- b. Watch initial charge of linemen and be alert for quick plays into line.
- c. Watch for holding by the tight end or illegal blocks by the inside receiver(s).

4. Running Plays:

- a. Look into the backfield to determine the direction of the play.
- b. When play is moving toward you, backpedal and give way slightly to the offensive side of the ball until the play heads up field.
- c. If play is moving to the far sideline, move across the field and then angle down field as the ball crosses the line of scrimmage. Focus on action away from the ball. Be aware of reverses back to your side of the field. You can leave opposing players behind you only if they appear to be out of the play and no unnecessary contact is going on.
- d. Always keep the play “boxed in”.
- e. When ball becomes dead, move to spot of the ball.
- f. When you are sure it is a first down, give the time-out signal and notify the Referee. As soon as the Line Judge has the spot, release to set your chains.
- g. When not sure of a first down, put the ball on the spot and notify the Referee.
- h. When the runner goes out-of-bounds, mark the spot, give time-out signal, turn and face out of bounds.
- i. During the run, observe action on linebackers and backside pursuit.
- j. Always square to ball at the end of the play. Mark the forward progress with your down field foot.
- k. Watch for:

- Fumbles (use beanbag) and recovery.
- When the ball leaves the neutral zone.
- Personal fouls.

5. Passing Plays:

- a. Hold near the line of scrimmage for the initial line charge then key on the outside receiver. Watch for illegal blocks by or on the receiver(s).
- b. Move down field with the receiver(s) in your area.
- c. Split the distance between the shortest and deepest receiver if you are responsible for more than one receiver in your area.
- d. If the ball caught is over the middle with the receivers back to you, then look to the Umpire. If he is not sure of the catch, then rule on what you saw. Make the call and sell it.
- e. Make eye contact with the Back Judge on questionable passes on the sideline. Both of you should have the same call on complete and incomplete passes. Talk about this in the pregame. For example, the official looking at the receiver's back will rule on whether his feet were in bounds and the official looking at the front of the receiver will rule on whether a catch was good or not.
- f. Be aware of when the pass is in the air in order to rule if action on a receiver is holding or pass interference.
- g. Make ruling whether a pass is complete or not in your area. Move into position to keep the continuing play "boxed in" as if a running play.
- h. Always square to ball at the end of the play. Mark the forward progress with your down field foot.
- i. Watch for:
  - Action of all receivers coming into your area.
  - Legally numbered receivers who were lined up as ineligible going down field. This normally is a "covered up" tight end or slot back on that was not off the line of scrimmage.
  - Immediate throws by the quarterback down the line of scrimmage to determine if the pass is forward or backward.
  - Early blocks or "pick" plays by the receivers.
  - Incomplete shovel pass.
  - Pass interference or face guarding.
  - Receivers going out of bounds voluntarily and returning.
  - Ineligibles down field that may get behind the umpire

**Note: You should be responsible for getting to all dead ball spots.**

D. Scrimmage Kicks – Including Field Goal Attempts

**Position – same as on Scrimmage plays.**

1. Punts:

- a. Count the kicking team and make sure they have 11 or fewer players.
- b. Determine whether nearest wide out is on or off the line. Give the proper off the line signal if necessary.
- c. Know numbers of eligible and ineligible receivers being aware that ineligible receivers can be lined up in positions where eligible receivers normally position themselves. This is important in the case of a pass.
- d. Hold your position until the kicked ball has crossed the neutral zone then move down field covering your side of the field.
- e. Observe blocks in front of the punt receiver(s).
- f. On a blocked punt, retreat to assist the Referee in determining possession.
- g. On a short kick out of bounds in your area, work with the Referee to "chop you in" in order to mark the spot. On a "shanked" kick to your area, be prepared to have the spot in the event the Referee did not see where it went out of bounds.

h. If the runner comes into your area, move with the runner. Be on the goal line during returns for a Touchdown.

i. Watch for:

- Neutral zone violations by the offense or defense.
- Illegal blocks.
- First touching in your area by the kicking team (mark spot with your beanbag).
- Signal from Referee before moving the chains after the play is dead.

2. Field Goals:

- Treat as any other scrimmage kick.

E. Try For Point

1. Kick:

Everything is identical as a field goal except:

- Be ready to stop the play if kick try is unsuccessful.

2. Scrimmage Play:

- Same as a scrimmage play except the ball becomes dead if the offensive team fails to score.

F. Goal Line Plays

1. Unless otherwise noted, treat as any other scrimmage play.

2. At the snap, your initial key is now the outside receiver.

3. On plays where the ball is snapped inside the 5-yard line, move to the goal line on the snap and work your way back to the ball.

4. On plays where the ball is snapped between the 10 to the 5-yard line, at the snap move 3 to 5 yards down field. Read the play and stay ahead of the runner, you have the goal line and you must be at the goal line before the runner.

5. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW IF THE BALL HAS BROKEN THE PLANE OF THE GOAL LINE. Signal Touchdown only if you have seen the ball break that plane.

6. On plays where the ball is dead just short of the goal line, move in quickly to get the spot. Do not jump over players. Sell the spot!!

7. On goal line plays (GOING OUT) where the ball is snapped on or inside the 3-yard line, move to the goal line on the snap and officiate up the field. Be prepared to rule on a safety in the event it occurs.

8. On plays where you are screened from the ball, but you can tell whether the runner was down short of the goal line, the Umpire may be able to help. If the Umpire has HANDS TO THE CHEST, he is telling you he has the ball in the end zone. You must still determine whether the runner was down short of the goal line.

**Note: On any goal line play you must be at the goal line before the runner. Read the play so you are standing still at the goal line ready to make the call.**

G. Time-outs

1. Move to a position halfway between the ball and the team box on your sideline – in position to monitor the team's huddle.

2. Watch for illegal conferences. Be sure of proper number of players/attendants in huddle.

3. Record the period and time that each time out occurs.

4. Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.

5. Be alert for signal from the Referee to give your team 15-second warning. Go to team huddle and say, "Coach, ball will be marked ready for play in 15 seconds.

6. Inform the coach of time outs remaining.

7. Be alert of substitutes or attempts to use substitutes for purposes of deception.

## H. Measurements

1. When the Referee calls for a measurement, hustle to the sideline. Make sure the box is at the spot of the front stake.
2. Pick up the chain at the clip and proceed to where the Line Judge is marking the yard-line (this should be directly behind the ball).
3. Hold the clip on the back of the yard line while the Umpire stretches the chain and the Referee signals the result.
4. If not a first down, carry the chain and clip to its correct position on the sideline and reset the chains.
5. If the measurement is in a side-zone, use the chains to bring the ball into the hash marks then set the box and make sure of the proper down.
6. If a first down, release the chains and clip then proceed to the sideline to mark the spot for placement of the box.

Preventative Officiating Suggestions:

**Note: If there is an incomplete pass on 4<sup>th</sup> down, the ball will be placed at the previous spot so that the rear point becomes the foremost point of the ball. The box and chains must be moved the length of the football in the new direction of the offense. Only move the box after the Umpire has spotted the ball.**

## I. End of Period and Between Period Procedures

1. End of period
  - a. When facing clock, know when time expires.
  - b. If time expires prior to snap, sound whistle to prevent snap.
  - c. If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
  - d. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
  - e. If end of game, quickly thank the chain crew, retrieve your clip, and leave the field together as a crew.
2. Between periods (quarters):
  - a. Meet with the Referee to verify the down, distance and yard line. Make note of the yard line where the clip is placed.
  - b. Be certain the results are recorded on your game card.
  - c. Pick up chain at the spot of the clip.
  - d. Remember to instruct chain crew to “flip-flop” sides.
  - e. Move to the appropriate yard line on the other side of the 50-yard line to reset the chains.
  - f. Re-check down, distance and yard line.
  - g. Ensure the box person sets the box on the yard line of the ball.
  - h. Inform Referee that you are ready to go.

**Note: Everyone has a job to do during this time. Avoid side conversations and be professional.**

3. At half time:
  - a. Instruct the chain crew to be back prior to the second half kickoff.
  - b. Secure your teams football.
  - c. Repeat escort duties when halftime is completed.

## J. Penalty Administration

1. Calling Penalties Live Ball:
  - a. Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul.
  - b. Drop your penalty marker at the proper yard line.
  - c. Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.
2. When ball becomes dead:
  - a. Give time-out signal
  - b. Sound whistle (get Referee's attention by sounding several short, loud blasts).
  - c. Verbally report information to Referee. (live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, offensive or defensive foul).
  - d. Mentally note whether clock should start on the ready or the snap.
3. Administering Penalties
  - a. If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official gets the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
  - b. Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.
  - c. Hustle to your sideline and report the foul and offending player's number to the coach.
  - d. If the coach asks you about administration of the penalty, give him the options.
  - e. Mark off the penalty on the sideline (as a double check for the Umpire) and move the box-man when necessary.

**Note: If you are not the official who called a foul, cover the flag for that official who did.**

## D. Line Judge Mechanics – 5-Man Crew

### A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties

1. On field pre-game duties:
  - a. After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
  - b. Find a member of game management and review the starting time of the game as well as the current time.
  - c. Locate the band director / ROTC advisor and let them know that the National Anthem needs to be completed 5 minutes prior to game time.
  - d. Locate and communicate with the ball person on your side.
  - e. Obtain possession of the football of your team's sideline from the Umpire.
2. Secondary on field pre-game duties:
  - a. Check the sideline for safety concerns and proper markings.
  - b. Take a look at the clock to make sure it is working properly.
3. Escort Duties:
  - a. Go to the dressing room of the team whose bench will be on the press box side. This will usually be the home team. Be there 10 minutes prior to the kick-off.
  - b. Escort the team to their side of the field. Remain with the team if both teams are in the same end zone prior to kick off.

**Note: Know where your team will be located when they leave the field.**

**Note: If both teams are in the same end zone, stand between the teams until at least one team moves to the bench area.**

### B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties

1. Coin Toss Duties:
  - a. If you are no longer with your team in the end zone prior to the coin toss, walk out to the hash marks on your side of the field with the Referee and captains.
  - b. Face the team box.
  - c. If the team on your side is kicking, give your football to the Head Linesman. If not, give it to the ball person on your side.
  - d. Once the coin toss is completed, and the captains dismissed, meet at the center of the field with the crew to record toss results and any final instructions from the Referee.
  - e. When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.
2. Free Kick Duties:

**Position – Press box side of the field on the receiving team's 50-yard line.**

  - a. Count the receiving team and make sure they have 11 or fewer players. In the event there are more or less than 11 players on the receiving team, give a strong indication to that team that they need to get to 11. Confirm with a "thumbs up" signal to the appropriate officials also counting your team.
  - b. Move to the hash mark on your side of the field and face the Head Linesman who will be facing you from his hash mark. Ensure that Head Linesman is ready by pointing at him, hustle to each sideline simultaneously.
  - c. Extend arm above head to indicate you are ready. Lower arm after making eye contact with the Back Judge.
  - d. Bean bag in hand. Use if the kick is touched by the kicking team prior to going 10-yards.
  - e. Watch for any infractions involving R's free-kick line and blocks on the front line.

- f. Unless you are the covering official do NOT wind clock when ball is first legally touched inbounds. Instead, concentrate on covering blocks in your area.
- g. Anticipate a short kick. If kick is short and to your side, watch for a fair catch signal and watch the catch.
- h. On an on-side kick, be prepared to bean bag first touching by K if it is touched before the ball travels 10 yards and to rule on possession at the end of the kick.
- i. If a free kick goes out-of-bounds untouched by R and you are the closest official to the spot of infraction, then go to the spot and drop your flag.
- j. If team on your side is the offended team, try to get the coaches' choice of either:
  - (1) Taking the ball 25 yards from the previous spot.
  - (2) Re-kicking with a 5-yard penalty.
  - (3) Taking the ball at the spot of the foul.
- k. After the ball is kicked, move down the field slowly while watching for fouls away from the ball.
- l. On long returns on your side of the field, pick up the runner and carry him to the end of the run. Mark the forward progress spot and wait until the Umpire is in position to spot the ball. Be aware that you need to be on the goal line at the end of long TD returns.
- m. If return is up the far sideline, move across the field, keeping the play "boxed in" while watching for illegal blocks and holding.
- n. Echo signals to start and stop the clock.
- o. In obvious on-side kick situations, move to the kicking teams free kick line, beanbag in hand.
- p. Free Kicks after an accepted free kick penalty:
  - Move to a position 5 yards from your previous free kick position.
  - Help clear the sidelines in your area.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
- q. Free Kicks after a safety:
  - Line up on the kicking teams 30-yard line.
  - Help clear the sidelines in your area.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.

### C. Scrimmage Plays

1. During the offensive huddle:
  - a. Remember to move your hand down indicator and be aware of down, distance, and game clock.
  - b. Make sure your sideline is clear.
  - c. Think about your keys.
  - d. Count the defensive team.
  - e. Signal (by giving thumbs up sign) when you have 11 or fewer players.
2. Pre Snap:
 

**Position – no closer than 9 yards outside the nearest player on the line of scrimmage and opposite the press box side of the field. Straddle the yard line through the ball. If the nearest player is near the sideline, then position yourself on or outside the sideline. Be aware of the tick or 9 yards marks (illegal substitution).**

  - a. Check to make sure that there are at least 7 offensive players on the line-of-scrimmage.
  - b. Establish the line-of-scrimmage with your foot on the offensive side.
  - c. Determine whether nearest wide out is on or off the line. If the widest man in the offensive formation is off the line of scrimmage, signal by extending your arm straight out toward the offensive backfield with your fist clenched. This is known as "punching him back". Hold the signal until the ball is snapped or the receiver goes in motion.

- d. Know the numbers of the eligible receivers on your side and legal position of slot-backs and wide-outs. Be aware of a tight end that might be "covered up".
- e. You are responsible for a player in motion going away from you. If he reverses, he is still your responsibility. It may be necessary to take a step toward the offensive backfield to watch the man in motion as long as this does not take away from your ability to watch the neutral zone.
- f. If you have an unbalanced line (any number of linemen except 3 on your side of the center), signal the Head Linesman by placing your clinched fist over your chest.
- g. Make sure of no neutral zone violations by the offense or defense.
- h. Never let a player line up behind you.

**Note: If your wide out is over the line on his initial set up in the formation, pat your leg which is on the offensive side of the ball and tell him "this is the line of scrimmage". This should indicate to him that he needs to back up.**

### 3. At the Snap:

- a. Determine run or pass. Do this by keying on a player (normally a tackle or tight end to your side) that will tell you the type of play.
- b. Watch initial charge of linemen and be alert for quick plays into line.
- c. Watch for holding by the tight end or illegal blocks by the inside receiver(s).

### 4. Running Plays:

- a. Look into the backfield to determine the direction of the play.
- b. When play is moving toward you, backpedal and give way slightly to the offensive side of the ball until the play heads up field.
- c. If play is moving to the far sideline, move across the field and then angle down field as the ball crosses the line of scrimmage. Focus on action away from the ball. Be aware of reverses back to your side of the field. You can leave opposing players behind you only if they appear to be out of the play and no unnecessary contact is going on.
- d. Always keep the play "boxed in".
- e. When ball becomes dead, move to spot of the ball.
- f. When you are sure it is a first down, give the time-out signal and notify the Referee. If the Head Linesman has the spot, notify him that you are now taking that spot so he can release to set his chains.
- g. When not sure of a first down, put the ball on the spot and notify the Referee.
- h. When the runner goes out-of-bounds, mark the spot, give time-out signal, turn and face out of bounds.
- i. During the run, observe action on linebackers and backside pursuit.
- j. Always square to ball at the end of the play. Mark the forward progress with your down field foot.
- k. Watch for:
  - Fumbles (use beanbag) and recovery.
  - When the ball leaves the neutral zone.
  - Personal fouls.

### 5. Passing Plays:

- a. Hold near the line of scrimmage for the initial line charge then key on the outside receiver. Watch for illegal blocks by or on the receiver(s).
- b. Move down field with the receiver(s) in your area.
- c. Split the distance between the shortest and deepest receiver if you are responsible for more than one receiver in your area.
- d. If the ball is caught over the middle with the receivers back to you, then look to the Umpire. If he is not sure of the catch, then rule on what you saw. Make the call and sell it.

- e. Make eye contact with the Back Judge on questionable passes on the sideline. Both of you should have the same call on complete and incomplete passes. Talk about this in the pregame. For example, the official looking at the receiver's back will rule on whether his feet were in bounds and the official looking at the front of the receiver will rule on whether a catch was good or not.
- f. Be aware of when the pass is in the air in order to rule if action on a receiver is holding or pass interference.
- g. Make ruling whether a pass is complete or not in your area. Move into position to keep the continuing play "boxed in" as if a running play.
- h. Always square to ball at the end of the play. Mark the forward progress with your down field foot.
- i. Watch for:
  - Action of all receivers coming into your area.
  - Legally numbered receivers who were lined up as ineligible going down field. This normally is a "covered up" tight end or slot back on that was not off the line of scrimmage.
  - Immediate throws by the quarterback down the line of scrimmage to determine if the pass is forward or backward. Signal with arm if backward pass.
  - Early blocks or "pick" plays by the receivers.
  - Incomplete shovel pass.
  - Pass interference or face guarding.
  - Receivers going out of bounds voluntarily and returning.
  - Ineligibles down field that may get behind the Umpire.

**Note: You should be responsible for getting to all dead ball spots.**

#### D. Scrimmage Kicks – Including Field Goal Attempts

Position – same as on Scrimmage plays.

##### 1. Punts:

- a. Count the kicking team and make sure they have 11 or fewer players.
- b. Determine whether nearest wide out is on or off the line. Give the proper off the line signal if necessary.
- c. Know numbers of eligible and ineligible receivers being aware that ineligible receivers can be lined up in positions where eligible receivers normally position themselves. This is important in the case of a pass.
- d. Hold momentarily after the snap then move down field covering your side of the field.
- e. Observe blocks in front of the punt receiver(s).
- f. On a blocked punt, retreat to assist the Referee in determining possession.
- g. On a short kick out of bounds in your area, work with the Referee to "chop you in" in order to mark the spot. On a "shanked" kick to your area, be prepared to have the spot in the event the Referee did not see where it went out of bounds.
- h. If the runner comes into your area, move with the runner. Be on the goal line during returns for a Touchdown.
- i. Watch for:
  - Neutral zone violations by the offense or defense.
  - Blocks in front of and around the kick receiver.
  - First touching in your area by the kicking team (mark spot with your beanbag).
  - Fair catch signal by players other than the kick receiver.
  - Illegal blocks after the fair catch signal.

2. Field Goals:

**Position – Take position underneath the goal post upright on your side of the field.**

- a. After kick has crossed the end line, confirm with the Back Judge if the kick was good or not (say "yes, yes, yes" or "no, no, no")
- b. Once decision is made, move two steps into the end zone and give appropriate signal.
- c. Back Judge has responsibility for whistle unless kick rolls into the end zone as a touchback on your side of the field.
- d. On blocked kicks or fake kicks, move to normal scrimmage position and continue to officiate.
- e. Unless otherwise noted, treat as any other scrimmage kick.

E. Try For Point

1. Kick:

Everything is identical as a field goal except:

- Be ready to stop the play if kick try is unsuccessful.

2. Scrimmage Play:

- Same as a scrimmage play except the ball becomes dead if the offensive team fails to score.

F. Goal Line Plays

1. Unless otherwise noted, treat as any other scrimmage play.
2. At the snap, your initial key is now the outside receiver.
3. On plays where the ball is snapped inside the 5-yard line, move to the goal line on the snap and work your way back to the ball.
4. On plays where the ball is snapped between the 10 to the 5-yard line, at the snap move 3 to 5 yards down field. Read the play and stay ahead of the runner, you have the goal line and you must be at the goal line before the runner.
5. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW IF THE BALL HAS BROKEN THE PLANE OF THE GOAL LINE. Signal Touchdown only if you have seen the ball break that plane.
6. On plays where the ball is dead just short of the goal line, move in quickly to get the spot. Do not jump over players. Sell the spot!!
7. On goal line plays (GOING OUT) where the ball is snapped on or inside the 3-yard line, move to the goal line on the snap and officiate up the field. Be prepared to rule on a safety in the event it occurs.
8. On plays where you are screened from the ball, but you can tell whether the runner was down short of the goal line, the Umpire may be able to help. If the Umpire has HANDS TO THE CHEST, he is telling you he has the ball in the end zone. You must still determine whether the runner was down short of the goal line.

**Note: On any goal line play you must be at the goal line before the runner. Read the play so you are standing still at the goal line ready to make the call.**

G. Time-outs

1. Move to a position halfway between the ball and the team box on your sideline – in position to monitor the team's huddle.
2. Watch for illegal conferences. Be sure of proper number of players/attendants in huddle.
3. Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
4. Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.
5. Be alert for signal from the Referee to give your team 15-second warning. Go to team huddle and say, "Coach, ball will be marked ready for play in 15 seconds.
6. Inform the coach of time outs remaining.
7. Be alert of substitutes or attempts to use substitutes for purposes of deception.

## H. Measurements

1. Using your foot, mark the spot on the yard line to be used by the Head Linesman.
2. Do not permit team attendants to enter field.

## I. End of Period and Between Period Procedures

### 1. End of period

- a. When facing clock, know when time expires.
- b. If time expires prior to snap, sound whistle to prevent snap.
- c. If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- d. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
- e. If end of game, leave field together as a crew.

### 2. Between periods (quarters)

- a. Make note of the down, distance, and yard line where the ball will next be put into play as well as the yard line where the clip is placed prior to the chains being moved.
- b. After the chains have been reset, verify that the clip is on the correct yard line.

**Note: Everyone has a job to do during this time. Avoid side conversations and be professional.**

### 3. At half time:

- a. Observe the players as they clear the field.
- b. Secure your teams football.
- c. Repeat escort duties when halftime is completed.

## J. Penalty Administration

### 1. Calling Penalties Live Ball:

- a. Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul.
- b. Drop your penalty marker at the proper yard line.
- c. Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.

### 2. When ball becomes dead:

- a. Give time-out signal
- b. Sound whistle (get Referee's attention by sounding several short, loud blasts)
- c. Verbally report information to Referee. (live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, offensive or defensive foul.
- d. Mentally note whether clock should start on the ready or the snap.

### 3. Administering Penalties:

- a. If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official gets the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
- b. Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.
- c. Hustle to your sideline and report the foul and offending player's number to the coach.
- d. If the coach asks you about administration of the penalty, give him the options.

**Note: If you are not the official who called a foul, cover the flag for that official who did.**

## E. Back Judge Mechanics – 5-Man Crew

### A. On field Pre-game & Escort Duties

1. On field pre-game duties:
  - a. After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
  - b. Check to make sure that the 3-yard marks are correctly marked off. Inform the Umpire of any discrepancies.
  - c. Ensure that neither team, other than the kicker, encroaches over their 45-yard line. The kickers may kick from the opponent's 45-yard line.
  - d. Ensure the kickers kick toward their own goal line.
2. Secondary on field pre-game duties:
  - a. Survey the field and make mental note of field and sideline danger spots.
  - b. Locate and communicate with the ball persons.
  - c. Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during the Referee/Coaches meetings.
3. Escort Duties:
  - a. Go to the dressing room of the team whose bench will be on the press box side. This will usually be the home team. Be there 10 minutes prior to the kick-off.
  - b. Escort the Home Captains to the goal line and on their side of the field.
  - c. Have the Home Captains on the goal line on their side of the field, five minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff for each half.
  - d. Make eye contact and signal the Umpire and move simultaneously to the 50 yard line.
  - e. Introduce the speaking captain to the Referee.

**Note: Know where your team will be located when they leave the field.**

### B. Coin Toss & Free Kicks Duties

1. Coin Toss Duties:
  - a. Remain on the sideline at the 50-yard line
  - b. Ensure the other team members remain on their sideline.
  - c. Once the coin toss is completed, and the captains dismissed, meet at the center of the field with the crew to record toss results and any final instructions from the Referee.
  - d. When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.

#### 2. Free Kick – Duties:

**Position – Press box side of the field (normally that of the receiving team) at the 20-yard line.**

- a. Count the receiving team and make sure they have 11 or fewer players. In the event there are more or less than 11 players on the receiving team, give a strong indication to that team that they need to get to 11. Confirm with the Referee with a “thumbs up” signal.
- b. Wait for the Line Judge to raise arm, raise yours, and make eye contact with the Referee. Lower arm after Referee checks off with you.
- c. Bean bag in hand.
- d. Watch for:
  - Kick going out of bounds - who touched it?
  - Winding clock when ball is legally touched in your area.
  - Muff or fumble.
  - Covering short and on-side kicks.
  - Backward passes and forward hand-offs.
  - Illegal blocks and clips.

- Facemask violations.
  - Fair catch signals.
  - Kick-catching interference.
  - If needed, help the Referee with the runner's momentum carrying him into the end zone on your side.
- e. Pick up the ball carrier in your area and take him to the Line Judge.
  - f. If ball becomes dead deep or in your area move in to spot the ball. Stop clock.
  - g. If ball carrier goes to other side of the field, move cautiously toward the play, watching for ball carrier to reverse his field. Focus on action away from the ball.
  - h. Start the clock when touched by the receivers in bounds.
  - i. Help out the Referee in ruling on balls kicked in your corner of the end zone.
  - j. Echo signals to start and stop the clock.
  - k. In obvious on-side kick situations, move to R's free kick line, beanbag in hand.
  - l. Free Kicks after an accepted free kick penalty:
    - Move to a position 5 yards from your previous free kick position.
    - Help clear the sidelines in your area.
    - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
  - m. Free Kicks after a safety:
    - Line up on the receiving teams 40-yard line.
    - Help clear the sidelines in your area.
    - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
  - n. Free Kicks after an awarded fair catch:
    - Take position under the crossbar.
    - Be prepared to give signal on kicks that are good and no good.
    - Be prepared to move to the goal line on kicks that are short and near the goal line in order to rule on whether the kick may be advanced or is a touchback.

### C. Scrimmage Plays

1. During the offensive huddle:
  - a. Start the 25-second clock on the Referee's ready for play signal.
  - b. Remember to move your hand down indicator and be aware of down, distance, and game clock.
  - c. Think about your keys, crack back blocks, pass interference rules, etc.
2. Pre Snap:
 

**Position – 15 to 20 yards off the line of scrimmage slightly towards the strong side of the offensive formation and always deeper than the deepest back. When the ball is snapped on or inside the 10-yard line, position is on end line.**

  - a. Count defense after the ready for play signal – check-off with the Line Judge and Head Linesman with a “thumbs up” signal if 11 or fewer players.
  - b. If after the ready for play signal there are 12 or more players, and no player is attempting to leave the field, then throw your flag for substitution infraction and stop the clock.
  - c. Be ready to focus on the near tackle to determine run or pass.
  - d. If the 25-second clock has expired, blow your whistle, then throw your flag and stop the clock.
3. At the Snap:
  - a. If you verify more than 11 players on defense after the snap, throw the flag but do not stop play.
  - b. Quickly read the tackle. If he “fires off the line” to block, it probably will be a running play so temporarily hold your position and begin to move back slowly in the event the ball goes outside toward the line of scrimmage. If he sets up to pass block, it probably will be a pass play so be prepared to back up quickly. Do not be observed moving several steps backwards when the play is a short quick run up the middle.

**Note: Avoid focusing totally on the quarterback, key on the wide out on the strong side.**

4. Running Plays:

- a. You are responsible for the goal line except on plays where the ball is snapped inside the 10-yard line. Always be ready to carry the ball carrier to the end zone.
- b. Work inside out on short runs up the middle, moving in and maintaining a presence towards mixed jerseys.
- c. If the play is within the in-bounds lines, hold until the football is dead. Watch for crack back and other illegal blocks. Move up to area of "mixed jerseys". Assist with retrieving the football.
- d. If the play is outside the in-bounds, begin backing up until the ball is dead. Watch for action on the runner after the ball is dead. Move up to area of "mixed jerseys". Assist with retrieving the football only after the dead ball activity is cleared.

5. Passing Plays:

- a. You are responsible for the goal line. Always be ready to go with any receiver to the end zone.
- b. Initial key is the action of the inside receivers.
- c. Always stay deeper than the deepest receiver.
- d. If the pass short towards a sideline, hold until the football is dead. If the play becomes dead out-of-bounds, go directly out-of-bounds and assist in retrieving the football. Watch the action between players while out-of-bounds.
- e. Be aware of when the pass is in the air in order to rule if action on a receiver is holding or pass interference.
- f. Assist flank officials in making rulings on passes to the side zones.
- g. Make eye contact with the Line Judge and Head Linesman on questionable passes on the sideline. Both of you should have the same call on complete and incomplete passes. Talk about this in the pregame. For example, the official looking at the receiver's back will rule on whether his feet were in bounds and the official looking at the front of the receiver will rule on whether a catch was good or not.
- h. If the football is intercepted in your area, move in the direction of the play. Be prepared to rule on momentum inside the 5 yard line. Watch for illegal blocks during the return.
- i. If the pass is complete and is a first down, then signal to stop the clock. If the pass is incomplete, give the signal for the incomplete pass.
- j. Be prepared to relay the football if the pass is incomplete or the pass is completed in the side zones.
- k. Watch for:
  - Illegal blocks by or on the receiver you are watching.
  - Illegal use of hands and holding.
  - Pass interference or face guarding.
  - Dead ball fouls and taunting.

**Note: The flank officials have precedent for getting to all dead ball spots. In the event neither is there to take the spot, then you are responsible for that spot.**

D. Scrimmage Kicks – Including Field Goal Attempts

1. Punts:

**Position - Line up 3 to 5 yards wide just in front of the deepest receiver and 10 yards wide. If the snap is on or inside R's 40-yard line, line up on the goal line.**

- a. Give a visual and verbal fair catch signal to the deep receiver(s).
- b. Count the defense and signal the flank officials with "thumbs up" signal if 11 or fewer players.
- c. When the football is kicked, watch for:

- Fair catch signal by the receiver (valid and legal).
- Interference on the receiver during the catch.

**Note: If the football is kicked over the receiver's head, stay with the receiver and the action around the receiver as well as action in front of the ball.**

- If the play becomes dead in your area, mark the dead ball spot, sound your whistle and give the time-out signal.
- If the kick is kicked out-of-bounds, work with the Referee to "chop you in" in order to mark the spot.
- Watch for and be aware of:
  - First touching by the defensive team
  - Muffs
  - Fumbles, recovery and advancement
  - Other fouls
  - Football going into the end-zone
  - The momentum rule (bean Bag)
- On blocked kicks, pick up the football while remaining focused on players downfield.
- On run-backs, assume normal scrimmage position and continue to officiate.
- Be alert for passes that look like kicks.
- Be prepared to rule on pass interference during fake kicks that turn into pass plays.
- Notify the Umpire of dead ball status (i.e. fair catch or not).
- Mark the spot with a bean-bag where possession of the kick is gained by the receiving team on a kick has crossed the neutral zone expanded.

## 2. Field Goals:

**Position – Take position underneath the goal post upright on the Head Linesman side of the field.**

- After kick has crossed the end line, confirm with the Line Judge if the kick was good or not (say "yes, yes, yes" or "no, no, no")
- Once decision is made, move two steps into the end zone and give appropriate signal.
- You are responsible for blowing the whistle unless kick rolls into the end zone as a touchback on the Line Judge side of the field.
- On blocked kicks or fake kicks, move to normal scrimmage position and continue to officiate.
- Unless otherwise noted, treat as any other scrimmage kick.

## E. Try For Point

### 1. Kick:

Everything is identical as a field goal except:

- Be ready to stop the play if kick try is unsuccessful.

### 2. Scrimmage Play:

- Same as a scrimmage play except the ball becomes dead if the offensive team fails to score.

## F. Goal Line Plays

**Position – On the end line cheating towards the strong side of the offensive formation.**

- At the snap, your initial key is still the inside receiver.
- Once the football is snapped, move to a position to pick up the offensive player who comes into your area.
- Assist flank official (as much as possible) on passes that go into the side zone, near the side line.
- Watch for illegal blocks on the corners and other fouls.
- Treat as any other scrimmage play.

#### G. Time-outs

1. Position yourself near the team huddle in view of the Referee so you can let him know when the 45 seconds is up as well as monitor the team for illegal conferences.
2. Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
3. Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.
4. When 45 seconds is completed, notify Referee with one short blast of your whistle and point at him.

#### H. Measurements

1. Assist in clearing the approximate area of the measurement of all players except a captain from each team.
2. In the event of windy weather or poor field conditions, hold the ball firmly in place until measurement is completed.

#### I. End of Period and Between Period Procedures

1. End of period
  - a. When facing clock, know when time expires.
  - b. If time expires prior to snap, sound whistle to prevent snap.
  - c. If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
  - d. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
  - e. Be aware of down, distance, and yard line.
  - f. Maintain a presence between mixed colors.
  - g. If end of game, leave field together as a crew.
2. Between periods (quarters)
  - a. Make note of the down, distance, and yard line where the ball will next be put into play.
  - b. Time the quarters. When 45 seconds is completed, notify Referee with one short blast of your whistle and point at him.
  - c. Monitor any mixed jerseys and the team huddle on your side of the field.

**Note: Everyone has a job to do during this time. Avoid side conversations and be professional.**

3. At half time:
  - a. Observe the players as they clear the field.
  - b. Repeat escort duties when halftime is completed.

#### J. Penalty Administration

1. Calling Penalties Live Ball:
  - a. Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul.
  - b. Drop you penalty marker at the proper yard line.
  - c. Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.
2. When ball becomes dead:
  - a. Give time-out signal.
  - b. Sound whistle (get Referee's attention by sounding several short, loud blasts).
  - c. Verbally report information to Referee. (live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, offensive or defensive foul.
  - d. Mentally note whether clock should start on the ready or the snap.
3. Administering Penalties:
  - a. If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official get the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
  - b. Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.

**Note: If you are not the official who called a foul, cover the flag for that official who did.**

## **V. 4-Man Mechanics Section (Sub-Varsity)**

The purpose of this section is to document the 4-man mechanics that are expected by our officials. It is not generally intended to replace the mechanics stated in the NFHS Officials manual, but to expand upon them. In the few instances where differences do exist between the NFHS Officials manual and this manual, this manual's mechanics are to be used. These mechanics are to be used in Sub-Varsity games, only. GHSA requires that all Varsity contests be officiated by an on-field crew of 5 or 6 officials in regular season games and crews of 6 on-field officials are required for all playoff games. 4-man on-field crews are required for all Sub-Varsity contests.

### **A. Differences between Varsity and Sub-Varsity Games**

1. Typically Sub-Varsity games use a clock operator provided by the host school. This makes clock management issues especially important and potentially difficult late in each half, especially in close games.

2. Sub-Varsity contests are often officiated by crews of less experienced officials than a typical Varsity contest would be. This is both necessary and proper. Just as the players in Sub-Varsity games are learning the game of football, so are many of the officials learning the craft of officiating during these games. This does NOT mean that any less care should be spent in the effort by the crew. It does mean that the more experienced officials on a crew need to be aware of younger officials and be prepared to assist these newer officials in learning the craft. Local associations are encouraged to assign a good mix of well-experienced and talented officials to Sub-Varsity games along with the less-experienced officials. This is to facilitate both well-officiated Sub-Varsity games and the mentoring of the newer officials assigned to these contests.

3. Required pre-game crew assembly times are controlled by the various associations. However, all associations are expected to require their crews to be present at the game site in time to conduct an adequate pre-game meeting of the crew, allow the Line Judge time to meet with game management, have a complete pre-game meeting between the Referee, Umpire and each head coach and for the Head Linesman to conduct a thorough pre-game briefing of his chain crew. Where needed, additional time may be required for a detailed pre-game briefing of inexperienced clock operators.

4. The length of quarters is different (shorter) for Sub-Varsity games than for Varsity contests. For both 9<sup>th</sup> Grade and JV/B-Team – 10 minute quarters.

5. As of 2009, there is no longer a 9:00 PM curfew for sub-varsity games. If there is a double header sub-varsity scheduled on a week night (Monday through Friday) the first game of the double header must be started not later than 5:30 PM.

6. Because the on-field crews are smaller, the portion of the field assigned for coverage is considerably expanded. This is especially true for wing officials. This provides real challenges for the wings especially on passes thrown beyond the line of scrimmage and on breakaway runs. Good reading of keys and continuous hustle are required to adequately cover many plays using 4-man mechanics.

## **B. Referee Mechanics – 4-Man Crew**

### **A. Pre-Game**

1. Take charge of team captains for team on same side as press box; stand to right side of speaking captain (speaking captain is to your immediate left).
2. On mutual hand signal with Umpire, bring captains to center of field.
3. Conduct coin toss ceremony:
  - Introduce captains.
  - Show captains coin to be used in toss; identify "heads" and "tails" sides.
  - Explain that if coin is dropped during toss, it will be re-tossed.
  - Indicate that visiting captain will have the call of toss. He should make his call of the coin prior to the toss. Verify with the home captain the selection made by the visiting captain before the toss.
  - Toss coin.
  - Give options to winning captain (kick, receive, defer or which goal to defend).
  - If the winning captain elects to defer, signal this immediately by tapping his shoulder and giving defer signal to press box side (signal # 10, see rule book).
  - Give losing captain choice of all remaining options. Continue by alternating choice of remaining options until all options have been selected.
  - Position team captains (assisted by Umpire) so that their backs are toward the goals they will defend.
  - Step to the press box side of the winning captains. Indicate again all options that apply to this team.
  - Bring captains of both teams together before dismissing them to their sidelines. Remind them of their responsibilities as captains to promote good sportsmanship and any other pertinent words of preventive advice that is appropriate.
  - Have captains shake hands again; dismiss them to their respective sidelines.
4. Record all options selected on game card. Relay these to the balance of the crew.
5. Gather with crew for last second words before kickoff.
6. Move to position for free kick (kickoff).

### **B. Running Plays**

1. Position to wide side of field, several yards behind deepest back of Team-A keeping the following in view: the ball, the deepest of the set backs, and the offensive tackle on the opposite side of the line. Exact depth is selected to not interfere with the normal routes likely to be taken by running backs during the play, typically 3-4 yards deeper than the deepest set back.
2. Count Team-A players. Indicate to Umpire with "thumb up" that count is 11 or less. Identify illegal substitution; do not allow ball to become live in a case where 12 or more Team-A players are about to participate in the play.
3. Check wing officials for their auxiliary signals indicating flankers on or off the line of scrimmage, unbalanced line or tight end covered in order to know eligible receivers and whether the formation is legal (rule on legality at snap).
4. Be prepared to rule on typical situations prior to or at the snap: time out called, backs set for one second prior to snap, motion back not moving forward at snap, no more than one man legally in motion at snap, delay of game.
5. At the snap stay with the person the ball is snapped to (typically the quarterback) and stay with him until he is no longer in the play. Stay with the ball carrier as he carries it from sideline to sideline. However, following a typical handoff from the quarterback, be aware of late hits on the quarterback. On an out-of-bounds play the Referee should typically be the second official to the dead ball spot.

6. After snap be prepared to rule on fumbles and recovery, backward passes (with help from flank officials, as needed), illegal blocks and clipping, illegal use of hands and holding, personal fouls against the ball carrier.
7. Officiate from outside in; stay clear of all action in Team-A's backfield. Be especially aware of reverses and scrambling quarterbacks in this regard.
8. Responsibility for the runner remains with the Referee until the runner crosses the neutral zone.
9. Once responsibility for the runner has shifted to another official the Referee reverts to "clean up" mode. He will move to keep the play "boxed in" while watching for action of other players in the vicinity of the ball carrier. This will mean moving past some players and the Umpire, depending on the yardage gained, on plays downfield. Only when there is some reason to expect problems between opposing players should the Referee hold back from making such a downfield move. In that case, only, stay with mixed jerseys until the play has concluded.
10. After the play has ended, be aware of whether a first down has been earned. Be prepared to relay ball to the succeeding spot, as needed. Watch for dead ball fouls.
11. Get ready for the next play. Pacing is important here. Both the Referee's and the rest of his crew's actions should match the pace of the game. Hurriedly marking the ball ready for play in a typical mid-game situation merely runs the unnecessary risk of a delay of game penalty. But late in the game with Team-A driving for a game-saving or -winning score, the pace should be picked up to avoid loss of opportunity for Team-A. Do NOT rush the ready for play; all ordinary communications between crew members such as the next down and player counts must still be accomplished.
12. Once the ball has been marked ready, move quickly to your pre-snap position (See A. 1.). Typically, the Referee should be only a few steps away from his pre-snap position when he blows the ball ready for play.

### C. Passing Plays

1. Same as B. 1.
2. Same as B. 2.
3. Same as B. 3.
4. Same as B. 4.
5. Same as B. 5. However, the passer remains the responsibility of the Referee. The passer must be watched instead of the flight of the ball once initial flight of ball has been determined. Be prepared to rule on:
  - o Roughing the passer
  - o When a near-sack has occurred and ball becomes loose, whether a fumble or incomplete pass has happened
  - o Whether a pass is backward (arm signal: pointing toward Team-A's goal line when true).
  - o Incomplete shovel or "Utah" pass
  - o Intentional grounding (this is Referee's call, alone)
  - o Deflections of pass by defense (hand signal #11, see rule book)
    - Verbally communicate "pass is away" when passer has released ball.
6. Same as B. 6.
7. Same as B. 7.
8. After the play has ended, be aware of whether a first down has been earned. In the case of a completed pass, move to the succeeding spot, barring a penalty. In the case of an incomplete forward pass, move to the previous spot. Watch for dead ball fouls.
9. Same as B. 11.
10. Same as B. 12.

#### D. Goal Line Play.

1. Same pre-snap positioning as any ordinary scrimmage play.
2. Do not give touchdown signal except as echo of another official's signal and then only if no foul has occurred.

#### E. Scrimmage Kick (punt).

1. Pre-snap position is altered to the kicking leg side of the punter.
2. Give Umpire the center protection signal (signal # 19, see rule book). Continue with signal until Umpire repeats it back. This is to be sure he understands this. Both the Referee and Umpire should make Team-B players verbally aware of center protection.
3. On blocked punt be prepared to rule on possession.
4. Be alert for run or pass. If this happens, simply officiate the play appropriately to the type of play run.
5. Roughing the kicker is the Referee's call all the way. Watch for action leading up to the punt that would cause or avoid a roughing call to be made. Continue to watch the punter until he has had a chance to regain his balance following the kick. This means not watching the flight of the ball downfield, but watching the punter, instead.
6. Once punter has regained his balance, move slowly downfield behind Umpire operating in "clean up mode" for fouls away from ball.
7. On long returns, pick up runner and carry him all the way. Work an inside-out technique as you follow the runner downfield. Take as much care as possible to not block any angles of pursuing Team-K players.
8. On normal return situations be alert for dead ball fouls and taunting.
9. Move to succeeding spot. Determine who is team in possession, if there was a fair catch and whether ball became dead in- or out-of-bounds.
10. Determine if there were any penalties during play. Communicate with Head Linesman whether to move chains or not.

#### F. Kick try (PAT) and Field Goal attempt, scrimmage line 15 yard line or less.

1. The Referee is responsible for determining whether the ball passed between the uprights of the goal.
2. Look to the Line Judge in cases where it is questionable whether the ball was over the cross bar. If it was under, the Line Judge show signal no good; if he so indicates, echo his call. If no call from the Line Judge, signal good (signal #5, see rule book) or no good (signal #10, see rule book), as appropriate to whether ball passed between uprights (or uprights extended).

#### G. Kick try (PAT) and Field Goal attempt, scrimmage line outside 15 yard line.

1. The Referee is responsible for determining roughing of the kicker and holder.
2. Echo ruling of the Line Judge who has the good / no good call all the way.

#### H. Kickoff or Free Kick

1. Position as the deepest official (near R's 5 or 10-yard line) and on the press box side of the field (opposite the chains). This is to give the best "box" of officials possible prior to the kick.

## I. Penalty Administration

1. Conference with crew members to verify what was called, determining double and multiple foul situations, if any.
2. Give preliminary signal of all fouls to press box side, only.
3. Offer options to offended team captain. Explain the penalty and its effect on down and distance (and possession) in case of enforcement or non-enforcement.
4. Give captain reasonable time to make up his mind, including looking to sideline for coaching guidance. Have captain select his option. Once he has selected his option, that is the decision; he may not later change his option. It is permissible in obvious enforcement situations to offer the offended team a summary and "slanted" option. For example in a dead ball encroachment, you might offer the option to the captain as: "You do want a free five yards, don't you?"
5. Once options have been selected, move to vicinity of succeeding spot. Repeat signals for all penalties and, if declined, signal that as well. If line to gain has been reached, indicate first down.
6. Mark ball ready for play, as normal to pace of the game at that point.

## J. Measurements

1. The Referee rules on whether line to gain was reached.
2. Position yourself so that the chains do not have to be passed through your position to be stretched.
3. Once the Umpire has the chains stretched, look at the position of the ball relative to the rod. If the most downfield part of the ball is equal to or past the inside of the rod (figuratively "touching" the rod), it is a first down. If the ball is not this far advanced. The next down is that which would next be by rule. In the case of a first down for either team in this circumstance, the signal for first down should be made quickly, forcefully and in the correct direction.
4. In the case of extremely short distances to go in a side zone, hold the chain at the foremost point of the ball as the chain is moved back to the hash mark; then place the ball accordingly.

## K. Time Outs

1. Signal time out (signal #3, see rule book) and indicate with both hands which team the time out is to be charged to or, alternately, indicate that it is an official's time out.
2. In the case of a charged time out, move to a spot between the ball and offensive huddle. Record the time and quarter of the time out and relay that information, along with remaining times out for both teams, to all crew members.
3. In the case of an official's time out, move as appropriate to deal with the situation which caused the time out to be called. Official's time outs may last as long as needed to deal with the situation in question. Charged times out have a total duration of 60 seconds.
4. When 45 seconds have expired in a charged time out, signal Head Linesman and Line Judge to announce to both teams "15 seconds to ready." This is to let any coaches on the field know it is time for them to begin to move to the sidelines.
5. At the expiration of the full 60 seconds, blow the ball ready for play. The clock will start on the snap, if in a timed down period.
6. Move to your pre-snap position appropriate to the anticipated play.

#### L. End of Period

1. Verify that there are no penalties or requested conferences which might potentially extend the period.
2. Move to the succeeding spot. In the case of end of 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> periods, take care that spot is preserved. In case of end of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> periods, this isn't important.
3. Hold ball overhead, facing press box (signal #14 see rule book).

#### M. Between Periods (1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>)

1. Meet with Umpire at the ball.
2. Verify with him the down, distance, yard line, team in possession and direction of movement ("out" if on own side of midfield, "in" if beyond midfield).
3. Hand the ball to the Umpire after having held it over your head.
4. Move to the appropriate spot (diagonally positioning ball that the same yard line to preserve the position of the ball to the same relatively to the left and right side of Team-A) at the opposite end of the field.

#### N. Between Halves.

1. Signal ECO to start time for half time.
2. Leave the field with the rest of the crew.

## C. Umpire Mechanics – 4-Man Crew

### A. Pre-Game

1. Obtain balls
2. Take charge of team captains for team opposite press box.
3. Stand on opposite end of captains' line from Referee. Position talking captain closest to the Referee (opposite end of line from you to your left).
4. On mutual hand signal with Referee, bring captains to center of field.
5. After the coin toss and selection of options, record with referee who won toss and which options were selected.
6. Gather with crew for last second words before kickoff.
7. Move to position for free kick (kickoff).

### B. Running Plays

1. Position over ball until Referee gives ready-for-play signal.
2. Following ready-for-play, position approximately nose up on the ball, 3 to 8 yards behind defensive line (Team-B) varying position to keep snap in view. (Note position of ball relative to inbounds markers "hash marks." In case of penalties, ball will need to be spotted in the same relative position to the hash marks after penalty administration.)
3. Do NOT obstruct views of either linebackers or defensive backs. Move as needed to keep from obstructing their view. Vary position between plays so that offense (Team-A) cannot key on you in any way.
4. Count Team-A players. Indicate to Referee with "thumbs up" that count is 11 or less. Help identify illegal substitution; do not allow ball to become live in case where 12 or more Team-A players are about to participate in the play.
5. At snap, check for illegal formation, snap interference, false snap, false start and illegal equipment (typically mouthpiece) infractions. Initially focus on the blocks of the center and the adjacent guards.
6. After snap, use linemen's blocks for key to pass or run. Observe blocking in free blocking zone. Be aware of when free blocking zone conditions have evaporated.
7. As play progresses, shift focus to point of attack. If play moves wide, move in direction of play, without moving outside inbounds markers. Be alert for blocks around the runner. Do NOT sound whistle unless covering official is out of position; runner is NOT your responsibility; wingmen ARE responsible for marking spot. Always work using in "inside out" technique at the Umpire position. (Note this is exactly backward of ALL the other official's techniques; every other position works "outside in.")
8. If play is at you, react and adjust ahead and laterally away from play. Do NOT move backwards from play. Try not to get in middle of play or to get blasted by blocker from your blind side.
9. Be aware of and check for illegal block outside of free blocking zone as well as clips, holding, illegal use of hands. Concentrate on area around runner and at point of attack. In other words, look for infractions which may impact the play by giving unfair advantage to one team or another.
10. Cover action at point of attack and then action behind play as play moves past you. You are the last official downfield on a long gain.
11. If fumble, bean bag yard line where ball became loose. Then be alert to declare which team gains possession. If you are covering official when ball becomes dead: If Team-A recovered, signal as appropriate for next down. If Team-B recovered, stop clock and signal first down for Team-B.
12. In preparing for next down, participate in ball relay almost always as the spotting official. Spot ball between inbounds marks. When spotting ball, square body between nearest yard lines (at 90 degree angle to yard lines and parallel to side lines). Face wingman whose spot you are using as you spot ball. Ball is spotted with the downfield tip of ball on

- the wingman's indicated spot. Once ball is spotted, face referee; indicate new down by showing new down count on one hand (1 finger – 1<sup>st</sup> down, 2 fingers – 2<sup>nd</sup> down, 3 fingers – 3<sup>rd</sup> down, clinched fist – 4<sup>th</sup> down).
13. Maintain control of ball at its spot until Referee blows ball ready-for-play. Move into position as in step A. 2. Be prepared to complete the play cycle for the next down.

### C. Passing Plays

1. Same as B. 1.
2. Same as B. 2.
3. Same as B. 3.
4. Same as B. 4.
5. Same as B. 5.
6. Same as B. 6.
7. When you know it is a pass and not a running play, move up to line of scrimmage / neutral zone. Watch for illegal blocks outside free blocking zone. Be aware of this and holding and illegal use of hands while you are moving toward line of scrimmage.
8. If a moving pocket, move in direction of play, but remain at line of scrimmage / in neutral zone.
9. When pass is thrown, watch for tipped ball. If tipped by Team-B, give signal immediately (signal 11). If touched illegally by Team-A, place flag on yard line where illegal touching occurred and allow play to continue.
10. After pass is thrown, in addition to ruling on legal/illegal touching also be prepared to rule on illegal forward pass and ineligible Team-A player downfield.
11. On "pop passes," turn toward wingman and help wingman with call (complete or incomplete) and progress.
12. Same as B. 12.
13. Same as B. 13.

### D. Goal Line Play.

1. Position near goal line and cover same as any scrimmage play.
2. Ensure runner does not thrust ball forward after it is declared dead.

#### **Note:**

- **Look to wing for TD signal.**
- **If you think runner has scored, but wings have not signaled, assist by signaling this with HANDS TO THE CHEST. You are saying that you have the ball in the end zone with this signal. It is still up to the wings to determine if the runner was down before the ball crossed the goal line.**
- **Signal TD when you are the ONLY official CERTAIN that the runner has scored.**

### E. Scrimmage Kick (punt).

1. Spot ball as normal.
2. Count Team-K and position 4-7 yards deep; but always to the Line Judge's side of the field (this is due to the Line Judge's shift in position to cover downfield in the vicinity of where the catch of the kick is anticipated).
3. Look for Referee's center protection auxiliary signal. Repeat the signal back to him so he knows you're in the game.
4. At snap, be looking for illegal formation, holding, illegal use of hands, illegal blocking outside free blocking zone, illegal contact on center (while center protection is in effect).
5. Be alert for run or pass. If this happens, simply officiate the play appropriately to the type of play run.
6. Help with short, blocked kick and determine if kicked ball crosses neutral zone.

7. Move to position to follow play (remember Line Judge's side of field is your primary area of responsibility – work this area inside out), watching action around ball. Pick up return man, if necessary, spot return progress and help relay ball to spot.

F. Kick try (PAT) and Field Goal attempt, scrimmage line 15 yard line or less.

1. Same as scrimmage kick.

G. Kick try (PAT) and Field Goal attempt, scrimmage line outside 15 yard line.

1. Same as scrimmage kick.

H. Kickoff or Free Kick

1. Position yourself around 20 yard line on Head Linesman's (chains) side of field.
2. Count Team-R and clear sidelines in your area.
3. Raise hand (with beanbag in it) indicating to Referee that you are prepared for the "ready signal" to be given.
4. After kick, start clock if ball is touched in your area of coverage by Team-R. First touching by Team-K does NOT start the clock.
5. Pick up runner as he moves into your area of coverage. Follow play; mark spot at play's end; stop clock.
6. If first touching by Team-K, mark spot with bean bag (on the yard line where it occurred); play continues on until ball becomes dead by rule.
7. If ball travels out of bounds, the following applies:
  - o If in player possession, mark spot and stop clock.
  - o Beanbag out-of-bounds spot if touched by Team-R inbounds.
  - o Penalty flag if not touched by Team-R inbounds.
8. Coverage technique: Stay on side line if play is to your side, trail play if action is away from you.
9. Observe blocks and other action away from ball when your responsibility is not covering the runner.
10. At end of play move to spot ball.

I. Penalty Enforcement

1. Secure ball.
2. Go to enforcement spot; march off distance from that spot. (Know what the distance penalty is before you start your march!) Note: On a properly marked field, it should not be necessary to mark distance between yard lines except for the first and last yards of a penalty.
3. Spot ball and proceed with next down, including any adjustment that may have resulted from the penalty's having been enforced.
4. If penalty is declined, simply spot ball and proceed as normal.

J. Measurements

1. Pre-position yourself near the ball, toward the chain side of the ball. There is NO need for the chains to move past the ball toward the press box side of the field; do not let chains move to the press box side of the ball.
2. Take the forward rod of the chain set from the member of the chain gang. Wait at your spot for him/her to bring the rod to you!
3. After Head Linesman has indicated that he has the chain positioned for the measurement to begin, pull the rod forward to tighten the chain.

4. Hold the rod in this position near the ball until referee makes his decision.
5. Hand the rod back to the chain gang member and proceed with next down. However, if measurement is in a side zone and the line-to-gain is not made, hold the chain at the forward point of the ball and move to hash mark to set the ball in its exact relationship to the line-to-gain before releasing the chains back to the sideline.

#### K. Time Outs

1. Maintain ball position (stand over ball) and watch Team-A for Referee.
2. If injury time out, make sure no one is coaching teams. (Note: for an extended injury time out, Referee may decide to make other disposition of the teams. In that case Referee's decision would apply.)
3. On charged time outs, with other members of the crew, share the time of the time out, which team it is charged to and the REMAINING time outs available to each team.

#### L. End of Period

1. When facing clock, know when time expires.
2. Do NOT allow a play to begin, if time expires leading up to the ball's becoming live. (Note: There is an exception to allowing a play when time has expired in conjunction with the enforcement of a penalty.) If stopping play from starting, sound whistle loudly.

#### M. Between Periods (1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>)

1. Hand ball to Referee so that he can signal end-of-period. Maintain spot while Referee is doing this. Retrieve ball from Referee and return it to spot.
2. Record down, distance, yard line, direction of movement ("going in", "going out") and which team is in possession of ball. (Note: The position of ball should be marked with good precision relative to the nearest yard line available prior to movement.)
3. Move to other end of field and spot ball appropriately.
4. Be sure that teams change sides of ball (direction of travel for offense).

#### N. Between Halves

1. Move with balance of crew, as needed, to keep teams separated as they leave the field for half-time break.
2. Following half-time intermission, take charge of team captains for team opposite press box.
3. On mutual hand signal with Referee, bring captains to the center of field.
4. After selection of second half options, gather with for last second words before kickoff.
5. Move to position for free kick (kickoff).

#### O. General

1. On ordinary scrimmage plays, another official is almost always responsible for the runner. ANY inadvertent whistle by any official is bad; for an Umpire, there is just no excuse for this happening.
2. For most live ball fouls the yard line at which a foul occurred is the important aspect. It is not necessary to throw a flag on the exact point of the foul. It is necessary to know at what yard line the foul occurred. Get your flag as close to the yard line as you can and still continue to officiate.
3. The Umpire is the arbiter of equipment legality. He rules on all player equipment issues and is responsible for approval of balls to be used during the game.

## D. Head Linesman Mechanics – 4-Man Crew

### A. Pre-Game

1. Position is on the side of the field opposite the press box (chains side).
2. Move out with captains opposite the Umpire.
3. Stop at the hash mark and maintain control of sideline from that point. In cases where there is time only to come out with the captains or brief the chain crew, select briefing the chain crew.
4. Record the results of the coin toss and options selected.
5. Meet a center of field for last minute get together with rest of the crew before the start of the game.

### B. Running Plays

1. Position along line of scrimmage at least 9 yards outside the widest player on the chains side of the field (opposite side from press box). "Wider is better." In short yardage situations, may "pinch in" tighter than this. In situations where the 9 yard split cannot be obtained due to reaching the sideline, position yourself on the sideline.
2. Prior to snap, a relaxed and semi-upright posture should be taken, with feet set approximately shoulder width apart. The idea is to be able to move easily but not too quickly at the snap. The ball should be centered between the legs.
3. Count players for defense. Share count with Line Judge. When count is eleven or less the signal is a "thumbs up". Do not allow ball to become alive if count is greater than eleven. Be aware of number of linemen on offense; minimum of 7 is required to be legal at the snap.
4. Prior to snap be prepared to rule on infractions occurring from Team-A's center to your sideline. Typical pre-snap penalties are false starts and encroachment (lining up in neutral zone) by offensive linemen and snap infractions by the center. For the defense, encroachment is the most common penalty.
5. Determine whether nearest wide out is on or off the line. If the widest man in the offensive formation is off the line of scrimmage, signal by extending your arm straight out toward the offensive backfield with your fist clenched. This is known as "punching him back". Hold the signal until the ball is snapped or the receiver goes in motion.
6. You are responsible for a player in motion going away from you. If he reverses, he is still your responsibility. It may be necessary to take a step toward the offensive backfield to watch the man in motion as long as this does not take away from your ability to watch the neutral zone.
7. Know the number of eligible receivers on your side and the legal position of slot-backs and wide-outs. Be aware that a tight end might be "covered up" (and therefore ineligible).
8. If you have an unbalanced line (any number except 3 on your side of the center), signal the opposite wing official by placing your clenched fist over your chest.
9. Make sure of no neutral zone violations by the offense or defense.
10. Never let a player line up behind you.
11. At snap, read block of the tackle on your side to determine whether play is a pass or run.
12. Focus on initial action around outside defenders. Watch for holding at point of attack, crack back blocks.
13. If play moves toward you, backpedal and give ground toward offense to allow all players to move inside of you. The cardinal sin for a flank official is for any player to get behind you. Always use an outside-in technique. In an emergency when the play is getting on top of you, the fastest way to allow is to move at something slightly greater than a 90 degree angle from the deepest man moving in your direction. As the play passes by you, turn and move down the outside of action (slightly) trailing action, taking care to stay outside. Once you have taken the runner in your zone, he is yours all the way to the end zone unless he crosses all the way into the other side of the field.

14. On plays up the middle, move with the ball.
15. On plays away from you drift downfield with the play gradually moving in to keep the play boxed in.
16. When the runner is down, sound whistle and mark forward progress with your downfield foot. For plays up the middle move in until you encounter the mixture of players. In all moves to mark the spot, you should "square in" to the spot.
17. When play ends be aware of dead ball fouls and taunting. Be ready to relay ball from side zone to inbounds marker, as needed. On out-of-bounds plays at the sideline, flank officials are responsible for obtaining the out-of-bounds spot watching for action that continues out of the field of play.

### C. Passing Plays

1. Same as B. 1.
2. Same as B. 2.
3. Same as B. 3.
4. Same as B. 4.
5. Same as B. 5.
6. Same as B. 6.
7. Same as B. 7.
8. Same as B. 8.
9. Same as B. 9.
10. Same as B.10.
11. Same as B.11. If a "snap pass" is made, the wing official in the direction of the pass is responsible for judging whether a pass thrown behind the LOS is forward or backward.
12. Same as B.12. But upon reading the blocking keys move downfield with the deepest receiver who comes out on your side.
13. Be aware of when the ball is in the air, blocks on or by receivers, illegal use of hands and holding, ineligible downfield, pass interference (including faceguarding), and receivers going out of bounds voluntarily and returning to the field during the current play. On passes near the sideline be aware of whether possession was gained while in the field of play or whether receiver would have come down inbounds had it not been for contact by opponent forcing him out.
14. When the ball is dead, sound whistle. Do not signal when a catch is made. There is no signal for this in high school ball. In the case of an incomplete pass in your zone of responsibility, do signal this by coming to a stop and using signal # 10 twice, followed by signal # 3 twice, followed by relay of ball back to previous spot, as needed.
15. When play ends be aware of dead ball fouls and taunting. Be ready to relay ball from side zone to inbounds marker, as needed. On out-of-bounds plays at the sideline, flank officials are responsible for obtaining the out-of-bounds spot watching for action that continues out of the field of play.

### D. Goal Line Play.

1. On snaps between 10- and 5-yard lines (going in) release slowly downfield and stay ahead of runner to goal line.
2. On snaps inside 5-yard line release to goal line and work back toward ball. Be aware of first downs insides 5-yard line; this may be the most important spot (for example, 4<sup>th</sup> and 1 from the 5-yard line, the most likely play is a short dive where a spot at or near the 4-yard line is more important than a spot around the 2-yard line).
3. Be prepared to rule instantly when ball breaks goal line plane in player possession.
4. On plays where you are screened from the ball, but you can tell whether the runner was down short of the goal line, the Umpire may be able to help. If the Umpire has HANDS TO THE CHEST, he is telling you he has the ball in the end zone. You must still determine whether the runner was down short of the goal line.

E. Scrimmage Kick (punt).

1. Responsibility for calling the entire line of scrimmage is taken by the Head Linesman as the Line Judge moves into position to cover the anticipated kick receiver.
2. Hold position after snap until kick has passed neutral zone, then release downfield to cover anticipated return.

F. Kick try (PAT) and Field Goal attempt, scrimmage line 15 yard line or less.

1. Head Linesman is responsible for kicker and holder. Be aware of roughing either of these players as well as handling of the ball by holder (especially on an errant snap) which could result in continuation or ending of the play depending on action of the holder.

G. Kick try (PAT) and Field Goal attempt, scrimmage line outside 15 yard line.

1. Head Linesman is responsible for the entire line of scrimmage in the same way as is normal on a punt.

H. Kickoff or Free Kick

1. Head Linesman is responsible for Team-K.
2. Move to the center of the field at Team-R's free kick line and give the ball to the kicker.
3. The kicker may place the ball at any point between the hash marks along the free kick line on a legal kicking tee and / or the ball may be held by one of his teammates.
4. In the case of a free kick, the kicker may also elect to put the ball into play by punting or drop kicking.
5. Remind all players to have their mouthpieces in and to not cross the free kick line until the ball has been kicked. Caution kicker not to kick ball until Referee has signaled ready for play with his whistle.
6. Count Team-K players; in cases where there are too many players, tell the kicker to count his players. Do not allow the ball to become alive with too many players on field for Team-K. As a courtesy, you may offer the same "count your players" advice when too few are on field; however, if Team-K so elects they may place the ball in play with too few players.
7. Remain with the kicker until communicating unobtrusively with the Line Judge that he has the Team-R ready to receive. Then turn and run to your sideline.
8. Take a position straddling the free kick line. Remove your bean bag and hold it above your head to show the Referee that you and Team-K are prepared for the ready for play signal. Continue to hold the bean bag above your head until ready for play is blown by Referee.
9. At the kick be aware of encroachment by any Team-K players. This is a dead ball foul if it occurs.
10. Head Linesman is responsible for marking spots of first touching with bean bag, and for illegal contact on kicker until kicker has proceeded downfield for a minimum of 5 yards. Also responsible for marking short kicks out of bounds. If not touched inbounds by Team-R, free kicks out-of-bounds are flagged as a penalty on Team-K.
11. Be aware of illegal blocks, clipping, illegal use of hands and holding.
12. On long returns, pickup runner at about midfield and proceed with him all the way down the field.

## I. Penalty Enforcement

1. Head Linesman must communicate with the chain crew what is happening and the exact actions he needs to have taken by any or all of the members. This is best done verbally.
2. Communicate with your sideline verbally what the penalty was and on whom it was called.
3. Communicate with other members of the officiating crew what the resulting down is after penalty enforcement.

## J. Measurements

1. Have the box man move the box to the position of the forward rod.
2. Move quickly to the sideline and clip the chain with a clip disk (or flag if no clip disk is available) on the (5 or 10) yard line most distant from the ball.
3. Once clipped, move out with the two people holding the rods to the position being marked for you by the Line Judge.
4. Place the chain down at that spot with the clip in the same position it was relative to the (5 or 10) yard line on the sideline. The Umpire will take control of the front rod. The back rod should be allowed to be held upright but slack.
5. In the case of a short condition in a side zone, be prepared to move the chains in to the hash mark for the ball to be precisely spotted.
6. In the case of a measurement where line to gain was not reached, return chains to sideline setting them via the clip and marking spot for box as appropriate.
7. In the case of a first down, simply move the chains back to the sideline and mark there as any other first down.
8. Unclip the chain.

## K. Time Outs

1. Record the time and quarter and which team is charged for charged times out.
2. Communicate this with other crew members to be sure all members agree.
3. Take position midway between position of ball and the team box on your side.
4. Control legal participation during any team conferences that may occur.
5. Relay 15 second warning from Referee when time out is to expire.
6. Inform the coach of how many time outs he has remaining.
7. When the time out has ended, return to normal position.

## L. End of Period

1. See items L and M, below.

## M. Between Periods (1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>)

1. Record down, distance, direction and team possession.
2. Clip chain at (5 or 10) yard line closest to back rod.
3. Instruct rod men to reverse ends.
4. Move to corresponding (5 or 10) yard line on opposite side of midfield.
5. Have rod men stretch chains away from the clip.
6. Have box man set up on ball.
7. Verify that placement matches step L. 1.
8. Unclip chain.

#### N. Between Halves.

1. Be prepared to keep teams separated from each other as they leave the field.
2. Instruct chain crew when to return for 2<sup>nd</sup> half.
3. Deal with any issues from the first half and / or answer any questions from members of the chain crew.

#### O. Working with the Chain Crew

1. At the sub-varsity, you will be very lucky if you ever have a thoroughly experienced chain crew. Typically, chain crew members are students pressed into service at the last moment by the head coach of the home team who is responsible for providing the chain crew. It is imperative that all chain crews, both experienced and inexperienced, receive a thorough briefing from the Head Linesman before the start of the game. This is both to be sure they know how to handle the chains safely and to help insure a fair and effective administration of the game.
2. Before briefing the chain crew, examine the rods and chains. Correct any apparent unsafe conditions before play is allowed to begin. However, any inaccuracy in the length of the chain will be treated the same as any inaccuracy in marking of the field. We will play it as we find it.
3. Generally speaking the most experienced member of the chain crew should be given the task of handling the down marker or "box."
4. The pre-game briefing should include the following points:
  - Safety is the most important concern. On any action near the sideline on the chains, the chains and the down marker should be laid flat on the ground and the holders should back away from the field of play. When the play has concluded, we will put the chains and box back as closely as possible to their previous positions, as necessary.
  - The chain crew is the responsibility of the Head Linesman and no other official. Explain that neither the chains nor the box are to be moved until explicitly requested by the Head Linesman. The crew should be told to ignore the request of the Head Linesman to move either the box or the chains if any of them see a penalty flag thrown. The most common error for chain crews is moving too soon. Simple, clear and unobtrusive signals should be given to both the "box man" and the other chain crew members so that they will know when they are being asked to move. In the case of the next down in a series, this may be no more than the Head Linesman indicating with his fingers that the next down is to be put on the box.
  - No coaching is allowed from the chain crew. They must accept that for the duration of the game they are part of the officiating staff and are, therefore, neutrals. It is usually a good idea to get onto a first name basis with each of the crew members right away. This will foster a sense of teamwork that is essential to a smoothly running operation.
  - Demonstrations of how the Head Linesman will make his signals and requests for movement should be given so that these are thoroughly understood before the start of play. Similarly, the Head Linesman should demonstrate effective handling of the chains and box in first down situations so that the ball may be marked ready for play as quickly as possible in these situations.
  - Briefly explain what will be happening at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters. But avoid giving a long briefing on these procedures. This would only cause unnecessary confusion at pre-game time.
5. The Head Linesman should ideally come all the way to the sideline to mark the succeeding spot for the box man on every reset of the box.
6. In cases where there is misconduct by any or all chain crew members, this can usually be handled by reminding them politely of their duties. If repeated misconduct occurs and you

feel a chain crew member must be replaced, go to the Referee. He will handle with the head coach of the home team to make a replacement on the chain crew. If this does occur, this new person must be given a safety briefing before the game is allowed to continue.

#### P. General

1. The Head Linesman should always work an outside-in technique. No player should ever be behind the Head Linesman on the field of play during a live ball situation. Except as specifically noted otherwise, he should keep his back to the sideline and not turn his back on the field of play. Principle exceptions are when coming off the field for a free kick and when observing action outside the field of play as action moves across the sideline at the end of a play. When adjusting position for a split back or end coming out of the offensive huddle, he should backpedal to get his 9 yard separation.
2. For most forward progress situations a flank official will be the spotting official. Always "square-in" on the ball. Mark progress with the downfield foot. The field is divided in half by an imaginary line that splits the goalposts. Each flank official is responsible for marking forward progress on his side of this line. The opposite official should endeavor to "mirror" the mark of the covering official on the opposite side of the field. In cases near the imaginary line or in cases where the usually covering official is screened, the opposite side official may take the lead in establishing forward progress. In ambiguous cases, the most distant flank official should yield immediately to the spot of the nearest flank official. There is no place on the field for arguments on spotting the ball between flank officials.

## **E. Line Judge Mechanics – 4-Man Crew**

### **A. Pre-Game**

1. Position is on the press box side of the field.
2. Move out with captains opposite the Referee.
3. Stop at the hash mark and maintain control of sideline from that point.
4. Record the results of the coin toss and options selected.
5. Meet a center of field for last minute get together with rest of the crew before the start of the game.

### **B. Running Plays**

1. Position along line of scrimmage at least 9 yards outside the widest player on the opposite side of the field from the chains. "Wider is better." In short yardage situations, may "pinch in" tighter than this. In situations where the 9 yard split cannot be obtained due to reaching the sideline, position yourself on the sideline.
2. Prior to snap, a relaxed and semi-upright posture should be taken, with feet set approximately shoulder width apart. The idea is to be able to move easily but not too quickly at the snap. The ball should be centered between the legs.
3. Count players for defense. Share count with the Head Linesman. When count is eleven or less the signal is a "thumbs up". Do not allow ball to become alive if count is greater than eleven. Note that this counting responsibility is different from that required with a 6-Man crew.
4. Prior to snap be prepared to rule on infractions occurring from Team-A's center to your sideline. Typical pre-snap penalties are false starts and encroachment (lining up in neutral zone) by offensive linemen and snap infractions by the center. For the defense, encroachment is the most common penalty.
5. Determine whether nearest wide out is on or off the line. If the widest man in the offensive formation is off the line of scrimmage, signal by extending your arm straight out toward the offensive backfield with your fist clenched. This is known as "punching him back". Hold the signal until the ball is snapped or the receiver goes in motion.
6. You are responsible for a player in motion going away from you. If he reverses, he is still your responsibility. It may be necessary to take a step toward the offensive backfield to watch the man in motion as long as this does not take away from your ability to watch the neutral zone.
7. Know the number of eligible receivers on your side and the legal position of slot-backs and wide-outs. Be aware that a tight end might be "covered up" (and therefore ineligible).
8. If you have an unbalanced line (any number except 3 on your side of the center), signal the opposite wing official by placing your clenched fist over your chest.
9. Make sure of no neutral zone violations by the offense or defense.
10. Never let a player line up behind you.
11. At snap, read block of the tackle on your side to determine whether play is a pass or run.
12. Focus on initial action around outside defenders. Watch for holding at point of attack, crack back blocks.
13. If play moves toward you, backpedal and give ground toward offense to allow all players to move inside of you. The cardinal sin for a flank official is for any player to get behind you. Always use an outside-in technique. In an emergency when the play is getting on top of you, the fastest way to allow is to move at something slightly greater than a 90 degree angle from the deepest man moving in your direction. As the play passes by you, turn and move down the outside of action slightly trailing action, taking care to stay outside. Once you have taken the runner in your zone, he is yours all the way to the end zone unless he crosses all the way into the other side of the field.
14. On plays up the middle, move with the ball.

15. On plays away from you drift downfield with the play gradually moving in to keep the play boxed in.
16. When the runner is down, sound whistle and mark forward progress with your downfield foot. For plays up the middle move in until you encounter the mixture of players. In all moves to mark the spot, you should "square in" to the spot.
17. When play ends be aware of dead ball fouls and taunting. Be ready to relay ball from side zone to inbounds marker, as needed. On out-of-bounds plays at the sideline, flank officials are responsible for obtaining the out-of-bounds spot watching for action that continues out of the field of play.

### C. Passing Plays

1. Same as B. 1.
2. Same as B. 2.
3. Same as B. 3.
4. Same as B. 4.
5. Same as B. 5.
6. Same as B. 6.
7. Same as B. 7.
8. Same as B. 8.
9. Same as B. 9.
10. Same as B.10.
11. Same as B.11. If a "snap pass" is made, the wing official in the direction of the pass is responsible for judging whether a pass thrown behind the LOS is forward or backward.
12. Same as B.12. But upon reading the blocking keys move downfield with the deepest receiver who comes out on your side.
13. Be aware of when the ball is in the air, blocks on or by receivers, illegal use of hands and holding, ineligible downfield, pass interference (including face guarding), and receivers going out of bounds voluntarily and returning to the field during the current play. On passes near the sideline be aware of whether possession was gained while in the field of play or whether receiver would have come down inbounds had it not been for contact by opponent forcing him out.
14. When the ball is dead, sound whistle. Do not signal when a catch is made. There is no signal for this in high school ball. In the case of an incomplete pass in your zone of responsibility, do signal this by coming to a stop and using signal # 10 twice, followed by signal # 3 twice, followed by relay of ball back to previous spot, as needed.
15. When play ends be aware of dead ball fouls and taunting. Be ready to relay ball from side zone to inbounds marker, as needed. On out-of-bounds plays at the sideline, flank officials are responsible for obtaining the out-of-bounds spot watching for action that continues out of the field of play.

### D. Goal Line Play.

1. On snaps between 10- and 5-yard lines (going in) release slowly downfield and stay ahead of runner to goal line.
2. On snaps inside 5-yard line release to goal line and work back toward ball. Be aware of first downs insides 5-yard line; this may be the most important spot (for example, 4<sup>th</sup> and 1 from the 5-yard line, the most likely play is a short dive where a spot at or near the 4-yard line is more important than a spot around the 2-yard line).
3. Be prepared to rule instantly when ball breaks goal line plane in player possession.
4. On plays where you are screened from the ball, but you can tell whether the runner was down short of the goal line, the Umpire may be able to help. If the Umpire has HANDS TO THE CHEST, he is telling you he has the ball in the end zone. You must still determine whether the runner was down short of the goal line.

E. Scrimmage Kick (punt).

1. Upon detection of a situation where a punt is likely (typically a 4<sup>th</sup> down), the Line Judge drops back to cover the likely receiver of the punt. Position several yards in front of the deepest receiver out on the field of play, but maintaining a position that allows you to continue to work an outside-in technique.
2. Be sure receiver(s) understand(s) how to call a fair catch, if they want to.
3. Be prepared to rule on catch, fair catch (with possible illegal contact by Team-K or illegal signals by Team-R), muff or fumble. For punts near Team-R's goal line, be prepared to rule on Touchback and momentum of receiver, as appropriate.
4. Bean bag spot where possession is gained by R for any possible PSK foul enforcement.

F. Kick try (PAT) and Field Goal attempt, scrimmage line 15 yard line or less.

1. Line Judge is responsible for his normal line of scrimmage duties prior to the snap.
2. He is responsible for making "over or under" determinations for the kick. If over, no signal is given. If under, sound whistle and give no good signal (signal # 10, see rule book).

G. Kick try (PAT) and Field Goal attempt, scrimmage line outside 15 yard line.

1. Line Judge is responsible for judging the entirety of whether the kick was good or not.
2. Position several yards behind the goal post toward which the kick will be directed. Once the ball has passed the goal or has been downed past the goal line, indicate with signal #5 (good) or # 10 (no good, see rule book).
3. In the case of a try the ball is dead when it becomes apparent that a kick try has failed. In the case of a field goal attempt, the ball remains alive as if punted so long as it remains in the field of play. A failed field goal results in a Touchback if the ball becomes dead in or beyond the goal line.

H. Kickoff or Free Kick

1. Line Judge is responsible for Team-R.
2. Move to the center of the field at Team-R's free kick line and face Team-R.
3. Remind all players to have their mouthpieces in and to not cross the free kick line until the ball has been kicked.
4. Count Team-R players; in cases where there are too many players, tell a captain to count his players. Do not allow the ball to become alive with too many players on field for Team-R. As a courtesy, you may offer the same "count your players" advice when too few are on field; however, if Team-R so elects they may elect to receive the ball with too few players.
5. Remain at center of field until communicating unobtrusively with the Head Linesman that he has the Team-K ready to kick. Then turn and run to your sideline.
6. Take a position straddling the free kick line. Remove your bean bag and hold it above your head to show the Referee that you and Team-R are prepared for the ready for play signal. Continue to hold the bean bag above your head until ready for play is blown by Referee.
7. At the kick be aware of encroachment by any Team-R players. This is a dead ball foul if it occurs.
8. Line Judge is responsible for marking spots of first touching with bean bag. Also responsible for marking short kicks out of bounds. If not touched inbounds by Team-R, free kicks out-of-bounds are flagged as a penalty on Team-K.
9. Be aware of illegal blocks, clipping, illegal use of hands and holding.

10. On long returns, pickup runner at about 35 yard line and proceed with him all the way down the field.

#### I. Penalty Enforcement

1. Determine the approximate location for the succeeding spot after penalty enforcement and move to that yard line.
2. Communicate with your sideline verbally what the penalty was and on whom it was called.
3. Communicate with other members of the officiating crew what the resulting down is after penalty enforcement.

#### J. Measurements

1. Move to a spot nearly in line with the ball along the length of the field. However, you should be positioned just to the chain side of the ball.
2. Place your toe on the (5 or 10) yard line at the spot where it intersects with the line determined in I. 1.
3. Hold that position for placement of the clip when the chains are brought out by the Head Linesman.

#### K. Time Outs

1. Record the time and quarter and which team is charged for charged times out.
2. Communicate this with other crew members to be sure all members agree.
3. Take position midway between position of ball and the team box on your side.
4. Control legal participation during any team conferences that may occur.
5. Relay 15 second warning from Referee when time out is to expire.
6. Inform the coach of how many time outs he has remaining.
7. When the time out has ended, return to normal position.

#### L. End of Period

1. See items L and M, below.

#### M. Between Periods (1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>)

1. Record down, distance, direction and team possession
2. Meet with Umpire and Referee to make sure all three agree on item L. 1.
3. Move to appropriate yard line at opposite end of field where ball is to be spotted.

#### N. Between Halves.

1. Observe players as they leave the field. Move to keep teams separated as necessary.

#### O. General

1. The Line Judge should always work an outside-in technique. No player should ever be behind the Line Judge on the field of play during a live ball situation. Except as specifically noted otherwise, he should keep his back to the sideline and not turn his back on the field of play. Principle exceptions are when coming off the field for a free kick and when observing action outside the field of play as action moves across the sideline at the

- end of a play. When adjusting position for a split back or end coming out of the offensive huddle, he should backpedal to get his 9 yard separation.
2. For most forward progress situations a flank official will be the spotting official. Always "square-in" on the ball. Mark progress with the downfield foot. The field is divided in half by an imaginary line that splits the goalposts. Each flank official is responsible for marking forward progress on his side of this line. The opposite official should endeavor to "mirror" the mark of the covering official on the opposite side of the field. In cases near the imaginary line or in cases where the usually covering official is screened, the opposite side official may take the lead in establishing forward progress. In ambiguous cases, the most distant flank official should yield immediately to the spot of the nearest flank official. There is no place on the field for arguments on spotting the ball between flank officials.
  3. Since the Line Judge is opposite the down marker ("box") and since the "box" is to the back of the Head Linesman, the Line Judge should routinely check to see that the box is displaying the correct down. If not, he should communicate with the Head Linesman to have him correct the error.
  4. Since the Line Judge is opposite the chains, he should inform the Referee when a first down has been clearly achieved or not or when the spot is close and a measurement may be called for. He must do this immediately at the end of the play as the Referee is moving to the spot of the ball.