

7-Person Mechanics

Umpire in the Offensive Backfield

Hereafter Referred to as Center Judge

Mechanics Based on 2nd Half Alignment

Sections:

Free Kicks

Positioning and Generalized Zone Coverage

Free Kick Coverage

Onside kick positioning and Zones

Onside Kick Coverage

Scrimmage Plays

Before the Snap

Substitution and counting players

Substitution procedures

Other Substitution Provisions

Running Play Coverage

Goal Line Positioning and Zones

Reverse Goal Line Mechanics

Forward Pass Coverage

Coverage Notes

Punts

Positioning and Zones

Coverage

Blocked Kick or Kick Over Kicker/Holder's Head

Scoring Kicks

Positioning and Zones

Fake Kicks

Timeout

Free Kicks

NOTE: The Line Judge and Field Judge will be positioned opposite the press box in the first half and the Line Judge will be responsible for the chains. The Head Linesman and Side Judge will be opposite the press box in the second half and the Head Linesman will be responsible for the chains.

Mechanics and keys do not change regardless of which side of the field the officials are working, other than responsibility for the chains.

If a sideline penalty recorder is present, he shall remain with the Head Linesman throughout the game.

Positioning, and Generalized Zone Coverage

Referee: Starting position is in between hashmarks behind deepest receiver. When players and officials are ready, after the sideline liaison is ready and once the Back Judge has reached the sideline after handing the ball to the kicker, sound your whistle and give the ready-for-play signal. Be alert for a touchback or a kick beyond the end line. You are responsible for the end line. You are responsible for the play clock and for knowing if Team A had at least four players on both sides of the kicker.

Center Judge: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on Team A's restraining line. Ensure kicking team players remain inside the nine-yard marks until the ready-for-play-signal from the Referee. You are responsible for clearing your sideline to Team A's end line. Ensure Team A players are within five yards of their restraining line.

Head Linesman: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box at Team B's goal line. You have goal line and pylon responsibility. You are secondary for knowing if Team A had at least four players on both sides of the kicker.

Side Judge: Assist in clearing your sideline. Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on Team B's restraining line.

Line Judge: Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at Team B's goal line. You have goal line and pylon responsibility. You are secondary for knowing if Team A had at least four players on both sides of the kicker.

Field Judge: Assist in clearing your sideline. Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at Team B's restraining line.

Back Judge: You are responsible for clearing your sideline to Team A's end line. After handing the ball to the kicker, starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at Team A's restraining line. Ensure kicking team players remain inside the nine-yard marks until the ready-for-play-signal from the Referee. You are responsible for Team A's goal line on any long return. Ensure Team A players are within five yards of their restraining line.

Free Kick Coverage

All: Once the ball is kicked, observing the players is your primary responsibility. Do not focus on the flight of the ball.

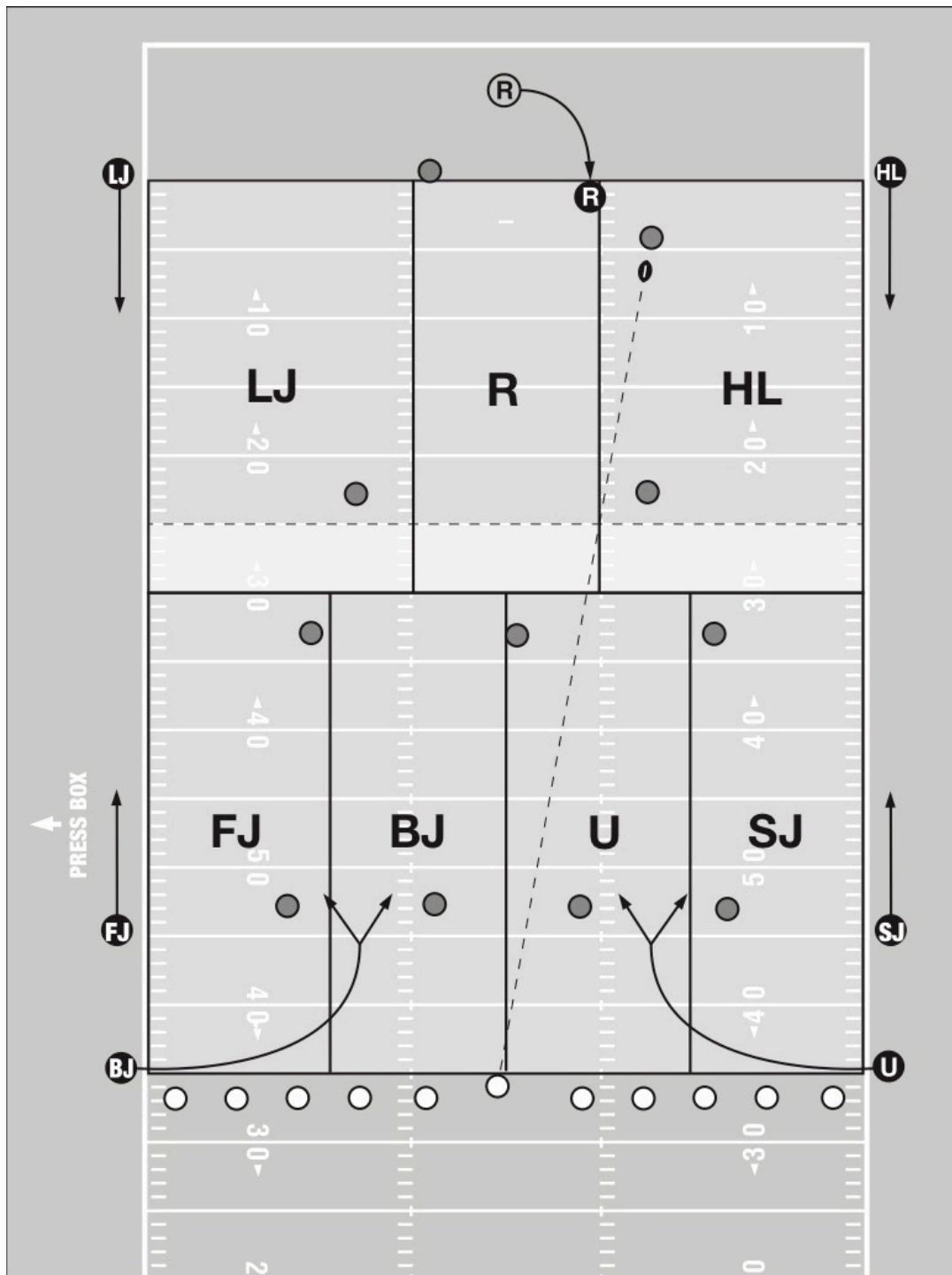
Referee: Once runner catches the ball and leaves the end zone, cover to about 25-30 yard line, focus on the center 1/3 of field and/or in front of runner. Be alert for a Illegal Wedge, handoff, and reverse.

Center Judge and Back Judge: Move between the numbers and the hashmark. The Center Judge will watch illegal action on the kicker. Move downfield no more than 10 - 15 yards. If ball kicked outside numbers - near side official moves to numbers and opposite moves to Hash.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: Wind the clock when the ball is legally touched in the field of play, unless the ball is caught or recovered by a player who is legally down. The clock will start when the ball crosses the goal line after being first touched by the receivers in the end zone. Stay at the goal line until it is no longer threatened. When the runner is on your side of the field, you are responsible for blocks at the point of attack and the runner. When you do not have the ball, take a position to observe blocks on the backside of the runner. Be alert for an illegal wedge in your side zone from the sideline to the hash mark and to approximately to 25-30 yard line.

Side Judge and Field Judge: Know if the ball was kicked into the ground or if it has taken more than one bounce. Move no more than 10 - 15 yards toward Team B's goal line. That will give better coverage in the critical area where contact occurs between the kicking and receiving team.

All: Yard lines stated are guidelines and are not set in stone. Zones will ebb and flow as play dictates exactly as they do for punts. If a player leaves our zone and there is a legitimate "threat of foul", stay with the player. If there is no legitimate "threat of foul", be alert to other players coming into your zone as you assume responsibility for their actions. If there is nothing happening with players in your zone, broaden your vision.



Inside Kick Positioning and Zones

Referee: Starting position is slightly behind and to one side of a deep receiver. However, the Referee is responsible for Team B's goal line, the end zone and the end line. When players and officials are ready, after the sideline liaison is ready and once the Back Judge has reached the sideline after handing the ball to the kicker, sound

your whistle and give the ready-for-play signal. Be alert to ensure there are at least four players on either side of the kicker.

Center Judge: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on Team A's restraining line.

Head Linesman: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box, midway between the two restraining lines. You are secondary for knowing if Team A had at least four players on both sides of the kicker.

Side Judge: Starting position is on the sideline opposite the press box on Team B's restraining line.

Line Judge: Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side, midway between the two restraining lines. You are secondary for knowing if Team A had at least four players on both sides of the kicker.

Field Judge: Starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at Team B's restraining line.

Back Judge: After handing the ball to the kicker, starting position is on the sideline on the press box side at Team A's restraining line.

Line Judge and Field Judge, Head Linesman and Side Judge: Before taking positions, meet briefly to review responsibilities and coverage.

Onside Kick Coverage

Referee: Be prepared if Team A kicks deep instead of onside. Be aware of fair catch signals behind the Receiver's restraining line

Center Judge and Back Judge: Have bean bag in hand. Treat Team A's restraining line as a plane. Any player (other than the kicker or holder) breaking the plane before the ball is kicked should be called for offside. If the kick is to your side, you have secondary responsibility for touching by either team. If the kick is to the opposite side, you are responsible for blocking. Be alert for a fair-catch signal by Team B and be prepared to cover the play if a Team B player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: Have bean bag in hand. Observe blocking by both teams. Know if the ball was kicked into the ground or if it has taken more than one bounce. Be alert for a fair-catch signal by Team B and be prepared to cover the play if a Team B player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

Side Judge and Field Judge: Have bean bag in hand. You must know if the kick broke the plane of Team B's restraining line. You are primarily responsible for touching by either team. Be alert for a fair-catch signal by Team B and be prepared

to cover the play if a Team B player recovers the kick and attempts to advance the ball.

All: Remember that the clock needs to be properly started and stopped on onside kick plays.

Scrimmage Plays

Before the Snap

Note: After any change of possession, the offensive team's game ball always comes in from the press box side.

Referee: Count the offensive players before they break the huddle (or in the absence of a huddle, early in the play clock). Check the offensive formation and note the tackle box. Check all of the backs between the Tackles and Quarterback for illegal motion and false starts. Be alert for obvious movement of restricted linemen that is not detected by other officials. Always work on the right side of the Quarterback, at least as wide as the tight end and 12 to 15 yards deep. Get into a position deep and wide where you may comfortably see the ball and stationary backs inside the tackle box and the Tackle on the right side. Be certain that the defensive team does not use words or signals to disconcert opponents. Check legality of the numbers of interior offensive linemen at the snap. Read the offensive alignment and know the five ineligible. Be alert for obvious movement of the Guard, and Tackle on your side of the ball not detected by other officials.

Center Judge: Primary official for spotting the ball after all plays. After spotting the ball, the Center Judge moves to a position behind but to the side of the Center to prevent the snap. This position allows the Center Judge to clear the linemen's feet as they get set and to avoid having to step over or through the gap between the center and the guard. This also affords a position in front of or to the side of the Quarterback so the Center can also clearly see that the snap is being prevented. As primary to spotting the ball, be aware of the lateral position of the ball if the ball must be returned to the previous spot. While the Center Judge has primary responsibility for spotting the ball, it does not prevent other officials from spotting if it expedites the process. When that occurs, the Center Judge continues to the ball until released by the Referee.

The Center Judge should maintain this position as long as the Referee's arms are extended. Otherwise, the Center Judge promptly backs into position facing the Referee and Quarterback. This allows the Center Judge to observe the Center, Guard, and Tackle on his side, which will be the primary key after the snap and in pass blocking. The Center Judge is secondary, after the Referee, for calling False Start by setbacks inside the Tackle on his side of the ball. Rule on illegal movement by Center, Guard, and Tackle on your side prior to the snap, and be certain that the defensive team does not use words or signals to disconcert opponents. Check legality of the numbers of interior offensive linemen at the snap. Read the offensive alignment **and** know the five ineligible. Be alert for obvious movement of restricted linemen that is not detected by other officials. The Center Judge should be prepared to communicate directly with the Center and Quarterback, especially if there is a late substitution and the Referee extends his arms, indicating that the snap should not occur. The Center Judge assists the Referee regarding the status of the game clock as needed.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: Read the offensive formation and know your eligible receiver responsibilities. Be alert for obvious movement of restricted linemen, especially Tackles on your side and be prepared to help with other linemen who are not detected by other officials. Watch for illegal formations, including encroachment prior to the snap and false starts by Tackle and players outside the Tackle on your side. Indicate the offensive line of scrimmage by extended foot, then take final position straddling the neutral zone. If a player goes in motion, observe them if they are on your side of the ball (direction of the motion does not matter) to ensure the motion is legal. That does not relieve the opposite official from making an obvious call. The basic starting position is just outside the sideline and on the line of scrimmage. The width varies depending on the game situation (on short-yardage plays, the Head Linesman and Line Judge may choose to pinch the ends; however, at no time should the wing officials allow players to line up behind them. The Line Judge or Head Linesman assist the Referee regarding the status of the game clock as needed.

Field Judge and Side Judge: Count the defense. Read your keys and know your eligible receiver responsibilities. Be aware of violations of the restricted team area and monitor substitutions. The Side Judge is primarily responsible for the game clock. In the event the clock is running when it should be stopped, give and repeat the appropriate signal until the clock has been corrected. If an appreciable error on the game clock is noted, or if inefficiency is habitual, the Side Judge shall call a timeout and advise the Referee. The basic starting position is approximately 20 yards from the line of scrimmage and on the sideline. Be diligent in keeping the white area free from all team members

Back Judge: Monitors all timing involving the 25/40-second count. Counts the defense. Read your keys and know your eligible receiver responsibilities. Be aware of violations of the restricted team area and monitor substitutions. The basic

starting position is 25 yards from the line of scrimmage, favoring the strong side of the field (the side with more eligible receivers outside the tackles). The position may have to be adjusted if a back goes in motion.

Substitutions and Counting Players

The task of counting players must be done on every play. There is no excuse for allowing one team a manpower advantage for even one play.

In certain situations, the rules dictate how long a team has to correct a problem with too many players on the field or in the huddle. There are other situations in which the issue does not become a foul until the ball is snapped or free kicked.

Officials with counting duties must count and confirm their count with other officials who share the responsibility. The signals: thumb up for a count of 11, twirling index finger for more than 11 players, open palms below waist level for less than 11. All officials are expected to monitor the legality of substitutions.

The counting assignments:

Free kick: The Center Judge, Back Judge, Field Judge, and Side Judge count Team A; the Referee, Head Linesman and Line Judge count Team B.

Scoring Kicks: Referee, Head Linesman, and Line Judge count the offense. The Field Judge, Side Judge, and Back Judge count the defense. The Center Judge has no counting responsibility on punts. The Center Judge is responsible for the defensive player lining up outside the frame of the long snapper on punts and any illegal contact.

Punts: Referee, Head Linesman, and Line Judge count the offense. The Field Judge, Side Judge, and Back Judge count the defense. The Center Judge has no counting responsibility on punts. The Center Judge is responsible for the defensive player lining up outside the frame of the long snapper on punts and any illegal contact.

All other non-kicking plays: The Referee has primary responsibility to count Team A; Head Linesman and Line Judge are secondary for counting Team A. The Field Judge, Side Judge and Back Judge count Team B. The Center Judge has no counting responsibility.

Substitution Procedures

To help simplify the application of rules regarding substitution, we will use the substitution procedures any time Team A substitutes. This includes if Team A substitutes into a formation or into a huddle of any type.

When Team A substitutes, the Center Judge will be primary in spotting the ball. For consistency, the officials shall not significantly increase the pace of spotting the football for teams seeking to snap the ball as soon as possible. The Center Judge should neither sprint nor walk but move throughout the game at a consistent pace that puts neither team at a disadvantage. After the ball is properly spotted, the Center Judge looks to the Referee to determine if they must remain near the ball to prevent the snap or if they are released to their normal position.

The Referee will manage the no huddle substitution process and the Center Judge must assume all responsibility to prevent the snap as determined by the Referee. The Referee must assume normal position as soon as possible in order to manage the process described below.

The Center Judge is not required to count the number of players on offense as the Center Judge's primary responsibility is to prevent a quick snap prior to the defense being allowed to complete their substitution under Rule 3-5-2-e and then to assume the Center Judge position as quickly as possible once cleared by the Referee.

If Team A substitutes, Rule 3-5-2 goes into effect: Team A is prohibited from rushing quickly to the line of scrimmage with the obvious intent of creating a defensive disadvantage. If the ball is ready for play, the game officials will not permit the ball to be snapped until Team B has placed substitutes in position and replaced players have left the field of play. Team B must react promptly with its substitutes. Team B will also be allowed to match up when Team A substitutes with exiting defensive players.

If Team A does not substitute and is in hurry-up mode, Team B must be prepared to react promptly and is not afforded any match-up provisions. The following mechanics will be used:

- The Referee is primarily responsible to use the signal with extended arms when Team A is substituting, and Team B is allowed a match-up opportunity.
- Officials on the Team A sideline and the Back Judge should also be aware of and shall extend their arms when Team A substitutes.
- The Center Judge shall check with the Referee prior to leaving the ball after placement. Should they notice the Referee with extended hands or the extended palm sign at any point, they should remain in the vicinity of the ball or return to the vicinity of the ball until the Referee clears them with a distinct and positive signal.

While waiting for the signal, the Center Judge should make note of the best exit route to be clear of players when the ball is snapped. The Referee should only use the extended arms substitution signal if a team is actually substituting.

- Once the Referee initiates the substitution rule by extending their arms, they monitor the offensive substitution until it is obvious who the replaced player(s) are and they begin leaving the field. The Referee then observes the defense to allow them reasonable time to match up, position its players and allow replaced players to leave the field.
- If Team A substitutes so late that the play clock expires while Team B, reacting promptly, was not in position prior to the play clock expiring, the offense is responsible for and will be penalized for delay of game.
- The Center Judge should be alert for the Referee's signal for late substitutions. If the Center Judge is remiss the Referee must move in quickly to prevent the snap. The Center Judge should then assume a position in the vicinity of the ball as the Referee returns to position prior to the snap.
- If the officials are delayed in getting to the ball to prevent a snap, the officials will stop the game and warn Team A it must allow Team B the opportunity to substitute. Further attempts by Team A to create a defensive disadvantage in that manner will result in a 15-yard penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Any official should be prepared to step in and shut down a play that violates the substitution rule.

Other Substitution Provisions

- If Team A breaks the huddle with 12, it is an immediate foul; if Team A fails to send the replaced player out of the huddle within three seconds after the substitute enters the huddle, it is an immediate foul. Therefore, the Referee, Head Linesman and Line Judge must count Team A players while they are still in the huddle. Too often, teams are allowed to break the huddle with more than 11 players and a foul is not called until the snap is imminent.
- When a Team A player enters the game having changed jersey numbers, they must report to the Referee. The Referee uses his microphone to announce the player's former number and the new number and the appropriate sideline official relays the information to the opposing Head Coach. The game clock and play clock do not stop. Team A must complete the process before the play clock expires. During the process, the officials will not allow the ball to be snapped. Normal substitution rules still apply.

- When a Team B player enters the game having changed jersey numbers, they must report to the Referee. The Referee uses the microphone to announce the player's former number and the new number and the appropriate sideline official relays the information to the opposing Head Coach. The game clock and play clock do not stop. The player must complete the process and get into position on his side of the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped or be subject to a foul. During the process, if the ball is ready, the officials will not prevent Team A from snapping the ball. Normal substitution rules still apply.
- These procedures, which are intended to prevent the defense from being unable to match up during normal scrimmage situations, should not be used in the case of substitution for a last-second field goal. In that situation, the offense is making a normal and expected personnel change. The defense should be prepared to respond appropriately. In no case should the Center Judge be standing over the ball to prevent the snap as the clock runs out.

Running Play Coverage

Referee: After the snap, key on the Center, Guard, and Tackle to your side, observe the action behind the line and the runner to the neutral zone, as well as action on the ball and the Quarterback on handoffs or backward passes. Once you read run to your side, focus on the blocks at front of point of attack. On a run to the other side, focus on backside of point of attack. Stay with any threatened runner behind the line on your side. Be prepared to go into the side zone to cover the play as necessary. If the Quarterback goes out of bounds to your sideline, coordinate sideline coverage with the Head Linesman or Line Judge to ensure the spot is maintained and players return to the field. On option plays to your side, be prepared to cover action around the Quarterback. If the Quarterback pitches the ball, stay with the Quarterback. After any change of possession be alert for action on the Quarterback who is a defenseless player. Specifically, be alert for targeting at all times and illegal blocks when the Quarterback is clearly out of the play.

Center Judge: After the snap, key on the Center, Guard, and Tackle to your side. Once you read run to your side, focus on the blocks at the point of attack. On a run to the other side, focus on backside blocks. Stay with any threatened runner behind the line on your side. Be prepared to go into the side zone to cover the play as necessary. If the Quarterback goes out of bounds to your sideline, coordinate sideline coverage with the Head Linesman or Line Judge to ensure the spot is maintained and players return to the field. On option plays to your side, be prepared to cover action around the Quarterback. If the Quarterback pitches the ball, stay with the Quarterback. After any change of possession, be alert for action on the Quarterback who is a defenseless player. Specifically, be alert for targeting at all times and illegal blocks when the Quarterback is clearly out of the play.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: Observe the initial action on or by the offensive player who is your key, especially if he's pressed. Observe the blocking in front of the runner behind the line of scrimmage on runs to your side or in the neutral zone. Determine forward progress when necessary. You have the runner in your side zone to Team B's two yard line, attempting to maintain 5 to 10 yards of separation. When the flow of play is away from your position, clean up action behind the play.

Side Judge and Field Judge: After the snap, observe action involving the widest receiver on your side of the field. Pay special attention to crack backs on run plays to your side. For plays away from your side, assist with second level blocks in the area of the linebackers. Box in the widest player. Cover your sideline from about 20 yards beyond the neutral zone, trying to maintain a 15- to 20-yard cushion to the goal line. Do not turn your back toward the play. If the play is to your side of the field and the Head Linesman or Line Judge marks the out-of-bounds spot, clean up action around the play and out of bounds. You have goal line responsibility and forward progress spots inside the two yard line.

Back Judge: Prior to the snap, pay attention to whether or not your receiver key has a defender in press coverage. After the snap, if the defender is in press coverage, observe action on or by eligible receivers on which you are keying. If the defender is not in press coverage and you read run play, help out with interior line play of the defense immediately after the snap. After your initial read of the defensive linemen, move laterally and backward to observe actions of players ahead of the runner as the ball moves toward a sideline and assist the Referee and Center Judge with second level blocking. Be ready to take over on cutback and breakaway runs. Go to the football when it becomes dead in your immediate area. When the play is not in your area, hold your position and observe the action after the ball becomes dead. Assume coverage of any runner who breaks loose and goes downfield. When the runner goes out of bounds, cover the area around the runner. On long runs, be prepared to rule on goal line plays.

Goal Line Positioning and Zones

On passes to the back corners of the end zone, the Side Judge or Field Judge and covering wing official can work in tandem to rule on the catch.

The Referee must be alert for the Quarterback "walking into the snap." The Quarterback may not be moving toward the line of scrimmage at the snap; all Team A players must be set before the ball may be legally snapped. Watch also for Team A players helping the runner.

When the play is over, all officials should move toward the pile to prevent late hits and to ensure that the players untangle in a prompt manner.

Referee: Starting position and coverage is the same as for any scrimmage play. Signal a score only if necessary, such as a delay in the on field ruling after a conference by officials. If the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's seven yard line, responsible for knowing if a pass is backward or forward.

Center Judge: Starting position and coverage is the same as for any scrimmage play, except if the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's seven yard line, responsible for knowing if a pass is backward or forward, if the passer was beyond the line of scrimmage, and if the touched pass is beyond or behind the line of scrimmage. If uncertain, drop a flag and allow the Replay official to make a ruling.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: Starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. You are responsible for the goal line when the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's seven yard line. To best rule on a score, you must be on the goal line. Be aware if the line-to-gain is between the seven yard line and the goal line and be prepared on progress at the line-to-gain. Be alert for a pass and prepared to rule if the pass was forward or backward, if the passer was beyond the line of scrimmage when the pass was thrown, or if the ball was caught behind the line of scrimmage.

Side Judge and Field Judge: When the ball is snapped outside Team B's 25 yard line, starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. When the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's 25 yard line to Team B's seven yard line, starting position is on the goal line at the pylon and you are responsible for the goal line. You should never take an initial position between the five yard line and the goal line. In order to rule on a score, you must be on the goal line extended. When the ball is snapped from Team B's seven yard line in, starting position is on the end line where it intersects with the sideline, one step off the sideline at a 45-degree angle from the end line corner pylon.

Back Judge: When the ball is snapped outside Team B's 25 yard line, starting position is the same as for any scrimmage play. When the ball is snapped on or inside Team B's 25 yard line to the goal line, starting position is on the end line. You may get help from the deep wings on passes to the corners of the end zone. When the ball is snapped from Team B's seven yard line in, you will get help on the end line from the deep wings. If necessary on a close play, look through and coordinate with the official facing the receiver.

Reverse Goal Line Mechanics

When Team A snaps the ball on or inside its own three yard line, the Head Linesman and Line Judge must use reverse goal line mechanics. Move immediately to the goal line at the snap. If the snap is between the three and 10 yard line, the Line Judge holds the line of scrimmage and the Head Linesman reads the play and reacts to the

goal line if necessary. Remember, a Team A runner must advance the ball completely over the goal line to avoid a safety. Be alert for fumbles and know which team provided the impetus for a ball that goes in the end zone.

Forward Pass Coverage

Referee: Primarily responsible for the guard and tackle on the right side; backs inside the Tackle Box on the right side, any other lineman who is a threat for a foul; and the passer, who is your primary responsibility until there is no threat of a foul. Verbally alert defenders when the passer has released the ball. Assist the Line Judge on the legality of a forward pass thrown beyond or behind the neutral zone, or out of bounds. Be prepared to rule on intentional grounding; know the status of the passer in relation to the tackle box and know if the passer was under duress. You shall receive help from the covering official in respect to eligible receivers being in the area and the designated wing official on status of the pass crossing the line. When the Quarterback drops back, retreat at a 45-degree angle to maintain a proper cushion. After any change of possession, be alert for action on the Quarterback, who is a defenseless player. Specifically, be alert for targeting fouls at all times and illegal blocks when the Quarterback is clearly out of the play.

Center Judge: Primarily responsible for the Center, Guard, and tackle on the left side; backs inside the Tackle Box on the left side, any other lineman who is a threat for a foul in your area; and the passer, who is your secondary responsibility until there is no threat of a foul, especially when contact to the Quarterback is imminent. Be prepared to help the Referee on intentional grounding. Responsible for Team A's goal line after a change of possession. Be alert for targeting fouls and illegal blocks at all time. When the Quarterback drops back, retreat at a 45-degree angle to maintain a proper cushion. You are responsible for the Quarterback when scrambling outside the numbers and into the left sideline bench area.

Head Linesman: The basic responsibility for preliminary action on the line is the same as during a running play. When you read a forward pass, your primary responsibility is to your receiver, so be prepared to move downfield along the sideline at a pace that allows you to stay in control and maintain focus on your keys. This could be quickly, more slowly or not at all depending on how the play develops and the pace and routes of the receivers. Keep in mind that you can still maintain coverage of your key even if reading the play would position you closer to the line of scrimmage. Movement should be deliberate and with purpose and avoid any preset distance that you feel you should always achieve. Rarely will your drift be more than five yards downfield prior to the pass being thrown; however that could be extended in certain situations such as the long pass at the end of a half to the end zone, or fourth and long when all receivers are going a greater distance. Note: The drift should only take place if your key takes you downfield. For example, if your key stays in to block, you should not move downfield. If your key does move downfield, do not advance beyond him. Once the pass is thrown, especially if thrown in your

area of responsibility, reducing movement while the ball is in the air will improve your ability to see the play more accurately.

If your receiver is not threatened, assist with the tackle on your side, backs who block outside the tackle on your side, or other receivers in the 0 to 10-yard belt if they are threatened. You are responsible for covering pass receptions in the area between the line of scrimmage and the deep officials. If the pass is thrown out of your area, observe the action of players other than the pass receiver after you have observed the pass being caught, intercepted or incomplete. Provide information to the Referee on eligible receivers in the area of the pass and whether the pass reached the line of scrimmage. To provide better coverage for observing ineligible linemen downfield, observe where the ineligible are at the time the passer releases the ball. The offside line of scrimmage official has primary responsibility for ineligible downfield.

Line Judge: The basic responsibility for preliminary action on the line is the same as during a running play. When you read a forward pass, your primary responsibility is your receiver or other receivers in the 0 to 10-yard belt if they are threatened. If your receiver goes downfield or is threatened, they have priority over the tackle. If the pass is thrown out of your area, observe the action of players other than the pass receiver after you have observed the pass being caught, intercepted or incomplete. You are primarily responsible to rule on whether a pass is forward or backward behind the line of scrimmage and shall punch back on backward passes and may move two yards into offensive backfield for coverage of pass blocking if necessary. Be prepared to rule whether the pass was thrown from behind or beyond the line of scrimmage. Provide information to the Referee on eligible receivers in the area of the pass and whether the pass reached the line of scrimmage. To provide better coverage for observing ineligible linemen downfield, observe where the ineligible are at the time the passer releases the ball. The offside line of scrimmage official has primary responsibility for ineligible downfield.

Side Judge and Field Judge: Observe contact on your eligible receiver and the defensive back. Cover the sideline from your original position to the endline. Maintain deep positioning, Cover the play and watch the defenders' action on the receiver when the ball is thrown in your area. Be particularly alert when a receiver flashes back toward the ball.

Back Judge: The basic responsibility for preliminary action on the line are the same as during a running play. You are responsible for action on your designated receiver from the time the ball is snapped until it may be necessary to release your specific player responsibility so you can cover the action in your zone. The man in motion will be put into the normal numbering of wide man, second man in, etc. and is determined at the snap if clearly outside the Tackle.

All: Be alert for eligible receivers out of bounds and for an illegal pass (especially after a completion); observe touching or catching by an ineligible player; watch particularly for holding and all contact beyond the neutral zone before and after the pass is thrown. When ruling on a reception at the sideline, give the incomplete signal or the timeout signal (if the pass is complete). On a tight reception at the sideline, the “catch” signal may be used. The “sweep” signal may be used if an airborne player receives a pass near the sideline and first returns to the ground out of bounds, or the “bobble” signal if a receiver fails to maintain control of the ball before going out of bounds. After an incompleteness, form a relay to return the ball to the official nearest the previous spot. When there is a change of team possession, immediately switch to reverse mechanics to cover the return and the goal line. Be sure the result of the play is properly communicated to the Referee. When contact occurs on a pass that is blatantly uncatchable and the covering official drops his penalty marker, the non-covering official will give the covering official information that the pass was uncatchable. If the covering official agrees and has no other foul, they report that information to the Referee. The Referee announces that there is no foul and gives the reason, and optionally gives the disregard the flag signal.

Coverage Notes

As a pass play develops, officials may be required to shift their focus from their initial keys and go to “zone coverage,” observing players in their area. When a pass is thrown, all covering officials in the area must focus on the spot of the catch.

Judging whether or not a catch was made and the legality of the contact on the receiver are paramount. If the pass is caught, officials resume watching players in their zone. If there is a question on the catch, the officials away from the pass may be able to help rule on the play.

Punts

Positioning and Zones

Referee: Take a position slightly behind and to the side of the kicker, outside the tight end position and on the right side. See the ball from snap to kick and observe the blockers and kicker at the same time. Be in position to be at a 45-degree angle with the kicker when the ball is kicked. If the kicker is near the end line, straddle the end line and warn the kicker before the snap.

Center Judge: Coordinate substitution process with Referee despite the obvious substitution situation. Be diligent in communicating with Team A, by whatever means, not to snap the ball until they are released to do so. Take an initial position between the snapper and the shield or personal protector and in line with the punter. Take the opportunity to remind the defense they are to not align themselves in the frame of the body of the snapper at the snap. When released by the Referee, work to get into a position even, or slightly deeper than the punter and at about the normal tight end position. This tighter spot will allow you to observe the alignment by the defense and action on and around the snapper.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: Take your basic position and officiate as on a scrimmage play. Hold your position until the ball crosses the line.

Field Judge and Side Judge: Take a position on your sideline no less than five yards behind the deepest receiver. Weather conditions and the kicker's ability will help dictate when to take a position on the goal line. When the ball is snapped at approximately Team A's 45 yard line, take an initial position at the goal line pylon.

Back Judge: The basic position is no less than five yards behind and at the side of the deepest receiver, favoring the wide side of the field. However, if the deepest receiver takes a position inside his 10 yard line, line up on the goal line. Work to maintain a 45-degree angle with the receiver while the ball is in flight.

Coverage

Referee: Observe action on the kicker and be aware of the flight of the ball off his foot. Secondarily responsible for observing blocking by the shield. Observe players while proceeding slowly downfield if the kick remains inbounds. If the flight of the kick is toward a sideline, move quickly to a position or spot of the kick in line with the flight. Raise your hand, signaling the covering official to begin walking toward the area where the ball went out of bounds. When the covering official reaches the spot, chop down with your arm. Be alert for action on the kicker, who is a defenseless player after kicking the ball, during the kick and on the return. Specifically, be alert for targeting fouls at all times and illegal blocks of players clearly out of the play.

Center Judge: Observe the blocks of Team A and action by Team B players. Pay particular attention to the Team B player nearest the snapper. Primary for action against the punt shield. After the ball crosses the neutral zone, urgently follow the first wave of Team A linemen. Your distance covered downfield will be determined by the length of the kick and the first wave of linemen.

Head Linesman: After the snap, hold your position until the ball crosses the neutral zone and signal if the kick is tipped. Move downfield with urgency after the kick crosses the line, covering play, or ahead of the runner if the Side Judge has the

runner. Therefore, you must maintain an appropriate cushion ahead of the runner. You have goal line responsibility on long returns.

Line Judge: When the kick crosses the line, move deliberately downfield, covering play, or ahead of the runner if the Field Judge has the runner. You have goal line responsibility on long returns. Therefore, you must maintain an appropriate cushion ahead of the runner.

Field Judge and Side Judge: Primary coverage of the gunner on your side of the field. When it's obvious the kicked ball will not land on your side of the field, move to a position to observe action in front of the receiver. If the return is to your side, take over the runner as soon as they start to advance the ball. Be alert for fair catch signals and the actions of players when a signal is given. The offside official is responsible for blocking by the fair-catch signaler and all action on and in front of receiver. Be prepared to rule on interference with the catch opportunity by your gunner and the legality of handoffs on the return. Follow the ball if the receiver fails to field a kick in your area. If initial starting position is on the goal line, Field Judge and Side Judge must remain on the goal line until it is no longer threatened. If initial position is not on the goal line, Field Judge and Side Judge must move immediately to the goal line should it be threatened at any point during the down.

Back Judge: Have a bean bag in hand. Work to maintain a 45-degree angle with the receiver while the ball is in flight, and adjust your position to maintain the prescribed depth behind the receiver. When it appears the kicked ball will land anywhere other than obviously out of bounds, be prepared to rule on the status of a ball that goes into the end zone and the validity of a fair catch signal. Primary responsibility for interference with the catch opportunity and the legality of handoffs on the return. Bag the spot

of the catch or recovery anywhere in the field of play, sideline to sideline. Follow the ball if the receiver fails to field a kick. When the runner advances, observe blocking in the middle of the field in front of the runner and give up coverage of the runner to the Side Judge and Field Judge. When it is obvious the kicked ball will land out of bounds or inside the area between sideline and nine-yard marks, concentrate on the action in front of the runner after the catch is made and move into position to cover play around the runner. If all deep officials are lined up on the goal line and there is a short kick, the Back Judge has primary responsibility for the ball and must leave the goal line if necessary.

All: Be alert for blocked or fake kicks and for recovery and advance of blocked kicks. Don't hesitate to call a foul that occurs away from your position if you are certain a foul occurred. Be alert for any fair catch signal given by a receiver even if away from the vicinity of the kick

Blocked Kick or Snap Over the Kicker/Holder's Head

The Referee and the Center Judge will retreat and box in the play. The wing officials will hold the line of scrimmage until it is no longer threatened. As the play develops, that wing officials must adjust to officiate the play. The Referee and Center Judge are responsible for officiating the play from an inside/out perspective as the play develops. If a blocked kick goes outside the Referee or Center Judge towards the sideline, the sideline official on that sideline must retreat with urgency to cover the goal line.

Scoring Kicks

Positioning and Zones

Referee: After a touchdown, the Referee will hold his ready for play signal for the TRY until they have received clearance from replay that the game will not be stopped. Following the ready-for-play, be alert for False Stars by the kicker or holder. Be aware of the nearest protector back and possible holding on that corner.

Center Judge: Quickly after the score, recognize if the scoring team is going to go for one point or two points. Spot the ball of the appropriate ball position as designated by the scoring team or where it is to be placed by rule. Remain behind the snapper, preventing the snap until the Side Judge is in position and released by the Referee. While facing upfield, be aware of any late substitutions. After being released by the Referee, line up in the offensive backfield opposite the Referee approximately 2-3 yards wider than the holder and 5-6 yards deeper than the holder and recognize the ineligible players. Key on the Guard and Tackle on your side of the offensive line and recognize overloads on your offensive side of the ball by the defense over one offensive lineman. Be aware of the end protector on your side of the offensive line of scrimmage. After the snap; recognize, leaping, leveraging, defensive pull/shoot. If the offense quickly shifts to a scrimmage formation, stay of the offensive side of the ball where originally aligned and slowly widen and work the play like it is a normal scrimmage down despite being on the opposite side of the offensive line where you normally work.

Side Judge: The Side Judge lines up on the defensive side of the ball, six to eight yards deep on the same side of the snapper as the Referee. Responsible for legality of defensive formation around the snapper and is also responsible for roughing the snapper. Know the numbers of the eligible receivers and be aware of numbering exceptions. After the snap; recognize, leaping, leveraging, defensive pull/shoot.

The Side Judge observes action on and against the Tackle and Tight End on his side of the field. Both officials should be alert for leverage, leaping and the pull and shoot. Center Judge is primary to observe defensive action on the snapper. The Center Judge has no counting responsibility on punts. The Center Judge is responsible for the defensive player lining up outside the frame of the long snapper on scoring kicks and any illegal contact.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: Take regular positions. Always know the eligible and ineligible receivers on your side of the ball. Observe action by and against the widest lineman and wingback on your side. At the snap, step one or two yards onto the defensive side of the ball to give you a better view of action (e.g., pull and shoots) by and against the wingback and tight end. Be ready to cover sideline from the line of scrimmage to the end line. Both are responsible for covering the play on short field goal and try attempts and fake field goals. You are both responsible for determining and ruling on whether a kick crosses the neutral zone.

Field Judge and Back Judge: Take positions inside the limit line to look up the upright of the goal on your side of the field. You are responsible for ruling on the success or failure of field-goal attempts. The official nearest the ball rules on the play. Both should be prepared to move out into position to cover a play in the end zone or on short field goal and try attempts. Be prepared for illegal touching or batting of ball, a blocked kick or a kick striking an upright or crossbar. If the ball strikes the crossbar, the Back Judge is responsible for the ruling. The Back Judge is responsible for the end line. The Field Judge moves to any position that will allow him to help on the play.

All

Be alert if a Team B player is positioned to return the kick.

Fake Kicks

As a guideline on fake kicks, when the ball is snapped inside Team B's 20 yard line, the Line Judge and Head Linesman have the goal line the Back Judge and Field Judge move along the end line to the sideline. When the ball is snapped on or outside Team B's 20 yard line, the Field Judge and Back Judge move toward the pylons on their sides of the field and have the goal line.

Swinging Gate Formations: When Team A uses a swinging gate formation with a kicker and holder in position to attempt a kick, take initial positions as a normal scoring kick with the Side Judge or Center Judge adjusting to a wider position in

front of the gate on their side respective side. Which ever official is not in a wider position, will be in position to prevent the snap. If the original swinging gate shifts to a traditional scoring kick formation, move to your normal scoring kick position.

On a scoring kick down when Team A is spread with no holder and kicker in position to attempt a kick, the Center Judge will line up in front of the gate formation. The Center Judge is responsible for confirming the offense has 5 players wearing 50-79 if the team runs a scrimmage play from the swinging gate formation. All other officials assume regular scrimmage down positions. Referee will rule on the legality of the snap if the ball is snapped from this position. If Team A subsequently shifts to a traditional scoring kick formation with a kicker and holder in position, the Center Judge and Side Judge will shift to their normal positions for a scoring kick.

Timeout

The red hat will stand at the top of the numbers for a full TV timeout and at the bottom of the numbers for a floater time out.

The Referee should use the microphone to announce which team took the timeout and how many it has used. If not miked or if the mike fails, the Referee should signal the third timeout by making three tugs on an imaginary steam whistle. In non-TV games, teams have the option of calling a 30-second timeout. All officials should record the team requesting the timeout, the quarter and the time remaining on the game clock. The calling official also records the player's number or that the coach called the timeout.

Should a coach request a coach-Referee conference, another official accompanies the Referee to act as a witness in case a dispute arises.

Referee: Stand away from other officials and the players. On the Back Judge's signal, which comes with 30 seconds remaining in the timeout, point to the appropriate sideline officials so they may tell the teams the timeout is over. On the Back Judge's subsequent signal that the timeout has expired, blow your whistle and give the ready-for-play signal. If a team has used its last timeout of a half, inform the head coach.

Center Judge: Stand over the ball during the timeout, then move into position to prevent the snap until the Referee gives the ready-for-play signal. If a team takes a timeout after assuming a position over the ball, make certain the ball is accurately reset to its proper spot.

Head Linesman and Line Judge: Inform the head coach which team took the timeout, how many each team has remaining and when the timeout has expired. Stand near their respective sidelines near the coach(es) and player(s).

Side Judge and Field Judge: Observe team on your side of the field and be ready to assist Head Linesman and Line Judge in getting teams back to the field promptly once the timeout expires. If a team huddles near the sideline, all players and coaches must remain outside the numbers and in front of the team area.

Back Judge: Time the timeout. For TV time outs, go to the red hat and stay with him until 30 seconds remain in the time out, then jog to your position, alerting officials near the sideline huddles to begin getting the teams back on the field. At the end of the timeout, the Back Judge will point to the Referee who will then make the ball ready for play.