

# 2024 BACK JUDGE POSITION – OUTLINE GUIDE

## 1. PREPARATORY PROGRAM:

- A. Arrive at dressing room at least 90 minutes before kickoff and leave the dressing room on time.
- B. Have complete uniform (warm & cold weather).
- C. Make sure you have the proper time and coordinate with other officials.
- D. Be sure to have a stop watch/timer as you have play clock responsibilities.

## 2. PRE-GAME:

- A. Give all officials the correct time.
- B. Make sure the crew is on the field 45 minutes before kickoff.
- C. Know the elapsed time of the game.

## 3. PRE-GAME DUTIES ON THE FIELD:

- A. Instruct the clock operator and find out his exact location during game.
- B. Be sure game balls are available.
- C. You have the captains of the team on the HL sideline.
- D. After completing your duties, retire to visiting team sideline with HL.

## 4. THREE MINUTES BEFORE KICKOFF:

- A. You are responsible to make sure captains are available on the sideline. You are also responsible to make sure the team on the HL side is on the field prior to the game.
- B. Record results of coin toss, place the kicking team's ball at their free kick line. Join the other officials.

## 5. KICKOFF:

- A. On kickoffs following a score, you should go up the sideline of the scoring team to get a ball so you are ready when the kicking team comes on the field.
- B. Move to the middle of the field and provide the kicker with the ball. Instruct him that he will tee the ball on the restraining line and wait for the R's whistle and signal before he kicks the ball.
- C. Count the kicking team and verify with the LJ. Do not let play start with more or less than 11 kicking team players. Then move to the sideline with the HL. You are on the K's restraining line.
- D. Make sure no members of K are more than 5 yards from the Kicking Line. *Exception: Kicker.*
- E. Raise your hand above your head indicating to the R that you are ready.
- F. You **MUST** know if the ball was kicked in the air or directly into the ground. The LJ also has responsibility for this. Have your bean bag in hand.
- G. Once the ball is kicked, observe the kicker for fouls on or by him in the first 5-yards.
- H. Come onto the field between the numbers and the hash marks, watching inside out.
- I. The kicker's goal line is yours. Watch the scoring players for unsportsmanlike/taunting fouls.
- J. If there is a penalty that involves a re-kick, the BJ gives the appropriate signal and enforces the required yardage.
- K. Check the new mechanics manual for all free kick situations and mechanics.

## 6. COUNTING PLAYERS:

- A. Count the defense and the kickers on a free kick.
- B. If in doubt as to the correct count and you want to indicate to the crew to recount, use the squirrel cage signal with your index fingers for this purpose.

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## 7. TIMEOUT AND MEASUREMENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. Take a position clear of the ball and time all timeouts.
- B. On a measurement, go to the ball and hold in place on the ground to assure the ball is not moved during the measurement. Face the opposite direction that the team is advancing. (Rear facing the defense.)

## 8. SCRIMMAGE PLAYS:

- A. Should line up 20-25 yards deep from the ball. Try to favor the wide side of the field, although there will be times where you will want to line up on the short side. NEVER START IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ENDZONE.
- B. You will always be deeper than the deepest defensive back. Remember you are being paid to make sure the goal line and end line are covered.
- C. As the offensive team comes out of the huddle locate the tight end and make sure there is an offensive player (flanker) outside of him. If balanced formation you favor the line judge's side of the field.
- D. You are responsible for the tight end and his opponent on the line opposite him. Continue to observe the actions of the tight end and the linebackers.
  - i. *EXCEPTION:* If no flanker is outside of the tight end, the Flank Official will observe the tight end and the BJ should immediately shift his attention to the second man in from the widest offensive player on the opposite side of the line. Observe him and his opponent at snap and afterwards. Discuss in the pre-game conference with the Flank Officials how you will cover a double tight end offensive formation, and 4 & 5 Wide Receiver Formations.
- E. At snap to assist U in observing players near tight end.
- F. As pass develops fade back. No one gets behind you.
- G. You are the sole guardian of the end line.

## 9. SCRIMMAGE PLAYS – AFTER THE SNAP:

- A. On running plays down field, assume responsibility for action in front of the runner.
- B. If runner goes out of bounds cover the action in that area unless you have the sideline spot (rare). Escort the runner back on the field.
- C. Be alert for wide sweeps that end up being a pass play. Stay deep and don't get caught up too close. Keep R/U informed on a long gainer.
- D. If there is wet weather or a muddy field where it is necessary to change the ball on every play, assist the U in this chore, if necessary. The primary responsibility is that of the U.

## 10. FORWARD PASSES:

- A. Your position is to the rear of the deepest defensive back.
- B. Vary your position in the field according to the down, yardage to be gained.
- C. You must always be able to rule on the end line of the end zone.
- D. Delay your signal slightly until you've had a chance to think about the close one.
- E. Be alert for any offensive blocking downfield before the forward pass is thrown or while it is in the air and before it has been touched by anyone.

## 11. SCRIMMAGE KICKS:

- A. Take initial position 5 yards *BEHIND* the punt receiver and 7 to 10 yards to the side of the field opposite the LJ.
- B. On long kicks (20 yards or more) and on all in-bound kicks inside the 20 yard line, take charge while the ball is in the air. Follow the receiver, if required, all the way to the goal line on the runback.
- C. Short kicks (20 yards or less) will be covered by the HL or LJ.
- D. Watch for illegally batting the ball by K. Legal if backwards.
- E. If receiver attempts to play the ball on long kicks, be in position to see both the ball and the receiver.
- F. If a coffin corner kick is possible, take a position at the snap at the intersection of the goal line and the sideline opposite the LJ. –have a good angle to see where the ball crossed the sideline in relationship to the pylon.
- G. You have to be an authority on the kicking rules that pertain when a kick can be advanced from the end zone. – NEVER!

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- H. When you cover the receiver on kicks that remain inbounds, be alert for the following possibilities:
  - i. Fair catch signal.
  - ii. Runner on his knee touching the ground in possession.
- I. Be in position to see who first touched the ball and where it occurred.
- J. Always have your bean bag in hand on any scrimmage or free kick. *HAVE 2 BEAN BAGS*, one to mark the end of the kick and one for marking illegal touching.
- K. Interference with an opportunity for a catch. Know that it can happen without contact.

## 12. GOAL LINE PLAYS:

- A. You must be in position to be the guardian of the end line at all times.
- B. On long plays from scrimmage be on the goal line in position.
- C. Do not give the TD signal unless you see the ball in player possession break the goal line.

## 13. TRY FOR POINT AND FIELD GOAL ATTEMPTS:

- A. Take a position 6 feet or less behind the goal post. Coordinate with the Umpire pregame which post you will take.
- B. Verbally confirm success or failure of a kick, and then move forward to the end line where you both simultaneously give the signal. Good – hold for 3-4 seconds and come down together. No good – Both signal no-good, but only the official on the post threatened will give a “sweeping” motion to indicate “wide”.
- C. Blow your whistle indicating the ball is dead. Continue to officiate.
- D. If a fake FG or try, stay on backline as in any normal situation. You are not responsible for the goal line.
- E. Be alert for illegal batting of the ball in the end zone.
- F. The flank is responsible if the kick goes over or under the cross bar.
- G. If a FG is obviously short and is a touchback by rule, give only the ‘touchback’ signal, do not give the ‘not good /incomplete’ signal (Signal #10) You may also give the time out signal prior to the touchback signal.

## 14. TIMING:

- A. BJ is responsible for the 25/40 second count. LJ responsible for game clock.
- B. Instruct the clock operator in pre-game duties on the field no later than 15 minutes before kickoff. Discuss with line judge.

## 15. CLOSING OF A PERIOD:

- A. Be conscious of the remaining time.
- B. When time expires, sound whistle only if ball is dead.
- C. At close of first and third periods, see that ball is not disturbed until exact position transfer has been determined.
- D. Know how much time is left in the quarter. Don’t fall asleep and allow a play to start after time has expired.

## 16. ENFORCEMENT OF PENALTIES:

- A. BJ can stand at spot of the penalty or cover the flag in case we need to know where the foul occurred.