



**BRITISH COLUMBIA FOOTBALL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION**

2018  
MECHANICS MANUAL  
FOR  
FIVE OFFICIALS  
WITH  
FOUR OFFICIAL ADDENDUM  
  
HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Note:

To the reader: updated text will be highlighted

New Sections will be identified in the title as NEW

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# Introduction

We all know that High School Football in British Columbia is played on a different field and with different rules than the 3 down standard played in the rest of Canada.

The BCFOA high school football education committee has committed to emphasizing the importance of understanding the rules differences in the 4 down game and therefore the differences of the mechanics required to successfully officiate the game. A one size fits all approach to mechanics will never provide a positive solution for either game.

BCFOA members who understand the following concepts and use them effectively on the field will undoubtedly have a great opportunity to become successful high school football officials.

## Safety:

The safety of all participants including players, coaches, spectators and officials needs to be the number one goal of every BCFOA football official. No official should allow an unsafe act to without a response. There should be no grey area regarding safety. Personal fouls, clipping, illegal low blocks and unsporting fouls must always be called no matter when or where they occur.

## Dead Ball Officiating:

When the whistle sounds it is time for continued focus and attention on the players. Statistics show that 90% of all dead ball fouls happen in just seconds after the whistle. All officials need to keep officiating after the whistle in order to minimize these uncalled for events. The NFHS has continued to increase emphasis on player safety by the introduction of specific definitions and penalties for illegal contact. The most important task of officials at the end of every play is to ensure that 22 players separate themselves safely. Only then does the spot become important. The end of the run is seldom important more than 2-3 times per game and the mechanics described in this manual are designed to allow officials to make good decisions on spots after ensuring player safety. Racing to a "spot" often results in errors, diverts attention from safety concerns and always prevents "great" dead ball officiating.

## Rules Knowledge:

The rules for high school football were made for high school football. Every high school football official needs to have a thorough knowledge of the rules for high school football. Officials should never apply a rule meant for another game to a high school football game. Rules also need to be understood for the intent for which they were written, and thus the concept that follows.

## Advantage/disadvantage:

The role of the official is to ensure that no team place another team at an unfair disadvantage and also that the game be played with as little interference as possible on the part of the official. There are some rules violations that must always be called. For instance, any foul that is a safety violation must be called. Also those fouls that are so blatantly obvious that they call into question the credibility of the officials should they not be called. It has been said that holding can be called on every play. If this was the case and officials were required to call every hold then the game would quickly become extinct. Good officials can in the space of several seconds see the foul, find the ball, decide if an advantage was gained or not and throw/not throw their flag based on that analysis. The mechanics and positioning described in this manual have been developed in response to the changing definition of how the game is being played, how it is being coached, and therefore, how it needs to be officiated.

## Hustle:

Hustle is defined as "moving with purpose". The successful official will always move with a purpose but will never hurry. They will almost never be seen walking.

## Angle vs. Proximity

Maintaining a proper distance and angle to more accurately view plays including blocking and tackling, in or out of bounds, pass or fumble, pass forward or backwards, catch or no catch, end-of-the-run and forward progress is more important than trying to be too close to the action. When every official on the crew learns and follows proper mechanics on each and every play, guesswork is eliminated, concentration is maintained, and duplication of tasks is avoided. Every play gets its proper attention.

## Preventive Officiating:

Preventive officiating facilitates the smooth conduct of a game within the rules. The good game official, by actions and/or words, can frequently prevent certain fouls from happening.

The mechanics described in this manual have been developed in response to how the game is being played, how it is being coached, and therefore, how it needs to be officiated. Applying these concepts in every game along with practicing improved communications, and consistent application of the rules will help raise the level of commitment and success of those who Referee high school football.

## Pre-Game for Officials

Pre-games are a mandatory requirement to be held before each and every game. With a less than satisfactory schedule which includes games in the early afternoon during the work week it is clear that not every pre-game will be stellar. Also worth noting, many venues have poor changing facilities or worse none at all.

So what is a crew to do? Here are a few suggestions that will help get your mind focused for the competition:

- Driving to the venue turn off the tunes and focus on the coming game.
- Print off a list of pre-game topics and go over them in your mind.
- Discuss a few basics with your partners as you walk the field.
- Take five minutes to discuss who is playing, who is coaching and therefore, how it must be officiated.

A rudimentary pre-game is better than none at all. Starting a game without a pre-game usually courts disaster.

For games that start after 6 pm and anytime on Saturday and Sunday there must be a thorough pre-game. This is the reason that BCFOA requires officials to be at the game site and dressed at least an hour before start time. The pre-game should start no less than 60 minutes prior to kick off. If a timer is assigned he should also attend the pre-game. Since the crew must be on the field no later than 30 minutes prior, there are 30 minutes to devote to the pre-game.

The pre-game is led by the Referee and all of the officials are expected to participate in the discussion. Below are topics that should regularly be included:

### Rule Changes/Major Differences

Cover recent rule/mechanics changes, especially at the beginning of the season. In British Columbia officials may be working both high school and Canadian amateur games. The Referee should ask the crew if there are rules/mechanics to be discussed related to these differences.

### Team Tendencies

Officials should share their knowledge or past experience about teams offense and defense tendencies, special plays, players with exceptional abilities such as long -distance kickers, strong-armed passers etc. plays that may challenge the rules, and things to watch in pre-game warm ups. If you know of team history that may have an effect the game, discuss it.

### Game Management Issues

Confirm start time and ensure time on the game clock is the same as crew watches to avoid taking the field late. Discuss halftime duration or special events during halftime such as Homecoming.

### Review the Mercy Rule

All high school games have the same rule. There is no provision for running the clock in the 1<sup>st</sup> half. At any time in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter one team achieves a 29-point differential the game must be stopped and both head coaches must agree to run the clock in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter.

At any time in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter when one team achieves a 29-point differential the game will be stopped and the losing team coach will advise if the clock will run.

### Special Coverage

Discuss crew coverage in the event of hurry-up offense, obvious onside kick situation, mechanic for field goals and converts inside the 10 yard line.

### Crew Communications

Go over signals used to communicate between officials receivers on or off the line, "two sticks" for a first down, "clock stops" after fourth down etc. Review counting players and the signals that will be used to indicate a team has enough or too few players. Remind officials who are sharing coverage to make eye contact and to practice good dead-ball officiating. Discuss the hand signal mechanic for punts that go out of bounds in flight. Discuss what to do in the event the Referee does not have the out of bounds spot.

### Reporting Fouls to the Referee

The Referee should tell crew members how he wants fouls reported to him. At a minimum the calling officials should tell the Referee what he saw, the offending player's number, offense/defense, live or dead ball and the result of the play, pass complete/incomplete, scoring kick was good/no good and during a kicking play did the foul occur before, during or after the kick?

Remind wing officials they are to tell the coach on their sideline who committed the foul, the nature of the infraction and any special enforcement loss of down, quarter extended for an untimed down, etc.

## Timeout Responsibilities

The Back Judge times in 5 man and the Umpire in 4 man crews.

Where will officials stand during the timeout?

A time out is NOT time off for officials.

Coach should be told how many timeouts each team has left.

Coach to Referee conferences requires 2 officials and happens on the field in front of team bench.

## Sideline Management

Review BCFOA expectations regarding the sideline. Remind wing officials to find the "get back" coach and use him to keep team personnel out of the restricted area. Remember that managing the sideline benefits the next crew and not doing so creates problems for the next crew. Manage to the BCFOA standard every game.

## Cover Mechanics Manual special coverage situations

1. Bump on obvious onside kicks.
2. Signaling from the wing position on dead-ball fouls false start and encroachment.
3. When will BJ give up the goal line?
4. Having all officials attend pre-game meeting with head coach.

## Weather

Football is played in almost any kind of weather. The one exception is when there is lightning in the area. In this case the crew will use the "Flash-to-Bang Theory" to handle a possible suspension of play. The "Flash-To-Bang" theory measures the time from when you see lightning to the time you hear the associated thunder. A measure of 5 seconds from Flash-To-Bang means lightning is one mile away. Ten seconds equals 2 miles; 15 seconds equals 3 miles, etc. When the Flash-to-Bang count is 30 seconds and becoming shorter, it is time to seek safe shelter.

# Important Communication between Crew Members

There are certain mechanics that require communication and agreement between two or more crew members in order to be accomplished with efficiency and effectiveness. These topics should be discussed so that each crew member will understand how the other party will carry out the duties related to these mechanics.

## Referee-Umpire.

Counting the offense and communicating the count.

Spotting the ball and how the Referee will release the Umpire

No huddle and hurry up procedure.

Communication and procedures for penalty enforcement.

## Referee-Wing officials.

How a short count 10 or less of the offense will be communicated.

End of play communication as to whether the ball became dead in or out of bounds.

Communication when a five-yard penalty on the defense will result in a first down.

When to flip the down marker and the release of the chain crew after punts and long plays?

End of the first and third quarter procedure.

## Referee-Back Judge.

Discuss how tight delay of game will be called.

## Umpire-Wing officials.

Screen passes behind or beyond LOS

Review forward progress spot Cross field mechanics

Goal line communication to assist wings with ball location Ineligibles down field

## Linesman-Line Judge.

Signaling on or off the line every scrimmage play

the wing official responsible for motion

Quick passes forward or backward

Keys on passing plays

Off side wing getting penalty info and reporting back to respective coaches.

## Wing officials-Back Judge.

Goal post procedure on kick tries and field goals

who has the whistle and over/under?

Signaling must be synchronized

Communication on double flags for pass interference must be discussed

Discuss coverage on a punt. Discuss counting the defense and signaling the count.

**Referee-Wing officials-Back Judge. New!**

All officials should be aware that on pass plays and punts and other potential change of possession plays that the Referee will likely **NOT** know the result of the play. It is therefore especially important that the official covering the ball ensure that the Referee is informed as to the result of the play when he arrives at the dead ball spot.

## Pre-Game Meeting with Coaches

The meeting with each of the head coaches is required and occurs on the field, out of the way of players. It is best to meet with the home coach first as he may have information about pregame ceremonies that must be relayed to the visiting coach.

The meeting should begin with the Referee and Umpire introducing themselves and giving the coach a card listing names of crew members. If time permits it is acceptable to have all the crew members to come to the pre-game.

- Ask the coach to confirm that there is a doctor or qualified health care personnel present and have the coach point that person out to you. The answer must be "yes" or the game will be forfeited at game time.
- Inform the coach that if a player is removed during the game for suspected concussion, that player may return after the team's qualified health care personnel inform the Referee verbally that that player is free of signs or symptoms.
- Ask the coach to verify that all of his players have the proper equipment and that no illegal equipment will be used.
- Advise coaches that it is their responsibility to advise the official on his sideline if he wants to have the clock started on the snap following a penalty against his opponent within the last 2 minutes of either half.
- Get the captains' numbers.
- Ask if there are players with casts or equipment that need to be inspected by the Umpire.
- Ask if the quarterback is right-handed or left-handed and if the place kicker is right-footed or left-footed.
- Ask for the name of the "get-back coach" and remind the coach of sideline requirements that players must in the team bench all the time and up to 3 coaches may be in the restricted area until the RFP.
- Ask the coach to show the footballs that are to be used and allow the Umpire to inspect and approve them.
- Ask if the team plans on using any unique formations or trick plays.
- Ask if any special ceremony is planned like national anthem or player introductions.
- Ask the coach if he has a choice preference if his team wins the coin toss.
- Ask the coach to have the captains on the sideline ready for the coin toss five minutes before game time.
- Avoid conversations about "what the other team does."
- Lastly, remind the coach about the emphasis on sportsmanship.

## Coin Toss

The coin toss is the next opportunity for a crew to make a good impression on coaches, players and fans. While rule knowledge and mechanics are important, game administrative duties are also needed to be accomplished with efficiency and effectiveness. Coin toss mechanics should be covered in the pre-game to ensure that all crew members are on the same page, especially early in the new season. We will not assume that everyone on the crew will know where to line up, what side of the field to come in from, or which crew member gets captains.

The coin toss will take place at the 50 yard line in the center of the field approximately 5 minutes before kick-off.

The crew will call for "captains to the sideline". The captains will come to their respective sideline and line up there. By rule four 4 captains are permitted but some schools will bring honorary captains dressed in street clothes during homecoming or other celebrations. The Referee and the Line Judge will introduce themselves to the home team captains and escort them to the center of the field with their backs to their sideline. The Umpire and Back Judge will introduce themselves and escort the visiting team captains to the center of the field and line up with their backs to the other **sideline**. The captains will face each other with their helmets on. The captains will line up with their backs to a sideline regardless if the team benches are on the same sideline.

The Line Judge and the Back Judge will stop at their respective hash marks at the 48 yard line while the Referee and Umpire will continue with their captains to the center of the field and the Linesman will remain off the field with his line to gain crew during the coin toss. In a four person crew the Linesman will replace the Back Judge for the coin toss.

On fields where teams are on the same sideline the captains will still line up with their backs to a sideline. It is suggested that the home team captains line up on their own sideline while the visiting team captains line up so their backs are to the opposite sideline.

The Referee will line up at one end of the captains formation and the Umpire will be at the other end of the formation. The Referee and the Umpire should ensure that the speaking captain for each team is lined up nearest the Referee.

The Referee will ask the captains to shake hands and introduce themselves to the other captains.

There is no requirement for the Referee to introduce the officials by name or provide any commentary beyond stressing the importance of good behavior during the game and ask captains to be prepared to talk with the Referee when there are penalty options to be decided.

The Referee will show captains the coin and indicate which side is heads and which side is tails. He will ask the visiting speaking captain to select heads or tails before the toss. The accepted method for tossing the coin is to flip it into the air and **CATCH** it. The

Referee will tell the captains that if the coin drops to the ground the coin will be tossed again. An optional method of allowing the coin to fall to the ground is also permitted as long as the instructions are clear as to which method will be used. The Umpire will verify the call by the visiting captain. The Referee tosses the coin into the air and catches it with both hands. The result of the toss is revealed when the Referee removes his upside hand from the coin and shows the coin resting in the palm of his other hand to each captain. When the alternate method is used, the captains can view the results by observing the coin on the ground.

The captain who won the toss has the choice of the following 4 options; kick, receive, defend a goal or defer his choice to the second half. Since in the vast majority of the time the choice will be either receive or defer to the second half and because the Referee has consulted with the head coach to obtain his preference it is permissible to say to the captain, "Do you want the ball now or in the second half?" In the rare circumstance that you know a coach wishes to defend a goal or kick the ball you must be prepared to honor the choice with an explanation that their choice will likely result in their team kicking off in both halves. The Referee also needs to be prepared to give the signals for these unusual options. The signal for kicking off is swinging a leg simulating a kick and for defending a goal, pointing with both arms extended toward the goal line a team wishes to defend.

If the winning captain selects the receive option the Referee will then ask the other captain which end his team will defend.

If the defer option is selected, the Referee will tap the captain on the shoulder and give the defer signal while facing the press box. The Referee will then obtain a choice from the other speaking captain and suggest, "You want the ball" in order to avoid giving them the list of other picks or asking for a selection. Lastly, the Referee will get the choice from the "deferring" speaking captain as to which end of the field they wish to defend. The same question is asked of the captain who lost the toss if the winning captain wants to receive.

After the Referee gets both team choices, the Referee will ask the captains to line up with their backs toward the goal they will defend, and the Referee will give the signal to indicate winning captain's choice. If the defer signal was given, the Referee will also touch the losing captain's shoulder and signal their option, most likely the receive signal. The Referee will ask the captains to shake hands once more and wish them good luck in the game.

As the captains return to their team area the entire crew should huddle to review coin toss options and all crew members record the captain choices on their game cards. Each official will then hustle to their kick off positions.

To obtain second half choices BCFOA no longer requires the captains to meet to determine second half options.

Prior to the end of the halfway intermission the Referee accompanied by the Umpire will ask the coach with the second half choice to declare his choice. The other options are then presented to the other coach.

In most cases the coach will want the ball but the Referee should be prepared for other choices such as on windy days the coach may wish to defend an end in the second half so as to have field position in the 4th quarter. The only choice not available is of course to defer. Once the choices are known the coaches are advised which end of the field they will defend, the officials huddle to record the choices on their game cards and then hustle to their kick off positions.

## Overtime Coin Toss

When a game is tied after four periods and the rules call for overtime, a specialized coin toss is held. After the required 3 minute timeout, each wing official will escort their respective coach and captains to the center of the field. The Referee will explain the procedures to each coach prior to the coin toss.

The overtime coin toss has a number of differences. There is no defer, kick or choice of end and the Referee only gives one signal. The Referee asks visiting team captain to call the toss. The coin toss winner has only two choices, offense or defense. BCSSFA (high school football league) has mandated the scoreboard end of the field as the choice of end for all overtime games. The Referee will select the end of the field that will be used taking into account the scoreboard if any, as well as the condition of the field. The Referee will tap the shoulder of the team that won the toss but only give a first down signal. The crew must record the team that won the toss regardless of their choice because if the game remains tied after each team has run a series then the team that lost the first toss has the choice to begin the next series.

If a tie exists after both teams run a series of plays, assemble again with the team captains at mid-field. The team that lost the first overtime coin toss now has the choice of options for the first series of the second overtime period. For third and subsequent overtimes, alternate options in each succeeding overtime period.

A well conducted coin toss is a great way to start a game. When executed properly, the crew will gain everyone's confidence of having the ability to correctly manage a football contest.



## Mercy Rule

The mercy rule modifies the timing of the game when a 29 point differential is obtained with the following conditions:

1. During the 1st half regular timing rules will always apply regardless of the score
2. During the 3rd quarter when a 29 point differential is obtained, both head coaches must agree to the timing changes.
3. During the 4th quarter when a 29 point differential is obtained the head coach of the losing team must agree to the timing changes.

### Timing changes:

During mercy rule timing the clock will always run with the exception of charged team timeouts, official's timeouts, injury timeouts and intermissions.

### Procedure:

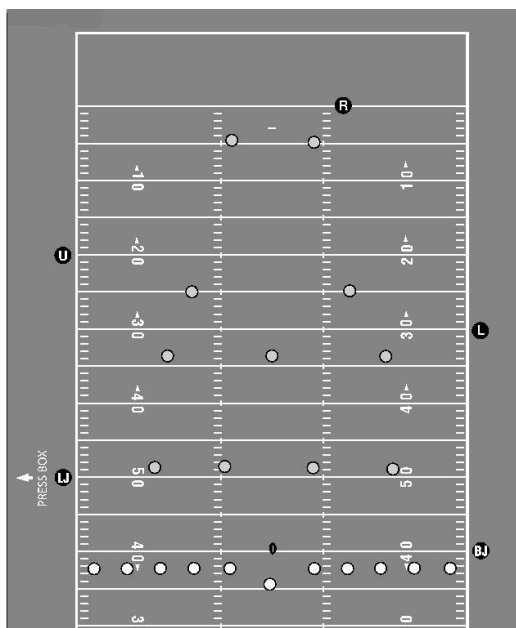
Any time during the 3rd quarter when a 29 point differential has been obtained, the Referee will stop the game and confer with both head coaches. If both coaches agree to modify the timing when the clock is started following the subsequent snap or kick off the clock will run continuously. Either coach may subsequently change his decision and return to normal timing by notifying the Referee. At any time during the 4th quarter when a 29 point differential has been obtained, the Referee will stop the game and confer with the coach of the losing team as to the status of the clock. If the coach of the losing team agrees to modify the timing when the clock starts following the subsequent snap or kick, the clock will run continuously. The Referee will notify the coach of the winning team as to the status of the clock. The coach of the losing team may subsequently change his decision and return to normal timing by notifying the Referee.

Should the point differential subsequently fall below 29 points, then regular timing rules would again apply.

Referees are asked to monitor the use of substitutes by the winning team as well as the discipline level of the teams involved and include it in their Arbiter Game Report.

## Free Kick Mechanics

After a score there is a one minute time out. All officials should use this period to get into position and ready for the subsequent kick off.



### Free Kick Alignment

**The Referee:** will be positioned on the goal line, somewhere between the center of the field and the hash mark, toward the Linesman's side of the field. This allows the Referee to be able to observe and determine the free kick alignment at the time of the kick 6 -1-3b. He counts R players and signals to the Umpire and Linesman. He then observes each of the crew members raise their arm over their head to signal their readiness. He observes the Back Judge last to ensure that the Back Judge has determined free kick alignment is correct. The Referee then signals RFP with a loud blast of his whistle.

**When the ball is kicked** the kicking team violates the free kick alignment rule if less than four 4 players are on each side of the kicker. If this occurs the Referee blows his whistle emphatically to stop the players from continuing and the penalty is administered as a dead ball encroachment foul.

**The Umpire** is positioned at the 20-yard line, outside the field of play opposite the Referee. If a team is known to regularly kick deep the Umpire may start closer to the goal line. He counts R players and signals to the Referee and the Linesman. He also ensures that his sideline is clear. The Umpire then raises his arm over his head to signal ready to the Referee.

**The Linesman** is positioned at the 30-yard line on his respective sideline outside the field of play. He counts R players and signals to the Referee and Umpire. The

Linesman also uses this time to ensure that his sideline is clear of coaches and players. The Linesman then raises his arm over his head to signal ready to the Referee.

**The Line Judge** is on his respective sideline at the 50-yard line, outside the field of play. The Line Judge does not need to come onto the field unless to get a players attention or help get a player into proper position. He counts K and signals to the Back Judge and also ensures that his sideline is clear of coaches and players. The Line Judge then raises his arm over his head to signal ready to the Referee. The Line Judge should have a bean bag in hand in case needed to mark a line of 1<sup>st</sup> touching.

**The Back Judge** should initially be positioned on the field with the kicking ball. From this position the Back Judge may assist the kicking team with their alignment restrictions. This includes making sure there are at least four K players on each side of the ball and making sure that no K players are not more than 5 yards behind the 5 yard belt area from where the ball is being kicked 6 -1-3c.

**Prior to handing the ball to the kicker** he should ensure that there are 11 players on K and that no kicking team player is in an illegal position. That is, no player can be touching the five 5 yard line behind where the ball is spotted except the player who kicks the ball. He signals 11 on K to the Line Judge and as he hands the ball to the kicker he reminds the kicker not to kick the ball until the Referee blows his whistle. He then retreats to a position on K free kick line outside the field of play on the Linesman's side of the field. **He may check one last time to ensure players are lined up legally.** Lastly, the Back Judge raises his arm over his head to signal ready to the Referee.

If after the RFP any player except the player who kicks the ball violates the five 5 yard rule, the Back Judge will sound his whistle emphatically **when the ball is kicked** in order to prevent players from continuing and the penalty will be administered as a dead ball encroachment foul.

## After Free Kick Coverage

### The Referee:

The Referee is solely responsible for action around the goal line pylon on his side of the field and the Umpire is responsible for the opposite pylon. The Referee should move toward either pylon if it is threatened. When in doubt, it is a touchback and not a kick out of bounds.

On kicks inside Team R's five yard line, the Referee is solely responsible for determining whether the receiver's momentum carries him into the end zone or the kick is to be ruled a touchback. If a touchback occurs, the Referee should whistle the play dead and move quickly toward the middle of the field to signal touchback, getting between the receiver and oncoming opponents to prevent late hits. If the momentum exception applies, he should bean bag the spot of possession.

If the kick is down the middle of the field, the Referee stays with the runner on the field to about Team R's 25 yard line. If the kick is to the Umpire or Linesman's coverage area, the Umpire is responsible for the initial coverage of the runner, and the Referee cleans up behind the play, but must move cautiously in case Team R runs a reverse or the runner reverses his direction.

### The Umpire:

If the kick is deep and near the Umpire's sideline, he should move towards the pylon in case it becomes threatened. If the ball is advanced from the Umpire's coverage area he stays with the runner to approximately Team R's 35 yard line, where the Line Judge takes over. When the Umpire is responsible for the initial coverage of the runner, the Referee will clean up behind the play. When the kick is outside the Umpire's coverage area, his initial responsibility is the legality of the blocks in front of the runner.

### The Linesman:

The Linesman initial coverage is blocking/contact on the four Team K players nearest his sideline. If the kick is to the Linesman's side and as wide as the hash mark, the Linesman takes up the coverage at about Team R's 25 yard line and stays with the runner trailing the play. If the kick is short the Linesman is responsible for the initial coverage of the runner. The Referee will clean up behind the play. If the kick goes to the opposite side, the Linesman watches blocks in front of the runner and action away from the ball. The Linesman has responsibility for his sideline to the K 2 yard line. The Linesman has responsibility for forward progress the dead ball spot and his sideline to the K 2 yard line and should trail the play.

**He must also be aware of the need to assist with cross the field coverage at the end-of-the-run, especially on a long return.**

### The Line Judge:

After the ball is kicked, the Line Judge moves no more than about 10-15 yards downfield, while watching the blocks on the four Team K players nearest his sideline. He should go no farther than Team R's 35 yard line in case the runner breaks off a long return and enters his coverage area. The Line Judge has responsibility for forward progress the dead ball spot and his sideline to the K 2 yard line and should trail the play.

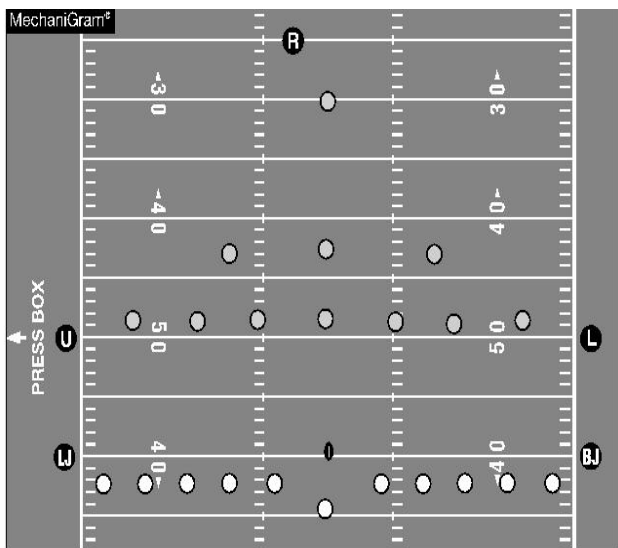
**The Line Judge should give ground until the Umpire can no longer cover the play and then allow the runner to pass him and trail the play as per any scrimmage play. He must also be aware of the need to assist with across the field coverage at the end-of-the-run, especially on a long return.**

### Back Judge:

After the ball is kicked, the Back Judge moves toward the center of the field about 10-15 yards and maintain special protection of the kicker until he participates in the action. He then moves up field to provide inside out coverage of the return, while watching the initial blocks on the three middle Team K players. He should not go beyond Team R's 45 yard line in case the runner breaks off a long return and enters his coverage area. The Back Judge has responsibility for the team K goalline.

**It is important to remember that the Back Judge does not have a "spot" short of the one-yard line. Unlike any other position, where the official should trail the runner to the goal line, the BJ must precede the runner and maintain a buffer to the goal line.**

## Onside Kick Coverage



If an onside kick is anticipated, the Linesman and Umpire move up to R's free-kick line. The Back Judge and Line Judge cover K's free-kick line. The Referee still has deep coverage. The BJ and the LJ have the football and responsibility for starting the clock, the first nine yards of the neutral zone. The U and the Linesman must never leave R's free-kick line until it is no longer threatened.

Each official covering the kickers or receivers free kick line must have a bean bag in hand ready to rule on first touching by team K.

### Winding the Clock

Only the official responsible for the initial touching by R will wind the clock on the kick off. Other officials do not mirror the wind signal.

### Dead Ball Officiating:

After the ball has become dead **ALL** officials must dead ball officiate and allow all players to clear the area before moving to their next position or retrieving a new ball.

## Scrimmage Plays

Since the majority of plays during a game are scrimmage plays, officials will not know exactly what play will be run when the offense lines up but indicators like down and distance, offensive formation, and the offensive linemen's stance can be used to help determine the next play and therefore help officials get into the best position to officiate it. The following section describes mechanics for runs and passes. Goal line plays require special mechanics and are documented separately.

## Positioning

### Referee:

The guideline position is suggested as 12-15 yards behind the LOS, outside the tight end at approximately 45% angle on the quarterback's throwing arm side. This is not a fixed position as the Referee needs to see the offside tackle as well as backs, and the ball. He should adjust his position when the game situation dictates a change e.g. move up on fourth and inches. At the snap the Referee must have a clear view of the offside tackle, the "B" gap and be ready to maintain a 7 yard buffer if the quarterback prepares to pass from a 1, 3, 5 or 7 step drop. The Referee should also be aware of team tendencies so as to position himself such that he does not need to move for reverse plays, trick plays, 7 step drops by QB. For broken plays and bad snaps the Referee should move to maintain his cushion. The Referee should stand in an upright position presenting an athletic posture. The Referee is responsible for ensuring Team A does not violate substitution rules and must always know how many players are in the huddle. He observes the offensive huddle and counts the offensive players and signals to the Umpire when the huddle breaks, holding it until the offense reaches the line of scrimmage. The Referee must develop a consistent pace and tempo for marking the ball ready for play. It is suggested that the RFP whistle be 3-5 seconds after the Umpire places the ball on the ground. It is therefore important that the Referee and Umpire take into account the time it takes all officials to return to their starting positions and hold the ball if necessary. He should allow all offensive players to return to their side of the ball before the ready-for-play. The Referee should be as near to his position as possible and visible to the clock operator when marking the ball ready.

### Umpire:

The Umpire should maintain control of the ball by standing with his feet straddling the ball observing and counting the offensive huddle. When the Referee signals the RFP he signals his count to the Referee and moves quickly to his starting position. If Team A is running a no-huddle offense, the Umpire can advise the snapper verbally to wait for the ready-for-play whistle. Once the snapper touches the ball, the Umpire must keep his eyes on it at all times including while he is moving to his position, which is generally 4-7 yards off the line and between the defensive ends. Laterally, he may line up anywhere opposite the tackles, but he should vary his position to lessen the possibility that the offense can use him as part of the blocking scheme. His position will also vary based on the adjacent lineman he has elected to observe for a specific play. There is no prohibition on taking a position on the same side of the snapper as the Referee. The Umpire should strive to work as close to the line of scrimmage as the linebackers will allow him. He must give the linebackers the freedom to move laterally and should not stand immediately behind a player. **He must be in a hands-on-knees position so as to not interfere with the quarterback's view of the defense.** He checks offensive line numbering for 50-79 and he must know which players are on the line of scrimmage in the free blocking zone and must monitor the defensive team's signal calling to ensure it does not interfere with the offense. It is preferable to warn, if possible, before throwing the flag. He should note the position of ball between hash marks so he can return the ball to that spot after an incomplete pass.

### Linesman and Line Judge:

The wing officials line up straddling the line of scrimmage and at least a yard off the field of play in all cases, even when the ball is on the opposite hash mark. It is easier to move in than to retreat backward when the play comes toward the sideline. Wings will use an upright stance.

The wing officials count defensive players and signal the count to the Back Judge and the other wing official prior to the offensive huddle breaking. Wing officials need be prepared to kill the play before the snap in every case when there are more than 11 players on defense. Before the snap, the wing officials identify the eligible receivers on their side of the field and check to ensure Team A has at least seven

players on the line of scrimmage. They must remain alert for illegal substitutions, encroachment or false starts.

As the offense leaves the huddle, each wing official extends an arm parallel to the line-of-scrimmage to give outside offensive players a reference point for where the line of scrimmage is. The wing official will say to the widest potential receiver, "Here is the line".

After the receiver has established his position, the wing official will signal the receiver's position. If the receiver is in the back field the wing will extend his arm toward the offensive backfield and state "I have you off the line". If he is on the line of scrimmage the wing official will extend his arm straight out parallel to the line of scrimmage and verbalize "I have you on the line".

Wing officials should note the number of the outside offensive player, and the number of the player directly inside of him eligible/ ineligible by number and/or position.

Wing officials are responsible for ensuring that the offense has seven 7 players on the line of scrimmage on every down. A simple method is to count the number of players in the backfield. If more than four, wing officials will communicate a possible foul at the snap, by tapping downfield thigh if the offense formation does not change or a charged time-out is granted.

After the snapper has made final adjustment the wing officials will concentrate on offensive players coming out of a three-point or four-point stance, violation of the neutral zone by any player, watch shifts and motion. Motion is legal when all 11 players are set for one second prior to such movement, and the player in motion is moving parallel to or away from the opponents' goal line. Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official from whom the player initially moves away from, even if the player reverses his motion.

### **Back Judge:**

The Back Judge should start about 15 to 20 yards deep depending on player/game situation. He may be anywhere between the hash marks that allows a clear view of his key. On obvious passing downs, a deeper position is acceptable. The Back Judge will always have all defensive players in front of him. He counts the defense and verifies it with both wing officials. When the ball is snapped inside Team B's 25 yard line he must be aware of the goal line. The Back Judge's distance from the goal line will decrease as the spot of the snap gets closer to the goal line. When the ball is snapped between Team B's 25 yard line and their 15 yard line, he must be on the goal line, but not in front of any defensive player. Between 15 and 10 yards the Back Judge is the sole decision maker as to his line responsibility at the snap. He must communicate that decision to the wing officials.

On plays where the Back Judge has declared the goal line he must be prepared to retreat to the end line when a pass play is deep enough that the goal line is not threatened.

If the ball is snapped inside Team B's 10 yard line, the Back Judge must be on the end line and will not give it up if there is any chance it will be threatened. He must communicate to both wing officials when he releases from the goal line.

## **Following the Snap:**

### **All officials:**

At the snap, each official should observe a lineman, which will almost always be a tackle. The initial movement of a tackle although not with 100% certainty will indicate whether the play is a pass or run. On running plays, the tackles will almost always charge forward to initiate a block. The play must always be properly boxed in and before blowing the whistle, the covering official must be able to see the ball and be certain the play is dead.

### **Referee: Runs:**

The Referee is responsible for snapper's release of the snap. He will then focus on the opposite tackle, which will help him read whether the play is a pass or run. He will also rule on illegal movement by the backs in the backfield including questionable movement by the quarterback during his cadence. On a running play, the Referee focuses on the ball, the runner and the blocking around the runner. The Referee is responsible for the runner until he crosses the neutral zone. If the play goes to the opposite side, the Referee should first hesitate to ensure the play is not a reverse and move toward the runner at a 45 degree angle after ensuring that the quarterback is not threatened. If the play is to the Referee's side, the Referee moves behind the play and is responsible for the runner until he crosses the neutral zone or turns up field. The Referee should watch the handoff or the pitchout, see the runner head outside the free blocking zone, and watch to see that no one contacts the quarterback before drifting along to follow the play. He will not have much to observe besides the quarterback because little action is likely to take place behind the runner, and the runner himself is being watched by the appropriate wing official. The priority is protecting the quarterback. The Referee should be able to get to the sideline and help the wing official with action out of bounds when the play ends out of bounds or near the sideline including helping escort players out of opponent's bench area. Otherwise, when the play is dead the Referee should continue to observe the offense and keep all players in his view.

### **Passing plays:**

At the snap the Referee is watching blocking and must watch for backs coming through the line to threaten the quarterback. The Referee should not have to move if the quarterback simply drops back into the pocket. If the quarterback rolls to either direction, the Referee must move with him, keeping a 7-10 yard buffer. By maintaining spacing between himself and the quarterback, the Referee will widen his field of vision. The wider view allows the Referee to determine if the pass is forward or backward yet continue to focus attention on the passer.

If the quarterback scrambles away from the Referee, the Referee needs to keep pace. If the quarterback scrambles toward the Referee, the Referee needs to move toward the sideline, keeping his 7-10 yard buffer as long as possible. He is responsible for the spot if the runner goes out of bounds behind the line of scrimmage on either sideline. If the runner goes out of bounds into the opposing team's bench area, the Referee follows the play into the bench area. He should help escort players out of opponent's bench area.

The Referee is the sole protector of the passer. Therefore he must not watch the ball when it is released by passer, but continue to focus on passer until he is not threatened. He can alert rushing defenders by yelling "Ball gone!" or "Leave Him"

If the direction of the pass is changed because the passer's arm is hit, the Referee must determine whether the loose ball is a forward pass or a fumble. If he rules the play to be an incomplete pass, he must blow his whistle and signal emphatically. If the play is determined to be a fumble, the Referee does not need to bean bag the spot because this is a loose ball behind the LOS and the basic spot will be the previous spot.

An intentional grounding flag is thrown ONLY by the Referee, but he can rarely make that call without assistance because he will not see where the ball landed. Other members of the crew should immediately volunteer information regarding whether or not the ball was thrown into an area occupied by an eligible offensive receiver. When the Referee believes a quarterback intentionally grounded the ball to avoid a sack, he should flag it. If an eligible receiver was nearby, the flag can be picked up. If the Referee does not throw his flag and is told the ball went into an area not occupied by an eligible offensive receiver, it is acceptable to throw a late flag, which should be tossed softly to the spot of the pass.

Illegal forward passes are also the primary responsibility of the Referee who is aided by the Umpire. As he trails the quarterback, he should move to the spot of the pass to judge whether it was thrown from beyond the line of scrimmage. If it is clearly a foul, he should drop his flag at the spot of the pass. If the spot is questionable, he should drop his bean bag. In either case, he must continue to officiate. If the quarterback is sacked, the Referee is solely responsible for the progress spot the wings will have gone downfield with the receivers and must go immediately to him ensure nothing illegal happens when the players un -pile. A bean bag may be used and it will have to be thrown to mark the spot, but it is preferable for the Referee to mentally note the progress spot in relation to the nearest five-yard line without using a beanbag. It is much more important to watch for dead-ball activity than to get a precise progress spot.

#### **Umpire: Runs:**

The Umpire is responsible for the start of the snap. He is responsible for snap infractions by the snapper and he is responsible for illegal pre-snap movement by four of the linemen. He will then focus on the two linemen he has selected to initially watch for that play. Their block will help determine whether the play is a pass or run. He must observe for possible chop blocks which will almost always occur immediately after the snap and any other block that violates the restrictions of the free blocking zone. On a running play, the Umpire must determine the point of attack because of the potential for holding, and other fouls. The Umpire does not watch the runner, but instead focuses on action in front of the runner. On runs into a side zone, he should move toward the play as it develops while covering the point of attack. He should continue to observe action around the runner. When the play ends the Umpire is responsible for retrieving the ball going past the hash marks and all the way to the bottom of the numbers if needed to get the ball from the wing official. On plays ending near the line of scrimmage, the Umpire should always reach the pile to assist with the separation of players and encourage sportsman like behavior. The Umpire's voice commands will reduce the chance of unsporting acts. When piles form the Umpire should use his voice to let players know the play is over. Rarely does the Umpire blow his whistle, but should be prepared to do so if no other official can see the ball or if a player's safety is a concern due to the absence of a whistle. The Umpire is responsible for spotting the ball. While facing the wing official he should communicate with the wing officials so they do not move until he has confirmed their spot.

#### **Passing plays:**

The Umpire must promptly move to the line of scrimmage to rule on passes or passers that cross the neutral zone. Be ready to assist the Referee when the passer crosses the line of scrimmage. In doing so, the Umpire must avoid interfering with a receiver who is running a short pattern over the middle. On quick passes head-level over the middle, the Umpire must pivot and watch the pass to help rule on catch/no catch. If the pass is ruled 'trapped' and incomplete the Umpire must move swiftly to the area and give a strong signal.

#### **Linesman and Line Judge:**

##### **Running Plays:**

**At the snap wing officials should take one step into the offensive backfield. They stay off the sideline and watch blocking.** They trail any play up the middle or on their side always remaining off the field of play and are responsible for progress beyond and behind the line-of-scrimmage, blocking patterns, outside in, tight end, pulling lineman, lead block. They have responsibility for the ball carrier and tackler when the ball carrier reaches the line of scrimmage.

On a sweep to their side the wing official observes blocking in front of the ball carrier and takes several steps into the offensive backfield to get a better angle on blocking and ensure they are not in the way of the runner. When the runner reaches the line of scrimmage the wing official takes over responsibility for the ball carrier from the Referee.

When ball becomes dead penetrate as far as necessary to "sell" your spot. On the back side, penetrate to the hash mark. Square up when penetrating and check your partner for forward progress.

After the ball is dead Wing Officials always keep their head up and always keep players in view then back out when returning to sideline; do not turn your back on the players.

If the play ends resulting in the line to gain to be more than 10 yards, the wing officials will give the "double stakes" signal prior to the next snap.

If the play continues out of bounds the wing official will rotate into the field of play observing the action out of bounds and establishing the spot with his feet. His head should be kept up and attention focused on players out of bounds and not focused on the ground. He should not leave the sideline unless absolutely necessary to break up a fight. The Back Judge and/or Referee will assist with the players in the bench area. If he does need to leave the sideline, it is permitted to use bean bag to mark the out-of- bounds spot.

On a running play away from his sideline, the wing official must clean up behind the play, but must stay off the field until the play ends and then penetrate to the hash. He should pinch in and observe the blocking, then hold the forward progress spot as a cross field mechanic.

The Line Judge has primary responsibility for determining if a first down has been achieved. If the ball is clearly beyond the stake, he will stop the clock and signal the first down to the Referee. If the ball is clearly short, he will announce the number of the next down. If it is questionable, he will stop the clock and signal for the Referee to come forward and look at it; he may recommend a measurement to the Referee.

##### **Passing plays:**

When the quarterback throws a quick pass one -step drop, the wing officials are responsible for ascertaining forward/backward, complete/incomplete. **The wing official facing the passer and toward whom the pass is thrown is responsible for determining whether the pass is forward or backward and whether the pass is complete.** When in question, it is a forward pass.

On passing plays downfield the wing officials have to follow receivers downfield but they need to be aware of what the quarterback is doing. There is no need to release downfield too quickly. The wing can allow the receiver to go approximately 10 yards downfield before he needs to follow. Most passes are relatively short; the wing should strive to be within 10 yards of the spot of a catch on his side of the field. Wing officials have responsibility for the passer/quarterback if he moves past the line of scrimmage. The wing officials also look for off-ball action and must be alert for action against a defenseless receiver. On catches where the receiver comes back toward the ball, the near wing is responsible for the catch and any fouls by or on the receiver. Since that wing official is up field from the completed play he should go to the receiver and not try to hold the progress spot. The opposite wing is responsible for the progress spot; this is one example of "cross field mechanics."

For possible cases of intentional grounding, the wings should point to the eligible receiver in the area and immediately go to the Referee and discuss the situation and where the pass landed. It is permissible for the wing officials to throw a flag for intentional grounding especially if the Referee is busy monitoring the quarterback after the pass is thrown which is often the case when the quarterback is under duress. The decision to enforce the penalty remains with the Referee.



**Back Judge:**

At the snap, the Back Judge will observe blocking to determine whether the play is a pass or run and then observe the actions of his key receiver. He should back pedal at the snap to ensure he maintains a 10-12 yard buffer from the nearest defensive player and ensure that he is never beat to the goal line on long runs/passes.

On a running plays, the Back Judge observes blocking ahead of the runner and is NEVER directly responsible for forward progress; unless it involves the goal line. Wing officials will come down the field and spot the ball.

The Back Judge will always have the goal line if the run is greater than 15 yards. When the play ends, out of bounds the Back Judge and/or Referee should move toward the out of bounds spot to assist the wing official with players who go into the bench area.

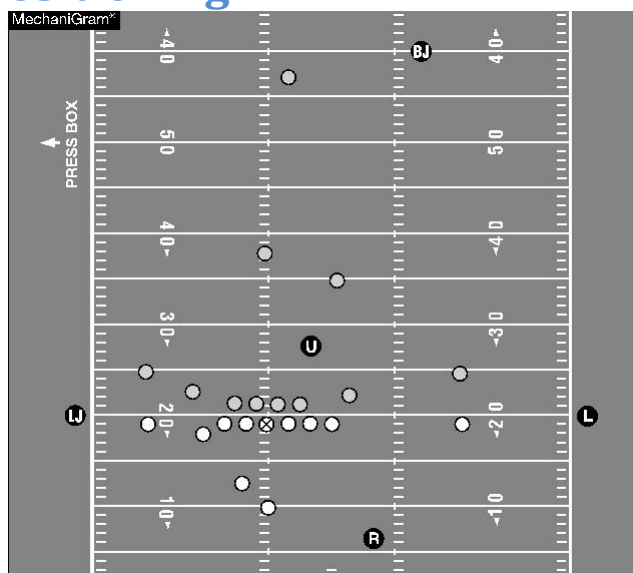
Otherwise, the Back Judge becomes the primary dead-ball official for the defense and must strive to keep all players in his view. He should maintain inside-out coverage then pinch-in to a point about 10-15 yards from where the play ended.

**Passing plays:**

On a passing play, the Back Judge must read this quickly and his first move should be backward; he must retreat by back pedaling far enough so he is always deeper than the deepest receiver. Once the pass is thrown, he should quickly determine the intended receiver and get into the best possible position to observe the play, boxing the intended receiver with the appropriate wing official. While the pass is in the air, he should not move toward the ball or watch the flight of the ball. His focus must be on action involving the receiver and defender. Both the offensive and defensive players must be observed for possible interference. He should also look off the ball for action by other defenders on passes in the side zones where the wing officials have primary coverage. He must also be alert for action against a defenseless receiver. The Back Judge rarely has forward progress; the wing officials will come down and spot the ball. In rare instance of a long pass and run where the wings do not have a good look at the forward progress spot the Back Judge from his position at least 10 yards from the end of the pass/run may communicate the dead ball spot. The Back Judge should never be at the spot of the end of the play unless it is the goal line. When the play ends, the Back Judge and/or Referee may assist the wing official with players who go into a team's bench area. Otherwise, the Back Judge becomes the primary dead-ball official for the defense and must strive to keep all players in his view. He should gently pinch-in to a point about 10-15 yards from where the play ended. If an incomplete pass is left on the field and no player retrieves it, the Back Judge should get the ball only after he is sure all dead ball action is complete.

## Scrimmage Kick Mechanics

### Positioning

**Referee:**

Starting position is about 3 to 5 yards outside the tight end and roughly 3 to 5 yards behind the kicker. The Referee must be able to view the snap and the initial block by the opposite tackle as well as the action around the kicker before, during and after the kick.

The Referee must be ready to move if a bad snap leads to a loose ball in the offensive backfield and must be aware of and ready to officiate the goal line.

**Umpire:**

Deeper than normal is better on scrimmage kicks so he should start about 10 yards off the line of scrimmage, favoring the sideline opposite the Referee.

**Linesman and Line Judge:**

Starting position is the same as for regular scrimmage plays, straddling the LOS off the field of play.

**Back Judge:**

Starting position is three to five yards behind the deepest receiver toward the Linesman side of the field and wide enough to observe the receiver's hands and no wider than the hash marks. If there are two

deep receivers, the Back Judge must be between and behind both of them. The Back Judge must be prepared to move up field if the kick is short or downfield if the receiver has to retreat. If the deep receiver is near or behind Team R's 15 yard line, the Back Judge should start on the goal line and not move off the goal line until it is not be threatened.

## After the Kick

**Referee:**

As the ball travels from the snapper to the punter, the Referee should observe the initial block by the opposite tackle and then shift his focus to any player who becomes a threat to contact the ball or the kicker. If the snap is mishandled he must be prepared to rule on the legality of any contact on the kicker. He must stay focused on the kicker until all threat has passed. He should loudly alert the defenders when the ball is kicked verbalizing "Ball's gone, ball's gone!" He should not move too quickly downfield after the kick. The Referee must be ready to move in the appropriate direction in case of a blocked kick. On blocked kicks, the Referee should be ready to rule on the recovery and observe the advance of any player who runs with a recovered ball. If the kicker runs with the ball to try a rugby style kick, the Referee must move with him and watch the nearest defenders to rule on the legality of any contact. The Referee must strive for a position where he can watch both the kicker and the flight of the ball. Once it is clear the ball will not go out of bounds in flight, the Referee should no longer be concerned with the ball. If the kick goes out of bounds in flight, the Referee will raise his hand to line up the kick for the covering official. The covering official will move up the sideline and stop when the Referee drops his hand. If there is continuing action on the kicker, the Referee must place his attention on the action disregard the flight of the ball and let the covering official get the OOB spot by himself. If the receivers begin a return, the Referee should move slowly downfield; if the runner breaks a long return, the Referee may ultimately assume

responsibility for the runner. The Referee has responsibility for the goal line and will get an inside-out look regardless of which sideline is involved since the appropriate wing official has sideline responsibility from end line to end line.

### **Umpire:**

The Umpire is responsible for the initial action on the snapper and for blocks by the snapper, guards and tackle opposite of the Referee. After the ball is kicked and all lineman/backs have cleared their positions, he should move slowly downfield along the hash opposite of the Referee keeping as many players in view as possible. The Umpire should be aware of a short kick or a partially blocked kick the Umpire must observe the action around the ball and help determine if the ball is touched first by Team R beyond the neutral zone and prepare to drop a beanbag if first touching occurs by K.

### **Linesman and Line Judge:**

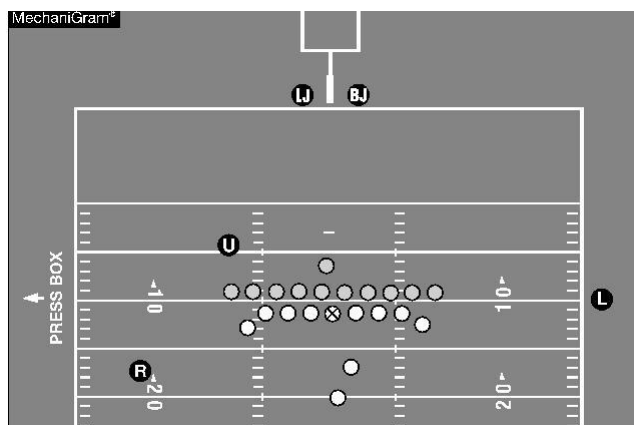
The wing officials observe the initial line charge and are responsible for encroachment/false start on their side of the field. The Linesman remains on the line until the kick crosses the neutral zone which only takes 1 to 2 seconds, while the Line Judge releases downfield when the ball is snapped. Wing's focus should include blocking/restraint by Team R on the 'gunners' followed by coverage around and in front of the kick receiver. If the kick is blocked, the Linesman has primary responsibility for determining if the ball is touched first by Team R beyond the line and whether the spot of a recovery is beyond or behind the line. The distance the wing official moves after the kick is dependent on the length of the kick, but each should strive for covering approximately half the distance between the LOS and the end of the kick. On the vast majority of punts, both wing officials are responsible for forward progress, players going out of bounds and blocks in front of the runner when the return is to their area. If the run is to the opposite sideline, they are responsible for action behind and away from the ball. If the kick is shanked less than 15 yards from the line of scrimmage and goes out of bounds in flight, the Referee will raise his hand to line up the kick for the appropriate wing official. The covering official will move up the sideline and stop when the Referee drops his hand. The wing officials should not always expect the Referee to help line up a kick that has gone out of bounds in the air. If the Referee has a hand up, that means he can help. Otherwise, the wing will have to select the best spot possible and sell that spot with good signals. If the ball lands inbounds and bounces out of bounds, the wing official always has the spot at the nearest whole yard line. If scrimmage kick goes over the receivers head the Back Judge shall cover the ball and the Line Judge will observe receiver for blocking after the fair catch and illegal fair catch signal.

### **Back Judge:**

All deep receivers are the responsibility of the Back Judge. Once the ball is kicked, he watches for a fair catch signal and judges its validity, moves with the receiver and maintains a position to rule on catch vs. muff. Once the receiver catches the kick, he must watch the players as they approach the runner. If the kick goes out of bounds after landing inbounds, the Back Judge's responsibility is for the players chasing the ball. He should not be concerned with the out of bounds spot, but if it is near him, he may assist the wing official. If the ball is kicked over the head of the deepest receiver, the Back Judge must retreat and not allow any player to get behind him. The Back Judge has sole responsibility for determining if a touchback occurs or the momentum exception applies. The Back Judge must bean bag the spot where the kick ends unless that spot is also the dead-ball spot in which case the Back Judge will stop the clock and mark the spot. That spot may be used for post-scrimmage kick penalty enforcement. If the kick goes out of bounds in flight, more than 15 yards from the line of scrimmage, the Referee will raise his hand to line up the kick for the Back Judge. The covering official will move up the sideline and stop when the Referee drops his hand. The Back Judge should not always expect the Referee to help line up a kick that has gone out of bounds in the air. If the Referee has a hand up, that means he can help. Otherwise, the Back Judge will have to select the best spot possible and sell that spot with good signals. If the kick goes over the receiver's head the Back Judge will release the receiver to the Line Judge and proceed to cover the ball.

## **Field Goals when the ball is snapped outside the 10 yard line**

### **Positioning:**



**Referee:** The Referee's starting position is 2-3 yards behind and 3-5 yards to the side of the kicker and facing the holder. The distance from the holder may vary depending on personal preference, keeping in mind that the Referee is responsible for the sideline behind him if there is a run or pass to that side.

**Umpire:** The Umpire's starting position is 4-7 yards off the line of scrimmage and shaded to the same side as the Referee.

**Linesman and/or Line Judge:** The wing official looking at the back of the Referee joins the Back Judge at the upright nearest his sideline. The opposite wing official remains in his normal position on the LOS and off the sideline.

**Back Judge:** The Back Judge's starting position is at the upright opposite the Referee.

**Communication:** Prior to the snap the entire crew should communicate that the ball remains live after the kick until it is dead by rule or a score takes place. This communication needs to occur to eliminate the possibility of confusion with a convert and an inadvertent whistle.

## Coverage:

**Referee:** The Referee must watch the holder receive the ball and the action of the holder's knee as the rules distinguish between the lifting of the knee during a muff and after possession of the ball has been obtained. The position of the knee is also critical if the ball is subsequently passed or handed off. The holder must lift his knee off the ground in order to pass or hand off the ball.

After the kick, the Referee is responsible for ruling on contact on both the kicker and holder. Once he is confident the kicker and holder are no longer in danger the Referee should look to the deep officials to learn the result of the kick. The signal should be relayed to the press box but only after the players have separated. Relaying the signal to the press box is of secondary importance to the safety of the players.

If a kick is blocked, the crew will continue to officiate as a blocked field goal remains live. Again, communication with the crew prior to the kick regarding the live ball/dead ball status of a blocked kick or a kick that fails to reach the goal line is essential. In cases of a fake or a broken play, if a run or pass develops to his side, the Referee is responsible for sideline coverage including the pylon acts as the wing. If Team R recovers the ball and runs for a score, the Referee is responsible for his sideline all the way to the goal line.

**Umpire:** Initially, the Umpire rules on the legality of the snap. His primary responsibility then is action on the snapper. He must also watch the blocks by the snapper and guards. The Umpire should step towards the snapper after the kick with a verbal presence to reduce the chance of bad acts.

If a blocked kick or fake results in a play toward the goal line, the Umpire has the inside-out look at blocks near the point of attack and goal line coverage on the open side of the field.

**Linesman and Line Judge:** The wing official on the line of scrimmage has sole responsibility for encroachment/false starts.

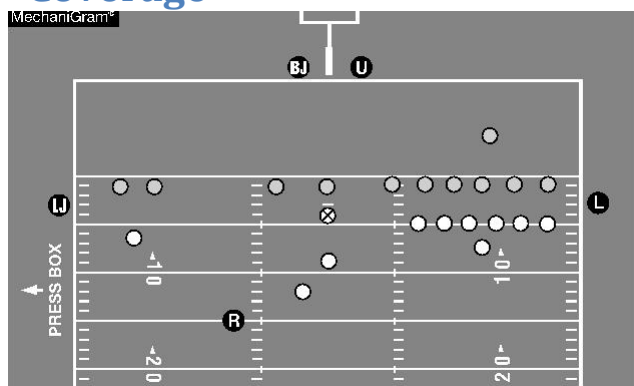
If the field goal is a fake and becomes a run or pass play this official must continue to officiate as in any scrimmage play. He can also help rule on ineligible downfield and kicks that result in a pass that crosses the neutral zone. When a runner approaches the goal line, the wing official on the line must be at the goal line to rule on the potential score.

If the kick is blocked, is obviously short or the play turns out not to be a kick fake or broken play, the wing official under the upright should quickly move along the end line toward his original sideline. Once the sideline has been reached, the official can move toward the goal line to assist with coverage of the runner. After the kick, the wing official must pinch-in toward the offensive and defensive linemen to dead-ball officiate and help ensure that players separate safely and return to the sideline.

**Back Judge:** The opposite wing official and Back Judge stand beyond the end zone and behind the upright on their side of the field. Their positions can be adjusted to provide the best look once the placement of the ball has occurred. Once the ball is kicked, neither official must move. The wing official is responsible for ruling on the upright on his side; the Back Judge is responsible for ruling on the upright on his side as well as whether the ball cleared the crossbar. When a successful kick passes the upright or when the ball breaks the goal line plane and it is obvious it will not score, the Back Judge sounds his whistle. The Back Judge and wing official with him should confirm their ruling verbally using "yes, yes" or "no, no, no." Both officials shall then take two steps straight forward into the end zone and signal. Their signal should start and end simultaneously. If the kick is blocked, is obviously short or the play turns out not to be a kick fake or broken play, the Back Judge has sole responsibility for the end line.

## Converts and Field Goals snapped from the 10 Yard Line and in

### Coverage



**Given the prevalence of teams that run 2 point conversions, swinging gate formations or just plain breakdowns the committee felt it worthwhile to experiment with an alternative formation so as to better protect both sidelines and the goal line.**

The wings will maintain their position on the sideline and the Umpire will move 2-3 yards behind a post with the Back Judge. The Referee will set up facing the holder and **maintain responsibility for kicker/holder**. The Umpire will signal and verbalize snapper protection as he moves to the post. The Referee will verbalize "Wings have goal line and I have kicker/holder" to remind wings just after the RFP whistle.

In order to ensure effectiveness of this formation, the Umpire needs to know the sequence of what they need to be looking at when they are under the post for PATs and field goals.

Prior to the snap, the Umpire and the Back Judge should be aware of the

position of defensive players and if there is someone aligned head up on the snapper, then more attention should be paid at the snap. The verbal warning to players from the Umpire is important at this time. "Snapper has protection", **NOT** don't touch him or don't hit the snapper" etc.

Pre-snap the Umpire looks at his normal keys snapper and two guards. Both Umpire and Back Judge verbalize eligible numbers. At the snap the Umpire has the snapper for protection until the holder gets the ball, this is when the snapper is most vulnerable and is protected by rule. The Back Judge may also assist the Umpire in looking at the snapper.

There is a misconception by some that the snapper is protected from any contact. Most of the time, contact occurs on gap penetration, and the defender is attempting to block the ball, not the snapper. It is important to know that contact on the side of the snapper is not a



foul. Head-on contact is very easy to judge/call, and should not need special mechanics to avoid being missed.

After the ball reaches the holder and before the ball is kicked the Umpire needs to focus on his post and find the ball when kicked, wings can look outside in for any other illegal personal contact that may happen.

As with all scoring kicks the Back Judge will have the only whistle. Both officials under the posts should confirm verbally either yes, yes OR no, no and then step forward together and signal in unison.

If the play becomes a run the Umpire will move to his traditional position to watch blockers. If the play becomes a pass the Umpire will stay on the end line so as not to impede any pass routes. In this mechanic it is important on runs up the middle that wings penetrate after the play that ends close to the goal line.

## A Word about Converts (Try for Point) NEW!

The 3 yard line will be used for **ALL** converts. On fields where the goal posts are not in the correct spot. Referees are instructed to **no longer** move the ball to the 8 or 13 for the Try for Point. We will now play the field as it lies in all cases.

**Convert Needed-** If a touchdown is scored on the last play of the game, and the point spread is less than 15 points a convert must be attempted. BCCFSA tracks points for playoff positioning up to a 15 point spread. A convert is NOT required for a greater than 15 point spread.

## Sideline Management

There is a large and varied number of sideline personnel across the province. There are also a large number of community-based coaching staffs, with varying degrees of rules knowledge, and less disciplined programs where there are continuous comments coming from players and assistant coaches. Because of these factors the importance of BCFOA officials to properly address sideline issues cannot be understated.

While experienced officials might wish to use their own techniques to avoid confrontation or talk rather than penalize, we all need to realize the importance of being consistent and the necessity of the Association to achieve adherence to a common set of standards.

Early in the season, we need to send a clear message that to be able to do the job effectively and efficiently, in the best interest of all participants, the sideline must be kept free of distraction, rules enforced, and that cooperation is necessary from all parties.

Every official must manage the sideline according to these standards if for nothing else than to ensure that future crews can expect relatively reasonable behavior from the sideline.

- A pregame field inspection should be done to identify and deal with issues before the game: team bench marked properly, stands/track, roped-off sideline, and any possible trouble areas.
- Set the tone in the pre-game discussion with the head coach by ensuring that the get back coach is identified and every wing official identify and seek cooperation from that person at the beginning of the game.
- Determine who and where the facility management people are located. These are the people that officials will go to for assistance with fans, photographers or media.
- Spectators must be at least 10 yards off the sideline. If there are stands, all spectators must be in the stands. If there are no stands the field needs to be roped off and spectators must stay in this area. Those behind the team bench should be at least 10 yards beyond the team bench area and that area needs to be roped off as well.
- The team bench should be clearly marked. Move the yard markers five yards off the sideline inside the team bench area, to give players and coaches a point of reference. Outside the team bench area, the yard markers should be further off the sideline.
- Ensure that the chain crew sets up two 2 yards off the sideline, and remind them that regardless of which school they are from, for the duration of the game they are part of the official crew and are important to the effective operation of the game.
- Wing officials need to start every down straddling the LOS and at least a yard off the sideline. When the LOS is outside the team benches wing officials should start at least two 2 yards off the sideline and further the nearer the goal line.
- Wing officials will always work off the sideline during live balls and not penetrate onto the field until the ball is dead.
- The wing official should confine his communication with the head coach, his designate and of course the get back coach. No conversation is really necessary with assistant coaches, players, trainers, managers, statisticians, or any other support personnel, unless directing them to the team bench area.

A Reminder:

Visiting coaches will be scouting for future games and are allowed **behind the end line**, but should be respectful of moving during convert attempts or other plays near the goal line.

## Sideline warnings

Sideline warnings are a useful tool for wing officials to encourage compliance with sideline expectations. The wing official who constantly allows coaches or players to encroach so that he must veer to avoid during the live ball period does a disservice to himself and the next crew who will work this team's game.

The 1<sup>st</sup> warning does not carry a yardage penalty, is a freebie so to speak, the 2<sup>nd</sup> is a 5 yard penalty and 3<sup>rd</sup> and subsequent are 15 yards. These penalties are marked from the succeeding spot like all non-player fouls. Sideline infractions are non-contact, and have to be applied consistently from crew to crew.

Contact while the ball is live with anyone on the sideline, is a foul. This is not a sideline warning but a personal foul by rule.

Any time an official has to veer to avoid anyone in the restricted area, stop or change direction or unable to properly and accurately cover a play, there should be a penalty marker for a sideline infraction.

Repeated or constant interaction by assistant coaches should also be penalized. For problems with assistant coaches the head coach should be informed and allow him to deal with it first, unless use of foul language is involved, for which there should be zero tolerance. Talking or attempting to repeatedly diffuse confrontation usually does not get the desired results. Throwing a sideline warning usually does and can be easily defended.

Once a warning has been flagged, the Referee must go to the team bench and reiterate with the head coach need for cooperation.

## Disqualification

Disqualification of a player or coach always creates problems. If a home team member, sending him to the locker room or away from the field is OK. However, a visiting team member may not have anywhere to go. Instruct the head coach of the visiting team that an ejected player needs to remove his jersey and shoulder pads and can sit/stand quietly in the team bench. Coaches must leave the confines of the field regardless.

The Provincial Procedure of documenting disqualifications, is for the Referee to complete a written report and forward it to the vice president responsible for high school football.

The vice president will complete a written report and forward to the BCSSFA executive with recommendations for further action if required.

Let us all do our part to continue to manage the sideline for the betterment of all involved in the game.

## Administering Penalties

**Administering penalties is an opportunity for a crew to demonstrate competency and professionalism. Doing it right every time will send the right message. All officials should know the penalty applications. Do not rely solely on the Referee. This is a crew responsibility!**

### Correct Use of the flag

Correct penalty enforcement starts by properly throwing the flag. For live ball fouls the flag is thrown to the spot of the foul. Since the spot of the foul may be the enforcement spot, the official must get his flag as close as possible to the location where the foul occurred. If the flag is off target, the calling official should immediately relocate the flag after the play by picking it up and moving it. Never attempt to kick it to the correct spot. For dead-ball fouls or fouls simultaneous with the snap, the flag should be tossed directly in front of the official and on the side of the LOS of the offending team. Do not slam-dunk the flag to the ground, fling it high in the air or look angry when you toss it. When there is a dead ball foul in the middle of a crowd of players it is permissible to toss the flag high into the air to alert fellow officials that you require assistance immediately.

### Reporting the foul

As soon as the play is over the calling official must stop the clock and sound his whistle loudly to bring the foul to the attention of the crew. The Referee should do the same if he has a foul during a punt while everyone else is downfield. The Linesman will ensure the chains and down box are not moved. The Linesman should be prepared to tell the Referee on 5 yard penalties whether a 1<sup>st</sup> down will be achieved by checking the tape in the middle of the chain. When wing officials throw a flag for a dead-ball foul prior to the snap, they should hustle toward the middle of the field to report the foul to the Referee if necessary. They must remember to practice good dead-ball officiating while penetrating to report. If a player has crossed the neutral zone and contacted an opponent, the contacted opponent may try to retaliate. BCFOA does not condone signaling the foul rather than reporting the foul to the Referee regardless of how many flags are down. When more than one flag is down the calling officials should get together when necessary to discuss what each official has seen, then report their decision to the Referee. The only exception to the reporting procedure is delay of game signals from the Back Judge when this is the only flag. If the calling official has the dead-ball spot in a side zone, the Back Judge should take that spot from him so he can report his foul to the Referee. If the calling official has a spot foul, the Back Judge may also be required to cover his flag to ensure it is not moved.

## Giving and getting the Explanation

The calling official must give the Referee as much information as possible. The Referee should ask questions if necessary. The calling official should tell the Referee what he saw, the offending player's number, whether offense/defense, live or dead ball. If during a kicking play did the foul occur before, during or after the kick? If the play involved a scoring play the Referee should also be informed whether the team scored.

## Giving the Options

It is not necessary to consult with captains if the choice is obvious or there is a double foul, but on some occasions it will be necessary to consult with the captain. The Umpire should assist the Referee in locating captains for penalty options and stand with the Referee as he explains the options. The Referee will state the options briefly and clearly. The Umpire must listen to the Referee's explanation to ensure the options are correctly offered. Do not allow the captain to make an incorrect choice if the coach is communicating what he wants. On complicated choices, it is permissible to move toward sideline and allow the coach to make the decision. On kicking plays, it is easy for the Referee to talk directly with the coach. The wing official on the sideline of the penalized team must tell the coach the number of the guilty player and explain the foul, e.g., "Your man in motion cut downfield too soon," instead of, "There was illegal motion." If the covering official didn't get the number, don't guess or make one up. The other wing official need only tell the coach the nature of the foul. Don't give up other officiating duties to report numbers to the coaches. Once the Referee determines the penalty has been accepted or declined he must inform the other members of the crew. If the penalty is accepted, the Umpire must understand where to walk from – the enforcement spot, how far to walk and which direction to walk.

## Signaling

The Referee should give the preliminary signal immediately after receiving the information from the calling officials after moving clear of players while standing still and facing the press box. The Referee will then consult with captains if necessary and the Umpire as to the yardage. The final signal is then given while the Umpire walks off the penalty yardage. The Referee will then move to an area clear of participants come to a complete stop and face the press box for the final signal. Proper signaling is a sequence of signals executed with separate and distinct motions to ensure clarity. The Referee should verbalize the announcement while giving the final signals including the number of the offending player. The non-calling wing official should be close enough to hear the Referee's announcement so they can inform their respective coach.

## Informing the Coach

The head coach is entitled to the following information for all fouls: the type of foul, a brief description of the act, and the number of the offending player and the enforcement. For example, "Number 62 was called for holding. He pulled down an opponent. It'll be 10 yards from the spot of the foul and second down will be repeated." If the closest wing was the calling official, he should tell the coach what the player did. Coach, both arms were outside the frame. If the wing official does not know he shouldn't guess, but tell the coach you will get a suitable explanation within a couple of plays. Explaining the foul should be kept concise. It is not the time to debate the merits of the decision. If a lengthy explanation is necessary, i.e. personal fouls or unsporting acts which do not carry an automatic first down, then the Referee might need to monitor the conversation.

## Administering the Penalty

The Umpire must not leave the Referee until he is 100 percent certain of the enforcement. If the penalty occurred in the side zone the Umpire goes with the ball to the spot of the foul, squares up, returns to the hash and steps of the penalty at the hash independent of the Linesman. The Linesman steps off the penalty independent of the Umpire. The Umpire does not set the ball down at the new spot until he confirms correctness with the Linesman. The Line Judge holds the enforcement spot while the penalty is walked off and checks the correctness of the succeeding spot. The Line Judge does not release his spot until the Umpire has placed the ball at the new spot. When all agree that the penalty has been stepped off correctly the flag is picked up and returned to the calling official.

**The Umpire and Linesman should not march the distance of the penalty step by step but do the math so to speak "10 yards from the 46 to the 36", and go to the spot directly.**

Before the next play the Umpire will remind the Referee of the status of the clock and the correct down, verify the correct down to wing officials and stay over ball until Referee gives the ready-for-play.

## Measurements

**In order to ensure consistency in measuring for 1<sup>st</sup> downs and ensuring that there are ZERO mistakes especially to ensure a down is not gained or lost the following procedure will be used by BCFOA officials.**

When it becomes clear that a measurement is required the Referee stops clock and waits at the spot for arrival of the chain crew and Linesman. The Umpire stands near ball and waits at spot for arrival of chain crew. The Back Judge will hold the ball outside of where the forward stake will be placed.

The Line Judge will place a bean bag at the intersection of the 5 yard line parallel to the ball and 90 degrees from where the chain will be clipped. This is the spot where the Linesman will place the clipped chain; the bean bag enables the Linesman to go directly to the spot with certainty. If the measurement occurs in the side zone, the Line Judge will then obtain a ball from the nearest ball person for use in relocating the ball to the hash in the event the line-to-gain was not achieved. At the sideline, before the chains are brought in and if there are no flags, the Linesman will have the down box move behind the lead stake showing the down at the beginning of the last down. That is a reference point in case the line-to-gain should somehow become lost during the process. If there is a flag down, the down box will remain at the previous spot showing the down at the beginning of the play. The Linesman then goes to the clip and confirms that is in the correct position. He grips the chain with one hand and the clip with the other. The chain crew will move onto the field. When they reach the other officials, the person with the lead stake will hand it to the Umpire.

The Line Judge should keep all players away from the measurement area. The Linesman places the clip on the rear-most edge of the yard line and declares that he is ready for the measurement. The Line Judge steps on the chain to ensure that it does not move. The Linesman then states what the next down of the series will be if it is short. Example: "It will either be first or fourth". The Back Judge holds the ball, positioning himself outside of the forward stake with his rear end toward the goal line to which the offense is advancing. He does not let go of the ball until the measurement is totally finished. The Umpire stretches the chain and ensures that it is tight with the lead stake vertical and about 12 inches off the ground. The Referee should be in a position to avoid blocking the view of the press box. After the front stake is placed on the ground, the Referee rules whether or not the ball is beyond the front stake.

### **Short of a First Down**

The Referee uses his hands or thumb and index finger if the ball is inches short of the front stake to inform both benches how short the play ended of a first down.

### **Short of the First Down in the Side Zone**

If the measurement is in a side zone and does not result in a first down, the Referee grasps the chain at the link in front of the ball and rises. The Referee, Umpire, Line Judge and Linesman walk to the nearest hash mark. The Line Judge then hands the Referee the ball, and he places the ball at the proper spot. Once the ball is placed, the Back Judge may remove the ball that was used in the measurement and return it to the ball person. When the measurement is over, the Umpire will hand the stake back to the chain crew member. The Linesman must hold the clip as he and the chain crew returns to the sideline. The Linesman will reset the clip at the appropriate yard line. The Referee will wait for the Linesman's signal that the chain crew is back in position before giving the ready-for-play signal.

If the measurement occurred on fourth down and Team A is short, the Referee signals the change of possession by giving the first down signal. The Referee then sets the ball in the same position as it was when it became dead so its foremost point becomes the rear point when the direction is changed. The new rear stake is then moved to the new foremost point of the ball.

### **First Down**

If the measurement results in the award of a new series, the Referee signals the first down. The Linesman does not need to hold the chain as he accompanies the chain crew back to the sideline, but he must go all the way to the sideline and indicate to the chain crew where the new series will begin. If the measurement occurred in a side zone, the Back Judge will remain with the ball on the ground to ensure the ball is spotted properly for the next play. The Referee must wait for the Linesman and chain crew to be back in position before giving the ready-for-play signal.

The Back Judge will inform the Referee of the status of the clock prior to RFP for the succeeding play.

## **Forward Progress**

Forward progress is a simple concept and is also one of the most inconsistently applied and misunderstood rules of the game.

Forward progress is the end of advancement of the ball toward the opponent's goal in a runner's possession or the forward most point of the ball when it is fumbled out of bounds and determines the dead ball spot. When an airborne player makes a catch, forward progress is the furthest point of advancement after he possesses the ball if contacted by a defender. 2-15-1,2. The dead ball spot is the forward most point of the ball when it becomes dead by rule. 2-40-3

Correctly marking forward progress throughout the game is one of the most important responsibilities for officials in a football game. Unless the play ends in a score or a touchback, forward progress must be determined on every play. Every runner's progress is exactly the same: The forward-most part of the ball when it's declared dead in possession of the runner either declared dead inbounds or where it crossed the sideline when declared dead out of bounds. The spot where the runner's knee touches the ground is not the forward progress spot. When the runner's knee, elbow, hip, etc., touches the ground, the covering official must determine where the ball was at that moment. That is the forward progress spot. Once a runner's forward progress is ruled to have stopped while being tackled and the runner is then driven backwards or sideways, forward progress is exactly where the ball was at that moment. The whistle is blown and the play is ended. No fumble may occur behind the forward progress spot because the ball is dead by rule. Forward progress for an airborne receiver is the spot where he gains possession and maintains control of the ball while being tackled and driven backward while still in the air.

## **Plays in the field of play inbounds**

When the runner is tackled upright by several defensive players and the runner's voluntary movement is stopped with the ball in his possession, the covering official should blow his whistle. The play ended when forward movement was stopped and not where the ball was when the whistle was blown. We will not allow a turnover after progress has stopped regardless of whether the whistle blew. Unless the ball became loose on the initial contact that stopped progress, the correct ruling is no fumble. If the covering official has any doubt when the ball became loose, the ruling should be that the play ended before the fumble. The greatest degree of judgment is required when the runner is knocked backwards and continues to drive his legs. The runner may be able to move forward while in control of an opponent or he may actually free himself of the opponent's grasp. If the runner momentarily frees himself from the tacklers the progress spot is not automatically erased, the official should hesitate before whistling the play dead to ensure the runner's forward progress has been stopped.

## Quarterback Sacks

The Referee will almost always be responsible for progress spots on quarterback sacks since the wing officials are likely downfield on pass coverage. Many times the Referee has a poor angle for progress since his most important priority is ruling on a possible fumble and watching for personal fouls. He may therefore rely on a wing official who has detected the breakdown and returned to the backfield. Since there may often be three to five yards distance between the spot the quarterback is contacted and where he goes down, it is permissible but NOT recommended to use the beanbag to mark the progress spot. Because it will have to be tossed instead of dropped the spot is not likely to be as accurate but close enough. The preferred method is for the Referee to take a visual snap shot of the spot and then tell the Umpire where to place the ball unless of course if a vigilant wing official has returned to get to the spot. His immediate responsibility is supervising the safety of the quarterback.

## Sideline Plays and Clock Status

For tackles near the sideline and when the ball carrier is off the field after the play determining the forward progress can be challenging as the status of the clock has also become a factor which needs to be determined accurately.

When time is a factor such as when there is little time left in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2nd half it is critical that the wing official determine the status of the clock correctly.

A simple concept can be used to determine whether a runner was inbounds or out of bounds at the end of the play.

If the runner's forward progress and where the runner goes out of bounds are at the same spot then the ball is deemed to be "dead out of bounds". This means the clock is stopped for the runner going out of bounds and not restarted until the next snap.

If the runner's forward progress is ahead of where the runner goes out of bounds then the ball is deemed to be "Dead Inbounds". This means the clock will continue to run unless a first down is gained or some other event requires the clock to be stopped, and will be restarted on the RFP unless a team time out is taken.

The only factor that determines whether the clock will stop or continues to run is the direction of the ball carrier as he leaves the field of play and NEVER whether he has been contacted by an opponent.

When the runner is airborne as he crosses the sideline, forward progress is where the ball crosses the plane of the sideline, not where the ball is when the runner first touches out of bounds. If the runner is stopped in the field of play, the clock is not stopped, but if he went out of bounds, the clock is stopped. A runner who is contacted by an opponent and crosses the sideline as he is moving forward has been forced out of bounds and the clock is stopped. If the runner is displaced backwards and goes out of bounds, his progress has been stopped in the field of play and the clock continues to run unless it is stopped for another reason such as a penalty or the awarding of a new series. The wing official will indicate the clock should run by using the wind the clock signal.

When a runner steps on the sideline, wing officials almost always mark the progress spot where the runner's foot contacted the sideline. That usually is a fairly accurate spot. However, since the progress spot is at the location of the ball, the spot where the runner's foot touched the sideline is not necessarily the correct location. The ball's location can be judged depending on whether the ball was held in the arm closest to the sideline or the arm away from the sideline. Good wing officials can accurately discern the spot based on the ball location. If the runner steps out of bounds with his lead foot and is carrying the ball in his outside arm, the location of the ball and the spot where his foot touches the sideline are virtually identical. However, if the ball is in his inside arm, it should be spotted about the length of the ball behind the spot where his foot touched out of bounds. The extra precision is most appropriate for plays that end near the goal line or the line-to-goal.

## Plays at the Pylon

The pylons are considered out of bounds in the end zone. Whenever a football touches a pylon it is considered to be in the end zone. If it is in possession of a runner, it is a touchdown, touchback or safety. If the ball is loose, it is a touchback or a safety.

## Goal Line Extended

Whenever a runner is contacted near a goal line pylon, it requires the coordination of both the Back Judge and a wing official to get the play right. For a runner who is **still touching the ground inbounds**, the goal line plane is extended out of bounds. If the ball is held outside the sideline plane and breaks the goal line plane extended, it is a touchdown. The wing official is responsible for determining if the runner stayed inbounds, while the Back Judge must rule if the ball broke the plane of the goal line. These two officials must communicate with each other before either makes a call.

Conversely, no touchdown is scored when the runner is airborne and was **not touching inbounds** when the ball broke the plane of the goal line extended.

## Marking Forward Progress

The wing officials will have forward progress in almost all situations. The official who marks the spot must keep his head up and observe players while marking a spot. He should not jump over or go around players to get the spot. Instead he should move onto the field until he approaches players, and then stop. This is known as penetrating to pressure. If the spot is close to the LTG, he must wait until players clear and then come to the spot where the play ended, get the ball from the Umpire or Back Judge and place it on the ground at his spot. The primary official responsible for determining the forward progress spot is the wing official who can actually see the ball when the play is declared dead, not based on what side of the field the play ends. On plays that end outside the hash and the progress spot is not close to the LTG the ideal method is for the covering official to place the ball on the ground and the Back Judge retrieve another ball to be placed by the Umpire at the hash. Unfortunately the majority of the time this will not be possible because of poor ball people. So the covering official should wait for the Umpire to take his spot and then either the Back Judge or the covering official will retrieve the

ball for the Umpire to spot at the hash mark. When the play ends in the field of play inside the hash marks not close to the LTG to mark a spot the covering official who was trailing the play should move to the progress line and make a ninety degree turn and move into a position that puts him about five yards from the dead ball spot. This is known as squaring up. If a spot is close to a first down, the spotting official must come all the way to the spot where the play ended indicating to the Referee that "It's close" or "Have a look." Wait for players to clear your path and then continue to spot the ball. The Umpire shall come to the covering official and hand the ball to him so that he may put the ball at his spot.

## A Word about Squaring Up

Squaring up began in the early 1990s and was so popular that it was adopted in mechanics manuals soon after that. Squaring up is a mechanic that allows officials to mark the plane or yard line where the ball became dead rather than focus on a spot somewhere in the middle of the field. The successful wing official will always be working off the field when the ball is live, trailing the play. When the ball becomes dead the wing official stays outside and moves to the yard line or plane where the ball became dead. As soon as he squares up he has already marked the yard line/plane of the dead ball and he is able to keep his head up and dead ball officiate as he moves in a controlled fashion at a 90 degree angle onto the playing field. He penetrates an appropriate distance depending on how close the ball is to the LTG or goal line. The successful wing official never rushes past or jumps over players to get to the forward progress line.

On plays involving the sideline the covering official should trail the play outside of the sideline and when the play goes out of bounds move onto the field turning to observe action on the runner out of bounds while getting the spot with his feet. He should never look down at the spot but always observe action of the players near the ball carrier. The Referee and Back Judge will assist with the clean up around the play while the wing official holds the spot. The covering official will not leave the progress spot until the spot has been picked up by the Umpire or Referee and they have indicated that they have the spot.

The Line Judge has primary responsibility for determining if a first down has been achieved. If the ball is clearly beyond the stake, he will stop the clock and signal the first down to the Referee. If the ball is clearly short, he will announce the number of the next down. If it is questionable, it is permissible for the Line Judge to stop the clock and signal for the Referee to come forward and look at it. He may also recommend a measurement to the Referee.

## Cross Field Mechanics

Cross field mechanic refers to a procedure in which the wing official looks across the field to the cross field wing official for forward progress when he is unable to get to the spot or does not have a spot. When that situation occurs the covering official can look across the field for the cross field wing official indicating he is asking for help. The cross field official must be aware if the covering official may have a problem due to congestion near the end of the play. If the cross field wing official has the spot he can indicate it by moving along the dead ball spot toward the middle of the field saying, "I have a good spot here" The covering official can now square up on the spot of the cross field official. Should the covering official look for help and find that no help is available, he must now pick the best spot he can find. Cross field mechanics must be discussed thoroughly in the pre-game if it is to be used.

## Whistle Mechanics New!

The most frequent use of the whistle is to announce that something has already happened. For instance the pass was incomplete, a touchdown was scored. The sounding of a whistle does not end a down, it only confirms that the down has ended. When the official has learned and understood this concept he is well on his way to becoming successful.

Successful officials learn that a whistle is to be sounded as a blast, not a chirp. Usually it is enough for ONE loud blast of the whistle. The whistle is not used to "sell a call" like signals or the voice. The whistle should always be sounded loudly and strongly.

Another important aspect of proper use of the whistle is that only the covering official should have a whistle. When a touchdown is scored near the Line Judge numbers it is NOT appropriate for the Linesman to be sounding his whistle, or for that matter signaling the touchdown. One whistle on a play is usually plenty. Two are okay in most circumstances. More than that is an indication that someone on the crew is ball watching instead of watching their responsibilities. Echoing or mirroring a whistle is usually unnecessary.

But mirroring a whistle may be appropriate on only a few occasions. If a crewmate's whistle is weak and some players don't stop, a repeated blast may be helpful. When a runner is stopped upright, repeated blasts on the whistle may prevent the runner from being unnecessarily thrown to the ground.

Sometimes no official can see the ball when the play ends, and as a result there will not be a whistle blown because all great officials know NOT to blow their whistle if they cannot see the ball.

And that leads to the dreaded inadvertent whistle. Every official has had an inadvertent whistle. In fact there is a theory of learning that an official does not really learn how to prevent the dreaded inadvertent until they have had one. It is learning good judgement from exhibiting bad judgement. Any official that say they have not had an inadvertent whistle is probably lying. So how do we avoid the inadvertent whistle?

Successful officials know to drop the whistle for their mouth once the snap has occurred. They do not follow the live ball play with the whistle in their mouth. They also wait a second or two when the pass bounces, or when forward progress has been achieved they find the ball, make the call.

So after all if an official blows an inadvertent whistle, he will not attempt to conceal it. Someone will have heard it, and the official will lose respect and credibility if he denies blowing one. Remember, once you have had one you are much less likely to have another. Learning good judgement from bad is a pretty universal concept. The most important task after the inadvertent whistle is to confess and then let it go.



There are some times when it is not only permissible but expected that the whistle will be more than one blast.

Getting the attention of other officials is the exception. When, at the end of a play, any official sees that a flag has been thrown, he should alert the crew by giving three short blasts of the whistle. That helps ensure the box is not moved or the chains moved until the penalty is sorted out.

Common uses of the whistle by position:

Referee: ball ready for play, declaring a dead ball foul before the snap, officials or charged timeouts,

Linesman and Line Judge: indicate timeouts, dead-ball fouls that prevent the snap, injuries, when the ball becomes dead following plays in their coverage areas (usually their side zone) including incomplete passes and the runner or a live ball going out of bounds and touchdowns when he is the covering official.

Back Judge: indicate timeouts, injuries, the end of a quarter, a touchback, when the ball is dead in his coverage area and touchdowns when he is the covering official

Umpire: to indicate a timeout, a dead-ball foul that prevents the snap and a player injury. The Umpire should refrain from using the whistle to confirm the ball is dead at the end of the play unless no other official has blown a whistle and he can see the ball.

## The Bean Bag

There is no question that the bean bag is an important tool for football officials. The bean bag is used to mark significant points on the field and sometimes to provide credibility for potentially game changing calls. Learning to use the bean bag correctly can be a long process for officials. The problem arises when by the time a new official thinks to use the bag the opportunity has passed. In the first few months or sometimes years numerous opportunities to use the bag are presented but seldom realized. Good advice to new officials or officials who may have given up on bagging is: memorize the list of plays below that should be bagged and then bag everything. Toss the bag even if you are late to realize the opportunity. Eventually it will become second nature and you will be bagging with the best. For sure it is definitely better to bean bag a fumble when not needed than to not bean bagging a fumble that requires a bag.

Ideally the bean bag should be dropped on the correct spot/yard line and not thrown. That won't always be practical so it is permissible to toss the bag a short distance. If a tossed bean bag misses the correct spot, it should be picked up and moved to the correct spot after the play ends. Just as with a flag the bean bag should never be kicked.

Here are the plays that should be bagged.

- Where a fumble occurs.
- Where a scrimmage kick ends.
- Where the kicking team first touches a kick in certain situations.
- Where a team A or team K player goes out of bounds by accident or voluntarily.
- Where the ball is caught or recovered when the momentum exception applies.
- Where the ball is located when an inadvertent whistle occurs.
- Referee marking the spot of a potential illegal forward pass.

Let's look at these in more detail:

### Fumbles

The spot of the fumble must be marked in the event a penalty occurs and that spot is needed to determine where the run ended. For fouls that occur during the interval between the fumble and recovery while the ball is loose, we need to know the basic spot for penalty enforcement.

Technically, the spot is required only for fumbles beyond the neutral zone, but many officials bag all fumbles out of habit. Fumbles behind the neutral zone are part of a loose-ball play and the basic spot is the previous spot so we already have a convenient spot in case a foul occurs.

**Play 1:** First and 10 for team A at A20. A2 runs to B35, where he fumbles. While the ball is loose, B2 holds A1 at B40 yard line. B3 falls on the ball at B45.

**Ruling 1:** The basic enforcement spot for the penalty is B35, where the fumble occurred. The covering official must drop a beanbag to mark the fumble spot. Since the spot of the foul is behind the end of the run fumble end of the run, enforcement is from the spot of the fumble. It will be 1<sup>st</sup> and 10 for A at B25.

### End of a Scrimmage Kick

The covering official must mark the yard line with a bean bag where the receiver begins his return, where the ball is downed by the kicking team or where the kick ends by rule. That is in case post-scrimmage kick enforcement PSK is needed on a foul. The Back Judge should use two different-colored beanbags: one for marking the end of a kick and the other for marking first touching.

**Play 1:** K1 punts the ball away at K35. R1 catches the ball at R35. While the ball is in the air R3 holds K3 at midfield.

**Ruling 1:** The kick ended where R1 possessed the kick. A beanbag should be dropped at R35 the PSK spot, which is the spot for penalty enforcement. The result is 1<sup>st</sup> and 10 for R from R25.

**Play 2:** R1 muffs the punt R35. The ball rolls forward to R40. R1 picks up the ball there and runs to midfield, where he is tackled. While the ball was loose from R1's muff, R2 clipped K1 at R45.

**Ruling 2:** The kick ended where R1 possessed the kick, not where he muffed it. A beanbag should be dropped at R40 the PSK spot, which is the spot for penalty enforcement. The result is 1<sup>st</sup> and 10 for R from R30.

### First Touching

During both free and scrimmage kicks, there are times when it is improper for K to touch the ball. That is known as “first touching” and it applies only when K touches the ball when it is not entitled to possession. On free kicks, if K touches the ball before the ball crosses R’s free kick line and before it is touched there by any R player, the spot must be marked with the beanbag. For a scrimmage kick, the spot must be marked if K touches the ball in the field of play beyond the line before R touches it. The spot must be marked because R may have the right to take the ball at that spot.

**Play 1:** K attempts an onside kick. The ball hits the ground, touches K1’s leg before it travels 10 yards and then rolls several more yards, where K2 falls on it.

**Ruling 1:** A bean bag should be dropped where K1 was contacted by the ball. That is the location of first touching. R will likely choose to start a new series, 1<sup>st</sup> and 10 at the spot of K1’s touching.

**Play 2:** K1’s punt beyond the neutral zone is rolling when K2 touches it at R20. The ball rolls to R5 where K3 falls on it.

**Ruling 2:** A bean bag should be dropped at R20 because that is the spot of K1’s first touching. R will likely choose to take the ball 1<sup>st</sup> and 10 at R20.

### Player Out of Bounds

If a player is pushed or blocked out of bounds, he may return and participate as long as he does not delay his reentry. If a player of A or B goes steps out of bounds on his own, either by accident or purposely for instance to avoid a block it is a foul if he returns and participates. The initial spot where the player left the field should be marked with a bean bag. If the player returns a flag should be thrown to the spot of reentry. When a player who was blocked out of bounds delays his reentry a flag should be thrown at the point of his reentry.

**Play 1:** 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6 from A24. A2 runs a pass route and mistakenly steps on the sideline at A30. A2 then catches a pass inbounds at B45.

**Ruling 1:** When the covering official sees A2’s step out of bounds, he should drop a beanbag at that location. A flag is then thrown where A2 returned to the field. Since the 15 yard illegal participation foul occurred during a pass play, enforcement is half the distance from the previous spot and replay the down. It will be 3<sup>rd</sup> and 18 from A12.

**Play 2:** A2 is forced out of bounds by B2 before a pass is thrown. A2 comes right back onto the field, or b continues to run 20 yards while in team A’s team area before coming back onto the field. In both cases, A2 catches the pass inbounds.

**Ruling 2:** A bean bag should be dropped where A2 went out of bounds. In a, because A2 returned to the field immediately, there is no penalty, the pass is complete and the play stands. In b, A2 is guilty of illegal participation when he delayed his return. A flag should be thrown at the spot A2 returns. The foul is administered from the previous spot, replay the down.

### Momentum

When a defensive player intercepts an opponent’s forward pass, intercepts or recovers an opponent’s fumble or backward pass or an R player catches or recovers a scrimmage kick or free kick between his five yard line and the goal line, and his original momentum carries him into the end zone where the ball is declared dead in his team’s possession or it goes out of bounds in the end zone, the ball belongs to the team in possession at the spot where the pass or fumble was intercepted or recovered or the kick was caught or recovered. The covering official should bean bag the spot where the player possessed the ball. It will be 1<sup>st</sup> and 10 for B at the spot where the player possessed the ball.

### Inadvertent Whistles

When an official inadvertently blows his whistle while the ball is in player possession, causing the ball to become dead, the covering official should drop his bean bag at the spot where the ball was when the whistle was blown. The down may be replayed or the team in possession at the time the whistle was blown may choose to accept the result of the play.

**Play 1:** 1<sup>st</sup> and 10 for A from the A20. A2I has the ball on the running play when an official blows an inadvertent whistle. When the whistle is sounded, A2 is at A12 or b A35.

**Ruling 1:** In a, A will likely ask for a replay of the down rather than accept an eight yard loss. In b, A will likely accept the result of the play and begin a new series at A35.

### Illegal Forward Pass

As discussed elsewhere in this document, the Referee may drop a bean bag at the spot of a forward pass if he is unsure whether the passer was over the LOS when a pass is thrown. The bean bag is used after the play to determine the yard line where the pass was thrown.

### Finally let’s look at situations that do not require a bean bag. Quarterback Sacks

On quarterback sacks, the progress spot is where the defensive player first contacts quarterback. Wing officials may have committed downfield and cannot help with forward progress behind the line. The Referee must keep his attention on action on the passer so dropping the bean bag and then moving to cover that action is an acceptable procedure, but Referees should be able to note and remember the correct line without using the bag.

### Interceptions

Do not drop a beanbag at the spot a player intercepts a pass. Unlike the spot of a fumble, that spot has no bearing on penalty enforcement.

### Free Kick

There is no reason to bean bag the end of a free kick as it can never be an enforcement spot.

### Free Kick out of Bounds

On free kicks, if the ball is kicked out of bounds untouched, that is a foul and the spot is marked with the flag.

### Out of Bounds Spot

Wing officials should not drop a bean bag on an out of bounds spot. The covering official should go to the spot and continue to dead ball officiate. Dropping the bag will take your eyes briefly off the players and you could potentially miss illegal action. The Referee and Back Judge have primary responsibility for tending to players out of bounds. In the rare situation where the wing official finds it



necessary to escort players from beyond the sideline back to the field, the bean bag could be dropped not thrown only after the official has ensured there will be no dead ball action. The spot is a distant second priority in these situations.

#### **Forward Progress**

Do not use the bean bag for marking the forward progress of a ball carrier when he has been pushed back and there is continuing action on him. Get on the whistle so action will stop and hold your progress spot. Cross field mechanics can also be used if the covering official is pushed off the progress spot or is trapped so as not to have a good look.

#### **Conclusion**

If you are in doubt whether to drop a beanbag or not, go ahead and use it. There is no such thing as an "inadvertent beanbag." You can pick it up if thrown in error. Nothing has to be explained to players or coaches.

## Time Outs

### Charged timeout

Each team gets three timeouts per half. Unused first-half time-outs do not carry over to the first half. Any unused second half timeouts do not carry over to the first overtime period 3 -5-1. Teams can take back-to-back timeouts and a team timeout can follow an officials' timeout.

When close to the end of the half with the clock running, officials should anticipate a team requesting a timeout after a timeout after a play ends. If a team is trying to save time near the end of the half, it is more unlikely they will request timeout if the clock is stopped at the end of a play, for example, after an incomplete pass.

Any official may grant a timeout request from the head coach or his designee or any player on the field and immediately sound the whistle and give the stop the clock signal. The official granting the timeout request reports the timeout to the Referee. If a wing official is the official granting the request, he should signal to the Referee which team called the timeout.

**Important: when a penalty flag is on the field or the crew needs to complete a task like moving the chains, measuring or there is an injury, wing officials should not allow coaches on the field until these tasks are completed.**

The Referee will then give the charged timeout signal. He does this by sounding the whistle and signaling to stop the clock 2X while facing the press box and then pointing with both arms in a horizontal direction 3X toward the end zone of the team to be charged. All officials will record the number and team of the player requesting the timeout, the quarter and the time remaining on the game clock. Each official then confirms with the Referee the number of timeouts each team has remaining by hand signal. The number of timeouts remaining for the team that has taken the timeout is given first and the other team second. If there are 2 and 3 timeouts remaining, the check is stated and signaled as "2 and 3" or "23."

The Linesman and Line Judge will inform the coaches on their respective sidelines of the timeouts remaining. If a team is using their last timeout, the Referee must personally inform the head coach and communicate that with all crew members.

The Back Judge is responsible for timing the timeout. The one-minute count begins when the Referee signals the timeout. The Back Judge will notify the Referee when 45 seconds have expired. The Referee will notify the coaches in the huddle between the nine yard markers of the time remaining.

If the timeout takes place outside the nine yard markers the Referee will notify wing officials after 45 seconds and the wing officials will notify their respective coaches.

If both teams are ready to play before the timeout expires, play may resume 3 -5-3.

During timeouts, wing officials are responsible for monitoring their sideline and any conferences or activity taking place there. When the minute has expired, the Referee whistles the ball ready for play.

#### **Important notes:**

A coach may leave his team bench to request a timeout when the LOS is inside the 20 yard line.

If both teams request a timeout at about the same time, both requests may be granted and each team charged with the timeout.

There is no penalty if a timeout is requested when none remain. Officials will simply deny the request.

If a timeout is erroneously granted, the play clock is reset to 25 seconds and the game clock started as soon as possible.

### Official's Timeout:

An official's timeout may be taken for a number of reasons related to the administration of the game, including repairing players or official's equipment, consulting on the number of the down, sideline warning, for injuries or a coach conference etc. 3 -5-7

The Referee will give the official's timeout signal. He does this by sounding the whistle and signaling to stop the clock 2X while facing the press box and then tapping his chest with both hands 2X. Play should resume as quickly as possible.

## Injury Timeout

When the timeout is for an injury, a team conference may take place outside nine yard marks in front of the team bench. For a prolonged injury the Referee will ask the teams to go to their respective sideline.

## Helmet off Timeout

When a play ends and it is determined that a player's helmet came off during the down the covering official will signal timeout. The Referee will mirror the official's timeout signal to the press box and then point to the player who must be removed for one play. The wing official whose team requires a substitute for the replaced player must notify the head coach and note the player's jersey number. This procedure should be followed even if the helmetless player runs off the field when the play ends.

Note: The team cannot "buy the player back" into the game with a team timeout.

## Coach-Referee Conference

If an official coach-Referee conference is granted, the Referee should take the wing official on that coach's sideline with him to monitor the conversation. The conference should be held at the sideline with the coach facing his bench. The Referee should stand with his hands at his side or behind his back. Crossed or folded arms indicate boredom or a non-receptive attitude. The Referee should emphasize that only the application of the rule will be discussed and not any judgment calls. Regardless of the outcome of the conference, the opposing coach must be told what transpired. If no ruling is changed, the timeout is charged to that team and the coach can subsequently meet with his players. The opposing team can have a conference outside the numbers during the entire discussion. If the team which requested the conference did not have any remaining time outs, a five-yard penalty for delay of game is enforced.

## End of 1st and 3rd Quarters

When the clock expires at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter there will be a one minute intermission for the teams to reverse ends and the officiating crew to move the ball to its new location. The Referee ensures there are no flags lying on the ground and then confirms with the Back Judge that there are no timing issues before he holds the ball above his head with one hand to indicate end of the quarter. All officials then record the yard line, down and distance on their play cards. After confirming the information with the Referee and Umpire, the Linesman will relocate the line to gain equipment. The Umpire determines the spot the ball will occupy yard line and position between the hash marks and moves the ball by jogging to that location on the opposite side of the 50 yard line. He confirms with the Referee and Linesman that the ball is at the correct spot before putting it down and stays over the ball until Referee marks it ready for play.

The Line Judge monitors the team on his sideline while the Back Judge monitors the team on the Linesman side of the field. The Back Judge times the one minute intermission and when 45 seconds have expired notifies the crew with two short blasts of the whistle. Both the Back Judge and Line Judge give a verbal 15 second warning to the teams before proceeding to their positions. The Line Judge confirms that the ball is placed in the correct location when he arrives at his position and will not allow the ball to be snapped if the ball is placed incorrectly.

The Back Judge confirms that the clock is set to 12:00 for the new quarter to begin.

## The Last Two Minutes New!

In 2017, the NFHS Football Rules Committee adopted Rule 3-4-7 which gives an offended team the option to start the clock on the snap when a penalty is accepted with less than two minutes left in either half. This option applies to any accepted penalty by either team if the clock would otherwise start on the subsequent ready-for-play signal. In a situation where there is a live-ball foul by one team and a dead-ball foul by the other, or a dead-ball foul by both teams, each team would be given the option to start the clock on the snap if it would have otherwise started on the ready-for-play. If either team exercises this option, the clock will start on the snap. It is of no significance whether or not the clock was running at the time a foul occurred.

The following procedure will be used. **Do not stop the game to notify coaches of the 2 minute time.**

The Referee at coach's pre-game meeting will advise coaches that it is their responsibility to advise the official on his sideline if he wants to have the clock started on the snap following a penalty against his opponent within the last 2 minutes of either half.

If the sideline official is advised that the clock should start on the snap, he simply verbalizes this to the referee before the ready for play whistle is sounded. The Referee then signals ready for play on the snap rather than winding on the ready. The official on the other sideline should be prepared to advise the coach on his side that the clock will start on snap as per the new rule.

This will ensure that we have made coaches aware but also ensured that we are not stopping the game to get a decision when the situation arises. It puts the onus on coaches to exercise their option and it also assures that officials are aware of the rule by verbalizing it at the start of every game.

## Halftime

When the clock expires at the end of the first half, the Referee should first ensure there are no flags lying on the ground. He then confirms with the Back Judge that there are no timing issues and holds the ball above his head with one hand to indicate end of the quarter.

Once both teams have left the field the Referee will wind the clock indicating to the timer to start the game clock for halftime. At the same time the Back Judge starts his countdown clock the game clock for halftime.

Prior to the end of the intermission the Referee accompanied by the Umpire will ask the coach with the second half choice to declare his choice. The other options are then presented to the other coach.

The crew must also be back on the field before the start of the mandatory 3 minute warm-up period. When the half time intermission expires, the timer will put 3 minutes on the game clock and start the clock.

**Important Note:** It is not required for the officials to insist that the teams participate in an organized warm up but only that they are provided with the opportunity to do so.

The Back Judge should obtain a ball from the kicking team upon its return to the field. The Line Judge and Back Judge should be near the team huddles and work with the team coaches to get the teams on the field. They should not go to kickoff positions until teams are on the field.

## End of Game

When the clock expires at the end of the game, the Referee should first ensure there are no flags lying on the ground. He then confirms with the Back Judge that there are no timing issues and holds the ball above his head with one hand to indicate that the game is over. The officials' authority over the game extends until all necessary game reports are filed with BCFOA. This is so that those responsible for imposing potential discipline including disqualifications are responsive to actions occurring while the game officials had jurisdiction. Any post-game confrontations with coaches or fans, or any other acts observed by the officials that reflect negatively on the game, may be included in the game reports and must be reported to BCFOA.

All officials will promptly leave the field together when the game is over. Do not take the time to shake hands with coaches, players or each other.

## Overtime

If overtime is necessary, both teams return to their team benches at the conclusion of regulation play for a three-minute intermission. That should be timed on the game clock. If additional overtime periods are necessary, the intermission is two minutes and will be monitored similar to the intermission after a score. See the overtime coin toss section for information on overtime procedures.

## Overtime Procedure

Overtime procedures will be used in **league, exhibition and play-off games** across all divisions.

When the score is tied at the end of regulation the referee should determine whether this is a league game or an exhibition game.

If the game is a league game then overtime will be played according to the following procedure. Regular Kansas City Shootout policy as per the NFHS Rulebook will prevail with the exception that the Referee will select the end of the field that will be used taking into account the scoreboard side if any, as well as the field conditions.

The winner of the coin toss will select offense or defense.

If the game is still tied after the first series of overtime, the team that did not have first choice will now choose offense or defense and a second series will be played.

If the game is still tied, then the team that had the first choice will select offense or defense and a third series will be played. **HOWEVER**, a team scoring a touchdown, **MUST attempt a TWO POINT TRY.**

If the score is still tied in a league game then the game is over and the game shall be declared a TIE.

## Exhibition Games

For exhibition games only **one series** of overtime procedure will be played. If the game remains tied then the game is over and declared a tie.

## Playoff Games

In the playoffs the same procedure will be used but additional series with two point convert attempts will be utilized until there is a winner.

## The Arbiter Game Report NEW!

The Referee is responsible for creating a game report for each game he officiates. The Report feature on ARBITER is used to inform BCFOA about a number of things such as the Bill Diett Award scores, the game score, field issues, officials not showing up or coming very late, players who although not disqualified deserve to be monitored for behavior problems or unsafe acts. Please also indicate when the score became greater than 29 and how this was handled. A brief summary of the game as a SCOUTING REPORT for future games ...team tendencies, running game, passing game, strong punter, very aggressive etc.

## Mechanics for Four Officials NEW!!!!

Ideally all high school football games in British Columbia would be administered by a crew of five officials. However at the Junior Varsity and grade eight levels this is almost always not the case. This supplement is intended to provide support and guidance for officials transitioning to working in a four person crew so that significant adjustment is minimized.

It is expected that all officials who work in four person crews will have a complete understanding of the requirements for a five person crew described earlier in this manual prior to using this supplement.

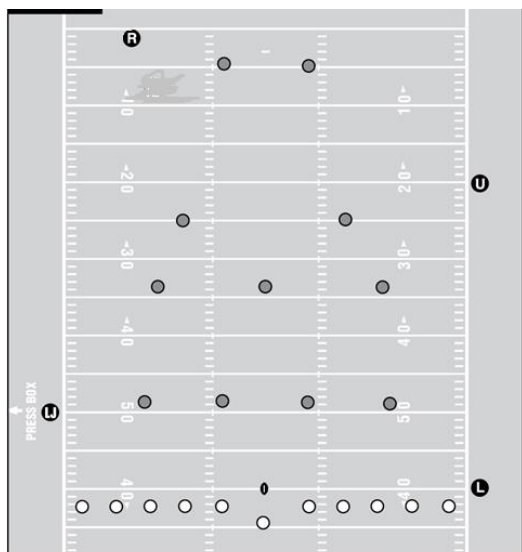
Notable differences between five person and four person officiating include positioning and coverage of free kicks, scrimmage kicks, scoring kicks scrimmage plays and pre snap/post snap keys.

Significantly because of the absence of the Back Judge, the Linesman and Line Judge have responsibility for their sideline from end line to end line.

In the interests of brevity this section should be treated as a summary. When responsibilities for individual officials are identified as primarily the same as described in the five person section it is expected that the reader will review those responsibilities in the five person section.

## Free Kick Mechanics

### Positioning



**The Referee** will **INITIALLY** be positioned on the goal line, between the hash mark and the sideline, opposite the Linesman's side of the field. **THIS POSITION IS A GUIDELINE.** Since the Referee is entirely responsible for the goal line he must be in a position to get to the goal line if it is threatened prior to the ball arriving. In practice many younger kickers cannot kick as far as the goal line so the Referee may ultimately be positioned on the 10 yard line dictated by game situation. He must however always be deeper than the deepest receiver. The Referee has the same duties described in the five person section.

**The Umpire** is positioned at the 20-yard line, outside the field of play opposite the Referee. If a team is known to regularly kick deep the Umpire may start closer to the goal line. The rest of his duties are the same as described in the five person section.

**The Linesman** is positioned on the field with the kicking ball on the kicker's free kick line. He has the same responsibilities as the back judge in a five person crew described in the five person section.

**The Line Judge** is on his sideline at the receiver's free kick line, outside the field of play. The Line Judge does not need to come onto the field unless to get a players attention or help get a player into proper position. He counts K and signals to the Linesman.

### Coverage

**The Referee** has primarily the same responsibilities post kick as described in the five person section.

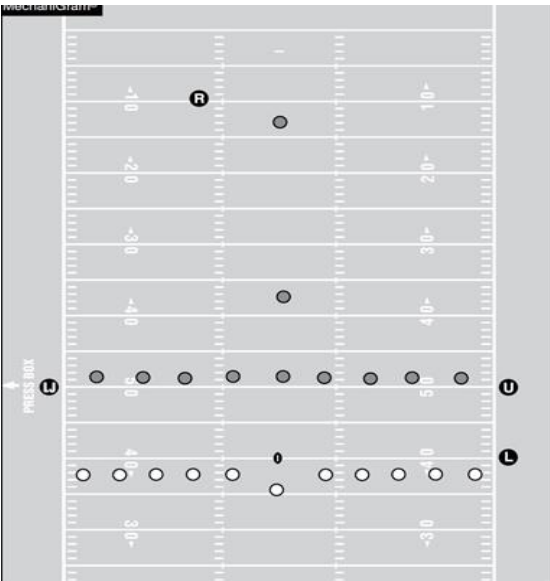
**The Umpire's** responsibilities are primarily the same as described in the five person section.

**The Linesman** may not need to move further than about 10-15 yards downfield, while watching the blocks on the four Team K players nearest his sideline. The Linesman has responsibility for forward progress, the dead ball spot and his sideline AND THE GOAL LINE and should trail the play once the Referee releases the runner all the way to the goal line if necessary

**He must also be aware of the need to assist with cross the field coverage at the end-of-the-run, especially on a long return.**

**The Line Judge** may not need to move further than about 10 yards downfield, while watching the blocks on the four Team K players nearest his sideline. Depending on the distance of the kick he may not need to move downfield at all. The Line Judge has responsibility for forward progress, the dead ball spot and his sideline AND THE GOAL LINE. After giving ground until the Umpire can no longer cover the play, he then allows the runner to pass him and trails the play all the way to the goal line if necessary.

## On-side Kick Positioning



If an onside kick is anticipated, the Umpire BUMPS the Line Judge to the kicker's free kick line. The Referee still has deep coverage and will move to the middle of the field since he now has coverage of the goal line and both pylons. He must still be positioned behind the deepest receiver.

The Linesman and Line Judge have the football and responsibility for starting the clock, the first nine yards of the neutral zone. The Umpire must never leave R's free-kick line until it is no longer threatened.

The Linesman, Line Judge and the Umpire must have a bean bag in hand ready to rule on first touching by team K.

Only the official responsible for the initial touching by R will wind the clock on the kick off. Other officials do not mirror the wind signal.

## Dead Ball Officiating:

After the ball has become dead **ALL** officials must dead ball officiate and allow all players to clear the area before moving to their next position or retrieving a new ball.

## Scrimmage Plays

### Positioning

**The Referee** has the same pre snap responsibilities described in the five person section. The guideline position is suggested as 12-15 yards behind the LOS, outside the tight end at approximately 45% angle on the quarterbacks throwing arm side. This is not a fixed position as the Referee needs to see the offside tackle, backs and the snap.

**The Umpire** has the same pre snap responsibilities as described in the five person section. He must stay over the ball until the Referee signals the RFP. He then retreats to 4-7 yards and assumes a hands on knees position so as not to interfere with the quarterbacks view of the defense.

**The Linesman and the Line Judge** has the same pre snap responsibilities as in the five person section except for pre snap keys.

Simply put the Linesman and Line Judge are responsible for their respective end AND also any flanker (potential receiver) positioned on their side of the field.

The primary key for the Linesman and Line Judge is the end on his side of the field. Secondary keys are any flanker positioned as potential receiver on his side of the field.

Motion of any back/flanker may alter pre snap keys as they move in or out of the Linesman or Line Judge Side of the field.

## Following the Snap:

All officials have essentially the same responsibilities as described in the five person section except for the fact that the Linesman and Line Judge have responsibility all the way to the goal line.

# Scrimmage Kick Mechanics

## Positioning

**The Referee:** The Referee's position is the same as in the five person section. Referee should be able to view the snap and the initial block back and the tackle then the action around the kicker before, during and after the kick. The Referee must be ready to move in the appropriate direction if an errant snap leads to a loose ball in the offensive backfield and must have an awareness of the goal line.

**The Umpire:** Deeper is better on scrimmage kicks. The Umpire should start at about 10 yards off the line of scrimmage.

**The Linesman:** The starting position is the same as for other plays from scrimmage.

**The Line Judge:** The Line Judge begins the play three to five yards behind the deepest receiver and wide enough to observe the receiver's hands. It is permissible for the Line Judge to off the sideline based on where the deepest receiver lines up. The Line Judge must be prepared to move up field if the kick is short or downfield if the receiver has to retreat. If the deep receiver is near or behind Team R's 15 Yard Line, the Line Judge must start on the goal line and not move off the goal line unless it is certain it will not be threatened. If there is any doubt about the ability of a receiver to signal for fair catch the Line Judge should request the receiver to demonstrate the signal before the Referee signals the RFP.

## After the Kick

**The Referee:** As the ball travels from the snapper to the punter, the Referee should observe the initial block by the near backfield protectors and then shift his focus to any player who becomes a threat to contact the ball or the kicker. If the snap is errant or mishandled, the Referee must be prepared to rule on the legality of any contact with the kicker. He must stay focused on the kicker until all threat of harm has passed. He should alert the defenders when the ball is kicked: **"Ball's gone, ball's gone."** The Referee should not move too quickly downfield after the scrimmage kick and keep all players in your view.

The Referee must be ready to move in the appropriate direction in case of a blocked kick. On blocked kicks, the Referee should be ready to rule on the recovery and observe the advance of any player who runs with a recovered ball.

The Referee must strive for a position where he can watch both the kicker and the flight of the ball. Once it is clear the ball will not go out of bounds in flight, the Referee should no longer be concerned about the ball.

If the kick goes out-of-bounds in flight, the Referee will raise his hand to line up the kick for the covering official. If there is continuing action on the kicker, the Referee must place his attention on the action disregard the flight of the ball and let the covering official get the OOB spot by himself.

If the receivers begin a return, the Referee should move slowly downfield; if the runner breaks a long return, the Referee may ultimately assume responsibility for the runner. The Referee has responsibility for the goal line and the sideline opposite from the Linesman. will get an inside-out look regardless of which sideline is involved since the appropriate wing official has sideline responsibility from end line to end line.

**The Umpire:** The Umpire is responsible for the initial action on the snapper and for blocks by all interior linemen and the widest players (gunners) opposite the Linesman. After the ball is kicked and all linemen/backers have cleared his position, he should move slowly downfield along the hash opposite of the Referee keeping as many players in view as possible. The Umpire should be aware of a short kick or a partially blocked kick. The Umpire must observe the action around the ball and help determine if the ball is touched first by Team R beyond the neutral zone and prepare to drop a beanbag if first touching occurs by K. On a return, the Umpire has responsibility for blocks between his position and the runner.

**The Linesman:** The Linesman observes the initial line charge and is responsible for encroachment/false start on the whole line since the Line Judge is downfield. The Linesman is primarily responsible for determining if the ball crossed the neutral zone and doesn't move downfield until the ball crosses it. After the ball crosses the neutral zone the Linesman moves downfield outside the field of play. The distance the Linesman moves after the kick is dependent on the length of the kick, but each should strive for covering approximately half the distance between the line and the end of the kick.

The Linesman's focus should include blocking/restraint by Team R on his side of the ball including the 'gunners' followed by coverage around and in front of the kick receiver. The Linesman is responsible for his sideline from end zone to end zone and for covering the runner when the return is to his area. If the run is to the opposite sideline, he should clean up behind the play.

If the ball is punted near the end zone, the wing officials must be alert for a blocked punt or a broken play and may have to cover action involving the goal line.

If the kick is blocked, the Linesman has primary responsibility for determining if the ball is touched first by Team R beyond the line and whether the spot of a recovery is beyond or behind the line. If the kicker initially starts to run before deciding to kick, the Linesman may have to rule whether the punter was beyond the line when the ball was kicked.

If a scrimmage kick goes over the receivers head the Line Judge shall cover the ball and the Linesman will observe the receiver for any blocking after a fair catch signal (valid or invalid).



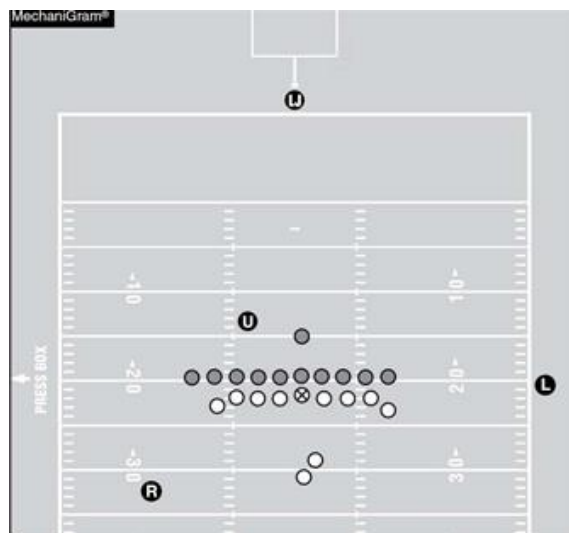
**The Line Judge:** All deep receivers are the responsibility of the Line Judge. Once the ball is kicked, he rules on the validity of any fair catch signal, moves with the receiver and maintains a position to rule on catch vs. muff.

If the ball is kicked over the head of the deepest receiver, the Line Judge must retreat if necessary to the goal line where he has sole responsibility for determining if a touchback occurs or the momentum exception applies.

Once the receiver catches the kick, he must watch the players who approach the runner and should track the ball with his peripheral vision. The Line Judge is responsible for his sideline from end zone to end zone and for covering the runner until he is transferred another official. The Line Judge must bean bag the spot where the kick ends. That spot may be used for post- scrimmage kick penalty enforcement.

## Field Goals when the ball is snapped outside the 10 yard line

### Positioning



**Referee:** The Referee's starting position is 1-2 yards behind and 3-5 yards to the side of the kicker and facing the holder. The distance from the holder may vary depending on personal preference keeping in mind that the Referee needs to have a good view of the snap and the initial block by the end and back on his side of the field and then the action around the kicker before the kick. The Referee is responsible for the sideline and the pylon behind him if there is a run or pass to that side. The Referee rules on roughing the holder and kicker.

**Umpire:** The Umpire's starting position is 4-7 yards off the line of scrimmage and shaded to the Line Judge sideline. Before the snap he should verbalize that the snapper has protection loud enough for defensive players to hear.

**Linesman:** The Linesman begins in his normal position on the LOS and off the sideline.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge's position is 5 yards behind and directly between uprights. When the ball is kicked he may move toward one of the uprights to get a better view of the ball and the upright. He is responsible for determining the success of the kick.

**Communication:** Prior to the snap the entire crew should communicate that the ball remains live after the kick until it is dead by rule or a score takes place. This communication needs to occur to eliminate the possibility of confusion with a convert and an inadvertent whistle.

### Coverage

**Referee:** The Referee must watch the holder receive the ball and whether the holder lifts his knee off the ground in muff or after possession. If the ball is passed or handed he must rule on the legality of the action.

After the kick, the Referee is responsible for ruling on contact on both the kicker and holder. When they are no longer in danger of being contacted, the Referee should then look to the Line Judge to learn the result of the kick. After dead ball officiating long enough to ensure that players are separated he may relay to the press box.

If a kick Try is blocked, the Referee should blow his whistle immediately as the play is over and the ball is dead; however, a blocked field goal remains live. Communication with the crew prior to the kick regarding the live ball/dead ball status of a blocked kick or a kick that fails to reach the goal line is essential.

In cases where a run or pass develops to his side, the Referee is responsible for his sideline the pylon. If Team R recovers the ball and runs for a score, the Referee is responsible for his sideline all the way to the goal line.

**Umpire:** Initially, the Umpire rules on the legality of the snap. He then observes contact with the snapper. He must also watch the blocks by the snapper and guards. He must be prepared to move toward the sideline if the play becomes a run or pass in his direction.

If a blocked kick or fake results in a play toward the goal line, the Umpire has the inside-out look at blocks near the point of attack and can help with goal line coverage on the open side of the field.

**Linesman:** The Linesman is responsible for false starts and encroachment along the whole line. He also is responsible to determine whether the kick crosses the LOS or LTG if the play develops into a run or pass. After the kick, the Linesman must pinch-in toward the offensive and defensive linemen to encourage them to separate.

If the play becomes a run or pass the Linesman officiates as he would any other scrimmage play. He is responsible for forward progress, the LTG, the goal line and the end line when the goal line is no longer threatened as in a pass play.

**Line Judge:** The Line Judge is responsible for ruling on whether the ball passed inside or outside the upright. When a successful kick passes the upright or when the ball breaks the plane of the goal line and it is obvious it will not score, the Line Judge sounds his whistle. He should

take a few steps forward into the end zone and signal the appropriate signal depending on the result of the kick. The Line Judge should hold the signal until the Referee makes eye contact. If the ball falls short of the goal line, the Line Judge should move toward his sideline to help rule on touchback, momentum and a kick return by Team R.

If the play becomes a run or pass the Line Judge must immediately move toward his sideline and the pylon and rule on whether the play scores. The Line Judge is also responsible for the end line when the goal line is no longer threatened as in a pass play.

## Converts and Field Goals from the 10 Yard Line and in

In four person mechanics the Referee will rule on whether the scoring kick is successful. Pre kick responsibilities are the same for each official as in regular scrimmage plays.

**Referee:** The Referee lines up about 1-3 yards behind the kicker slightly to the opposite side of the holder able to see the holder receive the ball. He rules on the kick passing the uprights after checking with the official responsible for over/under the crossbar if needed.

If the play becomes a pass or run he will assist with sideline coverage to either side of the field as per regular scrimmage plays.

If the kick is a convert and it is blocked he immediately sounds his whistle and signals after delaying to watch or assist players separate.

If the kick is a field goal attempt and is blocked the ball remains live.

**The Umpire:** The Umpire position is 4-7 yards behind the LOS ensuring he can see the ball. His pre snap responsibilities are the same as in a regular scrimmage play.

Prior to the snap he verbalizes that the snapper has protection.

After the snap he steps forward reading interior linemen. He watches for action on the snapper. When the ball is dead he uses his voice to let players know and assist with separation of players when necessary.

If the play becomes a pass or run he officiates using same mechanics as a regular scrimmage play.

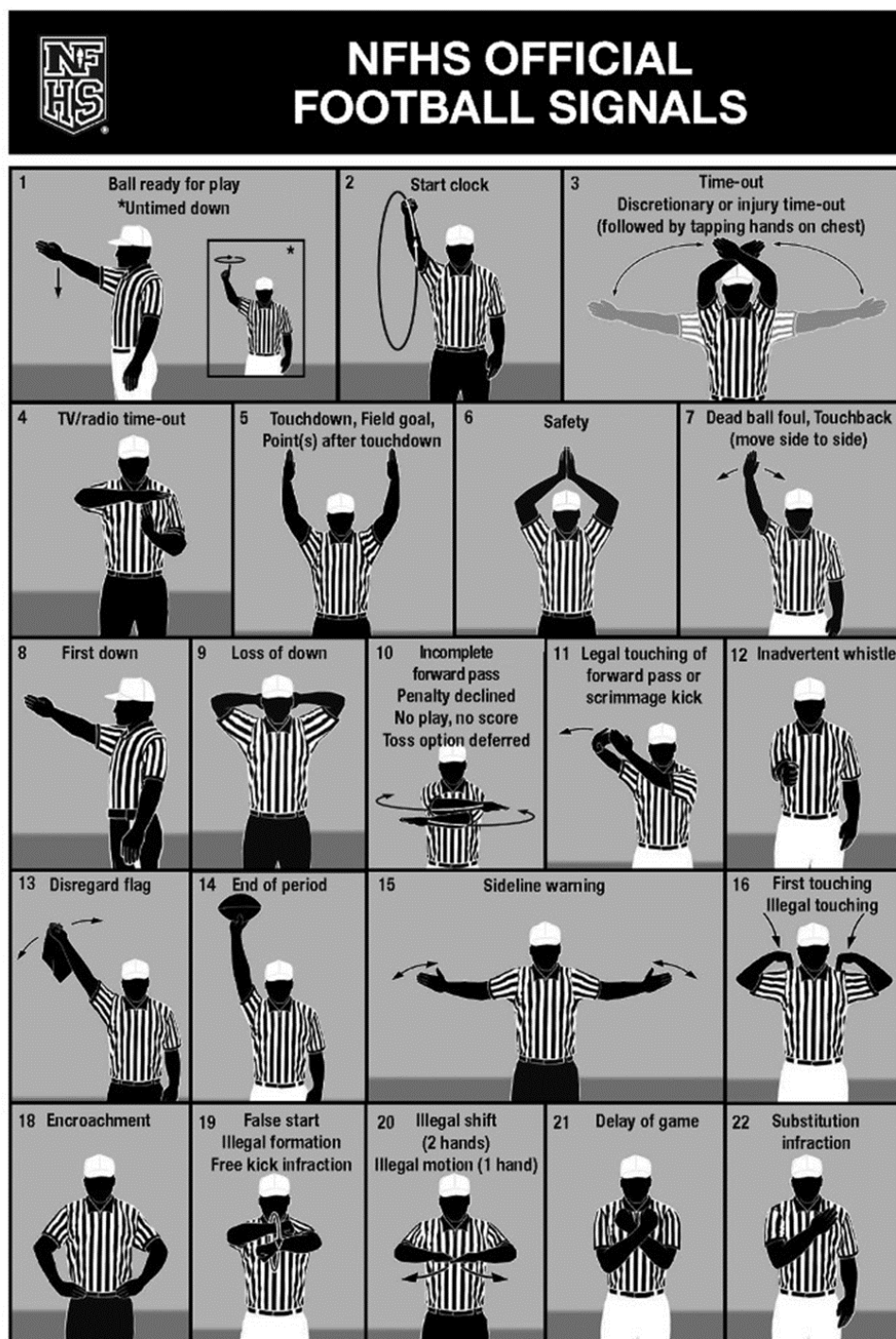
**Linesman and Line Judge:** The Linesman and Line Judge starting position and coverage is the same as normal scrimmage plays.

The wing official looking at the front of the holder will rule on action on the kicker/holder after the kick. The other wing official rules on over/under the crossbar and signals to the Referee if close or the Referee is looking for a signal.

If the play becomes a pass or run both the Lineman and Line Judge move to the goal line and officiate as any other scrimmage play.



# APPENDIX "A" NFHS OFFICIALS SIGNALS **UPDATED**



PlayPic® PlayPics courtesy of **REFEREE** (www.referee.com) Note: Signal number 17 is for future expansion.



# NFHS OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS

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

## APPENDIX “B” “OFFICIAL TO OFFICIAL SIGNALS



11 on defense



Play ended out of bounds



Play ended in bounds



Widest receiver is back



Widest receiver is up



Receiver out



Double stakes



LJ obvious 1<sup>st</sup> down



Snapper protection



Five will get ten



Reset the play clock



less than 11 players

## APPENDIX "C" "CONCUSSION PROTOCOL UPDATED!"

The first question the referee will ask during the pre-game meeting with the head coach is, "Do you have qualified health care personnel on your sidelines as per BCSSFA regulations?" If the answer is yes, that person should be identified by the head coach.

There is no requirement to see credentials.

**\*\*\* If the answer is "no" then the game will be forfeited and the officials must leave the field at the scheduled start time.**

The referee will report the forfeiture information to Vice President of High School by email [vp-high-school@bcfoa.ca](mailto:vp-high-school@bcfoa.ca)

If the answer is "yes" then the referee will inform the head coach that if a player is removed from the game due to concussion signs or symptoms that prior to returning in the same game the referee must be informed verbally by the qualified health care personnel that the player is free of signs or symptoms of concussion.

Note: This can easily be done at the sideline without delaying the game between plays or during timeouts/intermissions.

Any player who leaves the game for a suspected concussion will have his name, number and team recorded by the crew members on their game card.

Prior to returning to the game the qualified health care personnel for that team will verify verbally with the referee that the player is free of signs and is not reporting any symptoms of concussion.

If an official observes contact to the head (ie. helmet to helmet, helmet to knee, helmet to ground) and the player is down he should advise the Referee and the attending qualified health care personnel during the injury time out.

If at any time in the game an official observes a player showing signs and/or symptoms of a concussion, the game should be stopped. The Referee and Umpire will speak with the head coach and inform him of what they observed and ask for the player to be evaluated by the qualified health care personnel.

If the coach refuses, the Referee will remove the player from the game until he has been evaluated.

BCSSFA has informed programs that all of them will need to have qualified health care personnel on the sidelines for all games at all levels. If the officials remove a player because of suspected concussion symptoms, the qualified health care personnel will evaluate the player and after clearing him, send the player back in WITHOUT a doctor's note. If a player again exhibits signs and symptoms of concussion the Referee will notify the head coach and ask for the player to be reevaluated.

At this point, the officials will not have any involvement in this regard except to write this player's number down and submit it in the game report.

Notes:

1. Teams cannot share qualified health care personnel. BCSSFA policy requires each team to have their own.
2. If a team does not have a qualified health care personnel at kick off time the game will be forfeited.
3. There is no disagreement, the referee sends a player off, the qualified health care personnel evaluates the player and can send them back on after a play.
4. If the head coach is the qualified health care personnel and is disqualified, he must leave the bench area, but he can still act as the qualified health care personnel and an assistant can take over the game.