

Referee Pregame Conference Outline (7-Man)

Administrative items (R leads discussion)

1. Timing
 - A. Current time / Kickoff time/ **Halftime time.**
 - B. Clock operator meeting.
 - i. How do we handle clock malfunctions/adjustments?
 - ii. Procedures if we lose less than 5 seconds (R's discretion)
 - a. Outside 2 minutes either half, ECO will stop/start on next play.
 - b. Inside 2 minutes either half, add/take away time before next snap.
 - iii. How do we communicate with ECO?
 - iv. Run clock at halftime on R's signal. (3:00 warm-up as soon as 15:00 expires).
 - v. Stop clock on any official's signal . Start clock on R's signal only.
 - C. Four-minute warning – discuss if needed. **(not needed with visible game clock)**
 - D. 25-second clock – **BJ (5 sec warning signal if no visible play clock)**
BJ has all interval timing. FJ game clock only. All should be clock watchers.
 - E. Timeouts, Heat/Humidity timeouts – discuss if needed.
2. Review captains, special plays, get-back coach, location of teams (Get between teams entering and exiting field).
3. Review current year rules changes, particularly early in the season.
4. Weather concerns, including Lightning / Thunder Policy.
5. Review weekly notes from Assignnor.
6. Penalty reporting: Team (color), offense/defense, live/dead ball, type of foul, must get a #.

Crew review (all participating)

7. Pregame responsibilities
 - A. Field check (R & LJ inspect field) prior to teams coming onto field.
 - B. Equipment (U).
 - C. Chain crew and down markers (HL).
 - D. Ball persons (**FJ/SJ/BJ**) – approve and mark game balls - make sure we have coverage behind posts on FGs/tries.
 - E. Game Clock (FJ). **Play Clock and all interval timing (BJ).**
 - F. **FJ/LJ** escort Home, **SJ/BJ** escort Visitors, **have teams on field at correct time.**
 - G. Get between teams coming onto field.
8. Ceremonial Coin Toss (3 minutes before kickoff)
 - A. FJ escort home team captains, SJ escort visiting team captains (4 max in uniform).
 - B. All other players and team members off field.
 - C. Come together at mid- field, national anthem. **Bring kicking team ball and give to BJ.**
 - D. Start game on time.
9. Kickoffs
 - A. Regular positions. Short free kick positions. (Bean bag in hand).
 - B. Counting K & R.
 - C. Kick out of bounds.
 - i. Nearest official get choice from head coach whose option it is.
 - ii. If R opts to put ball in play, must go on near hash (no option for spot)
 - D. **Review positions for Free Kick following a fair catch/awarded fair catch. R and S are the only moves, all others regular kick off positions.**

10. Dead-ball interval

- A. Be great dead-ball officials — watch all players.
- B. Counting. R and U count A, R hold signal longer for wings to see, SJ/FJ/BJ count B.
- C. Status of game clock during dead-ball interval (FJ).
- D. Crisp ball handling with short, underhand passes. No balls bouncing on the ground.
- E. Ball rotation: R assists if needed/help from downfield.
 - i. No-huddle or hurry-up offense: U spot ball and go immediately to position.
- F. Communication between HL and R between downs
 - i. Let R see down marker.
 - ii. Know whether it's a "short 5" or a "long 5". Signal to R.

11. Running plays

- A. Forward progress is vital.
 - i. Obvious first downs – LJ stop clock.
 - ii. When in doubt, let clock run, tell R to "take a look".
 - iii. Inside 2 minutes of either half, LJ stop clock when in doubt.
- B. R stationed on QB's passing arm side, 12-14 yards deep, keys opposite tackle.
- C. Coverage in bench area.
- D. Crackbacks – wing officials are primary (stay with key).
- E. QB and pitchman coverage. Forward pitch — behind line, beyond line.
- F. Fumble mechanics
 - i. Get a bean bag down, only if you see ball come out!!!
 - ii. Obvious recoveries: point first, then kill clock unless time is a factor.
 - iii. Pileups:
 - a. 1st black hat digs.
 - b. 2nd official stops the clock if delay in unpiling. If A keeps possession. short of line to gain, R steps back and gives start clock signal.
 - c. Other officials keep players away and help unpile them.
- G. Motion man coverage.
- H. Illegal shift on backs – wing officials do not assume R sees it. If you see it, call it.
- I. Widest player off the LOS, HL and LJ arm signal back until snap.

12. Pass plays

- A. Keys (FJ/ SJ widest eligible, BJ second, HL/LJ second or third eligible).
Review mechanics when ball is snapped from 7 and in. (no change in keys)
- B. Cover-ups / eligibility.
- C. Traps and Tips, help form U. BJ now in middle to help.
- E. Forward / backward (punch back if backward pass toward you).
- F. Line of scrimmage responsibility / ball crosses L.O.S. / passer crosses L.O.S.
- G. Intentional grounding, R will stay with QB if runs OOB.
- H. Interceptions, Touchback/Momentum Rule.
- I. Incomplete passes — crew procedures for retrieving and re-spotting ball.

13. Goal-line plays

- A. Eligibles/Keys. Position of FJ/SJ/BJ from 7 and in is end line.
- B. "In the end zone" verbal signal by U.
- C. Don't be in a hurry if you aren't sure – touchdowns are forever.
- D. HL and LJ goal-line coverage crash in and back out.
- E. Activity after score or goal-line stand.
- F. BJ times 1 minute interval, signal to R at 45 seconds – get teams moving out of huddle

14. Punts

- A. Count players (5 yd. illegal sub. vs. 15 yd. illegal participation). FJ/SJ/BJ be even, 5 yards behind receiver. Kick from B-40 and in FJ/SJ start on G/L pylon.
- B. Know eligibles.
- C. Neutral zone responsibility: Kick touched/recovered by K behind / beyond NZ.
- D. Snap over punter's head / blocked kick.
- E. Know the status of the ball when foul occurs.
- F. BJ beanbag the end of all kicks.
- G. R stationed on kicking-leg side.
- H. Out-of-bounds in the air / what to do when R doesn't help with the spot.
- I. Goal line / touchback / momentum.
- J. Moving the chains.

15. Field goals

- A. Positions. SJ twin Umpire position. BJ whistle.
- B. Remember it's a live ball — same as a punt.
- C. FJ or BJ, bean bag for PSK if the end of the kick occurs in the field of play.

16. Tries

- A. Positions. SJ twin Umpire position. BJ whistle.
- B. Goal-line coverage. HL and LJ crash in on short running play.
- C. Play ends when B secures possession or a kick will not score.

17. Measurements.

- A. BJ freezes ball.
- B. U takes front stake.
- C. HL brings in chains.
- D. LJ spot for HL chain placement.
- E. FJ /SJ get alternate ball, keep teams away. Clear view to pressbox.
- F. Side zone measurement, keep ball placed in side zone until new ball is placed at hash.

18. Foul reporting/enforcement

- A. Cover each other's flags.
- B. How to report fouls (A/B, jersey color, offense/defense, get a #).
- C. Report offender's number to his coach.
- D. U If not certain what enforcement is, ask R.
- E. U confirm succeeding spot with HL before spotting ball.
- F. HL walk off yardage, LJ hold enforcement spot.
- G. If multiple flags, discuss — a flag "buys you in" to the conversation.
- H. All officials have not only the right but the obligation to speak up immediately if enforcement is questionable. (Let's Get It Right).

19. Between periods

- A. R, U record down, distance, yardline, etc. LJ to approximate spot.
- B. HL chain movement.
- C. SJ and FJ watch teams, stay between players on/off field.
- D. BJ times 1 minute interval between periods, notify R at 45 seconds.

20. Halftime

- A. Stay between teams coming off/on field.
- B. Review 35-point rule or overtime rule based on game conditions.
- C. Choice to kick/receive communicate to Referee.
- D. BJ times halftime.
- E. FJ/LJ escort Home, SJ/BJ escort Visitors, do not be late onto field.

21. Unusual situations / crew conference

- A. Tell what you know.
- B. If you cannot contribute, stay out of the conference and keep the players away.
- C. R will make final decision and will explain to both coaches if necessary.

22. Injured or ill official — discuss who rotates where. Chain crew member will not go on field.

23. Philosophy on calling fouls

- A. Get the big ones. Use common sense. Don't be a rulebook official.
- B. Communicate with each other, with coaches, with players
- C. Coach-Referee conference: Wing official tell coach it'll cost him a timeout for the R to come over. If he just wants an explanation, we'll get it to him.
- D. When you have warned a player about anything (holding, lining up in the neutral zone, unsportsmanlike conduct, etc.), discreetly be sure his coach and the crew knows.
- E. Ejection mechanics
 - i. Ejecting official and R go to sideline with ejected player.
 - ii. If R is ejecting official, wing official from ejected player's sideline go with R. Make notes on game card for reports.

24. Should have only one whistle on almost every play

25. See the ball before you blow the whistle

26. Equipment check

- A. Flag(s), bean bag(s), down indicator(s), whistle(s), game card(s) and pencil(s)
- B. Coin — R
- C. Chain clip — HL
- D. Represent Football Officials to the highest degree

27. Depart for field