

2019 OKLAHOMA Football Officials' Mechanics

The following document contains adjusted mechanics for your crew to study and carefully consider as you prepare for the 2019 football season. We acknowledge that each crew is unique, but it is our hope that the information that follows will give your crew a good starting point to make mechanics a priority. Being in the correct position to rule on a play is paramount in officiating. Being in the best position at the right time will allow your rules knowledge and sound judgment to operate efficiently. We want to encourage each crew to sit down and thoroughly discuss what will in fact work best for your crew. While these mechanics can be adjusted to fit your crews strengths and weaknesses we feel following these guidelines will put you in the best position possible to make proper rulings. Our general focus is on the safety of our officials and players with emphasis on minimal movement at the critical moments when decisions must be made.

NEW IN 2019

Game Clock / Play Clock Procedures

Please have both clock operators go meet with the Referee prior to each varsity contest.

This document includes a set of instructions for the clock operators to assist with the recent rule change to the play clock that now involves a 40 / 25 second possibility for a delay of game. These are instructions for the 40 second and the 25 second play clock to be used if and when visible play clocks are available to be used.

NOTE to the play clock operator: Starting the 40 second play clock “immediately” is to be interpreted as starting the 40 seconds as quickly as the covering official signals the end of the down using signal #3 (time-out) or signal #7 (dead ball with one arm straight up) or signal #10 (incomplete pass). These are the only 3 signals you should expect at the end of a down prior to the 40 second play clock starting.

The following addresses the play situations that require the 40 second option.

1. The team A (offense) runner is stopped in bounds short of a first down. The **game clock** continues to run and the **40 second play clock** is started immediately except at the end of a 4th down.
2. The team A (offense) runner is stopped in bounds beyond the line-to-gain (first down). The **game clock** is stopped for the first down and the **40 second play clock** is started immediately. The Referee will then restart (wind) the **game clock** (no whistle involved) as quickly as the football is placed on the ground and ready for play.
3. The team A (offense) runner OR a team A fumble OR a team A backward pass goes out of bounds. The **game clock** is stopped and the **40 second play clock** is started immediately. The **game clock** will not start again until the next legal snap.
4. A team A (offense) legal forward pass is incomplete. The **game clock** is stopped and the **40 second play clock** is started immediately. The **game clock** will not start again until the next legal snap.
5. A double change of possession during the down occurs resulting in team A in possession at the end of the down (very, very rare but a possibility). The **game clock** is stopped for a first down and the **40 second play clock** is started immediately. The **game clock** may then be restarted (wind with no whistle) or not, depending on whether out-of-bounds was a factor. (Example: team A's forward pass is

intercepted and team B then fumbles during their return and team A recovers – again, this is extremely rare but a possibility.)

There is no signal/whistle from the Referee during the 40 seconds except to restart the game clock following a first down inbounds. It is important to note that none of the situations listed above involve an administrative stop / interruption in play.

Administrative Stoppages / Interruptions

It is always possible for the situations that are listed below to occur during the game that are **administrative issues / interruptions** to the normal flow of play. Please understand that this list does not necessarily include absolutely every possibility.

NOTE to the play clock operator: Every situation listed below will result in a 25 second play clock that is **not** started immediately at any time, but you will wait until the situation has been addressed and the Referee will then utilize signal #1 which is the very common ready-for-play signal (with his whistle sounded) or signal #2 (wind) which restarts both clocks (with his whistle sounded).

Game Situations:

- | | |
|---|--|
| *Any foul occurs | |
| *Either team is granted a timeout | *Play is stopped for an injured player |
| *Any down that involves a score | *A player's helmet has come completely off |
| *Any down that includes a legal kick | *A measurement for a first down |
| *Team possession changes during or after a down | *The beginning of any period |
| *An inadvertent whistle | *An untimed down |

This list includes most every 25 second play clock situation, but an extremely rare situation is also a possibility (a dog runs across the field; the lights go out; weather conditions).

General Statements:

1. Always set the **play clock** back to 40 during a down in progress to be ready. You will have plenty of time to change it back to 25 at the end of the down if that is necessary.
2. The common ready-for-play whistle/signal is **not** used for a **40 second play clock**.
3. It is very important that the same individual in the press box is not responsible for both clocks!!! **An official on the field will be responsible for the play clock if and when visible play clocks are not available to be used.**
4. The **game clock** operator must always be ready for the Referee to wind/start the **game clock** when it is stopped. The **game clock** will always start on a legal snap if it is not already started/running prior to the legal snap.
5. **Always** turn off any scoreboard horn. There is absolutely no need for a horn at any time!
6. Make certain that we **always** run the **25 second play clock** prior to an extra point try, prior to a kickoff, and prior to the kick following a safety.

FINALLY, the play clock operator must always be ready for the Referee to reset the 40 second clock to 25 seconds if and when the 40 seconds has run below 25 seconds and the football is still not yet on the ground ready for the next down. The Referee's signal for this is a pumping motion with one hand up and down near his head.

PRE-GAME ROUTINE

It is important to have your conversation with the head coach at least a full hour or more, prior to the kickoff. We understand that travel considerations may make this difficult on occasion. We encourage you to be in full uniform as you address your responsibilities with each head coach on the field. Your conversation with the head coach should be professional, brief and to the point. Topics to be addressed include: 1) Your game card with the names and ID numbers of the crew which can also include the address for the coach to send the HUDL video. 2) Signing of the of the Gold Card - briefly mention that we respectfully request the head coach's attention to all three areas of concern. 3) Confirmation of the halftime length. 4) Coin flip early or at the regular time with the captains (involve the captains at the regular time anytime the head coaches really don't have a strong opinion). 5) Rather than ask a head coach specific questions about either team, we encourage you to finish up with the following question - "Is there anything else that you would like to visit with us about?"

As the crew observes the pre-game activities for both teams, at least 2 officials should be lined up at midfield keeping the teams separated and paying particular attention to equipment issues that need to be addressed before the game. Be hypersensitive to verbal altercations or any attempt to intimidate the opponent. Keep both teams inside the 45-yard line; this creates a 10-yard buffer between the teams. The R should watch the QBs to determine the throwing arm. The R should also communicate with the QB – let him know your name and that he can communicate with you throughout the game. The U should watch the lineman on each team. Find the starting C, get his first name and communicate with him about the “stop” sign and let him know the ball cannot be snapped until the officials are in position to officiate. The 2 wing officials should take time to observe the offensive team plays from the vantage point that they will have throughout the game to get an idea of the formation(s) being utilized by each team. The 2 wing officials should also confirm and meet with the ball personnel on their respective sideline. The HL should also visit with his chain crew. The BJ should observe kickoffs and punts to determine the relative strength of each kicking game. During your pregame responsibilities each official should introduce themselves to both Head Coaches. Keep your introduction short and refer all game administration questions to the R.

LOS SWITCHING SIDES AT HALFTIME

The LOS officials may switch sides of the field at halftime. This is a crew decision and each crew may decide if they wish to do this or not. If you choose to switch at halftime here are the basic mechanics.

The L will start on the visitor side with the chains in the first half. The H will be on the home side in the first half. After halftime the H will go to the visitor side with the chains and the L will go to the home side. Your mechanics as L or H do not change. The L still has his same responsibilities regardless of which side of the field he is on. The same applies to the H. The LOS mechanics do not change. This means

the R must be aware at all times which side of the field the LOS officials are on. It is imperative that the R adjusts his mechanics to match the LOS officials.

FREE KICK MECHANIC

We recognize that different crews utilize different alignments for their kickoff coverage. We would like to encourage your crew to carefully consider the following for all free kicks.

Referee - Line up on R's goal line anywhere between the hash marks with responsibility for the entire goal line ruling on touchbacks. If a return/running play develops, you will observe the play as it develops at the point of attack and then from behind the runner as you do on most all scrimmage plays that end in a run. It is R's responsibility to confirm there are at least four K players on each side of the kicker at the time the ball is kicked.

HL & LJ - Your initial alignment will be on your respective side of the field near R's 10 yard line. The only time that you would ever retreat toward the pylon would be on the rare occasion that the untouched kick travels near the pylon and R can use your help with a ruling of touchback or out of bounds. Prior to the ready for play whistle, carefully observe the kicker's alignment with relation to the football as it is a common occurrence that the kicker will telegraph what he is about to attempt with the kick. The wing official on the side of the field where K's team bench is located can feel free to move up the field in anticipation of the more common pooch kick that usually is kicked toward K's bench if there is evidence to support that possibility. Either wing official should be prepared to make that adjustment when the evidence dictates. You may move your initial alignment nearer the appropriate yard line if your pre-game observations indicate that the kicker will clearly not threaten R's goal line at all. The primary responsibility for the wing officials becomes forward progress once a return (running play) is in progress as you observe the blocking throughout the return. This alignment then gives you the same look at the action as you experience on most scrimmage plays. Remember that your responsibility for forward progress extends all the way to Team K's goal line with possible help from the BJ.

BJ - You will be responsible for K and their free kick line. As the K players align for their free kick, you are free to verbally fix any alignment issues prior to any signal to your referee for the 'ready' whistle. Always take a position on the sideline where team R's bench is located as most pooch kicks and on-side-kicks are directed toward team K's bench and we want the Umpire on that side of the field on R's free kick line. On legal kicks downfield, after the players clear your area move from your sideline position onto the field out near the hash on your side to observe the return/running play progressing back toward your position. Be prepared to assist the wing officials on forward progress for break away returns and be prepared to assist on action close to the goal line.

Umpire - You will be responsible for R's free kick line. Following any verbal communication you have for the team R players, take a position on the sideline where team K's bench is located. It is important to have that position covered as we have discovered that most pooch kicks and on-side-kicks are directed toward team K's bench. On legal kicks downfield, after all players clear your

area move from your sideline position onto the field out near the hash on your side to observe the return/running play progressing back toward your position.

PRE-SNAP SCRIMMAGE DOWN RESPONSIBILITIES

Referee - Your alignment should be 13 - 15 yards behind the LOS and as wide as 1 - 2 steps outside the normal tight end spot and on the side of the QB's passing arm. Whether the offense huddles or not, it is important that you determine as quickly as possible that there are 11 players on offense and that there are 5 linemen numbered 50 – 79. A hand signal should be used to indicate that you have 11 players on offense. You should use a different hand signal to indicate that there are less than 11 players on offense. The wing officials will determine that there are no more than four players in the offensive backfield. The umpire will acknowledge your signal with a signal of his own.

Umpire - Your alignment should be 7 - 8 yards from the LOS and you will adjust your lateral position according to the defensive players and your ability to see your offensive linemen. You will also count the offensive players and quickly determine that there are 5 linemen numbered 50 – 79. When the play is over place the ball down for the next play and move quickly to your position. Do not stand over the ball. Be prepared to communicate with the center with the “Stop” sign until the officials are in position to officiate. You may use the snappers first name to get his attention.

HL & LJ - Your position should be outside the sideline and inside the restricted area prior to the snap. Verbally communicate with any offensive or defensive player(s) who align themselves near your position on the sideline to help with their alignment and hopefully avoid any illegal formation / encroachment issues. We encourage the following communication only: while extending your leg out to mark the LOS, "this is your line of scrimmage" and as they take their position, "you are on" or "you are off". We would prefer that you never tell a player to "move up" or "move back" At this point, the 2 wing officials must determine that the offensive formation is legal at the snap. Although not always possible an illegal offensive formation should have 2 flags on the ground following the snap from the wing officials. If possible, make the formation legal. Leave the marginal alignment alone. Use your voice not your flag to get the players lined up correctly. Look for the referee's signal for 11 players and then just count the 4 players that are normally off of their LOS. A “punch back” signal between the 2 wing officials to determine players on or off the LOS is acceptable. Since the wing officials are concerned about the offensive alignment on each scrimmage play, it doesn't make sense for them to also count the offense. Two officials (R & U) counting the offense and 1 official (BJ) counting the defense should be sufficient.

BJ - Your alignment should be at least 20 yards from the LOS between the hash marks and near the side of the offensive formation strength. It should not be a problem for the BJ to easily count the defensive players for each down since your pre-snap responsibilities are limited. The BJ has timing responsibilities and should make a habit of keeping an eye on the clock between plays when his position is facing the clock. Helping the Referee to remember the status of the clock is also a strong habit to develop anytime it was stopped for any reason. The BJ must also be aware of the play clock at all times.

RESPONSIBILITIES AT THE SNAP AND ON PLAYS THAT END WITH A RUN

Referee - Watch for a legal snap or a possible false start by the offensive backs while limiting any movement of your own. Your initial focus at the snap should be on the opposite side tackle until the play begins to develop into a run. Your focus then quickly changes to the direction of the run to observe the point of attack. After the runner clears the point of attack and moves beyond your vision, you must clean up behind the run and watch the players and not the ball.

Umpire - Watch for a legal snap or a possible false start in addition to the initial movement of the snapper plus both guards and tackle on the same side as the Referee while limiting any movement of your own except to vacate a spot for safety reasons. As the play begins to develop, adjust your focus from the point of attack to the back side on wide runs.

HL & LJ - Your focus at the snap is on a legal offensive formation in addition to any alignment problems that may result in an encroachment foul. Also be aware of a possible false start by the tackle or tight end lined up on your side of the field. Immediately following a legal snap, focus on the initial contact between offensive and defensive players in your area as you watch for the play to develop into a run or pass. For an inside run to your side, begin to focus on forward progress and if the run moves to the outside toward your position, your focus must include the point of attack in addition to forward progress. Hold your position on the sideline to observe as much as you can while stationary. Begin to move for the forward progress when it becomes necessary. For runs to the opposite side of the snapper, do not become a ball watcher. Focus your attention away from the runner to watch for any player movement on the backside of the running play. Be keenly aware of the QB as he carries out his assignment. The backside wing official may be the only one who could catch a “cheap shot” on the QB.

BJ - Your focus at the snap will be on your specific key(s) depending on the offensive formation. Remain still at the snap without any movement forward to read the play as it develops into a run or a pass. Your focus on running plays will be on the critical blocking out in front of the runner, especially on runs that progress outside of either tackle position. Any movement at this point will be laterally or backward depending on the progress of the runner. Keep in mind that you must be prepared to cover B's goal line if there is a scoring threat or help with forward progress on lengthy break-away runs.

RESPONSIBILITIES DURING A FORWARD PASSING DOWN

Referee - As a pass play develops, hold your position as long as possible and observe the pass blocking by your keys. Stay with the blockers until the passer is clearly threatened or the pass is released. You are totally responsible for the safety of the passer until he is out of harm's way. If the QB rolls toward you, let him cross your face before moving with him. If the QB rolls away from you, keep an acceptable cushion but remain keenly aware of possible roughing. At times you may need to move to get a clear view of the QB to determine pass/fumble or “empty hand”. Pass/Fumble is your call and you cannot expect any help. You must be aware from what yard line the QB released the pass so you can return to the spot of the pass for penalty administration in the case of intentional grounding. If you sense the possibility of intentional grounding, drop your

beanbag at the spot of the pass until you determine otherwise. If the passer has to scramble and crossing the LOS becomes an issue, the referee stays with the passer for protection. You may assist in ruling on a pass thrown from beyond the LOS but this is not your primary focus. You must be aware when there is a clear overload (Trips) to the Line Judge side of the field and be prepared to rule on any play that involves/threatens the LOS. Protecting the QB is your main priority.

Umpire - From your position 7 - 8 yards deep, observe the pass blocking by your keys and remain constantly aware of the ineligible linemen and their location in relation to the LOS. You have primary responsibility for ineligible (the 5 interior linemen) downfield when the pass is released. The LJ can assist on ineligible lineman (a covered up tight end or wide receiver becomes the responsibility of either wing official). As you are able, be prepared to take a look at, and possibly rule on short passes over the middle and very near your location. Keep in mind that history has shown that a majority of forward passes do not travel beyond 15 yards downfield. The Umpire is not responsible for a passer releasing the ball beyond the LOS and is not responsible for knowing whether the pass was caught behind or beyond the LOS. For your own protection do not move towards the LOS on a pass play. Until goal line mechanics take effect at the 7-yard line (which are discussed later) you have no LOS responsibility.

HL - Hold your position on the LOS and observe the action against eligible receivers when you determine that a pass play has developed. You are responsible for the eligible player closest to you and possibly a slot back depending on the strength of the formation. After a clean release your attention should move to the 10 yard "Belt". The belt starts at the LOS and goes 10 yards beyond. The HL has no LOS responsibility on a pass play. We want his focus to be in the belt looking for OPI/DPI and the action on crossing routes. Since your focus is on the belt, let the LJ rule on whether a pass is forward or backward unless the pass is right at you on the snap. The LJ will indicate with a "punch back" if the pass was backward. Let the LJ kill the play or not, based on his judgment of forward/backward. Most passes can be officiated from your LOS position since they travel less than 15 yards downfield. When a pass is thrown well beyond 15 yards and to your side, move down the field as far as you possibly can while the ball is in flight and prepare to slow down at the critical moment to rule on a catch/no catch or on an inbounds/out of bounds decision. Be prepared to assist the LJ on cross field mechanics. You have primary responsibility for a covered up receiver on your side of the center who goes downfield prior to the release of the pass. Although we encourage you to hold your LOS position as long as possible on forward pass plays, you are free to move downfield quickly when the receivers and the flow of the play are clearly to your side. When you clearly determine the need to move downfield, do not hesitate - GO!

LJ - Hold your position on the LOS and observe the action against eligible receivers when you determine that a pass play has developed. At the snap you are responsible for the eligible player closest to you and possibly a slot back or running back, depending on the strength of the formation. After a clean release your attention should move to the offensive tackle on your side. Be aware of the running backs coming out of the back field or setting up for a screen pass. It is critical to know where a forward pass is caught in relation to the LOS, whether the pass was forward or backward and to know whether the QB is beyond or behind the LOS when the pass is released. That is why you must stay on the LOS. If the pass is backwards you will indicate this with a "punch back" that indicates to the rest of the crew that the ball is live. If the pass is forward

and incomplete, you will blow your whistle and signal incomplete pass. Most passes travel less than 15 yards downfield. When a pass is thrown well beyond 15 yards and to your side, move down the field as far as you possibly can while the ball is in flight and prepare to slow yourself down at the critical moment to rule on a catch/no catch or on an inbounds/out of bounds decision. Be prepared to assist the HL on cross field mechanics. You have primary responsibility for a covered up receiver on your side of the center who goes downfield prior to the release of the pass. Although we encourage you to hold your LOS position as long as possible on forward pass plays, you are free to move downfield quickly when the receivers and the flow of the play are clearly to your side. If there is a clear overload to your side (Trips) you must be aware of the action on the receivers. If possible communicate with your R to let him know that he will have to take more responsibility on plays involving the LOS. When you clearly determine the need to move downfield, do not hesitate - GO!

BJ – At the snap you are responsible for initial action by, and against eligible receivers located inside any wide out(s) to the strong side of the offensive formation. When the offensive formation is balanced you will go to the LJ side of the field. This could include a tight end on the LOS that has 2 wide outs to his outside that do not have him covered. As the pass play develops, begin to give ground remaining inside the hash marks as you observe your keys. It is critical to keep any and all receivers in front of your location throughout the down. You clearly have no responsibility for ineligibles downfield, for determining if the pass was caught behind the LOS, or a passer who releases the ball beyond the neutral zone. Stay deep, observe the play as it develops, and be prepared to assist with any catch/no catch decision on long passes downfield, and also with forward progress on lengthy plays downfield. On long touchdown plays you have goal line responsibility.

EVERY official must be keenly alert for blind side blocks during an intercepted pass return as this is a prime spot for them to occur. DON'T be a ball watcher unless and until you clearly have forward progress responsibilities!!!

GOAL LINE MECHANICS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

GOING IN

Goal line mechanics take effect from the 7-yard line and in. The most important line on the field is the goal line and we must have it covered when there is a ruling to be made.

Referee – Make sure your crew is aware when you are in a goal line situation. You are now primary on forward/backward passes and you will assist the U on whether the QB is behind or beyond the LOS when the pass is released. Even though you may not have the best angle to rule on this you must be prepared to make a call when you are in goal line mechanics.

Umpire – You now have LOS responsibilities. Was the passer behind the LOS when the ball was released and was the pass caught behind or beyond the LOS. The R can help you with this but you must have an opinion because the wing officials have goal line responsibilities.

HL & LJ – The goal line is your responsibility. Make sure all sideline personnel are clear of the area you need to work. At the snap do not rush. Go to the goal line at a 45-degree angle leaving plenty of room for you to make a judgment on a play at the pylon. If the runner is stopped short of the goal line work your way back to the spot of forward progress and spot the ball there. On close plays at the goal line in the middle of the field both wing officials should “crash” to the point of resistance and signal. If you cannot see whether the ball crossed the goal line or not “crash” to the pile and find the ball. If the ball is across the goal line it is a touchdown and if the ball is short of the goal line it is not a touchdown. It is very important that on close plays at the goal line in the middle of the field that you do not stand on the sideline after the ball becomes dead, you must hustle to the point of resistance and make a ruling.

BJ – The back line is your responsibility. On a pass play you must be aware if a player steps out of the back of the end zone and returns. You must also be prepared to rule on any pass that threatens the end line. On a running play, be prepared to assist with blocks at the point of attack especially on sweep plays.

GOING OUT

Goal line mechanics take effect when the ball is at the 3-yard line or less. The most important line on the field is the goal line and we must have it covered when there is a ruling to be made.

Referee – Make sure your crew is aware when you are in a goal line situation. Your position is on the end line. You are now primary on forward/backward passes and you will assist the U on whether the QB is behind or beyond the LOS when the pass is released. Even though you may not have the best angle to rule on this you must be prepared to make a call when you are in goal line mechanics.

Umpire – You now have LOS responsibilities. Was the passer behind the LOS when the ball was released, and was the pass caught behind or beyond the LOS. The R can help you with this but you must have an opinion because the wing officials have goal line responsibilities.

HL & LJ – The goal line is your responsibility. Make sure all sideline personnel are clear of the area you need to work. At the snap do not rush - go back to the goal line. Remember the runner must get the ball completely out of his own end zone. If any portion of the ball is across the goal line when the runner is tackled it is a safety. The dead-ball spot is normally under the foremost point of the ball but not when Team A's goal line is involved. On close plays at the goal line in the middle of the field both wing officials should “crash” to the point of resistance and signal. If you cannot see whether the ball crossed the goal line or not “crash” to the pile and find the ball. If the ball is across the goal line it is a safety if the ball is beyond the goal line it is spotted there. It is very important that on close plays at the goal line in the middle of the field that you do not stand on the sideline after the ball becomes dead, you must hustle to the point of resistance and make a ruling.

BJ – This situation is treated as any normal scrimmage down. Be aware that it may take the HL or LJ longer to get the dead ball spot. As always on deeper passes be prepared to help with the spot.

RESPONSIBILITIES DURING A 4TH DOWN PUNT SITUATION

Referee - Your position should be behind the possible punter 3 - 4 yards, and as wide as the normal TE position to the side of his kicking leg so that everything that you need to observe is in front of your position, and you can hold your position during the kick, during a rugby style kick or during a fake. The kicker must be protected first and foremost. If he is not threatened, try to get a quick look at the kick to check on the possibility of a poor kick headed out of bounds. On normal kicks headed downfield, do not follow the ball but observe the K players as they begin to move downfield to observe all blocking while holding your spot as the play develops. If there is a break- away return you have the goal line.

Umpire - Hold your normal position at the snap to observe the protection blocking, and then allow all players to move past your position headed downfield and simply turn to face the return of the kick and officiate from a normal vantage point as the return progresses back up the field.

BJ - Determine if either side of the field is clearly a wider side depending on the placement of the ball prior to the snap. Take a position 3 - 4 yards behind the deepest return man and well to his side toward the wide side of the field. Make certain that the end of the kick, or first touching by K is marked with a bean bag (no real need for a bean bag on a fair catch, a kick out of bounds, a kick that rolls dead with no player in possession or if K downs the ball). It is critical to remember that the return man is a great example of a defenseless player while he is in the act of receiving the ball and must be protected. If a return develops, observe the initial blocks and be ready for a blind side block as they often happen when R players peel back to set up a blocking wall!

HL & LJ - Prior to the snap from your normal position on the LOS, observe which side the BJ has taken. The wing official on the opposite side of the field from the BJ will hold until the potential kicker has cleanly possessed the snap and begins his kicking motion. Then begin to move down the field no more than half of the distance from the LOS to the spot where the deepest R player is positioned. Be prepared to stop and assist the BJ with a muff or first touching by K. After a clean catch by R, progress to the blocking that develops in the area in front of this R player. The wing official on the same side of the field as the BJ will hold your position on the LOS until the kick has clearly crossed the neutral zone, and then move downfield no further than the same distance as your opposite wing also observing the developing blocks.

EVERY official must be keenly alert for blind side blocks during punt returns as this is a prime spot for them to occur. DON'T be a ball watcher unless and until you clearly have forward progress responsibilities!!!

RESPONSIBILITIES DURING A TRY FOR POINT(S)

Referee - First and foremost, do not get in a hurry to make the try down 'ready for play'. If the offensive team lines up in the normal kick try formation, make certain that all of your officials are in their correct spots before you blow the ready whistle. Make certain that your own spot is facing the holder, and your alignment is 3 – 4 yards deeper than the holder, and at least as wide as the

numbers on your side of the formation. If the offensive team lines up in a different formation (likely a normal play from scrimmage set, or possibly a swinging gate), it is more important to utilize your normal pace between the scoring play and the ready on the try, as well as your normal alignment. Remember that you must cover the goal line pylon on your side of the formation on a fake or a busted play (help with forward progress at the goal line from the umpire is possible).

Umpire - Take your normal spot for the try and be prepared to observe the linemen and their numbers to assist with any ineligible receiver issues on a trick play (keep in mind that you may not have any 50 - 79 numbers on the offense). On a normal kick, make certain to protect the snapper, in addition to observing the interior blocking. If the play that develops is a fake, and the run / pass goes wide to either side, take a position on the goal line to possibly assist with a runner breaking the plane of the goal line. We do not recommend that the U move under the goal post. Player safety is our main concern and it is important for the U to make sure the center is protected which is difficult for him to do if he's looking up at the upright.

HL & LJ - Your initial alignment should be to your normal LOS spots on the sideline until it is clear that the offensive team is lining up in the normal scrimmage kick formation for a kick try. A shift from a swinging gate to the scrimmage kick formation still gives you time to adjust your alignment for a kick try. The wing official that would be facing the front of the holder is the official who will move to the upright position along with the BJ, when the scrimmage kick formation is used. Both wing officials along with the BJ must pay very close attention to eligible receivers prior to the snap and a possible passing down from the scrimmage kick formation. On a fake or busted play, the wing official who moved to the upright position with the BJ must help with the back line, but do not try to get back to your LOS position.

BJ - Your alignment will be along the end line for a try taking one upright for a potential kick try. Make absolutely certain to carefully observe eligible receivers prior to the snap, to assist with any eligibility questions that could come up in a passing situation.

WHEN IN DOUBT

Blocking

It is legal use of hands rather than holding or illegal use of hands.

The defensive back has legally initiated contact in passing situations.

The contact is below the waist (for blocking below the waist and block in the back).

It is a block at the side rather than behind (for block in the back or clipping).

As to disintegration of the free blocking zone, assume it is intact.

The contact is at the knees or below (for chop block).

Tackling

It is twisting, turning or pulling the facemask.

The runner's knee has not touched the ground.

Passing

The passer has not intentionally grounded the ball.

A Team A player has a reasonable opportunity to catch a pass.

The ball is a forward pass and not fumbled during an attempted forward pass.

The pass is incomplete, rather than a fumble.

As to “caught or trapped” the pass is incomplete.

The pass was released in, or behind the neutral zone rather than beyond it.

It is a forward pass rather than a backward pass, when thrown in or behind the neutral zone.

The pass is backward, rather than forward beyond the neutral zone, or where there is no neutral zone.

The ball has not been touched on a forward pass.

Kicking

It is roughing, rather than running into the kicker.

The ball is accidentally touched with the foot, rather than intentionally kicked.

A fair catch signal is valid rather than invalid.

The player has not touched, rather than touched the ball.

The ball has been muffed, rather than caught.

Running

The runner is held so that forward progress is stopped, rather than a fumble.

The runner has not fumbled as he contacts the ground.

Scoring/Touchback/Safety

The ball is dead in the field of play, rather than a touchdown.

It is a touchback, rather than the ball belonging to Team B under original momentum Rules.

The ball belongs to Team B under original momentum rules, rather than a safety.

Out of Bounds

The player is in bounds, rather than out of bounds.

The ball is dead in the field of play, rather than out of bounds.

Formation

The one-second pause has not been violated.

Offensive players are legally on the line.

Offensive players are legally in the backfield.

Players are legally moving rather than in illegal motion.

A Team A player has been within the nine-yard marks.

A departing player has left the field prior to the snap.

Mechanics

Don't throw the flag.

Don't blow the whistle.

You are welcome to direct any questions to: rolenx2@msn.com