

New Jersey Football Officials Association

SIX-OFFICIAL MECHANICS MANUAL

AND

OFFICIATING STANDARDS & PRINCIPLES

2025-2026



**New Jersey Football
Officials Association**

PART 1

Six-Official Mechanics

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Revision Marking: All substantive revisions from previous manuals are denoted using the **gray highlighting** effect commonly used in National Federation publications, as illustrated here.

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REVISION HISTORY

YEAR	SUMMARY OF SUBSTANTIVE REVISIONS
2025-2026	- On free kicks, HL and LJ may move off of goal line and take initial positions further up the sideline if kicker shows no reasonable ability to kick the ball deep. (V. p.17) - On try muddle huddle, R and U will coordinate initial positions to minimize need to relocate if/when team shifts to conventional kick try formation. (VIII. P. 40)
2024 Supplemental	- On plays inside B's 7-yard line where the line to gain is short of B's goal line, LJ and HL will move immediately toward the line to gain at the snap to rule on forward progress and then toward the goal line if the runner's progress will be beyond the line to gain. - FJ should move into the field with 0:10 remaining on the play clock to 'chop' the last five seconds - Emphasize that ECOs should disable auto-horn feature on game clock and also the feature which displays tenths of seconds under 1:00 - Referees should give thoughtful consideration to coaches' requests for measurement when game situations warrant even when it appears clear to the game officials whether the line to gain has been reached
2023-2024	- Redefined mechanics to be used for the coin toss - Clarified Referee's role in penalty enforcement, specifically in regard to announcing penalties - Revised and simplified mechanics to be used by deep wing officials on punt plays - Clarified that both wing officials should participate in pre-game instructions to chain crew
2022 Supplemental	- Added a preface stating the formal adoption of the 2021 experimental technique of having line of scrimmage and deep wings switching sides of the field at halftime. - Revised to change Umpire's initial positioning on free kicks, including expected short ("onside") kicks and free kicks following a safety - Revised positioning of deep wings on punts - Added technique for short wings on "4th and short" plays for better coverage of forward progress - Added clarification for coverage of goal line on fake/busted field goal plays - Clarified Umpire positioning on scrimmage plays - Added recommendations and clarification for officials covering a grounded forward pass (2022 rule change)

2021-2022	• Primary responsibility for determining whether ineligible players are illegally downfield is with the Head Linesman and Line Judge. Umpire may assist. • On plays inside B's 7, deep officials will key widest eligible outside the tackle, and LOS wings will key inside receiver as they would elsewhere on the field. • Upon reading 'pass,' Umpire will remain stationary and not move up toward the line of scrimmage. • On punts, Field Judge and Side Judge will take an initial position 10 yards behind deepest receiver. • Added proper mechanics for covering 'muddle-huddle' prior to try. • ECOs must secure and test an O-2-O wireless device for communications with field officials • Also, several other changes regarding positioning of officials and clarifications/details of coverage responsibilities
2020	• (V) Added diagram and procedures for determining initial keys and zone coverage for deep free kick return. • Added role for LOS officials to assist umpire in determining ineligible players illegally downfield. • Revised Mechanics Points of Emphasis for 2020 • Minor revisions to accommodate NFHS 2020 Rules Committee action
2019	• Revised language and procedures related to new 40-second play clock rule. Includes several editorial changes. • Changed positioning and coverage responsibilities of officials during punts • Revised Mechanics Points of Emphasis for 2019 • Revised XVIII – Clock Operator Responsibilities to include Play Clock operator responsibilities • Added NFHS Play Clock Rules/Mechanics Appendix IX
2018	• Added Mechanics Points of Emphasis • Added Appendix VII with guidelines for using wireless communication devices • Added Appendix VIII with guidelines for handling altercations and fights occurring during the course of play
2017	• Added diagram and text related to mechanics for a free kick following a safety • Revised free kick mechanics to include responsibility for ruling on pop-up kicks

	• (XVIII) Added responsibility for ECOs to track on paper all clock stoppages occurring during the final two (2) minutes of either half. • (XIV.C) Revised section to remain consistent with NJFOA/NJSIAA philosophies and to acknowledge the new NFHS timing rule related to a team attempting to illegally consume time. • Added Appendix V – Instructions to chain crews • Added Appendix VI – ECO Two-minute Tracking Form
2016	• (IV) Clarify that FJ and SJ are to remain at their respective sidelines during coin toss • (V.A) Documented 2015 change to initial positioning and responsibilities for anticipated onside kick. • (VI.A) For scrimmage downs, the Referee will line up on the right side of the quarterback or punter, but for scrimmage place kicks (FGs and kick tries), he will continue to line up facing the place kick holder • (VII) On scrimmage kicks (punts), the Field Judge will be at the bottom of the numbers at least 5 yards behind the deepest receiver and has responsibility for observing any signal by the receiver, determining its legality, and then stopping the clock when a fair catch is made. • Added new section (XIV) to cover mechanics near the end of either half, and renumbered remaining sections
2015	• (III.A) Pre-game reading of NJSIAA Sportsmanship Message • (V) HL and LJ sweep sidelines prior to taking free kick positions • (VII) FJ and SJ position on goal line when scrimmage kick occurs from inside B's 45 yd line • (XI.B) FJ and SJ position along end line changed when snap occurs inside B's 7. LOS wings and deep wings will also swap keys in this situation. • (XV.E) R will drop a bean bag on pass/fumble play if he determines that a fumble has occurred.

Preface

Wings switch at halftime

At the request of the New Jersey Football Coaches Association, the NJFOA State Mechanics Committee in 2022 formally approved the implementation of a technique designed to improve coach-official relationships and communications.

The nature of the technique is as follows:

1. For the first half of each varsity game, the Head Linesman (HL) and Side Judge (SJ) will operate on the press box side of the field; the Line Judge (LJ) and Field Judge (FJ) will operate on the side of the field opposite the press box. **NOTE: You are NOT changing positions—you are simply changing which side of the field you are working from for the first half of the game.**
2. For the second half of the game (and overtime, if required), these four officials will switch sides of the field and operate as we have done in the past (H and S opposite press box).
3. There are no impacts whatsoever for the Referee or the Umpire.
4. The line-to-gain equipment and the box will NOT switch sides and will remain opposite the press box for the entire contest as required by NFHS rules.
5. **In general, each official takes his/her mechanics to the other side of the field when they move with a few exceptions (below).** For example, the FJ will continue to be responsible for the play clock regardless of which side of the field he's on; the SJ will continue to monitor the operation of the game clock for both halves; etc.

The only exceptions to the general rule of officials bringing their mechanics with them to the other side of the field are necessitated by the fact that the chains remain opposite the press box. As a result, the State Mechanics Committee has identified these relatively few exceptions where officials' mechanics do change between halves.

- In the first half, the LJ is responsible for ensuring that the line to gain equipment is properly placed for each new series and is responsible for signaling its movement when a new series is awarded. (The HL will be responsible for this in the second half.)
- In the first half, the HL has the primary responsibility for signaling time out after a down when Team A has reached the line to gain or informing the referee when his decision is necessary regarding whether or not the line to gain has been reached or a measurement is required. (The LJ will be responsible for this in the second half.)
- In the first half, if there is a measurement,
 - The LJ will bring the chains onto the field using the clip (HL in second half)
 - The HL will indicate the spot where the clip is to be placed (LJ in second half)
 - The SJ will hold the ball stationary on the ground for measurement (FJ in second half)
 - The FJ will help place the box at the succeeding spot (SJ in second half)

It is highly recommended that all Chapters' training programs include an overview of this technique as well as a heavy concentration on sideline communication techniques.

Please note that for the sake of simplicity, all diagrams and text in this manual will show/describe only positioning (relative to the press box) as it will be for the second half of each game. Be aware that all such depictions will be reversed for the first half of the game.

2025 - 2026 POINTS OF EMPHASIS

These may be, but are not necessarily focused on *changes* to our current mechanics. Observations and film study have identified these topics as areas of concern that need to be a focus for 2025 and 2026. These areas should be part of meeting agendas and training plans for all chapters

2025-2026

- Sideline management and enforcement of the restricted area goal line to goal line.
- Penalty Reporting & Game Flow – clear, confident, concise reporting. Accurate enforcements while avoiding unnecessary conferences/delays
- Communication and Crew Cohesion – Effective use of verbal and non-verbal signals among crew members (mirroring, cross-field mechanics, foul reporting).
- Referees ensure that the crew operates as one unit, especially during administrative stoppages and pre-snap counts and alignment checks.
- ALL TRAINING PERSONNEL: Emphasize the need for all officials (cadets thru veterans) to read and comprehend the concepts in the NJFOA Six-Official Mechanics Manual, including those in the Officiating Standards & Principles Supplement

I. INTRODUCTION

Officials should maintain a professional attitude from the time they assume responsibility for the game until the end of the contest. It is important that officials not only know the rules, but that they communicate with the players and coaches in all matters pertaining to the game. Taunting and baiting opponents, as well as displays which demean the image of the game, should never be tolerated and should be penalized as provided in the rules. Officials must set an example for players and coaches by treating them with courtesy and respect at all times. Never use profanity or inappropriate language or gestures. Proper conduct is always important. Officials must have a football sense, which complements the technical application of the rules so that the game proceeds smoothly. Officials are expected to exercise good judgment in applying the rules. There is no substitute for hard work, hustle and a sense for being in good position. Players who have practiced long hours deserve competent officials who have a complete understanding of the letter, as well as the spirit of the rules and administer them consistently and fairly. There is nothing here that hasn't been said in one way or another in previous years and other forums. We must all get involved in the game and do everything we can to protect the value and integrity of the game.

When using six-man mechanics, the on-field officiating crew consists of a Referee (R), Umpire (U), Head Linesman (HL), Line Judge (LJ), Field Judge (FJ), and Side Judge (SJ). The Icons R, U, H, L, F, S respectively are used in the diagrams.

Gender References: In this manual, the masculine should be understood to include the feminine throughout.

II. BEFORE ARRIVAL AT GAME SITE

A. Alcoholic Beverages/Drugs

No alcoholic beverages or drugs that may hinder physical or mental capacity shall be consumed the day of the game. This means any game, be it Varsity, Jr. Varsity, Jr. High, Middle School, or Playground. Purchasing alcoholic beverages or even entering an establishment that serves such beverages must never be done while wearing a recognizable officials' uniform.

B. Departure for Game

All officials should be on time at the designated departure location if traveling together. The designated departure time is the DEPARTURE time, and all crew members should arrive at the designated location at least five (5) minutes prior to departure time. If an official arrives late at the designated location and misses the rest of the crew, that official is responsible to get to the game site in time for the pre-game conference.

C. Proper Uniform

All crew members must wear all the same identical parts of the uniform. The uniform must

comply with the NJFOA uniform policy as defined by the respective chapter.

III. AFTER ARRIVAL AT GAME SITE

A. Arrival & Pre-game Conferences

The crew shall allow themselves enough travel time to arrive at the game site approximately 75 to 60 minutes before game time. Upon arrival at the game site, the Referee and Umpire shall conduct a pregame conference with each Head Coach beginning with the Head Coach for the home team. If one team has not yet arrived at the game site, the conference with that team's Head Coach may be held at a later time.

Pregame conference with Head Coaches: At the conference with the Head Coach, the Referee will provide each Head Coach with a Football Officials Name Card. A suggested coach pre-game conference checklist is shown in Appendix I. The Referee and Umpire should cover all items on that checklist at a minimum. Try as best able to minimize the impact of this conference on head coaches actively conducting coaching activities on the field.

Pre-game conference with team personnel: a pregame conference with all respective team personnel shall be held prior to the contest. At that conference, a game official shall read and review the NJSIAA sportsmanship statement and policy, as well as address any other sportsmanship issues that may arise.

Pregame conference with Crew of Officials: The pregame conference with the officiating crew will be conducted by the Referee with all game officials and the game/play clock operator(s) participating. The conference should cover any matters that arose during the pre-game conferences with the Head Coaches. A pregame conference must be conducted before every game. An optional officials' pre-game conference checklist is shown in Appendix II.

B. Individual Official's Pre-game and Auxiliary Game Duties

After the officials' pregame conference, the crew members shall complete their pre-game responsibilities.

Referee: After the conferences, the Referee shall instruct the Field Judge and Side Judge to secure and game balls from each team and then approve them for competition. He shall also inspect the playing field and pylons and order the removal of any hazards on or near the field.

Umpire: The Umpire shall check player equipment and rule on any questions concerning the legality of player equipment.

Head Linesman & Line Judge: The Head Linesman and Line Judge should secure and check the line-to-gain equipment and review with the chain crew members their duties and responsibilities as outlined in Appendix V. It is important that the officials emphasize the fact that the chain crew are members of the officiating crew, and, as such, they must refrain from "cheering and coaching." Appendix V of this manual contains a comprehensive agenda of items to be discussed.

Field Judge: Because of his role as play clock operator, the FJ must inform each QB and head

coach prior to the beginning of the game of where he will be located on the field, including the fact that he will be switching sidelines for the second half. If a team is attempting to run out the clock, then the umpire or referee should remind the QB of where the FJ is positioned. Also, the wing officials should remind the coaches. Together with the **Side Judge**, locate and instruct the team ball handlers on their duties. The **Field Judge** has responsibility for securing the correct time, carrying an accurate watch, and assisting in getting the game started on time. During the game, the Field Judge shall be responsible for keeping or monitoring the 40-second or 25-second play clock. He should observe any visible play clock while the clock operator is testing it. **If there is no visible play clock, the Field Judge shall be responsible for running the play clock. When the play clock reaches 0:10, he shall enter the field to a position just outside the numbers, raise his hand overhead when there are 5 seconds remaining in the count and begin the countdown chop so that it is clear to the QB and coaches.**

Side Judge: Together with the **Field Judge**, locate and instruct the team ball handlers on their duties. Observe the game clock while it is running and as Game Clock Operator (**ECO**) tests it. During the game, the **Side Judge** shall maintain official time remaining in the absence of a game clock operator or the operation of an official electronic game clock. The **Side Judge** will time all time-outs and intermissions during the game.

Clock Operators (ECOs): The Clock Operators will become familiar with the operation of the game clock, and if used, any visible play clocks. The operation of each clock shall be thoroughly checked, and any problems shall be reported immediately to the Referee. If the ECO discovers that either (a) the clock displays tenths of seconds after reaching 1:00 remaining in a quarter, or (b) the clock is set with the auto-horn function enabled, or both, (s)he shall disable BOTH of those features. Seek game administration assistance if necessary. If the game clock becomes inoperative, the official game clock will be kept on the field by the **side judge** for the remainder of the quarter. If either visible play clock becomes inoperative, the official play clock will be kept on the field by the **Field Judge** for the remainder of the quarter. If either clock again becomes operable, then the new quarter will begin with the appropriate official clock operator running the electronic clock. When the crew enters the field to begin its pre-game duties at 30 minutes prior to game time, the Game Clock Operator shall begin a 30-minute countdown on the game clock. If the clock operator is not an official, the referee shall conduct a pregame conference with him and instruct him in his duties. NOTE: The game and play clock operator will be two different officials, and the play clock operator—if used—must be an NJFOA-certified active official.

Crew: With 30 minutes prior to game time, at least two (**HL/LJ**) members of the crew should always be present on the 50-yard line in order to observe both teams. As crew members finish their respective pre-game duties, they should take different positions around the field to observe and "shadow-scrimmage" the teams as they warm up. Crew members should not congregate or otherwise stand around aimlessly while teams are on the field.

Prior to pre-coin toss duties, the crew should assemble at a location off the field as determined by the Referee. The crew should discuss any last-minute matters and then proceed to their pre-coin toss duties.

IV. COIN TOSS

Prior to the scheduled coin toss, the **Side Judge** will locate the locker room of the Team that will occupy the sideline on the Press Box side of the stadium, and the **Field Judge** will locate the locker room of the Team that will occupy the sideline opposite the Press Box side of the stadium. These officials will stay with their respective team and, at the appropriate time, notify the Head

Coach that it is time to bring the team to the sideline. They will then escort the teams to the respective team box areas for the toss.

Once the teams and or captains have been escorted to the sideline and the field has been cleared for the coin toss with four (4) minutes before the scheduled kickoff, the Referee and Umpire shall jog to the middle of the field. The Referee will enter from the press box side of the field. The Umpire will enter from the side opposite the press box. The Line Judge and Head Linesman will obtain a game ball at this time. The Head Linesman (press box) and the Line Judge (opposite press box) shall line up on the left side of the team captains on their respective sidelines making sure that the captain who will be speaking is positioned opposite the scoreboard so that he will be adjacent to the Referee at midfield.

Upon a signal from the Referee, the Field Judge and Side Judge will escort the captains, stopping at the tops of the numbers, but instructing the captains to continue towards the Referee and Umpire at midfield. The Head Linesman and Line Judge will remain at the sidelines.

At midfield, the Referee and Umpire will introduce themselves to the captains and allow the captains to shake hands and introduce themselves to each other. The captains will face each other with their backs to their own sidelines.

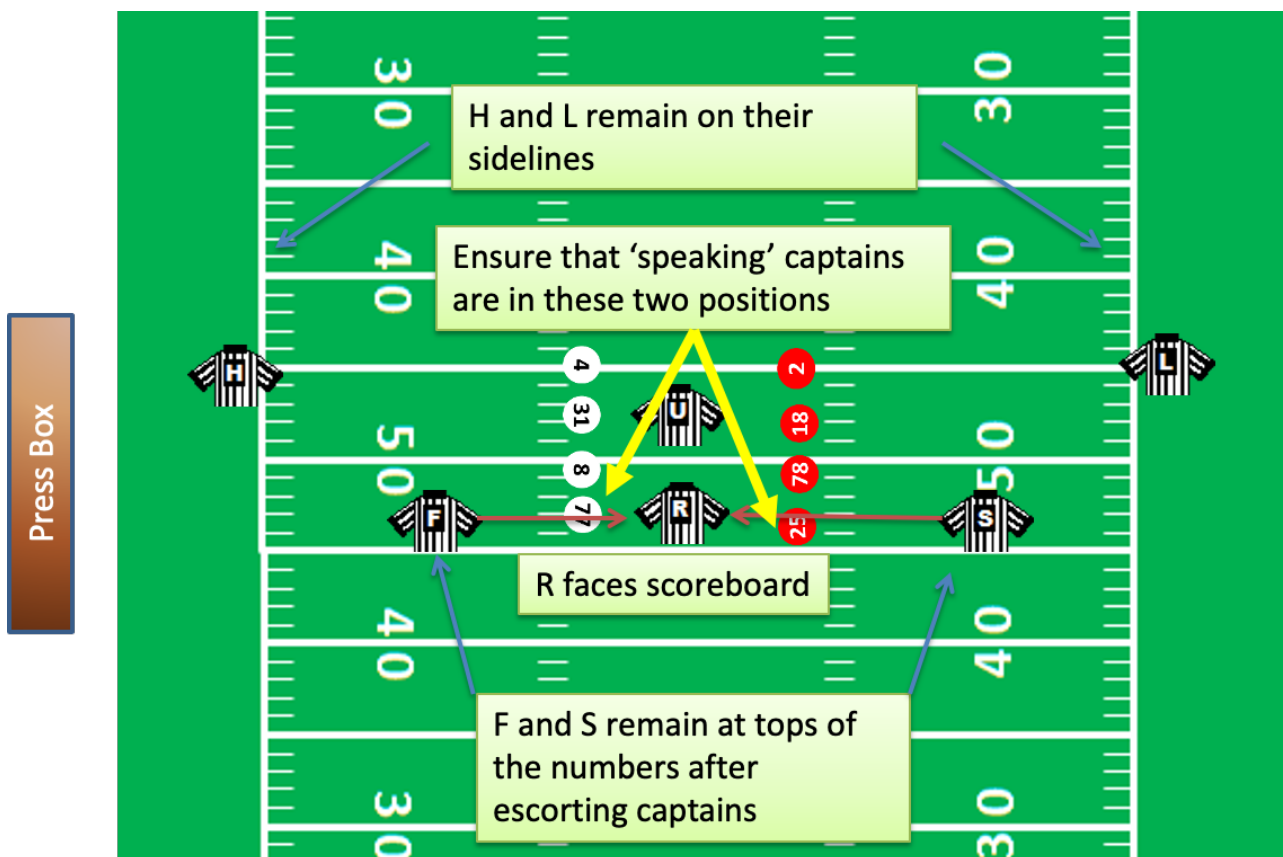
After all introductions, the Referee will ask the visiting team captain to call the toss and shall obtain his/her choice prior to tossing the coin. Once the visiting team captain has made his choice, the Referee will echo that choice aloud, pause for a second to ensure concurrence, and then shall toss the coin. The Umpire shall witness the toss and confirm the result. The Referee shall then inform each team of their respective options.

After the toss, all officials will meet at midfield to record the results of the coin toss and the captains' decisions. The Umpire will retain the kicking team's ball for the kickoff which will be brought out by the sideline official on the kicking team's sideline.

During the playing of the National Anthem, all officials will stand at attention, facing the flag, with the cap held by the right hand over the left chest. If no flag is present, officials will face the music source.

Following the National Anthem, the crew will assemble at midfield for last minute instructions. Crew members will then break to their positions for the opening kick-off.

The proper officiating positions for the coin toss are illustrated in the following diagram:



V. FREE KICK RESPONSIBILITIES

Generally: Prior to any free kick, all officials should have their bean bags in hand. The covering official only should give the signal to start the clock when he observes the kick touched other than "first touching" in his area. Any official should mark a spot of "first touching" that they observe with a bean bag. Any official should mark with a penalty flag the spot of a free kick that goes out of bounds untouched by Team R. The Referee, Line Judge, and Head Linesman should be ready to bean bag any spot of momentum within the five-yard line. **All Officials should note the time on the game clock before the kick and communicate that to each other and the ECO.** This may become important, particularly near the end of a half or of the game, if the ECO mistakenly starts or fails to start the game clock as the free kick rules dictate.

Before the Kick: Following a safety, try, or successful field goal, each official will record the score/result and make note of the time remaining on the game clock. The Umpire will jog down the center of the field, and the Head Linesman and Line Judge will jog to their positions at the intersections of the receiving team's goal line and their respective sideline. They will ensure that any non-team personnel located between the goal line and the closer limit of the team box (25-yard line) are well away from the field and well outside the restricted area. The Side Judge and Field Judge will position themselves at the 50 yard line (R's free kick line) on their respective sideline, making sure that the 2 yd. restricted areas in front of their team boxes is cleared of all team personnel prior to the kickoff. The Umpire shall jog to Team K's restraining line, align Team K, and present the ball to the kicker.

Referee: The Referee shall take a position in the middle of the field on Team R's goal line. The Referee shall stand erect while waiting for alignment of the teams and be prepared to acknowledge the signals by fellow crew members. The Referee will count the "R" players along with the Line Judge and Head Linesman, and all signal accordingly. Once the Umpire has handed the ball to the Kicker and has taken his position on the sideline, the Referee will sound his whistle and signal that the ball is ready for play. The Referee may assist the Umpire in making sure that at least 4 players are on each side of the ball when it is kicked.

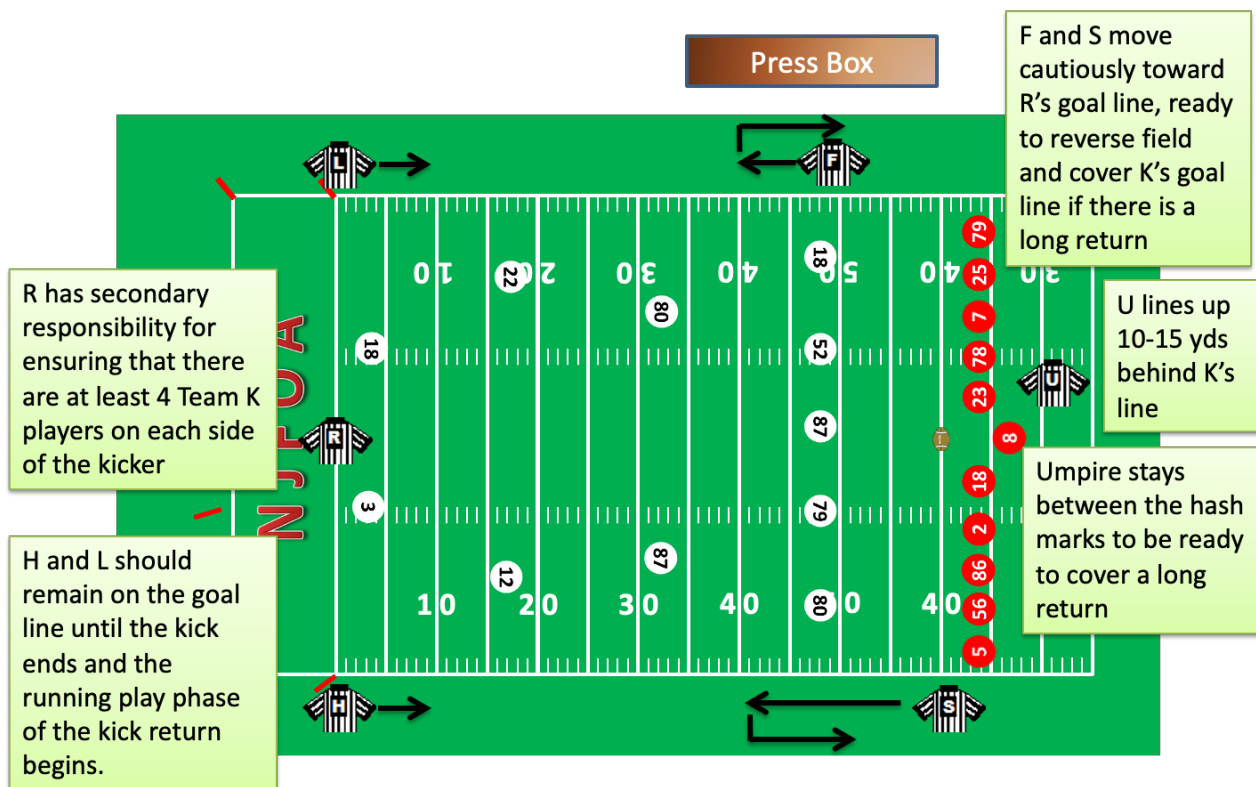
Umpire: The Umpire will set up the kicking team to kick off from the appropriate yard line. The Umpire shall count the kicking team and never allow the kickoff to proceed without the proper number of players. The Umpire shall point out the position of the Referee to the kicker and explain kicking procedures to him. The Umpire will then move to a position 10 yards behind K's free kick line and maybe up to a maximum of 15 yards depending on the kicker's initial position. He should also be positioned 2 to 3 yards wider than the spot of the kick on the kicker's kicking foot side. He must be in a position that allows him to see the kicker's foot strike the ball. He will raise a hand to inform the Referee that the ball can be declared ready for play. He has the primary responsibility for ensuring correct alignment of Team K players, and pop-up kicks.

Line Judge and Head Linesman: The Line Judge will initially position himself on Team R's goal line at the pylon on the press box side. The Head Linesman will initially position himself on Team R's goal line at the pylon on the sideline opposite the press box. Both officials will count the Team R players and signal accordingly to the Referee. If either team's kicker has demonstrated that his kicks are not reasonably able to reach the receiving team's goal line, the Head Linesman and Line Judge may move to a pre-kick position up the sideline but under no circumstances further than to a spot 5 yards behind the deepest receiver. With this adjustment, the crew should also be aware of either team's replacement of their kicker during the game.

Field Judge and Side Judge: The Field Judge will initially position himself on the press box sideline at Team R's restraining line, and the Side Judge will initially position himself on the sideline opposite the press box at Team K's restraining line. They will count Team K's players together with the Umpire. It is NOT necessary for them to align Team R prior to the kick.

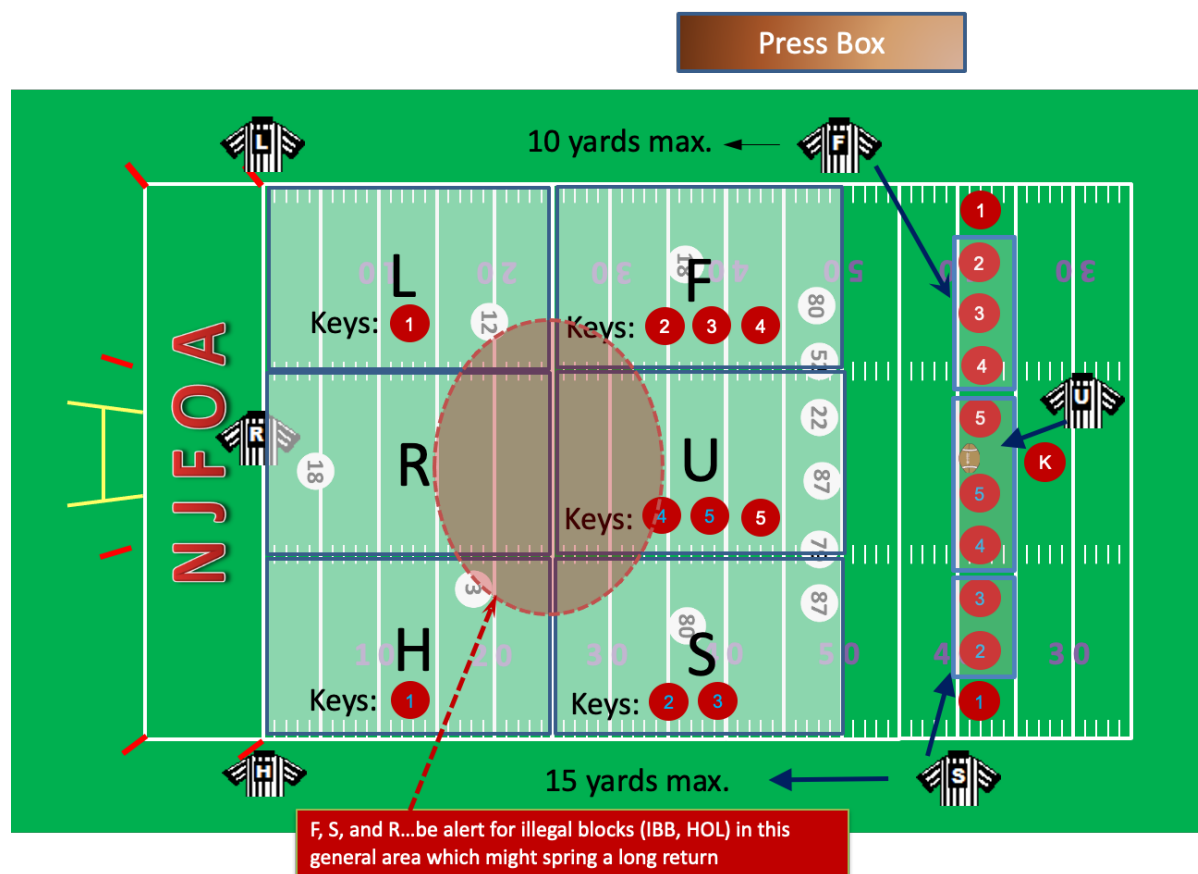
On a normal kickoff officiating alignment, the Field Judge must observe the kick and know if it touched the ground initially and potentially has become a pop-up kick. The Side Judge is responsible for possible encroachment by Team K players.

The normal free kick positions are illustrated in the following diagram:



FOLLOWING THE KICK – COVERING THE RETURN

Generally: Once the kick occurs (assuming that it's a deep kick), covering the return begins as a key exercise and then fairly quickly transitions to zone coverage. The following diagram shows both the initial Team K player keys as well as the approximate zones for covering the return. Detailed information for each official's coverage is below the diagram.



Referee: After the kick, the Referee should observe the receiver making the catch or recovery and thereafter observe action involving him and in front of him in the middle third of the field, including watching for illegal blocks, clips, forward handing, etc. As the runner breaks up the field into other officials' areas, the Referee should observe action behind the runner as well as off-ball activity. If a kick threatens the goal line, be ready to rule on the momentum exception or a possible touchback.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: Remain in your pre-kick position until the kick has ended and a return has begun. When the kick is deep and the pylon is threatened, the wing official nearest that pylon should remain at (or return to) the pylon in order to cover the action. He should be at the pylon when (if) the ball reaches the goal line. The other wing official should begin moving forward and be in front of the deep receiver to look across the field for illegal blocks, holding, clips, forward handing, etc. Both H and L should be prepared to rule on kicks out of bounds on their sidelines. These officials are responsible for forward progress along their sidelines to Team K's two-yard line. They will observe off-ball action away from the runner when the runner is in another official's area. Both officials initially key on the widest team K player and should be ready to rule if that player goes out of bounds as he comes downfield. Once the kick is fielded, both officials hustle off the goal line into a trail position and both should be alert for action moving toward the returner from their sidelines in their coverage zone.

Field Judge and Side Judge: Once F and S determine that the kick will be downfield, they should **stop** following the kicked ball and focus on the keys and coverage outlined here. On a normal kick, the Field Judge and Side Judge should move downfield toward Team R's goal line observing the initial contact between Team K's and Team R's restraining line players. Do not leave your pre-kick position until K players have passed you on their way downfield (SJ may

begin to move toward R's restraining line along with Team K's advance). Field Judge keys K players 2, 3, and 4 on his side; Side Judge keys K players 2 and 3 on his side. Once that initial contact ceases and coverage moves further downfield, field judge and side judge transition to zone. They should move downfield cautiously, but no more than 10 to 15 yards. Based on the depth of the kick, the Field Judge and Side Judge should move downfield only so far as necessary, mindful that they must maintain a sufficient cushion to get to K's goal line if a long return develops. Observe coverage in the critical area near the hash marks, observing for illegal blocks that might spring a long return. Scan from the inside out toward the sideline. As the return develops, maintain a cushion in advance of the run at all times. These officials are responsible for Team K's goal line and end line and forward progress inside Team K's two-yard line.

Umpire: At the kick, the Umpire's initial responsibility is R's possible interaction with the kicker. Be alert for a Team R player who moves purposefully toward the kicker. Umpire initially keys on K players 4 and 5 on the Side Judge's side of the formation as well as player 5 from the opposite side of the formation. He should move downfield from his initial position carefully and no more than 10 to 15 yards. Observe action mainly toward the center of the field. On long returns, watch for illegal blocks and observe off-ball action in front of the runner as he approaches, working inside-out as on any running play. He should move with the action, but he does NOT have goal line responsibility.

NOTE: **Field Judge, Side Judge, Umpire:** If immediately after the kick, one of your keys breaks through R's line with minimal resistance, keep eyes on him even as you transition to zone coverage. He is likely to attract attention—possibly in the form of an illegal block or a hold, and any Team R player pursuing him from behind is in “chase mode” and becomes suspect.

On directional kicks into a side zone, all officials must adjust their focus further toward that side of the field.

WHEN THE FREE KICK DOWN ENDS: The Referee and/or Line Judge/Linesman should spot the ball when the play ends inside the receiver's 25 yd. line. Officials should check the game clock to ensure that the time remaining shows a reasonable expiration of time during the free kick down.

A. Anticipated Short Free Kick

When an on-sides kick is likely, the Head Linesman will take a position on the sideline opposite the press box on Team K's free kick line. The **Line Judge** will move to the press box sideline on Team K's free kick line. The **Field Judge**, and **Side Judge** will take positions on R's free kick line. The **Referee** should move to the center of the field at the 10 yd line and may assist the Umpire in making sure that at least 4 K players are on each side of the ball when it is kicked. Only the covering official will signal to start the game clock when the ball is legally touched.

The **Umpire** will take his standard position behind the spot of the free kick.. He will be responsible for assessing Team K compliance with alignment rules. After the kick, he will assist in ruling on possible first touching, blocks and possession. The **Line Judge** and **Head Linesman** have responsibility for K free kick line and will strictly enforce (“Letter of the law”) the rule related to Team K encroachment. The official in whose direction the kick is moving should be alert for

first touching and catch or recovery. The other official should watch for illegal blocking, holding, clipping, etc. If the kick is deep downfield, stay back in the middle of the field and assist with blocks and the kick return.

If the kick is deep downfield, the **Line Judge and the Linesman** should move downfield about five to 10 yards and officiate the play, being alert for blocking and holding in front of the play. If a long return develops, they should maintain a sufficient cushion in front of the play and be on the goal line before a runner crosses it.

The **Field Judge and Side Judge** should be alert for clear encroachment by Team R and have responsibility for ruling on a pop-up kick. They must know if the kick traveled 10 yards (i.e. breaks the plane of Team R's free kick line and has touched the ground). They should be alert for touching by either team and the legality of Team K blocking in the neutral zone. If the kick ends up being a deep kick down the field, they should move downfield to assist with downfield coverage. If a long return develops, they should trail the play and will have forward progress to the two-yard line.

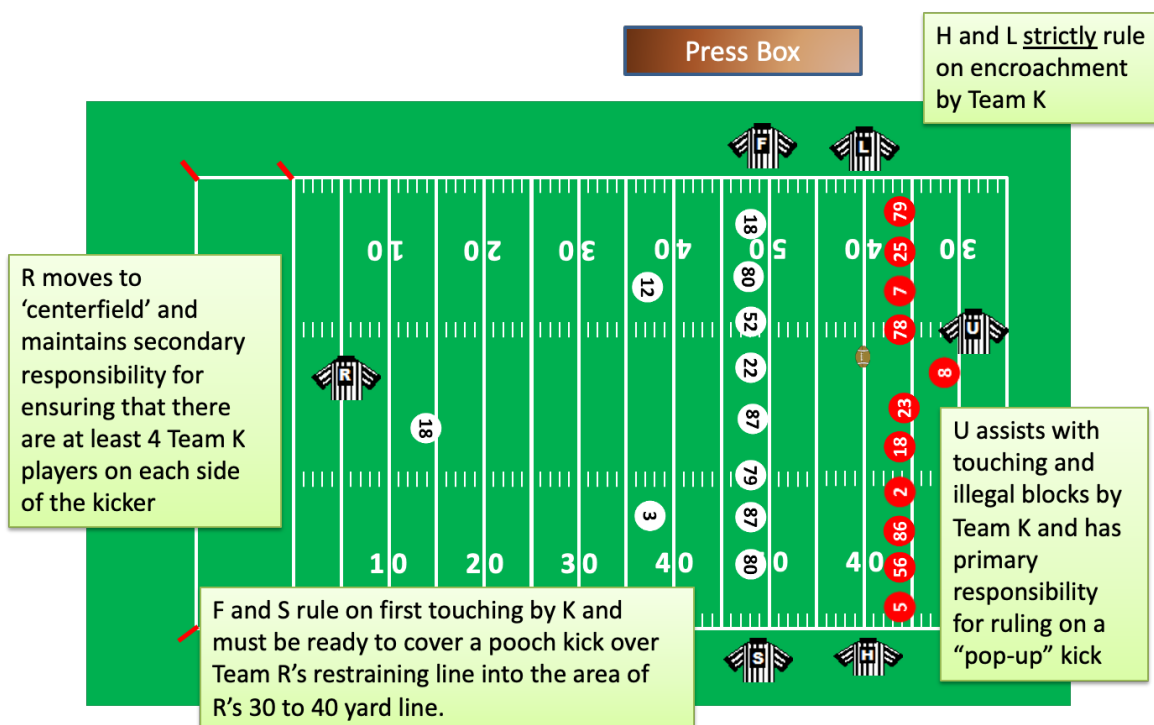
After the kick has ended and possession has been determined, all officials should check the game clock to ensure that the time shown remaining indicates that it was reasonably started and stopped as required by the play. Inform the ECO if correction of the game clock is necessary.

On free kicks where the down ends very quickly after a previously untouched kick is recovered, use the following guidelines for determining the correct amount of time that should have come off the game clock:

- When a grounded/prone Team R player cleanly catches or recovers a kick, no time should come off the clock.
- When a Team R player cleanly catches or recovers a kick while on his feet and then without any delay goes to the ground, one (1) second should expire from the game clock.
- When a Team K player cleanly recovers an untouched kick, no time should expire from the game clock
- When a Team R player cleanly completes a fair catch, no time should expire from the game clock

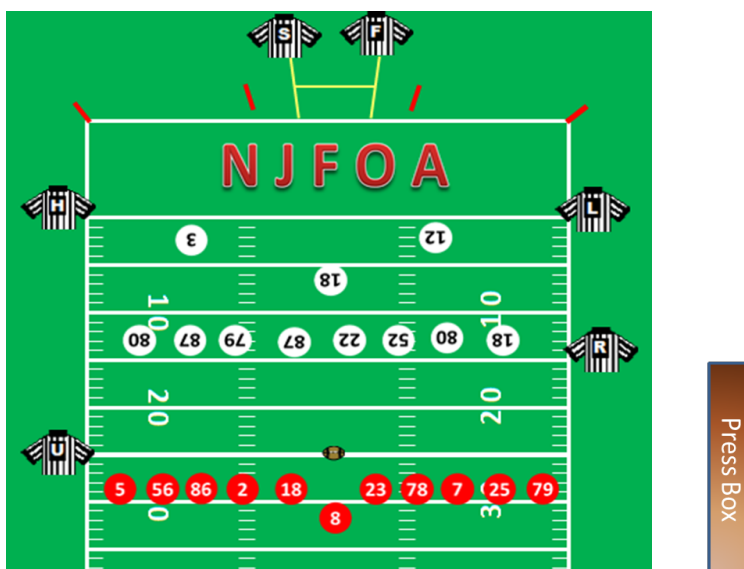
Ensure that this expectation is shared with the game clock operator during pre-game

The proper officiating positions for an anticipated on-sides kick are illustrated in the following diagram:



B. Free Kick Following a Fair Catch

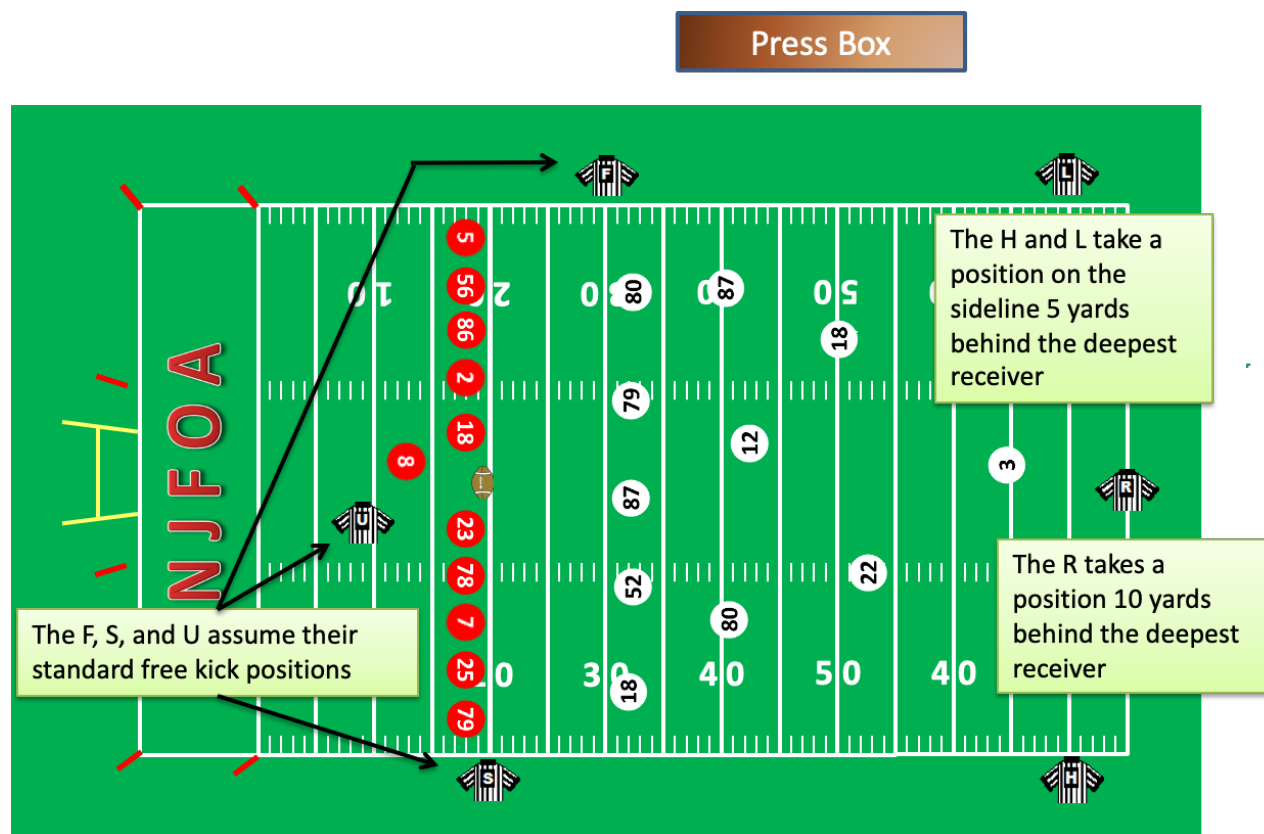
Though extremely rare, all officials must be aware of both the rules and the mechanics necessary to administer a free kick following a fair catch. **The proper officiating positions for a free kick following a fair catch are illustrated in the following diagram:**



Remember that this kick—though rare—is still a free kick and all free kick rules apply.

C. Free kick following safety

Also somewhat rare, all officials must be aware of both the rules and the mechanics necessary to administer a free kick following a safety. The Referee, Umpire, Field Judge and Side Judge assume their standard positions relative to K's free kick line (K's 20). The Head linesman and Line Judge line up five (5) yards behind R's deepest receiver. The Referee lines up in the center of the field ten (10) yards behind the deepest Team R receiver. R, HL, and LJ must be aware that a fair catch becomes a possibility, especially if Team K chooses to free kick by punt. **Proper officiating positions for a free kick following a safety are illustrated in the following diagram:**



VI. PLAY RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Pre-Snap and General Duties.

Referee: The Referee will make sure of the down, checking with the Head Linesman. The Referee shall maintain a depth of 12-16 yds. behind the line of scrimmage at least two (2) yards outside the shoulder of the tackle on his side of the LOS and shall line up on the right side of the Quarterback or punter. The only exception to this positioning will be place kicks from scrimmage (FGs and kick tries) where he will ALWAYS line up facing the placekick holder. He should be in position to comfortably see the snap and exchange of the ball, as well as the backs and tackles. The Referee will announce the down. When a 25-second play is to be used, he will consistently mark the ball ready for play within 12-15 seconds following the ball becoming dead, or within 3 seconds after the ball is placed ready for the next down by the U, with the same cadence throughout the game **without** any extra delay for substitutions unless a momentary special delay is mandated by rule, such as for the Try or after an unexpected change of team possession. The Referee should notify the Head Coach when his team has used its last timeout and should remind the wing official to notify the Head Coach of timeouts remaining on all other charged time outs. He will count the offensive team players along with the Umpire and signal him with a clenched fist when 11 are counted and give an appropriate signal if less than 11 are counted. [Note: A typical signal for less than 11 is the tapping of ten fingers on the chest.] Stand ERECT or get in a hand-on-knee position. DO NOT SLOUCH. Do not move too quickly to the play. He should be alert for false starts and illegal shifts in his area, especially involving the quarterback and backs. The Referee's initial keys are the Quarterback and the Tackle on his side of the field.

Umpire: Do not stand over the ball after placing it. Move to your position immediately after setting the ball and begin your pre-snap routine. The Umpire should take a position from 7 to 9 yards deep on Team B's side of the line of scrimmage favoring the side of the snapper opposite the referee when possible. He shall count the offensive team players and signal the Referee with a clenched fist if 11 players are counted. His initial position at the snap should vary, depending on the position of the ball and the formation, but the ball should be visible so that he can rule on snap violations. He shall check offensive linemen to make sure there are five players numbered 50 through 79 on the line at the snap. Be alert for snap infractions, interference with the snap, false starts, encroachment, and disconcerting signals by the defense. The Umpire's initial keys are the center and both guards, and the tackle opposite the referee. He can be assisted with the tackle by the HL or LJ, whomever is opposite the referee. At the conclusion of a play, the Umpire should expedite placement of the ball for the following play, and then swiftly **back** out to his position.

Head Linesman and Line Judge (Wingmen): Initially, the Head Linesman and Line Judge should be positioned on the sideline standing ERECT and in a ready position. They should never slouch or use "hands on hips" stance. These officials should be alert for incoming and outgoing substitutes involving the teams on their respective sidelines as well as keeping the Restricted Area off the sideline clear. Especially near either goal line, make sure that media and any other field personnel remain well away from the goal line and sidelines. Both the Head Linesman and Line Judge should note numbers of eligible pass receivers. Check positioning of the wingbacks, slot backs and split ends. Use hand to backfield signal when the closest offensive player is off the line. This signal should be held until the snap or until the closest offensive player is no longer off the line. Both officials should count to ensure that there are no more than four Team A

players positioned in the backfield. . They should assist each other when necessary, using cross-field ("soft-spot") mechanics. Be alert for encroachment by either team. Blow the whistle, move in quickly, and shut down all action immediately when encroachment or false starts occur. **The wingman is responsible for motion on his side of the LOS (from the center to his sideline) If a motion man crosses the center, then he becomes the responsibility of the other wing official.** As stated further below, the wingman is also responsible for all passes thrown toward him in determining if the pass is forward or backward. Initial blocking key is the tackle if opposite the referee. The R has primary responsibility for the tackle to his side. Secondary keys are all inside receivers on their side of the formation.

In addition to the above duties, the Head Linesman has the responsibility for the conduct of the line-to-gain and down marker crew, and the primary responsibility for counting downs. All officials, however, are responsible for maintaining the correct down count. All field officials should communicate and agree on the down count. The Head Linesman after each down, shall establish eye contact with the Referee to receive the signal for the next down. He should echo verbally and also indicate the next down with the appropriate hand signal. He should not call to change the down marker or move the chains for a first down until the Referee signals. The **Line Judge** has the primary responsibility for stopping the clock when the dead ball spot is beyond the line to gain.

When the referee has signaled a first down, the **Head Linesman** will 'wave' the line-to-gain equipment to the new spot while maintaining visual observation of dead ball activity. For all first downs, the Head Linesman will mark the spot with his foot for the line to gain crew at the sideline. When the goal line is the line to gain, only the down marker will be used to mark the spot of the ball. The chain will be removed from the sideline and away from the goal line.

The **Head Linesman and Line Judge** generally have responsibility for forward progress from Team A's goal line to Team B's two-yard line. The only exceptions are when the runner passes the down field official, and when covering goal line situations. The **Side Judge and Field Judge** should verbally communicate the out-of-bounds spot to the **Head Linesman and Line Judge**, respectively, when the runner goes out of bounds on their side of the field.

The **Head Linesman and Line Judge** should be aware of eligible receivers. Observe the snap to make sure there are no encroachments or false starts.

Field Judge and Side Judge: Side Judge should take an initial position on his sideline 22-25 yards in advance of the line of scrimmage. The SJ will determine the distance to line up (22-25 yds.) and the FJ will mirror. When the ball is snapped inside of B's 25-yard line, the FJ and SJ will position themselves at the goal line pylon. FJ initial position should line up between the bottom of the numbers and the sideline when he is responsible for keeping the play clock. If the team lines up on the opposite hash and is in a tight formation, then the FJ should adjust inward accordingly. This way the QB and coaches will still be able to easily find him to assess the status of the play clock. FJs should adjust where they line up based upon where the ball will be snapped and the formation. At or prior to the snap move backward at a 45-degree angle towards the sideline. FJ and SJ will count Team B players before each play and confirm with each other with a clenched fist when there are 11 players or an appropriate signal if there are less than 11 defensive players. These officials should be alert for incoming and outgoing substitutes and "hideout" plays and should assist in keeping the Restricted Area off the sideline clear. Their initial keys are the widest receiver on their side of the field at the snap. The Field Judge is responsible for administering the 40- or 25-second play clock or monitoring the running of any visible play clock operated by an ECO. If there is no visible play clock, he will raise his hand

overhead with 5 seconds remaining and begin the chopping motion so that it is clear to the QB and coaches. Both officials should assist in relaying information to other officials and coaches. Except for play situations inside Team B's 7-yard line, the Field Judge and Side Judge generally have forward progress inside Team B's two-yard line.

As the play develops, the official on the opposite side of the field may "pinch in".

B. Running Plays

Progression of Coverage: SNAP - TACKLE - KEY - ZONE.

Referee: After making sure that the snap was legal and there were no false starts, the Referee should read whether the play is a run or pass play based on the blocking by the tackles. If run is read, the Referee's primary responsibility is the football until it is beyond the line of scrimmage, then to cover the action behind the runner. While the ball is behind the line of scrimmage and the runner is not immediately threatened, focus on blocks on the front side of the point of attack. Primary responsibility is the tackle on his side of the LOS. At the snap, move only if necessary. Delay moving immediately to avoid hindering reverse or delayed plays and to assure maximum vision of play. If needed, move backwards at an angle to keep the play in front.

If the play is wide, slowly move in that direction and watch for action around and in front of the runner to the neutral zone. On option plays, if the quarterback keeps the ball and turns up field, observe action on the trailing back until there is no longer the threat of a foul. When the quarterback becomes the runner and runs into a side zone or out of bounds, follow him all the way including out of bounds.

For runs by runners **OTHER THAN THE QUARTERBACK** into the side zone, move in that direction watching the play and action, but it is not necessary to go too far past the hash marks. For obvious first downs on long plays, or on short gains between the hash marks, it is not necessary to run to the new line of scrimmage. Signal 'first down' from your pre-snap position. If after declaring a first down, the game clock is due to start on the ready-for play, wind the clock after the umpire spots the ball, but do not sound your whistle (assuming a 40-second play clock).

Umpire: Initial position 7-9 yds. off the LOS. After making sure that the snap was legal and there were no false starts or encroachment, the Umpire should read whether the play is a run or pass play based on blocking by the offensive line. If he reads 'run,' the Umpire should key on the point of attack and action on or by the interior linemen. Focus on the blocks and action on the back side of the point of attack looking for holding, chop blocks and other illegal blocks. Primary responsibility is the guards, center and the tackle opposite the R. If the play is wide, slowly move in that direction, and observe any action around the runner. Do not be restricted between the hash marks. When the ball becomes dead in or out of bounds, move out and retrieve the ball. Spot the ball at the hash mark, and quickly move to your pre-snap position. For a hurry-up or "two-minute" offense, obvious first downs and long gains, short gains between the hash marks, or balls that become dead within a few steps beyond the hash marks, retrieve and spot the ball getting forward progress from the offside wingman who will be mirroring the covering official's spot.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: After making sure the snap was legal and there were no false starts or encroachment, observe the tackles to read run or pass. Once run is read, both officials should maintain position on the line of scrimmage and allow the play to develop in front of them. Observe actions by tackles and keys. Do not leave the line of scrimmage until the runner crosses it. If you sense the runner or lead blockers moving toward your sideline, back up off of the

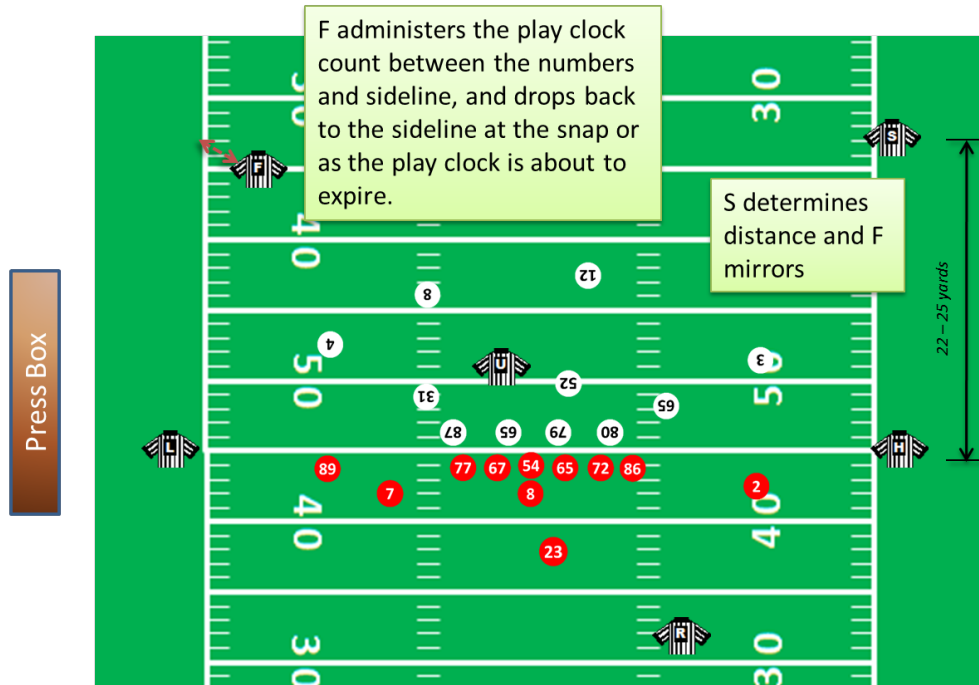
sideline and slide well into the offensive backfield, deep enough to remain clear of any action at the sideline. Officiate from this trail position as the play moves up the sideline. From this trail position, do not close on the dead ball spot too quickly. Let the action cease before doing so. If the play is away from him, the wingman should pick up action behind the Referee and Umpire while moving downfield with the play giving special attention to late action on the Quarterback after he has pitched the ball.

When the runner is down in his area, the covering wingman should signal that the ball is dead (S7), get an accurate forward progress spot and hold it until the Referee or Umpire acknowledges it. The wingmen should use cross-field mechanics ('soft-spot') when needed to assist each other in getting accurate forward progress. When the ball is dead, each official should "accordion in" on to the field approximately to the nine-yard marks or until he feels pressure from other players. Each official should square off the field in getting the spot and should match up with ("mirror") each other on the same line. If there is any disagreement, the officials should close in together and determine the correct spot. Use the up-field foot to give the spot of forward progress.

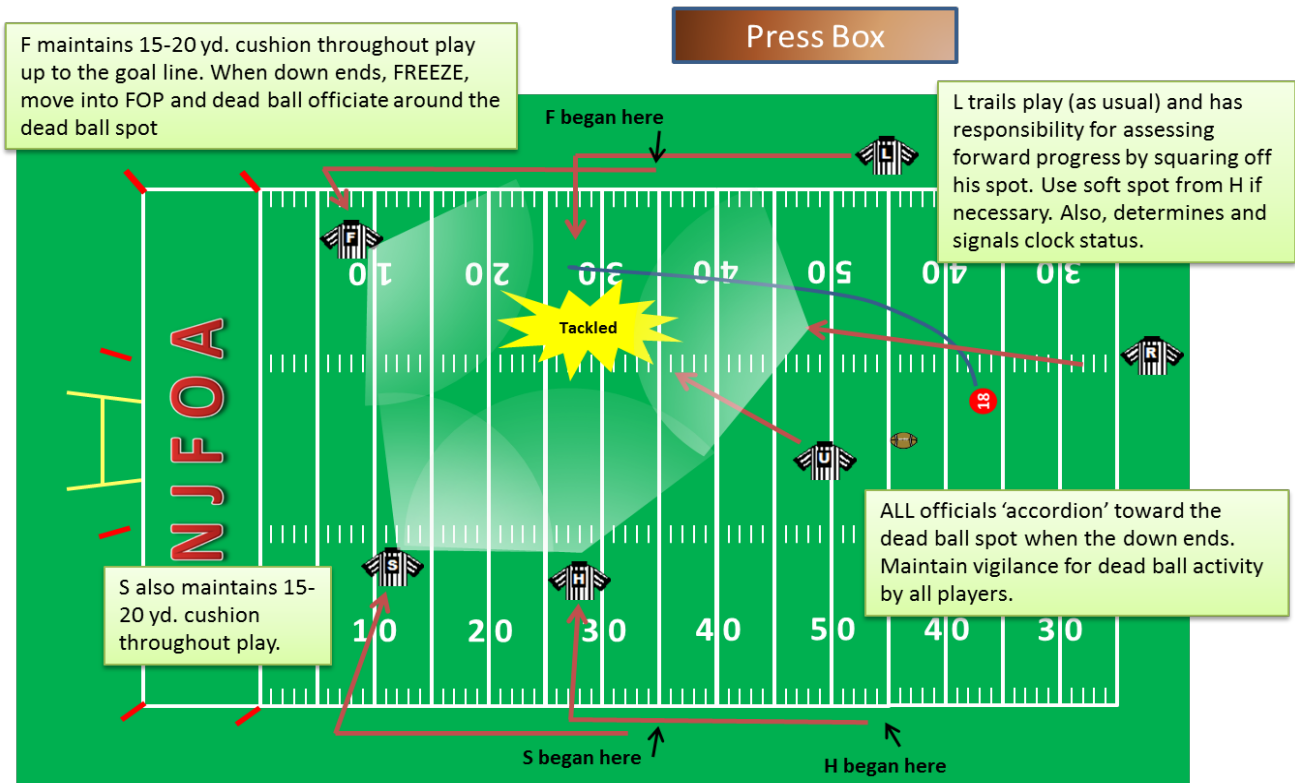
When the ball is dead inbounds near the sideline, **do not give a winding signal to indicate the clock is to continue to run, except when a runner's progress is forced sideways or backwards out of bounds or when the runner is downed close to out of bounds (one yd or less) and short of the line to gain.** If the ball goes out of bounds, hold the out of bounds spot and face the action out of bounds while either the Referee or deep wing official retrieves the ball. When getting the spot, always keep the head up looking at the action and never look down at the ground. If a first down is obvious, the covering wingman should stop the clock. If close, signal to and wait for the Referee to rule.

Field Judge and Side Judge: At the snap, read the play. When FJ and SJ read run, they should initially hold their position and wait for the play to develop. If run ends near the LOS or a few yards beyond, they should pinch in quickly ("accordion") and help with the dead ball officiating as well as being the second leg of the triangle for ball rotation if the ball is dead in the side zones. However, do not sacrifice dead ball coverage for quick ball rotation. "Eyeballing" players away from opponents and back toward their respective huddles is your number one priority. During the play, observe action on the widest receiver. Be alert for illegal blocks ("crackbacks") and holding. If the play is to the official, he should maintain a cushion in advance of the play and assist with action on lead blockers. Be at the goal line before the runner crosses it. Take responsibility for ruling on forward progress inside the two-yard line. If the play goes out of bounds on his side—especially when into a team box—and the wing official has the spot, he should proceed quickly and directly into the out of bounds/team box area to observe, clean up any action, and retrieve the ball. Be prepared to escort players away from their opponent's sideline. If the play is going away from him, he should assist in observing action behind the Umpire. Each official has responsibility for Team B's end line. After the play ends, they should "accordion in" while observing dead ball action. Be mindful of off-ball activity, especially in wide-open plays. Whenever the ball becomes dead, the Field Judge (or designated play clock operator) shall start the 40-second play clock as specified by rule.

Standard Running Play Positioning Outside the Red Zone



Long Running Play: Forward Progress Determination/Dead Ball Officiating



C. Passing Plays

Progression of Coverage: SNAP - TACKLE - KEY - ZONE.

Referee: On passing downs, as the passer retreats, stay outside of and deeper than the passer, moving backwards along an angle to maintain cushion if necessary. Observe drop back blockers in vision, especially the tackle on your side. After the pass is thrown, continue to observe action on and around the passer until there is no threat of a foul. Verbally alert defenders when the passer has released the ball. Assist the Line Judge on passes thrown to determine whether the pass was thrown forward or backwards. You are responsible for all passes thrown behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped within Team B's 7-yard line. The Referee is the sole judge for flagging intentional grounding but should seek input from other officials as to whether a forward pass was thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible receiver, and if so, coordinate with the covering wing official whether all requirements of the 2022 ING exception have been met. **The Referee is the sole judge as to whether or not the passer has cleared the lateral limits of the free blocking zone.**

Umpire: Initial position 7-9 yds. off the LOS. If he reads 'pass,' remain stationary (do not charge the line of scrimmage, as in the past), and look for holding or other illegal blocks by offensive and defensive linemen. He should look for holding or other illegal blocks keying, but not tunneling, on the center and two guards and the tackle opposite the R. As a secondary responsibility, the Umpire should be able to provide assistance on ineligible receivers down field prior to the release of a forward pass. When the ball is snapped inside Team B's 7-yard line, the umpire has primary responsibility for determining whether a forward pass crossed the line of scrimmage and if the passer was beyond the neutral zone. Once the pass has been released, he should turn quickly to assist in determining if there is a reception, interception, or an incompleteness as other officials may be blocked out if the pass was thrown over the middle. He should maintain coverage of his area of responsibility as long as there is a threat of action. After a catch, he should cover continuing action around the runner in the side zone.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: After the snap, observe the tackles to read run or pass. When pass is read, observe your key eligible receiver and give that player priority. The Line Judge is responsible, with Head Linesman secondary, for activity involving the line of scrimmage, including whether the passer goes beyond the line of scrimmage and whether a forward pass crosses the line of scrimmage. They will remain at the line of scrimmage until the ball crosses the line of scrimmage and then both will move quickly down field depending on the depth of the pass. Each is responsible for determining whether a pass behind the line toward their sideline is thrown forward or backwards. If their key receiver or belt area is not threatened, assist with the tackle on their side. **The Head Linesman and Line Judge have primary responsibility for determining if any ineligible receivers are illegally down field. The Umpire will have secondary responsibility and will assist both short wing officials.**

For short downfield passes, especially when the ball is thrown directly into his/her area, reducing movement while the ball is in the air will improve his/her ability to see the play more accurately. Each official is responsible for receptions between them and the deep official on their side of the field. When the pass is released deep downfield, both should move downfield with the pass keeping your shoulders parallel to the sideline. If the pass is not thrown into their area, he/she should observe off-ball action.

When the runner is down, whichever sideline is closest, that short wing official has forward progress and should get an accurate progress spot until the Referee or Umpire acknowledges it.

The offside short wing should use cross field ("soft-spot") mechanics, when needed to assist in getting an accurate forward progress. Both officials should "accordion in" on to the field approximately to the nine-yard marks or until he/she feels pressure from other players. Each official should square off the field in getting the spot and should match each other on the same line. If there is any disagreement, the officials should close in together and determine the correct spot. Use the up-field foot to give the spot of forward progress.

If either line of scrimmage official senses that a passer under duress may have intentionally grounded a forward pass, the offside official should make note of the spot of the pass to be of assistance if that spot is needed for enforcement of a penalty. The near-side official will have responsibility for determining if the pass reached the neutral zone in flight to aid the Referee in potentially ruling either a legally grounded pass or intentional grounding.

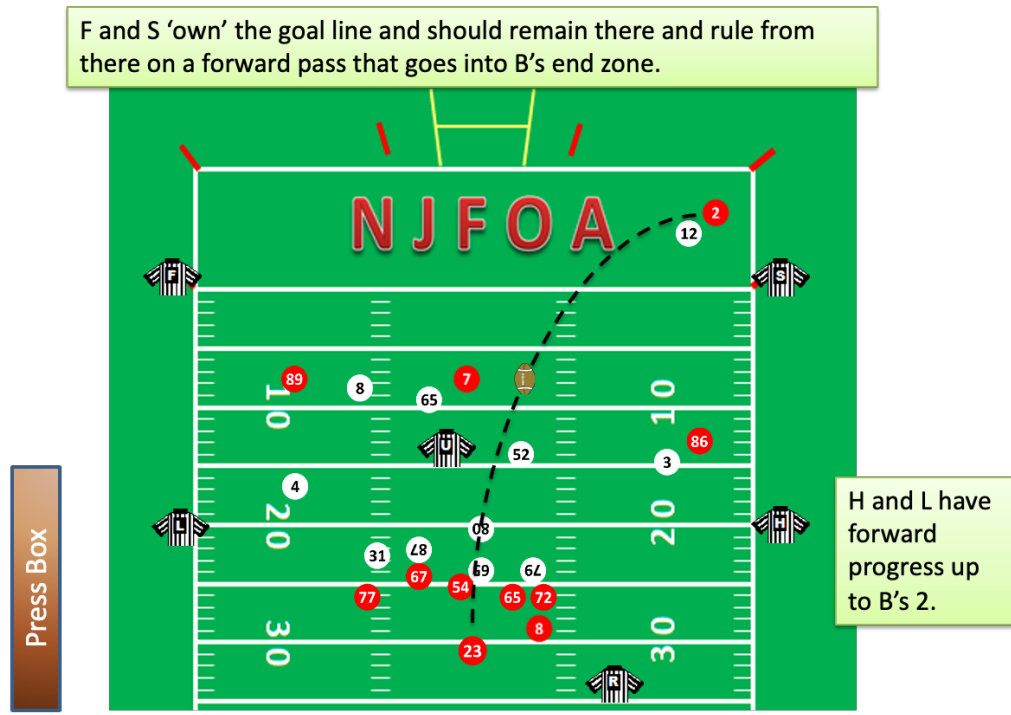
When the pass is released deep downfield, the Line Judge should move downfield with the pass. When moving downfield to cover your passing keys, keep your shoulders parallel to the sideline. This helps open up your vision should you be responsible for wide receivers coming off the line along with backs coming out of the backfield." He is responsible for receptions between him and the deep official. For shorter downfield passes, especially when the ball is thrown directly into his area, reducing movement while the ball is in the air will improve his ability to see the play more accurately. If the pass is not thrown in his area, he should observe off-ball action. When the runner is down and the Line Judge has forward progress, he should get an accurate forward progress spot and hold it until the Referee or Umpire acknowledges it. He and the Head Linesman should use cross-field mechanics when needed to assist each other in getting accurate forward progress. When the ball is dead, each official should "accordion in" on to the field approximately to the nine-yard marks or until he feels pressure from other players. Each official should square off the field in getting the spot and should match each other on the same line. If there is any disagreement, the officials should close in together and determine the correct spot. Use the up-field foot to give the spot of forward progress.

Field Judge and Side Judge: At the snap, maintain position and read the play. Once pass is read, move backwards to maintain cushion and assure maximum vision. Observe contact on key receivers and the defensive backs. When the pass is away from you, observe action behind the Umpire. Cover your sideline from your original position to the end line. When the ball is thrown into the official's area, he should cover the play and watch the defender's action on the receiver.

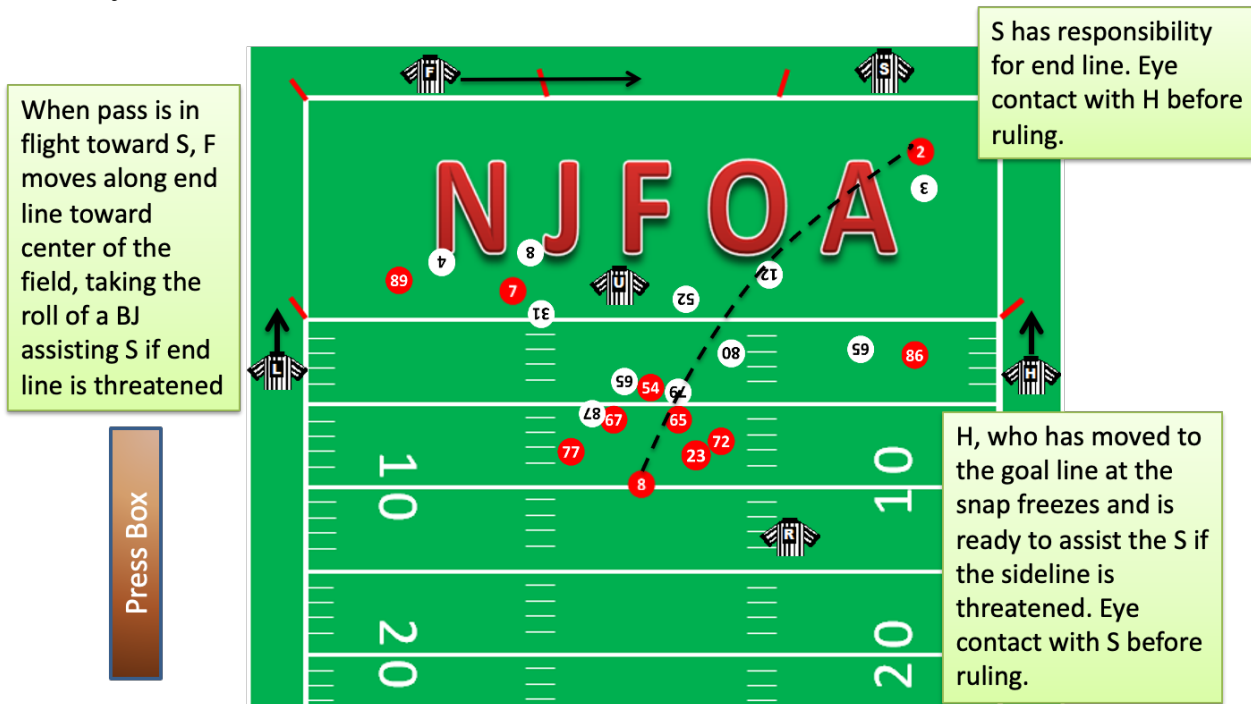
NEVER LET A RUNNER OR RECEIVER GET BEHIND YOU. On potential TD passes into B's end zone, stay at the goal line 2-3 yards off the pylon and rule from there. Do not follow the receiver into the end zone. If the pass is into a sidezone and beyond the goal line, the opposite deep wing can move into the endzone to assist on any ruling involving the receiver's interaction with the end line.

The proper initial officiating positions for scrimmage plays are illustrated in the following diagrams.

Pass into B's End Zone

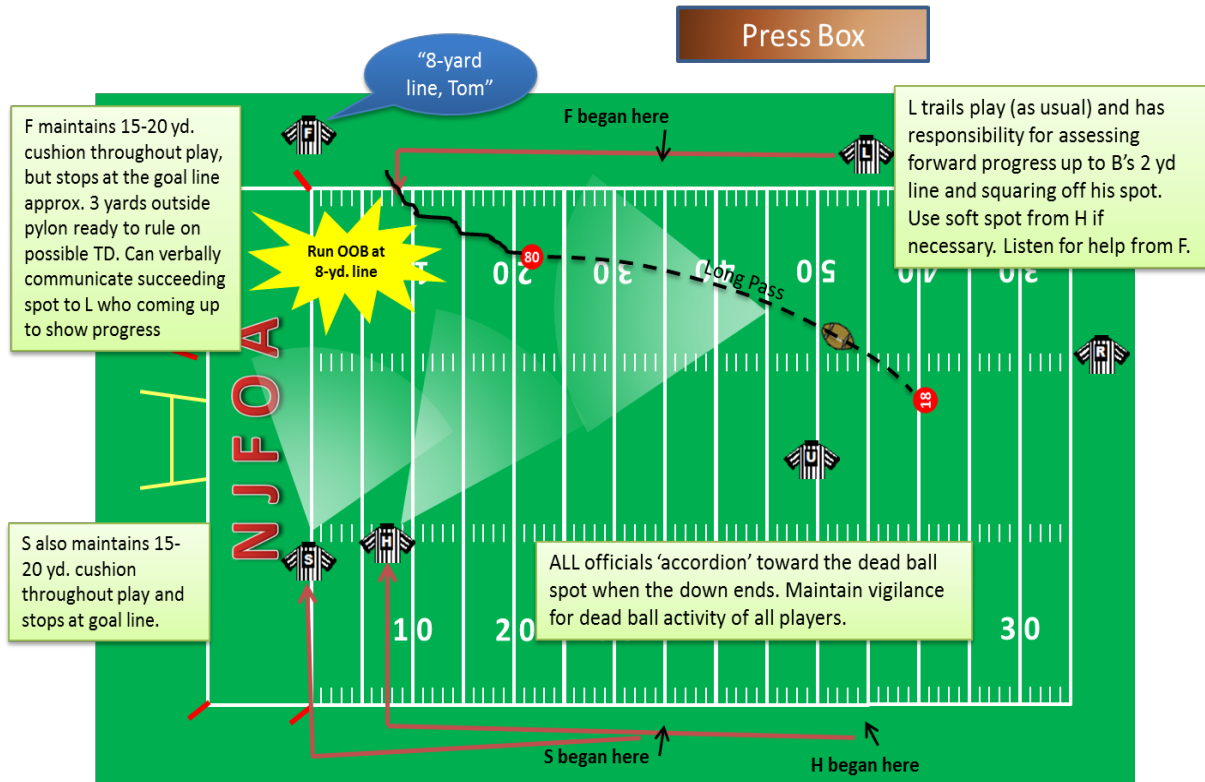


Pass Plays Inside or at B's 7



Passing plays inside B's 7 will likely develop very quickly. The **Line Judge**, **Head Linesman**, **Field Judge**, and **Side Judge** should resist the temptation to go 'zone.' Be prepared to remain 'man' on your keys for the duration of the down.

Long Pass Approaching B's End Zone



Legal grounding of forward pass by Team A passer

With the 2022 approval of a rule allowing a Team A passer to legally ground (“dump”) the ball under certain conditions, our mechanics must adapt accordingly.

Referee. The Referee has the sole responsibility (with possible help from the Umpire) for (a) determining that the passer was under duress, and (b) determining if the passer has been outside the lateral bounds of the free blocking zone (“the pocket”). While each referee must develop his own “strike zone” for this pocket, we would suggest that in a normal split formation, the pocket extends from the outside foot of one tackle to the outside foot of the other tackle. Three steps laterally by the QB should be enough to put him outside the lateral boundaries of the free blocking zone.

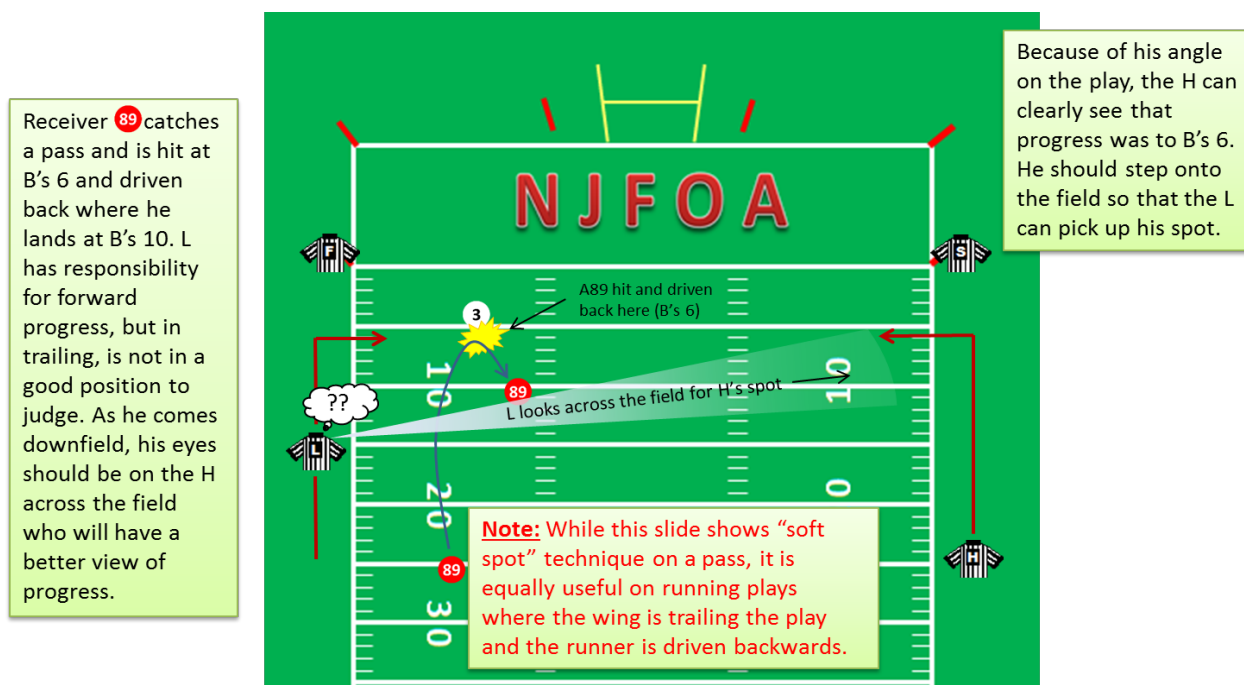
Head Linesman and **Line Judge.** The short wings have the sole responsibility for determining if the pass crosses the line of scrimmage (extended) in flight. The short wings have always been responsible for determining whether there is/are eligible receivers in the vicinity of the pass that might have reasonably been the intended target of the passer. With the approval of the new rule, this responsibility still remains in case the pass does not cross the line of scrimmage, or in case the pass DOES cross the line of scrimmage but the Referee rules that the passer was NOT outside the pocket when he released it.

Side Judge and **Field Judge** In rare cases where a passer under duress throws the ball way downfield, the deep wings may need to communicate to the Referee about eligible(s) in the area of the pass.

D. “Soft Spot” (Cross-field mechanics)

Often, when one of the wings (**Head Linesman** or **Line Judge**) has responsibility for forward progress, he will be trailing the play. This is normal and the expected way to cover the play. However, this position may put him at a disadvantage—especially if the runner or pass receiver is hit and driven back toward the line of scrimmage. In such situations, it is very difficult for that wing to determine forward progress accurately. The solution, however, comes from all the way across the field. Because he is also moving downfield, and because of his angle to the play, the opposite wing can provide the necessary help and allow the near-side wing (the covering official) to get an accurate spot. As the covering official moves downfield, the ball becomes dead, and he realizes his predicament, he should glance across the field at this partner. His partner should come downfield, square off, and step onto the field at the forward progress spot so that the covering official can pick up the spot. If the covering official fails to look across and is misplacing the ball, the offside official should correct the placement via O-2-O or with a short tweet on the whistle while showing the correct spot. This technique should be performed discreetly so as not to call undue attention to it.

The following diagram shows how this works.



E. Reverse Mechanics.

During a scrimmage kick / punt return, or when Team B begins a return following a turnover, officials should use reverse mechanics to cover the play.

Referee: The Referee should cautiously move backwards towards Team A's goal line while maintaining coverage of Team A's Quarterback or Kicker. The Referee will work inside out to

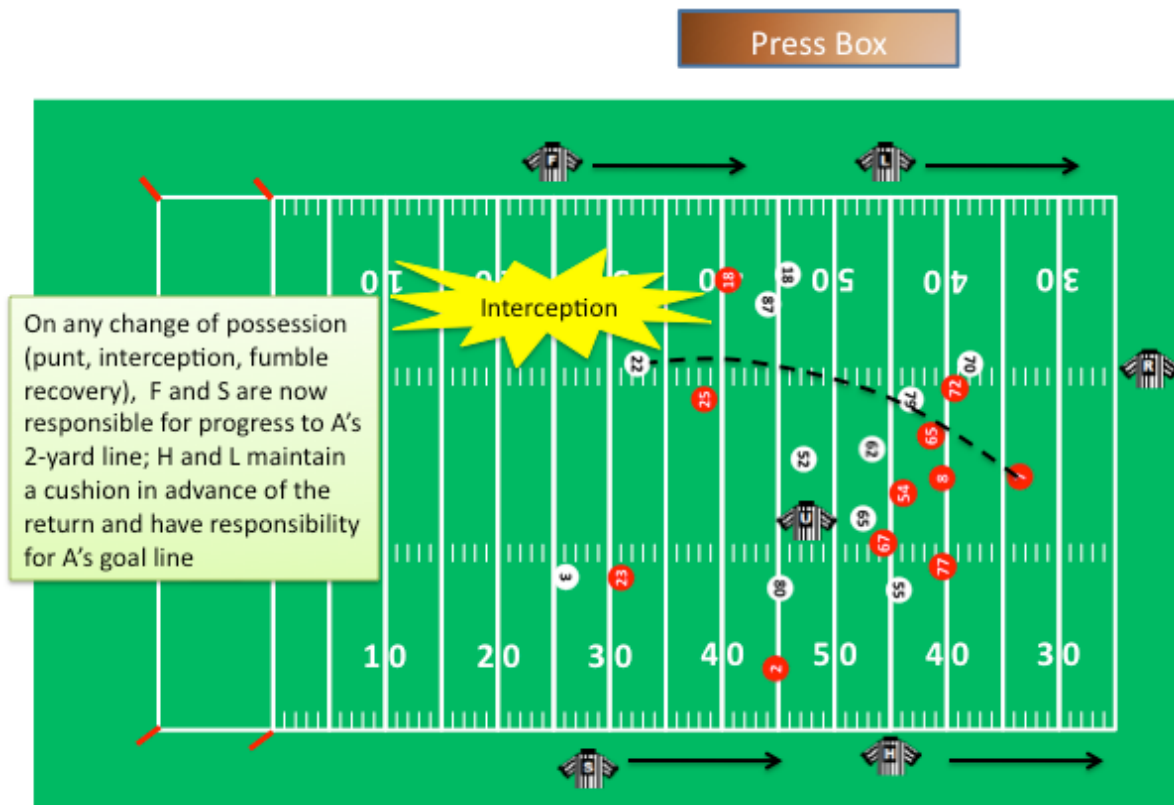
cover the play. He does NOT have goal line coverage and should NOT turn his back on the play to get to Team A's goal line.

Umpire: The Umpire should work to cover as any other play.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: When Team B or R begins its return, the Line Judge and Head Linesman should begin backing up along the sideline and officiating in front of the return, assisting with lead blockers. They should maintain a cushion in advance of the play and be on the goal line before the runner. They will have forward progress in this situation between Team A's two-yard line and its goal line. The Field Judge and Side Judge will determine and mark forward progress otherwise.

Field Judge and Side Judge: The Field Judge and Side Judge will trail the play and cover action on and around the runner on their side. The official who does not have coverage of the runner will assist in off-ball coverage and clean-up action behind other officials. When not covering the runner, be alert for off-ball activity. The Field Judge and Side Judge will take forward progress up to Team A's two-yard line. The Line Judge and Head Linesman will have forward progress inside Team A's two-yard line.

All Officials: On unplanned changes of possession (interceptions, fumble recoveries and advances), blocking angles for the return team are not optimal. Therefore, all return team blockers are suspect. Be alert for illegal blocks in the back and possibly blindside blocks. Be especially aware of blockers who are headed against the flow of the return. These players become 'red flags' and demand increased scrutiny.



F. “4th and Short”

All Officials: On 4th down scrimmage plays where the offense lines up in a non-scrimmage kick formation (“going for it”), officials should make special note of the line to gain. If there are three (3) yards or less to reach the line to gain, the **Head Linesman** and **Line Judge** will, at the snap, immediately go to the line to gain, steady themselves, and be ready to rule possible forward progress at that spot. If the down ends short of the line to gain, wing officials will come back to officiate the dead ball spot. However...

If the spot of the snap is inside B’s 7-yard line and the line to gain is short of the goal line, wing officials will move purposefully toward the line to gain at the snap, observing all action and be ready to rule on forward progress there. But be very aware of progress beyond the line to gain which now threatens the goal line. In such cases, hustle to the goal line and be ready to rule there. Be ready to officiate back to any dead ball spot short of the goal line. Use O-2-O to communicate these requirements to the crew.

VII. SCRIMMAGE KICK (PUNT) RESPONSIBILITIES

Referee: The Referee is positioned slightly behind the kicker and 7-9 yards wide on the right side of the punter, in a position to look at approximately a 45 degree angle to the position where the kick will be made, so that he can see the snap, back blockers, and entire play in front of him. Together with the Umpire, he will count Team K players and give the appropriate signal when there are 11 players or less. Verbally alert Team R players when the kicker has kicked the ball. Be alert for action on and around the kicker, then clean up behind the kick action while drifting down field, opposite the side of the Umpire. If the kick is blocked, or on a long return, he should be prepared to move toward Team K’s goal line for coverage. If the kicked ball appears to be heading toward a sideline with the possibility of going out of bounds in flight, referee should move toward the spot of the kick to assist deep wing officials in determining the out of bounds spot. If a return develops, the Referee should use reverse mechanics to cover the play.

Umpire: The Umpire should always be opposite the Referee, even if the Referee is on the wrong side of the punter, and be in position to rule on any contact with the snapper. He should be positioned 8 to 10 yards from the line of scrimmage (LOS) and no wider than the offensive guard on his side to have clear line of sight of the snapper before and during the play. Together with the Referee, he will count Team K players and give the appropriate signal when there are 11 players or less. When the offensive team is in a scrimmage kick formation, the Umpire should verbally warn Team R players not to charge directly into the snapper. Also, when in a scrimmage kick formation, the Umpire must remember that Team A is exempt from the 50-79 numbering requirement, but the Umpire must note other numbers in case a forward pass is thrown. Be alert for holding by either team, especially any “pull and shoot” action by Team R. He must assist the Referee in determining if the ball was tipped in or behind the neutral zone. After the kick has crossed the neutral zone, and action in the line has cleared, turn and move toward the return area to observe action by players in the second wave of pursuit on the **Line Judge’s** side of the field. After the ball becomes dead, be on the appropriate yard line to spot the ball. If the kick is blocked and picked up by a member of the receiving team, the Umpire must follow the play and cover action around and behind the runner.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: Both officials' positions and pre-snap responsibilities are the same as for any scrimmage play. They should communicate with each other to make sure there are no more than four Team A players in the backfield. The **Head Linesman** and **Line Judge** should hold his position until the kicked ball crosses the neutral zone. Both officials should assist the Referee in knowing whether the kick was tipped by a blocker. After the kick crosses the neutral zone, the **Line Judge** will drift downfield cautiously with the second wave of pursuit (15 yards max) and observe the flyers down his sideline. Both officials should be alert for errant snaps or blocked kicks. In such situations, the official opposite the Referee should move into the backfield to help with coverage. The other wing official should maintain his position at the line of scrimmage and rule on any action involving the line of scrimmage.

After the kick has crossed the neutral zone and stays beyond, the **Head Linesman** and **Line Judge** should move with a purpose downfield, approximately 15 yards. The **Head Linesman** will observe action by the second wave of pursuit on his side of the field. If the ball is to his side, that wing official should cover action ahead of the runner. Look for any player in chase mode who has gotten beat and may be inclined to hold or block from behind. If the ball is not to his side, that wing official should cover the play behind the deep wing official on his side. As the return develops, the **Head Linesman** and **Line Judge** should use reverse mechanics to cover the play.

Side Judge and Field Judge: Both the FJ and SJ should be off the field 7-10 yards behind the deepest receiver. If the snap is from R's 45 (or closer), both officials' initial positions should be on the goal line outside the pylon. Each official should divide the field in half lengthwise for responsibility purposes and to establish the "covering official." The covering official has primary responsibility for ruling on valid/invalid fair catch signals, and for stopping the clock after the kick is possessed following a valid or invalid fair catch signal. Both officials should be alert for touching of the kick by Team K or Team R players. Each official also has responsibility for flyers on their side of the field. The primary (covering) official shall follow the ball carrier until forward progress ends and immediately give the stop-the-clock signal. If, during his run, the ball carrier reverses field and moves to the other wing's side of the field, the primary official will give up the ball carrier and cover action behind the runner. If the receiver fails to field the kick cleanly, the covering official will follow the ball. The other official will watch action around the receiver—especially if a fair catch signal was given, prohibiting the receiver from blocking until the kick ends.

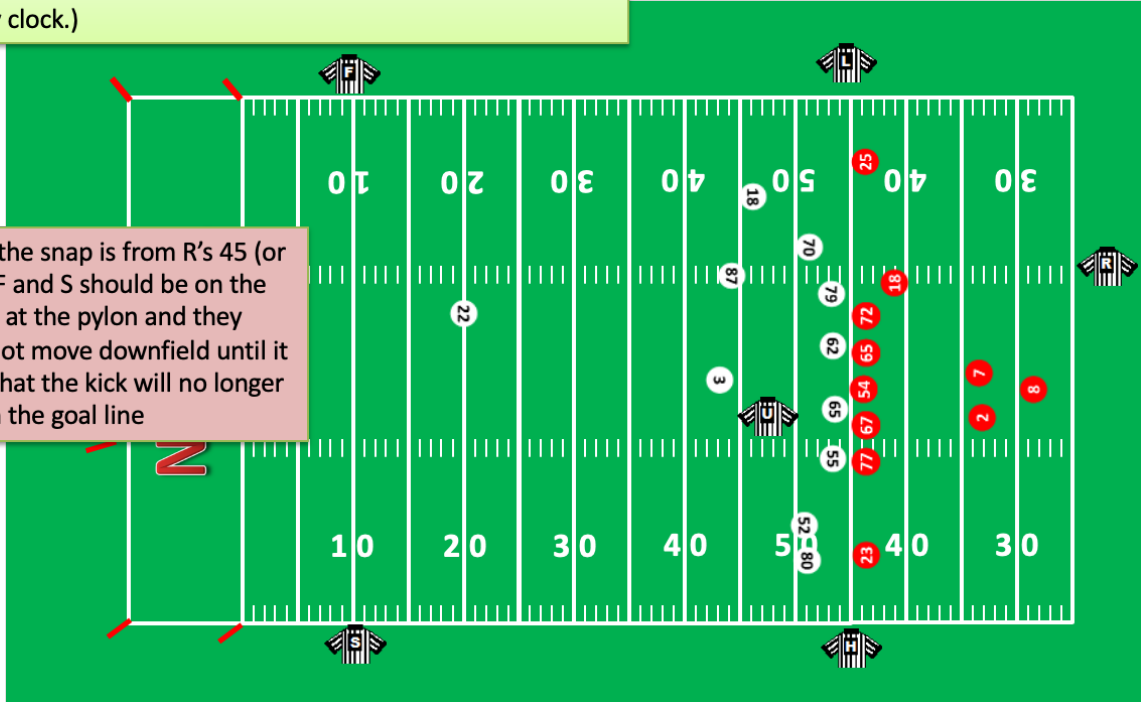
Field Judge and Side Judge: If a punt goes out of bounds in flight beyond the neutral zone, the deep official responsible for the affected sideline will move down the sideline back toward the previous spot and coordinate with the **Referee** to determine where the kick crossed the sideline (the succeeding spot). If a grounded kick bounces or rolls across the sideline and out of bounds, it is the deep official's sole responsibility to determine where the kick crossed the sideline.

The proper officiating positions for punts and the coverage keys are illustrated in the following two diagrams:

The F and S position themselves off the field approximately 7-10 yards behind the deepest receiver. (Note: The F may need to enter the field to chop the last five seconds of the play clock.)

Press Box

Note: If the snap is from R's 45 (or closer), F and S should be on the goal line at the pylon and they should not move downfield until it is clear that the kick will no longer threaten the goal line



(Post-snap Coverage Keys)

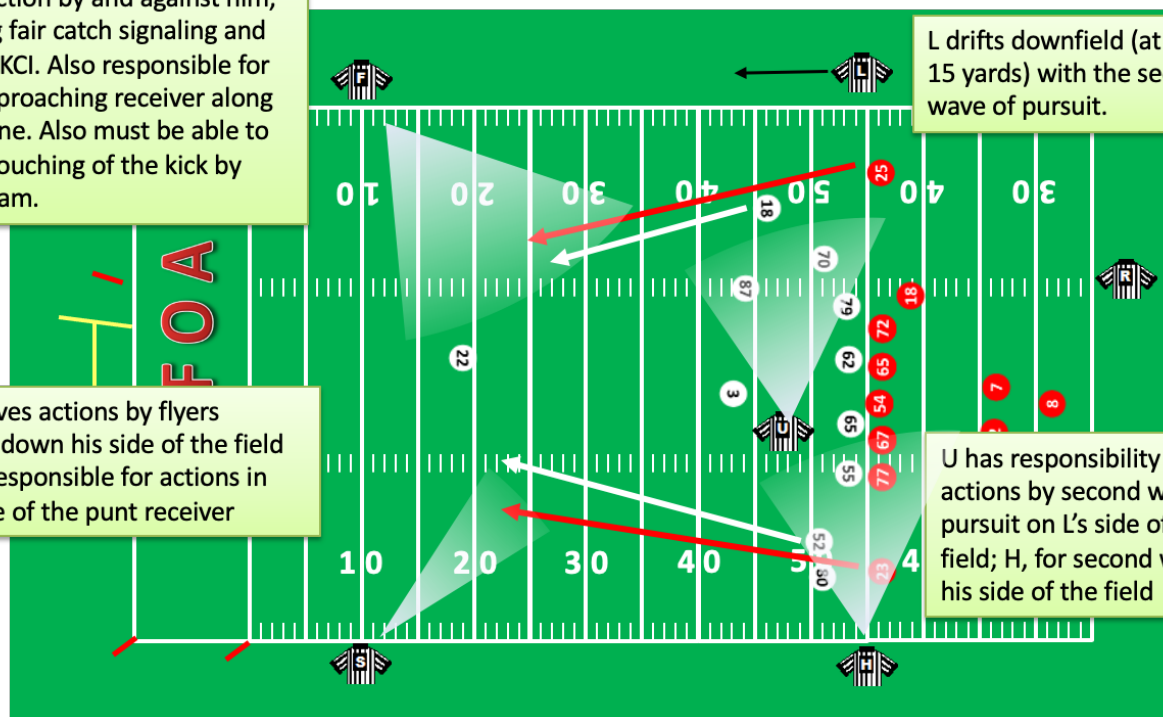
F is responsible for the receiver and all action by and against him, including fair catch signaling and possible KCI. Also responsible for flyers approaching receiver along his sideline. Also must be able to rule on touching of the kick by either team.

Press Box

L drifts downfield (at most 15 yards) with the second wave of pursuit.

S observes actions by flyers coming down his side of the field and is responsible for actions in advance of the punt receiver

U has responsibility for actions by second wave of pursuit on L's side of the field; H, for second wave on his side of the field



VIII. FIELD GOAL AND TRY FOR POINT

Referee: Prior to the snap, the Referee will count Team K players along with the Umpire and give the appropriate signal for 11 players. If less than 11, give an appropriate signal so that no one is surprised by a late-coming substitute. The Referee will take a position at least 7 - 9 yards wide on the side ALWAYS facing the front of the holder and about 5 yards deeper than the holder. He should be in a position to observe the snap. After the snap, he should observe any action by the holder, including a muff, fumble, or recovery, and any action that follows. Once a kick is made, he should observe any action on and around the kicker and holder and verbally alert Team R when the kick is made. If the play turns into a running or passing play, the Referee should move to cover the play as normal. **The R does not need to mirror the signals of the SJ and FJ**

Umpire: Prior to the snap, the Umpire will count Team K players along with the Referee and give the appropriate signal for 11 players or less. The Umpire should be positioned about 5 -7 yards behind Team R's line of scrimmage. He should observe line play and defensive action on the snapper. He should be alert for pull and shoots and other personal fouls. If the field goal or kick turns into a run or pass play toward the sideline, officiate from inside out. If Team R possesses the ball and makes a return, use reverse mechanics.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: Prior to the snap, the Head Linesman and Line Judge should position themselves as on any other scrimmage play. They should communicate with each other to make sure that there are no more than four Team A players in the backfield. They should be ready to cover action on their sideline from the line of scrimmage to the end line if necessary. Neither official should leave the line of scrimmage until the ball has crossed the line and it is necessary to move downfield. Unless it is necessary to move downfield, they will quickly close in to the line play after the kick and observe action. Both "pinch in" after try to dead ball officiate.

Field Judge and Side Judge: If the kicking team uses a "muddle huddle", start at the "hash" mark on your side. Otherwise, the Field Judge will take a position behind the upright on the press box sideline. The Side Judge will take a position behind the upright on the side opposite the press box. Both will count Team R players and give the appropriate signal when 11 players or less are counted. They will rule on whether the kick is good. The Side Judge has primary responsibility for his upright and the crossbar. The Field Judge has primary responsibility for his upright. The Side Judge may blow the whistle once the try is kicked or when the field goal attempt is over. After the kick ends, both officials should communicate/agree on the result, then take three steps forward and simultaneously signal the result of the play.

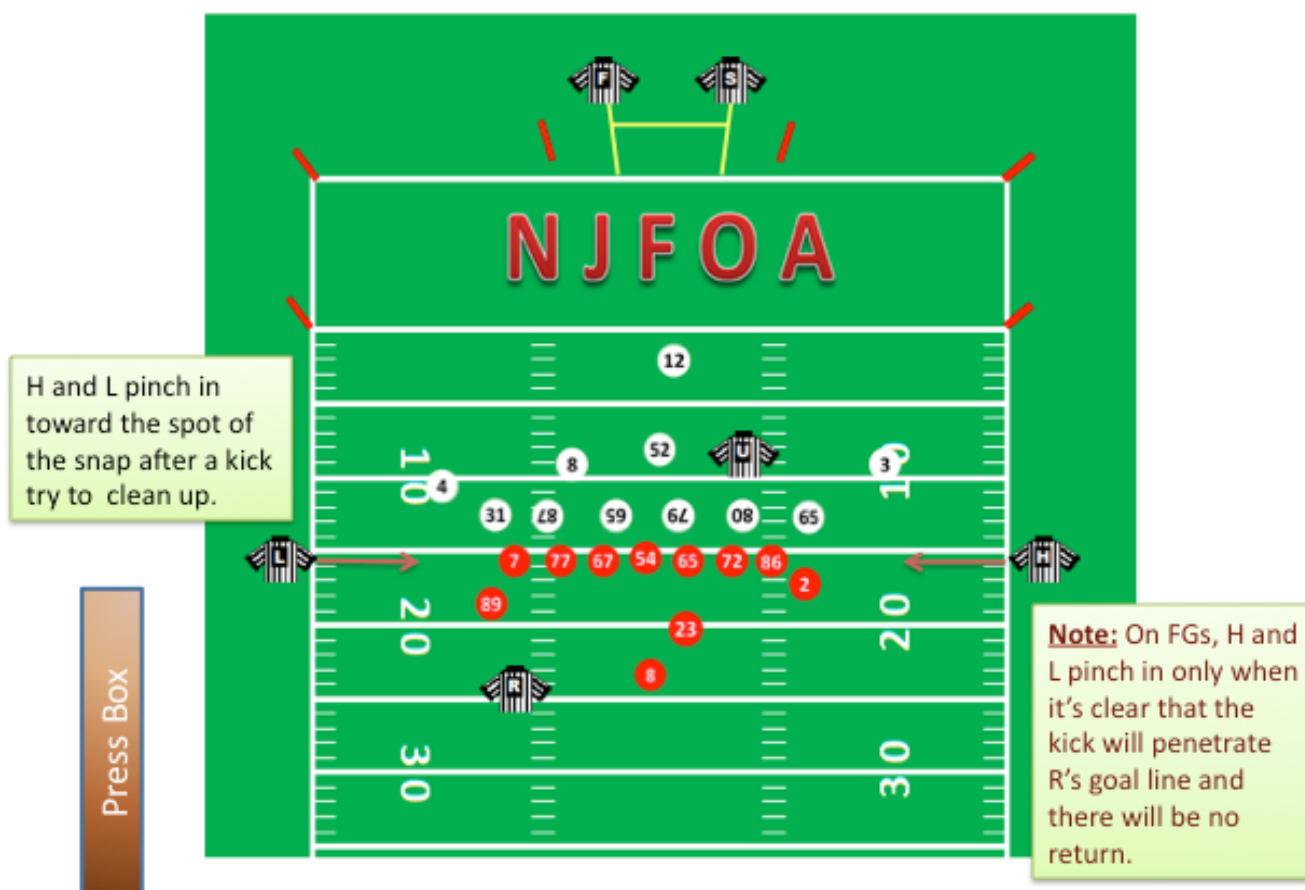
If the play turns into a run or pass, or if Team R gains possession and begins a return, the Field Judge and Side Judge should officiate as normal. Each should move out to the hash marks on their respective sides of the field to cover action coming at them which will put each official in position to observe action in the middle of the field as well as in the corner of their respective side of the end zone. If a return develops, they should use reverse mechanics.

FAKES AND BUSTED PLAYS ON FIELD GOALS

On 'fakes' or any 'busted' play arising from an errant or muffed snap or bad placement, officials' coverage responsibilities must adapt to deal with the uncertainty of what might happen.

Inside R's 20. When the spot of the snap is on or inside R's 20, the **Line Judge** and **Head Linesman** will go to the line to gain immediately as soon as a fake or busted play is determined and be ready to rule on progress. If the ensuing play advances beyond the line to gain, these officials will trail the play as quickly as possible and be responsible for ruling on progress up to and including R's goal line. The Field Judge and Side Judge will remain on the end line but will move toward their respective standard position at the 9-yard marks.

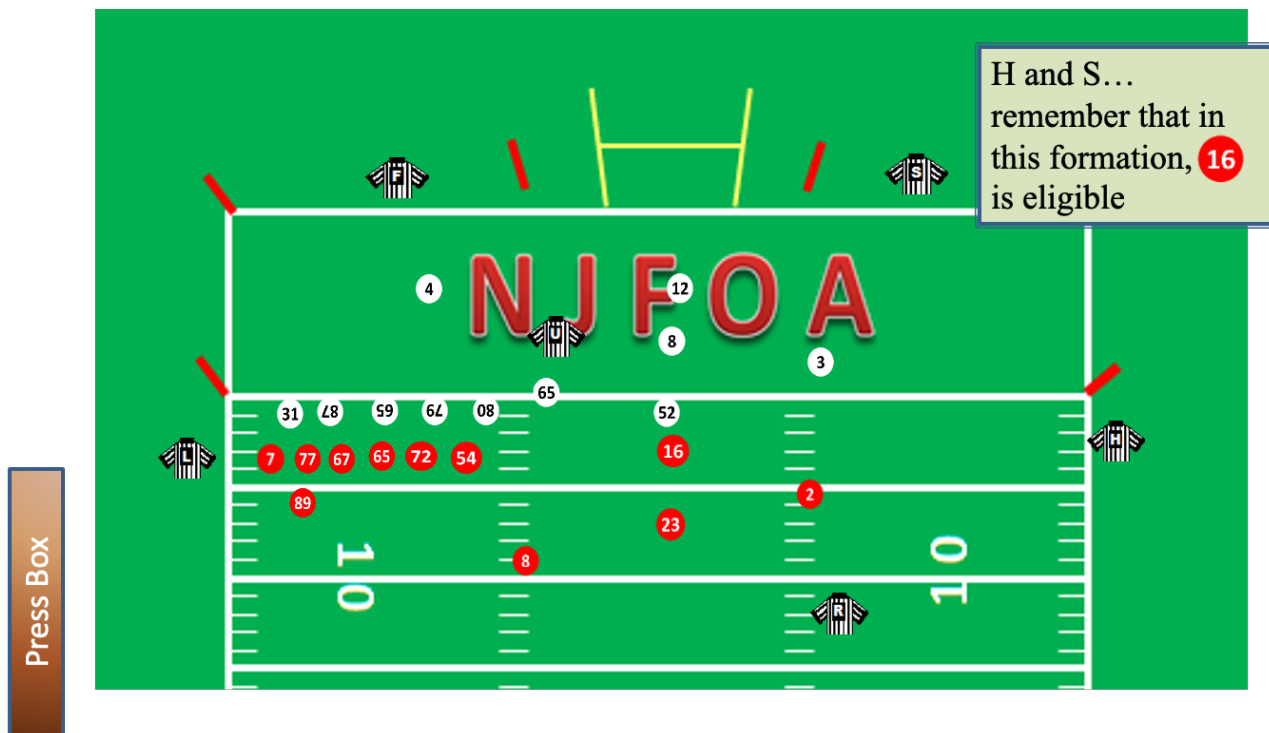
Outside R's 20. When the spot of the snap is outside R's 20, the **Line Judge** and **Head Linesman** will go to the line to gain immediately whenever a fake or busted play is determined and be ready to rule on progress. If the ensuing play advances beyond the line to gain, these officials will trail the play as quickly as possible and be responsible for ruling on progress up but not including R's goal line. The Field Judge and Side Judge will come off the end line at a 45-degree angle to the goal line and be in position to rule on any advance across R's goal line. **The proper officiating positions for field goal and try attempts from a scrimmage kick are illustrated in the following drawing:**



MUDDLE HUDDLE/SWINGING GATE:

If Team A initially lines up in a “muddle-huddle” (swinging gate) formation, all officials should position themselves as they would for a scrimmage play inside B’s 7 as shown below. However, depending on which side of the field the “gate” sets up, and depending on whether the kicker is right- or left-footed, the Referee and Umpire may coordinate and choose to reverse their initial positions. In the case of this formation below, the Referee might be positioned to the left behind the “muddle”/”gate” and the Umpire (opposite the R) might be initially positioned to the right of the snapper on the open side of the field. This would mean that if/when Team A shifts into a traditional kick-try formation, the Referee and Umpire will be in their approximately correct try positions with minimal movement (right-footed kicker assumed).

Regardless of how the R and U decide to line up, the initial positioning of all officials must anticipate that a two-point try might very well be attempted from this formation.



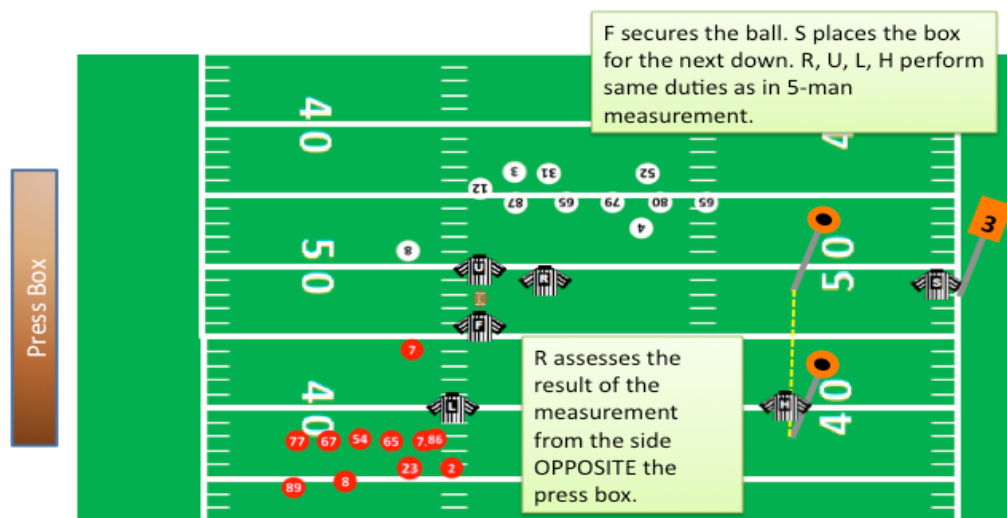
IX. MEASUREMENT FOR FIRST DOWN

When the ball is dead and forward progress is close to the line-to-gain, the Referee will decide if the clock should be stopped to signal a first down or ask for a measurement. If a measurement is needed, the Field Judge will hold the ball in place on the ground. The Side Judge and The Head Linesman will go to the sideline with the chains. The Side Judge will mark and hold the front stake with the down box. The Head Linesman will take the chain at the clip and direct the chain crew to take the chains onto the field toward the ball. The Line Judge will help the Head Linesman to align the chains on the field for measurement by giving him a spot on the yard line with the clip and in line with the ball. Once the Head Linesman has the clip down and secure, the Umpire will take the front stake from the chain crewman and stretch the chains so the Referee can rule on whether the front of the ball is beyond the line to gain. If a first down is

indicated, the Head Linesman will release the chain crew to return to the sideline where he will give them a first down spot. If the line-to-gain has not been reached, the Head Linesman will return to the sideline, re-spot the clip, and make sure the chain is stretched to place the chain in its original position.

When a measurement is needed and the ball is dead outside the hash marks, the same process is used. However, if the ball is short of the line to gain, the old ball should remain at the spot until a new ball is spotted at the hash mark for the next play. In this situation, the **Line Judge** should obtain a new ball and hand it to the Referee. The **Referee** will take the new ball from the Line Judge and also grab the link of the chain just in front of the foremost point of the old ball. The **Head Linesman**, holding the clip, the Referee, holding the chain link, and the Umpire, holding the front stake, should bring the chains to the hash mark and align them with assistance from the Line Judge. The Head Linesman shall hold the chain at the clip, and the **Umpire** shall stretch the chain. Once the chains are aligned, the Referee will spot the new ball just inside the hash mark at the proper spot. The **Field Judge** will hold the dead ball in the side zone at its spot on the ground until the Referee has correctly spotted the new ball inside the hash mark and has released the chains back to the sideline. The Field Judge should then give the old ball to the ball handler. If the Referee happens to drop the chain, the new ball does not line up clearly with the old ball, or some other event occurs causing a problem with the process, return the chains to the old ball and start over. This is the reason it is very important for the **Field Judge** to secure the old ball the ENTIRE TIME. The **Side Judge** remains at the sideline and assists the line-to-gain crew in placing the box for the next down.

PLEASE NOTE: Though Federation rules don't require that every coach's request for a measurement be granted, Referees should consider all aspects of the game (down, score, position on the field relative to team boxes, time remaining) before deciding whether or not to grant a request. Do not reject a coach's request out of hand.



X. TIME OUTS

Referee: Take a position near team A's huddle if the conference is held on the field. If the conference is held at the 9-yard marks take a position at the inbounds line nearest the team "A" sideline. Sound your whistle curtly at the conclusion of the time-out interval and summon the respective teams back to the succeeding spot to prepare for the next play.

Umpire: Take a position over the football and do not allow its status or position to be altered.

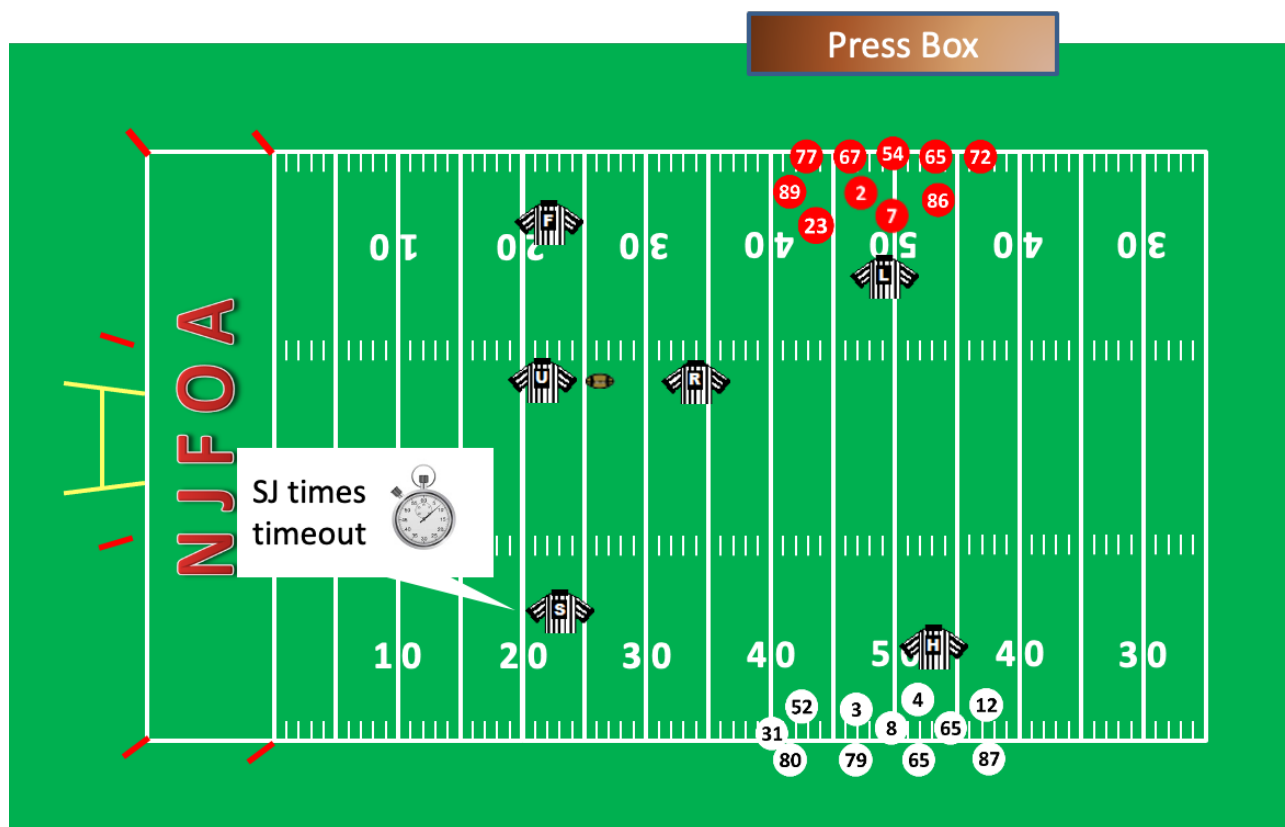
Head Linesman & Line Judge: Assume a position on your sideline near the respective teams' conference if it is held near the 9-yard marks. If the conference is held at the inbounds line, stay between the huddle and near the team box to monitor any and all player exchanges. Make sure to inform your respective head coaches as to the number of time-outs remaining for each team. Assist in calling the teams back onto the field at the timeout's conclusion.

Field Judge & Side Judge: Assume a position somewhere between the team box located on your side of the field and the inbounds line. Monitor any activity during the conference if held at the inbounds lines. Assist in calling the teams back onto the field at the timeout's conclusion.

Side Judge: Time the time-out interval and alert the referee when time has expired by blowing two short tweets with his whistle and 5 seconds later, the R will mark the ball ready for play.

All Officials: Mark your game card and communicate with each other to assure that all members of the crew are aware of the proper number of time-outs available for each team before the conference period has expired.

The proper mechanics to use during a time out are shown in the following diagram.



XI. PLAYS NEAR THE GOAL LINE

A. Ball Outside Team B's 7-Yard Line

The Referee, Umpire, Head Linesman, and Line Judge will assume their normal positions. The **Field Judge and Side Judge** will position themselves on the goal line outside the pylon and will

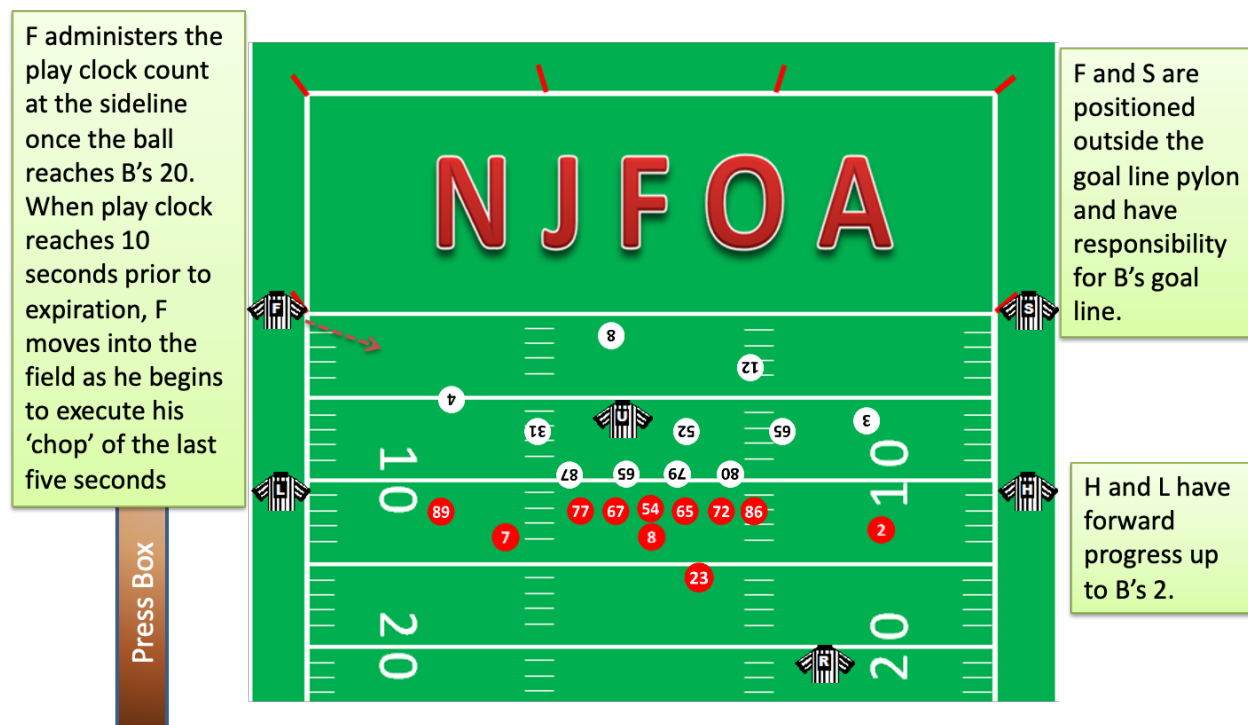
maintain this position as Team A moves toward the goal line. **** Field Judge: From the 25yd line to the 8 yd. line, the FJ should line up on the goal line, and administer the play clock by moving in to the bottom of numbers if the count reaches 5 seconds prior to expiration.** The Line Judge and Head Linesman must be ready to move toward the goal line and rule on progress up to B's 2. Inside of B's 2, the Field Judge and Side Judge will come off the goal line to determine the forward progress spot.

Side Judge and Field Judge: Goal line and sideline responsibility on all plays. Initial position is on the goal line two or three yards off the sideline. Move as the play dictates. Be alert. Protect the sideline on your side to end line. Be ready to rule on balls that become loose and on recovery in the end zone. Be careful on 4th down within 10-yard line.

Responsible for goal line on a running play when the line of scrimmage is beyond the 7-yard line. Be able to determine whether a catch of pass was made in or outside of end line. Watch for eligible receivers going over the end line before they catch or touch a pass. Assist on out of bounds spots. Before FJ, SJ rule TD, they should check with wing. Look, confirm, nod.... then go up.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: Stay out of bounds on sideline. Close in towards play and goal line only after you are positive the play has gone into line or away from you. When ball is dead on your side, mark the forward progress spot.

Position yourself the same as a running play, but emphasis is on forward progress. Concentrate more intently on your zone of coverage, as this is significantly smaller than usual. Assist FJ and SJ on all plays, especially passes into the end zone and on plays where the runner is very close to the sideline. That's the wing official's call. **The proper officiating positions for plays where the snap occurs inside the red zone but outside Team B's 7-yard line are illustrated in the following drawing:**



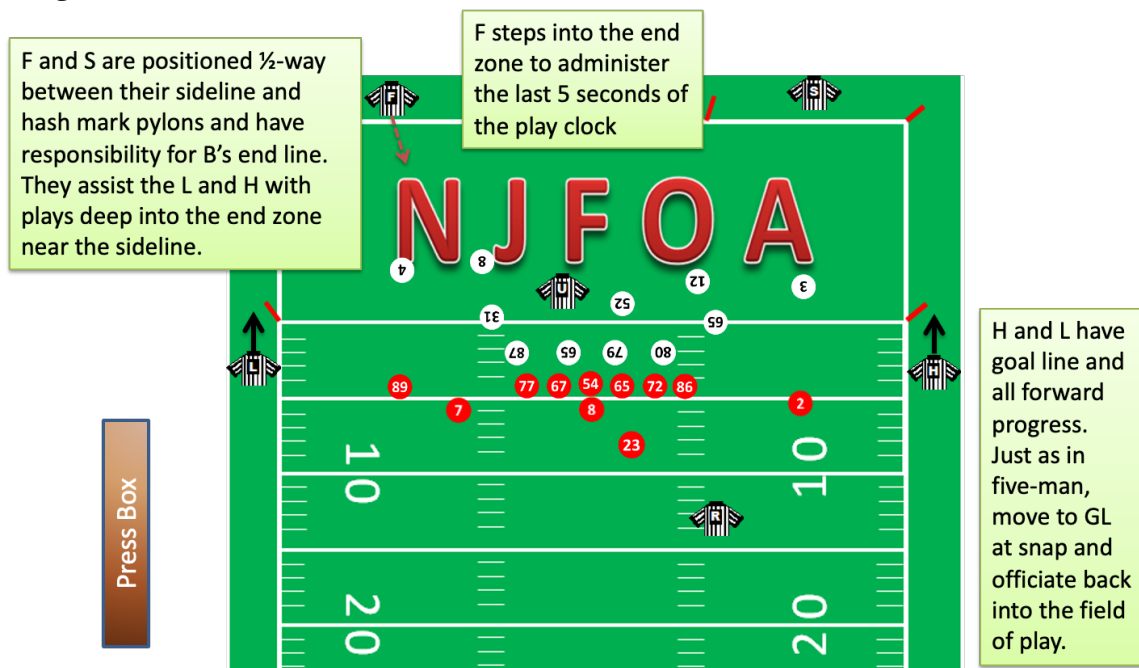
B. Ball On and Inside Team B's 7 Yard Line

The Referee, Umpire, Head Linesman, and Line Judge will assume their normal positions.

Side Judge and **Field Judge:** FJ and SJ initial position will be on the end line midway between their respective sideline pylon and their hash mark pylon (approximately 9 yards from the sideline and approximately in line with the tops of the numbers). From that initial position, the FJ will then take one step into the end zone and officiate the last 5 seconds of the play clock count from there. The FJ and SJ will each be responsible for the end line from their sideline to the center of the field on each side of the goal post. Assist the HL and LJ on passes that threaten the sideline. . When a pass is clearly going to the opposite side of the field, the off-side official shall move in towards the center of the field along the end line to assist his partner in determining possession and in bounds/out of bounds status. The Field Judge and Side Judge will continue to key on the outside receiver on their respective sides of the formation. *(Note: This is a change from prior guidance.)*

Linesman and **Line Judge:** Take regular position staying out of bounds at sideline. Cover your sideline to the end line and be prepared to rule on passes at your sideline. The SJ and FJ will assist on passes in the end zone near the end line. When ball is snapped from B's 7-yard line and in, move purposefully toward the goal line at the snap, observing all action, and moving at a 45-degree angle so that you have established a 3-yard cushion off the pylon when you reach the goal line. This affords you a safe distance from the action and a wider viewing perspective of the goal line/sideline intersection. [Note: Follow the guidance provided in Section VI Item F ("4th and Short") for dealing with situations where the line to gain is between B's 7-yard line and B's goal line]. Key on inside eligible receiver on your side of the formation.

Side Judge and **Field Judge** are on the end lines between the pylons and goal posts. The goal line is left to the HL and LJ. They should be ready to pivot and share the SL/EZ catch for TD/Interception. The **Umpire** moves closer to LOS at snap and must be in position to rule on ineligible downfield and illegal forward pass since the HL and LJ have vacated the line of scrimmage.



C. Sideline Plays Inside the Red Zone (20 yd line)

On plays up a sideline and into B's end zone, FJ and LJ should make eye contact with each other (or SJ and HL on the other sideline) before giving any TD signal to be sure both agree that the runner did not step out of bounds. The short wings (HL and LJ) have the primary responsibility for ruling on a runner being out of bounds along the sideline.

D. Goal Line Coming Out

When Team A snaps the ball on or inside its own five-yard line, the Head Linesman and Line Judge should immediately move to the goal line outside the pylon. All other officials should officiate the play as normal. The **Umpire** moves closer to LOS at snap and must be in position to rule on ineligibles downfield and illegal forward pass since the HL and LJ have vacated the LOS.

XII. CHANGE OF QUARTER PROCEDURES

When time expires for the first or third periods, the **Referee** will hold the ball in one hand over his head to signal the official end of the period **after pausing** for a moment to make sure that no foul, obvious timing error, request for a coach-official conference or other irregularity has occurred. In hot or inclement weather, the change of quarters is recommended as a good time to direct teams to their sidelines.

Once the period officially ends, the **Referee**, **Umpire**, and **Side Judge** will meet at the ball and agree and record possession, next down to be played, and the yard line where the ball is located. All officials will record the same information, and the **Head Linesman** will record the position of the clip. The **Head Linesman** will stay on his sideline and record all of the above and also the yard line where the clip is located. The **Side Judge** and **Field Judge** will at all times observe the teams, and help each team get turned around and located at the correct yard line. The **Referee** and **Umpire** shall move to the location of the ball at the new spot.

Prior to moving the chains, the **Side Judge** will proceed to the sideline and confirm the information with the **Head Linesman** and note the yard line where the clip is located. The **Head Linesman** will pick up the chain at the clip, instruct the chain crew to swap ends, and then lead the crew to the succeeding spot, place the clip at the appropriate yard line and instruct the crew to extend the chain from that spot in both directions. The **Side Judge** will observe the chains being turned around and then go to the opposite end of the field and confirm the clip is placed in the correct location.

The Change of Quarters procedure should take no more than one minute and is timed by the **Side Judge**. After 45 seconds, the **Side Judge** should signal the **Referee**. The **Referee** should then signal the wing officials to get the teams back onto the field. After checking that all officials are in proper position and that the clock has been reset and that there is no other delay, the **Referee** will mark the ball ready for play.

XIII. HALF TIME PROCEDURES

When time expires for the second period, the **Referee** will hold the ball in one hand over his head to signal the official end of the period **after pausing** for a moment to make sure that no foul, obvious timing error, request for a coach-official conference or other irregularity has occurred.

The Game Clock Operator will put the length of the half time period on the Game Clock and wait for the Referee's signal. When all players and coaches have cleared the field, the **Referee** will signal the Game Clock Operator to start the Game Clock to time the half time period.

All officials will exit the field together and should neither avoid nor seek out coaches during the exit from the field. The **Side Judge** will keep backup time, or official time if the Game Clock is not functioning, for the half time period and the time will start when both teams have cleared the playing area. If there are any discussions between officials and coaches, the **Referee** will be the spokesman for the officiating crew, but the referee will designate another official to also participate in any such discussion.

Five minutes prior to the end of half time, the **Field Judge** will make contact with the Head Coach for the team on the press box side of the field, and the **Side Judge** will make contact with the Head Coach for the team on the side of the field opposite the press box. They will notify the respective Head Coaches of the time remaining in the half time. These officials will remain with their respective teams and make sure the teams return to the field in time for the mandatory warm-up period. These officials will give the proper options to the teams and get the choices from the Head Coaches concerning receiving, kicking, and defending a goal.

XIV. "TWO MINUTES TO GO"

Near the end of either half, things can get very hectic as the offense may be trying to score and battling the clock as they do so. Conversely, they may be ahead and looking to consume as much of the game clock as they can. There are certain things we must do to ensure that no advantage is illegally gained and to likewise ensure that neither team is disadvantaged by our own techniques. When Team A is attempting to consume time (end of half/game),, the Field Judge must strictly and accurately manage the play clock.

A. Clock Awareness

Near the end of either half all officials must be constantly aware of the clock status. Is it running when it is supposed to be? Is it stopped when the rules call for a clock stoppage? While this task is primarily the role of the **Field Judge** and **Side Judge**, long advances or turnovers might require them to be covering the dead ball spot. That's why all officials need to be intimately aware of clock status. If any official identifies a situation where the clock is incorrectly running or stopped—especially during the last few minutes of either half, hold up play and get the clock corrected.

B. Hurry-Up/No Huddle Mechanics

In the hurry-up, the offense is attempting to get as many plays off as possible within a given timeframe—usually at the end of a half or the game. In the hurry-up, the clock becomes a secondary opponent for the offense.

Officials should be aware of the hurry-up and take positive steps to avoid impeding an offense's ability to play at their pace. The days of "Well, they'll just have to play at our pace" are gone. The offense has the right to dictate the pace of play, provided all officials are in place and game administration tasks such as signaling penalties to the press box have been completed. Therefore, the overarching directive to all officials is this: Get to your position, be facing the ball, and get ready for the next play as quickly as possible following the dead ball.

Here are some other steps we should take (or not take) in order to facilitate the no-huddle/hurry-up modes of offense when the clock is running at the end of a down:

- **Retrieve the ball following the prior play** and relay it to the umpire as expeditiously as possible. Umpires...be ready to sprint well into the side zones to retrieve the ball from wing officials—or from the runner or the ground—and then quickly return to the hash mark to set the ball ready-for-play. As you return to hash mark from a side zone, use the offside wing official to assist you in spotting the ball. That offside wing will mirror the covering official's spot to facilitate your spotting of the ball. Let the snapper know "Ball's ready" as you back out to your position.
- **Do not look to change balls arbitrarily.** For no-huddle, only change out unusable balls as weather conditions dictate. For hurry-up offense with the clock running near the end of a half, one ball should be used – even in inclement weather conditions. Wait for a clock stoppage to change a wet ball.
- **Avoid tossing the ball around.** This means that the umpire will be coming further into the side zones to retrieve the game ball, hustle back to the hash marks and set the ball ready for play.
- **Wing officials should stay wide** to mark the forward progress spot unless that spot is threatening the line to gain or the goal line. Come into the field only a few steps to identify the progress spot. This ensures that the ready for play is not delayed waiting for those officials to return to their pre-snap positions. Just as for all other cases, wing officials should mirror each other's spots, allowing the umpire easy access to routine spotting of the ball as he comes from the side zone to the hash marks.
- **Avoid measurements unless absolutely necessary.** And don't allow yourself to be talked into an unnecessary measurement by a coach looking for you to slow down his opponent's momentum or to provide him with the equivalent of a timeout.
- **Umpire—stand over the ball if the ready for play is delayed** by circumstances and the offense is in formation ready to go, e.g. when the referee is completing his signaling of a penalty decision to the press box. Likewise, communicate with the snapper and QB if you have just set the ball ready for play. Last instruction to the snapper and QB as you back out: "Wait for the referee's whistle" (25-second play clock) or "Ball is ready" (40-second play clock running).
- **Never turn your back to the action when the offense is over the ball.** Backpedal to your position quickly if necessary.
- **Referee—Stay back close to your pre-snap position** at the end of a down. Signal 'first down,' and if necessary, restart a stopped game clock, or blow the ball ready-for-play (25 seconds) from your position. Don't come to the succeeding spot unnecessarily.
- **Avoid talking to players, coaches, etc.** while the clock is running.
- **Remaining officials**—get to your pre-snap positions quickly.

Throughout the game, but especially when the offense is looking to step up the pace of play, our goal is efficient, quick, and accurate spotting of the ball so Team A never has to wait for officials other than after timeouts, after awarded first downs, and after any measurements.

Hustle at all times but avoid hurrying and risking a mistake in game administration.

C. Clock Abuse

All officials, but primarily the **Referee**, need to be aware that at the end of either half, teams might be attempting to conserve or consume time. There may be occasions where a team will foul in (a) an attempt to stop a running clock, or (b) to cause a reset of the play clock with a resulting consumption or conservation of game clock time. Any situation where a team fouls to gain an unfair advantage with respect to an attempt to illegally conserve or consume time should be addressed by the referee exercising his discretion in starting the game clock or keeping it stopped on his ready for play signal to prevent such an advantage (Rule 3-4-6). And don't try to read into 'intent' in these situations.

To handle these situations properly, you must be acutely aware of who's winning, and any attempts they may make to consume the game clock, and conversely what the team that's trailing might do to conserve time illegally. And remember that both Team A and Team B can be guilty of clock abuse.

For the 2017 season, the NFHS established a rule to deal with a team attempting to illegally consume time during the last two minutes of either half. In such cases, if after enforcement or declination of the penalty, if the clock is due to start on the ready for play, the offended team has the option of choosing whether to start the clock on the referee's signal (RFP) or on the snap.

In addition to this new rule, the NJFOA has adopted the following philosophy to handle these timing inconsistencies. These interpretations are also endorsed by the NJSIAA office, and supported by NFHS rules

For example, consider these plays:

Case Play #1 Team A has the ball (and is leading team B by a 3 points) with 1:59 to play in the game and the clock running when they are called for a false start. Ruling: After enforcement of the penalty, the referee will ask Team B whether they wish the clock started on the referee's signal or on the snap.

Case Play #2 Team A trails with 0:10 remaining and no time outs remaining. After a short advance, A4 tosses the ball away from the dead ball spot. Covering official stops the clock to retrieve the ball. Referee rules a delay of game. Because Team A was attempting to illegally conserve time with their action, Referee starts the clock with the ready for play signal.

Not all unusual timing situations near the end of the game are related to a team's attempt to gain an advantage by abusing the timing rules:

Case Play #3 With team A leading and the clock running with 1:53 seconds left in the contest, The HL informs the R that the chains are broken. Ruling: The R should use discretion in adjudicating an equitable solution. The Field Judge should inform the R of how much time has run off on the play clock. When play resumes, the R will add that time back on to the game clock and then start the clock on the ready for play. This procedure resets the game clock to its original status when the ball was declared ready for play. Neither team is put at a disadvantage. It is important that the field judge has specific knowledge of the play clock count. This scenario could apply to any administrative halt of play while the clock is running (equipment, clock malfunction, injury, etc.)

XV. OVERTIME PROCEDURES

All varsity games must play an overtime period if, at the end of regulation time, the score is tied.

The overtime procedure to be used is the National Federation of State High School Association's overtime procedure specified in **THE NATIONAL FEDERATION FOOTBALL RULES BOOK and as modified by the NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association.)** These procedures should be discussed as part of the pre-game.

When the score is tied at the end of regulation, all field officials will meet at the center of the field to review overtime procedures for a period of three minutes. The Game Clock Operator will turn off the game clock. After this three-minute intermission, the Head Linesman and Side Judge will go to the sideline opposite the press box, and the Line Judge and Field Judge will go to the press box sideline to inform the coaches of any penalties that will be enforced on the first series of overtime, and of the number of timeouts each team will have (maximum one timeout per team per overtime period). If requested by either coach, or to explain unusual situations, the Referee may go to **both** head coaches, home team first. The other officials will remain in the center of the field.

All officials will conduct the overtime coin toss as described in Section IV. The Head Linesman and Line Judge will obtain a game ball from their respective teams. When the coin toss is completed, the Umpire will place the offensive team's game ball on the appropriate yard line to begin the overtime.

Beginning with the third overtime period, if a team scores a touchdown, it must attempt a two-point try.

XVI. MISCELLANEOUS BUT IMPORTANT ITEMS

A. Forward Progress

IMPORTANT! Give the runner/receiver every inch he has gained. Never allow the defense to negate forward progress by spotting the ball back to where the offensive player has been pushed. Always be alert as to the foremost point of the ball as the runner crosses the sideline (i.e., give him all he has gained). Use your partner's "soft spot" if necessary, to ensure we get this spot right.

B. Pinching In / "Accordion"

This phrase describes moving toward a downed runner, primarily by the Head Linesman and the Line Judge. HL and LJ move toward the downed runner at right angles (perpendicular to the sideline), never at an oblique angle. If you are slightly behind or ahead when the runner is tackled, reach the same yard line before going in toward the play (Square-off your spots). Use cross-field mechanics to assist with getting the proper spot of forward progress.

Mark the foremost point of the ball with the up-field foot positioned slightly forward. Hold this spot until the ball has been spotted or until another official has acknowledged that he has acquired the spot. When the Umpire or Referee accepts the spot from the spotting official, he should mirror his action by planting his up-field foot on the same yard line facing Team B's goal line and, when he is given the ball, spot the ball at the most forward point. The ball will then be spotted accurately. It should be noted that almost all forward progress spots will be taken from

the wing men (Linesman or Line Judge). The only time the Umpire's spot will be acceptable is when the ball is dead at his feet **and both** wing men are **COMPLETELY** blocked out of the play.

If the dead ball spot is close enough to the line-to-gain that a measurement might be necessary, the spotting official should personally "pinch in" and move to the dead ball spot and place the ball at his own foot. Do NOT take the ball from a dead ball spot in the middle of the field and relay it to the spotting official in a side zone. However, when "pinching in," do not jump over or go around players to reach the spot. Go in until pressure is felt (players at your side or blocking your path to the spot). Normally, it is much better to mark the spot from 5 to 7 yards away than to almost reach the downed runner and be knocked around by jostling and late arriving players. You cannot give accurate assistance in spotting the ball if you are being pushed around or knocked down. If you go in too deep, players can and will engage in action behind you and this should never be allowed to happen.

If the dead ball spot is not threatening the line to gain or goal line, the covering official should "pinch in" to give the spot of forward progress, but there is no need to come in very far. Just separate yourself from the sideline clutter so that the umpire can clearly pick up your progress spot.

C. Dead Ball Period

Prior to the snap or awaiting the kickoff, all officials should be standing erect or be in a ready position. Officials should **NEVER** slouch or get in the habit of "hands on hips" while "leaning" on one foot. A professional appearance is given to coaches, players and fans if one assumes the "parade rest" position. This posture is highly recommended during time out periods.

D. Live Ball Period

During live ball action, keep in mind that each official has a specific area of responsibility and **never** should all eyes be on the ball. Be aware of the general location of the ball, but do not get in the habit of "zeroing in" on the ball. Be alert for unnecessary action away from the ball. When the ball carrier is downed, get in the habit of seeing the ball, knowing it is the ball and knowing the ball is dead in player possession **BEFORE BLOWING THE WHISTLE!**

E. Bean Bag Use

Deep Wing Officials shall carry two bean bags. All other officials shall carry at least one bean bag. Whether black, blue, or white, all officials will carry the same color bean bags. The covering official will drop the bean bag to mark any designated line specified by rule and by the following mechanics. Officials should be familiar with these bean bag mechanics. It is not necessary to run to the actual spot to drop the bean bag. Once marked, remaining officials should not drop the bean bag just to "back up" another official because confusion may result from multiple bean bag spots.

An official should drop his bean bag at the appropriate spot in the following situations:

- 1) Any spot of first touching during a free or scrimmage kick;
- 2) Any spot where a fumble occurs;
- 3) The Referee will drop a bean bag when the QB is hit and loses control of the ball indicating he has ruled a fumble

- 4) The spot where a backward pass is thrown if it is beyond the neutral zone;
- 5) The spot of a catch, interception or recovery inside B's 5-yard line when the momentum rule applies
- 6) Forward progress when necessary; and
- 7) The spot where the kick ends (post scrimmage kick spot).

F. Fumble

Regardless of where a fumble occurs, the covering official observing it should drop his bean bag to mark the spot of the fumble. He should continue to officiate the remainder of the play.

If the play involves a scrambling pile of players attempting to recover the loose ball, be sure to see the ball before blowing the whistle. The first official to the pile should start digging for the ball in the pile. The second official should stop the clock and help in un-piling players. The remainder of the officiating crew should monitor for dead ball infractions and keep other players from joining the pile. If after unpiling players, it is determined that Team A has recovered its own fumble and retained possession of the ball, the Referee should step into a clear path to the press box and immediately wind the clock (no whistle).

G. Ball Persons

Ball persons should be stationed between the two wings, not behind the HL and LJ. Using this mechanic either wing official can retrieve and rotate the ball so that it can be spotted efficiently.

H. Signals by Wing Officials

The Head Linesman and Line Judge should extend an arm horizontally toward the offensive team to signify that the offensive player *nearest* him is off the line of scrimmage. This signal should be held until the snap or at a time when the nearest player is no longer off the line.

The Head Linesman and Line Judge should extend his arm across his chest to indicate more than three linemen on his side of the snapper. This signal should be held until acknowledged by the other wing official.

The **Head Linesman** and **Line Judge** should assist an offensive player who is split out from the rest of the team in order to help him locate the line of scrimmage. If the offense is to the left of the wingman, he should extend his left foot to indicate Team A's line of scrimmage. If the offense is to the right, he should extend his right foot. Do not tell the player to move but do let him know that your foot is indicating his line of scrimmage.

I. Complete and Incomplete Catch Signals

Wing and deep officials, along with the umpire may use the completed catch signal (two arms and hands over the head pulling them into the chest of the official two times) to signify that a player has made a catch. This signal may be used when appropriate. For instance: 1. Catch completed in the middle of the field as a player is diving for a ball and catches the ball just prior to it hitting the ground. Only do this after waiting to see if another official might be ruling the pass incomplete. 2. A player secures possession of a thrown ball just prior to going out of bounds and maintains possession. **This signal should never be used in the end zone to signal**

a completed catch. In the end zone use either the incomplete signal or touchdown signal.

A wing official may use the "juggling signal" to signify that a player did not have possession of the ball prior to going out of bounds.

J. Penalty Administration

All officials have a role in the calling and enforcement of penalties.

The Calling Official: An official who sees a foul shall drop his penalty flag at the proper spot. If it is possible that enforcement may be from the spot of the foul, he should try to get the flag as close as possible to the actual spot of the foul. **For dead ball fouls or fouls simultaneous with the snap, the covering official should toss the flag overhead into the air and directly in front of him. For fouls that occur at the spot, drop the flag at the yd line of the foul. If it is necessary to throw a flag to a certain spot, then be very careful not to hit a player with the flag. It is better to miss the spot by a few feet than to hit a player with the flag!!!**

After the ball becomes dead, the official who called the foul should stop the clock and get the Referee's attention by giving short blasts of the whistle. If the calling official is covering the succeeding spot, he should not leave the spot until another official comes to him and takes the spot for him. Make sure another official is covering the spot of the foul. The official should communicate all the following important information to the Referee:

- 1) The foul that was called;
- 2) The offending team (jersey color, offense/defense, etc.);
- 3) The offending player's number;
- 4) Pertinent spots;
- 5) Status of ball when foul occurred (loose, pass, run, before or after any change of possession);
- 6) Outcome of the play if applicable (first down, touchdown, short, fumble, etc.);
- 7) Status of clock on next play.

For the following fouls, the covering official may give the preliminary signal to the referee without consultation: encroachment, false start, pass interference (defense) and delay of game. The following guidelines must be adhered to when using this technique: Preliminary signals will only be given by the covering official when he/she is the only official making the call, and it is obvious that the foul has occurred. For dead ball fouls prior to the snap, the calling wing official should come onto the field, a few yards into the offensive backfield to give the preliminary signal. If two or more officials are involved in a penalty situation, then they must consult and inform the R, who will then make the preliminary signal and enforce the penalty, if accepted.

The calling officials should record all pertinent information on his game card including the player and team who fouled, whether the fouling team was on offense or defense, whether the penalty was accepted or declined, the foul and specific characteristics, the quarter, and time of the foul. In the case of unsportsmanlike or personal fouls—especially after repeated offenses—the referee or other official should inform the coach that the offender's conduct may be threatening his

continued participation in the game. **But under no circumstances should any official order or even recommend that a coach remove a player from the game.** Such a decision is the coach's sole responsibility.

Referee: Give the time out signal and get the full information from the calling official. Give the preliminary signal to the press box side of the field, except that no preliminary signal is needed following dead ball fouls involving the line of scrimmage (false start, encroachment, etc.) and enforcement is obvious. Give the options to the offended team's coach or designee and get his choice. If the choice is obvious, simply inform him what the result will be. Determine the enforcement spot. After the penalty has been determined, and while the Umpire is marking off the yardage and spotting the ball, the Referee should take a position clear of all players. He shall give the signal(s) for the foul, number(s) of the player(s) who committed the fouls and offending team, and the enforcement and number of the upcoming down to the press box. **Exception:** If a player is disqualified, the Referee shall not announce his number on microphone. The referee should recite all penalties/enforcements aloud—even if no PA microphone is provided. This is not for announcement to the PA or sideline; it is so our Referees will become familiar with the technique so that when assigned to a school which provides a PA microphone, there will be a level of comfort.

The Referee is responsible for informing all officials of any player who commits an unsportsmanlike foul, and all officials will record the numbers of all such players.

Following the game, he should review all penalty information with the crew and prepare a foul report to be turned into the Assignment Secretary.

Umpire: Secure the ball, verify enforcement spot and distance with the Referee and proceed to mark off the penalty. On a properly marked field, do not step off the yardage except for the first and final yard. Be prepared to remain at the location of the next snap until the referee completes his signaling to the press box and is in position to blow the ball ready for play. This is especially important if the offense is in hurry up and is already over the ball. Once the referee completes his signaling/announcement, move quickly into your pre-snap position and inform the snapper to "wait for the whistle."

Head Linesman: Be ready to move the line-to-gain markers and be certain of the next down number. Mark off the penalty along the sideline to verify enforcement with Umpire. This serves as a check on the enforcement. Relay penalty information to the appropriate Coach as soon as possible.

Line Judge: Mark and hold the enforcement spot. Remain at the enforcement spot until the umpire and head linesman confirm correct enforcement. This provides a backup in case yardage enforcement needs to be repeated. If requested, relay penalty information to the appropriate Coach as soon as possible.

Field Judge and Side Judge: Help in retrieving the ball, holding the succeeding spot and or spot of the foul, and recovering the penalty marker. Assist in relaying information about the penalty to the Head Coaches.

All Officials: Accordion in at the end of the play as usual. Assist in obtaining information about what happened on the foul and relay the details to the Head Coaches. Make a mental note as to whether the clock should be started on the ready or at the snap. Make sure the penalty has been assessed properly in all respects. Communicate with other officials to make sure the entire crew agrees on the upcoming down number. If any official believes the enforcement to be incorrect, be

sure to question it immediately.

XVII. END OF THE GAME

The jurisdiction of the officials ends when the Referee declares the score final by holding the ball over his head. Unless the score is tied and there will be overtime played, there cannot be enforcement for a dead ball foul following the end of regulation time. All officials will immediately exit the field, and the Clock Operators will rejoin the crew as soon as possible. Do not discuss the game on the field or on your way to the locker room with anyone—including your teammates. Do not make any public statements about the game. All officials should give their foul information to the Referee so he can prepare his game foul report. The Referee should report any flagrant irregularity, player disqualification or coach disqualification to their Assigner and to their Chapter Secretary as soon as possible following the game.

XVIII. CLOCK OPERATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

With the introduction of the 40-second play clock in 2019, some schools have begun using visible plays clocks at their facilities. Our mechanics therefore will presume the possible use of these new devices.

The game and play clock operators are integral members of the officiating crew and game administration. Unfair advantages occur when the either clock is not started or stopped correctly by rule. Great care must be exercised to see that no time lag occurs in starting, resetting, or stopping the game and play clocks.

Both the game and play clock operators should report to the officials' dressing room at the stadium at least 45 minutes before game time for the following purposes:

1. Each clock operator will synchronize his time-of-day watch with the official game time as established by the official responsible for game timing.
2. Each clock operator must be equipped with an O-2-O wireless radio device so that he will be able to effectively communicate with the on-field officials regarding any possible clock corrections or other game/play clock issues. ECOs will secure the expected channel and/or privacy code from the crew during pre-game and test their device(s) from their game positions prior to kickoff. If used in the press box, ECOs must use a headset to properly secure official communications.
3. Each clock operator will advise officials whether he/she will be in the press box or on the sideline. Officials responsible for each clock (game and play) will determine procedure for communication with his respective timer and check this procedure prior to the game.
4. Officials and clock operators will discuss coordination of starting, stopping and adjusting each clock in accordance with the playing rules.
5. At least thirty (30) prior to game time, each clock operator will test the operations of his respective device and inform the referee of his findings. If either clock is not operating correctly, game management will be advised as quickly as possible. If the problem cannot be fixed prior to game time, the referee will decide how to proceed. While testing the game

clock, the ECO will determine whether or not the clock is set to display tenths of seconds during the last minute of any quarter, and whether the clock is set to sound an audible signal (horn, usually) automatically when the game clock reaches 0:00. Should either or both of these features be enabled, the ECO will disable them. Seek game administration assistance if necessary.

A. Game Clock Operations

Game Timing: Pre-game and Intermissions

The field game clock is normally started 30 minutes before game time. The halftime intermission will start on the referee's signal when the players and officials leave the field. All pre-game and halftime activities will be synchronized with the official game clock. The mandatory three-minute warm-up period will be put on the clock after the intermission time has elapsed.

Game Clock Failure

The clock operator shall have an extra stopwatch available. In case of failure of the game clock, the clock operator shall immediately contact the officials, giving them the correct data regarding the official time. The official responsible for timing will then pick up the correct game time on the stopwatch. Should the field clock become inoperative and subsequently repaired, it will not be used again until the next period begins or when the referee determines it is operational. In this case set the clock to zero or turn it off. The public-address announcer will indicate the field clock will not be official until the malfunction is corrected and subsequent announcement made on the PA system. **The Side Judge** will be responsible for keeping time on the field if the electronic clock becomes inoperable.

Game Clock procedures

1. On all free kicks, the nearest official(s) only will signal the legal touching of the ball by indicating that the game clock should start.
2. The official who declares the ball dead will be the first official to signal a time-out when a first down occurs.
3. Any official may signal a team time-out; therefore, the operator should be alert to stop the game clock.
4. On plays near a boundary line, unless an official so signals, if a pass is caught out of bounds, the incompleteness signal will stop the game clock. **Note:** On plays near the out-of-bounds line and in advance of the line to gain, an official **shall not give a winding signal** to indicate the ball is inbounds. Signal stop-the-clock signal for an apparent first down. **Officials are encouraged to not give the wind signal unless a player's progress is stopped and then he is driven out of bounds or is downed in bounds close to sideline (one yd. or less). Be alert for both signals.**
5. The game clock operator will automatically stop the clock following a touchdown, field goal, touchback or safety after the appropriate signal has been made.
6. After the game clock has been stopped, the referee will start it again on the referee's start-the-clock signal and if no such signal is given, the operator will start it on the snap. **If the Referee stops the game clock, when he shouldn't – you stop the clock. If the**

referee starts the game clock when he shouldn't – you start the clock. If a mistake is made, he will be responsible.

7. The referee may start the clock again before the ready-for-play signal, for example: when the clock is stopped to dig for a fumble, and it is determined that Team A has recovered its own fumble.
8. In accordance with the 2019 rule establishing a 40-second play clock, when Team A is awarded a first down and the game clock is stopped solely to award that new series, the Referee will restart the game clock when the ball is set ready by the Umpire. In this case, he will not blow a whistle ("silent wind"). Game clock operators must be alert for this signal to restart the game clock.
9. The try is not a timed down.
10. There are instances when a period shall be extended by an untimed down. During these extensions, leave the game clock at 0:00. Do not reset the game clock for the next period until the referee declares the period over by facing the press box and holding the ball overhead.
11. If overtime is to be played, the Game Clock Operator will turn the clock off during this period.
12. During the last two minutes of each half, game clock operators will track all clock stoppages on paper. A form for this purpose is included as **Appendix VI – ECO Two-minute Tracking Form**

NJSIAA Modified Timing Rule - Procedures

If at any point in the 2nd half one team is leading by 33 or more points, the modified timing rule procedure goes into effect. This procedure provides that the game clock continues to run except in the following situations:

- a. time out (official or team)
- b. player injury
- c. penalty enforcement
- d. score

If the clock is stopped for any of the above reasons, it is next started according to rule.

Note that the prior point differential condition allowing the game clock to revert to regular timing has been rescinded. **Once a running clock has been established, it will continue until the game ends.**

Game Clock operators are required to operate the game clock as their first and highest priority. Therefore, they must pay undivided attention to the action on the field. Their secondary responsibility is to keep the down, distance and score. Since it is a secondary responsibility, there may be times where accuracy in this area may be a bit off. Wrong down and distance are not nearly as bad as the wrong time!! Since schools are paying a full varsity fee, you must adhere to these guidelines.

B. Play Clock Operations

The NJFOA and NJSIAA have determined that if a school wishes to use visible play clocks at their facility, the clock will need to be operated either (a) by an official on the field via wireless remote control, or (b) by a NJFOA chapter certified clock operator familiar with play clock rules and official techniques related to play clock administration.

It is anticipated that this section of the manual will undergo revisions as the play clock operations, equipment, and possibly play clock rules evolve.

Instructions for 25/40 second Play Clock Operators

1. Reset the play clock to 40 seconds at the end of each play:

- A. The ball is declared dead in the field of play;
- B. Incomplete pass;
- C. The ball is declared dead out of bounds.
- D. Following the play, there is an injury to a player of Team B, or a team B player's helmet comes off requiring him to leave for a play. In these cases, the 40-second clock will start on the referee's signal.
- E. After a foul by the defense only, to administer the penalty

The covering official's signals (S7-Dead Ball, S2 – Wind Clock, S3 – Time Out, or S10 – Incomplete Pass) will designate when to start the play clock.

2. Manually set the play clock to 25 seconds when these occur:

- A. Penalty administration.
- B. Charged team time-out
- C. Media time-out
- D. Injury time-out or helmet comes off player (when for Team A or both teams)
- E. Measurement
- F. Team B awarded 1st down
- G. Start of a period
- H. Start of possession series in OT
- I. Either team is awarded a first down following a legal kick
- J. After any score
- K. Other administrative stoppage

3. Special Situations

- A. On a delay of game penalty, do not reset the play clock until the penalty is completed. Keep it showing :00.
- B. If the play clock hits :00 and there is no delay of game, reset to 40 seconds immediately after the snap, then wait for the appropriate signal to start the play clock.
- C. If the play clocks are not synchronized (show different times), or if one fails, the clocks must be turned off and the field judge will keep the play clock on the field.
- D. The referee is the only official that may reset the play clock by using the arm pump signal. It is common for an official to use this signal to "ask" the referee if he wants to consider resetting the play clock. One arm pump is to reset to 25 seconds. The two-arm pump signal is used to reset the play clock to 40 seconds.

- E. Look for the arm pump signal from the referee if you notice any type of administrative delay while the play clock is running, especially if the ball is spotted after the play clock gets under 25 seconds.
- F. On **kick-offs and free kicks after safety**, the 25 second clock starts on the ready for play by the referee. If there is a delay, the same procedure will be followed. The officials may reset the play clock if the ball blows off the tee. Watch for the arm pump from the referee.
- G. If the **game clock is running and less than 25/40 seconds remain in any period**, do not start the play clock. If the game clock is not running and less than 40 seconds remain in any period, the play clock is used normally. Remember that use of the play clock could alternate multiple times in the last 40 seconds.
- H. If the game clock is started erroneously, it shall be stopped immediately. The play clock should then be stopped. The Field Judge may be asked to help restore time using the remaining time on the play clock. Do not reset the play clock until the signal is given by the referee.

APPENDIX I - REFEREE PRE-GAME CONFERENCE WITH HEAD COACH

This conference should be held thirty minutes before game time. The home team coach should be conferred with first.

A. REFEREE:

1. Correct time.
2. Pre-game toss time.
3. Equipped according to rules/emphasize sportsmanship
4. Any unusual game situations.
5. Secure names and numbers of Captains and the person designated to make all penalty decisions (expect this to be the head coach).
6. Ask either coach if he will play any left-handed quarterbacks, as well as kicker's foot. If so, record that player's jersey number on your game card.
7. Length of half.
8. Notifications at end of half time.
9. Any questions from coach.
10. Ask for adult chain crew.
11. Keep sidelines clear and coaches/non-players in coaching box. Reinforce the requirement that all team personnel—including coaches—must leave the restricted area when snap is imminent. Snapper's hand(s) on the ball is an indicator that snap may occur at any time.
12. Post-game escort.

B. UMPIRE:

1. Inspect player equipment.
2. Inspect player's casts, tapes and bandages.
3. Record numbers of players with illegal equipment and inform the head coach.

APPENDIX II - PRE-GAME CONFERENCE WITH CREW

The Referee will conduct the Pre-Game Conference. However, in his absence the Linesman will assume this responsibility.

A. GENERAL:

1. Review rule changes.
2. Coordinate Watches with Field Judge.
3. Review any special bulletins issued by the assignor or the chapter.

B. TOSS OF COIN:

1. Actual three minutes before kickoff at mid-field.
2. Keep all team personnel off the field during toss, except for captains in playing uniforms (4-maximum).
3. After toss all officials meet at fifty and record result of coin toss.
4. Break briskly and jog to positions for kick-off. Outside officials check to ensure that sidelines are clear.

C. KICKOFF:

1. All officials perform pre-kick duties and be in position for kickoff. Umpire, after administering kick between the hash marks will move behind K's line with the kicker approximately 10-15 yards behind and to the kicking leg side of the kicker, check with other officials, and raise his hand to signal the referee that the ready-for-play can be blown.
2. Discuss field and sideline coverage.
3. Anticipate on side kick, bean bag.
4. Starting clock.
5. Coverage on long run.
6. Fair catch - valid and invalid signals.
7. First touching.
8. Blocking below waist.

D. SCRIMMAGE KICK FORMATION:

1. Kicks:
 - a. Touched or untouched by K or R after crossing neutral zone.
 - b. Kicks that do not cross neutral zone

2. Long or short kicks out of bound, Officials responsibilities.
3. First touching.
4. Catch or recovery by R or K.
5. Fair catch signal.
6. Line Judge and Linesman responsibility if kick crosses line.
7. Opportunity to catch kick.
8. Roughing the kicker.
9. Muff or fumble.

E. RUNNING PLAYS:

1. HL and LJ to rule on forward progress of ball. Unless forced out of position by a play coming toward them, they should move with the runner to track his advance. On a long advance, be prepared to trail the play straddling the sideline, and to rule on the runner in or out of bounds).
2. Caution on close measurements. Wing officials with forward progress spots on plays close to the line-to-gain or goal line should move in all the way to the dead ball itself to give the spot unless this is impossible.
3. HL and LJ position initially on sideline.
4. Watch for crack-back action.
5. HL and LJ check for legality of formation (five players #50-#79 on offensive line; no more than four players in backfield; legal position of all Team A players) and use approved signals to communicate position of widest offensive players.
6. HL and LJ man in motion away from you.
7. Referee, Umpire, Field Judge, Side Judge, clean up on plays in side zone and outside sidelines.
8. False Starts - Umpire, Lineman, and Line Judge - No player permitted in or beyond neutral zone.
9. Free-blocking zone.
10. Stop clock on first downs.
11. SEE LEATHER BEFORE BLOWING WHISTLE.
12. Illegal snap ball remains dead.

F. GOAL-LINE OR SHORT YARDAGE PLAYS:

1. HL and LJ forward progress and must cover goal line—sell your spots. FJ and SJ take end line.

2. See leather.
3. Signal score (HL and LJ responsibility).
4. Referee never signal score from behind runner.
5. Umpire never signal score from ahead of runner unless necessary in the case of a busted field goal/PAT situation. (Can help on plays at feet.)

G. FORWARD PASS PLAYS:

1. Linesman and Line Judge know eligible receivers.
2. Linesman and Line Judge have primary responsibilities for ineligibles down field and if pass crosses the neutral zone. The Umpire has secondary responsibility for ineligibles down field.
3. Referee, eligible backs.
4. Run-pass option coverage. Referee takes passer to line of scrimmage.
5. Know if pass is legally thrown.
6. Referee covers passer. Don't follow flight of the ball.
7. HL and LJ responsible for quick quarterback pass (forward or backward).
8. FJ and SJ should be ahead of all passes.
9. Zone coverage.
10. Screen passes.
11. Discuss catch and forward progress.
12. Momentum rule inside five-yard line.
13. Roughing Passer.
14. Discuss eligible receiver going out of bounds.
15. HL and LJ have forward progress and sideline from end line to end line.

H. FIELD GOAL AND TRY FOR POINT:

1. Field Goal - FJ and SJ responsible for ruling and signaling on all attempts.
2. Referee responsible for action on kicker and holder.
3. SJ has whistle.
4. Discuss fumble by holder.
5. Unsuccessful kicks.
6. Ball must go between not over uprights and over cross bar to be successful.

I. MEASUREMENTS:

1. Always place ball parallel to sideline for measurement.
2. LJ gives spot for HL.
3. Umpire stretches chain.
4. Referee makes decision.
5. Linesman put clip on yard line nearest rear rod. (Have down marker put in place of forward front stake before measurement.)
6. Field Judge sees that ball is not moved prior to measurement.

J. FOULS:

1. Know status of ball when foul occurred.
2. Referee give foul verbally to captain or sideline delegate via wing official O-2-O - Umpire to check - official calling foul stay by Referee to be sure he understands foul.
3. Signal foul before explaining options - again after acceptance or declination. On line of scrimmage dead ball fouls (FST, ENC, ILS), give one signal only while Umpire enforces penalty.
4. FJ and SJ to report foul and number to coach.
5. Captain/delegate must exercise penalty option before going to sideline during a time-out.
6. Umpire step off penalty with the Head Linesman—but ALL officials have responsibility for ensuring correct enforcement of penalties.
7. HL and LJ assure correct enforcement with Umpire.
8. Review fouls which extend periods.
9. Official calling foul is primarily responsible for seeing that the Referee and Umpire assess penalty properly, but the entire crew is responsible for getting it right.

K. TIMING AND TIME OUTS:

1. If a team is attempting to run out the clock, then the umpire should remind the QB of where the FJ is positioned. Also, the wing officials should remind the coaches.
2. SJ times length of time outs. FJ maintains the play clock, enters the field with ten seconds remaining on the clock, and holds arm up with five seconds remaining and begins chop.
3. Position of officials during time out.
4. All officials record time outs. Referee notify coaches and captains after third time out in each half.

5. All officials must observe the clock at all times. Do not allow a mistake to occur.
6. Procedure at end of period.
7. If official time is kept on field, stop game and notify benches when four minutes remain in period.
8. Officials should not gather together for bull sessions during time out.

L. SUBSTITUTIONS:

1. LJ and HL, FJ and SJ, be alert for replaced players leaving field by any sideline except that of their team area.
2. All officials alert for substitution situations.
3. Substitution rules. (Replaced players leave immediately: within 3 seconds)

M. MISCELLANEOUS:

1. Referee blow whistle and give arm signal whenever he declares ball ready for play (25 sec play clock).
2. Dealing with coaches (all officials).
3. Emphasis:
 - a. Keep sideline area clear.
 - b. Watch for blocking below waist.
 - c. SEE WRITING ON THE BALL BEFORE YOU BLOW THE WHISTLE.
4. Counting of players (FJ, and SJ count defense; R and U count offense).
5. Give signals.
6. Inadvertent whistle.
7. Call what you see but see what you call.
8. Don't turn your back on tough calls.
9. A mistake by one is a mistake by all. Don't allow your co-officials to make an obvious mistake.
10. Be in position for all calls. Hustle and be alert.

N. POST GAME DUTIES:

1. Join other officials and leave field together.
2. Use good judgment in any remarks to anyone.
3. Make sure to complete game report to be filed with the assigner and recorded for end of season evaluation.

APPENDIX III - POSITION KEYS

For complete coverage, all officials must cover their assigned keys at the snap. For the deep wings (FJ and SJ), keying Team A eligible receivers is their primary focus though downfield blocking by their primary key also needs their attention. For the referee and umpire, it's blocking keys that become their main responsibility. The short wings (LJ and HL) need to focus on both in order to be effective.

Referee. Assume the position described in this manual (on right side of QB/Punter). Key on the quarterback and the tackle on your side of the formation. Though assisting in watching the interior line blocking, the referee's primary key is the quarterback, especially when threatened by a defender and under duress. He retains this responsibility throughout the play, until and unless the quarterback/runner advances beyond the neutral zone where a Wing Official picks up coverage.

Umpire. Ensure legal snap. Has primary responsibility for action by and against the center, both guards, and the tackle opposite the referee. Officiate at and behind the point of attack.

Head Linesman and Line Judge. At the snap, key on inside receivers and be ready to assist with blocking by the tackle on your side of the formation if the situation permits it.

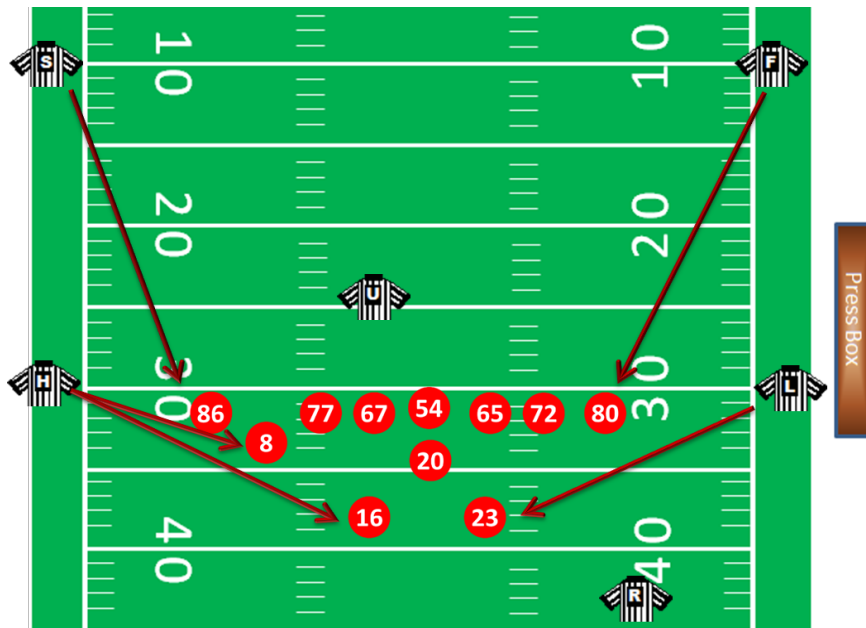
Field Judge and Side Judge: At the snap, key on the widest receiver.

All officials: Stay with your key(s) for initial contact by or against him. Do not release your key or go to zone too early. Do not 'tunnel vision' your key. Only after initial contact should you go to zone coverage.

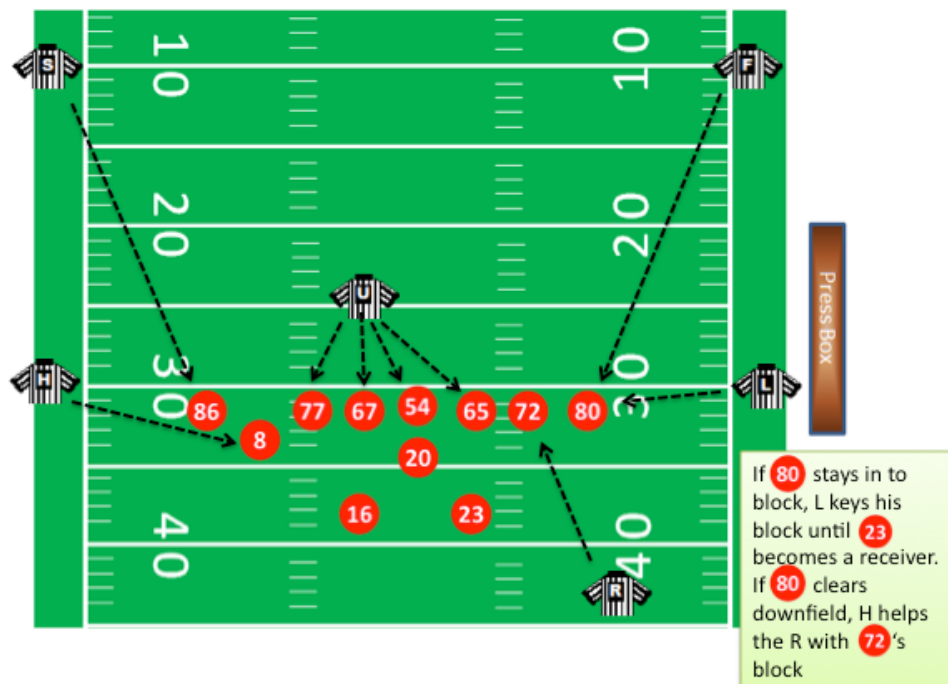
Shifts and motion. Your keys are set at the snap. Therefore, if there is a shift or motion before the snap, your keys may change. **BE ALERT FOR SHIFTS OR MOTION PRIOR TO THE SNAP.**

Examples of the application of these keys are illustrated on the following fourteen diagrams:

Strength to H; slot receiver – strength side

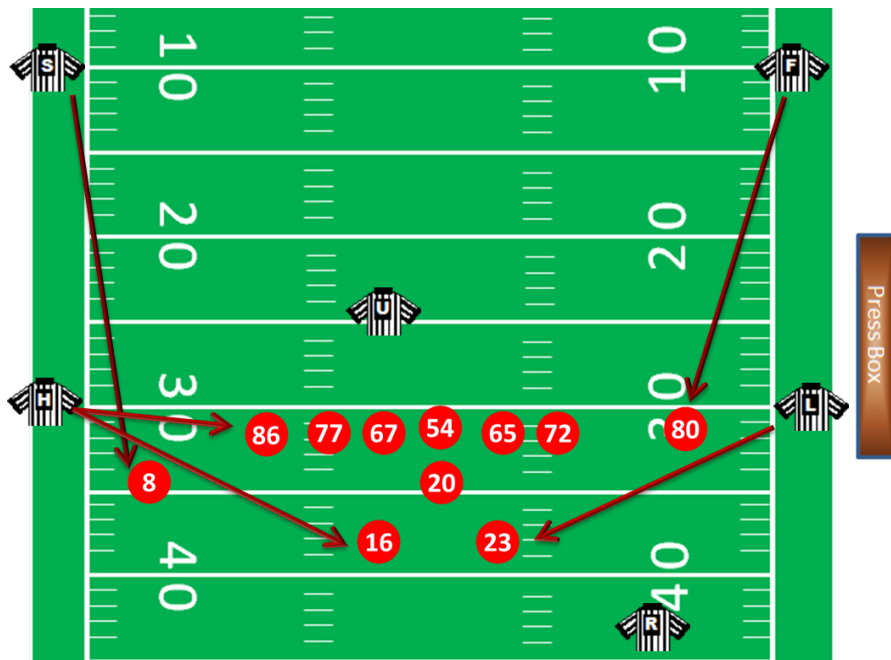


Eligible
Receiver
Keys

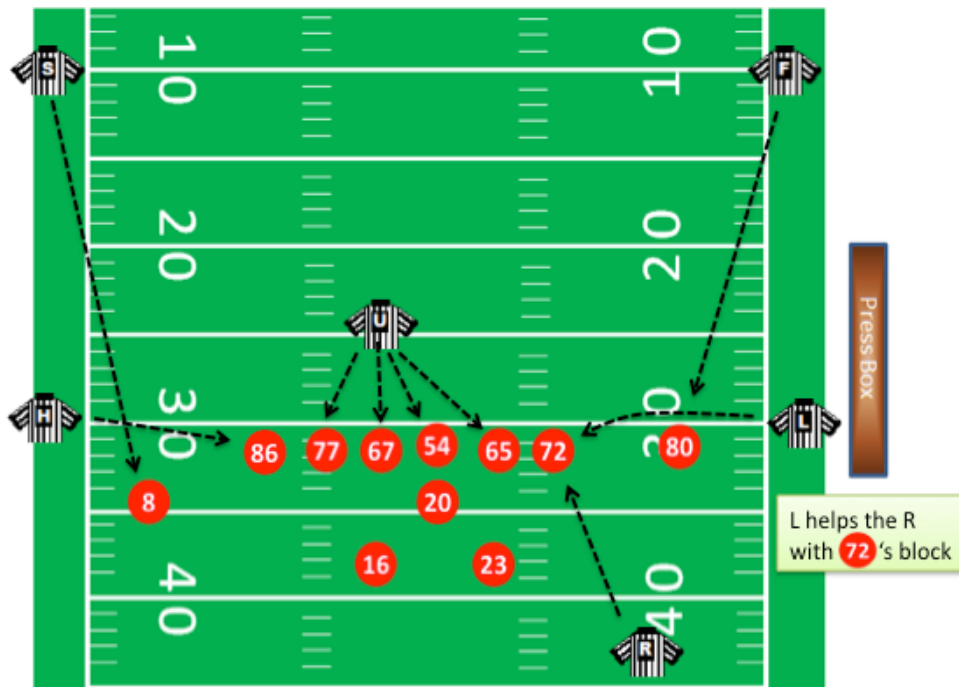


Blocking
keys

Strength to H; pro-set



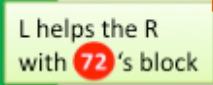
Eligible
Receiver
Keys



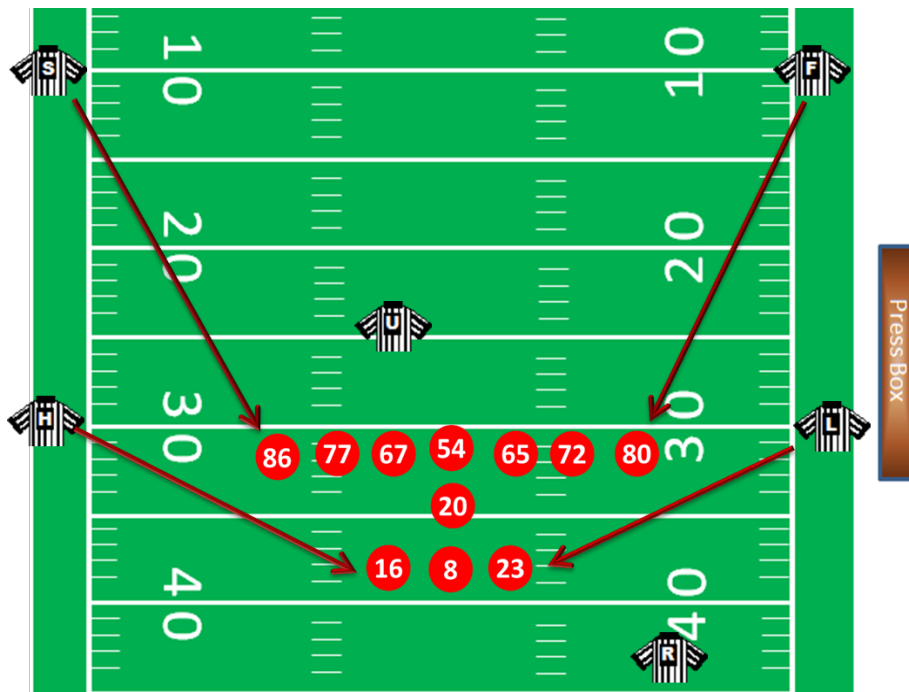
Blocking
keys

A diagram of a football field with yard lines marked 10, 20, 30, and 40 on both sides of the center. The center is marked with a 'C' icon. The left end zone is marked with an 'S' icon, and the right end zone is marked with an 'F' icon. A 'Press Box' label is on the right. Red circles with numbers represent players: 8, 20, 16, 86, 77, 67, 54, 65, 72, 23, and 80. Red arrows indicate movement: one from the 'S' end zone to player 8, one from player 8 to player 86, one from player 80 to player 23, and one from the 'F' end zone to player 80.

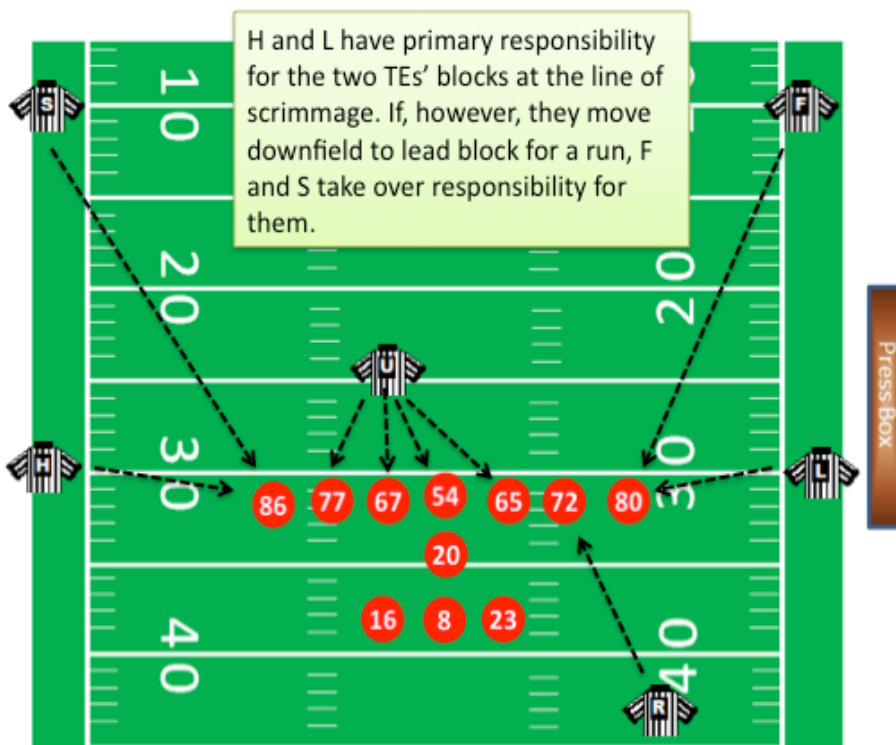
Blocking keys



Full-house; no backs outside the tackles

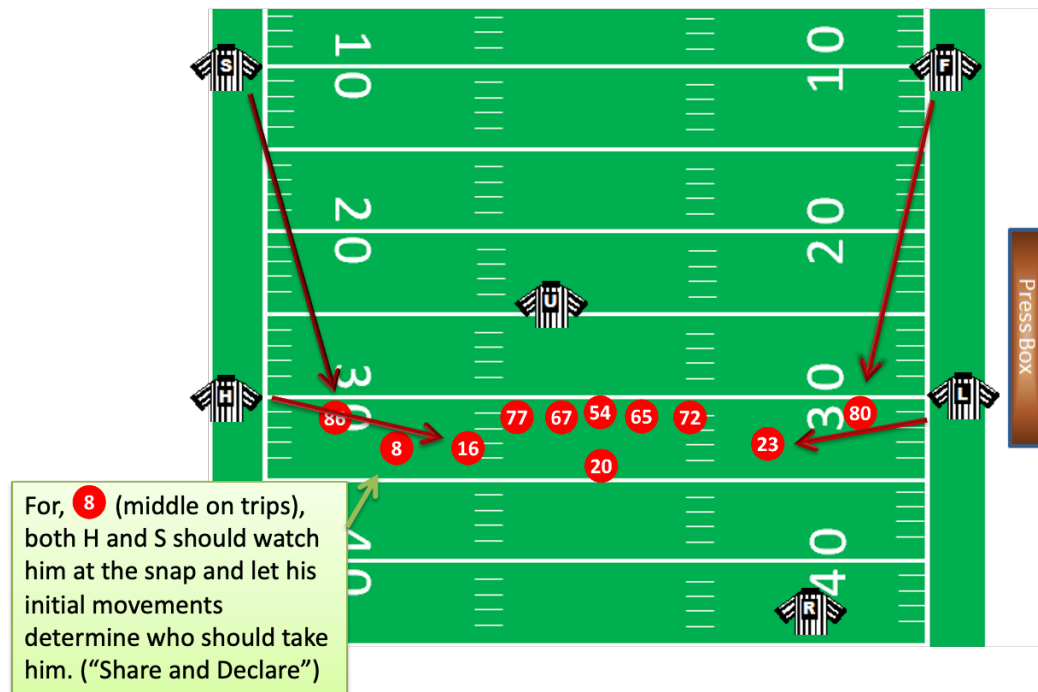


Eligible
Receiver
Keys

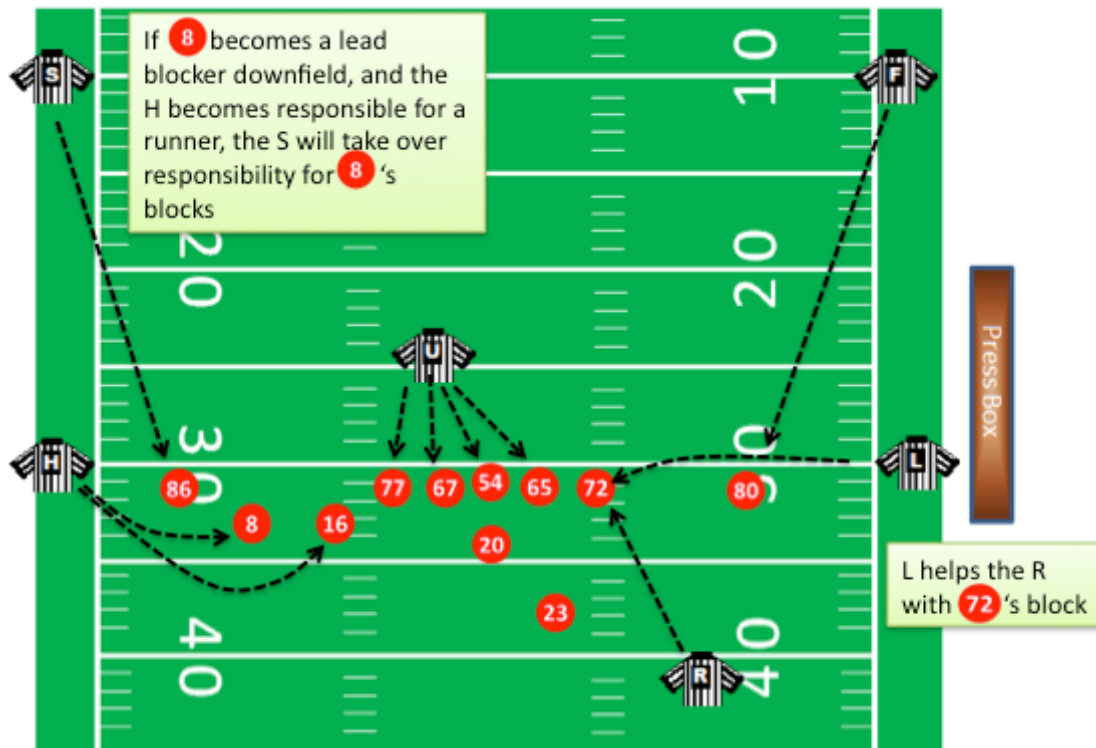


Blocking
keys

Trips

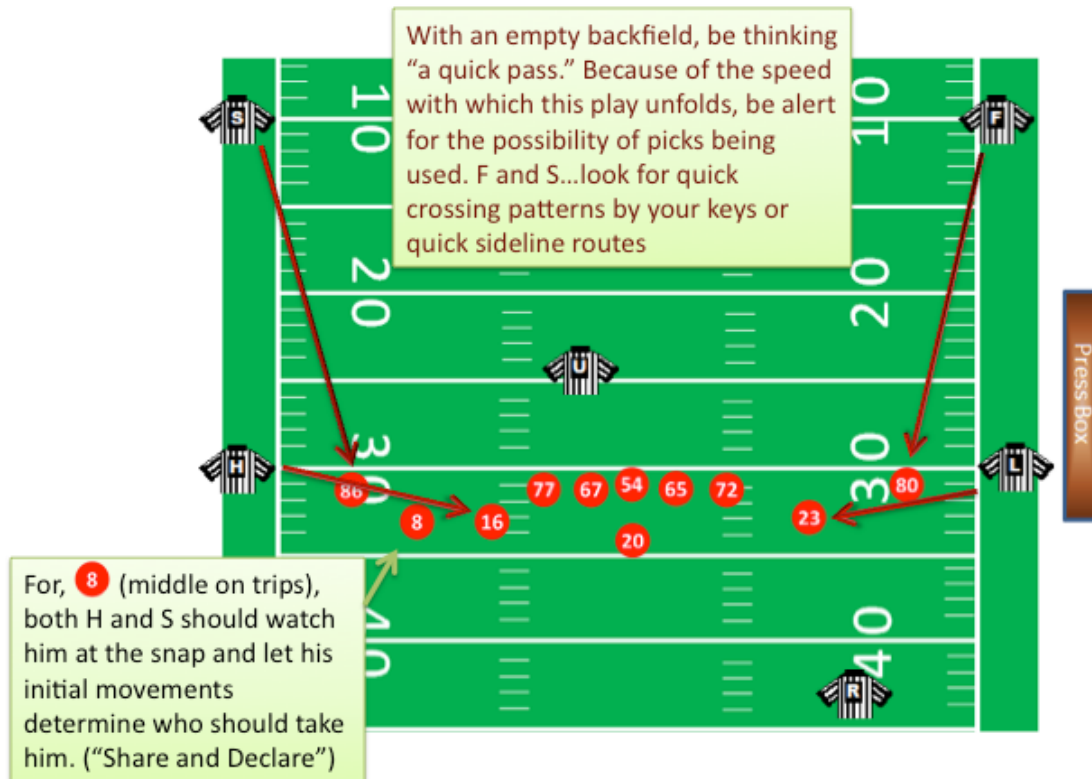


Eligible Receiver keys

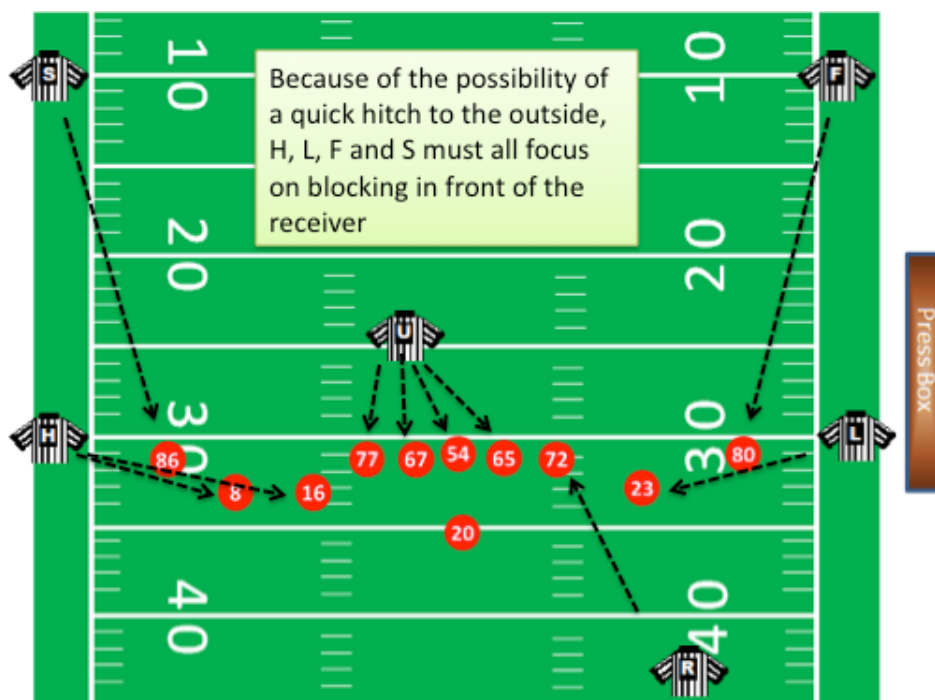


Blocking keys

Empty Backfield (expect something “quick”)



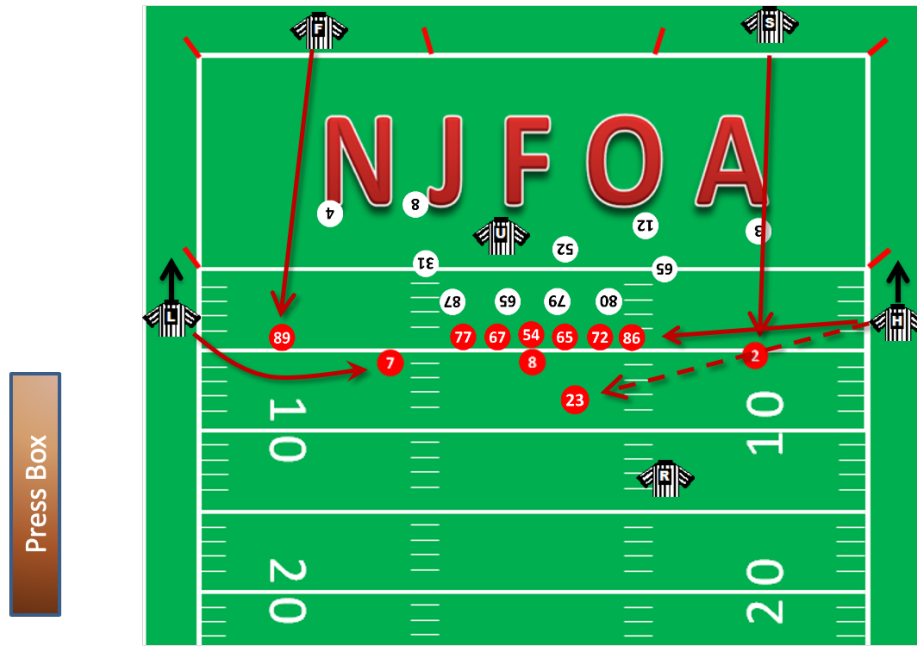
Eligible
Receiver
keys



Blocking
keys

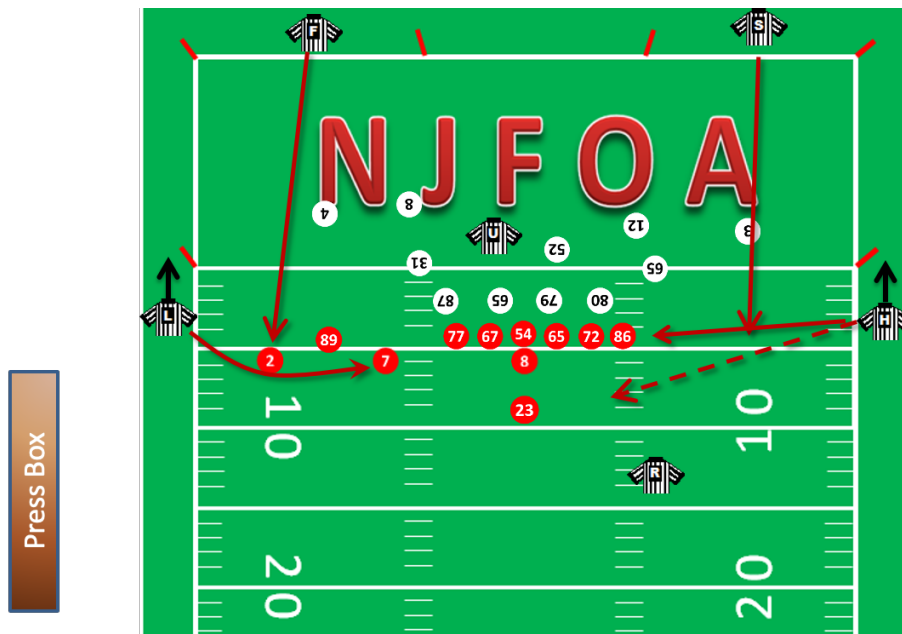
At or Inside B's 7 Yard Line

"DOUBLE - DOUBLE"



Eligible
Receiver
keys

TRIPS



APPENDIX IV – NJFOA 6-Official Mechanics “Pre Game Conference Reminders”

	<i>Referee</i>	<i>Umpire</i>	<i>Linesman</i>	<i>Line Judge</i>	<i>Side Judge</i>	<i>Field Judge</i>
BEFORE COIN TOSS	Pregame conf. w/ head coaches. Secure and approval balls. Inspect field & address hazards	Pregame conf. w/ head coaches. Check player equipment & rule if needed	Secure & check LTG equipment, brief chain crew. Inspect playing field, sidelines & boundaries	Secure & check LTG equipment, brief chain crew. Inspect playing field, sidelines & boundaries	Bring team opposite press box to field. Locate & instruct ball handlers.	Bring team on press box side to field. Locate & instruct ball handlers. Inform HC & QBs location of play clock.
COIN TOSS	Meet captains at midfield. Conduct toss. After toss, crew meets/writes results.	Meet captains at midfield. Witness toss. After toss, crew meets/writes results.	Opposite. press box side. Obtain game ball. Line up on left side of captains, “talking captain” on your side. Stay at SL. After toss, crew meets/writes results.	Press box side. Obtain game ball. Line up on left side of captains, “talking captain” on your side. Stay at SL. After toss, crew meets/writes results.	Press box side. Line up on left side of captains. Escort capt onto field and direct them to R/U. Stop at top of #s. After toss, crew meets to write results.	Opposite press box. Line up on right side of captains. Escort capt onto field and direct them to R/U. Stop at top of #s. After toss, crew meets to write results.
PRE-KICKOFF	On Goal Line, middle of field. Count R. Check others ready. Blow RFP. Check for 4 players each side of Kicker at kickoff (secondary responsibility).	Initially at tee w/kicker. Count K. Point out R to kicker. Move behind kicker, signal when ready. Watch kicker, ENC, kick hitting ground. Check for correct alignment by Team K players.	GL opposite press box. Count R, confirm with R, LJ. Stay on Goal Line until GL/pylon not threatened. Adjust initial position to kicker, not more than 10 YL Rule on kick OOB Sweep SL prior to kick	GL press box side. Count R, confirm with R, HL. Stay on Goal Line until GL/pylon not threatened. Adjust initial position to kicker, not more than 10 YL. Rule on kick OOB Sweep SL prior to kick	At K’s restraining line opposite press box. Count K, confirm with U and FJ. Observe K restraining line. Rule on K encroachment.	R’s restraining line, press box side. Count K, confirm with U and SJ. Observe R restraining line
KICKOFF COVERAGE	Wind clock on touch by R. Observe receiver, then action behind and off-ball action GL coverage.	Proceed down middle of field & officiate inside out. Not responsible for GL.	Rule on kick OOB. Cover field in 1/3rds. Ball to your side, wind clock on R touch. Rule on forward progress; ball away observe off-ball action in front of runner. Officiate outside/in.	Rule on kick OOB. Cover field in 1/3rds. Ball to your side, wind clock on R touch. Rule on forward progress; ball away observe off-ball action in front of runner. Officiate outside/in.	Resp. for if kick hit ground on contact (onside). After kick, observe contact area. Move toward R goal line, no more than 10-15 yards. Keep cushion. Officiate inside/out. Responsible for GL and spots from K2 and in	Judge if kick hit ground on contact (onside). After kick, observe contact area. Move toward R goal line, no more than 10-15 yards. Keep cushion. Officiate inside/out. Responsible for GL and spots from K2 and in
ON-SIDE KICK	Center of field, 10 yd line. Check for 4 players each side of Kicker at kickoff (secondary responsibility).	Behind kicker. Rule on kick – air or ground. Check for correct alignment by Team K players. Help with 1st touching, blocks, possession.	Opposite press box at K restraining line. “Letter of the Law” on K ENC Pop-up kick responsibility	Press box at K restraining line. “Letter of the Law” on K ENC,	Set up on R’s line. Look for R ENC, K illegal block, 1 st touch. Wind clock on legal touch. Cover pooch kick at R’s 30-40	Same as kick, Look for R ENC, K illegal block, 1 st touch. Wind clock on legal touch. Cover pooch kick at R’s 30-40

	<i>Referee</i>	<i>Umpire</i>	<i>Linesman</i>	<i>Line Judge</i>	<i>Side Judge</i>	<i>Field Judge</i>
SCRIMMAGE PLAYS	12-16 yds deep, QB right side. Count A, confirm with U. Alert for false start, snap infraction, illegal shift.	7-9 yds deep opposite R. Key= G, C, G, & T opposite of R. Count A, confirm with R. Check line numbering 50-79. Alert for false start, snap infraction, disconcerting signals by B	At sideline at LOS. Monitor substitutes. Keep restricted area clear. Count 4 or fewer backs. Note #s of eligible receivers. Signal if wide end on your side is in backfield. Alert for false start, ENC, illegal shift or motion. Rule on backward pass.	At sideline at LOS. Monitor substitutes. Keep restricted area clear. Count 4 or fewer backs. Note #s of eligible receivers. Signal if wide end on your side is in backfield. Alert for false start, ENC, illegal shift or motion. Rule on backward pass. Establish clock status on every play (next down, kill clock, whistle to R for measurement)	22-25 yds deep on sideline. Monitor substitutes. Keep restricted area clear. Count B, confirm with FJ. Establish key(s) at snap. Help relay game information to head coach	22-25 yds deep between SL & bottom of numbers. Monitor substitutes. Keep restricted area clear. Count B, confirm with SJ. Establish key(s) at snap. Help relay game information to head coach Signal 5 seconds remaining on 25 sec. clock
RUN	Key= near tackle. At snap, move 2-3 steps back, more only if necessary. Watch ball and front side blocks when ball is behind LOS. Watch action behind runner when ball goes beyond LOS. On option plays, if QB keeps, observe trailing back for fouls then follow QB through SL.	Key = G, C, G, & T opposite of R. Observe action at POA. If play goes wide, move slowly in that direction. Watch backside blocks @ Point of Attack. When play is dead in SZ or OOB, go to spot to get ball.	Key – inside end and/or RB, your side Don't leave LOS until runner crosses, unless run comes at you then move into backfield If play is away from you, observe action behind R and U. Responsible for forward progress up to the 2 yd line Pinch only when LTG is threatened. Mirror spots - use "soft spots" with LJ.	Key – inside end and/or RB, your side Don't leave LOS until runner crosses, unless run comes at you then move into backfield If play is away from you, observe action behind R and U. Responsible for forward progress up to the 2 yd line Pinch only when LTG is threatened. Mirror spots - use "soft spots" with HL.	Key= widest receiver your side. Take two steps in & maintain cushion. Be alert for who is in/out of NZ, crack-back blocks 2-3 steps back at snap, don't backpedal. To your side, observe lead blockers. Away, observe backside blocks & other off-ball activity. When play is over, "accordion in," watch DB action. Clean up side lines Responsible for GL and progress at 2 and in.	Key= widest receiver your side. Take two steps in & maintain cushion. Be alert for who is in/out of NZ, crack-back blocks. 2-3 steps back at snap, don't backpedal. To your side, observe lead blockers. Away, observe backside blocks & other off-ball activity. When play is over, "accordion in," watch DB action. Clean up side lines Responsible for GL and progress at 2 and in.

	<i>Referee</i>	<i>Umpire</i>	<i>Linesman</i>	<i>Line Judge</i>	<i>Side Judge</i>	<i>Field Judge</i>
PASS	Key = near tackle. Stay outside & deeper than passer. Stay at least 5-7 behind passer at all times to get better view Observe drop-back blockers, esp. tackle on your side. After pass thrown, alert defenders; observe action around QB. Stay with QB until not threatened. Help LJ with backward / forward pass. Rule on IG (with help from others on eligible in area), pass/fumble.	Key = G, C, G, & T opposite of R. Move slowly toward LOS Observe for blocking fouls. Watch for ineligible downfield. Be ready to help R with his tackle if QB threatened. Turn and help with pass plays over the middle. Help LJ on pass crossing NZ	Key – inside end or RB. “Share & declare” w/ SJ if 3 on your side Man/Zone/Ball on every pass play. Observe T briefly, then key(s). If key not threatened, stay with T. If pass on other side, observe off-ball action. Responsible for progress spot to 2 yd line.	Key – inside end or RB.. “Share & declare w/ FJ if 3 on your side Man/Zone/Ball on every pass play. Observe T briefly, then key(s). If key not threatened, stay with T. Responsible for LOS activity – passer beyond, forward pass crossing, backward pass. If pass on other side, observe off-ball action. Responsible for progress spot to 2 yd line.	Key= widest receiver your side. “Share & declare” w/HL if 3 on your side Man/Zone/Ball on every pass play. NEVER let runner or receiver behind you. Observe contact on key WR and DB. When pass away, observe action behind U. Clean up side lines GL is yours. Spot at 2 and in is yours.	Key= widest receiver your side. “Share & declare” w/LJ if 3 on your side. Man/Zone/Ball on every pass play. NEVER let runner or receiver behind you. Observe contact on key WR and DB. When pass away, observe action behind U. Clean up side lines GL is yours. Spot at 2 and in is yours.

	<i>Referee</i>	<i>Umpire</i>	<i>Linesman</i>	<i>Line Judge</i>	<i>Side Judge</i>	<i>Field Judge</i>
SCRIMMAGE KICKS	1 yard behind kicker, 7-9 yards wide on right side of punter, 45 degrees to the side. Count K, confirm with U. Alert R when kick is away. Clean up behind kick action. Officiate inside/out. Drift downfield opposite side of U. If kick blocked, or on long return, move to GL for coverage. If ball OOB in flight, assist deep wings with OOB spot.	8-10 yards deep. Favor side opposite R. Count K, confirm with R. Alert R about & observe contact with snapper. Check for numbering exception, note eligible numbers ineligible by position in case of forward pass. Observe for holding & “pull & shoot.” Help with tipped ball by R in or behind NZ. If kick blocked and recovered by R, follow & cover action around and behind runner. After kick clears, let 1st wave pass, turn, observe action. When ball becomes dead, go to spot ball.	Same as any scrimmage play. Hold position until ball crosses NZ. Provide “soft spots” for L when appropriate. Help R with kick tipped by R. After kick crosses NZ, move downfield up to 15 yards. If ball to your side, cover action ahead of runner. If ball away, cover action behind deep wing on your side. Help deep wings with PSK blocks. Keep cushion & use reverse mechanics to cover play.	Same as any scrimmage play. Hold position until ball crosses NZ. Provide “soft spots” for H when appropriate. After kick crosses NZ, move downfield up to 15 yards. Move with, observe 2nd wave, look for R players in chase mode If ball to your side, cover action ahead of runner. If ball away, cover action behind deep wing on your side. Help deep wings with PSK blocks. Keep cushion & use reverse mechanics to cover play.	Sideline 10 yds behind deepest receiver. Cover your 1/3rd of field. Count R and signal to FJ Punts inside B’s 45 start on GL. Responsible for flyers until ball is caught, 1st touching, KCI, illegal blocks. Beanbag PSK spot. Follow ball if R doesn’t field kick cleanly. Cover action on/around runner until in HL’s area, officiate outside in. Responsible for forward Progress up to the 2 yd line Mirror spots - use “soft spots” with FJ.	At sideline 10 yds behind deepest receiver. Cover 2/3rds of field. Count R and signal to SJ. Punts inside B’s 45 start on GL. Responsible for fair catch signal, ruling on fair catch, 1st touching, KCI. Beanbag PSK spot. Observe receiver for illegal block after FC signal. Cover action on/around runner until in LJ’s area, officiate outside in. Responsible for forward Progress up to the 2 yd line Mirror spots - use “soft spots” with SJ.

	<i>Referee</i>	<i>Umpire</i>	<i>Linesman</i>	<i>Line Judge</i>	<i>Side Judge</i>	<i>Field Judge</i>
SCORING KICKS	Count K & confirm with U. 7-9 yards wide facing holder, 2-3 yards deep and able to observe snap. After snap, observe action by holder. After kick, observe action on and around kicker. Alert R when kick is away. After kick and all action is over, get signal from covering officials, then signal result to press box. Signal by R is not mandatory	Count K & confirm with R. Be about 5-7 yds behind LOS. Observe action on snapper and line play. If play turns into run or pass, officiate from inside out. If R gets ball and returns, use reverse mechanics.	Scrimmage play position. Cover action from LOS to end line if needed. Stay at LOS until ball has crossed line. Know if R blocked K player into kicker/holder. If kick crosses GL, “pinch in” and observe DB action at LOS.	Scrimmage play position. Cover action from LOS to end line if needed. Stay at LOS until ball has crossed line. Know if R blocked K player into kicker/holder. If kick crosses GL, “pinch in” and observe DB action at LOS.	Count R and confirm with FJ. Start at upright opposite press box. If “muddle huddle” start at hash & move on shift to kick formation. Has whistle on kick when kick is dead. Rules on crossbar & your upright. Move to hash along the endline if play becomes run/pass.	Count R and confirm with FJ. Start at upright opposite press box. If “muddle huddle” start at hash & move on shift to kick formation. Rules on your upright. Move to hash along the endline if play becomes run/pass.
CHANGE OF QUARTERS	Hold up ball for official end of period. Record down, yard line, clip position with U and SJ. When ready, move ball to new spot.	Record down, yard line, clip position with R and SJ. When ready, move ball to new spot.	Record down, yard line, clip position. Confirm with SJ. When R signals, move LTG markers to new location.	Observe team on your SL during the TO.	Record down, yard line, clip position with R and SJ. Observe teams during the TO. Get them to LOS facing right way after time out.	Observe teams during the TO. Get them to LOS facing right way after time out.
MEASURE-MENTS	Call for measurement when appropriate. Rule on LTG. If short in side zone, grab chain at spot, tell HL to move chains to hash, reset chains and spot ball.	When back stake and clip set, take front stake and stretch chains for R to rule.	Take clip, direct chain crew to move chains. If short in side zone, after R grabs spot, have chain crew move and re-set chains at hash mark. Return chains to SL when new ball spotted.	Give HL correct yard line mark with foot. Help clear area of players.	Mark and hold front stake spot with down box. Help clear area of players.	Hold ball in place on ground until new ball is placed on spot after measurement. Give old ball to ball handler when new ball properly spotted.

	<i>Referee</i>	<i>Umpire</i>	<i>Linesman</i>	<i>Line Judge</i>	<i>Side Judge</i>	<i>Field Judge</i>
ENFORCE- MENTS	Normal responsibilities	Secure ball. Confirm & walk off distance.	At SL, move with U to mark off distance. Move LTG markers when ball is spotted. Relay foul information to head coach on your side	Mark & hold enforcement spot. Mark off distance after U to confirm enforcement.	Help retrieve ball. Hold succeeding spot, retrieve flag. Help relaying foul information to head coach on your side.	Help retrieve ball. Hold succeeding spot, retrieve flag. Help relaying foul information to head coach on your side.
TIME OUTS	Confirm remaining TOs for both teams with other officials. Near A's huddle if on field conference. If at 9 yard marks, inbounds line nearest A's sideline. Whistle end of time out to summon teams. Mark ball RFP.	Stand over football and don't let its status or position be moved. Confirm remaining TOs for both teams with other officials.	Sideline near team's conference when near 9-yard marks. If conference held at inbounds line, stay between huddle & team box. Confirm remaining TOs for both teams with other officials, head coach on your side.	Sideline near team's conference when near 9-yard marks. If conference held at inbounds line, stay between huddle & team box. Confirm remaining TOs for both teams with other officials, head coach on your side.	Between team box on your side and inbounds line. Monitor conference if held at inbounds line Time the timeout. Alert R when time has expired. Confirm remaining TOs for both teams with other officials, head coach on your side.	Between team box on your side and inbounds line. Monitor conference if held at inbounds line. Confirm remaining TOs for both teams with other officials, head coach on your side.
INSIDE B-25, OUTSIDE B-7	Normal position & keys.	Normal position & keys.	Normal position & keys. Stay OOB on sideline. Responsible for forward progress to the 2 yd line.	Normal position & keys. Stay OOB on sideline. Responsible for forward progress to the 2 yd line.	Start on GL, same keys. Move only when certain pass is beyond GL. On pass toward end line on other side, move along sideline then toward middle on end line to help rule on OOB. Help w/ OOB before 2 yd line.	Start on GL, same keys. Administer play clock one step in from GL. Move only when certain pass is beyond GL. On pass toward end line on other side, move along sideline then toward middle on end line to help rule on OOB. Help w/ OOB before 2 yd line.

	<i>Referee</i>	<i>Umpire</i>	<i>Linesman</i>	<i>Line Judge</i>	<i>Side Judge</i>	<i>Field Judge</i>
INSIDE B-7	Normal position & keys.	Normal position & keys Is responsible for LOS since the LJ and HL are moving to GL at snap when ball is snapped inside 7 yd	Normal position. Stay OOB on sideline. On snap, move to GL. Cover sideline to end line. Cover LTG first if short of GL Close in toward play and GL only when sure play has gone into line or is away.	Normal position. Stay OOB on sideline. On snap, move to GL. Cover sideline to end line. Cover LTG first if short of GL Close in toward play and GL only when sure play has gone into line or is away.	Start on end line between the pylon and the hash marks. On pass toward end line on other side, move along sideline then toward middle on end line to help rule on OOB.	Start on end line between the pylon and the hash marks. On pass toward end line on other side, move along sideline then toward middle on end line to help rule on OOB.
GOING OUT FROM A GL	Normal position & keys. End line Responsibility	Normal position & keys. Is responsible for LOS inside the five yd line since the LJ and HL are moving to GL at snap	Inside 5 yd line, 1st move is to GL.	Inside 5 yd line, 1st move is to GL.	Normal	Normal
Reverse Mechanics	Cautiously move backward toward A's GL, maintaining coverage of A QB or kicker. Work inside out. Does NOT have GL coverage; doesn't turn back to get to A's GL.	Normal play coverage	Back up along sideline and cover front of return. Official opposite side of runner help with off-ball coverage. Maintain cushion & be on GL before runner. Forward progress from 2 yd line to GL.	Back up along sideline and cover front of return. Official opposite side of runner help with off-ball coverage. Maintain cushion & be on GL before runner. Forward progress from 2 yd line to GL.	Trail play & cover action on and around runner on your side. Help with off-ball coverage and clean up if ball on other side. Responsible for forward progress up to 2 yd line.	Trail play & cover action on and around runner on your side. Help with off-ball coverage and clean up if ball on other side. Responsible for forward progress up to 2 yd line.

APPENDIX V – Instructions to Chain Crews

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOOTBALL LINE TO GAIN CHAIN CREWS

The typical line-to-gain crew consists of at least three individuals – a down-marker indicator operator and two to hold the rods. Unless otherwise possible by use of a fourth crew member, the down-marker indicator operator will attach the clip as specified. In some cases where a fourth crew member is present, that member may also be requested to record penalties on a chart provided by the game officials.

It is recommended that the members of the crew wear distinctive vests or jackets furnished by home or game management, or an official's uniform. Remind crew members that they are assistant officials, not fans.

PREGAME DUTIES

1. The line-to-gain crew shall meet the HEAD LINESMAN and LINE JUDGE on the sideline opposite the press box at least 15 minutes before game time and also five minutes prior to the second-half kickoff. They will be made aware that each official will be working with them for one half of the game.
2. The officials shall make certain that the official line-to-gain and down-marker indicators have been placed opposite the press box or on the designated sideline and that all are in good working order and conform to the rules. They shall make certain that if an auxiliary down-marker indicator is used, it is in good working order and is placed on the opposite side of the field from the line-to-gain crew.
3. The complete concentration of the crew is absolutely necessary if crew members are to discharge their duties efficiently. The crew must refrain from showing any partisan reaction to the events taking place on the playing field. The crew must be prepared to act immediately on instructions from the officials so that teams and all concerned will know the exact situation concerning the down and yards to be gained. The crew shall not move or change the number of the down until signaled to do so by the official. Any auxiliary down-marker indicator operator shall act only on instructions from the official on the press box side of the field. The crew must remain impartial and may not communicate down and distance information to members of the coaching staff or team.
4. While serving on the line-to-gain crew, the crew should refrain from using items that would distract them from their responsibility (i.e. using electronic devices).

GAME PROCEDURES

1. On the official's signal, the crew shall move as quickly as possible to the next position.
2. When a runner or pass receiver is going out of bounds in the immediate vicinity, the involved crew member is to quickly and carefully drop the marker and move away from the sideline, keeping his/her eye on the spot of the marker. The crew members away from the play should hold their positions if possible.
3. The official will set the spot of all first downs by going to the sidelines and marking, while facing the field, the exact spot where the rear stake will be set. The front crew member will then be sure the chain is fully extended before setting his/her stake.

4. The DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR, on every new series of downs, will set the down-marker indicator at the spot marked by the official. When the line-to-gain equipment is moved, the rear rod is to be set behind the down-marker indicator and then the clip shall be placed at the back edge of the 5-yard line nearest the rear rod. The down-marker indicator must be held at all times in an upright position with the down correctly shown.
5. The DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR is to show the number of the down just completed and shall not indicate the new down until so notified by the official. On instruction from the official, the DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR will move the down-marker indicator to a new position with the marker indicator placed at the forward point of the ball and change the marker indicator to the correct down.
6. On all measurements for first down when the chain is moved onto the field, the DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR is to place his/her marker indicator at the spot of the front rod until a new series of downs is declared or the chain is returned to its previous position.
7. The chain is not extended if it is a first-and-goal situation. The official should provide the DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR a bean bag in this situation to mark location of the box in case it is moved during the down.
8. The DOWN-MARKER INDICATOR OPERATOR should place the marker indicator on the line of scrimmage on all try situations. This will aid players and officials in determining the line of scrimmage on all plays toward the sideline. The chain will not be placed on a try.
9. If the sidelines become crowded and the crew does not have room to efficiently discharge its duties, the crew is to notify the official immediately so that a time-out may be called, and sidelines cleared before the game will be allowed to proceed.
10. If the game is delayed for any reason, the crew will stay with the game officials.
11. The official line-to-gain and down-marker indicators shall be operated approximately 2 yards outside the sideline opposite the press box, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit. Unofficial auxiliary line-to-gain and down-marker indicators may be used on the sideline opposite the official line-to-gain and down-marker indicators and shall be operated approximately 2 yards outside the sideline, except in stadiums where the total playing enclosure does not permit. All indicators shall be operated as far off the sideline (up to 2 yards) as facilities permit and as directed by the officials.

APPENDIX VI – ECO Two-minute Tracking Form

CLOCK OPERATOR'S TWO (2) MINUTE CLOCK STOPPAGE CHART

Time	2nd Qtr	4th Qtr	Time	2nd Qtr	4th Qtr	Time	2nd Qtr	4th Qtr	Time	2nd Qtr	4th Qtr
2:00			1:30			1:00			0:30		
1:59			1:29			0:59			0:29		
1:58			1:28			0:58			0:28		
1:57			1:27			0:57			0:27		
1:56			1:26			0:56			0:26		
1:55			1:25			0:55			0:25		
1:54			1:24			0:54			0:24		
1:53			1:23			0:53			0:23		
1:52			1:22			0:52			0:22		
1:51			1:21			0:51			0:21		
1:50			1:20			0:50			0:20		
1:49			1:19			0:49			0:19		
1:48			1:18			0:48			0:18		
1:47			1:17			0:47			0:17		
1:46			1:16			0:46			0:16		
1:45			1:15			0:45			0:15		
1:44			1:14			0:44			0:14		
1:43			1:13			0:43			0:13		
1:42			1:12			0:42			0:12		
1:41			1:11			0:41			0:11		
1:40			1:10			0:40			0:10		
1:39			1:09			0:39			0:09		
1:38			1:08			0:38			0:08		
1:37			1:07			0:37			0:07		
1:36			1:06			0:36			0:06		
1:35			1:05			0:35			0:05		
1:34			1:04			0:34			0:04		
1:33			1:03			0:33			0:03		
1:32			1:02			0:32			0:02		
1:31			1:01			0:31			0:01		

CTO
OTO
TD
SAFE
FD
PEN

CHARGED TIMEOUT
OFFICIALS TIMEOUT
TOUCHDOWN
SAFETY
FIRST DOWN
PENALTY

INC INCOMPLETE PASS
OOB RUNNER/LOOSE BALL OUT OF BOUNDS
TB TOUCHBACK
FG FIELD GOAL
COP CHANGE OF POSSESSION

ECO: _____

DATE: _____

APPENDIX VII – Wireless Crew Communication Devices – Guidelines and Requirements

Purpose: With the progression of technology in our society, communication devices worn by football officials to assist with immediate communication between crew members can assist in overall game management. Although many understand that these “official-to-official” (O2O) devices can certainly benefit the communication between members of a football crew, there are still concerns that officials who are not prepared to deal with the use of such communication devices could lead to confusion and unintended consequences; therefore, the following guidelines were developed. Officiating crews that use these devices are expected to follow these guidelines

WIRELESS CREW COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Wireless Crew Communication Device: A Wireless Communication Device is defined as a two-way radio with an attached earpiece or headset and push to talk microphone. Other communication devices are prohibited. It is recommended that such devices be of the Midland brand to ensure compatibility.

General Use: The use of crew communication devices is voluntary and not mandatory. The decision on whether to implement the use of a crew communication device is solely the decision of the “crew members”. It is not the position of any other entity to regulate the use of crew communication devices. In order for a crew communication device to be used, all six officials of a crew must be willing to wear and be in contact with all other crew members using the device. Additionally, a device must be used to communicate with the assigned electronic clock operator(s). In this case, the clock operator(s) must secure a device to use. Referees must facilitate clear communications and expectations with regard to the clock operators’ use of the device. In order to ensure that all six officials (and ECOs) on a varsity crew have access to the crew communication devices, the Referee or his designee shall be responsible for charging and issuing a device to each official working the game.

Additional General Use Guidelines Include:

1. All communication devices must use a “push to talk” setting/mechanism.
2. All communication on the devices must be directly related to the contest, using only appropriate/professional language. Officials must refrain from using any inappropriate language, derogatory statements or comments in reference to any player, coach, fan, etc.
3. Crews must ensure that the channel or frequency on which the communication devices are operating DOES NOT interfere with any communication devices of the coaching staffs and/or game administration. It is the crew’s responsibility to avoid channel or frequency conflicts with **any** other party.
4. Crews may wish to use the devices’ privacy code to further secure their communications.

PREGAME COMMUNICATION TESTING:

1. Coordinate a testing of the crew communication devices to ensure proper operation and connectivity to all official’s devices on the crew, including clock operator if given a device.

GAME COMMUNICATION:

1. **The use of crew communication devices SHALL NOT replace any NFHS/NJFOA approved mechanics, crew communication signals, or other signals designated by the NFHS/NJFOA Game Officials Manual.**
2. Crew communication devices are permitted in order to maintain the tempo of a game, allow more timely necessary communication between officials and coaches, as well as between the officials. Increased attention to detail and consistency is a product of crew communication devices when used appropriately and professionally.
3. The following are examples of appropriate times and situations to use crew communication devices:
 - ball placement
 - clock/time management/timeouts
 - goal line reminders
 - positions on Try
 - line to gain confirmations
 - player foul reporting
 - sideline control/issues
 - player conduct concerns
 - confirmation of rulings
 - penalty enforcement options
 - kickoffs out of bounds -
 - unusual situations
 - preventative officiating warnings Ex. LJ to HL: "I have warned the Blue School left tackle to get up on the line three times. Tell their coach he is out of warnings."
4. Crew communication devices may be used during dead ball periods only. Refrain from using during a live ball period, or when the snap or free kick is imminent.
5. Refrain from using crew communication devices when Referee is communicating or signaling to the press box, with a head coach, or game administration.
6. The crew communication devices are not a substitute for the desired verbal communication that is necessary at times during the game between head coaches and the Referee.
7. Crew members must keep communication short and to the point. Keep chatter and unnecessary comments off the devices. Total Conversation = Less Is More.

APPENDIX VIII – Handling Altercations on the Field

Overview: Nothing can ruin a good football game as much as an altercation or fight, especially if it escalates into an ugly bench-clearing brawl. In some cases, fights begin with no real warning, and must be dealt with on the fly. But in the vast majority of cases, there will be warning signs beforehand that if managed correctly may prevent a later altercation. These are the ‘red flags’ that we need to be looking for. The NJSIAA and NJFOA recommends the following three-pronged strategy for mitigating the possibility of an on-field fight marring a contest and dealing with an altercation should it occur. This strategy focuses heavily on all field officials understanding the kinds of cues that indicate a rise in emotional tension among participants and the proactive steps we can take to forestall an actual physical confrontation.

1. Game Preparation: Do your homework. Research the two teams you are about to see.

- a. How are the teams coached? Are they highly disciplined, or do they lose control easily? Are they constantly ‘chirping?’
- b. Are the teams evenly matched or is one a heavy favorite? How do the teams behave when the score begins to separate? Do they gloat and (marginally) taunt? Do they begin to show frustration (verbally/physically)?
- c. Do either of the teams have a *history* of altercation or borderline play – especially when playing each other? You’ve heard commentators on a broadcast say, “These teams don’t like each other...” Sometimes that’s true at the high school level as well.
- d. Is this a big rivalry game? Bragging rights in neighboring towns; Perennial playoff contenders; League title at stake, etc.

Some might say, “Don’t go into a game looking for trouble.” That’s probably sage advice for a normal game. However, if you have a game where Team A upset Team B in the playoffs last season, and there was an ugly incident at the end of that game, you had better approach this rematch looking for that trouble.

2. Prevention: Especially if your game preparation indicates that you might be in for a challenging contest, take all proactive precautions to keep emotions in check and prevent tensions from escalating. Don’t *wait* for a fight to break out. *Prevent* it from breaking out.

- a. Watch for all tell-tale red flags that might indicate a rise in tensions. Actions that would constitute a ‘talk-to’ in a calm game might need to be flagged in a game that forecasts potential for confrontation:
 - i) Pre-game entrances which appear designed to intimidate opponents. Even when an entrance appears innocuous, watch for players glaring at their opponent’s sideline.
 - ii) Players not immediately separating and returning to their huddles following a dead ball. Especially be aware of players moving further into their opponent’s backfield when the ball becomes dead.
 - iii) Players ‘glaring’ at each other—even when no verbal challenges occur.
 - iv) Players starting to talk trash or verbally challenging opponents.
 - v) Player standing over fallen opponent.
 - vi) Players laughing at opponents.
- b. Be intently conscious of dead ball activity and off-the-ball action. Hustle to dead ball spots, and close down the play (“accordion”) when the ball becomes dead. Do not leave opponents unsupervised and unwatched. Use your voice to let players know that you’re there and you’re watching. Make sure that players are clearly returning to their huddles before moving on to your other dead ball duties (ball retrieval, etc.). All officials should be looking for ‘pile-pickers.’ Once a game has provided you with an

indication that it will be a challenge, benefit of the doubt on possible late hits becomes a thing of the past. When in question, a hit near the sideline or a hit just after the whistle should draw a flag. Then don't make that a one-time thing. You have now set the standard for the remainder of the contest for your entire crew.

- c. Don't hesitate to inform coaches—and fellow officials—about players who appear close to crossing the line or losing self-control. Have another official nearby to witness notification of coaches. Do **not** 'warn' him or suggest how the coach should handle the situation. Just inform him of a potential problem brewing.

3. Altercation/Fight: Despite officials' and coaches' best efforts, occasionally our worst fears are realized, and a physical confrontation/altercation occurs. Many times, it's a simple one-on-one event that can (must) be defused before it escalates further.

There are varying opinions on how officials should approach such situations. One extreme recommends exerting all the physical means at your disposal to break it up, essentially becoming another combatant in the fray. The other extreme proposes sitting back, observing, and just 'taking numbers.' As is usually the case, neither extreme is an optimal solution and, in fact, both subject the official to legal liability.

Alan Goldberger, former NJFOA member and national legal expert in the areas of sports and officiating, suggests that the passive "taking numbers" approach is the riskier course of action, subjecting the official to the greater level of potential liability. It could be viewed by the courts as tantamount to negligence and an abdication of the officials' duty to maintain order. Likewise, jumping into the fray just looking to *pull* combatants apart and *restraining* their arms and bodies will have an accompanying legal risk as well. Alan believes that doing nothing to actively attempt to defuse the situation is the riskier proposition.

The NJFOA has developed, and the NJSIAA has endorsed and mandated the procedures on the following page for dealing with a physical confrontation that has broken out between opponents on the field. Most altercations begin with a one-on-one confrontation:

NJFOA/NJSIAA ALTERCATION PROTOCOL AND REQUIREMENTS

1. The nearest official should quickly approach the confrontation from the side so that he is visible in both combatants' peripheral vision.
2. Never approach a combatant from the rear and try to restrain him. Doing so subjects the official to undue injury risk since the player approached will not know who is approaching and may lash out as a defense.
3. Never restrain a player and potentially make him defenseless against an opponent. Use your arms as levers at chest/waist level to attempt to separate combatants. (Note...if you have reached this point, someone **MUST** have a flag on the ground). If you can get your body between combatants, the situation may be defused.
4. Nearby officials need to prevent other players from (1) entering this confrontation, and from (2) starting another altercation. Note that as long as the situation remains a one-on-one affair, the chances of a bench-clearing brawl are relatively low. As the number of active combatants grows, the chances of bench personnel intervening increase dramatically.
5. Split the field into thirds. The HL and SJ are responsible for the Visitor's team (players, coaches, non-authorized personnel) on their side and from their sideline to the hash marks. Conversely the LJ and FJ have the Home team (players, coaches and non-authorized personnel) and from their sideline to the hash marks as well. The Umpire has the Defense (11) players and the Referee has the Offense (11) players or collectively the 22 players in the middle of the field and between the hashes.
6. The sideline officials in their respective thirds of the field should turn toward the sidelines and loudly advise all bench personnel to remain where they are. Any bench personnel leaving the team box to become involved warrants a flag and disqualification. **Do not allow a non-player to enter the field without a flag on the ground.** Recall numbers of any players entering the field. Pay particular attention to any coaches and adult team personnel. If they enter the field and assist in helping to restore order, they will be exempt from any penalties and from disqualification. If, however, they enter and become combatants, penalties and disqualification shall apply to them as well.
7. After order has been restored for any altercation involving more than two combatants or for any altercations where team box personnel have entered the field, send both teams to their respective sidelines. All officials meet between the hash marks to review their observations.
 - a. Determine all combatants actively involved in a physical confrontation. All warrant at least a flag for UNR. Consider DQ as necessary. Seek consensus among at least two officials on this determination.
 - b. Determine all combatants observed fighting (punching, swinging, kicking at an opponent). These must be DQ'ed. Look for confirmation of other officials.
 - c. Determine all team box personnel observed entering the field. Rules call for them to be DQ'ed as well. Though not completely feasible, seek confirmation on these determinations as well.
 - d. Remember to include any activity (fouls) that might have occurred during the down preceding the incident in your final analysis.
 - e. As long as both teams had any personnel leave their team box and enter the field, assess one (1) UNS 15-yd penalty to each team.
 - f. All combatants are assessed a 15-yd UNR penalty. (Note: most if not all of these will likely offset)
 - g. Referee summarizes findings aloud to the crew. All officials reach consensus and record the findings.
 - h. Referee with a sideline official delivers the findings (including a readout of all DQs) to each head coach. Be sure to get the names of all DQ'd personnel.
 - i. SJ informs Referee of clock status
 - j. Play resumes
 - k. Post-game, referee informs assigner and chapter secretary of the incident and the resulting penalties assessed—including DQs.
 - l. Referee follows respective chapter's procedures for reporting and follow-up on DQs with NJSIAA and offending schools

APPENDIX IX – 40-second Play Clock Mechanics & Rules

The following guide is intended to help officials administer the NFHS play clock rule.

1. The play clock rule is intended to ensure that each team be given a consistent interval between plays and from game to game. A visible play clock will likely not be available.
2. Different game situations will call for either a 40-second or a 25-second play clock to be used.
3. Unless the game clock is stopped for administrative reasons (e.g., B awarded a new series, penalty, injury, clock error, time-out, etc.), the offensive team has 40 seconds after the previous play ends to snap the ball. After such administrative stoppages however, a 25-second play clock is used instead—just as we have used in the past.
4. When a 40-second play clock is used, the ball is ready for play when an official (usually the umpire) spots the ball and steps away to his position. **There is no need for the Referee to sound his whistle or signal the ball ready.** The 40-second play clock has significantly standardized the time the offense has to put the ball into play in both NCAA and NFL play.

Here are some examples beginning with a common scenario. **Table 1** shows more scenarios.

PLAY 1: A32 runs for a one-yard gain and is tackled inbounds (a) short of, or (b) beyond the line-to-gain.

RULING: In either case, a 40-second play clock is started immediately when the ball is declared dead. In (a), the game clock continues to run. The referee does not give a ready signal or any other clock signal. In (b), the game clock stops. The referee signals “first down,” the ball is spotted, and the referee then signals to start the game clock—but does not sound his whistle (“silent wind”). The referee does not wait for the chains to be set before starting the clock.

On a fourth-down play that results in Team B being awarded a new series/first down, the game clock will stop, and the referee will blow his whistle and signal ready-for-play for a 25-second play clock once the ball is set ready for play.

PLAY 2: A11 throws an incomplete pass. **RULING:** A 40-second play clock is started immediately when the ball is declared dead and the game clock stops. The game clock will start on the snap and there is no referee signal to indicate the ball is ready for play.

PLAY 3: A24 runs out of bounds (a) short of, or (b) beyond the line-to-gain. **RULING:** In both cases, a 40-second play clock is started immediately when the ball is declared dead and the game clock stops. The game clock will start on the snap and there is no referee RFP signal. In (b), the referee signals a first down.

As illustrated in the preceding three examples, if a play ends beyond the line-to-gain without a foul, a 40-second play clock is used. The game clock is still stopped for the ball to be spotted, but that is not considered an administrative stoppage.

The following is a classic example of ‘*an administrative stoppage.*’

PLAY 4: A11 throws an incomplete pass. A79 is flagged for holding. **RULING:** The clock stops for the incomplete pass. After the penalty is administered, the ready-for-play is blown, and a 25-second play clock is started. The game clock starts on the snap because of the incomplete pass.

Other administrative issues that would call for a 25-second play clock are situations such as the chains getting tangled up or broken, dry ball not brought in time, etc. This stoppage is not intended to allow for additional time needed to break up scraps between players. Statements like “Play clock is running” can be used as an aide to assist in getting players back to huddle.

Interruption of the play clock/game clock might, at crucial points near the end of a half or of the game might create situations where a strict following of the rules would lead to a distinct disadvantage to either team. Consider these plays:

PLAY 5: With 0:18 seconds remaining in the game, Team A leading 14-10, the play clock is running and has 14 seconds remaining. A’s ball, 4-10 from his 5-yard line. A Team A player goes to the ground with an

apparent severe cramp. Officials stop the clock for the injured player. **RULING:** By rule, once the player is replaced, the referee should reset the play clock to 0:25, and start the game and play clocks on his signal. However, this would effectively allow Team A to run out the clock, where absent the injury, they would have needed run their 4th down play. Referee informs both teams that the play clock will be set to 0:14 (freeze the time) and both the game and play clocks will start on his signal.

PLAY 6: Team A is leading in the last minute of the game and is attempting to run time off the clock. Team B has no time-outs remaining and is looking to conserve time. Following Team A's short gain or kneel down on third down, a Team B player is on the ground, apparently injured. **RULING:** Based upon a 2020 rule change, the Referee double pumps a 40-second game clock to start on his ready-for-play signal.

Table 1 – Play Clock “Cheat Sheet”

Event *	Play Clock Starts at	Game Clock Starts on	Covering Official's Signal	Referee's Signal
Dead ball inbounds behind line to gain	40	Running	S7	None
Runner or loose ball out of bounds	40	Snap	S3	None
Forward fumble out of bounds	40	Ready	S3	Wind
Incomplete pass	40	Snap	S10	None
Team A awarded 1st down inbounds	40	Signal	S3	Wind
Penalty administration	25	Ready	S3	Wind & Whistle
Foul against Team B only	40	Ready	S3	Wind & Whistle
Charged team timeout	25	Snap	S3	Chop & Whistle
Injury/Helmet off/Equip (Team A)	25	Ready	S3	Wind & Whistle
Injury/Helmet off/Equip (Team B) ****	40	Ready	S3	Wind & Whistle
Measurement	25	Ready	S3	Wind & Whistle
Double Change of possession- Team A snaps	25	Ready	S7	Wind
Change of possession- Team B snaps	25	Snap	S3	Chop & Whistle
Touchdown	25	N/A	S5	Chop & Whistle
Try, FG, Safety	25	Varies**	Varies**	Chop & Whistle
Start of each period	25	Snap	N/A	Chop & Whistle
Down during which a legal kick occurs	25	Snap	S3	Chop & Whistle
Start of an overtime period	25	N/A	N/A	Chop & Whistle
Other administrative stoppage ***	25	Ready	S3	Wind & Whistle

* If event does not occur in conjunction with any other event that stops the clock.

** The game clock will start on the free kick by rule.

*** Includes inadvertent whistle and period extension.

**** If both Team A and Team B have equipment and/or injury issues, the play clock is set to 25 seconds

S3 is stop the clock, S7 is “dead ball - start play clock,” S10 is incomplete pass.

Notes:

1. If B intercepts then fumbles and A recovers (A-B-A), use a 40-sec play clock.
2. On a 4th down fake punt, if A is short of line-to-gain, it is a 25-sec play clock because B snaps next.
3. On a 4th down fake punt, if A is beyond line-to- gain, it is a 40-sec play clock; same as any other first down for A.

If there is an appreciable delay in spotting the ball and the play clock is down to 20 seconds, the play clock should be reset to 25 seconds. When there is no visible play clock the referee should approximate this interval and use his best judgment. When in doubt, reset the play clock. The referee will do this by signaling (one palm open in an over-the-head pumping motion) that the play clock should be re-set at 25 seconds. The play clock operator should restart the play clock immediately after reset.

When the 40-second play clock is running, the ready-for-play occurs with the spotting of the ball. The impacted rules are: 2-25-1 (establishment of the line of scrimmage), 2-28-1 (establishment of the neutral zone), 2-26-5 (establishment of the line-to-gain), 2-8 and 7-1-5 (encroachment), 5-3-1 (designation of a new series), 7-1-3 (snapper restrictions), 7-1-7 (false start), and 7-2-1 (nine-yard mark compliance).

Additional Examples

1. During a down that ends inbounds, B55's helmet comes off without a helmet foul by Team A. B55 immediately picks up his helmet, puts it on and continues to chase the ball carrier. **RULING:** An illegal participation foul by B55 for continuing to participate after losing his helmet. The clock stops at the end of the down and B55 must leave the game for the next down. After the penalty is enforced, the play clock is set at 40 seconds and both clocks start on the referee's whistle.
2. Team B trails by three points with 40 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter and the game clock is running. A22 runs and is tackled inbounds short of a first down, but (a) A63's, or (b) B44's helmet comes completely off during the play. The game clock reads 0:33. **RULING:** In (a), the play clock will be set at 25 seconds and the game clock is started on the ready. In (b), the play clock will be set to 40 seconds and started on the referee's signal.
3. Second and 14 at the A-25. A33 gains six yards and is tackled inbounds. The Line Judge mistakes the back stake for the front stake and erroneously stops the clock. **RULING:** Although a 40-second play clock will start as soon as the ball is dead, the Referee will handle this as an administrative stoppage. As soon as the error is detected, the play clock will be set at 25 seconds and the game clock is started.
4. During the down B77 is injured. A44 is tackled inbounds. When the clock is stopped for the injury, it reads 0:58 in the fourth quarter. **RULING:** The play clock is set to 40 seconds and both clocks are started on the ready.
5. With the game clock running, Team A allows the play clock to expire. **RULING:** Team B may accept or decline a five-yard penalty for delay of game. In either case, the play clock will be set at 25 seconds. If the penalty is accepted, the game clock starts on the snap. If the penalty is declined, the game clock starts on the ready.

Mechanics

Responsibilities. The 40-second play clock is maintained by the Field Judge in a 6-man crew and by the Back Judge in a 5-man or 7-man crew. The 40-second play clock starts as soon as the play ends and the ball is dead. Wait a full 2 seconds after the ball is dead before restarting the 40 second clock.

Starting the play clock. The covering official's signal will designate when to start the play clock. When the ball is declared dead, the play clock starts when the following signals are given (only one signal is used):

- a. The dead ball signal (S7) to indicate the play has ended inbounds. The covering official will raise his arm straight up for two seconds.
- b. The start-the-clock signal (S2) to indicate the play has ended inbounds near the sideline.
- c. The stop-the-clock signal (S3) to indicate the play has ended out of bounds.
- d. The incomplete pass signal (S10).

Re-set. If the play clock is interrupted, it will generally be reset to 25 seconds. The signal is one arm with open palm pumped into the air – "push the sky". If the ball is not spotted with approximately 20 seconds

remaining on a 40-second play clock (referee's judgment), the referee will re-set the play clock to 25 seconds and whistle in the ready-for-play.

Countdown. When a visible play clock is not available, the following signaling technique will be used for the benefit of coaches and players for both a 40-second and 25-second play clock. The Field Judge will begin to come on to the field with 10 seconds remaining and raise his arm overhead at the five second mark; then he will begin to "chop" (count down) the remaining five seconds.

Chain crew. When the 40-second count applies, the ball can be snapped as soon as it is spotted. That requires the "box man" to hustle to the next spot after instructed by the Linesman. If the box is not in place when the snap is imminent, the Linesman will drop a bean bag to indicate the placement of the box. Under no circumstances will the play clock be re-set to 25-seconds because of a slow chain crew.

First down inbounds. When a first down is gained and the play ends inbounds, the clock stops to award the new series, but the 40-second play clock starts when the ball becomes dead (this is not an administrative stoppage). Although the ball normally can be snapped as soon as it is spotted, in this special case, it cannot be snapped until the game clock is re-started. Thus, the Umpire will stand over the ball to prevent a snap until the Referee signals the game clock to start and the Umpire confirms it has started, tells the offense "Ball's ready!" and backs off to his pre-snap position.

If the clock operator does not respond, the Referee may blow his whistle to get the clock operator's attention. Such a whistle does not re-set the play clock. If the clock operator still doesn't respond, the Referee will signal timeout and re-set the play clock to 25 seconds.

APPENDIX X – Instructions to Ball Persons

The following ball rotation mechanics should be shared with all ball personnel provided by the teams. We understand that very often, younger children who are not necessarily able to comprehend these requirements will be assigned. We must do the best we can in such situations.

Mechanics:

- Each team will designate at least one (1) person to be a sideline ball handler.
- It is strongly recommended that sideline officials learn the names of such persons and then refer to them by name (“Jim, we need another game ball.”)
- They will be responsible for 2 of their team’s game balls on their respective sideline.
- When the offense is to come on the field, one of the offense’s balls will get rotated into the game via the sideline officials to the umpire.
- The remaining ball in their possession is to be used when the game ball is dead and not near the succeeding spot and won’t be re-spotted quickly, (example: incomplete pass out of bounds or incomplete deep down the field) or the ball in use becomes temporarily unplayable due to weather conditions. Ball persons need to be alert for any official calling for that spare ball.
- Once the ball is provided to the officials, ball persons will chase down the out of bounds ball. If the ball is incomplete in the field of play the officials will get it back to the sideline.
- If out of bounds on the oppositions sideline ball personnel can work with the official on his sideline to get it back over between plays.

Safety:

- Ball persons should remain at the sideline and not venture onto the field
- Ball persons need to stay alert for any situation calling for their attention. It is best if they stay between the two sideline officials on their sideline since either one might call for a ball rotation.
- Ball persons need to stay clear of the sideline and be aware of any play coming toward them and move far back and away from the action.
- Ball persons should be instructed to raise ball above their heads and wait for the official to make eye contact with them and is in position to receive the ball before tossing it.

PART 2

Officiating Standards & Principles

PROLOGUE

All athletics, and football specifically, are governed by a concrete and discrete set of playing rules designed to ensure that each competitor is guaranteed a fair chance of success. In football, these rules are structured so as to provide a balance between offense and defense. They are designed to guarantee that neither party is disadvantaged and that a level playing field is provided for both competitors. The rules, however, are written in the proverbial “black and white,” whereas proper application of these rules to game situations requires acknowledgement of some shades of gray in order to ensure game flow.

The “proper application of these rules” involves three intersecting competencies:

1. **Knowledge of the rules**, including the areas of equipment, timing, the passing game, the kicking game, penalty enforcement, etc. A strong working knowledge of the National Federation of High Schools Rule Book and Case Book is a must-have to provide the basics for this competency.
2. **A universally accepted set of officiating techniques** and mechanics designed to ensure that all officials are positioned correctly and looking at the right things at the right times to ensure that the rules can be enforced properly. We took a giant leap in this area with the introduction and statewide deployment of the *NJFOA Six-Man Mechanics Manual* in 2014.
3. Finally, officials need a firm but flexible understanding of the *intent* of the rules. Just what is it that the rules makers intended by a rule or by implementation of a rule change? What aspects of the game precipitated the rule or change? How should we interpret the game rules to get precisely to the point where the intent of the rules makers is being realized? The answer to these questions is **a guiding set of officiating philosophies and principles**. It is the intention of this document to provide that for all NJFOA members with the endorsement of the NJSIAA.

The best way to ensure a good chance of properly applying the rules is to be in the correct position and follow this formula:

1. See the entire play.
2. Don't guess. If you haven't seen the entire play, it is better to withhold a flag than to make an assumption about what might have occurred and throw a flag, only to be found incorrect on film.
3. Before you decide to penalize and throw a flag, ask yourself, “Did I see the entire play? Am I sure it was a foul? And did it have an impact on the play?” If you can answer ‘yes’ to all three, then penalize. If you answer ‘no’ to any one of the three questions, then keep the flag in your pocket.

The beauty of football officiating is that you have a few seconds to think, before making or not making a call. Use the time. Make sure. And before your decision, filter the situation through the philosophies contained in this document. Late is better than wrong!!!

Please take the time to review all of these philosophies with your crew. Commit to making them a part of your pre-game discussions.

Bob Masucci, Editor

STANDARDS/PRINCIPLES

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.)

Safety Related and Helmet Contact

- Contacting an opponent with the helmet in an attempt to punish is always a foul and may result in a disqualification.
- Illegal helmet contact of any kind continues to be a major point of emphasis and should be penalized anytime an official sees this occur. Remember, the initial contact must be with the helmet. When in doubt, err on the side of safety.
- A helmetless player shall not block, tackle, or otherwise participate beyond the "immediate action" in which the player is engaged when the helmet came completely off. Likewise, it's also a foul (personal foul) for an opponent to engage a helmetless player unless it is part of the "immediate action." Use the following guidelines to determine "immediate action:"
 1. If a player makes contact with an opponent whose helmet has come completely off, then officials must determine the speed, distance and direction of the player before he made contact with the helmetless player. For instance, if player A's helmet comes off, and Player B, the opponent, makes contact, but player B was running at a fast speed, was within one yard of the opponent, and never altered his direction, then the contact would be judged legal. If he changes direction in any way or is more than one yd. away prior to contact, then this should be called a foul.
 2. If a player loses his helmet and is engaged with another player, he can continue to block in order to protect himself, but once the players become disengaged, the player must cease to participate. Conversely, if a player is engaged with an opponent whose helmet comes off, he should disengage, but can continue contact until disengaged.
- When a player is hit after giving himself up, it is a personal foul and may result in a disqualification. "Giving himself up" is any act in which a runner ceases to attempt a further advance by intentionally making the ball dead, e.g. stepping out of bounds, taking a knee, executing a feet-first slide, going to the ground, or by standing still with possession of a live ball and making no attempt to advance.
- Hit with an arm, shoulder or helmet on a defenseless player above the shoulders is a personal foul and may result in a disqualification, e.g., quarterback, kicker, receiver, holder, player who is no longer actively participating in the play, player with no helmet, kick returner and open-field upright player.

Line of Scrimmage

- Officials will work to keep offensive linemen legally on the LOS and will call a foul only when obvious or where repeated warnings are ignored. If the offensive lineman is lined up with his head clearly behind the rear end of the snapper, a foul will be called without a warning. Don't wait till the fourth quarter to enforce the rule. Also, on passing and scrimmage kick plays, any bowing of the tackles that puts them in an illegal formation will be penalized without warning. On those plays, that bowing provides an illegal advantage to the offense.
- 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.
- In order to call an ineligible receiver downfield you must see the ineligible player more than two yards downfield at the time the ball is released. If you do not know the exact location of the downfield player when the ball is released, do not call it. If the pass does not go more than two yards beyond the LOS, ignore the ineligible downfield unless his position impedes a defender making a play on the ball. When in doubt, the ineligible is not illegally downfield.
- Unusual formations or formations used during the execution of a trick or unusual play have the highest degree of scrutiny and should be completely legal ('letter-of-the-law').
- If an offensive player or substitute fails to be inside the numbers following the ready for play but is covered by the defense and thus has gained no advantage, do not flag it as an illegal formation, but be sure to talk to the offending player and his coach about this.
- A quick or abrupt movement by the offense that causes the defense to jump into the neutral zone, including by the QB, WR's and RB's, is a false start and should not be considered illegal motion or a shift.
- 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 and the outside receiver is judged to be in the backfield.
- If the center adjusts the ball, and in so doing, moves it slightly forward after the defense has established position on the LOS, the defense should not be penalized for encroachment as they have been put into this position by actions of the offense.

False starts

- A flinch by an offensive player—even a subtle flinch—is a false start. Lineman, receivers, and backs. No offensive player is allowed to flinch, abruptly move, or simulate action at the snap. Receivers and backs cannot 'reset' to become legal after a flinch/false start. While not "locked" as interior linemen are, any intended pre-snap movement by backs or receivers must be smooth and slow enough to not simulate the snap. Otherwise, it's a false start. "Abrupt" and "sudden" are the keywords that indicate a false start.
- When in question, a quick or abrupt movement by the snapper or quarterback is a false start. This includes an abrupt 'chucking' of the QB's hands toward the snapper from the shotgun formation.
- A QB lifting a foot to send a teammate in motion or to signal he is ready for a shotgun snap is not a false start.

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- If an eligible offensive player is going from a 2-point stance to a 3-point stance when the ball is snapped, it is illegal motion (allow the play to continue) and not a false start.
- Excessive QB head bobs or jerks are false starts. QB hard counts are not fouls. Clapping by a shotgun QB for use as a cadence is not a false start unless it is accompanied by an abrupt movement of the body or head, or a chuck of the hands that simulates the start of a play.
- Ineligible offensive linemen who have their hand on or near the ground can turn and look at the QB to hear the signals provided their movement is slow and they do not lift their hand(s). Be alert for the defense calling the offensive snap count that causes a false start. This is a foul by the defense.
- Pointing at the defender as part of the offensive signals is not a false start.
- If the center flinches or head bobs, this is a false start. If he moves the ball, simulating the beginning of the play, but does not complete the snap, this is an illegal snap. Also, if the snapper appreciably changes the spot of the snap such that as a result the defense appears to be encroaching, this should be ruled an illegal snap. Be especially aware of these possible infractions on 4th downs or short yardage situations.

Defensive Pass Interference (DPI)

- All eligible players have a right to the ball and there must be an obvious action that impedes to rule pass interference.
- Actions that constitute defensive pass interference include the following six categories:
 1. Early **Not Playing the Ball Contact** by a defender is defensive pass interference provided the contact results in some form of restriction or physical concussion. This includes tangled feet if the defender is not playing the ball.
 2. **Playing through the back** of a receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball.
 3. **Grabbing and Restricting** a receiver's arm(s) or body in such a manner that restricts his opportunity to catch a pass.
 4. Extending an arm across the body (**Arm Bar**) of a receiver thus restricting his ability to catch a pass, regardless of the fact of whether or not the defender is looking for the ball.
 5. **Cutting Off** or riding the receiver out of the path to the ball by making contact with him without playing the ball.
 6. **Hooking and restricting** a receiver in an attempt to get to the ball in such a manner that is causes the receiver's body to turn prior to the ball arriving.

The phraseology used above is what's communicated to the Referee by the calling official and to sideline officials communicating with coaches.

Reminder -- Face Guarding is no longer a foul based on a 2017 rule change

Not Defensive Pass Interference

- When there are tangled feet and both players are looking back at the ball or neither player is looking back at the ball, this action does not constitute pass interference.

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- When each player is making a legitimate play on the ball and there is shoulder to shoulder contact by players coming from different angles, this action does not constitute pass interference.
- When the contact is so close to the touching of the pass that it's difficult to determine which occurred first (we refer to it as 'bang-bang'), this action should not be ruled pass interference.
- When a defender places a hand on a receiver's body but does not initiate a turn or twist, or a pull or push, this action does not constitute pass interference.
- Incidental contact by a defender's hands, arm, or body when both players are competing for the ball or neither player is looking for the ball should not be ruled pass interference. If there is any question whether contact is incidental, the ruling shall be no interference.
- Laying a hand on a receiver that does not restrict the receiver in an attempt to make a play on the ball is not pass interference.

Offensive Pass Interference (OPI)

- Actions that constitute offensive pass interference include the following four categories:
 1. Initiating contact with a defender by shoving or pushing off, thus **Creating Separation** in an attempt to catch a pass.
 2. **Driving Thru** a defender who has established a position on the field.
 3. **Pick Play**: one receiver initiating contact with a defender downfield in order to prevent him from making a play on a ball thrown to another receiver in the same area. There must be contact to flag a pick.
 4. Picking off a defender who is attempting to cover a receiver.
- If the pass has not been thrown and the block occurs anywhere down field, call OPI if the pass subsequently crosses the line of scrimmage by 2 yards or more
- If the pass is in flight, and then a block occurs in that third of the field where the pass is thrown, or in an adjacent third of the field, call OPI.

Not Offensive Pass Interference

- OPI will not be called on a screen pass where the ball is overthrown behind the LOS but subsequently lands 2 yards or less beyond the LOS and linemen are blocking downfield, unless such blocking prevents or hinders a defensive player from making a play on the ball.
- It is not OPI or DPI if contact is made by an eligible player of A or B after the ball has been touched/tipped by any player.
- No OPI on a look-in pass where contact is shoulder to shoulder.
- It is not OPI on a pick play if the defensive player is blocking the offensive player when the contact occurs and the offensive receiver doesn't initiate a separate action, or if the contact occurs within one yard of the line of scrimmage.

Passing Situations

- If the passer is hit and in the referee's judgment, the B player could have avoided the passer, a personal foul for roughing will be called. When in question on action against the passer, it is roughing the passer
- When in question on action against the passer, if the defender's intent is to punish, it is roughing the passer.
- Hits above the shoulder on the quarterback with anything, i.e. hand, helmet, etc. is a personal foul for roughing the passer.
- For contact to the front of the passer, when the defensive player has taken two (or more) steps after the ball has been thrown/released prior to contacting the passer, it is a foul for roughing the passer.
- If an interception is near the goal line and there is a question as to whether possession is gained in the field of play or end zone, rule that the interception took place in the end zone rather than in the field of play.
- Intentional grounding is a Referee-only flag. If you work any other position and feel there are no receivers in the area you need to immediately get the information to the Referee. The Referee will then assess the status of the QB. Was his arm hit? Was he under pressure? Was he in the grasp and the throw altered as a result? Where was the QB when the ball was released? If the Referee determines there is grounding after evaluating your information and his observations he will then drop a flag at the spot of the pass. In such cases, a late flag is both warranted and expected.
- On passes thrown from a point beyond the line of scrimmage, when in doubt, the pass is backward.
- On simultaneous catches, when in doubt, whoever comes up with the ball gets the ball.
- If the passer is contacted clearly before he starts his passing motion, then there will be a foul for intentional grounding if there is no eligible receiver in the vicinity of the pass.
- If the passer is contacted after he starts his passing motion, then it may be ruled no intentional grounding due to this contact.
- When in question as to whether the passer was behind or beyond the neutral zone when he released the ball, rule that he was behind the neutral zone.
- For a passer who is attempting to legally ground a forward pass (2022 rule change)
 - When in question whether the passer is inside or outside the lateral boundaries of the free-blocking zone ("the pocket"), the Referee will rule him outside (i.e. a legal grounding of a forward pass).
 - When in question whether or not a grounded pass has reached/crossed the neutral zone (including extension into the out of bounds area, the covering wing official will rule that the pass was in-flight beyond the neutral zone.
 - When a forward pass is legally grounded out-of-bounds as described above, there will be no foul(s) for ineligible players illegally downfield (IDP).

Blocking/Holding

- To have offensive holding, there must be a clear and visible material restriction: a pull, a yank, or a jerk. Make the defense "show you something" ...like trying to get away.

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- Takedowns at the Point Of Attack (POA), and/or in the open field, create special focus and should be called.
- If there is offensive or defensive holding but the action occurs clearly away from the point of attack and has no (or could have no) effect on the play, holding should not be called.
- For blocks in the back, the initial approach angle, contact and reason for the contact must be seen in order to call a foul. The force of the block could be slight and still a foul if the contact propels the player past the runner. Watch how the blocked player falls. If he falls flat on his face, the blocker's contact was likely in the back; if he falls on his side or back, the blocker's contact was likely a legal block.
- 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 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 contact must be on the side in order to be ruled a legal block.
- 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.
- Blocks in the back that are personal fouls in nature should be called regardless of their timing relative to the runner being tackled.
- Illegal block in the back should not be called on fair catches or touchbacks unless it is at the point of attack or results in a personal 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 a touchback occurs and contact is slight (personal foul type actions should always be called).
- 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.
- 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.
- When in question whether an illegal block occurs in the end zone or field of play, it occurs in the field of play.
- On potential illegal blocks below the waist, be sure that the initial contact was below the waist before you drop a flag. If you did not see the initial contact, keep the flag in your pocket.
- **Blindside Blocks** If a player makes initial contact with open hands in the legal contact area (shoulders to waist-front or side body) even if the opponent, because of physical positioning and focus of concentration, is vulnerable to injury, the block will be considered legal. Of course, any contact that an official considered to be excessive with intent to injure an opponent would be considered illegal, and subject the blocker to disqualification for flagrant personal conduct

- A standard to use in determining a **blindside block** is the following: The blocker is moving parallel to the LOS or moving backward towards his end line and makes contact with an opponent in the legal blocking area (shoulders to waist; front or side of body). If forcible contact is with any part of his body (shoulder or helmet) other than with open hands first, then the contact would be considered illegal. If the contact is not forcible, but simply a shield or pick, there shall be no foul.

Kicking Situations

- **Before each free kick, all officials should make note of and confirm with each other the time on the game clock.** This may become important near the end of the half or the game—especially on short kicks where the ECO may incorrectly start (or not start) the game clock as required.
- On free kicks where the down ends very quickly after a previously untouched kick is caught/recovered, use the following guidelines for determining the correct amount of time that should have come off the game clock:
 - When a Team R player cleanly catches or recovers a kick while on the ground, no time should come off the clock.
 - When a Team R player cleanly catches or recovers a kick while on his feet and then without any delay goes to the ground, one (1) second should expire from the game clock.
 - When a Team K player cleanly catches or recovers an untouched kick, no time should expire from the game clock
 - When a Team R player cleanly completes a fair catch, no time should expire from the game clock
- The kicker's restraining line on onside and short, pooch kick-offs should be officiated as a plane and 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 kick-offs, but officials should not be too technical in regard to players breaking the plane.
- For deep kick-offs, the kicking team player's foot must be on the ground beyond the line or the players entire body if he is airborne to be called encroachment. When in doubt, legal.
- 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 judged based on the severity of contact and the potential for injury.
- Punts or kick-offs - A receiver moving into position or in position to make a catch must not be contacted or diverted until he has had an opportunity to complete the catch. Contact is not necessary for kick catch interference as the receiver must be given an "unmolested opportunity" to make the catch.
- Punts or kick-offs - A 'poison' signal by the receiving team will result in the ball being declared dead when caught or recovered by any player. This philosophy prevents the receiving team from deceiving the kicking team in to thinking that they have given up on the play.
- If a kick is near the receiver's goal line and there is a question as to whether possession is gained in the field of play or in the receiver's end zone, rule that possession was gained in the end zone and the play results in a touchback.

- When in question, dual possession of a kick by opponents shall be ruled simultaneous catch/recovery of a kick and is awarded to team R.

Runner Down and Making a Catch

- When in doubt, the runner is down and has not fumbled the ball.
- If the runner is being held by only one opponent, let the play continue; if he is held by two or more, rule forward progress stopped. Look for the runner's 'neutral legs,' i.e. the runner is no longer able to use his legs to advance.
- The ground cannot cause a fumble but it can cause an incompleteness.
- If no official sees that the ball has hit the ground, rule the pass complete.
- The ankle or wrist are considered part of the foot or hand, respectively and do not make a runner down.
- When in doubt, the pass is incomplete vs. the ball caught and then fumbled. The act of making a catch is a process that includes maintaining control of the ball throughout the entire act. If a player has control of the ball but, and in the act of making the catch, comes to the ground and loses control causing the pass to hit the ground, it will be considered incomplete. If he is upright and immediately hit, he must maintain control of the ball or it is considered incomplete. The time period for judging a catch is sometimes called the making of a "football-related move."
- If a receiver who is airborne controls the ball and is either contacted or falls to the ground on his own, whether in-bounds or out-of-bounds, he must maintain control of the ball through his fall to be awarded a catch. If ball never touches ground, receiver can regain control as long as he remains inbounds.
- If legal contact occurs before the runner has a foot down out-of-bounds it will be considered a legal hit and not a late hit out of bounds. However, there are rare situations when a runner/QB is not moving forward and clearly moving OOB in order to protect himself (giving himself up) where a punishing hit would be considered unnecessary roughness.
- Hitting a runner continuing down the side-line: If a whistle has blown and the player has eased up this is a foul. If he continues an aggressive run, you will have to judge the contact and if it should result in a foul.
- When in question, the runner did not step out of bounds.

Scoring Plays

- When in question, it is not a touchdown.
- When in question, it is not a safety.
- An airborne player crossing the goal at the pylon, the position of the ball determines if it's a touchdown or out of bounds. When in question it is a touchdown.

Game Clock & Play Clock

- All obvious and material game clock errors should be corrected. In the last five minutes of either half, ALL officials must be aware of the clock, and then even small, seemingly insignificant, errors will be corrected. If everyone in the stadium is looking at the clock, we need to know the status.
- Any time loss due to the game clock being started erroneously, such as when a dead-ball foul is called prior to the snap, the clock must be adjusted.
- **2017 Timing Rule Interpretation**

The timing rule now prevents the team in possession of the ball from using a foul in an attempt to consume time at the end of any half. Rule 3-4-7 - The offended team has the option to start the game clock on the snap for an accepted or declined penalty in the last two minutes of either half.

With **2:00 minutes** or less to go in the half), the referee will apply the following: Should team A or B commit a foul that prevents the ball from becoming alive or commits a live ball foul (motion, holding, etc.), or a dead ball foul after the play, the clock will stop and will start on the ready or snap based upon the offended team's choice—provided the clock was supposed to start on the referee's ready-for-play signal.

Case Play # 1 Team A is losing 28-21 with the clock running, and 1:35 seconds to play in the game. Team A commits a false start. Ruling: After enforcement of the penalty, the clock will start on the snap or ready based upon Team B's choice.

Case Play # 2 Team A has the ball on their own 5 yd. line with 1:59 seconds to play in the first half. Team A is called for holding on a running play that ends in bounds. Ruling: After enforcement of the penalty, the clock will start on the snap or ready based upon Team B's choice.

Case Play # 3 Team B commits a live ball personal foul against Team A with 1:23 seconds left in the 2nd half. The play ends in bounds. Ruling: Team A has the option of starting the clock on the ready or snap.

Case Play #4 Team A (trailing by 3 points) with 1:59 is flagged for holding after a 20-yard gain. Following the play which ended inbounds, Team B commits a dead ball personal foul. Ruling: After enforcement of the two penalties, either team may choose to have to have clock started on the snap rather than on the ready for play.

Case Play # 5 Team A has the ball leading in score 30-27 with 2:18 seconds left in the game and the clock running when they (a) false start or (b) are guilty of delay of game. Ruling: After enforcement of the penalty, the clock will start on the ready if a false start, and on the snap if delay of game.
Note: The clock can always be stopped by either team should they choose to call a time out.

Miscellaneous

- Call a side-line warning at the end of a down without causing an interruption, but be sure the Head Coach has had a prior verbal warning. Don't intentionally contact a coach or person in the box.
- 5-yard facemask fouls are rare but if it is a grasp and then let go, it can be called. When in question it is a 15-yard foul.

NJFOA Officiating Standards and Principles – 2023 - 2024

- When in the ‘victory formation’ and making it known and clear that the QB will take a knee, don’t allow a fake kneel down. Any movement of the QB’s knee toward the ground is an indication to the defense that he has given himself up and will cause the ball to become dead.
- Also, when in the victory formation, if the QB delays kneeling, but is not attempting to advance, blow the ball dead.
- If action is deemed to be “fighting”, then the player must be disqualified. When in question, the player is not fighting.
- Spitting in the face of an opponent requires disqualification.
- When in question regarding hits away from the ball near the end of the play, consider it a dead-ball rather than live-ball foul.
- When in question whether the QB passed the ball or fumbled it, he passed it
- When in question as to whether the QB’s pass was forward or backward, rule it a forward pass.
- When in question as to whether a player’s (other than the QB) pass was forward or backward. --- rule it a backward pass.
- When in question as to whether the is runner down or fumbled prior to being down – rule the runner down.
- When in question as to whether a Block was in the Back or from the side – rule it a side Block
- When in question as to whether illegal personal contact was Fighting/Flagrant Act or Personal Foul Only -- rule it a Personal Foul Only
- When in question as to whether a foul occurred in the end zone or in the field of play – rule it to have occurred in the field of play.
- When in question whether a personal foul occurred during a live or dead ball, rule it a dead ball foul.
- A replaced player attempting to leave the field will be considered off the field if he is no more than one yard from the side-line when the ball is snapped.
- PLEASE REMEMBER...We (officials) do not send a player out for any reason other than injury or equipment. If we send a player out for a play because he is acting up, we have stepped into a coaching role and we do not belong there. If he is acting up, inform the coach and allow him to manage his team. If he commits a personal foul, call it, and let the coach manage his team.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- Do not be overly technical in applying rules related to celebration. Allow for brief, spontaneous, emotional reactions at the end of a play.
- Beyond brief, spontaneous bursts of energy and emotional reaction, officials should penalize those acts that are clearly prolonged, self-congratulatory, or that make a mockery of the game or demean an opponent. Here is a list of specifically prohibited acts. The 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.

- a) Pointing the finger(s), hand(s), arm(s) or ball at an opponent, or imitating the slashing of the throat.
 - b) Taunting, baiting or ridiculing an opponent verbally.
 - c) Inciting an opponent or spectators in any other way, such as simulating the firing of a weapon or placing a hand by the ear to request recognition.
 - d) Any delayed, excessive, prolonged or choreographed act by which a player (or players) attempts to focus attention upon himself (or themselves), including purposefully moving further into the opponent's backfield to call attention to one's self after the ball has become dead.
 - e) An unopposed ball carrier obviously altering stride or strutting as he approaches the opponent's goal line or diving into the end zone.
 - f) Punching one's own chest or crossing one's arms in front of the chest while standing over a prone player.
 - g) Going into the stands to interact with spectators, or bowing at the waist after a good play (focusing attention upon himself)
- Conversely, the following acts are considered within the bounds of propriety and should not be flagged/penalized:
 - a) A quick raising of a finger and/or eyes to the sky
 - b) Two or three player spontaneous celebrations including 'high fives' or 'chest bumps', hugs or slaps on the back.
 - c) Dropping to a knee in a quick silent meditation or prayer.

A more complete discussion of the NJSIAA policy regarding unsportsmanlike conduct and protocols regarding player disqualification is included as Appendix A to this document.

Last Two Minutes of Half/Game

Philosophy on Winding Clock Late in the Game

Know the timeout situation. If A is out of timeouts, know that they will call plays that end near the sideline and try to get out of bounds. ***The underlying philosophy is that they will sacrifice yards to get the clock stopped.***

If you have a runner who runs out of bounds, rule him out and stop the clock if:

- He is driven out parallel to his path.
- He is driven out even after contact takes him a step or two back. If he can stay upright and get out, take away the forward progress yardage you would normally give him and put him out.
- He dives with the ball or some part of his body hits the sideline even simultaneous with his knee hitting the ground inbounds.

Make him inbounds when:

- The runner's *forward* progress and attempt to advance is stopped and he is driven backwards or held up and there's a chance he may fumble or be stripped of the ball. Wind him in if he is short of the line to gain.

- He is tackled/stopped inbounds and only a “second act” gets him out of bounds.

“WHEN IN DOUBT, PUT HIM OUT.”

Only the covering official should rule on whistle timing, progress spot and clock status.

APPENDIX A

NJSIAA Sportsmanship Policy

Procedure to be used if officials hear negative statements or see actions related to race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability, including vulgarity:

1. If the official(s) hear statements and can clearly identify what was said and who said it, then the player or coach would be immediately disqualified, and both head coaches should be informed of the disqualification and the reason for it.
2. Officials should write down the time, player(s) number, quarter, and what was said and to whom it was said. Multiple officials should record this information.
3. If an official hears statements or sees actions of this type but cannot clearly identify what was said or who said it, then he should immediately call time out. The referee and the official hearing the remarks will verbally warn both Head Coaches that such statements were heard, but they could not determine exactly who said them, or what was said.
4. If it is reported to an official that such negative statements are being made, that official should call timeout and the referee along with that official to whom it was reported, should likewise verbally warn both Head Coaches that such conduct has been reported.
5. For #3 and #4, both coaches should be told that if any subsequent negative statements by either team are heard, even if they are not attributable to a specific individual(s), an unsportsmanlike penalty will be assessed against the head coach. Officials should write down the time and quarter of that warning, and what was heard or reported.

Use of Profanity by Coaches or Other Team Personnel

- Use of profanity and disparaging remarks directed towards a player or players (their own or opponents) by coaches or any other team administrative or supplemental personnel is unacceptable. If heard by an official(s) and if the official can clearly identify the coach or other team personnel, he/she will be penalized.
- If heard, but the official cannot clearly identify who made the remark, then the head coach will be warned.
- Subsequent abusive language directed towards players, even if the official cannot identify the culprit, the Head Coach should be penalized for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Any remarks or actions that are racial, sexual, gender based, religious, ethnic or relating to one's disability will warrant automatic ejection. NJSIAA and the school's AD will be notified in writing per NJSIAA policy.

Player Disqualification

The rules clearly state that any player who commits a flagrant unsportsmanlike or personal foul should be disqualified from the game. As officials, you are responsible to make sure the game is played fairly and within the spirit of the rules. Player disqualification is a serious penalty in New Jersey. The NJSIAA does not allow for appeals.

Therefore, before a crew ejects a player(s) from a game, they should consider the following:

1. Are you confident that you have correctly identified the player (s) who committed the foul? If possible, confirm this identification with another official.
2. Are you confident that the foul(s) were clearly intentional, flagrant or unsporting.
3. Convene a conference as a crew (or at least the calling officials with the R) to review the play and the action. Write down the number(s) of the player(s) involved as well as the time and quarter of the penalty. Try to reach consensus as to whether the act warrants disqualification. When in doubt, as to whether the act was clearly flagrant, intentional or unsporting rising to the level of disqualification, you should penalize the player, but allow the player to remain in the game.
4. If a decision was made to disqualify, inform both head coaches of the outcome.