

# **GHSA FOOTBALL OFFICIALS MANUAL 2015**



Revision C

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

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# I. General Information Section

## A. Revision to Manual's Content from 2014

For 2015 the GHSA Football Officials Manual has kept the new format introduced with the major 2013 revision. The focus of the Manual remains shifted away from detailed explanations of specific coverage to be given, by position, in each of several pre-defined situations to more general coverage by the crew as a whole in more flexibly defined situations. While the content of this Manual is meant to cover activities of 6-Man crews (for Varsity games) and 4-Man crews (for Sub-Varsity games), the Manual owes much of its approach to that taken in the "2012 Football Officiating Manual For A Crew Of 7" from the Collegiate Commissioners Association (CCA).

The goal of the 2013 re-write was to eliminate many specific mandates for coverage by position while retaining standards for coverage that are easy-to-understand and easy-to-follow for the journeyman high school football official. At the same time, the mechanics contained in the GHSA Football Officials Manual are designed to present the task of officiating at the high school level in a more "open-ended" manner so that crews constructed around all sorts of mixtures of talent can be successful. More senior crews may wish to extend their mechanics while less senior crews will be better served by sticking with basic principles. Either way, crews will be both efficient and effective at managing the games to which they are assigned.

There are only a few changes to the manual from the 2014 version. Many of these changes are of an editorial nature to fix problems identified with the 2014 version.

There are 12 specific changes in the 2014 Officials Manual. In summary, these are:

1. Revise the Overtime procedure to bring penalty enforcement of fouls that occur on scoring plays into alignment with the "Redding Study Guide to NFHS Rules." (p. 7)
2. Revise Umpires' coverage of certain passes. (pp. 33-34, 36)
3. Fix the section on obvious on-side kick coverage so that BOTH the text and the graphics match. This fixes some incorrect text from the 2014 version of the manual. (p. 42)
4. On runs away from the Referee toward the opposite sideline, only, coverage by BOTH Referee & Umpire has been altered materially. (pp. 32 & 33)
5. For ordinary kick-offs, wings' default location will be the goal line with option to move up as needed for kicking teams unable to threaten goal line with their kicker. (p. 38)
6. The uniform for all games will be 2" GHSA striped shirts with black pants. Knickers may still be worn as an option; but 1" striped shirts are NO LONGER permitted. Shoes must be predominately black with white accents; all crew members' shoes do NOT have to be the same brand or model but should be of similar appearance. (p. 27)
7. A "neat appearance" statement has been added. All officials are expected to be in appropriate shape (conditioning) and to present a professional appearance. (p. 27)
8. Language describing initial distance off the line-of-scrimmage for deep judges on ordinary middle-of-the-field scrimmage downs was changed to be 20 yards, uniformly. (p. 36)
9. More specific language (3-5 yards behind & 9 yards wide) was adopted for initial positioning of the deep judges relative to deep receivers prior to punt plays. (p. 38)
10. Language was changed to clarify coverage of receivers by wing/deep officials for passes near the sideline. These officials will provide team coverage of the catch. (p. 36)
11. On ordinary scrimmage plays where deep judges' initial position is along the end line, deep judges' initial lateral position was changed from under the nearest upright of the goal post to the inbounds pylon on each deep judge's side of the field. (p. 37)
12. Changed wording for free kick coverage by Referee to match 2015 rule change. (p. 40)

## II. GHSA Mandates

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

1. All varsity games must be officiated by officials who are registered members of a GHSA approved association. Officials may work in on-field crews of four, five, six or seven (a crew of five, six or seven on-field officials are required for varsity games).
2. Officials and their associations are independent contractors, and officials are not employees of the local association, member-schools, or the GHSA.
3. All GHSA games are played according the rules published in the National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) rulebook.
4. Videotapes may not be used to review officials' decisions.
5. Game fees for all GHSA football games shall be:
  - a. Regular season varsity (crew of 5 or 6) - \$96.00 per on-on-field official. Travel fees: 1 official \$20, 2 officials \$30, 3 officials \$35 plus \$5 / additional official for contests that require more than 3 contest officials. Travel fees are per crew, per competition day basis. Travel fees MUST be used to compensate contest officials for travel-related expenses.
  - b. Playoff game (crew of 6) - \$125.00 per on-field official. Travel fees do NOT apply to state tournament contests.
  - c. Auxiliary Official (ECO, chains) - one-half of an on-field official's fee.
  - d. Sub Varsity game - \$59.00 per on-field official.
6. The host school has the responsibility of providing:
  - a. Dressing and/or meetings facilities for officials.
  - b. Competent, adult chain crew members. NOTE: Schools may contract with officials associations to use officials on the chain crew.
  - c. Security escorts for officials.
7. GHSA State Adoptions:
  - a. Halftimes shall be 20 minutes, followed by a MANDATORY 3 minute warm-up period.
  - b. Bands are not to play during live-ball situations. NOTE: this includes the situation in which there is no timeout and the teams are in the huddle. If a team claims that band noise is interfering with communication, the Referee shall give a warning to one or both head coaches who will instruct the band(s) to stop playing.
    - i. If there is a second offense by a warned school's band, an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty will be imposed against the same school's team (not the team's head coach).
    - ii. The Referee will always wait for a complaint before issuing a warning.
8. In all playoff games, a crew of six on-field officials will be used.
9. In all playoff games, only Wilson brand footballs may be used. The GHSA overtime procedure must be used in any game between two teams of the same classification that ends in a tie. Schools from different classifications may use the GHSA overtime procedure if both teams agree All games after the end of the regular season are considered playoff games.
10. If teams from different classifications will play overtime in case of a tie, this MUST be agreed upon by both coaches and communicated to the Referee BEFORE the game begins.
11. Overtime games are exempt from the 11:30 p.m. curfew.

## B. GHSA Overtime Procedure

### General

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

Overtime play is mandated for all games (including sub-varsity) between schools of the same classification. Overtime may be played between teams of different classifications in the regular season if both head coaches agree to do so in the presence of the Referee prior to the start of the game. Overtime play is divided into periods. During an overtime period each team has an opportunity for an offensive possession without regard to whether any score has already occurred in the overtime period. However, an overtime period may include only one offensive possession if the defensive team scores a safety or touchdown; such a score by the defense also determines the outcome of the game, and the game is over.

### Activity prior to Overtime Coin Toss

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

### Coin Toss before First Overtime Period

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

### Timeouts during Overtime

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

### Penalty Enforcement

**Except as noted in this paragraph, fouls are enforced during each possession of overtime as they would otherwise be enforced during any non-overtime periods. Dead ball fouls that occur between possessions are enforced on the following possession. Penalties for fouls occurring during a touchdown play, if accepted, may be enforced on the try but NOT from the succeeding spot of the try; enforcement of fouls occurring during a try may be from the succeeding spot.**

### Overtime Period Possessions

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

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

If the defensive team gains possession during a down, the ball becomes dead immediately and the defense may NOT advance. Otherwise, possession will continue as in non-overtime play with all other provisions of Rule 5 of the NFHS Football rules in effect. This means the offense may obtain one or more new series of downs during their possession by reaching the line-to-gain or as otherwise required by rule in conjunction with penalty enforcement. After the first team on offense during the overtime period has completed its possession, the team first on defense will become the offensive team with the ball in its possession at the 15-yard line on the same end of the field where the team first on offense started its possession, unless modified by penalty enforcement.

#### Overtime Scoring

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

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

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

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

#### Determining the End of the Game

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

#### Overtime Play Cases

PLAY 1– On 3rd down and 4 in overtime play, B1 recovers a fumble or intercepts a pass.  
 RULING –The down ends as soon as B1 recovers or intercepts. Team A's possession is ended.  
 PLAY 2 – On 3rd and 6 in overtime play, visiting Team A attempts a field goal. The attempt is not

successful, and Team B recovers at the one yard line. RULING – The down ends when Team B recovers. The possession is ended for Team A.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### C. GHSA Policy on Interrupted Games

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

1. Postponed games are games that are postponed before they actually begin.
  - a. The host school shall notify the opposing team and the officials as early as possible when a contest is postponed.
  - b. The host school is responsible for determining whether an event is to be postponed until the time that game rules turn that responsibility over to game officials.

- c. After administrators agree on the rescheduling of the postponed contest, the host school must notify the GHSA office.
2. Games Stopped by Weather are games that games interrupted in progress.
  - a. All GHSA member schools are responsible for having workable lightning detectors and for having game management personnel trained in the use of these devices; lightning detectors must be monitored by game management throughout the game. Due to their presumed greater accuracy, indications from permanently installed lightning detectors have a higher priority than indications from hand held lightning detectors. Regardless of the type of detector provided by the home school, the officiating crew will honor any request by game management to interrupt the game based upon game management's determination that the potential for dangerous lightning exists in the area of the game. Notwithstanding the requirement of the home school to have and use an approved lightning detector, the officiating crew will also interrupt play for any thunder that is close or loud as well as for any visible lightning. In such cases, the crew will interrupt the contest without regard to whether game management concurs. Play will also be stopped for extreme cold, weather conditions that game management declares would not permit safe travel home and any other dangerous field conditions noted by the crew.
3. Schools of the Same Classification
  - a. All games between schools of the same classification must be played to completion.
  - b. There is NO two-hour cumulative delay.
  - c. There is NO 11:30 p.m. curfew.
4. Schools of a Different Classification
  - a. All games between schools of different classifications will be called after a two-hour cumulative delay.
  - b. There is a mandatory 11:30 PM curfew unless there is a game in progress in overtime; in that case, the curfew is waived.
  - c. If the game is terminated prior to halftime, it will be a "no contest".
  - d. If the game is terminated after one half has been completed, it shall be considered a complete game. The team leading in the score shall be declared the winner; or if tied at this point, the contest will be declared a tie.
5. The GHSA office SHALL be notified of any terminated game.
6. Paying officials - in shortened or postponed games:
  - a. If a scheduled game cannot be started due to weather-related conditions, officials who come to the game site will be paid travel if the officials' contract mandates travel fees.
  - b. If a game is interrupted by weather before it becomes a completed game, the officials will be paid one-half of the regular game fee.
  - c. If a game is an official game at the point of interruption, the officials will be paid full fees.
  - d. Beyond these conditions, no officials' group(s) may hold the schools responsible for weather-related postponements.

## D. GHSA Ejection Procedure

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

1. Within the rules and the mechanics of the specific sport, announce the ejection by making eye contact with the ejected player or coach. Do not make physical contact with that individual. Try to avoid "toe-to-toe" confrontations, but be within 20 feet of the ejected person.
2. Instruct the player to go to his/her head coach immediately.
3. The Referee shall go to the sidelines, make eye contact with the head coach and announce that the player (identified by jersey number) has been ejected from the contest and state the reason for the ejection.
4. The ejected player shall remain in the team's bench area. Each additional disturbance results in an unsportsmanlike penalty against the head coach and may result in that coach's ejection, also. In that case, both the coach and the player will leave the competition area.
5. The ejection of a coach requires that the official approach and make eye contact with the coach, announce the ejection of the coach, and instruct the coach to leave the competition area. In addition, if the head coach is the coach ejected, the official must ask which coach or other official school representative with function as the head coach in the absence of the ejected coach.
6. The ejected coach shall leave the competition area and go to the locker room, the bus, or some other area out of sight and sound of the game. An ejected coach may NOT be allowed to stay in the competition area as a spectator.
7. After the contest, a precise account of the ejection must be filed in a "Game Report" to the Georgia High School Association. A game report may include more than one ejection. An official has no option about whether to report an ejection. The written account should be complete, factual, and non-inflammatory.

## E. GHSA Game Report Filing Requirements

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

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

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

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

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

## F. GHSA Games with Running Clocks

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

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

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

### III. GHSA General Mechanics

#### A. The “Mobile Box” Concept

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

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

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

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

- Running plays up the middle (short gainers; long gainers)
- Passing plays (short or deep; down the middle or to the sideline)
- Runs to the side-zone
- Free kicks and their returns
- Scrimmage kicks and their returns

Be aware that the “Mobile Box” should be used even during kicks returns and turnovers. For example, when using a six man crew and the ball is intercepted, the Head Linesman and Line Judge now reverse responsibilities with that of the Side Judge and Field Judge; this is termed working “reverse mechanics” on such plays.

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

For all the detailed mechanics which attempt to have the official as stationary as possible at the time of his call/no-call, maintaining the “Mobile Box” remains the primary mechanic. Officials must “hustle” but not “hurry” to maintain their proper position in the “Mobile Box” at all times.

## B. The Crew Concept and Auxiliary Signals

The proper conduct of the game requires that all officials on the crew work together as a team. Officials working positions adjacent-to or across-the-field-from other officials, especially, must be aware of what those nearby officials are doing. This is true in terms of pre-snap / pre-kick situations as well as what each is doing as the play develops. To facilitate communication between officials who are typically well out of earshot a series of auxiliary signals has been developed:

1. Wing officials' signals for balanced/unbalanced offensive lines.
2. Wing officials' declaration of players outside the last offensive player on the line of scrimmage (outside the linemen) who are also legal offensive backs.
3. Counts of players prior to the snap or free kick.
4. Dead ball signals.

## C. Distance, Angles and Field-of-Vision

Under the "Mobile Box" concept, the idea is to facilitate officials' movement to the spot where they are most likely to need to be to make a call / no-call even as they strive to be as stationary as possible at the time a call / no-call is made. The ideal distance to be away from action that is being judged is approximately 10-15 yards. While this is clearly not a possibility on all plays, keeping as much distance from the play as possible without being too far away from the action to be judged is important to each official on each play.

In addition to distance, each official needs to strive to have a field-of-vision in front of him of something just short of approximately 45 degrees to either the left or right. That is he needs to be able to see without turning his head all the action in his area of responsibility without having to turn his head to see this action if at all possible. Effective field-of-vision varies between individuals; therefore, there is no one "standard" that can be applied. Based upon individual limits, officials need to be far enough away for their field-of-vision to see all pertinent action in their areas of responsibility. This means people with narrower fields-of-vision must be more distant from the action they need to observe. However, this comes at the cost of having less ability to see important detail at that distance. Each official has to adjust appropriately to his own physical limitations. And when his visual acuity diminishes for whatever reason, he must know when it is time for him to find a different avocation that doesn't require the good eyesight that is required to be an effective football official.

Officials must avoid artificially narrowing their field-of-vision by concentrating too closely on any one aspect of action in their area of responsibility. The most frequent and obvious problem of this type to be avoided is "ball watching" or concentrating too closely on the ball as to miss important action in the area of the ball. For example, officials with responsibility for forward progress on a play must also have enough concentration away from the ball to be able to correctly determine whether an eventual tackle on the ball carrier was done legally.

Another important concept is to avoid "straightlining" where some important aspect of the play is obscured by another aspect of the play. For example, the official's view to the ball may be blocked by a player's body; or a player's body may block the view of the official to the player's hands – keeping the official from being able to detect Holding. This means keeping an "angle" of observance "to the side" of the action. This does not need to be a large angle, but there must be enough of an angle to observe all action pertinent to the call / no-call to be made.

## D. Using Keys to Determine Coverage

All officials must use “keys” to determine what sort of play is developing and what coverage they must provide as that type play develops. For example, “reading” the block of the offensive tackles gives a good indication of whether a passing or a running play is developing. If the tackle blocks aggressively, “read” run; if he blocks passively, “read” pass. Reading the movement of potential pass receivers can also aid wing officials and deep judges in deciding how deep downfield their movements are likely to need to be made.

The caution with keys is that they provide a good initial method of determining types of plays and the planned development of the play. But mistakes made by the offense or countering moves made by the defense alter the actual course of most plays in the game. Sticking with a “key” too long can take an official out-of-position for the play as it actually develops.

**Note: See Pre-Snap Routine and Progressions for each position.**

## E. Using Flags, Beanbags and Hats Correctly

### 1. Flags

- FLAGS ARE USED TO INDICATE A FOUL HAS OCCURRED, ONLY.
- USING THE FLAG FOR LIVE BALL FOULS:
  - During running plays live ball fouls may result in penalty yardage being marked off from the “spot of the foul.” Actually, the penalty yardage may be marked off from the yard line that runs through the true “spot” of the foul. Therefore, flags “thrown” during running plays need to land as close as possible to that yard line.
  - During loose ball plays the spot of the foul will never be the spot for penalty enforcement. For example, pass interference (offensive or defensive) will always be enforced from the previous spot. In loose ball plays it is better to have the flag thrown in the general direction of the offending player, but not directly at him, than it is to have it land precisely on the yard line of the foul.
  - In addition to the flag for a live ball foul, the calling official should sound a staccato whistle at the down’s end to draw everyone’s attention to the fact that a live ball foul has occurred and that this needs to be dealt with before any other non-emergency situation has been handled.
- USING THE FLAG FOR DEAD BALL FOULS:
  - Dead ball fouls will always be enforced from the succeeding spot.
  - For prior-to-the-snap fouls, such as false start or encroachment, the wing officials should drop the flag in the direction of the offending team. This provides a quick, easy and unobtrusive way to signal to the Referee which team was judged at fault.
  - For major fouls, such as unsportsmanlike conduct, throwing the flag high indicates to anyone in the stadium who is watching that something seriously wrong has taken place.
  - It is rarely necessary to “bring rain” as in the bullet above. Use this technique only for truly ugly fouls.

### 2. Beanbags

- PRIMARY SITUATIONS IN WHICH YOU SHOULD USE THE BEANBAG:

- Marking the spot a ball carrier lost possession of the ball on a fumble.
- Marking the spot where a kick returner or defensive back gained control of the ball when his momentum carries him into the end zone.
- Marking the spot where possession of a scrimmage kick is gained by the receiving team on a kick that has crossed the neutral zone expanded.  
Note: The beanbag should be used to mark the above three types of spots every time they are observed.
- SECONDARY SITUATIONS IN WHICH YOU COULD USE THE BEANBAG:
- Marking the spot where a ball carrier went out of bounds (in addition to standing on that spot).
- Marking the forward progress of a ball carrier when he has been pushed back and there is continuing action on him. Note: This mechanic should be used only by the Referee on tackles behind the line of scrimmage (see below).
- HOW TO USE THE BEANBAG WHEN NEEDED:
- Since the beanbag is always used to mark a precise spot, it should be carried to that spot and dropped – or at least dropped on that yard line extended if you are not near that exact spot.
- Keep the beanbag in your belt or in your hand and develop the habit of using it.
- At the high school level, there is no need to mark the spot of every change of possession.
- Referees may find it helpful to mark forward progress of a passer who is being sacked with the beanbag. The flank officials are generally downfield and cannot help. The passer is being pushed back and the Referee must keep attention on that action. Dropping the beanbag and then moving to retrieve the ball is an easy process.
- It is not a good idea to drop the beanbag on the out-of-bounds spot and then leave it to retrieve the ball. Even in a crew of 4, this should be a last resort. Hold the spot and drop the beanbag just in case an unusual situation arises.

### 3. Hats

- Primarily the hat should be worn. However, it is permissible to drop the hat at the spot where a player “intentionally” leaves the field. There is no foul at the point of such exit. But if that player returns illegally, the dropped hat is the indication that the subsequent foul for illegal participation is based on such exit and illegal return.

## F. Handling Fight Situations

### 1. PREVENTIVE MEASURES:

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

## 2. REACTIVE MEASURES:

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

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



## G. Efficient Penalty Enforcement Techniques

### 1. Goals

- Create consistency in our mechanics.
- Be as efficient as possible.
- Promote confidence and eliminate the appearance of confusion by moving smartly and with purpose while specifically avoiding the appearance of wandering around.

### 2. Expected Results

- Move the game along at a more professional pace.
- Appear more confident as a crew.
- Draw less criticism.
- Reduce game time.
- Save steps/energy.

### 3. Calling Official's Requirements

- Stop the clock.
- If a live-ball foul, sound a whistle so that everyone else is alerted to the fact that a foul call has been made (staccato whistle).
- Get the offending player's number.
- If multiple flags in the same area:
  - a. Get together with other calling official(s) and make a determination as to what will be reported.
  - b. If one foul, make a decision quickly and only one official reports the foul to the Referee.
  - c. If multiple fouls, all 'calling officials' report their fouls to the Referee.
- Report foul(s) to the Referee.
  - a. Fouls prior to the snap:

Calling official will meet the Referee at the ball to report the foul.

The Umpire and both wings will also come in to hear the report given to the Referee.

*Note: On Dead Ball Fouls with one official making the call: Wing Official – False Start, Encroachment & Illegal Substitution or Field Judge – Delay-of-Game – the calling official may give the prescribed signal for the type of foul to the Referee as he is moving to report the number of the offending player.*

#### b. Live ball or post-play fouls:

- i. If the end of the play is more than fifteen yards downfield, meet the Referee:
  - a. at the spot of the flag, or
  - b. "half way" as he (the Referee) is advancing downfield.
- ii. If the end of the play is less than fifteen yards downfield or the succeeding spot would otherwise be the previous spot, meet the Referee at the previous spot, or the spot of the flag and report clearly, concisely, completely, and calmly the:
  - Result of the play (catch/no catch, turnover, first down, etc.).
  - The type of play from an enforcement point-of-view: Loose ball, Running or Post-Scrimmage Kick (PSK).

- The type of foul (Holding, Personal Foul, Pass Interference, etc.).
- The offending team.
- The offending player's number.

Reporting Examples:

- *I have Defensive Pass Interference on #38 – the pass was incomplete.*
- *I have Holding on the Offence # 75 – the foul was on the 45 at the Spot of the flag.*
- *After the play - I have a Dead Ball Personal Foul on #45 of the Offense for a late hit. The offense got a 1<sup>st</sup> down on the play and the ball carrier went OOB.*
- *During the Play – I have a Personal foul on #78 of the Defense – there was a touchdown on the play by the Offense*

Note: Never forget about Clock Status and where the play ended (Spot). Be prepared to discuss enforcement and team options. Then complete other duties specific to your position (below).

4. Other Officials' Duties by Position

- Referee
  - a. Gather information (see above 'Report foul(s) to the Referee').
  - b. Give preliminary signal, if needed. – See Notes Below
  - c. Step out of player traffic and make yourself easily visible to press box to give signals (do not Run 10 yards away). Stand completely stationary and face the press box when making all penalty signals.

Note on Referee's signals for fouls –

- No preliminary Signals on Pre-Snap Fouls (FS, IC or Illegal Sub, ODG)
  - Start Arms at your side
  - Pause
- Give clear signal (Arms straight out or at your chest – never over your head)
  - Give the Next down at the end
  - Arms down to your side
- Pause
- Jog Away
- If you have a Microphone – Speak clearly – No Numbers – Less is more.
  - Example – False Start – Offense – 5 Yard Penalty – 2<sup>nd</sup> down
  - Example – After the Play (while giving the DB Signal) – Personal Foul – Defense – 15 yard penalty – 1<sup>st</sup> down
  - Use "After the Play" instead of Dead Ball
  - Do NOT try to explain penalties like PSK – use "by rule the Penalty will be from ..."
  - Pre-snap Foul – No reason to give Dead Ball Signal everyone knows the Ball was dead.
- d. If obvious, make decisions for a team.

□

e. Tell the Umpire:

- The enforcement spot.
- Direction in which to mark off the penalty.
- The distance portion of the penalty.
  
- The destination yard line if limited to half the distance to the goal.

f. Move with purpose by walking briskly and/or jogging to position. Do not run around as it gives the appearance of confusion and/or indecision.

g. Post enforcement:

- Make sure all officials and the chains are in position.
- Mark the ball ready for play without undue delay.
- Don't rush the ready for play if players seem confused or disorganized as a result of penalty administration.

- Umpire

- a. Find out what the flag is for as soon as possible.
- b. Become an expert in penalty administration and be an aid to the Referee throughout the enforcement process.
- c. If a team decision is needed, find a team captain.
- d. Get the football.
- e. Listen to the Referee's instructions (again, be an aid....don't let the Referee make a mistake).
- f. Walk off the distance, and put the ball down quickly and purposefully.
- g. Check the distance with your wing officials.
- h. Assist the Referee with clock status.

- Linesman

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

- Line Judge

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

- Deep Officials (Field Judge and Side Judge)

- a. Communicate the status of the ball and the result of the play. Be prepared to 'hold the spot' until an enforcement choice is made.

- b. You are primarily responsible for 'covering' flags as the calling official reports the foul(s) to the Referee. All flags should be covered even if it means covering a flag on the opposite side of the field. Exceptions: Dead ball fouls called by wing officials do NOT need to be covered by the deep judges. Similarly, delay-of-game calls by the Field Judge do NOT require coverage by any other official.
- c. You are responsible for clock status.
- d. You are the third party for confirmation on penalty administration.

## 5. General Commentary

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

## 6. Other Tips about Penalty Enforcement

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

## H. Pre-Game Meeting with the Crew

### 1. Preparation

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

### 2. Conference

- Prior to the conference's beginning, the Referee should let the home team management know that the officiating crew has arrived.
- Pre-game should begin no later than 1:30 minutes prior to kick-off with all officials dressed in uniform and ready to participate in the pre-game conference.
- The Field Judge will inform the crew of the official time. The Field Judge will ensure that the 25-second function on his watch is working properly.
- The Referee will lead a group discussion of the following responsibilities:
- Pre-game field observations and duties of all officials.
- Mechanics for coin toss.
- Mechanics for positioning, coverage, and common rules infractions on:
  - i. Free kicks.
  - ii. Scrimmage kicks.
  - iii. Running plays.
  - iv. Passing Plays.

□

v. Short yardage and goal line plays.

- Mechanics for reporting and administering penalties.
- Mechanics and rules on starting the clock, stopping the clock, and time out periods. He will also release the ECO in time for the ECO to be at the clock control point 40 minutes prior to the scheduled kick-off of all Varsity games.
- Officials who must coordinate their activities on certain types of plays will discuss those issues.
- Discuss any information about the teams involved that will be beneficial for this game.
- Discuss the need to see the ball before blowing the whistle, and discuss the ways to handle inadvertent whistles.
- Save any discussion of the GHSA Overtime Procedure until half time if it will be in effect for this game.

### 3. Comments about the Pre-game meeting

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

## I. Pre-Game Field Responsibilities and Meeting with the Coaches

### 1. General:

- Officials are required to take charge of the field not later than 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the game. Note: 40 to 45 is preferred – But you must have a good pregame.
- Every official has pre-game duties to perform. These duties should be performed in a professional and purposeful manner.
- Safety is our number one concern; establishing this fact is a primary requirement for all officials once they have reported to the field.
- Officials should go as a group to the 50 yard line on the press box side of the field in time to release the ECO to his game-clock-checking duties so that he can begin the countdown to kick-off at 30 minutes of clock time (barring unexpected difficulties with the clock). Exception: The Referee and Umpire may stop to conduct their pre-game meeting with the head coach of the home team if walking past him would produce an unnecessary delay in conducting their pregame meeting with him.
- Following completion of specific, by position duties it is permissible for officials to:
  - Individually return to the dressing area, as needed. However, the crew as a whole remains responsible for the field. Therefore, the bulk of the crew should always remain on the field once responsibility for the field has been established (barring an emergency situation).
  - Move to one end of the field for individual warm-up exercises.
- The Referee and Umpire need to schedule time prior to assembling team captains in the end zone(s) with the balance of the on-field crew to discuss any items of concern that arose during the pre-game meeting with the coaches. This includes at a minimum the identification of the team captains for each team.

### 2. Officials' Duties by Position:

See the individual pre-game responsibilities listed in each of the on-field crew configurations (6-Man & 4Man).

## • J. General Instructions for Electronic Clock Operators

- Reporting to the Game Site
  1. Report to the site at the same time as the rest of the crew.
  2. Arrive dressed as the rest of the crew, depending on your associations' requirements.
- Participating in the Pre-Game Meeting
  1. Synchronize time with the Field Judge (FJ) like all other crew members.
  2. Be prepared to discuss your role in the game like all other crew members.
  3. Be prepared to discuss what to do if the field clock fails during the game and you have to come down to the field to keep time with your auxiliary timer.
  4. Agree with R on how you will signal your readiness just prior to any free kick.
  5. Ask any questions that you have about how to be the ECO for this game. Don't leave the pre-game meeting with questions in your mind about your role.
- Special Equipment Needed by ECO
  1. The ECO wears a complete game uniform. However, you do not need flags, beanbags or whistles in your ECO role. Other equipment may be useful. Depending upon local association requirements, keeping a game card may be a good idea, for example.
  2. The ECO does need some special equipment and supplies:
    - a. An alternate or auxiliary timer other than the field clock. Any clock with a stopwatch type feature that will count down from 20 minutes will work.
    - b. Something to signal readiness to R prior to each kickoff. This can be a small flashlight, a red LED or your hat. What is satisfactory for any particular game depends on R's choice.
    - c. The crew line-up cards if provided by your local association (2 copies, obtained from R). One is for use by the stadium announcer; the other is for use by a GHSA evaluator, if any.
    - d. Paper and pen or pencil for recording events as required by your local association.
- Going to the Field from Pre-Game Meeting
  1. Go directly to the location of the clock controls, usually the press box.
  2. Leave the pre-game crew meeting in time to have COMPLETED your pre-game clock checks and have the clock running down to kick-off time NOT LATER THAN 30 minutes before the game's scheduled kickoff time. For example, at latest the clock would be set at 7 PM to 30 minutes and counting down to zero if scheduled kick-off is 7:30 PM. This generally means the ECO must be at the clock control point 40 minutes before kick-off.
- Testing the Clock under GHSA Procedures
  1. Most sites have electronic controls. Some sites still have electro-mechanical controls. Either way, know how to set time, start and stop the clock and adjust the time should you be requested to do so. This has to be practiced. Pre-game is the time to practice. Special care should be taken with on/off switches that operate off a pigtail (make sure the pigtail is tightly attached to the control box and that the on/off feature works consistently however the pigtail is held/used by you). Do not wait until game time to discover problems! During this practice time you have ample opportunity to fix any problems you have with the setup (sightlines to the field, location of the control box, etc.).

The GHSA requires that the following minimum tests be performed:

    - a. Set the clock to 5 minutes.
    - b. Allow it to run down to zero, note whether the horn does (or does not) sound as it should. If it does not, this information needs to be relayed to game management via the LJ and to R before the start of the game.
    - c. Compare time on the clock with your alternate countdown timer. Be sure they are in essential agreement. If not, inform R before the game starts.
    - d. Be sure the clock starts and stops correctly.

□

- e. After the tests are successfully completed, set the clock to the remaining time before scheduled kick-off and allow the clock to run down to zero. However, do NOT allow the horn to sound IF it would interrupt any late pre-game ceremony such as the playing of the National Anthem.
- f. If there is a stadium announcer or an evaluator (from either GHSA or your local association) present, offer them their copy of the crew list.
- g. Set the clock to 12:00 and wait for the game to start.

- Game Procedures

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

- Out-of-the-Ordinary Game Procedures
  1. If the field clock breaks, you should still have the correct time on your auxiliary timer. Use whatever prearranged plan you have to come to the field once this situation has been relayed to the rest of the crew.
  2. If a period is extended by an un-timed down (signal 1\*), do NOT change the clock back to 12:00 minutes and do NOT advance the period indicator until R declares the end-of-period (signal 14).
  3. Rarely the on-field clock may be operated from a location other than the press box. It is OK to run the clock from that location, but the Referee needs to know where you are in such cases.
  4. For whatever reason, the clock may need to be adjusted during the game. Make NO such adjustments until you have been told by R, directly or indirectly, what adjustment is to be made to the clock. Under NO circumstances should you make a clock adjustment on your own.
  
- At Period Breaks
  1. Once R has indicated the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> periods by holding the ball over his head (signal 14), it is OK to advance the quarter indicator and set the game clock to 12:00 minutes. Wait for the game to restart in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> period.
  2. At the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> period, you have to be prepared to start the half-time timer. Half-time is 20 minutes long (unconditionally), followed by a mandatory 3-minute “warm-up” time. After R has indicated the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, go ahead and put 20:00 minutes on the clock. As the crew is leaving the field, R should signal you (signal 2) to start the clock as the last crew member clears the field. If you observe that R fails to order you to start the half-time clock, start it once the whole crew is outside the fence on the way to the dressing room (or other half-time location). You should then join the crew to participate in the half-time discussion. Your auxiliary timer should also be running at this time and you should be able to report remaining time in the 20-minute main half-time period. Upon the end of the 20-minute break, you should be back in the press box. When the 20 minutes runs out, reset the clock to 3:00 minutes and start it immediately. This will time the mandatory warm-up period. (Note: the warm-up period is mandatory; warm-ups are not. The teams can decide whether to warm-up or not; the crew will do nothing to force the teams to warm-up.)
  
- Running Clock Situations
  1. See Section II. F., above, where running clock situations are described. Know this section and how your duties will be modified in such situations.
  2. Note that in running clock situations, the crew will maintain its normal signaling mechanics. The ECO must know when to ignore and when to follow a “stop the clock” signal based upon the “TIPS” acronym:
    - “T” = Time-Out
    - “I” = Injury
    - “P” = Penalty
    - “S” = Score
  
- Normal End-of-Game
 

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



- Overtime

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

## K. Uniforms and Uniform Options

- The basic uniform for ALL GHSA-sanctioned football games includes:
  1. A striped official's shirt with black Byron collar and GHSA logo above the shirt pocket and American flag on the left sleeve; both the GHSA logo and American flag must be an original pattern in the fabric of the shirt. This shirt may be either long sleeved or short sleeved. However, EVERY member of the crew MUST wear the same sleeve-length shirt.
  2. A black undershirt with no decorations showing through the outer shirt.
  3. Black official's pants fitted to correct in-seam with 1-1/4" outer white stripe. Pants must also be worn with a 1-1/4" to 2" black belt.
  4. Black outer socks of at least above-the-ankle length ("crew" socks or longer).
  5. A pair of predominately BLACK or ALL BLACK athletic shoes. If not wearing an ALL BLACK shoe, EACH member of the crew MUST wear a similar-looking model of shoe; the only other color that may be present on the shoe is WHITE.
  6. A black fitted official's hat with white piping for all officials except the Referee. The Referee will wear a solid white fitted official's hat, instead.
  7. Optionally, an official's jacket with alternating black and white vertical stripes.
- Uniform Option
  - Crews may elect to wear an alternate set of pants and socks to the combination black striped pants and black socks as follows:
    1. Pants shall be white knickerbockers with 1-1/4" to 2" wide black belt, folded over below the knee to cover the top of the socks.
    2. A pair of white "Northwest striped" socks to be worn underneath the fold of the pants.

## L. Officials Appearance

New for 2015. Officials are expected:

1. To have neat personal grooming.
2. To wear clean uniforms and shoes.
3. To wear uniforms without "yellowing" of white portions of the uniform or "graying" of the black portions.
4. To be in appropriate physical condition to officiate complete games without tiring significantly as well as to run sufficiently well to successfully complete their coverage responsibilities.
5. To generally project both an athletic and professional appearance.

## IV. GHSA Officiating Philosophy

### A. Ball Spotting

- The ball can be placed on a yard line to begin the next series after a change possession. For example, if a punt return ends with the ball between team B's 33 and 34 yard lines, move the ball forward to team B's 34 yard line. At all other times, the ball is placed where it became dead. (Exception: If the change of possession occurs on a fourth-down running or passing play, the ball will be left at the dead-ball spot to begin the next series.)

## B. Officiating the Line of Scrimmage

- Officials will work to keep offensive linemen legal and will call a foul 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 the offensive player is lined up with his head clearly BEHIND the rear end of the snapper, a foul will be called without a warning.
- Don't be technical on an offensive player who is a wide receiver or slot back in determining if he is off 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 alignments. If in question, the tight end is NOT covered up.
- When in question regarding player position on movement by the defense into the neutral zone which causes the offense to move, a player is moving toward the offensive player. This protects both that player and the two adjacent offensive players.
- When in question regarding a defensive player's jumping into the neutral zone and the appropriate offensive player(s) move(s) in reaction to the defensive player's move, shut the play down and penalize the defense.
- Formations during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal.
- When in question, a quick or abrupt movement by the snapper or Quarterback prior to the actual snap IS a false start.

## C. Fumbles

- When in question, the runner did NOT fumble the ball and was down.
- When in question regarding whether the quarterback passed or fumbled, it will be ruled a PASS.

## D. Defensive Pass Interference (DPI)

Actions that constitute defensive pass interference include, but are not limited to, the following seven (7) categories:

- Early contact by a defender who is not playing the ball is defensive pass interference provided the other requirements for defensive pass interference 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 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. (Call this ONLY when it's a big foul.)
- 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.
- Face guarding.

## E. Offensive Pass Interference (OPI)

Actions that constitute offensive pass interference include but are not limited to the following four 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.

## F. NOT Offensive Pass Interference

□

- Offensive pass interference 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 (up to three yards) and linemen are blocking downfield, unless such blocking prevents a defensive player from catching the ball.
- It is NOT offensive pass interference on a pick play if the defensive player is blocking the offensive player when the contact occurs and doesn't make a separate action, or if the contact occurs within one yard of the line of scrimmage.

## G. Other Passing Situations

- When determining if an untouched pass is beyond the line of scrimmage, the neutral zone will be expanded one yard.
- When in question on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer if the defender's intent is to punish.
- If the passer is contacted after he starts his passing motion, then it may be ruled no intentional grounding due to this contact.
- If an interception is near the goal line (inside the one yard line) and there is a question as to whether possession is gained in the field of play or end zone, make the play a touchback.

## H. Blocking

- "Takedown" blocks occurring at any of:
  - a. the point of attack,
  - b. in the open field,
  - c. in the tackle box that also impact the play should be given special focus and 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 for 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.
- 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. The force of the block could be slight and still be a foul if the contact propels the player past the runner or prevents him from making the play. If the force is clearly on the side, it is NOT a foul. If the blocker is in a "chase mode" all the action must be on the side to be legal.
- 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 that occur at or about the same time a runner is being tackled shall not be called, unless they are personal foul in nature.
- 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 also be defensive pass interference.
- Holding can be called even if the quarterback is subsequently sacked as it may be the other half of an offset foul.
- Illegal block in the back can still 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 touchback occurs and contact is slight (personal foul type actions should always 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.
- 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.
- When in question if an illegal block occurs in the end zone or field of play, it occurs in the field of play.

## I. Action during Kicking Plays

- The kicker's restraining line on onside and short pooch kickoffs 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 encroachment. The same plane applies on normal kickoffs, but officials should NOT be too technical in regard to players breaking the plane.

- 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 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.
- It shall always be roughing the kicker if there is forcible contact to the plant leg, whether that leg is on the ground or not. 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.

## J. 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 who has continued 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.

## K. 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 inside the pylon with the ball crossing the goal line extended IS a touchdown.

## L. 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 timing of illegal hits away from the ball near the end of the play, consider it a dead ball rather than live-ball foul.
- Spitting on an opponent is a personal foul and REQUIRES disqualification.

## M. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- Do not be overly technical in applying Rule 9-5-2 (improper handling of a dead ball).
- Allow for brief, spontaneous, emotional reactions at the end of a play.
- Beyond the brief, spontaneous bursts of energy, officials should flag those acts that are clearly prolonged, self-congratulatory, or that make a mockery of the game.
- A list of specifically prohibited acts is in Rule 9-5-1 (a) thru (h). That list is intended to be illustrative and not exhaustive. All agree that when those acts are clearly intended to taunt or demean, they should be penalized.

## N. Managing/Adjusting the Game Clock

- 5/5 axiom: In order to adjust game clock errors, there must be more than a five-second differential if there is more than five minutes remaining in either half.
- When any time is lost due to the clock's being started erroneously (such as when a dead-ball foul is called), the clock must be adjusted.

□

## **O. Miscellaneous**

- The ankle and wrist are considered part of the foot or hand, respectively. Touching the ground with the ankle or wrist, only, does NOT make a runner down.
- The covering official (only) may accompany his whistle with a dead ball signal at play's end.

## V. Six-Man Crew Specifics

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

### A. Scrimmage Plays Originating Outside 10-Yard Line

This is the so-called "standard" or "mid-field" play set-up. In this situation everyone on the crew lines up in their "normal" positions pre-snap and has "default" coverage as the play develops. Other play situations present greater or lesser deviations from this set-up.

**Referee:** Attempt to set the pace of the game by having a consistent ready-for-play; in routine situations this should be possible with no more than 12 to 14 seconds between the end of one play and the ready-for-play for the next one. When dealing with conventional huddles, stand 5-7 yards off the LOS and near the huddle to blow the ready-for-play; when dealing with spread offenses or no-huddle, stand as deep as desired for the actual start of the play before blowing the ball ready-for-play. Line up on the Quarterback's passing arm side to the extent that this can be determined. Failing the rare lack of knowledge of the QB's passing arm, he will line up toward the center of the field. In general he should be 11-15 yards behind the LOS. He keys the offensive tackle's block to the opposite side of the snapper; therefore, he must alter his pre-snap position so that he has a clear view to that tackle at the snap. The Referee should have a clear line of sight to the ball pre-snap and either he or the Umpire must have sight to the ball at all times once the ball has been blown ready-for-play. The Referee and Umpire will share the count of the offensive team prior to every snap and will NOT allow the ball to become alive if the offense has more than 11 players on the field with the snap's being imminent. The Referee has responsibility for the runner until the runner has crossed the LOS and has responsibility for the passer until the passer decides that he is once again ready to actively participate in the play with no further protection as a passer. On running plays outside the tackles, the Referee trails the play following action around the runner; on running plays that break up the middle (inside the tackles) or on sweeps to the wide side of the field away from his pre-snap position, he trails the entire play operating in a "clean-up" mode. In the case of an interception or fumble recovery, the Referee should be able in most cases to remain farther downfield than the runner and be able to beat him to the goal line, if necessary, to cover the touchdown or any forward progress short of the touchdown that is past the coverage of the wing officials operating in "reverse mechanics" on the play.

Pre-Snap Routine (Mental Check List before every Snap):

- Game Clock – *Is status correct?*
- Down and Distance – Verify with crew – the down MUST be correct!
- Ready-for-Play – Regular pace is 12 to 14 seconds after last play ended – *Is the crew ready?* □ Note any Substitutions.
- Count Offense – confirm with Umpire.
- Pre-snap position – 11-15 yrs. deep and wide – throwing arm side.
- Say to yourself the number of the offside Tackle and all the Backs in the backfield.
- When Snap is imminent, lock on the ball to insure the snap is legal.
- Watch for Pre-snap movement of the backs for a False Start.
- HUSTLE – but do not hurry.
- THINK –is this play likely to be a pass or run – Know the Situation.

Play Progression after the Snap:

- Run to your side
  - Key offside tackle (Read).

□

- If QB rolls your way, pivot and observe until he gets near the numbers; then trail. Hand off to RB – verify QB is out of danger before giving him up.
- Pivot and move your focus to blocks ahead of the runner (you do not have the spot).
- Trail play – stay back – look for cheap shots and Personal Fouls.
- Be aware of possible fumbles and reverse mechanics.
- Be a good Dead Ball Official.
- Run Away from you
  - Key offside tackle (Read).
  - If QB rolls away, trail and observe until he gets to the corner.
  - Look at the blocks on the corner (inside tackle).
  - Hand off to RB – verify QB is out of danger before giving him up.
  - Trail and move your focus to blocks ahead of the runner (you do not have the spot).
  - Trail play – stay back – look for cheap shots and Personal Fouls.
  - Be aware of possible fumbles and reverse mechanics.
  - Be a good Dead Ball Official.
- Run up the Middle
  - Key offside tackle (Read).
  - If QB keeps, focus on him – until past the LOS.
  - Look at the blocks up the middle (see Philosophies). Hand off to RB – verify QB is out of danger before giving him up.
  - Trail (you do not have the spot; you do have clean up).
  - Trail play – stay back outside – look for cheap shots and PF's
  - Be aware of possible fumbles and reverse mechanics.
  - Be a good Dead Ball Official.
- Pass
  - Key offside tackle (Read)
  - Be sure you are deep enough (14 or 15 yards off LOS and wide) ○
  - Direction of pass:
    - If to your side, pivot.
    - If away, trail – focus on QB until past the LOS.
    - If pocket, do not move.
  - As Pocket breaks down, focus on QB and most threatening defender. ○
  - Watch throwing hand – MUST judge Incomplete or Fumble – did contact dislodge ball?
  - Once pass is away, focus on QB – watch for Roughing Passer or Unsportsmanlike.
  - Be a Good Dead Ball Official.

**Umpire:** When dealing with conventional huddles, the Umpire should stand in the vicinity of the ball until the huddle breaks; when dealing with spread offenses or no-huddle, the Umpire should be in position ready for the snap before the Referee blows the ball ready-for-play. Pre-snap line up 6-9 yards off the LOS approximately head-up of the center but offset opposite the Referee, as needed, to have a clear line of sight to the ball, pre-snap. Either the Umpire or the Referee must have a clear line of sight to the ball at all times once the ball has been blown ready for play. The Umpire and Referee will share the count of the offensive team prior to every snap and will NOT allow the ball to become alive if the offense has more than 11 players on the field with the snap's being imminent. The Umpire is responsible for all action on or by the offensive center and guards and has additional responsibility for detecting and signaling forward passes deflected by the defense at or near the LOS. The Umpire is unique to the crew in that he works an inside-out technique which places him inside the Mobile Box during the play. As running plays move downfield outside the offensive tackles, he allows the Referee to follow the runner; and the Umpire operates in a "clean-up" mode for all other action trailing the play. For running plays that break up the middle (inside the tackles), he and the Referee reverse roles; the Umpire follows action around the runner and the Referee trails the entire play operating in a "clean-up" mode. On sweeps away from the Referee, the Umpire will continue to work inside-out, but he will move closer to the sideline than the Referee as the play develops; at play's end for this type play, the Referee (not the Umpire) will be in place to spot the ball for placement at the hash mark. While all officials have responsibility to recognize and flag various forms of illegal blocking, the Umpire has the greatest focus on the "free blocking zone" and recognition of legal and illegal blocks that take place there so long as the zone remains intact by rule. In mid-field passing plays adjust your position to maintain a clear view of the center and

two guards and to avoid oncoming pass receivers. Assist the Line Judge in knowing whether or not a forward pass crossed the neutral zone. Be prepared to pivot on all passes and assist on ruling on trapped passes. Continue to observe your area of responsibility until the pass is thrown and be aware of ineligible downfield. At play's end, the Umpire will move to the dead ball spot, if it is inside the hash marks, and will set the ball upon the mark of the covering official; very rarely will the Umpire be the covering official, himself. The Umpire should not treat the hash marks as a wall beyond which he will not go to retrieve a dead ball. Instead he should move outside the hash marks as needed to most efficiently retrieve the ball and replace it for the next play.

#### Pre-Snap Routine (Mental Check List before every Snap):

- Spot Proper position
- Huddle – move to pre-snap – No huddle glance to Referee for Hold or Release
- Game Clock – Is status correct?
- Down and Distance – Check within the crew – the down **MUST** be correct.
- Note any Substitutions.
- Count Offense – confirm with Referee.
- 6-9 yards deep – move back as needed – see the Ball & offset as needed to keep it in sight.
- Say to yourself the numbers of the 2 Guards and Center (Keys).
- Remember that any motion man is a potential Blocker.
- When Snap is imminent, lock on the ball to insure the snap is legal.
- Watch for Pre-snap movement of the Linemen.
- **HUSTLE** – but do not hurry.
- **THINK** –is this play likely to be a pass or run – Know the Situation.

#### Play Progression after the Snap:

- Run to the sides
  - Read Blocks of your Keys
  - Lock on your 3 Linemen – Blocks
  - Adjust Focus as play moves to the corners – blocks on corner and POA
  - Pivot with play (you do not have the spot)
  - Work inside out to box play in
  - Be aware of possible fumbles and reverse mech.
  - Ball rotation mechanics
  - Be a good Dead Ball Official
- Run up the Middle
  - Read Blocks of your Keys
  - Lock on your 3 Linemen – Blocks
  - Adjust Focus to POA Blocks
  - Pivot with play – get out of the way (you do not have the spot)
  - Work inside out to box play in
  - Be aware of possible fumbles and reverse mech.
  - Ball rotation mechanics
  - Be a good Dead Ball Official
- Pass
  - Read Blocks of your Keys
  - Lock on your 3 Linemen – Blocks
  - Adjust Focus to POA Blocks – possible pressure points on QB
  - Stay stationary – Wide view – move as needed only to view Blocks
  - Work inside out to box play in if QB scrambles
  - Be aware of possible fumbles and reverse mech.
  - Ball rotation mechanics
  - Be a good Dead Ball Official

□

**Wing Officials:** Wing officials should begin each play positioned on the sideline, outside the field of play. They should start each play aligned opposite each other straddling the neutral zone, working just out of bounds but inside the restraining line that aligns with their respective sideline. This will help the wing officials with several field management duties:

- Player and non-player safety as well as sideline control with the prospect for clear communication between the game officials and coaches is very important.
- Positioning along the sideline allows the action to be in front of them.
- Working wide will give the Wings a broader view of the play with complete outside-in coverage while keeping the play boxed in.
- Working outside the field of play will also prevent game officials from having players lining up or positioned behind them.
- It is essential to begin each play wide. This gives the game official a better perspective with a wider peripheral view for better officiating opportunities.

Wing officials are responsible for determining the eligibility of receivers and the alignment of players such that they are aware and will flag fouls for illegal formations at the snap when such fouls occur. They do this through a series of auxiliary signals between each other that show whether the line is “balanced” on their side of the center (that is once each of a guard, a tackle and an end on their side of the center) or not. These signals are needed on every scrimmage down and should be gotten as quickly as possible. For a balanced line, their signal is a clenched fist held at about the waist with their forearm approximately parallel to the ground using their downfield hand; for an unbalanced line an “illegal substitution” signal is used as an auxiliary signal, optionally with a closed fist to indicate fewer than 3 players on the LOS on their side and an open palm on their chest to signal more than 3 players on the LOS on their side of the center. Wings will also indicate if there are any legally positioned offensive backs outside the last player on the LOS prior to the snap. The signal for one or more such backs is made with the arm toward the offensive backfield outstretched at the shoulder with the entire arm approximately parallel to the ground and with a clenched fist. Optionally they may use a count on their fingers to indicate how many such players are outside the last offensive player on the LOS on their side of the center. At the snap, wing officials read the block of the offensive tackle on their side; a passive block gives a read of “pass;” an aggressive block gives a read of “run.” Note that this is just an initial read; wing officials must alter their coverage to the play that actually develops. For passing plays the wing official is responsible for action on or by the inside receiver on his side of the field; this may be a back lined up inside or could be the end when a flanker is used by the offense. The Linesman and Line Judges have very different responsibilities on passing plays. The Line Judge must hold the LOS and judge both the position of the passer and the flight of the ball relative to the LOS. The Linesman must release downfield approximately 10 yards to help cover the area across the field (using “cross-field” mechanics) to assist the Line Judge on passes thrown that depth and beyond to receivers who would have otherwise been covered by the Line Judge (who has had to hold at the LOS). In cases where the sideline is involved with a pass play, the Wings have primary responsibility for judging the catch while the Deep judges have primary responsibility for the feet of the receiver; however, if the Wing is screened from the ball (as in an over the shoulder catch), these responsibilities are reversed. On all scrimmage plays the wing officials have primary responsibility for marking the dead ball spot at play’s end all the way to the defensive team’s 2 yard line. At the 2 yard line, primary responsibility for obtaining the spot or signaling touchdown reverts to the deep judges. In such near-to-the-goal-line cases, the wing official should bypass the deep official and continue to cover any action that occurs in the defensive end zone.

Pre-Snap Routine (Mental Check List before every Snap):

When players separate and are no longer a threat to one another:

- Move to the LOS in the two yard restricted area.
  - Consider down, distance, point in game and player alignment when determining width. ○ Remember: Wider is better.
  - Establish the LOS with your foot on the offensive side.
  - Monitor neutral zone violations by the offense or defense.
  - Count offensive players on the LOS to your side of the center.
    - When (3) players are on LOS to your side, signal by holding a clenched fist at belt level with your down field hand (toward the defense).
    - If there are not (3) players on the LOS to your side of the center, signal with hand to the chest (signal 22).

- The wings will mutually determine number of lineman (at least 7 for legal formation) before snap and be prepared to rule accordingly.
- Determine whether nearest offensive player is on/off the line.
  - When nearest player is off the LOS, signal by extending your arm straight out towards offensive backfield (fist clenched).
  - Maintain signal until ball is snapped, receiver goes in motion or receiver shifts into legal position on LOS.
- Know the number(s) of eligible receiver(s) on your side of the LOS. ○
- You are responsible for ruling on ineligible(s) downfield on your side of the field (by number or position).
- A player in motion is your responsibility any time he is on your side of the snapper.

**Deep Officials:** Deep officials should line up approximately 20 yards off the LOS prior to the snap and square to the wing official on their side of the field. The Deep officials are responsible for maintaining the deep end of the Mobile Box and have primary responsibility for obtaining the dead ball spot from the defense's 2 yard line to the goal line; they have secondary responsibility for obtaining the dead ball spot for plays that end on their side of the field and in which the Wing official is unable to get the dead ball spot for any reason. Prior to the snap they are responsible for obtaining a count of the defense and sharing that count; in no case should they allow the ball to become alive if the defense has more than 11 players on the field and the snap is imminent. At the snap Deep officials key the widest receiver on their side of the field; however, they must cover any receiver(s) that flow into their zone, always maintaining a deeper position than any receiver with sufficient buffer from receivers/defenders to allow a call or no-call on passing plays where they have both angle and depth enough to properly judge the entire play without getting straightlined.

In cases where the sideline is involved with a pass play, the Wings have primary responsibility for judging the catch while the Deep judges have primary responsibility for the feet of the receiver; however, if the Wing is screened from the ball (as in an over the shoulder catch), these responsibilities are reversed. More important than specific catch/feet responsibilities are that Wing/Deep officials work together as a team to determine whether or not a catch was made.

**Pre-Snap Routine (Mental Check List before every Snap):**

- Clock – note time of the clock and ensure it is properly running or properly stopped. □ Down & Distance
- Substitutions
- Count Players– Deep Judges will count the defense on all scrimmage plays.
- Clear the sideline.
- Formation and keys – Deep Judges will key on the widest offensive player at the snap.
- Ensure proper positioning – approximately 20 yards deep and even with your respective wing official (will be off the field on most scrimmage plays).
- Be turned facing the line of scrimmage in a stance ready to back pedal.
- Know the situation – Is this likely to be a run or pass? Is the 'go-to' receiver on my side of the field.

**Play Progression after the Snap:**

- At the snap, be ready to back pedal and keep a good cushion. Deep Judges should be 20 yards ahead (your original position) of the ball or ball carrier when it becomes dead.
- The basic progression for Deep Judges is 'Man-Zone-Ball'. At the snap, Deep Judges will watch action on or by their key (the widest man in the formation at the snap). Be ready to switch to 'zone' coverage as your initial key leaves your zone and other players enter your zone. Last, be ready to pick up the ball and where it is on the field, and when it may enter your zone. NOTE – The 'ball' portion of progression mainly applies to passing plays, on runs to the opposite side of the field, Deep Judges will focus in on their zone and should avoid focusing on the ball on running plays away from them.
- On scrimmage plays outside the 10, Deep Judges are responsible for spotting the ball inside the 2 yard line and responsible for the goal line. If the ball is snapped on or inside the 10 yard line, Deep Judges will be lined up on the end line, using the position of the ball and the formation to determine how wide they should be.



## B. Scrimmage Plays Originating At or Inside 10-Yard Line

Plays originating at or inside the 10 yard line of the defense are handled quite a bit differently than those originating outside the 10 yard line. Inside the 10, the focus is generally on the goal line much more than it is on plays originating in the mid-field area. The purpose of having “goal line mechanics” for such plays is to acknowledge the increased importance of coverage at the goal line and into the end zone and allowing the officials to pre-position themselves pre-snap in such a way as to enhance their chances of getting good coverage on all such plays.

**Referee:** Among all the on-field officials his changes are the fewest of the entire crew. Mechanically, he operates in the same fashion as he would on any other ordinary scrimmage down. However, he has primary responsibility for recognizing that the next snap will be at or inside the 10 yard line (going in) or 3 yard line (going out) and conveying that information to the balance of the crew so that they will properly alter their own mechanics for the goal line situation.

**Umpire:** Going in the Umpire may line up at his normal depth (6-9 yards off the LOS). However, as the distance of the snap from the goal line shortens to less than 5 yards, he needs to adjust accordingly to be at a depth where he can assist on judging whether the ball made it to the end zone while it remained alive. He can best do this when he is positioned about 3 yards deep in the end zone. When the ball is snapped on or inside EITHER team’s 10 yard line, U is primarily responsible to rule if a pass crossed the line or if the passer was beyond the line. On plays with ball into end zone by Team A, use “hands to the chest” signal to assist wing officials in calling TD or successful non-kick try.

**Wing Officials:** On snaps from the 10 yard line going in, the Wing officials have primary responsibility for the dead ball spot. They should be able to beat the play to the goal line in all cases. On snaps inside the 5 yard line, they should move immediately from the snap to the goal line and work back out. The goal line is their most important responsibility with one exception – the dead ball spot for 4<sup>th</sup> down on plays where the line-to-gain is inside the 5 yard line; in that case, they need to give preference over goal line coverage to the line-to-gain. On snaps at or inside the 3 yard line going out, the Wing officials must step back to the goal line initially in order to cover the goal line for a possible ruling on a Safety. Also, be willing to “pinch in” to get (and sell) the dead ball spot; do not remain “glued” to the sideline area.

**Deep Officials:** On snaps at or inside the 10 yard line going in, Deep officials will be positioned outside the field of play along the end line. Depending on how the offensive formation is organized, their initial position laterally ranges from inbounds pylon (hash mark) on their side of the field all the way to the corner of the field on their side. Their primary call will be on passes; they have the end line and will work with the Wing official on their side to determine catch/no-catch on plays near the corner pylon.

## C. Punt Plays

**Referee:** Signal the Umpire that the offense is in a kicking formation (signal 19) when the offense has met the criteria for such a formation. Line up pre-snap on the punter’s kicking foot side. He should be offset to the side wide enough to watch action of the rushers but not so wide that he has difficulty in judging a possible tipped ball. He must be deep enough behind the punter to not be in the way in case of a too-long snap and the scramble for the ball that is likely to follow. His primary responsibility is to cover action on the punter (running into or roughing the kicker). He must stay with the punter until the punter decides to rejoin the play as an ordinary player. Once the ball has been kicked and there is no more action on the punter, move to the spot of the kick for possible coverage of a kick out-of-bounds (see below). For punts that will take place at or near the goal or end lines, his pre-snap position should give him good coverage of these lines, especially for judging whether a Safety has occurred on the play.

**Umpire:** Acknowledge the Referee’s kicking formation signal (signal 19) by repeating it back to the Referee. Check for legal/illegal numbering exception, and check linemen legal/illegal interlocking of feet prior to the snap. After the snap focus on action on the snapper as long as the snapper remains protected by rule then shift to action by the guards and backs behind the neutral zone. The Umpire needs to be in position to judge tipped punts behind the LOS (signal 11). Once the kick is away, verbally say “ball’s away;” allow action to flow by, pivoting to follow the action slowly downfield; on short or partially blocked kicks assist with determining whether the kick crossed the neutral zone. During the return work inside-out watching for personal foul, clipping and other illegal blocks.

**Wing Officials:** Both Wing officials hold the line at the snap. Following the punt drift downfield 10-15 yards from the LOS, prepared to work reverse mechanics to carry the runner all the way to the goal line, if needed. Be aware of post scrimmage-kick type fouls by the receivers. In the case of an errant snap or blocked punt, the Wing opposite from the Referee will retreat into the backfield to assist the Referee with coverage around the ball; the Wing on the same side as the Referee will hold at the LOS. On extremely short punts (typically “shanked” punts), the Wing official must be aware of and prepared to mark the out-of-bounds spot for the kick, if needed, on his side of the field.

**Deep Officials:** On all punts, brief the receiver(s) on the proper method of calling a fair catch. Pre-snap position is 3-5 yards behind and 9 yards wider than the deep receiver(s). The Field Judge has responsibility for coverage of the receiver on the vast majority of punts; the Side Judge is responsible for blocks in front of the catch in those cases. In the one case where the Side Judge’s sideline is “threatened” (catch will be made within approximately 2 yards of that sideline), the roles are reversed; the Side Judge takes the catch and the Field Judge takes the blocks around the catch. In all cases both Deep officials must take care not to get straightlined on the catch when they are the covering official, and it is completely inexcusable to miss a fair catch call. If the ball is kicked over the receiver’s head, the covering official sticks with the ball and action around it; once possession is gained on any punt, the covering official must mark that spot with a beanbag as a potential point of post-scrimmage-kick penalty enforcement.

**All officials (except Umpire):** If the punt goes out-of-bounds on the fly and the covering official is unable to mark the spot within a yard of the point where the ball crossed the sideline, the covering official should move to the sideline, raise his hand over his head and begin walking briskly toward the Referee. The Referee will have moved to the spot of the kick and will “chop in” the official stepping up the sideline when that official has reached the spot where the ball crossed the sideline.

## D. Field Goal & Kick Try Plays

**All Officials:** The largest difference between a Field Goal attempt and a Kick Try is the status of the ball if the attempt fails. In a Kick Try the ball becomes dead as soon as it is apparent that the kick will fail; in a Field Goal attempt the ball remains live until it otherwise becomes dead by rule. Officials must be prepared to stop play immediately for a failed Kick Try but allow play to continue for a failed Field Goal attempt until the ball becomes dead otherwise.

**Referee:** Signal the Umpire that this is a kicking formation when this is so (signal 19). Line up facing the holder standing 3 yards wider than the last down lineman and 2 yards behind the kicker’s initial position. The idea is to have a good line of sight to judge action on/by the kicker and holder as well as sight to action on/by the rushers from the outside, looking for pulls or hooks. This position also provides enough distance to not get caught up in the play for situations that develop as a result of fumbles, bad snaps or designed trick plays that involve quick action toward the sideline.

**Umpire:** Acknowledge Referee’s kicking formation signal (signal 19), if given, by repeating it back to him. Line up approximately 5 yards off the LOS; otherwise, the play is like any other scrimmage kick (see Punt Plays, above).

**Wing Officials:** On short Field Goals and Kick Tries, initially line up off the field of play; work in as needed. At the snap focus on action on/by the offensive tackles and up backs. Following the kick, jog in toward the offensive backfield to maintain a good angle of action on/by offensive tackles and up backs. On all Field Goal attempts the Wing officials must be prepared to work reverse mechanics for any kicks short of the goal line that may be returned.

**Deep Officials:** Both officials work behind the goal post upright on their side of the field. The Side Judge has the additional duty of blowing the whistle to end the play. Once the kick has crossed the end line, confirm with the other Deep judge (“yes, yes, yes” or “no, no, no”); then step straight out 2 steps into the end zone and give the appropriate signal together. However, in the case of a kick wide of the goal post, only the official on that side will signal “no good;” the other official will merely step out into the end zone. Unless this is a Kick Try, work the play as any other scrimmage kick; coverage at the goal line for a potential touchback must be obtained on long Field Goal attempts that fall into the field of play.



## E. Free Kick Plays

### 1. Ordinary Kick Off Anticipated

There are 2 types of ordinary kick offs. The first is the one that begins each half; the other is the one that follows either a touchdown or a field goal. The pre-kick positioning is the same for each type; however, the method for reaching the pre-kick positions is quite a bit different:

#### **Kick off to begin a half:**

Following completion of the coin toss ceremony (1<sup>st</sup> half) or the teams moving to their respective sidelines (2<sup>nd</sup> half), the crew meets in the center of the field. They are arranged with the Referee on the end where he will be covering the goal line; the Umpire is opposite the Referee. The Wing Officials stand on their side of the field next to the Referee. The Deep Officials stand next to the Umpire, and the Deep official on the kicking team's side of the field brings the ball from the sideline to the Umpire. When the first of the teams comes onto the field, the crew breaks to their pre-kick positions:

**Referee:** Turns and runs straight to the receiving team's goal line.

**Umpire:** Moves to the kicking team's 40 yard line with the ball.

**Wing Officials:** Move with the Deep Officials down the 50 yard line to the side line, then turn and move to the **receiver's goal line**, clearing the restricted area, as needed, while moving down the sideline. If observation of kicks (during pre-game or 1<sup>st</sup> half) shows that kickers will not threaten goal line, wings may move up to better cover anticipated shorter kicks.

**Deep Officials:** Move with the Wing Officials down the 50 yard line to the sideline. Both officials remain at the 50 (on the receiver's restraining line).

#### **Kick off following a touchdown or field goal:**

**Referee:** Move directly to the goal line of the receiving team. If necessary to alter the other official's duties to an "Obvious On-Side Kick" formation, relay that information to the Wing officials before they move to the 20 yard line.

**Umpire:** Move directly out to the numbers on the kicking team's side of the field. Retrieve a new ball from the ball person by the time the Umpire reaches the 20 yard line. Hold at the 20 only long enough to receive relay of "Obvious On-Side Kick" declaration, if any, relayed from the Wing officials.

**Wing Officials:** Hold briefly following the Try or Successful Field Goal to see if the Referee might declare an "Obvious On-Side Kick" situation, then move straight out to the sideline and up to the 20 yard line. Hold there until the Umpire has reached the 20 yard line and any "Obvious On-Side Kick" has been relayed; then the crew releases directly to their appropriate pre-kick positions.

**Deep Officials:** Move down the end line to the sideline, then turn and move up the sideline to the 20 yard line. The crew will hold briefly at the 20 yard line until the Umpire has reached the 20 and any "Obvious On-Side Kick" declaration has been relayed. Then the crew releases directly to their appropriate pre-kick positions.

#### **Activities leading up to the ready-for-play signal:**

**Referee:** Waits at the goal line near the center of the field for the balance of the crew to signal their readiness for the play to begin. Simultaneously, he is counting the receiving team. He shares that count with the Wing officials. In no case will he mark the ball ready for play while the receivers have more than 11 players on the field. In addition, it is the Referee's call at the time of the kick as to whether Kickers were legally positioned for the kick. Check off that the Wing Officials are ready; then check with the Umpire; finally check off with the ECO and blow to ball ready-for-play.

**Umpire:** Moves up the numbers with the ball to the kicker's 40 yard line (or other appropriate yard line if a penalty is involved) and moves toward the center of the field. Hand the ball to the kicker and strongly brief him on how to proceed including warning instructions for the entire Kicking team's legal pre-kick positions; allow the kicker to place the ball legally; count the kicking team and share that count with the Deep Officials. In the case that there are more or less than 11 players for the kicking team, give a strong indication that they need to get to 11; under no circumstances allow the ball to come alive with more than 11 players for the kicking team. When the kicker is ready, look to the Referee for his signal then move to a position at the sideline of the Kicking team; raise a hand to signal your readiness for the ball to be made ready-for-play. Wait on the Referee's ready-for-play

whistle. Upon ready-for-play drop his arm and await the kick. The Umpire is responsible for judging the Kicker's restraining line. Once the kick has been made the Umpire will circle back to the center of the field. In the case where the kicker tells the Umpire he will be deliberately kicking short, it is permissible for the Umpire to signal this to the rest of the crew that this is the case (beanbag in hand would be such a permissible and unobtrusive signal). **Wing Officials:** Move down the sideline to the receiver's 10 yard line and step off the field of play to the restraining line around the field. Count the receiving team and share that count with each other and the Referee. Upon receipt of the Deep Officials' signal that they are ready, with beanbag in hand raise an arm to indicate readiness on that side of the field for the Referee's ready-for-play signal. When the Referee has acknowledged readiness, drop the arm and move to the restraining line.

**Deep Officials:** Move to the Receiver's kick restraining line, the 50 (unless modified by penalty). Count the kicking team and share that count with each other and the Umpire. Once the count is confirmed, with beanbag in hand raise your arm to indicate readiness. Once the Wing on your side has raised his arm, drop yours. Move back to the restraining line surrounding the field.

**Covering the kick, itself: Keys**



Referee – No Key – Focus on Deep Receivers once kick is away

- **Remember – you have the call on K having at least 4 kicking team players on each side of the Kicker AT THE KICK (if a holder is used that is counted as one player on that side).**

Umpire – 5's (chart, above) and Kicker (Note: The Kicker is protected from contact by the receiving team for the first five yards downfield or until the ball has touched a receiver).

Field Judge – 2, 3 and 4 (chart, above) on your side.

Side Judge – 2, 3 and 4 (chart, above) on your side.

Wing Officials – 1 (chart, above, when he comes into your Zone) – Pick up the Ball if it comes to your Zone.

**All Officials except Umpire:** Have your beanbag in hand to make calls of "beanbag" events.

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**Referee:** Primary responsibility is for the goal line and judging whether a touchback has occurred; immediately judge whether Kicker's were in an illegal formation at the kick; if so, this is a dead ball foul. Stand directly on the goal line and move in the direction of the kick. If a touchback occurs, blow the play dead immediately and signal (signal 7). If the kick is possessed by the receiving team in your area, start the clock; as runner starts his run you give him up to the wings; thereafter focus on the blocking ahead of the runner; watch especially for any illegal block that may spring the runner.

Be watchful for:

- Ball being legally touched in your area.

Note: Your area includes the entire width of the field at the goal line and will generally include the one, two or three deepest receivers.

- Backward passes and forward hand-offs or passes.
- Illegal blocks and clips.
- Facemask violations.
- Fair catch signals.
- Kick breaking the goal line plane.
- Runner's momentum carrying him into the end zone. (Bean bag in hand!)
- Muff or fumble.
- Recovery of a loose ball.
- Dead balls.

**Umpire:** After judging action at the Kicker's restraining line, initial coverage is of the kicker. He is protected from contact by the receiving team for the first five yards downfield or until the ball has touched a receiver. The Umpire's responsibility includes the 3 inside players nearest the center of the field and the KICKER's restraining line (typically the 40). Move slowly downfield watching action generally away from the ball. On long returns, allow action to bypass you using a typical inside-out technique and operate in a "clean-up" mode for action well behind the progress of the ball.

**Wing Officials:** Primary responsibility is to judge action at or near the pylon at the intersection of the goal line and sideline. Note: A kick which hits this pylon is a touchback (signal 7). Pick-up the widest KICKING team players if/when they come into your zone. If the ball is legally touched in your area, start the clock; and take the runner up the field all the way to the kicker's 2 yard line. Be watchful for:

- "Pooch" kicks longer than 25 yards; be prepared to move up-field quickly to cover these. Watch for kick catch interference, fair catch signals (valid and invalid) and other activities associated with the catch.
- Kick going out of bounds - who touched it?
- Winding clock when ball is legally touched in your area.
- Muff or fumble.
- Covering short and on-side kicks. On short (pooch) kicks, wings must move up for the catch. Watch for kick catch interference, fair catch signals (valid and invalid) and other activities associated with the catch.
- Backward passes and forward hand-offs.
- Illegal blocks and clips.
- Facemask violations.
- Fair catch signals.
- Kick-catching interference.

**Deep Officials:** Primary responsibility is for action on/by the 3 Next-Inside the Outside player of the KICKING team players (see chart, above). Be aware of and prepared for a short kick regardless of whether one was signaled by the Umpire. If the ball is legally touched in your area, start the clock. Keep the deep end of the Mobile Box closed; you are responsible for the runner at the kicker's 2 yard line to their goal line (the last 2 yards before the score); you have secondary responsibility for spots short of the 2 yard line. Your "watchful" list is quite similar to the Wings'.

## 2. Obvious “On-Side” Kick Situations

Obvious “On-Side” Kick Situations are determined by the Referee. Typically these happen late in a game with a close score when the scoring team is still behind in the contest and needs one or more additional scores to win or tie the game. When the Referee has determined such a situation exists following a successful Field Goal or Try, he will relay this information to the Wing officials. The Wing officials will, in turn, relay this to the other 3 officials at the 20 yard line prior to moving to positions for the subsequent kick off.

In this case, the Wing officials will both move to 5 yards short of the Kicker’s kick restraining line as their pre-kick positions. The Deep officials will both move to the Receiver’s kick restraining line. The Umpire will move as for a normal free kick. The Referee, alone, will remain deep to cover an unexpectedly long kick.

All officials in the vicinity of the restraining lines must be aware of the likely short kick and anticipate action in the scramble for the ball. Officials who wind up being away from where the ball is kicked must be aware of all applicable rules governing contact in the neutral zone and must NOT concentrate on the ball. Instead, they must watch action away from the ball and be prepared to rule on a wide range of potentially illegal types of contact by members of each team.

In the unlikely case of a kick being made deep, the coverage responsibilities for Wing and Deep officials are the REVERSE of those for any ordinary free kick. Officials will have to hustle especially well, particularly the Deep officials, as they move toward a position on the field that approximates that which would have been had by Wing officials for an ordinary free kick. Do not over-hustle in this situation, but move under control as quickly as possible toward the depth of the kick.



## 3. After a Safety

Following a Safety the elaborate coordinated movement of the crew is somewhat abbreviated. In this case each member of the crew will move directly to his pre-kick position. The free kick line is the kicker’s 20 yard line. The kick restraining line for the receivers is the kicker’s 30 yard line. The Umpire will likely need assistance from the Deep official on the kicker’s side of the field to obtain the ball. Otherwise, duties for a free kick after a safety are

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the same as normal for all officials following movement to their pre-kick positions except that their location on the field is offset 20 yards closer to the kicker's goal line than normal.

#### 4. After a Fair Catch or Awarded Fair Catch

Following a Fair Catch or Awarded Fair Catch the receiving team has the option to free kick. This free kick differs from all others in that it can result in the awarding of 3 points for a Field Goal if successful. Because this option would only likely be taken if scoring a Field Goal was the intent, mechanics for covering this play are vastly different from all other free kick plays.

In effect, the officials will line up in very roughly the same positions as they would line up for a scrimmage kick Field Goal attempt. Specifically, by position:

**Referee:** Will handle the ball and will instruct the kicker in much the same way that the Umpire does for an ordinary free kick.

**Umpire:** Will position himself near the goal line to rule on a potential touchback in case the kick fails to make it to the goal line in the air. Similarly, the Umpire must be prepared to rule on the momentum exception, if needed.

**Wing Officials:** Will position themselves at the restraining lines for each team. The Linesman will position himself on the kicker's kick restraining line (through the spot of the catch or awarded fair catch), and the Line Judge will position himself 10 yards downfield from that spot.

**Deep Officials:** Will position themselves under their goalposts as if for an ordinary Field Goal attempt. Deeps must NOT signal anything so long as the ball remains alive on the field of play.

**All Officials:** In the case that the ball falls short and remains alive, treat this as any other kickoff. Officials will work reverse mechanics during a return of any such kick, much as they would work for a punt.

## F. Miscellaneous Situations

### 1. Pre-Game On-Field Duties

Referee:

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

- Identify the quarterbacks. Record their numbers, whether they are right or left handed and their general apparent abilities as passers.
  - Similarly identify the punters and field goal kickers and whether they kick with their right or left foot.
  - Identify the style of offenses are the teams fielding and the abilities of key players (long snapper or the snapper in shotgun, for example).
  - Identify “prime time players” – those who can be expected to be involved in critical situations.
  - Make a mental against your pre-snap checklist and think through how these teams will most likely fit into your pre-snap activities.
- Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during your meetings with each coach.

#### Umpire:

- After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
- Accompany the Referee to speak with the home, then the visiting coaches.
- Examine player equipment / medical wrappings / casts etc. & rule on legality.
- Ensure Referee asks if all players are legally equipped.
- Record captains numbers and who speaks at coin toss.
- Secure game balls. Referee to approve.
- Identify ball boys and direct them to wing officials.
- Listen for special plays or formations that coach’s use.
- Ensure Referee asks the home team coach about the chain crew.
- Relay each game ball to the respective deep officials.
- Ensure Referee mentions that sportsmanship is expected by the coaches and players.
- Observe additional pre-game activities that provide potential guidance to how the game, itself, may be played:
  - Identify the guards and centers (your keys) for both teams.
  - Similarly identify the punters and field goal kickers.
  - Identify the style of offenses are the teams fielding and the abilities of key players (long snapper or the snapper in shotgun, for example).
  - Identify “prime time players” – those who can be expected to be involved in critical situations.
  - Make a mental against your pre-snap checklist and think through how these teams will most likely fit into your pre-snap activities.
- Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during the Referee/Coaches meetings.

#### Linesman:

- After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
- Locate and communicate with the ball person on your side.
- Check the sideline for safety concerns and proper markings.
- Take a look at the clock to be sure it is working properly.
- Check the line to gain equipment by:
  - Making sure the chains are 10 yards in length with no knots and has a piece of tape secured at the 5-yard mark.
  - Making sure the down box is working properly.
- Instruct your chain crew as follows:
  - Introduce yourself to the entire chain crew.
  - Identify who will be the box person. Know them on a first name basis.
  - Explain the use of the clip (clip the back line, the back of that line) and who will be doing this job.
- Tell the crew to drop the chains and get out of the way when the flow of action comes toward the sideline.
- Tell the box person not to change the down or move until you indicate the next down.

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- Explain that you will be “setting” the box person on all first downs. There can be exceptions in the event the Side Judge is in position to do this.
- Explain the importance of them hustling and how important they are to the crew.
- Observe additional pre-game activities that provide potential guidance to how the game, itself, may be played:
  - Identify the tackles (your keys) for both teams.
  - Similarly identify the punters and field goal kickers.
  - Identify the style of offenses are the teams fielding and the abilities of key players (long snapper or the snapper in shotgun, for example).
  - Identify “prime time players” – those who can be expected to be involved in critical situations.
  - Make a mental against your pre-snap checklist and think through how these teams will most likely fit into your pre-snap activities.

Line Judge:

- After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
- Find a member of game management and review with this person:
  - The current time-of-day.
  - The starting time of the game.
  - The presence of a working lightning detector and how significant lightning events in the area of the game, if any, will be relayed to the on-field officiating crew.
- Locate the band director / ROTC advisor and let them know that the National Anthem needs to be completed not less than 10 minutes prior to game time.
- Locate and communicate with the ball person on your side.
- Check the sideline for safety concerns and proper markings.
- Take a look at the clock to make sure it is working properly.
- Observe additional pre-game activities that provide potential guidance to how the game, itself, may be played:
  - Identify the tackles (your keys) for both teams.
  - Similarly identify the punters and field goal kickers.
  - Identify the style of offenses are the teams fielding and the abilities of key players (long snapper or the snapper in shotgun, for example).
  - Identify “prime time players” – those who can be expected to be involved in critical situations.
  - Make a mental against your pre-snap checklist and think through how these teams will most likely fit into your pre-snap activities. Field Judge:
- After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
- Check to make sure that the 3-yard marks are correctly marked off. Inform the Umpire of any discrepancies.
- Work with the Side Judge to ensure that neither team, other than the kicker, encroaches over their 45yard line. The kickers may kick from the opponent’s 45-yard line. □ Ensure the kickers kick toward their own goal line.
- Survey the field and make mental note of field and sideline danger spots.
- Locate and communicate with the ball person on your side.
- Observe additional pre-game activities that provide potential guidance to how the game, itself, may be played:
  - Identify the wide receivers (your likely keys) for both teams.
  - Similarly identify the punters and field goal kickers.
  - Identify the style of offenses are the teams fielding and the abilities of key players (long snapper or the snapper in shotgun, for example).
  - Identify “prime time players” – those who can be expected to be involved in critical situations.
  - Make a mental against your pre-snap checklist and think through how these teams will most likely fit into your pre-snap activities.
- Obtain possession of the football of your team’s sideline from the Umpire.

- Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during the Referee/Coaches meetings.

#### Side Judge:

- After pre-game conference, walk with the other officials to the press-box 50-yard line, huddle momentarily, and then break to perform pre-game field duties.
- Work with the Field Judge to ensure that neither team, other than the kicker, encroaches over their 45yard line. The kickers may kick from the opponent's 45-yard line. □ Ensure the kickers kick toward their own goal line.
- Survey the field and make mental note of field and sideline danger spots.
- Locate and communicate with the ball person on your side.
- Assist the Linesman with checking the chains and down marker.
- Introduce yourself to the chain crew.
- Observe additional pre-game activities that provide potential guidance to how the game, itself, may be played:
  - Identify the wide receivers (your likely keys) for both teams.
  - Similarly identify the punters and field goal kickers.
  - Identify the style of offenses are the teams fielding and the abilities of key players (long snapper or the snapper in shotgun, for example).
  - Identify "prime time players" – those who can be expected to be involved in critical situations.
  - Make a mental against your pre-snap checklist and think through how these teams will most likely fit into your pre-snap activities.
- Obtain possession of the football of your team's sideline from the Umpire.
- Once the teams leave the field, meet with the crew to discuss any pertinent issues identified during the Referee/Coaches meetings.

## 2. Pre-Game Escort Duties

#### Referee:

- In the end zone on the Press Box side of the field in time to walk to the vicinity of the 50 yard line with 5 minutes to go on the countdown to kick off.
- Signal Umpire to start, as well; and walk to approximately the 48 yard line; stop there and stand "at ease" facing the field while awaiting the arrival of captains.
- Captains arrive; speaking captain should be on the left shoulder of the Referee.
- Signal Umpire and walk to the center of the field.
- As team captains meet, have them shake hands and conduct introductions.
- Conduct coin toss ceremony: Tap winner of the toss on the shoulder. Resolve options; signal "Toss option deferred" immediately if this is choice of winner of the coin toss. Turn teams with backs to the goal they will defend. Signal Which Team will kick / which will receive. Give mandatory sportsmanship talk. □ Have captains shake hands, again; then dismiss them to sideline.
- Take position with back toward receiver's goal line near midfield.

#### Umpire:

- In the end zone OPPOSITE the Press Box side of the field in time to walk to the vicinity of the 50 yard line with 5 minutes to go on the countdown to kick off.
- Walk to approximately the 48 yard line; stop there and stand "at ease" facing the field while awaiting the arrival of captains.
- Captains arrive; speaking captain should be to the far left of the Umpire.
- Walk to the center of the field on Referee's signal.
- As team captains meet, Referee will have them shake hands and conduct introductions.
- Stand by during coin toss ceremony, facing in toward the Referee. □ Rotate with the captains as coin toss results are announced.
- Take position with back toward the kicker's goal line near midfield. Linesman:

□

- Obtain captains of team OPPOSITE Press Box side of field (usually, but not always, the visiting team) in time for them to be in the end zone to walk with approximately 4 minutes to go on the countdown to kick off.
- Signal the Line Judge and walk the captains up the sideline to midfield.
- Take position opposite Umpire on the sideline, bracketing captains between.
- Walk onto the field with Umpire and captains; stop at hash mark; turn to face sideline and stand “at ease.” Control any action from your sideline; there should be none.
- When coin toss ceremony is complete, join the rest of the crew at midfield, lined up beside the Referee and opposite the Line Judge.

Line Judge:

- Obtain captains of team on Press Box side of field (usually, but not always, the home team) in time for them to be in the end zone to walk with approximately 4 minutes to go on the countdown to kick off.
- Acknowledge the Line Judge’s signal and walk the captains up the sideline to midfield.
- Take position opposite Referee on the sideline, bracketing captains between.
- Walk onto the field with Referee and captains; stop at hash mark; turn to face sideline and stand “at ease.” Control any action from your sideline; there should be none.
- When coin toss ceremony is complete, join the rest of the crew at midfield, lined up beside the Referee and opposite the Linesman.

Side Judge:

- Stay with the team who will occupy the sideline OPPOSITE the Press Box (usually, but not always, the visiting team). If they move to the sideline in time for the coin toss ceremony, go with them. If not, remain between the team and the meeting of captains for the coin toss. If at sideline for coin toss, stand “at ease” facing out toward the field; do NOT walk out with the Linesman, Umpire and captains.
- If the team you are escorting will be kicking as a result of coin toss options, obtain their ball before joining the crew at midfield to await the arrival of a team for the kick off.

Field Judge:

- Stay with the team who will occupy the sideline on the Press Box side of the field (usually, but not always, the home team). If they move to the sideline in time for the coin toss ceremony, go with them. If not, remain between the team and the meeting of captains for the coin toss.
- If at sideline for coin toss, stand “at ease” facing out toward the field; do NOT walk out with the Linesman, Umpire and captains.
- If the team you are escorting will be kicking as a result of coin toss options, obtain their ball before joining the crew at midfield to await the arrival of a team for the kick off.

### 3. Time Outs

Referee:

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

Umpire:

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

Wing Officials:

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

- Watch for illegal conferences. Be sure of proper number of players/attendants in huddle.
- Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
- Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.
- Be alert for signal from the Referee to give your team 15-second warning. Go to team huddle and say, "Coach, ball will be marked ready for play in 15 seconds." □  
Inform the coach of time outs remaining.
- Be alert of substitutes or attempts to use substitutes for purposes of deception.

#### Deep Officials:

- Record the period and time that each time out occurs.
- Confer with other officials as to the number of times out remaining for each team.
- Field Judge, only, maintains timing of the time out. Signal the Referee by prearranged signal when 45 seconds of the time-out have elapsed. That is his signal to, in turn, warn the sidelines that only 15 seconds remain before the ball will be marked ready-for-play.

## 4. Measurements

#### Referee:

- Straighten the ball appropriately and oversee the measurement process.
- Judge whether or not the line to gain has been reached. □ Make the appropriate signal.

#### Umpire:

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

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

- When the Referee calls for a measurement, hustle to the sideline. Make sure the box is at the spot of the front stake.
- Pick up the chain at the clip and proceed to where the Line Judge is marking the yard-line (this should be directly behind the ball).
- Hold the clip on the back of the yard line while the Umpire stretches the chain and the Referee signals the result.
- If not a first down, carry the chain and clip to its correct position on the sideline and re-set the chains.
- If the measurement is in a side-zone, use the chains to bring the ball into the hash marks then set the box and make sure of the proper down. When practical, leave the ball that was measured in place until a new ball has been spotted at the hash mark; then release the old ball to the sideline.
- If a first down, release the chains and clip and let the Side Judge set the chains for a new series.
- Note on a setting the chains for change-of-possession in a non-measurement situation: If there is an incomplete pass on 4<sup>th</sup> down, the ball will be placed at the previous spot so that the rear point becomes the foremost point of the ball. The box and chains must be moved the length of the football in the new direction of the offense. Only move the box after the Umpire has spotted the ball.

#### Line Judge:

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

#### Side Judge:

- Before the chains are brought on the field, move to the sideline and assist in setting the first down marker on the front end of the line to gain marker.
- When a decision is made, assist in placing the first down marker on the tip of the football.
- Tell the box person the number of the next down. If a first down, set the chains without waiting for the Linesman to perform this duty.

#### Field Judge:

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

□

## 5. Penalty Administration (Details)

### Referee:

- Fully explain all the options afforded to the offended team.
- Confer with the Umpire as to penalty, enforcement spot, direction and distance.
- Give final signal to the press box side of the field. Stand completely stationary and face the press box when making all penalty signals.
- Note: The Referee and Umpire will repeat out loud (Referee to Umpire & Umpire back to Referee) the enforcement spot, distance and direction of the mark-off of an accepted penalty BEFORE the walk-off is begun.

### Umpire:

- Direct offended captain to Referee as he gives the preliminary signal.
- Secure ball.
- Confer with the Referee as to enforcement spot, direction and distance. In situations where the ball has become dead in a side zone, move the ball back to the appropriate hash mark before stepping off the penalty (do NOT step off penalties in a side zone).
- On properly marked field, avoid stepping off each yard between yard lines. Instead step off the first and last yard line.
- Walk briskly using arm signal to point to each yard line you cross.  
Verbalize distance walked off as you move to spot.
- Note: The Referee and Umpire will repeat out loud (Referee to Umpire & Umpire back to Referee) the enforcement spot, distance and direction of the mark-off of an accepted penalty BEFORE the walk-off is begun.

### Linesman:

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

### Line Judge:

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

### Deep Judges:

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

## 6. Between First and Third Periods

### All Officials:

- When facing clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter).

### Referee:

- Meet with the Umpire and Linesman at the ball and check to be certain there are no penalties to be enforced or no requests for a Coach-Referee conference – then record the down, distance and yard line. Verify this info with the Linesman before he proceeds to move the chains.
- Be certain the results are recorded on your game card.
- Signal the end of the quarter by raising the ball above your head.
- Move to the appropriate spot at the other end of the field.
- The official who marks the end-of-quarter spot must mark the beginning-of-quarter spot on the other side of mid-field.
- When notified by the Field Judge that it is time to play, mark the ball ready for play.

### Umpire:

- Record down, distance and yard-line nearest nose of the ball – going in or out?
- Hold spot and hand the ball to Referee for end of period signal.
- Re-check spot and set up ball at corresponding spot on the other half of the field.

### Linesman:

- Meet with the Referee to verify the down, distance and yard line. Make note of the yard line where the clip is placed.
- Be certain the results are recorded on your game card. □ Pick up chain at the spot of the clip.
- Remember to instruct chain crew to “flip-flop” sides.
- Move to the appropriate yard line on the other side of the 50-yard line to reset the chains.
- Re-check down, distance and yard line.
- Ensure the box person sets the box on the yard line of the ball.
- Inform Referee that you are ready to go. Line Judge:
- Make note of the down, distance, and yard line where the ball will next be put into play as well as the yard line where the clip is placed prior to the chains being moved.

### Side Judge:

- Be aware of down, distance, and yard line.
- Maintain a presence between mixed colors.
- Make note of the down, distance, and yard line where the ball will next be put into play.
- Monitor any mixed jerseys and the team’s huddle on your side of the field. Field Judge:
- Be aware of down, distance, and yard line.
- Maintain a presence between mixed colors.
- Make note of the down, distance, and yard line where the ball will next be put into play.
- Monitor any mixed jerseys and the team’s huddle on your side of the field.
- Time the quarter break. When 45 seconds is completed, notify Referee with one short blast of your whistle and point at him.

## 7. Between Halves

### All Officials:

- When facing clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- Inform players near you of the situation (end of half).

#### Referee:

- Observe the players as they clear the field.
- Meet with the Umpire and check to be certain there are no penalties to be enforced or no requests for a Coach-Referee conference.
- Signal the end of the half by raising the ball above your head.
- After all players and coaches have left the field, signal the clock operator to start the game clock to time the half-time period.
- Following the 20-minute half-time and after the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field on R's side of the fifty with your back to R's goal line. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break positions at this time.) When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.

#### Umpire:

- Before leaving the field, make sure the deep officials have secured a game ball.
- Following the 20-minute half-time and after the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field on K's side of the fifty with your back to K's goal line. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break position at this time.) When a team takes the field, break to your free kick position. Linesman:
- Instruct the chain crew to be ready to resume their duties prior to the second half kickoff.
- Following the 20-minute half-time, relay coaches' options for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half in conjunction with the Side Judge's responsibilities.
- After the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field next to the Referee away from the press box and facing the Line Judge. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break positions at this time.) When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your free kick position.

#### Line Judge:

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

#### Side Judge:

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

#### Field Judge:

- Secure your team's football.
- Observe the players as they clear the field. If teams are leaving the field at the same end, get between the teams and keep them separated.
- Repeat team escort duties following half-time in time for your team to arrive for the mandatory 3-minute warm-up period; if your team has the option in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half, obtain the option from that team's head coach. Relay that information to the rest of the crew via the Line Judge. If your team does not have the option,

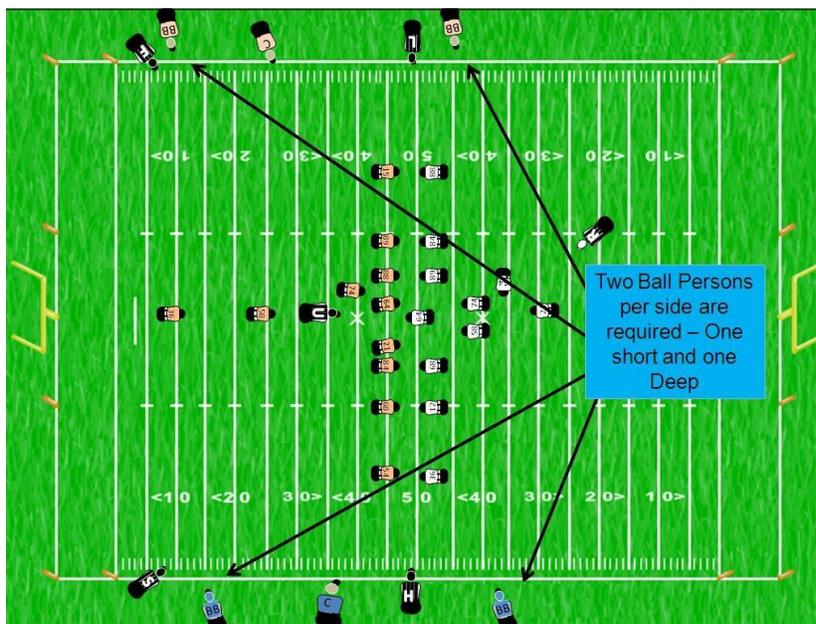
wait to receive the other team's option via the Line Judge and relay that to your team's head coach. Then obtain his choice of the remaining option and relay it back to the crew via the Line Judge.

- After the 3-minute warm-up period has ended, take a position in the middle of the field next to the Umpire on the press box side and facing the Side Judge. (All other members of the crew should also assume their appropriate pre-break positions at this time.) When a team takes the field, break and hustle to your pre-free kick position.

## 8. End of Game

All Officials:

- When facing clock, know when time expires.
  - If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
  - If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
  - Inform players near you of the situation (end of game).
  - Once the Referee has signaled the end-of-game, leave the field immediately as a crew. Neither seek nor avoid meeting with coaches at this time.
- Referee:
- Meet with the Umpire and check to be certain there are no penalties to be enforced or no requests for a Coach-Referee conference.
  - Signal the end of the game by holding the ball above your head. **9. Ball Rotation**





### Rotation Rules

- When the ball is dead from the middle of the field to the numbers (Both Sides) – the Umpire shall hustle over and retrieve the ball and spot it.

Ball is dead outside the numbers (other team's side line):

- Short wing spots the ball on foot
- Offside deep works in a new ball to umpire
- Umpire should be out shouting for a new ball

Ball is dead outside the numbers (same team side):

- Short wings spot the ball on foot
- Umpire gets new ball in from deep wing
- Umpire should be out shouting for a new ball

Long Pass down Field – complete – Middle of the field to #'s

- Umpire gets ball and spots ball

Long Pass down Field – complete – Outside #'s

- Spot ball on wing
- New ball thrown in deep

Long Pass down field – incomplete:

- Ball is thrown out deep
- New ball is thrown in short

## VI. Four-Man Crew Specifics

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

### Differences between Varsity and Sub-Varsity Games

1. Typically Sub-Varsity games use a clock operator provided by the host school. This makes clock management issues especially important and potentially difficult late in each half, especially in close games.
2. Sub-Varsity contests are often officiated by crews of less experienced officials than a typical Varsity contest would be. This is both necessary and proper. Just as the players in Sub-Varsity games are learning the game of football, so are many of the officials learning the craft of officiating during these games. This does NOT mean that any less care should be spent in the effort by the crew. It does mean that the more experienced officials on a crew need to be aware of younger officials and be prepared to assist these newer officials in learning the craft. Local associations are encouraged to assign a good mix of well-experienced and talented officials to Sub-Varsity games along with the less-experienced officials. This is to facilitate both well-officiated Sub-Varsity games and the mentoring of the newer officials assigned to these contests.
3. Required pre-game crew assembly times are controlled by the various associations. However, all associations are expected to require their crews to be present at the game site in time to conduct an adequate pre-game meeting of the crew, allow the Line Judge time to meet with game management, have a complete pre-game meeting between the Referee, Umpire and each head coach and for the Head Linesman to conduct a thorough pre-game briefing of his chain crew. When the school provides only an inexperienced clock operator, additional time may be required to provide them with a detailed pre-game briefing of the ECO's duties.
4. The length of quarters is different (shorter) for Sub-Varsity games than for Varsity contests. For both 9<sup>th</sup> Grade and JV/B-Team – 10 minute quarters.
5. As of 2009, there is no longer a 9:00 PM curfew for sub-varsity games. If there is a double header sub-varsity scheduled on a week night (Monday through Friday) the first game of the double header must be started not later than 5:30 PM.
6. Because the on-field crews are smaller, the portion of the field assigned for coverage is considerably expanded. This is especially true for wing officials. This provides real challenges for the wings especially on passes thrown beyond the line of scrimmage and on breakaway runs. Good reading of keys and continuous hustle are required to adequately cover many plays using 4-man mechanics.

### A. Scrimmage Plays Originating Outside 10-Yard Line

This is the so-called “standard” or “mid-field” play set-up. In this situation everyone on the crew lines up in their “normal” positions pre-snap and has “default” coverage as the play develops. Other play situations present greater or lesser deviations from this set-up.

**Referee:** Attempt to set the pace of the game by having a consistent ready-for-play; in routine situations this should be possible with no more than 10 seconds between the end of one play and the ready-for-play for the next one. When dealing with conventional huddles, stand 5-7 yards off the LOS and near the huddle to blow the ready-for-play; when dealing with spread offenses or no-huddle, stand as deep as desired for the actual start of the play before blowing the ball ready-for-play. Unlike 6-man mechanics, the Referee will line up toward the center of the field; in the case where the ball is marked near the center of the field, the Referee may elect to line up on the passing arm side of the quarterback for that play, only. In general he should be 11-13 yards behind the LOS. He keys the offensive tackle's block to the opposite side of the snapper; therefore, he must alter his pre-snap position so that he has a clear view to that tackle at the snap. The Referee should have a clear line of sight to the ball pre-snap and either he or the Umpire must have sight to the ball at all times once the ball has been blown ready-for-play. The Referee and Umpire will share the count of the offensive

team prior to every snap and will NOT allow the ball to become alive if the offense has more than 11 players on the field with the snap's being imminent. The Referee has responsibility for the runner until the runner has crossed the LOS and has responsibility for the passer until the passer decides that he is once again ready to actively participate in the play with no further protection as a passer. On running plays outside the tackles, the Referee trails the play following action around the runner; on running plays that break up the middle (inside the tackles), he trails the entire play operating in a "clean-up" mode. In the case of an interception or fumble recovery, the Referee should be able in most cases to remain farther downfield than the runner and be able to beat him to the goal line, if necessary, to cover the touchdown or any forward progress short of the touchdown that is past the coverage of the wing officials.

**Umpire:** When dealing with conventional huddles, the Umpire should stand in the vicinity of the ball until the huddle breaks; when dealing with spread offenses or no-huddle, the Umpire should be in position ready for the snap before the Referee blows the ball ready-for-play. Pre-snap line up 6-9 yards off the LOS approximately head-up of the center but offset opposite the Referee, as needed, to have a clear line of sight to the ball, pre-snap. Either the Umpire or the Referee must have a clear line of sight to the ball at all times once the ball has been blown ready for play. The Umpire and Referee will share the count of the offensive team prior to every snap and will NOT allow the ball to become alive if the offense has more than 11 players on the field with the snap's being imminent. The Umpire is responsible for all action on or by the offensive linemen and has additional responsibility for detecting and signaling forward passes deflected by the defense at or near the LOS. The Umpire is unique to the crew in that he works an inside-out technique which places him inside the Mobile Box during the play. As running plays move downfield outside the offensive tackles, he allows the Referee to follow the runner; and the Umpire operates in a "clean-up" mode for all other action trailing the play. For running plays that break up the middle (inside the tackles), he and the Referee reverse roles; the Umpire follows action around the runner and the Referee trails the entire play operating in a "clean-up" mode. While all officials have responsibility to recognize and flag various forms of illegal blocking, the Umpire has the greatest focus on the "free blocking zone" and recognition of legal and illegal blocks that take place there so long as the zone remains intact by rule. In mid-field plays, the Umpire is responsible for getting back to the LOS on passing plays to judge whether the ball or the passer crossed the neutral zone as part of the pass. At play's end, the Umpire will move to the dead ball spot, if it is inside the hash marks, and will set the ball upon the mark of the covering official; very rarely will the Umpire be the covering official, himself. The Umpire should not treat the hash marks as a wall beyond which he will not go to retrieve a dead ball. Instead he should move outside the hash marks as needed to most efficiently retrieve the ball and replace it for the next play.

**Wing Officials:** Wing officials should begin each play positioned on the sideline, outside the field of play. They should start each play aligned opposite each other straddling the neutral zone, working just out of bounds but inside the restraining line that aligns with their respective sideline. This will help the wing officials with several field management duties:

- Player and non-player safety as well as sideline control with the prospect for clear communication between the game officials and coaches is very important.
- Positioning along the sideline allows the action to be in front of them.
- Working wide will give the Wings a broader view of the play with complete outside-in coverage while keeping the play boxed in.
- Working outside the field of play will also prevent game officials from having players lining up or positioned behind them.
- It is essential to begin each play wide. This gives the game official a better perspective with a wider peripheral view for better officiating opportunities.

Wing officials are first responsible for the count of the defensive team. Thereafter they are responsible for determining the eligibility of receivers and the alignment of players such that they are aware and will flag fouls for illegal formations at the snap when such fouls occur. They do this through a series of auxiliary signals between each other that show whether the line is "balanced" on their side of the center (that is once each of a guard, a tackle and an end on their side of the center) or not. These signals are needed on every scrimmage down and should be gotten as quickly as possible. For a balanced line, their signal is a clenched fist held at about the waist with their forearm approximately parallel to the ground using their downfield hand; for an unbalanced line an "illegal substitution" signal is used as an auxiliary signal, optionally with a closed fist to indicate fewer than 3 players on the LOS on their side and an open palm on their chest to signal more than 3 players on the LOS on their side of the center. Wings will also indicate if there are any legally positioned offensive backs outside the last player on the LOS prior to the snap. The signal for one or more such backs is made with the arm toward the offensive backfield outstretched at the shoulder with the entire arm approximately parallel to the ground. Optionally they may use a count on their fingers to indicate how many such players are outside the

last offensive player on the LOS on their side of the center. At the snap, wing officials read the block of the offensive tackle on their side; a passive block gives a read of “pass;” an aggressive block gives a read of “run.” Note that this is just an initial read; wing officials must alter their coverage to the play that actually develops. For passing plays the Wing official is responsible for action on all receivers on his side of the field including a back lined up inside or a flanker if used by the offense. The Wing officials are responsible for all action beyond the LOS all the way to the defensive team’s end zone.

## B. Scrimmage Plays Originating At Or Inside 10-Yard Line

Plays originating at or inside the 10 yard line of the defense are handled quite a bit differently than those originating outside the 10 yard line. Inside the 10, the focus is generally on the goal line much more than it is on plays originating in the mid-field area. The purpose of having “goal line mechanics” for such plays is to acknowledge the increased importance of coverage at the goal line and into the end zone and allowing the officials to pre-position themselves pre-snap in such a way as to enhance their chances of getting good coverage on all such plays.

**Referee:** Among all the on-field officials his changes are the fewest of the entire crew. Mechanically, he operates in the same fashion as he would on any other ordinary scrimmage down. However, he has primary responsibility for recognizing that the next snap will be at or inside the 10 yard line (going in) or 3 yard line (going out) and conveying that information to the balance of the crew so that they will properly alter their own mechanics for the goal line situation.

**Umpire:** Going in the Umpire may line up at his normal depth (6-9 yards off the LOS). However, as the distance of the snap from the goal line shortens to less than 5 yards, he needs to adjust accordingly to be at a depth where he can assist on judging whether the ball made it to the end zone while it remained alive. He can best do this when he is positioned about 3 yards deep in the end zone. He must also be able to come quickly and easily to the LOS on passing plays as he must now judge whether the ball and/or the passer crossed the LOS (the Line Judge’s responsibility on snaps outside the 10 yard line). Going out, coverage is the same as in a mid-field scrimmage play.

**Wing Officials:** On snaps from the 10 yard line going in, the Wing officials should be able to beat the play to the goal line in all cases. On snaps inside the 5 yard line, they should move immediately from the snap to the goal line and work back out. The goal line is their most important responsibility with one exception – the dead ball spot for 4<sup>th</sup> down on plays where the line-to-gain is inside the 5 yard line; in that case, they need to give preference over goal line coverage to the line-to-gain. On snaps at or inside the 3 yard line going out, the Wing officials must step back to the goal line initially in order to cover the goal line for a possible ruling on a Safety.

## C. Punt Plays

**Referee:** Signal the Umpire that the offense is in a kicking formation (signal 19) when the offense has met the criteria for such a formation. Line up pre-snap on the punter’s kicking foot side. He should be offset to the side wide enough to watch action of the rushers but not so wide that he has difficulty in judging a possible tipped ball. He must be deep enough behind the punter to not be in the way in case of a too-long snap and the scramble for the ball that is likely to follow. His primary responsibility is to cover action on the punter (running into or roughing the kicker). He must stay with the punter until the punter decides to rejoin the play as an ordinary player. Once the ball has been kicked and there is no more action on the punter, move to the spot of the kick for possible coverage of a kick out-of-bounds (see below). For punts that will take place at or near the goal or end lines, his pre-snap position should give him good coverage of these lines, especially for judging whether a Safety has occurred on the play.

**Umpire:** Line up initially shaded to the Line Judge’s side of the field to help fill the gap caused by the Line Judge’s coverage of the receiver(s). Acknowledge the Referee’s kicking formation signal (signal 19) by repeating it back to the Referee. Check for legal/illegal numbering exception, and check linemen legal/illegal interlocking of feet prior to the snap. After the snap focus on action on the snapper as long as the snapper remains protected by rule then shift to action by the guards and backs behind the neutral zone. The Umpire needs to be in position to judge tipped punts behind the LOS (signal 11). Once the kick is away, verbally say “ball’s away;” allow action to flow by, pivoting to follow the action slowly downfield; on short or partially blocked kicks assist with determining whether the kick crossed the neutral zone. During the return work inside-out watching for personal foul, clipping and other illegal blocks.

**Linesman:** Take responsibility for the entire LOS prior to the snap to fill the gap caused by the Line Judge’s

coverage of the receiver(s). Hold the line at the snap and remain there until certain that the kick will travel past the LOS and not return. Once this is done, drift downfield 10-15 yards from the LOS and be prepared to carry the runner on your side all the way to the goal line. On kicks that go out-of-bounds in the air, be prepared to go past the most distant point the ball could have crossed the sideline and then walk back up the sideline to be "chopped in" by the Referee to mark the out-of-bounds spot.

**Line Judge:** Release all responsibility for the LOS to the Linesman. Pre-snap move downfield and brief the receiver(s) on the proper method of calling for a fair catch. Remain shaded to your side of the field a few yards in front of the deepest receiver. You are responsible for handling the catch and whether any receiver called for a fair catch. Be prepared to take the receiver all the way to the goal line if he breaks to your side. Also be prepared to rule on force and momentum on kicks that are near the goal line. On kicks that go out-of-bounds in the air, be prepared to go past the most distant point the ball could have crossed the sideline and then walk back up the sideline to be "chopped in" by the Referee to mark the out-of-bounds spot.

## D. Field Goal & Kick Try Plays

### All Officials:

1. The largest difference between a Field Goal attempt and a Kick Try is the status of the ball if the attempt fails. In a Kick Try the ball becomes dead as soon as it is apparent that the kick will fail; in a Field Goal attempt the ball remains live until it otherwise becomes dead by rule. Officials must be prepared to stop play immediately for a failed Kick Try but allow play to continue for a failed Field Goal attempt until the ball becomes dead otherwise.
2. Referee and Umpire each continue to count kickers and Wing officials count receivers. Referee and Umpire also share snapper protection when conditions are met for a legal scrimmage kick (signal 19).
3. Everyone must be aware of the numbering exception and be able to identify players who are wearing eligible numbers but are ineligible by position.
4. There is a major difference in crew configuration for kicks where the LOS is at or inside the 15 yard line and outside the 15:
  - At or inside the 15: Referee has the call for inside the uprights or not; he lines up behind directly behind the center deeper than the kicker's initial position by about 3 yards. The Line Judge holds the line and observes initial contact at the snap but also determines if ball went under the crossbar on the kick; he ONLY signals if the ball fails to cross above the crossbar (signal 10). If the ball is inside the uprights and above the crossbar, the Referee has the only signal (signal 5). The Linesman is responsible for judging roughing of the kicker/holder; therefore, he must quickly shift his attention to the kicker/holder after the snap. The Umpire has ordinary line coverage.
  - Outside the 15: The Line Judge locates directly behind the goal post and has the entire call – good (signal 5) or no-good (signal 10) regardless of the reason for no-good. The Linesman is responsible for the entire LOS (similar to a punt). The Referee offsets similarly to a 6-man configuration and is responsible for roughing of kicker/holder. The Umpire has ordinary line coverage.

## E. Free Kick Plays

### 1. Ordinary Kick Off Anticipated

#### Referee:

1. Position as the deepest official (near R's 5 or 10-yard line) and on the press box side of the field (opposite the chains). This is to give the best "box" of officials possible prior to the kick.
2. Check-off with all other officials before blowing ball ready-for-play.
3. After kick, start clock if ball is legally touched in your area.

4. Initially follow runner in your area eventually turning him over to other officials farther downfield if play develops that way.
5. Follow play once the runner has been released; observe locks and other action away from the ball (operate in "clean-up" mode).
6. If ball becomes dead in your area, blow the play dead and mark the spot.

#### **Umpire:**

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

#### **Line Judge:**

1. Line Judge is responsible for Team-R.
2. Move to the center of the field at Team-R's free kick line and face Team-R.
3. Remind all players to have their mouthpieces in and to not cross the free kick line until the ball has been kicked.
4. Count Team-R players; in cases where there are too many players, tell a captain to count his players. Do not allow the ball to become alive with too many players on field for Team-R. As a courtesy, you may offer the same "count your players" advice when too few are on field; however, if Team-R so elects they may elect to receive the ball with too few players.
5. Remain at center of field until communicating unobtrusively with the Head Linesman that he has the Team-K ready to kick. Then turn and run to your sideline.
6. Take a position straddling the free kick line. Remove your bean bag and hold it above your head to show the Referee that you and Team-R are prepared for the ready for play signal. Continue to hold the bean bag above your head until ready for play is blown by Referee.
7. At the kick be aware of encroachment by any Team-R players. This is a dead ball foul if it occurs.
8. Line Judge is responsible for marking spots of first touching with bean bag. Also responsible for marking short kicks out of bounds. If not touched inbounds by Team-R, free kicks out-of-bounds are flagged as a penalty on Team-K.
9. Be aware of illegal blocks, clipping, illegal use of hands and holding.
10. On long returns, pickup runner at about 35 yard line and proceed with him all the way down the field.

#### **Linesman:**

1. Head Linesman is responsible for Team-K.
2. Move to the center of the field at Team-R's free kick line and give the ball to the kicker.

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

## 2. Obvious "On-Side" Kick Situations

In a crew configuration this small, only minor adjustments can be safely made for an "Obvious 'On-Side' Kick Situation." The Referee will declare this following a successful field goal attempt or the completion of any try. This will typically happen only late in the game and the scoring team trails. If the situation is such that the scoring team "must" get the ball back quickly to have any chance of winning or tying the game, this will trigger the Referee's declaration; this is a judgment call for the Referee.

In this case, the Umpire will "cheat up" to the receiver's kick restraining line. The Referee will remain the deepest official, but he will also "cheat up" the field to about the receiver's 20 yard line; he must still be able to retreat to the goal line in the unlikely event that the kick is actually sent deep.

## 3. After a Safety

In this case, the entire crew shifts their ordinary pre-kick positions to account on a yard-for-yard basis of the relocation of the kicker's kick restraining line to their 20 (for a normal kick off their kick restraining line would be their own 40). This is the only adjustment to the crew's position and duties in this case. However, the kickers do have the option of legally punting the ball from within one yard behind this free kick line if they choose.

## 4. After a Fair Catch or Awarded Fair Catch

In this case, the selection of a free kick is almost certainly for the purpose of attempting to score a Field Goal from a free kick formation. The crew alignment for this play is:

- Referee: Handles the kicker and the kicking team much as the Linesman would normally do; however, he operates from the Line Judge's side of the field.
- Umpire: Moves to the goal line to judge the possibility of a touchback.
- Linesman: Covers the receiver's free kick line in absence of the Line Judge.
- Line Judge: Moves under the goal post and judges the entire attempt at a Field Goal.

## F. Miscellaneous Situations

### 8. Pre-Game On-field Duties

The duties of a 4-man crew are essentially the same as for a 6-man crew. See the 6-man section for details for each of the 4 positions in a 4-man crew. In addition, the 4-man crew must also police the 10 yard buffer zone (between the 45 yard lines) that would be covered by the deep judges in a 6-man crew. Generally, the Line Judge will be the “most free” to take on this duty; but flexibility is the watchword. This area must be policed regardless of other duties that may have to be delayed; however, most sub-varsity level games do not present much of a problem in this regard.

### 9. Pre-Game Escort Duties

Unlike Varsity games, there is not an elaborate set of procedures to be followed to get the game started. As kick off time approaches, the Referee and Umpire merely call for the captains of each team to meet on their appropriate side of the field. As soon as all captains and officials are assembled at the sideline, the walk to the center of the field commences. Refer to the 6-man section of the manual for individual escort responsibilities. Note that this leaves the teams without an escort. This is fine as long as they have gone to their sideline already. If not, the appropriate Wing official should stay with the team until they come to the sideline, thereby missing the coin toss ceremony. Also, since there are no deep judges in a 4-man crew the Wing officials are also responsible for getting the ball from the team who will be kicking off following the coin toss.

### 10. Time Outs

#### Referee:

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

#### Umpire:

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

#### Wing Officials:

1. Record the time and quarter and which team is charged for charged times out.
2. Communicate this with other crew members to be sure all members agree.
3. Take position midway between position of ball and the team box on your side.
4. Control legal participation during any team conferences that may occur.
5. Relay 15 second warning from Referee when time out is to expire.

6. Inform the coach of how many time outs he has remaining.
7. When the time out has ended, return to normal position.

## 11. Measurements

### Referee:

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

### Umpire:

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

### Linesman:

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

### Line Judge:

1. Move to a spot nearly in line with the ball along the length of the field. However, you should be positioned just to the chain side of the ball.
2. Place your toe on the (5 or 10) yard line at the spot where it intersects with the line determined above. Make sure this will NOT cause the chains to need to cross the ball when chains are extended.
3. Hold that position for placement of the clip when the chains are brought out by the Head Linesman.

## 12. Penalty Administration (Details)

### Referee:

- Fully explain all the options afforded to the offended team.

- Confer with the Umpire as to penalty, enforcement spot, direction and distance.
- Give final signal to the press box side of the field. Stand completely stationary and face the press box when making all penalty signals.
- Note: The Referee and Umpire will repeat out loud (Referee to Umpire & Umpire back to Referee) the enforcement spot, distance and direction of the mark-off of an accepted penalty BEFORE the walk-off is begun. **Umpire:**
- Direct offended captain to Referee as he gives the preliminary signal.
- Secure ball.
- Confer with the Referee as to enforcement spot, direction and distance. In situations where the ball has become dead in a side zone, move the ball back to the appropriate hash mark before stepping off the penalty (do NOT step off penalties in a side zone).
- On properly marked field, avoid stepping off each yard between yard lines. Instead step off the first and last yard line.
- Walk briskly using arm signal to point to each yard line you cross.
- Verbalize distance walked off as you move to spot.
- Note: The Referee and Umpire will repeat out loud (Referee to Umpire & Umpire back to Referee) the enforcement spot, distance and direction of the mark-off of an accepted penalty BEFORE the walk-off is begun. **Linesman:**
- If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official gets the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
- Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.
- Hustle to your sideline and report the foul and offending player's number to the coach. □ If the coach asks you about administration of the penalty, give them the options.
- Mark off the penalty on the sideline (as a double check for the Umpire) and move the box-man when necessary. **Line Judge:**
- If you have the succeeding spot, do not move until another official gets the spot from you, even if you know the penalty will cause a replay of the down.
- Be sure of the correct administration before you leave the Referee.
- Hustle to your sideline and report the foul and offending player's number to the coach. □ If the coach asks you about administration of the penalty, give them the options.

### 13. Between First and Third Periods

#### All Officials:

- When facing clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- Inform players near you of the situation (end of quarter).

#### Referee:

- Meet with the Umpire and Linesman at the ball and check to be certain there are no penalties to be enforced or no requests for a Coach-Referee conference – then record the down, distance and yard line. Verify this info with the Linesman before he proceeds to move the chains.
- Be certain the results are recorded on your game card.
- Signal the end of the quarter by raising the ball above your head.
- Move to the appropriate spot at the other end of the field.
- The official who marks the end-of-quarter spot must mark the beginning-of-quarter spot on the other side of mid-field.
- Mark the ball ready for play after the 1-minute intermission period between quarters. **Umpire:**
- Record down, distance and yard-line nearest nose of the ball – going in or out?
- Hold spot and hand the ball to Referee for end of period signal.
- Re-check spot and set up ball at corresponding spot on the other half of the field.

#### Linesman:

- Meet with the Referee to verify the down, distance and yard line. Make note of the yard line where the clip is placed.
- Be certain the results are recorded on your game card. □ Pick up chain at the spot of the clip.
- Remember to instruct chain crew to “flip-flop” sides.
- Move to the appropriate yard line on the other side of the 50-yard line to reset the chains.
- Re-check down, distance and yard line.
- Ensure the box person sets the box on the yard line of the ball.
- Inform Referee that you are ready to go. **Line Judge:**
- Make note of the down, distance, and yard line where the ball will next be put into play as well as the yard line where the clip is placed prior to the chains being moved.

## 14. Between Halves

### All Officials:

- When facing clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- Inform players near you of the situation (end of half). **Referee:**
- Observe the players as they clear the field.
- Meet with the Umpire and check to be certain there are no penalties to be enforced or no requests for a Coach-Referee conference.
- Signal the end of the half by raising the ball above your head.
- After all players and coaches have left the field, signal the clock operator to start the game clock to time the half-time period.
- Following the half-time, position yourself appropriately for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half kick off. **Umpire:**
- Observe the players as they clear the field.
- Following the half-time, position yourself appropriately for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half kick off.

### Wing Officials:

- Observe the players as they clear the field. If both teams exit on the same end of the field, get between the teams and keep them separated.
- Instruct the chain crew to be ready to resume their duties prior to the second half kickoff.
- Following the half-time, relay coaches’ options for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. □ Position yourself appropriately for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half kick off.

## 15. End of Game

### All Officials:

- When facing clock, know when time expires.
- If time expires prior to snap sound whistle to prevent snap.
- If ball snapped immediately after time has expired, sound whistle loud and long – give time-out signal.
- Inform players near you of the situation (end of game).
- Once the Referee has signaled the end-of-game, leave the field immediately as a crew. Neither seek nor avoid meeting with coaches at this time. **Referee:**
- Meet with the Umpire and check to be certain there are no penalties to be enforced or no requests for a Coach-Referee conference. □ Signal the end of the game by holding the ball above your head.

## VII. 5- and 7-Man Crews

### A. 5-Man Crews

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

### B. 7-Man Crews

Starting around 2007, the Officials Manual included a section on 7-Man mechanics. Because associations are prohibited from charging contracted schools for 7-Man crews and because 7-Man crews are prohibited from use during the playoffs – making 7-Man a rare crew configuration at the GHSA level, the “7-Man” configuration initially developed for use in GHSA contests would better be described as “6-Man Plus 1”. That is the fewest number of changes between 6-Man and the GHSA version of 7-Man were made. The idea was to make it as simple as possible a transition for the entire crew working this configuration from their more-familiar 6-Man assignments. The lack of popularity of 7-Man among associations has been reflected in the small number of games worked in this configuration. However, the crews working these games are largely made up of active college officials or officials who aspire to also work at the college level. This makes the “6-Man Plus 1” philosophy counter-productive to enhancing officials’ work toward college assignments. As of the 2013 version of the Manual, 7-Man mechanics should be worked as similar as possible to the college-level definition of this crew configuration. Therefore, associations wishing to use 7-Man are encouraged to pick a college conference’s Manual (or use the CCA’s “Football Officiating Manual for a Crew of 7” as the basis for their association’s 7-Man mechanics.