














MHSAA --- District 4 Football Officials Manual



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Symbols Legend

	Referee		Kicker
	Umpire		Captain
	Head Linesman		QB / Kicker
	Line Judge		Snapper
	Field Judge		Ineligible
	Side Judge		Eligible/Back
	Timer		

1. Officiating Requisites

Courage, knowledge of the rules & mechanics, hustle and tact are indispensable to a good official, but none is of any more importance than the prime requisite – GOOD JUDGEMENT!

Unfailing familiarity with the rules and full understanding of mechanics are necessary for the proper conduct of a game but are no guarantee of optimum performance. The intent of each rule must be kept in mind. Situations arise in a game that cannot be covered in a rulebook or manual. **FOOTBALL SENSE MUST SUPERSEDE TECHNICAL APPLICATION OF THE RULES.**

Courage – While football officiating requires courage, a smooth running game suddenly can get out of hand as a result of a domineering attitude toward players and coaches. Conversation with a player or coach should always be courteous, but without sacrificing dignity. If an action warrants a foul being called, it should be done and the penalty for the foul administered unobtrusively and without dramatization. A game is kept under control by proper administration of the rules. No impression of militant supervision should be displayed.

Knowledge – Rule mastery must be thorough and supplemented by an ability to interpret rules correctly. Attempting to officiate without these skills is unfair to everyone concerned. These abilities are acquired only through devotion of time and study. Anyone unable or unwilling to acquire these skills should leave officiating.

Hustle – Hustle is of the utmost importance. Hustle keeps officials in the best and proper position to make a call. When officials hustle to be in that position ahead of having to make a call, he ‘sells’ his call by not being ‘on the move’ at the time it has to be made. Hustle in the times of...dead ball intervals, between periods, positioning for a scrimmage or free kick...exhibits that official’s desire to be on the field and part of the game.

Tact – Tact is necessary but submission is not. Tact should never be a justification for retreating from a position properly taken or a decision correctly rendered.

Poise -- Be a calming influence amidst the turmoil that is a football game. Staying calm is an asset in officiating, as in any other phase of a sport where fast reflexes are required. A relaxed appearance is a great help as it gives the impression of confidence. Care, however, should be taken to avoid the appearance of indifference. The poised official is able to remain inconspicuous as he moves to be in the right place at the right time.

Physical Condition – Football officiating is difficult, exhausting and requires efficiency of mind and body. Men whose eyes, lungs or legs are not in sound condition have no place in officiating. Officials who need eyeglasses or contact lens should use

them. It is recommended that each official obtain a physical examination prior to each season.

Mental Reactions / Abilities – Decisions should be made timely and a ruling should be announced with a minimum of delay, whenever possible. Officials must be able to maintain total concentration for the full 48 minutes of the game (plus overtime periods if required).

Duties and Responsibilities – Each official must have thorough knowledge of the duties / mechanics of his own position. He must also be fully informed concerning the duties of each of the other officials. Be prepared to assume any one of the other positions should circumstances require changing positions. An official must:

- A. Know the down and distance prior to each snap.
- B. Be ready to assist a crewmate who is temporarily out of position.
- C. Be aware of erroneous procedure or rulings and attempt to prevent and correct whenever possible.
- D. Know the prescribed signals and when and how they should be used.
- E. Secure a new ball if appropriate, after all action has ceased and be able to handle and pass the ball properly.
- F. Be alert to happenings away from the ball when play has left his immediate area. (Be a good dead ball official)
- G. Call time-out for any player who is obviously injured or disable.
- H. Call any foul or rule infraction (if it impacts the play or puts a player in jeopardy) regardless of specific assignment.

Cooperation -- Teamwork is essential among crewmates. Continuous verbal communication between all officials during the game is essential for effective game administration.

Confidentiality – Do not discuss with any coach the play or players of his opponents in a game that you will officiate or are officiating. Caution should be used in discussing any team, players or coaches in all your daily activities.

Hospitality – In most high school settings the host school exhibits great effort to accommodate and welcome game officials. Care should be exercised to avoid the appearance of fraternization at the game site. The officials are assigned to a game for one purpose: to officiate the contest at hand.

2. Character

Realize the importance of your position and at all times uphold the dignity it demands.

Have ambition, but also patience, as over anxiety has ruined many young officials.

Never use your senior position to embarrass another official.

Be receptive. Open your mind to new concepts and ideas.

Become a leader. If you adopt a philosophy that you are going to help others reach their goals, you will reach yours.

Be passionate. If you are passionate about integrity, honest and professionalism, you've improved your quality of life through officiating.

Be courageous. Doing what is right – versus what's popular or safe – takes strong will and conviction.

3. Conduct and Ethics

Officials shall bear a great responsibility for creating public confidence in sports.

Officials shall be free of obligation to any interest other than the impartial and fair judging of sports competitions.

Officials shall hold and maintain the basic tenets of officiating which include history, integrity, neutrality, respect, sensitivity, professionalism, discretion and tactfulness.

Officials shall master both the rules of the game and mechanics necessary to enforce the rules, and shall exercise authority in an impartial, firm and controlled manner.

Officials shall uphold the honor and dignity of the avocation in all interactions with student athletes, coaches, school administration, colleagues and the public.

Officials shall display and execute superior communications skills, both verbal and non verbal.

Officials shall prepare themselves both physically and mentally and shall present themselves in a manner consistent with the high standards of the avocation.

Officials shall be punctual and professional in the fulfillment of all obligations. Officials shall work with each other, elected district leaders and the MHSAA in a constructive and cooperative manner.

Officials shall accept responsibility for all actions taken.

4. Officiating Axioms

We want quality fouls, see everything you call, but don't call everything you see.

Other than a cheap shot, a foul that is called should be at the point of attack and have a material effect on the play.

If you think you saw something, you didn't see it.

Continue to officiate after throwing the flag, the play is probably not over.

Players can (and should) stop on the whistle, however, officials cannot.

Be a good dead ball official. View all players until they are back with their teammates.

Have a slow whistle – remember the play will kill itself.

Only the covering officials of the zone where the ball becomes dead should sound their whistles to signify the play is over. A whistle may be needed to stop activity away from the end of the run, but remember your presence, with voice commands, can be used to stop this activity as well.

Too many officials blowing whistles could mean we are watching the ball and not our area of responsibility.

Have excellent communication with other officials, coaches and players, always using courtesy.

Preventive officiating is a beautiful thing.

If you know a mistake has been made – stop the game. We must correct what is correctable.

Be mentally and physically prepared to work the game.

Have a routine progression for each dead ball period between plays.

Three C's of every play; Confirm down and distance, Count players (don't assume 11), Concentrate

While on the field, move with a purpose, no walking.

Keep hustling at all times, but know the difference between hustle and hurry.

If all else fails, a little common sense goes a long way.

Flag on the ground, means it is time to slow down. Take adequate time to get penalty administration correct.

Imagine the coach with yellow flag in his pocket that he can only use to call Unsportsmanlike Conduct on us. Never give him a reason to use it.

5. Uniforms

Officials should constantly be aware of the condition of all segments of his officiating uniform and obtain new pieces as necessary to present a sense of pride and decorum in his appearance on the field of play.

Approved uniform for MHSAA District Four officials:

Shirt – Standard black and white knit, long tail, 1-inch vertical striped short or long sleeve shirt. All crew members shall match by wearing either short or long sleeve shirts. If long sleeves are worn, sleeves shall be worn at the wrist. (not pushed up to elbow). Then MHSAA patch shall be worn above the pocket. An American Flag patch may be worn on the left sleeve, but only if all crew members wear one.

Pants – Standard black pants with a 1 ¼ inch white stripe down the outside of both legs.

Undershirts – All undershirts that will be visible shall be black.

Socks – Shall be solid black.

Shoes and belt – Shoes should be predominantly black (limited amount of white for logos or stripes) and maintained at a proper shine. Shoe laces shall be black. Belt shall be black and its width a minimum of 1 ¼ inches with a maximum of 2 inches.

Cap – All caps shall be fitted (sized) Adjustable caps are NOT acceptable. Referee – solid white cap. All other positions – black cap with white piping.

Foul Marker – All crew members shall be equipped with a light gold foul marker, 15”x15” and weighted in the center. Marker shall be carried INCONSPICUOUSLY and out of sight.

Bean Bag – All officials shall be equipped with a bean bag for marking spots. Approved colors are white, royal blue and black. All crew members shall have the same color bean bag.

Whistle – If a whistle on a lanyard is used, both must be black. If a finger whistle is used it also should be black.

Jackets – Jackets are not considered part of the approved uniform. They may be worn during pre-game responsibilities.

Gloves – If gloves are worn they should be predominantly black.

Towel – Umpire is allowed to utilize a towel for assistance in maintaining a dry ball for play. Towel shall be black, worn on the belt and not exceed 8”x12” in visible area.

Other approved and suggested auxiliary equipment include: an elastic down indicator or other device to keep track of downs, a coin for the referee, a device that is clipped to the chain to aid in measurements for the Head Linesman, a countdown style wristwatch with black band for officials with timing responsibilities. Also approved are devices worn on the belt for play clock and time out management.

6. Philosophies

Ball Spotting

The ball can be spotted on a yard line to begin the next series after a change of possession. For example, if a punt return ends between the 33 and 34 yard line, the ball may be moved up to the 34 yard line to begin the new series. (Exception: if change of possession is after a fourth down running or passing play, the ball will be left at the dead ball spot to begin the next series)

Line of scrimmage

When in question, the formation is legal.

Officials will work to keep offensive linemen legal and will call only when obvious or when a warning to the player and a subsequent warning to the coach are ignored. Don't wait till the fourth quarter to enforce the rule

If an ineligible offensive player is lined up with his head *clearly* behind the rear of the snapper, a foul will be called without a warning.

Don't be too technical on an offensive player who is a wide receiver or slot back when determining if he is off or on the line of scrimmage. *When in question, it is not a foul.*

Wide receivers or slot backs lined up outside a tight end will be ruled on the line of scrimmage and covering the tight end if there is no stagger between their alignment. *If in question, he is not covered up.*

Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal.

Remember, illegal formation is a live ball foul; flag is dropped at the snap.

When in question, a quick or abrupt movement by the snapper or the quarterback is a false start.

When in question, the formation is legal.

Fumbles

When in question, the runner was down and did not fumble.

When in question regarding whether the quarterback passed or fumbled, it will be ruled an incomplete pass.

Defensive Pass Interference

Actions that constitute DPI include, but are not limited to the following categories:

Early contact by a defender who is not playing the ball is DPI provided the other requirements for DPI have been met, regardless of how deep the pass is thrown to the receiver.

Playing through the back of a receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.

Grabbing and restricting a receiver's arm(s) or body in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.

Extending an arm across the body (arm bar) of a receiver thus restricting his ability to catch a pass, regardless of the fact of whether or not the defender is looking for the ball.

Cutting off or riding the receiver out of the path to the ball by making contact with him without playing the ball.

Hooking and restricting a receiver in an attempt to get to the ball in such a manner that causes the receiver's body to turn prior to the ball arriving.

Offensive Pass Interference

Actions that constitute OPI include but are not limited to the following categories:

Initiating contact with a defender by shoving or pushing off thus creating separation in an attempt to catch a pass.

Driving through a defender who has established a position on the field.

Blocking downfield during a pass that legally crosses the line of scrimmage.

Picking off a defender who is attempting to cover a receiver.

Not Offensive Pass Interference

OPI for blocking downfield will not be called on a screen pass when the ball is overthrown behind the line of scrimmage but subsequently lands beyond the expanded line of scrimmage and linemen are blocking downfield, unless such blocking prevents a defender from catching the ball.

It is not OPI on a pick play if the defensive player is blocking the offensive player when the pick occurs and the offensive player doesn't make a separate action.

Other Passing Situations

When in question on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer if it is judged the defender's intent is to punish.

If the passer is contacted after he starts his passing motion, it may be ruled no intentional grounding due to this contact.

If the passer is contacted clearly before he starts his passing motion, there will be a foul for intentional grounding if there is no eligible receiver in the vicinity.

If an interception is near the goal line and there is a question as to whether possession is gained in the field of play or in the end zone, make it a touchback.

Blocking

Takedowns at the point of attack, those in the open field *and* affecting the result of the play create special focus and should be called as holding.

If there is a potential offensive holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, offensive holding should not be called.

If there is a potential defensive holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, defensive holding should not be called. Example: a defensive back on the opposite side of the field holding a wide receiver on a designed run play to the other side.

If the force of a block is clearly on the side it is not a foul.

The force of a block could be slight and still be a foul if the contact is in the back and propels the player past the runner or prevents him from making the play.

For blocks in the back, if one hand is on the number and the other hand is on the side and the initial force is on the number, it is a block in the back.

Blocks that start on the side and subsequently end up in the back are not fouls as long as contact is maintained throughout the block.

Blocks in the back and offensive holds that occur at or about the same time as the runner is being tackled shall not be called.

Blocks in the back that are personal fouls in nature should be called regardless of their timing relative to the runner being tackled.

A grab of the receiver's jersey that restricts the receiver and takes away his feet should be defensive holding if other criteria are met, and could be DPI.

Holding can be called even if the quarterback is subsequently sacked as it may be the other half of an offset foul.

Rarely should you have a hold on a double team block unless there is a takedown or the defender breaks the double team and is pulled back.

Kicking Plays

It shall always be roughing the kicker when there is forcible contact to the plant leg, whether or not that leg is on the ground. It shall be running into the kicker if a defender simply 'runs through' the kicking leg. All other contact shall be based on the severity and the potential for injury to the kicker.

When in question, a foul by the receiving team on a scrimmage kick occurs after the ball is kicked.

Illegal block in the back can be called on fair catches, but not if the illegal block occurs away from the play as the fair catch is being made, or the play results in a touchback and the contact is slight. (Note: Personal fouls should always be called)

Blocks in the back that are personal fouls should be called regardless of their timing relative to a fair catch.

The kicker's restraining line on onside kicks should be officiated as a plane. Any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for offside. The same plane applies on "normal" kickoffs, but officials should not be too technical in regard to breaking the plane.

On kicks entering the end zone or not, when in question, the kick has broken the plane and is a touchback.

Scoring Plays

When in question, it is not a touchdown.

When in question, it is not a safety.

A non-airborne runner crossing the goal line inside the pylon with the ball crossing the goal line extended is a touchdown.

Plays at the sideline

If legal contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out of bounds, consider it a legal hit.

If the whistle has blown and a runner continuing to advance down the sideline has eased up, contact by the opponent against the runner is a foul. Officials should be alert and be sure any action is not part of the initial play before calling a foul.

When in question as to whether the runner stepped out of bounds, officials should rule the runner did not step out of bounds.

Personal Fouls

If action is deemed to be “fighting”, the player must be disqualified.

When in question if an act is a flagrant personal foul or fighting, the player is not fighting.

Players committing flagrant personal fouls must be disqualified.

When in question regarding hits away from the ball near the end of the play, consider it a dead-ball rather than a live-ball foul.

7. Pre-game Responsibilities

Officials should be dressed and on the field one hour prior to kickoff, earlier, if possible, especially if both teams are on the field.

Meeting for coin toss should take place as soon as game administrator and both head coaches are available, but no later than 35 minutes prior to kickoff.

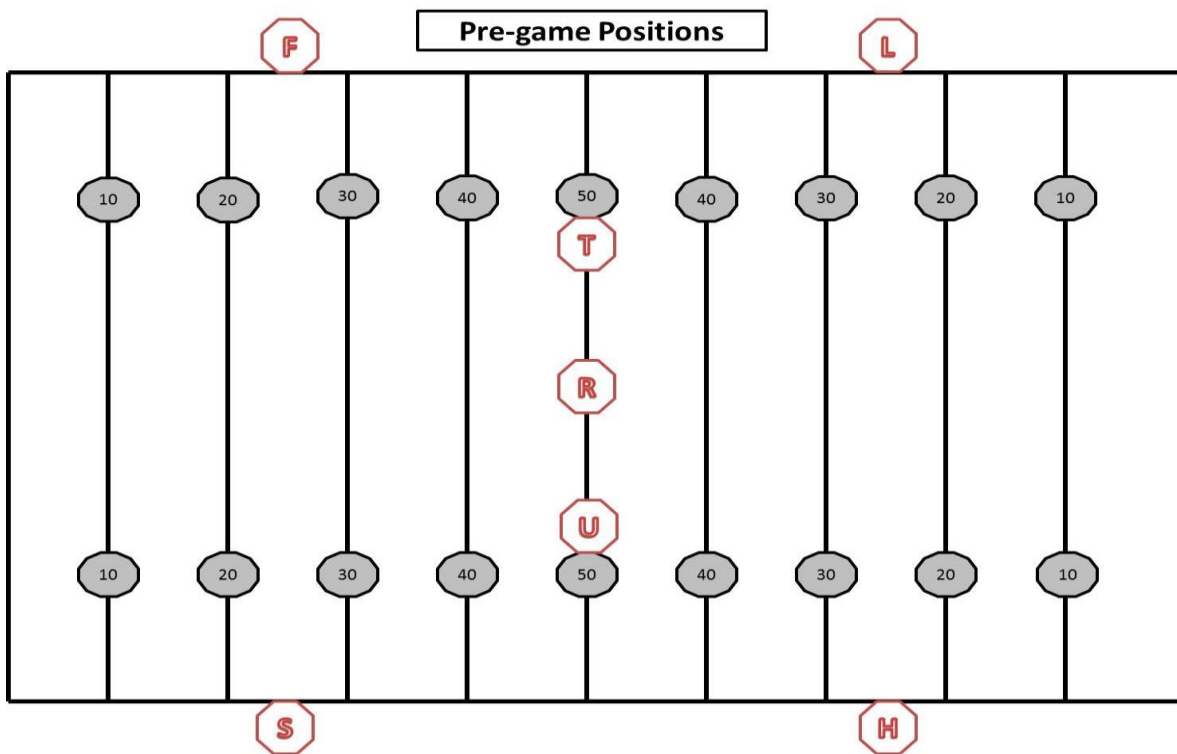
The meeting with coaches should be held at center of the 50 yard line with all officials attending.

Prior to the coaches meeting officials should be positioned as follows to observe field conditions, player equipment legality, QB throwing arms, leg strengths of kickers / punters, play formations and as a separation of teams on the respective 45 yard lines.

R, U and T spread along the 50 yard line, maintaining team separation

H / S on the visitor sideline, at opposite 25 yard lines, observing teams

L / F on the home sideline, at opposite 25 yard lines, observing teams



After coaches meeting / coin toss H and L walk away with respective coaches to receive information from coaches regarding unusual formations or plays they intend to use or other concerns they may need to share with officials.

R, U and T return to 50 yd line.

S / F return to positions along the sidelines.

When the discussions with coaches have completed, H / L assume R / U positions on the 50.

R / U circle the field observing field markings, pylon placement, try for point three yard marks. Report any issues to game manager for correction if possible.

Return to original positions when R / U complete playing field observations.

Sideline officials can move to one side of the fifty if only one team remains on the field.

Crew may elect to exit field if the home team is the single team on the field.

If the site does not have facility away from the field in which the crew can meet and cover final pregame mechanics and any information H / L gathered from coaches, then meet as a group in the most inconspicuous corner available, so as to not draw attention to the crew.

H will meet and review responsibilities with line to gain chain crew and down box operator.

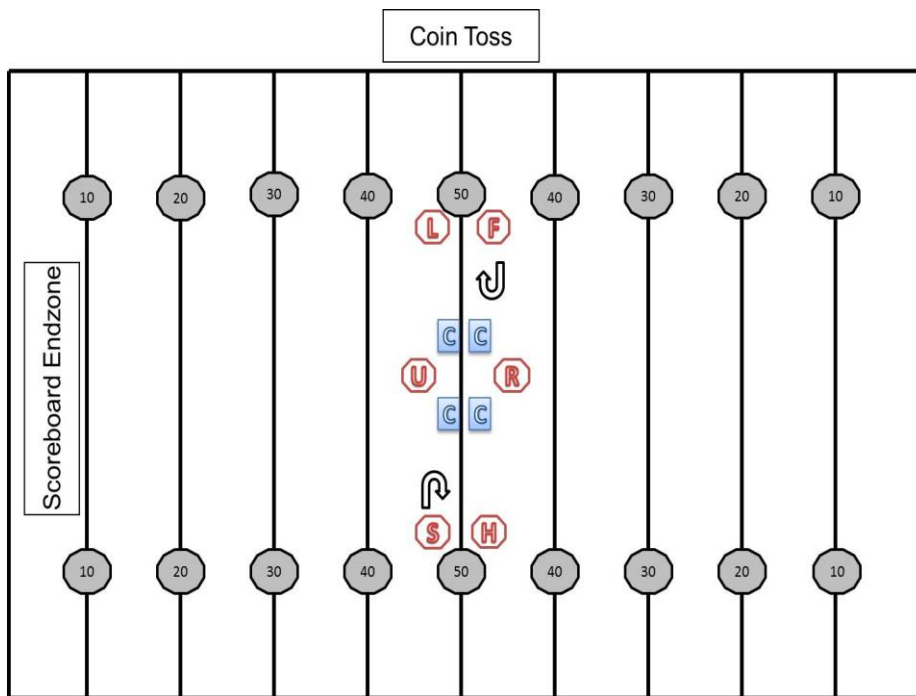
U will inspect and approve game balls.

S / F will meet with ball boys with instructions for managing game balls throughout the game. Ball boys are not to come onto the field of play.

S / F will retrieve game captains from locker rooms with enough time to present them at midfield at 5:00 minutes before kickoff

H / L will maintain sideline control at the ‘Numbers’ (9 yd marks) S / F will join them there after captain presentation.

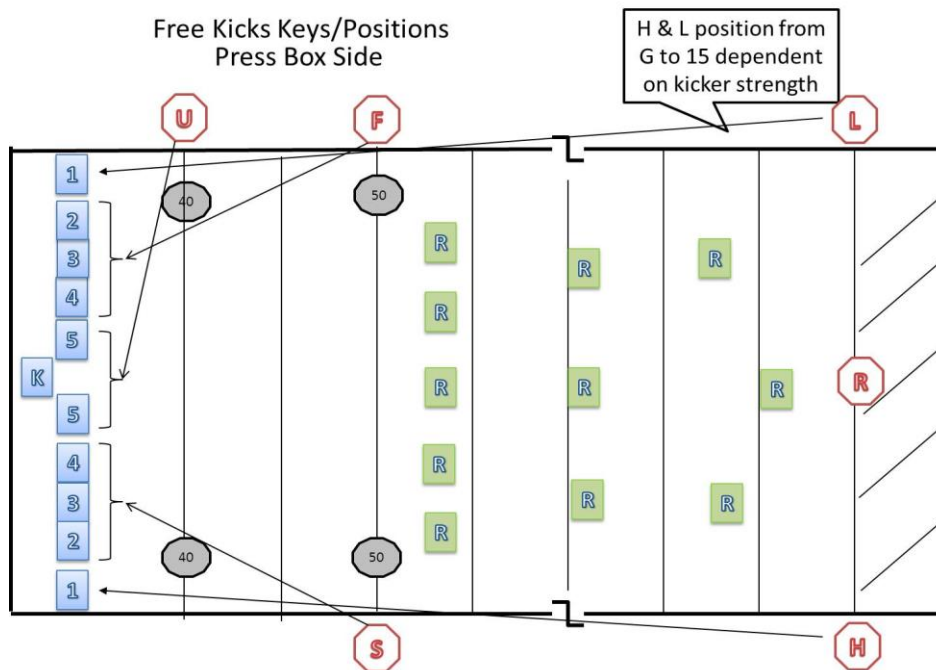
After ceremonial coin toss all officials meet at mid field for final instructions prior to moving to free kick positions.



8. Mechanics

Free Kicks

Positioning and Keys



Referee – Starting position is in the middle of the field a minimum of five yards behind the deepest receiver. Be alert for touchbacks.

Head Linesman -- Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box at R's goal line. You have goal line and pylon responsibility. Your key is the K player nearest the sideline on your side. Move quickly to zone coverage if kick is to your side of field.

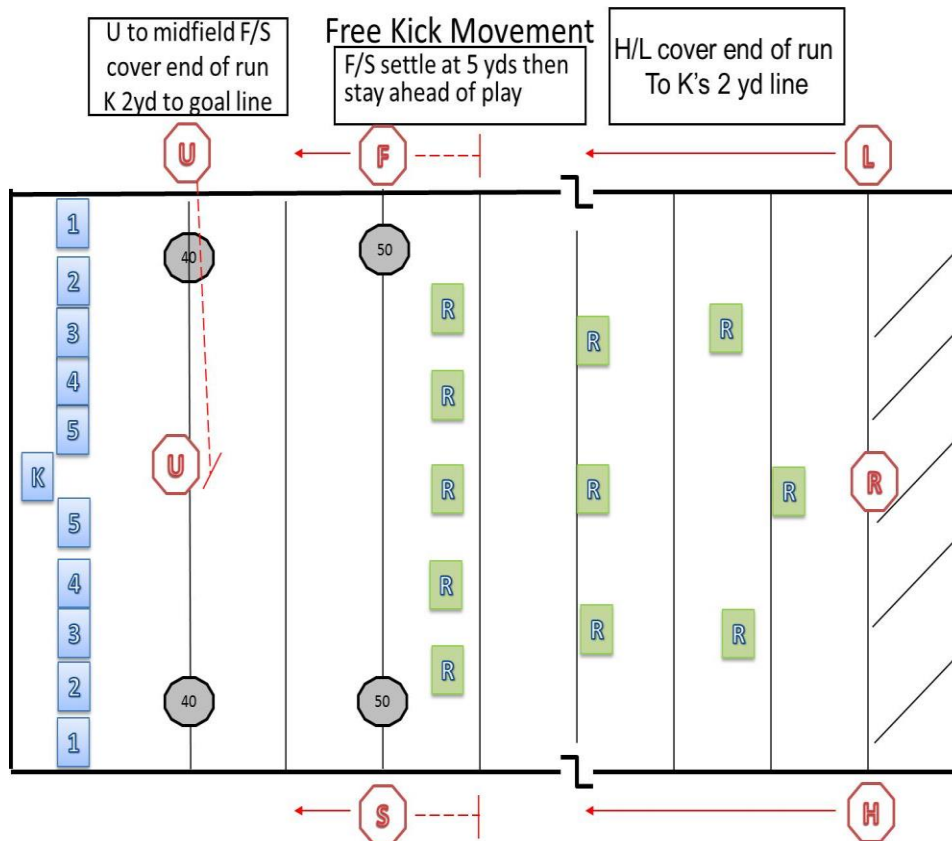
Line Judge – Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at team R's goal line. You have goal line and pylon responsibility. Your key is the K player nearest the sideline on your side. Move quickly to zone coverage if kick is to your side of field.

Side Judge – Assist in clearing the sideline of players and coaches. Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on team R's restraining line. Your keys are K players 2, 3 and 4 on your side of the field (note you should know their numbers). Ensure there are at least four K players on each side of the kicker.

Field Judge – Assist in clearing the sideline of players and coaches. Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side on team R's restraining line. Your keys are K players 2, 3 and 4 on your side of the field (note you should know their numbers). Ensure there are at least four K players on each side of the kicker.

Umpire – Assist in clearing the sidelines. Before handing the ball to the kicker, identify the Referee for the kicker; instruct him to wait on the R's ready for play whistle before kicking the ball. Then move to your starting position on the press box sideline at team K's restraining line. Umpire's keys are the middle three K players. This will include the kicker, whose protection is your responsibility. Ensure all K players are within five yards of the K restraining line.

Free Kick Coverage



All – Once the ball is kicked, observing the players is your primary responsibility. Do not focus on the flight of the ball.

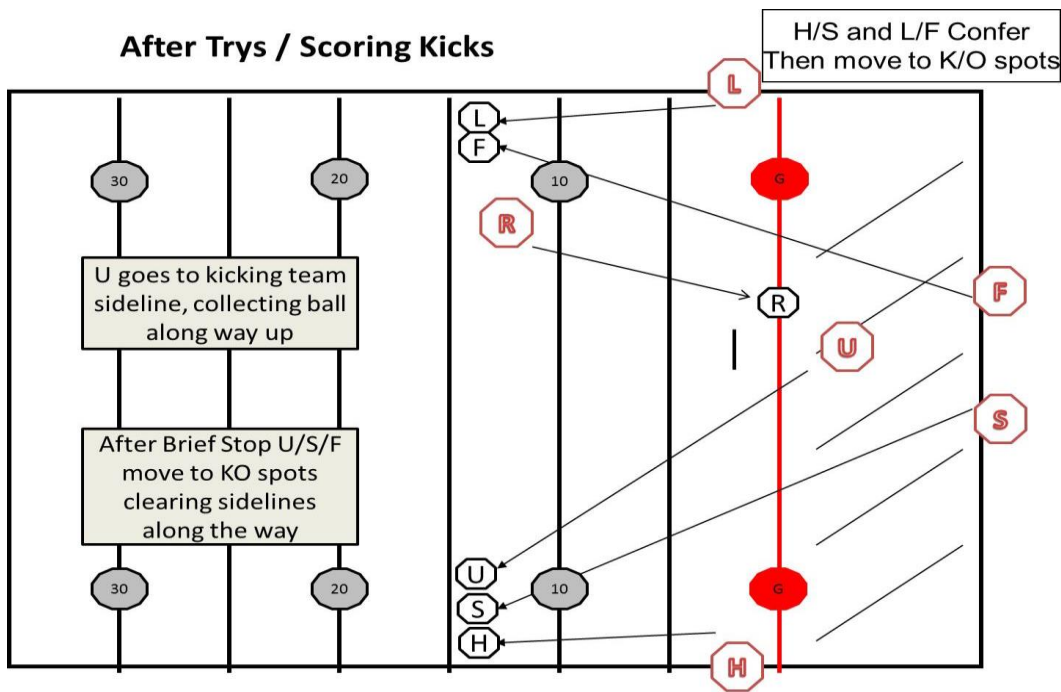
Referee – When players and officials are ready and after the Umpire has reached the sideline after handing the ball to the kicker, sound your whistle and give the ready for play signal. Move laterally to be in position to see action at the point of attack. You are primarily responsible for illegal blocks at the point of attack. Follow the play and observe action in front of the runner. Be alert for a handoff and a reverse.

Head linesman and line judge – Responsible for counting team R players. Signal each other when you determine R has 11 players on the field. Signal R when you are ready for play. Wind the clock when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, unless the ball is caught or recovered by a player who is legally down. Stay at the goal line until it is no

longer threatened. When the runner is on your side of the field you are responsible for blocks at the point of attack and the runner. When you do not have the ball, take a position to observe blocks on the backside of the runner. H and L are responsible for the end of the run down all the way to K's two yard line.

Side and Field Judge – Responsible for counting team K players. Signal each other when you have determined K has 11 players on the field. Signal R with a raised hand when you are ready for play. Anticipate on-side kick on every free kick. Have bean bag in hand. Know if the ball was kicked directly into the ground. Upon the kick move downfield no more than 5 to 7 yards. Observe contact against your keys. Adjust to zone coverage as runner moves into or away from your area. Maintaining cushion ahead of runner as you would on a scrimmage play. You are responsible for team K's goal line on any long return and any end of run that occurs within two yards of K's goal line.

Umpire – Upon reaching starting position signal R with a raised hand that you are ready for play. Upon the kick move to the center of the field and settle; being alert to illegal action on the kicker. Observe action mainly toward the center of the field, observing off-ball action.

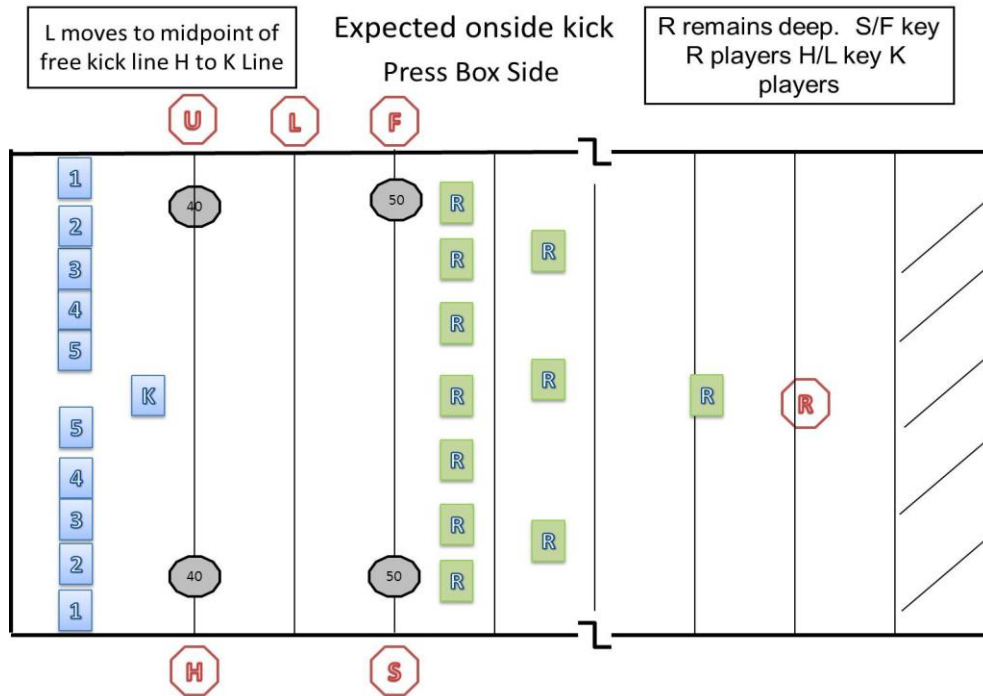


The chart above shows officials' movement after a try for point or successful scoring kick. This allows time for teams to clear and prepare for free kick. It also gives opportunity for side officials to confer regarding team actions that may need to be addressed. Proceed to K/O positions outside the number and clear sidelines along the way.

If necessary, prior to this movement, the crew may meet as a whole near the goal line to make necessary communications for crew clarity.

Onside Kicks

Position and Zones When Onside Kick is obvious



H,L,S and F – Before taking positions, meet briefly to review responsibilities and coverage. Clear sidelines as you move to positions.

Referee – Starting position is slightly behind and to one side of the deepest receiver. However, the R is responsible for team R’s goal line. When players and officials are in position sound your whistle and give the ready for play signal. R is responsible for counting team R players.

Umpire – After handing the ball to the kicker, starting position is on the sideline of the press box side on K’s restraining line.

Side and Field Judges – Starting positions are on restraining line of team R as on a “normal” free kick. Both are responsible for counting team K players.

Head Linesman – Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on the restraining line for team K.

Line Judge – Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side half-way between the two restraining lines.

Onside Kick Coverage

Referee – Be prepared if team R kicks deep instead of onside.

U and H – Have bean bag in hand. Treat team R's restraining line as a plane. Any player (other than kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for offside. You are responsible for blocking. You have secondary responsibility for touching by either team if the ball is kicked toward your side.

Line Judge – Have bean bag in hand. Observe blocking by both teams. Know if the ball was kicked into the ground or if it has taken more than one bounce. Be alert for a fair catch signal by team R and be prepared to cover the play if a team R player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

Side and Field Judge – Have bean bag in hand. You must know if the kick broke the plane of R's restraining line. You are primarily responsible for touching by either team. Be alert for a fair catch by R and be prepared to cover the play if a team R player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

Scrimmage Kicks Punts initial positions

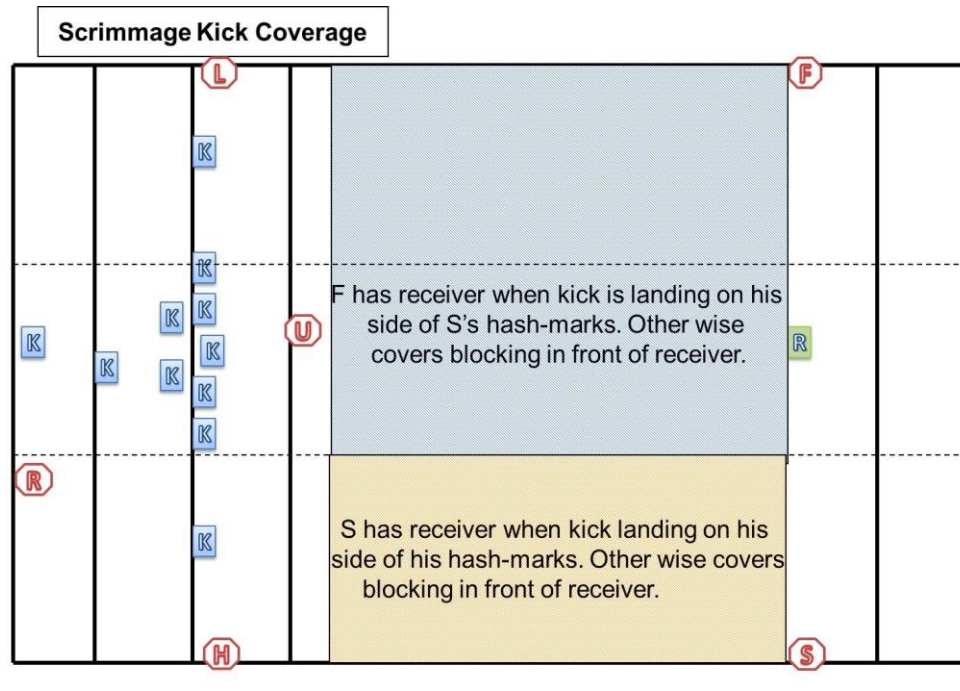
Referee – Take a position slightly behind and to the side of the kicker, outside the tight end position and on the kicking-foot side. Be in position to be at a 45-degree angle with the kicker when the ball is kicked. If the kicker is near the endline and before the snap, remind the kicker to be wary of stepping on the endline when possessing the ball. Communicate to the H and L to assist if the end line is threatened.

Umpire – Position is approximately 10 yards off the line of scrimmage. Position yourself in a spot that allows you to see the action on and around the snapper.

H and L – Take your basic position and officiate as you would on a scrimmage play. Hold your positions until the ball crosses the neutral zone. Remember with the two deep men it is not necessary for the Line Judge to release early.

Side and Field Judge – Take a position on your sideline five to seven yards behind the deepest receiver. When the ball is snapped on or inside the R 40 yard line, the S and F will take their initial positions at the goal line pylon. Weather conditions and the kicker's ability may dictate adjustment of when to take initial position at the goal line.

Punt Coverage



All – Once the ball is snapped, observing the players is your primary responsibility. Do not focus on the flight of the ball.

Referee – Primarily responsible for the activity in front of the kicker. If the flight of the kick is toward a sideline, move quickly to a position in line with the flight. Raise your hand, signaling the covering official to begin walking toward the area where the ball went out of bounds. When the covering official reaches the spot, bring your hand to signal him to stop, marking the dead ball spot. Be alert for action on the kicker during the kick. Observe players while moving downfield if the kick remains inbounds. Be alert for illegal and unnecessary blocks on players clearly out of the play.

Umpire – Observe the blocks of team K and actions by team R. Pay particular attention to the team R players over the snapper. Turn and move toward the return area.

H and L – After the snap, hold your position until the ball crosses the neutral zone. Observe action of exterior linemen of K and of press coverage on “gunners” that may result in defensive holding. Move downfield covering play ahead of the runner. Reverse mechanics are in place during the kick return. You have goal line responsibility. Therefore, you must maintain an appropriate cushion ahead of the runner.

S and F – The F will be responsible for the catch and ruling on any kick catching interference for two thirds of the field. (ex. from his sideline to the far hash marks) The S will be responsible for blocking and other activity in front of the receiver. These responsibilities will be reversed if the ball is kicked into the Side Judge's one third of the field. (S covering the receiver and F covering blocking) When field position of the snap requires initial positions to be taken at the goal line, the 2/3 and 1/3 coverage responsibilities remain the same.

On any short kick it is important for the official responsible for the receiver to move up and be in proper position for his coverage.

Offside official will cover blocking and remain at the goal line to rule on the kicked ball breaking the plane and resulting in a touchback. If the kick is obviously short the offside official may leave the goal line in a controlled manner making sure not to get out ahead of the return. Reverse mechanics are in play during a return so the S and B have the spot of the end of the run all the way to K's two yard line.

Blocked Kick or Snap beyond the Kicker/Holder

The Referee and the wing official he is facing will retreat and box in the play. The wing official on the same side of the formation as the R will hold the line of scrimmage until it is no longer threatened. As the play develops, he must adjust to officiate the play.

Scoring Kicks

Referee – Starting position is even with the potential kicker and five to seven yards outside the tight end position, facing the holder. Observe the motion of the backs within your line of vision and action on the kicker and holder. Be prepared to move with the ball if the snap cannot be controlled by the holder. Cover as usual if the play results in a run or pass. Signal a score on after being positive that requirements are met.

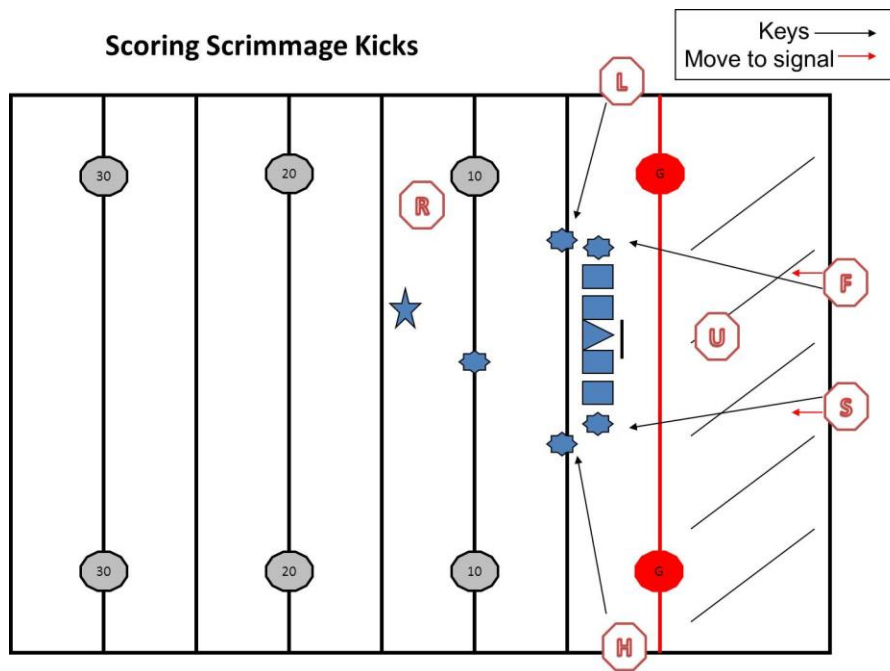
Umpire – Position five to seven yards off the ball. Observe line play with primary attention on defensive action on the snapper.

H and L – Take regular positions. Both are responsible for covering the play on short field goal and try attempts and fake field goals. Neither official should leave the line of scrimmage until the ball has crossed the neutral zone.

When the play is over the H, L and U should move toward the pile to prevent late hits and to ensure that the players untangle in a prompt manner.

Side and Field Judge – Take positions inside the limit line to look up the upright of the goal on your side of the field. You are responsible for ruling on the success or failure of field goal attempts. The official nearest the ball rules on the play. Both should be

prepared to move out into position to cover a play on short field goal and try attempts. If the ball strikes the cross bar the F is responsible for the ruling.



Fake Scoring Kicks

As a guideline on fake scoring kicks, when the ball is snapped inside the B 20 yard line the H and L have goal line coverage. If the ball is snapped outside the 20 yard line the S and B move to goal line pylons and have goal line coverage.

The referee should be prepared to rule on the legality of action of the holder on a fake kick.

Most importantly, the holder must not have a knee on the ground if he does anything other than placing the ball on the tee for a kick attempt. (If he starts play with a knee on the ground he must rise to do anything else) Specifically these two common fake kick plays -- with a knee on the ground the holder cannot toss the ball over his shoulder to the kicker; neither can he toss the ball forward to one of the wingbacks crossing the field behind the linemen for a sweep play. Upon either one of these actions by the holder the play should be blown dead.

Scrimmage Plays

Before the snap

The seemingly mundane task of counting players must be done on every play. There is no excuse for allowing one team a manpower advantage for even one play. Two officials are assigned counting responsibility for each team. Team A by R and U, team B counted by S and F.

Officials with counting duties must count and confirm their count with the officials who share the responsibility. Suggested signals; for a count of 11—arm extended with hand closed in a fist; for count of less than 11—arm extended with hand in a thumb down position; for a count greater than 11 – twirl wrist and hand with index finger extended

Referee

Count the offensive players and confirm the count with the U.

Work from the throwing arm side of the quarterback 12—15 yards deep and 3—5 yds outside the tight end position. Position yourself deep and wide to comfortably see the ball, backs and the tackle on the opposite side.

Check the set backs and quarterback for illegal motion and false starts, the ball at the snap and assist the umpire if there is movement by the restricted linemen.

Umpire

Count the offensive players and confirm your count with the R. Check the legality of the numbers of the interior linemen (five with numbers 50-79)

Position is eight yards off the ball and on the side opposite the tight end. Avoid a position that will interfere with linebackers and adjust your distance behind the defensive line according to the width of team A's formation. Always be in position to see the ball at the snap.

Read the offensive formation and know the five ineligible. Rule on illegal movement by restricted linemen prior to the snap and be certain the defensive team does not use words or signals to disconcert the opponents.

Always be aware of the lateral position of the ball on the field in case the ball must be returned to the previous spot.

Head linesman and Line Judge

The basic starting position is on the sideline and on the line of scrimmage. At no time should a player(s) be allowed to line up outside a wing official, as they are to officiate from the outside, in.

Indicate the offensive line of scrimmage to receivers with one foot, and then take final position straddling the neutral zone.

Signal to indicate the outside receiver is lined up off the line of scrimmage with an arm extended toward team A's end line at shoulder height and hand in a fist. Arm should be held in that position until the snap or until outside receiver shifts to be on the line of scrimmage or goes in motion.

H and L are responsible for reading the offensive formation and knowing their eligible receiver responsibilities. Watch for illegal formations, encroachment prior to the snap and false starts by the offensive line.

H and L will confirm team A has seven men on the line of scrimmage by counting the men on the line of scrimmage on their side of the snapper and signaling their "count" to the other wing official. Their two "counts" should total a minimum of 6 with the snapper being the 7th man for a legal formation of 7 men on the line of scrimmage.

Signals for the count will be: hand on the thigh for 2, hand on chest for 3 and hand to the face for 4. If the formation is not legal at the snap both H and L should have a flag on the ground.

Example: Offense lines up with balanced ineligible on each side of the snapper, a tight end to the press box sideline with a wingback off the line to his outside and wide receiver on the line to the opposite side. The H will signal 3 on the line on his side with a hand at his chest (guard, tackle and wide receiver); the L will signal the wingback off the line with a fist extended toward A's end line and 3 on his side with opposite hand to his chest (guard, tackle and tight end) $3+3 = 6$ and the snapper is the 7th man.

Side and Field Judges

Count the defensive players and confirm count with each other using the same signals as R and U counting team A.

Initial position is at the sideline and minimum of 20 yards, but no more than 25, from the line of scrimmage. Read your keys and know your eligible receiver responsibilities.

Field judge is responsible for monitoring the 25 second play clock. If there is not a visible play clock on the field of play, he will use his timing device and start it with the R's ready for play signal. In this situation, F will countdown the last five seconds starting with arm fully extending above and moving down in sections for each second. See Play Clock Countdown in approved signals section. (page 42)

Side Judge will monitor the game clock as to its accuracy on starting and stopping as required by rule. He will keep back up time on his timing device.

Running play coverage

Referee

After the snap, observe the action behind the line and the runner to the neutral zone, as well as action on the ball and the quarterback on handoffs and backward passes. Once you read run, focus on the blocks on the front side (the area immediately around) of the point of attack.

Be ready to assist in spotting the ball on runs that end in the side zone and out of bounds.

Stay with the runner behind the line. Trail but don't chase the runner into the side zone, covering behind the play. If the quarterback / runner goes out of bounds, coordinate sideline coverage with the H or L to ensure the spot is maintained and players return to the field. Assist in getting players cleanly out of a "foreign" team box area.

On option plays, if the quarterback keeps the ball and turns up field, assume responsibility for the trailing back until there is no longer a threat of a foul. If the quarterback pitches the ball, stay with the quarterback.

Umpire

After the snap and on plays between the tackles, your focus is on the point of attack in front of and around the runner. Be especially alert for offensive and defensive holding and chop blocks. On plays outside the tackles, turn with the flow and observe action on the back side (the area that is behind and away from the runner) of the flow. In addition to offensive and defensive holding and chop block, be alert for clipping fouls behind the play.

If the ball becomes dead between the hash marks, place the ball in accordance with the forward progress as marked by the wing official. If the ball becomes dead in a side zone or out of bounds, assist in getting the ball back to the hash mark for spotting. This may include going outside the hash marks to retrieve a ball (there is no wall on the hash marks preventing you from going outside them). The R may be in position for you to relay the ball from a side zone for him to spot.

Head Linesman and Line Judge

After the snap and having read run, the line judge may take two steps back into the backfield to read the point of attack and observe blocking.

Observe the initial action on or by interior lineman nearest you and by the offensive player who is your designated responsibility. Observe the blocking in front of the runner behind the line of scrimmage or in the neutral zone. Determine forward progress when necessary.

You have the runner in your side zone to team B's two yard line, attempting to maintain 5 to 10 yards of separation.

When the flow of the play is away from your position, you move downfield and clean up action behind the play. Exercise cross field mechanics to be able to make the following assists: 1. the opposite wing man with end of run spot, should he be caught up in traffic and lose the spot 2. the U as he comes back to the hash marks to find the proper ball placement for end of run (to keep him from having to turn around to look at your opposite wing for the spot)

Side and Field Judges

After the snap, observe action involving the widest receiver on your side of the field. Pay special attention to crack back blocks.

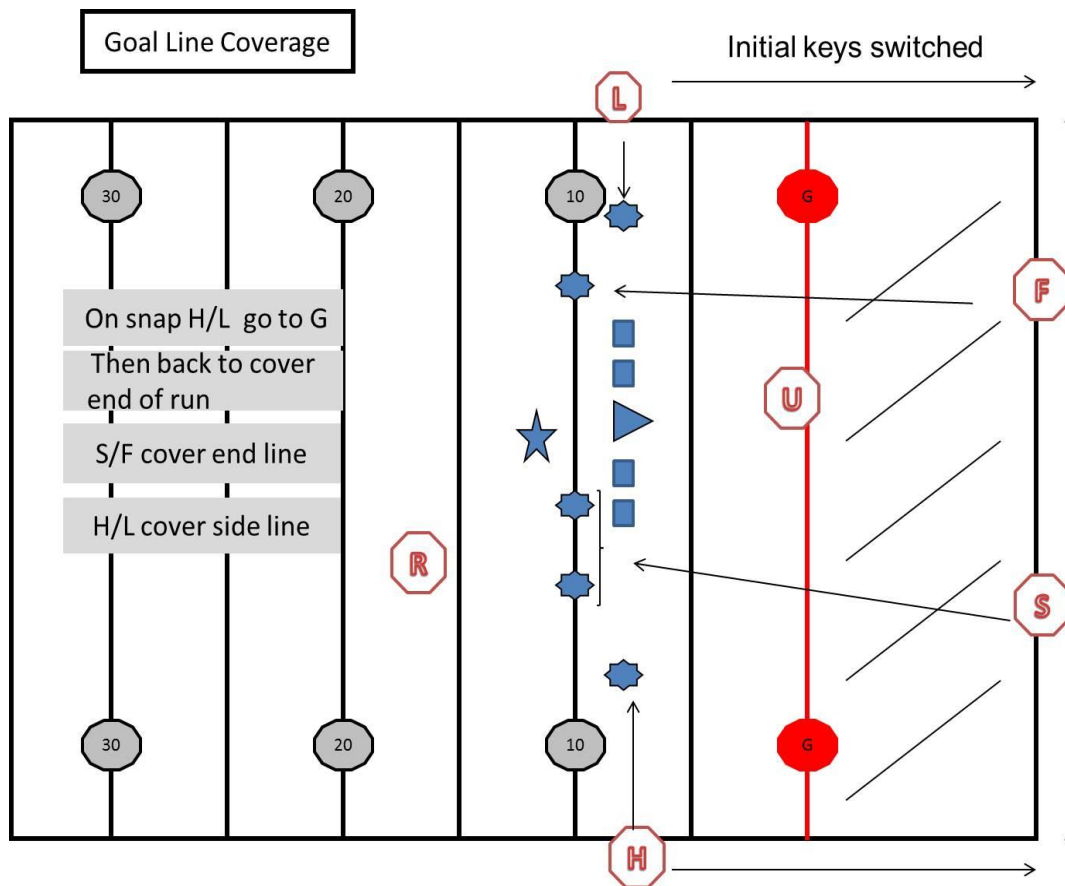
Cover your sideline from about 20 yards beyond the neutral zone, trying to maintain a 20 to 25 yard cushion to the goal line. You have the runner in your side zone from team B's 2 yard line to the goal line. Do not turn your back on the play.

If the play is to your side and the H or L marks the forward progress move back toward the end of run and clean up action around the play, especially when the end of run is an out of bounds spot.

When action settles assist in getting a fresh ball in to U for spotting (if it is coming from your sideline).

Goal line positions and coverage (snap is on or inside B's 7 yd line)

To be certain everyone is on the same page, it is imperative that the crew communicates the switch to goal line mechanics at this position on the field.



Referee

Starting position is the same as any scrimmage play. Signal a score only after you are positive all requirements have been met. You are responsible for knowing if a pass is backward or forward.

Umpire

Starting position needn't be as deep as scrimmage plays. You are primarily responsible for the line of scrimmage in determining if the passer was beyond the line of scrimmage and if the pass is beyond the line of scrimmage.

Ideally the U should not signal touchdown. Mechanics provide for the H and L to have goal line coverage, or S and F if a change of possession has activated reverse mechanics. Every effort should be made for side officials to be in position to signal a TD. The U can be of assistance to notify side officials to give TD signal, if he is positive of the score and they are blocked from viewing it.

An Umpire signaling TD should be an extremely rare occasion.

Head Linesman and Line Judge

Starting position is the same as for any other scrimmage play. You are responsible for the goal line. In order to rule on a score you must be at the goal line. Therefore, at the snap move immediately to the goal line and work back to mark end of run short of goal line.

Be alert for pass. Your initial key receiver is now the widest receiver to your side of the field.

Side and Field Judge

When the ball is snapped from the B 25 yard line to the B 7 yard line your starting position is at the goal line pylon and you are responsible for the goal line. You should never take an initial position between the B 7 yd line and goal line.

When the ball is snapped from on or inside the B 7 yard line your initial position is on the end line 2 to 3 yards outside the end line pylon on your side of the field.

Be alert for a pass. Your initial key receivers are now the two inside receivers on your side of the field.

Reverse Goal Line Mechanics

When team A snaps the ball on or inside its own three yard line, the H and L must use reverse goal line mechanics. Upon the snap both will move immediately to the goal line. If the snap is between the three and five yard line, the L retreats immediately to the goal line and the H reads the play and retreats to the goal line if necessary.

Remember that a team A runner must advance the ball **completely** beyond the goal line to avoid a safety. Be alert for fumbles and know which team has provided the impetus for a ball that goes into the end zone.

Forward Pass Coverage

Referee

Primarily responsible for the tackle on the opposite side; any other lineman who is a threat for a foul; and the passer--who is your responsibility until there is no threat of a foul. Verbally alert players when the passer has released the ball (ex: "it's away", "the pass is gone").

Assist the L on the legality of a forward pass thrown beyond or behind the neutral zone.

Be prepared to rule on intentional grounding. You shall expect help from the covering official in respect to eligible receivers in the area.

When the quarterback drops back, retreat at a 45-degree angle to maintain a proper cushion. Be prepared to rule forward pass or fumble when the quarterback is hit as he is attempting a pass.

Umpire

When you read forward pass, adjust your position to maintain a clear view of the center and two guards and to avoid oncoming pass receivers.

Assist the L in knowing whether or not a forward pass crossed the neutral zone.

Continue to observe your area of responsibility until the pass is thrown and be aware of ineligibles downfield.

Be prepared to pivot on all passes and assist in ruling on trapped passes.

Head Linesman

The basic responsibility for preliminary action on the line is the same as during a running play. When you read a forward pass, your primary responsibility is to your key receivers while moving downfield and settling 5 to 7 yards to the "hook" zone. Keep in mind that the play development may call for you to stay at or near the neutral zone to maintain coverage on your keys.

Movement should be controlled, deliberate and with purpose. The distance of your movement downfield could be extended in certain situations such as the long pass at the end of a half, or a fourth and long play where all receivers are going a greater distance.

Once the pass is thrown, especially in your area of responsibility, reducing your movement while the ball is in the air will improve your ability to see the play more accurately.

You are responsible for covering pass receptions in the area between the line of scrimmage and the deep officials. Provide the R information on eligible receives in the area of the pass when grounding is in question. If the pass is thrown outside your area,

observe the action of players other than the pass receiver after you have observed the pass being caught, intercepted or incomplete.

Line Judge

The basic responsibility for preliminary action on the line of scrimmage is the same as during a run play. When you read a forward pass, your primary responsibility goes from your tackle to your receivers. If one of your receivers goes downfield or is threatened, he takes priority over the tackle.

You are primarily responsible to rule on whether a pass is forward or backward behind the line of scrimmage and shall punch back to signal a backward pass.

Be prepared to rule whether the pass was thrown from behind or beyond the line of scrimmage.

Provide the R information on eligible receives in the area of the pass when grounding is in question. If the pass is thrown outside your area, observe the action of players other than the pass receiver after you have observed the pass being caught, intercepted or incomplete.

Side and Field Judges

Observe contact on your key receiver and the defensive back. Cover the sideline from your original position to the end line. Maintain deep positioning. Cover the play and watch the defender's action on the receiver when the ball is thrown in your area.

Coverage notes for All

Be alert for eligible receivers out of bounds and for illegal pass (especially after a completion); observe touching or catching by an ineligible player; watch particularly for holding and all contact beyond the neutral zone before and after the pass is thrown.

When ruling on reception at the sideline, give the incomplete signal or the timeout signal (if the pass is complete). On a tight reception at the sideline, the "catch" signal may be used. The "sweep" signal may be used if an airborne player receives a pass near the sideline and first returns to the ground out of bounds, or the "bobble" signal if a receiver fails to maintain control of the ball before going out of bounds.

After an incompletion, form a relay to return the ball to the official who will return it to a spot near the previous spot.

When there is a change of team possession, immediately switch to reverse mechanics to cover the return and the goal line. (i.e. S and F are responsible for marking end of run to the two yard line, with H and L from the two to the goal line)

As a pass play develops, officials may be required to shift their focus from their initial keys and go to "zone coverage", observing players in their zone as shown below.

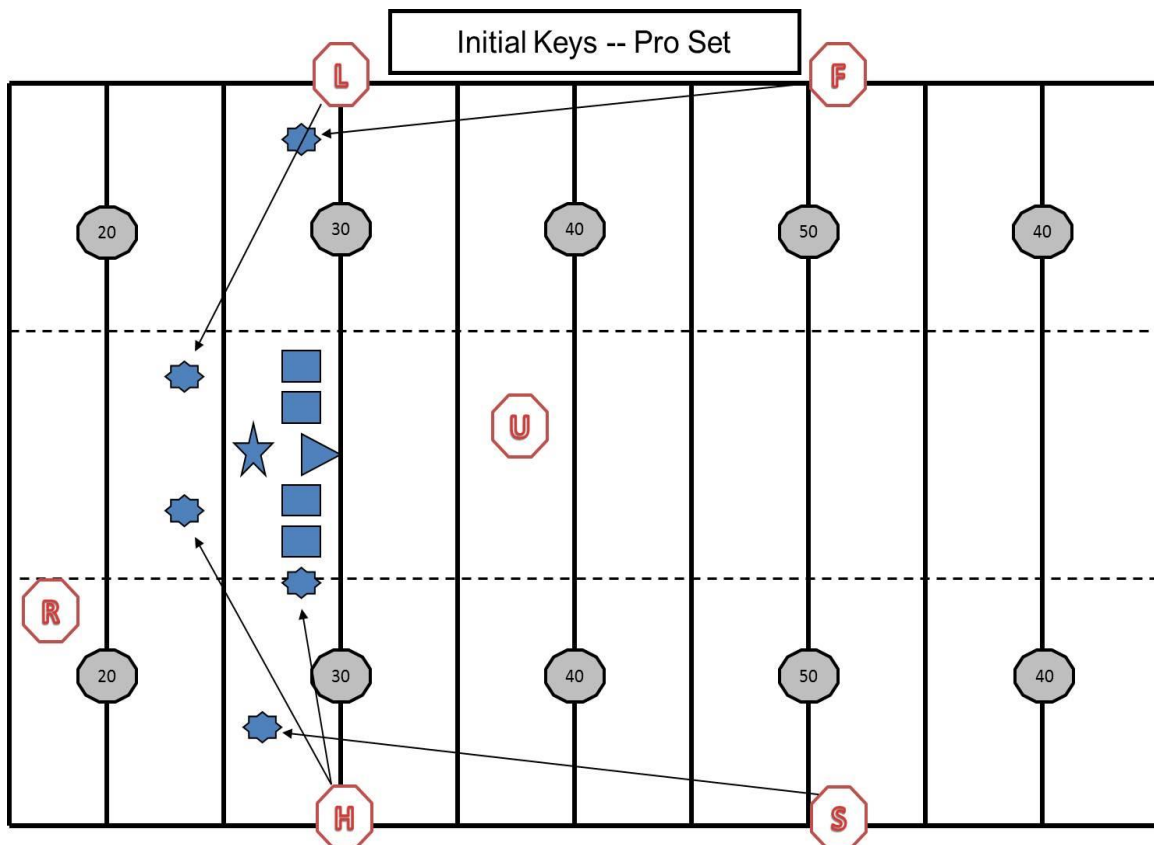
When a pass is thrown, all officials except the referee, must focus on the spot of the catch. This includes the U, who must turn in the direction of the pass to assist in trap / no trap decisions. The R must stay with the quarterback until the danger of a foul against him is gone.

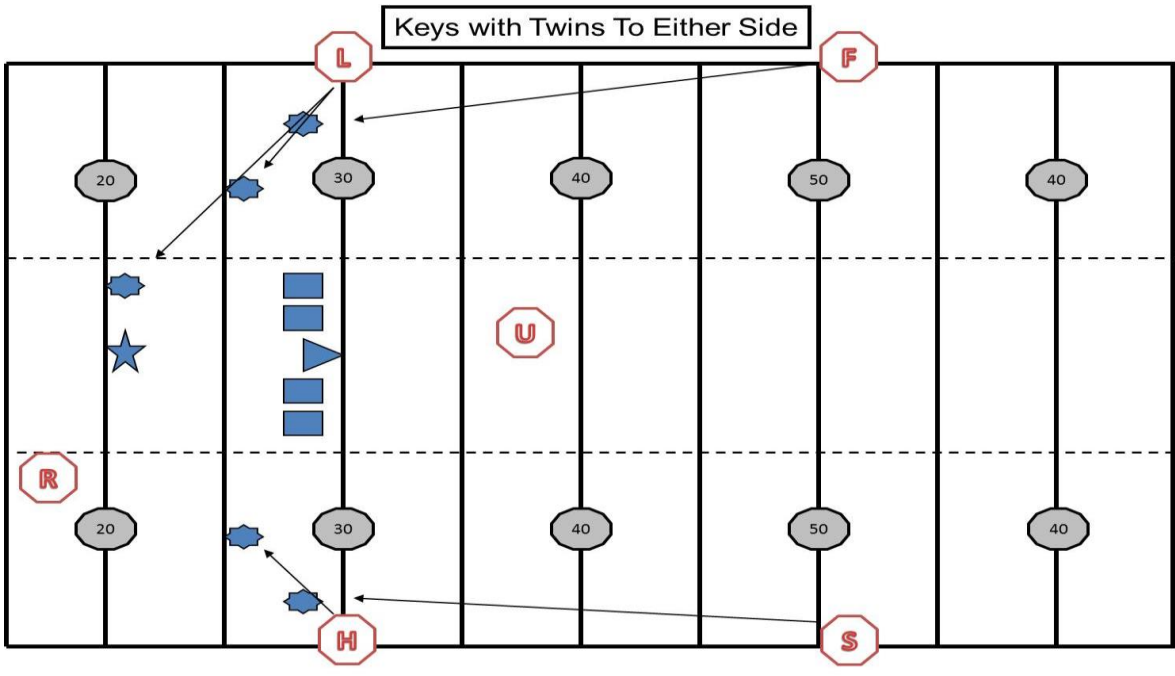
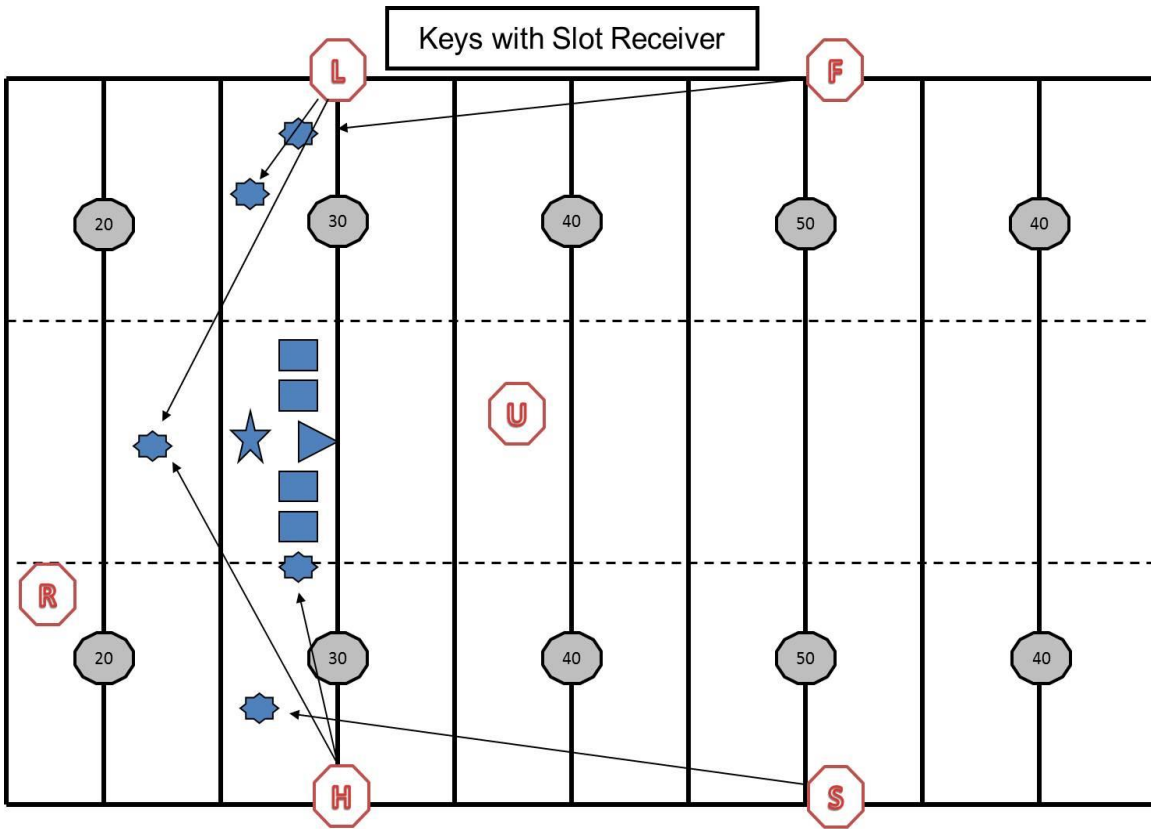
Judging whether or not a catch was made and the legality of the contact on the receiver are paramount. If the pass is caught, officials resume watching players in their zone and be in position to properly rule on the end of the run.

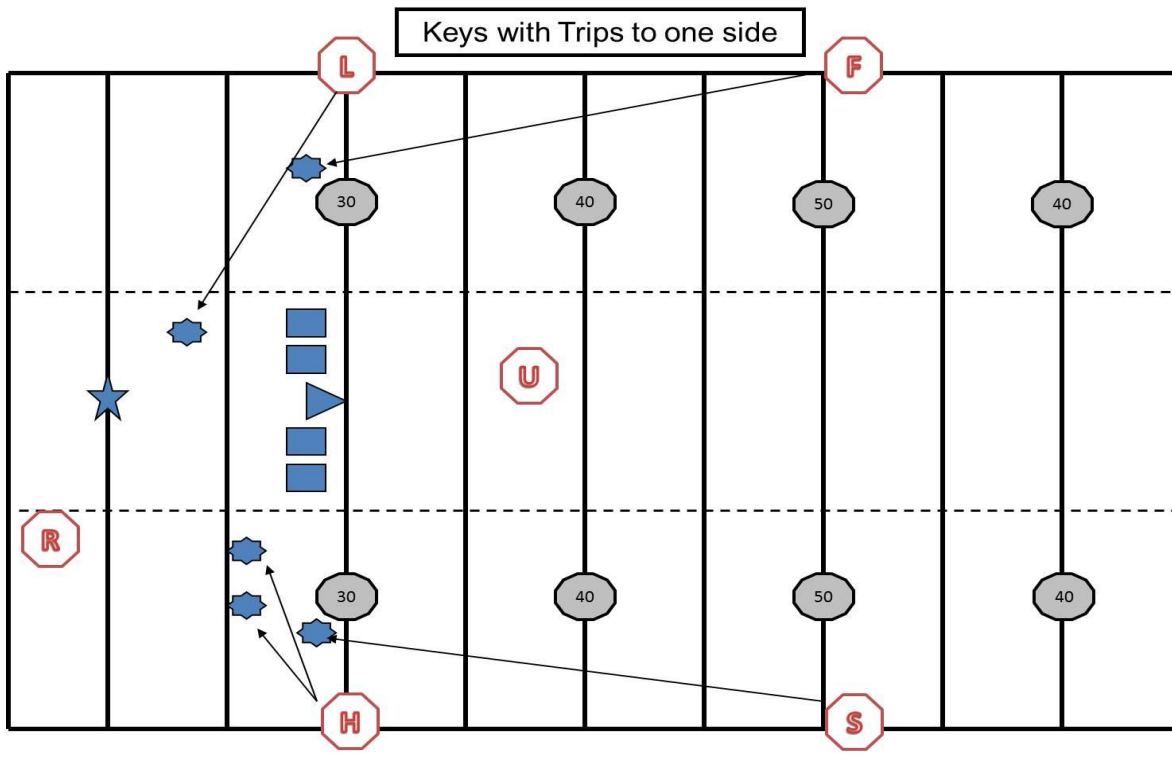
Knowing and Reading Keys

H, L, F and S all have particular receiver keys they are responsible for covering on each play. They are to observe the action on and by these keys prior to assuming zone responsibilities. Caution should be taken not to assume zone coverage too quickly.

A numbering system is used to help identify initial keys. The widest receiver is number 1, next widest number 2, etc.







Side and Field Judges

Take the widest receiver to their side of the formation, receiver 1 (note you should know the number of your key). If your key has press coverage by the defensive player head up on him (with 3 yards) your eyes should be on him at the snap. If no press coverage is in place your eyes are on the tackle on your side of the formation at the snap to read run / pass then back to your receiver as required by play development. Observe action on your key – that he is not held attempting to move downfield and that the receiver is not illegally blocking defensive players (especially linebackers, i.e. crackback / block below waist).

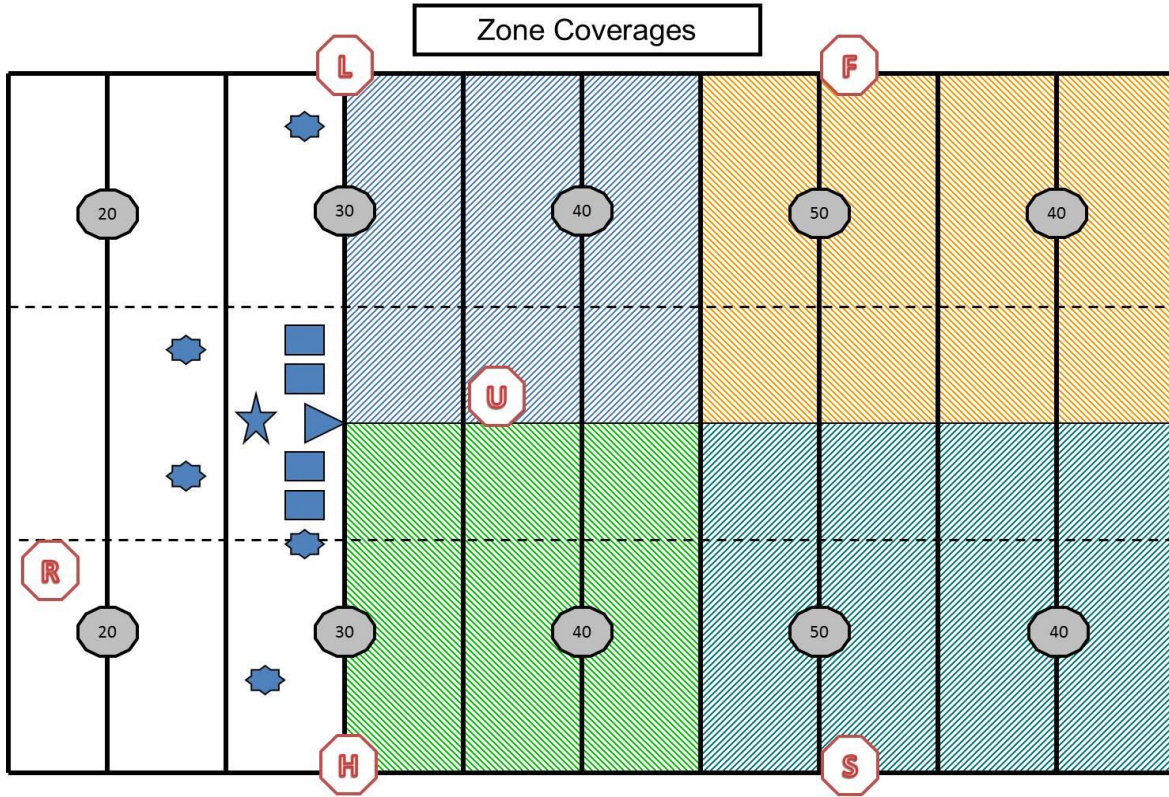
Primary zones of coverage for the S and F are from the middle of the field to their sideline in width and in depth anything deeper than 12 to 15 yards downfield from the line of scrimmage.

Head Linesman and Line

Will take receiver 2 and 3 to their side of the formation (note you should know the numbers of your keys). Until the snap the eyes of H and L are on the snap then to the tackle on their side of formation for run / pass read then to their receiver keys. As play develops observe action on your key – that he is not held attempting to move downfield

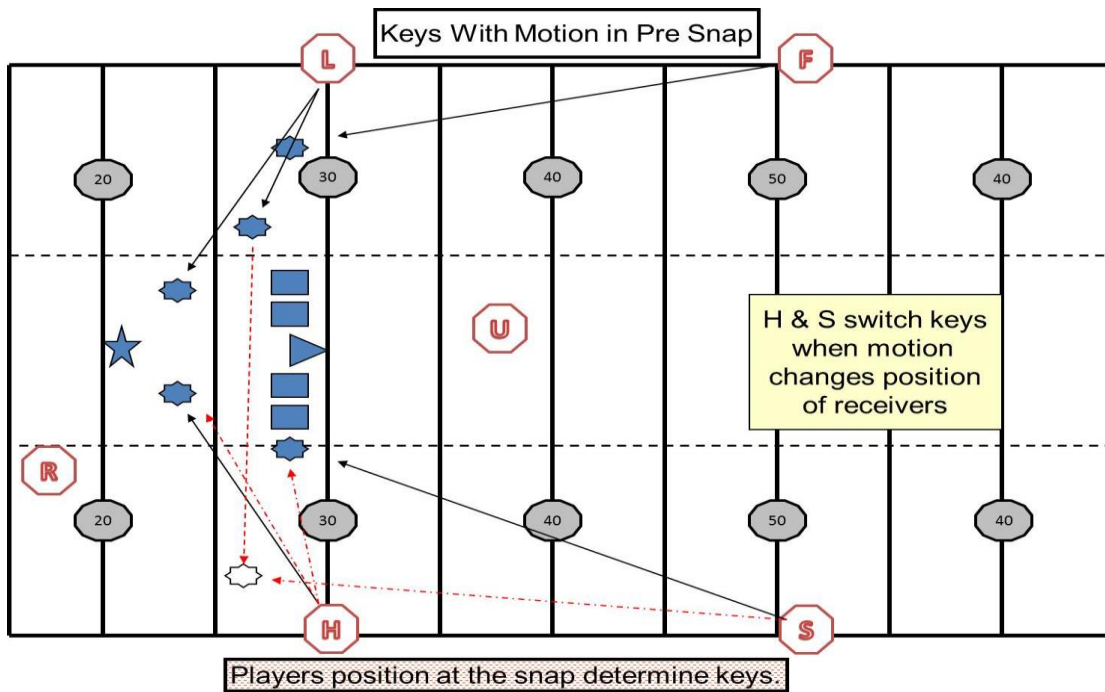
and that the receiver is not illegally blocking defensive players (especially linebackers, i.e. crack back / block below waist).

Primary zones of coverage for H and L are from the middle of the field to their sideline in width and a depth of 12 to 15 yards downfield from line of scrimmage.

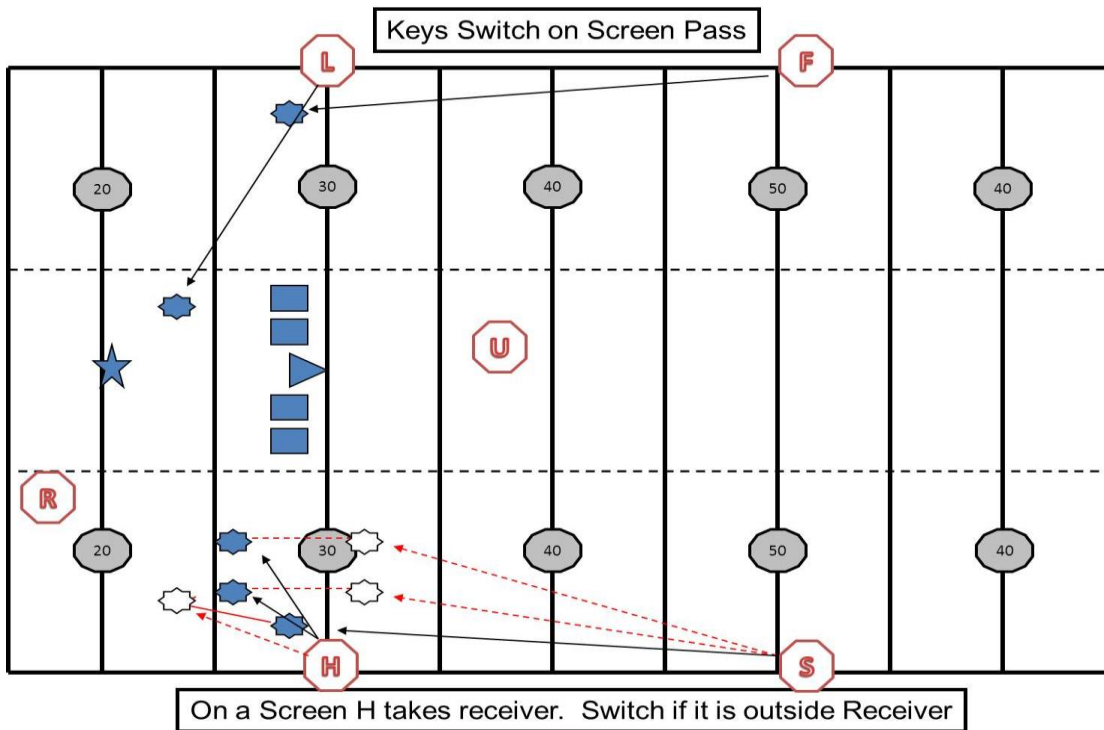


Switching keys

Keys are determined by the position of the receivers “at the snap”. If motion is involved by receivers or backs in the backfield from their initial pre-snap position and changes the numbering of the receivers at the snap, positions at the snap determine keys. (example: initial formation has a two receivers to the L and F side, then the slot back motions away and at the snap outflanks the tight end on opposite side; he then becomes receiver 1 and is the key for S and H will take tight end and back)



If there are twin or trip receivers to one side and the outside receiver stays behind the LOS while the inside receiver(s) move downfield to block for a “bubble screen” the H will switch to the key 1 for action on and by him while S will switch to keys 2 (3) for action on and by them. Same for L and F if play is on their side of the formation.



Penalty Enforcements

Penalty enforcements are a critical game management function and the ability to administer penalties in an efficient manner enhances the credibility and professionalism of the crew. Conversely, a crew that is perceived to have difficulty in enforcing obvious fouls loses the confidence of coaches, players and the fans.

The emphasis on this process is efficiency, not speed. Officials should *never* rush this process.

Crews should seek to minimize on-field conferences. Those should be limited to complex situations that demand officials communicate the specifics of the play to one another.

The calling official should give a preliminary signal unless there are mitigating circumstances such as multiple fouls, double fouls or situation that require verbal communications with other officials prior to determination of the foul. This preliminary signal will assist everyone in making determination whether the enforcement is obvious or an option is required from the offended team.

If multiple officials call a foul, they should confer quickly to determine if they have called the same foul and then one of them give a preliminary signal to the Referee.

If the enforcement decision is not obvious, the offended team should be explained their options briefly, but correctly, clearly and courteously.

The Umpire, Head Linesman and Line Judge will work together to enforce the yardage distance while the Referee makes the announcement. The down box and chains (if appropriate) should not be moved until it is certain the correct enforcement has been made.

It should be noted again the emphasis on this process is efficiency, not speed. Officials should never rush this process.

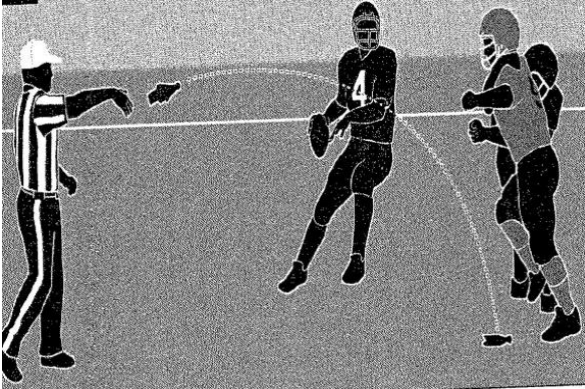
If a foul causes a player to be ejected, the calling official should go with the referee to inform the head coach of the ejection.

When fouls occur that require enforcement at the next free kick, the referee, after giving the penalty signal, should point to the spot of the free kick. The umpire will repeat the signal to the press box side prior to enforcement at the succeeding free kick spot.

The calling official should make every effort to ascertain the number of the fouling player. If that is not possible, do not guess or make one up. Incorrect information will cost officials their credibility.

Fouls

An official calling a foul will either throw or drop his marker at the proper spot. The throw will be used when a spot foul occurs. If it is possible the spot of the foul will be the enforcement spot, you must get your flag as close to that spot as possible. If the throw is errant, relocate the flag as soon as possible after the play by picking it up and moving it to the proper spot. The longer you delay in making such a correction, the more it will appear you are manipulating the situation.



For dead-ball fouls or fouls at the snap, the flag should be tossed into the air overhead and directly in front of you



When wing officials throw a flag for a dead ball foul, they should give the stop-the-clock signal (whether it is running or not), move toward the referee and give the preliminary signal in a controlled manner. If there is to be a discussion to determine the foul, it should be done in the offensive backfield, away from the players.

After throwing the flag, the calling official should note the yard line, the number of the player who fouled and the status of the ball (live or dead, loose or in possession) at the time of the foul.

If the ball is live when the foul is called, withhold the whistle until the ball becomes dead. Once the play is over, sound your whistle as necessary to be certain other officials are aware a foul has been called.

If the penalty will be enforced from the spot of the foul, the calling official must make sure another official is covering the spot before he moves to report the foul to the referee.

When the play ends, if the ball is not at the dead-ball spot, an official not involved in the play should assist in getting it there. The nearest non-calling official should cover and

hold the dead-ball spot and mark the end of the run. When the umpire starts to mark off the penalty the flag should be picked up and returned to the calling official.

The ball should be left on the ground until it is ready to be moved. Those officials not covering spots or involved in the reporting process should observe players and assist in any way needed.

The calling official must know:

1. To continue officiating until the end of the play
2. The foul
3. The offending team
4. The offending player number
5. The pertinent spots – foul, end of run, kick etc
6. The status of ball when foul occurred
7. The outcome of the play
8. When clock starts after penalty enforcement

The calling official should avoid:

1. Placing a hand on or pointing at the offending player
2. Slam-dunking the flag to the ground
3. Looking angry when you toss a flag
4. Holding the flag and waving it, instead of tossing it
5. Throwing the flag at the fouling player as it looks confrontational and, worse yet, might hit the player in the eye

Enforcement

Referee

Upon noting the preliminary signal by the calling official, the referee should determine, as soon as reasonably possible, whether the choice is obvious or an option is required. If the choice is obvious, the referee will make the signal to the press box immediately.

If an option is required, the referee will give a preliminary signal and then get the option from the offended team's coach. Note: The officials on that team's sideline must be prepared to communicate directly with the coach in order to explain the options and then relay his choice to the referee.

It is imperative that the referee has complete knowledge of all foul signals and possess the ability to present them to the press box in a manner that is clear, sharp and concise.

Umpire

The primary responsibility for enforcing penalties is assigned to the umpire. As such, it is imperative that he has absolute knowledge of all penalty enforcement principles and is able to enforce any penalty with minimal referee involvement.

The umpire, upon noting the preliminary signal of the calling official, will be ready to immediately enforce penalty on obvious cases as the referee is giving the signal.

If an option is required, he will wait until the referee receives the option from the offended team and then proceed to enforce the penalty.

He will work with the head linesman and line judge to ensure the penalty is correctly enforced.

Note: It is suggested the U and H use hand signals of one, two and three fingers to confirm penalty yardage is 5, 10 or 15 yards before they begin to walk off the yardage.

Head Linesman

The head linesman shall mark off the yardage from his sideline position at approximately the same time as the umpire; who will look to him to make sure they have enforced the foul correctly. Any discrepancy should be corrected immediately.

Line Judge

The line judge will hold the spot from which the penalty is enforced until the U and H have completed their enforcement. He will then, independently, mark off the penalty yardage and confirm that the U and H have enforced the penalty correctly.

Other Officials

Observe the actions of the R, U, H and L and make sure that no errors have been made. Also observe players and sidelines with good dead ball officiating.

Time-Out Management

All – When a request for a time out is received, step away from your sideline to a point ‘inside the numbers’ while giving the ‘stop the clock’ overhead signal. This movement will assist the Timer in recognizing the call for a time out and properly stop the game clock. Whistle should be sounded as necessary to stop play and alert other officials.

Official signaling for a time out should note the time on the game clock to assure it is properly stopped and request clock adjustment if necessary.

So that the Referee may properly signal the press box, indicate the team requesting a time out by pointing to their goal line.

Each official should monitor teams during the time out for proper use of authorized conferences. If the team chooses to conference “inside the numbers” only eleven players and one coach are allowed. If the team chooses to conference “outside the numbers” any number of players and coaches may participate in the conference.

Record the time out with this information; period of play, time remaining, team charged for the time out and whether it is their 1st, 2nd or 3rd time out of the half.

If it is necessary for two or more officials to confer on a matter during a time out, it should be done quickly and officials return to time out positions timely.

Referee – Complete any pending penalty administration prior to granting the time out.

Face press box, give the ‘stop the clock’ signal, then signal the team charged with the timeout with one chuck of the arms at shoulder height toward their goal line.

Signal the F to begin the 60 second countdown, with pointed index finger and rolling the wrist.

Inform the head coach when he has exhausted all of his times out for the half.

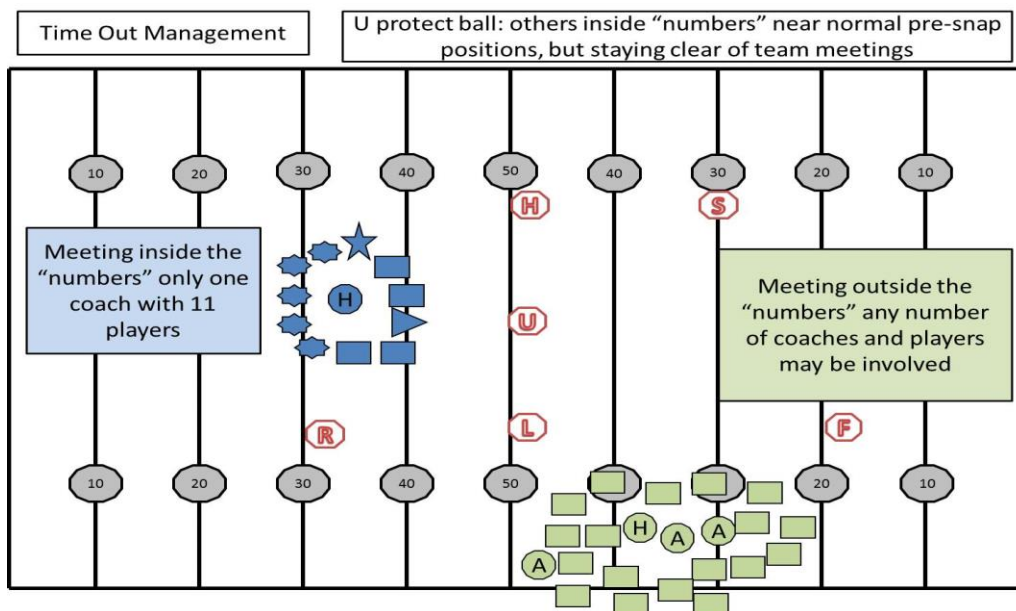
Move to a spot on the field near your normal pre-snap position to await F’s signal of the end of the time out.

Umpire – Take a position over the ball to maintain its security until the ready for play.

Field Judge – Move to a spot close to your normal pre-snap position but ‘inside the numbers’. Take care that your position does not interfere with either team’s conference.

Start the 60 second clock upon signal from R. Indicate to all that 10 seconds remain with two short blasts on you whistle.

H, L and S – Move to a spot close to your normal pre-snap position but ‘inside the numbers’. Take care that your position does not interfere with either team’s conference.



If a time out granted for medical personnel to attend an injured player becomes prolonged, managers may be allowed on the field to deliver water to players as they do in any other time out. Coaches cannot come onto the field for team conferences, but may opt to bring players to a position outside the numbers until the injured player is removed from the field.

Line to Gain Measurement

When a down ends with the ball close to the line to gain, officials must be alert and inform the referee. The ball should never be moved from the dead-ball spot until it is determined whether or not a measurement is warranted. There should be no measurement after the ball has been moved from the dead-ball spot.

Referee – Signal timer to stop the game clock for the measurement. After the measurement has been made, make appropriate signal to the press box.

Head Linesman – Instructs the down box to move to the spot of the forward stake, then bring in the chain with the chain crew from the sideline. It is suggested the H have one hand on the link beside the clip to assure proper measurement should the clip become detached from the chain.

H places the chain on the measurement line and instructs the U to pull the chain taut. (it is a good double check for the H to declare what down it will be dependent on the measurement ex: “it will either be first or third”)

If a first down is earned the U and H relinquish the chain to chain crew members to return to the sideline.

If a first down is not earned, the H returns the chain to the sideline to position it in place.

Line Judge – Clears team A members from measurement area and uses his foot to indicate for the H the spot parallel with the ball at which the H should place the clip for measurement.

Umpire – Takes the forward stake from the chain crew member and upon H’s instructions pulls the chain taut and holds the stake perpendicular for measurement.

Side Judge – Clears Team B players from the measurement area and from blocking the press box view of the measurement. If the measurement is outside the hash, obtain a fresh football for the next play.

Field Judge – Assists in clearing players from the measurement area and then hold the ball in place for the measurement. Hold the ball from downfield and opposite the sideline from where the chains are located.

Short of a first down

If the measurement occurs in a side zone and does not result in a first down, the U and H maintain control of the forward stake and chain. R signals to the press box that the measurement is short and then grasps the chain at the link in front of the ball.

The U and H then walk with the R to the nearest hash mark and pulls the chain taut. The R places the fresh ball obtained by the S at the link he is holding on the chain.

B maintains his control of the ball until the fresh ball is placed into position by the R and the chains have cleared the area.

The H then returns chain to sideline and places it in the proper position.

End of first and third periods

After the Referee signals the end of the period, responsibilities are as follows. These should be completed accurately and efficiently with all officials moving with energy.

R, U, H and S record on their game cards the yard line on which the ball is spotted, the down, and the line-to-gain. The ball, down box and chains should not be moved until that is complete. (It is a good practice that all officials record this information.)

The Line Judge goes to the yard line on the opposite end of the field to ensure proper placement of the ball.

The Head Linesman and the Side Judge rotate the chains and move them to the opposite end of the field.

The Field Judge secures a fresh football for placement at the opposite end of the field.

When the chain crew has been placed in the new position, all officials move to their pre-snap position and await the R's ready for play signal.

Overtime

Send players, coaches and attendants to team boxes for a three minute intermission.

Timer set clock at three minutes and begin on R's signal.

On field officials gather at mid-field and review overtime procedures and any dead ball fouls that may effect the overtime period.

Items to remember are:

- No game clock is operated during overtime periods.

- Play clock operates as usual.
- No time outs are carried over from regulation. Each team has one time out per OT period.
- There is only one coin toss after regulation. Offense / defense / end of field options rotate between teams at beginning of each overtime period. (winner of OT coin toss has choice on odd periods)
- A change of possession kills the play and ends that teams attempt to score.

Bean Bag Usage

The bean bag is used to mark spots during the course of play, such as first touching of a scrimmage kick, illegal first touching of a free kick and a fumble. It is also permissible for an official to place his bean bag on the ground to mark an end of run spot when activity around him dictates he move from that position. (i.e. after the play ‘interaction’ between teams, etc.)

The bean bag is to mark the yard line on which the “spot” is located. It is not necessary, nor acceptable, to hit the exact spot on the field on which the “spot” occurred. (i.e. the H observes a fumble in the middle of the field on the 30 yard line, he simply needs to drop his bean bag on the ground at his feet on the 30 yard line. He is ***not*** to throw his bean bag from his sideline position to the middle of the field where the fumble occurred.)

It is also ***not permissible*** to attempt to mark a spot on which a ball carrier runs out of bounds with the ball by tossing the bean bag to that spot on the sideline. The covering official must move to the out of bounds spot and mark the spot with his foot while observing dead ball activity by both teams around the spot.

Approved supplemental signals

These are commonly accepted signals that are not listed or described in the rules book. Some of these signals are used to enhance crew communications and others may help explain officials’ decisions.

Backward pass – Arm is extended at shoulder height with closed fist toward the offensive team’s goal line to indicate a pass was thrown backward. No signal for forward pass.

Beckoning signal -- Extend the arm(s) with open hand(s) in front of you in a “come here” motion. This signal may be used to notify the H to bring the line to gain crew in for a measurement, or for the H to move the down box and / or the chain down the field. It may be used to beckon coaches or attendants onto the field to assist an apparently injured

player. It may also be used on free kicks by the R after his ready for play signal to let the kicker know that it is okay to kick the ball.

Chain tape signals – The H will use an index finger held close to the body at the waist to indicate to the R and U whether or not the ball is behind or beyond the tape placed at the midpoint of the chain. Point to the rear stake if the ball is behind and to the forward stake if beyond the tape.

Clock status – Run Clock – give a small circular motion with the wrist and index finger in front of the waist to indicate the clock should continue to run or the clock should be started with the ready for play signal after an administrative procedure is complete.

Coin toss options – the following signals are used by the R to communicate the captain's choice at the pregame toss.

Defer – give the incomplete pass / penalty declined signal.

Receive – give the catch signal.

Kick – give a slight swing of the leg to simulate a kick.

Defend a goal – give one chuck of the arms extended at shoulder height toward the goal the team will defend.

Offense (in overtime) – give the first down signal.

Counting players

Eleven players – extend arm at shoulder with closed fist

Less than 11 players – extend arm at with a thumb down

More than 11 players – give a small circular motion with wrist and index finger in front of waist to indicate “count again”

Formation signals (H&L)

The H and L will use the following signals to indicate to each other the count of players legally on the line of scrimmage on their respective sides of the center. The H and L are looking for their counts to total a minimum of 6 with the snapper being the 7th man on the line for a legal formation.

Hand on the thigh – I have two men on the line on my side of snapper.

Hand on the chest – I have three men on the line on my side of snapper.

Hand on the face – I have four men on the line on my side of the snapper.

If the H&L counts do not yield at least seven men on the LOS both should drop their flag at the snap for illegal formation.

Double Stakes – Cross arms in front of the chest to indicate the offense has more than ten yards to go for a first down. All crew members should confirm by using the signal.

Incomplete pass – Raise arms to shoulder height with elbows out, palms down and at chest. Give two sharp, crisp extensions of the arms.

Kick out of bounds in flight – The following signals are used by the R on scrimmage kicks to help a covering official mark the spot where the ball crossed the sideline in flight.

Arm raised above the head (like a dead ball signal) means move toward the line of scrimmage.

A “chop” signal means stop you have reached the out of bounds spot.

Pass juggled – Give the incomplete pass signal. Then give the “juggling” signal by extending the forearms in front of the body with palms up and move the hands up and down alternately. The juggling signal may also be used in other loose ball situations such as fumble recoveries near the sideline where a player fails to establish control of the ball before the player and / or the ball goes out of bounds.

Play clock countdown – the Side Judge has responsibility to monitor the play clock. If the field does not have visible or properly functioning play clocks he will monitor with his own timing device and signal the last five seconds of the count. Signal will be raised arm with palm open (similar to a dead ball foul) at the 20 second mark, at 21 seconds drop arm to 10 o’clock position, 22 seconds drop arm to 9 o’clock position, 4 o’clock position then to side for time expired.

Position of the widest receiver – The following signals are used by the H & L to indicate whether or not the widest receiver on their side of the formation is behind or on the LOS.

Extend the arm at shoulder height with fist closed toward the offensive team’s backfield to indicate the wide receiver is lined up in the backfield. Maintain the signal until the snap occurs.

Drop arm if the wide receiver shifts to a point that places him on the LOS or goes motion.

If the widest receiver takes a position on the line of scrimmage and later shifts to a position in the backfield, the responsible wing official will immediately give the extended fist signal.

Readiness Confirmation – The dead ball signal (open hand above the head) will be used to indicate that the officials and their respective teams are ready to put the ball in play on a free kick down.

Receiver out of bounds – Give the incomplete pass signal. Then extend the arms in front of the body; sweep them toward the sideline or the end line; and hold them there momentarily. Usually one sweep is sufficient, but an additional sweep may be used to help sell a close call.

Reset the play clock – R will give a pumping motion of an open palm extended above the head to signal play clock reset. Two or three pumps should be sufficient.

Snapper protection – Rotate fists in front of the chest (same as false start signal). This signal is only used by the R and U on plays where the offensive team is in a scrimmage-kick formation and the snapper is given protection by rule. This signal is not to be used just because it is fourth down. For example, if it is fourth down and the team is not in scrimmage kick formation, do not give the signal, conversely if it is not fourth down yet the team is in a scrimmage kick formation give the signal and protect the snapper. Signal should be given when teams line up in a typical formation for a try.

Wide scoring kick – Give the unsuccessful kick signal (same as incomplete pass). Then give the two arm sweeping signal (same as receiver out of bounds) to the outside of the missed upright. Only the official covering the missed upright should give the wide signal. No additional signal is given if the kick is within the uprights but short of the crossbar.