

## A. 5-Man Crews (2013)

GHSA allows 5-Man crews to be worked in Varsity games during the regular season, only. However, this practice is discouraged as the coverage is not as good as with a 6-Man crew; and since 6-Man crews are mandated for all playoff games, associations working 5-Man crews are not as well prepared for post-season action due to their lack of 100% participation in the required playoff configuration. Around 2006, the section on 5-Man mechanics in the Officials Manual had its content frozen; there have been no changes made to that section since then. Trying to keep the Manual updated for both 5-Man and 6-Man mechanics seemed as waste of effort since GHSA wanted to discourage the use of 5-Man. The 2013 edition of the Manual takes this one step further by eliminating coverage of 5-Man, altogether. Associations may continue to use the 2012 Manual's 5-Man section if they choose to use this crew configuration. However, the format of that section is at odds with the re-write of this version of the Manual and so is not included here.

## 5-Man Mechanics Section (from GHSA 2012)

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.

### REFEREE MECHANICS

#### 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 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 - 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:
  - d. Loose ball on the snap and the recovery.
  - e. Roughing the kicker & holder or being blocked into the kicker.
  - f. Fake kick that becomes a running or passing play.
  - g. Dead ball fouls and taunting.
  - h. 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.
  - i. If the kick does not cross the goal line, treat it just like a punt.
  - j. 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. Remained 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
- d. – give time-out signal.
- e. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
- f. 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.**

### **1. 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.**

## **Umpire Mechanics**

### **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
- e. field with the crew to record toss results and any final instructions from the Referee.
- f. 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:
- o. Move to a position 5 yards from your previous free kick position.
- p. Help clear the sidelines in your area.
- q. 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
- b. keys before the snap
- c. If "no huddle" offense, stay on ball until "ready for play" whistle.
- d. Assist the Referee with whether the clock starts on the snap or "ready".
- e. 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.
- f. 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.
- g. 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.)
- d. Pivot toward the point of attack and know when the ball leaves the zone.
- e. Observe line play and action around the runner.
- f. Work inside - out.
- g. If play is directly at you, freeze and allow the runner to commit to their path.
- h. If possible pivot to face runner as they go by.
- i. Officiate at the point of attack and then behind the runner.
- j. Move downfield slowly. There may be unwarranted action on the line that is still your responsibility.
- k. 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".
- l. 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:

- a. Move to the line of scrimmage.
- 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 short passes over the middle (head high) turn with the ball to help wings rule on caught or trapped passes.
- 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, keeping the snap in view.**

- a. Count the kicking team players. Signal with a "thumbs up" to the Referee & appropriate wing official.
- 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:**

**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
- d. Give time-out signal.
- e. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
- f. 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.**

## Head Linesman Mechanics

### **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:
  - Taking the ball 25 yards from the previous spot.
  - Re-kicking with a 5-yard penalty.
  - 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 (used closed fist for 4<sup>th</sup> down). Make sure the correct down ins on the box. 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 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 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 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 move 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
- d. – give time-out signal.
- e. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
- f. 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.**

## **Line Judge Mechanics**

### **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:
  - Taking the ball 25 yards from the previous spot.
  - Re-kicking with a 5-yard penalty.
  - 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:**

- Count the kicking team and make sure they have 11 or fewer players.
- Determine whether nearest wide out is on or off the line. Give the proper off the line signal if necessary.
- 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.
- Hold momentarily after the snap then move down field covering your side of the field.
- Observe blocks in front of the punt receiver(s).
- On a blocked punt, retreat to assist the Referee in determining possession.
- 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.
- If the runner comes into your area, move with the runner. Be on the goal line during returns for a Touchdown.
- 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.**

- 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”)
- Once decision is made, move two steps into the end zone and give appropriate signal.
- Back Judge has responsibility for whistle unless kick rolls into the end zone as a touchback on your 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**

- Unless otherwise noted, treat as any other scrimmage play.
- At the snap, your initial key is now the outside receiver.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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
- d. Give time-out signal.
- e. Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter, half, etc.).
- f. 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 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 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.**

## **Back Judge Mechanics**

### **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.**

- d. If the play becomes dead in your area, mark the dead ball spot, sound your whistle and give the time-out signal.
- e. If the kick is kicked out-of-bounds, work with the Referee to "chop you in" in order to mark the spot.
- 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 (bean Bag)
- g. On blocked kicks, pick up the football while remaining focused on players downfield.
- h. On run-backs, assume normal scrimmage position and continue to officiate.
- i. Be alert for passes that look like kicks.
- j. Be prepared to rule on pass interference during fake kicks that turn into pass plays.
- k. Notify the Umpire of dead ball status (i.e. fair catch or not).
- l. 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.**

- a. 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")
- 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 Line 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 – On the end line cheating towards the strong side of the offensive formation.**

1. At the snap, your initial key is still the inside 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 side line.
4. Watch for illegal blocks on the corners and other fouls.
5. 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 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). 24
- 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.**