

## **OFFICIATING GUIDELINES**

### **REQUIRED UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT**

- Black and white vertically striped, long or short-sleeved knit shirt. The shirts shall have 1-inch stripes, a black knit cuff and collar. All officials in a given game are to wear the same type of shirt with the same length sleeve. Referee decides the type of shirt. Shirts shall always be tucked in. Micro-mesh shirts may be worn at all levels.
- T-shirts and turtlenecks(cold weather) shall be black. The undershirt should not have any letters or pictures that can be seen through your striped shirt.
- Standard all white tapered knickers with a black belt shall be worn with a short overlap below the knee. White or black compression shorts should be worn under the knickers. Shirt tails shall be tucked inside the compression shorts to prevent stripes from showing through the knickers.
- One piece official's stockings with white bottoms and black tops with Northwestern stripes. Shorts may be worn for pre-season scrimmages, middle school and youth league games until October 1.
- If shorts are worn, solid white knee socks are required
- Solid black shoes with black laces.
- Black baseball cap with white piping shall be worn by all officials except the Referee who shall wear a solid white baseball cap. All caps should be fitted. Micro-mesh caps may be worn at all levels.
- Black belt with a nondescript buckle shall be worn with knickers and shorts.
- Black and white vertically striped jacket when worn prior to the game. All officials shall wear jackets or go without during on-field pre-game responsibilities and at halftime. No jackets shall be worn during the game.
- Whistle, either lanyard, wrist or finger
- Penalty flag
- Bean bag(white)
- Game information card and pen or pencil
- Rubber bands or other device to keep track of downs. Umpire shall wear a second device to keep track of lateral field position.
- BJ shall wear a wrist watch with a countdown timer.
- The Linesman shall carry a clip for the chains
- The Referee shall provide a coin.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- Be professional
  - Dress appropriately when arriving at the game site. Show respect for the school's program and our association. Perception is important.
- A good official:
  - Is prepared mentally and physically
  - Takes pride in his effort, conduct and appearance
  - Is knowledgeable of the rules and mechanics
  - Is aware of the spirit and intent of the rules
  - Is consistent
  - Is always in control but never overbearing
  - Is a good communicator
- General principles of good officiating:
  - Call all fouls affecting advantage/disadvantage, safety and unsportsmanlike conduct
  - See the whole play
  - Be in the right place at the right time(know mechanics)
  - Know your vision patterns
  - Hustle but do not hurry
  - Communication with coaches and sidelines is important; communication with fellow officials is crucial
  - See the ball before you blow the whistle
  - A bad call is learned from, but never dwelled upon
  - Strive to learn from experience and other officials
  - Get the call right. Call "train wrecks not fender benders".
  - Avoid commenting about other officials, players, coaches, games, etc.
  - Leave your ego at home. Work with your fellow officials.

## **KEYS TO OFFICIATING**

- On all scrimmage downs, all officials relay the number of the next down.
- All officials pick up and relay stop-the-clock signals.

- On long gainers or change of possession, covering official must communicate what has happened to the referee.
- On fumbles, covering official must rule on possession.
- Officials must avoid huddling together unless it is essential to the administration of the game.
- Avoid inadvertent whistles; keep the whistle out of your mouth during the play until you need it.
- The play must be boxed in at all times.
- Nearest official has action around pile, other officials cover off the ball players.
- If play ends inbounds within three yards of the sideline, indicate with two winds of the arm.
- Officials must coordinate after each play; one has forward progress, one retrieves the ball, one spots the ball at the inbounds spot and all assist in relaying the ball.

## **WHEN IN QUESTION RULES**

- The catch, recovery or interception is NOT completed.
- The block is below the waist.
- The ball has NOT been touched on a kick or a forward pass.
- The ball is accidentally kicked rather than intentionally kicked.
- It is a forward pass rather than a backward pass when thrown in or behind the neutral zone.
- The formation is legal.
- The clock shall be stopped for an injured player.
- The ball is dead and progress is stopped. “Nothing good can happen from letting this go”.
- It is twisting, turning or pulling the face mask.
- Whether running into or roughing, the foul is roughing.
- It is a fumble.

## **PRE-GAME PREPARATION AND CONFERENCE**

- Record your game assignment including date, site and time for meeting other officials and site and time of the game.
- Referee will contact crew members no later than Monday of the week of the game to schedule meeting time and site and to communicate the uniform of the day.

- Double check to ensure that all of your uniform and officiating equipment is packed and with you.
- Do not consume any alcoholic beverages on game day.
- Schedule your arrival time at the game site to allow each crew member to be dressed and the pre-game to start no less than 60 minutes prior to scheduled kickoff time for varsity games.

## **Conference**

- Upon arrival at the game site, the Referee shall notify game management that the officiating crew has arrived.
- Pre-game shall begin no later than 60 minutes prior to kickoff with all officials dressed and ready to participate in the conference.
- The BJ will inform the crew of the official time. The BJ will ensure that the 25-second function on his watch is working properly.
- The Referee will lead a group discussion of the following responsibilities.
  - Pre-game field observations and duties of all officials.
  - Mechanics for coin toss.
  - Mechanics for positioning, coverage and common rules infractions on:
    - Free kicks
    - Scrimmage kicks
    - Running plays
    - Pass plays
    - Short yardage and goal line plays
  - Mechanics for reporting and administering penalties
  - Mechanics and rules on starting the clock, stopping the clock, and time out periods.
- Officials who must coordinate their activities on certain types of plays will discuss these issues.
- Discuss any information about the teams involved that will be beneficial for this game.
- Discuss the need to see the ball before blowing the whistle and ways to handle inadvertent whistles.
- Save any discussion of the Overtime procedure until half time.

## **COMMENTS ON THE PRE-GAME CONFERENCE**

“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 coverages 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 that 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 or if there is a question as to the correct down should bring their concern to the Referee immediately so a correction can be made.

## **PROPER USE OF THE BEAN BAG**

### **Primary situations to use beanbag every time:**

- Marking the spot a ball carrier loses possession of the ball on a fumble(not backward pass which includes the snap)
- Marking the spot where a kick returner or defensive back gains control of a kicked ball when his momentum carries him into the end zone.
- 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.

### **Secondary situation to use the beanbag:**

- Marking the spot where a ball carrier goes out of bounds.
- Marking forward progress of a ball carrier when he is being pushed back and there is continuing action on him(primarily the Referee)

### **How to use the beanbag:**

- Since the beanbag is always used to mark a precise spot, it should be carried to that spot and dropped or dropped on the yard line extended if the official is not near the exact spot.
- Keep the beanbag in your belt or your hand in kicking situations and develop the habit of using it.
- No need to use the beanbag to mark every spot of change of possession.
- It is not a good idea to drop the beanbag on the out-of-bounds spot and then leave it to retrieve a ball. Hold the spot and drop the beanbag in case there is a unusual situation when you would leave the spot.

## **5 – Man Crew Mechanics**

The purpose of this section is to document the 5 man mechanics that are expected of our officials. It is not intended to override the mechanics as stated in the NFHS Officials manual but 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 that 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 WNCOA. These are the mechanics that crews will be evaluated by.

### **REFEREE**

#### **On field pre-game duties**

- After the pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the field.
- Meet with each team's head coach with the full crew, home team coach first unless circumstances dictate otherwise.
- Give the coaches a list of officials working the game.
- Secure the names and numbers of game captains for each team.
- Verify with each coach that all players are equipped legally.
- Request information regarding special pre-game ceremonies and length of half-time period. Inform coaches that time will be placed on the game clock for half-time period that will include the mandatory 3 minutes warm-up period.
- Check with each coach about unusual formations or unusual plays.
- Ensure that each coach is aware of their responsibility to maintain good sportsmanship.
- Ask the home team coach about the availability of a chain crew.
- Notify each coach of the official time.
- Ask coach of his intended choice should his team win the coin toss and determine if both coaches are amenable to using the pre-toss procedure.

- Request that each team have their ball boys report to the home team bench area 15 minutes prior to the kickoff to meet with the LJ.
- Avoid undue fraternizing with either coach – be businesslike.
- Following the meetings with the coaches, the Referee and Umpire do their field inspection while the other officials attend to their pre-game responsibilities.
- At 5 minutes to kick-off, the Referee shall be at the 50-yard line on the press box sideline in preparation for the impending coin toss.

### **Coin Toss**

- Escort the captains whose bench is on the press box side to the center of the field. Captains shall line up on the Referee's left side, splitting the 50 yard line. Only 4 captains are allowed to midfield but honorary captains may come to the hash mark on their sideline.
- Introduce the captains to one another and introduce the Umpire.
- Remind the captains that they are the leaders of their teams and that sportsmanlike conduct is expected by all players at all times.
- 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.
- Explain all options to the winning captain and ask for his choice. If he defers, signal to the press box immediately.
- Get the option from the opposing captain and alternate until all options are taken.
- Move the players so that their backs are to the goal that they will defend and make the proper signals to the press box.
- Once the toss is completed and the captains dismissed, meet with crew at the center of the field to record toss results and communicate any concerns.
- Break the crew huddle and hustle to your respective free kick positions.

### **Free kick duties**

**Position – Assume a position between the 5 – 10 yard line of the receiving team on the Lineman's side of the field (opposite the press box side).**

- Count the members of the receiving team and make sure that they have 11 players. Do not kickoff with less than 11 or more than 11. Confirm with the BJ using a 'closed fist' signal.

- Ensure that each official is ready by checking off with the BJ, LJ, L, U and Clock Operator by pointing at each official individually and have them raise their hand when they are ready.
- Whistle the ball ready for play.
- Watch for:
  - Kick going out of bounds – Was it touched and by whom?
  - Wind the clock when the ball is legally touched in your area – 51% of the width of the field from the Referee’s side.
  - Backward passes and forward hand-offs.
  - Illegal blocks and clips.
  - Facemask violations.
  - Fair catch signals.
  - Kick breaking the goal-line plane.
  - Runner’s momentum inside the 5-yard line – bean bag ready.
  - Muff or fumble.
  - Recovery of a loose ball.
  - Dead ball.
- Start the clock when ball is touched by the receivers in the field of play.
- Echo signals to start and stop the clock.
- Signal touchback if kick breaks the plane of the end zone.
- Follow the runner up the field in your area and observe action around the ball carrier.
- Turn ball carrier over to up field officials on long runs and clean up behind the play.
- Focus on blocks just in front of the receiver if the kick is to the opposite side of the field.
- Move to the in-bounds spot and be prepared to give the ready for play signal when the ball has been set up.
- Free kicks following an accepted free kick penalty:
- Give preliminary signal for the infraction.
- Resume normal kicking duties as stated above taking into account the distance penalty involved.
- Free kicks after a safety, fair catch and following an awarded fair catch:
  - Same lateral position as on normal free kick with alignment as deep as the deepest kick receiver.
  - Resume normal free kick duties as stated above.

- Be prepared to give the proper signal on kicks that are good, no good, or touchback..

### **Scrimmage plays**

**Position: During offensive huddle, assume a position 5 – 7 yards deep and 5 – 7 yards wide facing toward the defense. Pre-snap position shall be to the throwing arm side of the quarterback approximately 5 –7 yards deep and outside the outside shoulder of the tackle on your side.**

- Communicate the next down with the L and then the remainder of the crew.
- Be aware of down and distance and game clock..
- When marking the ball ready for play, stand and face the defensive team.
- Count the offense after the ready for play signal. Check-off with the U with ‘closed fist’ signal if 11 or fewer players.
- If, after the ready for play there are 12 or more players and no player is attempting to leave the field, throw the flag for a substitution infraction and stop the clock.
- Keep the snap in view
  - Count the offense at the line if unable to do in the huddle.
  - Be aware of the clock.
  - Be in position to see the off-side tackle to pick up keys.
  - Watch for:
    - Backs being set for one second.
    - Backs moving forward prior to the snap.
    - Illegal movements by the offense.
    - Offensive player calling timeout.
- At the snap:
- Read keys that will indicate if a play is run or pass.
- Watch for:
  - Holding, illegal use of hands and personal fouls.
  - Chop blocks and other illegal blocks in free blocking zone.
  - Backward pass
  - Be aware that the quarterback may spike the ball to stop the clock.

## **Running plays:**

- Focus on the action around the runner while he is behind the line of scrimmage.
- Follow the ball carrier sideline to sideline.
- Focus on the action behind the ball carrier after the runner crosses the line of scrimmage.
- 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.
- Check for a possible first down.
- Help relay the ball to the succeeding spot if needed.
- Be alert for dead-ball fouls and taunting.
- Be prepared to assist if the ball carrier goes out of bounds.
- In plays that end with a TD, echo the TD signal of the other officials by facing the press box. Ensure that there are no fouls prior to giving the TD signal.
- Talk to the players as they unpile, letting them know of an official's presence. Do not allow players to pull other players off the pile.

## **Passing plays**

- Stay with the passer even after the pass is released.
- On passes to receivers who are behind the line of scrimmage, move to a position so that you can see whether the pass is forward or backward and still see the action on the passer.
- Communicate to the rushers that the “ball is gone” when the pass has been released.
- Rule whether passer fumbled on a ‘sack’ or whether his arm was moving forward.
- Mark the forward progress of the passer when he is sacked.
- Watch for:
  - Incomplete shovel or ‘Utah’ passes.
  - Intentional grounding – only R makes this call!
  - Illegal use of hands or holding.
  - Personal fouls.
  - Roughing the passer – only R makes this call!
  - Pass deflected by the defense
  - Dead ball fouls or taunting.

- At the end of the play, move either to the succeeding spot on a completion or move to the previous spot on an incompleting.
- On plays that end with a TD, echo the TD signal of the other officials by facing the press box. Ensure that there are no fouls prior to giving the signal.

### **Scrimmage kicks**

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

- Count the kicking team and signal the U with a ‘closed fist’ if there are 11 or fewer players.
- Check the jersey numbers of the up-backs to verify eligibility if it is a fake or a broken play.
- On a blocked punt, be ready to rule on possession.
- Watch for:
  - 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 a running or pass play.
  - Punt going out of bounds – move to the punter, mark path of the ball with the official on the sideline.
  - Dead ball fouls and taunting.
- After the punt is away and the punter has regained his balance, slowly move downfield and cleanup on the receivers’ right hash mark.
- On long punt returns, pick up the runner and ‘carry him all the way’ – work from the inside of the field looking outward.
- Check to see if there are any flags on the play and then communicate with the L about staying at the previous spot or moving the chains.

### **Field goals**

**Position: To the side of the kicker and holder facing the holder at least as wide as the last down lineman.**

- Treat as a punt unless otherwise noted.
- On a blocked FG, be prepared to rule on possession.
- Watch for:
  - Roughing the kicker and holder or being blocked into the kicker.
  - Fake kick that becomes a running or passing play.
  - Dead ball fouls and taunting.
  - Loose ball on the snap and recovery

- After the kick is away and the kicker has regained his balance, look for a signal from the LJ and the BJ as to whether the field goal is good and repeat the signal.
- If the kick does not cross the goal line, treat it just like a punt.
- If the kick is good, repeat the TD signal of the other officials by facing the press box. Ensure that there are no fouls prior to giving the signal.

### **PAT**

- Everything is identical to a field goal except be ready to stop the play if the kick try is unsuccessful.
- On PAT by scrimmage play, everything is same as regular scrimmage plays except that the ball becomes dead if the
- offensive team fails to score.
- Following the PAT or successful FG, the crew shall come together briefly to meet with the R.

### **Goal Line plays**

- Remind other officials of the proximity of the goal line.
- Treat as any other scrimmage play.

### **Time-outs**

- Give the time-out signal and specify the team that is charged or charge it to yourself.
- Make sure trainers and/or coaches summoned for injured player are not on the field to coach players.
- Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
- Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.
- Remain positioned near the offensive huddle but in view of the BJ and be prepared to receive the 45 second signal.
- When the BJ has communicated that 45 seconds have elapsed, warn each team that 15 seconds remain with two short blasts of the whistle. At 60 seconds, move to the ball and mark the ball ready for play and then move to a normal position.

### **Measurements**

- Adjust the ball to be perpendicular with the sidelines and oversee the measurement process.

- Judge whether or not the line to gain has been reached.
- Make the appropriate signal.
- If the measurement is in the side zone and short, secure the chain at the nose of the ball and move to the inbounds line where the chains are re-stretched while the ball is placed exactly where it was in the side zone. Leave the old ball in the side zone and spot a new ball – spot ball on ball.

### **End of Period**

- When facing the clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to the snap, sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long and give time-out signal.
- Inform players near you of the situation.
- At the end of the game, be certain that there are no penalties and then signal the end of the game by holding the ball over your head. Leave the field together as a crew.

### **Between Quarters**

- Meet with the U at the ball and check to be certain that there are no penalties to be enforced and no requests for a Coach-Referee conference. Record the down, distance and yard line. Verify this information with the L before he proceeds to move the chains.
- Be certain the results and the spot of the clip are recorded on your game card.
- Signal the end of the quarter by raising the ball above your head.
- Move to the appropriate spot at the other end of the field.
- Re-check the spot and set up ball at corresponding spot on the other half of the field.
- When notified by the BJ that 45 seconds have elapsed, give two short blasts on the whistle and then when 60 seconds have elapsed, mark the ball ready for play.

### **Half-time**

- Observe the players as they clear the field – if both use the same end of the field, lead the crew to that end to eliminate any potential problems.

- Signal the clock operator to start the game clock to time the half-time period.
- Repeat pre-game escort duties when halftime is completed and give the second half choices from the original coin toss.

### **Penalty Administration**

- Do not blow your whistle when you observe a foul.
- Drop your penalty marker at the proper yard line.
- Take note of the location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.
- At the end of the play, sound whistle and give time-out signal.
- Retrieve information from official that made the call – live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, offense or defense.
- Ask for the offended team's captain prior to the preliminary signal.
- Give a preliminary signal to the press box. Make sure to stand still and be away from the players while giving a crisp signal.
- Relay the penalty information to the appropriate wing official so that he can relay the information to the offended coach.
- Mentally note whether the clock should start on the ready or snap.
- Fully explain all options to the offended team.
- Confer with the U as to penalty, enforcement spot, direction and distance.
- Give final signal to the press box side of the field.
- Repeat out loud the enforcement spot, distance and direction of a penalty to the U to avoid error.

# UMPIRE

## **On field pre-game duties**

- After the pre-game conference, walk with the crew to the field to visit with the coaches, home team coach first (refer to Referee section for more details).
- Examine player equipment, medical wrappings/casts, etc. and rule on legality.
- Request the NCHSAA release form for any casts present and put the form with your game card.
- Be sure that the R asks if all players are properly equipped.
- Record captains' numbers and who speaks at the coin toss.
- Listen for special plays or formations that the teams may use.
- Ensure that the R asks the home team coach about the chain crew.
- Be aware that the R mentions that sportsmanship is expected by the coaches and players.
- Walk with R to inspect the field following the completion of the meetings with the two coaches.

## **Coin toss**

- At 5 minutes to kickoff, be located at the 50 yard line on the sideline opposite the pressbox.
- Meet the L and visiting captains at the 50 yard line to escort them to the coin toss.
- Place the captains on your right with the speaking captain next to you.
- Make eye contact with the R and move to the 50 yard line on the R's signal.
- Instruct the captains to move to the center of the field when you tell them. Only 4 captains are permitted at the coin toss, others must stop at the hash marks.
- Introduce the captains to the R and move to the opposite end of the huddle facing the R.
- Move in to see and record results of the coin toss as well as the options selected by each captain.
- Stand with the kicking team as the R signals the results of the coin toss.
- When the coin toss is completed and the captains dismissed, meet at the center of field with the crew to record toss results

and hear any final instructions. Take the appropriate ball from either the L or LJ for the team preparing to kick off.

- Break the crew huddle and hustle to your position.

### **Free kick duties**

**Position: Behind the kicker or to the side of the kicker if he gets too deep stepping behind him as he approaches the ball.**

- Count the members of the kicking team and make sure that they have 11 players. If they have too few or too many ask the kicker to count them. Do not kick off with fewer than 11 or more than 11. Confirm your count with the L.
- Instruct the kicker regarding waiting until the ready for play signal by the R is given before kicking and also remind him not to kick the ball if it should fall or be blown off the tee.
- Raise your arm when the R points at you to signify that you are ready. Drop your arm when the ready for play signal is given.
- Watch for:
  - Ball being legally kicked
  - Ball being topped or pooch kicked
  - Action on the kicker for the first five yards
  - First touching by either team
  - Blocking by both teams
  - Muff or fumble
  - Illegal blocks and clips
- Move downfield remaining inside the hash marks to be able to box the return.
- Watch off the ball as you move downfield and observe the action away from the ball until the ball carrier approaches your yardline.
- Pick up the runner on long returns and keep him bracketed with the appropriate wing official.
- Start the clock when the ball is touched on a short kick.
- Echo signals to start and stop the clock.
- On free kicks following an accepted penalty, step off the appropriate yardage, place the ball on the appropriate yard line and give the correct signal to the Press box sideline. Repeat the above procedures.
- On free kicks after a safety, place the ball on the appropriate 20 yard line and resume normal duties which may include helping the team to get properly aligned since safeties do not happen frequently.

- Following scores, move up the sideline of the scoring team to the appropriate 40 yard line. Time the interval following the PAT and at 45 seconds, sound your whistle and move to the center of the field.

### **Scrimmage plays**

**Position: 4 – 7 yards off the ball, on the defensive side of the ball with lateral position varying between the outside shoulders of the two offensive guards. Do not line up in the same position on every single down but vary your starting position.**

- Remain with the ball until the ready for play signal is given.
- Assist the R with whether the clock starts on the ready or the snap.
- Count the offense after the ready for play signal and give a ‘closed fist’ to the R to signify that you have 11 or fewer players.
- 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 the previous spot on incomplete passes and accepted penalty administration.
- At the snap:
  - Key on the snapper and two interior linemen adjacent to the snapper, varying from snap to snap.
  - Read point of attack and be aware of the free blocking zone.
  - Watch for:
    - Holding, illegal use of hands and personal fouls.
    - Chop blocks and other illegal blocks in the free blocking zone.
    - Fumbles. Drop bean bag on or parallel to spot.
    -

### **Running plays**

- Observe the snapper and two adjacent interior linemen during the initial line charge
- Operate primarily hash mark to hash mark and spot the ball at the end of the play. Move into the side zone whenever the flow of the play and primary action dictates.
- Pivot toward the point of attack and know when the ball carrier leaves the free blocking zone.
- Observe line play and action around the runner.
- Work inside-out.

- If play is directly at you, freeze and allow the runner to commit to their path.
- If possible, pivot to face the runner as he goes by.
- Officiate at the point of attack and then behind the runner.
- Move downfield slowly checking to be sure that there is no unwarranted action on the line which is your responsibility.
- When the 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.
- When the ball is in the side zone, move outside the hash mark to assist in ball retrieval and return to the hash mark to spot the ball on the intersection of the dead ball spot and the hash marks. Align the nose of the ball with the forward progress spot held by the wing official.
- When the ball becomes dead near a first down, assist the wing official in spotting the ball on their foot.
- Talk to players as they unpile. Let the players know of your presence.
- Do not allow players to pull other players from a pile.

### **Passing plays**

- On dropback or roll-out passes, move to the line of scrimmage.
- Be alert to avoid running into a draw play.
- Get into position to help rule whether the pass or passer crosses the line of scrimmage.
- Be alert for tipped passes. (Give 'tipped ball' signal)
- On quick passes, step forward and hold your position to observe any illegal contact on the line of scrimmage. On over the middle passes, be prepared to turn with the ball to assist with catch, no catch call.
- 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 passer (passer clearly beyond the line of scrimmage before releasing the ball is your call).
  - Dead ball fouls.

### **Scrimmage Kicks**

- **Position: 4-7 yards deep aligned toward the end of the interior line on the Line Judge's side of the field.**

- Count the kicking team and signal the R with a ‘closed fist’.
- Check numbering exceptions.
- Know jersey numbers of interior linemen.
- Note eligible numbers that are ineligible by position.
- Key on the snapper and the offensive guards.
- Check linemen(other than center and guards) for interlocked feet.
- Watch for false starts and snap infractions.
- Remind defensive players to “stay off the snapper”.
- Maintain initial position following the snap.
- Shift attention to the offensive guards and backs behind the neutral zone.
- Be alert to assist R in covering a short or blocked kick.
- Assist with determining whether the ball crosses the neutral zone.
- Be alert for a fake kick, broken play, run or pass.
- Watch for:
  - Illegal contact on snapper.
  - Illegal blocks.
  - Illegal use of hands and holding.
  - Ineligible downfield or offensive pass interference if a pass crosses the line.
- Allow the wave of blockers to move beyond you downfield.
- Pivot to your right and move downfield slowly, watching blocks.
- Be alert for the long return and officiate inside out.
- Watch for:
  - Personal fouls
  - Clipping
  - Illegal blocks
- Once ball has been kicked downfield, notify blocking linemen by yelling “Balls Away”.
- Be alert for dead ball fouls.
- Move to the dead ball spot to set the next play.
- Inform the R of the status of the play(Fair catch, etc.)

### **Field goals and PAT**

- Everything is identical as other scrimmage kicks on a kick try.
- Scrimmage plays for PAT are identical as other scrimmage plays

- 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.
- Be aware that the ball becomes dead on PAT if the offensive team fails to score from a kick try or a scrimmage play.

### **Goal line plays**

- Position near goal line and cover same as any scrimmage play.
- Ensure that the runner does not thrust the ball forward after it is declared dead.
- Look to wing officials for TD signal.
- Assist wing officials with either a positive head nod or a negative head nod.
- Do not give the TD signal unless you are the only official able to cover the goal line.

### **Time outs**

- Maintain position over the ball.
- Observe Team A until R is ready to start play.
- During injury TOs, make sure trainers and/or coaches summoned for the injured player are not on the field to coach players.
- Record the period and time that each TO occurs.
- Confirm with other officials as to the number of TOs remaining for each team.

### **Measurements**

- Take the forward stake from the chain person at the place of measurement.
- When the L says “ready”, slowly pull the chain and hold the forward stake near the ball until the R makes a decision.
- If the measurement is in the side zone and short, the R will secure the chain at the nose of the ball and the chains will be moved to the inbounds line where they will be 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 R’s grasp.

### **End of period**

- When facing the clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to the snap, sound whistle to prevent snap.

- If ball is snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long and give the TO signal.
- Inform players near you of the situation.
- If end of the game, leave the field together as a crew.

### **Between period**

- Record down, distance and yard line nearest the nose of the ball
- Hold spot and hand the ball to the R for end of period signal.
- Re-check the spot and set up the ball at corresponding spot on the other end of the field.
- Take the ball from the R or pick up the ball from the field and carry the ball to the corresponding spot.
- Jog to new corresponding spot and place the ball appropriately.

### **Half Time**

- Observe players as they depart the field – if both teams use the same end of the field, proceed to that end to eliminate any potential problems.
- Repeat pre-game escort duties when halftime is completed and listen to the R give the second half options to the captains.

### **Penalty Administration.**

- Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul.
- Drop your penalty marker at the proper yard line.
- Take note of the location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.
- Give TO signal.
- Sound whistle – give several short blasts on whistle to get attention of the R.
- Verbally report the information to R. (Live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number and offense or defense).
- Mentally note whether clock should start on the ready or the snap.
- Direct offended captain to R as the R gives the preliminary signal.
- Secure the ball.
- Confer with the R as to enforcement spot, direction and distance.
- Check with L and signal him with 1 finger for 5 yards, 2 fingers for 10 yards or 3 fingers for 15 yards.
- Walk briskly or jog to the succeeding spot.
- Visually check with L as you spot the ball on the succeeding spot.
- Repeat out loud the enforcement spot, distance and direction of the penalty to the R to avoid misapplication of penalty.

# LINESMAN

## **On-Field pre-game duties**

- After the pre-game, walk to the field with the remainder of the crew and meet with the coaches, home team first. Refer to the Referee section for more details.
- Following the meetings with the coaches, meet with the chain crew along with the BJ and instruct them as follows:
  - Introduce yourself and the BJ to the entire chain crew.
  - Identify who will be the box person and get to 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 their 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 except on measurements when the BJ will “set” the box.
  - Explain the importance of them hustling and how important they are to the entire crew.
  - Make sure that the chain has a tape marking the five yard mark on the chains.
- When you complete the meeting with the chain crew, secure the ball for the team on your sideline and wait at the 50 yard line for the captains to arrive. If they are tardy, you may have to go get the captains for the team on your sideline.

## **Coin toss**

- Align yourself to the right of the U with the team captains between you and the U.
- Bring a ball for the team on your sideline.
- Walk out to the hash marks on your side of the field with the U and the captains.
- Face the center of the field and remain with any honorary captains on the hash marks.

- 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.
- If your team is kicking, hand the ball to the U; otherwise, toss the ball to the ball person on your sideline.
- Break the crew huddle and hustle to your free kick position.

### **Free kick duties**

- **Position: Align yourself on the receiving team's restraining line(usually the 50 yard line) on your sideline (opposite the press box).**
- Count the receiving team and make sure that they have 11 players. Do not let a free kick begin with more or less than 11 players.
- Police your sideline to make sure that all players and coaches are within the team box.
- Extend your arm above your head to indicate that you are ready when the R points at you. Drop your arm when the R blows the ready for play.
- Carry your bean bag in your hand to mark if the kick is touched by the kicking team prior to going 10 yards.
- Watch for infractions involving R's free kick line and blocks on the front line.
- Start the clock when the ball is touched by the receivers in bounds in your immediate area of responsibility.
- Anticipate a short kick. If kick is short and to your side, watch for a fair catch and watch the catch.
- During 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.
- If a free kick goes out of bounds untouched by R and you are the closest official to the spot of the infraction, go to the spot and drop your flag.
- If the team on your side is the offended team, try to get the coach's choice of either:
  - Re-kicking with a 5 yard penalty.
  - Taking the ball at the spot of the foul.
  - Taking the ball 25 yards from the previous spot.
- After the ball is kicked, move down the field slowly on your sideline working outside in, watching for fouls away from the ball.
- On long returns to 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 U 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.
- If return is up the far sideline, move to the hash marks on your side, keeping the play ‘boxed in’ while watching for illegal blocks and holding.
  - As soon as the play is over, go to the sideline and set your chains.
  - Stop the clock when appropriate.
  - Free kicks after an accepted free kick penalty:
    - Mark penalty on the sideline and visually confirm with U.
    - Move the receiving team to the new yard line for the free kick.
    - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
  - Free kicks after a safety, fair catch or awarded fair catch:
    - Set up on the appropriate 30 yard line or appropriate yard line and assist with aligning the receiving team.
    - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
  - Following scores, move up your sideline and be prepared to get your team on the field when the U moves to the center of the field to set up for the next free kick. Step into the huddle and respectively tell the coach to get his players on the field

### **Scrimmage plays**

**Position: Initially should be no closer than 9 yards outside the nearest player on the line of scrimmage and opposite the press box side of the field.(May be closer to sideline but no closer to nearest player). 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 9 yard marks for illegal substitution.**

- Verify with the R 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 that the correct down is on the box.
- Remember to move your hand down indicator and be aware of down, distance and game clock.
- Make sure that your sideline is clear.
- Think about your keys.
- Check to be sure that there at least 7 offensive players on the line of scrimmage.
- Establish the line of scrimmage with your foot on the offensive side.
- Determine whether the nearest wide out is on or off the line. If the widest man is the offensive formation is off the line of scrimmage,

- signal by extending your arm straight out toward the offensive backfield with your hand opened. Hold the signal until the ball is snapped, the receiver goes in motion or the receiver shifts to a legal position on the line of scrimmage.
- Know the numbers of the eligible receivers on your side and the legal position of slot-backs and wide-outs. Be aware of a tight end that might be covered-up.
  - 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 movement does not take away from your ability to watch the neutral zone.
  - If you have an unbalanced line (any number of linemen except 3 on your side of the center), signal the LJ by placing your clenched fist across your chest followed by the fingers showing either 2 or 4.
  - Make sure of no neutral zone violations by the offense or defense.
  - NEVER let a player line up behind you.
  - If the outside man is over the line on his initial set up, pat your down-field leg and tell him “this is the line of scrimmage”.
  - Determine whether play is a run or pass. Do this by keying on a player (normally a tackle or tight end on your side) that will tell you what type of play is developing.
  - Watch the initial charge of the linemen and be alert for quick plays into the line.
  - Look into the backfield to determine the direction of the play.
  - When play is moving toward you, backpedal and give way slightly to the offensive side of the ball until the play heads up field.
  - If play is moving to the far sideline, move in and the 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 occurring.
  - Always keep the play “boxed in”.
  - When the ball becomes dead, move to the spot of the ball.
  - When you are sure that the play is a first down, give the TO signal and notify the R. As soon as the LJ or U has the spot, release to set your chains.
  - When you are not sure of a first down, put the ball on the spot and notify the R.

- When the runner goes out of bounds, mark the spot, give the TO signal, turn and face sideways to be able to officiate both in-bounds and out of bounds.
- Always move laterally downfield and square into the ball at the end of the play. Mark forward progress with your down field foot.
- Watch for:
  - Fumbles(use beanbag) and recovery.
  - When the ball leaves the neutral zone.
  - Personal fouls.

### **Passing plays:**

#### **Position: Same as on scrimmage plays.**

- 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).
- Move downfield with the receiver(s) in your area.
- Split the distance between the shortest and deepest receiver if you are responsible for more than one receiver in your area.
- If the ball is caught over the middle with the receiver's back to you, look for help from U, LJ and BJ. Rule on what you saw if no help is available. Make the call and sell it.
- Make eye contact with the BJ on questionable passes on the sideline. Both of you should have the same call on complete and incomplete passes. Talk about this in pre-game. 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.
- Be aware of when the pass is in the air in order to rule if action on a receiver is holding or pass interference.
- 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.
- Always square to the ball at the end of the play. Mark forward progress with your down field foot.
- Watch for:
  - Action of all receivers in your area.
  - Legally numbered receivers who were lined up as ineligible going down field. This is normally a covered up tight end or slot back that was not off the line of scrimmage.

- On immediate throws by the QB 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 U.

### **Scrimmage kicks – including FG and PAT**

#### **Position: Same as on scrimmage plays**

- Count the kicking team and make sure that they have 11 players.
- Determine whether the nearest wide-out is on or off the line and signal if off the line.
- Know numbers of eligible and ineligible receivers being aware that ineligible receivers can be lined up in positions where eligible receivers normally position themselves. Important in case of a pass.
- Hold your position until the kicked ball has crossed the neutral zone 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 R in determining possession.
- On a short kick out of bounds in your area in the air, work with R to “chop you in” in order to mark the spot. On a grounded kick to your sideline, mark where the ball goes out of bounds and give the TO signal.
- If the receiver/runner comes into your area, move with the runner. Be on the goal line during returns for a TD.
- 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 R prior to moving the chains after play is dead.
- Signal from R prior to moving the chains after play is dead.
- Treat field goal attempts as any other scrimmage kick.
- On kick attempts for PAT, everything is identical to scrimmage kicks except be ready to stop the play if kick try is unsuccessful.
- On scrimmage play attempts for PAT, everything is identical to scrimmage plays except that the ball becomes dead if the offense does not score.

## **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 after the snap and work back toward the ball.
- On plays where the ball is snapped between the 5 and 10 yard lines, move 3 to 5 yards toward the goal line after the snap. 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 TD 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!
- On goal line plays where the team is going away from their goal line with the ball snapped on or inside the 3 yard line, move to the goal line after the snap and officiate up the field. Be prepared to rule on a safety in the event it occurs.
- On any goal line play you must be at the goal line before the runner. Read the play so that you are standing still at the goal line ready to make the call.

## **Time Outs**

- Move to a position halfway between the ball and the team box on your sideline in a position to monitor the team's huddle.
- Watch for illegal conferences. Be sure of the proper number of players/attendants in the huddle.
- Record the period and time that each TO occurs.
- Confirm with other officials as to the number of TOs remaining for each team.
- Be alert for whistle from R to give your team a 15-second warning for sideline conferences. Go to team huddle and tell the coach that the ball will be marked ready to play in 15 seconds.
- Inform the coach of TOs remaining.
- Be alert for substitutes or attempts to use substitutes for purpose of deception.

## **Measurements**

- When the R calls for a measurement, hustle to the sideline. Make sure that the box is at the spot of the front stake.

- Pick up the chain at the clip and proceed to where the LJ is holding the perpendicular spot.
- Hold the clip on the back of the yard line as the LJ places his foot on the chain while the U stretches the chain and the R signals the result.
- If not a first down, carry the chain and clip to its correct position on the sideline and re-set the chains.
- If the measurement is in the side zone, use the chains to bring the ball into the hash marks then set the box and make sure of the proper down.
- If a first down, release the chains so that the chain crew can set up for the next series. BJ will be at sideline to set the box man.
- 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 U spots the ball.

### **End of period**

- When facing the clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to the snap, sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball is snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long and give the TO signal.
- Inform the players near you of the situation.
- If at the end of the game, quickly thank the chain crew, retrieve your clip, join the crew and exit the field together.

### **Between quarters**

- Meet with the R to verify down, distance, yard line and yard line where the clip is located.
- Record down, distance, yard line and clip location on game card.
- Pick up the chain at the spot of the clip.
- Remember to instruct chain crew to ‘flip-flop’ sides.
- Move to the appropriate yard line on the other side of the 50 yard line to reset the chains.
- Check down, distance, yard line and clip location.
- Ensure that the box man sets the box on the yard line of the ball.
- Inform R that you are ready to go.

### **Half time**

- Instruct the chain crew to be back 3 minutes prior to the second half kickoff.

- If the two teams exit on the same end of the field, position yourself with other crew members between the two teams and keep the teams separated as they exit the field.
- Secure your team's football.
- Remain on the sideline, approximately 3 yards on to the field during the second half meeting of the two teams' captains

### **Penalty administration**

- Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul (except on dead ball fouls).
- Drop your penalty marker at the proper yard line.
- Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.
- Give TO signal.
- Sound whistle, giving several short, loud blasts to get R's attention.
- Verbally report to the R (live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, offense or defense).
- Mentally note whether the clock should start on the ready or the snap.
- If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official gets the spot from you even if you know that the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
- Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the R.
- Hustle to your sideline to report the foul and offending player's number to the coach.
- If the coach asks you about the administration of the penalty, give him the options.
- On signal from the U, mark the penalty on the sideline with the U and move the box man when necessary.
- If you are not the calling official, cover the flag for the official who did.

# LINE JUDGE

## **On-Field pre-game duties**

- After the pre-game, walk to the field with the remainder of the crew and meet with the coaches, home team first. Refer to the Referee section for more details.
- Following the meetings with the coaches, meet with the ball boys from both teams in front of the home team bench and instruct them as follows:
- Remind them that they are part of game administration and that they must remain alert at all times.
- Inform them that balls will be changed from the top of the numbers to the sideline on every play but will not be changed between the numbers in the center of the field except as necessary.
- Ball boys are not to come more than 3 – 5 yards on to the field to relay a new ball to the covering official.
- Tell them to leave the ball on the field in the side zone until you tell them to pick it up so that the U may spot ball on ball.
- Ball boys will remain on their respective sides of the field and work with the wing official, BJ and R.
- Position them approximately 5 yards in advance of the line of scrimmage prior to each play beginning.
- On incomplete passes, they are to relay a new ball to the wing official on their sideline and the BJ will assist in retrieving the ball previously in play.
- Hustle and stay awake.
- When you complete the meeting with the ball boys, secure the ball for the team on your sideline and wait at the 50 yard line for the captains to arrive. If they are tardy, you may have to go to get the captains for the team on your sideline.

## **Coin toss**

- Align yourself to the left of the R with the team captains between you and the R.
- Bring a ball for the team on your sideline.
- Walk out to the hash marks on your side of the field with the R, BJ and captains.
- Face the center of the field and remain with any honorary captains on the hash marks.

- 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.
- If your team is kicking, hand the ball to the U; otherwise, toss the ball to the ball person on your sideline.
- Break the huddle and hustle to your free kick position.

### **Free kick duties**

**Position: Align yourself on the kicking team's restraining line (usually the 40 yard line) on the press box sideline.**

- Count the receiving team and make sure that they have 11 players. Do not let a free kick begin with more or less than 11 players. Signal 11 players on the kicking team to the U with a 'closed fist'.
- Police your sideline to make sure that all players and coaches are within the team box.
- Extend your arm above your head to indicate that you are ready when the R points at you. Drop your arm when the R blows the ready for play.
- Carry your bean bag in your hand to mark if the kick is touched by the kicking team prior to going 10 yards.
- 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.
- Start the clock when the ball is touched by the receivers in bounds in your area.
- Anticipate a short kick. If kick is short and to your side, watch for a fair catch signal and watch the catch.
- During 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.
- If a free kick goes out of bounds untouched by R and you are the closest official to the spot of the infraction, go to the spot and drop your flag.
- If the team on your side is the offended team, try to get the coach's 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.
- After the ball is kicked, move slowly down the field while watching for fouls away from the ball.

- On long returns to 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 U is in position to spot the ball. Be aware that you need to be on the goal line at the end of long TD runs.
- If return is up the far sideline, move to the hash marks on your side, keeping the play 'boxed in' while watching for illegal blocks and holding.
- Start and stop the clock when appropriate.
- Free kicks after an accepted free kick penalty:
  - Move to a position 5 yards from your previous free kick position.
  - Move the kicking team to the new yard line for the free kick.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
- Free kicks after a safety, fair catch or awarded fair catch:
  - Set up on the appropriate 20 yard line or the yard line at the placement of the ball and assist with aligning the kicking team.
  - Resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
- Following scores, move up your sideline and be prepared to get your team on the field when the U moves to the center of the field to set up for the next free kick. Step into the huddle and respectively tell the coach to get his players on the field.

### **Scrimmage plays**

**Position: Initially should be no closer than 9 yards outside the nearest player on the line of scrimmage and on the press box side of the field (may be closer to the sideline but no closer to the nearest player).**

**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 9 yard marks for illegal substitution.**

- Remember to move your hand down indicator and be aware of down, distance and game clock.
- Make sure that your sideline is clear.
- Think about your keys.
- Count the defensive team and signal to the BJ when you have 11 or fewer players using a 'closed fist'. Be ready to signal to the BJ when the offense breaks the huddle. If no huddle offense, signal to BJ as soon as possible.
- Check to make sure that there are at least 7 offensive players on the line of scrimmage.
- Establish the line of scrimmage with your foot on the offensive side.

- Determine whether the 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 hand opened. Hold the signal until the ball is snapped, the receiver goes in motion or the receiver shifts to a legal position on the line of scrimmage.
- Know the numbers of the eligible receivers on your side and the legal position of slot-backs and wide-outs. Be aware of a tight end that might be covered-up.
- 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 movement does not take away from your ability to watch the neutral zone.
- If you have an unbalanced line (any number of linemen except 3 on your side of the center), signal the L by placing your clenched fist across your chest followed by the fingers showing either 2 or 4.
- Make sure of no neutral zone violations by the offense or defense.
- NEVER let a player line up behind you.
- If the outside man is over the line on his initial set up, pat your down field leg and tell him “this is the line of scrimmage”.
- Determine whether play is a run or pass. Do this by keying on a player (normally a tackle or tight end on your side) that will tell you what type of play is developing.
- Watch the initial charge of the linemen and be alert for quick plays into the line.
- Watch for holding by the tight end or illegal blocks by the inside receiver(s).
- Look into the backfield to determine the direction of the play.
- When play is moving toward you, backpedal and give way slightly to the offensive side of the ball until the play heads up field.
- If play is moving to the far sideline, move in and 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 occurring.
- Always keep the play “boxed in”.
- When the ball becomes dead, move to the spot of the ball.
- When you are sure that the play is a first down, give the TO signal and notify the R. If the L has the spot, notify him that you are now taking the spot so he can release to set his chains.

- When you are not sure of a first down, put the ball on the spot and notify the R.
- When the runner goes out of bounds, mark the spot, give the TO signal, turn sideways so that you can officiate both in-bounds and out-of-bounds.
- During the run, observe action on linebackers and backside pursuit.
- Always move laterally downfield and square into the ball at the end of the play. Mark progress with our down field foot.
- Watch for:
  - Fumbles(use beanbag) and recovery.
  - When the ball leaves the neutral zone.
  - Personal fouls

### **Passing plays**

#### **Position: Same as on scrimmage plays.**

- 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).
- Move downfield with the receiver(s) in your area.
- Split the distance between the shortest and deepest receiver if you are responsible for more than one receiver in your area.
- If the ball is caught over the middle with the receiver's back to you, look for help from the U, L and BJ. Rule on what you saw if no help is available. Make the call and sell it.
- Make eye contact with the BJ on questionable passes on the sideline. Both of you should have the same call on complete and incomplete passes. Talk about this in pre-game. 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.
- Be aware of when the pass is in the air in order to rule if action on a receiver is holding or pass interference.
- 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.
- Always square to the ball at the end of the play. Mark forward progress with your down field foot.
- Watch for:
  - Action of all receivers in your area.
  - Legally numbered receivers who were lined up as ineligible going down field. This is normally a covered up tight end or slot back that was not off the line of scrimmage.

- On immediate throws by the QB 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 U.

### **Scrimmage kicks**

#### **Position: Same as on scrimmage plays**

- Count the receiving team and make sure that they have 11 players.
- Determine whether nearest wide out is on or off the line and signal if off the line
- Know numbers of eligible and ineligible receivers being aware that ineligible receivers can be lined up in positions where eligible receivers normally position themselves. Important in case of a pass.
- Move downfield immediately after the initial line charge covering your side of the field and observing blocks in front of the receiver(s).
- Watch for PSK fouls.
- On a blocked punt, retreat to assist the R in determining possession.
- On a short kick out of bounds in your area in the air, work with the R to “chop you in” in order to mark the spot. On a grounded kick to your sideline, mark where the ball goes out of bounds and give the TO signal.
- If the receiver/runner comes into your area, move with the runner. Be on the goal line during returns for a TD.
- Watch for:
  - Neutral zone violations by the offense or defense
  - Illegal blocks
  - First touching in your area by the kicking team(mark with bean bag).
  - Fair catch signal by players other than the kick receiver.
  - Illegal blocks after the fair catch signal.

### **Field goals**

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

- Remind other crew members that this is a scrimmage kick and can be returned.
- Remind U that you are leaving the line of scrimmage.

- After kick has crossed the end line, confirm with the BJ if the kick was good or not.
- Once decision is made, move one step into the end zone and give appropriate signal.
- BJ 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 quickly to your sideline and officiate back toward the original line of scrimmage.
- On kicks outside the 20 yard line remain on the line of scrimmage and move downfield after the ball is snapped. On kicks inside the 20 yard line, assume normal FG position.

## **PAT**

**Position: Same as for field goals.**

- On kick attempts, everything is identical as for field goals except be ready to stop the play if the kick try is unsuccessful.
- On scrimmage play attempts for PAT, everything is identical to scrimmage plays except that the ball becomes dead if the offense does not score.

## **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 TD 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!!
- On goal line plays where the team is going away from their goal line with the ball snapped on or inside the 3 yard line, move to the goal line after the snap and officiate up the field. Be prepared to rule on a safety in the event it occurs.
- On any goal line play you must be at the goal line before the runner. Read the play so that you are standing still at the goal line ready to make the call.

### **Time Outs**

- Move to a position halfway between the ball and the team box on your sideline in a position to monitor the team's huddle.
- Watch for illegal conference. Be sure of the proper number of players/attendants in the huddle.
- Record the period and time that each TO occurs.
- Confirm with other officials as to the number of TOs remaining for each team.
- Be alert for whistle from R to give your team a 15-second warning for sideline conferences. Go to the team huddle and tell the coach that the ball will be marked ready to play in 15 seconds.
- Inform the coach of TOs remaining.
- Be alert for substitutes or attempts to use substitutes for purpose of deception.

### **Measurements**

- When the R calls for a measurement, move to yard line where the clip is located and mark the spot on the yard line to be used by the L.
- Do not permit team attendants to enter the field.

### **End of period**

- When facing the clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to snap, sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball is snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long and give the TO signal.
- Inform the players near you of the situation.
- If end of the game, leave the field together as a crew.

### **Between quarters**

- 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 located.
- After the chains have been reset, verify that the clip is on the correct yard line.
- Observe the team conference on your sideline to be sure that it is legal and notify coach at 45 second mark to get ready to play.

### **Half time**

- If the two teams exit on the same end of the field, position yourself with other crew members between the two teams and keep the teams separated as they exit the field.
- Secure your team's football.
- Remain on the sideline, approximately 3 yards on the field during the second half meeting of the two teams' captains.

### **Penalty administration**

- Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul (except for dead ball fouls).
- Drop your penalty marker at the proper yard line.
- Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.
- Give TO signal.
- Sound whistle, giving several short, loud blasts to get R's attention.
- Verbally report to the R (live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, offense or defense).
- Mentally note whether the clock should start on the ready or the snap.
- If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official gets the spot from you even if you know that the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
- Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the R.
- Hustle to your sideline to report the foul and offending player's number to the coach.
- If the coach asks you about the administration of the penalty, give him the options.
- If you are not the calling official, cover the flag for the official who did.
- Remain at the spot of the administration of the penalty until the U has spotted the ball at the succeeding spot and confirmed with the L. Move to the succeeding spot checking on the proper administration of the yardage.

# BACK JUDGE

## On-Field pre-game duties

- After the pre-game, walk to the field with the remainder of the crew and meet with the coaches, home team first. Refer to the Referee section for more details.
- Following the meetings with the coaches, meet with the chain crew along with the L and listen to the instructions to them by the L.
- When you complete the meeting with the chain crew, check with the LJ regarding his meeting with the ball boys. Then proceed to the 50 yard line on the press box side and wait for the captains to arrive.

## Coin toss

- Align yourself to the left of the R and LJ with captains between the LJ and the R. You are to the far left on the coin toss formation.
- Ensure that the other team members remain on their sideline and you walk out to the hash marks on your side of the field with the R, L and captains.
- Face the center of the field and remain with any honorary captains on the hash marks.
- 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.
- Break the huddle and hustle to your free kick position.

## Free kick duties

**Position - Assume a position between the 5 – 10 yard line of the receiving team on the Line Judge's side of the field(press box side).**

- Count the receiving team and make sure that they have 11 players. Do not kickoff with less than 11 or more than 11. Confirm with the R with a 'closed fist'.
- Extend your arm above your head to indicate that you are ready when the R points at you. Drop your arm when the R blows the ready for play.
- Bean bag in hand.
- Watch for:
  - Kick going out of bounds and who may have touched it.

Winding the clock when the ball is legally touched in your area. 49% of the width of the field on the press box side.

- 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.
  - Momentum of runner carrying him into the end zone in your area.
- Pick up the ball carrier in your area and take him to the LJ.
  - If ball becomes dead deep or in your area, move in to spot the ball and stop the clock.
  - If ball carrier goes to the other side of the field, move cautiously toward the play no closer than the hash marks on your side watching the ball carrier to reverse his field. Focus on action away from the ball.
  - Rule on kicks on your sideline near the goal line/end line.
  - Echo signals to start and stop the clock.
  - On obvious on-side kick situations, move to receiver's free kick line opposite the L and on the same sideline as the LJ with bean bag in hand.
  - On free kicks following an accept free kick penalty, help to clear your sidelines and resume normal kicking duties as stated above.
  - On free kicks after safety, fair catch or awarded free kick, assist lining up the receiving team and resume normal kicking duties as stated above. If possibility of a score, take position under the crossbar and be prepared to give signal on kicks that are good and no good. This is your call alone, no help from the LJ. Also, 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.

### **Scrimmage plays**

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

- Start the 25 second clock on the R's ready for play signal.

- Remember to move your hand indicator and be aware of down, distance and game clock.
- Think about your keys, crack back blocks, pass interference rules, etc.
- Count defense after the ready for play signal – check-off with the LJ with a ‘closed fist’ signal if 11 or fewer players as soon as the offense breaks the huddle. If no huddle, give signal as soon as possible.
- If, after the ready for play signal, there are 12 or more players on defense and no player is attempting to leave the field, then throw your flag for a substitution infraction and stop the clock.
- Be ready to focus on the near tackle to determine run or pass.
- If the 25 second clock has expired, blow your whistle, then throw the flag and stop the clock. Remember to hand count the last 5 seconds of the 25 second count if no visible 25 second clock is available.
- If you verify more than 11 players on defense after the snap, throw your flag but do not stop the play.
- 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 the tackle sets up to pass block, it probably will be a pass play so be prepared to back up quickly. Do not move backwards when the play is a short quick run up the middle.
- Avoid focusing on the quarterback, key on the wide out on the strong side.
- You are responsible for the goal line except on plays when the ball is snapped inside the 10-yard line. Always be ready to carry the ball carrier to the end zone.
- 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 the area of mixed jerseys. Assist with retrieving the ball.
- If the play is outside the in-bounds lines, 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 ball only after the dead ball activity is cleared.

## **Passing plays**

### **Position – same as on scrimmage plays**

- You are responsible for the goal line. Always be ready to go with any receiver to the end zone.
- Initial key is the action of the outside receivers.
- Always stay deeper than the deepest receiver.

- If the pass is short towards a sideline, hold until the ball is dead. If the play becomes dead out-of-bounds, so directly out-of-bounds and assist in retrieving the football. Watch the action between players while out-of-bounds.
- Be aware of when the pass is in the air in order to rule if action on a receiver is holding or pass interference.
- Assist wing officials in making rulings on passes to the side zone.
- Make eye contact with the LJ and L on questionable passes on the sideline. Both of you should have the same call on complete or incomplete passes. Talk about this in the pre-game. The official looking at the receiver's back will rule on whether the feet were in bounds and the official looking at the front of the receiver will rule on whether a catch was good or not.
- 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.
- 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.
- Be prepared to relay the ball if the pass is incomplete or the pass is completed in the side zones.
- Watch for:
  - Illegal blocks by or on the receiver you are watching.
  - Illegal use of hands and holding.
  - Pass interference.
  - Dead ball fouls and taunting.
- The wing officials have primary responsibility for getting to all dead ball spots. In the event that neither is there to take the spot, you are responsible for that spot.

### **Scrimmage kicks**

**Position – Line up even with the deepest receiver favoring the L side and approximately 10 yards wide. If the snap is on or inside R's 40 yard line, line up on the goal line.**

- Give a visual and verbal fair catch signal to the deep receiver.
- Count the defense and signal the LJ with a 'closed fist' signaling 11 or fewer players.

- When the football is kicked, watch for fair catch signal by the receiver (valid and legal) and interference on the receiver during the catch.
- If the football is kicked over the receiver's head, go with the football with the LJ taking the receiver.
- If the play becomes dead in your area, mark the dead ball spot, sound your whistle and give the TO signal.
- If the kick is kicked out-of-bounds, work with the R to chop you in to mark the spot on the L's sideline.
- Watch for:
  - First touching by the defensive team.
  - Muffs.
  - Fumbles, recovery and advancement.
  - Other fouls.
  - Ball going into the end zone.
  - Momentum (bean bag).
- On blocked punts, pick up the football while remaining focused on the players downfield.
- Be alert for passes that look like kicks.
- Be prepared to rule on pass interference during fake kicks that turn into pass plays.
- Mark the spot with a bean bag where possession of the kick is gained by the receiving team on a kick that has crossed the neutral zone.
- Notify the U of the dead ball status (fair catch or not).

### **Field goals and PAT**

**Position – Take a position underneath the goal post upright on the L's side of the field.**

- After the kick has crossed the end line, confirm with the LJ if the kick was good or not.
- Once decision is made, move one step into the end zone and give the appropriate signal.
- You are responsible for blowing the whistle unless the kick rolls into the end zone as a touchback on the LJ's side of the field.
- On blocked kicks or fake kicks, move to normal scrimmage position and continue to officiate.
- On kicks from outside the 20 yard line, you have both uprights and the crossbar as well as the whistle. Kicks inside the 20 will follow the mechanics above.
- Unless otherwise noted, treat as any other scrimmage kick.

- On PAT from a scrimmage play, position is the same as any scrimmage play except the ball becomes dead if the offensive team fails to score.

### **Goal line plays**

**Position – On the end line favoring 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 wing officials on passes that go into the side zone near the sideline.
- Watch for illegal blocks on the corners and other fouls.
- Treat as any other scrimmage play.

### **Time Outs**

- Position yourself near the defensive team huddle in view of the R so that you can let him know when the 45 seconds is up as well as monitor the team for illegal conferences.
- Record the period and game time when each TO occurs.
- Confirm with other officials as to the number of TOs remaining for each team.
- When 45 seconds is completed, notify the R by pointing at him. Do the same when 60 seconds has elapsed.

### **Measurements**

- When the chains are called for, move to the sideline opposite the press box to be ready to set the box if the line to gain has been reached. The L will drop the chain following the measurement if the line to gain has been reached and you will set the box man and the back stake.

### **End of period**

- When facing the clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to the snap, sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long and give the TO signal.
- Inform the players near you of the situation.
- Be aware of down, distance and yard line.
- Maintain a presence between the two teams
- If end of the game, leave the field together as a crew.

### **Between quarters**

- Make note of the down, distance and yard line where the ball will next be put into play.
- Time the quarters. When 45 seconds is completed, notify the R by pointing at him. Notify R after 60 seconds by pointing at him again.
- Be on the L's sideline to monitor the team conference on this sideline assuring it is legal and notify coach at 45 second mark to get to play.

### **Half time**

- If the two teams exit on the same end of the field, position yourself with other crew members between the two teams and keep the teams separated as they exit the field.
- Remain on the sideline approximately 3 yards on the field during the second half meeting of the two team's captains.

### **Penalty Administration**

- Do not blow your whistle when you observe the foul.
- Drop your penalty marker at the proper yard line.
- Take note of location and status of the ball and continue to officiate.
- Give TO signal.
- Sound whistle, giving several short, loud blasts to get R' attention.
- Verbally report to the R (live ball, loose ball, dead ball, player's number, offense or defense).
- Mentally note whether the clock should start on the ready or the snap.
- If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official gets the spot from you even if you know that the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
- Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the R.
- If you are not the calling official, cover the flag for official who did.

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