

Mechanics, Philosophy and Things to Remember

Courtesy of GC-Refs.org

REFEREE

As the Game Administrator, you must have the crew ready to work the game. A solid pre-game conference is essential to a smooth flow of the game. It is essential that the crew have confidence in you and you have confidence in the crew. Go over the basics, basics and more basics. Ninety-nine per-cent of what will happen on the field today will be just that - BASIC. As the season progresses you can cover additional items that might have occurred the previous week either with your crew or with someone else's crew.

Leadership and control are critical to the successful administration of the game. This begins when you and the umpire visit with the opposing coaches before the game. Some coaches may ask you about a specific situation with regard to this game or will question something that happened to them last week. Answer the question that pertains to this game. If you were not officiating for that coach the previous week politely tell him that you had no knowledge of what happened and it would be unfair to comment unless you observed the specific play in question.

Once on the field remember one thing – "No one has a better job on this particular day than you –and- the crew that will be working this game with you today." Enjoy the next 2.0 to 2.5 hours.

Scrimmage Plays

Make sure your initial position is 12-14 yards deep, deeper than the deepest back and on the QB's throwing arm. Be on the outside shoulder of and as much as one yard wider than the tackle position on your side. This position should allow you an excellent peripheral view of the action.

Count the offensive formation and count the offensive players.

Using a demonstrative signal, blow your whistle forcefully and declare the ball ready for play while standing still in the vicinity of the ball. Kill plays that end deep in the offensive backfield. Look to your wingmen to assist you with forward progress on sacks.

Kicks

Protect the kicker (and holder) on all scrimmage kick plays. The HL and LJ will assist with their respective duties if a kick is blocked and doesn't cross the LOS.

Punts

Stand on the kicking foot side, 5-6 yards in front and 7-8 yards wide or wider than tight end. This position will give you a good look at the infraction if there is one. Once the ball is kicked watch flight of kick if kicked toward sideline. Be ready to line up covering official to OOB spot. Move slowly downfield watching for illegal action.

Field Goal & Try Plays

Position yourself on a 45 degree at least 5-6 yards to the side of the potential kicker facing the holder (or wider than the widest offensive player on your side).

Runs

Between the ends, be aware of blocking at the POA and officiate around the area of the ball carrier. You are responsible for the tackle on your side immediately following the snap. Be the opposite bookend of the umpire. Keep the play boxed in between the U and you. The HL and LJ will kill most runs and give forward progress. Assist in ball retrieval and spotting as required. On wide runs, move toward the side zone behind the action, continuing to observe action around the ball carrier and be ready to assist if any OOB activity occurs.

Passes

The QB is your #1 priority, and must be protected from all illegal actions by defensive players. Stay with him as long as he is in any danger. Do not allow the defender more than one step after the QB releases the ball prior to the defender contacting the QB. Back pedal at an angle-not-straight back. While you are primarily responsible for the offensive tackle on your side, you may also help with the opposite side tackle. On both running and passing plays, look for fouls that have a large effect on the play, (e.g., the little pull that makes the play, the takedown or pull back (snatch) by the blocker for the QB). Officiate by the feet; if the defender is still able to move (he still has his feet) it is not a foul. Do not call the "rip" effect which causes the blockers arm to go around the defenders neck-does the defender still have his feet?

Penalty Enforcement

Give preliminary signal to press box on fouls as soon as it is reported. DO NOT LET ANY PLAYER DISTRACT YOU WHILE YOU ARE DOING THIS. Do not move any distance before doing this, but step out in the open and give it. Maintain a stationary base, be firm on signals-no loose signals. Gather information and direct U to proceed with enforcement once option is obvious or after consulting with offended team. If there is a disagreement or uncertainty on a call or penalty enforcement, do not hesitate to conference with specific officials involved in the call. It is not how we look that is

important; it is of utmost importance to GET THE CALL RIGHT.

UMPIRE

As the Referee is the Game Administrator, you are in control of the lion's den. You live in the hub of all scrimmage action and everything revolves around you. Your judgement regarding blocking/holding has a major impact on every game. Always take the lead position in crew discussions regarding these areas, sharing philosophy thus contributing to the consistency we all strive for.

Free Kicks

Position yourself on the 30 yard line, in the case of a penalty then adjust accordingly, and watch for a free kick out of bounds, the first touching of the kick by the receivers and then starting the clock, any illegal blockes by the offense. Also be alert for any illegal blockes below the waist by the kickers (wedge busters). When the runner is in your zone watch for any illegal acts and spot forward progress. If the ball is on the other side watch for illegal acts away from the ball.

Scrimmage Plays

Observation of blockers on both runs and passes is your #1 priority. While your position will vary according to formations you should avoid a position that will interfere with linebackers. Don't worry about blowing your whistle as the HL and LJ will kill the majority of runs in the vicinity of the LOS and also establish the point of progress. Count offensive team players.

Runs

Between the ends, the POA is your main focus, not the ball carrier. Continue to officiate that area throughout the play. The R will be your opposite bookend, observing the POA from the other side. The majority of ball retrieval and spotting is your responsibility. On wide runs, move toward the side zone and observe action around the ball carrier. Be ready to assist if any OOB activity occurs.

Passes

Move towards LOS, staying behind the defensive linemen, and observe the actions of the interior linemen, offense and defense. Spin quickly to assist on low trajectory passes. If you do not know whether the pass is incomplete, hold your position. If complete, move toward dead ball spot; if incomplete, signal incomplete quickly. You are responsible for holding by the center and both guards. On passing and kicking plays, be alert for defensive player pulling offensive lineman and shooting that gap by another defender.

Penalty Enforcement

Be sure you completely understand what was reported. Repeat the enforcement option to the Referee. Line yourself up the LJ at the enforcement spot and then walk off the yardage. Communicate with the HL verbally the yardage to be assessed when you are at the enforcement spot. Make sure the HL is standing at succeeding spot confirming the proper walk-off before you spot the ball.

HEAD LINESMAN & LINE JUDGE

You are primarily responsible for dealing with the coaching staffs on your side of the field. During the game the action can get quite heated and it is important that you maintain a professional approach. Remember the game is emotional and you are there to arbitrate and not to root for or root against. Let the coach have his say and NEVER meet emotion with emotion.

Free Kicks

HL assumes your basic position on kick off. Of the five receiving team players on team B's restraining line (#1 closest to HL) you are responsible for illegal action by #1. Observe any player who is OOB before or during the kick.

LJ assume your basic position on kick off. Of the five receiving team players on team B's restraining line (#1 closest to HL) you are responsible for illegal action by #4 and #5. Observe any player who is OOB before or during the kick.

Scrimmage Plays

Read the offensive formation and know your keys. Look for multiple things as each play develops. Communicate with one another visually the down before each play. LJ know the approximate distance to go before each play. Indicate the offensive LOS by extended foot, and then take final position straddling the neutral zone, on the sideline.

Concentrate on the ball and the offensive linemen between you and the ball. See the ball snapped. Cover man in motion going away from you for illegal motion. He remains your responsibility even though he changes direction (does not relieve opposite official from making obvious call).

Runs

You are responsible for your half of the field. Take the runner as far as possible then release to respective downfield

official.

Give forward progress with sharp 90-degree turns. Assist R with forward progress on sacks behind LOS. Ask for the ball and place at your feet on plays when a measurement may be required. Under no circumstances should the ball be marked without your progress spot!

Keep the whistle out of your mouth. Don't anticipate. If you don't see the ball in player possession don't blow your whistle.

If the ball goes OOB, stop at the OOB and observe any OOB action. Your respective downfield official should be moving in to clean up and clear out the OOB players. The R should also be helping with this action.

Observe action away from you and behind the R & U. Move downfield so that you are at the approximate dead ball spot on your side of the field. This spot should only be utilized in the event the opposite official is temporarily out of position and did not have the spot.

Pass Plays

Observe action of the nearest ineligible lineman and pass protection until the ball is thrown or until your eligible receiver is a possible pass receiver.

Surrender the call to the official facing the receiver. Be in position to determine whether a quick pass or pitchout thrown toward you is forward or backward.

Punt Plays

HL will hold position until the ball crosses the neutral zone. Assist R in knowing if kick is tipped by a blocker. Move downfield slowly observing wide areas and multiple players in front of the SJ.

LJ will hold position until the ball crosses the neutral zone. Move downfield slowly observing wide areas and multiple players in front of the FJ.

Be aware of players going OOB and returning.

Field Goal & Try Plays

After ball has crossed LOS move in to clean up and clear out players.

Penalty Enforcement

Obtain all details of the foul before you approach the Head Coach on your side. Communicate to the Head Coach the foul and other pertinent information in a slow, concise and professional manner. Be sure to answer any questions he has if you know the answer to them. If you do not tell him you will get back to him.

LJ be at the proper enforcement spot to line up the U.

HL communicates with the U verbally the yardage to be assessed and proceed to the succeeding spot. Make sure the U is standing at the proper spot before he spots the ball.

BACK JUDGE

Free Kicks

Take appropriate position. BJ will watch for clips and blocks below waist away from ball carrier.

Deep Pass Plays and Long Runs

Observe contact on your eligible receiver and the defensive back. BJ/HL & BJ/LJ should box all calls between them.

BJ should not pass on sideline call because HL or LJ is closer. Many times you will have a better look at it and if the foul is there you are expected to throw the flag.

BJ don't be a toadstool. Move toward the HL or LJ as required when the ball is in the air, or the runner is in the area. If the play ends OOB, move closer to the sideline and observe dead ball activity.

Do not run to ball carrier. Keep all players in front of you and be no closer than 10 yards to HL or LJ. Under no circumstances should you turn your back on the play to obtain a new ball until all activity ceases.

When the ball is dead BJ will assist in backdooring ball to U.
Short Passes and Short Runs Beyond LOS

Always be ready to rule on complete/incomplete as will HL & LJ. The U will spin quickly and assist on traps. Always give call to the official looking into the play. When play starts in the red zone HL-LJ-BJ should be alert for pick plays and make the call if it is there! HL & LJ will establish progress point in most cases.

Be aware of blocking action in front of the runner. If HL or LJ are covering OOB spot R or BJ will clean up OOB action. If R or BJ are covering OOB spot HL or LJ will clean up OOB action. HL & LJ will establish progress point in most cases.
Punt Plays

Take basic position on your sideline 5 yards in front of deepest receiver. Have bean bag in your hand to mark spot if ball is illegally touched in your area or the ball goes OOB on your sideline.

Be alert for muffs and fumbles.

After play becomes dead appropriate official will result of play (i.e., illegal touch and signal direction, direction, etc.). This will alert all others and give R chance to digest play.
Out of Bounds Plays

BJ will go OOB with players to clean up and clear out (keep eyes wandering looking for illegal action). Off official (U) will rotate toward hash mark to back up BJ.

Penalty Enforcement

HL, LJ & BJ will assist in getting ball to dead ball spot when foul is called by another official. Cover and hold dead ball spot, if appropriate. Cover and hold flag(s), if appropriate. If spots and flag(s) are covered observes players and assist where needed.

GENERAL

Do not converse with crowds at any time before, during or after game intermissions.

Be in top physical condition. The players work hard, the coaches work hard and they deserve our best.

Don't be over officious. Fans come to watch the players play and not to see officials officiate!

Don't ever criticize or attempt to explain another official's judgement on decisions to a coach, team or fans. Never argue with players. If a player asks a question, give him the courtesy of listening to it, then give a definite and decisive answer. Never quibble about any situation.

Do not discuss with any coach the play or players of his opponents in a game which you will officiate or are officiating.

If a ruling is puzzling, relay an explanation to the press box.

Assist players in the interpretations of rules when such request is made at the proper time.

Wear your best and look best at every game.

