

2024 REFEREE POSITION – OUTLINE GUIDE

1. PRE-GAME CONFERENCE AND DUTIES:

- A. Arrive more than 90 minutes before the game. Have BOTH uniforms. If there is a dispute as to the uniform to be worn the Referee will make the final decision. Start the pre-game conference in time to be on the field 45 minutes before kickoff.
- B. If afternoon game, still have a pre-game conference, even if on the field.
- C. Referee's pre-game check list:
 - i. With another official, talk to each coach. Players legally and properly equipped, casts or pads for U to check, trick plays/formations, anything you saw opponent do on film we should be aware of, if you win the toss, are we playing overtime (non-league as most league are automatic). Captains for toss at –5 from kickoff.
 - ii. Referee must check for overtime procedures and league rules. (No OT for Lower-Level Games.)
 - iii. Review with the crew rules and interpretations, ask for their questions.
 - iv. Briefly review mechanics/keys for kickoff, time-outs, running plays, fwd. passes, punts and runbacks, man in motion, goal line plays, sideline plays, out of bounds and winding the clock, try's and field goals.
 - v. Discuss procedures in calling fouls and marking off penalties.
 - vi. Review signals for double stakes, out of bounds, in bounds, progress, winding clock near sideline, touchdown, fumbles, incomplete pass, use of whistle on kicks and method of signaling an official up or back on kicks out of bounds.
 - vii. Method to use in confirming/questioning officials' decision on the field. GET IT RIGHT!
 - viii. Stress communications, close to line-to-gain, half the distance, etc. Appropriate use of radios.
 - ix. Have coin and check correct time.

2. PRE-GAME DUTIES ON THE FIELD:

- A. Arrive on the field 45 minutes before kickoff.
- B. Physically check the field. Split up the crew, half goes one way and the other half the other way.
- C. Return to home team sideline following inspection of field.

3. COIN TOSS CEREMONY:

- A. Escort home team captains—see mechanics manual for coin toss procedures
- B. The R is on the field at the 50 facing the clock.
- C. Have the captains with their backs to their own sideline at the 50. Have the captains introduce themselves to each other. Be brief in your instructions. Don't give a speech but remind each team about sportsmanship.
- D. Tell the visiting captain you will catch the coin or allow it to drop *VERBALLY CONFIRM THE CAPTAIN'S CHOICE BEFORE YOU TOSS THE COIN.*
- E. Point to the winner. Since you asked the coach what they wanted to do, confirm this with the captain. If that is to defer, look to the press box, tap him on the shoulder pad and give the incomplete pass signal toward press box.
- F. Once you know who is receiving, have both captains put their backs to the goal they will be defending and visually indicate the receiving team.
- G. Double check coin toss information with crew. Break for positions about 1 minute before the kick-off.
- H. We will not use a captains' conference for the second half
- I. For overtime this procedure is repeated after the coach's conference but the choices to the winner of the toss would be-offense-defense or defend a goal.
- J. These choices are alternated after a full overtime period is finished and the score is still tied.

4. KICK-OFF:

- A. Your initial position will be at or near the receiver's goal line on the side of the field opposite the press box. Ensure that the sideline and coaches' area are clear. Please check the new mechanics manual for correct coverage. You will be positioned between the hash mark and the numbers.
- B. See that the opening kickoff and the second half kickoff are on time.
- C. Once you have counted the receivers and verified with the U, check with the BJ for his readiness and mark the ball ready-for-play.
- D. Ensure there are a minimum of 4 K players on each side of the kicker when the ball is kicked.
- E. Be prepared to rule on kicks at the sideline and goal line. Know when it's OB, in the field of play, or a touchback. When in doubt it's a touchback.
- F. The goal line is yours from your sideline to sideline (in bounds). If the kicked ball breaks the plane of the goal line, it is dead. Sound your whistle and stop the play.
- G. You have your sideline from the goal line out to around the 20-yard line where the H will pick it up. If the kick and subsequent return threaten your sideline, you will be trailing the play with an outside-in look.
- H. Kicks into your 2/3rds of the field (sideline to the far inbounds) that don't threaten your sideline require that you adjust your positioning to place yourself behind the play at an angle with the inside-out look. The ball carrier and

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action around him is your responsibility until he reaches the L (around the 20-yard line) at which time L will pick up the runner and you will now switch to blocking around the ball and any late action.

- H. Don't be in a hurry to get to the dead ball spot. The exact spot is not as important as keeping the action around the ball clean.

5. SCRIMMAGE PLAY MECHANICS:

- A. Positioning in various crews for a scrimmage play:
 - i. 5-Man Crew - In both on and off mechanics, preferred R is on the side of the passer's throwing hand, and 12-15 yards off the LOS. However, it is acceptable to be on the wide side of the field. Do not get caught inside too close. We suggest approximately as wide as the normal tight end position. On punts always be on kicking leg side.
 - ii. 4-Man Crew - Same as 5 Man-Crew. Punts – Always on LJ side facing HL.
 - iii. 3-Man Crew - Offensive backfield opposite and facing the HL. The R is no longer responsible for the sideline opposite the HL on running plays. This is the LJ responsibility.
- B. Things to do and look for:
 - i. Count the offense.
 - ii. Have a good view of the center, the ball and the "T" Q/B's hands.
 - iii. Have the tight backs in your view in a 5 or 4 man crew.
 - iv. 3 MAN – H has movement of flanker and the R will assist in calling holding. (Remember there is no U).
 - v. Be alert for back in motion, false starts, illegal shifts and motion, illegal blocks, and holding by backs, roughing the passer and kicker.
 - vi. Protect the passer especially after the pass has been thrown or ball handed off. Do not get caught peeking downfield. Always know what happened to the QB.
 - vii. Talk to charging Def. players to prevent roughing of kicker or QB
 - viii. Go into the side zone with the QB when he runs, the side line still belongs to the flank official.
 - ix. Stick with action behind the line when a pass or kick is in the air. You are the sole observer of the action behind the line.
- C. Use of the whistle:
 - i. We suggest spitting the whistle out of your mouth after the snap on all kicks.
 - ii. Be sure you see the ball in player possession before blowing it dead.
- D. Follow the ball up field. Never lead it.
- E. If the offense is at the LOS make sure to allow your umpire to be in position before the ready for play.

6. KICKING PLAYS:

- A. Signals to be used if kick out of bounds on the fly:
 - i. Open hand above the head = flank man moves toward you.
 - ii. Shoulder level with arm pointing = flank man moves back.
 - iii. Chopping motion of arm in #1 or #2 = STOP WHERE YOU ARE.
- B. If punter fakes being roughed tell him to get up using hand motion.
- C. During a FG and try you are responsible for roughing the kicker and holder. In 5, 4, 3, & 2 man crews repeat the signal of the officials behind the post, facing the line of scrimmage (not press box).

7. PASSING PLAYS:

- A. Stay with passer after pass is thrown, he is your sole responsibility.
- B. If there is forward movement of the passer's arm with possession there can be no fumble.
- C. Ask for help if in doubt about an eligible receiver being in the area.
- D. Flanks may have to rule on forward or backwards on quick stand up pass.

8. MEASUREMENTS:

- A. Use the flank official's who can see the football when progress is stopped or runner is downed (Cover in pre-game).
- B. In moving ball to flank official's foot, have him place it down, not you. Do not allow the ball to leave the dead ball spot by throwing it to an official who has not pinched in.

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9. DECLARING THE BALL READY FOR PLAY:

- A. Always blow the whistle for the start of a 25 second count, while giving either a chop or wind the clock signal.
- B. In 4-man or 3-man crew, the R has the 25/40 second clock timing responsibility.
- C. After “regular scrimmage plays”, there is no need to blow a whistle for the ready for play. If the previous play had been a first down, be sure to wind the game clock when the U places the ball.
- D. Count the offense, but you are in a good position to count both teams.
- E. Make sure HL is in position after moving chains.

10. PENALTY OPTIONS – MAKE THEM BRIEF:

- A. Make sure all options are understood. Don't give ridiculous options. Get enforcement decisions from the Head Coach. Use the radios to have the flank official give him the options when not obvious.
- B. Give preliminary and final signal to press side of the field only.
- C. If penalty was called in error give disregard flag signal #13.
- D. 4-Man or 5-Man mechanics – U walks off penalties with H. Double check enforcement is correct before next ready for play.
- E. There is no need for a preliminary signal on obvious dead ball fouls or live ball fouls where penalty options are obvious
- F. Let QB know if time is a factor and the clock will start on the ready.

11. GOAL LINE PLAYS:

- A. If a TD signal is given, don't repeat it until you check for a foul. A TD signal by the referee is not needed on a scrimmage play if there are no fouls on the play.
- B. On goal line plays, ball not over, if flank official is moving toward you and can't help with progress spot, look to other flank official.
- C. 3-Man Crew – LJ is on the line before the snap from 5 yd line to GL.

12. DUTIES AT TIME-OUT:

- A. Have all officials record the player's number, time, and what quarter he requested the timeout.
- B. 5 & 4 Man Crew = Out to the side away from the ball. 3 Man-Crew = Stand over the ball.
- C. Inform captains of down and yardage and number of T.O. remaining.
- D. Take over ball after 1 min. of T.O. and declare it ready 5 seconds later.
- E. After an official's T.O. the referee is the only one to wind the clock.

13. COMMUNICATION RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. Anytime during the game (especially when it is near the end) make sure the captains and QB are aware when the clock will start (on the ready or the snap).
- B. Step into the open, away from a crowd to give penalty signals. Do not run into the middle of the field to give signals—everyone will find you where you are.
- C. Inform the head coach when he is out of timeouts.
- D. Hold the ball above your head at the end of each quarter.
- E. On trys and FG
 - i. 5-Man – Line up in the offensive backfield facing the holder and rule on roughing the kicker or holder. Repeat signal from officials under the bar while continuing to officiate facing the LOS.
 - ii. 4-Man – Same as 5-man
 - iii. 3-Man – Same as 5-man and 4-man. You have the option to rule on the success or failure of the kick. If R chooses not to make the call, it will be the responsibility of the LJ.
- F. If there is OT, the R will meet with the coaches, crew and captains at midfield immediately after the game for instructions.